

JUL 21 1943

# RCAF Fighter Squadron On Sicily's Front Line

Ottawa, July 20 (CP).—R.C.A.F. headquarters announced tonight that an R.C.A.F. unit—the City of Windsor" fighter squadron—is operating in Sicily in support of the forward elements of the Allied forces striking up through the strategic island.

The R.C.A.F. announcement was in the form of a despatch dated "somewhere in Sicily" from Flt. Lt. Ken MacGillivray, public relations officer, which was received at headquarters here through a special communications channel provided by the United States Office of War Information.

This is the story MacGillivray tells :

"Its ground crews prepared by Commando training, its pilots seasoned by months of hard service with the Western Desert Air Force and all ranks keyed up for the most vital assignment in their long overseas career, the Canadian squadron made a successful early morning landing on the southern beaches of Sicily.

"Virtually 100 per cent Canadian and a self-contained unit of the Middle East Forces, the City of Windsor Squadron, which finished out the African campaign as a front line striking force, has been again and again in the forefront of the battle picture.

"Based on an enemy aerodrome captured only a few hours before the squadron's arrival and open to the risk of constant bombing and shelling, the R.C.A.F. squadron is covering the spectacular advance of Allied troops across the fields and vineyards of Italy's greatest island.

## Came from Malta.

"While pilots flew their Spitfires to Sicily led by their new commanding officer, Sqdn. Ldr. P. Stanley Turner, D.F.C. and Bar, of Toronto, ground personnel and administrative staff made the seavoyage by ultra-modern landing craft.

"Under cover of night they slipped across from Malta where they had been operating since shortly after the collapse of Tunisia and for the first time set foot on Italian soil.

"Everything had been meticulously rehearsed and went according to plan. The crews of the landing craft grated on the stony shore. ramp

were dropped and vehicles and men poured out onto the beach without a hitch. First officers to land were FO. John Emans, Saskatoon, and the adjutant, Flt. Lt. James Sinclair, M.P., of Vancouver.

"The first other rank to leap ashore was the squadron disciplinarian, Flt. Sgt. Steve Lisowski, Winnipeg.

The men and equipment roared across the beach and careened up a stony road to the newly captured aerodrome.

"Little knots of civilians lined the roads, their expressions varying from sullenness to openly cordial smiles. There was no suggestion of resistance from the populace.

In an amazingly short time the once unserviceable field was ready for R.C.A.F. Spitfires which were to bolster Allied air strength on the beleaguered island.

## All Wore Arms.

"A guard had to be maintained at all hours against enemy snipers, and in charge of this duty was the only ex-member of the Royal Flying Corps in the squadron, Cpl. Charles Dougall, Windsor, Ont. Side arms and other weapons which airmen had come to regard as superfluous during months in the desert suddenly assumed great importance, and in addition to service issue revolvers, a large and picturesque variety of shooting irons made their appearance.

"Squadrons of fleet motor vehicles—practically all made in Canadian factories—performed excellently under the extremely exacting conditions.

"Among the drivers who were at their wheels during the tense moments of running from ship to shore were LAC. Larry Annis of Orillia, LAC. John Russell, London, Ont., and LAC. Edgar Lyons, Sutton West, Ont.

"Another department which sprang up like a mushroom on the new drome was the medical section under Flt. Lt. Alexander MacPhee, Detroit, and his assistants, LAC. Bill Mabb, Winnipeg, who also drove a vehicle during the landing; LAC. Orrie Truman of Weston, and LAC. Max Kaplan, Winnipeg.

"All departments functioned so smoothly that when the aircraft arrived the following morning they touched down at an airfield comparable with the average in friendly territory despite the fact that it was situated within a short distance from the nearest enemy drome in this newest and hottest theatre of war."

155-853-006

149  
WAR  
EUROPEAN  
1939  
ITALY  
INVASION  
SICILY