

Scott-Malden Francis David Stephen (RAF n°74690)

DSO, DFC*, Norwegian War Cross, 1939-1945 Star, Air Crew Europe Star, Defence Medal 1939-1945, War Medal 1939-1945, Air Efficiency Award, Order of Oranje-Nassau



(Collection)

Scott-Malden, who has died aged 80, was a Battle of Britain fighter pilot, a leader of the highly successful wartime Norwegian Fighter Wing, commander of a fighter sector station (Hornchurch) by the age of 23, and Officer Commanding 125 (Fighter) Wing 2TAF in France, Belgium and Holland, Francis David Stephen Scott-Malden was born at Portslade, East Sussex, on December 26 1919, the son of a prep school master at Windlesham House. From Winchester, where David was a Goddard Scholar and won the Ashburton Shield at Bisley, he went up to King's College, Cambridge, winning the Sir William Browne Medal for Greek Verse and taking a First in his preliminary examinations. He joined the University Air Squadron on getting to Cambridge and in October 1939 was mobilised into the RAF, as part of the VR, attending FTS at Cranwell in January 1940 and then going to 1 School of Army Co-operation in May after being selected for an Army Co-operation course as a Pilot Officer. However, he was thrilled when in late May 1940 the chief instructor announced that he had "a severe disappointment" to communicate: "Gentlemen," he said, "you are to be transferred immediately to fighters." Scott-Malden joined in "the wild whoop as the classroom emptied, leaving the chief instructor standing alone beside the blackboard." "Twelve months before Dunkirk," he recalled years later, "I was receiving Cambridge's Gold Medal for Greek verse - an unusual qualification for a fighter pilot. A well-trained mind is an asset, but in the skies of Britain in 1940 to be too academic was not a recipe for survival. I was lucky to come through. Many of my university friends did not." With the fall of France he was despatched to 5 OTU, and in June 1940, he was posted to fly Spitfires with No 611 (West Lancashire) Squadron, at Digby, Lincolnshire, there it was somewhere on the flanks of the battle, before being transferred to No 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron at Hornchurch in early October, as a replacement Spitfire pilot in the autumn stage of the Battle of Britain over the South-East. The Squadron had been much depleted by losses that summer, as was only too apparent in an action over Kent on October 12. "Eight aircraft were directed into a large gaggle of Me-109 fighters," Scott-Malden remembered. "We split up individually and passed head-on through the enemy formation. "There was a sense of shock as a distant series of silhouettes suddenly became rough metal with grey-green paint and yellow noses, passing head-on on either side. At the far end I had a few minutes' dogfight with the last 109, scoring hits leaving a trail of black smoke." "Then we were alone at 20,000 feet, the German gliding down with an engine which coughed and barely turned over, I with very little ammunition and very little petrol. He glided towards the Channel. I looked for an airfield before my petrol ran out. Strangely, I felt inclined to wave to him as I left. But then I was only 20." It was Scott-Malden's first probable "kill"; his two years

