

# Tom Owen



## A teacher who went to war – Part 3

Compiled by Richard Chancellor

**15th February**, Dud. Up three times testing B786. Standing by to Bomb Courrieres with two 112lb bombs and no Observers. Too dud. Went as far as C.C.S. with Marsden after dinner. Pills not in.

0950hrs, RE8 B786, 800ft, 10mins flight time, Tail weights, Clouds very low. Engine and rigging test. Elevator controls to tight.

1330hrs, RE8 B786, 1000ft, 10mins flight time, Tail weights, clouds very low. Engine and rigging test. Rigging better but still more heavy.

1530hrs, RE8 B786, 1000ft, 25mins flight time, 1st Airman Richardson, Clouds very low. Engine and rigging satisfactory.

**16th February**, Very fine. Special bombing of Courrieres

Elwyn Harrison 'Billy' Marsden at Chocques.



with two 112-lb bomb. Left ground 10.05 followed by Money and Smith who stuck to me to 7000ft and then my engine went dud. Two front cylinders seized making an awful mess, landed OK on aerodrome!! D.G. Money missing and five from other squadrons missing. Night bombing with Billy Marsden. Couldn't see a damn thing, got absolutely lost and finally landed with bombs on aerodrome. Off with CO and Barr to see a Gotha which was forced to land near Le Touret (East of Bapume) got back 11pm, some day! [RE8 B2252 2Lt Duncan Goff Money, killed in action, combat claim in the area of Wingles by Oblt H Auffahrt, Jasta29]

1005hrs, RE8 B786, 7000ft, 35mins flight time, Tail weights, Bombing, two 112lb bombs, formation of six to bomb Courrieres. Engine cut out at 7000ft, got into aerodrome OK, Conrod, two pistons and cylinders, crankcase smashed!!!

**17th February**, Misty. No work done. Took up three infantry officers for joyrides including Tom Lloyd Jones (Aber, Gym) Northam goes up to test the air for night bombing, but no good.

1755hrs, RE8 B6480, 5000ft, 50mins flight time, Tail weights, Night bombing, couldn't see a solitary thing. Got absolutely lost and finally landed with bombs.

1505hrs, RE8 C4557, 2000ft, 30mins flight time, Lt Barrett, Demonstrating the working of (unreadable) to infantry officer.

1545hrs, RE8 C4557, 1800ft, 10mins flight time, Lt Clark, Demonstrating the working of (unreadable) to infantry officer.

1605hrs, RE8 C4557, 1500ft, 10mins flight time, Lt TH Jones, Demonstrating the working of (unreadable) to infantry officer.

**18th February**, Very misty again. CO goes out and leaves me in charge again. No work done. I have to decide about night bombing. Didn't send anyone up at all, considered it too dud. Practice more in morning.

**19th February**, Getting more misty. Again no work over lines. Two Practice Shoots over aerodrome in morning and one in afternoon. No night bombing. Billy, Daddy, Naylor, Robson, Barrington, Ziegler and myself have dinner at the billet! Hodgson comes back from Cannes.

**20th February**, Very dud, rain afternoon and evening. Off to Counter Batteries with Moll in morning. Chat with Col Suther from 9.30 to 12.30, to go there again tomorrow. At B Flight to dinner. Robson talks of leaving tomorrow on account of his legs. Lecture after dinner on 'How to Escape from Germany' by Henderson.

**21st February**, Braf dawn (nice day). With Moll at Counter Battery until 12.30. Up at 2.15 with Mosby. Shoot with Admiral, I made an awful mess of things but finally got V out. Off with CO to Corps after tea. Night bombing on while we were out, perfect night. Boston lands at Abeele. Gordon of A Flight killed by machine gun from ground. I got main spar of