

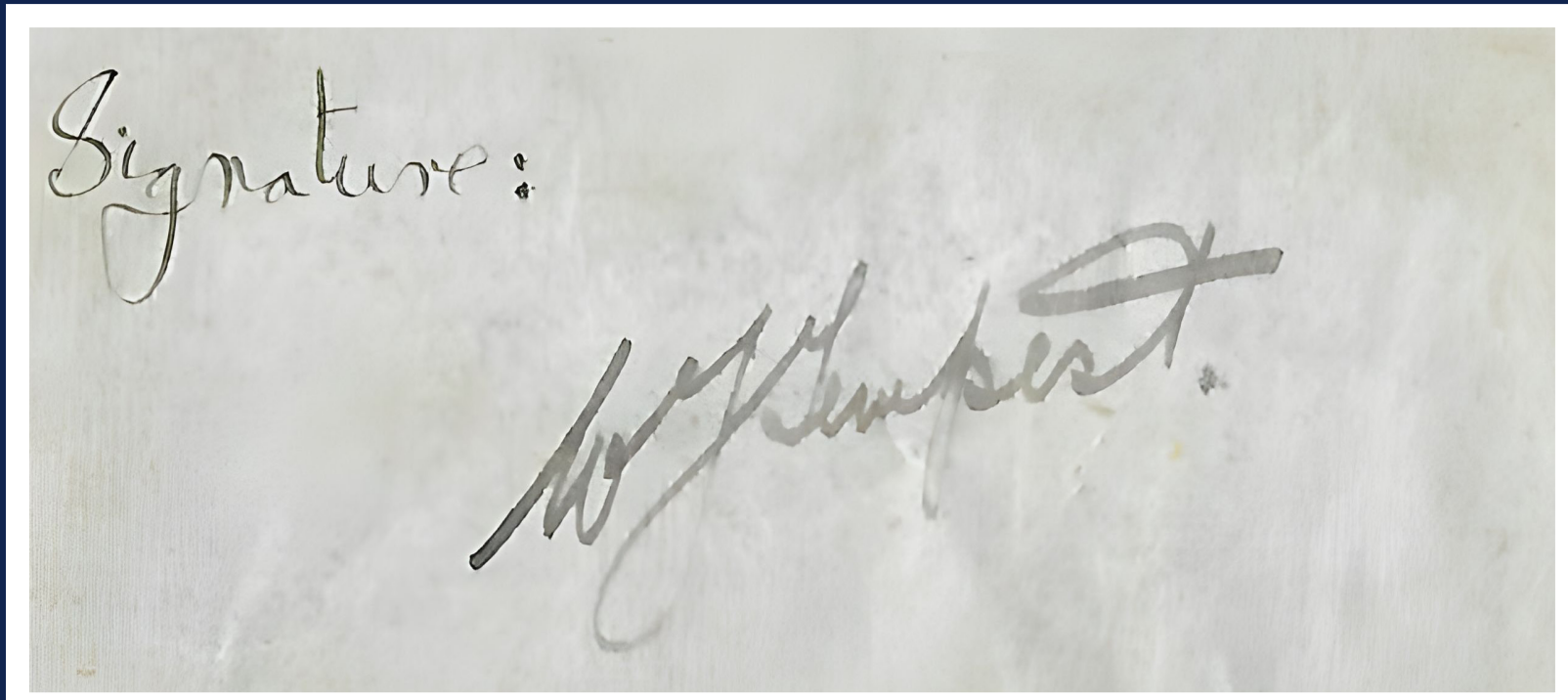


IMPERIAL GERMAN NAVY ZEPPELIN AIRSHIP L. 31

Shot down by Lieutenant Wulstan Tempest at Potters Bar 2 October 1916



Lieutenant Wulstan Joseph Tempest D.S.O. M.C. came from Canada and enlisted in 1914 in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He suffered the effects of chlorine gas at the Second Battle Of Ypres and, on recovery, transferred to The Royal Flying Corps in 1916, based at North Weald.



