



The First Air Campaign Against the UK 1914 to 1918 Part 2

Before the beginning (Part Two)

The Sins of both Commission and Omission

Calls for an Airforce

- ▣ “We do not consider that aeroplanes will be of any possible use for war purposes”: Viscount Haldane. Parliamentary Private Secretary to Minister for War 1908
- ▣ “Air raids would be more nerve-shattering, and would do more to shake the confidence of a people than a definite threat on sea or land”: Lord Montague of Beaulieu 1911

The Birth of an Airforce (of Sorts)

- ▣ By 1912, the pace of overseas developments in aviation could no longer be ignored, and in April of that year Col. Seely, Under Secretary of State for War announced the formation of the Royal Flying Corps.
- ▣ However there was to be no unified command structure, and this would not happen until the worlds first independent air force, the Royal Air Force, was formed in April of 1918.

Turf War

- ▣ Under the existing defence act, the Army was responsible for the protection of Great Britain against threats from both Land and Air. Although they themselves had not at that time evolved a coherent strategy for dealing with any form of aerial attack.
- ▣ The long established inter-service rivalry between the War Office and the Admiralty, only added to this sense of confusion.

The Parting of the Ways

- ▣ After the declaration of War in August 1914, the Admiralty announced that it was forming the naval wing into the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS).
- ▣ This was the death knell for any hope of unifying the Royal Flying Corps. Which then became solely the Army's air arm.

The War Horse



Royal Aircraft Factory BE2

Rasenkrieg

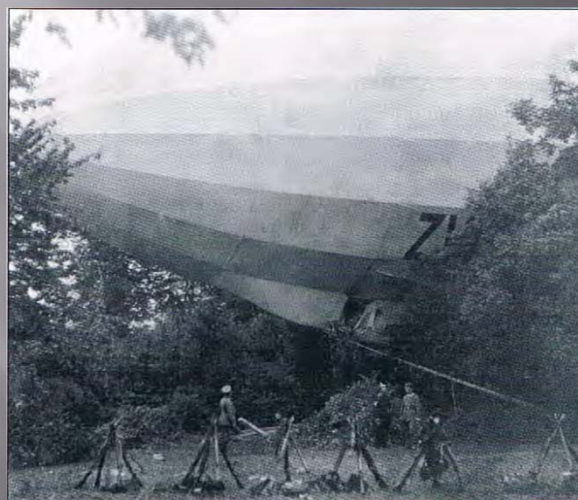
- ❑ The British Armed Forces were not the only ones to suffer from inter-service rivalry when it came to matters of aviation and air defence/offence.
- ❑ The German Army Airship Service and The Naval Airship Division constantly bickering over resources, and about who could inflict what upon whom.

Kapitän zur See Peter Strasser



Able Commander, Courageous Leader but Bad News to the Crews

First Blows



ZVI Inglorious End

Antwerp 26 August 1914



Antwerp 1-2 September 1914



Sachsen (LZ17) DELAG

The Empire Strikes Back (First)



Sopwith Tabloid 168 flown by Lt 'Reggie' Marix
in Raid on Dusseldorf Landing Ground 8 October 1914

First Blood

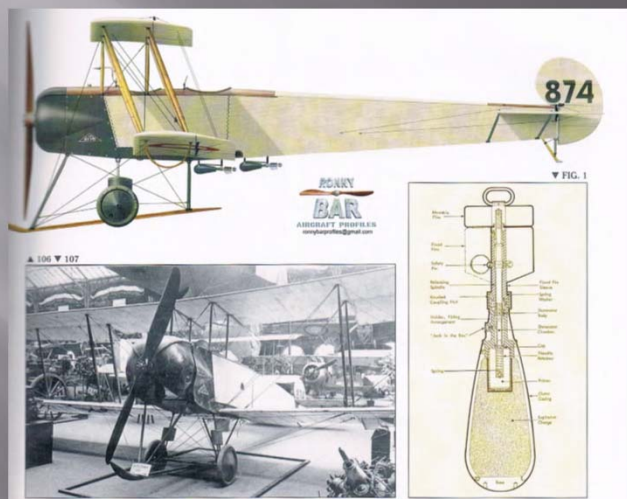


The tangled remains of ZIX

A Ripping Yarn The First Strategic Bombing Raid



The Weapons



The Raid



Raid on Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby





The Beginning (Again)

