Luck was the on the side of Arthur Ekins one day in January 1918 on the Western Front.

A bullet skimmed his head causing a wound to his scalp. It was severe enough to put him in hospital for at least three months, but had it been in a slightly different place, it likely would have killed him.

The New Zealanders started off 1918 strengthening the Allied defences in Belgium preparing for an eminent German offensive.

Arthur's wound was likely to have been during a minor raid or skirmish as there weren't any major battles underway at the time.

To add to his woes, Arthur's military files say he was in hospital for sickness between March to August 1918. It's not clear what the illness was, but in September 1919, he was finally discharged from the army because of illness contracted during active service.

Arthur returned to New Zealand on the SS Athenic accompanied by his new wife Edith – an English woman he married on 15 July 1918 in West Norwood.

**Life at home**

Before the war, Arthur was employed as a Farm Hand at the Stoke Boys' Training Farm, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education. The training farm was for delinquent, neglected and orphaned boys who were given training in agriculture and boarded on-site.

Arthur and Edith returned to Nelson and had a child. Unfortunately, Edith became a young widow when Arthur was killed by a tree being felled by a neighbour at his home in South Nelson.