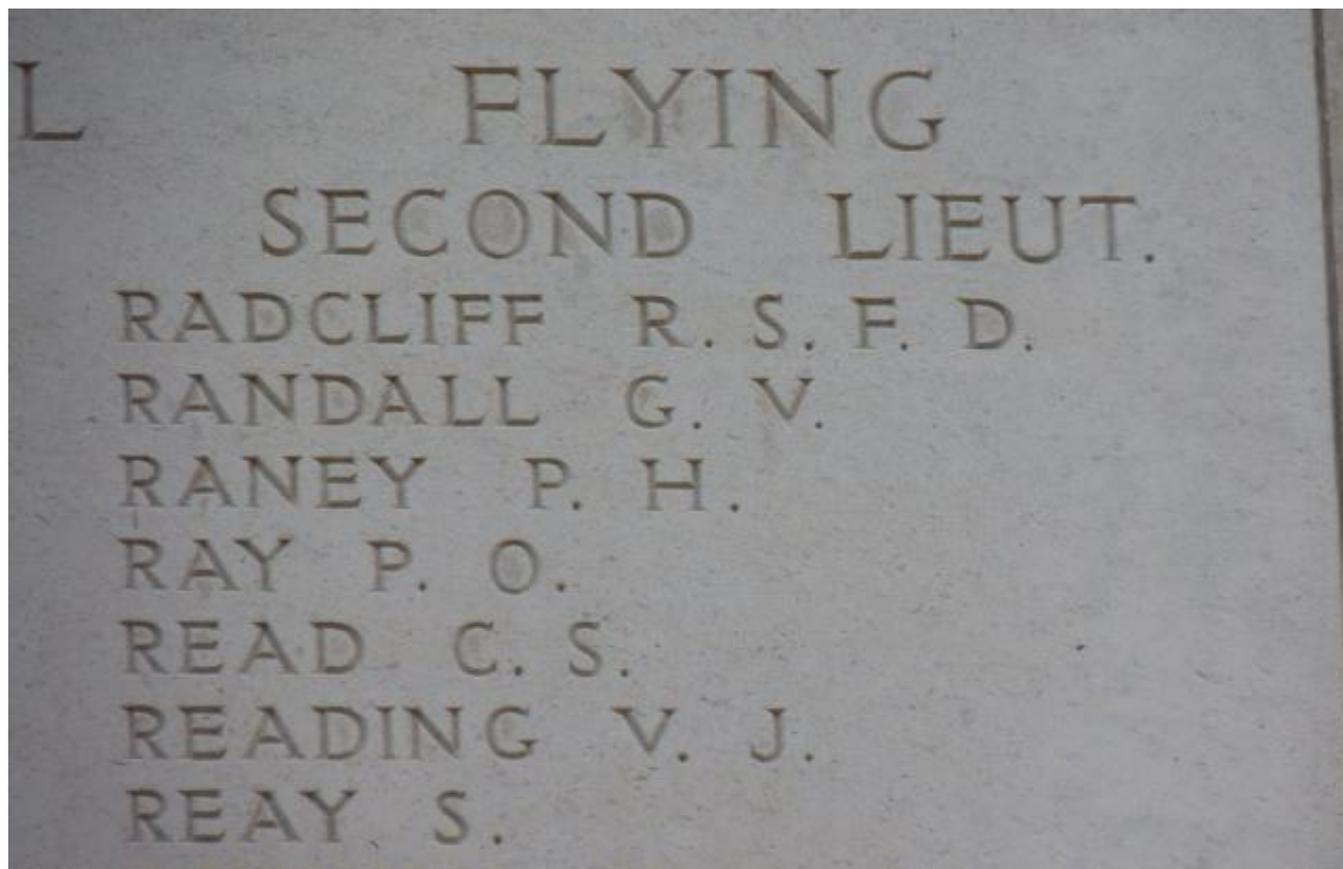


## GEOFFREY VICTOR RANDALL (1908-09)

<b>Date of Birth</b>	16 June 1897
<b>School Information</b>	Brother of <b>Cecil James Randall MC (1908-09)</b> .
<b>Career Information</b>	None
<b>Date Of Death</b>	20 July 1916
<b>Cause of Death</b>	Killed in action in the air
<b>Location</b>	Near Contalmaison, a short way north-east of Albert
<b>Cemetery</b>	Faubourg D'Amiens, Flying Service Memorial, Arras, France
<b>Rank</b>	Second Lieutenant
<b>Branch of Service</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> Squadron and East Lancashire Regiment, Royal Flying Corps

In October 2014 there was an OF visit to his grave





# Arras Flying Services Memorial



In the early courtyard of the Arras Memorial is the Memorial to the Flying Services, which commemorates by name almost 1,000 Commonwealth airmen of the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service, and the Royal Air Force, who died in the Western Front and here to become ground-crews. From several Commonwealth countries and representing many nations, they took to the air in all manner of machines, from balloons to balloons, reconnaissance aircraft, and bomber fighters. The memorial was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, and unveiled by Sir William Airey Dix, and was unveiled by Lord Hugh Fitzmaurice, Master of the Royal Air Force, on 31 July 1932.



