AWM2022.61.524.

[1/22]

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

OPERATIONS No. 453 SQUADRON

R.A.A.F.

DEC. 1942 to JUN. 1943

AWM 64
[1/221]

VERY SECRET

OPERATIONS No. 453 SQUADRON, R.A.A.F.

DECEMBER, 1942.

O.R.B. 7.12.42 — Aircraft - Spitfires VB — Convoy Patrol.

Q.	Sgt. Stansfield.	Pilot	Time.
W.	Sgt. Swift.	"	
V.	P/O. Ewins.	"	10.45 - 12.20.
X.	P/O. Darcey.	"	

No incident.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x

O.R.B. 8.12.42 — Aircraft - Spitfires VB — Convoy Patrol.

Y.	P/O. White.	Pilot.	Time.
Q.	Sgt. Stansfield.	"	
H.	Sgt. Leith.	"	10.25 - 12.15
A.	Sgt. McDermott.	"	
J.	F/O. Barrien	"	
K.	P/O. Parker	"	

No incident.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x

O.R.B. 9.12.42 — Aircraft - Spitfires VB — Sweep.

F.	S/L. Ratten.	Pilot.	
B.	Sgt. Ford.	"	
J.	P/O. Long.	"	
D.	Sgt. McDermott	"	
G.	FO/. Barrien	"	Time.
H.	Sgt. Leith	"	
U.	F/Lt. Yarra	"	15.35 - 16.45
V.	P/O. Thornley	"	
T.	P/O. Ewins.	"	
Y.	P/O. White.	"	
X.	P/O. Esau.	"	
Z.	P/O. Hansell	"	

The rendezvous was with No. 350 Squadron at Hawkinge - 18,000'. A wide orbit was made skirting the area Calais - Cap Gris Nez at 22,000'. A number of E/A were seen in the distance, but there was no engagement. The weather was good visibility being unlimited. 6/10 cloud at 15,000'.

D.I.S. 9.12.42 — Spitfires, Typhoons and Whirlwind bombers were despatched on harassing operations over Northern France the the Low Countries and Spitfires carried out sweeps over the Pas De Calais and off Cherbourg.

F.C.I.S. 9.12.42 — One squadron of Spitfires IX and one squadron of Spitfires VB left at about 1545 hours for an uneventful sweep over the Pas de Calais at 22 - 28,000 feet.

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Out just west of Gravelines 14,000-17,000 ft.
Flak: - Slight heavy flak S. of Hardelot over target and S. of Dunkirk. S/Ldr. Watts (616 Squadron) reports several jettison tanks from high cover fell through Ibsley wing on crossing French coast.

Weather: - No cloud. Thick ground haze. Visibility above haze unlimited. In haze 15 miles.

F.C.I.S. No. 404

Twenty-one U.S. marauders escorted by 8 squadrons of Spitfires attacked Merville. Bombing results were fair. Combats resulted in 3 FW.190s being damaged for the loss of one Spitfire and pilot.

A.M.B. No. 11050

Spitfires accompanying American medium-bombers to Merville saw bombs explode on the airfield and dispersals. An Australian pilot officer and other covering Spitfires damaged a number of enemy aircraft.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 179

It was decided to carry out Ramrod 179 against Merville A/F.

Bombers. 21 Marauders (U.S.A.S.C.)

Fighters.

Close Escort	131 and 165 Squadrons (10 Group) Spits V.
Escort Cover	453 and 616 Squadrons (10 Group) Spits V.
High Cover	129 & 222 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spits IX.
Forward Target Support Wing	403 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits IX.

Bombers: - 20 out of 21 Marauders dropped 155 x 300 lb. bombs with fair results. All aircraft returned safely.

Close Escort, Escort Cover, & High Cover Wings: - The Exeter, Ibsley, and Hornchurch Wings made rendezvous with the bombers over Dungeness at 1100 hours at 12,000 ft. and escorted the bombers to the target via Hardelot. The target was reached at 1119 hrs. stepped up to 23,000 ft. After turning left a small formation of enemy aircraft totalling from 10-15 were encountered. Of those that attacked the bombers from above and from below, one of the Close Escort Squadrons damaged 3 for the loss of 1 pilot. The High Cover Wing were bounced by 4 FW.190s over the coast near Gravelines to no effect. The formation returned without further incident to base.

Weather: - Over Amiens and Lille/Vendeville A/Fs hazy up to 8/10,000 ft., clear above. Clear with good visibility over other targets.

Enemy Casualties: 3 FW.190s damaged (131 Squadron)
Our Casualties: P/O. White (R.A.A.F.) 165 Squadron, N.Y.R.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1100 hours twenty-three Spitfires VB of 131 and 165 Squadrons (close escort) twenty-one Spitfires VB and VI of 453 and 616 Squadrons (escort cover) and twenty-five Spitfires IX of 129 and222 Squadrons (high cover) made rendezvous over Dungeness with twenty-one Marauders of the U.S.A.A.C. The formation flew to the target area where bombs were seen to fall on the N.E. corner of the airfield and on the northern dispersal area. Small formations of Me.109s and F.W.190s were encountered over and on leaving the target area and as a result of combats three F.W.190s were damaged for the loss of one Spitfire and pilot of 165 Squadron.

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O.R.B. 31.7.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB & VC. SCRAMBLE.

Aus. 403046 P/O. R.C. Ford Time Up: 2135
Aus. 412624 F/O. F.R. McAuliffe Time Down: 2200

F/O. McAuliffe and P/O. Ford scrambled in 1¼ minutes and patrolled Bournemouth at 4,000'. E/A were never reported nearer than 50 miles.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 31.7.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB & VC. RAMROD.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. K.M. Barclay
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. E.A. Esau
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins, R.H.
Aus. 408172 F/O. R.J. Darcey
Aus. 408606 F/O. T.A. Swift
Aus. 401071 F/O. R.J. Long Time Up: 1020
Aus. 403924 F/O. L.J. Hansell Time Down: 1150
Aus. 403000 F/O. P.V. McDade
Aus. 402949 P/O. J.H. Greaves
Aus. 403319 P/O. R.C. Clemesha
Aus. 401566 W/O. J.W. Nicholls
Aus. 413707 F/Sgt. R. Yarra

The Squadron was airborne at 0800 hrs to Biggin Hill. They were to have gone to Manston but this was changed at the last minute owing to a heavy sea mist rolling in there. F/O. Ewins led Blue Section. Having landed at Biggin Hill, they took off again for Manston and from there took part in Ramrod as escortcover to 20 Marauders bombing Merville Aerodrome. R/V Dungeness 1100 hrs at 12,000' and flew on starboard side of formation 5,000' above; crossed in Hardelot 17,000'. E/A were reported to N. and S. of target but not seen. Escorted formation out to Gravelines and made one orbit there whilst bombers continued on homewards course; then back to Manston. Ground haze up to 12,000', visibility excellent. After lunch Squadron as part of the Wing returned to base.

From Headquarters 11 Group.

Composite Report Ramrod No. 179 31.7.43

A. 453, 616, 131, 165. B. 9 Spits. V. 12 Spits VI. 12 Spits VB. 11 Spits VB. C. 1025-1155 D. Escort and escort cover E. 1115-1130 F. 1 FW.190 probable P/O. Lukof (R.A.A.F.) 131 Squadron. 1 FW.190 damaged P/O. Lukef (R.A.A.F.) 131 Squadron. 1 FW.190 damaged F/Lt. Sampson 131 Squadron. G. P/O. White (R.A.A.F.) 165 Squadron N.Y.R.

General: - Ibsley Wing (453 and 616 Squadrons) led by W/Cdr. Thomas acted as escort cover and Exeter Wing led by W/Cdr. Malfroy acted as close escort. Wings climbed to Dungeness and R/V made with bombers at 1100 hrs. With Ibsley 1,000 ft. above Exeter. Crossed S. of Hardelot stepped up 14,000-17,000 ft. Bombs observed to fall N.E. corner of airfield and on N. dispersal area. 3 E/A made vertical head on attack on bombers as they bombed. From target to French coast attacks by about 8 FW.190s diving through beehive and from below. An

a/c was seen burning on beach N.W. of Gravelines.

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F.S.I.S. No. 404

At 0628 hours 24 U.S. Marauders escorted by 6 Squadrons of Spitfires left to attack Woensdrecht airfield. Combats ensued and one FW.190 was damaged. One Spitfire and pilot are missing.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 174.

Bombers: - 24 Marauders

Fighters: -

Close Escort	453 & 616 Squadrons (Ibsley) (Spit V)
Escort Cover	66 & 504 Squadrons (Church Stanton) (Spit V)
High Cover	129 & 222 Squadrons (Hornchurch) (Spit IX)

Bombers. 11 Marauders out of 24 despatched bombed the target with believed good results against strong enemy opposition. They claim six enemy aircraft destroyed, 5 probably destroyed and one damaged for the loss of one Marauder and four damaged by Flak. 88 x 300 lb. bombs were dropped

Close Escort and Escort Cover. The Ibsley and Church Stanton Wings made rendezvous at Orfordness at 12,000 ft. at 0628 hrs. with the bombers and High Cover Wing. The formation flew on course to the target crossing the Dutch coast near Domburg. On reaching Zuid Beveland, the bombers turned north then south and then north to the target area, where they were attacked when they turned right after bombing, by 15/20 FW.190s in pairs out of the sun. Several pilots of one of the close escort squadrons were engaged and as a result one FW.190 was damaged. The escort cover wing flying slightly behind and 1,000 ft. above the bombers were attacked by 2 Me.109s from astern and one pilot is missing. This wing were followed some way out to sea by single FW.190s.

Enemy Casualties:	1 FW.190 damaged
Our Casualties:	F/O. Zurmoski (66 Squadron) missing.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 0628 hours twenty-one Spitfires VB of 453 and 616 Squadrons from Ibsley as close escort, twenty Spitfires VB of 66 and 504 Squadrons from Church Stanton as escort cover, and twenty-four Spitfires IX of 129 and 222 Squadrons from Hornchurch as high cover, made rendezvous over Orfordness with 24 Marauders of the U.S.A.A.C.

On reaching the target area the bombers were attacked by 15-20 F.W.190s in pairs out of the sun. 616 Squadron engaged these e/a and as a result of combats 1 F.W.190 was damaged. A marauder was seen to go down in flames over the Goes area, and an F.W.190 blew up as a result of defensive fire from the bombers. On leaving the target 66 Squadron was attacked by 2 F.W.190s from astern, one of our pilots fired a short burst at the E/A, but no claim is made. One Spitfire and pilot of 66 Squadron are missing.

The high cover wing dived on 3 e/a which were about to attack the other escort squadrons and drove them off.

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O.R.B. 28.7.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB & VC. RAMROD.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. K.M. Barclay
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. D.G. Andrews
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. E.A.R. Esau
Aus. 404811 F/O. G.G. Galwey
Aus. 405319 F/O. F.R. McDermott — Time Up: 1808
Aus. 411790 F/O. C.R. Leith — Time Down: 1925
Aus. 402949 P/O. J.H. Greaves
Aus. 403917 P/O. J.H. Ferguson
Aus. 401566 W/O. J.W.P. Nicholls

At 1540 hrs. 9 a/c took off for Tangmere to be briefed and act as Escort Cover to 18 Marauders bombing Tricqueville. Squadron airborne at 1808 and should have R/V with bombers but they were late at Beachy Head (R/V point) and another box acting as diversion were also late, so that escort and escort cover squadrons were completely put out and the whole thing became abortive and squadron landed at Tangmere at 1925 hours, and were then informed that they were to stay the night and crack off at dawn for Martlesham Heath.

From H.Q. 11 Group.

Composite Report Ramrod 168 28.7.43

A. 453 and 616 Squadrons. B. 453 - 10 Spits VB 616 - 12 Spits VI (including W/Cdr. Thomas). C. 1820-1940 D. Escort cover. E. N/A. F & G. Nil. H. The Wing set course from Tangmere at 1825 hours. and arrived over Beachy Head at 7,000 ft. Turned N. to gain height, sighted 18 Marauders 15 miles N. of Beachy Head and formed up behind them following them to Beachy where they arrived at 1840 hrs. Bombers then swung round and headed 300 degs. The Wing following them but as the bombers showed no sights of turning back to make R/V on time W/Cdr. Thomas and 616 Squadron broke away and returned to Beachy where they arrived at 1845 hrs. (R/V time). The Squadron orbitted Beachy at 14,000 ft. until 1850 hrs. when 14 Marauders were sighted coming from the N. other Spit. Squadrons joined up with the 14 Marauders and the formation crossed out over Beachy Head at 1852 hrs. About half way over the Channel W/Cdr. Thomas realising they were on a wrong course(125 degs instead of 188 degs) called up Tangmere and said "This is all wrong". The formation continued until just W. of Berck when they were recalled and 616 Squadron were ordered to return direct to Tangmere. 453 Squadron stayed with the original 18 Marauders and went out with them about half way across the Channel, escorting them back to a point near Hastings and then returning direct to Tangmere. Bombs were seen to be jettisoned about 20 miles from the English coast. Weather: - Belt of coastal fog up to 400 ft. and about 4 miles wide just off the English coast. Beyond clear. Visibility 20 miles.

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VERY SECRET.

OPERATIONS No. 453 SQUADRON, R.A.A.F.

JANUARY, 1943.

O.R.B. 2.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Sweep.

Aus. 401071	A.	P/O. Long	Pilot
Aus. 403763	C.	P/O. Parker	"
Aus. 404811	H.	F/O. Galwey,	"
Aus. 403319	E.	Sgt. Clemesha	"
Aus. 405111	F.	S/Ldr. Ratten	"
Aus. 411790	D.	Sgt. Leith	"
Aus. 405472	T.	P/O. Esau	"
Aus. 401543	Q.	Sgt. Stansfield	"
Aus. 404795	R.	F/Lt. Andrews	"
Aus. 416094	X.	Sgt. Halcombe	"
Aus. 405117	S.	P/O. Ewins	"
Aus. 403917	V.	Sgt. Ferguson	"

Time.

11.45 - 13.15

Diversionary sweep undertaken with 350 and 122 Squadron. The English coast was crossed at Hastings at 1,000, after which the wing climbed rapidly, 350 at the bottom lead, 453 being in the middle and to starboard, and 122 at the top and to port. The French coast was crossed at Cayrux at 22,000'. The wing then flew to Abbeville, swept round to the left still climbing and returned to base via Berck and Dungeness. No enemy activity seen, or flak. Visibility and weather good.

From H.Q. No. 11 Group.

Hornchurch Composite Circus 243 Report, 2nd January, 1943.

A. W/C. Bentley and 350 Squadron. 453 and 122.
B. 17 Spits VB.
7 Spits VC.
12 Spits IX.
C. 453 up Southend 1146. Down 1315
122 up Hornchurch 1147. 10 down 1335. 2 down Gravesend 1310.
350 up Hornchurch 1150. Down 1315.
D. Second diversion.
E. N/A.
F. Nil.
G. Nil.

General.

Wing crossed English coast at Hastings at 1,000 ft. on time, climbing immediately. 350 bottom leading, 453 middle and to starboard, 122 top and to port, wind 2 90 degrees not 330 degrees as predicted.

French coast crossed Cayeux 12.20 at 21,000, 22,000 and 25,000 ft. Wing flew to Abbeville, climbing and turned left round A/D returned to base via Berck 12.35 hrs., and Dungeness 12.50 hrs. No activity seen at Abbeville/Drucat where vertical vis. good. No flak.

Weather: - Heavy haze at 1200 ft, light haze above. 4/10ths cloud 8,000 ft. in channel, becoming 10/10ths at 12,000 ft. Variable cloud 8,000 ft. over France.

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O.R.B. 3.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

					Time.
Aus.	411059	V.	P/O. Thornley	Pilot	08.45 - 10.10
Aus.	416094	S.	Sgt. Malcombe	"	08.45 - 10.10
Aus.	411404	Q.	Sgt. Swift	"	09.50 - 11.15
Aus.	408989	X.	P/O. Gray	"	09.50 - 11.15
Aus.	405472	V.	P/O. Esau	"	10.55 - 12.10
Aus.	401543	S.	Sgt. Stansfield	"	10.55 - 12.10
Aus.	403924	Z.	P/O. Hansell	"	11.55 - 12.40
Aus.	403917	Q.	Sgt. Ferguson	"	11.55 - 12.40

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 4.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

					Time.
Aus.	401071	J.	P/O. Long	Pilot	09.10 - 10.35
Aus.	403763	C.	P/O. Parker	"	09.10 - 10.35
Aus.	411521	G.	P/O. Rickard	"	09.10 - 10.35
Aus.	405319	D.	P/O. McDermott	"	09.10 - 10.35
Aus.	408606	E.	P/O. Swift	"	09.10 - 10.35
Aus.	411790	H.	Sgt. Leith	"	09.10 - 10.35
Aus.	408989	B.	P/O. Gray	"	09.10 - 10.35
Aus.	405117	S.	P/O. Ewins	"	10.15 - 11.40
Aus.	405989	B.	P/O. Gray	"	10.15 - 11.40
Aus.	405472	Q.	P/O. Esau	"	10.15 - 11.40
Aus.	411059	V.	P/O. Thornley	"	10.15 - 11.40
Aus.	408606	E.	P/O. Swift	"	11.15 - 12.30
Aus.	411790	H.	Sgt. Leith	"	11.15 - 12.30
Aus.	405319	D.	P/O. McDermott	"	11.15 - 12.30
Aus.	404795	R.	F/L. Andrews	"	11.15 - 12.30
Aus.	401071	J.	P/O. Long	"	12.05 - 13.15
Aus.	403763	C.	P/O. Parker	"	12.05 - 13.15
Aus.	411521	G.	P/O. Rickard	"	12.05 - 13.15
Aus.	403924	Z.	P/O. Hansell	"	12.05 - 13.15
Aus.	408989	B.	P/O. Gray	"	12.50 - 14.20
Aus.	408606	E.	P/O. Swift	"	13.55 - 14.15
Aus.	405117	S.	P/O. Ewins	"	12.50 - 14.20
Aus.	408989	B.	P/O. Gray	"	12.50 - 14.20
Aus.	405472	Q.	P/O. Esau	"	12.50 - 14.20
Aus.	411059	V.	P/O. Thornley	"	12.50 - 14.20
Aus.	411404	U.	Sgt. Swift	"	14.55 - 16.00
Aus.	403917	Z.	Sgt. Ferguson	"	15.45 - 16.50
Aus.	416094	S.	Sgt. Calcombe	"	15.45 - 16.50
Aus.	403319	C.	Sgt. Clemesha	"	15.45 - 16.40
Aus.	413000	D.	Sgt. Morath	"	15.40 - 16.40

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 5.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

					Time.
Aus.	403319	H.	Sgt. Clemesha	Pilot	14.15 - 15.30
Aus.	411521	G.	P/O. Rickard	"	14.15 - 15.30
Aus.	411790	B.	Sgt. Leith	"	15.00 - 16.15
Aus.	413000	E.	Sgt. Morath	"	15.00 - 16.15
Aus.	403924	J.	P/O. Hansell	"	15.45 - 16.55
Aus.	404795	?.	F/L. Andrews	"	15.45 - 16.55
Aus.	411059	V.	P/O. Thornley	"	16.20 - 17.20
Aus.	401543	Q.	Sgt. Stansfield	"	16.20 - 17.20

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

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O.R.B. 9.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

				Time.
Aus. 407662	A.	F/L. Barclay	Pilot	08.50 - 09.35
Aus. 408606	E.	P/O. Swift	"	08.50 - 09.35
Aus. 407747	G.	F/O. Barrien	"	08.50 - 09.35
Aus. 413000	C.	Sgt. Morath	"	08.50 - 09.35
Aus. 404795	?.	F/L. Andrews	"	09.45 - 10.00
Aus. 411404	U.	Sgt. Swift	"	09.45 - 10.00
Aus. 408172	Z.	P/O. Darcay	"	09.45 - 10.00
Aus. 401543	Q.	Sgt. Stansfield	"	09.45 - 10.00

No incident.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x

O.R.B. 9.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Sweep.

Aus. 405111	F.	S/L. Ratten	
Aus. 411790	C.	Sgt. Leith	
Aus. 407662	B.	F/L. Barclay	
Aus. 408606	E.	P/O. Swift	
Aus. 401071	G.	P/O. Long	Time.
Aus. 403319	H.	Sgt. Clemesha	
Aus. 404795	?.	F/L. Andrews	
Aus. 411404	W.	Sgt. Swift	12.45 - 14.05
Aus. 405117	S.	P/O. Ewins	
Aus. 403924	U.	P/O. Hansell	
Aus. 411059	T.	P/O. Thornley	
Aus. 408172	Q.	P/O. Darcey	

Rendezvous with 350 Squadron at Manston at 13.08 hours and 500', course was set for Mardyck at 13.11 hours. Off the French coast the Squadron turned N.W. to gain height, and crossed at Mardyck at 25,000. The weather proved to be unsuitable for the operation, so dived to east of St. Omer to 18,000'. There was no reaction, so the squadron did a right hand orbit, maintaining height, 122 Squadron dived in to St. Omer below, and this Squadron orbitted right to cover them as some E/A were reported to be coming up. There was no engagement, so withdrew to Sangatte and, seeing no E/A set course for base, crossing the English coast at Deal. Weather over France - hazy cloud at 30,000', 5/10 to 6/10 at 8,000'. Vertical visibility between cloud layers was good.

B.C.I.S. 9.1.43 2 Spitfire IX and 2 Spitfire VB and VC squadrons swept over Mardyck and St. Omer, seeing only a few F.W. 190s, of which six engaged the top squadron.

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O.R.B. 13.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Sweep.

Aus. 405111	F.	S/L. Ratten	Pilot	
	G.	W/C. Slater	"	
Aus. 407662	A.	F/L. Barclay	"	Time.
Aus. 402129	B.	P/O. McCann	"	
Aus. 404811	H.	F/O. Galwey	"	11.55 - 12.55
Aus. 403319	J.	Sgt. Clemesha	"	
Aus. 404795	?	F/L. Andrews	"	
Aus. 408989	W.	P/O. Gray	"	
Aus. 405472	S.	P/O. Esau	"	
Aus. 411059	U.	P/O. Thornley	"	
Aus. 403917	Z.	Sgt. Ferguson	"	

Rendezvous with 350 Squadron at North Foreland, and set course 12.09 hours. A left hand orbit was made off Dunkirk and the French coast was crossed at 12.25 hours at 23,000'. The Squadron dived to 18,000' over St. Omer, and started a right hand orbit. This was changed to a left hand orbit when A/C were seen from the direction of Lille, but they proved to be friendly. The orbit was then completed to the Boulogne area. No reaction, so withdrew crossing coast at Sangatte. Accurate Heavy flak was encountered in Dunkirk area, 10/10 cloud at 10,000'. Visibility horizontal, good - vertical, variable.

From H.Q. Hornchurch. No. 11 Group. Composite Circus 249 Report.

A. 122, 64, 350 (Belgian) 453 (R.A.A.F.)
B. 22 Spit IX's 15 VB's 8 VC's.
C. 122 up Hornchurch 1158 down 1320, 64 up Fairlop 1150 down 1320, 350 up Hornchurch 1153, down 1315, 453 up Southend 1155 down 1255.
D. 1st Fighter Echelon
E. 1230 - 1246. F. Nil. G. Nil.

General. After R/V at N. Foreland 350 and 453 climbed to cross coast at Mardyck at 23000 ft. Then dived to 19000 ft. over St. Omer. Nothing seen on account of 10/10ths cloud 122 and 64 following 2 mins, behind 350 and 453. Reached Mardyck at 10,000 ft. made climbing orbit to port to gain height and re-entered at Gravelines at 22,000 ft at 1230 hrs. On hearing report of bogies from 453 leader 122 and 64 climbed to BourbourgVille and Audruice but bogies reported friendly, 122 and 64 remained in area until bombers, escort 453 and 350 went out near Calais then patrolled Mardyck-Calais area 24000 ft. withdrawing at 1245 as no reports E/A. Flak. 350 and 453 report heavy flak 30/40 bursts very accurate from Dunkerque.
Weather - clear in Straits and 10 miles inland then 10/10ths cumulus cloud at 10,000 ft. horizontal vis good.

F.C.I.S. 13.1.43 At 1200 hours, 11 Bomber Command Bostons and three Spitfire VB squadrons left for St. Omer/Fort Rouge. Eight of the F.W.190s were seen but did not attack.

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O.R.B. 15.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrol.

				Time.
Aus. 408172 Z.	P/O. Darcey	Pilot		10.40 - 11.35
Aus. 403917 Q.	Sgt. Ferguson	"		10.40 - 12.15
Aus. 404795 U.	F/L. Andrews	"		11.35 - 12.55
Aus. 415094 W.	Sgt. Halcombe	"		11.35 - 12.55
Aus. 403319 H.	F/Sgt. Clemesha	"		12.15 - 13.45
Aus. 411521 C.	P/O. Rickard	"		12.15 - 13.45
Aus. 407747 G.	F/O. Barrien	"		13.05 - 14.15
Aus. 411790 E.	Sgt. Leith	"		13.05 - 14.15

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 16.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrol.

				Time.
Aus. 405117 S.	P/O. Ewins	Pilot		
Aus. 408989 W.	P/O. Gray	"		
Aus. 403917 U.	Sgt. Ferguson	"		12.50 - 14.15
Aus. 405319 D.	P/O. McDermott	"		

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 17.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrol.

				Time.
Aus. 411790 C.	Sgt. Leith	Pilot		08.55 - 10.15
Aus. 401071 J.	P/O. Long	"		08.55 - 10.15
Aus. 404811 H.	F/O. Galway,	"		10.00 - 10.20
Aus. 408994 D.	Sgt. Henderson	"		10.00 - 10.20
Aus. 401071 J.	P/O. Long	"		13.55 - 15.20
G.	W/C. Slater	"		13.55 - 15.20
Aus. 404811 H.	F/O. Galway	"		15.10 - 16.20
Aus. 411521 D.	P/O. Rickard	"		15.10 - 16.20
Aus. 408172 S.	P/O. Darcay	"		16.00 - 16.35
Aus. 416345 T.	Sgt. Harris	"		16.00 - 16.35

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 18.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrol.

				Time.
Aus. 404795 U.	F/L. Andrews	Pilot		08.35 - 10.00
Aus. 403924 T.	P/O. Hansell	"		08.35 - 10.00
Aus. 404795 U.	F/L. Andrews	"		10.45 - 12.00
Aus. 403924 T.	P/O. Hansell	"		10.45 - 12.00
Aus. 411790 J.	Sgt. Leith	"		11.40 - 12.50
Aus. 408994 D.	Sgt. Henderson	"		11.40 - 12.50
Aus. 407662 A.	F/L. Barclay	"		12.30 - 13.55
Aus. 403763 H.	P/O. Parker	"		11.45 - 12.55
Aus. 411521 E.	P/O. Rickard	"		11.45 - 12.55
Aus. 404795 U.	F/L. Andrews	"		13.45 - 14.50
Aus. 403924 T.	P/O. Hansell	"		13.45 - 14.50
Aus. 408172 Q.	P/O. Darcay	"		12.30 - 14.15
Aus. 416094 S.	Sgt. Halcombe	"		12.30 - 14.15
Aus. 411521 E.	P/O. Rickard	"		14.00 - 14.25
Aus. 408994 D.	Sgt. Henderson	"		14.00 - 14.25
Aus. 403763 H.	P/O. Parker	"		14.30 - 15.55
Aus. 416345 S.	Sgt. Harris	"		14.30 - 15.55
Aus. 411790 J.	Sgt. Leith	"		15.30 - 16.55
Aus. 408994 D.	Sgt. Henderson	"		15.30 - 16.55
Aus. 405472 W.	P/O. Esau	"		12.30 - 13.55

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

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O.R.B. 21.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

				Time.
Aus. 405117	U.	P/O. Ewins	Pilot	09.00 - 09.50
Aus. 403924	W.	P/O. Hanseel	"	09.00 - 09.50
Aus. 405319	D.	P/O. McDermott	"	11.30 - 12.00
Aus. 405117	H.	P/O. Ewins	"	11.30 - 13.00
Aus. 411521	J.	P/O. Rickard	"	11.50 - 12.40
Aus. 407662	A.	F/L. Barclay	"	12.40 - 14.00
Aus. 413000	E.	Sgt. Morath	"	12.40 - 14.00
	G.	W/C. Slater	"	12.40 - 14.00
Aus. 403763	F.	P/O. Parker	"	12.40 - 12.45
Aus. 405319	D.	P/O. McDermott	"	12.40 - 14.00
Aus. 411521	J.	P/O. Rickard	"	13.00 - 13.10
	G.	W/C. Slater	"	14.35 - 16.00
Aus. 402129	F.	P/O. McCann	"	14.35 - 16.00
Aus. 407662	A.	F/L. Barclay	"	14.35 - 16.00
Aus. 413000	E.	Sgt. Morath	"	14.35 - 16.00
Aus. 405319	D.	P/O. McDermott	"	14.35 - 16.00
Aus. 403924	H.	P/O. Hansell	"	13.45 - 15.05
Aus. 411521	J.	P/O. Rickard	"	13.45 - 15.05
Aus. 403763	H.	P/O. Parker	"	15.45 - 16.55
Aus. 411521	J.	P/O. Rickard	"	15.45 - 16.55
	G.	W/C. Slater	"	16.35 - 17.45
Aus. 402129	F.	P/O. McCann	"	16.35 - 17.45
Aus. 408172	A.	P/O. Darcey	"	16.35 - 17.45
Aus. 413000	E.	Sgt. Morath.	"	16.35 - 17.45

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 21.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Patrols over Maidstone.

				Time.
Aus. 404795	X.	F/L. Andrews	Pilot	11.30 - 13.00
Aus. 408172	V.	P/O. Darcey	"	11.30 - 13.00
Aus. 411059	W.	P/O. Thornley	"	11.30 - 13.00
Aus. 403924	Z.	P/O. Hansell	"	11.30 - 13.00
Aus. 403917	U.	Sgt. Ferguson	"	12.40 - 14.00
Aus. 404795	X.	F/L. Andrews	"	13.45 - 15.05
Aus. 408989	W.	P/O. Gray	"	13.45 - 15.05
Aus. 408172	Z.	P/O. Darcey	"	13.45 - 15.05
Aus. 411059	V.	P/O. Thornley	"	13.45 - 15.05

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 25.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

				Time.
Aus. 405117	T.	P/O. Ewins	Pilot	09.25 - 11.00
Aus. 408989	W.	P/O. Gray	"	09.25 - 11.00
Aus. 403917	U.	Sgt. Ferguson	"	10.35 - 11.50
Aus. 403924	X.	P/O. Hansell	"	10.35 - 11.45
Aus. 403319	H.	F/Sgt. Clemesha	"	11.30 - 13.10
Aus. 405319	D.	P/O. McDermott	"	11.30 - 13.10
Aus. 407747	A.	F/O. Barrien	"	12.40 - 14.10
Aus. 411521	E.	P/O. Rickard	"	12.40 - 14.10

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

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O.R.B. 26.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

				Time.
Aus. 405472	C.	P/O. Esau	Pilot	09.55 - 11.15
Aus. 408172	X.	P/O. Darcey	"	09.55 - 11.15
Aus. 401542	Q.	Sgt. Stansfield	"	10.45 - 11.50
Aus. 416345	Y.	Sgt. Harris	"	10.45 - 11.50
Aus. 405319	D.	P/O. McDermott	"	11.35 - 13.30
Aus. 408994	B.	Sgt. Henderson	"	11.35 - 13.30
Aus. 403924	T.	P/O. Hansell	"	11.20 - 12.45
Aus. 408989	V.	P/O. Gray	"	11.20 - 12.45
Aus. 408172	X.	P/O. Darcey	"	12.30 - 14.00
Aus. 403917	U.	Sgt. Ferguson	"	12.30 - 14.00
Aus. 403319	J.	F/Sgt. Clemesha	"	12.25 - 12.35
Aus. 403763	C.	P/O. Parker	"	12.25 - 12.35
Aus. 407747	A.	P/O. Barrien	"	13.45 - 15.00
Aus. 411521	C.	P/O. Rickard	"	13.45 - 15.00
Aus. 401543	Q.	Sgt. Standfield	"	14.45 - 15.45
Aus. 416345	Y.	Sgt. Harris	"	14.45 - 15.45
Aus. 405319	D.	P/O. McDermott	"	15.30 - 15.45
Aus. 408994	B.	Sgt. Henderson	"	15.30 - 15.45

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 27.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

				Time.
Aus. 411059	V.	P/O. Thornley	Pilot	13.35 - 15.00
Aus. 416345	W.	Sgt. Harris	"	13.35 - 15.00
Aus. 408172	X.	P/O. Darcey	"	14.45 - 15.45
Aus. 403917	U.	Sgt. Ferguson	"	14.45 - 15.45
Aus. 405472	T.	P/O. Esau	"	15.30 - 16.40
Aus. 401543	Z.	Sgt. Stansfield	"	15.30 - 16.40
Aus. 411059	V.	P/O. Thornley	"	16.20 - 17.45
Aus. 416345	W.	Sgt. Harris	"	16.20 - 17.45

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 29.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrol.

				Time.
Aus. 411059	V.	P/O. Thornley	Pilot	08.25 - 09.40
Aus. 401543	U.	Sgt. Stansfield	"	08.25 - 09.45
Aus. 408172	X.	P/O. Darcey	"	09.20 - 10.10
Aus. 408989	W.	P/O. Gray	"	09.20 - 10.10

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 30.1.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

				Time.
Aus. 407747	B.	F/O. Barrien	Pilot	13.40 - 15.00
Aus. 411521	J.	P/O. Rickard	"	13.40 - 15.00
Aus. 403924	Z.	P/O. Hansell	"	14.40 - 16.05
Aus. 411404	W.	Sgt. Swift	"	14.40 - 16.05
Aus. 403763	C.	P/O. Parker	"	15.45 - 16.40
Aus. 405319	D.	P/O. McDermott	"	15.45 - 16.40

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VERY SECRET

OPERATIONS No. 453 SQUADRON, R.A.A.F.

February, 1943.

O.R.B. 1.2.43. Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrol.

			Time.
Aus. 403917	Sgt. Ferguson, J.H.	Pilot	09.10 - 10.30
Aus. 411404	Sgt. Swift, N.F.	"	09.10 - 10.30
Aus. 411059	P/O. Thornley, F.T.	"	10.10 - 11.30
Aus. 401543	Sgt. Stansfield, G.	"	10.10 - 11.30
Aus. 403924	P/O. Hansell, L.J.	"	11.10 - 12.15
Aus. 405472	P/O. Esau, E.A.P.	"	11.10 - 15.15

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 3.2.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Circus.

			Time.
Aus. 407662	F/Lt. Barclay, K.M.	Pilot	10.05 - 11.25
Aus. 407747	F/O. Barrien, J.	"	10.05 - 11.25
Aus. 403319	F/Sgt. Clemesha, R.G.	"	10.05 - 11.25
Aus. 402129	P/O. McCann, F.R.	"	10.05 - 10.15
Aus. 402129	P/O. McCann, F.R.	"	10.20 - 10.45
Aus. 411521	P/O. Rickard, E.T.	"	10.05 - 11.25
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews, D.G.	"	10.05 - 11.25
Aus. 411404	Sgt. Swift, N.F.	"	10.05 - 11.25
Aus. 405117	P/O. Ewins, R.H.S.	"	10.05 - 11.25
Aus. 401543	Sgt. Stansfield, G.	"	10.05 - 11.25
Aus. 408117	P/O. Darcey, R.J.	"	10.05 - 11.25
Aus. 411059	P/O. Thornley, F.T.	"	10.05 - 11.25
33174	W/C. Slater, J.H.	"	10.05 - 11.25

Escorting Venturas to Cambrai. The cloud, however, was 10/10 at 7,000' as far as could be seen over France and Belgium.

From: H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Composite Circus 258 Report 3rd February, 1943.

A. 64, 122, 453. B. 20 Spit. IXs 12 Spit VBs.
C. 64 Fairlop 0955/1133. Hornchurch 0958/1130. 453 Southend 1007/1137.
E. 1050. F. Nil. G. Nil.

