BRITAIN'S LEADERS IN WAR AND PEACE, the Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill (right) and the Rt. Hon. Clement R. Attlee, Prime Minister, leaving Westminster Abbey, London, after the memorial service to Field-Marshal the Viscount Gort, V.C., on April 11th. The service, conducted by Dr. G. R. How, was attended by high-ranking officers of the Royal Navy, the Army and the R.A.F., and by representatives of Poland, Scandinavia and Pakistan. See also page 14.
Calais After the Siege: Dauntless in Defeat

UNCONQUERABLE IN THEIR SOULS though Calais had fallen, after a fight beyond reason, the last round of ammunition expended, expressions of some British troops (1) mumbling save ich liebe dich, ich liebe dich amid the cheers of the nearby French. Enemy forces including an antiaircraft battery (2) have set the town ablaze in retribution. (3) took heavy punishment from relays of dive-bombers. See facing page.
Great Stories of the War Retold

By Rev. CLIFFORD LEVER
Author of On My Heart Too

The Last Stand at Calais

P R A Y A N T in our com-
fortable chabits just
outside Arlon was a
pleasant meal on that
lovely
May morning in 1914. Even
the breakfast seemed quite seren; despite the
rumours: "Boogeloge has fallen." ... "St.
Omer is captured." ... "The Germans
are heading your way for Calais." . . . .
and so on. We had no official information now of
how we took these rumours seriously. They were
too fantastic; they just didn't make sense!

But sense was bludgeoned into our dis-
believing minds by a sudden, shattering roar of
gunsfire. We rushed on to the veranda.
In the valley, two miles away, we could see
yellow stripes of carbide rising slowly into
the still air. And to our ears came the harsh
clattering of tanks and a blanket of
'cannon-fire.'

Into our cloudless blue sky roared a
formation of dozen bombers that began to peel
into screening attack. Another moment and
Spitfires were attacking
them. To our incredulous eyes the
air became filled with whirling, twisting,
diving, fire-spitting death. Firing
planes crashed to earth; others limped
off in clouds of smoke. Paraschutes floated calmly down. Then
the sky exploded again with an intense pattern of
'vapour-trails'; the noise of battle continued in
the air.

It was all as sudden as that! We gorged
our airfields from all directions; we seemed to
be isolated from our own action to give the
picture of a defeated nation that was taking
place or had taken place all over the country.
We could not find sufficient to relate to a
column of German tanks, men and field-
guns, asisted by spouting planes and para-
schuted snipers, were held up for a whole day
by a handful of clerks, cooks, baristas and
women. By the time the R.E.B.O., who harri-
teldorf themselves, with rations-bottles, made
the escape, the situation was Head-
quarters, and fought like veterans.

Victims of Fifth Column Snipers

The end, of course, was a foregone con-
clusion. But we denied the enemy the
satisfaction of capture. For, as the evening
came on, and scraped by the smoke from
the row dazzling farm-buildings about us,
we slipped out of our garrisons, walked west
in the darkness, along the main road that led north to Calais. In
a nearby 'crocodile' we marched the ten
miles to the outer perimeter of the town
and whishting shells and the bursting of
explosives. We found the railway-siding,
coal and dykes which formed this perimeter
sparsely marked by platoons of the K.R.B.
Our entry Calais.

We could hear the sounds of battle away
while the west of the town, and learned that
partial siege had already been laid by the
eye about two weeks before. German, Brazilian, and a few Welsh Guards who had
recruited back from shattered Boogelige had
held the west side of Calais until reinforced
by units of H.R.B. Queen Victoria's
Rifles and the Rifle Brigade. These had
held the north entrance and gone straight into
action. The main fighting so far had been
falling out of windows and
from the road-side; streams of
bullets smashing the cob-
bleas and zipping past our
crouching body; stretcher
bearers creeping along, ignoring our own
danger in the greater purpose of mercy;
water from burst mains flooding down
the littered streets—water with a pink ting as
it lapped around your feet; red-hot dust
choking lungs and nostrils. All this and,
ever the cacophony and that insidi-
ous awareness of death that blocks out
reason and leaves only a flicker instinct
involuntary action.

Pioneers Held the Inner Bridges

The trained infantry units were now fighting
bitterly—fanatically—on the inner perimeter
which circled the town, every shirking
calling claiming its percentage of life. The
Pioneers—old veterans of Mons and
more, I swear, of Maldon—intensely grided
as they held the inner bridges and stopped
house-moving tanks by the sheer size of
their Bren-gun firing. (These were running
old men who easily piled up German dead to
make fire-parapets for themselves.) Gunner
and R.E.A. now turned infantry, buzzed
away with their unfamiliar rifles. Time and
time again the Nazi broke before them.

In rear the dive-bombers , . . . in accu-
ation. They shook off, to wait until the situation
clearly. Slowly, as the terrible days and
nights vaguely punctuated this unrelenting
agony, the situation did clear. It was
impossible. You cannot fight tanks and
emergence with ever rifles, Bren-guns and
ammunition. Some rifles, especially if you are
so few in number that you cannot get any
bimby save the smashed moment of twitching
a sheep. No matter how high your
or how tenacious your obstinacy, rations that
become more and more forgone and consum-
ation that dwindles without replenishment
will make the end inevitable. Street by
street, square by square, the area of the town
held by a breath. It all is as simple—
for the Germans!

Two German tanks at one end of a street
two at the other with no tanks to oppose
innovate. We would fight a way
with sub-machine guns and grenades into the
first house of the inn, blast a hole through

THE TOWN HALL AT CALAIS with its walk-down clock tower as it is today. After the siege of 1914, the building was restored and the clock moved to a new position. It is now under the control of the British War Graves Commission. PAGE 35

[Photo: Front Page]
the internal wall into the next, and the next, and
and, finally, to find the two ends sealed off by
four concrete blocks. It was as though they were
exciting their ammunition. There was to be no replacemcet.
Vaguely they would charge, collec
tively, and periodically, with hand
bays andOften with bare fists-the
end was always the same; into the street,
Finally, to find the two ends sealed off by
four concrete blocks. It was as though they were
exciting their ammunition. There was to be no replacemcet.
Vaguely they would charge, collec
tively, and periodically, with hand
bays andOften with bare fists-the
end was always the same; into the street,

"So British ... I salute You!"

Thus the ammunition ran out. ... The same monotonous theme! If ever a broad could have been suffocated over the blazing, splendid ruins of Calais, on its scroll could truly have been written in letters of saddening blood, "We fought on until the ammunitions
and, still standing at the salute, passed out
of sight as the cars moved on. Almost before he had gone the men, British
and German alike, dropped down to the hard
coffins of the square. As night drew near
drool clacked about them, enemy and Friend
slept side by side in the unending anguish
of utter exhaustion.

The days that followed almost began
descriptions. Long columns of exhaustion
prisoners were forced-marched fifteen kilo
cas a day through French villages whose
inhabitants stood silent in the streets with
touching hopelessness. Many of our men were
wounded, but if they could stagger
along at all they were too aid to do so. Our
major, in particular, with rough hangings
and hanging hole in his back. limping
along in a dilemma of agony through all the
never-ending hours of a stifling heat, an
angry, blistersome protestations of our
of our men and officers and
for another day's march-
then forced the Germans to send
them—finally forced the Germans to send
them—finally forced the Germans to send
them—finally forced the Germans to send
them—finally forced the Germans to send
them—finally forced the Germans to send
them—finally forced the Germans to send
them—finally forced the Germans to send
them—finally forced the Germans to send

The third day it rained a little and
rained the agony. Our men put their
eyes on the oives. The Germans were intrigued by
these and gleefully took them. In fairness
to the enemy he said that he treated that by
these front-line fighting troops, though
rough, was humaine, and the meager ration of
soup doled out to our men were exactly of
the same quality and quantity on their own. It
was later, on the fourth or fifth
day, when they were handed-over to the base
personnel, that our men left the full harshness
of bitter and gloating ennemy.

