TUNISIAN ARABS WELCOME A BRITISH SERGEANT at Chaouach, N.W. of Medjez-el-Bab, which Gen. Anderson's men captured on April 10, 1943. This N.C.O. of the Field Security Police, who managed successfully to evade his German captors in Tunis and rejoin his comrades of the 1st Army, describes in fluent Arabic the Axis defeat in this sector. These Arabs were able to return to their homes at Toukabouer, a nearby village.

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THE BATTLE FRONTS


On May 6, 1943 the battle of Tunisia was decisively won by a blitzkrieg attack following on a series of desperate encounters in which the enemy's troops were exhausted and his reserves expended. The enemy had been out-fought, out-generalled, and induced to make the mistakes that no doubt General Alexander hoped he would make.

The world stood amazed when it was realized that within two and a half weeks after the 8th Army's initial attack on April 19 at Enfidaville, the boasted, impregnable Axis stronghold had been penetrated, and that nothing remained but to mop up the fragments of its defeated garrison. A blow has been struck at German military prestige almost as heavy as it had received at Stalingrad. The confidence of the German nation and its satellites in the competence of the High Command which had thus twice wilfully exposed its armies to disaster must be approaching vanishing point.

Will belief in the effectiveness of the elaborate wall of fortifications which fringes the coastline of Europe survive? Will the German people now realize that the amateur armies of the democratic nations are as formidable fighters as the professional soldiers of the Kitch, and better equipped? The storm is still brewing in Russia; and it may break before this article is published.

Meanwhile, there seems every possibility that part at least of the German bridgehead in the Kebir may meet the fate of the bridgehead in Tunisia. The notable superiority which the Russian Air Force is steadily gaining over the Luftwaffe may prove as important a factor in the air superiority established by the Allies in Tunisia.

NORTH AFRICA

No one expected the final phase of the battle of Tunisia to develop with such amazing rapidity. The enemy in his outer defence ring had positions of exceptional natural strength, and these had been artificially improved with the usual German thoroughness. The position did not lack depth, for behind the mountain strongholds there were some mountain strongholds almost equally strong, in addition to the fortress of Bizzair and the inner defences of Tunis and Cape Bon.

With fifteen divisions of picked and experienced troops, Von Arnim had a formidable army with which to conduct a protracted defence if he handled it skilfully and economically. Except in the matter of armour and petrol supply there was no immediate prospect that he would run short of munitions or food. Although he could not hope to equal the immense weight of artillery that could be concentrated against him, that is a disadvantage the defence always experiences. On the other hand, in minefields, he had a weapon which has proved highly effective in strengthening the power of defence, and he had ample supplies of mines to enable him to develop its use to the utmost.

The chief disadvantage he suffered from was inferiority in the air, owing to the limited number of airfields available for short-range aircraft and to shortage of petrol. There can be no doubt that the supremacy in the air established by the Allies, if not the main cause of the initial breakdown of the enemy's defence, contributed immensely to its rapid and complete collapse. Valuable as had been air cooperation during the initial attacks on the enemy's defences, it was in exploitation of success and in pursuit that air supremacy became the decisive factor.

Credit for victory must primarily be given to the skill and courage of the attacking infantry, which can seldom have been equalled, and to the support given by artillery. It was their efforts which wore down the enemy's defences and opened the way for the decisive exploitation by aircraft and armoured vehicles which produced such astounding results.

It may be long before the full account of the exploits of the fighting troops can be fully recorded, but it can already be seen with what consummate generalship their efforts were directed. It is abundantly clear that the enemy was not merely out-fought and crushed by greater weight of armoured force, but that he was completely out-generalled.

The sequence of General Alexander's operations is interesting. First came the very quick attack of the 8th Army on the Enaidville front, which drove the enemy back to his main position. Some surprise was expressed by the critics that the 8th Army should attack simultaneously. Possibly the reasons were that the 8th Army attack was only a preliminary operation, intended to establish a threat to the enemy's southern flank while the re-grouping of Alexander's command was in progress. Faced with a particular threat to its right, the enemy would probably be forced to commit strong forces at that point, and the 8th Army could then attack in the centre of its line.

It is still a matter of debate whether the enemy was misled by the enemy to contain a large part of the strength he had available.

The 1st Army with which Alexander meant to make his decisive attack had a considerable distance to advance and a number of enemy strong-points to capture before it had a reasonable chance of effecting a breakthrough. Its initial attacks began two days after the 8th Army attack and in conjunction with the action of the French towards Pont du Fahs served further to mislead Von Arnim into believing that his southern flank was or was threatened. The enemy consequently expended a considerable part of his armour in meeting the 1st Army in the Kouria plain, where the threat to Pont du Fahs was developing.

The 1st Army's drive towards Tebourba was also vigorously opposed, and met with counter-attacks. These preliminary attacks, however, made considerable progress, and, with the taking of Longstop Hill and Jebel Bou Aoukas, combined with the partial encirclement of Pont du Fahs and the 8th Army's thrust at Sfax, the threat had been reduced to the point where it would appear that Alexander's main effort would be made in the south and that, therefore, he had little to fear in the north.

Even when the American 2nd Corps appeared on the northern front, having by a wonderful cross-country march been switched from the extreme right to the extreme left of Alexander's line, it did not excite his suspicions. Possibly underestimating the offensive capacity of American troops, he may have thought they had been brought in on what was likely to be a quiet part of the front, and so been all the more convinced that the 1st Army was the immediate danger. Characteristically, and in defiance of German doctrine, he decided to meet that danger by counter-attacking; and it seems probable that he drew on his northern front reserves to provide the striking force he required. With the 8th Army apparently engaged in preparations for renewed attack, it is unlikely that he weakened his force facing it.

During the last week of April Von Arnim delivered his counter-attacks with the greatest ferocity, but they were met with equally fierce resistance and succeeded only in recovering a little lost ground, though this included the recapture of the important key point of Bou Aoukas. By Sunday, May 2, both sides seemed to have fought themselves to exhaustion; but whereas Von Arnim had expended his reserves, Alexander had still strong forces in hand, including those of the 8th Army which was still uncompromised to a major attack. That Alexander switched a considerable part of the 8th Army—the 7th Armoured Division and the 4th Indian Division—to take part in the decisive attack on the 1st Army front, has just been reported.

The enemy having expended his reserves and exhausted his troops in the counter-attacks, Alexander was now in a position to

LAST LAP TO TUNIS. Near Bou Arada on the S. Tunisian front, these men of the 1st Army move up through standing corn preparatory to attacking Axis positions in the area. Furious fighting at Bou Arada in mid-April, 1943, developed into one of the decisive battles for Tunisia. Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright
make his decisive onslaught. He may have postponed it for a day or two in hopes that the weather, which for a week had been restricting air operations, would improve. At any rate before it was delivered came the unexpected collapse of the northern front.

The Americans, far from having been given a defensive role, had been attacking with great vigour, magnificently assisted on their left by the French Moroccan Corps. They had made considerable progress and captured important key-points with the support of an ever-increasing weight of artillery fire.

Lacking reserves and under the onslaught of troops that had with experience made immense strides in tactical efficiency, the defence wilted. Apparently hoping to escape the grave danger of a sudden collapse, withdrawal to the inner Bizerta defences was ordered. The decision entailed the abandonment of the important road junction of Mateur and the possible complete isolation of the Bizerta fortress. But the decision came too late. At the first signs of retreat, the Americans and Moroccans, without hesitation or delay, started in fierce pursuit; and the enemy never succeeded in rallying effectively in spite of the strong defences available. Once again it was proved that the strongest works cannot be held by demoralized troops. The capture of Mateur on May 3 also opened a line of approach to the flank of the Axis troops opposing the 1st Army at Tebourba.

Yet this unexpected success was probably not the signal for the decisive 1st Army attack which was by now almost ready for delivery. Preceded by a devastating air and artillery bombardment, the main attack was delivered on the next day. The infantry assault, preceded by a devastating air and artillery bombardment, broke through the weakened crust of the Axis mountain defences and, as at Alamein, opened a gap for the waiting armour to break through into the open country. Delivered on a narrow front and aimed, not as in previous attacks towards Tebourba or Pont du Fahs, but straight at Tunis through Masciault, it was a blitzkrieg attack in which a matter of a few hours disrupted completely the whole German scheme of defence.

But we may ask ourselves, could our infantry have forced the gap for the armour if German reserves had not previously been exhausted and wrongly used? The village of Masciault, which had been prepared for hedgehog defence, fell without resistance. The counter-attacks which Von Arnim had delivered may have caused a few days' delay, but at the sacrifice of ability to offer prolonged resistance. When the crisis came, Von Arnim's reserves were either exhausted or in the wrong place.

Perhaps the most astounding feature in the German collapse was the fall of Bizerta, a fortress designed and equipped to stand a long siege. It is evident that it was no part of the German plan to abandon the place in order to concentrate their whole force for a final stand in the Cape Bon peninsula. Every credit must be given to the Americans and French for the speed and vigour with which they pressed home their attack; but it is inconceivable that they could have reached the fortress but for the breakdown of German morale, due very largely to the mistakes made by Von Arnim.

Now that the battle has been won so decisively, we may consider whether after all in the long run it was not to our advantage that the first attempt to seize Tunis and Bizerta failed. It induced Hitler to expend a substantial number of his best troops and to incur immense losses of men, aircraft, and shipping in maintaining them in their dangerous position—and that at a time when all his resources were needed in Russia. The defeat he has suffered is immensely damaging to his prestige, and it has still further undermined belief in German invincibility and military capacity.

Still more important perhaps, the campaign has given the Allied army invaluable experience, and welded it into a magnificent striking force. An easy occupation of Tunisia would have left it far from prepared to undertake the more difficult operations that may be believed to lie ahead.

The six months that have passed since the first landing in Africa do not therefore represent lost time. As a matter of fact, in any case a considerable part of the time would have been needed to disembark the whole force with its stores, to build up its base establishments, and to complete its organization. Those processes, no doubt, have been expedited under the pressure of the immediate needs of the campaign; and opportunities have been given to correct faults which might not otherwise have been detected. Now the war in Africa is won. A new phase begins.
After Six Months Struggle in the Mountains

Gen. G. S. PATTON watches his men advance during a battle for enemy-held hills in Central Tunisia. Commander of the 2nd U.S. Army Corps, he was succeeded (it was announced on May 1, 1943) by Maj. Gen. Bradley.

