

ENEMY AERIAL ACTIVITY

October 20, 1918 - A few shallow reconnaissances over the right of our sector. No balloons in ascension.

GERMAN CLAIMS.

(From R.A.F., Summary of Air Intelligence, Oct. 19, 1918.)

A captured pilot (sergeant) ridicules the claims put forward monthly in the German Communique, as to the number of Allied machines shot down and the number of aeroplanes lost by the Germans. He states that, if the figures were divided by three in the case of Allied and multiplied by three in the case of German machines lost, they would be more approximately correct.

The prisoner has been punished on two occasions for "doubting the official German claims."

INTERROGATION OF A PILOT BELONGING TO THE 203rd RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHT, AND HIS PASSENGER, AN ARTILLERY OFFICER.

1. The machine, a Rumpler C. 4 with 260 h.p. Mercedes motor, was brought down in the Bois de Vigneulles by French anti-aircraft fire at 4 P.M., Oct. 18, 1918. The pilot, who was unfamiliar with the neighborhood, and not having a map of the entire region, lost his way in the mist and had to rely on the passenger for direction. They crossed the lines at an altitude of 100 - 150 meters and had to land on account of the gasoline tank being pierced and the engine stalling. The pilot succeeded in making a landing without causing further damage to the machine.
2. The pilot, a N.C.O., claims he belongs to the 203rd Reconnaissance Flight which he joined three weeks ago. Previous to this time he was at the Army Aircraft Park No. 18 at LaCapelle. He had just completed a six week's course of training at the park, after undergoing a six month's course at the Flying school at Grossenhain, Saxony. Prior to joining the Flying Corps, he had served with the L.I.R. 104, then in the L. I. Div. 47, in Russia.
3. The passenger, a first lieutenant of the Austro-Hungarian Heavy Artillery Regiment 7, 1st Bn., 13th Battery, stationed near the airdrome, was permitted to take his first ride, which was to be a short excursion.
4. The prisoners claim that the 203rd Reconnaissance Flight is located at an airdrome at the southern edge of Montmedy. The pilot was told that the flight had been in the region of St. Quentin before coming to Montmedy. The airdrome is made up of 4 hangars, each able to accommodate two machines.
5. The flight has 6 machines, 5 L.V.G.s and the Rumpler C.4 that was brought down. As a rule, the Rumpler is armed with two machine guns but it left unarmed on this trip because it was not intended to go near the lines. The pilot states that each Observation Flight usually has a single-seater battle plane but that this flight had none while he was there. He also states that observation planes usually carry four 12-kilo bombs to be thrown by hand by the observer. The captured Rumpler had a light blue body with camouflaged wings and the prisoner states that the L.V.G.s have yellow bodies with camouflaged wings.
6. The 203rd Reconnaissance Flight is commanded by Capt. Donnevert. There are 6 other officers and 6 N.C.O. pilots with the flight. Each plane has 3 mechanics assigned to it. The entire personnel of the flight is about 100.
7. The flight belongs to the "Maas Gruppe Ost" and is under the direct command of the Gruf. Its chief duty is to register for the artillery but occasionally it is sent out to take photographs. The pilot believes that the two other observation flights at the disposal of the "Maas Gruppe Ost" are located at Thonne-les-Pres.
8. The pilot claims that the Rumpler C.8 is equipped with an Argus motor. This type is not being used at the front because it is not a success. The Rumpler planes are very unpopular with the pilots and have the reputation



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of being very dangerous and responsible for many accidents. He claims that the machine has a tendency to slip into a nose dive from which it is almost impossible to right it. While the Rumpler is a good climber at low altitudes, it is very difficult to climb the machine at higher altitudes.

9. The Rumpler C.7 is equipped with a Maybach motor and is used by the Army Command for long distance reconnaissance flights.

10. The prisoner states that there are no pursuit flights in the Montmedy area, but pursuit planes are ordered from flights near Metz when needed on this front.

11. Lost or damaged machines are replaced by the Army Aircraft Park. Very often there are no machines of the type lost available and the flights have to take machines of the type on hand; consequently many flights have two or more types of machines. Damaged planes and parts are sent to the Army Aircraft Park.

12. The prisoner states that new flying personnel is recruited from volunteers out of active regiments. These men are trained at flying schools in Germany, apparently divided into separate schools for observers and pilots. The prisoner was at the school in Grossenhain, Saxony, where he received instruction in flying, meteorology, compass reading and knowledge of the motor. He received but little instruction in the handling of machine guns and in bombing as these tasks are to be handled by the pilot only in emergencies. There are a great many students at the school in Saxony but only a few are able to pass the final examinations. The following planes were used in the school: Albatros, D.F.W. and Rumpler C.1, with Benz, Mercedes and Maybach motors.

#### OPERATIONS

Oct. 20, 1918. - Visibility very poor. Low clouds and rain.

One reconnaissance at low altitude by a Corps Observation plane.

No other missions undertaken on account of adverse weather conditions.

#### OFFICIAL AMERICAN COMMUNIQUE

(October 20, 1918, 9 p.m.) W. of the MEUSE our troops have continued their pressure on the enemy. E. of BANTHEVILLE in the course of local fighting in the BOIS des RAPPES they captured over 100 prisoners. On the entire front N. of VERDUN there has been heavy artillery and machine-gun fire. Severe counter-attacks have been thrown back with heavy losses to the enemy.

During the heavy fighting of the past week N. of VERDUN, we have drawn from other parts of the Western Front a constantly increasing number of German divisions, which are bitterly contesting every foot against our strong attack, in order to secure the retreat of the German Army, the position of which has been compromised by the attacks from the south and the west.