

# Codford War Graves



*Lest we Forget*

## World War I

6/2382 PRIVATE

**T. W. KEARSE**

N.Z. CANTERBURY REGT.

25TH OCTOBER, 1917 Age 23



*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Private T. W. Kearse is located in Third Row (Left Hand Side) Grave Plot # 58 of Codford War Graves Cemetery (Using Map by Brian Marshall)*

*(CWGC Reference - Grave # 101 )*

Thomas Walker Kears was born on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1893 at Westport, New Zealand, the son of Thomas Fowler Kears & Rosanna Kears (nee Walker). Thomas's birth was registered in 1893.

Thomas Walker Kears was a 22 year old, (Attestation Papers show date of birth as Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, 1891) single, Labourer from Kaikohe, New Zealand when he enlisted on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1915 with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. His service number was 6/2382 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr T. W. Kears c/- Mrs J. Darly, 25 Owen St, Newtown, Wellington, New Zealand.

Private Thomas Walker Kears embarked with 4th Reinforcements, Canterbury Infantry Battalion from Wellington, New Zealand on 17th April, 1915. Three troop ships left Wellington that day carrying a total of 2,254 men - on HMNZT (21) *Willochra*, HMNZT (22) *Knight Templar* and HMNZT (23) *Waitomo*.

Private Thomas Walker Kears joined his Battalion in the Dardanelles on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 1915. He was admitted to St. David's Hospital in Malta on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1915 with Enteritis. He embarked for England on Hospital Ship on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1915 & admitted to 2<sup>nd</sup> War Hospital at Birmingham on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1915 with Debility.

On 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1916 Private Kears was attached to New Zealand Base Depot at Hornchurch, Essex. On 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1916 Pte Kears was admitted to Depot Hospital & discharged to duty on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1916.

Private Thomas Walker Kears rejoined his Unit at Ismailia, Egypt on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1916 & embarked for France on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1916.

Pte Kears forfeited 28 days pay on 19<sup>th</sup> August, 1916 for absencing himself without leave from 9 p.m. on 19<sup>th</sup> until 7 p.m. on 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1916.

Private Thomas Walker Kears was wounded in action in France on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1916 with a gun shot wound to his hand & wrist (slight). He was admitted to No. 5 General Hospital at Rouen on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1916 & embarked for England on Hospital Ship on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 1916. Pte Kears was admitted to 3<sup>rd</sup> S. General Hospital at Oxford on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1916.

Pte Kears was attached to Command Depot at Codford, Wiltshire on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1916 & on 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1916 was admitted to Venereal section of Hospital. He was discharged on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1916 but again admitted to Hospital – No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital (Venereal Section) on 5<sup>th</sup> December, 1916. He was discharged on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 1916.

Private Thomas Walker Kears proceeded to Res. Group at Sling Camp on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 1917. He was appointed Cook on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1917 with 1<sup>st</sup> Canterbury Coy.

Private Thomas Walker Kears married Catherine Louise Goodwin (Kitty) on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 1917 at Southwark Registry Office, London.

Pte Kears was admitted to No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital, Codford, Wiltshire on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1917 & transferred to New Zealand Convalescent Hospital at Hornchurch on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1917.

Pte Kearsé forfeited 2 days pay while at Codford on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1917 for being absent without leave from 6 p.m. on 27<sup>th</sup> July until 8 p.m. on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1917.

Pte Kearsé was marched in to Sling Army Camp on 4<sup>th</sup> September, 1917 & appointed Cook on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1917 with 4<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battalion, Canterbury Regiment.

Pte Kearsé was admitted to Hospital at Codford (No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital) on 19<sup>th</sup> October, 1917 with Pleurisy & so relinquished his appointment as Cook.

Pte Kearsé was reported as seriously ill with Pneumonia on 21<sup>st</sup> October & then dangerously ill on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1917.

Private Thomas Walker Kearsé died on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1917 at No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital at Codford, Wiltshire of Pneumonia.

A death for Thomas Kearsé, aged 23, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire, England.

Private Thomas Walker Kearsé was buried at St. Mary's New Cemetery, Codford on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1917.

Private Thomas Walker Kearsé was entitled to 1914-15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal as he had entered a Theatre of War – Egypt, Balkans & Western European. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Mrs Asselin – Pte Kearsé's widow now remarried & living at 25 Homer St, Newtown, Sydney, NSW, Australia (July, 1921 & March, 1922).

The CWGC lists Private Thomas Walker Kearsé, 6/2382 of Canterbury Regiment, N.Z.E.F. as the husband of Mrs C. L. Asselin (formerly Kearsé) of 25 Holmwood St, Newtown, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

(25 pages of Pte Thomas Walker Kearsé'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.*

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**Private T. W. Kears**

## Newspaper Reports

### **HOSPITAL REPORT**

**Wellington, Oct 26**

Reported seriously ill: T. Kears

*(Marlborough Express, Volume LI, Issue 255, 27 October, 1917)*

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**KEARSE** – ON the 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1917, in Codford Hospital, died of pneumonia. Private Tom Kears, 4<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements, beloved son of T. F. Kears, 25 Owen-street.

*(Evening Post, Volume XCIV, Issue 103, 29 October, 1917)*

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### **DIED OF SICKNESS**

**Canterbury Infantry Regiment**

Kears, T. W. (T. W. Kears, c/o 25 Owen Street, Newtown, f. October 25)

*(Dominion, Volume 11, Issue 31, 31 October, 1917)*

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Private T. W. Kearse has a Commonwealth War Graves Headstone. None of the New Zealand CWGC headstones at Codford have a personal inscription.

Photo of Private T. W. Kearse's Headstone at Codford War Graves Cemetery



*(Photo courtesy of Romy Wyeth)*