

**Cathays Cemetery,  
Cardiff, Wales  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**3354 PRIVATE**

**E. A. McCLEERY**

**37TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**26TH SEPTEMBER, 1918 Age 19**

*Beloved Son Of*

*William And Lizzie McCleery*

*Camberwell, Victoria*

## Eric Alexander McCLEERY

Eric Alexander McCleery was born at Camberwell, Victoria on 24th March, 1899 to parents William & Lizzie Jane McCleery (nee Bennett). His birth was registered in the district of Hawthorn, Victoria.

Eric Alexander McCleery attended Camberwell State School, Victoria.

Eric Alexander McCleery was an 18 year old, single Clerk from Canterbury, Victoria when he enlisted on 17th September, 1917 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3354 & his religion was Congregational. His next of kin was listed as his father - Mr W. McCleery, of 138 Canterbury Road, Canterbury, Victoria. Eric McCleery stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served 4 years with Senior Cadets at Camberwell & 3 months with Citizen Forces at Kooyong. As Eric McCleery was under the age of 21 years, his parents needed to sign their consent for their son to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force for active service abroad. Mr & Mrs McCleery signed their consent stating that their son would be 18 ½ on the 24th September & was then eligible to be sent to Camp. An "Extract" of Birth was provided for proof of age.

Private Eric Alexander McCleery was posted to Recruit Depot at Broadmeadows on 17th October, 1917 for recruit training. He was admitted to Hospital at Broadmeadows on 18th October, 1917 with "Positive Throat" then transferred the same day to Isolation Camp, Ascot Vale until 20th October, 1917. Private McCleery was transferred to "B" Company, Recruits at Broadmeadows on 22nd October, 1917 then transferred on 12th November, 1917 to 1st (Depot) Battalion at Broadmeadows. Private McCleery was transferred again on 16th November, 1917 to 3rd District Guard. He was transferred to 2nd (Depot) Battalion at Broadmeadows on 27th November, 1917.

Private Eric Alexander McCleery embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ulysses (A38)* on 22nd December, 1917 with the 37th Infantry Battalion, 8th Reinforcements & disembarked at Suez on 16th January, 1918.

Private Eric Alexander McCleery was posted to A.I.F. Camp at the Suez from 16th January, 1918.

Private Eric Alexander McCleery embarked on H.M.T. *Leasowe Castle* from Port Said on 24th January, 1918 & disembarked at Taranto on 2nd February, 1918 & a final disembarkation at Southampton, England on 14th February, 1918.

Private Eric Alexander McCleery was marched in to 10th Training Battalion at Sutton Mandeville, Wiltshire, England on 14th February, 1918.

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

Private Eric Alexander McCleery was appointed Acting Corporal on 26th February, 1918 while posted with 10th Training Battalion at Sutton Mandeville, Wiltshire.

Acting Corporal Eric Alexander McCleery was On Command at Officers' Training School at Candahar Barracks, Wiltshire from 25th March, 1918.

Acting Corporal Eric Alexander McCleery reverted to the ranks on 30th March, 1918 on marching out to 9th Training Battalion.

Private Eric Alexander McCleery was marched in to 9th Training Battalion at Fovant, Wiltshire on 7th May, 1918 from School of Instruction, Candahar Barracks.

Private Eric Alexander McCleery proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 3rd June, 1918 from 9th Training Battalion at Fovant. He was marched in to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Rouelles, France on 6th June 1918. Private McCleery was marched out to the Front from A.I.B.D. on 8th June, 1918 & was taken on strength of 37th Battalion in the Field on 9th June, 1918.

Private Eric Alexander McCleery was wounded in action on 1st September, 1918. He was admitted to 9th Field Ambulance on 1st September, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to right thigh. Private McCleery was transferred to 53rd Casualty Clearing Station on 1st September, 1918 then transferred & admitted the same day to 6th General Hospital at Rouen, France. Private McCleery was invalided from Rouen for England on 5th September, 1918.

## 37th Battalion

The 37th fought in its first major battle at Messines, in Belgium, between 7-9 June 1917. For his actions during this battle, Captain Robert Grieve was awarded the Victoria Cross. The battalion fought in another two major attacks in this sector - the battle of Broodseinde on 4 October, and the battle of Passchendaele on 12 October. Belgium remained the focus of the 37th Battalion's activities for the next five months, until it was rushed south to France in late March 1918 to meet the German Army's Spring Offensive.

