

Wind in the Wires 53

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Wind in the Wires

Quarterly World War I Aviation Newsletter





Welcome to the latest issue of **Wind in the Wires**, your one stop shop for the latest First World War related aviation news, views and information. Every article in *WitW* 53 has been carefully curated at the **Great War Aviation Society** command and control centre for subscribers old and new to enjoy.

Unashamedly, it is also a chance to showcase our venerable Society and the Committee's hard work in bringing to its members a highly-respected **Journal**, now in its fifty-sixth year of publication, and other delights such as our latest innovation, **Contact!**, the online lecture

programme (which resumes in September), the acclaimed calendar and an extensive range of books and monographs. The website, which has had a complete overhaul over recent months, includes more and more accessible content for members and non-members alike.

Speaking of books, there are over 400 pre-loved 'on-subject' books in the web shop at the moment, and subscribers should check out this rich seam of goodies and add to their libraries. The Japanese even have a word for it - *Tsundoku* - the phenomenon of acquiring reading materials but letting them pile up in one's home without reading them!

Volume 56 Number 2 (Summer 2025) of the Journal is now at the printers and will be landing on doormats or flying through the ether digitally very soon. **Contact!** **Volume 02 Number 2 (Summer 2025)** will also be with members in the next few weeks. If you are not already a member, please consider taking the plunge and join us and have a say in the future of the Society. Our Membership Secretary, Andy Kemp, would be happy to discuss the veritable smorgasbord of options (to suit all budgets) with you at membership@greatwaraviation.org or just click here:

<https://greatwaraviation.org/2025-membership/>.

Finally, a 'house notice' about the recent **Annual General Meeting** of the Society, held on 12-Apr-2025; the **2024 Accounts** and this year's minutes will shortly be available on the **Members' Area** of the website. If you would prefer a copy on paper, email Brian Slater at secretary@greatwaraviation.org and he'll oblige.

2025 Membership Options

Members will have received their 2025 membership renewal form in each of the last two Journals of 2024. Many have rallied to the colours and already renewed for 2025; but not all. If you're still considering your options, can I suggest that 'now' would be an excellent time to resubscribe!

If you've been happily reading *Wind in the Wires* but haven't yet dipped your toes into Membership, why not just go for it and give it a try? It needn't cost much - starting at just £25 per year - really good value.



For 2025 you have much more choice than in previous years, with the option of receiving either the **Journal** or **Contact!** in print or digital formats. Or, if you wish, you can choose to receive **BOTH** publications as part of your membership - either in print, digital or a mix of the two. However, there's no need to change if you don't feel the urge. The **Journal** will continue as before, sailing serenely on

well beyond Volume 56.

All combinations are available; check which 2025 Membership option suits you best here: <https://greatwaraviation.org/product-category/membership/2025/>

‘Poor little Mole is dead’

In a moving story, a newly discovered letter reveals how 18-year-old Flt Lt **Mosley ‘Mole’ Woodhouse** sacrificed his life to save his older brother, Captain **Lionel Woodhouse**, during a dogfight over the Western Front. The *Daily Telegraph* article of 7 April 2025 explains that when Lionel’s aircraft came under attack on 9 August 1917, Sopwith Camel (B3870) pilot Mosley of 9 (Naval) Squadron RNAS bravely intervened, drawing enemy fire and ultimately being shot down by German ace Ltn Julius Buckler.

Lionel, only 20, later discovered the pilot who saved him was his younger brother and wrote a heart-wrenching letter to their father, describing the act and expressing his grief. Tragically, Lionel (59 Squadron RAF) was killed 13 months later on 27 September 1918 alongside his observer, Lt Peel, when RE8 F6011 was shot down.

Both brothers served with distinction, Lionel earning the Military Cross for aerial reconnaissance, and Mosley showing great courage in combat. A condolence letter is quoted from Air Chief Marshal Sir Christopher Courtney, praising Mosley’s heroic actions. The medals awarded to the brothers, including ‘Lio’s’ MC & DFC group and ‘Mole’s’ campaign group, along with the poignant account and other documents sold at **Spink’s Orders, Decorations and Medals** sale on 24 April 2025 for a total



hammer price of £23,000.

