

LARGE PRINT GUIDE



PEOPLE OF THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

PART 1

THE
BATTLE
OF **BRITAIN**

Prime Minister Winston Churchill summed up the thoughts of the nation as the Battle of Britain raged overhead, thanking the RAF: 'Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few'.

'The Few' received vital support from 'the Many' – men and women from across society, both service personnel and civilians, and from around the world who came together to face a common enemy. Luftwaffe aircrew faced the same dangers as the RAF. Having endured the same risks as enemies, many RAF and Luftwaffe personnel became friends after the war.

PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS

These photographic portraits from the Museum's collection represent the Many and the Few, whose actions had such a great impact on the outcome of the Battle of Britain.

They include RAF aircrew and groundcrew as well as pilots and senior commanders from many nations around the world. The contribution of factory workers, politicians, aircraft designers and test pilots cannot be overestimated.

RAF ranks, whether temporary or permanent, are shown as held at the time of the Battle of Britain – as are any awards and honours.

Portraits in this guide appear in alphabetical order.

[Discover more about RAF personnel, including the Roll of Honour of those who gave their lives on operations during the Battle, on the screen.](#)



British

**Squadron Leader
John William Maxwell Aitken DFC**

In 1935 Max Aitken joined No. 601 Squadron, Auxiliary Air Force, stationed at RAF Hendon. He served during the Battle of France, flying Hawker Hurricanes, and claimed the destruction or probable destruction of six enemy aircraft.

Max was given command of No. 601 Squadron in June 1940. He destroyed a Heinkel He 111 and shared in the destruction of a Dornier Do 17 in July. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on 9 July.



New Zealand

**Sergeant
Maurice Raymond Andrews**

Maurice Andrews was born in New Zealand and trained as an air gunner. He sailed for Britain in April 1940.

He joined No. 264 Squadron on 29 August, flying in Boulton Paul Defiants. In September 1940 Maurice was relocated first to Northolt then to Luton as part of B Flight, flying in night patrols over London. He was commissioned in 1942 and joined No. 277 Squadron, Air Sea Rescue. He returned to New Zealand in 1944.



British

**Pilot Officer
Dennis Lockhard Armitage**

Dennis Armitage was born in Lancashire in 1912. He learned to fly in 1934 and joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve when it formed in 1936.

Like many reservists, Dennis went on to play an important role in the RAF once the war started. He was called up in 1939 and was posted to No. 266 Squadron. In 1941, he became commanding officer of No. 129 Squadron, before being shot down over France later that year. He was held as a prisoner of war until 1945.



Canadian

**Flying Officer
Charles Ian Rose Arthur**

Charles Arthur was born in Canada and joined the RAF on a Short Service Commission in 1938. He was posted to No. 141 Squadron in October 1939.

After a short spell at Biggin Hill, flying Boulton Paul Defiants, Charles went on to serve in No. 242 Squadron, with many other Canadian pilots, under the leadership of Douglas Bader. He later saw action in Malta, North Africa and Italy.



British

Sergeant Ivor James Badger

Ivor Badger joined the RAF in 1929 and initially trained as an engine fitter. He re-trained as a pilot and by 1938 was a member of No. 151 Squadron's aerobatic team.

During the Battle of Britain, he served with No. 87 Squadron, flying Hawker Hurricanes. On 11 August 1940, Ivor claimed the destruction of a Messerschmitt Bf 109 and damage to another. On 25 August, during an engagement with a large formation of Germany aircraft off Portland, he damaged a Junkers Ju 88 and Messerschmitt Bf 109.



British

Sergeant Frederick James Barker DFM

Frederick Barker was born in London in 1918. He joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in April 1939 before being called up in September 1939. He then joined No. 264 Squadron as an air gunner, flying with pilot Sergeant Edward Thorn.

Frederick and Edward flew Boulton Paul Defiants with Frederick as a gunner, becoming the most successful team to crew Defiants. Both were awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal in 1940, and a bar in 1941. Frederick was commissioned in 1944 and left the RAF in 1946 as a Flying Officer.



British

**Pilot Officer
Eric Gordon Barwell**

Eric Barwell joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in July 1938, and was posted to No. 264 Squadron in December 1939.

In the Battle of France in May 1940, flying Boulton Paul Defiants, Eric claimed a Messerschmitt Bf 109, Bf 110, two Junkers Ju 87 Stukas and a Heinkel He 111. On 24 August 1940, while defending RAF Manston from an enemy raid, he claimed a Messerschmitt Bf 109. Eric was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1941.



Irish

**Wing Commander
Francis Victor Beamish DSO AFC**

Victor Beamish joined RAF College, Cranwell, in 1921. After a number of postings, including service in India and Canada, he was made station commander at RAF North Weald in June 1940.

Victor often flew operational sorties with squadrons at his station. During the Battle of Britain he was credited with the destruction or damage of 19 enemy aircraft, including nine Messerschmitt Bf 109s. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in July 1940.



British

Flying Officer Roland Prosper Beaumont

‘Bee’ Beaumont joined the RAF on a short service commission in 1939. After training, where he was graded ‘exceptional’, he joined No. 87 Squadron in France.

During the Battle of Britain, No. 87 Squadron was stationed at Exeter. Flying Hurricanes, Bee claimed the destruction of several aircraft. On 15 August, for example, he claimed the destruction of a Messerschmitt Bf 110 and the probable destruction of a second.



Canadian

1st Baron Beaverbrook William Maxwell Aitken

Baron Beaverbrook was born in Canada in 1879 and moved to England in 1910. His controlling stake in the Daily Express newspaper was one of his many business and political interests.

Churchill appointed Beaverbrook to the influential position of Minister of Aircraft Production in May 1940. He was always a controversial figure, praised by some for facilitating a rapid increase in aircraft production, but hated by others, who felt his methods did more harm than good. He resigned the post in 1941.



British

**Pilot Officer
Noel John Victor Benson**

Noel Benson completed his training as a flight cadet at the RAF College Cranwell, and was commissioned in October 1939.

On 23 July, Noel shared in the destruction of a Dornier Do 17, but his aircraft received damage to the starboard undercarriage leg, which collapsed on landing, causing the aircraft to tip over. On 28 August, Noel's Spitfire was shot down and crashed in flames near Tenterden, Kent by Messerschmitt Bf 109s.



Canadian

**Pilot Officer
John Benzie**

John Benzie joined the RAF on a Short Service Commission in March 1939. He served with No. 242 Squadron during the Battle of France in May 1940, and was shot down, wounded, and evacuated to England.

John failed to return from a combat over the Thames Estuary on 7 September 1940. He is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.



British

Squadron Leader Arthur James Biggar

Arthur Biggar joined the RAF on a Short Service Commission in early 1932. After serving in India, he joined the permanent staff of No. 604 Squadron, Auxiliary Air Force in July 1937.

Arthur took command of No. 111 Squadron on 3 October 1940 for the remainder of the Battle of Britain. He later became a Group Captain and was awarded the CBE in 1956.



New Zealand

Squadron Leader Minden Vaughan Blake

Minden Blake was born in New Zealand and arrived in the UK in 1936. He was granted a permanent commission in the RAF in November 1937.

On 21 August, while serving with No. 238 Squadron, Minden shot down a Junkers Ju 88. Later that month, he shared in the destruction of a Dornier Do 17, intercepted over Plymouth. On 11 September he destroyed another Junkers Ju 88. Minden went on to lead No. 234 Squadron. He was later captured by the Germans after his Spitfire was shot down in the Channel in 1942.



British

Flying Officer Benjamin Harvey Bowring

Benjamin Bowring learned to fly at Brooklands Flying Club in 1937 and joined No. 600 Squadron Auxiliary Air Force in 1938. He was called to full time service in August 1939.

Benjamin served with No. 600 Squadron until August 1940, when he transferred to No. 111 Squadron at Debden, Essex. During the Battle of Britain, he was involved in the destruction or damage of 10 enemy aircraft. Benjamin was wounded in the arm in October, but returned to action by the end of the month.



British

Flying Officer Archibald Douglas McNeill Boyd

Archibald Boyd learned to fly with the Oxford University Air Squadron in 1938. He joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve and was called up in 1939.

Archibald was posted to No. 600 Squadron in May 1940, flying Bristol Blenheims at RAF Manston, Kent. The squadron was issued with Bristol Beaufighters and Archibald flew the first Beaufighter patrol on 30 September 1940.



British

**Flying Officer
John Randall Daniel Braham**

‘Bob’ Braham joined the RAF on a Short Service Commission in 1938 and was posted to No. 29 Squadron in December 1938.

On 24 August 1940, on a night flight in a Bristol Blenheim, Bob shot down a Heinkel He 111 over the Humber. Later, he became one of the first pilots to fly a Bristol Beaufighter equipped with radar.



British

**Sub-Lieutenant
Henry George Kenelm Bramah**

Born in London, Henry Bramah joined the Air Branch of the Royal Navy in 1939. After training with the RAF, he joined No. 213 Squadron on 1 July 1940.

On 15 July 1940, Henry made three flights. On the first he shot down a Dornier Do 17, but on the third he was shot down and rescued from the sea. His slow recovery prevented him from re-joining the squadron. He returned to the Royal Navy, where he remained until 1955.



South African

**Air Vice Marshal
Sir Christopher Joseph Quintin Brand KBE
DSO MC DFC**

Sir Christopher Brand had a successful and distinguished flying career during the First World War. He served with the RAF between the wars and joined Fighter Command in May 1940.

Sir Christopher became Air Officer Commanding of No. 10 Group, Fighter Command, which was responsible for the defence of south west England and South Wales. He supported Air Vice Marshal Keith Park, Commander of No. 11 Group, in advocating the use of small, rapidly deployed, groups of fighter aircraft. After the war he returned to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).



British

**Flight Lieutenant
Peter Malam Brothers DFC**

Peter Brothers learned to fly aged 16 while he was still at school. He joined the RAF in 1936 and was posted to No. 32 Squadron at Biggin Hill.

While he was with No. 32 Squadron, between May and August 1940, Peter claimed the destruction of 10 German aircraft, including seven Messerschmitt Bf 109s. He was posted to No. 257 Squadron in September as a flight commander. After destroying a Dornier Do 17 and a Junkers Ju 88, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.



British

Sergeant Alfred Denmark Burt

Alfred Burt joined the RAF in 1932 as a fitter. He later went on to train as a pilot and in September 1939 he joined No. 611 Squadron, flying Spitfires.

Alfred shared in the destruction of two Dornier Do 17s off the Lincolnshire Coast on 21 August 1940 and in September he probably destroyed a Heinkel He 111. He was posted to No. 603 Squadron in Hornchurch in October.



British

Pilot Officer James Russell Caister DFM

James Caister joined the RAF in 1925 as an aircraft hand. He was later accepted for pilot training and served in Palestine in the 1930s. By early 1940, James was serving with No. 603 Squadron at RAF Dyce, Aberdeen, as a sergeant pilot.

During July 1940, he shared in the destruction of three enemy aircraft. James was commissioned as a pilot officer in August and claimed a Heinkel He111 on 30 August 1940 and a Messerschmitt Bf 109 on 3 September. During combat over the Channel, he crash landed in France in Spitfire X4260 and was taken prisoner.

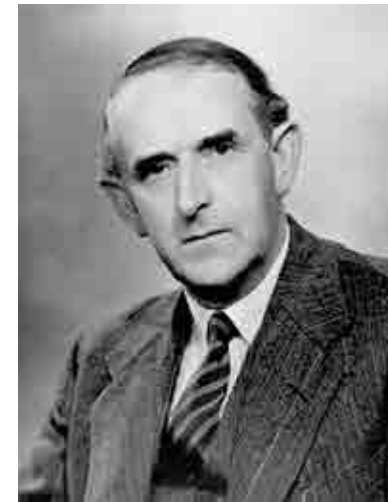


British

Sergeant Neil Cameron

Neil Cameron joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in 1939 and continued serving with the RAF, including promotion to its most senior role as Chief of the Air Staff, before becoming Chief of the Defence Staff in 1977.

In September 1940, he flew Hurricanes with No. 1 Squadron and was posted to No. 17 Squadron for the last part of the Battle of Britain. Neil later flew in operations in the USSR, North Africa and the Far East.



British

Sydney Camm

Sydney Camm had a lifelong interest in aeronautics, and joined the Hawker Aircraft Company in 1923. During his career with Hawker, he became principal designer and was involved in the development of 52 different types of aircraft.

In the 1930s, Sydney responded to the RAF's need for faster, more reliable fighter aircraft to replace outmoded biplanes. He was chief designer of the Hawker Hurricane, the RAF's most widely-used single-seat fighter aircraft during the Battle of Britain, which came into RAF service in 1937. By the end of the Second World War, more than 14,000 Hurricanes had been manufactured.



British

**Right Honourable
Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill MP**

Winston Churchill entered politics in 1900, when he was elected MP for Oldham. In 1940 he was made Prime Minister, a post he held for the rest of the war.

Although Churchill was Prime Minister, there was little he could do to influence the outcome of the Battle of Britain, and he relied heavily on his commanders. His Battle of Britain speeches may be his greatest legacy as they helped to inspire the British people and their allies.



Irish

**Pilot Officer
Brian Bertram Considine**

Brian Considine joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in 1939. After training, he was posted to No. 238 Squadron in June 1940, flying Hurricanes.

Brian claimed the destruction of a Messerschmitt Bf 110 in July. In August, he shared the destruction of a Dornier Do 17, which crash landed at Tavistock.



British

Flight Sergeant Harry Cook

Harry Cook joined the RAF as a flight sergeant in July 1939. He was posted to No. 266 Squadron at Wittering, flying Spitfires, in August 1940.

Harry moved to No. 66 Squadron in September and during the Battle of Britain was involved in the destruction or damage of seven enemy aircraft. On 13 October, he crash landed at RAF Hornchurch, but although his Spitfire X4543 was written off, Harry was unhurt.



British

Pilot Officer Ivor Henry Cosby

Ivor Cosby joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in 1938. He flew Westland Lysanders in the Battle of France in May 1940 with No. 13 Squadron.

Ivor converted to Supermarine Spitfires and joined first No. 610 Squadron and then No. 72 Squadron at Biggin Hill. He claimed a share of a Messerschmitt Bf 109 on 23 September. Ivor served with the RAF until 1974, retiring as a Wing Commander.



British

**Sergeant
David George Samuel Richardson Cox**

David Cox joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in April 1939 and was called up on 1 September.

During the Battle of Britain, while serving with No. 19 Squadron, David claimed or shared in the destruction of five German aircraft. His Spitfire X4237 was shot down on 27 September 1940 over Canterbury and he spent three months recovering in hospital. David went on to serve in North Africa and Burma and was awarded the DFC and bar.



British

**Flight Lieutenant
George Dudley Craig**

George Craig joined No. 607 Squadron, Auxiliary Air Force in 1937 and was called up to full time service in August 1939. He served in the Battle of France.

George served with No. 607 Squadron throughout the Battle of Britain and on 15 August he probably destroyed a Heinkel He 111 and a Messerschmitt Bf 110. In November 1941, he was shot down and became a prisoner of war, making two attempts to escape.



British

Flight Lieutenant John Cunningham

John Cunningham worked for the de Havilland Aircraft Company before he joined No. 604 Squadron Auxiliary Air Force in 1935. After this, he became a test pilot, often flying with Geoffrey de Havilland.

