

" Pij " Van Wersch Albert (RAF n° 169983)

Knight in the Order of Léopold, Knight in the Order of the Crown, Knight in the Order of Léopold II, Croix de Guerre 1940 with Palmes an Bronze Lion, Croix des Evadés, War Medal, Defense Medal, Air Crew Star Europe, Military Combatant Medal, Comemororative War Medal 40-45 with crossed swords, ...



(André Bar Collection)

Albert Van Wersch was born at Molenbeek (Brussels) on 19 June 1915. He enrolled into the Belgian Army on 24 September 1936 and was affected to the 3rd Regiment of the Aéronautique Militaire Belge. He joined III/2/Aé on 10 June 1937 and was to be formed as Reservist Observer-Air Gunner. He enters the Military Flying School on 1 September 1937 and is graduated as pilot, September 12th, 1938. Posted to 7/IV/1 Aé he participate with this unit at the 18 Day Campaign of May 1940. During this campaign while executing a search and recce mission above the enemy lines, his aircraft, Fairey Fox VI n° 169 with Observator Adjudant Taton, was hit by ground fire in his oil and water radiators. Flying at low altitude and 10 miles from friendly lines he managed to bring his damaged aircraft back into friendly territory and force landed near Belgrade (Namur). On May 15, 1940, he retreated to France with his unit. The capitulation of France sees him returning to Belgium on August 10th, 1940. He evaded from Belgium on 31 May 1942 and stayed in France till July 1942, the day he crossed the Spanish border and arrived at Gibraltar, 24 October 1942. He embarked on 12 November 1942 to Great Britain where he arrived November 29th, 1942. He enlisted the RAFVR and was send to 5 PAFU, Ternhill in February 1943, being retrained on Anson and Master (first flight on Anson on 18 February 1943). Send to 57 OTU, Eshott, he made his first flight on Spitfire on 28 March 1943. Posted in as Sergeant to 350 (Belgian) Squadron on 1 June 1943 at Ouston. His first operational mission was performed on 26 July 1943 flying Spitfire Mk Vb MN-Y. He saw promotions to P/O on 3 December 1943 and F/O on 3 June 1944. On March 10, 1945, after 139 missions totaling 282 flying hours, he was rested and

joined as Pilot Instructor the Belgian Training School of Snaiwell. He left the RAF in October 1946 and joined as pilot, the Belgian national carrier Sabena in May 1951. He also flew as reservist in the Belgian Air Force Auxiliary Squadron. Retreated from Sabena on January 1st, 1976. He died on 20 June 1998.

(Biography kindly provided by Philippe Deman)

His claims are :

21/02/1945 1 Me-109

Paderborn (Spit XIVb MN-R)

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