

A photograph of a street in Cullinstown, Dublin, covered in red poppies in front of stone buildings. The poppies are in the foreground, and the buildings are in the background. The sky is blue with some clouds.

My Soldier's Story

Leo Gerald
Cullen

17th September
1894 - 15th
September 1916

To Leo Cullen and his
comrades.
May they rest in peace.



Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Rank, Name and Serial Number.... | P1 |
| Family Background/Early Life..... | P2 |
| Education..... | P6 |
| Work after leaving College..... | P7 |
| Enlistment in the Army..... | P8 |
| Date and Place of Death..... | P9 |
| War Records..... | P10 |
| Circumstances of Death..... | P11 |
| Relevant Information..... | P12 |
| Bibliography..... | P13 |
| My Mission..... | P14 |



**Private Leo Gerald Cullen
Serial Number 2/2018**

**17th September 1894-15th
September 1916**

**A Gunner of the 1st
Brigade, 3rd Battery.**

Family Background/Early life

Leo Cullen was born in Napier on 17th September 1894. He had at least 4 brothers and three sisters. His brother was Patrick Alphonsus Cullen who survived the war but died later on in his life after being a chronic alcoholic and having severe appendicitis. What is interesting about Leo, is while there is very little about him, there is a lot about his Father, who was a very famous New Zealander, although born in Ireland.

His Father was the Inspector of Police, Mr John Cullen.

John Cullen

John Cullen was born in Glenfarne, Ireland and baptised there on 28 March 1850. He was the son of Mary McNulty and her husband, Patrick Cullen, a farmer. Mr Cullen joined the Royal Irish Constabulary in 1869. He married Rachel McGinley, (who was Leo's Mother) on 6 May 1874.

He resigned his position in March 1876 in order to go to New Zealand. On the way out on the Camperdown he was appointed a constable to police the passengers.

On 20 July 1876 Cullen joined the New Zealand Armed Constabulary. He was the first person to graduate from the Armed Constabulary depot into the police branch of the New Zealand Constabulary Force.

In January 1877 he was posted to Blenheim, where he won praise from his superiors and was promoted to sergeant on the 1st July 1878. Mr Cullen moved steadily through the three NCO classes, serving in Dunedin, Timaru, Christchurch, Napier (where he was in charge of a sub-district from 1891) and Wanganui. In 1897 he was sent on a special undercover mission to stop people illegally selling alcohol. He travelled disguised as Mr Berkeley, life insurance agent, securing the convictions of 26 prominent violators of the licensing laws and he earned much praise from authorities.

On 20 September 1897 Cullen was promoted to the position of inspector and by 1898 was sent to cover Auckland, Waikato and the Bay of Islands.

He was appointed commissioner of the New Zealand Police Force on 17 April 1912, despite 'determined, if not actual diabolical' opposition to him. He was the first commissioner to rise from within the ranks of the force.

Cullen retired in May 1916 (at the age of 66 years old). On his retirement he was appointed to the Imperial Service Order, (ISO) and on the 21 August 1917 he was the first New Zealander to be awarded the King's Police Medal, presented by the Governor General, at that time (The Earl of Liverpool).

Rachel Cullen (Leo's Mother) died on 20 June 1917, and on 11 June 1928 he married Ellen Margaret Hendrey in Auckland. He lived between Wellington and Auckland. This is seen also in Leo Cullen's military file.

John Cullen died in Auckland on 26 October 1939 and his funeral along with many of his son's and daughters was at St Michaels in Remuera, he was survived by his second wife and four children (who we don't know) of his first marriage.



