

# AN INTERWOVEN TALE OF MOTOR RACING, FILM MAKING AND A BIZARRE WAR STORY

The third chapter of a five-part series by André Loubser

To ensure authenticity for *The Battle of Britain*, the producers appointed top-scoring former Luftwaffe ace, Adolph Galland, as a consultant, to tell the story as seen from the German side. Likewise former Wing Commander, Robert Stanford Tuck, was appointed British consultant together with Douglas Bader. But not to worry, strange as it may seem, Galland and Stanford Tuck were already old friends as were Bader and Galland.

Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader CBE, DSO & Bar, DFC & Bar, DL, FRAeS was born in St John's Wood, London, on February 21, 1910. After completing his schooling he joined the RAF in 1928. In 1930, despite low-level aerobatics being banned, Bader cocked a snoot at what he thought was a ridiculous rule. As a result, the wing of his Bulldog MK2 A hit the ground causing the aircraft to smash into the ground. Bader was critically injured and both legs amputated. With artificial legs he eventually returned to flying but was soon grounded on 'medical grounds'. The decision was much against the will of the headstrong pilot, and with the outbreak of WW2 he persuaded the RAF that he was capable of flying an aircraft.

Bader's first victory was over Dunkirk in 1940 and was followed by several more, but his luck finally ran out on August 9, 1941, over St Omer in German occupied France, when he was shot down. He managed to bale out and fate was on his side that day as his right leg was trapped but when he pulled the

rip-cord of his parachute the sheer force broke the strap holding his leg to his body.

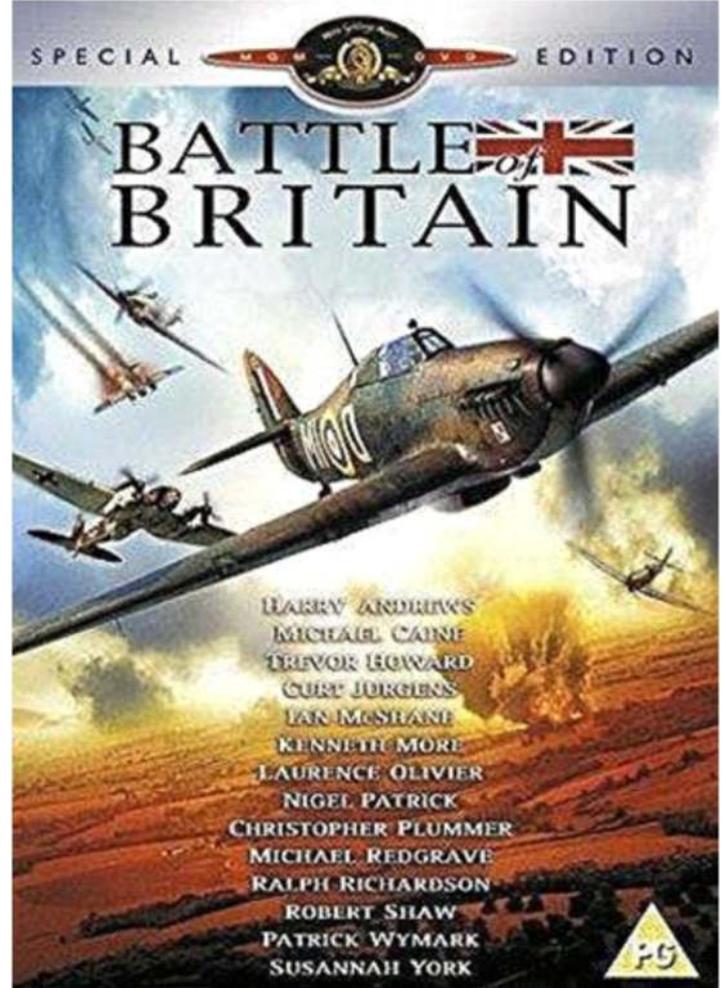
Following his capture he was graciously received by Adolph Galland who arranged for the RAF to fly over a replacement leg. Hermann Göring, head of the Luftwaffe, gave a green light and ensured the safety of the RAF aircraft. Consequently the leg was dropped off by parachute on August 19.

After this diplomatic and polite reception, Galland even allowed Bader to sit in a cockpit of an ME 109, but had one of his men point a pistol at the head of the legless ace in case he had 'other ideas'. How gallant was that?