He re-joined No. 604 Squadron in September 1939, flying Bristol Blenheims. In July 1940, the squadron was re-designated as a specialist night-fighter unit and was one of the first to receive AI – Airborne Interception Radar. John's nickname, 'Cat's Eyes', referred to his apparently uncanny ability to see in the dark.



British

Gerard John Regis Leo d'Erlanger

Born in London, Gerard d'Erlanger was a director of British Airways, joining the British Overseas Airways Corporation when it was formed in 1939.

He was aware that many pilots were too old for active service and proposed the formation of an organisation that could ferry new, repaired and damaged aircraft between factories and assembly plants to RAF squadrons and maintenance units. Gerard became Commodore of the Air Transport Auxiliary, in which about one in eight pilots was a woman.



British

**Flight Lieutenant
William Dennis David DFC and Bar**

William David joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in 1937 and was posted to No. 87 Squadron in early 1939. By the end of the Battle of France he was recorded as destroying 11 enemy aircraft, for which he was awarded a DFC and bar.

William's squadron moved to RAF Exeter in June 1940. Between August and October, flying in Hurricanes, he destroyed a further eight aircraft. He temporarily became Flight Commander of B Flight for No. 213 Squadron at RAF Tangmere. Later in the war he served in the Middle East and South East Asia.



Belgian

**Pilot Officer
François Xavier Egenoff de Spirlet**

François de Spirlet was serving in the Belgian Air Force in May 1940 when the Germans attacked. To avoid capture after the fall of France, he sailed to Liverpool via Gibraltar, arriving in July 1940.

François converted to Hurricanes and joined No. 87 Squadron at Church Fenton, North Yorkshire on 12 August 1940. He was killed when his Hawker Typhoon crashed into another at RAF Duxford in June 1942.



New Zealand

Flying Officer Alan Christopher Deere DFC and Bar

Al Deere was born in New Zealand in 1917. He moved to England in 1937 and joined the RAF, one of the many New Zealanders who gave their support to Britain at this time.

As a Spitfire pilot, Al served with No. 54 Squadron throughout the Battle of Britain, becoming a fighter ace. He was shot down on several occasions including on 15 August 1940 when he baled out near Deal in Kent. He received many awards and only retired from the RAF in 1967.



British

Wing Commander John Scatcliff Dewar

John Dewar entered RAF College Cranwell January 1926, later taking command of No. 87 Squadron in December 1939.

During the Battle of Britain, John claimed five possible enemy aircraft. On 12 September 1940, John was posted missing while on a routine flight. He was the highest-ranking officer to be killed during the Battle. His body was washed up on 30 September off the Sussex Coast. John is buried at St John the Baptist churchyard, North Baddesley, Hampshire.



British

Flight Lieutenant Alexander Rothwell Edge

Alexander Edge joined No. 609 Squadron, Auxiliary Air Force, in 1936 and was called up for full time service in August 1939.

On 18 July 1940, Alexander made a forced landing in his Spitfire R6636 on Studland Beach, Dorset after engagement with a Junkers Ju 88. The beach was heavily mined and he was taken off by sea by the Royal Navy. Alexander subsequently moved to Training Command and was awarded an Air Force Cross in 1943.



Polish

Flying Officer Jan Pawel Falkowski

Jan Falkowski was born in 1912. He joined the Polish Air Force in 1932 and was commissioned in 1936. He escaped when Poland was invaded, reaching England in 1940.

Unlike many of his compatriots, he joined No. 32 Squadron rather than a Polish squadron, flying Hurricanes. After being shot down over Portsmouth in January 1941, Jan was mistaken for a German until he was vouched for by his commanding officer. In 1945, he was shot down again and was helped to safety by the Dutch Resistance.



British

Squadron Leader Donald Osborne Finlay

Don Finlay joined the RAF as an aircraft apprentice in 1925. He became a successful Olympic hurdler during the 1930s before training as a pilot in 1935.

