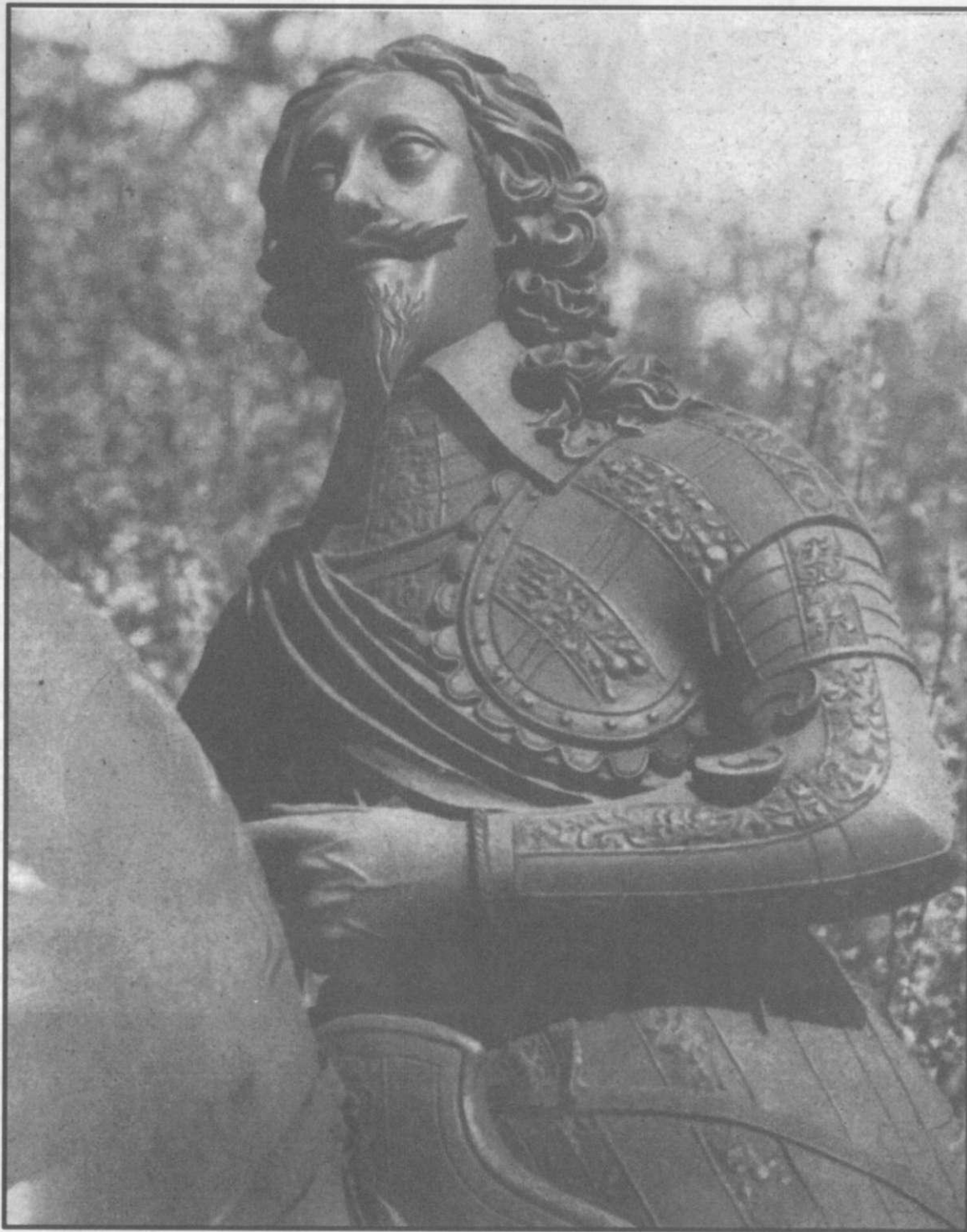


Vol 10 *The War Illustrated* N° 233

SIXPENCE

MAY 24, 1946



CHARLES I RETURNS TO LONDON from Lord Rosebery's Mentmore estate, in Buckinghamshire, to which the bronze equestrian figure, cast in 1633 by Hubert Le Sueur, had been removed in 1941 after receiving damage in air raids. It will be among the first of the Capital's statues to be restored to its plinth, in Trafalgar Square. Once before it had been "evacuated"—during Cromwell's Protectorate it was hidden away for safety, and re-erected after the Restoration of 1660. See also pages 79-82.

Edited by Sir John Hammerton

NO. 234 WILL BE PUBLISHED FRIDAY, JUNE 7

Monty's 'Great Debt to All British Soldiers'



TAKING LEAVE OF HIS COMMAND of the British Army of the Rhine, on May 2, 1946, to return to England to assume (in June) duties as Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein broadcast to the troops in Germany his appreciation at having commanded "... this great Army, the like of which our country can never before have put into the field ... I can justly say the Army has been a fine example to the Germans of the ideals for which we fought ... I feel I have a great debt to all British soldiers and I shall take every opportunity of repaying it ...". His successor as C.-in-C. B.A.O.R. is Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Sholto Douglas.

The Field-Marshal turned about to give a farewell salute as he entered the plane (1) at Gatow airfield, Berlin, where before his departure for England he inspected the Guard of Honour (2). His pet canary, "Erbie" (3), waited to be taken to his master's caravan home at Hindhead, Surrey.

Marshal of the R.A.F. Sir Sholto Douglas inspected the Guard of Honour at Gatwick airport (4) before taking off for Germany, airfield, Berlin (5).

Photos, British Official, Keystone, Associated Press, G.P.U.

PAGE 66



To appreciate the reasons for our attack on the docks at the German-occupied French town of St. Nazaire on March 27-28, 1942, it is necessary to consider the situation in Britain at the end of 1941. The U-boat campaign in the Atlantic was expected to reach its full strength before America could really get going and help to provide effective counter-measures. The Royal Navy was hard-pressed to protect the British life-line of convoys crossing the Atlantic, and any additional enemy weight in this quarter would be a contingency difficult to meet.

At this time it was learnt that the German battleship Tirpitz was lying in Norwegian waters and that she was likely to come out into the Atlantic to join in the campaign as a raider. If this was indeed so, anything that could be done to influence her to stay where she was would be of great value, even if such an action was only effective for the few months that were vital for America to be in a position to help our Navy.

It was as a result of this possible threat that the attack on St. Nazaire was considered in the spring of 1942. It was thought that if the Tirpitz was engaged, in all probability she would make for the dry dock there—the only one on the French Atlantic coast big enough to house her if she were knocked about and needed repairs. The destruction of this dock would therefore be likely to have the effect of keeping her in Norwegian waters, or of making her run the gauntlet of the Straits of Dover to get back to the naval base at Kiel. At the same time St. Nazaire was a very strong U-boat base, having a massively constructed concrete bunker, and any damage that could be done to it would assist to some extent the Allied anti-U-boat campaign.

Such were the main reasons for the raid and, in brief, this was the plan for carrying it out. A force of approximately 270 Commandos was to be landed in the Docks, 90 of whom were to carry out the demolition of all the essential dock machinery, gates and approach bridges; the remainder were to destroy the gun crews and keep the area clear of enemy whilst the demolitions were taking place. They were to be conveyed there by light surface craft—M.L.s, carrying about 15 men in each—and in an old American destroyer, H.M.S. Campbelltown, which, with five tons of explosives in her bows, was to ram the outer dock gates. A delayed-action charge in the explosives would detonate them some hours later when the land demolitions had been completed. To create a diversion to the many dual-purpose enemy gun positions in the area, the R.A.F. were to carry out a raid on the docks throughout the action.

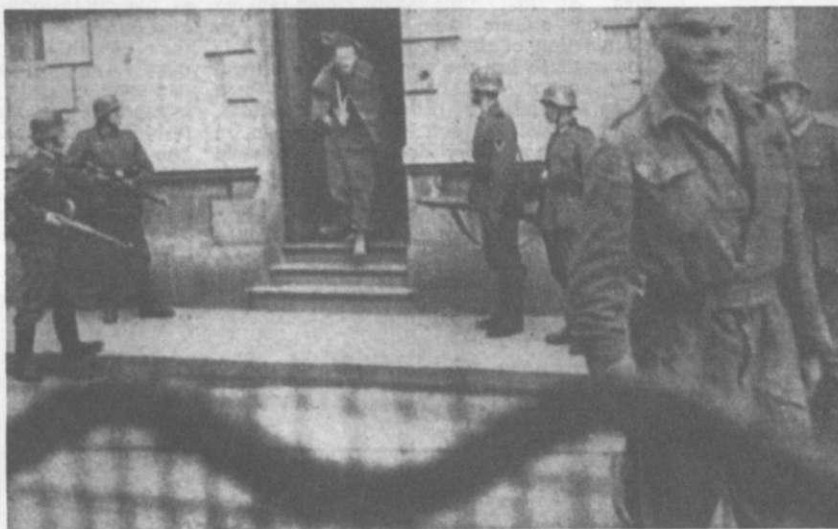
It was known that a large force of Germans was housed in the old French barracks just outside the town of St. Nazaire, so it was essential that the raid should be a surprise and the time ashore reduced to a minimum. The maximum time ashore was to be 1½ hours, and it was hoped this might be considerably reduced if all operations went well. The St. Nazaire docks lie some miles up

What Happened at St. Nazaire

By
Lt.-Col. A. C. NEWMAN, V.C.

the River Loire, and to get there it was necessary to run the gauntlet of many coastal batteries covering the estuary and river. So it was decided to carry the raid out at high tide, when there was just sufficient water covering the mud flats over which the destroyer and the M.L.s would cross, rather than to approach by the normal deep-water channel. High water was at half-past one on the night of March 28, 1942, and the landings were to be made at this time with, it was hoped, all away by 3 a.m.

On the morning of March 26 the force sailed from Falmouth, escorted by the destroyers H.M.S. Atherstone and Tynedale, these to cruise about outside the Loire estuary and give cover and assistance to the landing forces after the withdrawal and on the journey home. The passage to the Loire was uneventful, except for an attack on a U-boat which was seen at dawn on the 27th surfaced in the Bay of Biscay. After nightfall on the evening of the 27th, in close formation the convoy headed at high speed for the Loire estuary.



AFTER THE ST. NAZAIRE RAID many Commando survivors, left to their own resources, "went to ground" in the hope that escape would later be possible. The picketing of cross-roads and a systematic house-to-house search in the town by the Germans the following day (above) resulted in the capture of almost all of them.

The Atherstone and the Tynedale had been left behind in the Bay and a sharp lookout was kept in the darkness for the pre-arranged navigational beacon in the mouth of the river, which was to be given by the submarine H.M.S. Sturgeon. With an intermittent light flashing from her conning tower she was to mark the entrance to the river, after which the convoy was to be directed on to their objectives up the river by a M.G.B. carrying the Force commanders.

A muffled "Good-bye and good luck!" from the Sturgeon's conning tower as the convoy passed was the last link with home, and the operation was before us. Creeping across the mud flats had its anxieties. H.M.S. Campbelltown touched ground on two occasions, but by good fortune she managed to clear herself. Ahead could be seen the flak in the sky, telling us that the R.A.F. were there and the raid was on. How far we would be able to proceed up the river undetected was in the lap of the gods but, incredible though it seems, the Force was able to get within a few minutes of its objective

before searchlights picked us up and every enemy gun in the area was let loose at practically point-blank range.

Tracer of all colours swept across the river. The Campbelltown was seen to be hit many times, but on she came, closely following the little motor gunboat. The shooting was not all one-sided. From every vessel a stream of missiles answered the enemy fire; many searchlights were put out and many gun positions silenced. It was a great relief when immediately ahead could be seen the large dry-dock gate; and, pulling over to starboard to allow the Campbelltown to pass on to her objective, the Force commanders were to see the first part of the operation successful as, breaking through an anti-submarine boom, the old destroyer crashed into the dock gate—fair and square in the middle. Her determined commander (Lt.-Cmdr. S. H. Beattie, V.C., R.N.) had taken her in at almost twice the specified speed. (Portrait in page 669, Vol. 5).

ALMOST before she had stopped the Commandos on board were swarming over her bows, which were stuck far into the dock gate, and were making towards their objectives. The M.L.s, however, were not having such a good time. Trying to land their Commandos at points which were closely protected by gun positions, many of them were hit. In some cases they were so close to the German pillboxes that the enemy were able to lob hand grenades into the vessels. It was not long before the river was a mass of burning craft. Petrol was flaming on the water and men were trying to swim ashore under intense enemy fire.

Ashore, intermittent explosions in the vicinity of the dry dock indicated that the demolitions were being carried out according to plan. One by one the small parties reported that their task had been completed, and proceeded to the pre-arranged point of re-embarkation. The big white pump-house close to the dock entrance went up in a cloud of smoke and flame, and for a minute the whole area was full of falling masonry and bricks. The winding houses that operated the opening and closing of the outer and inner dock gates were blazing, following big explosions in each. Many of the gun emplacements that had a few moments earlier been firing were now silent; the crews had been destroyed and the guns smashed.

When all the demolition parties from the dry-dock area had reported, the fighting parties were withdrawn to the point where it had been arranged to re-embark the Force. On arrival here it was realized that getting away again was not going to be possible. The scene in the river was a nasty one. Burning M.L.s seemed to be everywhere, and heavy enemy gunfire across the river clearly indicated that it would be impossible for any M.L.s which survived from the gallant little fleet to reach the landing point, embark the Commandos and get away again.