The Ghost of Christmas Past

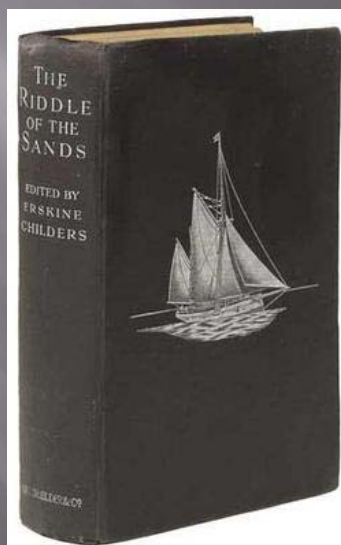
- ▣ The Terson family's Christmas Dinner is ruined!
- ▣ The Wedding at Cliffe goes off with a bang!
- ▣ But the rest of that Christmas is an anti-climax. Unless of course you are a player in the impromptu Christmas British/German Soccer match in no-mans land, or took part in the Cuxhaven Raid!

But before that, this



Robert Erskine Childers

The Riddle of the Sands



The Cuxhaven Raid



The Cuxhaven Raid





German Reaction

- ▣ After the raid there was no response by the German High Seas Fleet. By contrast, the Marine-Fliegerabteilung German naval air arm was very active.
- ▣ Seaplanes and airships set out to discover the position of the attacking force. One reconnaissance seaplane, a Friedrichshafen FF.19 (No. 85) stayed aloft for five hours 52 minutes, a remarkable achievement for the period. Another seaplane from Heligoland spotted the British, but due to not having radio had to return to the island to report.
- ▣ Sighting was also made by the airship L6, but due to a generator failure reporting was not initially made.

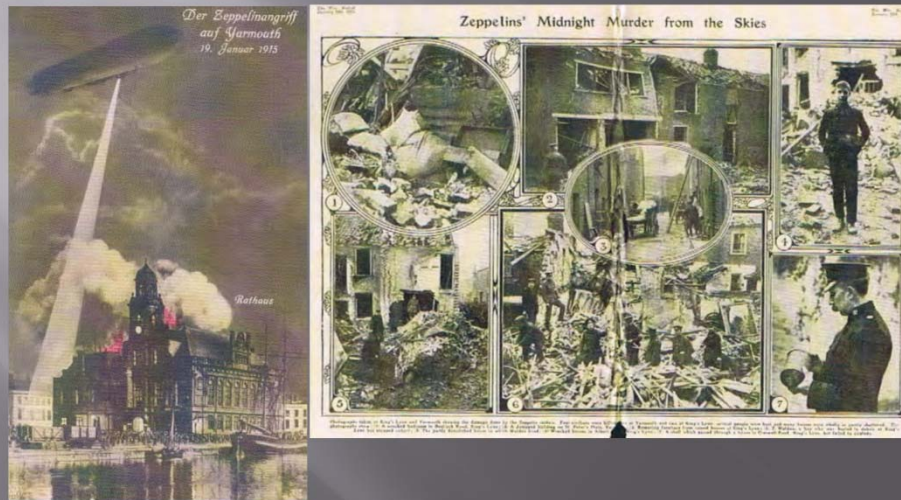
- ▣ Further attacks on the retiring force were attempted by submarines U-20, U-22 and U-30, but the manoeuvres of the British Fleet prevented any success. The British force returned to home waters without loss or damage.

Conclusion

- ▣ The Cuxhaven raid was an imaginative endeavour, showing the willingness amongst naval and military leaders to adopt new technology, and prefigured the air-sea battles of the future. It was a boost to British morale, and pointed the way to ways in which aircraft could be made more effective.
- ▣ The Cuxhaven raid marks the first employment of the seaplanes of the Naval Air Service in an attack on the enemy's harbours from the sea, and, apart altogether from the results achieved, is an occasion of historical moment. Not only so, but for the first time in history a naval attack has been delivered simultaneously above, on, and from below the surface of the water.



