

AND PILOTS PERSONAL COMBAT REPORT.

Ref: 610/ 29

STATISTICAL.

Date: (A) 7th March, 1944.

Unit: (B) 610 Sqn. A.A.F.

Type & mark of our aircraft: (C) Two Spitfires XIV.

Time attack was delivered: (D) 17.45 hours.

Place of attack and or target: (E) 35 miles South S/E Start Point.

Weather: (F) visibility 1 mile with mist and haze 9/10ths Cloud

Our casualties aircraft: (G) Nil.

Our casualties personnel: (H) Nil.

Enemy casualties aircraft: (J) 1 F.W.190

Enemy casualties ground or sea targets: (K) Nil.

Line camera gun carried/used: (L) By Black 2.

GENERAL REPORT.

Black section, (P/O Hussey and F/Sgt. Harding) were patrolling on an east west line about 20 miles south east of Start Point 500 feet above sea level, under the control of Kingswear C.H.L. Station.

At approx 17.30 hours the section was told to investigate unidentified aircraft 15 miles ahead, on a vector 120 degrees. After two minutes this vector was changed to 150 degrees (At this time Black one was using only plus 12 lbs boost with his jet tank still on, and the A.S.I. was clocking about 350 miles per hour.) The section was now outside G.C.I. cover, but after about a minute 3 F.W.190's appeared from 9 o'clock approx 200 feet below, flying in a fairly close vic on a rough vector of 240 degrees; visibility was bad owing to haze, and the section had hardly seen the F/A before they had passed underneath to 3 o'clock.

Black Section immediately pulled round to the right, and it seemed that the E/A saw them at the same moment, for as our section turned on their tails, Black smoke was soon pouring from their engines as they pushed everything forward and dived to sea level. The F.W.190 on the left of the section turned south, and the other two turned away and disappeared into the haze and glare of the sun. Our section gave chase to the single F.W.190 which at this time, was about 800 yards ahead, right on the dock. We closed without difficulty but when about 400 yards away, Black I noticed a F.W.190 making a quarter attack on him from between 4 and 5 o'clock, so gave the order to "break right". As he pulled up he saw the E/A firing at him with insufficient deflection, and it appeared that the turning circle of the Spitfire XIV was better than that of F.W.190. Black I, at a 1,000 feet, was now in the haze and lost sight of the F.W.190, and his No.2.

Black 2, who was on the left of Black I, saw the F.W.190 break off his attack on Black I, and dive south west to sea level, so he rolled down to the left and got on to the tail of the F.W.190 at a distance of about 800 yards (The F.W.190 that our section had been chasing originally, had disappeared by this time)

At first, Black 2, did not close on the F.W.190 as fast as he would have liked (probably due to excitement, he forgot to jettison his tank with Black I at the commencement of the first chase. The addition of the jet tank would probably take off 30 miles per hour.) Another F.W.190 now appeared ahead at about 11 o'clock, and joined formation on the left of the aircraft that Black 2 was chasing.

Black 2 now found that he was closing in quite fast, (Around 430 U.A.S. and opened fire on the left hand F.190 from dead astern at 300 yards he saw strikes on both wing roots and panels flew off the port mainplane as he closed to about 100 yards.

Continuation.....

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Not until the strikes were observed did the other E/A take any action. Even then he did nothing for some time, then pulled straight up and round to the left, and tried to get on the tail of Black 2. Black 2 took a final squirt at his target whose only evasive action was pitching slightly up and down, before he broke left into the other E/A which was trying to get on to his tail (although clocking 360 m.p.h. the turning circle of the Spitfire seemed superior to that of the F.W.190). The F.W.190 fired at Black 2 but allowed insufficient deflection then broke off his attack and disappeared into the mist. The E/A was not seen again.

By this time Black 2 was probably about 5 miles from the French Coast, and as petrol consumption in combat conditions is 4 gallons per minute, he decided to head for home.

Meanwhile Black 1 had headed south in the hope of rejoining the combat, but was unsuccessful, the two pilots returned independently within 5 minutes of each other.

Section took off at 17.10 from Exeter and landed at 18.15 and 18.20 respectively (Black 2 had 30 gallons out of 140 left).

CAMOUFLAGE. Dark Grey and Light Grey.

ARMAMENT. Port M.G. Star'bd M.G. Port Cannon Star'bd Cannon.

F/Sgt. Harding.

76 S.A.P.I. 76 S.A.P.I.
74 H.E.I. 74 H.E.I.

ENEMY ARMAMENT.

Enemy Cannon Shells appear to be self destroying between 300 and 500 yards.

M.P. Harding E/SGT.
M.P. HARDING (one H.E.I. damaged)

E.H.M. Coffin E/O E.H.M. COFFIN.
Intelligence Officer, 610 Squadron.