

ARH BARTON's Battle of Briton story

Introduction

My father was in the Navy attached to the Fleet Air arm before war broke out. In 1940 he was required to go back on Naval duty with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

According to my mother he wanted to continue flying so he resigned his commission and joined the Royal Air Force volunteer reserves as a pilot officer.

Captain F.G. 'Woody' Woodhall, (a good friend of my father's,) in his excellent book 'Soldier Sailor and Air Man Too' (page194) States: "He left the navy because in the early days of the war he was doing more watch keeping than flying."

When he joined the VRs in July 1940, his flying time was 766.40hrs solo (day), 88.05hrs (night) and 32.40hrs dual (day), 2.45hrs (night). Also not included in the dual time was a further 12.15hrs I.F. {*Instrument flying*}. So I guess he was warmly welcomed.

His last log book entry with the FAA was on July 4th 1940 and he then started his training with no. 6 O.T.U at RAF Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire on July 8th 1940. His training consisted of Harvard (AT-6) and Hurricane; Fairey Battle and Miles Master. His conversion from the Harvard to his first solo in the Hurricane was 30 minutes. This was on his first day there. He completed his training on the 29th July 1940 and he joined 32 Squadron, Biggin Hill sometime on or before the 4th August.

In the Squadron operational records, I found that Biggin Hill was referred to as 'Base' and Hawkinge was referred to 'Forward Base.' Which made sense of his log book entries, to and from Hawkinge. Entered sometimes as 'to' F.B and 'from' F.B or 'To' B. - I have written these as he has written them.

When 32 Squadron was moved North for a rest, my father was posted to 253 Squadron at Kenley. Both Squadrons were equipped with Hurricanes. He was mostly in 'A' flight in 32 Squadron.

Note(1): In the Battle, Hurricanes were responsible for 80% of kills by the RAF. The Hurricane also took half the time to rearm and refuel as a Spitfire. She was armed with eight 0.303 calibre machine guns and a reflector sight for deflection shooting. (A necessity with wing mounted machine guns.) A really good video explanation of deflection shooting can be found on Utube. Shortcut below: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPLv45c-_is by Stewart Finney a WW2 fighter pilot. This was a really difficult art to master!

Aircraft numbers are taken from his log book. The letter prefix I have taken from the Squadron operations records and elsewhere. Sortie times are taken mainly from the Squadron operations records. {*My comments are bracketed and written in italics.*}

In writing from his log book and combat reports, I have used what he has actually written; i.e. If he has written 109, I have written this rather than change it to Me109 etc.

A special thank you to Brian Cull for letting me use material from his book 'A History Of 253 Squadron' and answering my many questions.



HURRICANE Mk 1



32 Squadron - Biggin Hill {32 Squadron was the most successful squadron in the battle so far with 102 victories before it was moved North for a rest.}

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 4th	14.30hrs	1.20hrs	Hurricane V7205	Local
	17.15hrs	0.20hrs	Hurricane L2062	To Hawkinge
	17.45hrs	0.25hrs	Hurricane L2062	From Hawkinge to Biggin
Aug 5th	09.45hrs	0.45hrs	Hurricane V7205	Formation
	11.30hrs	0.50hrs	Hurricane L2062	Aerobatics
	18.55hrs	1.10hrs	Hurricane L2062	Co-op
Aug 6th	09.40hrs	0.30hrs	Hurricane V7205	Dog Fight
	10.40hrs	0.25hrs	Hurricane N2409	Test

After the test his log book does not show the time of the sorties. {I have added them.}

The 6th and 7th August was quiet in reference to any enemy activity.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 6th	12.50hrs	0.20hrs	Hurricane P3146	To Hawkinge
	17.40hrs	0.40hrs	Hurricane P3146	To Biggin Hill and Patrol

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 7th	08.20hrs	0.20hrs	Hurricane P3481	To Hawkinge
	13.00hrs	0.20hrs	Hurricane P3481	Hawkinge to Biggin
	17.55hrs	1.20hrs	Hurricane V7223	B.H to H. & patrol

According to 32's operations records: Ordered to escort convoy off Dungeness. No enemy aircraft sighted. Landed Hawkinge.

20.10hrs	0.50hrs	Hurricane V7223	Patrol to B.H.
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On Aug 8th a large convoy named 'Peewit' passed through the Dover Straits; this was heavily attacked by the Germans. However 32 Squadron was not ordered to intercept.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 8th	05.05hrs	0.20hrs	Hurricane 7223	B.H. to H.
	08.20hrs	0.20hrs	Hurricane 7223	H. to B.H.
	11.40hrs	0.50hrs	Hurricane 7223	Patrol - Brighton

According to 32's operations records: Ordered to intercept enemy **Raid 36** over Brighton. Enemy aircraft sighted in distance but no interception made.

