Today I would like to pause and pay our respects to:

4/1028 Francis Cyril **Aston.**

Francis Cyril Aston was the second child/first son of Bessie Elfreda DUMBELL and Frank Aston, who married n 2nd September 1891. Francis was born on the on 3rd September 1893.

Frank was in regular employment as a telegraph operator with the Post and Telegraph Department. Initially the young family lived in Wordsworth Street, now called Aro Street. In the early 1900’s they lived at several different addresses around the foothills of Mt Victoria/Te Aro. Francis Cyril must have attended Roseneath School for some time.  He apparently was also enrolled at Kilbirnie School at some stage.

On leaving school Francis joined the Post and Telegraph Department, as a PO Cadet, and became a telegraph operator.

In 1914 Frank and Francis are both registered on the Electoral Roll as resident in Karaka Bay, which is some distance from their previous addresses. Perhaps Frank had been deployed to a signal station along the coast.

Following the outbreak of WW1, Francis signed up on 3rd August 1915, in Palmerston North. His date of birth was recorded as 3rd September 1894, making him appear to be one year younger than he actually was - 21, not 22, so above the minimum age for military service. He stated that he had 1 years’ service with the Post & Telegraph Corps, No. 7 Company prior to signing up. On joining up Francis was posted to the Divisional Signal Company. The Signal Troop, being a specialist unit, was not enrolled in any particular district, its members being drawn mainly from the Signal Units of the four Territorial Mounted Brigades, the balance being motor cyclist despatch riders, tradesmen, and telegraphists from the Post and Telegraph Department. The strength was one officer, one staff sergeant-major, and thirty-six N.C.O.'s and men main body and first line reinforcements.

His medical examination had already taken place, on 25th June 1915. This recorded that Francis was 5ft 10 ½ inches tall, weighed 10 stone 2lbs, his chest expansion was from 33 to 36 inches, and that he had a fair complexion, blue eyes and brown hair. His health was entirely normal, and he was free of hernia, varicose veins, haemorrhoids, etc. His dental condition was “sufficient”. Francis stated his religion to be Methodist.

11 days after signing up Francis left New Zealand, as one of 2,363 troops making up the 6th Reinforcements on HMNZT No. 27, comprising the Willochra and the Tofua.

They sailed on 14th August and arrived in Egypt on the 9th of September 1915. After training in Egypt Francis was dispatched to Gallipoli, arriving there and joining his Unit on 26th October 1915 as a Sapper.

A mere 16 days later, on 11 November 1915, Francis was killed, one of the 2,779 soldiers from New Zealand who died on Gallipoli. Francis was only just 22. He is memorialised at the [Embarkation Pier Cemetery](http://www.ww1cemeteries.com/other_cemeteries_ext/embarkation_pier_cem_turk.htm), on Special Memorial A30. A Commonwealth War Graves Commission form for this Cemetery lists Francis amongst “Names of Soldiers Presumed to Be Buried in This Cemetery, But Whose Graves Have Not Been Identified”.

RIP Francis

Thank you for your service

E kore warewaretia

Will never forget