

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

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Private Samuel Gibson, No. 46578

Samuel Gibson was born on 22 June 1882 at Pleasant Point, the son of Irish immigrants, Campbell and Catherine (née Crawford) Gibson. He began school at Opihi School and in 1890 joined his siblings at Pleasant Point School. On leaving school he engaged in farm work in the South Canterbury area.

Samuel Gibson, of the 24th Reinforcements, married Mary Ann Wilkins on 30 December 1916, at the Manse, Knox Church, Christchurch. He had been drawn in the first military service ballot for No. 10 (South Canterbury) recruiting district, in November 1916, when he was farming at Clandeboye. His new wife, residing at Pareora West (perhaps with her family) was his next-of-kin. Mary Ann would not see Samuel again after he embarked with the Canterbury Infantry Regiment on 9 June 1917 on the Willochra.

He had spent three weeks in hospital in February 1916, suffering with pneumonia. In March 1917 he was admitted to the Casualty Hospital at Trentham for a month afflicted with herpes, and on 6 June 1917 while at Trentham Camp, he was admitted to the Cottage Hospital with influenza. Otherwise, he was in good physical shape. At Sling Camp in England on 26 October 1917 he marched out for overseas duty with the 4th Canterbury Regiment, spent some days in camp at Etaples; on 10 November he joined his battalion at Rouen, and was detailed to Brigade School for a week before rejoining his battalion on 27 November. Just two weeks later – 11 December 1917 - he was killed in action in the field.

All within a year, Samuel had married (December 1916), proceeded overseas for war service (June 1917) and had been killed in action (December 1917), with no further health issues while away. His death seems to have gone largely unnoticed in the district, the address being printed as Paeroa (instead of Pareora) in the Timaru Herald of 1 January 1918.

Clandeboye, however, did not forget. In late August 1919 a tablet placed on the wall above the hall stage was unveiled – in “one of the most important ceremonies ever conducted in the district.” The memorial tablet contained six names, one of them being S. Gibson.

Samuel’s medals were forwarded to his wife, then living at Pleasant Point. He left no will. His brother Andrew Alexander Gibson, who also served in World War One, drowned in the Clarence River in 1926. His oldest brother William Crawford Gibson, was called up but did not serve. His widow, Mary Ann Gibson, married William Earl Home in 1925, had three children, and lived to 1968.

The name of Private Samuel Gibson is inscribed on the Buttes New British Cemetery (NZ) Memorial, Polygon Wood, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium; and on the Timaru War Memorial Wall, the Temuka RSA Roll of Honour, the Temuka War Memorial, the Pleasant Point School Memorial, the Clandeboye Hall Memorial Tablet. An entry at St Mary's Anglican Church Timaru memorial may also be his. He has no known grave or headstone.

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