R/V Bradwell with Venturas and one Squadron Northolt set course Furnes 1015. After 9 mins. at 0 ft. bombers and Spits VB climbed to 13,000 feet and Spit IXs to 16,000 feet. When 10 miles north of N. Foreland formation ran into north bound convoy with balloons, making it necessary for entire formation to swerve sharply left. When ¾ way across North Sea 10/10ths cloud at 7,000 ft. was encountered making it impossible to pin point position at 1053 i.e. 3 mins. After ETA over target S/Ldr. Compton who was leading wing dived to leader of bomber formation waggling wings and turning to starboard. Bombers immediately changed to course 310 but only for 3 kins. Then changed again to 230. Wing leader then decided to leave bombers owing to risk of petrol shortage and told wing to steer 310 at that time 54 and 122 were 3/4,000 ft. in loose 4s over both boxes of Venturas which were approx. 1/2 mile apart with 453 escorting 1st box and Northolt 2nd box Hornchurch Wing flew for approx, 15 mins in 310 degrees and crossed out between Calais and Gravelines when they reached Calais, which could be seen through the clouds 6/10ths at 2,000/3,000 ft. and observed heavy flak (3 lots of 4 bursts) accurate for height but behind them 64 and 122 which were at 18,000 ft. did not see this flak. Wing recrossed England over Deal. No E/A sighted and no intimation heard over R/T of any

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engagements taking place. Weather: - 10/10ths cloud at 7,000 ft. as far as could be seen over France and Belgium with exception of Calais area when cloud 6/10ths at 2,000/4,000 ft.

E.C.I.S. 3.2.43

At 1015 hours 12 Venturas of Bomber Command with 2 Squadrons of Spitfires IX and 2 squadrons of Spitfires VB left to attack the airfield at Courtrai/Wevelghem. Three miles NW. of the target the bomber abandoned task because of 10/10ths cloud at 2,-4,000 ft. Three of the Spitfire squadrons returned to base and the remaining Spitfires squadron (Spitfires VB) remained with the bombers. On leaving the target area the formation was attacked by about 30 F.W.190s and one Ventura and 4 Spitfires failed to return. The bombers claim 1 F.W.190 destroyed and one damaged; the Spitfires 1 F.W.190 probably destroyed. A total of 6 Spitfires IX squadrons which carried out supporting sweeps saw a few enemy aircraft but had no combats.

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No. 11 Group Report on Circus 258

It was decided to carry out Circus 258 during the morning of the 3rd February, 1943 in two parts - Part 1 for 12 Venturas against Courtrai Aerodrome and Part 11 for 12 Venturas against St. Omer/Fort Rouge Aerodrome, in accordance with No. 11 Group Operation Order No. 368 dated 2nd February, 1943.

Part 1.

Bombers - 12 Venturas of No. 2 Group.
Fighters -

Escort Wing.	Nos. 64, 122 and 453 Squadrons, Hornchurch No. 308 Squadron, Northolt.
Target Support Wing.	Nos. 331 and 332 Squadrons, North Weald.
First Fighter Echelon.	Nos. 340 and 611 Squadrons, Biggin Hill
Second Fighter Echelon.	Nos. 402 and 403 Squadrons, Kenley

Weather: - 10/10ths cloud at 7/10,000 ft. over France as far as could be seen, with the exception of Calais - 6/10ths cloud at 2/4,000 ft.

Escort Wing.

The Hornchurch Wing made rendezvous at Bradwell with the Venturas and one Squadron from Northolt, and set course to Furnes at 1015 hours. After 9 minutes at 0 feet, the bombers and Spitfires V climbed to 13,000 ft. and the Spitfire IX's to 16,000 ft. When three-quarters of the way across the North Sea 10/10ths cloud at 7,000 ft. was encountered, thus making it impossible to pin-point the position at 1053 hours, i.e. 3 minutes after E.T.A. over the target. The Wing Leader dived down to the leader of the bomber formation waggling his wings and turning to starboard. The bombers immediately changed course to 310, but only for three minutes and then changed again to 230. The Wing Leader than decided to leave the bombers owing to risk of petrol shortage and told the Wing to steer at 310. At this time Nos. 64 and 122 Squadrons were at 3/4,000 ft. above the bombers which were at 13,000 ft. No. 453 Squadron were escorting the first box of bombers and the Northolt Squadron the second box of bombers. The wing flew for approximately 15 minutes at 310 degrees and crossed out between Calais and Gravelines. When they reached Calais, which could be seen through 6/10ths cloud at 2/4,000 ft. No. 453 Squadron not knowing where they were had lost height to 4,000 ft. and observed heavy flak, accurate for height but behind them. Nos. 64 and 122 Squadrons which were at 18,000 ft. did not see the flak.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1015 hrs. the Hornchurch wing (20 Spitfires IX of 64 and 122 Squadrons and 12 Spitfires VB of 453 Squadron) and 12 Spitfires VB of 308 Squadron, from Northolt as escort, made rendezvous over Bradwell Bay at zero ft. with 12 Venturas. The formation set course for Furnes and after flying at zero ft. for 9 minutes started climbing. Before reaching the Belgian coast they encountered 10/10 cloud at 7,000 ft. which made the pinpointing of their position impossible. After E.T.A. over the target the Hornchurch wing left the bombers owing to a risk of petrol shortage and returned over the coast between Calais and Gravelines, flying at 3,000 to 4,000 ft. No. E/A were seen. 308 Squadron. escorting the second box of six Venturas reached 14,000 ft. over the estimated target area and when returning were attacked by about 30 F.W. 190s south of Dunkirk. Numerous combats took place with the result that 1 F.W.190 was probably destroyed and four Spitfires and their pilots are missing.

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O.R.B. 3.2.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Circus.

Aus. 405111	S/Ldr. Ratten J.R.	Pilot	
Aus. 411521	P/O. Rickard, E.T.	"	
Aus. 407662	F/Lt. Barclay, K.M.	"	
Aus. 402129	P/O. McCann, F.R.	"	
Aus. 413000	Sgt. Morath, F.A.	"	
Aus. 405319	P/O. McDermott, F.R.	"	Time Up: 15.05
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews, D.G.	"	Time Down: 16.45
Aus. 416345	Sgt. Harris, G.	"	
Aus. 405117	P/O. Ewins, R.H.S.	"	
Aus. 401543	Sgt. Stansfield, G.	"	
Aus. 405472	P/O. Esau, E.A. P.	"	
Aus. 408117	P/O. Darcey, R.W.	"	

Escorting 12 Venturas to Abbeville. Moderate heavy flak over the town and aerodrome, which was accurate for height but slightly behind. Bursts observed on the target. 6/10 cloud at 4,000 ft.

E.C.I.S 3.2.43 At 1530 hours 12 Venturas of Bomber Command with 2 squadrons of Spitfires IX and one of Spitfires VB left to attack engine sheds and marshalling yards at Abbeville. Eleven of the Venturas attacked and bursts were seen along the northern and eastern side of the marshalling yards. Three enemy aircraft were seen in the target area, but did not attack.

From 11 Group, Al. 99 3/2/43. From Hornchurch.

Composite Circus 259 Report.

A. 64, 122, 453.
B. 22 Spit IX's, 12 Spit VB's
C. 122 up Hornchurch 1505 down 1650, 64 Up Fairlop 1505 down 1705, 453 up Southend 1508 down 1647
D. Escort
E. 1510 F. Nil G. Nil

Escort carried out in accordance with Operation Order excepting that Beehive returned over Ault/Cayeux and that bombers crossed back over Beachy Head at 0 ft. No E/A sighted. Moderate heavy flak from Abbeville town and accurate for height slightly behind. No a/c visible on Abbeville Drucat. Bombing bursts were seen on target. Weather - Channel 6/10ths cloud 4000 ft. Over target area 2/10 cloud 4/8000 ft. increasing to 8/10ths inland. No further report to follow.

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No. 11 Group Report on Circus 259.

Abbeville Marshalling Yards.

Bombers: - 12 Venturas of No. 2 Group.
Fighters: -

Escort Wing - 64, 122 and 453 Squadrons, Hornchurch.
Bouncing Wing - 331 and 332 Squadrons N.Weald.
Appledore Wing - 485 and 610 Squadrons, Tangmere.

Escort Wing.

The Hornchurch Wing rendezvoused with the bombers over Beachy Head at 1445 hours below 500 feet and after flying two minutes at sea level climbed rapidly till they reached 10,500 feet over the target. No E/A were seen, nor were any visible on Abbeville/Drucat, but flak from both town and A/D was accurate though slightly behind. Bomb bursts were seen on the target. The beehive returned back over Ault/Cayeaux and lost height homewards crossing over Beachy at 0 feet.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1530 hours. 12 Spitfires VB of 453 Squadron, from Southend and 22 Spitfires IX of 64 and 122 Squadrons. from Fairlop and Hornchurch respectively, made rendezvous over Beachy Head with 12 Venturas of Bomber Command, which were to attack the Marshalling Yards at Abbeville. The fighter wing were detailed to act as escort. The formation flew at sea level for 2 minutes and then climbed to about 10,000 ft. and continued to the target area. Moderate heavy flak was experienced from Abbeville. No. E/A were seen by the fighters, but 3 E/A were seen by the bombers over Abbeville, but no attack developed. The Venturas bombed the engine sheds and yards from 10,000 ft. One Ventura abandoned the task over the target having been engaged by flak.

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O.R.B. 6.2.43 Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrol.

Aus. 405319	P/O. McDermott, F.R.	Pilot	Time Up: - 16.55
Aus. 411790	Sgt. Leith, C.R.	"	Time Down: - 18.10

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 7.2.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

			Time.
Aus. 405319	P/O. McDermott, F.R.	Pilot	12.55 - 14.00
Aus. 404811	F/O. Galwey, C.G.	"	12.55 - 14.00
Aus. 413000	Sgt. Morath, F.A.	"	11.55 - 13.10
Aus. 401071	P/O. Long, R.J.	"	11.55 - 13.10
Aus. 405472	P/O. Esau, E.A.P.	"	09.55 - 11.10
Aus. 403917	Sgt. Ferguson, J.H.	"	09.55 - 11.10
Aus. 405117	P/O. Ewins, R.H.S.	"	10.55 - 12.10
Aus. 416345	Sgt. Harris, G.	"	10.55 - 12.10
Aus. 411059	P/O. Thornley, F.T.	"	14.35 - 15.15
Aus. 411404	Sgt. Swift, N.F.	"	14.35 - 15.15
Aus. 403917	Sgt. Ferguson, J.H.	"	13.45 - 14.55
Aus. 416345	Sgt. Harris, G.	"	13.45 - 14.55

No Incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 8.2.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

			Time.
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews, D.G.	Pilot	11.30 - 12.45
Aus. 416345	Sgt. Harris, G.	"	11.30 - 12.45
Aus. 405472	P/O. Esau, E.A.P.	"	12.20 - 13.45
Aus. 411404	Sgt. Swift, N.F.	"	12.20 - 13.45

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Convoy Patrols.

O.R.B. 9.2.43

			Time.
Aus. 402129	P/O. McCann, F.R.	Pilot	14.10 - 15.45
Aus. 405319	P/O. McDermott, F.R.	"	14.10 - 16.00
Aus. 411404	Sgt. Swift, N.F.	"	15.10 - 16.20
Aus. 407662	F/Lt. Barclay, K.M.	"	15.10 - 16.20

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.1. 9.2.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Special Shipping Recco.

Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews, D.G. Pilot Time Up: - 16.00
Aus. 405472 P/O. Esau, E.A.P. " Time Down: - 17.20

Special shipping recco. Swept the channel coast and harbours of Ostend, Flushing, West Kapelle, Zerbrugge and Blankenburg. They brought back a considerable amount of information. Intense flak experienced at Flushing and West Kapelle. The section flew at zero feet except over fort areas when climbed to Cloud base. 10/10 cloud at from 500 - 700 feet. Rain showers, but visibility approx. 3 miles.

From: No. 11 Group H.Q.

Composite Special Shipping Recco Report 9.2.43.

A. 453 (Aust) 2 Spits VB (F/Lt. Andrews and P/O. ESau).
C. 1600-1720. D. Special Shipping Recco. E. 1636-1650.
F. & G. Nil.

Struck coast 5 miles off Ostende and up to Flushing at 0 ft, where climbed to 600, crossed coast and orbitted harbour. Following shipping seen - convoy of 8 ships composed of barges, tugs and flak ships including one barge of approx. 250 ft. with flat top, similar to merchant ship converted to a/c carrier but smaller. About 8-10 other small ships in Flushing Harbour. Time of observation 1637. Intense light flak (Bofors) V. Accurate and also received from West Cappelle. Down coast to Ostende flying at 0 ft. except over Porst when up to cloud base. Following observations made. Zeebrugge: 2 small ships on inside of mole at 1645 hours. Between Ostende and Blankenberghe 2 or 3 small ships going N. hugging coast at 1645 hours. Ostende 2 small ships in outer Harbour 5 1650 hours. Inner harbour not observed. Nieuport and Dunkirk not Recced. At Ostende 2 F.W.190's observed astern, trying to intercept. So section climbed into cloud as primary object was Recced, and lost each other. Both came out of cloud once to search for other but not seen and landed Manston 1715 and 1720. Intense heavy flak from whole way along coast, mostly accurate. F/Lt. Andrews certain that ship for which Recco made was not in any harbour or part of harbour seen.

Weather: 10/10 cloud base varying 500/700 ft. with several rain showers. Vis. about 3 miles below cloud but very hazey. Vis. nil in rain.

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O.R.B. 10.2.43 **Aircraft - Spitfires VB.** **Convoy Patrol.**

Aus. 401543	Sgt. Stansfield, G.	Pilot	Time Up: 10.35
Aus. 411059	P/O. Thornley, F.T.	"	Time Down: 11.00

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 12.2.43 **Aircraft - Spitfires VB.** **Convoy Patrol.**

			Time.
Aus. 411521	P/O. Rickard, E.T.	Pilot	08.35 - 09.50
Aus. 403763	P/O. Parker, H.M.	"	08.35 - 0950
Aus. 408989	P/O. Gray, E.W.N.	"	09.30 - 10.35
Aus. 403924	P/O. Hansell, L.J.	"	09.30 - 10.35

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 14.2.43 **Aircraft - Spitfires VB.** **Convoy Patrol.**

			Time.
Aus. 403924	P/O. Hansell, L.J.	Pilot	11.50 - 13.30
Aus. 411404	Sgt. Swift, N.F.	"	11.50 - 13.30
Aus. 411059	P/O. Thornley, F.T.	"	13.00 - 14.10
Aus. 408989	P/O. Gray, E.W.N.	"	13.00 - 14.10
Aus. 403763	P/O. Parker, H.M.	"	12.00 - 13.20
Aus. 404811	F/O. Galwey, G.G.	"	12.00 - 13.20
Aus. 403319	W/O. Clemesha, R.G.	"	14.00 - 15.20
Aus. 411521	P/O. Rickard, E.T.	"	14.00 - 15.20
Aus. 403146	W/O. Ford, R.C.	"	12.55 - 14.25
Aus. 411404	P/O. Swift, N.F.	"	12.55 - 14.25
Aus. 413000	Sgt. Morath, F.A.	"	15.00 - 16.20
Aus. 411790	F/Sgt. Leith, C.R.	"	15.00 - 16.20

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 15.2.43 **Aircraft - Spitfires VB.** **Escort.**

Aus. 407662	F/Lt. Barclay, K.M.	Pilot	
Aus. 411404	P/O. Swift, N.F.	"	
Aus. 402129	P/O. McCann, F.R.	"	
Aus. 403319	W/O. Clemesha, R.G.	"	
Aus. 411790	F/Sgt. Leith, C.R.	"	Time Up: 12.20
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews, D.G.	"	Time Down: 13.30
Aus. 408989	P/O. Gray, E.W.N.	"	
Aus. 411059	P/O. Thornley, F.T.	"	
Aus. 403924	P/O. Hansell, L.J.	"	
Aus. 408117	P/O. Darcey, R.J.	"	
Aus. 401543	Sgt. Stansfield, G.	"	

Escort bombers to Dunkirk. 10/10 cloud at 9,000 ft. spoilt the operation, however, and the Squadron returned without having been engaged by enemy aircraft or flak. No bombing.

F.C.L.S. 15.2.43 From 1230 hours onwards three operations were carried out against an armed raider in harbour at Dunkirk. The first began at 1230 hours, when 12 Bostons of Bomber Command left with 17 Spitfires IX and 12 Spitfires VB. There was 10/10ths cloud at 9,000 feet over the target and no attack was made. No enemy aircraft were seen by the main formation or by a total of 38 Spitfires IX which acted as target support and first fighter echelon, although there was a late reaction estimated at 12 aircraft.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

No. 11 Group Report on Circus 265

It was decided to carry out Circus 265 for 12 Bostons against an armed merchant ship in Dunkirk Harbour, during the morning of the 15th February, 1943 the following forces taking part.

Bombers: 12 Bostons of No. 2 Group.
Fighters:

Escort Wing. Nos. 64, 122 and 453 Squadrons, Hornchurch.
Target Support Wing. Nos. 331 and 332 Squadrons, North Weald.
1st Fighter Echelon. Nos. 340 and 611 Squadrons, Biggin Hill.

Escort Wing.

The Hornchurch Wing made rendezvous with the bombers over Clacton below 500 ft. at 1230 hours. They proceeded for the first nine minutes at sea level and then climbed rapidly, believing they crossed the French coast at Gravelines, and made a left hand turn and recrossed the English coast over North Foreland. No enemy aircraft or flak.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

Commencing at 1230 hrs. seven squadrons of fighters escorted and supported 12 Bostons of Bomber Command in an attack against an armed merchant vessel of 5,000 tons, located in Dunkerque harbour. Owing to 9/10 cloud over the target area the Bostons did not attack. No encounteres with enemy aircraft took place and the bombers were escorted without incident.

At 1230 hrs. 17 Spitfires IX and 12 Spitfires VB of 64, 122 and 453 Squadrons, from Hornchurch made rendezvous over Clacton at low lwvel with 12 Bostons of Comber Command. The formation crossed the French coast in the vicinity of Gravelines but owing to 10/10 cloud at 9,000 ft, over the t arget area no bombing was carried out. The wing escorted the Bostons back to this country.

No E/A were seen and no flak was encountered.

From: H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Composite Circus 265 Report.

A. 64, 122, 453 W/Cdr. Bentley. B. 17 Spit IX, 12 Spit VB.
C. 122 up Hornchurch 1212, down 1333. 453 up Southend 1221 down 1330.
64 up Fairlop 1205, down 1335. D. Escort Dunkirk. E. 1250.
F. & G. Nil.

Escort carried out according to operation order. French coast crossed at probably Gravelines on left hand turn but no E/A or flak observed owing to unsuitable weather conditions, (cloud 10/10ths 9,000/10,500 ft. over target area). No bombing effected and Wing withdrew.

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O.R.B. 16.2.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Rodeo.

Aus. 403146 W/O. Ford, R.C.	Pilot	
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker, H.M.	"	
Aus. 408994 Sgt. Henderson, K.R.	"	
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay, K.M.	"	
Aus. 404811 F/O. Calway, C.G.	"	Time Up: 12.25
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews, D.G.	"	Time Down: 13.40
Aus. 416345 Sgt. Harris, G.	"	
Aus. 411059 P/O. Thornley, F.T.	"	
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell, L.J.	"	
Aus. 408117 P/O. Darcey, R.J.	"	
Aus. 411404 Sgt. Swift, N.F.	"	

Rodeo. Crossed coast 23,000 ft. Dunkirk, St. Omer, Berck, Boulogne and Gris Nez areas, swept uneventfully. No enemy aircraft or shipping seen. 10/10 cloud at 5,000 ft. over Channel and French coastal areas.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Composite Report Rodeo 169 16.2.43.

A. 122, 64, 453 (R.A.A.F.) 350 (Belgian)
B. 18 Spit IXs, 24 Spit VBs/Cs.
C. 122 and 350 up Hornchurch 1215, down 1345. 64 up Fairlop 1215, down 1340, 453 up Southend 1225, down 1339.
D. Sweep Dunkirk/St. Omer, area. E. 1240/1300.
F. & G. Nil.

Coast crossed Dunkirk 23,000 ft. St. Omer. Berck, Boulogne, Gris Nez area swept uneventfully 25,000 ft. Partly under Appledore control. Formation crossed out between Boulogne and Gris Nez 24,000 ft. Recrossing English coast Dungeness 19,000 ft. No E/A, shipping or flak observed. 6 E/A seen by 350 Squadron Berck area 5,000 ft. below when going out Boulogne.

Weather: 10/10ths at 5,000 ft. over Channel and French coastal areas 7/10ths cloud inland in France.

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Aus. 407662	F/Lt. Barclay, K.M.	Pilot	
Aus. 403763	P/O. Parker, H.M.	"	
Aus. 413000	Sgt. Morath, F.A.	"	
Aus. 401071	P/O. Long, R.J.	"	Time Up: 09.50
Aus. 407747	F/O. Barrien, J.	"	Time Down: 10.45
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews, D.G.	"	
Aus. 408989	P/O. Gray, E.W.N.	"	
Aus. 405117	P/O. Ewins, R.H.S.	"	
Aus. 403924	P/O. Hansell, L.J.	"	
Aus. 405472	P/O. Esau, E.A.P.	"	
Aus. 401543	Sgt. Stansfield, G.	"	

Circus 269. R/V Clacton, 1,000 ft. for six minutes. When E. of North Foreland ran into cloud increasing to 10/10ths at 6,000 ft. with another layer. 9/10ths at 12,000 ft. from mid Channel to as far inland as could be seen. Wing remained between these layers and when 3 minutes from target, as there was no weather improvement, turned back making landfall at Clacton at 10.12.

From H.Q. 11 Group

Composite Circus 269 Report 17.2.43.

A. 64, 122, 350 and 453. B. 17 Spits IX. 24 Spits VB and VC.
C. 64 up Fairlop 0940 - Down Manston 1050. 122 up Hornchurch - Down Manston 1110. 350 up Hornchurch 0940 - Down Southend 1045. 453 up Southend 0950 - Down Southend 1046.
D. Escort and escort cover. Not reached by Bomber and escort.
F. & G. Nil.

R/V Clacton 1000 ft. for 6 mins. When E. of North Foreland ran into cloud gradually increasing to 10/10ths 6,000 ft. with another layer 9/10ths 12,000 ft. from mid-channel to as far inland as could be seen. W/Cdr. Bentley flying with 453 and 350 and bombers remained between these layers and when 3 mins. from target, as no weather improvement, turned back, making landfall Clacton. At 1012, 122 and 64 ordered to climb above cloud and at 1017 to carry on although bombers were returning. Landfall 20,000 ft. Climbing to 25,000 ft. After steering various courses above cloud between St. Omer/Calais/Boulogne for approx. 20 mins. requested pinpoint from Ops, and returned Manston. No E/A sighted.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

No. 11 Group Report on Circus 269

It was decided to carry out Circus 269, for 12 Venturas against the armed merchant ship in Dunkirk Harbour, during the morning of the 17th February, 1943, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers: 12 Venturas of No. 2 Group.
Fighters :
Escort Wing. Nos. 350 and 453 Squadrons (VBs) Hornchurch.
Escort Cover. Nos. 64 and 122 Squadrons (IXs) Hornchurch.
1st Fighter Echelon. Nos. 331 and 332 Squadrons (IXs) North Weald.
2nd Fighter Echelon. (Appledore) Nos. 340 and 611 Squadrons (IXs) Biggin Hill.
3rd Fighter Echelon. Nos. 306 and 315 Squadrons (IXs) Northolt.
Rear Support. No. 124 Squadron (VIs) North Weald.

Escort and Escort Cover

The Hornchurch Wing made rendezvous with the bombers over Clacton under 500 feet at 1000 hours, commencing to climb at 1006 hours. When east of North Foreland, formation ran into 10/10ths cloud at 6,000 feet with another layer above 10/10ths at 12,000 ft., extending as far to the south and south-east as could be seen. The VBs and the bombers remained between the cloud layers and turned back when three minutes short of the target, making landfall homewards at Clacton, 1012 hours. The IXs, however, carried on and crossed in over the Dunkirk area at 20,000 ft., subsequently climbing to 25,000 ft. They swept St. Omer, Calais and Boulogne for some 20 minutes and then, having seen no enemy aircraft, returned to Manston.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

In an operation commencing at 1000 hrs eleven squadrons of fighters were detailed to provide escort and support to 12 Venturas of Bomber Command in an attack on an armed merchant vessel in Dunkirk Harbour. Owing to unsuitable weather conditions 10/10th cloud at 6,000 ft. over the Channel the bombers and their escort turned back before reaching the target.

Escort and Escort Cover. At 1000 hrs. 17 Spitfires IX and 24 Spitfires VB and VC of the Hornchurch Wing (64, 122, 350 and 453 Squadrons) made rendezvous over Clacton below 500 feet with 12 Venturas. Owing to 10/10ths cloud at 6,000 feet experienced over mid-channel the bombers and their close escort (453 and 350 Squadrons) turned back. 122 and 64 squadrons continued on, climbing to 25,000 feet, and swept the Calais- St. Omer-Boulogne area above cloud. No e/a were seen.

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E.C.I.S. 26.2.43

Aircraft of the Command co-operated with Venturas of Bomber Command in a series of attacks on the armed merchant vessel which recently arrived at Dunkirk from Boulogne. Altogether five attacks on this target were planned for that day; two of them were rendered abortive by thick cloud over the target and three were pressed home, but there is no evidence that the vessel was hit. Fighter opposition varied from nil to 50 aircraft and in combats we destroyed one enemy aircraft and damaged at least one other for the loss of two Spitfires and their pilots.

O.R.B. 26.2.43

Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Circus 274.

Aus. 407662	F/Lt. Barclay, K.M.	Pilot	
Aus. 403319	W/O. Clemesha, R.G.	"	
Aus. 404811	F/O. Galwey, G.G.	"	
Aus. 411404	P/O. Swift, N.F.	"	Time Up: 0945
Aus. 402129	P/O. McCann, F.R.	"	Time Down: 1045
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews, D.G.	"	
Aus. 408989	P/O. Gray, E.W.N.	"	
Aus. 405117	P/O. Ewins, R.H.S.	"	
Aus. 416094	F/Sgt. Halcombe, F.K.	"	
Aus. 403924	P/O. Hansell, L.J.	"	
Aus. 411404	Sgt. Swift, N.F.	"	

Circus 274. R/V 350 over H/B 09.50. R/V with bombers at Clacton 09.59. Bombers being ½ minute early. Set course for Dunkirk at 10.00 hours. 0 feet for 6 minutes climbing to 10,000 feet over target. Broken cloud experienced 15 miles off French coast increasing to 10/10ths. Inland at 3-500 feet. Crossed out at 10.20 hours, no bombing owing to weather conditions. Separated from bombers in Estuary.

Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Circus 274.

Aus. 407662	F/Lt. Barclay, K.M.	Pilot	
Aus. 411790	F/Sgt. Leith, C.R.	"	
Aus. 404811	F/O. Galwey, G.G.	"	
Aus. 403763	P/O. Parker, H.M.	"	Time Up: 1400
Aus. 402129	P/O. McCann, F.R.	"	Time Down: 1510
Aus. 411521	P/O. Rickard, E.T.	"	
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews, D.G.	"	
Aus. 408989	P/O. Gray, E.W.N.	"	
Aus. 405117	P/O. Ewins, R.H.S.	"	
Aus. 403917	Sgt. Ferguson, J.H.	"	
Aus. 411059	P/O. Thornley, F.T.	"	
Aus. 416094	F/SGt. Halcombe, F.K.	"	

Circus 274 (2nd part). R/V with 350 H/B 14.01 hours. Set course for Clacton at 0 feet. R/V with bombers 14.08 hours, 0 feet for 3 minutes climbing to 10 - 11,000 feet over target at 14.37 hours. Bombers released 'eggs' on left hand turn then made straight for home dropping to sea level. Crossed in about 2 miles south of Bradwell Bay at 1458 hours. Thick sea mist to within 2 miles approx. of French coast, broken and patchy cloud 3/10ths along French coast. 8/10th 10/10ths inland. Several bombs were seen to burstin the target area. Flak was accurate, heavy.

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O.R.B. 26.2.43 Aircraft-Spitfires VB. Circus 274

Aus. 407662	F/Lt. Barclay, K.M.	Pilot	
Aus. 408606	P/O. Swift, T.A.	"	
Aus. 404811	F/O. Galwey, G.G.	"	
Aus. 408994	Sgt. Henderson, K.R.	"	
Aus. 403146	W/O. Ford, R.C.	"	Time Up: 1635
Aus. 413000	Sgt. Morath, F.A.	"	Time Down: 1740
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews, D.G.	"	
Aus. 416345	Sgt. Harris, G.	"	
Aus. 405117	P/O. Ewins, R.H.S.	"	
Aus. 403917	Sgt. Ferguson, J.H.	"	
Aus. 411059	P/O. Thornley, F.T.	"	
Aus. 401543	Sgt. Stansfield, G.	"	

Circus 274 (3rd part). R/V with 350 H/B at 1636 hours. Set course Clacton at 0 feet and R/V bombers at 1645 hours. Headed for Dunkirk 0 feet for 4 minutes, climbing to 12,000 feet over target. Made left hand turn with bombers which were at 10,000 ft. Bomb bursts were not observed. Crossed out at 1711 hours making for Clacton and losing height all the way, crossing in at 1732 hours at 0 feet. Parted with bombers in the Estuary. Heavy sea mist thinning out towards French coast where there was 5/10ths broken patch cloud at 12,000 ft. extending inland. Accurate medium heavy flak from target area.

From 11 Group H.Q. Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Circus 274 Report. Part 1.

A. 122 plus W/C. Bentley, 64, 453 (R.A.A.F.) 350 (Belgian).
B. 24 Spits. IXs, 24 Spit VBs and Cs. C. 0940/1110.
D. (1) 350 and 453 Escort (11) 122 and 64 1st Fighter Echelon.
E. N/A. F. 1 F.W. 190 damaged by Sgt. Lawson, 122 Squadron.
G. P/O. Mercer and Sgt. Crowley, 122 Squadron, N.Y.R. 2 Spit IXs Cat. E.

Escort Wing. 350 and 453 R/V Clacton at 0 ft. S/C for Dunkirk with Dubden wing above. Climbed into broken cloud at 1100 ft. 15 miles from target. Bombers made wide left orbit near Dunkirk, crossing coast on turn and S/C for home as weather U/S. Dived towards Dover, crossed at 2000 ft. 6/8 heavy flak bursts from Dunkirk made behind escort on way out.

1st Fighter Echelon. Wing S/C from base for Nieuport where coast crossed 19000ft. S/L. Kingaby and No. 2 returned with tank trouble quarter way across Channel. Wing swept Ypres/Cassel area 23000 ft. 2 more pilots returned with surging. After several warnings of E/A Appledore told wing to turn N when near St. Omer. W/C. ordered 64 cross over and stay in sun. About 8 F.W. 190's seen below at 16/17000 ft. flying E.S.E. Wing then at 24/25000 ft. 122 did smart turn to port to get advantage of sun, lost height and turned in behind E/A. Individual combats followed and as blowers cut out two more pilots had to return. W/Cdr. ordered 64 to cover Gravelines area and withdrawal. Appledore told wing to go out as more E/A coming up. Remaining A/C 122 returned individually 64 back over Dover at 18,000 ft. Weather - Haze over Channel. 10/10 cloud at 4/6000 ft. from Mid-Channel inland over France.

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From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Circus 274 Report, Part 2.

A. 122 and W/C. Bentley, 64, 453, (R.A.A.F.) 350 (Belgian).
B. 19 Spits, 1X. 24 Spits. VB and C. C. 1355-1523.
D. (1) 350 and 453 escort. (11) 1122 and 64 1st Fighter Echelon.
E. 1438. F. Nil. G. 1 Spit. VC. Cat. B. not due to enemy action - 350 Squadron.

Escort. 350 and 453 R/V. Clacton with Bombers and Debden. Climbed to 11,000 ft. over Dunkerque reached at 1437. Bombs released left hand turn results not seen. Wing dived and crossed coast nr. Bradwell at 2000 ft. Much heavy flak, accurate from Dunkerque harbour.

1st Fighter Echelon. 122 and 64 Flew out over N. Noreland at 0 ft. climbed to cross Furnes 19000 ft. on time. Swept Ypres, Cassel, Guines climbing. Wing made one left orbit over Sangatte and Gris Nez at 33,000 ft. back over Dover at 26,000 ft. very intense heavy flak seen from Dunkirk when going in.

Broken cloud along enemy coast becoming 9/10ths at 6,000 ft. inland. Heavy haze at 22,000 ft.

E.C.I.S. No. 383 THE DUNKIRK RAIDER.

A note on the 5,000 ton raider recently attacked at Boulogne and Dunkirk may be of interest.

This vessel had been fitting out in the Baltic for some months past, and was sighted south-bound off the Dutch coast on the 8th February, accompanied by a Sperrbrecher and other escort vessels, including 'M' class minesweepers. Nothing further was seen of her until the night of the 10th/11th February, when she attempted to pass through the Straits. She had just passed Boulogne when she was attacked by a Whirlibomber of 137 Squadron, and probably hit, as she put back into Boulogne. She was attacked in harbour at Boulogne on the 11th and 13th February and on the night of the 13/14th February retired to Dunkirk, where numerous attacks were made on her during the next twelve days. She finally left Dunkirk, probably with the early morning high tide, on the 27th and was sighted in the afternoon off Ijmuiden north-bound with a close escort of 'M' class minesweepers. The final glimpse of her was at 1310 hours on the 28th February entering the mouth of the Elbe with seven 'M' class minesweepers.

The enemy's intention was undoubtedly to pass this vessel down the Channel to one or other of the Atlantic ports, and it is satisfactory to know that he was prevented from doing so.

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Fighter Command. Form Y. 26th February, 1943.

Part 1.

At 1000 hrs. eight squadrons of fighters escorted and supported twelve Venturas of Bomber Command in an attack against an armed merchant ship in Dunkirk harbour. This was followed at 1100 hrs by a second attack, in which ten squadrons of fighters provided escort and support for a further twelve Venturas of Bomber Command. On both occasions, 10:10th cloud over the target area prevented bombing being carried out. About 30 e/a reacted against the first part of the operation, but the second part did not arouse any interest on the part of the enemy.

At 1000 hrs. 24 Spitfires VB and VC of 453 and 350 Squadrons from Hornchurch as close escort and 26 Spitfires VB of 335 and 336 Squadrons from Debden as escort cover made rendezvous over Clacton below 500 ft. with 12 Venturas of Bomber Command. The formation crossed the French coast in the vicinity of Dunkirk with the fighter wings stepped up from 11,000 to 13,000 ft., but turned back when just short of the target owing to 10/10 cloud at 3,000/6,000 ft. over the area. A few bursts of heavy flak were experienced from Dunkirk

Part 2.

This operation was again carried out in two parts, at 1415 hrs and 1515 hrs, respectively. In both parts, bomb bursts were seen in the dock area; one near miss was observed to the stern of the ship.

There was no enemy reaction to the first part, but some 52 e/a operated against the second part.

At 1415 hrs. 24 Spitfires VB and C of 350 and 453 Squadrons from Hornchurch made rendezvous over Clacton with 12 Venturas of Bomber Command and with the Debden Wing (26 Spitfires VB of 335 and 336 Squadrons).

The Hornchurch Squadrons, detailed to act as escort, reached Dunkirk at 1437 hours, at 11,000 ft., and the Debden Wing, which acted as escort cover, operated over Dunkirk at heights ranging from 11,000/13,000 ft. Intense heavy flak was experienced from the harbour. No e:a were seen.

Part 3.

At 1645 hrs., six squadrons of fighters provided escort and support to twelve Venturas of Bomber Command in another attack on the armed merchant vessel in Dunkirk harbour. Bomb bursts were seen south of the dock-side, but cloud prevented complete observation

Some 48 e/a reacted to this operation, but there were no combats and no casualties.

At 1645 hrs., 24 Spitfires VB of 350 and 453 Squadrons., and 24 Spitfires V of 335 (U/S/A/) and 336 (U.S.A) Squadrons, made rendesvous over Clacton with twelve Venturas of Bomber Command to act as escort and escort cover respectively. The formation made landfall west of Dunkirk at 12,000/13,000 ft. and flew to the target area, where fires and smoke were observed on moles and slips. The bombing was not observed.

No E:A were seen but accurate heavy flak was experienced from the target area.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

O.R.B. 27.2.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Circus 275.

Aus. 407662	F/Lt. Barclay, K.M.	Pilot	
Aus. 405319	P/O. McDermott, F.R.	"	
Aus. 401071	P/O. Long, R.J.	"	
Aus. 413000	Sgt. Morath, F.A.	"	
Aus. 402949	F/Sgt. Greaves, J.N.	"	Time Up: 1350
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews, D.C.	"	Time Down: 1500
Aus. 403924	P/O. Hansell, L.J.	"	
Aus. 403917	Sgt. Ferguson, J.H.	"	
Aus. 411059	P/O. Thornley, F.T.	"	
Aus. 416094	F/Sgt. Halcombe, F.K.	"	

Circus 275. at 1350 hrs. R/V with 350 W/B at 1351 hours 0 feet to Clacton. R/V bombers, set course for Dunkirk at 1357 hours climbing to 11-12,000 ft. over target area. Made left hand turn and many bombs were seen to burst in target area. Crossed cut North of Dock area diving quickly to sea level arriving Clacton 14.53 hours. Parted with bombers in the Estuary. Slight haze up to 7,500 ft. visibility 4 miles. 1/10th. odd clumps broken cloud over target area. Accurate medium heavy flak experienced in the target area. Many red marked shells came up followed immediately by barrage. Landed 14.59 hours.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Roadstead Report 27.2.43.

