

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

SOPWITH PUP N5182/G-APUP/9213M
MUSEUM ACCESSION No.82/A/1067

Built by Sopwith Aviation Co at Kingston upon Thames, but delivered from Brooklands. One of a batch of 20 aircraft ordered under contractors number C.P.119901/16, serials N5180 to N5199, with 80 HP Le Rhone rotary engine. One of a total of 64 Pups built in 1916.

- | | | | |
|----|-----|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 05 | Sep | 16 | Delivered to Chingford. |
| 06 | Sep | 16 | ADD (Aeroplane Depot Dunkerque-St Pol) (via Dover). Allocated to RFC (Military Wing) as A8736 at Dunkirk (Dunkerque) but not taken up. |
| 07 | Sep | 16 | To C Sqn, No.1 Wing RNAS (which later became No.3 [Naval] Squadron RNAS) at Dunkirk.

Much of its operational history is recorded in the `war log Sopwith Pup N5182' - two copies held in DoRIS Ref.B2013/2014. This 'log is made up from log book entries of two pilots from N5182s service with No.8 (Naval) Squadron RNAS, 1916/17 – US- born Canadian Flight Sub-Lt Edward Rochfort Grange and Robert Alexander Little. R A Littles' logbook is also held in copy form by DoRIS Ref.MF10001/8-9. |
| 08 | Sep | 16 | First recorded flight of N5182 - 2 hours 25 minutes, piloted by the Canadian Flight Lieutenant (later Captain) E R Grange, DSC. This was escorting Sopwith 1½ Strutters on a reconnaissance flight over the Ostend area. |
| 09 | Sep | 16 | Pilot - Grange. One hour fighting patrol - quite a lot of anti-aircraft fire noted. |
| 12 | Sep | 16 | Pilot Grange (as with all other flights). Fighting patrol to La Panne. |
| 22 | Sep | 16 | Two flights - Nieuport and Ostend areas - Fighting Patrols. |
| 23 | Sep | 16 | Two flights - La Panne and Nieuport areas. |
| 24 | Sep | 16 | Three flights - 1 hour, 15 minutes and 5 minutes, the longest being to Ostend. |
| 25 | Sep | 16 | One hour flight escorting reconnaissance aircraft. Attacked enemy machine, which broke in two over the sea after his attack, - a two-seater Sablatnig SF 2 seaplane of <i>Seeflugstaffel 1</i> , painted white. |

This was only the second confirmed Pup victory; the remains were picked up by the Royal Navy and the French awarded Grange the *Croix de Guerre*.

The remains fell into the sea - the pilot could not identify the aircraft type, which was actually Sablatnig SF2 No.609, seeflug 1 -the crew, Lt Z S Soltenborn and Lt Z S Rothig being killed in the crash in the sea 6m off Ostende.

- | | | | |
|----|-----|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 26 | Sep | 16 | Two flights - short test flight and trip to La Panne. |
| 27 | Sep | 16 | Flight to Ostend. |
| 28 | Sep | 16 | Flight to Ostend. Up to now, all these flights had been from Dunkirk (St Pol) airfield, presumably with the Dover Defence flight. |
| 25 | Oct | 16 | No.8 (Naval) Squadron RNAS formed at St Pol – ('Naval 8') moved closer to the Somme front at Vert Galand the next day (26 Oct). This ties in nicely with N5182's recorded movements, still piloted by Grange. |
| 26 | Oct | 16 | The move of No.8 Squadron was intended to support the RFC in the Somme area. N5182 took off from Dunkirk heading for Amiens, but the engine died and a landing was made at Bertangles. Grange and N5182 were now part of No.8 (Naval) Squadron RNAS, as of this date, initially as part of a detached flight. |
| 31 | Oct | 16 | Reached new base at Vert Galand from Bertangles - perhaps the engine repairs took a few days. |
| 01 | Nov | 16 | Short local flight. |
| 03 | Nov | 16 | 8 Sqn began operations from Vert Galand. |
| 04 | Nov | 16 | Formation flying and air test of new engine - to 3,500 feet in 5 minutes, 3 loops on way down. |
| 06 | Nov | 16 | Further Air Test. |
| 09 | Nov | 16 | 50 minute patrol. |
| 10 | Nov | 16 | 'Patrol 2 scraps'. Hit by enemy fire and struts damaged. Further combat same day with a 2-seater Rolland, involving a steep dive where the Pups' Airspeed indicator stopped registering! A further combat that day involved another Rolland - Grange hitting the observer with his fire, but was out-dived by the German aircraft. |

These are apparently Granges' last flights in N5182, which was presumably out of service for repair. It re-appears in the pages of the log book of the Australian ace pilot Robert Alexander 'Rick/Riki' Little, DSO and bar, DFC and bar, Croix de Guerre with Star, born in Melbourne, who also served with No.8 (Naval) Squadron and opened his score-sheet on N5182. He was a Flight Sub Lieutenant, later Captain. (b)

July 1895, d. 27 May 1918)

