THIS ISSUE *Plans of Thompson Trophy Winner* NOVEMBER 25c

POPULAR AVIATION

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THE SEVERSKY P-35

A Noted Aviation Achievement

By ALFRED CELLIER

A graphic description of the massed flight that crossed from England to France during the World War. In view of the primitive equipment, this was truly a marvelous and daring undertaking.

PIONEER aviation's greatest achievement was, without a doubt, the massed flight which crossed from England to France upon the outbreak of the World War. The historical significance of that occasion has generally been forgotten and overlooked as we endeavor to keep pace with later developments.

Aviation was then in its infancy, and it is only necessary to look back on the diversity of types of those underpowered and frail machines to realize the great undertaking of that gallant band of airmen who flew them.

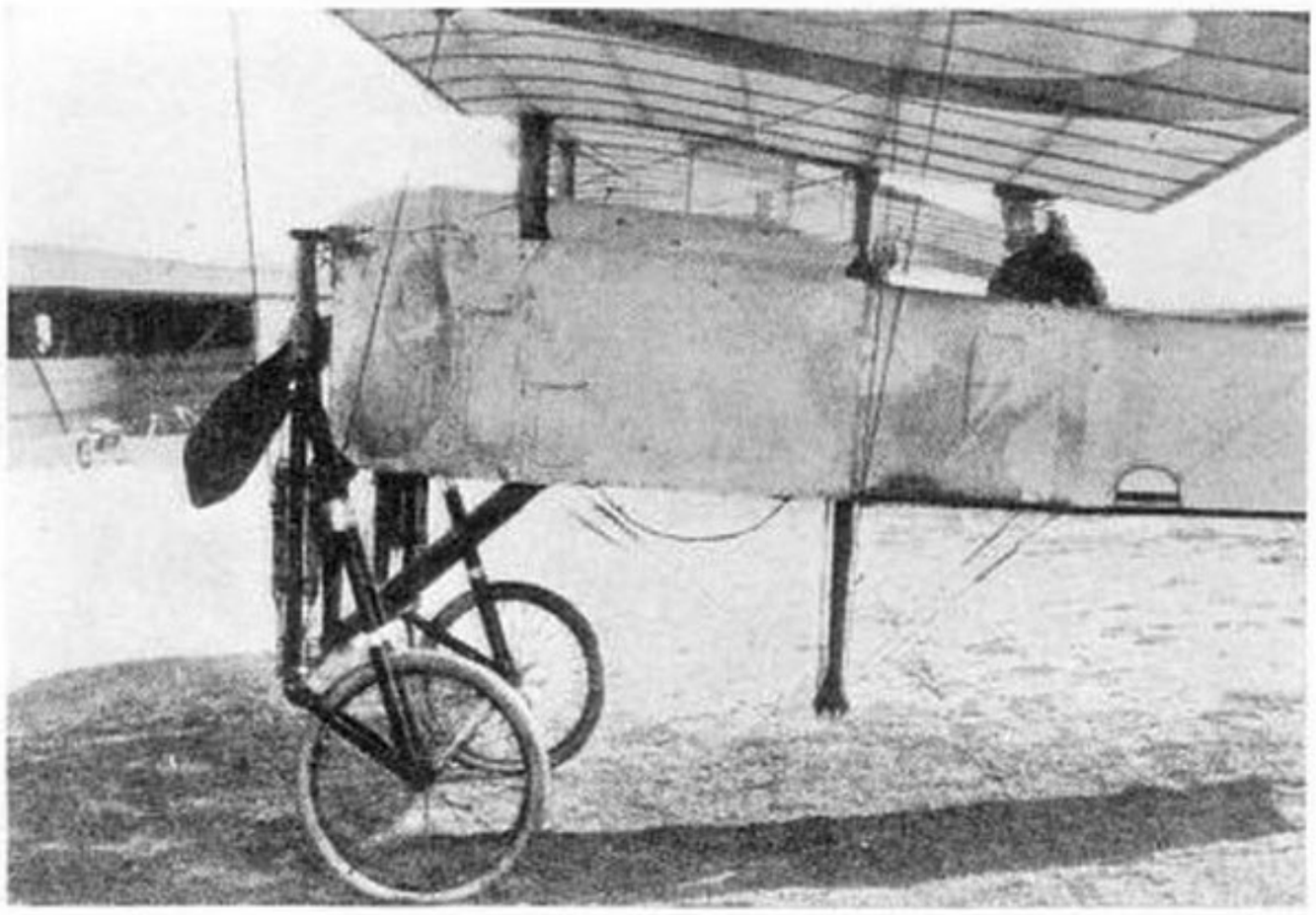
For sometime previous to the commencement of hostilities, mobilization plans had been perfected and issued to the tiny Royal Flying Corps. On the day that war was formally declared these plans were carried out. Within a few days Squadrons 2, 3, 4 and 5 had concentrated at Dover, under the command of Brigadier-General Sir David Henderson, in preparation for flying over the English Channel.

