

Canadian Draws Japs' Fire To Protect Supply Plane

Damaged Aircraft Gets Back to Base After Brave Feat

With the R.C.A.F., Burma, Feb. 3.—(BUP)—The story of how an R.C.A.F. pilot interposed his aircraft in the line of fire from Japanese fighters attacking another R.C.A.F. Dakota dropping urgently-needed supplies to British army troops driving the Japanese back on Mandalay, and yet managed to bring his damaged aircraft back to its base, was revealed officially today.

The aircraft, piloted by F.L. Herbert Coons, D.F.C., of Kingston, Ont., was also loaded with supplies for the ground troops—highly combustible petrol and mortar shells, it was said.

"It was one of those fool things you do when you're het up," Coons remarked when questioned about his daring action.

When Coons drove his aircraft in the line of the two attacking Jap fighters, the Japs were forced to execute quick turns to avoid collision. Turning upon Coons, they forced him down to tree-top level, their cannon and machine-gun fire inflicting damage upon his heavily-loaded Dakota. Further damage was suffered by the plane when one of its wings brushed the tree-tops. One crew member, Cpl. Arnold White, of Lower Rainesville, N.B., was wounded.

After ten minutes of evasive action among the tree-tops, the Japs gave up the pursuit, and Coons brought his aircraft back to base. Twelve holes, inflicted by machine-gun and cannon fire, were found in the fuselage and elevators, and bits of bark were clinging to the damaged right wing tip. The other Dakota from which the attack was diverted by Coons' action was never fired upon.

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