

During 1943, R.C.A.F. aircraft flew more than 20,000,000 miles on operations overseas. R.C.A.F. Bomber Group dropped a greater bomb tonnage in a single night's operations than the Luftwaffe had dropped on London in a single night at the height of the Battle of Britain—1940.

In addition to being the principal trainer of aircrew for all the British Commonwealth forces under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (see p. xxix of the 1940 Year Book and p. xxxii of the 1941 Year Book), Canada manned and paid all maintenance costs for her 42 units overseas. Nearly all commanding officers, aircrew and groundcrew of the 42 squadrons were Canadian. Moreover, for every Canadian in R.C.A.F. aircrew, there were another ten Canadian aircrew scattered through the R.A.F. One-quarter of all aircrew in European and Mediterranean areas were Canadians trained in the R.C.A.F.

Canada accepted responsibility for providing air protection for convoys in the western Atlantic. A gauge of R.C.A.F. success in hunting submarines is the fact that, whereas U-boats formerly were sighted once for each 840 hours of flying time, an average of 1,700 hours of operational searching was required to locate each one in 1943-44. Since the first R.C.A.F. attack on a U-boat in October, 1941, there have been 63 attacks on submarines and more than half of these were made in 1943. Canadian squadrons operated from Labrador, Newfoundland, and Iceland, as well as from Canadian bases.

As a morale measure, an overseas mail squadron was inaugurated Dec. 15, 1943, to fly mail to Canadian servicemen stationed along the 15,000-mile round trip route covered. Its operation proved most effective.

Strength of the R.C.A.F. grew from 4,000 in September, 1939, to a 1943 establishment in excess of 206,000. Instructors, staff men, mechanics, engineers and others in 50 different trades trained by the R.C.A.F. totalled 114,000. Production of aircrew has been the primary purpose. By the end of 1943, more than 86,000 aircrew—pilots, navigators, wireless air gunners, air bombers, flight engineers, and air gunners—had been trained. Of these, over 56 p.c. were Canadian. By the end of May, 1944, 100,000 aircrew had been graduated.

Peak development of training facilities was realized in 1943 and decision to reduce the intake of aircrew and to prune the machinery was made, with the object of bringing the greatest possible weight of air strength to bear on the enemy through employment of instructors and trained groundcrew in operational spheres. The first units closed were R.A.F. schools that had been transferred to Canada. It was decided to progressively close these as their activities were dovetailed into the schedules of Canadian stations. Up to that point, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan had cost Canada alone more than \$1,635,000,000.

During 1943 training aircraft were obtained with greater ease than previously and the supply of elementary and service training 'planes was adequate. By April, 1944, the Air Training Plan had almost 12,000 'planes. Of these, more than 5,000 were single-engined and nearly 6,000 twin-engined aircraft. Cornells were used chiefly for elementary training. Harvards and Yales were used as single-engined trainers; Ansons, Cranes, Oxfords, Beechcraft and Lockheeds as twin-engined trainers. Bombing and gunnery schools used Battles, Bolingbrokes and Lysanders; wireless schools had Forts, Harvards, Yales and Norsemen. The Norseman also was utilized in single-engined transportation. Operational training employed Hurricanes, Cansos, Liberators, Mitchells, Mosquitoes, Beechcraft, Dakotas, Venturas, Baltimores and Swordfish. Of all these, the following were made in Canada: Cornells, Ansons, Lysanders, Bolingbrokes, Harvards, Hurricanes, Cansos and Mosquitoes.