

# RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL


## DRS Bader



RAF College Cadet  
6 September 1928 - 25 July 1930



# DRS Bader - Flight Cadet Record

  
 "Roar" Looseleaf Books 138 Sp. 42074  
 J. W. Ruddock & Sons, Lincoln and London

COLLEGE SEQUENCE NUMBER 471.		CHRISTIAN NAMES DOUGLAS ROBERT STEWART.		SURNAME BADER.	
BORN	DATE	NATIONALITY	DATE	RELIGION	DATE
JOINED COLLEGE	21/2/10.	English.		Church of England.	
LEFT COLLEGE	6/9/28.	ORDER OF MERIT ON JOINING		NO. IN CLASS ON JOINING	
	25/7/30.	6.		23.	
		ORDER OF MERIT ON LEAVING		NO. IN CLASS ON LEAVING	
		17.		21.	
PROMOTED		JOINED		DROPPED	
CADET CORPORAL		1ST CLASS	7/9/28.	AFTER	TERM
CADET SERGEANT		2ND CLASS	11/1/29.		
UNDER OFFICER	17/1/30.	3RD CLASS	6/9/29.	AFTER	TERM
		4TH CLASS			
COMMISSIONED IN R.A.F.		REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL IF COURSE NOT COMPLETED			
26/7/30.					
NAME OF PARENT OR NEXT OF KIN		ADDRESS			
Mrs. J.S. Hobbs (Mother).		Sprotborough Rectory, Doncaster, Yorks.			
PROFESSION OF PARENT OR NEXT OF KIN		CHANGE OF ADDRESS			
Father: Major R.E. and Barrister-at-Law, deceased.					
WHERE EDUCATED					
Temple Grove, Eastbourne. St. Edward's School, Oxford.					
PRIZES, ETC., ON JOINING			PRIZES, ETC., ON LEAVING		
Prize Cadetship.					
REMARKS AND FURTHER HISTORY					
Posted to No. 23 (F) Squadron, R.A.F., Kenley, Surrey, with effect from 26/7/30. A.M.P.L. No. 187/1930 dated 29/8/30.					
Promoted Flying Officer 26/1/32. Flight Lieutenant (War substantive rank) 24/9/40. Squadron Leader 18/6/41. Wing Commander 1/7/45. Placed on Retired List on account of ill-health 30/4/33, Active 1940.					
Appointed a COMPANION of the DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER in recognition of gallantry displayed in flying operations against the enemy - London Gazette dated 1/10/40. X					
COLLEGE SEQUENCE NUMBER 471.		CHRISTIAN NAMES DOUGLAS ROBERT STEWART.		SURNAME BADER.	

P.T.O.

Mentioned in Dispatches - London Gazette dated 1/1/41.

Awarded the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS in recognition of gallantry displayed in flying operations against the enemy - London Gazette dated 7/1/41.

Mentioned in Dispatches - London Gazette dated 17/3/41.

Awarded to BAR to the DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER in recognition of gallantry displayed in flying operations against the enemy - London Gazette dated 15/7/41.

Awarded a BAR to the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS in recognition of gallantry displayed in flying operations against the enemy - London Gazette No. 35270 dated 9/9/41.

Placed on Retired List w.e.f. 21.7.46 (retains rank of Group Captain)

Died 5 Sept 1982



# DRS Bader - A Sqn July 1930



# Bader and his Sports Car





# Bader at Speed



# DRS Bader - December 1928 Rugby XV



RUGBY XV, ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE, CRANWELL, DECEMBER, 1928

F./C. S. S. Murray. F./C. F. C. Cole. F./C. Lord M. A. Douglas-Hamilton. F./C. N. C. Walker. F./C. R. L. Wallace. F./C. C. E. J. Barnes. F./C. H. R. L. Hood. F./C. D. J. Eyrns.  
F./C. G. R. A. Elhoie. F./C. P. B. Coote. F./C. Sgt. F. L. P. Hensell. F./C. Opl. R. W. Letchworth. F./C. U.O. G. P. Charles. F./C. D. R. S. Bader. F./C. W. N. McKechnie.