A. 350, 453 (Including W/C. Bentley). B. 23 Spits. VB and C. C. 350 up Hornchurch 1340, down 1500, 453 up Southend 1351, down 1459. D. Escort. E. 1428. F. & G. Nil.

Escort carried out according to operations order. Target reached few minutes late at 12/14,000 feet. Bombers returned Clacton instead of N. Foreland. 12 smoke trails seen by 350, very high and behind following out as far as Clacton which turned back near English coast. Bombing observed target area, and specific burst could be plotted. Target Map S. 5480 Squares 88, 97, 116. Flak: - From Dunkirk, medium heavy, accurate for bombers. Also many bursts marker flak.

Weather: - Over target haze up to 7,500 feet. Cloud 1/10ths. 7,000 ft. over Channel. Visibility 4 miles.

W/C. called bombe s on channel 'C' but did not receive reply.

F.C.I.S. 27.2.43 At 1347 hours 24 Venturas of Bomber Command left with 4 squadrons of Spitfires VB and VC for Dunkirk. The Venturas attacked and bursts were seen in the target area. Neither the main formation nor an escort cover wing of 48 Spitfires VB and 2 Spitfires IX saw any e/a. A target support wing of 20 Spitfires IX, however, saw e/a in considerable numbers, enticed them to mid-channel, and destroyed two for the loss of one aircraft and pilot.

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No. 11 Group Report on Operation Roadstead 27/2/43.

It was decided to carry out Operation Roadstead against an Armed Raider in Dunkirk Harbour, 27th February, 1943, ~~in~~ Forces taking part were: -

Bombers: 24 Venturas of No. 2 Group.
Fighters:

Escort Wing.	Nos. 350 and 453 Squadrons (VBs)	Hornchurch
	Nos. 335 and 336 Squadrons (VBs)	Debden.
Escort Cover.	Nos. 416 and 421 Squadrons (VBs)	Kenley
	Nos. 303 and 308 Squadrons (VBs)	Northolt.
Target Support.	Nos. 402 and 403 Squadrons (IXs)	Kenley

The Hornchurch and Debden Wings rendezvoused with the two boxes of bombers over Clacton under 500 feet, 1400 hours. Having started at 1406 hours the formation reached the target at 1423 hours, stepped up from 12,000 ft. Bursts were seen in the target area and a certain amount of accurate heavy flak was experienced, but the beehive returned home safely.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

Starting at 1400 hrs. ten squadrons of fighters were detailed to provide escort and support to twenty-four Venturas of Bomber Command in an attack on an armed merchant vessel in Dunkirk Harbour.

At 1347 hrs, 24 Spitfires VB ~~xxx~~ of 335 (U.S.A) and 336 (U.S.A) Squadrons (Debden) and 23 Spitfires VB and VC of 350 and 453 S uadrons (Hornchurch) made rendezvous below 500 ft. over Clacton with 24 Venturas of Bomber Command, to act as escort in an attack on Dunkirk Harbour.

The formation reached the target area at 12/14,000 feet. and bomb bursts were observed in the target area. Twelve smoke trails were observed by 350 Squadron., very high and behind the formation, following them back towards the English coast, but there was no engagement.

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VERY SECRET

OPERATIONS No. 453 SQUADRON, R.A.A.F.

MARCH, 1943.

O.R.B. 14.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. RODEO 185.

			Time
Aus. 407662	F/Lt. K.M. Barclay	Pilot	13.00 - 14.15
Aus. 408994	Sgt. K.R. Henderson	"	" "
Aus. 401071	P/O. R.J. Long	"	" "
Aus. 413000	Sgt. F.A. Morath	"	" "
Aus. 404811	F/O. G.G. Galwey	"	" "
Aus. 403319	W/O. R.G. Clemesha	"	" "
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. D.C. Andrews	"	" 14.20
Aus. 402949	F/Sgt. J.H. Greaves	"	13.05 - 13.20
Aus. 405117	P/O. R.H.S. Ewins	"	13.00 - 14.20
Aus. 403924	P/O. L.J. Hansell	"	" "
Aus. 411059	P/O. F.T. Thornley	"	" W
Aus. 416094	F/Sgt. F.K. Halcombe	"	" "

Rodeo 185. Squadron took off at 13.00 hours. R/V Hornchurch 13.16 hrs. - Dungeness 13.37 hrs. at 22,000'. Orbited for 3 minutes, crossed French coast at Hardelot - 20,000'. Left hand turn over Desures and out E of Griz Nez at 19,000' at 13.50 hrs. Orbited in mid-channel but ordered to return to base by Wing Leader. Crossed in E. of Dover 14,500' at 14.00 hrs, landing at Bast at 14.15 hrs. No enemy aircraft seen. No flak experienced. Good weather and excellent visibility.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1302 hrs. twenty Spitfires VB and seventeen Spitfires IX of the Hornchurch Wing (64, 122, 350 and 453 Squadrons) made rendezvous over Hornchurch and swept the Desvres-St. Omer-Sangatte area without incident. No E/A were seen.

There was no enemy reaction according to R.D.F.

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O.R.B. 14.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Ramrod 44.

			Time.	
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. D.G. Andrews	Pilot	16.30	18.10
Aus. 402949	F/Sgt. J.H. Greaves	"	"	"
Aus. 405117	P/O. R.H.S. Ewins	"	"	18.15
Aus. 401543	Sgt. G. Stansfield	"	"	"
Aus. 411059	P/O. F.T. Thornley	"	"	"
Aus. 403917	Sgt. J.H. Ferguson	"	"	"
Aus. 407662	F/Lt. K.M. Barclay	"	"	"
Aus. 411790	F/Sgt. C.R. Leith	"	"	"
Aus. 404811	F/O. G.G. Galwey	"	"	"
Aus. 405319	P/O. F.R. McDermott	"	"	"
Aus. 407747	P/O. J. Barrien	"	"	"
Aus. 408606	P/O. T.A. Swift	"	"	"

Ramrod 44. Squadron took off at 16.38 hrs. to escort Whirlibombers to Abbeville. R/V Hornchurch 16.46 hrs. at 0' Hastings at 17.01 hrs. Set course at 17.02 hrs. for Vayeaux, crossing in at 11,500' at 17.24 hrs. Climbing to 15,000' over target, dived to gain speed, rejoining bombers N.E. of target at 6,500'. Blue 3 and 4 escorted one bomber who could not get his flaps up, to Dungeness, rejoining rest of Squadron at Folkestone. Landed base 18.15 hrs.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.
The Following Received from Hornchurch.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 44 Report.

A. 122, 453, 350, 64. B. 19 Spit IXs 20 Spit VBs.
C. 1636/1815. D. 350, 453 Close escort. 64, 122 Escort cover.
E. 1726. F. Nil. G. Nil.

General. Operation carried out according to programme. Bombs seen to explode E. side of Drucat airfield and Le Plessiel wood and dispersals believed hit although observation difficult due to speed of dive and haze. At target Spitfire IXs who had climbed to 25,000 ft. in view of haze up to 24,000 ft. had lost sight of bombers, therefore orbitted up sun Abbeville, until informed bombers and close escort safe on way home, then flew up Channel on report E/A W. Le Touquet, but only saw 5 smoke trails over Boulogne which dived away, no E/A seen by anyone. Contrary to operation order escort cover wing was not controlled by Appledore an advice of this was only received after landfall had been made.

Flak, slight, light and heavy from Drucat airfield bursting below. No further report to follow.

F.O.I.S. No. 385

At 1700 hours 6 Whirlwind bombers escorted and supported by 2 Squadrons of Spitfires IX and 2 Squadrons of Spitfires VB left to attack Abbeville/Drucat airfield. The attack was carried out from 6-7,000 feet and bursts were seen on the N.E. side of the airfield. Two of the squadrons of Spitfires swept to Boulogne where 3 smoke trails were seen. There was an estimated enemy reaction of 25/30 aircraft.

A.M.B. No. 9615

Fighter Command continued its offensive from this country today with attacks by Whirlwind bombers on enemy airfields in France and sweeps by Spitfires over occupied territory during which two F.Ws were destroyed.

Whirlwinds escorted by Spitfires attacked the German fighter airfield Meupertus in the Cherbourg peninsula and Abbeville in the early evening. In the first of these all-fighter-command

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operations the attack on the Cherbourg airfield was carried out in two waves, one formation of Whirlwinds being escorted by Czech Spitfire pilots and the other by British squadrons.

Not a single enemy fighter rose to intercept out fighters as they swept over and all our aircraft returned safely to report that, with uninterrupted bombing runs, bursts had been seen on dispersals, on the Perimeter track and on the centre of the airfield.

Belgian and Australian pilots as well as British took part in the Abbeville attack - which is reported as 'very successful' - while a sweep was carried out by British and fighting French squadrons. The Whirlwinds which dived from 13,000 ft. to 7,000 ft. again had unhampered bombing. During the sweep, two F.W. 190's were destroyed by French pilots and others damaged.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod 44.

It was decided to carry out a dive bombing attack on Abbeville/Drucat aerodrome on the afternoon of 14th March, 1943.

Bombers. 6 Whirlibombers - 137 Squadron (Hornchurch)

Fighters.

Close Escort. 350 and 453 (SB) Squdrons (Hornchurch)

Escort Cover and Free Lance. 64 and 122 (9's) Squadrons (Hornchurch)

Weather: - 4/10ths cloud 17,000 feet - visibility 7 - 8 miles. Hazy up to 24,000 feet.

Narrative of Operations.

Bombers. 12 x 250 lb. instantaneous bombs were dropped in a 70 degree dive from 13,000 feet to 6/7,000 feet. Bursts were seen on the N.E. side of the aerodrome and in Le Plessiel Wood and it is believed that dispersals were hit although observations were difficult owing to haze and speed of dive.

Fighters. The 4 fighter Squadrons successfully escorted the Bombers to the target. On reaching it the escort cover, who had climbed to 25,000 feet, lost sight of the Bombers owing to haze up to 24,000 feet. They, therefore, orbitted up sun to Abbeville until they were informed that the Bombers and the close escort Squadrons were safely on the way home. None of the formation saw any e/a but the escort cover, on their way home, investigating e/a reported W. of Le Touquet saw, over Boulogne, 5 smoke trails which dived away.
Flak - Slight light and heavy flak bursting below was experienced from Abbeville/Drucat.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

Commencing at 1700 hrs, an attack on Abbeville - Drucat aerodrome by six Whirlwind Bombers of 137 Squadron., escorted and supported by four Spitfire Squadrons., was carried out.

At 1700 hrs. the Hornchurch wing (19 Spitfires IX and 20 Spitfires VB of 64, 122, 350 and 453 Squadrons) made rendezvous over Hastings below 500 ft., with six Whirlwind Bombers of 137 Squadron (from Manston). Abbeville/Drucat aerodrome was attacked from 6-7,000 ft. Bursts were seen on the N.E. side of the aerodrome. 350 and 453 Squadrons provided close escort to the Whirlwind bombers throughout the operation. The other two squadrons, which were detailed to act as escort cover, orbitted over the target area at 25,000 ft. and then swept to Boulogne where 3 smoke trails were seen. Slight heavy and light flak was experienced from the aerodrome. Enemy reaction was about 25/30 E/A.

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O.R.B. 16.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Patrol.

			Time.
Aus. 403319	W/O. R.G. Clemesha	Pilot	13.25 - 14.50
Aus. 413000	Sgt. F.A. Morath	"	" "
Aus. 407747	F/O. J. Barrien	"	14.25 - 15.20
Aus. 405319	P/O. F.R. MacDermott	"	" "
Aus. 411790	F/Sgt. C.R. Leith	"	15.30 - 16.50
Aus. 408994	Sgt. K.R. Henderson	"	" "
Aus. 401543	Sgt. G. Stansfield	"	16.30 - 17.00
Aus. 408503	Sgt. J.F. Olver	"	" "

No incident to report.

O.R.B. 17.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Patrol.

			Time.
Aus. 405117	P/O. R.H.S. Ewins	Pilot	17.00 - 18.10
Aus. 408503	Sgt. J.F. Olver	"	" "
Aus. 403924	P/O. L.J. Hansell	"	17.55 - 18.15
Aus. 402949	F/Sgt. J.H. Greaves	"	" "
Aus. 407747	F/O. J. Barrien	"	16.05 - 17.10
Aus. 403319	W/O. R.G. Clemesha	"	" "
Aus. 403046	W/O. R.C. Ford	"	17.55 - 18.50
Aus. 411790	F/Sgt. C.R. Leith	"	" "
Aus. 404811	F/O. G.G. Galwey	"	15.15 - 16.15
Aus. 411521	P/O. E.T. Rickard	"	" "

No incident to report.

O.R.B. 18.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Patrol.

			Time.
Aus. 403046	W/O. R.C. Ford	Pilot	10.10 - 11.05
Aus. 411521	P/O. E.T. Rickard	"	" "
Aus. 403319	W/O. R.G. Clemesha	"	" "
Aus. 405319	P/O. F.R. McDermott	"	" "
Aus. 403917	Sgt. J.H. Ferguson	"	10.40 - 11.45
Aus. 416094	F/Sgt. F.K. Halcombe	"	" 12.10
Aus. 403046	W/O. R.C. Ford	"	17.15 - 18.30
Aus. 403319	W/O. R.G. Clemesha	"	" "
Aus. 401071	P/O. R.J. Long	"	18.15 - 19.10
Aus. 403763	P/O. H.M. Parker	"	" "

No incident to report.

O.R.B. 19.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Patrol.

			Time.
Aus. 401071	P/O. R.J. Long	Pilot	10.10. - 11.25
Aus. 411790	F/Sgt. C.R. Leith	"	" "
Aus. 404811	F/O. G.G. Galwey	"	11.00 - 12.25
Aus. 408994	Sgt. K.R. Henderson	"	" "
Aus. 407747	F/O. J. Barrien	"	12.05 - 13.25
Aus. 413000	Sgt. F.A. Morath	"	" "

No incident to report.

O.R.B. 20.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Scramble.

			Time.
Aus. 405117	P/O. R.H.S. Ewins	Pilot	09.30 - 09.55
Aus. 403924	P/O. L.J. Hansell	"	" "

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O.R.B. 20.3.43 Aircraft Spitfires VB. Patrol

		Time.
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. C.R. Leith	Pilot	14.15 - 15.20
Aus. 408994 Sgt. K.R. Henderson	"	" "
Aus. 403319 W/O. R.G. Clemesha	"	15.00 - 16.05
Aus. 413000 Sgt. F.A. Morath	"	" "
Aus. 407747 F/O. J. Barrien	"	15.45 - 17.05
Aus. 403763 F/O. H.M. Parker	"	" "
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. C.R. Leith	"	16.50 - 17.15
Aus. 401071 P/O. R.J. Long	"	" "

No incident to report

O.R.B. 24.3.43 Aircraft Spitfires VB. Patrol

		Time.
Aus. 405319 P/O. F.R. McDermott	Pilot	06.30 - 07.55
Aus. 403763 P/O. H.M. Parker	"	" "
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. D.G. Andrews	"	07.30 - 08.40
Aus. 405472 P/O. E.A.P. Esau	"	" "
Aus. 403763 P/O. H.M. Parker	"	08.35 - 09.45
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. C.R. Leith	"	" "
Aus. 405319 P/O. F.R. McDermott	"	13.50 - 15.25
Aus. 403319 W/O. R.G. Clemesha	"	" "

No incident to report

Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Ramrod 76.

		Time.
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. K.M. Barclay	Pilot	16.35 - 17.45
Aus. 403319 W/O. R.G. Clemesha	"	" "
Aus. 401071 P/O. R.J. Long	"	" "
Aus. 413000 Sgt. F.A. Morath	"	" "
Aus. 407747 F/O. J. Barrien	"	" "
Aus. 408994 Sgt. K.R. Henderson	"	" "
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. D.G. Andrews	"	" 17.50
Aus. 408503 Sgt. J.F. Olver	"	" "
Aus. 405472 P/O. E.A.P. Esau	"	" "
Aus. 402949 F/Sgt. J.H. Greaves	"	" "
Aus. 401543 Sgt. G. Stansfield	"	" 17.45
Aus. 416094 F/Sgt. Halcombe, F.K.	"	" 17.50

Ramrod 76. Squadron took off to escort Whirlibombers to Abbeville marshalling yards. The wing having reached a point within 5 miles of the French Coast had to return through bad weather conditions.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1700 hrs. twenty-two Spitfires IX and twelve Spitfires VB of the Hornchurch Wing (64, 122 and 453 Squadrons) made rendezvous over Hastings with six Whirlwind bombers of 137 Squadron detailed to attack the Abbeville Marshalling Yards. The Whirlwinds escorted and supported by the Spitfires flew across the Channel, but when off the Somme Estuary the operation was abandoned and the formation turned back owing to unfavourable weather conditions.

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O.R.B. 25.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Patrol

		Time.
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. K.M. Barclay	Pilot	11.35 - 13.05
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. C.R. Leith	"	" "
Aus. 405319 P/O. F.R. McDermott	"	" "
Aus. 404811 F/O. G.G. Galwey	"	" "
Aus. 402129 P/O. McCann, F.R.	"	" "
Aus. 413000 Sgt. F.A. Morath	"	" "

No incident to report.

Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Escort

		Time.
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. K.M. Barclay	Pilot	14.35 - 16.05
Aus. 408606 P/O. T.A. Swift	"	" "
Aus. 402129 P/O. F.R. McCann	"	" "
Aus. 403763 P/O. H.M. Parker	"	" "
Aus. 404811 F/O. G.G. Galwey	"	" "
Aus. 405319 P/O. F.R. McDermott	"	" 15.50
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. D.G. Andrews	"	" 16.10
Aus. 416345 Sgt. G. Harris	"	" "
Aus. 405472 P/O. E.A.P. Esau	"	" 15.50
Aus. 403917 Sgt. J.H. Ferguson	"	" "
Aus. 405117 P/O. R.H.S. Ewins	"	" 16.10
Aus. 411059 P/O. F.T. Thornley	"	" "

Squadron took off at 14.37. R/V with rest of Wing Hornchurch 14.42. R/V with Whirlibombers Hastings 15.00 hrs. at 0', set course 0' for 11 minutes climbing to 13,500' crossing in Le Crotey 15.20 hrs. and out at 15.29 hrs. In Hastings 15.46 hrs. at 1,500' Landed base 16.08 hrs.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod 46.

It was decided to carry out a dive bombing attack on Abbeville Marshalling Yards on the afternoon of 25th March, 1943 - a repeat of the same operation which had proved abortive on the afternoon of the previous day - together with Rodeo No. 193 this latter sortie being undertaken as a Bouncing operation.

Bombers. 6 Whirlibombers - 137 Squadron (Hornchurch)

Fighters.
Close Escort. - 453 (VB) Squadron (Hornchurch)
Escort Cover and Free Lance Wing. - 64 and 122 (IXs) Squadrons (Hornchurch)

Weather. Over channel - 2/10ths to 5/10ths from 8,000 - 25,000 feet& over target - thin layer at 30,000 feet, clear at bombing height.

Narrative. Bombers. 12 x 250 lb. instantaneous bombs were dropped in an almost vertical dive from 13,000 - 7,000 feet. Bombs were seen to burst all over the target, the first two explosing on a line of trucks. The Fighter Escort observed at least four bursts on the yards, and four others on the edge of the canal. The attack must be considered successful in relation to its size, since, at the time, many trucks and much rolling stock was seen.

Fighters. Close Escort and Escort Cover. The three Squadrons crossed in at Cayeux and escorted the bombers over the target at 25,000 feet. The 2 Spit IX Squadrons under appledore control orbitted between the Mount of the Somme and Contville when they were vectored on to 25/30 F.W.190s at 30,000 feet. Our Spits IX

were then at 34/35,000 feet. The e/a were sighted and some of these climbed whilst the greater part turned to port underneath. 64 Squadron dived to attack whilst 122 Squadron orbitted above. Owing to freezing up of windscreens and a threat from the Huns above, only three pilots managed to fire.

Flak. Intense light and heavy flak on way in to and out from target, with light flak over coast. Fire was accurate for Bombers' height and position. A concentration of about 8 guns (believed heavy) 1 mile S. of St. Valery-sur-Somme.

Enemy Casualties. 1 F.W.190 probably destroyed (2nd/L. Johnson Norwegian 64 Squadron.)
1 F.W.190 damaged (Sgt. Burge N.Z. 64 Squadron)

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1500 hrs. the Hornchurch Wing (18 Spitfires IX and 12 Spitfires VB of 64, 122 and 453 Squadrons) made rendezvous over Hastings below 500 feet with six whirlwind bombers of 137 Squadron from Manston.

453 Squadron was detailed to act as close support and the other two squadrons as escort cover to the whirlwind bombers.

The six whirlwind bombers dived from 13,000 ft. to 7,000 ft. to bomb the target and the results appeared to be very good.

64 and 122 Squadrons orbitted between the Somme and Conteville at 34,000 ft. and 35,000 ft. respectively. About 30 E/A were seen at 30,000 ft. This formation split up, 10 E/A climbing to starboard. 64 dived to attack the remaining 20 E/A and as a result of combats 1 F.W. is claimed as probably destroyed and another as damaged.

122 Squadron remained at 35,000 ft. to prevent 64 Squadron from being attacked by the ten E/A which had been seen climbing to starboard.

Enemy reaction by R.D.F. was about 40 E/A.

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O.R.B. 26.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Rhubarb

		Time.
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. C.R. Leith	Pilot	Up: 15.35
Aus. 413000 Sgt. F.A. Morath	"	Down: 17.05

A successful Rhubarb was carried out in area - Knocke - Dixmude. Damage sustained by 1 barge and 1 locomotive. A further locomotive severely damaged. Squadron no damage or casualties.

From: H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.
Following received from Southend.

Composite Rhubarb Report Serial No. 4 26th March, 1943.

A. 453 R.A.A.F. B. 2 Spit VB. C. 1545/1706 hrs.
D. Barges and locomotives. E. 1612/1637 hrs.
F. 1 barge damaged, 1 locomotive severely damaged, 1 locomotive damaged.
G. Nil.

General: - Crossed coast at Knock 0' ft. flew down canal where barges were attacked and strikes seen. Flew on east of Bruges to Dixmude where two goods trains going in opposite directions were attacked with cannon and M.G. fire by Red 2. Sgt. Morath and M.G. only by Red 1. F/Sgt. Leith. 1 locomotive came to a standstill emitting clouds of steam, while strikes were observed on the other one a short burst was also fired at a signal box. There was a short burst of M.G. fire seen from railway yard area. The section went off course and crossed the coast N. of Gravelines at 1638 hrs. and crossed in N. of Dover at 1650 hrs. at 1100 ft. considerable interest was shown by inhabitants including schoolchildren and farmers in the fields who stood and waved. Lack of opposition was noticeable. Weather: - Over centre of Straits large patches of blue sky. Off coast to target area 10/10th cloud base 1,000 to 1,500 ft. Visibility 4 miles approx. with numerous local rain storms. Owing to slight default camera not used by Red 1.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1545 hrs. two Spitfires VB of 453 Squadron left Southend to attack barges and rail targets near Knocke. Neat Sixmude two goods trains, which were moving in opposite directions, were attacked and hit, and one train came to a Standstill. A short burst was also fires at a signal box.

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O.R.B. 29.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Standing Patrols.

			Time.
Aus. 416094	F/Sgt. F.X. Halcombe	Pilot	11.45 - 13.35
Aus. 411404	Sgt. N.F. Swift	"	" "
Aus. 407662	F/Lt. K.M. Barclay	"	12.50 - 14.00
Aus. 402129	P/O. F.R. McCann	"	" "
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. D.G. Andrews	"	13.50 - 14.35
Aus. 405472	P/O. E.A.F. Esau	"	" "

Nothing of importance to report.

O.R.B. 30.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires VB. Standing Patrols.

			Time.
Aus. 405472	P/O. E.A.F. Esau	Pilot	14.00 - 15.10
Aus. 403917	Sgt. J.H. Ferguson	"	" "
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. D.G. Andrews	"	19.00 - 19.55
Aus. 403917	Sgt. J.H. Ferguson	"	" "
Aus. 408606	P/O. T.A. Swift	"	19.05 - "
Aus. 411790	F/Sgt. C.R. Leith	"	" "

Nothing of importance to report.

O.R.B. 31.3.43 Aircraft - Spitfires V.B. Standing Patrols.

			Time.
Aus. 403046	W/O. R.C. Ford	Pilot	07.15 - 08.40
Aus. 403319	W/O. R.G. Clemesha	"	" "
Aus. 402129	P/O. F.R. McCann	"	08.10 - 09.35
Aus. 407662	F/Lt. K.M. Barclay	"	09.45 - 11.20
Aus. 411521	P/O. E.T. Rickard	"	" " "
Aus. 405117	P/O. R.H.S. Ewins	"	06.25 - 07.30
Aus. 411059	P/O. F.T. Thornley	"	" "
Aus. 401543	Sgt. G. Stansfield	"	08.10 - 09.35
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. D.G. Andrews	"	11.00 - 12.25
Aus. 402949	F/Sgt. J.H. Greaves	"	" "
Aus. 401071	P/O. R.J. Long	"	11.55 - 13.10
Aus. 403046	W/O. R.C. Ford	"	" "
Aus. 403924	P/O. L.J. Hansell	"	12.45 - 14.05
Aus. 403917	Sgt. J.H. Ferguson	"	" "

Nothing of importance to report.

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VERY SECRET.

OPERATIONS No. 453 SQUADRON, R.A.A.F.

APRIL, 1943.

F.C.I.S. 3.4.43 — Twenty six Spitfires made an uneventful sweep over the St. Omer area at 20,000 feet from 1511 hours.

O.R.B. 3.4.43 — Aircraft - Spitfires IX — RODEO.

		Time Up	Time Down.
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews	Pilot	15.10	16.10
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey	"	"	16.20
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins	"	"	"
Aus. 403917 Sgt. Ferguson	"	"	16.30
Aus. 405472 F/O. Esau	"	"	16.20
Aus. 401543 Sgt. Stansfield	"	"	"
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	"	"	"
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien	"	"	"
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long	"	"	16.00
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott	"	"	"
Aus. 402129 P/O. McCann	"	"	16.20

Out N. Foreland, in Calais 20,000 ft. Swept St. Omer area, out Gris Nez at 21,000 ft. and returned over Dover at 16,000 ft. Uneventful.

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F.C.S. 4.4.43 At 1830 hours 8 Whitlwind bombers escorted and supported by nine Typhoons and two squadrons of Spitfires IX left to attack marshalling yards at Abbeville. Bursts were seen on the centre of the target and on a large building nearby. Seven of the Typhoons returned to the French coast after escorting the bombers half way back across the Channel, and attacked R-boats and a Flak ship. The Spitfires saw eight F.W.190s over Berck out of an estimated reacti n of 16 to 20 e/a.

O.R.B. 4.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 405111	S/Ldr. Ratten	Pilot
Aus. 401071	F/O. Long	"
Aus. 411521	F/O. Rickard	"
Aus. 403046	W/O. Ford	"
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews	"
Aus. 408172	P/O. Darcey	"
Aus. 405472	F/O. Esau	"
Aus. 401543	Sgt. Stansfield	"
Aus. 405117	F/O. Ewins	"
Aus. 411059	P/O. Thornley	"
Aus. 402129	P/O. McCann	"

Over Berck at 26,000 ft. was warned of 20 E/A flying at 20,000 ft - 10 miles N.E. Made orbit over Berck to get 'up sun' the E/A's then being reported 10,000 below. The Squadron lost height to 22,000 ft. and saw 8 F.W.190s at 10,000 ft or less. The Wing Leader deemed it advisable not to attack as the E/A did a diving turn to port and the E/A were following behind. The Squadron then withdrew Le Touquet at 21,000 ft. Further E/A reported but not intercepted. Flew in over Dungeness at 17,000 ft.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1830 hrs. eight Whirlwind bombers of 137 Squadron with close escort of nine Typhoons IB of 609 Squadron and escort cover of twenty Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons made rendezvous at 500 ft. over Hastings.

The formation crossed the French coast at Cayeux with the bombers at 8,500 ft. and the target was attacked in a dive from 12,500 ft. to 7,000 ft. 16 x 500 lbs. bombs were dropped, four bombs being seen to burst in the centre of the Marshalling yards and one on a large building to the left.

When half way back across the Channel, and whilst 2 Typhoons continued to escort the bombers, the other 6 Typhoons were vectored on to six "R" boats in line astern travelling north 4 miles off shore towards Boulogne; inshore of the last pair there was a small motor flak ship.

All the Typhoons carried outone attack on the last two R. boats/Flak ship as a result of which one of the "R" boats and the flak ship were seen to be on fire and strikes were observed on the other "R" boat.

When returning from the French coast 122 and 453 Squadrons (escort cover) which also operated as Free Lance Patrol, were warned of 16/20 E/A at 20,000 ft. over the Berck area. Our A/C climbed to 26,000 ft, and after orbitting the area losing height further to 22,000 ft. saw 8 F.W. 190s over the beach at 10,000 ft. As further E/A were suspected behind no attack was carried out, and the Spitfires returned to base.

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No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod 46.

It was decided to carry out a dive-bombing attack on Abbeville Marshalling Yards on the afternoon of 4th April, 1943 - a repeat of the same operation which was carried out on the 25th March, 1943 but with Typhoons acting as Close Escort.

Bombers: 8 Whirlibombers - 137 Squadron (Hornchurch)

Fighters: Close Escort - 609 Squadron (Typhoons) Hornchurch
Escort Cover - 122 and 453 Squadrons (Spits IX) Hornchurch
& Free Lance Wing.

Weather:- Clear over whole area. Visibility 25 miles.

Bombers: - 16 x 500 lbs. bombs were dropped in a dive from 12,500 ft. to 7,000 ft. 4 bombs were seen to burst in the centre of the target and one on a large building to the left of it. Escort Cover Squadrons saw 4/5 bursts on the E. and W. edges of the marshalling yards.

Close Escort and Escort Cover: - The three Squadrons crossed in at Cayeux and escorted the Bombers to the target without incident. Returning from the target the 2 Spitfire IX Squadrons were vectored by Appledore on to 8 F.W.190s which when themselves at 22,000 ft, they saw below them at 10,000 ft. or less, over Berck. The e/a carried out a diving turn to port and, suspecting that a further batch of e/a were behind, the Wing Leader decided not to attack and withdres over Le Touquet at 21,000 ft.

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O.R.B. 4.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

		Time Up.	Time Down.
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	Pilot	11.45	12.55
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long	"		
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard	"		
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford	"		
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews	"		
Aus. 408172 P/O. Darcey	"		
Aus. 405472 F/O. Esau	"		
Aus. 401543 Sgt. Stansfield	"		
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins	"		
Aus. 411059 P/O. Thornley	"		
Aus. 402129 P/O. McCann	"		

Owing to bad weather the Squadron returned after flying 50 miles out to sea.

From H.Q. No. 11 Group.

Hornchurch Composite Roadstead Report 4th April, 1943.

A. 453. B. 11 Spits IX. C. 1148-1255 D. Anti Flak to 6 Bomphoons. E. N/A. F. Nil G. Nil.

General.

Squadron led by S/Ldr. Ratten R/V Beachy zero feet 1200 hrs. S/C 1202 zero feet for 13 mins climbed to 3,000 feet return ordered when 50 miles across channel. Weather u/s.

Weather. Clear to 50 miles from English coast then 10/10 cloud 1,000 feet. Visibility good. Slight haze no further report to follow.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x

O.R.B. 5.4.43 AIRCRAFT - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

		Time Up.	Time Down.
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	Pilot	14.50	16.35
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford	"	"	16.35
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long	"	"	"
Aus. 402129 P/O. McCann	"	"	15.55
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews	"	"	16.35
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins	"	"	16.15
Aus. 405472 F/O. Evan	"	"	16.35
Aus. 401543 Sgt. Stansfield	"	"	16.15
Aus. 411059 P/O. Thornley	"	"	16.05
Aus. 408172 P/O. Darcey	"	15.00	15.45

In Westkappelle at 26,000 ft. Orbitted to await bombers coming out. Joined up and came out West Hoofd. When 10 miles out the Squadron was warned of 50 plus E/A at 31,000 ft. coming N.E. from Ostend so climbed to 35,000 ft. then went down again in front of bombers at 23,000 ft. accompanying them to within 5 miles of the Naze without incident. In south of Bradwell at 10,000 ft.

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From H.Q. No. 11 Group.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 52 (Part 2) Report 5.4.43

A. 122 - 453 B. 21 Spits 9 C. 1458-1645 D. First withdrawal cover. E. N/A. F. Nil G. Nil.

General.

Wing led by S/Ldr. Kingaby In W. Kapelle 1525 hrs, 26,000 ft. Warned bombers late so orbitted Veere area, then saw bombers to N.E. Joined up in front, out West Hoofd. When 10/15 miles out warned by Appledore of 50 plus E/A 31,000 ft. coming N.E. from Ostende. Wing climbed to 32/35,000 ft. Saw nothing, went down again in front of bombers 23,000 ft. accompanied to 5 miles off Maze. In south of Bradwell 10,000 ft. Splash seen in sea 8 miles off Ostende.

Flak: - 2 bursts heavy from Knocke. None from Flushing. Much smoke seen from Antwerp area.

Weather: - Fine Vis. excellent then layer misty cloud 30,000 ft. No further report to follow.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1458 hrs. twenty-one Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons took off from Hornchurch to act as first withdrawal cover. The wing orbitted the Veere area and the bombers were seen to the N.E. The Spitfires formated on the bombers and accompanied them back to the Naze. No e/a were seen.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 52.

At zero 80 Fortresses and Liberators (part of the same force) to attack the S.A. Nouville Des Automibles Imperia Motor Assembly Plant at Antwerp (Mortsel) returning via Woensdrecht and S.W. of Schouwen. Fighter cover by 3 wings to be given as far as Mas Van Gent. Withdrawal cover by 2 Fighter wings to be given from the Goes/Tholen area back to English Coast.

Weather: - Fine. Visibility excellent. Layer of thin misty cloud at 30,000 feet.

65 Fortresses and 17 Liberators bombed the target and preliminary reports indicate that results were good. Four Fortresses are missing.

First Withdrawal Cover. The Hornchurch Wing (122 & 453) crossed the Dutch coast at Westkapelle at 1525 hours at 26,000 feet, and was warned that bombers were late so orbitted in the Veere area, then saw the bombers to the N.E. and joined up in front of them as they came out of Holland at Westhoofd. The Wing, when 10-15 miles out to sea, was warned of 50+ E/A at 31,000 feet coming from Ostend; the wing, therefore, climbed to 32/35,000 feet but saw nothing and accompanied the bombers until 5 miles off the Naze, returning without seeing any E/A. No casualties.

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O.R.B. 6.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. PATROLS.

		Time Up.	Time Down.
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield	Pilot	15.50	17.15
Aus. 416094 F/Sgt. Halcombe	"	"	"
Aus. 405472 F/O. Esau	"	16.40	18.05
Aus. 411059 P/O. Thornley	"	"	"
Aus. 402129 P/O. McCann	"	15.00	16.25
Aus. 411521 P/O. Rickard	"	"	"
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long	"	17.30	19.00
Aus. 403763 F/O. Parker	"	"	"

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 8.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

		Time Up.	Time Down.
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	Pilot	17.40	19.10
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith	"	"	"
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galway	"	"	"
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard	"	"	"
Aus. 408606 P/O. Swift	"	"	"
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews	"	"	"
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray	"	"	"
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell	"	"	"
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves	"	"	"
Aus. 405472 F/O. Evan	"	"	18.45
Aus. 416094 F/Sgt. Halcombe	"	"	19.10
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker	"	"	"

Wing led by S/Ldr. Ratten, crossed out Hastings at 1000 ft. and started to climb, entering French coast at Cayent at 25,000 ft. turned left towards Abbeville, still climbing and swept round Drucat, reaching 27,000 ft. The Wing was warned of E/A at 20,000 ft. approaching from North. When S.E. of Berck, on being warned that it had passed over E/A, The Wing Orbited to starboard, still maintaining height of 27,000 ft. and wa s then informed that E/A were travelling South 5 miles away. On reaching the Abbeville area, the Wing saw 6 F.W.190s through broken cloud to South at 15,000 ft. approx. These E/A were diving into cloud and were too low to engage. Then warned of further E/A approaching from S.W. at 20,000 ft. and they were sighted in Foret de Crecy area. There were 8 F.W.190s at 15,000 ft. directly below and flying N.E. in to V's of three line abreast with two others also line abreast, following behind and about 200 yards apart. The Wing Leader took Squadron down out of sun to attack. The enemy formation continued straight ahead and level and appeared unaware of an imminent attack. Two of these aircraft are claimed as damaged by S/Ldr. Ratten and F/Lt. Andrews. F/O. Gray and F/Sgt. Leith also used their guns but make no claim. P/O. Rickard and P/O. Swift observed strike on trailing edges of the wings of both these E/A claimed as damaged. The Squadron then reformed, climbed fast and cross out over the Somme Estuary at 27,000 ft. making landfall at Bexhill 10,000 ft at 1900 hours.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Rodeo Report 8th April, 1943.

