

Codford War Graves

World War I

25/1771 RIFLEMAN B. E. KEARSE

N.Z. RIFLE BRIGADE

16TH JULY, 1918 Age 40



Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Rifleman B. E. Kears is located in Fourth Row (Left Hand Side) Grave Plot # 74 of Codford War Graves Cemetery (Using Map by Brian Marshall) (CWGC Reference - Grave # 115)

Berty Ernest Kears was born on 30th April, 1878 at Wanganui, New Zealand, the son of Thomas Fowler Kears & Rosanna Kears (nee Walker). Bertie's birth was registered in 1879.

Bertie Ernest Kears married Alice Ada Turley at Wanganui on 22nd March, 1913.

He was a 37 year old, married, Fireman from Wanganui, New Zealand when he enlisted on 22nd November, 1915 with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. His service number was 25/1771 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Ada Kears of 33 Abel Smith Street, Wellington, New Zealand.

Rifleman Bertie Ernest Kears embarked with 2nd Reinforcements, 3rd Battalion, G Company of N.Z. Rifle Brigade from Wellington, New Zealand on 1st April, 1916. Two ships embarked that day carrying a total of 2,222 men on HMNZT (49) *Maunganui* & HMNZT (50) *Tahiti*. He disembarked at Suez on 2nd May, 1916.

He embarked from Alexandria for Marseille, France on *Ivernia* on 20th May, 1916. He was attached on strength at Etaples on 28th May, 1916 & joined his Battalion & posted to B Company in the field on 6th July, 1916.

Bertie was wounded in action on 15th September, 1916 with a wound to right arm. He was admitted to Casualty Clearing Station then transferred to 14th General Hospital at Wimereux, France on 18th September, 1916.

Rifleman Kears embarked for England on Hospital Ship *St. Denis* on 18th September, 1916 & admitted to 2nd London General Hospital on 19th September, 1916. He was transferred to New Zealand Convalescent Hospital at Hornchurch on 3rd November, 1916. On 30th November Rifleman Kears was transferred to New Zealand Command Depot at Codford, Wiltshire.

A death for Alice Ada Kears, aged 40 years was registered in 1916. She died on 3rd October, 1916.

Rifleman Kears was attached to Reserve Group at Sling Army Camp, Wiltshire on 11th January, 1917. Bertie was admitted to No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital at Codford, Wiltshire on 31st May, 1917 with Scabies. He was discharged to Command Depot at Codford on 5th July, 1917. On 30th July, 1917 Rifleman Kears was transferred to Reserve Group at Sling Army Camp.

Rifleman Bertie Ernest Kears was admitted to Military Hospital at Cannock Chase, Staffordshire on 1st March, 1918 with Asthma. He was discharged to Brocton Camp on 15th March, 1918.

He left for France from Brocton on 5th May, 1918. He was marched in at Etaples on 7th May, 1918 & joined his Battalion & B Company in the field on 12th May, 1918.

Rifleman Bertie Ernest Kears was wounded in action for the second time on 26th May, 1918 with a gunshot wound to back & neck. He was admitted to 1st N.Z. Field Ambulance the same day then transferred to 6th General Hospital on 27th May, 1918.

Rifleman Kears embarked for England on Hospital Ship *Aberdonian* on 2nd June, 1918. He was admitted to 1st New Zealand General Hospital at Brockenhurst, Hampshire on 3rd June, 1918.

Rifleman Kears was transferred to No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital at Codford on 1st July, 1918 & reported dangerously ill with Broncho Pneumonia on 16th July, 1918.

Rifleman Bertie Ernest Kears died on 16th July, 1918 at No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital at Codford, Wiltshire of Broncho Pneumonia.

A death for Bertie E. Kears, aged 40, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire, England.

He was buried at St. Mary's New Cemetery, Codford on 19th July, 1918.

He was entitled to British War Medal & Victory Medal as he had entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Rifleman Kears's father – Mr T. F. Kears (November, 1921 & February, 1922).

The CWGC lists Rifleman Bertie Ernest Kears, 25/1771, as the son of Thomas F. Kears of 15 Owen St., Wellington; husband of the late Ada Kears. Born at Wanganui.

(27 pages of Rifleman Bertie Ernest Kears's Service records are available for On Line viewing at Archives New Zealand website).

Information obtained from the Archives New Zealand, Auckland War Memorial Museum, Commonwealth War Graves Commission & PapersPast, National Library of New Zealand.

Rifleman Bertie Ernest Kears's brother – Private Thomas Walker Kears, 6/2382 died of Pneumonia on 25th October, 1917.

Both brothers are buried in Codford St. Mary's New Cemetery at Codford, Wiltshire.

Newspaper Reports

DEATH

KEARSE – On October 3rd, at the residence of her sister, Mrs Emmerson, Boundary Street, Greymouth, Ada, beloved wife of B. E. Kears, and second daughter of the late Wm. Turley, aged 40 years. – Private interment. (*Grey River Argus*, 4 October, 1916)

PERSONAL PARS

The late Mrs Kears will be buried privately this morning. The husband of the deceased is with the Expeditionary Forces in France, and the latest news from him brought the sad intelligence that he was in hospital suffering from wounds. The deceased leaves behind to mourn their loss, one sister (Mrs Emmerson), one brother (Mr W. Turley, of Nelson) and three nieces.

(*Grey River Argus*, 5 October, 1916)

SICK AND WOUNDED

WELLINGTON DISTRICT

Dangerously Ill

Kears, B. E., 25/1771, Wellington

(*Evening Post*, Volume XCVI, Issue 18, 20 July, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

WELLINGTON DISTRICT

DIED OF SICKNESS

Kears, B. E., 25/1771, R.B. (T. F. Kears, 25, Owen-street, Wellington, f) 16th July

(*Evening Post*, Volume XCVI, Issue 19, 22 July, 1918)

NEW ZEALAND'S ROLL OF HONOUR

KEARSE – On the 16th July, 1918, died of Broncho-pneumonia at Codford, No.25/177 Rifleman B. E. Kears (Bert), eldest son of T. F. Kears, of Wellington; aged 39 years.

(*Evening Post*, Volume XCVI, Issue 20, 23 July, 1918)

Mr T. F. Kears, of 25 Owen Street, Wellington (late of Westport), has been advised of the death of his eldest son, Rifleman Bert Kears, in No. 1 General Hospital, Codford. Deceased left with the 11th Reinforcements in April, 1916, and had been reported wounded on three different occasions – the last being June 3rd, 1918. Since that date pneumonia supervened – culminating in his death on July 16th. This is the second son Mr Kears has lost during the war, Private Tom Kears, of the 4th Reinforcements, losing his life on October 25th, 1917. West Coasters will probably remember the death of Mr Kears's other son, Dick, who died from injuries received while playing football in Westport.

(*Press*, Volume LIV, Issue 16274, 26 July, 1918)

Rifleman Bertie Ernest Kears has a Commonwealth War Graves Headstone. None of the New Zealand CWGC headstones at Codford have a personal inscription.

Photo of Rifleman B. E. Kearsé's Headstone at Codford War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.

(Photo courtesy of Romy Wyeth)

