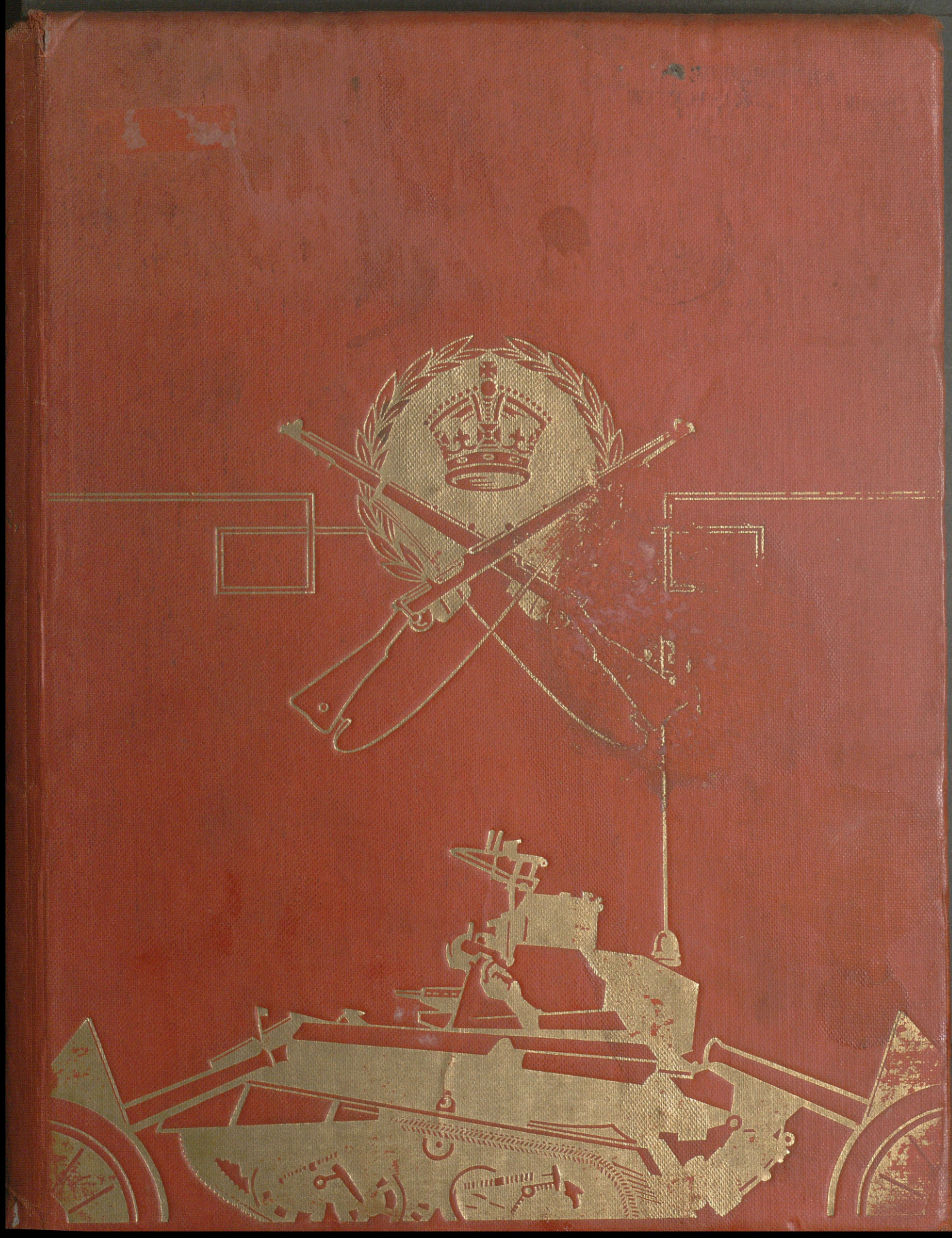
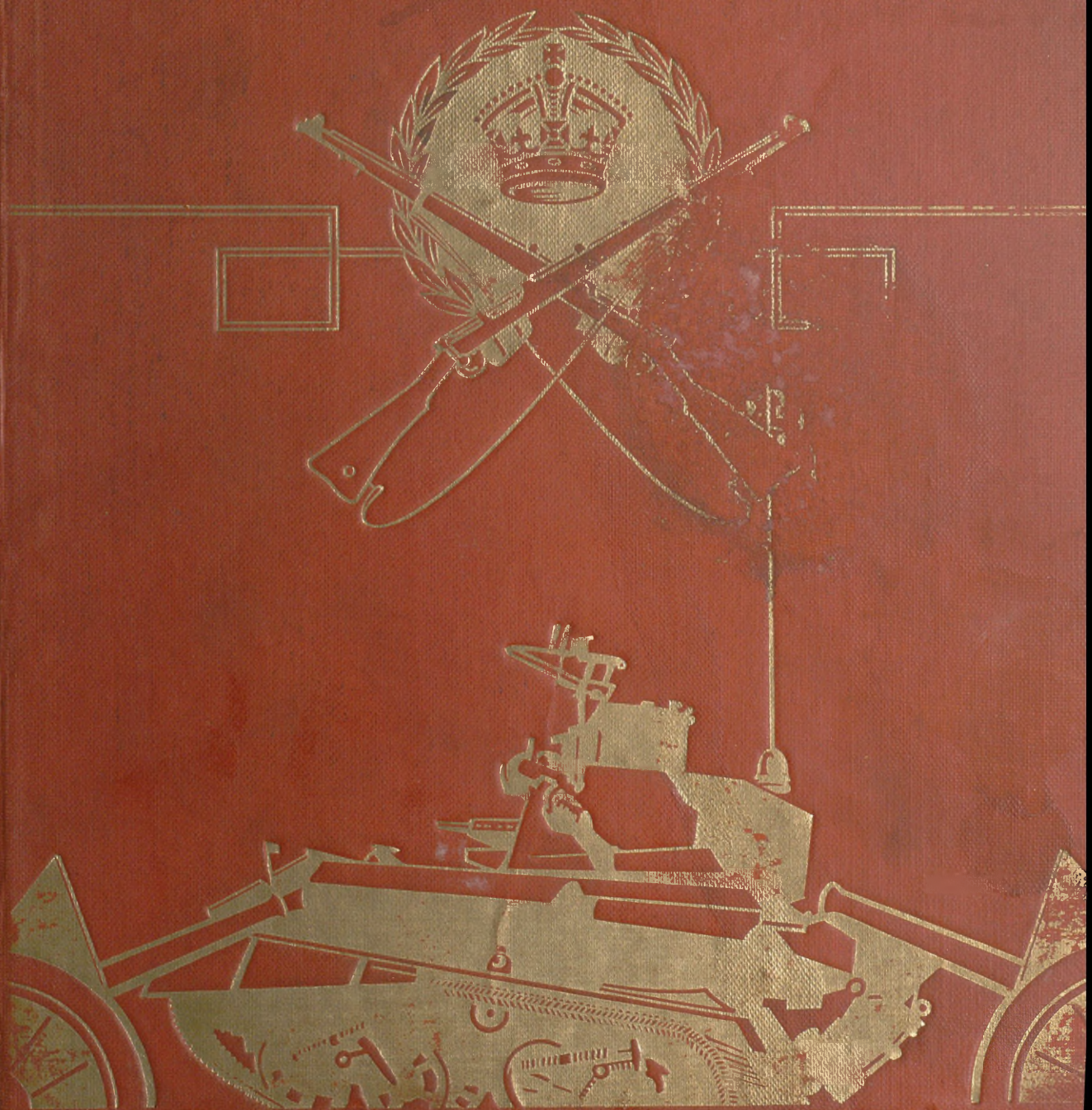




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BRITAIN AT WAR

The Army

★



"To encourage all valorous hearts and to show them honourable examples."

Froissart.

XXXVI.6.



PASSING THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

A column of troops marching across Parliament Square towards Westminster Bridge. Londoners soon got used to seeing troops on the march.

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BRITAIN AT WAR

The Army

From September 1939 to December 1940

★

By MAJOR F. YEATS-BROWN, D.F.C.

A COMPLETE RECORD IN TEXT AND PICTURES

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With 430 Illustrations

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INTRODUCTION

THE story of these days, so big with fate, must at present be provisional, for the necessary documents for a considered account are not yet available.

My indebtedness to various writers is indicated by footnotes, and I would add to them Hutchinson's *Pictorial History of the War* and the *Bulletin of International Affairs*, published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

I am also deeply grateful to my friend Miss Muriel Currey, O.B.E., for her assistance and advice.

Although the first chapters make gloomy reading, the story brightens as it develops—at least the facts make the imagination glow—and although I had intended to finish the book at the end of 1940, I could not forego the pleasure of writing a sketch—incomplete, of course—of the events leading to the battle of Benghazi and the magnificent cutting-out operation of the Royal Armoured Corps.

F. Y.-B.

BARLEY END,
TRING.
April, 1941.

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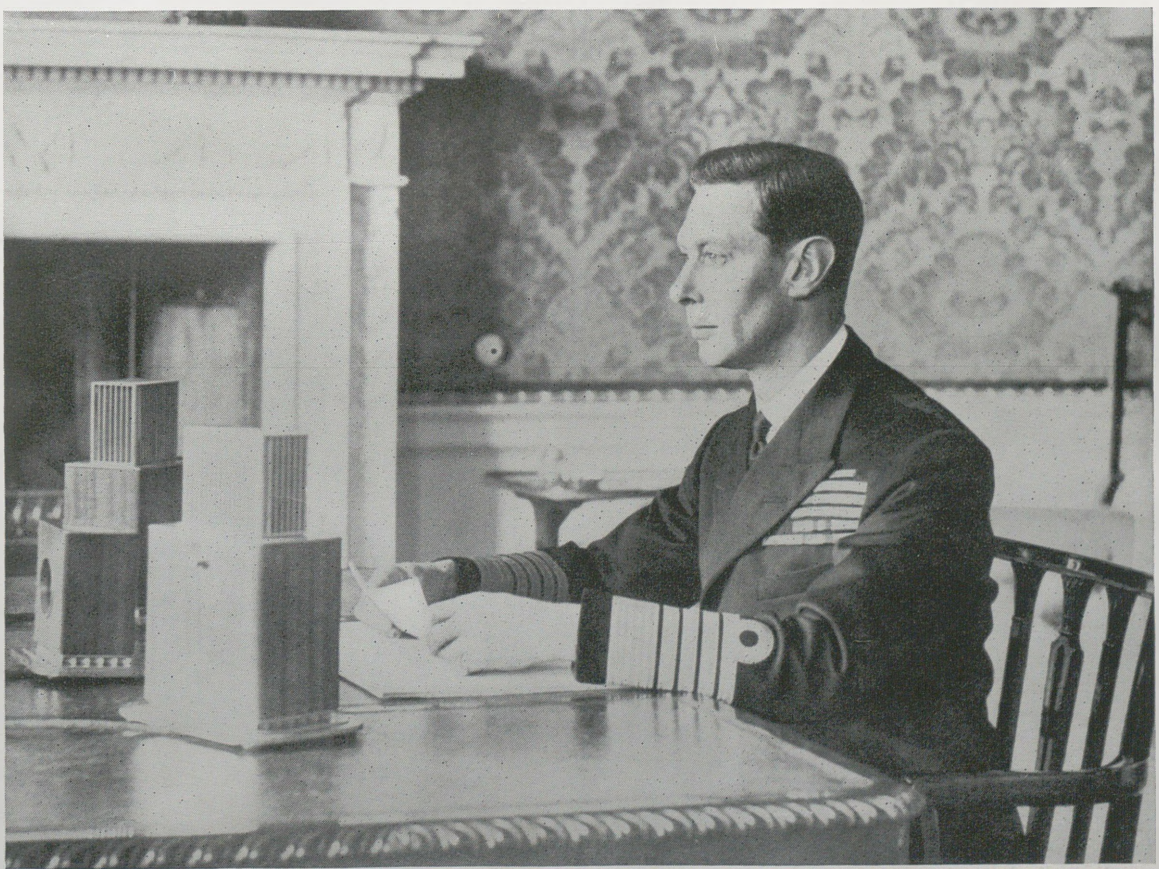
THE POLISH CAMPAIGN

It was on the late afternoon of August 31st, 1939, that Hitler gave the orders which began the Second World War.

On the very eve of hostilities—at 9 a.m. on August 31st—a nineteen point plan had been broadcast by the German Government which appeared to contain the elements of a reasonable settlement of the dispute.

Danzig was to become part of the Reich immediately. In the Polish Corridor, a plebiscite, conducted by British, French, Italian, and Russian representatives, was to be held in a year's time. Gdynia was to remain Polish, whatever the result of the plebiscite.

These proposals had been read over hurriedly to Sir Nevile Henderson, the British Ambassador, a little after midnight on August 30th-31st, but he was told that they were already out of date, since no plenipotentiary had arrived in Berlin to whom to communicate them. At that time no one in Poland knew what the proposals were, so that the actual terms which might have been dictated to a Polish statesman, had one arrived, must remain a matter of conjecture.



H.M. the King broadcasting from his study in Buckingham Palace, on Sunday, September 3rd.

The attack on Poland appears to have been planned by the German General Staff for August 25th[1] but was delayed by Hitler's orders, perhaps because he thought that he might still, at the last moment, detach England and France from their guarantee to Poland. However, every day's delay endangered the mobility of the German tanks, which would have been bogged in the plains of Poland if the autumn rains had broken earlier than usual. That they broke much later than usual added one more blow to the bludgeoning which Fate had reserved for the heroic Polish Army.

Before the sun rose on September 1st—at 5 a.m.—German motor bicyclists shot across the Polish frontier with exhausts roaring, followed by tanks, while dive bombers screamed overhead.

Other bombers flew straight to the airfields beyond the Vistula, and to the oil wells in Eastern Poland, wreaking their havoc practically unhindered, for there had been no declaration of war.

. . . . .

It was the *blitzkrieg*, long discussed in military circles in all the capitals of Europe, but at that time only fully understood and practised by the rulers of Germany, where the men and weapons had been assembled and tested in manœuvres.

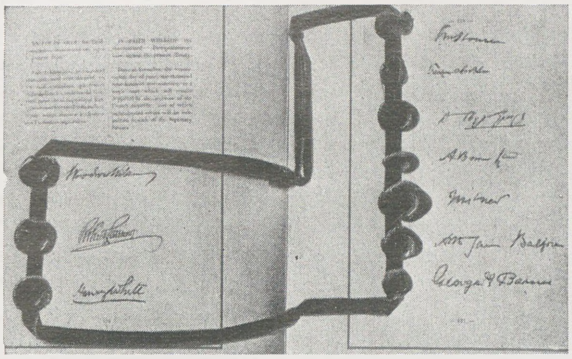
Poland, with its 34,500,000 inhabitants, could have mustered 3,000,000 men on a war footing, but at the request of the French and British Governments mobilisation had been delayed two days, and had only begun on August 30th, so that her forces numbered no more than one million at the outbreak of the war.

She was psychologically as well as materially unprepared for sudden and lightning war. Danzig and its Corridor had been for so long a bone of contention that the man-in-the-street did not contemplate

[1] Final Report by Sir Nevile Henderson. Command Paper 6115 of 1939.



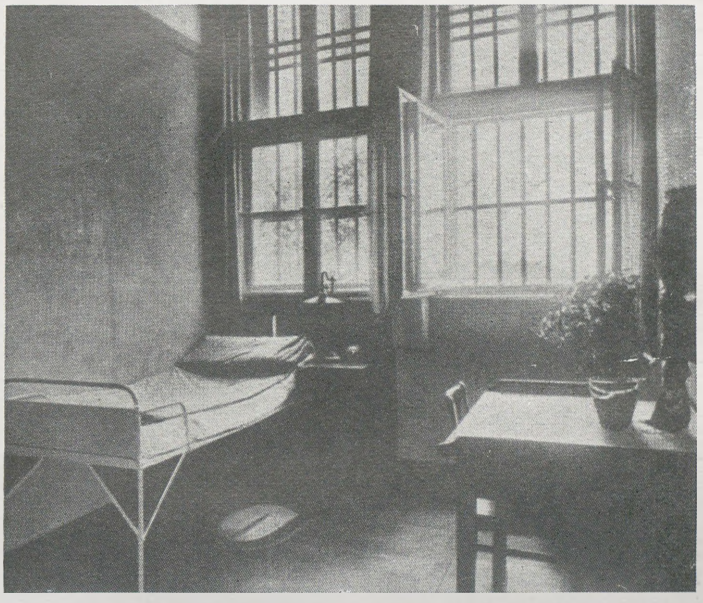
Sir Nevile Henderson, the British Ambassador in Berlin until the outbreak of war, emphasising a point of view during an interview with Herr Hitler, the German Chancellor.



First two pages of signatories of the Treaty of Versailles and the seals affixed by Signatories.



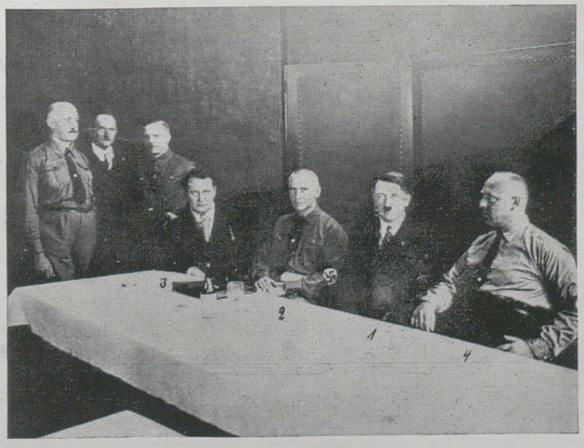
Clemenceau pronouncing the Treaty in force, January 10th, 1920 on which date it was formally ratified.



The cell in which Hitler spent eight months of a five years' sentence for his unsuccessful political machinations.



Hitler in his cell during 1924. During this time he conceived *Mein Kampf*.



Berlin, October, 1930. Sitting are Hitler, Dr. Frick (Minister of the Interior), and Marshal Goering.



Von Neurath signing the Treaty of 1932, to which M. Herriot, the French Premier, also appended his signature.

having to fight about it in 1939. Had not Colonel Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, been fêted in Berlin only last year, and had not the German Führer stated that there was no further reason for dispute between the two nations? And the eastern frontier was safe, for Russia had signed a pact of non-aggression in 1932. Polish peasants were looking forward to bumper crops. In the capital, people thronged the Marszelkowska and the Aleja Jerozolimska. Every night the open air theatre in Lazienki Park was sold out.[1]

On the surface all was gaiety and glitter in Warsaw, although there, as elsewhere in Poland, there were troubled hearts in the ghetto, and among the many other minorities.

Even when the sirens sounded, on the morning of September 1st, people refused to believe that the war had actually begun. The first bombs—eleven of them—dropped on a lunatic asylum in the suburbs which the Germans had mistaken for a barracks: some of the inmates escaped, and ran about the streets, terrified and spreading confusion and alarm.



The leader of the German people making his speech at a meeting of the Reichstag in Kroll's Opera House, Berlin, on September 1st, when he gave orders that started the present war.

Yet when news came that the British and French had entered the war, the people of Warsaw romped through the city, cheering and waving flags, regardless of the shades of menace overhead. Many Poles believed that they would be in Berlin within three months, but not those in official circles, where the true facts of the situation were known. There were some in authority who had already packed their bags on the very night that the citizens of the capital were rejoicing at the Anglo-French declarations.

"Lions led by donkeys" is a phrase coined for the British army of other days, and it would be fair description of Polish soldiers in relation to their General Staff, although not to their regimental officers, who fought with the greatest courage and skill. But there is no question that there was grave incompetence in Polish, as, indeed, there was in British and French military circles.

. . . . .

Ever since the First World War the Reichswehr had been deeply impressed with the possibilities of armoured fighting vehicles, used in mass, which had defeated their army so decisively at Cambrai in 1917, thereby revolutionising military tactics.

When the National-Socialist Government came into power, much thought was devoted to mechanised warfare, and it was Hitler himself who implemented and enlarged the plans of the German General Staff.

[1] *A Civilian in the Polish War*, by F. T. Csokor. Secker and Warburg, 1940.



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During the Great War (1914–18), Poland was overrun by the Austro-German forces, but on November 9th, 1918, her independence was solemnly proclaimed, and on June 28th in the following year it was recognised by the Treaty of Versailles. When her frontiers were finally defined, Poland became one of the largest countries in Europe with an area of 150,000 square miles—about three-fourths that of Germany. At the outbreak of war the inhabitants of Poland numbered some 35,000,000.

The works of Major-General J. F. C. Fuller in England and Colonel de Gaulle in France were translated and widely read in Germany. Many more copies of Fuller's books on mechanised warfare were sold in Germany than throughout the English-speaking world. He and de Gaulle were prophets little heeded in their own countries, whereas the Austrian General Eimannsberger and the Italian Visconti Prasca exercised considerable influence on German military thought. These experts, all of them soldiers tested in war, believed in mass attack by tanks: the "cavalry spirit" translated into terms of the internal combustion engine.

In 1935, the German army was still largely unmechanised, but in that year the production of several standardised types of armoured fighting vehicles was begun. Production, equipment and training were carried out on a long term plan.[1]

Heavy armoured divisions (tank divisions, or *Panzerdivisionen*,) consisted of approximately 500 tanks each (in battalions of 100) and a motorised infantry brigade of "troops of occupation," to hold the positions won by the tanks. This infantry brigade consisted of three battalions of 800 men each. Two of these battalions were carried on motor vehicles, and one was mounted on motor bicycles.



The Great Monastery, Czestochowa.



Railway Sidings, Czestochowa.

Light armoured divisions (which we may call motorised divisions) consisted of one battalion of 120 tanks, and four battalions of motorised infantry.

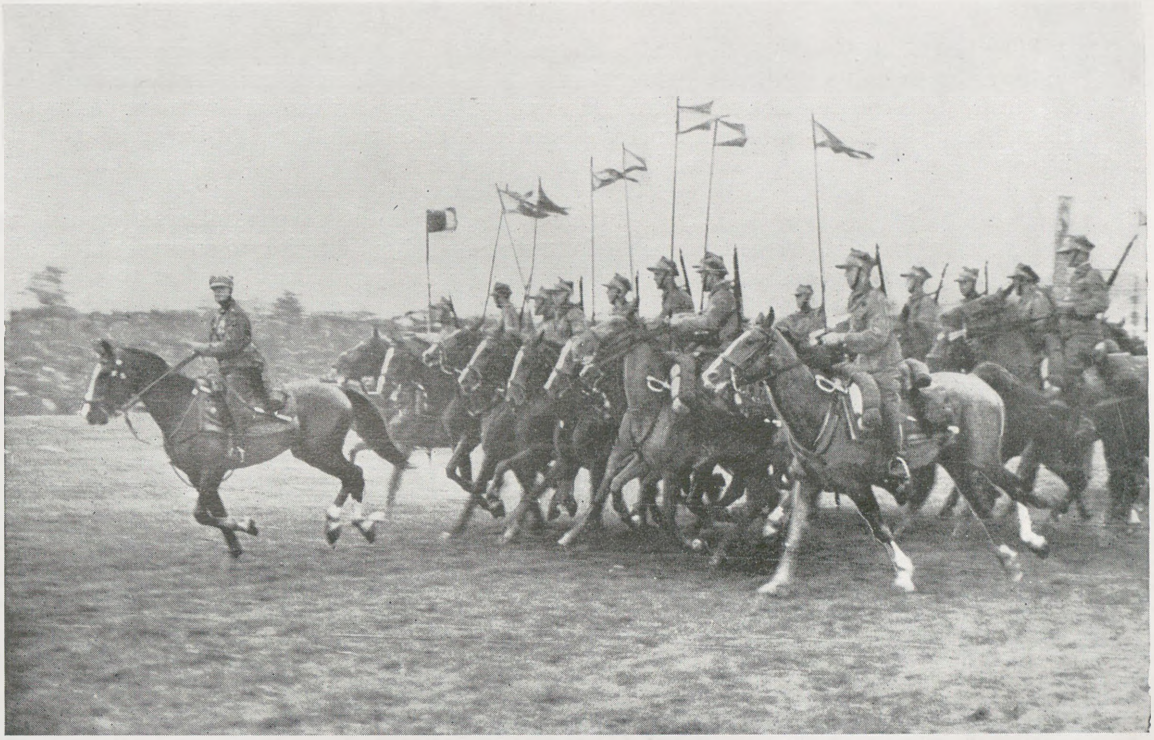
Both types of armoured division were accompanied by guns of all kinds (field, anti-aircraft, and anti-tank), and engineers, maintenance units and bridging-trains on wheels. They were supplied with radio inter-communication sets for even small units.

Tanks were of three types: (a) light, of 6 to 9 tons, with a crew of two, armed with a single machine-gun: (b) medium, of 15 tons with a crew of three or four, armed with a 37 mm. gun (1.5 inch) and three machine-guns: (c) heavy, from 30 to 75 tons, with 2-inch armour, and a crew of five to eight, armed with two 75-mm. field guns (3-inch), and a high velocity anti-tank gun.

