

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

Published in the Timaru Herald 3 November 2018

Private Timothy Joseph Perry, No.28912

By Teresa Scott

Timothy Joseph Perry was born on 13 April 1893 at Levels and baptised on 30 April in the Temuka Catholic Parish. Known as Tim, he was the second son of William (Bill) Perry and his wife Catherine (Kate) née Brosnahan, of Waitohi, Temuka, and ninth in a family of 11. Both William and Catherine came to New Zealand from County Kerry, Ireland.

Timothy Joseph Perry of Bankside registered with the Kaiapoi Group in May 1916. At Bankside he had been a drover and shepherd for J. Benbow. Two months later T. J. Perry enlisted at Timaru, from Temuka. He was a shepherd for Mr C. T. Jessop, Methven (his brother-in-law), and gave his address as C/o Mrs T Sheen, Temuka. Mrs Sheen was his older sister Frances (Fanny) Perry. He named his mother, Mrs W. Perry, of Temuka, as his next-of-kin. On the death of his mother in February 1921, his father, Mr Wm Perry became his legal next-of-kin.

Private Perry and three fellow members of the 18th Reinforcements left Temuka on a Saturday afternoon in mid-September 1916. Bagpipe music accompanied a procession through the town to the station where a large crowd of relatives had gathered. The mayor, in commending the action the men had taken in going to the Front, wished them the best of luck and a safe return. The Friday night before Tim was a guest at a farewell social evening in the Waitohi schoolroom. On behalf of the residents, the chairman of the Waitohi Patriotic Committee presented him with a money belt. He congratulated Privates Perry and Goodeve on the step they had taken and observed that the people of Waitohi would watch their soldier careers with interest. Following a euchre competition, dancing continued till an early hour.

Single, Roman Catholic, of fresh complexion, healthy and fit, he embarked on the Tofua with the 18th Reinforcements, leaving Wellington on 11 October 1916 and disembarking at Devonport, England on 29 December. He proceeded overseas to Etaples, France from Sling Camp on 1 February 1917, joining the 1st Battalion of the Canterbury Infantry Regiment a month later.

Private Timothy Joseph Perry, 28912, was killed in action on 3 December 1917 at Ypres, Belgium. Mrs Perry received the news by cable on 18 December and his name appeared in Casualty List 744 issued on 19 December. Twenty-four year old Tim Perry was described as of a very quiet disposition. His name is inscribed on the Buttes New British Cemetery (N.Z.) Memorial, Polygon Wood.

Timothy had been born into a large family – three sons and eight daughters. His brother Arthur died in 1913 and a sister, Nora Hanifin, in 1915. Mrs Perry died in February 1921, and Tim's older brother, William John, died on 21 June 1921 when he was found dead beneath his gig near Temuka. Thus William Perry senior suffered great loss from 1913 till 1921. He was the recipient of Timothy's medals – British War Medal and Victory Medal, and the memorial plaque and scroll.

This is part of the SCRoll project. You can find SCRoll stories, hosted by the South Canterbury Museum, at museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll