

REJESTR DOTYCZY:Nr. rejestracyjny

DROBINSKI Bolesław Henryk

z d.

s/c i

z d.

ur. 23.10.1918 w Ostróg, Wołyń

kraj:

zm. 26.7.1995 w Chiddingfold, Surrey

kraj:

pochowany spopielony

Dane personalnePpłk-pilot PSPVirtuti MilitariŹródła i bibliografia

Dziennik Polski 1 i 2.8.1995 - nekrolog

Tydzień Polski 19.8.1995 - wspomnienie

The Times 19.8.1995 - wspomnienie

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Ś. † P.

BOLESŁAW HENRYK DROBIŃSKI

ppłk.-pilot Polskich Sił Powietrznych, ostatni dowódca 303 Dywizjonu Myśliwskiego, Kawaler Orderu Virtuti Militari, odznaczony 4-krotnie Krzyżem Walecznych, brytyjskim DFC oraz medalami polskimi i brytyjskimi. Urodzony 23 października 1918 r. w Ostrogu na Wołyniu, zmarł 26 lipca 1995 r. w Chiddingfold, Surrey. Msza św. żałobna zostanie odprawiona w kościele St. Teresa of Avile w Chiddingfold, w środę 2 sierpnia 1995 r. o godz. 10.15, po czym nastąpi spopielenie w gronie rodzinnym w Guildford Crematorium.

Cześć Jego pamięci!

**STOWARZYSZENIE LOTNIKÓW POLSKICH
W WIELKIEJ BRYTANII**

Zamiast kwiatów Rodzina prosi o donacje na PAF Memorial Northolt, Stowarzyszenie Lotników Polskich, 14 Collingham Gdns., London SW5 OHT.

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Wspomnienie pośmiertne**Bolesław Henryk D**

Zmarł Gandi Drobiński, Kawaler Orderu Virtuti Militari Krzyża Walecznych czterokrotnie i Distinguished Flying Cross. Ostatni bojowy dowódca 303 Dywizjonu Myśliwskiego, który okrył się sławą w Bitwie o Wielką Brytanię i sławę tę pomnażał do końca wojny.

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O lataniu śniło mu się wcześniej już w roku 1934 wyfrunął, jak ptak, na szybowcu Wrona, w Góleszowie koło Cieszyńska, gdzie go po raz pierwszy spotkałem.

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Dęblinie. Tam zdobył gapę pilota myśliwskiego, szlify oficerskie i tam też się jego duch hartował.

Razem z całym rocznikiem XIII promocji odbył ich odyseję przez Rumunię i Włochy do Francji, skąd wyjechał z jedną z pierwszych grup pilotów do Anglii. Po przeszkoleniu został przydzielony do 65 dywizjonu RAF i walczył z nimi w Bitwie o Wielką Brytanię.

Za wyjątkiem krótkiego okresu kiedy był adiutantem ministra wojny, stale latał. Dowodził eskadrą w 303 i 317 dywizjonie, dwa razy pełnił funkcję instruktora w 58 OTU, a w sierpniu 1944 objął dowództwo Kosynierów.

303 dywizjon, wyposażony w samoloty Mustang IV, wykonał swój ostatni lot bojowy w osłonie wyprawy bombowej na Berchtes-

goda, 19 sierpnia 1995 r. w Ostrogu na Wołyniu, zmarł 26 lipca 1995 r. w Chiddingfold, Surrey.

The Times
19.8.1995

SQUADRON-LEADER BOLESŁAW DROBIŃSKI



Squadron-Leader
Bolesław Drobiński,
DFC, Polish Battle of
Britain fighter pilot, died
at Chiddingfold, Surrey,
on July 27 aged 76. He
was born in Ostrog, in a
part of Poland which is
now in Ukraine, on
October 23, 1918.

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Drobiński flew with No 65
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117½ confirmed — was the
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Wspomnienie pośmiertne

Bolesław Henryk Drobiński

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garden, a prowadził go kapitan Drobiński, nasz Gandi, zagończyk kresowy.

W szeregu walk myśliwskich na śmierć i życie zestrzelił 7 Me 109 na pewno, 1 i 1/3 Me 109 prawdopodobnie, uszkodził 1 Ju 52 na ziemi i zapalił 300-tonowy statek na Kanale.