On the 9th & 10th August the weather was not good, so there was little flying by either side.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 10th	16.55hrs 0.20hrs	Hurricane N2596	B.H to H.
	19.30hrs 0.20hrs	Hurricane N2596	F.B. to B.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 11th	05.05hrs 0.20hrs	Hurricane N2596	To Forward Base { <i>This sortie is not recorded in his log book but, According to 32's operations records, this sortie transpired.</i> }
	07.40hrs 0.45hrs	Hurricane N 2596	Patrol to Deal

1x Me109 CONFIRMED KILL (1)

[According to 32's operations records](#): Ordered to patrol Hawkinge at 15,000ft. Visibility very good. No clouds. When between Deal and Dover at 20,000ft Fl/Lt Crossley observed 9x109's coming straight towards him at the same level. he fired a burst but observed no damage. At the same time 3x109's dived from behind. P/O Barton who was no.3 fired at the last one and saw large pieces falling off it. The destruction of this enemy aircraft was confirmed by searchlights.

From Combat Report: (Red 3 flight A) The Squadron was climbing I was to the left and behind the leader in a right hand turn. Three 109's appeared diving from behind us, to the left and slightly below, going in the same direction. I gave the last one three short bursts. Pieces flew off. I then took a quick look behind as I had heard there were eight of them. I lost sight of the damaged 109 and never saw anything else. We were flying at 20,00 feet. Visibility was very good, there was no cloud about.

Total number of rounds fired 60 per gun at 300yds with (estimated) three one to two second bursts.

109 destroyed was confirmed by Searchlight sites from Dover R.Y.L.

Sortie -- Air Time

10.05hrs 0.55hrs	Hurricane N2596	Patrol Hastings
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[According to 32's operations records](#): Ordered to accept **Raid 23** in Dover area.

Time unknown 0.45hrs	Hurricane N2596	Local (night flight) - Practice
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Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 12th	13.35hrs 0.20hrs	Hurricane N2596	B. to F.B.
	14.30hrs 0.30hrs	Hurricane N2596	Ordered to patrol Hawkinge at 8,000ft. No enemy aircraft sighted. { <i>This sortie is not recorded in his log book but, According to 32's operations records, this sortie transpired.</i> }

16.50hrs 0.30hrs	Hurricane N 2596	Interception of bombers (Do215's-26+) - (Me109's)
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[According to 32's operations records](#): Ordered to patrol Hawkinge at 10,000ft. When over Dover sighted 30/40 Do215's escorted by 30/40 Me109's flying at 12,000ft. After the initial engagement, the Squadron became split up and various combats took place ranging from Dover to North of Whitstable. One Hurricane P/O Barton was shot down and crashed near Hawkinge.

'Shot Down' Anecdote: My mother told me that he was shot down over Dover but managed to *crash land* his hurricane near Hawkinge. This was a write off. He managed to return on his own to Biggin Hill. where, when the other pilots landed, they found him already in the mess drinking a beer.

This sortie is where 12 Hurricanes of 32 Squadron were scrambled to Hawkinge where a massive dogfight took place. 5 of the Hurricanes had to land at Hawkinge to refuel and rearm amongst the bomb craters. They all managed to take off again although the Ju88s had returned from bombing Manston and Lympe and were bombing Hawkinge again.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 13th 17.00hrs 0.30hrs Hurricane B3146 To F.B.
 20.25hrs 0.20hrs Hurricane B3146 To B.

{This was the start of Eagle Day by the Luftwaffe although it was continued over onto the 15th due to adverse weather - low cloud. The low cloud continuing on the 14th also.}

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 14th 05.25hrs 0.20hrs Hurricane B3146 To F.B.
 06.45hrs 0.20hrs Hurricane B3146 Patrol

[According to 32's operations records:](#) Ordered to patrol Hawkinge below clouds. No enemy aircraft encountered. Patrol cancelled.

At 11.50hrs 32 Squadron and others were vectored towards 'Hell's Corner' (Dover to Manston). Three of the pilots made forced landings on this sortie. My father was one of them.

Sortie -- Air Time

08.30hrs 0.20hrs Hurricane B3146 To B.
 12.30hrs 0.55hrs Hurricane B3146 Interception - 109's. Down again.

Leg shot.

[According to 32's operations records:](#) Ordered to intercept enemy **Raid 34** over Dover at 14,000ft. **Barton** forced landed at Hawkinge. Aircraft was U/S (unserviceable).

