

in England. During 1944, R.C.A.F. squadrons flew a total of 99,367 operational sorties and dropped 86,216 tons of bombs. As a result of these operations, 605 enemy aircraft were destroyed, 31 probably destroyed and 212 damaged. When Bomber Command commenced its offensive late in April, 1944, Canadian squadrons of the R.C.A.F. Group participated. Thousands of tons of high explosives and incendiaries were dropped on the invasion coast and great air armadas smashed at Nazi industrial and communication centres in a systematic campaign to paralyse Germany's transport facilities. In June, Canadian heavy bombers were used for the first time in daylight operations against enemy occupied territory. Later in the year, operations were directed against supply bases, flying-bomb launching sites, storage dumps, railway centres, etc., and tactical support for the Allied ground forces was provided. The bombing of petroleum supply plants and refineries, which was commenced in April, was continued for several months and enemy oil stores were reduced to a point far below requirements.

R.C.A.F. flying-boat squadrons in Coastal Command were engaged on routine convoy escort coverage and anti-submarine patrols. Other units in the Command carried out naval escorts, air sea rescue searches and many successful attacks against enemy shipping. An important development in June, 1944, was the successful anti-submarine activities reported by an R.C.A.F. squadron in Iceland. During its operations from that location, the squadron reported seven sightings and six attacks. One probable and three positive kills were claimed.

Day-fighter and ground-attack squadrons, equipped with Spitfire, Mustang and Typhoon aircraft, carried out a continuous offensive on supply trains, bridges, communications lines, locomotives, staff cars, lorries, flying bombs, etc. Squadrons with the Allied Expeditionary Air Force were active in covering landings of the Allied Forces in the invasion of the Continent on D-Day, while Coastal Command aircraft hampered any attempts of U-boats to impede the landings. After the invasion, attacks against tactical targets were carried out in direct support of the Army. On Jan. 1, 1945, when the Luftwaffe staged a surprise offensive against airfields and other military targets in Holland and Belgium, R.C.A.F. pilots accounted for 37 of the large number of enemy aircraft destroyed and for numerous others probably destroyed or damaged. In February, fighter and fighter-reconnaissance aircraft continued their attacks on communications with considerable success and the Tactical Air Force, of which R.C.A.F. squadrons formed a substantial part, was diverted from the British Second Army to direct support of the Canadian Army offensive. In addition to this direct support, R.C.A.F. squadrons were active when Bomber Command and the Allied Expeditionary Force co-operated in a drive to hamper German troop movements from the Western to the Eastern front and the movement of reserves from Denmark, Norway and the interior German provinces.

Fighter-reconnaissance, night-fighter and intruder squadrons were very active in attacks on enemy airfields, transportation facilities, etc., and in support of the Army. A record for R.C.A.F. intruder operations was established on May 16, 1944, when four Mosquito aircraft of one squadron destroyed seven enemy aircraft in air combat and one on the ground. This squadron alone accounted for 32 enemy aircraft destroyed during the month of May.

R.C.A.F. air transport, ferry and communications operations had increased to such an extent that a new group was formed early in February, 1945, with headquarters at R.C.A.F. Station, Rockcliffe, Ont. During the twelve months ended