

**Wolvercote Cemetery,
Wolvercote, Oxfordshire**

War Grave



Lest We Forget

World War 1



LIEUTENANT

E. H. WESTMORELAND

ROYAL AIR FORCE

20TH AUGUST, 1918 Age 23

"Into Thy Hands"

Edwin Herbert WESTMORELAND

Edwin Herbert Westmoreland was born on 15th May, 1895 in Richmond, Victoria to parents Charles Edwin & Annie Adelaide Westmoreland (nee Hooper). He was baptised on 8th September, 1895 at St. Stephens, Richmond, Victoria, Australia.

Edwin Westmoreland was a passenger on *Wakool* which departed from Victoria, Australia in August, 1903, destinations - Natal, Capetown, London via Ports. Also listed as passengers were: his parents Mr C. E. Westmoreland (aged 37), Mrs A. Westmoreland (aged 37) & siblings - Sybil Westmoreland (aged 9), Edwin Westmoreland (aged 8), Harry Westmoreland (aged 6) & Jack Westmoreland (aged 1).

Edwin Herbert Westmoreland joined Royal Flying Corps – Recruits Depot with a Service number of 88659 & rank of 3rd Class Air Mechanic on 18th July, 1917. He was transferred to 5 S. of A. on 2nd August, 1917 then transferred to 2 S. of A. on 7th September, 1917. He was discharged on 24th October, 1917 from South Farnborough having completed 99 days. He was discharged in consequence of “*his services being no longer required having been appointed to a temporary commission as 2nd Lieut. (on probation) on the General List for duty with the Royal Flying Corps.*” His discharge from non-commissioned service recorded him as “*keen and efficient*”.

RFC / RAF

The Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was the aviation arm of the British Army. Squadrons were the main form of flying unit from its foundation on 13 April 1912, until its merging with the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) to form the Royal Air Force on 1 April 1918.

Edwin Herbert Westmoreland gained a commission with the British Royal Air Force. His date of birth was listed as 15th May, 1892. His next of kin was listed as his wife of Glenelg, 32 Raleigh St, Yeoville, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa (postal address of P.O. Box 5748 Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa). Edwin Westmoreland's occupation in Civilian life was listed as a Government Land & Mine Surveyor. He had worked for Aurora West United G. M. Co. Ltd, Box 26 Marenburg, Transvaal, South Africa from 1st February, 1914 until 30th May, 1917. Edwin Westmoreland's Special Qualifications listed on his Officer's Service Record – “*Since joining RFC flown DH6, BE2c, d, e, RE8.*”

From the Supplement to London Gazette – 30 October, 1917:

The undermentioned to be temp. 2nd Lts. (on prob):

25th Oct. 1917

.....Edwin Herbert Westmoreland.....

2nd Lieutenant Edwin Herbert Westmoreland was posted to 5 Training Depot Squadron on 28th October, 1917. He was transferred to 35 Training Depot Squadron on 19th November, 1917. Edwin Herbert Westmoreland was appointed a Flying Officer on 13th February, 1918.

2nd Lieutenant Edwin Herbert Westmoreland was posted as Lieutenant at A. & S. on 1st April, 1918. He was transferred to 35 Training Squadron on 28th April, 1918 at Port Meadow then to Brigade Pool the same day.

R.A.F. Port Meadow Aerodrome, Oxford

During the First World War part of Port Meadow was used to train the Royal Flying Corps and turned into a military aerodrome. Seventeen air men were killed in accidents during WW1 associated with the aerodrome on Port Meadow near Wolvercote.

On 20th August, 1918 Lieutenant Edwin Herbert Westmoreland, aged 23, was flying (solo) a Bristol Fighter, serial B826. 2nd Lieutenant Joseph Packer, aged 21, was flying (solo) a Bristol Fighter, serial C759. Both Westmoreland & Packer were based out of Port Meadow – 44 Training Depot Station (which had formed by merging the resident 35 TS with the newly arrived 71 TS). While practising “aerial fighting” (later known as dogfighting) their planes collided in the air over Marston/Elsfield at 10 am. 2nd Lieutenant Packer’s plane caught fire and crashed into a cornfield, exploding upon impact.

