

LUFTWAFFE GAVE BATTLE BUT WAS BEATEN BY SPITFIRES

Allied and Dominion Spitfire pilots covering yesterday evening attacks by U.S.A.A.F. and R.A.F. medium bombers, reported many combats with the Luftwaffe over H. France.

American Marauders bombing the airfield at Beaumont Le Roger met determined opposition. One Spitfire wing was attacked three times by different groups of enemy aircraft, but the result was four enemy destroyed and others damaged for the loss of one Spitfire, whose pilot was seen to bale out after his engine failed. The bombers got through and successfully attacked their target.

A Wing Commander who is a triple D.F.C. described the German attempts to reach the bombers. "The Hun," he said, "seemed fairly anxious to fight if he thought he had a chance, but he seemed to realise he was getting the worst of it. First of all, four aircraft offered fight, but when a section was sent down to deal with them they dived to safety.

"Next we saw a dozen yellow-nosed F.W.s coming in above us and from the side. We went for them and when we had destroyed two the others made off. 15 Mes. then took up the attack but with no better success. One of the wing squadrons swung round and engaged them, shooting down a couple."

A New Zealand and a Fighting French squadron of another wing had a busy time as the Marauders were returning from this operation. The Frenchmen were bounced by six enemy just as the New Zealanders were attacked by twelve more. During the dog-fight, Spitfires lost touch with the bombers, but the Frenchmen found them again, took them three-quarters of the way across the Channel towards home and then went back into France to help their New Zealand comrades. The dog-fight was still on when the Frenchmen got there, but the New Zealanders had meanwhile shot down two of the enemy and the fight soon ended. The Spitfire wing suffered no loss.

A pilot of another wing, however, was lost during the operation for which the final fighter score was six enemy for two of Fighter Command.

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