In the river the Naval Commander in the motor gunboat (Cmdr. R. E. D. Ryder, V.C., portrait in page 627, Vol. 5) had tried everything to take off those ashore, but with the position in the river rapidly deteriorating


~~~~~Great Stories of the War Retold~~~~~

ammunition it was no place to stay. Close behind them was the as yet unexploded five tons of dynamite in the Campbelltown's bows. They were in the dock centre, to which point all German reinforcements would make, and space to manoeuvre was by now very limited. It was decided to form up into parties of about 20 and break out of the dock area into the town, do as much damage to the enemy as depleted ammunition would allow, and then attempt to get through to the open country beyond.

With luck their hope lay in making their way through France to Spain and home. Five of them managed it and sailed for home from Gibraltar! The majority of the remainder managed to penetrate the enemy ring surrounding them and enter the town. In small groups they engaged the Germans in the streets, fighting their way as far as they could into the town of St. Nazaire. When ammunition ran out each group went to earth and, with daylight adding to their difficulties, hoped to remain hidden through the day and to escape the following night. But, carrying out a systematic house-to-house search, with all cross-roads picketed by automatic weapons, the Germans combed the town and one by one the parties of Commandos were taken prisoner.

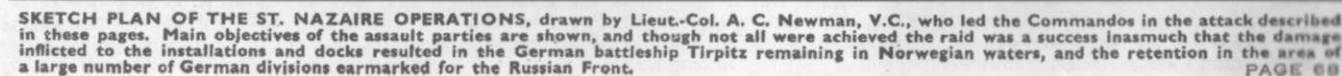
The very gallant firer of this weapon was the Commando Sergeant Tom Durrant, who although wounded many times, kept up his answer to the heavier German demand. Needless to say, in the end they were overpowered and those on board who remained alive taken prisoner. Sergt. Durrant, mortally wounded, was taken aboard to die a few hours later, and like his comrade, Able Seaman W. A. Savage, who gave his life on the M.G.B., firing his gun to the last, was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross (portraits in page 185, Vol. 9 and page 28, Vol. 6). Those little ships that made the estuary reached home with colours flying. Attacked by enemy aircraft, one of which at least they shot down, they succeeded in making the double journey.

THEY knew just what had happened when at about ten o'clock next morning there was a tremendous explosion from the dock area. At that time many high-ranking German officers were carrying out an examination of the Campbeltown, and it is known that when she went up many of them went up too, some 300 officers and men dying as a result of the explosion. H.M.S. Campbeltown had done her job; the main entrance to the dry dock was completely destroyed, and every effort by the Germans to repair the dock was unsuccessful. Delayed-action torpedoes fired into the entrance gates to the lock through which the U-boats had to pass to their bunker caused heavy damage.

Failure, however, had to be reported with regard to any damage that we had hoped to do to the bridges and entrance to the inner basin. The men whose task it was to destroy these objectives either lost their lives trying to reach them or, in the case of some, failed to be landed by their M.L.s at the dock side. But the main task was successful. And if as a result of this action the Tirpitz decided to stay in Norwegian waters, as indeed she did, then the raid as a whole may be considered successful.

Our casualties were high—34 Commando officers out of 44 and 178 other ranks out of 224 were left behind; 34 naval officers and 151 ratings were killed or missing out of a total of 62 officers and 291 ratings. From the day the exploit was planned, when it was known as "Operation Chariot," until the day the small Force sailed from Falmouth, there never was a doubt in anyone's mind that it would be otherwise. Yet never did a more confident Force sail from its base to do a job that needed to be done.

The action at St. Nazaire had another far-reaching result. The Germans were surprised by it, and for a while they thought it was the opening of the Second Front. Their losses were very heavy, and there is no doubt that in the confusion during the darkness and also during the days that followed, many of their casualties were caused by their own guns. The French citizens in St. Nazaire had spontaneously joined in the fighting and had added considerably to the enemy confusion and discomfiture. As a result it is known that not only were the Germans unable to send away many Divisions which they had earmarked for the Russian front but there is evidence that some on the way were actually recalled. Thus the action did to some extent relieve pressure on our Allies.



SKETCH PLAN OF THE ST. NAZAIRE OPERATIONS, drawn by Lieut.-Col. A. C. Newman, V.C., who led the Commandos in the attack described in these pages. Main objectives of the assault parties are shown, and though not all were achieved the raid was a success inasmuch that the damage inflicted to the installations and docks resulted in the German battleship Tirpitz remaining in Norwegian waters, and the retention in the area of a large number of German divisions earmarked for the Russian Front.



The collage features several newspaper front pages from World War II, overlapping each other. The visible headlines include:

- Chronicle**: "Sebastopol Falls After Eight Months", "LATE EXTRA", "HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING", "WORLD'S LARGEST BOMBING SET SALE", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- The Evening News**: "NEW LANDINGS IN AFRICA", "RAF STRIKE AT TABANTO", "PREMIER TAKES THE GAUCES", "THE DESERT LULLABY", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- The Daily Telegraph**: "SUCCESS OF COMMANDOS' INVASION TEST", "HEAVY DAMAGE TO ENEMY IN 9 HOURS AT DIEPPE", "NAZI PLANES DOWN 100", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- DAILY EXPRESS**: "GERMANS' STALINGRAD C-IN-C. SURRENDERS", "16 GENERALS TAKEN PRISONER", "RUSSIAN TROOPS", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- DAILY EXPRESS**: "SCRATCH FORCE HELD JAPS. AT KOHIMA", "Burma despatch which was held up 10 days tells heroic story: 'Even convalescents fought'", "Are we on the long road to the dums?", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- Herald News**: "Way Across Heart Of Peninsula", "ST ROBOT RAIDERS IN FORCE LAST NIGHT", "100 U.S. Planes", "U.S. Fleet Coast", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- News Chronicle**: "HITLER Doenitz, new Fuehrer, says: We fight", "HIRMACHT ORDERED TO MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- DAILY EXPRESS**: "ROME FALLS: RESISTANCE", "Citizens welcome", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- DAILY EXPRESS**: "WE INVADE", "6 a.m. Air & Sea Land", "On Normandy", "First Re", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- Daily Mail**: "RUNDSTEDT OPENS ATTACK", "Strike on 70-mile front", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- News Chronicle**: "TODAY IS V DAY", "Churchill speaks at 3 p.m., the King at East End and West End—neither waited", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- DAILY EXPRESS**: "ATOMIC BOMB: JAPS GIVEN 48 HOURS TO SURRENDER", "threaten Tokio: 'You can't threaten us'", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".
- DAILY EXPRESS**: "PEACE ON EARTH", "IAPS REPLY: We have the honour to surrender", "LONDON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1942", "ONE PENNY".

## Foreign Ministers' Conference Opens in Paris



DELEGATES AT THE OPENING SESSION were Mr. Bevin (1) and his deputy on the council of Foreign Ministers, Mr. Gladwyn Jebb (2); Mr. Vishinsky (3), assistant Foreign Minister U.S.S.R., Mr. Molotov (4), Foreign Minister U.S.S.R., Mr. Pavlov (5), U.S.S.R.; Mr. James Dunn (6), U.S.A., deputy to Mr. J. F. Byrnes; Senator Connally, U.S.A. (7); Mr. J. F. Byrnes (8), U.S. Secretary of State; M. Couve de Murville, France (9), deputy to French Foreign Minister, M. Bidault (10).

Photo, New York Times Photos



BRITAIN'S FOREIGN MINISTER, the Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin (1, left) with Mr. Gladwyn Jebb at the Conference table. The Russian delegation (2), left to right, Mr. Vishinsky, Mr. Molotov, and Mr. Pavlov; the "U.R.S.S." on the table is the French form of U.S.S.R. Mr. Bevin arriving at the Luxembourg Palace (3).

PAGE 70

Photos, Associated Press, New York Times Photos, Keystone

### THE FOUR POWER CONFERENCE

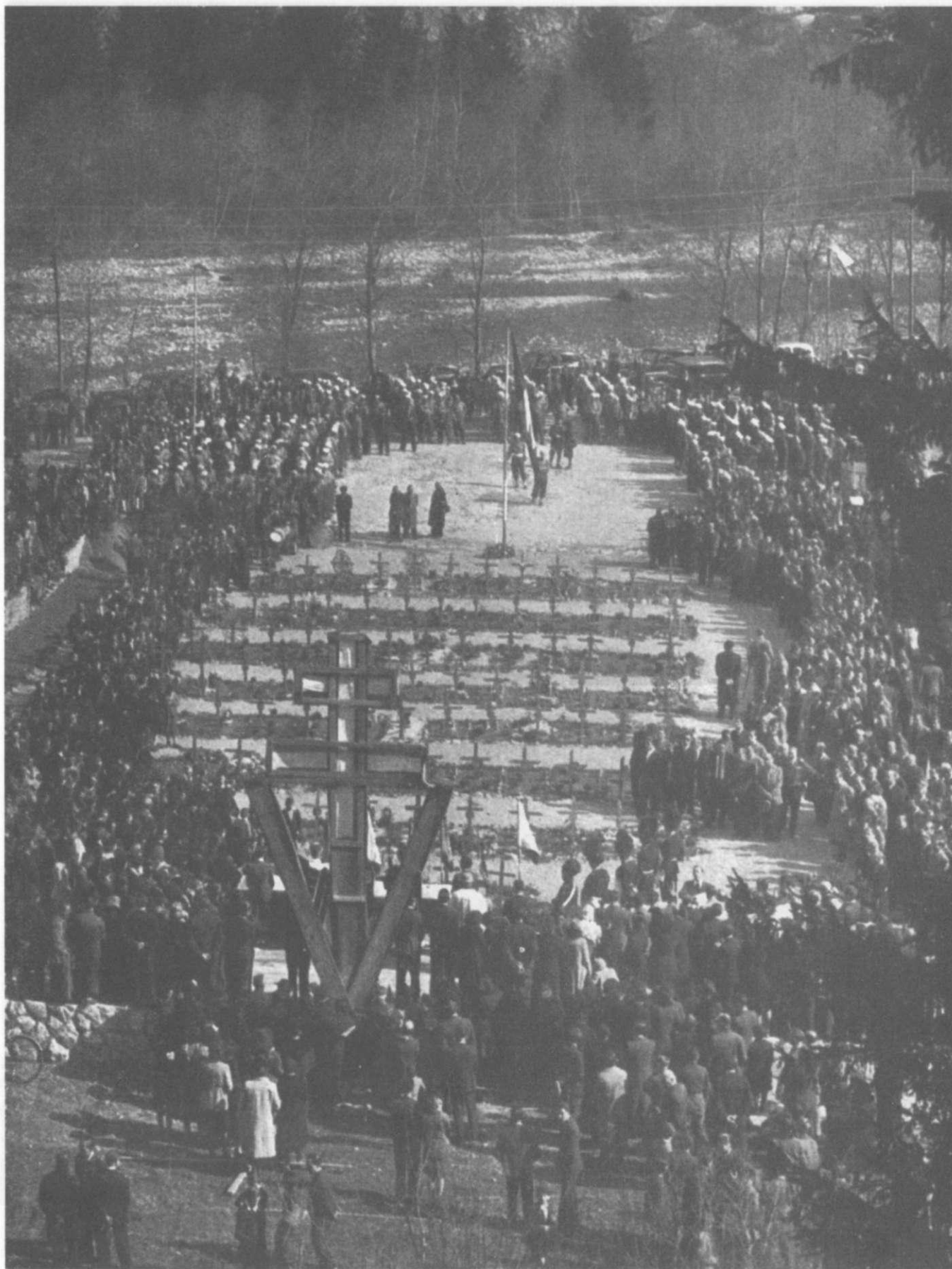
between the Foreign Ministers, Mr. Ernest Bevin (U.K.), Mr. J. F. Byrnes (U.S.A.), Mr. Molotov (U.S.S.R.), and M. Bidault (France), opened at the Luxembourg Palace, Paris, on April 25, 1946, to draft peace treaties with Italy and the former Axis satellite states. Quick decisions were made on points of procedure, and on the future of the Italian Navy—to be shared between the Big Four and Greece and Yugoslavia, Italy to retain only four cruisers.

Surprises came with Mr. Bevin's proposal that the former Italian colonies of Libya and Cyrenaica should be united into a Greater Libya; and Mr. Byrnes proposed a 25-year Four Power pact for the disarmament of Germany and promised continued American interest in European affairs. Discussion on the Italian peace treaty, including the future of Trieste, and the Italo-Yugoslav frontier, produced a deadlock between the Western Powers and Russia. The shelving of the Italian peace treaty by the Ministers, and the focusing of their attention on treaties with Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania and Finland, brought the first ten days of the Conference to a close.





## France Pays Homage to Fallen Maquis Heroes

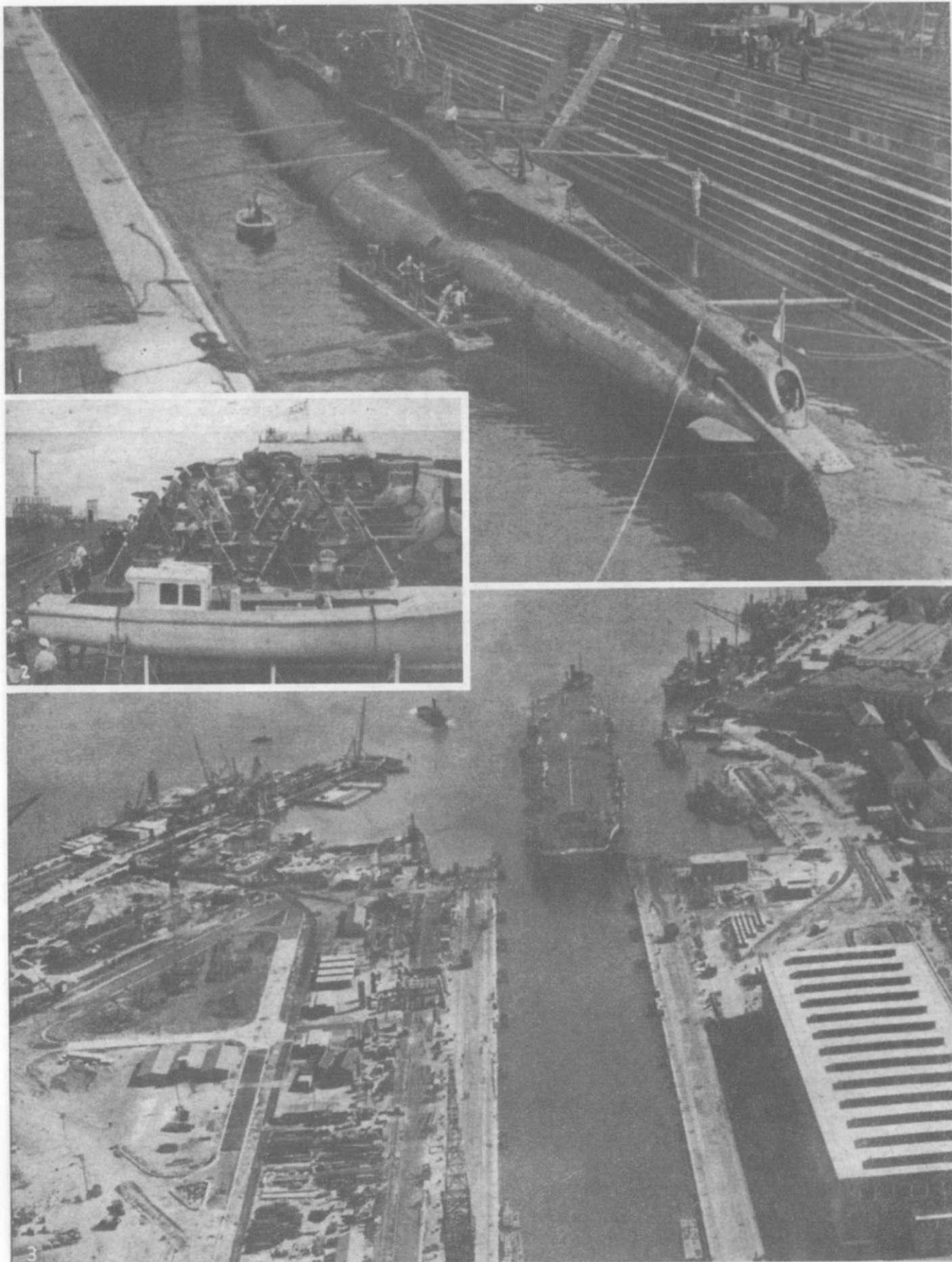


**BENEATH THE CRUCIFORM SYMBOL OF THE FREE FRENCH**, in the cemetery at Morette, the French Government, represented by M. Francisque Gay, recently honoured the memory of Maquis heroes of Plateau des Glières, where they fought to the last man when cornered by the Germans and were buried on the spot where they fell. Among the large gathering at the ceremony (above) were members of the Resistance Movement and representatives of the French Army.

PAGE 71

*Photo, Planet*

## Royal Navy Maintenance in Australian Ports



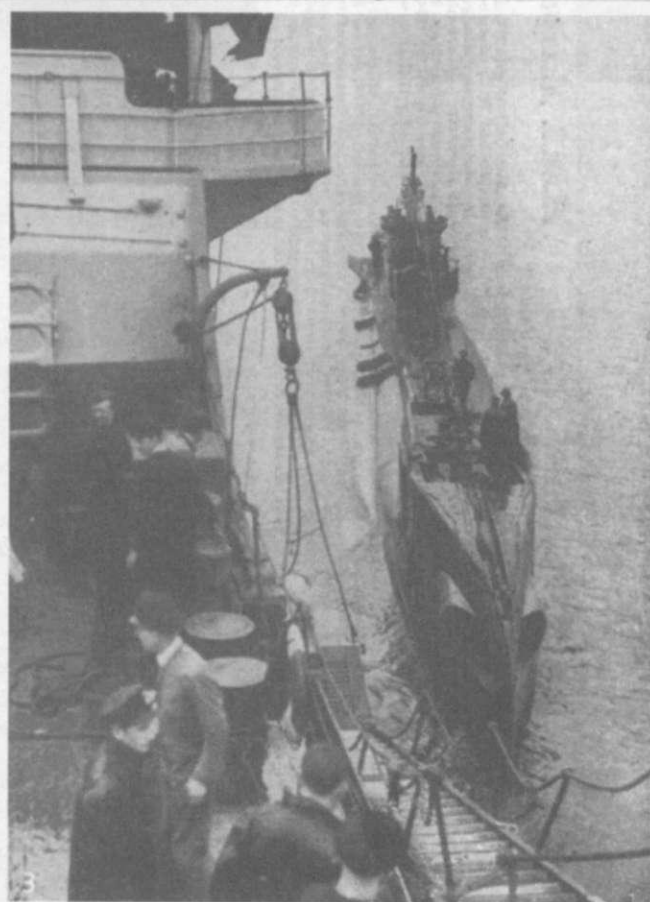
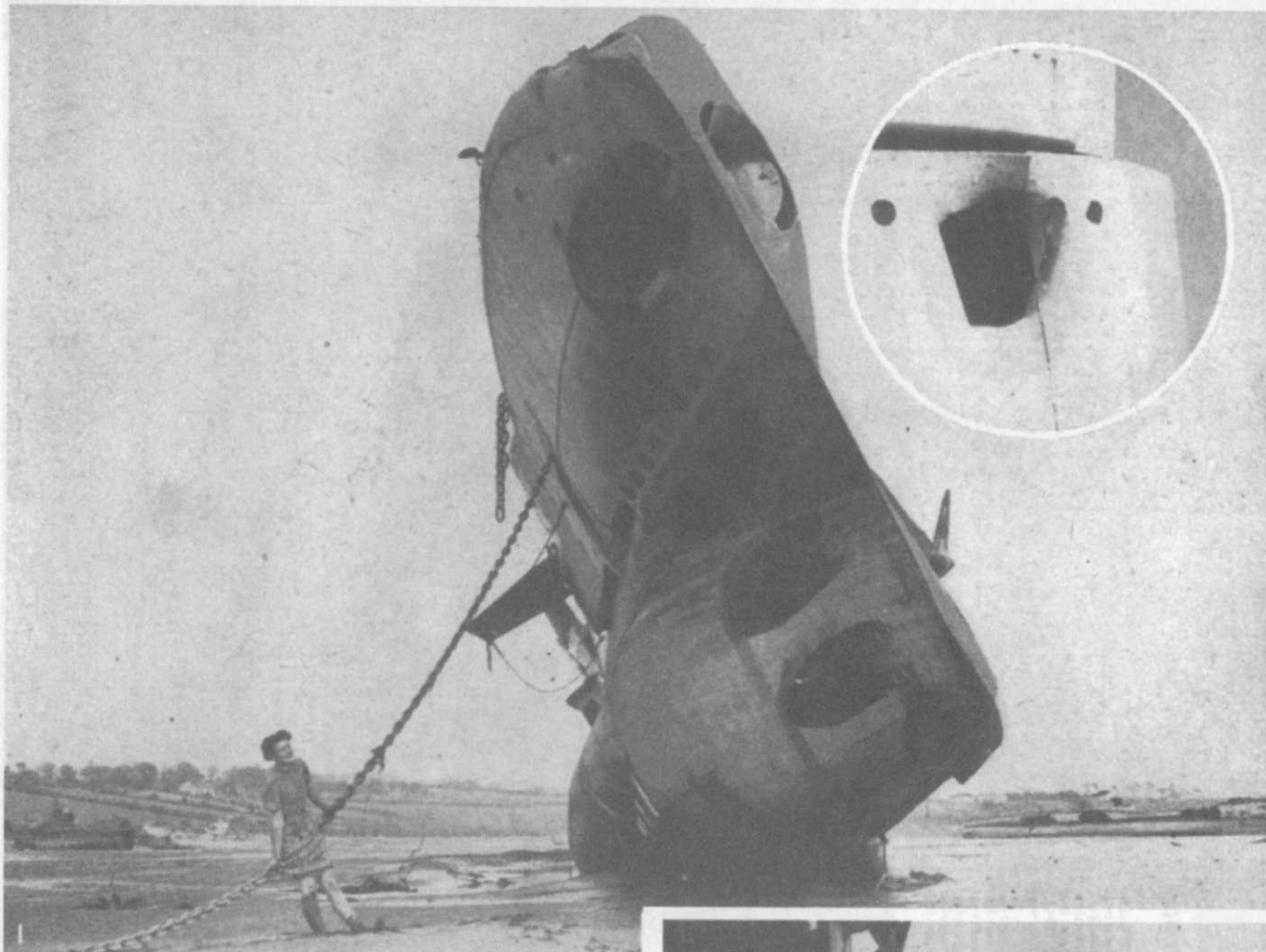
HELP FROM AUSTRALIA both in the war years and afterwards has not been confined to men, food and materials only: her maritime facilities have proved invaluable for the maintenance of ships of the Royal Navy. H.M. submarine Taurus (1) being overhauled in Williamstown Dock, at Melbourne, where H.M.S. Pioneer (2), decks packed with repaired aircraft, is being prepared for passage to England. H.M.S. Implacable, British aircraft carrier (3), going for a refit into the great Captain Cook graving dock at Sydney. See also illus. page 43, Vol. 9.

PAGE 72

Photos, Planet News



## Last Days of H.M.S. Thrasher, V.C. Submarine



SLUMPED ON THE MUD OF RESTRONGUET CREEK, Falmouth, in April 1946, and waiting with her comrades Taku, Tribune and Trusty to be towed away for breaking up, was the famous Thrasher (1), her service days finished for ever. She figured in a remarkable episode in February 1942, when Lieut. P. S. W. Roberts, R.N., and Petty Officer T. Gould removed two unexploded German bombs from her gun-casing (inset) and for their heroism were each awarded the Victoria Cross (see illus. in page 59, Vol. 6). After refitting and recommissioning, the Thrasher prepared for sea again (2); alongside a submarine depot ship after patrol (3). PAGE 73

## HIS MAJESTY'S SHIPS

## H.M.S. Hotspur

Motto: "Bravely in Action"

THIS destroyer of 1,340 tons was launched on the Clyde in 1936. As a unit of the British 2nd Destroyer Flotilla commanded by Capt. S. A. W. Warburton-Lee, V.C., she took part in the first Battle of Narvik on April 10, 1940, when she was severely damaged. Again damaged when she rammed and sank an Italian submarine off Gibraltar in November 1940, the Hotspur later took part in escorting convoys to Malta, and was present at the Battle of Matapan (March 28, 1941) and at the bombardment of Tripoli (April 21, 1941). During the evacuation of Greece and the operations around Crete in April-May 1941 she was repeatedly in action against enemy aircraft.

In the two following months she was engaged with Vichy French destroyers off the Syrian coast, and took part in various supply runs to Tobruk during the latter half of 1941. When the battleship H.M.S. Barham was torpedoed on November 25 of that year, the Hotspur rescued some of the survivors. From February 1943 to March 1944 she was on Atlantic convoy duty, and three months later was one of a group of destroyers screening the Allied invasion forces in the Channel. In June, also, the Hotspur took part with H.M.S. Fame in the destruction of a U-boat. Seldom has such a notable record of service been equalled.





# The Royal Air Force Regiment

by Squadron-Leader  
M. H. D. COCKAYNE

FROM a nucleus of ground gunners who had first been enlisted into the R.A.F. after the fall of France, the R.A.F. Regiment was formed in February 1942. Those gunners had shared with the Army the responsibility of protecting airfields from ground and air attack, and had played their part in the Battle of Britain.



To assist with the training and organization of the newly-formed Regiment a number of senior Army officers and N.C.O. instructors were lent by the War Office, with Major-General C. F. Liardet, C.B., D.S.O., T.D., who had recently commanded the London Division, as the first Commandant.

The first task of the squadrons was to relieve the Army garrisons at airfields throughout the United Kingdom. These squadrons were to form a mobile striking force ready for immediate action, the defended localities on the airfields being manned meanwhile by station personnel all of whom were now being armed and trained to fight in defence of their station. By June 1942, 62 squadrons had taken the place of Army garrisons, and by September take-over was virtually complete.

