

LUFTWAFFE LOSES THREE SPECIAL AIRCRAFT

The Luftwaffe today lost three of its special-job aircraft. They were Ju. 52s which were destroyed as they searched in the morning light for British mines.

This rare "bag" of three-engined aircraft was by two Mosquitos of Air Defence of Great Britain.

The Ju. 52s, which carry large metal rings round the fuselage in an effort to detonate our sea mines put down in their shipping lanes, were busy at their task when the two Mosquitos came on them.

S/Ldr. Geoffrey Wright, of Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, and his observer, F/O. R.P. Bourne, of Stoke-on-Trent, destroyed two, and the third fell to F/Lt. Leonard Welsh, D.F.C., of Tunbridge Wells, whose observer is F/O. L.R. Page, D.F.M., of Ipswich.

"We were off the Frisian Islands," said S/Ldr. Wright, "when we saw, through the haze, one Ju. 52 flying slowly at about 300 feet. I got astern of him, but he spotted me at the last moment and tried to wheel to the left. However, I got in a one-second burst which fired two of the Ju.'s engines.

"One minute the Ju. 52 was airborne and the next it was in the sea, with only the tail sticking up through a patch of flaming oil and debris.

"A little later, when off the Heligoland Bight, we spotted three more Ju. 52s, also with anti-mine laying rings. They were flying so low that they seemed almost to touch the water.

"I took the one on the port side and F/Lt. Welsh took the starboard one. A three-second burst set the starboard engine of my target alight and it just hit the water and spread out on fire over the sea.

"F/Lt. Welsh put in a short burst which immediately sent his Ju. nose-diving into the sea. The third Ju. of this formation meanwhile hared off to base as fast as it could."

S/Ldr. Wright, who is 25, and was a hosiery manufacturer in civil life, and F/O. Bourne, engaged in banking, have been teamed together for more than a year. To date, they have destroyed six enemy aircraft and damaged one. F/Lt. Welsh, an ex-reporter of Yeovil, recently began a second tour of ops.

On his first, he got two destroyed and others damaged. F/O. Page was formerly an engineer.