

NAVAL 8 (208) Squadron Pilot

Rank:	Name:	DOB:
Lt (RAF)	Johns, Reginald Leach	13 Nov1894
Joined Navy	RAC Cert	Service/REF No:
10 Jun 17		

Died:	Buried At:
11 Jun 18	Aire Communal Cemetery 51 14/4

Crashed trying to make a forced landing during an air test Spun during Left Hand turn took off at 8.10 pm. Camel D6698

From Kilburn

Headstone: His loved ones honour him. He was the life and soul of the Sqn "His CO"

Jordan Combat report 2 Jun 18 (Dennett) 204/5/2634/8SqN RNAS

Often flew with Price

Naval8 p151 Will anyone write a record of the evening binges which relieved the end of a foggy day? Where Johns would shamelessly appear in the guise of a WAAC going home on leave; when Jordan walked his imaginary quarter deck and gradually provoked everyone struggle in deadly combat with everyone else; when Johnstone, always ready for trouble on land and in the air, had a duel with Jordan, the weapons being Pyrenes; when Cooper played and sang snatches of the latest London shows in his charming way, and suddenly reduced us all to an attentive silence with a painfully pleasant glimpse of life at home; when Draper would take charge of the piano and inspire us all to yelling choruses and happy forgetfulness; when we worked the "funnel trick" on an American General and filled his riding breeches with water, having mistaken his one star for the badge of a Lieutenant; when Dixon delivered his only and historic speech, and Roach would make sure of his mess bill with a game of poker.

Naval 8 P 151-153 Johns was, I think, the greatest natural wit I have ever met. His comments on any unusual situation came as quickly as lightning, and were just as bright and penetrating. They were backed by a strong and humorous personality, and a power of comic grimaces and mimicry which have never been surpassed. One night he suddenly climbed up the iron pipe of our Canadian stove, which conducted the smoke straight up through the roof. The pipe was exceedingly hot where he embraced it, and he therefore had to scramble madly upwards to attain a cooler situation. When he had ascended about 6 feet and was clinging on with both arms and legs round the pipe, it gave way just where it entered the roof, and bent slowly in a graceful curve, with smoke pouring out of its open end. Johns was suspended in mid-air hanging on to it. He remained unperturbed, an extraordinary smile on his face. Then in a curious falsetto voice he made an impromptu speech, which started, I remember, as follows:

"Now lads, when I was aboard the French Frigate Flossie..."

And then followed a ludicrous description of life at sea, which reduced everyone, including the long-suffering stewards, to helpless laughter. He had somehow contrived to take a drink up with him, and his final touch was to appear suddenly to notice the smoke which was pouring out of the pipe, and then

make a pretence of putting out “ a frightful fire which was raging in the “ tweendecks” by emptying his glass down it.

Hid humour gained a great deal by the speed at which his mind worked, and the unexpected twist he would give the ordinary conversation. One morning an engineer came up to Johns, saluted and reported “sorry you won’t be able to go up sir; your engine’s gone dud.” He instantly turned to th CO, saluted, and with an exact imitation of the engineer’s manner sais “Sorry, shan’t be able to go up sir, my Camel’s got the hump.”

One night he appeared as a witch, in an astounding costume, the head-dress consisting of a gramophone record cardboard cover pulled down over his face. It just allowed his eyes, nose and mouth to show through the hole in the front, and a large bunch of hair to stick out the back. He was armed with a pack of cards, and offered to tell anybody’s fortune.

Jordan asked for his and laid the 3 of hearts on the table. He gazed at it and said “Ah! The Jack of Spades, I see. That means you have had a fatal illness from which probably never recovered. Let me regard further. (Pulling out the Queen of Diamonds) Ah! We have got the Ace of Hearts; that means you will pull through ”And then looking at Jordan’s attenuated figure, he said: “And you look like ruddy pull through anyway”

Mad Major P76 (24 Jan 18) Flt Lt Jordan and Flt Sub Lts Johnstone, Walworth and Johns attacked a single Albatros scout which had come very close to the lines. This machine was shot down and was last observed down to 1500 feet and quite out of control.

Naval Aces p73 Naval 8’s team effort continued on 24 Jan 18 when Price claimed a DV destroyed and 2 fell OOC to Jordan and Johnstone. The latter pair shared one of their successes with Flt Sub Lt Reginald Leach Johns, a 23 year old pilot from Kilburn in NW London

RFC Communiques 1917-18 P 204 Later, Flt Sub Lts Johnstone and R Johns attacked a single Albatros scout close to the lines. They fired between them 200 rounds and the EA was last seen at 1500 feet still descending quite out of control.

RFC Communiques 1917-18 P208 Flt Sub Lt R Johns shot one EA down completely out of control, and two others were driven down.

RAF Communiques 1918 P 106 Enemy aircraft also brought down Lt R L Johns.

24 Jan 18 look for combat report?