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AIRSHOW

CAF FRENCH WING - BULLETIN MENSUEL - MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
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EDITORIAL

The staff members of the French Wing recently met at the Air & Space Museum in Le Bourget to prepare for this year's events and activities. A few members were present as well. You will find in these columns details about the topics that were discussed as well as what decisions were made.

As always, we will need our members to help out, whether at meetings and airshows to man the PX and welcome the public, clean up the hangar and prepare the meals for the fly-in, or simply participate in the many daily chores that need to be done at the hangar or on the airplanes.

The date for our annual fly-in has been set to Sunday the 17th of May. We are counting on your help and assistance to organize everything and also to help us gather as many classic aircraft as possible. We're hoping to do at least as well as previous years, and hopefully better!

In this issue of Airshow, Col. Roger Robert continues to tour Commemorative Air Force units and presents the 3rd Pursuit Squadron. This unit, which is not as well known as it should, was founded by a former "Flying Tiger", Erik Shilling.

You'll also learn about "Black Friday", a disastrous raid led by RAF Coastal Command units against shipping in Norway 70 years ago on this day. Although it was slightly modified and illustrations were added, it should be noted that this article was

found on Wikipedia. This well-known "free encyclopedia" should always be read with caution, if not outright skepticism. However, some of its contents are actually quite good, such as this "featured article" which details a little-known yet important aerial battle.

What made the events of 9 February 1945 particularly tragic is that they could, and should, have been avoided, especially at a time when the war was clearly coming to an end.

The men who were engaged in the raid knew this perfectly, yet carried out their orders without hesitation, for which some paid the ultimate price.

As we are about to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the armistice, let us not forget what our predecessors had to sacrifice to achieve victory, up to the very last days of the war.

Enjoy your reading !

- Bertrand Brown



CAF 3RD PURSUIT SQUADRON



70 YEARS AGO: COASTAL COMMAND'S «BLACK FRIDAY»

Photo: Royal Air Force



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Photo Bertrand Brown



CAF French Wing Annual Fly-In

The date for the CAF French Wing's annual fly-in has been set to Sunday the 17th of May. Please save the date and let the word out.

A preparatory meeting will take place during the Carrefour de l'Air on Sunday the 12th of April. We would like to make improvements on safety measures as well as other points.

We will need to set up a team to prepare and serve the meals. An ideal figure would be at least 4 people, so that tasks can be shared and nobody is left to "slave around". As usual, meals and drinks will be free but we will gladly accept donations, for which a basket will be made available.

In order to reinforce security, we would like to have several security teams which will take turns on the "ramp". If we could have four teams of two people, that would allow us to safely direct flight operations. We're especially worried about children running around.

As always, the more the merrier and if there are enough volunteers, everyone will get a chance to contribute to a great day while not being overwhelmed with work. The specifics will be discussed on April 12, but we ask volunteers to get in touch with us now.

On a final note, please let us know if you want to invite friends to the fly-in, especially if they plan on coming with classic aircraft or warbirds! The food and drinks are free, but we still need to know how many people to expect! ■

Photo Bertrand Brown



News of the Piper Cub

Our Piper Cub «Spirit of Lewis» will soon need some minor repairs. There are no major problems to be dealt with but the window that was slightly cracked last year now needs replacement, and we also need to replace an access door hinge which is giving signs of fatigue.

As last year, we will be organizing «hangar days» at the airfield to do such work and spend time together as soon as the weather improves. Dates will be communicated on the website and by email. ■

CAF French Wing 2015 Events



Here is a preliminary list of events that the French Wing will attend during the 2015 airshow season. :

- 11/12 April - Carrefour de l'Air
- 17 May - CAF French Wing Fly-in
- 23/25 May - La Ferté-Alais airshow
- 6/7 June - Compiègne Aéro Classic

We're also planning group visits to various museums or airshows. The first of these will be at the World War One museum in Meaux, on Sunday 8 March. Practical details will be sent by email and posted on the website.

We're also considering organizing a group trip to Duxford for the "Flying Legends" meeting on July 11/12 as well as the Commemorative Air Force's Airshow in Texas in August.

We'll need help for all of these events and ask volunteers to get in contact Stéphane Duchemin or Bertrand Brown by email as soon as possible. We'll especially need help at La Ferté-Alais. If we can have two "teams", we can work in shifts and make sure that everyone gets a chance to enjoy the airshow without having to stay at the French Wing's stand all day long! ■

Staff meeting at the Paris Air & Space Museum



The French Wing staff and a few members met on Sunday the 18th of January at the Paris Air & Space Museum to discuss and plan for the French Wing's 2015 events.

Thanks to Col. Roger Robert, we were given access to a meeting room, with greater comfort and heat than could be expected in the hangar at this time of year!

During the meeting, various topics were discussed: preparation for the airshows we'll be attending as well as our annual fly-in, new items and organisation for the PX, group visits, etc.

We've decided to renew with the practice of group visits to museums or airshows. The first of these will be the visit of the Great War Museum in Meaux on Sunday the 8th of March.

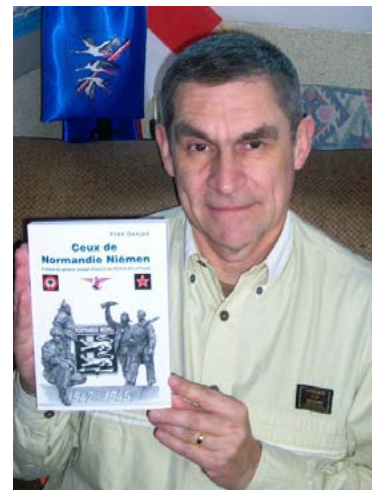
After the meeting, participants had lunch at the restaurant "L'Hélice" (the propeller) and a few seized the opportunity to visit the museum in the afternoon after lunch. ■

**MUSÉE
DE LA
GRANDE
GUERRE**
PAYS
DE
MEAUX

Great War Museum group visit

Our first group visit will take place on Sunday the 8th of March at 10:00 AM at the Great War Museum in Meaux. We'll have lunch at the Courtepaille restaurant near the museum before resuming the visit in the afternoon. If we can gather 15 members or more, the admittance cost will be 7€ per person, or 10€/person if there are fewer of us.

A registration form has been sent with this newsletter. To participate, please fill it and return it to Stéphane Duchemin by March 1st at the latest. ■



Roger Vaucamp and Yves Donjon, French Wing honorary members

During the January 18 staff meeting, the French Wing board members elected to induct two former French Wing members as honorary members.

The first is Roger Vaucamp, a figure well known by some of our oldest members. Roger, known as "Jethro" due to his resemblance to the legendary CAF leader Jethro Culpepper, was already a CAF Colonel in the early 80s when the CAF was still based in Harlingen, Texas. He joined the French Supporter Squadron when it was created by Bernard Delfino and has always held high the values and colours of our unit, as can be seen on this photo taken when he was commenting an airshow in Couhé-Vérac or Chauvigny. Roger is the proud owner of a Pioneer P300 S nicknamed "Vieux Croa", referring to Bud Anderson's P-51 Mustang "Old Crow", and wearing a CAF - Celtic Air Force - livery!

The second honorary member is Yves Donjon. Yves has been the Mémorial Normandie-Niemen's librarian for years and has done remarkable work to honour the memory of the former members of the famous Free French fighter regiment. He is the author of "Ceux du Normandie-Niemen", now in its fourth edition. This book presents the biographies of all regiment personnel: pilots, mechanics, translators, doctors... Yves was a member of the French Supporter Squadron and later French Wing. We are proud to honour him today and see him join our ranks again. ■

Rearwin Sportster project



Our Rearwin Sportster was one of the topics discussed during the staff meeting. A full restoration currently seems impossible due to the lack of manpower and qualified personnel. One possibility is to set up a series of "restoration workshops" to rebuild or restore some parts of the aircraft, while teaching interested members some basic restoration techniques and advancing a little on the project. If you're interested in participating in this, please contact Bertrand Brown by email. If no progress is made this year on the Rearwin Sportster, we will have to consider parting with it, so that it will have a chance of being restored and flying again. ■

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CAF 3rd Pursuit Squadron



Article: Col. Roger Robert

Above: The CAF 3rd Pursuit Squadron's Ryan PT-22 and Antonov An-2 «Big Panda».



This Squadron bears the name of the former unit in which one of its founding members served. Erik Shilling was a member of the American Volunteer Group (AVG), better known as the “Flying Tigers” during World War II. These volunteers fought alongside Chinese troops to contain the Japanese invasion. The Flying Tigers were composed of three squadrons: the 1st Pursuit Squadron “Adam and Eves”, the 2nd Pursuit Squadron “Panda Bears” and the 3rd Pursuit Squadron “The Hell’s Angels”, of which Erik Shilling was part.

The Commemorative Air Force’s 3rd Pursuit Squadron was founded to honour these men and present their important achievements.

Just as other CAF units, the goals of the the 3rd Pursuit Squadron also include the restoration and preservation of World War II aircraft. This means presenting these aircraft to the public during airshows and displaying them in museums to show the important role these machines and their aircrews played in the defence of liberty.

The 3rd Pursuit Squadron owns a Ryan PT-22, which it restored to airworthiness.

Several other aircraft are also flown by members of this unit:

- Harvard / SNJ / T-6
- Big Panda - Antonov AN-2
- Grumman Martlett / FM-2
- Polikarpov I-16
- Beech T-34

Eriksen E. Shilling

(Born 28 March 1916, deceased 18 March 2002).

In April 1941, 1st Lieutenant Erik Shilling of the US Army Air Corps was one of the first to join the AVG. During his training in Toungoo, north of Rangoon, Shilling painted a sharkmouth on the nose of his P-40. As he later recalled: “I got the idea from a British magazine in which I saw the picture of a Messerschmitt Bf 110C of the Luftwaffe’s Haifischgruppe in Crete (*Author’s note: ZG 76, known as the “Shark Group”*)”.

The AVG’s first mission took place on 10 December 1941, a photo-recon mission from Rangoon to Bangkok carried out by Shilling, Allen Christman (Group Intel-

Find out more on the 3rd Pursuit Squadron from its web-site:

3rdpursuit.com

ligence Officer) and future ace Ed Rector.

Shortly after, flight leader Erik Shilling led a group of three Curtiss-Wright CW-21 Demon on a ferry flight from Rangoon, Burma, to the Flying Tigers' main station in Kunming, where the aircraft were to be tested. The absence of radio sets, engine problems and very poor weather conditions led to the emergency landing and loss of all three aircraft during the trip.

He later joined the Civil Air Transport and made over a hundred flights over the "Hump", the supply route that went from India to China and overflew the Himalayan mountain range. He took part in the Chinese civil war until the 1949 Communist victory.

In 1949, the Civil Air Transport, nicknamed the "Flying Tiger Line", became close to the recently-created Central Intelligence Agency. From 1951 to the end of the Korean War in 1953, Shilling flew several missions in Communist China.

In March 1954, Shilling took part in the resupply effort for the French troops in Dien Bien Phu. Shilling and his comrades flew day missions without escort, and had to dive in the valley with heavily-loaded C-119 cargo aircraft, fly at low altitude and drop their load before climbing out under fire from enemy positions in the neighbouring hills.

In 1958, when the US began getting involved in South-East Asia, Shilling took part in the "unnamed war" in Laos in 1967 and became the last Flying Tiger to fly combat missions.

He left Laos in 1969 and joined the Flying Tigers Airline, leaving in 1979.

The Flying Tigers

This was the name given to a squadron of American pilots, whose official designation was the 1st American Volunteer Group. Based in China during World War II, the squadron fought the Japanese in China and was involved in the Burma campaign. It was later incorporated in the United States Army Air Forces.



