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SPITFIRES DESTROY FIVE F.W. 190s

Five F.W. 190s were shot down by squadrons of Fighter Command escorting U.S.A.A.F. bombers to France today. The fighters which escorted Liberators to Rouen met with stiff opposition but other squadrons flying some 200 miles over the sea to give protective cover to a big force of Fortresses, attacking Rennes in Brittany, met little resistance.

S/Ldr. D.E. Kingaby, D.S.O., D.F.M., and two bars, a Londoner, whose home is now at Cambridge, led a wing of the improved Spitfires, to give closer escort to the Liberators, and destroyed his 22nd enemy aircraft. Formations of F.W. 190s and Me109s made repeated and determined efforts to break through the fighter screen to reach the bombers and there were many combats as the Liberators flew inland.

"We were continuously fighting for a quarter of an hour" said S/Ldr. Kingaby. "The Huns were very persistent and nearly every time we tried to attack one of our boys had to break away because another got on his tail. It was one of the stiffest fights we have had for some time. I fired at one Hun and saw hits on the fuselage. Then an elevator came off. He flicked over and the other elevator came off. The next thing I saw was a parachute".

S/Ldr. W.V. Crawford-Compton, D.F.C., and bar, a New Zealander, who was leading a squadron in this wing, destroyed two F.W. 190s, bringing his score to eleven and a half confirmed victories. "We were more or less in front of the bombers all the time" he said. "The Huns kept on making attacks and we were heading them off. There were a large number of enemy aircraft and a number of our chaps fired but had no time to wait for results. One of my Huns caught fire and the pilot of the other baled out".

Canadian Spitfire squadrons were among those which flew to the French coast to escort Fortresses returning from the N.W. France operation. Two F.W. 190s were destroyed by pilots of one of the Canadian squadrons. The F.W. 190s appeared to make no effort to attack, but tried to intercept the Spitfires. "We saw six of them, three pairs", said a member of the wing, "and we shot down two of them without any difficulty. One of our pilots pumped so much lead into his Hun that a wing fell off the enemy aircraft. The other F.W. 190 crashed on land".

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