19/20 January 1915 The Rise of the Baby Killers



- ❑ An Imperial Order dated 12 February authorised the bombing of London's docks, which was interpreted by the German General Staff as permitting bombing targets east of Charing Cross. This interpretation was formally accepted by the Kaiser on 5 May 1915.
- ❑ The first Navy attempts to bomb London, made by L 8, failed owing to poor weather. The first was made on 26 February but turned back due to headwinds; a second attempt ended when the airship flew below the cloud base to check its position and found itself over Belgian army positions near Ostend: riddled by rifle fire, it came down near Tienen and was destroyed by the wind.
- ❑ A four-airship raid by the Army on 17 March ran into fog and was abandoned, one airship bombing Calais and being damaged on landing. On 20 March the three remaining Army airships set off to bomb Paris; one was lost on the return journey. Two Navy raids failed due to bad weather on 14 and 15 April, and it was decided to delay further attempts until the more capable P-class Zeppelins were in service

- ▣ The Army received the first of these, LZ 38, and Erich Linnarz commanded it on a raid on Ipswich on 29–30 April and another on Southend on 9–10 May.
- ▣ LZ 38 also attacked Dover and Ramsgate on 16–17 May, before returning to bomb Southend on 26–27 May. These four raids killed six people and injured six, causing property damage estimated at £16,898.
- ▣ Twice Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) aircraft tried to intercept LZ 38 but on both occasions it was either able to out climb the aircraft or was already at too great an altitude for the aircraft to intercept; the B.E.2 took about 50 minutes to climb to 10,000 feet.

The Fight with LZ 39



- ▣ On 30 May, Captain Linnarz again commanded LZ 38 on the first London raid; LZ 37 was also to be part of the raid but suffered structural damage early on and returned to Namur. Flying from Evere LZ 38 crossed the English coast near Margate at 21:42 before turning west over Southend.
- ▣ London police were warned of an incoming raid around 23:00; a few minutes later small incendiaries began to fall.
- ▣ In total some 120 bombs were dropped on a line stretching from Stoke Newington south to Stepney and then north toward Leytonstone.
- ▣ Seven people were killed and 35 injured; 41 fires were started, burning out seven properties and the total damage was assessed at £18,596.

You Stand a Better Chance at the Front?

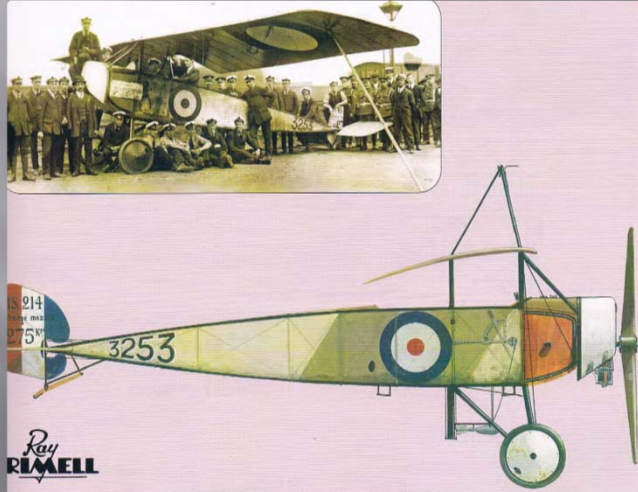


- ▣ The naval airships also tried to raid London. On 4 June strong winds led the commander of L 10 to misjudge his position, and the bombs were dropped on Gravesend.
- ▣ L 9 was also diverted by the weather on 6-7 June, attacking Hull instead of London and causing considerable damage.
- ▣ On the same night an Army raid of three Zeppelins also failed because of the weather; in an added blow, as the airship returned to Evere they ran into RNAS aircraft flying from Veurne, Belgium.

