

APPENDIX No. 7.

AEROPLANE COUNTER-ATTACKS ON THE GERMAN ARMY, MARCH, 1918.

To assist the reader's mental picture of the dangers risked and the damage wrought in the low-flying aeroplane attacks on the enemy's ground forces during the March offensive, it is worth while to quote some detail of No. 4 Squadron's performances from the pilots' own reports as made at the aerodrome on their return from each attack. The following extract from the squadron record-book describes part of the day's work of March 26th:—

"Lieutenant Schafer: Dropped two 25-lb. bombs on road running from Bapaume to Ervillers from 2,000 feet (8.30 a.m.). Was attacked by Albatros scout and two triplanes, which drove me practically on to the ground and damaged my machine. Fired 250 rounds on Bapaume-Albert road at troops and transport from about fifteen feet.

"Lieutenant F. J. Scott: Dropped two bombs, one on village of Gommecourt and one on village of Achiet-le-Grand from 1,000 feet (11.25 a.m.). Fired 600 rounds at troops and transport on road Bihucourt-Sapignies from 800 feet. Observed number fall and remainder seek cover. Bomb dropped on Gommecourt exploded amongst vehicles and guns.

"Lieutenant Barry: Dropped two bombs on 'flaming-onion' battery on Cambrai-Bapaume road from 3,000 feet (8.45 a.m.). Fired 450 rounds at troops in village of Velu from 1,000 feet.

"Captain Malley: Dropped one bomb on motor-transport and troops on road Bapaume-Ervillers (8.30 a.m.) from 2,000 feet. Observed fire start. Was attacked by Albatros scout and two triplanes, which drove me practically on to the ground and damaged my machine. Fired about 400 rounds at troops in fields and in trenches north-west of Bapaume from about 15 feet. Saw many fall apparently hit and the remainder scatter in all directions.

"Lieutenant Trescowthick: Dropped one bomb on troops on Bullecourt-Ecoust road from 1,500 feet (11.30 a.m.). Dropped one bomb on Ecoust from 1,500 feet (11.35 a.m.). Fired 400 rounds at troops on Bullecourt-Ecoust road from 1,000 feet.

"Lieutenant Elwyn: Dropped two bombs on troops and transport on St. Leger-Vaulx road from 1,500 feet (11.30 a.m.). Observed one bomb explode among troops. Fired 350 rounds at troops and transport on St. Leger-Vaulx road from 1,000 feet.

"Lieutenant Courtney: Dropped two bombs on park of transport at Achiet-le-Grand (11.20 a.m.) from 1,500 feet. Observed one of these bombs get a direct hit among this transport. Fired 350 rounds at troops and transport at Achiet-le-Grand from 1,000 feet. Shooting caused troops to scatter and seek cover.

"Lieutenant A. W. Adams: Dropped one bomb on park of transport and one bomb on village of Villers-au-Flos from 1,500 feet (11.20 a.m.). Fired 450 rounds at troops at Achiet-le-Grand from 1,000 feet. Caused many casualties, and the remainder dived for cover.

"Lieutenant Watson: Dropped two bombs from 1,000 feet (11.30 a.m.) on billets at Achiet-le-Grand. Fired 500 rounds at troops and transport in Achiet-le-Grand from 600 feet. Observed a number of casualties and remainder scatter for cover.

"Lieutenant Cobby: Dropped two bombs on column of troops on Bullecourt-Ecoust road from 1,500 feet (11.30 a.m.). One bomb exploded among this column, causing numerous casualties. Fired 400 rounds into the troops from 1,200 feet.

"Captain W. B. Tunbridge: Dropped one bomb on troops and transport at Bihucourt and obtained direct hit. Dropped one Cooper-bomb on transport and troops at Vaultx and obtained another direct hit. Fired 200 rounds into troops and transport at Bihucourt from 800 feet and 200 rounds at troops and transport at Vaultx from 800 feet. Shooting caused many casualties and column to break and seek cover.

"Lieutenant A. E. Robertson: Dropped two bombs on Bullecourt (11.25 a.m.) from 1,000 feet. Observed both bombs explode. Fired 500 rounds at column of troops on Bullecourt-Ecoust road from 1,500 feet. Saw a number fall and the remainder scatter in all directions.

"Lieutenant J. W. Wright: Dropped two bombs on troops and transport at Bihucourt from 1,500 feet (11.30 a.m.). Fired 200 rounds into troops and transport at Bihucourt from 1,000 feet. Fired 200 rounds at troops and transport on road at Vaultx from 1,000 feet.

"Lieutenant Schafer: Dropped two bombs on troops on side of road Miraumont-Pys from 1,500 feet (12.30 p.m.). Fired 600 rounds at troops and transport collected on same road from 1,000 to 800 feet.

"Captain Malley: Dropped two bombs on troops on side of road Miraumont-Pys from 1,500 feet (12.30 p.m.). Fired 500 rounds at troops and moving vehicles on road from about 800 feet.

"Lieutenant Wright: Dropped two bombs on infantry on road N.E. of Bapaume from 200 feet (3.20 p.m.). Fired 500 rounds into the same infantry from 200 feet. Was hit in back with a bullet passing through petrol tank, so switched on to gravity-tank and came back to aerodrome.

"Lieutenant Trescowthick: Dropped two bombs on troops and transport on Bapaume-Bihucourt road from 1,000 feet (3.15 p.m.). Fired 450 rounds at the same troops and transport.

"Lieutenant Elwyn: Dropped two bombs into village of Vaultx at troops and transport from 1,200 feet (3.25 p.m.). Fired 100 rounds at troops along Vaultx-Beugny road from 1,500 feet.

"Lieutenant Barry: Dropped two bombs on cavalry on Vaultx-Beugnâtre road from 1,800 feet (3.40 p.m.). Fired 450 rounds at troops and transport on Vaultx-Lagnicourt road from 1,000 feet.

"Lieutenant Adams: Dropped two bombs on troops and transport on Bapaume-Bihucourt road from 1,500 feet (3.30 p.m.). Fired 400 rounds into these troops and transport.

"Lieutenant Courtney: Dropped two bombs on road Gommecourt-Sapignies from 1,500 feet (3.20 p.m.). Observed one direct hit on motor-transport. Fired 600 rounds on road Bihucourt-Bapaume and behind railway near Achiet-le-Grand from 800 feet.

"Lieutenant Scott: Dropped two bombs on park of transport at Gueudecourt from 1,000 feet (3.45 p.m.). Fired 550 rounds at troops and billets along road Le Sars-Gueudecourt from 800 feet.

"Captain Tunbridge: Dropped two bombs on transport and troops on Bapaume-Bihucourt road from 1,000 feet (3.20 p.m.). Fired 450 rounds into transport and troops on same road from 800 feet. One bomb exploded among the troops.

"Lieutenant Jeffree: Dropped two bombs on gun-limbers in wood at Ligny from 1,000 feet (3.30 p.m.). Fired 500 rounds on transport and troops on Bapaume-Albert road at Ligny.

"Lieutenant Robertson: Dropped two bombs on transport and troops on Bapaume-Bihucourt road from 1,200 feet (3.20 p.m.). Both bombs exploded among this column. Fired 300 rounds into transport and troops on same road from 1,000 to 800 feet. Fired 100 rounds into cavalry from 900 feet on Ervillers-Bapaume road. Observed number of horses and men lying on road and remainder scatter for cover."