

"The Hollies"

Old Warden

Beds

June 4<sup>th</sup>  
1934

Dear Sir,

In to-day's 'Telegraph' I notice  
your connection with the Airship Branch  
of the R. N. A. S.

In June, 1916, my brother  
to B. Ames was drowned off Plymouth  
owing to the forced descent of the Naval  
Airship which was flying from Stoo to  
Plymouth.

I should like very much to  
have a full account of the disaster and  
I wondered if you would be kind enough  
to help me to procure it.

I am, sir

Yours Faithfully

Gertrude Tomkinson

S. Maurice Evans A.M.: D.A.

London

S.E. 13.

10th June, 1934.

Dear Madam,

I have received your letter of the 4th inst; which was sent on to me by the "Daily Telegraph". Unfortunately I am unable to help you in any way at present. I have looked very carefully through a mass of material in my possession relating to British Airships, but as this is mainly technical I have been unable to find any reference to the loss of your Brother's ship in June 1916.

Hoping to be able to help you, I spent some hours at the British Museum endeavouring to trace an account of the disaster, but, I regret to say, without success, nor could I find the particular casualty list which contains his name.

If there are any further particulars available, e.g. the type and number of the airship, the actual date of loss etc; I may be able to trace a reference to it, but it does not appear promising. At one time I could obtain information from the official records at the Air Ministry, but since the disaster to R 101, when a number of my friends and colleagues perished, my connections with the R.A.F. have been severed.

I was stationed at Kingsnorth near Hoo for sometime during the War also, but was not drafted there before the end of 1916. I am extremely sorry that I have not been able to help you in your enquiry but if ever I do come across any reference to that loss, I will let you know about it at once.

Yours truly,

Mrs G. Tomkinson.  
"The Hollies"  
Old Warden.  
Beds.

"The Hollies"  
Old Warden  
Beds  
June 11<sup>th</sup>  
1934

Dear Sir,

I am indeed grateful for the kindness you have shown in trying to find particulars of the loss of the airship to which my brother was attached. It was thoughtlessness, on my part, to have omitted further particulars.

I think that the notes on this snapshot are correct and my brother's diary may help.

It was, we believe, merely lack of petrol which forced them down.

There was one survivor, whom I visited at Dor, but he was too distressed to give me any account of the loss.

Yours truly

Bertie Tomkinson.

S. Maurice Evans. A. R. J. B.A.

"Rosslyn"  
114 Manor Park  
S. B. 13.



**MONDAY**

February						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
..	..	..	..	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	..	..	..

1934

February

**5**

March						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
..	..	..	..	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

1934

21-6-34

Dear Madam.

Will you please accept my apologies for the delay, due to my being out of town, in acknowledging your letter of the 11th and the safe receipt of your Mother's diary.

I have not yet had any opportunity of looking any further into the matter, but as soon as I can I will do so, and hope that with the further information you have given me, I will be able to find some record of the disaster.

Yours faithfully

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"The Hollies"

Old Warden

Beds

29<sup>th</sup> June  
1934

Dear Sir,

I thank you very much for your further letter and for returning my brother's diary and the photograph.

It is very generous of you to have continued the search. I felt quite sure that the fuller particulars would have led to some record of the loss.

I will write, as you suggest to the Air Ministry and I will let you know, at once, when I hear from them.

Yours truly

Gertrude Tomkinson.

S. Maurice Evans. A.R.S.O.A.

114 Manor Park

S. E. 13.

SME/JP.

24th July, 1934.

Mrs. G. Tomkinson,  
"The Hollies,"  
Old Warden,  
Bed s.

Dear Madam,

Please accept my apologies for letting so much time pass before writing to you again with regard to the loss of your brother's airship - C.8.

I have spent a considerable time endeavouring to get information about it and have been to the British Museum Library a number of times, and also to the Guildhall and the Royal Aeronautical Society. Unhappily I have been entirely unsuccessful and have not been able to trace any reference whatever to the disaster. It seems an extraordinary thing to me that there appears to be no record of it, and I, too, am disappointed, as I am afraid you will be, for I have become quite keen to find some record, not only to help you, but to add to my account of the work of the Airship during the war.

The only thing I can suggest now is that you write to the Historical Branch of the Air Ministry. (Captain Morris used to be in charge but I do not know if he is still), and if you put the facts before them I am almost sure they will be able to give you some particulars of the loss of the C.8. I hope if you are successful you will be good enough to let me know about it.

I am so sorry that I have not been able to help you, and that it has taken me so long to arrive at such a negative report. I am returning your brother's diary and the photograph herewith.

Yours truly,

Encs.



Copy.

Air Ministry  
WC2  
20 Aug: 1934

347464/34/S.7.(a)

Madam. With reference to your letter of the 31<sup>st</sup> ult. requesting an account of the loss of naval airship No C.8. on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1916. I am directed by to inform you that, according to the records of this dept. after the airship left Kingsnorth at 8 pm on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1916. no report of her movements was received until she was sighted at 8.5 am the following day. At 10.55 am. a further report was received from Prawle Pt. Signal Sta stating that the airship was seen to be in difficulties & nearly down on the water.

Messages were immediately sent to patrol vessels in the vicinity to proceed to her assistance & at 11.45 am H.M.S. 'Larne' reached the airship & took her in tow 24 miles South of Start Point., but it was subsequently found impossible to save the a. & she was sunk at 7.16 pm

The only survivor was the W/T. operator who, being a non-swimmer, remained with the A. & was rescued by a French vessel & afterwards transferred to H.M.S. 'Larne'. According to <sup>the</sup> evidence of the survivor the three remaining members of the crew, 3/4 hour prior to the arrival of the French vessel, decided to jump overboard as otherwise the A. would have sunk. A thorough search was carried out but no trace could be found of the remainder of the crew.

Yr. G. Tankinson

The Hollies, Old Warden Beds

I am Madam

Yr. Obedient servant  
J. Howarth



"The Hollies"

Old Warden,

Biggleswade,

Beds.

25<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1935.

Dear Sir,

I must apologise and beg ~~you~~ you to excuse my impolite delay in giving you the result of the enquiries I made from the Air Ministry.

The two letters they sent to me are enclosed.

Their second letter gives the reason. My brother had told me that the commandet would take too little petrol. I quite well remember him saying "We shall have to swim to save ourselves ultimately."

Yours truly,

Gertie Jonkinson.

S. Maurice Evans Esq. A. R. I. B. A.

"Rosslyn"

114 Manor Park

3.8.13.