

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

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### Private Thomas Lane, No.38966

Thomas Lane was one of 14 children of Andrew and Julia (née Ring) Lane, of Carriganes, Kingwilliamstown, Co Cork, Ireland. On 5 January 1911, Thomas, a farm labourer, and two sisters – Ellen and Julia – left London on the Corinthic bound for New Zealand. His brother Denis Andrew Lane had already settled at Winchester Settlement.

When he enlisted the 22nd Reinforcements at Temuka in October 1916, Thomas was farming on his own account at Winchester. His medical examination was carried out at Temuka by Dr F. A. Scannell, who himself served in the First World War. It was reported in the *Timaru Herald* that T. Lane, farmer, Temuka, single, had enlisted in Timaru on 27 July 1916. He nominated two family members as next-of-kin, namely his father Andrew Lane, of Carriganes, Co Cork, Ireland, and his brother Denis Lane, of Winchester Settlement, Temuka.

Thomas left Temuka, where he had spent his final leave, on his return to camp in January 1917. A social evening was held at Winchester, to bid him farewell. A month later he embarked with the Canterbury Infantry on the Navua for Devonport. After training at Sling he proceeded overseas and joined his battalion at Rouen in May.

It was 10 August 1917 when his brother received word that Tom had been wounded in action on 26 July and admitted to the Field Ambulance. After two and a half weeks he returned to duty. Two months later Thomas was killed in action one year and one day after enlisting, just eight months after embarking and less than four months after joining his battalion in France. Casualty list 700 contained the names of 234 men killed in action. In the aftermath of an early morning advance, Thomas became a victim of the Passchendaele offensive, falling on New Zealand's blackest day.

He was buried at Passchendaele, possibly where he fell and probably without a formal burial. Thomas had been in New Zealand for five years when he enlisted in 1916 at Temuka. He was described as a steady, well living young man, highly respected and liked by all who knew him. He was one of the many regularly remembered in the *Temuka* Leader Roll of Honour – "A sacrifice is made by every man who enlists and goes to the front." Tom was a member of the Foresters' Lodge. On 13 July 1920, the Lodge members unveiled in their hall a decorative Roll of Honour, which names 107 brethren who went to the front and underlines in red the names of sixteen who lost their lives. The name "T. Lane" is among those who made the supreme sacrifice.

His medals (British War Medal and Victory Medal), plaque and scroll were to be sent to his father at Kingwilliamstown, Carriganes, in Ireland. On 12 October 1918 in the Timaru Herald, an In Memoriam notice was inserted by his sisters and brother. Tom did leave a will, dated 9th October 1916. He appointed his sisters, Ellen of Pleasant Point and Julia of Timaru (December 1919 both in Wellington), to be executors and trustees of his will, and he made provision for his parents. Probate in his estate was granted in Christchurch in early December 1919.

One of the hundreds whose bodies were not recovered, Private Thomas Lane, 38966, is honoured on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Tyne Cot Cemetery, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, one of 35,000 soldiers – 1176 New Zealanders - commemorated on this memorial. His name is recorded on the Timaru Memorial Wall, the Temuka War Memorial, the Temuka St Joseph's Church Memorial, and the Foresters' Lodge Roll of Honour.

*This is part of the SCRoll project. You can find SCRoll stories, hosted by the South Canterbury Museum, at [museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll](http://museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll)*