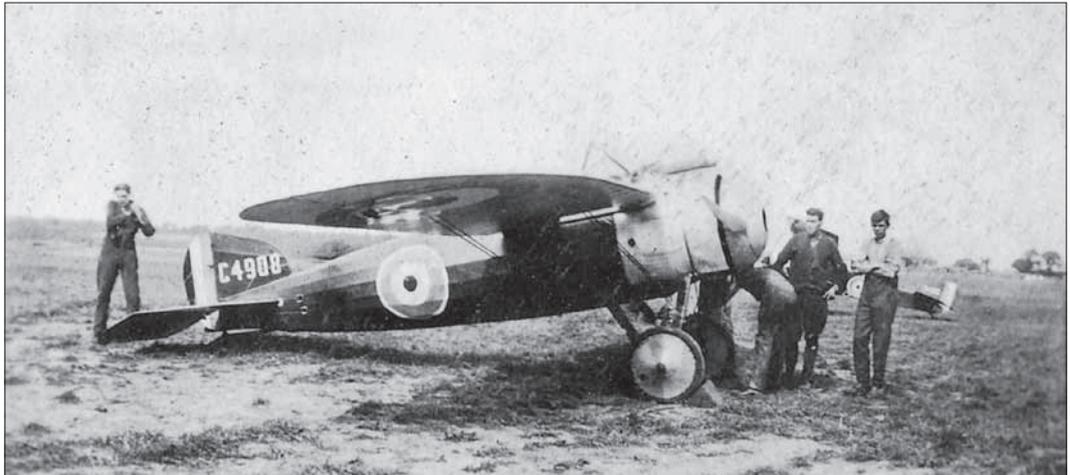# from the albums

compiled by Mick Davis

2Lt L.H.CURTIS

An American, Dave de Rooe, was put in contact with me by Dave Gregg of the North East Aircraft Museum, during his research into the career of his great uncle, L.H. Curtis. Curtis had trained in Canada and served as an instructor at 6 TDS, Boscombe Down, before an operational posting to 206 Sqn. His active service was quite brief due to being wounded on 22 August 1918. After recuperation and Canadian leave, Curtis joined 52 TDS at Cramlington. Dave made his great uncle's album available to me but it contained very little relating to his own career. There were, however, a number of interesting photographs that he must have acquired from friends and/or other sources and a selection of them is presented here.

Bristol M1C C4908 was delivered from 5 AAP, Brisol, to 2 AAP at Hendon on 21.11.1917. It was allotted to the Contoller of the Technical Department as a replacement for C4902, which had been damaged, and delivered to the ES at Martlesham on 23.11.1917, where it was used for performance tests and tests of armament and propellers. It was passed to the WEE at Biggin Hill on 25.2.1918, where this shot was taken. Its cowlings had, by then, been stripped of the factory applied grey dope and its formerly black serial was re-applied in white.

A pair of Sopwith 1½ Strutters of the WEE at Biggin Hill, with Wells-built A5252 nearest. Both had the lower section of the engine cowling cut away and had their unit identity letters repeated on the fuselage turtle decking. The photograph dates from the summer of 1918, when the GS shed in the background was under construction on Biggin's south-west boundary (see GFS p.020 CCI 41/3.

An unidentified, Viper-engined, SE5a which was probably also photographed at Biggin. Although there seems to have been a Lewis gun on the over-wing Foster mounting, the machine was not fitted with an Aldis optical sight. Its metal cowlings were grey and the small size of the cockade under the lower starboard mainplane suggests that component had been re-doped.