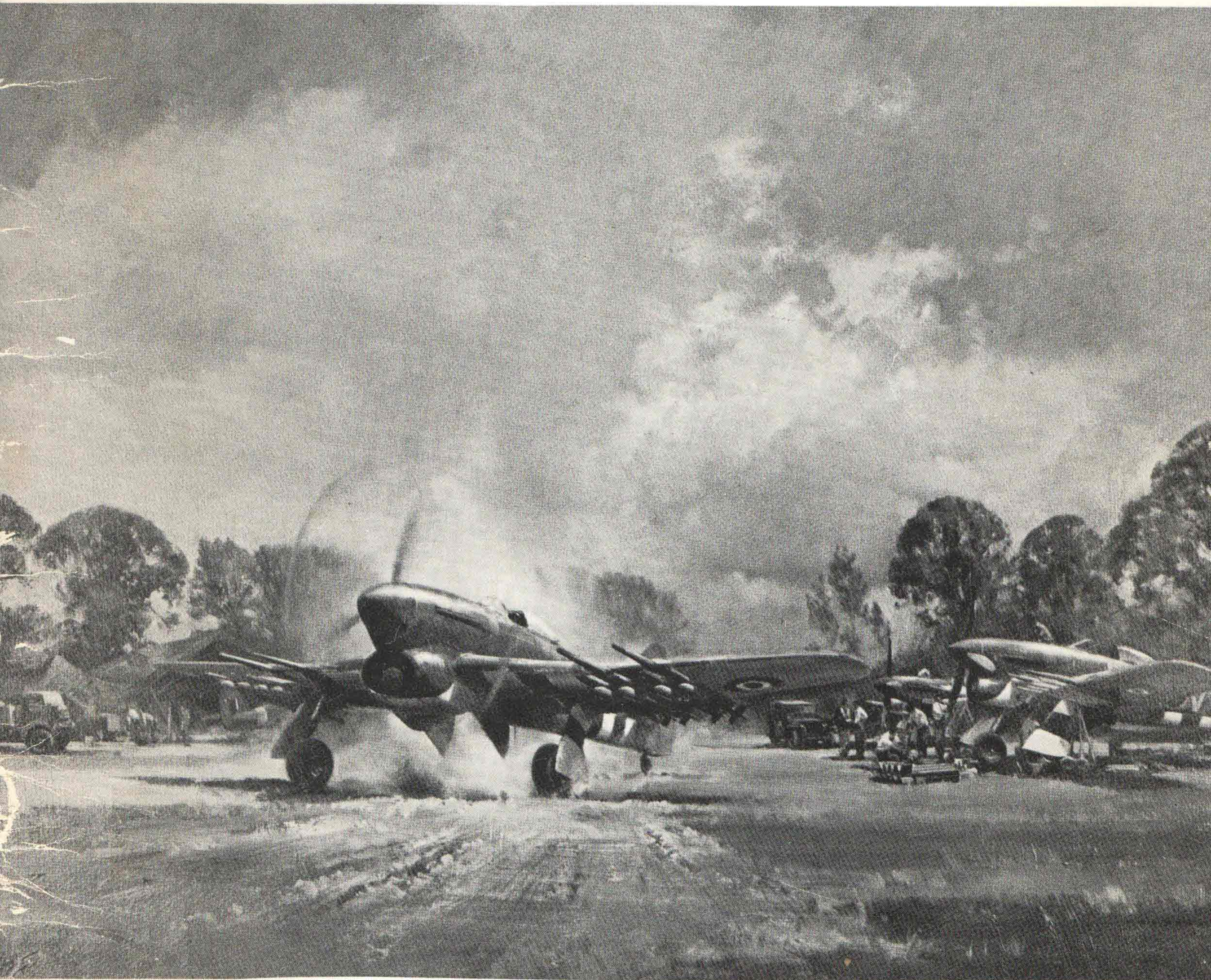


# The *CAHS* Journal



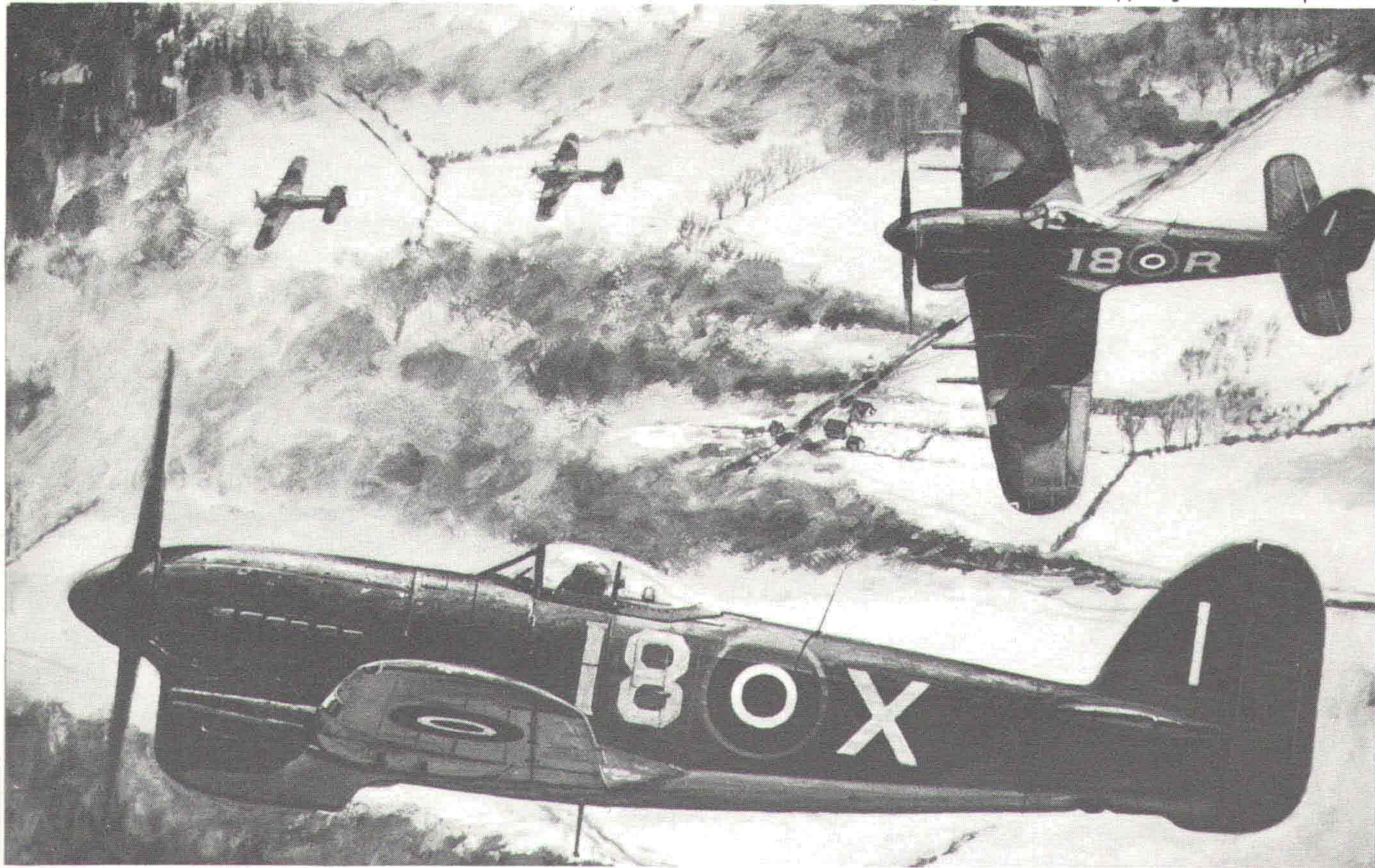
published by the  
**CANADIAN  
AVIATION  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

**VOL. 22, NO. 2, SUMMER '84**



**HAWKER TYPHOON, NORMANDY 1944**  
*painting by FRANK WOOTTON*

Painting by Don Connally of Typhoons of 440 Squadron, RCAF. While not the Author's unit, these aircraft are engaged in similar close-support, ground attack operations.



# **RECOLLECTIONS**

**OF A**

# **TYPHOON PILOT**

**JACK G. BROWN**  
**F/L RCAF RET'D**

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Four years ago, Roland Butler gave an excellent presentation to the Toronto Chapter of CAHS on his experiences as a test pilot on Hawker Typhoons and Tempests, which was later published in the Spring 1980 Edition of the Journal. Later, Dave Davies also gave a superb account of life on the Canadian Typhoon Wing, from its formation until it was disbanded at the end of the war, from the standpoint of a groundcrewman, using a series of slides made from photographs. As a continuation of that series, the following article is the recollections of a Canadian pilot's experiences on an RAF Typhoon Fighter-Bomber Squadron during the Second World War.*

After graduating from the RCAF Initial Training School at Victoriaville, I commenced flying training on 30 October, 1941 at No. 21 Elementary Flying Training School (21 EFTS) at Chatham, New Brunswick, where I put in 60 hours on the Fleet Finch, a basic trainer of that time. The first five months of 1942 I flew 135 hours on the North American Harvard at No. 9 Service Flying Training School (9 SFTS) at Summerside P.E.I. and was awarded my wings.

Of those graduating, two of us were posted to RAF Ferry Command at Dorval to train as ferry pilots, although neither of us had flown anything but single-engined aircraft. We spent a month at ground school learning about fuel systems and automatic pilots in Hudsons, Venturas, Mitchells and

REVISED BY THE AUTHOR FROM AN ADDRESS GIVEN TO THE TORONTO CHAPTER, 8 DECEMBER 1983.

Marauders. For the flying training, we lined up in a room where the instructors took four at a time, in order, from the line. I changed places with another chap so I could stay with my classmate from Summerside. Lucky for me that I did because half an hour later the Hudson, in which the instructor and four others were flying, lost a wing, crashed and all aboard were killed.

Our instructor was Russ Bannock, who is also a member of the CAHS. On our second trip we were awaiting clearance to take off, at the end of the runway, when an aircraft on the final turn of its approach suddenly spun in. Russ immediately took over the controls, took off and, flying at about 50 feet, directed the ground rescue squad to the scene. I can still see the tip of a church steeple off the end of the wing as we circled near Point Claire.

It was evident that we could not learn to cope with twin-engined machines in the allotted time and we were posted to the RAF depot at Moncton and from there to the RCAF Holding Unit in Bournemouth, England. We arrived there on the day of the Dieppe raid. From there I went to No. 7 Advance Flying Unit at Peterborough, north of London, where we received 27 hours of instruction on Miles Masters to acquaint us with British type aircraft and with navigation in different geographic and atmospheric conditions than we had been used to.

The maintenance at Sibson, the satellite airfield where we did our night flying, was very lax. One aircraft crashed when the glide path indicator at the end of the runway was set at the wrong angle. The instructor was killed and the student pilot badly burned. It was there that I had one of my most frightening flights. Shortly after takeoff into a black, overcast night sky I found that the control column would not move sideways. I was too low to bail out and I hoped and prayed the machine would not start to roll. When I reached 1500 feet the stick became free — but I had no idea what had caused it to jam or whether it would do so unexpectedly again. I gently eased the aircraft into a turn and carried out an elongated circuit. Fortunately, I had not strayed off course because there was no radio aboard with which to get a homing and the runway lights were shielded so they could only be seen from one direction. As I was rolling down the runway after landing the column again seized. I later learned that the rubber mouthpiece from the rear cockpit speaking tube had, at some previous time, come off, fallen to the bottom of the fuselage and lodged in the control wires. From October to December 1942 I completed 60 hours training on Hurricanes at No. 56 Operational Training Unit (56 OTU) at Tealing, near Dundee, Scotland.

On 29 December, 1942 thirteen members of our OTU course, plus four from another OTU, arrived at Harrowbeer, near Plymouth, Devon, to form 193 Fighter Squadron. The only operational types on the squadron were the CO and the two flight commanders. No one had flown Typhoons, there were none on the station and it was several weeks before we even got to see one. We spent our time familiarizing ourselves with the area in a Hurricane, learning as much as we could about the Typhoon from the Pilot's Notes and from watching and talking to the pilots of 257 Typhoon Squadron who were based at nearby Exeter.

I would like to give you a brief description of the Hawker Typhoon.

It was a low-wing, single-seater fighter powered by a 24 cylinder, liquid cooled, Napier Sabre "H" type, sleeve valve engine which, in its later versions, developed up to 2260

horsepower. The wing span was 41 feet 7 inches, the length 31 feet 11½ inches and the height 15 feet 4 inches. Four wing tanks carried 154 gallons of fuel and another 90 gallons could be carried in two drop tanks. The machine weighed 8,840 pounds empty, 11,850 pounds loaded and, with two 1,000 pounds bombs aboard, reached a maximum of 13,980 pounds or nearly seven tons. Maximum speeds at usual operating levels were 413 miles per hour at 11,500 feet and 412 miles per hour at sea level. The aircraft could climb to 15,000 feet in six minutes and had a range of 510 miles with two 500 pound bombs or 910 miles with drop tanks. We generally cruised at around 240 miles per hour. Armament consisted of four 20 millimeter Hispano cannon fed by belt from magazines in the mainplanes. Each magazine carried 155 rounds consisting of two armour piercing, two high explosive and two incendiary for a maximum of 620 rounds. The four cannon fired 760 rounds per minute. The cannon were fired by a thumb operated button on the spade grip control column. A camera mounted in the nose of the aircraft took a picture of the target whenever the cannon were fired. An illuminated reflector sight created a ring and bead on a slanted piece of glass near the windscreen. The Typhoon could also carry eight 60 pound high explosive rocket projectiles or two 500 pound bombs or two 1,000 pound bombs. One cockpit switch allowed selection of the bombs; another armed the bombs by operating a catch which held a piece of wire attached to a small propeller at the rear of the bomb. The bomb became armed when the wire was retained on the aircraft. This allowed the small propeller to turn, permitting the striker pin to come in contact with the charge as the bomb struck the target. When low level bombing was to be carried out delayed action fuses were used and identifying ribbons were put on the wires. One low level "do" I was on was scrubbed at the last minute because of the weather. When one of the pilots got out of his machine he noticed that all the aircrafts' bombs had been armed with instantaneous fuses. We could all have been blown up by our own bombs!

The reflector sight was used to aim the bombs. They were released by a button in the throttle just as the target appeared in the lower segment of the gun sight during the pullout of the dive. Designed by Sidney Camm the Typhoon was one of a long line of notable aircraft produced by Hawker, which included the Hart, Fury and Hurricane. It is apparently an accepted maxim for successful aircraft development that future requirements should always be the principal concern of the design team and so Camm was working on a replacement for the Hurricane in 1937 before the first production type of the Hurricane had flown. Two prototypes were produced, the Tornado with a Rolls Royce 24 cylinder 'X' type Vulture engine and the Typhoon with the 'H' type Sabre. First flights of each were 6 October, 1939 and 24 February, 1940 respectively. However, after the Typhoon had been selected as the aircraft to be produced, a number of factors resulted in delays and almost cancelled the whole program. As the Battle of Britain approached, priority was given to producing more Hurricanes and Spitfires and Typhoon production was curtailed. Sleeve valves and pistons in the Sabre engine seized up. Flutter in the elevators weakened the fuselage and tail sections fell off without warning. Carbon monoxide leaked into the cockpit asphyxiating the pilots. This happened a number of times before the cause of the crashes was determined. Starting up was a problem. Performance at high altitude, for which the aircraft had been designed, was disappointing. The cockpit enclosure resulted in poor pilot visibility. Our original squa-

dron aircraft had doors like those on automobiles with roll up windows and a small bubble canopy top. First production models had no visibility to the rear whatsoever. They apparently assumed nothing could catch up to the Typhoon.

Most of the problems encountered were the result of putting the machine into service before it was ready. A high level meeting was held to determine if the aircraft should be scrapped. Roland Beamont, CO of 609 Typhoon Squadron, had seen how effective the "Tiffie" was in attacking ground targets and in shooting down low flying Fw 190s. He could foresee its future role as a close support aircraft. Beamont's perseverance saved the Typhoon.

Each of its problems was eventually overcome and its value was proven in the close support role. But at the start, on our squadron, the tails of two aircraft came off, one while the pilot was cruising over the moors. He crashed and was killed. The other was in a high speed dive. He just managed to bail out in time. To counter this problem they made an adjustment to the elevators and reinforced the fuselage. Engine failures occurred periodically into the summer of 1944. The carbon monoxide hazard was reduced by changing the exhaust stubs and by making it a rule that oxygen valves were to be set for what would be required at 15,000 feet as long as the engine was running. Starting was unpredictable but experience improved your performance. The need to operate at high altitudes was eliminated by the role chosen for the Typhoon as a medium and low level weapon.

Other than the occasional starting problem the only time I experienced any difficulty was when the oil system packed up as we were thrashing around the sky in a squadron formation practice. Fortunately I was near base and managed to return with a pint of oil left in the engine. I found the Typhoon an excellent machine. It was responsive to the controls, steady in a dive or as a gun platform and ideally suited to its role as a fighter/bomber. It was a big, strong aircraft which could stand up to tremendous punishment whether it resulted from air combat, enemy flak or forced landings.

The Tiffie was a tricky machine to start. Instead of a portable accumulator (battery) plugged into the side of the machine, as most other fighter aircraft utilized to start the engine, the Typhoon was equipped with a Coffman starter which was something like the chamber on a revolver only it held cartridges like small shotgun shells. The throttle had to be opened to a correct setting and the engine primed a set number of times depending on its temperature and that of the

atmosphere. The Pilot's Manual devotes two and a half pages to the procedure. If it didn't start after the third try, the engine had to be blown out by counter-rotating the propeller by hand. Overpriming occasionally caused a fire in the air intake which could sometimes be blown out by continuing the starting procedure but in most cases was put out with a fire extinguisher.

I approached my first flight in a Tiffie with some trepidation. While we didn't know then what I know now about all the problems with the machine, we were a bit in awe of its size and power. We were warned of the violent effect of torque which caused a swing to the right on takeoff and of how different it was to the Hurricanes we had been flying. On takeoff I locked my left leg in a rigid position and actually ended up going slightly to the left. I flew around for a considerable time to accustom myself to the handling of the aircraft and at times felt as if the machine was flying me! As the undercarriage came down the machine wallowed around in a corkscrew fashion. To make sure I didn't stall it, I brought the machine in with a little too much speed. Since the runways at Harrowbeer were not exceptionally long, I could see a pile of bricks at the end of one of them coming up fast. Fortunately the brakes held and the machine stopped in time.