Sherman tanks (right) advance towards the Goubellat Plain, between Medjez-el-Bab and Pont du Fais (see panorama in p. 77f).

REMOVING AXIS MINES from the path of the advancing American troops in Central Tunisia. These U.S. Army Engineers are shown clearing one of the innumerable death-traps set by the enemy to impede the Allied push towards Tunis and Bizerta. Having located the mines by their detectors, these specially-trained men remove them by hand. The soldier on the right holds a mine which he has just extracted from its hiding-place in the ground.

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Eisenhower's Armies Enter Upon the Last Lap

MEDJEX-EL-BAB was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting on the Northern Tunisian front during the second and third weeks of April 1943. Desperate battles were fought by the 1st Army in the hills N. and N.W. of the town where the enemy was strongly entrenched between Sidi Neir and Jebel Ahmera (Longstop Hill).

Medjex was originally taken by us on Nov. 25, 1942, and was of great strategic importance. 1st Army men had many savage hand-to-hand encounters with von Arnim's crack troops during the last offensives. Left, a long column of German prisoners marches through the ruined streets of the town en route to a prisoners-of-war camp.

Below, a "Priest" 105-mm. gun mounted on a Gen. Grant chassis in action with the 8th Army.

8th ARMY IN ENFIDAVILLE, Tunisian town N. of Sousse, taken by them on April 25, 1943. The men shown above are searching a row of houses for enemy stragglers. Enfidaville was the coastal anchor of the Axis line running west through the mountains. It was here that Rommel launched an unsuccessful counter-attack against Gen. Montgomery's forces as the latter advanced towards the town. When our infantry entered the place they found that the enemy had withdrawn completely.

Meanwhile, in the northern sector of the Tunisian front the 1st Army were also heavily engaged. On May 3 the capture of Mateur by the U.S. 2nd Corps greatly facilitated further advances. Vital road and railway junction, 20 miles S.W. of Bizerta, Mateur was taken after a 15-mile advance. Above, British troops advance in single file along the Mateur road. Their way lies across a rocky landscape which is characteristic of this region of Northern Tunisia.
TANK-BUSTING — the concentrated and scientific "tin-opening" that punished the Panzers so severely in Tunisia — is not new, although its secret was fully revealed only in the break-through at the Mareth positions. It first hit the enemy between the eyes at Alamein last October. The man behind the punch was a secret ace from India, Wing-Commander Roger Cave Porteous.

Thirty years old, holding a commission for seven years in the R.A.F., he had never been decorated although he had commanded his squadron since its arrival in the Middle East. A brilliant and courageous flyer, he was probably chosen by Air Marshals Tedder and Coningham for his great skill and his distance from the limelight.

Tank-busting as he developed it, in a Hurricane fitted with special heavy-calibre guns for attacking armoured vehicles, was born of dive-bombing and an idea dating from the old R.F.C. days, when planes were fitted with a Heath Robinson device which exploded a charge backwards in order to compensate for the powerful recoil of the guns. The Nazis had come near the idea in the twin-engined Henschel 129, with a 30-mm. cannon slung externally beneath its fuselage. They missed success, perhaps in tactics, perhaps in inferiority of armament. In the hands of Roger Porteous, however, it was clear from the start that we had hit on an innovation of power and supremacy.

The secret lay in the two 40-mm. (about 1-57 in.) Vickers cannon, one beneath each wing. Weighing 320 lb. apiece, too large to go inside the fuselage, they were the biggest weapons ever mounted in single-seat fighters. The shells alone weighed 24 lb. each and the guns were capable of automatic or single-shot fire.

In the course of nine sorties during the bitter sky-fighting of the Gazala line, Porteous destroyed 5 enemy tanks, 7 lorries and innumerable other vehicles. Encountering two troop carriers on the way home during one trip, he was tempted to try out the combat strength of his unexpected armament, and the carriers were literally shattered to fragments. Soon he was leading in actual training flights over the enemy lines the sweeps that became known as the Porteous school of tank-busting.

SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE — the need for distinguishing at a glance the silhouette of Allied and Axis tanks and armoured cars could be taught on the ground. The ice-cold technique of low-level precision attacks into enemy armour could be gained only in the sky. Flying skill exceeding the average, plus iron nerves, was essential. The star "pupil," Wing-Commander Howard Burton—who with Squadron-Leader Weston-Burt was to head the great break-through in Italy — had won the Sword of Honour at Cranwell. In addition, he had gained the D.F.C. for "coolness" after 50 or 60 sorties he had brought him a bag of six enemy aircraft. Another pioneer, South Africa's Captain Johannes Faure, had been mentioned in dispatches as "an exceptionally good leader" and had destroyed at least five enemy planes.

Ace flyers all, the first "tin-openers" were frankly aware of the risks involved. In taking aim, sighting first on a burst of tracer, they might be below the bursts from the Breda guns, but there could be "no room to wriggle," no chance to avoid ground fire, indeed no possibility of any action. The vital essential was pre-arranged teamwork. Spattering the target, the first tank-buster would be closely followed by a second, sweeping from sharp firing in a different direction and confusing the gunners.

That was the primary, simple yet dangerous trick of the Porteous school. Before the enemy knew what it was all about, tank-busters were operating. British tanks were caught, sitting in a straight line — and were smashed to pieces. One pilot crippled as many as twenty tanks in less than a week. On the opening day of the Alamein offensive 19 enemy tanks were hit by a single wing. This success foreshadowed the 32 enemy tanks wrecked at El Hamma on April 25 and the 50 vehicles destroyed and hundreds damaged on the Sfax road, when the further refinement of fighter cover for the Hurriguns enabled tank-busting as a fine art to be almost doubly effective.

Before long, as the tank-busters swept through Daba and Fuga, many new men had won their laurels in "double sorties," as they were called. Flying Officer William McCallum, for instance, had "the sheer determination to achieve success." Sergeant George Chaudy, formerly an Oxford mechanic, Flight Sergeant Kevin Clarke, of Birmingham, and Sergeant Forbes Fraser — all these flyers of 148 Squadron were conspicuously successful.

It was never easy. The road to success in this new branch of flying technique was paved with heroism. Thus one of Porteous's right-hand men, Flight-Lieut. Allan Simpson, was wounded in the chest by ground fire as he swept into the armour clusters at Bir Hacheim. Still he continued to attack, scoring one hit after another. Then, weakened by lack of blood and with his right arm useless, he attempted to gain height. His plane was hit by the barrage. Hot oil spraying his face, blinded by smoke, Simpson parachuted at only 50 ft. The citation to his D.F.C. justifiably described this deed of gallantry as "an outstanding devotion to duty."

Then there was Sergeant John Price, formerly a Yorkshire electrician, who was wounded in the head by a shell splinter and, though dazed and suffering from concussion, carried on. There was Lieutenant Douglas Rogan, who had his right foot virtually shot off during an attack on a tank concentration, but still brought his plane back to base—an amazing effort in face of the pain and shock—and made a good landing. And there was Sergeant John Strain, who had an artery punctured and was nearly blown off his machine by a burst of flak but remained undaunted.

These were a few among the many tank-busting founder members. Today they and many newcomers to the business have spread their work from auxiliary attacks on armoured vehicles to dug-in emplacements and ground offensive formations of all kinds. Rommel undoubtedly planned a surprise with his Mark IIs and Vs at Mareth. They were dug into pits in the sides of the wadis, and only tank-busting tactics could have opened them up. That scores of tanks were destroyed and hundreds damaged without—in some instances—a chance to fire a shot is now no matter of history. In General Montgomery's phrase, such intimate and close support between air and army had never been achieved before. It was an inspiration to all the troops — and a surpassing sign of Hurrigun victories yet to come.
DUAL ATTACK BY R.A.F. 'TIN OPENERS' IN TUNISIA. This drawing gives a vivid impression of the tactics employed by our Hurricanes when carrying out their paralysing assaults on enemy tanks. By working in pairs and coming in from different directions, they make it impossible for the tank under attack to follow the movements of both aircraft with its turrets, and it is thus easy to fall a victim to the 'tank-busters' when unsupported by other fighting vehicles. (See article opposite.)

'TANK-BUSTERS' IN FLIGHT. Each of the 40 mm. guns carried by these aircraft weighs only 320 lb., and in addition to the cannon the Hurricane is armed with two .303 Browning machine-guns. These machines first went into action against Rommel's armoured vehicles in Cyrenaica in June 1942. During the following month one squadron alone accounted for 74 tanks, 46 lorries, eight armoured cars, four six-wheeled troop carriers and three bowser—all for the loss of one pilot.
THE WAR AT SEA

by Francis E. McMurtrie

ONE of the direct consequences of the fall of Bizerta will be the facility afforded the British Mediterranean Fleet for making use of that port as a base. Any damage done to the harbour installations can hardly affect this fact.

Since the French occupied Tunisia in 1881, Bizerta has been systematically developed as a naval base, for which it is naturally well adapted. At Bizerta itself is the commercial port and outer harbour; this is connected by a dredged channel, having a uniform depth of water of 39 feet, with Bizerta Lake. Here are situated the naval dockyard and the town of Ferryville. There are four dry docks, of which the largest, 880 feet in length and 135 feet in beam, might take a battleship or aircraft-carrier. Two others, each 650 feet long, are able to accommodate cruisers. The remaining one, 265 feet in length, is suitable for small destroyers, sloops or corvettes.

In the lake, which is eight miles across and roughly circular, there is room for a whole fleet. Its obvious weakness is that ships sunk in the dredged channel might insert the cork in the bottle, as it were; but if this were done by the Germans before surrendering, the obstacle should not take long to remove, judging from the rapidity with which Benghazl and Tripoli harbours were cleared.

Dry docks cannot be destroyed, though the pumping plant by which they are either flooded or emptied might be wrecked. Heavy cranes and other mechanism may have been sabotaged; but it may be assumed that the possibility of such obstacles having been left will have been foreseen, and that every possible arrangement will have been made in advance for putting in hand the necessary repairs as soon as the port is taken over by the Allied naval authorities.

Strategically, Bizerta is admirably situated for launching an attack upon Sicily or Sardinia, distant respectively some 90 and 125 miles. In the lake there is ample space for transports and landing-craft to assemble—though for that matter there are several hundred feet of quayage in the outer port from which troops could be embarked.

