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BRIGADE MACHINE GUN OFFICERS.

Minutes of 14th Monthly Meeting.

Held at Headquarters, Royal Air Force, on Thursday, 5th September, 1918.

Presiding : Lieut.-Colonel H. Blackburn, M.C., of H.Q., R.A.F.

Present : Major Pearce (H.Q., R.A.F.), Captain Wain (H.Q., R.A.F.), Major Worswick (H.Q., R.A.F.), Lieut.-Col. Forbes (Air Ministry), Major Hartley (Air Ministry), Lieut. Douglas (M.G.O., 1st Brigade), Captain Sutton (M.G.O., 2nd Brigade), Lieut. Wood (M.G.O., 2nd Wing), Capt. Middlemass (M.G.O., 3rd Brigade), Capt. Swoffer (M.G.O., 5th Brigade), Capt. Groom (M.G.O., 9th Brigade), Captain Miller (M.G.O., 10th Brigade), Lieut. Horan (Repair Park, 1/ASD), Lieut. Reynolds (Reception Park, 1/ASD), Lieut. Cadman (Repair Park, 2/ASD), Lieut. Lonsdale (Stores, No. 1 A.D.), Captain Vernon (Stores, 2/AD), Major Thomas, 3rd Aircraft Park.

The meeting proceeded by going through the Minutes of the last meeting, and taking each item in turn for further comment.

Camera Guns.—Major Pearce stated that mountings had been made and supplied to all S.E.5 and Camel Squadrons, also that mountings were now being made for Bristol Fighter Squadrons, the fitting and position of which was explained to the meeting. 10th Brigade stated that the O.C. 88 Squadron would not hear of the camera gun being fitted to the centre section struts, as these were not strong enough to stand the strain. 3rd Brigade stated that 11 Squadron had used the camera gun in this position ever since Bristol Fighters came out, and had never had any trouble.

3rd Brigade stated that the mounting for S.E. 5's was not considered a very great improvement as it took such a long time to fix and sight correctly, and suggested that some adjustment should be made in the stem holding the brass attachment which acts as the gun barrel, to give vertical and lateral adjustment. The only other method was by adjusting the Nieuport Clip and so spoil the alignment for the Lewis gun.

There were no complaints from other Brigades.

10th Brigade asked if time expired machines could not be allotted to Squadrons for Gunnery Training, and so save all the trouble of changing guns, sights, etc. The President stated that this was not to be recommended in view of the danger of crashes, etc., but promised to bring the point forward.

Modified Control Attachment for "B" Type Reservoir "C.C." Gear.—The necessity for the auxiliary spring was discussed. It was stated that in some cases the original "mouse-trap" spring was considered good enough, and it was decided that the use of the extra spring should be left to the discretion of Squadrons. Major Hartley stated that there was a large number of these extra springs in stock at home, and it was agreed that these should be sent out to France, and Squadrons could have them on demand if desired.

Luminous Sights for Night Flying Squadrons.—Major Pearce stated that sights that are required to be illuminated should be sent in to the Repair Park, where they would be done properly.

Major Pearce stated, for the information of Colonel Forbes, that illuminated sights of the electric type were not required by the E.F. This had already been stated in letters.

Lewis Gun Extractors.—3rd Brigade produced two samples of two-piece extractors that had consistently given trouble in faulty extraction and no extraction at all. These had been thoroughly tested by the B.M.G.O. himself, who found the complaint quite genuine. Other extractors issued to him had worked perfectly and given no trouble whatever.

5th Brigade quoted one case of one piece of an extractor pulling out. Otherwise everything O.K., and very satisfactory. England had been asked to make the lip on this extractor at right angles.

On the whole everyone is satisfied with the two-piece extractor.

Adjustable Loading Handles.—5th Brigade stated that those sent them for trial were in every way satisfactory, and very adaptable. 9th Brigade stated that some had been tried in No. 43 Squadron (Snipes), being used fully extended, and were quite satisfactory.

Major Hartley asked for a decision as to whether the handles should be of 8 or 10 gauge material.

Major Pearce asked that a further 50 of these adjustable handles, of 8 gauge material, should be sent out in order that they may be thoroughly tested before being finally passed. These to be sent out as soon as possible with a view to getting a final report on their suitability, etc., by the next meeting.

5th Brigade asked if "B" type handles could be fitted on D.H.9 machines instead of the Cox type. This will be done.

Sighting on D.H.9's.—This question was again raised.

Major Hartley stated that in England they had overcome the difficulty of the sighting being fouled by the cowling, by elevating the guns about 4 degrees, approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ " at the rear and $\frac{3}{4}$ " at the front. Machines should be received shortly with guns so fitted.

[P.T.O.]

Leather Washers for "C.C." Generator Pistons.—Major Pearce stated that three special samples had been received from England and been distributed, one to 1/ASD Repair Park and two to 2nd Brigade. Lieutenant Horan stated that so far no trouble had been experienced with his, and Captain Sutton stated that the two samples he had received were not much better, if any, than other leather washers we have already had. The same trouble was experienced with them getting very hard. 29 Squadron still prefer the composition washer, and it is considered by them that the trouble of particles wearing off and interfering with the working of the gear would not apply in connection with the generator washer. Some Brigades had found that the suggestion of using an ordinary and a reservoir washer for the generator piston, worked quite well.

It was suggested that gear washers should be made of oil-treated leather. Those at present supplied from England are too hard. Major Pearce asked that supplies of composition washers for the "B" type generator should be sent out by England, until such time as the problem of the leather washer is satisfactorily settled. Two thousand have been ordered.

Prideaux Links.—Types mark "M.S." and "W.M." reported on as giving a lot of trouble. Major Pearce stated that this had already been intimated to England in several letters. A complaint had also been received from the Independent Force on some samples of the "Bak-fin" type which were rough on the inside and fitted the cartridge case too tightly. This was also being forwarded to England. Links marked "P" seemed to be the most satisfactory of all types supplied.

3rd Brigade reported that cases of links were still arriving with the contents very much mixed as regards makes of links, otherwise the packing generally was quite satisfactory. Major Hartley stated that the matter of packing the different makes of links separately had already been taken up in England, and the effect of this would be felt in due course.

Camel Sights.—Major Pearce stated that one sight had been standardized for use on Camel machines. This is called the "No. 9 Sight" (as now used on Le Rhone Camel machines) and supplies can be had on demand from depots.

Standard Lubricators for "C.C." Generators.—A sample lubricator, now standard for all "C.C." generators, was shown to the meeting, and Major Hartley stated that supplies are now available.

Spare "C.C." Gears.—Major Pearce stated that complete "C.C." pipe lines and fittings were being made up in England for all types of machines, but these will not be available for some time yet.

De Havilland Tail Gun Mounting.—There was some discussion as regards the suitability of the tail gun for De Havilland 4 machines, and it was agreed that the fitting of this gun mounting, etc., should for the present be optional and at the discretion of Squadron Commanders so far as De Havilland 4 machines are concerned.

Camel Ammunition Boxes.—10th Brigade reported trouble in 4 AFC Squadron with ammunition boxes being too weak. They slip off the bracket which supports them and are wrenched away from the gun, which means that cartridges fall into the machine and get into the controls. To overcome this a small angle plate had been fitted at the bottom of the box and steel strengthening at the top.

This was not general in other Camel Squadrons, and Major Hartley stated that if particulars of the machines concerned could be obtained, the matter would be taken up with the makers.

Model Aeroplanes.—5th Brigade asked whether supplies of model enemy aeroplanes could be obtained for training purposes. The President stated that this was being taken up with the Director of Training.

Transport for Wing M.G.O.s.—This question was raised by Brigade gunners, as it was very necessary that Wing Gunnery Officers should have some means of transport in order to carry out his duties, which meant visiting the Balloon Sections in his area as well as Squadrons. The President said that this matter would be taken up in the proper quarter, meanwhile Brigades were to make their own arrangements in this connection.

Belt Loading Machines.—The standard Maxim belt filler will be modified for this purpose, and instructions will be issued to Brigades showing these modifications.