

moved to a position off Barfleur, to counter enemy night operations. Detailed arrangements were also made to ensure that the loss of one or all of these ships should not leave us without control of our fighter forces. These arrangements, briefly, provided for a reciprocal stand-by between these F.D.Ts., certain naval vessels, the Headquarters ships, the G.C.I. Stations landed in France, and the control centres in the United Kingdom.

322. Fighter Direction Tenders.—Some details of the operations of the Fighter Direction Tenders follow:—

(i) F.D.T. 216 was at first located five to fifteen miles off shore opposite the "Omaha" section of the beach; later it moved closer in to a position off St. Laurent. The tasks allotted to this F.D.T. were to control the day and night fighter cover over the western assault area. Control was effective on the only occasion the enemy attacked beaches in the United States sector in any strength.

(ii) F.D.T. 217 sailed with the Eastern Assault Forces. It was also placed five to fifteen miles off "Sword" beach, but later moved closer in shore. It controlled the day and night cover to the Eastern Assault Area and co-ordinated the cover over the whole

area. The control of the night fighter pool was handed over to the far shore G.C.C. on D + 6 and the day fighter cover on D + 8. The ship then moved to a position off St. Laurent to act as stand-by control and continued to control night fighters until D + 17.

(iii) F.D.T. 13 was located forty to fifty miles off the beach-head to control both day and night fighters protecting the shipping lanes. On 12th June, the control of day fighters in these areas was handed back to a fixed station in the United Kingdom and the ship sailed to a position twenty miles east north-east of Barfleur, where from 15th to 27th June it controlled night fighters protecting shipping.

323. The figures below indicate only partially the excellent work of these Fighter Direction Tenders, and when the low scale of enemy effort and the steady and prolonged deterioration of the weather are considered, the number of enemy aircraft claimed destroyed and damaged by the Allied aircraft controlled by these ships, is high. The figures show the number of aircraft controlled by Fighter Direction Tenders at night, and the number of casualties inflicted by day and night by aircraft actually under the control of a Fighter Direction Tender at the time of the combat:—

Operations of Fighter Direction Tenders

Day (6th–13th June inclusive):—

F.D.T. 216 ... 13 enemy aircraft destroyed.

F.D.T. 217 ... 35 enemy aircraft destroyed, others probably destroyed and damaged.

F.D.T. 13 ... Nil.

Night (6th–13th June inclusive):—

N/F controlled

F.D.T. 216 ... 62

F.D.T. 217 ... 275

F.D.T. 13 ... 18

Night (15th–27th June inclusive):—

F.D.T. 13 ... 64

<i>Contacts</i>	<i>Friendly</i>	<i>E/A destroyed</i>
49	33	3
123	67	10
		1 damaged
13	10	—
195	144	12
		1 damaged

324. The story of the setting up of Fighter Control units on the Continent is dealt with in Part IV. Here it may be recorded that at 2230 hours on D-Day, the first G.C.I. station on the far shore began controlling night fighters and on D + 6 took over the co-ordination of all night fighters from the F.D.T. previously responsible. On D + 8, this G.C.I. station had expanded into No. 483 Group Control Centre, and control of both day and night fighters over the battle zones passed to this centre.

325. Allied A.A. Gunfire. The operation of our fighter aircraft was at times rendered difficult by the actions of our own anti-aircraft guns. In fact, I regret to say that engagements of friendly aircraft did occur with some frequency in the initial stages of the operation. I made representations to the Allied Naval Commander about certain instances of promiscuous and uncontrolled fire and both Naval Task Force Commanders decided to prohibit any A.A. gunfire from merchant vessels unless these ships were being directly and individually attacked. From many reports of observers, it would appear however, that the merchant ships were not alone to blame. This gunfire occurred despite the fact that it had been agreed, during the planning stages, that no A.A. gunners

should be permitted to engage aircraft unless they were qualified to recognise by their appearance all aircraft, both friendly and hostile, which were likely to operate in the area concerned. Furthermore, the Naval and Army Commanders were charged with the responsibility of nominating the type of personnel or unit which should be allowed to engage aircraft under this rather general classification.

326. It must, however, be admitted that the weather conditions generally were so indifferent that the aircraft providing fighter cover and close support was often forced to operate below the height which had previously been agreed as a minimum, except in pursuit of the enemy. This factor must have caused complications for the A.A. gunners, especially when there was enemy activity at the same time.

327. A complete solution to the problem of using A.A. guns and defensive aircraft together in any amphibious operation has clearly not yet been found, and I am of the opinion that the whole question should be given considerably more scientific and practical study on an inter-service and inter-Allied basis than has been done in the past. I refer again to this problem in Part V.