

**St. Giles Churchyard,  
Ashtead, Surrey, England**

**War Grave**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**1313 CADET**

**T. M. ALLEN**

**AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS**

**27TH APRIL, 1917**

## Thomas Meredith (Tom) ALLEN

Thomas Meredith Allen was born at Lalomalava, Savaii, Samoa on 11th October, 1893 to parents Ernest Frederick & Maria Miller Allen (nee Meredith). Maria was part Samoan. He was baptised on 21st October, 1893. Thomas was one of six boys born to Ernest & Maria Allen.

Thomas Meredith Allen was a 21 year old, single, Seaman from *Care of Sauwa Shipping Co.*, Sydney, NSW when he enlisted at Liverpool, Sydney, NSW on 28th November, 1914 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1313 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his aunt – Miss Allen, 273 George St, Sydney, NSW. Thomas Allen stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served with New Zealand Territorials at Auckland for 5 years.

Private Thomas Meredith Allen embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Seang Bee (A48)* on 11th February, 1915 with the 2nd Infantry Battalion, 2nd Reinforcements.

Private Thomas Allen was wounded in action on 25-30th April, 1915 at the Dardanelles with a bullet wound to left thigh. He was attached to 2nd Battalion, A.I.F. – Beach Party.

Private Thomas Allen was admitted to Military Hospital at Ras-el-Tin, Alexandria on 28th April, 1915 with a gunshot wound to scrotum. He was transferred on Hospital Ship *Goorkha* on 3rd May, 1915.

Private Thomas Allen was admitted to 1st Southern General Hospital, Birmingham, Dudley Road Section on 12th May, 1915. He was transferred & admitted to 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital Harefield, Middlesex on 8th June, 1915 with a gunshot wound (left testicle) & discharged to duty on 8th July, 1915.

According to Sylvia Allen, widow of Frederick Allen, "Tom's" eldest brother, Tom was originally posted as being killed. *"When his brother, Fred, wounded some time later, was in a Birmingham hospital, a chance remark by a nurse that another Allen had been there two weeks earlier made him do some checking. It was indeed his brother, Tom, and he traced him to a convalescent home in Ashtead and then got himself transferred there as well. One of the visitors to this home was 23 year old Violet Mellish, a daughter of the local baker and the Mellish household on Ashtead Common became a home-from-home for both of the Allen boys."*

Private Thomas Allen was admitted to 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital Harefield, Middlesex on 22nd July, 1915 & transferred on 25th July, 1915. Private Allen was admitted to Military Convalescent Hospital, Epsom on 26th July, 1915 & discharged on 17th September, 1915.

Private Thomas Meredith Allen was promoted to Lance Corporal on 21st December, 1915.

Lance Corporal Thomas Meredith Allen was promoted to Temporary Corporal on 4th February, 1916. His rank reverted back to Private on 8th May, 1916.

Private Thomas Meredith Allen was transferred from Monte Video, Weymouth & taken on strength at 1st Training Battalion, Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 28th June, 1916.

Private Allen was absent without leave from early morning parade on 18th July, 1916. He forfeited 1 days' pay.

Private Allen proceeded Overseas to his Unit on 25th July, 1916 from Perham Downs. He was taken on strength at 1st Australian Divisional Base Depot, Etaples, France on 26th July, 1916 & rejoined his Unit in France on 10th August, 1916.

Private Allen was "On Command" to Australian Flying Corps Board for Inspection in France on 17th November, 1916.

Thomas Meredith Allen joined the Royal Flying School of Military Aeronautics, Reading, England as a Cadet Trainee on 5th December, 1916. He was attached to No. 9 Reserve Squadron.

Thomas Meredith Allen, on returning to England, became engaged to Violet Mellish, whom he had met while convalescing at Ashtead.

Cadet Thomas Meredith Allen was piloting a Henry Farman F-20 Serial no. A1214 on 27th April, 1917 when it crashed on landing at Norwich Aerodrome. He was admitted to Norfolk War Hospital on 27th April, 1917.