Photo 3rdpursuit.com

Claire Lee Chennault, Chiang Kai-shek's military advisor, sought to build an air force in 1938 to assist the Chinese government.

Starting in 1940, the officially neutral American government began providing China with Curtiss P-40B fighters via the Lend-Lease agreement. Chennault recruited 100 pilots (60 from the US Navy and Marine Corps and 40 from the US Army Air Corps) as well as 200 technicians and mechanics.

These men were paid by CAMCO (Central Aircraft Manufacturing Company), a private military contractor. They were mercenaries but were presented as volunteers and unofficially benefitted of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's approval, although no written executive order was ever given.

Centre: the unit's newsletter is called "Ding Hao" (good news). On this photo, the Ding Hao logo is painted on the leather flight jacket of a P-40 pilot.





Above, from top to bottom: the Grumman FM-2 Martlett in flight, the Ryan PT-19 and the Curtiss P-40 #48 of the CAF P-40 Sponsors Group bearing colours inspired by those of Tex Hill's aircraft.

Below: Shilling in the Planes of Fame Museum P-40.



The squadron became famous for its shark-mouth-adorning fighters, a practice initiated by Erik Shilling. A Royal Air Force fighter squadron in the Libyan desert also decorated their aircraft in a similar fashion, inspired by Messerschmitt Bf 110 of the Luftwaffe's HaifischGruppe.

Pilots began their training during the summer of 1941. They were based in Kunming, China, and were tasked with the protection of strategic supply points in Burma. Claire Lee Chennault set up a new group of "American volunteers", the 2nd American Volunteer Group, equipped with Lockheed Hudson and Douglas DB-7, and was planning the formation of a third group. However, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and subsequent entry of the United States into the war made this unnecessary. Although the Flying Tigers are presented as the first American volunteer group, they were the only ones to ever see action.

Their first taste of combat came on 20 December 1941 and resulted in a victory, when a Japanese raid on Kunming was defeated. The Flying Tigers then participated in the Burma campaign and shot down some 50 aircraft while defending Rangoon.

In the spring of 1942, the United States Army Air Forces took over. Chennault was reinstated in the American Army and took command of the China Air Task Force. On 4 July 1942, the American Volunteer Group was officially disbanded and became the 23rd Fighter Group of the China Task Force.

In 1992, shortly before the 50th anniversary of the unit's reintegration in the regular Army, all of its members were retroactively incorporated in the US Air Force. In 1996, survivors were decorated, pilots receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross and ground personnel the Bronze Star.

Despite their short existence, the Flying Tigers secured a major place in American military aviation history, as can be seen by their modern-era fame.

Their combat record was 21 pilots killed or missing in action for 286 Japanese aircraft shot down (according to David Ford's "Flying Tigers"). ■



«Black Friday»

9 February 1945: Coastal Command's disastrous raid over Norway

Wikipedia article, adapted by Bertrand Brown.

Above: A formation of Beaufighter TF. X of No 404 Squadron, one of the units of the Dallachy Wing. This photo was taken a few days after the raid over the Scottish countryside.

Due to Allied victories in France and Eastern Europe, Germany's surface shipping was largely confined to the lower Baltic and Norwegian waters by late 1944. This left ports in Norway as Germany's last remaining bases to continue the Battle of the Atlantic and conduct trade with Sweden. When the Baltic iced over during the winter of 1944–45, Germany was forced to transport its vital imports of Swedish iron ore from the port of Narvik in northern Norway.

In response to the growing importance of German maritime transport routes through Norwegian waters, the Royal Air Force's Coastal Command transferred seven squadrons of anti-shipping aircraft from bases in eastern England to northern Scotland during September and October 1944. Three squadrons equipped with Mosquito light bombers were stationed at RAF Banff while a wing made up of four squadrons operating Beaufighter heavy fighters was based at RAF Dallachy. The Dallachy Wing comprised the British No. 144 Squadron, Canadian No. 404 Squadron, Australian No. 455 Squadron and New Zealand No. 489 Squadron. These four squadrons were veterans of many anti-shipping operations over the North Sea.