The day previous to the crossing saw the flying corps' first casualties of the war. As the preparations were going on and a few straggling machines arrived, Lieutenants R. R. Skene and R. Keith Barlow were killed when their airplane crashed during a bad landing.

With everything set, the flight to France took place at 6:25 a. m. on August 13, 1914, just six days after war was declared. This feat accomplished by 63 airplanes has gone down in history with glorious acclaim.

The first to land on the previously prepared French aerodrome was Lieutenant H. D. Harvey Kelly, who, flying a B.E.2, came down at Amiens at 8:20 a. m. Headquarters of the Royal Flying Corps meanwhile was established at Maubeuge. The last of the units to arrive at Amiens was the Aircraft Park, consisting of 12 officers and 162 men. This organization had brought with them twelve spare airplanes for replacements, eight of which had been flown over with the original units a few days before.

Of these four combat squadrons that flew to France, Numbers 2 and 4 were completely outfitted with B.E.'s. Number 3 Squadron was made up of some Bleriots and Maurice Farmans, while Number 5 Squadron was composed of Avros, B.E.8's and Henri Farmans. The Aircraft Park had a little of everything. Altogether, the little force that went to France comprised 105 officers and 755 men, the non-flying personnel with the equipment of the squadrons having been transported by boat.



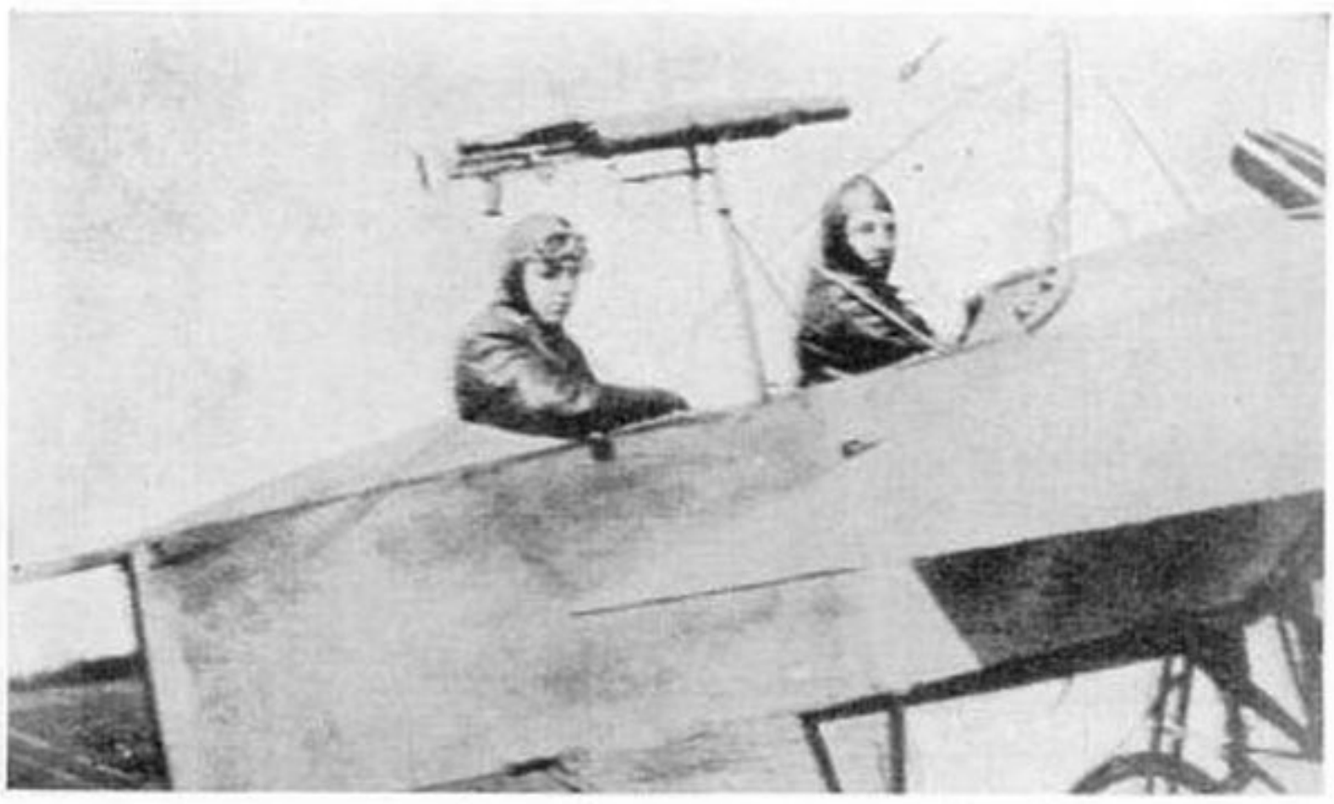
A 1914 Bleriot monoplane, of the high-wing type but with the same form of landing gear used on the earlier cross-channel type.

