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OFFENSIVE OPERATION.

26/8/41.

Three Whirlwinds Mk.1. of 263 Squadron, (F/Lt. Pugh, F/Lt. Hughes and F/O Coghlan) took off from Predannack at 1132 accompanied by 10 Spitfires Mk. 2 L.R. of 66 Squadron to make a low level attack on Lannion aerodrome. They crossed the English coast at 1137 at 100 feet. Crossing the Channel at 50 feet landfall was made at Les Sept Isles at 1210. Flying South West they skirted the coast, outside Ile Grande where a dummy aerodrome was seen with ME 109s and JU 87s. (presumably dummies) parked on it. They followed the coast to Pte. de Sehar and from there turned up the river Le Legner flying in line astern at zero feet. F/Lt. Pugh leading sighted Lannion church at 1220, and at the same moment saw two blister hangers on the North bank of the river, apparently at Meslar. He turned North from this point and saw two JU 88s. parked closely in line astern between the hangers. Opening fire from 300 feet he gave a 3 seconds burst, and saw explosions in both aircraft approximately in the centre sections. Both aircraft immediately caught fire with large dark red flares.

F/O Coghlan followed noting Pugh's two JU 88s in flames, and attacked 2 JU 88s. parked nearer to the aerodrome from 300 to 200 feet. He observed his complete burst straddle both aircraft, and there were many explosions on the fuselage of both aircraft from the H.E. Incendiary ammunition. He also saw smoke and some flame come from both machines. He then did a left handed turn and did a left handed turn and did a flat dive on a JU 88 parked in a field still South of the aerodrome. The machine was straddled, but results were not observed. F/Lt Hughes attacked a JU 88 parked in the South dispersal area, and saw it start to burn. Going out to the North East of the aerodrome a machine gun position on the edge of a wood about 1½ miles North East of the aerodrome opened fire at him. He attacked it without observing results. One puff of black smoke was seen over the aerodrome. Otherwise there was no Flak or ground opposition other than the M/G fire mentioned above.

No fighters were seen: no balloons: no shipping other than fishing vessels close inshore.

The Pilots report admirable escort by 66 Squadron who kept very close to them. Visibility was 25 miles with 6/10 cloud at 2000/2500 feet.

The JU 88s. were camouflaged black. The Pilots are unable to say with any degree of certainty how many there were in all. Five were left in flames. Two others were seen clearly, and many others were seen dispersed.

The South dispersal area appears to have been extended as far as the bend of the river at Meslar.

F/LT. Pugh reports that the mouth of the river Le Legner is difficult to find. When the tide is out there is a great deal of sand showing. Coming from the North at low level it is very easy to pass it without noticing it, and one is liable to mistake the river Coal Tredrez for Le Legner.

Three Whirlwinds landed at Predannack at 1253.

Intelligence Officer.
263 Squadron.

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OFFENSIVE OPERATION.

26/8/41.

Four Whirlwinds of 263 Squadron, (Red Section, P/O Rudland and Sgt. Meredith: Yellow Section, P/O Mason and F/Sgt. Brackley) took off from Warmwell at 1130 hours, accompanied by 12 Spitfires Mk. 2 L.R. of 234 Squadron, to attack Maupertus aerodrome. The Channel was crossed at zero feet, and correct landfall was made at 1158 about 1½ miles North West of Maupertus aerodrome. Twelve JU. 87s. were seen on the aerodrome, parked closely together in the North West corner in three rows of four each. P/O Rudland did a steep turn and coming up from the South, with his formation in echelon to Port, attacked the machines, coming down from 250 feet to ground level. In all 5 machines were set on fire. One of the crews was seen running like a rabbit between the machines, but this soon stopped. Going out North P/O Rudland and F/Sgt. Brackley fired at and damaged an R.D.F. station on the top of the hill, about 1 mile North of the aerodrome. Sgt. Meredith also attacked a gun position North of the aerodrome.

There was intense and accurate Flak, and P/O Rudland's machine had a cannon shell through the starboard aileron.

234 Squadron provided cover at 500 feet, and also destroyed 2 JU. 87s. and 1 JU 88. They lost one Spitfire.

The JU 87s. are reported to have had a lot of Yellow in their camouflage, and both P/O Rudland and P/O Mason expressed some doubt as to whether they may not have been dummies. They say that they did not look quite real.

When the formation reached the coast a red signal rocket was fired, and the pilots could see the gun crews running to their posts when they sighted the aerodrome.

The visibility was 10 miles, with 9/10 cloud at 1500 feet. Four Whirlwinds landed at Warmwell at 1235.

SECRET.

From:- Sector Intelligence Officer. Colerne.
To:- Officer Commanding, 263 Squadron.
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Prisoner of War Reports.

The following is a extract from "Prisoner of War Reports"
dated 1.10.41.

"British Raid on LANNION."

Unfortunately neither of these crews was at Lannion aerodrome when three Whirlwind escorted by ten long-range Spitfires made the attack on August 26th referred to in Fighter Command Intelligence Summary No 274

As far as they knew, however, the British claims - five aircraft destroyed and four damaged - were substantially correct. It was said that two of the aircraft destroyed were D.O. 217's not JU 88's, but this could not be confirmed.

The aircraft were lined up outside the repair handlers, which were also riddled with bullets.

(Signed) F/O.
Sector Intelligence Officer,
R.A.F. Station. Colerne.