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## JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF FIRST WORLD WAR AVIATION HISTORIANS

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**FRONT COVER:** Captain James McCudden and Lieutenant Arthur Rhys Davids of 'B' Flight, 56 Squadron, RFC on patrol over the Ypres Salient in the late summer of 1917.

This painting will appear on the cover of Alex Revell's book *High in the Empty Blue, The History of 56 Squadron RFC/RAF 1916 to 1919* shortly to be published by the Champlin Fighter Museum Press. :Joe Michie

**REAR COVER:** Lieutenant Gerald Constable Maxwell's SE5 A4863 of 56 Squadron RFC at London Colney in late March 1917.

Also from Alex Revell's book *High in the Empty Blue*, a title taken from a poem by Maurice Baring. :Joe Michie

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# SOPWITH BAT-BOATS

By  
A.E. TAGG

This early type of flying boat is usually best remembered for its success in winning the Mortimer Singer Prize for which purpose a land undercarriage was fitted to make it into the first successful amphibian in Europe. There were two distinct types of Bat-Boat of which the second, an enlarged version, appeared in March 1914 at the Aero Show at Olympia. Of the first type there were several major variations of the design although it is generally known that two machines of the same basic type were built. The hulls were made to the design of S.E. Saunders Ltd, boatbuilders of repute, but despite reports to the contrary, only the first was built by their patented 'Consuta'<sup>1</sup> method at Cowes, all subsequent Bat-Boat hulls being built by Sopwiths at Kingston.

The first reference appears in an article in *The Aeroplane* of 1 August 1912 under the heading 'The Sopwith-Saunders Bat-Boats' and this reads as follows:

'Just by way of showing that all advance aviation does not come from abroad, it may be well to point out that Mr T.O.M. Sopwith has been busy for some time evolving an aero-hydroplane on lines which are quite distinct from those of the ordinary aeroplanes with floats.

The machine in question is in reality a hydroplane with wings, the boat being built by S.E. Saunders Ltd, of Cowes, who have probably had greater experience of hydroplanes — their evolution and construction — than anyone in this country. The wings have been built in Mr Sopwith's sheds at Brooklands by his chief engineer, Mr Sigrist. Needless to say, both sections are turned out in the best possible fashion. The hydroplane is covered with a sheeting made of two layers of spruce with a layer of water-tight fabric between, this being sewn to the

frames with copper wire by the Saunders patent-sewn system, as used by the firm in all their hydroplane work.

The writer had the privilege of inspecting the machine last week, when it was approaching completion, and can vouch for the excellence of the design and workmanship throughout. The lower plane is bolted on top of the gunnel of the boat, and from the four points where the main cross members meet the boat, stout upright struts run to the upper plane. To the forward pair the Gnome engine is fitted, with the tanks behind it on a platform below the plane and above the passenger.

The pilot sits behind the planes, with the passenger in front of him, both of them being inside the boat itself. The boat tapers aft, till the deck reaches a point, and the bottom is only a few inches wide, and terminates in a lifting tail of the Bleriot type, which has between the elevator flaps a rudder working partly in the water when floating. The span of the upper main plane is about 30ft and that of the lower some 8ft less.

The hull of the hydroplane only weighs about 130lb, which compares more than favourably with any possible weight for an ordinary fuselage and chassis with floats.

The whole machine is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, and it is hoped that it will be the forerunner of a regular type of flying boat. With due acknowledgement to Mr Kipling's wonderful story "With the Night Mail", Messrs Sopwith and Saunders have agreed to call their machines "bat-boats", an excellent name, which will be handy and easy to remember. The right men are behind the new type, the type itself is right, so let us hope it will have the success it deserves.'

The style is that of C.G. Grey and it was almost certainly

*Sopwith 200hp Bat Boat taxiing.*

*:G.S. Leslie*



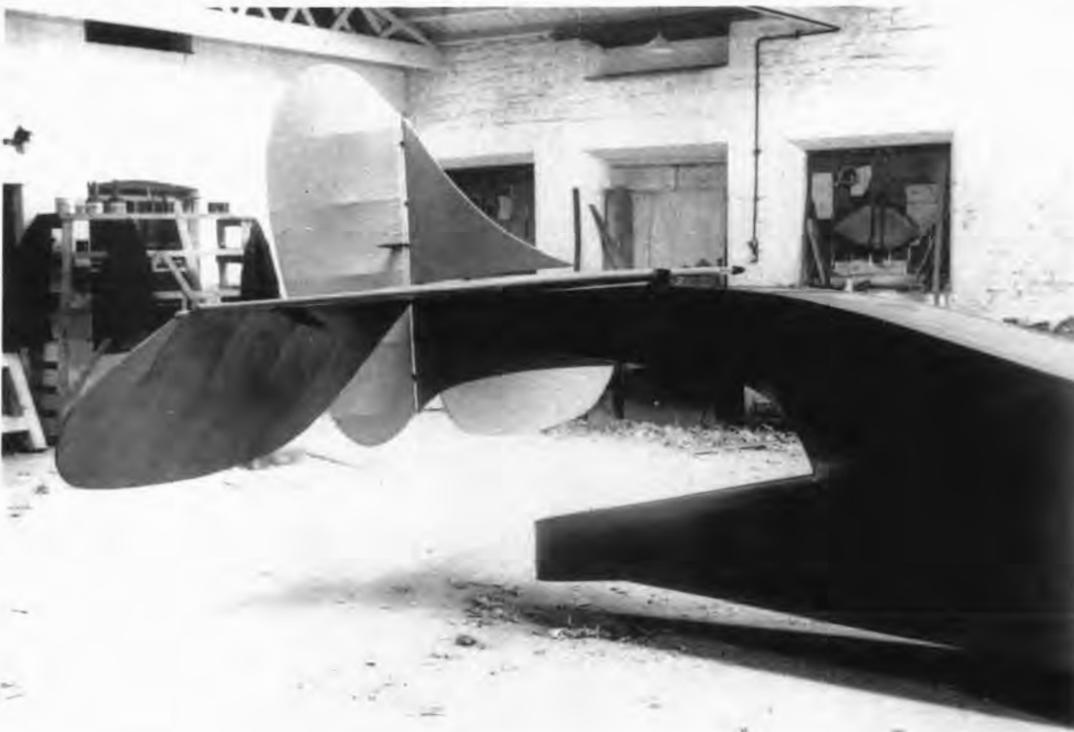


*The Wigram Flying Boat under construction in the works of S.E. Saunders Ltd at East Cowes, Isle of Wight. This machine was not completed.  
:Westland Aerospace Ltd — C5604*

C.G.G. who visited Brooklands and described the aeroplane he saw with some degree of accuracy. However, the machine as described, with a tractor Gnome rotary engine and behind the wings which were of unequal span, was not seen in public nor completed in this form. Sopwith and Sigrist were still feeling their way forward and perhaps the full scale positioning of the main units revealed the shortcomings of such an arrangement. Hawker had only been engaged at Brooklands on 28 June and at the time was still working as a fitter and, no doubt, carried out some of the construction. He was put in charge of the work at Brooklands soon after being taught to fly in September.

It seems unlikely that either Sopwith or Saunders would readily discard an expensive new hull, so perhaps it is no coincidence that at about this time, 20 February 1913 to be precise, a report appeared in *The Aeroplane* that Mr Arthur Wigram, an Australian who had been working on the design of a flying boat since 1910, was now having one constructed at Cowes. A drawing of the side elevation was

shown but no details were given although it can be seen that the machine was a two seater with the pilot in the centre, the passenger in front and the engine, a four cylinder in-line, such as a 100hp Green, behind, driving by chain or belt a pusher airscrew. The constructor was S.E. Saunders and the machine was photographed at an advanced stage of construction in the Medina shop at East Cowes, but now the tail boom was covered with ply instead of being the open girder shown in the drawing. Nevertheless the general characteristics suggest that the original hull seen by C.G. Grey at Brooklands could have been utilised for this purpose by rearrangement of the engine and crew positions. The Wigram was reported to be a potential entrant for the *Daily Mail* Seaplane Circuit of Britain Contest of August 1913 but no official entry was received and the machine was a non-starter. The fate of the Wigram is not known but it is probable that financial problems arose which caused work to be discontinued and the machine was never completed.



*Another view of the Wigram Flying Boat at East Cowes.  
:Westland Aerospace Ltd — C5605*

*Front of the hull of  
the Wigram Flying  
Boat at East Cowes.  
:Westland Aerospace  
Ltd – C5606*



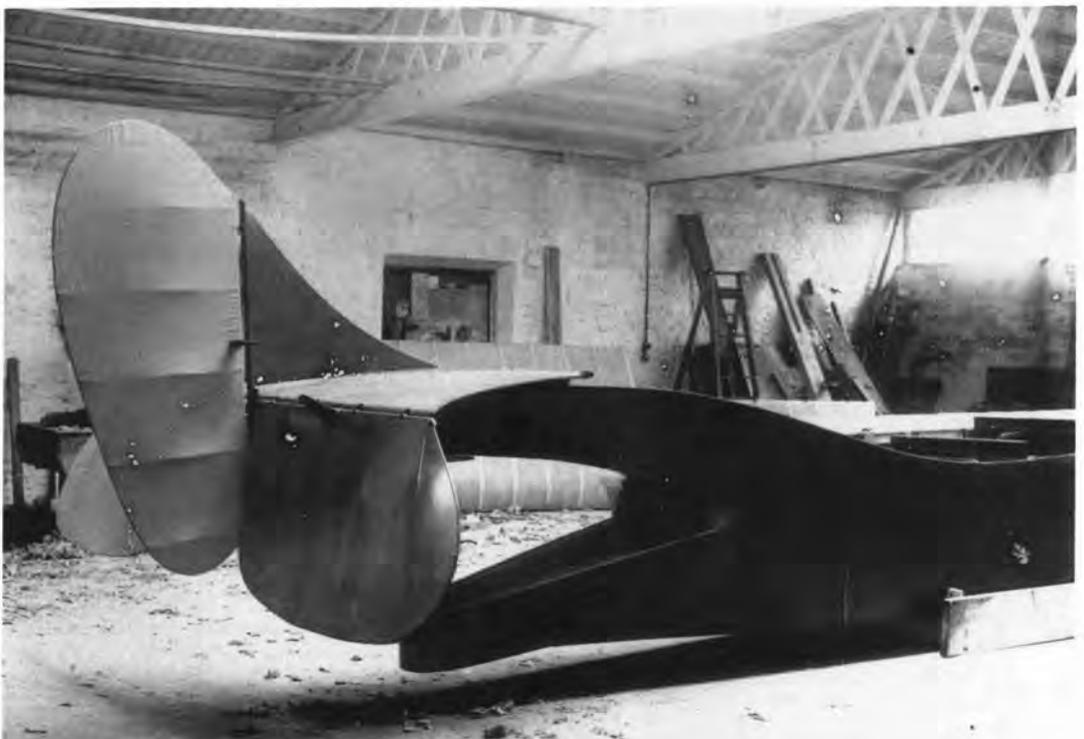
In January 1913 when the Sopwith Bat-Boat was next reported upon, it was in the newly acquired Roller Skating Rink at Canbury Park Road, Kingston and being prepared for exhibition at the Aero Show due to open at Olympia on 14 February 1913 and was quite different from the original description.

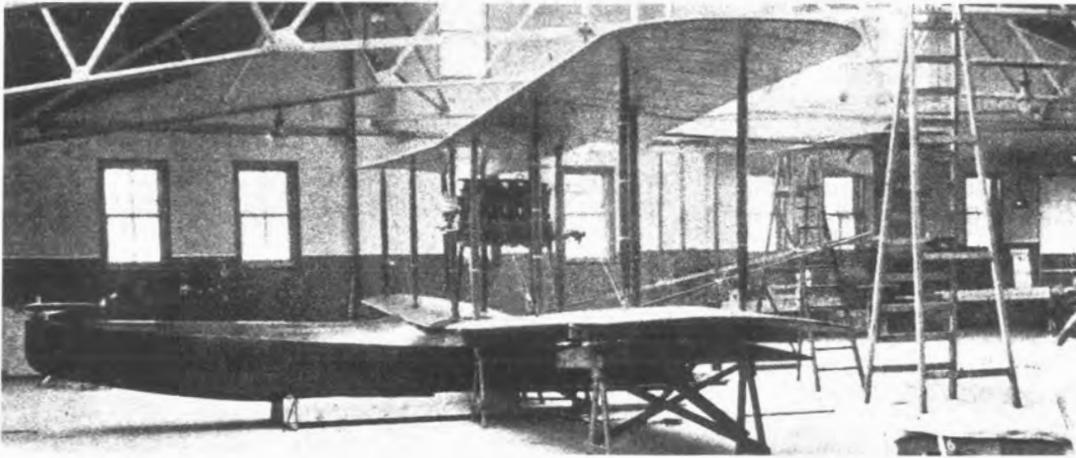
Sopwith had engaged the company's first draughtsman in the person of R.J. Ashfield and he started work at Brooklands on 21 October 1912. Thereafter there was some attempt at establishing designs on paper before full-size manufacture began, although the old method of full-scale layout in chalk on the floor and walls was still to be practised for later types when manufacturing was established at Kingston. Reg Ashfield's GA drawing of the Bat-Boat D.0001 is believed to be the firm's first drawing although the published reproductions are of a later traced version produced in the 1950s under Sir Sydney Camm's instructions to avoid handling of the fragile original and this has lost something of its original authenticity.

Ashfield's contribution at this stage to the design was presumably of a detailed nature, for the triumvirate of Sopwith, Sigrist and Hawker had all contributed to the design already basically established by the time his drawing appeared. Neither must it be overlooked that Sydney Porter of S.E. Saunders Ltd had made significant contribution in that he was responsible for the design of the hull, a major part of the aircraft.

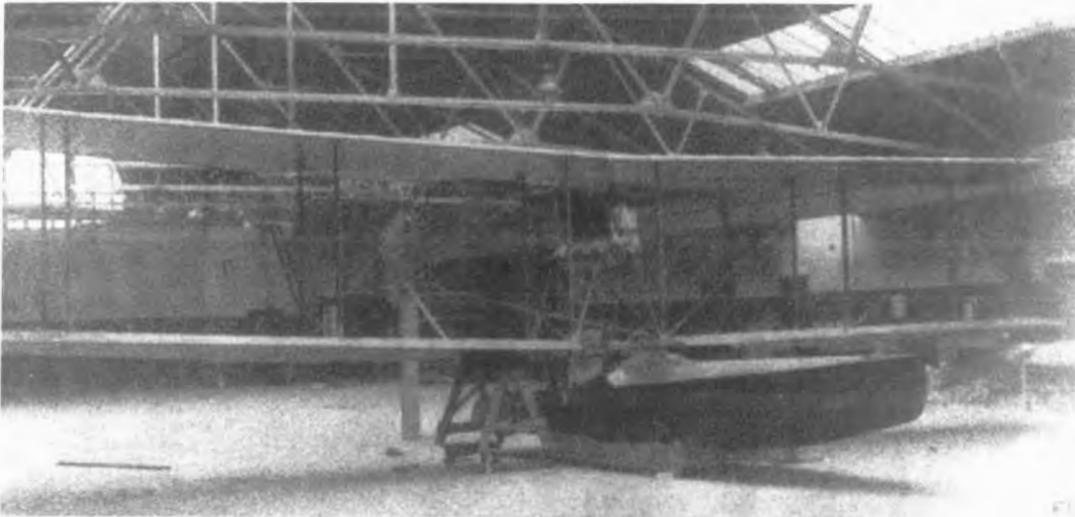
To extract the machine from the Rink it was necessary to remove part of the brickwork over the door to clear the centre section. This obstacle overcome, the machine was towed in the hours of darkness, slowly through the streets, with helpers walking alongside to check on clearances and assist manoeuvring around corners. Jack Whitehorn, a young shop boy and previously the page boy at the Skating Rink, was one of the helpers deputed to walk the ten miles from Kingston to Olympia. On the stand at Olympia, Whitehorn was given the job of polishing the copper of the engine and pipework and, on standing back to admire his

*Rudder and elevators  
of the Wigram Flying  
Boat.  
:Westland Aerospace  
Ltd – C5619*





*The original Bat Boat being assembled in the Rink at Kingston on Thames.  
:Aeroplane*



*Sopwith's original Bat Boat during assembly at Kingston.  
:Aeroplane*



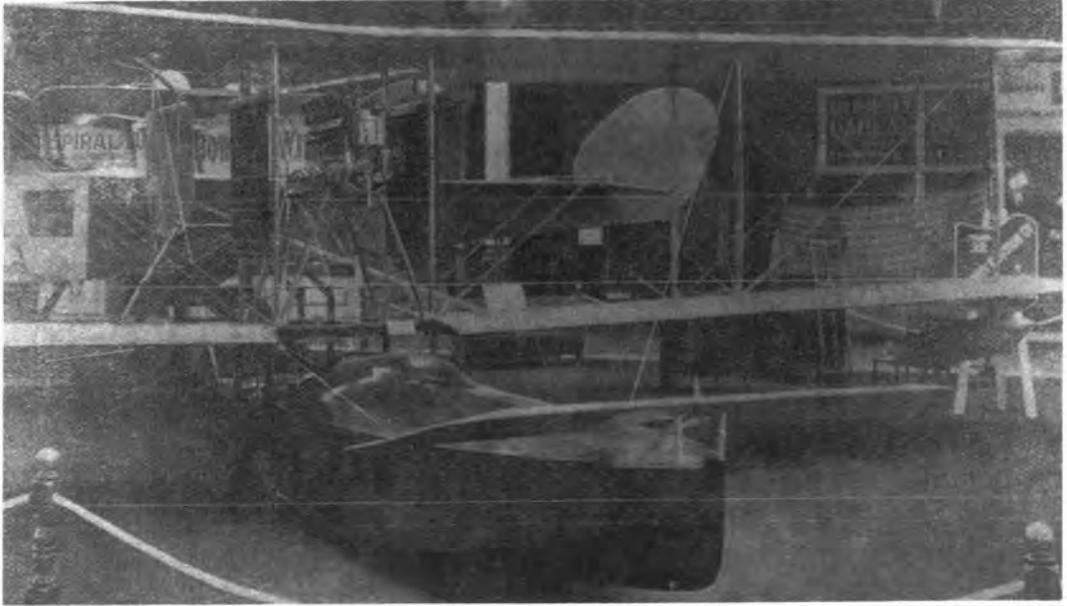
*The Bat Boat on Sopwith's stand at the Aero Show at Olympia in February 1913.  
:J.M. Bruce/  
G.S. Leslie Collection*

work, put his foot through the fabric of the lower wing. 'Sack him Harry — he's no b---y good', shouted Sopwith to Hawker, who, apart from now being a pilot, was in charge of the fitters and superintended the move and re-assembly of the aircraft. However, the repairs were effected before

the show opened at 3pm and Whitehorn survived in his job as an employee of Sopwith's and its successors to serve for some 63 years, a record in itself.<sup>2</sup>

The show at Olympia was visited by many Service personnel and serious interest was shown by senior

A further view of the Sopwith stand at the 1913 Olympia Aero Show. The Bat Boat is in the foreground and behind it is the rudder of the 'Tractor Biplane'.  
:J.M. Bruce/  
G.S. Leslie Collection



The damaged Bat Boat on the foreshore of the Medina at the Folly Sheds near Whippingham. The damage was caused by a gale after early attempts to fly.  
:Harry Busteed via  
Harald J. Penrose



The extent of the damage caused by the gale can be seen in this close up view of the Bat Boat on the foreshore near Whippingham in March 1913.  
:Harry Busteed via  
Harald J. Penrose



members of the Admiralty, who subsequently placed orders for a number of the machines on display. C.G. Grey, with his contacts, was able to list the machines to be purchased in his leading article at the conclusion of the show and this included a Bat-Boat.<sup>3</sup>  
The Aero Show closed on 22 February and the Bat-Boat was then returned to Kingston for preparation for dispatch

to Cowes, where it was housed in the sheds of S.E. Saunders at Folly near Whippingham on the east bank of the Medina river and there was prepared for testing. A contemporary report on the subject is given in *Aeronautics* magazine of April 1913 and later in Mrs Hawker's book<sup>4</sup> from which the following is quoted:  
'During March 1913, the first tests of the Sopwith Bat-



*The Bat Boat, rebuilt after the gale damage and now seen in the form used for the Mortimer Singer flights and just about to enter the water at the end of the slip-way.*  
:Westland Aerospace Ltd — C5462-B

Boat, which had made its debut at the Olympia Show, were carried out at Cowes. Sopwith, whose motor boat experience stood him in good stead, first took the machine out, but although a speed of sixty miles per hour was attained, the machine would not leave the water. Harry had a shot at it, but with no better success. Sopwith, making another effort, rose a few feet, but the hull landed heavily and was damaged. Left out all night on the beach, the machine was almost destroyed by a gale, one report circulating to the effect that only the engine and propeller remained intact.'

This report appears to be exaggerated as the photographs of the wreckage on the foreshore of the Medina show. These originate from Harry Busted who was at Cowes to test the Bristol Coanda No 120 seaplane which was also housed at the Folly Sheds until it crashed on 15 April, from which accident Busted was fortunate to escape drowning. At that time money in the business was not plentiful and with the need to conserve resources, it would be reasonable to repair the hull and, being made of 'Consuta', no doubt Saunders would be asked to carry out this work. In later years, Sir Thomas referred to 'my Bat-Boat' and was adamant that only one 'Consuta' hull was ever built. This first machine had warping wings, which were made at Brooklands in 1912, before the works were established at Kingston in the Rink and it had three bays to the tailbooms and a forward elevator.

The accident happened at the time when Sopwith had ideas for an attempt to secure the Mortimer Singer £500 Prize which had been announced by the Royal Aero Club early in the year. The rules for the contest required among other things 'Six out and home flights on a course from a point on land to a point out at sea, not less than five miles distant in a direct line, but the latter point shall not be less

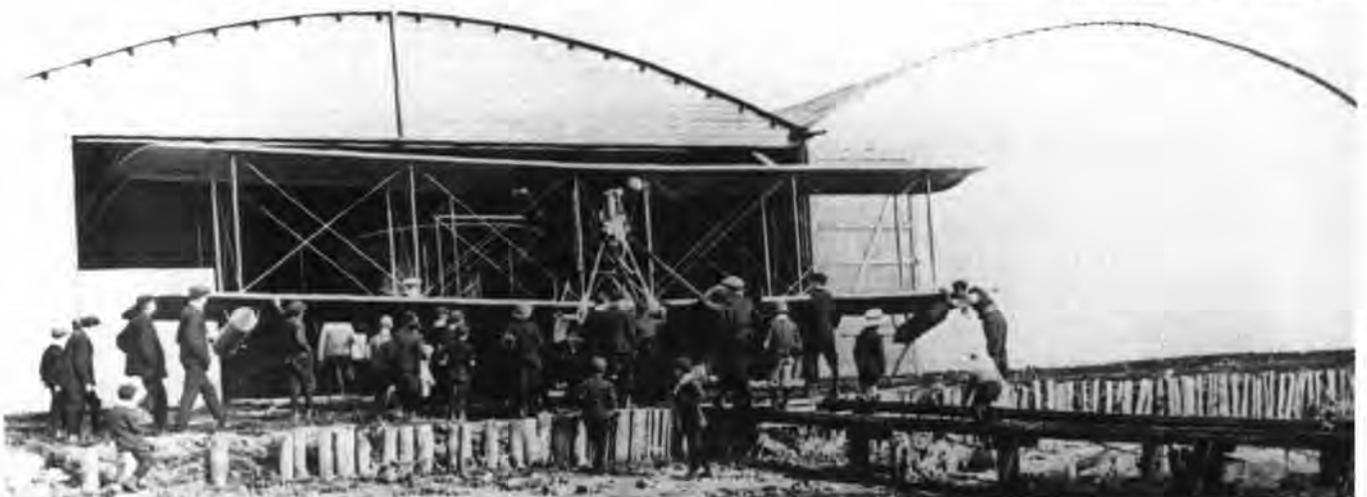
than one mile from any shore. Alightings have to be made on arrival at each point.' The rules, therefore, required that it should be an amphibious machine and also specified that it should be all British. The admiralty had ordered a machine basically as exhibited at Olympia and doubtless understood that changes would take place during the trials. Now, with the first machine badly damaged, Sopwith put in hand a second as a replacement for the Navy, retaining the first as his own and introducing changes for the Mortimer Singer attempt, primarily a temporary land undercarriage and a British-made 100hp Green engine. A significant change since its Show appearance was the replacement of the wires from the hull to the centre section with streamlined section tubular struts from the hull to the engine mounting. Following the damage at Cowes, the forward elevator was discarded and the tail booms were lengthened by one extra bay, twin rudders were fitted with a larger tailplane and elevator. The wings had been changed to embody aileron control instead of warping. Hawker tested this second version of the Bat-Boat at Brooklands on 25 May until a strut in the port landing gear gave way and an aileron was damaged. Thereafter, the machine was dismantled and repaired ready for dispatch to the Isle of Wight.

Sopwith had responsibility for a company and now came to rely on Hawker to carry out the flying, although he kept a watchful eye on these activities from a fast motor-launch. The Bat-Boat was again based at the Folly shed but take-offs were made outside the harbour after planing about a mile and a half down the Medina. Flights were made over the Solent almost to Calshot and over Spithead and an altitude of 1800ft was reached before alighting on the Medina adjacent to the Folly shed.

The Sopwith entry in the contest on 7th June was

*The Bat Boat being prepared at the Folly Sheds of S.E. Saunders Ltd. The figure at the wing tip is believed to be T.O.M. Sopwith, hands in pockets and preparing to 'move on' some of the over-enthusiastic lads.*

:Westland Aerospace Ltd — C5462-A





*The Mortimer Singer Bat Boat. Harry Hawker is in the cockpit and Harry Kauper sits on the prow.*

*:British Aerospace — SOP 4*

announced by the Royal Aero Club as a '100hp Gnome Tractor' and this was corrected a week later to a '100hp Green'. By 21 June Hawker was reported as having made 'one or two attempts on the Mortimer Singer Prize' one of which was abandoned because of a damaged wheel. Sir Thomas recalls the early attempt being from a field 'above the Squadron (ie the Royal Yacht Squadron — the Castle at Cowes) to a buoy off Lee-on-Solent'. The take-off from land was downhill over the cliff edge near Egypt Point and was found to be somewhat risky. The grass was long and the machine barely reached flying speed, dropping over the cliff edge to within ten feet of the water on one occasion. So a change of plan was made and the land base was established in a field near Lee-on-Solent on the mainland and the buoy was now near to the Isle of Wight opposite to the entrance to Southampton Water. On Tuesday 8 July, Hawker carried out flights which complied with the rules and won the contest. His passenger has been variously reported as fellow Australian Harry Kauper or Lt Spenser Grey, who has been nominated as one of the official observers in an earlier Royal Aero Club notice. The lowering of the undercarriage proved troublesome and assistance from the passenger's well aimed boot resolved the problem.

The Royal Aero Club accepted the reports of their observers, Messrs J.H. Spottiswoode and Howard T. Wright, without reference to Spenser Grey, and the award was made to T.O.M. Sopwith and officially published on 12 July. So the Bat-Boat had proved to be a successful amphibian and another step forward in marine aviation had been taken.

Whilst these activities were taking place, a second Bat-Boat was completed at Kingston and because of the more convenient access from Kingston and the lack of space in

the Folly shed, arrangements were made for it to be assembled at Hamble in the sheds of Hamble River, Luke and Co on the Spit at the mouth of the river. Walter Luke, an established boat builder, was taking an interest in marine aviation and was handling other people's aircraft under the manager F.R.S. Bircham and shortly was to engage Francis Murphy to design a seaplane, the HL1, which appeared at Olympia in 1914 but whose lack of success was to cause the company to go into receivership. The Bat-Boat now had a hull with cedar ply skin built by Sopwiths by conventional boat building methods under the supervision of Sidney F. Burgoine who had worked for the company since January 1913 after the family boat building yards at Kingston and Hampton Wick had closed down. He became Assistant Works Manager at the Rink in June.<sup>5</sup> This Bat-Boat was powered by the 90hp Austro-Daimler engine of the original and reverted to a single rudder of the new shape with overhanging areas top and bottom forward of the hinge line, necessitating divided elevators. There were the lengthened tail-booms as in the Mortimer Singer variant, but no undercarriage or forward tailplane and no fin was fitted. The machine was delivered to the Navy at Calshot in May thus fulfilling the contract for No 38, ordered at the time of the Aero Show.

Spenser Grey flew with C.G. Grey as a passenger from Calshot to Southampton Water on Friday, 15 August for the start of the 1913 Seaplane Circuit of Britain where, owing to fuel feed problems, the machine remained by the *Enchantress* start boat moored off Netley. The Bat-Boat was not a participant but was intended to escort the sole competitor, Hawker, in a Sopwith float seaplane, together with another Naval machine, a Borel monoplane, as far as Ramsgate; neither of the escorts in fact flew due to engine

*The Mortimer Singer Bat Boat seen safely secured 'for the night'.*

*:Westland Aerospace Ltd — C5659*





Harry Hawker in the cockpit of the Bat Boat taxiing in the entrance of Cowes Harbour.

