

The following are the officers who will attend the H. of I. Conference on Monday the 14th September:-

Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh DOWDING, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.B.

Air Marshal R. H. FECK, C.B., O.B.E.

Wing Commander Maxwell AITKEN, D.S.O., D.F.C. (Born at Montreal)

Wing Commander Adolph Gysbert MALAN, D.S.O., D.F.C. (South African)

Wing Commander John Alexander KENT, D.F.C., A.F.C. (Canadian)

Wing Commander Richard GLEED, D.S.O., D.F.C. (English)

Wing Commander Charles Brian Fabris KINGCOME, D.F.C. (Born in India)

Wing Commander Desmond Frederick Burt SHEEN, D.F.C. and Bar. (Australian)

Squadron Leader Anthony Charles BARTLEY, D.F.C. (Born in India)

Squadron Leader Alan Christopher DEFFE, D.F.C. (New Zealander)

Squadron Leader Douglas Herbert WATKINS, D.F.C. (Born at Wallasey)

Squadron Leader Stanislaw LAJKA. (Polish)

Flight Lieut. Richard MILLAR. (Born at Sydney)

Flight Officer Elspeth Candlish HENDERSON, H.H. (W.A.A.F.) (Born at Edinburgh)

Warrant Officer R. H. GRETTON.

Air Commodore Lord STANSGATE, D.F.C. (D.F.R.)

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR HUGH C.T. DOWDING, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., C.M.G.

Sir Hugh Dowding was Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain and had held this vitally important Command for more than four years. During that time the size and importance of this Command increased enormously. Previous to this appointment he held the key post on the Air Council of Member for Supply and Research for a period of six years, from 1930. It was during this period that the expansion of the R.A.F. was actively begun and rapid progress was made in the development of monoplane types and in increased armament.

In November, 1940, at the special request of the Minister of Aircraft Production, Sir Hugh Dowding was seconded to that department for special duty in the United States.

In November 1941, the Secretary of State for Air invited him to undertake a review of the establishments of the R.A.F. in the United Kingdom with a view to effecting economies in personnel. On the termination of this work he was permitted at his own request to retire from the R.A.F. in July 1942.

He was born in 1882, at Moffat, Dumfries, and was educated at Winchester and Woolwich. He served with the Royal Artillery until 1914, when after qualifying as pilot he was transferred to the Royal Flying Corps.

Wing Commander Maxwell AITKEN, D.S.O., D.F.C. was born in 1910 and was educated at Westminster School. He was commissioned in No. 601 (County of London) Squadron Auxiliary Air Force in 1935. He was awarded the D.F.C. in July 1940 when a squadron leader. It was then stated that he had displayed great dash and gallantry in three engagements, in which he had destroyed several enemy aircraft (A.M.B. 1027). Recently it was announced that the squadron of Beaufighters which he leads had shot down 15 raiders this year (A.M.B. 7600). The Czechoslovak War Cross was conferred upon him on July 30. When he was awarded the D.S.O. in August 1942, it was stated of him (A.M.B. 7784):

"A brilliant pilot and a gallant leader, this officer has set a most inspiring example. By his exceptional skill and unswerving devotion to duty, he has contributed largely to the high standard of operational efficiency of his squadron, and to the successes it has achieved. One night in July, 1942 the squadron destroyed five hostile aircraft, two of which were destroyed by Wing Commander Aitken himself. His total victories number twelve."

Wing Commander Adolph Gysbert MALAN, D.S.O., D.F.C. is 31. He was born at Wellington, South Africa, and educated at Wellington Public School and in the South African Training Ship "General Botha". He served for two years in the R.N.R. as Sub-lieutenant, and in 1936 joined the R.A.F. as pupil pilot. In June 1940, as Flight Lieutenant he was awarded the D.F.C. It was then stated that he had led his flight, and on certain occasions his squadron, on ten offensive patrols in Northern France. He had personally shot down two enemy aircraft and possibly three others. When he was awarded a bar to the D.F.C. in August it was stated that during the Dunkirk operations, he shot down three enemy aircraft and assisted in destroying a further three. He was awarded the D.S.O. in December 1940, when it was stated (A.M.B. 2250) that he had commanded his squadron with outstanding success and his brilliant leadership had largely contributed to the success obtained. Since August 1940 the squadron had destroyed at least 84 enemy aircraft. Squadron Leader Malan had himself destroyed at least 18 enemy aircraft and possibly six. When he was awarded a bar to the D.S.O. in July 1941, as wing commander, it was stated (A.M.B. 4419):

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"This officer has displayed the greatest courage and disdain of the enemy whilst leading his wing on numerous recent operations over Northern France. His cool judgment, exceptional determination and ability have enabled him to increase his confirmed victories over enemy aircraft from 19 to 28, in addition to a further 20 damaged and probably destroyed. His record and behaviour have earned for him the greatest admiration and devotion of his comrades in the wing.

