

42419 Pilot Officer Rogers Freeman Garland Miller
Killed in Action 27th September 1940
Buried in Radford Semele Churchyard

42419 P/O Rogers Freeman Garland Miller. Born Weymouth, from Radford Semele, Warwickshire. Killed in Action 27th September 1940 aged ?. Miller took a Short Service Commission in June 1939 and joined 609 (WR) Sqdn 11th June 1940. On 27th September 1940 he was flying Supermarine Spitfire X4107, as Yellow 1 under S/Ldr H S Darley. 609 were scrambled shortly before noon to intercept a raid on Bristol but the controller placed them in a hopeless position for a successful interception. Both S/Ldr Darley and his 2 Flight Commanders radios failed at this time and F/O Miller had to take the lead, attacking a formation of Messerschmitt Bf109 and Bf110 aircraft which were circling Warmwell. He was seen to collide with Bf110 C-4, Werknummer 3297, coded 3U+FT of 9 Staffel /ZerstorerGeschwader 76. Both pilots were killed, and P/O Millers Spitfire crashed at Doles Ash Farm, Piddletrenhide at 11.45. P/O Miller was buried at St Nicholas Churchyard, Radford Semele, Warwickshire, England. In his three months with 609 he had claimed three enemy aircraft destroyed, 1 shared destroyed, one probable and one damaged. His brother John was killed six weeks earlier, flying with 149 Squadron.

F/Sgt 'Tich' Cloves Diary

28th June. A casual conversation by one of our new pilots, Plt Off Miller, was overheard. He said that while approaching to land R6636 he heard a noise which he couldn't trace. Fortunately he discovered in time it was the hooter – he hadn't got his wheels down. Fg Off Edge reminded him that landing on the runway without wheels was apt to cause sparks, thereby setting fire to the aircraft. Incidentally, Fg Off Edge was the first pilot in the squadron to land without wheels.

13th July. Plt Off Blayney N3323 and Plt Off Crook N3023 gave a Dornier the works, which disappeared flying low over the sea, but was almost immediately spotted by another squadrons aircraft which gave chase. Fg Off Dundas R6634, Plt Off Overton L1082 and Plt Off Miller L1065 were detailed to patrol a convoy. They didn't find the convoy but got mixed up in a nice air battle. Plt Off Overton couldn't keep up in L1082 our oldest (and original) aircraft and had to dive smartly into the clouds to avoid a couple of ME's. Plt Off Miller damaged a Dornier and a ME110. Fg Off Dundas shot down a ME110. It was later confirmed that the Dornier damaged by Plt Off Miller was in fact shot down.

12th Aug. Air battle over Portland and Swanage. The days bag: Sgt Feary N3223 ME109 Destroyed, Fg Off Goodwin K9997 ME110 Destroyed and one Damaged, Plt Off Agazarian K9841 ME110 Destroyed and 2 109s Probably, Fg Off Newbury R6692 JU88 Probably Destroyed, Plt Off Staples L1096 ME110 Destroyed, Plt Off Miller R6915 ME110 Damaged, Plt Off Crook N3024 ME110 probably Destroyed and DO17 Damaged, Flt Lt McArthur R6977 ME110 Probably Destroyed, Fg Off Dundas N3113 ME110 Destroyed and one Damaged, and Plt Off Overton L1008 2 ME110s Probably Destroyed. Our losses nil, although three aircraft had minor bullet holes which were capable of patching in situ.

