

**Milton Cemetery,
Portsmouth, Hampshire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



69/A PRIVATE

T. O. PEARSON

25TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

26TH JULY, 1916 Age 20

In Honor's Cause

Thomas Owen PEARSON

Thomas Owen Pearson was born at Maitland, New South Wales around 1896 to parents Eric W. Watkins & Mabel (nee Richards). (It is unsure if Mabel was married to Eric Watkins). His birth was registered as Thomas Owen Watkins. (His brother - Eric W. Pearson's birth was also registered under the surname Watkins in 1894 in the district of Manly, NSW to parents Eric Watkins & Mabel. (Note: Four children were born from 1900 to 1912 with parents named as Thomas Pearson & Ellen Mabel Richards. Thomas Pearson married Ellen M. Richards in 1917 in the district of Murwillumbah, NSW.)

Thomas Owen Pearson attended school at Toowong, Brisbane, Queensland.

Thomas Owen Pearson was a 19 year old, single Clerk from Dean Street, Toowong, Brisbane, Queensland when he enlisted at Brisbane, Queensland on 7th September, 1914 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 69 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr T. Pearson of “Walareyan”, Dean Street, Toowong, Brisbane, Queensland. Thomas Owen Pearson stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served with 8th Oxley 2nd Regiment for 1 ½ years & was still serving.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was posted to 3rd Field Ambulance, A.I.F. on 7th September, 1914 for recruit training.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson embarked from Brisbane, Queensland on HMAT *Rangatira (A22)* on 25th September, 1914 with the 3rd Field Ambulance “A” Section.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson proceeded to join M.E.F. (Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) at Gallipoli on 2nd March, 1915.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was wounded in shoulder & right hip & transferred to Hospital Ship *Gloucester Castle*. He was admitted to No. 1 General Hospital, Heliopolis & discharged to duty on 23rd June, 1915.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson embarked for Dardanelles from Alexandria on 21st July, 1915 on *Seang Bee*.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was admitted to 3rd Field Ambulance at Anzac on 26th September, 1915 with diarrhoea then transferred to 1st Casualty Clearing Station the same day. He was transferred to Hospital Ship *Gascon* & disembarked at Malta on 2nd October, 1915. Pte Pearson embarked for England on 25th October, 1915 on Hospital Ship *Gibraltar*.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was admitted to 2nd Southern General Hospital at Bristol, England on 30th October, 1915 with Debility (Convalescent from Gallipoli).

Private Thomas Owen Pearson reported at Depot at Abbeywood on 4th January, 1916.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was written up for an Offence on 9th February, 1916 – “failing to report for Draft”. He was awarded a forfeiture of 1 days' pay.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was returning to join M.E.F. (Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) forming 22nd Draft on 24th February, 1916 from England. He disembarked from *Kingstonian* at Alexandria on 5th March, 1916. He joined Overseas Base from England at Ghezireh the same day.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was taken on strength with 2nd Field Ambulance from Reinforcements at Serapeum on 12th March, 1916.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson Regimental Number was altered to 69A on 14th March, 1916 while posted with 2nd Field Ambulance.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was admitted to 2nd Field Ambulance at Serapeum on 14th March, 1916 with Influenza & discharged on 21st March, 1916.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) from Alexandria on 23rd March, 1916 & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 30th March, 1916.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was transferred from 2nd Field Ambulance to 25th Battalion & joined 25th Battalion in France on 19th June, 1916.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was wounded in action on 30th June, 1916. He was admitted to 7th Field Ambulance on 1st July, 1916 then transferred to 8th Casualty Clearing Station with shrapnel wounds to left thigh. Pte Pearson was transferred to Hospital Ship *St George* on 2nd July, 1916 for England.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was admitted to 5th Southern General Hospital, Portsmouth, Hampshire, England on 3rd July, 1916 with Shell wounds to left leg & fractured fibula – severe. Pte Pearson was listed on 25th July, 1916 to be suffering from Tetanus. The Hospital report reads “*Was admitted to 5th S. G. Hospl 3rd July 1916 with a flesh wound on outer side of left leg which he had received in France on 30th June. There was slight purulent discharge for a few days but it soon cleared up & the wound was healing well when - on 23rd July he complained of a light stiffness of the jaw. On 24th July he showed evident signs of tetanus. He had 18000(?) units a day of antitetanic serum but he died on 26th July about 11.0 pm.*”

Private Thomas Owen Pearson died at 11.10 pm on 26th July, 1916 at 5th Southern General Hospital, Portsmouth, Hampshire, England from Tetanus following wounds received in action in France – gunshot wounds to left leg.

