

**Woodgrange Park Cemetery,
East Ham, Essex, England**

War Grave



Lest We Forget

World War 1



31928 CADET

C. T. WATTS

AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS

3RD SEPTEMBER, 1918 Age 25

*God Thought It Best
To Take Thee
To Thy Heavenly Rest*

Cecil Thomas WATTS

Cecil Thomas Watts was born at 51 Water Lane, Stratford, West Ham, Essex, England on 15th September, 1892 to parents Charles Valentine Watts & Clara Watts (nee Richards). He was baptised on 9th October, 1892 at All Saints Church, West Ham, Essex, England.

The 1901 England Census recorded Cecil T. Watts as an 8 year old, living with his family at 30 Water Lane, Stratford, West Ham, Essex. His parents were listed as Charles V. Watts (Silversmith, aged 43, born Westminster, London) & Clara V. Watts (aged 44, born Old Ford, London). Cecil was the youngest of five children listed on this Census (all born West Ham, Essex) – Florence C. Watts (age 19), Ernest C. Watts (Silversmith, aged 17), Bert J. Watts (aged 16), Arthur E. Watts (aged 13) & Cecil.

Cecil Thomas Watts attended City of London, School, England.

According to information supplied by his mother – Cecil Thomas Watts came to Australia when he was 18 years old.

Cecil Thomas Watts, of "The Laurels", Chadwell Heath, Essex, Gunner (Signal School), Australian Field Artillery, was admitted to the Freedom of the City of London on 20th May, 1915.

[The database from which this came from contains papers associated with application for "Freemen" status. Freeman are: a man who did not have to pay trade taxes and shared in the profits of his borough, a person free of feudal service who had served their apprenticeship and could trade in their own right, and anyone who was a member of a City Guild. Freeman admission papers often contain biographical details about the individual.]

Cecil Thomas Watts was aged 23 years & 11 months, single & a Grazier from "Cressbrook" Toogoolawah, via Esk, Queensland when he enlisted at Brisbane, Queensland on 11th September, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 31928 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs C. Watts, Water Lane, Stratford, London, England.

Private Cecil Thomas Watts was posted to 11th Depot Battalion on 13th September, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to Field Artillery Depot as Gunner on 10th October, 1916.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts made an application for Home Leave for 8 days while posted at Artillery Camp, A.I.F., Enoggera. He was requesting to leave on 17th October & return on 25th October to "*visit friends & fix business relating to property.*" Leave was approved on 14th October, 1916.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts was posted to 13th Field Artillery Brigade, 10th Reinforcements on 3rd November, 1916.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts embarked from Sydney, NSW on RMS *Osterley* on 10th February, 1917 with the 13th Field Artillery Brigade, 10th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 11th April, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts was marched in to R.B.A.A. (Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery) at Larkhill, Wiltshire, England on 11th April, 1917 from Australia.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts was written up for an Offence at Larkhill, Wiltshire – Overstaying Leave from midnight on 21st May, 1917 till noon on 22nd May, 1917. He was awarded 24 hours detention on 23rd May, 1917 by Lt. Colonel W. Mailer & forfeited 2 days' pay.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts was written up for an Offence at Larkhill, Wiltshire – Overstaying Leave from 7 pm on 16th June, 1917 until 10.40 pm on 17th June, 1917. He was awarded a forfeiture of 4 days' pay.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 11th September, 1917 from Larkhill. He was marched in to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Rouelles, France on 13th September, 1917. Gunner Watts was marched from A.G.B.D. on 14th September, 1917 & was taken on strength of 4th D.A.C. (Divisional Artillery Column) on 17th September, 1917.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts was transferred to 11th F.A.B. (Field Artillery Brigade) on 20th September, 1917 & was taken on strength of 11th Field Artillery Brigade on the same day. He was posted to 42nd Battery.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts was sent to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance in Belgium on 31st October, 1917 with Influenza. He was transferred to 10th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 2nd November, 1917 – N.Y.D. (cause not yet determined). Gunner Watts was transferred to England from Rouen on 10th November, 1917 with Bronchitis.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts was admitted to Bath War Hospital, England on 12th November, 1917 with Bronchitis – severe. He was transferred to 3rd Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford on 5th December, 1917 with “*Gas Poisoning Bronchitis*”.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts was on furlo from 7th to 21st December, 1917 & was then to report to Depot at Hurdcott.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts was marched in to Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire on 8th January, 1918 from No. 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts was transferred to A.F.C. (Australian Flying Corps) at Wendover on 14th January, 1918. He was marched in to A.F.C. Depot at Warminster from O.T.B. (Officers' Training Battalion) on 15th January, 1918.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts was taken on strength of A.F.C. at Wendover on 15th January, 1918 as mustered as 2nd Air Mechanic (2/A.M.)

