

# Naval 8 Squadron 1916-18



Colin Buxton was a Navigator on 208 Sqn Buccaneers at Lossiemouth Jun 1986-Nov 1990.  
He took an interest in this period of 208's history after reading the book Naval 8.  
Made a visit to France in 1990 to trace the fallen and the airfields.  
Continued research through the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, The National Archive at Kew, The RAF Museum at Hendon and The Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton.  
His initial aim was to find the graves or memorials of the Pilots who fell in World War 1.

# Scope of Talk

- Aircraft and Performance
- Aerodromes
- Operations
- Flying and Living Environment
- Combat
- Personalities
- Summary
- Questions

Many of the photographs and personal accounts were obtained from the RAF Museum Hendon, they have copyright but were happy for their use when presenting to the Squadron or when used for educational, non-profit purposes.

Additionally, much of the information was derived from the books: Naval 8, The Mad Major by Christopher Draper and Fighter Pilot on the Western Front by Eric Crundall.

# Formation 26 Oct 1916

Formed at St Pol, Dunkirk

Led by Sqn Cdr Bromet

One Flight from each of 1, 4 and 5 Wing RNAS

18 Aircraft



Nieuport



Sopwith Pup



Sopwith 1½ Strutter

## Naval 8 Aircraft

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On arrival many of the Pilots named their aircraft, Shown is "Dusty" flown by Flt Lt C R Mackenzie.

## Flt Lt Reggie Soar DSC



The splendidly named Flt Lt Reggie Soar in "Hilda". [Quote from Crundall:](#)

Soar and I went out in the evening, he told me nobody in C Flight liked the name "Whitfield" (Crundall named the aircraft after the village which he lived) and it was suggested I should change it. I was promised a brand new machine if I would select a name in accordance with the others on the Flight. All the machines has girls names, I told Soar that I knew very few girls. Soar had maned his "Hilda" and there was a "Gwen" and "Brenda". It was suggested mine should be named "Doris". The name "Whitfield" is being painted off N5439.

21 Mar 17: I flew "Doris" which I liked very much.

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# Naval 8 Aircraft

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- Jul 17 Re-equip with Sopwith Camel
- Feb 18 Upgrade engines from 130hp to 150hp
- 8 Nov 18 Re-equip with Sopwith Snipe



No Kills were claimed by 208 with the Snipe as it arrived just 3 days before the end of the war



## Albatros D I

The German Aircraft were generally built with an aluminium frame. Slightly heavier but more robust.



## Fokker DR1 Triplane

Famously flown by Von Richthofen.

# Aircraft Performance

Type	Speed	Endurance	Height	Armament	AUW
Triplane	117mph	2H45	20500'	1 Vickers	700Kg
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Albatros	110mph	1H30	16500'	2 Spandau	900Kg
Fokker D1 (Triplane)	115mph	1H45	20000'	2 Spandau	580Kg

