



WESTERN EUROPE 1939-1945: BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Extracts from a pilot's logbook, August 1940

Catalogue ref: AIR 4/58

YEAR 1940	AIRCRAFT		PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT, PUPIL OR PASSENGER	DUTY (INCLUDING RESULTS AND REMARKS)	SINGLE-ENGINE AIRCRAFT				MULTI-ENGINE AIRCRAFT				PASS- ENGER	INSTR/CLD FLYING (Incl. in cols. 11 to 13)				
	MONTH	DATE				Type	No.	DAY	PILOT	DAY	PILOT	DAY	PILOT		DAY	PILOT	DAY	PILOT	
TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD						43:30	725:00	-	49:25										
AUG.																			
	7	Spitfire	R6919	self	-														
	7		R6919																
	7		R6919																
	8		R6758																
	11		R6919																
	13		R6919																
	15		R6919																
	15		R6919																
	16		R6919																
	17		R6919																
	18		R6923																
	18		R6923																
	19		R6833																
	22		R6919																
	24		R6919																
GRAND TOTAL (Cols. 1 to 10)						832	00			TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD						43:30	737:40	-	49:25



P/O DOLEZAL



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MONTH	DATE	Type	No.			
AUG.	24	(cont.)				TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD bunch of Huns over Estuary. Had a bang at 11:10 but had to break away as tracer was coming over my head from another behind me. He appeared to be hitting his fellow- countryman in front of me but I didn't wait to see if he shot him down. Had a crack at another & shot his engine right out of the wing Lovely! Franked near N. Forland. Last trip in Blitzen III. Patrol N. Weald. P/O Cunningham & Sgt. Potter in Spin. Patrol.
	29		R6776			
	30		R6776			
GRAND TOTAL (Cols. (1) to (6))						TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD
8.34 Hrs. 55 Mins.						

SINGLE-ENGINE AIRCRAFT				MULTI-ENGINE AIRCRAFT						PASS- ENGER	INSTRUMENT FLYING (Cols. (1) to (10))		
DAY		NIGHT		DAY		NIGHT		1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT		1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT	1ST
DUAL (1)	PILOT (2)	DUAL (3)	PILOT (4)	DUAL (5)	1ST PILOT (6)	2ND PILOT (7)	DUAL (8)			1ST PILOT (9)			
43:30 737:40 - 49:25													
Total August 1940 <u>24 hrs. 35 min.</u>													
S.P.R.													
F/O PETRE, F/O BRNSDEN & F/LT. LAWSON													
1:20 1:35													
43:30 740:35 - 49:25													



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What is this source?

These pages come from a logbook that a pilot used to record his flights.

One of the main aims of the logbook was to record the number of hours flown. It was a balance between gaining experience by flying many hours and becoming too tired to fight effectively.

What's the background to this source?

By the summer of 1940 Britain and its empire stood alone against Hitler's Germany. The Germans had serious plans to invade Britain. Their problem was crossing the English Channel against the Royal Navy. They thought that they might achieve this if they controlled the air and could attack Royal Navy ships. As a result, the first stage of the German invasion plan, Operation Sealion, was to try and destroy the Royal Air Force.

The first stage of the campaign was to try and destroy airfields and aircraft factories. This proved unsuccessful and so bombing raids then switched to important towns and cities. There is no definite beginning or end to the Battle of Britain but it is generally agreed that it ran from July to October 1940.

It's worth knowing that...

The pilots who fought in the Battle of Britain became known as 'The Few'. This was because of a speech by Winston Churchill who said: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

The RAF pilots did not just come from Britain. Out of about 2300 over 500 came from other parts of the world.

What conclusions can you draw from this source?

1. What proportion of time seems to be spent fighting enemy aircraft?
2. Which of the following factors are mentioned in the source: enemy aircraft; friendly aircraft; problems of cloud, weather; mechanical troubles?
3. Does this source give you a sense of the chaos and confusion of air battles during the Battle of Britain?
4. Consider the general tone of this log. What impression do you get of the pilot who wrote it?
5. Look at the plan for your TV documentary.
 - o Do you think you will give some time in the documentary to the experiences and qualities of the pilots?
 - o How much of the 30 minutes do you think you will give?

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