

PREFACE

“History, the one sure guide to the future — that and imagination”.

Churchill

One of the best ways to learn the history of a squadron is to attempt to write it down. However, despite the fact that one needs only to venture back three quarters of a century to do so, such an undertaking is beset with difficulty. At some points there is a dearth of information, at others, a surfeit, to a large extent mirroring the involvement of the RAF in events on the world stage. Thus, while the story of No.1 Squadron RNAS is relatively well recorded, the activities of No.480 Flight in the mid-twenties passed almost unnoticed. Nevertheless, on the whole, the tale of 201 Squadron, conscientiously noted by various individuals in the F540, the F541 and in the unofficial line-book, is in good shape for two main reasons.

First, the work of Paul Warrener over a long period of time by which he has amassed a degree of knowledge, probably unequalled amongst serving squadron historians, and which has added considerable detail to the basic skeleton of the Squadron's history.

Second, the active interest of many ex-members of the unit. History is primarily about people and thus the many personal recollections which have been supplied have, I believe, conferred a far more human element to the narrative than would otherwise have been possible.

In addition to the chronological narrative, there are two other elements to the book: a reference section in the appendices which gives detail about aircraft, people and various other elements of Squadron life, and a short snapshot of 201 Squadron as it is at present.

Finally, this is not, nor was it intended to be, a thoroughly definitive history; the consideration of space alone did not permit the inclusion of every incident and event. So, for example, significant anti-submarine actions, where they are chronicled, have been included; whereas, the thousands of hours of monotonous patrolling that accompanied them, have not. What is certain though is that however the tale is told, it is one of which all who have served on the Squadron can be proud.

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