Interference by Axis aircraft from the other side of the Sicilian Channel should not be serious so long as we maintain our present superiority in the air. Actually, that advance should tend to increase as time goes on, so that the passage of supplies through the Mediterranean to Egypt and Syria should soon be possible. This will obviate the long delay hitherto involved by the necessity of employing the route round the Cape of Good Hope. It was estimated some time ago by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham that this shortening of our sea supply route would be equivalent to an addition of 2,000,000 tons to Allied shipping resources. This implies a corresponding gain in the unceasing battle against the U-boats.

WHAT COULD ITALY'S NAVY DO IN THE EVENT OF INVASION?

In some quarters it has been predicted that the Germans will now seek to concentrate the greater part of their submarine strength in the Mediterranean, with the object of obstructing any invasion of Europe from Africa. This rather loses sight of the fact that similar efforts to interfere with seaborne supplies to our armies in North Africa failed to prevent their annihilating Armim's forces. That menace now is that the German submarines of accomplishing anything appreciable, now that the whole of the southern shores of the Mediterranean are under Allied control?

It is far more likely that the Germans will leave the inevitable task of meeting the menace of invasion from Africa to their wretched dupes, the Italians. In view of the consistent failure of the latter to accomplish anything at sea in the past, it may be questioned whether such opposition need be reckoned formidable.

At the same time, an examination of Italian naval strength may be of interest. It contains seven battleships, the majority of which were last reported to be at Spezia, in Northern Italy. A report that three of these ships had proceeded to Taranto, in the south, is a little difficult to credit. Not only is it obviously bad strategy to divide forces in this way, but the disaster of November 8, 1940, when the Italian fleet at Taranto was crippled by a torpedo attack from British naval aircraft, proved that port to be no longer a safe one.

How many cruisers Italy has in service is uncertain. Not more than two, and probably only one, of the heavy 10,000-ton type have survived the hazards of war. There may be seven or eight of between 5,000 and 8,000 tons; and in addition, several of the twelve new fast ships of the Regolo class, of 3,362 tons, are believed to have been completed. One of them was torpedoed and probably destroyed by a British submarine not long ago.

When the War began the Italian Navy possessed a strong force of destroyers and seagoing torpedo-boats, but losses in these classes have been very heavy. In the three weeks preceding the fall of Bizerta and Tunis at least eight were disposed of by the Royal Navy and Allied air forces. It is question- able if more than 60 could be mustered to meet an invasion threat, so many having been uselessly expended in escorting Axis convoys to Africa.

There are, of course, the small craft which we should class as motor torpedo-boats and motor gunboats, but which the Italians refer to as M.A.S.—an abbreviation for motoscafi anti-sommergibili, or anti-submarine launches. These are extremely primitive craft in pre-War days, boasting that they would accomplish marvels in the way of torpedoing enemy warships. In practice they proved a sad failure. But, even though the greatest bravery was shown by Italian officers in abortive attacks on the harbours of Alexandria, Malta, and Gibraltar, how many of them still remain at the enemy's disposal it is impossible to say, as they can be built very rapidly—possibly a hundred.

ITALIAN SUBMARINES NUMBERED OVER 100 WHEN WAR BEGAN, BUT LOSSES HAVE PROBABLY REDUCED THIS FIGURE BY AT LEAST HALF. SOME OF THE LARGER ONES ARE BELIEVED STILL TO BE OPERATING OUTSIDE THE MEDITERRANEAN, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE U-BOAT PACKS; BUT THERE SHOULD REMAIN AVAILABLE A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE RECKONED WITH AT THE ATTEMPTING A LANDING ON ITALIAN SOIL.

For submarine operations, however, the Mediterranean is not an ideal sea, as the water is unusually clear and the weather is often bright. At this time of year, too, the hours of daylight are so many that an additional handicap is imposed. In such circumstances the remarkable achievements of our own submarines are more than ever to be commended; but up to now the Italians have not shown themselves to be capable of such feats.

It would seem, therefore, that any serious naval resistance to an Allied invasion of Europe from Africa is scarcely to be feared. Should the Italians at last take courage in their hands and send their entire fleet out to do or die, no one (we may be sure) would welcome the decision more warmly than Sir Andrew Cunningham.
Air Force Girls Lend a Hand with the Sea Balloons

W.A.A.F. PERSONNEL IN BALLOON COMMAND are doing a front-line job. These airwomen help to keep our sea balloons aloft, for among their many important tasks they service the barges and drifters of our water-borne barrage. Daily rations for the men aboard the barges have to be weighed and checked, and then the ration-vessel sets out for the balloon boats. W.A.A.F.s are here seen loading ration-containers on to a drifter of the sea balloon fleet.
Gentlemen, a Toast: The Charwomen of the Sea!

Prepared for the Admiralty by the Ministry of Information and published by H.M. Stationery Office. His Majesty's Minersweepers is a well-illustrated ninety-nine booklet describing the work of that great fleet of little ships which clear the seaways of the deadly "fish" strewn with such indiscriminate devilry by enemy planes and ships.

Charwomen of the sea: it is a well-chosen description. In every town and city those hard-working women, the "charls," are "up with the dawn, sweeping and cleaning passageways before their betters are abroad. Most people take their work for granted. Few know how they live; few even see them, save perhaps for a glimpse of a Johnson carrying her bonnet as she departs. They are sturdy, weather-beaten and good-humoured. Rain, hail or snow finds them at their task; and when there is a blitz the heart goes out of a "jost." To continue the quotation from the official account of His Majesty's Minersweepers:

Like them, the minesweepers are as undeterred by blizzards as by borrows and they have a spirit and tradition of their own. They are seen by few outside their own calling; for by the time the big ships are due their sweeping is done, their gear packed, and they are under steam for home.

Over twenty-five thousand men are now engaged in the Minesweeping Service of the Royal Navy, and every month new ships go from the yards to join those which have been sweeping since the War began. Fleet sweepers and trawlers, paddlers, motor-minersweepers, whalers and drifters have been and are engaged in continuous sweeps, making the channels safe for the convoys and the ships of war. Most people seem to think that minesweeping is confined to the English Channel, but in fact these handy men of the Navy have cleared up many a minefield in the Mediterranean, off the coast of Persia, in the waters of Australasia, in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. In Arctic waters, too, they have provided a safe and continuous sweep for the convoys proceeding to Murmansk. It is impossible to calculate the value of their service; they have caught and denoted thousands of mines, any one of which might have blown a ship to pieces. Every minefield cleared is a battle won.

Headquarters of the Minesweeping Service, a stone's throw from their sweeping grounds, or returning to port after a stiff spell of duty. They are seaworthy little vessels of steel construction with high bows, with a length of about 140 ft., and a displacement of between 200 and 300 tons. At sea they are just numbers, but in harbour they display their names in white letters on their hulls. Many of them have distinctive badges; many have a swastika painted on their funnel, indicating a Nazi plane brought down, while the tally of mines destroyed is kept by chevrons and stars. H.M.T. Rolls Royce holds the record at present of over 150 mines to her credit.

The larger and faster of the minesweepers operate with the fleet; and their increased armament enables them to undertake escort and anti-submarine duties when they are not actually sweeping. Recently one of them rammed and destroyed a German submarine in Arctic waters, and when H.M.S. Edinburgh was torpedoed in May 1942 three of the Halcyons—a type of Fleet sweeper, having a displacement of some 800 tons, a complement of 80, and a speed of 17 knots—put up a spirited fight which will live in the history of the Service.

The Flag Officer in command had given orders that they should retire at full speed under a smoke screen if attacked by surface-craft. These orders never reached them. When the Edinburgh was hit, instead of turning away they turned towards the enemy destroyers, "going in like three young rivetless ship built for the Royal Navy, her construction being entirely welded. Then there is the Bangor class of 20 or more ships, which have a displacement of about 700 tons, and a main armament of a 4-inch gun forward and a pom-pom aft; their complement is about 80.

Yet a third class of Fleet minesweepers is the Albrighton, consisting of 20 ships built under the emergency programme of the last war, and launched between June 1917 and August 1919. Their displacement is 710 tons, and their speed is 18 knots. They have a complement of 73, and are armed with a 4-inch gun piece. They are the only coal-burners left in the Royal Navy: hence their nickname of "Smoky Joes."

In the annals of minesweeping "Operation Dynamo" stands out as one of the most amazing achievements of the little ships. "Operation Dynamo" was the evacuation of Dunkirk. The Smoky Joes were there, the paddle-sweepers and the drifers.

The senior ship of the paddle-sweeper flotilla, the Sandown (Commodore K. M. Greig, R.N.), was bombed repeatedly on every passage across the Channel, but was never hit. She displayed her good fortune to their mascot, a dachshund who became known as "Bigproof Bella." But two other ships of the flotilla were not so fortunate. The Gracie Fields sank on her second trip, and the Brighton Queen sank after striking a wreck on her first return passage. As she went down into the water, one of the flotilla, the Medway Queen (Lt. A. T. Cook, R.N.), took off all the survivors. The Medway Queen was the first to get to Dunkirk, so setting up the sweepers' record.

Another flotilla of paddle-sweepers that reached Dunkirk from Harwich, the Waverley (Lt. S. F. Harmer-Elliott, R.N.V.R.), had embarked 600 troops when twelve Heinkels bombed her from a height of 8,000 ft. A bomb passed straight through the ship, and within a minute of the order "Abandon ship" the Waverley had gone down. Lt. Harmer-Elliott was rescued after being 45 minutes in the water, but many of his ship's company perished, together with 150 German soldiers. The other ships of the flotilla, Marmion, Duchess of Fife, and Oriole, were more fortunate, doing magnificent work in the evacuation. For four days and nights their men worked without sleep, almost without food; and between them they brought 4,755 troops safely home.

Finally, mention is made of H.M.T. St. Melaneté (Skipper F. Hayward). When the Germans invaded Holland she was sweeping off The Hook, and the skipper and several members of her crew were killed by bomb splinters. Then she went to Flushing, where with her consort the Arctic Hunter she was bombed and sank by a machine-gun fire. After sweeping the harbour entrance at Zeebrugge, St. Melaneté went in turn to Dunkirk, Le Havre, and St. Nazaire. From Le Havre she took off 670 men and carried them safely to the transports waiting in the harbour. She was then there when the Lofthusa went aground. Troopships were ready to sail Skipper Hayward was told, "Although your crew are off their feet, you must sweep us out."

