

Benjamin Hannah

Rushworth Chronicle

14 August, 1936

TRAGIC DEATH

War Injuries Lead to Death of Popular Townsman

The district was profoundly shocked yesterday (Thursday), when it became known that Mr. Benjamin (Bert) Hannah had died in tragic circumstances.

Mr. Hannah had conducted a tailoring and mercery business in High street for a number of years. His shop adjoined Messrs Weir and Coyle's office and about twenty minutes to one, shortly after Mr Hannah's staff had left for dinner, Mr Len Coyle, who was working in Weir and Coyle's office heard an explosion in Mr. Hannah's shop.

Thinking at first it was a noise made by an exploding electric light globe, he did not become alarmed until he heard a faint sound as of a piece of iron striking the floor. He went to the rear of the shop and through the window saw Mr Hannah lying on the floor. He obtained Mr J. Koopman's assistance and they broke open the door and found Mr Hanna dead with a bullet wound through the centre of his forehead and a .38 calibre revolver lying beside him.

The late Mr Hannah has suffered many years with a war wound in the head which caused him great pain and it is known that recently he had several particularly severe attacks from this disability.

Letters left by him addressed to his brother and his son and daughter, and dated the previous day, indicated that the sufferings from this cause had led him to resolve take his life. He had taken part in a golf tournament on the previous day and gave no indication of his state of mind.

The sad death of Mr Hannah caused a wave of gloom to spread over the district. He was well known and popular with all sections of the community, being held in the highest regard.

A native of Scotland, he was 39 years of age and enlisted at the age of 17. He had a distinguished military career, rising to the rank of captain and being decorated for bravery. He served with the famous Black Watch regiment.

The deepest sympathy of the whole district is extended to the bereaved widow and three children, Bob, Jessie and John.

An inquest was formally opened by Mr. A. J. Sleep, J.P., (who gave an order for burial) and adjourned.

The funeral will be held this afternoon (Friday) to the Rushworth Cemetery.

Rushworth Chronicle

21 August, 1936

The funeral of Mr Benjamin (Bert) Hannah, who died in tragic circumstances at Rushworth last Thursday, was held to the Rushworth Cemetery on Friday last. The funeral cortege was one of the largest ever seen here, and was a striking tribute to the late Mr. Hannah who was held in very high esteem throughout the district.

The remains were laid to rest with military and masonic honours and the civic service was conducted by Mr. A. F. Landers. A large contingent of returned soldiers escorted the hearse to the burial ground, where the simple service was read by Mr. W. Johnson, president of Stanhope branch of the R.S.S.I.L.A. of which Mr. Hannah was a member, which was followed by the sounding of the last post. Mr. A. A. Bryant, branch secretary, placed a wreath of laurel and Flanders poppies on the grave.

The impressive service of the Masonic Lodge was performed by Wor. Bro. A. Wilson, P.M. and Wor. Bro. P. H. Peart, P.m., (secretary).

The funeral arrangements were carried out by E. F. Anderson.

Mrs. B. Hannah and family desire to thank all kind friends for letters, telegrams, floral tributes, and personal expressions of sympathy in their recent sad bereavement, especially thanking Mrs. Poulson, Miss Hanlon, Mrs. Cameron, Sister Roach, Dr. MacInnes and Mr. Koopman. Rushworth.

Rushworth Chronicle

28 August, 1936

Death of Mr. B. Hanna

Coronial Inquiry

The deputy coroner, Mr. A. J. Sleep, J.P., on Monday last, at Rushworth Court, conducted an inquiry into the death of Benjamin Hannah, who died at Rushworth on 13th August.

Evidence was given by Leonard Charles Coyle that at about 12.40 p.m. on 13th August, he was sit in the office of Weir and Coyle, which adjoined a tailor's shop occupied by Benjamin Hannah in High Street, Rushworth. He heard a sound similar to an electric light globe exploding, following followed by a noise as though some piece of metal had fallen to the floor.

Thinking there was nobody in the shop, and as he had seen the door closed a few minutes previously, he went to the rear of the shop and saw the body of deceased lying on the floor of the workroom at the rear of the shop.

Constable C. F. Carr deposed that with Constable Yeoman he saw the body of Benjamin Hannah lying on the floor of the shop with a bullet wound in the centre of his forehead. A .38 calibre revolver was lying on the floor about two feet away. it had a discharged cartridge shell in one chamber and the four other were empty. Four other cartridges were on a bench in the room. He also found letters addressed to deceased's son and brother and insurance policies addressed to his wife and brother.

Witness [Carr] interviewed deceased's brother who stated that he had suffered with severe pains in his head for a number of years as a result of war injuries.

Katherine Helen Hannah stated deceased was her husband. When he left home at 10.40 a.m. to go to his shop he appeared to be in good spirits, but complained of pains in his head. She had never heard her husband threaten to take his life but was afraid that he might do

so. She did not know of any financial worries that would cause him to take his life. Her husband had suffered severe head wounds due to war injury.

Dr. A. F. MacInnes stated that he examined the body of deceased. There was a bullet wound in the centre of his forehead and an area of powder marks surrounding the wound. He had been the medical attendant of deceased in the last nine years. He had received gunshot wounds in the head in the Great War and had suffered from continual headache with frequent attacks of severe pain in the head causing continued insomnia. In his opinion these disabilities would affect his mental balance and stability.

The deputy coroner found that the deceased died from a bullet wound in the forehead, self-inflicted, and that the state of mind at the time was the result of war injuries.

Mr. J. R. Hanlon (Messrs Hanlon and Dick) assisted the deputy coroner in the interests of the relatives of deceased.