

**Ocklynge Cemetery,
Eastbourne, East Sussex
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



PERCIVAL VICTOR FRASER

ROYAL NAVAL AIR SERVICE

10TH JANUARY, 1916 Age 29

Percival Victor FRASER

Percival Victor Fraser was born on 25th October, 1886 at Rockhampton, Queensland to parents William and Annie Fraser (nee Grieve).

Percival Victor Fraser was a 28 year old Engineer when he enlisted on 25th November, 1914 with Royal Naval Air Service.

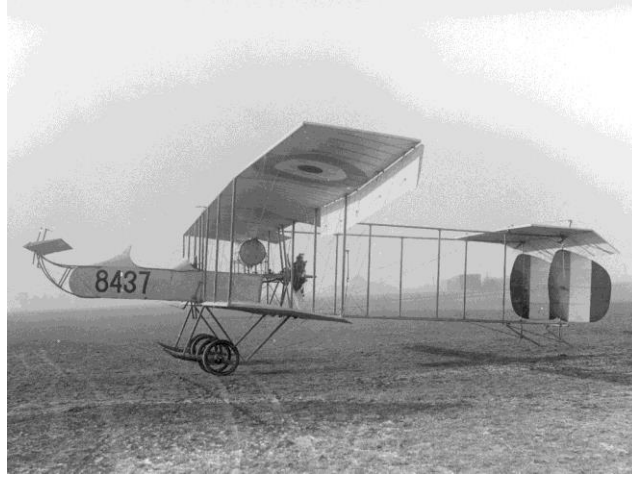
Percival Victor Fraser gained his Aviator's Certificate on 14th May, 1915 – Certificate No. 1239. His certificate was taken on a Wright Biplane at Beatty School, Hendon.



Percy Fraser's Aviator's Certificate (Image from State Library of Queensland)

Percival Victor Fraser was appointed Temporary Warrant Officer 2nd Class on 21st June, 1915 while at Eastbourne, Sussex. He was assistant instructor on GW Biplanes & in charge of flights. Percival Victor Fraser's Service Report described him as "shows general ability & is very hard-working & courageous pilot. Commands a flight well. "

Flight Sub-Lieutenant Gordon Ezra Duke was piloting a Short S.38 (pusher biplane) serial No. 3148 under instruction of Warrant Officer II Percival Victor Fraser on 10th January, 1916 from the local naval aerodrome. The aeroplane was dual-control. Gordon Ezra Duke was a Canadian who at the outbreak of war decided to join Royal Naval Air Service, which was recruiting in Canada, but they required the men to already have their pilot's certificate in order to volunteer. Gordon Duke had paid for a course at Curtiss Flying School on Toronto Island, Canada & began his training in September, 1915 but the course was stopped at the end of October, a month before completion due to concerns about flying in the winter weather. The Royal Navy offered to pay Duke & several other recruits their passage to England so they could complete their training. They sailed from the port of New York in late December, 1915. Duke was taking his first training flight with Warrant Officer II Fraser on 10th January, 1916.



Short S.38 similar to that in which Fraser & Duke crashed

Warrant Officer II Percival Victor Fraser was killed in a flying accident on 10th January, 1916 at Hampden Park, Eastbourne, Sussex, England, along with Flight Sub-Lieutenant Gordon Ezra Duke, aged 19.

A death for Percival V. Fraser, aged 29, was registered in the March quarter, 1916 in the district of Eastbourne, Sussex, England.

Warrant Officer II Percival Victor Fraser was buried in Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, East Sussex, England – Plot number D. 148. Flight Sub-Lieutenant Gordon Ezra Duke was buried next to Percival Fraser in Plot number – D. 149. They were given a funeral with full military honours & share the one headstone.

Newspaper Reports on the Incident:

TWO AIRMEN KILLED Nose Dive in East Sussex

When flying a biplane over Hampden Park, near Eastbourne, yesterday afternoon, Lieutenant Gordon Duke, aged about twenty-five, a Canadian, and Warrant Officer Fraser, aged about 36, and said to be an Australian, were killed when the machine dived nose-downward into a field.

