

A SECOND WAR SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE GROUP TO A 'TOMAHAWK' FIGHTER PILOT OF 5 SQUADRON WHO KILLED IN ACTION, CRASHING IN FLAMES AT AMIRIYA ON 3 APRIL 1942



1939-45 STAR; AFRICA STAR; WAR AND AFRICA SERVICE MEDALS 1939-45, ALL OFFICIALLY IMPRESSED '47824 M. J. BARTELS'; SOUTH AFRICAN SECOND WORLD WAR CASUALTY PLAQUE, IN THE NAME OF '47824 LUIT. M. J. BARTELS S.A.L.M.', this last in its card box of issue.

Martinus Johannes Bartels was born at Zutphen, Holland on 20 October 1917 and worked as a Mechanical Draughtsman prior to enlisting with the 2nd Battalion, Pretoria Regiment in 1937. Serving with this until he was appointed Corporal and served until March 1939 when he was transferred to the South Africa Air Force as a Pupil Pilot.

Posted to No. 65 Air School Bartels qualified as a Pilot and was promoted 2nd Lieutenant, being called up for war service in 1940. Promoted Lieutenant on 2 July 1941 he was posted to No. 5 Squadron on 27 December 1941 for operational flying. This unit flew Tomahawk IIb's on anti-shipping duties from December 1941.

Bartels stayed with them for a short time before being sent to 91 Operational Training Unit in the Sudan on 9 January 1942. Completing his training with them he was returned to No. 5 Squadron on 7 February 1942. The Squadron operating in Egypt from the beginning of March 1942

On 3 April 1942, Lieutenant Bartels, flying Tomahawk IIb AN239 failed to return from a patrol. The Squadron's war diary notes the following:

"First pilot killed since operations started: No 47824 Lieut. M. J. Bartles, flying Tomahawk AN.239, on detached duty at L.G.98. No direct evidence available as to cause of the crash; suspected enemy action as "Jumbo" reported a bogey in the vicinity, Aircraft: Cat. Three."

It was later ascertained that he had crashed in flames at Amiriya at 4.55pm. At the time of his death, the War Diary lists Bartels having taken part in 19 operational patrols, during March 1942, until he was shot down, having commanded a flight on 3 occasions. Bartels is buried at Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery



Tomahawk 8B AM401 of No 5 Sqn SAAF, flown by Capt Johnny Human, LG 121, Egypt, 11 March 1942

Tomahawk of 5 Squadron S.A.A.F March 1942







Condition; some contact wear to medals, VF, the plaque EF. Sold together with copied service papers and a Commonwealth War Graves certificate.