

STICHTING WINGS TO VICTORY

AIRWAR MUSEUM / AIRMEN MEMORIAL ZEELAND



Crash No 237

Spitfire BS444

16-04-1943

Noordzee



16 april 1943

De Benzil fabriek Union Chemique nabij Oostende werd op deze dag het doel van 12 Ventura's van No. 464 squadron, waarbij het escorte werd gevormd door de Spitfires van Nos. 331 en 332 (Norwegian) squadron. De Noren vlogen – terwijl de Ventura's hun opdracht met succes uitvoerden - in een positie boven Walcheren toen de piloten van No.331 een tweetal Fw 190's opmerkten.

Dit was de als laatst gestarte Stabsrotte van II./JG 1 bestaande uit Maj.Herbert Kijewski en Olt.Hans Mohr die beiden door de Noren bij verrassing en in duikvlucht werden neergeschoten.

De vermoedens van de Duitsers dat beiden het slachtoffer waren geworden van bij verrassing aanvallende Spitfires waren dan ook volkomen gerechtvaardigd. Ondanks het onmiddellijk in gang zetten van een zoekactie boven zee werd er van de Kommandeur en zijn Kaczmarek geen spoor meer gevonden!

Nadat de Wing zich op 24.000 voet hoogte weer had geformeerd namen de vliegers van No.332 squadron in de richting van Sas van Gent een vijftiental Duitse vliegtuigen waar. Wat zij zagen waren 15 Fw 190's van II./JG 1 en omstreeks half drie kwam het boven de Westerschelde ter hoogte van Vlissingen tot een verbitterde luchtstrijd tussen deze Fw 190's en het Spitfire verband van - naar men dacht - 25 tot 30 Spitfires. Hptm.Wickop (Staffelkapitän 5./JG 1) slaagde er tijdens dit treffen in om – volgens de officiële geschiedenis van JG 1 om 14.35 uur – twee Spitfires ten westen van Vlissingen neer te schieten.¹

Enkele uren later voerden Ventura's van No.487 squadron – met een escorte van vijf Spitfire squadrons – een missie uit naar de werkplaatsen van de spoorwegen bij Haarlem. Delen van dat escorte werden eveneens boven het Zeeuwse luchtruim waargenomen.

Just another day (extract from)

The next operation was Circus No.283, which commenced at 14.00 hours.

Thirteen Ventura's of No.464 squadron were briefed to hit the chemical works at Ostend. The Northolt Wing was their close escort and was supported by the North Weald, Biggin Hill and Kenley Wings.

The bombers went in and the Norwegian pilots from North Weald orbited Walcheren, their eyes peeled for fighters. Then three Fw 190's were sighted in line abreast and No.331 squadron's Spitfire IX's took them from astern, claiming all three destroyed.

No.332 squadron saw another seven approaching from the direction of Ghent and swung around to intercept, preventing them from getting to the bombers. In these two actions, Fw 190's were claimed by Captain L. Lundsten, Lieutenant H. Grundt-Spang and Sergeant F. Eitzen of No.331 squadron and Major Finn Thorsager of No.332 squadron and Lieutenant J.B.Gilhuus of the latter unit claimed a probable.

Sergeant G.K.H.Koren of 331 was shot down and killed by Hauptmann Wickop of 5./JG 1, who claimed two Spitfires but the aggressive Norwegians had accounted for Major Kijewski and Oberleutnant Lohr, both killed!

¹ Hiermee boekte hij zijn zevende en achtste luchtoverwinning.

War Diary No. 331 (Norwegian) squadron

--/-- Ten aircraft, led by the Wing Commander, took off for Circus 263 at 13.40 hours. They started to climb about mid-Channel, continuing to Walcheren Island at 20.000 feet, where a wide turn starboard orbit was made. Just north-east of Flushing, four or five enemy aircraft were seen about 8.000 feet below them going westwards. Blue Section dived down on them and attacked, whilst Red and Yellow Sections followed down covering Blue Section meanwhile No.332 squadron remaining on top. Capt. L. Lundsten, Sgt. F. Eitzen and 2Lt. H.G. Spang (Blue 1, 2 and 3 respectively) each destroyed one Fw 190, the three aircraft being seen to go straight into the sea. Blue 4 (Sgt. G. Koren) has not returned. He was seen by Blue 3, going towards an enemy convoy of ships and though asked twice to return to his No.1, he did not so or reply on his R/T. The rest landed safely by 15.15 hours.