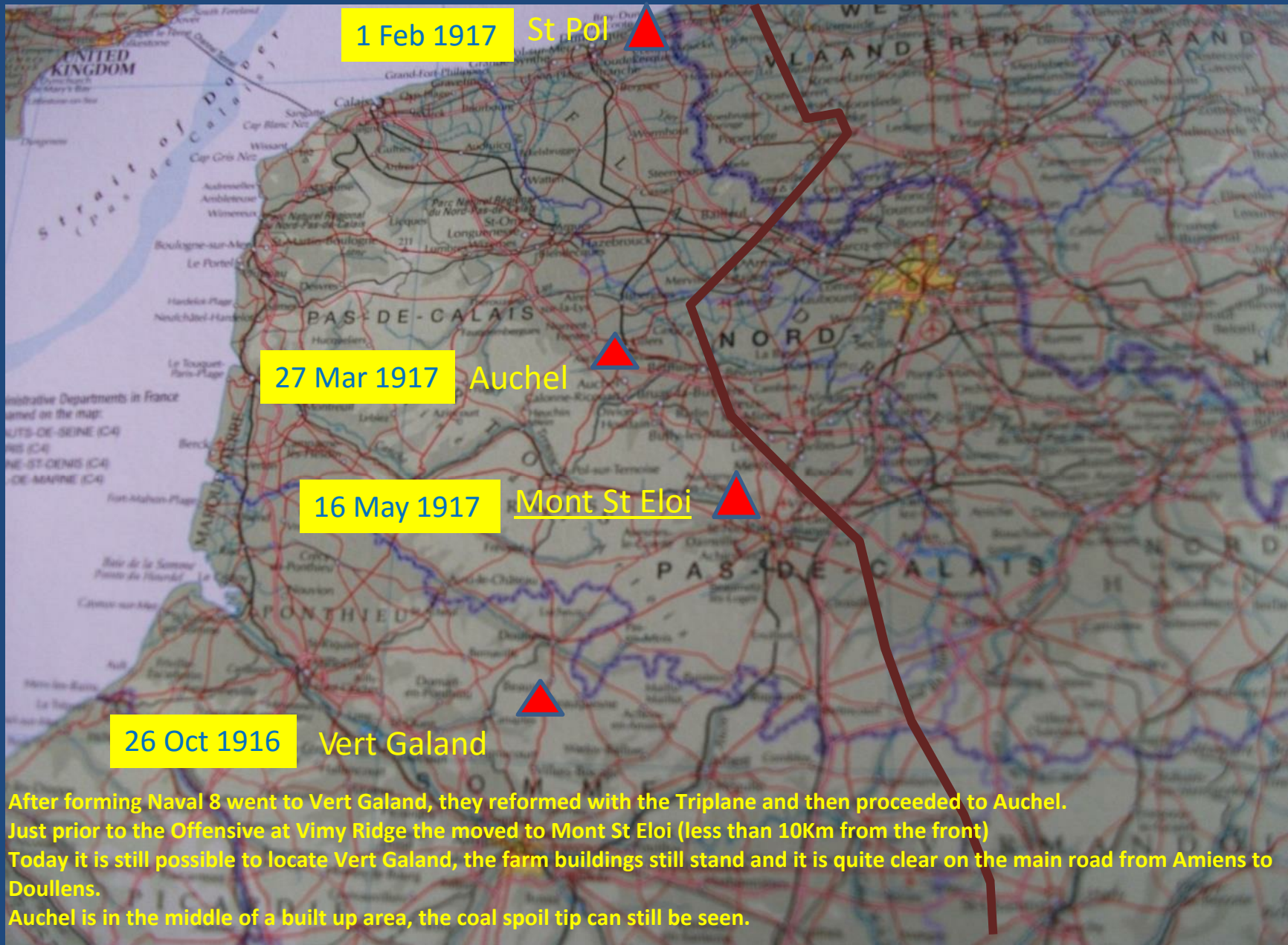
## Engine Power was 110-160Hp (Varied with mark)

German aircraft were not built for endurance as they usually had a specific task. Allied aircraft were designed to patrol hence the longer endurance.

Towards the end of the war many German aircraft had Oxygen and heating systems. Some flew with parachutes.

The Allies did not fit parachutes as the General Staff felt that it would make the pilots' tactics less aggressive.

The power of the engines is similar to a VW Golf TDI



## Naval 8 Airfields 1916-17



## Sopwith Camels Mont St Eloi

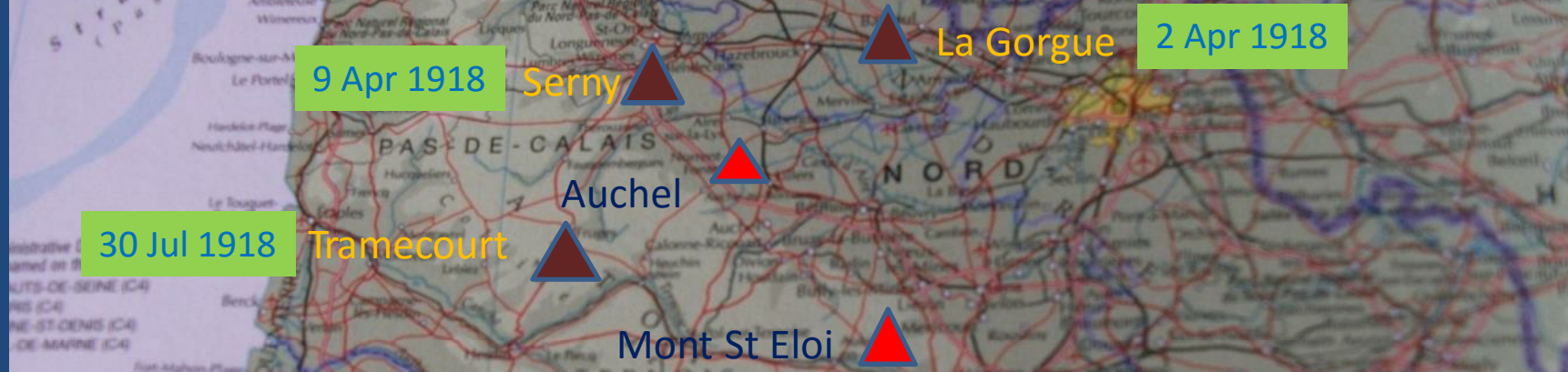
Today Mont St Eloi is very similar, with pictures of the ruined Abbey it is easy to locate the part of the Airfield which Naval 8 flew from.

