

FLIGHT SERGEANT RUSSELL JAMES COUND

54 TDS RAF

BY JEFF TAYLOR

BROMSGROVE IS A MARKET TOWN in the County of Worcester, 11 miles north east of Worcester itself and 13 miles south west of the City of Birmingham. The Parish Church of St John the Baptist stands on an elevated site overlooking the south side of the town. Adjacent to the church there are the town cemeteries, both old and new. There is also a Public Library in Bromsgrove which houses archive copies of the locally published weekly newspaper. Whilst examining archive copies of that newspaper, a report describing the death of Flight Sgt Russell J. Cound RAF on 8 January 1919, and his subsequent burial in Bromsgrove Cemetery, was discovered. Armed with that account, the search for his final resting place began. Initial enquiries at the Bromsgrove Cemetery Office proved to be quite encouraging with the grave plot number being swiftly identified. However, a search of the area met with disappointment, as no relevant grave marker was to be found. A further visit to the Cemetery Office revealed the news that Russell's 16 year old sister, Evelyn Cound, had been interred in the grave on 7 September 1917. Rather surprisingly, no mention of Russell's death could be found in the relevant Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery Register, or on their computer database.

No grave marker, no mention in the official record of war deaths; this was a situation which cried out to be addressed. News of the situation aroused interest amongst the members of the local historical society and surviving members of the Cound family were soon located. From that moment on, the crusade to secure suitable recognition of Flight Sgt Cound's death began.

THE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT

DEATH OF FLIGHT-SERGT R. J. COUND



This poor newspaper cutting is the only available photograph of Cound.

Flight-Sergt. Russell J. Cound, of Bromsgrove, was accidentally killed at Fairlop on January 8th., while flying. Sergt. Cound, who was 20 years of age, was the third son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cound, of Conway Road, Bromsgrove. It appears that on the morning of January 8th he was taking part in a flight at low altitude, in company with Captain Starbuck, when the machine, a new Avro biplane, was caught by a 'turn-down' wind, which caused the accident. Cound was killed outright, and Captain Starbuck was rendered unconscious. Before joining the forces, Sergt. Cound was employed in the aeroplane department at the Austin Works and he was expecting

shortly to return to the Longbridge Works. He was educated at the Bromsgrove Secondary School, from whence he went to Barnsley Hall, Asylum as a clerk. At eighteen years of age he joined the Devonshire Regiment, and was transferred to the Air Service after about six months training. He was then sent to Denham, as a cadet, and afterwards to Fairlop as a flight-sergeant, which rank he held for six or eight months.

FUNERAL AT BROMSGROVE

The body of the deceased soldier was conveyed to Bromsgrove for burial and arrived on Tuesday morning in charge of Flight-Sergt. Dykes. The funeral took place at the Bromsgrove Parish Church and the Cemetery on Tuesday January 14th the Curate (the Rev. A. Smith) officiating. The principal mourners were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cound (parents), five brothers, three sisters and Mr. George Cound (grandfather). The bearers were members of the 2nd Volunteer Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, under the command of Sergt. W. L. Snell. Owing to the closure of the aerodrome at Fairlop it was not possible to send a firing party. The Last Post was sounded by Mr. F. Evades, of Redditch. The New Road, Bromsgrove Baptist Sunday School, of which the deceased was a member, was represented by Mr. Leedham and Mr. W. Long.

RUSSELL J. COUND

Russell James Cound, the third son of Charles and Mary Anne Cound, (nee Shepherd) was born in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, in 1899.

Mr. Charles Cound, a former scythe grinder, had moved to Bromsgrove, from the nearby village of Belbroughton, opening up a cycle business in the early days of that mode of transport. He was awarded a gold medal with a diploma, in 1899, by the Parisian Inventor's Academy in connection with his patent (the centrifugal hub). He was also one of the promoters of the Lillie Cycle Company, then based in Bromsgrove. In later years he traded as a cycle repairer.

In all probability, following Russell Cound's death, the relevant World War One medals and the next of kin memorial plaque would have been forwarded to his parents at 38, Conway Road, Bromsgrove. If this was so, the present day whereabouts of those items is unknown.

FAIRLOP AERODROME

Fairlop Aerodrome, Ilford, Essex, was located to the west of Romford just north of the A12 trunk road, and was in very close proximity to Hainault Farm Aerodrome. The Fairlop

The Casualty Card, in the RAF Museum, recording Cound's fatal accident.

Date Report Received and Official Reference.	Date of Casualty.	Where occurred.	Type of Machine.	Nature and Cause of Accident.	Result of Accident.	Name of other Occupant of Machine.	Remarks.
Letters Bankers F.S. 547 8/14/18 C. J. S. 5/1/18 25/78	8/1/19	Home	Avro D9804 130 HP 3100.	fallen machine knocked into the ground	KILLED	Capt. Starbuck injured	C. J. S. acc. rec.

KILLED CASUALTY CARD. Tests completed. Name: Russell J. Cound, Rank: Sgt., Unit: 54 TDS, RAF, Date of Accident: 8/1/19, Employed as: Pilot. Remarks: Went overseas.