A. 453 (R.A.A.F.) 122 B. 24 Spits IX C. 1745/1915
D. Sweep Abbeville area. E. 1830 F. 1 F.W. 190 damaged by S/Ldr. Ratten 453 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron. 1 F.W.190 damaged by F/Lt. Andrews 453 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron. G. Nil.

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General.

Wing led by S/Ldr. Ratten, out Hastings 1,000 ft. climbing, in Cayeux 25,000 ft. over Abbeville area, then warned by Appledore of E/A at 20,000 ft. approaching from N. wing at 27,000 orbitted starboard, saw 6 F.W.190s at 10,000 ft. diving into 10/10ths, cloud E. of Foret de Crecy. Appledore warned more E/A at 20,000. Wing at 22,000 turned N. and saw 8 F.W.190s at 15,000 in Auxi le Chateau/Yvrench area flying N.E. 122 sat up sun as high cover 453 dived on E/A damaging two. Four pilots fired, E/A broke away in various directions. Wing withdrew on leaders order, over Somme Estuary 27,000. In Bexhill 10,000.

Weather: - Clear in Channel except for scattered cloud. 6/10ths, to 10/10ths strato-cumulus at 10,000 ft. over France.

PERSONAL COMBAT REPORT 453/43/1.

HORNCHURCH WING.

CIRCUS 280 - 8/4/43.

S/Ldr. J.R. Ratten.

I was leading the Hornchurch Wing as Red 1, under Appledore control, who vectored us on to 8 F.W.190's 10,000 feet below. I ordered 122 Squadron to cover and took 453 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron down to attack and saw the e/a flying in 2 Vic's of three line abreast, with 2 others line abreast behind. I attacked the left of the rear 2 e/a, coming up under and behind his tail, I gave him a 1½ sec. squirt of cannon and machine gun from extremely close range and then had to break violently to avoid collision. After breaking, I observed the e/a on its back, about to enter cloud, leaving a trail of greyish smoke behind. Yellow 2 and 3 both saw strikes on the trailing edge of the wings. At the same time I saw Blue 1 (F/Lt. Andrews), firing at the other e/a from dead astern, which also rolled on its back through cloud, with smoke pouring from it. I claim this F.W. 190 as damaged.

Signed J. Richard Ratten, S/L

No Cine Camera carried.

PERSONAL COMBAT REPORT 453/43/2.

HORNCHURCH WING.

CIRCUS 280 - 8.4.43.

F/Lt. D.G. Andrews.

I was flying as Blue 1, when Appledore vectored the Wing on to Bandits. I followed the Wing Leader down and spotted the 2 rear e/a when half way down on the dive, and recognised them as F.W.190's. Choosing the starboard one, I closed extremely rapidly from dead astern and the same height, giving a short burst from machine gun, then another short burst (mixed), brown smoke came from the top of the engine and it broke violently left. I gave another short mixed burst at 45 degrees deflection and then pulled up sharply to avoid collision; the next I saw of him he was on his back going down into cloud, trailing whitish grey smoke. Yellow 2 and 3 also saw strikes on the trailing edge of the wings. I claim this F.W. 190 as damaged.

signed D.G. Andrews, F/Lt.

No Cine Camera Gun carried.

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Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1830 hrs. 24 Spitfires IX of 453 and 122 Squadrons left Hornchurch to sweep over the Abbeville area. The French coast was crossed at Cayeux and Abbeville was reached at 25,000 feet. Later six F.W.190s were seen at 10,000 feet diving into cloud east of the Foret de Crecy and after being warned of the proximity of further E/A pilots saw eight F.W.190s at 15,000 feet. While 122 Squadron remained as cover 453 Squadron dived down on to these E/A, which broke away in various directions. Two E/A were damaged.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus 280.

Weather: - Scattered cloud in the Channel. 10/10ths cloud 10,000 ft. over France with unlimited visibility above.

Escort Cover & Free Lance Wing - 453 and 122 Squadrons.

The Hornchurch Wing left base at 1745 hours crossing out over Hastings at 1,000 ft. and climbing to reach Cayeux at 25,000 ft. when they climbed to 27,000 ft. on receipt of warning by Appledore of e/a approaching from the North. 6 F.W.190s were seen which dived immediately into the cloud at 10,000 ft. On receiving warning of more enemy aircraft the Wing then at 25,000 ft. turned North and saw 8 F.W.190s at 15,000 ft. in the YVrench area flying N.E. 122 Squadron stayed up sun as High Cover while 453 Squadron dived on the e/a damaging 2 for no loss. The F.W.190s then broke away and the Wing withdrew over the Somme Estuary and crossed the English Coast at Bexhill.

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O.R.B. 9.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. PATROLS.

		Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 408606 P/O. Swift	Pilot	09.55	11.00
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith	"	09.55	11.00
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey	"	10.55	11.50
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves	"	"	"
Aus. 405472 F/O. Esau	"	11.45	12.40
Aus. 416094 F/Sgt. Halcombe	"	"	"
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey	"	13.30	13.40
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell	"	"	13.45

Weather poor - No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

F.C.I.S. 13.4.43 Eight Whirlwind bombers up at 1155 hours with a close escort of 12 Spitfires VB to attack a marshalling yard at Bruges returned early because of unfavourable weather. A total of 43 Spitfires IX and 20 U.S.A. Thunderbolts acting as cover and support, however, went on to sweep over the target and adjacent areas. A reaction estimated at 40 enemy aircraft was apparent, but no enemy aircraft were seen.

O.R.B. 13.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

		Time Up	Time Down.
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	Pilot	11.45	13.20
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith	"		
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay	"		
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha	"		
Aus. 402129 P/O. McCann	"		
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews	"		
Aus. 408989 P/O. Gray	"		
Aus. 405117 P/O. Ewins	"		
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves	"		
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell	"		
Aus. 405472 F/O. Esau	"		

Wing led by S/Ldr. Ratten, acted as top cover and free lance to Whirlibombers. In Blankenbergh at 20,000 ft. Swept Bruges, Roullers, Ypres area at 25,000 ft. Squadron warned of E/A in Lille area, but too far away to intercept. Made wide orbit over St. Omer without result. Out North of Le Touquet at 26,000 ft. In Dungeness at 17,000 ft.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

Starting at 1155 hrs. eight Whirlwind bombers escorted by Squadrons of fighters were detailed to attack the marshalling yards at Bruges. The Operation was abortive as owing to unfavourable weather, the Whirlwings returned early.

At 1145 hrs. 21 Spitfires IX of 453 and 122 Squadrons left Hornchurch and flew with the bombers and escort until the latter turned back. The escort cover squadrons went on and swept over Bruges/Roulers/Ypres and St. Omer without seeing any E/A.

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No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod 50.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod No. 50 at Noon on the 13th April, 1943 against Bruges Marshalling Yards the following forces taking part.

Bombers: - 8 Whirlibombers, 137 Squadron.

Fighters: - Close Escort: - 19 Squadron. Hornchurch

Escort Cover &
Free Lance Wing: - 122 and 453 Squadrons.

Weather: - 10/10's cloud base 300' thick at 4,000', and a further layer of 10/10's hazy cloud at 33,000'.

The Whirlibombers and their 3 Spitfire Squadron Escorts made rendezvous at Manston below 500' at 1200 hours and proceeded for the first 13 minutes at sea level and turned to starboard on course to the target, climbing. When 10 miles off Ostend at 8,000 the bombers returned to base with the Close Escort Squadron owing to the weather. The Escort Cover and Free Lance Wing swept in over Blankenbergh at 20,000' at 1232 hrs and proceeded to Bruges/Roulers/Ypres area at 25,000'. Warned of E/A in the Lille area, the Squadrons saw some E/A flying S.W. too far away; proceeded over St. Omer and out N. of Le Touquet at 1255 hours. No other E/A seen.

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O.R.B. 13.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD

Aus. 405111	S/Ldr. Ratten	Pilot
Aus. 403046	W/O. Ford	"
Aus. 407662	F/Lt. Barclay	"
Aus. 408606	P/O. Swift	"
Aus. 404811	F/O. Galway	"
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews	"
Aus. 408989	P/O. Gray	"
Aus. 405117	F/O. Ewins	"
Aus. 402949	W/O. Greaves	"
Aus. 405472	F/O. Esau	"
Aus. 408172	F/O. Darcey	"
Aus		

A further Ramrod took place - out N. Foreland at 16,000 ft. In Mardyck at 23,000 ft. Swept St. Omer to North of Desvres - no E/A seen. Out Sangatte at 25,000 ft. made two wide port orbits on report of E/A, without success. In N. Foreland 17,000 ft.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1735 hrs. 19 Spitfires IX of 453 and 122 Squadrons were airborne from Hornchurch. No E/A were encountered during a sweep at 23,000/25,000 ft. over Mardyck/St. Omer/Desvres/Sangatte.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 56

It was decided to carry out Ramrod No. 56 during the afternoon of the 13th April, 1943 against St. Omer/Fort Rouge aerodrome, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers: - 8 Bomphoons - 182 Squadron.

Fighters:

Escort.	247 & 609 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Typhoons
1st Fighter Echelon.	453 & 122 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spit IXs.
2nd Fighter Echelon	341 & 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spit IXs.

Weather: - 3-4/10ths cumulus cloud at 5,000 feet over target area. Visibility excellent. Hazy S. of the line Gris Nez/St. Omer.

The Bomphoons and Typhoon Escort made rendezvous over Dungeness at 0 feet and proceeded at 0 feet until 2 miles off the French coast where they made landfall at Hardelot at 10,000 feet at 1817 hrs. The Bomphoons dropped 16 x 500 lb. G.P. bombs on an aerodrome, believed St. Omer/Longuenesse - identification was difficult owing to cloud. Bombing results were unobserved. The formation recrossed the French coast between Gravelines/ Calais, 2 e/a were seen taking off from the aerodrome and 1 Me.109 seen flying S. from Gris Nez just below cloud.

The Hornchurch wing proceeded from North Foreland at 16,000 feet crossing the French coast at Mardyck at 23,000 feet at 1818 hours, swept to St.Omer/Desvres and were given various vectors but no e/a seen. The Wing recrossed the French coast at Sangatte.

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O.R.B. 13.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. PATROLS.

		Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 408606 P/O. Swift	Pilot	20.03	20.57
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford	"	"	"

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 14.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

		Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	Pilot	15.45	17.45
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay	"		
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford	"		
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott	"		
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews	"		
Aus. 403917 F/Sgt. Ferguson	"		
Aus. 405472 F/O. Essu	"		
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Standfield	"		
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley	"		

Aircraft crossed over Blankenburgh at 18,000 ft. climbing to 23,000 ft. in Bruges area. Made two complete orbits and received several plots of E/A. Several smoke trails were seen above but no E/A were seen. Crossed out North of Sangatte and in N. Foreland at 8,000 ft. Some flak experienced from Calais area.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 50.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod No. 50 during the afternoon of the 14th, April, 1943 against Bruges Marshalling Yards, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers. 8 Whirlibombers, 137 Squadron.

Fighters.
Close Escort. 19 Squadron (Hornchurch) Spit V's.
Escort Cover and
Free Lance Wing. 453 & 122 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spit IXs
1st Fighter Echelon. 331 & 332 Squadrons (North Weald) Spit IXs.
2nd Fighter Echelon. 341 & 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spit IX's.

Weather: - 8/10ths thin layer of cloud base at 20,000 feet and unlimited visibility.

Bombers, Escort and Escort Cover and Free Lance Wing.
The 8 Whirlibombers of 137 Squadron and 3 Spitfire Squadrons of Hornchurch Wing made rendezvous at Manston below 500 feet at 1600 hours. The formation proceeded for the first 13 minutes at sea level then turned to starboard on course to the target, climbing rapidly to 14,000 feet, and crossing the Belgian coast at Blankenberghe, the Bombers at 19,000 feet with the Escort Cover at 18,000 feet, the formation still climbing. The Bombers dropped 16 x 250 lb. instantaneous bombs in a dive from 12/7,000 feet on a run from S.E. to N.W. Bursts were seen on a line of engine sheds on E. side of the target and on the tracks. After bombing, the Bombers and Escort flew out over Blankenberghe and returned to base without further incident while the Escort Cover and Free Lance Wing made two orbits over the target area until the Bombers and Escort had recrossed the Belgian coast and then returned without further incident although seeing some smoke trails above.

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O.R.B. 15.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

		Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	Pilot	16.25	17.45
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay	"	"	"
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith	"	"	"
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha	"	"	17.30
Aus. 408606 P/O. Swift	"	"	17.25
Aus. 404811 P/O. Galway	"	"	"
Aus. 405472 F/O. Esau	"	"	17.45
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell	"	"	"
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey	"	"	"
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray	"	"	"
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley	"	"	"

The Wing operated from Ford and rendezvous at Selst Bill. After 14 mins at sea level, S/Ldr. Ratten, who was Wing Leader, developed engine trouble and had to return, ~~one with~~ two other of our aircraft also had to return, one with tank and the other with engine trouble. In N. Fecamp at 16,000 ft. made two wide orbits at 24,000 ft. North of Seine. Followed Typhoons out to Etretal, without incident.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 59.

It was intended to carry out Ramrod No. 59 on 15th April, 1943 on Tricqueville Aerodrome, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers. 8 Bomphoons, 182 Squadron (83 Group)

Fighters:
Escort. 9 Typhoons, 247 Squadron (83 Group)
Fighter Echelon. 122 & 453 Squadrons Spit IX's (Hornchurch)

Weather: - Heavy mist over sea, visibility unlimited over target. Wispy cloud 4/10ths at 8,000 ft.

The whole formation made rendezvous at Selsey Bill at 1630 hours under 500 ft. They proceeded for 14 minutes at sea level, and then started climbing. The Hornchurch Spitfire IX's could not catch up with the Bomphoons and Typhoons, and were 5 miles behind when they crossed the French coast at Fecamp at 22,000 ft, the Bomphoons and Typhoons having crssed the coast at 12,000 ft. The Spitfire IX's swept at 22,000 ft. to Caudebec, making a wide orbit to the Foret Bretonne, then followed the Typhoons ~~out of the sun but did not appear~~ out over Etretat where six F.W.190's dived on the Typhoons out of the sun, but did not appear to press home their attack, although one aircraft was seen to dive vertically at the coast line. Meanwhile the Bomphoons with their Typhoon escort crossed the Seine at Aizier and bombed Tricqueville aerodrome from S.W. to N.E. in a dive from 12,000 ft. to 8,000 ft. Bombs were seen to burst from the S.E. of the aerodrome ending in the N.W. amongst dispersals, where the majority of burst were observed. A building believed to be the Watch Tower was hit. Ten e/a were observed on the airfield, but were not thought to have been hit. The English coast was recrossed at Beachy Head with the Bomphoons and Typhoons at 2,000 ft and the Spitfire IXs at 8,000 ft. Intense light flak accurate for heightand direction at 5000 ft and 6000 ft. was received from the aerodrome. One Typhoon failed to return.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1645 hrs. 21 Spitfires IXs of 122 and 453 Squadrons from Form made rendezvous with the bombers and escort over Selsey Bill, and following them over the French coast at Fecamp swept the Caudebec/Foret Bretonne area at 22,000 ft. The Typhoons were followed out over Etretat when six F.W. 190s were seen approaching them from the S.W. at 8,000 feet.

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O.R.B. 17.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

		Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	Pilot	14.35	15.40
Aus. 403662 F/Lt. Barclay	"	"	"
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford	"	"	"
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long	"	"	"
Aus. 402129 P/O. McCann	"	"	"
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews	"	"	15.45
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver	"	"	"
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell	"	"	"
Aus. 403917 Sgt. Ferguson	"	"	"
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield	"	"	"
Aus. 416094 F/Sgt. Halcombe	"	"	15.40

Wing led by S/Ldr. Ratten off Berck at 20,000 ft. After receiving various vectors from Appledore, bringing them S. of Abbeville, a gaggle of about 40 F.W. 190s were sighted in wide boxes of 4, two miles away and travelling N.E. at 28,000 ft. Wing leader sent down 122 while 453 Squadron orbitted to port, up sun. Control warned of a further gaggle and ordered wing to climb quickly. At this stage, another Wing of Spitfires came up at 29/30,000 ft. and caused confusion. Wing leader took 453 Squadron out and orbitted mid channel at 30,000 ft. finally crossing Dungeness at 20,000 ft.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus No. 284

It was decided to carry out Circus No. 284 during the afternoon of 17th April, 1943 for 12 Venturas against Abbeville Marshalling Yards, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers: 12 Venturas of No. 2 Group.

Fighters:
Escort 411 Squadron (Kenley) Spits VB
Escort Cover. 403 and 416 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits 9.
1st Fighter Echelon 122 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spits 9.
2nd Fighter Echelon 315 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt) Spits 9.

Weather: - Clear. Slight haze.

12 Venturas bombed from 11,000 feet at 1457 hours. The bombs of one box falling across the engine sheds and the 2nd box across the Marshalling yard. Results appeared to be good. All returned safely.

The Hornchurch Wing crossed over Dungeness and arrived over Berck at 1500 hours at 20,000 ft. under Appledore Control. After various vectors which brought them S. of Abbeville with 122 Squadron at 30,000 ft. and 453 Squadron above and behind, about 40 F.W.190s in wide boxes of four were seen 2 miles away travelling N.E. at 28,000 ft. 122 Squadron went down to attack and sighted a further 15 F.W.190s 1,000 ft. above the first bunch and ¾ mile behind. On information that the Wing Leader and 453 Squadron would look after the 15 F.W. 190s 122 Squadron continued to close towards the large bunch and had got within 400 yards of them when they broke left and right into two batches. The left-hand batch climbed up towards the sun and the right-hand batch flew off down sun weaving hard. 122 Squadron turned towards the left-hand batch with the 15 F.W. 190s coming up behind. Meantime, 453 Squadron made a wide orbit to port up sun in an endeavour to locate the 15 F.W.190s and when he saw the 40 F.W.190s split up with one batch climbing the Wing Leader ordered 122 Squadron to climb out ashard as possible. At this point 2 Spitfire

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Squadrons were seen coming in at 28,000 ft. behind the Hornchurch Wing. The Wing then returned over Dungeness after orbitting the Channel without incident.

O.R.B. 17.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 405111	S/Ldr. Ratten	Pilot
Aus. 403319	W/O. Clemesha	
Aus. 407662	F/Lt. Barclay	
Aus. 411790	F/Sgt. Leigh	
Aus. 404795	F/Lt. Andrews	
Aus. 402949	W/O. Greaves	
Aus. 405472	F/O. Esau	
Aus. 401543	F/Sgt. Stansfield	
Aus. 411059	F/O. Thornley	
Aus. 403917	Sgt. Ferguson	

Circus led by S/Ldr. Ratten climbed straight up to Zeebruge at 22,000 ft, made a wide orbit to port, following bomber out. Made landfall Shoeburyness at 15,000 ft. without incident. Good bombing results observed.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

ATTACK ON THE COKE OVENS AT ZEEBRUGGE.

10 Venturas of Bomber Command attacked the target. Results were excellent. Bombs were seen to burst right across the target. Red flashes were seen to come from the power station and the Benzol plant was left burning.

Ten squadrons of fighters provided escort and support.

Target Support.

At 1843 hrs 18 Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons from Hornchurch took off and flew to the target area which was reached as the bombers were coming . The Squadrons orbitted at 22,000 ft. and then escorted the bombers back to Shoeburyness.

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O.R.B. 18.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

		Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	Pilot	13.30	14.50
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay	"		
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath	"		
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey	"		
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews	"		
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver	"		
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley	"		
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell	"		
Aus. 416094 F/Sgt. Halcombe	"		
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey	"		

Wing led by S/Ldr. Ratten, flew 21 minutes at 0 ft. in Domburg at 19,000 ft. making a wide orbit to starboard around Flushing for 7 minutes and out Visengen at 23,000 ft. No e/a were plotted but many were brought into the air after the Wing had left, which was the purpose of this sweep.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

DIVERSION TO FLUSHING.

At 1330 hrs. 22 Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons left Hornchurch. The Wing made landfall at Domburg at 19,000 ft. and swept over Flushing at 26,000 feet and after leaving the coast numerous smoke trails were seen over the Flushing area.

R.D.F. indicates a reaction by about 45/50 e/a, the majority of which were late.

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O.R.B. 18.4.43. Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

	Time Up	Time Down.
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	17.50	19.10
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford		
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay		
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker		
Aus. 402129 P/O. McCann		
Aus. 408606 P/O. Swift		
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews		
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves		
Aus. 405472 F/O. Esau		
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield		
Aus. 403917 Sgt. Ferguson		

Wing led by S/Ldr. Ratten - in Nieuport at 11,000 ft. and saw Bomphoons and Typhoons in Dunkirk area, climbed to Courtrai at 23,000 ft. and made left hand orbit, climbing to 22,000 ft, and returned to bombers crossing out Nieuport. Some E/A were plotted so Wing climbed down channel, up sun, to 27,000 ft. as far as Dunkirk, then returned to Ostend, finally crossing in Shoeburyness at 8,000 ft. No E/A were sighted.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

ATTACK ON COURTRAI AIRFIELD.

Eight Typhoons of 182 Squadron which left Manston at 1803 were closely escorted by seven Typhoons of 247 Squadron. Courtrai Wevelghem airfield was bombed in a dive from 12,500 feet to 5,000 feet, many direct hits being obtained on the hangars and buildings on the south side of the target as well as on the airfield itself. A Typhoon bomber crashed on returning and was destroyed (due to enemy coastal flak) but the pilot was only slight injured.

One Typhoon made a cannon attack on a goods train, silencing fire from a flak wagon, scoring strikes on petrol wagons and the locomotive, which stopped. Gunposts which opened fire near the coast were silenced.

Twenty-one Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons up from Hornchurch at 1750 hrs, climbed to 25,000 feet over the target during the attack. Afterwards the Wing flew up sun as far as Dunkirk and Ostend, but no e/a were seen.

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O.R.B. 20.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

	Time Up	Time Down.
	15.00	16.15

Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galway
Aus. 408606 P/O. Swift
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey.

Wing led by S/Ldr. Ratten out over Hythe at 0 ft. in over Ambleteuse at 23,000. Several E/A plots were given and two wide orbits were made without result. Out Marduck at 25,000 ft. Made further orbit in Channel area, then in Shoeburyness at 10,000 ft.

From H.Q. 11 Group.

Hornchurch Composite Circus 288 Report 20th April, 1943.

A. 122, 453 (R.A.A.F.) B. 23 Spits. IX C 1503/1620 D. Circus. E. N/A F. and G. Nil.

GENERAL. 122/453 led S/Ldr. Ratten, W/C Kilmarpin flying with 453 out Blythe 3,000 ft. climbing in Ambleteuse 22,000 ft. vectored by Appledore on E/A approaching from east, in Dunkerque area made climbing turn to port, but unable to locate E/A reported below them, climbed up sun towards Ambleteuse in further endeavour to locate, but this also unsuccessful. Then made wide port orbit St. Omer area at 26,000 ft. when Appledore reported friendly wing travelling north and absence of further E/A out Mardyck 25,000 ft. swept port down Channel, then starboard in Shoeburyness, 10,000 ft.

Flak: - Medium heavy in Boulogne area fired at bombers ship seen 1/2 mile off shore Ambleteuse surrounded by oil patches. Approx. 1600 hrs. small vessel seen making a right hand turn off Boulogne and further small vessel seen outside Gravelines.

Weather: - Light cloud forming inland over France clear Channel area except for medium ground haze. No further report to follow.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus No. 288.

It was decided to carry out Circus No. 288 for Venturas against Boulogne Marshalling Yards, during the afternoon of the 20th April, 1943, the following forces taking Part.

Bombers: -	10 Venturas (2 Group)	
Fighters:		
Escort	485 and 610 Squadrons	(Tangmere) Spits VB
Escort Cover	411 Squadron	(Kenley) Spits VB
Target Support	122 and 453 Squadrons	(Hornchurch) Spits 9
Fighter Echelon	341 and 611 Squadrons	(Biggin Hill) Spits 9.
Weather: - No cloud.	Visibility good.	

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10 Venturas attacked the target at 1536 hours from 11/12,000 feet, bombs falling across the N.W. end of the Yard, across the steel rolling mill and in the open country S. of the target. Very concentrated accurate heavy flak was encountered from the time of crossing the enemy coast to 5 miles W. of the enemy coast after leaving. All a/c returned safely although a number were hit by flak.

Target Support Wing.

The Hornchurch Wing crossed the English coast at Hythe at 3,000 feet and the French coast at Embleteuse at 1536 hours at 20,000 feet, when they were vectored by Appledore on to e/a approaching from the E. Various climbing turns were made and a wide orbit over St. Omer area at 26,000 feet but the e/a were not located. The wing then swept out at Mardyck at 1547 hours at 25,000 feet and crossed the English coast at Shoeburyness at 10,000 feet at 1600 hours.

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Q.R.B. 20.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	18.30	19.45
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay		
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha		
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott		
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith		
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker		
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews		
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves		
Aus. 405472 F/O. Esau		
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield		
Aus. 411059 P/O. Thornley		

Wing led by S/Ldr. Ratten, out at 0 ft. to 5 miles off the English coast. Warned of E/A in Dieppe area, made climbing orbit to port to 26,000 ft. Wing leader saw 5 F.W.190s diving fast and weaving 15,000 ft. below, with two other gaggles following behind. For this reason and low altitude the Wing leader suspected a trap and did not go down. Out Dieppe at 28,000 ft. In Pevensey Bay at 20,000 ft.

From H.Q. 11 Group.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 67 Report 20/4/43.

A. 122, 453 B. 21 Spit IXs C. 1830/1930 D. Rear Cover
E. N/A F. Nil G. Nil.

GENERAL. 122, 453 led by S/Ldr. Ratten out Hastings Off for 6 mins. Climbed when 5 miles N. St. Valery advised by Appledore of E/A in Dieppe area, Vectored S.E. Dieppe, E/A reported at 26,000 ft. Wing did climbing port orbit to 29,000 ft. Wing Leader saw 5 F.W. 190s flying S.E. in loose formation, diving fast and weaving, at least 15,000 ft. below 2 other gaggles following close behind first. For this reason and low altitude of E/A, wing leader suspected trap and did not go down. Out Dieppe 28,000 ft. and few minutes later advised by sector control of friends heavily engaged Dieppe area so commenced climbing port, when Appledore advised all friendly a/c already withdrawn. In Pevensy Bay 20,000 ft.

Weather. Haze to 20,000 ft. Thicker on ground. Wispy cloud forming generally 25,000 ft.
No further report to follow.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 67.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod No. 67 against Triqueville Aerodrome, during the evening of the 20th April, 1943, the followng forces taking part.

Bombers: - 8 Bomphoons of 181 Squadron (83 group)

Fighters: -
Escort. 197 Squadron (Tangmere) (Typhoons)
Escort Cover
& Bouncing Wing. 341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spit 9
2nd Bouncing Wing. 247 Squadron (83 Group) (Typhoons)
Target Support 403 and 416 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits 9
1st Fighter Echelon 315 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt) Spits 9
Rear Cover 122 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spits 9

Weather: - No cloud. Haryup to 4,000 feet.

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Bombers, Escort and Escort Cover & Bouncing Wing.

The formation made rendezvous at Shoreham below 500 feet at 1830 hours and proceeded at sea level until 10 miles N.W. of Trouville, (the bombers having altered course as they were too far to the E) and commenced to climb. The bombers climbed to 10,000 feet with the Escort at 11,000 feet and the Escort Cover at 12,000 feet, when the target was bombed out of the sun in a dive from 10,000 feet to 5,000 feet, 16 x 500 lbs. bombs being dropped, the majority on the S. end of the W. dispersal, some in front of the watch tower and some by the Northern end of the Western dispersal. The formation continued to dive, and recrossed the French coast near Fecamp from 3,500 to 6,000 feet at 1908 hours. The bombers and their escort returned to Tangmere and the Escort Cover Wing to Beachy Head.

The Biggin Hill Wing daw 1 e/a, believed to be a fighter, on the ground in the Western dispersal but there were no signs of activity in the aerodrome.

Rear Cover.

The Hornchurch Wing crossed the English coast at Hastings below 500 feet at 1848 hours and when 5 miles N. of St. Valery En-Caux were advised by Appledore of e/a in the Dieppe area at 26,000 feet. The Wing climbed to 29,000 feet when 5 F.W.190's were seen flying at S.E. in loose formation, diving fast and weaving, at least 15,000 feet below. Two other lots of e/a were following close behind the first formation. For this reason and on account of the low altitude of the e/a, the Wing Leader suspected a trap and did not go down. The Wing recrossed the French coast at Dieppe at 28,000 feet and returned over Pevensey at 20,000 feet.

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O.R.B. 21.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	11.40	12.45
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay	"	12.30
Aus. 408606 P/O. Swift	"	"
Aus. 402129 P/O. McCann	"	12.45
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford	"	"
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews	"	"
Aus. 416094 F/Sgt. Halcombe	"	"
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell	"	"
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray	"	"
Aus. 411059 P/O. Thornley	"	"
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey	"	"

Wing led by S/Ldr. Ratten out Dungeness, climbing, and in Le Touquet at 20,000 ft. E/A reported proceeding to Abbeville from east, so turned right up sun, losing height to keep under cloud. Made complete port orbit and one section was sent down to investigate but aircraft were friendly. 4 E/A were seen travelling north west at 4,000 ft, below and on turning towards them they dived inland. Further 6 u/a were seen by the Wing leader off Gris Nez - these proved friendly also. In Dungeness at 20,000 ft.

From H.Q. 11 Group.

Hornchurch Composite Circus 290 Report 21st April, 1943.

A. 122, 453, and W/Cdr. Kilmartin B. 23 Spit IX. C 1140/1255
D. 2nd Fighter echelon. E. N/A F. and G. Nil.

GENERAL. 122, 453 led S/Ldr. Ratten, W/Cdr. Kilmartin flying with 453 out Dungeness climbing in Le Touquet 20,000 ft. 1207, on approaching Frugey Appledore reported E/A proceeding to Abbeville from, furned right up sun, losing height to 17,000 ft., IX under cloud E. turned went N. Abbeville, made complete port orbit, sent one section down to investigate 4 E/A, these friendly. Out Ault, headed north 15 miles off shore, saw 2 109s travelling fast 5,000 ft. Below S.E. from Le Touquet, diving inland, furhter 4 E/A seen travelling N/W. 4,000 ft. below, 10 miles to port, turned towards them, but E/A dived inland, further 6 E/A seen by Wing leader off Gris Nez on investigation these also friendly, Appledore reported North Weald engaged in Le Treport area. On starting to turn, saw North Weald coming out. In Dungeness 20,000 ft. 1240.

Flak: - Slight medium seen following bombers out.

Weather: - Heavy haze cloud at 17/20,000 ft. Cloud forming generally at 25,000 ft. Haze at all heights, thicker towards south. No further report to follow.

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No. 11 Group Report on Circus 290.

It was decided to carry out Circus 290 on the morning of 21st April, 1943, against Abbeville Marshalling Yards, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers: - 11 Venturas (No. 2 Group)

Fighters: -
Escort. Nos. 485 and 610 Squadrons (SpitV's) Tangmere
No. 411 Squadron (Spit V's) Kenley.
Escort Cover. Nos. 541 and 611 Squadrons (Spit IX's)Biggin Hill
1st Fighter Echelon. Nos. 331 and 332 Squadrons (Spit IX's) North Weald.
2nd Fighter Echelon. Nos. 122 and 453 Squadrons (Spit IX's) Hornchurch.

Weather: 9-10/10ths cloud at 20,000 feet; visibility good, ground haze

Bombers.

The 11 Venturas bombed Abbeville Marshalling Yards at 1215 hours from 10,500 feet. The bombs from the first box fell to the West of the northern end of the target and the bombs from the second box to the East of the northern end of the target. The bombers were attacked by enemy fighters and one Ventura was shot down over the target and two were shot down before they reached the coast on the Homeward journey by a head-on attack by F.W.190's.

2nd Fighter Echelon.

The Hornchurch Wing left the English coast at Dungeness and crossed the French coast at Le Touquet at 1207 hours at 20,000 feet, and were ordered to Abbeville. Various formations of aircraft were seen but none were near enough to engage and the Wing returned to base without further incident.

Enemy Casualties: - 1 Me.109 destroyed.
3 F.W.190s damaged.

Our Casualties. 2 pilots N.Y.R.

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O.R.B. 21.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX - PATROLS.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galway	19.10	20.35
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath	"	"
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha	"	"
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith	"	"
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien	"	"
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott	"	"
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andreÿs	20.15	20.55
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves	"	"
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell	"	"
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray	"	"
Aus. 405117 P/O. Ewins	"	"

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 22.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. PATROLS.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 411521 P/O. Rickard	19.55	21.00
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott	"	"

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 24.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. PATROLS.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins	06.50	08.10
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves	"	"
Aus. 411938 P/O. Odea	10.50	11.50
Aus. 411521 P/O. Rickard	"	"
Aus. 412624 F/O. McAuliffe	"	"

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 25.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CONVOY PATROLS.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien	10.05	11.55
Aus. 411938 P/O. Odea	"	"

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 26.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CONVOY PATROL.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford	18.30	19;25
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha	"	"

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

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O.R.B. 28.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX PATROLS.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford	18.30	19.25
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha	"	"

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 29.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX RAMROD.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten	11.35	12.55
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha	"	"
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay	" b	"
Aus. 411521 P/O. Rickard	"	"
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien	"	"
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker	"	"
Aus. 403917 Sgt. Ferguson	"	"

The Wing failed to R/V with Whirlibombers so after orbitting Hastings twice, set course independently at zero feet for six minutes, crossing in to France at Le Crotoy at 14,000 feet. Turned right and orbitted Abbeville area until told by Control that friends had turned back, then turned left and flew north to Hesdin. There, was warned of Bandits 20 miles to the east at 15,000 ft. and climbing. However, these were not intercepted, so Wing turned out at Berck sur Mur at 24,000 ft. and crossed in at Rye at 18,000 ft. and was then ordered to land at Biggin Hill owing to poor weather conditions at home base. They then returned at 15.10, landing at base at 15.30 hours, 10/10ths cloud east of a line Calais to Abbeville and 5/10ths at 20,000 ft. in Channel area, which made chances of interception remote.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

COMPOSITE RAMROD 66 REPORT HORNCHURCH WING 29.4.43

A. 122 and 453 (Aust). B. 11 Spits IX 122 and W/Cdr. Kilmartin, 12 Spit IX. 453. C. 1143 to 1310. D. Escort cover and free lance wing. E. N/A. F. and G. Nil.

GENERAL. The wing led by W/Cdr. Kilmartin set course for Hastings and arrived there at zero ft. Did not R/V with Whirlwinds or Whirlwinds escort. Circled Hastings twice and set course independently at zero ft. for Cayeux where at zero ft. for first six minutes and then climbed, crossing French coast 14,000 ft. at Le Crotoy. Turned right and orbitted at Abbeville and on being told that friends had turned back, turned left and flew north to Hesdin. The wing was told by Appledore control that bandits were 20 miles to the east at 5,000 ft. and climbing. Appledore gave a vector of 100 degrees, but after 2 minutes on this course the wing leader decided to return to base. The wing turned left and crossed out over Berck sur Mer at 24,000 ft. Lost height gradually and crossed English coast at Rye at 18,000 ft. The wing was ordered by the sector controller to land at Biggin Hill.

Weather: - 10/10 cloud east of a line from Calais to Abbeville to Dieppe. Clear from Dieppe to Cap Gris Nez for about 10 miles inland. 5/10 at 20,000 ft. over Channel. Very hazy. Visibility horizontal 3/5 miles vertical unlimited.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

11 Group Attack on railway sidings east of Eu.

Twelve Whirlwind Bombers of 137 Squadron escorted and supported by three squadrons of Spitfires and a Typhoon Squadron, were detailed to attack the railway sidings east of Eu.

Additionally four squadrons of Spitfires IX were to sweep areas east and west of the target.

The bombers and escort did not sight the escort cover at the rendezvous point and the bombers therefore abandoned the attack. Six squadrons of the Spitfires and the Typhoon Squadron swept the French coast, but they were not engaged.

