

Captain Lenox Stanley Arbuthnot



DoB: 19th January 1896

Died: 1st November 1918

Age: 22

Buried: Wolvercote Cemetery

Family:

Born in Kingston to Captain Ret'd (later a Major in the Suffolk Regt and then a Lt Colonel in the Labour Corps in WW1) Lenox Conyngham and Mabel Arbuthnot. I older sibling. Family spent some time in County Mayo, Ireland with several servants. Lenox was an apprentice in the tea and rubber trade prior to enlisting in 1914. Home address was Hyde Park London.

Military Career:

Enlisted as a private in the Royal Fusiliers on 7th October 1914 age 19 and then commissioned to 2nd Lt on 9th January 1915. Transferred to the RFC in 1916 and attended the No.1 School of Military Aeronautics in Reading from May to July 1916. He was awarded his flying certificate on 29th September 1916, and promoted to Lt. He then served with 6 different squadrons over the next year including service in France with 3 Squadron from 28th October 1916 to 5th June 1917. He qualified as a Class II Instructor at the Gosport School of Special Flying, one of the most respected schools training instructors, flying 39 different aircraft types. Lenox attended the School of Wireless Telephony from 12th May 1918, promoted to Acting Captain on 15th August and then joined the 21st Wing WT (Wireless Telephony) Flight from 11th October, based at Port Meadow, as a "special Instructor" with significant flying experience.

Accident:

Wolvercote. Lenox undertook an unauthorised low flying "stunting" display, piloting Bristol Fighter C4774 (pictured above). The undercarriage struck the ground hard coming out of a dive, breaking off a wheel and causing the aircraft to veer towards and hit a building, ripping off part of a wing before climbing to 100 ft and then diving into ground.

The accident was witnessed by the Wing Examining Officer, Capt Geoffrey Hughes MC, and recorded in his diary: "...two Bristols [Fighters] stunting wildly round the hangars & [I] narrowly missed a collision with one of them. Then for ten minutes saw the worst and most nerve wracking bit of flying I've ever seen as one Bristol dived at people on the aerodrome. Finally an awful crash ended the career of the Pilot & passenger".