

NORMAN HENRY STARBUCK, RNAS & RAF



by Alan Smith

A Bristol Scout D of 2 Wing RNAS, with Pilav Tepe in the background. All photographs are from Starbuck's album, via Alan Smith, unless credited otherwise.

NORMAN HENRY STARBUCK was born on 14 September 1897 and became a student of business methods working with J.S. Blockey & Co Ltd of 71 Eastcheap, London EC. He enlisted on 28 September 1915, shortly after his eighteenth birthday, becoming a private in the Honourable Artillery Company. He transferred to the RNVR, as a temporary Sub Lieutenant, on 29 February 1916 and was posted to the Clement Talbot Works five days later, for training as an observer with the RNAS. He began basic training at Crystal Palace on 24 June, before moving on to Roehampton and then the Gunnery School at RNAS Eastchurch on 14 July.

The following are entries from his logbook and diary, the latter being given in italics.

Sub Lt N.H. Starbuck RNAS, 1916.



18.7.1916 Mirror work, Shorthorn; 23min.
26.7.1916 Mirror work; Shorthorn; 13min.
31.7.1916 Dummy bombs; Shorthorn; 12min.
31.7.1916 Dummy bombs; Shorthorn; 11min.
1.8.1916 Dummy bombs; Shorthorn; 17min.
3.8.1916 Recce; Voisin; 2hr 17min.
5.8.1916 Recce; BE2c; 1hr 45min
8.8.1916 Firing from air; Shorthorn; 5min.
8.8.1916 Firing from air; Shorthorn; 0min.
8.8.1916 Firing from air; Shorthorn; 8min.
9.8.1916 Firing from air; Shorthorn; 8min.
9.8.1916 Firing from air; Shorthorn; 9min.
9.8.1916 Firing from air; Shorthorn; 12min.
21.8.1916 Recce; Curtiss; 1hr 40min
22.8.1916 Recce; Curtiss; 1hr 22min
23.8.1916 WT; RAF; 48min
24.8.1916 Recce; Shorthorn; 58min.
25.8.1916 W/T; BE2c; 24min.

AN OBSERVER IN THE AEGEAN

Starbuck was regarded as 'excellent' and was graded as a Temporary Observer Sub Lieutenant on 31 August and posted to the Yarmouth air station, but, four days later, that posting was changed to 2 Wing. He travelled to the Aegean via Rome and Malta, arriving at Thasos on 16 October, noting: *Arrived Air Station Thasos on a trawler.* He had three practice flights around Marsh aerodrome in an unidentified BE2c that was piloted by FSL H.R. Aird, before starting operational work.

19.10.1916 Bombing; HF 9140; Maswakli aerodrome; 2hrs 0min; Hugh Aird; 3 x 112lb bombs.

My first strafing mission. Dropped 3 x 112lb HE bombs at Maswakli. Two direct hits in quarters, failed to observe third bomb. Pilot - Aird. Height 11,500ft. No enemy machines went up after us but think we were fired at twice by archies near the coast. Machine Henri Farman 9140.

23.10.1916 Bombing; HF 9140; Buk Bridge; Hugh Aird; 2hrs 10 min, 3 x 112 lb.

Made successful bomb raid on Buk bridge. Centre span blown into water. Fired on by 'archie' at 14,000ft. Rotten firing, couldn't hit us at all. Returned in safety at 11.40. Pilot - Aird.

This afternoon Blakesley and Blandy left to bomb transports at Buk at 2.15. Haven't been seen since. Cross went out this evening on a Schneider to find them, landed in the sea in the dark. and fired coloured lights. Haven't seen him since he left. Since turned up having landed by Monitor and had dinner on board.