Our work-up training as a squadron consisted of practice formation flying, dogfighting, cloud flying and strict air discipline. We visited the Group Operations Room to see how aircraft were plotted and controlled from the ground and to meet those who would be directing us. We visited an Air Sea Rescue Station and were taken out on a rescue launch. We practised inflating a dinghy in the swimming pool of a local hotel. To improve our deflection shooting we had regular sessions of skeet shooting. On poor weather days we practised in the Link Trainer, invaluable training for some of the situations we would find ourselves in during future ops. We had lectures from pilots who had either evaded capture or had escaped from POW camps. We studied maps of the areas in France over which we normally flew to work out plans of what we would do if shot down. As an exercise we were transported several miles from the aerodrome and dropped off with instructions to return to base without being detected or captured. We were supplied with recent combat reports from other fighter units which later helped us when we became involved in similar situations. The watchword became "*Beware of the Hun in the sun*". We built up a rapport with the ground crew and, when we learned that the smoothness of an aircraft's



The original members of 193 RAF Typhoon Fighter Squadron at Harrowbeer, South Devon, England in January, 1943. The Author, Jack Brown, is on the extreme right of the picture.  
via the Author

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A TYPHOON PILOT



The Author, Jack Brown, poses with his aircraft, DP-U, at Needs Oar Point in May 1944. The impressive size of the Typhoon is apparent. A wireless technician, decapitated by the photographer, tests the radio telephone. Author's photo

skin surface improved its speed, we assisted in cleaning our machines.

When the squadron became operational we did patrols along the coast in our area to counter any hit and run attacks by Fw 190s. These patrols were carried out by pairs of aircraft; one right down on the water, the other about a hundred feet up. Several fellows bent the ends of their props when they flew too low and touched the sea. We also did standby duty at the end of the runway, ready to take off as soon as a Very pistol was fired from the control tower. We used to envy the pilots of 609 Squadron who were based at Manston on the east coast, close to France, and therefore had lots of action. The first offensive operation we were involved in was as escort to a Typhoon Bomber unit who were to attack shipping in the harbour at Brest, some 200 miles over water from our base. We had no long-range tanks at that time and the thought of what might happen if we got into a scrap and used up the fuel that was to get us back over all that water left us a bit apprehensive, to say the least. We had been briefed nearly six hours before the "do" and so had a lot of time to think about it. I wandered around the crewroom in nervous anticipation, looking for a suitable pair of escape boots, much to the amusement of those who were not going on the op., and earned the nickname "Boots" which stayed with me throughout the service. Just after we took off the operation was cancelled and we were recalled.

In the next few months we carried out a number of shipping "recces" along the Brittany coast and managed to prang a few small ships. In late August of 1943, I, along with a number of pilots from various fighter squadrons, was posted to a fighter reconnaissance course on Mustangs. We learned how to take vertical and oblique photographs of ground targets, how to report on ground activities and how to spot for the artillery. On completion of the course I was posted to 170 RAF Mustang Fighter Reconnaissance Squadron at Thruxton near Salisbury. I only got started on one operation before the squadron was disbanded. In January 1944, I returned to 193 Squadron which had become a fighter bomber unit. Around this time Fighter Command was disbanded. It was replaced by the Air Defence of Great Britain and the Second Tactical Air

Force. We became part of 84 Group, a division of Second TAF, which was later to provide close support for the First Canadian Army in the Northwest Europe Campaign. We began a series of moves from Harrowbeer to various airfields along the South Coast, including Fairlop, Thorney Island and Gravesend. To help us cope in the event we had to operate in France before our groundcrew arrived, we were given instruction in how to refuel and rearm our aircraft and how to drive a three-ton lorry. Fortunately we didn't have to put any of this training to use. I remember that one fellow ran into the side of a London bus while learning to drive!

Throughout that spring our targets varied from flying bomb sites along the Channel Coast to marshalling yards at Mons, Arras, Bethune, Cambrai and Rouen, to bridges along the Seine, to radar stations at Caen, Cherbourg, Gris Nez and Le Treport.

On a typical fighter bomber operation the squadron commander was given the target by Group Headquarters. Pilots were assigned to their sections and aircraft and briefing took place about an hour before takeoff. The target was described and map references and photographs displayed. The Intelligence Section provided maps, weather information, flak locations and the anticipated enemy reaction. We were issued a pouch of French currency and an escape kit containing a water bottle, chocolate, needle and thread, fish hook, compass, pills to keep us awake and a list of French, German and Spanish words. We returned to the crew room, emptied our pockets of any identifying material, donned life jackets and escape boots. These boots could be converted to shoes by cutting off the uppers in the event you had to wear civilian clothes in order to evade capture. We carried a dagger in our boot to deflate our seat pack dinghy should it accidentally inflate in the air. We put on gloves and a flying helmet containing goggles, microphone, earphones and oxygen mask. We signed the flight authorization book, the aircraft logbook and climbed into the cockpit to sit on the combination parachute-dinghy. We fastened the seat belt and hookups to radio and oxygen, setting the valve for the amount required for an altitude of 15,000 feet. As soon as the leader started up we all did so. In the event any aircraft wouldn't start, a spare pilot was assigned to take that

person's place. We lined up at the end of the runway in pairs, opening the throttle when the previous pair were airborne. We were in formation and on course after one circuit. The formation usually consisted of two fours in loose finger formation, each pair covering the other two in the section. After clearing the English coast we maintained radio silence and dropped down to 50 feet over the sea to avoid enemy radar. We remained at that height until within sight of the French coast at which time we climbed to 8,000 feet to avoid coastal flak batteries. We continually scanned the sky above, behind us and into the sun to avoid being bounced by the enemy. On the approach to the target the bomb selector switches were set and the reflector sight and gun button turned on. We put the aircraft into echelon starboard formation behind the leader and, in turn, peeled off, firing the cannon in the dive to discourage the flak gunners. At about 4,000 feet we released the bombs, just before we pulled the aircraft out of the dive. We headed back, keeping a sharp eye out for enemy aircraft. As we neared base we went into a tight formation. Sometimes these formations were as tight as the op itself. We came low over the runway in line astern breaking off individually into a steep climbing turn and spreading ourselves out for landing. The distance between aircraft was not great and you could often dip a wing when hitting the fellow ahead's slip stream or sometimes hear a frantic call on the radio to "keep rolling" as someone slowed down before turning off the runway. We taxied back to the dispersal, shut off the engine and reported back to the Intelligence Officer who debriefed us. As did other Tiffie Squadrons we spent a week at an armament practise camp in Wales where we sharpened up on our bombing and rocket firing techniques.

In April 1944 we arrived at a newly constructed airfield on the south coast immediately opposite the Isle of Wight at a place called Needs Oar Point. Here we joined four other Typhoon Squadrons to form 146 Wing. The airfield, formerly a farm, had runways made of Summerfeld Track, a type of wire mesh. We went under canvas and were issued a camp cot, bed roll and all that went with living in the outdoors. Just before D Day, Intelligence learned that a German suicide paratroop group were to attack airfields along the South Coast and we were issued side arms. One night I awakened and saw a shadowy figure enter the tent. I grabbed for the pistol under my pillow and prepared to use it when I realized it was one of my tent mates who had been up to answer nature's call!

During the month of May there was a tremendous buildup of ships in the Solent, the body of water between our base and the Isle of Wight, and you could sense that something big was coming up. We continued attacks on enemy radar stations right up to 5 June. That night our 'Winco', Reg. Baker, briefed us on the invasion, outlining in detail the role each service would take in the huge operation. As we left the briefing we heard the first of the many aircraft, which were to take part, flying overhead on their way to Normandy. We were up early on that day for which we had waited so long, D Day in Normandy. Everybody wanted to be on the first show of the day but for our squadron that didn't occur until early afternoon. Led by the Winco six of us were to carry out a recce behind the beach-head. After takeoff and out across the Channel we saw a solid line of ships, four abreast, stretching from the Isle of Wight to Normandy. As we neared the invasion beaches we saw a line of the Allies' largest battlewagons firing salvo after salvo inland. Southwest of Caen we spotted two enemy tanks at the side of a road. We first dive bombed them then went in from all sides and strafed them. Later, in

viewing cine films of the attack, I saw my aircraft flying right through another aircraft's target area!

After the first few days, when the Germans brought up reinforcements, flak in the area west of Caen became deadly. I lost one of my best buddies six days later when we were attacking vehicles. A day later we lost Reg. Baker, our Winco, the same way. His loss caused a terrific letdown on the wing. He was a born leader, extremely well liked, and the pilots would have flown anywhere with him.

Flak, as enemy anti-aircraft fire was known, was the scourge of Typhoon pilots. During the period of most intense activity, losses were estimated to be three to five aircraft per unit per month. Undoubtedly this was due to the height at which most operations were flown. The versatile 88 millimeter German anti-tank gun could be quickly elevated to fire at aircraft. Usually the opening round was far enough away that you could take evasive action. However, one evening I was leading our flight on a recce of the battle area, flying at about 7,000 feet, when I saw and heard a bursting shell between me and my number three. His oil line was hit and with the oil coming up into the cockpit he couldn't see so he headed for the lines and called up that he was bailing out. Unfortunately his 'chute didn't open. It had probably become doughy from sitting around in a damp tent. He and I had been close friends since the squadron formed and had just returned from leave together. Another vivid memory I have of flak was when we were attacking destroyers in a port in Brittany. As we started into our dive we could see the red blobs of tracer rise slowly, or so it seemed, and then zip past our wing tips. Amazingly no one was hit. A sequence in the documentary movie "The Fighting Lady" had dramatic films of Japanese anti-aircraft fire which would illustrate what I saw.

After D Day, we bombed enemy strongpoints and bridges in the Caen area. On 25 June, three squadrons of the Wing carried out a low-level bombing attack on a bridge near Beaumont le Roger on the Seine. On these low-level attacks we spread ourselves out, as we neared the target, so that we were not blown up by the explosion resulting from the delayed action fusing on the bombs of the aircraft in front of us. The idea was to keep the man ahead of you in view at all times. I was flying as Number Three to the Winco who was leading our squadron. I kept his Number Two in sight during and after the attack. However, the Number Two had lost sight of the leader and, after bombing, we were going around in never ending circuits of the target area. We later learned that the Winco's RT had packed up, he had no way of communicating with us and he had headed back to England on his own.

After the three squadrons had completed their attacks, I set course for base and found I was leading the wing! On the way back we received disturbing reports of bad weather along the English coast. The other two squadrons and our other flight broke off and headed for other airfields. As we approached the south side of the Isle of Wight I could see that the cloud base was below the level of the chalk cliffs. Rather than risk running into them I turned out to sea and called for another course to base. When we again approached and made landfall it was between the western end of the Isle of Wight and a series of high pointed rock formations known as the Needles. Because of a shortage of fuel my Number Two landed at the first base we came to. I continued on for several miles to our own base and landed in a driving rainstorm. The three squadrons' aircraft were spread out on airfields over the whole of the south of England. That was one of many times I was

thankful for the Link training which taught us to put full trust in our instruments.

As a fighter bomber pilot I saw very few enemy aircraft — but, on 29 June 1944 I saw more than I wanted to at one time. Our Wing Leader, Johnnie Baldwin, who had replaced Reg. Baker, had achieved the highest score of enemy aircraft of any Typhoon pilot. He was leading ten of us on a recce near Rouen when we ran into 20 or 30 Me 109s. I dropped my long range tank and pulled into a turn toward them firing as I did so. To avoid colliding with them I tightened the turn. As they climbed I followed but, as I looked around, I saw three coming after me. I pulled the aircraft into a steep climbing turn to try and make the cloud cover above and as I looked back I could see the flame coming out of their gun muzzles just as you would in a movie. Suddenly there was a bright flash above the engine and a thump on the cowling. As I tightened the turn the aircraft went into a spin. I remember thinking “this is it” because you weren’t supposed to get out of a spin at that altitude. Fortunately, after taking corrective action, I found myself out of the spin and heading toward the north in a vertical dive. I levelled out at deck level and headed for the coast. When I looked back I saw one of the 109s following me go straight into the ground as he tried to pull out of the dive. The others gave up the chase as I reached the coast just east of Le Havre. As I throttled back the engine began to vibrate. I prepared to bail out near the ships which formed the bridge from England to Normandy but the engine kept going so I landed on one of the airstrips near the beach. The ground crew advised me that the magnetoes had been damaged and there was a three-inch hole in opposite blades of the four bladed prop. so I returned to England in a Transport Command Anson. Back at base I learned that seven enemy aircraft had been shot down and two damaged. Two of us with damaged aircraft had landed in France. All pilots were back at base that night and, needless to say, we had a party.

On 17 July our flight moved to St. Croix sur Mer in Normany. Our other flight, which had preceded us by several days, was out on a recce when they spotted an important looking staff car accompanied by other vehicles on a road southeast of Caen. They attacked and saw the vehicle turn over. In October, when news of Rommel’s death was announced, our squadron was headlined in the British press as the “Rommel Killers”. Credit was later given to a Spitfire unit which was operating in the same general area. Rommel had been seriously injured in the attack but of course had recovered and his death was by his own choice since he had been implicated in the plot to kill Hitler.

The pilot, who replaced my tent mate who was shot down just after D Day, was a chap from Montreal who had a very interesting story to tell. In the late thirties, Ralph Ritz left



The pilots of 193 Squadron at St. Croix sur Mer, Normandy in July 1, 1944.

home seeking adventure. He went to Hollywood, then Hawaii, Japan, and after touring the South Pacific ended up in Singapore just as the Pacific War broke out. He joined the RAF and was sent to Iraq for training as a pilot. A pro-Axis uprising brought all flying crews into action to put down the insurgents. Instructors and students all took part in the action. Ralph and his navigator were shot down and taken prisoner. A fanatic killed the navigator and shot Ralph, the bullet narrowly missing his spine. Ralph was eventually freed and went to Cairo, from there to South Africa and eventually ended up in England. We used to spend our summer evenings playing cribbage while Ralph recounted stories of his experiences. Ralph died of Lou Gehrig’s disease last year.

Aside from a brief visit to the Canadian Tiffie Wing nearby, we never travelled too far from our base in Normandy. The water was unfit to drink without being boiled. We received one bottle of beer a week. This was usually buried in the ground to keep it cool and savoured on a hot evening when we were really thirsty. One of the other Tiffie wings sent one of their pilots back to England to get a supply of it. He had a pair of long range tanks washed, took them to a nearby pub, and had them filled up with beer. He also purchased a large quantity of bread and tomatoes which he put in the gun bays in the wings. The long range tanks were put back on and he started to take off down the runway. Unfortunately one of tanks fell off and he nearly pranged before he brought the aircraft to a stop. By the time he got the tank refilled and back onto the aircraft the weather closed in and he was grounded for about three days during which time the tomatoes got soft, the bread got hard and I’m sure, out of sheer frustration, he was ready to consume all the beer!

Around this time the Germans launched a tank attack against the Americans at Mortain. The Typhoon Squadrons were called in and successfully thwarted the attack. Our CO was awarded an American DFC for his part in this operation.

The Germans had a long range gun mounted on a railway car which they wheeled out of a tunnel at night to shell the beach-head. Intelligence learned where they kept it and six of us went over with two 1000 pound bombs each and skip bombed each end of the tunnel, closing it.

Several of our pilots who had been shot down returned with exciting tales of their escapades. Bill Switzer from Edson, Alberta, who later became an MPP, badly twisted his knee as he bailed out after his aircraft was hit. He was unable to walk and crawled around the Normandy orchards for a week gaining sustenance from any fallen apples he could find and quenching his thirst by sucking the dew from his battledress cuffs. At night he could hear the German troops talking on the other side of the hedgerow. Finally an American army patrol spotted him at the side of the road and, because he was wearing a blue uniform, took him to be a German. His use of a few well chosen obscenities convinced his captors he was Canadian.

Art Ross, son of the well known coach and manager of the Boston Bruins hockey team, was one of our flight commanders. Art was shot down while attacking an enemy ammunition convoy. He bailed out in a wooded area and a nearby SS regiment searched for him. He hid under a pile of leaves and narrowly missed being hit when his searchers fired into similar piles. With the aid of the French escape organization he made his way to a village east of Caen which he hoped would soon be overrun by Allied troops. When it was not, he chose to go to Paris where he took part in the liberation by shooting at the retreating Germans from the rooftops.

A fellow named Kilpatrick, who had bailed out when the

tail came off his machine at Harrowbeer, later was shot down and taken prisoner in Normandy. It was shortly before the German retreat. Killy and an American pilot convinced their captors they should surrender and turned over fifty prisoners to a nearby British unit. Killy received a DSO for his efforts. A chap from another squadron in our wing evaded capture and lived in the attic of a French farmhouse while posing as a farmhand. He could speak neither French nor German but sat down and played cards with the German soldiers who were there. By the time the Allies overran the area and he returned to his unit, he was a nervous wreck.

One day we had a visit from Winston Churchill who arrived in the 83 Group Commander's captured Fiesler Storch, a German light communications aircraft. He gathered us round him and told us to "give it to those buggers".

One of our lads, Ned Statters by name, had the most miraculous escapes I've ever heard of. When his engine cut on a mission in Normandy he tried to force land in the narrow fields and ended up going right through a house, landing upside down in a ditch without sustaining a scratch. He had one of his elevators shot away in a dogfight and got back safely. He had a tire blow on takeoff and managed to keep the aircraft clear of other machines nearby. A similar accident, the day before, had resulted in the death of the pilot. When Boulogne was the only port in the Pas de Calais area being held by the Germans, Ned mistook it for Dover and was shot down, landing wheels up on no man's land where he was rescued by Canadian troops.

In August we went on recces looking for enemy transport, bombed tanks, tunnels and troop concentrations, flew fighter cover for a Wing "do" in which a radio beacon near Beauvais was destroyed. As the enemy were compressed in the Falaise Gap we attacked vehicles near Trun at the eastern end of the Gap.

About a week after the Battle of Falaise a number of us toured the battle area in a truck to determine what had happened to some of our missing pilots. We drove down the Caen-Falaise Road and then on to Argentan. Between Falaise and Argentan the sides of the road were strewn with a continuous line of smashed and burned out vehicles. Many of the dead had not yet been buried. Infantrymen and tank crews were sprawled, in grotesque positions, around their vehicles. It was a scene of total destruction and one which, as pilots, we had never seen before. We returned to our base by another route and came through a village which had been almost

levelled by the advancing armies in their efforts to drive out the enemy. The expression of black humour that we used was that the inhabitants had been "obliterated". An old Frenchman came out of what was left of a house and offered us a tiny glass of Calvados, a type of apple brandy for which the area is noted. This bottle must have been pure alcohol for immediately after I drank it I felt as if someone had hit the inside of my skull with a hammer. I later learned from an American army captain that after one of his men had drunk a tumblerful of this potion, he went completely off his rocker and cut up his best friend with a butcher knife.

The fleeing enemy raced toward the Seine and under cover of darkness crossed the river in barges. We dropped leaflets in the area to encourage them to surrender. We also carried out armed recces as far away as Arras but couldn't find much to shoot at, as the enemy moved only at night. Our airfield moved to Lille and, while this was taking place, we operated from Manston on the east coast of England and carried out recces of the Dutch coast. After a week at Lille we moved on to Antwerp, Belgium, and from there I was posted back to a Tactical Exercise Unit at Aston Down in the west of England, the last of the original 193 members to leave the squadron. As an instructor at Aston Down, I taught pilots, who had converted from Spitfires to Tiffies and other pilots fresh out of OTU, the tactics we had used on the fighter bomber squadrons. The greatest hazards at Aston Down were the pilots in the bar. Once, a red headed Scot, who would get wild after a few pints, dove straight at me from the counter of the bar and knocked me to the floor with my head landing inches from the sharp corner of a brick fireplace. Another evening one of the lads demonstrated his skill with a pistol by shooting a hole in the ceiling of the bar room. However, I managed to survive the war unscathed and arrived back in Canada on 1 August 1945.