13th Aug. Another battle over Southampton and Portland added a few more to our

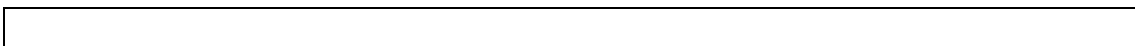
mounting score. Plt Off Crook R6699 ME109 Destroyed, Fg Off Dundas R6690 JU87 Destroyed, one Damaged, Plt Off Nowierski L1082 ME109 Destroyed, One Damaged, Flt Lt Howell R6691 2 JU87s Destroyed, Fg Off Goodwin N3024 2 JU87s Destroyed, Sgt Feary L1065 JU87 Destroyed, ME110 Damaged, Pt Off Overton 2 JU87s Destroyed (in N3113), Pt Off Staples L1008 ME109 Destroyed, JU87 Damaged, Plt Off Miller L1096 JU87 Destroyed and one Probably, Plt Off Ostazewski R6915 2 JU87s Probably Destroyed, Flt Lt McArthur R6977 ME109 Damaged and Plt Off Appleby N3223 2 ME109s and 1 JU87 Damaged. Own losses again nil, but R6691 had a few holes in the fuselage and R6690 had oil and fuel pipes shot through. Fg Off Dundas in R6690 was not aware of the damage until he approached the aerodrome, when his engine, not unnaturally, packed up. He landed down wind quite safely and finished his run on the dispersal point; a neat bit of work. Raiders dropped a few bombs in afield just outside the aerodrome at Middle Wallop.

30th Aug. Practice at quick scramble by 'A' Flight. Plt Off Miller L1096 was so eager to do his best, didn't wait for the starter trolley to be pulled clear, turned and damaged his rudder on it. New rudder required.

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 – Rees L1008 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.

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.



ADDRESSED TO No. 609 SQUADRON, etc.
O C 10 GROUP

FROM A

P.877 28/9

THE C-IN-C DESIRES ME TO CONVEY HIS CONGRATULATIONS ON THE EXCELLENT WORK OF YESTERDAY WHICH WAS EVEN MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN THAT OF THE PREVIOUS DAY IN THAT THE ENEMY WAS BROKEN UP AND PREVENTED FROM ACCURATELY BOMBING THEIR OBJECTIVE.

1050. JONES B.

ADDRESSED TO 609 SQUADRON, etc
No. 10 GROUP.

FROM

P.880 28/9

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE DATED 26/9 RECEIVED 10 GROUP FROM THE S OF S FOR AIR BEGINS
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR FIGHTING YESTERDAY – ENDS – 1055.

JONES B.

ADDRESSED TO 609 SQUADRON, etc
No. 10 GROUP.

FROM

P.889 29/9

A MESSAGE HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY THE A.O.C. FROM SIR STANLEY WHITE OF THE BRISTOL AEROPLANE COMPANY THROUGH LORD BEAVERBROOK COMMENTING ON THE FINE COURAGE DISPLAYED BY FIGHTER SQUADRONS IN BREAKING UP ENEMY ATTACKS ON FILTON ON THE 27TH INST. WHICH HE SAYS UNDOUBTEDLY SAVED THE FACTORY FROM SERIOUS DAMAGE AND HEARTENED AND ENCOURAGED ALL THE FACTORY EMPLOYEES. HE WISHES THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO BE CONVEYED TO ALL CONCERNED.

The Roger's family home was at Alveston Pastures, a farm near Alveston, Stratford-on-Avon. Rogers' brother John Garland Miller was killed on the 12th August 1940 whilst serving with No 149 Sqdn.

Miller spent 3 months with 609 starting at Northolt and was Yellow One when he

collided with Me110 on 27/09/40 - claimed 3 destroyed and 1 shared destroyed, 1 probably destroyed and 1 damaged.

Making an entry on 10th December, Novi recollects the following:

"This happened even earlier, it must have been back in September (the date has been verified as 27th September) A large group of bombers, about sixty in number, escorted in force by fighters was on the way to bomb Bristol. We met them rather belatedly, because just after they had managed to drop their bombs, they were forming a wide circle and heading towards the south. And so it happened that, not being able to assume an advantageous position of attack, what with the fighters lurking above our heads, we did not go into action. But neither were the Messerschmitt's keen to pounce on us, despite considerable advantage of height. Only one grouping of Me110's which, as if closing off this armada, took any visible notice of us. We also devoted a certain amount of our attention to them, which cost them the loss of six of their aircraft being shot down. Thus when we had made our way over Portland from Bristol, the Messerschmitt's emboldened by our apparent docility, formed a great circle just above the coast. We reached them in a very short time, and before they managed to make one full circle, the squadron launched its attack. All this happened so quickly that it was difficult even to be aware of what was afoot. I was on the right wing, being the last covering aircraft, so I was able best to see from a relatively long distance.