:Westland Aerospace Ltd – C5657

trouble.<sup>6</sup>

The Navy were not to have their new Bat-Boat in new condition for long. On Saturday, 23 August 1913 Lt Spenser Grey with Rear Admiral Mark Kerr as passenger flew in it from Calshot to Brighton, where conditions prevented the machine being housed in a shed by the West Pier, so it was moored out for the night. On Sunday morning it was seen to be sinking gently, but surely, and so was hauled out by the coastguards with the tail well under water. When close in, the tail struck a groyne and broke away and a little later both planes collapsed, the machine becoming a total wreck except for the hull. The remains of No 38 were returned to the works for an extensive rebuild, completed in November when it was returned to Calshot. Subsequent to its rebuild the machine is seen with a further revision of the vertical tail surfaces consisting of a triangular fin and oval shaped rudder, presumably an improvement embodied during the course of the major rebuild. During its service it moved to Felixstowe, Yarmouth and finally to Scapa Flow where its operational life was concluded in September 1914, the debris being passed back to Calshot, its original station, in October.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, Sopwith, with a company to organise and administer, had given up flying and had sold his Bat-Boat also to the Navy. The Green engine employed for the Mortimer Singer contest was reportedly replaced with a

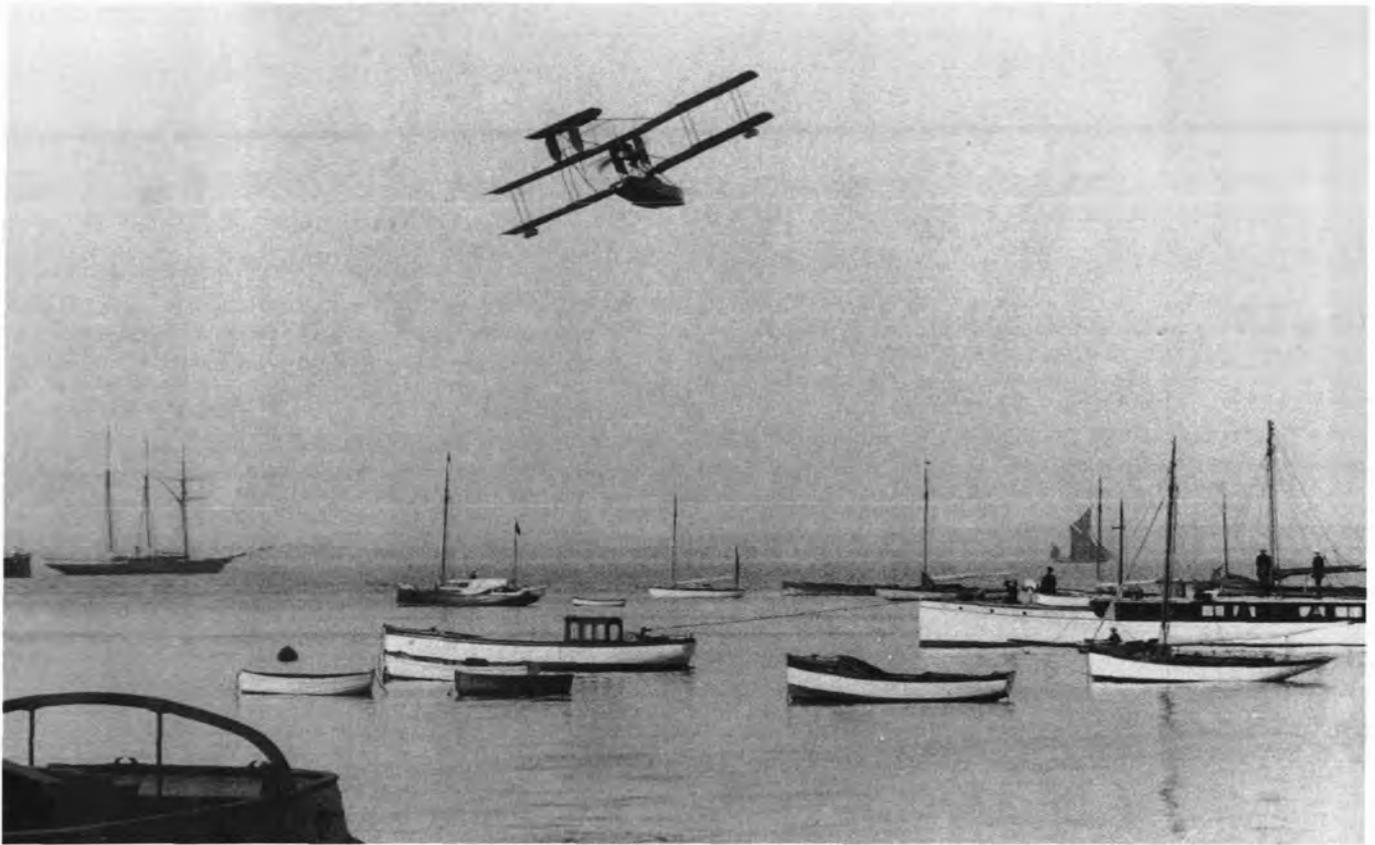
120hp Austro-Daimler and after assembly at Hamble the machine was flown to Calshot in the week before Christmas 1913 by Howard Pixton, Hawker by now being on his way to Australia with a Tabloid for demonstration purposes. The acceptance tests were reported as having been delayed by engine trouble (the *The Aeroplane*, 1 January 1914) but this was presumably overcome, although a later list of Naval aircraft of February 1914 records the machine, now No 118, as being fitted with a 90hp Austro-Daimler.<sup>8</sup> No 118 spent its service life based at Calshot, providing a means for developing the operational uses of marine aircraft, being used for a variety of trials of new equipment and techniques which included bomb-dropping trials and night flying in connection with the Naval Review of July 1914 when a car headlight was fitted to the prow. By the middle of May No 118 was fitted with triangular fins forward of the rudders as referred to by C.G. Grey in his report dealing with the Naval Review. His comments were sufficiently interesting that the following relevant extracts are included:<sup>9</sup>

'The last machine to start was the Sopwith bat-boat (90hp Austro-Daimler), one of the most extraordinary craft in the Navy, and quite the most comfortable thing to fly in I have yet come across. The huge hull, the comparatively low power, and the apparently small planes would lead one to expect a clumsy, sluggish machine, very hard to



The Bat Boat moored and at rest in Cowes Harbour.

:Westland Aerospace Ltd – C5607



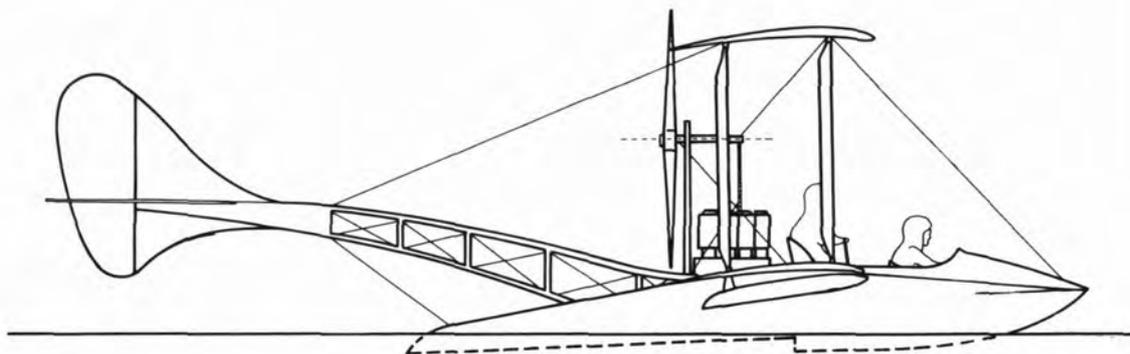
A beautiful view of the Mortimer Singer Bat Boat in the air over Cowes Harbour. :Westland Aerospace Ltd – C5608

get off the water and awkward to bring down properly. In practice she gets off easily, provided there is not too much sea – for she is small, considered as a boat – and flies very well indeed.

...She is, I think, the oldest machine at Calshot, and certainly one of the best fliers, now that triangular fins

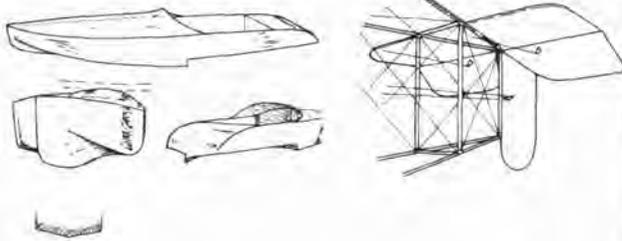
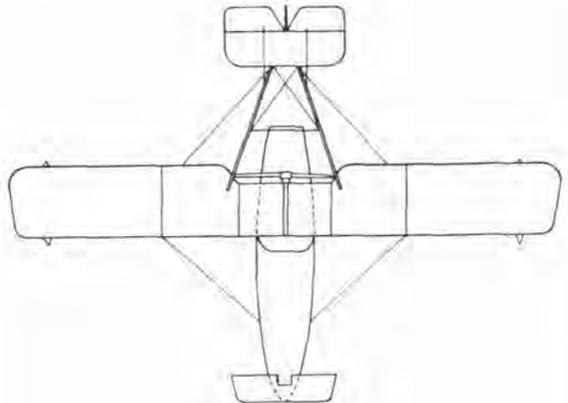
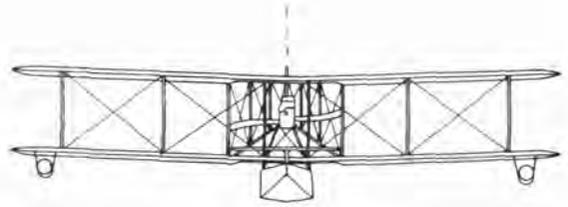
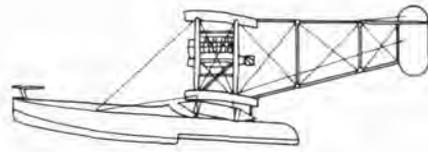
have been fitted under the tail and forward of the rudders. Of course, she is too small for real sea work, but a similar kind of machine in a really large size – say a 500hp twin-engine job – is something like the beginning of the real flying ship.'

The remarks on the flexibility of the tail-booms were made



THE WIGRAM HYDRO-BIPLANE.

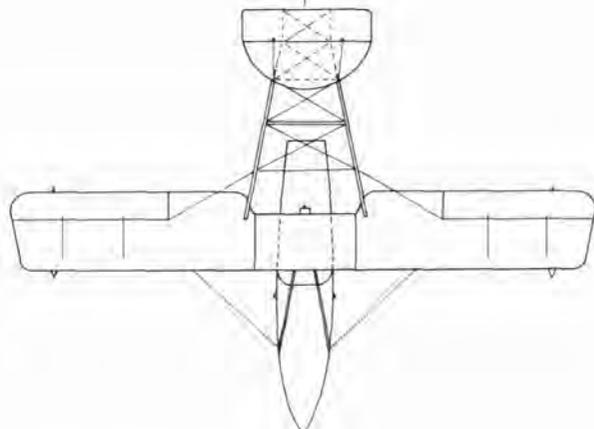
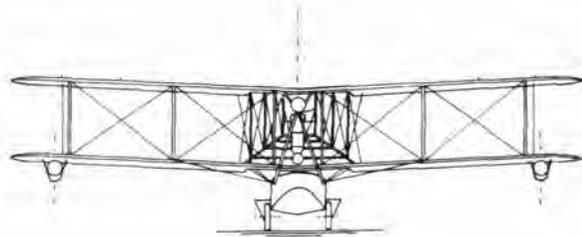
SOPWITH BAT BOAT (Type 1).



no doubt with his own memories of a flight in No 38 from Calshot to Southampton Water.

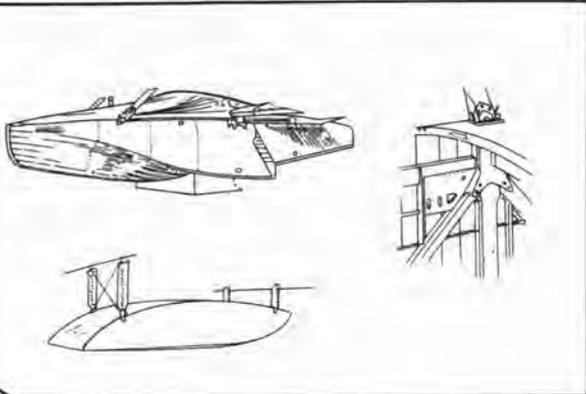
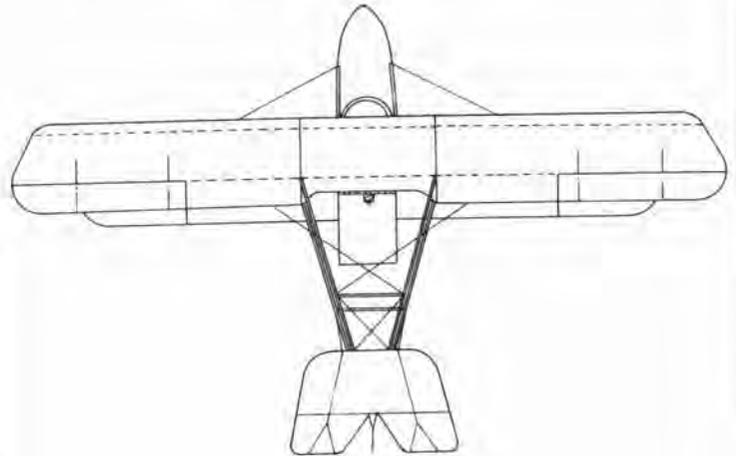
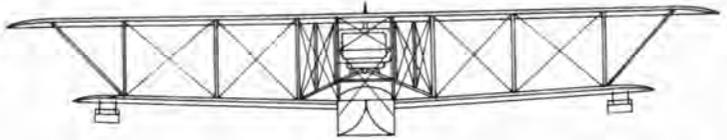
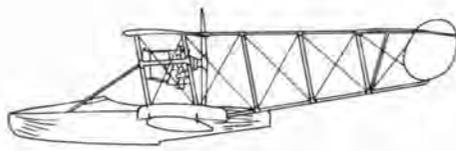
'One thing that will be altered in such a type of machine will be the tail-booms. At no time have I liked the idea of a heavy propeller and engine buzzing round inside four little sticks which one could break with one's hands, and

in the big, powerful, fast machines of today it is positively terrifying to see the tail-booms whipping about when the engines are running on land or water, and it is not good for one's nerves to watch them when in the air, for some of them bend visibly when the rudders are put full over.' The small Bat-Boat was used extensively by the naval



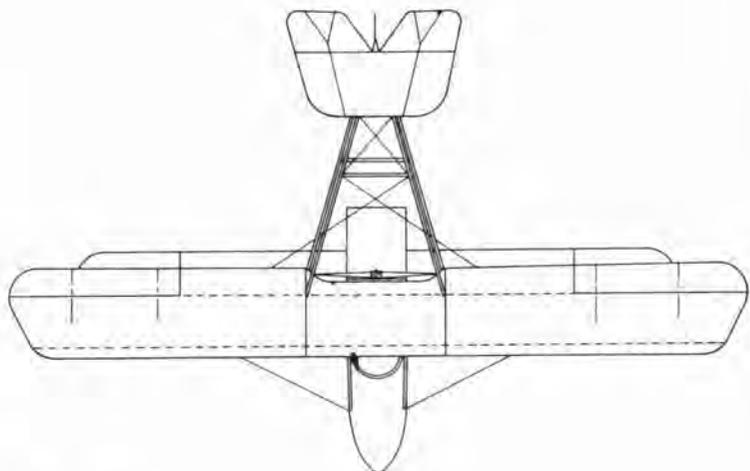
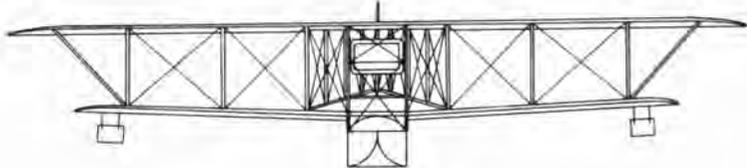
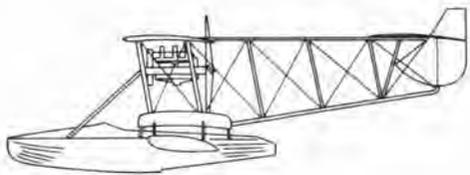
SOPWITH BAT BOAT Type I (Mortimer Singer prize version).

SOPWITH BAT BOAT Type 2

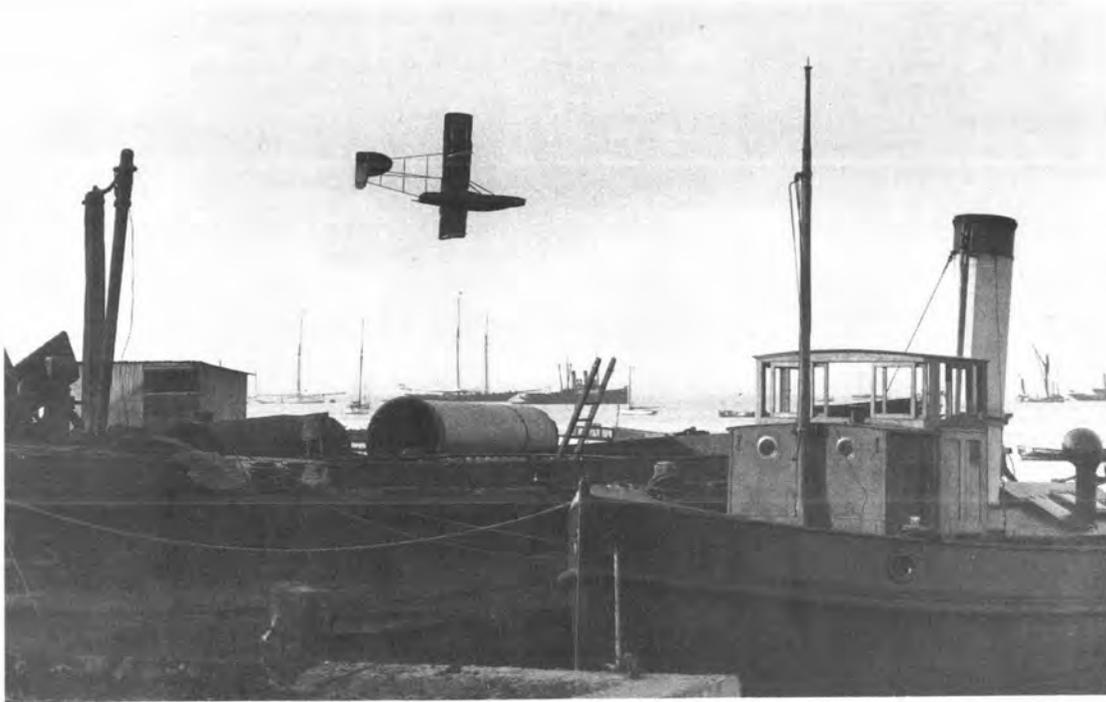


personnel at Calshot and during the various trials it was inevitable that improvements and other applications were suggested. Flight Commander J.L. Travers, an experienced pilot, who carried out much of the flying, proposed a redesigned version based on No 118 powered by a 100hp Gnome engine and capable of carrying a machine gun or

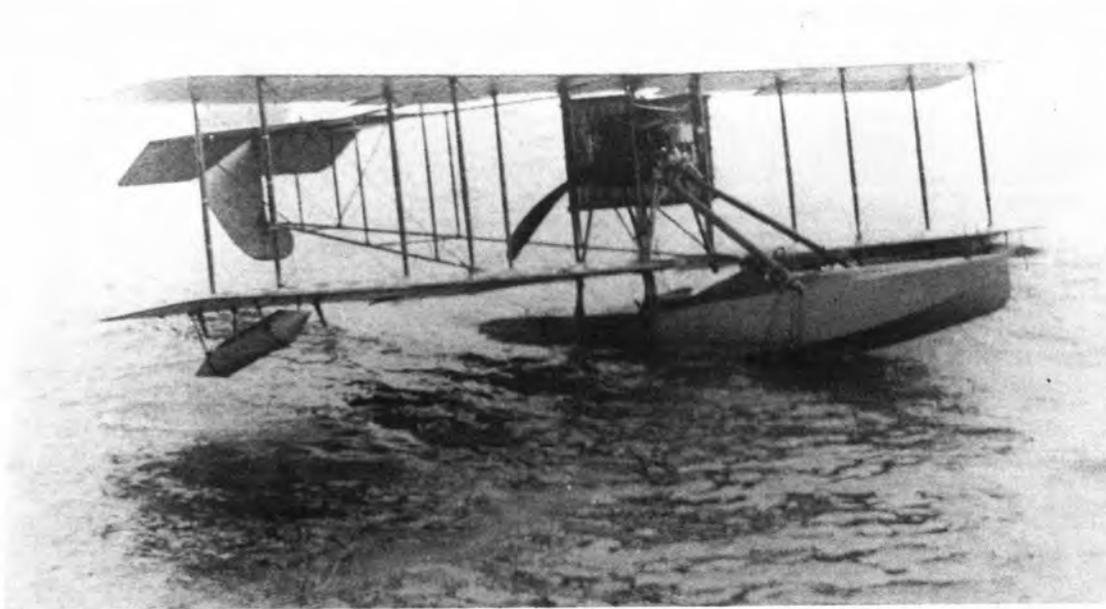
150lb of bombs. (AIR 1.349.15/227/4 Report dated 12.1.1915.)<sup>10</sup> To comply with this proposal R.J. Ashfield produced a general arrangement drawing No 839 dated 27 January 1915 with tandem seating and with a gun mounted forward of the front cockpit, but Travers was interested also in a gun mounted on the upper centre section firing above



SOPWITH BAT BOAT 2 (Sunbeam engine).



*The Bat Boat flying  
over Cowes  
Harbour.  
:Beken*

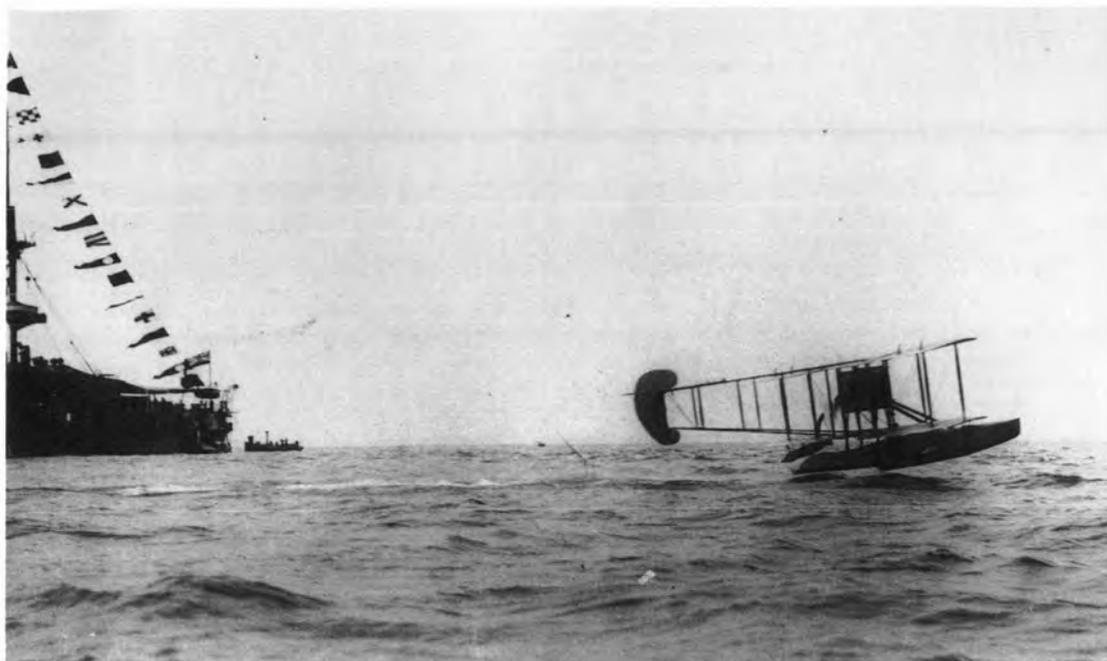


*The second Bat  
Boat Type 1 as  
delivered to the  
Royal Navy, serial  
number 38.  
:J.M. Bruce/  
G.S. Leslie  
Collection*

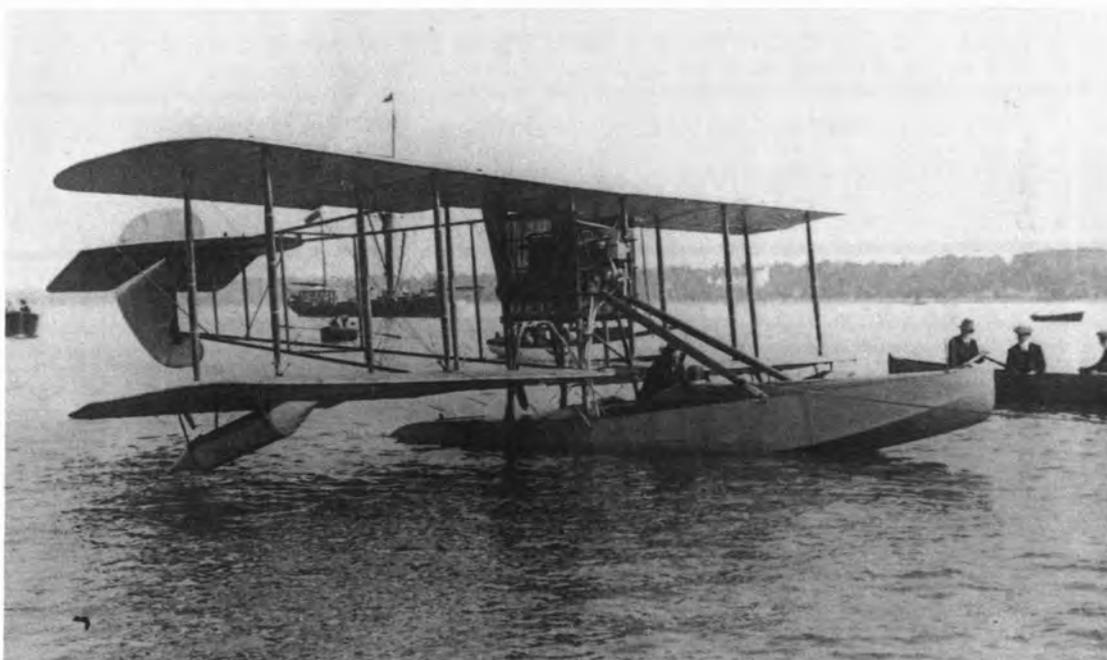


*Royal Navy Bat  
Boat No 38.  
:J.M. Bruce/  
G.S. Leslie  
Collection*

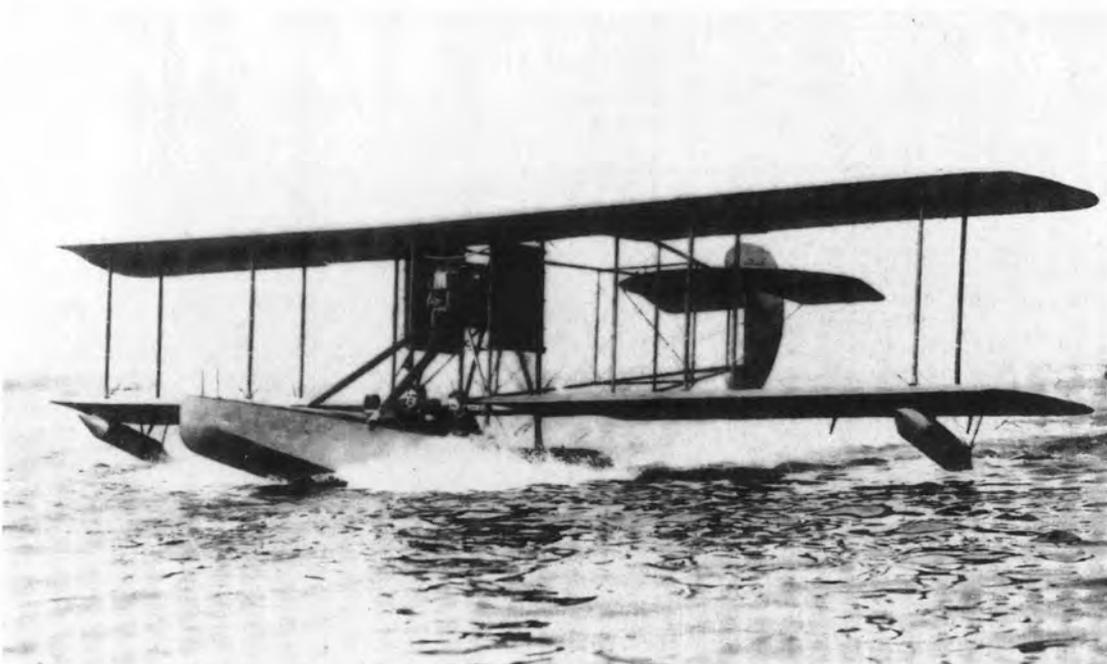
*Bat Boat No 38  
lifting off the water  
and passing a RN  
warship in 'gala  
attire'. Can any  
member read the  
signal being flown?  
:J.M. Bruce/  
G.S. Leslie  
Collection*



*Bat Boat No 38 on  
the water at Cowes.  
:J.M. Bruce/  
G.S. Leslie  
Collection*



*Bat Boat serial  
number 38 taxiing  
at speed.  
:J.M. Bruce/  
G.S. Leslie  
Collection*





*Bat Boat No 38 after rebuild and with a modified tail. The serial is now clearly marked.  
:J.M. Bruce/  
G.S. Leslie  
Collection*

and behind and suggested that the pilot and passenger positions should be reversed. His request to fit a gun to No 118 was not approved within the Admiralty and neither was the redesigned Bat-Boat which remained a project.