## The Air War on the Western Front

History lessons read in an alley in the courtyard of war. The Royal Air Force, the Royal Flying Corps in 1912, and the Royal Naval Air Service in 1914, with aircraft that were available, expensive and fragile, in the earliest battle air war. This was a tactical reconnaissance, but as the tactical use of the Western Front was formed, observation for artillery became crucial. Tactical balloons were used to observe the enemy's positions and observers in balloons reported back through rudimentary radio and, before the advent of the ground. The development of aerial photography provided a vital view of enemy lines from above.

Memorials to the air war were erected in the courtyard of the Arras Memorial, and were begun in 1932.

and watch their progress, with aerial machine guns and 7500 bombs. In the summer of 1915, the German machine-gunners had to find a fresh design, existing from 1914, was too slow to fire through an aircraft's propellers, introducing with the term of the 'Fokker scourge' in early 1916, and Allied technology overtook the Germans.

During the Western offensive, Commonwealth pilots sought to fight just one day, and made many losses in the trenches, and more than 80 of those commemorated on this

memorial were lost between July and November 1918, in the spring of 1917. During the Battle of Arras, with significant and successful losses between German fighter groups, British air forces could finally penetrate among the enemy pilots, who had hitherto been the greatest fear. Nearly 50 of those named on this memorial were killed at Arras itself, and more than 100 over the course of the year. Eventually, advances in design and industrial production created new aircraft, including the S.E.5a, the Duxford Camel, and the Fokker D.VIII, which helped to give Commonwealth pilots a tactical and technological advantage over their German counterparts.

In April 1918, the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service merged to create a new Royal Air Force. By this time, the battle in the air was being fought increasingly by advanced aeroplanes operating in large formations, and the RAF eventually grew to over 4,000 aircraft in 1918, and over 100,000 personnel. Although their primary role throughout the war was to support ground forces, pilots on both sides increasingly used tactics and weapons to attack supply lines, industrial facilities, and civilians. The majority of those named on this memorial—more than 300 names—were a loss in the final year of the conflict, and the heaviest losses of a single month occurred here in September 1918, when more than 70 airmen were missing.

Fighter units were put to rest in proportion to the length of the war that they were typically and psychologically demanding, and

Some of the largest aerial sites had been constructed. Flying was among the most dangerous forms of service, and half of all Commonwealth pilots had become casualties by the war's end.



A photograph of a biplane on the ground, with several people standing nearby.

Aerial view of a biplane on the ground, with several people standing nearby.

A photograph of a biplane on the ground, with several people standing nearby.

A photograph of a biplane on the ground, with several people standing nearby.

## Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commission is responsible for the commemoration of about 1,700,000 members of the Commonwealth forces who gave their lives in the two world wars. The graves and memorials of those men and women who came from all parts of the Commonwealth and other areas of many lands and of some 150 countries. For more information about the Commission, our work and how to visit our website, please visit [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org). You may also write to our office: CWGC Head Office, 1st Floor, 44, Victoria Road, London SW1A 1HQ, UK. Email: [enquiries@cwgc.org](mailto:enquiries@cwgc.org). CWGC Press Office: Tel: +44 (0) 20 7736 1111. Fax: +44 (0) 20 7736 1111.

For more information about the memorial and more of those commemorated here, visit the CWGC website.



A great nephew of his (Chris Randall) has managed to find the following announcement in "Flight" on 11 August 1916, which gives more information on his death :-

*"A fortnight before he was killed, he and his observer were attacked by four hostile machines. Lieut. Randall brought one enemy machine down, and kept the other three at a distance until he reached the British lines. Later he was attacked by eight hostile machines, shot through the head, and killed instantly. His observer climbed into the pilot's seat, and managed to get hold of the controls, when he was rendered unconscious by a shot. The aeroplane circled and grounded 400 yards from our front trenches. The observer was rescued by a padre and a sergeant under heavy fire. Lieut. Randall's squadron-commander writes :—" I am very cut up, and so is the whole squadron at losing him. . . . Twice lately I have brought his name before the proper authorities for brave and useful work and only a few days ago I was ordered to convey to him the personal congratulations of the G.O.C., R.F.C., in the field." And again in another letter :—" He was overwhelmed with eight hostile machines, but all accounts agree that he went straight into the middle of them, and he would never have cared if it had been 18 instead of eight."*

There was a further report in RFC Communique number 44: *"On the IIIrd Army front there was no activity, but on the front of the Reserve Army hostile patrols were more active and came down the line. A machine of 4 Sqn, 2nd Lt Randall and 2nd Lt Angier, was brought down, the pilot being killed."*

He and 2nd Lt G M Ainger were in BE2e 2481 when they were shot down, near Contalmaison, a short way north-east of Albert.

The photo below shows his Royal Aero Club's record of him passing his flying qualifications on 13th Oct 1915.

