



*Sapper Thomas Edward Drane*

*No.53 No.2 Section  
1st Field Company Engineers  
Campaign fought: Gallipoli*

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# *Thomas Edward Drane*

Thomas Edward Drane left the town of Forbes, NSW on the 16th of August, 1914 to join the war effort. He was headed for the Victoria Barracks in Sydney where he enlisted into the 1st Field Company Engineers (1FCE) and was given the service number of 53.

During his service with the Australian Army he compiled a personal diary of his wartime experiences. His diary describes the anticipation and adventures in the days of training leading up to battle. He writes of the time spent in Sydney with new friends and the cheering crowds on departure. And the times he enjoyed with mates, exploring Egypt's natural wonders and culture when relieved from the rigours of wartime training at **Mena Camp**.

Then there is the harsh reality of the **Gallipoli landing** which has been so firmly entrenched in Australia's history. To read in his own words the living hell of those first moments and ensuing days from the perspective of the **1st Field Company Engineers of NSW** is to gain an insight into what many men had endured for 'honour and love of the country that reared them'.

Thomas Edward Drane had his leg amputated as a result of wounds suffered at Gallipoli and spent nine months receiving treatment on hospital ships and military hospitals at Alexandria, Gibraltar and England.

He returned to Forbes when he arrived back in Australia and was soon after married to Leila Combe on the 14th June 1917. Leila Combe was the sister of Cassie Combe who was also from Forbes, who died from his wounds received at Gallipoli.

In January 1918, Thomas wrote to the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. Aware of legislation preventing misuse of the word 'Anzac' for commercial or other unsuitable purposes, he asked if he could give his first child 'Anzac' as a middle name.

*"I myself left Australia in Oct 1914, and was wounded at Gallipoli which cost me a leg, also I was the first to volunteer from this town, and my child is the first to be born here with an Anzac for his father. My wife's Brother also left with the First Div and he laid down his life at Gallipoli and that is the reason we want to name him so."*

While the Gallipoli campaign might have been fought in vain, Thomas Drane wanted to forever honour the memory of fallen comrades through the names of his children. With no objection to the request he subsequently named his three sons George, Albert (Bill) & Thomas (Tom) with 'Anzac' as a middle name. Thomas and Leila Drane had five children including Leila & Eureena (Rene):

Thomas Edward Drane died on the on 25th June, 1942 at the age of 55. He was buried in Forbes where he spent the rest of his life after returning from the war. He was an active member of the Forbes community and was one of the founding members of the **Forbes RSL club**.