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 15th 12.55hrs 0.20hrs Hurricane P3481 To F.B. On Hawkinge when bombed. Mike pinched my aeroplane. *{Fl/Lt Mike Crossley; promoted to Squadron Leader & C/O on 16th Aug. Crossley was recorded as flying Hurricane N2461, according to 32's operations records, on the 12.55hrs sortie, and my father as flying Hurricane N2459. His log book states Hurricane P3481 which I would think is more accurate and hence his log book entry of the 'pinched' aeroplane. Crossley's next sortie used Hurricane P3481 and my father's sortie N2461.}*

Sortie -- Air Time

17.20hrs 1.05hrs Hurricane N2461 From F.B to Selsey - Too late.
 18.50hrs 0.30hrs Hurricane P3900 Do17's Croydon - Kenley.

Mike & Co polished off Do17's - Sevenoaks.

[According to 32's operations records:](#) Intercept enemy raid over Croydon composed of 15/20 Ju88's & Do17's escorted by Me110's & Me109's. The Squadron attacked and the combat became general. All Hurricanes returned safely and landed at Biggin Hill.

The 15th of August was the largest air battle so far. It was that evening that Winston Churchill said (not yet to Parliament) his immortal words: " Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." It was also the first day that the Luftwaffe bombed London, albeit by mistake.

At 15.30hrs 32 Squadron and 5 others are scrambled to intercept nearly 300 German aircraft.

At 18.20hrs 32 Squadron and 610 Squadron (Spitfires) are scrambled to intercept incoming bombers and 109's that are heading towards Biggin Hill. 610 Squadron originally head for the bombers but instead both squadrons head for the fighters. The bombers continue towards Biggin but attack West Malling (Maidstone) by mistake. 32 Squadron decides to chase the bombers but is told to return to Biggin where they see smoke from the direction of South London.

At 18.50hrs some bombers, Me110's continued towards London. Their target was Kenley but they attacked Croydon by mistake just as 32 and 111 Squadron arrived.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 16th 12.15hrs 1.05hrs Hurricane P3900 Interception - 109's - Dover

[According to 32's operations records:](#) Ordered to patrol Dover at 10,000ft. Me109's were attacked over Dover and 3 were shot down. All aircraft returned safely to Biggin Hill.

At 12.15hrs A large formation was approaching the Kent coast between Folkestone and Brighton. 32 and two other Squadrons were scrambled. The three Squadrons attacked the enemy bomber formation at the same time hoping to split them apart. This quickly became a spectacular mix-up of bombers and fighters weaving all over the Kent sky.

14.30hrs 0.45hrs Hurricane P3900 Patrol

[According to 32's operations records:](#)

Ordered to patrol Hawkinge at 10,000ft. No enemy aircraft sighted.

16.40hrs 1.05hrs Hurricane P3900 100+ Base - 2x 109's down

2x Me109's CONFIRMED KILL (2&3)

[According to 32's operations records:](#) Ordered to intercept enemy raid in Biggin Hill area. While being vectored back to base a large formation of Ju88's & Me110's escorted by Me109's were met, and the main body attacked head-on. 2x Ju88's and 2x Ju110's were destroyed.

P/O Barton destroyed 2x Me109's.

On the right side of his log book: Chasing 110's out over Tunbridge - Mixed up with 7x 109's that came in over the top. Turned around in tight circle, and squirted as they attacked one by one.

From Combat Report: Suggest 17.30hrs 10 to 15mins after bombers left vicinity of base.

(Red 2 flight A) As I was chasing a Ju88 Southward from base at about 15,000ft, several 109's appeared just overhead going Northward. I saw them turn, so I left the bomber and started to turn round quickly to the right. A 109 appeared to make a half hearted dive at me and shot round in front of me in a climbing turn to the right. I fired bursts at him, turning inside him and firing at 1/4 deflection. Bits flew off and white smoke came from his engine. He wobbled and turned over. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see three more in line astern flying quietly round to the right, apparently playing ring of roses. I turned around in a right hand turn some more. Another 109 did exactly the same thing and I dealt with him in exactly the same way. White smoke came from his engine and from his starboard wing root. He went down. I turned round some more, and found myself on the tail of another 109. I had no ammunition, so went down out of it.

I fired about 1/3rd of my ammunition at each 109 at 200yds, the other third I had fired at the Ju88 without apparent damage earlier on.

(Written underneath in longhand - 2x 109's destroyed probable.)

These two 109's were later confirmed destroyed.

August 17th was a day of rest for both sides. Although it was a gorgeous summer day the Luftwaffe didn't attack. There was the occasional reconnaissance flight from the Germans but fighter command did not order interception. The Germans needed a breather and a chance to lick their wounds. When it was clear that there was not going to be any attacks that day, the British pilots were stood down and the airfields and radar had their repairs finished. Our main problem now was a shortage of pilots. The Czechoslovakian pilots were made operational and then later the Poles.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 18th **13.00hrs** 1.00hrs Hurricane P3900 Raid on base (Battle of Biggin)

1x Ju88 CONFIRMED KILL (4)

According to 32's operations records: Ordered to intercept enemy bombing raid on aerodrome at Biggin Hill. The squadron met approximately 60 bombers escorted by 40 fighters who were attempting to bomb the aerodrome at 15,000ft. Attacked them, broke up their formation and shot down or damaged 15 enemy aircraft. Only three of our aircraft totally destroyed.

P/O Barton, 1x Ju88 destroyed.

From Combat Report: I was flying (Red 3 Flight A), After the section had attacked the leading section of 215's approaching base, we became involved with escorting 110's. There were very many attacking me all at once, so soon I climbed out of it up sun. I noticed a long line of bombers reforming to go home (88's & 215's). I went in behind a section of Ju88's and attacked the right hand one. I had about half my ammunition left. After one burst, bits flew off the fuselage - I put another burst into his starboard engine - smoke and flame came from it. He wobbled and lost his position in the section. I had no ammunition left and there was a good deal of opposing fire, so I went down. I did not see him come down - but it is extremely unlikely that he could have got home.

Details: Number of enemy aircraft - 100. Time of attack - 20 to 30mins after take-off (V. approx). Between Base and S. Coast. Enemy height 12,000ft. Range was 300yds in 2 to 3 second bursts (approx.) Half ammunition fired. 1x Ju88 destroyed.

Sortie -- Air Time

Time unknown 0.50hrs Hurricane P3900 Raid - Missed - Dover

{This sortie is in his Log Book but not listed in operations records.}

17.15hrs 0.50hrs Hurricane P3900 Raid - Deal - took on escort of

15x 109's

On the right side of his log book: Had to cope with escort alone, as no R/T. {Radio Telephone. This had been knocked out by the raids on the airfields in the morning but was meant to have been restored by early afternoon.} Went round inside in defensive circle. Raid underneath turned home over Canterbury. Pity - bad shooting - too busy.

According to 32's operations records: 9 aircraft ordered to investigate Enemy raid north of Canterbury. Encountered 50 bombers escorted by 30 fighters coming in from the Thames Estuary, North of Herne Bay. Attacked them and broke up the formation. We lost 3 aircraft, Cat 3. {Totally destroyed. However the 3 pilots bailed out; 2 wounded with burns, all were safe} 5x 109's were destroyed. 6 of the patrol {my father one of them} landed safely at Biggin Hill.

'The Battle of the Airfields'. This was the day that Kenley was very nearly totally destroyed. Kenley and Biggin Hill were the two targets for the morning raids. Kenley first, then Biggin Hill. The 'Battle of Biggin' only lasted about 10 minutes and got off lightly as most of the bombs fell to the East of the airfield, thanks to 32 and 610 (Spitfire) Squadrons. (This Became known as the 'Hardest Day'.)

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 19th	08.30hrs 0.20hrs	Hurricane P3900	To F.B.
	13.05hrs 0.25hrs	Hurricane P3900	To B.
	16.50hrs 0.20hrs	Hurricane P3900	To F.B.
	20.10hrs 0.20hrs	Hurricane P3900	To B.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 20th	05.35hrs 0.20hrs	Hurricane P3900	To F.B.
	08.15hrs 0.35hrs	Hurricane P3900	To B.
	15.15hrs 1.25hrs	Hurricane P3900	Patrol. Chased 215 with P Smith {actually P/O Smythe} over Estuary

According to 32's operations records: (Fighting Patrol & Enemy Raid.) Ordered to patrol Base. Then vectored to intercept enemy raid over the Thames Estuary. P/O Smythe attacked a Do215 at 10,000ft over the Estuary getting in several bursts. P/O Barton confirms that it was damaged.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 21st	12.55hrs 0.20hrs	Hurricane P3900	To F.B.
	17.00hrs 0.20hrs	Hurricane P3900	To B.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 22nd	08.25hrs 1.15hrs	Hurricane P3900	To F.B. & Patrol
	10.20hrs 1.30hrs	Hurricane P3900	To B. (Shelled convoy)
	12.40hrs 1.00hrs	Hurricane P3900	Patrol & to Base (109's D.B. - nil)

{D.B.? The Me109 in 1940 was fitted with the DB 601 Daimler Benz engine. Could he mean this? Previously the aircraft had been fitted with the Junkers Jumo engine.}

The weather forecast was for rain and heavy winds which prevented much action by the Luftwaffe, however there was a convoy, code named 'Totem', battling heavy seas off the Dover Straits and being shelled by heavy guns on the French coast. In the afternoon, 109's were sent over to strafe the Aerodromes which was his last sortie.