Portrait of John Cullen



King's Police Medal

Education

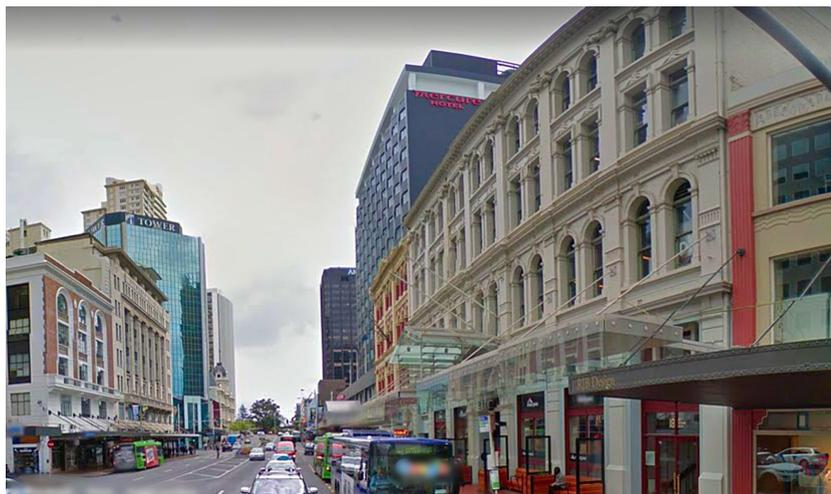
It is unclear what school Leo went to before his time at Sacred Heart, but he either went to a school in Wanganui or Wellington because of his father's movement throughout the North Island. It isn't Wellington because his after contacting St Patrick's in Wellington, there were know known Leo Cullen's from his time. Leo attended SHC in 1905-1907. He was very smart and won awards at prizegivings at the end of the year for Latin.



Sacred Heart College
Richmond Road

Work after leaving College

After leaving college, Leo started to work for a John Burns and Co, as an ironmonger, which he probably worked in the forges, forging iron and steel

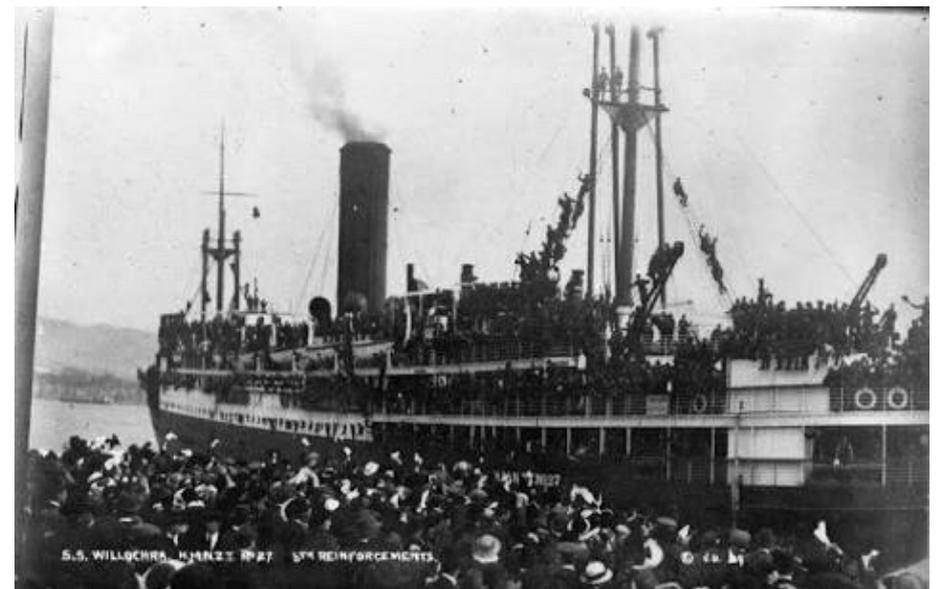


The comparison to then and now.

Enlistment in the Army

Leo enlisted on the 14th April 1915. He had previously had military training as a schoolboy and was already semi-trained as a gunner as he was in the No.6 Company of Artillery. He was sent to Trentham Camp in Upper Hutt three days later, and that was the first day he was in service. In his medical examination, it tells me that he had a dark complexion, and that he was 5ft 11 1/2 in. He weighed 140lb (63kg), and he had to be sent to the dentist for a follow up after his examination, to get free artificial teeth in his upper jaw. He was approved by a W.G Parker.