"During the past fortnight the wing has scored heavily against the enemy with 42 hostile aircraft destroyed, a further 15 probably destroyed and 11 damaged."

WING COMMANDER JOHN ALEXANDER KENT, D.F.C., A.F.C., was born in 1914 at Winnipeg, Manitoba, and was educated in that town at the George V Elementary School, and Lord Selkirk High School. He was given a short service commission in the Royal Air Force as acting pilot officer in the General Duties Branch, on 15th March, 1935, becoming a pilot officer one year later. He was promoted to flying officer on 15th September, 1937, receiving the Air Force Cross as a New Year honour on 2nd January, 1939. He was promoted flight lieutenant on 15th September 1939, and was promoted acting squadron leader on 17th October, 1940. He was awarded the D.F.C. on October 24th 1940, and was granted a permanent commission in March, 1941. After receiving the D.F.C. he served for a time as an instructor and then again on flying duties. In addition to the A.F.C. and the D.F.C., Wing Commander Kent holds a Polish decoration, the Virtuti Militari.

When awarded the D.F.C. in October, 1940, the citation stated:-

"Early in October, 1940, this officer, when entirely alone, attacked 40 Messerschmitt 109s and shot down two of them. He has personally destroyed at least four enemy aircraft. Flight Lieutenant Kent has been responsible in large measure for the fighting efficiency of his squadron and has materially contributed to its successes. He has proved himself a fine leader."

He was awarded a bar to the D.F.C. in October, 1941, when it was stated:-

"This officer has led his wing in an efficient and fearless manner on many operational sorties within the last two months. He has now destroyed a further six enemy aircraft, bringing his total successes to 13 destroyed and three probably destroyed."

WING COMMANDER RICHARD GLEED, D.S.O., D.F.C., was born in 1916 at Finchley where his home is. He was educated at Epsom College and was commissioned in 1936. He was awarded the D.F.C. as a Flight Lieutenant in September, 1940 (A.M.B.1693). When he won the D.S.O. in May, 1942, after promotion to Wing Commander, it was stated (A.M.B.7045):-

"This officer has led his wing on 26 sorties over enemy territory. He has always displayed a fine fighting spirit which, combined with his masterly leadership and keenness, has set an inspiring example. Wing Commander Gleed has destroyed at least 12 enemy aircraft, 2 of which he shot down at night."

WING COMMANDER CHARLES BRIAN FABRIS KINGCOME, D.F.C., was born at Calcutta in 1917 and was educated at Balford School and Cranwell. He was commissioned in 1938 and won the D.F.C. in October 1940 as a Flight Lieutenant. It was then stated of him (A.M.B.2071):-

"He has personally destroyed six enemy aircraft and by his leadership has been responsible for the destruction of many others. He has led his flight and lately his squadron with judgment, skill and keenness."

Wing Commander Desmond Frederick Purt SHEEN, D.F.C. and Bar is an Australian. He was born in SYDNEY in 1917. He became an air cadet in the R.A.A.F. in 1936 and was commissioned in the R.A.F. in the following year. He was awarded the D.F.C. in May 1940, when still a Flying Officer. When, in October 1941, he was awarded a bar to his D.F.C., the citation said:

"Since July, 1941, Squadron Leader Sheen has led the squadron, and on occasions the wing, in 43 offensive operations over Northern France. He has carried out these missions with consistent skill and courage, and, under his leadership, the squadron has attained a high standard of efficiency.

On one occasion the squadron was menaced by a superior number of enemy fighters, but, by his coolness and clever tactics, Squadron Leader Sheen saved his unit from suffering heavy casualties and succeeded in destroying at least 3 of the fighters. Squadron Leader Sheen has personally destroyed a number of enemy aircraft, including one at night."

