

FIGHTER BOMBERS ATTACK DESTROYERS

Fighter Command carried out three offensive sweeps this morning - the eighth consecutive day of their offensive.

While Spitfires were sweeping the area round and behind Calais, over which they destroyed one F.W.190, other fighters took Hurricane bombers to attack three destroyers escorting merchant ships off the Brittany coast.

Later in the morning, large numbers of Spitfires, who got a second enemy fighter, safely escorted and brought back Boston bombers from an attack on Le Havre docks. All three operations were carried out without the loss of a fighter or a bomber.

The first fight of the day was won by a New Zealand pilot, who destroyed his third enemy fighter in five days.

"I had three combats altogether in the Calais sweep", he said, on landing. "I fired at a Hun at 19,000 feet and then used my cannon on another lower down.

"Then, with machine guns only, I took a crack at the F.W.190 which I destroyed. I followed it down to within 150 feet of the ground, where it turned on its back and 'hit the deck'.

"Three German fighters jumped on me and they were following me round in a tight turn when three Spitfires came down and chased them off."

His squadron encountered about 15 F.W.190s on this operation. They met none on their first trip but stirred up the opposition when they returned to sweep a new area further inland.

In the shipping raid off the Brittany coast our Hurricane bombers left one of the destroyers in a badly damaged condition and raked the others with cannon fire.

Smoke and flames were seen coming from the severely damaged destroyer by the pilots of the escorting Spitfire wing.

The Squadron Leader of the fighter bombers said, on his return, that men on the attacked ship were so taken by surprise that a number of them dived overboard as our aircraft came in.

The Hurricane bombers and Spitfires met with no fighter opposition and all returned. One bomber, however, had a large hole shot in one of its wings by flak. Even so, it landed safely back at its base.

In the attack on Le Havre, the second enemy aircraft fell to an English pilot.

Several pilots reported that when the bombing and fighter formation turned for home the target area of the docks was covered in a thick pall of dust and smoke.

Other reports from escorting fighter pilots refer to many hits on the dock buildings being scored by the bombers.

As the bomber formation was on its way home, squadrons of escorting Spitfires met formations of F.W.190s and Me.109Fs. One squadron, with the Wing leader, attacked ten F.W.190s and recorded the second destruction. The enemy did not seem very keen to fight.