

Timaru Herald. 1 June 1918 (page 3) [14/02/2016]

LANCE-CORPORAL S. W. TOMS
WINS DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.

Mrs Toms, of 133 North Street, has received word that her son, Lance Corporal S. W. Toms, has been awarded the D.C.M., for bravery in the field. Lance-Corporal Toms was employed in the joinery department of Messrs J. Jackson and Co., leaving with the 12th reinforcements. The following is a letter received from Archdeacon Jacob to Mrs Toms, describing the bravery for which Lance- Corporal Toms was rewarded.

“Dear Mrs Toms, — I saw to-day a Sergeant Young, who was Stanley’s sergeant, recently in France. He told me a story of Stanley’s wonderful act of bravery which I think you ought to know, and to be proud of. Stanley’s patrol saw some men in the mist about 50 yards away, but could not detect whether friends or foes. They all went away but one, and Stanley went over alone to find out who they were. He found the one who had stayed was a big regimental sergeant-major of the enemy, so he covered him with his revolver. The Hun tried to knock his revolver out of his hand with his stick, but Stanley was too quick and shot him, and then got back to his own men and unhurt. The result was that the Huns’ plans were known. It was an act of great bravery, and Sergeant Young was full of it, and said that Stanley’s father and mother ought to be proud of such a son. My very best wishes to you all. I hope I may see you again some day and that Stanley may be spared to you.”

Press. 6 November 1918 (page 5) [08/05/2016]

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL

While in charge of a Lewis-gun section in an advanced post, noticing a movement in front, 12234 Corporal S. W. Toms, Rifle Brigade, immediately jumped over the top and ran to the wire, where he found an enemy officer with ten men behind him. He shot the officer with his revolver and caused the rest to bolt under Lewis-gun fire. “His dash and gallantry on this and many other occasions had a most inspiring effect on all ranks.”

Timaru Herald. 26 November 1919 (Papers past) [June 2020]

WAR DECORATIONS.

TIMARU PRESENTATION CEREMONY.

Last night another presentation ceremony was held in the Drill Shed, Timaru, to present medals won at the war to the successful soldiers or their next-of-kin. There was a very large attendance of the general public and a ceremonial parade of the local military group was also held. The troops paraded at 7.30 as follows:— “A” Coy, 2nd (South Canterbury) Regiment, under Lieut. C. L. Gillies; No. 7 N.Z.A.S.C., under Lieut. A. E. Sharp, N.Z.P.S.; No. 43 Coy Senior Cadets, under Captain W. Fossey; Nos. 44 and 45 Coys, under Lieut. J. P. C. Walshe; the 2nd (South Canterbury) Regimental Band, under Mr Schnack; and the Bugle Band under Mr Home, were also on parade. The parade was under Major F. H. Hume. R.N.Z.A., officer commanding Group 10, Timaru, and was marshalled by Lieut. C. Quartley, N.Z.P.S., adjutant, with the following of the N.Z.P.S.: Mr H. Frank (W. O.1.), Mr Thatcher (W. O.1.), and S.S.M. A. Mathieson. Besides the above there were present — His Worship the Mayor (Mr Wm. C. Raymond), Major Foden, Major Holdgate, Major Dryden N.Z.M.C, and Captain Chaplain Jacob.

The medals were presented by Colonel R. Young, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., N.Z. S.C., Officer Commanding the Canterbury district, and on his entering the Drill Shed the general salute was sounded. The parade state was 330 officers, n.c.o.'s and men.

The Mayor at the outset accorded a hearty welcome to Colonel Young. It was his honour a short time ago to welcome Sir James Allen for the purpose of presenting awards to men of the town, who had rendered valiant service in the recent war. It gave him great pleasure that evening to accord to Colonel Young, on behalf of the citizens of Timaru, a cordial welcome to the town. He did so with additional pleasure on account of the many honours Colonel Young had earned on the battlefields, and of his long and distinguished war service. (Applause.) His Worship congratulated the Colonel on coming through so much hard fighting and being spared to return to New Zealand to continue his good work. His Worship also took the opportunity of congratulating the officers and men present that evening who were to receive decorations. It was unfortunate, however, that some of their gallant boys were not there that evening – they were numbered amongst the unreturning brave. Their next-of-kin, however, would receive their decorations, and he was sure it would be a source of deep gratification to them to possess such tangible marks of the King's appreciation of their services as those decorations symbolised. (Applause.) In conclusion he called upon Colonel Young to present the awards.

