

## NIGHT FLYER

**Lewis Brandon**  
**DSO DFC and Bar**

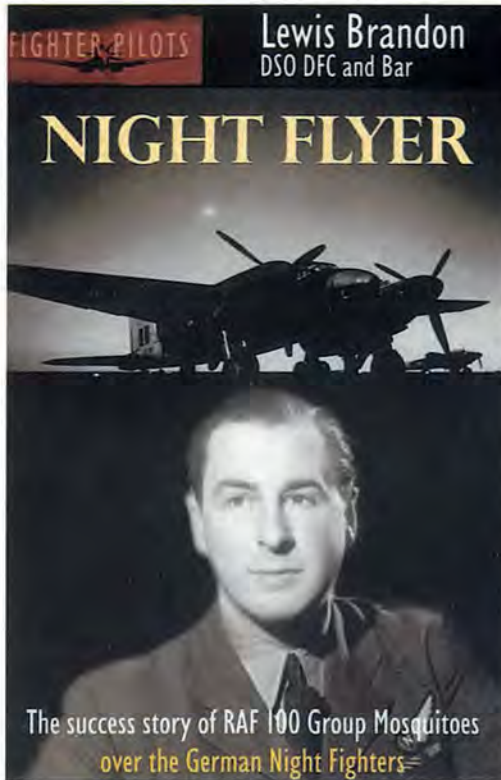
The art of successful night fighting was not something that could be easily learnt. Pilot and navigator had to work together as a team, to think and move as one man. Success, and survival, depended on the skill of both. Squadron Leader Lewis Brandon and his pilot, Wing Commander James Gillies Benson, were crewed together by a fortunate chance. Brandon was a newly recruited and inexperienced navigator, whose only claim to distinction was that he had enlisted in the full regalia of a Gestapo officer! Before the war he had been Robert Donat's stand-in and was working on a film when his call-up papers arrived. 'Ben' Benson was already a Flying Officer and a seasoned pilot. He and Brandon were crewed together in October 1941 and went on to be one of the most successful night fighter teams of the 2nd World War.

Brandon and Benson first flew Beaufighters but later were equipped with the other legendary aircraft of night fighting – the de Havilland Mosquito. Both of these carried airborne radar, one of the best-kept secrets of the war. By the end of the war, the pair had shot down nine enemy aircraft, with three probables, three damaged and six flying bombs destroyed. They also had the rare distinction of operating under the order of three commands – Fighter, Bomber and Coastal. Both received the DSO, DFC and Bar.

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