See <https://tinyurl.com/yckcutwu> (behind their paywall, alas) or head over to Spink's lot archive and search for 'Woodhouse' <https://tinyurl.com/49rynf86> for full details.

Further Spink Auction Highlights



Also sold at the 'Woodhouse' auction on 24 April 2025 was an important **Aero Club of America Aviation Medal of Merit**, artefacts and archive appertaining to Walter T Hinton, United States Navy,

who co-piloted Curtiss Flying Boat 'NC-4' in the first ever trans-Atlantic flight in May 1919, a pioneering achievement for which he was awarded the Navy Cross and later the Congressional Gold Medal. The lot hammered for £3,200.

<https://tinyurl.com/nkpwc2rr>

Other highlights of the sale included the M.I.D. medal group to Major **Arthur Thomas Whitelock**, which hammered at £850, and the £2,200 paid for a scarce Sergeant-Pilot's group of eight awarded to Sergeant **Frank Elliot Nash**. Whitelock took part in early air combat in BE2cs, and went on to command 7 Squadron. On 20 July 1918, 55 Squadron (Independent Force) pilot Nash and his observer shot down German ace Paul Felsmann before their own aircraft (DH 4 A7879) was attacked. Though wounded and his observer Sgt WE Baker killed, Nash crash-landed behind enemy lines and was taken prisoner. All picture credits to Spink!

More coverage 4 Sophie

There was an excellent edition of *Warbirds Workshop* broadcast on *More 4* on 5 May 2025. It caught the emotion of the long journey undertaken to build Scotland's only full-sized flying First



World War aircraft.

See <https://tinyurl.com/48z8mw3f> (you'll need to sign in or register to watch).

Also see the detailed article on **'Sophie' the Strutter** posted on *Vintage Aviation News* on 8 May 2025 <https://tinyurl.com/3xtaw7c4> or head to <https://www.apss.scot/> for the excellent *Aviation Preservation Society of Scotland* website and links to their 'socials'.

Bee-Wee's a Jolly Good Fellow



British West Indian Airways fondly known as 'Bee-Wee' was established on 27 November 1939, by **Lowell Manley Yerex**, noted the *Trinidad and Tobago Newsday* in the first part of a history of the airline posted on 27 March 2025. Yerex was born in New South Wales Australia on 24 July 1895, and attended university in Valparaiso, Indiana and graduated in 1916. During the First World War, he volunteered for the Royal Flying Corps and was shot down over France and spent four months in a German prisoner-of-war camp.

Intrigued by this brief reference, I dug a little further and found that Yerex joined the RFC in Canada in January 1918 and in June joined 210 Squadron in France, and was credited with three victories. He was shot down on 5 September 1918 (Sopwith Camel E4390) and captured. On his way to a POW Camp he escaped and was loose for three days before being recaptured. Upon release, he returned to the US and applied his skills to barnstorming and wing walking in a "flying circus" in California.

See <https://tinyurl.com/ye8byjb6> and also <https://tinyurl.com/bdhkbdj4>

News in Brief (1): Aces, Auctions and Aerial Artefacts

A rare Memorial Plaque (pictured) to 19 year old Lieutenant **Joseph Bertram Taylor** was sold by *C&T Auctioneers & Valuers* on 30 March 2025. The timed auction finished with a hammer price of £1,500. Taylor completed his training on 24 March 1918 joining 82 Squadron RFC and, just four days later, he was reported missing alongside Lieutenant Eric Betley in Armstrong Whitworth FK8 C8444 (erroneously listed as an RE8 by the auction house).



