GOOD LUCK, AUSSIES! Gen. Sir Thomas Blamey, C-in-C. Allied Forces, Australia, gives these cheerful "Diggers" a cordial send-off as they set out on their journey for the New Guinea front. They were among the first Australian soldiers to reach the battlefield by air; and, as the enemy was soon to know to his cost, they have given a splendid account of themselves in the Papuan fighting.

PHOTO, SPORT & GENERAL.
THE BATTLE FRONTS


DURING the last half of January 1943 the situation of the Axis continued to deteriorate at a pace that compelled German propaganda for home consumption to switch from reassurances to threats. Events have also outrun expectations of commentators on the Allied side. Possibly they were anxious to avoid accusations of wishful thinking, but up to the time Paulus was offered terms of surrender the possibility or even the probability that his encircled army might hold out till relieved in the spring was discussed. A general slowing up if not a complete arrest of the Russian offensive was expected. In Africa, too, it was thought that the capture of Tripoli would prove a difficult undertaking even if Rommel were not strong enough to risk decisive battle. How over-cautious such views were is now apparent. Paulus’ army has been wiped out. Far from being brought to a standstill, the Red Army continues to go from success to success, to open new fronts of attack and threaten the German line at its most vulnerable points. The Germans admit that their front must be shortened, but it will be under compulsion and to avoid, if possible, further catastrophes—not as a deliberate, well-planned strategic operation. It will have to be carried out under the most difficult weather conditions and at a time when railway communications, already over-taxed, have the additional task of replacing vast quantities of lost material.

In Africa Alexander has brought the Libyan campaign to a triumphant conclusion and is ready with the 8th Army to play his part in Tunisia.

RUSSIA Since I last wrote announcements of Russian victories have followed each other with bewildering rapidity. Here are some of the main events of the last half of January, approximately in chronological order:

The relief of Leningrad; the capture of Kamenka, giving a bridgehead across the Donetz; exploitation of the break-through south of Voronezh, leading to the capture of Valuiki and other towns on yet another railway of vital importance to the Germans on the front covering Kharkov; on the Caucasus front the capture of Voroshilovsk and Armavir—where it was thought the army retreating from the Terek Valley might stand in order to cover the Maikop oil-fields and the communications of the force operating across the Caucasus towards Tuapse; the opening of railway communications through Stalingrad as a result of the progressive annihilation of Paulus’ army; the crossing of the lower Manych and the capture of Salsk, followed by a two-pronged advance along the railways leading to Rostov, and to the vital railway junction of Tikhoretsk; the advance of the Russians from Tuapse in pursuit of a retreating enemy and the recapture of the Maikop oil-fields; the continued pursuit of the Germans from Armavir and Voroshilovsk, leading to the capture of the important railway junction at Kropotkin; and, finally, the great breakthrough at Voronezh with the capture of the strong hedgehog town of Kantornaya on the direct line of approach to the still more important bastion of Kursk, to be followed in the south by the capture of Tikhoretsk and the occupation of Maikop.

That is an amazing record of successes spread over an immense front, but what are their chief strategic implications? Cumulatively they imply a threat to the whole of the great salient formed by the German front south of Kursk.

To examine them in detail from south to north: The German armies of the Caucasus, estimated to amount to 250,000 men, are in immediate danger. Two groups, those from the Terek Valley in the east and from Tuapse in the south, are in full retreat, abandoning vast quantities of material and having heavy losses. The line of retreat of the former group towards Rostov has been cut by the drive from Salsk which has captured Tikhoretsk. Some elements may have extricated themselves before the town was taken, but a great part of the force appears doomed to annihilation. The main line of communication of the Tuapse and Maikop group, which ran through Armavir, has already been cut, and the only way of escape open to it is by cross-country roads through mountainous districts to Krassnodar. In winter, retreat by this route would be very difficult and entail the abandonment of all heavy equipment.

At the western end of the Caucasus the German forces appear still to be holding their position from Krassnodar and Novorossiisk—the lower Kuban here gives them a defensive position facing south. They have brought up reserves to hold a bridgehead east of Rostov on the railway to Salsk, and are trying to stop the Russian advance on that line by counter-attacks. Whether they will attempt to link up with Krassnodar remains to be seen. The situation for the troops retreating from the east is still not clear; but it seems more probable that they will be compelled to fall back to a line much closer to Rostov because they are threatened by converging attacks from the directions of Salsk, Kropotkin and Tikhoretsk, all of which will now have good railway communications. Many troops and heavy weapons will also be released by the annihilation of the Paulus army to reinforce the drive from Salsk.

A small bridgehead may be established east and south of Rostov, but it seems inevitable that the whole of the Caucasus will have to be abandoned, and that a great part of the army that has been operating there...
will be lost, together with enormous quantities of material and equipment.

North of the Don the Germans are still trying desperately to hold the line of the Donetz, but the Russians have secured footholds across it; moreover, having now control of the railways from Stalingrad and Voronezh, their communications have been greatly improved and reinforcements from Stalingrad will also be available. Meanwhile, farther north, the progress of the Russian drive south of Voronezh threatens to cut the communication between Kharkov and the Donetz and is approaching the Upper Donetz. The Donetz basin, in fact, seems likely to become a dangerous salient under attack from three directions. There is therefore a possibility, though it is still remote, that the shortening of the front, of which the German people have been warned, envisages a withdrawal from the Donetz when everything has been done to save the armies of the Caucasus.

MEANWHILE, the success of the breakthrough at Voronezh has produced another critical situation. It will mean further heavy demands on German reserves, and it threatens to interrupt the railway from Kursk to Kharkov, which is one of the main lateral routes by which reserves must be moved. Moreover, this threat has proved once again that the Russians are now capable of breaking through the most strongly defended positions and that hedgehog towns are liable to prove traps rather than defensive assets.

In the centre and north there has been no great change since the capture of Veliki Luki and the relief of Leningrad, but at both of these points dangers threaten which tie up German reserves.

The German soldier continues to fight hard, but he cannot, after a series of disasters and retreats, be the man he was when full of confidence. The numbers of prisoners captured may be symptomatic of some loss of morale. The satellite armies, which have for so long served a useful purpose, have almost ceased to exist, and such remnants as remain can have little military value. Will the Germans be able to replace their immense losses? They may by superhuman exertions replace material and fill up their depleted ranks with young and partly-trained men. But they cannot make good the loss of fully trained and war-experienced men, especially officers and non-commissioned officers.

Apart from victories gained, territory recovered and railway communications reopened must immensely improve the Russian situation. But, on the whole, the best reason for optimism is the new standard of tactical efficiency now manifest in the Red Army.

NORTH AFRICA

The sound of gunfire in Tripoli gave cheering proof that the last page of the last chapter of the history of the Libyan campaigns had been reached.

For all-round brilliancy it would be difficult to find an equal of Alexander's campaign. With all three services pulling their weight, and with the administration organization performing as brilliantly as the fighting forces, it was a wonderful exhibition of team work of the highest order.

Rommel, if he hoped to throw Montgomery out of his stride at Zem-Zem, was disappointed, and the resistance offered by his rearguard there did practically nothing to delay the advance of the 8th Army and cost him casualties. Thereafter, he relied mainly on mines to slow down pursuit which has now reached the Tunisian frontier.

Will Rommel attempt to bar the advance of the 8th Army into Tunisia either on the Mareth Line or at the Gabès defile? That he will hold one or both as strong rearguard positions is practically certain; and, as at Zem-Zem, Montgomery, before attacking, will probably have to pause to close up his army, reconnoitre and get his supply services well established. The time required to make the port of Tripoli reasonably usable is likely to affect the development of the situation. I find it hard to believe, however, that the Germans will attempt to hold Southern Tunisia permanently. It would mean spreading their troops over a very wide area and the maintenance of a much larger force than their precarious sea communications could be relied on to keep fully supplied. Moreover, the defensive Mareth and Gabès positions would be exposed to attack from both front and rear.

IT seems more probable, therefore, that they will concentrate on holding the more important northern half of the country. Rommel certainly may stand in the south till Montgomery is in a position to attack, and he may be reinforced there in the hopes that an attempt to interpose on his line of retreat might offer an opportunity for one of his characteristic counter-strokes. Axis reports indicate that an American army is threatening to interpose, and Rommel may believe that an inexperienced army may offer opportunities which the experienced 8th Army never presented.

On the whole, however, the situation in Tunisia is full of uncertainties and is veiled by secrecy. Yet it is not unreasonable to believe, with the situation in Russia going from bad to worse, that the Germans will try to keep their commitments in Africa to the minimum which will meet their main object of keeping the Sicilian Channel closed to our convoys.

THE FAR EAST

With the final extermination of the Japanese in Papua operations for the time being are almost exclusively confined to air attacks on advanced Japanese bases. The Papuan operations afforded a convincing proof of what white men can accomplish in the most trying tropical surroundings and weather. It was a desperate test of courage and endurance brilliantly passed.

In Guadalcanal the Americans are extending their area of occupation and by degrees mopping up the remaining Japanese.

What the assembling of a large Japanese convoy in the more northern islands means is not yet clear, but it is costing the enemy heavy losses in aircraft and shipping.
ROYAL ENGINEERS IN TUNISIA have been busily constructing new roads and bridges for the needs of the First Army and of our Allies. 1. Men of the R.E.s at work on a road intended for military transport. 2. A mobile crane is employed in bridge-building operations to place concrete base blocks in position. 3. The bridge is here shown almost completed. It is 130 ft. in length. A bridge over the River Medjerda, with its two approach roads, was built by the sappers in 4 days.
In 1938, when Mussolini threatened to occupy Tunis, the French constructed the Mareth Line. Running for 30 miles from the Mediterranean to the Matmata Hills in S. Tunisia, these defences take their name from Mareth, an inland village which forms the pivot of the whole line. Built on the pattern of the Maginot, the Mareth defences consist of three lines, each with a series of fortresses cut into the desert rock or built of reinforced concrete. Underground sleeping quarters, guns which can be lowered out of sight, telephones, underground water supplies drawn from the Mareth Oasis are some of the most important features of this Tunisian Maginot.

The defences stretch for a depth of from nine to ten miles, filling in the whole of the gap between the hills and sea. In 1940 Vichy agreed to dismantle them, but to what extent demilitarization was carried out is impossible to tell.