On 26 August, Don took command of No. 54 Squadron. He was shot down two days later by Messerschmitt Bf 109s over Ramsgate, baling out of his Supermarine Spitfire X4053. In mid-September Don took command of No. 41 Squadron, based at Hornchurch, and by the end of the Battle of Britain had destroyed or damaged six enemy aircraft.



American

Pilot Officer William Meade Lindsley Fiske III

'Billy' Fiske was an American citizen and Olympic bobsled gold medallist, who worked for the London branch of a US bank. He joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in 1939.

Billy joined No. 601 Squadron in July 1940. He was badly burned when his Hawker Hurricane was hit while intercepting a formation of Junkers Ju 87s on 16 August and he died of his wounds the next day. Billy is buried in St Mary and St Blaise churchyard, Boxgrove. He was the only American serving with the RAF to die in the Battle of Britain.



Australian

Sergeant Desmond Fopp

Desmond Fopp was born in Australia and joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in 1938. After completing flying training, he joined No. 17 Squadron.

Desmond shot down a Heinkel He 111 on 12 July 1940. On 3 September his Hurricane P3673 crashed in Hutton, South Essex after being pursued by Messerschmitt Bf 110s. Desmond baled out but was badly burned and took three months to recover in hospital.



British

Flying Officer Christopher Neil Foxley-Norris

Christopher Foxley-Norris served with the Oxford University Air Squadron in 1936 and joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in 1938.

Christopher saw action during the Battle of France with No. 13 Squadron in May 1940. He was posted to No. 3 Squadron at Turnhouse, Edinburgh in September, flying Hurricanes. Christopher was Chairman of the Battle of Britain Fighter Association between 1978 and 2003.



British

Sergeant Joffre Harry Fripp

Joffre Fripp joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in August 1937. After he was called up and had completed training, he joined No. 248 Squadron.

Joffre remained with No. 248 Squadron throughout the Battle of Britain, flying Bristol Blenheims from airfields in Scotland. The squadron was in Coastal Command, but flew some patrols for Fighter Command, the crews qualifying for the Battle of Britain Clasp.



German

Major Adolf Josef Ferdinand Galland Spanish Cross in Gold with Swords and Diamonds, Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves

Adolf Galland was a commercial pilot before he joined the Luftwaffe in 1934. He served in the Spanish Civil War, the invasion of Poland and the Battle of France.

Adolf was based in Calais throughout the Battle of Britain, flying Messerschmitt Bf 109s. He was a highly successful and influential pilot and shot down an estimated 50 British aircraft between July and October. He, and fellow ace, Werner Mölders, disagreed with Hermann Göring's tactics of how to deploy German fighter aircraft, but were overruled.



British

Flight Lieutenant Ian Richard Gleed DFC

Ian Gleed learned how to fly privately before he joined the RAF in March 1936. He was posted to No. 266 Squadron as a Flight Commander in September 1939.

During the Battle of France in May 1940, flying Spitfires with No. 87 Squadron, Ian was involved in the destruction, or probable destruction of eight German aircraft. During the Battle of Britain he claimed a further seven aircraft and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in September 1940.



Polish

Sergeant Antoni Glowacki

Antoni Glowacki joined the Polish Air Force in 1926. Following the German invasion, he fled via Romania and France before arriving in the UK and joining the RAF Volunteer Reserve in January 1940.

Antoni joined No. 501 Squadron and became the first pilot during the Battle of Britain to become an 'Ace in a Day' when he shot down three Messerschmitt Bf 109s and two Junkers Ju 88s over Ramsgate. Between 15 and 31 August, he destroyed or damaged a further 12 enemy aircraft.



British

Squadron Leader John Grandy

John Grandy joined the RAF on a Short Service Commission in 1931.

During the Battle of Britain John commanded No. 249 Squadron at Church Fenton, Yorkshire. On 6 September 1940, he was shot down over Maidstone and the injuries he sustained to his legs when he baled out stopped him flying until 31 October. John later went on to serve in the Middle East and South East Asia.