Sub Lt R A J Warneford



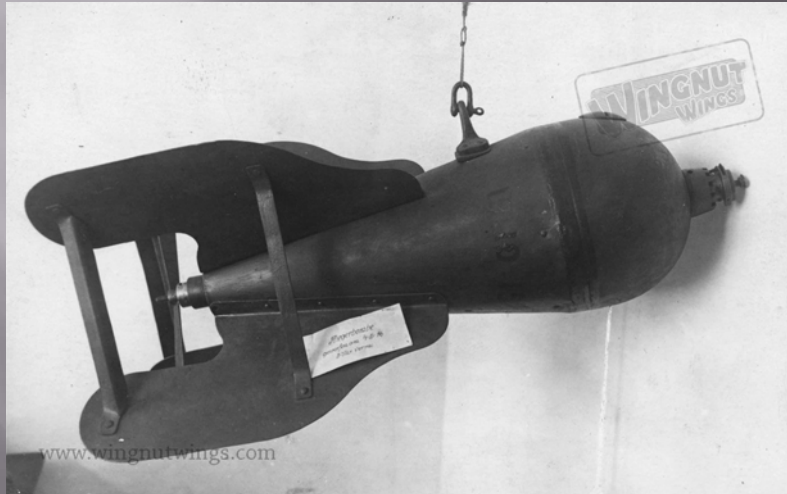
More Ripping Yarns



Henry Farman HF27



HERL Bomb



The Mühler's Tale



Warneford Sees it Through



Giant Killers



But What of LZ39? You Can Run, But You Can't Hide



- ❑ After an ineffective attack by L 10 on Tyneside on 15-16 June the short summer nights discouraged further raids for some months, and the remaining Army Zeppelins were reassigned to the Eastern and Balkan fronts.
- ❑ The Navy resumed raids on Britain in August. On 9-10 August, four Zeppelins were directed against London; none reached its target and one, L 12, was damaged by ground fire near Dover and came down in the sea off Zeebrugge. Despite eight attacks by RNAS aircraft the airship was towed into Ostend where it was later dismantled.
- ❑ The four-Zeppelin raid was repeated on 12-13 August; again only one airship, L 10, made landfall, dropping its bombs on Harwich. A third four-Zeppelin raid tried to reach London on 17-18 August; two turned back with mechanical problems, one bombed Ashford, Kent in the belief it was Woolwich, but L 10 became the first Navy airship to reach London.
- ❑ L 10 was also mis-navigated, mistaking the reservoirs of the Lea Valley for the Thames, and consequently dropped its bombs on Walthamstow and Leytonstone. 10 people were killed, 48 injured and property damage was estimated at £30,750. Guns were fired at L 10 and a few aircraft took off in pursuit, but the Zeppelin suffered no damage.

Do You Know What Happens when You Make the Gods Angry?



7/8 September 1915



Kapitänleutnant Heinrich Mathy

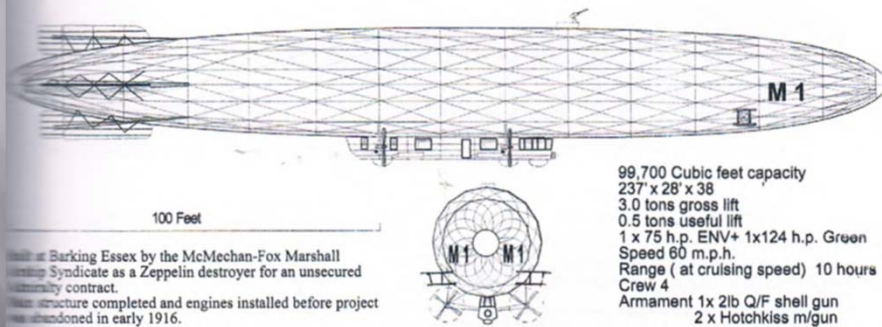


Churchill in the Wilderness

- ▣ Despite RNAS's early success, Churchill's policy of pre-emptive attack did not survive his tenure as First Sea Lord after the Gallipoli disaster.
- ▣ His successor, Arthur J Balfour was a man cut from entirely different cloth. A prognosticator and prevaricator, whose preferred method of action was inaction; or if pressed to form a committee.
- ▣ Under him Admiralty policy was to change focus to development of rigid airships, none of which rendered any useful war service.
- ▣ He is said to have wasted more than £40 Million on this Policy!

