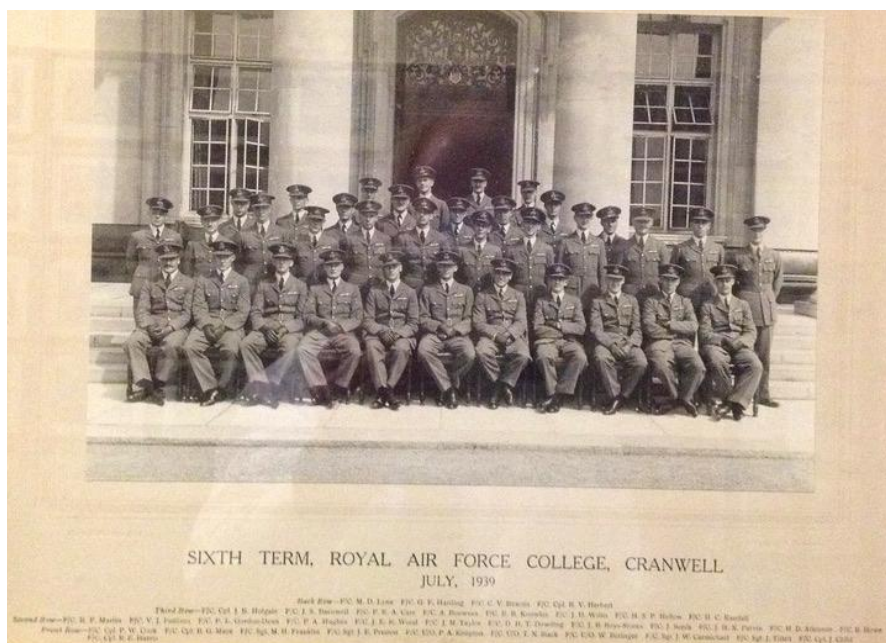


Fewest of the Few Supplement



S37 Entry Graduated July 1939

SURNAME	INITS
ATKINSON	HD
DOWDING	DHT
HOWE	B
TILLET	J





Atkinson, Harold Derrick (S37 Entry, B Squadron)



213



Atkinson was born at Wintringham, Yorkshire on 19th August 1918 and educated at Shrewsbury School from 1932 to 1937, where he was a member of the First XI. He entered RAF College Cranwell as a Flight Cadet in September 1937 and graduated in July 1939.

Atkinson joined 213 Squadron at Wittering. He went with the squadron to Merville in France on 17th May 1940. On the 18th Atkinson destroyed a Me110 north-west of Douai. He shared in the destruction of a Hs 126 on the 19th and also shared a Do 215 the next day.

The stay in France was a short one, with 213 returning to England on the 21 May, 'A' Flight going to Manston and 'B' Flight to Wittering. The squadron took part in the operations covering the evacuation of Dunkirk.

On 27 and 28 May, Atkinson shot down Me109's and on the 29th he claimed a He 111 destroyed and shared in damaging a Ju88. For his successes during May, Atkinson was awarded the DFC (gazetted 25th June 1940).

213 Squadron was based at Exeter in August 1940 and over a period of seven days Atkinson claimed the destruction of six enemy aircraft, on the 12th two Me110's, on the 13th a Me110 and on the 14th a He111. In this last action he returned to Exeter in Hurricane R4099 damaged by return fire from a He111 engaged over Lyme Bay. He was slightly wounded by shell splinters in the arm. On the 16th, Atkinson claimed a Me109 and another two days later.

He failed to return from a combat over Warmwell on 25th August. His aircraft, Hurricane P3200, is believed to have crashed into the sea but Atkinson's body was recovered and he is buried in Market Weighton Cemetery, Yorkshire.



Dowding, The Hon. Derek Hugh Tremenheere (S37)



Dowding was born on 9th January 1919, the son of Group Captain HCT Dowding, later Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding. He was educated at Winchester College and entered RAF College, Cranwell as a Flight Cadet in September 1937. On graduation in July 1939, Dowding was commissioned and posted to 74 Squadron at Hornchurch.

The squadron flew over France from 20 May 1940. On the 24th, Dowding destroyed a Do 17, shared another and probably destroyed a Ju 88, on the 23rd he shared a Do 17 and on the 27th damaged a Do17 after chasing it for 20 miles before being forced to break off by intense anti-aircraft fire.

On 6 July 1940, Dowding probably destroyed a He 111 and, two days later, he shared in the destruction of another.

He was posted to 6 OTU Sutton Bridge on 8 August to be an instructor. He was still instructing in 1941, but became a Flight Commander with 135 Squadron later in the year.

He served as a test pilot in the Middle East from 1942 to 1945 and held a number of appointments and commands before retiring on 17th November 1956 as a Wing Commander. He retired 17 November 1956 and died 1992



Howe, Bernard (S37 Entry, C Squadron)



Howe of Wadebridge Cornwall was educated at the Thame School and entered the College in September 1937, graduating in July 1939.

He then joined 25 Squadron at North Weald in August 1939 and served with it throughout the Battle of Britain.

On 20 April 1941, Howe was killed as a Flying Officer with 263 Squadron, aged 22. He was flying the Whirlwind I P6992, which dived out of control into the ground. This has been attributed to either the control cables burning through following an engine fire in the air, or a leading edge slat becoming detached.

He is buried in All Saints' churchyard, Wittering.



Tillett, James (S37)

Tillett was the adopted son of Maud Reynolds of Courteenhall, Northamptonshire. He was a student of St Lawrence's College, Ramsgate, and was a Flight Cadet Sergeant and participated in athletics, cross country and hockey. He entered the RAF College as a Cadet in September 1937. He graduated from RAF Cranwell and was promoted to Pilot Officer with effect from 29 July 1939 and promoted to Flying Officer on 3 September 1940.

On the 7 September, he was posted to 238 Squadron at St. Eval.

The squadron was scrambled on 6 November to intercept a German bomber force heading toward Portsmouth. Tillet's aircraft, Hurricane V6814, was probably one of two shot down that day by Major Helmut Wick in a Messerschmitt Bf109. Eyewitnesses say that the Hurricane "belly-landed" in a field near Whitedell Farm, that Tillet was slumped over the controls and could not be removed from the aircraft before it caught fire. He is buried in Ann's Hill Cemetery in Gosport. James Tillet was just 22 years old.

A short time later, on 28th November, his German assailant Major Wick was himself shot down and killed over the Isle of Wight. He too was young - 25 - though an air-ace credited with 56 'kills' and a holder of the Iron Cross.

