

OGILVIE, Alfred Keith, a Canadian from Ottawa, joined the RAF and served with 609 Squadron during the Battle of Britain. On 7th September he shot down a Bf109 and probably a Bf110, and on 15th September shared in shooting down a Do17 with two other pilots over Victoria Station. The Queen of the Netherlands witnessed this combat and sent her personal congratulations to the pilots. He probably destroyed Do17's on 24th and 25th September. Next day he damaged a He111, and during October destroyed two Bf109's. On 19th March 1941 he damaged a Bf109, and claimed others destroyed on 16th May and 17th and 21st June. He was awarded a DFC, being a Flying Officer at this time. On 4th July 1941 he was shot down over France and became a prisoner of war.

Squadron Leader Keith ("Skeets ") Ogilvie. DFC. 609 Sqdn. POW as from 4th July. 1941. Was in "The Great Escape" from Sagan

Alfred Keith Ogilvie, affectionately known as Skeets, was born in Ottawa, Canada on September 14th 1915. After leaving school he worked as a bank cashier from 1937 until 1939. He applied to join the RCAF but upon being turned down he approached the RAF and after hearing nothing for months he was at the eleventh hour granted a short-service commission on August 11th 1939. He did his ab initio course at No.1 E&RFTS, Hatfield and was posted to 9 FTS, Hullavington on November 6th. After completing the course Ogilvie went to No.1 Flying Practice Unit, Meir Staffordshire on May 16th 1940, for further training before being sent on June 6th to CFS, Upavon for an instructors course.

"Dreams of fame and fortune via the shot-and-shell route were abruptly dashed when they posted me to the CFS as an instructor. There, however, it turned out that the wonderful elderly gentleman who was my flying partner was a buddy of no less an officer than Boom Trenchard, and when the latter appeared on one of his ubiquitous visits an impassioned plea from him on behalf of the young fella from Canada who had come all the way was successfully made and I departed to 7 OTU at Hawarden.

They never asked what I had been flying before (namely twin-engines) and checked me out on a Harvard, a Master and (day of days) a Spitfire. I applied for the all-Canadian Squadron, Doug Bader's, but was advised there were no vacancies so instead they would send me to a good Spitfire Squadron, No.609."

So on August 20th Ogilvie arrived at Middle Wallop to begin his lengthy association with 609 Squadron whom he joined as a replacement for Mac Goodwin. He opened his Battle of Britain account by destroying an Me109 and claiming the probable destruction of an Me110 on September 7th although his Spitfire, N3280 also suffered some damage in this combat and he returned to base with a damaged tail unit.

"I was flying Red 3. The Squadron was ordered to patrol Brooklands. Many bandits were sighted over London above us. We climbed to 20,000 feet and attacked from the sun. Following Red 2 I delivered a beam attack on a trio of bombers. I gave them a couple of 3-seconds bursts and they started to break formation at a range of 200 yards closing to 75 yards. I gave one a solid burst of six or seven seconds, he turned over on his back and slid down. I kept going down, then climbed and returned to the attack. As I was diving on the bombers again two 109s attacked me, one overshooting very close to me. At very close range I emptied my guns on him as we were diving. He turned on his back and as I followed him down started to burn. Out of ammunition I returned to base."

On September 15th, now celebrated as Battle of Britain day, he shared in the downing of the famous Dornier Do17 which crashed on Victoria Railway Station. At about 1215 hours the Squadron was ordered South-East where over Kenley it waded into a formation of Do17s from KG76. During the melee that followed he launched his attack on Dornier F1+FH,wr.no.2361.Oberleutnant Robert Zehbe, the pilot of the Dornier, and two of his crew were killed but two other crew members succeeded in baling out and were captured. Oglivie's proof was photographic for his 16mm cine-camera, mounted in the wings like the eight.303

guns and synchronized with them, recorded a film showing an almost wingless Dornier fuselage in one part of the sky and its tail unit in another. Though he too modestly admitted that he was not the only attacker - and in fact Sergeant Holmes of 504 Squadron, who ended up by rolling off a Chelsea roof into a dustbin after baling out, claimed the final victory.

Ogilvie later filed the following Combat Report

"We were ordered to attack a large formation of Dornier 17, 215's with a heavy Me109 escort. In getting in position I saw a lone Dornier separated from his formation. I went for it and gave it several bursts from the beam. The fire was returned. Two other Spitfires also attacked, and on my next attack I could see fire in the Dornier's cockpit. As I went beneath it I saw two men jump and their parachutes open.

The whole disintegration being a most amazing and terrifying sight. The enemy aircraft spun and broke in half, and dropped somewhere around Battersea.

On orders from base I returned alone and pancaked."

The two German aviators landed on the Oval, fortunately without disturbing any cricket, whereas the main part of their aeroplane arrived in the forecourt of Victoria station. The tail unit landed outside a Pimlico public house "to the great joy and comfort of the Patrons" reported the Squadron Operations book.

He probably destroyed Do17s on the 24th when flying as Yellow 4. He later described this dogfight in his diary:

"My wireless packed up at a most inopportune time and I had to guess what was going on. Dogs Dundas was leading Yellow section and I stuck to him like a brother. I attacked a Do17 and had his port engine on fire. From about 20,000 feet he dove for the sea - I waited for the splash, and was my face red when he levelled off and went like a ding bat for home! I dove after him and caught him about thirty miles out to sea. But flying Betsy at the gate had poured oil over my perspex and I couldn't see...Nearly rammed him on one attack. Emptied my guns, but I'm afraid he got home alright"

Ogilvie's entry in his diary for September 25th when the Squadron engaged Me109s over Bristol at 1200 hours reads

"I was giving a Dornier hell and both engines were streaming glycol when there was a gigantic pow and a nice hole appeared in my right wing. Immediately saw a 109 quite close behind, and it was evident he didn't want to be my valentine. I only shook him off after he had sent another through my tail, one up my fuselage exploding in my wireless, and one in my port wing puncturing that tyre. Certainly my closest call yet."

And after all that this modest, courageous little Canadian from Ottawa still went on fighting.

"Caught a chap close to the water, but could only get one engine smoking before my ammo gave out. Nearly turned over on landing but got away with it."

His Spitfire, N3280, suffered some damage and he was forced to land back at base on a burst tyre, although it was later repaired it was not fit for operations the following day when he flew N3288. Once again his aircraft was damaged in combat, this time over Christchurch at 1635 hours when he engaged a Heinkel He111, the aircraft's main spar was damaged but he was able to safely return to base as he related in his combat report.

"I was flying Yellow 2. Bombers were sighted over Isle of Wight and following Yellow 1, we flew in to engage them. Before we reached them we had to take evasive action from 109's. I engaged one at 10,000 feet and found that the Spitfire could handily out manoeuvre the 109 at that altitude. I hit him on a climbing turn, from close range and he dived away. I lost him and went after the bombers. I made a quarter attack on a Heinkel 111 opening fire at 200 yards, closing to 50. Experienced very heavy return fire from the wings of the 111 also what seemed to be a free cannon. I was hit on the wings only one shot piercing my spar. The Heinkel seemed to soak up the fire which obviously was entering it. We were well out to sea and were ordered to break off and return. Regarding the 109, during a series of turns I experienced fire from right angles to its path of flight which baffled me at the time."

In his diary that night he briefly described the day's events.

"After playing ring-around-a-rosy with a 109 I found myself on the tail of a huge Heinkel. I could see yellow flashes as my bullets hit, but he soaked it up. His rear gunner was no sissy and threw plenty back, bouncing a couple off my wings and putting one through the main spar."

On September 27th he succeeded in downing an Me110 off Portland as he described in this combat report.

"I was flying Yellow 3. At 24,000 feet we engaged a circle of Me110s. Following Yellow 1 we made a beam attack on the circle, each taking a separate aircraft. The circle broke up and I saw an Me110 turn into Yellow 1. There was a head on collision, both aircraft disintegrated in terrific explosion. I made an attack on one from almost head on, climbed up and came down vertically on him (10 secs). He went straight down, both engines on fire. This was seen by other pilots. I also saw at least three other 110s going down in flames, one hit the sea, another on the land near Portland."

He later confided his thoughts on the loss of Mick Miller to his diary.

"The 110 turned out to get his cannon working on Mick, and they hit head-on. There was a terrific explosion, a sheet of flame and a column of black smoke. I glimpsed a Spitfire wing fluttering out and the white of a parachute with something on the end. It was ghastly. The whole viscous action lasted only a few moments."

In his diary for September 30th Ogilvie recorded the following entry

"We tangled with a 109 circus and I found myself a playmate. He had too much staff for Junior, and though he got in a deflection shot which floated across in front of me, I never got a shot at him. . I was pleased that the Spitfire was able to turn inside of the 109, but he suddenly flipped over and disappeared before I had fired a shot - a moral victory only!" The next combat that is noted in his diary is that of November 28th . The Squadron was scrambled and vectored towards the Solent to intercept an enemy formation of Me109s of JG2 led by their famous leader Major Helmet Wick. The Germans had the advantage of height and the 609 Squadron Spitfires were bounced and Pilot Officer Baillon was killed in the first strike. Flight Lieutenant Dundas extracted instant revenge by shooting down Helmut Wick but was in turn shot down by Wick's wingmen. Ogilvie managed to escape, although not totally unscathed with his Spitfire X4590, PR-F, receiving some damage, as recorded in his diary.

