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Spokane 200

COMBAT REPORT

NO. 255 S U ARDEN

NIGHT OF 24/25.6.43.

W/O J.H. PLAYER D.F.C. (Pilot) F/L A. LAMER D.F.C. (Radio Navigator)
Blackhair 16. Beaufighter VIF No. V8530. 4 Cannons 6 Machine Guns. Mark
IV A.I.

Took off 01.20 from La Sebala II Landed 05.20 La Sebala II.

Under Mixture control at approximately 03.15 sent after a Bogey which was 50 miles N.E. of Mixture. Flying at 9,000' indication obtained at maximum range 5,000' below. The bogey was followed in violent diving turns. Range was closed to 3,000' with target still below. The Beau-fighter had to level out to retain a reasonable working space on the A.I., but then bogey went right down to sea level and contact was lost. Later informed that Bogey was definitely friendly and that only friendlies were in the vicinity.

The pilot suspected from the behaviour of the previous so called "friendly" that there might be bandits about and repeatedly asked the Controller if he (the pilot) could have a look at them.

At approximately 04.05 when about 20 miles N.N.E. of Bizerte, Mixture (Controller S/L Boebuck) gave Blackhair 16 an interception on an aircraft which was plotted as definitely friendly. Flying at 10,000' indication obtained at maximum range well above crossing from port to starboard. Range closed to 6,000' at 230 mph I.A.S. It was found by Navigator Radio that during the subsequent climb range increased to 7,500' and he asked pilot to level out to gain speed. Height was then gained gradually in small steps. Flying at 12,000' a visual was obtained at 1,500' range above and to port. The aircraft was immediately identified as hostile by bright twin exhausts from three engines. Pilot closed to 50 yards, dead underneath and identified the aircraft as a Curt Z 1007 bi:

At 04.15 fire was opened at 100 yards range from astern. A two seconds burst was given with all guns. The starboard engine immediately blew up, and after another similar burst the port engine caught fire. A large piece was seen to break off the enemy aircraft which then spun down to port as a massive flaming mass, which burnt for some time on the sea about 50 miles N.N.E. of Bizerte.

Given another 'friendly' which went towards Bizerte and then N.N.E. It was chased until outside the range of Mixture. Beaufighter was at 15,000' at 260 mph I.A.S. There was no contact. Beaufighter

returned to base owing to shortage of petrol.

ROUNDS FIRED :- 40 rounds from each of 3 Cannons
30 rounds from 1 Cannon (sluggish ejection)
80 rounds from each of 5 Machine Guns
60 rounds from one Machine Gun (Link stoppage)

I.A VI

WEATHER :- Slight haze, some low cloud. Moonlight.

CLAIM :- One Cant. 2,1007 hit destroyed.

N.B. Entire Crew Killed.