

Johnny Baldwin actually shot down 3 Messerschmitt Bf109 G-4's of 6./JagdGeschwader 26 off Dover. Post-war research indicates that these were BF109 G-4 werksnummer 16141 Brown 11, whose pilot Leutnant Wenzel was reported missing, and BF109 G-4 werksnummer 16102 Brown 7 flown by Unteroffizier Budd, who was captured with the pilot of BF109 G-4 werksnummer 16113 Brown 12, Unteroffizier Marquardt. He actually met the two prisoners a few days later, who were both rather surprised that they had been defeated by a 'worm' like him! Baldwin joined the squadron on 17th November 1942, having previously been an experienced pilot at OTU, and he was ultimately to become the highest scoring Typhoon pilot of all, with 15 confirmed solo victories, 1 shared destroyed, a further 1 Probable and 4 damaged, and winning the Distinguished Service Order and Bar, and Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar by the time the war ended. He was posted to No. 198 Squadron as its Commanding Officer in November 1943, before taking command of 123 Airfield and ultimately achieved the rank of Group Captain. He was posted missing during the Korean War when he failed to return from a weather reconnaissance sortie on 15th March 1952. His body has never been recovered.

BALDWIN, John Robert, was born in Bath, Somerset in 1918. He joined the RAFVR in September 1939 and served as a ground crewman in France during 1940. Back in England, he spent the 'Blitz' period on bomb-disposal duties. In 1941 he volunteered for aircrew duties, and was trained in the United States. He was posted to 609 Squadron in 1942, at that time equipped with Typhoons, and on 15th December damaged a Fw190 after only four hours flying time on this aircraft. On 20th January 1943 during a fighter-bomber raid on the south coast, he shot down three Bf109's, and for this he was awarded the DFC. During 1943 he was shot down in flames into the Channel, but survived unharmed. He shot down several more enemy fighters during 1943, including a Bf110, and also shared in the destruction of a Ju88 on 6th October. This was his last victory with 609, as he was then posted as commanding officer of 198 Squadron. On 1st December he destroyed a Fw190, and on 4th December a Do217, his ninth victory. He was then awarded a Bar to his DFC, before starting the New Year well by destroying three Fw190's and a Caudron Goeland during January. He left the squadron in April 1944, and after a spell as Sqn. Ldr. (Tactics) at 11 Group, was promoted as wing leader 146 Wing in 2 TAF. On 29th June 1944, flying with 193 Squadron, he shot down two Bf109's, and two weeks later on 3rd July, this time flying with, 197 Squadron, he destroyed another to bring his score to 16½, the top scoring Typhoon ace of the war. The rest of the war was spent on ground-attack duties with rocket projectiles, and he was awarded the DSO in December 1944. In 1945 he was promoted to Gp. Capt., as commanding officer of 123 Wing, but after the war reverted to Wg. Cdr. rank when he stayed in the RAF. He spent several months at Boscombe Down in 1946-47 as a test pilot, and then became commanding officer of 249 Squadron in the Middle East. In the early fifties he was posted to Korea on an exchange posting with the USAF and while there was shot down and killed.

BALDWIN, John Robert, S/L, DFC (122337, Royal Air Force) - No.198 Squadron - Distinguished Service Order - awarded as per London Gazette dated 10 March 1944.

"Since being awarded a Bar to the Distinguished Flying Cross, Squadron Leader Baldwin has led his squadron on very many sorties, during which 30 enemy aircraft have been shot down. Much of the great success achieved can be attributed to

Squadron Leader Baldwin's superb leadership, fine tactical ability and iron determination. His sterling qualities were amply demonstrated on one occasion in January 1944, when he led a small formation of aircraft in an attack on a force of some 30 Focke Wulf 190s, nine of which were shot down, Squadron Leader Baldwin being responsible for two of the successes. His example was inspiring."