# DRS Bader - July 1929 Cricket XI



1st CRICKET XI, ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE, CRANWELL  
JULY, 1929

F/C. W. H. Hodgkinson   F/C. W. N. McKechnie   F/C. Cpt. R. C. Keary   Capt. C. C. Brachi   F/C. W. H. Kyle   F/C. G. F. W. Heycock   F/C. D. R. S. Bader  
F/C. E. S. Des Druy   F/C. Sgt. R. S. Murray   F/C. Sgt. W. V. L. Spenslove   F/C. UO. D. J. Douthwaite   F/C. C. A. Wall

CRANWELL—290; WOOLWICH—216 for Six Wickets; MATCH DRAWN



# DRS Bader - July 1929 Hockey XI



HOCKEY TEAM ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE CRANWELL  
JULY 1929

F/Capt R. G. Kenny    F/C. Sgt. W. V. L. Spindlow    F/C. C. E. J. Bates    F/C. R. L. Wallace    F/C. D. R. S. Bader  
F/C. P. B. Coote    F/C. G. R. A. Thomie    F/C. H. R. L. Hood    F/C. G. F. W. Haycock    F/C. W. N. McKerrison



# DRS Bader - December 1929 Rugby XV



RUGBY XV., ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE, CRANWELL  
DECEMBER, 1929

F/C. M. W. S. Robinson    F/C. J. O. W. Oliver    F/C. T. N. Goslett    F/C. W. Sawyer    F/C. F. C. Daubory    F/C. W. H. Hodgkinson    F/C. E. A. E. De Pencier    F/C. N. E. Morrison  
F/C. Cpl. C. E. J. Baloes    F/C. Sgt. W. N. McKechnie    F/C. U/O. S. R. A. Elsmie    F/C. Cpl. P. B. Coote    F/C. Cpl. D. H. S. Bader    F/C. Sgt. B. L. Wallace    F/C. N. C. Walker



# DRS Bader - July 1930 Cricket XI



———— CRICKET TEAM, ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE, CRANWELL ————

JULY, 1930

FC A. M. Davis      FC A. H. Mowbray      FC R. E. Morrison      FC G. H. Moore      FC D. B. D. Pugh      FC W. F. G. Pugh  
FC Capt. H. A. T. Higgs      FC C. W. M. Linn      FC DRS Bader      FC E. H. F. Jones      FC J. A. Paine



