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AMERICAN PILOT WITH FIGHTER COMMAND

A former American professional parachutist, now a Typhoon pilot with Fighter Command, recently scored his first success by sharing - with a Canadian pilot - in the destruction of a Me.109 off the South coast of England.

He is F/Sgt. R.L. ('pete') Shelton, of Richmond, Virginia, and it was his squadron's first score as well.

F/Sgt. Shelton, who joined the squadron only five weeks ago, said "I had never seen a Hun aircraft till this Messerschmitt came along. We were mighty glad to notch it up as our first".

He did more than 800 parachute jumps at air shows all over America before the war and had more than 2,300 flying hours to his credit.

"I have been interested in flying since I was 12", F/Sgt. Shelton said. "My elder brother was a pilot and worked on the air mail lines. I took lessons when I was about 20 at the central airport in Richmond, and had my own aircraft.

"I decided to get into the war when it started, so in December, 1939, I sold my aircraft and went to Canada with a friend to join the R.C.A.F. but they could not take us just then, so we hung around Montreal for three months waiting and hoping, but all that happened was we went broke.

"I went back home and travelled around with the air shows again, till in May, 1941, I went back to Canada and was accepted in the R.C.A.F.

I was made an instructor. Then when, eventually, I got across to England, I had to go through a lot of courses myself before getting to my present squadron".

Describing the shooting down of the Messerschmitt 109, F/Sgt. Shelton said: "I shared it with F/O Walter Ahrens, of Rosetown, Saskatchewan, who was my number one.

"When we spotted the Me.109 it was about two miles ahead. I suspected he was acting as a decoy for others ready to pounce on us from above the clouds, so I swooped around, doing some 'lazy eights' while F/O Ahrens closed in and gave him some bursts.

"I saw part of the hood fly off, then a wheel came down. The Hun started climbing, I then tore in, hitting him in many places, his tank blew up, bits of his wing came off, the other wheel came down and fuel sprayed out and covered my Typhoon.

"The Hun went down in a flat spin and vanished under the water. He was as full of holes as a sponge by that time".