



No. 27 SQUADRON

A Short History of a Famous Bomber Unit

THE presentation, on January 7th, of a Squadron Standard to No. 27 Squadron at Scampton, provided an opportunity to study the history of this remarkable unit. Since its formation at Hounslow on November 5th, 1915, No. 27 has operated in a wide variety of rôles, including reconnaissance, fighting, bombing and transport—few units have been more versatile. In an exciting career it has been wiped out once, disbanded three times and re-formed four times.

The squadron first went to France on active service in March 1916 and was, in fact, only the second unit flying single-seat

aircraft to go to France specifically for air fighting duties. It did not remain as such.

The aircraft were Martinsyde Scouts, nicknamed "Elephants," but the origin of this soubriquet is not clear. The machine was larger than contemporary single-seat types, and this may have been the reason, or it may have been considered that there was something elephantine in its outlines.

Comparison of performance with the squadron's 500 m.p.h.-plus Canberras is interesting. The Martinsyde had a 160 h.p. Beardmore engine and a maximum speed of 102 m.p.h.; rate of climb at 10,000ft was 450 ft/min and service ceiling 16,000ft; fully loaded it weighed 2,458 lb. Offensive armament comprised one 0.303



S/L. P. W. Helmore, D.F.C., A.F.C.,
the present Commanding Officer.
"Flight" photographs

Comparative photographs of No. 27 Squadron's present-day silver painted Canberras at Scampton and their olive-green D.H.4 bombers at Serny Aerodrome in France in the latter part of the 1914-18 war.