

# Fewest of the Few Supplement



## A38 Entry Graduated October 1939

SURNAME	INITIALS
BENSON	NJV
HOGG	RM
HOLLAND	RH
MacDOUGALL	IN
WORSDELL	KW
WRIGHT	AR
YULE	RD

Form 540

**OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK**

R.A.F. Form 540

No. of pages used for day.....

of (Unit or Formation).....**Station Headquarters.....CRANWELL.**

Place.	Date.	Time.	Summary of Events.	References to Appendices.
CRANWELL.	1.9.39.		Lieutenant T.A. Tindle assumes the duties of Station Defence Officer. Education Officers - members of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve - recalled for duty. Aerodrome Council School closed owing to evacuation.	D.R.O. 170. D.R.O. 168.
	2.9.39.		Lighting restrictions introduced, and guards posted at entrances to the Station.	
	3.9.39.		Receipt of message stating that War has been declared on Germany by the Allied Powers. Group Captain Strugnell, MC., posted to Command (A/Cdre Post). <u>Royal Air Force College becomes a Flying Training School, and is self-controlled.</u>	A.M.P.L. 319.



**Benson, Noel John Victor (A38 Entry, B Squadron)**



With grateful thanks to Geoff Simpson of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust for kindly sharing the following narrative, an update to Wynn's book *Men of the Battle of Britain*, and which replaces our earlier narrative.

### **33485 PO Pilot British 603 Squadron**

Noel John Victor Benson was born on 11 December 1918 at Great Ouseburn, Yorkshire. The family lived in the village and his father was a much respected GP in the area.

In 2000, a former next door neighbour recalled Noel Benson as, "a quiet boy, very intelligent. He and his brother Brian built a boat and sailed on the Ouse, they named it / *Made Her*. (Noel) was a happy young man."

Benson went to Sedbergh School. He entered RAF College, Cranwell on 28 April 1938, as a Flight Cadet.

After the outbreak of war, Cranwell cadets who had not completed their courses were enlisted in the RAF on 7 September 1939 as Airmen u/t Pilots and each given an airman number.

Benson (581680) graduated at Cranwell on 23 October, with a Permanent Commission. He immediately went to 11 Group Fighter Pool, St Athan, converted to Blenheims and joined 145 Squadron at Croydon on 30 October.

He joined 'A' Flight, 603 Squadron (Spitfires) at Prestwick on 16 December 1939. He became known as "Broody" Benson on the squadron, because of his habit of sitting deep in contemplation between sorties.

Benson was still with 603 in July 1940. On the 23rd, he shared in the destruction of a Do 17. His Spitfire, N 3229, was hit by return fire and his starboard undercarriage leg collapsed on landing and the aircraft tipped up.

On 27 August, 603 went south to Hornchurch. Next day, Benson was shot down in combat with Bf 109s and killed, when he crashed in flames on Great Hay Farm, Leigh Green, Tenterden, Kent.

He was 21 and is buried in the extension to St Mary's churchyard, Great Ouseburn. Benson's brother, Captain Brian Joseph Nodder Benson, Royal Corps of Signals, was killed on 15 April 1945 and is buried in Becklingen War Cemetery, Germany. He is also commemorated on the grave at Great Ouseburn. The names of the brothers appear on the war memorial in the churchyard.

*PO 23.10.39*

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**Hogg, Richard Malzard**  
**(A38 Entry, B Sqn)**



**145**



**152**

Richard Malzard Hogg, of Jersey, was educated at Victoria College there. He entered Cranwell in April 1938 as a Flight Cadet. The outbreak of war meant that the course had to be condensed and Hogg left in September 1939, was commissioned and went to the 11 Group Pool at St. Athan on the 24 October, where he converted to Blenheims.

He joined the newly-formed 145 Squadron at Croydon on 30 October. In Blenheim K7114, Hogg collided with another Blenheim west of Gatwick on 10 February 1940, but both aircraft returned safely to base.

In May, Hogg may have been serving with 263 Squadron in Norway, but this is not certain.

In early July 1940, he was serving with 152 Squadron at Acklington.

On 12 and 21 August, he shared in the destruction of two Ju88's.

Hogg was shot down and killed by Me109's in combat over the Channel on 25 August 1940, in Spitfire R6810.

He was 21 and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, panel 8.

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**Holland, Robert Hugh  
(A38 Entry, C Squadron)**



V



91



92



607



615

Robert Hugh Holland was born in Ceylon and educated at Malvern College. He entered Cranwell in April 1938. The outbreak of war caused the course to be shortened and Holland graduated in September 1939.

Holland arrived at 11 Group Pool, St. Athan on 24 October and, after converting to Spitfires, he joined the newly-reformed 92 Squadron at Tangmere at the end of the month.

Over France on 23 May 1940, he claimed two Me110's destroyed and a Ju88 damaged; on 24 May, a Do17 destroyed; on 2 June an Me109 destroyed and an He111 damaged near Dunkirk.

Holland shared in the destruction of a Do17 on 8 July and shared a Ju88 on the 25 July. He was shot down in combat west of Ashford on 15 September, baled out and was injured on landing. He probably destroyed an Me109 in the action. Holland was admitted to hospital at East Grinstead. At some time, he was treated by pioneering plastic surgeon Archie McIndoe and was became a (burns) member of Guinea Pig club.

On 15 October, he achieved a probable Me109, on the 26 October and, on 1 and 2 November, he claimed Me109's destroyed; on 13 November, he damaged a Do17; on 15 and 17 December, damaged Me109's. He was awarded the DFC (gazetted 26th November 1940).

In early 1941, Holland was posted to 91 Squadron at Hawkinge as a Flight Commander. He claimed an Me109 destroyed on 13 March, a probable Me109 on 24 April and damaged one on 11 May.

Rested from operations, Holland was OC V Squadron at 61 OTU Heston in November 1941. He was posted to 615 Squadron at Fairwood Common in February 1942 as a Flight Commander.

In October 1942, Holland was given command of 607 Squadron at Jessore in India. He destroyed a Nakajima 'Oscar' on 5 March 1943. Later in March, he took command of 615 Squadron at Feni, India. Holland was posted in January 1944.

He remained in the RAF after the war and attained the rank of Wing Commander. On 17 November 1954, he was involved in a fatal accident during a practice formation attack in his Vampire FB Mk 5 VV229 of 233 OCU, colliding with VV552 of the same unit and exploding near Port Eyon, Gower, Wales.



**MacDougall, Ian Neil**  
**(A38 Entry, A Squadron)**



Born on 11 June 1920, Ian Neil MacDougall was educated at Morrison's Academy, Creiff. He entered the RAF College in April 1938 as a Flight Cadet. After the outbreak of war, some Cranwell cadets who had not completed their courses were enlisted in the RAF on 7 September 1939 as Airmen u/t Pilots and each given an airman number.

MacDougall (581743) passed out on 21 October 1939 with a permanent commission. He was posted to 141 Squadron, forming at Turnhouse.

On 12 July 1940, the Squadron flew south to West Malling. Shortly after 0900 on the 19th, 12 Defiants moved to the FOB at Hawkinge. At 1223, they were ordered to carry out an offensive patrol 20 miles south of Folkstone. Three were left behind with engine trouble.

During the patrol, the nine Defiants were surprised by a force of Bf109s of III/JG 51. MacDougall's aircraft, L6983, was hit in the engine. He ordered his gunner, Sergeant JF Wise, to bale out. He then managed to get the aircraft back to base, but Wise was reported 'Missing' and no trace of him was ever found.

MacDougall was posted to 260 Squadron at Drem on 2 May 1941 and later in the month he left with the Squadron for the Middle East. He was appointed Flight Commander in late 1941. He shared the destruction of a Ju88 on 5 April 1941 and he was awarded the DFC (gazetted 15 May 1942).

He commanded 94 Squadron in the Western Desert from February to May 1942. Posted from 94 Squadron, he returned to the UK and was placed in a non-operational post. On May 1943, he was posted to Malta, where he joined 1435 Flight.

In June 1943, he took command of 185 Squadron at Krendi. On 8 July, he damaged a Bf109 and on 20 August shared in the destruction of a Cant Z 506 B. He led 185 Squadron from May to October 1944.

After the war, MacDougall had a number of teaching and instructing appointments, amongst them Chief Flying Instructor at Cranwell and as a War Studies Lecturer at the US Air Force Academy in Colorado.

In 1965, he was Chief Air Staff Officer at 38 Group; then he was appointed Air Defence Commander in Zambia. He was made a CBE in 1967. From 1967 to 1969, he was Air Attache in Paris. He retired from the RAF on 27 December 1969 as an Air Commodore.

MacDougall died in August 1987.



**Worsdell, Kenneth Wilson  
(A38 Entry, B Squadron)**



**219**

Kenneth Wilson Worsdell was born on 6 June 1920 and went to Wellington College from 1933 to 1937. He entered the RAF College in April 1938 with a Prize Cadetship. After the outbreak of war, some Cranwell cadets who had not completed their courses were enlisted in the RAF on 7 September 1939 as Airmen u/t Pilots and each given an airman number.

Wordsell (581784) graduated on 20 October and was granted a permanent commission on the 21st. He joined the recently formed 219 Squadron at Catterick.

He was still with 219 Squadron on 3 July 1940 when he took off with Red Section, to patrol Hartlepool and intercept an X 49 raid, in Blemheim L1168. He landed at Catterick at 1442, having been attacked by two Spitfires, with a damaged starboard engine and an oil tank pierced. On the afternoon of 15 August, Wordsell shared in damaging an He111 off Flamborough Head.

Worsdell (Aged 20) and Sgt. Eric Cecil Gardiner (Aged 27) lost their lives on what is officially known as the last day of the Battle of Britain. Captain of Beaufighter R2065 on the night of 30 October 1940, he took off from RAF Redhill on a routine patrol. On the return flight and whilst attempting to locate RAF Redhill, the Beaufighter hit beech trees and exploded on impact at Balcombe Place.

Worsdell is buried in Nutfield Cemetery, Surrey.

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**Wright, Allan Richard**  
**(A38 Entry, A Squadron)**



Group Captain Allan Richard Wright DFC AFC (born 20 Feb 1920) was an RAF flying ace of the Second World War. Wright scored 11 kills, three shared kills, five probable kills and seven damaged against the Luftwaffe. He served with 92 Squadron throughout 1940, and is one of the surviving aircrew of the Battle of Britain.

Wright was born in Devon on 12 February 1920. He entered RAF College Cranwell as a Flight Cadet in April 1938. After training, he was posted to 92 Squadron at Tangmere on 27 October 1939.

Over Dunkirk on 23 May 1940, he claimed a Bf110 destroyed and two damaged, on the 24 May a 'probable' He111, and on 2 June another Bf109.

During the Battle of Britain, he shared :

- an He111 destroyed on 14 August;
- a KG 27 He111 at night over Bristol on 29 August;
- an He111 and Bf109 'probable' on 11 September;
- a Bf109 damaged on the 14 September;
- a Bf109 'probable' on the 15 September;
- a Ju88 'probable' on the 19 September;
- a Do17 on the 26 September;
- a Ju88 on the 27 September;
- and two Bf109s on the 30 September.

On 30 September, he was shot down near Brighton by a Bf109 of JG 27, wounded and hospitalised. The award of the DFC was made on 22 October 1940.

On 6 December 1940, he destroyed a Bf109.

By July 1941, Wright had received a Bar to the DFC.

He was posted to 59 OTU in July 1941. Service with HQ Fighter Command and as an instructor followed until being posted to 29 Squadron at West Malling in March 1943, where as a night fighter he destroyed a Ju88 on 3 April.

Remaining in the RAF post-war, he retired as a Group Captain on 12 February 1967.

Wright was regarded as one of Robert Stanford Tuck's right hand men with Bob Holland, another fighter ace on 92 Squadron.

He appeared in the Battle of Britain tribute film, *First of the Few*.

He died 16 September 2015



**Yule, Robert Duncan  
(A38 Entry, B Squadron)**



**145**



**501**



**66**

The son of a dental surgeon, Robert Duncan Yule was born in Invercargill, New Zealand, on 29 January 1920. In early 1938, he won a scholarship to RAF College, Cranwell, and began the course there in April. The outbreak of war caused the normal syllabus to be shortened and Yule joined 145 Squadron, a newly reformed fighter unit on Blenheims, in September 1939.

In March 1940, the unit received its first Hurricanes and during May its pilots found themselves ferrying Hurricanes to France and assisting the Squadrons there. Yule took part in 145's first action of the war on 18 May.

On patrol over Brussels, 12 Hell's were intercepted in broken cloud. When the German bombers emerged from cover the Hurricanes attacked, Yule shooting one down. Four days later he destroyed a Ju87. The squadron flew daily patrols during the evacuation from Dunkirk and Yule claimed a Bf110 destroyed on 1 June 1940. His next victory was a month later when he shared in the destruction of a Do17 near Brighton.

During the Battle of Britain, Yule destroyed a Ju88 and damaged three more, probably destroyed a Bf110 and shared in the destruction of two Do17's. On October 25, he was himself shot down by Bf109's in a combat over Kent and was admitted to hospital with leg wounds after making a forced landing which completely wrote off his Hurricane.

He rejoined 145 Squadron in mid-February 1941, but a month later was posted to be an instructor. Yule helped instruct some American pilots, very much under secrecy because the USA was still neutral.

In early November 1941, he returned to operations with 501 Squadron and remained with the unit for seven months and many operational sorties. He was awarded the DFC in April 1942 and was promoted to Squadron Leader in June to take command of 66 Squadron, (a Spitfire unit).

On 15 July 1942 whilst leading a squadron sweep over the Cherbourg area Yule engaged in combat with two FW 190's. He destroyed one, which exploded and crashed into the sea, and the other was last seen flying inland with its engine smoking. On 19 August, he led the squadron twice over Dieppe during the Combined Operations raid.

With his tour completed, Yule was posted to staff duties in mid-November 1942 and awarded a Bar to his DFC. He was promoted to Wing Commander in early August 1943 to lead the Detling Wing.

Yule claimed his final victory on 6 January 1944 - another Fw 190. After leading the Wing on many operational sorties, he was posted in early March and awarded the DSO.

Yule now went on to planning duties, involving fighter wings of the 2nd Tactical Air Force in the coming invasion. He continued with these duties into 1945 and at war's end was on an RAF Staff College course.



While rehearsing for the Battle of Britain flypast over London on 11 September 1953, Yule collided with another jet aircraft. Faced with a densely-populated area, Yule steered his aircraft towards Woolwich Arsenal and crash-landed between rows of buildings. Some workers were injured and Yule was killed. His selfless action undoubtedly saved many lives.