The Allies launched their own offensive on 8 August 1918, but the 37th Battalion was in reserve on this day and was not ordered into action. It was involved, however, in an ill-conceived attack that failed to capture the village of Proyart on 10 August. The battalion nevertheless continued to play an active role throughout August and early September in the 3rd Division's advance along the Somme Valley.

Despite its success, this advance sapped the strength of the AIF. In September 1918 several battalions were ordered to disband to provide reinforcements for others. The 37th was one such battalion. Its CO, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Story, was dismissed for questioning the order in letters written to all of his superior commanders, including the Prime Minister. The men of the battalion subsequently mutinied. On 23 September the order to disband was temporarily suspended, and the battalion fought its last battle 'St Quentin Canal' six days later. On 12 October 1918 the 37th Battalion, then with a fighting strength of 90, disbanded.

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

### War Diary – 37th Battalion

*1st September, 1918*

*Battalion Headquarters at H.6.b.70.50 East of CLERY*

*On the Battalions – 38th, 39th and 40th – being relieved in the forward positions in advance of CLERY, the 37th Battalion moved from its support position to CURLU – G.6.b. – arriving about dawn. The men had a hot meal which was awaiting them and immediately retired to the billets which had been prepared.*

*The men were very tired after the previous days continuous fighting.*

*Baths were allotted to the Battalion; half the battalion bathed and had a clean change of underclothing issued. Occasional the enemy shelled the area at almost extreme range –with his 4-2-inch high velocity gun. The men began to settle down and make themselves as comfortable as possible. Arrangements were made by Battalion headquarters to get the Battalion Canteen forward. Blankets were issued. Enemy aircraft were active during the night. The weather continued to remain fine.*

*(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private Eric Alexander McCleery was admitted to 3rd Western General Hospital at Cardiff, Wales on 6th September, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to right thigh. The Hospital Admission form records "Wound 1/9/18. Large flesh wound....16/9/18 had secondary haemorrhage sup Femoral artery & vein .....18/9/18 Gangrene R foot & leg up to knee. Amputation same day mid thigh. Septicaemia developed \_\_\_ abscess L. foot. Septic diarrhoea.... 25th Sept. intravenous & subintaneous saline ..... gradual exhaustion."

Private Eric Alexander McCleery died at 3.30 am on 26th September, 1918 at 3rd Western General Hospital (Ninian Park Section) at Cardiff, Wales from wounds received in action – gunshot wound to right thigh, amputated & Septicaemia. In a telegram to Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. from Cardiff regarding the death of Private Eric Alexander McCleery, it was stated that Pte C. H. McCleery, 15895, Australian Army Service Corps, uncle to Private Eric Alexander McCleery, was present at his death.

A death for Eric A. McCleery, aged 19, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Cardiff, Glamorganshire, Wales.

Private Eric Alexander McCleery was buried on 30th September, 1918 in Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff, Wales – Plot number E.B. 50 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. The funeral was to leave the Hospital at 11 am. From the burial report of Pte Eric Alexander McCleery - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Full Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin, draped with the "Union Jack", and surmounted by beautiful flowers, sent from the Hospital Staff, was conveyed to the graveside on a Gun-carriage. The Rev: Makeham, A.I.F. officiated at the graveside, and the "Last Post" was sounded. The grave will be turfed, and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Names of relatives and friends present at the funeral – Uncle – 15895 Pte C. H. McCleery, A.A.S.C.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Eric Alexander McCleery contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives to obtain the fullest details possible into his wounds, death and burial. A reply was received from O.C. 3rd Western General Hospital, Headquarters, Cardiff which reads: *"Reference No. 3354, Pte Eric Alexander McCleery, 37th A.I.F., was admitted to Niniam Park Section of this Hospital on the 6th September, 1918, with gunshot wound right thigh, amputated, and died 3.30 A.M. on the 26th September 1918. Was buried at Cardiff Cemetery. Representative of Australian Government from London attended the funeral."*

Private Eric Alexander McCleery requested in his Will dated 10th December, 1917 that in the vent of his death the whole of his property & effects to be given to his mother – Lizzie Jane McCleery.