A cyclist who was riding along the road says that the aeroplane was moving very unsteadily and was very low. The weather was bright and sunny, but, according to the cyclist, the wind blew in gusts. Suddenly the biplane seemed to turn over and fall. It landed in a field and within a few feet of a brickyard pond which is about 18ft. or 20ft. deep.

The force of the fall was so great that the machine was shattered and the two airmen were pinned beneath the debris. The first to reach the spot was a woman, who lifted up part of the broken machinery to enable a man to get underneath to help the airmen. They were, however, both dead.

Fraser was an experienced flier, and was instructing Lieut. Duke.

(Portsmouth Evening News, Portsmouth, Hampshire, England – 11th January, 1916)

TWO AVIATORS KILLED

About 2.30 on Monday afternoon an aeroplane was seen flying in the vicinity of Hampden Park, Eastbourne. The machine was rather unsteady. Eventually it fell into a meadow near a brick-field and was smashed, its two occupants (Lieutenant Gordon Duke and Warrant Officer Fraser) being killed. The bodies were removed to the Eastbourne mortuary.

(Gloucestershire Echo, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England – 11th January, 1916)

A Short S38 biplane (3148) flown by Probationary Flight Sub-Lt Gordon Ezra Duke, a 20-year-old Canadian from Toronto, with his instructor, Warrant Officer (second Grade) Percival Victor Fraser, a 30-year-old Australian from Queensland, took off from the aerodrome and soon started to fly irregularly. Their machine nose-dived from approximately 150 ft to crash near a brickfield at Hampden Park owned by Alderman Mark Martin, the local builder, killing both men. The cause of the accident was thought to be a wire which slipped off an elevator control pulley. The funeral of the two men took place at Ocklynge Cemetery three days later.

(Eastbourne Gazette, Sussex – 12 January, 1916)

MACHINE FALLS IN BRICKFIELD AT EASTBOURNE

A double flying fatality occurred at Eastbourne on Monday afternoon. Lieut. Gordon Duke, a Canadian, who has not been in this country long, and Warrant Officer Fraser being the victims. The two naval airmen went up from the local aerodrome, and after flying well as far as Hampden Park, a distance of about 1 ½ mile, the machine became very unsteady.

Suddenly it made a dive nose downwards from a height of about 200 feet, and crashed to the ground in a brickfield. When picked up both aviators were dead, and the machine was wrecked.

Fraser, it is stated, was an instructor at the aerodrome, but Lieut. Duke had only made one or two previous flights.

(Western Gazette, Yeovil, Somerset, England – 14 January, 1916)

ARMY AIRMEN KILLED

An officer and a warrant officer were killed in a terrible flying accident at Eastbourne on Monday.

Lieutenant Gordon Duke and Warrant Officer Fraser went up from the naval aerodrome, and had only flown as far as Hampden Park, about two miles away, when the machine made a dive from a height of about 160 feet and fell in a brickyard.

Both men were killed almost instantaneously. Lieutenant Duke was terribly injured in the chest, and the warrant officer, who had been acting as instructor, died from injuries to the head.

(Framlingham Weekly News, Framlingham, Sussex, England – 15th January, 1916)

The Inquest

The Secretary of the Admiralty announced the following casualties on January 12th : —

Killed. (Under date January 10th.) Prob. Flight Sub-Lieut. Gordon E. Duke, R.N. Mr. Percival V. Fraser, Warrant Officer, 2nd Grade, R..N.A.S.

An inquest was held at Eastbourne on January 12th on the bodies of Prob. Flight Sub JJeut. Gordon Eyra Duke, twenty-nine, of Toronto, and Warrant Officer Percival Victor Fraser, thirty, of Rockhampton, Queensland, who were killed by the fall of a biplane on January 10th. The evidence showed that the two men took the machine out of the aerodrome of the R.N.A.S. at Eastbourne, Fraser being the pilot and Duke the passenger. The biplane flew towards Hampden Park, but the engine seemed to be switched on and off. The machine was a dual control one, and either of the men could have taken control. The third time the "engine was switched off the machine turned to the left, righted itself, and then made a nose-dive from a height of from 150 to 200 feet. When the wreck was reached the two men were found lying dead beneath the engine. Death had been instantaneous in each case, Squadron-Commander Philip Shepherd, R.N., stated that he had no reason to suppose anything went wrong with the engine. Even if such a thing occurred there was no reason there should be a dive. He had examined the remains of the machine. One wire had slipped off a pulley, and this would prevent the elevator being used. Witness was of opinion that if the wire did slip it was when the machine was in the air. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death, and expressed sympathy with the relatives.