Attacks by the Banff Wing quickly forced German ships travelling along the Norwegian coast to sail at night and take shelter in deep fjords during the day where they were very difficult to attack. In order to locate German ships the two wings sent out aircraft on almost daily patrols along the Norwegian coastline from the Skagerrak to Trondheim. During this period the Allied squadrons developed a tactic of sending two 'outriders' ahead of the main body of the patrol; these aircraft were manned by experienced aircrew and penetrated into fjords in search of shipping which might not be spotted by the other aircraft. By December 1944 patrols were also routinely escorted by RAF Mustang Mk III fighters and accompanied by Vickers Warwick air-sea rescue aircraft. Only a single squadron of Mustangs was available, however, as these long-ranged fighters were needed to escort daylight raids by heavy bombers against Germany. German fighters began to be encountered off the Norwegian coast in December, and from the end of the month onwards it was common for Allied wing-sized operations near Norway to be attacked by groups of up to 30 fighters. In March 1945 the Luftwaffe had 85 single-engined and about 45 twin-engined aircraft operating from ten or twelve airfields south of Trondheim.

During the first weeks of 1945 the Allied strike wings flew few operations due to severe weather. On 15 January, the Banff Wing was intercepted by 30 Fw 190 fighters from the III. Gruppe of Jagdgeschwader 5 (III./JG 5) during a raid on the town of Leirvik. In the resulting fighting five Mosquitos and five Fw 190s were shot down. By 9 February, the Ninth and Twelfth Squadrons of JG5 were based at Herdla near Bergen, about 65 miles (105 km) to the south of Førde Fjord. These units were equipped with Fw 190s and the Twelfth Squadron was commanded by Leutnant Rudi Linz, a 28-year-old flying ace with 69 'kills' to his credit.

The German Narvik-class destroyer Z33 entered service in February 1943. She served in Norwegian waters from July of that year and saw combat on several occasions. She was the last German destroyer to leave northern Norway, and sailed for Germany on 5 February 1945. It was intended that Z31, which had completed initial repairs at Bergen after being heavily damaged in the Action of 28 January 1945, would join her to make a joint passage to the Baltic. However, Z33 ran aground in Brufjord on 7 February, damaging her port shaft and propeller and causing both engines to fail. She was subsequently taken under tow to be repaired in Trondheim. Z33 and the two tugboats that were towing her chose to shelter in Førde Fjord during the daylight hours of 9 February while en route to Trondheim.

Battle Preliminaries

On the morning of 9 February, two New Zealand-crewed Beaufighters from No. 489



Photo Australian War Memorial

Above: Australian crews of No 455 Squadron in front of a Beaufighter in October 1944.

Squadron conducted a patrol of the Norwegian coast. These aircraft first sighted a 1,500-ton merchant ship in Stong Fjord. Continuing north, they were surprised to find a Narvik-class destroyer accompanied by a minesweeper and two flak ships in Førde Fjord. The aircraft continued their patrol and spotted five large merchant ships in the Nord Gulen and two minesweepers and a flak ship near Bremanger. Despite the pilots' surprise, the Allied command was aware that Z33 was in the area from Ultra signals intelligence.

The Dallachy Wing was on alert to attack any ships found by the reconnaissance patrol. Although the group of five merchant ships were highly vulnerable to attack and a worthwhile target, Coastal Command came under the operational command of the Admiralty and was bound by its decision to give higher priority to attacking warships than merchant vessels. As a result the wing

Below: Jagdgeschwader 5 "Eismeer" Focke-Wulf Fw 190 in Herdla in 1945.



Source: www.jagdgeschwader5und7.de



Above: This photo taken by a Beaufighter's gun camera illustrates the difficulties encountered by Beaufighter and Mosquito anti-shipping crews when attacking targets in fjords. The steep fjord walls only allowed for predictable attacks coming from a single direction while providing German ships with high level of protection.

was dispatched against Z33 even though the destroyer and its escorts were well protected and in a difficult position for aircraft to attack.

