

# RAF terms and slang

**Ammo:** ammunition

**Angels:** altitude in 1000 ft increments 'London angels one-five' = 'London at 15000 feet'

**Bale out:** leave plane by parachute 'I was hit. I was going to have to bale out.'

**Bandits:** enemy aircraft

**Body snatcher:** stretcher bearer

**Bought it:** been killed 'I was shocked to hear that Tom had bought it that afternoon.'

**Cheesed off:** fed up

**Chocks:** large blocks under the wheels that stop the plane from moving forward until the pilot wants to move off

**Clock:** airspeed indicator

**CO:** Commanding Officer

**Crate:** an aircraft

**Curtains:** death 'The plane blew to pieces and it was curtains for the pilot'

**Dogfight:** battle between planes

**Gaggle:** a formation of aircraft

**Goes like a bomb:** goes very fast 'This car goes like a bomb.'

**Had it:** been killed 'It looks like Jack has had it.'

**Heinkel:** make of German aircraft

**He111:** German bomber

**HQ:** headquarters

**Hurri:** Hurricane fighter plane

**In the drink:** downed in the sea 'I was running out of fuel and I didn't want to end up in the drink.'

**Kip:** sleep 'I'll be OK after a couple of hours kip.'

**Mae West:** inflatable life vest worn by pilots and aircrew

**Meat wagon:** ambulance

**Messerschmitt:** German make of aircraft

**Me109:** fast single-seater German fighter plane

**Me110:** slower, twin-engined manned by pilot and a rear-firing gunner

**NOK:** next of kin

**Peel off:** pull sharply away from formation.

**Piece of cake:** easy 'I thought I'd never get the hang of it but it was a piece of cake.'

**Prang:** crash 'I lost control and pranged my crate into a ditch.'

**Quick squirt:** short burst of gunfire

**Radar:** the Radio Direction Finding was Britain's secret weapon in the Battle of Britain. Short wave radio pulses are sent out and bounce back from incoming aircrafts to show up as blips of light on a glass screen

**R/T:** radio telephone

**Scramble:** very fast take-off

**Shot down in flames:** told off 'Before I could say a word my CO shot me down in flames.'

**Sortie:** one flight by an aircraft: 'Jack got shot down on his first sortie.'

**Spit:** Spitfire

**Squadron:** usually 12 to 18 aircrafts

**Tally ho!:** old hunting call given to other pilots when an attack on enemy aircraft begins

**Tear a strip off:** tell off 'The CO was in a terrible mood – he really tore a strip off Frank this morning.'

**U/S:** broken, useless

**UXB:** unexploded bomb

**WAAF:** Women's Auxiliary Air Force. Used to describe individuals as well as the force 'I looked up and saw a WAAF walking towards me.'

