

= William Garnett Braithwaite =

Brigadier General William Garnett Braithwaite , CB , CMG , DSO ( 21 October 1870 ? 15 October 1937 ) was a British Army officer who participated in the Boer War and the First World War .

Born in England in 1870 , he joined the British Army in 1891 . He served with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers during the Boer War , during which he received the Distinguished Service Order . After the war he was an instructor at the Royal Military College . In 1911 , he went to New Zealand on secondment to help with the training and administration of the New Zealand Military Forces . Following the outbreak of the First World War , he served as a staff officer in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force . He commanded the New Zealand Division 's 2nd Infantry Brigade for nearly two years on the Western Front and on occasion was acting commander of the division . In December 1917 , he was medically evacuated to England . After a period of rest , he returned to military duty with the British Army , and ended the war in command of the 16th Infantry Brigade . He retired from the army in 1925 and died in 1937 at the age of 66 .

= = Early life = =

Braithwaite was born in Kendal , Westmorland , England on 21 October 1870 . After completing his schooling at Marlborough College , he attended the Royal Military College at Sandhurst before joining the British Army in 1891 .

= = Military career = =

Braithwaite was commissioned in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers as a second lieutenant 23 May 1891 . He was promoted to lieutenant on 16 May 1894 , and to captain on 19 July 1899 . From late 1899 to 1902 , Braithwaite fought in the Boer War . As well as being appointed to the Distinguished Service Order ( DSO ) , he was mentioned in despatches three times for his service in South Africa . At the closing of the war he returned to the United Kingdom in March 1902 , and was appointed adjutant of the 3rd ( Volunteer ) Battalion of his regiment . He was later assigned to the Royal Military College for a period of time as an instructor .

In 1911 , now a major , he was seconded to the New Zealand Military Forces under the command of the then Major General Alexander Godley . Braithwaite was appointed General Staff Officer for the Auckland Military District and later promoted to temporary lieutenant colonel , Godley 's Chief of General Staff . At the time , Godley was restructuring the New Zealand Military Forces and creating a Territorial Force to replace the inadequate Volunteer Force . Braithwaite assisted in the establishment of the Territorial Force and was responsible for staff organisation and training . His initial three @-@ year appointment was to expire in July 1914 but earlier that year was extended a further 12 months following a request from the New Zealand government .

= = = First World War = = =

Braithwaite volunteered for the New Zealand Expeditionary Force ( NZEF ) following the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 . He left for the Middle East as the staff officer responsible for the operational planning of the NZEF . His wife , Gwendolen , whom he married in 1901 , and the couple 's three children also left New Zealand but to live in England .

= = = Gallipoli Campaign = = =

Following a period of training with the NZEF in Egypt , Braithwaite served as a staff officer in Godley 's headquarters . Godley was not only commander of the NZEF but also the New Zealand and Australian Division during the Gallipoli Campaign which commenced in April 1915 . Braithwaite fulfilled his duties well and was twice mentioned in despatches for his work during the August offensive . He took ill the next month and required evacuation for medical treatment . He returned to

duty in October and the following month took over temporary command of the New Zealand Infantry Brigade when its nominal commander , Brigadier General Francis Johnston , went on sick leave . After the withdrawal of the Allied forces from Gallipoli , Braithwaite returned with the surviving elements of the NZEF to Egypt . He was appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George for his work during the Gallipoli Campaign .

In December 1915 Braithwaite was promoted temporary brigadier general ( his temporary rank of lieutenant colonel was made substantive at the same time ) and took command of the newly formed New Zealand ( Rifle ) Brigade . The brigade consisted of only two battalions at this stage but would be brought up to strength with the arrival of its 3rd and 4th Battalions in March 1916 . During this time Braithwaite oversaw the training of his new command . However , within a few months , he was appointed commander of the 2nd Infantry Brigade , one of the three brigades of the newly formed New Zealand Division .

= = = Western Front = = =

The New Zealand Division moved to the Western Front in April 1916 . Braithwaite had a brief period in command of the division while its commander , Major General Andrew Russell , was on leave . During the division 's first major engagement , the Somme Offensive , Braithwaite led his brigade in the Battle of Flers @-@ Courcelette in which it incurred over 700 casualties during the capture of its key objective , the Switch Line . A few days later he planned and directed a successful nighttime attempt by the strongest battalion of his brigade to seize the neighbouring high ground at what was known as Goose Alley . After the battle , Russell assessed Braithwaite as the best performed of his brigade commanders .

In June 1917 , Braithwaite was promoted to colonel , although he remained a temporary brigadier general . His brigade had a central role in the Battle of Messines and was able to achieve its objectives with minimal casualties . However , heavy losses were incurred by his brigade later in the year during the First Battle of Passchendaele on 12 October . After his initial attack faltered and came to a halt , Braithwaite protested orders from Russell later that day to resume the attack , 2nd Infantry Brigade having suffered heavy casualties for the gain of little ground . When it became apparent to Russell that flanking units had not achieved their objectives , the orders were cancelled .

Braithwaite had a further period in command of the division while Russell was on sick leave in late October and in early December led his brigade in attacks on Polderhoek Chateau . The brigade suffered heavy losses and the attack was regarded as a failure . At this stage of the war , Braithwaite was one of the longest serving brigade commanders of the NZEF . Worn down by stresses of command , his health was so poor it forced his evacuation to England .

Following a period of convalescence , Braithwaite , rather than rejoining the New Zealand Division , resumed service in the British Army with his parent unit , the Royal Welsh Fusiliers . A popular commander amongst the New Zealanders , rumours circulated in the division that his return to the British Army was due to his refusal to continue with the 12 October 1917 attack at Passchendaele . Braithwaite returned to the front in February 1918 as a staff officer in a British Corps and was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath in June 1918 . In October 1918 , he was placed in command of the 16th Infantry Brigade when its previous commander , Brigadier General Henry Walker , was wounded in an artillery barrage , and led it through to the armistice . During the course of the First World War he had been mentioned in despatches six times .

= = Later life = =

Braithwaite remained in the British Army after the war and commanded a brigade in the British Army of the Rhine . While stationed in Germany , he wrote a foreword for one of the regimental histories of the NZEF . He relinquished his temporary rank of brigadier general in 1920 , and reverted to his substantive rank of colonel to take up a brigade command in the Territorial Force . He eventually retired from the British Army in November 1925 , with the honorary rank of brigadier

general . He died in Camberley , Surrey , on 15 October 1937 , survived by his wife and children . Braithwaite Street in the Wellington suburb of Karori is named for him .