



0. LUFBERY, THE ACE - Story Preface

1. CAN PEOPLE FLY?
2. HOW POWERED FLIGHT WORKS
3. THE FIRST FLIGHTS
4. AMERICANS FLY FOR FRANCE
5. THE LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE
6. LAFAYETTE FLYING CORPS

7. LUFBERY, THE ACE

8. PICTURES OF WWI AVIATORS

Gervais Raoul Lufbery was the eighth American pilot to volunteer for the Lafayette Escadrille during WWI. Marveling at his friend's ability to fly, a colleague said: "He flew as the bird flies, without any thought as to how it was done." This image depicts "Luf," the "Ace," sometime between 1916 and 1918. Library of Congress image LC-USZ62-101970.

Raoul Lufbery ("Luf") was the inspiration for "Cassidy" in the *Flyboys* movie. Beginning his aviation career as a mechanic, he soon became a pilot, flying bombing missions. When he moved on to fighters, he became the first ace of the *Lafayette Escadrille*.

Enshrined in America's National Aviation Hall of Fame, in 1998, Luf was highly respected by his peers and idolized by the men who served under him. Joining the *Lafayette Escadrille* in May of 1916, during the battle for Verdun, Lufbery was selected by Captain Thenault. Describing Luf's courage, during the many sorties he flew in the Verdun sector, Thenault later said:

Above all the pilots who found themselves at Verdun was Lufbery. Each pilot can be recognized by his flight, but Lufbery stood out by the mastery and ease with which he executed his daring renversements [inversions] and all the acrobatic stunts.

Amazed at Lufbery's flying endurance and capacity, the commander also noted:

To fly high is very fatiguing, as the sudden changes of altitude quickly tire the heart. But never have I met a pilot with more endurance than Lufbery. When the sky was clear, he would go up three or four times a day to 18,000 feet just for his own pleasure, in a dilettante fashion. Never was he at all ill from it.

After the United States joined the war, pilots in the Lafayette Flying Corps, including those survivors of the *Lafayette Escadrille*, were eventually absorbed into the U.S. military. Now veteran pilots, they proved invaluable as instructors for new recruits. Luf became a top instructor, in addition to his flying duties.

Two years to the month after Thenault picked him for the *Lafayette Escadrille*, Luf was on a mission north of Nancy when he tried to shoot down a German Rumpler. Flying a Nieuport 28 (on May 19, 1918), he was hit by enemy fire.

Seen falling out of his flaming plane, he may have jumped to avoid death by fire. Since he took off quickly, to help another pilot who had exhausted his ammunition, it is also possible Luf had not secured his seat restraint. As noted by Jon Guttman, in *SPA 124 Lafayette Escadrille* (at page 112):

First to take off [to attack the German Rumpler] was 1 Lt. Oscar J. Gude, who attacked the Germans at a hopelessly long range until his ammunition was used up. Majors [Majors] Lufbery and John Huffer took off five minutes later, and the former made two attacks before Scheibe's return fire apparently severed a control wire ... causing the Nieuport [Luf's plane] to go into a sudden roll. Lufbery, who in his haste to take off may not have fastened his seat belt, was thrown from his aeroplane and fell on a garden fence near the village of Maron.

America's then-top ace, Lufbery was buried with full military honors the next day. He was thirty-three years old. It is said that he forgot more about combat flying than most men of his time ever knew.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/LUFBERY-THE-ACE-Fly-Boys)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/LUFBERY-THE-ACE-Fly-Boys>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/LUFBERY-THE-ACE-Fly-Boys)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/LUFBERY-THE-ACE-Fly-Boys>



Raoul Lufbery

This photo, is provided by the U.S. Air Force. Online, courtesy the National Museum of the Air Force [website](#).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Raoul-Lufbery0>



Map Depicting Nancy, France

Image online, courtesy the BBC [website](#).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Depicting-Nancy-France>



Nieuport 28

Image provided here from the collection of Lewis Lupton Kaylor, Corporal. Photographic Section, Air Service, United States Army. Online courtesy the [airminded.net website](#).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Nieuport-28>



LUFBERY, THE ACE

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>