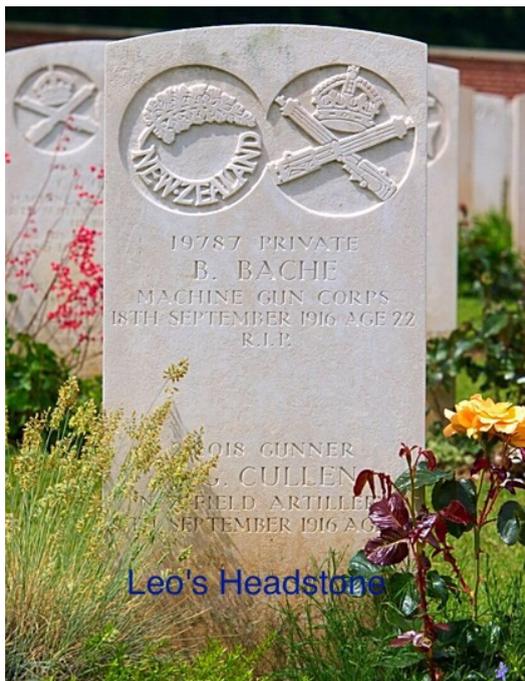
He was seen fit for service on 14th August 1915 and was posted to Egypt on the HMNZT 27 and the vessel was named Willochra. This was the start of his adventures. He landed in Egypt and fought there for a while, and then he was posted to France on 6th April 1916.



The Willochra leaving Wellington Page 8

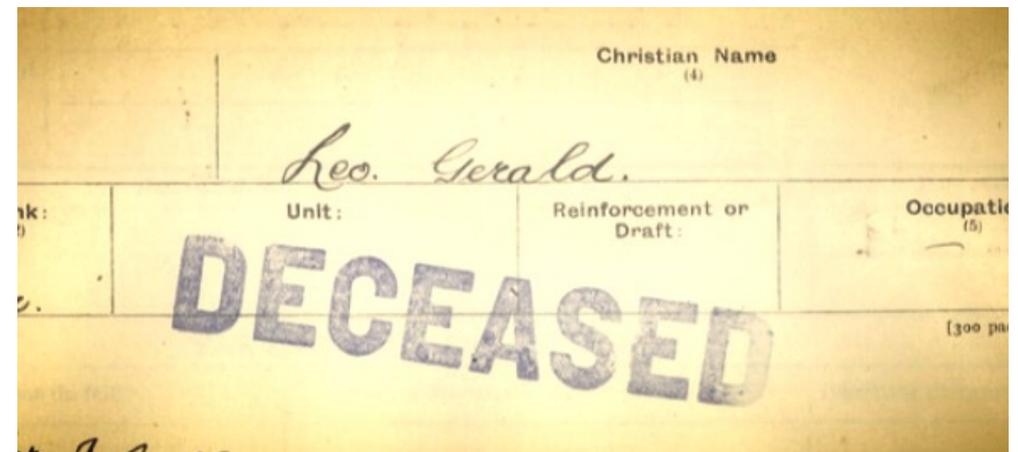
Date and Place of Death

Leo was severely wounded in the chest, on the 13th of September 1916. He was taken to the 38th Casualty Station in the field but he never left. He died two days later on the 15th September 1916. He is buried at the Heilly Station Cemetery, Mericourt-l'Abbe, Somme, France. His grave reference is IV. D. 15. And he is buried exactly 2 1/2 miles north north east from where he fought and passed.