According to 32's operations records: Escort to convoy which was shelled by long range guns from the French coast. No enemy aircraft sighted. *{All three of these sorties were escorting the convoy.}*

Sortie -- Air Time

	17.00hrs 0.20hrs	Hurricane P3900	To F.B.
	18.35hrs 1.00hrs	Hurricane P3900	Raid interception - (Manston) Chased 109's

According to 32's operations records: 'B' flight on escort to Anson on spotting duties in the channel. Joined by 'A' flight at 18.36hrs and ordered to intercept enemy **Raid 32**. Enemy bombers escorted by Me110's and 109's were intercepted at 3,000ft. One Do215 was attacked between Manston and Deal by three pilots. Ordered to patrol Base. No enemy aircraft sighted. All 11 hurricanes landed safely Biggin Hill 19.35hrs.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 23rd	Time unknown 0.20hrs	Hurricane V6567	Test <i>{I have no other details}</i>
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Note (2): Around this time the Luftwaffe sent fighters over to strafe the airfields etc. This was to make the British send up their fighters to chase them off. The British however had orders to attack the bombers not the fighters, so only a handful of aircraft were scrambled after these raiders. Pilots were told not to chase these raiders back over the channel, but it happened anyway. My father did this on the 24th August at 16.05hrs.

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 24th 14.30hrs 1.20hrs Hurricane V6566 To F.B. & Patrol

According to 32's operations records: Ordered to patrol Hawkinge. At 20,000ft over Dover they were attacked by 12x Me109's. One was 'destroyed' & one was listed as 'probably destroyed'.

2x Hurricanes were destroyed.

{Here is where there seems to be a discrepancy in his log book with the sortie times from operations records. He writes his third sortie at 17.10 hrs as where he chases the Me 109 to France but if we look at the airtimes, it is obvious he wrote his comments in the wrong section. I have corrected this here.}

16.05hrs 1.00hrs Hurricane V6566 Patrol 109's as before - chase to France. 4 guns jammed. 1x Damaged.

According to 32's operations records: Ordered to patrol Hawkinge. At 16.00hrs at 10,000ft over Folkestone 15x Me109's were encountered. A dog fight ensued and 2 were destroyed. P/O Barton chased one to the French Coast and damaged it.

From Combat Report: After engaging 109's over Folkestone at 15,000ft for some five minutes, I chased one of them across the Channel. He was diving, and at about 7,000ft, I began to catch him up. He was taking fairly skilled avoiding action but I managed to give him four bursts of approximately 2 seconds each at 300 to 200yds range during the fight. When I had no ammunition left, he was flying strait and level at about 150mph at about 1,000ft. I flew around near him. He showed no interest. I left him before he crossed the French coast. I only had four guns firing, the remainder had separated cases.

Details: (Yellow Flight A) Number of enemy Me109's x 15. Time 16.00hrs at 15,000ft over Folkestone. 4 to 2 second bursts at 300yds commencement - approximately 600 rounds.

1 Damaged Me109

Sortie -- Air Time

17.10hrs 0.40hrs Hurricane V6566 Patrol - 109's - just up

19.10hrs 0.20hrs Hurricane V6566 To B. (Being shelled at F.B.)

*{Last sortie was Hurricane **N2921** According to 32's operations records.}*

According to 32's operations records: Ordered on patrol from base. Recalled 19.40hrs.

{The fact that his guns had jammed, makes it likely that he did in fact change aircraft and also possibly, for the previous sortie, as 5 minutes for a refuel and rearm is precious little time. However a Hurricane could be rearmed and refuelled in only 9 minutes!}

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 25th 08.25hrs 0.40hrs Hurricane V6447 .

14.00hrs 0.20hrs Hurricane V6447

According to 32's operations records: To Forward Base and from Forward base.

{Neither of these are recorded in his log book.}

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 25th 16.55hrs 0.40hrs Hurricane V6546 To F.B
17.50hrs 0.20hrs Hurricane V6546 Patrol with 'Shag' - 'The Magic ????'
{This was F/O AF Eckford but it has been impossible to decipher my father's writing - below.}



Sortie -- Air Time

18.20hrs 2.00hrs Hurricane V6546 Rescue of 'Beacon' Rose from
Channel

Anecdote: This was P/O Jack Rose. He recalled that on the morning of 25 August each pilot on the Squadron was issued with a pack of fluorescene to sew on their life jacket. While waiting at dispersal, Rose borrowed an outsize needle and passed the time sewing on the pack to his life jacket. Later that day, he was forced to bail out, landing in the English Channel. After floating for two hours a searching aircraft from his squadron spotted the trail left by the colored dye in the water. A ship was directed to him and he was rescued. {The fluorescene was a new development for the pilots and Rose was convinced that this saved his life and hence my father's use of 'Beacon' Rose.}

According to 32's operations records: Ordered to patrol Dover. 12x Do 215's escorted by 36xMe109's were intercepted at 14,000ft South of Dover. P/O Rose was shot down and bailed out landing in the sea, but was rescued uninjured after 1x1/2 hours. There is no mention of the He126 that my father damaged.