Colonel Young, who was accorded a very hearty reception, thanked the Mayor for his kindly welcome. He was very pleased on the occasion of his first official visit to Timaru, to have the opportunity of presenting medals to returned soldiers. He congratulated those present who were to receive awards. No one knew better than he did how well those medals had been earned. One of the most difficult jobs a battalion commander had was the allocation of medals. The friends and relations of those men who were to receive decorations that evening had every reason to be proud that those men had been selected as most worthy of those honours. It was his honour, said the gallant officer continuing, to command the 1st Canterbury Battalion for nearly two years, while as a brigade commander he had the first and second battalions under his command in 1918 up till the signing of the Armistice. He assured all officers and men of the battalion on parade that night that esprit de corps, which had ever been present in those battalions on the field was remarkable. They had also won a tradition which ought to be dearly cherished, and it was handed on to those present to maintain without blemish. (Applause.) He asked every officer and man of the regiment there that evening to see to it that the good name they had won was ever upheld, because it had been earned by hardships and bloodshed on the field of battle. Nothing they could do in the future could be too much. All they could do — as those before them had done — was their duty, and if they did that the old officers and men of the regiment would be proud of them. (Applause.) He then presented the decorations to those present, the gazette notice of each award being read by Lieutenant A. E. Dendy as the next-of-kin or the soldier concerned came for the medal. Each award was heartily applauded. The following is a list of the honours presented, the first four being posthumous awards which were presented to the mother of each deceased soldier:

24/938 Rfm. Wootten, F. C, French Croix de Guerre.

6/1785 Sergeant Brien, W. S., M.M.

6/1636 Private McRohan, J., M.M.

62709 Lance-Corporal Minnis, W. H. M.M.

13800 R.S.M. Emerson, A. L., M.S.M. (presented to Mrs Emerson).

7/790 2nd Lieut. Martin, A., D.C.M.

7/778 2nd Lieut. Purves, L. D., D.C.M.

6/3199 Sergeant White, W., D.C.M.

12294 Corporal **Toms, S. W.**, D.C.M.

7/2427 Sergeant Smillie, J., M.M.

32380 Corporal Paterson, D. T., M.M.

9/160 Bombardier Dobson, T., M.M.

6/2329 Private. Glassey J., M.M.

27271 Private Gillon, J., M.M.
24/1792 Private Richards, W., M.M.
7/1481 Private Jackson, J., M.M.
10739 Private Brown, C, M.M.
32286 .Rifleman Allan, J., M.M.
26/1045 Sergeant Patching W. J., M. M.
4/73a Sergeant Elsom, C. H., M.M.
25/1645 2nd Lieut. Hunt, R. E., M.S.M.
25/984 L-Corporal Hickey, M., M.S.M.
S.S.M. Johnston , G. G., Imperial Long Service and Good Conduct.
S.S.M. Edmonds, W., M.S.M.

The following were to have received awards but were absent:—

2/1126 Sergeant White, J. A., M.M.
52670 Lance-Corporal Wilson, J. J. H., M.M. '
7/893 Lance-Corporal Robinson, L., M.M.
7/1845 Lance-Corporal Gaffnev, P. J., M.M.
8/3662 Lance-Corporal Langford, E. H., M.M.
6/3905 Sergeant Turner, H. H., M.M.

The Mayor, at the close of the presentation of prizes, called for three hearty cheers for the men who had received decorations, and these were very lustily given.

The 2nd South Canterbury Regiment Band discoursed selections during the evening.