



SECOND LIEUTENANT RICHARD EVISON KIMBELL

60th Squadron. Royal Flying Corps & 14th (King's) Hussars

Service number *unknown*

16th April 1917, age 19 missing over Arras

Brown's Copse Cemetery, Roeux, France

Born in Great Brington, 1898

Son of Eaton and Annie Rebecca Kimbell

The Grange, Great Brington

Brothers – Eaton, Harold and Sidney (all school age).

Living descendant Diana Smith, Hartwell.

Little Brington School then Eaglehurst, Denhurst and Sandhurst

October 1916 – Passed out of Sandhurst with a commission in the 14th Hussars and then transferred to the Royal Flying Corps.

Victory Medal and British War Medal.

April 1917 – reported missing, Battle of Arras.

(note: in the diaries of Alexander Morley for the entry of 29th April 1917 written at Noeux-Les-Mines near Arras it records that “*Dick Kimbell is reported missing but he remembers Dick as a boy riding a small pony at cub hunting*”)

Dominance of the air over Arras was essential for reconnaissance and the British carried out many aerial patrols. Trenchard's aircraft, acting in support of ground forces, carried out artillery spotting, photography of trench systems and bombing. Aerial observation was hazardous work as, for best results, the aircraft had to fly at slow speeds and low altitude over the German defences. It became even more dangerous with the arrival of the "Red Baron", Manfred von Richthofens with his highly experienced and better-equipped *Jagdgeschwader 1* (Richthofen's Flying Circus) in March 1917. Its deployment led to sharply increased losses of Allied pilots and April 1917 was to become known as Bloody April. One German infantry officer later wrote "during these days, there was a whole series of dogfights, which almost invariably ended in defeat for the British since it was Richthofen's squadron they were up against. Often five or six planes in succession would be chased away or shot down in flames". The average flying life of a RFC pilot in Arras in April was 18 hours. Between 4 and 8 April, the RFC lost 75 aircraft and 105 aircrew on operations. The casualties created a pilot shortage and replacements were sent to the front straight from flying school: during the same period, 56 aircraft were crashed by inexperienced RFC pilots.



