

# NAME THAT PLANE

## Sopwith Camel

The Sopwith Camel was a British First World War single-seat biplane fighter introduced on the Western Front in 1917. Manufactured by Sopwith Aviation Company, it had a short-coupled fuselage, heavy, powerful [rotary engine](#), and concentrated fire from twin synchronized [Vickers machine guns](#). 5,490 were built. Though difficult to handle, to an experienced pilot it provided unmatched maneuverability. A superlative fighter, the Camel was credited with shooting down 1,294 enemy aircraft, more than any other Allied fighter of the war. It also served as a ground-attack aircraft, especially near the end of the conflict, when it was outclassed in the air-to-air role by newer fighters.

The Camel proved to be a superlative fighter, and offered heavier armament and better performance than the Pup and Triplane. In the hands of an experienced pilot, its maneuverability was unmatched by any contemporary type. Its controls were light and sensitive. Agility in combat made the Camel one of the best-remembered Allied aircraft of the First World War. It was said in jest to offer a choice between a "wooden cross, red cross, and Victoria Cross." Together with the S.E.5a, the Camel helped to wrest aerial superiority away from the German Albatros fighters.

By mid-1918, the Camel was becoming limited, especially as a day fighter, by its slow speed and comparatively poor performance at altitudes over 12,000 ft. However, it remained useful as a ground-attack and infantry support aircraft. During the German offensive of March 1918, flights of Camels harassed the advancing German Army, inflicting high losses (and suffering high losses in turn) through the dropping of 25 lb. [Cooper bombs](#) and ultra-low-level strafing.

The Sopwith Camel is the "plane" of [Snoopy](#) in the Peanuts comic strip, when he imagines himself as a World War I flying ace and the nemesis of the [Red Baron](#).



The Camel is the plane used during the climactic aerial battle scenes in the 1975 film "[The Great Waldo Pepper](#)", starring Robert Redford.

### General characteristics

Crew: 1  
Length: 18 ft. 9 in.  
Wingspan: 26 ft. 11 in.  
Height: 8 ft. 6 in.  
Wing area: 231 ft<sup>2</sup>  
Empty weight: 930 lb.  
Loaded weight: 1,455 lb.  
Powerplant: 1 × Clerget 9B 9-cylinder Rotary engine, 130 hp.

### Performance

Maximum speed: 115 mph  
Stall speed: 48 mph  
Range: 300 miles (ferry)  
Service ceiling: 21,000 ft.  
Rate of climb: 1,085 ft/min

### Armament

Guns: 2 × 0.303 in. Vickers machine guns

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Please complete this form and return it to:

**Don Bush, EAA 172 Treasurer**  
**3076 Old Waynesboro Rd.**  
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**EAA 172 Membership for 2012**

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**Thank you for your support!**