The first night after this hanging-over
of some of our men were comfortably housed
in a brickworks; too comfortably! In the
middle of the night the Commander of the
Guard had torn them out and they were
made to sleep in the storehouse on pyramids of
brick. They h{, but they could, on the
stepping stones. If they slid down they
were boosted back by the guards; if they
protested they were pushed with loaded rifles or
hanged with a rope.

Finally, in some wayide railway station in
Belgium, they were loaded into open cattle
wagons, chained so tightly that it was
impossible for them to sit or lie down. The
men of the night and the Commanding
Guard had torn them out and they were
made to sleep in the storehouse on pyramids of
brick. They h{, but they could, on the
stepping stones. If they slid down they
were boosted back by the guards; if they
protested they were pushed with loaded rifles or
hanged with a rope.

After a few weeks of this, everybody
was crawling with lice and bitten by bugs.
Our doctors firmly protested to the Camp
Commandant, only to be blindly told that it
was worth while making, any session and
that the War would soon be over and our men
would be free. It was only when someone
refused to go in and the War looked like
ending for some time longer that the
Germans got down to the problem of
the prisoner bunks and made a real job of
it.

To the Awamnt of Escape
Not all our men arrived in Poland.
A few died on the way, but more
suffered extreme hardships in the
back of German trucks; and some
were in special trains to Germany.
In a few weeks of this, everybody
was crawling with lice and bitten by bugs.
Our doctors firmly protested to the Camp
Commandant, only to be blindly told that it
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were in special trains to Germany.
Redundant Now: Not Again to be Fired in Anger?

IN NEATLY MARSHALLED RANKS hundreds of redundant guns stood默默ly just beyond Park Royal Station, Middlesex, in a huge dump stretching from Wenlock Avenue across the fields. Among them are some of the finest pieces of British artillery. In the background are the skyline and smoke of London, and beyond, the thickly forested grounds of Sydenham Castle, where the guns were once mounted on the German heavy tanks, and later used by our Airborne forces.
Slovakia Goes Gay on Year-Old Liberation Day

THROUGH THE STREETS OF BRATISLAVA, capital of Slovakia, on April 1, 1945, marched the people who for six years had been under Nazi 'protection.' The others in Bratislava and Pilsen. The morning, the first anniversary of the city's liberation by Russian troops, was marked by a speech delivered by Dr. Hantlač, Prime Minister of the Czechoslovak Republic, in one of its city squares (top), and by a procession of Slovak girls in picturesque and colorful national costume (bottom).
Invasion Anniversary Remembered by Denmark

TWO MINUTES SILENCE WAS OBSERVED throughout Denmark on April 9, 1945, to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the German invasion of April 9, 1940, and in homage to those who fell in the line of duty and those, both men and women, who worked unceasingly at the tasks of the war. On that day a war memorial was unveiled in Copenhagen for the first time. Among the many dignitaries present were the Prime Minister, the Crown Prince, and the Danish Bishop. The ceremony was followed by a special service in St. Peter's Church. The following day a large demonstration was held, attended by thousands of people, to protest against the continued occupation of Denmark by the German Army.
HIS MAJESTY'S SHIPS

H.M.S. Exeter

LAUNCHED at Devonport in 1929, H.M.S. Exeter, of 6,390 tons, mounted six 6-in. guns and was the most powerful of the three British cruisers under Commodore H. N. Harwood which defeated the German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee in the Battle of the River Plate, December 15, 1939, in the earlier stages of World War II. After this action, the Exeter was sent to the Indian Ocean, while the other two cruisers went to the Pacific. Her main armament consists of four 5.25-in. guns and her large warships were quickly stripped of their equipment and with her guns mostly removed, she was obliged to evacuate temporary repairs at Basra, British India.

In February, 1940, the Exeter was reclassified for further service. She was one of the five Allied cruisers which faced a superior Japanese squadron in the Battle of the Java Sea on February 27, 1942. With most of her battleships out of action at that time, the Exeter, with her other three cruisers, was ordered to engage the Japanese cruisers and destroyers. She was taking a heavy toll of the Japanese cruisers and destroyers when she was hit by a direct hit on her magazine; she was again engaged by Japanese cruisers and destroyers on March 7, being badly damaged as to be incapable of operation. She was then ordered to the Indian Ocean for repair. On her return to Singapore, she was again damaged by an American submarine. After her repairs, she was dispatched to the Eastern Mediterranean to assist in the Mednine-Alexandria campaign. Exeter offered to several enemy ships at the Battle of Suda Bay in the Eastern Mediterranean.
Truth About the Submarine Seal Revealed at Last

MYSTERY surrounded the fate of one of Britain's newest minelaying submarines when in May 1940 the Admiralty announced that "H.M. submarine Seal is overdue and must be presumed to be lost." Foreign reports suggest that some of her crew may be prisoners of war. The Times Naval Correspondent commented, "The mention of foreign reports probably refers to an account published in Germany and Sweden on May 6 of the capture of prisoners from a disabled British submarine in the Kattegat by a German seaplane. The German report went on to describe how the submarine was subsequently taken in tow by a German mine sweeper and, a.d.d later, how part of it was probably salvaged.

Six years were to pass before details of the loss of the 1,500-ton Seal became generally known—as the result of a court-martial convened at Portsmouth on April 9, 1946, when 73-year-old Lieut. Trevor Agar Beecroft, R.N., now of H.M.S. Victory, faced charges of failing to sink the ship to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy, and was honorably acquitted.

In evidence, Lieut.-Commander Rupert Phillips Lonsdale, R.N., who was in command of the Seal from April 29 to May 5, 1940—and, with his men, from then on for five years a prisoner of war—told how they left the Humber on April 29 in a minelaying expedition in the Kattegat and were attacked by a surface craft but suffered no damage. Later, having successfully laid her mines, the Seal was proceeding out of the Kattegat, when she struck a mine.

Tense Drama on Bed of the Sea

The mine exploded and the Seal, 20 per cent flooded, hit the bottom of the sea-bed and lay there with her bow up, at an angle of 45 degrees. Scattered about the forecastle were at once made to close a watertight door through which water was cascading. Oil and water were pumped out of the tanks, to lighten the submarine. All this, the Lieut.-Commander said, "made conditions and were increased with the physical and mental capacities of the crew." The men were diary, and passing for breath.

There occurred then a never-to-be-forgotten scene. The Commanders summoned all hands, and together, as the Seal lay overturned and helpless on the sea-bed, officers and 60 men repeated the Lord's Prayer. Eventually the mowers started again and the submarine surfaced, after having been submerged for 22 hours. Code books and other secret documents were placed in weighted bags and thrown overboard and periscopes and Asdic detecting gear were smashed. Four at a time the crew went to the coming tower for air; but some of their number were in a coma-like condition, unable to move. Helpless as she lay on the surface, the Seal came in for further attack by German aircraft. Now the engines failed altogether to respond, and when the main motors were switched on they blew up. It was impossible for any of the crew to go on deck; those who attempted it were subjected to streams of machine-gun bullets. The odds were too tremendous to continue, and the Commanders hoisted a white sheet from the bridge—but not until the first Arado seaplane had been joined by two others and it was stated in evidence Lieut.-Commander Lonsdale himself had fired at them with Lewis guns, until the guns jammed, as shown in our artist Hawarth's spirited impression.

One of the seaplanes came down close to the Seal, and the Commanders were ordered to leave the submarine and swim over to the aircraft. Finally, all the crew were taken aboard and the plane returned to Denmark, by which the Seal sank in tow, reaching Denmark only just above the bridge.

AFTER the Commanders had left the ship, everyone aboard (said Lieut. Beecroft, in evidence) thought she was in a sinking condition and would go down; and a depth-charge set in the Seal would go off when she sank. In these circumstances it did not occur to him to hasten the sinking. This goes story from the past so far brought to light, the Court was cleared whilst the judges came to a decision.