"I was Yellow 3 and was weaving merrily behind, keeping an eagle eye above, when I caught a glimpse of three yellow noses in my mirror. They were obviously crack pilots by their tight formation and strategy. I gave the warning and dove as the centre Johnny opened fire on me, and was speeded on my way by a cannon shot up the fuselage and a second through my prop."

On December 2nd he overshot on landing at Warmwell and hit a fence, the Spitfire was badly damaged but Ogilvie was unhurt with only his pride damaged. On March 19th 1941 he added to his now growing list of claims by damaging an Me109F.

"At 1737 hours Red Section of 609 Squadron was ordered to patrol over a convoy off Dungeness at 5,000 feet. I was Red Leader and proceeded to patrol line. After about half an hour patrolling in which period we passed three Hurricanes on the same duty, we (Red Section) were at 9,000 feet. I saw an Me109 come from above and behind us and attack the last Hurricane which caught fire and went straight into the sea. Red 2 thinks he saw a small white dot first before the 'plane hit and the pilot may have jumped at a low altitude. I saw a trawler proceed to the green patch in the water. When I saw the 109 going down on the Hurricane, Red Section immediately dove on it, but due to our slow initial speed were able only to give him a burst from the quarter which I believe hit his glycol tank as it immediately poured white smoke.

He dove for the French coast and was joined by a second 109. Red 2 and myself gave chase but with absolutely full power were unable to gain any distance, and, if any, lost some. At the French coast we abandoned chase as it was apparent we were getting nowhere.

During the chase I fired several short bursts at 200-300 yards from astern. When last seen the 109 was still streaming white smoke, whereas the second one with it was not, but was not losing speed. Due to the amazing performance of these 109's at this altitude, I am certain they

must have been the new 109F type. I do not think the 109's had seen us when they attacked the Hurricanes as we were to one side and in the sun from them."

Ogilvie's next combat success was not to occur until May 16th 1941 when the Squadron, who were providing fighter cover to bombers, spied a formation of Me109s. Squadron Leader Michael Robinson leaving his own section as top cover, took Red and Blue sections down after the 109s. Keith Ogilvie attacked one, causing it to trail smoke, half roll and dive at a steep angle, with the Canadian right behind, with Van Lierde his No.2 covering him. Ogilvie registered 450 mph in the dive, in which he used all his ammunition as he described in his combat report.

"At 1538 hours Beauty squadron was ordered to patrol Dungeness at 30,000 feet. I was leading Blue Section on the right of Beauty leader. At 22,000 feet inland from Dover, I heard someone say Beauty weaver was being attacked, the Squadron turned to starboard and below us (about 1,000 feet below) saw two pairs of 109s and informed Beauty leader. My section was ordered to attack and I broke downwards and opened fire on the leading 109, from the quarter downwards at fairly close range, 50-100 yards. He half rolled and went down at a steep angle and I followed at 250-300 yards. The speed was considerable and I clocked over 450 mph. We passed over Dover at 1,000 feet still in a steady dive and I fired short bursts from dead astern. I ran out of ammunition, about a third of the way across the Channel, and left the 109 still losing height at less than 500 feet. I was followed all the way by two other Spitfires (Blue 2 and 3) and Dover Balloon Barrage reports one Me109 pursued by 3 Spitfires at this time, crashing into the sea off the French coast . Believe this to be the machine I engaged. Enemy aircraft emitted black smoke continuously from the time it commenced to dive."

He shared in probably destroying a Junkers Ju52 on May 22nd before destroying an Me109 on June 17th .

"I was flying Blue 2 and was returning in that position from operating inland of France at 20,000 feet. About 5 miles inland mid-way between Le Touquet and Boulogne Blue 1 saw a pair of Me109Es 3,000 feet below and led his section into attack. They saw us diving and the leader pulled around and up during which I got in a two-seconds front quarter attack with no result. I used my superior speed and did a climbing turn into the sun.

Shortly after I saw below me a 109E of the usual type; square wing tips, yellow nose, but very dark fuselage. I dived from the sun and opened fire at 75 yards with cannon and machine guns. One cannon stopped firing but, after a 2-seconds burst using one ring deflection, the 109 blew up with a great explosion and went into the sea in flames about one mile offshore midway between Le Touquet aerodrome and Boulogne. The 109 had not, apparently, seen my attack as he made no evasive attempts nor did he jump. Blue 3 (Pilot Officer de Spirlet), who was above, saw the 109 explode in the cockpit, it is likely a H.E. shell found his petrol tank. I rejoined the bombers and came home with them."

On June 21st he was attacking as part of a covering force of fighters for a bombing operation when he destroyed another Me109.

"I was Yellow 1 acting as high cover for bombers during operations. Yellow Section was behind on a turn home and I saw heavy smoke coming from bomber target. We crossed well to the left of Boulogne where there was heavy AA fire which was accurate to height and which hit a plane (not identified) as it went down pouring glycol.

Over Le Touquet aerodrome at 17,000 feet there were four aircraft flying parallel to us and as they turned in I recognised 109s. We engaged nearly head-on (2 secs.) and a general dog fight ensued. I pulled around and saw a 109 slightly below and 200 yards ahead. Drew up and opened fire with cannon and machine guns. The enemy aircraft took no violent evasive action but weaved slightly and turned over on his back. I turned to watch my tail and saw the enemy aircraft still spinning with a white parachute above it, open.

I started for home, diving to pick up speed and was soon attacked by 4 109Fs. They were very fast, straight and level and could only be shaken off by somewhat violent evasive action. I was hit in port wing by 2 machine gun shots which did not affect manoeverability of aircraft. I finally shook them off and started for home. Shortly after this I discovered a slight error in compass setting and found myself over sands between Le Touquet and Boulogne, I was

immediately engaged by our friends again at 1,000 feet and managed eventually to shake them off by turning towards them, climbing into the sun and turning in the mist. They followed me to mid-channel then disappeared to my unbounded relief."

Circus 32 flown on July 4th saw the squadron escort 12 Blenheims on an attack upon the Khulman chemical works and power station at Chocques, three miles west of Bethune. Ogilvie had been leading a section when he spotted Me109s descending upon the bombers. As he turned to attack his aircraft was damaged, his port aileron floated away and a huge rent appeared in his wing. He was wounded, in the arm and shoulder, and lost consciousness but came to and baled out, landing in a field. Weak from loss of blood he was unable to take up offers of French people to help him escape

"About noon on July 4th we took off in absolute silence as close escort to the bombers doing Lille, Sailor Malan leading the Wing, Michael Robinson our Squadron, Paul Richey leading one flight, I the other. Over North Foreland the bombers crawled in beneath us and wings of the fighters formed up ahead, behind and on either side - an inspiring spectacle, and I never lost the thrill of being a part of the show. Far below we could see the white streaks as the air-sea rescue launches put out from Dover and Ramsgate. On crossing the Channel and progressing inland we were greeted by "ack-ack", first at Dunkirk, then St. Omer. Away to the side tiny specks represented the wary Hun climbing so as to be above and behind us when we turned down-sun for home. We had already started when about fifteen 109s floated over us, breaking up into fours, then pairs. A pair came down to attack the bombers and I had turned in to attack them when there was one hell of a "pow" and I was smacked into the dashboard, my port aileron floated away and a great rip appeared up my wing. There was blood all over and I felt sick, so I blew my hood off and turned the oxygen full on to keep awake. If I could reach the Channel I'd bale out, because I could not land the kite as it was. But I must have passed out because suddenly everything was quiet and through a haze I could see my prop sticking straight up, and smoke coming from under my cowling. I figured this is where I leave and let go of the stick. Sometime later I came to in a field, surrounded by sympathetic Frenchies who tried to get me up and away, but I could not make it. I had been hit twice in the arm, once in the shoulder, and had lost too much blood. A little while later a sad-eyed German informed me, "For you the war is over" - and he was not kidding."

Ogilvie was in hospital in Lille and Brussels for nine months and was then sent to Stalag Luft III, Sagan. One irony was that Ogilvie was due for some well earned leave in a few days time as he had flown on every operation since June. Ogilvie now had an extensive leave, as a guest of the Germans. Meanwhile his comrades at 609 Squadron believed him to have been killed until on July 4th Lord Haw Haw himself broadcast the fact that he had been captured and was alive. Obviously the Germans regarded him as quite a catch.

After nine months in hospital at Lille and then in Brussels - "The Jerry docs fixed my arm up really well, though I can still tell when rain is in the offing" - he eventually reached the notorious R.A.F. camp Stalag Luft III. He was awarded the DFC on July 11th 1941 with the following citation appearing in the London Gazette:

"This officer has displayed great keenness and determination in his efforts to seek and destroy the enemy. He has shot down at least five hostile aircraft." At Stalag Luft III he was one of 76 prisoners chosen to take part in the Great Escape under the leadership of Roger Bushell, who had been shot down over Dunkirk when CO of 92 Squadron. The last to get free of the tunnel before it was discovered, Ogilvie was captured after two days and sent to a Gestapo prison at Gorkitz in Czechoslovakia. There during repeated interrogations "I stuck to my story that I was a career officer. This must have registered with the Teutonic mind, because I was one of eight returned to camp - the others, as you know, were shot"

In April 1945 he was liberated and transferred to the Royal Canadian Air Force as a Flying Control Officer. Resuming flying he joined 412 Transport Squadron before later taking command of 129 Acceptance and Ferry Flight upon his promotion to Squadron Leader. He was later appointed to air operations as a Staff Officer and finally operations officer at Downsview Base.