Meanwhile, ten units of the Regiment were being specially trained for service overseas, and in November they landed with the Expeditionary Force in North Africa. In the Middle East newly organized Regiment units were ready to play their part when the advance from El Alamein began. In North Africa and the Western Desert they adapted their role to conditions very different from those at home. To provide the air support so necessary for the Army's rapid advance it was essential to occupy and protect each airfield immediately it was taken.

THE Regiment was called into being primarily to defend the airfields of the United Kingdom from threatened invasion. Rapidly adapting its role step by step in response to the changing needs of the R.A.F., its range of activities developed far beyond the original conception. It made extremely important contributions to the success of the major operations of the War by providing the R.A.F. with a force of trained fighting troops for the ground and air defence of its own airfields and relieving the Army of these commitments.



Major-General Sir Claude LIARDET, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., T.D., who became the R.A.F. Regiment's first Commandant on its formation in February 1942. Photo, Fox

Consequently the Regiment became much more mobile, moving well forward, clearing the airfields of any pockets of enemy, of minefields and obstructions, and giving protection to the air squadrons operating from them. In these theatres the armies moved on narrow fronts and their operations were

fluid; landing grounds and radar stations were frequently established to a flank and the defence of these had to be provided by the Regiment. From El Alamein to Tripoli and from Algiers to Cape Bon the Regiment gave valuable assistance to the Desert Air Force and Eastern Air Command, facilitating the provision of air cover for the forward troops by its rapid occupation and protection of advanced landing grounds.

In the spring of 1943 it was decided that the Regiment should relieve A.A. Command of responsibility for the light A.A. defence of airfields in the U.K., and by September the Regiment were manning 300 of the 40-mm. Bofors guns—to them an entirely new weapon. When the invasion of Sicily took place in July, squadrons of the Regiment from U.K., Middle East and North Africa took part. Two squadrons—one from U.K. and one from the Middle East—made beach landings to give A.A. protection to a coastal airfield. At the end of the Sicilian campaign the squadrons which had taken part moved into Italy, three being flown to forward airfields near Taranto. Others followed from the Middle East and North Africa.

## Battle Experience in the Line

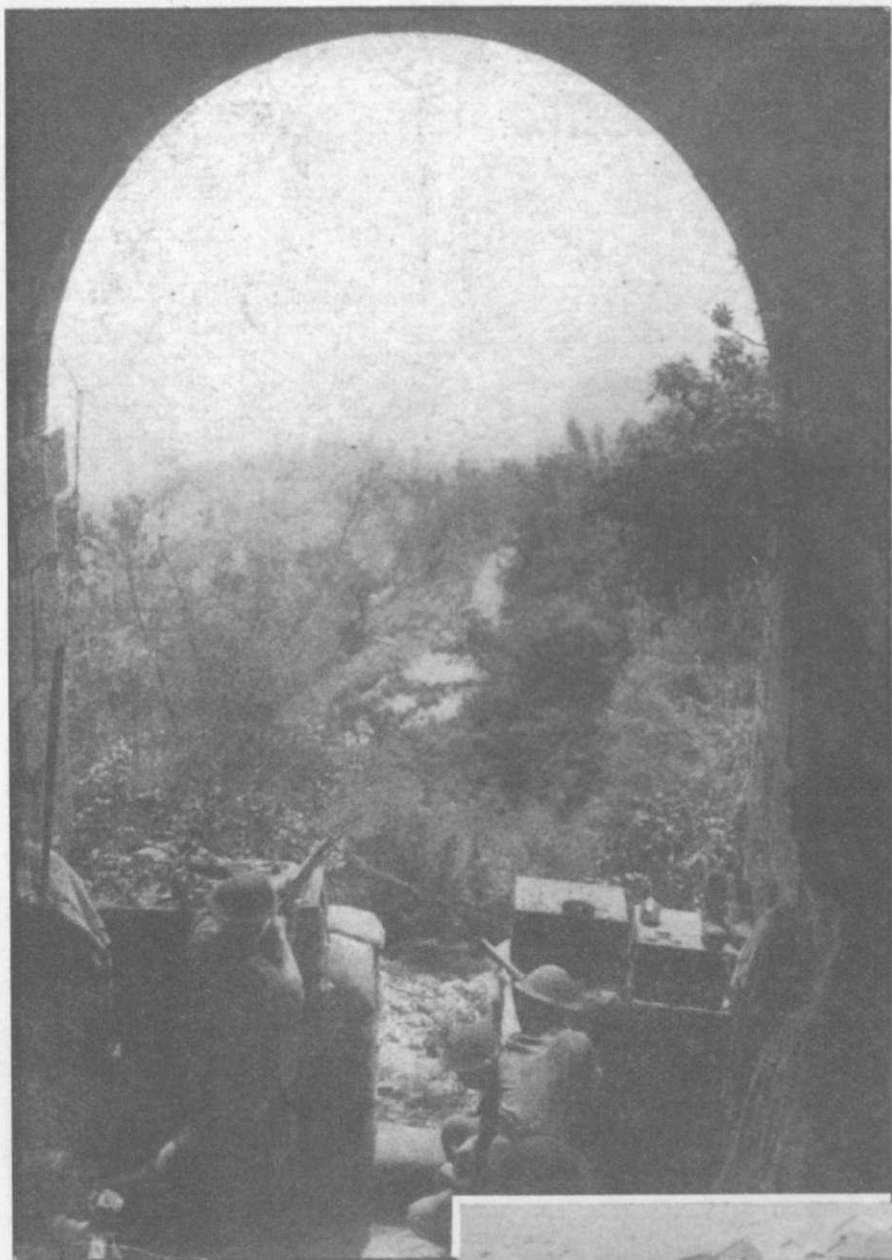
In September 1943 a light anti-aircraft squadron was flown to the Island of Cos, in the Aegean, to protect the forward airfields which were to be established there. The squadron was constantly in action against the low-level attacks which preceded the German landings on the island, and early in October, when German forces invaded Cos in strength, the Regiment gunners joined the Army units in resisting the invaders.

In Italy and the Central Mediterranean area it was decided to give Regiment Squadrons, when possible, the benefit of battle experience in the line alongside the Army. Such duties were admittedly outside the role for which the squadrons had been formed and trained but the experience gained was often of the greatest value. Two squadrons had occupied the island of Lampedusa during the operations which led up to the invasion of Sicily. There, in a sudden emergency, they organized the local fishing fleet to search for the crew of one of our bombers which had crashed in the sea, all of whom were eventually found.

Another sea-rescue occurred six months later, from the Island of Ponza, in the Tyrrhenian Sea, where a Regiment unit was protecting an R.A.F. radar station. An American vessel containing troops and prisoners was washed ashore on the rocks at the foot of a high cliff where heavy seas

**FIRST ACTION** of the Regiment occurred in the Western Desert, where it proved invaluable in occupying and protecting captured airfields in the Army's advance from Alamein to Tripoli. Waiting to go forward (left) on the edge of an enemy airfield. Photo, British Official





ON THE ITALIAN FRONT, after fighting in Sicily, squadrons of the R.A.F. Regiment occupied forward positions; defending H.Q. (above) situated in a cave within half a mile of the enemy lines. Wreckage of a German Ju 88 brought down in Naples Harbour (right) by the Regiment's A.A. gunners. Photos, British Official

were breaking. Rescue work was organized and carried out by the men of the Regiment under great difficulties, one officer losing his life in the attempt. Nearly all of the Americans and their prisoners were rescued and the American authorities later awarded their Soldier's Medal to two men of the rescue party. This same unit had another experience when it was ordered during the summer of 1944 to provide A.A. protection for Marshal Tito's headquarters in the mountains of Yugoslavia.

By the end of 1943 most of the Regiment squadrons in the U.K. were actively preparing to take part in the assault on the Continent, and as the preparations developed during the first five months of 1944 the danger of enemy attack on our airfields in Southern England increased. To guard against this danger a heavy concentration of Regiment A.A. units was made at these vital air bases. The

PAGE 76

months of training and preparation came to an end on June 6, 1944, and on that day the first squadrons, detailed to protect the bridge-head airfields, accompanied the invading forces across the Channel. The first units went ashore on D-Day + 1, and within a few hours of their landing were deployed on their appointed airfields in Normandy, engaging enemy aircraft.

At home a new form of attack from the air—the flying bomb—began on June 13, and the Regiment was quickly assisting A.A. Command in its defeat. In all, 51 A.A. squadrons were deployed along the south and south-east coasts, and there they stayed, manning their guns by day and night until October, when they were withdrawn to prepare for the move to the Continent, where the advancing armies were securing more airfields, requiring squadrons for their defence.

#### Clearing an Airstrip at Meiktila

In Air Command, South-East Asia, the defence personnel who had been absorbed into the Regiment on its formation had been reorganized and equipped. The Japanese offensive of early 1944 found Regiment units protecting the airfields in the Imphal plain, where operations were maintained at maximum intensity only by air supply and by constant vigilance against infiltration. Battle experience was gained by attachments to Army units engaged in long-range patrols, and this training proved its value when the offensive into Burma began and the airfields were moved forward as the Army advanced.

In January 1945, in this theatre, some units of the Regiment took part in the combined operation for the capture of Ramree Island while others were advancing on Rangoon. One of the latter particularly distinguished itself at Meiktila, in March, by clearing a considerable force of Japanese from an airstrip to enable the fighters to operate. A Regiment Squadron had been flown in after the capture of the airfield. It had only recently arrived in Burma and had not so far been in action. The Japanese were attacking fiercely and made a nightly withdrawal from the airfield necessary. It was impracticable to put a cordon around the airstrip, so a defensive "box" was established quite near it and manned each night by the squadron and a detachment of Indian troops.

One morning at dawn, after being heavily attacked during the night, the small Regiment





# R.A.F. Soldiers in Overseas Action



ON A NEWLY-CAPTURED AIRFIELD on the Adriatic coast of Italy in July 1944, men of the Regiment man a Bofors gun (above) and keep watch for sight of an enemy aircraft. Members of an armoured unit (below) patrol the perimeter of an airfield in Britain in 1942; mechanization had become essential for rapid movement to threatened points.

Photos, British Official



Motto : " 216 Bearing Gifts "

## NO. 216 SQUADRON (TRANSPORT COMMAND)

WITH a long history, No. 216 Squadron owes its origin to a flight of four twin-engined Handley-Page bombers which was detached from No. 7 Naval Squadron in France towards the end of 1917 for inshore anti-submarine patrols off the North Yorkshire coast. On October 2, 1917, the flight was transferred to Manston as the nucleus of a bombing squadron—"A" Squadron, R.N.A.S.—for independent bombing operations, in co-operation with the R.F.C., against industrial areas in Southern Germany. On January 8, 1918, "A" Squadron became No. 16 Squadron R.N.A.S., and on April 1 it was renumbered No. 216 Squadron, R.A.F.

Between the wars No. 216 was engaged in mail, freight, passenger and troop transport operations between Egypt, Palestine and Iraq, and training in troop emplaning, casualty evacuation and supply dropping. On the outbreak of war in September 1939 the squadron was the only heavy Bomber-Transport squadron in the Middle East. Under Wing-Commander G. C. Gardner, its first task was the transfer of R.A.F. units to their war stations in the Middle East. It was re-equipped with Bombers at the end of 1939, and by December 1940 had finished its last bombing raid and was engaged solely in transport and airborne support duties. Its first large commitment was the evacuation of troops from Greece in 1941.

IN 1942 the squadron was re-equipped with Hudsons, and in October took part in diversionary operations in preparation for the break-through at El Alamein. During the early months of 1943 the advance was so rapid that the squadron was fully occupied in moving forward Fighter Wings, supplying ground forces and evacuating casualties. With the formation of R.A.F. Transport Command in 1943 the squadron undertook a number of new scheduled flights, and carried out paratroop training.

Early in 1944 the squadron, now flying Dakotas, went to Air Command, South-East Asia, to meet urgent air-supply demands of the Allied forces in the India-Burma theatre, and flew 3,422 operational hours, dropped over 600 tons of supplies, landed more than 1,500 tons of freight, carried 7,200 passengers and evacuated 508 casualties. A great compliment was paid to it by the Supreme Commander South-East Asia when Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten wrote, "Thank you, 216 Squadron, for saving the situation in Imphal!"



Records of the Regiments: 1939—1945



AT LINGEVRES, 10 km. south of Bayeux in Normandy, men of the R.A.F. Regiment clear wreckage of German aircraft from ground required for forward airfields. They landed on June 7, 1944. Photo, British Newspaper Pool

garrison of the "box" sent out a patrol to reconnoitre the landing strip and found that a strong Japanese force had taken up positions on and near it. While a tank and infantry counter-attack was being prepared the patrol gallantly held its ground, continuously engaging the enemy. When the strip was finally regained, 150 Japanese dead were counted. The losses of the Regiment patrol were seven killed and eight wounded.

THE campaign in North-West Europe provided two classic examples in which the Regiment fulfilled the role for which it was originally formed—that of protecting R.A.F. installations against ground and low-flying air attack in a defensive battle. The German counter-offensive which Von Rundstedt launched in the Ardennes in December 1944 found our radar units directly in its path and close to its starting-line. These units were, in consequence, in danger of being overrun and losing their secret technical equip-

ment to the enemy. However, the Regiment units which were protecting them escorted them in safety, despite bad weather, the difficult country and breakdown of communications, without loss of equipment.

The second example was on January 1, 1945, when the Luftwaffe suddenly launched a determined attack on the forward airfields in Belgium and Holland. Formations of up to 50 fighters and fighter-bombers, approaching at tree-top height, attacked 11 airfields. By the end of the action, which lasted one and a half hours, the Bofors gunners of the Regiment defending these airfields had destroyed 27 and damaged 54 enemy aircraft.

The last days of hostilities in N.W. Europe provided a fitting climax to the activities of the Regiment in 2nd T.A.F. At dawn on May 5 nine columns composed of 11 squadrons moved ahead of the Army to take over all the airfields in the Schleswig-Holstein peninsula, accepting the surrender of over 20,000 Germans, 1,000 aircraft intact, and stores.



ON A BURMESE BEACH they manhandled A.A. guns through a sea of mud for the final advance on Rangoon. Photo, British Official

Young officers found themselves in command of airfields containing 7,000 armed Luftwaffe personnel, and at the same time responsible for the welfare of large numbers of prisoners of war and displaced persons of many nationalities. With tact, firmness and good judgement the situation was mastered, and by May 10 the Regiment was relieved by 2nd Army and Air Disarmament Wings of the R.A.F. The operation demonstrated the value of a small force of trained units at the disposal of the R.A.F., and the ability of officers and airmen of the Regiment to deal with the most unexpected situations.

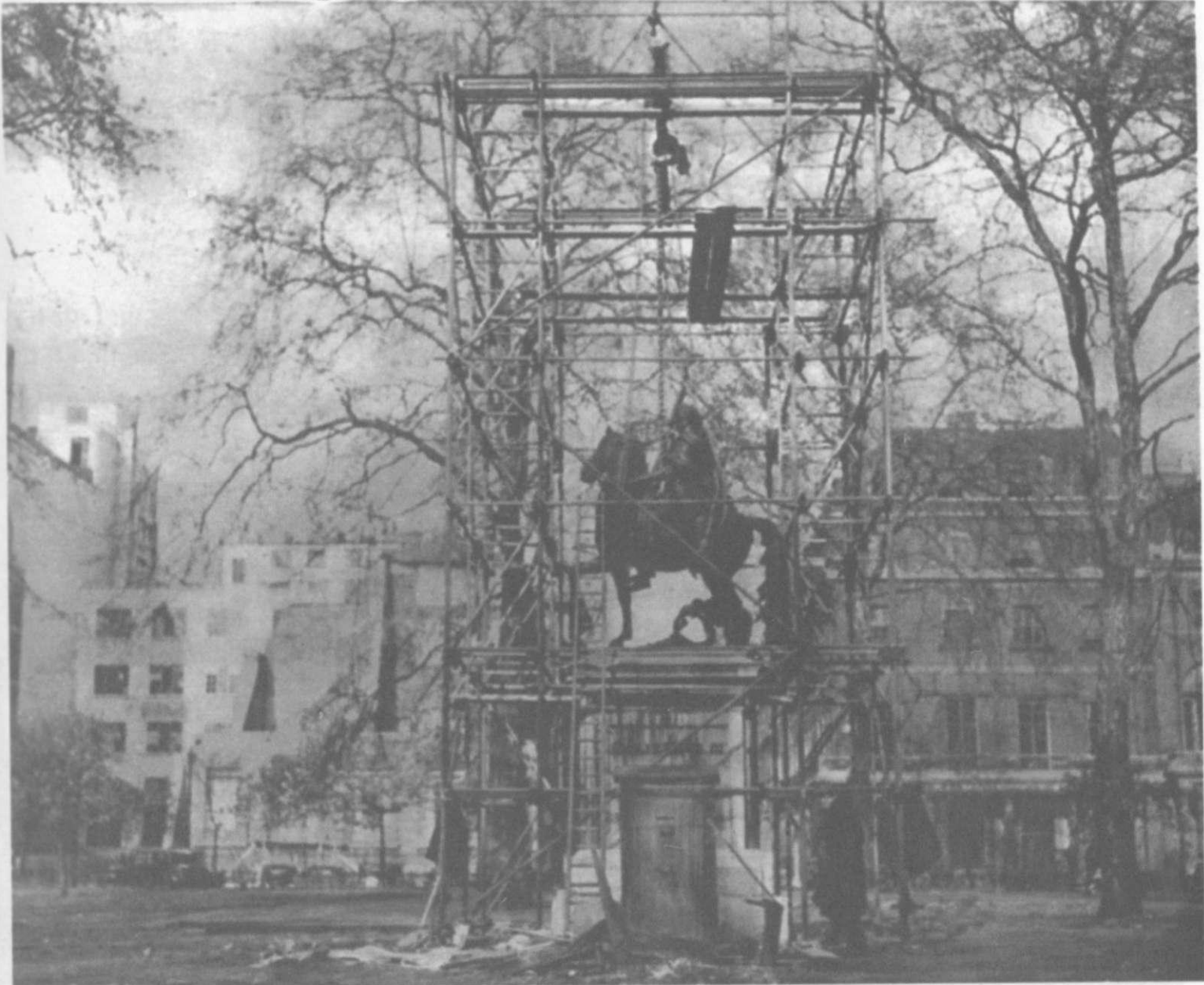