It is estimated that 40,000 men are needed to take over the defences at full strength. The only good road from Tripoli to the S. Tunisian plain runs through the Mareth Line. The photographs in this page were taken in 1938, when the defences had just been completed.

Strong Points of the Mareth Line. 1. Le Bastion redoubt, a typical example of a Mareth fort. 2. Military roads link the chain of small forts that stretch across the rocky Matmata plain. This photo was taken from a hill-cave. 3. A native soldier guards the imposing entrance to the post of Djelain. 4. French tanks assembled outside a village. 5. One of the innumerable pill-boxes in the defence zone seen through barbed wire entanglements.
Into Tripoli: Montgomery Marched in Triumph

Crowning the splendid achievement of the 8th Army in its 1,400-mile advance from within the Egyptian frontier was the capture of Tripoli, last surviving capital of Mussolini's "Risen Empire." This account is based for the most part on the dispatches of Reuters correspondents, Eric Lloyd Williams, George Crawley and Dennis Martin.

As dawn was breaking General Montgomery stood on the Gebel heights and watched his victorious troops stream down the precipitous mountain roads into the streets of Tripoli, last remaining city of Italy's once extensive colonial empire. It was a great moment, the crowning achievement of a magnificent piece of generalship. From the very beginning of the campaign Rommel had been hopelessly outgeneraled, his men outfought. Before the offensive was launched, war correspondents at the 8th Army's H.Q. were told that Tripoli would be in Allied hands on January 22; and sure enough, the British columns were outside Tripoli before nightfall on the appointed day—this, in spite of some of "the wildest-ever advance." He pictured British tanks and gun columns racing through a vast wilderness of hills and deep, wide ravines looking like mountains of the moon. One minute they would be seen going across a flat tableland covered with black basalt rocks; the next, the whole column would disappear. You would not see it again until you came to the steep edge of some wadi; and there, with the leading tank many miles away, just dust in a mirage of distorted distance, you would see the column picking its way through a great ravine. So they went on, bouncing along across wide rocky plains, creeping through dimly-wooded hills, descending into sand-filled wadis where no road had ever been made, churning along the heaviest going in North Africa—while behind them streamed a great cavalcade of trucks, carrying hospital equipment, water, food, shells, repair units, bridge-builders, tank-recovery units, and all the other equipment needed for running a modern army.

The 8th Army's final advance on the doomed city was made from three directions. One of these was a two columns of armoured units and New Zealanders charged through the desert to the south, while the infantry, the Highlanders of the 51st Division, topped up along the coast road. No minefields were found in the desert, but along the coast road the enemy used his old rearguard tactics of mines and booby-traps. Every conceivable device was adopted to delay the advance; every culvert and bridge was demolished and the road surface was pitted with holes blown in by the retreating enemy. Armed resistance, however, was slight. The last engagement with Rommel's panzers before the city's fall was fought at Azziza, a few miles to the south, when the crack 7th Armoured Division were in action.

It was an amazing performance. Eric Lloyd Williams of Reuters, who was with one of the armoured columns, described it as through the great seas of sand until finally they climbed up through the tumbled peaks of the Tripolitanian mountain ridge guarding the town on the Mediterranean shore.

Gathered in their three columns in the fields surrounding the city walls, the British assault troops awaited General Montgomery's signal to advance. This was given, the three columns converged and moved on the town. This was at 5 a.m. on January 23. One column came from the east; a second force, which had streamed down the mountain pass the night before along the road from Tarhuna, moved in from the south; the third column rumbled in through the western gate.

Just after six a.m. on Saturday, January 23, reported Alexander Clifford of The Daily Mail, when the eastern sky was still only faintly pale with dawn, a British tank called Dorothy (after the driver's sweetheart in Liverpool) clattered into the main square. Seven Gordon Highlanders and a sapper clung to the tank as it felt its way cautiously through the still streets. But the first British, desiring to scout the city were a patrol of 11th Hussars who were nosing up into the southern suburbs as early as 4 a.m., and an hour and a half later drove in through the streets and out again. If anybody deserves the honour of being first into Tripoli, wrote Clifford, "it was these Hussars, who have been so long in the desert that they glory in the nickname of 'the Desert Rats.' The Gordon Highlanders, then, were the first infantry in. Dorothy was the first tank. Seafort Highlanders, who fought so gallantly at El Alamein, singing machine-gunners of the Middlesex Regiment, and men of the Suffolk, the Royal East Kent Regiment—and the Queens—the West Surrey—followed."

At noon General Montgomery, standing in the sun at the Porto Benito cross-roads just without the city wall, officially received the surrender of the city. To him, standing between an interpreter and one of his brigadiers, approached the Lord Mayor of Tripoli; Commandatore San Marco, Vice-Governor of Libya; and the Prefect. The Italians were in battledress, glistening with full medals. Montgomery made an interesting contrast, in his battledress, tank beret and two sweaters of different colours. The delegates listened carefully to his demands, said Mr. Clifford. 'The Vice-Governor's nose twitched once or twice as though he wanted to blow it, but didn't quite like to. Then they all turned and frowned. But at the end they had no questions to ask.' Commissariat and police were to remain Italian responsibilities, said the General. 'There's a very big population here. I have nothing against it, provided it remains orderly. My war is against the Italian and German armies.' At the same time he uttered a stern warning against any treachery or espionage.

As General Montgomery with his senior commanders entered the town, Arab and Italian civilians lined the streets and cheered. Before them marched British infantry to the skirt of the Highlanders, bugle piped, and the General took the salute in the main square. Then as column after column of British troops swept by, the Union Jack was broken at the head-waves over the Town Hall. A few hours later General Montgomery spoke to the correspondents. 'I have nothing but praise for the men of the 8th Army,' he said. 'I am surprised that they have done what I expected of them.'

In the city itself there was never a sign of resistance, few signs of hostility to the conquerors. But in the harbour area the work of repeated pounding by the R.A.F. were plentiful. Wrecked ships dotted the bay and the warehouses lay in ruins.

Soon life in Tripoli was back almost to normal. Shops began to open, and the hotels filled up with military personnel. In the square the citizens listened with growing appreciation to the roll of drums, the strange music of the pipes.
FUNERAL MARCH OF THE ITALIAN EMPIRE. On Jan. 21, 1943, Tripoli was entered by the Eighth Army. Marching behind their pipers to the accompaniment of their famous battle tune—Cock o'the North—these men of the Gordon Highlanders are seen in the chief city of Mussolini's now vanished African empire. In the background lies the harbour, dominated by the monument of the wolf which, in ancient legend, nourished Romulus and Remus, the founders of the Roman state.
THE WAR AT SEA

by Francis E. McMuirie

News was received at the end of January 1943 of the supersession of the supreme Chief of the German Navy, Admiral Raeder, by one of his subordinates, Admiral Doenitz. Previously the latter had been in charge of the Nazi submarine service.

Whatever the underlying reasons for this change, it is obvious that, like the wholesale dismissal of German generals each time the Army fails to achieve its objects, it is designed to provide a scapegoat under the gospel that the Fuehrer himself is infallible.

Probably the immediate cause of Raeder’s downfall, though he has doubtless been slipping from favour for some time past, was the failure of the German fleet to stop British convoys getting through to North Russia. Without the arms and munitions that have poured in by this route, it is improbable that the Soviet armies could have accomplished a tithe of what they have done recently. Apart from this, there is reason to suppose that Hitler is by no means satisfied with the progress of the submarine campaign. Though fantastic figures have been broadcast by Berlin of the alleged sinkings of shipping by U-boats, the fact that the Allies were able to land their armies in North Africa with such small opposition must have been a bitter disappointment to the enemy.

It is of course quite possible that Raeder showed himself to be a lukewarm supporter of the submarine as the principal naval weapon. In pre-war days he strongly advocated the sending out of surface raiders to prey upon commerce. His belief in this method of attacking seaborne trade has been shown by the persistence with which heavily armed ships of mercantile type have been let loose on to the trade routes, to say nothing of the Graf Spee’s ignominious end and the loss of the Bismarck. Several of the mercantile type raiders also failed to return, such as the Atlantis, sunk by H.M.S. Devonshire on November 22, 1941; the Kormoran, sunk in action with H.M.A.S. Sydney in the same month; the Pinguin, sunk by H.M.S. Cornwall in May 1941; one sunk by H.M.S. Dorsetshire in December 1941; and yet another which was recently reported to have been destroyed by U.S. Naval forces in the South Atlantic.

Raeder himself is understood to have said that he was relieved of his duties at his own request, “on account of the state of his health.” That excuse is unlikely to deceive anyone who knows Hitler’s methods of dispensing with the services of those who do not satisfy him.

DOENITZ, in an order of the day to the German Navy, stated that he will continue in personal charge of U-boat operations. He must call for “unconditional obedience, supreme courage and sacrifice," he concluded. This may be taken as an indication that in the coming spring a supreme effort to sink more shipping will be made by the Axis submarine flotillas.

TRIPOLI’S Importance as a British Naval Base in the Mediterranean.

What effect will the occupation of the port of Tripoli have on the Axis in Tunisia? This must depend to some extent on the time it takes to clear the harbour of wrecks and to repair the damaged moles. From experience at Benghazi it is evident that this can be done much more rapidly than the enemy supposed when the work of blocking and demolition was executed.

Once in working order, the port can be used freely by our supply vessels, which will relieve the long land lines of communication of the Eighth Army of much of the task of keeping it reinforced, fed and munitioned. Moreover, cruisers, destroyers and smaller craft of the Mediterranean Fleet will be able to use Tripoli as a base from which to attack the seaborne supplies of the Axis armies in Tunisia. Already those supplies have been suffering from the incessant attacks of our submarines and anti-aircraft, the former based on Malta. Recently the enemy have made increasing use of schiffsflottille, which can creep along the coast unobserved after making the crossing from Sicily by night. Not only are they less conspicuous targets than bigger ships, but to landing is a less serious matter in the present depleted state of Italian shipping.

A forecast of what is to come was given at the beginning of December 1942, when British cruisers and destroyers under Rear-Admiral C. H. J. Harcourt sank four supply ships and two escorting destroyers in a smart action. With Tripoli available as a base, operations of this kind will be much easier to carry out; and the Royal Navy can be trusted to miss no opportunity of striking. In time shortage of supplies must gradually weaken the enemy in Tunisia to an extent which will render his defeat inevitable.

