

**A VERY FINE WW1 'WESTERN FRONT' SOPWITH SCOUT PILOT'S PAIR AWARDED TO CAPTAIN, 66 SQUADRON, ROYAL FLYING CORPS, WHO FLEW IN AT LEAST 50 OFFENSIVE PATROLS WITH THE SQUADRON OVER THE WESTERN FRONT, MARCH - JULY 1917, CLAIMING 2 ENEMY AIRCRAFT DESTROYED, AND SUFFERING THREE CRASHES OF HIS OWN IN THE PROCESS**



**BRITISH WAR AND VICTORY MEDALS, WITH M.I.D. OAK LEAVES 'CAPT. D. F. COX. R.A.F.'**

M.I.D. *London Gazette* 3 June 1918.

Dudley Fisher Cox was born in Golder's Green, London June 1898. He was the son of Herbert Robert Cox, an accountant, and was educated at the Merchant Taylor's School. Cox was employed as a Lloyd's broker, as well as serving as a Private (No.6243) with No. 3 Company, Inns of Court Officer Training Corps from December 1914. During the Great War, he applied to join the Royal Flying Corps, 6 July 1916, and was commissioned Second Lieutenant into the General List in August 1916.

Cox carried out pilot training at the Central Flying School, and was posted for operational flying to 66 Squadron (Sopwith Scouts) at the start of 1917. Having moved with the Squadron to St. Omer, Cox was injured making a forced landing due to engine problems, 24 March 1917. Further misfortune

occurred when taking off on an offensive patrol, 13 April 1917, just as he was taking off *'slightly across wind, and down hill, his machine bumped, causing the machine to swing round, with the undercarriage collapsing, propellor smashed.'*

The Squadron was engaged in offensive patrols during the Battles of Arras and Messines. Cox flew in a number of patrols, including 30 April 1917, when his aircraft suffered an engine failure and he forced landed behind Gavrelle, the machine being totally wrecked. He managed to emerge unscathed once again, only to be engaged by an enemy single seater whilst on patrol 2 May 1917. Cox drove off the aircraft only to be attacked by another enemy aircraft, losing his formation in the process. As he flew west, three enemy aircraft attacked him intermittently. Cox succeeded in engaging one of these aircraft at close range and this machine went away in a straight glide *'but could not be observed owing to attention received from enemy aircraft.'* This enemy aircraft was later confirmed to have crashed by the artillery.

On 24 May 1917, Cox was again employed on an offensive patrol, during which he and his formation saw an enemy two seater over Hamel, *'who were apparently trying to entice them east. Leader saw about 10 hostile scouts above the two seaters and in the sun, so turned west and having climbed to their level attacked them. A general combat ensued, which gradually drifted east. The Hun aircraft eventually made away east and patrol turned towards their lines. Hun aircraft followed them at long range as far as Recourt but would not close with them. The scouts then climbed into the sun, one two-seater Albatros following patrol. Leader allowed him to come close to the lines and then turned on him. Two-seater was attacked at fairly long range but out climbed patrol and made off.'*



On 5 June 1917, Cox's patrol was attacked by hostile scouts, *'several combats took place. 2nd Lieutenant Smith and 2nd Lieutenant Cox. One enemy aircraft being engaged by Captain Andrews was seen to fall on his back and went down like a leaf but is believed to have regained control later.'*

Six days later Cox was part of a patrol over the Houthulst Forest - Roulers - Menin - Quesnoy area, which 'descended to about 1,000 feet and attacked a battery east of Warneton and a few enemy troops near Gheluvelt who immediately took cover.'

On 15 June 1917 Cox's 'patrol encountered 8 new type Scouts and were heavily engaged. Two 2-seaters were attacked early during patrols.' The following day during a patrol 'leader was fired at by a machine with circle markings over Bailleul. Machine had two yellow bands between circle on fuselage and tail planes. From general appearance machine was like a two seater Sopwith.' On the same day during another patrol 'dive on enemy aircraft, but were seen approaching, three enemy aircraft being engaged decisively. Enemy aircraft had superior speed and disappeared east.'

On 4 July 1917, Cox's 'patrol encountered very bad weather and several machines lost the formation owing to clouds.' Cox flew over Dunkerque during this patrol and may well have landed there. On 22 July 1917 a Transfer Report was made for Cox to be transferred to the Home Establishment. Cox who had joined 66 Squadron on 17 March 1917, 'has accompanied 50 offensive patrols since he joined this squadron and has done consistent good work. He is a very good pilot and thoroughly understands his machine.' He was further described as 'thoroughly run down and requires a rest.'

Cox was posted home in August 1917. He joined 112 Home Defence Squadron and is noted to have been on a patrol between Detling - All Hallows at 15,000 feet 22 August 1917. Cox was however soon diagnosed as suffering from neurasthenia, he having been involved in 'three aeroplane crashes, one more severe when this officer thought he was having to descend in Germany.' Cox was noted as suffering from tremors and a slight knee jerk.

By July 1918 Cox had been deemed permanently unfit as a pilot or observer and was recommended for ground duties only. He continued on light duties with 112 Squadron based at Throwley near Faversham in Kent for the remainder of the war. Cox was credited with two enemy aircraft destroyed during the war. He eventually left the service in 1923 but remained on the list of the Reserve of Officers. With the outbreak of the Second World War Cox was mobilised as a Flight Lieutenant 30 August 1939, but relinquished his position and appointment, 1 May 1940.



Condition NEF, mounted for display, with flattened named card box of issue. Sold with extensive copied research. Ex DNW 2019

A really very fine and well documented WW1 fighter pilot group