In the final advance at Rangoon through Central Burma the units of the Regiment moved forward with the air squadrons. They not only provided protection for our air and ground crews and aircraft from snipers and enemy patrols, but hunted down Japanese stragglers and saboteurs when they ventured near newly captured airstrips. It so happened that some of these airstrips were located directly in the escape line of the trapped Japanese Army. This necessitated our keeping our patrols in operation right up to and even after the official VJ Day. Later, when the British reoccupation of Singapore took place, R.A.F. Regiment units were among the first to go ashore, in September 1945, taking over the protection of Kalang airfield.



AT SINGAPORE a detachment of the Regiment presented arms to Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander South-East Asia, at a ceremonial parade preceding the signing of the island's surrender by the Japanese on September 12, 1945. Units of the Regiment were some of the first troops to go ashore for the reoccupation. PAGE 78 Photo, British Official



## *Home-Coming of London's War-Exiled Statues*



### ***From Country Castle back to Town Square***

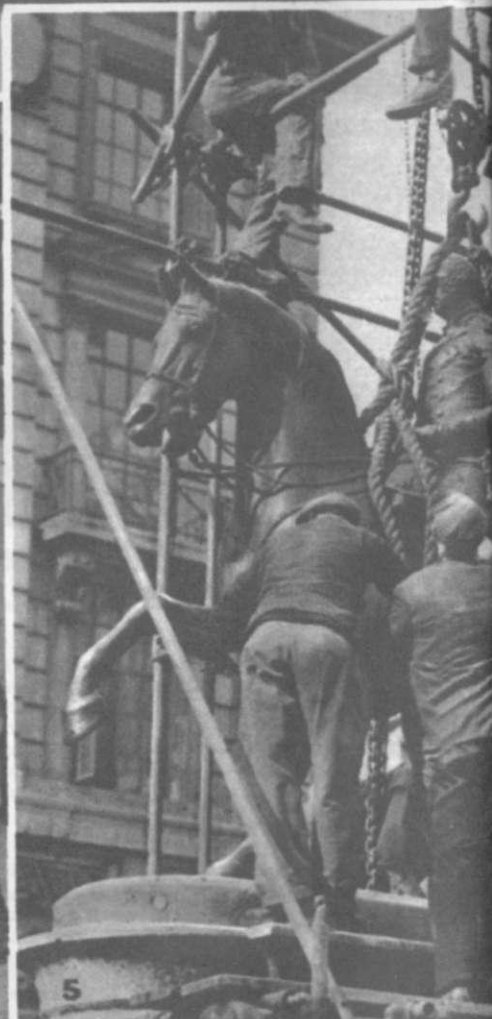
Removed to Berkhamsted Castle, Hertfordshire, to escape possible damage by air raids, the fine equestrian statue of King William the Third was returned to London on April 18, 1946. In a Ministry of Works storehouse in St. James's Park evidence of its lengthy retirement has been removed, and a final short journey saw it restored to its somewhat warworn site in St. James's Square, where it was originally placed in 1808.

An interesting point in the history of this statue of a British monarch who was born at The Hague (in 1650) is that 106 years elapsed between William the Third's death (in 1702) and its erection, though the pedestal had been in position in the Square since 1732. The bronze is the work of John Bacon. See also illus. in page 284, Vol. 6.

*Exclusive to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED*







## Famous Evacuees in Bronze Return—

From wartime retreat at Mentmore Park, Bucks, King Charles the First was seen returning to Town on a truck (1) on April 5, 1946; the York Column (background) is surmounted by Westmacott's bronze statue of the Duke of York, second son of George the Third, which survived the Battle of London intact. Sliding backwards down a ramp (2) at the St. James's Park storehouse, King Charles and his mount reappears, as of old, at the top of Whitehall (3). See also illus. page 65.

Photo  
Plated No. 1, Key Stone

## —To Their Old Places in London's Scene

Back to the twelve-foot high pedestal at the junction of Cockspur Street and Pall Mall, off Trafalgar Square, came King George the Third and his charger on April 15. Stormy war-years safely passed in the seclusion of Berkhamsted Castle (in company with William the Third and other Important Personages), the statue by M. C. Wyatt is swung into the position (4) which it first occupied in 1837. Removal of the scaffolding (5) reveals it as it was in former days of peace (6).



### ***In Memory of Valiant Exploits***

Commemorating 14,000 of our men killed in the First Great War the Machine Gun Corps Memorial, designed by Professor F. Derwent Wood, R.A., was erected at Hyde Park Corner. The unveiling ceremony of the bronze statue of David on a pedestal of stainless marble was performed by the Duke of Connaught in May 1925; the Machine Gun Corps, created in October 1915, was disbanded in July 1922. When that war which was to end wars was followed by another and vastly more terrible conflict the Memorial was removed and housed in the Aldwych Tube Station beyond reach of the Luftwaffe's bombs. On April 5, 1946, the crated sections were once more disturbed—this time to be taken to the foot of the lift-shaft (1) for the ascent to open air and daylight. After a spell at Millbank, for necessary attentions, it will be reassembled at Hyde Park Corner. The Memorial as it was and is to be again (2).

The towering column with Bailey's statue of Nelson at its summit (3) remained unscathed in Trafalgar Square; steeplejacks are cleaning it. See also illus. in page 799, Vol. 9.

*Photos, Fox, Keystone*





## Our Empire's Proud Share in Victory

# INDIAN OCEAN AND PACIFIC COLONIES

**T**HE Middle East, the cradle of civilization, might, but for the foresight of the British and almost superhuman endeavour, have become its grave. The fact that it did not become such a grave is due to the interlocking and flexible strategic character of the British Colonial Empire as a whole, and the point is brought home most clearly when we turn to the Indian Ocean.

The Battle of the Mediterranean was more in the nature of a series of holding actions to prevent domination of the area by the Axis Powers, but while these were going on the Indian Ocean provided the alternative route for the transport of men and materials to the various battlefronts in the Middle East.

### The Great Importance of Ceylon

Undoubtedly one of the greatest prizes for an enemy to have captured in the Indian Ocean was Ceylon. In the words of the French commodore Suffren in 1782, "the importance of Ceylon is such that, if English troops captured the island, its recapture would be more important than all other conquests wherewith one could begin a war in India." Ceylon lies to the south-east of India, a few degrees north of the Equator. Its greatest length is 270 miles, its greatest width 140 miles, its area 25,352 square miles, or about half the size of England.

The defended port of Colombo on the west coast of the island is a major junction of trade routes by the Cape and Suez to India and the Far East, and was particularly important as a nodal point of communications when the Mediterranean route was virtually closed to Allied shipping. Trincomalee on the east, which Napoleon described as the finest harbour in the world, is the only British naval base, except Bombay, between Aden and Australia.

The occupation of Malaya and Burma by the Japanese brought Ceylon into the front line as a bastion of defence against further aggression, and in March 1942 the post of Commander-in-Chief, Ceylon, was created to ensure the proper co-ordination of all branches of defence. As the tide turned, however, Ceylon began to be developed as an offensive base; supplies were accumulated from Great Britain, Australia and the United States, and Allied troops and aircraft poured into the island. Old aerodromes were enlarged and new ones hacked from the jungle.

In his Christmas broadcast in 1942, the Commander-in-Chief said, "Ceylon is the springboard from which to launch an attack against Japan, and our fighting men are being trained for the offensive." Sixteen months later, on April 16, 1944, Lord Louis Mountbatten moved his headquarters to Ceylon, and this island became the pivotal point for the operations which followed. The attack on Sumatra, for instance, was carried out by warships and carrier-borne aircraft based on Ceylon. But more about Ceylon later.

### Mauritius and the Seychelles

Ships rounding the Cape on the route to the Red Sea and Suez, or servicing the ports on the East African coast, were faced with the problem of extended lines of communication. These became increasingly dangerous when Japan entered the war and gained access to the Indian Ocean. To a considerable extent, however, the dangers were lessened by the strategic position in the Indian Ocean of Mauritius and the Seychelles.

Mauritius might well be described as the "Clapham Junction" of the Indian Ocean. Situated 500 miles east of the French-owned Madagascar, the island, comprising about 920 square miles, commands the route from the Cape to India and Ceylon, and ships based on Mauritius are also within striking distance

By HARLEY V. USILL

**C**ONTINUING his explanations of the strategic importance of the British Colonial Empire, the author deals here with the supremely important islands in the Indian Ocean—alternative wartime route to the Middle East after the enemy had partially closed the Mediterranean. The strategic significance of the East and Central African groups of Colonies and British possessions in the Pacific is also dealt with in this article.

of the Cape route between Great Britain and Australia and New Zealand. The harbour at Port Louis is one of the best in the East, and is sufficiently spacious to receive a large number of ships.

During that part of the War when the Cape route was used to transport men and supplies to the battle zones in the Middle East by way of Aden and the Red Sea, and to Russia by way of the Persian Gulf, the strategic importance of Mauritius was very considerable, since its position enabled control to be maintained of a number of separate routes of supply and communication.

The Seychelles form a Colony which, with its dependencies of 92 islands, covers a total area of 156½ square miles. It is distant from Mauritius 939, from Madagascar 600, and from Zanzibar 970 miles. The chief island, Mahe, has a safe and commodious harbour, and lies on the direct route from Cape Town via Mauritius to the Red Sea. Its importance was such that its garrison was considerably increased during the War.

### East and Central African Groups

It can be argued that this group of Colonies belongs to both the Middle East and the Indian Ocean systems of defence, and for this reason it is perhaps less confusing to treat them as a separate region, at the same time showing how they are interlocked with both. The British Colonial territories in East and Central Africa consist of Kenya, Uganda, the Mandated Territory of Tanganyika, the island of Zanzibar, and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Altogether, with Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, they form an all-British block extending from the Cape to the borders of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Abyssinia and the former Italian Somaliland. To complete the picture we must, of course, include British Somaliland, which faces Aden on the entrance to the Red Sea.

Kenya covers an area of about 220,000 square miles, or about 2½ times the size of Great Britain. To the north it borders the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Ethiopia, and to the east it has a land frontier with former Italian Somaliland and a coast line on the Indian Ocean. With such a long frontier with enemy territory, Kenya was in the front line from the day of the Italian declaration of war in June 1940. The direct threat of Italian aggression, however, was relatively quickly removed, but the fall of Singapore brought the Japanese menace close to Kenya's shores since, after the Japanese ships entered the Indian Ocean, the Eastern Fleet was withdrawn temporarily from Ceylon to the port of Kilindini.

For the most part, however, Kenya's strategic importance has lain in her position on the supply routes of the armies of the Middle East, Kilindini becoming the principal port of call for vessels bringing men and supplies from the United Kingdom and the United States. It served, too, as the base from which communications with India, Ceylon, and the oil ports of the Persian Gulf were protected. Road and air communications with South Africa passed through Kenya.

The Uganda Protectorate covers an area of about 94,000 square miles, of which 14,000 square miles are water. It lies on the northern shore of Lake Victoria, while its eastern border is contiguous with Kenya. The strategic position of Tanganyika is best appreciated when it is remembered the trouble it caused in the 1914-1918 war when it was in German hands. An area of about 360,000 square miles, it borders Uganda and Kenya in the north, and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in the south, with the port of Dar-es-Salaam giving access to the Indian Ocean. The 290,000 square miles of Northern Rhodesia and the 37,000 square miles of Nyasaland, neither with a port on the Indian Ocean, complete the link with Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.

**E**AST and Central Africa, then, were an integral part of the defensive and offensive systems of the Middle East, but after the fall of France the whole position was threatened by the uncertainty regarding Madagascar—that island more than a thousand miles long by 350 miles across at its widest point which, if captured by the enemy, could have severed our main lines of communication with Egypt, India, Persia and East Africa itself. The Madagascar campaign, then, which began with the capture of Diego Suarez in May, 1942, and ended with the signing of the agreement at Ambalvo on November 6, served to preserve intact the strategic usefulness of East Africa. In later articles we will deal with the great war effort of the individual Colonies, and particularly with the courage, endurance and loyalty of the troops of East Africa Command.

The strategic position of the units comprising the British Colonial Empire is again seen to advantage when we pass from the Indian to the Pacific Ocean. This positioning enabled the shock of the disaster in the Pacific to be absorbed without irreparable damage to the Allied cause. Normally Hongkong, Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and the many other British possessions in the Pacific presented an impenetrable barrier to possible Japanese aggression, but the treacherous surrender of French Indo-China, and the Pearl Harbour disaster, upset the strategy on which Pacific defences were based.