He retired from the RCAF on September 14th 1962 and returned to Ottawa where he lived until passing away in 1998.

From the Form 540 Operations Records Book of 609 (West Riding) Squadron

7/9/40.

On the early evening the Squadron was called in to reinforce No.11 Group in the defence of LONDON, which was being attacked by very large enemy forces of over 200 aircraft. This Squadron's "Bag", under the leadership of F/Lt McArthur, consisted of 3 Me.110's, 1 Me.109 and 2 Do.17's destroyed; 2 Me.110's, 1 Me.109 and 1 Ju.88 probably destroyed, and 1 Me.110 and 1 Ju.88 damaged. The successful pilots were F/Lt McArthur, F/O Nowierski, P/O Curchin, Sgt Feary, F/Lt Howell, P/O Staples, P/O Ogilvie, P/O Bisdee. (Appendices).

15/9/40.

Another big field day over London, in which the Squadron accounted for 4 of a force of about 30 Dorniers : 2 destroyed, 1 probable and 1 damaged. Pilot Officer G.N. Gaunt was killed in this engagement. Gaunt was a good pilot and a competent operations officer, but even more as a man is his loss deeply regretted.

One of the Dorniers attacked by the Squadron broke up in mid-air, not far from the residence of the Queen of the Netherlands, who later conveyed her thanks and congratulations to the Squadron and to the successful (Canadian) pilot, P.O. A.K. Ogilvie. One portion of this Dornier is reported to have reached the ground just outside a Pimlico public house to the great comfort and joy of the patrons. (Appendix)

Pilots who caused enemy casualties were :-

destroyed.	F/Lt F.J. Howell.	1	Do.17
destroyed.	P/O G. Tobin.	1	Do.17Z
damaged.	P/O J.C. Dundas.	1	Do.17Z
destroyed (with 2 other pilots).	P/O A.K. Ogilvie.	1	Do.17Z
damaged.	F/Lt McArthur.	1	Do.17Z
	P/O J. Curchin.	1	Do.17Z

(Also attacked by Hurricanes).

P/O Appleby also claimed a share in the damage or destruction of one of the Dorniers. (Appendices)

The same afternoon the Squadron had a second engagement near Rye, in which two stragglers of a large formation of Dorniers, returning from their bombing London, were sent into the "Drink". Subsequent scrutiny of films taken by two pilots reveals the fact that the approach of their Cine-guns caused "alarm and despondency" to one of the Dornier pilots, who had baled out and was descending by parachute.

The Squadron received the signal "Well done once more" from the Chief of Air Staff. (Appendix).

24/9/40.

The Squadron intercepted a raid over Swanage, in which 1 Dornier (Sgt Feary) 1 Me.110 (P/O Staples) 1 Me.109 (F/O Dundas) and 1

uncertain Me.109, believed possibly a Morane, (P/O Curchin) were destroyed; 1 Dornier (P/O Ogilvie) probably destroyed, and 2 Dorniers (F/O Dundas and P/O Miller) damaged (Appendices).

In this engagement F/O Dundas enjoyed his dog-fight with an Me.110, in which he found that he could easily hold the Me.110's climb and turn inside him, subsequently sending him spinning into the sea.

25/9/40.

A big battle just before noon, in which over 200 Dorniers and Heinkel bombers in arrow-headed formations, escorted by at least 30 Messerschmitt fighters, were chased and caught just south of Bristol. The city's A.A. fire, though well meant, was more than disturbing our Pilots, none of which, however, were hurt. The Squadron obtained a very good bag, at the expense of only one machine (P/O Ogilvie's) damaged by enemy fire. Those responsible for enemy casualties were :-

	S/Ldr Darley.	1	Dornier
17 and Me.110's damaged.	F/O Dundas.	1	Do.17
destroyed.	Sgt Hughes-Rees.	1	Do215
destroyed.	P/O Ogilvie.	1	Do.17
probable.	Sgt Feary.	1	Do.215
damaged.	P/O Staples.	1	Me.110
probable.	F/Lt McArthur.	1	Me.110
destroyed.	P/O Miller.)		
	P/O Agazarian.)	1	He.111
destroyed.	P/O Unwin-Mann)		
	(238 Sqdn)		
	P/O Curchin.	1	He.111
destroyed.			
destroyed		1	He.111
			(Shared
with P/O Wigglesworth, 238 Sqdn.)	P/O Nowierski.	1	He.111
destroyed.			

A signal of "congratulations on your fighting yesterday", dated 26/9/40, was received from the Secretary of State for Air. (Appendix). Several very good Cine-gun films emerged from this engagement.

26.9.40

There was a brisk Tea-time engagement over Christchurch with a force of 60 bombers and 12 fighters, the Squadron being handicapped by having to approach at the same height as the fighters. "A" Flight acting as "Above-guard" to look after the fighters, enabled "B" Flight to

attack the bombers. At the expense of 2 Spitfires, Category 2 (P/O Ogilvie and S/Ldr Darley) (Personnel casualties Nil) the following enemy casualties were recorded (Appendices):-

	F/O Dundas.	1	Me.109
destroyed.	1 Do.215 damaged.		
	P/O Bisdee.	1	He.111
probable.			
	P/O Ogilvie.	1	He.111
damaged.			
	S/Ldr Darley.	1	Do.
probable.	1 Do. damaged.		
	P/O Agazarian.	1	Me.109
destroyed.	2 Do's damaged.		
	P/O Curchin.	1	He.111
destroyed.			
	F/O Forshaw.	1	Do.215
damaged.			

The three American pilots, P/O "Shorty" Keough, (ex-professional parachute jumper) P/O "Red" Tobin, (formerly of the M.G.M. Studios, Hollywood) and P/O "Andy" Mamedoff, (former civil aviation instructor and Air-taxi owner-pilot) left us with evident reluctance, and to our great regret, to join the All-American Eagle Squadron. Both in the air and on the ground they had contributed colour, variety and vocabulary to the Squadron, and their "wise-cracking" will be missed.

27/9/40.

The enemy sent a mixed force to bomb Bristol shortly before noon. For the second time in three days No.10 Group Control positioned the Squadron so badly that they had little or no chance of catching any of the bombers over the coast. Both Flight Commanders' R/T having failed, Yellow Leader, P/O R.G. Miller led the squadron into an attack on the escort of fighters that were seen circling over Warmwell, losing his life in a collision with an Me.110, in which both aircraft appeared to explode in mid-air. Five other Me.110's and an Me.109 were destroyed by the Squadron (Appendices), as follows :-

	F/O Dundas.	1	Me.110
destroyed.			
	P/O Bisdee)		
	P/O Crook.)	1	Me.110
destroyed.			
	P/O Miller.	1	Me.110
destroyed (in collision)			
	P/O Staples.	1	Me.110
destroyed.			
	P/O Agazarian.	1	Me.110
destroyed.			
	P/O Ogilvie.	1	Me.110
destroyed.			
	P/O Forshaw	1	Me.109
destroyed.			

Deprived of the protection of their escort by 609's demarche, the bomber formation appears to have been broken up effectively by other fighter squadrons, as testified by messages received from the Secretary of State for Air, the Commander in Chief, and from Sir Stanley White of the Bristol Aeroplane Company. (Appendices) P/O R.F.G. Miller, whose loss was deplored of his associates, had held a Short Service Commission in the R.A.F. and since joining the Squadron at Northolt on 26th June accounted for 3 plus ½ plus 1/3 Enemy Aircraft destroyed, one probable and two damaged.

Biggin Hill. 1941. March.

March saw the squadron settle down at Biggin Hill, with the officers as joint lords of the 'manor' of Southwood, an estate about three miles away, entered by an imposing avenue. There, on 'off' afternoons, such squirearchical pursuits as tree-felling, vegetable-growing, rabbit shooting and beer-drinking take place, punctuated by nocturnal raids on the taverns and clubs of London and Bromley. Problem: to organise the lords in time for dinner at the Mess; and get them back to sleep. From the flying point of view, the month came in like a lion - with a number of offensive patrols over France - and went out like a lamb. For this the weather, in particular long spells of fog, was to blame; also the enemy, who seldom nowadays sends a bomber overland by day, and whose Me.109's must generally be searched for somewhere in the stratosphere. Though several squadron members sportively fired their guns at evanescent targets, the only two combats worthy of the name occurred both on the same day, and featured P/O Ogilvie each time. To this must be added the loss of Sergeant Macsherry, the Squadron's first casualty since November 28th, 1940. It has now been established from German and American sources that on that date A/F/Lt J.C. Dundas, who lost his own life, shot down the German ace, Major Wieck, a man who boasted that he had accounted for upwards of 50 British Aircraft. Since then there have been few, if any, mass daylight raids on this country. Finally, the month was notable for a crescendo of changing personnel, in particular the final departure of the four Poles, whose reiterated chant of "We go!" "We go!" had (like that of the policeman in the Pirates of Penzance) begun to elicit the response, "But you don't go"!

