

ALFRED GILMER LAMPLUGH, *Fellow*

19th October 1895 - 15th December 1955

THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN A. G. LAMPLUGH on 15th December 1955, at only sixty years of age is a grievous blow to aviation and one that I personally feel most deeply, for our activities in the aeronautical world brought us together on frequent occasions over a period of many years.

Captain Alfred Gilmer Lamplugh, C.B.E., F.R.Ae.S., M.I.Ae.S., M.C.A.I., F.R.G.S., had been Underwriter and Principal Surveyor of The British Aviation Insurance Co. Ltd. since its formation until his retirement and election to its board of directors in September last.

He was educated at King Edward's School and Queen's College, Birmingham. His interests were technical rather than scholastic, however, and he served an apprenticeship with a firm of motor engineers. In 1913 he learnt to fly and obtained one of the very early "B" licences.

The Great War came and he went into the army, to be seconded later to the R.F.C. He served in that corps and in the R.A.F. until 1919.

It was abroad, in China, that he gained his first experience of insurance. Then, home once more, he became Underwriter to the British Aviation Insurance Group, later the British Aviation Insurance Co. Ltd., and was introduced to aviation insurance, this group in those days being the only body to undertake such work.

His interest in almost every aspect of things aeronautical was enormous and far beyond a merely professional one. This interest—and his great abilities—were reflected in the number of positions, mainly honorary in nature, which he filled with success and in many cases for long periods.

He was a member of the Committee of the Royal Aero Club for nearly thirty years; a member of the Council of the Air Registration Board since its inception; Warden and first Deputy Master of the Guild of Air Pilots; an honorary member of the British Airline Pilots' Association; a member of the International Union of Aviation Insurers; Chairman of the Aviation Insurance Offices Association; and President of the London Gliding Club. In 1943 he was Chairman of the Independent Committee on the Future of Civil Aviation.

He did much for flying, both in these capacities and in other ways, not least by his services in the field of insurance. It was in recognition of this that he was appointed a Companion of the Order of the British Empire.



Captain A. G. Lamplugh

"Lamps" made it his business and his pleasure to be at the heart of aeronautical activities, not only getting to know people, but getting to know them well. He was a familiar figure at aviation gatherings of every sort since the early 'twenties and will be missed by very many of us indeed.

SIR FREDERICK HANDLEY PAGE

J. Laurence Pritchard writes:

I have a great affection for "Lamps," and I am glad to be able to express it in the JOURNAL of the Society, of which he was such a good friend.

On September 14, last year, he wrote to me, in reply to a letter of mine about a project of his, "It would be nice to have some stabilizing influence like yours in the show and it was kind of you to write. Your interest has bucked me up a lot."

"Lamps" must have known that his chance of carrying out his idea was very small indeed, but his magnificent courage would never allow him not to try,

whatever the odds were. I shall always be glad that I was the first to reply to his suggestion, for he was the first to listen to any suggestion of mine when he was on the Council of the Society, and its Honorary Treasurer.

"Lamps" joined the Society in 1924, and became an Associate Fellow two years later. In 1929 he was made a Fellow.

On the Council, to which he was first elected in 1933, he was a tower of strength with his direct comments, which were always listened to, and generally agreed upon. It was a tribute to his practical and sane outlook that the year he was elected to the Council, he was asked to serve on the Finance Committee, upon which he served until 1947.

He was Honorary Treasurer in those difficult years 1941-46 when Councils and Committees were not able to give close consideration to the affairs of the Society, and I wanted what help I could get.

"Lamps" often dropped in casually in those days, talked about any difficulties I may have had, and just as casually went out, saying, "All right, chaps, it'll be done." It was. Few appreciated how quietly he kept up others' morale, how shrewdly he summed up all those with whom he came in contact.

During the War he once gave me a lift in his car into the West Country. Those were the days when all sign posts had been obliterated, post office and village signs blotted out; and driving was difficult. Yet he drove with great assurance, often on minor roads, while we talked of everybody and everything. In his car he had a small portable wireless set, given him in New York, so that he

could hear the news wherever he happened to be. Fixed below the dashboard was an aeroplane compass.

"That's how I find my way," he replied cheerily, when I was complimenting him on his knowledge of all the by-roads.

When the offices of the Guild of Air Pilots were destroyed I agreed to find room for their staff at 4 Hamilton Place. "Lamps" was one of the Wardens of the Guild and often came in to see how things were going. One day a bomb dropped in Hyde Park and blew in some of the office windows. I had given very definite orders that the moment the sirens sounded their warning all curtains were to be drawn and staff were to keep away from windows.

I went round the building, and as I walked up the stairs to the Guild of Air Pilots' room Lamplugh followed me. He had dashed round to see how things were. One of the girls was sitting in front of her typewriter by a window, the blind not drawn. For disobeying the orders upon which her life might have depended she got no praise but was told sharply where to sit in future. I expected "Lamps" to say something to me about the way I spoke to someone not on the Society's staff. All he said was, as we walked away, "Good show, chaps."

I believe that when someone tries to assess the personalities of these early years of aviation, that of Alfred Gilmer Lamplugh will rank very highly indeed, for he had courage and vision when both were required in full measure.