Po wojnie gospodarzył na wsi w Surrey, kochał swoją piękną żonę, wychował i wykształcił dwóch synów i jedną córkę, z kolegami pił whisky, opowiadał kawały i grał w pokera. Wśród myśliwców RAF miał wielki mir, a szczególnie w Battle of Britain Association. Stał na straży pamięci i honoru polskich załóg bojowych i publicznie wypowiadał się w tych sprawach w środowiskach angielskich i PRL-owskich, kiedy zaszła ku temu potrzeba. Do końca życia był filarem Stowarzyszenia Lotników Polskich.

Gandi ma zapewnione miejsce w historii Lotnictwa Polskiego i pamięć o nim wśród myśliwskich pokoleń obecnych i przyszłych nie zginie.

F. Kornicki



Squadron-Leader Bolesław Drobiński, DFC, Polish Battle of Britain fighter pilot, died at Chiddingfold, Surrey, on July 27 aged 76. He was born in Ostrog, in a part of Poland which is now in Ukraine, on October 23, 1918.

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Bolesław Henryk Drobinski was born in an area of Poland which was, in the years between the wars, subjected to agitation both from Communists and from Ukrainian nationalist movements, and Polish residents always had to be on their guard. As a child, he was fascinated by aircraft and when, aged nine, he first saw a Polish airman in uniform, he made up his mind to join the air force.

At the age of 16 he took his glider pilot's international B category certificate, and in 1938 he went to the Polish Air Force Officers' School. Gaining his pilot's wings and completing a fighter pilot's course, he was passed out of the college in haste on September 1, 1939, just as the German invasion of his country began.

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After a spell as a flying instructor at 58 Operational Training Unit at Grange-mouth, and another as a flight commander with 317 "City of Wilno" Squadron, Drobinski returned to No 303. In March 1943 he married an English girl, and was appointed to the safer job of ADC to the Polish Minister of Defence.

But on September 26, 1944, he was posted as commanding-officer of No 303, now based at Coltishall. From there he led the squadron in battle over Holland and Germany.

He was nearly killed over The Hague in November of that year when he was knocked unconscious by shrapnel from flak exploding beside his plane. He was at that time flying at 23,000 ft. His engine stopped and the aircraft went into a spin. Miraculously, he came to with the Spitfire not much more than a thousand feet above the ground and managed to restart the engine and pull out of the spin. Although his controls were partly shot away, he was able to nurse the damaged plane back to Coltishall.

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With the destruction of much of the Polish Air Force on the ground in the early stage of the campaign there were no planes for him and his comrades to fly. They were sent to Romania to take delivery of the Hurricanes which were supposedly on their way from Britain by sea. But none were forthcoming and Drobinski and his colleagues were interned by the Romanians. But he escaped and made his way through Yugoslavia and Italy to France.

Drobinski was one of those who volunteered to fly with the RAF rather than with the French, and arrived at the Polish collection centre at RAF Eastchurch in January 1940. On August 12, 1940, he was posted to 65 Squadron at Hornchurch and flew a Spitfire with it throughout the Battle of Britain. His only score during the Battle of Britain was a third share in an enemy aircraft, but he improved dramatically on this performance in the following year.

Unlike many of the Poles posted to British squadrons, he found the British easy to get on with and for a long time resisted being transferred to a Polish unit when these were formed. But on March 1, 1941, he was posted to the Kosciuszko Squadron at Northolt, perhaps the most famous of all the foreign manned squadrons to serve with the RAF during the war. Its tally of

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He shot down one more Messerschmitt for certain, bringing his final tally for the war to 7½. His last operational flight was the highly congenial one of providing a fighter escort for the great bombing raid on Hitler's headquarters at Berchtesgaden. After serving in various RAF staff posts, Drobinski was demobilised in 1948. He had been awarded the Polish Virtuti Militari, the Polish Cross of Valour with three bars, and the DFC.

After the war he did not want to return to Communist-dominated Poland, preferring to remain in Britain and take out British citizenship. But when he applied to do so he was told that the previous eight years did not count in the residence requirements. He was so incensed at this that he decided to take himself and his young family to America, where he took a job in the oil business.

But in 1954 he returned in order to help his father-in-law, who had retired from the City and bought a farm in the South of England. Drobinski lived there for the remainder of his life. He remained an active member of the Polish Air Force Association, and was much loved in the Polish community for his modesty and charm.

He is survived by his English wife, Mavie, a daughter and two sons.

