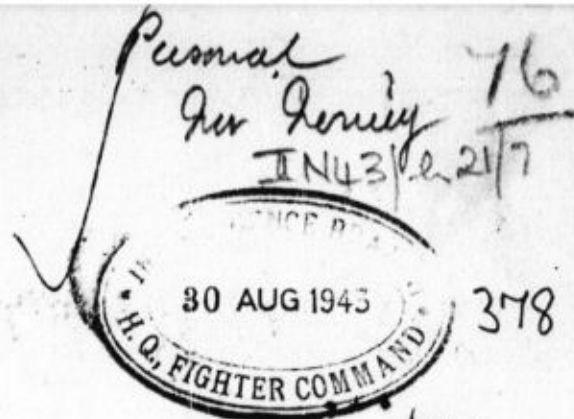


INTELLIGENCE FORM "F"

HORNCHURCH WING

RAMROD SERIAL NO. 8.

3rd AIR TASK FORCE



- A. 27th August 1943
- B. W/C W.V. Crawford-Compton, D.F.C. and Bar (New Zealand).
 129 (Mysore) Squadron, 222 (Natal) Squadron.
 Red Yellow
- C. Spitfires IX B.
- D. 1939 hours.
- E. Between St. Omer and Nardycyk.
- F. Pas de Calais/St. Omer 2/10ths cumulus 4,000 feet; east of that area 10/10ths cloud 10/15,000 feet, some haze.
- G. Nil
- H. Nil
- J. 3 F.W.190's destroyed by 222 Squadron - F/Lt. Burke, D.F.C. (South Africa),
 E/O. Smik (Czech.)
 F/O. Hesselyn, D.F.C. and Bar (New Zealand).
- 1 F.W.190 damaged by 222 Squadron - F/Lt. Burke.
- K. Nil.

GENERAL

The Wing, led by W/C W.V. Crawford-Compton, D.F.C. and Bar (New Zealand) and consisting of 26 Spitfires IX B (13 of 222 Squadron, including the Wing Leader, and 13 of 129 Squadron) took off from Base 1833 hours detailed to act as High Fighter Cover to the **third** force of 60 Fortresses attacking a target 4 miles north of St. Omer Marshalling Yards.

The Wing climbed from Base, crossed out over Dungeness 16,000 feet at 1850 hours and made French landfall and rendezvous with the bombers over Berck at 1904 hours, having reached 22,000 feet and positioned themselves to port of the leading box of Fortresses. After reaching a point N.W. of St. Pol, the formation turned left and flew due north to St. Omer and then on to Nardycyk. Having escorted the first box about 15 miles out to sea, the Wing turned back to St. Omer, picked up another box of bombers, escorted them out and then returned to pick up the third box. When between St. Omer and Nardycyk on the third time out at 1939 hours, 9 F.W.190's were seen diving on the bombers in loose small formations and then coming up beneath them. While Red Section 129 Squadron and Yellow Section 222 Squadron remained above as cover, the rest of the Wing were led down to attack and engaged the enemy at 15,000 feet, combats taking place between this height and 5,000 feet, resulting in 3 F.W.190's being destroyed and 1 F.W.190 damaged by 222 Squadron.

F/Lt. E.P. Gardner-Burke, D.F.C. (South Africa), Red 3, saw a F.W. 190 attack Red 1 and 2 (W/C Compton and W/O Davidson) and, getting on its tail, fired a 2-second burst from 350 - 300 yards. He saw strikes on

/OVER

the starboard wing and tail of the e/a which then turned sharply starboard and dived away. This was seen by Red 1 and 2 and the e/a is claimed as damaged.

Red 3 then attacked another F.W.190, closing to 300 yards and firing a 4-second burst from 5° off to dead astern. The e/a dived and Red 3, following it, fired a 2-second burst from astern at 300 yards, resulting in the e/a diving vertically into the ground near Audricq. This was witnessed by Red 4 and Yellow 2 and 3, and the e/a is claimed destroyed.

H. H. T.

F/O. O. Smik (Czech), Red 4, seeing a P.W.190 intending to attack Red 3 out of sun, closed on it. The e/a was aware of Red 4's presence and pushed its nose down but was followed and at 400 yards Red 4 opened fire with cannon only 5° off to dead astern hitting the starboard side of the fuselage. White smoke poured out of the e/a which pulled out, rolled on its back and the pilot baled out. This is confirmed by Yellow 1 and 2. The e/a is claimed as destroyed. Height of engagement 10,000 feet to 8,000 feet.

F/O. R.B. Hessellyn, D.F.M. and Bar (New Zealand), Blue 3, covered by Blue 4 (P/Sgt. Townsend), attacked a P.W.190 as it broke away after attacking the bombers. After his first burst, 4 seconds from port quarter to astern at 350 yards, closing to 300 yards, the e/a started to dive. Blue 3 followed and gave another 4 second burst from 300 yards astern, seeing cannon strikes and large red flashes on the fuselage. He continued to close and after a final 6 second burst saw the P.W. go into gentle dive and finally crash 10-15 miles N.E. of Guines (seen by Blue 3 and 4 from 2,000 feet). The combat took place from 8,000 feet down to 6,000 feet. The P.W.190 is claimed destroyed. The behaviour of the e/a after the second burst led Blue 3 to believe German pilot was killed.

H. H. T.

W/C Compton and Blue 4, 222 Squadron also fired but make no claim.

Blue Section 129 Squadron chased a P.W.190 but were unable to get within range.

1 P.W.190 was seen going down vertically and smoking after being hit by the guns of a Fortress.

A Fortress was seen to crash in flames 10 miles N.E. of Fruges, but the crew is believed to be safe as 8/9 parachutes were seen floating down.

After the engagement, our aircraft withdrew in small formations and one landed at Gravesend, the remainder landing at Base by 2017 hours.

Bombing was not observed but much smoke was seen coming from a wood north of St. Omer.

Considerable heavy flak between St. Omer and Hardyck accurate at bombers.