When the Court reassembled, the position of the sword, which (in accordance with Naval tradition) had lain lengthwise on the judge's table throughout the hearing, had been changed. As Lieut. Beecroft re-entered he saw the hilt pointing towards him, and with a smile the President of the Court returned the sword to its owner.

The following day, Lieut.-Commander Lonsdale faced the court-martial on charges that he had failed to take immediate action to engage the enemy aircraft that attacked the Seal, and had failed to take steps to see that the submarine was sunk when it appeared possible that she might fall into enemy hands. He also was honorably acquitted.

Of matters concerning the Seal which may still remain unresolved there is the mystery of the submarine's final disposal by the enemy. Close investigations have revealed that she was never used operationally by the Germans, but no trace of her has been found in German or Danish U-boat yards.
Caernarvon's Freedom for Royal Welch Fusiliers

THE 13TH CENTURY CASTLE was the setting for the presentation of the Freedom of Caernarvon Borough to the 6th Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers on April 11, 1945. The Battalion, now stationed in Killearn, Scotland, was represented by Col. H. C. A. Senior (left), a member of the Killearn Indian Club, and Lieut. Col. C. A. D. James (right) was among those present.
Records of the Regiments: 1939–1945

The Royal Marines

By Major W. R. SENDALL

No comparable unit of the Active Forces can lay claim to such a variety of War service as the Corps of Royal Marines. They have been everywhere, and done everything. Their badge is the Globe sphere, surrounded by laurel, awarded to them more than two years ago as a symbol of the varied service and the various theatres of war in which they have fought. They have served at sea and land, but under the sea and in the air, in every theatre of War from the River Plate to the North Cape, from Hongkong to Iceland.

General for THOMAS HUNT, K.C.B., D.S.O. * Assistant Director, War Office, Department of Public Relations

The requirements had been met, a Royal Marine Brigade and the first Mobile Naval Base Defence Organization were built. The former was the first British amphibious unit to get ashore in the War; the latter was an elaborate organization to establish and defend advanced bases for the Fleet in any part of the world.

A battle from the Brigade was dispatched, after the invasion of Norway, to form the naval forces in Iceland, and a week's work of clearing and landing made it possible to take fifteen large ships, and a month to get a convoy of the ships to the Moray Firth. Throughout the autumn of 1940 the R.M. Brigade stood by for action as the only force in Britain capable of counter-invasion role. As the autumn was about to take part in the Dukar operation, which, to the great disappointment of the Marines, was broken off before they had an opportunity to show their mettle.

Record Bag of Enemy Aircraft

The Mobile Naval Base Defence Organization (M.N.B.D.O.) was deployed in Home Defence of Great Britain—which, of course, is the world's greatest naval base—manning anti-aircraft and coast defence guns. The Marconi anti-aircraft batteries claimed a record bag of enemy planes, one Regiment shooting down 96 and one battery accomplishing 44 in 40 days, figures which have never been excelled. With the Germans mounting long-range guns at Calais, the Royal Marines mounted two great naval guns and a pair of long-range guns on railway mounting near Dover to counter them. Their two original guns were replaced by new mounting, and manned by the marines, who handled them constantly until 1944, when they fired their last rounds across the Channel in support of the Canadian attack on the Boulougne-Calais area.

Early in 1941 the M.N.B.D.O. sailed for Crete, in which the Royal Marine Brigade and the M.N.B.D.O. were engaged, in a successful demonstration of war in the Mediterranean. The work was well planned, and the Royal Marines and the M.N.B.D.O. were efficient at the highest possible levels of. In the Middle East after the heavy losses in Crete. Its contribution was, perhaps, its greatest, and in the field of training for special duties, the Royal Marines have, if not the best, certainly one of the best, units in the British Army.
ROYAL MARINE COMMANDO'S ENTER OESNABRUCK STATION In April 1945. Among the first to cross the Rhine (on 23rd Brigade was in the spearhead of the British crossing), when Field Marshal Montgomery unleashed his last offensive, they were as on this big industrial town where capture opened the way into the Hanover plain. Later, Marines took part in the first crossings of the rivers Weser, Aller and the Elbe, where they raised bridges for our armour to pass through.

A small group of tiny coral islands in the Indian Ocean, as a defended anchorage for our ships against the Japanese menace. When the Japs entered the war the A.A. batteries of the M.N.B.D.O. were deployed in defence of Ceylon, taking heavy toll of enemy aircraft in the raids of Easter 1942 on Colombo and Trincomalee.

Besides their part in the naval actions, Marines ashore helped to meet the Japanese. A tiny detachment fought gallantly in Hong Kong. After the loss of their fine ships, the R.M. detachments of H.M.S. Prince of Wales and Repulse formed with the remnants of a battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders a composite unit known as the Plymouth Argyll, and at such played a distinguished part in the last defence of Singapore.

In Burma, a small band of volunteers detached by the M.N.B.D.O. in Ceylon manned an improvised Battery of river craft on the Irrawaddy, which protected the flank of the Army during the famous withdrawal from Burma. They fought ashore and afloat under the White Ensign on the Irrawaddy, helping to make the retreat of the Army a success.

At home, 1942 saw the beginning of two roles that were to be of great importance to the Corps: the formation of the first Royal Marine Commando and the mounting by Marines of the armament of a new type of craft for Combined Operations, the Support Craft, designed to give fire support to landing operations from closer inshore than destroyers could venture. These craft distinguished themselves in their first action at Dieppe, and were used in ever-increasing numbers in every major amphibious operation subsequently. No. 40 R.M. Commando also saw its first action at Dieppe, where it suffered severe casualties attending a landing on a beach swept by German fire.

The Commando role was, of course, traditional in the Royal Marines, but the prior demands of the M.N.B.D.O. and the expansion of the R.M. Brigade into a Division had previously absorbed the whole of the Corps' slender manpower. Now to No. 40 R.M. Commando was added another—No. 41; and both these units were engaged in the invasion of Sicily, where they were the first to land from the sea, striking at coast defences on the flank of the 8th Army in a night landing that was a complete success.

**At Termoli They Avenged Dieppe**

The Support Craft were engaged off the Sicilian beaches while the Marines of the second M.N.B.D.O. were also there, their A.A. batteries being deployed first in defence of Malta during the mounting of the invasion and later in defence of the naval anchorage at Augusta, while the Coast Artillery component manned captured Italian batteries at Syracuse and Augusta. Other units were employed in the supply and maintenance of the 15th Army Group.

When the assault on the Italian mainland was launched the Royal Marine Commandos and the Support Craft were again in the van. No. 40 Commando made assault landings at Vibo Valentia, and later, in company with Army Commandos, at Termoli on the Adriatic coast, where they took part in a bold move to outflank the German line facing the 8th Army. The Marines surprised a German parachute regiment in the town of Termoli and took their revenge for Dieppe in the street fighting which followed. At Salerno, No. 41 Commando landed with an Army Commando to secure and hold the Vietri defile on the main road from Salerno to Naples. For four days they repelled attack after attack from crack troops of the German Hermann Goering Division until the main Army forces fought their way up to the rumps from the beaches. Later they suffered further casualties in another desperate battle to stem a German drive for the beach in the neighbourhood of a small village called Pignataro.
The Soldiers of the Fleet in Diverse Roles

In the steaming jungle of Burma or the icy Arctic seas the Royal Marine has to be equally at home. In tropical heat, this Marine points to the rear as a duty of a police role was enforced when a B.M. landed Aug. 29, 1944. The ship was shrouded by her fences that the crew could not get out and the gun emplacement was being used for gunnery practice.

Duty at the gate of headquarters and cruisers both Marines with the Russian enemy through the death of five thousand men, joining guns on the British and German fronts.

