

# A DICTIONARY OF THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN REPRINT

Geoff Simpson

The year 2010 will see the 70th anniversary of The Battle of Britain, a significant anniversary at any time, but possibly to be the last one at which survivors of that historic battle will be able to join in the memorial celebrations. While many books detail the story of 'The Few', and describe the technical details of the aircraft and the aircrew who took part on both sides, here for the first time is a book that provides a useful background to every aspect of the conflict, comprising 150 entries covering everything from 'Ace' to 'Women's Auxiliary Air Force'.

Sample entry:

**Nicknames** – Nicknames for aircrew were often seen as a sign of being accepted and frequently stayed with the person concerned for life. There were plays on names – "Polly" Flinders, "Bunny" Currant, "Sticky" Glew, "Robin" Hood. Some described a personal habit – "Social Type" Jeff was always immaculate. "Broody" Benson would, between sorties, sit slumped in a chair. "Tannoy" Reid was often to be heard on the radio. Some referred to physical appearance – "Woolly Bear" Ritchie was big, but also gentle; "Sawn-off" Lock was small; "Dopey" Davies was supposed to look like one of the Seven Dwarfs. Others were biographical – "Dimsie" Stones had been caught with the book by Dorita Fairlie Bruce, Dimsie Goes to School. "Sailor" Malan and "Sinbad" Innes had both been to sea before joining the RAF. "Sheep" Gilroy had been a farmer and "Sticks" Gregory a professional drummer. For "Hawkeye" Wells the origins of his nickname lay with his achievements as a schoolboy shooting champion in New Zealand. He continued to demonstrate his talent while flying RAF fighters. "Grubby" Grice, "Widge" Gleed and "Fanny" Brinsdon were among those who claimed not to know the reasons for their sobriquets. For the slight Gleed the name appears to have been an abbreviation of "Wizard Midget".

Many entries are accompanied by contemporary photographs further enhancing the reader's enjoyment of this unique publication.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Geoff Simpson** is a Trustee of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, a Council Member of the Friends of the Imperial War Museum and a member of the RAF Historical Society and the Guild of Battlefield Guides. He has written many articles and a number of booklets on aspects of the history of the RAF in the Second World War.

## HALSGROVE CATALOGUE

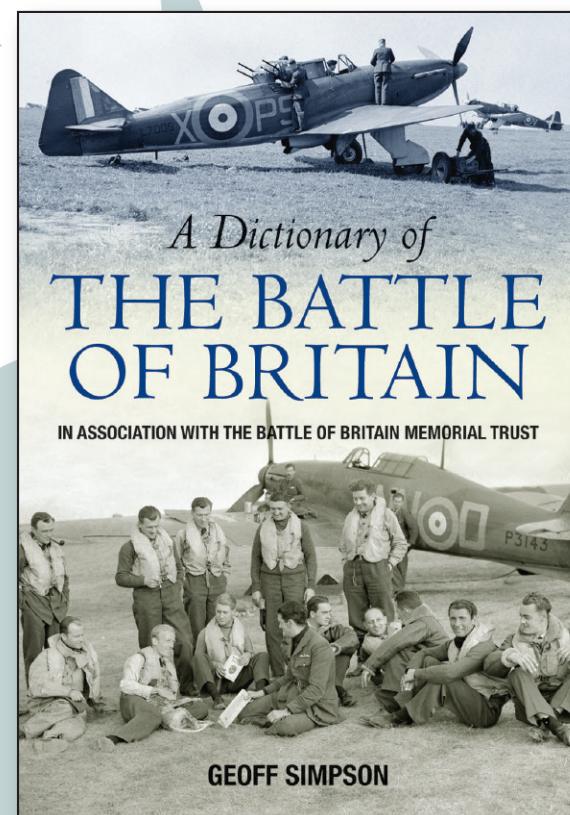
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The Prime Minister and Mrs Churchill on their way to visit the London docks, September 25 1940.  
(Courtesy Imperial War Museum, London, negative no H 4367)



Top left: Plt Off L G H Kells about to fly a night sortie in a Blenheim of No 29 Squadron. Kells was lost in 1941, failing to return from a Hurricane test flight. (Courtesy of Imperial War Museum, London, negative no CH 1584)

Above: Aldwych underground station in use as a shelter on October 8. (Courtesy of Imperial War Museum, London, negative number HU 44272)



Top right: Fairey Swordfish on a training flight. (Courtesy of Imperial War Museum, London, negative no A 3532)



Example of a double-page spread.



Royal Engineers disembarking at Dover during the Dunkirk evacuation. One appears to have acquired either a souvenir or a makeshift weapon. (Courtesy Imperial War Museum, London, negative number H 1618)