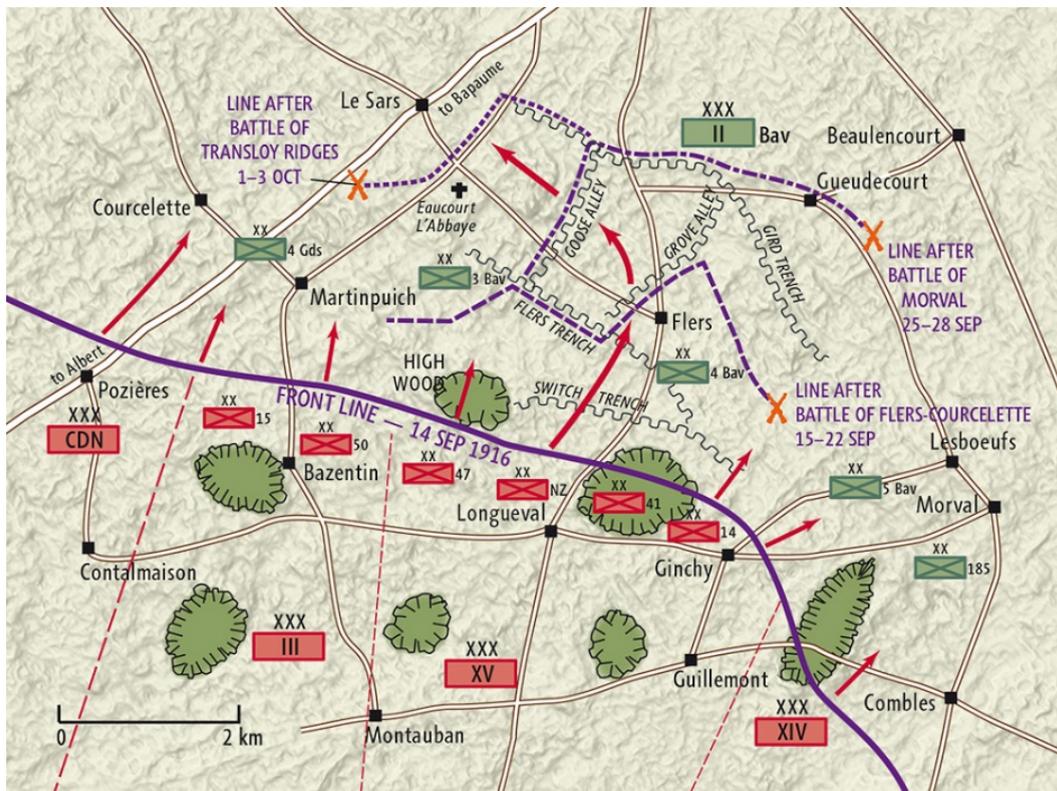
War Records

http://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/record/C3521?n=2%2F2018&ordinal=0&from=%2Fwar-memorial%2Fonline-cenotaph%2Fsearch%2F



Circumstances of Death

In the book *New Zealand Artillery in the Field 1914-1918* by Lieut. J. R. Byrne, it states that the 1st Battery had new positions on the ridge, between Bazetin-Le-Grand and Longueval. These positions were occupied on the afternoon of the 13th, (the day Leo was injured). This must of been where Leo was and he was probably using a machine gun at a post. The wounds he sustained, were chest wounds and to be honest, I think that it was hard to stay alive for two days in the field with chest wounds.