# DRS Bader - July 1930 Hockey XI



HOCKEY TEAM, ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE, CRANWELL

JULY, 1930

F/C. R. H. A. Leigh

F/C.M. W. G. I. La V. Baker

F/C. C. W. M. Long

F/C. Cpt. H. A. V. Hogan

F/C.D. B. D. Field

Sgt. G. E. J. Bairds

F/C. U/O. D. R. S. Bader

F/C. U/O. P. B. Coote

F/C. Cpt. J. W. C. More

F/C. P. E. Drew

F/C. N. C. Walker



# DRS Bader - July 1930 Hockey XI

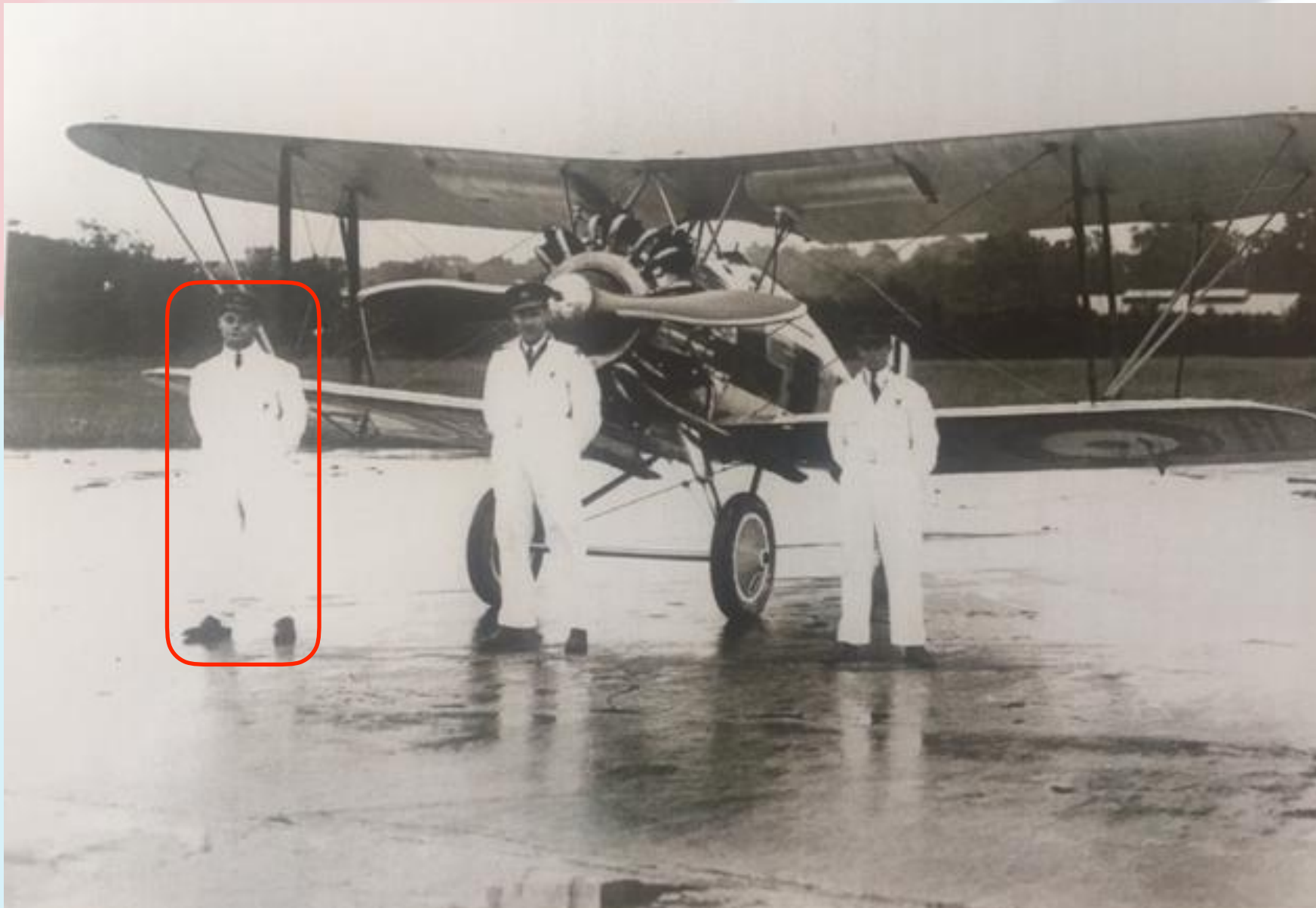


————— BOXING TEAM, ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE, CRANWELL —————  
JULY, 1930

F/C. T. O. Horner      F/C. E. Xybis      F/C. J. R. Macdonald      F/C. M. W. Lt. La V. Baker  
F/C. Sgt. C. E. Luffler      F/C. Cpt. T. N. Costin      F/C. T/O. P. H. Coote      F/C. Sgt. St. D. Stephenson      F/C. 150. D. R. S. Bader



# Bader trained on an Avro 540N





# DRS Bader - College Development He Witnessed



1

Marshal of The RAF, Viscount Hugh Trenchard



2



6

1. Realising Trenchard's vision for an RAF College on the lines of Sandhurst and Britannia, RAF Cranwell was officially formed on 1 November 1919 and opened for business on 5 February 1920.

2. The decision to replace the existing corrugated iron huts was made in 1922.

3. By 1929, plans had been drawn up, the final version of which produced the building which we see today. The Secretary of State for Air in Stanley Baldwin's Government, Lord Hoare, was highly supportive. The problem was that a general election (which Baldwin was expected to lose) was imminent and so Hoare pulled off what he described as "an act of bluff": Lady Maud Hoare - his wife - laid the foundation stone on 29/04/29 to the left of the entrance, in front of worthies that included Viscount and Lady Trenchard, AVM Longcroft (1st Commandant) and Sir James Grey West (Architect). The event was noted in the Statute Book and so, when the new Government was formed by Ramsay Macdonald, it seems that approval was assumed and building went ahead.

4. A tinned steel time capsule, held within the foundation stone, holds a record of all present and a special edition of the RAF Journal Vol IX No 1 with details of every cadet who passed through the College since its inception in Feb 1920.



5



3

The College Hall architecture conforms to English tradition, being built of "rustic and moulded brick work with the more important features in Portland Stone". It was based on St Pancras Station and the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

All showing CHOM under construction c.1932

The laying of the foundation Stone, 1929

5. Constructed in 1932, the RAF College design was based on St Pancras Station and the dining room on the long room at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The station canopy of the branch line terminus joining the main Cranwell station (currently the guard room) can still be seen from behind the kitchens.