The next day Bader was marched off to prison to Colditz Castle from where he and his fellow inmates attempted numerous escapes but to no avail. They sang 'Deutschland, Deutschland unter alles', at the top of their voices, hardly endearing themselves to their captors. They were finally freed in August 1945 when the Americans liberated the prison.

After his distinguished war, Bader joined an oil company in 1946. He suffered a heart attack and died on September 5, 1982, in Chiswick, London. He was certainly a member of the British Bulldog Breed, a title that Harold Wilson and his flabby and uninspiring Labour Party henchmen could not claim!

Wing Commander Robert Stanford Tuck, DSO, DFC and two bars, AFC, was born in Catford,



London, on July 1, 1916. He joined the RAF in 1935 and first saw action over Dunkirk in 1940. In that year was promoted to Squadron Leader to lead a Hawker Hurricane squadron.

On January 28, 1942, Tuck was also shot down at St Omer. That evening Galland invited him to

dinner with some fellow pilots and afterwards said, 'Good that you don't have to risk your life anymore.' The next day, as a Jew, he was sent to a prison camp at Sagan south of Berlin from where he made several unsuccessful attempts to escape. As was the case with Bader, he and Galland became firm friends after the war. In fact, Galland married for the second time in 1963 at age 51 and produced a son, Andreas, in 1966. And who was his godfather? Robert Stanford Tuck of course! What would Herr Hitler have said about that!

After the war, shunning publicity, Stanford Tuck with his wife became mushroom farmers in Kent for 20 years. He died on May 5, 1982.

Adolph Joseph Ferdinand Galland was born on March 19, 1912, in Westphalia. After





After the war, Galland and Bader became firm friends.

Left: Adolph Galland.



Tuck and Galland play with model aircraft flown during the war. No wonder women say men don't grow up!

completing his schooling he became a glider pilot and then joined Lufthansa. In February 1934 he was transferred to the Luftwaffe. He took part in the Spanish Civil War and in 1940 persuaded his superiors to allow him to become a fighter pilot. Flying Messerschmitt Bf 109s he took part in the Battle of France and the Battle of Britain and by the end of 1940 had scored 57 victories that increased to 96 by the end of 1941, in the process collecting several awards.

Galland was best known for his clash with Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring concerning the way to combat the invading allied forces. In January 1945, he motivated a pilots' revolt and was placed under house arrest. He died on February 9, 1996, in the Rhineland aged nearly 84.

It's interesting to note how many people involved in 'dangerous' pursuits, ie war and motor racing, reach ripe old ages. Next month Stirling Moss will be 89. Moss'



In 1969, former enemies Galland, Tuck and Bader, were consultants for the film The Battle of Britain.

1955 Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix and sports cars team mate, Juan Manuel Fangio, made it to 84.

Remarkably and most conveniently, at the time of making the film, the Spanish Air Force still used ME109s and even more remarkably they were powered by Rolls Royce Merlin engines. Indeed, truth is often stranger than fiction. Some of the aircraft were hired by the film producers and Bud and team resprayed them and added wartime German markings. They also built outriggers for the aircraft on which to mount cameras and a Spitfire mock-up was built that was set alight. At one point, Bud ran along the top edge of the White Cliffs of Dover to lay down explosives. A crazy French helicopter pilot, hired for dangerous and precise sequences, saw Bud and 'strafed' him. To get away from the 'attacking' helicopter Bud lay flat on the ground whereupon the pilot gently pressed one of skids against Bud's back without hurting him. How's that for precision flying? However, three months later the

pilot was dead. He had taken one chance too many.

Some members may recall the opening sequences of the film Grand Prix at Monaco where the cars were followed from above with the helicopter flying between the palm trees, the Casino and the Hotel de Paris. At the time, I thought it pretty scary filming. It was the same pilot. 

Next month, we tell the remarkable story of the making of the Steve McQueen's film Le Mans, and Bud Rossler's involvement.



All's fair in love and war. Christopher Plummer and Susannah York add spice to the film.



## Wafting to Eternity

With tender loving care Rolls-Royce cars will last forever. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for their owners! With age they become a Shadow of their former selves, eventually give up the Ghost, and reveal their Wraith. Others fail to proceed with life at say 20, 25, or 30. Then its time to call Alan Lindhorst to take care of body and Spirit. Every Cloud has a Silver lining. With our passing we do not waft about as Phantoms, but enter the Dawn of life hereafter, Spurred on to great heights in a Spirit of Ecstasy.



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