2nd Air Mechanic Cecil Thomas Watts was On Command at No. 2 R.F.C. (Royal Flying Corps) School of Military Aeronautics at Oxford on 1st February, 1918 to qualify for an appointment as Flying Officer & was appointed as Cadet.

Cadet / 2nd Air Mechanic Cecil Thomas Watts was marched out to Armament School at Uxbridge on 31st March, 1918 from S.M.A. at Oxford.

Cadet / 2nd Air Mechanic Cecil Thomas Watts was marched in to A.F.C. Training Depot at Wendover on 1st May, 1918 from R.A.F. (Royal Air Force) School of Aeronautics.

Cadet / 2nd Air Mechanic Cecil Thomas Watts was marched out to 1st Wing Headquarters & reported to No. 8 Training Squadron at Tetbury on 1st June, 1918. He was taken on strength of No. 8 Training Squadron on 3rd June, 1918 at Leighterton.

First World War –Training & Pilots Wings

By 1918 cadets progressed through several phases to qualify for their Pilot's Wings.

At the Cadet Wing pupils received basic military training during a two-month course which included drill, physical training, military law, map reading and signalling using Morse code.

Once completed they moved on to the School of Military Aeronautics to begin a two-month course of military training and ground instruction. The topics covered included aviation theory, navigation, map reading, wireless signalling using Morse code, photography and artillery and infantry co-operation. The students were also taught the working of aero engines and instruments and basic rigging.

The next phase involved flying at a Training Depot Stations (TDS). Cadets were expected to complete a minimum of 25 hours elementary flying training - both dual and solo - on Avro 504 aircraft logged over three months. Thorough ground instruction was also provided. This achieved, student pilots received the grade 'A'.

Cadets remained at the same TDS for the second phase of their instruction. This two-month course included a further 35 hours flying time with a minimum of five hours on a modern 'front-line' type of aircraft. Student pilots also had to demonstrate proficiency in cross-country and formation flying, reconnaissance work and gunnery. Successful cadets were graded 'B' and commissioned.

Students completed their training at specialist schools which taught them the skills they would need to survive in combat. The courses varied in length and content according to the operational role selected (e.g. fighter, army co-operation, bomber or maritime). On completion, student pilots were graded 'C' and permitted to wear their Pilot's Wings. In all, by 1918, it took about eleven months for an individual to qualify as a Pilot.

Cadet Cecil Thomas Watts, of No. 8 Training Squadron, A.F.C., took off at 8.50 am on 3rd September, 1918 from Leighterton Aerodrome in a Sopwith Camel C101. The weather was good & it was his first Camel flight. He had flown "Avros" & "Pups".

Cadet Cecil Thomas Watts died on 3rd September, 1918 at Leighterton as a result of an aeroplane accident which occurred at 9 am.

A Court of Enquiry was held at Leighterton Aerodrome on 3rd September, 1918 by order of Major A. W. L. Ellis (M.C.), O/C/ No. 8 Training Squadron, A.F.C. for the purpose of enquiring into the circumstances connected with the accident on 3rd September, 1918 at Leighterton, about 2 miles east of Aerodrome, involving the death of Cadet Cecil Thomas Watts, A.F.C.