The tank divisions, and sometimes the light divisions, were generally employed in five échelons, (that is, a succession of short lines, overlapping each other, and laid back towards one flank) of 100 tanks each (in light divisions there would be one échelon of tanks and four of motorised infantry) with an interval between the tanks of—say—25 yards, so that each échelon of 100 tanks would occupy a frontage of perhaps 2,500 yards, but varying with the ground and the objective attacked.

The distance in depth between each échelon would be from 100 yards to 1,000, again varying with circumstances. Échelons of light tanks might sometimes follow each other at 1,000 yards intervals and medium tanks at intervals of 100 yards.

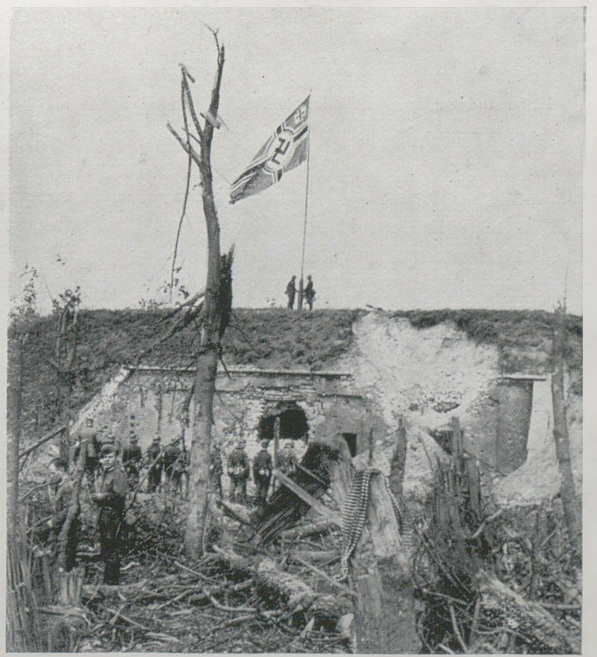
[1] See the *Cavalry Journal* for July 1940.



Guerilla bands of this fine mobile force continued to harass the advancing Nazis long after organised Polish resistance had been smashed.



The commander of the Westerplatte fortress whose gallant defence thrilled Europe.



The war-battered Westerplatte munition dump after its surrender to superior Nazi forces whose flag is being hoisted.

The leading échelon of a tank division consisted of medium or light tanks, to make contact with the enemy and signal back his position to the heavy tanks, which attacked and overran the defence.

Strong enemy positions were not to be attacked frontally. If possible the tanks were to get round behind them, leaving the dive-bombers and motorised artillery to deal with them. If they could not get round,they waited until a way was cleared for them, or they moved away to attack some other part of the enemy line.

Once a breach had been made, the motorised infantry dashed through the gap, followed (sometimes preceded) by the light tanks. Some of these troops would spread out fanwise, to enlarge the breach already made, and swamp opposition. Others would push far ahead, regardless of support, to interrupt the enemy's communications and destroy his sources of supply. The greatest freedom of action was given to brigade and battalion commanders in the advance, in pursuance of the tradition of Frederick the Great and von Moltke, that once the attack was launched the initiative passed to the leaders on the spot.



Hitler studying the plan of campaign.



General von Fritsch, killed in action.



General von Brauchitsch (2nd from left).

Close touch was kept at all times by the ground troops with their attendant air force, who co-operated by dive-bombing positions indicated as centres of resistance, and also by reconnoitring and photographing advanced positions. For these three rôles, three types of machines were employed :

(a) fighters to protect the attack from hostile aircraft :
(b) dive-bombers to clear a path :
(c) reconnaissance 'planes to indicate new objectives.

The advance of an armoured division was to be preceded by a short intensive bombardment by howitzers, trench mortars, motorised artillery, machine-guns and bomber-aircraft. This was to last from ten to thirty minutes, and would give time for the attacking troops (armoured cars and motor cyclists with machine-guns) to take up their positions.

Such was the theory. It was boldly and skilfully executed by the Germans, and found the Poles as unprepared to meet the storm of steel as we were in Norway, in April, 1940, or the French in May, and with much more reason.

This new form of warfare nullified static defences. Entrenchments cannot deal with tanks, but only armour-piercing projectiles. Aeroplanes and parachutists cannot be defeated by taking cover. War has become more mobile than it was even in the days when the slant-eyed horsemen of Mongolia rode up to the gates of Vienna.

. . . . .

The German operations consisted of an invasion of Poland at seven points, designed to form a series of pincer movements.

The first and second columns advanced from Pomerania and East Prussia, converging on Bromberg, with the object of cutting off the Polish troops in the Danzig Corridor.

The third column advanced southward from East Prussia in the direction of Warsaw. This divided into two parts: (a) one branch investing Warsaw from the north; (b) the other marching southwards and eastwards to encircle the capital.

The fourth column crossed the frontier at the Varta River and moved to the north-west of Poznán, then turned south in the direction of Lodz.

The fifth, from German Silesia, marched to Czestochowa. It then divided into two parts: (a) marching north towards Lodz to join the fourth column: (b) to the industrial areas of Radom and Kielce.

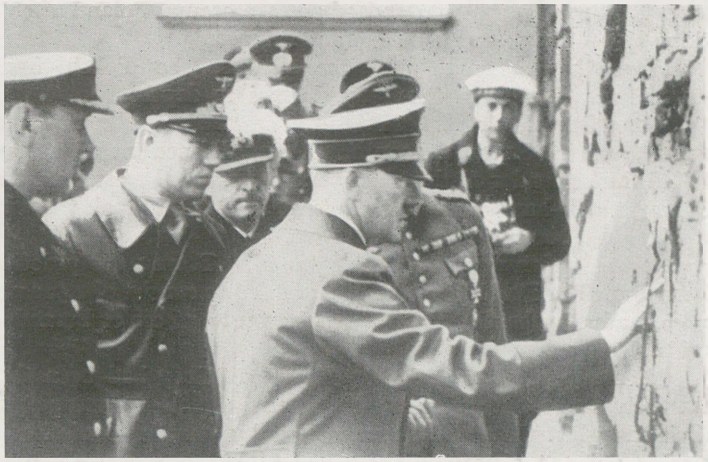
The sixth column attacked from the Moravian Gate on the Silesian border, with Cracow as its objective.

The seventh column assembled in the "protected" state of Slovakia, and marched over the Carpathians. It then bisected: (a) one part making for Cracow to join the sixth column, (b) one part making for Przemysl.

Four "pincers" were in operation: the first to encircle the Polish troops in the Corridor, the second Warsaw, the third Lodz, the fourth Cracow.

Exact disposition and strength of the forces employed have naturally not yet been disclosed by either side, but we may assume—as an approximation to figures which will only be available in years to come—that Germany used in the Polish campaign 2,000 aeroplanes, 5,000 tanks and five armies, making a total of about 1,250,000 men.

The Germans left nothing to chance. If the armoured divisions or their motorised colleagues had failed, they possessed great reserves of infantry with horse-drawn transport (some 200,000 horses), and many regiments of cavalry might also have been thrown into the



After the surrender of the Westerplatte's little garrison, Hitler visited the spot. Behind him is Albert Forster, the Nazi leader in Danzig.



Major Koscianski, commander of the Westerplatte, surrounded by Nazis after his surrender, passes on orders to the soldiers of his heroic garrison.



Polish officers leaving the Westerplatte fortress after surrendering to the Nazi army. Their force held out for eleven days.

assault. Such troops were indeed used to occupy Poland after the ironclad armies had crushed everything before them except the soul of the people.

From the Baltic to the Carpathians, the Polish frontier with Germany was practically unfortified. Nor was there any defence in depth.

Along the central rivers of Poland, from the Narew in the north, facing Prussia, to the Vistula in the centre, and the San in the south, a strong defence line might have been formed. This would have entailed the surrender of the richest industries of the country, but might—if there had been no Russian intervention—have enabled the Poles to hold out through the winter, by which time Anglo-French help might have become directly effective.

Mechanisation was woefully neglected. There were practically no anti-tank guns or anti-aircraft batteries. The Polish air force was reputed to consist of 1,500 machines, but only a tenth of this number were ready for battle. Many were blown to pieces or burned on the ground in the first Germau air raids.

Of cavalry regiments there were forty. They had been the apple of Pilsudski's eye, and believed themselves about to play an important part in the campaign, by capturing the German armoured divisions when these were immobilised by weather conditions or fuel shortage. Alas, the autumn storms did not arrive till the flower of Polish chivalry had perished, and German organisation was



German infantry entrenched on the outskirts of Warsaw advancing cautiously towards the centre of the city.

so good that only rarely did the petrol supply fail to arrive when the Panzers halted for the night.

Given a thousand first-line aeroplanes, instead of a handful unready in their hangars, and sufficient artillery and tanks, the Poles could have stemmed and even defeated the *blitzkrieg*. They possessed the spirit, but not the tools of victory.

Threatened on their front, flanks, rear, and from above, the Polish commanders in the field did their best, and achieved minor miracles in many parts of the country, but with the paralysis spreading from their own General Headquarters they could not withstand the rain of fire and death which assailed them on every side.

General Sosnkowski, commanding the Southern Army in the Carpathians, was still fighting back fiercely from Tarnopol on September 18th, and might possibly have formed a zone of permanent resistance in the south-east corner of Poland if the Russians had not then stabbed his troops in the back.

In the north, the Army of Pomorze hacked its way out of the Corridor, against vastly superior numbers of the enemy, and reached the Warsaw front. Gdynia held out until September 14th. At Kutno, the Polish cavalry charged German armoured divisions with sublime but useless courage.

Deeds of heroism performed by a beaten army are doubly courageous, but the chronicler of events whose pattern is still on the loom of time cannot pause to record them, for he must carry his story forward with the advancing tanks.

In the north two columns advanced, as have been described, from Pomerania and East Prussia. Two armoured divisions were employed with the East Prussian force (1,000 tanks), which pushed



Russian infantry of the type that invaded Poland, taking cover behind a bank as they advance in a mimic battle in the Kiev military district. Russia is reported to have a standing army of 5,000,000 men and tremendous man-power in reserve.

rapidly towards Mlawa, on the Danzig-Warsaw railway. They were checked here by a Polish division, and turned eastward, where they fought a night battle by the aid of incendiary shells and searchlights, setting whole villages alight in order to find the Polish troops. They defeated another Polish division here, driving it back across the Narew.

The division holding Mlawa now had to give way, and on the evening of September 6th the German troops reached the Narew.

In the centre, the Germans probed here and there to find a passage, and eventually threw in two armoured divisions before the city of Czestochowa, where they quickly penetrated. This force then thrust forward on three lines : (a) towards Warsaw : (b) towards Kielce : (c) towards Sandomierz at the junction of the Vistula and San rivers.

The first of these columns (making for the capital) swept forward with the greatest boldness. It had reached Piotrkow (75 miles from the frontier) by September 5th, Rawa (40 miles further on the way to Warsaw) by the 6th, and on September 8th it fought its way into the city, fifty miles ahead of any troops following it.

It was then recalled, to deal with a fierce Polish counter-attack from the direction of Kutno ; but meanwhile the Polish Government had left Warsaw (September 6th) and had sought safety in Lublin. The Kutno offensive could not be maintained with diminishing supplies of ammunition, and in the prevailing uncertainty on other parts of the front.

The campaign was a perfect illustration of the fact that victory in war to-day depends on questions of



All that remained of the Modlin in Warsaw which the Polish garrison bravely held to the last, against terrific onslaughts by heavy Nazi guns and almost continual bombing from the air. Its gallant defenders were finally overwhelmed.

supply and communication. The Polish air force was driven out of the air not by lack of courage, but lack of fuel, spare parts, repair facilities, and a capable High Command. Spies were everywhere. The Germans knew almost everything, and the Polish Army almost nothing about what was happening.

Neither the President of Poland nor the Headquarters Staff found safety in retreat. They and the Embassies and Legations which accompanied them, were bombed at Lublin, and again at Krzemieniec, near the Soviet frontier. They were only spared at their final refuge in Zalesczyki owing to the collapse of all resistance except that of Warsaw.

The second of the German columns which had captured Czestochowa pushed on from Kielce to Radom. The third reached the confluence of the San and the Vistula on September 10th.

In the south, two German light armoured divisions and one division of mountain troops effected the passage of the Carpathians. They were quickly successful, though they lost forty tanks in one attack. They afterwards divided into two columns, directed towards Cracow and Przemysl respectively.

By September 10th the whole Polish front had been broken, and the back areas of the country had been thrown into confusion and dismay. Still the tanks swept on. Those of the northern group crossed the Narew at Rozan, and pushed on towards Brest-Litovsk. In the south there was a tank versus tank battle at Rzeszow, in which the Germans were driven from the field with the loss of seven tanks, but this



SIGNING THE SOVIET-GERMAN PACT

The Anti-Aggression Pact is signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov in the Kremlin. Ribbentrop is seen adding his signature.



RUSSIAN INVASION OF POLAND

Polish peasants, apparently determined to make the best of a bad job, welcome the Russian Army as it sweeps into Poland.



RUSSIAN ARTILLERY

Russian artillery photographed on the frontier of Poland after Stalin had ordered the invasion of the country by his Army.



RUSSIAN INFANTRY

The Russian invasion of Poland began at dawn on September 17th, ostensibly with the intention of protecting the Russian minorities.

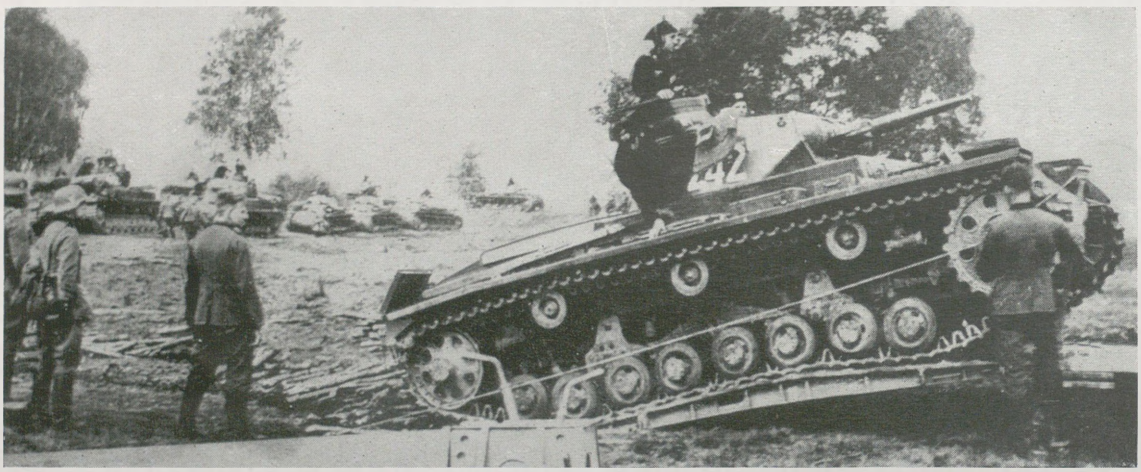
success was only local. The enemy reformed his ranks and advanced towards the Bug river, which he reached on September 13th. Here he ran short of petrol, and was brilliantly counter-attacked by General Sosnkowski, who captured from the Germans 20 guns and 80 tanks.

By now, however, the Poles had lost most of their artillery, and their eastern line of retreat had been severed. They could do little to stop the progress of the invaders, and already there were rumours from Russia that "the Polish state had dissolved" and that it was the duty of the U.S.S.R. to save the Ukrainians and the White Russians who looked (according to Moscow) towards the Bolsheviks as their "natural protectors."

On September 16th the Germans were holding a line running from Bialystok in the north, through Brest-Litovsk and Lwów, to Przemysl. On the 18th the Russians crossed the frontier along its whole length, and next day made contact with the Germans at Brest-Litovsk.

That, in reality, was the end of the Polish campaign, although Warsaw put up a gallant resistance until September 27th, and Modlin till the 28th.

Both Germans and Russians proceeded to absorb the conquered populations into their respective systems.



One of the hundreds of tanks used in the German onslaught on Warsaw about to cross a pontoon bridge.

In the German area all Polish owners of property were turned out and replaced by Germans. The rich timber-lands were exploited. Jews were sent helter-skelter to Lublin, where the population of the city increased tenfold and famine broke out. The harvest was removed to Germany, and much of the livestock.

In Eastern Poland under the Bolsheviks measures of socialisation were the order of the day. The banks were closed, and the rouble replaced the zloty as the only legal tender. Soviet inspectors examined the houses of the bourgeoisie, allotting rooms to workers if the former occupied more than one room per person. Anyone having more than one suit of clothes was required to hand the others over. Pictures and jewellery were confiscated. A Workers' Militia was formed to hunt down landowners, capitalists, shopkeepers, priests and police.

Those who could, escaped from the twin tyrannies. The Polish soldiers and airmen who were able to make their way into Rumania are many of them now in the ranks of our armed forces and have added new lustre to the traditional heroism of their race. So did the glorious crew of the *Orzel*, the submarine which escaped from the Baltic, and eventually met her end in the North Sea, while serving the Allied cause.

A chapter in Polish history closes with the Bolshevik invasion of 1939. The new page begins with a terrible catalogue of crimes and persecutions, but the nation bears its woes with fortitude, as it has done in the past, looking to the last battle by which freedom and nationhood shall be restored.

Biblioteka Akademii Szt. Gen.

II

STALEMATE

At eleven o'clock on Sunday morning of September 3rd those British citizens who were not in church or chapel, must almost all have been gathered round a radio set.

Was it to be peace or war? Even at that hour—perhaps because of "wishful thinking," a phrase long ago struck in the psychologists' mint but not at that time in common currency—many of us held to the belief that somehow or other this horror would be averted . . . but the very first words of the Prime Minister's broadcast showed that the iron had entered into his soul, as it was to enter ours.

No reply had come to our demand for a withdrawal of German forces from Poland. A state of war existed between ourselves and Germany. "You can imagine," he continued, "what a bitter blow it is to me that all my long struggle to win peace has failed. Yet I cannot believe that there is anything more, or anything different, that I could have done that would have been more successful.

"Up to the very last it would have been quite possible to have arranged a peaceful and honourable settlement between Germany and Poland, but Hitler would not have it. He had evidently made up his mind to attack Poland whatever happened . . .

"There is no chance of this man giving up his practice of using force to gain his will. He can only be stopped by force.

"It is the evil things that we shall be fighting against—brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression, and persecution—and against them I am certain that the right will prevail."

. . . . . .

As if to drive home the significance of Mr. Chamberlain's words, the wail of the sirens broke the quiet of that Sunday morning. It was a false alarm, but a fitting prelude to that period in our annals when the "Maginot mentality" prevailed; the period when it was believed that all we had to do to win was to sit tight under cover, and let the Navy do the work.

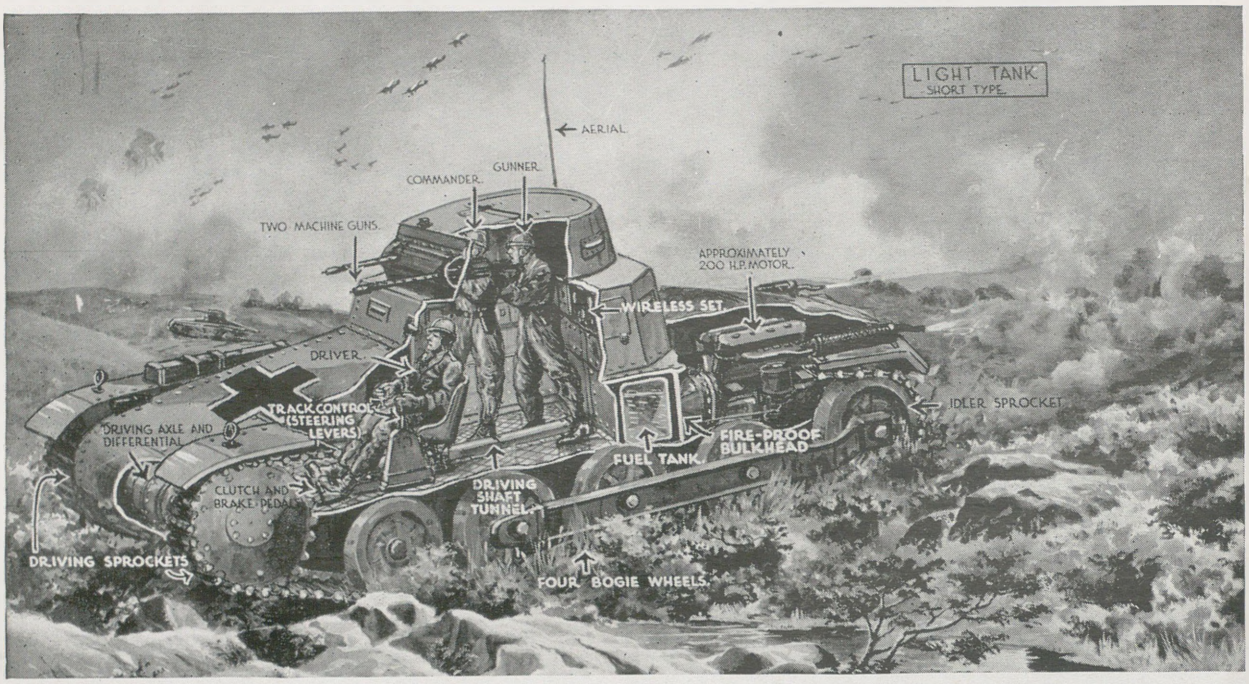
Our rulers must have known the strategic difficulties of the situation, and our state of unpreparedness, so that fifteen months after the declaration of war Mr. Churchill had to declare that in spite of our growing strength and fairer prospects we were still "a half-armed nation fighting a fully-armed one." But the Nazi challenge had to be met. Parliament and people were convinced that the Germans intended to attack this country after settling accounts with its eastern neighbour. To wait until we were ready would have shocked the electorate, keyed up by the press to "stop Hitler now."

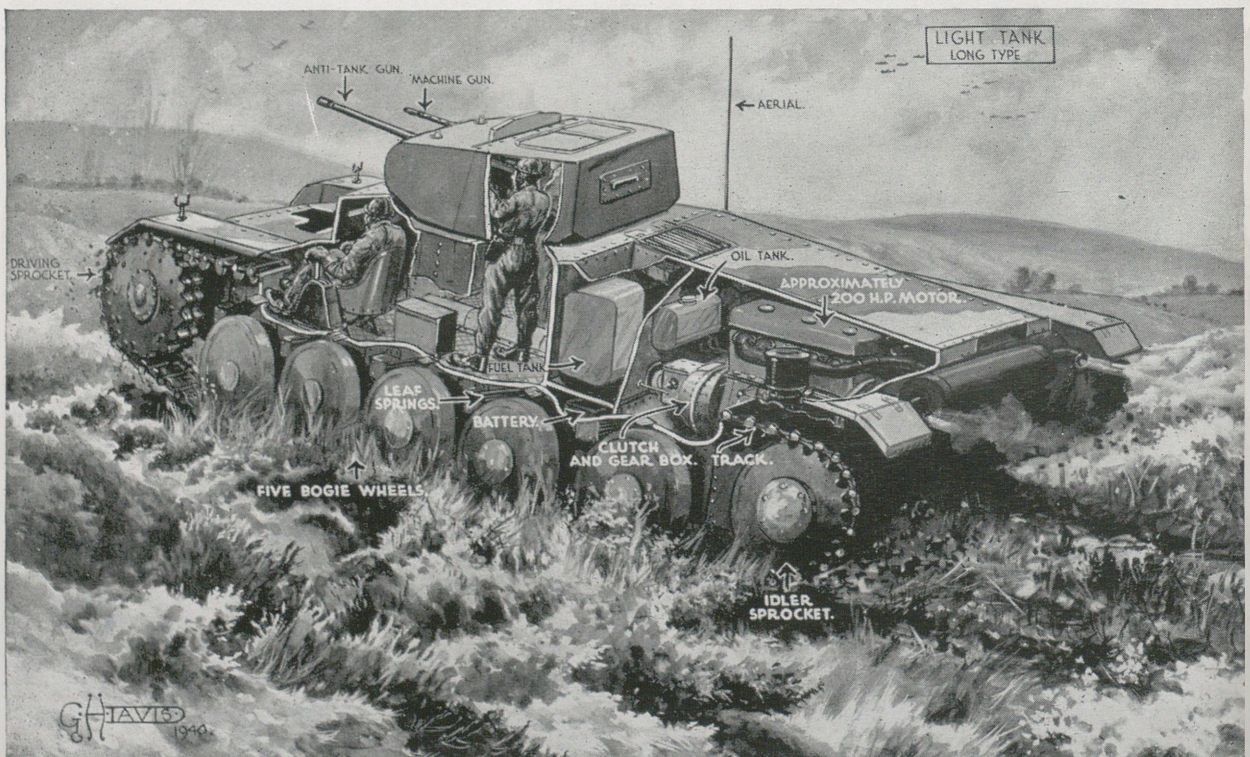
There was, indeed, justification for our confidence in the blockade. If France had not collapsed, Italy would not have dared to intervene, and our two navies could have blockaded the Germans effectively. What was not justified was our neglect of the lessons of Poland, and our leisurely preparations to meet the German attack through the Low Countries which everyone had foreseen was inevitable.