Escort Cover.

At 1143 hours twenty-three Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons left Hornchurch to act as escort cover to the Whirlwind bombers, which, however, were not sighted at the rendezvous point. The wing then set course independently and swept the Abbeville area. No E/A were sighted.

O.R.B. 29.4.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX.

PATROLS.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath	16.50 "	18.10 "
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott	17.45 "	18.30 "
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith	18.25 "	19.30 "

No incident.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x

VERY SECRET

OPERATIONS No. 453 SQUADRON, R.A.A.F.

MAY, 1943.

O.R.B. 1.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX CIRCUS.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay	10.25	12.00
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford	"	"
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith	"	"
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift	"	"
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long	"	"
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews	"	"
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver	"	1140
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins	"	1200
Aus. 405472 F/O. Esau	"	"
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley	"	"
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey	"	"

Circus. Squadron took off 10.32 hours landed at base 1200 hours. Wing led by W/Cdr. Kilmartin; arrived Hastings 1045 hours, owing to weather conditions deviated from course and flew down Channel to 8 miles off Beachy Head, where conditions were better. Were then vectored on to correct course by control; they were flying above cloud which was 10/10ths and in consequence the French coast was not seen, but were presumably in the Fecamp/Le Havre area. Having had several further vectors from Control, the Wing withdrew. Weather, east of a line Shoreham/Le Havre 10/10ths cloud solid from 17,000 ft. West of this same line 5/10ths cloud at 5,000 ft.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus No. 293.

It was decided to carry our Circus No. 293 for 12 Bostons against Caen Marshalling Yards during the morning of the 1st May, 1943, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers: 12 Bostons of No. 2 Group.

Fighters:

Escort: - No. 303 Squadron (Spit VB's) Northolt
No. 421 " " Kenley

Escort Cover: -Nos. 315 and 316 Squadrons (Spit IX's)Northolt

1st Bouncing Wing: - Nos. 341 and 611 Squadrons (Spit IX's) Biggin Hill

2nd Bouncing Wing: - Nos. 486 Typhoon Squadron (Tangmere)

Forward Support: - Nos. 331 and 332 Squadrons (Spit IX'S) North Weald.

Rear Support: - Nos. 122 and 453 Squadrons (Spit IX's) Hornchurch

Weather: - Clear in mid-channel, 5/10ths at 5,000 feet over the French coast, 10/10ths at 2,000 feet 350 feet thick over the target.

Bombers: - 12 Bostons reched the target but abandoned task owing to cloud, and all returned safely with bombs.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

Rear Support: - The Hornchurch Wing arrived at Hastings at zero feet and owing to 10/10ths cloud at 1,000 feet, flew towards Beachy Head, climbing through a gap 10 miles south of Beachy Head. They then turned back on their original course until vectored by Appledore to bring them to their correct landfall, flying above 10/10ths cloud. The Wing estimate they flew over the Fecamp/Le Havre area between 25,000 and 26,000 feet where they turned right and began to withdraw at 1114 hours probably over the Baie de la Seine. The Wing returned uneventfully.

Enemy casualties: - Nil
Our Casualties: - Nil.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1032 hrs, twenty-four Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons left Hornchurch and patrolled the Fecamp/Le Havre area at 25,000/26,000 feet, without sighting any E/A.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

O.R.B. 2.5.43 Aircraft IX. Spitfires. CONVOY PATROL.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins	0920	1035
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell	1110	1215

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 3.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CONVOY PATROL.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann	0805	0945
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift	"	"

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 3.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galway
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell
Aus. 301543 F/Sgt. Standfield
Aus. 403917 Sgt. Ferguson
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay

Squadron left base at 1523 hours for Martlesham to re-fuel and take part in a 12 Group Ramrod. W/Cdr. Kilmartin led 453 Squadron, but the Wing was recalled having reached a point 30 miles west of Zandvoort at 27,000 ft. and returned direct to base landing at 1730 hours. Weather clear; visibility excellent, 8/10ths broken cloud at 28,000 ft.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

Target Support: - At 1649 24 Spitfires IX of 453 and 122 Squadrons left Hornchurch to act as Target Support. When flying 30 miles W. of Zandvoort at 27,000 ft., the wing was recalled. No E/A were seen.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

F.C.I.S. 4.5.43
No. 392

At 1915 hours 12 Venturas of Bomber Command escorted and covered by 70 Spitfires VB and VC left for Abbeville, where eleven of the Venturas attacked the marshalling yard, seeing bursts on the railway junction slightly north of the engine sheds. Seventeen Typhoons and 43 Spitfires IX carried out supporting operations and one formation of Spitfires saw 8 enemy aircraft at 10,000 feet near Abbeville, which went into cloud and on re-appearing dived away. Another formation of Spitfires saw 6 enemy aircraft at 22,000 feet near the mouth of the Somme and destroyed 3 Me.109s for the loss of one Spitfire and its pilot.

O.R.B. 4.5.43

Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker — Time Up: 1900
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews — Time Down: 2000
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield
Aus. 403917 Sgt. Ferguson
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell

CIRCUS. Wing led by W/Cdr. Kilmartin. Course was set for Abbeville, the Wing flying at zero feet and commencing to climb at 1923 hours. Cross in Le Crotoy 18,000 ft, flew around Abbeville at 22,000 ft. Owing to difficult cloud conditions, the Wing Commander decided to stay below cloud so as to keep an eye on the bombers and escort, even though this meant being below blower height on some occasions. 8 presumed e/a were seen 10 miles south, south-east at 10,000 ft. flying N.W., but these disappeared into cloud. The Wing finally crossed out at Cayeaux at 26,000 ft. when presume same batch of e/a re-appeared in the Le Treport area, but these quickly dived inland under cloud. Bomb bursts were not observed, but smoke was seen coming from north end of target. Weather, 5/10ths cloud over French coast 23,000 ft. becoming 10/10ths 19,000 ft. inland with layer at 10,000 ft. and base up to this same height.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus No. 294.

It was decided to carry out Circus No. 294 in the afternoon of 4th May, 1943 against Abbeville Marshalling Yards, the following forces taking part.

Bombers: 12 Venturas (No. 2 Group)

Fighters:

Escort: 485 Squadron (Tangmere), 421 Squadron (Kenley), 222 Squadron (Hornchurch) — Spit V's.

Escort Cover: 310, 312 and 313 Squadrons (10 Group) Spit. V's.

Forward Support: 609 Squadron (Hornchurch) Typhoons

Rear Support: 197 Squadron (Tangmere) Typhoons.

High Cover: 122 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spit IX's

2nd High Cover: 331 and 332 Squadrons (North Weald) Spit IX's

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

Weather: - Over target - Hazy up to 10,000 ft. 2/10ths cloud at 5,000 ft. 7/8 10ths at 20,000 ft. Visibility good.

Bombers: 11 of the 12 Venturas bombed the Marshalling Yards from 10/12,000 ft. with 24 x 500 lb. 14 x 250 lb. G.P. and 72 x 30 lb. I.B. bombs. Bursts from the first box being seen slightly to the N. of the engine sheds. Bursts of the second box were not observed on account of haze.

High Cover: The Hornchurch Wing crossed the English Coast at Dungeness at 0 ft. started climbing at 1923 hours crossing the French Coast at Le Crotoy at 18,000 ft. and flew round Abbeville at 20/22,000 ft. seeing 8 a/c presumed enemy 10 miles S.S.E. flying N.W. disappearing under cloud. The Wing recrossed the French Coast at Cayeux at 26,000 ft. seeing presumably the same batch of e/a over Le Treport at 10,000 ft. diving inland under cloud. The Wing returned to base without incident.

Enemy casualties: 3 Me.109's destroyed (2nd Lt. Grundt-Spang, Sgt. Olsen, Sgt. Larssen - 331 Squadron)
3 Me.109's damaged.

Our Casualties: Sgt. Granness N.Y.R.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1904 hrs. twenty two Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons, left Hornchurch as high cover, and swept over Le Crotoy at 18,000 ft. and round Abbeville at 20,000-22,000 ft. Eight E/A were seen at 10,000 ft. 10 miles S.E. of the target area, but they soon disappeared in cloud to re-appear later over Le Treport, before diving inland. No flak was encountered.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

O.R.B. 5.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. PATROL.

Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield Time Up 1025
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver Time Down 1120

Scrambled at 1025 hours and airborne at 1927 hours to patrol Barrow Deep area at 20,000 ft., 3 bandits were plotted and several vectors were given taking the Section up to 27,000 ft. in the Flushing area, but there was no interception and they landed at base at 1120 hours. Owing to deteriorating weather conditions further operations were suspended but in the evening

Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey Time Up 2025
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith Time Down 2140

were scrambled at 2036 hours and airborne at 2038 hours to try to intercept 2 e/a which had crossed the coast at Dungeness, but these were chased out by Typhoons from Biggin Hill and our section returned to base at 2120 hours.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x

O.R.B. 7. Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

Aus. 405111 S/Ldr. Ratten
Aus. 407662 F/Lt. Barclay
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith
Aus. 411938 P/O. O'Dea Time Up: 1550
Aus. 411521 P/O. Rickard Time Down: 1725
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 403917 Sgt. Ferguson

Rodeo took place, the Squadron being airborne at 1553 hrs. setting course zero feet for 7 mins, then climbing, out at Dungeness, in Berck 1628 hrs. at 25,000 ft. Flew East to Hesdin then North to Guines area and South to Abbeville, finally crossing out Somme Estuary 1652 hrs. and in Dungeness at 10,000 ft. without incident. Scattered cloud at 10,000 ft. over Channel and France, with excellent visibility.

H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence

Hornchurch Composite Rodeo 213 Report 7th May, 1943.

A. 453, 122 and W/Cdr. Ratten. B. 21 Spits IX C. 1553 1723
D. Fighter Echelon E. N/A F and G. Nil.

General. Wing led by W/Cdr. Ratten, zero ft. on course to Berck for 7 minutes, then climbed out Dungeness, N. Berck 1620 hrs., (25,000) flew E. to Hesdin then N. to Audruicq/Guines area then S. to Abbeville. Out Somme Estuary 1652 hrs. (25,000) N. to Dungeness 10,000. 3 possible bargeen seen inside mole Bolougne Harbour.

Weather: - Very scattered cloud 10,000 ft. over Channel and France. Light haze. Visibility excellent. No further report to follow.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

O.R.B. 11.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 411521 P/O. Rickard
Aus. 405472 F/Lt. Esau — Time Up: 1205
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins — Time Down: 1310
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray
Aus. 403917 Sgt. Ferguson
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey

Circus. Rendezvous Newhaven with bombers, when half way out due to the deteriorating weather conditions bombers and escort turned back. The Hornchurch Wing went on to within 10 miles of French coast in order to drop tanks, then returned, there being no enemy reaction. Crossing in Dungeness 10,000 ft. The weather 10/10ths cloud, 3,500 ft. over French coast and inland. Second layer 10/10ths 11,500 ft. over Channel.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus 295

It was intended to carry out Circus No. 295 during the afternoon of the 11th May 1943, in accordance with No. 11 Group Operation Order No. 406 against Boulogne (Outreau) Marshalling Yards, but owing to weather conditions the bombers turned back before reaching the target.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

Commencing at 1230 hrs. six Mitchells of Bomber Command, escorted and supported by 161 Spitfires IX and VB of 501, 485, 421, 222, 453, 122, 341, 611, 403, 416, 315, 316, 331 and 332 Squadrons, and nine Typhoons of 486 Sqadron, were detailed to attack railway objectives in France.

Owing to unfavourable weather conditions over the target area the bombers and co-operating fighter Squadrons were recalled.

Weather: - Over France: 8/10ths cloud at 5,000 feet. 10/10ths cloud at 10,000 feet.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

O.R.B. 11.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CONVOY PATROL.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith	0950	1130
Aus. 413108 Sgt. Currie	"	"
Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann	1220	1335
Aus. 412624 P/O. McAuliffe	"	"

Convoy patrol in the Estuary during the morning, without incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

F.C.I.S. No. 393 At 1130 hours 6 Mitchells of Bomber Command left with 4 Squadrons of Spitfire VB for Boulogne, where the Mitchells attacked the marshalling yard, scoring hits on the target. Two squadrons of Spitfires IX provided high cover and 12 Typhoons, 68 Spitfires IX, 13 Spitfires IX (66) and 12 Spitfires IX (70) operated in support. There was an apparent reaction estimated at 55 aircraft and aircraft of the high cover and supporting formations saw a number of F.W.190s. Six F.W.190s were destroyed in combat for the loss of 3 Spitfires and 2 pilots.

O.R.B. 13.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 405472 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey

Time Up: 1105
Time Down: 1240

Circus. Wing led by W/Cdr. Ratten who flew with 453. Up 1114, down 1240. In Boulogne 22,000 ft. at 1150 hrs. Made two wide port orbits and turned S.W. Saw 2 e/a far below diving towards Berck area, but too far to bounce. Wing then turned north, crossing out at Berck. Just off coast, smoke trails were seen behind and above and control reported friends in trouble behind. Wing leader ordered steep climbing turn to port, the a/c behind also started to climb to port but we outclimbed them reaching to a height of 35,500 ft. west of Le Touquet. Another gaggle of e/a were reported to the east, meanwhile the former gaggle had continued on a south westerly course and our Wing had to turn for home, crossing in Dungeness 30,000 ft. Intense heavy flak was experienced from the Boulogne area, accurate height for bombers, one of which was seen going down in flames, four parachutes were seen falling over French coast. Slight sea mist rising to 3,000 ft. 5/10ths cloud at 10,000 ft. over France, with unlimited visibility.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

H.Q. No. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Circus 296. Report 13.5.43.

A. W/Cdr. Ratten. 122, 453, [illegible]. 24 Spit IX C. 1110/1240
D. High Cover E. 1145 F. Nil G. Nil.

General. Hornchurch Wing led. W/Cdr. Ratten over target 1248 at 20,000 ft. Orbitted port during bombing observing one stick of bombs straddle Marshalling Yards. Continued large orbit to port round Boulogne while bombers and escort retired. Then turned starboard towards Berck where hung reported by Controller. 2 e/a diving fast were sighted over Le Touquet 15,000 ft. below Wing, which had climbed to 25,000 ft. Message from Wing Leader detailing 122 to intercept was cancelled owing to speed of E/A and probility of decoy. As left hand orbit made W. Berck at 1210 15 E/A sighted coming out from east about 3,000 ft. above, 10 miles away. Wing leader ordered wing to do fast climbing orbit to port off Somme estuary, thus getting up sun above E/A. Latter manoeuvred for position and were then 2,000 ft. below Wing, which was at 37,000 ft. Hornchurch Wing and E/A continued manoeuvring for position for few minutes, then E/A dived away towards coast and were re-enforced by another large gaggle of 25 plus from Abbeville area, making total of 40 plus F.W. 190's. Wing Leader considered attack inadvisable and at 1217 returned to Dungeness.

Flak: - Intense heavy, accurate for bombers, one of which seen go down in flames 3 miles west of Boulogne. 4 parachutes observed falling over French coast. One pilot of 122 reports sighting Spitfire spinning at 11,000 ft. at 1214 about 8 miles west of Alprech.

Weather: - Haxy cloud 38,000 ft. 2/10ths alto-cumulus spreading over France. 12/15,000 ft. visibility good.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus No. 296.

It was intended to carry out Circus 296 for 6 Mitchells against Boulogne Marshalling Yards during the morning of the 13th May, 1943, the following forces taking prt: -

Bombers: 6 Mitchells (No. 2 Group).

Fighters:

Escort Wing: Nos. 485 and 501 Squadrons (Tangmere) Spit VB.
Escort Cover Wing: Nos. 411 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley) Spit VB.
High Cover Wing: Nos. 122 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spit IX.
Target Support: No.197 Squadron (Typhoon)
1st Fighter Echelon: Nos. 341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill)
2nd Fighter Echelon: Nos. 403 and 416 Squadrons (Kenley)
3rd Fighter Echelon: Nos. 315 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt
4th Fighter Echelon: Nos. 331 and 332 Squadrons (North Weald) Spit IX's.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

Weather: - Thin patchy cloud about 5,000 feet over France: visibility good.

Bombers: - 5 Mitchells bombed the target with 20 x 1000 lb. bombs from 10,500 ft. Bursts were seen across the target, particularly at the North end. One Mitchell is missing. Two of the crew were seen to bale out.

High Cover Wing: - The Hornchurch Wing made rendezvous as above and orbitted the target at 1248 hours at 20,000 feet, observing the bombing. After the bombers and the Escort Wings had retired, the Wing turned towards Berck reaching 25,000 ft. Two enemy aircraft were observed at 10,000 ft., diving fast and were thought to be a decoy. While orbitting Berck at 1210 hours, 15 enemy aircraft were seen coming from the E. at about 28,000 ft. The Wing climbed up sun to 37,000 ft., the enemy aircraft having climbed to 37,000 ft. Our Wing and the enemy continued manoeuvring for position until the enemy dived away into France when they were reinforced by at least 25 aircraft coming from the Abbeville area. With such large enemy forces in the area, the Wing Leader considered attack inadvisable and at 1217 hours returned to Dungeness. This Wing observed four parachutes near Boulogne.

Enemy Casualties: - 6 FW.190's destroyed.
2 FW.190's damaged.

Our Casualties:

Bombers: - 1 Mitchell N.Y.R.

Fighters: - 1 pilot N.Y.R. due to enemy action.
1 pilot N.Y.R. believed not due to enemy action.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1110 hrs. 24 Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons from Hornchurch took off and flew to Boulogne arriving over the target area at 1148 hrs. at 20,000 ft. After orbitting until the bombers and their escort had retired, the Hornchurch wing flew towards Le Touquet (25,000 ft.) where 2 E/A were seen at 15,000 ft. Over the Berck area 15 E/A were sighted and while the wing was manoeuvring for position, these were reinforced by some 25 E/A. No combats took place.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.18.238

O.R.B. 13.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leigh	1530	1720
Aus. 405472 F/Lt. Esau	"	"
Aus. F/Lt. Douglas	"	1640
Aus. 408989 P/O. Gray	"	1720
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay	"	1635
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey	"	1720
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield	"	1640
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins	"	1720
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley	"	"

Ramrod. Led by W/Cdr. Ratten who again flew with 453. All down by 1719 hours. Wing started climbing from base, reaching Berck at 1612 hrs. 27,000 ft. Crossed up sun of the first box of Fortresses, being 3,000 ft. above, followed them into target area and covering them at a height of 30,000 ft. When they made a port orbit, and sighted 10 F.W. 190s 2,000 ft. below approximately 2 miles away, coming from the S.W. 453 Squadron dived down after them, but they split up and dived inland. After bombing, the bombers broke into two gaggles, the Wing stayed up sun of the leading box and covered them, flying loosely and in visual contact. Several e/a were seen in twos and threes but were much too low to engage. The English coast was recrossed at Dungeness at 1700 hrs. at 17,000 ft. When Wing half way home two splashes seen in the sea. It was later learned that this was a F.W.190 and a Spitfire from Biggin Hill Wing. Some light flak observed west of the target. Weather good, 1/10 to 2/10 cloud at 10,000 ft. with excellent visibility.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 71 Report 13th May, 1943.

A. W/Cdr. Ratten, 122, 453, 222. B. 23 Spits. IX, 12 Spits. VB. C. Spits. IX up Hornchurch 1535, down 1736. Spits VB up Tangmere 1630 down 1725. D. Spite IX first high cover. 222 withdrawal cover. E. 1645 F. Me.109F damaged by S/Ldr. S. Compton (H.Q. 11 Group) flying with 122 Squadron. 1 F.W.190 damaged by P/O. Mlade (CZech) 122 Squadron. G. Nil.

General. 122 and 453 led by W/Cdr. Ratten in Berck 27000 ft. 1612. Crossed up sun of bombers reached target 30,000 ft. when 10 F.W.190s sighted 2,000 ft. below, 1/2 miles away coming from S. Wing turned and dived after them, but E/A dived inland. Boming appeared very accurate on return from target bombers split into two gaggles and wing flew up sun of main formation crossed out between Le Touquet and Berck with one box on starboard side. SEveral E/A in 2s and 3s were observed well below between target and coast and at Le Touquet 4 or 5 F.W.190s were seen to dive through bombers, but after wing had dived across bombers, they lost sight of E/A. Bombers were followed across Channel at same height, at 25,000 ft. in English coast 20,000 ft. Dungeness 17,000 Blue 3 122 Squadron S/Ldr. Compton, followed by Blue 4 P/O. Mlade (Czech) detached from squadron owing to tank trouble, engaged two to five E/A about to make attack on middle box of bombers from starboard side 4,000 ft. below. As result one Me.109F and 1 F.W.190 are claimed as damaged.

Flak. On way in several dark black bursts N. of Amiens, also slight heavy flak west of target on way out. Fortress was seen in vertical dive, smoking, half way between target and coast at about 25,000 ft. Much smoke observed from St. Omer area. 222 Squadron as part of Tangmere withdrawal cover wing took off

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Tangmere 1630. Reached French coast slightly below 25,000 ft. over Berck. Returned with 4 boxes of bombers on their port side and when quarter way back over Channel Red Section bounced by 2 F.W.190s., which broke away when section turned to engage. Simultaneously Blue Section became split by F.W.190 on tail of Spitfire from another squadron. Squadron returned to base without any further incident.

Weather: - Clear. Visibility excellent, slight haze.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod 71.

This Ramrod was carried out during the afternoon of the 13th May, 1943. The operation was planned as follows: -

Diversions.

a. 80 Fortresses and Liberators to sweep Orfordness at zero minus 60, to 40 miles N. of Ostende, N. Foreland, Dungeness (zero plus 15) Le Touquet, Sto,Omer (zero plus 30) N. Foreland, escorted by nine Thunderbolt Squadrons from Dungeness, the bombers to bomb two aerodromes at St. Omer.

b. 80 Fortresses to sweep Beachy Head (zero minus 45) to 20 miles N. of Dieppe, to 28 miles N. of Fecamp, Beachy Head, Dungeness zero.

Main Attack.

At zero 80 Fortresses, the same force as (b) above, to attack Potez aircraft works at Meault, returning over Hastings Fighter Cover by six wings, of Spitfires.

The following forces took part: -

1st Diversion.

Bombers: 80 Fortresses and Liberators

Fighters: 9 Thunderbolt Squadrons (U.S.AA.C.)

2nd Diversion.

Bombers: 80 Fortresses

Main Attack.

Bombers: 80 Fortresses

Fighters:

1st Fighter Cover:	315 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt)	
2nd Fighter Cover:	331 and 332 Squadrons (N.Weald)	Spits.
3rd Fighter Cover:	403 and 416 Squadrons (Kenley)	IX
1st High Cover:	422 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch)	
2nd High Cover:	341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill)	
Withdrawal Cover:	485 and 501 Squadrons (Tangmere) and 222 Squadron (Hornchurch)	Spits VB

Weather: Mainly clear, visibility good, some haze.

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Main Attack Bombers.

80 Fortresses bombed the target, and preliminary reports indicate that the bombing was good. 3 Fortresses are missing, and it is understood that they claim to haveshot down 8 e/a.

1st High Cover.

The Hornchurch Wing crossed the French Coast at Berck at 1612 hours at 27,000 ft. and reached target at 30,000 ft., giving cover to the front half of the bombers. 10 F.W.190s were seen over target area which were prevented from attacking the Fortresses. Several e/a in twos and threes were observed attacking the Bombers between the target and the Coast. 2 a/c became detached from the Wing and engaged 2 to 5 e/a who were about to attack the middle box of bombers, with the results set out below. The Wing returned to base without further incident.

Enemy Casualties: 1 Me.109 damaged (S/Ldr Compton Headquarters, 11 Group)
1 F.W. 190 damaged (P/O. Hlado - 122 Sqdn)

Our Casualties: Nil

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy: 4 F.W. 190's destroyed.
2 Me.109's destroyed.
1 F.W.190 probably destroyed
6 F.W. 190's damaged.
4 Me.109's damaged.

Ours: 5 pilots missing.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1535 hrs. 23 Spitfires of 122 and 453 Squadrons, left Hornchurch as First High Cover. The wing flew up sun of the bombers at 30,000 ft from Berck, and several times turned to engage small groups of FW.190s and Me.109s which made for the bombers. Two Spitfires which engaged one group claim one F.W. 190 and one Me.109 as damaged.

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O.R.B. 13.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. ESCORT

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 405472 F/Lt. Esau	1855	1905
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath	and	
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins	1935	2020
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield		

Left base at 1855, landing Manston at 1905, were briefed and took off at 1935, escorting 2 Lancasters out to sea on a secret mission, returning to base at 2020 hrs. without incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

F.C.I.S. No. 393

46 Fortresses of U.S.8th B.C. left for Antwerp and were joined over Belgium by 123 Thunderbolts of U.S.8th F.C.. Twenty-four Spitfires IX provided withdrawal cover. Considerable fighter opposition was encountered over and near the target area and a reaction estimated at 50 aircraft was apparent. In combats the Thunderbolts destroyed 4 enemy aircraft and the Spitfires 1 enemy aircraft for the loss of 3 Thunderbolts and their pilots. Twenty-nine of the Fortresses attacked the ship-building yards at Antwerp with results described as good.

O.R.B. 14.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann
Aus. 405472 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galway
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 408989 P/O. Gray
Aus. 405117 P/O. Ewins
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield
F/Lt. Douglas

Time Up: 1240
Time Down: 1420

Ramrod took place; 12 a/c were airborne at 1242 and all down at 1417. The Wing reached Walcheren Island at 1323 hours at 28,000 ft. Control reported the bombers as being heavily engaged so Wing turned towards Antwerp and sighted the bombers coming out, between Antwerp and Flushing, 3/4,000 ft. below. Wing then made a wide orbit and placed themselves behind the bombers. On the way out one Fortress was lagging about two miles behind the formation at 18,000 ft., a little later 10/12 e/a were seen to attack it. W/Cdr. Ratten flying with 122 Squadron went down whilst 453 acted as top cover. The e/a broke and dived away, then 122 Squadron became quite split up and could not be covered, so 453 remained with Fortresses, weaving 3,000 ft. above them and stayed so until Orfordness was reached, then crossed in over Dengie, Flats. Some flak and a heavy pall of smoke was seen over Antwerp, thick ground haze and 1/10th strato cumulus at 12/15,000 ft.

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From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 73 Report 14th May, 1943.

A. Part 1 222, Part 2 W/Cdr. Ratten, 122, 453. B. Part 1 12 Spitfires VB part 2. 24 Spits IX. C. Part 1 1200/1320 Part 2. 1242/1430 D. Part 1. Withdrawal cover Part 2. First withdrawal cover. E. Part 1 Nil, Part 2 1340. F. W/Cdr. Ratten one F.W.190 destroyed, shared with P/O. Legal, 122 Squadron. One F.W.190 probably destroyed P/O. Legal, one F.W.190 damaged. In addition to one destroyed shared with W/Cdr. Ratten, mentioned above, Captain Johnsen (Norwegian) one F.W.190 probably destroyed. Cine cameras carried by W/Cdr. Ratten and Captain Johnsen. G. Nil.

General.

Part 1. 222 R/V Manston at 1220 15,000 ft. with 2 Squadrons Tangmere over Nieuport 27,000 ft. Middle Squadron. orbitted off Nieuport/Ostend. Returned with bombers which were at 25/26,000 ft. 7 E/A sighted approximately 5,000 ft. above off Ostend, flying N.W. Intense heavy accurate flak directed at bombers from Bruges area.

Part 2. W/Cdr. Ratten led Hornchurch wing to Walcheren 28,000 ft. from where intense heavy flak seen from Antwerp. At 1323 ordered by Group to go to assistance of bombers which were reported heavily engaged. Wing turned towards Antwerp and saw bombers coming out 3/4,000 ft. below them, also huge pall of smoke over target rising to roughly 1,000 ft. Wing orbitted port and came behind bombers. As they came out W. of Flushing no E/A sighted nor was escort of Thunderbolts. Visible one Fortress was lagging behind main gaggle at about 18,000 ft. 10/12 E/A then seen making attacks on it. Wing leader went down with 122 but 190s immediately broke, started to dive away. Just as W/Cdr. Ratten had got on tail of 190 he observed 4 Thunderbolts close behind him. Section climbed to 28,000 ft. to rejoin bombers when 2 190s seen approaching bombers from Flushing area. W/Cdr. Ratten and P/O. Legan each engaged one and as a result W/Cdr. Ratten claims one probably destroyed and P/O. Legal one damaged. Section then resumed return course when a further 2 F.W.190 seen following bombers from south. One was destroyed by W/Cdr. Ratten shared with P/O. Legal. Pursued some distance away by 5 F.W.190s section rejoined bombers 20 miles east N. Foreland. Fortress seen by 122 to spin in on Westerschelde Peninsula, circled by 3 E/A. This was straggler referred to below. Blue 1, 122, Captain Johnsen, engaged one F.W.190 which he claims as damaged. 15 miles N.W. Flushing, in meantime 453 had remained 3,000 ft. above and down sun of 122 but when latter squadron got broken up they remained with beehive and general impression was that E/A were operating in loose parties. P/O. Legal escorted for 10 minutes Fortress with engines smoking, to 10 miles off Clacton, when Fortress opened fire on him. No. of Fortress QET 229698 already reported by telephone. Flak 2 puffs of black flak at 18, 22,000 ft. seen from St. Nicholas. Weather fine, thick ground haze 1/10th strato-cumulus at 12/15,000 ft.

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No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod 73.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod No. 73 during the afternoon of the 14th May, 1943, in 2 parts, the first for 40 Fortresses against Courtrai Airfield and the second 50 minutes later for 40 Fortresses against the Ford and General Motor Works, Antwerp, the following forces taking part:

Part 1.

Bombers: 43 Fortresses (U.S.A.A.C.)

Fighters:

1st Fighter Cover: 315 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt) Spit
2nd Fighter Cover: 403 and 416 Squadrons (Kenley) IX's
3rd Fighter Cover: 341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill)
Withdrawal Cover: 495 and 501 Squadrons (Tangmere and 222 Squadron. (Hornchurch) Spit VB's

Part 2.

Bombers: 46 Fortresses (U.S.A.A C)

Fighters:

Fighter Cover: 9 Thunderbolt Squadrons (U.S A.A C)

Withdrawal Cover Wing: 122 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch Spit IX's.

Weather: Fine, with good visibility over both targets.

Part 2 Bombers.

39 Fortresses attacked, dropping 97.5 tons of bombs. Results believed to be good. 1 Fortress missing.

Withdrawal Cover Wing.

The Withdrawal Cover Wing proceeded towards Walcheren at 28,000 ft. At 1323 hours they were ordered to go to the assistance of the Fortresses which were reported heavily engaged, so turned towards Antwerp and saw the bombers coming out 3/4,000 ft. below them, and a huge pall of smoke over the target rising to 1,000 ft. The Wing orbitted and came behind the Bombers as they were going out W. of Flushing. No enemy aircraft were sighted, nor was the Thunderbolt escort seen. Enemy aircraft were then appearing in loose pairs, and a number of combats took place with the results as under: - A Fortress was seen to spin in on the Dutch Islands.

Enemy Casualties. 1 F.W. 190 destroyed (W/Cdr. Ratten & P/O. Le Gal 122 Sqdn
2 F.W. 190's probably destroyed.
1 F.W. 190 damaged.

Our Casualties. Nil

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy: 10 FW.190's destroyed
2 Me.109s destroyed
9 FW.190s probably destroyed.
16 FW.190s damaged.

Ours: Bombers - 3 Fortresses. Fighters - 3 pilots missing.

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Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1243 hrs. twenty-four Spitfires Ix of 122 and 453 Squadrons, left Hornchurch and flew to Walcheren at 28,000 ft., continuing towards Antwerp until the returning bomberes were sighted 3,000-4,000 ft. below. Keeping behind the bomber formation they crossed the coast westof Flushing. One Fortress lagging behind was attacked by 10 - 12 F.W.190s, but the e/a dived away when 122 Squadron went down to attack. Later a number of other F.W.190s operating in loose pairs, endeavoured to attack the bombers and as a result of combats by Spitfires I FW.190 was destroyed, two probably destroyed and another damaged.

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O.R.B. 15.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. SCRAMBLE.

Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann Time Up: 0700
Aus. 411938 P/O. O'Dea Time Down: 0800

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 15.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
Aus. 405472 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins Time Up: 1620
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott Time Down: 1750
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver

Circus. Out Hastings zero feet, began climbing at 1640 hrs. In at Pont D'Ailly. Several wide orbits were made and some e/a were seen but these avoided interception. Wing out Le Treport at 32,000 ft. Made another wide port orbit, then turned N.W. crossing in Dungeness 20,000 ft. 1732 hours. Weather - sea mist, with small patches cumulus cloud over France at 10,000 ft. with unlimited horizontal visibility.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus No. 297

It was decided to carry out Circus 297 during the afternoon of the 15th May, 1943 in two parts - the first for 6 Mitchells against Caen Aerodrome, followed by an attack by 8 Bomphoons five minutes later on the same target, each with Fighter Escort, the second for 12 Bostons against Poix aerodrome, also with fighter Escort, this part taking place at the same time as Part 1. The following forces took part.

Part 1.

Bombers. 6 Mitchells (No. 2 Group)

Fighters.

Escort Wing. No. 222 Squadron (Hornchurch) Nos. 485 and 501 Squadrons (Tangmere) Spit V's.
Escort Cover Wing. No. 303 Squadron (Northolt) Spit V's.
High Cover Wing Nos. 315 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt) Spit IX's
Fighter Echelon Nos. 341 and 611 Squadrons (B. Hill) Spit IX's
Fighter Bombers. 8 Bomphoons 181 Squadron (83 Group)
Escort No. 197 Squadron (Tangmere) Typhoons.

Part 2.

Bombers. 12 Bostons (No. 2 Group)

Fighters.

Escort Cover Nos. 411 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley) Spit V's
High Cover. Nos. 403 and 416 Squadrons (Kenley) Spit IX's

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First Fighter Echelon. Nos. 122 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spit IX's

Second Fighter Echelon. Nos. 331 and 332 Squadrons (N. Weald) Spit IX's

Weather: Cloudless. Good visibility over both targets.

Part 2 Bombers.

12 Bostons dropped 48 x 500Ø lb. bombs, bursts seen on N. and S. runways. Bostons claim 2 Me. 109s damaged. Boston crews report seeing 2 Me. 10('s shot down in flames by escorting fighters.

First Fighter Echelon.

The Hornchurch Wing crossed the English coast at Hastings at zero feet, continuing at sea level until 1640 hours when they commenced to climb and crossed the French coast W. of Dieppe at 22,000 feet at 1659 hours. They turned left and swept 10/15 miles inside the coast at 30,000 feet, being given several vectors by Appledore. A number of Me. 109s and FW. 190s were seen far below, and the Wing recrossed the French coast at Le Treport at 32,000 feet returning uneventfully to base.

Enemy Casualties - Nil
Our Casualties - Nil.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties: 6 FW. 190s destroyed
1 Me. 109 destroyed.
2 FW. 190 damaged.
3 Me. 109s damaged.

Our Casualties: Bombers - Nil
Fighters - 6 Pilots missing.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1621 hours twenty-four Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons left Hornchurch and patrolled the Dieppe/Le Treport area at 22,000 - 32,000 feet. Several E/A were sighted but were flying too low for our aircraft to engage.

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O.R.B. 15.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CONVOY PATROL.

Aus. 411521 P/O. Rickard	Time Up:	1305
Aus. 412624 F/O. McAuliffe	Time Down:	1430

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 16.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay		
Aus. 405472 F/Lt. Esau		
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath		
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford		
Aus. 412624 F/O. McAuliffe	Time Up:	1150
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey	Time Down:	1325
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins		
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott		
Aus. 401543 Sgt. Stansfield		
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift		
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray		

Rodeo. Out east of Hythe 8,000 ft. 1212 hrs. In Hardelot 23,000 ft. 1233, turned to S.E. and swept E. of Abbeville/ Control gabe several vectors and orbits were made in Abbeville/ Dieppe /Le Treport areas. The trip proved quite uneventful and the Wing Crossed out Le Treport 28,000 ft. at 1248 hrs. and in Dungeness 17,000 ft. 1301 hrs. Many bomb scars observed on Abbeville Drucat aerodrome. About 20 bursts of heavy flak seen 2,000 ft. below from Dieppe area on the way out. Weather; 1/10 to 5/10ths broken cloud Pas de Calais area, clear elsewhere. Slight ground haze with excellent visibility.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1150 hrs. twenty-four Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons took off from Hornchurch and carried out a sweep over the Abbeville area. Twelve Me.109s were seen east of Abbeville at 30,000 ft. flying west but as our aircraft went down to attack the E/A dived away.