A death for Thomas O. Pearson, aged 20, was registered in the September quarter, 1916 in the district of Portsmouth, Hampshire, England.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was buried in Milton Cemetery, Portsmouth, Hampshire, England – Plot number K, Row 15, Grave No. 6 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

A letter was sent from Base Records on 16th April, 1920 to Mr T. Pearson, Walareyan, Dean Street, Toowong, Queensland, father, of the late Private Thomas Owen Pearson, advising that his son’s remains had been exhumed from former section in Milton Cemetery & had been re-interred in Plot H. Row 19. Grave No. 4 in the same cemetery. It was explained that “*this work is carried out with every measure of care and reverence in the presence of a Chaplain*”.

A letter was sent from Base Records on 1st July, 1925 to Mrs M. Pearson, “Penrose” Wilmington St., Newmarket, Queensland enclosing a photo of her late son’s grave in Milton Cemetery & a general view of the Cemetery with Mr Sanderson (of 33 Exeter Road, Southsea, England who voluntarily attended to the care of the graves). The letter was returned unclaimed.



**Photo of re-interred 11 Australian Soldiers in Milton Cemetery
with Mr Sanderson who voluntarily attended to the care of the graves**



(Photos located in Service Record file of Pte Thomas Owen Pearson)

A War Pension was granted to Ellen Mabel Pearson, mother of the late Private Thomas Owen Pearson, in the sum of £1 per fortnight from 19th April, 1917.

Private Thomas Owen Pearson was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Pearson's father - Mr T. Pearson, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll originally sent June, 1921; duplicate* despatched August, 1922 & Plaque sent July, 1922).

(*According to Base Records, the Memorial Scroll issued in respect of the late Private Thomas Owen Pearson was forwarded for delivery on 20th June, 1921 but had not been received by Mr Pearson as at September, 1921. Base Records advised that a Statutory Declaration would need to be completed in order for a fresh issue to be obtained and that a duplicate would be issued only on the understanding that if the original scroll did turn up that it would have to be returned to Base Records for cancellation as the "*British authorities have made it a rigid rule that only one scroll may be issued in connection with each deceased soldier.*" Enquiries were made at the local Post Office. Mr Thomas Pearson, father of the late Pte T. O. Pearson, signed a Statutory Declaration on 31st July, 1922.)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Thomas Owen Pearson – service number 69/A, aged 20, of 25th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Thomas and Ellen Mabel Pearson, of Wilmington St., Newmarket, Queensland. Born at Maitland, New South Wales.

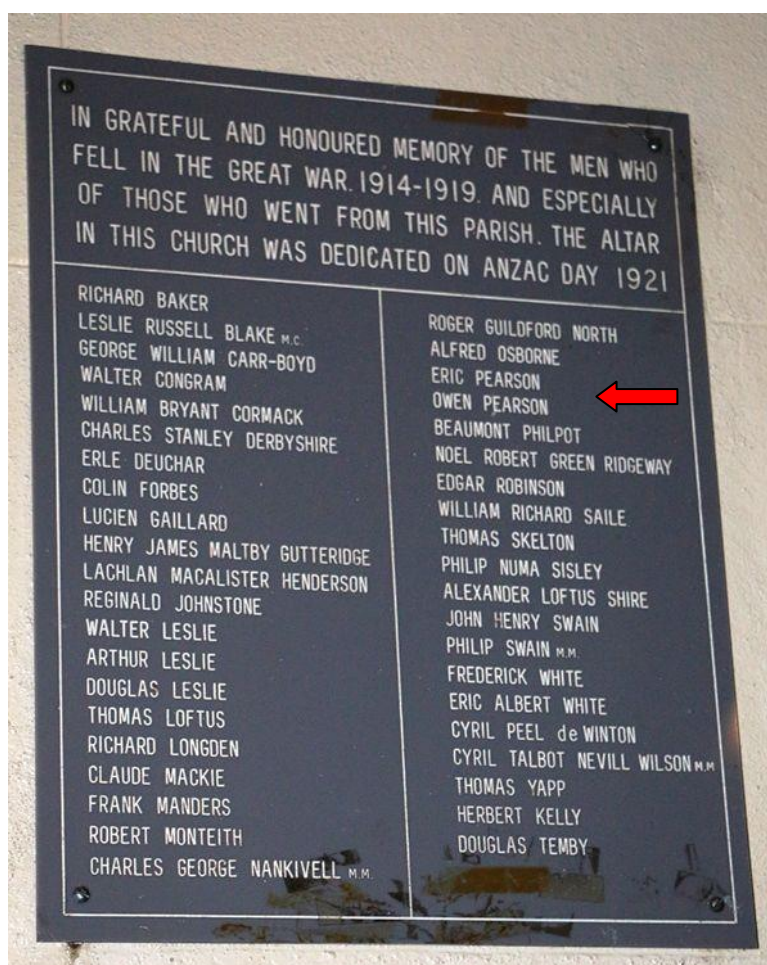
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Private T. O. Pearson is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 105.