So at dawn the St. Melaneté and the trawler Asama went ahead of the great convoy—twenty merchant-ships packed with troops of ten fishing trawlers and the escort of destroyers. They swept from the lock gates into the open sea; then on either side of the convoy steamed it with to Britain.
Hitler's 'Secret Weapon' Was Met and Mastered

FREEING THE SEA TRAFFIC LANES. 1. This German magnetic mine—Hitler's secret weapon—dropped in the Thames Estuary on Nov. 23, 1939, was the first to be recovered intact. 2. "Bosun's Nightmare," so-called because of its tangles, was the first answer to the magnetic mine. 3. M's denote magnetic mines destroyed, and strokes seapaths cleared. 4. "To hell with Hitler," is Minesweeper Stella Rigel's motto. 5. This sweeper makes for home after being badly damaged by a mine.
MEN AND SHIPS ON OUR UNDERWATER FRONT: 1, Lt. J. S. Stevens, described by Gen. Eisenhower as 'the maddest captain in the trade,' has been awarded the D.S.O. He served in the Thunderbolt—previously Thetis—when she sank a U-boat on her first patrol, and was later appointed command to another submarine. On April 21, 1942 the Thunderbolt's loss was announced. 2, H.M. Submarine Ursula has a long and distinguished war record, dating from her daring raid on Nazi warships in the R. Elbe in 1939. Here she flies the Jolly Roger recording her tally of victims. Bars represent supply ships sunk, the oil installations, viaducts and trains denote shore bombardments, while the stars indicate gun actions. 3, Cmdr. J. W. Linton, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N., who, it was announced on May 3, 1942, was lost with his ship Turbulent. He was estimated to have sunk some 27 enemy vessels. 4, "Torpedo running, sir!" is telephoned to the captain in the control-room. 5, Gun action aboard a British submarine. 6, End of the patrol; a submarine enters port.
This Way for the Air Route Across Africa!

ON THE BRITISH W. AFRICAN COAST is the airfield pictured above, a vital link in the supply of aircraft to the African front and Middle East. Here, crated machines, shipped from Britain, are unpacked, assembled and tested before being flown across Africa by pilots who will later use them for Operations. The creation of an airfield from a tropical forest was a formidable task. 1. Palm trees fell to native workers' axes. 2. In building runways "milling" was carried in baskets on the heads of labourers. 3. Hurricane fuselages, wings and tail units being taken from crates for assembly. Two native porters on the left are carrying on their heads long-range petrol tanks to be fitted under fighters' wings. 4. Hurricanes ready for flight-testing before being hauled over to pilots who will then fly them to their destination. 5. Hawker Hurricanes on flight-test after assembly on the tropic aerodrome.

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Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright
Women Make Good as Aircraft Surgeons

That the duties performed by the women in the Services are many and varied, and often highly responsible, will be clear from what we have said about them in our pages. And here W. J. BENTLEY writes of yet another job which feminine brains and hands have learnt to do—and learnt to do well.

Now it can be revealed that on many R.A.F. stations—where pilots train for daylight sweeps and mass raids, on Master I and III trainers—nearly 80 per cent of the flight mechanics are women. They're the girls who nurse the planes, and Waafs in the servicing parties—a special branch of flight mechanics, which is a Group II trade, the second highest group of skilled tradesmen and tradeswomen to be found in the entire Royal Air Force.

Each aircraft is inspected every 24 hours, and thoroughly overhauled after it has flown a stipulated time. In the 24-hour inspection of the Masters the girls check up on the filling of the oil, fuel and supercharged oil tanks, check over the controls and run the engines on the ground, just as the men do, before signing certificates of airworthiness. At some stations a special mixed team, of men and women, is responsible for the airworthiness of each individual machine; at Master training centres all take a share and have a joint responsibility for all aircraft.

"Like the men of our group," a girl flight mechanic says, "we are divided into 'flight mechanics A,' who do the routine inspections and maintenance of air-frames and undercarriages, and 'flight mechanics E,' who are responsible for inspection, starting and running of aero-motors." When girls first arrived at one station a few months ago the men did all the work, but the girls have now taken over an equal and independent share under the N.C.O. gang-leaders.

On that station the other day I saw a girl fitting a new filter to a Pratt and Whitney Twin Wasp motor, while another was fitting new plugs—a very different job from changing the plugs of a family car! Another girl at work on the Kestrel motor of a Master I was fitting new H.T. leads, while two girls together were shortening the jack on an undercarriage leg because the mechanism was not locking properly. Their job had to be done with the utmost care, for a crash-landing would otherwise result.

Official opinion has been against the use of girl flight mechanics on operational stations, as it was felt they would not be able to stand the irregular hours. Few of the girls knew anything about engineering as "civvy street." One met had been a dressmaker, another a housekeeper; one a shop assistant, another an armament inspector. As recruits they were given a psychology test before beginning the course of training; and though they do not have to fly on Operations, they nevertheless do have to fly on occasion.

All R.A.F. flight mechanics, men and women, must expect to fly in aircraft for which they have signed certificates of airworthiness. The flying instructors of the stations take them up and can explain to them anything slightly awry in the performance of the machine better than they could do on the ground.

There's a team of flight mechanic "A" girls fixing on their parachute harness now before going up. They wear flying helmets and seat-type parachutes are attached over their blue overalls.

Air-screws of the planes are swung by girls, others hang on to the tails to keep them down, and girls, too, remove the chocks in professional manner.

The spirit of these ground crews is perfect. They get little glory, but they love their work with a craftsman's pride in it.

And at an engineering centre not far away are other girls who make the mass raids and day sorties a success. They are the girls of a Spitfire Hospital who "nurse" broken planes.

At one of these centres 150 girls—ex-domestic servants, cleaners, and housewives—have become skilled nurses for damaged fighter aircraft.

When you hear on the radio that "two of our fighters were damaged," or that "the pilot's machine badly shot-up, returned safely"—these are the girls who bring the aircraft back into commission again, all in two hours.

All the girls working on this scheme are expert aircraft surgeons, though none has been at the factory more than 10 months, working on a scheme suggested to the Ministry of Aircraft Production by Lord Nuffield. They work so swiftly that a "fly-in"—a machine badly shot-up but capable of being flown—is usually in the air again on Operations in a matter of hours.

Sometimes the machines are "ferried" in, but often a Spit or a Hurricane is flown in from its squadron by the pilot himself. "That's why we can feel we really are helping the pilots," one of the girls explained, as she looked up from a riveting job in the cockpit of a Spitfire Vs. "When the boys come in here and tell us how they escaped with their lives after getting over the target, and so getting badly shot-up, it's all the incentive we need to get those planes back into action again as quickly as possible."

As each girl finishes her job it is wheeled outside, and an R.A.F. test-pilot takes it up for fault-finding. Cynics might think that he risks his neck by having to fly once-damaged aircraft that have been mended by women.

But there is striking proof how well these girls keep the Spits and Hurricanes in the air. You see, as the test-pilot See the factory a slim girl standing at the far end of the field. She is easily identifiable in her white linen suit. She is the checker. In her book have to go details of all the defects spotted by the test-pilot, and which must be put right before the machine is flown back to the Operational station. In her book there are barely four pages of complaints in the course of the whole ten months. That's proof.

W.A.A.F. FLIGHT MECHANICS are doing splendid work for the R.A.F. in Flying Training Command. The safety of our pilots depends to a considerable extent upon the skill and care of these airwomen. They check the filling of fuel and oil tanks, etc., and finally they fly with the pilot to test the machine which they have serviced. Here some of them are hard at work on a trainer.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright PAGE 782
Second to America's General Eisenhower in command of the armies of the United Nations in the Mediterranean basin, General the Hon. Sir Harold Alexander served in France for the greater part of the last war, receiving the D.S.O., M.C., and the Legion of Honour. In this War he was in command of the last British forces at Dunkirk, and won deserved renown for his masterly leadership in Burma two years later. Then as C-in-C Middle East he launched at El Alamein the great series of victories which was crowned on May 7, 1943 by the Allies' triumphal entry into Tunis and Bizerta.
Nature Aided the Nazis in Tunisia

Through April and into May the great battle of the Tunisian " box " went on, as Von Arnim strove desperately to avoid being thrown into the sea. To the untutored the Allied progress seemed disappointingly slow, but these photographs show a countryside most admirably suited for defence by a determined adversary. American M-4 tank destroyers, a new Ford product representing an improvement on the 1-ton Tiger tanks, knocked out by gunners of the 1st Army, litter a Tunisian battlefield. Yet they were " invincible "!

Hard Was the Way Up Longstop

Barren mountain slopes, crags and precipitous gorges, forbidding heights towering above the plains—these are the main characteristics of the rocky wilderness whose conquest has demanded such a toll of human life and labour. Dazed by a glance at the landscape seen by this machine-gunner perched above Baitou (3) but on Longstop Hill, the black ridge in the middle distance, the enemy line encroaches. A craggy crest above Keflina just captured by one man (4). Churchill approaching Longstop (5). So rough was the country that supplies had to be taken on mules (6); the village is Charouch.
So This Is Tunis

When on the morrow of victory, Alexander's men go sightseeing in Tunis, what do they find? A city where the crust of modern French culture is pierced by such relics of Roman rule as this aqueduct (1), where the voice from the minaret calling the Moslem faithful to prayer (2) stills the noise of Oriental bazaaars (4), a city of palm-lined avenues (3) and of close-packed homes of Arab and Jew in the native quarter, dominated by the great Mosque of the Olive Tree (5).
by Hamilton Fyfe

I must confess to a prejudice. It is a prejudice against women in uniform. Very few of them seem able to wear it is a matter of course. Far too many have their frilled or flounced gowns or suits or frocks or flounced or frilled—man means it looks absurd under a Service cap. Make-up on the face of a woman in uniform suggests the chorus of a revue. Indeed, I think I agree with a friend of mine who says that with rare exceptions they look like chorus girls or else like schoolmarm. Uniform destroys any distinction or personal charm a woman may have. If she is dressed as a man, and it appears to bring out and emphasize all her less attractive points—in particular, ugly legs.

But when I read a book like Wings On Her Shoulders (Hutchinson, 8s. 6d.) I feel I have to take all that back. I feel that my prejudice is misplaced. I am moved to admiration and gratitude for the work women in uniform are doing, by the way, the photographs of them by Cecil Beaton are first-rate. The book is about the Women's Auxiliary Air Force—I suppose they must be called W.A.A.F. I dislike the term as much as most of them (I believe) dislike it. I have seen lips curl and eyes flash at the query, "Do you prefer the Waafs to the ATS or the Wrens?"

