Commander and Mrs Eric ‘Winkle’ Brown

The Duke of York, Admiral of the Fleet, Air Chief Marshal Sir James Duffield, three former Prime Ministers and representatives from more than 150 organisations attended the Fly Navy Trust's commemoration of Eric ‘Winkle’ Brown, who became Britain’s first fighter ace in 1918. The Duke of York, King Edward VII, the Earl of Mountbatten and the Queen’s Own Hussars also attended the ceremony.

Commodore-in-Chief of the Fleet Air Arm, Admiral Sir Philip Jones and more than 650 Royal Navy personnel, fellow test pilots, scientists and members of the aviation and aeronautical industries gathered at the same air station to commemorate the life of a man who rose from that skid marks with Somerton said to be the world's greatest military test pilot.

Captain Eric Brown, who died in February this year aged 92, flew 487 different military aircraft — from gliders and jets to helicopters including many during their dangerous initial testing phase.

He made 3,407 landings on carriers and at 2,975 would account for two thirds of these totals.

He was the first man to land a jet on a carrier, and during 70 years of involvement in British aviation went from flying the Blackburn Skua fighter to advising on the development of the F-35 Joint Strike from our new Queen Elizabeth Class carriers.

Captain Eric Brown first came to RNW's bewildered of the day it is opened in 1940, when “it was nothing but three runways in an ocean racing track.”

Workmen had to be moved before each take-off and the flying pilot had his first accident there, belly-flopping his Gloster Gladiators bleeds into a pile of rubble.

Brown owned his original test flying overalls, helmet and uniform to the Fly Navy Heritage Trust, which hosted his commemorative event at their hangar.

He changed the charity to use his legacy to inspire new generations of aviators.

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