In the ruins of the great German batteries which dominated the Scheldt battery right the filehouse tower at Weser, where they made their battery landing on Nov. 3, 1944.
Marines, and the whole of the huge fleet of tiny craft in the “Bulldog” Squadrions, many of which crossed the Channel under their own steam—no small feat in the present day—landed. R.M. Commandos were in action ashore, their outstanding achievements being the capture of Pori-en-Bessin, the storming of strongpoints such as Langrune, Petit-Fater and Douvres Radar station, and the clearing of the river Orne valley. Later they helped to hold the left flank of the Allied bridge-head east of the river Orne, alongside Army Commandos and Airborne troops.

Many Marines were operating in the naval forces, some at the guns of battleships and cruisers, others in Support Craft which, after supporting the assault, took their place in the “Tout Line”—the line of ships and craft that covered the assault area at sea from incursions of German motor submarines, mine-laying motor boats, and other mosquito craft during the covering action known as the Battle of Seine Bay.

Many, too, were among the “frogs”—the Landing Craft Occupation Clearance units that broke a way through the underwater barriers erected by the enemy to stop our landing craft. Another unexpected Royal Marine role was the R.M. Artizans, who were put ashore by parachute or in small boats to take the heavy and medium artillery. As the Royal Navy occupied ports and the famous Mahratta was established, many Marines were employed on vital transport and communications work in the naval base organization.

The R.M. Commandos fought on the flank until after Falaise; when they took part in the advance to the Seine. After the fall of Antwerp, 4th Commando Brigade, consisting of three R.M. and one Army Commando, began planning and training for their part in the attack on Walcheren—Dunkirk—Bruges. Three weeks later they landed on our ships. The amphibious assault on the Westkapelle Dyke in Walcheren was the outstanding Marine operation of the War. Those Royal Marine Commandos landed in the gap blown in the famous dyke by Lancasters of the R.A.F., to storm the great batteries by means of which the Germans dominated the entrance.

The assault was covered by the Assault Squadron, Eastern Flank, a large Support Craft force with many Royal Navies at the guns, as well as the battleship H.M.S. Wasp and the monitors Eucharis and Roberts. The Support Craft fought an amazing duel at point-blank range with the big German guns in a remorseless barrage, suffering severe casualties but successfully subduing the enemy fire to enable the three R.M. Commandos to get ashore in the gap. One after another the batteries fell to the determined attacks of the Marines, till the R.M. Commando linked up with No. 4 Army Commando that had been the spearhead of the Army attack across the river against Flushing. With this junction the way was clear for the clearing of the beaches and the sweep across the Rhine for the final breakthrough.

Up the Rhine to the City

Later, 1st Commando Brigade was in the spearhead of the British crossing of the Rhine. No. 46 R.M. Commando was the first unit across at Wied. These Marines continued in the great drive through Germany, helping to win bridge-head across the rivers Weser, Elbe and finally the Elbe.

Meanwhile, in the Italian theatre, after taking part in the crossing of the Sangitano and Arrino, Nos. 40 and 43 R.M. Commands crossed over to the Dalmatian coast for an exciting spell of amphibious warfare among the islands and co-operating with Marshal Tito’s partisans in some hard and bitter fighting.

They returned to Italy to form No. 2 Commando Brigade, in the fierce action on the shores of Lake Como which was the prelude to the 8th Army’s final offensive, in the course of which battles Corporal Tom Hunter of No. 43 R.M. Commando won the V.C. (portrait in page 276, Vol. 9).

In the Far East, 44 R.M. Commando was engaged in the Arakan early in 1944, harassing Japanese lines of communication from the sea. In 1945 both the Royal Marine Commandos in that theatre took part in the series of landings at Akyab, Myedon and Kangaw, which brought the Arakan fighting to a victorious close. Royal Marines in their landing craft also took part in these operations. Over 900 Marines manned landing craft in the force that made the longest run in assault craft in history—up the Kangaw river to the reconquest of that city.

This very rapid sketch of Royal Marine operations during the Second World War has not paused to mention such episodes as the canoe raid up the Girode to destroy enemy ships near Bordeaux (see illus. page 623, Vol. 9), the performance of R.M. anti-aircraft batteries shooting down 3,000 enemy aircraft; the record number of flying bombs in defence of London and Antwerp; the R.M. officers with the Japanese Army and in the airborne forces; the Operation “Grapple” in the South Pacific and the R.M. teams in the Coelacanth’s memory. See portrait in page 276, Vol. 9.

DEDICATION OF MEMORIAL TO CORP. TOM HUNTER, of No. 43 R.M. Commando, the only Royal Marine to receive a V.C. was awarded during the War (by magnanimous covenants on the shores of Lake Como) while on duty in Italy, on March 12, 1945, at the R.M. Depot, Lympne, Kent, where he died of his injuries. The tribute of Eulogy is to erect a memorial to this Corporal’s memory. See portrait in page 276, Vol. 9.

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Pl. 7-4.—Naval
Past Glory to be Restored to Cologne Cathedral

In Allied air raids on Germany's third largest city the Cathedral received fourteen hits—due to its close proximity to the main railway station and the Rubensbrücke. Part of the roof of the north transept (1 and 2), with station and city beyond, a view from the south-east (3). Half of the roof had been covered with zinc by March 1946. Temporary repairs to the building—which was one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in Europe—will be effected by the year-end.
Shattering Sunken Wrecks by Depth-Charge—

Legacy of six years of total warfare, many submerged vessels present a menace to shipping today. When solving of the wrecks is impracticable depth-charges are dropped to blow them to pieces. Engaged in the clearance of channels leading to the Thames is the Shannon-registered 450-ton trawler H.M.S. Landy, here seen operating, together with a cutter, above the sea-bed hull of the minesweeper Myrtle, a 350-ton trawler which fell victim to a mine on June 14, 1940.

—Clears Britain's Obstructed Shipping-Lanes

The wreck having been located by the cutter, by means of echo sounding apparatus, fifteen depth-charges, involving 5,600 lb. of T.N.T., are prepared (1), and lowered from H.M.S. Landy to the cutter (2), from whose bows they are then suspended (3). The cutter proceeds to the boye-marked area (4) above the wreck, leaving the Landy at a safe distance, drops the charges and with a shattering roar and uprush of water (5) the Myrtle is disintegrated—a menace no more.
Life in Austria's Once-Gay Capital Revives But Slowly

All eyes turn in admiration as mounted members of the British Corps of Military Police (1) patrol past the burnt-out Opera House (seen also at 4) in the Inner City of Vienna, occupied by the Four Powers jointly. At the Soviet H.Q., are displayed (2) portraits of Lenin (left) and Stalin, with the Red Star in between. A monument of the Emperor Franz Josef I (1830-1916) still stands amid the ruins (3). Spanning the Danube Canal, which divides Vienna, this bridge (3) was completely destroyed by the Germans. Strenuous efforts are being made to speed the flow of traffic. See also facing page.
It was a year ago, in April 1945, that the first Russian troops entered Vienna and were followed on May 2 by a column of the Red Army in a takt. That was only a reconnaissance, it was true, if of an unconventional kind, and there was plenty of fighting before the capital of Austria was declared to be free. But in July, much of it was undamaged, and when, two months later, the first Allied aircrafts, led by Marshal Tolstuhin drove in from Carinthia with only a small proportion of its population known to be likely to find food.

There had been a state of rumours, owing to the fact that no official observers had been allowed to Vienca since the Armistice in 1938, and there was plenty of fighting before the capital of Austria was declared to be free. But in July, much of it was undamaged, and when, two months later, the first Allied aircrafts, led by Marshal Tolstuhin drove in from Carinthia with only a small proportion of its population known to be likely to find food.

Our little convoy of military cars had passed through the ruined industrial wilderness of the former Burgenland and over the dreary hills where Vienna is entered from the south. Suddenly we reached the Ring and there, beside the old Imperial gardens, stopped in the middle of a Viennese crowd, a little girl with an enthusiastic reception. "They are here!" was the excitement. It was an exciting sight, many times to be repeated in those early days of liberation.