March 10th.

A Squadron patrol at 32,000 feet was ordered at 13.10 hours to counter an enemy sweep which didn't mature. Officers Forshaw, Bisdee, Ogilvie and Atkinson practiced dusk landings. (N.B. The Squadron is liable here to be called on to supply dusk patrols or 'forward layers.' These operations are unpopular and are seldom performed owing to a dearth of night operational pilots. Two new officers, both (confusingly enough) called Mackenzie, and with almost identical initials, were found lurking in the Mess after release.

March 19th.

From 13.15 till 19.45 hrs the squadron maintained a standing patrol of one section over minesweepers off Dungeness - altogether 6 sections worth - and it fell to the lot of Red Section to be engaged both times. 1st Action: (13.15-15.09) At 19,000 feet they were warned by

controller that 6 bandits approaching from south. At this point Red 2 (P/O Olenski) dived on some bogeys, which proved to be Hurricanes. Red 1 and 3 were flying SW when the latter (P/O Zurakowski) saw an Me.109 up-sun ahead. He fired a 2-second burst without effect, then warned Red 1 (P/O Ogilvie) that another 109 was on his tail. Ogilvie turned sharp to port, and as bandit overshot, fired a 2-second burst at 200 yds. Zurakowski then warned him that another Me.109 was on his tail. This one fired at Ogilvie, who suffered three bullet holes in his wing and a punctured tyre. Patrol was then resumed. 2nd Action: (17.37-19.09): This time section was flying west at 9,000 feet when Ogilvie saw an Me.109 dive from behind and attack three Hurricanes flying below at 5,000 feet, shooting one of them down into the sea. Our aircraft dived onto enemy aircraft, and as it pulled up from its attack Ogilvie fired a two second burst at 100 yards from quarter, resulting in white smoke pouring from enemy aircraft's glycol tank. With Olenski he pursued this and another 109 to the French coast, firing 5 further 2-second bursts at 200-300 yards without apparent additional effect, from astern. He himself could only register 280 m.p.h., and performance of enemy aircraft suggested they were the new Me.109F. Patrol resumed. One Me.109 damaged. (Criticism voiced at having three sections from different squadrons simultaneously on same patrol, without R/T communication, especially when some of them Hurricanes, which were twice today confused with the enemy.) (Appendix "A").

April 1941 5th.

Much rain, and no operational flying. Visit of Secretary of State for Air, Sir Archibald Sinclair who, after stating that Spitfires II were supposed to do 360 miles per hour, was a bit taken aback by P/O Ogilvie's estimate of 300 - 330. Chagrin of newly appointed F/Lt Curchin D.F.C. on being rung up by an alleged A.O.C. and told to report in writing why he had been guilty of 'beating up' the aerodrome. After long interval, 'A.O.C.' turned out to be P/O MacKenzie (black). In afternoon Squadron subjected to a recognition test at Station Intelligence Office, won by F/O Bisdee and P/O Hill (the C.O., who took the examination later, cheated by naming a captured Sunderland as one of the types of German 4 engined aircraft, and was disqualified). N.B. Britain has so many new types of bombers, some American, that recognition is at present rather a preoccupation of the authorities. 25 friendly bombers are said to have been shot down by our fighters last month, which is more than the Germans accounted for.

6th.

A Squadron practice produced a satisfactory formation, and F/Lt Curchin and P/O Ogilvie enjoyed 'beating up' the Home Guard. At 02.00 hours the following morning at Southwood, after a series of shattering explosions, P/O Hill was seen emerging from the room of F/Lt Curchin with a smoking revolver (revolvers having been at last obtained after being demanded for 15 months). It transpired that Hill had not after all been bumped off the new Flight Commander as he slept, but had suddenly been unable any longer to tolerate the sight of his own face. Result:- 1 mirror Cat. 3, P/O Hill shot in effigy. His

appearance next day, sans collar stud but avec beard, suggested that of a man hunted by his alter ego

- 8th. A wing patrol with 92 Squadron failed to make contact with the bandits reported in their vicinity, despite the detachment of 609's "A" Flight to enlarge the field of operations. Patches of high haze above cloud made visibility difficult. There was also a lecture by Sergeant Field on 'ZZ landings', which seemed pretty complicated, and dusk patrols by F/Lt Curchin and P/O Ogilvie.
- 16th. A Patrol by "B" Flight ended in the strange sight of its Leader taxiing in with 2 Hurricanes hot on his tail. These proved to belong to 601 Squadron at Northolt, and had been in action. One of them F/Lt Whitney Straight, while his C.O. was being rescued from the sea, had circled round taking pictures with his Leica. - This was an adventurous day for P/O Hill, who first had his undercarriage give way on landing, then force landed at Hawkinge owing to his fuel gauge erroneously showing no petrol and finally landed the Drone in a strawberry patch. The writing off of the Drone was then completed by F/Lt Curchin who arrived and took off through a hedge. Henceforth one of the Squadron's proudest possessions, second only to the piece salvaged from their 100th Jerry is a piece of tailplane inscribed "PR ? The First Drone Destroyed By 609 Squadron. F/Lt Curchin and P/O Hill." Dusk Patrols by the C.O. and F/Lt Curchin preceded London's (and Bromley's and Keston's) worst blitz of the war to date, an estimated 480 enemy aircraft being involved. At 21.32 two aircraft of 609 Squadron were suddenly and startlingly ordered to Readiness for Layers over London. F/Lt Curchin and F/O Bisdee came forward and waited gloomily in the dark at Dispersal, occasionally diving to the floor as bombs whistled in the neighbourhood. At 23.52 they were released. At 01.20 the phone at Southwood rang and four pilots - C.O., Curchin, Bisdee, Ogilvie - were called to Readiness, with orders to take off at 03.00 and patrol London stepped up from 19,000ft. Just before they did so, they were stopped, the Controllers R/T having failed once more, like all other communications, and so they waited till dawn, when the rest of the Squadron came to Readiness.
- 22nd. A Squadron 'Night Attack' on London was pressed home after a 'Defensive Circle' had been formed at Prunier, in the centre of which the C.O. and P/O Ogilvie competed to see which could remain inverted the longer. Party then adjourned to the Suivi, but there is no coherent record of what transpired there. Later P/O Hill, sans coulotte in a canary-coloured sweater and hair awry, was observed entering Lyons' Corner House shouting impossible demands in a loud murkey voice, and being gently eased to a seat by two loyal drivers. Return to base was accomplished in 30 minutes.
- 24th. 2 A/C to Gravesend to stand by for Layers. 2 of them (P/O's Ogilvie and Atkinson) performed dusk patrols above cloud in high wind.

29th.

Far the most active day of the year so far, and presaging more activity to come. At 08.30 the Squadron set out on 'Roadstead' operation, instructions being to rendezvous with 3 Blenheims and a Flight of 74 Squadron at Manston, below cloud. 74 however were never sighted. The Blenheims then crossed the Channel at 0ft, 609 500ft above and behind. The target, 4 medium-sized ships, was only sighted between Gravelines and Dunkirk, and while 609 circled above at 2,000ft, 2 of the Blenheims attacked. The 3rd which apparently dropped its bombs in mid-channel, then machine-gunned the target, and it was while waiting for the completion of this that 6 Me.109.s dived out of cloud and attacked the Squadron. The latter broke up in pairs, half returning with the Blenheims, the other half engaging in a dog-fight with the 109's (probably Me.109F on account of their rounded wings). F/Lt Curchin and P/O Seghers were attacked by 3 E/A, and took quick-turn evasive action, Curchin firing 3 short bursts without apparent result. Both of these aircraft were holed, especially Seghers'. Finding E/A's speed superior, they then climbed into cloud and returned to base. P/O Ortman failed to make his guns fire, owing to omitting to turn handle away from 'safe'. Flak was experienced from the ships, also from the Navy's guns at Dover, despite use of IFF. Sgt Bennett did not return. No one saw what happened to him, though it is possible that he landed in enemy territory. He was one of the Squadron's veteran Sergeants with an He.111 to his credit from last year. At 14.09 "B" Flight went to patrol Dungeness. Flying at 26,000ft, 4 Me.109's were sighted to South and slightly above. Both sides then broke up into pairs and manoeuvred for upsun position. Dogfight ensued, 2 enemy aircraft attacking P/O Hill with cannon. P/O Ogilvie attacked these, firing at both (in the melee he also got a shot at Hill, which amused them both in retrospect). One E/A dived vertically downwards. F/Lt Curchin fired a burst at another E/A while attempting to climb after it. Though no enemy casualties are claimed, E/A retreated to France and 609 were left in charge of the situation. (Appendix 'A'). At 15.06 "A" Flight took off and were flying on a vector of 085 degrees at 27,000ft when 3 Me.109's were sighted flying N.W. at slightly higher altitude. Manoeuvring took place, and leader (P/O Bisdee) got in a short burst from 500 yards. After some further circling, one E/A dived vertically downwards, pursued by F/O Bisdee and F/O du Monceau de Bergandal, who fired 2 short bursts, thus being in action for the first time. The Bish reports E/A's underside colour was duck-egg blue, without crosses. Altogether it was a good day for the visit of the Belgian Air Attaché and his Staff, to whom it probably seemed typical. Evening saw a concert by Noel Coward, Beatrice Lillie, Caroll Gibbons and his wife, followed by an excellent cold table in the Mess which was impossible to get near. Dancing ensued, and by 03.30 3 Squadron Leaders were serving waiters from behind the bar.