### Formed a Second Line of Defence

It was always assumed, and few would have been bold enough to have questioned the belief before the events, that the back door to Malaya would always be held by a friendly France, and that the United States Fleet would be available intact should the Japanese ever embark upon aggression. In the event, all the bravery in the world—and there was much displayed in these Colonies before they fell into enemy hands—could not save the situation. The subsequent failure of the Japanese to press home their advantage to a successful conclusion, however, was in large measure due to the strategic disposition of those Colonies which were called upon to form a second line of defence.

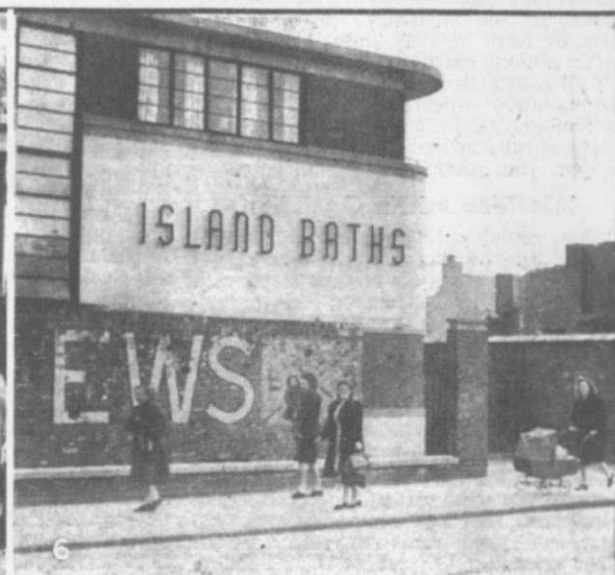
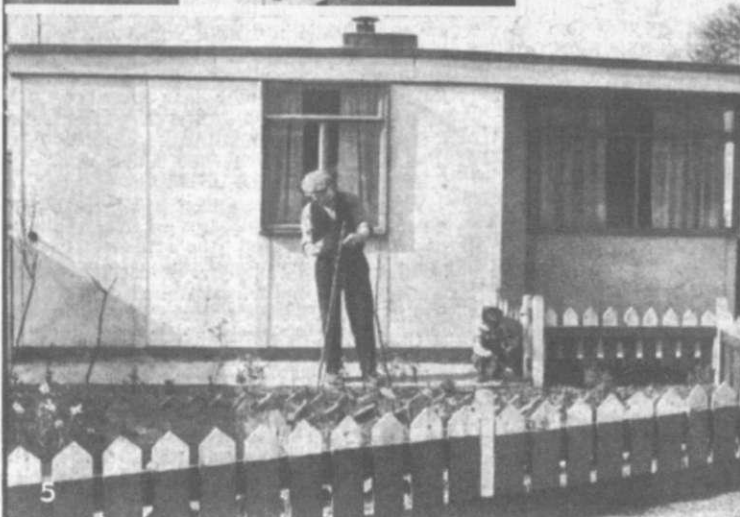
When the Japanese advance had reached its farthest limit, with bases in New Guinea, the Solomons and the Gilbert Islands, another British Colony, Fiji, assumed great strategic importance. It was at once in the front line, and was included for naval purposes in the Southern Pacific Command under a United States Admiral. The Fijian Islands are one of the groups which guard the sea routes from North America to New Zealand and Australia, and they also serve as a link to the north-east with Samoa and the American naval base at Pago Pago, to the south-west with the French Colony of New Caledonia, and to the west with the Anglo-French condominium of the New Hebrides.



## Housing the Homeless: East London's Enterprise



POPLAR'S PREFABRICATED VILLAGE has won favour with East London housewives fortunate enough to occupy these labour-saving temporary homes, at a rental of 14s. 8d. per week. Electric cooker in the kitchen (1) enables meals to be prepared with cleanliness and ease. The fishmonger calls (2), making the fish-queue an irksome memory of the past. Cleaning made easy: all windows are within comfortable reach (3). Siting of the houses secures maximum light and airiness (4). Each has its own plot of garden (5). Public baths (6) are available, appreciated especially by those on the estate who live in Nissen huts let at 10s. per week, which, unlike the "prefabs," have no bathroom. PAGE 84 Photos, Planet News



## 'Our Friendship Will Be an Enduring One'



GRATITUDE TO BRITAIN for the wholehearted support and hospitality given to the Netherlands has been expressed eloquently in both words and gifts. Recently, telephone operators at The Hague presented a Delft plaque to their "sisters" at the International Exchange, London, in appreciation of their parcels to Holland. The plaque (above) bears the inscription, "Food, Peace and Freedom," and is displayed in the London International Exchange (right). A magnificent show of tulips in Regent's Park (below) and other London parks is the result of a generous gift of bulbs from the Netherlands. In a message to Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Lord Tedder, on April 26, 1946, Queen Wilhelmina summed up such gracious acts in the words, "Friendship between you and us . . . will be an enduring one." *Exclusive to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED*



## Our War Leaders in Peacetime

### ATTLEE



OF all our political leaders the Prime Minister is, perhaps, the least ostentatious. No. 10 Downing Street is his London address, and Chequers, in Buckinghamshire, his country residence; but he was much more at home among his books in an ordinary house at Stanmore, on the outskirts of London.

Before he superseded Mr. Churchill as Prime Minister at No. 10 Downing Street, in July 1945 he travelled to Whitehall as often as not on the Underground, again as often as not smoking a pipe; back home in the evening he settled down for a quiet smoke and read. He sold his Stanmore house a few months ago, and today affairs of State cut right across his personal interests.

Before the war Attlee spent his week-ends playing tennis and golf. And if he did not excel at either he had the stamina to play a good hard-court game, and the eye and balance to be more than an average golfer. Now, after five years in the Cabinet, his golf and tennis have become rusty and he contents himself largely with home interests—when opportunity offers.

Newsreel and newspaper give the world details of the Prime Minister's public life: speeches, banquets, conferences. But his private life has escaped the public gaze, largely because it is so very "ordinary." He enjoys the cinema, a game of cards, and a quiet evening with his wife—the fair-haired girl he married, Violet Millar, at a Hampstead church, 24 years ago. She is still his constant companion, but seldom appears in public life with him.

Janet, their eldest daughter, 22-years-old, is a Section Officer in the W.A.A.F. Martin, their 18-year-old son, comes home in Merchant Navy uniform when his ship docks in Britain. He wants to remain in the Merchant Service. Felicity, a year older, is training to

be a nurse. The youngest of the family, 15-year-old Alison, is still at school. When all four children are home the Attlees have a simple and quiet celebration.

Reading is among the Prime Minister's favourite recreations. Ever since he went to Haileybury from his father's home in Putney, where he was born sixty-three years ago, he has been reading, mainly on social matters. His over-riding interest has always been the welfare of his fellow mortals. His father was a solicitor, and Attlee, a Barrister-at-Law specializing in Company Law, was doing well when in his early thirties he left the Bar for social work in London's Mile End slums. There he lived for several years, lecturing at Toynbee Hall and taking part in local government affairs.

THE Attlees spend their time between London and the country. Weekdays find them in their self-contained flat at the top of No. 10 Downing Street. At week-ends Violet Attlee leaves a few hours before her husband to see that everything is shipshape at Chequers before he arrives for a little temporary relaxation.



IN THE STUDY of his former suburban home at Stanmore, Middlesex, Britain's Prime Minister pauses in his meditation on papers of State. In the garden (top left) Mr. Attlee found pleasant diversion from onerous tasks in mowing the lawn.

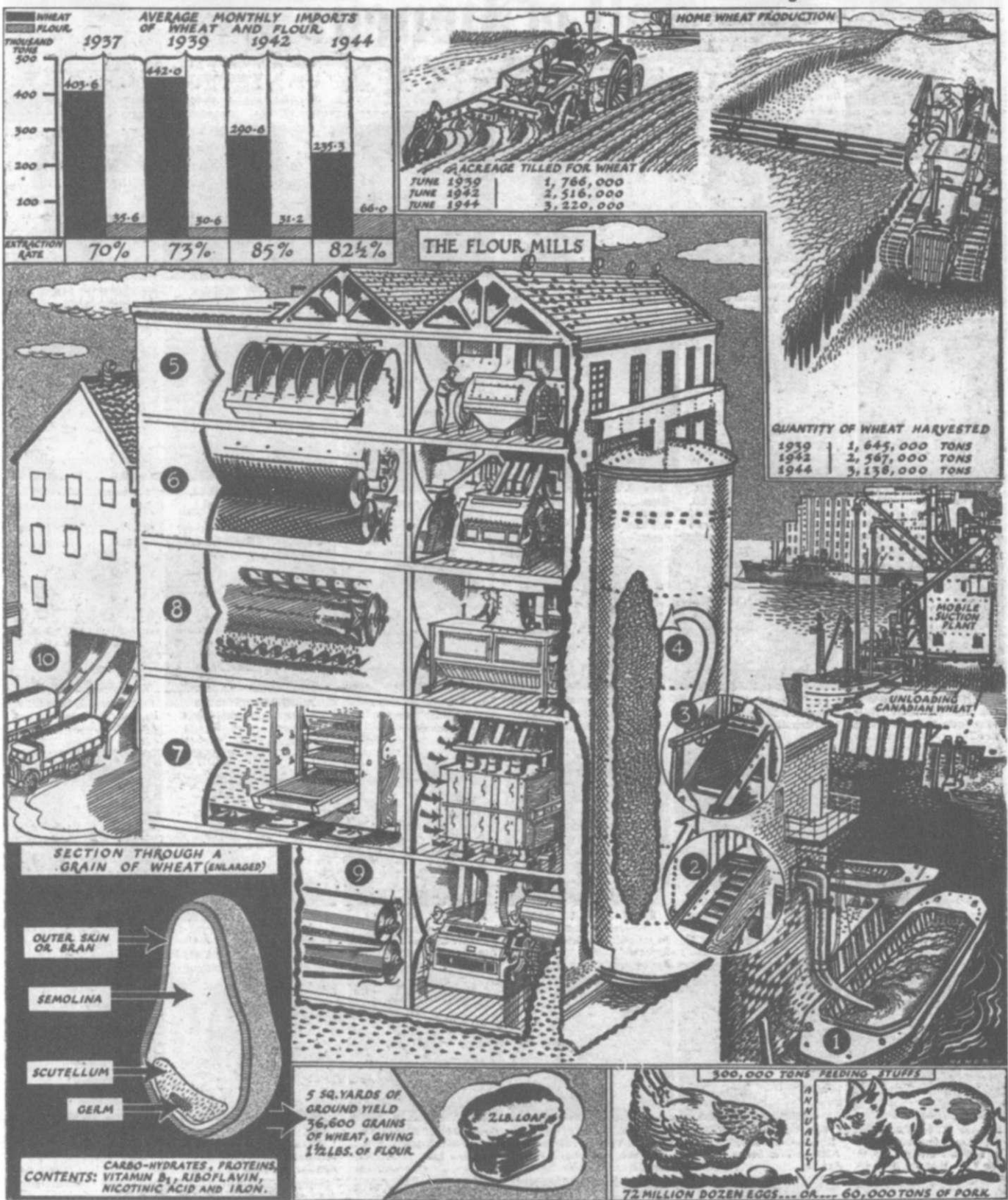
TEA TIME on this occasion was a family affair at Stanmore, where (left) sitting on the arm of her father's chair is 19-year-old Felicity Attlee. Martin, the only son, a cadet in the Merchant Service, stands next to Alison, youngest of the children. Mrs. Attlee, at the tea table, is seated next to the eldest daughter, Janet, who holds a commission in the W.A.A.F. As Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Clement Richard Attlee's residences are now at Downing Street, London, and Chequers, near Weymouth in Buckinghamshire.

Photos, Topical





# Britain's Food: The Battle for Daily Bread



SERIOUS WORLD WHEAT SHORTAGES have resulted in a reduction in weight of Britain's standard 1 lb. loaf to 14 oz., the 2 lb. loaf to 1½ lb., and the 4 lb. loaf to 3½ lb. Announced by the Government on April 25, 1946, to take effect from May 5, this ensures the saving of 12 per cent of the 100,000 tons of flour used weekly to meet Britain's daily requirements of between 16 and 20 million loaves.

This diagram was compiled with the assistance of milling experts, our artist Haworth being given facilities to follow the processes of making wheat into flour at one of our modern mills. Arriving by ship or barge (1) the wheat is taken into the mill at the rate of 60 tons an hour by vacuum suction plant (2). Passing over magnets, which free it from any metallic substances, it is given a first sieve (3) to remove other impurities, then stored in large concrete or metal silos holding upwards of 50,000 tons (4), whence it is taken, as required, by means of moving bands and elevators to the disc separator (5), which removes barley and other seeds.

Next, it passes between saw-toothed rollers (6) which crack the wheat and loosen the outer bran from the inner semolina. The next move is to the plansifter dressers (7) which separate the bran from the semolina, the latter going to the purifiers (8), where it is graded ready for grinding into flour by chilled steel rollers, the grinding and sieving on centrifugal dressers (9) continuing until nothing is left behind but a fibrous substance known as weatings. The flour is automatically packed into bags for delivery (10).

At present a mixture of 10 per cent British and 90 per cent Manitoba (Canadian) wheat is being milled, and the "extraction rate" was recently raised from 80 per cent to 85 per cent—which means that the miller must extract 85 per cent of flour from every grain of wheat, retaining the most nutritious parts—situated in the germ, the scutellum, and the portion immediately adjoining the outer bran. This 5 per cent extraction increase means a loss to Britain of 300,000 tons annually of animal feeding stuffs.

PAGE 87



**Pte. E. BAKER**  
2nd S. Staffs Airborne R.  
In action: Sicily. 9.7.43.  
Age 23. (Lewisham)

Readers of the WAR ILLUSTRATED who wish to submit photographs for inclusion in our Roll of Honour must fill in the coupon which appeared in No. 230. No portraits can be considered that are not accompanied by this coupon.

**Cpl. A. T. BARNETT**  
1/4 Essex Regt.  
In action: Athens. 15.12.44.  
Age 19. (Leominster)



**L/Cpl. B. BEECROFT**  
4th Suffolk Regt.  
Died Jap Camp. 21.7.43.  
Age 24. (Ipswich)



**Pte. D. G. BRACHER**  
Royal Army Medical Corps.  
In action: Walcheren. 1.11.44.  
Age 20. (Bristol)



**L/Sgt. H. BULLARD**  
154/172 Field Regt., R.A.  
Died N. Africa. 19.9.43.  
Age 30. (Walthamstow)



**B. J. BUTTERWORTH**  
Tele. Royal Navy.  
In action: France. 25.6.44.  
Age 19. (Milnrow)



**Sgt. P. V. COOK**  
Royal Air Force.  
In action: Belgium. July 43  
Age 21. (Bromley)



**Flt/Sgt. E. P. HAWKES**  
Royal Air Force.  
In action: Caen. 6.6.44.  
Age 20. (Putney)



**Pte. E. HENRY**  
Durham Light Infantry.  
In action: Caen. 9.8.44.  
Age 28. (Chorlton-cum-Hardy)



**Pte. T. W. HOLICK**  
2nd King's Shropshire L.I.  
In action: Beauville. 6.6.44  
Age 20. (Birmingham)



**Pte. J. J. R. HOOD**  
Royal Artillery, H.A.A.  
In action: at sea. 7.1.43.  
Age 22. (Leyton)



**Rfn. W. H. NEATE**  
Cameronians  
In action: Italy. Jan. 44.  
Age 33. (Gosport)



**O/S W. J. ODELL**  
H.M.S. Firedrake.  
In action: at sea. 17.12.42.  
Age 29. (Walthamstow)



**Stoker C. OSBORN**  
H.M.S. Dunoon.  
In action: at sea. 30.4.40.  
Age 19. (Long Eaton)



**L/Cpl. J. OWEN**  
9th York & Lancs. Regt.  
In action: Arakan. 12.1.45.  
Age 27. (Runcorn)



**Fusilier D. PEACOCK**  
Royal Scots Fusiliers  
Action: Boschkant. 27.10.44.  
Age 19. (Darlington)



**Gnr. D. H. PILBEAM**  
18 Div. Royal Artillery.  
Action: Singapore. 10.2.42.  
Age 24. (Chertsey)



**A/B C. PLANT**  
Royal Navy.  
In action: Anzio. 23.1.44.  
Age 27. (Cheddleton)



**A. RIGGLESFORD**  
Stoker H.M.S. Hood.  
In action. 24.5.41.  
Age 20. (Bexhill-on-Sea)



**Driver M. ROBERTS**  
Royal Army Service Corps.  
Action: Dunkirk. 29.5.40.  
Age 38. (Flint)



**Pte. W. ROBERTS**  
5th Beds. & Herts. Regt.  
Died P.O.W. Siam. 28.11.43.  
Age 24. (Chingford)



**L/Cpl. A. SALMON**  
Royal Engineers.  
In action: Saigon. 26.2.42.  
Age 33. (Rochester)



**L/Cpl. E. E. SCOTT**  
7th K.O.S.B.  
In action: Arnhem. 22.9.44.  
Age 24. (Edgware)



**A/B A. S. SEWELL**  
H.M.S. Charybdis.  
Action: Channel. 23.10.43.  
Age 46. (London)



**Stkr. D. J. SUTTON**  
H.M.S. Calcutta.  
In action: Crete. 1.6.41.  
Age 22. (Nonington)



**Gnr. T. SWINDELL**  
Royal Horse Artillery.  
Middle East. 27.6.42.  
Age 24. (Newcastle/Lyme)



**Sapper T. N. TAYLOR**  
Royal Engineers.  
In action: Sicily. 2.9.43.  
Age 22. (Langley, B/ham).



**Pte. G. THOMPSON**  
King's Own Scottish Bds.  
Action: Walcheren. 2.11.44.  
Age 20. (Liverpool)



**Pte. W. THOMPSON**  
Royal Welch Fusiliers.  
In action: Burma. 5.5.44.  
Age 32. (Northwich)



**Gnr. UNDERWOOD**  
72nd Field Battery, R.A.  
Kasserine Pass. 22.2.43.  
Age 35. (Sunningdale)



**M. W. WALKER**  
L/Tele. H.M.S. Salmon.  
Action: Norway. July 1940  
Age 25. (Grange/Sands)



**Pte. A. WAYMAN**  
King's Shropshire L.I.  
Anzio. 20.2.44.  
Age 25. (Sunderland)



**Cpl. H. WHAIT**  
1st Leicester Regt.  
West Wesol. 21.10.44.  
Age 31. (Leicester)



**Pte. K. C. WILSON**  
No. 2 Commando.  
In action. 3.6.42.  
Age 20. (Wood Green)



**Sergt. WINTERBURN**  
R.A.F.V.R.  
In action. 29.9.43.  
Age 21. (Otley)



**Sgt. J. WOODGATE**  
44th Reconnaissance Regt.  
In action: Italy. 3.12.43.  
Age 24. (Robertsbridge)

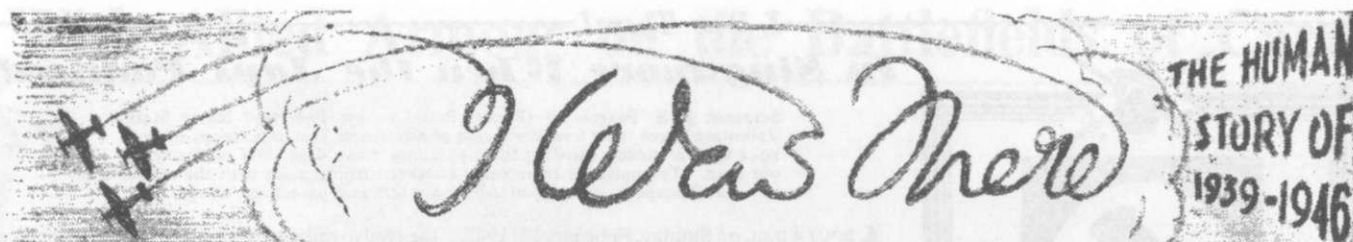


**Pte. A. L. YOUNGS**  
1st Hertfordshire Regt.  
Palestine. 24.4.45.  
Age 27. (Hitchin)



**A/B E. BROUGHTON**  
H.M.S. Carlisle.  
In action: Crete. 22.5.41.  
Age 21. (Hu'1)





## I Saw the Normandy Break-Through

At the time of the tremendous events related here Major (then Lieut.) P. B. Collins, Reconnaissance Corps, was serving with the 51st Highland Division as an Air Photo Interpreter. Vividly he conveys the majesty and terror of the R.A.F. bombing and the gunfire which heralded the opening of our smashing advance towards the Low Countries in the summer of 1944.

My diary for August 7, 1944, reads: "All tee'd up for the big attack, and off now to see what I can see." The attack was to be the start of our final break-through from the Normandy beach-head and, more especially, from that corner east of the Orne River which was probably the toughest and most difficult sector of the whole campaign. Except for one brief respite the 51st Highland Division, with whom I was serving, had been in that corner since the first few days of the Invasion.



Major P. B. COLLINS

At the time of that entry in my diary, Divisional H.Q. was near an old powder factory at Cormelles, a mile or two south-east of Caen. Ourselves the most easterly of the attacking formations, we had further British divisions on our left, on whom we would pivot in our great sweep to the east, before they began their advance. On our right, the great force of the Canadian and, beyond them, further British divisions, were also poised for that leap forward which was to lead before the end of the month to the German disaster of the Falaise Gap.