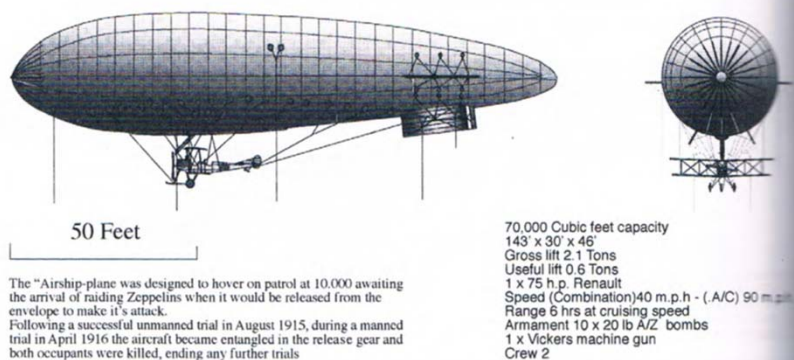
McMechan Anti- Zeppelin Airship - 1915

Marshall-Fox-MacMechan A/S Syndicate - Barking, Essex

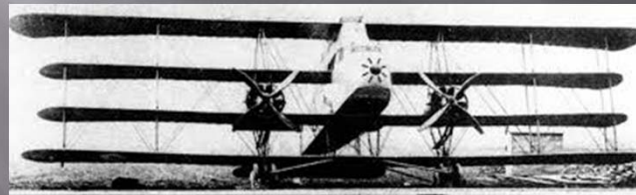
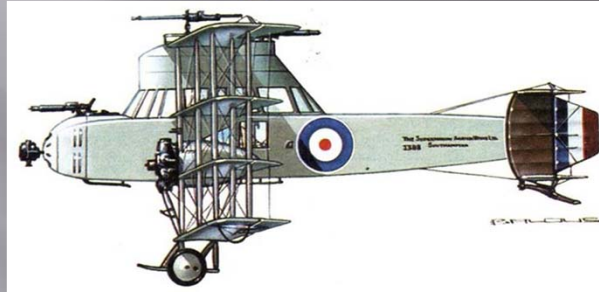


"AP-1" Anti-Zeppelin "Airship-plane" - 1915

R.N.A.S. Constructional Facility, Kingsnorth



Pemberton-Billing PB31c 'Nighthawk'



1916

- ▣ Aerial defences against Zeppelins were haphazard, and divided between the RNAS and the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), with the Navy engaging enemy airships approaching the coast while the RFC took responsibility once the enemy had crossed the coastline.
- ▣ Initially the War Office believed that the Zeppelins used a layer of inert gas to protect themselves from incendiary bullets, and discouraged the use of such ammunition in favour of bombs.

- ▣ Ten home defence squadrons were organised by February 1916, with London's defences assigned to No. 19 RAS at Sutton's Farm and Hainault Farm (renamed No. 39 (Home Defence) Squadron in April 1916, who were also allocated North Weald Bassett airfield in August 1916).
- ▣ The number of aircraft varied: in February there were only eight squadrons at less than half-full strength, and by June the number of squadrons had been cut to six and only No. 39 Squadron was at full strength and equipped with the B.E.2c aircraft, which was being outclassed on the Western Front, but provided a stable gun platform suited to night fighting.

- ▣ The first raid of 1916 was carried out by the German Navy. Nine Zeppelins were sent to Liverpool on the night of 31 January - 1 February.
- ▣ A combination of poor weather, difficult navigation and mechanical problems scattered the aircraft across the Black Country hitting Tipton, Wednesbury and Walsall. A total of 61 people were reported killed and 101 injured by the raid. Fifteen of the fatalities occurred in the town of Tipton.
- ▣ L 21, captained by Max Dietrich, caused the majority of the damage. Despite ground fog, 22 aircraft took off to find the Zeppelins but none succeeded. Six aircraft were damaged beyond repair and two pilots were killed when attempting to land. One airship, L 19, crashed in the North Sea because of engine failure and damage from Dutch ground-fire: all 16 crew were lost.

