

CONVOY ATTACKED OFF FRISIAN ISLANDS

A further shortage of supplies to German garrisons in Northern Norway is assured by an attack by Coastal Command aircraft last night on a north-bound enemy convoy off the Frisian Islands.

Enemy shipping on this route, which has been heavily attacked by the R.A.F. this month, is an important line of communication between the Ruhr and the isolated garrisons in the north.

Four ships in the convoy were left burning after last night's attack, which was carried out by Lockheed Hudsons, and hits are probable on other ships as well.

It is a fair assumption that those ships had started out a few hours previously heavily laden with supplies which would eventually have found their way to the new naval base at Trondheim, to those units of the German Fleet based on the Norwegian coast and menacing British and American supplies to Russia, and to the German Army on the Petsamo front.

The squadrons of Coastal Command which carried out the attack included aircraft of the Royal Netherlands Naval Air Service (led by their commanding officer), the Royal Canadian Air Force squadron known as "The Demons" (led by Wing Commander A.C. Brown, D.F.C) and a squadron (led by Squadron Leader P.J. Evans of Liverpool), which is the lineal descendant of the "Dawn Patrol" of the last war. This squadron now includes Australians and Canadians among its crews.

The Dutch commanding officer ignored a balloon flying from the ship he selected as his target, and went in at mast-height to drop his bombs. They hit the ship fair and square and fires broke out a few moments later.

Another Dutch pilot saw four ships burning. One ship had heeled over and was burning from stem to stern. He could still see the fires when he was twenty miles on his way home.

Squadron Leader Evans said the flak was intense and extremely accurate. "After I attacked my ship," he said, "the explosion amidships caused such a brilliant flash that it lit up the interior of the aircraft. When we were twelve miles away from the convoy my crew reported a further big explosion as though a ship had blown up,"

Burning debris was seen by another crew to be thrown high in the air.

The crew of one Hudson owe their lives to the stout build of their aircraft. After the attack they went down too near the sea and the Hudson bounced on a wave.

The port propeller struck the water and the engine was useless on the return journey. But they got safely back with the use of only the starboard engine.

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