The flying boat with tail-booms nevertheless persisted — with the CR1 from Farnborough and much later with such types as the Navy Curtiss and Sikorsky machines. Sopwith himself followed almost immediately with an enlarged version of the Bat-Boat which made an appearance in March at the 1914 Aero Show. This was one of two machines with the 200hp Salmson water-cooled radial engine, sometimes called a Canton-Unné, which had been put in hand as a result of orders from both the Royal Navy and the German Navy. The first machine appeared over Southampton Water in April or early May and was delivered to Calshot where it was extensively flown on test by Pixton. The Bat-Boat was not received at Calshot with great enthusiasm and although identified as No 127, was not accepted by the Navy but was soon made available to the Greek Navy whose air arm was being developed with British assistance.<sup>12</sup>

The Greek Navy now had as Commander-in-Chief Vice Admiral Mark Kerr and under his guidance was forming a Naval Air Corps. Admiral Kerr had been appointed in

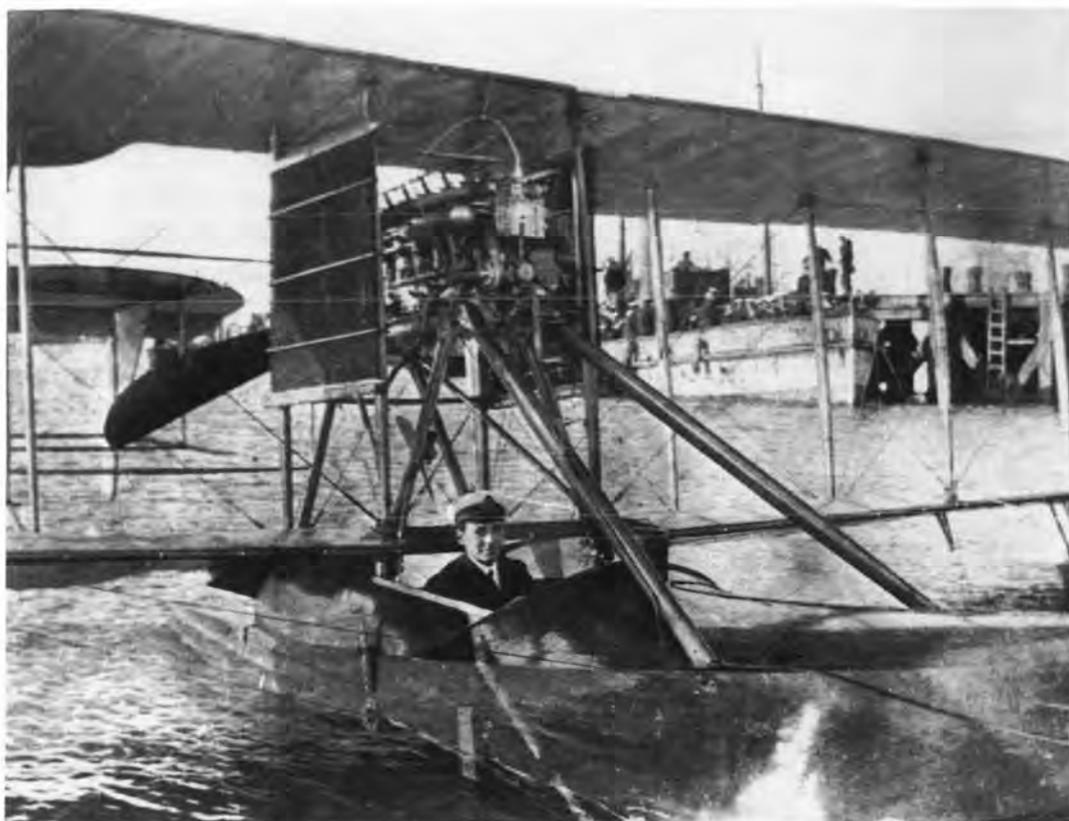
September 1913 to this position and no doubt his previous flying associations led to an order for one Sopwith pusher seaplane with Anzani radial engine for use as a training machine. One 'hydro-biplane', namely a Bat-Boat, was ordered in July 1914 which was well after the pusher trainer had arrived at Elefsis near Athens and at the time when four of later orders for six additional machines of the same type, but with Monosoupape Gnome engines, had flown at Hamble or Calshot. The declaration of war was imminent and perhaps these machines were deliberately delayed, in any case they were impressed by the Admiralty to become Serial No 896-901, and in exchange the Bat-Boat No 127 was released to the Greek Navy.<sup>13</sup>

The second machine, for the German Naval Air Service, was flying from Woolston in May, a photograph of it appearing on the front page of the *Aeroplane* of the 28th of that month together with the reported earlier delivery of the first machine to the Royal Navy. The second Bat-Boat was collected by Herr Hillmann shortly before the outbreak of war and flown away safely to Kiel-Holtenau, where it acquired the Serial No 44, joining Lohner No 42 and Curtiss No 43 flying boats. The naval airmen developed a preference for floatplanes and none of the flying boat types were adopted for operational use, including the indigenous



*Bat Boat No 118 in mid-1914 with triangular fins and a headlight. It was flown in this form by Lieut J.L. Travers at the Naval Review.  
:G. Quick*

Another view of Bat  
Boat No 118.  
:G. Quick



Friedrichshafen FF21. A photograph which appeared in *Flight* much later on 22 June 1916 is wrongly captioned as the FF21 and *Flight* went on to comment on the machine's similarity to the Bat-Boat and conjectured that it was a copy built by Flugzeugbau Friedrichshafen. It was in fact the Sopwith Bat-Boat and the comment may have stemmed from the possibility of Sopwith's establishing a 'German branch' early in 1914 or more likely a licence arrangement to build in Germany by an established manufacturer if the sample aircraft had been accepted for service use.<sup>14</sup> Sopwith's attempt to get the machine back before the outbreak of war, presumably under government pressure, was not successful, the machine remaining in Germany and believed used for training purposes only.

A third machine of the same size but with a 225hp Sunbeam engine and other variations was also built in the early part of 1914 and this was entered as No 3 in the 1914

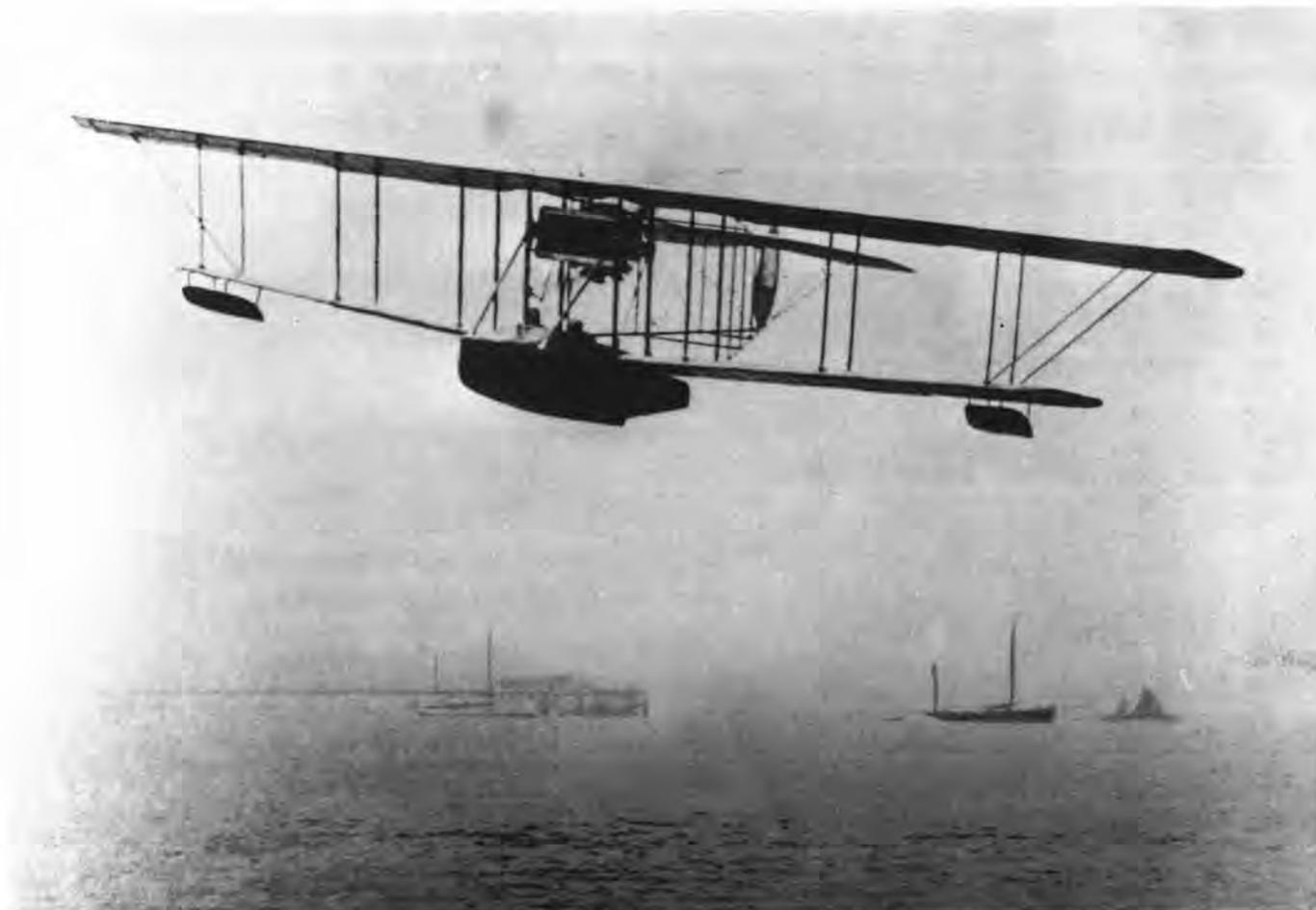
Seaplane Circuit of Britain (which was abandoned at the outbreak of the war) and was to have been flown by Pixton.

Seaplane assembly and testing by the firm was, from early in 1914, carried out from a shed which was part of Pemberton-Billings Supermarine works at Woolston. The use of Calshot by civilian firms was now restricted to the receipt of aircraft for official acceptance trials. Pixton accordingly delivered the machine on 9 August to Calshot where it became identified as No 879 after impressment by the Admiralty at the outbreak of war. The machine remained mainly unserviceable until November, seemingly due to engine problems, for it was suggested that two 100hp Monosoupape Gnomes should be fitted.<sup>15</sup> However this was not proceeded with and the Navy were discouraged from the purchase of further Bat-Boats. No 879 was dismantled in the sheds on Hamble Spit known as the Salterns in April 1915 although still recorded in Admiralty lists as 'HM

The first Type 2 Bat  
Boat at the Aero Show  
at Olympia in March  
1914.

:J.M. Bruce/  
G.S. Leslie Collection





The second of the large Bat Boats flying over Southampton Water on test before delivery to the German Naval Air Service. British Aerospace — SOP 5

aircraft built, building and under repair' in September 1915.

The Bat-Boats had served their working lives and made useful contributions to the advance of marine aviation. The success of the type, although short-lived, was typical of the standards of the time, taking into account the rapid advances being made in aviation under pressure of the impending war.

#### SOPWITH BAT-BOAT (Type 1) FIRST MACHINE — 1912-13

*Engine:* 90hp Austro-Daimler 6-cylinder in-line water-cooled driving a two-blade pusher Levasseur airscrew direct.

*Hull:* 21ft long with V entry and 3in-4in single step 12ft from the sternpost. Pilot on port side and passenger seated side by side. Construction was of cedar Consuta ply by S.E. Saunders Ltd for this first machine. The ply was applied in strips 5in-6in wide lengthwise (ie carvel fashion) with a fabric interlayer between the plies.

*Wings:* Two-bay wings of equal span and parallel chord mounted on short struts above the hull immediately behind the cockpit. Cut-outs in the trailing edges provided clearance for the propeller. The bottom centre section was open and consisted of the two main spars only. The original bracing wires to the forward part of the hull were soon replaced by substantial struts to the engine mounting structure. Wing warping control was employed.

*Tail Unit:* Twin strut and wire-braced booms of three bays extended aft from the inboard interplane struts to a single sternpost. No fin was fitted and the single parallel chord rudder with curved top and bottom ends protruded above and below the booms. A parallel chord tailplane with divided elevators was mounted on the top booms.

An additional elevator was fitted above the nose of the hull.

*Wing-Tip Floats:* These were of cylindrical form with conical ends and were made of light gauge copper sheet and

provided with bicycle valves to permit inflation for the removal of dents occurring in use.

*Power Plant:* Radiators of spiral tube manufacturer were mounted on either side of the engine between the wings. A handle for hand starting from the cockpit operated on the front end of the crankshaft. Fuel was carried in a cylindrical tank on the port side below the top centre section.

#### *Dimensions:*

Span	41ft 0in	Wing area	400sq ft
Length	30ft 4in	Tailplane span	9ft 0in
Height	11ft 6in	Front elevator	
Chord	5ft 6in	span	8ft 0in
Gap	5ft 6in	Hull length	21ft 0in
Dihedral	2°	Hull beam	4ft 0in
Incidence	4°		
<i>Weights</i>			
Basic	1200lb	<i>Maximum speed:</i>	60/65mph
Gross	1650lb	<i>Endurance:</i>	2 hours
Hull	180lb		

#### SOPWITH BAT-BOAT (Type 1) FIRST MACHINE REBUILD — 1913-15

Alterations made to the first machine subsequent to the damage at Cowes prior to contesting the Mortimer Singer Prize.

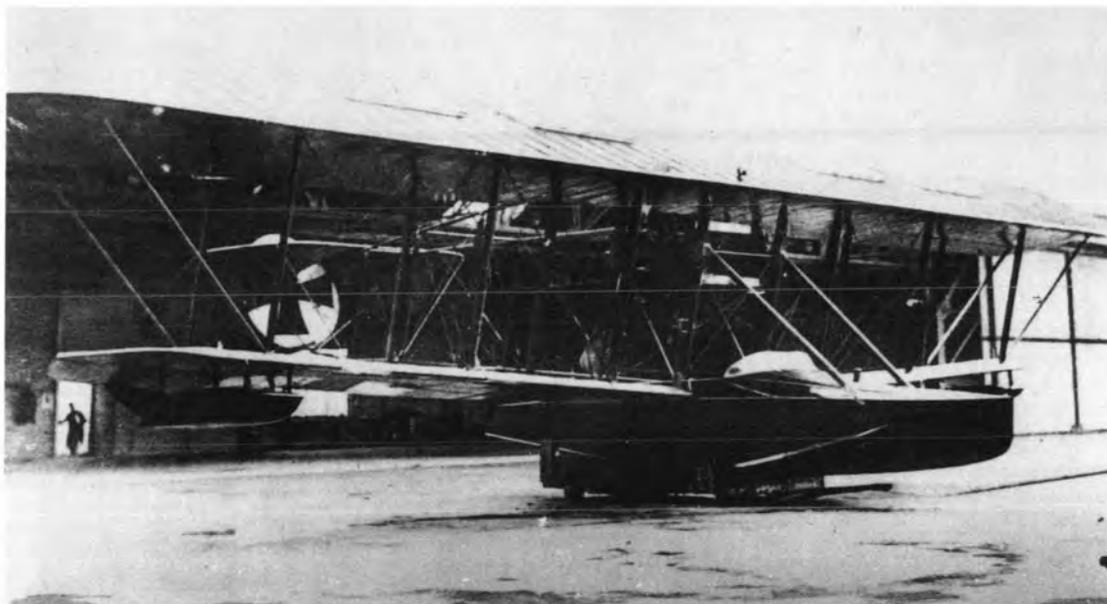
*Engine:* 100hp Green Type E6 6-cylinder in-line water-cooled.

*Wings:* New wings with control by ailerons and small increase in area and dihedral angle.

*Tail Unit:* Tail booms increased in length by one bay and opened out to double sternposts to carry twin rudders of new shape. A new tailplane with curved leading edge carried a one-piece elevator. Small triangular fins were added when the machine was in Naval service in about May 1914.

*Undercarriage:* A tubular member across the hull was mounted in bearings on each side and carried short struts in the form of forks in which the wheels were mounted. The

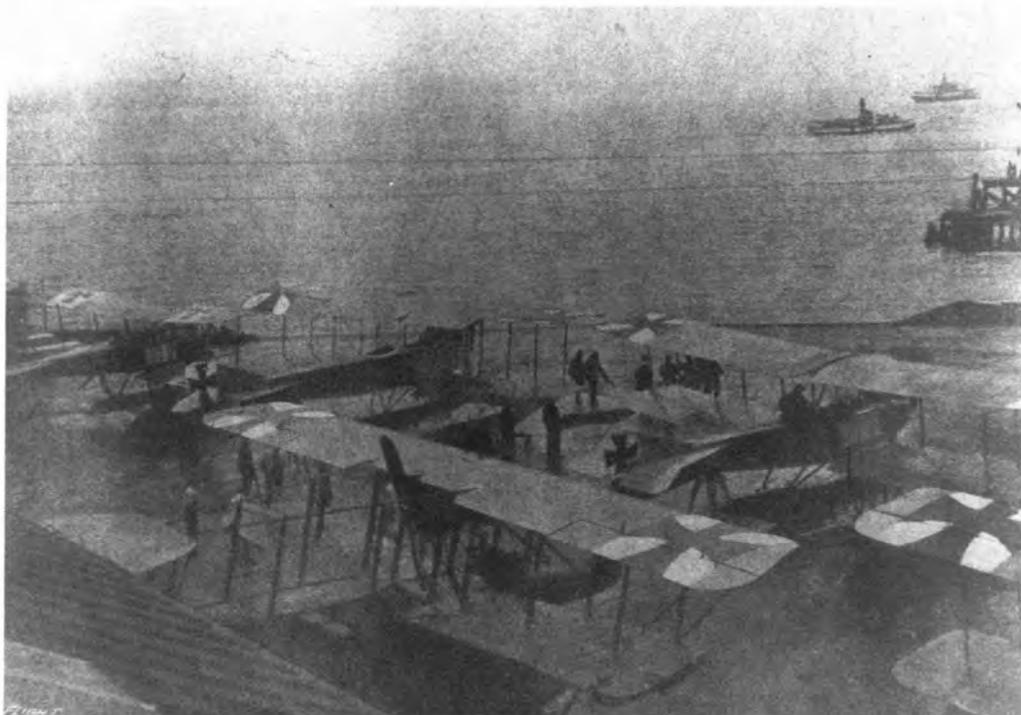
*Type 2 Bat Boat in service with the German Navy seen at Kiel-Holtenau. Serial Number 44. :J.M. Bruce/ G.S. Leslie Collection*



*German naval personnel around No 44 at Kiel-Holtenau. :Aeroplane*



*No 44 amongst other German naval aircraft at Kiel-Holtenau. :Flight*





A Friedrichshafen FF.21 of 1914. A type comparable to the Large Bat Boat.  
:Heinz J. Nowarra

undercarriage was designed to be raised by a lever in the cockpit and to fall under its own weight. The wheels carried tyres 2ft diameter by 4in wide and were unsprung. The hull was supported at the rear by a tail skid when at rest on the ground.

*Dimensions:*

Length	32ft 0in	Wing area	428sq ft
Dihedral	3°	Track	4ft 8in

*Note:* Revised weights for the aircraft as prepared for the Mortimer Singer Contest are not recorded but a gross weight of 1950/2000lb could be expected.

The undercarriage was later removed and an Austro-Daimler engine refitted (possibly 120hp initially, 90hp later) before transfer to the Navy as No 118 where it served until February 1915.

**SOPWITH BAT-BOAT (Type 1)  
SECOND MACHINE – 1913-14**

*Engine:* 90hp Austro-Daimler.

*Hull:* As previously described except that it was built by Sopwiths at Kingston using cedar ply skins but not of 'Consuta' type.

*Wings:* As for modified first machine.

*Tail Unit:* Twin strut and wire-braced booms but tapering to a single sternpost. No fin was fitted. The rudder was of a new type, aerodynamically balanced by extensions forward of the hinge line top and bottom operating between a divided elevator. In later service a triangular fin was fitted with an oval shaped rudder.

*Note:* This machine was delivered to the Navy to meet the contract (CP.32098/13) placed as a consequence of the 1913 Olympia Show and served as No 38 until September 1914.

**SOPWITH BAT-BOAT (Type 2) – 1914-15**

An enlarged version with double the power of the first type. One machine, as exhibited in March 1914, was supplied to the Royal Navy as No 127 and subsequently passed on to the Greek Naval Air Service. A second machine was supplied to the German Naval Air Service taking No 44 in that service.

*Engine:* 200hp Salmson (Canton-Unné) 2.M.7 14-cylinder water-cooled radial driving a two-blade Integral airscrew direct.

*Hull:* Generally similar in type to earlier machines but covered in mahogany. Now 20ft long but broader and deeper. External air ducts fed air to the step. Pilot on starboard side.

*Wings:* Three-bay wings of unequal and increased span and chord mounted direct to the gunnel. Mounted with 1ft 6in stagger and 3° dihedral on lower wing only.

*Tail Unit:* The four-bay booms tapered to a single sternpost. There was no fin and an oval-shaped balanced rudder was fitted. The tailplane with divided elevators was mounted on the top booms and braced by wires to the bottom booms.

(Sketches in *Flight* made prior to the Aero Show showed three bays and a parallel chord unbalanced rudder with clearance for a one-piece elevator but these features were not incorporated in the machine exhibited.)

*Wing-Tip Floats:* These were of shaped box type mounted by four short struts.

*Power Plant:* The engine was mounted high up on the rear centre section struts on cross mountings with a radiator in front mounted across the two forward struts. A small gravity tank was fed by a wind pump from a main tank in



Sopwith Bat Boat at Calshot in 1914.  
:Bromet via RAF Museum

Inside the Rink at Kingston upon Thames. The Bat Boat hull on the right is that being built for the 'Circuit of Britain' contest in 1914. In the left foreground, a Sopwith Tabloid is being completed.  
:Aeroplane



the rear of the hull giving a fuel capacity of 70 gallons. Starting was by compressed air.

**Wireless Equipment:** A single cylinder Motosacoche engine driving a generator for a wireless telegraphy set was mounted in the hull in front of the passenger.

**Dimensions:**

Span: top	54ft 0in		
bottom	44ft 6in	Stagger	1ft 6in
Length	36ft 6in	Wing area	600sq ft
Height	10ft 0in	Hull length	20ft 0in
Chord	6ft 9in	Hull beam	4ft 4in
Gap inboard	6ft 0in	Hull depth	3ft 6in
Dihedral	3°		

**Weights**

Basic	2300lb	Speed range:	40-70mph
Gross	3120lb	Endurance:	4½/5 hours
		Rate of climb:	500ft per min

**SOPWITH BAT-BOAT (Type 2)  
CIRCUIT OF BRITAIN VERSION – 1914-15**

One machine was constructed for the abandoned contest of 1914 and this was impressed by the Admiralty becoming No 879.

**Engine:** 225hp Sunbeam. 12-cylinder water-cooled V driving a two-blade Integral airscrew, later changed to a four-blade in Naval service.

**Wings:** On this machine the wings were raised on four short struts above the hull leaving an open centre section across the hull.

The third Bat Boat 2, originally built for the 1914 'Circuit of Britain' contest. Serial No 879 after delivery to the Royal Navy.  
:J.M. Bruce/  
G.S. Leslie  
Collection



**Tail Unit:** As previous machines but with struts bracing the tailplane to the lower booms. Later a triangular fin and unbalanced rudder were fitted.

**Wing-Tip Floats:** Originally fitted with cylindrical floats, later reverting to the box type.

**Power Plant:** The engine was mounted on fore and aft beams between the centre section struts.

**Dimensions:**

Span Top	55ft 0in	Weight	
Bottom	45ft 0in	Gross	3180lb
Height (est)	11ft 0in	Speed range:	48-75mph

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2. *Surrey Comet*, 26.2.1975, Interview with Jack Whitehorn.
3. *Aeroplane*, 27.2.1913.
4. *H.G. Hawker – Airman*, by Muriel Hawker published by Hutchinson & Co, 1922.
5. *Aeroplane*, 12.6.1913.
6. *Aeroplane*, 21.8.1913.
7. *Aeroplane*, 28.8.1913.
8. *Aeroplane*, 1.1.1914 and 19.2.1914.
9. *Aeroplane*, 22.7.1914.
10. PRO AIR 1.349 15/227/4. Report dated 12.1.1915.
11. *Aeroplane*, 25.5.1914.
12. *Aeroplane*, 29.7.1914.
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14. *Aeroplane*, 28.2.1917.
15. *C&C GB Journal*, Vol 16 No 2.



*Felixstowe F2A: N4545, cruising low over the sea. Drawing 2.*

# High Visibility Colour Schemes on Felixstowe and Great Yarmouth Flying Boats

by Adrian Vicary

On 4 June 1918, north of Terschelling, five flying boats were involved in a long battle with seaplanes from Borkum. Three of the 'boats were from Felixstowe and the others from Great Yarmouth. Of the latter pair, the machine flown by Capt John Hodson was painted post-box red with diagonal yellow lightning marks. In the confusion of the action it was difficult to identify a particular aeroplane as all, except this vividly coloured machine, were in the standard colour scheme for the type. It was decided, therefore, to allow individual pilots to paint their own machines in similarly outstanding colours and patterns. The foregoing is gleaned from C.F. Snowden Gamble's *The Story of a North Sea Air Station* pp 394-400. Unfortunately in that account the serial number of the red and yellow painted Felixstowe F.2A is given as N4298 (p394) and N4289 (p396). One must be a misprint but as both these 'boats were at Yarmouth, it is impossible to know which is correct, unless and until further data or photographs can be found.

Another reference to these schemes appears in G.E. Livock's *To the Ends of the Air* (p61). Livock also flew from Yarmouth and claimed to have started the idea of dazzle-painting the 'boats, together with his co-pilot Bob Leckie. They produced the black and white scheme on N4283.

Very few illustrations of these recognition colour schemes have appeared in print, so I have produced the following notes and sketches to give an idea of their variety and style. It is believed that other stations operating the flying boats adorned their machines with identification markings but not in such an elaborate manner. As it is impossible to accurately judge colours from black and white photographs

the remarks made should be taken merely as suggestions and I welcome argument, discussion and further information. The invaluable help of Stuart Leslie and Chris Ashworth in providing photographs from their collections is acknowledged — without them I would have had little to work on. As it is, only N4283 from Great Yarmouth has been seen of that station's machines and all the others depicted are believed to have operated from Felixstowe. The latter was a much larger base with at least sixteen flying boat flights to Yarmouth's three. These were as follows:

	Original RNAS Flights	From 20.8.18 RAF Squadrons
Great Yarmouth	324, 325 and 326	228
Felixstowe	327 and 328	230
	329 and 330	231
	333, 334 and 335	232
	336, 337 and 338	247
	342, 343 and 344	259
	339, 340 and 341	261

Individual schemes shown are:

1. Felixstowe F.2A: serial unknown; open cockpit, colours — red and white. This machine had an experimental pulpit type gun position centrally placed in the upper mainplane. No cockades on upper surface of top wing.
2. F.2A: N4545; open cockpit, colours — red and white.
3. Curtiss H.16: N4060(?); open cockpit, colours — red and white. Balanced rudder as shown, fitted at experimental station on the Isle of Grain. (Also had balanced ailerons and elevators). Cockades on undersurface of top wing. It seems likely that numbers 1-3 would have been of the same flight as the chevron/zig-zag markings on the forward half of the

fuselage match up.

4. F.2A: N4297; open cockpit, colours — blue and white. Cockades on undersurface of top wing, upper section of fin above tailplane apparently dark green. Carried figure 3 on nose.
5. F.2A: N4304(?); open cockpit, colours — red and white or white on dark green. Cockades on undersurface of top wing. Figure 2 on nose.
6. F.2A: serial unknown; open cockpit, colours — red or black and white or white on dark green. Interplane struts in fuselage colours.
7. F.2A: serial unknown; semi-enclosed cockpit, colours — white on dark green, fuselage spine aft of cockpit, white. Cockades on undersurface of top wing.
8. F.2A: serial unknown; open cockpit, colours blue and white, tail fin dark green.
9. F.2A: N4541; semi-enclosed cockpit, colours — blue and white, fuselage spine and tail fin dark green.
10. F.2A: N4300; semi-enclosed cockpit, colours — blue and white, fuselage spine white, tail fin dark green. Numbers 8-10 probably of same flight.
11. Felixstowe F.3: N4251(?); open cockpit, colours red or black and white. Cockades on undersurfaces of bottom wing. Another F.3, believed to be N4258, had a matching chequerboard pattern on forward half of fuselage and plain rear fuselage.
12. F.2A: N4296; open cockpit, colours white on dark green.
13. F.2A: N4099; open cockpit, colours white on dark green. Cockades on undersurface of top wing.
14. F.2A: serial unknown; open cockpit, colours — white on dark green.
15. F.2A: N4087(?); open cockpit, colours — white on dark green.
16. F.2A: N4283; semi-enclosed cockpit, colours — black and white, main and tailplane struts black and white, section of rear fuselage possibly clear doped fabric — a repair? Underside of fuselage concealed by beaching trolley

was unpainted. Figure 2 on rudder as shown.

All machines shown had standard dark green camouflage on upper wing surfaces and wing and tail struts were not painted unless noted otherwise. Most bore national markings in the form of cockades on the upper surface of the top wing. Rudder stripes as shown. In most cases the fuselage colours would probably have been applied to the underside of the hull but I have avoided too much speculation and have left blank areas not visible in available photographs. In examples 1-15 inclusive, the pattern on the opposite side of the fuselage would have been a mirror-image of that drawn with the pattern meeting on the centre-line of top and bottom surfaces. However the random scheme applied to N4283, number 16, would almost certainly have differed on the starboard side. A drawing by Leonard Bridgman (who served at Great Yarmouth) on p.293 of Snowden Gamble's book shows the starboard side of this aeroplane and the pattern drawn is completely different. Only photographic evidence could confirm or deny its accuracy. Floats on all aircraft, except number 14 (unpainted), bore markings matching the fuselage in some way as shown.

