

COWAN

Raymond Talbot

Service No: 3618



Basic information

Name: Raymond Talbot Cowan

Service Number: 3618

Date of Enlistment: 10/9/1917

Age at Enlistment: 19 Years 6 months

Civil Occupation: Bank Clerk

Medals, Honours, Awards: British War Medal, Victory Medal,

Height: 6 Ft 1 ½ inches

Weight: 164 Lbs.

Chest Measurement: 34 inches

Complexion: Fair

Eye Colour: Blue

Hair Colour: Fair

Father: William Cowan

Mother: Margaret Cable

Siblings: Clarence Walkinshaw, Stella Constance, Enid Janette, Evelyn Annie, Margaret Isabelle, James William Halley

Married: No



Courtesy National Archives of
Australia

Family History

Raymond's grandfather, Walkinshaw Cowan, arrived in the Swan River Colony in 1839 on the *Brothers*. He had been appointed Private Secretary to Governor Hutt who sailed on the same ship. Cowan also became Clerk to both the Legislative and Executive Councils. He married Mary Elizabeth Dyer in 1842.

Cowan's life of public service continued; he was appointed Protector of Aborigines at York in 1848 and was the Resident Magistrate at York between 1873 and 1888. By 1887, Cowan was increasingly suffering from ill-health. He retired to Perth and died at Fremantle in 1888.

Raymond's father, William, was appointed Clerk of Courts at York by his father, Walkinshaw Cowan, at the tender age of sixteen. He remained in that position for seven years. William was later appointed to various positions throughout the State, including Clerk of Courts at Geraldton for nine years, Resident Magistrate at Toodyay and Bunbury, Government Resident at Wyndham for three years and the Government Resident at Roebourne.

William married Margaret Cable in 1892, in Perth, and the couple had seven children.

William appeared in the 1898 Post Office Directory as Resident Magistrate for York, and that listing continued until 1904, when he became the Resident Magistrate at Northam until his retirement in 1919. Despite a newspaper report that William planned to "live in York after a good holiday," he did not return to the town but lived in "Corona House" on the corner of Coode and Copley Streets in Bayswater until his death in 1940.

Raymond's uncle, James Cowan, was Clerk of Court and Postmaster in York in 1864 but, by 1870, he had been appointed as Clerk to the Police Magistrate in Perth. He also held the position of Clerk to the Legislative Council and, in 1879, was listed as the Registrar and Master of the Supreme Court. James married Edith Dircksey who, in 1921, became the first woman elected to the Australian Federal Parliament.

Life Story

Raymond was born in 1898 at York. He was one of seven children born to William and Margaret Cowan. There is little information about Raymond on the public record during his early years. However, he was known to be working in Beverley as a bank clerk in 1916, as he was fined for riding his bicycle on a footpath.

Raymond enlisted on the 10th September 1917 at Beverley, listing his father as Next of Kin, and was assigned to the 11th Reinforcements, 27th Battalion. However, William Cowan wrote a letter to the Camp Commandant at Blackboy Hill, on official Resident Magistrate stationery, to request his son be placed either in the artillery or, failing that, the Light Horse, rather than his existing placement. Two days after receiving the letter, the Camp Adjutant arranged for this to happen, and Raymond was transferred to the Light Horse.

He embarked on the *Commonwealth* on the 9th November, arriving at Suez on the 10th December. From there, Raymond was Taken on Strength with the 3rd Light Horse Regiment at Moascar, Egypt, on the 11th February 1918 before joining the 10th Light Horse on the 7th May.

On the 7th October, he was admitted to hospital. Raymond was transferred to the French Hospital at Damascus on the 22nd October, where he was recorded as being “dangerously ill” with malaria.

Raymond Cowan died of malaria on the 24th October 1918 and was buried in the Damascus Protestant Cemetery. Amongst the contents of the first package of his personal belongings returned to his family was a mosquito net.



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References

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