

A SOLDIER OF THE SKY

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A Soldier of the Sky by George F. Campbell

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GEORGE F. CAMPBELL

**A SOLDIER
OF THE SKY**



CAPTAIN GEORGE F. CAMPBELL, R. F. C.
"Fighting Scout of the Air."

A SOLDIER OF THE SKY

By

CAPTAIN GEORGE F. CAMPBELL

of the Royal Flying Corps

Illustrated



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1917

DEDICATED
TO
ALL WHO HAVE ANSWERED THE CALL
OF PATRIOTIC DUTY
IN
THE WAR OF THE ALLIES
FOR HUMANITY

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INTRODUCTION

This is the authentic story of a British airman and his remarkable experiences as a "fighting scout" in the present war.

But it is more than a mere recital of personal experiences in the Flying Corps. The circumstances under which the author served his country in the air make it a document of thrilling human interest.

Captain George Frederick Campbell became "a soldier of the sky" to avenge the loss of his entire family in the war. Already a soldier of the King before the war broke out in August, 1914, he was serving in India as a lieutenant of the Highland Light Infantry when his regiment was ordered to the European front, immediately after war was declared by Great Britain against Germany. In a few weeks he was fighting to stem the Hun advance on Paris. His father, Col. Colin Campbell, of

the Scots Guards, and his three brothers were already with their regiments at the front.

Then, first, his father fell, killed in the memorable retreat from Mons. At the battle of Loos, his brothers, Bruce and Jamie Campbell, both lieutenants, fell with their faces to the foe; and in a trench raid not long after his remaining brother, Capt. Blaikie Campbell, was killed. The menfolk of his family were gone, but an invalid mother and a loving sister remained to mourn in the old ancestral home in the Mull of Kintyre, back in bonnie Scotland. Then his sister, bent on an errand of mercy, embarked on the ill-fated "Arabic," and was counted among the lost when the vessel was sunk by a German torpedo. This final crushing blow killed the mother. The author, then a lieutenant of the Highlanders, was left alone.

At the battle of Neuve Chapelle in 1915, Capt. Campbell was severely wounded, having his hipbone shattered by a bayonet thrust through the abdomen. Several months in hospital followed, during which he brooded over his losses and meditated revenge. On his recovery, he was declared unfit for further duty

in the trenches with his regiment. He then sought and found his opportunity for further service, in the Royal Flying Corps.

For two years, until again severely wounded, he fought the Hun in the air. Only a part of what he did is modestly, though thrillingly, recounted in these pages. And in justice to the gallant author it must be said that it was only after repeated urgings that he consented to tell the tale.

Many German aeroplanes have fallen before this intrepid "fighting scout." Just how many, no man can tell. But he has officially participated in bringing down eighteen, and several more are unofficially credited to him or to his assistance. Few men have passed through such an experience as his and live to tell the tale.

Capt. Campbell probably owes his life, as well as much of his military success, to the fact that he comes of hardy, fighting stock. His grandfather served gallantly as a British officer in the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and the Crimean War of 1859, and bore honorable scars to the day of his death.