

**St. James Churchyard Cemetery,
Dover, Kent
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



LIEUTENANT

C. D. MERRETT

AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS

16TH MAY, 1916 Age 21

*Sleeping In The Land
Of His Forefathers*

Charles Darrell MERRETT

Charles Darrell Merrett was born on 20th December, 1894 in Hawthorn, Melbourne, Victoria to parents Charles Edward Merrett and Annie Florence Merrett (nee Slocombe). His birth was registered in 1895.

Birth Notice: (*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 5 January, 1895):

MERRETT – On the 20th ult., at Sutton, Riversdale–road, Hawthorn, the wife of Chas. E. Merrett – a son.

Charles Darrell Merrett attended Melbourne Grammar School and entered the Preparatory School in 1905. He attended the Senior School in 1908 & left in 1911 to work in his father's office.

Charles Darrell Merrett (nicknamed Bill) was a Lieutenant in the 51st (Albert Park) Infantry. A.M.F. (Australian Military Forces) prior to the War. He had been made a Provisional 2nd Lieutenant of the 51st Infantry Regiment on 26th August, 1913.

The Quarterly Army List 1916 (Second Quarter, Volume 3) records the Australian Commonwealth Gradation List – Forces of the Overseas Dominions and Colonies:

Lieutenants – Merrett, Charles Darrell, 51st Inf 1 July, 1915

As Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett was under the age of 21 he was not eligible for a commission in the A.I.F. (Australian Imperial Force) so he undertook a flying course.

Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett gained his Royal Aero Club Aviator's Certificate on 20th October, 1915 at Central Flying School, Werribee, Victoria, Australia on a Bristol Biplane.



Charles Darrell Merrett (*Photo from Royal Aero Club Aviators' Album*)



“Bill” Merrett (Photo kindly supplied by Ian Brock)

After gaining his Aviator's Certificate, Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett was granted leave by the Defence Department to proceed to London, England to gain experience in seaplane work. He departed Melbourne on 23rd November, 1915 and received a commission in the R.N.A.S. (Royal Naval Air Service) on arriving in London. He was appointed a Temporary Flight Sub-Lieutenant. However, his leave was cancelled by the Defence Department & he was appointed as Flight Lieutenant in the A.F.C. (Australian Flying Corps) with instructions to take up duty in England. He was posted to Farnborough, England with the Royal Flying Corps.

Charles Darrell Merrett was appointed Lieutenant on 5th January, 1916, No. 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps.

Appointments in connection with the Australian Imperial Forces – No. 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps:-

To be Lieutenants: –

..... Lieutenant (provisional) C. D. Merrett, 51st (Albert Park) Infantry;

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 17 March, 1916)

Owing to an increase in enemy air raids, Flight Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett was attached to Dover Air Station, Kent, England with the Australian Flying Squadron.

On 16th May, 1916 Flight Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett & Captain Lord Lucas, of No. 20 R.S. (Reserve Squadron) R.F.C., were flying an Avro 504A 4068. (Originally named Reserve Aeroplane Squadrons when formed, these were renamed to Reserve Squadrons on 13 January 1916, and then again to Training Squadrons on 31 May 1917 for the R.F.C. – Royal Flying Corps). No. 20 Reserve Squadron was located at Dover, Kent from 1st February, 1916.

Captain Lord Lucas was instructing Lieutenant Merrett in the dual control machine at about 8 am from Dover Aerodrome. It was their second flight for that morning & Lieutenant Merrett was positioned in the front seat of the plane. When preparing to descend, on approach to the aerodrome, Captain Lord Lucas shut off the petrol, which

stopped the engine but he realised that they were too short & turned the petrol back on but the engine did not start immediately. The machine then side-slipped and nose-dived straight to the ground. Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett died in the crash while Captain Lord Lucas sustained minor injuries.



An Avro 504

Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett died on 16th May, 1916 at Dover, England as a result of an aeroplane accident.

A Court of Enquiry was held at Dover on 16th May, 1916 by the order of Lt. Col. Newall, Commanding 6th Wing, Royal Flying Corps for the purpose of investigating the circumstances under which Lieutenant C. D. Merrett, Australian Flying Corps was killed.

1st Witness: *Capt Lord Lucas, No. 20 R.S. R.F.C., states:*

I was instructing Lieut Merrett on Avro No. 4068, he being in the front seat. On coming down to the Aerodrome, I switched off as usual but finding I was a little short, switched on again but the engine refused to pick up. I looked inside to adjust the Petrol and felt the machine begin to turn. I looked out at once, found the machine was out of control; the machine nose-dived from a height of about 80 feet and was wrecked.

2nd Witness: *Major A. S. Barratt, No. 20 R.S. R.F.C., states:*

I did not see the accident, but was told immediately it occurred. I went straight to the wrecked machine and looked at the controls which were unbroken and as far as I could see, were in good order. The deceased Officer was buried in the wreckage.

3rd Witness: *No. 177 Sergt. Major J. H. Winch, No 13 R.S. R.F.C., states:*

At about 8 am this morning, I was taking the morning working parade. I heard a crash and looking round, saw a machine lying wrecked about half a mile away from the Aerodrome.

I detailed One Sergeant and Eight Men to proceed to the accident, after which I went down myself to render assistance. I found the machine to be Avro No 4068 belonging to No 20 R.S. it was a total wreck. Capt. Lord Lucas was sitting on the grass in a very dazed condition, but at first there was no sign of the other Officer.

On looking between the planes I discerned the deceased, Lt. Merrett. He was dead before I arrived, and I proceeded to extract the body from the machine.

The Court having carefully considered the forementioned evidence are of opinion that Lieut. C. D. Merrett, Australian Flying Corps, met his death by accident, and through no fault in the construction of the Aeroplane.

A death for Charles D. Merrett, aged 22, was registered in the June quarter, 1916 in the district of Dover, Kent, England.

Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett was buried on 18th May, 1916 in St. James Churchyard Cemetery, Dover, Kent, England – Plot number W. C. 35. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Funeral Report (*Dover Express*, Dover, Kent, England – 26 May, 1916):

FUNERAL OF A FLYING CORPS OFFICER.

The funeral of the late Lieut. Charles Darrell Merritt, Royal Flying Corps, took place, with full military honours, on Thursday week, at St. James's Cemetery, Dover, the band being provided by the Royal Fusiliers. The casket was of polished oak, with the inscription:—"Lieut. C. D. Merrett, R.F.C., died 16th May, 1916, aged 22 years." The deceased was a fine young man in every respect, and an Australian attached to the 20th Squadron, R.F.C., having come over, like many of our staunch colonists, to "do his bit" on the outbreak of war. He had no relatives here to mourn his loss; but floral tributes were sent on behalf of, or by, the following:— From his father and mother; his sister, Mrs C. F. Berry; brother Mick; sister Iris; Mr and Lieut. Ellis; Lord Lucas; officers, No. 1 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps; N.C.O.'s and men of A. Flight, No. 2 R.S., Royal Flying Corps. The funeral arrangements were entrusted to Messrs Flashman and Co., Ltd., of the Market Square, Dover.

Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Lieut. Merrett's father - Lt. Col. C. E. Merrett, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent October, 1921 & Plaque sent May, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett, aged 21, of Australian Flying Corps. He was the son of Col. Charles Edward Merrett and Annie Florence Merrett, of South Lodge, Were St., Brighton, Victoria, Australia. Native of Melbourne.

Lieutenant C. D. Merrett 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

Lieutenant C. D. Merrett is remembered on the Brighton & Caulfield Avenue of Honour located at Kammersburgh Gardens ANZAC Hostel, 78 North Road, Brighton, Victoria. The monument consists of three pillars which contain plaques listing those who served.



Brighton & Caulfield Avenue of Honour (Photos from Monument Australia – Chris McLaughlin)



C. D. Merrett is remembered on the Brighton War Memorial, located at Green Point, Beach Road, Brighton, Victoria.



Brighton War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia – Graeme Saunders/Sandra Brown)



C. D. Merrett is remembered on the Melbourne Grammar School Honour Roll, located in Melbourne Grammar School, Domain Road, Melbourne, Victoria.



Melbourne Grammar School Honour Roll (Photos by Chris McLaughlin)

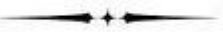


(35 pages of Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett *(Photo with permission from Ian Brock)*



From the Melbourne Grammar School War Services Books:



v.

"THE SCHOOL WILL NOT FORGET."

*"You, our brothers, who, for all our praying,
To this dear School of ours come back no more."*

1. G. Kiddle
2. W. T. T. Appleton
3. C. D. Merrett



4. E. E. Williams
5. F. R. Beveridge
6. B. F. Moore

7. H. H. Matthews

Obituary Notices

HARRY ROBINSON MCKINLEY who died of wounds in France on 11th April 1917 was the only son of Mr. Henry McKinley. He was born in 1885 and was at the School from 1901 to 1903. He was a Lieutenant in the Cadet Corps in 1902. On leaving School he went into business in Melbourne. He enlisted on 2nd June 1915 as a Private and received his commission on 8th November 1915 before embarkation. He embarked on 18th February, arrived in France on 14th June and was taken on strength of the 14th Battalion on 1st September 1916. He was promoted to Lieutenant on 1st January 1917 and was fatally wounded at Bapaume on 11th April 1917. He was buried in Bapaume Australian Cemetery.

ARCHIBALD MCGIBBON McLAURIN who died on 23rd November 1918 from pneumonia in Palestine at the 74th Casualty Clearing Station was the son of Mr. Robert McG. McLaurin. He was born in 1865 and entered the School in 1875; he left in 1878 and returned again for 1880. For years he was in the office of Powers, Rutherford & Co., and afterwards took up a vineyard with his brothers Bob and Reg near Rutherglen, on which he was when war broke out. He was Area Officer in Rutherglen District, and also served under Colonel Price in the Old Victoria Mounted Rifles, being Captain 16th Australian Light Horse Brigade A.M.F. He was a Councillor in Rutherglen Shire for years and took a keen interest in all country pursuits and will be mourned by a large circle of friends. He enlisted with the Light Horse in 1914, and sailed as a Captain in February 1915, was on Gallipoli, and served the whole of the war in the 8th Light Horse Regiment. He was promoted Major on 27th June 1915 and was one of the survivors of the famous charge at Walker's Ridge when the regiment was all but wiped out. He was in almost every battle in Palestine up to Damascus, being Mentioned in Sir Archibald Murray's Despatches of 18th March 1917 and being appointed to command his regiment and promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel on 1st November 1917. His men over whom he had charge at all times spoke most highly of his qualities as a man and a leader and would follow the Colonel to death. Whilst in London on furlough in 1918 he took the opportunity to visit the home of his people in Scotland, and he extended many kindnesses to his nephew, Gunner Gerald Vine Buckland, another Old Melbourne whose death is recorded. He was buried in the Beerut Military Cemetery, Syria.

CHARLES DARELL MERRETT who was killed while flying at Dover on 16th May 1916 was the son of Charles Edward Merrett (No. 1329 on the School Roll). He was born in 1894 and entered the Preparatory School in 1905 and came on to the Senior School in 1908. He left in 1911 and went into his father's office. He was Lieutenant in 51st Infantry A.M.F. under Colonel R. E. Courtney (No. 1995 on the School Roll) before the war, but being under 21 was not eligible for a commission in A.I.F. In 1915 he went through a course of instruction in flying at the Central Flying School, Laverton, and upon qualifying was granted leave by Defence Department to proceed to London in order to get experience in seaplane work. He left Melbourne on 23rd November 1915, and on arrival in England was appointed to Royal Naval Air Service, as he was particularly fitted for this work. Almost immediately the Defence Department cancelled his leave and appointed him as Flight Lieutenant in A.F.C. with instructions to take up duty in England and await arrival of the first Australian Flying Squadron. He did considerable duty at Farnborough and had been transferred to Dover for duty owing to an increase of enemy air raids. His death was the result of accident, and he was buried in St. James Cemetery, Dover.

JOHN WILLIAM MERRIFIELD who died of illness on 17th January 1921 was the son of the late Mr. E. G. Merrifield. He was born in 1899 and entered the Prep. in 1910. After leaving there in 1910 he was for two years at Xavier College and then received private tuition. He enlisted in the R.A.N. on 21st January 1915 and after training on H.M.A.S. "Tingira" was transferred as A.B. to H.M.A.S. "Australia," on which he served in the North Sea from 12th January 1916 until after the cessation of hostilities, and was present at the surrender of the German Fleet. During that service he received during coaling operations a severe blow on the back, which subsequently set up cancer. He returned to Australia on 10th June 1919 and was transferred as watchman to the "Cerberus" at Williamstown; he there sustained an accident in consequence of which he was admitted to hospital and operated upon, when, unknown to him, the cancer was discovered. Subsequently he decided to enter the Mercantile Marine, and having been discharged from R.A.N. on 19th February 1920 studied for the Nautical examinations. His health, however, gradually failed and he died on 17th January 1921 as a result of the injuries sustained at the war. The record of his character and ability while in the R.A.N. was very good and satisfactory.

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Newspaper Notices

The Military Forces of the Commonwealth – No. 10



51st INFANTRY
*Back Row—Lt.-Col. H. E. Conway, Major W. F. Le Neve, I.R.F., Major W. H. Fellers, I.R.F., Capt. E. P. Flackert, Lt. Moxley, I.R.F., Lt. A. B. Chalker. Middle Row—Lt. W. C. Linton, I.R.F., Lt. A. H. Cook, Lt. D. L. Kinton, Lt. E. J. Cusick, Lt. C. D. Merrett, Lt. A. J. Phillips, I.R.F., *Forward Row—Lt. L. Harris, I.R.F., Lt. H. C. Bennett, Lt. H. H. Harris, Lt. U. E. L. Shorro, Lt. V. G. Burt, Lt. V. U. Cumberlidge.

51st INFANTRY

Middle Row – Lt. C. D. Merrett

(Punch, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 12 November, 1914)

ABOUT PEOPLE

Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. Merrett, of Brighton, received a cablegram from the squadron commander of the Royal Flying Corps at Dover stating that his son, Lieutenant C. D. Merrett, had been killed at Dover on Tuesday. Lieutenant Merrett left Melbourne in November last, after obtaining his aviation certificate at the Werribee Flying School, and received a commission in the Naval Air Service immediately on arrival, in London. He was, however, appointed to the Australian Flying Squadron, and did not take up his naval duties, but remained at Farnborough with the Royal Flying Corps. He had been transferred to Dover for duty owing to an increase in the enemy air raids, and was only last week appointed as one of the instructors to the Australian Flying Squadron. His younger brother leaves in a few days for the front in the Artillery Brigade.

(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 18 May, 1916)

DIED ON SERVICE

MERRETT – On the 16th May, at Dover, Lieut. Charles Darrell Merrett, 51st Infantry, Victoria and Flight Lieutenant Reserve Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, aged 21 years.

DEATHS

MERRETT – On the 16th May, at Dover, Charles Darrell, dearly loved elder son of A. F. and Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. Merrett, Eden Park, Brighton, aged 21 years.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 18 May, 1916)

AUSTRALIAN AIRMAN'S DEATH

EVIDENCE AT THE INQUIRY

London, May 17

Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett, of the Australian Flying Corps, was killed on Tuesday. Lord Lucas, who was his companion, gave evidence at the inquest, that he was instructing Merrett in the dual control of the machine, and Merrett, pulled the aeroplane's nose round, causing it to lose speed.

(The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia – 19 May, 1916)

FATAL ACCIDENT TO A FLYER

WELL KNOWN STATESMAN IN FLYING ACCIDENT

On Wednesday an inquest was on Lieut. C. D. Merrett who was killed in a flying accident on Tuesday morning.

Captain Lord Lucas, captain in the Hampshire Yeomanry, attached to the Royal Flying Corps, said: The deceased's name was Charles Darrell Merrett, a lieutenant in the Australian Flying Corps. He was 22 years of age. On Tuesday we were in a dual controlled machine at about 8 a.m. I was the instructor, and he was a pupil. We were just going to land after a very short flight — the second that morning. He was controlling the machine, and was sitting in front. I was at the back, and had the control of the engine, and, if necessary, of the machine. We were about 100 feet from the ground when the accident happened. When we prepared to descend I cut off the petrol, which stops the engine. The engine had stopped, and we had come down from about 800 ft., and as we prepared to land I re-started the engine. On turning on the petrol the engine seemed to take rather longer than usual to start again, and I was looking at the engine control with my head inside the machine. Whilst I was doing this I felt the machine turning, and at once looked out. I found that the machine had lost speed and was out of control. The engine had not started. The machine then side-slipped and nose-dived straight to the ground. The whole machine was completely smashed, and I think

the deceased was killed instantly. I only sustained a few cuts and bruises. I found myself in the wreckage, very little being left of the seat. I saw that nothing could be done for the deceased. Assistance arrived in a very short time, and the deceased was removed on an ambulance. The actual cause was that the machine lost flying speed due probably to the deceased pulling the machine out of her proper gliding angle. The engine was all right, as it started again as we commenced to fall. The deceased came in March, and he flew well that morning, so that I should have recommended him to take up a machine alone. The deceased had a certificate.

Lieut. R. J. Mayberry, R.A.M.C., and Medical Officer to the Royal Flying Corps, said: I was called to the accident. The deceased had by then been removed from the wreckage. He was dead. I made a superficial examination of the body, and then ordered its removal to the Mortuary. He had sustained a fractured skull, fractured left thigh, and a fractured left leg below the knee, and several other injuries. The cause of death was shock, and it must have been almost instantaneous.

The Coroner said that there did not seem to be any fault or blame attached to anyone. It was a pure accident.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

Lord Lucas was formerly Under Secretary of State for War, and from 1911 was President of the Board of Agriculture.
(*Dover Express*, Dover, Kent, England – 19 May, 1916)

LORD LUCAS' ESCAPE

Captain Lord Lucas (Royal Flying Corps) has had a narrow escape in an aeroplane accident, in which Lieutenant Charles Darrell Merrett, of the Australian Flying Corps, was killed.

At the inquest Lord Lucas said he was instructing the late lieutenant in a dual control



machine, and he thought that his pupil pulled the aeroplane's nose round, causing it to lose flying speed.

A verdict of Accidental Death was returned.

(*Daily Mirror*, London, England – 19 May, 1916)

AIRMAN – PEER'S ESCAPE



Lord Lucas, R.F.C. had a narrow escape in a recent flying accident.



Lieut. C. D. Merrett, Australian Flying Corps, who was flying with Lord Lucas, was killed.

(Daily Sketch, London – 19 May, 1916)

MELBOURNE IN THE MIRROR

An Old “Grammar Boy”

Lieutenant C. D. Merrett, son of Lieutenant-Colonel Merrett, who was killed at Dover last week, was educated at the Melbourne Grammar School, and subsequently studied aviation at the Werribee Flying School, receiving a commission in the naval air service on his arrival in London. Only a week before he was killed he was transferred to Dover for duty owing to the increased number of enemy raids, acting as instructor to the Australian Squadron.

(The Mirror of Australia, Sydney, Australia NSW – 27 May, 1916)

THE 173rd CASUALTY LIST

The Victorian names are:

KILLED

(All in May, 1916)

Lieut. C. D. Merrett, Brighton

(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria, Australia – 3 June, 1916)

OFFICIAL CEREMONY THIS AFTERNOON

STATE GOVERNOR TO PLANT FIRST TREE

The planting of the avenues in honour of the fallen soldiers from Brighton and Caulfield will take place this afternoon at Nepean Road, Elsternwick, and North Road, Gardenvale. The State Governor will plant the first tree, at 3 o'clock, and the other trees, which will be planted by relatives of deceased soldiers, will take place simultaneously, the signal being transmitted by boy scouts.

BRIGHTON

Name	Date of Death	Place of Death
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C. D. Merrett	16/5/16	Dover
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(Brighton Southern Cross, Victoria – 3 August, 1918)

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)

A letter from Base Records, dated 28th June, 1921, to Lieut-Col. C. E. Merrett, "Eden Park" Denby Street, Brighton, Victoria advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone his son, the late Lieutenant C. D. Merrett, had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

Lieutenant C. D. Merrett does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Sleeping In The Land Of His Forefathers

St. James Churchyard Cemetery, Dover, Kent, England

St. James Churchyard Cemetery, Dover contains 719 identified casualties. There are 8 Australian servicemen from World War 1 buried here – 7 Australian Imperial Force soldiers & 1 Royal Flying Corps.

During the First World War, Dover was a port of embarkation for troops bound for the Western Front and between August 1914 and August 1919 some 1,300,000 Commonwealth sick and wounded were landed there. The port was bombed in 1915 and again in August 1916.

There are 373 identified burials of the 1914-1918 war here. In addition there are 19 unidentified burials, 9 of whom can be named as victims of the Zeebrugge Raid, and these 9 are inscribed on a Special Memorial on the Cross of Sacrifice in the Zeebrugge Plot.

In 1940, Dover was the headquarters for the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk and nearly 200,000 of the 366,000 British and Allied troops brought back during the operation were landed there. Throughout the war Dover was a particular target for the long range guns on the French coast and between September 1939 and May 1945 there were no less than 742 attacks by air raid and shelling.

Most of the 356 Second World War burials are contained in a special war graves plot at the far end of the cemetery. The plot, known as the Dunkirk plot, contains many graves from the Dunkirk operation. 22 of these burials are unidentified. There are also 8 Foreign National war burials and 3 non war service burials in the cemetery.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



Photo of Lieutenant C. D. Merrett's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. James' Churchyard Cemetery, Dover, Kent, England.



(Photo courtesy of Len Scott)



(Photo courtesy of Mitchel Carr)



Charles Darrell Merrett included on his Grandparents' Headstone in St. Kilda Cemetery

(Photo courtesy of Friends of St. Kilda Cemetery)

In Loving Memory

Of

SARAH ASHTON

Beloved Wife Of

S. H. MERRETT

Died At Malvern Hill

28th February, 1869, Aged 42 Years

And Of

SAMUEL HEADEN MERRETT

Died At Prahan

25th January 1883, Aged 56 Years

And Of Their Grandson

CHARLES DARRELL MERRETT

Flight Lieut. Aust. Flying Corps,

Beloved Elder Son Of

CHARLES E. And A. F. MERRETT

Who Was Killed At Dover, Eng.

On The 16th May 1916

Aged 21 Years.

He Sleeps In The Land

If His Forefathers.