

DARLEY, Horace Stanley, was commanding officer of 609 Squadron in 1940, and led the squadron during the early stages of the Battle of Britain. He was a Londoner from Wandsworth, and gained his first success on 8th August when he shot down a Bf110. On the 15th he probably destroyed a Ju88, and on the 25th got a Bf109 and a Bf110. On 25th September he damaged a Do17 and a Bf110, and next day probably destroyed a Do17 and damaged another. He was awarded a DSO for his leadership of the unit, and in early October left the squadron after getting 3½ and 3 probables. He was posted as Wing Commander, Exeter, and from here he brought his score to 5. The following year he was posted to the Far East, and was in command of operations by the Buffalo equipped fighter force in Malaya in December 1941. In 1942 he commanded Risalpur RAF station in India, with the rank of Group Captain. He served with 221 Group in Burma during 1943, and then commanded 151 OTU until 1944. He was in charge of 62 OTU from then until 1945 when he became commanding officer of RAF Cranfield.

Horace Darley was an accomplished pianist and held the 'Russian Desk' in Intelligence for 14 years.

Squadron Leader H S Darley DSO

Horace (but known universally to all as George) Darley was born on the 3 November 1913 and educated at Emmanuel School on Wandsworth Common. Whilst there, he obtained colours for rugby, rowing, and shooting at Bisley, representing the school also at swimming and fives. George joined the RAF in 1932 with a commission and the following September was posted to Bircham Newton flying Fairy Gordons with 207 Bomber Squadron. In 1935 George was posted to 8 Sqn in Aden flying Fairy 111F's and Vickers Vincents. Whilst at Aden, George spent some time at Burao in British Somaliland, and then promoted as a Flight Commander in March 1936. Postings to CFS at Upavon on an instructors course and 7 FTS at Peterborough followed, with further postings in 1938 to 602 Sqn in May and 611 Sqn in December. Promoted to Squadron Leader on 1st April 1939, George took over firstly the Catterick Ops room and then soon after the Debden Ops room. In April 1940 he was posted to Merville in France as part of No 63 Wing Air Component, British Expeditionary Force. After being evacuated from the continent via Boulogne in June 1940, George was posted as a supernumary to a Spitfire Squadron at Hornchurch, for three sorties only. Then came a posting to 609 (WR) Sqn on the 28th June 1940 at Northolt. During the 3 months that George was in command, 609 (WR) Sqn claimed 85 enemy aircraft for the loss of seven pilots. On October 5th, George was posted as a Wing Commander to command the Exeter wing with two day squadrons and one night fighter squadron. Eighteen days later, George was awarded the DSO, the first DSO to be awarded for leadership during the Battle of Britain. The following May, he was posted to Air HQ, Far East, Singapore. After several different assignments and locations, George was promoted to Group Captain in June 1943, and posted to command 151 FTS at Risalpur, NWFP. This was followed by the command of 62 OTU at Ouston near Newcastle upon Tyne, and the command of RAF Cranfield in June 1945. After the war, George completed a Staff College Course in 1946 and was posted as Senior Air Staff Officer at 12 Group in Watnall. In the October of that year, George was posted to RAF Wittering as Commander followed by West Malling in 1948. In July 1948, George was sent to India to set up a Staff College at Wellington near Ootacamund. In May 1950 he returned to West Malling as the Commanding Officer and in 1952 was posted to the Air Ministry as Deputy Director Overseas

Operations. In June 1954 George was posted to 4 FTS at Middleton St George, then as a Chief Intelligence Officer Far East, Singapore. George retired from the RAF eventually in June 1959, but then was invited to join the Air Ministry where he spent a further 14 years on special duties. During his service career George flew 65 different aircraft types, completed 27 years service and commanded 11 RAF stations.