

AWM 65

[716]

CLAYTON, ARTHUR JAMES
405171

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

OFFICERS AND AIRCRAFT.

See Summary
61/3/AIR
Enc 46A

The following biographical details are required for use at
R.A.A.F. Overseas Headquarters, LONDON.

Surname... CLAYTON Number 405171

Christian Names... ARTHUR JAMES

Air Force Rank and Mustering... SGT. PILOT

Degrees, Decorations, etc.....

Present Appointment and Location... 133 Squadron Regoon Hill Westerham
Kent

Date of Birth... 13/6/1913 Place... "ROBE" ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Educated... ISWICH GRAMMAR SCHOOL, QUEENSLAND

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Date of Entering Service... 2/2/41

Previous Service Experience... NIL

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Places of Training... ^(3 YRS) SANDGATE, ^(2 YRS) ARCHERFIELD, ^(2 YRS) WAGGA, (AUST.)

Civilian Career and Activities... PUBLIC SERVANT,

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Clubs, Recreations, etc... Public schools old boys assocn.
cricket - golf - Athletics - Polo - Football -
Rifle shooting.

Father... WILLIAM JAMES CLAYTON

Wife.....

Children.....

Home Address... "TALLEGALLA" ROSEWOOD, QUEENSLAND, AUST.

Signature... McClayton

Date... 17/1/42

Date Embarked... 17/11/41

Destination... Great Brit.

Personal file - Sgt A. J. Clayton (405171)

File Number 61/3/AIR - Enclosure 46A.

From 11 Group. A1. 732 From Hawkinge. 15/7/42.
Comp. Combat Report.

Further to our patrol report A1 717 15/7/42 2 Spitfires 5B Red Section 91 Sqdn left Hawkinge 0930 hrs to act as spotters off Hastings. At approx 1000 hrs while flying east at 10,000 ft in line abreast 500 yds apart along coast about 8 miles out from Hastings 5 Red two (Sgt. Clayton) saw a F.W. 190 flash across in front of him from port side from out of sun. The F.W. 190 was travelling very fast and appeared to throttle back as if the pilot had misjudged an attack. Sgt. Clayton was just about to attack it when he suddenly felt a jerk behind him followed by a cannon shell entering cockpit and wrecking instrument panel. Another cannon shell then hit the engine and pieces of the cowling flew off. All his controls were shot away and A/C slowly went into a spin the rate of which quickly increased. Sgt. Clayton got his hood open easily and managed to get out of the A/C at about 5000 ft he fell about 2000 ft before he pulled the rip cord. The parachute opened easily and he floated down slowly reaching the water about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from position, his A/C went in. He released harness just after touching water and inflated dinghy which worked perfectly. He remained in dinghy for about 3 hours before being sighted by two A/C of 91 Sqdn and he was picked up by rescue boat and taken into Newhaven which he reached at 1715 hrs. Sgt. Clayton is unhurt and has now returned to Hawkinge. Just before he was attacked he spotted another FW 190 (about 500 ft above him 100 yds to port which probably attacked Red 1 F/Sgt. Campbell RCAF). Sgt. Clayton saw the latter make a steep climbing turn to port just before his own A/C went into a spin. He saw nothing further of F/Sgt. Campbell or his A/C but while he was floating down by parachute he heard cannons and M/G's firing above him but could see nothing. Red section received no warning of any bandits or friendly A/C in their vicinity and Sgt. Clayton had no chance of taking any evasive action. The FW 190's were coloured light yellow underneath with dull camouflage above Swastikas on fuselage just behind cockpit. Weather - haze up to 10,000 ft patches of cloud between 3 and 5000 ft. Visibility generally quite good. Our Cas. 2 Spitfires 5B missing, 1 pilot Sgt. Clayton RAAF safe and 1 pilot F/Sgt. Campbell RCAF missing. Enemy Cas. NIL as far as is known. No further report will be sent.

R. 2146 15/7

405171
 Sgt Arthur James Clayton Air Ministry Bulletin No. 7531
 Air Ministry News Service of Redwood, Queensland

ATTACK ON RESCUE LAUNCHES

Some of the fiercest dog fights between Spitfires and F.W.190s - the new German fighters - took place yesterday (Wednesday) afternoon over the English Channel when Air Sea Rescue launches tried to save Spitfire pilots from the sea within sight of the French coast. The battles went on for four hours.

One squadron saw a pilot in a dinghy about 6 miles west of Boulogne. While some of our fighters circled over him, others went in search of rescue launches.

Other Spitfire pilots from the same wing saw a green patch of dye released by a pilot from his dinghy about 6 miles south west of Boulogne. They were on their way home, but turned to investigate.

They saw the pilot waving his arms to them. Again some pilots were left to orbit the dinghy while others searched for launches.

Meanwhile, another Spitfire had been seen to crash in the sea, also about 6 miles from the French coast. This spot was being circled by pilots of the Spitfire's own squadron.

Spitfires searching for rescuers for the second of these pilots saw Air Sea Rescue launches about 10 miles away going in the opposite direction. The Spitfires circled and guided them back to within 200 yards of the pilots in the sea. Then they had to return to base owing to shortage of petrol.

