

ROYAL FLYING CORPS COMMUNIQUÉS 1917-1918

Photography – 948 photographs were taken during the day.

MAY 1

Reconnaissance – A special reconnaissance was carried out by Lts O'Brien & Jones, 43 Squadron, at very-low altitude and much useful information obtained. An armoured BE of 53 Squadron flew at 500 feet and successfully co-operated with an infantry raiding party.

Artillery Co-operation – 111 targets were dealt with by aeroplane observation and 11 by balloon observation.

Hostile Aircraft – Six FEs of 25 Squadron engaged about 15 HA scouts near Douai. 2nd Lt R G Malcolm & Cpl L Emsden destroyed one and drove down a second, while 2nd Lt B King & Lt G M A Hobart-Hampden drove down another out of control. Captain C J Q Brand, 1 Squadron, destroyed an Albatros two-seater near Warneton, and Capt E D Atkinson of the same squadron destroyed one near Zonnebeke. 2nd Lt R G Dalziel & L/Cpl R Bradley, 20 Squadron, shot down an Albatros two-seater which crashed near Messines. An Albatros scout which was engaged by 2nd Lt M G Cole, 1 Squadron, was brought down in our lines near Elverdinghe. An Albatros two-seater was driven down out of control by 2nd Lt L M Mansbridge, 1 Squadron, and another of the same type was driven down out of control by Capt F H Thayer & F R Cubbon, 20 Squadron. Anti-aircraft gunners of the Third Army brought down a DFW two-seater in our lines. A photographic reconnaissance of 18 Squadron attacked 10 HA near Epinoy. Flight Sub-Lt J S T Fall, 8 Squadron RNAS, one of the escort to the FEs, assisted by 2nd Lt M M Kaizer & Sergt F Russell, 18 Squadron, drove down one HA completely out of control. Three other HA were driven down out of control. Capt Taylor & Lt C G Eccles, both of 32 Squadron, attacked two Albatros two-seaters and drove them down. A green-coloured machine was seen shortly after destroyed on the ground and is believed to be the one which they drove down which was painted that colour. A patrol of three SEs of 56 Squadron saw six HA near Cambrai at 13,000 feet. The SEs immediately attacked and one HA was destroyed by Captain A Ball, while a second was driven down out of control by this pilot. 2nd Lt K J Knaggs, 56 Squadron, drove down an Albatros two-seater which is believed to have fallen into the River Scarpe. Lt F S Wilkins, 19 Squadron, drove down an Albatros two-seater which fell south-east of Arras. 2nd Lt D J Bell, 27 Squadron, drove down a single-seat German machine in a spin.

Photography – 1117 photographs were taken during the day.

Bombing – During the night of 30 April/1 May, bombing raids were made against Carvin, Bauvin, Quiery-la-Motte, Rumbeke aerodrome, St Sauveur, Haubourdin, Le Catelet, and Epinoy aerodrome.

MAY 2

Artillery Co-operation – 145 targets were dealt with by aeroplane observation and 45 by balloon observation.

Hostile Aircraft – On the evening of May 1, Flight Sub-Lt D M Shields, 8 Squadron RNAS, drove down an Albatros scout out of control. He was then attacked by seven more scouts and was forced down; his controls were shot away and the machine crashed and was immediately shelled by the Germans. The pilot, who was injured, crept into a shell hole and remained there until rescued the next morning. A formation of nine Albatros scouts attacked six FEs of 25 Squadron which were

Combats in the Air.

Squadron: No. 1.

Date: 1st. May 1917.

Type and No. of Aeroplanes. 6678, 6603, B1552, 1508, B1550.

Time: 10-18 a.m. 12-30 p.m

Armament: 1 Lewis gun each.

Duty: Offensive Patrol.

Pilots Capt. E.D. Atkinson, Lt. J.C.C. Piggott,
Lt. J.R. Anthony, 2/Lt. E.S.T. Cole, Lt. F. Sharpe.
Observer: 1

Height: 12,000 ft. downwards

Locality: YPRES - ROULERS.

Remarks on Hostile machines:—Type, armament, speed, etc.

4 Albatros Scouts (3 usual type and one painted brilliant red with an exceptionally good pilot.)

Narrative.

Whilst on Offensive Patrol at about 12,000 feet, the formation attacked 4 H.A., one of which was a special machine. All H.A. Pilots were exceptionally good at handling their machines. A general combat ensued in the vicinity of POPERINGHE - YPRES and lasted for about 20 minutes. Capt. E.D. Atkinson when leading the formation to attack, noticed one of the H.A. had seen the Nieuports - this machine immediately climbed, obviously with the intention of diving on us when we attacked the others, consequently I singled him out and after about 5 minutes of manoeuvring, managed to get under him and fire. He went down for about 2,000 feet vertically and then towards his lines - obviously he was badly hit and I went down to finish him off, when the red H.A. attacked from above - he fought for at least 10 minutes but he was an exceptionally good Pilot with a machine superior in every way to the Nieuport and got in quite 2 bursts of fire to my one (amongst other things, he shot away my carburettor) then, having lost my engine, I spun. The H.A. chased me down to 3,000 feet, firing, but the only time he hit the machine in coming down, was when for a short time I stopped spinning to see where the H.A. was. After getting out of the spin, I landed with no further damage near ELVERDI. 2/Lt. E.S.T. Cole attacked one H.A. and dived on it several times and in turn being dived on by the H.A. After some time 2/Lt. Cole fired a complete drum whilst in a dive when only at 1,000 feet. The machine crashed in a pond about 28.B.13. Lt. F. Shappe attacked this machine and fired a long burst at with 2/Lt. Cole, followed it down to the ground firing in all 1 1/2 drums. Lt. J.R. Anthony attacked one H.A. which was flying West, diving on a Nieuport. He fired a drum into it but had to break away owing to engine trouble. Lt. J.C.C. Piggott saw the red H.A. leave formation and make towards the line. He dived on it and fired a drum, H.A. turned and twisted about but continued his dive. Lt. Piggott changed drums and fired again but got a stoppage. The H.A. then ceased to dive and attacked the Nieuport which dived and came to our side of the lines. Confirmations attached.

(Signed) E.D. ATKINSON Capt., J.C.C. PIGGOTT Lieut., F. SHARPE
E.S.T. COLE 2/Lieut. J.R. ANTHONY Lt.

E.D. Atkinson Major,

Commanding No. 1. Squadron, R.F.C.

H. Q. 2/1