Mrs. Bentley Beauman, the author, was once Woman Editor of The Yorkshire Post; she has put her book together with journalistic skill. It isn't literature, nowhere near it. Yet it can't really be a godsend to a historian writing a hundred years hence. For it isn't only about what the Waafs do in uniform; it throws light on the social, intellectual and economic standing of women generally at this present time. Take the matter of pay, for instance. The lowest ranking officer gets 7s. 10d. a day.

This brings her approximately £12 a year when income-tax has been deducted—or £11 a month. In addition she has allowances amounting to about 2s. a month. Her mess bill might be £2 10s. without; she has paid it she has £2 13s. over for all other personal expenditure. As her uniform grant does not cover the cost of an officer's outfit, with tailors' bills rising, part of this has to go to pay the difference in the first month's pay the commission is remissioned. It has provided her own amusement, has private money or friends in the R.A.F., she is well off. Otherwise, with a 18-inch war wheel she must argue that all work doesn't necessarily make a dail dog; and if her mind runs in financial channels, there is always the thought that she may some day become a Squadron Officer at 19s. 4d. a day and allowances.

All Waafs now get a hot, well-cooked dinner in the middle of the day if they are at a big station or in camp. Earlier on, their meals were not well arranged. Landladies at billets were paid 10d. a day for lodging and attendance, 9d. for breakfast, 8d. for lunch, 9d. for tea and 8d. for dinner. The airwomen got 1s. 2d. a day for their dinner at N.A.A.F.I. cantines, which were supposed to supply meat, two vegetables and a sweet for 11d. "Wine? Be 3d. for a cup of tea and bun. But practice was not so good." Drawing rations and being fed from the station kitchen makes a lot of difference.

The Waafs are, I suppose, the most popular of any women in the Forces. Formed by Royal Warrant on June 28, 1939, there were 48 companies in being when, a bare two months later, the outbreak of war necessitated an immediate call for those in waiting. As soon as a rush was made to join some 20,000, a B.B.C. appeal for recruits had been put on the air. The Director at Adastral House, London, was told a policeman wanted to see her. She had him in.

"You can't do this sort of thing, ma'am," he said.
"What sort of thing?" she asked.
"These war work, ma'am," he said.
"What women?" she asked.
"These women queuing up at the stations," he said.
"Oh, that's all right. I don't worry about that. I've got perfectly good recruiting staff to cope with them."
"But have you seen them, ma'am?"
"No, why?"
"Well, thousands of them. There's a queue stretching right down Kingsway to the Strand, goodness knows where it ends! We can't keep them waiting all day."

So all who were any good were enlisted. They were not always welcomed. "Old-fashioned officers of misogynistic outlook said rather rudely nothing would induce them to have any sort of women hanging around their station, in uniform or out. Other officers thought the Waafs couldn't be put in charge of their wives," but war did not allow such happy family parties. "However, the system was for some time so informal that didn't matter much. The women agreed to certain conditions, but it was a gentleman's agreement. If they agreed to break it and go off, leaving their uniform behind them, they could not be siged in the civil courts, nothing could be done to them. Nothing but the minor punishments of fatigue and stoppage of privileges could be imposed if they were absent without leave. Desertions in the first months of war were serious.

Now conditions of service for women are like those for men. This is how a persistent offender against discipline is dealt with: Sergeant. Evidence is that she came in late after a dance, and when asked what had happened, said, "Shut up, it's none of your business," and threw her pass down without waiting to be booked in, and went out of the Guard Room bashing the door. She commands has her own view of the case. She thinks there is a boy friend in it. The offender has been very difficult late. I can't do anything with her." Having been on the charge sheet for the third time in a fortnight, she is given seven days' minor punishment, which means that after work she must report every hour at the Guard Room, not be allowed to leave camp or go to any entertainment, and be given no fatigue such as cleaning out wax rooms or scrubbing floors.

On the whole, women officers are probably rather more sympathetic to women in the ranks than men are inclined to be. One Wing Officer, asking for names of any who were suitable for commissions to be sent in, added: "And send ones who are kind." Mrs. Beauman remarks drily that sympathy and efficiency had sometimes been regarded as awkward bedfellows." Men often do take that view. Women have done very useful work in proving a mistaken view.

As for the pluck and dogged persistence in sticking to duty when in peril of death that many of the Waafs have displayed, these qualities men gladly and fully recognize. Among the awards for gallantry it is hard to pick out any particular cases. Here are three:

When enemy bombers heavily attacked a R.A.F. Fighter Command Station, Sgt. Turner was the switchboard operator and Cpl. Henderson was in charge of a special telephone line. Bombs were falling around the building, but both airwomen carried on with their jobs, although they knew there was only a light t of over their heads. When the building received a direct hit both continued working till it caught fire and they were ordered to leave. Cpl. Robins was in a dug-out which received a direct hit during an intense raid. A number of men were killed and two seriously injured. Though dust and flames filled the shelter, Cpl. Robins immediately went out to the assistance of the wounded. She displayed courage and coolness of a very high order in a position of extreme danger.

An aircraft crashed near W.A.A.F. quarters. Cpl. Pearson rushed out and, although the aircraft was burning, and she knew there were bombs aboard, she stood on the wreckage, tossed the pilot, who was stunned, and assisted him in getting clear. While he was on the ground, a 120-lb. bomb went off. Cpl. Pearson shielded herself on top of the pilot to protect him from blast and splinters. Her prompt and courageous action undoubtedly helped to save the pilot's life.

Yet many who set such magnificent examples of "stickling it" are what would be called "just ordinary girls." One, for instance, turned up on a wet morning with an empty stomach and an empty purse. "If I hadn't had my raincoat gone astray, " and I can't get my nice new uniform wet!" Others were heard screaming after a bad raid which they had borne very well. They were afraid not so much of the bombs that were dropping as of the mice in their impromptu quarters! Now, if they had been Nazi mice!

Cpl. PEARSON, E.G.M., whose heroic action is told in Wings On Her Shoulders, reviewed in this page. Her war is by Dame Laura Knight, R.A., officially commissioned in 1940, is here reproduced.
From Italian Prison to the Free Air of England

HOME FROM ITALY. Some four hundred repatriated British prisoners arrived in the hospital ship Newfoundland at a West Country port on April 23, 1943. 1, Women of the British Colony in Lisbon proffer cigarettes to our men en route for England. 2, First men ashore. 3, Capt. Frame, of Glasgow, captured at Tobruk, enjoys his first impressions after landing. 4, A wounded accordion player leads the singing on the upper deck as the ship comes alongside.

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Training Tank Captains for the Coming Battles

Cadets of the Royal Armoured Corps are trained at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, to become the best tank officers in the world. Above are illustrated some of the tests they have to undergo: 1. Negotiating a rope bridge at tree-top level. 2. Jumping test in parachute-fighting training: a 15-ft. drop. 3. Scaling a 30-ft. wooden "cliff" by means of small hand-and-foot holes. 4. A stomach traverse on double ropes slung between two trees. 5. Learning to recognize salient features of tanks from true-to-scale models.

Photo: Central Press
THE WAR IN THE AIR

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

It seems a far cry back to the days when our air power appeared to be insufficient to stem the tide of Axis domination. Yet only three years have passed since we were fighting odds of 30 to 1 against us in Norway, seven to one against in France, four to one against in the Battle of Britain. Then there were but three machines for the defence of Malta—three Gladiators nicknamed Faith, Hope, and Charity. "And the greatest of these is charity." I am not sure that "Charity" was the greatest of the three Gladiators in Malta, but I do know that not Mussolini, nor Hitler, nor Kesselring, the tactical general of the two dictators who was personally responsible for the tremendous air assault upon the Mediterranean island, betrayed charity.

Now the scales have turned. The R.A.F. is a greater air force, measured in the number of our aircraft, than the Luftwaffe. When the relative quality of the aircraft of the two air forces is taken into the account, the power of the R.A.F. is even greater than is indicated by its numerical superiority. But the R.A.F. is not the end of the force that the Axis has to face. There are the United States air forces of the Army and Navy, and there is the Red Air Force of Russia. The present disparity in air power—now so clearly in our favour—will grow and grow until the Axis forces will be overwhelmed by the weight of our blows.

There are two quotations that are particularly applicable to the present change of fortune in the air. One is from Mr. Winston Churchill's broadcast to the world on July 14, 1940. He said: "...be the ordeal sharp or long, or both, we shall seek no terms, we shall tolerate no parley. We may show mercy—we shall ask none."

And the other is from that moving poem of Colonel Macrae's, from which I take:

If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep though poppies blow
In Flanders fields.

What immense courage the British people, all the British people, all over the world have displayed! They have not broken faith during the greatest ordeal in the history of mankind, nor faltered once; although before the War their memory had grown dim and many had lost sight of the unpopular path of trying to revive it.

It is not an easy task to assess how much we owe today to the steady growth of our air power during the past three years, but it is indeed much. The great deliverance of Egypt, the absolute defeat of the Italian and German armies in North Africa, could not have been accomplished without first obtaining superiority in the air. The tank-buster Hurricanes with their two 40-millimetre guns played havoc with Rommel's tanks. Never before have such large guns been mounted to the wings of an aircraft. When one remembers that the Hurricane is a low wing monoplane with full cantilever wings, the successful fitting of these guns represents an engineering triumph characteristic of British technical skill. (See illus. p. 77.)

The pattern of tactical bombing and machine-and-cannon-gunning of the battle areas by the tactical air force of the Middle East was a perfected piece of military organization. The shooting of the Italian and German fighters from the skies and the destruction of large numbers of these machines upon the enemy aerodromes displayed the pertinacity of the British fighting spirit. The large-scale operations of the Middle East strategic air force upon the ports, communication lines, and industry of the Mediterranean Axis-held zone was a clever dovetailing of the use of air power to prepare the way for conquests yet to come. Indeed, it is possible to say that the successful outcome of the surface fighting in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia was pre-determined by the air planning of Air Chief Marshal Tedder, operating in concert with his colleagues of the British Army, Generals Alexander and Montgomery, and later with General Eisenhower of the American Army. The great victory in Africa was the work of a team. The one-man band of Rommel could not stand up to that team, nor could his ultimate successor Von Arnim.