Autograph of Lieutenant, later Major Tempest 1891 – 1966



This picture shows the "Zeppelin Oak" situated in farmland into which the Zeppelin L. 31 plummeted that fateful morning. The land was later developed into housing and left the tree marooned in the driveway of number 9 Tempest Avenue. It was finally cut down in the 1930s as it was feared a threat to life with its still cracked trunk and twisted branches packed with aluminium fragments.



Grafton China souvenir of an incendiary bomb carried by Zeppelins this one showing the crest of Potters Bar.



Grafton China souvenir model of British Searchlight "The Zeppelin Finder"



Imperial German Navy Tallyband inscribed Navy Airship Department worn by the crew aboard L. 31



Distinguished Service Order D.S.O. Awarded to Lieutenant Tempest shortly after the action.

At 23.45 on 1 October 1916 Lieutenant Tempest was on patrol at 14,500 feet (over 2 and a half miles) over London flying his B. E. 2c night fighter plane, painted black for camouflage, when he encountered Zeppelin L. 31 now framed in searchlights.

Even with a failed fuel pump, and friendly fire from Anti – Aircraft guns, he kept his engine operating and fired a mixture of tracer, incendiary and ordinary ammunition ripping into the Airship's outer material and inner Hydrogen cells until it began to glow like "an enormous Chinese lantern."

The flaming inferno of sparking reinforced Duraluminium and two million cubic feet of flaming Hydrogen could be seen for miles around as it roared down and crashed with an indescribable noise into farmland beyond Oakmere Park, present day Tempest Avenue / Wulstan Park.

Even after it hit the ground, there was the wrenching sound of the Aluminium framework, splintering of branches, the rattling detonations of the Zeppelin's ammunition and the explosion of fuel tanks. And to cap it all, one of the propellers was cart wheeling out of control across the field.

Exhausted by his exertions and the bitter cold, Tempest managed to steer his aircraft back to base, a not too comfortable landing resulting in his head hitting the butt of the plane's machine gun in the process.

Later that morning, incognito, he, with many thousands, made the pilgrimage to see the wreck site in Potters Bar; having paid his one shilling to the farmer, along with all the other sightseers, for a more privileged view.



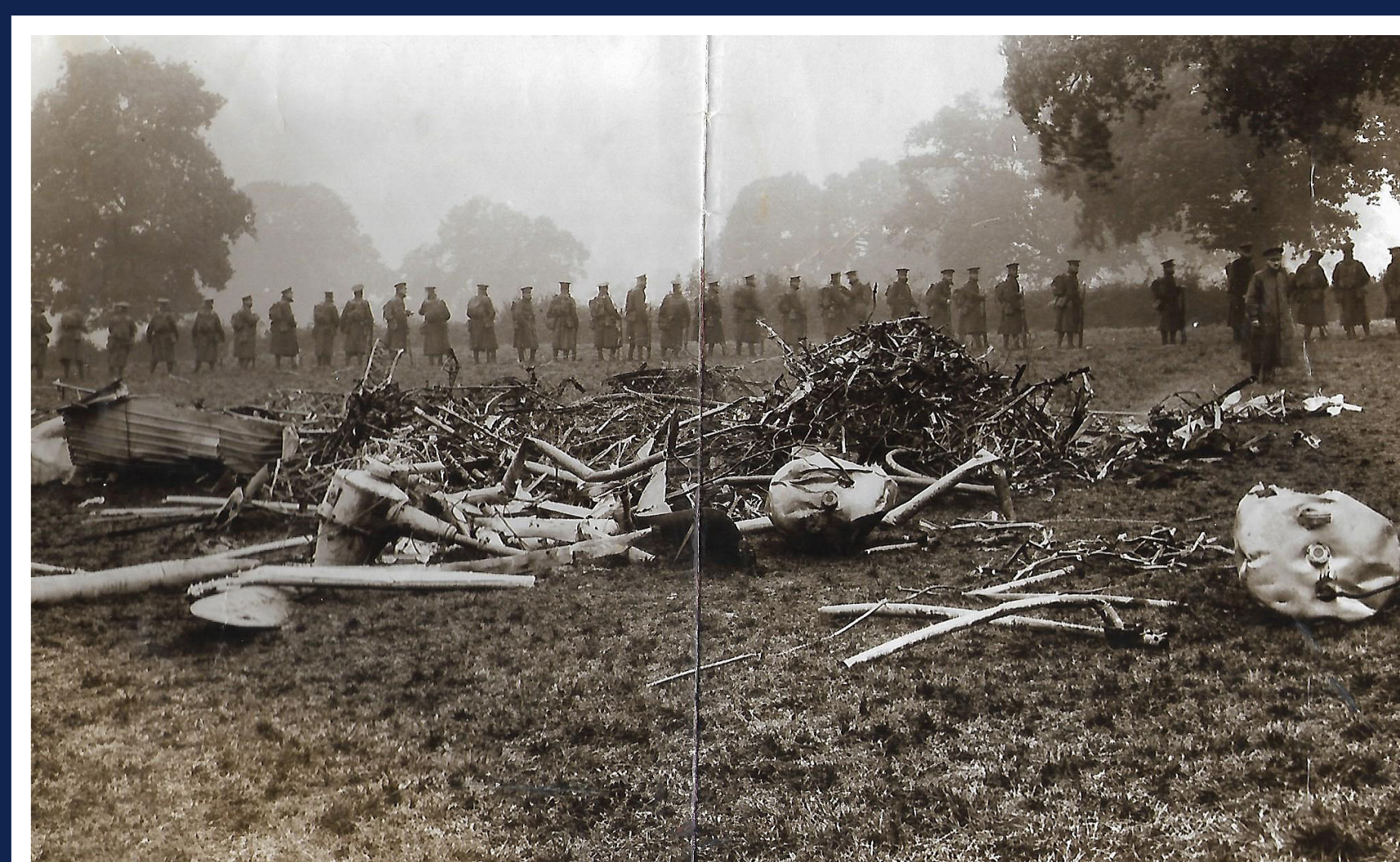
Medal inscribed Essex Group A. A. (Anti - Aircraft) Searchlight Coys. Royal Engineers, the Group responsible for spotting L. 31 that night.