This left the home establishment just about stripped, there remaining 41 officers who were assigned to the three remaining squadrons and staff and school duties. The machines then assigned to the home establishment numbered 116 of various makes.

As the squadrons were moving from Amiens to Maubeuge, on August 16th, the second casualties occurred when a B.E.8 of Number 3 Squadron, piloted by E. W. C. Perry with H. E. Parfitt as his observer, crashed on the Amiens aerodrome and burned, killing the crew. Just two days later a similar accident took place at Perronne, in which Lieutenant R. R. Smith-Barry and Corporal F. Gerard were killed in the same type of machine.

After arriving at Maubege, the squadrons carried out reconnaissance for the British Army which was then engaged in the start of the Mons battle. Through the efficient scouting of this small force, it was not long before their army found that they owed their existence to the flying corps, as on several occasions the information they brought back prevented them from being trapped and annihilated.

Losses in action were yet to come



A standard Bleriot monoplane of 1914, showing the unusual method of mounting the Lewis gun. This is what might be called a "tripod mounting."

and on August 22nd, a machine failed to return from a patrol. This was an Avro two-seater of No. 3 Squadron, with Lieutenants V. Waterfall and C. G. Bayly, who were shot down by rifle fire of German infantry near Fournes. Later that same day, Sergeant-Major Jillings was shot through the leg by enemy fire while observing from a machine of No. 2 Squadron. His wound, likewise was from an infantry rifle.

As the Germans were all the while rapidly advancing, the small British Expeditionary Force was compelled to retreat and headquarters of the Royal Flying Corps fell back to Le Cateau, on August 24th, and in the next two days, to St. Quentin and Le Fere. Eventually, by September 4th, they established themselves on the abandoned French aerodrome at Melum.

During the interim, on August 26th, Lieutenant G. F. Pretyman, with Major L. B. Boyd-Moss as observer, in Bleriot No. 387 of No. 3 Squadron, were shot down from an altitude of three thousand feet by German anti-aircraft artillery. They were "Archies" first victims.

Enemy aircraft, at this time, were rather few and far fetched in the British sector. It was not until the 22nd of August that the first German machine, an Albatros, was sighted. It flew over the Maubege aerodrome apparently endeavoring to learn the strength of the Royal Flying Corps. Several machines took off to give it combat but it soon got away.