Our great increase in air power, effected during the course of the actual War, will be recorded by historians as perhaps the greatest feat of industry the world has ever seen. For we have had to build up our strength in the air at the same time as we have had to expend it upon defence and offence. For the successful balancing of aircraft output and aircraft expenditure we have to thank the team of air experts working immediately under the direction of the Prime Minister. It has been rather like the private financial budget of a prudent householder, who, having the wisdom to work and save, has yet been able to spend wisely in order to improve the conditions under which he lived.

Every Plane We Can Turn Out Needed to Win the War

It has not been accomplished without a tremendous effort from the aircraft industry. And it has not been done without complications. We have several aircraft companies asked to resign their positions in favour of Government-appointed directors; controllers have been appointed in other cases; in one case, the Board of the company, the shares of a company have been taken over entirely by the Government.

Various opinions have been expressed upon the application of the powers which war production has conferred upon the control of the Government. I do not propose to add anything to what has been already said elsewhere upon this subject but this: Now that this country is the great power in North Africa, and its advent has not ended its end, we and our Allies face the task of reducing the fortress of Europe which stands embattled in the hands of the two ruthless dictators and their slave-driving minorities. However fortunate we may continue to be in action, there can be no doubt that the most difficult task of all lies ahead. If we are to achieve success with the least loss in life, and in the shortest possible time, we shall have need of every aeroplane we can turn out to enable us to reach the walls of Fortress Europe and destroy that fortress. We have mustered, and the time when these two men must take account of the air pressure against the Japanese, which already has saved the Hawaiian Islands and Australia from invasion.

To achieve so much we must have the greatest possible output of aircraft. Nothing can be permitted to stand in the way of the achievement of our object of producing the biggest obtainable number of aircraft in the ensuing months. Now that we have achieved superiority, it must be kept at all costs. To the speeding-up of output it is imperative, to make allowance for a possible increase in aircraft losses when our assault upon Fortress Europe commences.

We are fortunate in having the Commonwealth Joint Air Training Plan to give us the opportunity to train airmen who range over the world free from enemy interference, where rationing is less onerous, and where changes of climate will improve the physical tone of their growths of tomorrow.

Looking back along the years of war, we can marvel at the roughness of the way we have trodden to reach our present happier position in the air. Looking ahead, we have every reason for confidence, for air power has been demonstrated to be the factor essential to military victory; and air power is now almost overwhelmingly in our hands. The power that blasted the enemy out of Africa is seeking fresh fields to conquer.
HAWKER TYPHOON. First officially-released photographs of which are seen above, has had many successes against the Luftwaffe. On April 29, 1943 it was stated that these aircraft had destroyed 48 enemy aircraft since the beginning of the year. 1, Typhoon in flight and (2) on the ground. It has a span of 41 ft. 7 in., an overall length of 31 ft. 11 in., and a 2,000-h.p. Napier Sabre engine giving a speed of over 400 m.p.h. Armament consists of four 20-mm. Hispano cannon. 3, Black-and-white camouflage distinguishes it from the F.W. 190.
Brave Men of the Air: Some Recent Awards


L./A.C. J. A. SKINGSLEY, awarded D.F.M. for throwing overboard a blazing oxygen bottle, thus saving his plane from destruction.

F./Sgt. KEEN, D.F.M., awarded C.G.M. for repairing damaged radio when his plane was hit. He was badly injured.

Sgt. Air Gunner D. SMITH, awarded D.F.M. for trying to save a comrade's life by parachuting from blazing bomber. He was made prisoner.

Sgt. L. PARISH, posthumously awarded G.C. for attempting to save a passenger's life in a burning plane in the Sudan.

Sgt. D. NABARRO, aged 31, awarded the first "pooled medal," the D.C.M.—formerly a military decoration, but since last Jan. open to all the Services.


F./O. D. GREAVES (right) and 2nd W./O. F. ROBBINS, awarded D.F.C. As pilot and observer they flew together and cooperated in the destruction of 3 enemy planes. They are seen with an improvised gramophone in N. Africa.

F./Lt. J. LE ROUX, awarded a bar to his D.F.C. for courageously destroying 5 enemy planes. He has also successfully attacked shipping and ground targets.

Act. F./Lt. E. H. GLAZEBOURK, R.C.A.F., awarded D.F.C. for displaying outstanding leadership in many sorties over Sicily and in heavy fighting over Malta. He has destroyed three enemy aircraft.

F./O. E. L. MUSGRAVE, R.A.A.F., awarded D.F.C. for successfully bombing an enemy merchant ship in the Channel despite heavy opposition. Although his plane was damaged he managed to fly it to safety.

F./O. D. IBBOTSON, R.A.F.V.R., awarded D.F.C. for destroying seven enemy aircraft during the W. Desert campaign. His keenness and determination have been an inspiration to all with whom he has worked.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; T. C. Probst. D.3 by Mirror, News Chronicle
APPLE BLOSSOM IN KENT, appearing a month earlier than had been known in this orchard for 30 years, surrounds these oasthouses in pink and white clouds. So fine a display should portend a record apple harvest. Tests in drying English fruit last season proved that colour and flavour of apples, pears, etc., could be perfectly preserved. Further tests are to be carried out this year. Oasthouses in which for years malt and hops have been dried are suitable for drying the fruit.
This Strike Was a Gamble with Men’s Lives

"The Russian man in the street," cabled Harold King, Reuters’ Special Correspondent in Moscow, on May 4, "is somewhat taken aback at the thought that half a million men could abstain or even threaten to abstain from work in a vital industry in the middle of the War. This reaction to the American coal strike found worldwide expression. What lies behind the strike?"

This article should help to provide an explanation.

They’re turning out the stuff in America, yes sir! The stuff that wins wars, that in brave and capable hands will win this war, sooner perhaps than some folks expect.

Planes? If you want to know just how many we are producing, you’re going to have to ask Mr. Donald Nelson, Chairman of the U.S. Production Board, airplane output in March reached a new high of 6,200; and for the first time heavy bomber production passed the 500-a-month mark. Tanks? No, not at all. In August, 1943 we produced nearly 18,000 artillery pieces, including 7,000 anti-aircraft and more than 8,000 anti-tank guns. Our factories also turned out 250,000 machine-guns and more than a million rifles and sub-machine-guns. Ships? Yes! Well, March was a bumper month there, too. We put the battleship Iowa into commission, not to mention a number of smaller vessels that gave the merchant a lead of 37 per cent over February. As for merchant vessels—deliveries by the U.S. Maritime Commission climbed in March to five a day. Of the 349 major type ships delivered, 129 were liberty ships. Motor vehicle output was up by 8 per cent over February’s total, clothing production was up 10 per cent. And if you are among that dwindling majority who think that money still means something big in wartime, you may like to know that the U.S. Treasury and Government Corporations spent more than seven thousand million dollars in March on war purposes, compared with only six thousand millions the month before.

These are just some of Mr. Nelson’s figures. They make encouraging reading, particularly when they are taken in conjunction with the figures of Lend-Lease shipments announced at about the same time by Mr. Stettinius, our Consolidated administrator. But this is the bright side of a picture which has a not-so-bright reverse. On the last Saturday night in April all but a few thousands of America’s 330,000 coal miners answered the strike call of their union, the United Mine Workers—biggest and most powerful of America’s trade unions, whose president is Mr. John L. Lewis.

Why was the strike call issued? Not, we are assured, because the mine workers are against the war or politically disaffected in any way. The miners of America are held to be as patriotic as their fellows in Britain. Not politics, but an economic issue brought out the men with the cap-lamps from the pits of Ohio and Kentucky, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Illinois; that, and a complicated tissue of intense antagonisms and rivalries which for years past has been playing the devil with America’s industrial set-up.

Briefly put, the economic issue boils down to that race between wages and cost of living about which we know something—too much, indeed—in this country.

America’s miners have a hard job—though not so hard seemingly as the men working in our own coalfields, since over there the coal is got at more easily: the layers lie flat, and the miners go down only a thousand feet or so, whereas here in Britain the layers are mostly tilted and we have mines burrowing 4,000 ft. under the ground, even some way under the sea. Then in America, as in Britain, the miner’s life is a dangerous one, thousands being killed or injured every year. But it isn’t these things that the American miner grumbles about. The real trouble apparently is that, as Don Iddon, The Daily Mail’s New York correspondent, put it the other day in a highly-informative dispatch, "the men who dig coal are fighting a fierce struggle to make ends meet, and that is the simple truth."

The United Mine Workers are seeking an increase in pay of two dollars a day as to catch up with the cost of living. According to figures presented on May 6 by the coal owners to the War Labour Board (on which public, management, and labour are represented) the cost of living for miners increased by only 24 per cent from 1941 to January 1943, while wages increased 73 per cent from October 1940 to February 1943. These figures would no doubt be challenged by the U.M.W., but their spokesman, J. L. Lewis, was ostentatiously absent from the inquiry. "The latch-string is on the outside of the door," said Mr. Morris Cooke, the chairman; but John Llewelyn showed no inclination to pull it. He has no time for the War Labour Board apparently. The Board is not a statutory body, but one appointed by Mr. Roosevelt; and Mr. Lewis is opposed to the President and all his work. Philip Murray, No. 2 of the U.M.W., took his place as the head of the C.I.O., and Lewis was forced to concentrate on his job as president of the United Mine Workers. But of late he has been able to stage something of a come-back; and in company with "Big Bill" Henderson, head of the Carpenters’ Union (one of the C.I.O. organizations), the American Federation of Labour, for years the deadly rival of the more recently established C.I.O., union of the general or industrial type, he is said to be building up organised labour in the ranks of organized labour.

A dynamic personality, pugnacious and self-assertive, highly gifted in organization and a powerful speaker, Lewis has the enthusiastic, no-nonsense outlook of the miners and the miners, but many thousands more of American workers. He himself thinks he is doing an encouraging job for the President. If there is to be a showdown, it will be (he believes) the wealthy squire of the White House and Hyde Park who will take the count.

But here he has not made sufficient allowance for the President. He too is a powerful personality, and one, moreover, not calculated to appeal to the great body of Americans, white-collar and horn-handled, to the betterment of whose lot no American has been more, or is likely to be more. Mr. Roosevelt ordered Mr. Harold Ickes, who is Administrator of Solid Fuels as well as Secretary of the Interior, to take immediate possession of all the coalmines affected by the stoppage; and by 2 a.m. a few hours later U.S. troops were on guard at the pits, above which flew the Stars and Stripes. In a broadcast to the nation two days later the President revealed himself in fighting mood. "I want to make it clear," he forcefully declared, "that every American coalminer who has stopped mining coal—no matter what his motives, no matter how legitimate—he may believe his grievances to be—every idle miner directly and individually is obstructing our war effort."