At the moment we were in a shell-torn, cratered wood, surrounded by a tremendous concentration of weapons of every sort—armour, guns, vehicles—and everywhere the patient infantry. As usual in this sector, life was punctuated by the whine and crump of occasional shells, for there was no part of our area that was yet out of enemy range, and we had done our usual digging-in as soon as we arrived, some hours previously.

### Eight Columns of Armour Moving

Working as a photographic interpreter at divisional headquarters I had for weeks past been getting to know the ground over which our troops were to fight, up to the last minute watching and reporting on the development of the defences that lay out of sight over the ridge beyond Bourgebus and Tilly-la-Campagne. There, when driving up to our present location, we had seen the village disappear suddenly, obliterated in the dust and smoke of an enemy mortar attack; and there, now, I knew that our own troops were lying, waiting their turn to advance.

It was dusk when I left the camp and wandered out towards that ridge. On my right, quite near at hand, things were already on the move. Down what a few hours before had been a narrow, dusty track, the armour was beginning to advance. Eight columns deep it moved, a solid stream of tanks and carriers, S.P. guns and Kangaroos—those troop-carrying tank-hulls whose use set the standard of success for this operation. So dark was it now, and so thick the up-

flung dust, that it would seem impossible to see with normal vision through the driver's narrow slit in a Sherman tank. Yet on they went, nose to tail almost, each commander watching from the open turret-top and controlling his driver with brief orders over the inter-com. It was a crawling, ceaseless stream of metal. They moved slowly, first one column accelerating, then another, with a deadly purposefulness that told me that to walk in among that stream of armour, however slow its movement seemed, would be to court as sure a death as that administered by its individual guns.

I REACHED the top of the rise, and became conscious, above the roar of the armour, of another sound—the drone of the four-engined heavies of the R.A.F. Then, almost immediately, it began. At first, all I could see was the crimson streaming of the markers as they poured through the evening haze over the target area—the village of la Hogue, one of those difficult positions from which, with Tilly-la-Campagne farther west, Jerry had so obstinately refused to budge. Suddenly the air shook with frightful din. I had heard many bombardments, had seen the R.A.F. Lancasters at work at much closer quarters, but this was indescribably frightening. It was as though, down there in the haze of smoke and debris, a vast diabolical whip was being cracked, every crack bringing destruction and death.

For over half an hour I watched this terrible performance. Dark though it now was I could see the outlines of great pillars of smoke and ruin. Every few seconds came the crimson glare of a major explosion and, like long white tendrils, the streaming lines of more markers. This pulverizing

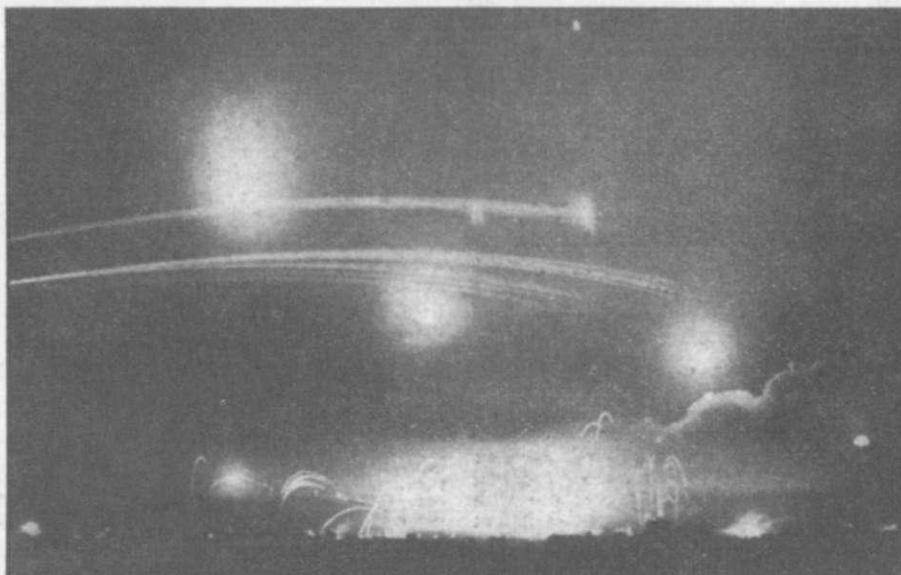
offensive of our heavy bombers indeed had been well named "Operation Totalize."

Away to the right, down in the valley at May-sur-Orne, a similar programme of timed destruction was in progress. I could hear no sound of this, though the flashes of the bigger bombs were occasionally visible, and I knew that the greatest, the most impressive "show" was yet to come—the artillery barrage. Now, and very suddenly, the whole horizon was ringed with flashes, red, yellow, orange and white. The briefest interval of complete stillness, and then the first bellow as the sound of the nearest guns reached me. Gradually, the noise intensified, finally becoming one ceaseless shattering roar.

### Searchlights Sprang Into Life

This barrage covered the whole front, and as far as I could see in either direction the sky was alive with flashes. Behind, on the slopes of Mondeville and Faubourg de Vaucelles, that hard-won suburb of Caen, the medium guns—our famous "five-fives"—were at work, while the American Long Toms and our own heavies threw their weight from even farther back. A hundred yards to my right a troop of American S.P. field guns were firing, but their flashless charge left them almost invisible in the dark; only when the scene was lit by some other battery could I see the smoke curling upwards from their muzzles, which stuck up high out of the tank-like hull of their tracked mounting. On either flank single Bofors guns began to fire, not at hostile aircraft this time but to mark with their red tracer the lines of our axis for the advancing troops. The sole human sound in this bedlam was the occasional fire order from the commander of some gun crew.

And then, from all around, from every eminence and hill, searchlights sprang into life. Directed at a low angle on to the base of the clouds, they gave a semblance of uncanny moonlight to the entire battlefield. For a while yet the guns would roar their barrage, as the tanks and their infantry, achieving with the Kangaroos the surprise



THE BOMBING SOUTH OF CAEN, on the night of August 7-8, 1944, which heralded the Allied break-through in Normandy, grew in intensity until it became "indescribably frightening," as told above. The tracer-filled sky over the German positions is viewed here at the commencement of the R.A.F. bombardment.

PAGE 89

Photo, British Official





Colours: Red Rat in White Circle on Red Background.

#### 7TH ARMoured DIVISION

**M**OULDDED in the Desert at Mersa Matruh, 1938, under the guidance of Maj.-Gen. P. C. S. Hobart, the 7th Armoured Division, familiarly known as the "Desert Rats," grew from an indifferent collection of armour to a force whose power was felt from Alamein to Berlin. In its first major battle, at Sidi Barrani in December 1940, the Division advanced to storm Tobruk on January 22, 1941, and later reached Benghazi.

The next two years saw fluctuating fortunes in which the "Desert Rats" were engaged against Rommel's Afrika Korps—at El Agheila in April 1941; in the "Battle of the Axis" offensive of June-July; and at Sidi Rezegh in November, where V.C.s were gained by Maj.-Gen. "Jock" Campbell (portrait in page 512, Vol. 5); Lieut. G. Ward-Gunn (3 R.H.A.); and Rfn. J. Beeley (1 K.R.R.C.), the last two posthumously (portraits in page 694, Vol. 5).

In 1942 heavy losses were sustained on the Gazala Line in May; at Ruweisat Ridge in June-July; and defending Alamein from which the final British offensive was launched in October 1942 when the Division, breaking through and commencing the pursuit of the Afrika Korps, captured Benghazi for the third time, on November 20, and entered Tripoli on January 23, 1943. In Tunisia it took Sfax (April 10), and Enfidaville (April 20). Transferred from the 8th Army to the British 1st Army the Division was the first of the Allies to enter Tunis, on May 7, 1943, thus completing a 2,000-mile "swan" in six months.

**B**Y-PASSING Sicily, the "Desert Rats" were the first British armour to land in Italy, at Salerno, September 1943. In bitter fighting some of the Division led the way round Vesuvius while others entered Naples on October 1. After fighting across the Volturno and along the Garigliano the Division was recalled to England to prepare for D-Day. It landed at Arromanches, Normandy, on June 6, 1944. It assisted in the assault on Caen (July 18); crossed the Seine (August 31), and later the Somme, to capture Ghent on September 10. After crossing the Rhine (March 27, 1945), the Division took Hamburg on May 3. The last chapter in the history of the "Desert Rats" was written in Berlin where, as occupational troops, Mr. Churchill paid the Division a glowing tribute.

**C**OMMANDERS of the Division were Maj.-Gen. Sir M. O'M. Creagh (1939-41); Lieut.-Gen. W. H. E. Gott (1941-42); Maj.-Gen. "Jock" Campbell, V.C. (1942); Lieut.-Gen. F. W. Messervy (1942); Maj.-Gen. J. M. Renton (1942); Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Harding (1942-43); Maj.-Gen. G. W. E. J. Erskine (1943-44); and Maj.-Gen. L. O. Lyne (1944).

that was so essential, pushed down to their objective. As I picked my way back to camp in that eerie light I knew that "Operation Totalize" was truly under way.

It was only later, calling at the "Ops" lorry on my way to bed in the early hours, that I heard how successful it had been: how the first of the German defensive lines, their occupants driven below ground by our bombing and kept there by our gunfire, had let our tanks through in accordance with their usual plan, only to find that they had at the same time admitted the infantry! Surrendering, the Germans left their second line to fight or run, as run they finally did, not stopping until they had reached the canals and rivers of the Low Countries.

### I Was There!

## In Singapore When the Japs Pounced

Sergeant J. E. Pearce, 1st (Perak) Battalion, the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force, tells how the threat of advancing Japanese troops early in 1942 took a sudden startling turn, entailing 1,200 days' loss of liberty for our men. Dramatically there came another turning-point with the arrival at Singapore, in 1945, of Allied aircraft and parachute troops.

**A**BOUT 4 p.m. on Sunday, February 15, 1942, Japanese troops were dangerously close to the Kallang Civil Airport. What was happening elsewhere on the Island was not known to the two companies of local Volunteers and the one company of the Manchester Regiment, who were retiring under heavy mortar fire along the East Coast Road. Orders were given to retire over Kallang Bridge and make a stand there, fighting to the last man and the last round. We got over the bridge where a large bus was overturned and the steel anti-tank barricade raised.

At 4.20 we were told to pile our arms—because the war was over! Also we were told to destroy any papers that might be of use to the enemy, as we were now prisoners of war. We were then taken to a nearby Chinese school to await what the Future might bring forth. The school was old, dirty and insanitary, an awful contrast to the splendid aerodrome a few hundred yards away and on the construction of which so many millions of dollars had been spent.

#### The 'Poached Egg' Flag Appeared

An hour or so later a Japanese officer drove up, got out of his car, produced a large-scale map of Singapore, and addressed me in Nipponese. As I did not understand him and he spoke no English, he grunted, folded up his map and drove off. Such was my first contact with my new "hosts." A restless night passed, with harrowing, shamed thoughts going confusedly through our minds—and burrowing, unashamed insects going over our bodies.

Throughout the following day we did what we could to feed and clean ourselves. Numbers of Japanese troops in trucks passed up and down the road, showing few signs of their "glorious victory." The Japanese flag (known to us as the "poached egg") appeared at a number of houses, but there were no demonstrations. The Chinese near us continued to give us what help they could. Orders came that all the British troops were to go to the barracks at Changi on Tuesday morning.

Three trucks were available for my company, to carry the men's gear and also unfit personnel. The remainder had to march

the twelve miles, and they covered the distance in good style, arriving in Changi in well under four hours. Fortunately for me I was driving the first truck. Leaving at 7 a.m., the convoy was stopped at Kallang Air Port entrance by a Jap sentry. He looked at my watch and ring as if he would like to take them, as was the usual procedure. However, he transferred his curiosity to my identification disc, murmured a few words, stepped back, bowed and waved me on. And so began the first of the many moves we made under Japanese control.

The barracks at Changi were large and substantial and had suffered very little damage during the blitz. They were ideally situated near the sea, off which there was always a cooling breeze. As the number of men now to be accommodated was very much larger than in pre-war days, each was allowed about 6 feet by 4 feet of floor space. Optimism was still high, and we could not see ourselves being held for very long; but we also realized that our requirements had to be necessities, as we had no room for storing kit or means for transporting it when we were shifted.

Inside the barbed wire we were still under our own administration, which meant that we had our own offices, cookhouses, stores and so on. Rations were supplied by the Japanese and consisted mostly of rice and green vegetables with occasional issues of fish or meat. A number of stores had been brought in by ourselves, chiefly tins of bully, milk, M & V, and vegetables. These, however,



**LAYING DOWN ARMS** in the courtyard of Raffles College, Singapore. On that fateful day in February 1942 the fighting for these British troops was over, but their captivity was to last until the end of the war itself.

## With Allied Armour on the Battlefields of Caen



ON THE FIERCELY CONTESTED BATTLEFIELDS round Caen in Normandy—one heavy engagement is described by Major Collins in pages 89-90. In Cormeilles (1) liberated by the Allied Armies on August 24, 1944, an armoured car keeps roads covered while a Churchill tank burns in the background. Earlier in the month 1,000 R.A.F. bombers cleared the way for a break-through S.E. of Caen. British and Canadian armour move up (2). At Cormelles, H.Q. of the 51st (Highland) Division, on August 7, a troop commander issues rations to his tank crew (3).

PAGE 9:



