

# Codford War Graves



*Lest we Forget*

## World War I



**7716 PRIVATE**

**W. R. CATHCART**

**16TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**25TH NOVEMBER, 1917 Age 30**

*GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN*

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte W. R. Cathcart is located in Main Third Row (Right Hand Side) Grave Plot # 56 of Codford War Graves Cemetery (Using Map by Brian Marshall)*

*(CWGC Reference - Grave # 99)*

William Rea Cathcart was born at Ballymena, Ireland. His birth was registered in the March quarter of 1887 at Ballymena. According to the information held by Commonwealth War Graves Commission – William Rea Cathcart was the son of Thomas Cathcart of Windsor Terrace, Ballymena, Co. Antrim, Ireland. William was single, a bookkeeper & aged 30 from Perth, Western Australia when he enlisted on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1917 in Perth, Western Australia, with the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 26<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 7716 & his religion was Roman Catholic\*. His next of kin was listed as his father – Thomas Cathcart, of Windsor –terrace, Ballymena, County Antrim, Ireland. According to the information collected for the Roll of Honour, submitted by his brother, James Cathcart of Ballymena, Ireland, William came to Australia when he was 24 years old. (\*James Cathcart, brother of William stated that the Roman Catholic religion marked on William's Attestation Paper was incorrect & should be Presbyterian.)

Pte William Rea Cathcart embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Medic (A7)* on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1917 & disembarked at Liverpool, England on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. These were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Pte Cathcart was marched in to 4<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion at Codford on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1917.

Pte Cathcart was admitted to No. 4 Group Clearing Hospital at Codford on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 1917 & transferred to the N.Z Hospital on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1917. Pte Cathcart's Medical Case Sheet has the following information:

*22.11.17 -Admitted from Australian Camp Hospital with diabetes. He is very weak can hardly walk- is emaciated- eating very little – constant drinking....*

*His illness began on transport 3 months ago. Pains left chest & lumber region. Abdomen hollow.... skin dry, tongue coated – dry tip...*

*23.11.17 – Patient rapidly becoming worse.*

*24.11.17 – Pains in arms & legs, Very restless. Very sluggish. 10 p.m. Patient suffering from very severe neuritis.*

*Patient rapidly sank & died at 1.50 a.m. 25.11.17*

Private William Rea Cathcart died at 1.50 a.m. on 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1917 at No. 3 New Zealand Military Hospital, Codford, England from diabetes.

A death for William R Cathcart, aged 30, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

From the burial report of Pte William Rea Cathcart – he was buried 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1917 at St. Mary's Codford in Grave No. 99, Australian Section. Coffin was elm with Brass Pedestals & Mr James Cathcart, William's brother, from Windsor Terrace, Ballymena, Ireland was present at the

funeral. Pte Cathcart was buried by a Presbyterian Clergyman, who also visited him before his death. *“Loved by all who knew him.”*

Pte W. R. Cathcart requested in his Will, dated 10<sup>th</sup> July, 1917 that he appoints his father – Thomas Cathcart of Ballymena, Ireland to be the Executor of his Will & for his father to receive his real & personal estate.

Private W. R. Cathcart is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 79.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*



*(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)*

Pte William Rea Cathcart is also remembered on the Ballymena War Memorial for 1914-1918, in the Memorial Park located at Galgorm Road. There are 491 names from World War 1 on the memorial.

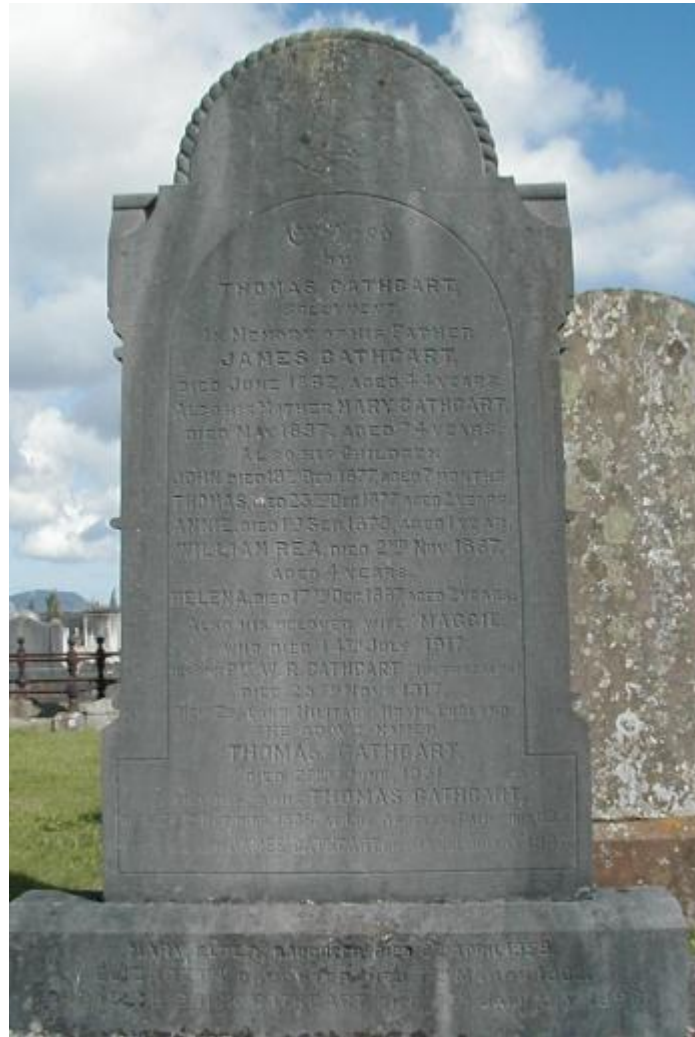


Pte W. R. Cathcart is also remembered on the family headstone at Ballymena New Cemetery. Information regarding William Rea Cathcart states, incorrectly, that he died of wounds. He was also linked with Kinhilt Street, Ballymena.



Pte W. R. Cathcart

(Photos from [freewebs](#))



Pte W. R. Cathcart was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Cathcart's father – Thomas Cathcart, Ballymena, Ireland, 1922.

(48 pages of Pte William Rea Cathcart's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

*Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives*

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### Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone at Codford War Graves Cemetery. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

*(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)*

Pte W. R. Cathcart does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Pte W. R. Cathcart's Headstone at Codford War Graves Cemetery (below)



*(Photo courtesy of Romy Wyeth)*