

OLDBERG DOWNS TOP BRISTOL CREW IN FAILED BALLOON ATTACK
Raymond Grant Dies of Critical Wound on 11th Mission!
Lang Misses Balloon, Puller Loses Lang

12 July, 1917, 4 miles in British lines (February 12, 2000, Scott J.'s apt.): It was the worst balloon assignment they could have asked for; Vz. Paul Oldberg (Scott J., 9/3) and Fritz Lang (Barton, 1/0) were sent after a balloon floating only 300 above heavy ground fire, deep in enemy lines, defended by capable planes, one of which was flown by a top crew.

The Bristol 190's flew to meet the attackers and intercepted them a quarter mile short of the balloon. Quick shots were exchanged before the Albatros DIII's dove to the attack. Lang misjudged his approach and was forced to take a long-range shot; Oldberg, not realizing his wingman had chosen to fire on the balloon so quickly, could only manage a 400 shot. Both attackers missed and Lang was chewed up by 13 hits from heavy AA guns.

The balloon dropped to 150 and the Huns flew in for one last, desperate and almost suicidal attack. Fortunately, they were saved by a lack of communication by the British.

Flight Leader Lt. Raymond Grant and his observer Sgt. Howard Shields (Stephen, 11/0, 9/1) failed to make it clear to wingman Lt. Scott Puller and 2Lt. Bart Osworth (Stephen Dale, 1/0, 1/0) that he was to stay clear of the enemy during their actual attack so the AA could fire freely. So Puller jumped on Lang's tail for a 200' shot, not realizing that he most likely saved his enemy's life.

Oldberg, the veteran, recognized the situation and flew in alongside his wingman to gain the same immunity from ground fire. Both Germans fired quick bursts and scored a total of 6 hits, but it was not enough to flame the balloon which was hauled down to safety. Heavily damaged, Lang's Albatros DIII limped homeward, closely followed by both Bristols. Puller fired from the rear and scored still more hits while Grant zoomed for a tailing position and rattled off a short burst. Oldberg saw his opportunity and dove hard to save his wingman.

Observer Howard Shields, himself a veteran of 9 dogfights, saw Oldberg's Albatros coming but could not get a clear shot at his attacker. The German's burst scored 5 hits, one of them a critical wound in Grant's right arm. The Bristol pilot passed out instantly at an altitude of 350' and both he and his observer died in the crash.

Despite scoring a kill, Oldberg knew that his failed mission was over and his wingman was still in very bad shape, so he led his team back across the lines. Puller and Osworth could do little but permit them to escape, then fly home to mourn the loss of their flight leader.

THE LATEST DIRT

Indy's Kankakee Memories

Well, here they are. The not-very-well-thought-out, top three memories of Indy players going to Kankakee. I will not be held responsible for minor things such as correct dates. They are simply listed to give credibility to otherwise completely stupid events. Nor do I stand behind the specific times or places. They are simply listed to fill out column space that I cannot otherwise occupy with coherent thought. And many of these will qualify as you had to be there stories and if you weren't there, too bad. Just imagine how entertaining it must have been. I can, however, verify the authenticity of each specific incident detailed herein. In most cases I was there. I personally witnessed these various acts of blatant stupidity, and trust me at the time we howled with laughter. Blame, however, has been shifted to others whenever possible to protect the author. So, rest assured that these events are not made up. Though some of us may wish they were.

3. Stephen Flies Fokker Ace Into Entire Flight Of Salmson Bombers.

Kankakee, 1996. 15 Salmson bombers, to be precise. With twin Lewis gun mounts. Most of them within firing range; some within firing range of the front gun as well. As Stephens ace flew into the jaws of death, it occurred to him that no one else was following. This at first seemed strange, until the remainder of the bomber flight closed into formation. Upon reflection (which Stephen had plenty of time for, given the size of the enemy formation), he reckoned that the odds were roughly 45 guns to 2, in favor of the bombers. He was right. His ace died a horrid, fiery death.

2. Scott Jones 100 MPH Run On Interstate 65, Just Because He Could

Kankakee, 1994. In northwestern Indiana there lies a barren stretch of roadway which connects our fair city with Chicago. Flat and featureless, it beckons to both the speed demon and the tax-collecting cop paid to apprehend him. On said stretch of I65, the normally sedate Scott Jones was travelling a wee bit faster than Scott Jones would normally drive anything under any conditions. His otherwise lucid judgement was clouded by the presence of three fellow Indy members urging him to press on and the fact that he was driving his new-at-the-time-but-now-a-junkbox (see event #1) Chevy Cavalier. Disgusted with the fact that the Cavalier, laden with passengers Stephen, Brian and Dory, would only manage 94 MPH on level terrain, the happy crew chanted in unison for the century mark. With the help of a hill on the north side of Lafayette, we achieved the dual miracle of 100 MPH and staying out of jail.