Three days after that a German machine of the monoplane type was forced to land within the British lines, while a second was forced down at Le Quesnay. On the 29th, a German airplane made its appearance over the newly established field at Compiegne and dropped three small bombs but they did no damage.

On September 7th, the headquarters of the Royal Flying Corps moved to Touquin, finally locating at Fere-en-Tardenois a week later, where preparations were made for the Aisne battle. The squadrons, in the meantime, changed their aerodrome to Saponay. It was from this base that Lieutenants L. Davis and W. R. Freeman, while on a reconnaissance mission for No. 2 Squadron, were forced to land behind the German lines on account of engine trouble.

A month of active service had passed and it was found that replacements were needed in both machines and personnel. In response to the request for these, five machines—a Bleriot, two B.E.2's, a B.E.8 and an R.E.1—were dispatched with their crews to fill the vacancies. These were followed a few days later by a flight of Maurice Farmans, of No. 4 Squadron, which had remained in England. These latter machines were very welcomed additions, for their type of construction allowed a gunner to sit out in front with a clear arc of fire and they were the only real fighting planes up to that time.

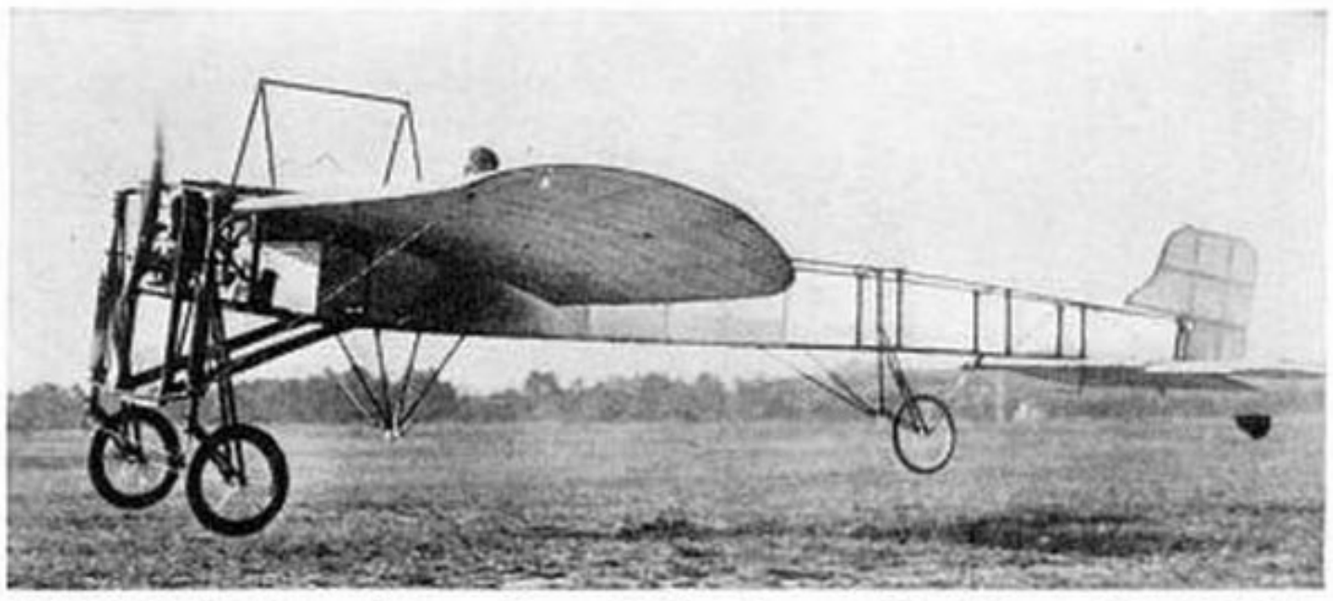
Continuous aerial operations brought on more casualties and on September 22nd, Lieutenant G. W. Mappleback, of No. 4 Squadron, was wounded in the leg when attacked by an enemy Albatros. Although an observer had previously been wounded, Lieutenant Mappleback was the first pilot to be wounded while in the air. It was at this time, also, that Captain L. A. Strange dropped two 20-pound bombs on two converging lines of cavalry at a cross road. This was the first damage ever inflicted by aerial bombs, and it resulted in many casualties and the stampeding of the horses.