Taylor and Manchester-born Betley's FK8 is recorded as the 74th victory of Manfred von Richthofen. More at <https://tinyurl.com/nhavne32>

Flying Officer **George Hayward**, a First World War flying ace from Catford, has been honoured at RAF Digby, Lincolnshire, where he died in a 1924 training flight crash alongside Pilot Officer Charles Brealey. Hayward, with 24 confirmed enemy aircraft in just six months, later became an RAF flying instructor. A new museum display at RAF Digby now commemorates both men. See <https://tinyurl.com/4jdw62eh>

I noted that a fine example of a **Thornton Pickard Hythe Type III H Aerial Camera** sold for £4,200 on 16 April 2025 at *Flints Auctions*, Thatcham, Berkshire. The 1915-18 black model, serial 3451, came complete with sights, dummy magazine and original bi-pod.

Spruce Springsteen



The *Smithsonian's Air & Space Quarterly* piece by Mark Strauss posted on 20 March 2025 recounted an interesting story of an impeccable restoration of a **Lincoln-Standard HS** (Modified **Standard J-1** trainer). The aircraft was donated to the National Air and Space Museum, where structural repair efforts were led by specialist Jay

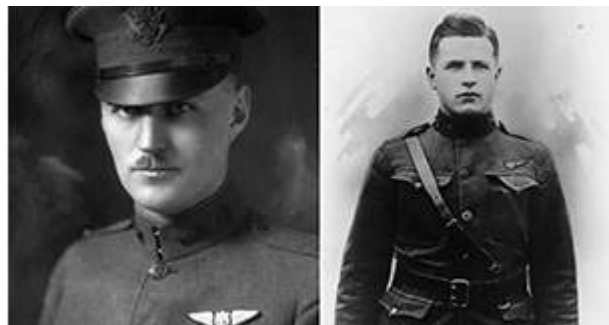
Flanagan. He used vintage woodworking tools, including a restored Stanley Number 5 hand-plane, to repair the damaged wings and rebuild the horizontal stabiliser. His careful craftsmanship and traditional methods echo the historical practices of the Army's Spruce Production Division.

This 'use of spruce' links nicely with another article in the Spring edition of the *Quarterly*, focusing in some detail of the acres of the versatile Sikta spruce used to jumpstart the US aviation industry as the country entered the First World War. The Allies had asked for 100 million board feet of lumber from the US. By the end of the war in November 1918, the Spruce Production Division had produced nearly 185 million board feet. This lumber was used in the manufacture of 16,952 airplanes.

Head to <https://tinyurl.com/2cs5eu7e> and <https://tinyurl.com/2s3zmmh6> for more

Finding the Lost Battalion

An article from *Military Times* by our own Jon Guttman on 2 April 2025 highlighted the heroic actions of two US Army Air Service pilots, 1Lt **Harold Goettler** and 2Lt **Erwin Bleckley**. In October 1918, during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the 77th Infantry Division's 308th Infantry



Regiment, led by Major Charles W Whittlesey, became isolated in the Argonne Forest, surrounded by German forces. This group of approximately 554 men became known as the '**Lost Battalion**'. Efforts to resupply them via aerial drops had

largely failed, with supplies often landing in enemy hands due to German deception tactics.

On 6 October 1918, Goettler and Bleckley volunteered to locate the Lost Battalion. Flying at low altitude, they drew enemy fire to pinpoint the battalion's position. Their aircraft was hit, and both men were wounded. Goettler died from his injuries, and Bleckley was thrown from the aircraft, also perishing. Despite their deaths, Bleckley's notes helped Allied forces accurately target German positions, aiding in the battalion's eventual rescue.

Both aviators were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for their bravery. For more detailed information, you can read the full article here:

<https://tinyurl.com/mrxrerc9>

Ashes of Aviation: The Loss of Old Sarum Hangar 3



A devastating fire engulfed Hangar 3 at **Old Sarum Airfield** in Wiltshire on 17 April 2025, destroying the Grade II* listed structure and an adjacent café. Built in 1917 by German prisoners of war and the Chinese Labour Corps, Hangar 3 was a rare surviving example of early aviation architecture. The blaze,

reported at 18:38, spread rapidly, leaving the building roofless and charred.

Firefighters battled the flames overnight, and while no injuries were reported, the hangar was lost.

