

RAF pilot mobbed by cheering crowd

Worthing Herald, September 9th 1940

POLISH HERO MOBBED BY CHEERING CROWD

AT LEAST SIX MORE NAZI PLANES WERE ADDED ON WEDNESDAY TO THE ACCUMULATION OF WRECKED ENEMY FIGHTERS AND BOMBERS THAT LITTER THE COUNTRYSIDE IN THIS PART OF SOUTH-EAST ENGLAND.

R.A.F. Fighters intercepted a strong force of German planes when they crossed the coast line at lunch-time, and in a thrilling air battle that lasted over half an hour six planes were brought down.

TWO MORE GERMAN MACHINES FOUND A WATERY GRAVE OFF THE COAST.

It was the most thrilling of the several air battles that this south-east coast town has had.

Ignoring all warnings to take cover, thousands of people stood in the shelter of doorways and in streets of the town to watch the battle.

Their cries of "There's another" and "He's down," were mingled with cheers as the fighters did their work.

The crews of at least two planes baled out. One airman landed near a waterworks on the outskirts of the town; another came down a short distance away.

Further along the coast the crew of a Junkers 87, one aged about 30 and the other in his early 20's, were taken prisoner by the military, who were there as soon as the prisoners.

When two of the captured airmen were brought by an Army lorry to a police station hundreds of people lined the street. The prisoners, one of whom was wounded in the head, marched quickly out of sight.

Machine gun bullets spattered on roof tops in a thickly populated area, and along one stretch of concrete road adults and children "dug" out bullets.

On a stretch of Downland not more than five miles from the town a Messerschmitt 110 twin-engined fighter was so badly

damaged that it crashed. The machine crashed on the side of a hill. Neither occupant was badly hurt. They scrambled from the machine, which caught fire.

They then made off in the direction of the coast, but before they had gone half a mile they were arrested by soldiers.

One Burst— Smoke Poured Out

The Messerschmitt was first attacked over the town by two Hurricanes, and after the first burst, smoke poured from it. One Hurricane left the battle to attend to another enemy, and the other carried on the fight. The German plane appeared to try to manoeuvre its way towards the sea, but after a short skirmish, seemed to get completely out of control, and began to spin down to earth.

Mr Herbert Archer watched a terrific fight over his house, which is situated at one of the highest spots in the district. This fight resulted in the "death" of a twin-engined light bomber, believed to be a Messerschmitt Jaguar. It crashed within a few hundred yards of his house, exploded, and burned out. The crew made parachute landings and were taken prisoner.

"Shortly after hearing some-



THIS NAZI PLANE won't attempt any more raids

what intensive machine gun fire, I took shelter in a thick hedge," Mr Archer said. "I had a magnificent view to the north. There seemed to be scores of little white flies in the sky, all spitting machine gun bullets. I had not been there very long before I saw two parachutes coming down, followed shortly afterwards by a plane absolutely out of control. It turned over and over, and finally struck the Downs. There was an explosion and a big flash of flame was followed by a big cloud of smoke.

"I made my way to the top of the lane, thinking I might be able to give some assistance, but was called back by a policeman. Later an Army lorry brought a young Polish airman to the scene of the crash, and a policeman explained to the crowd that he was the pilot of the British fighter who had brought the enemy down. It was said that the Pole had brought down three planes."

The Pole was mobbed by the cheering crowd and soldiers and police had to force a path for him to the lorry.

He was pilot of a Hurricane which he had landed safely west of the town. He had been shot through the wrist and his plane's petrol tank had been pierced.

Continued page 7, column 5.

When he alighted from his machine he cheerfully signed autographs for members of the public, using his uninjured hand.

One of the engines of this plane had been blown nearly fifty yards away when it exploded. Its tail landed half a mile away.

Another twin-engined German plane tried to escape British fighters by diving to within 50 feet of the sea. Smoke was coming from its tail. A British fighter dived down after it, and as the German tried to regain height the fighter closed in on the sea side and gave it a final burst. The German crashed with a thud which was heard by hundreds on the shore.

Dozens of dog fights were fought over the town, and it is known that these ended in favour of the R.A.F., although the final "kills" were not made within view of the thousands of watchers.