of fighter combat would yield five confirmed and as many as seven probables. He was also one of the very few RAF pilots to encounter the Duce's air force in the skies over Britain. In November 1940, No 603 Squadron, with which he was serving, was sent aloft to repel the only serious Italian incursion into British airspace in the entire war. Anxious to join in the pickings from Germany's projected invasion of Britain, Mussolini had, after the fall of France, offered Hitler both troops and aircraft for use against the island fortress. The Führer politely declined the former, but accepted the Squadrons, and on November 11, 1940, a large force of Italian bombers escorted by 60 fighters crossed the Kent coast to attack shipping in the Medway. Intercepting this mass of aircraft after taking off from its base at Hornchurch, Essex, 603 administered a severe mauling to the raiders, whose escort of Fiat CR42 biplane fighters was hopelessly outclassed. Scott-Malden did not add to his tally of kills that day, but shot up and badly damaged two of the CR42s in a running battle during which the Italians lost eight bombers and five fighters. Ironically, it was on that very day that a force of even more archaic biplanes - the Swordfish of the Fleet Air Arm - was delivering a crushing blow to the Italian Fleet in its harbour at Taranto. As Churchill remarked of the hapless Italian raiders of the Medway incursion: "They might have found better employment defending their Fleet at Taranto." When Fighter Command went on to the offensive in the spring of 1941 he shot down his first Messerschmitt 109s in sweeps with 603 over northern France. He was appointed a flight commander in September and was awarded his first DFC in 1941. The endearing insignia painted on "Scottie's" Spitfire ensured that his groundcrew could easily pick it out on the airfield at Hornchurch. In September received command of No 54 Squadron, shooting down another Me109 in November. Bearing the initials "S-M" below the cockpit and the legend "Bahrain", Scott-Malden's Spitfire - W3632 - built at the Supermarine factory at Woolston, Hampshire - was a gift from the people of Bahrain, who had raised £15,000 to buy it. Moving in November to headquarters No 14 Group in Scotland, Scott-Malden had the task of assessing the quality of two (331 & 332) Norwegian Squadrons, which were being formed at Catterick and training there and in the Orkneys. Scott-Malden formed a high opinion of men who had already shown the resource to escape over the North Sea when their country was invaded by Germany, and reported back on their great potential as combatants. Scott-Malden, in March 1942, was appointed to command the Norwegian Fighter Wing of three Squadrons, including 331 & 332, at North Weald in Essex. With his inspiring leadership qualities and experience he soon forged a fine fighting force of the wing. From North Weald and, later, from Manston the Norwegians flew on Channel patrols and strafing missions. Like other formations at that time the Wing ran up against the new and formidable Fw190 in its sweeps over occupied Europe. Scott-Malden shared in kills of two of these, bringing his score to five and earning him a Bar to his DFC in the summer of 1942. In the summer, the Wing built a magnificent reputation and covered itself in glory during the disastrous Dieppe raid of 19 August. Operating from the Kent coastal airfield at Manston, Scott-Malden led No's 242, 331 and 332 Squadrons in three separate sorties on the day, seeking, against great odds, to protect the mostly Canadian troops as they attempted to land and then to withdraw. Scott-Malden was awarded a DSO, and was also decorated by King Haakon VII of Norway with the Norwegian War Cross, luncheon with the King afterwards at Claridge's. He was then rested from operations and was sent to the International Youth Assembly in Washington as the representative of the English Universities and on a lecture tour of American universities, flying over in a Clipper flying boat and returning in a Liberator. He returned to Britain in November, to the day operations staff at Fighter Command headquarters. From July to October 1943, Scott-Malden was Liaison Officer with the US 8th Bomber Command. He was then, aged 23, given command of Hornchurch, a station of 1,000 airmen and 600 WAAF. In New Year 1944, in preparation for the Normandy invasion, he joined a mobile Group Control Unit, as a fighter controller with 84 Group, camped in tents on Goodwood racecourse. After D-Day, 6 June, the unit moved to Normandy to control fighter support. In August Scott-Malden was promoted acting Group Captain and given command of No. 125 Wing, in France, which covered the British advance towards Eindhoven. From there, under the command of Group Captain "Johnnie" Johnson, it was the first RAF unit to cross the Rhine and operate from bases inside Germany. In addition to his RAF and Norwegian decorations, Scott-Malden was appointed a Commander of the Order of Orange Nassau for liaison work he had done with the Dutch Air Force in exile. After the war, reverting to Squadron Leader, Scott-Malden took a permanent commission, among his immediate post-war jobs being deputy president of the RAF Selection Board

and spells on the instructing staff at Cromwell and at the Central Fighter Establishment. He passed through the RAF Staff College, Bracknell, in 1951, moving thereafter to higher posts in planning at the Air Ministry including assistance with initial plans for the Suez campaign of 1956 and as AOC 12 Group Fighter Command. His final appointment was as Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Policy), 1965-66 He was happiest, he said, under the air ace "Johnnie" Johnson, while building the first NATO airfield beyond the Rhine, at Wildenrath. Scott-Malden was invalided out of the service in 1966 and joined the Ministry of Transport for twelve years, initially as an administrator until his retirement in 1978 as a Principal in the Department of Transport. In his final retirement he enjoyed trout fishing and the pleasures of his garden in Norfolk. Over the years he kept in touch with a number of his Norwegian "pupils" of the war years, one of whom, Wilhelm Mohr, became a General and Commander-in-Chief of the Norwegian Air Force in 1969. David Scott-Malden married, in 1955, Anne Elizabeth Watson. She died in 1996 but he is survived by two sons and two daughters. David Scott-Malden died on 1 March 2000.