The fire occurred just a week after a government inspector approved plans to build 315 homes and leisure facilities on the airfield site, a decision that had sparked local opposition. Community members and local officials expressed sorrow, emphasising the hangar's historical and communal significance. The airfield has been a site of historical importance, serving as a training depot during the First World War and playing roles in the Second World War and D-Day preparations.

There was significant national and local press coverage as well as a piece in the Nooks and Corners section of *Private Eye* for the third time in 18 months. See <https://tinyurl.com/4cej3d52> and <https://tinyurl.com/yke45ux9>. There is also a considered article on *Flyer.co.uk* here <https://tinyurl.com/53dk3ps9>

Please also follow our friends [@SaveOldSarum](#) on X for all the latest updates, comment and photographs of the damage. They are also in touch with Historic England.

News in Brief (2): LEGO, Lists and Little Gully

The *LEGO* website for adult builders and fans, *The Brothers Brick*, had a post on 23 March 2025 showcasing the work of LEGO builder Calin Bors. His designs are compact and efficient, distilling his vision into toy-like proportions. Calin's latest build is a fresh take on the **Sopwith Camel** and readers will note that it is actually a homage to 'IKANOPIT', the replica aircraft **D1851 X** owned and operated by the Shuttleworth Collection! The aircraft is painted with the markings of 70 Squadron, RAF.

See <https://tinyurl.com/mu8ech2d>



The technology news website *SlashGear* listed '11 of the most iconic ground attack planes in history' in a 24 April 2025 post. First World War contenders were interesting choices, namely the **Halberstadt CLII** and the **Sopwith Salamander**.

See <https://tinyurl.com/4a8bkpwz>

Little Gully Publishing posted on X on 13 March 2025 that '**Above and Beyond Palestine**' by C.E. Hughes (1930) was back in print. It is a valuable first-hand account of naval air operations in the Middle East during the First World War and

includes a new biographical afterword by the Society's Ian M Burns, who calls Hughes' memoir 'essential' for understanding naval aviation in the eastern theatres.

See <https://tinyurl.com/2wmfxm97>

A Zeppelin Onslaught for your ears!



As regular readers will know, I am a friend and advocate of 'First Blitz' historian **Ian Castle**, whose trilogy of books (Zeppelin Onslaught, Zeppelin Inferno and Gotha Terror) has been featured in *Wind in the Wires* and are highly recommended. Ian has been busy of late in collaboration with the excellent

'*WW1 - Not So Quiet On The Western Front*' podcast, hosted by **Dan Hill** and Dr **Spencer Jones**.

Ian was their guest for two episodes (73 and 74) in April 2025 '**Lighter Than Air: Airships in the Great War**'. The first part looks at the airship's initial introduction onto the world stage, employment by the military and use as an offensive weapon of war, and examines the impact they made both on the home and fighting fronts. The second part focuses on the Zeppelin campaign in the skies over Great Britain and how the air defences adapt to the threat, and what it was like to intercept and engage these gaseous monsters. See <https://not-so-quiet.com/en-gbp/> or from wherever you get your podcasts.

Ian and Dan have also released a complementary 25 minute documentary on **YouTube – The First Pilot to Shoot Down a Zeppelin – A WWI Air War Legend** – available here <https://tinyurl.com/bdcdnbzi>

Also episode 72 featured more on 'air power', as with the help of guest historian Dr **Victoria Taylor**, the team explored the life of the controversial German aviator **Hermann Goering**. This thought provoking podcast is also recommended.

Faith, Flyers and Firsts

On 17 February 1934, Australian aviator **Charles Ulm** completed the first airmail flight between New Zealand and Australia, proving the commercial potential of trans-Tasman air mail. He flew the Avro 618 Ten trimotor, 'Faith in Australia', carrying over 39,000 pieces of mail. A detailed article posted on 17 February 2025 on *Vintage Aviation News* explains all.