# Flight Operations WW1

- Nov 16-Feb 17 Scout Ops close to Lines, Reconnaissance and Artillery spotting denial
- Mar 17-Jul 17 Support of Canadian Advance, Offensive Scout ops over German Airfields
- Jul 17-Feb 18 Almost free role from HQ to deny German aerial activity
- Mar 18 Rest in UK (Dover)



Newly formed as an RAF unit, 208 Sqn were taken from rest early to reinforce the front following the massive German Offensive which commenced on 21 Mar 1918. On 10 Apr 1918 the Airfield at La Gorgue was overrun by Germans. On the 9<sup>th</sup> Major Draper faced a dilemma, in thick fog he felt that the aircraft could not launch safely. After a discussion (where some Flight Commanders wished to take a chance) Draper gave orders to retreat by car and set fire to all of the Sopwith Camels. The Sqn was moved back to Serny and re-equipped within 3 days.



After this the Sqn's reputation was somewhat tarnished and the commanders didn't employ the Sqn with same conspicuous trust as in the previous year where the Sqn had been treated very much as an elite unit.

From this time the main role of the RAF on the front was to initially stall the German Offensive and, after August 8<sup>th</sup>, Ground Attack and Interdiction of retreating German forces.

# Naval 8 Airfields 1918

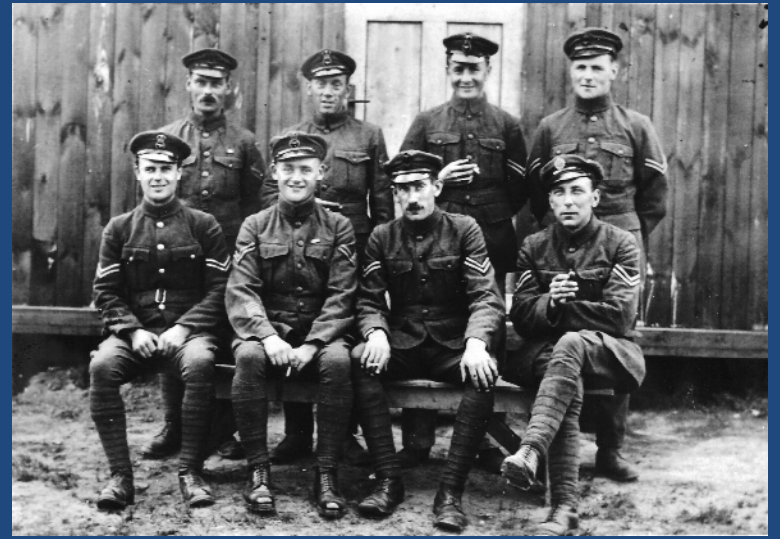
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- Jul 17-Feb 18 Almost free role from HQ to deny German aerial activity
- Mar 18 Rest in UK (Dover)
- Apr 18-Jul 18 Rear Action to stem German Ground Offensive, mainly strafe and bombing
- Aug 18-Nov 18 All Arms Offensive, support Allied Offence strafe, bombing and scout missions

# Ground crew

Proud Navy Tradition

6 Aircraft per Flight



Rigger and Fitter allocated to their own aircraft - complete devotion to their aircraft, serviced mostly during night, often fully stripped the engine or rebuilt the airframe struts, wires and skin.

Sqn had workshops in a headquarters flight - If Aircraft crashed it was recovered by salvage crews.

Quote from Flt Cdr Compston: In Naval 8 we had the finest lot of men the RNAS could produce, drawn from every branch of trade they all worked unsparingly to keep our machines in good condition. The conditions under which they sometimes had to work were deplorable, imagine 9 inches of snow on the ground, icy wind blowing through the many holes in a canvas Bessoneaux hangar, the feel of cold spanners and frozen oil, the making of delicate adjustments with hands numbed to the bone

Further Quote from Compston: After landing I stated that my engine felt a bit rough. The next morning the engine had been completely dismantled and built up during the night. Nothing much had been amiss but the roughness had certainly disappeared.