6. The new College was first used by cadets in 1933, but not formally opened until 11/10/34 by HRH Edward, Prince of Wales - the honorary Air Commodore in Chief of the Auxiliary Air Force.

7. The Foundation & Commemorative Stones can be seen either side of the front entrance.



3

7

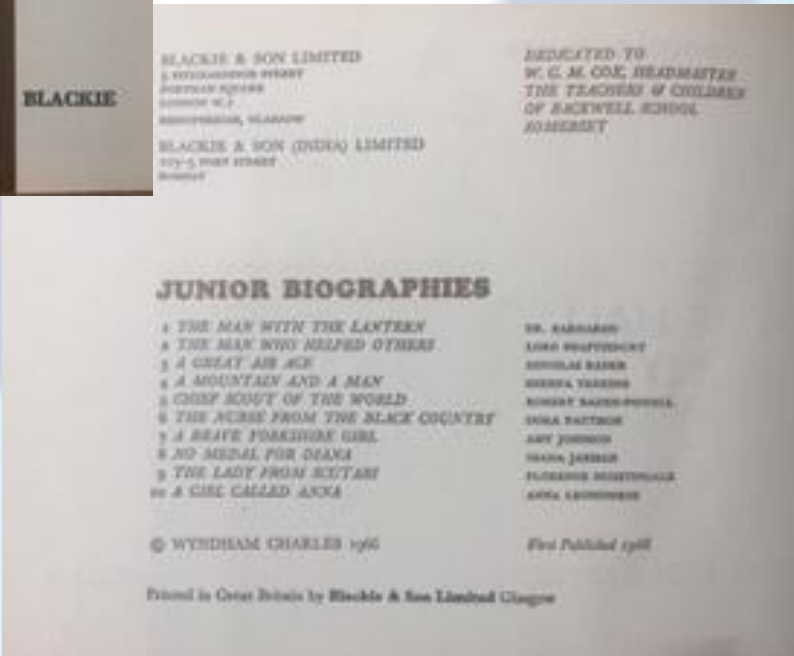
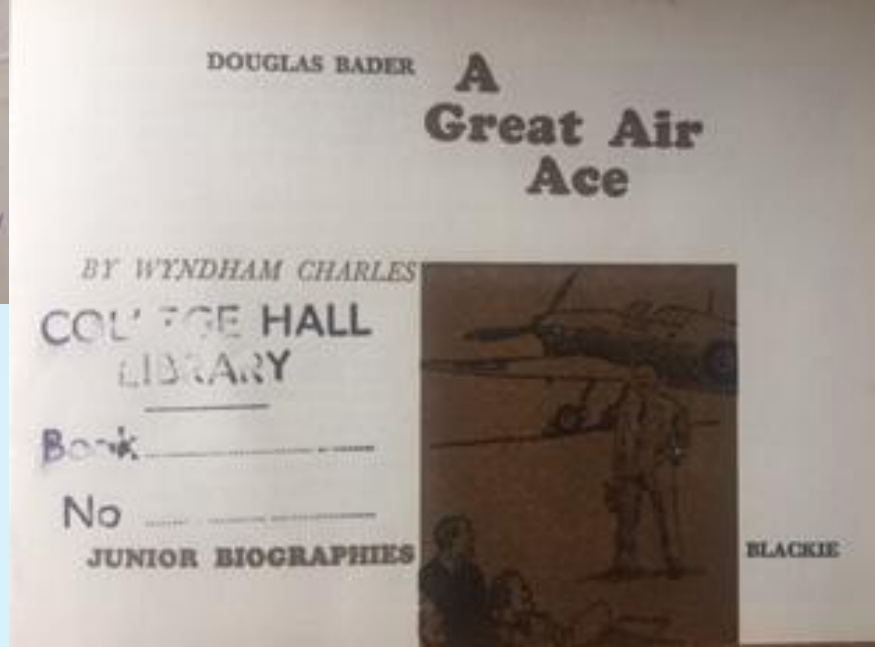
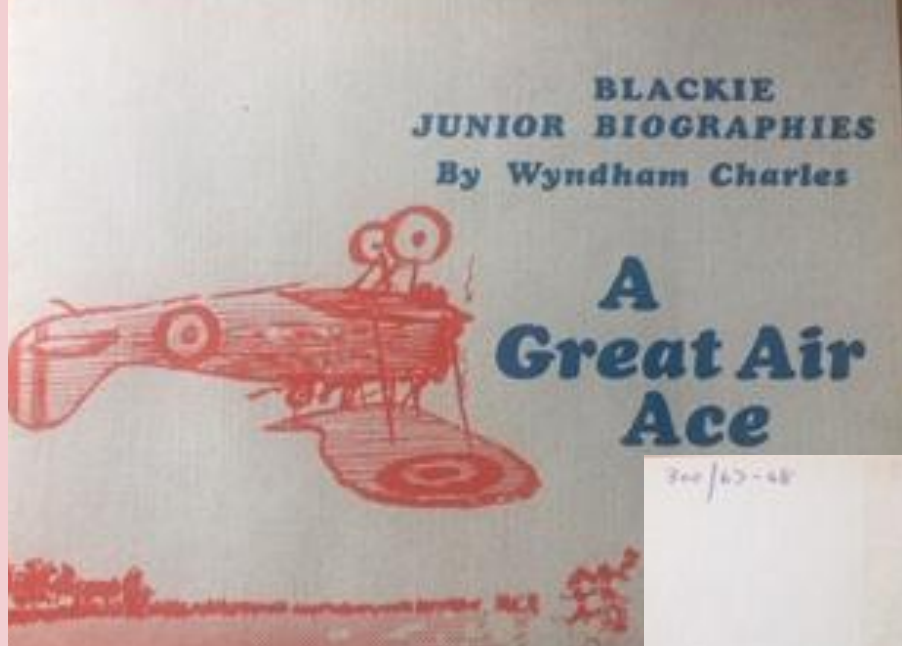


6

7



# The Bader Story (1)





# The Bader Story (2)

The small aircraft skimmed the tops of trees and hedges as it roared towards the airfield. On the airfield men gasped with astonishment as it approached. "It's Douglas Bader!" shouted one of them. "Look at him now. He's flying upside down."

The men threw themselves flat on the ground as the plane zoomed across the airfield. It was upside down and only a few feet above the ground.

"Bader will kill himself if he tries that stunt too often," shouted a mechanic. "I could have touched a wing as he went over me."

Some of the men laughed as they watched the aircraft climb into the blue sky. "Bader is one of the best pilots in the Royal Air Force," said one of them. "I've never seen anyone fly upside down as close to the ground as that. Look out! Here he comes again!"

As the plane skimmed the hedges and turned upside down, the men saw Douglas Bader grinning at them. They threw themselves to

## Chapter One



Ashton

the ground. The starboard wing dipped in salute. The men held their breath as it almost touched the grass. They saw the pilot take one hand off the controls and wave to them. They saw the starboard wing dip once again in salute.

Then suddenly the wing touched the grass. There was a great roar of sound as the plane plunged and crashed across the field. A wing snapped off like a rotten stick. Finally the nose of the aircraft buried itself deep in the earth. The pilot's body hung limply from the straps in the cockpit. He was very still.

The men raced across the airfield towards the plane. "He may still be alive," said one of the men as he climbed into the cockpit. "Hurry up. There's no time to be lost."

They pulled the young pilot out of the plane and laid him gently on the grass. He was still breathing. Now and then he opened his eyes and looked blankly around him.

"He'll live," said one of the men, as an ambulance approached, "but I don't think he'll ever fly again. Look at his legs. They're broken and twisted under his body."

Bader was unconscious when the ambulance reached the hospital. A doctor examined him carefully. "He'll have to lose his legs," he said grimly. "Both of them are badly smashed below the knee. I must operate as soon as possible."

That night Douglas Bader lost both his legs. For many days he was very ill and at one time it was thought that he would die, but he was young and fit and after some days in hospital he began to get better.

A nurse sat by the pilot's bed and watched him. Soon he opened his eyes and stared blankly at the walls of the room. "Where am I?" he asked. "What am I doing here? Who are you?"

"You are quite safe", replied the nurse. "Your plane crashed. Don't talk too much. You're still weak and you need plenty of rest."

Bader nodded. Slowly he began to remember what had happened to him.

"I flew into the ground, didn't I?" he said.

