



Pilot: P/O John 'Paddy' Hemingway.
Date: 26 August 1940



He landed safely near the Barge Public House, Vange, Essex.

11 Pages

£1.50

Hurricane Mk1 RAF Serial: P3966 85 Squadron, Croydon,
Pilot: P/O John 'Paddy' Hemingway. Date: 26 August 1940
Place: Fobbing Marshes, Essex, UK



Mark Postlethwaite's painting showing P/O Hemingway baling out



Hurricane Mark I, W9232, in flight. this aircraft
formerly served with Nos. 85, 23 and 247
Squadrons of the RAF .



85 Squadron Hurricanes in October 1940.

He landed safely near the Barge Public House, Vange, Essex.



THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN LONDON MONUMENT



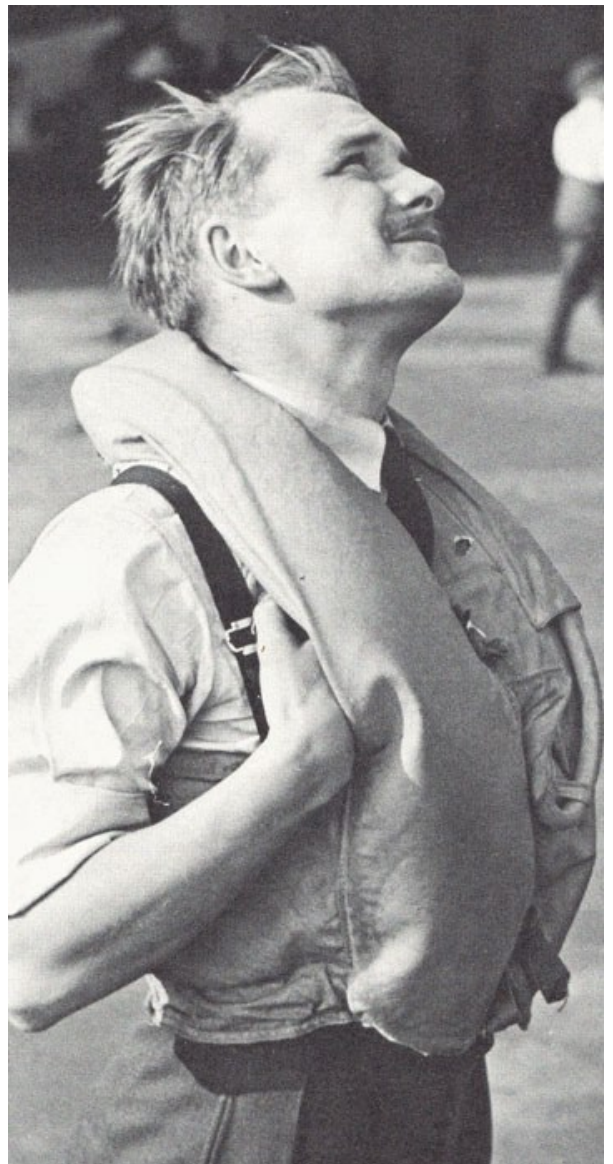
Distinguished Flying Cross



1/48 Hurricane Nightfighter 85 Squadron.

L to R Hemingway, P/O GL Howitt, F/O J E Marshall, S/Ldr. P W Townsend, (kneeling with dog Kim), and F/O W F Carnaby leaning on propeller scoreboard.

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Pilot Officer John 'Paddy' Hemingway's Report:

At 14.50 Squadron 85 based at Croydon was sent to patrol base Angels 15. From there it was vectored to the Maidstone area. Several minutes later 15 Do215 15,000 ft and 109s 20,000 approx. We turned to attack and three Do215s were separated from the main formation. After several attacks on these three Dorniers P/O Hemingway (Blue 2) broke away and climbed up to engage Me109s. While climbing P/O Hemingway was hit behind the cockpit and in the engine on the starboard side. The engine became red hot and thinking that the aircraft was on fire P/O Hemingway baled out, delaying his drop until he was in clouds before pulling rip cord. He landed in Pitsea Marshes at 15.30 and went to Pitsea Police Station, reporting to Intelligence Officers at Croydon and Hornchurch. He reported back to unit at 10.30 the same night.

Operations Record Book

No 85 Squadron, R. A. F.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	A
CROYDON	28/8/40	14.49	<p>Those taking part in this engagement were Squadron Leader Townsend, Flight Lieutenant Hamilton, Pilot Officer Hemingway, Pilot Officer Worral, Pilot Officer Allard, Sergeant Howes, Pilot Officer English, Pilot Officer Hodgson, Sergeant Walker-Smith, Sergeant Ellis, Flying Officer Woods-Scawen.</p> <p>Flying Officer Woods-Scawen attacked an M.E. 109 while climbing firing three seconds burst into its belly. He saw bits flying off in all directions, and enemy aircraft appeared to Whiptail, but he was unable to see if it crashed as he had to dive away.</p> <p>Pilot Officer Hemingway after the general engagement with the Dorniers was climbing to engage some M.E. 109's when he was hit behind the cockpit and in the engine by cannon shell. As the engine became red hot and it was impossible to remain in the aircraft he baled out, and landed safely in PITSEA MARSHES.</p> <p>The Dornier 215 were painted light blue beneath the wings, except one which was black.</p> <p>ENEMY CASUALTIES: Three Dorniers 215 destroyed - one M.E. 109 probable.</p> <p>OUR CASUALTIES: One Hurricane destroyed.</p>	

ASN Wikibase Occurrence # 176712

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Date: 26-AUG-1940

Time: 16:00



Type: [Hawker Hurricane Mk I](#)


Owner/operator: 85 Squadron Royal Air Force (85 Sqn RAF)

Registration: P3966

MSN:

Fatalities: Fatalities: 0 / Occupants: 1

Aircraft damage: Written off (damaged beyond repair)

Location: the Barge Public house in ~~Pitsea~~ -  [United Kingdom](#)

Phase: Combat

Nature: Military

Departure airport: RAF Croydon, Surrey

Destination airport:

Narrative:

We understand that PO Hemmingway flew L1639 in the Battle of France.

MONDAY AUGUST 26TH 1940 16.00 ~~hrs~~

Pilot officer J.A. (Paddy) Hemmingway. D.S.O. baled out of his Hawker Hurricane over the Thames Estuary After combat with Bf 109 fighters. He landed safely near the Barge Public house in ~~Pitsea~~, and his aircraft crashed into the marshes at Fobbing Essex.

Crew:

F/O (40702) John Allman (Paddy) HEMMINGWAY (pilot) RAF - ok

Sources:

85 Sqn ORB



Dunlop tyre on tail wheel



Parts of the engine were first discovered, then the control column, the tail wheel and a Brown- ing gun.

The propeller hub was later found, suggesting the excavators they had dug as deep as they needed to.

On August 26, 1940 Hemingway bailed out of his Hurricane at 17,000 feet, with the plane burrowing itself into 30 feet of mud near the Essex village of Fobbing.

After many years of careful planning and meticulous research using computer imaging technology, a Battle of Britain legend is finally coming to light.

At the end of March 2019, a specialist archaeological team deployed an excavator in the middle of a lonesome windy field in Essex. At the bottom of the wide hole was a Hawker Hurricane.

The wreckage has been preserved in good condition thanks to the mud. The joystick was recovered with the firing mechanism still in working order and with the safety off, meaning that the pilot was most likely engaged with the German Messerschmitt that shot him down on August 26, 1940.

The pilot, then twenty-one-year-old John 'Paddy' Hemingway was flying with 85 Squadron based in Croydon, South London.

The crash site of 'Paddy' Hemingway's Hurricane was originally located in 1987 and attempts made to recover it in 1988 by the Essex Historical Aircraft Society. Undercarriage legs and two Brownings were unearthed together with various small pieces, but the main wreck was buried too deeply in the mud to be recovered.

The site remained undisturbed until 30th March 2019 when a major excavation was organised by Gareth Jones and team. Funding was provided by Warrior Film Promotions, headed by Jeff Clarke, who were to finance the recovery as part of their documentary film about the restoration of Hurricane V7497 G-HRLI to airworthy condition.

The assistance of the following organisations is gratefully acknowledged:

Andrew and George Young - Land Owners.

Ministry of Defence.

Essex Wildlife Trust.

Port of London Authority.

The Environment Agency.

WM Plant Hire.

The University of Winchester Archaeology Department.

Sky News.

ITN.

The Historic Aircraft Collection Ltd.

The dig was carefully orchestrated so that the main wreck could be lifted to coincide with the tide, Hurricane flypast and TV news schedule! Worryingly, however, there was no sign of any aircraft wreckage as the digger's bucket scooped out the soft mud, just drinks cans and plastic bags left behind from the 1988 excavation. Then at a depth of 8 feet some wooden planks emerged - and a Browning machine gun - but nothing else.

When the excavation re-commenced the fabric covered tail section was found 20 feet down, then half of the shattered Merlin engine and the tailwheel. 'Paddy' - 99 years old at the time watched it all on TV in his home in Ireland.

The final item recovered was the propeller hub from some 36 feet.

He rejoined 85 Squadron at Lille-Seclin on the 15th after being returned by the Army. He flew back to England in an Ensign on the 17th. Hemingway was posted to 253 Squadron at Kirton-in-Lindsey in early June 1940 but rejoined 85, then at Debden, on the 15th.

On 18th August Hemingway baled out after his Hurricane, V7249, was damaged by return fire from a Ju88, engaged over the Thames Estuary. He fell into the sea and was rescued by a lightship 12 miles east of Clacton.

On the 26th he was shot down by a Me109 over Eastchurch and baled out, unhurt. His Hurricane, P3966, crashed on Pitsea Marshes.

The site was excavated in March 2019 and the engine, control column and other parts were recovered.

Hemingway damaged a Me109 on 31st August. He and F/Lt. JE Marshall were led on a patrol by F/Lt. G Allard on 22nd September over the western area of the Church Fenton sector. In poor weather conditions over Lancashire they ran low on fuel and had to make forced-landings, Hemingway and Marshall near Burnley and Allard near Clitheroe. All three Hurricanes were damaged but repairable.

In February 1941 85 Squadron was re-equipped with Havocs. During the nights of 3rd/4th May and 5th/6th May Hemingway damaged He111's.

He was awarded the DFC (gazetted 1st July 1941).

He was posted to 1452 Flight at West Malling on 7th July 1941, to fly Turbinlite Havocs.

In 1945 Hemingway was again operating in day fighters and he commanded 43 Squadron in Italy from early April until December 1945. On 23rd April 1945 his Spitfire was struck by ground fire and he baled out but was unhurt.

Hemingway retired from the RAF on 12th September 1969 as a Group Captain.

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN LONDON MONUMENT

Hemingway survived the war and returned home to Ireland where he is still alive and well at the age of 99. As an Irish volunteer, the British government awarded him the Distinguished Flying Cross for his efforts.

Hemingway is a Dubliner who signed up in 1938 and was granted a short service commission with the RAF at the age of just 19.

Hemingway became the last verified surviving airman of the Battle of Britain. He was shot down four times during the Second World War.



Group Captain (retired) John 'Paddy' Hemingway, the last known Battle for France and Battle of Britain pilot, celebrated his 102nd Birthday back in May 2021.

VANGE BOOKLETS

All Saints Church Hall 1931 £2.10

Barges at Vange Wharf £2.10

Cashes Well No5 £2.10

John (Paddy) Hemingway £1.50

The Barge Inn 1832 – 2015 £2.50

The Bull Public House 1878— 1961 £1.50

The Vange Crystal Well £1.50

Vange Board School 1876 £5.80

Vange Fire Station 1934 – 1962 £3.90

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Vange Swimming Pool 1933-1952 £2.00

The Shops of Vange London Road & High Road £5.00

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BASILDON BOOKLET

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The Old Pitsea Market 1924—1969 £2.60



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