

BEAUFIGHTERS SINK FIVE ESCORT VESSELS

In less than five minutes, during an attack which was carried out with great determination, a Coastal Command Beaufighter wing sank five enemy escort vessels steaming south with a convoy off the Dutch coast last evening, and they also probably destroyed a supply ship.

It was one of the most heavily-defended convoys which this wing has yet encountered in any of its attacks against German shipping.

The wing was led by Wing Commander H.G.N. Wheeler, D.F.C. and Bar, and it was escorted by Spitfires and Typhoons of Fighter Command.

"We came dead out of the sun," said the Wing Commander, "and I don't think the enemy ships even saw us coming. From the first of the escort ships which we attacked there was a vivid red flash with volumes of black smoke."

Several of the Beaufighter crews stated that there were heavy explosions and large fires among the convoy, and the observer of one of the aircraft saw columns of smoke rising from four vessels as the wing left for its base.

Another observer said, "I saw one vessel go right up in the air. It was swept by flame which rose to about 50 feet."

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