The Admiralty have to be congratulated on their latest appointments in connexion with the Fleet Air Arm. Rear-Admiral Denis W. Boyd, who has had war experience in command of aircraft-carriers, has been appointed Fifth Sea Lord, a post which has been temporarily vacant since Vice-Admiral Lyster went back to sea in the early part of last year. His secondary title, instead of ‘Chief of Naval Air Services’ ‘as in Admiral Lyster’s case, is ‘Chief of Naval Air Equipment’.

CAPTAIN R. H. Portal, hitherto Director of the Air Division of the Naval Staff at the Admiralty, becomes Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Air), succeeding Rear-Admiral. Though he will not himself be a member of the Board of Admiralty, he will be responsible to the Chief and Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, both of whom are on the Board. Rear-Admiral Portal has had long experience of naval flying, in which he graduated during the last war. He is a younger brother of the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, no inconsiderable asset when it is remembered how often the two Services have to cooperate. Admiral Sir Frederic Dreyer, who has been Chief of Naval Air Services at the Admiralty since the departure of Vice-Admiral Lyster, will continue his good work with the new designation of Deputy Chief of Naval Air Equipment. The post of Assistant Chief of Naval Air Services, hitherto held by Vice-Admiral R. B. Davies, V.C., has been abolished.

This reorganization, together with the news announced by Mr. A. V. Alexander, the First Lord, in an address in London on January 13 of a general speeding-up in the production of new types of aircraft for the Navy, is welcome and timely in view of the need for augmented air defence against U-boat attacks on shipping. Another welcome piece of news released by the First Lord was that the Navy is expecting early delivery from the United States of a number of new dive-bombers.

ADM. DOENITZ, appointed C-in-C. of the German Navy in place of Adm. Raeder on Jan. 30, 1943. Hitherto chief of Hitler’s U-boat Command, he was a U-boat commander in the last war. Photo, Sport & General

REAR-ADM. D. W. BOYD, whose appointment as Fifth Sea Lord, with the additional title of Chief of Naval Air Equipment, was announced on Jan. 32, 1943. He commanded the aircraft-carrier Illustrious at Taranto in 1940, and was given command of an aircraft-carrier squadron in 1941.

Photo, Associated Press
They Got the Convoy Safely Through to Malta

CAPT. C. R. MILL, O.B.E.
His ship destroyed 3 enemy aircraft before being sunk herself.

E. E. HAYES, B.E.M.
Greaser of a torpedoed vessel, he displayed great skill and courage.

F. FOTHERGILL, B.E.M.
His cool and accurate gunfire helped to destroy a U-boat.

C. R. B. GOODMAN, M.B.E.
As 2nd Officer he showed exceptional ability in convoy duties.

CAPT. W. HARRISON, C.B.E.
He handled his vessel with exceptional skill and daring.

J. L. WILLIAMS, M.B.E.
As Fourth Officer he showed outstanding ability and courage.

CAPT. H. PINKNEY, D.S.O., M.B.E.
CHIEF ENG. L. BENTLEY, D.S.C.
2nd OFFICER R. BETTESS, D.S.C.
Like their fellows of the Merchant Navy whose photographs appear above, these three Mercantile Marine officers helped to defend an important convoy which reached Malta in August 1942. They were among those of the Merchant Navy to win naval honours for the first time in history. Centre, unloading the precious cargo at the docks by night.

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Photos, British Official: L.N.A., Wm. Jt Jones (Malta)
Coastal Command Keeps Watch and Ward

COASTAL COMMAND 1939-42. (H.M. Stationery Office, 1st.) Published in Jan. 1943 the Air Ministry account of the work of Coastal Command contains a number of photographs not hitherto released: here are some of them. Top left, Wellington fitted with special attachments for exploding magnetic mines before ships were equipped with degaussing gear. Top right, U-boat under fire from a Sunderland flying-boat. Below, German invasion barges massed in Boulogne harbour in 1940.

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Photos. British Official: Crown Copyright; Fox
TRIPLE TASK OF COASTAL COMMAND, working in cooperation with the Royal Navy, is "to find the enemy; strike the enemy; protect our ships." These photographs are some of those included in the recently published Coastal Command, 1939-42. Top, an Anson aircraft maintains vigilant watch over a convoy. Below, the men who do the job—1st and 2nd pilots (background) of a Catalina flying-boat with their navigator (right) and radio operator. PAGE 555

Photo: British Official; Crown Copyright
The Casablanca Conference—the fourth occasion on which Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt had met since the beginning of the war—may prove to be one of the most momentous events in the history of the present conflict.

It was on January 7 that the world learned that the great leaders of the two nations had been in consultation at Casablanca (whither they had gone by air) since January 14. Great Britain and the United States were thus active participants in the "unconditional surrender" meeting—so named by the American President in a press conference to denote that the unconditional surrender of Germany, Italy and Japan was the only assurance of future world peace.

Gen. de Gaulle and Gen. Giraud also met and discussed plans for the unification of the war effort of the French Empire; and on January 27 they issued a joint statement. "We have met. We have talked (it read). We have registered our entire agreement on the end to be achieved, which is the liberation of France and the triumph of human liberties by the total defeat of the enemy. This end will be attained by the union in the war of all Frenchmen fighting side by side with all their Allies."

The Conference came at a crucial time for the Axis, and the news of its holding filled the peoples of the United Nations and of the oppressed European countries with renewed hope and assurance as they looked towards the campaigns of the coming year. In London and Washington the great gathering was accepted as a council of war—a sure sign that increased pressure would be brought to bear upon the Axis, involving a concerted plan of the utmost significance.

Mr. Roosevelt flew 5,000 miles to N. Africa. It was the first time that any President of the United States had left his country during a war, and the first flight made by Mr. Roosevelt since 1932. He flew by Clipper to a point in N. Africa, where he transferred to a four-engined bomber which had been specially fitted out for the journey. On his return journey the President, travelling via Liberia, visited President Vargas of Brazil at Natal, called in at Tunis, and arrived back in Washington on January 31. Mr. Churchill went from Casablanca to Cairo, when he proceeded to Adana, in Turkey, for consultations (January 30-31) with President Inonu and his ministers. Having paid a brief visit to Cyprus, he returned via Cairo and Tripoli, arriving in London on February 7.
"The President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain have been in conference near Casablanca since January 14," said a communiqué published on January 27. "They were accompanied," it went on, "by the Combined Chiefs of Staff of the two countries, and a number of other high-ranking officials and officers from both countries. For ten days the Combined Staffs were in constant session, meeting two or three times a day and recording progress at intervals to the President and the Prime Minister. The entire field of war was surveyed—the theatre of war, throughout the world, and all resources were marshalled for the intense prosecution of the war by sea, land, and air. Nothing like this prolonged discussion between two Allies has ever taken place before.

Complete agreement was reached between the leaders of the two countries and their respective Staffs upon the war plans and enterprises to be undertaken during the campaign in 1943 against Germany, Italy, and Japan, with a view to drawing the utmost advantage from the markedly favourable turn of events at the close of 1942.

Premier Stalin was cordially invited to meet the President and the Prime Minister, in which case the meeting would have been held very much farther to the east. He is, however, unable to leave Russia at this time on account of the great offensive which he himself as C.-in-C. is directing. The President and Prime Minister realized to the full the enormous weight of the war which Russia is successfully bearing along her whole land front, and their prime object has been to draw as much of the weight as possible off the Russian armies by engaging the enemy as heavily as possible at the best selected points. Premier Stalin has been fully informed of the military proposals.

The President and the Prime Minister have been in communication with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. They have apprised him of the measures which they are undertaking to assist him in China's magnificent and unrelenting struggle...

The occasion of the meeting between the President and the Prime Minister made it opportune to invite Gen. Giraud to confer with the Combined Chiefs of Staff and to arrange for a meeting between him and Gen. de Gaulle ...

The President and the Prime Minister and the Combined Staffs, having completed their plans for the offensive campaigns of 1943, have now separated in order to put them into execution."
The attacks by Bomber and Fighter Commands upon Germany’s transport system have forced the Nazis to utilize more than ever before the coastal ships they constructed before the War. This fleet has been strengthened by the inclusion of craft commandeered from France, Norway, Belgium, Holland and Denmark.

With this coastal fleet at their disposal the Germans hoped to ease their overworked railway system.

But the R.A.F. and Royal Navy, by splendid cooperation, as I have seen for myself, have cut deep into Hitler’s reserves of coastal shipping—and the mines they have laid in enemy shipping lanes have played a major part in this success.

In the First Great War the Royal Navy, in four years of war, laid 128,652 mines in enemy waters. Already, in cooperation with Bomber Command, the Senior Service has exceeded this figure. From Norway round to Toulon our minelayers go quietly about their work; and to talk with those men who carry out one of the most secret of our many offensives makes you appreciate all the more the greatness of their achievement.

During the course of the last thirteen months Bomber Command, in some cases calling upon the giant Lancasters, Halifaxes and Stirlings, has flown 3,000,000 miles on operations concerned with minelaying. Last month 500 of these “eggs of death,” as pilots call them, were dropped in enemy shipping lanes. We have good reason to believe that for every German vessel sunk as the result of mines, the loss of which is made public, yet another is destroyed and kept secret by the Axis authorities. German U-boats, too, sinking close inshore, are reported to have suffered serious damage as the result of hitting British mines.

I suppose you think minelaying a devil’s job, a young pilot officer, captain of a Lancaster, said to me when I sat in a R.A.F. mess a short time ago. “Wrong. It’s one of the most monotonous jobs in the world. You take your orders from the Adm’l, fly for hours in the dark, reach the target area, drop the mine, then get back home. No thrills. No bangs. Just monotony.”

I might add that this young pilot was once caught in the beam of German searchlights on the coast and had his wrist-watch shot off by an enemy night-fighter; yet he kept to his course and placed his mine in the Admiralty “brains behind the scenes” had selected.

Even the famed Kiel Canal, and other waters hitherto thought closed to minelayers, have been “visited” by Bomber Command. In fact, since the R.A.F. and Navy joined hands in this attack our successes have increased day by day.

It is interesting to watch mines being loaded aboard our flying giants. I have seen the “eggs,” after being loaded aboard trolleys by crane, hauled along by a tractor, driven by a young W.A.A.F., to the machines. Always a naval expert is present to fuse the mines, and to see how closely he works with the R.A.F. ground crews makes you appreciate how well the Senior and Junior services are working.