By October 12th, it became necessary to move the headquarters of the flying force from Fere-en-Tardenois to St. Omer, and within a week No. 6 Squadron which had been acting as a depot reserve in England flew to Bruges. After operating in that vicinity and covering the retirement from Ostend to Dunkirk, they reported for duty at St. Omer.

Air combat that had become lax was again engaged in on November 22nd, when Lieutenant F. G. Small and Captain L. A. Strange, of No. 5 Squadron, forced down an Albatros two-seater and took the crew prisoners. It was found that the German machine had been hit twenty times by their bullets.

With 1914 at an end, the Royal Flying Corps had tasted its baptism of fire and had accomplished a great deal of valuable work. There is, however, still more that must be told as regards the massed flight.

(*Concluded on page* 64)



This 1909 Bleriot Type XI monoplane, still in flying condition, is owned by The International Horseless Carriage Corporation, Brooklands Track, Weybridge, England.

A Memorial for the 27th Aero Squadron

The 27th Squadron Memorial Tablet.

ABOVE is the bronze memorial tablet carrying the names of the members of the 27th Aero Squadron who won victories over the enemy.

First and foremost is Frank Luke, the "Balloon buster," who won 18 victories over enemy planes and balloons. Altogether, as the photo shows, this squadron boasted six "aces" with a total of 40 victories. A total of 77 victories is credited to the whole squadron.

Reading up and down the columns, we see such well known pilots names as Eugene McCubbin, Joseph Wehner, Thomas Lannon, etc.

A New Stunt for Seaplanes

AS an ardent fisherman, Alexander P. de Seversky realized that the most helpless man in aviation is a pilot trying to beach or anchor a seaplane alone. So he invented an automatic anchor.

When he dropped down on a secluded lake in the amphibian in which he established a world speed record of 230 miles an hour, Seversky found himself at the mercy of the slightest wind or current, and the whirling propeller prevented his getting to the nose of the pontoons to drop anchor or tie up. Even the largest seaplanes are delicately susceptible to a slight breeze or water movement, so that the pilot usually has to keep his propeller turning to maintain his position.

Seversky's new anchor in its retracted position becomes the rubber or leather-covered bumper on the nose of the pontoon. It is released from the pilot's cockpit and so designed that it digs into the bottom like any marine anchor.

To "up anchor," the pilot taxies slowly over the anchor, lifts it vertically, and reels it back into its nest in the nose of the pontoon. The device may be used on both pontoons of a seaplane, or on the nose of a flying boat.

Air Mail

(Continued from page 42)

terested in knowing that this first air mail service also brought about the first anti-aircraft artillery. The Prussians, dismayed at seeing the balloons floating serenely overhead, hurriedly ordered the Krupps to build "archies" to shoot down the bulbous messengers of the wind. However, like the cavalry, used to chase the balloons without success, as well as the hawks, trained to intercept the homing pigeons, the anti-aircraft guns bombed away in utter futility until the starved city finally fell.

Early Flights

(Continued from page 26)

While the army was engaged in flying across the Channel, a Royal Naval Air Service Squadron crossed the same day. This unit was composed of seaplanes, under the command of Flight-Lieutenant E. T. R. Chambers. Arriving at Ostend on August 13, 1914, they established a temporary base from which they operated while the expeditionary force was crossing to France. On August 22nd, this squadron returned to England.

It is right here that the author desires to clarify something. The first crossing has very often been attributed to Commander C. R. Samson's naval landplane squadron from Eastchurch. This squadron in question did not fly from that station to Ostend until August 27th, 1914. As that unit did some admirable work upon its arrival, it is not the intention to belittle it but rather to give credit where it is due. Samson's squadron consisted of three B.E.2's, two Sopwiths, two Bleriots, one Henri Farman, one Bristol and one Short, the latter having wheels substituted for its floats.