I must say that I enjoyed flying the Typhoon. I also enjoyed the comradeship that existed on a squadron; it was something that I have not experienced before or since those days when your life was on the line and you lived a day at a time.



J.G. Brown  
F/L RCAF Ret'd.  
26 Easton Road  
North York M2N 2L3

William J. Wheeler

Famed aviation artist Frank Wootton has very generously allowed us to reproduce his spirited painting of an RAF Hawker Typhoon Mk 1B of 121 Wing, 83 Group operating from an advanced airfield in Normandy in 1944. The cloud of dust which the artist has used to such dramatic effect

## Cover Story

illustrates one of the problems which had to be faced when operating from dry, unimproved fields in summer. Also captured is the muscular, broad-shouldered stance so typical of the massive seven-ton Typhoon.

### CAHS PUBLICATIONS

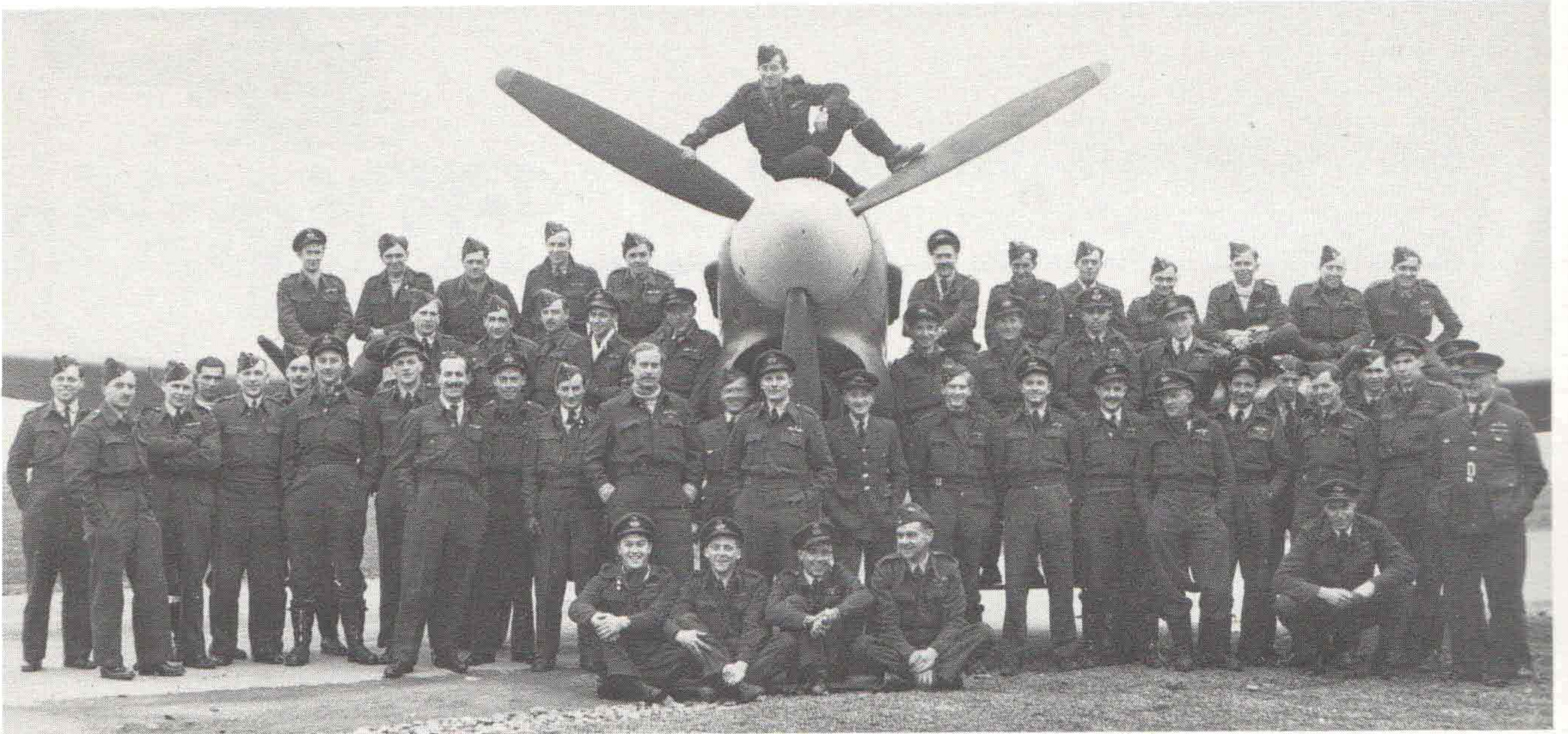
As a service to members, the items on the following list have been made available and may be purchased from CAHS Headquarters.

G-C — Aircraft Register — J.R. Ellis	8.00
Early CF — Aircraft Register — J.R. Ellis	8.00
Cdn. Civil Pilots THE FIRST 500 — K.M. Molson	8.00

PLL NEVER FORGET (A Journal WW II series)	5.00
*CAHS Journals (reprints) years 1 to 3 per vol.	12.00
*CAHS Journals (originals) years 4 to 20 per vol.	15.00
CAHS lapel pins	8.00
125 YEARS OF CANADIAN AERONAUTICS	20.00

