

107 Squadron on 18th July 1918

Dear Richard,

As a sort of gift at Christmas – though that makes too light of it – I think I may have just found two airmen, one of whom is a Canadian RAF Captain. I'll try and explain what I have.

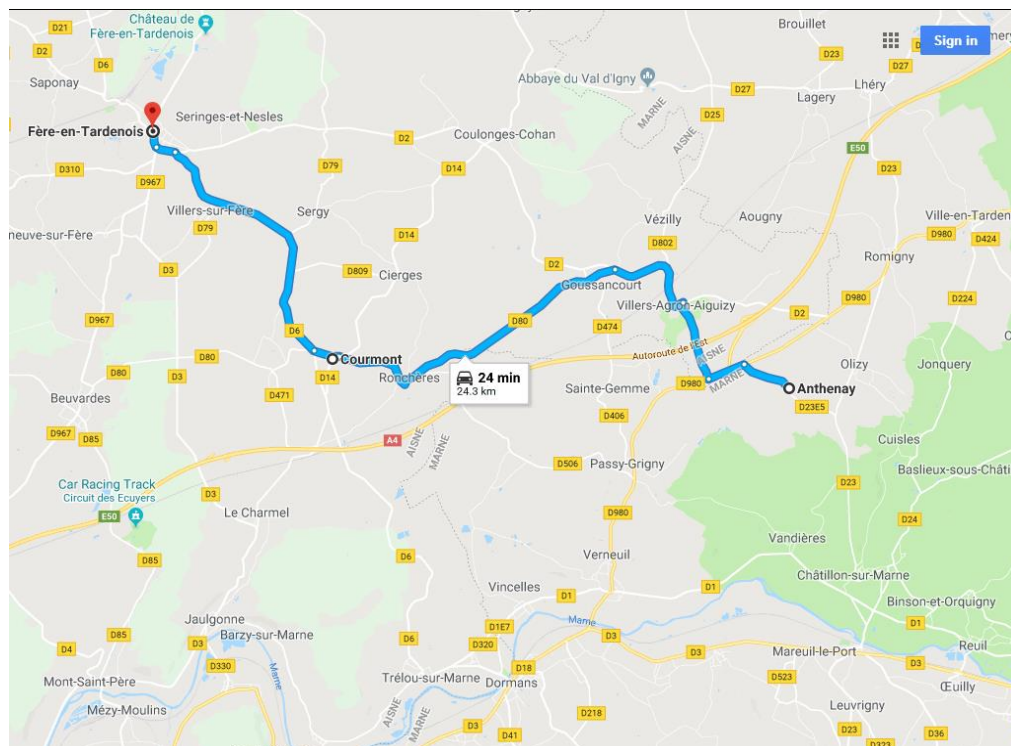
A day-bombing unit, 107 Squadron RAF, had a bad day on the 18th July. They were raiding the area of Courmont and Fere-en-Tardenoise, flying their DH9s out of Chailly-en-Brie, down south with 51st Wing of IX(HQ)Bgd. (See the attached opening page of the 107 Squadron history in the National Archives, confirming the raid destination that morning).

On that morning, having left 6-33am, three machines went missing: one turned up later, but another two crews were lost and killed. The graves of the crew of Lt FN Mollett and 2Lt B Rawlings in DH9 C6252 were both found after the war, in 1920 (attached sheet doc2056612.jpg) over at Map Ref REIMS 34 1:50000 272.9 x 206.1 and moved to Soissons.

The other 107 Squadron crew, lost that day, were Canadian Capt Roy Edward Dubber and his Scottish Observer/Gunner, Lt Cecil Barron Dickie. Both are at Arras, and have no known grave. Note that Dickie was also a member of the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders).

So, we have two crews down on a raid to Courmont-Fere-en-Tardenoise area. Two men are never recovered. One is of the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders). The fact that in my book I omitted the target place names for the Dubber and Dickie entry is immaterial – they were all raiding there – my omission. There is also a combat claim by Jasta 4 pilot that morning – that could also easily apply to *either* of these crew losses – I put it beside Mollett and Rawlings in TSTBII as at the time they had the place name linkages that seemed to make sense (bear with me!)

