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NEW AMERICAN "MUSTANG" CO-OPERATES WITH FIGHTER COMMAND

Mustang American fighter aircraft have been operating from Great Britain for the past few weeks. The machines are flown by Army Co-operation Command in co-operation with Fighter Command. This arrangement of utilising the machines will probably continue till such time as the land war in the west flares up when they will be used for their original purpose of giving full support to the army. In the meantime, Fighter Command reaps the benefit of their help and the pilots gain valuable experience.

The pilots have expressed their delight with the machine and describe it as an excellent fighter which is likely to earn a good name for itself. It is fast, it is manoeuvrable and it has excellent endurance and has given a very good account of itself.

All its operations, so far, have been of the 'ground strafing' variety. They usually hunt in packs of two or three and ever since the first sortie - which was carried out by a single machine - they have become increasingly unpopular with the German soldiers in Northern France.

On the first Mustang operational flight the pilot chose two hangars as his target. As soon as he opened fire he was attacked by anti-aircraft batteries which he quickly silenced. Later, he found a goods train with steam up and tried his guns out on it. He returned and reported success. A few days later, four Mustangs set off and during the hunt for the enemy, attacked some soldiers on a beach, a factory, light gun positions, and a wireless station. The pilot who attacked the wireless station came down so low that his wings actually hit the aerial between two pylons. Other successful attacks have been made against goods trains and engines, troops engaged in building defences, and other military objectives.

One of the pilots engaged on these operations said, "these grand American fighters are remarkably sturdy. The damage some of them have suffered would have sealed the fate of most fighters. On one occasion after a gruelling experience with ack-ack a Hun bullet hit the ammunition box and blew up most of the cartridges which in turn damaged the wing and sent splinters all over the interior of the aircraft. Some of the splinters went into the pilot's leg. Both pilot and machine made a quick recovery, and when he returned to base he made a perfect landing. Another Mustang was hit by a fairly large A.A. shell which made a hole through its wing. Although the aeroplane was heavily shaken, it was none the worse for its adventure.

"We enjoy doing these miniature sweeps. They keep us up to scratch, and cause the German a lot of worry. When the times come for us to co-operate with the army we shall do so with as much zest as we are now putting into our co-operation with Fighter Command."