Relevant Information

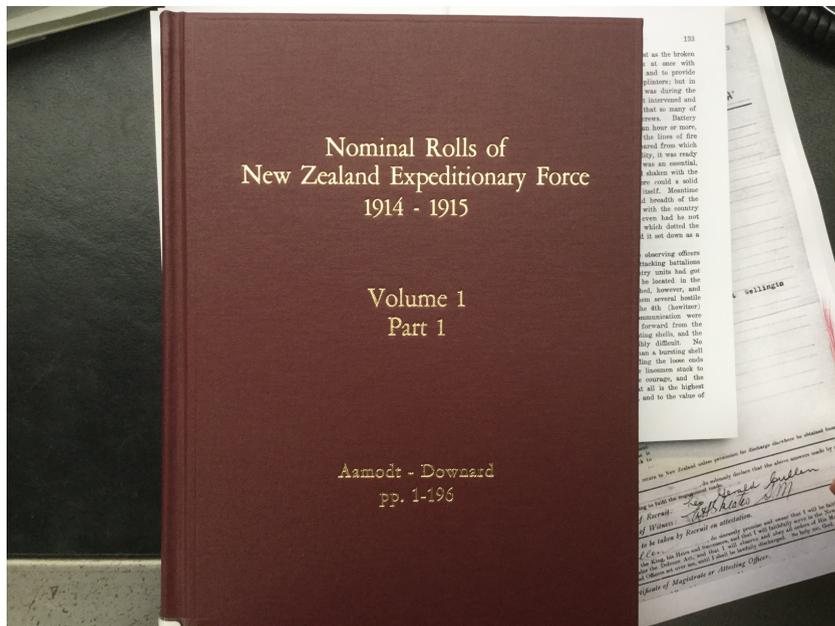
- Leo Cullen was born in New Zealand on 17th September 1894 in Napier
- Attended SHC from 1905-1907
- Enlisted in the army on 14th April 1915
- Goes to Trentham
- Posted to Egypt later that year travelling on the Willochra
- Sent to France on 6th June 1916
- Injured on the 13th September 1916
- Dies on 15th September 1916
- Buried at Heilly Station Cemetery 2 1/2 Miles NE from death.

He was part of the Sixth Reinforcements, and while they were abroad on the ocean, each week they would print out and make a magazine featuring news comics joke and upcoming competitions.



Bibliography

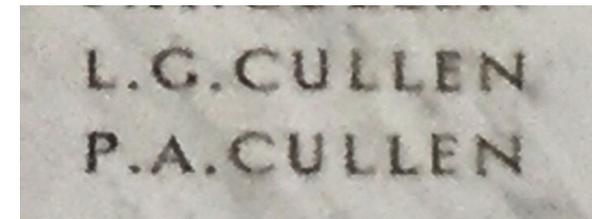
Papers Past
Digital NZ
Auckland Museum Library
Auckland Museum Cenotaph
Mrs Graham
SHC Roll of Honour
The Magazine of the Sixth Reinforcements
New Zealand Artillery in the Field 1914-1918 by
Lieut. J R Byrne
New Zealand Nominal Roll



My Mission.

<http://medalsreunitednz.co.nz/lost-trails/>

On the website Medals Reunited it claims that Leo Cullen has unclaimed medals, but in his war records, it states that his medals were claimed. Possibly his medals ended up somewhere else after the death of his father. My mission is to find out if Leo Cullen has any known and alive relatives, and if not try to present the medals to the school. We have tried contacting St Michael's Parish in Remuera to see if there are any parishioners with the surname Cullen. Also we contacted the people at Medals Reunited and Auckland Museum and they haven't started researching Leo yet and have asked for me to email them a copy of my book, to have more info and clarity about him



Leo and his brother's name in the WW1 Hall of Memories at Auckland War Memorial Museum

In Memory of

Gunner

Leo Gerald Cullen

2/2018, No. 3 Bty, New Zealand Field Artillery who died on 15 September 1916 Age 22

Son of John and Rachel Cullen, of 250, Remuera Rd., Auckland, New Zealand. Also served in Egypt.
Native of Napier, New Zealand.

Remembered with Honour

Heilly Station Cemetery, Mericourt-L'abbe



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Leo Gerald Cullen R.I.P



LEST WE FORGET

THEY SHALL GROW NOT OLD, AS WE THAT ARE LEFT GROW OLD:
AGE SHALL NOT WEARY THEM, NOR THE YEARS CONDEMN.
AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING,



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

A large field of vibrant red poppies stretches across the foreground and middle ground. In the background, a long, multi-story stone building with numerous windows and a crenellated roofline is visible under a clear blue sky. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

*This is the story of
the courageous
Private Leo Cullen, A
Sacred Heart Old
Boy, whose body
once lay, on the
battlefield of the
Somme.....*