Pilot Officer Miller, a twenty year old marvellous brave young fellow, attacking the first of them, collided with a Messerschmitt, which blew to bits, and unfortunately Miller was killed diving into the sea, his Spitfire ablaze. Moments later there was no circle formation, only single machines diving in a southerly direction, and behind the tail of each of them was a Spitfire discharging its deadly rounds. Passing one of the Me110s I gave only a short burst at three-quarter lengths ahead, however without apparent result. A moment later there was already someone else sitting on his tail and he quickly sent him crashing. All this did not last longer than 60 to 70 seconds and the valiant squadron returning home from all directions had sustained a loss of 6 aircraft, that is the equivalent of half its complement of machines. We lost Miller, about whom the British press later devoted a lot of space.

Together with P/O Curchin, we both gave two Messerschmitt's a long chase almost right up to the French coast, but our good old trusty Spitfires were already out of breath at that altitude. This was one of the most glorious days of the squadron, in spite of the fact that the held record of only one scramble had resulted in the destruction of thirteen machines.

Brothers in Arms
Chris Goss

"It was now 609's job to harry the attacking force all the way back to the coast. Many combats were shared between 609 and other squadrons such as the kill shared between Pilot Officers Roger Miller and Noel Agazarian and Pilot Officer John Unwin-Mann of 238 Squadron. They all latched onto the Heinkel flown by the Staffelkapitän of 7 / KG 55, Oberleutnant Hans Bröckers. Nearing Poole and mortally damaged, the Heinkels crew began baling out. With it's pilot still at the controls, the

Heinkel crashed into housing at Bransome Park, Poole. In the wreckage was the body of the German pilot and although the four other crew members baled out, only one survived."

"On the morning of 27th September, Luftflotte 3 tasked Erprobungsgruppe 210 with attacking the Parnall Aircraft Factory at Yate, nine miles northeast of Bristol. Yet again, 10 Group failed to position 609 Squadron correctly and when their aircraft got to altitude and sighted the German fighter-bombers they were too far behind them to be able to intercept. The Squadron were obviously annoyed as the diarist, still presumably John Dundas, wrote:

'For the second time in three days, Number 10 Group positioned the Squadron so badly that they had little or no chance of catching any of the bombers over the coast.

To make matters worse, Squadron Leader Darley began to suffer extreme pain in his ears as he was flying with a cold. Additionally the radio in Flight Lieutenant Frank Howell's Spitfire stopped working. Both of these pilots returned to Middle Wallop and command of 'B' Flight was handed to Pilot Officer Roger 'Mick' Miller 3 while John Dundas took command of 'A' Flight. Spotting about fifteen Messerschmitt Bf110's circling in the area between Warmwell and Blandford Forum, Mick Miller led the squadron in to attack. What happened next is best described by three eyewitnesses:

We climbed around them, then dived into the middle of the circle. I saw Yellow One collide with a Messerschmitt Bf110 while executing a beam attack - John Dundas
The Messerschmitt 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's wing fluttering out and the white of a parachute with something on the end. It was ghastly - Keith Ogilvie.

I was flying behind Mick and he turned slightly left to attack a 110 which was coming towards him. But the German was as determined as Mick and refused to give way or alter course to avoid this head on attack. Their aggregate closing speed was at least 600 mph and an instant later they collided. There was a terrific explosion and a sheet of flame and black smoke seemed to hang in the air like a great ball of fire. Many little shattered fragments fluttered down and that was all - David Crook.

Mick Miller had collided with the Messerschmitt Bf110 flown by Gefreiter Georg Jackstedt of 9 / ZG 26. Amazingly, Jackstedt managed to extract himself from his rapidly disintegrating fighter and although wounded managed to open his parachute; this was the parachute with 'something on the end of it' witnessed by Keith Ogilvie. His radio operator was still in the remains of the German fighter when it hit the ground at Piddletrenthide. Mick Miller's broken body was found in whatever was left of his Spitfire which landed in farmland near Chesilbourne.

