



BATTLE-HARDENED AIR-GUNNERS RETURN TO TRAIN AS PILOTS

All eager to get back into the air battles over Europe and do their fighting from behind a "stick" rather than a machine-gun, four veteran Ontario air-gunners have returned from Britain to take pilot's

courses at the initial training school at Belleville. Between them they have flown a total of 125 operational trips over enemy territory. Two of them were shot down and made their escape, one from internment

in Italy and the other from hiding in an occupied country. The quartet includes, LEFT to RIGHT, P.O. Floyd Morrison, Ottawa; P.O. Phillip Whitnall, Peterboro; F.O. Jack Otten, Kingston, and F.O. Bill Rowland, Brussels.

**FLIER, CAPTIVE 18 MONTHS
'OWES LIFE TO RED CROSS'**

Belleville, Feb. 5—Having approximately 125 operational trips over enemy territory to their credit, four Ontario R.C.A.F. officers, formerly air-gunners with bombing squadrons overseas, commenced training this week at No. 5 initial training school at Belleville to become pilots. Two of the former air-gunners, Flying Officer Jack Otten, Kingston, and Pilot Officer, Phillip Whitnall, Peterboro, were shot down over enemy territory but ultimately escaped the Nazi clutches to rejoin their units.

The other two officers, Flying Officer Bill Rowland of Brussels and Pilot Officer Floyd Morrison of Navin, near Ottawa, have both seen German night-fighters crash to earth before their flaming guns.

To have his torpedo bomber shot into the air from a height of 100 feet, giving him no chance to bail out, followed by 18 months in an Italian prisoner-of-war camp, has been the experience of Flying Officer Otten. Off the coast of Greece, ack-ack fire got his plane and Otten floated for three and a half hours before being picked up by Greek fishermen. He was placed in a Greek hospital and later taken to an Italian internment camp.

"Is a Military Secret"

Just how he escaped or where he rejoined the Allied forces, Flying Officer Otten did not say. "Some of my goals are still interned," he said. "Telling how I escaped would do no good." Just 22 years old, he enlisted in 1940 and was overseas for three years.

He paid tribute to the work of the Red Cross in supplying food and parcels for interned men. He said 50 per cent. of the men would have died had it not been for food sent by the Red Cross.

One of the crew of an R.A.F. medium bomber, Pilot Officer Whitnall was forced to bail out over enemy territory when Nazi anti-aircraft fire struck his plane. Landing in a sparsely populated area, he managed to escape capture and six months later turned up in England.

"Just put it down that I was able to run a bit faster than the Germans," he said. He would not state in what part of occupied territory he landed nor how he got back to England.

Wants To Get Back

A former army man, Flying Officer Rowland trained as a wireless air-gunner. Now a veteran of 32 operational trips, he has a Junkers-88 night-fighter to his credit and is itching to have wings pinned on his tunic and get back into the fray. He and Pilot Officer Morrison were crew members of heavy bombers.

Pilot Officer Morrison had well on to two operational tours to his credit. He stated he had 43 trips over enemy territory, "about three-quarters of them over Happy Valley. He has official confirmation of one Nazi night-fighter destroyed and another "damaged" to his credit.