

STICHTING WINGS TO VICTORY

AIRWAR MUSEUM / AIRMEN MEMORIAL ZEELAND



Crash No 142

Messerschmitt Bf 109F werknr. 7265

25-10-1941

In Westerschelde bij Vlissingen



25 oktober 1941

In de vroege morgen voerden twee Spitfires van No.71 squadron een rhu barb uit naar het Nederlands-Belgische kustgebied. Nadat ter hoogte van Vlissingen een tweetal Messerschmitt's van 2./JG 53 werden waargenomen kwam het tot een luchtgevecht waarbij één Bf 109 boven de monding van de Westerschelde werd neergeschoten.

Enkele uren later nam een Spitfire van (naar alle waarschijnlijkheid) No.91 squadron ter hoogte van Vlissingen een boot van het Rheinflottille tevergeefs onder vuur. De afweer slaagde er gelukkig evenmin in om treffers te boeken zodat deze schermutseling onbeslist eindigde.

Operations Record Book HQ Fighter Command

Two Spitfires Mk.VB of No.71 (Eagle) squadron took off from North Weald at 06.30 hours, and crossed the Dutch coast north of Flushing at zero feet. Having past 5 feet above a gunpost which did not fire at them, they sighted two Bf 109F's flying at 200 feet. One Spitfire pilot climbed towards them and attacked one without observing results; he then attacked the other from 100 yards range and it immediately exploded and fell into the sea like a ball of fire and it is claimed as destroyed.

Our pilot then turned towards the first enemy aircraft and the two aircraft made a head-on attack on each other from 200 yards range but no results were observed. Intense fire was experienced from ground defences in the Flushing area both from machine guns and light Flak.

Een Bf 109 van 2./JG 53 stort in de monding van de Westerschelde

- Messerschmitt Bf 109F-4 (Wnr.7265) van 2./JG 53 werd tijdens een luchtgevecht met Spitfires van No.71 squadron door Plt.Off. Scarborough neergeschoten waarna het toestel ter hoogte van de gevangentoren voor Vlissingen in zee stortte.
Uffz. Theodor Blechschmidt mia

Seekommandant Südolland

(waarin opgenomen de meldingen van MFA 810 en MAA 202)

0828 Alarm! **Drei Spitfire im Tiefflug – aus Richtung 11 bis 12 über 3 nach 9 fliegend – greifen Vlissingen an, beschießen mit Bordwaffen wirkungslos die Signalstelle und schießen über dem Ostgat bei Vlissingen eine soeben gestartete Me 109 ab! Diese stürzt brennend in die Schelde.**

--/-- Stand I Schelde (3,7 cm Flak) hatte einen Rohrkrepierer.

Das Feuer mußte bald wegen Starts deutsche Jäger eingestellt werden.

Keine Feindeinwirkungen nur Verluste bei den Flak-kampfmitteln(?)

0852 Kriegswache Ruhe! Feindabflug in Richtung 8 bis 9.

1124 Alarm! Anflug mehrerer Feindmaschinen aus Richtung 7.

Eine Spitfire – Höhe 2000 m – wird beschossen und dabei wurden Treffer beobachtet!

Die Maschine flog stark rückend in Richtung 9 ab.

1142 Kriegswache Ruhe!

1800 Dämmerungsbereitschaft wird ab heute für die Abend – und Morgendämmerung befohlen und nachfolgend nicht mehr hier aufgeführt.

2331 (bis 2335) Alarm! Unbekannte Motorengeräusche aus Richtung 3 anschwellend und Abflug nach 7. Die Maschine schoß ES.