The stopping of the coal supply, even for a short time, would involve a gamble with the lives of American soldiers and sailors and the future security of our whole people. It would involve an unwarranted, unnecessary and terribly dangerous gamble with our own future."

In face of so resolute an attitude it was hardly surprising that the strike was called off; indeed, twenty minutes before the President’s voice was heard on the air Mr. Lewis had given out a statement reached agreement with Mr. Ickes for the members of his union to return to the pits for a 15-day period beginning on May 4. The miners, he said, had made it clear to the U.S. Government, and negotiations for a settlement would be resumed forthwith.

So for the time being—a fortnight at least—there was a truce. But the problem itself remained—a challenge to both sides, on either side, direct America’s industrial life: a menace, only averted for a brief space, to the successful effort of all the United Nations.

E. ROYSTON PIKE
Into War's Byways Goes Our Roving Camera

Volunteer Land Corps Camps are being erected in various parts of the country. Above, a number of volunteers waiting to register at a recently completed camp at Staines, Middlesex.

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Sixty tons of A.T.S. clothing are issued every week by one hundred and fifty A.T.S. auxiliaries, storekeepers and clerks. The A.T.S. have taken over a section of a large Midland store which clothes a proportion of the British Army, and are entirely running their own organization. This photograph gives some idea of the vast quantities of clothing required. Civilian workers are busily stacking a pile of battledress to be worn by their military sisters.

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Over two tons of keys were recently collected by the Gas Light and Coke Co. in a salvage drive. Among the 150,000 brought in were keys of every shape and size. This girl examines a giant specimen from the vast pile.

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Plaque to U.S. Airmen, Lt. H. D. Johnson, D.F.C., U.S.A.A.F., sacrificed his life last Nov. when he crash-landed his plane on a football ground to save civilians living in Edward Road, Walthamstow. A piece of the plane's propeller mounted in a glass case was unveiled at the scene of his sacrifice on April 4, 1943.

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School for River Firemen at Cheyne House, Chelsea Embankment, teaches men of the National Fire Service how to combat river fires during heavy air bombardments, a task which calls for considerable skill and courage. This fire float is shown passing downstream as it approaches Albert Bridge on one of its practice tests.

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Photo, Planet News, L.N.A., Fox, Sport & General, Associated Press
I WAS THERE!

Eye Witness
Stories of the War

EVEN the Italians Flocked to Greet Us at Sfax

"There really isn't much to laugh at in desert warfare," says Clifford Webb, War Correspondent in Tunisia of The Daily Herald (from which this story is reprinted). But he encountered amusing incidents that lightened the grimness of the general scene preceding and during the 8th Army's triumphal entry into Sfax on April 10, 1943.

Four or five hours earlier I had crouched in a ditch just off the road between Mahares and Sfax, while the enemy hurled across the last 500 yards all his rear-guard defence before being nosed out of this important harbour town and sent running by our spearhead force.

The delay between the enemy's withdrawal and the actual entry into Sfax was due to the discovery of a minefield. It stretched across the road and effectively barred the way to all traffic until the sappers went forward and cleared it. While the engineers, prodded the road and road verges with bayonets, I saw the front wheels of a lorry hurtle into the air as one deadly mine exploded not far off. Fortunately, all the occupants escaped without a scratch.

An Italian officer, leading a straggling column over the field towards the road, was called out. It was highly indulgent at the request. He explained with much hauteur that he and his men had already surrendered a couple of miles farther forward, and that it was not usual to surrender twice.

British infantrymen and machine-gunners, who had successfully tackled the last German rearguard in a spirited night action, munched bread and bacon and sipped steaming tea as they waited for the mines to be lifted. The sun rose, and soon it was time for the cavalcade of battle to move off. I accompanied the triumphant parade.

About a mile outside the town the infantry debussed, formed up and swung into a march behind the leading tanks. Delighted French people, who had cowered in their battred buildings from the noise of war during the night, came out to meet the conquerors.

The ceremonial parade took the main thoroughfare to the harbour, while platoons of shock troops threaded their way through side streets and made for the aerodrome. Sfax had certainly taken a battering from the air, but there was no doubt about the genuine nature of the French people's welcome.

So hard have Rommel's rearguards been pressed they have scarcely had time to dig in roadside positions before our troops were among them. Moving columns of guns, light tanks and lorried infantry have swung off the road and into action in a matter of minutes, cleaning up enemy pockets relentlessly and pushing forward with all speed.

On Friday (April 9) there were light artillery duels at little more than 2,000 yards range, and on one occasion our gunners, rushing off the road to shoot, found that they had set up their guns right in an abandoned enemy ammunition dump.

"Any Jerry stuff landing near would have blown up half Tunisia," a gunner officer told me. "But there was no time for finessing. We just shot him out of the way before he had time to reply with any accuracy." Another incident typifying the close nature of the chase is the arrival in our lines of a German ambulance, complete with wounded.

I don't know who was the more astonished, our men or the German driver, who had no idea that that particular part of the country was in enemy hands. He climbed down from the cabin with a gesture and almost comic look of bewilderment to join the already long line of prisoners, while our medical men took charge of the wounded.

It is difficult to give you in Britain any real idea of what this kind of advance means. On paper or on the radio it is Medenine one day, Gabès a couple of days later, a brief battle at Akarit and then Sfax, and so on.

I travelled 140 miles on Saturday to cover about 70 miles in a straight line. Blown-up roads and bridges and mines were expected, and we were rarely disappointed. Charred and wrecked enemy transport, blasted by the R.A.F., littered the roads. Men who died when the vehicles were hit had been hastily buried in the roadside almond groves, their steel helmets decorating the rough graves and their names scribbled on pieces of wood.

Officers tore up and down the road in Jeeps, returning or going out on reconnaissance patrols, during which they sometimes deliberately offered themselves as targets to enemy gunners to discover the guns' position.

The manner in which the Italians have flocked over to us during the past few days has suggested mass desertion rather than genuine surrender. They amble back towards our rear positions unguarded, but perfectly happy and quite brazenly delighted that their war efforts have finished.

There isn't much to laugh at in desert warfare. But it is funny to see a head-scratching military policeman puzzling what to do with a mob of gesticulating Italian prisoners, who surround him like a lot of children surrounding the vicar at a Sunday school treat.

HOW WE FLUNG THE NAZIS OFF LONGSTOP HILL

One of the most strongly fortified Axis positions in Tunisia, Longstop Hill dominating the Medjer-al-Bab-Tunis road, stood in the path of the First Army's westward drive. Bitter fighting cleared the last German from the formidable height on Easter Monday morning, April 26, 1943. War Correspondent Alan Moorehead sent in to The Daily Express (from which we reproduce the story) the following front-line dispatch a few hours after the victory.

A blinding hot sun cleanses down on scrub, and there is a watery heat haze on each succeeding height. You tramp upward you are half-choked with fine white dust from returning ambulances and tanks, and then sweat makes runnels through the dust on your arms and face as you go higher and get hotter.

Every few yards the ground is pitted with mortar shell blast, and the surrounding grass is dead and withered—as though some disease had blighted the plants. You reach the top of each ridge only to find another ahead, and then you see the front-line infantry. They seem to swarm everywhere. This particular spot where I have been standing almost looks like a stage set. A zigzag trench makes an open suture through the

LONGSTOP, the formidable height on the road to Tebourba, was stormed by the 1st Army on April 26, 1943. Infantry are here moving up in the initial stages of a shattering attack, an account of which commences in this page. In the background is one of those incredible Churchills which clawed their way up gradients of 1 in 3.
I have been hiding myself in some of their shallower trenches, but I believe there are others that go six feet into the earth and then have a cave cut horizontally at the bottom. The Germans simply hid down there while our barrage was on, then when our infantry charged they fired their machine-guns on fixed lines by remote control. They just squeezed the trigger from below ground.

Standing here on Longstop you see all the battlefields spread out below and all the figures and facts given you back at divisional and brigade headquarters suddenly become vivid and have meaning. Straight south across the unbelievably green and flowering Medjerda Valley we saw shells bursting ten miles away. That was the battle for Wadi Ahuror we crossed last night.
I Was There!

A bridge blew up behind our troops there and now they are holding on while reinforcements come up by a detour. Ahead our fighters are patrolling lines of trees. That is the Italian-German South front. It is hastening eastward. I heard the calm, reasonable voice of a brigadier major calling for this raid only one hour ago.

As we get closer, more explosions ring out. There is a steady grumbling of bombing and artillery. That is where our tanks are advancing on German armour. They got six 88-mm. guns yesterday, one of these is already in action on our side.

We cannot, of course, see Djebl Mansour, another landmark in this campaign. It dominates the Bou Arada-Pont du Fahs valley, and the troops have that height without resistance. In the far north, too, French Goums are within two miles of Bizerta. They are either on the road about on Longstop, and from here on a clear day you almost look into Tunis itself.

In Tripoli I Found No 'Little Caesars'

When the 8th Army marched into Tripoli on January 23, 1943, the British military administration found it to be a bankrupt city in a bankrupt country. A special report (from which this account is reprinted), describes how this region of Mussolini's much-vaulted African empire is now progressing under the new management.

First, it ought to be remembered that the British military administration found Tripoli a bankrupt city in a bankrupt country—a people bankrupt financially, materially, and mentally. Public works had been sabotaged, stores had been looted, food exhausted. The colonists had been left unprotected.

And in Tripoli itself, where the upper crust of civic and political rulers had shamelessly fleed, the beaten, stumped, litless and casually abandoned Italians had taken the wild fictitious façade of Fascism crumbling in front of them.

Into this town, and facing this bankruptcy, came the British political officers. They sat at the grandiose offices. They slept in the hotels. They took over from the hierarchy of little Caesars who had been running the market garden empire of Tripoli, and watch from a motley concourse into a going concern.

It was, and is, their job to maintain order and to see that the lives, domestic peace, honours and religious convictions of the inhabitants are respected, and generally to weld, as best they can, the civil administration with the demands of the Eighth Army.

This the administration has done with due regard to humanitarianism and with due avoidance of molly-coddling. One particular thing has impressed the Arabs—deliverance from taxes. The Eighth Army have made the Arab a present of both.

I went to a tea party to meet the leaders of the Jews in Tripoli. We drank green tea with them, I learned that they are grateful and happy for their deliverance. These intelligent leaders refer to the Eighth Army as the army with which is quite a different thing from the army with cold feet.