Ranken Darts



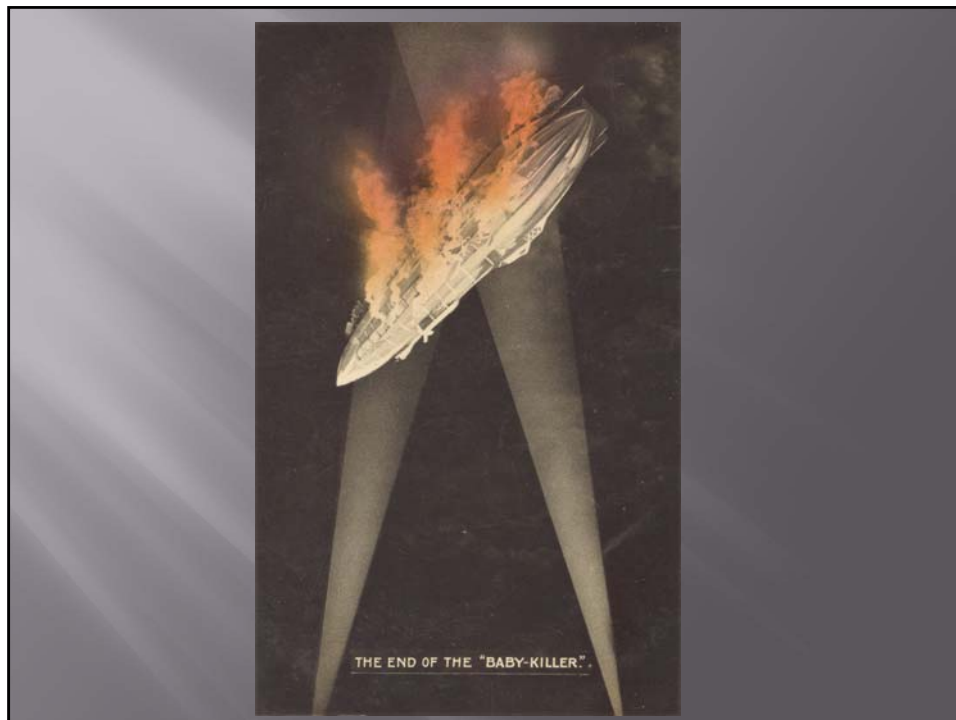
1 April 1916



- ▣ On 28-29 July the first raid to include one of the new R-class Zeppelins, L 31, took place. These were 660 ft long, with a capacity of 2,000,000 cu ft, powered by six engines and capable of operating at 13,000 ft, and could carry up to four tons of bombs.
- ▣ The 10-Zeppelin raid achieved very little; four turned back early and the rest wandered over a fog-shrouded landscape before giving up.
- ▣ Adverse weather dispersed two raids on 30-31 July and 2-3 August. On 8-9 August, two Zeppelins were part of a nine airship raid on Hull.
- ▣ The sixth successful London raid was on 24-25 August when 13 Navy Zeppelins were launched and Heinrich Mathy's L 31 reached London; flying above low clouds, 36 bombs were dropped in 10 minutes on West Ferry Road, Deptford Dry Dock, the station at Norway Street and homes in Greenwich, Eltham and Plumstead.
- ▣ Nine people were killed, 40 injured and £130,203 of damage was caused. L 31 suffered no damage in the attack but several weeks of repair work were needed following a hard landing.

William Leefe-Robinson VC





- ▣ The loss of SL 11 ended the German Army's interest in raids on Britain.
- ▣ The German Navy remained aggressive, and a 12-Zeppelin raid was launched on 23–24 September. Eight older airships bombed targets in the Midlands and Northeast, while four M-class Zeppelins (L 30, L 31, L 32, and L 33) attacked London.
- ▣ L 30 did not even cross the coast, dropping its bombs at sea. L 31 approached London from the south, dropped a few bombs on Kenley and Mitcham and was picked up by searchlights.
- ▣ Forty-one bombs were then dropped in rapid succession over Streatham, killing seven and wounding 27. More bombs were dropped on Brixton before crossing the river and dropping 10 bombs on Leyton, killing another eight people and injuring 30. L 31 then headed home.

- ▣ L 33 dropped a few incendiaries over Upminster before losing its way and making several turns, heading over London and dropping bombs on Bromley at around midnight.
- ▣ As the bombs began to explode, the Zeppelin was hit by an anti-aircraft shell fired from the guns at either Beckton, Wanstead, or Victoria Park despite being at 13,000 ft.
- ▣ Dropping bombs now to shed weight, a large number fell on homes in Botolph Road and Bow Road. As the airship headed towards Chelmsford it continued to lose height, coming under fire at Kelvedon Hatch and briefly exchanging fire with a B.E.2c.

Mathy Makes His Mark



- ▣ A raid on 27-28 November avoided London, instead targeting the Midlands and Tyneside. Nine Navy airships took part.
- ▣ The bombing was largely ineffective, killing four, injuring 37 and causing £12,482 damage.
- ▣ Two airships were shot down by the defending aircraft: L 34 was brought down in flames off the coast at Hartlepool by 2nd Lt. Ian Pyott flying a B.E.2c and L 21 was attacked by three aircraft near Yarmouth.
- ▣ Flt Sub-Lt. Edward Pulling was credited with the victory and awarded a DSO, the other pilots receiving the DFC.

LVG CIV



Half Time

- ▣ There were no further raids in 1916 although the Navy lost three more craft, all on 28 December:
- ▣ SL 12 was destroyed at Ahlhorn by strong winds after sustaining damage in a poor landing, and at Tøndern L 24 crashed into the shed while landing: the resulting fire destroyed both L 24 and the adjacent L 17.

TO BE CONCLUDED