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C. Rupert Moore, 'Felixstowe F.2A Flying Boats', *Scale Models*, December 1977

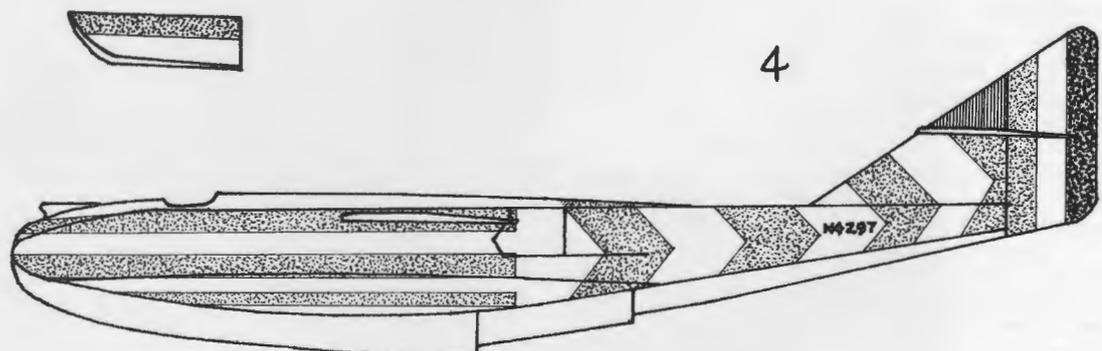
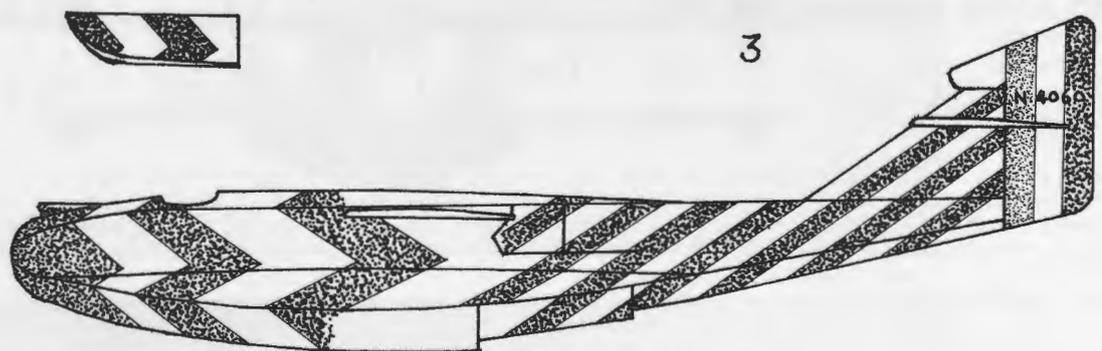
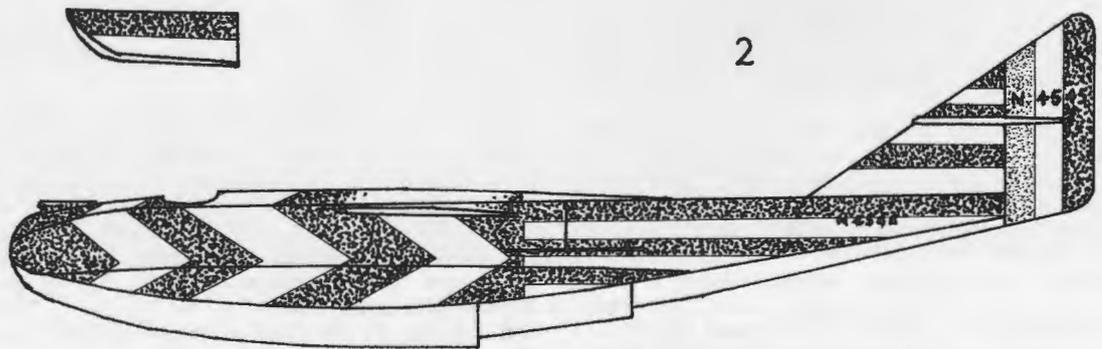
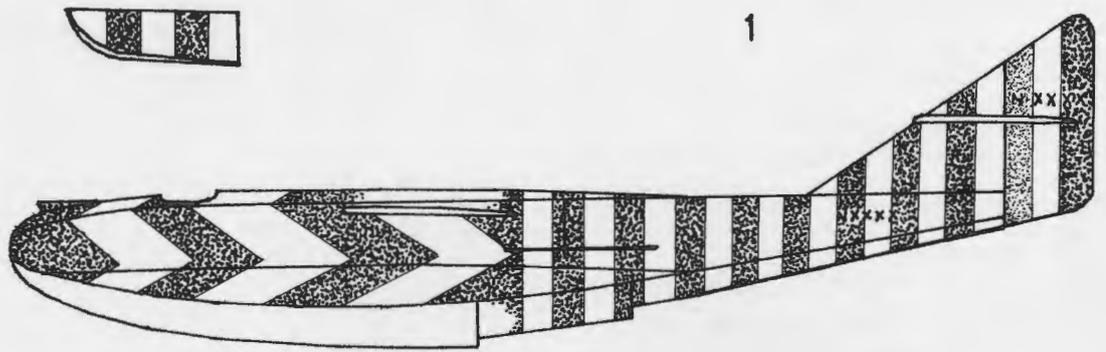
G.E. Livock, *To the Ends of the Air*, HMSO (Imperial War Museum), 1973

*Felixstowe F2A with a gunner occupying the position above the top wing. Serial not known. Drawing 1.*

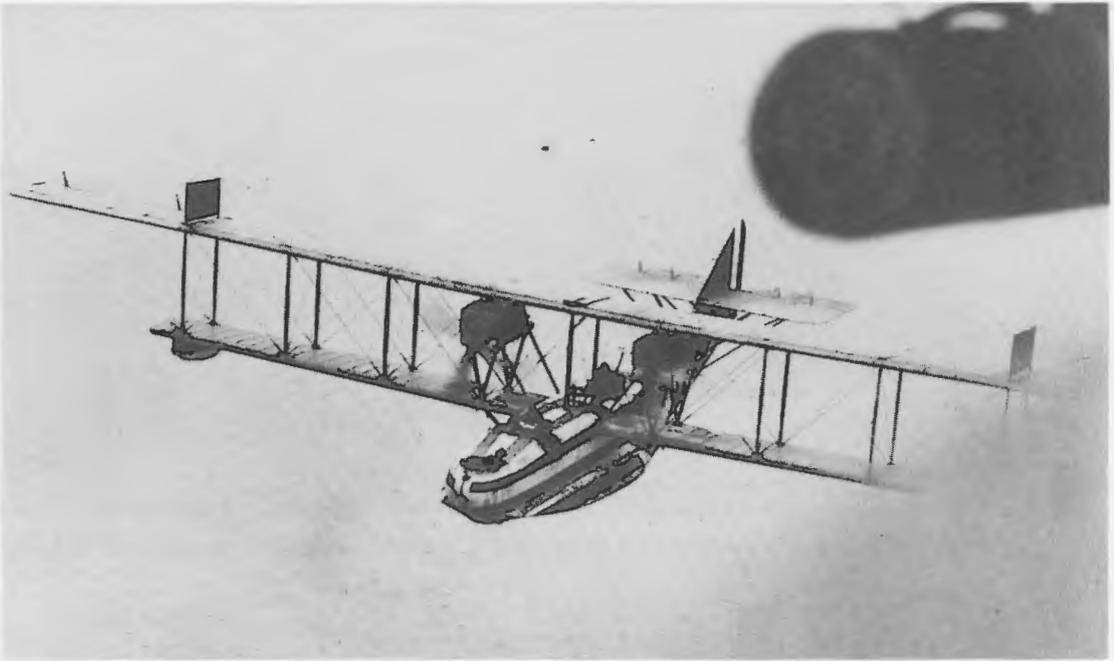


*Curtiss H16: Thought to be N4060. The beaching crew with thigh waders and tow rope stand in the water nearby. Drawing 3.*

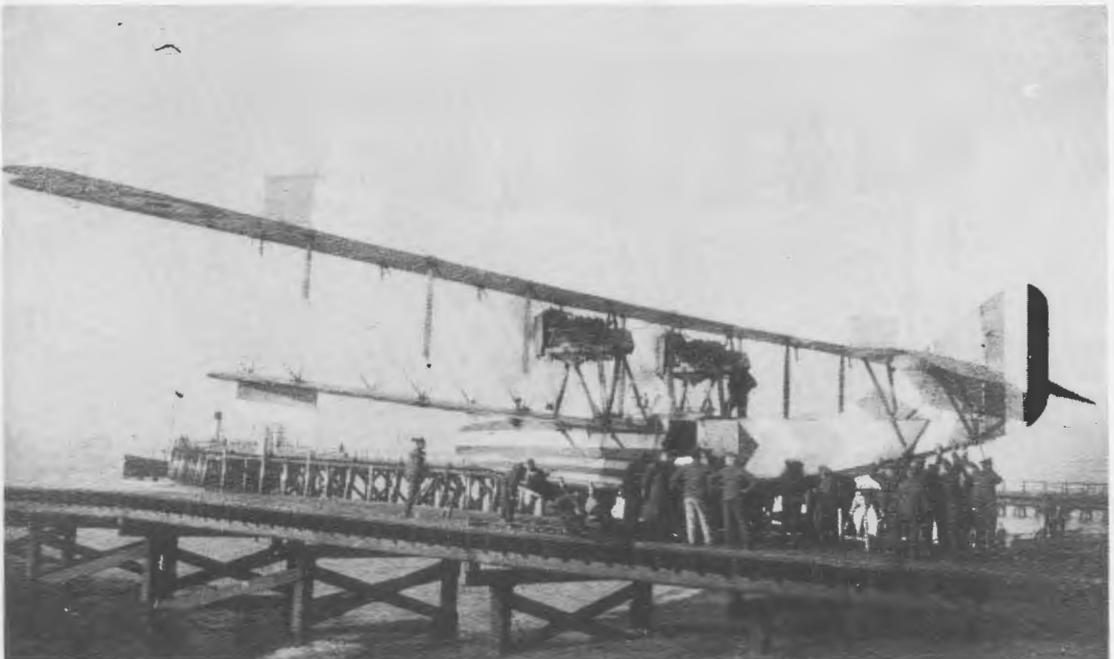




*Felixstowe F2A:  
Thought to be  
N4304. Drawing 5.*

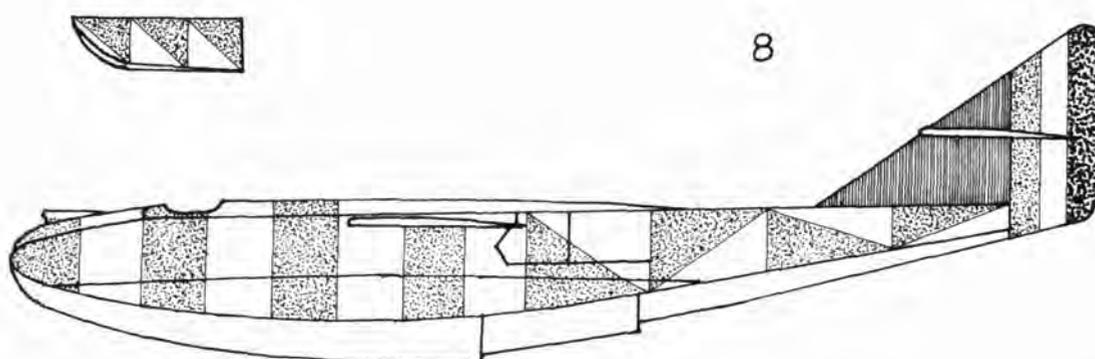
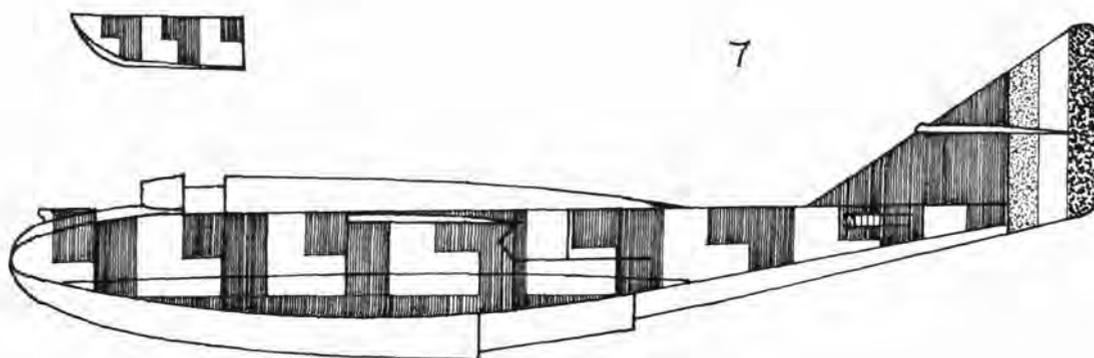
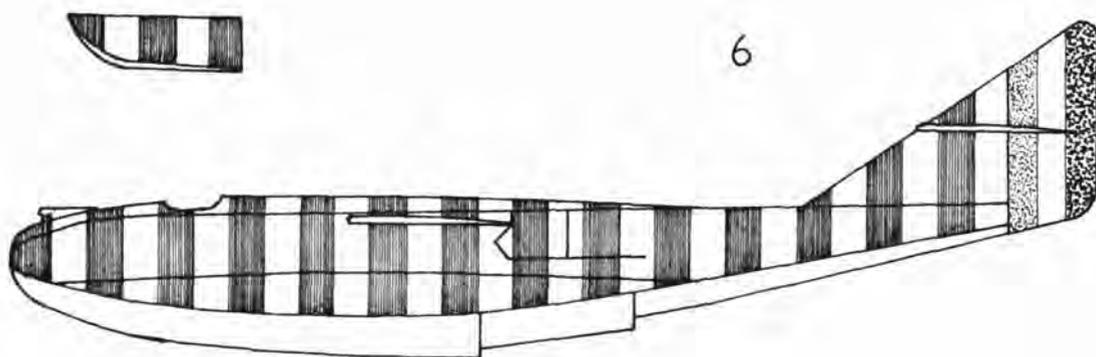
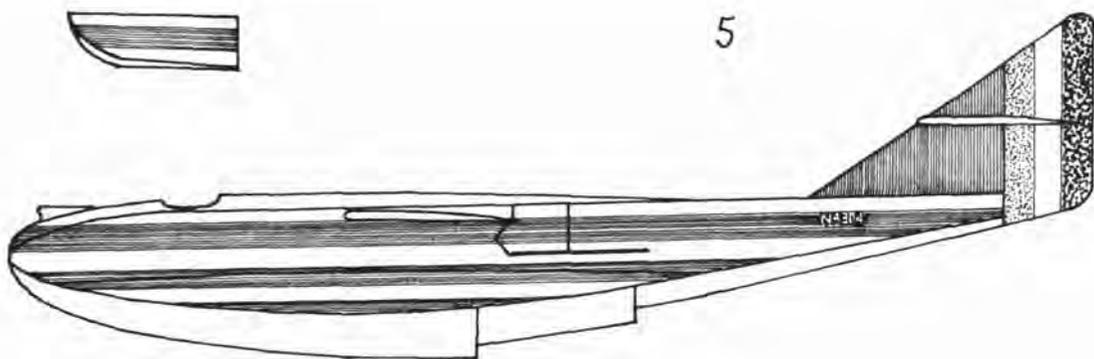


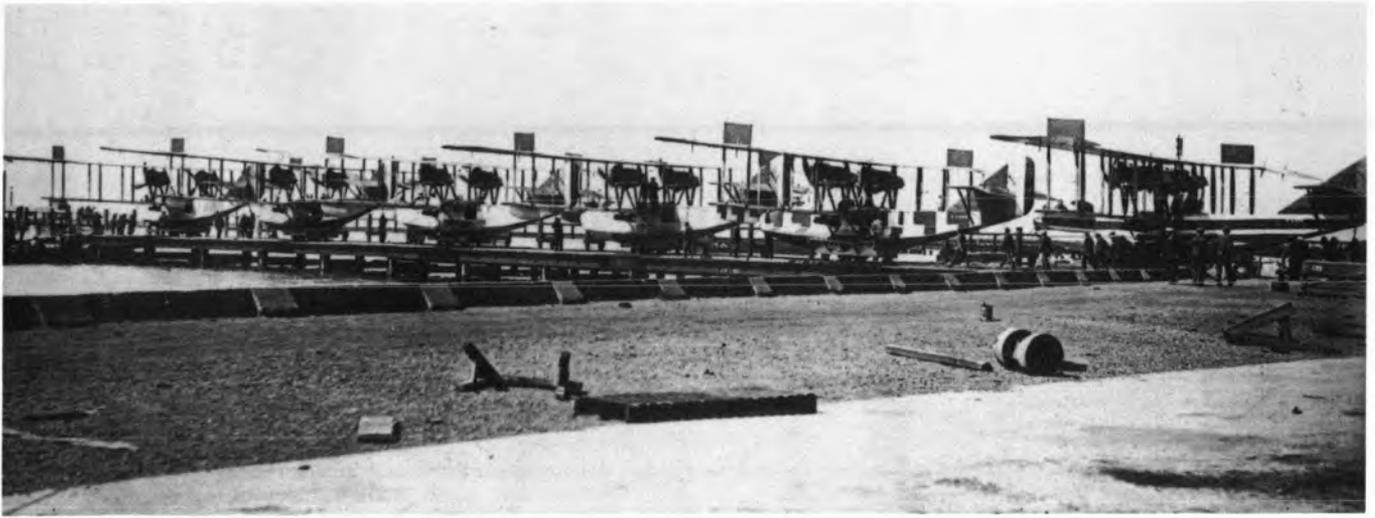
*Felixstowe F2A:  
N4297. Drawing 4.*



*Felixstowe F2A:  
Thought to be  
N4304. Drawing 5.*





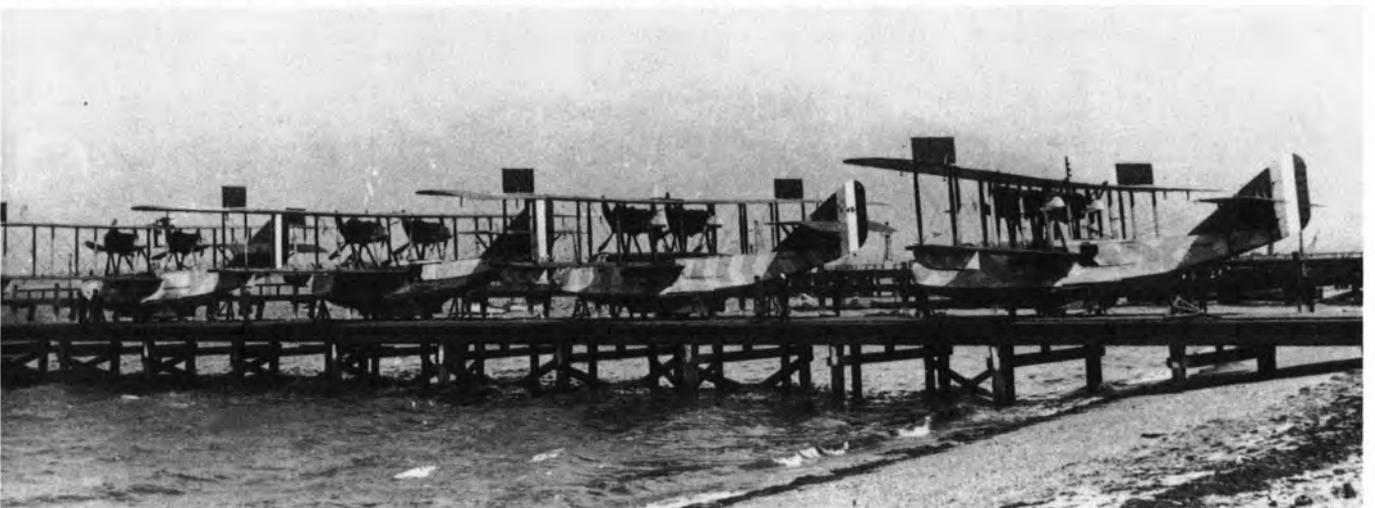


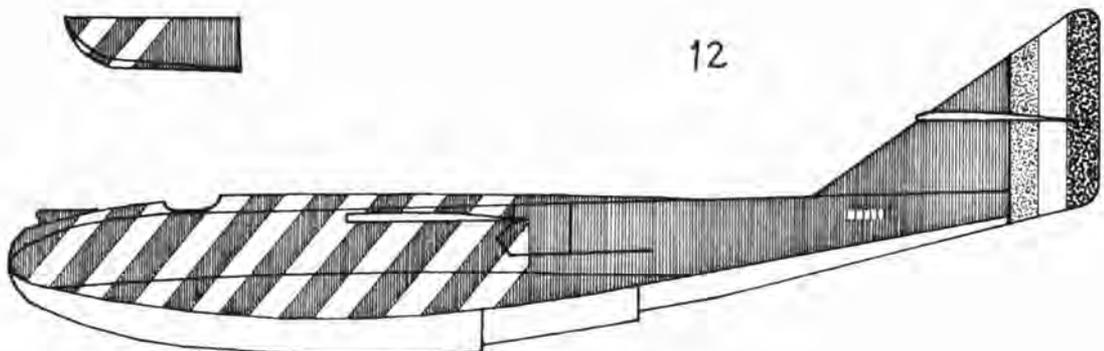
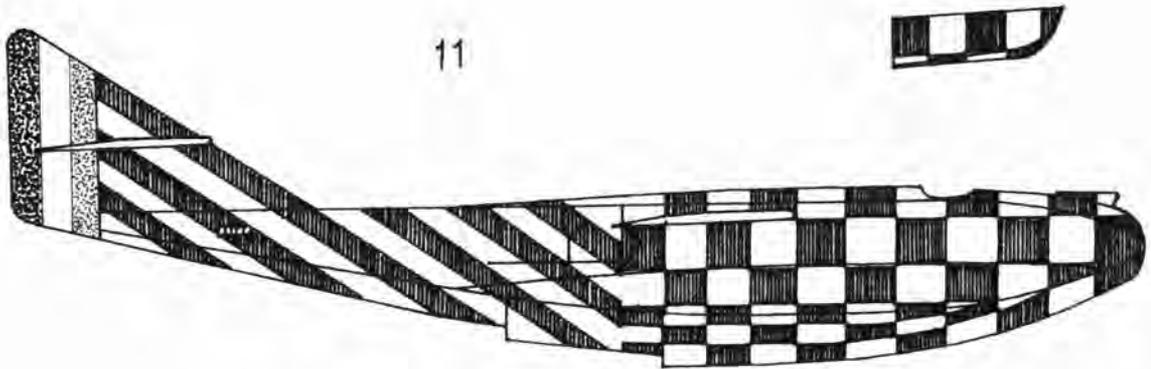
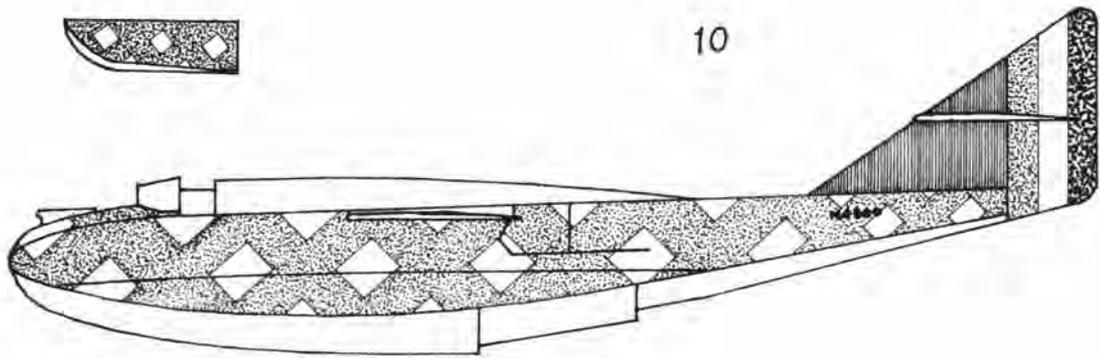
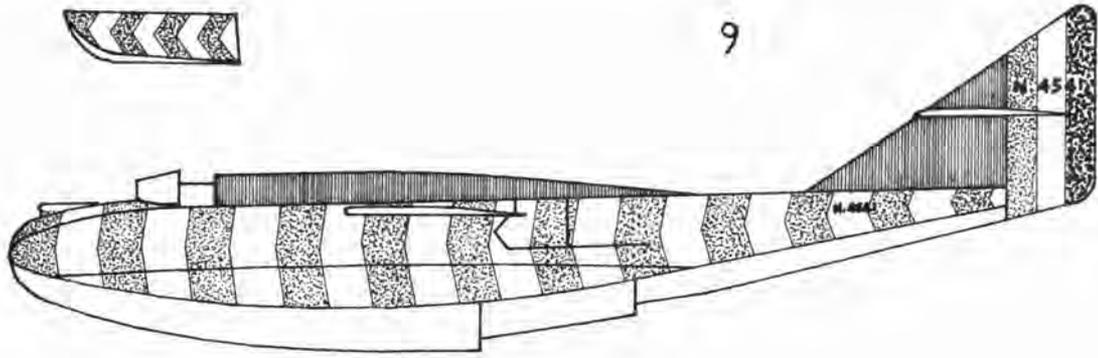
*Felixstowe F2A flying boats on the quay at Felixstowe. The two machines on the right are illustrated in drawings 5 and 7.*



*Heavily armed Felixstowe F2A at Felixstowe. In the background can be seen the F2A shown in drawing 7.*

*This line up of Felixstowe F2As includes those shown in drawings 8, 9 and 10.*



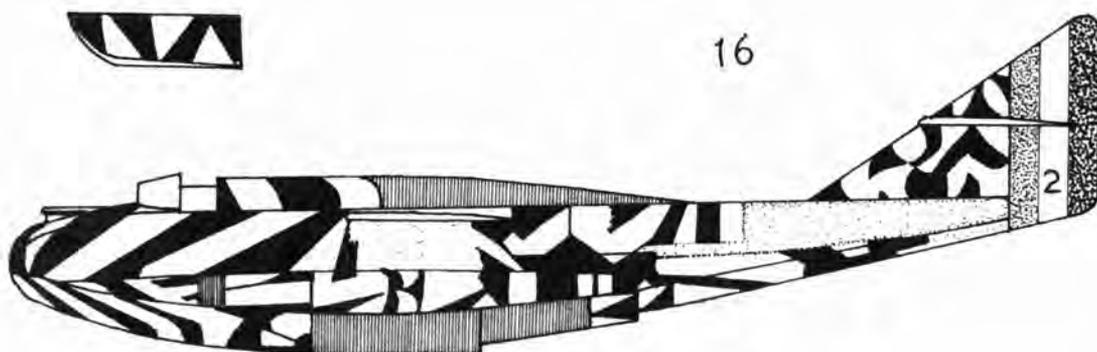
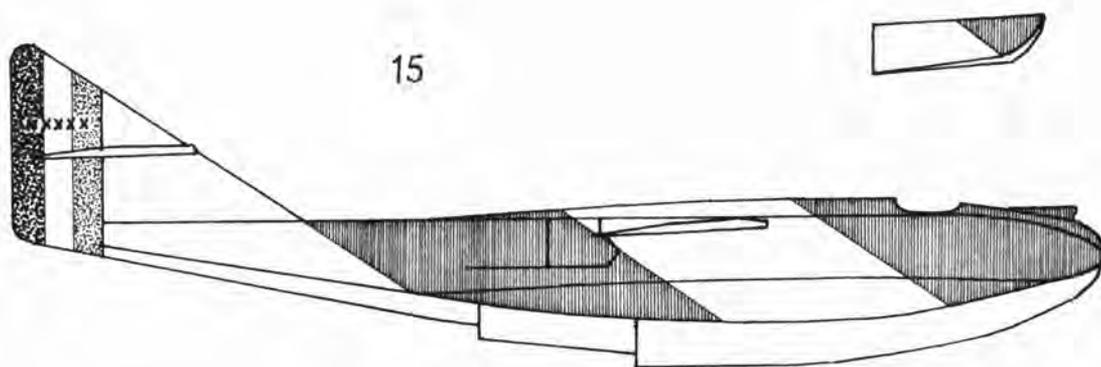
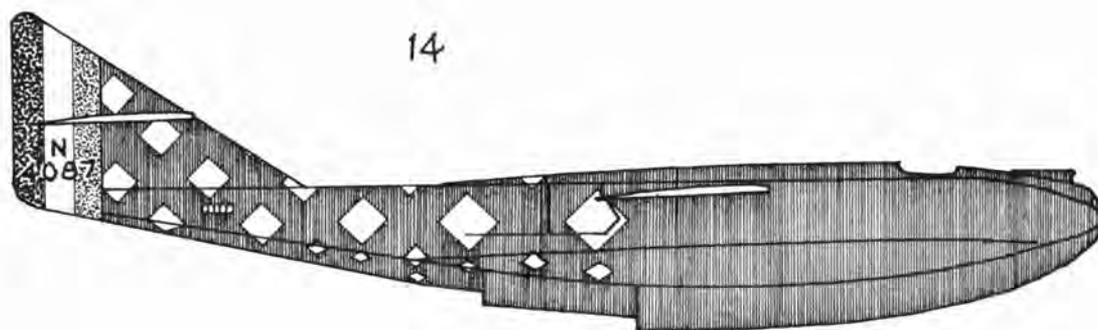
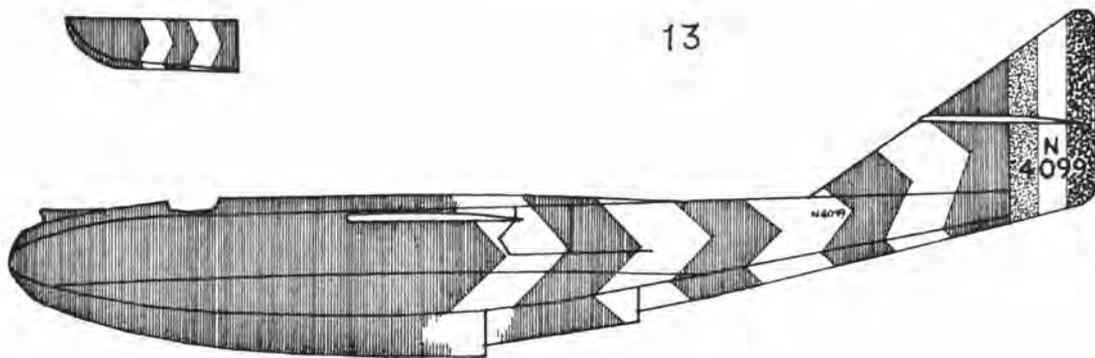




*Felixstowe F3: Thought to be N4251. Drawing 11.*

*Felixstowe F2A. N4296 being loaded onto a lighter at Felixstowe. Behind the lamp post to the left of the left wing tip is the public house 'The Little Ships' which still exists. Drawing 12.*





# HANGAR NOTES

Compiled by GRAHAM MOTTRAM

3 High Street, Ilchester, Somerset BA22 8NQ



## A MYSTERY NO MORE

My thanks to the several people who responded very promptly to the "Mystery Man" feature in the last Journal. Without any doubt the man in the photograph is Air Commodore Robert Marsland Groves CB DSO AFC LdeH(France) DSM(US). The photograph was probably taken between April 1 and June 3 1918, when the rank lace represented a Brigadier-General in the newly-formed RAF, and before the award of Groves' AFC.

