

Fighter Planes, Bombs and Results of Bombings

ARTICLE NO. 32
(By Hugh Tompkin)

This week, I leave the purely descriptive to turn to a discussion of a subject that is of particular interest at the present time, and especially to Canadians. What is the Royal Canadian Air Force doing?

Before I flew to England, I had the advantage of visiting many of the air training camps in Ontario. Before that, I had been up in a number of planes of quite a wide variety of types, starting as far back as 1919, and including everything from a veteran of the last war to an autogiro. As long ago as 1932, I flew to James Bay in a Vickers Vimy Bomber plane of the same type as that in which the first non-stop flight was made across the Atlantic. For that reason, it was not surprising that I was interested in the Air Force Overseas.

During my stay in England, I had many opportunities to meet members of the R.C.A.F. from Air Commodore F. L. Stevenson down. The Air Commodore gave a party one afternoon at the Royal Automobile Club, a swanky place on Pall Mall, and he invited the leaders of all Canadian Squadrons in England. Most of them were able to come and I had a chance to listen to them discuss their adventures. Several had been decorated by the King for conspicuous service. Often, I see familiar faces in looking over photographs in the newspapers.

There has recently been some discussion in Parliament about separating the Canadians overseas in the Air Force from the rest of the R.A.F. This has brought both praise and condemnation to Hon. C. G. Power from Canadian papers, depending upon whether they belong to the ultra-loyal group or not. But it isn't a matter of "loyalty," but of practical considerations. When I was in England, there were some 18 all-Canadian squadrons, the numbers starting at "400." Since then, the number has been increased considerably. It was up to 25 when I last saw figures given out, but that was some time ago, and changes since have been kept secret. A great many Canadian units are in other R.A.F. units. There seemed to be some difference of opinion among the officers overseas as to whether the Canadians were better mixed in with the R.A.F., or in separate squadrons.

The R.A.F. (or was) divided into "Commands," depending on the work done by the various types of aircraft. The Fighter Command uses the small fighting planes, such as the Supermarine Spitfire and the Hawker Hurricane, both of them one-seater machines, with motors of about one thousand horsepower, driving them at speeds up to six miles a minute. That seems incredible. Not so long ago, scientists would have insisted that human beings couldn't stand a speed like that. It is said that the designer of the Hurricane has never been up in one. There is no room for a passenger, and he isn't a pilot. The Spitfire is only 37 feet across wings and 30 feet in length—a tiny plane compared to the bombers. The weakness of these fighters is that they can remain in the air only three hours and a half, which gives them a range of 1200 miles or so, but does not allow them to protect the bombers all the way to Germany and back.

Some machines of the Fighter Command have two or more in the crew. The Boulton Paul Defiant is no larger than the Spitfire, but it has a gun turret with a gunner as the second member of the crew. At least one of the faster bombers, the Bristol Blenheim, is used as a fighter. The Coastal Command is in charge of patrol work around the coasts, the search for enemy craft on and under the water, the conveying of ships for the last part of the journey to Britain, and similar tasks. Land planes are used for the most part. The Avro Ansons, now used almost entirely for training and quite familiar over our Canadian towns, were originally used almost entirely for Coastal Command work. They are now outdated, but the first plane I saw in the English air after leaving the airport where I landed was an Avro Anson. The favorite plane of the Coastal Command now seems to be the American-built Lockheed Hudson. This is much like the Trans-Canada passenger planes (which are made by the same firm). They are flown across the Atlantic by the Ferry Command. The Bristol Beaufort, a torpedo bomber, was in use by the Coastal Command, as well as the Blenheim.

The B. A. F. Bomber Command is the busy decision now, and has become quite aggressive. Larger and larger bombers are being used to carry bigger loads. Changes have been so rapid that the favorite types of bombing planes last October are now more or less out of date. Their places are taken by the huge Halifax, Stirling and other types, which were just coming into use when I was in England. I did not see either of these bombing planes, though I did most had a trip through the Halifax factory. Had I been there another

day or two, I might have made it. One of the largest and most popular bombers up to last Fall was the Wellington. Those who saw the moving picture, "Target for Tonight," know what it looks like. It is a huge machine, with a wing span of nearly 90 feet and the body is over 50 feet long, and "fat" in appearance. In contrast to the extreme leanness of a number of other bombers. When it is loaded, it weighs over 13 tons. The body is of an odd basket-work construction, said to give great strength, and the chief characteristic is the lattice-work windows.