Up to this time no enemy aircraft had been seen by our pilots on the offensive raids or during the rescue operations.

After our Spitfires had left however, the enemy fighters came out to attack the launches.

A Polish squadron of Fighter Command which went out to cover the rescue operations, saw four launches in the Boulogne area being attacked by five F.W.190s.

In a few seconds, the Poles had shot one into the sea and severely damaged two others, one of which was unlikely to reach its base. Unfortunately, the Poles had arrived too late to prevent the F.W.190s from setting fire to one rescue launch. The remaining F.Ws. made use of cloud cover and escaped.

The two Polish pilots who shot down the F.W.190 said on their return:- "The F.Ws. were attacking the launches out of cloud when we arrived. We immediately tackled them. Five of us fired in the short engagement, which took the enemy by-surprise. We saw only one F.W. dive into the sea."

Another squadron, this time Canadian, then took up the patrol, relieving the Polish pilots. They orbited at 500 feet over the rescue launches, one of which was still on fire, about 8 miles off Le Touquet towards Boulogne. Pairs of F.W.190s dived on Spitfires from cloud the ceiling of which was 5,000 feet. At least eight pairs made the attack, and the Spitfires formed a defensive circle over the boats, fighting off the attackers for 25 minutes, during which another F.W.190 was shot down.

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The squadron then safely escorted the rescue launches back to within 5 miles of Dover, being constantly attacked by F.W.190s which dived on them all the time.

Meanwhile, another Spitfire squadron went out to intercept the F.W.190s, which were then reported to be off Dungeness. Our aircraft, however, sighted a single rescue launch about half way between Dover and Gris Nez. This they went down to escort and as they did so, eight F.W.190s broke cloud at 8,000 feet with the intention of attacking the launch. The Spitfires immediately chased them back to France, but were unable to get within close range in the short flying distance involved.

Two of our fighters re-fuelled at base to keep up the patrol, while six others saw six F.Ws. flying west. These were chased south of Boulogne but got away. The Spitfires then escorted the launch safely to Dover.

A description of the attack by 12 Pocke Wulf 190 fighters on the rescue launches was given today by Flying Officer P.L.A. Shakeri, the skipper of one of the R.A.F. high speed launches.

Flg.-Off. Shakeri's launch was attacked three times with cannon and machine-gun fire, and the launch which was finally sunk drove off 14 separate attacks before it went down riddled with holes. Except for one man who was killed while attending to a wounded airman the crew of the sunken launch were rescued.

"We were well across the Channel when we were attacked," said Flg.-Off. Shakeri. "We opened up our engines and weaved like hell. We fought back with our machine-gun and damaged one of the fighters, but while we were under fire we felt it was a bit like target practice for the jerries".

The two R.A.F. launches were making wide sweeps in the Channel looking for a pilot reported to have been shot down. From time to time they saw Spitfires flying above them, but the air was temporarily clear of British aircraft when the Pocke Wulf swooped and attacked.

"Four of the German fighters dived on my launch from out of the sun," said Flg.-Off. Shakeri. "The first one came down to 500 feet, blazing away with its cannon. My gunners did not open fire until the F.W. fired at us. We emptied two pans of ammunition into him and he turned away for the French coast, losing height with smoke pouring from his tail.

"My wireless operator sent out a message for assistance, and a few minutes later the F.Ws. attacked again. Two of them dived on me from starboard, and the first burst from their guns killed one of my deck hands and wounded my wireless operator in the leg.

"By this time I had opened up the throttle and began weaving all over the Channel. A few minutes later a third attack developed, but the only damage done was to the deck and cabin housing of the launch.

"After that they left my boat alone. I was on deck all the time and I saw other F.Ws. attack the second launch which was about half a mile away. I counted the number of attacks they made on it. There were fourteen in quick succession. I saw the launch settle low in water and a cloud of white vapour flowed from it. That was the last I saw of it. Two naval launches had come up and they gallantly went in under fire to pick up the survivors."

Flg.-Off. Shakeri was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and has lived at West Harrow, Middlesex for some years.

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91 SQN

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184/23/Air

Air Force, Melbourne

A.L. 504

20/7/42

Latest Australian gain membership Caterpillar Club is AUS405171 Sergeant Pilot Arthur James Clayton of Rosewood Queensland (.) He jumped from Spitfire over Channel after encounter with two FW190 (.) With instrument panel wrecked by cannon shell engine badly hit and all controls shot away spitfire was falling in rapidly increasing spin (.) Clayton struggled clear at 5000 feet and jumped dropping 2000 feet before he pulled rip-cord (.) After three hours in rubber dinghy pilots of his own squadron spotted him and guided rescue launches to spot (.) Clayton reported unhurt to his station same evening thanks to fine work of men of Air-Sea Rescue service who were attacked continually by FW190's (.) One launch drove off 14 separate attacks before it went down riddled with holes (.) Another damaged a FW190 which was last seen making for French coast losing height with smoke pouring from tail (.) Battle continued for four hours but rescue work went on (.)

W.B. TART

(W.B. TART),
Squadron Leader, for
Air Vice Marshal,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING

193

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