Squadron Leader Anthony Charles BARTLEY, D.F.C. was born at DACCA, INDIA, and was educated at Stowc. His home is in Buckinghamshire. He was commissioned in 1939 and won the D.F.C. in 1940 when it was stated of him (A.M.B.2071):

"Pilot Officer Bartley has shot down at least eight enemy aircraft. He has always displayed great coolness in action and proved himself a clever and determined fighter."

Squadron Leader Alan Christopher DEERE, D.F.C. was born at Auckland, New Zealand. He was educated at St. Canice's School, Westport, and Wanganui Technical College. He joined the R.A.F. as a pupil pilot in 1938 and was granted a short service commission the same year. He was awarded the D.F.C. in June 1940. It was then stated (A.M.B.881):

"During May, this officer has, in company with his squadron, taken part in numerous offensive patrols over Northern France, and has been engaged in seven combats, often against superior numbers of the enemy. In the course of these engagements he has personally shot down five enemy aircraft and assisted in the destruction of others. On one occasion, in company with a second aircraft, he escorted a trainer aircraft to Calais Marck aerodrome, for the purpose of rescuing a squadron commander who had been shot down there. The trainer aircraft was attacked by twelve Messerschmitt 109s whilst taking off at Calais, but pilot officer Deere, with the other pilot, immediately attacked, with the result that three enemy aircraft were shot down, and a further three severely damaged. Throughout these engagements this officer has displayed courage and determination in his attacks on the enemy."

When he was awarded a bar to the D.F.C. in September 1940, it was stated (A.M.B.1591):

"Since the outbreak of war this officer has personally destroyed eleven and probably one other enemy aircraft and assisted in the destruction of two more. In addition to the skill and gallantry he has shown in leading his flight and in many instances his squadron, Flight Lieutenant Deere has displayed conspicuous bravery and determination in pressing home his attacks against superior numbers of enemy aircraft, often pursuing them across the Channel in order to shoot them down. As a leader he shows outstanding dash and determination."

S/L WATKINS

Squadron Leader Douglas Herbert WATKINS, D.F.C. was born in 1913.

He was educated at Denstone College, and was commissioned as Pilot Officer in No.611 Squadron, A.A.F., in March, 1938. He was promoted Flying Officer in September, 1939, and became a Flight Lieutenant twelve months later. He was awarded the D.F.C. in April 1941. It was then stated that he had been actively engaged in operations against the enemy for a considerable time (A.M.B.3719).

/LAFKA

Squadron Leader Stanislaw LAPKA was born in August 1915 at BORZYMY in the Warsaw district. He came to England with the first batch of Poles in 1940. (He had been in the Polish Air Force since 1935.)

When the first Polish Flights Squadron was formed in 1940, Lapka became second in command. He is now leader of the squadron. He was shot down on September 15, 1940, soon after his squadron became operational. He has won the Polish War Cross (roughly equivalent to D.F.C.) three times, once in 1941 and twice already this year, for bravery in air operations.

Flight-Lieut. Richard Hillary was an undergraduate at Oxford at the outbreak of war, when he joined the R.A.F. as a Pilot Officer. As a result of his experiences in Fighter Command, and particularly during the Battle of Britain, he wrote a book under the title of: "The Last Enemy", which was a best seller. The book was serialised in a National Daily Newspaper. He was shot down in action during the early phase of the battle and was badly burned.

Flight Officer Elspeth Candlish HENDERSON, M.M. When enemy bombers heavily attacked an R.A.F. Fighter Command Station in September 1940, Flight Officer Henderson, then a Corporal, was on duty in a building which received a direct hit. Flight Officer Henderson was in charge of a special telephone there. Bombs were falling around the building, but this airwoman carried on with her work, though she knew there was only a light roof over her head. When the building received a direct hit she continued working till it caught fire and she was ordered to leave.

Warrant Officer R.H. GRETTON. Warrant Officer R.H. Gretton was born in Birmingham in 1918 and educated at Handsworth Grammar School and Lawrences College in that city. He joined the R.A.F.V.R. as a pilot under training in June, 1939, and was embodied on the outbreak of war in September of that year. After the usual course of flying instruction he graduated as a pilot in February, 1940. On completing his course of training he joined a Spitfire squadron in June 1940, and was almost continuously engaged in the Battle of Britain in August and September of that year.

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AIR MINISTRY