The crowd flocking around us added to the sight the atmosphere of the Austrian people who had been looked on with more or less well-bred interest by Allied officers, remembering the rules against allationism.

"I have not yet been a prisoner and I could not know it. And so far I was a British soldier appeared a crowd, fixed to his conclusion, to treat him as a saviour.

They turned to us with touching faith in the British Empire, the only hope of a new civilization of the world in a way of the word. And indeed the reality was grim. This was the Piccadilly of a city which has been heavily bombed - the original damage on the Russian by 20 per cent of the whole of the Tyrolean sandstone, much of it on the German island, and finally looked by its own undercroft, was some of the pieces of the conquerors. It had been left without water, gas or electricity except in limited areas. Not all the dead were buried.

The wonder is that there was no breakdown. I remember being told at the city hall that within a week the paperwork which the military had ordered back to work, and that even the collection of rates and taxes had not been held up for more than that week. The main obstacle to overcharge was that there were practically no civilian vehicles at all.

Gradually, however, some appearance of surface normality has been restored to the people. In the coming months - many of them - the underground railway is functioning, and it is yet another year of the Viennese to be within the walls of Vienna, and the sudden appearance of energetic, but unlawful, visitors to remove the radio, some carpets, and all clothing, need no longer be reckoned as a likely possibility.

But no real assessment of ordinary life is possible until Vienna can again function as the capital of a united country. Until the country is again in peace, reconstruction and development must be attempted; even the final eradication of the attendant elements is made immeasurably more difficult owing to the division of the city into national zones. And what a work will remain to be done! A large part of the centre of the town has been torn up in the last months, and the deep has been destroyed. The industrial suburbs are largely in ruins, and only great blocks of workers' flats. Almost every public building, notably the Cathedral, will need complete reconstruction.

The Vienna Circle of Misery

Housing will be one of the first problems to be tackled. Overcrowding at present is extremely severe, in spite of a big drop in population. The crowded houses are crammed with people, living as best they can behind window boards and under leafy roofs. Luckily the winter has been bearable, and otherwise there must have been a grim toll of deaths from cold and hunger, for only a very small minority can offer these discomforts by warm clothes or a good fire. The fortunate ones are those who, in the general breakdown of civilized life, happened to be overlooked by the looters.

This misery goes in a vicious circle; as long as there is no food there can be no work done, and there is no money; and the lack of work means no earnings to buy the food. The general lack of food in Europe is reflected in the growing shortage of all essentials, and the eyes of the crowd are back to the days when they tasted the empty shops. Only in the theatres and concert-halls do they revive. The Vienna Circle of Misery is the one serious strong enough to conquer the people."

The Viennese have always liked taking life easily, and, in addition, one has the feeling that they have no incentive to work while they have no incentive to work. The occupying forces have been unable to supply the capital of Austria with anything to buy. From a haircut to household services, they can be obtained for a much lower price of food or cigarettes than for a handful of sehichs.
Japanese Submarines Towed to a Shameful Doom

From their base at Sasebo, twenty-four Jap submarines were recently swept into the open waters of the Pacific and there sunk as a result of the United States Navy's launching of the last phase of its sweeping war program. This phase of the Allied program for the complete destruction of the enemy's submarine forces is the most far-reaching of all. Only a few remaining warships are to be involved with the exception of 30 destroyers. This operation is to be completed in the course of the next few weeks among the four Allied armies—Britain, U.S.A., Russia, and China.

Assembled in a cove (1) near the formerly important base, preparatory to completing the attack, was the American assault force (2), composed of several battleships, cruisers, and destroyers. It sailed (3) unmolested to U.S. waters.

The U.S. took the U.S. cruiser which was hit by a mine in the harbor at the end of July and, after August 19, after the original attack, successfully discharged her cargo of atomic bombs. The ships took the place of the Canadians and the Germans at the head of the American destroyers dropped in this task near the U.S. Line. The A.T.W. Line.
Our War Leaders in Peacetime

MOUNTBATTEN

Born in Windsor, Berkshire, in 1900, Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander South-East Asia—was brought up in the Naval tradition. Second cousin of His Majesty the King, the son of Admiral of the Fleet the Marquis of Milford Haven, he was a naval cadet at 12, and at 14 saw action as a midshipman in Beatty's flagship H.M.S. Lion.

And keenly as ever today, whether engaged on Service matters or at home with the girl (Miss Edwina Ashley, daughter of Lord Mount Temple) he married twenty-four years ago, and their two young daughters, Patricia and Pamela, he studies naval matters.

The Mountbattens have a town house in Westminster, London; a country house at Romsey, Hampshire; and a castle in Co. Sligo, Ireland, where, before the War, they entertained the great names in the land. At his country residences Mountbatten used to shoot, fish, ride, and drive a car. He likes outdoor pastimes, but he is also keen on study and reading and spends hours perusing ever technical books.

All his life he has been making notes and committing his conclusions to writing. His friends pull his leg about this propensity, but from it has grown a number of books, pamphlets and manuals on a variety of subjects, for writing is among his favourite recreations. His notes on destroyer design are reflected in the n-cw-type bridge fitted to the Tribal class and later destroyers. Mountbatten has written on many aspects of naval and construction in his spare time. Also he has followed out several developments in naval radio technique.

Mountbatten is particularly interested in radio; ever since he passed out first in the Long Course at the Royal Naval Signal School 21 years ago it has been his main hobby. He wrote the first Admiralty Handbook on Wireless Telegraphy, and his he is constantly bringing up to date. But it is five years now since he spent any length of time among his technical books at his London house.

He concerns himself with a new subject so enthusiastically that he becomes an acknowledged expert in it: polo, for instance, at which as a player he has but limited success. He just does not possess the natural qualities for this exciting game; but having arrived at that conclusion, he studied the game scientifically and then sat down and wrote: "Introduction to Polo." His own polo did not benefit to any extent; but the book by "Mazoe" became a standard work.

When Lord Louis returns home the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews will see him, and once again he will appear at the Royal Yacht Club. Yachting is another subject on which he has written authoritatively. Meanwhile, the man who directed the war in Burma is making notes on military government and colonial administration.
Our Empire's Proud Share in the Middle East

By HARLEY V. USIL

This, the second of his series of articles on the British Colonies in the War, the author traces the vital part played by their strategic disposition in the affairs of the European theatre. In a previous article he discussed the British Empire's position on the European scene. In this article he describes the part played by the British Empire, and especially by the Middle Eastern territories, in the Near East - the Middle East and Persia - and in the Mediterranean.

BRITAIN'S LIFE-LINE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

From the very day that war was declared, in 1939, Great Britain had to face the two-fold problem of creating and maintaining an impregnable island fortress in the British Isles and in the Mediterranean, while maintaining a sea communications line from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, across the Red Sea, to Suez, and up the Persian Gulf to Basra. Both these problems were complicated by the fact that wherever Germany and, later, the Axis powers attacked, they had to be struck. Their task, as we shall show later, was made much more difficult by the fact that if the decision of the Mediterranean was lost, a radical change in her initial strategic plan resulted. But in every phase of the war the Middle East and the Mediterranean were on the strategic and military areas.
Our Mediterranean Bastions: Gibraltar and Malta

Colonies whose strategic position played a vital part in establishing the Allied Middle East defense line, especially after the fall of France and the entry of Italy into the war, included Gibraltar and Malta. San陛rico hospital ship was one of the first to arrive there, in the summer of 1943. See also facing page.
PERSIA'S CASE AGAINST RUSSIA opened with the Security Council at its November 1952 meeting and immediately became a thorny issue when the Russian delegate, Mr. Andrei Gromyko, walked out following the rejection of his proposal for the hearing to be postponed until April 16. Persia insisted that the presence of Iranian troops in the Soviet Union before March 9, 1939, constituted a threat to its security. Russia, on the other hand, claimed March 5, 1939, as the date the troops entered Soviet territory from the two countries, on April 4, 1941, Russia undertaking to remove those troops by May 8. Persia withdrew her complaint on April 15, but the Council decided to retain the case on its agenda until May 8.
I Was Chief Engineer of a Floating Volcano

The 20,000-ton transport Duchess of York, under Captain E. R. Wood, O.B.E., was en route to the Pacific when it was stopped by a Japanese submarine. During the engagement, the ship was hit by a torpedo, and the stern and part of the superstructure were destroyed.

