

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



SECOND LIEUTENANT

G. V. WICKS

AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS.

13TH OCTOBER, 1918 Age 28



George Viner WICKS

George Viner Wicks was born on 8th October, 1890 at Fremantle, Western Australia to parents William Henry & Alice Mary Wicks (nee Viner).

George Viner Wicks had served 5 years apprenticed with NSW Government Railways, Sydney & served 5 years with Vickers Naval Construction Works.

George V. Wicks, Engineer was listed as a passenger on *Suevic* which departed from London. George Wicks had departed from the port of Calcutta, India & embarked at Sydney on 17th April, 1910.

George Wicks, aged 22, was listed as Crew – 5th Engineer on *Argyllshire* which had departed from the port of Rockhampton, Queensland & arrived at the port of Sydney on 23rd September, 1912.

George Wicks, aged 25, was listed as Crew – 3rd Engineer on *Manchuria* which had departed from Newcastle, NSW & arrived at the port of San Francisco, California on 2nd May, 1915.

G. Wicks, aged 25, was listed as Crew – Assistant 3rd Engineer on *St. Albans* which had departed from the port of Melbourne & arrived at the port of Sydney on 26th July, 1915.

George V. Wicks, aged 25, was listed as Crew – Assistant 3rd Engineer on *St. Albans* which had departed from Kobe, Japan & arrived at the port of Sydney on 3rd April, 1916.

George Wicks, aged 25, was listed as Crew – Assistant 3rd Engineer on *St. Albans* which had departed from the port of Melbourne & arrived at the port of Sydney on 17th April, 1916.

George V. Wicks, aged 25, was listed as Crew – Assistant 3rd Engineer on *St. Albans* which had departed from Kobe, Japan and arrived at the port of Sydney, Australia on 26th June, 1916.

George V. Wicks, aged 25, was listed as Crew – Assistant 3rd Engineer on *St. Albans* which had departed from the port of Melbourne & arrived in Sydney on 7th July, 1916.

George Viner Wicks was issued a Certificate of Competency (No. 627) on 18th August, 1916 for 1st Class Engineer, issued by the Department of Navigation, NSW.

George Viner Wicks was a 25 year old, single, Consulting Engineer from “Caversham” Anderton Street, Marrickville, NSW when he applied for a Commission with the Australian Flying Corps of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England and his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr William Henry Wicks of “Caversham” Anderton Street, Marrickville, NSW. His educational qualifications were listed as The Sydney School Mechanical Drawing, D. McNeil’s Marine Engineers Academy & Burke’s College (Adelaide). George Wicks was presently employed as a Draftsman & Engineer to R. Wildred & Co. Consulting Engineers.

George Viner Wicks was accepted into the Australian Flying Corps on 5th November, 1917.

The Officers’ Service Record form lists the following special Qualifications for George Viner Wicks:

- A.E.F. to German New Guinea 18 Months. Service at sea 2 years.
- Chief Engineers Cet. BA 7
- Boiler Instrt Cert. – Australian
- Member American ___ Engineers
- 4 years Engineer Apprentice
- 4 years (Sea going Engineer)
- 2 years (Shore) Craftsman & Manager
- ___ to Consulting Engineers erecting _____ etc)
- Have built Aero Engines since joining R.F.C.
- Certs Tractor Biplane ___HP.
- Have Civilian Pilots ticket

George Viner Wicks was posted to Special Draft No. 1, Australian Flying Corps on 17th November, 1917.

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Nestor* (A71) on 21st November, 1917 & disembarked at Suez on 15th December, 1917.

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks was posted to Australian Camp, Suez on 15th December, 1917. He entrained for embarkation Overseas on 30th December, 1917 & embarked from Alexandria on 31st December, 1917 & disembarked at Alexandria on 2nd January, 1918. Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks embarked from Abbassiah on 8th January, 1918 & disembarked at Taranto on 13th January, 1918 then finally disembarked at Southampton, England on 24th January, 1918.

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks was marched in from Australia to A.F.C. (Australian Flying Corps) Training Depot at Wendover, Buckinghamshire, England on 24th January, 1918.

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks was on command at No. 1 Royal Flying Corps School of Military Aeronautics at Reading, Berkshire, England on 1st March, 1918 for training as a Flying Officer (Pilot).

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks was marched in to A.F.C. Depot, Wendover from No. 1 School of Military Aeronautics at Reading on 17th May, 1918.

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks was marched out from A.F.C. Depot to 1st Wing Headquarters & reposted to No. 5 Training Squadron.

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks was taken on strength with No. 5 Training Squadron at Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire on 30th May, 1918.

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks passed the Vickers Gun Test "B" on 7th June, 1918. He passed Lewis Gun Tests No. 1 & 2 on 13th June, 1918. Second Lieutenant Wicks passed Vickers Gun Test "C" No. "A" on 15th June 1918 & passed the Lewis Gun Test No. 5 on 21st June, 1918.

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks was taken on strength with No. 7 Training Squadron at Leighterton, Gloucestershire on 16th September, 1918.

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks, of No. 7 Training Squadron, was killed in an aeroplane accident at Leighterton, Gloucestershire on 13th October, 1918.

A Court of Enquiry was assembled on the 13th October, 1918 at Leighterton Aerodrome, Gloucestershire, by order of Major W. H. Anderson, D.F.C. Commanding No. 2 Squadron Station, A.R.C. with instructions to enquire into the circumstance connected with the accident on 13th October, 1918 at Leighterton Aerodrome involving plane R. E. 8 C/2628 type – 140 HP. R.A.F. which the plane was totally damaged & the engine seriously damaged. R.E.8 C/2628 was piloted by Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks, of No. 7 Training Squadron, A.F.C. He was the sole occupant & was fatally injured.

The Court proceeded to examine the Witnesses:

1st Witness: Captain N. Clark, No. 7 T.S., A.F.C. stated:-

I am Flight Commander "B" Flight No. 7 T.S., A.F.C. I instructed 2/Lieut Wicks about 12 o'clock noon on 13/10/18 to take up R.E.8. C/2628 to do his first solo on that type, I watched him take off and when about 50 feet up, he swung very quickly to the left without putting on any bank. This developed into a flat spin, the nose of the machine dropping. At that moment, he shut the engine off and the machine dived into the ground just on the edge of the aerodrome.

2nd Witness: No. 100 Corpl/Mech Eckhardt H. G., No. 7 T.S., stated:

I am Corpl engine fitter in "C" Flight No. 7 T.S. On the morning of the 13th October, at 12.20 pm I started up the engine of R.E.8 C/2628 for the pilot 2/Lieut Wicks. The engine was running satisfactorily, and pilot (who I had noticed was securely strapped in) taxied the machine out and took off. When about 50 feet up, the pilot got into a flat spin and crashed on the Aerodrome. I rushed across and found the pilot lying partly out of the machine which was lying on its side. The safety belt was undone. The pilot was unconscious and appeared to be seriously injured and was removed immediately to hospital. The machine was a complete wreck and the engine was seriously damaged.

3rd Witness: No. Aus. 457 1/A.M. Green G. No. 7 T.S. stated:

I am a rigger in "C" Flight No. 7 T.S., A.F.C. I examined the rigging of R.E.8 C/2628 on the morning of the 13th October and found all correct.

4th Witness: No. Aus. 6352 2/A.M. McBriar W. M. No. 7 T.S. stated:

I am a fitter in "C" Flight No. 7 T.S., A.F.C. I examined the engine of R.E.8 C/2628 on the morning of the 13th October at 8 am. and found all correct.

5th Witness: Captain T. E. Marshall, A.A.M.C. stated:

I am Medical Officer, Leigherton Station, A.F.C. At about 12.45 pm on 13/10/18, 2/Lieut Wicks was brought to the Reception Station. On examination, I found he was dead as a result of fracture of the base of the skull. There were other minor injuries.

6th Witness: Cadet B. A. Fallon, No. 7 T.S., A.F.C. stated:

I am Cadet under instruction in No. 7 T.S., A.F.C. I flew R.E.8 C/2628 at 9.30 am on 13/10/18. The machine was then in good order and condition. This flight was the one prior to that of 2/Lieut Wicks'.

The Court found that aeroplane R.E.8 C/2628, piloted by Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks. The weather conditions on take-off were good. The plane & engine were last examined at 8 am on 13th October, 1918 & were in good condition, fit for flying. It was Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks' first solo flight in aeroplane type R.E.8. Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks had flown the following planes:

- **Avro aeroplane** – Dual – 21 hrs 25 mins & Solo- 17hrs 10 mins.
- **Sopwith Scout** – Dual – nil & Solo – 9 hrs 5 mins.
- **R.E.8** – Dual – 6 hrs 45 mins & Solo – nil.

The scene of the accident was visited before the aeroplane was removed with the following findings: *"The Aeroplane was found lying on its side, having evidently fallen on its nose and right wing. The rudder controls were intact."*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

C04676

Crashed R.E.8 C/2628 piloted by Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks

The accident took place at 12.30 pm. The Court found, in their opinion, that the cause of the accident was *"through the Pilot (while on his first R.E.8 solo) putting on full left rudder at 50 feet after taking off and allowing the machine to get into a flat spin to the left."*

The Report of Squadron Commander:

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The Pilot was on duty and was not to blame. His flying was previously very good in the air, and the only reason for his being kept on dual for so long on the R.E.8 was that his landings were not consistently good. He had previously flown Avros and Sopwith Scouts.

R.E.8

The R.E.8 was a British two-seat biplane reconnaissance and bomber aircraft of the First World War designed at the Royal Aircraft Factory. Intended as a replacement for the vulnerable B.E.2, the R.E.8 was widely regarded as more difficult to fly and gained a reputation in the Royal Flying Corps for being "unsafe" that was never entirely dispelled. Although eventually it gave reasonably satisfactory service, it was never an outstanding combat aircraft. In spite of this, the R.E.8 served as the standard British reconnaissance and artillery observation aircraft from mid-1917 to the end of the war, serving alongside the rather more popular Armstrong Whitworth F.K.8. *(Wikipedia)*



An R.E.8 aeroplane

A death for George V. Wicks, aged 26, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Tetbury, Gloucestershire.

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks was buried on 16th October, 1918 in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire –Grave reference 35. 13395. Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks has a private headstone, however his death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. From the burial report of Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks - *Coffin was Elm with brass fittings. The deceased officer was interred in a Private grave in Reading Cemetery, He was accorded a full Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being supplied by the Royal Flying Corps. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and surmounted by several beautiful wreaths. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside, and the Rev. F. J.C. Gilmour officiated. Names of relatives present at the funeral – Brother – Lt J. H. Wicks, No. 1 School Aeronautics, Reading & Uncle – Mr Viner (C/o Huntley & Palmer) Caversham, Reading.*

Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks requested in his Will, dated 16th November, 1917, that the whole of his property & effects be given to his mother – Mrs Alice Mary Wicks, of 3 Anderton St., Marrickville, NSW.

Second Lieutenant G. V. Wicks 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

(82 pages of Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks' 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



Newspaper Notices

On Active Service

WICKS – October 13, 1918, at Leighterton, through an aeroplane accident, Flight-Lieutenant George Viner Wicks, Australian Flying Corps, aged 28 years, dearly loved eldest son of Mr and Mrs W. H. Wicks, Anderton-street, Marrickville, and brother on Herb (on active service), A.I.F., D.C.M., Nell, Elsie, Reg and Will.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 9 November, 1918)

NEARING THE END

TWO CASUALTY LISTS

No. 445

ACCIDENTALLY KILLED

Sec.-Lieut. G. V. WICKS, Marrickville

(The Sun, Sydney, NSW – 25 November, 1918)

On Active Service

WICKS – In affectionate remembrance of Lieut. George Viner Wicks, killed by aeroplane accident, in England, October 13, 1918, aged 28 years. Inserted by Edna Percival, Richmond.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 14 October, 1919)

On Active Service

WICKS – In loving memory of Lieut. George Viner Wicks, A.F.C., who was killed at Leighterton, Eng., October 13, 1918. Eldest son of Mr and Mrs W. H. Wicks, Marrickville.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 13 October, 1920)

On Active Service

WICKS – In loving memory of Lieut. George Viner Wicks, A.F.C., who was killed at Leighterton, England, October 13, 1918. Dearly loved eldest son of Mr and Mrs W. H. Wicks, Marrickville.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 13 October, 1922)

On Active Service

WICKS – In loving memory of Lieut. George Viner Wicks, A.F.C., who was killed while flying at Leighterton, England, October 13, 1918, dearly loved eldest son of W. H. and A. M. Wicks, Marrickville.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 13 October, 1923)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P00731.006

Photo – 1917 - Group portrait of members of the third course of trainee pilots at the NSW State Aviation School in front of a Curtiss Jenny (JN) aircraft at Ham Common near Richmond.

Left to right, back row: Alan Sydney Edwards, (ex 4th Battalion, AIF); N70059 Augustus 'Bob' Bargwanna, (formerly Mechanical Transport Section, Army Service Corps); Richard Henry Chester, Chief Mechanic, ex Central Flying School (CFS) Point Cook; William John Stutt, Chief Instructor, ex Royal Flying Corps (RFC), NSW Special Air Service (SAS); Henry George Murray, Assistant Instructor, ex 2nd Course, Richmond; 51054 Glenn Dobell, ex 1st Australian Light Horse; Douglas William Cullam, ex 12th Australian Light Horse, Gallipoli and 4 Squadron AFC; Cyril Charles Worboys, RFC.

Front row: K Mathieson; James Herbert Crews (alias Herbert James Crews), AFC; Roger Sayer Fleming Nickoll (possibly to RAF/RNAS); **Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks, later AFC, killed in flying accident, Leighterton, England on 13 October 1918;** Lewis George Cole (ex Lance Corporal 1st Battalion who returned to Australia in 1915)



Second Lieutenant George Viner Wicks



George Viner Wicks is included on his parents' headstone in Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney, NSW (Old Church of England). His father – William Henry Wicks was buried on 4th March, 1939 in Zone B Section AAA Grave number 1996. His mother – Alice Mary Wicks was buried on 1st November, 1944 Zone B Section AAA Grave number 1996.

The inscription reads "Killed on active service England".



(Headstone photos courtesy of Gary & Irmgard Heap 2020)

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire contains 248 War Graves, 17 of those being from Australian Forces – World War 1.

The War Graves Plot is situated at the back of the cemetery, in the right hand corner from the entrance. A Screen Wall Memorial commemorates those buried in Plot 72 and those buried in other parts of the cemetery whose graves are not marked by headstones. There are 207 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war and 41 of the 1939-1945 war. There is also 1 Serbian burial.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



Cross of Sacrifice & Memorial Screen Wall, Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire *(Photos from CWGC)*

Photo of Second Lieutenant George Viner Wick's private headstone in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England.



(Headstone photos courtesy of Portsmouth Remembers – Kevin - 2021)



(Headstone photos courtesy of Portsmouth Remembers – Kevin - 2021)







In

Loving Memory

Of

Lt. GEORGE VINER WICKS

A. F. C.

Born Oct. 8th 1890

Killed by Aeroplane Accident

Oct. 13th 1918.