

Air Ministry News Service

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ENEMY LOSSES OVER MALTA

Royal Air Force day and night fighters, anti-aircraft artillery and Naval guns have taken their toll of the German Air Force over Malta during the last twenty four hours.

The Luftwaffe has been making non-stop efforts to neutralise the aerodromes on the island and at some periods today (Monday) the air was filled with battling aircraft, while at other moments hundreds of cotton wool puffs of bursting shells floated across the sky.

Enemy casualties since five o'clock the previous evening were one Ju.88 destroyed, and one Heinkel damaged by R.A.F. night fighters, two Me.109s destroyed, one Ju.88 destroyed and seven Ju.88s and two Me.109s damaged by R.A.F. day fighters. Anti aircraft artillery destroyed one Ju.88 and damaged another.

Despite the large number of combats none of our fighters was lost. Some military damaged was done but it was not serious. Civilian damage and casualties were also light.

The Ju.88 destroyed during the night was shot down by a sergeant pilot. After seeing the bomber's starboard engine on fire he watched the aircraft hit the water. A little later the same pilot saw a Heinkel III in the moonlight. He stalked it and then opened fire from astern at close range. The Heinkel was damaged but the Sergeant had to break off his attack as his aircraft was silhouetted against the moon.

A Squadron Leader operating a fighter during the night also picked up a Ju.88. He made his attack when the German bomber was only five hundred feet above the sea. After firing a short burst the Squadron Leader saw a large orange flame on the water which he was convinced was the aircraft he had attacked.

The Junkers bomber destroyed by anti-aircraft guns was hit in the wing by a heavy shell when flying at 7000 feet. The aircraft was blown over and spiralled to earth in flames. Hundreds of people watching from Valetta's Bastions cheered as they saw the bomber going down.

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