Instinctively I flung up my left arm to shield my face, and both hands and arms became deeply pitted with scoring metal. That otherwise might have blinded me. Fumes came from the decks above, water cascaded through the hatches from the fractured fire-rooms, and the reserve tank emptied itself over the engine-room gratings.

All communication to Captain Busk-Wood in the bridge was broken—telephone, telegraph, telephones and voice-pipes. The enforced lubrication pumps were put out of action, and this stopped automatically operated the safety control and stopped the engines. Agitated voices sounded amid the plash of seawater and the dull roar of the blaze spreading rapidly. The heart of the Duchess of York had ceased to beat, and her dead body was in process of cremation.

I had no time to heed either an injured left arm or the discomfort of being dressed in a burning suit. A rapid survey had to be made, and certain emergency repairs effected, if possible.

The fire was extending rapidly and I forced my way to the main switchboard. The thing spread over the deck in chunks of debris, and tests applied to the lubrication pumps proved them to be totally useless.

Meanwhile, the attack by the enemy continued in the face of heavy defensive fire from the convoy. Three minutes after the Duchess of York had been stricken, a thunderous explosion sounded the doom of a second big merchant ship.

A further rapid survey convinced me that the engine-room and adjacent compartments were in a parlous state. I was unable to communicate with the Captain, I assumed responsibility for ordering my entire staff to clear out before the spreading fire between decks cut off all means of escape.

When all others had gone, I gave a last look at my engines, from which the life had been drained, then climbed up an iron ladder and emerged on the B-deck antenna.

Only ten minutes had passed since the bombs had found their target, but already a barrier of fire straddled the space from going forward along this deck. Looking in that direction, I saw one of my subordinates clad in a blue boiler-suit and fantastically illuminated by the flames. I shouted not to him, "How are conditions in the boiler-rooms?"

Made a Bridge of His Own Body

He bowed an answer above the roar and crackle of burning woodwork. "All lights have gone and the forced draught fans have stopped. One steam-pipe burst. I've shut off the oil supply to the funnels." He did not say if any had been hit, nor did he mention the number of our crew. Third Butcher Hughes, had made a bridge of his own body to enable many passengers to climb over him to safety. Many other heroic deeds were performed that tragic evening while officers and men strove to stem the fire with inadequate means and to save life both before and after the Captain had given the order to abandon ship.

Unable to go forward, I found a way to the open deck by means of a companion ladder aft. It was good to breathe the sea-air! For a moment or two I paused to survey the scene and then, with the utmost haste a second's warning to those of us below,

The Duchess of York had been stricken with a second big merchant ship in the foreground, and the stern of the cruiser had been hit by a torpedo. The ship was sinking fast, and the smoke and flames were spreading rapidly through the decks.
I WAS THERE!

FOCKE-WULF CONDO. CORONADO, CALIFORNIA, December 5. A German-built fighter plane, the Focke-Wulf Condor, German-built fighter plane the Germans for restoring piloting gliders in the Atlantic, is the American-built U.S. machine before the enemy in the last war of the war in 1944. Photo, Associated Press

With Dagger Division's Guns to the Chindwin

Captain R. B. G. Blackmore, 115th Field Bn., R.A., reports on the gunning of the Chindwin by the 1st Indian Army's advance from Sibrouk to Imphal in the autumn of 1944 through some of the most difficult country in the world...

The regiment was part of the Divisional Artillery of the 9th Indian Division, better known as the Dagger Division, and its commander was that Napoleon-like figure, Major-General T. W. Rams, D.S.O., M.C., affectionately known to all of us in "the Green Grenadier," "Dagger Renn," or just "Petie," and whose Bambounock silk scarf will be always remembered.

On the 1st of September the Division found itself on the edge of the Naga Hills, north of the Imphal Plain, at approximately milestone 113 on the Manipur Road; which was the jumping-off place for the Division on its great advance across the Chindwin to Sibrouk, across the Irrawaddy to Mandalay and across the Sittang to the Mawchi Road and finally, "the Battle of the Break-through," in the Pago Yomas and the end of the Japanese campaign in Burma.

Driving 8-ton Lorries at 40 m.p.h.

The Manipur Road runs from the railway line at Dimapur through Kohima to Imphal. What a road it was! Before the War it was a mere cut-track. By 1944 it was a tarred main road which curved around mountains, skirted precipices, took hairpin bends in its stride and declared to the world that the Army engineers could make a road fit for a king. Day and night, thousands of lorries streaking down the spines of five Divisional army units, food, petrol, medical and combat stores, weapons, guns, reinforcements, stores, clothes to work on the road, everything and everyone, pouring Sisters and nurses, visiting officers from other theatres, Staff Officers from G.S.C. and E.N.S.A. artists from home. All, in fact, that goes to make a modern army went down the Manipur Road.

The drivers of these "Rice Carps" vehicles were localised because rice is one of the main items of the Indian Army's food, and as a pronunciation of R.I.A.S.C. abbreviation for the Royal Indian Army Service Corps.

Into flame on the davits. The mainmast became a torch; the after-drawn and deck-plating glowed white-hot; the for'ard funnel, its paint peeled away, grew red in the furnace heat. A continuous noise was emitted.

"You clear off, Chief," the Captain said to me. "There's a boat on the port side about to leave, and you may just about make it." I wish you luck.

"And you, sir.

"I shall leave directly you have gone.

A wall of flame had advanced to within ten feet of the bridge, and small-arms ammunition and signal rockets had become ignited to give a devil's pyrotechnic display. The height in which I had been directed was full, and by another resilience that caused further delay the eastern end of the bridge fell into the sea and swam toward the destroyer a cable's length away—and the few returning to make a final attack before leaving the area, with only one of the three showing signs of danger.

It took the watchers there and a half hours to collect survivors, adrift all over the sea, while the two merchant ships joined in beacons in the growing darkness of night. Then torpedoes were lowered at them, and the crowded destroyer sped southward, leaving the shattered hulks to sink amid clouds of steam and smoke.

Then did the Duchess of York meet her fate in the North Atlantic.

Curt W. G. Busk/Wood, O.B.E. com

manded the Duches of York on her tragic voyage to India.

(courtesy of Canadian Pacific Railway

() 1948 by W. C. B. Wood

"We have seen the future, and it works!"

"I wish you luck."

"And you, sir."

"I shall leave directly you have gone."

"You clear off, Chief," the Captain said to me.

"There's a boat on the port side about to leave, and you may just about make it."

The bridge was made note too soon. By this time the ship was a floating volcano from which fire would advance directly the growing press along the bow that came the resistance of the straitened upper part. Part of that deck bulged open and were signs of fire over which we had to jump to regain the bridge later.

A few seconds later, when I looked behind, I saw that the bridge was still in place, and two lifeboats burst free, and one of them crashed into the davits. The mainmast became a torch; the after-drawn and deck-plating glowed white-hot; the for'ard funnel, its paint peeled away, grew red in the furnace heat. A continuous noise was emitted.

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Then did the Duchess of York meet her fate in the North Atlantic.
Battling With the Nightmare Roads of Burma

ON THE WINDING IMPHAL-TAMU MOUNTAIN ROAD British armour (1) presented with no great hindrance after squatters and Miners had failed to convert the all-weather track to a main supply route for 1st Army troops then closing in on Mandalay from the northwest. Jeeps and trucks bearing supplies struggled through treacherous mud of the Patkai-Yamoo Road (2). Engineers and laborers worked all night (3) to drive the Cobe Road forward to link up with the Burma Road. See also facing page.
I Was There!

