

FIGHTER PILOT 8 DAYS ADRIPT IN CHANNEL

After being eight days and eight nights afloat in a tiny rubber dinghy with a bullet wound in his leg, a 22-year-old Canadian fighter pilot has been rescued from the English Channel by a Walrus aircraft which, unable to take off again because of a fractured cylinder, had to taxi back 50 miles to land.

The rescued pilot, Sgt. Gerald Enes of Edmonton, Alberta, is now recovering in hospital.

"My greatest trial during the whole eight days was the lack of drinking water," said Enes. "It was an awful temptation to drink the crystal clear water of the Channel. I used up my malted milk tablets in a few days, and then I began on the emergency tablets. These went on the sixth day. No rain fell at all, so I had nothing to drink.

"Two of the nights were rather rough and once I fell out of my dinghy. I can't swim a stroke but luckily the dinghy didn't drift away. It never occurred to me that I would not be picked up, though I began to get a little lonely after five or six days.

"I never saw a ship the whole time. Once I spotted the vapour trails of Fortress bombers on their way to France but they were too high to spot me."

Enes was one of four pilots from the City of Glasgow Spitfire squadron who had been in search of shipping off France. They were intercepted by F.W. 190s and in a dog fight which followed Enes was separated from his companions who all flew back safely.

"I got a bullet wound in the leg," he said. "I saw one of the F.Ws. go into the sea but I don't know whether it was as a result of my gunfire. I know I damaged another one and apparently one of them had hit my engine for when I was 25 miles off the French coast it seized up and I had to bale out. At one time six F.Ws were chasing me, but only two remained when I baled out and these turned back when they saw my Spitfire go into the sea."

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