Wing Commander Jack Davenport, who had commanded No. 455 Squadron until October 1944 and was now on the staff of No. 18 Group RAF, planned the attack on Z33. The plan called for two 'outriders' to precede the main force and confirm the location of the German ships. The Beaufighters would then arrive to the east of the German anchorage, turn to the west and attack the ships before escaping over the sea. Davenport sought to minimise Allied casualties, but the location of the German ships in a narrow and protected fjord meant that the operation was inherently risky. The strike leader was Wing Commander Colin Milson, the 25-year-old commanding officer of No. 455 Squadron, and a veteran of anti-shipping operations against Italian and German ships in the Mediterranean and North Seas. Milson had reservations about making what was likely to

be a costly raid, particularly given that the war was clearly coming to an end, but carried out the order to attack Z33 to the best of his ability.

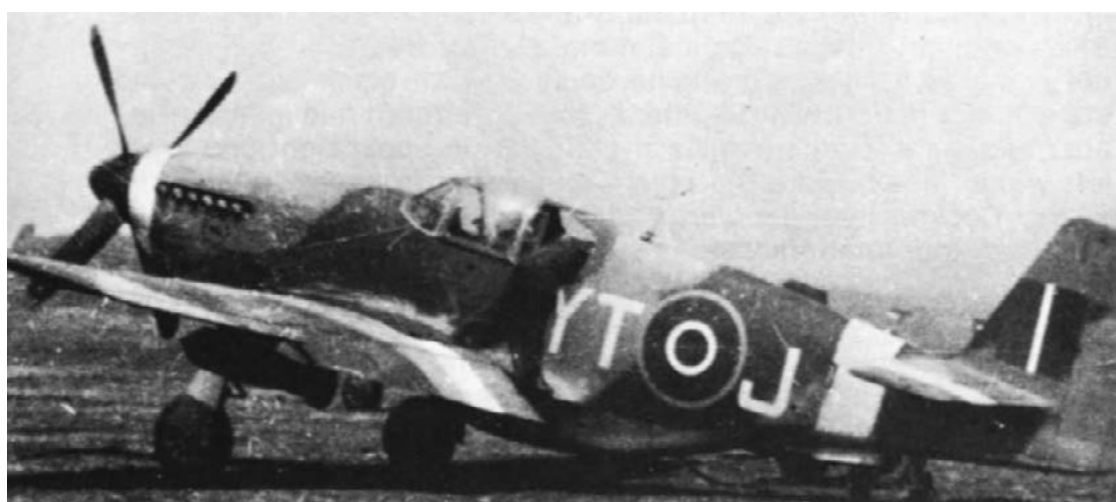
After being spotted, the German ships in Førde Fjord sailed further up the fjord and prepared for an Allied attack. Z33 and several of her escorts anchored close to the steep southern slopes of the fjord near the village of Bjørkedal. Meanwhile other ships moored near the northern shore after breaking up pack ice with gunfire. This anchorage was also protected by flak batteries on the shore of the fjord.

The Attack

At 1:30 pm on 9 February, Milson led 31 or 32 Beaufighters into the air from Dallachy. The strike force was joined by either ten or twelve P-51 Mustang fighters from No. 65 Squadron RAF and two Warwick air-sea rescue aircraft from No. 279 Squadron RAF carrying life rafts to help any aircrew forced to ditch. All four of the Dallachy Wing's squadrons contributed aircraft to the force. The No. 404 and No. 455 Squadron Beaufighters were armed with «60lb» rockets while the aircraft from No. 144 Squadron and the single No. 489 Squadron Beaufighter dispatched were armed only with their four 20 mm cannon and six machine guns.