Other bombers were the Blenheim, the Bolingbroke, the Hampden, the Whitley, and several others whose names don't come readily to mind. The big American bombers, the Consolidated Liberator, and the Boeing Fortress, were not there in large numbers in October and had been used only in trial raids. I did not see either of them.

There is an Army Co-operation Command, which hasn't had much to do except in training, as its business is to be the eyes of the Army during active fighting. It was using the odd, gull-winged Lysander planes, No. 400 Canadian squadron was an Army Co-operation unit. As the Lysander is a fairly old model, it has probably been replaced with something newer in the meantime. The Fleet Air Arm is attached to the Navy. I had no contact with it.

At Bomber Station

The Canadian editors spent one evening at a bomber station up in the central part of the East Coast of England. It gave me something of a thrill to drive along the Great North Road. The name itself is interesting, but the thrill came from memories of a book, "The Good Companions" and from passing through the Robin Hood country.

It seemed that every few minutes, that famous road passed an air-borne of the Bomber Command. There was no particular attempt at concealment from the road, whatever there may have been from the air. Many different types of bombers were to be seen out in the open. The driver of our automobile had a son in the Bomber Command. He had never visited his station but he had me keep a lookout after we passed a certain town, to see the first drome using Wellingtons, and was greatly pleased when we found the place, though he didn't suggest stopping.

Well up the road, our little procession of cars passed through the home of Sir Isaac Newton, with his statue in the square, and on out towards the coast, along winding roads, following a motorcycle guide. The fields were full of plane traps, all ways a sign that one is approaching some place of importance. There was a tiny hamlet at last, and three or four miles beyond that, down a road that wasn't much more than a lane, bordered by hedges, we came to the bomber station.

The main buildings were of new red brick. Beside the door, a guide showed me the marks where machine gun bullets had splattered on the wall from German guns. One or two had been killed but the chief regret of my guide was that the Hun plane had not got safely away.

In the hangars nearby were the big bombers, Handley Page Hampdens. The Hampden is deceptive in its appearance, particularly from the front. The body is extremely narrow, only one-man wide, while it tapers off in a long, narrow line to the tail. It is hard to believe that it carries a crew of four and weighs more than nine tons when it is loaded. The wing spread is about 70 feet. There are two air-cooled motors and two tail fins. For a bomber, it has a high speed of 265 miles an hour, or over four miles a minute, and it can stay in the air for eight hours and a half, flying over 1700 miles.

The living quarters were comfortable, and the lounge room where we were greeted might be called luxurious. Over mantel at one end was a painting of the Hampden, presented by Mr. Hendley Page himself. There were chest-of-drawers and padded chairs and a radio.

A few Canadians were among the officers, the only one from around this part of Ontario being Pilot Officer J. G. Spier of Brussels, Ontario. The Station Commander was Group Captain Boothman. He didn't tell us anything about himself but some of the other officers did. He raced in the famous Schneider Cup races more than ten years ago and won the cup himself in 1931. These races were high-speed tests with tiny planes, and being sporting events, they kept the British on their toes, with the result that the cup nearly always stayed in Britain. Strangely enough, this race probably saved Britain from destruction in 1940 and 1941. They kept British firms building the fastest and finest planes, and the Spitfire and Hurricane, particularly the former, are adaptations of the racing planes of Schneider Cup days.

I ate that night in the officers' mess at this B. A. F. station, and brought away the menu. The supper was light and the foods were the familiar foods of wartime England.

WAR 25 Years Ago

Military Genius of Sir Arthur Currie Recognized by His Appointment as Commander of Canadian Corps

By H. H. Gordon
Canadian Press Staff Writer

Sir Arthur Currie, noted citizen-soldier, was appointed to command the Canadian Corps 25 years ago in the First Great War. His appointment was a marked recognition of his leadership, vigor and resourcefulness and for the first time command of the corps passed from an Imperial Army officer to a native-born Canadian.

As Commander of the 1st Division, Maj.-Gen. Currie played an outstanding part in the operations that brought honor to Canada in the Ypres Salient, at the Somme and later at Vimy Ridge. He was knighted by King George V and the French government created him a Commander of the Legion of Honor.

When that brilliant British general, Sir Julian Byng, relinquished command of the Canadian corps to assume command of the Third Army, he indicated Sir Arthur as his logical successor. The appointment was announced June 19, 1917 and Sir Arthur was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-general.

