

FATHER & SON

by Peter Wright



James Hubert Ronald Green.

:RAeC

HOW MANY STANDARD Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstones have you seen, with two different regimental badges thereon? I had not seen any before, but then a pair of these did turn up recently, both in the county of Berkshire. I was interested to view the first in Abingdon Old Cemetery. They appear to be quite rare. In time, it would be useful to have a full list of them, home and abroad.

The Abingdon headstone is marked 5025 Serjt. (Pilot) J.H.R. Green, Royal Flying Corps, 15th December 1917, Age 19 and R/387893 Private W. Green, Royal Army Service Corps, 4th July 1918. Portrayed are the RFC and RASC badges, side-by-side, son and father. The other headstone is in Didcot, details later.

The plot had been purchased by Walter Green the father, who, in time, had the usual large Victorian/Edwardian family of six sons and a daughter.¹ The main theme of this article covers the service life of his second son, James Hubert Ronald Green, born on 7 February 1897, according to his RAeC flying certificate.² Here we have an anomaly.

The 1901 Census shows James Green as three years old, therefore he must have been born in 1898. His headstone in Abingdon Old Cemetery gives his age at death as 19 years, but his alleged birth year of 1897 would make him 20 years old when accidentally killed. In 1915, I believe he falsified his year of birth by a year, to gain acceptance into the RFC as a volunteer, although he was actually only 17 years old at the time.



ROYAL FLYING CORPS

In early 1915, James Green was accepted into the RFC and eventually had a Railway Warrant issued to him, directing him to report to a Recruits Depot. He was kitted-out and given his RFC (Army) number of 5025, and after training, given the rank of 2nd Class Air Mechanic (AM2), as a chauffeur at No 2 Aircraft Park, which had recently been formed.

It didn't take him long to be posted overseas, to an Aircraft Park with the Expeditionary Force, on 6 June 1915. 2 Aircraft Park was renamed 2 Aircraft Depot at the end of 1915 and eventually located at Candas. On 14 June, he was posted to 8 Squadron RFC,³ then based at Abeele with BE2c machines, under the command of Major L.E.O. Charlton DSO.⁴

I must assume that 2AM Green was being employed on chauffeuring/driving duties with the squadron, and it is a possibility that he suffered in some sort of serious road accident for, on 11 November 1915, he was admitted to hospital⁵ and within a week of this, was transferred to the hospital ship *Saint Patrick*, bound for the UK. On landing, he was taken to the British Military Hospital at Brockenhurst in Hampshire.⁶

Upon discharge from hospital, he was posted to 1 Reserve Aeroplane Squadron at Gosport (Fort Grange). In January 1916, Reserve Aeroplane Squadrons were renamed Reserve Squadrons and in May 1917, became Training Squadrons.⁷

FLYING TRAINING

Green keenly wanted to become a pilot and was accepted for training, after which he gained his 'ticket' No 2841 in a Maurice Farman Biplane on 28 April 1916, at the Military School at Gosport, as it was then called. Having gained his 'wings', he was automatically promoted to Sergeant, then posted back to the Expeditionary Force, this time to 25 Squadron RFC based at Auchel/Lozingshem, 35 miles south-west of Lille, and flying FE2b/c machines, under the command of Major R.G. Cherry.⁸

The posting of non-commissioned ranks as pilots in the

Brockenhurst Military Hospital, Ward 15.

:WW1 Forum

