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WIDESPREAD FIGHTER ACTION OVER FRANCE

In fierce air battles this morning, and early this afternoon nine enemy aircraft, seven of them twin-engined, were destroyed by Fighter Command pilots.

Many of the actions took place over enemy occupied territory, for our fighter sweeps, as they did yesterday from dawn to dusk, reached from St. Omer in the east right down to the Brest peninsula in the west.

The seven twin-engined fighters, all Me110s were shot down in dogfights when our Spitfires were escorting R.A.F. Mitchell bombers to attack the airfield at Lanveoc, near Brest. The enemy never were near the bombers, all of whom were taken to their target and home again safely.

In all, there were 12 Me110s, operating in sections of four, and in little more than five minutes seven of the number had been shot down into the sea and at least two others were seriously damaged.

Four of the Mes. were destroyed by a wing led by W/Cdr. E.F.J. Charles, D.F.C., a Canadian from Vancouver who accounted for one himself, thus raising his personal score to 15.

"When we saw the dozen Me110s about to make head-on attacks on the Spitfires who were close escort to the bombers, we dived down and in little more than five minutes my wing had knocked down four of them", W/Cdr. Charles said. "It was terrific while it lasted. I saw two go down into the sea in flames and another streaming glycol. There were so many parachutes about they looked like a field of mushrooms.

"One Me made a head-on attack on me, but when I opened up with my cannon he went on fire and pieces flew off everywhere, some nearly hitting me. I saw one of the crew bale out all right.

A Rhodesian flight lieutenant caused one Me. to blow up only a 100 yards ahead of him and go crashing down in flames. Two parachutes<sup>opened</sup> out from it on the way down.

Other fighters who saw the results of the bombing reported that it was well concentrated on the airfield.

Besides this attack on Lanveoc R.A.F., Dominion and Allied fighters were also engaged in Fighter Command's other widespread tasks.

There were dogfights when another section of Mitchell bombers went to Amiens marshalling yards, but the fighters whose job it was to stick by the bombers reported seeing some excellent bombing.

Bursts were seen to straddle the yards and among engines and railway trucks. Here again all the bombers were brought back intact. One F.W. was destroyed.

An Me109 was also a victim of a Spitfire pilot who was among the squadrons taking a strong force of U.S.A.A.F. Marauders to Evreux airfield.

Typhoon bombers and Typhoons carried out an attack on St. Omer where once again the landing ground was hit.

From all these morning and early afternoon operations seven of our aircraft are missing.