



Thomas John Kane

Thomas Kane was born on April 18, 1895 in Ravenna Township, Minnesota to Thomas H Kane (1860-1934) and Anna Sherry Kane (1861-1952). Thomas was one of nine children and the family lived right next door to Anna's parents. He was already working as a barber for Frank Riches on June 5, 1917 when he and his older brother John registered for the draft. Both would serve.

On September 21, 1917 Thomas became part of the 135th Infantry, 34th Division, Company E (part of the original First Minnesota). He left with several other boys from Hastings. They first trained at Camp Dodge, Iowa and then they were sent to Camp Cody, New Mexico and waited a long time to hear the news that they were finally headed for the front. They shipped out on the SS Ortega on October 12, 1918 from New York. Unfortunately this division was

selected to become a replacement division which resulted in the division being broken up and all personal was assigned to different units in France. Thomas was reassigned to the 49th Infantry, 83rd Division, Company M. The war was almost over but Thomas was wounded and badly gassed at some point before he left France on January 12, 1919 on the USS George Washington. They left from Brest, France and arrived in Hoboken, New Jersey in route to Camp Merritt where he was discharged as a Corporal on May 15, 1919. The next part of the story is a bit of a mystery. More research is needed to understand the exact timing of the events. While in France, Thomas married an 18 year old girl named Antoinette (1898-1950) from Bordeaux, France. In the 1920 Census, Thomas is listed twice, in France living in the USN Lafayette Radio Station Military Housing in Croix d'Hins. He is also listed as living back home in Hastings, Minnesota with his family. We know that he did come home in early 1919 because there is a record of this trip. We are not sure when Antoinette comes to America. Her passport application seems to indicate that it was in 1920. By February 8, 1921, he has divorced Antoinette and married Christina Tix (1900-1940). Christina's parents most likely had something to do with this decision as Christina was pregnant and the couple's oldest son, Joseph was born on March 26, 1921. Thomas' oldest brother, William would eventually marry Antoinette in 1940, after the death of his wife. Life was a struggle for Thomas. He opened several barber shops, the first in Rochester, Minnesota but health issues always required him to close. He spent two years at the Veterans Hospital. He tried one more time, opening a barber shop with Lucien Peltier on 2nd Street in Hastings but again was forced to quit. He finally just opened a shop in his home on West 4th Street and worked when he could.

On February 21, 1940, Thomas and Christina had seven children between the ages of 18 and 1 years old.

At 10:30 am that morning, Thomas killed his wife with a 16-gauge shotgun and then walked into his barber shop and shot himself. Thomas had been suicidal and was planning to return to the hospital at Fort Snelling on the Monday following this tragedy. He was never able to recover from his experience in the war. The community was heartbroken as Thomas was considered to be a good husband and father and was known to be kind and generous. Thomas received a full military funeral at Guardian Angels Catholic Church in Hastings. Military rites were conducted at the grave by a firing squad.

Thomas and Christina's oldest son, Joseph was attending Business College in St Paul when his parents died. He moved home and took over the responsibility of raising his siblings.