For the first time in the history of this country, compulsory military service had been introduced in time of peace, on May 26th, 1939. Amongst



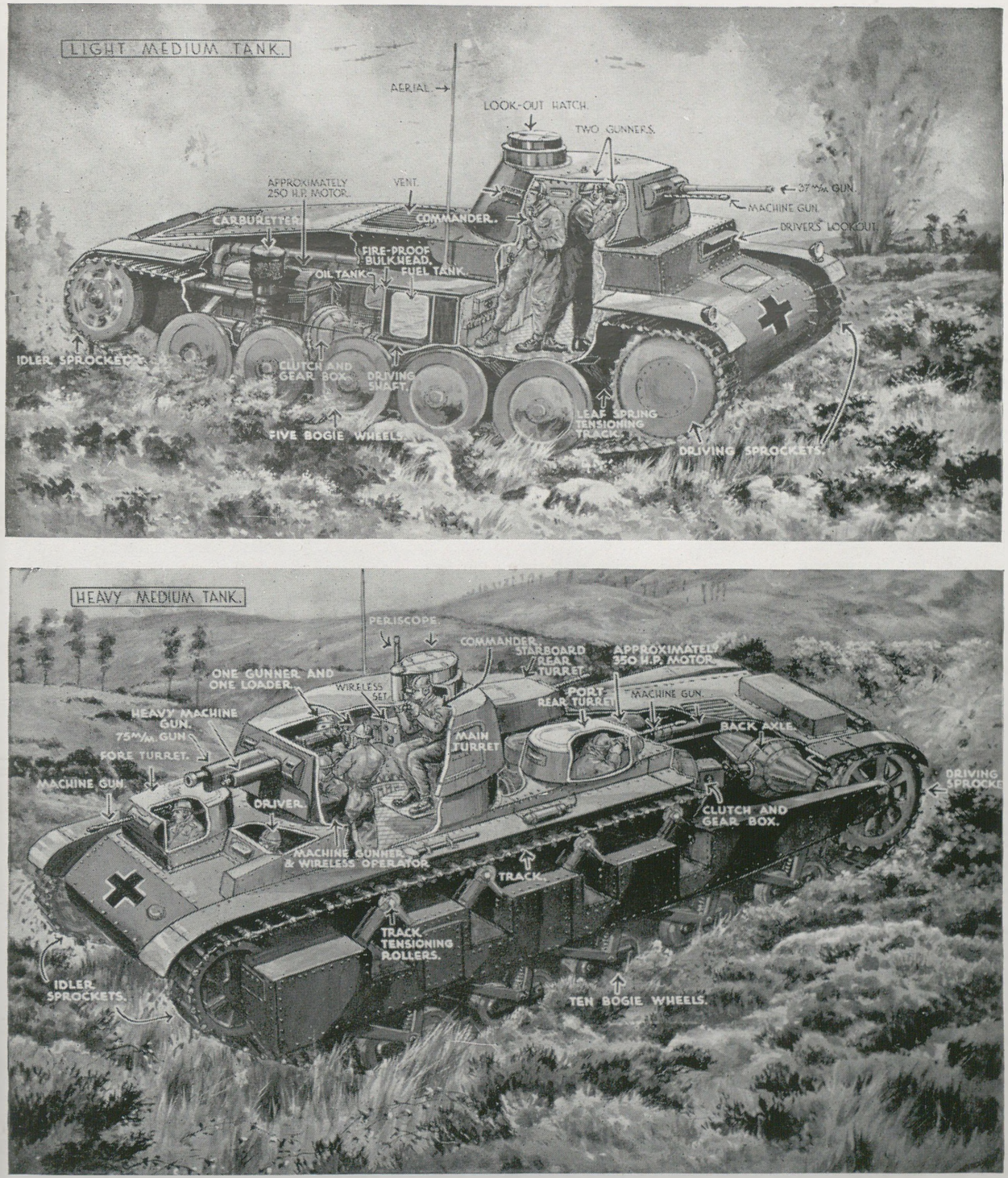
The Prime Minister, accompanied by Mrs. Chamberlain, leaving 10 Downing Street for the House of Commons.





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Since 1935, vast numbers of tanks have been produced in Germany, and here are illustrated four of the most important types, part-sectioned to show the interior mechanism. In the great attack, intensive bombing by aircraft cleared the way for heavy tanks, many of which mount a 75 mm. gun and a large calibre machine-gun. The heavy medium tank illustrated here, although possibly not the largest type possessed by the Nazis, has been used extensively and in considerable numbers. It has a 350 h.p. motor and carries a crew of seven men, having a speed on the flat of over 20 m.p.h. In this type there is a rear sprocket drive, whereas in the lighter tanks the driving sprockets are in front. Light tanks of the



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"long" type and light medium tanks are smaller than the heavy mediums, having ten bogie wheels and being armed mostly with a 37 mm. gun in addition to a machine-gun. Light tanks have approximately a 250 h.p. motor, a crew of four, and a road speed of 23 m.p.h. The "short" type of light tank is said to have a road speed of 30 m.p.h. It carries a crew of three men and mounts two machine-guns. All carry wireless equipment.

those voting against it, when it first came to the Commons on April 26th, were many of the most energetic supporters of the war to-day. We were—and remained for some time—a thoroughly unmilitary and unwarlike nation. But Norway, Dunkirk, and the subsequent tremendous ordeal of air attack brought out our native toughness and native resilience, so that just before the end of 1940 we were beginning to show results in a *blitzkrieg* of our own.

. . . . .

That British troops had arrived in France was announced in a French broadcast on September 11th. The Ministry of Information (staffed by its famous 999 officials) gave the newspapers permission to publish the news, then withdrew it, then again gave permission in the early hours of September 12th.

It was not until October 11th that Mr. Hore-Belisha, then Secretary of State for War, told the House of Commons what had been accomplished. In five weeks 158,000 men, more than 25,000 vehicles, including tanks, and 140,000 tons of stores had reached France without the loss of a single man.

"It was a small body of specially selected officers in the War Office," said Mr. Hore-Belisha, "who with seven confidential clerks and typists worked out every detail of this plan for moving the Army and the Royal Air Force to France. They foresaw and provided for every need; the selection of ports and docks, of roads and railways, of accommodation of all types, of rest camps and depots, at every stage on both sides of the Channel. Their ingenuity, their precision and their patience would have baffled Bradshaw."

Owing to the enormous weight of the equipment of a modern army, the men travelled separately and the heavier mechanisms had to be transported from more distant ports, where special facilities were available.

"The arrangements for the reunion of the troops and their material on the other side made an additional complication. Similarly, and for other reasons also, more remote landing places had to be selected in France, thus making the voyages much longer." (Hundreds of German bombers were lined up on the sands of Sylt, with engines warmed, ready to attack our convoys.)

"There are in France," the Minister continued, "fifty types of vehicles and most of them require a



Men aged twenty to twenty-two, who were liable for military service under the National Service Act, registering at an employment exchange in London.



Volunteers, between the ages of thirty-five and fifty, for the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, waiting to enlist at the Central Recruiting Office, Great Scotland Yard.

different grade of fuel and lubricant. Great reserves have had to be conveyed and stored. None of these problems existed, except in embryo, in 1914. It was a light Army that travelled then. Nearly sixty per cent. of the troops were infantrymen, relying on their rifles and bayonets and two machine-guns a battalion. Now only twenty per cent. of the fighting troops are infantrymen, with 50 Bren guns, 22 anti-tank guns and other weapons as well with each battalion."

It was certainly a matter for congratulation that all these men and their material had been taken safely across, but we may detect in Mr. Hore-Belisha's statement the self-complacent platitudes of bureaucracy. Had there been any serious breakdown, the War Office would have been surely to blame, considering that the Anglo-French General Staffs had had many years in which to elaborate their plans for just this contingency.

. . . . . .

During the long hard winter of 1939–1940 London sang of "hanging out our washing on the Siegfried Line." Theatres were full, in spite of the black-out. We dropped pamphlets over Germany, telling the enemy how lofty were our aspirations for a better order in Europe.

At times we grew anxious. The submarine menace and the magnetic mine gave us some sleepless nights, but when these threats were countered by convoy, "degaussing," and the wonderful Asdic indicator, the British public settled down again to its assurance of victory.

A pamphlet issued by the Ministry of Information (afterwards withdrawn) gave ample expression to this feeling. Sentences such as the following did little to spur the nation to that "total effort" which we were afterwards to learn is required for "total victory."

"The balance of man-power is already heavily tilted against the Nazis."

"Every leaf torn off the calendar means greater danger to the Nazis."

"Neutral opinion is overwhelmingly unsympathetic to the Nazis."

"Much of Germany's military equiment has been hurriedly obtained."

"The French can draw on huge reserves of experienced officers."

"A large proportion of French infantry divisions are motorised. They are more mobile than the German infantry, and have a bigger proportion of tanks."

"The Belgian frontier is strongly fortified, and along the whole length of France's eastern frontier runs a great barrier of steel and concrete—the famous Maginot Line."

This famous and fatal Line ran for two hundred miles along the French-German frontier. In it had been embodied all the experience so painfully acquired in the war of 1914–1918—and nothing else. The tomb of dead theories.

Twelve million cubic metres of earth had been dug out of the Line between 1929 and 1936. One and a half million cubic metres of special concrete, and 50,000 tons of steel plates were used in its construction. The great gun turrets were covered with steel plates, concrete and earth three times the thickness of what had been proved to be impenetrable to the heaviest bombardment. The towers of the gun turrets were monolithic, and could not be pierced by any shell. The guns themselves were fired on the same principle as those in a battleship, the crews not seeing their targets but being controlled by an officer in a hermetically sealed chamber.

There were miles of electric underground railways; there were Diesel engines to supply the electricity for all the elaborate machinery; there were lifts for the munitions; there were fully equipped barracks to accommodate thousands of men.

The troops were specially trained for service in the Line. Above ground they worked incessantly at the preparation of traps for tanks, camouflage devices, and the erection of barbed wire defences in advanced positions. Below ground, they lived in air-conditioned, gas-proof chambers, impregnable, and remote from all reality.

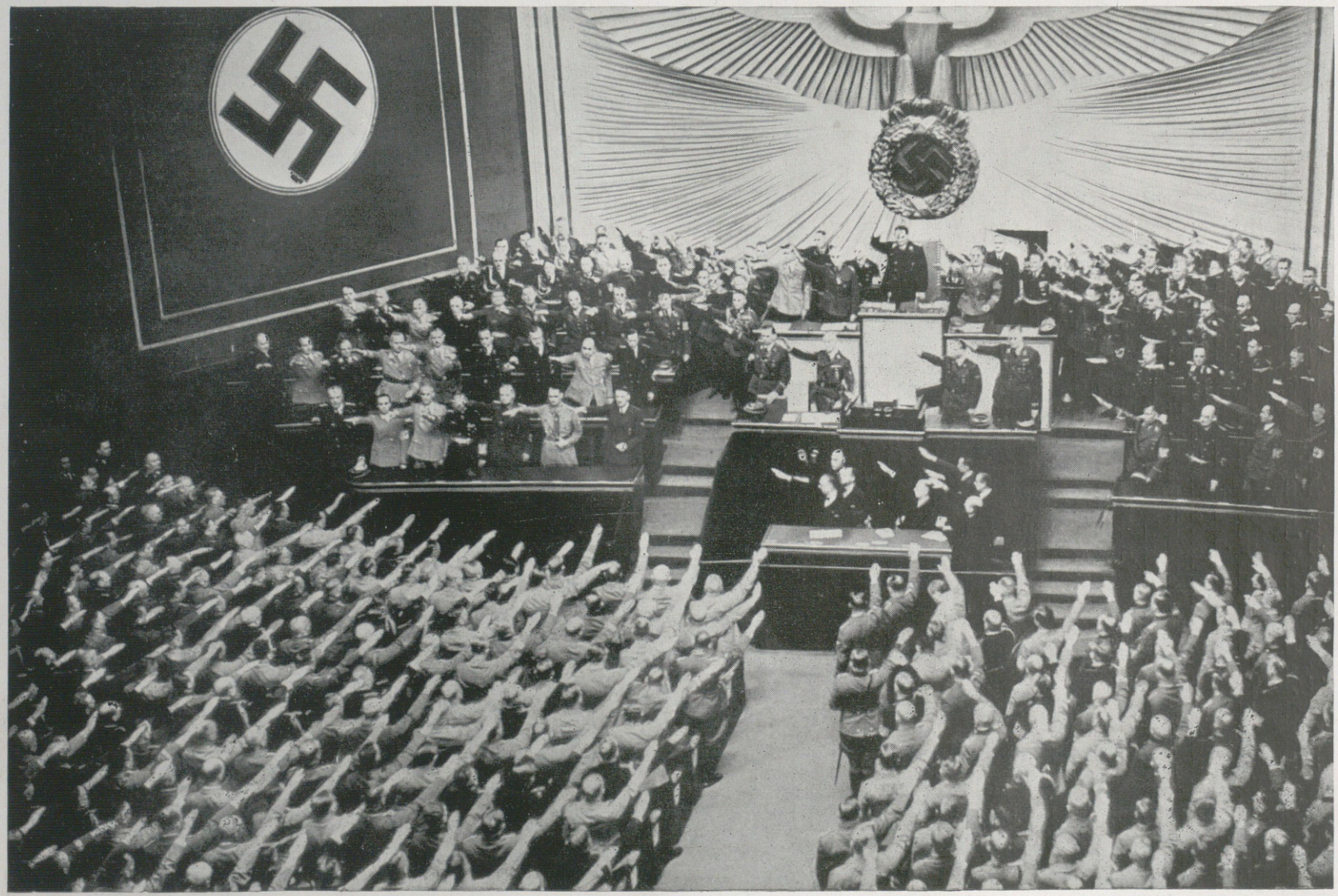
On the opposite side of the frontier ran the Siegfried Line, from Switzerland to the North Sea, not from Mulhouse only as far as Mezières, like the Maginot. What could be seen from the air was a series of "pill boxes," originally eight or ten to the square mile but increased immediately after the outbreak of the war.

It was not as good as the Maginot Line, said the French generals, who were unanimous on this point, however much they quarrelled amongst themselves on other matters. It had been hastily built, and the concrete had not had time to set.

As far as it went, the Maginot Line may have been stronger than the Siegfried. But it did not go far enough, and saved France from assault no better than those iron girdles which suspicious Crusaders are said to have riveted on their wives.



General Ott, Herr Hitler, General von Brauchitsch and General Keitel watching manoeuvres at Doberitz.



Herr Hitler, in the front row, on right, receiving the Nazi salute at a Reichstag meeting in the Kroll Opera House. In his address to the Reichstag the Fuehrer boasted ot the conquest of Poland and then stated the terms on which alone he would be prepared to consider a peaceful termination of the war.

On September 5th, and subsequent days, the French made a small advance along a twelve-mile front into the Saar, with the intention of drawing off troops from Poland and of disorganising German industry.

Czech, American and Italian legions were organised in France, the latter under Colonel Garibaldi; and the Supreme War Council met for the first time on September 12th. Of those who then met in Paris not one remained in office at the close of the year. Mr. Chamberlain had passed to his rest, Lord Chatfield and General Gamelin were in retirement, and M. Daladier was under arrest in Vichy.

The first German offensive against the Allies was diplomatic. On October 6th, Hitler, in a speech to the Reichstag informed the world of the terms on which he was prepared to make peace. Having conquered Poland and divided the spoils with the Bolsheviks, he was now prepared to give fresh assurances to his neighbours of respect for their security and independence.

"The plain truth is," said Mr. Chamberlain in his reply, "that after our past experience, it is no longer possible to rely upon the unsupported word of the present German Government. It is no part of our policy, however, to exclude from her rightful place in Europe a Germany which will live in amity and confidence with other nations. . . .

"Accordingly acts—not words alone—must be forthcoming before we, the British peoples and France, our gallant and trusted Ally, would be justified in ceasing to wage war to the utmost of our strength."

M. Daladier, the French Prime Minister, broadcast a declaration in similar terms; and beyond a violent attack on the Allies in a speech by Ribbentrop, in Danzig, on October 24th, nothing more was heard of the German peace offer.

Meanwhile conversations had been in progress at Ankara which were to be of great importance to the Allies' position in the Eastern Mediterranean in view of the equivocal attitude of Italy.

On October 19th an Anglo-French Treaty of Mutual Assistance was signed with Turkey. In the event of the Allies or Turkey being involved in a war in the Mediterranean the signatories undertook to "collaborate effectively" and to lend each other all aid and assistance in their power. The Treaty, which



Men of the Corps of Military Police lined up on their motor-cycles, with full equipment.



Artillery of the British Army returning to their barracks with heavy howitzers after firing practice. These 6-in. howitzers were among the types of big guns sent to France with the British Expeditionary Force.



German soldiers taking a light machine-gun with them as they enter the underground passage to a blockhouse.



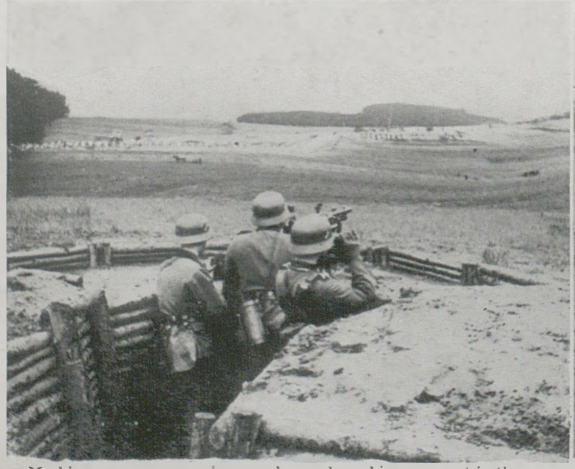
As a protection against infantry attacks, the Line is fronted with barbed wire. Alleyways lead to machine-gun posts.



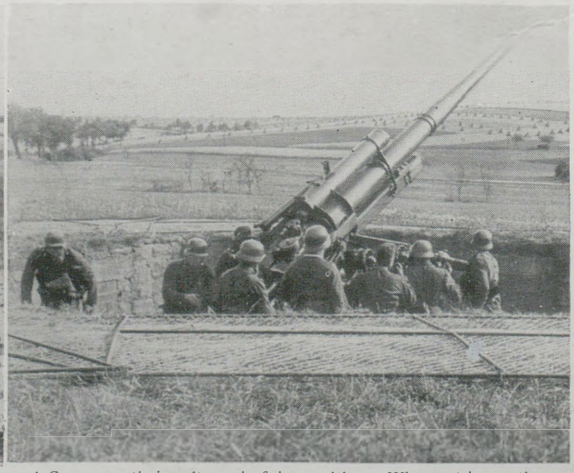
Infantry entering their underground fortifications. In many places these defence works have three and four lines.



A German aircraft-predictor in position in the Siegfried Line at a point where enemy aerial invasion may be expected



Machine-gunners occupying an advanced machine-gun post in the centre of a mass of steel and concrete tank barriers.



A German anti-aircraft gun in firing position. When not in use the gun is lowered below ground level and camouflaged.



German infantry cleaning their rifles in an underground fort. These forts are plentifully stocked with food and ammunition.



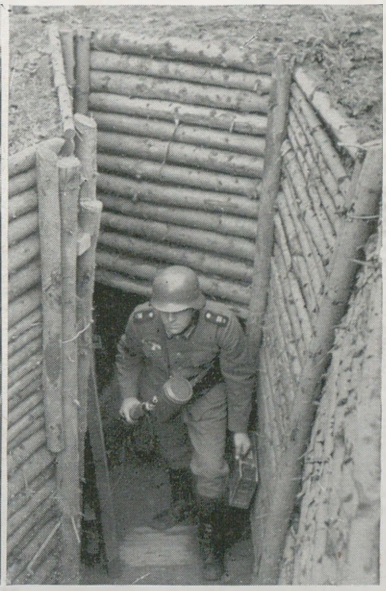
In the observation room of a fighting unit. Information received here can be telephoned to all parts of the sector.



A mess-room in an anti-aircraft defence tower with its own water supply.



Siegfried Line soldiers receiving their orders from an officer



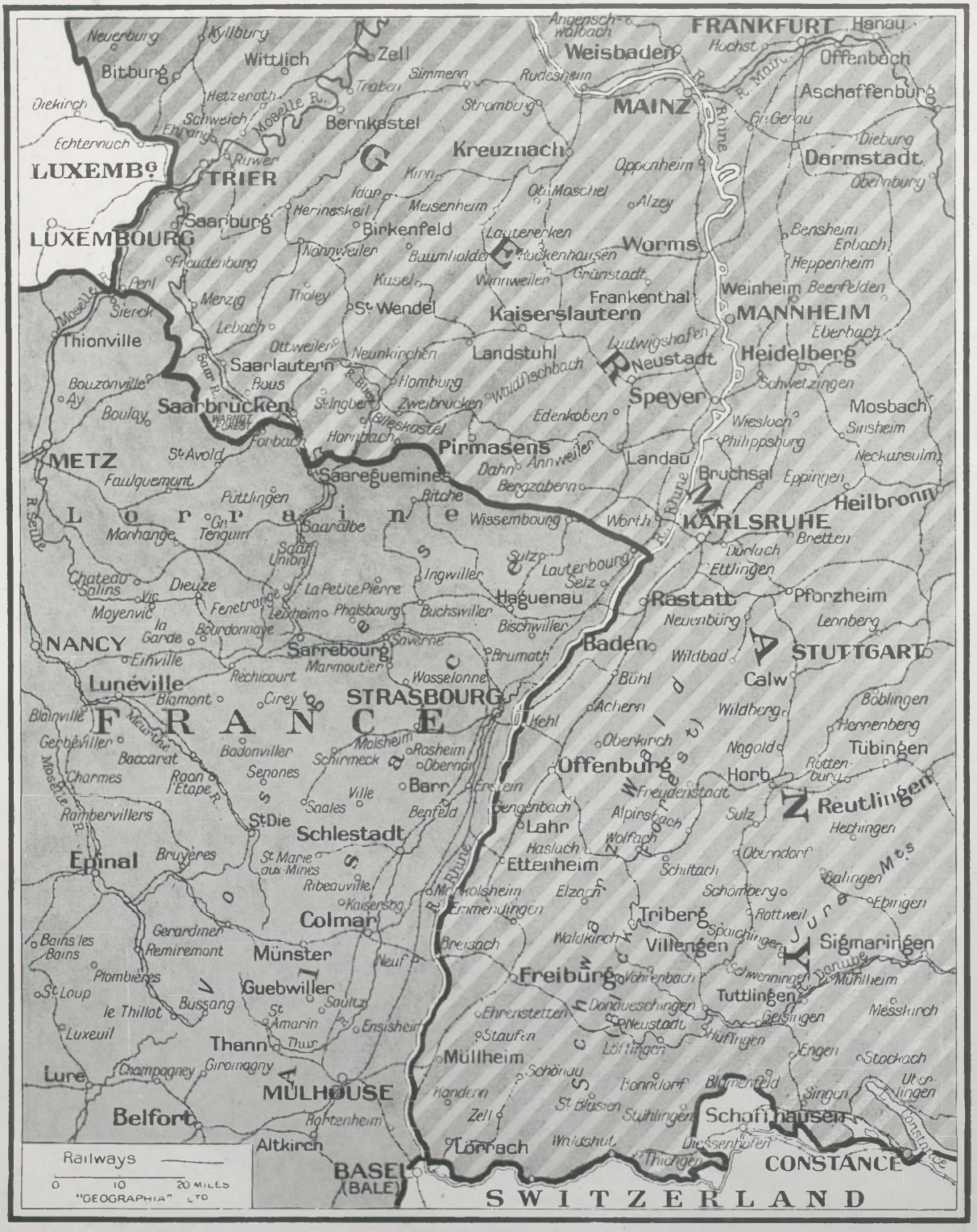
Machine-gun outposts of the Line have deep entrances and underground alleys.



