

# RCAF Commemorates Battle of Britain

Just twenty years ago this month a battle for air supremacy was waged over Britain and the English Channel. Just how decisive this battle was is born out by the orders given by Adolf Hitler's high command in July, 1940: "If after eight days of intensive air war the Luftwaffe has not achieved considerable destruction of the enemy's air force, harbours and naval forces the (invasion) operation will have to be put off." This, then is the battle which had to be fought.

To all men who believed in democracy, in freedom, truth, justice and human decency, that narrow channel represented the last barrier against the forces of a new power of darkness that was threatening Christian civilization. From North Cape to the Pyrenees the victorious might of Nazidom was arrayed, facing westward toward the only opponent remaining in the lists — Britain, the Dominions and the Empire. The next few weeks would witness a trial of strength upon which the cause of human freedom depended.

Control of the air was the essential prerequisite to success in the Battle for Britain. If the Luftwaffe could win and retain control over the Strait of Dover and English Channel long enough to permit the invasion fleets to cross and gain a beach-head, Britain might well follow in the list of Nazi conquests. It was upon the Royal Air Force then, and particularly upon Fighter Command, that the heavy responsibility rested of being Britain's first line of defence against invasion. Were the fifty squadrons of Hurricanes and Spitfires equal to the task? There was one hopeful indication, although its full significance was little appreciated at the time. Over Dunkirk the fighters of the RAF had come to grips with the Luftwaffe and had taken a heavy toll. Without that fighter cover the story of the Dunkirk beaches would have been much more tragic.

Before the Battle began there was an interval of several weeks, a breathing spell during which the Luftwaffe rested from its arduous six-weeks blitzkrieg, moved forward to new bases in the Low Countries and Northern France, collected replacements of aircraft and personnel, and gathered all the supplies and equipment necessary for the next campaign. The Wehrmacht too was making preparations for the invasion. The Luftwaffe's preparations required six or seven weeks for completion; but before the full-scale assault could be launched there was some preliminary skirmishing over the Channel in which small forces bombed Portland and coastal convoys. On July 10th a sudden quickening was evident in these activities; two formations of 150 aircraft, the largest force yet used, attacked a convoy off Dover. The Battle for Britain had begun.

The contest that followed can be divided into three phases. The first, covering approximately forty days (July 10th to August 18th) was the period during which Goering sought to overwhelm Britain's fighter defences by heavy attacks on coastal shipping, harbours, airfields, radio location stations and aircraft factories. This period reached its climax in the ten days August 8th to 18th when the German Air Force, its preparations now completed, launched a series of mass attacks on a wide front in a supreme effort to eliminate our fighter squadrons and open the way for invasion. Fighter Command was called upon for intense efforts on a scale greater than at any other time in the Battle. But Goering's efforts failed. Air supremacy over the Channel and Strait was not achieved. Far from exhausting our fighter forces the Luftwaffe itself suffered crippling losses and had to change its tactics.

After five days' respite (August 19th to 23rd), the second phase began, with London the chief objective for great formations of bombers escorted by swarms of

fighters. This was the climax of the air battle and was probably intended by the Nazis to be the prelude to the actual invasion. Their preparations for the land battle appeared to be complete and Hitler issued his solemn warning "we shall come". For five weeks (August 24th to September 27th) the ordeal of London continued, rising to a peak on September 15th when the Luftwaffe suffered a major defeat. Great damage was inflicted on the capital but once again the Luftwaffe failed to attain its objective. The heart of the empire was not paralyzed, nor was the spirit of its people broken. "We can take it" was their defiant reply. German bomber losses became so great that a continuation of this phase was impossible. Once again there was a change in tactics. September 15th marked a definite turn in the course of the Battle; it was the beginning of the end.

On September 28th the third and final phase opened, a "battle of attrition" which continued until the end of October. Forced to abandon the use of his bombers for mass daylight attack Goering now resorted to fighter sweeps by squadrons of high-flying Messerschmitt fighters and fighter-bombers. This attempt to wear down our fighter defences was in itself an admission of defeat, and like the others it failed. By the end of October the pressure on Fighter Command had definitely eased; waves still beat upon the defences, the night assault was still raging, but the menace of invasion for that year had passed. The battle had been won.

The spectacular victories won by Fighter Command have tended to overshadow the fact that the other commands of the Royal Air Force were also engaged in the battle. While Fighter Command was defending Britain, Bomber and Coastal Commands were carrying the battle to the enemy and by their assault on Nazi-held ports and harbours, on aircraft factories and other war industries helped to defeat Hitler's plan of invasion.