War Diary No. 332 (Norwegian) squadron

--/-- At 13.40 hours, seven Spitfire IX's of this squadron took off from North Weald with No.331 squadron to act as first Fighter Echelon in Circus 283, twelve Ventura's bombing chemical works at Ostend and Wg.Cdr. P.C.Jameson was leading the Wing. The English coast was crossed at Clacton at sea level and course was set for Noorderhoofd. The Wing remained on the deck until 14.12 hours when the formation started climbing reaching Noorderhoofd at 20.000 feet and 46 minutes after take off. Two orbits off Walcheren were made at 22.000 feet where three Fw 190's were observed, flying south off coast and some 5.000 feet below. This squadron was ordered to stay above as cover while No.331 went down to attack the huns, all of which were destroyed. The Wg.Cdr. reformed No.331 squadron after the attack and returned to base. Meanwhile, this squadron having made several orbits off Walcheren, sighted about three Fw 190's coming into attack from the Sas van Gent area. These enemy aircraft were 1.000 feet above (25.000 feet). The squadron turned to attack and some dogfights developed, during which Major Thorsager destroyed a Fw 190 and 2Lt. J.Gilhuus probably destroyed another without loss to ourselves. The remainder of the enemy aircraft took evasive action and were not seen again. The squadron reformed and was soon ordered towards Manston as enemy aircraft appeared in that area but this order was soon cancelled as the enemy aircraft had turned back. Course was set for base and the squadron had landed by 15.25 hours. One vessel of about 4.000 tons and escorted by twelve E-boats was seen from 22.000 feet 6 - 10 miles off Noorderhoofd heading south.

Combat Report Sgt. F. Eitzen (No.331 squadron)

I was flying as Blue 2 at 24.000 feet over Walcheren Island when Red 3 reported some enemy aircraft below us. I followed Blue 1 down, closing in on the Fw 190 to the right. I started firing at 200 yards range and the Fw 190 turned on its back. I saw a big sheet of flame coming up from underneath the cockpit and he went straight down into the sea. I saw three big splashes in the water altogether. Ammunition used: 46 x 20 mm and 80 x 303. MG.

Combat Report 2Lt. H. Grundt-Spang (No.331 squadron)

I was flying Blue 3 at 24.000 feet over Walcheren, when Red 3 reported some enemy aircraft underneath us at about 12.000 feet on a south-westerly course. Blue 1 went down with his No. 2 and I followed with my No. 2. There were three huns flying almost line-abreast.

I made for the port one, and had plenty of speed to overtake him. At a range of about 300 yards, I gave him a second burst and saw cannon strikes on his starboard wing. He started to dive, but I half rolled and followed him quite easily though we had a colossal speed. After another two-seconds bursts, 30 degrees deflection being allowed, there was a terrific explosion in the Fw 190, a big orange flame came out of the cockpit, and big pieces flew in all directions. The rest of the enemy aircraft dived vertically into the sea. I went down to sea level, had to turn left to avoid a convoy just off Walcheren, went home and landed at base at 15.15 hours.
Ammunition used: 192 x 20 mm and 260 x 303. MG.

Combat Report Capt. L. Lundsten (No.331 squadron)

I was flying as Blue 1 when over Walcheren Island, Red 3 reported some huns at 3 o'clock below us. I saw them and the whole of Blue Section went down to attack them. We saw three Fw 190's flying in line abreast, the port one a little below and this was at 12.000 feet. I attacked the middle one and I started firing at about 800 yards and closing in to about 400 yards, when the Fw 190 had an explosion and started burning after which he went straight down. I saw afterwards three big splashes in the sea off Walcheren Island and Blue 2 and 3 also saw these splashes.
Ammunition used: 126 x 20 mm and 170 x 303. MG.

Combat Report Major F. Thorsager (No.332 squadron)

Flying as Red 1 with one Flight as top cover for No.331 squadron. After making a gentle starboard turn round Flushing, No.331 squadron saw some enemy aircraft beneath over the Flushing area. They went down after them and we stayed above as cover. As No.331 squadron went far down I lost sight of them and we made several port orbits over the Flushing area at 24.000 feet. Some enemy aircraft, about 15, came down on us from above, so we broke to meet the attack. Myself and my No. 2 (2Lt. J.Gilhuus) attacked two Fw 190's which started climbing, turning port into the sun. I fired at one of them from 350 yards, and saw strikes all over and in the cockpit. It flicked over quickly, started burning with black smoke pouring out and spun down. My No. 2 saw it spinning down burning 5.000 – 6.000 feet and my No. 2 fired at another one and I saw white smoke coming out, but I had to break away owing to other enemy aircraft.
Ammunition used: 200 x 20 mm and 600 x 303. MG.