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O.R.B. 16.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galway
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift

Time Up: 1640
Time Down: 1825

Circus. Out Newhaven at zero feet, started climbing at 1711 hrs. In at Courselle 1732 hrs. at 25,000 ft. Swept behind Caen aerodrome where 4/6 bomb bursts were observed across the S.E. corner. Many e/a reported in loose pairs and 6 u/a were seen to the S.W. Wing continued behind Tricqueville aerodrome seeing three or four bomb bursts and much smoke and dust rising. The Squadron was at 25,500 ft. but could not climb owing to cloud base at 26,000 ft. with strong probability of e/a above. After control had reported bombers on their way out, Wing crossed out 25,000 ft. N.E. of Fecamp and in Bexhill 20,000 ft. 12 bursts of slight heavy flak below and above from Le Havre area. Weather: 7/10 to 10/10 cloud in target area, decreasing out to sea, with unlimited horizontal visibility.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus No. 298.

It was decided to carry out Circus No. 298 during the afternoon of the 16th May, 1943, in two parts: the first for 6 Mitchells against Tricqueville Aerodrome with Figher Escort and the second for 6 Mitchells against Caen Aerodrome also with Fighter Escort, this taking place at the same time as Part 1. Two Diversionary Sweeps taking place at the same time, one by 6 Thunderbolt Squadrons and the other by 3 Thunderbolt Squadrons. The following forces took part: -

Part 1.

Bombers: 6 Mitchells of No. 2 Group.

Fighters:

Escort Wing: No. 222 Squadron (Hornchurch) and Nos. 485 and 501 Squadrons (Tangmere) Spits VB.
Escort Cover Wing: Nos. 411 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley Spits VB.
High Cover Wing: Nos. 403 and 417 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits IX.
1st Fighter Echelon: Nos. 315 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt) Spits IX
2nd Fighter Echelon: Nos. 122 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spits IX

Part 2.

Bombers: 6 Mitchells of No. 2 Group.

Fighters:

Escort Wing: Nos. 19, 132 and 602 Squadrons (83 Group) Spits VB
Escort Cover Wing: No. 303 Squadron (Northolt) Spits VB

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High Cover Wing: Nos. 33 and 332 Squadrons (North Weald) Spits IX

Diversionary Sweeps.

1. 6 Thunderbolt Squadrons.
2. 3 Thunderbolt Squadrons.

Weather: Over target 3/10ths cloudat 25,000 feet. visibility excellent.

Bombers - Part 1.

The 6 Mitchells failed to identify their target and dropped 48 x 500 lb. bombs N.W. of Brionne some 16 miles S.E. of the target.

2nd Fighter Echelon.

The Hornchurch Wing arrived at Courselles at 1731 hours at 23,000 feet and climbed to 27,000 feet over Caen and Tricqueville, seeing some 13/14 Me.109s a mile away, they turned out at Etretat towards Caen until satisfied that the Caen beehive were safe, then returned up Channel towards Gris Nez and made landfall over Hastings at 1804 hours.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties: 1 F.W.190 damaged.
Our Casualties: Nil.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1646 hrs. twenty three Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Squadrons took off from Hornchurch and carriedout a sweep over the Caen-Tricqueville area. About 16 e/a were sighted during the patrol but no engagements resulted.

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O.R.B. 17.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. PATROL

Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 402129 F/Ø. McCann

Time Up: 2145
Time Down: 2225

No incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 17.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 405319 F/O. McDermott

Time Up: 1025
Time Down: 1155

Rodeo. Wing Commander flying with 453. Rendesvous Selsey Bill with Fortresses flying above and to port of them, crossed to Cherbourg harbour 26,000 ft. at 1110 hrs. continued climbing, reaching Point de La Percee 28,000 ft. Control reported only a few stray Huns, but no contact was made. Continued N.E. in a slow dive, finally crossing in between Newhaven and Brighton 20,000 ft. 1140 hrs. A parachute reported inland of Pointe de Barfleur turned out to be a Met. balloon. One Fortress was seen to jettison 10 bombs 10 miles off Selsey Bill on the way out and then turned back. Thick ground haze over England clearing out to sea, 1/10 to 3/10ths cloud dispersed over Frence 20,000 ft. Visibility unlimited.

From Hqs. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Rodeo 216 Report 17.5.43.

A. W/Cdr. Ratten 122, 453. B. 23 Spitfires IX C. 1030/1200
D. Rodeo E. N/A F. Nil G. Nil.

General: - R/V Selsey 1052 27,000 instead 23,000 as Fortress were met on way to Selsey at this height. In Maupertus 27,000 at 1112. Swept down Carentan out Pte Percee 28,00 in E. Brighton 20,000 at 1140. No e/a sighted. No flak. One coloured balloon observed off Cherbourg 32,000 believed Met. balloon. Fortress seen jettison 10 bombs in sea 5 miles off Selsey.

Weather: - Fine heavy ground haze particularly over London area.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1052 hrs. twenty-three Spitfires IX of 122 and 453 Sqndrons made rendezvous over Selsey Bill with the bombers and swept over the Maupertus - Carentan - Pointe de la Percee.
No e/a were seen.

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O.R.B. 19.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. SCRAMBLE

Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield	Time Up:	0910
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver	Time Down:	1015

Scramble - patrol Manston at 20,000 ft. They were then given numerous vectors, which finally took them to the Gris Nez area, where 2 e/a were plotted flying at 18,000 ft. inland, but Group would not permit them to penetrate, so they withdrew, landing at base at 1015 hrs.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

F.C.I.S. No. 394 At 1400 hours six squadrons of Spitfires, flying in three wings, swept over the Pas de Calais. A slow reaction by 60 enemy aircraft was indicated. Six enemy aircraft were sighted and chased without success.

O.R.B. 19.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien	1400	1510
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath	"	"
Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann	"	"
Aus. 412624 F/O. McAuliffe	"	"
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha	"	"
Aus. 411521 P/O. Rickard	"	"
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay	"	"
Aus. 413108 Sgt. Currie	"	1420
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift	"	1510
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley	"	1500
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield	"	1510

Rodeo. Wing Commander flew with 453. Out Dungeness 17,000 ft. in S. of Berck 23,000 ft. 1430 hrs. Continued climbing reaching Desvres at 25,000 ft. Control reported 10 plus e/a in the Calais area, so Wing made wide port orbit, coming out between Calais and Gravelines 25,000 ft. 1445 hrs. At this point control reported 50 plus e/a in the St. Omer area, so Wing made steep climbing orbit to port, finally reaching 31,000 ft. off Calais without incident. Then set course for base, crossing in S. Foreland 25,000 ft. Weather was perfect, with only slight sea mist.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

Between 1400/1405 hrs. six squadrons of Spitfires IX forming three wings left Hornchurch, North Weald and Kenley to carry out independent sweeps over the Pas de Calais area.

The Hornchurch wing consisting of twenty-four Spitfires IX of 453 and 222 Squadrons. crossed the French east south of Berck at 23,000 ft. and patrolled over Descres (25,000 ft) and Calais without sighting any E/A.

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O.R.B. 19.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. PATROL.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha	1950	2010
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath	"	"
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha	2035	2220
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath	"	"

Two sections did a standing patrol off N. Foreland.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x

E.C.I.S. No. 394 At 2000 hrs. four squadrons of Spitfires took off to carry out sweeps from St. Omer to Le Touquet. A reaction by 45 enemy aircraft was indicated and about 14 were seen. Combats resulted in an F.W. 190 being destroyed and three damaged.

O.R.B. 19.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford	1955	2055
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay	"	2115
Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann	"	2055
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien	"	2115
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker	"	"
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley	"	"
Aus. 413108 Sgt. Currie	"	"
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift	"	"
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray	"	"
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield	"	"
Aus. 403917 Sgt. Ferguson	"	"

RODEO. Wing Commander Ratten flying with 453. Out Ramsgate 17,000 ft. in Mardyck 24, 000 ft. at 2028 hrs. Set course for St. Omer but control began to give vectors which took the Squadron S. of Hesdin to N. St. Omer, then to the east, where 2u/a were seen travelling north to the west of Ypres 15,000 ft. below. A wide port orbit made, without result so Wing came out north east Dunkirk 29,000 ft. 2048 hrs. In Sheerness 15,000 ft. 2105 hrs. Weather good, with 2/10 to 3/10ths cumulus cloud 16/19,000 ft. over France, visibility good.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 2000 hrs. twenty two Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons from Hornchurch and eleven Spitfires IX (70) of 341 Squadron and thirteen Spitfires IX (66) of 611 Squadron. from Biggin hill took off to carry out a sweep over the St. Omer-Hardelot-Le Touquet areas. The Hornchurch wing patrolled uneventfully over the Mardyck-Ypres-Dixmude area at 26,000 - 29,000 ft sighting 2 e/a which dived away rapidly.

The Biggin Hill Wing flying at 26,000 feet encountered 12 e/a 6,000 feet below about 15 miles E. of St. Omer, 611 Squadron, dived to attack whilst 341 kept top cover, and as a result of combats one FW.190 was destroyed and three damaged by 611 Squadron. As the wing withdrew a large formation of E/A were observed to be following about 7 miles behind 5,000 feet above.

R.DF showed an enemy reaction of about 45 E/A from the St. Omer - Lille areas.

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O.R.B. 20.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. SCRAMBLE

Aus. 404811 F/O. Galway Time Up: 2200
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley Time Down: 2245

Scramble - to patrol Clacton to N. Foreland at low altitude. Weather extremely bad and the section got split up and lost in cloud, but finally joined up and returned to base.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 20.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey
Aus. 412624 F/O. McAuliffe
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker Time Up: 1220
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey Time Down: 1300
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 413707 Sgt. Yarra
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell

Rodeo. Wing set out to sweep St. Omer area, but having reached a point 10 miles off Ramsgate at 20,000 ft. were ordered by control to return to base. The reason for recall was due partly to weather conditions and partly to the lack of enemy reaction to the Wings that had previously swept this area.

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O.R.B. 23.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. PATROLS.

	Time Up	Time Down
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell	1855	1945
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver	"	"
Aus. 405472 F/Lt. Esau	2115	2245
Aus. 412624 F/O. McAuliffe	"	"

Two patrols were carried out - one over Barrow Deep area and another over an Estuary convoy.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x

O.R.B. 23.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith
Aus. 405472 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
F/Lt. Doll Time Up: 1200
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha Time Down: 1330
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 403917 F/Sgt. Ferguson
Aus. 413707 Sgt. Yarra
Aus. 408606 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves

Circus. Wing Commander flying with 453. Out Deal 10,000 ft. 1220 hrs. in Mardyck 23,000 ft. Many vectors given by control in Mardyck/Cassel/St. Omer areas, but no e/a were seen, finally crossed out Sangatte 1256 hrs. 23,000 ft. When in mid-channel, control vectored the Wing towards Hastings to investigate some u/a flying low, but nothing seen. Wing then turned north, crossing in Folkestone 1306 hrs. 20,000 ft. Weather 5/10 to 6/10 cumulus cloud at 10,000 ft. Misty cloud forming at 28,000 ft. increasing inland. Visibility good. 8/10 bursts heavy flak, 1/2,000 ft. below and in front experienced from Calais area on way out.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1155 hrs. 24 Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrns left Hornchurch and swept the Mardyck-Cassel-St. Omer-Sangatte area at 23/25,000 ft. without seeing any E/A.
When approaching the English coast the Wing was diverted to investigate E/A in the Hastings area. These E/A were not seen.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus No. 302.

It was decided to carry out Circus No. 302 at mid-dy on the 23rd May, 1943 against Zeebrugge (Zandvoorde) Coke Ovens, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers: - 12 Venturas (No. 2 Group)

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Fighters.

Close Escort:	No. 411 Squadron (Kenley) and 303 Squadron (Northolt) Spits V.
Escort Cover:	Nos. 403 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley) Spit IX
High Cover:	Nos. 341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spits IX.
1st Fighter Echelon	Nos. 331 and 332 Squadrons (N. Weald) Spits
2nd Fighter Echelon	Nos. 315 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt) IX.
3rd Fighter Echelon	Nos. 222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch)

Weather: - Clear over Channel, 8/10ths at 4,000 feet commencing 10 miles inland. Visibility 20 miles.

Bombers: - 1 Ventura returned early. 11 Venturas attacked the target at 1230 hours, dropping 33 x 500lb M.C.Bs and 44 x 250 lb. G.P.s. Bursts seen on Marshalling Yards W. of the target and on the western part of the target area. Heavy flak was experienced from Ostend and Zeebrugge. All bombers returned safely.

3rd Fighter Echelon. The Hornchurch Wing crossed the English coast over Deal at 10,000 feet at 1220 hours and the French coast at Mardyck at 1230 hours at 23,000 feet, and swept under Appledore control Mardyck/Cassel/St. Omer/Sangatte, but no e/a were seen. When in mid-channel on the way home the Wing was vectored by Sector control towards Hastings, but saw no e/a.

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O.R.B. 25.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
Aus. 405472 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 403917 F/Sgt. Ferguson
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stanafield
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves

Time Up: 1050
Time Down: 1210

Circus. Crossed in Hardelot 25,000 feet at 1117 hours. Control informed Wing Leader of a general mix-up in the Abbeville/Le Treport area at 30,000 feet, so Wing swept Hesdin and behind Abbeville at 34,000 ft. 453 being cover Squadron at 35,000 feet. 25-30 u/a were sighted at 1126 hours flying at 20,000 feet to starboard and travelling S.E. at high speed. Wing Leader took 222 Squadron down whilst 453 remained as Top Cover. E/A and Spitfires were all very mixed-up and Wing Leader ordered Wing to withdraw, crossing out at Berck 25,000 feet and in Dungeness 17,000 feet, finally landing at Base at 1204 hours.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus No. 304.

It was decided to carry out Circus No. 304 during the morning of the 25th May, 1943 against Abbeville/Drucat A/D, the following forces taking part.

Bombers: 12 Mitchells (No. 2 Group)

Fighters:

Close Escort	65, 122 and 602 Squadrons (83 Group)	Spit V's
Escort Cover	411 Squadron (Kenley) and 303 Squadron (Northolt)	Spit V's
High Cover	341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill)	
1st Fighter Echelon	331 and 332 Squadrons (North Weald)	
2nd Fighter Echelon	403 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley)	Spit IX's
3rd Fighter Echelon	222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch)	Spit IX's
4th Fighter Echelon	315 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt)	Spit IX's

Weather: 7/10ths cloud at 8,000 feet. Visibility good.

Bombers: - Of the 12 Mitchells despatched 6 returned early. One of the remaining 6 was hit by flak before bombing. 5 bombed, dropping 8 x 500 lb. M.C. on the leader's bombs through gap in cloud, the A/D believed hit. One further Mitchell was shot down by fighter action on the way out. Flak: Some heavy and accurate flak encountered.

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3rd Fighter Echelon.

The Hornchurch Wing crossed the English Coast at Dungeness at 1110 hours at 15,000 feet and the French Coast at Hardelot at 1117 hours at 26,000 feet. The Wing swept to Hesdin/Abbeville climbing to 34,000 feet seeing 24/30 unidentified a/c to starboard heading S.E. which then turned N.E. 222 Squadron went down and found 50/60 FW's and Spitfires, one pilot fired without result. E/A last seen climbing N. towards St. Omer and the Wing returned to base without further incident.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1050 hrs. twenty-three Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons, left Hornchurch and swept over Hardelot (26,000 ft) Abbeville/Hesdin 30,000/34,000 ft. over which area 25/30 aircraft were first sighted at 20,000 ft. heading south east. Turning over this formation, 222 Squadron went down to 24,000 ft. and recognised FW.190s and Spitfires mixed up, totalling about 50/60 aircraft. Only one brief encounter took place and no claim is made. 453 Squadron remained above during the bounce.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties: Nil

Our Casualties: Bombers - 2 Mitchells
Fighters - 2 Pilots N.Y.R. (83 Group)

O.R.B. 26.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. Scramble.

Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha Time Up: 1615
Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann Time Down: 1710

Scramble - to patrol Manston area, but returned to base without incident.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

O.R.B. 26.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford
F/Lt. Gaze
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath Time Up: 1235
Aus. 405472 F/Lt. Esau Time Down: 1400
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield

Rodeo: In the absence of the Wing Commander, S/Ldr. Barclay led the Wing. Crossed in Blankenberghe 23,000 feet at 1316 hours, swept Roulers/Ypres/St. Omer area at 24,000 feet. Several reports of e/a were given by Control but none were seen, the Wing finally crossing out N.E. of Calais 24,500feet and in at Deal 17,000 feet 1343 hours. Slight heavy flak was experienced from Calais area on the way out. 5-6/10ths cloud general over France 12/16,000 feet.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1240 hrs twenty-three Spitfires IX of 453 and 222 Squadrons took off from Hornchurch and carried out a sweep over the Roulers-Ypres-St. Omer areaat 23,000 to 24,500 feet. No E/A were seen. Slight heavy fairly accurate flak was encountered. According to R DF there was no enemy reaction.

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O.R.B. 27.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. AIR SEA RESCUE PATROL.

Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
F/Lt. Gaze
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey
Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay Time Up: 2000
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins Time Down: 2050
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift
Aus. 403917 F/Sgt. Ferguson
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield

Wing took off on an Air Sea Rescue Patrol, but owing to there being 10/10ths cloud down to sea level had to return to base when only 10 miles off Manston. One of our Pilots F/Lt. Gaze, who is attached to the Squadron for a short period, made a forced landing at Tilbury Marshes owing to his engine cutting. He was uninjured and the aircraft was Cat. B.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x

O.R.B. 27.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 411938 P/O. O'Dea
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford Time Up: 1650
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien Time Down: 1815
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell
Aus. 403917 F/Sgt. Ferguson
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves

Rodeo: W/Cdr. Ratten flying with 453. In Ostend 28,000 ft 1727 hours. Control reported Bandits in this area at 27,000 feet, so Wing made two wide port orbits, climbing to 34,000 feet. 8-10 u/a were seen approximately 15 miles N. of Ostend. Wing turned to follow but u/a, now known to be e/a, lost height rapidly in the turn and dived down rapidly into thick haze and were lost sight of. Wing then turned W. to investigate smoke trails in the Calais/Dunkerque area, crossing inside coast again at Dunkerque at 35,000 feet, but these proved to be friendly aircraft. Wing then continued towards Gris Nez at 35,000 ft., crossing out there and slowly diving towards English coast. Crossed in Margate 17,000 feet 1735 hours. There was fairly thick haze generally up to 20,000 feet with 6/10ths cumulus cloud 10,000 feet over land with excellent horizontal visibility.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1650 hrs. 23 Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrns took off and swept the Ostend, Ypres, Knocke and Dunkirk areas at 30/37,000 ft.

Ten/Twelve e/a were sighted in the Knocke area, but while the wing were manoeuvring for position, the e/a dived away inland. A further two e/a were sighted in the Dunkirk area, but these could not be engaged.

A pilot of 222 Squadron was seen to bale out 10/15 miles N.W. of Ostend.

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O.R.B. 29.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 413707 Sgt. Yarra
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray

Squadron was airborne at 1100 hours and arrived at Warmwell 1205 hours to take part in a 10 Group Circus. Took off from Warmwell at 1543 hours, 453 being Top Squadron. Arrived St. Brieuc at 27,000 feet. Saw Fortress Bombers in two boxes approaching the W. side of the Bay of Mont St. Michael. Turned E. behind them, dropping to 22,000 feet. As bombers approached Jersey a Section of 190s were seen following them out. One Section of 222 Squadron went down to attack but e/a immediately dived away towards coast. Two more 190s were then seen to the west. Red 1 and 2, S/Ldr. Barclay and Sgt. Morath detached to engage, opening fire for 3½ secs. burst at long range. E/A dived away very fast and no claim is made. No other e/a were seen. The Wing brought bombers to English coast over Portland 5,000 feet 1705 hours, landed at Warmwell 1710 hours. Took off again 1730 hours, finally landing at Base 1816 hours. Weather was hazy up to20,000 feet with wispy cloud up to 33,000 feet.

FIGHTER COMMAND. FORM Y.

Attack on Rennes Marshalling Yards.

At 1510 hrs. seventy-two Fortresses of the U.S.A.A.C. made rendezvous over Portland Bill for an attack against the Marshalling Yards at Rennes.

Fifty-three Bombers attacked the target dropping 132½ tons of bombs, and results are reported as fair.

Strong E/A opposition was encountered and six Fortresses are missing.

2nd Cover. At 1545 hrs. twenty-four Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons left Warmwell and flew to St. Brieuc, climbing to 27,000 ft.

Two boxes of bombers and some stragglers were seen to the west side of the Bay of Mont St. Michel, and the Spitfire wing turned behind them losing height to 22,000 ft.

Two sections of FW.190s followed the bombers out but the E/A dived away when a section of 222 Squadron were detached to attack them.

Another two FW.190s were observed to the west and pilots of 453 Squadron chased and attacked these aircraft at long range, but no claims are made.

Other Fortresses, operating with the main force, and escorting Thunderbolts, were seen towards the Brest Peninsula.

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Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford
Aus. 411790 F/Sgt. Leith
Aus. 401543 F/Sgt. Stansfield
Aus. 408503 Sgt. Olver
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 403924 P/O. Hansell
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves

Circus. W/Cdr. Ratten flying with 453. Wing made landfall at Cabourg 22,000 feet, orbitted starboard whilst bombers remained in target area. The Wing was controlled by Tangmere and several e/a were reported, but the Wing was at considerable tactical disadvantage owing to 10/10ths wispy cloud at 22,000 feet. Wing therefore withdrew with bombers, crossing in Hastings 5,000 feet 1201 hours. Medium heavy flak was experienced from the target area.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus No. 308.

It was decided to carry out Circus No. 308 during the morning of the 31st May, 1943 against Grand Quevilly Power Station with two diversions against Caen and Abbeville aerodromes, the following forces taking part: -

First Diversion - Caen Airfield.

Bombers 12 Venturas (2 Group)

Fighters

Escort Nos. 310, 312 and 313 Squadrons (10 Group) Spit Vs.

Escort Cover No. 303 Squadron (Northolt) Spit Vs

High Cover Nos. 222 and 452 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spit IXs

1st Fighter Sweep Nos. 315 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt) Spit Ixs

Bombers: - Preliminary reports indicate that 12 Venturas bombed the target, and all returned safely. Bursts were seen in the Northern and Western Dispersal areas and to the south of the aerodrome in Carpiquet village.

Escort, Escort Cover, and High Cover: - These three wings made rendezvous with the bombers over Selsey Bill below 500 ft. at 1058 hrs, and set course at sea level with the Bombers at 11,000 ft. and the wings stepped up above the Bombers to 22,000 ft. The Escort wing saw this and engaged sectionf of F.W.190s, one section of which appeared when the Bombers were re-crossing the French Coast, and another when half way back across the Channel. There are no claims from these engagements and the formation returned to base without further incidents.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1058 hrs. thirty-six Spitfires VB of 310, 312 and 313 Squadrons acting as escort, ten Spitfires VB of 303 Squadron, acting as escort cover and twenty-four Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons as high cover made rendezvous over Selsey Bill with 12 Venturas of Bomber Command detailed to attack the airfield at Caen. The

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formation flew to the target area where inconclusive combats took place with about 5 FW.190s and on recrossing the French coast on the way out three more FW.190s were sighted one of which was attacked, without observed result. When half way across the Channel two FW.190s were seen and inconclusive combats again resulted. Bombs were seen to fall on the southern dispersals and just south of the airfield.

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O.R.B. 31.5.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey
Aus. 412624 P/O. McAuliffe
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott
Aus. 411059 P/O. Thornley
Aus. 403917 F/Sgt. Ferguson
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray

Circus. R/V Clacton on time, started to climb at 1716, arrived Flushing area 1742 at 22,000 feet, being just below cloud. Orbitted to port during bombing and on return when 15 miles W. Flushing did a complete orbit to starboard to get behind bombers, Huns having been reported approaching from N.E. These were presumably above cloud and consequently not seen. Lost height gradually crossing in Denghie Flats 6,000 feet at 1804 hours. A large column of smoke was seen rising from the target area, after bombing. 2-3 bursts of fairly accurate flak came up from target area. Layers of cloud 10/10ths at varying heights.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus No. 309.

It was decided to carry out Circus No. 309 during the afternoon of the 31st May, 1943, in accordance with No. 11 Group Operations Order No. 420. dated 31st May, 1943, in two parts: the first against the Dornier Aeroplane Factory and aero-Engine Works at Flushing and the second part against the Coke Ovens at Zeebrugge.

Part 1.

Bombers: 12 Mitchells of No. 2 Group.

Fighters:

Escort Wing	Nos. 19, 118 and 402 Squadrons (12 Group) SpitV's
Escort Cover	Nos. 167 and 485 Squadrons (Tangmere) Spit V's
High Cover	Nos. 222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spit IX's
Fighter Sweep	Nos. 331 and 332 Squadrons (N. Weald) Spit IX's

Weather: - 6/10ths high cloud over Flushing, visibility unlimited. Slight very high cloud over Zeebrugge, visibility excellent.

Bombers: 12 Mitchells bombed the target from 10,000 feet at 1730 hrs. Bomb bursts seen in target area, some are thought to have overshot. All the bombers returned, but one ditched 5 miles off the English coast three of the crew of four being picked up.

Escort, Escort Cover and High Cover Wings: - These three Wings rendezvoused with the bombers over Clacton at 1700 hours below 500 feet and proceeded for first 16 minutes at sea level climbing to target area the bombers at 10,000 feet and the fighters stepped up from 10,500/20,000 feet. Bombs seen to burst in the farget area. Much heavy flak from target area, Brescens and the Belgian Coast.

On the way out after 14 minutes 402 Squadron reported F.W's above and they were jumped by severd sectionf of 2/4enemy aircraft. Engagements ensued with results set out below.

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VERY SECRET

OPERATIONS No. 453 SQUADRON, R.A.A.F.

JUNE, 1943.

O.R.B. 1.6.43 Airgraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 411790 P/O. Leith
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift
Aus. 403917 P/O. Ferguson
Aus. 401543 P/O. Stansfield

Time Up: 2010
Time Down: 2110

Ramrod. The wing took off at 2010 hours on a Ramrod which proved abortive owing to bad weather conditions, and landed at base at 2109 hours.

From H.Q. 11 Group.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 82 Report, 1st June, 1943.

A. 222, 453, W/Cdr. Ratten. B. 22 Spits IX. C. 2010/2115.
D. High Cover. E. N/A. F. Nil G. Nil.

General. Wing led by W/Cdr. Ratten R/V Pevensey Whirlibombers late and set course 5 mins late. When still at zero feet. at 2041 whole formation were recalled due weather.

Weather. 6-10/10 cloud 5,000 and more above in Channel rain and mist below. Visibility very poor. No further report to follow.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x

O.R.B. 1.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 413000 Sgt. Morath
Aus. 403949 P/O. Greaves
Aus. 405117 F/O. Ewins
Aus. 413707 F/Sgt. Yarra
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 403924 F/O. Hansell

Time Up: 1130
Time Down: 1255
Sgt. Morath crashed

Rodeo. S/Ldr. Barclay led the Wing. Out Deal at 8,000 feet, in Gravelines 18,000 feet at 1159 hours. Set course to Hazebrouck, then on to Hardelot. Control reported Bandits to the S.W. so Wing made a climbing orbit to port to keep up sun. On completion of orbit a number of e/a were seen coming out of sun slightly above. The Wing climbed hard to port and recognised these aircraft as F.W.190s, 15 approximately, and as the Wing prepared to go down 6-8 more e/a were sighted slightly above

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and about a mile behind. The Squadron became split up and Blue 1 and 3 (F/Os Ewins and Thornley) each took a shot at an e/a but from long range and so made no claim, the e/a diving away very fast. The Wing leader ordered all pilots to reform and the formation crossed out at Boulogne at 27,000 feet.

From H.Q. No. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Rodeo 225 Report 1/6/43.

A. 222, 453 B. 23 Spits IX. C. 1131/1300. D. 3rd Fighter Sweep. E. 1225 F. Nil. G. 453 Squadron. 1 Spit IX Cat E. crashed near base after take off. Not due E/A. Sgt. Morath slightly injured.

General: Wind led S/Ldr. Barclay zero feet until 1144 hrs. Out Deal 8,000 in Gravelines 18,000 at 1200 climbed to Hazebrouck 23,000 turned W. on report of E/A then S. to keep up sun. Saw Spits. near Desvres. 453 saw several E/A 3,000 ft. above coming from sun. Squadron turned port and climbed. Identified 15 F.W.190s on beginning attack 6/8 E/A believed 109's seen half to 1 mile behind and slightly above. Squadron therefore again climbed (29,000) and turned port. All E/A seen, no claims. Cameras used. Wing leader told pilots not to follow E/A inland. Wing out Boulogne 27,000 in Folkestone 10,000.

Camouflage: FW.190s warship grey. Yellow stripe under fuselage from spinner to cockpit.

Weather: F/10 cumulus 10,000 England and France, off patches 10,000 over sea. Visibility above cloud excellent. No further report to follow.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1131 Hours twenty-three Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons, left Hornchurch and when near Desvres sighted a formation of 15 F.W.190s and eight Me.109s. The E/A went inland and no combats took place.

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O.R.B. 4.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 411790 F/O. Leith
Aus. 412624 F/O. McAuliffe
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves
Aus. 405319 F/O. McDermott

Time Up: 1100
Time Down: 1220

Rodeo: W/Cdr. Ratten flew with 453 Squadron. Flew atzero feet until 1114 hours, crossing out Dungeness at 4,000 feet and in at Berck 20,000 feet at 1130 hours. Set course for Aere reaching 23,000 feet. Were given several vectors by Control and six FW.190's were seen near St. Pol 5,000 ft. below. Blue Section was ordered to attack but the e/a dived quickly away into cloud and Section reformed. Wing was then vectored to Abbeville area, where they saw 12-15 FW.190's 5,000 ft. below diving towards Somme Estuary. Leaving 222 as top cover the W/Cdr. took 453 down and at the same time 20 F.W.190's were seen approaching the Estuary from the S. to join the others. Combats took place, W/Cdr. Ratten destroyed 1 F.W.190. P/O. Leith flying Red 2 struck close to the W/Cdr. but did not get a squirt. S/Ldr. Barclay damaged 1 F.W.190 and F/Lt. Andrews chased and fired at another e/a, but makes no claim. Should his cine-camera film show any strikes on e/a it is quite probable that a damaged will be awarded to him later. Squadron then re-formed and crossed out Somme Estuary 17,000 feet and in Dungeness 5,000 feet. Slight heavy inaccurate flak was experienced from Abbeville area. 5/10 cumulus cloud at 6,000 feet over swept area. High wispy cloud, visibility good.

Fighter Command Intelligence Summary, 4.6.43.

At 1100 hours 36 Spitfires IX left to sweep over the Berck-Gravelines area at 20,000 - 25,000 feet evoking a response of about 35 enemy aircraft from the Poix & Mazingarbe areas. Six FW.190s seen near St. Pol at 5,000 feet could not be engaged, but 12 - 15 FW.190s diving towards the Somme Estuary where they were joined by about 20 FW.190s approaching from the South, were engaged. One FW.190 was destroyed and another damaged without loss. Twelve of the Spitfires attempted to intercept enemy aircraft returning from a raid on Eastbourne, over the St. Valery - Dieppe - Somme area but without success.

PERSONAL COMBAT REPORT.

Hornchurch Wing.

Rodeo - 4.6.43.

W/Cdr. J.R. Ratten, D.F.C. (Australian).

Date.	(a) 4.6.43
Unit.	(b) S.H.Q. Hornchurch.
Type and mark of our aircraft	(c) Spitfire IX.
Time attack was delivered	(d) 12.44 hrs.
Place of attack and/or target	(e) Near Somme Estuary.
Weather.	(f) 3/10 - 5/10ths cumulus cloud at 5/6,000 ft. High wispy cloud.

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Our casualties, aircraft	(g) Nil.
Our casualties, personnel	(h) Nil.
Enemy casualties in air combat	(j) 1 F.W.190 destroyed.
Enemy casualties, ground or sea target.	(k) Nil.
Cine Camera Gun	(l) Carried and used.

General report.

I was leading the Hornchurch Wing as Red 1 in 453 Squadron at 23,000 ft. when I saw 12/15 F.W.190's 5,000 ft. below, diving towards the Somme Estuary. I dived with 453 to attack these e/a and at the same time saw 20/30 F.W.190s approach from the south and join the first batch. At this state, we attacked and the whole Hun gaggle broke to the right. I opened fire with a 3 sec. burst on a F.W.190 at extreme range observing no results. I then attacked a second F.W.190 with deflection at 300 yards. with 2 short bursts, observing no results. I madd another attack from line astern, from 200 yards closing to 100 yards with a 3 to 4 sec burst observing many strikes around the cockpit and engine cowling as well as cannon strikes on the port wing root. My port cannon had jammed in the attack I had made on the first e/a so I was now firing with M.G. and starboard cannon. The F.W.190 burst into flames on the port side and went down leaving a thick trail of smoke. This combat was seen by several pilots as well as by my No. 2 who saw the e/a burst into flames. P/O. Smik of 222 Squadron, who also saw the combat, saw the e/a hit the ground near the Foret de Crecy. I claim this F.W.190 as destroyed.

PERSONAL COMBAT REPORT.

Hornchurch Wing.

Rodeo 226 - 4.6.43.

S/Ldr. K.M. Barclay

Date.	(a) 4.6.43
Unit	(b) 453 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.
Type of aircraft	(c) Spitfire IX
Time attack was delivered	(d) 1200 hours
Place of attack and/or target	(e) Somme Estuary
Weather	(f) High wispy cloud.
Our casualties - aircraft	(g) Nil
Our casualties - personnel	(h) Nil
Enemy casualties ground or sea targets.	(k) N/A
Enemy casualties in air combat	(j) 1 F.W.190 damaged.
Camero Gun	(l) Carried and used

General. I was flying as Blue 1 with 453 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron at 22,000 feet when I saw 12 - 15 F.W.190's 5,000 feet below, travelling towards the Somme Estuary. At the same time another gaggle of 20 approximately were travelling from the south to join them. The Wing Leader ordered us down to attack and I dived on these e/a, which were travelling in Sections of 3 line astern.

I picked off the last aircraft of the right hand Section but they immediately turned right and left me open to attack from their left hand Section, so I turned to attack the last aircraft in this left hand Section. The closing speed was very slow, so I opened fire from astern at 4000 yards, closing to 300 - 350 yards. After 2 - 3 seconds firing during which the enemy took no evasive action, I saw strikes on the trailing edge of the port wing and the e/a began to take violent evasive action and smoking slightly went down in a vertical dive. By this time, other e/a were turning in to attack, so I broke away and climbed fast, and came home. I claim this F.W.190 Damaged.

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PERSONAL COMBAT REPORT.

Hornchurch Wing.

Rodeo 226 - 4.6.43.

F/Lt. D.G. Andrews.

Date	(a) 4.6.43
Unit	(b) 453 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron
Type of Aircraft	(c) Spitfire IX
Time attack was delivered	(d) 1200 hours.
Place of attack and/or target	(e) Somme Estuary
Weather	(f) Hish wispy cloud.
Our casualties - aircraft	(g) Nil.
Our Casualties - personnel	(h) Nil.
Enemy casualties ground or sea targets.	(j) 1 F.W.190 Damaged.
Camero Gun.	(k) Carried and used.

General Report: I was flying as Blue 3 with 453 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron at 22,000 ft. when the Wing Leader ordered us down to attack 12/15 F.W.190s 5,000 ft. below, travelling towards the Somme Estuary. In the general mix up I did not get an opportunity to shoot until I saw an F.W.190 stooding due west towards the Somme Estuary at about 16,000 ft. I did a climbing turn and got behind this aircraft and as I did not seem to be closing range, which was about 600 yards., I opened fire giving approximately a 6 second burst. 3 seconds after I started firing, I saw brown smoke coming from the engine of this aircraft and although I did not see the actual strikes I am convinced that I hit it and I therefore claim this F.W.190 as damaged.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1100 hrs. twenty-four Spitfires IX of 453 and 222 Squadrons left Hornchurch, and twelve Spitfires IX of 331 and 332 Squadrons left North Weald to carry out sweeps over the Berck-Gravelines area at 20,000-25,000 feet.

The Hornchurch Wing flew to Aire (23,000 ft) and then turned South; near St. Po 16 F.W.190s were seen 5,000 feet below and a section of 453 Squadron were detailed to attack, but they were unable to engage the enemy.

The Wing then flew to the Abbeville area and sighted 12-15 F.W.190s 5,000 feet below diving towards the Somme Estuary where they were joined by another force of about 20 F.W.190s which had approached from the South

Leaving 222 Squadron as top cover 453 Squadron dived down and attacked and as a result of combats 1 F.W.190 was destroyed and another damaged.