Lieutenant Edwin Herbert Westmoreland died on 20th August, 1918 over Marston/Elsfield, Oxford (east of Wolvercote) from an aeroplane collision. Both pilots were killed in the collision.

An Inquest was held into the accident between Lieutenant E. H. Westmoreland & 2nd Lieutenant J. Packer at the Wolvercote Parish Room on 21st August, 1918. “*The cause of the accident was in our opinion that the Pilots while on duty practicing aerial fighting collided, probably because one while doing an _ A turn lost sight of the other.*” The verdict was “accidental death”.



A general photo of 2 Bristol fighters

(Photo with permission Wolvercote WW1 Aerodrome Memorial Facebook page)

Newspaper item on Inquest – *The Oxford Journal Illustrated*:

On Wednesday, Mr A. H. Franklin, Coroner for the Central District, held an inquiry at the Parish Rom, Wolvercote, respecting the death of Edwin Herbert Westmoreland, aged 25, lieutenant in the R.A.F., and Joseph Packer, aged 21, second lieutenant, at Marston.

Lieutenant William Shaw Thomson said he had known both officers for some time. They were expert airmen, and had had considerable experience, Lieutenant Packer having had 96 hours, and Lieutenant Westmoreland 103 hours in the air, which was considered a great deal. He saw the deceased officers about 9.30 on Tuesday morning, before they started. Lieutenant Packer reported to him before he went up on fighting practice with Lieutenant Westmoreland. Each man was using a Bristol fighter machine.

Albert Gammon, a discharged soldier, living at Hendington, stated that he was working in hayfield near Marston about 10 o'clock in Tuesday morning, when he saw two aeroplanes engaged in fighting practice just overhead. He watched them for about 10 minutes, during which time they were manoeuvring. The one machine struck the other, the wings seemed to double, they began to fall, and one of the machines caught fire. The man who was not burnt jumped from the machine with his arms spread out. Witness went to the other machine, which had fallen in a field in Elsfield parish. The machine was on fire and Lieutenant Packer was inside, He could not get near, to do anything, so went to the other machine, and found the airman lying face downwards, quite dead.

Capt. Hitchings, R.A.M.C., said he was called to the scene of the accident about 11 o'clock on Tuesday morning. He saw the body of Lieutenant Packer in the burning wreckage, charred beyond recognition. The head of Lieutenant Westmoreland was shattered.

Lieutenant H. R. Hastings said that on Tuesday morning he instructed the deceased officers to go out and practice aerial fighting, He did not see them start.

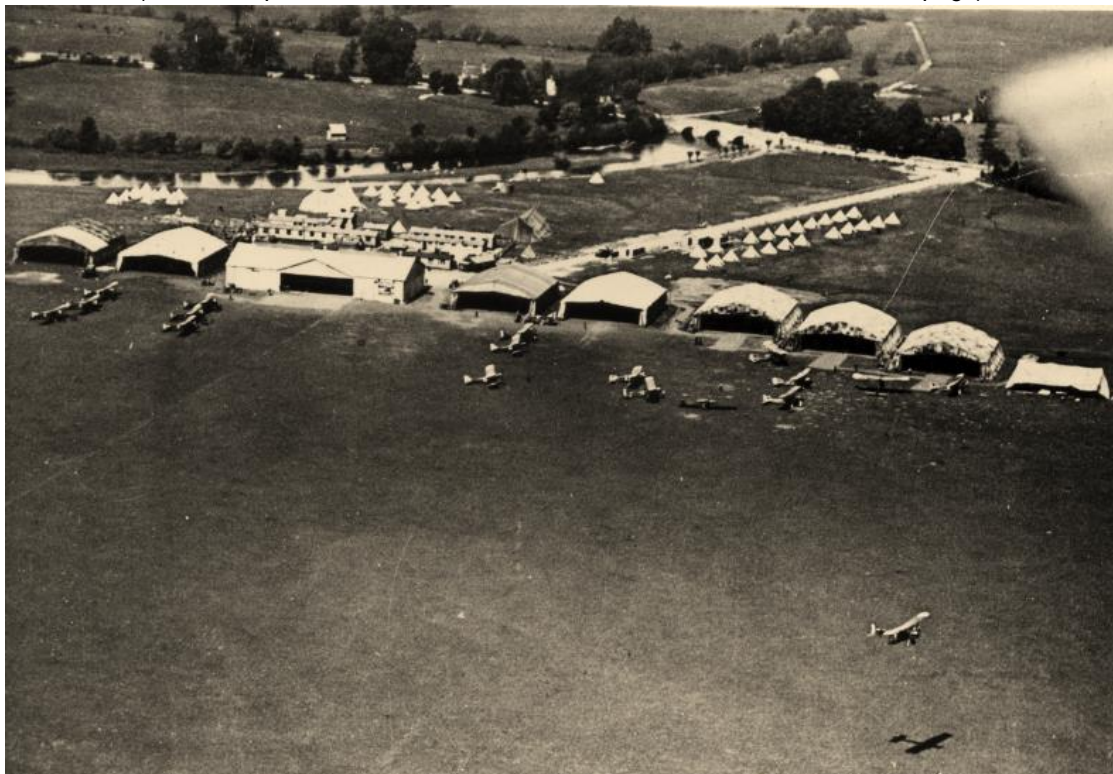
Air-mechanics Ford and Clowes deposed to the machines being in proper condition when the airmen went up.

