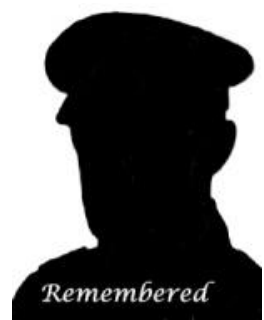


Lt William Fortescue Beachcroft MC



DoB: 19th February 1891 **Died:** 21st July 1918 **Age:** 27

Buried: All Saints Church, Ascot

Family:

William was born in South Africa, he father a Civil Servant. William worked as an accountancy clerk for 2 years before switching to farming in 1912.

Military Career:

He had joined the Natal Carabiniers territorials in May 1911 and was serving with them, renamed Mounted Rifles, when war broke out. They were mobilised on 23rd August 1914. He fought in German South West Africa (now Namibia) until the Germans capitulated in July 1915, and he was de-mobilised. William then sailed to London and enlisted with the Royal Field Artillery. He was commissioned 2nd Lt on 5th November 1915 and served in France during 1916. He was awarded the MC for valuable duty and rescuing a wounded signaller. He was severely wounded by a shell splinter on the Somme on 10th October 1916. He remained in the UK and applied for a transfer to the RFC in early 1918. William attended No.1 School of Aeronautics in Reading from 30th March 1918. He was posted to 4 TS on 1st June 1918, was promoted to Lt upon graduating as a pilot, and then was posted to 44 TDS at Port Meadow on 21st June 1918.

Accident:

Foliejon Park, Ascot. Fellow South African Capt. Everil Froneman MC was piloting Bristol Fighter C4788 which crashed while looping. The engine had failed following an earlier fault, although there was insufficient official evidence on the cause. They were apparently thanking Princess Hatzfeldt, who had hosted them for lunch at her Foliejon Park estate, after landing there to fix an initial engine fault.

They were on official 44 TDS business at the time of the accident. They were buried with full military honours, sharing the same headstone.