

P.O. BOX 2340, AUCKLAND, N.Z.

January 27th, 1959.

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Dear Robert,

Many thanks for your letter of January 18th, received yesterday.

Yes, I well remember the names of Callahan and Horn and many other pilots who served with 85 Squadron in France in the First World War. I do not, however, remember what happened to Donald Inglis of No. 85.

As requested, I give you below a very brief summary of my varied service in the First World War.

In October, 1914, I volunteered for Overseas Service and joined the N. Z. Artillery as a gunner (the lowest form of Artilleryman). In December, 1914, I sailed with the N. Z. Expeditionary Force for the Middle East.

From January to March I served with the N.Z.A. in Egypt, training in the Desert.

On April 25th, 1915, landed on ANZAC as a corporal in the N.Z.A. I was commissioned as a Temporary 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery and transferred from Anzac to Cape Helles, to serve with the famous 29th Division in "L" Battery R.H.A. and 10th Battery R.F.A., until the Evacuation from the Dardanelles in December, 1915.

In 1916 served with the R.F.A. in Egypt and Sinai Desert against the Turkish Desert Forces threatening the Suez Canal.

In March, 1916, accompanied my Battery to France and took part in the First Battle of the Somme. Took part in various battles, including the Second Somme in September, 1916, when seriously wounded and returned to England on stretcher.

In January, 1917, passed permanently unfit for Active Service and was posted to R.A. Depot, Woolwich, as an instructor in Gunnery. I heartily disapproved of a "cushy" job in England when all my friends were in France, so wangled a transfer to the R.F.C. as a Ground Officer. Immediately my transfer was effected I wangled a course as a pilot, although I was officially medically unfit for flying or Active Service. In fact, I was still an out-patient at the Woolwich Hospital when I began my pilot's training.

Fortunately my medical papers had gone astray between the War Office and the Air Ministry. I did my Ground Training at Reading and my Flying Training at Netheravon on Maurice Farman Biplanes. My advance training was done on Avro 504 and R.E.7 Biplanes. I was then given one short flight in a Bristol Fighter and declared fit for solo, and applied for posting to France.

In June, 1917, I joined the one and only Bristol Fighter Squadron in France, No. 48, with whom I served as a pilot, and then a Flight Commander until December, 1917.

In January, 1918, I was sent home from France for a rest and took command of a Training Squadron. Again, I found a "cushy" job in England irksome with heavy fighting going on in France, and applied to be posted back to a Fighter Squadron at the Front. In February, 1918, I went back to France and took command of No. 48 Squadron as Acting Major, and commanded the Squadron until December, 1918.

Whilst serving in 48 Squadron in 1917, I was awarded the M.C., also Bar to the M.C., and the Croix de Guerre for work with the French Fighter Squadrons. In 1918 was awarded the D.F.C.

In December, 1918, after the Armistice, I returned to England to command a Flying Training School.

I look forward very much to seeing you next time I visit England.

Yours sincerely
Keith Park