After the attackers crossed the Norwegian coastline at 3:40 pm, two Beaufighters from No. 144 and No. 489 Squadrons detached themselves from the main force and pressed ahead as outriders. The two 'outriders' crossed Førde Fjord near where the German ships had been sighted that morning. At 3:50 pm they sent Milson a radio message stating that they could not see the ships. The 'outriders' then

Right: Few photos of No 65 Squadron Mustang Mk III exist. As practically all British Mustangs, FZ120 was equipped with a Malcolm hood which gave the pilot better visibility. Shortly after the raid, No 65 Squadron received bubble-top Mustang Mk IV, of which many photographs are available...





turned to the east and overflowed the town of Førde before searching the next fjord to the north; during their flight near Førde Fjord they did not spot the German warships in their new position. Meanwhile the Ninth and Twelfth Squadrons of JG5 were scrambled from Herdla at 3:50 pm and ordered to attack the Dallachy Wing and its escorts.

Several minutes later, the main body of the raid reached the southern shore of Førde Fjord travelling north. To their surprise, the Allied planes passed directly over the German ships and came under intense attack from anti-aircraft guns, though no aircraft were hit. In response, Milson wheeled his force to the right in an attempt to attack the ships from east to west as planned. The steep walls of the fjord protected Z33 from attack from this direction, however. As a result, Milson led the force west to near the mouth of the fjord and ordered the Beaufighters to attack in relays from west to east. This required the aircraft to fly into the face of alerted German defences and then escape over steep mountains. The narrow confines of the fjord also meant that the Beaufighters had to attack individually from a single direction and would not be able to swamp the German defences as they normally sought to do.

Milson led the first group of Beaufighters into Førde Fjord at about 4:10 pm. His aircraft escaped undamaged after attacking a flak ship and other Beaufighters followed him into the fjord. At about this time 12 Fw 190s arrived at Førde Fjord and flew through German flak to intercept the Beaufighters that were waiting their turn to attack. The British Mustangs were taken by surprise, but dived to intercept the German fighters. This led to an intense air battle, with over 50 aircraft either engaged in dogfights or diving to attack the German ships; it was the largest aerial conflict ever fought over Norway.

The fighting continued until 4:25 pm. By that time the German ships had shot down seven Beaufighters. Fw 190As had claimed another two Beaufighters and a Mustang III. The Allied losses included six of the eleven No. 404 Squadron aircraft involved in the attack. Overall, the Germans killed 14 Allied airmen and took four prisoner of war. The Allies damaged Z33 and several of the other German ships and shot down either four or five Fw 190s. Linz and another German pilot were killed. Kriegsmarine fatalities included four sailors on Z33 and three on the converted trawler VP6808; both of these ships were damaged during the attack. There may also have been fatalities on the other German ships.

Aftermath

After departing the Førde Fjord area, the surviving Beaufighters, many of which were damaged, returned to RAF Dallachy. Several had difficulty making safe landings, and two were forced to land on their bellies due to undercarriage damage, but no further aircraft were lost. The air and ground crew were shocked by the scale of the losses, and the battle became known as «Black Friday». The losses suffered by the Dallachy Wing on 9 February were the

Above: These three pictures were taken during the attack against Z33 and its escorts in Førde Fjord. The destroyer is visible on the first two, having broken the ice to get closer to the fjord's walls. The third picture shows one of the escorts under attack. The silhouette of a rocket can be seen in the upper right hand corner of the photograph.

Below: German ace Rudi Linz in the cockpit of his Fw 190A-8 WerkNummer 732183, which was named after his wife. He was shot down and killed in this aircraft of 9 February 1945.



highest any of Coastal Command's strike wings sustained in a single operation during the war.

The German fighters, many of which were short of fuel and ammunition, also broke off at about 4:25 pm and returned to base. On the night of 9/10 February, the German ships left Førde Fjord and continued their journey to Trondheim. A subsequent Allied attack on the ships by a different strike wing was also unsuccessful. Z33 arrived in Trondheim on 11 February and was repaired. She subsequently departed for Germany on 26 March and safely arrived in Swinemünde on 2 April. She did not see any further combat, and was decommissioned at Brunsbüttel in late April as the Navy lacked the fuel needed to operate her.

