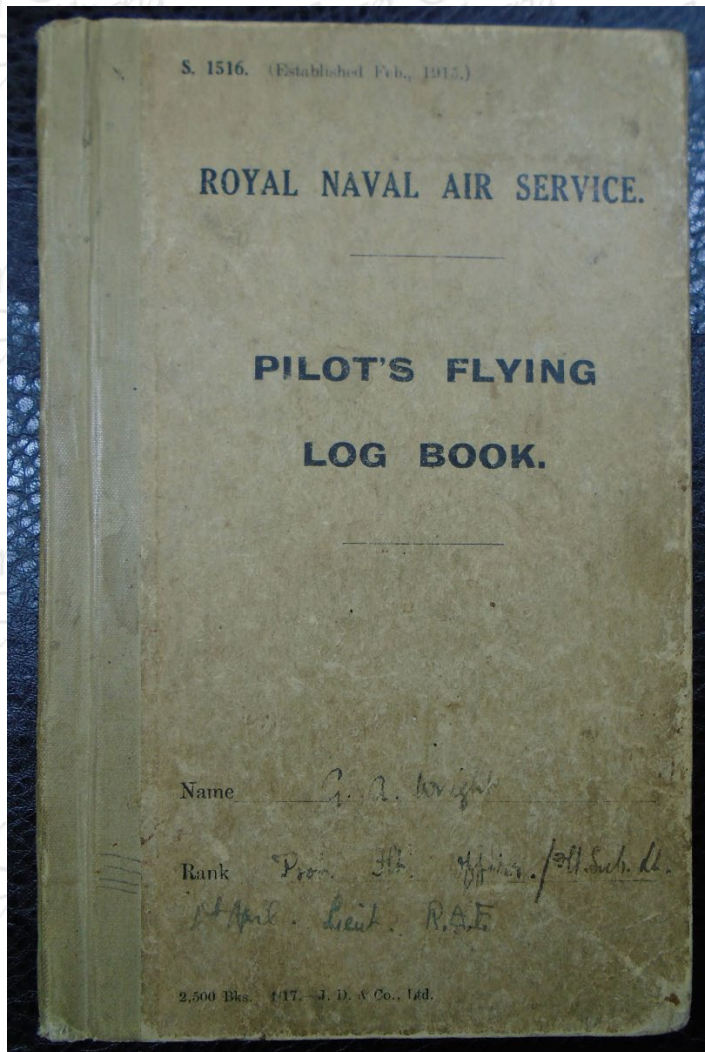


A RARE WW1 ROYAL NAVAL AIR SERVICE LOG BOOK TO A SHORT 184 SEAPLANE PILOT WHO FLEW OPERATIONALLY OVER THE CHANNEL IN 1918 AND IN 1919, THE BLACK SEA DURING THE RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR, SEEING A GOOD DEAL OF ACTION IN THE LATTER



Lookbook belonged to Sub Flight Lieutenant G A Wright, a pilot with the Royal Naval Air Service/Royal Air Force. He flew operational over the French Coast and Channel in 1918 and in 1919, the Black Sea during the Russian Civil War, seeing a good deal of action in the latter. Almost every flight has notes in the 'Remarks' section, giving the reader a good insight to early aviators flying experiences both training and operationally with seaplanes.

Logbook starts with training flights with Caudron G3's on 21 September 1917 and continues throughout his training at various establishments, including Killingholme until end of May 1918. Posted to Dover Seaplane Station on 17 June 1918, his first flight was the following day. Piloting 260hp Short's, he flew patrols over the Channel and French Coast until his last flight on 11 August 1918, when he notes 'Dropped bomb on oil SSE Dungeness'

Having been attached to *HMS Empress*, a converted aircraft carrier from a steam packet ship, his next flight recorded isn't until 13 November 1918. Piloting a 260hp Short, he notes 'Escorted Allied Fleet into Constantinople' and another flight later that day 'Searching for seaplane from Manxman, presumed down'. He takes part in just 3 more flights that year and his not flying again until April

1919, by which time *Empress* was operating in the Black Sea during the Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allied_intervention_in_the_Russian_Civil_War



In the months of April and May, Wright would fly on 26 operational flight, both reconnaissance and bombing over hostile territory during the Russian Civil War of 1919. During this period he piloted Short 184 seaplanes, flying over the Crimea, including the Gulf of Perekop and Sebastopol. A few examples of notes to flight are as follows: *'Passenger Russian Officer, Reconnoitred Bolshevik positions, fired gun at transport'*, *'Bombed and Machine gunned trenches, Heavily fire on, hit several times'*. *'Reconnoitred Bolshevik positions fired gun at transport'*, *'Attacked armoured train'*, *'Reconnaissance, sighted HA'* etc etc. His final entry and flight is on 12 May 1919