The Germans, in their efforts to reduce the efficiency of our aerial minelayers, have introduced night-fighter patrols, together with anti-aircraft ships, to cover their coastal waters. Powerful searchlights have also been mounted, but the minelayers, although the danger has increased, continue to force home their attacks. When I was in Germany just before the War I heard talk of a new “speed-boat mineweeper” the Reich Fleet had introduced. Today we know it as the R-boat. It is a speedy vessel and was put into commission to sweep up our mines in the shortest possible time. The German seamen do not relish being drafted on to this craft, but the British mine offensive is causing the Nazi transport system to creak.

Nazi merchantmen and tankers forced out of their normal lanes by our mines have to run the gauntlet of Royal Navy light coastal forces. “Motor torpedo boats, protected by the motor and steam gunboats, as I have seen when out in the English Channel and North Sea, take a terrible toll.”

During recent months these light forces have destroyed over a score of chancellors and tankers, and severely damaged forty-five. And the mines forced the Germans, against their wishes, into our trap.

Royal Navy motor launches, under cover of darkness, also play a big part in this most secret war. I have seen them, under cover of darkness, put their bows into the open sea, “slide” quietly into waters close to the enemy, unload their T.N.T., and just as quietly set a course for home. The Germans, knowing the daring of these men, many of whom I found to be members of the R.N.V.R., have strengthened their patrols by including among the armoured trawlers the speedy Schnellboote, more commonly known as “E-boats.”

One young commander officer, formerly a solicitor, with whom I have talked, told me how, on one particularly dangerous mission, they passed clean through the middle of a German convoy. Every man aboard the motor launches wanted to fire upon the Hun, but they held their fire while the Germans passed but a few yards away. One German ship passed within twenty yards of a motor launch, and the Germans aboard were so surprised that they could only let off—a rocket! By the time the alarm had been given the British craft were laying their mines. This task completed, they withdrew from the areas and watched the Germans fighting it out among themselves.

On another occasion a rating was injured when a German fighter attacked. But he refused to allow anyone to tend him until the minelaying had been completed. During another “trip” our minelayers were so close to the German-held coast that a sentry, on anti-invasion patrol, hailed them, but fortunately without disastrous results.

Today the enemy, to assist their own surface craft, as well as planes, to locate and destroy British minelayers, have mounted some of the most powerful searchlights in the world in various coastal areas. I have been blinded by those facing Dover, and had the experience of being caught in their beams when in the Straits of Dover. By using them the Hun would appear to think that he will at least keep our minelayers away from his shores.

But the men who conduct one of the most important offensives, on which we remain for the most part on the “secret list,” still take their war into the enemy’s shipping lanes—and have given Hitler a headache he cannot shake off!
Malta, Island of the George Cross

Would she, could she, survive? That was the question asked in the summer of 1940, when Malta was exposed to the full fury of Axis strength in the Mediterranean. Two and a half years have passed, and not Malta but Tripoli has fallen. Always Malta has roared defiance—thanks to her people's gallantry, the R.A.F. and the Royal and Merchant Navies which have kept them supplied with arms and food. Top, convoy on its way; below, unloading a supply ship in the docks.
In the World's Most Bombed Island

Deep in the rocky heart of Malta function the H.Q. of the island's Command. To the Coastal Defence Room (1) news is flashed of the approach of enemy raiders, and from it the orders proceed to the answering guns and fighters. During 1942 alone Malta's planes and A.A. guns shot down 565 Axis raiders; one photograph (2) shows Maltese children playing amongst the remains of a German bomber.

Malta Rises Above the Smoke of Battle

Only twenty minutes' flying time from Axis strongholds in Sicily, Malta has experienced about 1,000 air raids. Last year the enemy dropped 12,000 tons of bombs on the island, and among the many buildings of historic interest that have been damaged is St. Paul's church in Valletta (3). In St. Julian another bomb has dropped (4), while in (5) we see Maltese folk clearing a pile of rubble.
'Unsinkable Aircraft-Carrier' in Action

During 1942 aircraft based on Malta's airfields dropped 1,500 tons of bombs on enemy bases in North Africa and Sicily, while scores of enemy ships were hit with bombs or torpedoes by planes of the R.A.F. and Fleet Air Arm. Top, a naval pilot running to take off in his Hurricane, standing ready and bombed-up on a Malta airfield. Below, searchlights and enemy flares light up the night sky above Floriana cathedral as the island experiences yet another raid.
Ominous Cracks in the Facade of Hitler's Fortress

In spite of all that Himmler and his Gestapo can do to suppress every whisper, criticism, every symptom of unrest, it is clear that things are far from well in the Nazi world.

The following article is contributed by EDGAR STERN RUBARTHE, the prominent anti-Nazi German publicist who has previously written in our columns.

HAD Hitler confined his ambitions to the German tribe, to the Germans in the widest possible interpretation of the word, he might have got away with it. But he has not. He has taken the power of Europe, even the world; and in so doing he raised up the opposition which will eventually destroy him.

There are three more or less organized centers of resistance: the military, the holders of material power; the churches and social leaders, supporters of tradition; and the oppressed—the conquered peoples as well as disdained groups within Germany, fighting for their liberty in underground movements. Those comprising the first and second centers went with Hitler part of the way, hoping to use him and his gang for their own ends: the first, in order to regain their old Prussian supremacy and privileges within the State, glory and booty around it; the second in order to fight Bolshevism, rationalism, Trade-Unionism and other developments threatening the overthrow of an old order and a caste-system. These Hitler did destroy; but he even rewarded them, while concentrating upon the annihilation of the third. The Churches, the big industrialists and financiers, the heads of the civil service, the large estate owners—all these began to separate themselves from, even to stand up to, Hitler when they discovered that his kind of brown bolshevism was much more efficient and subtle, than the red. But the soldiers, panpered and spoiled and favoured as never before, not even under the Hohenzollern soldier-kings, went farther than any with Hitler. They could not be relied upon until the end had he, the ex-lance-corporal, the drummer, not yielded to the ambition of playing Napoleon and, as their "war lord," not made at least five major mistakes.

WHAT were these mistakes? In the first place, Hitler did not dislodge Britain when in the summer of 1940, he might perhaps have overpowered her. Then he assailed Russia after having given her two years to prepare. Like his hero, Kaiser William II, he dragged America into the war. Next he squandered his best troops for the sake of prestige when he disregarded the generals' demand for a withdrawal from the most exposed positions in Russia at the outset of last winter. Finally, he debased all favours and advantages previously granted to his officers' corps by forcibly permeating it with his Nazi Party gangsters who were granted ranks for which generals of the old school had had to work hard for decades, under exacting professional and social rules. Of all Hitler's mistakes, this last is most likely to accelerate his doom, even beyond all that the mounting power and experience of the Allies can do.

Hitler got away with his first grave mistake in this connexion: he had merely to apologize for the murder, on June 30, 1934, of General von Schleicher, his predecessor as Chancellery. He was able to dismiss von Blomberg, his own docile War Minister, in February 1938, when he got the first faint scent of military opposition, and assumed his job himself, while substituting Keitel and Brauchitsch for his able C.-in-C., General von Fritsch. Then and subsequently between 50 and 100 staff officers, denounced by his hangman Himmler as being involved in the "plot", were done away with, strict secrecy being imposed upon their murderers; but he had to wait for the war before being able to have Fritsch assassinated without the risk of a revolt. Though neither Hitler nor his "die-hard" leaders—men of the generals' junta. For this news was of a more powerful, more far-reaching, and more

Battles, never to win a great war. For that is the task of extremely difficult, hard, persistent team-work by organized brains, for which Hitler—"the Bohemian"—is inspired leader—hard but sneers. So it is that after dismissing generals right and left, after giving amateurish battle-orders painfully translated into strategic language by his private "Fuehrer Staff" under General Jodl, Hitler finally decided upon being, not only his own Supreme C.-in-C., but also his Chief of Staff.

That fatal decision welded together a military camarilla inspired by individual disappointments, hatreds, revenges, and ambitions. It centred around Brauchitsch and Bock, the latter dismissed for the second time, on October 4, at Stalingrad. Dismissed—or so Hitler is made to believe. He is hardly aware yet that all the generals to whom he has "given the boot" wanted and got his "boot" to get an alibi for the army leadership in case of a stalemate, for which they hoped—or a defeat, which they now fear. Their technique is simple: when called to his

HITLER'S 'INTUITION' AT WORK. Hitler is here shown planning the two summer offensives of 1942, both of which were doomed to utter failure. Keitel is seen on the Fuehrer's right, while von Bock is on the extreme right of the photo. The latter was stated to have been dismissed some three months later for his failure to take Stalingrad. Photo, Associated Press
Leningrad's Epic of the Unknown Civilian

When Captain Fyodor Sabakhin and Captain Demidov met on the snow-covered, corpse-littered battlefield outside Leningrad they first exchanged the passwords so as to identify themselves. Then, as is the fashion of demonstrative Russians, they gave each other three kisses on the cheek, and flung their arms round each other's shoulders. Their men, too, coming up did likewise. Then for a brief interval they sat on the snow, "swooped" tobacco, and talked for a while of the things they had seen and done.

Just an incident in the years of war. And yet that meeting had an historic importance. For Sabakhin was commander of an infantry battalion in Captain Demidov's Leningrad, while Demidov was one of General Meretzkov's men fighting their way to Leningrad from the Volkovk front to the south-east. Their meeting signaled the junction of the besieged and their deliverers: in other words, the siege of Leningrad had been raised.

For sixteen months Leningrad lay under the menace of imminent capture by the Hitlerites. It was on August 21, 1941 that the Germans under Von Leeb began their onslaught, and by September the siege proper had begun. For some weeks the city was entirely cut off from the rest of Russia, but in November 1941 General Meretzkov's troops on the Lower Volkovk front drove the Nazis from the southern shore of Lake Ladoga except for a small stretch at Schlesiussen— and even here the fortress on an island off-shore continued to be held by a handful of Red Marines from the Baltic fleet.

Henceforth communications with Russia were maintained across Lake Ladoga. During the light craft traffic, tugs towing barges dashed across the great lake—it is about the size of Wales—to a branch-line of the Murmansk railway; then in December 1941, when the cold was so intense that birds dropped dead on the wing and the life of the city was at its lowest ebb, a double-track highway, complete with traffic-lights, service-stations and bomb-shelters, was brought into operation across the ice. Even so, this was but a slender and precarious route to a city of three million people (not to mention several millions more in the neighbourhood).