Citation for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross:

"Acting Flight Lieutenant Francis David Stephen SCOTT-MALDEN (74690), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No.603 Squadron.

This officer has been continuously engaged in operational flying since June, 1940, leading his flight and sometimes the squadron. During the last six weeks, he has taken part in 38 offensive operations over enemy territory. A fine leader, Flight Lieutenant Scott-Malden has at all times displayed great keenness and determination in his engagements with the enemy. He has destroyed three and damaged many of their aircraft."

(London Gazette – 9 August 1941)

Citation for the award of the Bar to the Distinguished Flying Cross:

"Acting Wing Commander Francis David Stephen SCOTT-MALDEN, D.F.C.(74690) Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

This officer has led the wing on 44 sorties over Northern France. During these operations 6 enemy aircraft were destroyed 1 of which was shot down by Wing Commander Scott-Malden himself. On 2 occasions, in April, this officer displayed great skill when his force was attacked by superior numbers of enemy aircraft. Throughout, he has displayed great courage and leadership."

(London Gazette – 5 June 1942)

Citation for the award of the Distinguished Service Order:

"Acting Wing Commander Francis David Stephen SCOTT-MALDEN, D.F.C. (74690), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

During the past 6 months, this officer has led his wing on a large number of sorties. In this period, the wing has destroyed 49 enemy aircraft and probably destroyed and damaged many others. During the combined operations at Dieppe on the 19th August, 1942, the wing completed a large number of sorties; 21 enemy aircraft were destroyed, and many others damaged. Wing Commander Scott-Malden led the wing on 3 of these sorties. The splendid success achieved on this and other occasions is largely attributable to the magnificent leadership displayed by Wing Commander Scott-Malden. He is a brilliant pilot and a fine tactician, whose thorough knowledge and personal example have proved worthy of the highest praise."

(London Gazette – 11 September 1942)

(source: Allan Hillman)

His claims are :

12/10/1940	1 Bf-109E Probable	Gravesend (603 Sqn)
23/11/1940	2 CR42 Damaged	off Folkstone (603 Sqn)
29/11/1940	1/9 Do17	off Ramsgate (603 Sqn)
28/05/1941	1 Bf-109F Probable	Calais (603 Sqn)
28/05/1941	1 Bf-109F Damaged	Calais (603 Sqn)
07/06/1941	1 Bf-109E Damaged	E Boulogne (603 Sqn)
14/06/1941	1 Bf-109E Damaged	Dunkirk (603 Sqn)
21/06/1941	1 Bf-109F Damaged	St-Omer (603 Sqn)
08/07/1941	1 Bf-109F Damaged	Lens (603 Sqn)
12/07/1941	1 Bf-109F Damaged	St-Omer (603 Sqn)
17/08/1941	1 Bf-109E	off Le Touquet (603 Sqn)
19/08/1941	1 Bf-109E	E Dunkirk (603 Sqn)
26/08/1941	1 Bf-109E	Dunkirk (603 Sqn)
18/09/1941	1 Bf-109E Probable	Abbeville (603 Sqn)
04/11/1941	1 Bf-109F Damaged	W Le Touquet (54 Sqn)
28/04/1942	1 Fw-190 Probable	St-Omer (North Weald Wing)
04/05/1942	1 Bf-109F Damaged	Le Havre (North Weald Wing)
04/05/1942	1/4 Bf-109F Damaged	Le Havre (North Weald Wing)
19/05/1942	1 Fw-190 Probable	St-Omer (North Weald Wing)
27/05/1942	1 Bf-109F Damaged	N Blankenberghe (North Weald Wing)
19/06/1942	1/2 Fw-190	Knocke (North Weald Wing)
29/06/1942	1/2 Fw-190	Hazebrouck (North Weald Wing)
19/08/1942	1 Do-217 Damaged	Dieppe (North Weald Wing)

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