This Jasta 4 claim is by Ltn H Maushake, for a DH9 around 8-15am “south-west of Authenay” (which I have now realised is wrongly spelt in the original German Records (!) and should read Anthenay). So this is a map showing what we have so far (Map 1):



I am not exactly sure where the REIMS map reference for where the crew of C6252 were found is. I am totally baffled by French Map refs!!! (Can you help me with the whole issue of French Map Refs btw!!?) I suspect it is towards the north of this image, towards Soissons and where VAILLY is. Which interestingly pulls them away from that German claim that we know about, which had Maushake, over south-west of Authenay. He could have shot down the other DH9 crew...Which brings me on to something I've found.

This is **doc1996165.jpg** (also attached), for an unknown pair of airmen at DORMANS, originally found virtually together: One at DORMANS 1:20,000 209.2 x 267.3 and the other 209.0 x 267.3 .

Serial 12-19
6/2451

CONCENTRATION OF GRAVES. (EXHUMATION AND RE-BURIALS)

BURIAL RETURN.

Name of Cemetery of Re-burial: *DORMANS MILITARY CEMETERY*

Plot.	Row.	Grave.	Approximate Map Reference where body found.	Was cross found on grave.	Particulars on cross found on grave.	Were any Effects forwarded to Home?
2	B	13	209.5 x 265.5	Yes	A SOLDAT INCONNU ✓ 17/9/18 B UNIFORM & SHOULDER TITLES S.W.B. (PIONEERS)	
10	B	14	— do —	Yes	A SOLDAT INCONNU ✓ 17/9/18 B UNIFORM & SHOULDER TITLES S.W.B. (PIONEERS)	
11	B	15	209.2 x 267.3	Yes	A AVIATEUR ANGLAIS INCONNU ✓ 18/9/18 B UNIFORM OF AIR FORCE, RECOGNIZED AS OFFICER BUT NO RANK BADGE FOUND	
12	B	16	209.00 x 267.3	Yes	A AVIATEUR ANGLAIS INCONNU ✓ B UNIFORM OF AIR FORCE, RECOGNIZED AS OFFICER BUT NO RANK BADGE FOUND	
13	B	17	EPERNAY 1:20000 214.900 x 269.450.	Yes	A CAPT R. EASTWOOD, 8TH GLOUCESTER R. 31/5/18 B NIL	

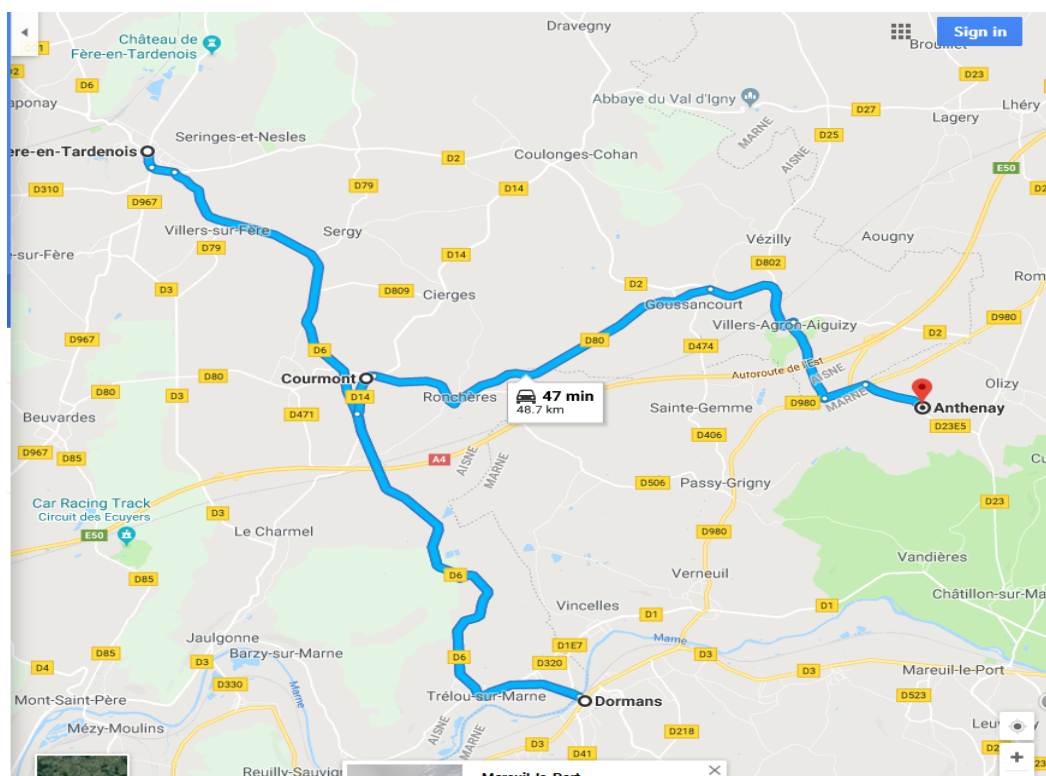
G.R. SQUAD, 43. - EPERNAY.

