



Capt. B.T. James Wireless Pioneer

By Paul R. Hare



Baron Trevenen James was born on 20 April 1889, the son of Dr Charles Alfred James MRCS and Anne Lucy James, of The Pollard Elms, Upper Clapton, in north-east London. His younger brother Charles Kenneth James was born two years later. Their maternal grandfather, the Rev W. Philipson was the Rector of Bradley St George, some three miles to the south-west of Grimsby in Lincolnshire.

Scholastically competent and a born leader, the young Baron James was appointed head of his house at Harrow School, became a school monitor in 1906, and the following year began training at the Royal Military College, Woolwich

in preparation for a career in the Royal Engineers. He was commissioned in 1909, at the age of twenty and spent the next few years stationed at Woolwich, at Gosport and then at Dover.

In the late spring of 1912 he enrolled as a pupil of the Grahame-White School of Flying at Hendon, and on Saturday 11 May made his first flight as a passenger, with Mr Lewis Turner at the controls of Grahame-White biplane No. 3.

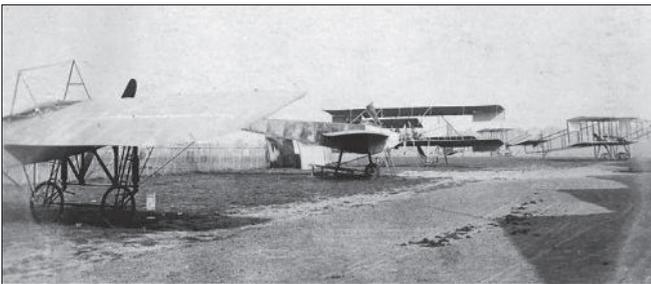
Two days later, he received his first actual lesson, being taught 'rolling' or controlling the aeroplane, again biplane No. 3, whilst on the ground. In his next lesson he progressed to performing 'straights', i.e. simple straight line hops across the aerodrome, and on 21 May he flew further 'straights' immediately after dawn and then, in the afternoon began flying both circuits and figures of eight, still on biplane No. 3.

After transferring to a Howard Wright biplane, on 1 June 1912 he passed the tests for the award of Royal Aero Club pilot's certificate No. 230 after having, as later advertisements for the school rather extravagantly claimed, spent only four days sitting in an aeroplane.

Flight magazine reported that he was presently stationed at Dover and that he had had only a few days leave in which to

The portrait of James included in his pilot's certificate.

:RAeC 230



Above: The Grahame-White school fleet at Hendon.

:CCI Archive

Below: James seated in the Howard Wright biplane in which he took the tests for his Royal Aero Club pilot's certificate.

:Flight