...yświata, szary ucieska
...am też się jego duch hartował
...Razem z całym rocznikiem XIII
...romocji odbył ich odyseję przez
...kumnie i Włochy do Francji.
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THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN LONDON MONUMENT

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

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15 February 2013

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The Airmen's Stories - P/O B H Drobinski

Squadron Leader (Pilot Officer during the Battle) Boleslaw "Ghandi" Drobinski, the Polish fighter pilot who has died aged 76, fought with distinction in the Battle of Britain and finished the Second World War with a confirmed tally of seven Me109's.

Commissioned into the Polish Air Force on Sept 1st 1939 - the day on which the Germans marched on Warsaw - Drobinski was ordered to make his way to the Romanian border. He was told that Hurricanes were being delivered from Britain to Constanta on the Black Sea; he was to fly one back to Poland and take on the Germans. When the Soviet invasion of Poland put paid to this scheme Drobinski crossed into Romania where he was detained in a camp near Slatina. He escaped and caught a train to Bucharest, jumped off at the outskirts of the city and took a taxi to the Polish consulate. There he was given money and an address at which to stay. The next day, Drobinski took a train to Paris. He doctored his papers and bribed a ticket inspector to lock him in a first class compartment, thus making his perilous journey in some comfort. From Cherbourg he sailed to Southampton, where he was accorded a cool welcome by the RAF. Drobinski considered himself to be a fully trained pilot but to his dismay he was sent to RAF Eastchurch to acquire rudimentary English and to learn how to march.

It was not until the summer of 1940, when the Battle of Britain was at its height and pilots were in short supply, that Drobinski was posted to No 65, a battle-worn Spitfire squadron. On August 24, Drobinski was making a sector reconnaissance. Almost out of fuel, he returned to base to find it being heavily bombed. He gave chase to one of the attackers but noticed his fuel gauge had dropped to zero. He glided in to land "like a slalom skier".

In 1941 Fighter Command went on the offensive over France. By then Drobinski was a member of No 303, a Polish Spitfire squadron, and took part in numerous low-level sweeps. His account of a sortie on May 15th evokes a typical operation of the period -

I and my wingman strafed military buildings in the St Omer area and shot up a Ju52 on the ground. On the way back we attacked and damaged a convoy of five ships about four miles from Calais.

Drobinski set one ship ablaze.

For the next three years he mixed spells as an instructor at No 58 Operational Training Unit with combat duty for 303 and 317 Squadrons. In September 1944, as the Allies pushed into North West Europe Drobinski was appointed to command No 303. Two months later he was patrolling over Holland when a piece of anti-aircraft flak furrowed the top of his flying helmet. "I felt as though I had been hit with a hammer and blacked out" he recalled. When he came to, the Spitfire had dropped from 23,000 ft to 5,000ft and was spinning helplessly towards the sea. Most of the controls had been shot out and Drobinski did not manage to restart the engine and pull himself out of the spin until he was only 1,000 ft above the water.

Boleslaw Drobinski was born at Ostrog in Poland on Oct 23rd 1918 and educated at Dubno High School. At 16 he learned to glide on a summer holiday and two years later he was flying powered aircraft. In 1938 he entered the Polish Air Force College at Deblin near Warsaw.

In 1948 he was released from the RAF with the rank of squadron leader. He called at the Aliens Office to obtain a British passport. "You will have to wait five years" he was told by a civil servant. "But I have been fighting with the RAF and Polish Air Force since 1940" pleaded Drobinski. "Oh, that doesn't count" said the official "you came here without permission to land".

Somewhat vexed, Drobinski took up a family invitation to work in an oil business in America. After six happy years he returned to Britain to help his sick father-in-law to run his farm. In 1960 he was finally granted British citizenship.

Drobinski was awarded the DFC in 1941; he also received five Polish decorations.

In 1943 in England he married a South African woman; they had two sons and a daughter.

With acknowledgments to the Daily Telegraph August 1995

Bolesław Drobiński [edytuj]

Z Wikipedii, wolnej encyklopedii

Bolesław Drobiński (ur. 23 października 1918 r. w Ostrogu nad Horyniem, zm. 26 lipca 1995 w Anglii), major pilot Wojska Polskiego, major (ang. *Squadron Leader*) Królewskich Sił Powietrznych, as myśliwski II wojny światowej.

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Życiorys [edytuj]

Maturę zdał w Dubnie, w 1934 roku odbył swój pierwszy lot na szybowcu Wrona w Goleszowie, niedaleko Cieszyna, 2 stycznia 1938 r. wstąpił do Szkoły Podchorążych Lotnictwa w Dęblinie. Absolwent 13 promocji, 11 lokata. W kampanii wrześniowej nie brał udziału, przez Rumunię i Włochy dotarł do Francji. Jako jeden z pierwszych wyjechał następnie do Anglii.

