

Title: 58395: Photographs of Captain Peter Dudley Stuart RFC

Documents/files:

Photograph of Captain Peter Dudley Stuart RFC (1)

Photograph of Captain Peter Dudley Stuart RFC and RFC friend (2)

Further information submitted:

Photo by Medringtons Ltd, 29 Bold St, Liverpool.

On 1916 May 11th Peter Dudley Stuart, younger son of Dr. Peter Stuart and Edith Kate Stuart nee Simpson of Liverpool, received his "Royal Aero Club of the UK" aviator's certificate from the 22nd King's (L'pool) Regiment, 2nd Lieutenant.

His missions involved taking aerial photos behind enemy lines in France and Belgium. Some of these photos are extant.

1917 Apr07 letter from Peter Dudley Stuart to his mother:

"Dearest Mater, I am awfully tired & can only afford a few lines. I had a topping letter from the Pater to-day & was awfully bucked to receive it but am afraid he misunderstood my meaning concerning the additional pip. Once more I have distinguished myself by taking a whole run of photographs of the line which were being very much in demand, Well! I must close & will write again tomorrow. With fondest love to you both from yr affec. son Dudley"

1917 July 19th letter to Peter Dudley Stuart from E. L. Gossage of No 8 squadron:

"My dear Stuart,

Very many thanks for your latter & congratulations & let me thank you again for your share in bringing about the great event!

I am glad to hear that you are now back again in England (or rather Scotland), & I rather think that your capabilities are somewhat wasted on 'Rumpeties'.

Don't go & 'do yourself in' on the cables of the Forth bridge or the wireless arials of our latest battleships by stunting too close to them, as your future lies undoubtedly in a Scout Squadron & the sooner you advertise the fact the better.

No. 8 is still a happy crowd but I think that the Squadron Commander is the happiest person in it at present & they all send you their best wishes.

I am not all keen on being out here too long now as I have arranged to get married when I next come home for a 'spell' or 'on leave'.

I am glad you enjoyed your stay with the 2nd Brigade. I am afraid I did not quite know what I had let you in for but I am glad that it has turned out all right.

My fiancée probably saw you trying to jump the funnels of the battleships as she has recently been staying at Aberdeen which is close to the Bridge.

The idea of Thinhouse? sounds rather attractive to me, except for its distance from everywhere & its 3.15 am in the morning!

It is not you who ought to thank me for kindness, but rather I should thank you for all you did for me when you were here; for without fellows like you, the show would never have run at all.

I think you will probably like the Sopwith 'Pup' but the SE5 is your metier & you must try for that.

All best wishes & good luck,

Ever yours very sincerely, E. L. Gossage."

1917 July 25th letter to Edith Kate Stuart on paper of Royal Flying Corps, Turnhouse, Midlothian:

"Dearest Mater,

Thank you ever so much for your letters which I haven't had time to answer. Even now I am practically asleep owing to the shortage of slumber. You never said what Ronald [his brother] thought about the photographs.

I have to go out with the C.O. this afternoon & am not feeling a bit keen about it as I am fagged out. Enclosed you will find an awfully nice letter from Mr Gossage which I want you to keep for me. The first part refers to my taking his letter to her ladyship. I will write the more detailed account of my doings at a later date as I am too tired now. Cheerio With fondest love from your devoted son Dudley"

1917 August 22nd letter to Edith Kate Stuart on paper of Royal Flying Corps, Turnhouse, Midlothian:

"Dearest Mater,

I put Ronald's photographs or rather films in an envelope recently to send away but now I can't find either the films or the envelope but will have another look when I get a moment to spare. We are working very hard just now as you may guess when I tell you that I have done nine forty five minutes in two days and at the end of another nine I understand I am entitled to 48 hours leave but doubt I shall get it 'cos we are running rather short of instructors, our leaving here has been postponed until the 22nd of next month.

I have just rcvd a letter from Coline Stephenson to say that she has just become engaged, it rather looks as if I shall be the only single person in L'pool by the way things are going and as for dances well!!!

Cheerioh will try & find the films.

With fondest love from always your affectionate son Dudley"

1918 February 1st letter to Edith Kate Stuart on paper of the George Hotel, Stamford:

"Dearest Mater,

I had a gorgeous time last night at the dance. You will be amused to hear that my method of transit was by air and I covered a distance of 80 miles in 35 minutes in a BE12 completely equipped with a change of attire.

As far as I am concerned the dance was a success but unfortunately for the ladies there were too few men owing to a squadron at Narborough going overseas.

The dance finished about 12.30 emma & we all went back to Gaywood Hall and danced till 2 in the morning. My room was nothing short of palatial but what amused me was they expected that I had not brought sufficient things for the night on account of my bag which was the wee one you gave me. At any rate I found a suit of pyjamas sitting on the bed waiting for me also aing fire.