The North Weald wing, when westof Le Touquet, were detailed to intercept the E/A returning from the Eastborne raid.

Our aircraft lost height from 15,000 ft to 2,000-4,000 feet and patrolled over the St. Valery-Dieppe-Somme area but no E/A were seen.

During the sweeps there was an enemy re-action of about 35 E/A from the Poix-Mazingarbe areas, according to R.D.F.

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B.R.B. 5.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CONVOY PATROL.

Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey Time Up: 1440
Aus. 403917 P/O. Ferguson Time Down: 1610

No incident.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x

O.R.B. 7.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfire IX. SCRAMBLE.

Aus. 402129 F/O. McCann Time Up: 1755 Time Down: 1905

Scrambled to patrol Barrow Deep at 25,000 feet at 1755 hours and was given several vectors without results.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x

O.R.B. 10.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 403924 F/O. Hansell
Aus. 408503 F/Sgt. Olver
Aus. 401543 P/O. Stansfield Time Up: 1810
F/Lt. Glazier(attached) Time Down: 1930
Aus. 403917 P/O. Ferguson
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
Aus. 411938 F/O. O'Dea
F/Lt. Gaze (attached)
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford

Ramrod. Out N. Foreland at 10,000 ft., in Nieuport 25,000 ft. 1843 hours. Were warned of e/a in Ostend area, so made three wide climbing port orbits, reaching 35,000 ft. 2 F.W.190s were seen by 222 Squadron and the Wing Leader ordered Red Section to go down but the e/a dived away. Many more e/a were reported but not seen. Wing finally crossed out Nieuport behind main gaggle of bombers 33,000 feet 1900 hours, and crossed in Shoeburyness 5,000 feet 1915 hours. Thick haze up to 20,000 feet and 3-5/10ths cumulus cloud over Belgium at 12,000 feet.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 86.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod No. 86 during the afternoon of the 10th June, 1943 in against Langerbrugge Power Station, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers: -	6 Mitchells (No. 2 Group)
Fighters: -	
Close Escort:	302 Squadron (Northolt) Spits V.
Escort Cover:	167 and 485 Squadrons (Tangmere) Spits V.
High Cover:	341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spits IX
Withdrawal Support Wing:	222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spits IX.
1st Fighter Sweep:	331 and 332 Squadrons (North Weald) Spits IX.
2nd Fighter Sweep:	303 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt) Spits IX

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Weather. 3/10ths cloud at 3,000 ft. over target with haze up to 20,000 ft. with further cloud above.

Bombers. 6 Mitchells took off but failed to bomb due to failure of intercom in the leader's aircraft, the bomb-aimer not receiving the word to bomb, the remaining aircraft therefore refraining from bombing. The bombers were attacked by F.W.190s with the result set out below.

Enemy Casualties: 1 F.W.190 damaged

Our Casualties: 1 Mitchell missing, 1 Mitchell Cat. E crash landed at Manston, crew safe.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

Withdrawal Support. At 1809 hrs. twenty-four Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons took off from Hornchurch to act as withdrawal support wing. When over the Ostend area two F.W.190s were seen which dived away and then two of our aircraft came in to attack. The main formation was then seen crossing out over Nieuport and the Hornchurch wing followed it out across the Channel.

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Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 413108 F/Sgt. Currie
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 403924 F/O. Hansell
Aus. 408503 F/Sgt. Olver
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 411790 P/O. Leith
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
Aus. 412624 F/O. McAuliffe
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey
S/Ldr. Compton (attached)

Ramrod. Wing led by W/Cdr. Ratten, flying with 453, crossed out Romney 3,000 feet, in at Berck 22,000 feet. Swept S. of St. Pol and Merville area, finally out Sangatte at 24,000 feet and in S. Foreland 15,000 feet. There was no enemy reaction. Much medium heavy flak was seen coming up at bombers from Calais/Boulogne area. Thick haze up to 20,000 and 3-5/10ths cumulus at 10,000 feet. Wing was released at 1500 hours until 1300 hours on the 12th June.

From H.Q. No. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 87 Report 11.6.43.

A. Wing Commander Ratten 453 and 222 (B). 24 Spits IXs.
C. 1300 to 1435 hours. D. 1st Fighter Sweep. E. Nog applicable.
F. Nil. G. Nil.

General: Wing led by Wing Commander Ratten out Romney 3,000 in Berck 22,000 feet on time. Swept south of St. Pol Merville under Appledore out Sangatte 24,000 in south Foreland 15,000 feet. No e/a. Much medium heavy flak from Calais/Boulogne area at bombers.

Weather: Thick haze to 20,000 feet 3/10 to 5/10 cumulus 10,000 feet. No further report to follow.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod 87

It was decided to carry out Ramrod 87 during the morning of the 11th June, 1943 in two parts - the first a Diversion against Zeebrugge Coke Ovens andthe second, the Main Attack against Gosnay Power Station - the following forces taking part: -

Part 2. Bombers: 12 Bostons of No. 2 Group.

Fighters:
Escort: No. 302 Squadrons Spit V (Northolt)
Escort Cover: Nos. 167 and 485 Squadrons Spit V (Tangmere)
High Cover: Nos. 341 and 611 Squadrons Spits IX (Biggin Hill)
1st Fighter Sweep: Nos. 222 and 453 Squadrons Spits IX (Hornchurch)
2nd Fighter Sweep: Nos. 331 and 332 Squadrons Spits IX (North Weald)

Weather: 3 - 5/10ths cloud at 6,000 feet, thick haze beneath and up to 12,000 feet above and then 7/10ths cloud at that height with further cloud layers above.

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Bombers. Gosnay Power Station. 12 Bostons did not attack the target owing to adverse weather conditions.

1st Fighter Sweep. The Hornchurch Wing crossed the English Coast at Romney at 5,000 feet, crossing the French Coast at Berck at 22,000 feet at 1303 hours. The Wing then swept S. of St. Pol to Merville under Appledore control and then recrossed the French Coast at Sangatte at 24,000 feet returning to base without incident.

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O.R.B. 12.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 405319 F/O. McDermott
Aus. 403917 P/O. Ferguson
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
Aus. 411790 P/O. Leith — Time Up: 1855
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford — Time Down: 2030
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 411938 F/O. O'Dea
Aus. F/Lt. Gaze (attached)

Ramrod. Out Bexhill 1910 flew at zero feet until 1915 hours, in E. of Dieppe 1931 hrs. 22,000 ft. Swept Cleres /Rouen/ Fecamp area at 24,000 ft. quite uneventfully, crossed out 1955 St. Valery 24,000 ft. Just after crossing out a large formation of u/a were noticed following above, so the Wing made fast climbing orbit to port reaching 35,000 ft. when u/a were recognised as friendly. Finally crossed out E. of Dieppe 34,000 ft. and in Dungeness 12,000 ft. Thick ground haze up to 10,000 ft. strato cumulus forming on both sides of the Channel.

From 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 91 12.6.43.

A. W/Cdr. Ratten 453, 222. B. 24 Spits IX. C. 1855/2035
D. 2nd fighter sweep. E. N/A. F. Nil. G. Nil.

General. Wing led by W/Cdr. Ratten out Bexhill 1910 hours zero feet until 1915. In east Dieppe 1931 hrs. 22,000. Swept Cleres/Rouens/Fecamp area 24,000 uneventfully. Out 1955 St. Valery 24,000. Saw large formation u/a following above. Did fast climbing port orbit to 35,000 a/c friendly. Out S.Dieppe 34,000. In Dungeness 12,000.

Weather. Thick ground haze to 10,000 strato cumulus forming over haze overland on both sides of Channel. No further report to follow.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod 91.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod 91 during the evening of 12th June, 1943 against Grand/Quevilly Power Station with a Diversion against Caen/Capriquet A/D, the following forces taking part: -

Part 1. Grang Quevilly Power Station.

Bombers: 12 Bostons of No. 2 Group.

Fighters:
Escort: 402 and 416 Squadrons (Digby, 12 Group) Spits V.
Escort Cover: 308 and 315 Squadrons (Church Fenton, 12 Group) Spits V.
High Cover: 341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spits IX
1st Fighter Sweep: 403 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits IX
2nd Fighter Sweep: 222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spits IX.

Weather: no cloud or haze, visibility good.

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Bombers. 12 Bostons bombed the target, seeing several near misses and some bombs in the River Seine. There was no flak over the target.

2nd Fighter Sweep. The Hornchurch Wing crossed the English Coast at Bexhill at 1910 hours at zero feet, commencing to climb at 1915 hours and crossing the French Coast E. of Dieppe at 1931 hours at 22,000 feet, sweeping Cleres/Rouens/ Fecamp area at 24,000 feet uneventfully and recrossing the French Coast at 1955 hours at St. Valery-en-Caux, returning to base without incident.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties:	1 Me.109 destroyed 1 Me.109 damaged.
Our Casualties:	1 Ventura missing.

O.R.B. 13.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews		
Aus. 413108 F/Sgt. Currie		
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley		
Aus. 403924 F/O. Hansell		
Aus. 408503 F/Sgt. Olver	Time Up: 0830	Time Down:1015
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford		
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay		
Aus. 401071 F/O. R.J. Long	Time Up: 1050	Time Down: 1110
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard		
Aus. 412624 F/O. McAuliffe		

Ramrod: Wing acted as First Diversion, High Cover. Wing Commander Ratten flew with 453, the Squadron was airborne at 0831 hours. 10 a/c landed and refueled at Manston on the way back and all landed at base by 1110 hours. R/V with bombers at Bradwell Bay at 0845 hours. zero ft., started to climb at 0857 hours., crossed in at Knocke at 0913 hours at 20,000 ft. One bomber was seen to receive a direct hit by flak and another was pouring smoke and losing height. The Wing orbitted Walcheren during the bombing then made a wide port orbit north of Antwerp and swept Overflakkee/Flushing area uneventfully. Finally crossed out Westkapelle 0939 hours. at 25,000 ft., made a further port orbit to investigate a large gaggle of u/a which proved friendly. Crossed out again at Blankenberghe at 0955 hrs. 32,000 ft. When half way back 2 F.W.190s dived on 222 Squadron from astern and one pilot was lost. The Wing then made another steep climbing port orbit but nothing further was seen, finally crossing in N. Foreland. Accurate heavy flak was experienced from the Flushing area. The weather was fine with 3/10ths cloud forming at 10,000 ft. over Holland.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 93 Report. 13.6.43.

A. W/Cdr. Ratten 453, 222. B. 23 Spits IX. C. 0831/15 Manston 10.15. 1 Southend 10.22 6 Hornchurch 10.25. D. 1st Diversion (High Cover) E. N/A. F. Nil. G. 222 F/Lt. Hall missing 1 Spit IX Cat. E.

General. R/V Bombers Bradwell on time zero ft. Started climb 0857, in 0913 E. Knocke 20,000 as bombers crossed in. 1 bomber seen receive direct hit flak, another pouring smoke and losing height. Orbitted 20,000 Walcheren during bombing. Did wide port orbit N. Antwerp, swept over Flakker/Flushing area 25,000 ft. as E/A reported. Then orbitted Flushing uneventful. As more E/A reported. Out Westkapelle 0939 25,000. Sighted large gaggle E/A travelling W. towards Bruges. Fast climbing port orbit 35,000 ft. E/A recognised friendly. Out Blankenberghe 0955 32,000. When half way back 2 FW.190 attacked 222 from astern. Blue 2 222 F/Lt. Hall seen tp spin in fire 35 miles E. Manston. Mayday heard and fix obtained. 453 did steep climbing port orbit without seeing anything more. In N. Foreland. Flak accurate heavy over Flushing. 5 bursts marker flak Sas Van Gent accurate for height.

Weather. Fine 3/10 cloud forming 10,000 over Holland. Hazy cloud in layers 30/000. No further report to follow.

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No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod 93.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod 93 during the morning of 15th June, in two parts, the first being a diversion against Flushing Dornier Airframe Factory and the De Schelde Shipyards and Aeroplane Works; and the second part against the Labuissiere Electric Power Station (Mines de Bruay) at Gosnay. The following forces took part: -

Part 1. Bombers: 12 Mitchells of No. 2 Group.

Fighters:
Escort Wing: Nos. 402 and 416 Squadrons (12 Group) Spit. Vs.
Escort Cover: Nos. 19 and 118 Squadrons (12 Group) Spit Vs.
High Cover: Nos. 222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spit IXs

Weather: 2 - 5/10ths cloud at 5,000 ft. over France, 3/10ths forming over Holland. Much high Cirrus. Good visibility.

Bombers. 10 Mitchells bombed the target from 12,000 ft. at 0916 hrs. Results of bombing were not observed. Over the target one Mitchell was hit by flak which was heavy and intense and it was seen to crash. A second bomber was hit in the starboard engine but was escorted safely back 40 x 1,000 lbs. bombs were dropped.

High Cover. The Hornchurch Wing made rendezvous with the bombers at Bradwell Bay at 0845 hrs. started to climb at 0857 hrs. and crossed the enemy coast E. of Knocke at 20,000 ft. They orbitted Walcheren at 20,000 ft. during the bombing and then climbed to 25,000 ft. to sweep Antwerp/Overflakkee/Flushing uneventfully. The Wing came out at Blankenberghe at 32,000 ft. at 0955 hrs and when halfway back, No. 222 Squadron were attacked from astern by two F.W.190s with the following results: -

Enemy Casualties: Nil.
Our Casualties: F/Lt. Hall N.Y.R.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties: 4 F.W.190s destroyed
1 F.W.190 probably destroyed.
3 F.W.190s damaged

Our Casualties: 2 Spitfires and Pilots missing.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 0831 hrs. twenty-three Spitfires IX of 453 and 222 Squadrons left Hornchurch and having reached Knocke at 20,000 ft. flew on to Walcheren at this height during thebombing, later sweeping from N. of Antwerp to the Flushing area. The Wing returned over Blankenberghe at 22,000 ft. and when half way back to the English coast, 2 F.W.190s attacking from astern, shot down a Spitfire of 222 Squadron.

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O.R.B. 13.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 405319 F/O. McDermott
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 403917 P/O. Ferguson
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift — Time Up: 1355
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay — Time Down: 1405
F/Lt. Gaze
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker
Aus. 411790 P/O. Leith
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha

Ramrod. Our role was Fourth Fighter Sweep. Airborne 1359 hours all down 1521. Crossed Ambleteuse at 1424 hrs. 25,000 ft. Several vectors were given as e/a were about and finally over Lille area 20 u/a were seen about 10,000 ft. below, our height then being 36,000 ft. The Wing Commander who was flying with 222 Squadron went down to investigate whilst 453 remained above as cover; these u/a proved to be e/a and split up immediately over a very large area and although 3 pilots of 222 Squadron fired at e/a no claims were made. The Wing then reformed and withdrew crossing out at Dunkirk 31,000 ft. at 1450 hours, and in N. Foreland 10/10ths cloud at 10,000 ft. over England with rainstorms, patchy cloud over France increasing to 3/10ths, visibility good.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 94.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod 94 on the afternoon of the 13th June, 1943. The operation consisted of an attack on Ebbeville Aerodrome by Typhoon Bombers supported by five separate Fighter Sweeps. The following forces took part: -

Bombers and Escort: 8 Bomphoons of No. 182 Squadron (83 Group) escorted by 12 Typhoons of No. 609 Squadron (Hornchurch).

Fighters:
1st Fighter Sweep: 341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spitfire IXs.
2nd Fighter Sweep: 403 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley) Spitfire IXs.
3rd Fighter Sweep: 303 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt) Spitfire IXs.
4th Fighter Sweep: 222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spitfire IXs.
5th Fighter Sweep: 82, 83 and 84 Squadrons (U.S.AA.C) Duxford. Thunderbolts.

Weather: Clear over Channel. 3/10ths to 5/10ths at 5,000 ft. over France. 10/10ths cirrus at 24,000 ft. Visibility good.

Bombers. 4 Bomphoons dropped 8 x 500 lb. bombs in a dive from 11,000 to 7,000 ft, bursts being seen near the Northern dispersal of Abbeville/Drucat aerodrome. No e/a were seen in the air on on the ground. Accurate flak was experienced over the target following the aircraft down in the dive and then succeeded by accurate light flak as aircraft left the target One aircraft slightly damaged.

Three Bomphoons returned early, one due to a burst tyre on take-off a second returning after commencing to climb owing to a u/s oil pressure gauge, accompanied by a third as escort. The bombs of one Bomphoon failed to release.

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4th Fighter Sweep.

The Hornchurch Wing crossed the French Coast at Ambleteuse at 1424 hours at 25,000 ft. and flew to St. Pol whence they were directed to the St. Omer/Merville area. They were then flying at 35,000 ft. and sighted a large formation of about 50 F.W.190s 10,000 ft. below them. The Wing Leader left 453 Squadron as top cover and took 222 Squadron down to attack but only 3 Pilots were able to fire as the e/a broke into numerous small formations, several climbing above our formation. As the e/a were now dispersed in force over a wide area our Wing climbed and reformed at 35,000 ft. and withdrew via Dunkirk. No claims are made.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties: 2 F.W.190s destroyed
2 F.W.190s damaged.

Our Casualties: 2 Thunderbolts and pilots M.Y.R.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1357 hrs. 21 Spitfires LX of 453 and 222 Squadrons took off from Hornchurch and reached St. Pol at 25,000 ft. They were then directed to the Merville and St. Omer areas and having climbed to 35,000 feet saw about 50 F.W.190s 10,000 feet below. 222 Squadron went down to attack but the E/A broke up into small formations and dispersed. Three pilots fired but no claims are made.

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O.R.B. 15.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 403924 F/O. Hansell
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 403046 W/O. Ford
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey

Time Up: 0735
Time Down: 0855

Ramrod. Briefing was at 0645 and the Squadron took off at 0740 hrs. to act as Second Fighter cover to Fortresses. En route to R/V the bombers were seen to starboard turning back at 0816 hrs. the Wing leader was told that the bombing would not take place, so he continued on Group instructions and landfall was made at Fecamp at 24,000 ft. at 0817 hrs. The Wing then swept inland N. of Yvetot to Somme Estuary and Berck uneventfully, crossing out at Berck 24,000 ft. at 0830 hrs. On e/a being reported in Berck area a right hand orbit was made but none were sighted. Landfall was made at Folkestone 0844 at 16,000 ft. Weather was clear in patches otherwise 10/10ths strato cumulus at 10,000 ft. and massive cumulus from 10/24,000 ft. The target area appeared to be clear.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 95 Report 15.6.43.

A. W/Cdr. Ratten, 453, 222. B. 24 Spits IX. C. 0740/0900 (including 2 of 222 at Hawkinge) D. 2nd Fighter Cover. E. Not reached. F. and G. Nil.

General: - En route R/V Fortresses seen starboard turning back. At 0816 advised Group's instructions. Landfall Fecamp 24,000 feet 0817 swept inland of Yvetot to Somme estuary and Berck. Out Berck 24,000 0830. Right hand orbit on hearing report of E/A Berck but none sighted. Landfall Folkestone 0844 at 16,000.

Weather: - Clear in patches particularly inland. Otherwise 10/10ths strato cumulus at 10,000 massive cumulus from 10,000 to 24,000. No further report to follow.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod 95.

It was intended to carry out Ramrod No. 95 during the morning of the 15th June, 1943 in two parts. Part 1 - Main Party against Le Mans Marshalling Yards; Part 2 Diversion against Bernay/St. Martin Aerodrome. The following forces taking part.

Part 2. Bombers. 45 Fortresses.

Fighters:

1st Fighter Cover.	Nos. 303 and 316 Squadrons	(Northolt) Spit IXs
2nd Fighter Cover.	Nos. 222 and 453 Squadrons	(Hornchurch) Spit IXs.
3rd Fighter Cover.	Nos. 341 and 611 Squadrons	(Biggin Hill) Spit Ixs.
1st High Cover.	Nos. 331 and 332 Squadrons	(North Weald) Spit IXs.
2nd High Cover.	Nos. 403 and 421 Squadrons	(Kenley) Spit IXs.

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Weather: 10/10ths strato cumulus at 10,000 ft, massive cumulus from 10/24,000 ft. Alto stratus at 30,000 ft. Visibility fair.

Bombers. 45 Fortresses crossed the English coast at Dungeness at 0720 hours and swept to 20 miles W. of the Somme Estuary before turning right to 45 miles N. of Le Havre, and thence to Brighton, and then to Beachy Head before setting course for Fecamp at 0801 hours. They were then recalledowing to adverse weather conditions, before crossing the French coast.

2nd High Cover. The Hornchurch Wing set course for 12 miles N. of Fecamp seeing the Fortresses to starboard returning to England. The Wing made landfall off Fecamp at 24,000 ft. at 0817 hours, and swept inland N. of Yvetot to the Somme Estuary and Berck where they made a right hand orbit on hearing of enemy aircraft in the vicinity. None were seen, however, and the Wing returned to base without further incident.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties.	3 F.W.190s destroyed 1 F.W.190 probably destroyed 1 F.W.190 damaged
Our Casualties.	Nil

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 0740 hours. twenty-four Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons took off from Hornchurch to act as second fighter cover. The bombers were seen turning back but the Wing entinued on and carried out an uneventful sweep over the Yvetot-Somme-Berck area.

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O.R.B. 17.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galwey
Aus. 403763 F/O. Parker — Time Up: 0840
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews — Time Down: 1020
Aus. 413707 F/Sgt. Yarra, R.E.
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 408503 F/Sgt. Olver
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift
Aus. 403917 P/O. Ferguson

Circus. The Wing acted as Target Forward Support and were airborne at 0845 hours and all down at 1022 hrs. Started climbing at 0916 hrs. as instructed, crossed in N. Walcheren 15,000 ft. at 0926. Made complete orbit of Flushing reaching 23,000 ft. then swept right to 10 miles N. Antwerp, were advised of e/a approaching Bruges from S.W. and swept to Ghent, but e/a had turned south and were not sighted. Finally crossed out west of Nieuport 28,000 ft. and in Deal at 0945 hrs. 10,000 ft. 20 bursts of heavy flak experienced Bruges and Ostend. Thick mist up to 10,000 ft. from 50 miles off Flushing inland over Holland, 10/10 cumulus 15,000 ft.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Circus 311 Report 17th June, 1943.

A. W/Cdr. Ratten, 453, 222, B. 24 Spitfires IX. C. 0842/1022
D. Target Forward support. E. N/A F. Nil G. Nil.

General. Wing led W/Cdr. Ratten started climbing as instructed 0916, in N. Walcheren to 23,000 ft. Swept right to 10 miles. N. Antwerp 23,000, advised E/A approaching Bruges from S.W. swept Ghent but E/A which are believed to have turned S. out of range were not sighted. When approaching Nieuport large formation u/a turned behind from N.E. right climbing orbit 28,000 ft. U/A recognised friendly. Out W. Nieuport 28,000/31,000, 0954 in Deal.

Flak: 20 bursts heavy Bruges and Ostend, Accurate for height.

Weather: Thick mist to 10,000 from 50 miles off Flushing to inland over Holland 5-10/10ths cumulus 10/15,000 over Holland and Belgium clear 10/10 cumulus towards S. 10,000. No further report to follow.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus 311

It was decided to carry out Circus 311 during the morning of the 17th June, 1943 against Flushing, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers: 12 Bostons (2 Group)

Fighters:
Close Escort: 302 and 317 Squadrons (Northolt) Spits V.
Escort Cover: 401 and 411 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits V.
High Cover: 341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spits IX.
Target Forward Support Wing: 222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spits IX.
Target Withdrawal Support: 331 and 332 Squadrons (North Weald) Spits IX.
Fighter Sweep: 303 and 315 Squadrons (Northolt) Spits IX.

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O.R.B. 17.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 403763 F/O. Parker
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha — Time Up: 1440
F/Lt. Gaze (attached) — Time Down: 1620
Aus. 411938 F/O. O'Dea
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 403924 F/O. Hansell
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott
Aus. 402949 W/O. Greaves
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray

Rodeo. Wing acted as Second Fighter Sweep. Wing Commander flying with 453, proceeded at zero feet until 1505 hrs. crossing in Blankenberghe 1522 hrs. at 22,000 ft. Swept Ghent/Antwerp/Flushing area, then e/a were reported to S. and above. Wing climbed to 32,000 ft. When in Axel Hurst area 15/20 F.W.190s were seen about 10,000 ft. below at 1535 hrs. travelling east. Leaving 222 Squadron as cover, Wing leader took 453 down to attack, the e/a broke, some climbing. Several engagements followed. 5 pilots of 453 fired their guns; they were F/Lt. Andrews, F/O. McDermott, F/O. Hansell, F/O. O'Dea and P/O. Greaves. F/Lt. Andrews is claiming one F.W. 190 as probably destroyed, which may be stepped up to a destroyed when his film has been seen. The other four pilots made no claims, as in most cases they fires from long range and the e/a were darting about the sky. All pilots used their Cine camera guns, so it is possible that when the films have been assessed one or two claims may result. The Wing leader ordered the Squadron to re-form as the e/a had dived inland and the engagement was broken off E. of Ghent at 1538 hours. The Wing crossing out at Knocke 2,000 ft. 1546 hrs. making landfall at Ramsgate. 70 to 100 bursts of heavy flak to 15/17,000 ft. was experienced at Ostend and a few bursts from Bruges. Thick sea haze up to 10,000 ft. and up to 10/10 strato cumulus over Belgium and Holland at 12,000 ft.

From 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Rodeo 231 Report 17.6.43.

A. W/Cdr. Ratten, 222, 453. B. 24 Spits IX. C. 1444/1625
D. 2nd Fighter Sweep. E. N/A. F. 453, 1 F.W. 190 probably destroyed
F/Lt. Andrews, G. Nil. Cine camera gun carried and used.

General. Wing led by W/Cdr. Ratten proceeded zero feet until 1505. In Blankenberghe 1522, 22,000 ft. Ghent/Antwerp/Flushing 22,000. E/A reported S. and above. Turned S. climbing 32,000 When Axelhurst area, saw 15/20 F.W.190's 8/10,000 ft. below going east. 1535. 222 left up for cover, W/Cdr. led 453 down to attack. E/A broke left climbing. Several engagements followed, 5 pilots fired of which Blue 1 453, F/Lt. Andrews, claims 1 F.W. 190 probably destroyed, E/A turned inland. Engagements broken off E. Ghent 24,000 1537. Wing out Knocke 22,000 1545, in Ramsgate.

Flak. 70/100ø bursts heavy 15/17,000, Ostend, 5/6 bursts heavy Bruges.

Weather. Thick sea haze to 10,000 up to 10/10 strat cumulus over Belgium and Holland about 12,000. Some cumulus/nimbus over Holland to 22,000.

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PERSONAL COMBAT REPORT.

Hornchurch Wing.

Rodeo 231 - 17.6.43.

F/Lt. D.C. Andrews.

Date	(a) 17.6.43
Unit	(b) 453 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron
Type and mark of aircraft	(c) Spitfire IX
Time attack was delivered	(d) 1537 hrs.
Place of attack and/or Target	(e) Axel Hulst
Weather	(f) Broken cumulus 5-6/10ths.
Our casualties aircraft	(g) Nil
Our casualties personnel	(h) Nil
Enemy casualties air bombat	(j) 1 F.W.190 probably destroyed
Enemy casualties ground or sea target	(k) N/A
Camera Gun	(l) Carried and used.

General Report. I was leading Blue section when the W/Cdr. saw some 15-20 F.W.190s flying in twos and threes about 8,000 ft. below, our height being 24,000 ft. The W/Cdr. turned the Wing to port and went down from up sun to attack. Blue section in doing a cross-over turn, got the lead.

I singled out the port rear e/a of a pair. When I opened fire from 300 yards. port astern the e/a dived then pulled up again very quickly. I closed to point blank range and he skidded violently to starboard, and I know I obtained strikes all along the fuselage as there was an explosion and considerable black smoke from the port side of the engine. Pieces flew off the e/a hitting the under surface of my own a/c. After pulling up over the e/a to avoid colliding with it, I saw it going down in a vertical dive emitting thick grey smoke. At this stage the W/Cdr. called on the R/T that an e/a was diving on a leading Spitfire, and thinking it was me, I paid no further attention to the e/a. However Red 2 F/O. Gray was watching it and considers that it was very probably destroyed as it was diving vertically with greyish brown smoke coming from it. I therefore claim this F.W.190 as probably destroyed, although when my film has been seen I hope it may be stepped up to a destroyed.

PERSONAL COMBAT REPORT.

Hornchurch Wing.

Rodeo 231 - 17.6.43.

F/O. F.R. McDermott.

Date	(a) 17.6.43
Unit	(b) 453 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron
Type and mark of aircraft	(c) Spitfire IX.
Time attack was delivered	(d) 1537 hrs.
Place of attack and/or target	(e) Axel Hulst
Weather	(f) Broken cumulus 5-6/10ths
Our Casualties aircraft	(g) Nil
Our Casualties personnel	(h) Nil
Enemy casualties air combat	(j) 1 F.W.190 Damaged
Enemy casualties ground or sea target	(k) N/A
Camera Gun	(l) Carried and used.

General Report. I was flying as Blue 2 when the W/Cdr. saw some 15-20 F.W.190's flying in twos and threes about 8,000 ft. below, our height being 24,000 ft. The W/Cdr. turned the Wing to port and went down from up sun to attack. Blue section in doing a cross-over turn, got the lead.

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I singled out the starboard e/a of a pair and opened fire at 250 yards. closing to 150 yds., 25° port. the e/a remained on a steady course until just before I finished my burst, he then turned slightly to port, but I wasn't sure that I had hit him. But since seeing my film frame by frame I am convinced that there were strikes and I therefore claim this F.W. 190 as damaged.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1444 hrs. 24 Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons left Hornchurch and carried out a sweep over the Blankenberghe-Ghent-Antwerp-Flushing area at 22/32,000 ft. 15/20 F.W. 190s were sêgn in the Axel-Hulst area 8/10,000 ft. below. The Wing dived from 32,000 ft. to attack the E/A and as a result of combats an F.W. 190 was probably destroyed by apilot of 453 Squadron.

Weather: 8/10ths cumulus cloud up to 15,000 feet obscured target. Ground haze. Visbility moderate.

Bombers. The bombers abandoned task at 0926 hours when 6 miles W. of Flushing at 13,000 feet owing to the target being obscured by cloud.

Target Forward Support.

The Hornchurch Wing were airborne at 0842 hours and proceeded to the N. of Walcheren Island at sealevel, commencing to climb at 0916 hours and arriving over Walcheren at 0926 hours at 15,000 feet. The wing then made complete orbit at Walcheren at 23,000 feet before sweeping to 10 miles N. of Antwerp, when they were advised of e/a approaching Bruges from the S.W. swept to Ghent and Nieuport without sighting any e/a and returned to base without incident.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties.	6 F.W.190 destroyed 2 F.W.190 probably destroyed 7 F.W.190 damaged.
Our Casualties;	1 Pilot N.Y.R.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

Twenty-four Spitfires IX of 453 and 222 Squadrons left Hornchurch and flew to Walcheren which they circled at 23,000 feet before sweeping towards Antwerp. No E/A were seen.

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O.R.B. 20.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 403763 R/O. Parker — Time Up: 1220
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long — Time Down: 1410
Aus. 411938 F/O. O'Dea
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 413108 F/Sgt. Currie
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley

Circus. Wing acted as Withdrawal Support Wing. Crossed in Abbeville 1306 hrs. 23,000 ft. orbited at heights varying from 23-30,000 ft. On way to Griz Nez sighted 4-6 a/a over Le Touquet 10-15 miles N. of Wing at the same height but these immediately dived into cloud. Wing orbited beneath cloud at 22,000 ft. for a few minutes without success. Finally crossed out Le Touquet 27,000 ft. 1340 hrs. and in Dungeness 1348 20,000 ft. Hazy cloud at 22,000 ft. in patches. Cloud forming 5,000 ft.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Circus 313 Report.

A. W/Cdr. Ratten, 453, 222. B. 24 Spits IX. C. 1227/1410 (3 pilots 453, 1 of 222 landed Manston) D. Forward target support. E. N/A F. Nil G. Nil.

General: Operation carried out according to plan. Crossing in Abbeville 1306, 23000 and sweeping at heights varying 22/27,000 lost sight of Kenley when sweeping over Amiens as Kenley seen to turn north, to attack small formation E/A. On way to Gris Nez to reinforce Kenley sighted 4/6 E/A over Le Touquet 10/15 miles to north of wing at same height, but these immediately dived into cloud. Wing orbitted under cloud 22,000 searching for these E/A for few mins without success. Only one pilot (Yellow 3, 222) caught glimpse of 190 22,000 coming out of cloud and firing at target which could not be seen. Yellow 3 only managed short burst extreme range without making claim and immediately lost sight of E/A in cloud. Wing crossed out Le Touquet 27,000 1340. In Dungeness 1348 20,000.

Weather: Hazy cloud 22,000 in patches, varying to 10/10. Layers above at all heights; cloud forming 5,000 ft 1-2/10 strato cumulus, clear over Channel. No further report to follow.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus 313.

It was decided to carry out Circus No. 313 during the afternoon of the 20th June, 1943, against Poix Aerodrome, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers: 12 Bostons (2 Group)

Fighters:
Close Escort. Nos. 401 and 411 Squadrons (Kenley) Spit Vs.
Escort Cover; Nos. 65, 122 and 602 Squadrons (83 Group) Spit Vs.
High Cover: Nos. 341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spit IXs.
Forward Target Support: Nos. 403 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley) Spit IXs.
Wings: Nos. 222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spit IXs.
Withdrawal Support Wing: Nos. 303 ans 316 Squadrons (Northolt) Spit IXs.

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Weather. Over the target no cloud at bombing height, and unlimited visibility. Layers of patchy cloud at 16,000, 22,000 and 27,000 ft., varying from 1 - 10/10ths cloud.

Bombers. 11 of the 12 Bostons bombed Poix A/S at 1513 hours from 10,600 ft, bursts were seen in the northern dispersd area, and on the east side of the A/D among personnel accommodation. No enemy aircraft were seen on the ground.

Forward Target Support Wings. The Kenley and Hornchurch Wings rendezvoused at Rye at 1245 hours They began to climb at 1249 hours, crossing the French coast at Quend Plage, stepped up from 12/22,000 ft. still climbing, arriving over target area stepped up from 23/27,000 ft. at 1316 hours. Wing then turned north under Appledore control, and when near Aux Le Chateau (16 miles N.E. of Abbeville) 403 Squadron attacked 3 F.W.190s going in opposite direction 1,000 ft below without effect. 12 More were then seen at 24,000 ft who attacked. Combats ensued with results set out below. Before the squadrons were able to reform, a further 50 plus were seen to be flying from the south. 403 Squadron then turned for base, recrossing the French coast at the Somme Estuary. One pilot who was detached shot up goods wagons and flak postson the way and 421 Squadron climbed to 32,000 ft, and recrossed Gris Nez before returning to base.

The Hornchurch Wing had lost sight of the Kenley Wing, when it turned north, but proceeded towards the north. When 10 miles of Le Touquet saw 4/6 enemy aircraft over Le Touquet, but in cloud these were lost and the Wing returned to base over Le Touquet without further incident.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties:	1 F.W.190 destroyed 1 F.W.190 probably destroyed
Our Casualties	3 Pilots N.Y.R

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1245 hours twenty-four Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons of the Hornchurch wing and twenty-four Spitfires IX of 403 and 421 Squadrons of the Kenley wing, made rendezvous over Rye and patrolled over the Abbeville/Amiens/Somme Estuary areas between 22/32,000 ft.

About 20 F.W.190s were encountered by the Kenley Wing when flying at 24,000 ft. near Auxile Chateau and a further 50 F.W.190s were sighted at 27,000 feet flying towards Abbeville from the south. As a result of combats an F.W.190 was destroyed and another probably destroyed. Three Spitfires and their pilots are missing.

A pilot of 403 Squadron dived to ground level owing to oxygen trouble and attacked a goods wagon and flak posts east of Boulogne.

The Hornchurch wing sighter 4-5 e/a over Le Touquet which dived into cloud. A Spitfire of 222 Squadron fired at one of these E/A before losing it, but makesno claim.

