

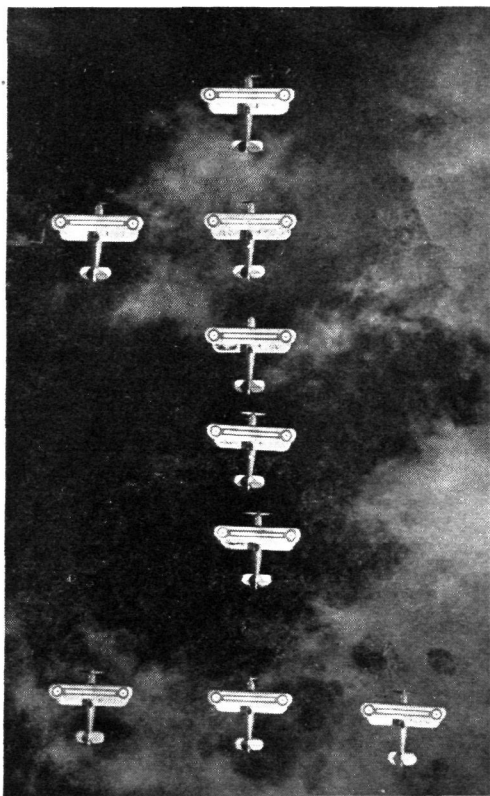


N^o 1 (Fighter) SQUADRON

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TO the student of history there is always something especially intriguing about the number One. It seems to carry with it the essence of the romance of the past. The flippant may say, "Ten sixty six and all that," but King William the First (the number in italics) was the start of an era which has made a lot of difference to the daily lives of you and me. Perhaps before very long the time will come when light-hearted young pilot officers will say, "Oh! 1914 and all that," and perhaps already it may be the fashion to regard the possession of war medals as proof of an antediluvian ignorance of modern theories of war. It is, however, very improbable that any passage of time will prevent an officer of No. 1 (Fighter) Squadron from taking pride in the number of his squadron.

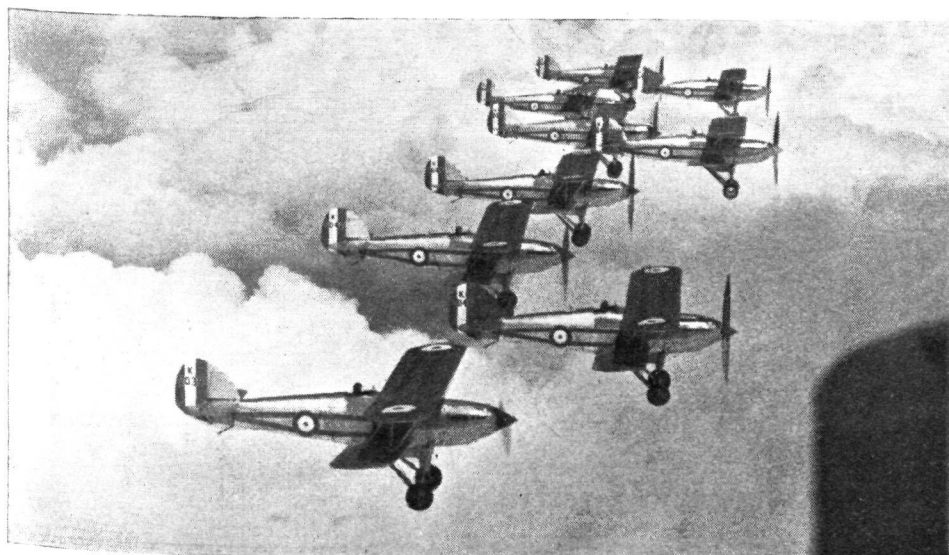
The origin of No. 1 Squadron is not crystal clear, despite the number. The question is, can the squadron claim direct descent from the original No. 1 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps? That squadron was equipped with airships, balloons and kites. Its commanding officer was Maj. (afterwards Air Commodore) E. M. Maitland, who died in the R.38 disaster. In January, 1914, the squadron was handed over, gas-bag and baggage, to the Royal Naval Air Service. That left No. 2 as the senior squadron in the R.F.C., and when war broke out, the four squadrons which crossed to France with the Old Contemptibles were Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5. Before that fateful August a beginning had been made to replace the lost No. 1 Squadron as an aeroplane unit of



"1": No. 1 (Fighter) Squadron do a little figure-writing, being naturally proud of their number. (FLIGHT Photo.)

day on which the battle of Neuve Chapelle began. On the third day of the fight the squadron suffered its first casualty, when Lt. O. M. Moullin did not return from a bombing raid on the railways at Douai and Don. On March 29 the squadron settled down at Bailleul aerodrome, and remained there until March 29, 1918, an unusual experience for any squadron in France. During the fighting for Hill 60, No. 1 Squadron first made a name for itself.

This fight took place in April, 1915, just before the second battle of Ypres and the first gas attack by the Germans. The assault on Hill 60 was to start at 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 17, and it was important that the Germans should get no news of the assault troops moved up on our side. Maj. Salmond was given the task of keeping German aeroplanes from getting a view of our position that day before the assault. He sent up a patrol at 4.30 a.m. and kept his patrols relieving each other all day, the times overlapping, until 7.15 p.m. It is not usually possible to establish an impenetrable line of defence in the air, but on this occasion no German machine got past the patrols of No. 1 Squadron, and the attack on the hill came as a surprise. Then came counter attacks, and the hill was taken and lost several times. During this fierce fighting No. 1 Squadron was given the task of spotting the enemy guns, sometimes by their



FLIGHTS LINE ABREAST: The clean lines of the Hawker "Furies" (Rolls-Royce "Kestrels") show up well in this effective formation. (FLIGHT Photo.)