

# Soldier sadly missed

SCRoll (South Canterbury Roll of Honour), hosted by the South Canterbury Museum, was born out of a vision to develop short biographies of all South Cantabrians who served their country during World War I. They have been compiled to be publicly accessible in order to support the 100th commemoration of World War I. The *South Canterbury Herald* will feature some of the biographies over coming weeks. This week we feature Private James Alexander Smith of the No 34741 20th Reinforcements, Canterbury Infantry Battalion, C Company.

Private James Alexander Smith was killed in action at Ypres, Belgium on October 4, 1917.

He was the son of William and Matilda Smith of Gleniti, Timaru. He embarked from Wellington on December 7, 1916 heading for Plymouth, England and fought on the Western Front.

The *Timaru Herald* of February 27, 1918 reports: Mrs W Smith, of Glen-iti, has received letters from two soldiers at the front, in which they refer to the death in action of her son James. They state that her son's death was a great blow to all of them.

In him they lost one of their bravest comrades, and he was a great favourite and never tired of doing anyone a good turn.

One soldier writes as follows: "I had known Jimmy since he joined us, and had always been good friends with him. In fact, all who know him thought highly of his admirable qualities".

"We were within a chain or so of our objective when Jimmy was hit. Up till then I had been near him all the time.

"He had just preceded me out of the shell hole we were in when he was caught by the machine gun fire. He fell back almost into my arms.

"You will perhaps be relieved to know that it was instantaneous. The next morning I and a few others brought his body in and gave it the burial that all our good fellows get, about a mile or so in front of the town.

"We of this company join in extending to you our heartfelt, sympathy in your sad loss."

Private Smith is remembered at Tyne Cot Cemetery, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.



**Private James Alexander Smith**

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)