May 1941 16th.

Wing Commander Malan, D.S.O., D.F.C., and Bar, thought it was about time the Biggin Hill Wing got together for a little practice so, with himself leading 92 and 609 took off at 12.30 and met 74 from Gravesend over Base. The temptation to parade his monster show of

strength before the Nazis was however irresistible, so they swept up and down the Channel, little pairs of 109s skipping out of the way in a fright, 1 of them not quick enough to avoid being damaged by 92. In the afternoon 609 had another victory, and though it was pale compared with the glories of the eighth, it ended with 2 Me.109s destroyed and another damaged, P/O. Ogilvie, Hill and Ortman being a representative lethal media, and respectively representing the countries of Canada, Great Britain and Belgium. We suffered one Spitfire Cat.2, Sgt. Palmer being surprised and having to force land at Detling. The classic remarks of the C.O., "I couldn't have been more sorry", on hearing one of his weavers had been shot down, deserves engraving in stone, preferably granite. This was the start of the battle. After that the Squadron began circling at 22,000ft., near Dover. P/O Wilmet was then attacked but took successful evasive action, and when 4 Me.109's was sighted below and flying in the opposite direction. Leaving the faithful Yellow Section as top cover, the other two dived to attack. Blue 1(P/O Ogilvie) took the leading one and after a burst from the quarter and above at short range, E/A half rolled and went down at a steep angle followed by Ogilvie, clocking over 450 and firing further burst until his ammunition was spent. It was left smoking at less than 500 ft., Blue 2 (P/O. Van Lierde) fired a short burst at 2nd E/A., and Red 4 (P/O Hill) attacked a 3rd. After diving from 20,000 ft., to 1,000 ft., emitting black smoke, it descended into a layer of heat haze, and P/O. Hill himself pulled out just in time to avoid the Dover Balloons. (Ogilvie's E/A was seen to crash by the Dover Balloon Barrage, Hills was seen burning on the water by F/Lt. Lyle of 75 Wing, though the reconciliation of positions and time gave the Intelligence Officer a headache). Meanwhile Blue 4 (P/O. Atkinson) had done a spot of free lance chasing and shooting. The 2 109s concerned then had the impudence to attack Yellow Section, obediently reformed over Dover. As F/Lt Richey and P/O. Ortman broke away in opposite directions, the latter had a shot as one as it flew past, and then chased it most of the way to France. Though White, then black smoke issued from it. Ortman returned saying 'He no go down'

Enemy losses..... 2 Me.109s Destroyed
(P/O. Ogilvie & P/O. Hill) E.1 & e." Appendix
1 Me.109 Damaged (P/O. Ortman)
E & E.3

Our Losses..... 1 Spitfire Cat.2 (Sgt. Palmer returned smiling in the Maggie)

The casualty list today incidentally nearly included 1 Adjutant Cat.3, F/O. Tidswell, slow marching on Hawkinge Aerodrome at Sgt. Mercers funeral, seemed fair game to 3 Me.109s which suddenly swooped out of the sky in line abreast and plastered Group Captain Beamish's Hurricane just after the latter had got out, also a Maggie. The Adjutant, 50 yards away, thought this bad form at a funeral, and so the slow march continued. When later the 109s returned, he played up and took cover. Resemblance between the words BOSOM and BOSUN today caused a hideous misunderstanding. Instructions were to patrol 'BOSOM' but the Ops. clerk, being of a pure disposition,

understood BOSUN. When the 2 pilots got into the air, they said, 'Please there isn't a BOSUN on our cards'. An infuriated Controller then had to explain that the word was BOSOM, that BOSOM was a convoy, and that this convoy lay on the vector of -- degrees, blast you.

17th.

P/O. Atkinson's day of adventure. "A" Flight, after patrolling Tenterden at 15,000 ft, were directed to Manston when 2 or 3 Me.109s were sighted below and behind. A dogfight developed, during which F/O. Bisdee, P/O. de Grunne and P/O. Ortman all fired their guns. P/O. Atkinson, who was weaving slightly below, was struck in the starboard wing by a cannon shell and went down with the intention of landing at Rochester Aerodrome. Only his port flap came down however, and then got stuck, with the result that his machine became all but uncontrollable. He succeeded however in a force landing in a ploughed field, losing his undercarriage and bumping his head on his sight. He was then viewed with considerable suspicion by the ploughman, who perhaps deemed him to be another Hess, or alternatively did not know whether it was 'quite the thing' to notice a Spitfire trespassing in his boss's field. "I felt so surprised to be alive" said P/O. Atkinson on returning to the Mess that evening. Another casualty today was the Puss, whose breaking system failed as the C.O. landed with the Adjutant on board. The Puss was never to undergo repair, and this was a very sad thing, because the Puss was the symbol of Pilots' liberty and escape. Dusk patrols were flown by the C.O. and - well deserved promotion - F/O. Ogilvie. But he can't find the time to put up the wider stripe.

29th.

Weather worse than ever: " There's a knife outside you could cut with a mist", F/O. Ogilvie was heard to mutter as he thankfully went to sleep again. Consequently there was no flying. Visit of Canadian and Philippines presses. To the former the necessary line was shot by F/O Ogilvie (Canadian). The latter, a dear old boy with a Philippine daughter, didn't think his reader's would ever believe that he had been to a fighter Station without being photographed against a Spitfire. This fell to the Intelligence Officer in pouring rain complete with daughter and pilots, and as a reward he promised a box of cigars, which came. Squadron transport problem now so acute that today the C.O., Adjutant and I.O. were seen proceeding from Dispersal to the Mess poised precariously on a Spitfire. Today also Capt. Orde began a portrait of F/Lt. 'Apollo' Richey.

June 11.

An improvement in the weather produced an afternoon 'Roadstead' in which 609, led by W/C. Malan, acted as top cover to 5 Blenheims escorted by 74 Sqdn. Making rendezvous over Detling the formation proceeded across Channel to Dunkirk, of which an enemy tanker was successfully bombed. 609 did not see any of this, being busy patrolling the sea between Dunkirk and Gravelines in independent sections ranging from 1000 to 8000 feet. P/O. du Monceau then found his oil temperature had reached 120 degrees, and came home, only to discover he had confused the oil radiator lever with the seat adjustment

lever. As the squadron was turning for home, two Me.109's appeared and attacked the second pair of Blue Section, F/O. Ogilvie and Sgt. Chestnut (Both Canadians) and the latter was evidently hit. The first pair (S/L. Robinson and F/O. Bisdee) turned and counter attacked, which caused E/A to dive to sea level, one of them damaged by obligingly flying through F/O. Bisdee's line of fire which was directed at the other. F/O Ogilvie then got a shot from above, after which S/L. Robinson found himself alone and being attacked by both. Only one of his cannons worked, and taking evasive action he beat it homeward flat out at 0 feet, easily catching up with the astonished remainder of his section. Then tragedy happened. S/L. Robinson saw glycol issuing from Sgt. Chestnut's aircraft, which began gliding towards the sea about a mile from Ramsgate cliffs. Though S/L Robinson tried to signal him not to do so, he attempted to stretch his glide over the cliff, just missed doing so and struck it a few feet from the top. One mainplane landed on top, the rest of the aircraft slithered down the side smoking. Coastguards reported a parachute and for a while hope was entertained that Sgt. Chestnut had baled out, though it seemed impossible, it proved quite an illusory. ("Appendix B")

Enemy losses 1 Me.109 damaged (F/O. Bisdee)

Our losses 1 Spitfire Cat. 3 (Sgt. Chestnut killed).

This was the sixth pilot 609 had lost since coming to Biggin Hill. He was one of two Canadian Sergeants who arrived only a month ago, and this was one of his first patrols. At 23.00 hours the squadron assembled at Dispersal to hear the C.O. describe the Circus scheduled for 06.30 hours the following morning. Just as he finished, Ops. rang through to say it was cancelled.

June 17.

After convoy patrols before lunch, there began the first of that long series of Circuses which were to continue the rest of the summer. This was Circus 17, with Blenheims raiding Bethune, and 609 as part of the high cover escort at 25,000 feet, in fours. Only 3 Me.109's were sighted near the target area, but on approaching the French coast coming back, 2 or 3 pairs were sighted coming from the north. Blue Section at 20,000 feet north of Le Touquet saw a pair below at 15,000 feet and dived on them. F/L. Bisdee's cannons jammed, but with machine guns only at short range, he caused one of the E/A to go down "Flaming like a torch". F/O. Ogilvie, using cannon and m/g, caused the other to "blow up with great explosion" and land in the sea in flames. Blue 3 (P/O. de Spirlet) was in mid channel at 12,000 feet when he saw a single Me 109 flying to his left on the same course. Both A/C turned towards each other and P/O de Spirlet opened fire from front quarter. He saw his ammunition and E/A dive steeply streaming black from the fuselage. S/L. Robinson a patch of frothing water in the position. He, Sgt. Hughes-Rees, Pilot Officer Atkinson, Sgt. Palmer and P/O. Ortman all fired as well. Flak, with a red pointer burst, is reported Le Touquet, also from Boulogne. (Appendix C.)