From Combat Report: We sighted the He126 near Dungeness. He sighted us at about the same time and went down on the water and made for France. Green 1 went in whilst I watched for the reported 109's. We were below a thin and broken cloud cover.

Green 1 broke away - I went in and gave two to three second bursts between 300 and 200yds, during which I saw tracers going into the He126. There was no answering fire. I broke away quickly, as I thought green 1 had broken away because he had sighted the escort. I lost sight of the He126 and came home.

Details: B flight {assumedly B2} - Total number of rounds fired 1,000 - Mid Channel off Folkestone at 500ft. Opened fire at 300yds - two 3 second bursts.

1 Damaged He126

Sortie -- Air Time

Aug 26th 06.00hrs 0.20hrs Hurricane P3460 To F.B.
08.30hrs 0.20hrs Hurricane P3460 To B.
12.05hrs 1.20hrs Hurricane P3460 Patrol

According to 32's operations records: Fighting Patrol of base. No enemy aircraft sighted.

Sortie -- Air Time

Sept 1st Time unknown 1.45hrs Hurricane P2976 To Acklington
{RAF Acklington in Northumberland. 32 Squadron moved to Acklington on Aug 28th. For some reason my father did not fly there until Sept1st}
Sept 5th Time unknown 0.20hrs Hurricane P3460 Patrol
Sept 8th Time unknown 0.45hrs Hurricane P4200 Patrol

253 Squadron - Kenley {My father must have had two day's leave as he arrived sometime on the 10th September.} **From 'A History of 253 Squadron by Brian Cull'**

Sortie -- Air Time

Sept 11th	Time unknown	0.35hrs	Hurricane V6637	Local
	15.15hrs	1.15hrs	Hurricane V6637	Patrol (8 for Squadron out of 60 + 111's & Do's)

On the right side of his log book: Squadron dead head-on at block. Completely smashed & turned back. 10 to 15 parachutes counted. 1 presumably given here.

According to 253's operations records: 10 Hurricanes left Kenley at 15.15hrs to orbit base at 5,000ft then ordered to vector 090 degrees at 20,000ft to intercept **Raid 44**. After several further vectors Squadron were told to orbit, when formation of some 30 He111's and Do215's escorted by approximately 50 Me109's and Me110's above, were sighted at 16,000ft some 30 miles East of Dover heading N.W. Squadron headed N.N.E. climbing to about 1,000ft above the bombers and changing the formation to sections echelon Starboard and delivered beam attack onto the bomber formation who were then at 15,500ft, out of the sun. The result of this was that 3 bombers were seen to be in flames followed by a number of enemy aircraft smoking badly. The bombers signalled to their fighter escort by firing a red rocket. After the main attack several pilots had individual combats in which 2 enemy E/A were destroyed and one damaged. Visibility was exceptionally good with no cloud but slight ground haze. No evasive tactics employed by enemy who apparently did not see our fighters until attack was delivered. Our losses: one Hurricane Cat.1 and 1 Hurricane Cat.2 Enemy casualties: Two Me109's destroyed; three Do215's destroyed; one He111 probable, one Me110 damaged; two He111's damaged and one Do215 damaged.

From 'A History of 253 Squadron by Brian Cull': Three Do17's were claimed shot down jointly by the combined fire of six pilots (P/O's Samolinski, Murch, **Barton** and Nowark and S/gt's Kee, and Dredge). Apparently a wholesale misidentification by the pilots, as there were no Do17's on this operation - only He111's, Bf109's and Bf110's.

Sortie -- Air Time

18.25hrs	1.15hrs	Hurricane P5179	Patrol (missed raid)
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Note (3): The 11th of September was the day Hitler intended to invade Britain, but of course he wasn't ready as we had so far defeated all his attempts of destroying the airfields, radar, the RAF and our coastal defences. Fighter command made sure that the Hurricanes concentrated on the bombers and the Spitfires on the fighters.