British

Unknown Ground Crew

The roles of ground crew were varied. Riggers and engine fitters maintained the airframes and engines, armourers made sure the guns fired, while wireless mechanics ensured the radios could transmit and receive. All were supported by numerous office and administration staff. Few received recognition for their vital work.



British

**Pilot Officer
Roger Montague Dickenson Hall**

Roger Hall originally was commissioned in the Royal Tank Regiment in 1938 and transferred to the RAF in 1940.

After training, Roger joined No. 152 Squadron in August 1940, and undertook patrols along the south coast. During September he engaged a lone Junkers Ju 88 and damaged a Messerschmitt Bf 110. On 7 October, he damaged another Bf 110 but was forced to land his Supermarine Spitfire R6608 at Sutton Scotney, Hampshire. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1942.



British

**Sergeant
Ronald Fairfax Hamlyn DFM**

Ronald Hamlyn joined the RAF in 1936 and joined No. 72 Squadron in 1939.

During the Battle of Britain Ronald served with No. 610 Squadron at Gravesend, flying Spitfires. During August he destroyed eight enemy aircraft, including five in one day, 24 August. Ronald was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal in September 1940 with his citation reading 'He has displayed great courage and good marksmanship'.



British

Assistant Section Officer Felicity Hyde Hanbury MBE

Felicity Hanbury was born in Cheshire in 1913 and gained a pilot's licence in 1935 before joining the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) in 1939.

She was stationed at RAF Biggin Hill throughout the Battle of Britain, responsible for 250 WAAF personnel. During two days of heavy bombing in August 1940, she ensured the station continued to operate, an action that earned her the Military MBE. Felicity became the last Director of the WAAF and first Director of the Women's Royal Air Force when it formed in 1949.



British

Pilot Officer Norman Edward Hancock

Norman Hancock joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in July 1939.

Norman joined No. 65 Squadron on 2 September, flying patrols along the east coast of Scotland. In October, he moved to No. 152 Squadron in Warmwell, Dorset. On 28 November Norman claimed a Messerschmitt Bf 110. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1944.



British

Corporal Elspeth Candlish Henderson

Elspeth Henderson joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in January 1940. After plotter training, she was posted to Biggin Hill, one of Fighter Command's main airfields.

During the Battle of Britain, Elspeth was responsible for supervising plotters in the Operations Room. In late August 1940, despite suffering six enemy raids in three days, she maintained contact with airfield operations staff and the controllers at 11 Group Headquarters, Uxbridge, for which she was awarded the Military Medal.



British

Alexander Adolphus Dumfries Henshaw

Alex Henshaw was born in Peterborough in 1912. He learned to fly in 1932, making his name in air races and winning the King's Cup in 1938. Also in that year, he made a record-breaking flight from England to South Africa and back.

Rather than joining the Royal Air Force, Alex joined Vickers-Armstrong as a test pilot. In June 1940, he transferred to the new Vickers Castle Bromwich factory where he test flew Spitfires. It is estimated that he flew 10% of all Spitfires ever built.



German

Führer Adolf Hitler

In 1934 Hitler became Führer und Reichskanzler. He felt humiliated by Germany's defeat in the First World War and sought revenge on those he considered responsible.

Hitler hoped the British Government would seek peace following the defeat of France in 1940. When it did not, he ordered preparations be made for an invasion – Operation SEALION. The failure of the Luftwaffe to defeat the Royal Air Force during the Battle of Britain forced him to postpone, and later abandon, the invasion while he turned his attention towards the Soviet Union.



British

Sergeant Sydney Victor Holloway

Sydney Holloway joined the RAF in 1938 and was posted to No. 25 Squadron on 6 July 1938.

During the Battle of Britain, Sydney piloted Bristol Blenheim night fighters equipped with Airborne Interception equipment (later known as radar). In September he flew night patrols from RAF North Weald, Essex, to intercept incoming German bombers. On 15 November 1940, he shot down a Heinkel He 111 near Colchester.