Private Eric Alexander McCleery was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte McCleery's father –Mr W. McCleery, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Memorial Plaque (also referred to the Death penny) on account of the service of the late Private Eric Alexander McCleery is held by Camberwell RSL Sub-Branch, Victoria.



**Memorial Plaque for Private Eric Alexander McCleery**

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Eric Alex McCleery – service number 3354, aged 19, of 37th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of William and Lizzie McCleery, of "Eric-A" 33 Currajong Ave, Sth Camberwell, Victoria, Australia.

Private E. A. McCleery is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 128.



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

E. A. McCleery is remembered on the Camberwell Cenotaph, located at RSL Club, 403 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria.





**Camberwell Cenotaph** (Photo from Monument Australia – Graeme Saunders)

Eric Alexander McCleery is remembered on the Stained Glass Window at Canterbury Congregational Church, Balwyn & Mont Albert Roads, Canterbury, Victoria and was also remembered on the church Honour Roll.



**Portion of Stained Glass Window at Canterbury Congregational Church**



Stained Glass Window at Canterbury Congregational Church

E. A. McCleery is remembered in the Book of Remembrance at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Victoria.

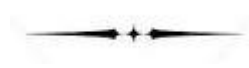


|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| McCausland, C.               | McCleary, W. J. A.                                 |
| McCausland, C. P. F.         | McCleary, H. S.                                    |
| McCausland, L. H.            | McCleary, J. L.                                    |
| McCausland, M. E.            | McCleary, N.                                       |
| McCavana, E.                 | McCleary, T. S.                                    |
| McCavana, H.                 | McCleave, W. A., "M.M."                            |
| McCaw, M. A.                 | McCleary, A. A., "M.M." & Bar                      |
| McCay, H. F.                 | McCleary, A. C.                                    |
| McCay, H. W.                 | McCleary, C. H.                                    |
| McCay, Sir J. W., "C. B."    | McCleary, E. A. <span style="color: red;">→</span> |
| "K.C.M.C.," "K.B.E.," "V.D." | McCleary, R. L.                                    |
| McCay, N. J.                 | McClelland, K. C., "D.C.M."                        |
| McCay, R. C.                 | McClellan, H. S.                                   |
| McCheyne, M., "M.M."         | McClelland, A. A.                                  |
| McClaren, G. H.              | McClelland, E. W.                                  |
| McCleary, F.                 | McClelland, F. C.                                  |



(49 pages of Pte Eric Alexander McCleery's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

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



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **DIED ON SERVICE**

McCLEERY – Officially reported died of wound, at the 3rd Western General Hospital, Cardiff, Wales, on the 26th September, 3354, Private Eric Alexander, 37th Battalion, beloved second son of William and Lizzie McCleery, loved brother of Harry, William, late Wallace, and Keith (of "Dudley," Canterbury-road, Canterbury, aged 19 years 5 months. John, 3,16.

McCLEERY – A tribute to the memory of my dear friend, Private Eric McCleery, who died of wounds received in France, at the 3rd Western General Hospital, Cardiff, Wales, 26th September, 1918. (Inserted by Roy Sayers).

*(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 5 October, 1918)*



## THE 438th CASUALTY LIST

### VICTORIAN NAMES

#### DIED OF WOUNDS

Private E. A. McCleery, Canterbury

*(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – 2 November, 1918)*

---

### IN MEMORIAM

#### On Active Service

McCLEERY – In loving remembrance of our darling hero, son and brother, Private Eric Alexander McCleery (3354), died of wounds 3rd General Hospital, Cardiff, Wales, England, 26th September, 1918, aged 19 ½ years.

-Inserted by his loving father, mother and brothers.

*(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 26 September, 1919)*

---

### IN MEMORIAM

#### On Active Service

McCLEERY – In loving remembrance of our darling hero, son and brother, Private Eric Alexander McCleery (3354), died of wounds 3rd General Hospital, Cardiff, Wales, England, 26th September, 1918, aged 19 ½ years. (Inserted by his loving father, mother and brothers.)

McCLEERY – In loving memory of Private Eric A. McCleery, who died of wounds at Cardiff Military Hospital, September 26, 1918. (Inserted by his loving aunties and uncles, St. Kilda).