Sortie -- Air Time

Sept 14th	15.25	1.20hrs	Hurricane N2588	Patrol (Higgins gone - 109's)
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On the right side of his log book: Big dog fight - Hit 109 here

According to 253's operations records: 8 Hurricane took off 15.20 to 15.25hrs to patrol Tenterden. They were vectored to Maidstone then ordered to intercept enemy bombers flying at 15,000ft. No bombers however were encountered but a formation of 12 Me109's was seen at 20,000 to 22,000ft. Squadron who were flying in sections Vic with one aircraft rear at 18,000ft about 5 miles west of Faversham turned S.W. towards the sun and while turning were attacked by the Me109's (who were yellow nosed.) A short dog fight ensued Sgt. Higgins was killed. {Re: my father's log book entry.} One Me109 was destroyed and we lost two Hurricanes.

Sortie -- Air Time

18.10hrs	0.50hrs	Hurricane P3551	Patrol
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September the 15th became known as **Battle of Britain Day**

"The crux of the Battle of Britain" - Churchill

Sortie -- Air Time

Sept 15th 11.15hrs 1.25hrs Hurricane V6698 Patrol (17's & 111's)
Ix Do17 off Herne Bay

*{Actually Hurricane **P3609** According to 253's operations records. The Do17 may well have been a Do215, again according to 253's operations records. In his combat report there has been an alteration to a Do215. See Note 4}*

On the right side of his log book: Squadron head-on - no visible results. Found solo Do17- 2,000ft
1x Do215 (Do17) CONFIRMED KILL (5) below.

(This was a Dornier from 111 Gruppe, No:2578, K/W Keck - 2 killed - 2 missing. Bomber forced out of formation by fighters over London and shot down by my father near Herne Bay.)

According to 253's operations records: 10 Hurricanes took off from Kenley at 15.15 hrs with 501 Squadron to intercept **Raid 10**. Squadron who were flying in sections Vic were vectored in company with 501 Squadron to Maidstone area at 15,000ft when 17 Do215's were sighted on Starboard bow 18,000ft with large fighter escort above. Squadron turned left and climbed to 18,000ft delivering head on attack onto bomber formation. Several bombers were apparently damaged. **P/O Barton shot down a Do215 in the sea off Herne Bay**. Visibility good with little cloud above 10 to 12,000ft. 10 Hurricanes landed 12.15 to 12.40hrs. Our losses nil. Enemy casualties were 1 Do215 destroyed over sea and two Do215 damaged over land.

From Combat Report: **(Red 4 flight A)** I was flying Red 4 when we attacked a formation of Do215's. After breaking away downwards from the Squadron attack on the main enemy formation, I saw a Do215 *{this is where it has been altered}* flying some 2,000ft below and 5 miles to Starboard of the main bomber formation. I delivered three head on attacks firing about 3 seconds in each attack. He turned and made off South losing height after the second attack, his Starboard engine on fire. After the third attack he seemed to have lost control to a certain extent; he circled and lost height. About eight minutes after my having ceased fire he crashed into the sea about 4 miles N.W. of Herne Bay. Details: Number of Enemy 40 to 50; Do215's, 17's, Me110's & Me109's. Time of attack 12.20hrs over Thames Estuary (nr. Herne Bay) at 13,000ft. First attack 3secs - 600rounds at 150yds. second attack 3secs - 600rounds at 150yds. Third attack 3secs - 600rounds at 150yds.

From 'A History of 253 Squadron by Brian Cull': 15th Sept: A massive raid began forming and 10 Hurricanes of 253 Squadron scrambled at 11.15hrs to engage and, in the company of 501 Squadron, hit the first wave of Do17's of 111/KG76. **253 claimed one shot down into the sea of Herne Bay by P/O Tony Barton.**

Note (4): So was this aircraft a Do215 or a Do17? Both aircraft are near identical in appearance. The '215' was originally an export version of the '17'. The small differences would be hard to notice in combat. From what I have read, the enormous armada crossing the channel and stretching some two miles wide, were made up of Do17's escorted by Me109's at a height of between 15,000 and 26,000ft. These Dorniers were known as 'Flying Pencils' owing to their slender fuselage.

Sortie -- Air Time

Sept 15th 14.15hrs 1.10hrs+ Hurricane V6698 Patrol - Head-on at Heinkels
crashed - legs open - All alone again

{'Legs open' - assumedly he is referring to the undercarriage being down when he crashed}

On the right side of his log book: Squadron reduced this formation of He's from 25 to 13. Head on as above {referring to previous sortie} 13 turned back. Went through remainder head-on alone on their way back over channel. One given here - maybe more.

