Wolseley S.E.5a Biplane by Norman Wilkinson

Norman Wilkinson

Sold



REF: 83911

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Height: 29.2 cm (11.5")

Width: 39.35 cm (15.5")

Description

A watercolour and gouache on board illustration of a Wolseley S.E.5a Biplane.

The image is a classic and evocative WWI scene of a lone biplane over no man's land with the desolate ground and burnt trees in the background. The painting is signed Norman Wilkinson 1918 RFC.

The label to the back of the board states '84. Up Front (Lille) November 1917, S.E.5A, Wolseley Motors, By Norman Wilkinson 1918'. Also written, direct to the board is 'R.F.C.4. France For 1917-18 Xmas Card, R.F.C.- RAF, B Flight, 84 SQDN.' The contradiction in date to that on the image is probably due to Wilkinson later painting the picture from earlier sketches or photographs.

84 Squadron of the Royal Flying Corp was formed in February 1917. By July of the same year they became a fighter squadron and were flying the SE.5as. Wolseley were one of a number of companies who made the plane and they improved the 200 hp Hispano Suiza 8A engine to their own modifications and named it the Viper. The SE.5a was one of the most successful planes of the war.

Whether this image was printed as a Christmas card is not known and it may have been in competition with other illustrations. It is a strong image and Wilkinson has effortlessly conveyed a common scene. Dated 1918.

Later framed in a period frame.

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