Watercolour painting of the Zeppelin L. 31, sometimes referred to as "The Baby Killer" plunging to the ground which narrowly missed Lieutenant Tempest who had to take his plane into a tailspin to avoid being hit with the flaming debris.



Photograph of Searchlight Crew Royal Engineers "Zeppelin Hunters"



Photograph showing some of the tangled Aluminium structure and other components of L. 31 under armed guard.



Kapitanleutnant Heinrich Mathy, remarkably a household name in Great Britain as well as in Germany. A "Knight Of The Air" and at 32 years old the most experienced and audacious of raiders with 14 combat flights to his name dropping 34,000 Kg of bombs to date. A skilled navigator showing real coolness and daring – seemingly unstoppable. That evening he and a Fleet of 10 other Zeppelins had flown across the North Sea via Lowestoft. Having spotted Tempest in his black plane, Mathy decided to drop most of his bombs over Cheshunt, lightening the load by 30 high explosive and 26 incendiary bombs resulting in shooting 200 feet into the air while turning and racing away.



Photograph of Kapitanleutnant Heinrich Mathy and his Officers and Crew taken on 27 September 1916, days before their last fatal flight. Only 18 would go on to serve aboard L. 31, all of which lost their lives.



Stereoscope photograph allegedly showing the indentation made by Mathy's body after hitting the ground at 120 miles per hour – terminal velocity. Folklore states that he lived for a few minutes after the impact. Mathy was once questioned "burn or jump" in a hypothetical situation.



Mathy and his crew were interred alongside the bodies of the Commander and crew of the Schutte - Lanz Airship shot down over Cuffley exactly one month earlier – the Vicar having refused to bury them there at the time. The original wooden crosses, having fallen into disrepair, were replaced by these named grave markers at a later date. By this time the markers did not necessarily match the remains.



The Hohenzollern Order awarded to Mathy as the personal gift of The Kaiser Wilhelm II. He also received the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for his services.



German Zeppelin Airship Pilot's breast badge. Not actually issued until the 1920s, by which time the Imperial Crown had usually been sawn off the top by the manufacturers. Examples exist with the Crown intact or actually replaced.



Grafton China souvenir model of the new Super Zeppelin.