

BROTHERS FLY FIGHTERS TOGETHER

Two Cheshire brothers, Squadron Leader H.C. Rigby, D.F.C, and Flying Officer J.B. Rigby, who flew together as Numbers 1 and 2 in the first Spitfire squadron to operate in the North African campaign, are together again at the headquarters of a fighter group of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force. Their father is a solicitor at Sandbach, Cheshire.

When they flew out from Gibraltar to cover the first landing operations, J.B. led the Section. He was badly shot up in action, and while he was in hospital his brother gained further experience, promotion and a decoration. J.B. hopes soon to return to 'Ops', flying again as Number 2 to his brother.

Squadron Leader Rigby started his service career before the war as an officer in a Territorial battalion of the Cheshire Regiment, and was in France in 1939 with one of the first Territorial units to cross. He spent three days on the beach at Dunkirk as a liaison officer, and was one of the last to leave.

When war broke out, he was a law student at Liverpool University, and his brother was a theological student at Lichfield College.

As a theological student, Flying Officer Rigby was exempt from military service but preferred to take an active part, and he was accepted for air crew in the R.A.F. After completing his training, he was posted to a Hurricane wing which went to North Russia.

In the meantime, Squadron Leader Rigby had transferred from the Army to the R.A.F. He also trained as a fighter pilot. Flying Officer Rigby -- back from Russia -- successfully applied for his brother to be posted to his squadron, although J.B. was at this time a sergeant pilot, while his brother was commissioned. They lived in different messes but they flew together in the same section, the sergeant being the leader.

The R.A.F. was then developing its intensive fighter sweeps over Northern France and the brothers flew together on many sorties, including those on the day of the Dieppe raid.

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They went out together to the North African campaign. J.B. by this time had been commissioned and was still flying as Number 1, but the partnership was broken when he was badly wounded soon after. He was only just able to get back and crash-land on a beach, and there is still some shrapnel in his arm. When he came out of hospital he was found unfit for operational flying, and was posted to a communications flight in the Orkneys.

H.C. continued to fly with the squadron, and was awarded the D.F.C. as a flight commander. He attended a recent investiture at Buckingham Palace to receive his decoration.

His tour of operations completed, Squadron Leader Rigby came home to take up temporary ground duties at group headquarters, and applied for his brother to be with him. Again the application was successful. J.B. has now been passed as fit, and, when his brother starts his next operational tour, he hopes that they will be flying together again.

Both brothers are married. A third and younger brother is serving with the Merchant Navy as a wireless officer.

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NOTE: - PICTURE AVAILABLE FROM B.I.P.P.A.

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