

7th April, 1969

Dear Ginger:

Many thanks for your letter of the 21st of March. You have provided just the right information that I need for the book on Stuffy, and I am delighted with it.

When I saw Rosemary and Bill Elliot I borrowed his copy of your book, and I have just re-read it. It confirmed for me my understanding that you spent most of your time in II Group in the battle itself. As a result of that I should like to ask a further question of you. But it must be, at this stage, in the strictest confidence, Ginger, and I hope that you will not mind my putting it to you in that fashion.

A certain allegation was made early in November, 1940, that was brought to Stuffy Dowding's attention and which has, ever since, caused him the deepest distress. It was made by a responsible officer in No. 12 Group in a report to Air Ministry, and it was that II Group pilots were becoming unnecessarily shaken in their morale and not shooting down enough of the enemy because they were not using big enough wings. It was a dreadful allegation by somebody in another Group to make about you chaps who were bearing the brunt of the fighting, and it caused Dowding a very great deal of trouble because he made an issue out of it in the strongest protest about such a statement being made.

Al Deere is good on the use of wings, as is Johnnie Johnson. Al states that he never heard anything in II Group that would lead to such an accusation about a loss of morale. What are your views, basing them on the strenuous service you saw in II Group. Did you know of any loss of morale because you were not flying in the big wing formations? And what are your views in the use of the big wings in the battle itself?

The treatment of Stuffy which baffles you will be dealt with in full in the book. It will stun you!

With all good wishes,

As ever,

Robert Wright

BATTLE OF BRITAIN

BOB/001

An attractive first day cover in colour celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain (1940-1980) and featuring the 12p postage stamp commemorating the 80th birthday of the Queen Mother. Cancelled at the RAF Post Office, Biggin Hill, on the 5th October, 1980. Signed in blue ink by five of the leading air aces of the Battle:

Douglas Bader (1910-1982) Bader, who lost both legs in 1931 was the leader of "The Few". Many of the aerial tactics he developed contributed to the victory and he was credited with 22½ airkills. Shot down in 1941 he spent the rest of the war in a German prisoner-of-war camp.

John Cunningham (1917-) Known as "Cats Eyes", Cunningham specialised in night defence and was credited with 20 airkills (19 at night). He became a test pilot after the war.

Johnnie Johnson (1915-) Johnson was the leading air ace, credited with 38 airkills.

James Lacey (1917-) Known as "Ginger", Lacey was the most successful fighter pilot of the actual Battle of Britain, with 15½ airkills (28 for the whole war).

Robert Stanford Tuck (1916-) The dashing epitome of the fighter pilot, Stanford Tuck was credited with 10½ airkills in the Battle of Britain, 18 by 1940 and a total of 29.

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