They want me to go there for a dance on the 3rd of April and of course I am extremely keen if that is possible.

You seem to have misunderstood my position.

I have a position of a squadron Co bar the pay & rank tho' in my group I have got 2 flights with a total of 23 machines against my 8 before. So I think I have left 26 with colours flying.

Well cheerioh. With fondest love from yr devoted son Dudley."

1918 May 27th letter to Edith Kate Stuart on Air Force paper address 5TDS PAF Easter Stamford:

"My dearest Mater,

Thank you ever so much for the gloves, candies & letter.

I am fearfully sorry I haven't written before but I have literally been swept off my feet with work in fact have been on the aerodrome for 12 hours at a stretch today & am feeling tired to death.

However I am really in the "Pink", thanks to uncle M and his trip to Oakwood. By the way I wrote to him tonight and expect he will receive his at the same time as this.

I shall ring up Edith Ridley to-morrow & ask her to meet me on Weds if possible.

I shall certainly look up Mrs de Laloubere. I have a very faint recollection of her but probably my memory will be at fault.

I think that the last time I saw her was at Elm House when I was quite small.

My answer to what she said to Rene: I always thought you to be so & it doesn't surprise me at all!!

Was the name of the adjutant Ridley? or perhaps Pymm? the former in 5 TDS the latter ..TDS

Could you call at Barton & Dobson's & say that their chocolates have not yet arrived.

With fondest love always Your devoted son Dudley

When are you coming to Stamford? Had a topping journey down.

M Ry is by far the best."

In June 1918 Dudley should have been on leave, but because of a dire shortage of pilots, he went instead to Easton Aerodrome, Lincs, to help out. A trainee he was teaching crashed their plane.

1918 June 1st telegram to Mrs Peter Stuart, Blundell Sands Liverpool:

"Or 1/867 1/6/18 Regret to inform you that your son Capt PDS was killed as a result of aeroplane accident at Easton aerodrome this evening AAA telephone no Stamford 26 AAA Death instantaneous AAA Aeronautics 5 Stamford."

His death certificate: 1918 June 1st at Easton Aerodrome near Stamford Lincs death of Peter Dudley Stuart captain in RAF 24 residence The Serpentine Blundellsands, Lancashire

of Fracture of spinal column cervical region, sustained through the aeroplane in which he was flying accidentally crashing to the ground.

Certificate received from ?S G Stapleton, Coroner for the County of Lincs (Kesteven)

Inquest held Jun03. Death registered June 5th.

1918 June 5th The Times page 1: DIED OF WOUNDS:

STUART. Accidentally killed, on the 1st June, while flying in Lincolnshire, CAPTAIN PETER DUDLEY STUART, RAF, Croix de Guerre, beloved younger son of Mrs E. K. Stuart and the late Dr Peter Stuart, of Drummoyne, Blundellsands, grandson of the late Peter Stuart, of Elm House, Seaforth, & the late Henry Simpson, of Nottingham, aged 21.

Liverpool's Scroll of Fame p212: Captain Peter Dudley Stuart, Royal Air Force.

"It was the air, with its romance, its magnificent freedom, and its novel opportunities, that called from boyhood to Peter Dudley Stuart, who at the age of twenty-four years was a Captain of Britain's great aerial arm of defence, and lost his life not on the battle front, where he had won the Croix de Guerre, but through an unfortunate accident to his machine while flying at home.

Captain Stuart came of a well-known and highly respected Liverpool family, being the son of the late Dr. Peter Stuart, of 36a Rodney Street, and of Mrs. E. K. Stuart, of Drummoyne, Blundellsands. His paternal grandfather, a descendant of the Royal Stuarts, was Mr. Peter Stuart, J.P., of Elm House, Seaforth, who gave his influence and wealth in support of the movement for the emancipation of Italy; Garibaldi, Mazzini and Orsini were honoured guests at his house, and a shirt of the first-named soldier-patriot is still treasured as a relic by the family. On his mother's side Captain Stuart was a grandson of the late Mr. Henry Simpson, of Highfields, Lenton, Notts. He was educated at Parkfield School, Liverpool, and afterwards, owing to ill-health, under a private tutor, with a view to a medical career.

On the formation of the Pals, in August 1914, he joined as a private, and on the 3rd September received his commission in the 19th King's (Liverpool Regiment). He had flown on several occasions before the declaration of war, and transferring to the Royal Flying Corps (Military Wing) graduated on the 22nd June, 1916, having flown in M.F., (S.H.,) B.E 2c, A.W.B. and Avro machines. From July 16th, 1916, to June 17th, 1917 he was in France, and during those eleven months he did most valuable work, and was awarded the Croix de Guerre for special service, and on the 17th March, 1917, was promoted to the rank of Captain.

