

**St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery,
Kensal Green, London, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



LIEUTENANT

C. WHELAN

ROYAL AIR FORCE

25TH APRIL, 1918 Age 19

Cyril WHELAN

Cyril Waxman was born on 21st March, 1899 was born at Collingwood, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia to parents Albert & Florence Agnes Waxman (nee McRae).

The 1911 England Census recorded Cyril Waxman, Student, aged 12, at Xavier College at East Brighton, Sussex, England. The principle of Xavier College was Thomas Wall & Cyril was one of 46 Students listed – aged 19 down to 8 years.

Cyril Waxman (Student, aged 17), along with his father – Albert W. Waxman (Artiste, aged 40) & Arthur E. Carthy (Valet, aged 22) were passengers on *New York* which departed from the port of Liverpool, England on 12th February, 1916 bound for New York.

Albert Waxman & his son Cyril, both changed their surname to Whelan.

Cyril Whelan joined Imperial Army on 2nd March, 1916. His next of kin was listed as his father – Albert Whelan, 10 Piccadilly Chambers, 26 Coventry St, London.

3rd Air Mechanic Cyril Whelan, Regimental number 68725, had joined Royal Flying Corps on 28th March, 1917. He was discharged on 23rd May, 1917 at Recruits Depot, South Farnborough, England. "*His services being no longer required having been selected for appointment to a temporary commission as 2nd Lieutenant (on probation) for duty with Royal Flying Corps.*" Cyril Whelan served with the Colours for 58 days & served with Army Reserve for 1 year & 25 days.

Cyril Whelan gained a Commission in the Royal Flying Corps on 24th May, 1917. His address was listed as c/o London Bank of Australia, 71 Old Broad St., London. His next-of-kin was listed as Albert Whelan, c/o London Bank of Australia, 71 Old Broad St., London (in September, 1921 the address was changed to 59 Portland Court, Great Portland St., London).

Royal Flying Corps (R.F.C.) / Royal Air Force (R.A.F.)

The Royal Flying Corps (R.F.C.) was the air arm of the British Army before and during the First World War, until it merged with the Royal Naval Air Service on 1 April 1918 to form the Royal Air Force (R.A.F.). During the early part of the war, the R.F.C. supported the British Army by artillery co-operation and photographic reconnaissance. This work gradually led R.F.C. pilots into aerial battles with German pilots and later in the war included the strafing of enemy infantry and emplacements, the bombing of German military airfields and later the strategic bombing of German industrial and transport facilities.

The R.F.C.'s motto was *Per ardua ad astra* ("Through adversity to the stars"). This remains the motto of the Royal Air Force (R.A.F.) and other Commonwealth air forces.

(Extract from Wikipedia)

From *Supplement to The London Gazette* – 19 June, 1917:

The undermentioned cadets to be temp. 2nd Lts. (on Prob) 24th May 1917:-

General List (R.F.C.)

Cyril Whelan

2nd Lieutenant Cyril Whelan gained his Royal Aero Club Aviator's Certificate on 16th June, 1917 in a L & P Biplane at London & Provincial School, Edgware.

2nd Lieutenant Cyril Whelan was posted to No. 42 Training Squadron which was based at Wye Areodrome, Kent, England.

2nd Lieutenant Cyril Whelan was appointed Lieutenant on 1st April, 1918.

On 25th April, 1918 Lieutenant Cyril Whelan was flying an Avro 504 - serial number D4394 from No. 42 Training Squadron, with Lieutenant Edmund Douglas Marrable as passenger. At the same time 2nd Lieutenant Alwyn Gordon Levy, cousin of Lieutenant Cyril Whelan, was the pilot of a Sopwith Pup serial number D4079 also from No. 42 Training Squadron at Wye, Kent, England, under instruction in aerial fighting. The Avro collided with the Sopwith Pup around 6.45 pm near the *Golden Ball* public house between Wye and Kennington, Kent, England. All 3 airmen were killed.

Lieutenant Cyril Whelan died on 25th April, 1918 between Wye and Kennington, Kent, England as a result of an aero accident.

A death for Cyril Whelan, aged 19, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of East Ashford, Kent, England.

Lieutenant Cyril Whelan was buried in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England – Plot number 1. 1952. and now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

[Second Lieutenant Alwyn Gordon Levy was buried in Willesden Jewish Cemetery, Willesden, Brent, London, England – Plot number Cx. 21. 4. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.]

Newspaper item – *Western Times*, Exeter, Devon, England – 27 April, 1918

Two Aeroplanes Collide: Three Men Killed

As the result of a collision between two aeroplanes attached to an aerodrome in a South-eastern district, three airmen were killed on Thursday evening.

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An inquest was held in East Kent on Lieuts. C. Whelan and E. D. Marrable, and Second-Lieut. A. G. Levi, of the Royal Air Force. It was stated that Lieut. Whelan left the aerodrome with Lieut. Marrable as passenger, and crashed into a machine flown by Lieut. Levi. Both machines crashed to the ground. A verdict of death from misadventure was returned.

Newspaper item – *Diss Express*, Diss, Norfolk, England – 3 May, 1918

Collided In The Air

At an inquest in an East Kent village on Lieuts. Whelan and E. D. Marrable and Second Lieut. A. G. Levi, R.A.F., who were killed while engaged in air fighting practice, "Death from misadventure" was the verdict.

It was stated that Lieut. Whelan left the aerodrome carrying Lieut. Marrable as a passenger. Later he crashed into a machine piloted by Lieut. Levi. and the two aeroplanes fell to the ground. Marrable asked permission to go up; it was his first flight.

Newspaper item – *Globe*, London, England – 29 April, 1918:

AVIATION COUSINS KILLED

The victims of a collision 2,000 feet over a southern-eastern aerodrome on Friday were Lieut. Cyril Whelan, son of Mr Albert Whelan, the Australian entertainer, and his cousin, Lieut. Alwyn Levey, son of Mr Bert Levey, the Australian artist and caricaturist. Both were in the R.A.F. Lieut Whelan being an instructor and Lieut. Levey his best pupil.

A Requiem Mass will be held at St. Charles' Ogle-street, W., at 10.15 am to-morrow after which the body of Lieut. Whelan will be interred at St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Kensal-green

Lieut Levey will be buried at the Jewish Cemetery on Wednesday.

Newspaper item – *Punch*, Melbourne, Victoria – 15 August, 1918:

The sad news has come through of the death of another brave young Australia. Flight -Lieutenant Cyril Waxman enlisted in the Flying Corps, and passed all his exams before he was eighteen. He was to go into the firing-line when he was nineteen, but, during the year previous he had proved such a wonderful success training aviation pilots that he was retained at this work. He was a son of the well-known London vaudeville artist, whose stage name is Albert Whelan. The young aviator was buried with full military honours. At the requiem mass the coffin was carried by six officers of his aerodrome, who also carried him to his last resting place.

Information from “*British Jews in The First World War*”:

Cyril's Father, Albert who had changed his name to Albert Whelan, left Australia in the early 1900s to come to Britain with his young son, to pursue what turned out to be a successful career as an film actor and music hall performer.

Cyril was educated at St Edmunds College, Ware. He was 18 years old when he enlisted in the RFC in March 1917 and was their youngest flier and a very gifted aviator. Over the next 12 months he had advanced to stunt instructor having gained a wide experience on a variety of different RFC aeroplanes. He joined the 42nd training school at Wye in January 1918 as an instructor to train British and Canadian pilots for the Western Front.

Tragedy struck at 6.45 in the evening of 25 April 1918 when Cyril's Avro 504 trainer collided in mid-air with a Sopwith Pup flown by his cousin Alwyn Levy .

No one knows what actually happened but it appears that that the cousins were attempting to signal each other resulting in disastrous consequences. Alwyn was buried at Willesden Jewish cemetery and Cyril at St Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery in Kensal Green, Brent.

Their deaths were tragic loss for not only their parents but also for the Levy family back in Australia as only a month earlier another their cousin's, Sergeant Albert Levy, MM had been killed in France.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lieutenant Cyril Whelan, aged 19, of No. 42 Training Squadron, Royal Air Force. He was the son of Mr & Mrs Albert Whelan, of 221 Brixton Hill, Brixton, London.

Lieutenant Cyril Whelan 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.