Once at Ostend, Samson's squadron cooperated with the Marine Brigade carrying out daily reconnaissance until August 28th, when they had to withdraw from that place before the German advance. The next move was to Dunkirk where they were given some armored cars in which they achieved considerable fame as ground fighters on the days they could not fly. From there they moved to Antwerp, staying until October 3rd, whence it became necessary to retire from that place. They then moved up to Ypres and Poperinghe.

With the decision to establish a permanent naval air station at Dunkirk, the British decided to dispatch a squadron of seaplanes there. This unit, under the command of Squadron Commander J. W. Seddon, arrived on October 30th, and was the ninth British squadron to fly across the English Channel in 1914. Previous to the arrival of this unit another naval squadron, under the command of Commander Spenser Grey, had established a base at Antwerp but abandoned it on October 8th, when the town was evacuated.

The Antwerp base had been established with the primary object of carrying out their attacks against the German Zeppelin sheds to hinder raids on England. When it was foreseen that the Antwerp base would have to be abandoned, it was decided to carry out the attacks on Dusseldorf and Cologne that same day.

Consequently, Commander Grey and Flight Lieutenant Marix each took off

in a Sopwith Tabloid armed with four 20-pound bombs. Both reached their objectives accordingly. Squadron Commander Grey got over Cologne, but due to the thick fog was unable to find the huge hangar. Flight Lieutenant Marix was more successful, not only in finding the shed but in destroying the Zeppelin Z-9 which was in it.

With further plans evolved to carry out a raid on the Zeppelin factory and hangars at Friedrichshafen, permission was received from the French to use the Belfort aerodrome. While this was being arranged a squadron of four 80-horsepower Avros was gathered under Squadron Commander E. F. Briggs.

On November 21st, with an improvement in the weather, the raid was carried out and a large amount of damage was done to the sheds and the gas works of the Zeppelin plant was blown up. Only one thing marred the complete success of the expedition and that was the failure of Commander Briggs to return. While over Friedrichshafen, the gasoline tank of his machine was punctured in several places by machine gun bullets and, wounded, he was forced to land and was taken prisoner.

In reviewing these aerial activities which took place during 1914, consideration must be given to the fact that aviation was only in the pioneer stages. To take planes that were scarcely stable enough for exhibition stunt flying and adapt them to military service was a heroic accomplishment. END

Airy Chat

(Continued from page 12)

unable to give our readers much help on this subject at the present time.

However, we are just on the brink of performing some experimental work along this line, and if our idea works out, will publish a full account of the equipment with notes for its construction. This is really a hard problem to solve because of the weight limitations placed on the apparatus, hence we cannot promise an early solution of the matter. Wait and hope.

* * *

THE ability to control a gas driven model from the ground like a robot plane, will mean much to the gas model constructor. It will eliminate all of the running and chasing that has been an essential feature of gas model flying up to date and will therefore prolong the life of the shoes and auto tires.

* * *

MANY readers have written to us about the well liked "What Our Readers Are Building" department that was temporarily discontinued several months ago.

This department was suspended because of certain changes taking place in the makeup of the magazine at that time, but we will assure anxious readers that it will be restored at an early date. This has proved to be a popular department for nearly all our readers and has been a very interesting one for the editors as well as the readers. It demonstrates what can be accomplished in aviation with only a limited amount of capital.

* * *

LAST year, we believed that the transatlantic fad had died out, but this year sees a full revival of this quaint custom. The funny part of the thing is that they did not do half as well this year, in spite of the improved instruments, as the pioneer ocean flyers did several years ago with scarcely any navigational instruments at all.

* * *

WE are strongly in favor of a Department of Air in this country which will be the sole and undisputed authority in aviation. To be thoroughly effective, it must be entirely independent of other government bureaus and should be in charge of navy and army aviation as well as private and commercial flying. And—needless to say—should be independent of political connections, if that is possible.

* * *

IT is with regret that we announce the omission of Mr. Roddy's "High-Lights and Side-Lights" which has greatly interested our readers. Because of Mr. Roddy's poor health, he will be unable to do any writing, at least for some time to come.

* * *

Well, we're bumping into the ads again. So long.—J. B. R.