

# WING COMMANDER GEOFFREY PAGE

DSO, OBE, DFC (and bar)

This centre commemorates Wing Commander Geoffrey Page, DSO, OBE, DFC (and bar), who founded the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, custodian of this memorial, and led the campaign to ensure that the National Memorial to the Few was built.

In the Battle of Britain in 1940, Geoffrey Page flew Hurricanes with No 56 Squadron. He was credited with two enemy aircraft destroyed and he shared in the destruction of another, but, on 12 August, his aircraft was hit by return fire from German bombers he was attacking. Pilot Officer Page baled out, terribly burned, and was rescued from the sea by a small boat. He was brought ashore by the Margate lifeboat.

Geoffrey spent over two years in hospital, much of the time at the Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead, Sussex, where he underwent many operations. In 1941 he was a founder member of what became the Guinea Pig Club, for disfigured RAF aircrew who had received treatment at East Grinstead from the team led by the brilliant surgeon, Archie (later Sir Archibald) McIndoe.

McIndoe was among those who believed that Geoffrey Page would not return to flying. Page defied that prediction to take part eventually in operations again. He became a wing leader and was highly decorated, but crashed and returned to East Grinstead to become a Guinea Pig for the second time.

After Geoffrey left the RAF he worked in the aircraft industry. In 1946 he married Pauline, daughter of the actor, Nigel Bruce. They had two sons and a daughter. Geoffrey wrote a memoir, *Tale of a Guinea Pig*, published in 1981. It was republished as *Shot Down in Flames* in 1999. He died in 2000, aged 80, shortly after attending the Memorial Day at Capel-le-Ferne marking the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

At the time of Geoffrey's death, his fellow Battle of Britain pilot, Air Chief Marshal Sir Christopher Foxley-Norris, wrote of Geoffrey: "Even in the context of the Battle of Britain he was the bravest of the brave."