British

Sergeant Francis Vincent Howell

Francis Howell joined the RAF in 1931 as an aircraft apprentice and retrained as a pilot in 1937.

At the end of September 1939, Francis was posted to No. 87 Squadron in France. On 9 December, after making a forced landing in Belgium, he just managed to cross back to France to avoid internment. On 25 August 1940, while based at Exeter with No. 87 Squadron flying Hurricanes, Francis claimed a Messerschmitt Bf 109 as probably destroyed.



British

Pilot Officer Andrew Henry Humphrey

Andrew Humphrey entered RAF College Cranwell as a flight cadet in 1939. He graduated in 1940 and joined No. 9 Bombing and Gunnery School as a staff pilot.

In September 1940 Andrew converted to Spitfires before joining No. 266 Squadron at RAF Wittering. Although he did not claim any victories during the Battle of Britain, he was more successful when the squadron concentrated on night fighting. He was eventually appointed Chief of the Air Staff in 1974, one of three Battle of Britain pilots to hold this senior post.



New Zealand

**Flight Lieutenant
Patrick Geraint Jameson DFC**

Patrick Jameson was born in New Zealand and travelled to the UK to join the RAF on a Short Service Commission in 1936. He joined No. 46 Squadron in January 1937.

In early 1940, Patrick flew Hawker Hurricanes over the Norwegian coast from aircraft carrier HMS Glorious during the German invasion of Norway. He was one of fewer than 40 survivors when the carrier was sunk. Patrick was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and took command of No. 266 Squadron in September 1940 for the last weeks of the Battle of Britain.



British

**Pilot Officer
James Edgar Johnson**

‘Johnnie’ Johnson joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in 1939. He was posted to No. 616 Squadron on 5 September 1940.

He flew just one sortie in Spitfire X4330 before he was admitted to hospital for an operation on an old injury and only returned to the squadron in December 1940. By 1945 Johnnie became the highest scoring RAF pilot with 38 confirmed kills and was never shot down in over 1,000 combat missions.



British

Squadron Leader

Alexander Vallance Riddell Johnstone DFC

After he joined the RAF in 1939, Alexander Johnstone was involved in the first combat with German aircraft of the Second World War over the Firth of Forth in October 1939.

Alexander took command of No. 602 Squadron in July 1940. During the Battle of Britain, he claimed and shared in the destruction of two Junkers Ju 88s, two Messerschmitt Bf 109s, two Messerschmitt Bf 110s, one Heinkel He 111 and one Dornier Do 17, and damaged a further five enemy aircraft. Alexander was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in October 1940.



British

Pilot Officer

Nigel Leslie Digby Kemp

Nigel Kemp joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in the first half of 1939. He was called up in September 1939 and completed training at Grantham 7 September 1940.

Nigel joined No. 85 Squadron in late September, flying Hawker Hurricanes, before being posted to No. 242 Squadron, which was commanded by Douglas Bader. He later served in No. 242 Squadron in Malta.



German

**Generalfeldmarschall
Albert Kesselring
Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross**

Albert Kesselring joined the army in 1914 and transferred to the Luftwaffe in 1934, becoming responsible for its expansion. In 1939, he commanded Luftflotte 1 during the invasion of Poland.

Albert commanded Luftlotte 2 during the invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium and France, retaining command during the Battle of Britain. He disagreed with his fellow commanders over the best tactics to use to defeat the Royal Air Force and rarely co-ordinated attacks with them. He also over-estimated the success his units were having, giving the Luftwaffe false confidence that they were winning.



British

**Sergeant
Donald Ernest Kingaby**

Donald Kingaby joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in April 1939 and was called up on 1 September. He converted to Spitfires and joined No. 266 Squadron on 24 June 1940.

Donald damaged two Junkers Ju 88s and a Messerschmitt Bf 110 on 12 August. After sustaining an injury to his hand, he was posted to No. 92 Squadron at Biggin Hill on 25 September. Donald was credited with the destruction or damage of six Messerschmitt Bf 109s in the last months of the Battle of Britain.

