

- 10 -

D.T.F.
S.M.2(b).

As this file has now again been passed to this Branch I had better take the opportunity of replying to Encl. 9A, although I have already written to Group Captain Oddie.

1. My original minute was, as is customary in such cases, addressed to D.T.F.(T.G.2.) After signing it I noticed U.S. of S. had been left off and gave instructions that he was to receive a copy. Unfortunately, owing to a clerical error here he was put at the top. Please accept my apologies for this mistake.

2. In Encl. 7A I definitely stated that there was no direct evidence that the pilot intended on that occasion to roll this aircraft. We do know, however, that he had given instructions for his air gunner to be strapped tightly into his seat. That he actually did carry out such a manoeuvre cannot be dismissed because the tail had failed by being twisted off in a way that might have been the result of a roll - perhaps carried out a few minutes before the aircraft was first noticed by those on the ground.

In my d.o. reply to 9A I emphasized this and pointed out that what we did know was that a pilot from another Squadron had been over about 10 days before this and given a demonstration of rolling. It was in respect of that contravention of regulations that it seemed desirable to draw attention in para.3.

3. A Court of Inquiry investigated ~~the~~ accident to this particular Beaufighter and it would not normally record evidence of a kind I have mentioned. I do not think, therefore, it is fair to suggest that there may have been a widespread conspiracy "to conceal the true facts of the case." So long as an inquiry is carried out by officers of the Station to which an aircraft belonged there is always a likelihood that all the contributory factors will not be disclosed. That is a matter which I have stressed on many occasions. A typical example may be found on Air Ministry file A.189975/41.

In this Branch we are always as careful as we can be that if we give information obtained in confidence no one will be let down. If that were not so, we could no longer work in the way we do. That is why in my minute I was careful to avoid mentioning any names.

4. It may be of interest generally to know that the frame formers 330 and 332 have been suspect because in a great number of cases the rivets of the rear spar attachment fittings of the tail plane have sheared and/or cracks have been found in the formers themselves adjacent to this fitting. At one Squadron alone 17 out of the 18 aircraft there were so affected. Modification action is being taken immediately. There is a possibility that the trouble has been caused by tail wheel shimmy. Another trouble with the Beaufighter has been the failure of engine mountings. That matter, again, is receiving immediate attention.

Meanwhile, Beaufighters shouldn't be rolled.

(Sgd.) VERNON BROWN.
C.I.(Accidents).

17.11.41.