Combat Report 2Lt. J. Gilhuus (No.332 squadron)

I was flying as Red 2 when this squadron made four port orbits over Walcheren. On the last of these orbits, about 15 enemy aircraft came down on us from above. I followed my No. 1 as he broke to attack and I fired three or four bursts of approximately two seconds each on one of the Fw 190's as they climbed away into the sun. I saw flashes in front and on the cockpit with cannons and MG causing the enemy aircraft to flick over with white and black smoke pouring out from it. My No. 1 reports seeing white smoke from this enemy aircraft but both of us were forced to break away and take evasive action without being able to see what happened to the Fw 190 which I attacked. I saw the Fw 190, which my No. 1 attacked, go into spinning down burning for 5.000 – 6.000 feet before I was forced to break away.
Ammunition used: 80 x 20 mm and 240 x 303. MG.

KTB II./ Jagdgeschwader 1

--/-- Abwehreininsatz über dem niederländischen Küstengebiet wobei insgesamt neun Einsätze – davon 2 Rotten – und 5 Schwarmeinsätze sowie ein Einsatz mit 15 und ein weiterer mit neuen Fw 190 – wurden geflogen, nach denen zwar drei Abschüsse jedoch zugleich auch zwei Gefallene gemeldet wurden.

Flakkommandeur Vlissingen

- 1246 Flakalarm! Süd./- und 1./594 melden ein Spitfire in Richtung 7 Höhe 7000 m.
1247 1./594 meldet Maschine fliegt nach Richtung 8 aus.
1250 Kriegswache Ruhe! Die Maschine ist nach Richtung 8 abgeflogen.
1420 Laut Fluko Gent stehen in Richtung 9 viele feindliche Ziele, Entfernung 70 km.
1427 Flakalarm! Fluko Gent und Breda melden Anflug vieler feindlichen Maschinen aus Richtung 8, Entfernung 40 km.
1428 Fliegeralarm! Luchs hat viele Ziele in Richtung 8 aufgefaßt, Entfernung 60 km.
1430 Fluko Gent meldet in Richtung 8 13 Hudsons.
1431 Leitstand Bahnhof meldet Motorengeräusche aus Richtung 10 näherkommend.
1432 Scheinwerfer 14 und 15 melden Motorengeräusche in Richtung 5-6 weit.
1434 Ostbatterie meldet mehrere Fw 190 von Richtung 3-9
1435 **Absturz von zwei Spitfire in Richtung 8 und 9 in die Scheldemündung!**
1436 **Absturz von ein Fw 190 in Richtung 8 – 300 m von der Küste!**
Meldung an Seekommandant mit der Bitte um Suchaktion von mehreren Booten ist abgegeben.
1437 Süd./- und Ostbatterie haben in Richtung 10-12 mehrere Spitfire aufgefaßt.
(bis 1441) **2./-, 3./- und 4./- beschießen mit 12 Schuß 10,5 cm und 8 Schuß 3,7 cm 7 Spitfire**, Zielhöhe 2400 bis 7000 m.
1442 Ostbatterie meldet in Richtung 10 mehrere Spitfire.
1./594 meldet in Richtung 12 einen Luftkampf!
1443 Nord./- meldet : bei den Spitfire sind auch eigene Jäger.
1444 Vorsicht bei Feuereröffnung da eigene Jäger noch in der Luft.
1448 Laut Luchs sind die Maschinen im Abflug in Richtung 11 Entfernung 25 km.
1451 Laut Domburg stehen die Ziele in Richtung 10 im Abflug Entfernung 60 km.
1455 Entwarnung und Kriegswache Ruhe!
1635 Laut Fluko Gent drei Spitfire im Tiefflug aus Richtung 8 im Anflug, Entfernung 60 km.
1639 Kriegswache Achtung! Mehrere Unbekannte Ziele in Richtung 8 Entfernung 40 km.
Äußerste Aufmerksamkeit bei Feuereröffnung da eigene Maschinen in der Luft.
1654 Flakalarm! Süd./- meldet Spitfire über der Schelde.
1656 **2./-, 3./-, 4./-, 5./-, 6./- und 9./810, 1./594, 4./-, 5./-, 6./-, 7./- und 8./202 beschießen zwei Spitfire mit 63 Schuß 10,5 cm – 9 Schuß 4 cm – 36 Schuß 3,7 cm – 816 Schuß 2 cm und 764 Schuß MG.**
1704 Süd./- hat Spitfire aufgefaßt! Leitstand Seedeich meldet zwei Fw 190 von Richtung 11-1
1706 Die Ziele sind in Richtung 8 abgeflogen und stehen in 30 km Entfernung.
1714 1./847 meldet Motorengeräusche aus Richtung 12 näherkommend.
Es sind zwei Bf 110 zur Suchaktion gestartet!
1715 **Eine Bf 110 wird laut Meldungen von AK-Stand von Booten beschossen!**
1718 **Süd./- meldet Flakfeuer in Richtung 10!**
1719 Flakalarm! Feuererlaubnis nur auf einwandfrei erkannte Ziele.
1720 1./594 meldet 2 Bf 110 in Richtung 10
1721 Zwei Bf 110 und vier Fw 190 nach Richtung 11 abfliegend.