- 14 Nov 16 Littles' first flight in N5182. His logbook records 'Sopwith Scout No.5182 'Lady Maud' allocated to me' - so presumably repairs were complete by this time. His first flight was a patrol.
- 16 Nov 16 Two further patrol flights, plus a further patrol when Little and a colleague chased off two German aircraft attacking a Caudron.
- 17 Nov 16 More offensive patrols, attacking three German aircraft during one patrol, being attacked himself by six other German aircraft who attacked Littles' patrol, Little managing to escape.
- 22 Nov 16 A further patrol, in misty conditions.
- 23 Nov 16 Further patrol - attacked on L.V.G. aircraft, but then counter-attacked by two German scout aircraft, Little breaking off the engagement, but encountered - and attacked - another enemy aircraft later NE of Bapaume, firing continuously from a range of 150 yards to 75 yards, which caught fire having been hit by tracer bullets, and hit the ground, still burning, close to a small wood north of Courcelette, near Etrincourt. It was a two-seater reconnaissance aircraft, possibly a C-Type, possibly from unit *Flieger Abteilung (Artillerie) - FA (A) 221*; both crew were killed.
- 27 Nov 16 Offensive patrol - formation broken up by heavy AA shelling.
- 04 Dec 16 Escort to bombing raid - attacked enemy aircraft but gun jammed after firing one round - chased by enemy plane as Little struggled to clear his jammed gun - he eventually landed in a field close to the trenches to clear the stoppage. Later attacked an enemy scout plane and forced it to land SE of Bapaume, this being a Halderstadt DII.
- 11 Dec 16 Escort to bombing raid - compass froze up - had to use a pocket compass. Made a forced landing at a small village - the Pup was dismantled and removed by road the next day.
- 20 Dec 16 Escort to bombing raid. Attacked a German 2-seater aircraft, which evaded him, then attacked a second German 2-seater, killing or wounding the observer at 25 yards range. The aircraft then nose-dived, but Little could not watch its descent over Fontaine since he was attacked by three aircraft, which he shook off. He made a second offensive patrol the same day, in Pup N5193. The nose-diving aircraft was an Albatross D11.
- 24 Dec 16 Offensive patrol - very cloudy - nothing to report.
- 26 Dec 16 Lost his formation due to thick cloud, but saw and attacked two German aircraft, which escaped in cloud. Sighted a hostile formation but attacked by German scouts before he could attack it, but evaded them.

His compass stuck and he had to navigate by pocket compass.

- 28 Dec 16 Escorting FE2b aircraft - formation attacked by 8 enemy aircraft -he attacked one German scout aircraft, narrowly avoiding colliding with it in a head-on attack. He then rejoined the main formation.
- 15 Jan 17 Again flying N5182 after a period flying other Pups, for an air test on this occasion.
- 23 Jan 17 Practice flights, and offensive patrol - nothing to report.
- 24 Jan 17 Littles' last recorded flight in N5182 - a 1 hour 50 minute offensive patrol - nothing to report. When flying this Pup, Little apparently flew streamers from the wings in the colours (cardinal red, blue and gold) of his college - Scotch College, Victoria. He was the 8th highest scoring British pilot of WW1 with 47 confirmed victories eventually - Australia's highest-scoring ace. He is buried in Wavans British Cemetery, France.
His medals – DSO and Bar and DSC and Bar - and two of his three logbooks were presented to Australian War Memorial, Canberra in 1978 by the son of his widow, who had re-married; in 2013 a Gladstone bag was found on a Queensland, Australia tip containing personal clothing and his flying helmet with gold sovereign sewn into it with photo of his infant son, circa 1917/18, and passed to the Australian Fleet Air Arm Museum at Nowra.
- 03 Feb 17 N5182 and other Pups transferred to No.3 (Naval) Squadron RNAS at Dunkirk (St Pol) - transfer influenced by the impending conversion of 8 Squadron to Sopwith Triplanes (March 1917) - 8 Squadron actually returned to St Pol Feb 1917 to rest and prepare for the conversion.
No.3 Squadron flew Pups only from February to July 1917, then replaced them with Camels. Its Pups were involved in heavy fighting in the build up to the battle of Arras, March-April 1917, supplementing RFC units in the Somme Area together with `Naval 8' Squadron, flying from Vert Galand and other Somme area bases, although St Cyrien records that after only 3 flights with Naval 3, N5182 was considered no longer useful and returned to Dunkirk - see below.
- 10 Feb 17 ADD (Aeroplane Depot Dunkerque)
- 27 Feb 17 Approx. 16 Mar 17. 9 Sqn RNAS, St Pol. This unit was formed 1 Feb 17 from a nucleus of `Naval Eight'
- 22 Mar 17 ADD by this date (repair).
- 28 Mar 17 Approx. 30 Apr 17; Dover.
- May 17 To Walmer Defence Flight by this date.

