

Airship pioneer

George Scott

1888-1930

In the years around the First World War, airships were seen by many as the key to man's domination of the skies.

George Scott, raised in England, was associated with their greatest achievements and fell victim to one of their worst disasters.

When war broke out he began training on airships.

By 1917 he was commander of the first British rigid airship, no. 9, and flew for 27 hours during one coastal patrol.

George also developed a system for mooring airships at the head of a mast or tower.

After the Armistice of 1918 he headed for Renfrewshire, Scotland, where a replica of a German Zeppelin, brought down by British gunfire, was under construction.

The following year he flew the R34 on an epic voyage from East Lothian, over Newfoundland where mail was dropped, down to the USA, where it circled New York, and back to Britain.

This was the first aerial transatlantic round trip – Alcock and Brown had just managed one way by plane.

The government hoped that airships could open up communications throughout the empire.

In 1930 a new generation of rigid airships was built, and George was aboard the mighty R101 on a flight to India when it caught fire and crashed in France, killing him and many others.

- Read the Oxford DNB biography here: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/public/dnb/35986.html>.