11 września 1940 roku otrzymał przydział do 65 Dywizjonu RAF stacjonującego w Turnhouse, w którym walczył w czasie bitwy o Anglię. Od 2 marca 1941 w Dywizjonie 303. 15 maja 1941 wspólnie z innym pilotem uszkodził na ziemi Ju 52.

21 czerwca 1941 podczas operacji Circus 17 Drobiński ciężko uszkodził samolot niemieckiego asa Adolfa Gallanda^{[1][2]}, który przymusowo lądował na brzuchu.

18 marca 1942 roku instruktor w 58 OTU w Grangemouth. Powrócił do Dywizjonu 303 9 sierpnia 1942. Znowu w 58 OTU od 9 kwietnia 1943. Od 18 października 1943 roku dowódca eskadry w dywizjonie 317. 3 kwietnia 1944 roku przeszedł do pracy w Ministerstwie Obrony. 26 września 1944 roku objął dowództwo dywizjonu 303.

Zdemobilizowany w 1948 roku. Pracował w przemyśle naftowym w Ameryce. W latach 50-tych osiedlił się na wsi w Surrey w Anglii. W 1960 otrzymał brytyjskie obywatelstwo. Zmarł w 1995 roku

W 1943 w Anglii ożenił się z kobietą z RPA, miał dwóch synów i córkę^[3].

Bolesław Drobiński	
<i>Ghandi</i>	
7 zwycięstw	
 major pilot	
Data i miejsce urodzenia	23 października 1918 Ostróg nad Horyniem
Data śmierci	26 lipca 1995
Przebieg służby	
Siły zbrojne	 - Siły Powietrzne RP  - RAF
Jednostki	65 Dywizjon RAF Dywizjon 303 Dywizjon 317
Główne wojny i bitwy	II wojna światowa bitwa o Anglię
Odznaczenia	
	

THE BATTLE
10 JULY 1940 TO



OF BRITAIN
31 OCTOBER 1940

LEST WE FORGET

At the beginning of July 1940, the British Isles faced a peril greater than at any time since the Spanish Armada of 1588.

Seven weeks earlier, Adolf Hitler had launched his army in an overwhelmingly successful blitzkrieg that defeated the Dutch, the Belgian and the French armies in quick succession. Now the whole of the European coastline facing Britain was occupied by German troops.

Throughout June and early July, Germany had invited peace talks. With increasing impatience, Adolf Hitler waited to hear that his sole remaining enemy accepted that further resistance was futile.

But Hitler had not reckoned on Winston Churchill. He stood firm and the Führer waited in vain. In July, Hitler's patience ran out. He informed his High Command: "I have decided to prepare a landing operation against England and,

if necessary, to carry it out... The English air force must be so reduced, morally and physically, that it is unable to deliver any significant attack against an invasion across the Channel."

This, then, was the significance of the air battle that raged between 10 July and 31 October. The RAF's 900 aircraft took on the 2,784-strong Luftwaffe. In Churchill's masterful words: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

The Few, whom we remember and celebrate in this fiftieth anniversary year of the Battle of Britain, went about their terrifying job with incredible daring and style. They were very young – with an average age of 22 – and very brave.

On 15 September – Battle of Britain Day – the remaining Few, some sprightly, some frail, will gather before Buckingham Palace as a 12-mile ▷



column of aircraft, including Spitfires and Hurricanes, flies overhead. The Queen will take the salute from her balcony and there will be a massive fireworks display at 8.15pm, launched from barges moored between Waterloo and Blackfriars bridges.

We spoke to four pilots who played their victorious part in the Battle. Without them, our lives might now be very different. In the words of Wing Commander Pat Hancock, 71, a former Hurricane pilot and secretary of the Battle of Britain Fighter Association: "I would say that without the Battle of Britain the whole nature of the world would be different, and I think Hitler's dream of a 1,000-year Reich could have become reality."

Thanks to the Few, it didn't.

AIR VICE-MARSHAL HAROLD BIRD-WILSON

"The Battle of Britain was the saving of Britain," says Air Vice-Marshal Harold Bird-Wilson, 70, who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in September 1940 for destroying six German planes. "People often don't realise how close we were to being invaded."