A verdict of Accidental death was returned.



Wolvercote Aerodrome 22 April, 1917

(Photo with permission Wolvercote WW1 Aerodrome Memorial Facebook page)



Wolvercote Aerodrome May, 1918 showing the expansion

(Photo with permission Wolvercote WW1 Aerodrome Memorial Facebook page)

2nd Lieutenant J. Packer, of Royal Air Force, was the son of Joseph Frederick & Anne Packer of 37 North St., Swindon, Wiltshire. He was buried in Christ Church Burial Ground, Swindon, Wiltshire.

A death for Edwin H. Westmoreland, aged 25, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Headington, Oxfordshire, England.

Lieutenant Edwin Herbert Westmoreland was buried on 23rd August, 1918 in Wolvercote Cemetery, Wolvercote, Oxfordshire, England – Plot number F1. 5. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lieutenant Edwin Herbert Westmoreland, aged 23, of 44th Training Depot Station, Royal Air Force. He was the son of C. E. and A. A. Westmoreland; husband of Dorothea Westmoreland, of Johannesburg, Transvaal. Born at Melbourne, Australia. Came from Johannesburg to serve.

Lieutenant Edwin Herbert Westmoreland 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*)

Edwin Herbert Westmoreland is remembered on the South Africa War Graves Project website.

Lieut. E. A. Westmoreland is remembered on the Florida War Memorial, Roodepoort, Gauteng South Africa.



(Photos by Derek Walker)



The Wolvercote WW1 Aerodrome Memorial Project was set up to raise awareness & funds for a Plaque to be installed in remembrance of the 17 airmen who died in accidents in World War 1 associated with the aerodrome at Port Meadow. The new memorial is due to be in place on 23rd May, 2018.



Wolvercote WW1 Aerodrome Memorial Project – Howard Crapper & Peter Smith *(Photo by Richard Cave)*



Unveiling of the Wolvercote WW1 Aerodrome Memorial – 23rd May, 2018





Unveiling of the Wolvercote WW1 Aerodrome Memorial – 23rd May, 2018





Wolvercote WW1 Aerodrome Memorial

**A special thank you to Peter Smith for allowing me to use several photos from Wolvercote WW1 Aerodrome Memorial Facebook page. Also for providing the Newspaper item on the Inquest & for pointing out a few corrections that were required.*



Wolvercote Cemetery, Wolvercote, Oxfordshire, England

Wolvercote Cemetery, Wolvercote has 45 Commonwealth War Graves – 22 from World War 1 & 23 from World War 2.



Wolvercote Cemetery, Wolvercote (Photo by julia&keld)



Lieutenant E. H. Westmoreland's headstone (Photo from CWGC)

Photo of Lieutenant E. H. Westmoreland's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Wolvercote Cemetery, Wolvercote, Oxfordshire, England.



(Photo with permission Wolvercote WW1 Aerodrome Memorial Facebook page)