BALDWIN, John Robert, W/C, DSO, DFC (122337, Royal Air Force) - No.146 Wing - Bar to Distinguished Service Order - awarded as per London Gazette dated 29 December 1944. No citation in that publication; following text from Flight, 8 February 1945; relevant Air Ministry Bulletin may have more.

"Wing Commander Baldwin was appointed Wing Commander (Flying) of a wing in June 1944. He has, in addition to planning the major portion of the operations undertaken by the wing, led over 100 successful wing and squadron missions, directed against a wide variety of targets. These have included enemy tanks, railway communications and shipping and enemy gun positions menacing our troops. Under his brilliant leadership the wing has destroyed or severely damaged over 800 fighting vehicles, thus contributing in no small measure to the rout of the enemy in the Falaise Gap. Wing Commander Baldwin has destroyed three enemy aircraft in combat since the invasion, bringing his total victories to at least 16 destroyed. Immediately prior to the invasion, he planned and completed the operations against enemy radar installations, which paved the way for the landing of our forces by enabling them to achieve complete surprise. Throughout this period Wing Commander Baldwin has planned in a masterly manner and led brilliantly a vast number of missions, many of which have been in direct support of the Army and have decisively affected the course of the battle."

BALDWIN, John Robert, W/C, DSO, DFC (122337, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve) - No.84 Group - Commander, Order of Orange-Nassau (Netherlands) - awarded as per London Gazette dated 31 October 1947. Public Record Office Air 2/9140 has recommended citation. Recommended when he was a Group Captain.

"Group Captain Baldwin commanded No.123 Wing from 20th February 1945 to present time. During the winter of 1944-45 it was stationed at Gilze Rijen. Group Captain Baldwin had previously taken part in the initial battles for the liberation of the Netherlands as a Wing Commander (Operations). He organized the ground side of the Wing so effectively that he found time to fly on numerous missions. The Wing continued to specialize in direct close support work on the front of the First Canadian Army and the standard of attacks remained high. Under the leadership and guidance of Group Captain Baldwin, the Wing began to perfect a method for briefing pilots, whilst airborne, for attacks against fleeting targets and, within a short space of time, the Army was being provided with close support from the air within a few minutes of their demanding the support."

BALDWIN, John Robert, F/O (122337, RAFVR) - No.609 Squadron - Distinguished Flying Cross - awarded as per London Gazette dated 26 February 1943.

"This officer has participated in numerous sorties, invariably displaying great courage and operational efficiency. This was amply demonstrated during a sortie one day in January 1943, when he attacked a formation of three enemy aircraft. In the first attack, Flying Officer Baldwin shot down the leading aircraft of the hostile formation.

Following this success he destroyed another of the formation before his own aircraft was hit in one of the wings. When the third enemy aircraft attempted to attack from the rear, Flying Officer Baldwin outmanoeuvred the attacker and shot it down. On another occasion, during a sortie over Belgium, he damaged two locomotives.

BALDWIN, John Robert, A/S/L (122337, RAFVR) - No.609 Squadron - Bar to Distinguished Flying Cross - awarded as per London Gazette dated 14 January 1944.

"Squadron Leader is a keen, skilful and determined fighter. He has participated in much operational flying during which he has destroyed at least nine enemy aircraft. In addition he has attacked some 14 locomotives, six barges, a tug and a tanker with damaging effect. He is a highly efficient squadron commander, whose example and determination has inspired all.

BALDWIN, John Robert, W/C, DSO, DFC (122337) - Croix de Guerre (1940) with Palm (Belgian) - awarded as per London Gazette dated 24 January 1947.

The 'Typhoons' unequalled record as a ground attack a/c overshadowed its air to air successes such as those credited to F/Lt. J.R. Baldwin. (later Wg Cdr. DSO. DFC\* AFC.) A pilot considered by many to be "The supreme Typhoon pilot of WWII" Flying 'Typhoon' DN360 PR-A , on 20th Jan. 1943 he shot down three Bf109's out of his total score of 15 e/a plus many damaged and several on the ground. And