



The invasion of Sicily on July 10, 1943, brought to an end three years of waiting and preparation. From then on Canadian troops were in continuous action in Europe until the surrender of Germany.

They took a heavy share in the Italian campaign until the Gothic and Hitler lines were pierced. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, they were in the initial assault wave that stormed the Normandy beaches. Their capture of Carpiquet and Caen provided the pivot for the Allied break-through.

The First Canadian Army then took the field in the drive from Caen to Falaise. In bloody fighting it freed the Channel ports, cleared the Scheldt estuary to open the port of Antwerp, and secured the northern flank of the allied line during the last offensive into Germany.

The Canadian Army suffered more than 80,000 casualties of whom more than one-quarter were killed.

In September, 1939, the total strength of the Royal Canadian Air Force was approximately 4,000. By 1943 its strength had been expanded to 206,000. The first R.C.A.F. squadron reached England at the beginning of 1940 and from before the Battle of Britain until VJ-Day Canadian airmen were in combat on virtually every war-front.

The operational strength of the R.C.A.F. in all theatres of war grew to over 60 squadrons. Many thousands of other Canadians served with the R.A.F. The Canadian combat units fought over England, Africa, Italy, Europe, India and Burma. During the invasion of Normandy they spread a protective shield over the convoys and beaches and assisted in the defeat of the flying-bomb menace. They played an outstanding role in all phases of air operations—in combat, bombing, reconnaissance, sub-chasing and the protection of shipping. And, in addition, there was no major operation of the British R.A.F. in which Canada was not represented by attached Canadian air-crew.



*Sailors face North Atlantic cold.*



Canada also developed, administered and largely financed the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, which turned Canada into what President Roosevelt called the "airdrome of democracy". Canada thus became the chief source of trained aircrew for the Commonwealth air forces throughout the war. More than half of the graduates of the 154 training schools across Canada were Canadians, and in addition to the other Commonwealth airmen, many from the occupied lands of Europe and other allied countries were trained in Canada.

The Royal Canadian Air Force suffered nearly 22,000 casualties, including some 17,000 dead.

Canada's merchant navy increased in personnel from 1,460 to more than 8,000 during the war. Canadian sailors served on the ships of many nations and suffered 1,243 casualties.

More than 50,000 Canadian women enlisted in the three armed services. They enormously increased the fighting effectiveness of Canada's forces by replacing men in every type of duty which a woman could perform, in and out of the combat zones.

Almost overnight Canada was transformed from a producer of food and raw materials into one of the world's major manufacturing nations. After the fall of France, when an invasion of Britain seemed imminent, long-range war production plans in Canada were swiftly revised to meet the emergency and make Canada the chief arsenal of the Commonwealth.

Among the United Nations, Canada's production of war materials was exceeded only by the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. Her industrial capacity was nearly trebled in three years. She rose to second place among the exporting nations of the world with four-fifths of her exports made up of war goods for her allies.

When war was declared there were no armament works, no production of large ships and planes, no facilities for the manufacture of tanks and artillery in Canada. Since the end of the first world war no sea-going vessel of any size had been turned out from Canadian shipyards. The aircraft industry was confined to the manufacture of a few light planes. Canada had had no previous experience in the manufacture of precision instruments and there was no Canadian source of supply for the fine optical glass required to produce them.

*Quebec plant produced these howitzer shells.*



*The flag goes up at Trenton R.C.A.F. station.*