What saved Leningrad was the active defence policy of its garrison under Govorov. Always the Russian planes were in action against the Germans in front of the city and their bases on the Finnish coast and in Estonia; always the Red Army ground forces nibbled at the Nazi defences so that they could never be properly consolidated. The Red Fleet, too, sailed out when ice permitted to attack the German supply routes in the Baltic, while in the winter, when the Gulf of Finland was ice-bound, the naval gunners went ashore with their big guns and went into action with them on the land front. Even when, in the depth of last winter, all municipal transport ceased, the water-supply failed, and workers in the factories toiled in Arctic temperatures in overshoes made from old boots— even then the supply of shells, mortars and guns continued to flow from the great armament works inside the city.

At the outset the city's food stores were considered to be adequate for a long siege, but with the German bombing and the appalling difficulties of transportation across the ice, Leningrad was brought to the verge of famine. Aeroplanes were used to fly provisions into the city, but the route across the ice had been properly developed. To quote a passage from a brilliant dispatch from the Special Correspondent of The Times:

They were the days when people were dragged dead through the streets on sledges... when workers arriving at the factories fell into a coma on the floor by their hunches; when it was not rare for someone telephoning to hear the voice falter and cease and to find out afterwards that the speaker had fallen dead; when, for the sound of battle, the life of the city was stilled and in streets festooned with tangled wires (the Germans dropped pieces of and cut them), littered with broken glass and deep in uncleared snow, scenes of desolation occurred.

But even in those hard and terrible times Leningrad showed its fighting spirit. Thousands of its workers went to the front, women taking their places at the furnaces and lathes in the suburbs under shellfire. Although it was so cold that the inkwells, 100,000 children attended the schools; and after the day's lessons were over the boys and girls alike "did their stuff" as messengers, first-aiders and posture. Wooden houses were torn down for fuel. Communal feeding-centres were organized. On May Day last year, so as to have their share in the usual celebration, workers set about an immense spring-cleaning of the city with such excellent results that during the summer Leningrad could boast that she was the cleanest city in Russia. Every patch of ground was cultivated, and the heart of the city was transformed into an immense vegetable garden. Most symbolic of all was Leningrad's spirit was the performance on April 5 by a scratch orchestra of fireworks set off in fur coats in the Pushkin Hall, of Shostakovitch's Seventh Symphony, specially dedicated to the heroic city.

So for sixteen months it went on. Always there was fighting, in winter and summer alike, fearless and bloody; inside the city the people drew in their belts notch by notch, suffered terrible privations, died of hunger and cold. In the autumn of last year Meretzkov launched an attack on the city with a view to taking Sinyavino; and once they cut down the German corridor from eight miles wide to three. But they could never get through the bloody swamp and so surrounded the city.

Then on the morning of Tuesday, January 12, 1943, Meretzkov and Govorov struck together. Following an artillery bombardment of unprecedented weight, Red Army infantrymen equipped with mines and sticks slid down the northern bank of the Neva and sped across the ice-covered river to the steep southern bank. As they crossed German shells tore up the surface, but in less than ten minutes the first wave of Russians had made good their foothold on the southern bank. Hard on their heels came the second wave, and pushed field-artillery before them, and the Germans were driven from the city. Soon the battle was joined in the network of concrete forts which German military engineering science had created south of Schlesiussen. Next the Russians brought heavy tanks across the river by pontoons; and these, aided by the low-flying Stormoviks and the infantry with bayonets and automatics, thrust the Germans out of their massive fortifications to the edge of the forest. Meanwhile General Meretzkov had smashed his way through to Ladoga and now pushed southwards towards Sinyavino, so as to link up with Govorov across the German corridor. And all the time the guns of the Schlesiussen fortress and of the Baltic fleet kept up a terrific and slowly narrowing belt between the two armies.

German resistance was of the most embittered kind; particularly violent was the fighting between Sinyavino and Schlesiussen and 10,000 Germans were reported to be killed there. The city of Schlesiussen was stormed by units of the Leningrad army, aided by ski-troops from the Volkovk front who, crossing the canal, reached Lake Ladoga behind the town and so surrounded the garrison. The Nazi ring was broken.

But all the generalship, the bravery and devotion of the Red Armies could not have maintained Leningrad for the Soviet if it had not been for the ordinary men and women who for so many long and terrible months within its ring of forts lived and worked and fought and died. E. ROYSTON PIKE
RUSSIAN DRIVE TOWARDS ROSTOV-ON-DON was further accelerated by the Red Army's recapture of Salik, on Jan. 22, 1943. From this important railway junction the Soviet forces advanced to capture Tikhoretsk and Kropotkin in an attempt to cut off the enemy fleeing from Armavir. A Russian armoured car patrol is here seen pushing forward across the snow-covered ground under fire of German mine-throwers in the Lower Don area. A mine is exploding as the cars advance.
THE WAR IN THE AIR

by Capt. Norman Macmillan, M.C., A.F.C.

TOWARDS the end of January 1943 it was reported that the German police were to enforce the carrying of gas-masks by German civilians throughout the Reich. It is curious that this report should coincide with the increasing misfortunes of the German armies in Russia, and North Africa. Under the prevailing conditions of continuing victories there is no reason for the United Nations to resort to aerial gas warfare. Moreover, Britain has stated without equivocation that we will not first use the gas weapon.

The objective of this enforcement order might be to create a panic in Germany and make them more ready to toe the line to the most stringent Government decrees ordaining harsher terms of living. If this is the reason it might be good United Nations propaganda to use aircraft to drop leaflets containing an official assurance that the United Nations will not use gas unless Germany or one of the Axis states first uses it. This would defeat the German object of instilling fear into the people to make them obedient to the crack of the whip. The alternative objective of the order might be to prepare for the consequences of an Axis resort to gas warfare as a means to try to turn defeat into victory. That is a possibility against which the United Nations must be prepared. We should not forget that Italy is the only Power ever to have used gas from the air as a weapon of war, and that she used it without pity against Abyssinian tribesmen who were completely defenseless against this form of war because they had no defence against gas and no defence against aircraft.

Let us hope that air war on the scale on which it is waged today will not take this additional horrible turn. But even if this were to happen I cannot conceive that it will end the war. The Axis. The end of the air war, and of the war as a whole, is already written in the waning power of the Axis in the air and the waxing power of the United Nations in that element. British aircraft output in 1943 was 50 per cent greater than in 1941.

The forward troops of the Eighth Army entered Tripoli early on January 23. The advance of the Army over the 1,400 miles from El Alamein was made under the continuous cover of the R.A.F. The Luftwaffe was unable to play a big part in the campaign because its aircraft and supplies were often needed elsewhere. From October 1 to January 22 fighters, bombers, and groundfire of the United Nations destroyed in the air 507 enemy aircraft for a loss of 335 Allied aircraft. Fighting in the Middle East have cost the Axis about 4,000 aircraft lost in flight and about 2,000 on the ground. Yet only recently has the Axis had to face a great accumulation of air strength.

DESSERT Landing-Ground Prepared for Eighth Army Advancement

During the 8th Army's advance fighter squadrons' ground personnel moved up almost within sight of the enemy, striking forward in mobile columns to occupy evacuated enemy airfields or create new ones out of desert scrub. One landing-ground, 1,200 yards square was serviceable three hours after advanced guard parties had selected the site. That was in the Bir Dufan area, fewer than a hundred air miles from the town of Tripoli. Fighter formations, including an American pursuit group, moved forward into this area in one hop of 140 miles.

R.A.F. ground staff, with their supply and transport columns, attached units of Royal Engineers, and airfield graders, were protected by the Allied fighters. Ahead of Rommel's rearguard German and Italian ground troops were moving towards the air. Rommel's supply position was rendered precarious by air attacks against shipping and ports on both sides of the Mediterranean and Junkers 52 air-transport planes in flight. The citation to the award of a Bar to the D.F.C. to Wing Commander S. B. Grant showed how Rommel tried and failed to get supplies by air. It reads: "In December 1942 this officer flew the leading aircraft of a formation acting as escort to a force of fighter-bombers. During the flight 63 enemy aircraft were attacked by five twin-engined fighters were intercepted. Leaving the fighter-bombers to attack the transporters, Wing Commander Grant led in an attack on the enemy fighters, all of which were shot down ..." That left the Junkers transports as easy prey. Aircraft based on Malta played a big part in these interceptions of transport aircraft and shipping.

Rommel's defeat must be ascribed in part to the failure of General Field-Marshal Albert Kesselring's 2nd Air Fleet of the Luftwaffe (of which the 2nd Air Corps was commanded by Colonel-General Bruno Lörzer, well-known Great War fighter pilot, and first President of the German Air Sport Association—Deutsche Luftsport-Verband—founded in 1933 by the Nazis as the foundation of the flying section of the forbidden air force) when operating from Sicily against Malta. For months this Air Field was floundering away at Malta, but could not break the spirit of the George Cross Island—greatest "aircraft carrier" in the world. Curiously enough, Kesselring and Rommel were not friends. Now Malta has done much to smash Rommel.

In page 470 I referred to Rommel's retreat westward, pointing out that it was by no means a retreat to safety. He is now open to air attack from the advanced airfields around Tripoli, from Malta, and from air squadrons in Tunisia, and Algeria: from the air he is outflanked and surrounded. A wise way of escape is, as ours was from Greece and Crete, by sea, or else by air. The dénouement of the African battle against Rommel and Von Vanden has yet to come, and it may hold surprises.

From the United Kingdom the Fortress and Liberator bombers of the U.S. Army Air Force 8th Bomber Command attacked Germany for the first time on Wednesday, January 22, from bases in the United Kingdom. Principal target was Wilhelmshaven naval base, on which bombs were dropped from a height through clouded weather, or falling in at dusk between 50 and 300 feet up, the pilots dodged the churningly and many spires of the Danisch capital, and then the masts of ships in the harbor. And reached the island east of the city where the yards stand. Everything there goes to the enemy. In face the talk from shore and ships "the great bulk of the bombs went in," and flames roared up to a height of 1000 feet.

From the night of January 18 until the morning of January 28 Bomber Command raided heavy industries, production installations, railway communications, submarine bases and docks in the Ruhr, at Hengelo, Terneuzen, Lorient, Flushing, Bruges, Bordeaux, Copenhagen, and Düsseldorf. Laid mines in enemy waters, and bombed airfields at Maupertius (Cherbourg) and St. Omer. Coastal Command was also concerned in the attack on Bordeaux. The raids were made by day and night. Twenty-two bombers were lost.

American Mitchell B.25 284 m.p.h. medium bombers were officially mentioned for the first time as part of the force which bombed the French airfields on January 22. These bombers were named after the late General William Mitchell—the great, and in his life time despised, American protagonist of air power.

LOSING only one aircraft, the R.A.F. bombed Berlin in daylight for the first time on Saturday, January 30. To celebrate Hitler's birthday, according to the BerlinDaily, it made it a double. Daring out of cloud cover, Mosquitoes bombed at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., the 56th and 57th raids by British aircraft on the Reich capital. A.A. was negligible; flak-crews were dispersed to hear loud-speaker speeches by Goering and Goebbels. Bomber Command made Her- mann's only hour late. German Bomber Emden was also raided that day. Hamburg got a tough half-hour during the succeeding night from 8,000-lb. and 4,000-lb. bombs and ten of thousands of incendiaries; five bombers were lost in this raid.

Air war in New Guinea, New Britain, the Solomon Islands, and the surrounding territories continued against military and naval concentrations.
At Home in a Land of Scrub and Sand

WITH THE R.A.F. IN N. AFRICA. 1, Bargaining with a native vendor in a village street. 2, Intelligence Officer listens to pilots' accounts of an operational raid over enemy territory. 3, This tent-pole serves as a scoreboard, and testifies to the squadron's bombing efficiency. 4, Armours of a fighter-bomber squadron busily loading a Hurricane for an attack on Axis positions. 5, These pilots have just returned from a raid. Their machines are seen in the background.
Help from America for Hard-pressed China

U.S. AIRCRAFT IN CHINA. 1. Clearing the ground to enlarge an airfield, these Chinese women and children are busy at work with hoes and scythes. 2. U.S. airman indicates his score of four destroyed Jap planes to a comrade who also has one to his credit. 3. Chinese soldier mounts guard as repair work begins on a fighter plane. The huts serve as camouflaged hangers. 4. Transport planes of the India-China Ferry Command loading up with Chinese troops on their way to the front.

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Did He Want His Bombs to Drop Just Here?

BOMBS ON A LONDON SCHOOL. Soon after midday on Jan. 20, 1943 enemy aircraft dropped bombs on the south-eastern suburbs of London. An L.C.C. school in Lewisham received a direct hit. 39 children and 5 teachers being killed, and 40 children severely injured. 1. The demolished wing.

2. A clergyman assists Civil Defence workers.

3. Despite her injuries this child manages to smile.

4. A policeman directs the search for the missing.

5. Wreckage of one of the raiders—an F.W.190 which was shot down. On his return to Berlin one of the Nazi airmen, Capt. Stuhman, broadcast an account: "We dropped our bombs where they were to be dropped."

On October 23, 1942 Rommel's army and Montgomery's faced each other across the wire and trenches of El Alamein. The one was still flushed with triumph, boasting of the next stage which would inevitably carry it to the Nile and beyond. The other, with defects to averge, was quietly confident in its new-found strength. At dawn on that fateful day the Eighth Army attacked. For a while there was fierce battle, but from the first Montgomery secured and maintained the masterly advance. November 4 Rommel's Afrika Korps and his Italian allies were streaming back along the road they had come. The Eighth Army had begun which was to carry it across 1,400 miles to Tripoli, and past Tripoli over the border into Tunisia—as great a distance as from Leningrad to Paris, as from New York to New Orleans.

It was not an unopposed advance. All the time the Rommel emphasized there was skirmishing between the light armoured forces which headed our columns and the tanks and guns which shielded Rommel's rear. Sometimes, as at Fuka and Mattru, the fighting was on a bigger scale; and twice, at El Aghella and at Buerat, Rommel halted and dug himself in, making at least a show of resistance. But General Montgomery profited by these enforced delays to bring up the innumerable stores and supplies by which an army lives and fights, and as soon as the stores were in hand he gave Rommel that extra kick which drove him on once more in flight.

Nor was it easy going. There was no railway beyond that which runs from the Nile Valley to Tobruk. There was only one good road with an asphalt surface, the one which runs the whole distance through the coastal region; and that had been blown up in scores of places by the enemy. Thousands of mines, too, were strewn in the path of the advancing troops. But when causeways had been blown, when minefields hidden under the dusty surface of the single road made it impassable, our cars ploughed their way across the desert until such time—often it was a matter of hours only—as the engineers had cleared the way. Indeed, in one instance the enemy rode to the lorries following each other bonnet to tail for mile after mile along the line of march.

Working to an imperative time-table over some of the worst going in the world, faithful always to the rule "the supplies must get through," the swarms of vehicles kept up their steady progress. Well might the War Secretary pay tribute to the work of the Quartermaster-General's staff under Lieut.-Gen. Lindsell, and to those vitally necessary but so often unheralded heroes, the Engineers, the Royal Army Service Corps, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. As the army advanced it was accompanied by an elaborate gradation of aid detachments and workshops which retrieved cripples and made them fighting fit again.

Constant labour was required to improve and repair the surface of the coastal road, and to make passable the rough, ill-defined tracks across the desert which constituted the shortest route. The railway from Alamein to Tobruk was soon working with the punctuality of a British railway, bringing up scores of thousands of tons of supplies. What quantities of ammunition had to be handled may be gathered from the fact that in the course of the barrage that preceded the attack at El Alamein the field guns alone fired 1,000 tons weight of shells in an hour. In one week at a late stage in the advance over three million gallons of petrol were delivered at the front, and over 8,000 tons of ammunition. On an average, each man required 5 lb. weight of food (and containers) per day, as well as 50 cigarettes and 2 boxes of matches a week.

Most important of all the stores was water. From El Aghella to the hills south of Tripoli fresh water is altogether lacking. The Army needed more than 3,000 tons of water a day, and half of it was brought from the Nile, along a pipe-line to Tobruk; 1,500 tons, still from the Nile, were shipped to Bengazi for lighters, and the balance of 700 tons came from local wells. From Tobruk to Bengazi the water was carried to the forward troops in specially constructed tank wagons or metal containers holding four gallons each.

A great part in the advance was played by the Royal Navy, whose preparations began months before, not at Alexandria, but at Knysna, and by the aircraft of the Royal Air Force, whose pilots, R.A.F. Supply, and other organizations brought supplies—often on very scarce scale than ever before; huge quantities of ammunition, petrol, rations and water were flown to the troops composing the vanguard. Bombers taking supplies to the front brought back wounded. In return the Army seized and made ready new advanced landing-grounds which enabled our fighters to keep up with the retreating enemy.

In spite of everything the average rate of advance of the Eighth Army was 17 miles a day. We have excluded the major attack at El Aghella and Buerat it was 30 miles a day. In eighty days Montgomery's men stormed their way from Egypt to the borders of Tunisia; Cyrenaica was overrun, Tripolitania captured, Tripoli entered in triumph. In those same eighty days Rommel's Afrika Korps suffered 80,000 casualties in killed, wounded and prisoners; 500 of his tanks were destroyed or captured, 1,000 pieces of artillery, and tens of thousands of his vehicles.
'THE PRIEST,' as the Allies' latest self-propelled gun has been nicknamed by the 8th Army, is a 105-mm. gun-howitzer known to the U.S. Army as the M. S. As Mr. Churchill disclosed on November 11, 1942, it is a most useful weapon in contending with the German 88-mm. anti-tank gun.  

1. Side view; note the one-pounder A.A. gun amidships.  
2. Mounted on an M. 3 Granr tank chassis, the 105-mm. gun is here seen ready for action.  
3. A "Priest" in the background pours a burning enemy tank.
FUR COATS FOR A.T.S. Operational A.T.S. have recently been issued with winter clothing. Here are seen two members of an A.A. battery well protected against the cold.

STATION RAILBAR (right), recently opened by the L.M.S. at Euston, has been designed to take the place in wartime travel of withdrawn dining-cars on trains.

UNDERWATER FIGHTERS. Before crews set out on their first submarine operational patrol they are given a rigorous training. The instructor is here seen helping pupils to descend the steel ladder into the practice tank.

' POTATO KING OF ARRAN.' Mr. D. MacKelvin, M.B.E. (right), and two of his helpers inspect seed potatoes before planting. He has cultivated over 3,000 seedling varieties on his trial grounds in the Isle of Arran.

H.M.S. BRAMBLE, British minesweeper forming part of a convoy to N. Russia, was announced on Jan. 20, 1943 to have been lost. She made an enemy sighting report on the morning of Dec. 31, 1942, and a study of reports received later makes it clear that the Bramble endeavoured most courageously to do what she could to protect the convoy, and went down fighting.
These Men Juggle with Death on the Home Front

Our fighting men are dependent on the perilous work of Home Front civilians who daily juggle with deadly little grains of powder at the risk of instant destruction to themselves. Here is "Rear-ranker's" story of his recent visit to one of these factories somewhere in the country.

The gatekeeper took my pipe, tobacco and matches. Then they examined my trousers carefully, sweep clean and left turned down. My sportsman's carry turn-up fell to my match-heads and all sorts of things which may ignite chemicals. Shoes have nails and metal pieces which may grind a particle of explosive to danger heat. As he put it, "Squeezing the trigger round here goes off if you raise your eyebrows at it."

Single-stored wooden huts are separated by high grassy mounds of earth, to localize explosion effects. There are no electric lights, no electric switches, no metal fittings. The wooden swing-doors have no handles and no latches. Their hinges are on the outside and the doors pull open with a knotted rope. The lighting comes from bulbs shining inwards through small thick glass screens in the inner wall. Fire-extinguishers, fire-hydrants and hoses are everywhere.

There's a white fine painted along the centre of the gangways. It isn't there for fun. It is the men carrying little red boxes by rope handles. And, believe me, those boxes aren't just full of ice-cream. So you walk on the left of the white line and say "watch out" if you walk on the other. The heavy stuff is gently pushed around by hand in small wooden wagons on little brass wheels. The wood is dovetailed together to make those boxes and wagons. There isn't a steel nail anywhere.