"Yes," said the nurse, "but you're going to be all right. I think the doctor would like to see you now. Don't try to move. I'll call him."



Ashton

## Chapter Two

"You're lucky to be alive, my lad," said the doctor when he arrived. "You've had a bad crash and you've been in hospital for some days."

"But I am alive," said Bader quickly. "Except for a few pains here and there I feel all right. How long will I have to stay here? When can I leave?"

The doctor shook his head, and when he spoke his voice was soft, almost gentle. "You might as well know the truth now," he said. "When you were brought here I had to operate at once to save your life. There was no other way. You've lost both your legs."

Douglas Bader stared at the doctor. There was a puzzled expression on his face. "I don't believe you," he said slowly. "I tell you that I can feel my feet. They hurt and I know that they're there." He tried to lift the blankets that covered him to prove to the doctor that he still had both his legs. The doctor placed a hand on his shoulder.

"That won't do any good," he said. "You have to get used to the idea. You can't really feel any pain in your legs. You only think you can. It often happens after an operation. Soon the pain will be gone." Douglas Bader closed his eyes. For a while he was silent. Then he said quietly: "More than anything else I wanted to fly. Will I ever fly again? Is there any hope at all?"

The doctor shook his head. "I'm very sorry," he said. "There is no hope at all. You'll never fly again. This is something you must learn to face on your own. Later on we may be able to fix you up with a pair of metal legs.

It's been done before, but I can't promise anything. We shall have to wait and see."

"Will I be able to walk with them, the metal legs?" asked Bader.

"Yes," replied the doctor. "Of course you'll have to use crutches or at least a stick. But in time you might learn to walk with them."

The young pilot smiled grimly. "As soon as I feel stronger I'll try the metal legs," he said. "How long will I have to wait?"

"Don't worry too much about that now," said the doctor. "You still need plenty of rest. As soon as I think you are well enough I'll let you know."

It was several weeks later that Douglas Bader was taken to see a man called Dessoutter. He met him in his office inside a small factory. "I understand that you have legs for me," said Bader. "I've been looking forward to this moment for a long time. I hope they fit."

Dessoutter smiled. "This is one of the few places in the country where metal legs are



Ashton

made," he said. "When they are fitted don't expect to walk at once. You'll need hours of practice before you can use them."

He nodded to two men standing near him. "These are my assistants, Walker and Tulitt," he said. "They are here to help you."

Soon the metal legs were fitted. Walker and Tulitt each took one of Bader's arms. Slowly, carefully, they pulled him to his feet, but as the pilot stood upright waves of pain swept through his body. For a moment he thought that he would faint. Grimly he tried to move his right leg forward but nothing happened.

"I can't move my legs!" he cried. "This is hopeless. I'll never be able to walk about on these. I've never felt such pain."

"Don't forget that the stumps of your legs have done no work for a long time," said Dessoutter. "You've been lying on your back in hospital. It will take time to get used to these legs. Be patient." Bader nodded. "All right," he said. "I'm beginning to feel better. I'll try to walk forward a few steps."

Dessoutter shook his head. "Take your time," he said. "You have to get used to having these metal legs strapped to your body. Now, as soon as you're ready, I'll give you a stick to help you to balance. Walker and Tulitt can hold your arms."

Bader grinned stubbornly. "Your assistants can help me," he said, "but I don't need a stick."

"You must learn to face facts," said Dessoutter quietly. "You'll never



# The Bader Story (3)

walk again without a stick. I have one here. Take it. It will help you."

Bader shook his head. "I'll walk without a stick," he said. "I'll never use one, never."

He tried to take a step forward. Nothing happened. Terrible pain swept once again through the stumps of his legs.

"Try kicking the stump of your leg forward," said Dessoutter. "Move the leg as if you're cracking a whip."

Bader flicked his right leg forward. The assistants helped him to move and he flicked his left leg forward. He moved jerkily, like a toy soldier. After half an hour he was very, very tired. "I shall never learn to walk," he said.

Dessoutter shook his head. "Don't forget that you are learning to walk all over again," he said. "It's like learning to play the piano. You must practise and practise."

Bader nodded. "Let's try again," he said.

"Take very short steps," said Walker. "I think you'll find that much easier."



On the golf course

**Chapter Three** Again and again Bader tried to walk with the metal legs. He learned to lean the top of his body well forward to help him to balance. The stumps of his legs ached, but he kept on trying. "I think I can manage now," he said at last. "Let me try on my own."