There were reports of attacks on lone men and we were cautioned not to go about alone. Near where we camped we found a deserted jeep vehicle park - our mechanics got busy, and soon each Battery had a large three-tonner in working order.

We were next told that we must cut a road over the hills from the Tarut river valley near Thanon to the Chindwin, so we all became pioneers swinging the pick, or engineers blowing the rocks and big trees. It was during this period that I first saw Burmese woodsmen at work, with their elephants. Tree trunks are magnificent. They stand straight and tall for a hundred feet or more and the wood is, I suppose, as tough as any. The Burmese woodsmen tackle them as they appear to be the most inadequate weapons but are really astonishingly efficient. The axe may have a handle cut out of wood, or it may be as long as ours, and only as thick as a man's thumb, and more like a stick of bamboo; its head is a piece of tink fashioned into the shape of a cow's horn, and on the point of the horn is a small steel blade with no more than three inches of edge. Before the blow from this light-weight axe the largest tree trunk would be split asunder.

Records in Big Boulder-Shifting

The road we built from the Tarut valley over the hills to the Chindwin gave us great pride although we were responsible for preparing only a small portion of it. Our orders were to make a road without a surface suitable for vehicles up to one inch in gross weight, to move one way in good weather. There was a road already in existence, but it was so narrow and steep that we could not take the guns over it. The Engineers officers surveyed the new cut, and then all the work detailed for the week drew lists. We were lucky and drew the lot which involved making the first section of the road thirty-five miles up the hill. It was hard work, but most satisfying.

We lathered from 7.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. every day with a short break for lunch, backing the road out of a steep boulder field and throwing away the boulders. The men were large boulders, five or six feet through, which had to be moved. Since we were all engaged in a competition to create records in boulder-shifting, when we pushed one over it would go crashing down the hill, breaking even bigger trees before its headings. Fate alone determined where and when it would stop and who or what should be broken by it. We were assisted by the local Aries for the more tricky problems; they showed us how to use sacking and gaffing; and we had some exciting moments blowing huge cotton trees and solid rock faces.

After a fortnight of road-making we had another lot to move. My battery went first and we were the first vehicles to use the new cut, which we christened Artillery Road. The total distance to our destination on the banks of the Chindwin was only 12 miles, but it took us 13 hours. It was a night of nightmares. The first portion of the road, say about four miles, was easy enough. Then, when we started happening, the way was so steep that my jeep could not pull its trailer up. So we left the trailer on the road and unloaded the jeep, then jumped up and then for the big accumulators and changed gear to the top, a distance of about half a mile. The surface was clay, and the heavy dew made it so slippery that even in Army boots, straddled as they are, you couldn't keep your feet. Gun tractors with their heavy loads were washed slowly from corner to corner, and slowly we pushed on.

Half Over the Valley of Death

At one point the new cut had not been completed and we had to use the old original road. It was exceptionally steep, the road running round on a ledge which at one point was over 500 feet above the valley. The surface was a sheer face of soil and on the other side a drop of 30 feet, then steep rocky boulders going down to an invisible bottom. At this point all the gun detachments dismounted and the drivers, quite alone, took up the position of the gun, and in the face of the weight of their vehicles, against the hill. We were on the road, the other half being supposed to seem to be the Valley of Death. But they were good drivers, and they crossed the heavy vehicles and trailers and guns over a very unpleasant 100 yards of road and then on again.
Even when daylight came, after what seemed a lifetime of night and trouble, all was not well, because the road down by the Chindwin passed over a place where a small tributary ran into the big river. We had to ford this, and as it was not monsoon season the bed of the stream was almost dry; it looked easy until we got off the firm ground into the soft, silty sand. Before we knew what was happening we were belled in it, and we were rescued only with the help of two elephants and a Sikh with a small bulldozer.

Tanks versus Submarine on the Way to Tobruk

During the months of Tobruk's siege, from April to December 1941, rations and supplies were regularly sent in by sea from Egypt. Here the Matrasch Regiment, equipped with Matildas, was in the area south of Mersa Matruh, and suddenly there came an operational order for us to reinforce Tobruk's garrison. A hundred miles west of Halfaya Pass, the most easterly German position, Tobruk formed was in the sixth month of its siege.

We moved down to Mersa Matruh on September 30 by squadron, and embarked in lighters—bunt-rigged, cut-bottomed, skis-knot, powered by high-octane petrol motors. Each could carry four tanks. My troop went aboard one afternoon, spending two prepping hours running out four tanks up the bow ramps and manoeuvring them inside for quick unloading. We sailed at about five in the evening, in company with two other lighters—Nos. 13 and 18.

All that evening we changed our way slowly west. About nine o'clock we saw a flight of German bombers on route for Mersa, but they left us alone, and happily we watched the sun settle out on the horizon. The night was deliciously dark until eleven, when a large and brilliant moon came—and soon we heard the buzz of an aircraft—and soon we heard the buzz of an aircraft—two-pounder pom-poms were manned, and after ten minutes' suspense the aircraft went away. An hour or so later he came back with others, and we were bombed, off and on, all night. One bomb landed just under our stern: the little lighter lifted, the propellor raked, there was a deluge of water, and the lights went out. We were certainly surprised and pleased to find ourselves still afloat—but speed had to be reduced slightly.

On we ploughed up Bomb Alley, past Sollum, which was German-held, with aircraft always above us. Now and then we could hear the brief noise of a motor ticking over as a plane glided slowly down over our phosphor-enriched sky, then a quick whistling rush and the result of a bomb. They dropped quite well, and it was a matter of few strained planes. We were uncomfortably conscious of our high-octane petrol tanks covered only by thin mild-steel plating!

Dawn came, and the attacks stopped. All that day we went on, seeing an odd aircraft, and getting more and more interested. The area was under attack, and R.A.F. had promised as lighters could come part that part of the coast which was thick with enemy aerodromes. At 12.30 a single enemy reconnaissance plane came and had a look at us, and from then on the tension was considerable. At 1.40 the look-out reported a squadron of enemy aircraft coming up to port, very high. Our hearts sank, and I was afraid we carried the R.A.F. We knew we had no chance at all from daylight bombing, with our inadequate A.A. protection, and we also knew that one small bomb was enough to sink us.

The formation flew past us, turned, and came back. Suddenly the look-out cried: "Aircraft coming up on the starboard quarter!" and we looked up. There was our escort—twelve beautiful Hurricanes—and hastily we apologised to the R.A.F. The German bombers saw them too, and turned off and back but it southwest very quickly indeed. The rest of the day was enjoyable enough—just chugging along, the tank crews sun-bathing on the canvas hatch covers, with our escort wheeling overhead. But towards evening our fighters left.

None Left Alive on the Deck

About one in the morning I was on the little bridge, trying to cheer myself up by chatting to the captain, and watching the other two lighters wallowing along, when suddenly the lighter farthest from us fired a burst from its pom-pom. It seemed odd to us that the lighters didn't go up in the air but along the water. The captain at once put up his nightlights. "There's something over there—\(I\) think it's an E-boat!" he said. I stared and saw a dim, long shape moving across the bows of the farthest lighter, and a white light flicked from it. The signalman beside us read the message: "He's asking for our numbers, sir," he said. "What? In white light?" I asked the captain. (Our own craft signalled in blue light, I learned later.) "He's a Jerry, for sure!" I turned and told the port pom-pom to train on the dark shape. The signalman, his voice showing his excitement, said, "\(N\) No. 18 reports enemy submarine, sir. \(H\) He's going to ram!" We heard the noise of a heavy-calibre gun, quickly followed by the explosion of a shell. The other two lighters opened fire. It was then ahead of the centre lighter and lighter, and the captain told us to lie low, for it had been told to us by No. 15, farthest from us. No. 18 had altered course and was bearing down on the submarine, steady, shooting from the massive pom-pom. The gun made a helpless smile at the three streaming flashes, when it shot, and the port pom-pom to train on the dark shape. The signalman, his voice showing his excitement, said, "No. 18 reports enemy submarine, sir. He's going to ram!" We heard the noise of a heavy-calibre gun, quickly followed by the explosion of a shell. The other two lighters opened fire. It was then ahead of the centre lighter and the captain told us to lie low, for it had been told to us by No. 15, farthest from us. No. 18 had altered course and was bearing down on the submarine, steady, shooting from the massive pom-pom. The gun made a helpless smile at the three streaming flashes, when it shot, and the port pom-pom to train on the dark shape. The signalman, his voice showing his excitement, said, "No. 18 reports enemy submarine, sir. He's going to ram!"
We Battled with Exeter's Unexplained Bombs

The railway line was disrupted and important goods were delayed as a result of the bombing.

