



(Left) A production-type Short 184 with straight cross-bars and bomb carriers.

(Below) Cockpit of a Short 184.

(Bottom) Showing Short 184 cockpit arrangements from the side.

THE SHORT SEAPLANES . . .

A further batch of Short 830s (1335-1346) were built by Short Brothers, but the Sunbeam-powered 827 was standardized and was produced on a fairly widespread but modest scale by Shorts and four other contractors. Altogether about 100 Short 827s were built.

Although not numerous, the type was used in many theatres of war. From British coastal stations such as Calshot and Great Yarmouth, the 827s made anti-submarine patrols. On April 25, 1916, No. 3108 from Great Yarmouth was among the aircraft which bombed the German High Sea Fleet while it was bombarding Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth. The Short was flown by Flt. Sub-Lt. H. G. Hall with Flt. Sub-Lt. D. C. Evans as his observer, and they were subjected to heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire from the enemy ships. Hall was severely wounded, and his aircraft badly damaged, but he flew for three-quarters of an hour and brought the Short down safely before collapsing from loss of blood.

The action against the German light cruiser *Königsberg* has been mentioned in the notes on the 160 h.p. Short Folder seaplane. The British monitors *Mersey* and *Severn* wrecked the enemy vessel on July 11, 1915; on the following day the British fleet returned to Zanzibar, whence the armed liner *Laconia* took the R.N.A.S. personnel to Mombasa, for they were needed for service in the land campaign against German East Africa. At Mombasa they found three Short 827s and two Caudrons which had been sent out to assist in the operations against the *Königsberg*. Since the Shorts were no longer needed in East Africa, Sqn. Cdr. R. Gordon was instructed to take them to Mesopotamia, and they left on the *Laconia* on August 12, 1915. In March 1916, however, the R.N.A.S. detachment, which was later to be the first unit to bear the title of No. 8 Sqn., R.N.A.S. (not to be confused with the later and more famous Naval Eight), arrived at Zanzibar from England; its equipment consisted of four Short 827s and four Voisins. The Shorts flew from Chukwani Bay, but their mobility was increased by placing one on board each of the ships *Laconia*, *Manica*, and *Himalaya*. They were chiefly used as reconnaissance aircraft and did useful work in trying conditions; while covering some British landings they also dropped bombs, and in May 1917 one of the 827s spotted for the guns of the gunboat *Thistle* and the monitor *Severn* during the operations near Lindi.

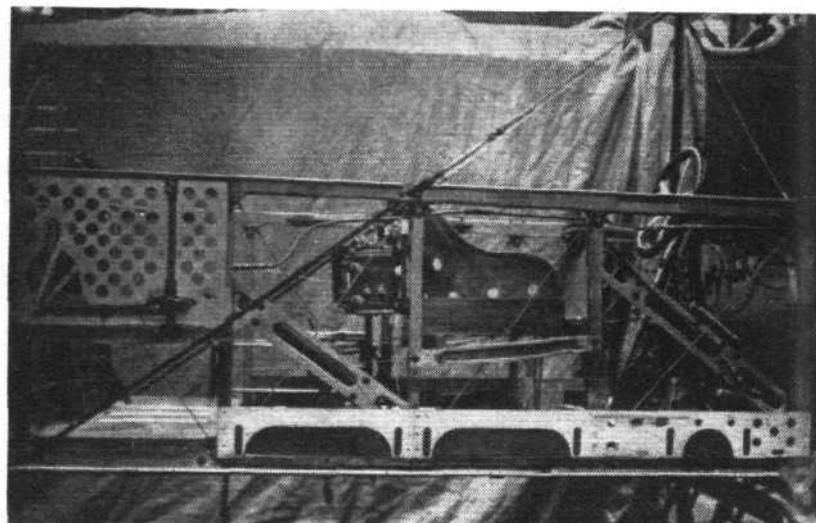
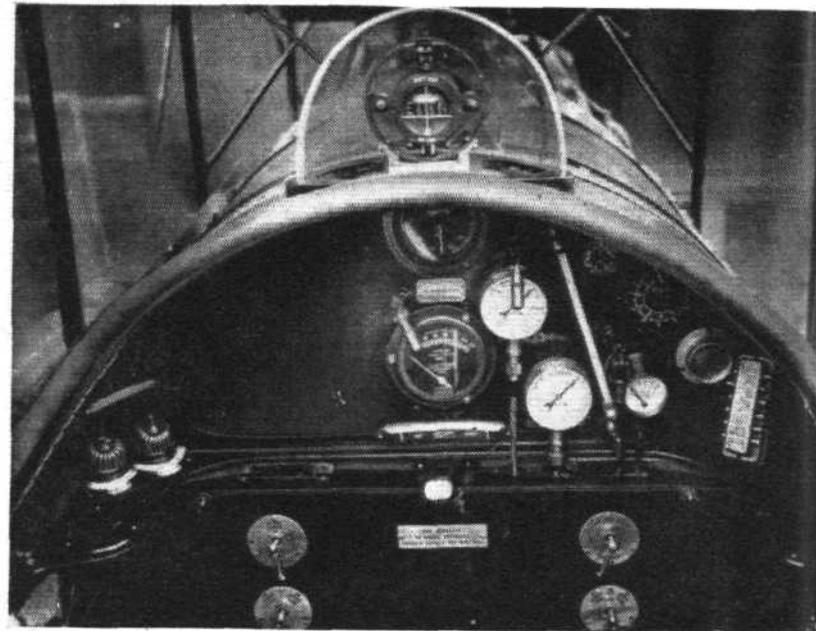
Of the 827s which were used in East Africa, Nos. 3093, 3094, 3095 and 8219 were handed over to the Belgians and continued their African service in the hands of our ally.

