

1917

Excerpt 4 AB flying  
in WW1

Extracts from Diary of Henry. A. Blundell who served with the 21st Squadron, R.F.C. from August 25th, 1917, until May 7th, 1918 and was invalided out to Hospital with so-called 'flying sickness' but after instructing was flying on anti-submarine off Cornwall.

- Tues. Sept 4th. Went up on photos but lost escort of 4 Nieuports at 8000 ft.
- Wed. Sept 5. Another attempt. Went over with escort of 2 DH5s. Photos N.B.G. Ventured over alone. Attacked by 2 Huns. Observer, Alexander drove them off.
- Thurs. Sept 6th. Weather dud.
- Fri. Sept 7th. Weather dud but went over in evening with Swann and Barnet as escort. Driven off by Travelling Circus. Camera jammed.
- Sat, Sept. 8. Went over again on photos. Successful at last. Waddel on photos, too. Oliver escort. Huns attacked us. Waddel nearly had his tail shot off but his observer Sergt Fryer shot down two of them. Did 110 m.p.h. when after me. Waddel had bullet through leg.
- Wed. Sept. 19. Up at 9 oclock. A cylinder of engine blew off when over lines. Managed to get just past Ypres and landed in a small clearing. Telephone wires and ditches at regular intervals so crashed. Bombs didn't go off. Spent remainder of morning with Dorey and an M.O. Captain. Had lunch with them. In afternoon mechanics came and took machine to pieces. We went back in a tender only to find that we had to go up immediately. Had a bit of wind up about shells from our barrage passing rather close. Returned at 6.45 because dusk.
- Sept. 20. Day of great push. Counter attack and contact went up. Rained and clouds low so didn't go up all day.
- Sept 21. Went up with Dorey on DX 87 at 3PM. Huns rather plentiful but didn't bother us. Some of the shell holes appear quite red from air owing to blood. Horribl sight. This was confirmed by other pilots so was not imagination.
- April 7. 1918. Aerodrome all morning. At 4.15 pm went up to do a shoot with 85 SB, 12", and 119 SB, 6". with Harper. Engine failed over lines. Symptons, vibration increasing then sudden dropping of revs from 1500 to 1200. Shouted to Harper to ask him whwther he would rather me land on emergency landing ground near Ypres or try for aerodrome. We decided aerodrome. Rather more risky but almost worth it. Height 4000. Strong headwind. We just did it. I just judged it to a nicety and made a perfect landing. Engine would not take me in to Hangers. It was an anxious few minutes. The rocker arm on the port magneto was found to have stuck through oil solidifying. I went up on another machine and completed the shoot. Capt Eyden and Walters killed on aerodrome