THE AIR ACCIDENT NEAR EASTBOURNE SLIPPING OF A CONTROL WIRE

The East Sussex Coroner (Dr G. Vere Benson), at Eastbourne Town Hall yesterday, held an inquest on the bodies of Probationary Flight Sub-Lieutenant GORDON EZRA DUKE, R.N., aged 20, of Toronto, Canada, and Warrant Officer (Second Grade) PERCIVAL VICTOR FRASER, aged 30, of Queensland, Australia, who lost their lives in an airplane accident near Hampden Park Railway Station on Monday.

Sergeant Donald Lovat Fraser, of the 5th Light Horse, Australian Imperial Forces, identified the body of his brother, whose home was at Rockhampton, Queensland, and who had been a marine engineer. Commander Philip Shepherd stated that Sub-Lieutenant Duke joined the Royal Naval Air Service on December 16 last. In Toronto he was a clerk in the municipal department.

Richard Hutton, second air mechanic in charge of the Royal Naval Air Service at Eastbourne Aerodrome, said that Mr Fraser was the pilot and Sub-Lieutenant Duke the passenger. The witness, who watched the machine in flight, thought that something must have gone wrong with the elevation control.

Mr Gerald Ratcliff Hackman, Flight Superintendent in the Royal Naval Air Service, said he saw the biplane flying towards Hampden Park. He thought it was flying rather irregularly. He watched it turn to the left, right itself, and then make a mad dive from a height which he put at from 150ft to 200ft.

Commander Philip Shepherd said he had examined the remains of the machine. One wire had slipped off a pulley. This might have happened when the accident occurred. The elevators could not be used if the wire had slipped. He was of opinion that if the wire slipped it did so when the machine was in the air.

In reply to a question, Commander Shepherd said, "You do not find your men from Canada losing their heads very easily."

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death."

(The Times – 13 January, 1916)

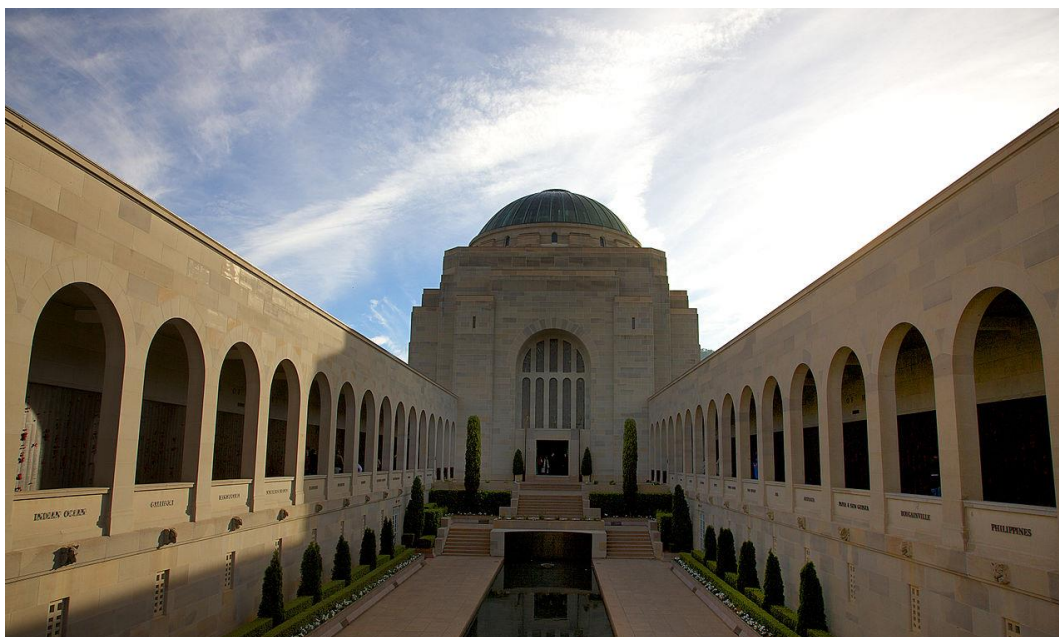


LIEUT. GORDON DUKE.

