

15 September 1943

7 Squadron Arafura Sea

While flying SSE on routine patrol at 3000 feet and 80 miles SW of Cape Valsch, Wing Commander Keith Parsons sighted what he described as a mono-floatplane "Jake" travelling NE at 11 o'clock. Greenish brown with large red roundels the aircraft was 1000 feet above and 3 miles distant. Both aircraft spotted each other simultaneously with the Jake immediately making for the 6/10ths cumulus cloud tops 1500 feet below. Parsons opened the throttles and followed the floatplane into the clouds. Sighting it shortly afterwards through a gap in the cumulus, Parsons opened the attack from astern with a burst at 150 yards. The Jakes' gunner returned fire with tracer passing very close to port of the Beaufort. Following the aircraft through a violent diving turn, Parsons gave it another burst before forcing the Jake onto clear sky. Pulling up 100 yards behind and under the aircraft, with the observers guns now jammed, Parsons continued the attack with his wing guns:

'Return fire from "Jake" was encountered at this point and one bullet penetrated my main starboard petrol tank. I again opened fire, straddling the after part of E/A, I saw the enemy rear gunner slump inwards and gun go out of control. No more fire was encountered from the "Jake".'

As the Beaufort broke away from this attack, port beam gunner F/O Grabau and rear turret gunner P/O Jamieson, were able to fire off bursts at the damaged aircraft. Both crew scoring hits.

Manoeuvring for a rear quarter attack Parsons closed to within 50 yards but his wing guns jammed. Instead he positioned his plane so that his rear and beam gunners could again fire. More hits were observed before the Jake was eventually lost in thick cloud after a battle of more than 20 minutes. During the engagement Parsons fired 100 rounds and the remaining crew fired 590 rounds between them.

Combat claims

W/C K.R Parsons DSO DFC

1 Jake damaged

A9-370

CFR

Other known participants

Nil

Allied losses

Nil

Japanese forces

1 Jake floatplane