1746 Kriegswache Ruhe! Erhöhte Aufmerksamkeit aus der Sonne.

1925 Kriegswache Achtung! Motorengeräusche aus Richtung 3 näherkommend.

1926 4 Fw 190 über der Schelde nach Richtung 9 abfliegend.

1931 Kriegswache Ruhe!

1944 Flakalarm! Flakfeuer in Richtung 8.

1952 Westbatterie meldet Motorengeräusche aus Richtung 9 näherkommend.

1953 1./594 meldet zwei Fw 190 von Richtung 12 nach Richtung 9.

1954 Kriegswache Ruhe! Erhöhte Aufmerksamkeit aus der Sonne.

2030 Erhöhte Aufmerksamkeit da Wetterlage günstig für Feindunternehmen!

Luchtbeschermingsdienst Vlissingen

1428 Alarm gegeven door Flakabteilung! Rijksinspectie LBD Den Haag (4 x dringend) aangevraagd.

1430 Rijksinspectie LBD Den Haag alarmtoestand medegedeeld.

1435 Luchtafweergeschut in werking! Reservist de Nooyer meldt, dat hij een vliegtuig in razende vaart recht naar beneden heeft zien komen en dat het toestel vermoedelijk in de richting Nieuwe Sluis in de rivier de Schelde is gestort.

1439 De brandweerpost uit de Coosje Buskenstraat deelt op verzoek mede, dat de ploegcommandant Minnaard twee vliegtuigen naar beneden heeft zien storten. Eén in de richting van de bomvrije kazerne en de ander in de richting van de Zeevaartschool, welke uit elkaar scheen te springen.

1450 Einde alarm gegeven door Flakabteilung.

1455 Rijksinspectie LBD Den Haag medegedeeld einde alarm en dat er twee vliegtuigen zijn neergestort in de rivier de Schelde en tevens vermeldt dat de nationaliteit van de vliegtuigen ons niet bekend is. Rijksinspectie verzoekt dat, indien de nationaliteit der vliegtuigen of der inzittenden ons bekend wordt, dit alsnog telefonisch te melden. Politie, Ortskommandantur en Polizei-offizier Middelburg met bovenstaande in kennis gebracht.

1500 Brandweercommandant de Lange rapporteert dat hij drie vliegtuigen heeft zien neerstorten, allen vermoedelijk in de rivier de Schelde.

1530 Riolist de Ridder meldt bij gerucht te hebben vernomen dat er een vliegtuig is neergestort in het Nollebosch. Jasperse als ordonnance uitgezonden voor onderzoek ter plaatse maar bij de politie was er niets bekend.

1655 Hevig luchtafweervuur en vliegtuigen boven de stad die elkaar beschieten! Geen alarm gegeven.

1720 Jasperse als ordonnance uitgezonden voor onderzoek naar Nollebosch. Deze rapporteerde dat er niets bijzonders was waar te nemen maar wel kreeg hij bevestiging van vliegtuigen, welke bij de Nollepunt in de rivier zijn gevallen.

Generalkommando LXXXIX. Armeekorps

1400 (zwischen 1400 und 1500) Einflug zahlreicher Bomber auf die Benzolfabrik Union Chemique Ostende wobei zehn Bomben abgeworfen wurden.

Zwei Gasometer zerstört wobei ein Belgier tot und zwei schwer verletzt.

Beim Einflug feindl. Jäger im KVA A1 wurden durch eigene Jäger zwei Spitfire abgeschossen und stürzten in die Westerschelde.

KTB 712. Infanterie Division

1505 stürzten im Verlauf von Luftkämpfe zwei Spitfire und eine Focke Wulf zwischen Breskens und Vlissingen in die Schelde.

