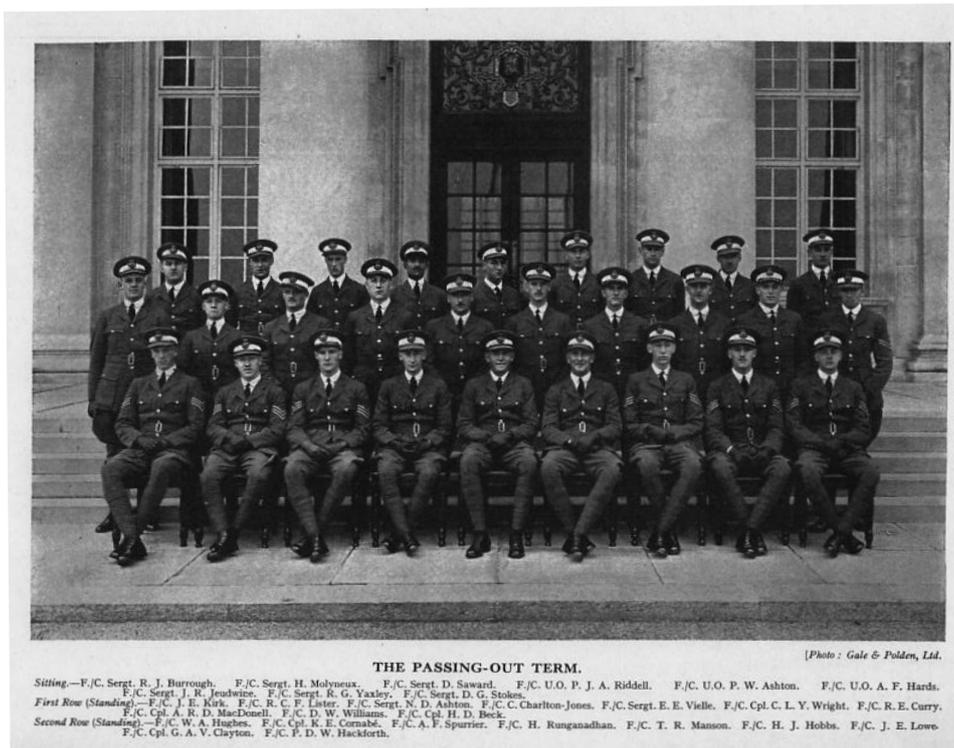


# Fewest of the Few Supplement



## S32 Entry Graduated July 1934

SURNAME	INITS
LISTER	RCF
MacDONNELL	ARD





**Lister, Robert Charles Franklin  
(S32 Entry, A Squadron)**



41

92

614

Robert Charles Franklin Lister was born on 23rd August 1913 and attended Cheltenham College from 1927 to 1932. He entered Cranwell in September 1932, won the Groves Memorial Prize in 1934 and, after graduating, he joined 13 (Army Co-operation) Squadron at Netheravon on 28 July 1934.

Lister was posted to 20 (Army Co-Operation) Squadron at Peshawar on 28 February 1935. In 1937, he was supporting the Army, operating in the mountains of Waziristan against tribesmen led by the Fakir of Ipi. Lister was awarded the DFC (gazetted 16 August 1938) for gallant and distinguished service in operations in Waziristan from 16 September 1935 to 15 December 1937. He received a Mention in Despatches (gazetted 18th February 1938).

Back in the UK, Lister was posted to CFS Upavon for an instructor's course, after which he went to 10 FTS Tern Hill. On 2 January 1939, he was made Adjutant of 614 Squadron, Auxiliary Air Force at Cardiff.

In late 1939, Lister crashed during take-off with engine failure and fractured his spine. He was in plaster for nine months and was given a temporary job at the Air Ministry. Lister was cleared for flying duties in August 1940 and asked for a posting to Fighter Command. He was posted to 7 OTU Hawarden, converted to Spitfires and then took temporary command of 41 Squadron at Hornchurch on 8 September. He was shot down on the 14 September by an Me109 out of the evening sun that no-one had spotted, whilst flying at the rear of a squadron formation in Spitfire R6605. Lister baled out when the aircraft caught fire, slightly wounded in the arm.