Born in 1898 in Melbourne, Ulm served in the First World War, initially under a false name due to his age and, post war, he pursued aviation, partnering with Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith. Together, they completed several pioneering flights, including the first Trans-Pacific flight and the first flight across the Tasman Sea in 1928. They co-founded Australian National Airways (ANA), which ultimately collapsed during the Great Depression. In 1933, Ulm attempted a round-the-world flight, which ended prematurely in Ireland. Later in the year, he set a new England–Australia speed record and made the first East-to-West Tasman crossing with passengers, including the first women to cross the Tasman by air. Ulm founded Great Pacific Airways aiming for a San Francisco–Sydney route.

On 3 December 1934, Ulm and two crew members disappeared over the Pacific; they were never found. See <https://tinyurl.com/bdcnvy9u>

Rediscovered and Returned



In September 2025, the **National Military Museum in Soesterberg** will welcome a remarkable piece of aviation history, an original Fokker D.VII fighter aircraft, reported *Vintage Aviation News* on 25 March 2025. Designed during the First World War and later serving with the Dutch Fleet Air Arm, this aircraft will be on loan from the Deutsches Museum in Munich. Its journey back to the Netherlands marks a significant moment in aviation heritage, shedding light on a long-lost chapter of Dutch military history.

The Fokker was discovered in 1945 by the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives unit (better known as the 'Monuments Men'). It was not until a 1980 restoration that the aircraft's Dutch markings, including roundels and a registration number, were uncovered. Over the past two years, researchers from both museums have worked closely to trace the aircraft's missing history. While its presence in the Netherlands until May 1940 is well-documented, what happened between its removal during the war and its discovery in 1945 remains a mystery.

More at <https://tinyurl.com/mrx6ukf>

Pluschow's Perilous Path from Prisoner to Pioneer

There was an enjoyable post on *ExplorersWeb* on 8 March 2025 all about

Gunther Pluschow. He led an extraordinary life shaped by war, wanderlust, and an unrelenting spirit of adventure. A German aviator born in 1886, Pluschow became a First World War legend known as '**The Aviator of Tsingtau**,' famed for escaping from a British POW camp (see *WitW 46*). His wartime feats included shooting down a Japanese aircraft with a pistol (see *WitW 31*) and an audacious escape from China to Germany via the US, all while evading Allied forces.



In the late 1920s, Pluschow travelled to South America with engineer Ernst Dreblow, and a Heinkel HD 24 D-1313 seaplane. He became the first person to survey Patagonia by air and his flights documented dramatic landscapes, aiding regional mapping efforts and producing a documentary, *Silver Condor over Tierra del Fuego*. Tragically, Pluschow and Dreblow died in a 1931 crash on Lake Argentino but his legacy endures in Argentina and among aviation pioneers.

See <https://tinyurl.com/3n5dj9me>

News in Brief (3): High Hopes and Low Altitude Bombing



Posting on his X account recently, Mark Piesing was 'stunned' to be a finalist for the **Aerospace Media Awards**. The **Secret History of Drones** is up for a gong and Mark's excellent article on early drone technology for the Smithsonian was mentioned in *WitW 51*. It is still available to read at

<https://tinyurl.com/5ckzhzvm>

Head over to the *Daily Kos* article on 21 February 2025 for a photo diary featuring the **Pearson Air Museum** at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Washington. One of the aircraft exhibited is the **DH-4 Liberty** and there numerous pictures for you to enjoy, as well as links to other photo diaries. See <https://tinyurl.com/58h96kkf>

On 2 April 2025, the *Gedling Eye* posted a good summary of the **Zeppelin** raids that took place in the early hours of 25 September 1916 on the **Nottingham** districts of Mapperley and Netherfield. A local schoolboy witnessed the bombing on that night and wrote about the incident in a letter that was then placed in a school time capsule. More at <https://tinyurl.com/36w52zwp>

Finally, I would also mention a post on the *From Balloons to Drones* website, a 'scholarly webzine that seeks to analyse and debate air power history, theory and

current operations'. The extensive profile on the US Army's First World War aircraft production certainly hit the brief in some 3,000 words (and that's just part one!).

You can read it here: <https://tinyurl.com/2f48cd75>



Written by David Marks, edited by Andy Kemp



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