

Victor Annesley Barrington-Kennett c 1910
Image from the Balliol College War Memorial Book, p.25;
detail of Oxford, Balliol College Archives, FF Urquhart Album

Victor Barrington-Kennett was born in London on June 16th 1887. He was educated at Eton and went up to Balliol College, Oxford in 1906. The College archives reveal something of his character and personality. *'With all his humour and boisterousness there was an odd shyness of manner which made his fun all the more infectious; there was also a good judgement and taste which prevented him going too far. He became Captain of the Boat Club and rowed at Henley; and was fond of ballooning'*.

Victor graduated in 1910 and for a short period it appears that he was a banker in the City. However, on November 6th 1911 he joined the London Balloon Company, Royal Engineers, Territorial Force as Second Lieutenant. As part of his candidature for this commission the Rector of Petworth and Rural Dean, Rev John T Penrose, certified Victor's good moral character.

Following in his elder brother's footsteps he lost no time in learning to operate the new 'flying machines'. Victor gained his Aviation Certificate (No.190) on March 5th 1912. In August 1913 Second Lieutenant Barrington-Kennett was appointed to the Royal Flying Corps, Special Reserve, probably attached to No.1 Squadron. By August 1914 he had been promoted to Flying Officer and on March 7th 1915 the Squadron left for France and their base at St Omer.



Lieut. A. V. Barrington-Kennett qualifying for his pilot's certificate on the Short dual control biplane at the Royal Aero Club's Eastchurch flying grounds.

The London Gazette for June 25th 1915 records Victor's further promotion to Flight Commander and *'to be temporary Captain whilst so employed.'* On January 17th 1916 Captain Barrington-Kennett was appointed Squadron Commander and moved to No. 4 Squadron as Commanding Officer with the grade of Temporary Major. This appointment was gazetted on February 22nd 1916.

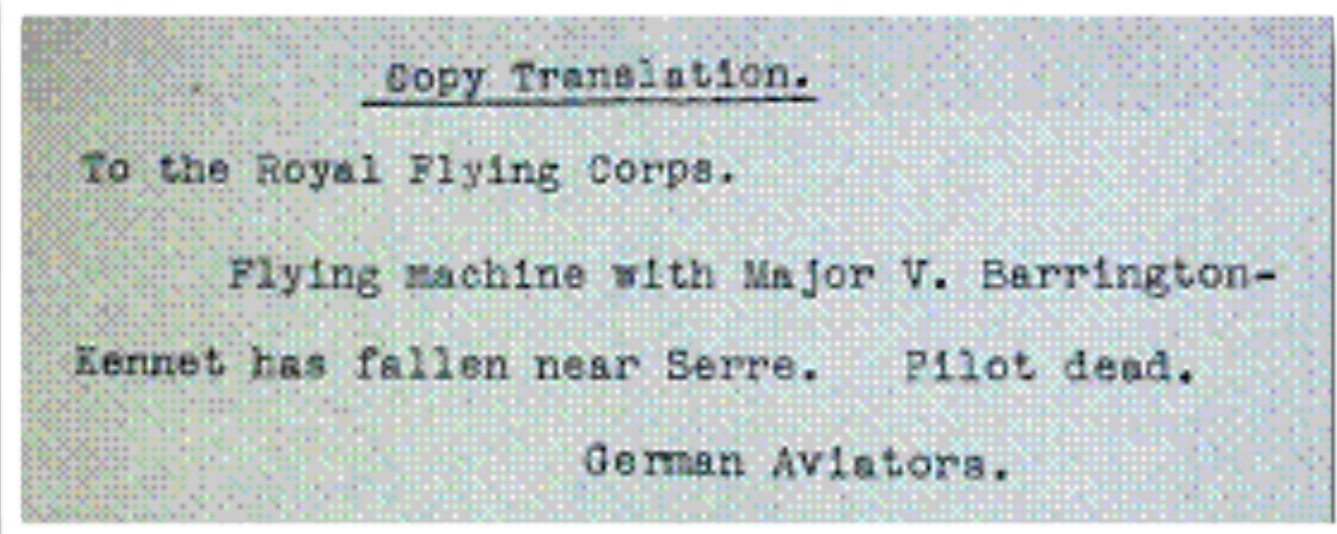
From the official history of No. 4 Squadron:

'Operations continued routinely until March 13 1916 when the CO Major Barrington-Kennett was killed in a Bristol Scout while in pursuit of an enemy aircraft'.