Draper on Ground crew and their Accommodation: There were no union hours for them, they had to be ready to turn out day and night when duty called. (During the German Offensive) Ratings were conveyed to a relief aerodrome next to an ammunition dump- and working hard all day were brought back to camp. Surrounded by mud, two tiers of bunks down each side and one in the middle. At the end a canvas window and the beloved Canadian stove. Twenty odd men, twenty odd kit bags, primus stoves and petrol tins fashioned into washing basins, stewing pans and many other necessities related to everyday life. The pervading stench of congestion associated with ablutions and the cooking of meals.

# Flying Environment

- Open Cockpit
- Temperature

Even on a summers day the temperature at 17000ft would be around -10 Degrees C, in the winter probably -35.

## Flt Cdr Compston Flying Conditions:

We were muffled up to the eyes and wore fleece-lined thigh boots drawn up over a fleece or fur-lined Sidcot suit, a fur-lined helmet complete with chin guard and goggles with a strip of fur all round them.

Any parts of bare skin left open to the air were well coated with whale oil to prevent frost bite.

For our hands we found that an ordinary pair of thin silk gloves, if put on warm then covered with ordinary leather gauntlets, retained enough heat for the patrol.

If one started cold it was impossible ever to generate sufficient heat from the body, I remember once having to come down from 300ft only, so frozen that I only just had enough power to land the machine. I was incapable of pressing the triggers and had to be helped out of the machine and carried away.

# Flying Clothing



# Flying Environment

- Open Cockpit
- Temperature
- Oxygen
- Visibility
- Noise
- Communication
- Gun Operation

# Pilot Living Environment

- Accommodation



Squadrons operated as autonomous units for Operations and even their own Mess. Unlike the infantry, the pilots slept in a bed, had regular food, a relatively comfortable Mess and the chance, occasionally, to go out.

However, they were propelled from this comfortable environment at great speed into the cold, noisy and extremely hostile world of Air Combat. They had to live with the constant fear of burning alive or meeting a particularly unpleasant death. They were often reminded of their mortality by the empty seats at breakfast and the constant influx of new personnel to replace the dead or those sent to “rest” due to numerous physical or stress related problems associated with lack of Oxygen and Cold.

# Pilot Living Environment

- Accommodation
- Mess & Social Life
- Food
- Alcohol



# Pilot Living Environment

Squadron Mess was treated like a social club. It was their whole life. Most pilots were from Public schools and they did treat the war as a great adventure, often like a sport.

Sqn Cdr Draper on Flt Sub Lt Wallworth: When I was at home at Christmas 1917 dining in the Adelphi, Liverpool, I met Wallworth. His father asked me to get him onto my Sqn, his mother said he was an only child and she would be happier if he was with someone they knew. It was very easy to arrange. This boy, who looked 16, arrived for duty. I never met anyone so keen, so bubbling over with enthusiasm. His letters home were a fine example of British spirit (Draper censored all of the Officer's letters). Once he wrote to a school friend "I've just landed back with holes in my petrol tank, but you simply don't know or feel the danger: It's just one big thrill. Hurry up and come out. It's wonderful". He only lasted a couple of months, when he was shot down in flames on our side of the lines. In my letter to his parents I particularly avoided any reference to the way he met his death. It was, therefore, more than distressing for them when a tactless Infantry Officer, who reached the wreckage first, took Wallworth's charred cigarette case and pocket book and sent them direct to his father.

*Wallworth is buried very close to Mont St Eloi. Draper must have made great efforts to get him buried close by as it was routine to bury personnel at the cemetery next to any Casualty Clearing Station (CCS)*

Flt Lt Soar quote about Flt Cdr Little on mess life and attitude: The pilots would often drive into Amiens for dinner at the Godbert. If stuck behind a car of French Staff Officers who would not give way, Little would pull out his revolver and shoot a hole in the tyre of their vehicle. He never missed!

Flt Sub Lt Crundall on Mess Life Party: In the evening it was decided we needed something to drink and a supply of champagne was obtained. The piano was played and songs were sung, and it developed into a merry evening. Quite a number had rather too much to drink and it affected them in various ways. Jenner-Parsons had crouched in a corner of the room. Suddenly a wild expression came into his eyes as he saw Thornley sitting on the window ledge peacefully smoking his pipe. He jumped into the air, dashed across the room, and butted Thornley through the open window. Thornley did a backwards somersault. After that the party got very rough and one after the other were thrown into the swimming pool.