Cadet Thomas Meredith Allen died in the early hours of 27th April, 1917 at Norfolk War Hospital, Norwich as a result of an aeroplane accident. [*According to Tom's older brother – Fred who was at his side when he died, death occurred 52 hours after the accident. It would appear therefore that Allen died very close to midnight 26/27 April.*]

A death for Thomas M. Allen, aged 23, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Blofield, Norfolk.

Violet Spowart (nee Mellish) wrote in a letter about "Tom" many years later - "*On the day ["Tommy"] was injured, we were to have met in London to celebrate Anzac day, instead the fatal telegram arrived and immediately my dear mother and I journeyed to Thorpe, Norwich, to see him. There was no hope, the brain had been lacerated and he never regained consciousness. His brother, Fred, joined us at his bedside and we just sat there and watched Tommy's passing. He and I wanted [him] to be buried near our family grave. It was a military funeral and the Last Post was sounded. Since, I have cared for the grave as well as possible, a little difficult as I have lived abroad for the last 30 years....*" Apparently Violet Spowart (nee Mellish) had sent the required sum of money every year so that Tom's headstone and surround could be cleaned. [Violet Mellish had married William Spowart & had lived abroad for 30 years in Ireland & also in Spain. Lieut. Colonel William Spowart, OBE died on 2nd October, 1973. Violet Spowart moved to Isle of Man & later to Gloucester where she died on 12th January, 1984, just short of her 91st birthday.]

A Court of Enquiry was held at Norwich Aerodrome on 27th April, 1917 by order of Capt. M. E. Lane, R.F.C. S.R. Commanding No. 9 Reserve Squadron, R.F.C., enquiring into the circumstances of the fatal accident of No. 1313 Cadet T. M. Allen, A.I.F., on H.F. A1214 which took place on 24th April, 1917 at Norwich.

#### **Evidence:**

1st Witness – Lieut. H. H. Cotton, C.M.R. states:

*On the evening of the 24th April, 1917, Cadet Allen went up in H.F. 1214. He had previously done 2 hours 25 minutes solo in this type of machine satisfactorily. The machine had previously been tested by 2/Lieut. Thompson and found to be in good order, it was flown previously to Cadet Allen's flight by 2/Lieut. Hodgson. Being engaged in the sheds I did not witness the accident.*  
(Sgd) Henry H. Cotton. Lieut.

2nd Witness – 2/Lieut. Thompson states:

*that he tested H.F. 1214, previous to Lt. Hodgson's flight and found it to be in good order.*  
(Sgd) J. G. Thompson. 2/Lieut., R.F.C.

3rd Witness – Cpl. H. Adams, No. 9700. Rigger states:

*that he inspected H.F. No. 1214 previous to the flying on the 24th and found it to be in perfect order. At the time of the accident he was standing in the road and saw Cadet Allen gliding into the Aerodrome, on nearing the ground he did not alter the gliding angle, the machine struck the ground and cadet Allen was thrown out falling heavily on his head.*  
(Sgd) H. Adams. Cpl., R.F.C.

4th Witness – 2/A.M Cowling J.W., No. 40133,

*states that he witnessed the engine in H.F. 1214 run previous to Cadet Allen's flight and was in perfect order.*  
(Sgd) J. W. Cowling. 2/A.M. 40133., R.F.C.

5th Witness – 2/Lieut. N. B. Freiman, A.I.F. states:

*that he was seated in a machine ready to take off as soon as Cadet Allen had landed. Cadet Allen was gliding into the Aerodrome from about 500 feet. The angle of descent was not too steep. He made an attempt to flatten out. On machine striking the ground he was thrown clear and fell heavily on his head. The machine and engine did not seem to be out of control.*  
(Sgd) N. B. Freiman. 2/LT., A.I.F.