Experienced middle-aged men do the mixing, and work the hydraulic presses at 3 tons a square inch—that squeeze this sensitive stuff into tin pellets with a terrific kick in them. Half a dozen men will be standing at a little counter almost touching each other. Each will be doing just one—on-top, side, or underneath, unburred filling operations. So many tiny pellets, and then a wafer-thin paper wrapper, placed in a container by one man—so much powder, carefully measured in a little wad of felt by the next, and so on.

Finally, the last man in the row gently pushes the container on to the tray of a vertical flash-light half-cylinder let into the wall. Then he pulls a lever which turns the cylinder—just like the revolving doors at a hotel entrance. The man waiting on the other side of the wall takes out the container and carefully places it ready for the hydraulic press.

Then my guide took me off to a small hut all by itself. He turned me over to its only inhabitant, who examined my pass and took off my cuff-links and wrist-watch. I had to put on one, a workman's—I didn't like my buttons. Inside the hut a smooth wooden counter ran the full length of one of the walls. On it were a few tiny things of the most innocuous-looking stuff. It arrived, mixed with water, in small red-painted kegs.

While the powder's wet it wouldn't hurt a fly. But on the counter in this hut the gain is great and there's a trap to keep that fly out, and any other insect which might get in. For if one of them picked up a single dry grain and flew around and dropped it in the hut, you, and the fly, and quite a slice of the surrounding countryside would never be seen again. There's even a fine mesh net hung below the ceiling to catch any tiny splinters that might fall through. As usual, the lighting comes from electric bulbs behind glass in the walls. Even the sunlight is dangerous.

He showed me a wooden egg-spoon. It was nice and smooth, he said, for picking up the tiny pellets. He had a chance of squeezing a grain against the counter. Slowly and gently he started filling a minute glass tube. Marvelous to watch how skillfully he could run it in the minimum of friction against each other.

A polished leather case, about the size of a 1-lb. tin of tobacco, stood at the end of the counter. It was deeply padded with cotton-wool, lined with fine silk. Inside it, four of the little glass tubes, already filled, stood upright in their holes. He finished the fifth tube and put it in. Then he put the leather cap on the case, slipped his wrist through the silk thongs which ran right under it, and we walked out of the enclosure to the mixing hut.

He put the case on a counter in the mixing hut, whistled to George the Mixer, shook my hand and said goodbye. Then he walked off to do the same thing tomorrow—and the day after—and the day after that. And you would think that he had just brought round a box of cigarettes, instead of the potential destruction of half a dozen enemy ships. I never saw such cold nerve and skill—for he's under no illusions as to what may happen if he should make one mistake.

George showed me his polished brass mixing bowl, about a foot in diameter. It's mounted on a pedestal, waist-high for him. Close against one side of the bowl is a strong curved shield, bolted to the floor, and reaching up well above his head. In the shield there's a thick glass window at his eye-level.

In the mixing bowl lay a tiny silk bag about the size of one of those old-fashioned ring purses. It was wide open and he showed me the other powder inside waiting to be mixed. It was fine and ungranulated. Properly mixed, he explained, they are handled with absolute safety. Then he stationed me behind the entrance wall, where I could put my head and watch. He took one of the little glass tubes and ground the powder against his shield. Putting his arms round inside the shield, and watching through his glass pane, he emptied the red powder very gently into the bowl. Then he gathered the bag of the bag together with a silk draw-cord, which he hooked over a wooden lever on the machine which does the mixing.

All is now ready for mixing, and we leave the hut. George then pulls the machine's starting lever. We wait in silence, for this is a very critical moment. It either mixes as usual—or it goes off. George knows the timing to a split second. All's well—we go back—and now the stuff is as safe as houses. With grim humour he shows me how the wall of the hut on the opposite side of his shield is fitted to blow out with the least trouble and expense.

Now the powder mixture goes into detonators, which give the kick that explodes the big fillings of guncotton, or T.N.T., in torpedoes, mines, and shells and bombs. You can handle these big fillings with no more ceremony than so many hundredweights of cheese. Put a detonator the size and shape of a medium-sized egg—and, well, you've seen photographs of what's happening to Axis ships and factories.

His Operating-Theatre was in Mid-Atlantic

One of an escort group fighting off a U-boat attack on a convoy, a corvette has been hit and has several badly wounded men needing immediate medical attention. A young surgeon aboard a destroyer receives the corvette's signal. What happens then is told by the Naval Reporter of The Evening Standard, from which the story is reprinted here.

Hundreds of miles out in the Atlantic a British destroyer momentarily slackens speed as a small boat is quickly lowered away. The ratings, in their cumbersome life-jackets, glue themselves to the boat rides like a cockle-shell up and down the deep troughs of the waves. In the after-part of the boat sits a solitary figure clutching a case and with his slightly-laden haversack slung over his shoulder.

The destructor gathers speed again and swings round in a wide protecting circle as the boat-approaches a smaller warship. The corrugated sides of the corvette are now visible. The boat is tossed up a matter of some ten or twelve feet on an almost oily swell.

"Good," says the destroy captain, who has been watching from his bridge. "The doctor has made it. Now we must get cracking."

The smaller warship is a corvette flying the flag of the Norwegian Navy. Not long before she, and other ships of the escort group, fought off a U-boat attack on a convoy. The corvette is safe, but the corvette has been hit and has signalled that she has several badly wounded men who require immediate attention. The young surgeon at once collects his instruments and goes to their aid, in the middle of them, and—well, you've seen photographs of what's happening to Axis ships and factories.
red between the gold rings on their arms. He is an R.N.V.R. surgeon lieutenant in the early twenties. When war came he was completing his medical studies at the London Hospital. He took an appointment at the hospital and grew old in experience during six months of heavy raids in the East End. Then the doctor—he is an Irishman, with crisp, curly hair and grey eyes which alternate between deep seriousness and twinkling mirth—joined the Navy.

"Sometimes for weeks on end it seems a waste," he told me. "There is little for me to do except as a glorified chemist's shop. Then there comes a time when I need every bit of skill I have as a surgeon, and there must be no hesitation because men's lives are at stake."

"Doc," as the wardroom knows him, has been across the Atlantic 14 times. "Life in a destroyer which is crashing about the Atlantic in all weathers can be extraordinarily uncomfortable," he confided. "But for some reason which I cannot define, I enjoy it.

Before the war began I had planned to go round the world as a ship's doctor. Well, I've travelled many thousands of miles at sea—but it has hardly been a world tour." Of his work he would only tell me one instance. He knew that he had heard most of the story.

"When I arrived in the Norwegian corvette," he said, "I knew that I was under strict orders from my own captain to return to the destroyer in five hours, just before darkness fell.

"There was no sick bay in the corvette, so we rigged up an emergency operating theatre in one of the flats (small open spaces) near the valley. I had to perform three major operations and several minor ones.

"Often, as the ship rolled, I had to prop myself up against a bulkhead. An R.N.V.R. lieutenant, British liaison officer in the ship, who had never seen an operation before, helped me. He kept up the supply of hot water and held the patients on the table. I finished with twenty minutes to spare."

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'The whole world, it seemed to me in my greenness, was suddenly spread with terrible flashes. Shells were exploding everywhere. The pilot took violent evasive action, throwing the aircraft around like an aerobatic fighter. This went on for minutes, but still there were shells everywhere.

Then, suddenly, I heard over the intercom, just about the worst thing I ever wanted to hear. The aircraft had shuddered from a burst right beside us, and the pilot shouted in rage: "Damn! Blast it! I'm hit!"

But there was no reply from the air bomber, and I remember wondering what was to happen next. We all thought he must have been hit even more seriously than the pilot. After an interval that seemed like years, with the plane swinging over in a steep downward turn, the air bomber's voice came through on the intercom, as sweet as life itself. "Yes, sir," was all he said, in a voice that was as quiet and restrained as that of a waiter in a West End restaurant. Then I heard the pilot say he was bleeding rather badly and he would have to see how much worse it was likely to get. Then the pilot did what obviously seemed nothing extraordin- arily to him, but to me was little short of incredible.

We were still in the middle of the barrage with "dirt flying everywhere, and before he decided on his next action he calmly circled round, studying the flow of blood from the wound and calculating whether he could afford to continue to Berlin.

The air bomber by this time was up in the cockpit beside the pilot, and had clamped a dressing on to the wound. The blood came through this as if it were paper, and so a second dressing was placed on top of the first. For a minute or two it looked as if the pilot would be unable to take us out of the barrage, let alone get us to Berlin or far-off England.

I am sorry, Bedall," said the pilot. "I am afraid we will have to cut the party short." At that moment I did not much care what he did so long as we got away from those guns around us. Turning away from the main raiding force meant that the whole of the defences we encountered could concen- trate on us alone. We started off on a lone course that took us away.

Judging by the opposition we met on the long, rambling journey home there are many gunners in the German Army who could tell the next part of our story better than I can. The flak was bad enough going out, but it was now many times worse. Everywhere we turned there seemed to be a new barrage waiting for us.

All the time the pilot was flying with one good hand and the only sound he made was to curse his "bad luck" at not being able to take S for Sugar just exactly where he had planned. The air bomber wanted to put a tourniquet above his shattered forearm, but the pilot refused this, saying it might make it impossible for him to carry on. He told someone standing beside him not to lift his eyes off him for a second.

"If I go out to it," he said, "you'll just have to shove me out of the way and take over." He must have suffered agony, as time after time the plane had to be put into violent evasive action to avoid the flak.

We were all now expecting to see any minute a stream of enemy fighters coming in to complete the kill. The clouds, against which we were piled like a fly on the ceiling of a room if we went beneath them, provided a magnificent background also for sighting by fighters when we were above them.

For some hours we were the only Lancaster within hundreds of miles and should have been "easy meat" for the Junkers 88 boys. The crew said afterwards it must have been the weather, causing severe icing at high altitudes, which cut them down.

At least three times on the way back we were caught in barrages as heavy as that bad one in which the captain was hit. The pilot got us out of the worst of them. We seemed to gather strength the farther we went, and after a while the routine aboard went on almost as if nothing was amiss.

Occasionally one of the crew would bring up a fresh article of clothing to wrap around the pilot's arm, and then go quickly back to his job. After what seemed an eternity we finally got out once more over the North Sea with nothing more serious than a few flak-ships to cope with on the last really hazardous stage of our journey.

The closest watch, however, had to be kept for fighters until we were out beyond their maximum range. All four motors were going beautifully on a pretty full throttle, however, and, sliding down from altitude in a steady descent, we did eventually reach lovely England long before we had dared hope.

The captain landed us at our base without giving us much worse than a bit of a jolt. Only he knows just what it took out of him, to do so. As we were approaching the base, the wireless operator sent a message that we
had been hit and the pilot was wounded. A fire-tender, an ambulance, and the ever-watchful doctor were waiting beside the plane which really came to rest at the end of its landing.

Much to everybody's surprise the captain jumped out of the aircraft almost without assistance, the doctor, however, kept him off to hospital, and he was being operated upon within an hour of landing.

The doctor said another hour in the air would probably have found the captain helpless. As it was we had been in the air for seven hours, and for more than half that time the pilot had been flying the machine in a condition which very few would like to meet in the air, let alone over the heart of the most heavily defended country in the world.

In Six Hours I Shot Down Four German Raiders

On Sunday, January 17, 1943, following the great R.A.F. raid on Berlin, the Ju 88's came to drop bombs on London. Wing Commander Wight-Boycott, in the air for six hours, in a Beaufighter, tells here how he shot four of the raiders out of the sky.

The curious thing about the first one I shot down was that although London was throwing up a terrific amount of flak and debris, the number of searchlights about I don't remember seeing anything of them at all. I was looking up all the time to find the enemy silhouette against the bright moonlit sky.

We'd just popped above a thin layer of cloud and there was the Dornier, a sort of grey colour. I fired a long burst and saw an explosion behind the pilot's cockpit. It seemed to go down and I tried to follow, so steeply that my observer came out of his seat. When the Dornier crashed, three or four white dots appeared to jump out of the ground. That was Dornier number one. The next patrol nothing happened at all, except my observer complaining about the hardness of his seat.

We only shot down two during the second alert. It must have been about four in the morning. He was travelling very fast and jinking violently. He didn't keep a straight course for more than a few seconds at a time. But there was no cloud about now; it was a good night for interception, and I managed to get in a fairly long burst.

The doctor said another hour in the air would probably have found the captain helpless. As it was we had been in the air for seven hours, and for more than half that time the pilot had been flying the machine in a condition which very few would like to meet in the air, let alone over the heart of the most heavily defended country in the world.

Burma.—Allied bombers attacked Rancho, Shwebo and Akrath.

Australia.—Waves of U.S. aircraft raided Munda, New Georgia.

JAN. 25, Monday 1,244th day.


France.—Front. — Soviet troops occupied whole of Voronezh, from which Soviet forces had withdrawn.

Australia.—U.S. troops captured Kokumbouna on Guadalcanal.

JAN. 26, Tuesday 1,245th day.

World.—Admiralty announced loss of cruiser Kingston Kaishei.

Air.—R.A.F., again attacked Lerins by night; Bordeaux also raid ed.

North Africa.—In Tunisia Allied forces advanced ground in Ouassita valley. U.S. Air force based at Algiers six enemy bombers were shot down.

Russia Front.—Only two small groups of German Sixth Army left out at Stalingrad.

Australia.—Allied heavy bombers attacked Rabaul and other Japanese bases.

JAN. 27, Wednesday 1,246th day.

Air.—U.S. and British bombers in Middle East.

Flash-backs

1940

February 1. Russians launched violent attack at Sumna in Mannerheim Line.

1941

January 22. Australians under Wavell entered Tobruk.

February 1. Argadirt, Eritrea, captured by Allied troops.

January 21. Rommel began to advance from El Agheila.


January 23. Rommel recaptured Wavell entered Tobruk.


January 29. Rommel recaptured Benghazi.

JAN. 20, Thursday 1,244th day.

Russia Front.—Soviet troops captured Kastornaya, on Voronezh-Kursk road.

Australia.—Attacks by Allied air craft on Jap air bases and shipping in Taino, New Britain, New Guinea and New Georgia.

General.—Mr. Churchill conferred with Service chiefs in Cairo.

JAN. 29, Friday 1,245th day.

Air.—Another night raid on Loriers, Libya.—In patrol operations our forward troops crossed Tunisian frontier.

Russia Front.—Soviet offensive W. of Voronezh; Novy Okol occupied.

Kropeckin in N. Caucasus also captured.

Australia.—Strong Jap patrols resumed near Mubo, New Guinea.

JAN. 30, Saturday 1,246th day.

Air.—Mosquitoes made day raids on Berlin on occasion of tenth anniversary of Hitler's accession. Heavy bombers attacked Hamburg by night.

North Africa.—In Tunisia German tanks, infantry and artillery pushed through Faid Pass on road from Sfax.

Mediterranean.—U.S. Liberators made daylight raids on Messina harbour.

Russia Front.—In Caucasian Soviet troops captured Tikhoretsk and Mozkop.

Australia.—Sea and air battle began off the Solomons.


JAN. 31, Sunday 1,247th day.

Sea.—Admiralty announced loss of submarine F. 17.

Libya.—Eighty Army occupied Zaouia, W. Libya. Allied heavy bombers again raided Messina.

Russia Front.—General Paulus and 15 generals of German Sixth Army captured at Stalingrad.


General.—Mr. Churchill visited Cyprus on way back from Turkey.

FEB. 1, Monday 1,248th day.


Russia Front.—Sylvain, 100 m. S.E. of Kharkov, and Zavornoy, 20 m. from Rostov, captured by Russians.

Australia.—Fighting continued in Mubo-Wau area of New Guinea. U.S. troops made progress in Guadalcanal.

FEB. 2, Tuesday 1,249th day.

Air.—Night raid on Cologne R.A.F. bombers dropped over 1,000-b. bombs. Libya.—Our troops occupied Zelten.

Russia.—All remaining German forces at Stalingrad capitulated; eight generals more captured.

Australia.—Allied aircraft bombed Jap supply dumps at Kaukenau, Dutch New Guinea.
A correspondent of mine writing from Port Said tells me that he has been subscribing to The War Illustrated since No. 1, and that, despite the fact of his newspaper not being in one of the raids that town, he has been able to gather a complete series up to the time of his writing, when No. 124 had arrived, which is pretty good going. I don't know that some of the newspapers published in Egypt make frequent use of our articles without acknowledgement, which, if, of course, a representation of the papers is used. The first concern of us all is the winning of the War, we can afford to ignore such informalities, and I am sure that the Egyptians are helping us in that direction, even when they quote The War Illustrated without acknowledging the source of their information. All the same, one would prefer an occasional "credit" title, as the film producers and their many associates ever eager for their individual efforts to be recognized, phrase it.

Among the letters on my desk the other morning was one of New Year's greeting from the Royal Norwegian Government. It was stamped with the first Norwegian postag stamps to be issued by the Kingdom since its temporary departure from Norwegian soil on June 7, 1940, and was mailed from Free Norwegian territory—"in other words, it was posted on the high seas on one of the more than seven hundred vessels belonging to the Norwegian Mercantile Marine which, in spite of severe losses, are continuing to transport men, munitions and food in the service of the United Nations. The stamps form a series of six, and together they provide a symbolic representation of Norway's fight against the German invader. Each of them bears the symbol "H 7 9 4 0", the national crown—a symbol which has been chosen by the Norwegians in Norway to demonstrate their continued loyalty to King Haakon VII and to the fight for freedom and independence which he personifies. Specially interesting is the 20-øre stamp with the face of a Norwegian home front slogan: "Vil Vi Vinne" (we will win) Norway's adaptation of the V-sign—painted on a Norwegian country road. All of us will echo the words of the Norwegian Government's wish that "in the year 1943 it may prove possible to transform Vil Vi Vinne into Vi Vant" (we have won).

One day in mid-August last year Wing-Commander A. B. Austin, who had already achieved some distinction with his book Fighter Command, received a single ticket from London to a place on the south coast, and the brief summons: "Waterloo Station tomorrow at 0900 hours. Bring one suitcases and the minimum of luggage. Tin hat and gas-mask, of course." That was the beginning of days of arduous and frequently dangerous adventure. It hardly seemed possible to believe that that adventure was the combined attack on Dieppe, and what took place on that long-to-be-remembered August 19 has been described by none more vividly than Mr. Austin, who represented ten national newspapers on that historic occasion. In our own pages we quoted some passages of brilliant narrative from his story of the Commando attack on the German positions above the cliffs west of Dieppe. (See page 197.) Now Mr. Austin has written a full account of it. We landed at Dawn (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.) he describes not only the events on the day of battle, but tells something of the long preparation, and how the work on which he came to know, of many a deed of heroism, of many an incident touched with humour.

CPL. J. A. FRENCH, of the Australian Infantry, to whom the posthumous award of the V.C. was announced on Jan. 14, 1943. He destroyed 3 Jap machine-gun posts at Milne Bay, Papua, last September, but was killed after he had silenced the third post. Photo, Painted News

Many a reader will be amused, and not a little moved, by his story of the concert on board ship as they crossed the Channel on the eve of their desperate adventure: of the Rabelaisian monologue, of the Canadian soldier singing The Road to Mandalay, and the sailor who obliged with Round Her Knee She Wore a Purple Garter, after which an A.B. rendered The Longshoreman in an Edwardian voice (whatever that is)—of the petty officer who in a most remarkable speech had given an impression of a "young lady, a very young lady, very tasty, very sweet, getting into, and having her bath ... Gee, don't he know a lot," murmured a boy behind me in Toronto, "It is the spirit that the "foreigner" finds it so difficult to understand; the spirit that is so typically English, British, whatever adjective you care to apply to it, that strange race of beings who are ourselves.

But then so much that we do must amuse those who are not of our language and nation, that debate in the House of Lords the other day, for instance—the one noises produced by the human voice which certainly are neither music nor even in tune. The technical name for these noises is 'hot rhythm.' I cannot see why the "foreigner" should not endure it. There ought to be a close season for such performances," But for my part, I am not at all sure that the 'comics' are anything but a popular art of the day, and the mob of numbers whose names the placards outside the theatres print in the biggest letters that the stars of the stage can command.

Yet again I have to greet the publication of another Stationery Office publication. This time it is The Battle of Egypt, which has been prepared for the War Office by the Ministry of Information, and costs but 7d. In its 32 large pages there are 80 excellent photographs, many of them published for the first time by the Stationery Office Film and Photo Section, attached to the Public Relations services in the Middle East. There is also a double-spread diagrammatic map in two parts, illustrating the story of the great battle which decided the fate of the Italian Empire in North Africa.