Groves was a regular naval officer who specialised in Wireless, and transferred to the RNAS early in the war, serving for a time in the airship section, and later learning to fly. His DSO was gazetted 22 June 1916, AFC 3 June 1918, CB 16 August 1918, LdeH 11 August 1917 and DSM(US) 16 December 1919. He was also entitled to the World War 1 trio of "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred", properly the 1914/15 Star, War Medal and Victory Medal. During 1918 Groves served as Secretary to the Air Board before becoming Deputy Chief of the Air Staff of the RAF.

Around the turn of 1919/20 Groves went out to take command of the RAF in the Middle East while Sir William Salmond was away directing operations in Mesopotamia. During a tour of his airfields Groves was piloting himself in a Bristol Fighter. He had just taken off from Almaza in Egypt en route for Kantara on 27 May 1920 when his engine failed at about 150 feet. In trying to turn back Groves lost control and the Bristol spun in, killing the pilot and his passenger, Flying Officer Clarence Oscar Bird of 70Sqn. Groves was 40 years old.

Three hundred officers and men attended the funeral on May 29, and on 7 June a Memorial Service was held at St. Martins-in-the-Fields in London, where the families of Groves and Bird were present. The R. M. Groves Memorial Prize was instituted in his memory and a copy of the photograph which I printed was usually fixed into the front of the prizewinner's choice of book.

## AROUND THE BRANCHES

### East Midlands Branch

Dates for the next meetings at Arnold Library, Nottingham are:

16 January 1991; 27 February; 22 May; 17 July. Volunteers to give short talks on their interests would be welcome. Please contact Colin Baxter, 7 Meadowdale Crescent, Grantham, Lincolnshire: 0476 66740.

## TRADING POST

Ken Slocombe, 42 Lalebrook Road, Hooe, Plymouth, Devon, PL9 9RW is trying to complete his set of Newnes "Air Stories", and would like to hear from anyone who has spare copies to trade or sell.

Ron Hinchcliffe, 41 Bank End Lane, Huddersfield, HD5 8ES collects postcards of WW1 aviators, particularly the German SANKE ones. He will pay reasonable prices for any offered.

Michael Pearce (THE Treasurer) wants a copy of "Three Cheers for Me" by Donald Jack (which contains the most hilarious description of Victorian plumbing, if my memory serves me right -Ed.) Mike lives at 11 Blacon Way, Stratford-on-Avon, Warks. CV7 9DU.

## RESEARCH SOURCES

The second in this (very) occasional series deals with the holdings of the Australian War Memorial.

The AWM has an incomplete collection of aviation records, the rest being distributed between the RAAF and Air Force Office (Department of Defence, Canberra), the RAAF Museum (Point Cook, Victoria), a number of regional Australian Archive offices, certain RAAF squadrons, and the Public Record Office in London. The AWM holdings are divided into four main sub-collections: private records, manuscripts, official records and microfilm.

### 1. Private records.

About sixty personal collections are held, relating primarily to the war service of air and ground crew in the Australian Flying Corps (AFC). Typically these collections only comprise a few items of personal memorabilia, although a number do contain logbooks, course notes and diaries. All AFC operational squadrons are represented.

There are also a few collections from Australians who served with the RFC or RNAS. The most significant of these is that relating to R. A. Little, which contains memorabilia of his service in the RNAS, including his logbooks from 1916/17, which are held by the Written Records Section.

The inter-wars period is not well covered, but there are some collections dealing with wartime aviators and their record-breaking or inaugural post-war activities, such as Ross Smith's logbook for the England-Australia flight.

Not surprisingly, the AWM has a significant amount of material relating to the death of von Richthofen, including eye-witness accounts of his death.

### 2. Manuscripts.

This is a miscellaneous collection of theses, drafts of books and articles, etc., which contains some items with a First World War interest.

### 3. Official Records.

The AWM holds virtually a complete run of AFC squadron war diaries. The amount of detail in them varies, but the best have combat reports, photographs and extensive detail on operations and training. All eight Australian squadrons are represented and in some cases the diaries extend to 1920. Records are also held for a few support units such as Aeroplane Repair Section and the AFC Training Depot.

Aviation material is also to be found in more general AIF files, and there are also selections of copied RFC records, original AFC material on its allies and its enemies, plus some captured German records.

Biographical information on AFC members is included in a number of official records relating to the AIF.

### 4. Microfilm

The microfilm collection covers both material of which the originals are held in Canberra, and also copies of records held in other institutions. There is some aviation material in this section, but its scope covers all Australian and comparative military history.

YOUR ASSISTANCE IS REQUESTED

Kevin Kelly, 10 Tunstall Vale, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, SR2 7 HP is researching the transfers to the RFC/RAF from regular Army regiments. He would like to hear from anyone who has information on the service careers of men who transferred from the Sherwood Foresters to either air or ground crews, and also, for comparison between infantry and cavalry regiments of those who left the 9th and 12th Lancers to join the flying services. He already has one list of Sherwood Foresters that he can make available to other members, but would like to have as much new material and photographs if possible.

A group of naval aviation enthusiasts are hoping to form a museum to commemorate the air stations at Lee-on-Solent and Fort Grange (Gosport) from their beginnings to the present day. They would also like information on the Gosport Aviation Company. Please write to the co-ordinator, Cdr. H. M. J. Plumtree RN, 23 Fairfax Close, Olivers Battery, Winchester, Hants, SO22 4LP.

Mrs. Wendy Hazlewood, 5 Rencomb Close, Abbeymead, Gloucester GL4 7UH is trying to identify some RFC personnel associated with her collection of postcards:

2/Lt or Lt. E. J. Lainchbury, who crashed in the Arras area sometime in 1918 probably;

The pilot and squadron of SE5a C8827. This postcard was printed in St. Albans, and the SE5a behind C8827 appears to be equipped with snow skis!

The identity of "A. T. W." who sent a 60Sqn Christmas card in 1916.

Wendy also has an RFC Major's tunic with collar badges of 4th Queen's Own Hussars, with pilot's wings, MC and WW1 Trio including Mons Clasp. The only two possibilities seem to be Bindon Blood (KIA 1915) and W.A.C. Weyman (to RFC 12/15, released RAF 1919). But neither of these appear to have been awarded the MC. Can any member help please?

Gordon Clark, 242 Southbourne Road, Eastbourne, Sussex, BN22 8RF is researching the history of the Eastbourne Aviation Company, which became a naval flying training school during 1914/18, and would like to hear from any member who can help with information or photographs.

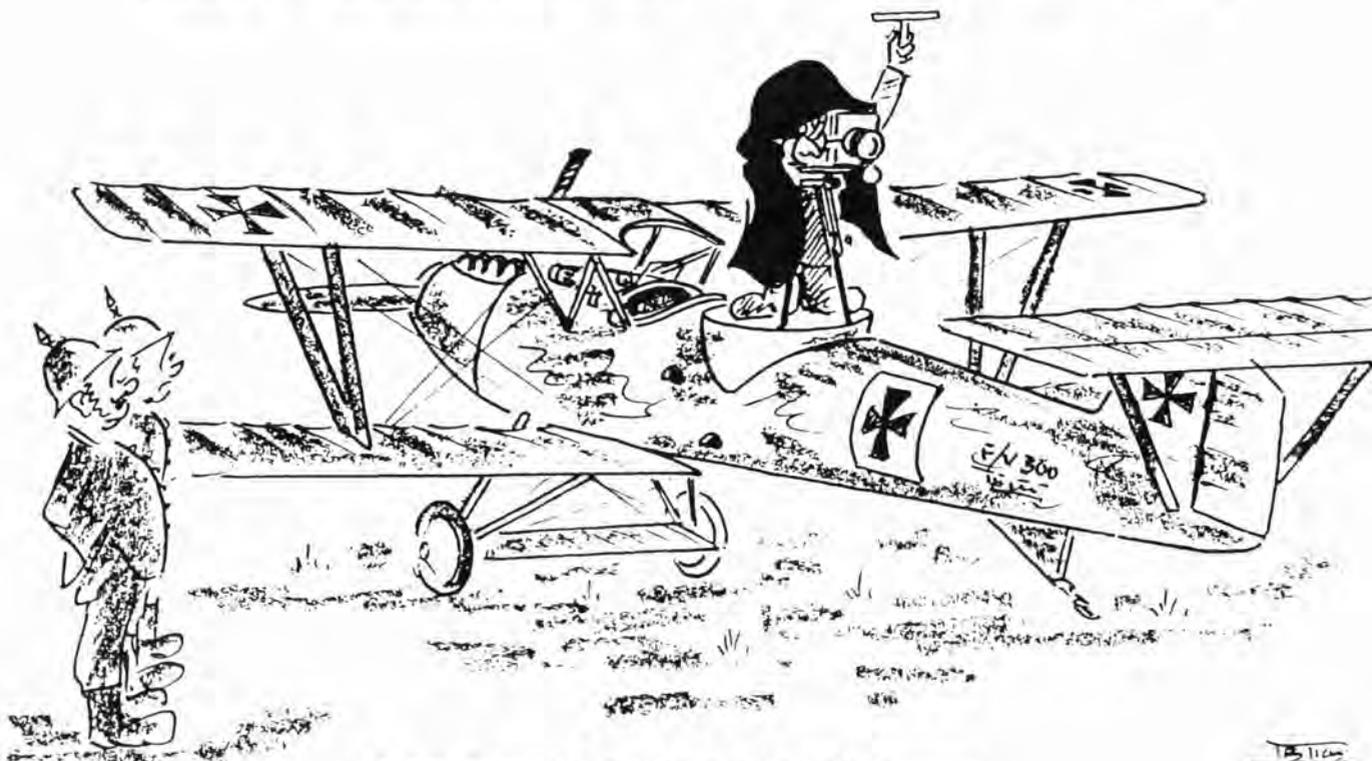


Ron Hinchcliffe, 41 Bank End Lane, Huddersfield, HD5 8ES would be grateful if anyone can identify the RFC pilot in the photograph. (Mystery Man worked very well - let's see if we can manage two in a row - Ed.)

Trevor Henshaw, 14 Thornton Road, High Barnet, Herts, EN5 4JE is researching the history of 58Sqn RFC. He already has a fair amount of material and photographs but would welcome all new material of any kind.

K. H. Jenkinson, The Cottage, Frenchman's Cove, St. Brelade, Jersey, C.I., is trying to find some further information about Sgt. Ernest Frank Geldart. He enlisted in the RFC 26 January 1915. Service Number 19370, with the pre-war trade of Turner, and served in Ireland (Curragh Racecourse 1915), Mesopotamia and India. He was awarded the MSM, and was Mentioned in Dispatches on 7 February 1919 by Lt. Gen. Sir W. R. Marshall. At some time during Geldart's period in Mesopotamia a Colonel Boyd managed to crashland an aeroplane on top of a workshop at either Onaa or Tamooma. Does anyone know which unit(s) Geldart served in, and/or the reasons for his MSM and MID awards.

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NOTE! – The Society's next Annual General Meeting will be held at the RAF Museum on Saturday, 27 April 1991. Official business will start at 11.30hr but our stand will be there when the Museum opens at 10.00hr. Bring your current membership card for 'free' admission to the Museum.

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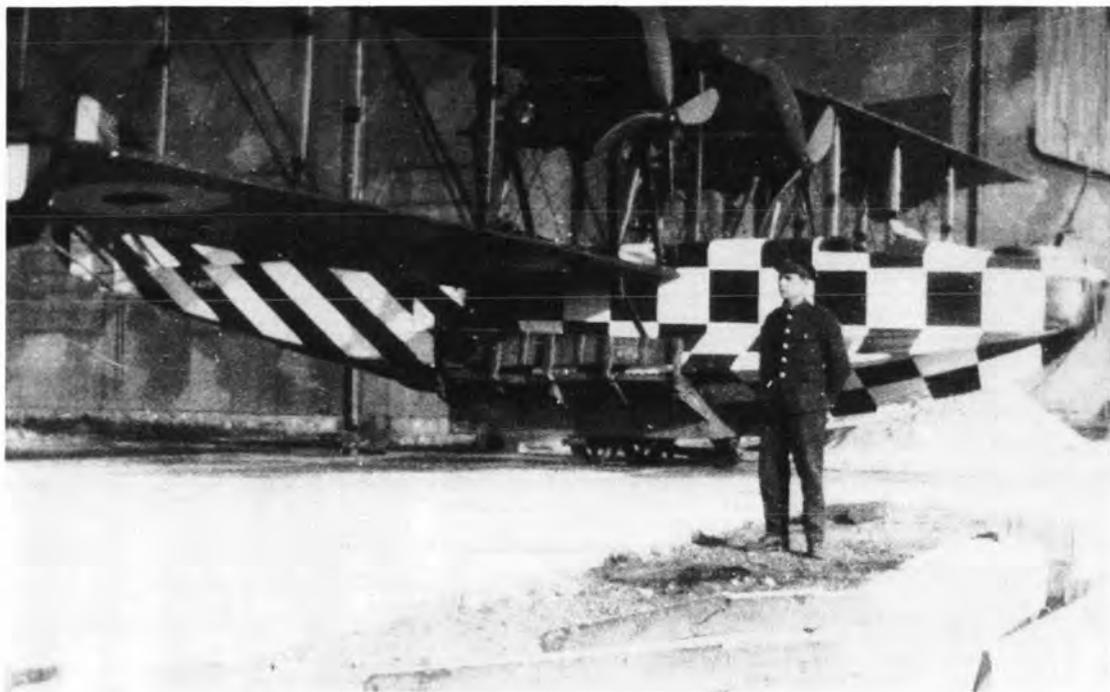
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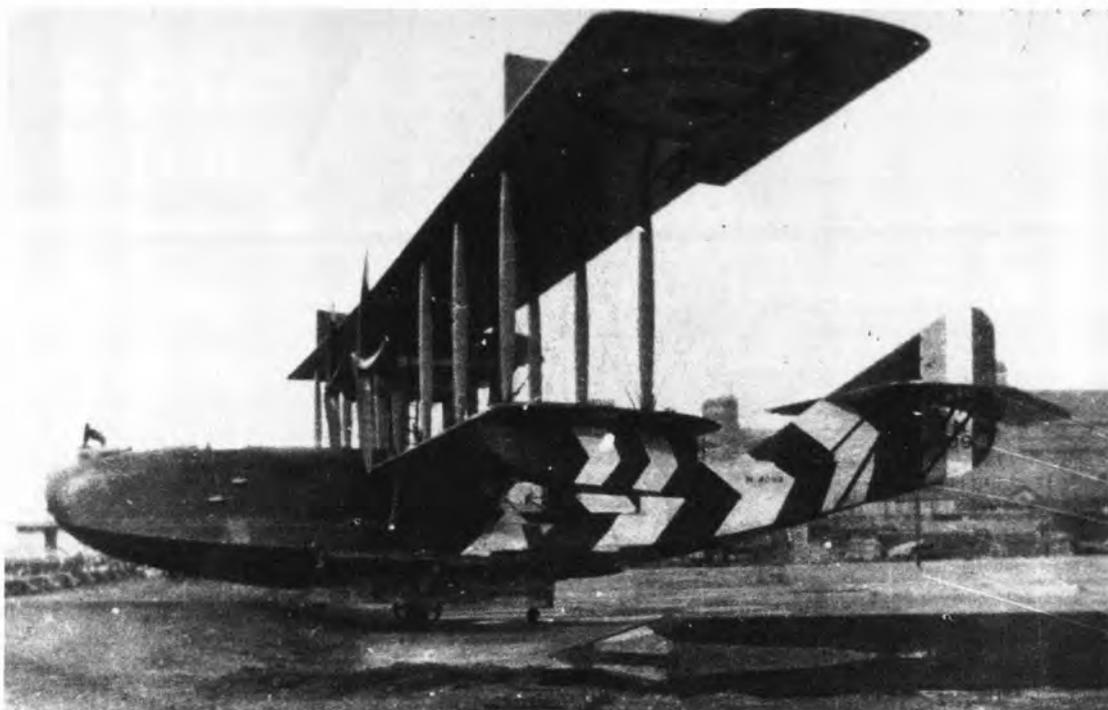
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# DAY OF DAYS

Arthur Rhys Davids  
by  
Alex Revell

*Arthur Percival Foley Rhys Davids. A very newly commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, before he gained his pilot's wings.*



During the research for the biography of Arthur Rhys Davids a number of papers came to light which, for one reason or the other, were not suitable for inclusion in the finished book.<sup>1</sup> One such was the following 'fragment'. This was written in Rhys Davids' hand, on two pages of ruled paper, during his first days in France, while still in the first flush of Rupert Brooke-like idealism, although the phrase 'This horrible War', almost out of context with the rest of the piece, gives a hint of things to come. As far as I can see the events described are not those of an actual patrol but are a composite of several actions, and the names of his fellow pilots have been changed. Rooke — 'my worthy and excellent flight commander' — is obviously Capt Cyril Marconi 'Billy' Crowe, Rhys Davids' first flight commander in 56 Squadron; and 'Knox' is Keith Knox Muspratt, his great friend. The connotation of Lokerby escapes me — possibly the connection is one which was contemporary and personal.

The Day of Days (A Fragment), although short and containing no 'hard' facts from the view of historical research, nevertheless gives an evocative picture of a young pilot's first impressions of the war in the air in 1917.

## THE DAY OF DAYS (A fragment)

There are comparatively few things that annoy me in France, but I must confess that I was somewhat pained when I found myself aroused from my beauty sleep at the outrageous hour of 4.45am. I managed to recover enough misty consciousness to ask the Corporal of the Guard who was standing beside my bed why on earth he had called me seeing that I had been told the night before that I was not on the early show. I remember hazily hearing a vague reply to the effect that someone's radiator has sprung a leak and that I was going instead. So after much toil and tribulation I arose and prepared to wage war. A cup of tea and a biscuit almost woke me up, and when I discovered that Lockerby and Knox were on the show as well, bed was beaten hands down and completely took second place.

It was grey and cold when we left the ground, but by the time we reached the lines the sun was just putting his head above the bedclothes and gazing with a somewhat bed-raggle eye on the surroundings. Lockerby likes the early

shows because he says he can see Home Sweet Home all the time and it comforts him. It is the time that with the sun in the East all the delightful vista of trenches to the West looks most attractive, but then with the sun in your eyes it is very much harder to see brother Boche coming out of the dim and mysterious East.

What comforts me is the sight of five other little scouts all paddling along around me and looking most warlike.

This morning brother Boche seems to have disliked early school: at least we wandered around for a good hour without any sign of him. Then to my huge joy I saw my worthy and excellent flight commander draw away from me, which meant that he had spotted something. Which he had. 'Quite simple my dear Holmes, isn't it? Pray proceed as to details'. The details were five quaint looking Hun scouts at about 10,000 — about 500 feet below us. Down went Rooke (he is my aforesaid worthy and excellent flight commander) and down I went after him looking around to see old Lockerby and Knox puffing along behind, a fifth man with them. I suppose the sixth had gone back with a dud engine or something. Rooke got quite close to his man before he was seen at all, and then all the Huns split up and began wheeling around and down like a flock of pigeons. Hugely excited — it being my first big scrap — I rushed down after the second man — one with a yellow body and green wings. He looked so comic that I chuckled with laughter as I pressed the button and loosed off. My friend inside may have been a comic fellow to indulge in such variegated style of decoration, but he was no mean pilot as he did a beautiful turn almost over on his back and vanished underneath me.

Then everything went all of a heap. The air was filled with our little scouts rushing about and Huns standing on their noses: one fellow whizzed past me and missed colliding by a few feet, then I trundled round and put in a little wild shooting at another green man and at the same time I saw Rooke — I knew him by the streamers on his wing-tips — sitting about ten or twenty yards behind an unfortunate Hun, and filling him up to the brim with lead, to judge by the quantity of tracers which were flashing all around him. Then suddenly the green man spun over like a top and plunged down, turning over and over like a piece of paper. And then my gun jammed, with the green man sitting right

in the middle of my sights.

With horrible oaths dropping from every pore I pulled up and wheeled round to find four terrified Albatrosses — I think that is what they were — diving like stones for earth with four of our company reassembling on top, that is down to 4000. As the wily Knox remarked after we had landed threequarters of an hour later, one drops more feet in five minutes scrapping than a London bus conductor treads on in five years. But anyhow, Rooke had bagged one alright, and we cheerily set out to cover the ten or twelve miles to regain our lost height. Naturally 'Archie' began to get interested, and threw up much fire and brimstone, but somehow his shooting had not woken up yet, and so all he did was to knock a small hole in Lockerby's left wheel. Lockerby incidentally went straight home, having as we afterwards discovered both his guns badly jammed: my jamb luckily was quite small. Rooke wandered around for a short time more, and the four of us went down after a clumsy old Aviatik, probably doing artillery, but he heard his mother calling and suddenly showed a wild desire to go back to the land. It really was too funny: we left him alone after a time: he went down full engine on going like a streak of lightning and we should never have caught him in time. So we turned home and floated along quite low over the country, watching the infantry camps wake up, and the labour people at the dumps stretching themselves and buzzing about like so many ants. Back to the aerodrome again to find Lockerby fuming about his guns and full of jealousy because Rooke had slain a German. 'And I believe I got my beggar too,' he grunted 'Anyhow, his beloved mechanics

will work all night for a few days extracting three bags full of lead from his gaudy aerofoil.'

Knox summed it up by the curt remark that 'it was a most enjoyable morning and we fairly put the breeze up them' This horrible war!

The day turned out gorgeously hot and sunny with a fresh breeze from the East which is always a great asset. After breakfast Knox and I performed the monotonous job of preparing more ammunition — the only tiresome part of letting off gunpowder at Huns is that it means more ammunition to be prepared — meanwhile discussing the morning's war and singing in appalling harmony many psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Then lunch accompanied by many drinks, and afterwards a most refreshing snooze, and at tea time we heard that we were going on the evening show at 6.30 and that the sixth man this morning had landed at another aerodrome with engine trouble. After tea I struggled hard to write a letter or two before the show, but one of the armourers was trying a gun on the range near my hut and made a dreadful noise. It almost reminded me of the war, which otherwise was very far away — the summer weather seemed to make all the difference.

Then I saw the machines coming out on parade, and I wandered down to the sheds. Half an hour later we were over the lines again.

#### REFERENCE

1. *Brief Glory. The Life of Arthur Rhys Davids*, Alex Revell, William Kimber, 1984.

*Keith Knox Muspratt. His Royal Aero Club 'Ticket' photograph.*



*Captain Cyril Marconi 'Billy' Crowe. 'My worthy and excellent flight commander'.*



# GEOFFREY HILTON BOWMAN DSO, MC\*, DFC

by  
Alex Revell



*Major Geoffrey Hilton Bowman DSO, MC and Bar, DFC.*

It is doubtful if the airfighting during the 1914-1918 war — when, if he had survived, a fighter pilot was usually sent home for a rest after six months — saw a more remarkable record of continuous war flying than that of Geoffrey Hilton Bowman, DSO, MC, DFC.

Bowman, known to his friends as 'Beery' — not because of his drinking habits, but because of his florid complexion — flew in France as an active and successful fighter pilot, both as a Flight and, later, Squadron Commander, from May 1917 until the armistice — nineteen consecutive months of intense airfighting. Add to this an earlier five and a half months in 1916, flying DH2s in 29 Squadron, and it becomes clear that Bowman had a truly outstanding career as an airfighter, outstanding even amongst the giants of that time.

Bowman was commissioned in the 3rd Royal Warwickshire Regiment and was seconded to the Royal Flying Corps on 20 March 1916. He reported to the Central Flying School, joining 'B' Flight (OC Capt. Nichol) on 27 April and soloed on 11 May, 1916 after a total of 4hr 45mins of flying time, only four hours of this being dual instruction. He rapidly gained confidence and skill, flying Maurice Farman Longhorns and Shorthorns, Horace Farmans, Vickers Gunbuses and, for the first time on 20 June 1916, a DH2 — the type he was to fly in action a mere thirteen days later.

In July 1916 Bowman was posted to France. He joined 29 Squadron at Abeele on 7 July 1916, and flew his first war patrol — St Eloi to Bethune — two days later. The first seven weeks passed uneventfully enough — if any flying in those days could be called uneventful — but on 2 September Bowman had his first decisive combat. Escorting a bombing raid, he saw a BE2c being attacked by a Fokker. Bowman dived and succeeded in driving off the Fokker but was then attacked by a Roland. He turned to meet the attack and Roland and DH2 flew nose on to each other. Bowman's fire was the more accurate of the two and he shot the pilot of the Roland. Although out of control the Roland still came on, hitting the DH2's starboard wing, the impact taking off the Roland's starboard top wing and leaving Bowman with no lateral control. The Roland went down in pieces but

Bowman came back over the lines at 2000 feet and landed safely. Few pilots could have scored their first victory in such a hazardous, yet positive manner.

On 27 September, while on patrol at 12000 feet Bowman saw an enemy observation balloon two thousand feet above him. He climbed to attack, but a sparking plug cut out and the little DH2 lacked the power to climb to the height of the balloon. Bowman returned to Abeele and set out in another machine, finally attacking the balloon and setting it on fire over Kemmel Hill. As Bowman watched the balloon burning, his engine cut out and he hurriedly looked for a suitable field in which to make a forced landing. Picking a likely field, he made his approach, but the DH2 hit a telephone pole and crashed in the same meadow as the burning balloon. Undeterred, Bowman drew his revolver and took the balloon officer prisoner!

After five and a half months with 29 Sqn — making his last flight with the squadron on 16 December 1916 — Bowman was posted home and promoted to Flight Commander on 1 January 1917. After a period as a fighting instructor, he was posted, on 11 May 1917, to 56 Sqn, then stationed at Vert Galant in northern France.

56 Sqn had gone to France on 7 April 1917, equipped with the new SE5 — the first squadron to have this aeroplane. Bowman's posting was the result of a patrol the squadron had flown on the evening of 7 May. During this patrol the squadron had lost four pilots, two killed and two wounded. This was a severe mauling for 56 Sqn, out of all proportion to the numbers lost, for included in the casualty list was Capt Albert Ball the 'A' Flight Commander, the squadron's inspiration and the RFC's first 'ace'. The 'C' Flight Commander, Capt 'Duke' Meintjes, had been wounded in the wrist and Bowman took over his command.

That 56 Sqn retained its high morale during the next weeks was entirely due to its remaining experienced Flight Commander, Captain 'Billy' Crowe. Crowe ran all three flights — both Prothero, the replacement 'A' Flight Commander and Bowman being six months out of date in the fast developing and changing art of airfighting.

Bowman opened his score with 56 Sqn on 27 May,

shooting down a two-seater over Douai and being chased back to the lines by five enemy scouts. On 5 June he shot down two scouts over Roulers and nine days later two more aeroplanes fell under his guns. The first victory, a scout, merited a droll entry in Bowman's logbook: 'Shot down one EA scout which nearly fell on Major Sandy; confirmed by him'. The second victory, a two-seater, was confirmed by British AA batteries. On 7 June, over Lille, Bowman shot down another two-seater. The period with 29 Sqn, which appears to have been relatively quiet and to have given the tyro airfighter a chance to learn his trade, was now paying dividends. Bowman was becoming a deadly and expert airfighter.

There was a welcome break for 56 Sqn in late June. On 21 June it was ordered to England to deal with the Gothas which had been raiding the Home Counties, causing a public outcry at the inadequacy of the home defences.

56 Sqn was two weeks in England. It took off on two false alarms, but no Gothas were seen and the squadron flew back to France on 5 July. The next day the Gothas again raided in some force.

The fighting in France continued unabated. Bowman shot down a scout out of control and forced another to land on 7 July. A logbook comment from this time states 'fighting all the time'. Bowman's flight got three scouts on 16 July, Bowman's, Vfw Fritz Krebs of Jasta 6, crashing at the eastern end of the racecourse in Polygon Wood. Four days later the flight shot down five enemy aeroplanes from a formation of fifteen — Bowman's victory being confirmed by his deputy Flight Commander 'George' Hoidge. On 22 July, Bowman, perhaps not satisfied with the rate at which he was now scoring, tried an experiment. His logbook states: 'Courtrai by myself. Dropped a pineapple bomb on one EA Scout. Did not hit it'.

