

## Tribute to WWI Nurse Catherine Adaway A recipient of the Gallipoli Star, this New South Wales native is buried at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Colma

By JEAN BARTLETT | THE WEEK OF 4-29-19-5-5-19 | STORY ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN 2016



photo courtesy of the descendants of Thomas Adaway.

**Catherine McManus Adaway (1883-1921)**  
(Section M, Row 15, Grave 79, Holy Cross)

*This story was originally written for "Roll Call ~ Reveille" – a book I wrote in 2016 for Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Colma. The book offers biographies on 55 individuals, now at rest at Holy Cross, who served in wars dating back to the U.S.-Mexican War and on through the Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II.*



On Wednesday, June 3, 2015, Kay (Cooke) Lovett and her husband Bruce arrived at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Colma. From Australia, the couple stopped in the Cemetery's office to inquire about a grave location, that of Catherine McManus Adaway, born on March 21, 1883, in Gunnedah, New South Wales. Nearly 100 years after Catherine's death, a bit of her life was pieced together for these pages.

On the 8th of October, 1915, in Sydney, NSW, Catherine Adaway enlisted in the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS). Her occupation prior to enlistment was listed as "nurse" and it was reported that she was the daughter of Thomas Adaway and Mary Ann née McManus of Hawker Street, Quirindi, NSW. Her father Thomas was the brother of John Adaway and it was John's great granddaughter Kay who came to pay her respects to her first cousin, twice removed.

"Both Catherine's father and my great grandfather were the sons of an English convict, Thomas Adaway, sometimes Hadaway, convicted of highway robbery in Buckinghamshire in July of 1836," Kay said. "Thomas Sr. was a stonemason by trade and was sentenced to death but on appeal changed to life in the Colonies."

"The thousands of convicts sent to Australia were of course a very easy way for the British to get rid of so many people because of the overcrowding," Kay went on to say. "Many people were convicted on trumped up charges or for simply stealing a loaf of bread in an attempt to stay alive."

While working in Sydney, Thomas Sr. met Catherine McCool, a "free Irish immigrant." The couple had four children: Mary, Thomas, John and a younger brother William who died very young. Thomas Sr. was the chief stonemason on a small church near Maitland called St. Clements. (Opened in 1844, it is still standing and is located in the small village of Camberwell in the Hunter Region.)

"Catherine McCool quite liked the odd drink or two and she and Thomas Sr. had a volatile marriage." Kay discovered both through family stories and extensive research on her ancestors. "She tragically died from burns she received in July of 1877 when her clothes caught on fire."

Thomas Sr. and his sons John and Thomas were all farmers at one time or another. But Kay noted that, "Tragedy seemed to follow our families."

"The siblings of Nurse Catherine either died young, or lived long lives and did not marry except one sister," Kay said. "Catherine had at least 10 siblings. Her eldest brother Thomas died at the age of 27 from typhoid, Edmund Valentine died at 59 after a short illness, Edwin Dennis died at 48, Eleanor Catherine married George Costello, James Mark became estranged from the family and it appears he died at 59, Michael Parnell lived to be 96, Hilda Mary died at 89, there was most likely a 'Vincent' but no details can be found on him, Harold John died at 22, Margaret Faith lived to be 103 and Patricia Hope died at 74."

Catherine became a nurse after completing two years of training at Singleton Hospital before taking a job at St. Vincent's, a private hospital in Sydney.

"She volunteered for active service during World War I, and after enlisting, she boarded the HMAT Orsova A67 on November 10, 1915 from Sydney having little time to prepare herself for the life she was about to embark on," Kay said. "Her medical records tell of a problem she encountered from an adverse inoculation reaction. This would plague her throughout her short career."

All members of the AANS were required to have a full medical examination with chest X-rays and inoculations against typhoid and smallpox in preparation for overseas service.

"Catherine saw service at the Gherzich Hospital in Egypt attending wounded Australians from the Peninsula," Kay said. "Later she was a member of the No. 2 Australian General Hospital at Boulogne in France where she was close to the front at Messines and Amiens. She later transferred to the No. 3 at Dartford in England. She was listed as seriously injured in an Australian newspaper and repatriated home on the Ulysses on November 16, 1917. She contracted typhoid at some stage and after recovering, nursed in the Field Hospital at Liverpool, NSW. Discharged as medically unfit on the 18th of March 1918, she joined a group of former workmates and left to nurse in various hospitals." Catherine nursed U.S. Army patients at military hospitals located in Seattle, Chicago, New York, Portland (Oregon) and Vancouver (Washington).

The name of one of Catherine's former workmates can be found, Mary Rosa Harford. Mary, a native of St. Marys, would at some point return to NSW from California, where she died at the age of 83 in September of 1964.

"Catherine moved to California for a private nursing engagement and became ill," Kay said of Catherine's final days. "She was preparing to sail home on the Sonoma (*a passenger ship of the Oceanic Steamship Company*), due to dock in Sydney on the 19th of April 1921 when she died of pulmonary tuberculosis and was laid to rest at Holy Cross."

Posthumously, Catherine was awarded the Gallipoli Star and is listed on the Honor Roll at St. Vincent's Hospital in Sydney.

*This particular biography can be found in Jean Bartlett's 2016-released book, "Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery, Colma: Roll Call ~ Reveille," which offers 55 biographies on individuals, now at rest at Holy Cross, who served in wars dating back to the U.S.-Mexican War and on through the Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II. The book is available at the reception desk at the main office of Holy Cross: 1500 Mission Road, Colma, CA 94014. Phone: 650-756-2060. All mail inquiries should be sent to: Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery, Colma, P.O. Box 1577, Colma, CA 94014.*



Jean Bartlett is a longtime Bay Area features writer: Pacifica Tribune, Oakland Tribune, San Jose Mercury, San Mateo Times, Portraits & Roots, Marin Independent Journal, Twin City Times, Ross Valley Reporter, Peninsula Progress, Coastal Connections, Contra Costa County Times, Bay Area Business Woman and Catholic San Francisco. Contact her through her website, [www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com).