The three Short 827s which had left Mombasa in August 1915, arrived at Basra early in September. It was intended that the seaplanes should be used to co-operate with naval forces in Mesopotamian waters, but they proved to be unsuitable owing to their poor rate of climb in the hot climate, and the difficulty of getting a sufficiently long take-off run on the Tigris. Two of these 827s were fitted with "home-made" wheel undercarriages and thereafter proved to be quite useful, although their Sunbeam engines were somewhat troublesome. They made reconnaissance flights and occasionally bombed the Turkish cavalry and infantry, but by the middle of February 1916, all three of the Short 827s had been wrecked.

The 827 was also flown in the Mediterranean. A few were on the strength of Otranto air station; one or two were with the East Indies and Egypt Seaplane Squadron and were used from the carriers *Ben-my-Chree* and *Raven II*. By the end of October 1918, only four Short 827s remained on charge with the R.A.F.: three were at coastal stations in the United Kingdom, the fourth was in the Mediterranean.

The next Short seaplane to appear after the 827/830 design was a large three-bay biplane with equal-span wings, powered by a twelve-cylinder Sunbeam engine which delivered 225 h.p. and designed as a torpedo-carrier. Sir Murray Sueter has written:*

"After the War broke out, we required all Mr. Sopwith's efforts and those of his factory to produce high performance machines, then just beginning to show some promise. But Hyde-Thomson and myself were



quite determined to succeed with a torpedo machine. So I sent for that fine pioneer seaplane constructor, the late Mr. Horace Short. When I explained my requirements to him and the great weight that had to be lifted with a 225 h.p. Sunbeam engine, in addition to pilot and petrol, Horace Short looked at me with a determined grin and said: 'Well, if you particularly wish this done, I will produce a seaplane that will satisfy you'; and he did."

There can be little doubt, however, that Short Brothers were not the only manufacturers who were asked to produce a torpedo-carrying seaplane powered by the 225 h.p. Sunbeam engine, for the Wight 840 and Sopwith 860 were obviously built to the same specification, possibly as insurance against possible failure of the Short design. At least sixty-nine Wight 840s and eighteen Sopwith 860s were built, but the 225 h.p. Short was built in hundreds and was used everywhere.

The first machine of the new type bore the official serial number 184 and thereby provided the big Short with its official designation—Short seaplane, Admiralty Type 184, or Short 184. (Not, be it noted, Short S.184, an erroneous designation which has unfortunately achieved widespread currency. True, the seaplane which had the works number S.184 was a Short 184, but its serial number was 8042.) To many R.N.A.S. personnel the Short 184 was better known as the Short Two-two-five, from the horse-power of its original engine.

(To be continued)

**Airmen or Noahs*, p. 50.