The evening of 27 July saw one of Bowman's hardest fights to date. His flight attacked a formation of nine enemy scouts just east of Roulers to Menin road and during the fighting Bowman was singled out by two of the enemy. He had only one gun working and he was forced down from 14000 feet to 4000 feet. Things began to look extremely hazardous for Bowman but Lt Richard Maybery then arrived, shot one of the enemy scouts off his Flight Commander's tail and drove the other away. Bowman turned west but was immediately attacked by another enemy scout, painted a brilliant red. Bowman noticed that 'this machine seemed to be red all over and was very well flown'. Bowman still had only his Lewis gun working and was driven down to within a thousand feet of the ground. The pilot of the red Albatros continually attacked by the same method: a dive, a zoom away and a climbing turn back for another attack on Bowman's tail. Seeing that Bowman was making for the British lines each time he went round for his next dive, the enemy pilot changed his tactics: he did a straight zoom after his attack, followed by a stall turn for a head-on attack on the SE5 as it flew for the Front Line. This was his undoing. Bowman had noted the change in tactics. The next time the Albatros dived, Bowman throttled down, the Albatros overshot and zooming after it Bowman pulled down his Lewis gun and fired fifty rounds into the red fuselage at a range of twenty feet. The red Albatros dived vertically into the ground. It was the only opportunity for a shot the enemy pilot had given Bowman throughout the entire flight.

Bowman's Lewis gun now had a jam and while he was trying to rectify it he was attacked by another Albatros. Turning right, then left, diving for the fields, Bowman managed to get his Vickers gun working and turned to face the enemy scout, which had ceased firing. The antagonists were now so low that the German pilot, turning to evade Bowman's fire, flew smack into a tree on the edge of Houthulst Forest. Turning into the sun and flying along the edge of the forest, Bowman was then attacked by three more enemy scouts. By this time even the redoubtable Bowman called 'enough' and headed for the British lines, diving and zooming to avoid their shots. The enemy scouts finally left him at the lines and he crossed the Yser Canal by Het Sas at a height of only fifty feet. Again a terse logbook entry: 'Never been so frightened in my life'.

Bowman claimed another Albatros scout on 17 August and ended the month by shooting down another five days

later. On 25 August he went on leave, returning to the squadron on 8 September. He had lost none of his ability and soon got back into his stride, crashing a 'V' Strutter on 14 September, just north-east of Menin. 23 September saw the now famous fight with Werner Voss, the twenty-year old commander of Jasta 10, in the opinion of many German pilots their best fighter pilot of the war — including von Richthofen. The story of the Voss fight with 56 Sqn is now well known in the annals of airfighting history: Bowman, flying SE5a B2, and in the thick of the action, received his full share of Voss' remarkable marksmanship and flying.

Bowman's logbook entry for 28 September contains a typically terse comment: 'Got one V Strutter, broke up in air after 4000ft. First EA of mine to be seen to break up. Splendid'.

A determined and relentless fighter in the air, Bowman changed completely once he had landed. A contemporary of his 56 Sqn days once described him as 'a lamb on the ground, a holy terror in the air'. He was the life and soul of the 56 mess and was considered quite a dab hand at the drums, which he played with the squadron band, taking over from A/M Pegg, the regular drummer. A frequent visitor to the squadron's mess nights at this time was Trenchard's aide-de-camp, Maurice Baring. Baring had many friends in 56 Sqn and became a close friend of Bowman, dedicating a later printing of his book *Round the World In Any Number of Days* to Bowman, who had left his original copy in a village near Lille.

Bowman could still show the resourcefulness on the ground which marked his fighting in the air. When the squadron was moved to a new base at Baizieux the pilots' accommodation left a lot to be desired. A lone Tommy was found nearby, guarding twelve empty Nissan huts and the pilots, led by Bowman, opened negotiations. The jubilant pilots returned to the aerodrome with eleven of the huts, leaving the Tommy with one — as he said, he had to be guarding something!

Bowman opened his score for October 1917 on the second day of the month, with a V Strutter — as the RFC called the German Albatros scout — out of control. Another V Strutter met the same fate on the 27th and two days later the logbook details destroying an 'EA Nieuport'. This was a

*Bowman in the cockpit of DH2 A2582 at a training establishment.*





*'C' Flight, 56 Squadron. Autumn 1917. Left to right: R.T.C. Hoidge; G.H. Bowman, Flt Commander; R.A. Maybery. Hoidge survived the war with 27 victories; Maybery was killed in action on 19 December 1917 with 25 victories. Bowman's knee is still bandaged after being burnt on a hot exhaust pipe on 6 September 1917. This incident is related in McCudden's Flying Fury.*

*Bowman, while CO of 41 Squadron, sitting on the wheel of the Fokker DVII of Ltn Adolf Auer of Jagdstaffel 40. Auer was forced down by Lt Soden of 41 Sqn on 28 October 1918.*



Pfalz DIII, a type which had recently entered service.

November passed quietly enough, with its attendant bad weather curtailing flying, until the 20th, the first day of the British offensive at Cambrai, with 381 tanks advancing five miles. At 9.00am, flying through the British barrage at 200ft, Bowman saw the advancing tanks and the following infantry. In the thick of the airfighting above the battle, Bowman gained another victory on 23 November, and on the last day of the month added another V Strutter destroyed to his score plus a two-seater as a probable. Later the same day, out alone, he shot down a Pfalz and, being attacked by another, led it under a formation of British scouts, which promptly shot it down. This Pfalz DIII, the first to be shot down in the British lines, was flown by Ltn Hans Hofacker of Jasta 33 and was credited to Lt Thomson of 46 Sqn.

5 December saw a return to the old 29 Sqn days. Bowman attacked a balloon south of Cambrai, pulling out of his dive with such vigour that three rear spars broke. The SE was uncontrollable for a while but Bowman regained control and made for home, flying just above stalling speed and keeping an anxious eye on his wings. Relating this incident in 1968, Bowman recalled with some relish that the German AA batteries had his height accurately but just couldn't seem to realise that the SE was flying much slower than usual. By the time they had discovered their mistake Bowman had safely crossed the British lines.

The first decisive engagement of 1918, on 25 January, saw 'C' Flight in action against a patrol of five two-seaters over Havrincourt. Bowman shot one two-seater down and wounded or killed the observer in another. Lt Blenkiron then attacked this two-seater and shot it down. This was clearly a case where a Flight Commander gave a new pilot a 'sitting duck' for his first victory. Many experienced Flight Commanders did this, knowing only too well the

tremendous boost to the morale this first victory gave an inexperienced pilot. From his contemporaries' accounts of him it is obvious that Bowman often did this. One stated that: 'however many Huns Beery was credited with you can add at least half again'. The flight downed four of the five two-seaters engaged in this action.

The month was rounded off with a victory on the 30th — a black-tailed Albatros V Strutter just south of Cambrai. This was Bowman's last decisive action with 56 Sqn. For some time he had been resisting a posting to command 41 Sqn — as he once remarked to the writer: 'as I was the one actually doing the blood and thunder stuff I thought I should have the choice of where I did it, and that was with 56'. But finally, on the understanding that he could take his own aeroplane — as he later said 'I didn't know any of the aeroplanes at 41' — he left 56 Sqn on 8 February 1918. His service with the squadron had been remarkable: 'C' Flight Commander for ten months and twenty-six enemy aeroplanes brought down.

Bowman, now promoted to Major, ferried his SE5 from 56 Sqn to 41 Sqn's aerodrome at Lealvillers on 9 February, and began the task of settling down in his new role of a squadron CO. The commanding officers of squadrons were not officially allowed to fly patrols, but Bowman was not the type to stay out of the action for longer than necessary. His new duties kept him on the ground for only five days. On 16 February he drove down a two-seater over Bantouzelle and on the 26th he sent another crashing into the wood at Berjanmont. Squadron and Wing business now kept Bowman busy, he had little opportunity to fly and had no combats until 3 May. 56 Sqn had a mess night on 25 May and Bowman flew over for dinner. The month ended with a narrow escape; diving after a Rumpler over Don, the drum of his Lewis gun came off and hit Bowman on the head, knocking him out. The SE fell for 5000ft before Bowman regained consciousness.

June brought no combats, but after a spell of leave at the beginning of July, Bowman re-entered the war by dropping four 20lb Cooper bombs on an enemy dump. On 17 July he shot the port elevator off a Rumpler which went down in a flat spin over Bapaume. 8 August saw the beginning of the British attack which was to finally destroy the German Army's faith in ultimate victory. Bowman was in the air, bombing and groundstrafing, and while groundstrafing again the next day he shot down a Fokker DVII — his first victory over the type. That night he dined again with 56 Sqn, renewing an old friendship with Richard Blomfield, now a colonel, his CO from the 1917 days.

During September, Bowman gained four more victories: on 16 September a Rumpler in flames north of Roulers; a Fokker DVII out of control over Houthulst Forest and, on the 25th, a DFW in flames. Wing HQ noticed these victories and on 27 September Bowman was forbidden to cross the lines. However, Bowman was not the type to take such orders seriously for long. On 10 October, with one of his

Flight Commanders, Soden, he sent a Fokker DVII crashing into the allied lines. 15 October saw his last victory of the war. Flying at 17000ft he saw British 'Archie' bursting west of Roulers. Diving to 7000ft to investigate, he found ten Fokker DVII's flying north east. Bowman fired a long burst into the top machine of the enemy formation. The Fokker's top wing came off and it went down. Bowman later pinpointed the crashed Fokker on the ground, but because of the orders of 27 September, did not report the victory. Unfortunately for him, however, the Belgians did, with the result that he was 'forbidden to leave the ground on any pretext whatsoever without the personal permission of GOC 2nd Brigade'. The complete unambiguity of this order made it clear that Wing knew only too well the calibre of the man they were dealing with. They left no loophole in the wording for Bowman to wriggle through. These orders kept Bowman on the ground for just five days.

Events were now moving rapidly and the long struggle of over four years was coming to an end. On 26 October flying over the advancing British troops, Bowman saw that they had laid out a white 'V'. He returned to the aerodrome and, on enquiring, found that this meant 'short of small arms ammunition'. He took off again with two sandbags of ammunition and cigarettes, but the troops had already moved on.

Bowman flew his last patrol of the war on 11 November, from 10.20am to 12.05. His final score was 34 enemy aeroplanes and one balloon, but his greater worth lay in the inspiration he gave, both by his inspired leadership and his personal example — an example which was still talked of by his contemporaries fifty years later.

After the war Bowman remained in the RAF and continued his varied and incident-packed career. He went to Russia in 1919 and during the between-the-wars period he was noted by his fellow officers for his habit of turning up in out of the way places all over the world. As a fellow officer once put it: 'one would go into the mess in some God-forsaken spot and there would be Beery keeping everybody on their toes with tricks and jokes and generally being the life and soul of the party'.

In 1968 Wing Commander Bowman RAF (ret'd) renewed his days with 56 Sqn at an informal reunion lunch and drinks party at a country house in Hertfordshire. He skidded his sports car — fitted with an old turn and bank indicator on the dashboard — to a stop in a crunch of gravel with the same élan with which he had flown three decades of RAF fighters. After he had returned home he sent the writer a telegram. 'Arrived home safely. No Huns (cops). Beery'.

Beery Bowman died on 25 March, 1970. With his passing another of that band of men who had shaped the history of the RFC and RAF had gone. Geoffrey Hilton Bowman DSO, MC, DFC, played no small part in that history. To slightly paraphrase a famous critic: 'Fortunate the generations that knew them for we shall not see their like again'.

*Bowman's SE5a B2, crashed on Christmas Day 1917 by Captain Jarvis, Bowman's deputy Flight Commander, while Bowman was on leave in Paris.*





# ARTHUR TESTER RNAS

by  
R.J. Marchant

Being a fairly new member of C&C I missed Peter Wright's first article about Con Vereker (Vol 10, No 4, 1979) but 'Vereker Re-visited' (Vol 18, No 1, 1987) has prompted me to write a short article shedding light on the life of RNAS ground crew in 1917 with a special mention regarding Con Vereker.

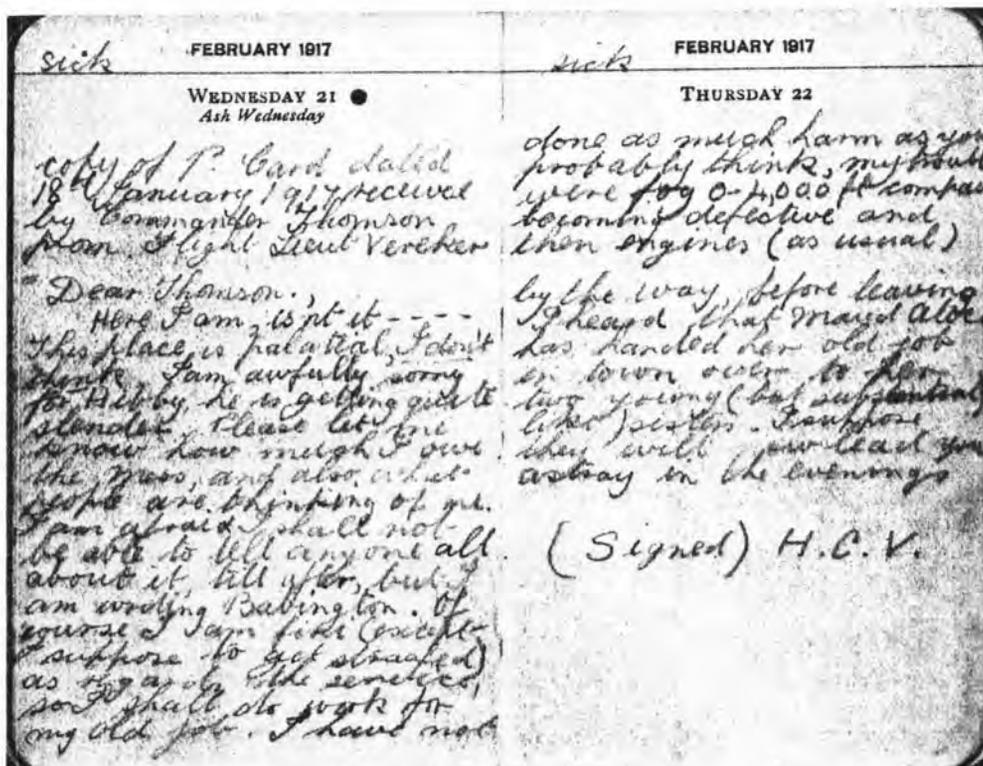
My grandfather, Arthur Tester, was a carpenter by trade from Bexhill on Sea. He was serving as a tradesman with the RNAS by 1916 being then in his early 20's. His rank was AMIC (his number being 9088, later amended to F9091). Together with others he left the UK on 9 January 1916 on the liner *Erna Woerman* and voyaged to Mesopotamia via Aden to serve with Commander Bowhill's expedition.

The photographs from this theatre show RNAS Short 184s and Caudrons that are believed to belong to the Indian Flying Corps.

By 18 August 1916, Arthur Tester was in Marseilles on the way home to the UK. The New Year of 1917 found him at the Royal Naval Air Station, Manston in Kent where one of his pals, a Mr Jim Istead of Bexleyheath is most probably pictured in Peter Wright's more recent article (Vol 18, No 1,

Arthur Tester in flying clothing. Date not known.

:R.J. Marchant



The text of Vereker's post card copied into the pages of Arthur Tester's 1917 diary.

:R.J. Marchant

1987 page 43).

Handley Page 0/100s were working up at Manston under Thomson's command and Con Vereker's adventure is recorded in Mr Tester's diary as follows: (NB Peter Wright has indicated that some machine numbers may be incorrect.)

Monday 1 January

Machine numbers 1463 and 1464 pilots Vereker and Millsom left Manston at 11.45 for France and have not been heard of.

Tuesday 2 January

'No news of 1463 machine, 1464 machine landed at Dunkerque completely wrecked. Lt Millsom broke his leg.

Wednesday 3 January

1463 machine reported to have landed in the German lines.

On 21 February Mr Tester copied Con Vereker's post card to Commander Thomson, the diary is reproduced with this article but for the sake of clarity the text is as follows:

Dear Thomson

Here I am, isn't it .... this place is palatial, I don't think. I am awfully sorry for Hibby, he is getting quite slender. Please let me know how much I owe the mess, and also, what people are thinking of me. I am afraid I shall not be able to tell anyone all about it, till after, but I am writing Babington. Of course I am fine (except I suppose to get strafed) as regards the service, so I shall do work for my old job. I have not done as much harm as you probably think, my troubles were fog, 0-4000 feet compass becoming defective and then engines (as usual). By the way, before leaving I heard that Maud A--- has handed her old job in town over to her two young (but substantial like) sisters. I suppose they will now lead you astray in the evenings. Signed HCV.

As an aside I have recently come across a photograph of what I believe to be Vereker's machine photographed at

Adlershof, Laon in January 1917 in a book by Alex Imrie.

The nose of the machine is shown displaying a Grecian warrior painted underneath the front gunner's position with an entwined H&P logo actually on the underside of the nose. Perhaps someone could confirm that this is in fact Handley Page 1463.

However, turning back with the aid of the diary to the early days of January, the ground crew at Manston appear to have been living in tents 'very rough day our tent blew down' (Tuesday 9 January) with snow '5 inches' (Monday 15) and rain 'all day' (Wednesday 17). Winter clothing was issued (Friday 5 January) whilst off-duty recreation included meeting girls in Margate (4 January), snowball matches (15 January), dinner at the Jolly Farmer and football at Westgate.

Ground crew were given the opportunity to fly 'I went for 20 minutes flight in HP with Lt Barker'(23 January) but the main business of the station was to collect machines together 'Sub/Lt Geach with Yates and Crockett went to Hendon (7 January) to fetch 1466 machine but weather too bad'. Machine 1466 arrived three days later and made a good landing, 1465 machine arrived 23 January followed by 3166 on 6 February.

The following day a Bristol was smashed and on 8 February Lt Geach bought in 3118 machine. He appears to have been accompanied by two BEs one of which arrived while the other one came down at Ash, near Sandwich.

On 13 February 'one new try-plane arrived safe' appears to document an early Sopwith Triplane [this could, in fact, have been one of the six Caproni machines bought] and by the end of the month machines were on their way to France to gather a bombing force together and retaliate for the German raid on Ramsgate made on 16 February.

An idea of the scale of the station's activity is shown by the entry of 3 March 'record of flying 6 Handley Page machines and one BE in the air at the same time'.

By the middle of March Mr Tester was receiving

*Flight Commander Bowhill's Expedition to Mesopotamia. Bowhill is seated in the centre of the second row in this photograph. Arthur Tester is standing behind his right shoulder. Details of the 'military', rather than naval, uniforms worn by the personnel are well illustrated here.*

*:R.G. Marchant*





*Newly arrived  
Maurice Farmans  
5909 and 7346 (or  
7388, inverted)  
wrecked by a dust  
storm, 2 May 1916.  
:R. Vann*

instructions on Webley & Colt pistols and Lewis machine gun. War preparations were made in earnest as the German raids by aeroplane and Zeppelin continued and counter raiding was rumoured by 24 March.

Machines numbered 1463, 1466, 1315 and 1318 left for France on 5 April and in the following days replacements were received. (The mention of 1463 must be an error).

Mr Tester continued to be chosen for Handley Page flights and the easy going nature of the service is surely demonstrated by his diary reference and much later memories of Lance Seive King officer and pilot, all mention of title or rank being omitted, a great contrast to contemporary Army practice. Sieve King's machine was 3123. He was known as a ham-fisted pilot and a splay fingered hand was painted on the nose of 3123 with Sieve King's nickname 'Split Pin' underneath.

North Kent was in the front line in the spring of 1917, Westgate having been raided at 5.20am on 15 March, Ramsgate raided at 5am on the following day, Westgate also being hit 'a Zepp dropped a bomb'. Four German seaplanes were sighted on 21 April (Handley Pages' 1323 and 1322 flying the same day), Manston being raided at

1.30am on 27 April 'shells on hangar'. It was now time for the Handley Pages to begin their work.

The big bombers took ground crew with them to France, flights taking variously 1hr 20min, Manston to Dunkerque and 1hr Manston to Coudekerque. The endurance of the Handley Pages is well established but their ceiling appears to be variously under-estimated at 8500 feet or 10000 feet in common reference books whilst Mr Johnson flew for 2½hrs at 10500 feet on 22 March.

Manston continued its work as a forwarding base but does not appear to have been solely a naval station as an army Avro visited on 17 March, overturned and smashed on landing there. A Bristol was smashed the same day (no one hurt) and Handley Page 1458 smashed a plane whilst taxiing the following day.

Mr Tester flew to France on 5 May in Handley Page 1321 with F/lt Lt Digby, A/M Ratnage and G.L. Revel.

The first mention in the diary of offensive action is 1 June when eight machines raided Zeebrugge (presumably the U-boat pens). A mixed bag of HPs and Shorts return to the same target two days later, a day when hostile machines were seen over Coudekerque. Six HPs and four Shorts



*A Short 184 at  
Orah with food  
drop gear fitted for  
relief of the Kut at  
Amarah siege.  
:R. Vann*



*A Short 184 taxiing on the Shatt al Arab waterway at Basrah. The RFC Tigris support vessel, SS Bahmashir is behind the Short.*  
:R. Vann

successfully raided a German aerodrome on the 4th but Coudekerque was bombed on return.

Coudekerque was shelled for eight hours by 15in guns on 27 June, several hitting Coudekerque aerodrome. Nine Handley Pages counter-raided on 4 July (full moon) and 10 on the 6th, (Mr Andrews landed back at Abbeville) and 11 on the 11th. There is a gap in the diary for nearly a month until 9 August (laster quarter of moon) when eight machines raided (all returning safely), 15 machines raiding on the 15th dropping 8¾ tons of bombs — all returning safely and the same number of machines dropping 9 tons the following day.

Other squadron life continued as in England with various watches going 'ashore' at various times for swimming at Malo and other pleasure breaks, new machines arriving, mess bills settled and occasional accidents occurred. There was a fire in the engine shop on 23 July and on 4 September Fl/Sub/Lt Andrews smashed 3136, no one hurt but 'plenty of work for the chippies'. Machine 3129 arrived on 15 June but 7 Sqn was presented with 25000 cigarettes, an entry given much more importance. The Handley Pages attracted celebrity attention with the King of Belgium visiting on

5 June and returning with the Queen on the 7th. On each occasion His Majesty flew with Commander Babbington, escorted by Sopwiths. A Handley Page was sent to St Pol on 5 July where King George and the Prince of Wales were visiting and the Admiral (which one?) and Sir Edward Carson came to the squadrons on 17 August, the Company being inspected and dismissed.

The diary peters out around here but a postcard reveals that in January 1919 Mr Tester was in 10 HP Salvage Section attached to the 12th AP, RAF, BEF. This was based at the time in Lille with detachments to near the Dutch border. A few months later Mr Tester is found job hunting as there is a reply from Handley Page Limited dated 4 April 1919 in answer to a job application offering him a temporary post in New Foundland to work under Chief Mechanic Petch. Although Mr Petch was an old comrade the offer was not taken up and Mr Tester returned to Bexhill resuming his trade as carpenter and eventually founding his own building company in neighbouring St Leonards on Sea.

*Handley Page 0/100  
number 3125.  
:R.G. Marchant*





*Sopwith 1 1/2 Strutters. The 'positive/negative' cocquottes on the fuselage at the far left of the picture suggest that these aircraft are in Belgian service although the wing cockades appear British. The aft fuselage and stabilizers of the near machine are also overpainted.  
: R.G. Marchant*

#### Officers

Commander Babbington flew the first prototype 1455  
 Lt Allan pilot of 1262 and 3125  
 Sub/F1/Lt Andrews pilot of 3136 (crashed 4.9.17)  
 Lt Barker pilot  
 Sub/F1/Lt Booth pilot (missing 26.8.17)  
 Lt Buss pilot of 3116  
 Lt Denham pilot  
 Lt Digby pilot  
 ? Gardiner pilot of 3122  
 Sub/Lt Geach pilot of 1466, 3118  
 Lt Johnson pilot  
 Lt Jones pilot of 1459  
 ? Lance Sieve King DSC pilot  
 ? Millson pilot of 1464 (crashed in France)  
 P/O Petch pilot (later worked in Canada for Handley Page)  
 P/O Priest pilot  
 P/O Pilson pilot  
 ? Con Vereker pilot of 1463 (crashed in enemy lines)  
 ? Waller pilot of 3120

#### Other Ranks

A/M Amos Mespot veteran

? Boshier

? Broughton  
 Gun Layer Canning

missing 26.8.17

? Casey  
 A/M W. Crockett

? Flaskett

A/M Grugg

? Roy Howard

? J. Huckle

A/M Jim Isted

home address 72 Oaklands,  
 Bexleyheath

? Kemp

A/M Marsdon

? H. (Charlie) Mullins

? Dick Newberry

? A.L. Novis

home address 54 Mitcham Road,  
 Tooting

A/M Paxton

? Price

A/M Ratnage

A/M G.L. Revel

? Scading

? G.L. Schofield

? H. Slingsby

home address 112 Church  
 Street, Croydon



*Close but dark photograph of the external bomb stowage on a Handley Page 0/100.*

*:R.G. Marchant*

A/M Smallman  
A/M Arthur Tester  
AC2 Wester  
A/M L.M. Yates

home address 9 Church Street,  
Bexhill  
died of spotted fever 6.2.17,  
buried in Margate cemetery

**Aircraft**

1262, 1315, 1318, 1325, 1455, 1456, 1458, 1459, 1463  
(landed in German lines - Vereker), 1464, 1465, 1466,  
3116, 3118, 3120, 3122, 3123 ('Split Pin' Sieve King's  
aircraft), 3125, 3129, 3136.

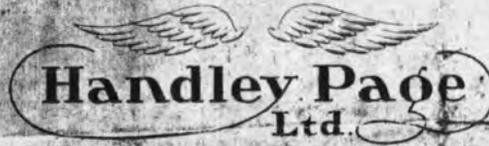
NB Peter Wright warns that Mr Tester may have had a  
tendency to transpose numbers eg '1322' for '3122' and care  
must be taken with the above list.

Handley Page's letter offering post war employment (which he rejected) to Arthur Tester.

:R.G. Marchant

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WOOD  
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AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERS.

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NOT TO INDIVIDUALS AND REFER TO

L.D. /19252



4th April, 1919

Mr. Arthur Tester,  
9, Church Street,  
Bexhill-on-Sea,  
Sussex.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 3rd instant, will  
you please give more particulars of your pre-war experience  
and at the same time say whether you are prepared to consider  
a temporary job in Newfoundland. The conditions would be  
roughly as follows:- Union rates of pay until landing on  
the other side; from then £5 per week to cover all overtime,  
Sundays, night work, &c., plus a liberal maintenance allowance  
You would be required to work under Chief Mechanic Petch  
with whom you have served for some considerable time, and  
would be expected to supply your own tools.

Yours faithfully,  
For and on behalf of Handley Page, Ltd.

*Sustman*



*Isolation — Austin Motor Company built RE8, B5877 of 30 Squadron, flown by Lt P. Phillips on 'A' Flight's advanced landing ground near Jemalabad, Persia, October 1918. This machine was not struck off charge until 28 August 1919.*

# PERSIAN ADVENTURE

by Ray Vann and Mike O'Connor

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE AUTHORS' MESPOT COLLECTION

By October 1918, the Allies had victory within their grasp on all fronts. For the infant Royal Air Force, born out of the amalgamation of the RFC and RNAS in April, it would be the final full month of operations against the last desperate missions of the German Air Service in France, the Austrian Air Service over the Alps and Macedonia and the Ottoman Fliegertruppe in campaigns such as Palestine and Mesopotamia.

11 October dawned bright and clear at the RAF landing ground at Zenjan, some three and a half thousand feet above sea level, in the district of Azerbaijan, North Persia. There was frost on the ground, the chill of autumn in the air and the surrounding mountain peaks had already had their first covering of snow. Here, at Zenjan and at Kasvin and Hamadan, the Flying Corps operated at the edge of the unknown, carrying out the work of bombing, photography and reconnaissance that had 'spilled over' from the 'side show' of Mesopotamia, into an area of Persia that had been

in turmoil since the Russian peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the surrender of Romania.

The Russians had ceded three Trans-Caucasian provinces to Turkey. With the final collapse of the Russian Armies in North Persia — due, in the main, to the influence of Bolshevik agitators — the way had become open for German supported Turkish forces to march on the oil port of Baku on the Caspian Sea, perhaps even to threaten the North West Frontier of India.

The danger had been recognised by the Imperial General Staff as early as January 1918 and they had instructed the Army Commander in Mesopotamia, Lt General Sir W.R. Marshall, to send a small force to the Caspian Sea to prevent the capture of Baku. It was also hoped to recruit, train and equip the local population. Some resistance, from Russians in the ceded provinces, was already meeting the advance on Baku, but the whole area was in a state of civil war, with Red and White Russian factions in conflict,



*Air to ground photograph of the RFC's aerodrome at Kasvin, Persia taken on 3 November 1918.*

Members of 'A' Flight, 30 Squadron at Kifri, Mesopotamia, August 1918. Left to right standing: Lt A.E. Morgan, Lt L.L. Leleu (ex 72 Sqn); Lt E.D.G. Hughes; Lt J. Chacksfield. Sitting on wall, left to right: Lt A.L.G. Campbell, Lt T.A. Tindle, unknown, Lt P. Phillips, Lt C.H.E. Ridpath EO (wireless).



bandit groups roaming the countryside, plus the long running feuds between Kurd and Armenian, Russian and Turk, Moslem and Christian.

Into this melting pot were to be sent armoured cars, an Infantry Brigade, a Cavalry Regiment plus an RFC Flight under the command of Major General Lionel Dunsterville, an Indian Army Officer well suited to the task, being fluent in German, French, Russian, Persian and several other languages.

Promptly dubbed 'Dunsterforce', the advance party travelled to the port of Enzeli on the Caspian Sea in February, to be followed by the main force in May 1918. The terrain to be fought over was some of the most inhospitable in the world, with mountain passes rising to over nine thousand feet, barely any roads or usable tracks and with the whole of 'Dunsterforce' reliant on supplies transported into Persia by six hundred motor lorries, nearly all the mechanical transport in Mesopotamia.