The Court proceeded to examine witnesses:-

1st. Witness. Capt. E.F. Pflaum. O.C. "C" Flight, states:-

Cadet Watts was one of my pupils. He had done 15 hours solo "Avro" 6 hours solo "Pup", 18 hours dual "Avro". I tested this man this morning and considered him quite fit to fly "Camels". He first of all flew a "Pup" and handled same in an efficient manner. I then sent him solo on "Camel" C. 101 which had been tested by me, and also flown by the pupils. Cadet Watts had been taught to "Spin" and come out of same, in an "Avro" he had also spun and looped, and half rolled a "pup". Cadet Watts promised to be a good Pilot, and on last flights with me was flying very well. He had good knowledge of engine running and generally handled his machine well.

(Sgd) E.F.PFLAUM. Capt.
O.C. "C" Flight No. 8. T.S.
A.F.C.

2nd. Witness. Aus. 1024. 2/A.M. Grey H.C. No.8. T.S. A.F.C. states:-

I am an engine fitter in "C" Flight No. 8. T.S. A.F.C. and started the Engine of "Camel" C.101 up before leaving the ground. The engine was last inspected at 8.40 a.m. 3.9.18 and was found O.K. The engine was run up on the "Chocs" by the Pilot Cadet Watts and was O.K.

(Sgd) H.C.Grey. 2/A.M. No.8.T.S.
A.F.C.

3rd. Witness. Aus. 2514. 1/A.M. Howes E.F. No. 8. T.S. A.F.C. states:-

I am a rigger attached to "C" Flight, No. 8. T.S. and assisted in dispatching "Camel" C.101. Previous to the machine being despatched. I thoroughly overhauled the controls and fittings on ailerons and elevators. All wire controls and fittings were in good order. I also inspected rudder controls and fittings, also undercarriage and found them all correct. I watched the pilot Cadet Watts taxi out and take off which was quite good.

(Sgd) E.F. Howes. 1/A.M. No.8. T.S.
A.F.C.

4th. Witness. Cadet F.Z. Ross No. 8. T.S. A.F.C. states:-

I was the last Pilot to fly "Camel" C.101 on the 3rd. Sept. 1918. at 7.45 a.m. previous to Cadet Watts flying Camel C.101. It was my first flight on a Camel, and all controls and engine were in good order. My take off and landings were good.

(Sgd) F.Z. Ross. Cadet.
No. 8. T.S. A.F.C.

5th. Witness. Lieut. W.H. Brasch. No. 8. T.S. A.F.C. states:-

On the 3rd. Sept. 1918 at about 9 a.m. I was standing on the "Tarmac" watching Cadet Watts in "Camel" C.101. At about 3000 ft. I noticed him do a right hand verticle turn immediately after at about 2500 feet. I saw a machine spinning slowly to the right, and eventually spin into the ground. I immediately flew over and landed in the same field, taking mechanic Purcell with me. On arrival Cadet Watts had been removed by some workmen. he appeared to be dead, so I left Mechanic Purcell in charge of the machine..

(Sgd) W.H. Brasch. Lieut.
No. 8 T.S. A.F.C.

6th Witness. Aus. 45 F/Sgt. Domeyer A.L. No. 8 T.S A.F.C. states:-

I am N.C.O. i/c "C" Flight, 8 T.S. A.F.C. and inspected the controls of "Camel" C.101 on the 2nd Sept. 1918, the night previous to the accident. They were all in good order. Previously a "King Post" or Aileron Control Lever had carried away at the exceteleyne welding. A new "King Post" of another type was fitted and bracing wires added to all "King Posts" on the machine, otherwise no complaints had been received concerning this machine.

(Sgd) A.L. Domeyer. F/Sgt.
"B" Flight. No. 8 T.S.
A.F.C.

7th. Witness. Cecil Cox, Farm Labourer, Leighterton states:-

At about 9.a.m. on the 3rd. Sept. 1918 I saw a machine come down from a fair height going round and round. It kept going round and round until it hit the ground. I ran over to the machine and found the Pilot hanging out on the left side of the machine. For about two minutes the Pilot was apparently alive but then expired. I helped to lift the body from the machine and then the ambulance came and took the body away.

Question. Was the belt unfastened when you first saw the body?

Answer. No. I unfastened the belt to lift the Pilot from the machine.