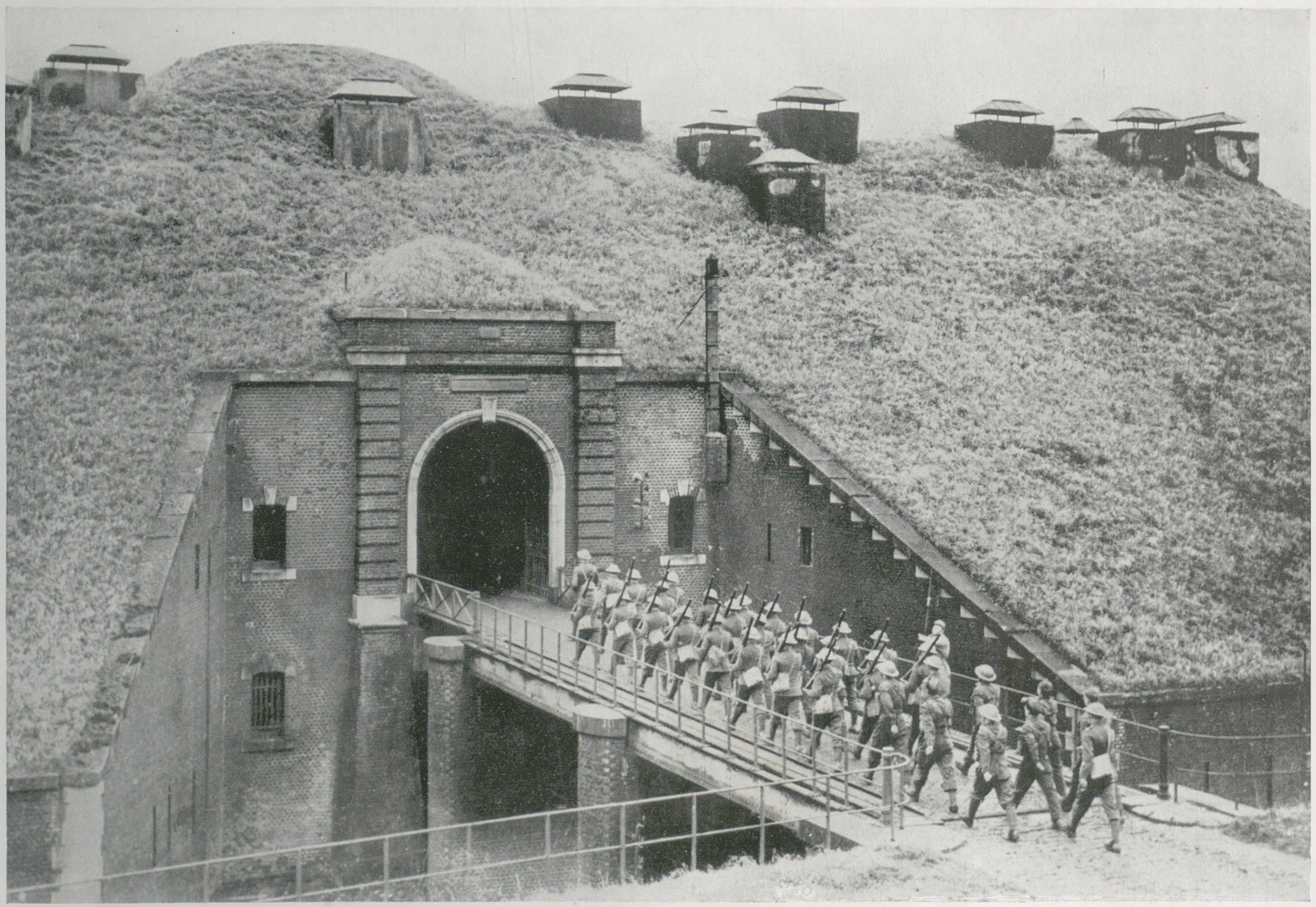
A concrete Siegfried Line observation post from which the orders for firing are given to the German gunners.



German soldiers leaving an underground fortification of the Siegfried Line.



MAP OF THE WESTERN FRONT



A detachment of British troops about to take up duties in an underground fortified position near the front. Note French sentry on the right, saluting.

is valid for fifteen years, was accompanied by a Protocol in which it was laid down that the obligations undertaken by Turkey cannot compel that country to take any action which would involve her in armed conflict with the U.S.S.R.

Turkey was ready and, indeed, determined, to defend her own independence, but was unwilling to be dragged into the war by either side. This was a position with which the British Government had full sympathy. During the winter lull, and especially after the U.S.S.R. had invaded Finland, advocates of a more active policy in London would have liked us to declare war on Russia. They pointed out that from bases in Turkey we could bomb the Caucasian oilfields, and cripple Soviet agriculture, which relies on tractors. The chief difficulty about this plan—there were others, of course—was that Turkey did not desire to offend her powerful neighbour, and that the British Government respected her decision.

When this war is over, let us hope that we may say that, no matter how hard pressed we were, we never attempted to influence neutrals to their detriment, nor seized a temporary advantage (as we might have done, for instance, by betraying the Baltic States to Russia, *more Germano*) in despite of honour and the long view.

In the British Army, drawn from all classes, and far better educated than any other Army of ours has ever been, politics were little discussed. By tradition we know and care little about foreign affairs. There was general agreement that we had to stop Hitler, and that it was better to get it over now.

Not so amongst the French soldiers, who were closer to the realities of Continental war than we then were, and whose country had been invaded by the Germans three times in seventy years. There was a



Mr. Winston Churchill discussing the progress of the war with General Viscount Gort, the Commander-in-Chief, in France.



The Duke of Kent (greeting a Polish officer with General Sikorski (*left*), the Polish Premier, and Count Raczynski (*centre*) at a Scottish port.



The Princess Royal inspecting the Royal Corps of Signals, of which she is Colonel-in-Chief, in the Southern Command



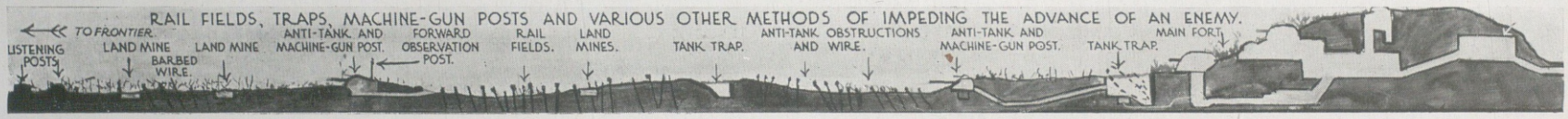
The King of the Belgians who on November 6th conferred with Queen Wilhelmina on their "good offices" offer.



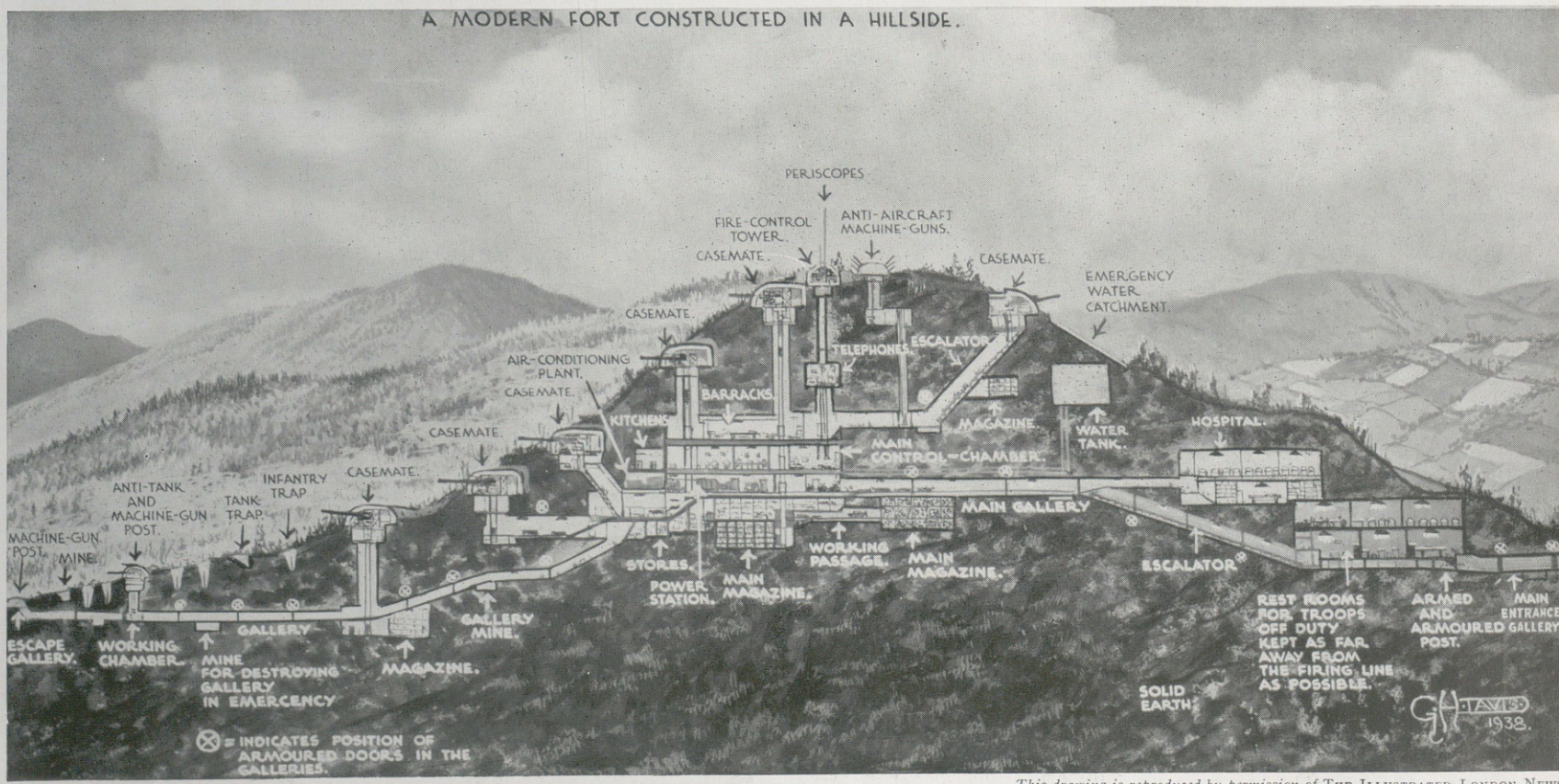
The Queen of the Netherlands, joint author with King Leopold of the mediation offer to the belligerents.



M. Albert Lebrun, the President of the French Republic, who sent a joint reply to Queen Wilhelmina and King Leopold, in which he stated that France would "welcome every possibility of assuring a just and durable peace".



A cross-section of the ground in front of the Maginot Line showing the intensive preparations made against a heavy assault on the line.



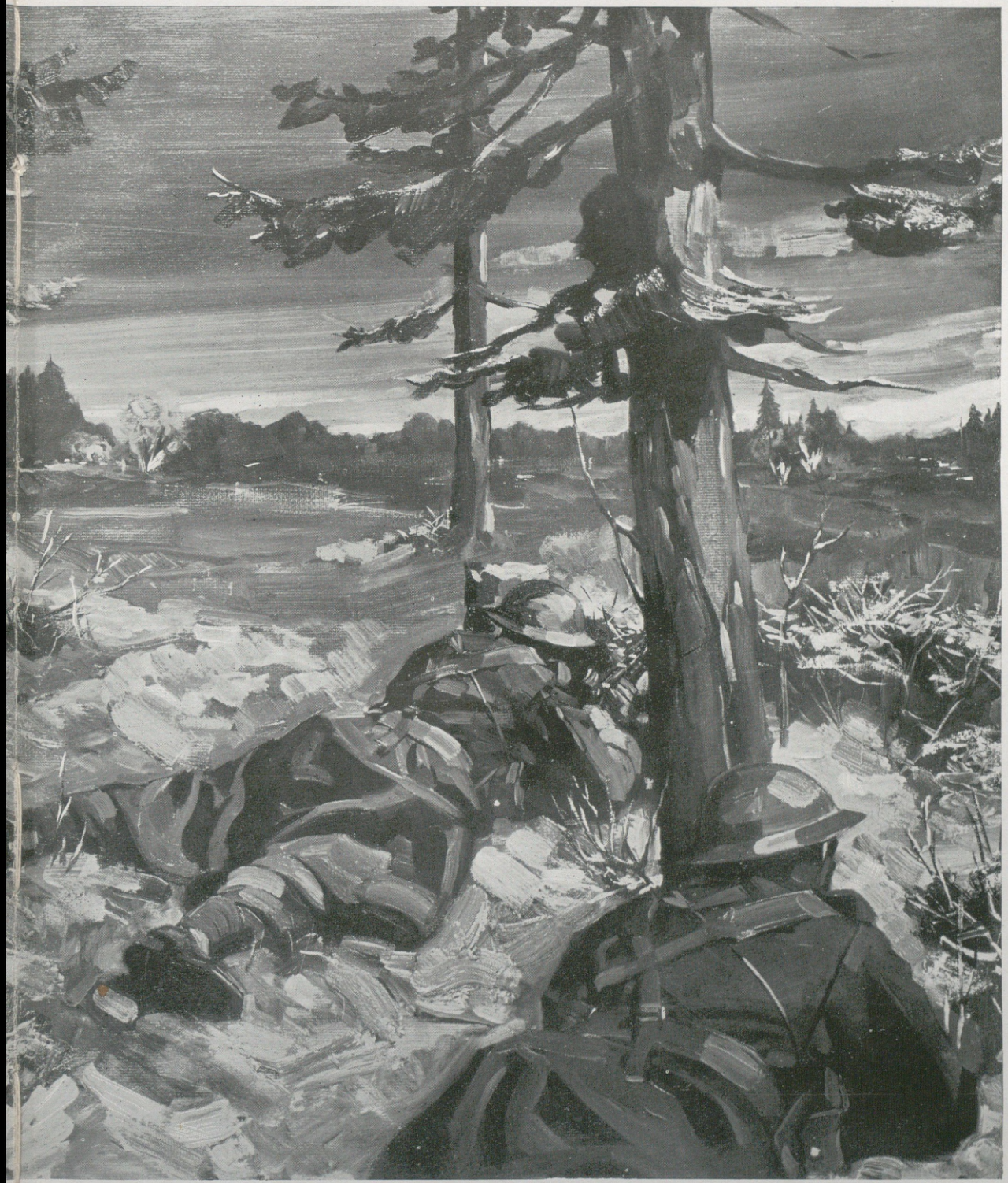
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THE FORTIFICATIONS OF THE MAGINOT LINE

A typical frontier work, with galleries within a hillside leading to "pill-boxes"; and details of machine-gun posts and tank traps



"Quiet apart from local patrol activity." Thus a communiqué may describe a seemingly unimportant day on the front. At times, however, this patrol activity reaches great intensity. In this picture, based on a drawing by an eye-witness in France, British troops have trapped the Germans into using their small arms by a decoy bombing party, the position of which is marked by flashes in the centre distance. In the right distance



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are the flashes from the Nazi rifles, which afford an excellent mark for the Bren gun party, lying in wait on a small crest, ready to open fire on this target. The incident took place just before dawn, which is considered, and confirmed by veterans of the Great War experienced in all branches of warfare, to be the grimmest moment of the twenty-four hours.



The first contingent of the Canadian Active Service Force arrived in Great Britain on December 18th, the whole span of the Dominion being represented. Above are seen Canadian troops in marching order.

great difference between the spirit of 1914 and that of 1939. "Then," as Mr. Maugham wrote: "the call to the colours was accepted with enthusiasm, men with flowers in their hats joined up shouting and singing; 'À Berlin.' they cried; the cafés were full of excited, eager people; it seemed a thrilling adventure they were starting on.[1] But this time the spirit was different. There was no enthusiasm; there was determination and an angry acquiescence, a firm courage and resignation. Everyone knows with what efficiency the mobilisation was completed. But what people are apt to forget is that the French nation had been mobilised three times in one year. In September, 1938, in the following March, and then again last August men were taken away from their peaceful avocations, the clerk from his office, the peasant from his field, the working man from his factory, all the able-bodied men of France between the ages of twenty and fifty, to put on their uniforms and assist the country in its peril."

Experienced observers were of the opinion that French mobilisation had been too drastic. Some 6,000,000 men had been called up, so that agriculture, industry and the Home Front were dangerously weakened.

On the other hand, the average Frenchman thought that our war preparations were too leisurely. France was fertile soil for the gibe that Great Britain would fight this war to the last Frenchman; and the Germans did not neglect to drive the suggestion home, by means of loud-speakers and placards in the front-line.

What were we doing? The work of the Navy is largely unseen. The Air Force was engaged on what it called "bomphlet" raids. Our Army was small,

[1] *France at War*, by Somerset Maugham. Heinemann 1940.



Marching six abreast with fixed bayonets, men of the first contingent of the Australian Imperial Force passing down Martin Place, Sydney, on their last parade before leaving for overseas. Thousands of cheering people lined the route and Lord Gowrie, Governor-General of Australia, took the salute as the 6,000 troopers marched past.

and much more highly paid than the French. We needed some joint feat of arms (such an opportunity as an Italian or Balkan campaign might have provided) to cement our comradeship in a common victory. Instead, the B.E.F. experienced the inevitable bickering of life in billets, varied by spells of dull and hard labour at improving fortifications, and all the discomforts of the bitterest winter in living memory.

The great freeze-up began before Christmas and continued until March. In England, at the end of January, telegraph lines hung in festoons, with a thick coating of ice, and many trees were riven by the frost. Waterways were sheets of solid ice. The Danube froze earlier than usual. The Rhine became unusable except by special ships in the middle of January. The Kattegat froze early in February. Temperatures of –30° Fahrenheit and even –40° Fahrenheit were reported in Scandinavia and Finland.

Our first war-budget (September 27th) was such as to freeze the blood of those old enough to remember the income-tax levied in the closing years of the last century. Now it was to be 7s. 6d. in the pound; and the chief comment was that it was not enough.

Another effort to stop the war (if Mussolini's and Hitler's previous proposals can be thought genuine) was made by King Leopold of the Belgians and Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, who met on November 7th (at the unusual hour of 4 a.m.) to issue a joint appeal to the belligerent States to enter into peace negotiations. Until the Foreign Office archives of both countries are published, we cannot know all that lay behind this sudden move. Perhaps the two Sovereigns were anxious once again to demonstrate their complete neutrality: at any rate, their offer of mediation was rejected by both sides.

It was, however, clear that anxiety in the Low Countries continued. Belgium strengthened her defences on the frontier, while Holland ordered partial mobilisation, and prepared to flood her defensive zones. So disquieted was public opinion in the Netherlands that on November 13th the Dutch Prime Minister broadcast an assurance to the nation that there was no need for alarm, and that the defensive measures were indeed purely defensive.

This situation impressed on Great Britain and France the urgent need to improve the security of the 600 miles of Franco-Belgian frontier. Mr. Hore-Belisha gave the House of Commons to understand that the B.E.F. was engaged on a long sector of that front, strengthening the positions. He also reported



Firemen and men of the Gestapo searching the ruins of the Bürgerbräu beer-cellar in Munich for the bodies of those killed in the explosion



Fifteen minutes after Herr Hitler's departure for Berlin on November 8th an explosion occurred in the Bürgerbräu beer-cellar in Munich, where the Fuehrer had been making a speech (*above*) at the anniversary celebrations of the *putsch* of 1923. Eight people were killed and 63 injured.

that "the health of the troops was exceptionally good, the sickness rate being actually lower than that of peacetime." Thirteen of our soldiers were killed, 24 wounded, and one was missing up to the end of the year. The French and Germans fished from their respective banks of the Rhine, while aeroplanes droned above, photographing positions in rear.

The next "sensation", after the meeting of the Sovereigns of Holland and Belgium, occurred on the night of November 8th. Hitler and most of the other prominent Nazi leaders had gone to Munich to hold their annual meeting in the Bürgerbrau cellar, where the Party celebrates the anniversary of the *putsch* in 1923. After a shorter speech than usual, the Fuehrer and his companions left. A quarter of an hour later there was a violent explosion, in which eight people were killed and sixty-three injured.

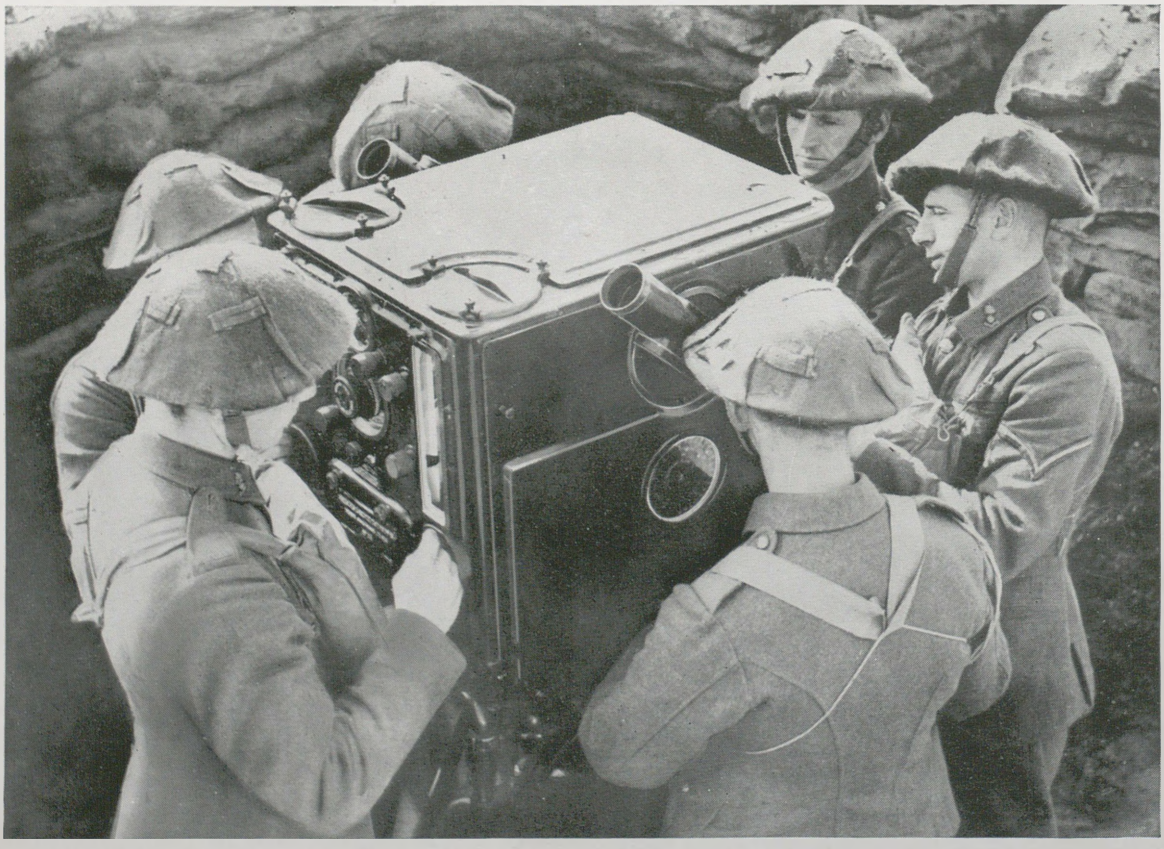
The German police subsequently declared that a bomb had been embedded in one of the pillars supporting the roof, by a workman who had gained admittance to carry out some electric installation. A man—alleged to have been the workman—was arrested trying to cross the Swiss frontier, but there is considerable doubt about the existence of the person described by the Gestapo.

It was, of course, immediately announced in Germany that the outrage was the work of the British Secret Service, and that proof existed of England's guilt. But to make Hitler into a martyr would have been small service to the British cause.

Next day there was a flagrant violation of Dutch neutrality near Venloo. Gestapo agents crossed the Dutch frontier and kidnapped two English passport officials—Major Stephens and Mr. Best—who were sitting in a café with a Dutch officer. The Dutch officer was killed in the course of the struggle and his chauffeur was compelled to drive the captured men across the frontier at the point of the revolver.

The Germans subsequently declared that the Englishmen were secret agents responsible for the attempt on Hitler's life, and promised sensational revelations, but these were never made.

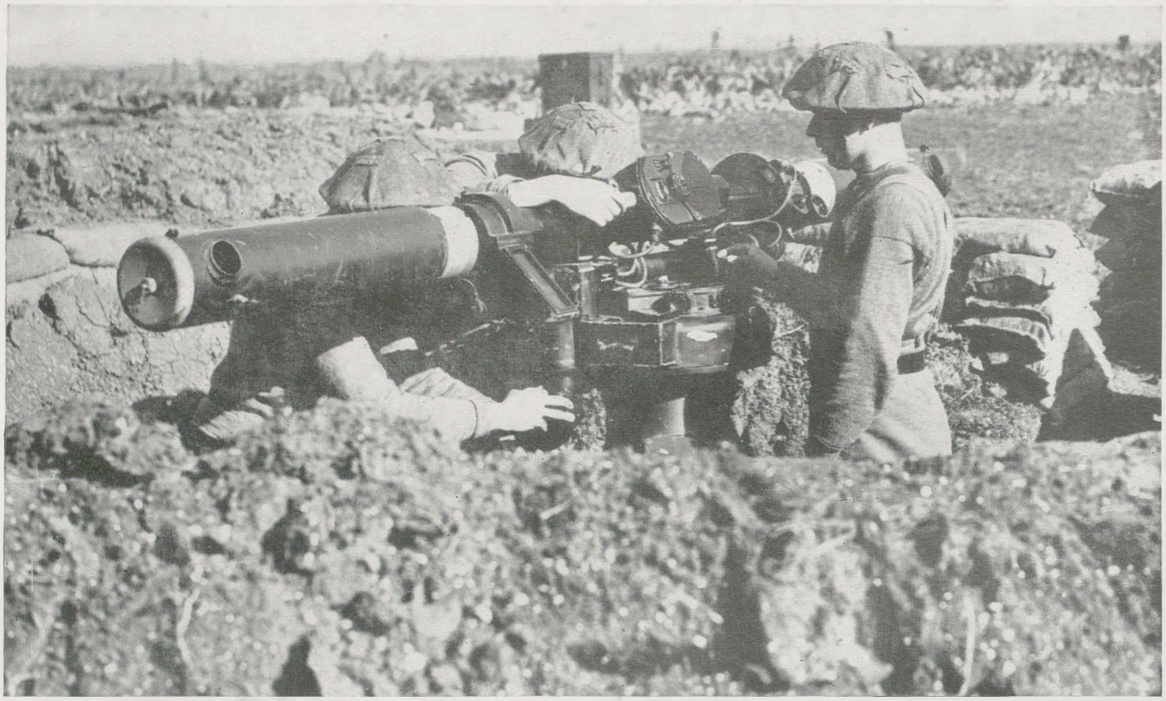
Nothing more was heard of the affair, which remains one of the many mysteries of the Gestapo. Nor



Men of the B.E.F. operating a predictor used for predicting the speed of approaching enemy planes in a trench behind the lines in France



King George being shown a chart which is used by anti-aircraft units to recognise enemy machines, during his tour of the Western Front, on December 6th. In the course of his tour the King went up into the line. He saw troops of all arms and also visited the French Army.



A range-finding crew operating the latest type of range-finder.

has anything more ever been heard of the unfortunate chauffeur. The Dutch protest at the murder of the officer and the violation of their frontier has been completely ignored.

. . . .

From the grim mass of the Kremlin, meanwhile, a cloud much larger than a man's hand had been spreading across the skies of northern Europe. In late October, Dr. Paasikivi, representing Finland, returned from Moscow (whither he had been invited to discuss "various political and economic questions") to tell the world that negotiations with Russia had been conducted "in a most amicable atmosphere," but that he did not know if or when they would be resumed.

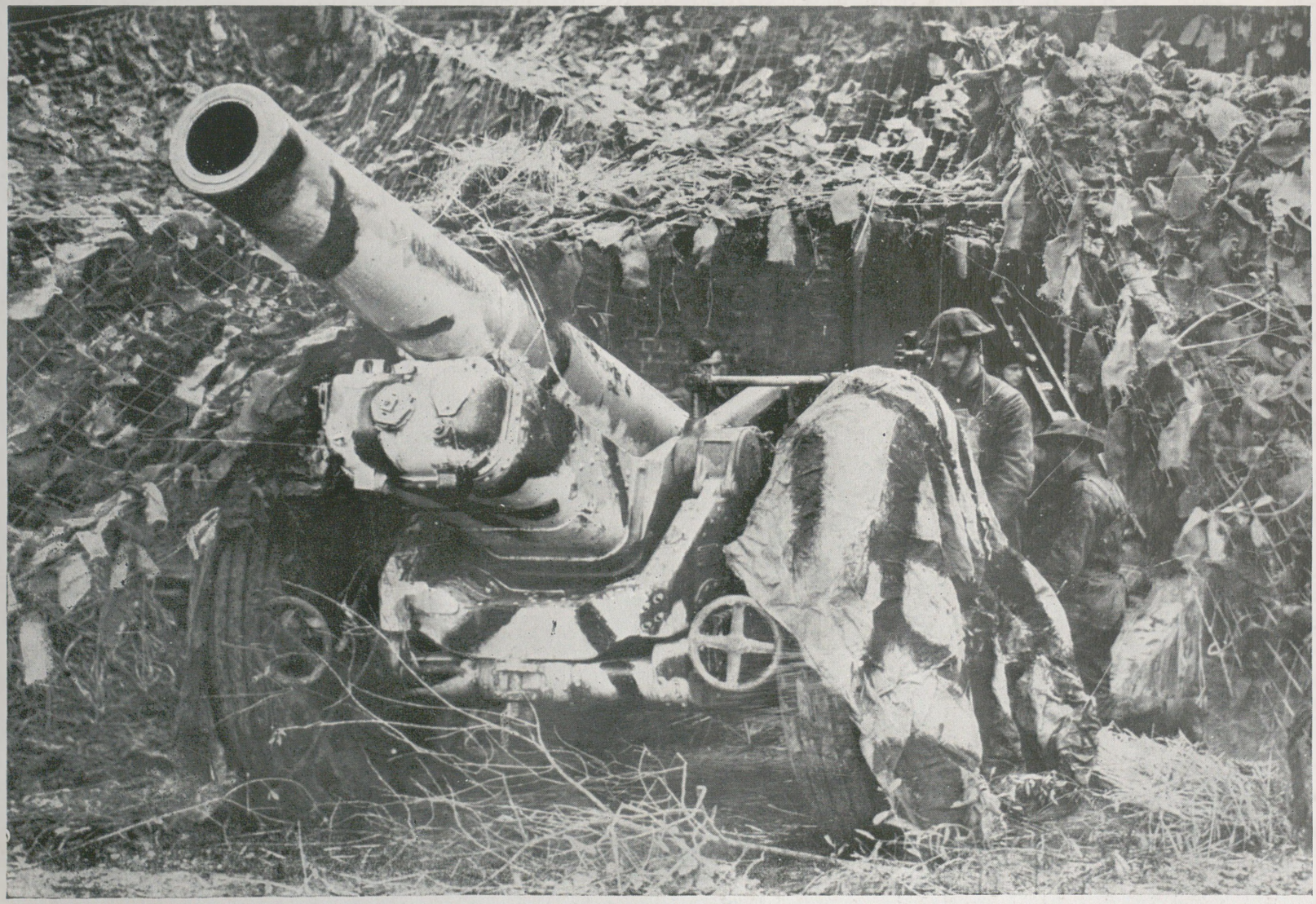
On November 30th, the U.S.S.R. attacked Finland by land, sea, and air. Already the Russians had absorbed the Baltic States. Now the Bear seemed to be stretching out his arms to take Finland—and perhaps Northern Sweden and Norway, with the iron-ore mines and the ice-free port of Narvik—into the Bolshevik embrace.

Copying the German technique, M. Molotov, the U.S.S.R. Commissar for Foreign Affairs, announced that the Soviet Government was not at war with Finland; it had merely accepted the invitation of the People's Democratic Government (headed by a Comintern puppet, Kuusinnen, who was so little trusted by his countrymen that even Moscow had eventually to throw him over) to liberate the Finns from their present elected government and army chiefs.

So Helsinki and other towns were bombed without any warning. This was not war, but merely the desire of Moscow that Finland should not be oppressed by "the Mannerheims and Tanners."

Meanwhile the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Rumania assured King Carol's Government that Russia had no intention of attacking that country, or of occupying Bessarabia. (Before the year was out the U.S.S.R. was established not only in Bessarabia, but in part of Bukovina.)

The magnificent defensive campaign of the small Finnish army, and the military genius of their leader, Field-Marshal Mannerheim, aroused the enthusiasm of the peoples of Great Britain, France and the United States. The Americans placed Finland's annual debt payment (the sole payment on this account now received in Washington) into a suspense account; and subsequently it was remitted.



One of the heavy British guns effectively camouflaged with branches in a farmyard somewhere behind the lines in France. Camouflage, which was not used extensively until the latter part of the last war is now a matter of course. Even the Tommies use camouflage on their steel helmets.

On February 5th the Supreme Allied War Council decided to prepare an Expeditionary Force for operations in Finland if required. The men were chosen—100,000 of them—and many went to Alpine slopes to improve their knowledge of ski-ing under war conditions. By February 26th the British contingent—50,000 men of the B.E.F.—had been chosen, equipped, and were standing by with the necessary transports.

The force never sailed, however, for reasons which we only know in part. Field-Marshal Mannerheim was expected to make a public appeal for assistance not later than the beginning of March. He did not make it, probably because neither Norway nor Sweden would have dared to incur the reprisals of the Germans if they had permitted Allied troops to go to the relief of their eastern neighbour.

The first Russian troops thrown against the Finnish defences were of poor quality, and Finn machine-gunners mowed them down in swathes. Prisoners were found to be ill-equipped, ill-fed, and ignorant of why they fought. Had the defenders been supported by Allied troops, and had we been able to give them effective assistance in the air (we sent 144 aeroplanes, but it was not enough) the Mannerheim Line might still be intact, and Stalin might no longer be in power in the Kremlin. On the other hand, the vast resources of Russia might by now have been fully mobilised against us, and ranged with the other dictatorships. Conjecture is idle. The fact is that the Russians lost so many men in mass attacks that the Soviet régime was badly shaken.

During December and January the Finns—fighting on their own ground, amidst the forests and snows they knew so well—won repeated victories. By the middle of January the Russians were engaged on a desperate attempt to avoid being encircled. Early in February, however, their numbers began



Heavy artillerymen in France enjoying a way-side halt.



Coldstream Guardsmen with one of the chief weapons of the infantryman. Terrific rate of fire, simplicity, and reliability have made a deadly weapon for the Army.



Gordon Highlanders, who form part of the British Expeditionary Force in France cleaning and attending to their Bren carriers in a farmyard.

to tell. The Finns had had little sleep or rest since the beginning of the campaign, whereas the Russians, with unlimited man-power, were continually putting fresh divisions into the line.

After twelve days of continuous assault on the Mannerheim Line, directed by German officers as well as by Russians, and supported by large numbers of guns and tanks, the Bolsheviks began to press the Finns back on February 13th.

That was the beginning of the end. It is a tragic and unsatisfactory story, like that of Poland. The story of a heroic people overcome by sheer weight of men and metal.

The Russians entered the suburbs of Viipuri on March 1st, and on the 12th the Russo-Finnish peace treaty was signed in Moscow. Viipuri and the whole Karelian Isthmus was ceded to Russia, also a salient of territory in the north-east, with permission for the U.S.S.R. to build a railway linking up Kandalaksha with Kemi on the Gulf of Bothnia. The terms were grievous to the Finns, and an obvious threat to the future of Scandinavia. Maps were found on Russian officers indicating that the ultimate objective of the Bolsheviks is Narvik.

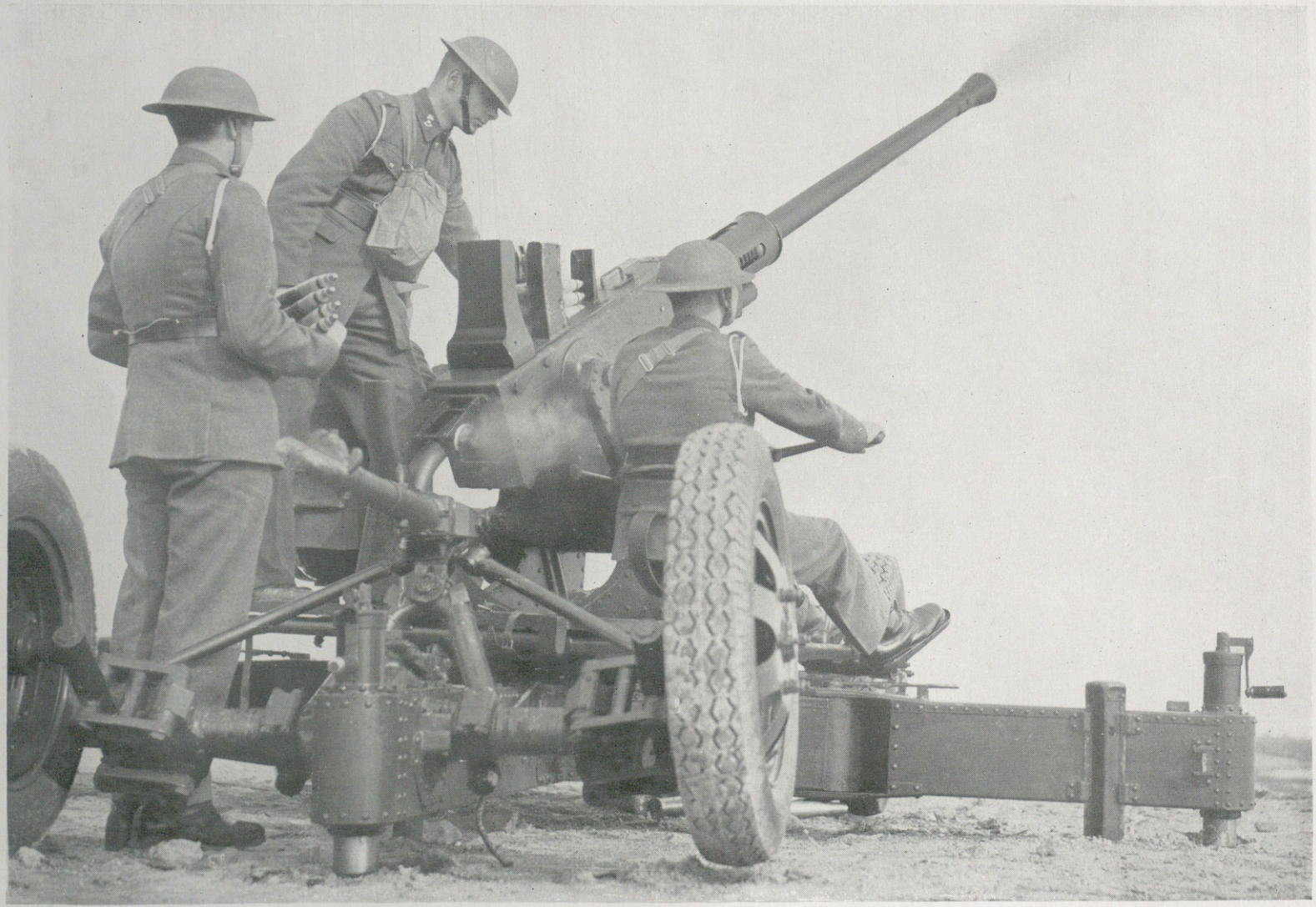
Stalin remained a dark enigma, and another question-mark on the horizon was provided by the arrival in Rome of Mr. Sumner Welles, Under-Secretary of State for the United States. In Italy he received little publicity, but in Fleet Street speculation about possible peace moves was rife.

He was in London on March 11th, after having visited both Berlin and Paris, and then returned to Italy for a further interview with Mussolini.

Meanwhile the two dictators had met on the Brenner Pass (March 18th) each arriving in a bullet-proof train. After a talk lasting two and a half hours a non-committal communiqué was issued, and the world can only surmise from subsequent events that the date of Italy's entry into the war was one of the subjects discussed.



The King toured Royal Ordnance factories in the Midlands and saw armaments being made. His Majesty is seen above chatting with a man in a drilling shop.



Of Swedish invention, but made under licence in England this A.A. gun is the "small brother" of the mighty 3.7. Capable of a tremendous rate of fire, its high explosive shells are a menace to attacking dive bombers.

In the background of these discussions, however, there were ambitions, not always fully formulated, but ever present in the minds of the dictators, which the rest of the world is still inclined to treat as fantasy. Yet the Nazi (more than the Fascist) aims are backed by fanatical determination, and considerable military skill. "Thinking calms the men of most nations," said Madame de Staël; "it inflames the Germans."

As Hitler and his colleagues saw the future of the world, they would have a controlling interest in half Poland, and in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Belgium, France, together with the French Empire in Africa, the Union of South Africa, South-West Africa, Bechuanaland, Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda.



Welsh Guardsmen near the front line. The soldier on the right is carrying a 2-in. mortar.

The Italians would be permitted some (possibly limited) control of a *bloc* comprising Italian East Africa, the Sudan, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria.

Spain would be allowed to keep Spanish Morocco, but Gibraltar and Ceuta would be internationalised, as well as Tangier. Her reward, if she submitted to Axis plans, would be French Morocco, and some share in the development of her sister nations in South America.

Spheres of influence in the Balkans, Greece, Turkey, Syria and Palestine have probably never been allocated precisely between the senior and junior partners of the Axis, partly because the Soviet Union keeps them guessing as to its intentions.

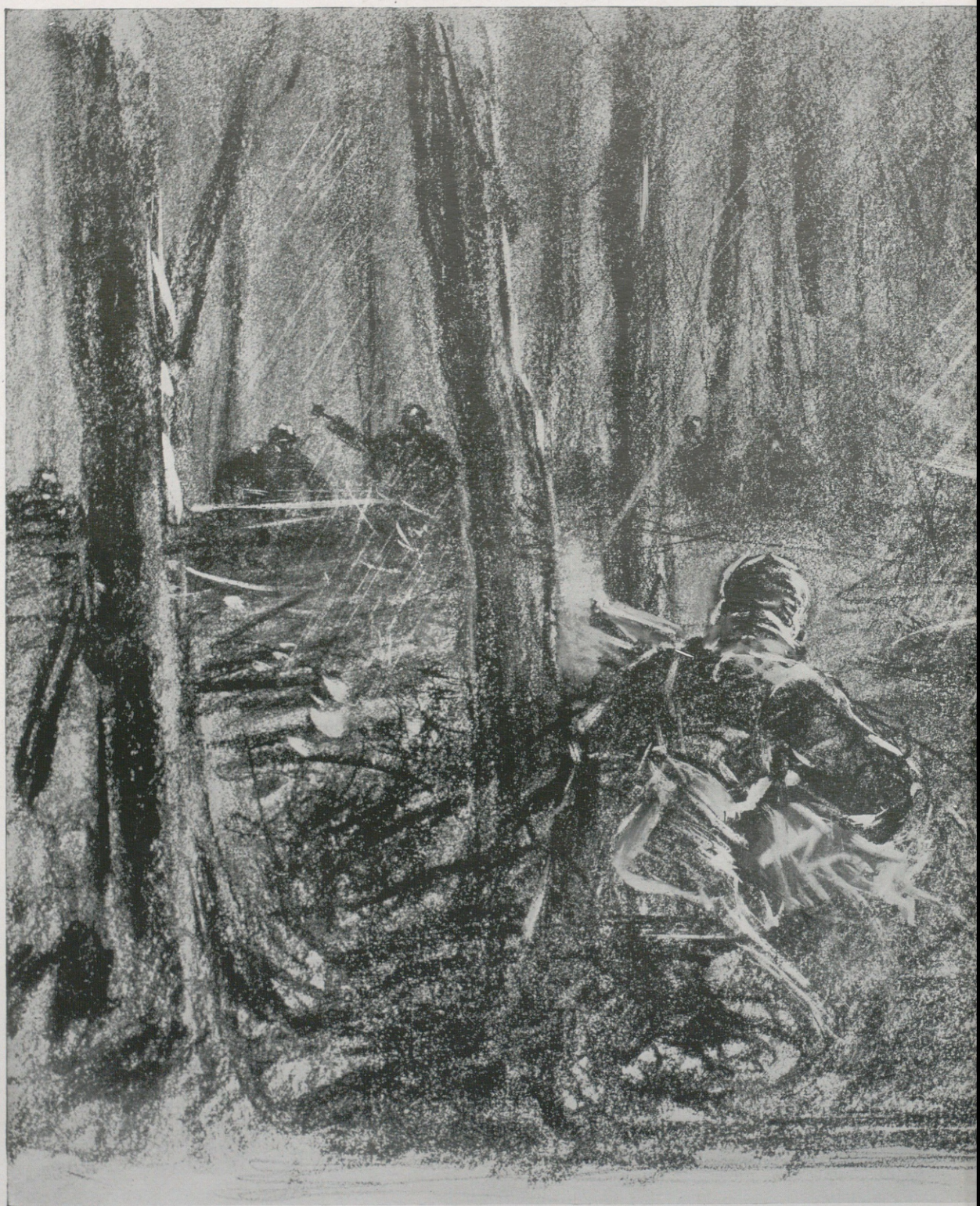
As to the Russians, Dr. Rosenberg (who remains a prophet of National Socialism) declares that they "must remove their centre of gravity to Asia. Bolshevism, that mixture of Babœuf, Blanc, Bakunin, Tolstoy, Lenin and Marx, must not be spoken to the West, but to the East, where there is room to spread it."



British troops arriving in army transport lorries at a French village behind the lines. Note the curtain camouflage in the street.



A British field gun passing near a French village at sunset on its way up the line.



Activity on the Western Front was chiefly confined to reconnoitring patrols and artillery duels between French and German guns. The nightly patrols—troops creeping through the darkness with bombs and life-preservers—aim at capturing prisoners who will provide important information about the enemy's troop movements and positions in the lines. In the above drawing, which depicts a scene described by a patrol leader on his



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return to the lines, a British patrol are seen engaging a Nazi patrol in the wooded No Man's Land in front of the Maginot Line. The British patrol have discarded their steel helmets for forage caps and woollen head-gear. Although rifles are carried, they are used only in a case of emergency.

The U.S.S.R., therefore, must be encouraged to carry its doctrines to Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and India. "To save Europe," Dr. Rosenberg explains in the *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, "it is necessary above all to strengthen the Nordic sources of blood, that is Germany, Scandinavia, Finland, and England.

"On the other hand, the influence of France must be restricted, in order to prevent her becoming the deploying-ground of Africa. As long as the French, together with the Poles and Czechs, dominate Europe, there can be no prosperity for the German people.

"To grant outer freedom to-day to Czechs, Poles and Levantines means to be delivered over to racial chaos. . . . Freedom means to be bound by the ties of race . . . and this means the protection of the race.

"Germany must be the central power of the Continent, guardian of the South, and South-West, with the Scandinavian States and Finland to safeguard the North-East, and with England in charge of the West, and overseas, wherever the interests of Nordic Man require it."



A British anti-tank gun and crew camouflaged in white during the arctic conditions on the Western Front
The crew and gun were unrecognisable from a short distance.

To the Japanese (made Honorary Aryans by the Nazis) would have been given rights of exploitation in China, Tibet, Burma, Thailand and French Indo-China; perhaps also, but more doubtfully, the Malay States, the Netherlands-Indies, Australia and New Zealand.

In the Western Hemisphere, the United States (still according to Dr. Rosenberg) "should begin to settle its Black race in Africa. If this is not done the twelve million negroes in the United States will soon grow to fifty million, and as the tool of Bolshevism they will cut the throat of White America." Consolingly, he adds that "an America cleansed of all her black, yellow and Jewish elements, with a purely Nordic-European population, will be a thousand times more powerful than a State polluted by alien blood."

Doubtless these ideas remained unspoken at the Brenner meeting. There was no need to formulate them there, and there is no need for us to speculate as to what was in Mussolini's mind. One day we shall know when he took his final, fatal decision, and goose-stepped across the Rubicon.

. . . . .



One of the most menacing weapons in mechanical warfare is the anti-tank gun which can fire shell after shell through the armour-plating of modern tanks. A British anti-tank gun crew are seen here in action in a wood on the Western Front.



A British sniper, wearing a white suit as a camouflage, creeping through the snow during an exercise. His rifle, which has also been camouflaged, is bound with a white material.



During the severe arctic conditions at the front, British troops camouflaged themselves in a similar way to the Finnish soldiers. An advance party of Tommies are seen here moving up from behind an avenue of trees.



Men of the Norfolk Regiment on patrol on the Western Front being issued with hand grenades in a forward trench manned by riflemen before going out to reconnoitre enemy front-line posts.



One by one, men of the Norfolk Regiment on patrol moving out from the forward trench. The Norfolk Regiment had the honour of winning the first two Army decorations of the war for bravery when on patrol.

Ten days after the dictators had parted in the Alpine snow, the Supreme War Council of the Allies met in London (March 28th) and agreed that (1) neither Britain nor France would negotiate or conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement; (2) they would not discuss peace terms without prior agreement on the conditions necessary to ensure an effective and lasting guarantee of the security of both Powers; and (3) after the conclusion of peace they would maintain a community of action in all spheres as long as it was necessary for security.

Soon afterwards (April 4th) Mr. Chamberlain told us that after seven months of war he felt ten times as confident of victory as he did in the beginning. Hitler, he added, had "missed the bus."

The following day General Sir Edmund Ironside, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, told assembled journalists at the War Office that although the German army was a magnificent machine, the men commanding it had little experience, and that according to his information the fact that there had been no *blitzkrieg* in the West was causing doubt and depression amongst the Nazis. The German Army, he said, was not well officered. It had few senior generals with experience of the last Great War.



A cup of tea in a French village

If Hitler attacked us, nothing could suit us better, for we had had time to build up magnificent defences.

Time would reveal how long the Germans could stand the strain of waiting. As for ourselves, we were prepared. He trembled to think what would have happened if the Germans had attacked us at the beginning of the war. "But now," he concluded, "—only in this last fortnight—I am certain that we have turned the corner."

How many corners have we turned since then?

Ominous rumours were reaching London of French political and military intrigues, of the underground strength of French Communists, and of deficiencies in French defences.

M. Daladier's government fell because the war was not being prosecuted with sufficient vigour; but there were other politicians who did not want to prosecute the war at all. When M. Reynaud's government declared its policy, on March 22nd, the new French Prime Minister won a vote of confidence by 112 votes, but there were 111 abstentions.



Troops of a battalion of the Cheshire Regiment manning their machine-guns, loaded ready for action, on the Western Front. As a protection, the men have taken up positions in a ruined building.



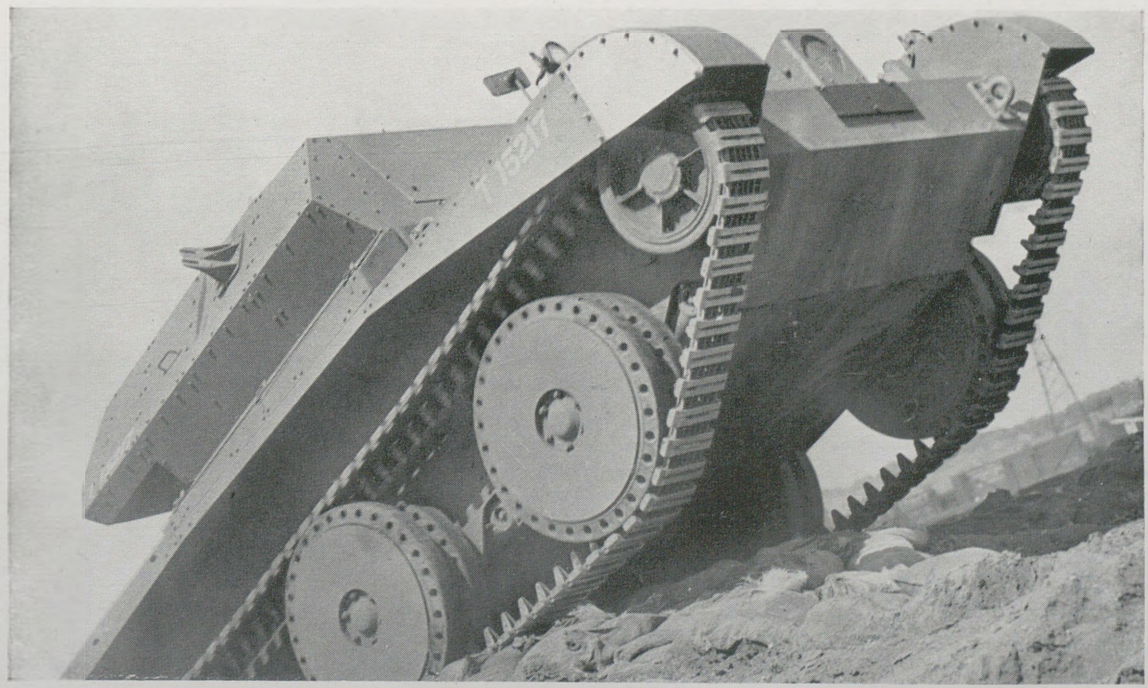
A six-inch gun in action with the B.E.F.



Surmounting any obstacle, light tanks of the Army crossing rough country during training in France. Steep hills, dense woodland, trenches and fences have to be crossed during the exercise.

At least one well-known war correspondent wrote a memorandum to the War Office pointing out that the continuation of the Maginot Line to the Channel was dangerously weak, and that the weakest point of all was at Sedan. Indeed, a map of Europe is sufficient to disclose the potential danger. A line ruled between Paris and Berlin passes almost through Sedan.

All leave was stopped for the B.E.F. on January 14th, for about ten days: thereafter there were several other periods of tension. But before our soldiers were to fight in France some of them were to attempt—alas, unsuccessfully up to date—"to purge the sacred soil of the Vikings from the filthy tyranny of the Nazis."



A whippet tank undergoes its first trials over rough ground after passing out from the factory.

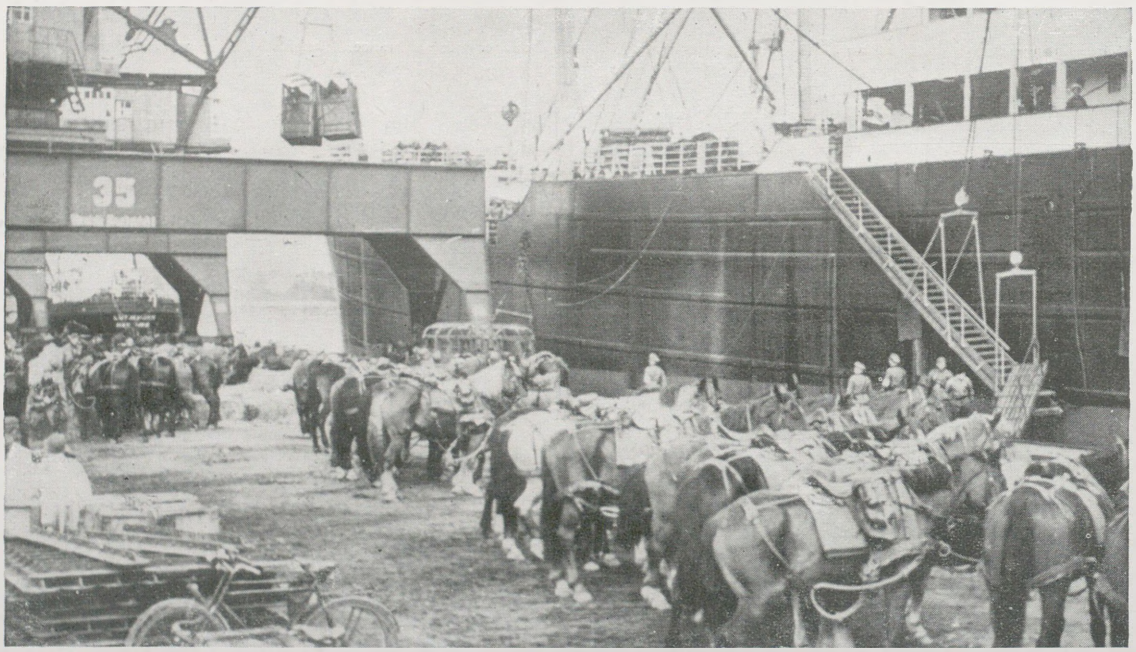
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III

NORWAY

From the ice-free port of Narvik in the north of Norway, German ships with their cargoes of iron-ore from the Swedish mines at Gellivare had crept down the long line of coast since the beginning of the war, under the exasperated eyes of the British Navy. Keeping within territorial waters, they were immune from capture; but it was not only German merchantmen which made use of the deep-water channels behind the fringe of the islands; German warships and submarines also sought the security of the fjords.

During the First World War the same problem of the use of Norwegian territorial waters had arisen



Horses about to be taken aboard a German transport at Hamburg, several days before the Nazis invaded Norway and Denmark. A large number of troops were installed on steamers at Bremen and Hamburg some months before the invasion.

and the British and United States Governments had induced the Norwegian Government to lay mine-fields off this coast. In this war, however, the British Government felt that it could not have induced Norway to take such a step, and did not attempt to do so.

Nevertheless there was a great and growing desire at home to end the apparent deadlock in the war. Action against German misuse of neutral waters was insistently demanded by public opinion, and military writers were not slow to point out the immense importance of the Gellivare mines to Germany, whose produce came chiefly down the Norwegian coast.

In 1935 Germany imported from abroad fourteen million tons of iron-ore. In 1936, eighteen millions. In 1937, twenty millions. In 1938, twenty-eight millions. These figures demonstrated not only the rising tempo of German war preparation in the past, but the crippling blow that we might strike against her present war economy by closing the Norwegian route.

Up to April, fifty-five Norwegian ships, aggregating 120,000 tons had been sunk by the Germans, and over four hundred Norwegian sailors had been drowned as a result. When, therefore the Admiralty



German troops being conveyed in a tender from their transport ship into Oslo Harbour.



A Nazi anti-aircraft gun position guarding the port of Oslo against R.A.F. bombers.



German troops, after their arrival in transports at Copenhagen, are seen above wheeling their cycles along the quayside. Danish citizens watch the invaders in silence as they move off towards the city.

sent our minelayers, on the night of April 7th—8th to lay minefields near Bodoe, Kristiansund and Stadtland, the whole country rejoiced. At last the period of stalemate was over !

But Germany had anticipated our action. For months past, as it subsequently appeared, the General Staff had been working out a detailed scheme for the seizure of Denmark and Norway. Early in March began the assembling of transports and war material in the ports of northern Germany. Troops accustomed to mountain warfare were withdrawn from the Western Front, and for weeks had been engaged in practising embarkation and disembarkation. Phrase-books in the Norwegian language, for the use of soldiers were printed, also proclamations to be posted up in Trondheim and other cities. The Allied Governments were apparently aware of these preparations, but it was stated that they could not tell where



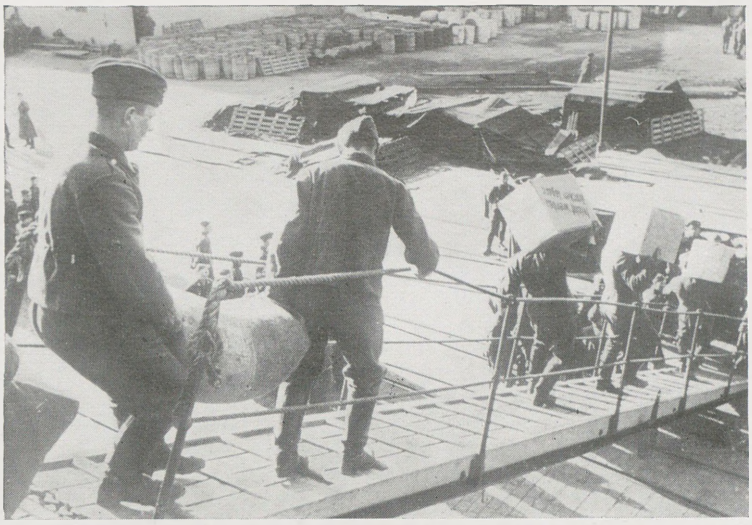
German troops, headed by a band, on parade in the streets of Oslo, the Norwegian capital. The column of the invaders was composed of only two battalions numbering 1,500 men.

or when the blow would fall. To the man-in-the-street it seemed as if their Intelligence Services might at least have made a guess.

At the end of March, German ore ships and cargo ships, flying neutral flags (modern versions of the Trojan horse, for their holds were filled with German soldiers, guns and tanks) were steaming northwards through Norwegian fjords.

Some of these soldiers subsequently boasted that they had been in Norwegian ports for a month. But the main body of the enemy left Stettin later (though still before the British minelaying) namely, on April 5th. They sailed in 20 transports, and at the same time the German Fleet put to sea and led our ships a wild-goose chase into the mists and snow-storms of the Arctic Circle.

On the morning of April 9th the Danes awoke to find that their country had been occupied. Business people going to their offices in Copenhagen were greeted by German soldiers, while showers of leaflets came from aeroplanes overhead. They were informed that their country had been taken under German protection to save it from an Allied attack. Except for a few shots fired on the frontier, and stubborn resistance by the Guards outside the Royal Palace, who were finally ordered to lay down their arms by the King himself, the Danes sullenly acquiesced.



German troops carrying supplies from a transport vessel on arrival at a Norwegian port, immediately after the invasion.

Throughout the whole of Monday, April 8th, the Norwegian Government was busy preparing a protest to the British Government, regarding the minelaying. All sorts of rumours were circulating in Oslo. The afternoon papers had a story of German soldiers, torpedoed by a British submarine, landing on the South coast. A little after midnight an air-raid warning sounded over the capital, which was immediately blacked-out. It was the night after new moon, and cloudy. People groped their way home in the pitch dark.

The Norwegian Cabinet met in the Foreign Office at 1.30 a.m. The telephone rang constantly, bringing news of strange ships—probably German, but it was difficult to identify them in the darkness—attacking the fjords of Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim. At 4.30 a.m. the German Minister, Dr. Brauer asked to see Dr. Koht, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, to whom he presented a Note and Memorandum. As the building was still blacked-out, they sat down by the light of two candles in the library. Dr. Brauer proceeded to give a verbal explanation of the document, which ran to nineteen typewritten pages. He pointed out that all resistance to Germany would be foolish, and quoted the very words of the horror film, "Baptism of Fire," portraying the invasion of Poland, which he had shown four days previously to members of the Norwegian Government: "If there are terrible consequences, you will only have to thank your English and French friends."

The Memorandum consisted of the stereotyped announcement that Germany was occupying the country to save it from Great Britain and France. The Note contained a series of demands, or instructions, designed to secure the complete subservience of the Norwegian Government, and control of the armed forces and all means of communication.

Dr. Koht asked for time to submit these proposals to his Government, and the German Minister unwillingly agreed. He required the answer quickly, he said, for the German forces had been ordered to complete the occupation of the places specified by 9 o'clock that morning.

By 5.30 a.m. Dr. Koht had returned to the library, where the pale dawn was breaking. The Government, he told Dr. Brauer, was determined to maintain Norwegian independence as long as possible.



Germans landing anti-aircraft guns at Trondheim shortly after they had taken possession of this Norwegian seaport.



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Although many rumours of British landings in Norway had circulated from Stockholm during the second week in April, it was not until April 15th that a short War Office announcement was made stating that British troops had landed at several points in Norway. Six days later, an official Norwegian communiqué stated that the British forces were in action in Eastern Norway, and it was also reported that they had landed at



THE SPHERE

Aandalsnes at the head of Romsdal Fjord. Namsos, reached by way of Namsen Fjord, was another of the landing-places. This drawing depicts an armed convoy of great liners packed with troops, protected by destroyers of the Royal Navy, steaming up a Norwegian fjord overhung by massive cliffs to one of the ports where a landing was successfully carried out.



German troops preparing to take over control of traffic in one of the city squares of Copenhagen, Denmark.

The Norwegian military forces consisted of a national Militia of about 12,500 men called up annually for 84 days training, and a permanent cadre of 1,900 officers and N.C.O.s. The Navy had four small coast defence ships, the newest having been built in 1902, a minelayer, and a few destroyers and submarines. The Air Force was negligible. The Army was not mobilised, and what arms and munitions it possessed were scattered in depots in distant parts of the country, so that thousands of young men ready to fight for their country had neither equipment nor uniforms.

The occupation proceeded according to plan, despite the gallant action of some of the Norwegian coastal troops, notably at Oslo, Kristiansand, and Bergen. Within twelve hours the Germans had occupied Oslo with air-borne troops, and a German military band was playing in the main square, while the citizens went about their business in a daze.

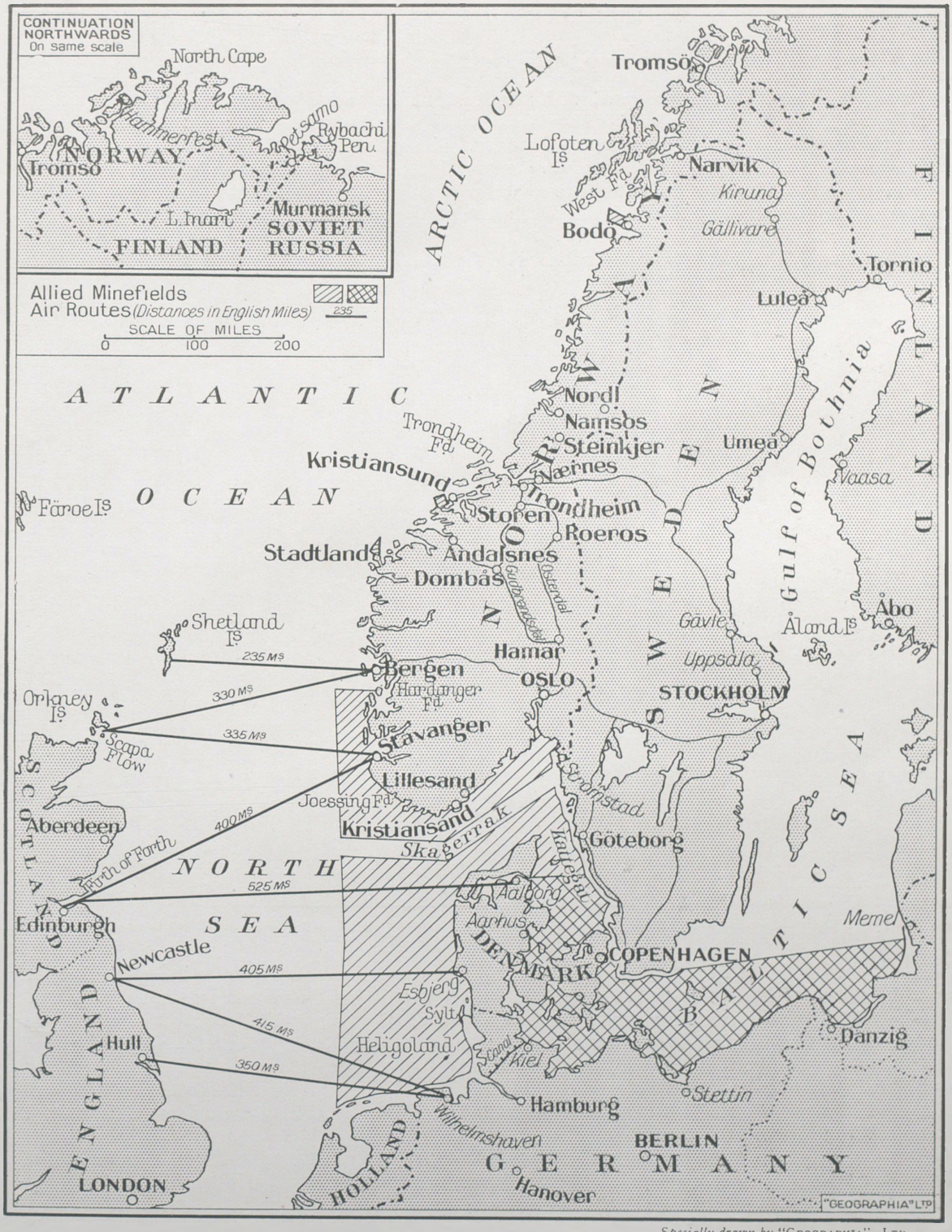
It was only next day that they fully realised what had happened. Many young men then escaped to join the forces which had been able to take up arms against the invaders. But the chief ports were already in German hands—Kristiansand, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim and Narvik. The Luftwaffe was in possession of every aerodrome.

The King and his Government left Oslo at 7.30 a.m. on April 9th. On April 10th Dr. Brauer demanded an interview with the King and Dr. Koht, in the course of which he announced that "the situation was now so altered that the demands presented in the Memorandum of the previous day could no longer satisfy the German Government." Major Quisling was to be appointed Prime Minister. The King refused.

Negotiations were broken off, and during the whole of the struggle for the independence of Norway the



German troops on Stavanger airfield, said to be leaving to take up strategic positions. In the first six days of the war in Norway, seven raids were made by the R.A.F. on Stavanger aerodrome.



Specially drawn by "GEOGRAPHIA", LTD.

This map of Norway and Sweden shows the principal areas in which fighting between the Allies and the Nazi invaders has taken place and the two huge minefields laid by the British Navy in the Skagerrak and the Kattegat. The direct distances between Norway, Denmark and Germany and Great Britain are also indicated.

King and the Crown Prince were hunted like outlaws by German troops, and bombed by German aeroplanes.

France and Great Britain were faced with the problem that was to be presented to them again by Belgium and Holland. Norway had been anxious to avoid being drawn into the war, and had been careful not to give the least ground of offence to Germany. She had consequently refused any arrangement even approaching military collaboration or staff talks with the only two countries who could help her in her present plight. There was no plan of campaign, and the difficulties of co-operation were increased by poor communications and by the confusion which inevitably existed in the Norwegian Army, scattered as it was over a wide area.

As Mr. Churchill told the House of Commons on April 11th. "It is not the slightest use blaming the



A Bren gun crew at their stations on board one of the transport vessels which carried men of the North-Western Expeditionary Force to the allied bases in Norway.

Allies for not being able to give substantial help and protection to neutral countries if they are held at arms' length until those countries are attacked on a scientifically prepared plan by Germany."

The Navy and the Air Force were, however, doing all that lay in their power to support the Norwegians. On April 10th, Captain Warburton-Lee led his flotilla of destroyers into Narvik fjord, where he fought a glorious battle against a larger and more powerful German force, sinking one destroyer and leaving three ablaze. Seven supply ships were sunk. Three days later the battleship *Warspite*, accompanied another force of destroyers up the fjord. These were able to press home their attack, sinking seven German destroyers.

But the small Expeditionary Force which had been secretly prepared for possible intervention in the Finnish campaign had been disbanded. It was hastily reassembled, together with ships and supplies which the War Office might have held in readiness when the Admiralty had taken its decision to lay minefields in Norwegian waters.

If the Norwegians are to be blamed, as they may be, for not being prepared for German aggression, we must not absolve ourselves from an equal or indeed a greater negligence.

So far as a concerted plan was possible, it was hoped to reinforce the two small Norwegian contingents



Troops of the North-Western Expeditionary Force are seen here on board one of the troopships during boat drill instruction. Tanks, motor-lorries, heavy artillery and supplies accompanied the troops on the voyage.

which were trying to hold the two valleys which run up from the comparatively level country of southern Norway to Trondheim, the Gudbrandsdal and the Osterdal.

As soon as the Allied troops arrived it was hoped to establish a line from Trondheim to the Swedish frontier at Storlien, along the Trondheim-Ostersund railway, thus preventing the junction of the German forces in southern and northern Norway.

The original Allied plan was for a landing in strength at Trondheim, while creating diversions at two smaller ports, Namsos, 120 miles to the north, and Aandalsnes, 100 miles to the south. There were railways from Namsos and Aandalsnes to Trondheim, but owing to the high Dovre Plateau, the latter railway first runs due south to Dombaas, the junction for Lillehammer and Oslo, before turning north to Trondheim.

The landing at Trondheim, however, was countermanded. It was suggested at the time that it was abandoned on the advice of the Admiralty, owing to the danger from submarines and aircraft to the warships which would have covered these operations in the difficult waters of Trondheim fjord. Mr. Churchill, however, stated in the House of Commons that the Admiralty raised no objections. "Grave doubts were entertained by the military as to the possibility of making an opposed landing under heavy hostile air superiority. The Chiefs of Staff and their deputies unanimously advised that it would be less costly and surer to convert the diversionary landings into the main attack."



After landing from their transports, British troops waiting to be taken by lorry to the fighting lines. On the right a Norwegian officer is seen talking to a British officer.

This decision deprived the Allies of the possession of the largest port in Central Norway, with facilities for landing heavy guns and stores, which were totally lacking at Namsos and Aandalsnes. Trondheim was held by 4,000 German troops who could not easily have been reinforced, nor wasit more exposed to the danger of bombing than the other two harbours. On the other hand, we might have sustained heavy losses in the forcing of the Agadnes and Brettenes forts at the entrance to Trondheim.

The Allied forces were landed at three widely separated points: at Namsos on April 14th, near Narvik on April 15th, and at Aandalsnes on April 17th. At Namsos and Aandalsnes the landings continued throughout the week. No list of the regiments engaged has been published, but speaking in the House of Commons on May 7th, Mr. Chamberlain said that the two forces combined did not amount to more than a division—about 15,000 men. At Narvik two companies of the Scots Guards were disembarked, together with detachments of the French Foreign Legion, Chasseurs Alpins, and Polish mountain troops.

The Norwegians were still holding the Germans with great gallantry in the Gudbrandsdal and Osterdal valleys, although opposed by heavy artillery, tanks, dive-bombers, and harassed by parachute troops in the rear.

The Allied force, under Major-General Bernard Paget, which had landed at Aandalsnes, immediately entrained for its journey south down the famous and picturesque Romsdal valley to reinforce the hard-pressed Norwegians. Arrived at Dombaas, the junction for Trondheim, it divided into two parts. One section turned north and east to hold the railway at Röros in the Osterdal, while a weak Territorial brigade (weak in numbers, but not in spirit) continued down the Gudbrandsdal.

On either side of Gudbrandsdal the mountains rise steeply for thousands of feet, and in places the river forces its way through narrow gorges, surmounted by snow-capped mountains. On April 20th, the



Oslo, one of the finest cities in Scandinavia, was occupied by Nazi troops landed from troopships and aircraft.



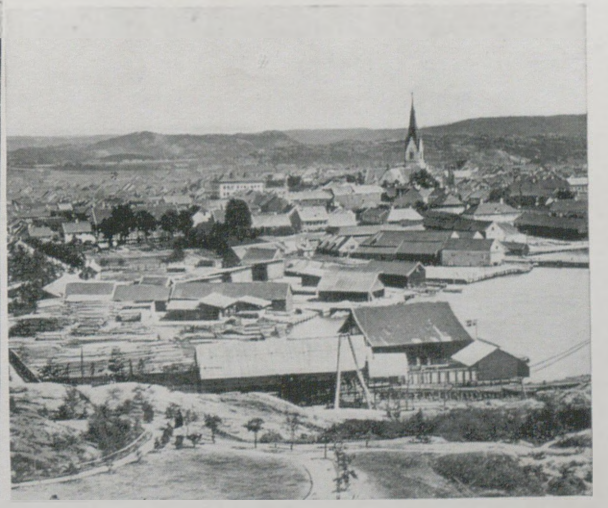
Bergen, an important port on the west coast of Norway, one of the first towns to be occupied by the Nazis.



The Norwegian iron-ore exporting centre of Narvik was captured on April 9th by a combined force of German troops and naval units.



The German forces, who landed disguised as marines, took Trondheim completely by surprise.



Kristiansand, a port in Southern Norway, which was severely bombed by the Nazis.

Territorial brigade reached Lillehammer, a small agricultural town about 150 miles to the south, defended by the Norwegians. Three days later, however, it was compelled to retreat, for it lacked the air-support, the artillery, and the armoured vehicles which alone would have enabled it to maintain itself against superior numbers.

Ceaselessly bombed from the air, battered by guns to which our men could not reply, and attacked by tanks, the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, the York and Lancaster Regiment and the Green Howards fell slowly and doggedly back. By April 23rd they were at Kvam in a narrow part of the Gudbrandsdal, where they made a stand.

During the night of April 24th the exhausted Norwegians passed through the British lines. Next morning the Germans, whose strength was reckoned at a division, were thrown back. The enemy were highly trained, and much better equipped than we were, but when it came to bayonet fighting they were no match for the English brigade.

The Germans were now making use of their air superiority to bomb the ports of Namsos and



Sailors helping men of the British Expeditionary Force to Norway by handing stores, supplies and other equipment up the gangway.

Aandalsnes, and the roads and railways leading to the front. They were also reinforcing their garrison at Trondheim by troop-carrying aeroplanes, and dropping machine-guns, trench-mortars and ammunition by means of parachutes. The Royal Air Force, without a base in Norway, had to fly 300 miles across the North Sea to bomb their objectives.

One squadron of Gladiators landed on a frozen lake near Dombaas and endeavoured to establish an air base there, but it was quickly discovered by the Germans. Some of the machines were bombed and machine-gunned on the ice; those which managed to get into the air fought magnificently, shooting down 30 of the enemy in the course of 15 hours. But our stores of petrol were set alight and the last British 'plane was destroyed when it landed to refuel.

The Namsos contingent, under General Carton de Wiart, pushed south along the railway to Stenkjer, where there was a small body of Norwegian troops. The combined force moved along the east coast of Trondheim fjord and quickly made contact with the Germans.

On April 25th Carton de Wiart's position was rendered untenable by an attack on his right flank carried out by troops which had been landed from a German destroyer in Trondheim fjord. By skill and hard fighting he managed to extricate himself, and took up a strong position on steep hills above



British troops and supplies being landed at Namsos.

Stenkjer, but once again the incessant air bombardment and the lack of artillery support made an advance impossible.

It was unfortunate that the Navy had not been permitted to attack Trondheim, but more tragic was our long neglect of the Royal Air Force. Our weakness in the air would have made it difficult, in



The crew of a heavily armoured tank running to take up their positions during training behind the lines in France. These heavy tanks can travel over the roughest ground at a good speed.

April 1940, to gain or maintain local air supremacy in Western Norway, and without it we should have fared badly, whatever our initial successes might have been.

Namsos and Aandalsnes had by this time been reduced to ruins, and the sorely-needed guns could not be landed. A transport carrying anti-tank guns had been sunk.

On April 25th the territorial brigade at Kvam repulsed violent attacks on its position, but further withdrawal had become inevitable. That night it fell back to a fortified position at Otta, seven miles in rear. Here it was again violently attacked on April 28th by the reinforced Germans, but the enemy had no better success than on April 25th. The fine discipline and fighting qualities of this force enabled it to reach Dombaas on April 30th, where the K.O.Y.L.I. fought yet another rearguard engagement. They were to have been withdrawn by train, but the line had been bombed. After fighting all day the men marched seventeen miles during the night. Next day they faced the Germans once more, and drove them off. At last they were able to entrain, and arrived at Aandalsnes on the night of May 1st.



Troops of the French Expeditionary Force, sent to assist Norway against the Nazis, boarding a transport. On April 20th a War Office communiqué stated that French troops had successfully landed in Norway.

The remainder of General Paget's force, which had gone forward to the Osterdal Valley, also managed to elude capture by the converging Germans, and reached Aandalsnes in safety. The pleasant little fishing village was now a charred heap, but thanks to the Navy the troops were withdrawn without further loss.

General Carton de Wiart's force suffered the same fate as General Paget's: its position north of Trondheim became untenable. It fell back slowly to Namsos, where the walls of a gutted church were all that was left to tell of the little port's modest prosperity.

Transports carrying back the British and French troops, with their faithful escort of destroyers, disappeared into the mists of the North Sea two days before the arrival of the pursuing Germans.

It was a sad end to a campaign, where the skill and courage of the men who did the fighting shone brightly against the sombre background of muddle in Whitehall—not for the first time in our history.

But perhaps with regard to Norway the Government has suffered criticism in silence for the sake of others. From an observation made by M. Reynaud, when he was French Prime Minister, to a correspondent of *The Times*, it would seem that he held General Gamelin personally responsible for the mismanagement of the campaign. Gamelin's, of course, was the main responsibility, since he was the Allied Commander-in-Chief.



MAJOR-GENERAL BERNARD PAGET, D.S.O., M.C.

In command of the British land forces in the Aandalsnes area, Major-General Paget carried out the dangerous task of withdrawing the allied troops with remarkable success. He began his military career in the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, and during the Great War (1914-18), in which he won the D.S.O. and M.C., he was wounded four times. Major-General Paget was appointed Commandant of the Staff College, Camberley, in 1938.



Standing on deck with lifebelts ready, the famous French *Chasseur Alpins* on their way to Norway.

There remained the small contingent outside Narvik, to which other detachments of British troops had been added, from landings at Bodoe, Mo and Mosjoen. This force had made its way north, and effected a junction with the besieging force of Norwegians.

It is hard to see why, when the evacuation of the main body had been decided upon and carried out (the decision had been taken on April 27th) this isolated operation was continued. It would have had no effect on the ultimate result of the German campaign, and it involved the dispersal of valuable men-of-war, which led to serious losses.

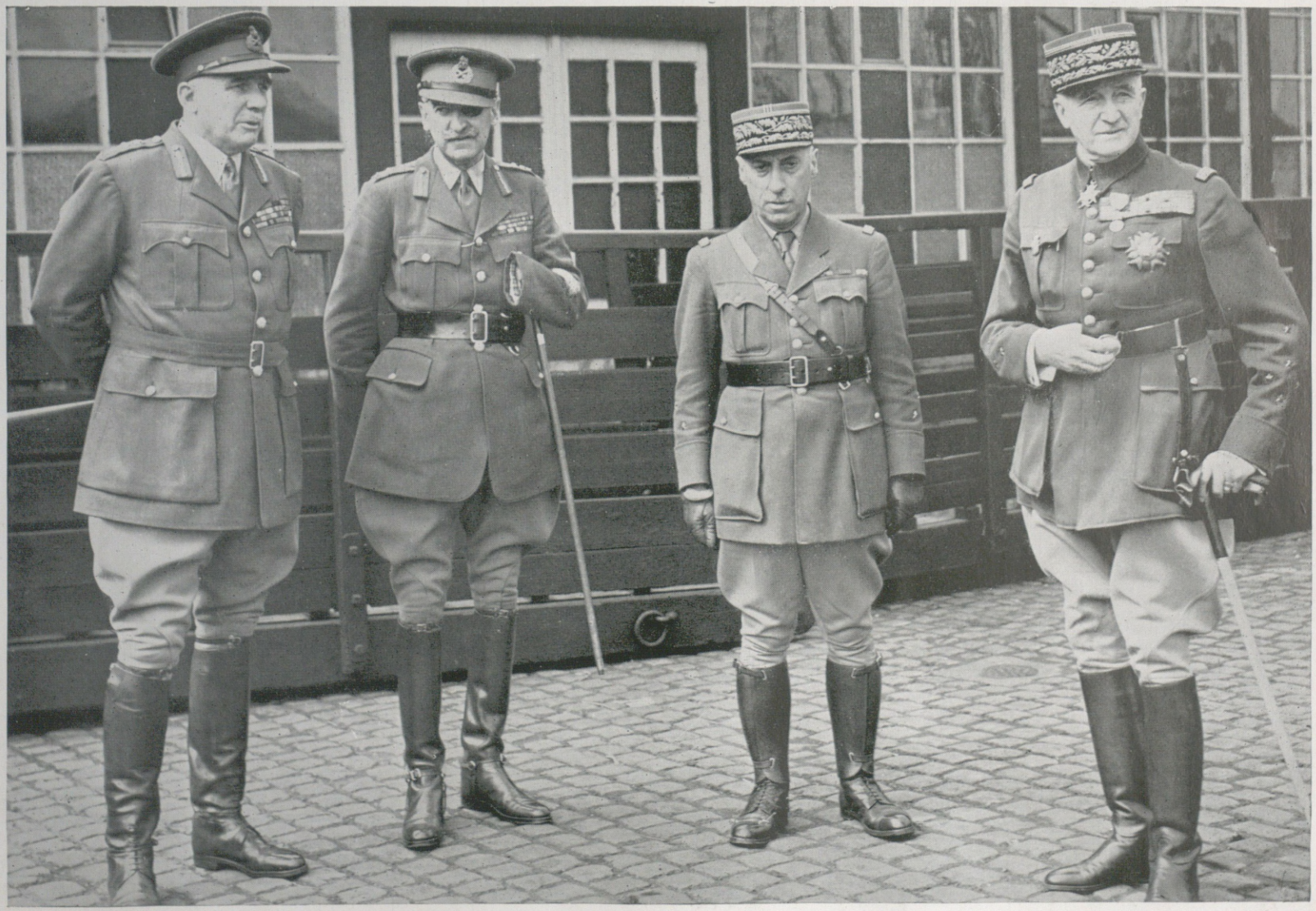
The weather added to the Allies' difficulties in Narvik all through May. There was unceasing snow and rain, while the thaw turned the ground into a quagmire. The Germans received food and munitions dropped by aeroplane, and although they retreated from Narvik on May 28th, they took up a position along the railway to Sweden. All of them (about 2,000) would have been captured when the late spring turned to summer, but by the end of May the situation in France was so grave that an immediate evacuation of the Narvik troops was ordered. Although they were withdrawn safely, H.M. aircraft-carrier *Glorious*, and the destroyers *Acasta* and *Ardent* as well as the 20,000-ton Orient liner *Orama*, were sunk by the German fleet.

The King and Government of Norway were at Tromsoe, and were notified of the British decision; they too left for England, where they landed on June 10th to continue the struggle for a free Norway. In many parts of the country the brave, ill-equipped Norwegian Army was still keeping up a guerilla warfare, but gradually each centre of resistance was stamped out by the Germans, and the nation grimly submitted to overwhelming force.

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The attack on Mr. Chamberlain's Government for the failure of this campaign came from all sides of the House of Commons.

Some of the sternest critics were distinguished Conservative back-benchers, such as Mr. Amery, who



Allied troops who had been fighting in Norway were landed at a northern port. Above are seen four generals waiting at the quayside to greet one of the transports. *Left to right* are General Sir Edmund Ironside, General Carton de Wiart ,General Audet and General Mittelhauser.

ended his strictures with the words of Cromwell: "You have been too long here for any good you have been doing! Depart I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!"

Mr. Herbert Morrison, who had been a conscientious objector in the last war, summed up the case against Mr. Chamberlain by saying that "Before the war, and during the war, we have felt the whole spirit, tempo, and temperament of at least some of the Ministers have been wrong, inadequate and unsuitable. I am bound to refer, in particular, to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretary of State for Air." Mr. Morrison added that "just as they lacked courage, initiative, imagination, psychological understanding, liveliness, and self-respect in the conduct of foreign policy, so the absence of those qualities has manifested itself in the actual conduct of the war."

Even Mr. Churchill did not escape censure for having said: "All German ships will be sunk in the Skagerrak and Kattegat, and by night all ships will be sunk as opportunity serves." He wound up the debate in a good speech, but he could not dispel the impression, which was indeed general throughout the country, that the Government was sluggish and incompetent. Members were determined to register their disapproval, and the immense majority of Mr. Chamberlain's administration sank to 81. The day after the close of the debate (May 10th) it was clear that the time had come to form a Cabinet in which all parties were represented.



Lorry loads of British troops ready to move off to the fighting lines shortly after arriving at a Norwegian port.

The King sent for Mr. Churchill. There was no time to lose, for the Germans had invaded the Low Countries at 3 a.m. that day.

Yet what far greater sinners there were, in that Parliament, which had first applauded Mr. Chamberlain's Munich policy, and then turned on him so bitterly! History may yet record that, but for Munich, the British Empire—disarmed and dreaming of collective security—might have gone down to ruin. Members who had been prominent in schemes for disarmament and had sought to economise on the Services by every possible means were now clamouring for arms and men. One of them had declared in 1934 that "no air force can ever defend us against air attack," and had written in the magazine of the National Peace Council: "Who stands in the path of Britain when we ask for the supreme guarantee of our national security—a guarantee that 20,000 aircraft could not give? We ought to be told who these international criminals are." Yet this same M.P. (Mr. P. Noel Baker) was kind enough, in August 1940, to acknowledge that the R.A.F. "had saved the country, and would win the war": presumably, therefore, he no longer considered the men who planned British rearmament as criminals.

Mr. Chamberlain would have made a better case for his administration had he been free to speak the whole truth about France. Even so, he could not have absolved it from its share of responsibility for the Norwegian failure. The Germans had been bound to take strong, even desperate action to counter our attempt to block the iron-ore route from Narvik. The Government had apparently anticipated that the enemy might seize the southern coast of Norway, but did not believe that the Germans could reach Trondheim. There had been a serious miscalculation here, and again in not securing air bases for our military operations. Troop-carrying aeroplanes landed the enemy by thousands, parachutists came down at key points and dive-bombers harried the hastily-assembled Norwegian and British troops. Meanwhile the German Navy, despite heavy losses, had been handled with great enterprise.

In a larger sphere, however, the balance was in our favour. Having reduced the strength of the German Navy by one-third, we were able to reinforce the Mediterranean and send out many more men and munitions to Egypt.



British troops who took part in the operations in Norway arriving at a northern port on May 7th. They were addressed by General Sir Edmund Ironside who said : "You did not retreat from Norway. You were ordered out . . ."



The port of Aandalsnes, situated on the south-west coast of Norway, where British troops were disembarked despite continuous air attacks by Nazi bombers. Aandalsnes is the railhead of the line to Oslo.



It was reported that British forces landed at Molde, a port on the west coast of Norway south of Narvik. On April 15th, 1940, the first official news, a War Office communiqué, announced the arrival of allied troops in Norway.

IV

THE CAMPAIGN IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

On at least two occasions—in January and April, 1940—the invasion of the Low Countries had been regarded as only a matter of hours. Each time it had been postponed, apparently at the last moment, though there is the possibility that the German General Staff were testing its preparations, which needed rehearsal and accurate timing.

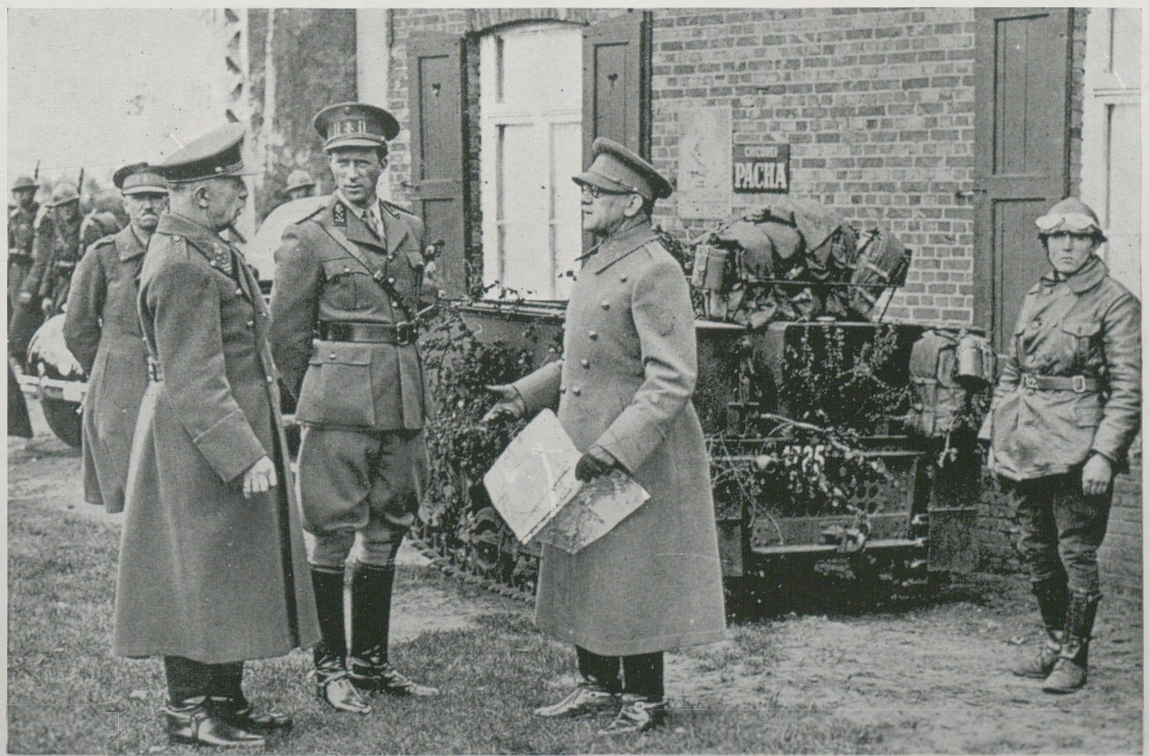
Holland and Belgium were tempting prizes, for despite their small areas they were two of the richest countries in Europe. Much of the trade of Germany flowed through the great ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp, while both countries could supply the things of which Germany stood most in need at the moment.

Holland had a large yearly surplus of dairy and farm produce for export: milk and cream 220,000 tons, butter 56,000 tons, cheese 62,000 tons, flour products 378,000 tons, potatoes 287,000 tons and large quantities of vegetables and fish. It was a dainty dish to set before the Germans, who during the winter had been feeling the effects of the British blockade.

For munitions, Belgium was just as tempting, with her great steel and iron works, and her iron-ore deposits so conveniently near the coal mines; and her magnificent textile factories with their stores of raw material.

In both countries the great system of deep-water canals, the highly-developed railway systems, the good ports and many airfields, supplied ideal bases for sea, land and air operations which might lead to the final overthrow of Britain.

Belgium and Holland were so conscious of their danger that they omitted the only measure which could really have helped them in their hour of need. They refused to enter into any staff talks, or to concert a



King Leopold of the Belgians is seen above discussing military matters with his army officers

common plan of defence, either with each other, or with the Allies ; and they failed to take any effective steps to deal with enemies within their gates.

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Up to this war there was always a chance for an unprepared people to "muddle through somehow" against a better-equipped enemy. Resolute men could still die in the last ditch, believing that thereby they could save the day ; and history records many instances when such courage did indeed prevail.

Not so against the new weapons. There is no use manning barricades against a heavy tank, nor will heroism alone defeat a dive-bomber. Weapons of precision, organised defence in depth, and enormous quantities of munitions are required, otherwise an unarmed people are as powerless as were the slow-moving armies of the Middle Ages against the horsemen of Ghengiz Khan and Tamerlane.



German motor-cycle troops searching Belgian refugees for arms as they escaped across the frontier during the Nazi invasion of the Low Countries. These troops are of the Zündapp Motor Cycle Corps, employed as part of the spearhead in the advance.

The *tempo* of modern war is that of the petrol engine. Long columns of lorries (a division requires fifteen miles of road space), flocks or hordes of motor bicyclists (a noun of multitude has not yet been invented for them) and convoys of motorised artillery move forward under the cover of squadrons of scouting 'planes and bombers. Everything depends on the co-ordination of various arms, on keeping the roads clear for the great masses of vehicles, and on carefully-prepared time schedules. Without such planning all is chaos.

All was chaos in the Low Countries, and the rot spread to France, whose troops were compelled to attempt the most dangerous of all operations of war, a flank march in face of the enemy.

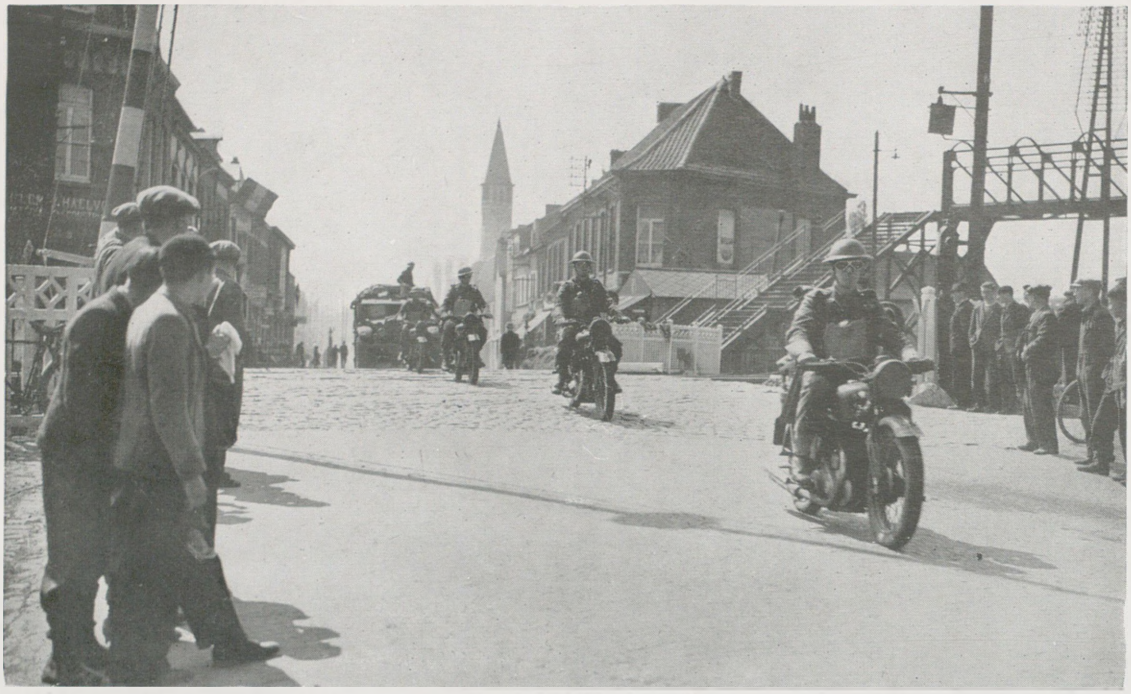
General Gamelin has been severely criticised (perhaps with justice for subsequent indecisions) but he is only one of the many people responsible for having opened the battle with the dice loaded against the Allies.

It is at any rate arguable that since combined staff talks were forbidden by Holland and Belgium it was impossible to attempt the defence of those countries. Such strategy would have involved us in no worse risks than those we were afterwards compelled to run. We might have yielded the Low Countries as a gambit in the dreadful game which the Germans had forced us to play. By doing so we

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CENTRALNEJ KOMISJI REGULAMINOWEJ



German parachute troops, who have jumped from three air transports, swooping down on a Low Country village. The troop-carriers fly low, and when a man jumps his parachute opens automatically.



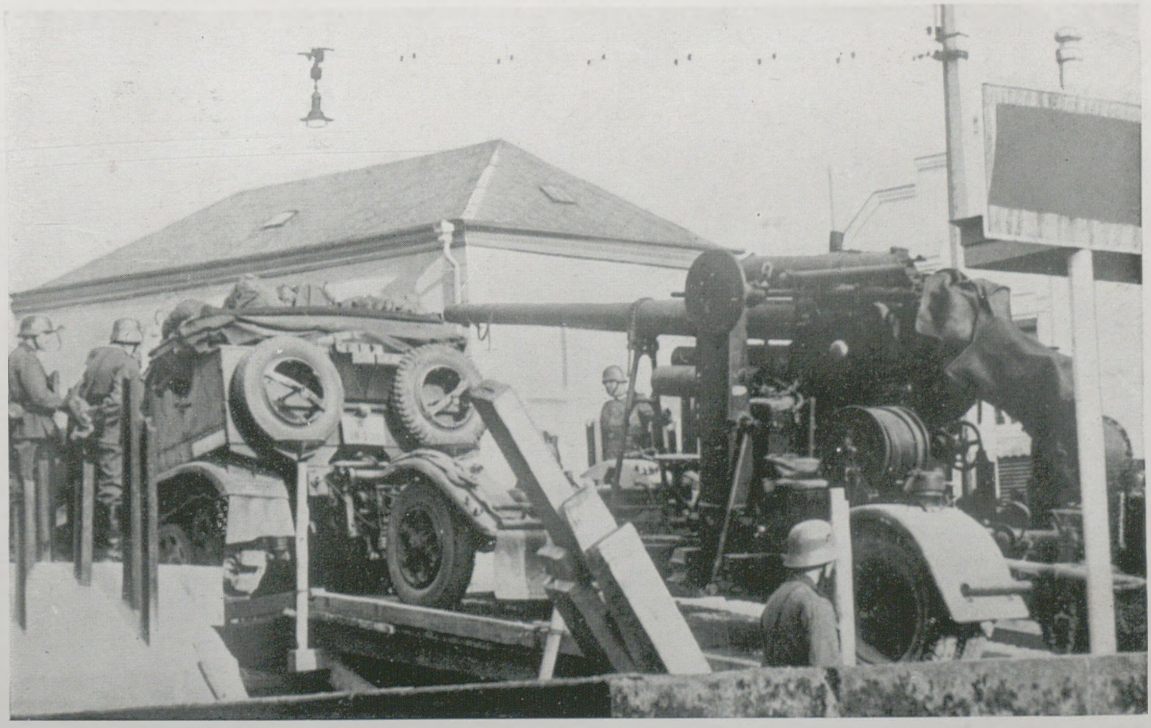
After Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg had been invaded by German forces on May 10th, the Allies immediately went to their assistance. British motor-cycle troops are seen here crossing the frontier into Belgium.