Additional to the logbook are 5 photocopied reconnaissance reports for flights in Russia, these filled in a signed by Wright's observer, 2/Lieut J S Nichol. It's not clear where these came from, perhaps a museum of such has Nichol's archive:

17/4/19 – 'Reconnaissance of Southern Area of Sevastopol'

29/4/19 – 'Bombing Raid' – Armoured train

29/4/19 – 'Bombing Raid on Armoured train' – this later same day

30/4/19 – 'Spotting for HMS Emperor of India'

30/4/19 – 'Spotting for HMS Emperor of India' – as above but later in the day

At the start of the logbook, Wright he notes the aircraft types he flew: Avro, Curtis 90hp, Bristol, BE 2E, Bristol Scouts, Sopwith Strutters, FBA, Caudron G3 and Short 150hp, 225 hp, 240hp and 260hp. All of Wright's operational flights are with 'Short' sea planes.

WW1 logbooks to naval pilots are relatively scarce but this is a rare piece due to the Russian Civil War service.

Date and Hour	Wind Direction and Velocity	Machine Type and No.	Pilot Instructor	Time in Air	Height	Course	Remarks
21/9/17. 630pm.	Nil.	Caudron 3058 S.H. Brown	18 mins	900	Right hand circuit of aerodrome. Felt controls and had control before in	Completed instruction	
22/9/17. 8.35am	E. force 2	Caudron 3058 S.H. Brown	27 mins	1200	Left hand circuit of aerodrome. Took control, turned right & left.		
Total time dual in air		18 mins					Did not give machine quite enough bank for the amount of rudder.
Solo "		Nil					
Week ending		21/9/17.	18 mins				
22/9/17. 5.58pm.	E. force 1	Caudron 3058 S.H. Brown	34 mins	800	Left hand circuit	Felt more confident kept machine flying more level and did not ascend.	
					L. B. Bailey	Practised landing and taking off, tendency to jerk controls too much.	
24/9/17. 7.30am	E. force 1	Caudron 3058 S.H. Brown	35 mins	600	Left hand circuit to landing field	Practised landing and taking off again. Improved on previous time. Try to pull tail down rather too soon before the machine	

Disappearance of Southern Area of Sevastopol

Army Form W. 3099.
(In books of 100.)

Date	Sqdn.	Pilot	Observer	Ref. Map.	Hour at which reconnaissance commenced	Hour at which reconnaissance concluded
17/11/17		S. C. Wright - J. A.	2 nd Lt. J. S. Nichol	12/10/17	0615	0745
TIME	PLACE	OBSERVATION				Page
0610	HMS EMPRESS	Anchored on beach				No.
0615	SEVASTOPOL HARBOUR	in line				
0630	PESCHANA BAY	1500 ft - Nil				
0635	QUARANTINE BAY	Observed, Allied line 1 1/2 miles S.E. + 2 1/2 miles N.E. - Nil				
0655	- 0740	3,000 ft. Patrolled main road between head of SOUTH BAY + BAKALAVA - concentration of transport observed at point 2 1/2 miles N.W. of BAKALAVA - battery of four field guns, six horses to each gun, stationary, to make N.W. of position - attached battery with bombs - caused some to scatter - broken transport - but no explosion noted - marked the whole of the position with high ammunition - caused a general landing. Four gunnery were actually observed - no infantry. Some there, not in position for firing.				
0750	SEVASTOPOL HARBOUR	Water down				
0755	HMS EMPRESS	Anchored on beach				

Signed: *J. S. Nichol*
2nd Lt.

Bombing raid on Sevastopol

Army Form W. 3099.
(In books of 100.)

Date	Sqdn.	Pilot	Observer	Ref. Map.	Hour at which reconnaissance commenced	Hour at which reconnaissance concluded
20/11/17		S. C. Wright	2 nd Lt. J. S. Nichol	12/10/17	1210 LT	1311 LT
TIME	PLACE	OBSERVATION				Page
1210	HMS EMPRESS	H. water on beach				No.
1215	"	in line				
1235	13 GL	4,000 ft - fired on by three A.A. guns - caused explosion - two shells down - third fire with considerable high ammunition - no material damage observed. Photograph of three taken.				
1305	HMS EMPRESS	Water down				
1311	"	Anchored on beach				

Signed: *J. S. Nichol*
2nd Lt.