\* list volume required





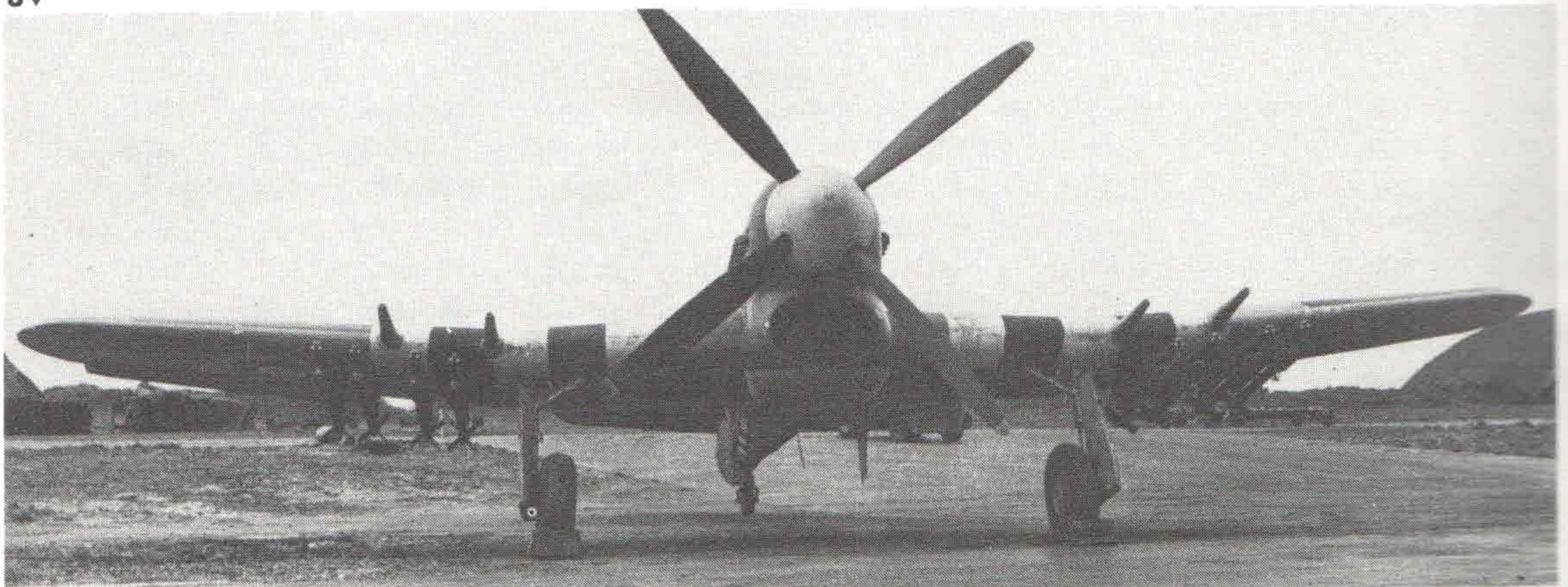
1  
▽



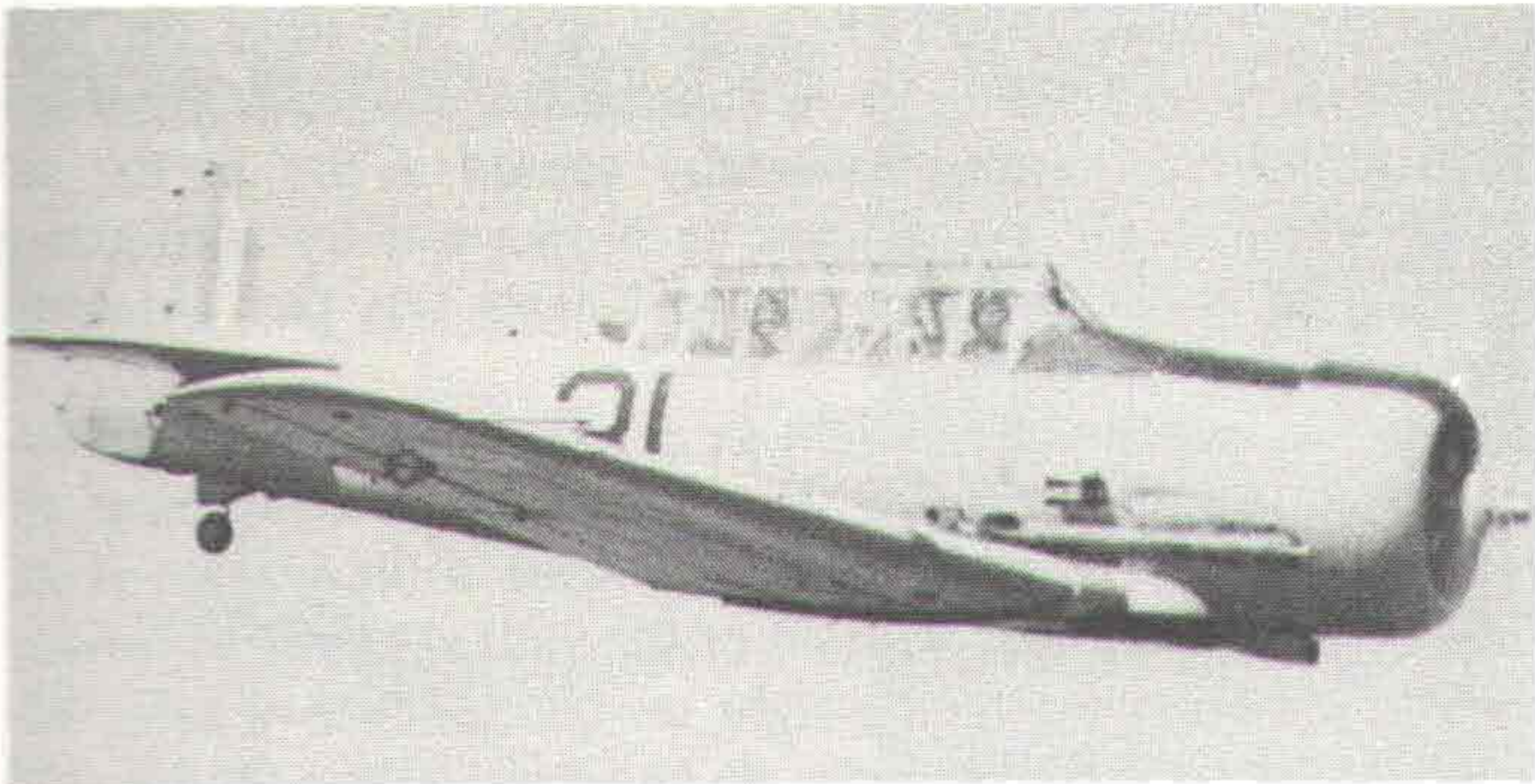
2  
▽

3▽

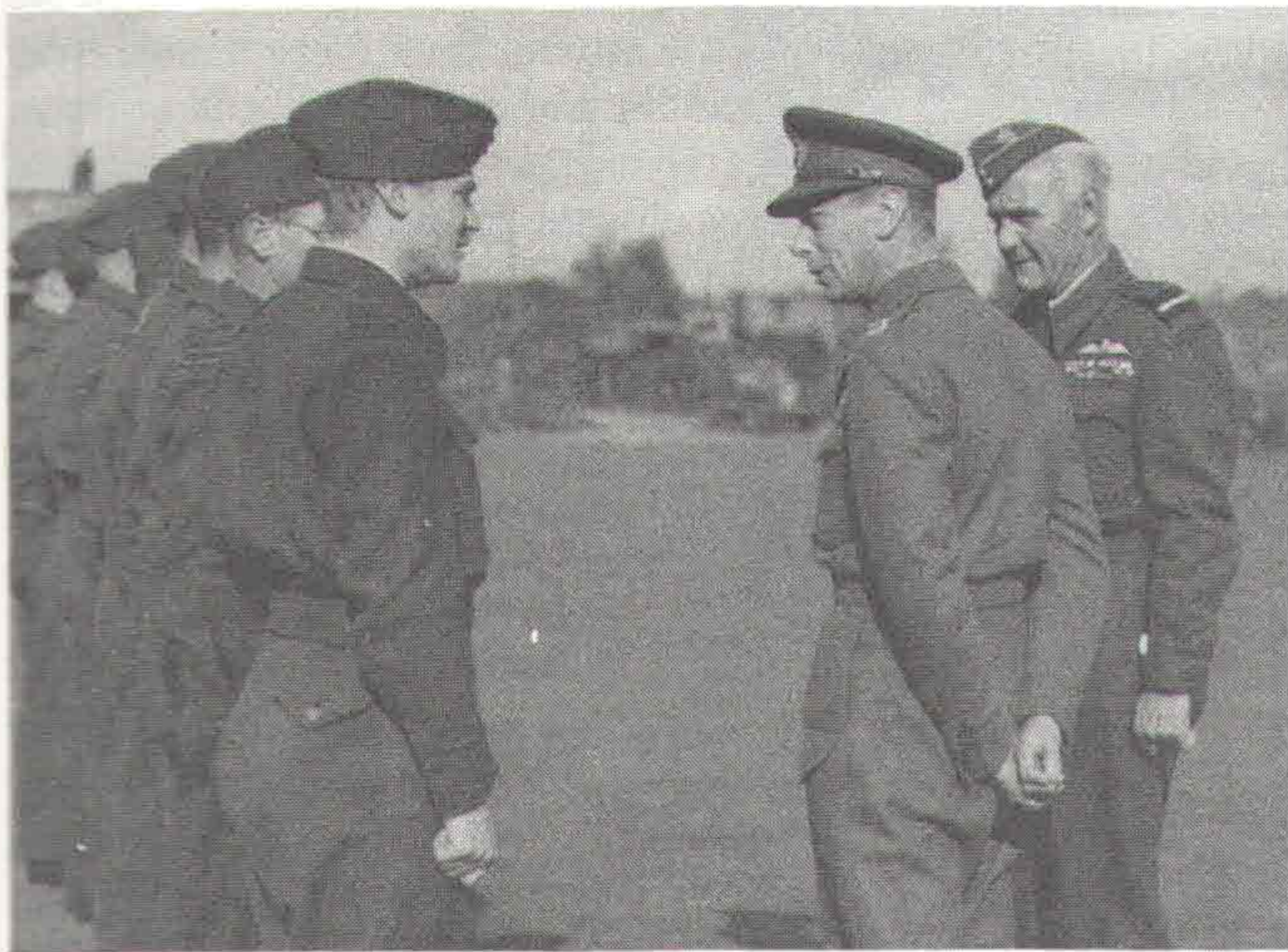
1. The pilots, engineering and administrative personnel of 193 and 266 Squadrons at Harrowbeer, South Devon in February 1944.
2. A group of pilots of 193 and 266 Squadrons who formed a team which took part in "Ranger" operations in early 1944. Rangers were sorties on which enemy airfields and other 'targets of opportunity' were shot up. W/C Reg. Baker, Wing Leader, is third from left.
3. Head-on a Typhoon equipped with eight 60 pound high-explosive rockets displays its characteristic 'wide-shouldered' stance.