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O.R.B. 22.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 411790 P/O. Leith
Aus. 401071 F/O. Long
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien — Time Up: 0930
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift — Time Down: 1125
Aus. 403924 F/O. Hansell
Aus. 408989 F/O. Gray (Missing)
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 402949 P/O. Greaves
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau

Ramrod. Role of Wing being to bring Fortresses back from an attack in force on Germany. Three Squadrons came up from the south and were briefed with our wing at 0800 hours. S/Ldr. Compton (Acting Wing Commander) flew with 453. F/O. Gray did not return. Crossing out Dengie Flats 4,5000 ft. continued on a slow economical climb to Haamsede at 1017 hrs. 19,000 ft. E/A reported 25,000 ft. so climbed Heumansdorp; here S/Ldr. Compton turned back with tank trouble and S/Ldr. Barclay led the Wing from 1020 hrs. At 1021 4 F.W.190s were sighted 4,000 ft. below the wing and 10 plus 2 miles ahead at 25,000 from S.E. Bombers were sighted ~~bring~~ south of Rotterdam stepped up to 15/20,000 ft. and leading bombers being attacked by 4 F.W.190s, one of these was seen to go down in flames. 10-12 190s were then seen in loose pairs and 4's coming from the S.E. Yellow section went down to attack just as the E/A were about to attack the Fortresses and F/Lt. Esau gave a short burst and E/A dived away very fast. Two other E/A were sighted by Blue Section at 1000 ft. below and S/Ldr. Barclay opened fire on a 190 and saw strikes on the port sing and claims it as damaged. F/O. Swift also got in a 1¼ secs' burst at the same e/a without result. F/O. Gray did not return and Blue 1 and 3 saw a Spitfire spinning down off Schonwen and believe it was he. Wing rejoined bombers, weaving above and to port, making landfall at Ipswich. 2/10ths low cloud, r/10 strato cumulus 27,000 ft. air good.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

A. 222,453, S/Ldr. Compton. B. 24 Spits IX. C. 0935/1125 (453-2 landed Southend, 1 Bradwell Bay, 222-4 landed Southend, 2 Bradwell Bay) D. Fighter escort. E. 1024 hrs. F. 453, 1 F.W.190 damaged, S/Ldr. Barclay. (G) 453, F/O. C. Gray missing, 1 Spit IX Cat 4.

General. Hornchurch Wing led S/Ldr. Compton economical climb from base, out Dengie Flats 4,500 in Haamstede 1017 hrs. 19,000. On report E/A 25,000 ft. wing climbed 25,000 ft. over Neumansdorp at which point S/Ldr. Compton started return with tank and R/T trouble, S/Ldr. Barclay taking over at 1020. At 1021 4 F.W.190 sighted 4,000 below, wing coming from S.E. and 10 plus 2 miles ahead at 25,000 also from S.E. Blue section 222 detached to attack but only one pilot fired as E/A dived away, no claim. Bombers sighted S. of Rotterdam stepped up 15/20,000 ft. Leading bomber being attacked by 4 E/A, one of latter seen go down in flames. 453, then saw 10/12 E/A loose pairs and fours coming from S.E. above and below. Yellow section 453 dived to attack but E/A dived away. Further 2 e/a were then attacked by Red section 453, one F.W.190 claimed as damaged by S/Ldr. Barclay. Blue 4 Schouwen. After being separated from his section. Wing rejoined by S/Ldr. Compton returned with bombers remaining port and astern of first box, making landfall Ipswich 15,000. 1100. It is considered that wing diverted 2 gaggles of 12 E/A each from bombers by obliging them to dive away.

Weather: 2/10 low cloud 5/10 strato cumulus 27,000. Visibility good. Cine guns used.

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PERSONAL COMBAT REPORT.

Hornchurch Wing.

Ramrod 99 - 22.6.43.

S/Ldr. K.M. Barclay.

Date	(a) 22.6.43
Unit.	(b) 453 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.
Type and mark of aircraft	(c) Spitfire IX.
Time attack was delivered	(d) 1025 hours.
Place of attack and/or target	(e) Tholen
Weather	(f) 2/10ths low cloud, 5/10ths strato-cumulus and 27,000 ft. Visibility good.
Our casualties aircraft	(g) Nil
Our casualties personnel	(h) Nil
Enemy casualties air combat	(j) 1 F.W.190 damaged
Enemy casualties ground or sea target	(k) N/A
Camera Gun	(l) Carried and used.

General Report: I was leading Blue section and after Yellow section had been detached to attack 5 F.W.190's below over Tholen two more were seen coming from the east at 22,000 ft., my height being 23,000 ft. and the time 1025 hrs. I dived down after them and e/a turned and dived away S.E. one slightly ahead of the other. I attacked the rear e/a, my closing speed was very slow so I opened fire at 450 yards port astern, closing to 300 yards. E/A began to take mild evasive action doing a skidding diving turn to port. I broke away at 14,000 ft. having seen some strikes on his port wing. I could not fire very accurately as my port cannon had a stoppage.
I claim this F.W.190 as damaged.

Fighter Command Intelligence Summary No. 399

In connection with an attack on the Huls Chemical Factory near Krefeld for which 237 Fortresses of U.S.A.A.C. were detailed and went out unescorted, escorting operations on the return journey, diversionary and covering operations were carried out by 12 Mitchell bombers which bombed Wiltons Shipyards at Rotterdam and by 27 Squadrons of Spitfires and 3 Squadrons of Typhoons. Nine U.S.A. Thunderbolt squadrons supported by 41 U.S.A. Fortresses which made a diversionary raid on the Ford Motor Works at Antwerp.

One hundred and sixty-nine Fortresses attacked the primary target and bombing results are reported to be good. Sixteen of the Fortresses are missing. The Mitchells bombed at 0830 hours from 12,000 feet and photographs show that at least four sticks of bombs fell across the shipyards. Thirty-six of the 41 Fortresses detailed for the Antwerp diversion bombed with good results. Four of these Fortresses are missing.

As a result of the whole operation seven enemy aircraft were destroyed, two probably destroyed and five damaged by fighters. Four Spitfires and their pilots were lost.

The operation commenced at 0752 hours when 24 Spitfires VB and 20 Spitfires IX left to escort the Mitchells. Between 0830 and 0845 hours 136 Thunderbolts left to escort the 41 Fortresses to Antwerp. Between 0912 and 1015 hours, 150 Spitfires IX, 155 Spitfires VB and VC and 32 Typhoons took off to provide escort and support during the withdrawal over Holland of the main force of Fortresses.

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Air Ministry Bulletin No. 10668

R.A.F. COVER BIG FORTRESS ATTACK → MANY SQUADRONS ENGAGE.

Many squadrons of Fighter Command Spitfires and Typhoons played an important part in today's joint operations in the course of which American Fortresses attacked targets at Huls and Antwerp.

With R.A.F. Mitchell bombers they made a diversionary sweep to attack military targets at Rotterdam, and later more squadrons of fighters flew out to cover the withdrawal of the Fortresses returning from Germany.

Both operations were perfectly times. The Spitfires detailed to escort the Fortresses met them with "Bradshaw" precision at the rendezvous. The Rotterdam diversion had, meanwhile, served its main purpose in drawing the enemy fighters away from ingoing Fortresses.

As the Fortresses flew across Holland on their way home, however, many fighters - sometimes in formation of six - came in to attack. But the moment escorting Spitfires turned on them, they dived away to France.

W/Cdr. A. Deere, D.S.O., D.F.C. and Bar, who was leading the fighters in close attendance on the Fortresses, saw only one enmay fighter fire at the bombers, but noticed that other squadrons of Spitfires which had been "sitting" above them were being hotly engaged.

Squadron Leader "Bill" Compton, D.F.C. and Bar, leading a fighter wing for the first time said "There were 30 to 40 F.W.190s which were about to attack the Fortresses from the port side. Our Wing turned into them and they dived away. Every time we tried to attack the F.W's weren't having any and we were able to bring the Fortresses back without their being molested.

"When we made the rendezvous the Fortresses were flying in excellent formation. As we arrived, four F.W.190s were attacking one bomber. We saw one F.W.190 shot down in flames by the Fortress and the three others made off."

W/Cdr. J.E Johnson, D.S.O., D.F.C. and Bar, English leader of an R.C.A.F. Spitfire wing, said: "When we lined up with our Fortresses there were between 12 and 20 F.W.190s shadowing them but they made no attempt to attack."

While the Mitchells were bombing their Rotterdam targets, our fighters drove off a number of F.W.190s and a Norwegian wing, engaged in dog-fights south of Rotterdam, probably destroyed two F.W.s and damaged a third, breaking up the enemy formation.

As the Spitfires brought the Mitchells out over the Dutch coast, they met another enemy fighter formation which they also broke up and prevented from making any attack. An R.C.A.F. wing saw a Mitchell send an F.W.190 spiralling down. Eight more came out of the sun to attack but, as before, they were driven off.

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No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 99

It was decided to carry out Ramrod No. 99 during the morning of the 22nd June, 1943 in threeparts, Main attack and two Diversions. Part 1, Main Attack, against Huls, 1st Diversion against Rotterdam, 2nd Diversion against Antwerp. The following forces taking part: -

Part 1. Main Attack. - Huls (Chemical Works).

Bombers: Fortresses

Fighters:

The fighter escort wings were to meet the bombers on their withdrawal over Sliedrecht in 3 Groups at 1015, 1020, and 1025 hrs. respectively. Further fighters were to sweep low off the Hook of Holland to cover the withdrawal. The fighter forces taking part were: -

1st Fighter Escort:	403 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits IX 303 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt) Spits IX 310, 312 and 313 Squadrons (10 Group) Spits V.
2nd Fighter Escort:	341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) SpitsIX 129, 504 and 610 and 616 Squadrons (10 Group Spits V.
3rd Fighter Escort:	222, and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spits IX 331, and 332 Squadrons (North Weald) Spits IX 118, 402, 416 Squadrons (12 Group) Spits V.
Withdrawal Support Squadrons:	198 Squadrons (Debden)) 247 " (North Weald)) Typhoons 609 " (Hornchurch)) 65, and 122 Squadrons (83 Group) Spits V.
Rear Withdrawal Support:	315 Squadron (12 Group) Spits V.

Weather: - Fine, 5/10ths cloud at 27,000 feet, visibility excellent.

Bombers. 169 Fortresses of 235 despatched, bombed the main target with 427.5 tons. Results are believed to be good. 23 Fortresses report that enemy aircraft resistence was strong to mediocre. Flak - intense to moderate. Weather - clear over target. 16 Fortresses are missing.

3rd Fighter Escort.

The Hornchurch Wing crossed the Dutch coast at Haamstede at 1017 hrs. at 19,000 ft, climbing to 26,000 ft. over Neumansdorp and at 1021 hrs. 4 F.W.190s were sighted 4,000 ft. below and a further 10 plus 2 miles ahead bothi coming from the S.E. The Fortresses were then seen and 10/12 e/a in loose pairs and fours, above andbelow them. These were attacked by 453 Squadron and dived away, with the results set out below. The Wing then returned on the port and astern of the first box of bombers making landfall at Ipswich.

Enemy casualties - 1 F.W.190 damaged (453 Squadron)

Our Casualties - F/O. Gray (453 Squadron) N.Y.R

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties: - 5 F.W.190s damages
1 Me.109 damaged

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2 F.W.190s probably destroyed.

Our Casualties. 4 pilots N.Y.R.

O.R.B. 22.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. CIRCUS.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 411521 F/O. Rickard
Aus. 411790 P/O. Leith
Aus. 404811 F/O. Long — Time Up: 1545
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews — Time Down: 1715
Aus. 413707 F/Sgt. Yarra
Aus. 402949 P/O. Greaves
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau

Circus. Crossed in Berck 16,000 ft. 1627 hours; made several orbits; saw a parachute over Crecy en Ponthieu Wood. Turned to port climbing to 30,000 ft. over Hangest; turned N.W. and out Le Touquet 1640 hrs. 28,000 ft. About 12 bursts of light flak from Le Crotoy; 2/10 low cloud inland, 5/10ths 20,000 ft. Rose - Withdrawal Support.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Circus 314 Report 22.6.43.

A. S/Ldr. Compton, 222, 453. B. 1549-1715. C. 21 Spitfire IX. D. Withdrawal support E. N/A F and G. Nil.

General. Wing led by S/Ldr. Compton in Berck 16,000 feet. 1627 swept according to plan. 1628 on way in 22,000 feet 6 F.W. 190s seen 16,000 feet to dive on 4 Spitfires 8-10,000 feet below. One a/c believed Spitfire dived in flames. Wing turned starboard, dived 18,000 feet, but E/A too low. Parachute seen very low over Crecy en Ponthieu wood. Wing turned port. Climbed 25,000 feet. Turned N.W. out Le Crotoy 1640 26,000 feet. Splash seen 12 miles N.W. Gris Nez. In Dungeness.

Flak. On way out 12 bursts slight heavy Le Crotoy accurate for height. 6 bursts marker 28,000 Feet Abbeville area.

Weather. 2/10ths low cloud inland of area swept 5/10ths cloud 22,000 feet. No further report to follow.

No. 11 Group Report on Circus 314.

It was decided to carry out Circus No. 314 during the afternoon of the 22nd June, 1943 against Abbeville Airfield, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers:	12 Venturas of No. 2 Group.
Fighters:	
Close Escort:	Nos. 122 and 65 Squadrons (83 Group) Spits VB.
Escort Cover:	Nos. 401 and 411 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits VB.
High Cover:	Nos. 611 and 341 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spits IX.
Withdrawal Support Wings:	Nos. 222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spits IX
	Nos. 403 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits IX.

Weather: Over target - good, unlimited visibility.

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Bombers. 11 of 13 Venturas which took off bombed the target in two boxes. Bombs from both boxes were seen to undershoot, with possible hits on target with last two or three bombs. The Escort, however, state that bomb bursts were seen in the N.E. corner of aerodrome and on the E. perimeter track.

Withdrawal Support Wing.

The Hornchurch Wing crossed the coast at Rye at 1607 hours, climbing and crossing the French coast at Berck at 16,000 feet at 1627 hours. Swept Douliens and Abbeville where 6 F.W.190s were seen to dive on 4 Spits 8/10,000 feet below and an a/c believed to be a fighter was seen to dive in flames, although no claims are made or losses suffered by the Group. (Possibly this refers to the Ventura shot down, as 1 parachute was seen and one of the bomber crew was stated to have baled out).

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties: Nil

Our Casualties: 1 Ventura Missing

Fighter Command. Form Y.

Twenty-one Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons (up from Hornchurch at 1549 hrs) and 21 Spitfires IX of 403 and 421 Squadrons (up from Kenley at 1554 hours) saw about seven F.W.190s on the way to the target. No combats resulted.

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O.R.B. 23.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IXb RAMROD.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews — Time Up: 1720
Aus. 413108 F/Sgt. Currie — Time Down: 1845
Aus. 401543 P/O. Stansfield
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift
Aus. 403924 F/O. Hansell
Aus. 411790 P/O. Leith
Aus. 403319 W/O. Clemesha

Ramrod: S/Ldr. Compton flew with 453. Wing acted in role of Withdrawal Support. Swept Boulogne 20,000 ft. 1752 hrs., Hesdin, Somme Estuary and Le Touquet. A second orbit at Le Touquet, then out 1810 hrs. 24,000 ft. In Dover 11,000 ft. Slight heavy flak from Boulogne area on the way in. 2-3/10ths cumulus at 10,000 ft; increasing inland.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 100 Report 23.6.43.

A. S/Ldr. Compton, 453, 222, B. 24 Spits IX. C 1721/1840
D. Withdrawal support to light bomber diversion. E. N/A.
F. Nil G. Nil.

General. Hornchurch wing led by S/Ldr. Compton in N. Boulogne 20.000 1752 at Foret Hesdin. Turned starboard received various vectors from Appledore but no E/A sighted. Out Le Touquet, 26,000 ft. 1810.

Flak. Slight heavy from Boulogne, accurate for height and direction, 20,000.

Weather. 2/10ths low cloud clear above, vis good. No further report to follow.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 100.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod No. 100 during the afternoon of the 23rd June, 1943.

The operation was planned as follows: -

A large force of Fortresses to arrive at Beachy Head in two parts, the first at 1800 hours and the second at 1805 hours; both parts to proceed to Bolbec (1821 hrs and 1827 hours respectively) where the forces were to split, the first to proceed to bomb Villacoublay Airfield and to be met by Fighter escort (Thunderbolts) between Rouen and Beauvais on the return, the second to bomb the Marshalling Yards at Le Mans and to be met by Fighter Escort (No. 10 Group Spit V Wings) at Argentan on the return with withdrawal support wings N.W. of Le Havre. Meanwhile, two diversionary forces were to bomb targets just prior to the time that the Fortress force was to set course from Beachy Head. (i) A Heavy Bomber Diversion of Fortresses with three Wings of Spit IX Escort to bomb Bernay airfield and (ii) a Light Bomber Diversion of Bostons with three Wings of Spit V Escort and Cover and with High Cover and Withdrawal Support by Spit IX Wings to bomb Meaulte Airframe Factory. The forces intended to have taken part in the Ramrod were as follows: -

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Light Bomber Diversion.

Bombers:	12 Bostons (No. 2 Group)
Fighters:	
Close Escort:	401 and 411 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits V.
Escort Cover:	118, 402 and 416 Squadrons (No. 12 Group) Spits V.
Cover:	65 and 122 Squadrons (No. 83 Group) Spits V.
High Cover:	341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spits IX
Withdrawal Support:	222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spits IX

As the forces taking part in the Main Attack failed to make rendezvous it was decided, after consultation with H.Q. U.S.A.AF. VIII Bomber Command, to recall the aircraft. Consequently the Ramrod did not take place according to plan.

Weather: - Clear over Channel. 5/10ths cloud abouv 5,000 feet over French Coast, Clear above. Visibility good.

Bombers: - 9 Bostons attacked the target (Meaulte Airframe Factory) at 1746 hours from 13,000 feet with 48 x 500lb bombs. The target was obscured by cloud at the moment of release, and the bombs are believed to have overshot. There was considerable opposition from enemy fighters near Abbeville on the way back, but the attacks were fought off by the Fighter Escort.

Withdrawal Support: The Hornchurch Wing crossed the French coast N. of Boulogne at 20,000 ft, reaching Hesdin at 1752 hours where various vectors were received from Appledore, but no enemy aircraft were sighted. The Wing recrossed the French coast at Le Touquet at 26,000 ft. at 1810 hours, and returned uneventfully to base.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties: - 2 F.W. 190s destroyed
1 F.W. 190 probably destroyed
1 F.W. 190 damaged.

Our Casualties: - Nil

Fighter Command. Form Y.

Twenty-four Spitfires IX of 453 and 222 Squadrons up from Hornchurch at 1721 hrs. An uneventful sweep was carried out over Boulogne (20,000 ft). Foret Hesdin and Le Touquet (26,000) ft. No E/A being observed.

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O.R.B. 24.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 403763 P/O. Parker
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 402949 P/O. Greaves
Aus. 405319 F/O. McDermott

Time Up: 0750
Time Down: 0920

Ramrod. Wing acted as Forward support. Started to climb 0819 hrs., crossed in Walcheren 24,000 ft. 0830 hours. Swept Eecloo, Bruges and out Nieuport 25,000 ft. In Deal 0859. Sweep quite uneventful; medium heavy flak from Flushing, accurate for bombers. Thick black smoke from target area. No cloud, visibility good.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 102.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod 102 for Venturas of No. 2 Group against the Engineering Works at Flushing during the morning of the 24th June, 1943, in accordance with No. 11 Group Order, the following forces taking part.

Bombers: - 12 Venturas of No. 2 Group.

Fighters:
Close Escort. 401 and 411 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits V.
Escort Cover. 402 and 416 Squadrons (12 Group) Spits V.
High Cover. 341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spits IX
Target Forward Support. 222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch))
Target Withdrawal Support. 331 and 332 Squadrons (N. Weald)
1st Fighter Sweep. 403 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley)
2nd Fighter Sweep. 303 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt)
Spits IX.

Weather: - Fine, 1/10ths cloud at 12,000 feet, visibility excellent.

Bombers: - 12 Venturas attacked the target and dropped 36 x 500 lbs. and 48 x 250 lbs. bombs at 0832 hours from between 10,500 and 11,000 feet. A good concentration of bombs are believed to have fallen on the target, a few on the oil storage tanks and a few undershot into the water. Moderate accurate heavy flak was experienced. No e/a were seen.

Target Forward Support: - The Hornchurch Wing after remaining at sea level until 0819 hours, commenced to climb and reached N. of Walcheren at 0830 hours at 20,000 feet where they circled and swept to Breskens at 22/24,000 feet and out at Dunkirk at 0850 hours. They returned uneventfully to base.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 0751 hrs. twenty-one Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons left Hornchurch and circled the Walcheren Island at 20,000 - 24,000 ft., passing E. of Breskens and then continued to E. of Dunkirk uneventfully.

Sixteen E type boats were seen 4 miles N. of Knocke.

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O.R.B. 24.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 413707 F/Sgt. Yarra
Aus. 403924 F/O. Hansell
Aus. 401543 F/O. Stansfield
Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 411790 P/O. Leith

Time Up: 1125
Time Down: 1240

Ramrod. Squadron acted as Withdrawal Support. Crossed in W. Graveline 18,000 ft. 1151 hrs. Swept behind St. Omer 23,000 ft. came out behind bombers to coast, then turned to port and returned to St. Omer, then Griz Nez, climbing to 30,000 ft. on report of e/a at 25,000 ft. Back to Dunkirk, finally crossing out Gravelines 28,000 ft. and in Dover 20,000 ft. Some slight heavy flak from Calais on way in. Cloud forming 3/10 at 10,000 ft. Clear above, visibility good.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 103 Report, 24.6.43.

A. S/Ldr. Compton, 453, 222, B. 23 Spits IX. C. 1126/1254
D. Withdrawal support. E. N/A F. and G. Nil.

General. Hornchurch wing led by S/Ldr. in West Gravelines 19,000, 1151 swept behind St. Omer, 21-23000 ft. Out behind bombers. At French coast turned port and returned St. Omer from where to port to Gris Nez. Then to starboard towards Dunkirk and back to Gris Nez. Climbing from 21/23000 to 26000/30000 ft. on report of E/A at 25,000. Raturned over Dover 23,000 at 1250. No E/A sighted by wing except by Red section 222. This squadron had got broken up after investigating gaggle of Spits below W. of St. Omer and Red Section when at 30,000 saw approx. 6 F.W.190's mixed up with Spits 10,000 below. S/Ldr. Harrington led section down to engage but only two pilots able to fire and this without claim.

Flak. Slight heavy at bombers from St. Omer and at wing from Calais on way in.

Weather: Cloud forming 4/10 10,000 no cloud above. Visibility good. No further report to follow.

No. 11 Group Repot on Ramrod No. 103.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod No. 103 during the morning of the 24th June, 1943 against the Maintenance Unit at St. Omer, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers: - 12 Bostons ofNo. 2 Group.

Fighters:

Close Escort:	401 and 411 Squadrons	(Kenley) Spits V.
Escort Cover.	308 and 315 Squadrons	(12 Group) Spits V.
High Cover.	341 and 611 Squadrons	(Biggin Hill) Spit IX.
Target Support.	303 and 316 Squadrons	(Northolt) Spits IX.
Withdrawal Support.	222 and 453 Squadrons	(Hornchurch) Spits IX.
1st Fighter Sweep.	331 and 332 Squadrons	(North Weald) Spits IX.
2nd Fighter Sweep.	403 and 421 Squadrons	(Kenley) Spits IX.

Weather: 5 - 6/10ths cloud at 7,000 feet over target. Visibility good.

Bombers: - 6 Bostons dropped 24 x 500 lb. M.C. bombs on target through gap in cloud from 12,800 feet. No results seen by

bombers but bursts were seen by fighters across the canal. 2nd box of 6 Bostons did not bomb as they found themselves over the town.

Withdrawal Support. The Hornchurch Wing crossed the Belgian coast W. of Gravelines at 19,000 feet, swept behind St. Omer 21/23,000 feet, and out behind the bombers Then recrossed the French coast sweeping back to St. Omer and then to Gris Nez/Dunkirk/Gris Nez climbing from 21/23,000 feet to 26/30,000 feet. 6 F.W.190s were seen mixed up with Spitfires 10,000 feet below. 1 section went down to engage but no claims are made. The Wing returned to base without further incident.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties: -	3 F.W.190s destroyed 1 F.W.190 probably destroyed 6 F.W.190s damaged.
Our Casualties:	1 Spit IX and pilot missing

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1126 hrs. twenty-three Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons left Hornchurch and carried out a sweep behind St. Omer at 21,000-23,000 feet. Following the bombers out to the French coast, the wing returned and patrolled the St. Omer/Dunkirk/Gris Nez area at 21,000-30,000 feet. Six F.W.190s were seen engaged with Spitfires 10,000 feet below over the St. Omer area Two Spitfires of 222 Squadron fires at these E/A without observed result.

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O.R.B. 24.6.43 Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 403763 F/O. Parker — Time Up: 1650
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews — Time Down: 1820
Aus. 405319 P/O. McDermott
Aus. 411059 F/O. Thornley
Aus. 408606 F/O. Swift
Aus. 402949 P/O. Greaves

Ramrod. In role of First Fighter Sweep. Out at Pevensey Bay. Started climb at 1709 hours. As ordered crossed in Etretat at 22,000 ft. 1727 hrs. E/A were reported and several climbing orbits were made, reaching 31,000 ft. Finally crossed out Calais 26,000 ft. 1750 hrs. and in South Foreland.

From H.Q. 11 Group Intelligence.

Hornchurch Composite Ramrod 106 Report 24.6.43

A. S/Ldr. Compton, 222, 453. B. 23 Spitfires IX. C. 1650/1821.
D. 1st Fighter Sweep. E. N/A. F & G. Nil.

General. Hornchurch Wing led by S/Ldr. Compton in between St. Valery and Fecamp 21,000 1727, swept Tricquiville, Yainville, west of Abbeville, E. of Desvres, out Sangatte all at 26/31,000 back S. Foreland. Although huns were searched for in all areas reported by controller, no E/A sighted.

Weather: Thin layer misty cloud 31,000, fine visibility good. No further report to follow.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 106.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod No. 106 during the afternoon of the 24th June, 1943 against the Yainville Power Station, the following forces taking part: -

Bombers: 12 Venturas (2 Group)

Fighters:
Close Escort. 402 and 416 Squadrons (12 Group) Spits V.
Escort Cover. 401 and 411 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits V.
High Cover 341 and 611 Squadrons (Biggin Hill) Spits IX
Target Forward Support: 403 and 421 Squadrons (Kenley) Spits IX
Target Withdrawal Support: 303 and 316 Squadrons (Northolt) Spits IX.
First Fighter Sweep: 222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) SpitsIX
Second Fighter Sweep: 331 and 332 Squadrons (North Weald) Spits IX.

Weather: - No cloud. Excellent visibility.

Bombers: - 11 of the 12 Venturas despatched bombed the target from 10,000 feet with 33 x 500 lb. M.C. and 44 x 250 lb. G.P. bombs. Bomb bursts were seen in the northern part of the target and some are believed to have dropped short of it. No bombers are missing.

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First Fighter Sweep. The Hornchurch Wing arrived between St. Valery and Fecamp at 21,000 feet at 1727 hours. swept Tricqueville, Yainville and N. to Abbeville and Desvres before recrossing the French coast at Sangatte, returning to base without incident, although Huns were searched for in all areas when reported by the Controller.

Summary of Casualties.

Enemy Casualties: 2 F.W.190s destroyed.

Our Casualties: Nil

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1650 hours twenty-three Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons left Hornchurch and carried out an uneventful sweep over the Tricqueville/Yainville/Desvres area between 26,000-31,000 ft. No E/A were seen.

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O.R.B. 24.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RAMROD.

Aus. 407662	S/Ldr. Barclay	
Aus. 405473	F/Lt. Esau	
Aus. 404811	F/O. Galway	
Aus. 412624	F/O. McAuliffe	
Aus. 411790	F/O. Leith	
Aus. 407747	F/O. Barrien	Time Up: 1242 to Tangmere
Aus. 408606	F/O. Swift	
Aus. 411938	F/O. O'dea	Time Up: 1827
Aus. 408503	F/Sgt. Olver	Time Down: 2023
Aus. 411059	F/O. Thornley	
Aus. 403924	F/O. Hansell	

Ramrod. Acted as Withdrawal cover to the second half of main force of Fortresses. Set course for Argentan in a steady climb. Crossed coast at Cabourg at 18,000 ft. arrived over Argentan 1905 hours at 22,000 ft. as ordered. No Fortresses seen at R/V so continued to South Argentan and orbited for 10 minutes. Returned to Caen orbiting for another 5 minutes then crossed out at St. Aubin and made a further 27 minute orbit. Seeing only a Spit 5 Wing below, Wing then left France having remained 15 minutes in the R/V area; crossing in at Brighton 12,000 ft. without sighting bombers or E/A. 4/10ths low cloud over France; clear above with good visibility.

From H.Q.11 Group Intelligence.

A. S/Ldr. Compton, 453, 222. B. 24 Spits IX. C. 1825/2023.
D. Withdrawal cover for 2nd half of main force. E. N/A.
F. and G. Nil.

General Report. Hornchurch wing led S/Ldr. Compton airborne Tangmere 1825 climbed slowly on course Argentan. Landfall Cabourg 18,000 over Argentan 21/22,000 1905 as ordered. No Fortresses seen at R.V. Wing sent S. of Argentan and orbitted for 10 mins., returned to Caen and orbitted for another 5 mins. out N. St. Aubin. Made another orbit 5 mins. and saw wing of Spits. V below and ahead of them. Wing eventually left France 1925 having remained 15 mins. in R.V. area and 5 mins. off French coast. Returned over Brighton. Weather: - 12,000 no flak seen. No E/A sighted. Haze over Channel up to 11,000 over France 4/10 low cloud. No cloud above. Visibility good.

No. 11 Group Report on Ramrod No. 108.

It was decided to carry out Ramrod No. 108 during the afternoon of the 26th June, 1943 in three parts. Part 1, the main force, the greater part of which would attack a target at Poissy (Paris) the remainder attacking Le Mans Marshalling Yards after a preliminary feint at the French Coast. Part 2, a heavy bomber diversion against Tricqueville airfield. Part 3, a light bomber diversion against Abbeville airfield. The following forces taking part.

Part 1. Main Force.

Bombers: 124 Fortresses to Poissy (Paris)
81 Fortresses to Le Mans.

Fighters:
Withdrawal Cover for the Bomber Forces to Paris -
8 Thunderbolt Squadrons.
Withdrawal Cover for the Bomber Forces to Le Mons. -
129, 616, 302 and 317 Squadrons (10 Group) Spits V.
118, 402 and 416 Squadrons (12 Group) Spits V.
222 and 453 Squadrons (Hornchurch) Spits IX.

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Withdrawal Support Squadrons:

122 Squadron (83 Group) Spits V.
19 Squadron (83 Group) Spits V.
41 Squadron (Tangmere) Spits XII

Bombers.

The Fortresses left Beachy Head at 1750 hrs. at bombing height and proceeded until 5 miles N. of Fecamp, when they turned N.W. until 15 miles S. of Selsey Bill, thence to 20 miles N. of Point de Barfleur before crossing the French coast, arriving over Lisieux at 1810 hours. where 124 Fortresses proceeded to Paris, 22 of which bombed the target through 9/10ths cloud. The remaining 81 proceeded towards Le Mans, but turned back before bombing owing to 10/10ths cloud. 5 Fortresses are missing from these two operations and the heavy bomber diversion mentioned below.

Withdrawal Cover for the Le Mans Forces.

The 2 10 Group Wings, the 12 Group Wing, and the Hornchurch Wing all set course for Argentan where they arrived at 1903 - 1905 hrs, having crossed the French coast at 1856 and 1858 hrs. stepped up from 17,000 to 22,000 ft. No bombers were seen in the Argentan area, and the wings patrolled the area between Argentan, Caen, and Lisieux, eventually recrossing the French coast at Ouistreham, W. of Le Havre, and St. Suban-sur-Mer respectively at 1930 hrs. No enemy aircraft or bombers seen.

Enemy Casualties - Nil
Our Casualties - P/O Jones, 118 Squadron (12 Group) N.Y.R.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1825 hrs. 24 Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadronstook off and flew to the Argentan area, but the bombers were not to be seen. The Hornchurch wing then swept the Caen, St. Aubin area without seeing any E/A.

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O.R.B. 27.6.43 Aircraft - Spitfires IX. RODEO.

Aus. 407662 S/Ldr. Barclay
Aus. 405473 F/Lt. Esau
Aus. 404811 F/O. Galway
Aus. 411790 P/O. Leith
Aus. 403917 P/O. Ferguson
Aus. 408172 F/O. Darcey
Aus. 405319 F/O. McDermott
Aus. 407747 F/O. Barrien
Aus. 404795 F/Lt. Andrews
Aus. 408503 F/Sgt. Olver
Aus. 412624 F/O. McAuliffe

Time Up: 1016
Time Down: 1138

Rodeo. S/Ldr. Compton flew with 453. Crossed in Boulogne 21,000 ft. flying port and above Kenley Wing and on an easterly vector. When 8-10 e/a were seen approaching from the East at 26,000 ft. our height then being 25,000 ft. Wing leader took Squadrin in a climbing starboard turn, and Blue Section became split up from the rest and continued to climb to 28,000 ft. in a south-easterly direction. 4 Me.109s were seen slying S.W. and slightly below in Bethune area. S/Ldr. Barclay leading Blue section turned in behind the last section and opened fire on the starboard 109 from 450 yards closing to 350 yards line astern and although he saw no strikes there was a stream of greyish white smoke as the e/a turned on to its back and went into a vertical dive. Meanwhile the rear port e/a was attacked by P/O. Ferguson and a burst of flame and clouds of black smoke emitted from it as it skidded away into a vertical dive and was claimed as destroyed. The squadron finally proceeded to the coast and crossed out at Gravelines and Calais 28,000 ft. at 1105 hours, and in Deal 18,000 ft.

PERSONAL COMBAT REPORT.

Hornchurch Wing.

Rodeo 235 - 27.6.43.

S/Ldr. K.M. Barclay.

Date	(a) 27.6.43
Unit	(b) 453 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.
Type and mark of aircraft	(c) Spitfire IX
Time attack was delivered	(d) 1047 hours.
Place of attack and/or target	(e) Bethune area.
Weather	(f) 10/10ths cumulus cloud 15,000 ft. Clear above; visibility good.
Our casualties aircraft	(g) Nil
Our casualties personnel	(h) Nil
Enemy casualties air combat	(j) 1 Me.109 Damaged
Enemy casualties ground or sea target	(k) N/A
Camera Gun	(l) Carried and used.

General Report. I was leading Blue section when south of St. Omer at 28,000 ft. I saw 4 Me.109's in two sections of 2 line abreast 3,000 ft. below, trayelling S.E. My section was flying line astern and we turned sharply to port and got behind these e/a. I fired at the rear e/a of the starboard section at 450 yards port above, closing slowly to 350 yards. line astern, but saw no strikes. The e/a turned on its back and went into a vertical dive trailing a stream of greyish white smoke. I therefore claim this Me.109 as damaged.

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PERSONAL COMBAT REPORT.

Hornchurch Wing.

Rodeo 235 - 27.6.43.

P/O. J.H. Ferguson.

Date	(a) 27.6.43
Unit	(b) 45 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron
Type and mark of aircraft	(c) Spitfire IX
Time attack was delivered	(d) 1047 hours.
Place of attack and/or target	(e) Bethune area.
Weather	(f) 10/10ths cumulus cloud 15,000 ft. clear above; visibility good.
Our casualties aircraft	(g) Nil
Our casualties personnel	(h) Nil
Enemy casualties air combat	(j) 1 Me.109 destroyed
Enemy casualties ground or sea target	(k) N/A
Camera Gun	(l) Carried and used.

General Report. I was flying as Blue 2 at 28,000 ft. south of St. Omer when I saw 4 Me.109's in two sections of 2 line abreast 3,000 ft. below, travelling S.E. Blue section was flying line astern and on sighting e/a turned sharply to port and got behind them. Blue 1 (S/Ldr. Barclay) fired at the rear e/a of the starboard section and I fired at the rear e/a of the port section, firing in dead line astern at 300 yards. range and closing to 200 yards. I then saw strikes about and underneath the cockpit, which suddenly burst into flames. The e/a rolled on its side and went down in a skidding vertical dive, pouring black and white smoke. This combat was witnessed by Blue 1 (S/Ldr. Barclay) and Blue 3 (F/O. Darcey). I therefore claim this Me.100 as destroyed.

Fighter Command. Form Y.

At 1032 hrs. 22 Spitfires IX of 403 and 421 Squadrons from Kenley and 24 Spitfires IX of 222 and 453 Squadrons from Hornchurch made rendezvous over Dungeness. The formation flew to the Hardelot - St. Omer area. Some 35 F.W.190s at 25/27,000 ft. and 20 Me.109s at 29,000 ft. were seen over the St. Omer area. The Spitfires climbed to attack and as a result of combats the Kenley wing claim an F.W.190 destroyed and the Hornchurch wing two Me.109s destroyed and one Me.109 damaged.

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BORROWER. CARD

RAAF Records

Unit(s) 453 Sqn.
OPERATIONS
DEC. 1942 TO JUNE 1943.
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Files listed over

Signature	Date

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