Date and Hour,	Wind Direction and Velocity	Machine Type and No.	Passenger	Time in Air	Height	Course	Remarks
30. 6. 18	E 2-3	260 Shark Pl.	1 hr.	1000	Calais, Boulogne, France	Very good visibility	
2-35 pm.		N 2967	Shapiro	35 min		Dungeness.	
2. 7. 18	N.W	260 Shark Pl.	5'	40 feet	Startee "A" Patrol.	Turned low away from land in order to miss pier & diffuser. Revs. stopped. sideslipped and crashed. Crash from about 400 ft up.	
4-50 am.	2-3	N 2967	Tilly	mins.		(See Report) This same engine let me down three times on 29. 6. 18.	
14. 7. 18	SSW	260 Shark Pl.	2 hr.	1000	D.T.E. Patrols.	Break down at 1000 feet. Lighted long rd path. Found not to be of importance.	
11-35 am.	2-3	N 1681	Young	50 min			
15. 7. 18.	Indefinite	260 Shark Pl.	1 hr.		D.T.E. Patrols.	N.T.A. Took a long time to get off.	
7-4 pm.	surface	N 1681	Balls	38 min	1000		

Date and Hour	Wind Direction and Velocity	Machine Type and No.	Passenger	Time in Air	Height	Course	Remarks
11. 8. 18	E. 2-3	260 Shark Pl.	2 hrs.	1000	A + E patrols.	Dropped bomb on rail. S.E. Dungeness.	
6-1 pm.		8015	Young	25 min			
H.M.S. EMPRESS.							
13. 11. 18	NE 2-3	260 Shark Pl.	2 hrs.	2000	San Stefano	Escorted allied flesh into Constantinople.	
am.		1688	Nichell	35 min		Constantinople Sea of Marmara.	
13. 11. 18	N. 3-4	260 Shark Pl.	1000.		Patrol over Sea of Marmara.	Searching for seaplane from "Maxman" presumed down.	
13. 11. 18	N. 2	260 Shark Pl.	45	1000-2000	Test flight Local.	Engine satisfactory.	
		1688	Sumner	mins.			
13. 11. 18	N. 2	260 Shark Pl.	25	100	Test flight. Mares.	Alt. pressure too high. Landing. Seaplane slips and recedes.	
		1688	Spalton	mins.			
29. 12. 18	N. 4	260 Shark Pl.	45	1000	Test flight + signalling Mares.	Satisfactory.	
		1688	Spalton	mins.			

Date and Hour	Wind Direction and Velocity	Machine Type and No.	Passenger	Time in Air	Height	Course	Remarks
6. 4. 19. 145 pm.	N. 2.	Shark 124	Quarians	2.15 min	1,000	Southern end of Gulf of Penekop.	Reconnaissance. Bolshevik positions. Fired gun at Pankaf.
6. 4. 19. 145 pm.	N. 2.	Shark 124	Quarians	10 min	500	D.S.	Went to examine boat believed hostile.
6. 4. 19. 145 pm.	N. 2.	Shark 124	Quarians	20 min	1,500	D.S.	Inspection of landmarks for bombardment.
7. 4. 19.	N. 2.	Shark 124	Quarians	26.25	2,500	D.S.	Reconnaissance. Killed H 17.
7. 4. 19.	N. 2.	Shark 124	Quarians	26.25	2,500	D.S.	Bombed gun & transport, fired gun.
8. 4. 19.	N. 1.	Shark 124	Quarians	20 min	1,000	Black Sea Bay.	Too thick for raid.
8. 4. 19.	N. 1.	Shark 124	Quarians	35 min	1,500	D.S.	Engine too, very thick.
8. 4. 19.	N. 1.	Shark 124	Quarians	25 min	2,000	D.S.	" returned.
8. 4. 19. 210 pm.	N.E. 3-4	Shark 124	Quarians	16. 15	2,500	Southern part of Penekop Gulf.	Bombed & machine gunned trenches. Heavily fired on.
8. 4. 19. 145 pm.	N.E. 4	Shark 124	Quarians	16. 45	2,500	D.S.	Bombed Iskassar heavily.
15. 4. 19. 145 pm.	N. 3.	Shark 124	Nichell	15. 15	1,000.	Sebastopol.	Fired on. Hit several times.
15. 4. 19. 145 pm.	N. 3.	Shark 124	Nichell	16. 20	500	D.S.	Reconnaissance for 2 short trips. S.E. of town.
17. 4. 19. 145 pm.	N. 2.	Shark 124	Nichell	16. 45	3,500	D.S.	Reconnaissance + bombing.
12. 2. 20				59 min. 20			