Crundall on Drinking: Soar told me that he had some old pals on 16 Sqn RFC and Sqn Cdr Bromet gave us permission to visit. Soar's pals were very pleased to see him and produced quantities of whisky. I do not like the stuff and when I tried to refuse I thought they were inclined to look upon me as a poor type so I had a drink with them. We were at Bruay for about an hour and on the way back I felt rather muzzy but I landed quite well.

*It wasn't just the Allies:*

Crundall on German Senior Officer: Flt Cdr Gerrard told me a tale of a hun who had crashed nearby. A few nights ago they heard a German machine flying very low. Suddenly they heard it crash through a hedge. When they arrived on the scene they found a German pilot drunk and roaring with laughter. The passenger was asleep. Next day they were astounded to find themselves prisoners. It seems there had been a drinking party, and the passenger, a fairly senior officer, had slid under the table. He was carried to a machine and taken for an "Airing" by a young junior pilot. The passenger was most annoyed when he found out what had happened.

# The Young Aviator Lay Dying

The Young Aviator lay dying,  
And as in the hangar he lay, he lay,  
To the mechanics who round him were standing  
These last parting words he did say -

(Chorus):

Take the cylinders out of my kidneys,  
The connecting rod out of my brain, my brain,  
The cam box from under my backbone  
And assemble the engine again.

This was a very popular song at the time.

# Combat Operations

- Tactics Continually Developing
- Ground Attack, Strafing Stunts
- Artillery Spotting Balloon Attacks

Squadrons operated as autonomous units for Operations and even their own Mess. On an Aerodrome there would be different types and therefore Tactics may not suit each type. There was very little cross fertilization, maybe some friends may mention ideas but generally everything rested on each Flight Commander who had complete control of his Flight (even engineering). In the mess, the pilots would talk endlessly about tactics. They were very close knit groups who lived and worked together.

## Flt Cdr Compston Ground Attack Missions:

Towards the end of the war, Scout aeroplanes were used for low flying raids. This work was decidedly unpleasant, for the air was full of all manner of projectiles and one became a target for anyone's fire.

On these raids we carried, in addition to about 2000 rounds of ammunition, four 16lb bombs which we dropped on anything which looked as if it might be improved by the addition of our bombs.

Personally, I was always relieved when I had found a suitable resting place for my cargo, because I did not relish being hit by a bullet on the bombs and being given a free pass to the next world, providing my own cordite for the job.

## Balloon Attacks from RFC Communique    29 Sep 1917

Flt Cdr Munday, Naval 8 Sqn, left the ground at about 9.45 pm and proceeded to attack a German Balloon shed. On finding the objective he dived down to within 20 feet of the ground and fired 50 rounds from each gun into the shed, which burst into flames. Flt Cdr Draper, when over Douai, saw the shed burning furiously so flew towards it and dived down, attacking the men who had gathered round in order to extinguish the flames. There is little doubt that the shed contained a balloon.

# Combat Operations

- Combat, Dogfight Examples

11 Aug 1917



# Combat Operations

11 Aug 17 Evening patrol at 8pm Flt Cdr Booker leads a patrol of 4 aircraft. Jenner-Parsons sees other aircraft at detaches to engage, shortly after has engine trouble and returns to base. The 3 Triplanes chance upon a dogfight of 6 Nieuports, 6 SE5a's and 10 German Albatros. Booker targets the Black aircraft (usually signifies leader, in this case CO of Jasta 12 Hauptmann Adolf Von Tutschek who already has claimed 22 kills). Von Tutschek's gun has jammed as he engages an SE5. Booker attacks head on and the radiator ruptures. This looks like fire. Von Tutschek is hit in the shoulder and tracer pepper the aircraft, he spins. Booker follows, Von T loses consciousness. Booker is then attacked by wingmen of Jasta 12 (Lt Schobinger) and his petrol tank is hit. (He wouldn't notice as they invariably turned off the engine in a dive). Von Tutschek recovers consciousness at 1500ft. Turns on engine and limps home. Soar (Bookers wingman) attacks the wingmen attacking Booker and drives one off, the other makes a quick exit from the fight. One aircraft is driven down to the ground (no German casualty reported). Meanwhile Booker attempts to start his engine, as he is unable he crash lands in no-mans land. He climbs out of the aircraft and that is immediately shelled by German artillery. Booker waits in a shell hole until dark and crawls back to allied lines. The aircraft was destroyed but the Naval 8 recovery team did embark to the front line to see if it could be recovered. Booker received a new replacement 3 days later. Booker was killed a year and 2 days later by aircraft of Jasta 12.

## Flt Cdr Little 24 April 1917 Combat Report

I met a Hostile aircraft over Auchel and dived to attack it, He turned north and I followed him firing whenever the opportunity arose. I noticed that the observer was not returning fire so I closed on him, he was losing height all the time, I observed my tracers going into his fuselage. I was firing at a range of 10-15 yards he nose dived, I followed him, he landed in a field. I could not get my engine to go after the dive. I landed beside the hostile aircraft and ran into a ditch and turned over.

*Little crawled out of his aircraft to claim his prisoner, the German pilot saluted smartly and said in English "It seems that I have brought you down, not you me, doesn't it?" They went off to a nearby mess. The pilot, Lt Neumuller wrote to Mrs Little every year at Christmas except during the second world war. The Observer, Lt Huppertz, was tangled up in the ammunition belts and it took some time to unravel him. Little joked that he had crashed as many machines as he had shot down so had to carry on!*

## Flt Cdr Little 26 June 1917 Combat report (Not quite so chivalrous)

I attacked a hostile aircraft head on from a little below. I then did a roll which brought me out about 20 yards behind and going in the same direction as the Enemy Aircraft (EA). I fired a burst of about 20 rounds and the EA then stalled and fell over on its back and did a flat spin down. The EA then caught fire and one man jumped out. Later I saw another man crawling along the fuselage, trying to get to the bottom (the machine was still upside down). So I fired at him and he fell off.

*Soar added "He came down arms swinging and screaming his head off" I can still see Little's grin as he landed.*

*The pilot was (Lance Cpl ) Gefreiter Ernst Bittorf 26 years of age. The Observer was Lt Paul Schweizer, it was his 29<sup>th</sup> birthday in 3 days.*



## Flt Lt A S Todd

- Naval 8 Nov 16- Jan 17
- Canadian from Toronto
- Killed 4 Jan 17 Aged 30
- 16<sup>th</sup> Victim of Manfred von Richthofen

Flt Lt Alan Todd, Canadian.

Canadians were offered a flying course for 50 dollars and when completed successfully they could join the RFC or RNAS with immediate effect, they were generally then shipped over to the UK to complete their training.

Todd was the 16<sup>th</sup> victim of Manfred Von Richthofen who reported that he fought against a new type Sopwith Pup.

Von Richthofen stated that it was obvious to him that the aircraft was superior to his and that it was only the inexperience of the pilot which allowed him to get in a position to kill as Todd attacked from below with insufficient speed.

Von Richthofen visited the crash site to claim a part of Todd's aircraft as a souvenir. Todd has no known grave and is commemorated on the RNAS memorial in Arras. Perhaps Von Richthofen could have ensured that Todd was buried appropriately as one can assume that it was far enough behind German lines for Von Richthofen to visit without placing himself at risk.



## Flt Sub Lt H L Smith

- Naval 8 Apr 17- May 17
- Arrived on Sqn with 43 Hours Flying
- Killed in Action 24 May 1917
- Total Flying Time 59 Hours
- Death Confirmed in German Publication

The German publication could have been an unofficial approach. There are many references in Naval 8 (the book) to messages requesting the fate of Germans which were dropped over the airfield. In some cases personal effects were returned to the airfield too.



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Mrs Smith was so concerned as to the final resting place of her son that she wrote to "Baron Von Richthofen care of the German Red Cross".

Nine months later she received a letter which was translated by a diplomat. It gives details of his final resting place.

Frau Beatrice E. Smith,  
Bingley - Yorkshire.  
In reply to your letter of 16 Sept to Baron  
Auf Ihr gefl. Schreiben v. 16. 9. 17 an Baron  
von Reichoven we regret to inform you that  
your son Lieut Harold Leslie Smith, Royal Naval  
Ihr Sohn, Leutnant Harold Leslie Smith, Royal Naval  
Air Service, fell on the 24 May 1917 in an air battle and  
fell with his flying machine west of Flers. He was  
seinem Flugzeug westlich von Flers abstürzt ist. Er liegt  
auf dem Soldatenfriedhof von Lauwin-Planq  
the Douai-Bethune-Lietard Road. We have sent  
Strasse Douai-Hénin-Lietard, beerdigt. Wir haben Ihnen  
you through the International Committee of the Red  
durch das Internationale Komitee vom Roten Kreuz in Genf  
zwei Photographien Ihres Sohnes, sowie zwei Aufnahmen sei-  
nes Grabes zugehen lassen.





