



SOME MACHINES saw considerable and useful service with the RFC but have, over the years, received less attention than they deserve in the aviation press. A prime example is the series of monoplane, parasol and biplane types produced by *Aéroplanes Morane-Saulnier* of Paris and known, collectively, in the RFC as *Moranés*.

The RFC first became acquainted with *Moranés* upon the outbreak of war. Four were impressed into service from their civilian owners. They comprised three Type H single-seater and one Type G two-seater. None of the Types H saw any great length of service but either the type made a favourable impression or the service was desperate for machines because a batch of twelve, apparently Types H, was ordered from Grahame-White.

The maintenance of the squadrons serving with the BEF stretched RFC resources and the British aircraft industry had yet to accelerate production to meet wartime demands, so the service turned to the French. Before the first Grahame-White machine had been delivered, a new Morane type had entered operational service. That was the Type L, a parasol monoplane that had been developed from the pre-war Type G and initially produced to an order from Turkey. The Turkish order was taken over by the French air service on the outbreak of war, with the type receiving the service designation MoS 3. The parasol mainplane, combined with an 80hp Le Rhône engine, made the type very suited to reconnaissance and the RFC placed orders. The first was delivered at the beginning of December 1915, the type eventually equipping first 3 Squadron and then 1 Squadron. Those two units continued to fly parasols through to 1917.

A refined development of the original parasol design entered RFC service the following autumn. The MoS 4, Type LA, had a streamlined fuselage and a new design of mainplanes, in which inversely tapered ailerons replaced wing-warping for lateral control. The new type initially supplemented but soon replaced the earlier parasols in 1 and 3 Squadrons.

The single seat Morane monoplane, which was effectively copied by the Germans as the Fokker E.I, also evolved into a machine with a streamlined fuselage, but one which retained wing-warping. Importantly, it could be armed with a fixed machine gun, which fired forward through the propeller arc. It was the MoS 5, the Type N. The RFC was keen to order this type and initial deliveries went to the two existing Morane units, to provide escort to the reconnaissance machines. The re-organisation of 60 Squadron led to the Type Ns becoming concentrated in that unit.

RFC *Moranés* had, thus far, been powered by the 80hp Le Rhône but 1915 saw the development of a Morane biplane, the Type BB, MoS 7. It was powered by a 110hp Le Rhône and the RFC was sufficiently impressed to request an initial 92 of the type. The first was delivered during the first week of November 1915 but further deliveries were slow. The type was issued to the Morane squadrons, supplementing but not replacing the parasol types.

A factory feature of Morane designs was the absence of fixed tailplanes and the use of balanced elevators. That made them extremely sensitive to fly and successful Morane pilots acquired a reputation as being among the best in the service.

The 110hp Le Rhône made the Type BB an effective aeroplane but attempts to place that engine into developments of the Type N airframe were much less successful. The Types I, MoS 6, and V, MoS 22, were received in small numbers but proved unpopular with their 60 Squadron pilots and saw only a short operational career.

The 110hp Le Rhône was also fitted to a new parasol design, the Type P, MoS 21, which was ordered for the RFC. It resembled the Type LA but was larger and was fitted with a large spinner, similar to those on the Types BB and N. Massive demand for the 110hp Le Rhône, which also powered the Nieuport 16 and 17, led to the need for some RFC Types P to revert to the 80hp engine. That involved more than just an engine change and the resultant machine, the MoS 24, bore a greater outward resemblance to the Type LA, particularly by its use of a small spinner. Resumption of 110hp engine supply saw the ultimate change to the Type P design. The MoS 26 had a neat, circular engine cowling and no spinner was fitted at factory level.

The final design to serve with the RFC was the MoS 23, Type AC, which also used the 110hp Le Rhône. It was a monoplane scout with wings braced by an underlying truss. Two were delivered but saw no operational use and were shipped, engine-less, to England, where one was made airworthy.

The serial listing follows the format established in the CCI Monographs and in the previous feature on Bristol Scouts. Again, readers wishing details of the RNAS Morane Type Ls and the solitary Type BB used by that service are referred to *Royal Navy Aircraft Serials and Units* by Ray Sturtivant and Gordon Page.

Despite a considerable number of *Moranés* being used by the RFC, the types were not widely photographed and so illustrations will be presented in a different manner to that used in the Bristol Scout listings.

482 : 1 Morane Type G, built by the Grahame-White Aviation Co and impressed 8.1914, from Mr FE Etches.

482 CFS Upavon dd 8.8.1914. Farnborough by 17.9.1914. **1 Sqn** Netheravon by 7.12.1914 until @ 20.12.1914. **1 RAS/RS** Gosport. **60 Sqn** Gosport 5.1916 on loan ex 1 RS.

587 – 598 : 12 Morane Type H (GW Type 14) ordered from the Grahame-White Aviation Co, Hendon, under Contract A.2610.

587 RAF Farnborough by 14.4.1915. **1 AP** St-Omer dd 23.4.1915. **4 Sqn** Bailleul/Vert Galant/ Baizieux dd ex 1 AP 6.6.1915. **3 AP** Candas ex 4 Sqn 26.9.1915. **1 AP** ex 3 AP 27.9.1915. **12 Sqn** St-Omer dd ex 1 AP 23.10.1915 and crashed 15.11.1915. **1 AD** St-Omer ex 12 Sqn 18.11.1915. Deleted 17.11.1915.

587 was the only Morane Type G to see service with the BEF. It is shown at Bailleul fitted with a bomb carrier.

:CCI Archive

