

George Demetrius Zenovich

Zenovich, George Demetrius : Service Number - 37476 : Place of Birth - Hill End NSW : Place of Enlistment – Auckland, New Zealand : Next of Kin - (Wife) Zenovich, Elizabeth Ann

Zenovich, George Dimetrius born 21st Feb 1877 at Hill End, father George Zenovich, mother Mary Anne Baldock.

Zenovich, George Dimetrius married 28th Jul 1898 Elizabeth Ann Prisk at Hillgrove NSW. Zenovich, George Demetrius died 28th Jul 1962 (suddenly), age 85, at a private hospital, Auckland New Zealand, loved husband of the late Elizabeth and loved father of Olive (Mrs B. Watt, 133 Mountain Rd, Mangere), Regt No. 37476 First World War. Funeral service held at the chapel of C.H. Barker Ltd, Onehunga, burial at Mangere Lawn Cemetery, Lawn Plaque North, plot 1081.

Service No: 37476, Names(in full): Zenovich, George Demetrius, Rank/Calling: Corporal, Unit: New Zealand Engineers Tunnelling Company, 3rd Reinforcements, Ship Name: HMNZT Tahiti, Date of Embarkation: 15th Nov 1916, Place of Embarkation: Wellington, New Zealand, Age: 39, Trade or Calling: tram conductor, Married or Single: married, Address at Date of Enrolment: 92 Manukau Road, Parnell, Auckland, New Zealand, Next of Kin & Address: wife, Mrs Elizabeth Ann Zenovich, 92 Manukau Road, Parnell, Auckland, New Zealand, Religion: C of E, Date of Joining: 29th Sep 1916, Previous Service: Cadets School.

Regimental No: 37476, Last Held Rank: Sapper Surname & First Names in Full: Zenovich, George Demetrius, Last Unit of Service: New Zealand Engineers Tunnelling Company, Date of Enlistment: 29th Sep 1916, Return to New Zealand(Embarkation Date): 6th Nov 1918.

George's father George Zenovich snr was a native of Austria / Montenegro and his mother Mary was from Essex England. In 1874 they married at Hill End in the house of Mary's brother-in-law Themetre Moustaka. George snr held several mining leases while at Hill End including one on Marshall's Reef on Little Hawkin's Hill, but left the district after 1881. Both died at Hillgrove NSW, George snr in 1894 and Mary in 1910.

In 1898 George was married at Hillgrove. He was a battery hand at the mines until about 1901, when he emigrated with wife Elizabeth and baby son Sidney to Waihi in New Zealand. Tragically the couple's infant daughter Ruby had died in 1899 at Hillgrove and Sidney died in 1903 at Waihai, aged three. Two other children were born in New Zealand, Olive in 1905 and Lorna in 1909, but only Olive lived into adulthood, as Lorna died in 1910 aged 17 months.

Elizabeth's parents and some of her siblings also relocated from Hillgrove to Waihai as did George's brother Milos who made the move by 1904. Both George and Milos worked in the Waihi mines and Milos was involved in the strike of 1912. George was a keen sportsman being a member of Waihi Cycling Club and also a bandsman with the Waihi Federal Band, however by 1911 had moved to Parnell in Auckland, where initially he worked as a labourer, but in 1916 was employed as a tram conductor with the Auckland Electric Tramway Company.

George's enlistment at Auckland on 29th September 1916 was at a time when suspicions and concerns were being expressed in the community, about the loyalty of soldiers of alien parentage. Consequently he was required to make a declaration about his parents, including details of their birthplaces and length of time in New Zealand and / or other British colonies. George declared that he "considered himself British, as he had lived all his life in the colonies of Australia and New Zealand."

On 4th October 1916 George commenced training at Narrow Neck camp. He was promoted from Sapper to Corporal two weeks before embarking for England on 15th November. After arrival on 29th January 1917 he was marched into the New Zealand Engineer Depot in Boscombe and reverted in rank to Lance Corporal.

On 2nd March 1917 George left for France, but in early April contracted influenza. After treatment in hospital and convalescent camps at Etaples he re-joined his unit on 6th May with his temporary rank of Lance Corporal relinquished to Sapper. He continued with his unit until the following year, when he was detached to the 3rd Army Mine School from 26th January 1918 until 8th March and afterwards was granted three weeks leave.

In late July George became sick requiring evacuation to No 1 USA General Hospital, where he was diagnosed with a disordered action of the heart. Shortly after being discharged to duty in early September he was classified by the medical board as being unfit for service. He embarked for England on 19th September and proceeded to Torquay Depot awaiting return to New Zealand, embarking on 6th November. He was discharged on 21st January 1919.

After his war service George returned to work on the tramways at Auckland, remaining in the position as tram conductor until his retirement. In his later years he lived with daughter Olive at Mangere in Auckland. He died on 28th Jul 1962 at a private hospital in Auckland age 85.

George's brother Milos was in the Second Division of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force Reserve in 1917. In 1937 he was tragically killed in a mining accident at the Martha Gold Mining Company's mine at Waihi, when he fell down a shaft after being crushed between a skip and the centre timber of the shaft.

Helen Wood
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