Stunned by what had just occurred, the rest of the Squadron had little time to reflect on the death of their friend as they tore into the German fighters, breaking up the formation which then headed out to sea hotly pursued by 609's Spitfires."

"Again, on their return, 609 Squadron were able to ponder over the loss of yet another one of their 'associates'. Crook recalls walking to a late lunch that Friday afternoon

and that a few hours before, he had sat next to Mick Miller for breakfast and here was he, Crook, sitting at the same table and same chair only this time Mick was lying dead in a Dorsetshire field."

Under The White Rose

Frank Ziegler

Three new pilots - Pilot Officers Curchin and Miller, and Sergeant Feary - had indeed arrived on 11th June (though with the commentary, 'None are trained'), plus Flying Officer Goodwin who had come three weeks earlier from another Auxiliary Squadron."

"609 improved the kill / loss ratio slightly during the two days following the loss of Barran and Mitchell. On 12th July Howell, Edge and Curchin attacked and damaged a lone Heinkel III in foggy weather; on the 13th Dundas and Miller, while searching for a convoy not (as was frequently the case) in the position reported, got involved together with Hurricanes of 238 Squadron in a Battle with Dornier 17's and Messerschmitt 110s, claiming one of the latter destroyed and one of the former probably destroyed."

(13th August) " P/O R.G. Miller : 1 Ju 87 destroyed, 1 Ju 87 probable."

(24th September) "Yellow 3 (Miller): Attacked a Dornier with Red 2 (Feary), which crashed south of the Isle of Wight."

(25th September) "609 went on harrying the armada all the way back to the English Channel and the final action - involving Miller, Agazarian. Curchin and Nowierski - was against a stragging trio of Heinkel III's over Bournemouth. One crashed into a house near Poole harbour after three of the crew had baled out; the second made a successful landing in a field near Swanage, and the third had the effrontery to machine gun a flyle boat in Poole harbour."

"Yet 609 was critical. In the words of its diary, '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.' These had been seen, already to the north, far above at 18,000 feet, and the next thing that happened was that 609 Squadron was itself nearly broken up by a squadron of Hurricanes that dived on them out of the sun. And to make things still more difficult the radio sets both of Darley, leading the squadron and leading 'B' Flight, and of Dundas, leading 'A' Flight, packed up, leaving Pilot Officer Miller, in command of yellow section, to lead the attack on some fifteen Me 110's which were circling Warmwell at 23000 feet, presumably as additional fighter escort.

'We climbed around them,' Dundas reported, 'then dived into the middle of the circle. I saw Yellow 1 collide with a 110 while executing a beam attack.'

Right behind Miller in Yellow Section was Ogilvie, who confided in 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. Somehow I shot straight up, half-rolled, and coming down saw a 110 float under me. I pressed the button and kept it presses and he went straight down in a sheet of flame. The whole vicious action lasted only a few moments.'

The circle was now disintegrating, with the enemy planes streaming out to sea, hotly pursued. With no single-engined fighters above to help them, it was murder. Two plunged into the sea, shot down by Dundas and Agazarian. Crook hit another, and when to his disgust his ammunition ran out, he heard a voice on the RT saying 'OK, OK, help coming' and Bisdee overtook him, to pursue and finish off the job sixty miles out from the coast. Two men were apparently hit in the first beam encounter by Staples and Forshaw - though the latter involuntarily taught a lesson in deflection shooting by admitting the one that was hit was not the one he was aiming at. It spun down in flames, it's pilot landing by parachute on terra firma (I circled till he was captured by some local farmers'), while Staples last saw his limping only fifty feet over the water towards Poole harbour, with both engines seemingly done for.

Altogether, seven of the enemy were claimed destroyed - including of course the one rammed by Miller - and on this occasion the evidence for at least five seems completely authentic. 609's contribution had evidently been to deprive the raiders of one whole escort formation. The total enemy loss for the day, including the London raid, was fifty-five, while Fighter Command lost twenty-eight aircraft.

Miller, 'whose loss was deplored by his associates', the diary records, had joined the squadron at Northolt on 26th June.

