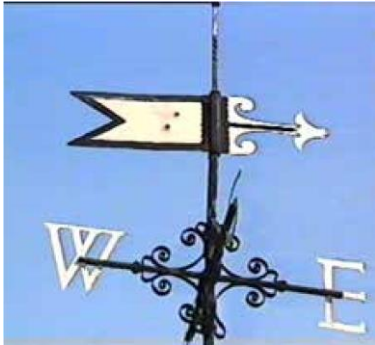


Village Echoes

GOUDHURST DURING THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN -Planes



In an earlier Village Echo we dealt with ARP logbook records of bombs that had fallen on Goudhurst Parish during the Battle of Britain, July to October 1940. We now turn to the planes that came down, both British and German. To recap, during this period Goudhurst Parish was divided into 10 sectors:

1. Winchett Hill,
- 2.- Ballards-Trowswell,
- 3.- Ladham,
- 4.- Iden Green,
- 5- Central Goudhurst,
- 6- Risebridge,
- 7- Bedgebury,
- 8- Smugley,
- 9- Kilndown and
- 10- Flimwell and each sector had its own ARP Wardens.

The Luftwaffe began waves of air attacks on British airfields on 13 August 1940 and the RAF responded with defensive sorties. The ARP logbooks show that the first plane to come down in Goudhurst was on 31 August. A Hurricane was reported down at Sugar Loaf, Bedgebury at 2.55pm. The pilot, Sqdn. Leader Peter Townsend (yes, the Peter Townsend) baled out and survived, but his plane was “smashed to pieces”. A few days later, on the morning of 6 September, a British plane came down in the south west corner of sector 6. The Hurricane was burnt out but the pilot, P.O. H W Eliot, had parachuted out and survived.

On 9 September at 5.45pm a British Hurricane was reported down in a hop garden at Lime Trees Farm in sector 4. The plane was wrecked and the pilot P.O. S B Parnall, was dead. At 6.00pm another plane was reported to have come down in the north west corner of sector 3, and 5 minutes later, a 2nd report of a plane down in the south east corner of sector 2. This was the same plane and it had come down at Bockinfold Farm in sector 2. The plane, a Hurricane, was wrecked and the pilot , P.O. G J Drake, was killed. A short while later, at 8.30pm, a German Messerschmidt was reported down at the top of Rosemary Lane, Kilndown, sector 10. The pilot, Uffz. M Massmann, survived and was taken prisoner by the Military.

On 15 September 1940, subsequently designated 'Battle of Britain Day', the Germans mounted their biggest air attack yet but the RAF planes outnumbered the Luftwaffe. At around 2.49pm a plane came down behind the waterworks at Risebridge, sector 6. It was originally thought to be a German plane but was later identified as a Spitfire. The pilot, P.O. R H Holland escaped by parachute and survived. At around 3.15pm a German Dornier bomber crashed near Priors Heath. The fire set the woods alight and then its load of bombs exploded. Sadly, John Waters of Kilndown, a member of the Home Guard, died following the explosion.

On 2 October at 10.12am a plane was reported coming down at Smugley. Confirmation followed that the plane, a Messerschmidt 109, had come down at Forge Farm, not Smugley. The pilot, Gefr. H Zagg, was found severely wounded and was taken prisoner by the Military. Then, on October 7 a message came in from Tenterden central asking about a plane reported to have come down in the Parish. The following day Goudhurst ARP confirmed that a Messeschmidt 109 had crashed on the boundary with Flimwell and the pilot, Uffz. Lederer, was wounded and had been taken prisoner by the Military.

On occasion planes had come down in neighbouring parishes but the pilots' parachutes had carried them to Goudhurst. On 16 August Sgt. Ralph Carnall of the RAF landed in an orchard at Little Trottenden. He had suffered burns to his face, neck and hands and was transported to Tunbridge Wells hospital. His plane had come down at Palmers Green Farm in Brenchley. On 15 September a dead German pilot was found at Curtisden Green by Mr Kendon. Uffz Richard Lenz was transported to the mortuary. A badly wounded German, Otto Krumhelium, had come down at Quarry Field south of Fegans and was transported with an armed guard to the Casualty Clearing Station at Benenden.

The official end of the Battle of Britain came on 31 October 1940. Nearly 3000 men had taken part, either with the RAF or the Fleet Air Arm, and of those 544 lost their lives.



*A still from Spitfire
Summer*

*John Blunt retelling how
he and his father were
blown up by a bomb on
a crashed German bomber
in Kilndown*

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