Richard Carew Reynell (1912-1940) Biographical Notes

Richard Carew Reynell was born in Reynella, South Australia on 12th August 1912 and was educated at St Peter's, Adelaide. He went to England in 1929 and passed the Oxford University entrance examination to read Agriculture at Balliol College.

Reynell joined the University Air Squadron and he was commissioned in the RAFO in March 1931. He relinquished this on being granted a short service commission in the RAF in September 1931. On the 28th Reynell was posted to 5 FTS, Sealand and with training completed he joined 43 Squadron at Tangmere on March 8th 1932. He flew one of three Furies of the squadron, which performed at the International Air Meeting at Brussels on June 11th 1933. Reynell went to the Station Flight at Duxford on December 6th 1934 and then joined the instructing staff at 8 FTS, Montrose on May 4th 1936. He went on to the RAFO on January 15th 1937.

His engagement in London to Marjorie Watts-Allan was announced on 20th June 1938 and the couple were married on 24th September, whereupon the following item and photo (see photos) appeared in the Adelaide Advertiser:

STOKE POGES WEDDING.—At St. Giles's Church, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, England, on September 24, the wedding took place of Mr. Richard Carew Reynell, only son of the late Col. Carew Reynell and Mrs. Reynell, of Reynella, South Australia, and Miss Enid Marjorie Allen, second daughter of Col. and Mrs. E. Watts Allen, of Gerrords Cross, Buckinghamshire.

After a visit to Australia Reynell returned to Britain and became a test pilot at Hawker's. At the outbreak of war, Reynell remained on the RAFO but was seconded to Hawkers to continue his test pilot duties. On August 26th 1940 he was attached to 43 Squadron at Tangmere, for operational experience. Reynell claimed an Me109 destroyed on September 2nd. On the 7th September 1940 Richard Reynell was stationed with No 43 Squadron flying Hawker Hurricanes from RAF Tangmere near Chichester.

Richard was a pre-war pilot with No 43 Squadron and at this time was employed as a test pilot by Hawker Aircraft. He had come back to the squadron two weeks previously to look at the attributes of the Hawker Hurricane in combat conditions and had shot down an enemy aircraft by this time and a number of probables. On the morning of the 7th he was called back to Hawkers because of the death of another test pilot, but opted to finish out the day with the squadron. In the afternoon the squadron was called out against what turned out to be the first big raid on London and the start of the Blitz. The squadron had 12 aircraft against well over 100. Richard attacked the bombers with his Squadron Leader all the way from Beachy Head to London. At approximately 5.00 PM he was shot down over Greenwich. Dickie Reynell did not bale out but was blown out of his Hurricane, Sadly his parachute failed to open and he was killed. The Hurricane (V7257) itself was blown into three pieces with the engine going through the roof of St Ursula's Convent which set the building on fire.

Flt Lt Reynell was survived by his widow and a son, aged 15 months. On 28th June 2013 a memorial to him, situated near the spot where he died, at The Point, Blackheath in South-East London, England (see photos), was unveiled.

Sources:

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