~~~~~ I Was There! ~~~~~



LIBERATION DAY AT CHANGI PRISON, SINGAPORE, was heralded in August 1945 by Allied aircraft dropping parachute troops and supplies. Raising excited cheers at the gates of the gaol (where Sgt. Pearce spent part of his captivity) are some of the 6,700 British prisoners who, with 2,600 civilian internees, were numbered among the 37,000 captives of the Japanese at Singapore. Within three weeks of the Allied landing, on September 5, 1945, almost all of them were on their way home. Photo, Topical

did not last long, and soon we were issuing one tin of bully to 22 men—three-fifths of an ounce each. The last of the milk was used at the rate of 48 men to a 1-lb. tin. Digestive troubles began immediately, owing to the sudden change of diet.

The water supply was out of action, so that it had to be hand-carried and consequently we were severely rationed. Firewood was obtained by felling trees in the camp area. The hygiene wallahs got down to their job, as did the medical staff, and in a short time the camp routine was running smoothly. As was so obvious through all the P.O.W. days, the harder the times the better the men pulled together. Gardeners, amateur and otherwise, began cultivating any spare ground. Many jeered at what looked like pessimism; little did the majority think that 1,200 days would pass before we would be free again.

WAYS and means of making the meagre rations look and taste differently from just rice were devised, with extraordinary results. The Japanese did not trouble the camp as a whole; what went on between our Command and theirs I do not know. As the camp was large in area a certain amount of freedom was possible. There was sea-bathing, and one could visit friends in other units. Rumours and false news items were continually passing around, so that our hopes rose and fell daily. Soon, however, the realists were in the majority and we settled down to routine. After about a couple of months the Japanese called for a working party of engineers to go to Singapore to help put the essential services in order again. Assurances were given that the men would not be employed in helping the Nipponese war effort; in spite of which, from now on parties were continually being sent away on work that was definitely helping the enemy.

In mid-May, 500 of us—a mixture of British and Australians—were taken to Blakang Mati, an island fortress in Singapore harbour. Living tightly packed in two barrack blocks surrounded by wire that did not allow any walking space, we ran our own cookhouses, canteen and "Q" stores with goods provided by our "hosts." Blakang Mati was a Japanese bomb dump, and most of the work that had to be done was shifting bombs to and from Singapore. It was a curious coincidence that on five occasions during 1943-44 all men were carrying bombs to Singapore immediately after a large hospital ship had arrived in port. Although we did not actually load this ship, we were convinced that she was carrying arms to some base a few days' journey away.

Qualified men were picked to look after the Diesel power-house, the water supply and the Japanese motor and carpenter shops. Others acted as boatmen on the ferry service to and from Singapore. One fatigue that was popular was working in the Japanese cook-house and "Q" stores; one always had the chance of acquiring an extra spot of food! The building of a Japanese temple took up a lot of time. I presume it was some form of War Memorial. Anyhow, it was quite impressive when completed. Much of the work that we were made to do was, of course, very galling, and the average Japanese guard naturally took full advantage of his newly acquired powers to make things worse.

There were many unfortunate incidents, few of the boys coming through without some kind of beating. Much of the trouble arose through language difficulties, feigned or otherwise, and the natural desire of the fellows to sabotage the job as much as possible. Bombs were dropped into the sea

during loading and unloading, oil drums punctured, tools broken or lost; in fact, as many difficulties as possible we put in the way of the Nips. As their army discipline is based on physical punishment for mistakes, the Japanese guards automatically used the same methods to correct their prisoners. Where and with what they suddenly and savagely struck was seldom considered.

Human Heads Displayed on Stands

The camp was healthy enough, the only deaths being due to accidents. After one drowning our officers held an inquiry in the barracks, as it was said that the guard had pushed the unfortunate Aussie into the sea and he was carried away by a swift tide. The Japanese said the Aussie had slipped. They decided to inquire into the matter on their own, and sent for the witnesses and the Australian major one night near eleven o'clock. The Australians refused to change their story, and were unmercifully beaten.

The major was told that his men were lying. His reply "My men do not tell lies!" so angered the Japs that the major was picked up and flung about the room. After more talk and kickings the Australians were sent back to their barracks. It is to be hoped that these Nips will be caught and brought to trial in Singapore.

It was toward the end of 1942 when I was over in Singapore collecting rations that I saw one method the Japanese employed to try to control their local enemies. On stands, outside the Station entrance, the Post Office and the Cathay Building, were the heads of half a dozen Asiatics who had been executed for being anti-Japanese. The stands bearing the heads carried large posters "telling the world"—as a warning. The main camp had been moved westward

I Was There!

a few miles to Selarang, where the Gordons had lived prior to the outbreak of the war in the Far East. The main buildings became the hospital, the bungalows and married quarters being used as barracks. Once again the men were crowded, but as the buildings were not huge the atmosphere was different. Rations were far from what they should have been, but many new ideas had been put into practice. The variety of the cookhouse products was amazing. The gardens now covered about 150 acres and produced about 30 tons of vegetables per month. Although not of high quality these "greens and roots" helped in no small way to eke out the Japanese supplies, which were irregular in quantity and quality. Coconuts were also collected and helped to flavour the rice, but we could never get nearly enough. There was plenty of room to walk about if one had the time and energy. The shows at the theatres, the concerts, lectures and classes all helped to keep us cheery.

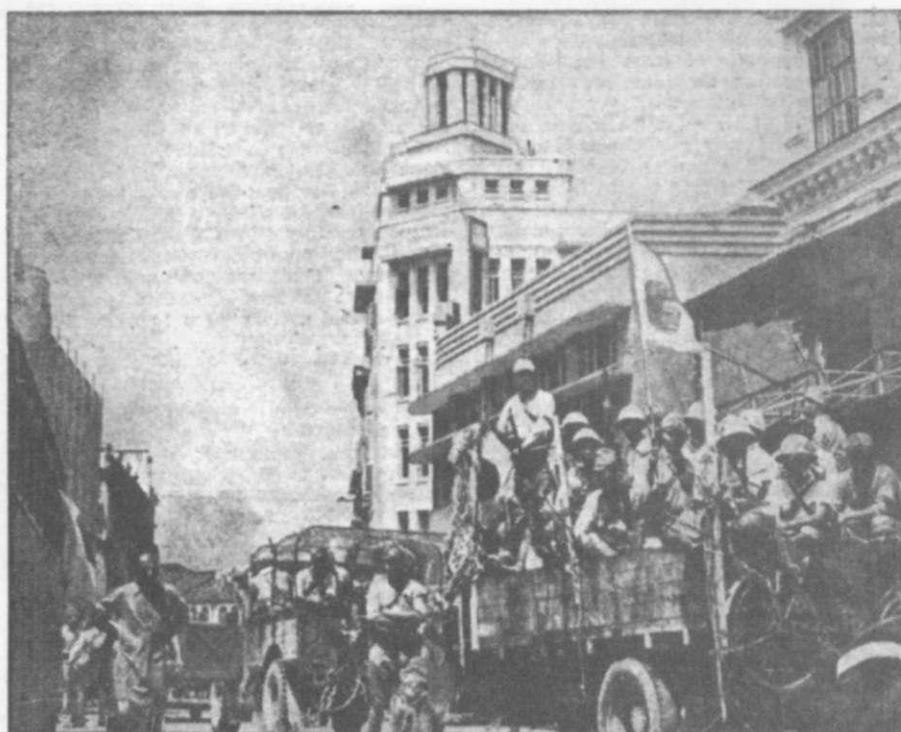
We Watched the Flying Fortresses

In November-December 1943 word began to come through telling of the awful conditions that existed in the Siamese and Burma camps where the workers on the Siam-Burma railway were living. Not long afterwards the first of the survivors arrived—all hospital cases, starved and ill. To describe the emaciated, ulcerous condition of these men is impossible. Unless seen it is well-nigh impossible to believe what the human body can withstand when the will to get through is there. These lads when able could still smile and joke, but the lack of medical supplies and invalid foods hampered their recovery grievously.

Early in 1944 there was a change in the Japanese command, which resulted in our camp being told to shift again. This move meant transferring the civil internees from Changi Gaol to a camp in Singapore, while we took over the gaol. The gaol itself was far from being big enough to hold the 10,000 of us, so that bamboo huts had to be built. Practically all the materials supplied by the Japanese had been used at least once before, and great credit is due to our men who transported and rebuilt the "hutted camp" outside the gaol walls.

Just over 4,000 men were put inside a building designed and built to hold some 600 convicts. The bamboo huts in addition to accommodating men were made into hospital wards. Numerous and remarkable were the medical and surgical feats performed by the doctors and surgeons in the most difficult of conditions and without anything like sufficient or proper materials.

Working parties went out daily to labour in the gardens, on the drome, or wherever the Nips required a job to be done. Aerodrome work was hard and distasteful, the guards mostly being a tough type. Many were the beatings. But much was forgotten when the



JAPANESE TRUCKS IN SINGAPORE, seen passing through Finlayson Square in 1942, packed with temporary conquerors. Believing that their triumph was a permanent one, there was to come a turning of the tables, with defeat in 1945, when their "poached egg" flag would be hauled down.

first Allied planes came and used the drome at Liberation time! Most of us will never forget November 5, 1944, when the first Allied air raid took place. Daily after that we watched the skies, and often were rewarded with the sight of scores of Flying Fortresses doing a grand job of bombing at the docks or naval base.

As the Japanese realized that their spell of power was being seriously threatened, working parties from the camp were sent all over the island to dig tunnels to shelter the Jap troops. We knew this work would not last very long; our news service continued to keep us up to date, so toward the middle of August 1945 we were not surprised when working parties were sent back into the gaol.

Then one day Allied planes came low over the gaol and dropped three parachutists and much-needed supplies on the drome, and we began to realize that our long wait was over. More men and supplies were landed, then the taking-over troops came ashore—and the Japanese guards disappeared. Under a most efficient R.A.P.W.I. organization, parties were soon arranged to begin the journey to Blighty. The unheralded visit of Lady Louis Mountbatten at that time came as a great surprise. Her enthusiastic friendliness and solicitude for the boys will be long remembered by all of us who survived.

bombs which fell near the White Tower, one within seven yards of it. The modern buildings nearby were badly blitzed, but the Norman building took it unflinchingly—except the windows.

On October 5, at 11.30 p.m., a stick of bombs was released over the Tower and Tower Hill, two falling on North Bastion. This building had suffered considerable damage on September 11, and now it collapsed like a pack of cards. Our only warder casualty throughout the War was killed here, also an old lady of 70. There were ten other occupants and two Alsatian dogs, and all had marvellous escapes. The area around was floodlit from the fires of a burst gas main on the hill; metal from the main was flying about in all directions, and it was two hours before the fire-fighters were able to get the flames under control.



Chief Warder A. H. COOK, D.C.M., M.M., B.E.M., of the Tower of London, author of these memories of days and nights of ferocious blitz during 1940-41. Photo, Fox

In the Tower of London Under Fire

Chief Warder A. H. Cook, D.C.M., M.M., B.E.M., of His Majesty's Tower of London, records its terrible ordeals from the start of the night-blitzing to the arrival there, as a prisoner, of Rudolf Hess, the Deputy Fuehrer. He presents vivid pen-pictures of the Capital standing out in flaming silhouette.

THE night-blitzing started on September 7, 1940, and although no bombs fell in the Tower on that occasion our public services were all affected. The electric light failed for several hours, we were without gas for seven weeks, and the water was filthy. The first high explosive fell in our Moat at 3.20 a.m. on September 11, near North Bastion; and though there were no casualties, walls varying from eight to ten feet in thickness were cracked right through. Many incendiaries fell around Tower Hill and Great Tower Street on

September 16, and started several fires. At 3.40 a.m. on September 23, two H.E.s arrived. One hit the military quarters near the Officers' Mess, completely demolishing a portion of it and killing one soldier. The other fell on a warder's quarters at No. 4 The Casemates; fortunately this warder was on night duty and his wife had gone to the shelter, otherwise they must both have been killed. The Conqueror's Keep had a very narrow escape at 9.35 p.m. on October 1, when the Tower rocked at the impact of two

I Was There!

The next fell at 9.15 a.m. on October 10, between the Queen's Steps and Tower Pier, causing damage to the Byward Tower, and on this day an order was issued to all Yeomen Warders advising them to evacuate their families to the country. Tower Bridge had been put out of action, and remained so till the 14th. At 2.30 a.m. on October 15 a bomb fell on Tower Dock near the West Gate, demolishing and setting fire to the General Navigation Company's ticket office which was being used by the R.N.V.R. as a guard room. The sentry was badly injured, and two ratings sleeping in the hut were burned beyond recognition. Hostile planes were overhead most of the night, and the noise of bursting bombs intermingled with the barrage was terrific.

The night of Sunday, December 8, was decidedly unpleasant. Flares were dropped at 6.30 p.m. and it soon became evident that the enemy meant business. At 9.40 p.m. the Tower shook when a bomb hit the Port of London Authority building. Incendiaries which began to fall on the Tower about two hours later, and were all dealt with by the Warders and military, were immediately followed by H.E.s, one of which fell near the West Gate, killing a soldier and the Tower electrician, also injuring the landlord and landlady of the Tiger Inn nearby. The Middle and Byward Towers suffered much damage.

By midnight fires completely encircled us. To add to the inferno more incendiaries fell at 12.30 a.m., and there was an immediate rush to smother them. One had lodged on the roof of the miniature range, but a hurried message brought a Yeoman Warder with his trailer pump into action and the fire was under control in fifteen minutes. This miniature range had to be saved at all costs, for it was here that spies were shot in the Tower—and we did not wish to be deprived of this honour! The honour occurred only once—on August 15, 1941, when a German spy named Josef Jakobs was shot at 7.15 a.m. It gave us a certain amount of satisfaction to have preserved the range for his benefit.

While we were attending to incendiaries on that night of Dec. 8, 1940, a heavy bomb fell on Tower Hill, near the foundations of

the Roman Wall, and scattered debris all over the place. A stone weighing 17 lb. came over the Moat and crashed through my skylight; an incendiary missed my other skylight by a foot. And so the night wore on, bombs crashing down unceasingly for eight hours. The east end of All Hallows Church had a direct hit, completely destroying the altar. Two also fell on the Children's Beach.