Roll of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Owen Pearson & his brother Eric Pearson are both remembered on the St. Thomas' Anglican Church Honour Roll, located inside St. Thomas' Anglican Church, 67 High Street, Toowong, Queensland.

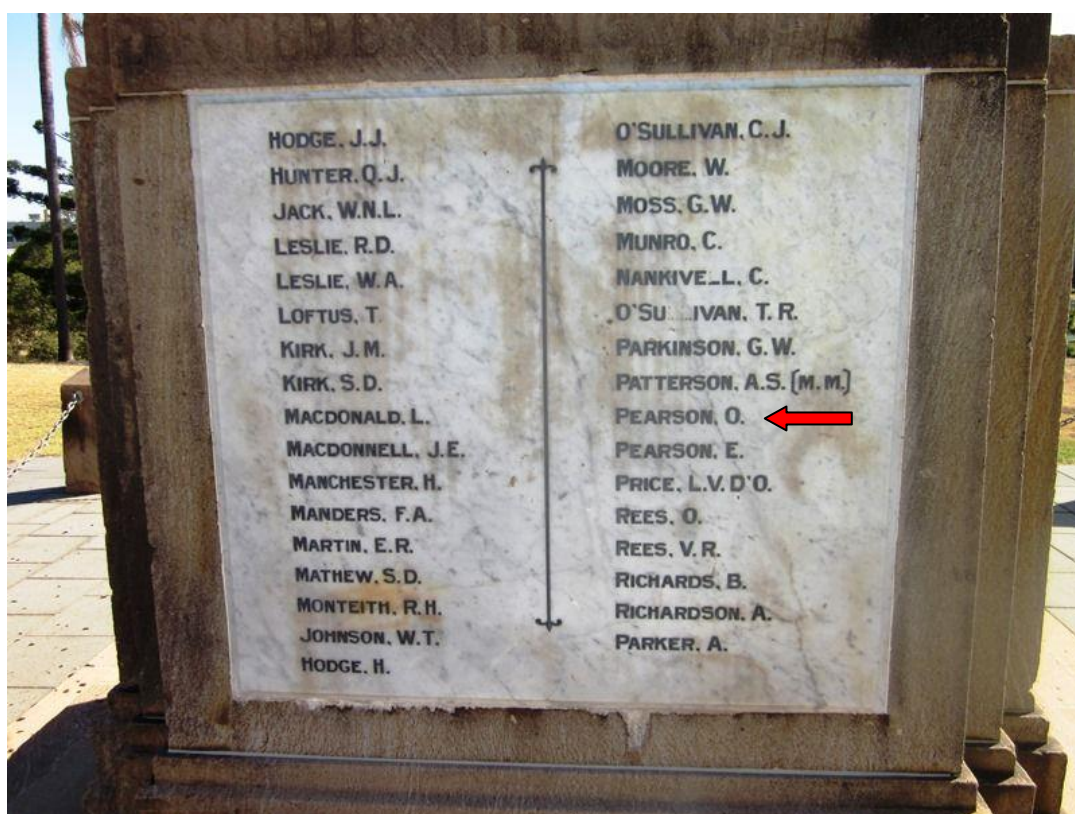


St. Thomas' Anglican Church Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia – John Huth)

O. Pearson & his brother E. Pearson are remembered on the Toowong War Memorial, located in Memorial Park, Sylvan Road, Toowong, Queensland.