KTB Führer der Motorbootsverbände

- 0830 Rheinflottille – **Drei in Richtung See fliegende feindliche Jäger werden in mittlerer Gefechtsentfernung mit MG ohne feststellbaren Erfolg beschossen!**
- 1130 **Boot 1 wird beim Anlaufen des Hafens Vlissingen von einer Spitfire angegriffen! Die Feindmaschine wird durch MG-Feuer von Bord und Flakbeschuß von Land zum Abdrehen gezwungen!** Verluste und Beschädigungen entstanden nicht.
- //-- **Um die gleiche Zeit wurde von dem Boot der Position 16 ein von Vlissingen kommender und in Richtung See fliegender feindlicher Jäger in mittlere Gefechtsentfernung ohne feststellbaren Erfolg mit MG beschossen**

Combat report Plt.Off. Scarborough

(extract uit “En nooit was het stil”)

In zijn gevechtsverslag rapporteerde Plt.Off. Scarborough als volgt: Op 25 oktober voerde ik met een Spitfire Mk.V b als Black 1 een rhu barb missie uit. Vlaktbij Vlissingen werden twee Me 109's waargenomen, die op een hoogte van ca. 70 meter vlogen.

We klommen er naar toe waarna ik vanaf 200 meter afstand het vuur opende met een salvo van 2,5 seconden en – omdat ik geen resultaat kon zien – opende ik vanaf een afstand van ongeveer 100 meter nogmaals het vuur. De Messerschmitt explodeerde onmiddellijk en viel als een bal van vuur op ongeveer 200 meter uit de kust in zee. De brandstof van dit vliegtuig brandde volop en ik claim deze Me 109 als vernietigd.

Dit wordt bevestigd door Plt.Off. Roscoe.

Daarna moest ik een aanval uitvoeren op de andere Me 109, die recht op mij toevloog. Ik vuurde met een salvo van 1,5 seconden zonder echter enig resultaat waar te nemen. Toen hij nog maar een 25 meter van mij af was, brak hij naar links weg. Ik zei tegen mijn Number Two dat we beter konden maken dat we wegkwamen in de wolken. De Me 109 volgde ons en na 15 kilometer was hij ons genaderd tot op een afstand van zo'n 400 meter. Ik zei tegen Black 2 dat we het beter konden uitvechten omdat hij te dichtbij kwam, waarna ik optrok in een steile bocht om hem aan te vallen. Hij vuurde op mijn Number Two maar toen ik gereed was om te vuren brak hij af en vloog weg.

In het gebied rondom Vlissingen werden we beschoten door Bofors, mitrailleurs en zware Flak.

Getekend: Plt.Off. R.O.Scarborough – 71 (Eagle) squadron RAF

Anatomy of a Rhubarb

By Plt.Off. Arthur F.Roscoe No.71 squadron.

The morning of October 25 was cold, dark and overcast as predicted. Scarborough and I dined on an egg, english sausages – we used to call them sawdust sausages – toast, jam and hot tea; then reported to dispersal and our aircraft were ready and waiting. At start engine time we fired up and taxied out to the take-off runway. I aligned with the runway in number two position to Scarborough. The compass on a Spitfire is between the rudder pedals below the instrument panel and I checked to make sure that the outer ring was correctly set – a reciprocal course can be flown if this is not done – set the directional gyro, turned the cockpit lights as low as possible and flicked on the pitot heat switch.

The flarepath extended into the darkness like a finger pointing the way as we were airborne with undercarriage up. As the lights disappeared I found myself in a black hole, trying to follow a white light.

The ceiling was 400 to 500 feet and the ground black as ink. I had no horizon and no references at all and the exhaust glare was disconcerting. Regular nightfighters had horizontal

flanges attached to their fuselages which covered the exhaust stacks, shielding the pilot's eyes from the flames.

My night flying experience consisted of two hours of take-offs and landings at Polaris with plenty of lights around and a couple of dusk landings at North Weald after convoy patrols. I was not altogether prepared for this situation!

I didn't want to lose Scarborough in the pre-dawn darkness but intended to continue on my own if I did, hoping to pick him up again somewhere en-route. I was just able to keep his white tail navigation light in sight as we flew at 200 feet at a pre-arranged power setting. Ten minutes should put us over the second little island to find North Weald and I guess other types did as well.

Returning in a low ceiling and poor visibility you could steer 280 degrees from the second island, Chelmsford would go by off your starboard wing tip and in a few minutes you would be over North Weald.