The losses incurred during the raid on Førde Fjord led to changes in the tactics used by RAF Coastal Command's anti-shipping squadrons. Following the attack, the Admiralty agreed to a proposal by Air Chief Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas, the commander of Coastal Command, to assign a higher priority to attacking merchant vessels than to destroyers and small warships. A second squadron of Mustangs was also assigned to protect Coastal Command aircraft operating near Norway from early March. Milson was awarded a bar to his Distinguished Service Order on 13 July 1945 for his leadership and personal courage during the raid on Førde Fjord, which was described in the citation as a «brilliantly executed operation».

The raid was commemorated in Norway after the war. A monument to the aircrew killed in

the battle was dedicated in the town of Førde on 8 May 1985, the 40th anniversary of Norway's liberation. This monument was later moved to Bergen Airport. The Air Combat Museum in the town of Naustdal also houses photos, maps, aircraft parts and other artifacts relating to the battle.

At least one of the Focke-Wulf Fw 190A fighters of JG 5 that crashed as a result of the «Black Friday» aerial engagements, an F-model airframe with factory serial number, or Werknummer of 931 862, was found and recovered as a salvageable aircraft wreck in September 1983. It currently resides in Kissimmee, Florida, and was under restoration by the «White 1 Foundation» towards a resumption of full flightworthy status. In 2012, it was transferred to the Collings Foundation which is continuing restoration work. In 2005 its last pilot, the former Luftwaffe Unteroffizier Heinz Orlowski visited it and sat one final time in the cockpit of his «under-restoration» Fw 190F-8, some sixty years after he last flew it and five years before his death in 2010. Rudi Linz's Focke-Wulf Fw 190A-8 (Werknummer 732183) was also salvaged and is displayed at the Military Aviation Museum in Virginia Beach.

The locations of several of the Beaufighter planes—gravesites—were found by marine archeologist Rob Rondeau and diving crew 60 years later. One site was given a commemorative plaque, in the presence of one surviving Canadian airman, Herbert (Bert) Ramsden, who participated in the action and a sister of an airman who died there.

Below: Flying Beaufighter TF X NE831 of No 144 Squadron, Flight Sergeant S. Butler (pilot) and Flight Sergeant Nicholls (navigator) were the last to attack during the raid. They were hit by flak from their target, the German destroyer Z33, before taking hits from a JG 5 Focke-Wulf Fw 190. They managed to return to base but had to do a wheels-up landing in Dallachy.



Photo IWM

BATTLE COLOURS: « BLACK FRIDAY »

Profil: Bertrand Brown (aka Gaëtan Marie)

www.bravobravoaviation.com



Focke-Wulf Fw 190A-8 Werknummer 732183 «Blue 4» of 12./JG 5 was the aircraft in which Luftwaffe ace Oberleutnant Rudi Linz was killed during the fighting above Førde Fjord on 9 February 1945. Before falling to Allied fighters, he probably shot down a No 65 Squadron Mustang thus bringing his tally to 70 aerial victories. For this, he was posthumously awarded the Knight's cross of the Iron Cross. The aircraft was recovered decades later and is now under restoration in the US.



This Fw 190A-8 (unknown Werknummer) was flown by Unteroffizier Gerhard Eisermann of 9./JG 5, who claimed his only aerial victory of the war by shooting down a Beaufighter while defending Z33. In the initial moves of the aerial battle, 12./JG 5 engaged the escort fighters while 9./JG 5 went after the attacking Beaufighters.



Photos of No 65 Squadron RAF Mustang Mk III are very scarce. A short time after Black Friday, the squadron received bubble-canopy Mustang Mk IV, which are much better documented. This aircraft, serial FZ120/YT-J, was that of Squadron Leader Derrick Westenra, the squadron's commanding officer in 1944. Westenra left No 65 Squadron several months before "Black Friday".



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