(Sgd) Cecil Cox. per President.
J. Mellish. Lieut.

8th. Witness. Pte. Ernest Bristow on being called states:-

I was working on the farm with Cox and helped to lift the body of the Pilot from the machine.

(Sgd) Pte. Ernest Bristow. per PRESIDENT.
J.S. Melish. Lieut.

9th. Witness. Capt. T.E. Marshall M.O. Leighterton Station
states:-

I am the M.O. of Leighterton Station. I examined the body of Cadet Cecil Thomas Watts. He had died from the effect of a severe blow over the heart sustained I believe in an Aeroplane accident. Other injuries were:-
Contusions and Lacerations on the Face and the Limbs. Fracture of Right Humerus, Fracture of both legs; Death was probably instantaneous.

(Sgd) T.E. Marshall.
M.O. Leighterton Station.

The Court having carefully considered the evidence are of the opinion that crash of Camel C. 101 involving the death of Cadet Watts was caused by:- *“The Pilot Cadet Watts, C.T. while attempting a right hand vertical turn, the machine C. 101 went into a spin and that the Pilot did not push his control lever sufficiently forward to bring the machine out of spin. The Court are further of the opinion that no blame is attachable to any other person and that machine C. 101 was in perfect flying order on leaving the ground.”*

Major A. W. L. Ellis, O.C. No. 8 Training Squadron, A.F.C. made the following statement: *“On examination of this crash I found all controls to be O.K. The throttle and fine adjustment were forward and the leading Magneto was off, and trailing Magneto on. The belt was unfastened and unbroken. I am of the opinion that the accident was due to Pilot getting into a spin on a steep right hand turn and further that he did not get his stick far enough forward to bring the machine out of it. The Pilot had been very thoroughly instructed and was quite used to spinning in an Avro and Sop Scout machine, and further had been told how to get out of a spin in a camel. The Pilot was on duty and was not to blame.”*

A death for Cecil T. Watts, aged 25, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Tetbury, Gloucestershire, England.

Cadet Cecil Thomas Watts was buried on 9th September, 1918 in Woodgrange Park Cemetery, Manor Park, London, England – Plot number 35.1929 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Cadet Cecil Thomas Watts - *Coffin was Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Full Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin, draped with the Australian Flag, and surmounted by several beautiful wreaths, was conveyed to the graveside on a Gun-carriage, and the Rev: L. M. Gorrie conducted the burial service. A large number of relatives and friend were present at the graveside. An oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Names of relatives and friends present at the Funeral – (Mother & Father) Mr & Mrs Watts, Water Lane, Stratford. (Sister) Mrs Cockhead, Chadwell Heath, Essex and other relatives.

Gunner Cecil Thomas Watts requested in his Will, dated 17th July, 1917, that all his real estate be bequeathed to Charles Valentine Watts, 30 Water Lane Stratford, London & all his personal estate be bequeathed to Clara Watts. 30 Water Lane, Stratford.