I never saw the island at all on the way out, just blackness! Scarborough changed course slightly and I noted we were on the heading for **Flushing**. I knew we had crossed the coast because my engine started to run rough. Actually the Merlin was purring like a kitten – I had just contracted a common disease amongst fighter pilots over water at low altitude – “acute engineitis”- and about forty-two minutes should bring us to the northern tip of **Walcheren Island**, diamond shaped, about twelve miles long and wide and it lays off the west coast of the Netherlands about thirty-five miles northwest of Antwerp Belgium.

Flushing airdrome was on the southern tip of that diamond. Forty-two minutes may not be long but to me it was an eternity. “What am I doing here?” I thought. I could be back in the mess in a warm bed but too late for that now. Gradually the darkness faded and below I could make out the dirty grey of the North Sea and above the solid cloud layer seemed to force us lower and lower.

Scarborough switched off his navigation lights. I could just make out the shape of his plane but mostly I could see his exhaust glow. Now was the time to set my gun button to fire, turn on the reflector sight to night and dim and set the range bars to thirty-five feet.

As we neared the coast the ceiling rose, the sky became lighter and visibility improved. I could make out a dark line on the horizon at about two o'clock and hopefully this was **Walcheren**.

Scarborough altered course slightly to starboard and began to pull away. I moved the mixture control from weak to normal, increased rpm to 2600 and opened the throttle till I caught up.

We crossed a grey flat featureless coast on the deck and, if we were right, Flushing airdrome should be to the south of us. We banked to starboard and began weaving down the coast; three to four minutes and we should be there! Nothing moved on the ground and no sign of life in the grey dawn. Suddenly we roared over **Flushing** airdrome just as two Me 109F's in line abreast took off heading out to sea.

Whether they were scrambled to intercept or just a routine patrol will never be known but Scarborough wasted no time! **Banking hard to starboard he put a burst into the nearest 109. This unfortunate Hun probably never saw us or knew what hit him for in a split second he was a ball of flame going straight into the sea just off the airdrome.**

Watching all these marvelous goings-on with my finger up, it dawned on me that I should be after the other 109. I found him making a gentle turn to starboard and, closing to about 300 yards, gave him a two second burst with no visible results. I went around with that fellow for a short while, but with the low ceiling, neither of us got in a shot. We had been out for an hour by now. Breaking radio silence for the first time, Scarborough suggested that if I did not intend to shoot down the 109, we might better head for home. I agreed and we set course on the deck. The remaining 109, being close to base and with plenty of fuel, gave chase.

Soon it became a matter of my turning to fight or nip up into the clouds. I decided to have one more go at him and turned back. He turned back as well, heading for **Flushing**. I gave him a burst at long range and decided against further pursuit as Scarborough and I were now separated, I pulled up into the clouds and set course for England.

I soon found that my artificial horizon had tumbled and I was forced to fly on the British Slip and Skid indicator. This instrument always confused me as it was upside down compared to the Turn and Bank I was used to. Finally, I got to flying straight and level, checked the compass, set course for home and reduced power to economical cruise. After a few minutes I let down out of cloud and continued under the overcast.

I made a landfall at Clacton, flew southwest to the Blackwater River, then over the little islands and was soon on the ground at North Weald.

I confirmed Scarborough's destroyed but he could do nothing for me. I was pleased for him for his success but sorely disappointed at my own performance. That was the only rharb I did with No.71 squadron. Some 71 pilots were real gluttons for rharbs stooging out on one at any available opportunity.

Others were not all that interested, just not their cup of tea like me.

Of what value were these voluntary forays into enemy territory? Aside from keeping the Hun observers, Flak gunners and operations people awake, pulling tired and grouching German fighter pilots out of their warm beds! What good did they do?

Who knows exactly how many enemy trains, petrol dumps, staff cars, Flak positions and aircraft on the ground were destroyed by Eagle pilots on rharbs – these didn't count in scores as only planes destroyed in the air counted. During the eleven months I was with No.71 squadron, 10 German planes were shot down on rharbs with only two losses and both of these pilots survived.

They must have been doing something right.

