

PORTLAND BILL A-HOY!

"Now I'm in a jam!" These words were called over the radio telephone by Squadron Leader J.C. Carver, commander of a fighter squadron, just before his damaged Spitfire plunged into the sea seven miles from the Channel Islands.

In the early hours of this morning, fifty seven hours after his "dive" into the sea, the Squadron Leader was picked up by one of His Majesty's ships.

He was sitting in his rubber dinghy about 15 miles from the tip of Portland Bill. He was blowing a whistle and alternating this with singing. He asked the men on the destroyer why they had picked him up, adding that he was making for Portland Bill and would have been there by daylight to-day. He was right; the navigating officer of the ship worked it out that he would have been.

Since the evening of Friday the 13th, when he crashed after being hit by machine gun bullets from a Ju.88, which a few seconds later was destroyed by another pilot, he had drifted many miles up and down Channel at each successive tide.

But he had steadily made his way north towards the English coast and had managed to cover, by laborious work in his dinghy, a distance in a straight line of over 40 miles.

The Squadron Leader, was leading his formation when he met the Ju.88.

With another squadron of fighters, he was flying only a few feet above the Channel between low lying and thick cloud. The Ju.88 with a companion suddenly appeared out of the cloud behind the Spitfires.

The fighters turned to the attack but before they were in position, the gunner of one of the Ju.88s put in a short burst which hit Squadron Leader Carver's aircraft. He went down into the sea, giving his position as he dived and casually making to his companions the remark "Now I'm in a jam". An Australian, a Canadian and a Free French pilot heard his call and attacked the two Ju.88s. Both the enemy aircraft were seen to be severely damaged and flying on single engines, as they made hurriedly off into cloud and haze. One was but a few feet above the water with one wing well down.

The rest of the squadron were unable to locate their leader and returned to their base. Hope that he would be saved had been given up when, in the pitch dark at 3 o'clock this morning he was found by the warship.

The seamen heard him blowing a whistle and singing having been kept alive and fit on the chocolate ration packed in his dinghy.

The Squadron Leader said "I was hit in the Glycol tank by the Ju.88 at 15,00 feet. I baled out about two minutes afterwards when over the Channel Islands."

An officer of the ship which picked him up added this touch "The crew of our ship heard him blowing his whistle and either singing or shouting - or both.

"When picked up he was perfectly happy and told us that he intended to navigate to Portland Bill. He mentioned his expected time of arrival - and he was up to schedule. He would undoubtedly have reached Portland Bill on time."