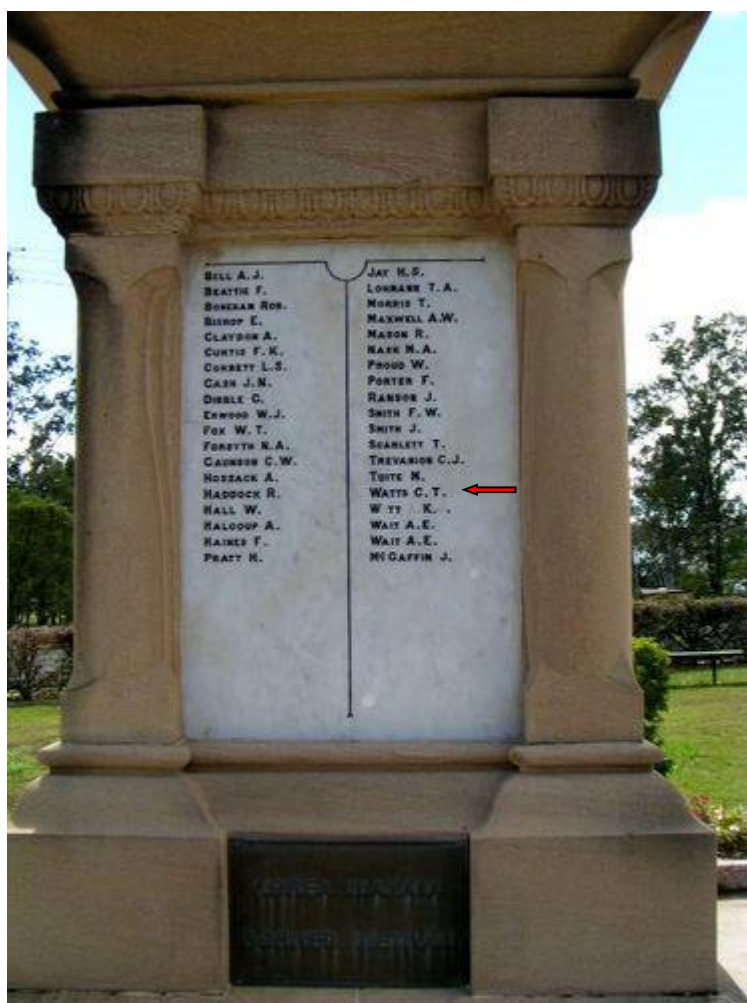
Cadet Cecil Thomas Watts was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Cadet Watts' mother – Mrs C. Watts (Scroll & Plaque issued in England in November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Cadet Cecil Thomas Watts – service number 31928, aged 25, of Australian Flying Corps. He was the son of Mr and Mrs Charles Watts, of 30 Water Lane, Stratford.

C. T. Watts is remembered on the Toogoolawah War Memorial, located in McConnell Park, Cressbrook Street, Toogoolawah, Queensland.



Toogoolawah War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia)



Cadet C. T. Watts 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

Cadet Cecil Thomas Watts is remembered on the London WW1 Memorial 1914-1918 Online website.



(59 pages of Cadet Cecil Thomas Watts' 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





(*Queenslander Pictorial* – 26 May, 1917)



Newspaper Notices

376TH CASUALTY LIST

ILL

Gnr C. T. Watts, England (ser).

(*The Daily Mail*, Brisbane, Queensland – 28 December, 1917)

CASUALTIES

LIST NO. 434

ACCIDENTALLY KILLED

Cadet C. T. Watts, England, 3/9/18 (prev. rep. ill)

(*Daily Standard*, Brisbane, Queensland – 15 October, 1918)

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

TRANSMISSION BY DEATH

REAL PROPERTY ACTS OF 1861 AND 1877

Notice is hereby given that applications have been made for the Registration of Transmission of Title to the Lands hereinafter mentioned.....

Name of Deceased Proprietor – Cecil Thomas Watts, formerly of Taroom, ranch manager, but latterly a member of the A.I. Forces.

Date of Death – September 3, 1918.

Name of Claimant – The Public Curator of Queensland, as Administrator

Description and Situation of Land – Allotment 7 of section 3, town of Taroom.

Estate Claimed to be Transmitted – Fee – simple.

Particulars of Will or Otherwise – Certificate of Authority.

Date within which Caveat may be Lodged – September 20, 1919.

(*The Telegraph*, Brisbane, Queensland – 11 August, 1919)

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)

Cadet C. T. Watts has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone with the following inscription:

God Thought It Best To Take Thee To Thy Heavenly Rest

Woodgrange Park Cemetery, East Ham, Essex, England

There are 190 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war and 101 of the 1939-1945 war here. Those whose graves could not be marked on a headstone are named on a Screen Wall memorial. There are also 3 non World War burials here.

(Information from CWGC)



(Photo from Find a Grave – julia&keld)



Cross of Sacrifice (Photo from CWGC)



War Graves in Woodgrange Park Cemetery (Photo from CWGC)

Photo of Cadet C. T. Watts' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Woodgrange Park Cemetery, East Ham, Essex, England.



(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett Private Collection)



Family Headstone behind CWGC Headstone *(Photo by Geoffrey Gillon)*



War Graves in Woodgrange Park Cemetery *(Photo from CWGC)*