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AIR CHIEF MARSHAL LORD DOWDING, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., C.M.G.

Marshal

Air Chief Lord Dowding was born in April, 1882, at Moffat, Dumfries, and educated at Winchester and the Royal Military Academy Woolwich.

He entered the Army as 2nd Lieutenant in 1900 and served with the Royal Artillery until 1914, when he was attached for duty with the Royal Flying Corps, having qualified as a pilot in the previous year.

He served with the Air Force in France during the Great War and commanded various squadrons there. He was mentioned in despatches and received the C.B. and C.M.G. in recognition of his distinguished services during the war.

In 1919 he was appointed to a permanent commission in the Royal Air Force as Group Captain. He commanded No. 16 Group and later No. 1 Group. After promotion to Air Commodore, he was Chief Staff Officer in the Inland Area in 1922 and in Iraq in 1924.

He was appointed Director of Training at the Air Ministry in 1926 and in 1929 was promoted Air Vice-Marshal and appointed temporary Air Officer Commanding in Transjordan and Palestine. In December of the same year he was appointed to command the Fighting Area, Air Defence of Great Britain, and in 1930 became Member of the Air Council for Supply and Research, an appointment which he held until 1936. It was during these periods that the expansion of the R.A.F. was actively begun and rapid progress was made in the development of monoplane types and in increased armament.

In January 1933 he was promoted Air Marshal and the same year received the K.C.B.

He was appointed Air Officer Commanding in Chief, Fighter Command, in July 1936, and held that appointment for over four years. During that time the size and importance of the Command increased enormously and Lord Dowding carried a unique responsibility as its Commander in War, especially during the summer and autumn of 1940, when the Royal Air Force fought its immortal battle (the Battle of Britain) in defence of the British Isles against the numerically superior German Air Force.

At the beginning of 1937 he was promoted Air Chief Marshal, and later that year was awarded the G.C.V.O. He received the G.C.B. in October 1940. A barony was conferred upon him in the Birthday Honours of 1943.