Spitfire Pilot
David Crook

On Friday 27th September, another big raid tried to get through to Bristol and we took off to intercept. When we sighted the bombers we were too far behind to be able to catch them, but they were very well taken care of by other squadrons.

Also, the CO had a bad cold and the height caused him such agony in his ears that he had to drop out. He was off flying for over a week as a result of this effort.

Anyway, we continued our patrol, and soon after we saw a squadron of Me. 110s circling over Swanage at 25,000 feet, waiting to protect the bombers on their return. We immediately turned towards the enemy fighters and started to climb above them.

They had formed one of their defensive circles, going round and round on each other's tails - altogether quite a tough nut to crack. Incidentally this was the first time in this war that we had met the enemy on even terms. Generally we were outnumbered by anything from three to one up to ten to one. But on this glorious occasion there were fifteen of them and twelve of us, and we made the most of it.

We were very close to them now and we started to dive. I think that these moments just before the clash are the most gloriously exciting moments of life. You sit there behind a great engine that seems as vibrant and alive as you are yourself, your thumb waits expectantly on the trigger, and your eyes watch the gun sights through which in a few seconds an enemy will be flying in a veritable hail of fire.

And all round you, in front and behind, there are your friends too, all eager and excited, all thundering down together into the attack! The memory of such moments is burnt into my mind forever.

I was flying just behind Mick and he turned slightly left to attack an Me. 110 which was coming towards him. But the German was as determined as Mick, and refused to give way or alter course to avoid this head-on attack. Their aggregate speed of closing was at least 600 m.p.h. and an instant later they collided.

There was a terrific explosion and a sheet of flame and black smoke seemed to hang in the air like a great ball of fire. Many little shattered fragments fluttered down, and that was all.

Mick was killed instantly and so were his two German opponents, and hardly any trace of them was ever found.

Poor old Mick! I had known him for a year, as he was at F.T.S. with me. His brother, also in the RAF was killed only two months before in a raid on Germany.

All this happened in an instant, and I turned right in order to get on to the tail of a Hun. My Spitfire immediately went into a very vicious right-hand spin - the atmosphere at these great altitudes is so rarefied that machines are very much more difficult to manoeuvre - and when I recovered I had lost my German.

The whole enemy circle had been broken up by our attack, and various Messerschmidts were streaming out to sea with our people chasing after them.

I saw an Me 110 about half a mile ahead and went after him on full throttle. He also was going flat out and diving to get extra speed, but my beloved Spitfire rose nobly to the occasion and worked up to over 400 m.p.h., and I caught him fairly easily, though we were about twenty miles out to sea by this time.

The enemy rear-gunner, who obviously had wind up, opened fire at me at rather long range, though I could see his tracer bullets flicking past me. It is an odd thing when you are being fired at by a rear-gunner that the stream of bullets seems to leave the machine very slowly and in a great outward curve. You chuckle to yourself, 'Ha, the fool's missing me by miles!' then, suddenly, the bullets accelerate madly and curl in towards you again and flick just past your head. You thereupon bend your head a little lower, mutter 'My God', or some other suitable expression and try to kill the rear-gunner before he makes any more nuisance of himself.

I dived slightly to get underneath his tail, as he could not fire at me in that position, and when in range I opened fire. I must have killed the gunner, because he never fired again, though I must have been visible to him at times and at very close range. I put all my ammunition into the fuselage and port engine and the latter started to smoke furiously. To my intense disgust my ammunition ran out before he went down and I thought that I might have to let him go after all, badly damaged though he was.

I should have been able to shoot him down easily, but on thinking it over afterwards I decided that I must have opened fire too soon - always a temptation during a hard chase - and thus I wasted the first part of my ammunition at too great a range.

But at this moment a voice said on the R.T. 'OK, OK, help coming,' and Bishop gradually overtook us and finished off the Messerschmidt, which fell into the sea. Bishop and I were credited with one-half each in this affair.

Apart from Mick's death, the whole fight had been a great success and six Huns were destroyed and one or two more probables. I bet that German squadron don't look forward to their next trip over England. I know what we should feel like if we were attacked by an equal number of Messerschmidts and half our squadron was destroyed in four minutes*.

