

of air crew for all Commonwealth forces. Royal Canadian Air Force graduates make up considerably more than one-half the total of all air crew supplied by partners in the Commonwealth. From 22% to 25% of all the air crew in the European and Mediterranean areas under British tactical command are Canadian boys, enlisted and trained in Canada, and the proportion is expected to increase to one-third.

Throughout 1944 allied air attacks over Europe have been continually increasing in number and intensity, and the Royal Canadian Air Force has had a considerable share. In the first five months of the year the Canadian group alone sent 19,000 tons of destruction down on enemy territory. In May, the month before the invasion, it dropped 6,000 tons of explosives and incendiaries on enemy targets.

During these tense days Canadian ground crews worked at top speed to have every possible aircraft available for H-hour. As a result every squadron in the Royal Canadian Air Force bomber group was represented in the massive air fleet that attacked the invasion coast, together with hundreds of fighting craft. Between midnight and dawn of invasion day the Royal Canadian Air Force dropped 1,000 tons of bombs. During the month of June the Canadians made 3,000 sorties to drop 10,000 tons of explosives over Europe - almost as great a tonnage as was dropped during the whole of 1943 by the Royal Canadian Air Force.

By the second week of the invasion a Canadian Spitfire wing was operating from a full-fledged airfield in Normandy, and a complete mobile Royal Canadian Air Force airfield unit had been moved across the English Channel. Between invasion day and the end of June the Royal Canadian Air Force destroyed more than 80 enemy aircraft, one destroyer and several E-boats.

In addition to attacking industrial centres, robot bomb bases, airfields, communications and shipping, Canadian fliers have given close support to advancing ground troops. Dive-bombing Spitfires and rocket-firing Typhoons have swooped in just ahead of army units to destroy machine-gun nests and strongly fortified positions.

In addition to their activity over German and Axis-held territory in Europe, Canadians have participated in air attacks in many parts of the world. An Royal Canadian Air Force bomber wing reinforced the bomber force in the Mediterranean area, and Royal Canadian Air Force personnel took part in the African campaign and the Battle of Malta. Canadians had a large role in the successful operation by transport aircraft and the third tactical air force in Burma which placed allied troops some 200 miles beyond the Japanese.

One of the most ambitious projects of the Royal Canadian Air Force has been the formation of an overseas mail squadron which operates a 7,500-mile air line for Canada's three armed services from Canada to the United Kingdom and from there to the Mediterranean theatre.

R.C.A.F.  
IN THE  
WESTERN  
HEMISPHERE

Almost as many Royal Canadian Air Force squadrons formerly were engaged in western hemisphere operations as there were Royal Canadian Air Force squadrons overseas, but with the withdrawal of the Japanese from the Aleutians and the improvement in the U-boat war situation, several of these squadrons have been released for service overseas.

Royal Canadian Air Force squadrons operating under United States command took part in the Aleutians campaign. Other squadrons have patrolled Pacific sea lanes, and fighters were poised for air attacks.

The Royal Canadian Air Force has taken control of all flying on the Northwest Staging Route -- the airway system from Edmonton to Alaska which was built largely by Canada and was ready for use when the United States declared war on Japan. Control towers are staffed by the R.C.A.F., and the R.C.A.F. is solely responsible for security on the route.

The Northwest Staging Route was formerly controlled by No. 2 Wing in Edmonton, Alberta, but was made into the Northwest Air Command on June 1, 1944. The expanding scope of Canadian participation in Northwest developments