

DITZELL, Fred



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February 1918 p.25

Fred Ditzell was born in 1890 at Camden, NSW. Fred was the oldest child, and only son of John and Annie Ditzell. Fred had two sisters, Ida b.1892 and Margery b.1893.

At the time Fred entered HAC, aged 16, in 1907, his father was farming near Inverell, NSW. Fred undertook the Full Diploma Course, gaining the First Year Certificate and Ambulance Class Certificate in 1907. Fred gained his Diploma in 1908, finishing Dux of College, getting a Burdekin Medal, Principal's Gold Medal, First Aggregate Prize, Special Prize for Best Diary, and Special Prize of £2, presented by A. H. Prince, Esq., Secretary of N.S. W. Sheep Breeders' Association, for the Student who makes the best progress (HAC Annual Report 1909 p.50).

Fred was appointed Assistant Experimentalist at HAC in 1909, then Assistant Experimentalist at Cowra by April 1910, and was writing articles on Agriculture for the College Journal. At Cowra, work was done on new varieties of wheat, and fertilisers. Fred was then appointed Experimentalist at HAC in 1911, taking over from A.V Donnan, also a past HAC student.

Fred was Acting Manager of Coonamble Experiment Farm in 1912, and by October 1913, had been appointed Inspector and Instructor of Mixed Farming in the north and north-east of NSW.

Fred was a Senior Experimentalist with the NSW Department of Agriculture when he enlisted on 4 January 1916 as a Private in the 35th Battalion, 2nd Reinforcement, A.I.F. By May 1916, Fred was put forward for officer training.

A letter from C.G.F. Grant to the College in 1916 spoke of all the HAC Old Boys at '...Duntroon No.9 Officers' School with him in 1916: H. Bartlett, T. Segal, N. Lancet (returned from Gallipoli), Elliot (1908), Boyce, Clem Bate, A.T.R. Brown, F. Ditzell (Diploma, 1908, dux), A.G. Farleigh (diploma, 1908)' (HAC Journal May 1916 p.65).

Fred embarked from Sydney, NSW, a 2nd Lieutenant, on board HMAT A15 *Port Sydney* on 4 September 1916.

Fred was initially in England, and was promoted to Lieutenant in June 1917. Serving in France Fred was Killed in Action 12 October 1917, at Passchendaele, Belgium. He was 26 years old, and is buried Tyne Cot Cemetery, Zonnebeke, Belgium.

Lieutenant-Colonel Goddard wrote to Mr Ditzell regarding Fred, 'He had joined up with his Battalion in France only quite recently, but was with us long enough to endear himself to all ranks and to prove himself a brave and devoted soldier...He made the great sacrifice leading his men in the attack under conditions calling for the extreme of courage and soldierly qualities, and his splendid response called forth the admiration of us all' (HAC Journal March 1918 p.40-41).

The College Journal also reported '...By his death Commonwealth agriculture has sustained a very severe and irreplaceable loss.

As a student Fred was of the type beloved by teaching staff and boys alike; men of Fred's character lighten the duties of a headmaster and are a charm and inspiration to know' (HAC Journal February 1918 p.26).