He pushed the assistants from him and started forward on his own. Slowly he walked a few steps. "What did I tell you?" he said. "I know I'll have to practise, but I'll walk again and I'll never need to use a stick."

Dessoutter smiled. "You're right," he said. "I never would have believed it if I hadn't seen you with my own eyes, but now you really must rest. You've done enough for one day."

Douglas Bader returned to the hospital, and every day he practised walking with his new metal legs. Then one day some friends called to see him. "We're going to play golf," they said. "We thought that you might like to come with us."

"All right," said Bader. "I should very much like to see a golf course again. Although I shan't be able to play I shall enjoy watching you go round the course."

They got into the car and drove to the golf course. One of Bader's friends gave him a golf club and some balls. "Why don't you see what you can do with them?" he said. "It will help to pass the time while you wait."

When his friends had gone Bader put a ball on the grass. He picked up

the club and swung at the ball. He missed it by inches and fell flat on his back. He laughed stubbornly at himself, got up, and tried again, but the same thing happened. Twelve times he tried and twelve times he failed and fell to the ground.

Then at last he hit the ball. It soared away into the air and he felt like cheering. It was a magnificent drive and the ball landed close to the flag on the next green. "This is fine," said Bader to himself. "Now I shall soon learn how to use my metal legs to play golf."

He made up his mind to learn to play golf better than his friends. "I shan't need any help," he said to them when they returned. "I shall walk around the course on my own. I shall play all my shots myself. If you want to beat me you'll have to work very hard to improve your game."

His friends laughed and joked with him. "We shan't mind being beaten," said one of them. "If golf helps you to learn to walk better with those metal legs we shall be very pleased."



He wanted to fly again

So the weeks and months passed and Bader learned to play golf. Soon he was a better golfer than most of his friends. He learned to walk everywhere on his own. He learned to do everything for himself.

As the months passed he needed every ounce of his great courage. From time to time the pain in his legs above the knees was very great. The stumps that supported the metal legs bled and grew raw, but wherever he went he refused the help of a stick. Whenever he could he played golf with his friends.

There was one thing above all else that worried the young pilot. This was the thought of never being able to fly again. For many weeks he worked in an office but he soon grew tired of this. "I want to fly again," he told a friend. "If I can learn to walk again with metal legs I can learn to fly with them. What do you think?"

His friend thought at first that Douglas Bader was joking. "Flying is a dangerous game, even for a very fit man," he said. "Are you serious? Do you really think that you can fly with metal legs?"

"Of course," replied Bader. "I think I can learn to fly a plane as well as any man in the country. If Germany declares war against us, then England will need every pilot she can find. I'm sure I can be a pilot again."

"Well, I don't know what to think," said Bader's friend, "but if you've made up your mind to learn to fly again then nothing I say will stop you. If you do succeed you'll be the first legless pilot ever to fly in the R.A.F."

"That's right," said Bader. "I'll be the first."

One day Douglas Bader's friends found him waiting for them at the airfield. He had his flying helmet in his hand.

"I'm ready," he said grimly.

"All right," said one of his friends. "Come up with me and have some practice. When I think you're good enough I'll let you fly solo."

Together they walked to a plane and took off. The other pilots watched closely as the aircraft rose into the air and circled the field. After a long practice the plane landed. Bader's friend jumped out and waved to the legless pilot. "You're on your own," he shouted. "Let's see what you can do."

Bader opened the throttle wide and took off. The plane climbed rapidly into the blue sky. It circled the airfield, landed, and then took off again. Bader's friends watched anxiously as the plane turned upside down and flew a few feet above the grass. "He's the same Bader," grinned one of the pilots. "He's still the best pilot I've ever seen."

## Chapter Four



Waiting at the airfield

The other pilots agreed. They knew he was right. When the legless pilot landed they all crowded round him and shook his hand.

Some months later Douglas Bader was sent to the Central Flying School to be tested in the air. Many instructors flew with him for hours in different types of aircraft. "He's wasting our time," they said. "We can't teach him anything. He's the best pilot we've ever seen."

In spite of this the Royal Air Force finally decided that a legless man could not be accepted as a pilot. Bader was not allowed to rejoin the R.A.F., but he was promised that if war broke out he would be allowed to fly again.