According to 253's operations records: 9 Hurricanes took off from Kenley to intercept **Raid 24.** Squadron was ordered to patrol base at 15,000ft. When at 4,000ft South of Base 16 bombers probably Do215's were sighted with fighter escort approximately 18,000ft about 10 miles S.E of Base heading N.W. Squadron endeavoured to engage but while climbing for position sighted about 35 Do215's and He111's again with very large fighter escort above at 15,000ft on Port quarter of first formation of E/A. Squadron turned in to attack but bombers turned a right handed circle onto a Southerly course. Squadron then endeavoured to position themselves for head-on attack when 15 Me110's were seen to dive towards hurricanes, who turned in immediately on to the bombers delivering beam attack to very close range. After breaking away, individual pilots delivered attacks on to odd smaller bomber formations. 1 Hurricane damaged - Cat 3 {my father's}

{My father's Hurricane V6698 was damaged by return fire from the bombers at about 15.30hrs and he had to make a forced landing at Hawkinge. He was unhurt. In fact he doesn't even mention it in his log Book. I have read that he was shot down by a Me109 and bailed out; this is untrue.}

Sortie -- Air Time

Sept 17th 10.35hrs 1.05hrs Hurricane P5179 Fighter Patrols 110's & 109's

On the right side of his log book: Written in pencil - 3 destroyed presumably given here. Difficult to trace. {Maybe he's referring to his total score to date?}

There are no detailed records from 253 squadron for any of the scrambles for the 17th or 18th of September; only that each scramble was an Interception.

Sortie -- Air Time

Sept 18th	12.40hrs	1.10hrs	Hurricane P3537	Patrol
	Time unknown	1.10hrs	Hurricane P3537	Patrol
	16.25hrs	1.25hrs	Hurricane N2588	Patrol

Sortie -- Air Time

Sept 20th	Time unknown	0.45hrs	Hurricane V6756	Weather test
	11.05hrs	1.00hrs	Hurricane R2686	Patrol - Shot Down - Age

On the right side of his log book: Squadron formation =10 - 3 threes of Vic. 1x Weaver. Weaver=me

According to 253's operations records: 10 Hurricanes took off from Kenley at 11.05hrs to patrol Base at 10,000ft. Squadron were then vectored to Maidstone area where yellow section got separated in cloud. When yellow section emerged from the cloud they were attacked by 12 Me109's at 10,000ft. Yellow leader (Fl/Lt Duke-Woolley) reports that at least 3 of the Me109's were painted light blue and yellow and were yellow nosed. Red and blue sections were flying in Vic at 14,000ft with one aircraft in the box over Maidstone area when they were ordered to join up with friendly

fighters above. At that moment they were attacked by the fighters which proved to be a formation of 20 He113's which dived from 16,000ft onto the Squadron, breaking up the formation. The Squadron endeavoured to reform and while doing so were dived on by Spitfires. Squadron while taking evasive action were separated in cloud. P/O Barton was admitted to Ashford Hospital with slight wounds from cannon shell.

From 'A History of 253 Squadron by Brian Cull':P/O Barton's R2636 coming down near Ashford at 11.30 following combat with Bf109's. He was wounded and admitted to Ashford Hospital.

From 'Airman's stories' (Battle of Britain Monument): Barton was shot down in his hurricane, R2636, crashed and burned out. He was severely wounded and admitted to Ashford Hospital.

{253 Squadron had three Hurricanes shot down between Ashford and Maidstone. P/O John Greenwood who flew with my father in 253 Squadron confirms that he was shot down and badly wounded - not with slight wounds as stated in the operations record. My father did not return to operations until February 16th 1941, I would therefore assume he was definitely 'badly wounded'. My mother told me the same story.}

On the right side of his log book further down the page he writes:

Official score for Aug & Sept: 5x Destroyed & 3x Probable's.

{Searching records and the Internet, I have been able to find confirmation of those listed below; apart from the 11th September for which there seems to be no official record.}

11th August	1x Me109	Destroyed	(1)
16th August	2x Me109's	Destroyed	(2&3)
18th August	1x Ju88	Destroyed	(4)
15th September	1x Do17 (215)	Destroyed	(5)
24th August	1x Me109	Damaged	
25th August	1x He126	Damaged	

11th September Do, Me, He? Destroyed (1/2)?

{His Log Book says: '1 presumably given here'. We know from the operations records that 3 Dornier's were shot down and that from Brian Cull's 'History of 253 Squadron' six pilots, my father amongst them, claimed three Dornier's shot down; but My father did not write a combat record that day and then there is the mystery of what type of bomber was shot down. Brian Cull writes that no Dornier's were present that day; so what was the bomber? And, was my father given a credit of a 1/2 kill?}

(From associated press) - His first DFC Citation reads:

Act. Fl/ Lt. ARH BARTON, R.A.F. V.R. No. 124 Sqn.—This officer has proved himself to be a keen and courageous pilot. He fought with great distinction in the Battle of Britain and destroyed five enemy aircraft before he was himself shot down and severely wounded. Fl/Lt. Barton resumed operational flying in February 1941, since when he has participated in many sorties against the enemy. Throughout; he has set a magnificent example.