The RFC involvement came originally from 'B' Flight of 72 Sqn, who had arrived in Mesopotamia in February 1918. Landing grounds were established at Hamadan (May), Kasvin (June), then at Zenjan and Enzeli. In August, Baku was threatened by a large Turkish force and two Martinsydes from 72 Sqn supported elements of 'Dunsterforce' and local troops until 14 September, when the oil town was overrun. The Martinsydes were burnt to prevent capture, and the two pilots, Lt R.P.P. Pope and Lt M.S. Mackay, escaped by sea with other British troops and returned to Enzeli.

Additional air reinforcements were provided by 'A' Flight of 30 Sqn, which, on 17 September, flew three of its RE8s

two hundred miles over mountainous country to Hamadan, while spares and fuel were dispatched over dangerous mountain roads.

At 7.15am on this October morning, three RE8s from 30 Sqn and their escort, an SE5a and Martinsyde G102 Elephant from 72 Sqn's 'B' Flight sat on the landing ground at Zenjan, awaiting pilots and observers for a reconnaissance and bombing mission in the Tabriz area to the north.

RE8 B5883 carried the flight commander's streamers of Capt Frank Nuttall, a New Zealander from Christchurch, currently into his eighteenth month of active service in 'Mespot'. His observer was Lt J.B. Case, a relative 'new-comer' having been posted to 30 Sqn in February of 1918. The second RE8 (B6585) was crewed by Lt Henry Adelbert Anson, another veteran with fourteen months flying experience in the campaign, his observer being Lt Tom Alderton Tindle.

The third RE8 (B3449) was to be flown by Lt A.E. Morgan, South Wales Borderers and RFC, with Lt John Chacksfield in the rear cockpit. Morgan had joined 30 Sqn in August 1917 and, like his fellow pilots, was still in 'Mespot' fourteen months later, an average tour of duty in this 'side-show'. John Chacksfield had originally been posted to 72 Sqn in June 1918, because although this was nominally a scout unit, they did have DH4s on strength. With sickness and a lack of replacements reducing aircrew numbers, pilots and observers could be 'loaned out' to any flight in need of reinforcement and Chacksfield was currently on loan to 'A' Flight of 30 Sqn, in a situation probably unique to this outpost of RFC operations. The loan period could be for one flight, one day, a week or even longer, the record

Two RE8s of 30 Squadron in 1918. The nearest aircraft is B3449. On 11 October 1918, Lt Morgan and Lt Chacksfield of 30 Sqn force landed this machine in Persia in an attempt to rescue Lt K.M. Pennington of 72 Sqn. The RE8 with the white band is B5872.





*Joy ride... Capt Frank Nuttall, officer commanding 'A' Flight, 30 Squadron about to take off with the Khan of Sultanabad in the observer's cockpit. Mesopotamia, 1918. :D. Phillips*

*Lt Kenneth Misson Pennington, a pilot with 72 Squadron from 7 December 1917 until 7 March 1919. He was awarded the AFC on 4 July 1918. On 11 October 1918, Pennington force landed in Persia. His experiences, together with those of Lt A.E. Morgan and J. Chacksfield, who tried to rescue him are told in the text of this article.*



being held by a 72 Sqn pilot, Lt E.L. Pratt, who flew with 30 Sqn from March to August 1918.

As the RE8 crews ran up their motors, Capt Nuttall checked that the escorting scouts were also ready to depart. The SE5a was piloted by Lt William Miles Webster Thomas (in later years Sir Miles Thomas, chairman of BOAC), with Lt Kenneth Misson Pennington aboard Martinsyde Elephant A3973. Pennington was already the holder of the AFC, having gained the award for a flight to Urmia in Persia on 8 July, 1918, when he successfully delivered dispatches despite the fact that, until he landed, he was not certain if the town was in Turkish hands.

Although there was not the aerial combat as in France, there was still danger enough in this forgotten war. Engine failure over the deserts or mountains in Persia was a constant worry. Most RFC machines had to be rebuilt every few months due to climatic conditions and remained on charge for longer periods. In the thin air of the mountains, RE8s need a take-off run of over four hundred yards before getting airborne and, in the event of a forced landing, the dangers of falling into the hands of hostile tribes was ever present. Perhaps, on this October morning, it was best for Morgan and the others not to dwell too long on the fate of Lt John Hay Caldwell, of 63 Sqn, who had force landed on 12 January 1918, while flying SPAD A8811. His naked body had not been recovered until the 27th, at Daur, some sixty miles from the crashed aircraft and what had happened in the intervening period left little to the imagination.

The flight took off at 7.35am and flew first to an advanced landing ground between Sarchan and Jemalabad, guarded by armoured cars and Gurkhas, being in sight of enemy positions on the Qaplan-Kuh Pass. Here, the aircraft were topped up with petrol and took bombs on board for a mission expected to take over three hours to complete. They were off again at 9.30am, Capt Nuttall heading north-west. The machines crossed the Kuflian Kuh mountain range then picked up the Tabriz road near Turkmanchai. There were enemy camps along the road, transport, consisting of camels, donkeys and carts, escorted by mounted troops, plus freshly dug positions covering an enemy withdrawal on Tabriz.

Capt Nuttall ignored these targets, flying on to Meamabad, where a large convoy was noted. Here, the RE8s lost height and eighteen 20lb Cooper bombs were dropped, four from Pennington's Martinsyde and one from the SE5a. Troops and transport resting on the north side of the lake at Yusufabad were attacked by machine gun fire all aircraft flying at low altitude. Turning back towards the pass, Capt Nuttall discovered more enemy troops in a road cutting between steep hills, four more Coopers falling on packed infantry causing many casualties. Meanwhile,

*The town of Zenjan, Persia, photographed from 1000 feet on 30 January 1919. It was from here that Flights from 30 and 72 Squadrons operated in 1918-1919.*



Lt Anson had come under fire from a mountain cannon on a hillside. From less than two hundred feet Lt Anson bombed the gun, killing the crew instantly, as Lt Morgan and Chacksfield were machine-gunning more Turkish troops and transport nearby. Owing to a shortage of fuel, Lt Thomas now turned the SE5a for home, but Capt Nuttall led the remainder of the flight to Hagi Agah, where a camp and parked transport were shot up at low level, Lt Case firing 400 rounds of Lewis into the confusion, while Lt Anson fired over 250 rounds with the forward Vickers gun.

By now Pennington's Martinsyde was below a thousand feet, the pilot using his remaining ammunition on fleeting targets. As he flew over Mianeh, the aircraft was hit by ground fire and the engine cut out completely. He glided away from a road full of troops, keeping the Martinsyde in the air as long as possible. The forced landing, when it came, was in desolate countryside and completely wrecked the scout, but Pennington scrambled clear unhurt. The pilot did not set fire to his aircraft, for to do so would have marked the crash location for enemy soldiers. Almost immediately, Pennington heard engine noise overhead and a few seconds later Lt Morgan was landing B3449 less than fifty yards away. The rescue of downed officers by other flight members had been a feature of the RFC's campaign in 'Mespot', so this attempted recovery was not unexpected. Leaping from the rear cockpit, Chacksfield helped Pennington swing the RE8 around, and for the next twenty minutes they pushed the two-seater several hundred yards

up a slope so that Morgan could effect a take-off. Above them, Nuttall and Anson were shooting up any Turkish troops that tried to approach, although the terrain still screened the RE8 from the main enemy position on the road. Chacksfield and Pennington then squeezed into the observer's cockpit, Morgan having kept the engine running. The pilot ran the RE8 down the slope at full power and would have got into the air, but, just at the point of take-off, the undercarriage struck a large boulder and the RE8 came to a shuddering halt. Fortunately, no one was hurt and the three officers scrambled clear taking Chacksfield's Lewis gun with them. They were now stranded some 120 miles inside enemy territory.

Overhead, Capt Nuttall dived down to drop a message to say he was short of fuel and would have to leave and, with Turkish troops appearing in the distance, the three flyers set off in a southerly direction. Almost immediately, they found themselves surrounded by a large group of Persian civilians, but Pennington and Morgan produced pistols and, in the confusion, the officers were able to escape capture, although one mounted Persian was seen heading for a nearby village to fetch assistance.

Morgan and the others ran off down a valley, with enemy troops closing on them all the time. After two hours and a steady climb upwards, the three officers reached the brow of a hill with the Turks some three hundred yards behind. Facing them was the steep side of a nullah. Halfway down, a hole had been scored out of the sand and the flyers

*The 'Hush-Hush Column' Elements of 'Dunsterforce' on the road to Baku, North Persia, August 1918.*





*Three RE8s and two Martinsydes of 'A' Flight, 30 Sqn at Zenjan, Persia in November 1918. Second RE8 from the left is B6585, fitted with a Davis Gun. The first Martinsyde is A1594, marked 'Pan-K-Kos'. Both Martinsydes were taken over from 72 Sqn.*

instinctively dropped into this and laid low. For the next two hours Turkish troops and cavalry searched around them and, although one patrol passed within thirty yards, Morgan and his comrades were not discovered.

At nightfall they set off in a south-easterly direction, heading for a high rocky peak about fifteen miles away. For the moment they decided to travel only by night, avoiding all villages, hoping to pick up any food as they went.

Lt Morgan had two tins of malted-milk tablets, Lt Chacksfield had his water bottle and Pennington had a handful of chapatti, which he purchased for five krans, from a Persian civilian from the crowd which had tried to arrest them earlier.

Despite the cold, they walked steadily south-east all night. Morgan and Chacksfield had full uniforms on plus a flying coat between them, but Pennington had started the mission in shirt, shorts, flying boots and 'British warm' and was consequently suffering from slight exposure by daylight.

At 4am they had reached the high rock peak and decided to lay-up during the day to recover. Small Turkish cavalry patrols searched along roads to the south and north during the day, but none came within a mile of Morgan and his comrades.

They started off again at 6pm having decided to ditch the Lewis gun. Striking a track over fairly easy country this enabled them to cover about 25 miles before daylight.

On 13 and 14 October the trek continued, still heading south. The three flyers crossed a river on the 14th following it down stream until deep gorges halted their progress. Now they had to travel by day to avoid having an accident in this desolate wilderness, and, on the morning of the 16th, Morgan, Chacksfield and Pennington came across a small village and managed to rob a garden of some green melons and berries, their first food since the crash. By evening they had reached the top of a high plateau south of Mekah and they could see the Kuflan Kuh.

They rested all day, then, on the evening of 17 October, set off again covering fairly easy terrain so that they had reached the top of the Kuflan Kuh by daybreak. Again they rested all day then set off at nightfall steering by the North Star until they struck the junction of two rivers, one heading for Sarchan, the other flowing in the direction of Zenjan. Following the river towards Zenjan, the three officers came across a village at about midnight, but they could not search for food as they were fired upon by nervous peasants who probably assumed they were bandits.

Towards daybreak, Morgan, Chacksfield and Pennington had to wade across the fast flowing river to strike the Mianeh road, which they successfully reached at dawn. Here, the three officers rested and went to ground, watching the road for British armoured cars, which they knew patrolled the area fairly frequently.

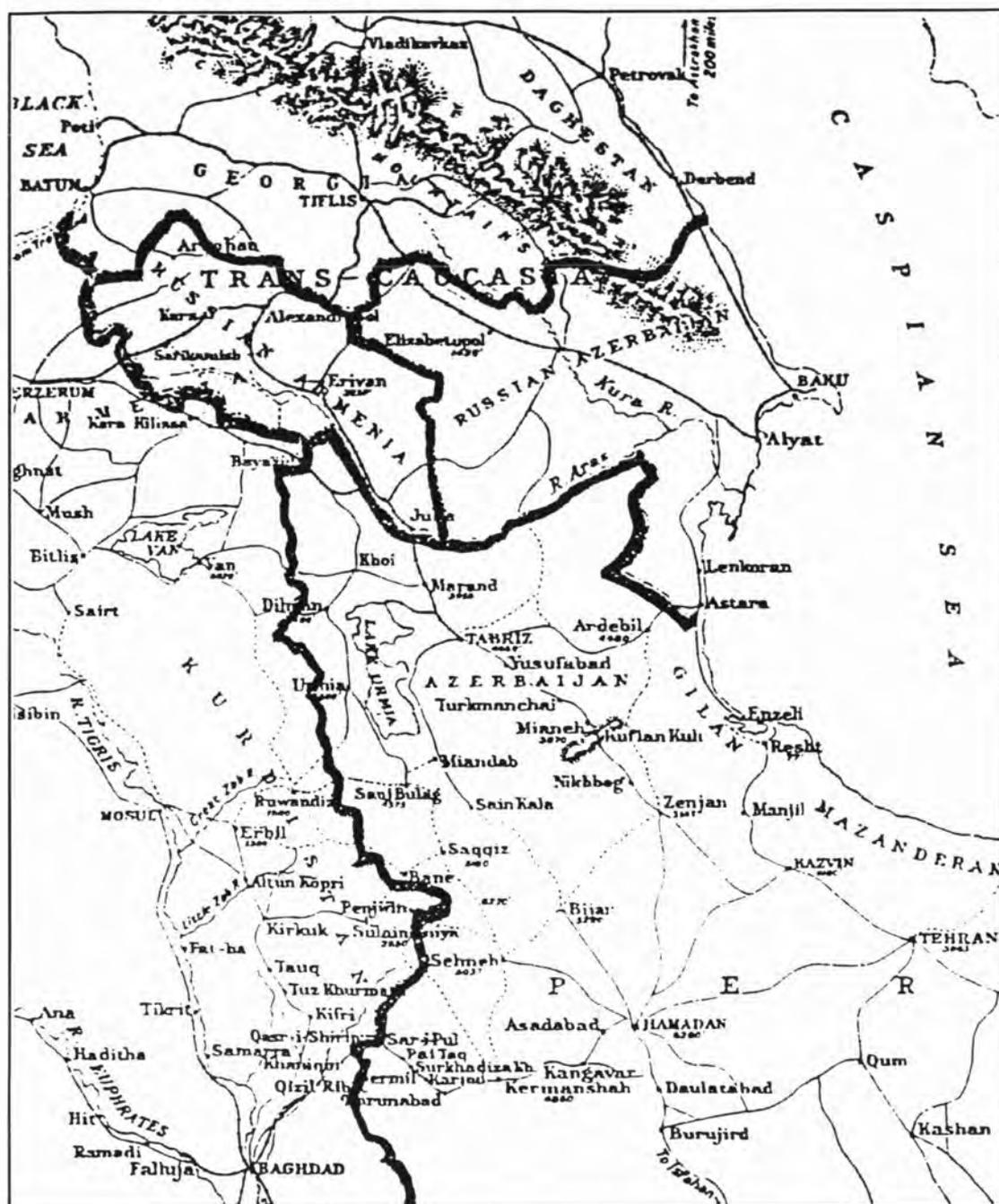
About midday the LAMBs (Light Armoured Motor Batteries) put in an appearance and the RAF men waved them down. Morgan, Chacksfield and Pennington were given food and then driven, by Ford van, halfway to Zenjan, before transfer to an RAF tender for the remaining journey to the aerodrome which they reached at 5pm. Apart from rather blistered feet and the effects of hunger, they were none the worse for their experience.

As the three officers recovered, they were aware that their escape from enemy territory was not a unique adventure. As they had started out on 11 October, Lt Trevor Lewis Williams of 'B' Flight, 72 Sqn was completing a solo journey of epic proportions. Acting as escort to RE8s on 6 October he had been shot down in enemy territory near Tabriz. Disguised as a Persian peasant, he was to reach safety just hours before Capt Nuttall took off from Zenjan. Tragically, Williams was to die in a flying accident in December 1918, but he, Morgan, and the others had displayed the courage and determination, that set the standard for others to follow in the RAF's post-war operations in the 'side-shows'.



*Three RE8s from 'A' Flight, 30 Sqn on the RAF landing ground on the outskirts of Enzeli, the Caspian Sea port, October 1918.*

The area in which  
30 and 72  
Squadrons RAF  
operated in  
October 1918.



Sopwith Camel  
B3769 of  
D Squadron at  
Stavros. In  
December 1918, it  
was sent to Greece.  
29 November 1917

— 'We bombed  
Drama again,  
Mellings escorting'.  
See 'From the  
Albums' —  
page 221.



# BOOKSHELF

Compiled by Nick Forder



## MANFRED VON RICHTHOFEN: THE MAN AND THE AIRCRAFT HE FLEW

### Famous Flyers 1

David Baker

*Outline Press Ltd, 1153 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5PN. 128pp, 248mm x 185mm, colour and black and white illustrations, paperback £9.95.*

Publishers' fascination with von Richthofen continues, the 'Red Baron' being chosen to launch a new series of books which will include Bishop, Stanford-Tuck and Galland.

The author approaches his subject with a rather journalistic style, scattering the generous margins with extended quotes and drawing attention to significant passages in the text by the use of heavy type. This gives the text an immediacy which the casual reader may find more accessible, though equally the reader may wonder why the quotes are repeated in the main text.

Use is made of the RAF Museum's Collections to provide subjects for the colour photographs, as is one of the world's innumerable Dri replicas. Details of the aircraft types flown by Richthofen form an appendix, supported by line drawing side views. No specific colour scheme details are given for aircraft other than Dri 425/17. The latter is presented as a three view colour illustration. A full list of Richthofen's victories is also included.

Although one can but applaud the publishers for launching this new series with two Great War subjects, one cannot help thinking that this one on von Richthofen is little more than skilful repackaging of old information. The text is derivative, and the photographs range from the familiar to the well known. Being concerned with such a well known subject, it is a little difficult to review the contents objectively. Suffice to say that this is a professionally presented work which bodes well for future titles in the series.

## AIRCRAFT ARCHIVE: AIRCRAFT OF WORLD WAR ONE VOLUMES 1, 2 AND 3

*Argus Books, Argus House, Boundary Way, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7ST. 95pp, A4, paperback, £5.95 each (plus 75p p&p).*

Over the years *Aeromodeller* and *Scale Models* have produced a wealth of 1/72 plans of Great War aircraft, fortunately including lesser known types as well as Fokkers and Nieuports. These plans have now been collected into three volumes and represented with additional photographs and scrap views.

As some of the drawings date from the 1950s, the quality is variable and I would hesitate to guarantee the accuracy of all of them. The extremely useful scrap views go some way to compensate for the limited details offered by the older plans, but it must be said that many of these have been superseded by the prolific outpourings of Albatros Productions.

My other criticism concerns the method of production of these compilations. It is impossible to make the plans lay flat without breaking the books' spines. In addition, the fact that such subjects as the Zeppelins and the Felixstowe F2A are printed over two pages means that some details disappear into the 'gutters' and accurate measurements are difficult to ascertain. A little forethought would have avoided this.

Nevertheless, with an average of twenty eight subjects in each volume they are excellent value for money, and should spell the end of countless hours spent searching for that elusive issue of *Scale Models*...

## POWER FOR THE PIONEERS: THE GREEN AND ENV AERO ENGINES.

A.E. Tagg

*Crossprint, Daish Way, Dodnor Industrial Estate, Newport, Isle of Wight. 76pp, paperback, illustrated, £7.50.*

All too often books on pre-Great War aviation concentrate on personalities and airframes, and fail to emphasise the importance of early powerplants. Foremost of the pre-1914 British manufacturers of engines were Greens and ENV; the products of these two companies being used in a wide variety of aircraft. It is probably true that the success of the two firms was stimulated by the 'all British' qualification for many of the British aviation competitions which debarred the French Gnome rotary, yet one only has to look at the list of aircraft which were fitted with Greens and ENV engines to appreciate the importance of the respective

marques.

The author outlines the development of the various engines combining technical explanation with historical narrative. Each engine is illustrated with a photograph and usually with a sectioned drawing. All the significant data is also presented in tabulated form. In addition almost every type of aircraft which was fitted with a Green or an ENV is illustrated, and again supported by technical data in tabulated form. I did note one small mistake in that the index implies that the Eastbourne Circuit seaplane was part owned by B.C. Hucks; in fact it was part owned by Benny's elder brother Frank.

A valuable work on a neglected subject. Recommended.

## ACTION STATIONS 5: MILITARY AIRFIELDS OF THE SOUTH WEST

Chris Ashworth

*Patrick Stephens Ltd, Thorson Publishing Group, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 2RQ. 265pp, hardback, illustrated, £15.99.*

Most of you will be familiar, by now, with the highly successful 'Action Stations' series. For those who are not, I should explain that each volume lists all the airfield sites in a particular region of the United Kingdom. Map references are given, together with a brief history and a list of extant structures. There are nine volumes in the series, all of which were published in the second half of the last decade. Inevitably new information has come to light after the publishing date, and the first volumes to be reprinted, volumes 1 and 5, include an updated supplement.

All the volumes I have seen have had a strong WW2 bias, and volume 5 is no exception. Possibly this reflects the period of greatest expansion of the air forces based in the United Kingdom, or the fact that many of the Great War landing grounds have been inadequately documented. Nevertheless, this is a most useful reference source for anyone interested in aviation in the South West from the formation of the British and Colonial Aeroplane Company at Filton, in 1910, to the present day Sea Harrier training flights from Yeovilton.

## THE ROYAL FLYING CORPS BOY SERVICE

John Ross

*Regency Press Ltd, 125 High Holborn, London WC1V 6QA, 179pp, hardback, illustrated, £9.50.*

This is not, as the title suggests, a history of the RFC Boy Service. It is an autobiography of one of the original 400 Trenchard 'Brats', and forms a prequel to the same author's *The RFC to the RAF, India 1919* (see Bookshelf Vol 18, No 4).

The author recalls an early interest in aviation stimulated by seeing Harold Blackburn and Marcus Manton during their respective visits to Sheffield in 1914. This led Ross to answer a 1917 advertisement to join the Boy Service. The story Ross then proceeds to relate underlines the limited preparation that the Corps had made for the introduction of the scheme. Further disruption was caused by the creation of the RAF, and one could be forgiven for regarding the whole exercise as having been fairly pointless. Subsequent events have proved that this was not so and one wonders if the author has not dwelt a little too much on the juvenile recreational aspects of apprentice training.

The value of this book lies in its uniqueness, and one is led to believe that there is no official documentation on which to base a more authoritative history.

## AIRCRAFT OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Gerald Howson

*Putnam Aeronautical Books, 24 Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8DR. 256pp, 200 photographs, 40 general arrangement drawings, 10% x 7 1/4", £35.00.*

Following that amazing 'pot-pourri' of aircraft designs encompassed by *Japanese Aircraft 1910-1941*, Putnams have gone one better with this refreshing new work on the Spanish Civil War.

The diversity of aircraft types which flew in Spain make this a book of surprises, including as unlikely a fighter-bomber as the DH Dragon Rapide. No less fascinating are the tales of how many of these aircraft arrived in Spain; something which makes one wonder about the efficiency of any embargo.

This book finally escapes from the seemingly narrow minded

obsession with the Condor Legion which has characterised so many former works on the subject. The author freely admits that this would not have been possible to produce during Franco's lifetime as the necessary information was simply not available. Though a number of question marks still remain, this book must rank as the most informative reference work on the Spanish Republican Air Force to appear in English.

#### FIRST IN, LAST OUT: THE NAVY AT GALLIPOLI

T.R. Frame and G.J. Swinden

*Kangaroo Press Ltd, 3 Whitehall Road (PO Box 75), Kenthurst, New South Wales, 2156, Australia. 208pp, illustrated, hardback.*

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the ill-starred Gallipoli landings, and is therefore an appropriate time to publish a history of the Australian Navy's little known contribution to the Dardanelles Campaign. The Australian submarine AE2 was the first to 'force the Narrows' and enter the Sea of Marmara; the 'First In' of the title; and the RAN Bridging Train was one of the last units to leave Suva Bay; the 'Last Out' of the title.

The book, really two books under a single cover, offers much more than an account of the Dardanelles Campaign. The section on the AE2 is really a history of the Royal Australian Navy; a force which all too rapidly lost its independence of action and was, for all practical purposes, absorbed into the Royal Navy by 1916. The story of the Bridging Train is particularly interesting as it concerns a unit originally raised as a means to usefully employ naval reservists, as the Australian Government refused to send these men to sea. The result was a naval formation largely under army control; inevitably a recipe for disaster.

Though originally intended to serve on the Western Front, the Train's overseas service was restricted to the Dardanelles and the Suez Canal Zone. The work the unit carried out was mostly concerned with the construction of piers and bridges, though unofficial patrols into Turkish held territory were undertaken. Indeed, this was but one of the many breaches of discipline by members of the Train. Later, on Mudros, there was a mutiny when an administrative problem denied members of the Train their pay; and the time the unit spent in the Canal Zone was marked by a catalogue of minor infractions of military law. Eventually the unit was disbanded, seemingly for administrative reasons, and personnel were either discharged or transferred to the Australian Imperial Forces. Extended appendices include a Nominal Roll of this obscure unit, together with a list of all its reinforcements.

#### VOICES OF WAR: FRONT LINE AND HOME FRONT 1914-1918

Peter H. Liddle

*Leo Cooper, Heinemann, Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, London SW3 6RB. 256pp, hardback, £12.95.*

As noted on the cover, this is 'A Channel 4 Book', and was produced to accompany the short TV series of the same name. The latter was very interesting, but somewhat wasted by the decision to screen it at an hour when most people were stuck in traffic jams on the way home. Hopefully it will be repeated at a more favourable time in the near future.

Returning to the book, John Terraine's masterly introduction launches the reader into what must be regarded as a mere soupçon of the largely untapped pictorial treasures of the Liddle Archive. I have some reservations about the presentation; there being a tendency towards 'wonky' and overlaid photographs. This seems unnecessary, but one must remember the nature of the projected market, and the author's probable brief. It is also possible to 'nit-pick' some of the captions, but many will excuse — or not notice — this for the reasons given above. Some fifteen of the photographs are concerned with aviation, with the one of 10 Squadron personnel at Droglandt in 1918 being perhaps the most interesting.

Though clearly not Peter Liddle and his Sunderland Volunteer Force (sadly now disbanded) at its best, this book adequately achieves its modest aims.

#### ABOVE THE TRENCHES: A COMPLETE RECORD OF THE FIGHTER ACES OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE AIR FORCES 1915-1920

Christopher Shores, Norman Franks, Russell Guest

*Grubb Street, The Basement, 10 Chivalry Road, London SW11 1HT. 397pp, hardback, black and white illustrations, £35.00.*

Landing on the doormat with a resounding 'crump!' this is the long awaited Great War companion volume to the revered 1966 publication *Aces High*. Personally I would have rather waited a little longer for it and not had it forced through the letterbox by an over-enthusiastic postman! Despite the rather worse for wear appearance of the review copy, it was immediately obvious that this is a most impressive work.

Using a slightly different format to *Aces High*, *Above the Trenches* provides biographical outlines for over 800 aircrew, all of which have five or more 'victories'. These are not just scout pilots, but also observers and the odd extremely brave (or foolhardy) RE8 crew. The emphasis is placed on the actual victories, each of which are listed with details of type attacked, date and time, nature of

claim (out of control, etc), aircraft flown at time of action, and squadron served with. These lists will inevitably raise a few eyebrows; Bishop is credited with 2 balloons, 52, plus two shared, destroyed, and 16 out of control. Mannock has 1 balloon, three, plus two shared, captured, 30, plus five shared, destroyed, and 17, plus three shared, out of control — a total of 61. All references are quoted, so dissenters are able to investigate how these various totals were arrived at.

Certain interesting patterns emerge with further study of the text. Irrespective of class or education, there are precious few aces on secondment from cavalry regiments. Considering the small percentage of the army represented by the cavalry this is only to be expected, but it does question the traditional image of the ace as 'the cavalryman of the air'. The largest number of aces on secondment are sappers, again not surprising, but there are relatively few from the Army Service Corps. This reflects the low level of mechanisation in the British Army of the time. There is a large number of Canadians, and a disproportionate percentage of aces were on secondment from the Highland Light Infantry and Rifle Brigade. The latter seems curious as Air Commodore Huskinson decided against joining the Rifle Brigade as he had heard at Sandhurst that the unit did not approve of flying!

Beginning with a useful summary of the 1914-1918 Air War, and the 1918-1920 war in Russia, *Above the Trenches* also includes lists of aces categorised under squadrons. The 'Statistics Section' lists balloon strafers, top scoring pilots on a monthly basis, top scoring pilots by types of aircraft, gunner aces (scout, bomber and corps squadrons) and bomber and corps pilot aces.

A book well worth saving for, but think twice before ordering it by post!

#### BRITISH NAVAL AVIATION: THE FLEET AIR ARM 1917-1990

Ray Sturtivant

*Arms and Armour Press, Artillery House, Artillery Row, London SW1 1RT. Hardback, 224pp, profusely illustrated, £19.95*

Carrier decks provide endless opportunities for the aircraft photographer and this might explain why most published works of the FAA have been illustrated histories with little more than short text introductions and extended captions. This book goes a long way to redress the balance, and deserves to be regarded as a standard work for future researchers.

Not surprisingly, approximately half of it is concerned with the operations and development of the FAA during WW2. This is followed by some seventy pages investigating the significant changes in the role of the FAA in postwar years; largely brought about by the introduction of the helicopter and the decision not to build any more 'real' aircraft carriers. The Great War section is little more than an introduction; the author having decided against outlining the operations of the various seaplane carriers in order to concentrate on aircraft actually flown from and on to Royal Navy ships. This is appropriate to such a work, and the information is available elsewhere in books such as Layman's *Before the Aircraft Carrier*.

A book well worth venturing 'out of period' to acquire.