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“High in the clouds he fought,  
Nobly striving he nobly fell  
Alone he died for God, for Right, for Liberty”

Family were allowed to make an inscription on the headstone if they wished. Harold Smith's is extremely powerful.



## Flt Cdr G W Price DSC & Bar

- Naval 8 Sqn Nov 17- Feb 18
- 12 Victories
- Killed in Action 18 Feb 18

# Flt Cdr Price Service Record

Space for particular notations at Air Department (i.e., Accidents, meritorious work, special flights, etc.)

Private letter disposition of one of HMS Ship 121 was guilty of an act in the presence of good order & naval discipline - that he did in a private letter disclose an operation carried out by HMS "Kivara" - 70 per cent 6 months sentence, to be dismissed his ship and to be severely reprimanded. 2/20/05 Awarded the D.S.C. 11.1.18. 2/23/10. 29.11.17. Down down foolish machine out of control - 2/26/05. 11.11.18. Awarded D.S.C. for gallantry & determination, notably on following dates - Jan 2 1918, Dec 27. 17, Dec 16. 17 = C.W. 20. 2. 18. - Reported Missing 10th Dec. 1918. (Report on Naval Reg. 8.) 19.1.18. Attacked 2 Albatross Scouts, 1 brought down vertically, out of control. 21.1.18. Attacked one of 7 Albatross Scouts, bringing it down completely out of control. 24.1.18. On wireless patrol attacked Albatross Scout. 31.1.18. went down in vertical dive. 28.1.18. Attacked enemy two seater, which burst into flames & crashed - Awarded bar to D.S.C. = 2/30/18. 20.2.18. He left the Albatross 18.2.18. in order to test his tail hook. (Panel 15, 7204) No reds received when yet, although D.S.C. have made extensive inquiries - Honda fare 22/1/18. D.S.C. Am/01574 from C-in-C British Armies in France awarded bar to D.S.C. for consistency & determination in attacking enemy aircraft open in far superior numbers: - Am 42545 No. 8 Naval Sqdn - Total loss of B 7204 - Top Canal 150 HP OR1 lost 18/2/18, Locality Unknown

Perhaps Price only became a pilot because he was Court Martialled for giving his Ship's position away in a private letter. It is most likely that after he was dismissed his ship that no other unit was too keen to take him on. That was the RNAS gain as he was an exceptionally brave and talented pilot.

## Quote from Flt Cdr Compston:

Determination, pluck and the power to lead were the attributes of Price. Irish and impetuous, he gave much trouble to the enemy for he never gave in. Scorning the Aldis telescopic sight for his guns he would put his head over the side of the machine and watch his tracer bullets riddling the enemy; this gave him no small amount of satisfaction and I can see the sparkle in his eyes as he said to me one day "Sure I drilled him like a colander till the blighter burst into flames".

He died on a low level stunt and had he been told his time had come, he would have asked for nothing better than to die with a sparkle in his eyes, engine roaring, guns spurting flame in glorious action.



Sopwith Camel Gun Sight



## Flt Cdr R A Little DSO& Bar, DSC& Bar

- Naval 8 Sqn Oct 16-Sep 17
- 38 Victories (47 Total)
- Flt Cdr Naval 3 Sqn (203)
- 1 Mar 18

The top Australian Ace who is now getting recognition, especially in Australia.



## Flt Cdr R A Little Confidential Reports

- 21 Apr 16 As an Officer he is quite hopeless and Likely to remain so. Somewhat lacking in skill as a pilot.
- 5 May 16 This Officer has been reported on unfavourably. If a further adverse report is received his commission will be terminated.
- 9 Jun 16 Has conducted himself satisfactorily.
- 20 Jun 16 Very Keen Pilot.
- 2 Mar 17 Specially recommended for promotion.
- 1 Apr 17 Good ability to command, exceptionally brilliant fighting pilot.

It wasn't all plain sailing - His attitude was quite belligerent initially and not at all what was expected of a Naval Officer.



## Flt Cdr R A Little Confidential Reports (2)

- 25 Jun 17 Magnificent fighting pilot.
- 1 Aug 17 A most loyal, capable and keen Officer with few, if any, equals as a fighting pilot.



## Flt Cdr R A Little DSO& Bar, DSC& Bar

- Naval 8 Sqn Oct 16-Sep 17
- 38 Victories (47 Total)
- Flt Cdr Naval 3 Sqn (203)
- 1 Mar 18
- Killed in Action 22 May 18
  
- **AGED 22yrs 9months**

He launched alone at night following a Gotha raid on his airfield. By all accounts he had become more reckless after his period of rest on leaving Naval 8, perhaps he became more fatalistic but in his early career one of his great strengths was that he knew when to engage or leave a fight. He chased the Gotha and it is believed that the Gotha gunners fired back along the line of his tracer. He was hit in the leg which severed an artery. He crash landed intact and he bled to death in the cockpit. He was identified the next day by his good friend Booker who was asked to visit the crashed aircraft by the local Army Commander.