They regard Montgomery as a kind of miracle man who brought them a prodigious well-received. In rural areas, they are looking forward to the best crops for 12 years.

The Jews are grateful for their release from Italian rule, and, like the Arabs, they are receiving with delight the progress of the Eighth Army in Tunisia. Under the old regime the rule for the 30,000 Tripolitanian Jews was that we are all doors are closed. One of the most interesting men I talked to was the Italian manager of the Tripoli brewery, now producing beer for the British troops, who is a typical deduced Fascist, and sorely felt the end of the war. But he is nevertheless astonished to read each day in the Italian newspaper published by the British the Italian communiqué—verbatim.

In Tripoli, Italian officers are forced to be left alone with their acres. They have accepted the British administration, essentially a stop-gap, short-term authority, until the people decide the ultimate fate and ownership of Tripolitania, the British can merely care for and maintain the country and the people.

Our Diary of the War

North Africa.—American troops occupied Bizerta, 2, of Bizerta, 2, Bizerta, 2, Bizerta.

Mediterranean.—Fighter-bombers from Malta attacked Ladnada aerodrome.

Russian Front.—Soviet soldiers made night attacks on Gomel, Minisk and Bratsk.

U.S.A.—American bombers entered into co-operation in French Vichy.

General.—Laval received at Hitler's headquarters.

Mediterranean.—U.S. aircraft again raided Tripoli during daylight.

North Africa.—U.S. aircraft raided Kairoh and Vila in Solomoth and Monda in New Georgia.

U.S.A.—American aircraft made 13 more attacks on German air-bombing bases in Attu.

General.—U.S.A. broke relations with Adm. Roberts; Governor of Martinique.

Mediterranean.—Announced that 15 Axis soldiers were killed in the last raid on St Nazaire.

North Africa.—Three US. bomber attacks during daylight.

May 6, Thursday

North Africa.—Admiralty announced loss of Dnepropestrovsk and four other ships.

North Africa.—Admiralty announced loss of M.Thursday

North Africa.—Admiralty announced loss of Thames. May 7, Friday

North Africa.—Tunis captured by First Army and Berveirs by U.S. troops.

Mediterranean.—Allied heavy bombers made night attacks on Magd, New Guinea.

U.S.A.—Navy Dept. announced that in January U.S. forces had occupied Amchitka, in Rat Island group of Aleutians.

North Africa.—Tebourba and Djelefeia captured by Allied troops; French captured ceded Zaghoun; naval forces shelled enemy positions on Cape Bon.

Mediterranean.—Allied aircraft made heavy attack on island of Pantelleria.

North Africa.—Admiralty announced loss of Mandan; Japanese troopship sunk by U.S. naval forces.

Mediterranean.—Over 400 U.S. aircraft made daylight raid on Palermo, Sicily; Messina also bombed.

Burma.—Announced that in Arakan there was a close-up of Japanese threat of encirclement.

Mediterranean.—Five U.S. destroyers raidied aerodrome at Babu, New Guinea.

May 8, Saturday

North Africa.—Mediterranean.—Flying Fortresses made heavy attacks on airfields in Sicily; Pantelleria destroyed.

Mediterranean.—Jap fighters raidied airfield on Milne Island.

General.—Lt. Gen. Devers arrived in London as Commander in Europe.

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May 9, Sunday

North Africa.—Organized fighting ceased in N. Africa, where six German generals surrendered in Cairo; enemy resistance continued round Zaghoun.

Mediterranean.—Allied aircraft made night raids on Reggio, in toe of Italy, following night attack by R.F.A.

North Africa.—Soviet bombers and fighters destroyed damaged 500 aircraft on airfields by night. U.S.A.—U.S. Army aircraft made five attacks on Tunis and seven on Bizerta.

Mediterranean.—Over 400 U.S. aircraft made daylight raid on Palermo, Sicily; Messina also bombed.

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Of the many books that I should have liked to write were the allotted span-thing over a hundred years rather than a mere seventy, was one that would tell the world somewhat what Britain has cost, not merely to save Europe and America, but to save civilization. It is a grand theme, but the ingrained habit of the Briton not to boost in print what he has done explains why so little has been written about it. When I managed to interest my colleague, Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, in the idea, I was happy because I had given him what is a journalist to the people's cause, would command a sympathetic audience where he might be regarded as a mere Imperialist. So I brought this book "But For Britain...." I have read his manuscript with pleasure and approval, although his thesis does not run on the lines mine would have followed; and I am glad to know that it is being published immediately by Macdonald & Co., the enterprising firm of publishers who have issued Mr. Shinwell's "The Britain I Want." If you can afford the modest price of 5s. I am sure you will be glad to add it to your bookshelves; and if not, I hope you will ask for it at your library.

When the "amenities" on which people can spend their money nowadays are so few, it is a little surprising to learn that despite the provocations the whiteness is falling rapidly. In large measure, of course, this happy state of affairs is due to the tremendous increase in taxation on赛克, the "amenity" that is not a Budget which does not put something on the cost of the working-man's pint and the wealthy fellow's bottle of whisky. There are many reasons why it is so much weaker than it used to be. As Lord Woolton told us some time ago, those who, like himself, were anxious to see some reduction in the rate of excessive drunkenness in the slums of this country twenty-five years ago, "begged and prayed for a light drink which the working people might have which would give them more pleasure and satisfaction without the bestiality that followed from excessive drinking. We have got that beer now (Lord Woolton went on); people buy it if it is done at any rate very little harmful." These reasons—and no doubt there are others account for the fact that, whereas in 1941 in the Metropolitan area, 10,999 persons were convicted of drunkenness, in 1942 the number had dropped to 7,491. Most of the other great cities, and indeed the majority of our towns and counties, show similar decreases.

A worthy vivid sidelight on the nation's drinking habits shows us the women visiting public houses regularly. "In the past the public house has been, in the main, a man's sanctum," says the Chief Constable of London, "his words are quoted in the Fellowship of Freedom and Reform's Bulletin for April; "Now it would appear that women are not only doing men's work, but are proving themselves capable of doing them. This applies to women in the Services as well as to those in industry."

Rightly enough, the Chief Constable thinks that this condition is the result of a problem which must have its bearing on future licensing legislation. Should women be kept apart from man, and separate rooms be provided for women, it asks; or should there be a revolutionary alteration in the design of public houses—these to be built with open façades, with "amenities" that the dead serious are hidden from public view, and encouragement given to make licensed premises the resort of the family as are wine shops and beer gardens in some continental countries?" One may feel a certain wry amusement from the reflection that the frosted windows of the saloon may have put there by magistrates' behest so that the people passing along the street shall not be demoralized by the spectacle of men (and women) "knocking back their mild-and-bitter...

So the Navy knows its Shakespeare....

During a recent operation in northern waters, in bitter weather, with frequent snowstorms, when the sea was covered with sludge and a steady fog enveloped the vessel, sound was heard on a British cruiser. Apparently the Yeoman of Signals had sighted an enemy vessel which might have been the Luetzow. Steam was made to clear the fog, and the cruiser steamed out thorough the storm with her guns trained in the direction of the supposed enemy cruiser, the ship at daybreak finally came out "into the clear" to find—nothing at all! After a lengthy consul- tation on the bridge, the conclusion was re- luctantly reached that what had been seen was only a shadow on the snowstorm. Whereupon, says Arthur Osbo., Armitage, Reuters' Special Correspondent, who was there at the time, the Admiral caused the following signal to be sent to the other cruisers in the squadron: "Malachite IV, Soma, line 110, 111.": When turned up this was found to be, "Come like shadows, so depart! Mr. Osbockett then proposed a toast to Admiral the Admiral, who said that during the admiral noticed that the guiding cruiser had suddenly turned incorrectly; "Haven't you turned the wrong way?" he signalled. Swift came the reply, "Sorry, we were just quickly looking up our Shakespearean sea songs". Another of the cruisers straight- way copped this with a further Macbeth quotation, "Flit forth and turn tail!" Not surprisingly the erring vessel is now known as H.M.S. Hellhound.

Never since the Napoleonic age have pamphlets had such a vogue as now, when limited supplies of paper and limited budget have forced paper merchants to use much information as possible shall be given in the smallest possible space. Among the host of pamphlets that are appearing a very high proportion are those on World Affairs, published by the Oxford University Press. Some noteworthy additions of recent appearance are Violet Conolly's Soviet Asia, and J. H. Stembridge's Atlas of the U.S.A. (Mr. Stembridge's Atlas of the U.S.S.R. in the Slavonic World last year). Over four million copies of the World Affairs series have been sold. Now the first numbers have appeared of another extremely series, the Oxford Pamphlets on Home Affairs. How Britain is Governed, by Mr. R. B. McCallum, is the first; and its companion are, to be called "The Future Population, Professor A. G. Pigou's Transition from War to Peace, and The Newspaper, by Mr. Irving Thomas, M.P. All are first-rate, but I am afraid I may have given an individual put on the back to a fellow journalist's attempt to convey a mass of information concerning the British Press to them, for I seldom how even the foggiest notion of the immense effort and enterprise involved in the production of their favourite newspaper.

With this number we have completed Volume 6 of THE WAR ILLUSTRATED. Those of my readers who are having their loose Parts bound in volume form will find in this page brief instructions how to go about the matter. As it may be that all who bind Volume 6 have already had the preceding volumes bound, nothing more than a reminder and instructions here given are needed. But I would emphasize that all loose Parts sent for binding must be free from pencil or ink marks of any kind. That is most important. And it must be warned that it is not possible to provide the best workmanship and material at reasonable prices. Compared with almost all other commodities, the value given in the bound form of the WAR ILLUSTRATED is exceptional. I am more than satisfied at the response of my readers to the final change which transformed the publication into a weekly and I am sure there are many who are using every inch of space to the best advantage. The introduction of an extra colour into some of our pages will enrich the reading matter for ourselves and will not only contain a remarkable record of events throughout the War, but will indicate the changing conditions of production that prevailed during their publication.
Arab Setting for a British Supply Base

STREET SCENE IN SOUK-EL-ARBA, a key town in the Northern sector of the Tunisian front. Situated W. of Midjez-el-Bab on the Mejerdah River and the main Bizerta line, this road and rail centre became one of our most important supply bases, feeding as it did the First Army's growing offensive in the vital Midjez-el-Bab region—the offensive which on May 7 carried it triumphant into Tunisia.