

Letter to Sheffield "Star" Newspaper - 5th September 1980

malcolmravenhill.co.uk

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Dear Mr Darling,

You asked me in your recent 'phone call about Flying Officer Malcolm Ravenhill, the Sheffield-born pilot who was killed during the Battle of Britain, on 30 September 1940 when his Hurricane (P2815) was shot down at Ightham in Kent.

He had joined the RAF on a short service commission at the age of 25 on 7 May 1938, having been born on 13 January 1913. His father was Frederick Arthur Ravenhill of 53 Norfolk Road, Sheffield 2.

Malcolm had been educated at King Edward VII School, Sheffield (1923-29), where he proved himself as a sportsman - in athletics, cricket, football and swimming. He subsequently became assistant manager at F.W. Woolworth & Co Ltd, Liverpool 2.

His RAF commission was in General Duties Branch and he did his initial flying training at No 4 Flying Training School, Abu Sueir, Egypt, from June 1938, flying Avro 504Ks, but after less than two months was sent home because of some eye trouble; then he re-started flying training at No 5 FTS, Sealand, Chester, which trained single and twin-engined fighter pilots, in October 1938.

His first posting after pilot training was to No 1 Air Observers' School in May 1939 although after only about a fortnight there he was sent to No 7 AOS, remaining with that unit until the beginning of 1940 when he was posted to No 12 Group - one of the Groups in Fighter Command, with Headquarters at Hucknall, Notts. From there, on 17 March 1940, he went to his fighter squadron - No 229, then based at Digby in Lincolnshire.

This was a Hurricane squadron, which subsequently became part of the AASF (Advanced Air Striking Force) and operated in the Battle of France, then from Northolt during the Battle of Britain.

Flying Officer Ravenhill (he had been promoted from Pilot Officer w.e.f. 3 September 1940) was 27 when he was killed on the morning of 30 September 1940; he was buried at City Road, Sheffield.

I hope this information will be helpful to you: I had hoped to have the ORB (Operations Record Book) of No 229 Squadron in front of me and had requisitioned it from the Public Record Office. Unfortunately, through a clerical error, the wrong volume was ordered; and although the right one has been re-ordered it hasn't come in yet, and I'm away for the next two weeks - so I thought I'd better let you have what I had.

Yours sincerely,

Humphrey Wynn