He is buried in Wavans Cemetery. It is very small and was a Casualty Clearing Station well to the rear of the front line. Although there are less than 50 graves Little is buried alongside McCudden VC one of the Allies greatest aces. Quite a coincidence!





## Flt Cdr C D Booker DSC

- Naval 8 Sqn Oct 16-Oct 17
- 23 Victories (29 Total)
- Sqn Cdr Naval 1 Sqn (201) on 1 Mar 18

Crundall on Booker (he was a member of Booker's Flight)

Booker is an Australian by birth who now lives in Tunbridge Wells. He says he hopes the war will go on forever because he loves air fighting, and if the war were to end he is afraid he might not be able to find a suitable job.

He is a little fellow, usually very silent, who fears nothing, but he would run a mile from any girls because he feels so shy in their company.

Compston on Booker

My mind turns to Booker, a man who said remarkably little but who did much; he was a tiger for air fighting. Nor was his spirit directed only against the enemy, for he fought for his own men to get what he wanted for them.

Jealously he guarded the rights of his men, fearlessly he preserved the lives of his pilots and bravely he attacked the enemy. Until one day the odds were too numerous even for his skill and spirit.



## Flt Cdr C D Booker DSC

- Naval 8 Sqn Oct 16-Oct 17
- 23 Victories
- Sqn Cdr Naval 1 Sqn (201) on 1 Mar 18
- Killed in Action 13 Aug 18
- **AGED 21yrs 3months**

Crundall on the death of Booker: News has just been received that Major Booker was shot down and killed. It was his practice to lead each new pilot on their first active service flights. *(By this time Squadron Commanders were not allowed to fly on patrols due to the effect on morale should they be lost in action, Booker relieved the pressure on his Flight Commanders by taking up the new pilots to show them the lines).* On this occasion a new pilot was following his lead and, due to inexperience could not keep in formation and strayed across the lines, where about 12 huns pounced upon them. Booker fought a rear-guard action and the new pilot got safely back to the aerodrome. Booker put up a tremendous fight and shot down 2 of the German machines but was wounded. He crashed when landing, receiving severe injuries. He died in hospital. *(he was officially credited with 3 as the fight was witnessed by another patrol).* He was the bravest man I ever met. He cannot have been far short of meriting a Victoria Cross. *The fact that Booker was the CO of a Squadron probably meant that there was no one in a position to write his citation as it usually has to be endorsed by a person of higher rank.*

# Summary From Official Report September 1918

- Oct 16-Sep 18
  - In Flames 11
  - Crashed 67
  - Out Of Control 195
  - Total 273
- Total Combats 565

# Summary

- Operated in France for 2 years
- 298 Kills were claimed by the Sqn
- 26 Pilots became aces
- 28 pilots Killed, 23 in Action, 5 Accidentally
- 10 Pilots have no known grave
- 11 Pilots became POWs
- 16 Pilots injured whilst on Sqn

18 pilots on a Squadron. 65 pilot casualties in two years. This does not include those sent to rest due to physical stress.

The Squadron turnover was three and a half times the personnel.

The casualty rate on Naval 8 was very low in comparison with many others.

## Quote from Sqn Armament Officer Capt Pinkney MBE

I cannot adequately depict the cheerfulness, efficiency, unselfish bravery and wonderful comradeship of No 8 Naval.

There was never anything like No 8 Naval and there can never be anything quite like it again

I hear it's "Soul Goes Marching On" as No 208 Squadron RAF: All good luck to it

# ROLL OF HONOUR

## NAVAL 8 / 208 SQUADRON 1916-18

P M Dennett

E A Bennetts

W E Traynor

H Day DSC

P A Johnston

WSK Scudamore

E D Roach

R L Johns

J N McAllister

Hon A C Corbett

S V Trapp

S Clark

G W Price DSO

H A Pailthorpe

W H Sneath

A S Todd

E B J Walter

C R Wallworth

G S Smith

F Bray

W H Hope

C R Mackenzie DSO

A H Hiscox

H L Smith

A E Cuzner

R McDonald

J Mollison

A J Dixon



# QUESTIONS ?