It's a very good thing to instil into the Hun a healthy respect for the RAF!

I remember walking into the mess for lunch and sitting down and suddenly recollecting that at breakfast, only a few hours before, I had sat next to Mick at this

very table and we had chatted together. And now, here we were at the next meal, everything was quite normal, and he was dead.

That was the one thing I could never get accustomed to; seeing one's friends gay and full of life as they always were, and then, a few hours later, seeing the batman start packing their kit, their shaving brush still damp from being used that morning, while the owner was lying dead in a shattered aeroplane 'somewhere in England'.

* From The Times, 28th September 1940: ' At one time bombers with escorting fighters crossed the coast in two waves each of at least fifty machines. They were hotly attacked by AA fire and RAF fighters and six were seen to fall in flames. One had a direct hit from an AA shell and exploded in the air. Three crashed west of Poole and another fell into the sea. The funerals of four German airmen who were killed in air battle two days ago were taking place during yesterdays air battle'. This statement is not quite correct. The enemy aircraft seen to explode in the air was actually the collision between Mick and the Me 110, but as it happened at about 27,000 feet the onlookers on the ground naturally could not see exactly what occurred.

Form 540 / Operations Record Book

11/6/40. The escort and escorted aircraft left today for Orleans and the three sections spent the night in Orleans. Three new pilots were posted to the squadron from No. 600 Squadron, they are:- P/O Curchin, P/O Miller and Sergeant Feary. None are trained. There was an accident in Flying Officer Drummond-Hay's aircraft today. The incendiary ammunition exploded in the feed chute of no. 1 port Browning gun causing damage to the tank; there was no material damage to the Port Mainplane. There has been no previous instance of this curious defect, it is suggested that spontaneous combustion of the incendiary composition may have been caused by the heat of the sun. Squadrons have been permitted to experiment with back-view mirrors around the cockpit. The Squadron has obtained an experimental fitting to one aircraft; this consists of tear drops on either side of the hood - these tear drops are made of perspex and each contains a mirror which is held in by suction. The effect at present seems very good.

13/7/40. Yellow Section, F/O Dundas, P/O Miller and P/O Overton were detailed to patrol convoy at 4,000 feet west of Swanage, and did not find convoy as it was not in the position given. P/O Miller observed a large number of enemy aircraft 15,000 feet above, south of Portland. F/O Dundas and P/O Miller climbed above them and attacked from the sun. F/O Dundas shot down one Me.110 with 800 rounds, then, himself attacked by 110s, broke off the engagement and landed at Warmwell. P/O Miller carried out a short inconclusive attack on Me.110s and then fired all his rounds into a Do.17, which was seen by members of 238 Squadron who were also engaged, flying out to sea with his port engine on fire and losing height rapidly. P/O Overton, whose aircraft was not performing as it should, could not gain height quickly enough, so broke away and did not engage. Engagement took place between 14.45 - 15.00 hours. (Appendix "E")

19/7/40. PO Dundas shot down one Me. 110 and P/O Miller shot down one Do.17 in engagement in which 238 Squadron also took part. (Appendix "H".) (Ziegler's note - "Confirm here. This almost certainly refers to 13/7/40. FHZ.)

Warmwell. 13/8/40. Thirteen Spitfires left Warmwell for a memorable Tea-time party over Lyme Bay, and an unlucky day for the species Ju.87, of which no less than 14 suffered destruction or damage in a record Squadron "Bag", which also included 5 of the escorting Me's. The enemy formations, consisting of about 40 dive bombers in 4 vic formations, with about as many Me.110's and 109's stepped up above them, heading Northwards from the Channel, was surprised by 609 Squadron's down-sun attack (Appendices "D"). All thirteen of our pilots fired their guns, the casualties claimed being as follows:-

