

## THE PECHBUSQUE JUNKERS88

You will certainly remember that we found the remains of a Junkers88 (« Ju88 ») which was shot down near Toulouse in 1944;

This German aircraft was performing night training when it was caught by surprise by an English Mosquito, handled by Alexander Lawson, which had taken off from Sardinia a few hours earlier.. Taking advantage of the bright night, he shot down the JU88 which did not expect such a threat.

You can read here appended (i) a copy of Alexander Lawson's logbook, showing this mission and this kill (ii) the accident report written by the German Army. Although it was coded with the famous "Enigma" machine, the British managed to read and translate it and such messages were stored in the so-called "ultra" files. (iii) then, its translation (in French);

Alexander Lawson will end the war as Squadron Leader with 3 confirmed kills and with one the highest decoration: the "Distinguished Flying Cross".

Recently, new searches on site lead us to find interesting JU88 parts (picture 1) , which we will look at together:

- this plate (picture 2) provides us with many information: the aircraft type (we are facing a Junkers88 A-5, an extended wing version), and the manufacturing date. The aircraft part that bore this plate was built under Junkers Licence by Arado, thus this name appearing;
- the second label (picture 3) shows instructions concerning the hydraulic system (translation: "be careful! Connect or disconnect the trim only when the rotating condenser has been trimmed");
- this plate (picture 4) was affixed on the rudder pedal ("einneitspedal") of the JU88.
- A cover in good status (picture 6) can be positioned in the cockpit area: it shows instructions for the pilot concerning the engine start;
- This small wheel (picture 8) was to adjust the bombersight Löfte 7C. (The JU88 was a bomber too);
- This small component (picture 10) marked "boot/frei" (translation: "boat/free") was next to the lever enabling the release of the inflatable dinghy which was on board the JU88, in case it had to ditch in the sea.
- Finally, this small part with graduation (picture 12) was the lower part of the bombersight instrument.

After having worked on the remains of the crashed aircraft, it is interesting to try to know more about the men that were behind theses machines; This is what we did.

The first element reaches me by chance: a Danish aircraft passionate reading one of my "post" on an internet site contacted me to propose me a picture of one the JU88 crew members. As a matter of fact, he had an obituary in his possession and scanned to me (picture 13). A very moving document that allows seeing the face of one the JU88 crew member: the gun operator, who was in the back of the JU88.

Then, on the English side, I discover that the Mosquito pilot kept on flying after the war. I start to think that he still may be alive.. I start to look for him: I send in England letters, emails, to several pilots association, historical RAF squadron association, friends, etc.. to try to locate him

This search remains vane, during two years, until this morning when my phone rings, and an elderly voice asks to speak with me: this was him, I had a contact with Alexander Lawson.

A few months later, I met him in London (picture 14) and he explained me in detail this night of January 6, 1944, when, with three mosquitos', they had flown above Toulouse to harass the German crews that were performing training.

Alexander provided me also with the name of his navigator, who lives in New Zealand, and who described me as well this war mission.

This new enquiry will have permitted not only to show interesting aircraft parts, but also put a face on names of protagonists of this war event.

Because this is the essential goal of our quest: taking out of oblivion each human person and its story, that lays behind any aircraft parts;

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