When war did break out in 1939 Douglas Bader was soon back in the Royal Air Force and drawing his flying kit. He refused a fine pair of flying boots. "I don't need those," he laughed. "I don't get cold feet."

In the months that followed Bader proved he was one of the best fighter pilots in the country. Soon he was given his own squadron, and he showed that he was a great leader. In the Battle of Britain he and his men shot down many enemy aircraft.

Douglas Bader had shot down twenty-two German aircraft before he was himself shot down. When he tried to bale out he found that his right leg was stuck in the cockpit, so he went without it. As he floated down to earth he thought how lucky he was to have metal legs. When the Germans took him prisoner he told them to send a message to England, to ask for another leg.



# The Bader Story (4)

Soon a bomber left England, and a metal leg was dropped by parachute over Bader's prison camp. Now that he had two legs again Bader tried to escape, but he was recaptured by the Germans. Again and again he tried to escape and return to England but he was never able to succeed. Several times the Germans took his legs away from him and tried to make him promise not to try to escape, but Bader always refused and at last the Germans put him in Colditz. This was a prison camp where the Germans kept their most difficult prisoners.

Bader tried to escape even from Colditz. Although it was almost impossible to succeed he kept on trying, and he made life very difficult for his German guards.

When the war ended in Europe, Douglas Bader finally returned to England. He did not stay in the Royal Air Force. He chose a job where he was given a plane of his own to fly when he wished.



*Adapted by from the city*

Even in his own lifetime he has become a legend. He was the first legless pilot ever to fly with the Royal Air Force. He was also one of the greatest pilots to fly in the Battle of Britain.



**Blackie & Son Ltd.**




# Bader's Hurricane with 242 Sqn





# DRS Bader - Extracts from RAFC Honours Register

BADER	St Edwards,	Under-Officer	Entered;
Douglas Point Street,	Oxford.		6 September 1928
			Passed;
			25 July 1930

D.S.O.	1 October 1940.	<sup>1</sup> "This officer has displayed gallantry and leadership of the highest order. During three recent engagements
Mention	1 January 1941.	he has led his squadron with such skill and ability that thirty-three enemy aircraft have been destroyed.
D.F.C.	7 January 1941.	In the course of these engagements Squadron Leader BADER has added to his previous successes by
Mention	17 March 1941.	destroying six enemy aircraft. <i>London Gazette</i>
Bar to D.S.O.	15 July 1941.	<sup>2</sup> "Squadron Leader BADER has continued to lead his squadron and wing with the utmost gallantry on
Bar to D.F.C.	9 September 1941.	all occasions. He has now destroyed a total of ten hostile aircraft and damaged several more. <i>London Gazette</i>
		<sup>3</sup> "This fearless pilot has recently added a further four enemy aircraft to his previous successes; in addition he has probably destroyed another four and damaged five hostile aircraft. By his fine leadership and high courage Wing Comdr BADER has inspired the wing on every occasion. <i>London Gazette</i>
		(See Index 'B' at end of book)

high powers of leadership, unsurpassed skill and iron determination. His conduct has been of unusual value." <i>London Gazette</i>	
<sup>4</sup> BAR to D.S.O.	15 JULY, 1941. "In recognition of gallantry displayed in flying operations against the enemy"

*Almoner Captain D.R.S. BADER, DSO, D.F.C.*

*BAR to D.S.O. 15 JULY, 1941.*

*"In recognition of gallantry displayed in flying operations against the enemy"*



# DRS Bader - Colditz Resident





# DRS Bader - 'Reunited'





# DRS Bader with Battle of Britain Film Actors





# A Very Fine Cranwellian - Douglas Bader



Group Captain **Sir Douglas Robert Steuart Bader**  
CBE, DSO & Bar, DFC & Bar, FRAeS, DL  
(21 February 1910 – 5 September 1982)

Joined the RAF in 1928, commissioned in 1930, lost both legs in an aerobatic accident in 1931. Despite being discharged on medical grounds, he rejoined in 1939 to become a renowned flying ace, credited with 22 aerial victories, four shared victories, six probables, one shared probable and 11 enemy aircraft damaged. Shot down in 1941 - blue-on-blue - he 'resided' in Colditz Camp for the next 4 years.



**C**ourage **A**bility **D**edication **E**nergy **T**eamwork **S**ingle-mindedness