

# Codford



## **New Zealand soldier remembered by family at Codford ANZAC service**



**John Bryce (centre) fought at Gallipoli & recuperated at Codford**

by Stefan Mackley

A New Zealand soldier who fought at Gallipoli 100 years ago and recuperated in Codford was remembered by his family last weekend after they attended an ANZAC Day service with his medals.

John Bryce was one of thousand New Zealand and Australian troops sent out to fight in the conflict in 1915, which claimed the lives of more than 10,000 soldiers from both countries during World War One.

His step-grandson Dick Scott was at the dawn service held at Codford's St Mary's Church to honour his step-grandfather, including wearing his 1914 Star, British War Medal and British Victory Medal.

"I'd always been conscious of ANZAC because it's massive in New Zealand and Australia," said Mr Scott, who retired from the British Army earlier this year with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

"I think it's brilliant I have a relative who fought at Gallipoli and it's very interesting piecing together his life and having also served in the army I can kind of relate but they would have faced worse than what I did.

“I was clearing out some stuff and on these bits of paperwork I noticed it said Codford on one of them and I thought, ‘that’s only down the road’ and then I found out there was a Commonwealth War Grave and ANZAC service in this small South West village.

“I’ve been going for the past three years and the service blew me away, and this year’s service was bigger and there were twice as many people because it was the centenary.”

Born in 1891, Mr Bryce was a labourer before joining the New Zealand Army on September 23, 1914, becoming part of the 7th Squadron Otago Mounted Rifles.

Mr Bryce arrived at Codford for recuperation on July 16, 1916, likely suffering from illness or injury before being sent out to France to continue fighting in the conflict.

In June 1918 he was court marshalled for allowing a prisoner he was escorting to get money before being promoted back to Corporal in March 1919.

He went back to New Zealand soon after to work as a guard on the country’s railways and died in 1964, never meeting his grandson Mr Scott who was born in 1966.

“We never really talked about it in the family, occasionally nana would tell a story because her brothers and other relatives had also fought,” added Mr Scott.

“I would love to have been able to speak with him though and at the Codford service, managing to get people with stories together and being able to talk with them, just being that fly on the wall and listening to the tales would be incredible.

“It’s not about the gory details though it’s about tales of humanity and reality which would be utterly, utterly capturing really.”

*(Wiltshire Times – 30 April, 2015)*