Toowong War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia – John Huth)



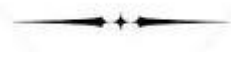
(94 pages of Private Thomas Owen Pearson's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

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

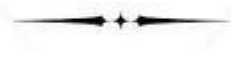


Connected to Private Thomas Owen Pearson:

Older Brother – Corporal Eric Walter Pearson, 481, 25th Battalion, Enlisted 9th March, 1915. Killed in Action 29th July, 1916 (previously reported missing), aged 22. Remembered on Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, France as he has no known grave.



Private Thomas Owen Pearson (*Brisbane Courier* – 5 June, 1915)



Newspaper Notices

PERSONAL NOTES

Private T. O. Pearson, of A Section, Third Field Ambulance, reported wounded, is the second son of Mr Thomas Pearson, town traveller for Messrs. Burns, Philp, and Co. Mr Pearson's first son, Eric, is a present in training at Enoggera to join the next Contingent for the Front.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 29 May, 1915)

CASUALTIES

THE 187th LIST

WOUNDED

Pte T. O. Pearson, Toowong (2nd occ.)

(Daily Standard, Brisbane, Queensland – 27 July, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOUR

The 190th Casualty List

QUEENSLAND

Wounded in Action

Pte T. O. Pearson (and dangerously ill).

(Examiner, Launceston, Tasmania – 5 August, 1916)

PERSONAL NOTES

The late Thomas Owen Pearson, whose death from wounds has been announced, was the second eldest son of Mr and Mrs Pearson of Toowong. He left with the first contingent on the 3rd Field Ambulance, landed at Anzac on April 25, 1915, was wounded while stretcher bearing on May 4, and after some weeks in hospital at Heliopolis returned again to the Peninsula, doing duty as stretcher bearer at the memorable Lone Pine engagement. He was invalided home to England, and subsequently obtained a commission as Sub-Lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards, but was refused transfer from the Australian Force. Early in April he landed in France, and joined on of the Australian Infantry Battalions with which his elder brother, Eric, served in Gallipoli and is now serving in France. The deceased soldier had a large circle of friends, by whom the news of his death was received with the keenest regret.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 7 August, 1916) & (The Queenslander, Brisbane, Queensland – 12 August, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOUR

QUEENSLAND CASUALTIES

DIED OF WOUNDS

Pte T. O. Pearson, Q., 26/7/16 prev. rep. W and dang. ill

(The Week, Brisbane, Queensland – 18 August, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOUR

PEARSON – July 28, of wounds received in France, Thomas Owen, 25th Battalion, late 3rd Field Ambulance, son of Thomas and Mabel Pearson, Toowong.

“In Honour’s Cause.”

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 7 August, 1916) & (The Queenslander, Brisbane, Queensland – 12 August, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOUR

PEARSON – In loving memory of our son, Owen, who died on July 28th, 1916, from wounds received in France, brother of Eric, who has been reported missing since July 29th, at Pozieres.

In honour’s cause.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 26 July, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOUR

PEARSON – In proud and loving memory of Eric, killed in action, July 29th, 1916. Also Owen, died of wounds, July 26th, 1916.

Inserted by father and mother.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 29 July, 1922)

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)

Private T. O. Pearson does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

In Honor’s Cause

Milton Cemetery, Portsmouth, Hampshire, England

Milton Cemetery, Portsmouth contains 426 Commonwealth War Graves – 192 relating to World War 1 & 234 relating to World War 2. There are 12 Australian War Graves from World War 1 in this cemetery.

It was opened in 1911, and contains war graves of both World Wars. The 1914-1918 burials are mainly in Plot 1. After the war a Cross of Sacrifice was erected on the northern side of the chapel in honour of all the servicemen buried in the cemetery. The 1939-1945 War burials are widely spread throughout the cemetery.

(Information from CWGC)



Cemetery Chapel at Milton Cemetery, Portsmouth *(Photo by Basher Eyre)*



Australian War Graves in Milton Cemetery, Portsmouth *(Photo by Mr Peter Bennett)*

Photo of Private T. O. Pearson's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Milton Cemetery, Portsmouth, Hampshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Portsmouth Remembers)