The struggle has been called the Battle of Britain. More accurately it was a Battle for Britain (and freedom) in which the people of that island were assisted by the other parts of the Commonwealth and Empire and by contingents from conquered lands of Europe. In the ranks of the Royal Air Force were bound to be found fighter pilots from Canada and South Africa, coastal crews from Australia, bomber crews from New Zealand, and men from many other branches of Britain's great family. From Czechoslovakia and Poland, from Norway and the Netherlands, from Belgium and France came more trained aircrews to don the blue of the R.A.F. and take their part in the Battle. They too were numbered among the few.

Canada was represented in the Battle of Britain by several hundred officers and airmen who served as aircrew and ground crew in Fighter, Bomber and Coastal Commands. The names of forty-seven are inscribed on the honour roll in the memorial chapel in Westminster Abbey. The great majority of these Canadians who fought in the Battle of Britain were young men who had crossed the Atlantic in pre-war days to enroll in the R.A.F. and served in units of that force. There were, however, two fighter squadrons which bore the name Canadian. One was No. 242 (Canadian) Squadron of the R.A.F., composed of Canadian fighter pilots in the R.A.F.; the other was No. 1 (Fighter) Squadron of the RCAF (later designated No. 401) which arrived in Britain on the eve of the Battle.

The Battle of Britain has special significance for the RCAF. It was the Force's baptism of fire. In August 1940 a squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force for the first time flew into action against an enemy, won its first victories — and suffered its first casualties. It is fitting that this battle in which the RCAF first proved its spurs should be remembered with pride.

# Haileybury IODE Trading Post Sale

On Monday September 10th a meeting of the Haileybury Chapter I.O.D.E. was held at the home of Mrs. A. J. Dempster. After the Regent had declared the meeting open, Mrs. Lorne Umphries took the affirmation of the Order and was welcomed into the Chapter.

As it was the first meeting of the new season, the fall projects were discussed in detail. The "Tea Bag Tea" has been postponed until October. Mrs. Geo. Black presented final instructions to the members on the Trading Post or Opportunity Sale as it could well be called. On Wednesday, September 28th from 2 to 5 p.m. and again from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Elk's Hall any saleable article, of any description will be accepted. The owner must set the price and will be given a receipt. On Thursday 29th September from 2 to 9 p.m. these articles will be sold. On Friday September 30th from 2 to 6 p.m. owners of merchandise sold may

call for their money which will be the selling price, less 25% which the Chapter retains for the service rendered. Members were asked to assure the public that anything saleable will be accepted. Any furniture etc. that may be too large to deliver may be advertised in the Elks Hall, and arrangements made to inspect same in the home of the owner. The Regent reminded the members of the balance required to meet Chapter obligations - provincial and local school bursaries, prizes for the separate and public schools etc; and asked the full co-operation of all to make this new venture a success.

Mrs. Geo. Black will be the hostess for the October meeting which will be held on Monday, October 17th.

## Georgina Jemmett

The death of Miss Georgina Marian Jemmett occurred Monday, September 19th, in Toronto.

Formerly of Haileybury and Victoria, Miss Jemmett was the daughter of the late Rev. George and Mrs. Jemmett of Ottawa.

Funeral services were held Wednesday at 2:30 from the Bates and Maddox Funeral Chapel, 124 Avenue Road, with interment in Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa.

This year, Battle of Britain Sunday, on September 18, marked the twentieth anniversary of this decisive conflict. May the people of Canada join in tribute to all members of the RCAF and RAF who fought not only for the fate of Britain but for the destiny of all free men.

# Women Can Help Front Seat Driving

Be a front seat driver, not a back seat one.

This is the advice offered by Mrs. E. J. Roylance, Greenwood, B.C., president of the Federated Women's Institute of Canada, to Canadian housewives and mothers.

"On long trips this Fall, wives should share in the driving if they can. By avoiding undue driver fatigue, they are protecting the safety of their husbands and children," Mrs. Roylance pointed out. "On the other hand, instructing the driver from the back seat can only distract and irritate him."

"Canadian women can also help considerably in preventing traffic accidents by suggesting frequent stops for rest and coffee," she added.

Among other protective measures, Mrs. Roylance suggested that a wife should indulge in pleasant conversation to keep the driver alert, and pay special attention to the children to keep them quiet and in a happy mood.

"Safe-driving is certainly a major responsibility of women in our modern world. To discharge it, they must use all their natural talents for diplomacy," she concluded.

## Classified Ads Bring Results

# VOTE

for

# Phil Hoffman

## PROGRESSIVE-CONSERVATIVE

# on Sept. 29th

HEAR

## HON. JAMES A. MALONEY

Minister of Mines

ELK LAKE LEGION HALL  
SEPTEMBER 22 — 8 P.M.

## PREMIER LESLIE FROST

NEW LISKEARD COMMUNITY HALL  
SEPTEMBER 24th - 3:00 P.M. TO 5:30 P.M.

## HON. JOHN P. ROBARTS Q.C.

Minister of Education

HAILEYBURY MASONIC HALL  
SEPTEMBER 27th — 8 P.M.

TEMISKAMING PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION