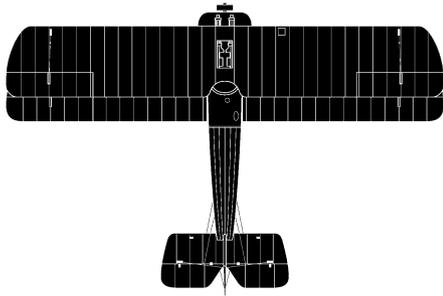


Camel



The Camel F.1, the most famous British fighter of World War I, acquired its vaunted reputation as a result of 2,790 victories, including 1,543 aircraft destroyed and 1,086 driven out of control. The Camel was a descendent of the Sopwith Aviation Co.'s highly successful Triplane and "Pup." The nickname "Camel" came about as a result of the pronounced hump in the fuselage.

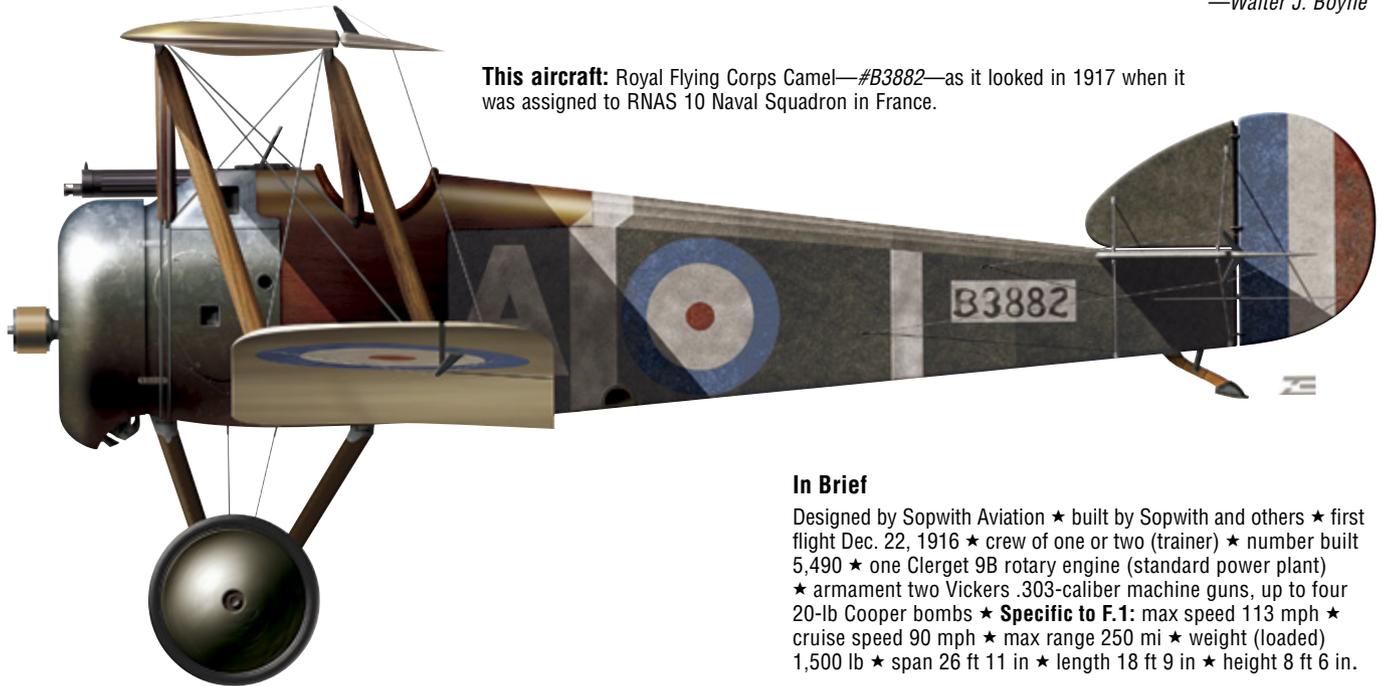
The Camel was an inherently unstable aircraft, but that feature only added to its maneuverability and deadly combat prowess. Its short wingspan and concentration of pilot, fuel, engine, and guns in one compact area made the Camel extremely agile. This, combined with strong gyroscopic ef-

fects of the rotary engine, also made the Camel susceptible to vicious spins. The immediate need to adjust the delicate fuel control after takeoff led to many training accidents. Nearly 1,800 Camel pilots died in combat and another 365 in accidents.

Once mastered, the Camel was a supreme dog-fighter. It was far superior to German types in 1917, when it was introduced on the Western Front, and held its own throughout the war. It served in many missions: air superiority, close air support, night fighting, and home defense. It was featured in many famous battles, including the dogfight that claimed the life of the renowned German pilot Manfred von Richthofen, the "Red Baron."

—Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: Royal Flying Corps Camel—#B3882—as it looked in 1917 when it was assigned to RNAS 10 Naval Squadron in France.



In Brief

Designed by Sopwith Aviation ★ built by Sopwith and others ★ first flight Dec. 22, 1916 ★ crew of one or two (trainer) ★ number built 5,490 ★ one Clerget 9B rotary engine (standard power plant) ★ armament two Vickers .303-caliber machine guns, up to four 20-lb Cooper bombs ★ **Specific to F.1:** max speed 113 mph ★ cruise speed 90 mph ★ max range 250 mi ★ weight (loaded) 1,500 lb ★ span 26 ft 11 in ★ length 18 ft 9 in ★ height 8 ft 6 in.

Famous Fliers

Notables: Roy Brown and Wilfred May, combat with Manfred von Richthofen, "Red Baron." **Aces:** William Barker, Raymond Collishaw, Field Kindley, Donald MacLaren, Clifford McEwen, Elliott Springs, George Vaughn, H. W. Woollett. **Test pilot:** Harry Hawker.

Interesting Facts

Known originally as "Big Pup" ★ piloted by fictional twins John and Bayard Sartoris in William Faulkner novel *Flags in the Dust* ★ executed 270-degree turns to the right more swiftly than 90-degree turns to the left (effect of engine torque) ★ modified as night fighter called "Sopwith Comic" ★ featured in films "The Great Waldo Pepper" (1975) and "The Red Baron" (2008) ★ flown by air arms of Britain (RFC/RAF, RNAS), US (Army Air Service, Navy), Australia, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Sweden ★ designated as Camel 2F.1 aboard ships ★ suffered heavy casualties when strafing German positions ★ mentioned regularly in the Charles Schulz comic, "Peanuts."



Sopwith Camel of the Royal Air Force.