6th Witness – Corpl. Davis S. No. 1586 states:

*that he was the first to arrive at the scene of the accident, and found Cadet Allen lying clear of the wreckage. The switch was still on and in perfect order. The back seat switch was torn away from nacelle. All controls and control wires were unbroken. The elevator was in perfect order. (Sgd) S. Davis. Corpl. 1586. 9.T.S., R.F.C.*

7th Witness – Pte Smith J.W. No. 21297. R.A.M.C. states:

*that on arriving in the ambulance he found Cadet Allen lying on his side clear of the wreckage, unconscious and bleeding from the mouth. He was wearing a safety helmet. He was placed in the ambulance and taken to Thorpe War Hospital. (Sgd) J. W. Smith. Pte. 21297., R.A.M.C.*

### **Opinion of the Court**

The court is of the opinion that the accident which resulted in the death of Cadet Allen was entirely due to his error in not flattening out soon enough.

The Court is satisfied that the machine and engine were in perfect order.



*(Photo from Discovering Anzacs – DOMFOUNTAIN)*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for 1313 Lieutenant Thomas Meredith Allen, Australian Flying Corps, contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives in Sydney, into the suffering, death and burial. The reply letter from Matron, Norfolk War Hospital, reads in part: *“Temp Lieut. Thos. Meredith Allen, 1313 A.I.I.F. Flying Corps, late 2nd Battalion. Died of Aeroplane accident 27-4-17 at Norfolk War Hospital, Thorpe, Norwich. Buried at Ashtead Parish Cemetery, Ashtead near Epsom 30-4-17, Private Grave No. 165.*

*Lt. Allen was admitted in a comatose condition and remained so until his death. His brother, Lt. Allen’s Fiancée and her Mother were with him when he died and would really be able to supply you with fuller details than I can. The lady’s name I do not know, but her address is – Woodfield House, Ashtead, Surrey.”*

Lieutenant (Cadet) Thomas Meredith Allen was buried at 3 pm. on 30th April, 1917 in St. Giles Churchyard, Ashted, Surrey – Plot number 165. It had been Violet Mellish's wish that her fiancée – Cadet Thomas Meredith Allen be buried in St. Giles' Churchyard. He has a private headstone but his death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

*From the burial report of Thomas Meredith Allen - Coffin was English Oak with Brass Mountings – The deceased soldier was buried with Military Honours (arrangements for the burial were made by brother). Firing Party comprising members of the Administrative Headquarters Staff, A.I.F. London were in attendance. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside by a bugler of the A.I.F. and 3 other buglers of an Imperial Regiment stationed at Woodcote Park, Epsom. Prior to the interment of the deceased soldier's remains a Memorial Service was held in the Parish Church, Ashted by Chaplain Wray of the A.I.F., assisted by the Revd. Waddilove of the Parish of Ashted. The coffin was draped with the Australian flag and covered with many beautiful floral tributes. The deceased soldier's remains were borne to the graveside by members of the Administrative Headquarters Staff, A.I.F. London. Lieut. Allen (brother) of the Royal Naval Service, Mr & Mrs Mellish and several other friends were present at the funeral. Temporary Memorial will be erected by the Commonwealth Military Authorities.*

Mr E. F. Allen, father of late Thomas Meredith Allen, wrote to Officer in Charge, Base Records on 4th May, 1920 to advise that he was the next-of-kin of Thomas Meredith Allen & Thomas's mother & 5 brothers were still alive. Mr E. F. Allen stated that his sister's name had originally been given as next-of-kin as she was the only one resident at Sydney at the time that Thomas enlisted. Mr E. F. Allen was Managing Director of The Samoa Shipping & Trading Co. Ltd.

Cadet Thomas Meredith Allen was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Cadet Allen's father – Mr E. F. Allen (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Cadet T. M. Allen – service number 1313, of Australian Flying Corps. No family details are listed.

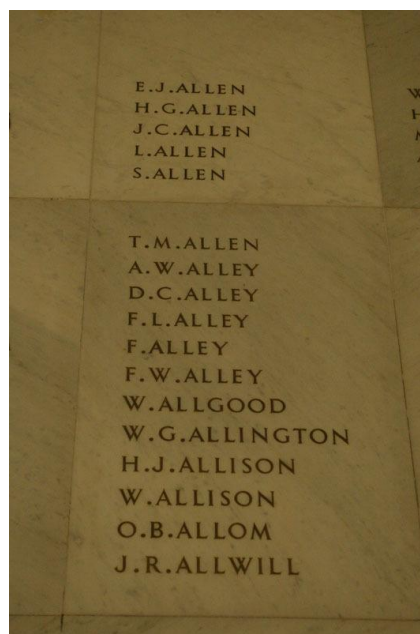
Cadet T. M. Allen is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 187.