McCLEERY – In fond memory of a good pal, Pte Eric McCleery, 37th Battn., who died of wounds on 26th September, 1918. (Inserted by his platoon sergeant, "Robby.")

*(The Argus Melbourne, Victoria – 26 September, 1919)*

---

### IN MEMORIAM

#### On Active Service

McCLEERY – In loving memory of our darling son and brother, Eric A. McCleery, (37th Batt.), who died of wounds at Cardiff, Wales, 26th September, 1918. (Inserted by his loving father, mother and brothers.)

*(The Argus Melbourne, Victoria – 25 September, 1920)*

---

### IN MEMORIAM

#### On Active Service

McCLEERY – In loving remembrance of our darling son and hero brother, Private Eric A. McCleery, 3354, 37th Battalion, died of wounds at Cardiff, Wales, 26th September, 1918, aged 19 ½ years. (Inserted by mother, father, and brothers, "Eric-A", Currajong avenue, Camberwell.)

*(The Argus Melbourne, Victoria – 26 September, 1921)*

---

## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

McCLEERY – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Eric Alexander, who died of wounds at Cardiff, England, 26th September, 1918.

-Inserted by his loving father, mother, and brothers, 33 Currajong avenue, Camberwell.)

(*The Age* Melbourne, Victoria – 26 September, 1923)

---

### 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. 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*)

A letter from Base Records, dated 27th June, 1921, to Mr W. McCleery, of 138 Canterbury Road, Canterbury, Victoria advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of his son, the late Pte E. A. McCleery, had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

Private E. A. McCleery does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Beloved Son Of William And Lizzie McCleery*

*Camberwell, Victoria*

### **Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff, Wales**

During the 1939-1945 War, the city of Cardiff was one of the Royal Naval bases of the Western Approaches Command. It was severely damaged by enemy air attack during the early part of the 1939-1945 War and has been largely rebuilt. The cemetery, known locally as Cathays Cemetery was opened in 1859 and has been extended to cover over 100 acres. The cemetery contains war graves of both world wars. Just over a third of the 1914-1918 burials are contained in a War Graves Plot in the portion of Section EB, this plot is on two converging roadways leading to the main entrance. The remainder of the graves are scattered in other parts of the cemetery. After the 1914-1918 War, a Cross of Sacrifice was erected in front of the plot in the angle formed by the junction of the two roadways, the whole forming a triangular island site. The 1939-1945 War burials are scattered throughout the cemetery in more than 30 different sections. A number of them are airmen who came from the Royal Air Force stations at Cardiff and St. Athan. There are now nearly 500, 1914-1918 and over 200, 1939-1945 war casualties commemorated in this site. Some 40 French and Norwegian Foreign Nationals are also commemorated here.

(*Information & Photos from CWGC*)





Entrance to Cathays Cemetery (Photo by Peter – Find a Grave)

**VGC**  
War Graves Commission

## Cardiff (Cathays) Cemetery

**CWGC**  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

**The British Home Front during the First and Second World Wars**

During the two world wars Britain became an island fortress and a base for equipping and training troops and launching land, sea and air operations. In both conflicts, the skies above the island and the seas that surrounded her became the scene of fierce fighting involving aircraft, submarines and warships. Britain was also the main centre for the medical care of men and women serving in the armed forces. Thousands of hospitals located across the country were used to treat service personnel who were wounded, fell victim to disease, or were injured in accidents at home or overseas.

Many of the servicemen buried in the United Kingdom were killed in action in the air while defending the home front. Others, mostly naval men, drowned in British coastal waters. However, the majority were wounded or contracted disease on active service, were transported back to Britain, and subsequently died while undergoing hospital treatment or recovering in private homes.

Today over 170,000 men and women who died in the United Kingdom, while serving in the armed forces during the first and second world wars, are buried in cemeteries and churchyards throughout the country. Some burials form small war graves plots within larger cemeteries, but the majority are scattered throughout cemetery grounds. In all, there are Commonwealth

Cardiff, c.1918 (Image courtesy of John Farnhill)

war graves in almost 12,500 different locations throughout the United Kingdom.

**Cardiff (Cathays) Cemetery**

During the First World War, King Edward VII Hospital (now Cardiff Royal Infirmary) and the Welsh Metropolitan War Hospital, formerly the Cardiff City Asylum at Whitchurch, were devoted to the treatment of sick and wounded Commonwealth servicemen. Casualties took over half the beds in the former and entirely occupied the latter hospital, with a total provision of over 3,000 beds throughout the city. In addition, the Prince of Wales Hospital for Limbless Sailors and Soldiers had 66 beds for men from Wales, Herefordshire and Shropshire. Most servicemen recovered as a result of the care they received in Cardiff during the war, but of those who did many were buried in this cemetery.

The vast majority of the 466 First World War burials are British, but the cemetery is also the final resting place of six Australians and nine Canadians. Two thirds of the servicemen buried here died during the war; the remainder succumbed to post-war injuries, disease or influenza. Influenza or Spanish Flu was a

global pandemic that killed up to six per cent of the entire globe's population between 1918 and 1920. An estimated 25 million people died in the first six months alone and it may ultimately have killed more than 50 million worldwide. The young and healthy were particularly vulnerable to the disease, which struck with such severity that a victim could be fit at breakfast and dead by tea-time.

A third of the First World War burials are located here in Section EB, where a Cross of Sacrifice, designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield, was erected after the war. The remainder are scattered throughout the cemetery.

During the Second World War, Cardiff served as one of the Royal Naval bases of the Western Approaches Command. It was also the biggest coal port in the world and consequently came under repeated enemy air attacks in 1940 and '41 and again in 1944. Damage to property was extensive and many civilians were killed. There are 224 military burials dating from the Second World War scattered throughout the cemetery in more than 30 different sections. Among the Second World War dead buried here are airmen who were stationed at the Royal Air Force bases at Cardiff and St Athan.

A detachment of the Royal Army Medical Corps marching down Queen Street, Cardiff, c.1917.  
View of Cardiff, Midland Railway / Public in partnership with Find a Grave, Cardiff, c.1917

**Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

The Commission is responsible for the commemoration of almost 1,700,000 members of the Commonwealth forces who gave their lives in the two world wars. The graves and memorials of these men and women, who came from all parts of the Commonwealth and who were of many faiths and of none, are found around the globe in some 150 countries. For more information about the Commission, our work and how to search our records online visit [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) or contact us at [enquiries@cwgc.org](mailto:enquiries@cwgc.org)

For more information about this location and some of those commemorated here, scan the QR code (right).

Cathays Cemetery (Photo courtesy of John Farnhill – The Friends of Cathay's Cemetery)

**Map Of Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff showing Section EB – Roll of Honour**

*(Courtesy of The Friends of Cathays Cemetery)*



|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|     |     | 113 | 114 | 115 |     |     |
| 103 | 104 | 105 | 106 | 107 | 108 | 109 |
| 96  | 97  | 98  | 99  | 100 | 101 | 102 |
| 89  | 90  | 91  | 92  | 93  | 94  | 95  |
| 82  | 83  | 84  | 85  | 86  | 87  | 88  |
| 75  | 76  | 77  | 78  | 79  | 80  | 81  |
|     | 69  | 70  | 71  | 72  | 73  | 74  |
|     | 63  | 64  | 65  | 66  | 67  | 68  |
|     | 57  | 58  | 59  | 60  | 61  | 62  |
|     | 51  | 52  | 53  | 54  | 55  | 56  |
|     | 45  | 46  | 47  | 48  | 49  | 50  |
|     | 40  | 41  | 42  | 43  | 44  |     |
|     | 35  | 36  | 37  | 38  | 39  |     |
|     | 30  | 31  | 32  | 33  | 34  |     |
|     | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  |     |
|     | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  |     |
|     |     | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  |     |
|     |     | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  |     |
|     |     | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  |     |
|     |     | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   |     |
|     |     | 1A  | 1   | 2   | 3   |     |



**Australian CWGC Headstone**



**Private Headstone for Babbage**



**RASC CWGC Headstone for Pilkington**



**The five Australian CWGC Headstones in Cathay's Cemetery, Cardiff**  
(left to right) **Leipold, Olsen, Waddups, McCleery** (red arrow) & **O'Connell**  
*(Photos courtesy of John Farnhill – The Friends of Cathay's Cemetery)*





**The five Australian CWGC Headstones in Cathay's Cemetery, Cardiff**  
(left to right) **Leipold, Olsen, Waddups, McCleery** (red arrow) & **O'Connell**  
*(Photos courtesy of John Farnhill – The Friends of Cathay's Cemetery)*

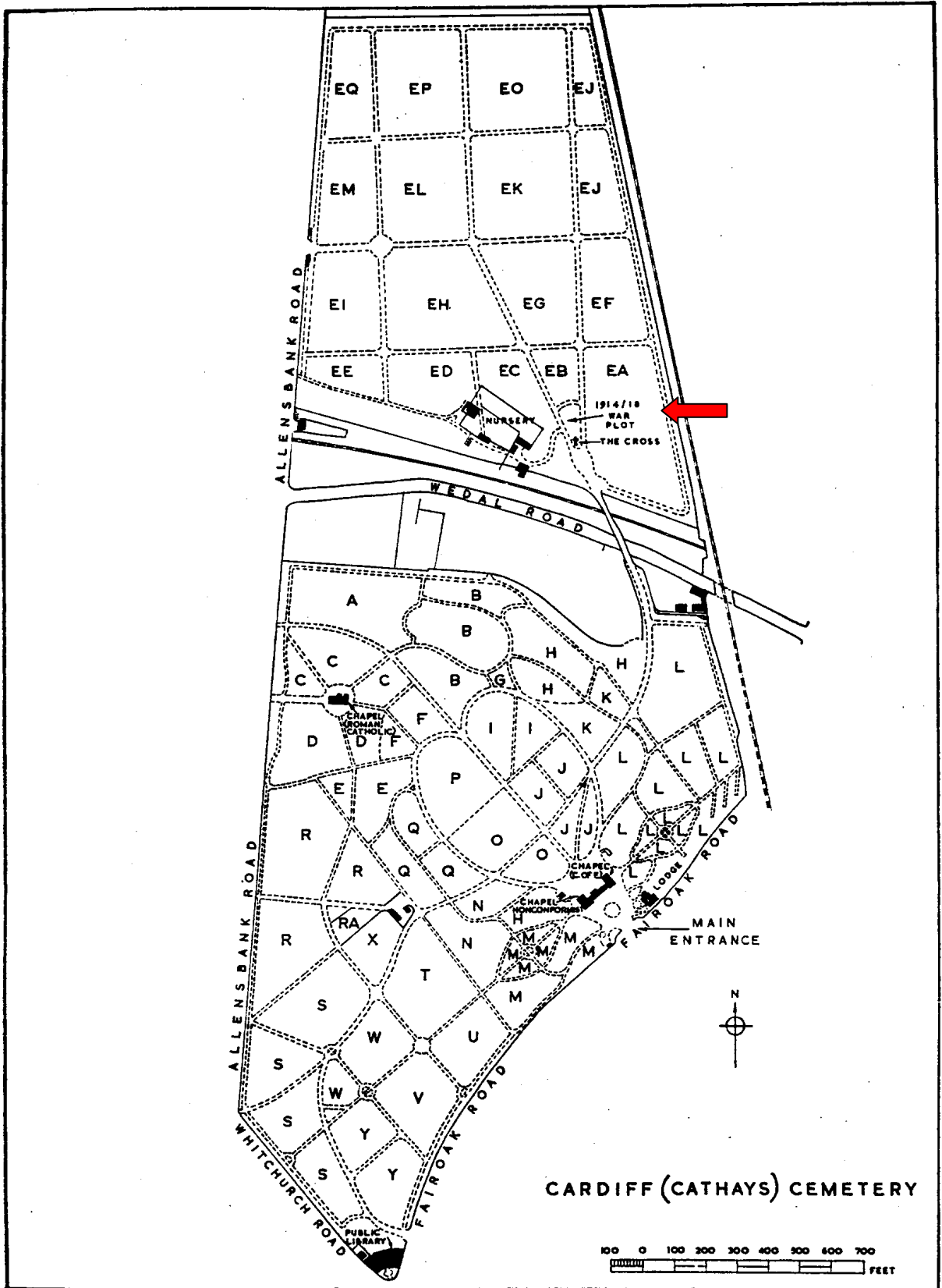


Photo of Private E. A. McCleery's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff, Wales.



*(Photo courtesy of The Friends of Cathays Cemetery)*





Cemetery Plan from CWGC