

At evening, just at sunset, I have climbed into her cockpit,
And gone roaring up an air lane till I've caught the sun again,
And feeling most important at my private view of glory,
Have watched him set splendid with his pink and golden train.

Her crash form's all in order, and they'll strip, saw, break, and burn her,
And I'm sorry more than I can say to know she has to go;
For blue, depressed, fed-up, or sore, I'd but to climb aboard her
To leave my pack of mouldy troubles far away below.

The patrol work of the station was rather at a low ebb at this time through various causes. With the machines available much good work had been done in the previous years, but the first five big twin engine boats to be erected and tested, together with many good pilots and engineers, had just boomed off for the Scilly Islands, leaving a rather large hole in the station resources. Weather conditions also were not very good. There was no organisation in existence for carrying out intensive anti-submarine patrol, and there appeared to be no signs of that passionate energy by which alone, in all branches of anti-submarine work, the knavish tricks of the U-boat were frustrated.

A great deal of the energy of the station was taken up in experimental work and the erection of flying-boats, of which forty in all were assembled, fitted out, and tested during the year.

The engines of the only two boats available for patrol, Nos. 8661 and 8663, were run and tested every morning before daybreak, but after volunteering many times to get up and run the engines, I found that the boats never went out. There was a feeling among the majority of the pilots at this time that there was little use in patrols from Felixstowe, as from the beginning of the war only two enemy submarines had been sighted by pilots on patrol from the station. This lack of success was not due to patrols not having been done, although intensive work had never been carried out owing to the lack of suitable machines, but was due to the few submarines that had been navigating about.

But now the enemy submarines were freely and copiously navigating the narrow seas, and the Zeppelins were nonchalantly parading in daylight outside the Bight of Heligoland.

Commander Porte, owing to various causes, was absent from Felixstowe for long periods throughout this year, although fortunately his advice and experience were available