

(c) AIR FORCE -

The RCAF Bomber Group was normally active throughout the month despite conditions which restricted the operations of the lighter aircraft based on the continent. In general, bomber operations were directed against the communication system leading to the Western Front, though on two occasions attacks were made on similar installations behind the Eastern Front. In addition to these semi-tactical operations, the heavy bombers were airborne four times against synthetic oil plants.

The activities of the fighter and reconnaissance aircraft, which form so important a part of one group of the 2nd Tactical Air Force, were greatly restricted during the first half of the month due to unfavourable weather and poor visibility. In this period, their main duty, when conditions permitted, was to provide escorts for medium range bombers. With improving weather during the third week of March, the number of sorties increased and ground attacks were added to the bomber escort duties. Later all our aircraft of this type were engaged in providing air support for the 21st Army Group in their Rhine crossing operations.

II - Summary of Canadian Operations

Central Mediterranean Theatre

(a) ARMY -

The 1st Canadian Corps moved from Italy to northwest Europe.

(b) AIR FORCE -

No. 417 (Fighter) Squadron at Bellaria flew 540 sorties on rail interdiction, armed reconnaissance, bombing, strafing and air-sea rescue missions with a loss of two aircraft.

United Kingdom and Northwest Europe

(a) NAVY - Coastal Waters

The R.C.N. continued to assist on escort work in U.K. coastal waters and with the arrival of Escort Group 16 in Londonderry on the 18th, five Canadian frigate groups were acting as support or striking forces against U-boats in British waters.

Escort Group 26 made a promising attack southeast of the Scilly Isles on the 4th, but it was possible that the wreckage brought up was from a U-boat previously attacked in the vicinity. While patrolling St. George's Channel, Escort Group 25 attacked and destroyed a German U-boat on the 7th, and H.M.C.S. "New Glasgow" rammed and sank a U-boat just out of Lough Foyle on the 20th.

Two Canadian Motor Torpedo Boats engaged four German E-Boats off Ostend on the 17th. The enemy separated and retired after suffering some damage.

On the 29th, H.M.C.S. "Tene", a frigate, was torpedoed off Land's End while in support of a convoy. She

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