Probate details of Percival Victor Fraser of 15 St. Anthony's Avenue, Eastbourne, Warrant Officer, R.N.A.S., died 10th January, 1916. Administration (limited) London – 29th May to Edward James Gibson esquire, the attorney of William Fraser. Effects £154 10s. 8d.

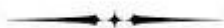
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Warrant Officer Percival Victor Fraser, of Royal Naval Air Service. He was the son of William and Annie Fraser, of The Pines, Emu Park, Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia.

Warrant Officer II Percival Victor Fraser is remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.



Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial (*Capital Photographer*)

(*Information on Gordon Ezra Duke compiled from information from David Fuller (dfuller52) on The Great War Forum.)



Newspaper Notices from Australia

Warrant Officer Percival Victor Fraser, son of William Fraser, of Rockhampton, who was killed in an aeroplane accident at Eastbourne, was an instructor to the R.N.A.S. Previous to joining the air service he was a chief engineer on one of the steamers of the Anglo-Saxon Oil Company (says the "British Australasian" of 27th January).

(*The Telegraph*, Brisbane, Queensland – 14 March, 1916)

FALLEN SOLDIERS

PRESENTATION OF MEMORIALS

All the arrangements for the presentation of memorials to relatives of fallen soldiers at the School of Arts to-night have been completed, and a large gathering is anticipated. As has been previously mentioned, seats will be reserved for those who desire to have the memorials presented to them by the Mayoress, Mrs C. O. Gough, to-night, and they are particularly requested to enter by the door on the right-hand side of the hall. They will from there be

conducted to their appointed seats. Attention to this request will greatly add to convenience and be of material assistance to the Committee. The names of all fallen soldiers, of whom particulars have been supplied to the Hon. Secretary. Miss V. C. Voss, will be read out. In several instances these particulars have been sent in too late to enable the names to be included in the list and to have memorials prepared, and they will be made available later. A small dais has been erected on the door of the hall in front of the stage where the Mayoress will present the memorials to those coming forward as the names are called. Relatives who prefer to receive the memorials privately may obtain them from the Secretary after the meeting.

The following is the list of the fallen soldiers from the district, with the names of the nearest relatives:—

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Fraser, Percival Victor, warrant officer, Royal Naval Air Service; Mrs Fraser, The Pines, Emu Park.

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(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Queensland – 7 March, 1919)



Percy Fraser *(Photo from State Library of Queensland)*



Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex

Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex contains 175 War Graves. There are 129 War Graves from World War 1 & 44 War Graves from World War 2. There are also 1 Belgian & 1 Brazilian Foreign National burials from World War 1. A Cross of Sacrifice stands near the Chapel, facing the main entrance.

During World War 1, Eastbourne contained a very large Military Convalescent Hospital, originally called Eastbourne Military Hospital, which opened in April, 1915. From January, 1917 to October, 1919 it became No. 14 Canadian General Hospital.



Cross of Sacrifice at Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex (Photos from CWGC)



Photo of Warrant Officer Percival Victor Fraser's Headstone in Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex, England which he shares with Gordon E. Duke. Both were killed in an aeroplane accident & are buried next to each other.



(Photo by Terry Denham)

In Loving Memory of

PERCIVAL VICTOR FRASER

Of Rockhampton, Queensland

Aged 29 Years

And

GORDON E. DUKE

Of Toronto, Canada

Aged 20 Years

Both of the R. N. Air Service

Killed in Aeroplane Accident

Jan 10th 1916.