

# BULLDOG!

ED STORO HAS CREATED A MASTERPIECE THAT HONORS THE ROYAL AIR FORCE'S  
BIPLANE FIGHTERS OF THE INTERWAR YEARS  
BY ROGER CAIN



Ed Storo with the project that took two decades to complete — the Bristol Bulldog.

The Great War left most of the nations of Europe devastated with an entire generation slaughtered off for nothing. Britain in particular was reeling at the end of the conflict but the government realized it still needed to keep up some sort of military presence — the entire colonial system was beginning to show signs of crumbling — and, in particular, advances in aeronautics had to be incorporated into a new generation of warplanes.

One must remember that during the 1920s, aircraft could be designed and constructed in a rapid manner. By the mid-1920s, the Royal Air Force was flying Armstrong Whitworth Siskin and Gloster Gamecock fighters. Basically, these machines had much in common with fighter aircraft of the late Great War period. They were fabric-covered

airframes, often making extensive use of wood in their construction, biplane in layout, and armed with just two machine guns.

With the need to replace these aircraft, the Air Ministry issued Specification F.9/26 and this was distributed to Britain's many aircraft builders — all of which were looking for work. The specification meant "F" — for fighter, "9" — for the ninth specification issued that year, and "26" — for the year issued, 1926. The specification was relatively basic and called for a single-seat fighter to be powered by an air-cooled radial engine and armed with two Vickers machine guns. For performance, the new aircraft had to be comparable or better than the Fairey Fox day bomber.

At the Bristol Aeroplane Company headquarters near the English city of the same name, chief designer Frank S.

Barnwell received the specification and began to make some initial sketches. He had joined the company in 1911 and was almost immediately assigned to the secret "X-Department" to work on what would be an unsuccessful seaplane. Barnwell had taken over the top position in October 1914 but with the war, he went to France as a pilot. Wisely, his skills as a designer were more valued than his ability as a pilot and, in 1915, he returned from the front and No. 12 Squadron to work on a number of designs. His most successful of that time period was the magnificent Bristol F.2B two-seat fighter, of which over 5300 were built. He also created the Monoplane Scout and it was well-liked by aviators but there was a great deal of prejudice against anything that did not have two (or more) wings and only 130 were built.

Ed Storo and the Bulldog in flight near Hood River, Oregon. Note the amount of dihedral in the wings. Camera plane for the mission was WAAAM's Piper L-21 flown by Jonathon Borchers.