**PRIZE-WINNERS.**  
Standing—F./C. Sergt. R. G. Yaxley (Engineering), F./C. U.O. P. J. A. Riddell (English and History), F./C. Sergt. D. G. Stokes (Science and Service Subjects).  
Sitting—F./C. U.O. P. W. Ashton (Sword of Honour), F./C. R. C. F. Lister (Flying).  
*[Photo: Gale & Polden, Ltd.]*

On 22 September, he was attached to 92 Squadron at Biggin Hill as a supernumerary. Shortly after Lister's arrival the OC was burned and Lister took command.

On 24 September, 92 Squadron was scrambled to be part of a 'Big Wing' of three squadrons. Time was wasted and it met a formation of nine Ju88s with a 100+ Me109 escort, head-on and slightly below.

After a general break Lister, in X4427, found himself alone and being circled by some nine Me109's. He was eventually hit by a cannon shell in the bottom of the cockpit and wounded in both legs. He went into a spin, managed to get back to Biggin Hill, but had only one flap working, causing him to go out of control into a skidding diving turn which fortunately took the Spitfire into a valley below the level of the airfield. Lister regained control, made a landing without flaps and stopped ten yards short of a wood at the far end.

After long hospital treatment, Lister was declared medically unfit for flying duties in June 1941 and posted to the Operations Room at Biggin Hill as Controller.

In April 1942, he became SASO at HQ 219 Group at Alexandria and in October 1943 became CO 209 Group at Haifa.

From September 1944 until July 1945, Lister was on the staff at Air HQ Eastern Mediterranean, after which he commanded RAF Amman, Jordan, until March 1946, when he was posted back to the UK. Lister later commanded RAF Wattisham and was subsequently SOA at HQ 64 Group.

He was Station Commander at RAF Newton when he retired on 31st October 1954 as a Wing Commander, retaining the rank of Group Captain.

He died in March 1998.

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**MacDonell, Aeneas Ranald Donald**  
**(S32 Entry, B Squadron)**



Born in Baku, Southern Russia, where his father, Aeneas Ranald Donald MacDonell, was British vice-consul, he was educated at Hurstpierpoint College in Sussex, where he captained the Rugby XV and Shooting Eight. He entered the RAF College in September 1932, graduating on 28 July 1934 and joining 54 Squadron at Hornchurch.

After he qualified as a fighter pilot at CFS Upavon on 22 January 1939, he was appointed Flight Commander at 13 FTS, Drem, East Lothian at the time war broke out.

Aged 25 and with the rank of Squadron Leader, he led No 64 Squadron of Spitfire fighters from Kenley in Surrey. He was never far from the thick of the action and within one month he had downed eight enemy aircraft in dog-fights with three other possible kills, a feat that won him the Distinguished Flying Cross.

His luck ran out in March 1941 when he was shot down over the Channel and had to ditch in the sea where he was picked up by a German E-boat. He was a PoW for the rest of the war and became adjutant in charge of the Allied prisoners at Stalag Luft III. From there, he helped organise repeated freedom bids, including the famed "Wooden Horse" escape, when prisoners used a vaulting horse as a cover for the tunnel they were digging under the perimeter fence, an episode which became the basis for a book and film.

It was while a PoW that he inherited the clan chieftaindom, and after the war held appointments in the War Office and was Chief Flying Instructor at RAF Cranwell. After a year at Cambridge reading Russian, he was promoted to Air Commodore and appointed Air Attache to the British Embassy in Moscow, where his knowledge of the language and the country made him an ideal choice for his Cold War "spy" activities.

He was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1964 after four years at the still-fledgling Ministry of Defence, which exercised his diplomatic skills. On retirement from the MoD, he moved into the construction industry, finally retiring in 1981 to Fortrose, where he was known simply as Donald and a popular figure in the village.