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from Air Ministry & placed in Operation Record Book*

Combat Report by Flt. Lt. R. S. Mills, No. 263 Squadron.

Notes concerning an engagement with Ju.88.

I noticed a formation of three Ju.88 which were about to attack the lake.

I delivered an attack on the rear aircraft but when I was seen, the formation increased their speed. I realised the aircraft were Ju.88. They are beautifully finished on the surface of fuselage and well stream lined. During the engagement with the three Ju. I found myself being out-maneuvred and had no advantage in attempting to climb so I decided to fight on a line of tactics of attempting to collide with them having very little ammunition remaining (after six other combats) and caused one front gunner to cease fire and I believe one rear gunner. I ran out of ammunition and petrol and landed on runway, and with only a few minutes petrol I drove the enemy away by attempting to collide it was my only hope to keep them away from the lake and to save myself from being shot down. This change of tactics enabled the enemy to inflict damage on my aircraft. An inner plane strut was shot away, large holes on the leading edges of my main planes but as I made my last dive at one Ju.88 to try and hit him the aircraft turned to avoid collision and then withdrew just as my petrol was exhausted and I forced landed in the snow successfully. The holes were caused by cannon-fire from the front guns. The holes on my aircraft were large about 4 to 5 inches in diameter wherever they struck the aircraft, there were about 15 holes. I was unable to carry out any further examination as I became a target for a number of ground strafing He.111. My aircraft was set on fire as I left it. I walked to the lake and tried to start another aircraft but was forced to leave and this aircraft was also bombed.

Combat Report during morning patrol of 2½ hours.

Attacked one He.111 setting his port engine on fire and turning noticed three He.111 approaching aerodrome at a low altitude. I attacked this formation each aircraft in turn from astern. This formation broke up and made off in different directions. I followed one firing and killed the rear gunner two burst entered the nose of the fuselage when I left the aircraft it was losing speed and height. I broke off the attack as the lake was being bombed so I attacked the bombing He.111 as it made his second run. I was out of ammunition so I made feint attacks and the He.111 left the lake. I noticed another He.111 approaching the lake and my feint attacks were also successful in driving the enemy away. During this patrol I am certain of causing two He.111 to crash the third being unconfirmed.

Afternoon Patrol.

I attempted to staff an aircraft but left owing to bomb attacks and I found a deserted Norge gun and with the aid of Pilot Officer Purdy we were able to drive a He.111 away. A number of hits were observed. The bomber released his bombs but they were not accurate. Pilot Officer Purdy, although badly burnt, assisted me to start an aircraft when we were being bombed and machine gunned. I joined up with my C.O. and attacked a He.111 This He.111 was set on fire, one engine and crashed.

I lost my C.O. and then noticed him attacking a formation of He.111. I saw the formation being broken up and the He.111 dived into the snow in one of the valleys. The C.O. prevented any of these He.111 from attack the lake. I then attacked another three He.111 during the course of my patrol how much damage I inflicted I cannot say as there was always another He. to attack. I remember seeing an He.111 flying low along a valley I attacked this aircraft and killed the rear gunner. I placed a short burst in the fuselage which caused the He. to drop his undercarriage I broke away as I was running short of petrol and lost certain of my position. I landed on the lake and saw 3 Ju.88 approaching the lake, so I took off again and attacked these aircraft eventually force landing through lack of petrol. In all I had sixteen combats but what distressed me was being compelled to break off my attacks by having to conserve my ammunition which perhaps enabled me to place an accurate burst at enemy aircraft and having no quick refuelling and rearming facilities. For myself I know I shot down two He.111 and helped my C.O. on another. I am also certain that I scored four other victories but I had always to leave my target there would be another attacking the lake. The other officers worked themselves to a standstill helping to refuel and rearm whilst under severe gun-fire and continuous bombing attacks.