

CZECH PILOT GETS THREE

A Czech flight lieutenant serving with a night fighter squadron in which he was once a sergeant, shot down three Heinkel 111s over an aerodrome in Northern France, from which German bombers were operating against this country last night.

It was his eighth victim on such operations - seven since April 1 - and his success came, appropriately enough, on the anniversary of the death of M.R. Stefanik, 1st General of the Czechoslovak Air Force, who was killed on May 4, 1919, when returning to liberated Czechoslovakia from the great war.

The feat of the Czech flight lieutenant follows that of one armed S/Ldr. MacLachlan who shot down two on Sunday night on similar operations.

Flying a four-cannon Hurricane the Czech made the journey out and back to three German airfields and had three combats last night, all in the space of an hour and 40 minutes.

Describing his experiences he said today,

"I had stuck around over one aerodrome for ten minutes and saw no sign of life, so I flew on to another.

"Here I was luckier, for I saw six Heinkels circling round at 1,500 feet to 2,000 feet waiting to land. I didn't waste any time. I came in behind one of them and fired a short burst; one of his engines immediately caught fire and nose dived to the ground.

"Then I picked out a second enemy aircraft and repeated the performance. A one second burst was enough for this one which went down in flames into a wood near the airfield.

"It had to be quick work, because the others had had plenty of warning by this time that I was about. But I managed to attack a third. I gave one short burst and saw my shells strike the Heinkel, which began to go down steeply.

"For 30 seconds or so, I lost sight of him, but as I went around the aerodrome again I saw the wreckage burning in three separate fires."

Machine gun fire from the ground defences left the Czech's aircraft undamaged and he flew off to a third aerodrome to search for more customers. Finding none, he returned to his base.

Meanwhile, Boston Havocs of Fighter Command were bombing airfields elsewhere in Northern France.

One Havoc, on its way out from this country, saw an enemy aircraft going home and attacked it. Damaged, the enemy aircraft turned sharply and was lost to sight. Then the Havoc carried on to drop its bombs on runways in the face of heavy flak.

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