No. *59*

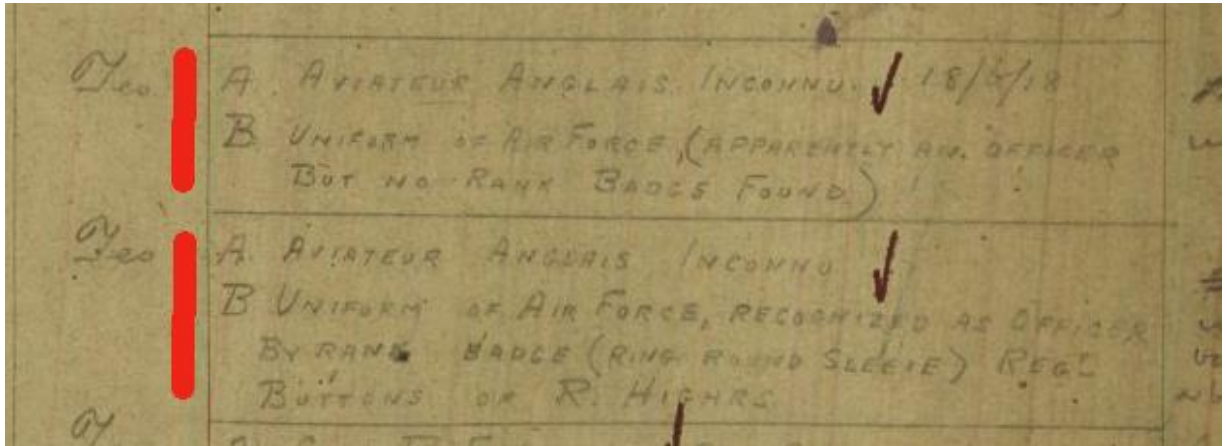
Date *10/10/18*

This form to be rendered in duplicate, one copy being handed to the Registration Officer and the other retained by the Burial Officer.

Again, I don't know these French grids exactly, but here is how DORMANS fits into the previous Map, 5 or 6 miles below Courmont:



And looking more closely at the details of these two graves:



One immediately sees the second one is a Flier from *The Royal Highlanders* – The Black Watch. I believe this is Lt Dickie. And his companion is your fellow Canadian, Roy Dubber.

And Dormans is “South-west of Anthenay” – just as per the German pilot’s claim for a DH9 that day.

But you’ll have spotted the date... Good news as well as bad news that... It’s got the day right – the 18th But it reads 18th June 1918, and not 18th July 1918. I could explain this... in the sense that the cross may have been inscribed 18.VII.1918, in the Continental way, but the second “I” got mistaken for a slash etc, and read as June, or just got damaged.

And I’d also say this - taking the “18th June” – taking that exact day, all four air NKGS for the 18th June are ALL up in the Bapaume – Amiens Front 40 or 50 miles away. Even a few days either side of it, they’re all up there still, with the nearest NKG crew being a 103 Squadron crew up near Roye, on June 16th. There are no applicable NKGs down on this front at all for that specific 18.6.18 date.

In contrast, whilst there is a single-seater 32 Squadron pilot on the 18th July last seen down near Grisolles, further west (another of your Countrymen- WA Anderson) – he’s not of the Black Watch, or part of a two man crew. The only other NKG lost that day are our 107 Sqn crew, known to be within the Fere – Courmont area, and which they had approached from their base to the south-west – importantly meaning they probably had followed the Marne River up north-east, towards Courmont and Fere, but got picked off by Jasta 4 as they were nearing their targets...while flying over Dormans... And there they were buried.

So, my expert... what do you think?

Very best Regards to you,

Trevor