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



T. M. Allen is remembered at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, World War 1 Hall of Memories Panels.



**World War 1 Hall of Memories Panel, Auckland War Memorial Museum** (Photo by J. Halpin, 2010)

T. M. Allen is remembered on the “Old Boys of Devonport School” WW1 Memorial, located in the grounds of Devonport School, Auckland, New Zealand.



**“Old Boys of Devonport School” WW1 Memorial** (Photo above – J. Halpin 2012; below from New Zealand History)





T. Allen is named on the Apia Clock Tower which was erected as a war memorial & acts as a central point of the business district of Apia.



Apia Clock Tower with names from World War 1 (Photo by Stephen Glauser)




His Highness the Head of State lays a wreath at the foot of the War Memorial

(Photo from Talamua On-Line News Service)







Cadet Thomas Meredith Allen is remembered by the New Zealand War Graves Project.



NEW ZEALAND  
WAR GRAVES PROJECT

Home / Thomas Meredith Allen



Cadet  
 **Thomas Meredith Allen**

**Conflict:** WW1  
**Additional Information:** Son of Ernest Frederick and Maria Miller Allen (nee Meredith), c/- Samoa Shipping and Trading Company.

**References:**

- [Martyn \(2008\)](#)
- [National Archives of Australia](#)

Cadet Thomas Meredith Allen is remembered by RAAFA Aviation Heritage Museum.



(69 pages of Thomas Meredith Allen'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*



**Thomas Meredith Allen**



*(Photo from Discovering Anzacs – DOMFOUNTAIN)*



**Thomas Meredith Allen**

*(Photo from Auckland Museum – provided by Briar Wilson (August 2021))*





**Thomas Meredith Allen with another Soldier**

*(Photos from Auckland Museum – provided by Briar Wilson (August 2021))*



## Newspaper Notices

### CASUALTIES

295th LIST

Died (Other Causes)

Pte T. M. Allen, Sydney (result of Accident)

(*The Land*, Sydney, NSW – 18 May, 1917)

---

### LOCAL AND GENERAL NEWS

The sad intelligence has been conveyed by cable from England to Capt. E. Allen, of the "Dawn" that his son, Lieut. T. M. Allen, has succumbed to injuries received in an aeroplane accident in April last. The cable, which was received via Pago Pago, runs thus: "Capt. E. F. Allen, 273 George St., Sydney. Regret report 2nd Lieut. T. M. Allen died this morning, 27.4.17 as result of injuries received in aeroplane accident 24.4.17. – Aeronautics, Norwich."

In the death of Thomas Meredith Allen a promising career has been thus brought to an untimely end. He was born at Lalomalava, Savaii, on October 11, 1893. Enlisting at Sydney in October, 1914, two months after the outbreak of war, he went through the Gallipoli campaign, being wounded there on April 27th, 1915. After his recovery in England, where he had been invalided, he served in France at Pozieres and other places. In December, 1916, he was promoted to second Lieutenant, being attached to the Royal Australian Flying Corps. The news of Lieut. Allen's death has been received with great regret in Apia, where he was well known, and we extend to the family our deep condolences in their sad bereavement.

(*The Samoa Times*, Samoa – 2 June, 1917)

---



**Pte. T. M. Allen,**  
2nd Btl., N.S.W. – Wounded.

(*Photo from Discovering Anzacs – blacksmith*)

---



## St. Giles Churchyard, Ashted, Surrey

St. Giles Churchyard, Ashted, Surrey contains 16 War Graves – 4 from World War 1 & 12 from World War 2.



