




TASMANIAN BORN AIR ACES OF WORLD WAR 1
FRANK ALBERRY – “THE ONE – LEGGED ACE”

Frank Alberry – “The One – Legged Ace”

Author: W Dearing, September 2020

	Frank Alberry – “The One – Legged Ace”	
	Born:	29 September 1892, Hobart, Tasmania
	Joined:	24 August 1914, Broadmeadows, Victoria
	Died:	23 January 1969, Concord, Sydney, NSW
	Serial Number:	867, 8th Battalion, AIF

Alberry was born in Hobart and grew up in Port Arthur. As a young man he worked his way from Burnie, to Melbourne, to Bendigo, to England and then Edinburgh. When he ran out of work, he returned to England to search for work and then joined the Welsh Regiment of the English Regular Army. In 1911 while on leave, he deserted when he got the opportunity to return to Australia on a ship. He reconciled his desertion by telling himself that if war broke out, he would return.

Three years later, when war was declared, he turned up at an Australian recruitment station and was given the option of returning to his English unit or joining the Australian Army; he chose the latter. He enlisted in the 1st A.I.F. on 24th August 1914, aged 21 at Broadmeadows in Melbourne.

He served in the 8th Battalion, composed of the 1st Division, as commander of the machine-gun section, distinguishing himself in the battles of Gallipoli in 1915, and on the Western Front in 1916. On the 25 July 1916 whilst serving with the 8th Battalion at the battle of Pozières on the Somme, Sergeant Alberry was wounded after a bullet shattered his kneecap and his right leg was eventually amputated above the knee. Following this action, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. (D.S.M.)

After a period of convalescence, he applied for pilot training, only to be told they did not have an authority to accept him with only one leg. He sent a personal request to King George V, who, after hearing Alberry’s story, gave him a letter addressed to the Air Board requesting he be accepted for training in the Air Force.



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

TASMANIAN BORN AIR ACES OF WORLD WAR 1 FRANK ALBERRY – “THE ONE – LEGGED ACE”

After completing his training with the Royal Flying Corps (R.F.C.) in June 1918, he was posted to No 2 Squadron Australian Flying Corps (A.F.C.) in France, flying the Royal Aircraft Factory SE5a biplane.

Always keen to be where the action was, he followed the front-line into Europe and on the 16th September was involved in a dog fight where he shot down a Fokker over France. Alberry's combat report reads:

“As the patrol dived on the formation of enemy aircraft encountered 1 mile NW of Lille, I singled out one and dived on it firing about 50 rounds at close range. The enemy aircraft did a side-slip, left hand turn, and flames and smoke were coming from the cockpit.”

Two more victories were achieved on the 17th September with a further successful encounter on the 18th October. This was followed up on the 28th October with two more victories, elevating him to “ace” status, with his final conquest occurring on the 4th November 1918, (a week before the end of the war).

After the war he returned to Australia and settled in East Gippsland, where he worked as a timber feller and machinist.

Frank Alberry's Victories					
Date	Time	Unit	Aircraft	Opponent	Location
16 Sep 1918	0730	2 (AFC)	S.E.5a (D6995)	Fokker D.VII (DES)	NW of Lille
17 Sep 1918	1020	2 (AFC)	S.E.5a (D6995)	Fokker DR.I (OOC)	Lille
17 Sep 1918	1020	2 (AFC)	S.E.5a (D6995)	Fokker DR.I (OOC)	Lille
18 Oct 1918	1230	2 (AFC)	S.E.5a (D6995)	Fokker D.VII (OOC)	N of Tournai
28 Oct 1918	1120	2 (AFC)	S.E.5a (D6995)	Fokker D.VII (OOC)	Bandour
28 Oct 1918	1120	2 (AFC)	S.E.5a (D6995)	Fokker D.VII (DES)	Bandour
04 Nov 1918	1310	2 (AFC)	S.E.5a (D6995)	Fokker D.VII (OOC)	Houtaing

During World War 2 Frank Alberry again returned to service, this time as a recruiter. Rejoining the R.A.A.F. in September 1939 he served until his retirement on 30 June 1942 and was placed on the R.A.A.F. reserve list.

Frank Alberry passed away in 1969 at the age of 77 years.



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

**TASMANIAN BORN AIR ACES OF WORLD WAR 1
FRANK ALBERRY – “THE ONE – LEGGED ACE”**



This S.E.5a is the type flown by Frank Alberry while serving with No 2 Squadron during the Autumn of 1918. This aircraft displays the squadron’s later markings depicting a vertical strip behind the cockpit.