

# Fewest of the Few Supplement



## S21 Entry Graduated August 1923

SURNAME	INITIS
BEAMISH	FV



PASSING OUT TERM—AUGUST, 1923.

[Photo: Gale & Polden, Ltd.]

*Back Row*—Cpl. C. K. J. Coggle, F/C. R. Scott-Taylor, F/C. W. J. P. Sloan, F/C. F. W. Hall, F/C. M. Senhasteni, F/C. V. Svasti, F/C. L. W. Dickens, F/C. F. W. L. C. Beaumont, F/C. J. B. Friskman, Cpl. D. L. Timmon.

*Front Row*—Cpl. N. A. P. Pritchett, Cpl. P. Jones, Sgt. F. H. Fressanges, Sgt. B. D. J. Broadway, U/O. F. V. Beamish, U/O. G. L. Worthington, Sgt. G. R. M. Clifford, Sgt. A. D. Davies, Cpl. J. M. Mellor, Cpl. R. A. P. Roberts.

*Absent*—F/C. C. W. Moss.



### **Beamish, Francis Victor (Entry S21, A Squadron)**

Victor Beamish was born at Dunmanway, County Cork in the Irish Republic on 27 September 1903. He attended the Coleraine Academical Institute and then entered the RAF College, Cranwell as a Flight Cadet on 14 September 1921. After graduation in August 1923, he went to 4 (Army Co-operation) Squadron at Farnborough on 18 September that year.

In January 1925, he was posted to the School of Army Co-operation at Old Sarum. Beamish went overseas later in the year and joined 31 Squadron at Ambala on 18 November, but stayed only for months before moving to 60 Squadron at Kohat.

He was back in the UK in October 1926 for a course at the Central Flying School, Wittering. On completion, he went to 5 FTS Sealand as an instructor.

On 16 September 1927, Beamish went back to Cranwell, this time on the staff.

He went to Canada on 22 March 1929, on exchange with an RCAF officer. When he returned two years later, he was posted to 25 Squadron at Hawkinge as a Flight Commander.

In January 1932, Beamish was appointed Personal Assistant to the AOC at Uxbridge. A year later, he went into hospital at Uxbridge, suffering from tuberculosis, with the result that he had to retire from the RAF on 18 October 1933. Very unhappy at this, Beamish got a job as civilian assistant at 2 FTS Digby, later returning to Ireland in 1936 to become civilian adjutant at RAF Aldergrove on 18 May, a non-flying appointment in the RAFVR.

Beamish was sufficiently recovered to be reinstated with full flying status as a Flight Lieutenant on 27 January 1937 and was posted to command 2 Armament Training Camp and Met Flight at Aldergrove. His comeback was complete when he took command of 64 Squadron at Church Fenton on 8 December 1937. He was awarded the AFC (gazetted 1st January 1938) for establishing the Met Flight.

After a course at RAF Staff College, Andover, he took command of 504 Squadron at Digby on 13 September 1939.

He returned to Canada in mid-January 1940 on Air Staff duties but, back in the UK, he took over RAF North Weald on 7 June 1940. Beamish flew operational sorties with his station squadrons whenever he could. On 18 June, he claimed two Me109's destroyed, on 9 July a Me110 damaged, on the 12th a Do17 shot down, on 18 August a probable Ju88, on the 24th a Do17 damaged and on the 30th two probable Me110's. On 6 September Beamish claimed two Ju87's, on the 11th a probable He111, on the 15th a share in a He111 and on the 18th and 27th probable Me109's. He damaged a Me109 on 12 October, probably destroyed one and damaged another on the 25th and probably shot down another on the 30th. Not all of these claims were substantiated.

Beamish was awarded the DSO (gazetted 23rd July 1940) and the DFC (gazetted 8th November 1940).

On 7 November 1940, Beamish collided with P/O TF Neil of 249 Squadron whilst on patrol and made a forced-landing at Leeds Castle in Kent. Of his sorties in 1940, he was damaged by enemy action three times, on each occasion getting his aircraft down safely.

On 11 November 1940, Italian aircraft based in Belgium attempted a raid and Beamish claimed a probable CR42 biplane fighter. Two days later, he damaged an Me109 near Dover.

On 10 January 1941, he shot down a Me109 over the Channel.

Beamish was posted to HQ 11 Group on 17 March 1941. He was back in action later that year and claimed a probable Me109 near Mardyck on 9 August 1941.

He was awarded a Bar to the DSO (gazetted 25th September 1941).

On 25 January 1942, Beamish went to RAF Kenley to take command and again flew with his squadrons. With Wing Commander RF Boyd, he took off on the morning of 12 February "to see what was happening on the other side". After chasing two Me109's, they saw part of the German Fleet making its 'Channel Dash'. The ships had been reported ten minutes earlier by two pilots of 91 Squadron, but the news was received with complete disbelief at 11 Group. Beamish's confirmation was enough to set in motion a series of uncoordinated attacks on the German fleet.

On 13 February, Beamish had a share in the destruction of an He 115 over the Channel. On 9 March, he claimed a Fw190 destroyed and another on the 26th, as well as a Me109.

Leading the Kenley Wing and flying with 485 (NZ) Squadron on 28 March, Beamish saw a force of Me109's and Fw190's a few miles south of Calais. He turned the Wing towards them. In the ensuing engagement, Beamish was seen to be attacked and damaged by a Me109. He requested a vector over the radio and was last seen entering a cloud near Calais. It is presumed that he crashed into the Channel, possibly wounded and perhaps unconscious. He was 38 years old.