

GREAT WAR STORIES

# Sergeant Matthew Wall

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

**TERESA SCOTT**

Matthew Wall was born on January 18, 1888 in Waimate and baptised at the Catholic Church there on February 5, one of nine children born to Nicholas and Fanny (née McGovern) Wall. His father died in 1900 in Dunedin, where he had gone for medical treatment, leaving a relatively young family.

Wall went to St Patrick's College in Wellington. He was still living in Waimate in February 1911 when he visited Christ-



Matthew Wall

church. At the time of volunteering and his subsequent enlistment, Wall was working as a shepherd in Masterton and enlisted there on April 28, 1915 joining the Sixth Reinforcements as part of the NZ Rifle Brigade. His next-of kin was his sister, Miss Monica

Wall, at the Sacred Heart Convent, Christchurch. Matthew left a "Pay Book Will" in favour of Miss Monica Wall; and his medals were sent to her. Before moving north he had served for two years with the Studholme Mounted Rifles. At the time of enlisting he

was a member of the Puketoi Cricket Club.

Wall disembarked initially at Suez on November 15, 1915; he then to Alexandria where he disembarked on February 15, 1916. On March 28, 1916 he was appointed lance sergeant, and on June 11, 1916 in the field in France he was promoted to the rank of sergeant.

He appears to have avoided illness and wounds until the fatal gunshot wound which caused his death on September 10, 1916, at the Main Dressing Station in France. He may have been involved with the New Zealand Division as it moved into the line



Quarry Cemetery at Montauban, Somme, France.

between High and Delville woods preparing for the first major engagement on the Western Front – the Battle of the Somme. Wall was one of 27 old boys of St Patrick's College who had died at the front since the beginning of the war and were remembered in a Requiem Mass celebrated in early August 1917.

He was buried at the Quarry

Cemetery at Montauban, Somme, France. He is also remembered on his parents' headstone in the Waimate Old Cemetery. His name is recorded on the Timaru Memorial Wall (as Wall H. M.) and the Waimate War Memorial (as H. M. Wall).

■ This is part of the SCRoll project at [museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll](http://museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll)