



# *Coroner's Inquest*

## *Bowerchalke*

On Thursday, April 25th 1918, Frederick Charles Butler, 2nd Lt. of Rookhay Farm, Bowerchalke. was Killed by a fall from an aeroplane at Dover.

Buried April 29 1918 at 2.30 p.m. aged nearly 20 years. Flying accident.

**From an unknown Australian Newspaper**

**The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records the following information:**

Butler, Frederick Charles - Second Lieutenant - Royal Air Force - Died 25th April 1918 - Age 20 - Son of Joseph Henry and Lilla Butler of Bower Chalke - Buried at Bower Chalke (Holy Trinity) Churchyard, Bower Chalke, Wiltshire

**Inquest Report from the Dover Express and East Kent News 8th May 1918**

On Saturday inquests were held on the bodies of Second Lieut. C. R. Haines and Lieut. F. C. Butler, R.A.F., who had been killed in flying accidents.

Lieutenant H. A. O'Shea, R.A.F., said that in the case of Second Lieut. Clifton Robinson Haines, R.A.F., aged 23 years, on Thursday, at 8.15, the deceased was flying alone at a height of 200ft. He went into a cloud and shut off his engine, and almost stalled the machine. He put on his engine again and stopped it stalling. Then he flew into another cloud directly over witness and again shut off his engine, and stalled the machine. It then nose-dived to the ground. Witness had to run, or else he would have been hit, the machine falling only ten yards away. The pilot evidently did not know where he was as regards the flying

position of his machine. The machine was totally wrecked and the pilot very badly injured. He was immediately extricated from the machine and attended to by the doctor, but died on the way to the hospital. He belonged to Ontario and was a very good flyer.

Lieut. Rowland Roy Harkins, R.A.F., said that the deceased was his pupil, and had been so for about a month, and was half way through his course. It was good flying weather when he went up, but the mist came on and caught him. The air was tested by an instructor that morning, and was quite satisfactory then. The mist came up unexpectedly.

A verdict of accidental death was returned.

Captain R. H. Hawkins, R.A.F., in the case of Second Lieut. Frederick Charles Butler, said that the deceased was his pupil and had been with him since March.

On Thursday, about 8 a.m., the deceased went up on the last type of machine he was to fly on his course. It was the first time he had been up in this particular type. He left the ground all right, and was flying well. Twenty minutes later witness's attention was called to a machine diving steeply and just coming below the mist, which had come up since the deceased had started. He was up about 150ft. to 200ft. Apparently he saw that he was close to the ground, and he pulled the machine out so suddenly that it turned over completely sideways, and landed on its back. It was completely smashed.

The ambulance at once went to the deceased, who was killed on the spot. The mist was the cause of the accident. Owing to it, the deceased was unaware that he was so close to the ground. He was 20 years of age, and belonged to Salisbury.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death in this case also.

