



Louis Elmo Marie Belloc

Second Lieutenant, 209 Squadron Royal Air Force

Died 26th August 1918 aged 20

Louis was the eldest child of Hilaire and Elodie Belloc of Kings Land, Shipley. He was born in Oxford on 23rd September 1898. The 1901 Census shows Louis was 3 years old and living with his parents at Cheyne Walk, London. Hilaire and Elodie's children were **Louis** (1897), Eleanor (1901), Hilary Anthony (1903) and Peter Gilbert (1905). Louis attended the Roman Catholic public school Downside, near Bath between 1911 and 1915. His service papers show that he enlisted directly from school at the age of 16. He served with the Royal Engineers on the Somme in 1916 where he was gassed before transferring to the Royal Flying Corps, later to become the Royal Air Force.

A recently discovered letter written by Louis on 6th August 1918 gives an insight into his life as a flying officer. He had joined Number 1 Flying School on 1st August 1918 and flew himself in his Camel aeroplane to Turnberry in Ayrshire where he expected to spend about three weeks familiarising himself with guns and target practice. Despite his enjoyment of the luxury hotel where pilots were accommodated he hoped to get to France sooner than the expected three weeks. He would have known his chances of selection were good as he was already an experienced Camel pilot. His wish was granted as he was posted overseas to join the British Expeditionary Force on 10th August 1918. By this time there was a shortage of Camel pilots after great losses during the Battle of Amiens. *



Image of a Sopwith Camel

Louis was shot down over Cambrai on 26th August 1918 having served just 16 days on this mission. He was listed as missing in

operations over Cambrai and his death was not officially confirmed until October 1919. Hilaire Belloc visited Cambrai and wrote *"I travelled here in 1918, in a voyage of sorrow, after the death of my eldest son Louis. He had been a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps, and had died here, shot down while bombing a German transport column. In his honour, I placed a memorial tablet for him here, at Cambrai Cathedral"*.

Louis is commemorated on The Arras Flying Services Memorial in the Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery, Cambrai Cathedral and in Shipley Church.

He was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

**(This part of Belloc's story was researched by Simon Machin as part of West Sussex Great War Project).*

Belloc image www.findagrave.com



In Memory Of
Second Lieutenant

LOUIS BELLOC

209th Sqdn., Royal Air Force who died on 26 August 1918 Age 20

Son of Hilaire Belloc and Elodie Agnes Hogan Belloc, of King's Land, Shipley, Horsham, Sussex. His brother Peter Gilbert Marie Sebastian Belloc fell in the 1939 – 1945 War.

Remembered with Honour

ARRAS FLYING SERVICES MEMORIAL



**COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION**