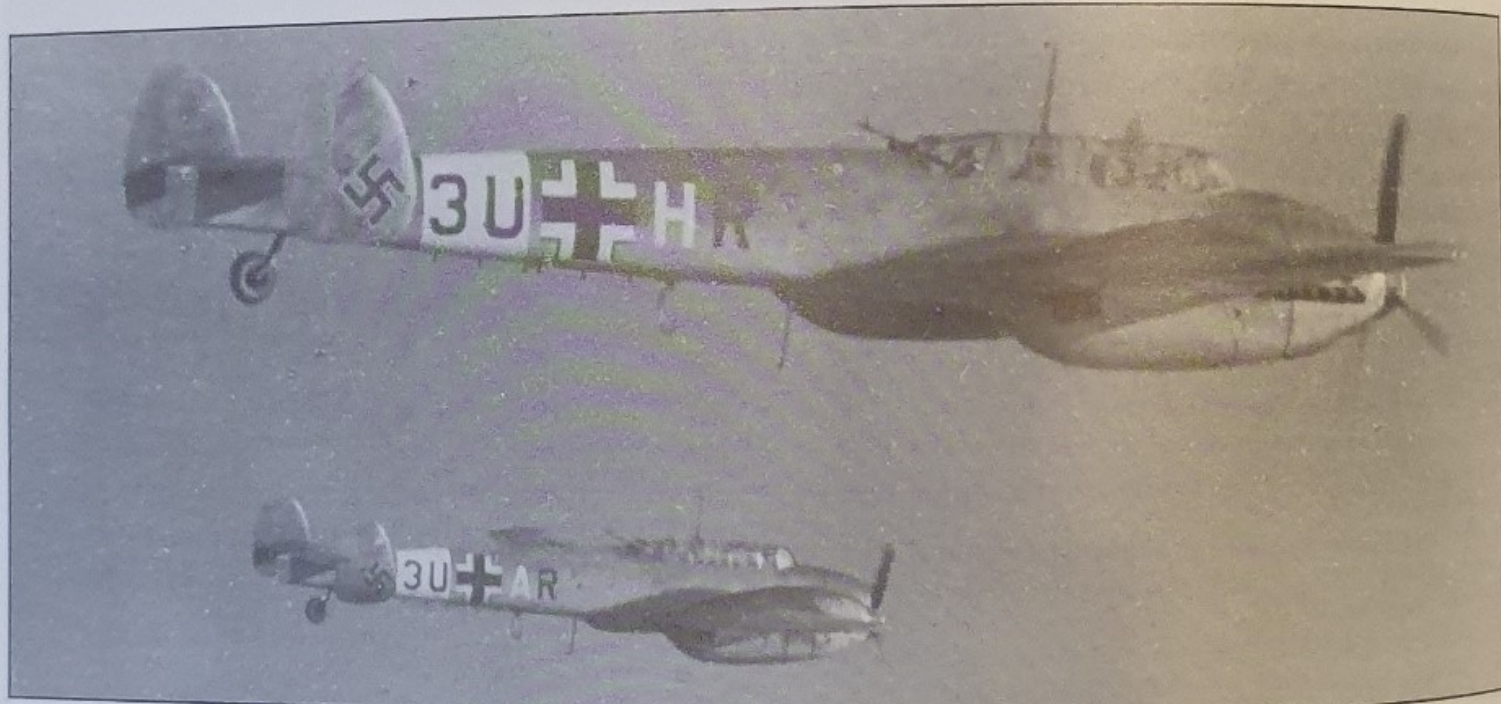




FH266 (closest to the camera) and V8998 (left); a photo taken no later than September 1942. FH266 was one of only two Hudsons on strength with No. 459 Squadron by July 1942 which remained on strength until January 1944. V8998 (GK-O) crashed on landing at LG226 on 6th September 1942 and was subsequently struck off charge. This particular Hudson had arrived on No. 459 Squadron in May 1942, about six-eight weeks before FH266. Interestingly, V8998's markings appear to have been applied on a more permanent basis than those on FH266, indicative perhaps of the change of pace at No. 103 Maintenance Unit in the brief intervening time between the two deliveries. At No. 103 MU incoming aircraft to the Middle East were "tropicalised" and generally given whatever treatment was necessary, including camouflage and markings, prior to entering front line service. The more permanently-applied letter "C", visible here on FH266 was, no doubt, a legacy of the Hudson's earlier service with No. 1444 Flight. (via John McKenzie)



Two Messerschmitt Bf 110s over the Mediterranean, date unknown. Were these the same two encountered by two 459 Squadron Hudsons on 24th July 1942? The aircraft in the foreground bears the identity of the Bf 110 shot down on that occasion, but the absence of a date when the photo was taken makes it impossible to confirm whether this was the aircraft in question, as a replacement aircraft for that lost would have worn the same markings. The code combination (here 3U) to the left of the fuselage cross identified the unit to which the aircraft belonged, in this case Zerstörer Geschwader 26, whilst the letters on the other side (HR and AR) denoted the individual aircraft letter (here "H" and "A") and a Gruppe/Staffel identifying letter (letter R here indicating 7. Staffel of III Gruppe). The significance of these markings was appreciated from an early stage, Middle East Training Memorandum No. 1 issued in September 1941 commenting: "It is sometimes possible to distinguish the recognition letters of low flying enemy aircraft. These markings are most useful to the RAF for identification purposes and, if seen should be noted and reported back to HQ's without delay". (via Barry Rosch)