

SQUADRON LEADER WILLIAM VALE DFC AND BAR AFC (1923-30)

He was born on 3 June 1914 in Chatham, Kent, but was raised in Framlingham, where he became a county athlete.

In 1931, he joined the RAF as an apprentice, qualifying as a Fitter, Aero Engines, and Aerial Gunner. Initially he served at Martlesham Heath until 1935, when he was posted to 33 Squadron in Egypt, then a light bomber unit with Hawker Harts.

He volunteered for pilot training in 1936, completing this in July 1937, when he was posted back to 33 Squadron as a Sergeant. In March 1938 the unit converted to Gladiators on becoming a fighter squadron, and in September he saw action against dissident Arabs in Palestine.

On 24 June 1940, he was commissioned as a Pilot Officer and was later posted to 80 Squadron.

On 28 March 1941 he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross "For gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations." He was awarded a Bar to his DFC at the end of June 1941 (gazetted on 11 July 1941), as well as Greek DFC.

He was promoted to Flight Lieutenant on 17 January 1942.

Amazingly he ended WW2 with 10 and 2 shared biplane victories out of a total of 30 and 3 shared. According to a number of websites eg <http://math.fce.vutbr.cz/safarik/ACES/aces1/qb-ww2.html> this appears to place him 2nd in the list of British WW2 Air Aces.

In October 1946 he left the RAF, having also been awarded an AFC.

He subsequently settled in Nottinghamshire, where he was killed in a road accident on 29 November 1981.

This website http://surfcity.kund.dalnet.se/commonwealth_vale.htm provides a huge amount of detail about the exploits of "Cherry" Vale.



Distinguished Flying Cross, reverse engraved 1941, with bar engraved 1941

Air Force Cross, reverse engraved 1944

General Service Medal 1918-1962, GRVI, with clasp PALESTINE, edge impressed 565293 SGT. W. VALE. R.A.F. and with Mention in Despatches

1939-1945 Star

Africa Star

Defence Medal

War Medal 1939-1945