1. Watching Scott Pour Oil On The Ground, Some Of It In The Vicinity Of His Cavalier's Engine.

Kankakee, 1995. Stephen and Scott Jones in Scott's Cavalier returning from Kankakee. Stephen glances at the dashboard

"Hey. Whats that funny looking light?"

"Nothing. Just the oil warning light. Comes on by itself now and then."

"This happens all the time?"

"Oh, yeah. But when the engine starts sputtering, I always stop and put another quart in."

"Just a quart?"

"Yeah. I never put expensive oil in from these roadside gas stations. Its just 79 cents at WalMart."

By a merciful act of God, the Cavalier was still running when we pulled into the Bob Evans restaurant on the north side of Lebanon. Brian, driving separately, also pulled over so we could lunch together. Scott walks to the nearby gas station and returns with two quarts of oil. Brian speaks.

"It may be pretty low, Scott. It should hold at least 3 quarts, maybe more."

"You kidding? They wanted \$1.19 each!"

Scott opens the car hood and finds the only piece of the automobile that he can readily identify - the oil cap. The hot, smoking engine begs for a drink. Scott opens the oil and immediately turns the bottle upside down. Smoke rolls out from under the hood as the precious liquid spills over the manifold, valve cover and white-hot exhaust and drains on the ground. The possibility of flames bursting out does not worry Scott, who continues to pour oil like a ruptured fire hydrant. Stephen whispers to Brian that he might want to stay within sight of our car til we get to Indianapolis, as we are still a long way off and Stephen does not want to walk. After approximately 4 seconds, Scott slings the oil bottle, still half full, over his shoulder. Stephen and Brian take cover, laughing hysterically. The second bottle takes roughly 3 more seconds. We calculate that the 8-10 ounces of oil in the crankcase should run out somewhere around I-65 and Michigan road, which is close enough. Scott remains unconcerned and fully enjoys his meal, neglecting to thank the Lord that his car runs at all.

Postscript: the Cavalier was mercifully wrecked two years later.

SKYWRITING

RED BARON FIGHT XII DRAWS A CROWD Indys annual party commemorating the final flight of Manfred von Richtofen is growing fast. Two players from Chicago have expressed interest in attending and two more from St. Louis, in addition to the extra large local contingent. Well have to select a spacious venue for this years edition and have some cool prizes available.

MINUTES FROM FEB 12th GAMING: Scott J., Barton, Stephen Dale, Dory, Stephen and Tom were on hand for a total of 5 games. Dory played the first 3 games and left, then Stephen played the final 2 after being sick the first half of the day. Tom watched and learned but did not participate. \$6 were donated to the squadron fund which now stands at \$22.70.

DOLPHIN DUET ESCAPES HESS BROTHERS Mistake-Ridden Fokker Fliers Miss Big Chance

24 August, 1918, Over the front (February 12, 2000, Scott Jones apt.): The Hess brothers, Aron (Stephen, 36/20) and Arthur (Stephen Dale, 7/1), let two heavily damaged Sopwith Dolphins slip away from them through a series of missed shots, jammed guns and tactical errors.

The fight started at 10,000 feet over No Man's Land, with Sgt. Murray Scott (Bart, 1/0) finding himself under fire from both Fokker DVII's. Aron Hess missed his first shot entirely while Arthur scored half a dozen tail hits. The Dolphin flight leader, 2Lt. Charles Gilligan (Scott J., 3/0) crept up underneath Aron and scored a few hits in the opening moments of the fight.

Sgt. Scott again lost combat initiative and was attacked by both DVII's - Aron pumped in 9 bottom hits while Arthur chipped in another 7 from the tail. Gilligan did his best to defend his wingman and scored another 6 hits into Aron's BMW-powered DVII.

Now in serious trouble, Sgt. Scott dove hard for his own lines and shook the quadruple ace off his tail. Arthur managed to follow the Dolphin down and get off another burst before finding himself outmaneuvered. Despite absorbing 34 hits and never getting off a single shot, Sgt. Scott extricated his critically damaged Dolphin from the scrap and landed in successfully on his home field. Gilligan tried to chase down Aron Hess and renew the fight, but the tables were soon turned and he was on the defensive.

Hess tailed the Sopwith for seven consecutive turns but was plagued with gun jams on short bursts at 5% jamming chance! With neither Spandau operative and Gilligan now streaking away at 130 mph, Aron gave up the pursuit and flew home. Neither Fokker pilot was able to submit a victory claim.

Arthur maneuvered poorly and missed what would surely have been the fatal shot on Sgt. Scott, and Aron failed to double the tail attack with his wingman twice in a row and lost the tail position on an easy kill. The Germans are both being considered for a transfer to a training unit. The mission reflected so poorly on Aron that his already-approved Pour le Merite medal has again been delayed.