Note: The Australian War Memorial Commemorative Roll states he was also known as Cyril Waxman



Commemorative Roll (Photo from AWM)



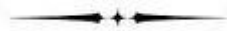
Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial (*Capital Photographer*)

Information obtained from the CWGC & Australian War Memorial (Commemorative Roll)





Cyril Whelan



Newspaper Notices

FLYING OFFICER'S DEATH

The adjourned inquest on Lieut. Francis Walter Cobb, R.F.C., killed in descending from a flight, as reported in our last issue, was held in an East Kent town on Saturday afternoon. Additional evidence was given by Lieut. Cyril Whelan, the officer who had used deceased's machine before the fatal flight. He stated that everything was in good order when deceased ascended.

Sergt, Kalam Plopin witnessed the accident. Deceased, when descending, tried to turn without banking, and crashed to the ground.

A verdict of "Death from Misadventure" was returned.

(South Eastern Gazette, Maidstone, Kent, England – 9 April, 1918)

Australian Fliers Killed

Former Residents of Victoria

Lieutenant Cyril Whelan, son of Mr Albert Whelan (formerly of Melbourne, and now a leading theatrical entertainer in England) and Lieutenant Levy, son of Mr Bert Levy (formerly of Bendigo, and now a successful caricaturist in New York and London) have been killed in an aeroplane collision in England.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 2 May, 1918)

DIED ON SERVICE

WHELAN (Waxman) – Killed in an aeroplane collision in England about 25th April, 1918, Lieutenant Cyril Whelan (Waxman), loved son of Mr and Mrs Albert Whelan (Waxman), London, and beloved nephew of Cr. Joseph Waxman, Mrs Aaron Blashki (Sydney), and Mys Hyman White.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 4 May, 1918)

News has been received by Mr Reub. Levy that his nephew, Flight Lieutenant Alwyn Levy, aged 20, the only son of Mr Bert Levy, the Australian artist, now resident in New York, was accidentally killed by the result of a collision in midair near London. The lad enlisted with the Canadian Flying Corps. ON the same day his cousin, Flight Lieutenant Cyril Whelan, the eldest son of Mr Albert Whelan, the Australian actor, now in London, was killed in a similar collision. Both lads are nephews of Mrs A. Blashki, of Potts Point.

(*The Sun*, Sydney, NSW, Australia – 10 May, 1918)

AVIATORS FALL

TWO COUSINS COLLIDE

Flight-Lieutenant Cyril Whelan (Waxman) and Flight Lieutenant Levy, killed in a collision in England, were sons of Australians well known in the literary and theatrical world – Mr Albert Whelan, now residing in London, and Mr Bert Levy, now in America. Both fathers held leading places in literary circles in Melbourne some years ago, and both have since been successful on the vaudeville stage. Mr Levy revisited Australia a few years ago, and his entertaining caricature act proved a big hit on the Tivoli circuit. The cables give only vague details of the deaths, but it is surmised that the boys, who were first cousins, were manoeuvring at the base of the Royal Flying Corps, when they endeavoured to approach and signal each other, with disastrous results; or they may have been flying in the same machine as pilot and observer. Much sympathy is felt for the parents, but more especially for Mr and Mrs Levy, as their son was an only child, and just turned eighteen. Lieutenant Whelan was twenty-two years of age. The boys were nephews of Councillor Joseph Waxman, the late Mr Louis Waxman, Mrs Aaron Blashki (Sydney), and Mrs Hyman White. The Levy family have had a double bereavement, for Sergeant Albert Levy, M.M., who was killed on 25th March, another only son, being Mr and Mrs Jack Levy's boy, was a cousin. Both Lieutenant and Sergeant Levy were grandsons of Mrs S. Levy, St. Kilda.

(*Table Talk*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 9 May, 1918) & (*Jewish Herald*, Victoria, Australia – 17 May, 1918)

SMILE AND CARRY ON

Lieutenant Bert Levy, R.A.F., who was killed in England through colliding in the air with his cousin Cyril Whelan, in a letter written just prior to the death to his father, Bert Levy, the well known artist, formerly of Melbourne, said - "If the news ever reaches you, which sooner or later reaches every flier's parents, don't mourn. We Royal Flying Corps men never think of death. The only thing we may think of is the effect of our passing may have on our dear ones. So, if I go the usual way, don't let dear Mumsy cry, wear black, and all that sort of nonsense. Dad, don't get all upset. In the vernacular of your profession—keep the show going—don't have any waits. Smile, and carry on, for I will be standing right by, watching you both, but I will not be visible. If you don't smile I may feel like David Warfield, in 'Peter Grimm,' struggling to ask you to do so, but unable to put my message over."