It did not take long to move the rails, then the men proceeded to clear the mud. The other two were busy carrying timber from a distant point to the site; as the line was on an embankment the soil would be too loose to hold on its own, so we would have to timber the sides as we went down.

The digging was carried out by the men working in pairs, one with a pick and one with an iron shovel, for a 20-minute spell, then the other pair took over for 20 minutes, an arrangement which could be maintained throughout the eight-hour shift. As the hole became deeper there was room for only one man on the bottom, and he threw the soil on to a staging halfway up, a man on the staging shovelling the soil away so that the ground round the shaft was kept clear.

We Decided to Operate Immediately

As we dug down the timbering was placed—planks ("runners") varying from eight to 12 feet long and nine inches by one and a half inches section, positioned vertically against the sides of the shaft and held in place by "wagings" of nine-inch by four timber which formed horizontal frames welded against the rests. As we went deeper so the runniers were lowered and other frames put in at approximately four-foot intervals. We were on one of these frames that the staging was supported.

While this was going on I had a look down the hole, and saw a small greenhouse (which had collapsed about 20 yards away in a brick garden at the foot of the embankment). I decided to investigate, and found that a bomb had fallen through the glass.

On probing, I found something hard about five feet down. I sent Teffy to collect another squad, complete with tools, and they got busy on the debris to clear a working space. This second bomb had a complicated mechanism, because of the explosion of two charges, the destruction of the entire usefulness of the corps would be impossible. However, our work had to continue.

About 2 o'clock in the afternoon I received a message from the Exeter Control Centre that another unexploded bomb had been found, in a public convenience about a mile away; this caused a large area to be evacuated, and I wonder I went over.

I was There!

This piece of news was brought to me on the railway line by a police messenger. I left instructions with the N.C.O.s on the railway job as to where I was going, and Teffy and I rushed over in the car to this latest incident of a couple of large electric hand-lamps borrowed from the local A.R.P. people.

A 5.50 o'clock, the third party took over, and I was told of the night, when we had to use lights. As we had to observe the blackout as much as possible we fixed up a temporary timber framework over the top of the shaft, and the men working on the outside ladders.

There was the bomb with its nose berried and the remainder sticking up in the air. We decided to operate immediately. The mud was cleared, and my driver took the track along to a safe spot around the corner and informed the policeman on duty what was happening, whilst I got busy on the bomb, first clearing away some of the bricks and rubble so that I could identify the fuse. After a few minutes' fiddling with the latter, which was now nicely exposed in the side of the bomb, I was able to announce all clear. On reaching the track I found a crowd waiting for the news that they could return to their homes. I told the policeman that the bomb was now quite "dead," and that a squad would arrive later to collect it.

Back to the railway for 4 o'clock, I discovered, much to my relief, that all was well and work proceeding smoothly; for now, of course, the second party had taken over. I had one more call during the day. This concerned a small 50 kilogram bomb which had ploughed through the roof of a house and a bedroom floor and was resting pointlessly beside the fireplace in the dining-room. After a few minutes' work on the fuse I carried the bomb out on my shoulder, put it in the back of the track—and that was that.
At 2.30 a.m., whilst I was in the shaft digging with the men, the party working at the greenhouse showed that they had discovered the bomb—a 500 kilogram (approximately 1,100 lb) bomb—despite our efforts to avoid it. This meant ceasing work on both jobs, for the parties to take cover whilst I drew in the shaft. The men then went back to the house to get fresh clothes and went to bed, whilst the rest of us returned to work. So 5 o'clock came, and once more the parties changed. By now we were about 13 feet down and still had not touched what we thought was the bomb. It was another five feet down, making a total depth of 25 feet. One work went on with renewed zeal.

During the afternoon a G.W.R. official came along and, calling me aside, asked if I could get the bomb clear at 3 p.m. The King and Queen were due to pass through in the Royal Train at 8 p.m. I promised it should be done by 5 p.m., which would leave two hours for the company's goods to fill in the excavation and relay the lines. It was agreed that an engine with track and crane would be standing by half a mile up the line from 4 o'clock onwards. This I intended to call up to lift the bombs from the holes and take them down into the sidings in the goods yard, to be loaded on to our lorry for final disposal. By now excitement was tense, but when we uncovered what we had hoped was the bomb it proved to be only the tail fins left behind on its downward path. However, we could touch the bomb now, another three feet down, and on we went, racing against the clock.

Three feet in 50 and two hours to do it!

There was no time for timbering as we had already dug down. We worked absolutely exhausted. Pits and shovels seemed twice their normal weight. And when one of the men working at the bottom hit the timber above his head with his pick, he muttered in a very weary voice, "Sarry, timber!" A sure sign that we were all just about at the end of our tether!

At last we uncovered the base-plate, which was just inside our shaft, the nose of the bomb pointing away from it. This meant going down another two feet and tunnelling around the bomb—most awkward in this confined space, but we scratched the earth away somehow and finally reached the fuse in the side of the bomb case about midway between nose and base-plate. It was another 500 kilogram, partner to the one that had worked the greenhouse.

The party retired to the safety of the weighbridge house for a brew-up whilst I operated on the fuse and made the bombs safe for handling. When this was finished, one of the party came down the shaft whilst the rest of us cleared more soil from around the bomb and lowered it ready for removal. The time was five minutes past six and we had excavated 28 feet. Inscrewing the shaft and dealing with the bomb, besides the disposal of the other incidents, in 34 hours.

Up came our special train, the job of the crate was over, the hole and the bomb lowered. Having made the bomb secure by wrapping the chain around it the weighty missile was hoisted up, swung around, and deposited in the track. Now we turned our attention to the one which was still lying in the debris of the greenhouse and treated it in similar manner.

We cheered as the train passed.

The bombs clear, a party from the railway company showed back the soil, the timber being left in the hole for support, the lines were relayed, and within half an hour we heard the first train rattled past. At that time we were sorting the bombs from the railway track into our lorry, but we managed to raise a cheer as the train passed by.

That night, Tuesday, I had a sorely needed wash, a shave and a meal—my first in comfort since the Sunday. I had never left the job except for the shortest intervals to deal with the other incidents—and straightway went to bed.

The next few days were spent usefully in clearing up numerous other bombs in less important places, such as minor roads, parks and outlying districts; one was in a sewage tank, which necessitated working waist-deep in the sewage. Fortunately, during this period we had the assistance of other Bomb Disposal Sections who had been drafted into the city. It was whilst I was hard at work—and plastered with mud—that I received a summons by dispatch rider to report at Exeter Station in half an hour to be presented to Their Majesties the King and Queen for my work on the line. Then back to our stations, to await the next call.
A Bomb-Fenced Road in the Island of Crete

REMINISCE OF ALLIED AIR ATTACKS on Crete during the period of German occupation in this fence of bombs (rendered harmless) lining a road in the island. The bombs, still intact after being dropped from Allied planes, bear witness to the fierce fighting when British and Greek forces cleared most of the island and pushed the German garrison into one corner.

Photo: Edward Fett