

19th April 1917 19
328 ✓

PROCEEDINGS of INQUEST

held upon the body of

Basil George Watson.

at
Melbourne Morgue.

Received at the Crown Law Offices,

24 APR 17 19

C. L. O.

R. H. Cole.
Coroner.

16237.

PROCEEDINGS BEFORE CORONERS.

INQUISITION.

VICTORIA, }
TO WIT. }

AN INQUISITION for our Sovereign Lord King George V., taken at the Morgue, Melbourne, in the State of Victoria, the 19th day of April A.D. 1917 in the seventh year of the reign of our said Lord the King, by me, Robert Hodgson Cole, gentleman, a Coroner of our Lord the King for the Central Bailiwick of the said State, upon the view of the body of *Basil George Watson* then and there lying dead.

Having inquired upon the part of our Lord the King, when, where, how, and by what means the said

Basil George Watson

(1) His or her.

came by¹ his death, I say that

on the 28th day of March 1917

(2) Here state cause at² *Laverton near the Australian Aviation Camp* *Basil George Watson* *fell & was killed by the fall from his biplane. I decide that the death is due to accident*

In witness whereof I, the aforesaid Coroner, have to this Inquisition
put my hand, this 19th day of April

A.D. 1917

James H. Cor.

Coroner.

VICTORIA POLICE.—(47.)

Werribee

Station

MELBOURNE

Police District

28th March 1917.

REPORT of

Intd bones find 5815

Relative to

death of Basil George Hatton
at Point Cook.

R.M.

Encl. lost game

Werribee

I have to report that a young man named Basil George Hatton 21 years of age, aviator, single, who resided with his parents at 34 Hilda Street Elsternwick was killed at the Aviation School, Point Cook, at about 4 p.m. this day. The deceased was not attached to the Flying School here, but had been giving exhibitions of flying in an aeroplane principally constructed by himself and to his own design. He left Elsternwick today between 3 & 4 p.m. for the Aviation School Point Cook in this own aeroplane. He arrived at the Aviation School at the time above stated, flying at a height of about 3,000 feet. He then gave two dives as an exhibition towards the earth, when the wings of the machine collapsed and the machine fell ~~and~~ into the sea in about three feet of water. Several of the men at the Aviation School noticed the accident & immediately went to his assistance & removed the wreckage of the aeroplane from off the deceased which

he was still strapped to. Dr. Major Mitchell was present at the time & attended the deceased who was breathing slightly when removed from the water, and who died immediately afterwards and before being placed in the hospital tent at Point Cook. The body was examined by the Doctor who found that his neck was broken, skull fractured, left jaw bone fractured, several ribs broken and the right leg fractured. The deceased was flying at a height of about 2,500 feet when the accident happened, and was an experienced aviator and gave exhibitions of flying in different parts of the State & was to have given an exhibition of flying tomorrow at Bairnsfield.

The body is now at the Aviation School Point Cook.

H. C. Tied
Post Const 8815

Werribee

28.3.15

For information and
instructions
The Coroner
Morgue
Melbourne

Sam James
Sc 388

CORONER'S INQUEST.

No. 5.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent* JAMES RUDYARD WATSON

on his oath saith, I am a ASSISTANT CHEMIST

residing at

St KILD~~A~~ STREET ELSTERNWICK

*Christian and
Surname in
full.

I saw the body of the deceased att hemorgue and I identified it as that of my brother Basil George Watson. He was aged 23 years. I last saw him alive on the Tuesday previous to his death. He was then in good health.

James R. Watson

Taken and sworn before me the

of

April 19 12 at Melbourne

19th day

Coroner.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

No. 5.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

*Christian and
Surname in
full.

This Deponent* JAMES MISAAC WATSON
on ~~his~~ oath saith, I am a INDEPENDENT MEANS
residing at ST KILDA STREET ELSTERNWICK.

The deceased was my son. I was with him till he left home to fly and he left Albert Park at about 3.40 p.m. on the 28th March. He was flying with a bi plane which was one of his own design and that was a combination of the best parts and it was constructed at my own place by himself and it was ready for use and he had been using it over two months without any misgap. He left Albert Park in this machine and was the alone. I saw him in the air when he left Albert Park. He got up about 1500 feet and then he attempted the loop and the wind drove him back and when that failed he took a circle round ~~up~~ and rose about 3000 feet and tried again and failed again on account of a side bank. He then righted the machine and circled the machine and was rising higher and higher till he got to about 6000 feet when he did the \$ loop and then he dropped about 2000 feet and then righted the machine again and then he went towards Melbourne and rose up gain to about 5000 feet when he looped the loop again and then made a circle and rose up again higher still and then looped the loop again. He again rose and then pointed ~~out~~ straight for Point Cook and as soon as he did that I got in the car and left Albert Park for Point Cook. I had promised him that I would go to Point Cook. I got there at about 4.45 and I was met by one of the instructors and he directed me to Captain Harrison where I heard the news of my sons death. I have taken a great interest in aviation since my son stated and he has been teaching me. Looping the loop puts some strain on the machine and if the machine was weaker on one side that would put a strain on the machine. We had an Inquest on the machine and we are sure that the clip produced gave way. We had it tested before it was put on the machine.

Taken and sworn before me the 19th day
of April 1917 at Melbourne
K. W. Watson
Coroner.

James J. Watson.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

No. 5.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent* HAYMOND FRANCIS CALLAWAY

on his oath saith, I am a LIEUTENANT

residing at POINT COOK.

*Christian and Surname in full.

I saw the machine arrive with the height of about 2500 feet over Point Cook. I had previously got a message to expect Mr Watson. I did not see him actually loop but I saw him do two very steep dives and one very steep bank and he came out of those evolutions all right and then he made an evolution that he were going to loop and then the machine seemed to collapse sideways and at the same time there was a report and this report co-incided with the collapse of the right wing. Then one wing closed up and then the two wings seemed to come together and then the machine fell headlong. I did not see the machine hit the ground on account of buildings in the way. I am satisfied that the abnormal strain put on the machine through the evolutions caused the clip to break - that is the clip that has been produced. I saw the machine several times and I had great admiration for it and I was quite satisfied that it was the machine for the evolutions he was going. I am quite satisfied that he was a very fine pilot and was quite capable of managing the machine.

H. F. Callaway

Taken and sworn before me the 19th day of April 1917 at Melbourne
R. H. Cr. Coroner.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

No. 5.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent* GERGE WILLIAM CLARK NICHOLSON

on his oath saith, I am a SOLDIER

residing at LAVERTON AVAITION CORPS.

*Christian and Surname in full.

I witnessed this occurrence. I first saw Mr Watson coming from Melbourne to Point Cook. He looped the loop once and the machine seemed to collapse and the wings closed up. There were a couple of pieces left the machine and then he appeared to leave the engine ~~on~~ ^{on} rade and he tried to reach the water and he reached about 40 yards from the edge of the water. I went to him at once and the machine was in about 3 feet of water and it was a total wreck and he was tangled among the wires. He was under the water and we lifted his head first and he was only under the water the time that it took me to wade 40 yards. He was held under the water. When the machine gave way he was at a point about 500 yards away from the water. I heard the report of the break and there is no doubt it was the noise of something giving way.

G.W.C. Nicholson.

Taken and sworn before me the 19th day
of April 1911 at Melbourne
R. H. Clark
Coroner.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

No. 5.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent*

EDWARD VALENTINE HIGGINS

on h~~is~~ oath saith, I am a

AIR MECHANIC

residing at

LAVERTON CAMP.

*Christian and
Surname in
full.

At the time of this occurrence I was at the middle of the Camp. I saw the deceased do the last loop and then he did a steep dive and with a very sudden upward lift. The strain then was too great for the machine. I see the clip produced and I agree with the statement of the father of deceased. Every movement places an extraordinary strain on the machine. I think that the one sudden strain was quite sufficient to break the machine and that the other evolutions did not.

E. Higgins

Taken and sworn before me the 19th day
of April 1917 at Melbourne }
R. H. Cr. }
Coroner.