

In Memory of

Lieutenant

Roland Henry Peck

Mentioned in Despatches

30 Sqdn., Royal Flying Corps who died on 05 March 1916 Age 24

Son of William George Peck, of The Limes, Ashton Rd. Moordown, Bournemouth.

Remembered with Honour

Basra Memorial



The notes below were written by Jenny Young, who has carried out much research into the fate of all the Moordown men who served and died in the Great War:

Lieutenant Roland Peck was an observer and then a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps.

Thetford born Peck was one of five children. After the family moved to Pokesdown, he attended Bournemouth School, then in Portchester Road. He was one of the first old boys of Bournemouth School to obtain a commission to 5th Dorset Regiment.

2nd Lieutenant Peck then joined No.7 Squadron RFC at St Omer, France in February 1915 as an observer.

St Omer was the arrival point for deploying the RFC. The squadron's mess was a life far removed from the trenches, where pilots enjoyed hot water, leisurely breakfasts, London newspapers and tennis!

At the end of July, Peck, who was acting as an observer for Captain John Aidan Liddell on a four-hour reconnaissance flight around Ostend and Bruges, narrowly escaped death when their RE5 aircraft came under heavy enemy fire.....

The pilot lost consciousness after sustaining a broken leg and the badly damaged plane nose dived out of control. Peck, who had earlier unstrapped himself to load his Lewis machine gun, was in danger of falling out, but managed to cling on, as his rifle, ammunition, and other items tumbled out of the plane. Luckily, Captain Liddell regained consciousness and despite his wounds managed to land the RE5 on a friendly airfield at La Panne in Belgium.

The extraordinary incident appeared in the Daily Mirror. Sadly Liddell died after his leg was amputated a month later. He was awarded the VC for his bravery. Peck was later Mentioned in Despatches for his services at St Omer.

Three months later Peck qualified as a pilot at the Central Flying School in Upavon, Wiltshire. He joined the 30 Squadron RFC in the Middle East supporting the IEF and in particular supporting the Mesopotamia Campaign.

During the siege of Kut-al-Amara, between December 1915 and April 1916, he was involved in dropping supplies, such as spares for radios, and also did vital reconnaissance work. Food supplies became critically low and to maintain the hold 5000lbs were required, and so the World's First Air Supply Operation began.

Peck was undertaking reconnaissance work when he was shot down over the Tigris by a German aircraft supporting the Turks. Peck and another officer were killed instantly. He was 24 years old. His medals - the Victory Medal, 1914-15 Star, and the British Medal - were sent to his father in Moordown.

Lieutenant Roland Henry Peck is remembered on the Basra Memorial in Iraq. He is one of 9,378 men of the RFC, RNAS and RAF killed or missing in World War One.