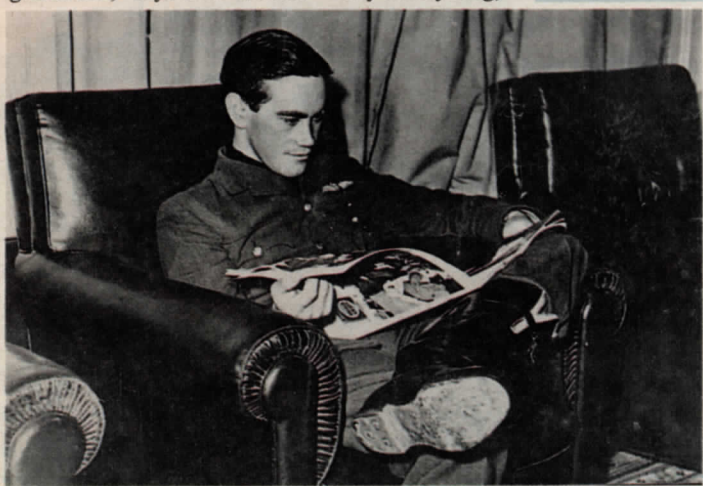
Bird-Wilson joined the RAF on a short-term commission when he left school in 1937 and, by the time war broke out, was a highly trained pilot.

During May and June 1940 he was based with 17 Squadron in Martlesham Heath, Hawkinge, Tangmere and then Debden, while patrolling the coastline and escorting ships. Then, in July, the numbers of German planes started to increase.

"As more and more bombers came over, so we got scrambled more and more," he says. "We were on duty from dawn to dusk, seven days a week. We were up before there was real light. Our Hurricanes were warmed up, ready for the orders to be given."

"The crews never thought of themselves as glamorous," says Bird-Wilson. "They were young,

ROY BOTTERELL



Officers' mess, RAF Debden: Harold Bird-Wilson pictured for "Life" magazine, August 1940





RAF MUSEUM, HENDON

Bird-Wilson on the tail of his own Hurricane with colleagues at RAF Debden in August 1940. He was shot down the following month by Major Adolph Galland (left)

virile, gay in the old-fashioned sense of the word, absolutely delightful young chaps. To fly in those days took a fair amount of nerve, I suppose."

The most moving reminder of the dangers they faced was when wives kept returning to the mess, hoping to discover husbands who had been reported missing. "You never had time during the battle to show any real sorrow or to shed any tears for a person who hadn't returned. As soon as you started worrying you were scrambled again and you had to put a shield around you. If you carried on worrying you wouldn't come out of the next combat.

"I think a lot of the chaps prayed mighty hard. I wouldn't be ashamed to say that I saw chaps bending their heads in the cockpits as they waited to take off. And they weren't looking at their toes."

Fighters flew in formations of 12. The Hurricanes were designated to attack the bombers at 15,000 feet, while the Spitfires took on the German fighter planes that escorted them.

"People say they weren't afraid up there, but they were – very afraid. A mob of planes that started out as little specks in the sky grew in size until you couldn't count them any more. It was like a beehive. Then you'd see the fighters above them. That was when your throat and mouth would dry up and you'd pray like hell. You'd hope to hell you'd come out of that fight."

His most frightening moment came on 24 September 1940 when he was flying over the

Thames estuary near Rochester and heard a sudden explosion. "When you are shot down and it's a good shot, you don't see it happening," he says. "There was a sudden bang in the cockpit and I looked out and there was no Perspex left in the hood. Flames were coming out of the floor towards my face. I knew I was in a bit of a fix.

"I baled out. I hit my silk immediately and floated down. As I was going down I saw a navy torpedo boat and hoped to hell they had seen me. I splashed down. I had got a bit of shrapnel in me and was bleeding. They fished me out in about 15 minutes and gave me a shot of morphine and a shot of rum. I'm not sure which was more effective!"

Reading a book on Messerschmitts in 1982, Bird-Wilson discovered he had been downed by Adolph Galland, Germany's most famous fighter pilot. It was the German's fortieth victory, which earned him Hitler's Knight's Cross. Bird-Wilson wrote to Galland in September 1982 and received a friendly response from his former enemy.

"I shot one Hurricane north of Rochester at 10.00 our time," Galland wrote. "The aircraft was shot in flames and I noticed that the pilot happily parachuted. I am so glad to hear from you that you were the pilot and you are doing fine. After so many years we can easily speak about the past in friendship now. Thanks for the congratulations on my fortieth victory."

Bird-Wilson finally left the RAF in 1974 and spent 10 years in the aviation industry before retiring six years ago.