In June of that year he returned to England, and after a fortnight's rest was sent to Scotland as an Instructor. Subsequently he was stationed at various aerodromes in England. On the 1st. of June, 1918, he was instructing a pupil (Lieut. P. P. Ayles) at Easton Hill Aerodrome, Stamford, in a D.H.6., when the machine got out of control, and he was unfortunately killed.

His mechanic, describing the accident, wrote that Captain Stuart was in his favourite machine when the sad occurrence took place. The first time he circled round in the air, instructing his pupil with his usual calm and carefulness. Then he came down, stepped out, and told the men that he had seen another machine away in the corner of the aerodrome which required its propeller swinging. After that he stepped back into his machine, his pupil in the pilot's seat, and went up again. All eyes were watching as he was circling around, and when his aeroplane was about 200 feet up in the air it was suddenly seen that he was coming down. For an instant nobody could move; then when they did move, although it did not take half a minute to get to his machine, your son had already passed away. From that hour the sorrow that came over his pupils, his officers, his sergeants, and all his men, I cannot describe to you. Your son was such a good captain to us in every way that even now his name is always being spoken of with regret whenever we compare him with our other officers who from time to time are over us. We were never frightened of him because we knew he would never speak to us in any other way than nicely, and many and many a time when everything was going on badly with us we all knew that when he came we need not fear. I could tell you of such a lot of his goodness to us and the things he used to say, and his kind actions, and he has left such a good name behind him

His commanding officer, Major A .A. Wilson, paid this tribute:- Your son was a good pilot and a very gallant officer. I looked upon him as a personal friend, and he was certainly one of the best and most capable officers under my command. I cannot tell you how sorry I am to write this sad letter. I feel your son's loss very deeply. He had distinguished himself overseas, and he has died here doing his duty for his country. I was on the spot a few seconds after the crash, and lifted his body out of the wreckage. He was quite dead and so cannot have suffered, as his death was instantaneous. Allow me to express the very sincere sympathy that I feel for you in your great loss. England loses in him a good officer, and a very gallant gentleman.

He was buried at Anfield Cemetery, Liverpool:

Anfield Cemetery Consecrated Division Section 8 No. 1543 Vault: Peter Dudley Stuart age 24 of Drummoyne, Serpentine North, Blundellsands.

Funeral Address for Peter Dudley Stuart

We are committing to Mother Earth all that was mortal of our dear Brother. The Angel of Death has been very busy amongst us. We seem almost "to hear the rustling of his wings". As in the old bible story there is "Scarce a house where there is not one dead". But the tragedy of it is that it is our youngest & bravest & best who are being called away, those for whom we might have expected many years of life, for whom we had cherished high hopes. How splendid our youth has been: splendid that is the only word. Their own friends & relatives, their dearest ones, did not know how fine they were. When the summons came, how quickly they responded -

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,

So near is God to man,

When duty whispers, lo, thou must,

The youth replies "I can".

But the brave young souls whom we think of today have not died in vain. They have enhanced the value of our common humanity, have shewn what are its glorious possibilities. They have too done something, they have glorified God by their death, striking a blow for freedom and right and homeland, preparing the way for the newer, better England, better Europe we hope to see. When we think of it, we almost envy them, we feel our own lives to have been so vain & profitless. They have done something, and if they could speak to us today they would say "Carry on", "Carry on", until the goal is reached, until the goal is reached, until that is completed which we gave our lives to attain.

It seems so short a time since I saw Dudley Stuart in the flush of health of strength - I was so attracted to him, there was something so straight & honest about him. Here I said to myself, is a true man. I cherish the memory of that chance meeting, all the more so since in his infant years I had admitted him into the fold of Christ. From our hearts we pray to God to comfort his bereaved relatives, to grant them the sense of his upholding presence. These braver young souls gave all. As the Savoyard peasant said "God found them ready". How shall we speak of them or pray for them now that they are gone. In regard of those of advanced or advancing years, when they are called away it is phrases about rest & peace which come to our lips, but here they seem out of place. It is not rest & peace they would crave for, that would mean simply stagnation, whereas they were full of abounding hope, and the spirit of limitless adventure. How shall we speak of them? Perhaps the first of the King's Regulations & Orders for the Army may suggest something - "The Army is composed of those who have undertaken a definite liability of Service". Service - that is the word. They died on service, service truly for God & man, & on service they are still. Death does not interrupt, God's plan for them is not frustrated by it. We are as dear to God when wounded or dying or dead as when in the prime of health. He has his purpose for each and that purpose still holds good -

"What here is well begun.

is then completed not undone,
He careth for them and they are still on service,
God judges by a light
Which baffles mortal sight,
and the fallen soldier lad the crown hath won,
In his vast world above,
A world of broader love,
God has some grand employment for his Son"

So lovingly, trustingly, we leave him in the hands of him who is his faithful Creator and Merciful Saviour, may perpetual light shine upon him."