Enemy Casualties:- 3 Me 109E Destroyed (F/L. Bisdee, F/O. Ogilvie, P/O. de Spirlet).

Our casualties:- Nil.

Two new Belgians from 145 Squadron - P/O. Offenbergh and P/O. de Hemptinne - arrived today, and helped form a composite 'C' Flight which stood by during the Circus Operation. As if 609 had not done enough, a late 'Sphere' was ordered, which was eventless except that it did not land till 23.11 hours in vertical darkness. A prettier sight has seldom been seen as the Squadron, in perfect sections lined astern formation, came in with navigation lights shining against the darkling blue sky.

June 21.

Early convoy patrols preceded Fighter Commands biggest day since the Battle of Britain, upwards of 30 Enemy Fighters being destroyed for small loss. It was also the longest day of the year, and the hottest to date - so hot that some pilots flew without tunics, thus rendering themselves theoretically liable to be shot as spies. The Biggin Hill Wing played a large part in the success of the day. 2 Circuses took place, and in one of these 609 destroyed 2 and damaged 1. The target for this was Desvres. On approaching the French coast, return journey, between Hardelot and Le Touquet, Yellow Section saw 4 Me109F flying parallel. As they converged, leader (F/O. Ogilvie) turned head on and fired, this starting a general dog fight. Ogilvie got behind one E/A and brought it down to Le Touquet aerodrome "in full view of the ground staff" as the papers added. The pilot baled out. Sgt. Boyd fired at another which overshot its dive, this spiralled down from 3,000 feet to crash in a field - Sgt. Boyd's first victory, and a popular one. P/O. Ortman, after shaking a 109 off his tail, sighted another in a dogfight with a Spitfire. He delivered two beam attacks, and E/A dived at 45 degrees streaming black smoke. Finding his engine vibrating, he broke off, thinking there was another E/A behind. Meanwhile F/O. Ogilvie, starting for home, was attacked by another 4 Me109F which were very fast and could only be shaken off by violent evasive action. After being hit in the wing by two bullets, he spied what he thought was Dungeness, then found to his horror that it was Boulogne. Crossing the sands at 1000 feet, he met his friends again and only got rid of them by making use of the sun and the welcome haze over the sea. All this time he was in effects without ammunition, as he couldn't make his guns work. "I made a slight error in compass reading", he said, "and gave those Luftwaffe boys entirely the wrong impression". The only other pilot to be engaged was Blue 4, P/O. Offenbergh. Flying at 15,000 feet inland of Boulogne, he saw an Me109 streaming glycol, and another (F) flying parallel with him below. He chased this one to Le Touquet and back, skimming the tree tops, and once they met head on, both firing. Eventually with petrol and ammunition running low, he dodged back to England when E/A wasn't looking. He reports an English parachutist off Le Touquet, who waved at him. (Appendix E).

Enemy Casualties:- 2 Me109F Destroyed (F/O. Ogilvie and Sgt. Boyd)

(P/O. Ortmans)

Our Casualties:- Nil.

June 23.

The exploits of F/O. Ogilvie and Sgt. Rigler of the day before were today featured in the Times and on the radio respectively. P/O. Van Lierde, the oldest pilot 609 ever had (age 37) departed to take up duties at an F.T.S., and the Squadron, through the instrumentality of P/O. Ortmans, acquired a mascot in the shape of William the Goat, which from now on could be seen eating the newly grown grass outside the Dispersal, when not being fed milk from a babies bottle by P/O. Ortmans himself. As there were also two circuses, the Squadron was hardly surprised to miss its release. The first of these (19) had some works near Bethune as its target, and no less than 24 Blenheims operated. No opposition was encountered by 609 until, on crossing the French coast at 24,000 feet near Hardelot, leader (F/Lt. Richey) warned it of 2 Me.109 diving from Behind. P/O. Wilmet (Yellow 4) was seen diving away, and afterwards landed at Hawkinge, his aircraft damaged. This or another pair of E/A. then attacked Red Section, but as they had white spinners, F/Lt. Richey did not identify them as hostile until one was close upon him, and suffered a bullet in his header tank which covered his perspex with oil. The second circus (20) had Mardyck aerodrome as target, after a feint at St. Omer, with only 6 Blenheims. No definitely identified E/A. were met by 609, though 3 bursts of Red pointer Flak were seen from Boulogne area, as well as black puffs from Gravelines.

27th.

A Roadstead and a Circus. In the former 609 joined with 92 in protecting 3 Blenheims 3which bombed some ships off Calais, scoring some near misses. The boats retaliated with Flak, and F/O. Ogilvie reports being 'lifted in the air.' No E/A. interfered. Target for the Circus was steel works at Lille (pilots think Lille a sight too far to go with only 80 gallons?, and 10 miles inland from Dunkirk one pair of 609 was attacked by a pair of Me.109F, who dived to avoid being attacked in their turn. Our pair was then attacked from ahead by 3 more, and turning left to get behind them, F/Lt. Richey followed one down as it spiralled towards the coast line. After two cannon bursts from the vertical, E/A. emitted glycol, but its fate was unobserved owing to its dive exceeding the vertical. P/O. Ortmans and P/O. Offenbergl were also engaged, but without apparent result. (Appendix H).
 Enemy Casualties:- 1 Me.109F damaged (F/L. Richey, D.F.C.)

Our casualties:- Nil.

P/O. Mackenzie was irate today. Returning from the Roadstead, he was led all the way to the Wash by F/L. Bisdee, weaving at great speed and with great eagerness.

29th.

09.30 hours saw a section take off to patrol a convoy in the Barrow Deep while other pilots blissfully slept at Dispersal, F/O. Ogilvie furious at being made to get up, softened somewhat on having a D.F.C.

ribbon pinned on his chest C.O. The same honour was bestowed on F/Lt. Bisdee. The Squadron then took off on a Sweep, which was immediately recalled owing to Hornchurch being unable to supply top cover. Take-off and landing however fulfilled the purpose of providing entertainment for 150 A.T.C. cadets who were being shown Spitfires. At 14.30 a Sweep did actually occur, 609 and 74 participating. It was eventless, as Sweeps generally are, despite Kenley stirring up things first. The Jerries just don't bother to interfere, and if they don't the Sweep does not harm. On the 1 o'clock news today W/C Malan listened to himself broadcasting about such things, mentioning Rigler's adventures the day he got his three.

<u>MONTH'S SCORE SHEET.</u>		Destroyed.
Probable.	Damaged.	
Sgt. Rigler		4.
	1.	1½.
F/L. Bisdee, D.F.C		2.
	1.	1.
P/O. Ortman (Belgian).....		2.
	-	-
F/O. Ogilvie, D.F.C. (Canadian)		2.
	-	-
Sgt. Boyd		1.
	1.	-
F/L. Richey, D.F.C.		1.
	½.	1.
Sgt. Hughes-Rees		1.
	-	-
P/O. de Spirlet. (Belgian)		1.
	-	-
P/O. Hill		-
	1.	-
P/O. Malengreau		-
	½.	-
S/L. Robinson		-
	-	1½.
P/O. Offenbergl, D.F.C. (Belgian)		-
	-	1.
		TOTAL
	5.	7.
		14.

Pilots lost:- F/Lt. Churchin, D.F.C. P/O. Hill, Sgt. Chestnut (Canadian).

F.H. Ziegler F/O.

July 1941 4th.

Circus 32 took place in the afternoon, with Kuhlmann Works and Power Station at Bethune as target for 12 Blenheims, for which Biggin acted as Escort Cover. 609, as rear squadron, encountered 109s from just before the target area onwards. Some of these were in small parcels, but one formation of about 9 passed over the squadron before

going to attack the bombers, and another of 12 were sighted above in line astern over the target area. 2 of these came down and remained below cloud, 2 others came down as cover, and as they went up a further 4 came right through our formation. S/L Robinson fired a full deflection shot at all 4 below as they passed through his sights, and the last one emitted black smoke. F/Lt. Richey was attacked by one of several 109s manoeuvring above and behind. He succeeded in getting behind it, and after a burst of cannon saw it emitting glycol. Rejoining his formation, F/L. Richey saw 2 Me.109s dive past to attack 2 Spitfires of 74 Squadron. He fired at the second of these and it emitted brown smoke continuously as it dived after its leader. Two other 609 pilots fired without result, and there were a number of near-collisions owing to the number of friendly fighters in the vicinity. When they returned, F/O. Ogilvie was missing. A Spitfire had been seen going down near the target area emitting glycol and flames; also a parachutist, not necessarily from the same aircraft. F/Lt. Richey, who flew alongside him, reported that he was wearing black overalls, and that the parachute did not resemble a British one (a lot of amusement was caused by the thought that the black overalls might have been those of the Station Commander, who was flying today, but the latter returned intact). Blue 2 reported that several 109s dived on them from behind, and that he saw F/O. Ogilvie half-roll to the left, but after that he blacked out. One Blenheim was seen to suffer a direct hit from Flak on the way out in Dunkirk area. Weather was 10/10 cloud over the target, and our A/C. must have been silhouetted against it - attacks ceased on reaching the clear area near the coast.

