

THE RFC WITH THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

31 DECEMBER 1915

THE RFC IN THE FIELD at the end of 1915 was a very different force to that a year earlier, when it had comprised six squadrons flying a miscellany of types, several of which were unsuited to operational conditions, and with an average unit establishment of eight machines. On 31 December 1914, it fielded 47 machines, with a further 14 in reserve or under reconstruction. The comparable figures for 31 December 1915 were sixteen squadrons flying 217 machines, with an average unit establishment of 13. 65 machines were in reserve or under reconstruction.

9, 13, 15 and 18 Squadrons had arrived from England during the final quarter of 1915. 18 Squadron was a fighting unit, joining 11 Squadron in that role, and the others were equipped with the RAFla-powered BE2c, which had virtually replaced the Renault engine version of that type in the existing Corps Reconnaissance units and were gradually forming the major equipment of 6, 12 and 16 Squadrons. The Morane Type LA had superseded the earlier Type L Parasols in 1 and 3 Squadrons and the first examples of the Morane Biplane had been taken on charge. Each BE2c and Morane squadron was intended to have a single scout machine.

The BE2c and Morane Type LA formed the backbone of the force, 72% of all machines, with the majority of the others being fighters – a reflection of the growing need to protect vulnerable reconnaissance machines from enemy aircraft. A breakdown of the machines on BEF charge at 31 December is shown in the table below.

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| 121 BE2c (108 RAF, 13 Renault) + 21 in Reserve/under Reconstruction |
| 25 Morane LA + 19 in Reserve/under Reconstruction |
| 1 Morane N + 2 in Reserve/under Reconstruction |
| 1 Morane H |
| 1 Morane BB + 1 in Reserve |
| 16 Bristol Scout + 10 in Reserve/under Reconstruction |
| 32 Vickers FB5 + 6 in Reserve/under Reconstruction |
| 1 FE8 |
| 4 FE2a |
| 5 FE2b + 1 under Reconstruction |
| 1 Martinsyde G.100 |
| 1 RE5 + 1 in Reserve |
| 4 RE7 + 1 in Reserve |
| 1 Voisin |
| 1 BE9 in Reserve |
| 1 Martinsyde S1 under Reconstruction |
| 1 Vickers ES1 in Reserve |

Logistical support was provided by the 1st Aircraft Park at St-Omer and the 3rd Aircraft Park at Candas, respectively supplying units on the northern and southern sections of the British Front. These Aircraft Parks were retitled, in November, to become 1 and 2 Aircraft Depots and the growth of British air power with the BEF was reflected by the number of machines handled by these units.

| 1 SQUADRON | | |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| | From | To |
| Avro | | |
| 758 | 1 AP 9.6.15 | 1 AP 12.10.15 |
| 769 | 1 AP 20.5.15 | 1 AP 12.10.15 |
| 773 | 1 AP 29.5.15 | 1 AP 2.10.15 |
| 784 | 1 AP 20.9.15 | 1 AP 12.10.15 |
| 2858 | 1 AP 2.10.15 | 1 AP 12.10.15 |
| Caudron | | |
| 1885 | Paris 27.3.15 | Struck off 2.10.15 |
| Morane | | |
| 1894 | 1 AP 14.4.15 | 1 AP 7.10.15 |
| 5006 | 1 AP 10.5.15 | 1 AP 15.11.15 |
| 5046 | 1 AP 12.8.15 | 1 AP 5.11.15 |
| 5048 | Paris 8.8.15 | 1 AP 5.11.15 |
| 5051 | 1 AP 21.8.15 | 1 AD 28.12.15 |

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| 5052 | 1 AP 22.8.15 | 1 AD 27.12.15 |
| 5056 | 1 AP 5.9.15 | 1 AD 23.12.15 |
| 5060 | 1 AP 17.9.15 | Struck off 13.12.15 |
| 5076 | 1 AP 12.10.15 | |
| 5080 | 1 AP 7.10.15 | |
| 5082 | 1 AP 12.10.15 | |
| 5085 | 1 AP 12.10.15 | |
| 5086 | 1 AP 12.10.15 | Struck off 10.11.15 |



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|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 5089 | 1 AP 5.11.15 | |
| 5090 | 1 AP 14.11.15 | |
| 5091 | 1 AP 5.11.15 | |
| 5100 | 1 AP 14.11.15 | |
| 5101 | 1 AP 16.11.15 | |
| 5105 | 1 AD 14.12.15 | 1 AD 29.12.15 |
| 5107 | 1 AD 28.12.15 | |
| 5108 | 1 AD 28.12.15 | |
| 5109 | 1 AD 28.12.15 | |
| 5113 | 1 AD 30.12.15 | |
| Bristol Scout | | |
| 4672 | 1 AP 1.10.15 | 1 AP 26.10.15 |
| Morane Scout | | |
| 5069 | 3 AP 8.10.15 | 1 AD 26.12.15 |
| On charge 31.12.15: 13 Morane LA | | |

| 2 SQUADRON | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| | From | To |
| BE2c (Renault) | | |
| 1659 | England 17.4.15 | 1 AP 1.10.15 |
| BE2c (RAF) | | |
| 1669 | 1 AP 20.6.15 | Struck off 14.12.15 |
| 1687 | England 11.5.15 | 1 AP 4.11.15 |
| 1703 | England 24.7.15 | |
| 1710 | England 15.7.15 | |
| 1716 | England 5.8.15 | |
| 1729 | England 10.8.15 | |
| 1730 | 1 AP 5.9.15 | |
| 1732 | England 12.8.15 | |
| 1734 | England 19.8.15 | |
| 2019 | 1 AP 7.10.15 | |



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|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 2034 | England 31.7.15 | Struck off 22.8.15 |
| 2081 | 1 AP 4.11.15 | |
| 2101 | 1 AD 23.12.15 | |
| 2673 | England 26.8.15 | |
| 2677 | England 18.9.15 | |
| 2685 | 1 AP 11.11.15 | |
| 4074 | 1 AP 1.10.15 | Struck off 6.10.15 |
| Bristol Scout | | |
| 4667 | England 27.7.15 | 1 AP 10.11.15 |
| 4673 | 1 AP 14.11.15 | Struck off 27.12.15 |
| On charge 31.12.15: 13 BE2c (RAF) | | |