#### BIGGIN ON THE BUMP: THE MOST FAMOUS FIGHTER STATION IN THE WORLD

Bob Ogley

*Froglet Publications, Brasted Chart, Westerham, Kent TN16 1LY. 160pp, hardback £14.95, paperback £9.50.*

A provocative title indeed! Yet can anyone think of a rival? Out of loyalty to the Society, one should even discount Duxford as it wasn't a Great War station. Further suggestions on a postcard to Fabric please. (Bet that elicits a list from 'Scourge of Fabric' Mr Kelly.)

Like *That Eternal Summer*, this book is one of the better Battle of Britain associated publications to appear. The author has employed mainly large black and white photographs and economical text to recall the complete Biggin Hill story from 1916 to 1990. This includes the air-to-air wireless work of 1917, and 141 'Cock of the Walk' Squadron. An ideal book for the compulsive browser.

#### RAF SQUADRONS

Wing Commander C.G. Jefford MBE, RAF

*Airlife Publishing Company, 101 Longdon Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9EB. 271pp, profusely illustrated, hardback, £29.95.*

*RAF Squadrons* consists of a comprehensive record, in concise text and tables, of the movements and equipment of every RFC, RNAS and RAF unit since 1912. The listing is both under individual squadrons and airbases, allowing quick and easy reference to the information contained therein. Additional sections cover types of aircraft used, and aircraft manufacturers.

This is a reference work par excellence, and one which researchers will soon find indispensable, leaving them wondering how they ever managed without it. Doubtless the price tag will cause a certain amount of sucking of teeth, but you have to pay for

quality, and compared with two *Action Stations* or three Greenhill reprints, the excellent value for money which this book represents comes sharply into focus. If you can't afford it, badger your local library into ordering at least two copies.

#### **FOR CONSPICIOUS GALLANTRY: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RECIPIENTS OF THE VICTORIA CROSS FROM NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND DERBYSHIRE**

Nigel McCrery

*J.H. Hall and Sons Ltd, Siddals Road, Derby. 87pp, 36 black and white illustrations, paperback, £2.40 plus 74p p&p.*

The Victoria Cross remains a subject of great fascination for generation after generation of military enthusiasts, while of late the tendency has been towards producing books on VC winners associated with a particular locality.

This volume contains citations and biographical outlines of some 37 holders of the VC, 20 of whom won their awards during the Great War, and all of whom have some association with the two counties. In some cases this association is slight, and so, strictly speaking, the subtitle is inaccurate. For instance, the Irishman Bernard McQuirt, the 95th (Derbyshire) Regiment VC, is unlikely to have ever set foot in either of the two counties. In fact approximately 50% of the 'Sherwood Foresters' VCs featured were not from Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. The author, also fails to explain the development of the 'Sherwood Foresters Regiment', with its amalgamations and changes of name, which is likely to cause confusion for the reader who wishes to consider further research. Perhaps the biggest 'faux pas' appears in the chapter on Robert Humpston, viz: 'His Victoria Cross can be seen at the Rifle Brigade's Regimental Museum. His campaign medals have, alas, been lost.' In fact, Humpston's complete medal set is presently laying on the reviewer's desk, awaiting collection for loan to the Royal Green Jackets Museum. The medals have been part of the Derby City Museums Collections since 1928, and have been on almost continuous display, a short distance from where this book was printed, for the last sixty years.

Despite these irritating flaws, this is good value for money, and deserves to be popular. It is just a great pity that with only a little more work it could have been so much better.

#### **THE FIRST WAR IN THE AIR: BY A FIGHTER PILOT OF No 3 SQUADRON, ROYAL FLYING CORPS**

A.G.D. Alderson

*64pp, 6" x 8 1/4", 2 photographs, 2 diagrams, softback, £2.95.*

A rather rare and surprising booklet to find nowadays, being the autobiography of Grey Alderson, a Sopwith Camel pilot in 3 Squadron RFC. His story starts with his first flight as a pupil at Catterick in August 1916. After further training at 58 and 63 Reserve Squadrons, Cramlington, he became an instructor at 18RS Montrose, Netheravon and back at Cramlington. Following that he became a ferry and acceptance pilot at Hendon and this is one of the most interesting parts of the story as the work of pilots at acceptance parks is rarely written about so it is nice to have a first hand account.

Alderson joined 3 Sqn just after they re-equipped with Camels in November 17 and in the following months, when the squadron endured a particularly heavy casualty rate, he was one of the few to shoot down an EA. Unfortunately he was brought down badly wounded himself in the same dogfight and became a prisoner of war.

He spent his 10 months of captivity in various German hospitals where he witnessed the dreadful standards of care given by the enemy to PoWs, a reminder that not all airmen's imprisonment was jolly japes 'outwitting the Hun' and making escape attempts.

The author writes in a detached manner and gives few names of anyone he associated with, yet his account is clear and concise (even to the inclusion of a few serial numbers) and a bargain at the price.

Thereby lies a snag. Like most bargains this booklet is hard to get hold of. This reviewer's copy came via a friend who spotted it in the local history of the Gillingham branch of W.H. Smith's. There is no publishing data in the front of the book, other than the author's copyright dated 1990. I suspect Alderson's book to be privately printed, and he may still be with us (in the Medway area perhaps?) Can anyone provide further information on the publishing? K.K.

#### **AN ERRATIC ODYSSEY**

Rev Herbert Ward

*118pp, 5 1/2" x 8 3/4", 15 photographs, hardback, £15.00.*

Members may recall that the late Rev Ward's photograph appeared in the *Journal* Vol 20 No 1 in connection with his bequest which paid for that issue's colour cover of a DH2. The first two parts of his unpublished autobiography have been combined to make the present book under review. The son of an explorer turned artist, his story opens with the family living in a French country retreat which, when the war came, was converted into a convalescent hospital for British officers. Their second patient was Gilbert Mapplebeck, one of the RFC's leading airmen who was in part young Herbert's inspiration for becoming a pilot.

After training in the UK in mid 1915 Ward joined 16 Squadron, then flying BE2s. This unit, with its famous barge, has been fully described by Duncan Grinnell Milne in *Wind in the Wires*, and it helps to know this earlier work to appreciate Ward's time in 16 Sqn. Actually Ward is 'Little Willie' in Milne's book and the two friends became prisoners of war on successive days in late 1915. They met briefly in Mainz Lager and both were later to escape from Germany. In Ward's case he jumped train along with 2/Lt H. Champion, ex 20 Sqn, and walked to the Swiss border. They were the first British airmen to escape from Germany yet they received no accolades when they crossed into France; the Intelligence Corps even suspected them of being German spies. Further injustice came in the lack of official recognition given them. All subsequent escapers were awarded medals, or a mention in dispatches — but not Champion and Ward, which is a rather shameful omission.

Following a period of instructing in England, including training a batch of Russian pupils, Ward became a liaison officer to the French VI Army. He had the use of a Nieuport scout as a 'runaround' for these duties, which coincided with the March retreat of 1918, which was not the best of times to foster the spirit of the 'entente cordiale'. By the Armistice he was the machine gun officer for No 8 Group based at Southampton.

The inability to settle, common to many after the war, certainly hit Ward who, despite having a family of his own to consider, toyed with several vocations without ever staying too long at any. He could have gone into the diplomatic service or politics (he refused a safe Liberal seat), sculpting, coach-building, or architecture under Sir Edwin Lutyens whom he accompanied on trips to South Africa and India. None held enough appeal to Ward who also took an interest in psychoanalysis and owning of the first Bentley and Aston Martin motor cars. He even took on the local butcher's boy as a sort of juvenile side-kick, the sort of thing I thought only happened to fictional characters like Biggles or Sexton Blake in between the wars novels. Towards the end, the story begins to turn into a series of house moves, described at some length. The main narrative finishes in 1926, but long before that the reader will have realised why the book was titled 'Erratic Odyssey'.

There is an added section in which the author describes how he joined the RNVF in 1940 and within a month was commanding one of the small boats involved in the evacuation from Dunkirk. What the book omits seems to prove Ward never really settled. After 1926 he went from Christian Scientism via Communism and Buddhism to Christianity. He also sailed a lot, took up prison visiting and qualified as a doctor (without practising) before being ordained and becoming a prison chaplain at Wandsworth and Dartmoor prisons.

Not surprisingly this book is not really a flier's story, but more one man's account of how he made his way in the world, touching upon many personal aspects with an endearing quality. K.K.

*John Flannigan is anxious to identify the German shown in this photograph. The aircraft in the background is a Nieuport 11. The original photograph shows this to be fitted with le Prieur rockets and to have suffered extensive damage to its wings in, presumably, a forced landing.*





**CROSS & COCKADE  
INTERNATIONAL**

Compiled by Desmond Furze

*fabric*

**Marvin L. Skelton of Houston, Texas writes:** The following supplements the review of Alan John Bott's fine book, *An Airman's Outings*, in Vol 18, No 2 and is partly gleaned from James Philip Noffsinger's work *World War I Aviation Books in English: An Annotated Bibliography*. In 1917, Bott's book was published in Great Britain, with five printings, and in Canada as *Cavalry Of The Clouds*. The same year it was published in America as *The Flying Ace*. In 1918, it was re-published in America as *Cavalry Of The Clouds*. In 1972, it was reprinted as *Cavalry Of The Clouds* in New York by Arno Press as part of its series on the Literature and History of Aviation.

*An Airman's Outings* ends in November 1916, with Bott recuperating in England from a chronic knee injury aggravated in a crash following a flight on 24 July 1916 which is described in Chapter III of the book and in *Sopwith - The Man And His Aircraft*, page 73, and *The War In the Air*, Vol 2, page 267. Bott had served as an observer in France. According to Noffsinger, Bott trained as a pilot after his recovery and served as a fighter pilot in Palestine, where he was shot down in a Nieuport and captured. His squadron has not been identified, but was possibly No 14 or No 111, both equipped with Nieuport 17s. He eventually escaped from a Turkish prison, along with Captain T.H. White of the Australian Flying Corps, via Odessa (Russia) and Varna (Bulgaria) and arrived at Salonika (Greece) one week before the Armistice. Bott wrote a book on his experiences in the East, which was published as *Eastern Nights - And Flights* in 1919. This seems to be a rare item.

According to the review of *An Airman's Outings* in Vol 18, No 2, Greenhill Books identified some of the personnel in 70 Squadron. I do not have a copy of this publication and, at the risk of duplication, will identify 'C' as Captain Guy Lindsay Cruickshank, who was killed in action on 15 September 1916 by Boelcke, as his 25th victory (page 50 of the book) and 'V' as A.M. Vancour, who was Bott's pilot and later commanded 45 Squadron in Italy, where he was killed in a tragic incident on 16 July 1918 by an Italian pilot. Bott is mentioned, without reference to *An Airman's Outings*, by Colin Waugh in 'A Short History of 70 Squadron, RFC/RAF 1916-1919', *Cross & Cockade (US)* Vol 20, No 4.

Keep up the good work on 'Fabric'. I enjoy it very much. **From Miss Judy Robinson of Auckland, New Zealand:** A very belated reply to the comments in 'Fabric' in Vol 21, No 1 issue, the journals take a while to reach the Antipodes, but most of the delay is due to the tardy pen of your correspondent!

1) I have sent Peter Wright a copy of the page in Peter Kilduff's book which describes the Baron's investigation of the captured English bomber. I hope this will help him in his research.

2) Was Gunther Pluschow really so famous that he was considered the outstanding aviator of Germany after the death of Baron von Richthofen??? or is this another example of journalistic hyperbole from a newspaper?

3) Lothar von Richthofen and Paul Baumer visiting the hospital - the photo in Vol 20, No 2. I have investigated my notes (not only a tardy correspondent, but the world's worst record keeper!) and found another angle - Paul Baumer was originally a dentist or dental technician before enlisting. Given that piece of information is it possible that he was visiting friends and former colleagues who worked in the facial injuries unit, which would certainly have dentists on the staff.

Lothar certainly did suffer facial injuries - there is a photo of him wearing a jaw brace in the American *Cross & Cockade Journal*, Vol 10, No 2, Summer 1969, so he may well have been a patient in the ward. On the other hand, he may simply have been a bit of a lad?

4) Cats as squadron mascots. A big thank you to all the people who have investigated for me. I quite agree with the comment about the cats having more sense than to

associate with smelly noisy things around aerodromes - the same attitude as the officer from the Brigade of Guards who, when asked to describe Dunkirk, exclaimed, "Oh my dear, the noise! the people!"

I was impressed with 42 Squadron's menagerie, though I presume the pig, like 77A's donkey, was a non-flying member. Another, local, correspondent sent me a photo of a pilot called Katzerstein who had a cat on a stone (the meaning of Katzerstein) painted on his plane; but this is no proof, of course, that he owned a cat.

5) One little quibble, Hal Giblin biographies in 'lest we forget', the officers are all described as 'son of Fred Jones'! Didn't they have mothers?, most people do.

**James Morton from Dublin writes:** I would like to comment on the review of Alister William's book *Against the Odds* which appeared in Vol 21, No 1 of *Cross and Cockade*.

Having obtained a copy of the book before your review appeared I must say that I found it a most interesting and informative account of the life and times of Group Capt Rees, one of the little known VCs of the RFC. I think that it would be a pity for anyone with an interest in the RFC to be put off buying the book due to the adverse comment of your reviewer.

It is possible to find some fault with any book, however good, and *Against the Odds* is no exception. The cover illustration could be said to be uninspiring and lacking in impact. Colourful and dramatic covers do sell books but sometimes their contents fail to live up to the covers. Also, I agree with your reviewer that an index would have proved useful.

However in any book it is the contents which ultimately count and in this respect I could find very little to fault in *Against the Odds*.

**From Tasmania: Geoff Hines writes:** I beg to disagree with your band colour sequence on the Camel, page 36 - my guess is 'thin white, red, white, blue, thin white'. Paul Leaman's response is one of humble agreement and embarrassment over his careless mistake.

**H.S. Clarke of Chester-le-Street writes:** With reference to the dropping of ammunition to Australian troops during the Battle of Hamel in July 1918 mentioned by Stuart Tucker in 'Fabric', Vol 21, No 1, this incident is also described in the following sources.

*Air Pictorial* March 1969, History of the RAAF by N.M. Parnell and C.A. Lynch. Part 3 'Australian Squadrons on the Western Front' - "On 27 June 3 Sqn made extensive photo-coverage of the Hamel area. Another duty which had just been started was the dropping by parachute of small arms ammunition in boxes on captured positions, saving the infantry carrier extra labour and danger. The racks, fitted under the wings, were copied from a captured German document and fabricated in 3 Sqn's workshops. Capt Wackett carried out the first trials and such was the success of the rack that it was adopted throughout the RAF.

Just before dawn on 4 July, the squadron flew low over Hamel, dropping bombs and generally making as much noise as possible to cover the sounds of the advancing Australian Corps. The whole operation was over in short order with remarkably light casualties. Shortly after 5.00 am the pilots observed the locating flares in position beyond Hamel. 9 Sqn RAF was also operating from Flesselles and they delivered nearly 120000 rounds of ammunition by the new supply-dropping method."

*Men and Machines of the Australian Flying Corps 1914-1919* by Charles Schaedel, published by Kookaburra 1972 - "Throughout the rest of this period (June 1918) 3 Sqn was also instrumental in providing a new form of assistance to the ground troops, when it was given the job of adapting a German idea to supply ammunition to forward troops in isolated positions. A practical system involving the use of modified bomb racks and parachutes

was evolved, assembled and tested satisfactorily by the efforts of Capt Wackett (who brought his inventive genius with him when transferred from 1 Sqn in Egypt), together with Sgt Nicholson and the squadron mechanics. The RE8s of 9 Sqn RAF operating from the same aerodrome, used this system to supply ground forces during the Hamel attack, providing a further example of the ever-increasing value of the air force units in the developing field of close support".

*The Airman's War* by Peter H. Liddle — "Le Hamel on 4 July seems to have been the last flight of the war for Hugh Pryce, an RE8 pilot of 9 Sqn whose log has this last entry after listing practice ammunition drops on the previous two days. 'From 3.30am operating from 3 Australian Squadron's aerodrome. Dropped 6000 rounds ammunition during great Hamel show (Australian). 10am over Hamel Wood attacked by 3 Huns and chased 5 miles to 100ft. Leader shot down in 1st burst, 10 shots and confirmed. I got hit in knee, two bits going in and several scratches. Landed safely. Went to hospital 2pm."

Lt H.E. Pryce and his observer had made three sorties from Flesselles in RE8 C2347 when attacked by three Pfalz

scouts over Hamel Wood.

May I take this opportunity of adding my appreciation of the continuing high standard of 'Cross & Cockade'.

**Patrick Mallahan of Washington, USA writes:** In the interest of complete accuracy, let me correct a mis-statement by my good friend Peter Wright appearing in his otherwise admirable 'Skies Over the Holy Land', Vol 21, No 1. After recounting the downing and subsequent capture of Lt Cedric Hill he adds in footnote 3 that 'Hill eventually escaped'.

This writer has the highest respect for Hill (see my article on him in *Over The Front* Vol 4, No 2, Summer 1989) but he cannot be counted among the escapers. He was still under Turkish control awaiting exchange at Smyrna when hostilities ceased on 31 October 1918, the armistice between the Entente Powers and Turkey having been signed at Mudros the previous day. In his book, *The Spook And The Commandant*, Hill confirms his locus on the 31st, though he has a mistaken notion regarding the date of the armistice.

## OBITUARIES

### Sqn/Ldr Hamilton Elliott (Tim) Hervey MC and Bar

We lost another of the Society's small band of ex-RFC members on 30 May 1990, when Tim Hervey died at the age of 94. Tim had been an enthusiastic member for a considerable time and his career was covered in the *Journal*, Volume 14 No 4 (1983). He joined the RFC in November 1914 and, as an Air Mechanic, went to France with 12 Squadron with BE2s at St Omer.

In March 1916 he became an observer with the squadron. Granted a commission in June 1916, he transferred to 8 Sqn at La Bellevue. Here he was the regular observer to Capt G.A. Parker and also flew with Lt Albert Ball MC on a successful KB-strafting mission. While observing with Parker, he also learnt to fly their aircraft and so on acceptance for pilot-training in November 1916, he very quickly became proficient and gained his 'wings'. He was posted to 'C' Flight of 60 Sqn on Nieuport Scouts at Le Hameau in March 1917, where his Flight Commander was the already-famous Capt W.A. 'Billy' Bishop. Tim was projected straight into the weeks of 'Bloody April' and on the 7th of that month, was attacked by the Rittmeister himself. Tim survived this encounter by his clever evasive flying, but was shot down the following day by AA fire and was forced to land on the wrong side of the lines.

Taken prisoner, he suffered the remainder of the war in various enemy camps, but was never just satisfied to sit-it-out. He escaped from Freiburg and reached the Swiss frontier but was recaptured and sent to Fort Zorndorf, a more secure prison. He was transferred to Clausthal along with Lt Horrocks, Leefe Robinson and others, where he was again part of an escaping team, although he did not manage to get away. Tim was Mentioned-in-Dispatches for these efforts.

After the war, he went to Australia where he flew for a wartime colleague Harry Shaw who had formed Shaw-Ross Aviation Co to carry out charter and flying-training. In 1934, Hervey returned to England to become Manager and Chief Instructor of the London Gliding Club on Dunstable Downs. During WW2, he was CO of No 1 Glider Training School at Haddenham, concerned with the early formation of our Airborne Forces. He wrote to AVM Sir E.L. Gossage, his old CO in 8 Squadron, suggesting the setting-up of an Escaping School, to train Allied aircrew to evade capture if shot down in Europe. He was invited to join this organisation, part of MI9, and spent the remainder of the war years there.

His other interests were model glider design, gliding and hot-air ballooning, which he took up at the age of 80! He was a skilled creator of three-dimensional miniatures of birds from natural materials, establishing a unique niche for this rare art form, including royal patronage. Tim could in every way be said to have lead a very full and interesting life and will be sadly missed by his family and all his many friends.

Representing the Society, the Sales Manager attended his funeral service and burial on 8 June 1990, at the 700 year-old village church in Great Billington, Bedfordshire; the community where he had lived for 56 years. Requiescat in Pace!  
PFGW

### Dennis Connell

It is with deep regret and sadness that we have to announce the death of member Dennis Connell, of Beaumont, Texas, on 14 May 1990, of a heart condition. Dennis was a member of *Cross & Cockade International* and *Cross & Cockade US* for over twenty years and one of the original members of *Over The Front*. He was sixty-four.

After graduating from Springfield High School, Louisiana in 1942, Dennis joined the US Army in 1943 and served in France and Germany with the 191st General Hospital until he was honourably discharged in 1946. After Army service he entered business school in Shreveport until finally settling on journalism as a career. He enrolled at the University of Missouri in September 1946 and graduated in 1950 with a BJ (Bachelor of Journalism) and a BA (Social Sciences, Major and History). He was in the top ten per cent of his graduating class, for which he received a Sigma Delta Chi Scholarship Award.

After graduation Dennis went to work for the *Shreveport Times*, becoming their top reporter, working every beat in the city and covering a number of major news stories. In 1955 he moved with his family to Beaumont, Texas, to be a courthouse reporter for the *Beaumont Enterprise*, a post he held for seventeen years. He then gave up journalism to become a County Probation Officer and Grant Co-ordinator for Jefferson County, later becoming the Assistant County Auditor until his retirement in February 1988.

Rather surprisingly, given his journalistic background, Dennis was not one to rush into print with articles for *Cross & Cockade* or *Over The Front*. Rather he was one of that select band of researchers who work quietly behind the scenes, and who are such a constant guidance, help and encouragement to others. At least two books — one still to be published — owe much to his help. A modest, but very capable person, he had a very wide and varied range of interests.

Personally, I have lost a fine and valued friend. We worked together on many points of research and some years ago collaborated on a definitive list of Manfred von Richthofen's victories, clearing up many omissions and anomalies. I shall greatly miss his expert advice and help in research. But I shall miss far more his friendship, his gentle, wry humour, and our 'chats' by letter, sharing as we did a love of those corny old Errol Flynn films, music of all kinds, and a healthy disrespect for all politicians, regardless of their political colour.

Although he had known of his condition since 1988, Dennis made light of it and his many friends had no idea of the seriousness of his illness, which he bore with extraordinary bravery. He leaves a wife, Cathy, a son Danny, and two daughters, Bonnie and Mary. We extend to them our deepest sympathy.

Alex Revell

# from the albums

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The photographs on page 215 and those that follow were provided by Stuart Leslie and should be

seen in conjunction with Francis Marlowe's Diary in Volume 21, No 2. The quotations come from that article.

*Bristol Boxkite  
serial number 947.  
27 November 1915 —*

*— '....did some of  
my own on a  
Bristol Boxkite'.*



*Grahame White XV  
serial number  
thought to be 875.  
6 February 1916 —*

*'Flying a variety  
of machines, the  
Grahame White  
type'.*



*Grahame White XV.  
10 September 1916 —*

*'....took me up in  
a Grahame White  
Boxkite...there was  
no proper seat  
for me'.*





*Short 827s numbers 8222 and 8223 and also a Sopwith Schneider at Yarmouth in 1916. 21 February 1916—  
'I am in Yarmouth'.*



*Bristol Scout D number 8996. 13 December 1916  
'...CO and myself escorting in Bullets'.*



*Nieuport 12 at Imbros. 3 January 1917 —  
'Snow and I went on another trip down the Asiatic Coast'.*

*Nearest is Nieuport 11, 3983, then a Bristol Scout D and then a Nieuport 12.*



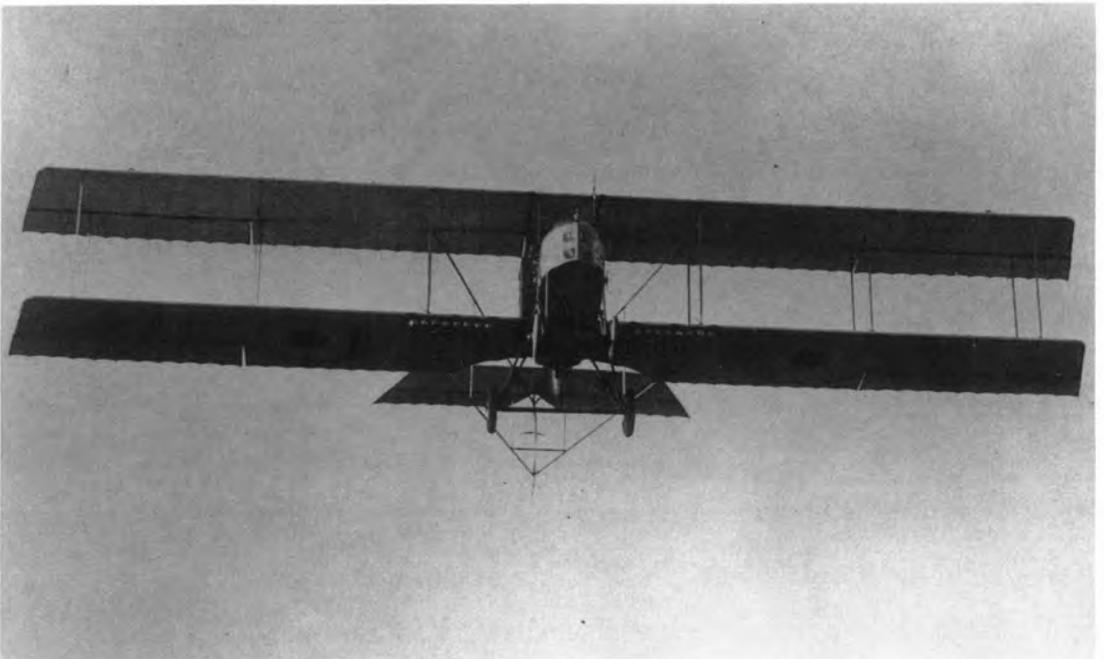
*Nieuport 12s: 8514, S/Lt H.V. Reid; 8524, F/Lt G.A. Cox; 8525, F/Lt A.F.F. Jacob. 25 October 1916 —*

*'Several pilots have set off for Rumania'.*



*Henry Farman F27. 10 January 1917 —*

*'Heriot with Bentley also got a direct hit and silenced an AA battery, ...all of them flying at about 100ft.'*





*Sopwith Triplane  
N5431.*

*26 March 1917 —*

*'Alcock has  
smashed the  
Triplane at  
Salonika.'*



*The funeral of  
Midshipman Snow  
who was killed in  
the crash of  
Nieuport 12, 8708  
on 3 March 1917.*

*The funeral was on  
5 March, the  
wrecked aircraft  
can be seen and in  
the background are  
the Fleet  
minesweepers.*

*18 March 1917 —*

*'...Nieuport fell from  
about 200 feet ...'*

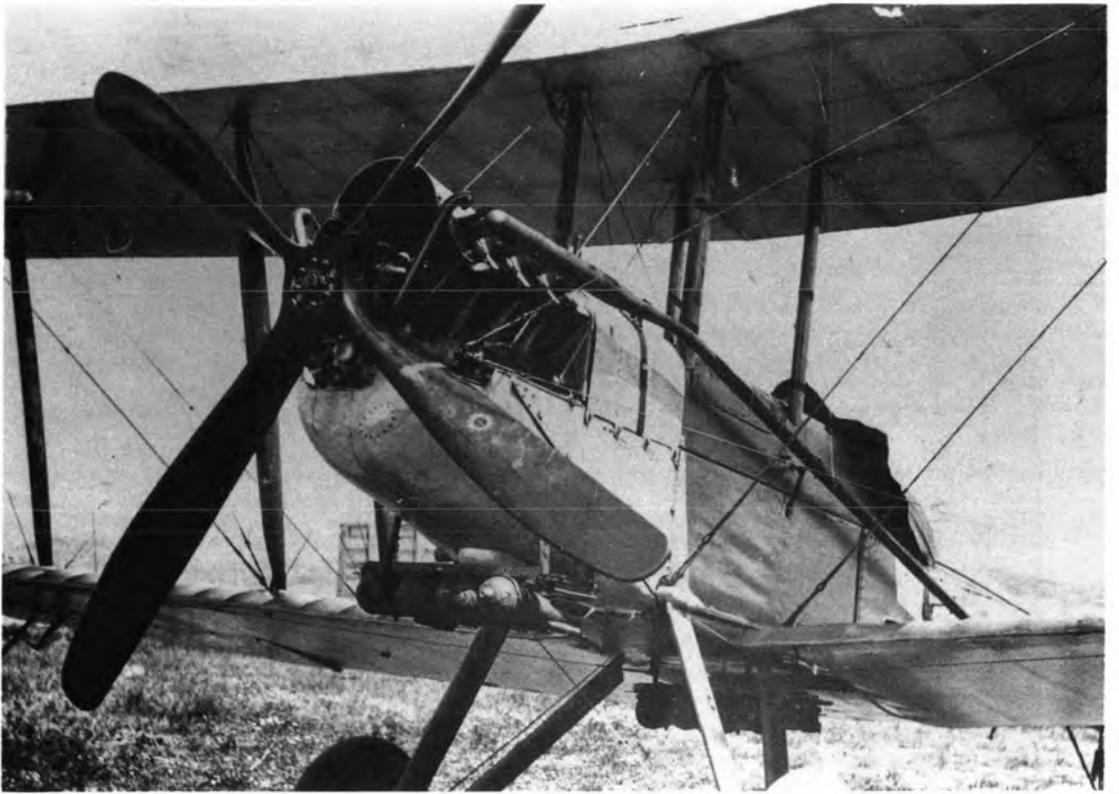


*Imbros aerodrome  
showing dummy  
warships in the  
distance.*

*4 September 1916*

*'...there are dummy  
wooden warships.'*

*BE2c, front cockpit  
faired over.  
21 November 1916 —  
'CO in a BE2c with  
eight bombs'.*



*BE2c 8610.  
Blackburn built at  
Eastchurch. See the  
photograph at the  
bottom of page 72,  
Volume 21, No 2.  
:RAF Museum*



*DH4 'Sultan Selim  
II'. F Squadron at  
Mudros. The fuel  
tank has been  
moved from the left  
to the right wing.*