By dawn our poor old Tower looked in a pitiful plight, for hardly a portion of it had escaped the fury of the night. Most of its windows had been blown out, or were hanging awry. Glass was strewn everywhere. Doors were off their hinges, ceilings down, and blackout curtains torn to ribbons.

I Wanted to Shoot the Signaller

Our worst night to date was December 29, when Hitler tried to destroy the City of London by fire. The alert sounded at 6.8 p.m. and guns were in action as the German planes approached. By 6.30 many fires had started north of the Tower and around Wapping. Fifteen minutes later showers of incendiaries fell on the Tower, Tower Hill and all adjacent areas. Some were of an explosive type and had to be tackled warily. Others were burning themselves out around the Moat and on Tower Hill, giving a brilliant prominence to the whole of the Tower, the P.L.A. building, and Tower Bridge.

Many incendiaries had lodged on the roofs, and by 7 p.m. Skipper and East's buildings, opposite the West Gate, were afire. For three hours this was a blazing furnace. Fanned by a strong breeze nothing could stop the flames; the fire-fighters were helpless. At 7.15 an incendiary, which had fallen unobserved on the roof of the Sergeants' Mess, started a fire. A strong wind soon had this out of control in spite of the valiant efforts of the Tower fire-fighters. The whole building, comprising the Sergeants' Mess, Corporals' Room, complete N.A.A.F.I. Institutes, grocery bar, Q.M. office, stores, main guard room and the orderly room, was completely gutted—except for the orderly room.

Whilst patrolling the Casemates, about 7.30 p.m., I saw what appeared to be someone signalling in Morse from a top window of a house in Trinity Square. I watched for a

while, in company with some soldiers, then I decided to go and investigate. I found two policemen on the hill, told them my story, and persuaded them to accompany me. There was a terrific din, and my throat was parched from the fumes of the bombs and smoke of the fires. Flares in the sky and fires on the ground had turned night into day, and it was obvious that whoever had been signalling had seen our approach and stopped. So not being able to verify my statement I returned disconsolately to the Tower.

An hour later the signalling started again. I tried to borrow a rifle or a Lewis gun and go on the ramparts to have a crack at that window; but no one seemed prepared to let me have either. Next morning the top floor of that house was ablaze, so I had the satisfaction of knowing there would be no more signalling from there.

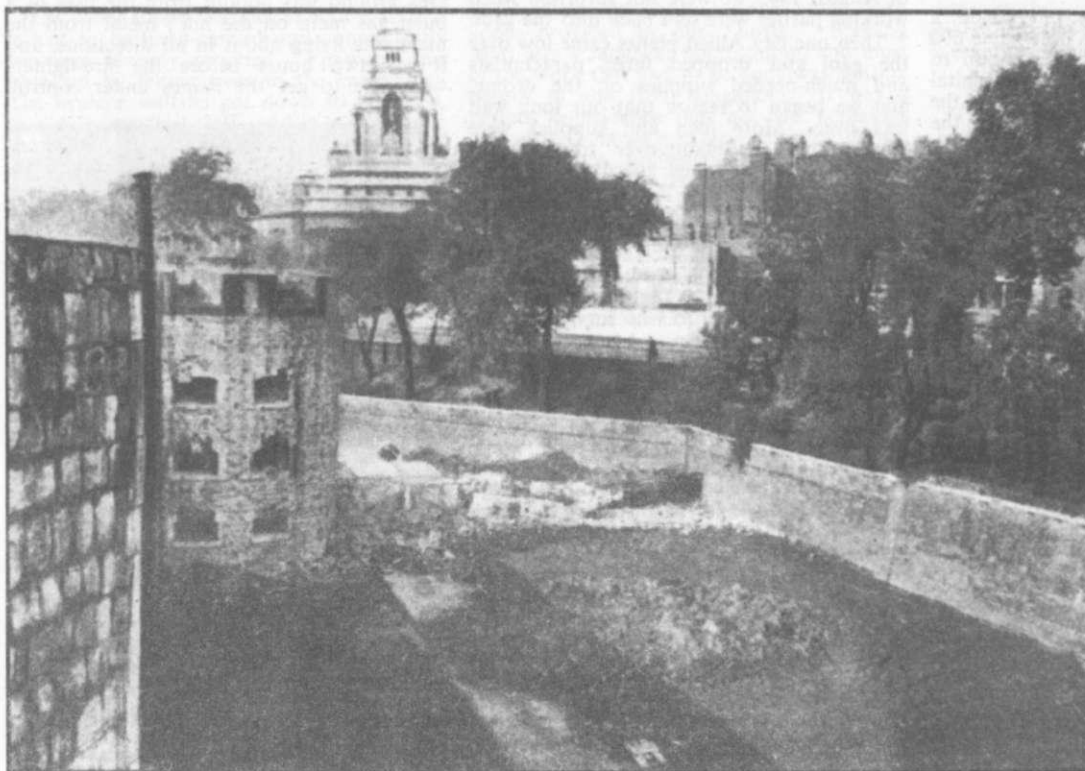
The N.A.A.F.I. block was now a raging furnace. Fire hoses were being directed at it from the White Tower, but nothing would stay the flames' progress; only the thick walls of the White Tower saved it from destruction. At 8 p.m. fires were raging all along the river as far as the eye could see, both east and west, and flames were everywhere on Tower Hill. One started in the King's House, but was successfully dealt with; had it got a hold all the Tudor buildings on Tower Green would have been destroyed and many warders would have been rendered homeless.

The air appeared to be full of planes, yet at times there was little gun-fire. Only those who have been under continuous bombing know the comfort a heavy barrage can give. You get the satisfaction of knowing it is probably just as uncomfortable up there as it is down below. We hoped our fighters were up amongst them, as there were occasional bursts of M.G. fire. About 9 p.m. the blitzing began to ease up. At 11.25, when all seemed quiet, a bomb hurtled down, and five minutes later the Tower shook; this was probably a delayed action. The All Clear sounded at 11.40 p.m. Although of comparatively short duration (5 hours 32 minutes) the raid had been very severe.

From the ramparts facing the City we had a grandstand view of the fires. On the Hill great blocks of masonry were crashing. Firemen were everywhere, one moment silhouetted brilliantly by flames, the next completely blotted out by sparks or shadowed by a mantle of smoke. Against hopeless odds they struggled on in the glistening streets now running with water, or perched precariously at the top of their fire ladders. Sparks had settled in the ruins of Chapman's Buildings and, fanned by a strong breeze, soon added to the destruction, taking in the Mazawattee block. At 12.45 a.m. flames were rising double the height of these buildings and the heat could be felt as far away as the Brass Mount at the north-east corner of the Tower.

IN THE TOWER MOAT, drained and used as a parade ground, the first high explosive bomb fell on September 11, 1940. Beyond its crater (in centre of moat) is seen debris of the North Bastion, which collapsed "like a pack of cards" when struck by two bombs on October 5.

PAGE 94



I Was There!

According to later reports over 1,500 fires were started that night, and the Tower and Tower Hill had more than their share. The N.A.A.F.I. at dawn was still burning furiously, also Trinity House. Many buildings in Byward Street and Great Tower Street were either gutted or badly damaged. The church of All Hallows was completely destroyed, also the Interpreter's House, and the Public Ledger printing press.

For over 700 years the "Ceremony of the Keys" had been carried out without a break, but it had to be cancelled this night, not by falling bombs but by reason of the N.A.A.F.I. block being a blazing furnace at 10 p.m. The men of the guard from whom the escort would have been drawn were too busy salvaging belongings from the guard room under the burning N.A.A.F.I. So for the first time in history the Ceremony was called off.

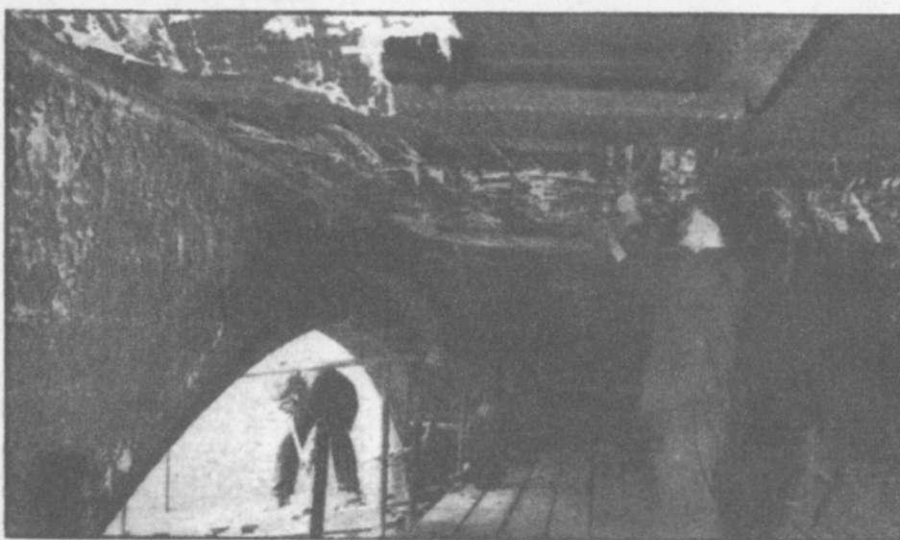
In the early hours of January 10, 1941, incendiaries fell around the S.E. corner, some in the Moat and on the wharf front, in the river and on Tower Bridge. They were all successfully dealt with. About 7.13 p.m. more fell, just missing the Tower. Six days later, at 3.47 a.m., things were rather quiet and I was resting on the settee when suddenly there were three explosions. The windows blew open, glass clattered down and debris could be heard falling. I went out to investigate, and what a grand night it was! There had been a fall of snow, and the brilliant moon seemed to turn our grimy old Tower into a fairyland. But dark patches in the snow showed where debris had settled.

THESE bombs were definitely intended for Tower Bridge, but one fell on barges moored just west of the Bridge, setting them on fire and causing some casualties. There followed a quiet spell of exactly three months duration. The peaceful nights were broken on April 16. The alert sounded at 9.3 p.m., and soon enemy aircraft were dropping flares, of a chandelier type with twelve lights. These came down S.E. of the river, and, drifting in our direction, started one of our worst nights to date. Woolwich, Old Kent Road, and the Elephant and Castle direction appeared to be receiving the brunt of the initial attack, but later it developed everywhere, and the Tower was in the thick of it.

By 9.45 fires were burning everywhere. Suddenly there was a swish of a bomb, followed by a vivid flash and a terrific crack. Out came the window frames, followed by the familiar sound of breaking glass. Black-out blinds were torn to threads, and there were frantic shouts of "Put those — lights out!" For seven hours pandemonium continued. It was at its worst between 3 and 4 a.m. Planes were coming in from all directions. Sometimes the barrage was heavy, sometimes not a gun could be heard. The prowling enemy was dropping his loads of death wherever he wished.

Against a starlit sky the spires and tall buildings of tragic London stood out in silhouette, heavy billows of smoke rising as the flames shot up. The night was red, but the red turned to white where incendiaries were falling. Many bombs seemed to screech right over us, and their impact would shake the ground like a jelly. With dawn the old Tower came grimly to life, its sleepless residents beginning all over again the task of clearing-up.

The next night of horror was May 10, in my opinion the fiercest raid of the War. The alert sounded at 11 p.m. and lasted for 6 hours and 50 minutes. Guns were soon in action, but at no time was the barrage very heavy; and for long periods not a gun could be heard, although the sky was full of aircraft. As 33 planes were brought down, 29 of them by our fighters, it must be presumed the sky was left clear for the latter. A good job they made of it! At 11.23 the first bomb fell, and from then they were too numerous to record.



BOMB-DAMAGED CEILING ABOVE THE TRAITOR'S GATE is here being repaired. Dating (it is believed) from the reign of Henry the Third, the arched entrance, facing the Thames, was originally known as the Water Gate. It became Traitor's Gate by reason of the fact that State Prisoners were brought to the Tower by that entrance. Photo, Planet News

Warders and military personnel pounced on all incendiaries, and although there must have been at least 100 on the Tower during that night, no serious fires were started. H.E. bombs, too, whistled down. At 2.30 a.m. there were four terrific crashes, which blasted out windows and brought ceilings tumbling everywhere. Tower Pier had received a direct hit and was no more. A naval boat anchored to the pier sank with the pier on top of it, drowning several naval ratings.

From the ramparts we could see warehouses in Lower Thames Street burning furiously, Great Tower Street and Seething Lane all afire. Trinity Square looked in a bad way, also the Minorities, St. Catherine's Dock House, and buildings behind the Mint. Once more the Tower was surrounded by fire. The blazing buildings stood out in stark relief, tongues of flame leaping from one place to another, the moonlit sky frequently blotted out by huge rolling billows of black or brown or white smoke.

When dawn arrived, practically all streets around the Tower were closed. People wishing

to get to the west had to make a long detour. Miles of firemen's hoses lay everywhere, like huge serpents, making roads practically impossible for traffic. Men of the National Fire Service were struggling valiantly with their stupendous tasks, their faces smoke-blackened, their eyes bloodshot, their clothing drenched. Proudly I raise my hat to them! It was the last big raid by piloted aircraft and no more serious damage was done to the Tower.

On May 17, 1941, at about 10.30 a.m., a Mc.109 was brought into the Tower, followed by several cars and outriders. We, the warders, wondered who on earth our visitor was. It proved to be none other than Rudolf Hess, the Deputy Fuehrer! He was imprisoned in the King's House, in the room in which Herr Gerlach, German Consul for Iceland, had been imprisoned from June to September 1940. The arrival of Hess gave us plenty of scope for speculation. Had he turned traitor to his country? Had he brought us peace terms? We were still guessing when, on the third day after his arrival, he was removed to other and distant quarters.

NEW FACTS AND FIGURES

FAMILIES of imprisoned anti-Nazis were expected to pay 1s. 6d. a day for the upkeep of the prisoner. When the prisoner's head was cut off they had to pay £15 for the cost of execution. Detailed bills were sent in, including such items as the washing off of blood, and the final cleaning, states United Nations War Crimes Commission.

A TYPICAL statement of accounts sent by the Court's Cashier in Berlin on February 15, 1943, addressed to the heirs and successors of Anton Slavik, former Director of the Brno Broadcasting Station, for the attention of his widow Marie: charge for death sentence, 300 marks; charge for defence counsel, 81'96 marks; cost of transport, 33'60 marks; cost of imprisonment for 986 days, 1,479 marks; cost of execution including fee, last wish, travelling expenses and printing of poster, 145'15 marks. Widow Slavik had to pay £103 5s. for the death of her husband!

WAR figures in the provincial areas of Cologne, issued by the Control Commission for Germany in April 1946, show 10,000 people killed; 18,000 injured; 43,000 totally bombed out; 8,934 houses completely destroyed, 54,375 partly demolished; 260 factories and 11 mines destroyed; 672 farms destroyed, 3,089 partly damaged; 3,000 head of cattle killed as well as 2,190 sheep, 2,100 pigs and 8,971 horses. Considerable damage was done to 620 miles of road, 200 miles of

railway and 35 miles of tramways; 65 railway stations, 117 railway bridges, 228 road bridges and eight railway tunnels were also destroyed. Figures for the population do not include Cologne city, as records of casualties there are missing.

NET estimated cost of the British control of north-western Germany in the next 12 months is £80,000,000. Actual expenditure will be closer to £130,000,000, but German exports are expected to bring in £50,000,000, says The Times (April 1946). Food must be imported for the 21,500,000 Germans under British control.

GERMAN birth-rate declined by only 761,000 in the first four years of the War, compared with a decrease of over 3,000,000 in the First Great War, states the International Committee for the Study of European Questions. Population of Germany has increased to roughly 72,000,000, including minorities returning to the Reich from Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. Also about 2,000,000 prisoners are still to go back.

IN Britain there are now 146,000 prisoners of war allocated for work on the land—111,000 Germans and 35,000 Italians. Before the end of 1946 the Government intend to make the total up to 200,000. Most of the Italians will have been sent home by the end of this summer and the additional men will be Germans.

Queen Mary at St. James's Park Bomb Site



WITHIN A QUARTER-MILE OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE a 1,000-lb. German delayed action bomb, dropped in St. James's Park on April 16, 1941, suddenly began "ticking" at the bottom of the 30-ft. shaft where R.E.s were working to remove it on April 24, 1946. Containing 600 lb. of T.N.T., the bomb was electrically detonated two days later by No. 2 Bomb Disposal Squad. Within 15 minutes of the violent explosion H.M. Queen Mary, in residence at Marlborough House, was inspecting the crater, which was about 40 feet across.

Photo, Keystone

Printed in England and published every alternate Friday by the Proprietors, THE AMALGAMATED PRESS, LTD., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.
Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; and for South Africa:
Central News Agency, Ltd.—May 24, 1946 S.S. Editorial Address: JOHN CARPENTER HOUSE, WHITEFRIARS, LONDON, E.C.4.