His Bristol Scout aircraft No. 4678 was shot down at 12.55pm by Max Immelmann, the German Ace, and became his tenth victim.



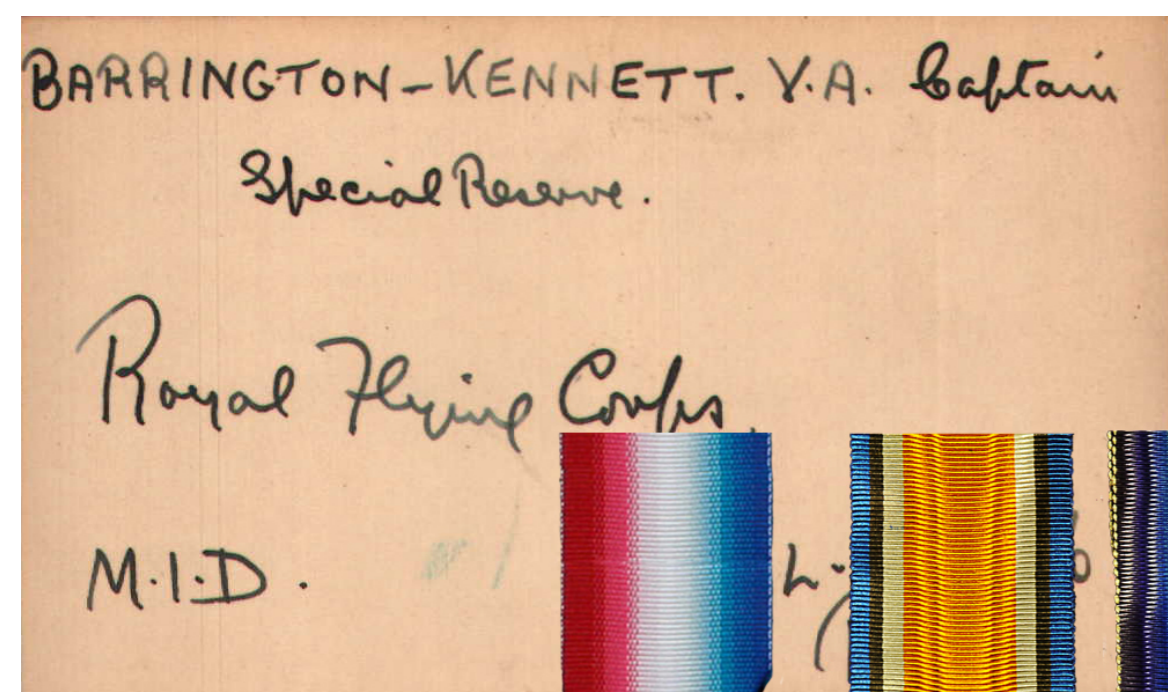
This is claimed to be the wreck of Major Barrington-Kennett's Bristol Scout No.4678, but there is little evidence to substantiate this claim.



Such was the sense of chivalry between opposing officers in the two Flying Corps that soon after the death of Major Barrington-Kennett, somehow a note was delivered to the RFC from German Aviators. It is also believed that he was buried with dignity by the same aviators in Miraumont Communal Cemetery, close to Albert.

At Eton and Oxford, Victor was a great friend of George Butterworth who after meeting folk song collector Cecil Sharp and composer Ralph Vaughan-Williams abandoned his law studies in favour of music. At the outbreak of WW1 George Butterworth joined the army and was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Military Cross. Sadly he was killed in the Battle of the Somme in the early hours of August 5th 1916 and did not live to receive his MC.

George Butterworth is perhaps best known for his song settings based on A E Houseman's collection of poems from 'A Shropshire Lad'. These songs were dedicated to Victor Annesley Barrington-Kennett by his old friend from Eton and Oxford.



Mentioned in Dispatches
Oak Leaf Clasp worn on
Victory Medal

1914-15 Star
British War Medal
Victory Medal

*And think my son, with eyes grown clear and dry
She lives as though for ever in your sight,
Loving the things you loved, with heart aglow
For country, honour, truth, traditions high,
Proud that you paid their price. (And if some night
Her heart should break - well, lad, you will not know.)*



The Mother - May Herschel-Clark

