

255 SQUADRON - COMBAT REPORT

6/7th December 1942.

S/L Player J.H. - Pilot

Sunshine 16

F/L Lammor A. - Navigator Radio

Beaufighter VI (mk. IV. A.I.)

Took off 19.55 hrs, landed 23.50 hours at Souk-el-Arba.

Under G.C.I. control straight away and went to 15,000' and given vectors to Bone and over the sea. Contact was obtained and target was jinking about 30/40°, and height kept varying. Visual was obtained on exhaust flames at about 2,000' range. On closing in underneath aircraft was identified as He III, and fire was first opened (4 cannon and 6 machine guns) 2 second burst 400' range. Strikes were seen and fire broke out in the fuselage. The enemy aircraft was followed down (it was flying straight but slowly losing height) when we closed in and gave a 3 second burst to make sure. Enemy aircraft was followed down until it hit the sea, when huge flames breaking out could be seen for sometime after.

CLAIM One He-III destroyed. (Entire crew killed)

We were then vectored on to another bandit and contact was obtained after prolonged chase. Enemy aircraft was going very fast and Beaufighter could only gain ground very slowly at maximum speed (280 A.S.I. at 11,000'). Enemy aircraft was approx. 3,000' above and flying straight and level. At range of 9,000' enemy aircraft turned sharply away to port, and order hard port at full throttle was immediately given by Operator, but enemy aircraft drew away out of range, and was lost, despite an attempt at gaining speed by diving at full throttle. At approx. 2,200' Beaufighter was given fresh vectors on another bandit and contact was obtained (10,000' range) on enemy aircraft which was jinking slightly at first, and more violently (up to 90°) later. Beaufighter closed in approx 170 mph to about 800' range, when enemy aircraft was weaving continuously from side to side. The overtaking speed was 5/10 mph at that range and enemy aircraft was 20° above, when suddenly elevation ratio increased to 4/1 and immediately decreased to 2/1 above and range simultaneously went up to 4,000'. The Radio Navigator gave order to throttle right back, put wheels and flaps down and pull the nose up. Range decreased immediately and visual was obtained at range of 1,000' on exhaust of three engined aircraft. Beaufighter closed in to approx. 300' below aircraft, but pilot had great difficulty in maintaining position due to enemy aircraft tactics of climbing steeply at low speed, and weaving

from side to side at the same time. There were patches of cloud and *visual* was lost several times, but immediately regained through A.I. control. Pilot then closed in to 200' below enemy aircraft which was identified as ^{3-engined} ~~S.H.79~~ ~~and~~ ~~opened~~ ~~fire~~ (cannon and machine Gun), strikes being seen all along the fuselage, and fire breaking out in the fuselage. After approx. 5 seconds the aircraft went into a vertical dive leaving a streak of fire and was observed to hit the ground by the Observer as one ball of fire. The aircraft crashed 20 miles S.W. of Bone G.C.I. station and was confirmed by them.

CANT 1007. Bis.

CLAIM One ~~S.H.79~~ destroyed.

On looking back on tubes the Observer saw free lance contact, the clips being one-sided to port and 4/1 above. Interception was made, the enemy aircraft taking evasive action similar to previous one. Visual was obtained on exhaust flames of centre and starboard engines at about 800'. On closing in to approx. 100' below, enemy aircraft was identified as ^{CANT 1007. Bis.} ~~S.H.79~~ with no exhaust flames from port engine to be seen. Fire was opened from below, the Beaufighter's undercarriage being down and speed 130 mph, and enemy aircraft broke up completely, Beaufighter having to be pulled up sharply in order to avoid hitting parts of enemy aircraft which was seen falling to earth.

CANT 1007. Bis.

CLAIM 1 ~~S.H.79~~ destroyed (This was confirmed by P/O Cox - Sunshine 42)

Rounds fired Cannon Port outer 230, Starboard outer 40, Port Inner 100, Starboard inner 200.

N.B. The last two aircraft now known to be CANT.1007. 324 Wing have been advised by Signal of this Amendment.

Crew of both Cant 1007 Bis (5 in each) killed except one Italian who was blown out of the 2nd Cant by the explosion & landed by parachute.