- 23 May 17 Flew two Anti-Zeppelin patrols.
- 25 May 17 Flew anti-Gotha bomber patrol - from Feb 17 to this date apparently flown by Flight Lieutenant W H Chisam.
- 05 Jun- Sep 17 Dover Defence Flight. Flew anti-Gotha patrol 5 Jun.
- 06 Jul 17 Wings, Propeller and undercarriage damaged.
- 04 Aug 17 Recorded as deleted from effective list by RNAS whilst at Dunkirk, but apparently retained in stock.
- 11 Aug 17 Badly damaged, Walmer.
- 20 Oct 17 War Flight/School Manston.
- 23 Feb 18 Deleted from stock - one of the last survivors of its batch, the last few being deleted the following month.

Somehow - it is not known how - the aircraft seems to have survived and was retained in France - for what purpose is not recorded.

c.1959 Following up a lead, the remains of the aircraft were discovered by Lieut.-Commander K C D (Desmond) St Cyrien MBE (retired). Its remains were kept as part of the Musée de l'Air's reserve collection in an old airship hangar. As found, the aircraft consisted of a heap of parts, including fuselage and wings, with its 80 HP Le Rhone engine and remains of the propeller attached - but lacked machine gun, undercarriage and instruments, though it retained a brass plate on the engine marked 'N5182', the serial being repeated on remains of the fabric at the rear of the aircraft, the wings and fuselage still being present. At the time the engine belonged to the museum but the airframe belonged to the French Air Force. St Cyrien got the engine released and informal permission to take the Pup to England - a piece at a time - over several years, with the engine flown to England by the French Air Force.

13 Feb 59 Registration G-APUP issued, as a replica aircraft, changing to Sopwith Pup (original) 7 May 1973.

St Cyrien had started in 1958 by beginning the construction of a replica Pup at Luton, and later Horley, with some components of B5292, reserving the registration G-APUP for this project, and retaining it for the N5182 rebuild. The replica components went to Canada and the USA according to St. Cyrien.

The rebuild took some 13 years. St Cyrien was given some instruments and parts from the original Pup prototype by Mr Ron Shelley. Much of the original ash in the longerons and wing spars was replaced.

The engine was rebuilt by the Royal Aircraft Establishment, the Carburettor came from Brussels Museum, the BTH Magneto from Finland and a pair of Pup wheels were found fitted to a handcart in Lincoln - they were rebuilt using original hubs and bearings. A Vickers Mk.1 machine gun came from the Vickers Museum at Weybridge and the Lang propeller from Birmingham Science Museum.

The completed aircraft is supposedly 60-70% original, or at least contemporary, components. In 1973 it was accepted by the CAA as genuine only after they received a letter from Sir Thomas Sopwith to this effect. Given constructor's number PFA/1582.

- 11 Aug 73 Following taxiing trials by St Cyrien, test flown by British Aerobatic Champion the late Neil Williams. First flight - 15 minutes - from Fair Oaks airport where the later stages of restoration were carried out. Photo immediately after first flight; Fair Oaks Airport (Jones) p.241.
- Flight-testing was carried out over several months from Fair Oaks. Photo flying at this time - Aeroplane Monthly April 1974 and Sport Aviation May 1975 pp. 5-56. Carried the name 'Sheila'
- 1974 Moved to Blackbushe, Surrey, suffering a forced landing during the delivery flight, fortunately with no damage - flown out the next day.
- 27 Mar 74 Certificate of Airworthiness issued.
- 17-19 May 74 Appeared at Biggin Hill Air Fair. Later that year - flown at Old Warden with Shuttleworth Dove/Pup 'N5180'. See photo Aeroplane Monthly Jul 75 p.377 of the two Pups flying together 30 Jun 74.
- 23 Oct 76 Flown by Neil Williams for 25 minutes at RAF Honington for the commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee of 8 Squadron RNAS, now 208 Squadron RAF. This brought the post-restoration flying hours to 10 hours 45 minutes. The aircraft was moved to Honington in a dismantled state.
- 1977-78 Apparently not flown. Suffered accident in 1978.
- 28 Jun 78 CoA Expired - withdrawn from use at Blackbushe.
- June 1979 Sold to Doug Arnold at Blackbushe, being registered to him 7th June 1969.
- October 1980 Recorded as still airworthy by PFA.
- Jun 82 Acquired by RAFM from Doug Arnold in exchange for Spitfire LF16e RW386, becoming MOD property.
- 12 Aug 82 Moved from Blackbushe to Hendon by team from RAF Abingdon. On display in WW1 section ever since.
- 4 Oct 84 Registration cancelled by CAA.

- | | | |
|-----|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 31 | Aug 93 | Allotted RAF Maintenance serial 9213M. |
| 4-8 | Mar 96 | Loaned to Australia House for celebration of 75th Anniversary of RAAF (held on 7 March 1996). |
| 3 | Aug 98 | One of a number of aircraft donated to the RAFM by the MoD. |
| 18 | Mar 03 | Moved to newly relocated Grahame White Factory building for further display from December 2003. |

Mr. St Cyrien later restored a second largely original Pup, acquired in the 1960s after 40 years storage in Lincoln, flown in 1985 and latterly on loan to the Museum of Army Flying at Middle Wallop, registered as N5195/G-ABOX. It was originally acquired as a spares source for N5182 but was stored unused.

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON