

Fewest of the Few Supplement



J26 Entry Graduated December 1927

| SURNAME | INITIS |
|---------|--------|
| DEWAR | JS |





Dewar John Scatliff (J26 Entry, B Squadron)



87

213

Dewar attended the Royal Air Force College Cranwell from January 1926 to December 1927 and on graduation was commissioned as a Pilot Officer.

On 10 November 1939, he was posted to the 11 Group pilot pool for reassignment to a fighter squadron. He was by that time one of the most senior active duty pilots in the RAF.

Dewar took command of 87 Squadron on 29 November 1939 and led the Squadron during operations during the Battle of France, and distinguished himself by his superb piloting and leadership skills.

On 7 May 1940, returning from a sortie in bad weather and low on fuel, Dewar had to force land his Hurricane at an unserviceable airfield at Villefranche. As he touched down his wheels dug into the mud and the aircraft overturned, severely injuring his right shoulder. In spite of his injury, he refused to ground himself and continued to fly.

He claimed a Dornier Do 17 (shared) and two Junker Ju 87s of I./StG 2 on 11 May, and another JU 87 the next day. For this and his leadership of 87 Squadron, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). On 20 May 1940, in the face of the advancing German Army, Dewar ordered his squadron to return to England. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, which appeared in the London Gazette of 31 May 1940. The citation reads:

Air Ministry, 31 May 1940. ROYAL AIR FORCE.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the undermentioned awards, in recognition of gallantry displayed in flying operations against the enemy:—

Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Squadron Leader John Scatliff DEWAR (26029).

This officer has shot down five enemy aircraft and led many patrols with courage and skill.

In the same edition of the Gazette he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order with the following citation:

Air Ministry, 31 May 1940. ROYAL AIR FORCE.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the undermentioned appointments and awards in recognition of gallantry displayed in flying operations against the enemy:—

Appointed Companions of the Distinguished Service Order.

Squadron Leader John Scatliff DEWAR, D.F.C. (26029)

Before intensive operations started this officer injured his right shoulder in a severe flying accident. Despite this, he flew regularly and led his squadron with skill and dash, more than 60 enemy aircraft being destroyed by them. He remained in command of the squadron throughout the operations, in spite of the injured shoulder, trained his new pilots well and continued throughout to be a very efficient commander, inculcating an excellent spirit in his squadron.

He continued to fly operationally from RAF Exeter with No. 87 Squadron during the Battle of Britain, claiming two Bf 110 fighters on 11 July, a share in a Ju 88 on 13 August, and a Ju 88 destroyed on 25 August.

On 11 September 1940, Dewar took off on a routine flight from RAF Exeter for RAF Tangmere in Hurricane V7306, but he failed to arrive. There was considerable enemy action in late afternoon that day around Southampton, including a low-level bombing raid on Eastleigh airfield by the elite Eprobungsgruppe 210. The timing of this raid closely approximates in time and location of Dewar's route north of Southampton, so it has been speculated that he may have observed enemy aircraft and decided to join the combat on his own.

As it was an "unofficial" flight (he was taking advantage of a brief lull in the action to visit his wife who lived near Tangmere), he was not reported as missing until the following day, 12 September, which is erroneously recorded in the records as his date of death. [Dewar was the highest RAF ranking officer to be lost during the battle]

His body was washed ashore on 30 September 1940 at Kingston Gorse in Sussex. There is some mystery surrounding his death as some reports suggest that he had taken to his parachute and that his body "was riddled with bullets" when it was found, implying that he had been shot and killed during his parachute descent. There are no German claims for aircraft destroyed in Luftwaffe records, so it remains unclear the cause of Dewar's death.

John Scatliff Dewar is buried at St. John the Baptist church in North Baddesley, Hampshire