(*Daily Herald*, Adelaide, South Australia – 16 May, 1919)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Lieutenant C. Whelan has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone but no inscription.

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England

Kensal Green (St Mary's) Roman Catholic Cemetery contains burials of both wars. Some of the 208 First World War burials are grouped together. The largest, known as the War Plot, contains graves of United Kingdom forces and there are smaller groups of Canadian and Australian graves. The rest of the First World War graves, and all of the 107 Second World War graves, are scattered elsewhere in the cemetery. A Screen Wall and a low kerb bear the names of casualties of both wars whose graves could not be marked individually. In addition to the Commonwealth war graves, the cemetery contains a number of war graves of other nationalities, including a substantial Belgian plot from the First World War.

(Information from CWGC)





St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery (Photo above from Find a Grave – Len)



Cross of Sacrifice (Photo from Find a Grave – Mike Ganley)

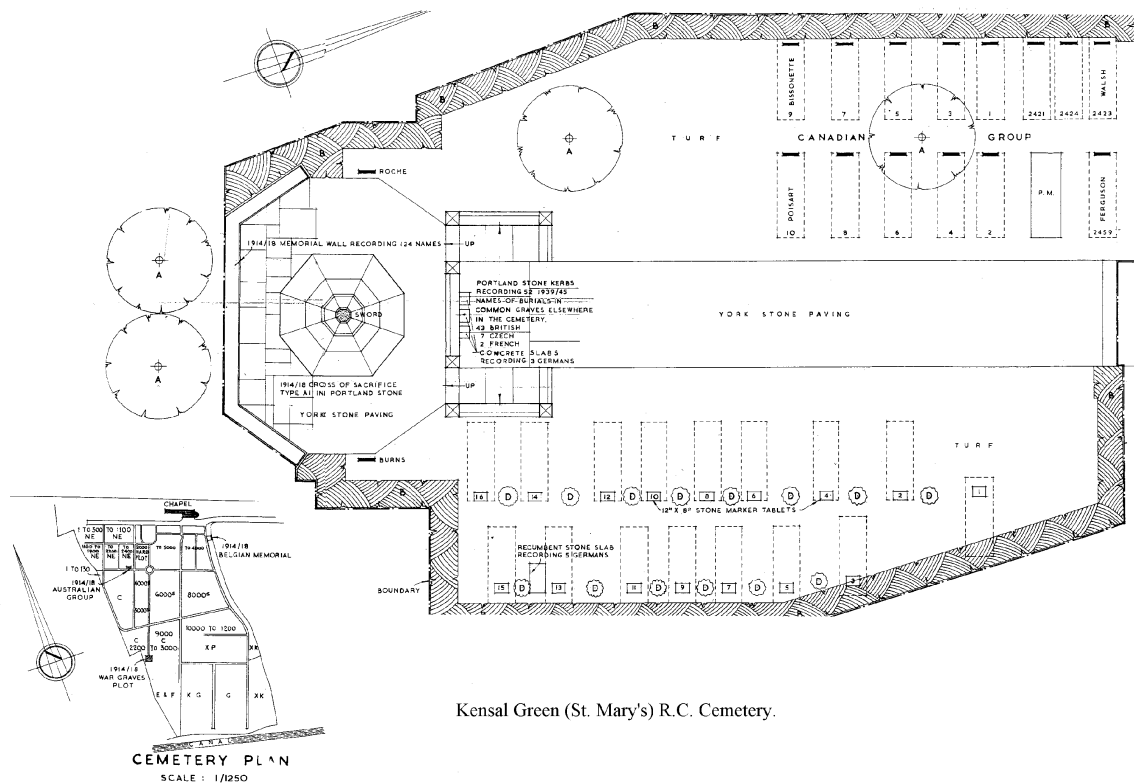
Photo of Lieutenant C. Whelan's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England.



(Photo from Find a Grave – js)



Australian Plot in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green
(Photo from Find a Grave – Lighthouseman)



Kensal Green (St. Mary's) R.C. Cemetery.