

George Thomas White aka George Thomas Vere

White, George Thomas : Service Number – 4/1485 : Place of Birth – Hill End NSW : Place of Enlistment – Avondale New Zealand : Next of Kin – (Wife) White, Mrs Ruby Jane

Vere, George Thomas born 21st Nov 1878 at Hill End, father George Vere, mother Louisa Sarah Muscutt.

White, George Thomas married 2nd Jan 1905 Ruby Jane Everitt at Te Aroha, New Zealand. White, George Thomas died 28th Feb 1927, age 48, at Auckland, New Zealand, beloved husband of Ruby Jane White, late New Zealand Tunnelling Company. Funeral conducted by C. Little and Sons Ltd, burial at Waikumete Cemetery, Church of England portion, Soldiers' Burial B, row 2, plot 7.

Service No: 4/1485, Names(in full): White, George Thomas, Rank/Calling: Sapper, Unit: Tunnelling Company, Headquarters, No. 2 Relief, Ship Name: HMNZT Ruapehu, Date of Embarkation: 18th Dec 1915, Place of Embarkation: Auckland New Zealand, Age: 36, Trade or Calling: miner, Married or Single: married, Address at Date of Enrolment: 106 Peel Street, Gisborne, New Zealand, Next of Kin & Address: (wife), Mrs Ruby Jane White, 106 Peel Street, Gisborne, New Zealand, Religion: C of E, Date of Joining: 6th Oct 1915.

Regimental No: 4/1485, Last Held Rank: Sapper, Surname & First Names in Full: White, George Thomas, Last Unit of Service: New Zealand Engineers, Tunnelling Corps, Date of Enlistment: 6th Oct 1915, Return to New Zealand (Embarkation Date): 1st Nov 1917.

George attended Hill End Public School.

George's father George Vere snr came to Australia from England about 1851, arriving at Hill End around 1870 to look after the interests of the Sergeants Reef Gold Mining Company; in 1872 George snr was manager of the Monitor mine on Hawkins Hill, also had Vere's Golden Crown G. M. Co. on Hawkins Hill.

The Vere family left Hill End in 1881 for Sydney, returning in 1888, but without George's mother Louisa who had died the previous year. George and his brother John attended Hill End Public School until reaching leaving age.

In 1890 George snr became the manager of the Hawkins Hill Premier Gold Mining Co which was formed to rework some of the famous old claims including Beyers and Holtermann, Krohmann, Carroll and Beard's and other rich claims on Hawkins Hill. The investors in the mine were mainly Sydney men. George snr continued 'prospecting' until 1903, after which he returned to Sydney. He died at Hill End in 1908, possibly on a visit to John who had stayed to work the family's mine. John left Hill End after 1919.

George was also a miner at Hill End until 1903. Family stories tell that he fled to New Zealand after he'd had a fight with one of his brothers and thought that he'd killed him. He reportedly changed his name in transit and when he was married in 1905 at Te Aroha, did so as George Thomas White.

George was a miner, employed by the Public Works Department at Matawai, when he was recruited at Gisborne in late September 1915. On 6th October he left for Auckland, to

commence training with the Tunnelling Company, at the military camp at Avondale Racecourse.

On 18th December George embarked for England, arriving on 18th January 1916 and possibly underwent further training until proceeding to France on 9th March. He was admitted to hospital at Rouen on 1st June 1916 suffering from bronchial catarrh, received treatment for a month and then discharged to the Base Depot at Etaples.

On 17th November he re-joined his unit at the front until 16th January 1917, when he was granted leave to England. During his time off he was hospitalised with haemorrhoids at Walton. He continued his recovery at Hornchurch Convalescence camp before he returned to France to re-join his unit on 8th March.

In mid-October George was sent to England to the New Zealand Discharge Depot at Torquay, awaiting return to New Zealand, embarking on 1st November. He was discharged on 20th June 1918, no longer physically fit for war service on account of illness contracted on active service.

George returned to his wife and seven children, who during the war had moved from Gisborne to Ponsonby in Auckland. By 1927 however, he was living alone and tragically was found dead on 28th Feb 1927 in a room that he was renting in Newton Road. He had taken his own life, cause of death being gas poisoning. George was aged 47.

Helen Wood

Hill End and Tambaroora Gathering Group

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with the assistance of Sue Baker Wilson of New Zealand Tunnelling Company on facebook at

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