Enemy Casualties:- 3 Me.109F damaged (S/L. Robinson 1, F/Lt. Richey, 2.)

Our Casualties:- 1 Spitfire Cat. 3, F/O. Ogilvie missing.

Six weeks later Lord Haw-Haw broadcast over the German radio that F/O. Ogilvie was a prisoner of war. He, W/C. Malan and P/O. Ortman had not missed a single Circus since they began on an intensive scale. Hard as he had worked, in the air and on the ground, he had always remained cheery. Many a time and oft had a Canadian wisecrack from him ended a period of tension. Ironically, he was just about to depart on a well-earned period of leave, and he has probably laughed quite a lot since about that. Amongst today's visitors were 2 Belgians who had recently escaped from Belgium to join the R.A.F., and a number of 'key' journalists. Despite the fact that these were given every opportunity to chat with the pilots themselves, they only really got the story when they came to Intelligence. P/O. de Spirlet, departing today on sick leave hesitated between three girl friends, each with a different complexion, and each in a different part of the county. Late in the evening there was some convoy patrols by allied and dominion pilots (P/O. Offenbergh, P/O. de Hemptinne and Sgt. Evans). The I.O. remembering to take the Colours of the Day to Dispersal at 23.30 hours (a useless habit, as no one ever pays the least attention to them) found the last section landing in the dark, on the wrong side of the flare path and across it.

MONTHLY SCORE SHEET

<u>Destroyed.</u>	<u>Probable.</u>	<u>Damaged.</u>
S/Ldr. M. Lister-Robinson, D.S.O., D.F.C., C.de G.		6.
1.	4.	
F/Lt. Richey, D.F.C., and Bar.		
1.	1.	5.
Sgt. Hughes-Rees, D.F.M.		1.
1.	-	
Sgt. Boyd.		1.
-	1.	
F/Lt. Bisdee, D.F.C.		1.
-	-	
P/O. Offenberg, D.F.C., C.de G. (Belgian).		1.
-	-	
P/O. Seghers. (Belgian) C.de G.		1.
-	-	
P/O. de Monceau du Bergandael. (Belgian).		-
1.	1.	
Sgt. van Schaick.		-
-	2.	
Sgt. Palmer, D.F.M.		-
-	1.	
Sgt. Bramble.		-
-	1.	

13.	4.	15.

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Pilots lost:-	F/O. A.K. Ogilvie, D.F.C. (Canadian) -
Prisoner of War.	
	Sgt. Bramble. - Killed.
Pilots rescued from sea:-	Sgt. Hughes-Rees, D.F.M. Sgt. Evans,
(Canadian). Sgt. Boyd.	
Aircraft lost:-	5 Spitfires Cat. 3. 2 Spitfires
Cat. 2.	

F.H. Ziegler F/O

From the Diary of Tich Cloves

1940

3rd Sept. Squadron returned from patrol; all quiet and no contact. Plt Off Mamedorff L1008 burst a tyre on landing, hit a ridge and nosed over. Aircrew write – off; this completed the ‘hat trick’ of prangs for the USA, Plt Offs Keough and Tobin being the previous 2/3. Plt Off Ogilvie

L1065 also burst a tyre and got into a wobble, somehow managing to write – off both mainplanes. Perhaps he thought that as he was a Canadian he would be neighbourly and follow the lead of the USA.

7th Sept however turned out to be a different day, the day of the biggest raid so far, directed on London. The squadron was patrolling Brooklands as usual when the horde appeared; battle commenced. Result: Flt Lt Howell R6691 ME110 destroyed 2 JU88s Probably Destroyed, Flt Lt McArthur L1008 DO17 Destroyed, Plt Off Ogilvie N3280 ME109 Destroyed, and ME110 Probably Destroyed, Plt Off Bisdee N3113 ME110 Destroyed, one Damaged, Plt Off Curchin N3223 ME109 Destroyed, DO17 Probably Destroyed, Fg Off Nowierski R6922 DO17 Destroyed, Plt Off Staples L1096 ME110 Probably Destroyed and two Damaged, Sgt Feary X4234 JU88 Probably Destroyed. Several pilots landed at various other aerodromes having run out of fuel but all returned to base before being considered overdue. Plt Off Agazarian R6915 had a bullet somewhere in his oil system and force landed successfully at White Waltham. N3113 had a bullet hole in the tappet cover and N3280 one through the fin; the magic patching technique soon fixed these.

15th Sept. Battle over London in the morning and south of Rye in the afternoon. Both appeared to be big affairs and who shot what seemed to be rather vague. The following appeared to be a rough result. Morning: Fg Off Dundas R6922 DO215 Damaged, Plt Off Appleby R6631 DO17 Damaged, Plt Off Ogilvie X4107, Plt Off Curchin R6699 and a third unknown pilot destroyed a DO215 between them, Flt Lt McArthur R6979 DO215 Damaged, Plt Off Tobin K9997 DO215 Destroyed, ME109 Damaged. Afternoon: Fg Off Dundas R6922 DO215 Destroyed, Sqn Ldr Darley R6979, Plt Off Curchin R6699, Plt Off Staples L1096 and a fourth unknown pilot (probably Plt Off Keough) destroyed DO215 between them, Flt Lt Howell R6691 DO17 Destroyed, Fg Off Dundas on a second trip DO215 Destroyed. Plt Off Gaunt R6690 failed to return from the mornings patrol. Apart from this loss only R6691 and R6922 sustained a few bullet holes. It was learned that Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands witnessed the destruction of the DO215 polished off by Pt Off Ogilvie. A message of congratulation was received by the squadron.

24th Sept. Enemy raids seemed now to concentrate on the South Coast and the squadron was involved in one over Swanage. Plt Off Curchin R6631 ME109 Destroyed, Plt Off Miller X4107 DO17 Damaged, Sgt Feary X4234 DO17 Destroyed, Fg Off Dundas X4472 ME109 Destroyed, DO17 Damaged, Plt Off Staples L1096 ME110 Destroyed and Plt Off Ogilvie N3280 DO17 Probably Destroyed

25th Sept. Another raid on Swanage. Sqn Ldr Darley R6769 DO17 and 2 ME110's damaged, Plt Off Ogilvie N3280 DO17 Probably Destroyed and one Damaged, Plt Off Miller X4107 HEIII Destroyed and given credit with another pilot of half of another, Plt Off Staples L1096 ME110 Probably Destroyed, Fg Off Dundas X4472 DO17 Destroyed, Flt Lt McArthur X4165 ME110 (Jaguar) Destroyed and DO17 Probably Destroyed, Plt Off Agazarian R6915 and Plt Off Curchin N3288 together HE111 Destroyed, Sgt Feary X4234 DO215 Damaged and Sgt Hughes – Rees L1008 DO215 Destroyed. Plt Off Ogilvie returned peppered with bullet holes in both mainplanes and tail unit. Fg Off Newbury R6691 had distorted wings, Perspex hood shattered and pilots seat bottom collapsed through pulling out of a power dive. Fg Off Ostazewski R6699 suffered the same except the seat stayed whole. Sgt Hughes – ReesL1008 developed engine trouble and force landed with wheels retracted in a field at Glastonbury. Fg Off Newberry sustained severe internal injuries through pulling out of his dive and was taken to hospital.

26th Sept. Raid again on South Coast. Sqn Ldr Darley R6979 DO17 Probably Destroyed, Fg Off Dundas X4472 ME109 Destroyed, DO215 Damaged, Sgt Feary X4234 ME109 Damaged, Plt Off Ogilvie N3288 HEIII Damaged, Plt Off Bisdee X4165 HEIII Probably Destroyed, Plt Off Agazarian R6915 ME109 Destroyed and 2 DO17's Damaged, Plt Off Curchin R6631 HEIII Destroyed and Fg Off Forshaw X4471 DO215 Damaged. N3288 and R6979 both sustained a few bullet holes. The three pilots of the USA, Plt Offs Tobin, Mamedorff and Keough left the squadron to form an all American squadron (later named the Eagle Squadron).

27th Sept. Once more, action over the South Coast. Fg Off Dundas X4472 ME110 Destroyed, Plt Off Bisdee X4165 and Plt Off Crook R6961 together Destroyed ME110, Plt Off Staples X4234 ME110 Probably Destroyed, Plt Off Ogilvie R6706 ME110 Destroyed, Plt Off Agazarian R6915 ME110 Destroyed, Fg Off Forshaw X4471 ME109 Probably Destroyed, and Fg Off Nowierski N3223 ME110 Damaged. Plt Off Miller collided with a ME110 during the fight; both aircraft crashed, no survivors. Bullet holes found in X4234 and R6915. Sgt Feary landing Magister N3929 at Weston Zoyland hit a large screw picket, damaging starboard mainplane and flaps.

28th Nov. News had been received during the night that the squadron would move to Warmwell the following day. In between packing up our equipment, the squadron was kept scrambling all day. Add to this 150 Sandhurst cadets being shown how why and wherefore, a slight idea of the near chaos everybody got into can be imagined. The last scramble added to our troubles, the squadron getting mixed up with a hell of a lot of ME109's. Flt Lt Dundas X4586 was seen to destroy an ME109 and was seen no more; Plt Off Baillon R6631 also failed to return. Plt Off Ogilvie X4590 arrived back with a shell hole through the rear of the fuselage and tail plane. Plt Off Zurakowski X4165 had a shell hole through his port mainplane. Which left us with the bare 12 aircraft with which to move to Warmwell.