The Canadian commander was responsible for the triumphs of the corps at Hill 70 and Passchendaele in the late summer and fall of 1917. These victories inspired the Allies during the critical period that followed the failure of the French offensive at the Abbe.

Over the Rhine

During the last year of the war the Canadians drove forward from Amiens to Cambrai, Valenciennes and

but on the other side of the menu was the luncheon at noon, and it had featured the roast beef and Yorkshire pudding I saw only once in England—and that at the private house of a manufacturer. Here is the evening menu:

Kidney Soup
Con-ou-Gratin
Sausage Figs and Custard
Coffee Cheese

Food is important in Britain and it is strange how I recall meals after an interval of six or seven months. Kidney is unrationed and so one is apt to find it anywhere, even in soup.

I had a little of each kind of meat, for the "Con-ou-Gratin" aroused my curiosity. It turned out to be cold sliced bologna with cheese in it.

That was, I think, my first encounter with English wartime sausage. They were amazing things. I ate them once or twice again, in hotels, just to see if they were all the same. The first ones encountered that night, "There" was no improvement. Sausages come in three grades, I'm told, and presumably these were all of the best grade. The grades are 40c, 50c and 60c, that being the percentage of meat in them, but I always doubted it. The rest of the percentage is said to be bread, but again I had my doubts. It wasn't that the sausages tasted bad; they didn't. They simply didn't taste at all. They might be ground up blotting paper, but into skins and fried. But the dessert and the coffee were good and the cheese excellent.

But this was the menu for the noon meal we had missed:

Provençale Soup
Roast Beef and Yorkshire Pudding
Creamed Potatoes and Cauliflower
Cold Whittshire Roll
Salad

Steamed Sultana Roll
Rice pudding

Stewed Figs Custard

The boys at the Bomber stations are under a continual nervous strain. They live among the greatest thrills in the world when they are out on a job with the anti-aircraft shells bursting in puffs around them and the need to watch continually for an attack by fighter planes, while looking all the time for their targets.

It had been the intention of these Canadian editors to see the bombing planes go out, then have a few hours' sleep, and get up in time to see them come back. It didn't turn out that way that night. There was a bit of fog and operations were cancelled. Work had gone around before we arrived that the flight was "off" and so tension had relaxed.

One officer told me that when the boys are all keyed up and then, at the last minute the trip is cancelled, it's hard to keep discipline. He said all kind of stunts are pulled off. One night, a couple of officers entered their little Austin car in the front door and around the hall.

To Be Continued

Mon. Following the armistice the 1st and 2nd Divisions began the long march from Mons to the Rhine where Sir Arthur Currie set up headquarters in the city of Bonn.

A writer on the war said of Sir Arthur: "In time the people of Canada will come to realize how great a figure Sir Arthur Currie was on the West Front. Had the war continued he might have gone far, his military genius recognized, his vigorous leadership proved, and that there must still have attached to him the proud disability of being a Canadian citizen soldier."

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

LONDON, (CP)—Lord Teviot was assured police are on the lookout for sales of wood alcohol disguised as whisky after he had told the House of Lords that friends had "just escaped death after very abstemious drinking in an eminent London hotel."

PENNY-TIME FOR WREN

LONDON, (CP)—Millicent Attfield, a member of the Women's Royal Naval Service, was fined a penny for careless driving after the magistrate remarked that "it would be a cruel thing to fine heavily anybody giving her time to the country."

FAST RATIONING

LONDON, (CP)—Joan Young is the ration book-lauing champion of Lambeth borough. In an hour she checked 180 identity cards with 180 ration books, issued 180 new clothing ration books and 180 new personal ration books.

DUTCH LABOR FRONT

ZURICH, (CP)—German Minister has founded the "Dutch Labor Front" in Holland and has appointed himself "leader" in honor. Workers are forced to join the labor front.

THE RAILWAY AND THE WAR By Thurston Topham

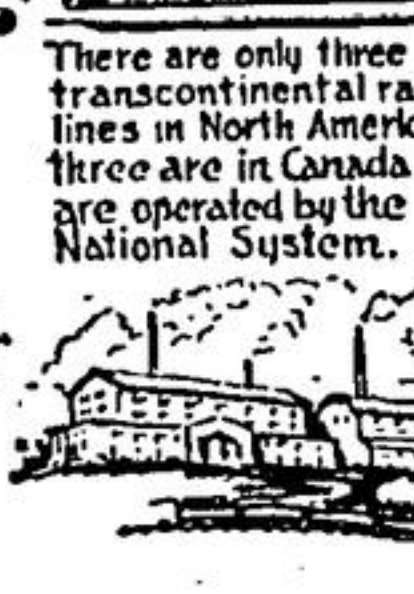
War brought a tremendous increase in rail travel, but efficient peacetime maintenance of roadbed and equipment has enabled the Canadian Railways to cope with this abnormal traffic. There are constant and heavy troop movements between camps, air training centres, and manning depots, to and from embarkation ports—and many thousands of civilians are travelling daily on war business. The cooperation of the public is greatly assisting the railways in carrying out this big wartime job.

There are only three transcontinental railway lines in North America. All three are in Canada. Two are operated by the National System.



The famous "6400" which decked out in purple and gold, hauled the Royal Train in 1939, is now in war service handling troop trains.

The transport of troops requires very exacting schedules of train movements. The first Canadian contingent was moved to a Canadian port in 17 special National Railways troop trains. These arrived at the ship's side at two hour intervals.



Specialty equipped CNR trains for munitions workers serve big war plants in various parts of Canada. A new type of car which seats 122 passengers was designed by mechanical engineers of the National System for use in these trains. The average railway coach seats 70.

APPLICATION CARDS FOR COUPON RATIONING OF SUGAR

will be mailed next week to every Household in Canada

Canadians will be required to register so that ration cards, good for the 10 week period, commencing July 1st, may be issued immediately. At the end of that period a coupon ration book, good for six months, will be issued.

HOW TO REGISTER

Residents in Urban Areas not served by Letter Carrier, and Residents in Rural Areas

Application cards will be distributed to all householders through the post offices on or before Tuesday, June 23rd. Additional cards will also be delivered for every person resident in the household who bears a different last name from the head of the household. If needed, extra cards may be secured from local post offices.

These application cards should be filled out immediately and dropped in the nearest mail box or post office. A pamphlet giving complete instructions will be delivered with each card. As soon as your name is duly registered at headquarters, ration cards, good for a ten-week period, will be mailed to you—one ration card for each person in your home. These will be for sugar only.

Coupon Rationing for Sugar Becomes Effective July 1st

Beginning July 1st, no one will be permitted to buy sugar for regular domestic use without a ration coupon.

Prompt co-operation on the part of the public in filling out and returning their application cards is necessary to ensure return of the ration coupon card in time to purchase sugar on or after the above date.

Remember—the amount of sugar allowed each individual under the new coupon rationing plan will be exactly the same as allowed at present—4 pound per person per week.

DO NOT SURRENDER YOUR APPLICATION CARD TO ANY UNAUTHORIZED PERSON

THE WARTIME PRICES AND TRADE BOARD

PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS LEAVE BLANK

1. LAST NAME ONLY

2. APPLICANT'S FIRST NAME

3. HOUSE NO. STREET (FOR RURAL ROUTES)

4. CITY OR POST OFFICE PROVINCE AND COUNTY

5. FIRST NAMES OF OTHER PERSONS AT SAME ADDRESS HAVING SAME LAST NAME AS AT TOP

6. AGE IN YEARS

7. LEAVE THIS BLANK

8. SIGNATURE ONLY

9. THE WARTIME PRICES AND TRADE BOARD

— DECLARATION —

IN SUPPORT OF RATION BOOK APPLICATION, I, THE UNDERSIGNED, SOLEMNLY DECLARE THAT I AND THE FOREGOING MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY, LIVE AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS BEING ACCURATELY DESCRIBED HEREIN, AND THAT NO OTHER APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE ON BEHALF OF ANYONE MENTIONED HEREIN.

10. SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT OR SPONSOR

The provision for additional sugar for preserving, etc., will be continued. Special voucher forms for this purpose are being supplied to all retailers. No person may have on hand more than two weeks' supply of sugar, unless resident in a remote district.

Men, Women Over 40
Feel Weak, Worn, Old?

Want Normal Pep, Vigor, Vitality?
These weak, run-down, exhausted conditions make you feel ragged and old. They drain your energy, lower your vitality, and rob you of your zest for life. You get nervous, irritable, and lose your appetite. You feel like a worn-out machine. You need a tonic that will restore your vitality and give you the pep and vigor you need to get on with your life. This is the tonic you need. It's the tonic that will give you the pep and vigor you need to get on with your life. It's the tonic that will give you the pep and vigor you need to get on with your life.