F/O P. Ostazewski.	2 Ju.87's Probable.
P/O M.J. Appleby.	1 Me. 109 and 1 Ju.87 Damaged.
F/Lt McArthur.	1 Me.109 Damaged.
F/O Nowierski.	1 Me.109 Destroyed and 1 Me.109 Damaged.
P/O D.M. Crook.	1 Me.109 Destroyed.
F/Lt F.J. Howell.	2 Ju.87's Destroyed.
F/O H.M. Goodwin.	2 Ju.87's Destroyed.
Sgt Feary.	1 Ju.87 Destroyed, and 1 Me.110 Damaged.
F/O J.C. Dundas.	1 Ju.87 Destroyed and 1 Ju.87 Damaged.
P/O C.N. Overton.	2 Ju.87's Destroyed.
P/O R.G. Miller.	1 Ju.87 Destroyed, 1 Ju.87 Probable.
P/O M.E. Staples.	1 Ju.87 Destroyed, 1 Ju.87 Damaged.

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.
1 He.111 destroyed
(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.

ADDRESSED TO 609 SQUADRON, etc No. 10 GROUP.	FROM
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P.880 28/9

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE DATED 26/9 RECEIVED 10 GROUP FROM THE
S OF S FOR AIR BEGINS
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR FIGHTING YESTERDAY – ENDS – 1055.

JONES B.

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.

ADDRESSED TO No. 609 SQUADRON, etc.
10 GROUP

FROM A O C

P.877 28/9

THE C-IN-C DESIRES ME TO CONVEY HIS CONGRATULATIONS ON THE EXCELLENT WORK OF YESTERDAY WHICH WAS EVEN MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN THAT OF THE PREVIOUS DAY IN THAT THE ENEMY WAS BROKEN UP AND PREVENTED FROM ACCURATELY BOMBING THEIR OBJECTIVE.

1050. JONES B.

ADDRESSED TO NO. 609 SQUADRON. etc. FROM No. 10 GROUP.

P.880. 28/9

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE DATED 26/9 RECEIVED 10 GROUP FROM THE S OF S FOR AIR BEGINS

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOU FIGHTING YESTERDAY - ENDS -- 1055

JONES B.

ADDRESSED TO 609 SQUADRON, etc
No. 10 GROUP.

FROM

P.889 29/9

A MESSAGE HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY THE A.O.C. FROM SIR STANLEY WHITE OF THE BRISTOL AEROPLANE COMPANY THROUGH LORD BEAVERBROOK COMMENTING ON THE FINE COURAGE DISPLAYED BY FIGHTER SQUADRONS IN BREAKING UP ENEMY ATTACKS ON FILTON ON THE 27TH INST. WHICH HE SAYS UNDOUBTEDLY SAVED THE FACTORY FROM SERIOUS DAMAGE AND HEARTENED AND ENCOURAGED ALL THE FACTORY EMPLOYEES. HE WISHES THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO BE CONVEYED TO ALL CONCERNED.

Never just a name

It has always been the intention of our museum that we should tell the story behind the exhibits that we have on display here at Shoreham. It's all too easy to simply add a label stating '*Hurricane Mk I P1234, 1st April 1940, Pilot Officer J B Bloggs killed*', to a display of relics recovered from a crash site. We try to tell the story of an incident

from the viewpoint of the aircrew, RAF & Luftwaffe, those who fought their battle from the ground, and the civilians who could only stand and watch the battle above their heads.

On display in the museum, is a crumpled panel from a Me110, Werk Nr 3297, of 9/ZG26, flown by Gefr Georg Jakstadt, together with his Radio Operator Gefr Emil Liedtke, which collided head-on with the No 609 (West Riding) Sqdn Spitfire, X4107, of Pilot Officer Rogers Miller on the 27th September 1940, not far from Dorchester, Dorset. The display included an account of the collision by Georg Jakstadt, and an eyewitness account from David Crook, one of the No 609 squadron pilots who took part in the engagement with the Me110s of 9/ZG26.

Even so, we were not satisfied with this, and after some effort, we were able to trace Rogers' sister, who was able to help us with photos and background information on Rogers, and his older brother Pilot Officer John Miller, a Wellington pilot, who had lost his life only some six weeks before Rogers.

