

RIGLER, Thomas Charles 'Hairwave', from Poole, Dorset, joined the RAF and was posted to 609 Squadron in 1941 as a Sergeant. On his first sortie on 8th May, he shot down two Bf109's and on 4th June he claimed another and shared in damaging one. On the 22nd he destroyed a Bf109F and two Bf109E's, and was then awarded a DFM. Two days later he probably destroyed one and damaged another, and a month later, on 24th July, destroyed another Bf109. He damaged one on 7th August, and was then wounded while attacking a flak ship. His aircraft was badly damaged, but he managed to get back to England. He was commissioned in December 1941, after some weeks in hospital, and returned to the squadron. On 25th April 1942 he destroyed his eighth Bf109 and the following month was rested from operations. In July 1944 he joined 504 Squadron as a flight commander, and in October was posted to 229 Squadron. This unit became 603 Squadron shortly after, and he became Commanding Officer. He led the squadron on dive-bombing missions over Holland and North-Western Germany until the end of the war, receiving a DFC in May 1945.