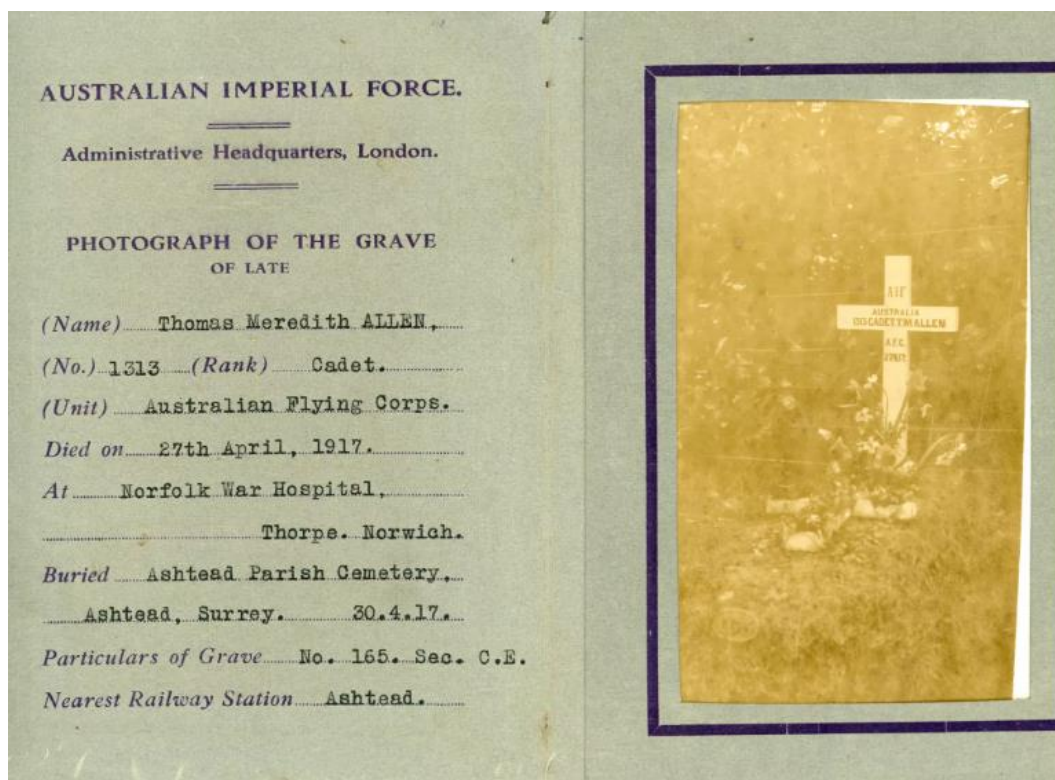
*(photo from Find a Grave – julia&keld)*



**St. Giles Churchyard, Ashted, Surrey** *(Photo by Hassocks5489)*



Folder sent to next-of-kin with photograph of original Cross marker.



(Photo from Auckland Museum – provided by Briar Wilson (August 2021))



**Lieut Thomas Meredith Allen's Private Headstone**

(Photo from Auckland Museum – provided by Briar Wilson (August 2021))





*(Photo from Discovering Anzacs – DOMFOUNTAIN)*



Photo of Lieutenant (Cadet) Thomas Meredith Allen's Private Headstone in St. Giles Churchyard, Ashted, Surrey, England.

*Note: All records list the date of death as 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1917, however the date of death recorded on his headstone is 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1917.*

*Because his flying training had been completed and all examinations passed for his wings and commission, the family had felt that the reference to the rank of Lieutenant on his headstone was correct though his death had precluded completion of the formalities.*



(Photos courtesy of Neil Bright)





*In*  
*Loving Memory Of*  
**LIEUT. THOMAS**  
**MEREDITH ALLEN,**  
*Australian Flying Corps,*  
*Third Son of*  
**ERNEST & MARIA ALLEN,**  
*Of Wellington N.Z.*

*Who Died Of Injuries Sustained Whilst Flying*  
*At Norwich April 26<sup>th</sup> 1917,*  
*In His 23<sup>rd</sup> Year.*

*Gallipoli 1915. France 1916. England 1917.*

*No Greater Love Hath Any Man Than This*  
*That He Lay Down His Life For His Friends*