2nd Dec. We never had to wait long at a new camp for a pile up. Plt Off Ogilvie landing X4588 overshot and careered through the aerodrome fence; nice effort. Pilot uninjured, aircraft beyond unit capacity to repair. Plt Off Ogilvie was very peeved with himself, saying how stupid it was to wreck good aircraft in this manner when we were so short; exactly. Plt Off Agazarian X4778 and Fg Off Nowierski X4471 met an ME110 and gave it the works. It was found at Thorney Island and was being claimed as a victim of the AA. 'Aggy' said he was almost the victim of the AA, not the ME110.

3rd Dec. Plt Off Ogilvie X4173 found his engine coughing etc whilst on patrol and lobbed down at Exeter. He made his usual long landing; went off the runway and got bogged down in the famous Exeter mud. He was rescued and eventually returned to base without further mishap.

1941

19th Mar. Plt Off Ogilvie P7830 and Plt Off Zurakowski P7600 while on patrol were screamed on by 6 ME109's, with 6 more in position behind them in case the first 6 missed. However, using their skill and their ammo they escaped, the only damage sustained being a shot through Plt Off Ogilvie's port mainplane. One ME109 was observed to be in difficulties but was not claimed.

From the Diary of Bob Walling

1941

July 1st. The squadron was hurled into the depths of despair when the news was broken that it was going to move to Gravesend. Today, F/Lt Bisdee 'The Bish' and F/O Ogilvie 'Ogs' received their DFC's – which were very well deserved. Both pilots have been with 609 since Wallop – F/Lt Bisdee in fact joined the squadron at Drem in the spring of 1940 and has taken part in over 250 scrambles and has five E/A to his credit. 'Ogs' is the pilot who shot down the DO17, which fell outside Victoria Station during the Battle of Britain. Today the squadron did two sweeps but no opposition was encountered – Lille.

July 4th. The squadron was on available all the morning – but in the afternoon the squadron, along with the rest of the group went on a sweep accompanied by Blenheims. The sweep went to Bethune and the Blenheims bombed the oil refinery at Gournay. From this sweep F/P Ogilvie DFC is missing – which is a very great loss to the squadron. (Later found to be a prisoner). The CO got one ME as a probable and F/Lt Richey DFC had two probables. In F/Lt Bisdee's absence P/O Offenbergh DFC takes over 'B' Flight. During readiness at about 21:45 two a/c went on a convoy patrol off Beachy Head – a further two a/c were sent up. All a/c landed safely, at 23:30 in darkness – quite a good show. 'M' developed yet another oxygen regulator leak.

"Plt Off Keith Ogilvie, flying as 'Yellow 3', was to make the following entry in his diary: 'I was weaving merrily behind the squadron keeping an eagle eye above, when I caught a glimpse of three yellow noses in my mirror. They were obviously crack pilots by their tight formation and strategy. I gave the warning and dived as the centre Johnny opened fire on me.'"

No. 609 Squadron had met Major Wick and his Geschwader. Keith Ogilvie in Spitfire X4590 / PR-F arrived back after the combat with a shell-hole through the rear of his fuselage, while Plt Off Jan Zurakowski in X4165 received a shell-hole in his port mainplane. They were the lucky ones. Keith Ogilvie witnessed Paul Baillon bale out of aircraft R6631 and fall into the sea south of Bournemouth. Sadly, Ogilvie saw no signs of life from the water and it was not until 5th January 1941 that Paul's body was washed ashore in France and buried with full military honours by the Germans at Ste. Marcouf."

Unknown Newspaper article - relates to 28th November 1940 and the loss of Charles Dundas and Paul Baillon.

The last man out of the tunnel

When 76 PoWs in Stalag Luft III dug their way out, an Ottawa man made it just before the escape was discovered.

Bruce Urquhart tells the story.

He was the last one out of the tunnel.

Emerging from the exit, loaded with supplies, maps and money, Flying Officer Keith Ogilvie rushed to the treeline. "I poked my head out and could see the wire not far off. It was starting to snow outside. I just pulled myself out and crawled over to the trees to wait for the next guy," the late Mr. Ogilvie told a Citizen reporter in 1983. Sadly, there wouldn't be a next guy. A German guard, patrolling the perimeter of the prisoner of war camp, almost fell over a prisoner as the unlucky fellow emerged from the tunnel. "(The guard) fired his gun and then all hell broke loose. I took off and was pretty well clear by the time the other guards got there."

This was "The Great Escape."

And, for Flight Lt. Keith Ogilvie, a young man from Ottawa, Ontario, it was a chance for freedom. On March 24th and 25th, 1944, 76 Allied officers escaped by tunnel from Stalag Luft III, a German prisoner of war camp. Only three of these officers made it safely to England. Of the 73 PoWs who were recaptured by the German military, 50 were brutally murdered by the Gestapo. The murders

were supposed to deter any other escape artist. "The men who were shot were picked at random. I don't know why I wasn't chosen. Guess I'm just plain lucky," Mr. Ogilvie said in 1945. Keith Ogilvie wanted to be a pilot. And after being rejected by the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1939, he was signed on by the British Royal Air Force that August. "They called me in on a Monday for an interview, I had my medical on Wednesday and sailed for England on Friday," recounted Mr. Ogilvie in a 1990 interview with the Citizen. A year later, he was posted to the 609 Squadron, piloting the workhorse of the RAF, the Spitfire Mark I. It was a grim time for the Allies. The German military was ready to launch Operation Sea Lion - the conquest of Britain - but wanted air over the channel and southern England first. On July 10, 1940, the Battle of Britain began, with Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering ordering the Luftwaffe to bomb British military targets, factories and ports. Britain's first - and only - line of defence from the numerically superior German air force was 50 squadrons of Hurricanes and Spitfires. The Battle of Britain, the first military battle fought completely in the air, would soon emerge as a turning point in the war.

Pilot Officer Ogilvie first saw combat on Sept. 7th, facing two German Messerschmitt 109s. "I just swung my nose around and hit the ol' (trigger) button as hard as I could and opened fire at what I thought was the first guy, and the second guy flipped over and went down with glycol pouring out of his engine." The Battle of Britain ended on Oct. 31st, when the German military abandoned its planned invasion. In less than two months, Pilot Officer Ogilvie had shot down three German planes. Nine months later, it was Mr. Ogilvie who would be shot down. On July 4th, 1941, a severely wounded Pilot Officer Ogilvie was forced to parachute from his burning Spitfire Mark V. He had been trying to pilot his crippled plane towards the English Channel, hoping to be picked up by a rescue boat. Instead, the wounded pilot landed in occupied France and was soon arrested by a German patrol. After recovering from his injuries, he was transferred to Stalag Luft III, a supposedly escape-proof camp. They were digging three tunnels, code-named Tom, Dick and Harry; the preparations had been going on for more than a year. Flight Lt. Ogilvie's job was to steal material from the camp to help with the excavation- canvas for the bellows, tin, string for the candle wicks, anything. When Tom was eventually discovered by the guards, the POW's decided to abandon Dick, dedicating all of their resources to Harry. "We went down 20 feet and it took a year to dig it out," said Mr. Ogilvie. Harry was almost 110 metres long and measured two-thirds of a metre wide. It ran from Hut 104 to just beyond the camp's barbed wire fence. After the escape, an exhausted Flying Officer Ogilvie wandered for two days before being recaptured by a German patrol. Surviving the round of executions, he was sent to another camp for questioning. Eventually, he was returned to Stalag Luft III. "I was sent back. I figured I'd sit there and wait for the war to end on its own account. It was four years in prison I could have done without, but at least I was lucky and came home." Upon his release from the POW camp, Flight Lt. Ogilvie was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in recognition of his gallantry. Flying Officer Ogilvie died almost two years ago, 54 years after he and 75 other men made their bid for freedom. He can no longer tell his remarkable story, but his family continues to celebrate his memory.

The Ottawa Citizen. April 2000.

From:- Headquarters, Fighter Command.

To: No. 609 Squadron, Middle Wallop.

Date:- 30th September, 1940.

Ref:- FC/19468/P.

The attached a copy of a Message of Congratulation received from her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands is forwarded for your information.

2. I am to add that no publicity is to be given to this message of congratulation beyond its transmission to the Squadron concerned.

H.A.Darnell, F/Lt.
For Air Chief Marshall,
Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief
Fighter Command.

Dienst Van H.M. de Konigin,
Der Nederlanden,
82, Eaton Square,

London, S.W.1.

17th September, 1940.

I am commanded by her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands to convey to you her Majesty was most gratified to see from her London House a german bomber shot down by an eight gun fighter during the air battle on the morning of the 15th September.

Her Majesty would be very pleased if Her congratulations should be conveyed to the Squadron concerned in this battle and to the pilot who shot down the german aircraft.

(sgd) Major General de Jonge Van Ellemeet
Aide de Comp on service.

To The Air Ministry,
London.