

Remembering the sacrifices of those with SC connections who served their country 100 years ago.

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Thomas Edward Ingram, No.45212

Thomas Edward Ingram was born on 8 February 1887 at Waimate, the youngest son of Thomas and Sarah (née Cairns) Ingram. Thomas Snr and Sarah came to New Zealand within two years of marrying at Newtownards, County Down, Ireland. They settled in Waimate where four children were born. Between 1893 and 1896 the family moved to Pukeuri Junction near Oamaru. Young Tomas started school at Waimate, before moving at Pukeuri School aged eight. Thomas followed his father into farming. His father died in 1916, his mother living on till 1930.

Thomas was living at the family property at Patiti, Pukeuri, when he enlisted with the New Zealand Forces on 11 November 1916, 29 years old and single. He proceeded to camp from Oamaru with the Infantry of the 25th Reinforcements (North Otago and Central Otago men) on 10 January 1917 for Wellington, and on 26 April he re-embarked on the Pakeha for Plymouth, England, immediately marching into Sling Camp for training. Six weeks later, in September, he went overseas and joined his battalion, being posted to A Company at Rouen.

On 27 March 1918, Thomas was admitted to hospital, mildly ill. Two weeks later he was attached to the New Zealand Forces and the following month (May) rejoined his battalion. But not for long - on 16 July 1918 Rifleman Ingram was killed in action in the field in France, aged 21. At the time of the death of Rifleman T. E. Ingram, his mother was one who contributed £10 to the Red Jersey Appeal. In May 1918, while still residing at Richmond, just north of Pukeuri, she had given 3 shillings to the Red Cross Sheep drive, and one of his sisters made four pairs of socks for the Pukeuri Red Cross in mid 1918.

Thomas Edward Ingram is buried in the Hebuterne Military Cemetery at Hebuterne, France, one of 53 New Zealanders buried there, all between April and August 1918 when the New Zealand Division was engaged in renewed fighting in the village. He is also remembered on his parents' headstone in the Oamaru Cemetery – 'He did his duty.' His name, along with fifteen others, is inscribed on the Pukeuri War Memorial. A new memorial was unveiled in 2006 after the original was damaged on several occasions and finally demolished by a vehicle in 1971. His medals – British War Medal and Victory Medal – were sent to his mother, who moved into Oamaru after her son's death. The plaque and scroll were also sent. His brother, John Cairns Ingram, was called up but did not serve.

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