"I was only 20 at the time," he says, looking back on the Battle of Britain. "I didn't really appreciate the seriousness of the war. I don't think any of us did, because we were on this daily grind and didn't have time to give it much thought.

"What we did know was that if the invasion came then we'd all have been thrown into the lions' den. England would have rallied and done damage to the Germans, but what could we have done with pitchforks and rifles against an army with tanks and machine guns?"

SQUADRON LEADER "GANDI" DROBINSKI



Squadron Leader B H "Gandi" Drobinski, now 70, was one of the 145 Polish pilots who played such a vital role in the Battle of Britain. His countrymen made up the largest non-British group fighting on the Allied side.

Drobinski trained at Poland's Flying Academy but was forced to leave the country after it was invaded first by Germany and then by Russia. Interned briefly in Romania, he escaped with two friends on 5 October 1939 and, disguised as a student, made his way to Paris by train.

"It was a frightening journey," Drobinski remembers. "On the Italian border the carriage was full of drunken Italian Alpine troops. We were huddled in a corner and they were singing songs. We didn't understand Italian but we knew that they were songs against the English and the French."

He was sent from Paris to England in January 1940 and began training at RAF Eastchurch. "We were eager to start fighting the Germans," he remembers. "We didn't want to sit around. We were fighting for the Allies and for Poland."

It was in August that Drobinski was posted to a Spitfire squadron in Hornchurch, Essex. Returning from his second sortie he found the airfield being bombed and he immediately took up the chase. "I was devastated not to get



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them," he says. "I was half a mile behind and maybe 1,000 feet below. I could have hit the last ones, but then realised I was almost out of petrol."

"My most frightening experience came when I was shot by an anti-aircraft gun over Holland at 24,000 feet. I woke up at 5,000 feet and my Spitfire was spinning. I tried the engine but it wouldn't start. The second time it did start and I was only about 1,000 feet above the ground. Fortunately I managed to take it back up. When I got back I realised there was a big hole near the tail. The rudder linkage had been reduced to three threads."

He also remembers seeing tracer bullets speeding past his cockpit and realising that an enemy plane was on his tail. "You need 10 pairs of eyes to see what is going on in a Spitfire. But once you see the enemy, your fear goes."

After the war he heard that his mother had been killed, his brother forcibly conscripted into the Russian army and that his father - whom he was never to see again - was dying of heart disease. Drobinski left the RAF in 1948, settled in Britain and married his WAAF sweetheart.

"I have a mixture of feelings when I think of the Battle of Britain," he says. "I was happy that we got the victory but sad that I lost so many friends."

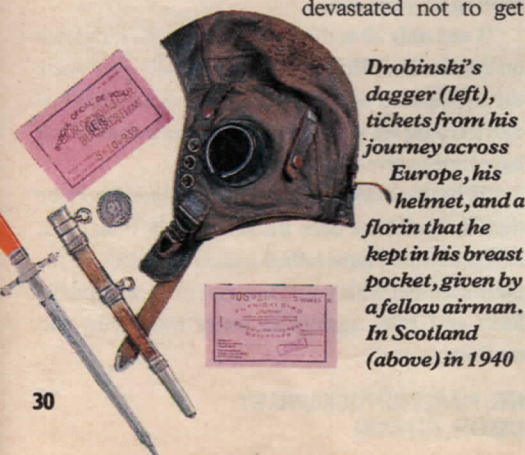
FLIGHT LIEUTENANT NIGEL "FLOSSIE" FARMER

By the time the Battle of Britain took place, Flight Lieutenant Nigel "Flossie" Farmer was, at the age of 25, an old man by fighter pilot standards with "a fair bit of flying experience" under his belt.

Educated at Shrewsbury, he joined the RAF in 1935 and in May 1940 was stationed at Leconfield, training exiled Polish airmen. But he was soon thrust into combat, in a wing led by Douglas Bader. "He was a good pilot and a brave man with a tremendous personality," says Farmer of Bader.

Farmer typifies the modesty of the uncelebrated Battle of Britain pilot who routinely put his life on the line. He recounts his combat experiences as if they were hardly worth mentioning.

"Various attacks on enemy bombers and so on" is his characteristic summary of life in a Hurricane during the heat of the battle. "One day was like another. All that changed was the number of ▷



Drobinski's dagger (left), tickets from his journey across Europe, his helmet, and a florin that he kept in his breast pocket, given by a fellow airman. In Scotland (above) in 1940