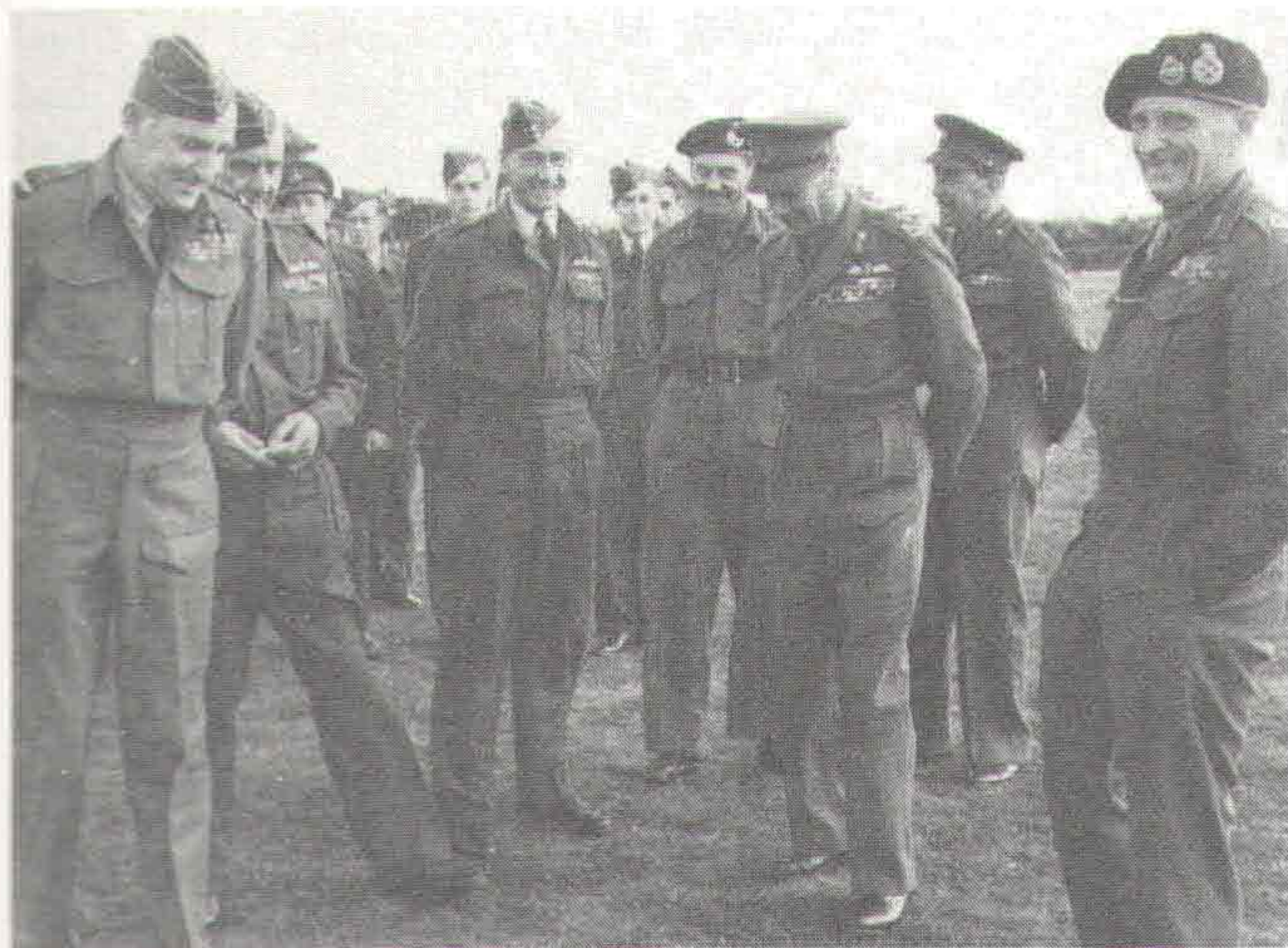
All photos Air Ministry via Author



1Δ



3Δ



4Δ



5▽

2▷

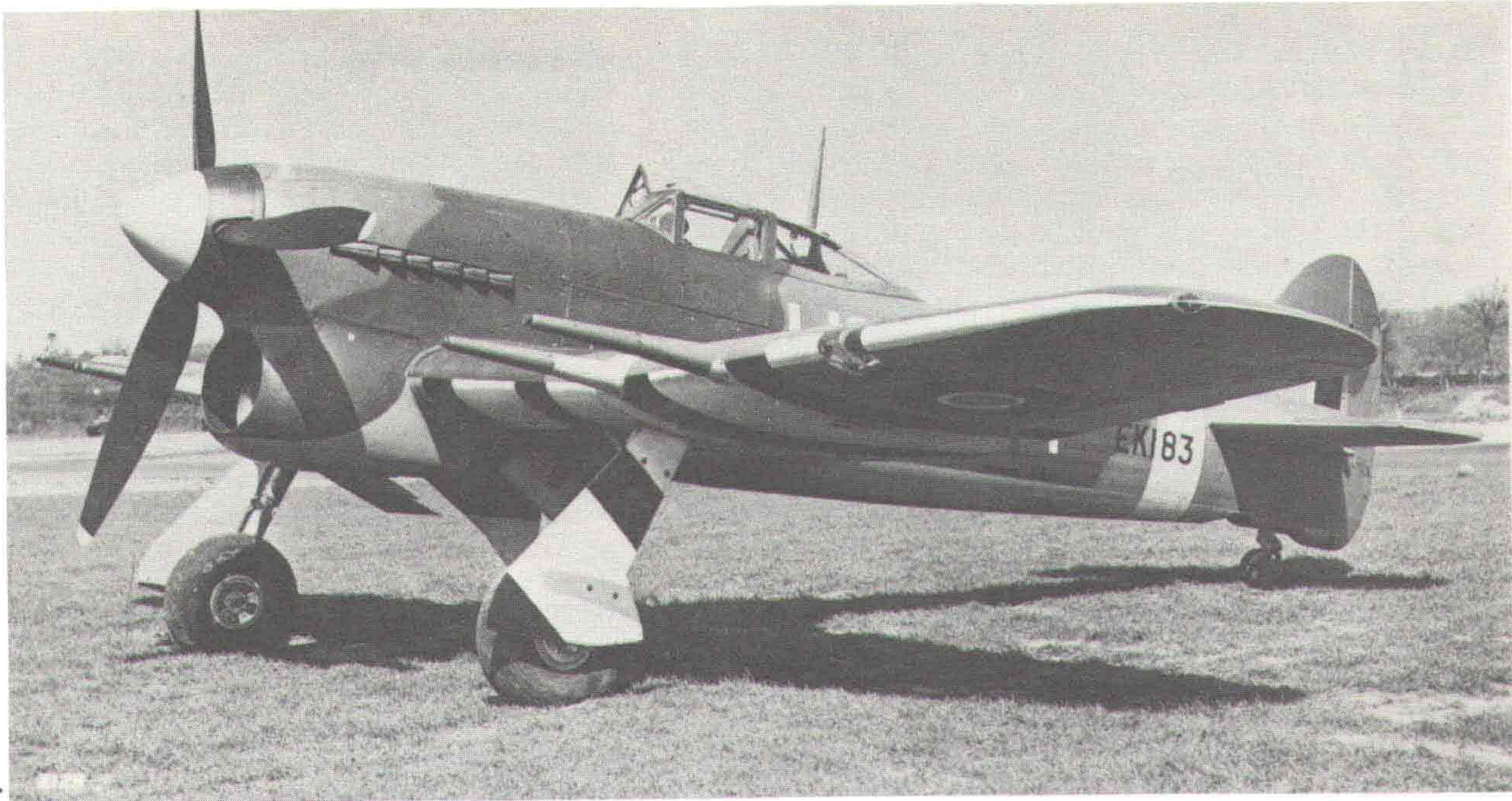


## RECOLLECTIONS OF A TYPHOON PILOT

1. The Author, Jack Brown, flies a Harvard trainer at No. 9 SFTS, Prince Edward Island, May 1942. Author's photo
2. The 193 Squadron crest designed by S/L Guy Plamondon, the CO, in July 1944. Translated, the motto reads "To Conquer the Air and the ground". The eagle denotes a seaker of prey in the air and on the ground while the grenade in its talons recognizes the army support role. via the Author
3. King George VI chats with G/C Dennis Gillam, 146 Airfield Commander and the man who formed the first Typhoon Wing. Beside him is G/C "Sailor" Malan of Battle of the Britain fame. Crown photo via Author
4. Distinguished visitors to 146 Wing at Antwerp, Belgium, 13 October 1944. In the foreground are A/M Coningham, AOC of the 2nd Tactical Air Force and A/V/M Brown, OC 84 Group, King George VI and Field Marshal Montgomery. Crown photo via Author
5. The presentation of Typhoons to 193 Squadron at Harrowbeer in October of 1943 by the Brazillian Ambassador on behalf of the Bellows Club of Brazil. Air Ministry via Author
6. Bombing up a Typhoon of one of the Canadian squadrons. RCAF photo

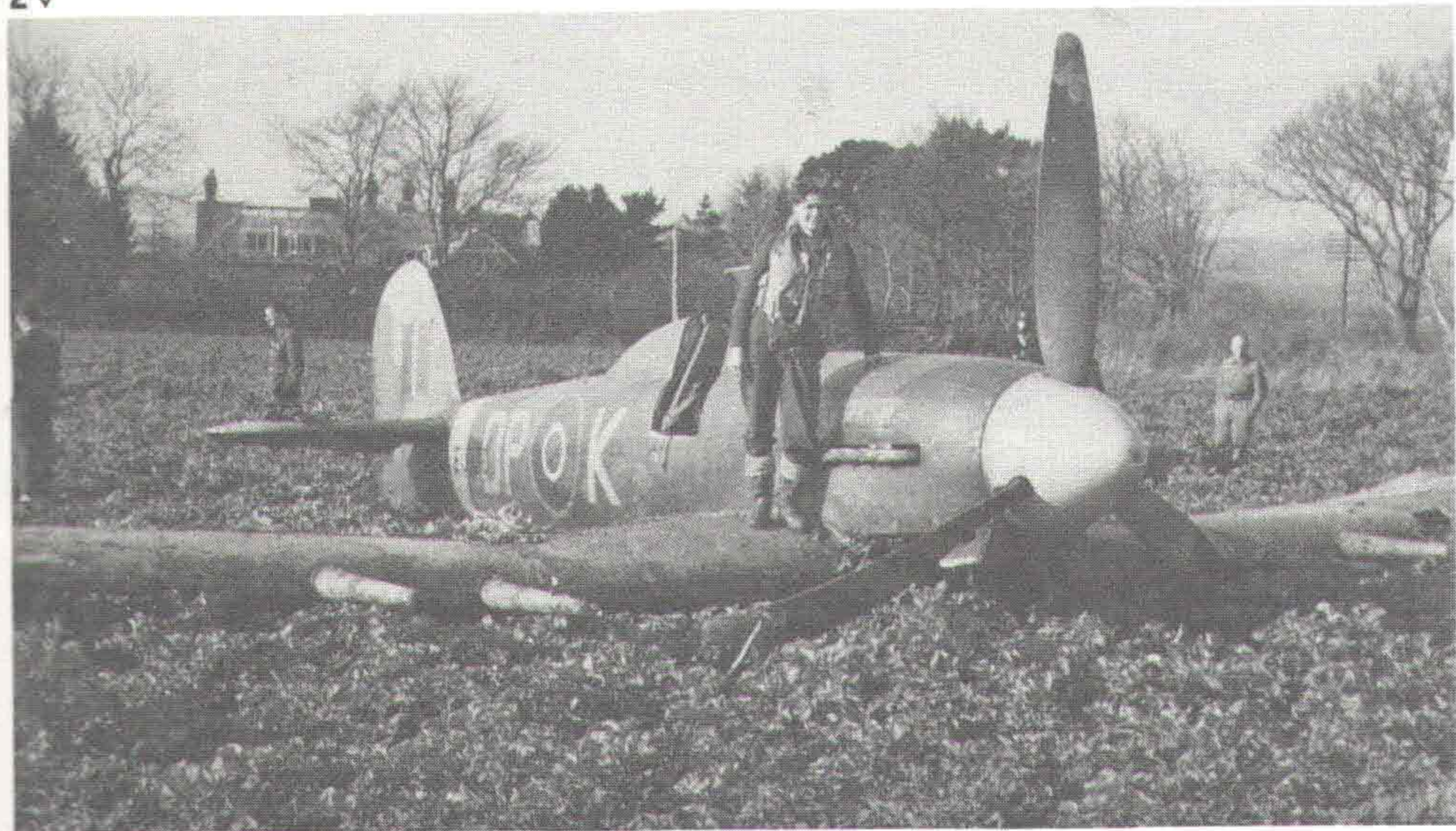


46



1▷

2▽



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A TYPHOON PILOT

1. A Typhoon 1B with door entry to cockpit. Later versions had four-bladed propellers and bubble-type sliding canopy. Stripes on the underside of the wings were to distinguish the Typhoon from the Fw 190 for which it was sometimes mistaken because of its somewhat similar silhouette by allied anti-aircraft gunners.

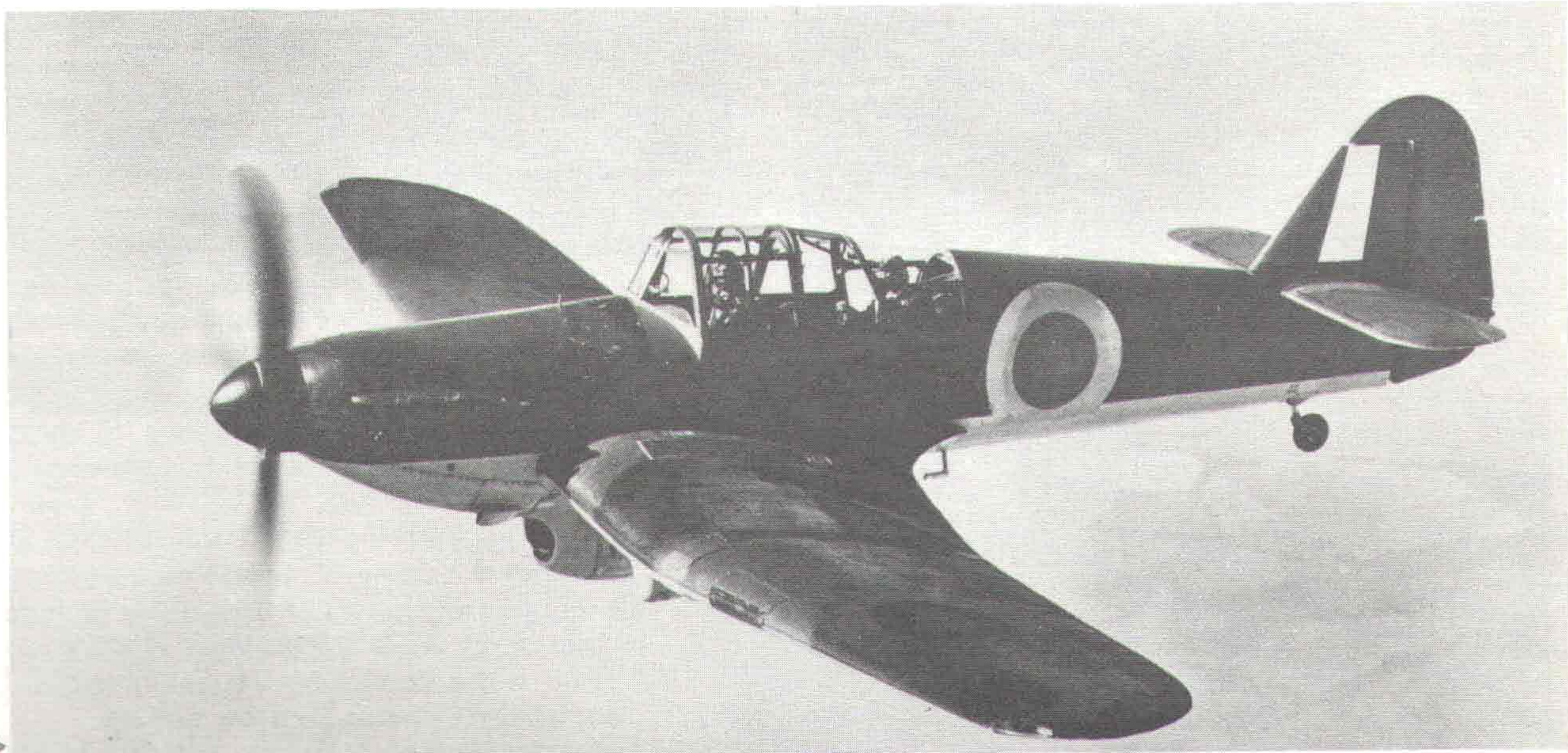
Manufacturer's photo via Author

2. The pilot of this 1983 Squadron Typhoon, DP-K, had his engine cut close to his base and managed a successful wheels-up landing in a nearby field.

Author's photo

3. A Miles Master was used for orientation training at Advanced Flying Training Units in the U.K.

Manufacturer's photo via Author



3▷



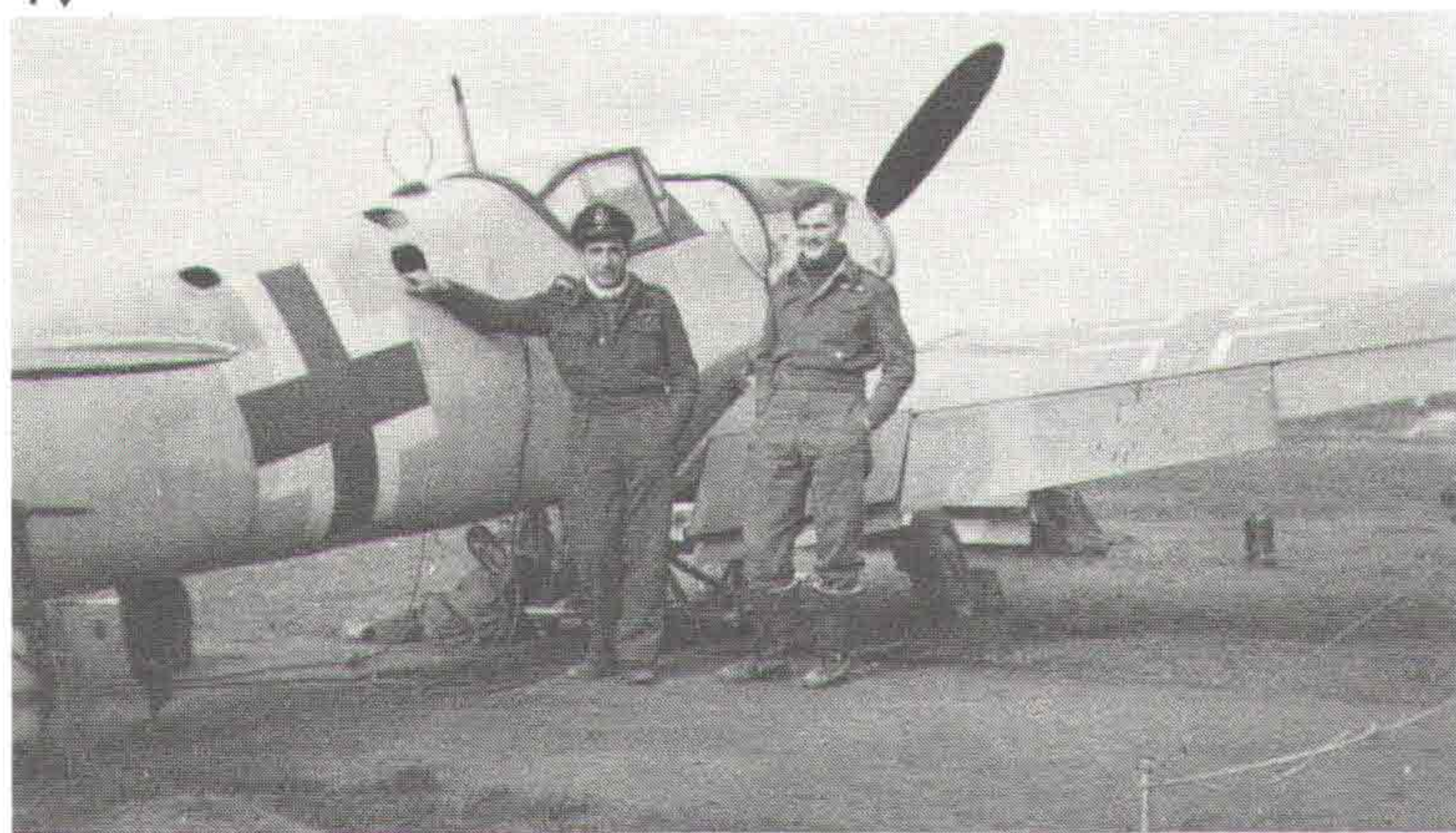
1△  
3▽



2△



4▽



5▽



## RECOLLECTIONS <sup>OF</sup> A TYPHOON PILOT

6▽

1. Seven of the ten 193 pilots who took part in a dogfight with 20 to 30 Bf 109s on 29 June, 1944. The result: seven 109s destroyed and two damaged against three Typhoons damaged. Needs Oar Point, June 1944. The author is at the extreme right. Author's photo
2. Ned Statters, a 193 pilot, points to his missing left elevator, the result of an encounter with a Bf 109. Author's photo
3. A line-up of 193 Squadron Typhoons presented by the Bellows Club. Air Ministry photo viz Author
4. Two 193 pilots stand beside a Bf 109 left in a hanger at Antwerp by the hastily retreating Germans. Guy Plamondt, 193 CO put this aircraft in flying condition and flew it later in England. Author's photo
5. Ned Statters and Jock Inglis pose outside their tent at Needs Oar Point in May 1944. Author's photo
6. Jack Brown (author of this account) lands his Typhoon at St Croix sur Mer, Normandy, in July 1944. Author's photo