More recently, through the Internet, we have made contact with Mark Crame, the No 609 (WR) sqdn archivist. Mark kindly sent us what information he had regarding Rogers, including the following extracts from the diary of Flight Sergeant 'Tich' Cloves, who was one of the ground crew on No 609 squadron, in charge of one of the flights. This diary, as can be seen below, is a goldmine of information. How he found the time to record the squadron's activities, and do his 'day job' is incredible. Would that every squadron had such a person! If the serial number of the Spitfire flown by Rogers on the 12th August, R6915, sounds familiar, this is no less than the Spitfire on display at the Imperial War Museum, London!

28th June. A casual conversation by one of our new pilots, Plt Off Miller, was overheard. He said that while approaching to land R6636 he heard a noise which he couldn't trace. Fortunately he discovered in time it was the hooter – he hadn't got his wheels down. Fg Off Edge reminded him that landing on the runway without wheels was apt to cause sparks, thereby setting fire to the aircraft. Incidentally, Fg Off Edge was the first pilot in the squadron to land without wheels.

13th July. Plt Off Blayney N3323 and Plt Off Crook N3023 gave a Dornier the works, which disappeared flying low over the sea, but was almost immediately spotted by another squadrons aircraft which gave chase. Fg Off Dundas R6634, Plt Off Overton L1082 and Plt Off Miller L1065 were detailed to patrol a convoy. They didn't find the convoy but got mixed up in a nice air battle. Plt Off Overton couldn't keep up in L1082 our oldest (and original) aircraft and had to dive smartly into the clouds to avoid a couple of ME's. Plt Off Miller damaged a Dornier and a ME110. Fg Off Dundas shot down a ME110. It was later confirmed that the Dornier damaged by Plt Off Miller was in fact shot down.

12th August. Air battle over Portland and Swanage. The days bag: Sgt Feary N3223 ME109 Destroyed, Fg Off Goodwin K9997 ME110 Destroyed and one Damaged, Plt Off Agazarian K9841 ME110 Destroyed and 2 109s Probably, Fg Off Newbury R6692 JU88 Probably Destroyed, Plt Off Staples L1096 ME110 Destroyed, Plt Off Miller R6915 ME110 Damaged, Plt Off Crook N3024 ME110 probably Destroyed and DO17 Damaged, Flt Lt McArthur R6977 ME110 Probably Destroyed, Fg Off Dundas N3113 ME110 Destroyed and one Damaged, and Plt Off Overton L1008 2 ME110s Probably Destroyed. Our losses nil, although three aircraft had minor bullet holes which were capable of patching in situ.

13th August. Another battle over Southampton and Portland added a few more to our mounting score. Plt Off Crook R6699 ME109 Destroyed, Fg Off Dundas R6690 JU87 Destroyed, one Damaged, Plt Off Nowierski L1082 ME109 Destroyed, One Damaged, Flt Lt Howell R6691 2 JU87s Destroyed, Fg Off Goodwin N3024 2 JU87s Destroyed, Sgt Feary L1065 JU87 Destroyed, ME110 Damaged, Pt Off

Overton 2 JU87s Destroyed (in N3113), Pt Off Staples L1008 ME109 Destroyed, JU87 Damaged, Plt Off Miller L1096 JU87 Destroyed and one Probably, Plt Off Ostazewski R6915 2 JU87s Probably Destroyed, Flt Lt McArthur R6977 ME109 Damaged and Plt Off Appleby N3223 2 ME109s and 1 JU87 Damaged. Own losses again nil, but R6691 had a few holes in the fuselage and R6690 had oil and fuel pipes shot through. Fg Off Dundas in R6690 was not aware of the damage until he approached the aerodrome, when his engine, not unnaturally, packed up. He landed down wind quite safely and finished his run on the dispersal point; a neat bit of work. Raiders dropped a few bombs in a field just outside the aerodrome at Middle Wallop.

30th August. Practice at quick scramble by 'A' Flight. Plt Off Miller L1096 was so eager to do his best, didn't wait for the starter trolley to be pulled clear, turned and damaged his rudder on it. New rudder required.

24th September. 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 September. 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 – Rees L1008 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.

27th September. 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.

(The '609 (West Riding) Squadron Archives' website can be found at '<http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/609photos/>')