Belgian citizens welcoming British Army transports as they pass through a Belgian town on their way to the battle-front. A Bren gun mounted on a lorry is pointing skywards, ready to drive off attacking Nazi planes.



German troops carrying rifles, pistols and hand grenades, creeping down a deserted street in the Duchy of Luxemburg, after they had violated the neutrality of this little country. These patrols were followed by armoured units.



A heavy anti-aircraft gun crossing a Luxemburg frontier barricade by means of a specially improvised wooden ramp. It will be seen that the name of the frontier town on the road side in the foreground has been blacked out.

might have thrown in the whole weight of our well-trained and well-equipped troops (afterwards wasted in gallant rearguard actions) against the German flank, while keeping a substantial Anglo-French reserve intact behind the defences which we had laboriously constructed during the winter.

Such a policy, however, would have been impossible for political reasons. The public in France, Great Britain and the United States had for years been bemused by every kind of pacifist fantasy and knew nothing whatever about war. Neither did its politicians, with the possible exception of Mr. Winston Churchill. If we had been conducting this war on sound strategical principles we should not have declared it when we did, and we should temporarily have abandoned the Low Countries to their fate.

In the event, Holland was overrun in five days, and Belgium in eighteen.

Had General Weygand (who was appointed to the supreme command on May 19th) been able to dispose of the fifteen infantry divisions (say 300,000 men) and the three mechanised divisions which he lost in Flanders, together with the well-trained nine divisions of the B.E.F. (with auxiliary troops and pioneer corps numbering in all 400,000 men) the summer of 1940 might have seen a battle in Flanders which would have broken the German legions, instead of one that led to the disaster of Dunkirk and the tragedy of France.

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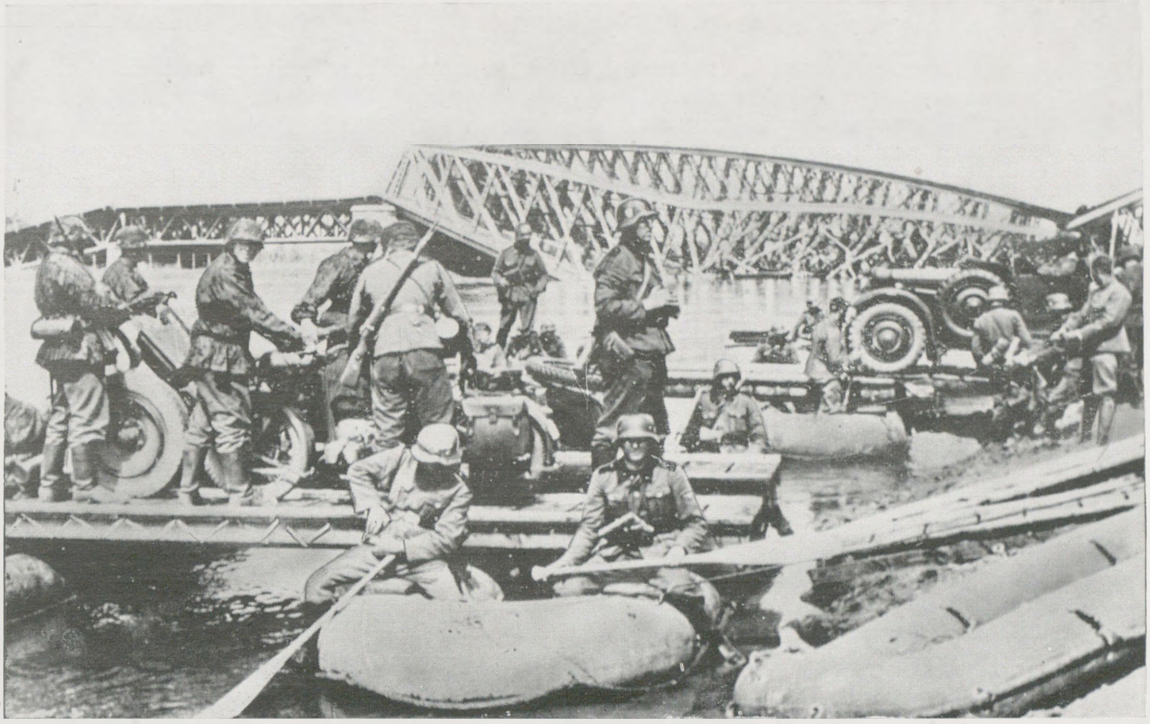
The Dutch Army had been mobilised at the outbreak of war. After the alarms of November and April more classes had been called up. Like all armies except the German, it had but small supplies of anti-tank guns and anti-aircraft batteries.

For defence the Dutch relied largely on the flooding of the frontier districts, a method which had served the country well against Alva and his invincible Spanish infantry, regarded in the 16th century as the *Panzerdivisionen* were in 1940. But water is no protection against aeroplanes.

The Dutch strategy was based on the abandonment of that part of the country which lies to the north and east of the Zuider Zee. There were blockhouses along the rivers Yssel and Maas from the south of the Zuider Zee to Maastricht in the south-east. Behind these fortified positions the country was again to be flooded. Within that semicircle lay the richest cities of Holland—The Hague, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and many other prosperous places, with tree-lined canals, pleasant friendly streets, town halls



German medium light tanks, of a type used to form the spearhead of the Nazi advance into the Low Countries and Northern France, are seen here crossing a shallow river during the invasion of Belgium.



German motorised troops constructing bridges over a river during their invasion of Belgium. The original bridge, which can be seen in the background, was destroyed by the Belgians before they retreated.



Following the rapid advance of Nazi motorised units through the Low Countries were animal transports bringing up fresh supplies and guns. A column is seen here passing by a railway bridge that had been blown up by the Allies.

with crowfoot gables and gaily painted shutters, tall light churches, picture galleries, and peace-loving, hard-working, clean and contented people.

Once again the Germans adopted the tactics they had used in Poland. There was a light frontal attack, but the main positions were captured from the rear.

In other respects the situation resembled that which had existed in Norway prior to the attack on that country, but in Holland the "Fifth Column" preparations were even more complete.

Since 1934 there has existed all over the world an Association of Germans Abroad. Germans resident in foreign countries were expected to show their enthusiasm for the Fuehrer and the Nazi Party by becoming members; many of them were loyal and devoted members. Those who failed to join found that their business languished, their local authorities received curious accusations against them, and that their relations in the Reich were suspected of disloyalty.

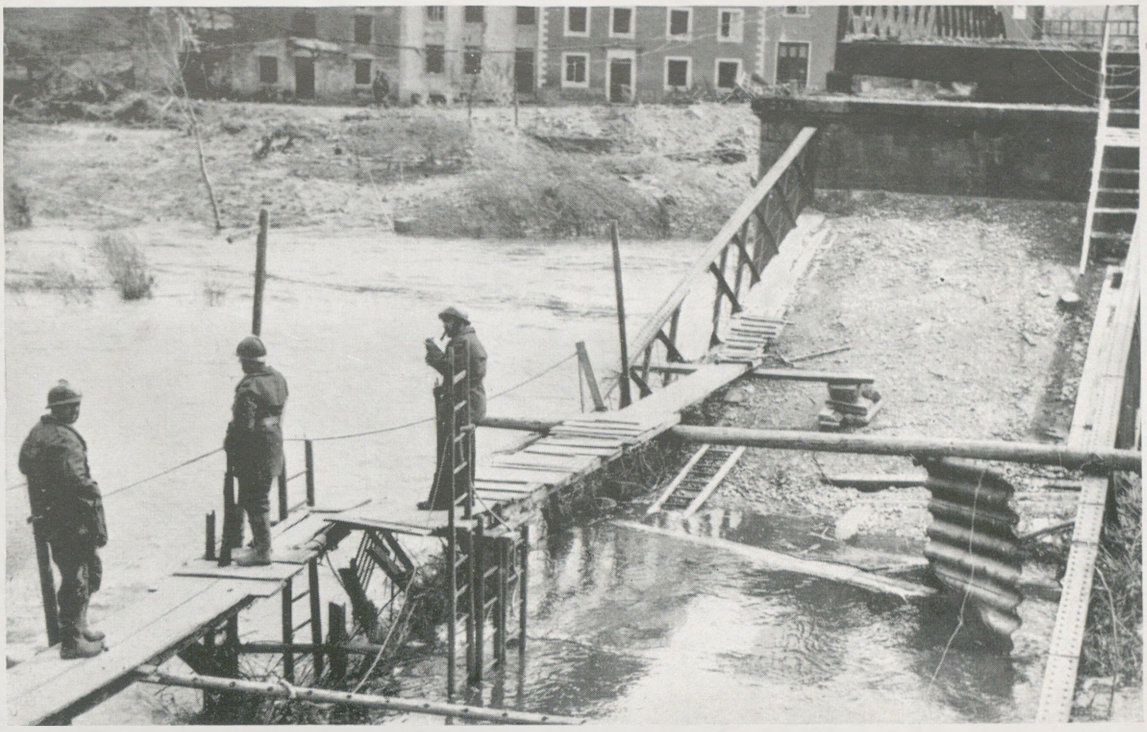
The members of the Association attended an annual conference at Stuttgart, held immediately before the Nuremberg Rally. They were instructed there as to how they could best serve the Fatherland. Those who showed a special aptitude were invited to attend an advanced course at a training school at Hamburg-Altona, where they were taught the construction of wireless transmitters, the sending and reception of ciphers and codes, signalling and the darker arts of sabotage and spying.

There were 80,000 German residents in Holland, many of them popular and highly-respected citizens.

There was also a Dutch Nazi Party. It had grown up during the years of the financial depression and consisted largely of young "black-coated" workers who had either lost their posts or could find no employment after they left the Universities. In the elections of 1933 it received 30,000 votes, and in 1935 300,000 votes. Its ablest and most influential leader was Rost van Tonningen, who had done valuable work as the adviser to the Austrian Government under the League of Nations financial reconstruction scheme. In 1936 he returned to his own country to edit *Het Nationaal Dagblad*. He was



Immediately it became known that Germany had once again committed ruthless aggression of Belgium, British men and material were poured into that country to aid the Belgian resistance. This gun is just about to cross the frontier.



French soldiers on sentry duty on a bridge blown up as a defence measure on the Lorraine front. It will be seen that the houses on the opposite bank of the river have been badly damaged by heavy artillery fire.



A column of French troops moving into Belgium to join the Allied forces resisting the Nazi onslaught



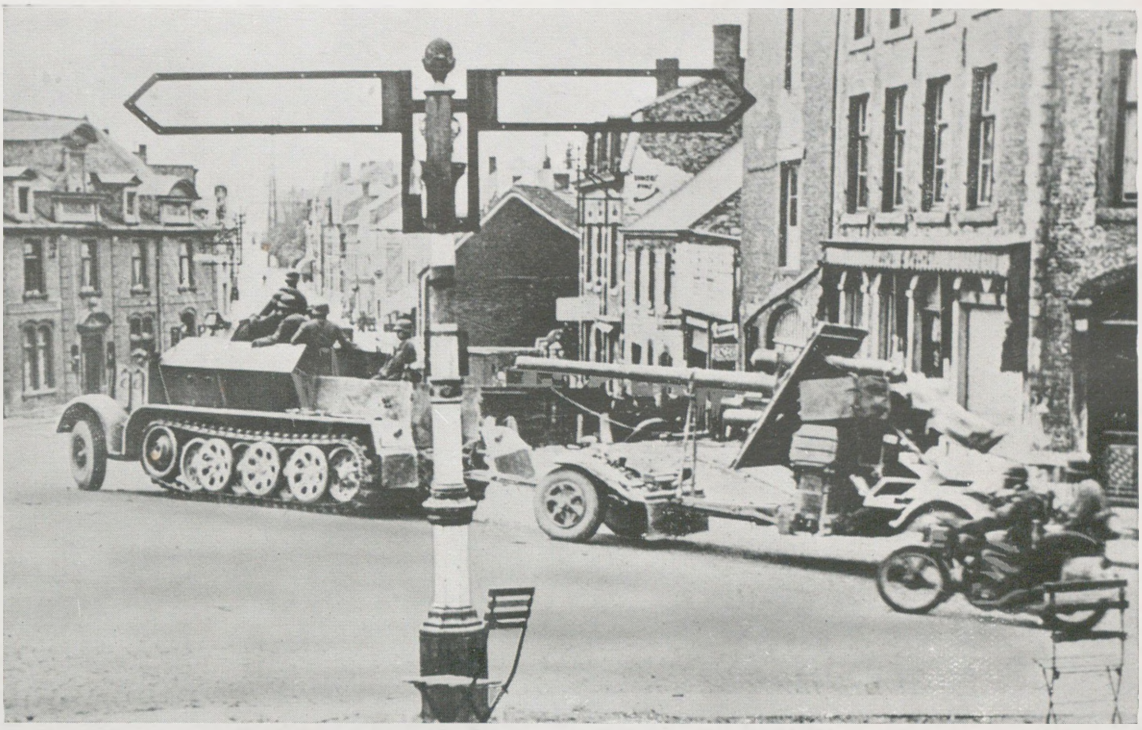
Wearing the Iron Crosses presented by Hitler, Nazi parachutists pose with their Fuehrer for a photograph.



A group of German machine-gunners land by parachute, and then assemble in readiness for a lightning attack.



This photograph was found in the camera carried by a German parachutist taken prisoner during the invasion of Holland. It shows a parachutist, complete with bicycle and full equipment, taking cover on the side of a deserted Dutch road.



One of the heavy guns of the German Army passing through a frontier village during the invasion of Belgium. It will be seen that the names on the signpost in the foreground had been removed before the village was evacuated.



German advanced troops are seen here entering a bomb-shattered farmhouse during the Belgian invasion. The barbed wire entanglements in the foreground were erected by the Belgians to impede the Nazi thrust.



A camouflaged German tank makes its solitary way through a ruined French village during the drive to the Channel ports. These speedy light tanks created terrible havoc as they forced their way through the refugee-filled roads.



A German infantryman looks on with evident satisfaction as a heavily armoured Nazi lorry crosses the French frontier. It will be noted that the lorry has been equipped with an anti-aircraft gun.



One of the many pathetic scenes witnessed during the bombing of an open town in the invasion of Belgium by German forces on May 10th, 1940. A refugee mother with her three young children escaping from the ruined town during the bombardment.

arrested on May 4th, 1940, together with 21 of his chief supporters, but by then he had organised a wide network of pro-Nazi sympathisers.

The long tradition of political tolerance in Holland gave these plotters considerable liberty to undermine the country from within. Certainly not all Dutch Nazis were traitors but even the idealists often served as tools or dupes to those who were in the pay of Germany.

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Both from the strategic and military point of view Belgium was better prepared than Holland to face an invasion, but amongst her citizens there was also a considerable minority—not only friends of Germany, but also friends of Russia—who contributed to her downfall.

The Rexists were led by an eloquent young man named Degrelle. Although they were losing some of their popularity in 1940, they were represented by four members of the Chamber, and four in the Senate, and Degrelle was said to enjoy the confidence of King Leopold. There was also a considerable Communist Party, and a number of discontented Flemish nationalists. Many of the older Flamands had been German sympathisers during the last war. Though much had been done to remove their grievances, they were once again ready to help the enemies of their country.

The Belgian Army was organised in six Army Corps, with additional fortress and frontier troops. Some 650,000 men had been mobilised in May 1940.

The plan of defence was dictated by the same geographical and strategic factors as those of 1914—to fall back from the frontier to strongly fortified positions which ran from Liége south to the Ardennes. The recently built Albert Canal between the Meuse and the Scheldt was to provide an inner line, while another line ran from Antwerp through the Meuse valley to the frontier of France.

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A French heavy tank going into action.

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French infantry reserves—of whom there were far too few—marching to relieve their comrades in the front line



The deep defences on the French west front, known as the Weygand Line, stretched along the Rivers Somme and Aisne. The French infantry put up a desperate resistance before falling back against the overwhelming enemy onslaught.



The Nazi tank and armoured-car attacks were held off continuously by the well-directed shells of the famous French 75 mm. guns. They did great work in breaking up the enemy's ferocious advance.



Nazi Storm Troopers advance through a blazing French village, victim of fierce enemy bombing attacks.



A French shell, bursting near an advancing Nazi tank section causes a hold-up of the enemy's column.



Mounted German troops passing through a village in Northern French territory. British mechanised transport has generally replaced horse units during the present war although the Germans still rely to some extent upon this form of transport.

When the German Government presented its ultimatum to the three countries—Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg—the burden of its charges against them was, as usual, that the Allied Powers had been planning an invasion, in order to reach the German industrial district of the Ruhr. On May 9th, neutral correspondents were given the most emphatic assurances at the German Foreign Office in Berlin, that Germany had no aggressive intentions towards Holland. At 9.30 that night—following the usual technique—the German army began to move against the Dutch and Belgian frontiers.

German diplomats abroad are expected to be early risers, but even so the Ministers are always later than their Army and Air Force.



Nazi motorised troops advancing through a town of Northern France which had suffered severely from violent and continuous air attacks and heavy artillery bombardment before being surrendered by the Allies to the enemy.

At 6 a.m. on May 10th the German Minister to the Netherlands arrived at the Foreign Office in The Hague, and demanded to see the Foreign Minister, M. van Kleffens. The latter had been up most of the night, for the Dutch Intelligence Service had warned him that the German attack would come at dawn. And at dawn—four o'clock—he had heard that the aerodromes at Waalhaven, Bergen, Schipol and de Kooy had been bombed.

Count von Zech delivered an ultimatum announcing that an immense German force had been put into action. Any resistance was senseless. Germany guaranteed that, if no resistance was offered, Holland would retain her possessions in Europe and overseas. Otherwise there was danger of the complete destruction of the country, and of the machinery of the State.

The document proceeded to cite what the Nazi Government considered a long series of unneutral acts by the Dutch Government, such as allowing the use of Dutch territory to British secret agents and the help given to them in their work; the defence measures taken by Holland and Belgium along the



A group of German prisoners, captured during the fighting in Northern France, about to enter British Headquarters behind the line for interrogation. The obvious youth of the Nazi soldier is clearly shown in this picture.



An armoured French unit on its way to the front line sees on all sides the result of the devastating bombing from Nazi planes. This scene is typical of the many towns and villages in Northern France.

German frontier, when similar measures had not been taken along their western frontiers and the southern frontier of Belgium.

Further, Holland had been guilty of allowing her neutrality to be frequently violated by British aircraft without taking any effective counter-measures. (As a matter of fact Dutch anti-aircraft batteries had fired impartially on all air intruders, and one British aeroplane had been shot down.) But hours before the German Minister presented this memorandum German bombs had fallen on Dutch towns, parachutists had dropped from the sky, and the attack on the frontier had begun.

The Dutch Foreign Minister indignantly denied these accusations, and declared that as a result of the German attack Holland was now at war with Germany.



Strongly protected at every point, and guarded like a fortress, this armoured train, consisting of six coaches of bullet-proof steel, carried Mussolini to the Brenner Pass for a meeting with Hitler.

Hitler, meanwhile, had proclaimed to his Army that its hour had come. "The fight begins to-day which will decide the destiny of the German people for a thousand years. Now do your duty! The German people follows you with my blessing!"

* * * * *

In Brussels the German Ambassador did not rise so early as his colleague in The Hague, but otherwise the procedure was the same.

The Belgian Cabinet met at 1 a.m. on May 10th, having received news that the Germans were on the march. King Leopold took over the direction of operations, orders were given for general mobilisation, and an appeal was made to France and Great Britain for help, which was answered half an hour after it was received.

At 4.30 a.m. German aircraft were scouting over Brussels, but it was not till 8.30 a.m. that the German



To cover their lines of retreat during the first days of the crushing German onslaught, the French destroyed railway bridges and bridgeheads. The picture shows a straggling column of Germans crossing a railway track.



With bridges over the rivers blown up by the French, the Germans hurriedly constructed pontoons capable of carrying heavy loads. A Nazi field-kitchen is here being transported across a French river, its bridge destroyed.

Ambassador arrived at the Foreign Office with his ultimatum. M. Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister, took it from his hand saying: "Let me spare you the shame of reading it."

. . . . . .

In London Lord Halifax received the Dutch Minister and the Belgian Ambassador at the Foreign Office shortly after 6 a.m. They informed him that their countries had been invaded, that their forces were resisting; and made an official request for support.

The War Cabinet met at 8 a.m. and re-assembled at 11.30 a.m. when the Chiefs of Staff reported that the Allied Forces had been moving to the relief of Belgium since early morning. At midday the Dutch Foreign and Colonial Ministers arrived in London by air, to consult with their Allies.

On May 13th Mr. Churchill met the House of Commons for the first time as Prime Minister, and asked for a vote of confidence. "I have nothing to offer," he declared, "but blood and toil and tears and sweat. . .

"We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months



A typical scene in a French village behind the lines: an endless stream of artillery making its way to the front. Although many such units are mechanised, horses are still used in this type of work.

of struggle and of suffering. If you ask me what is our policy, I will say it is to wage war—war by air, land and sea, war with all our might, and with all the strength that God can give us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark and lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy.

"If you ask us, 'What is your aim?' I can answer in one word: 'Victory. Victory at all costs' . . . for without victory there is no survival—let that be realised—no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for, no survival for the urge and impulse of the ages that mankind shall move forward towards its goal."

. . . . . .

Thus the great battle opened. The German forces consisted of 98 infantry divisions, 8 armoured divisions, 6 light armoured divisions and 8 motorised divisions. The Allied forces consisted of 12 Dutch, 17 Belgian, 90 French, 2 Polish, and 12 British divisions (of which three were only partially trained and equipped, and were therefore—temporarily— second-line troops, although included in the total)—making 133 Allied divisions, against 120 employed by the Germans. In aeroplanes, armoured fighting vehicles, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, however, our numbers were notably inferior to those of the Germans.



With German motor-cyclist troops directing the traffic, a mounted unit crosses a pontoon bridge of rubber boats over a French river. Much use has been made of this temporary bridge, judging by the mud on the roadway.

Nor must we blind ourselves to the fact that our chief deficiency at that time—afterwards to be remedied in the British Army, which had always chafed, albeit in loyal silence, at the "Maginot mentality"—was lack of offensive spirit. Broadly speaking, the Allies expected to fight a long war, in which they would repulse German attacks from well-sited and elaborately-equipped underground forts, while the blockade did its work.

It was not to be. It was not true that the attack required three times the numbers of the defence in order to succeed. The attack starts with the advantage of choosing its own time and place, and if it also possesses new methods of assault, as the Germans did, it can conquer with lesser numbers than its adversary. The Germans were never hard pressed, except in purely local offensives.

In the spring of 1940 the Allies had insufficient weapons and an unsound military theory with which to meet the Germans, but their numbers were amply sufficient.



An old woman and a weeping girl leaving a London station after their arrival with other Belgian refugees.



A nurse helping a refugee at a French reception centre to untie a bundle of her belongings from her cycle.

We could have won, if we had had more aeroplanes and more tanks, and if we had had them in the right places. Instead, our fine tank division was lost in Flanders, fighting rearguard actions, and the French tanks were scattered along the whole length of the Maginot Line, in support of infantry, instead of being employed in mass.

We inflicted incalculable suffering on ourselves and Europe through these miscalculations, which were not in their essence military, but political. We had believed that if we disarmed other nations would follow our example. It was a Himalayan blunder, wishful thinking *in excelsis*.

* * * * *

The German plan was simple and well executed. It was to lure our armies north, and then strike a blow at Sedan, the nerve-centre of the French line, nearest Paris. Had the attack failed, the Germans had other plans in readiness which would have enabled them to continue the war. But the Nazi machine moved forward with scarcely a hitch.

There was the sudden irruption into Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg, throwing those countries into confusion. There was the well-planned march through the forests of the Ardennes, enabling armoured



A great column of smoke rising hundreds of feet into the air as another French bridge is blown up. French sappers were actively engaged in dynamiting bridges in Northern France to hold up the advancing German forces.

units to appear suddenly at the hinge of the French front. There was the break-through, bisecting the French defences, as previously the Dutch and Belgian defences had been split. There was the dash to the Atlantic coast, and the merciless bombing of villages, to crowd the roads with refugees, preventing our reinforcements being brought up to the fighting line. Nothing went amiss. On the Germans went, with horror and havoc as their allies—until they reached the dunes of Dunkirk.

Twenty-five Allied divisions had gone northwards, to help the Low Countries. The Germans did not bomb them on their way up. Why should they, when they were conforming to Hitler's plan? As the *Panzerdivisionen* swept forward, to St. Quentin, to Péronne, Amiens, Abbeville, the propagandists in Berlin exulted. "The British and the French armies in the north are facing annihilation," they declared. It was true according to all human calculation, but none the less the Germans were wrong.

. . .

The thrust against the Low Countries was delivered with armoured divisions just where it was expected in all instructed quarters, namely at the junction of the Belgian and Dutch frontiers, where a tongue of Dutch territory (known as the "Limburg appendix") extended southwards between the German and Belgian borders.

Not only was it impossible for the Dutch to defend this appendix, but also the frontier junction was obviously a place where both countries would be in doubt as to the direction of the enemy attack.

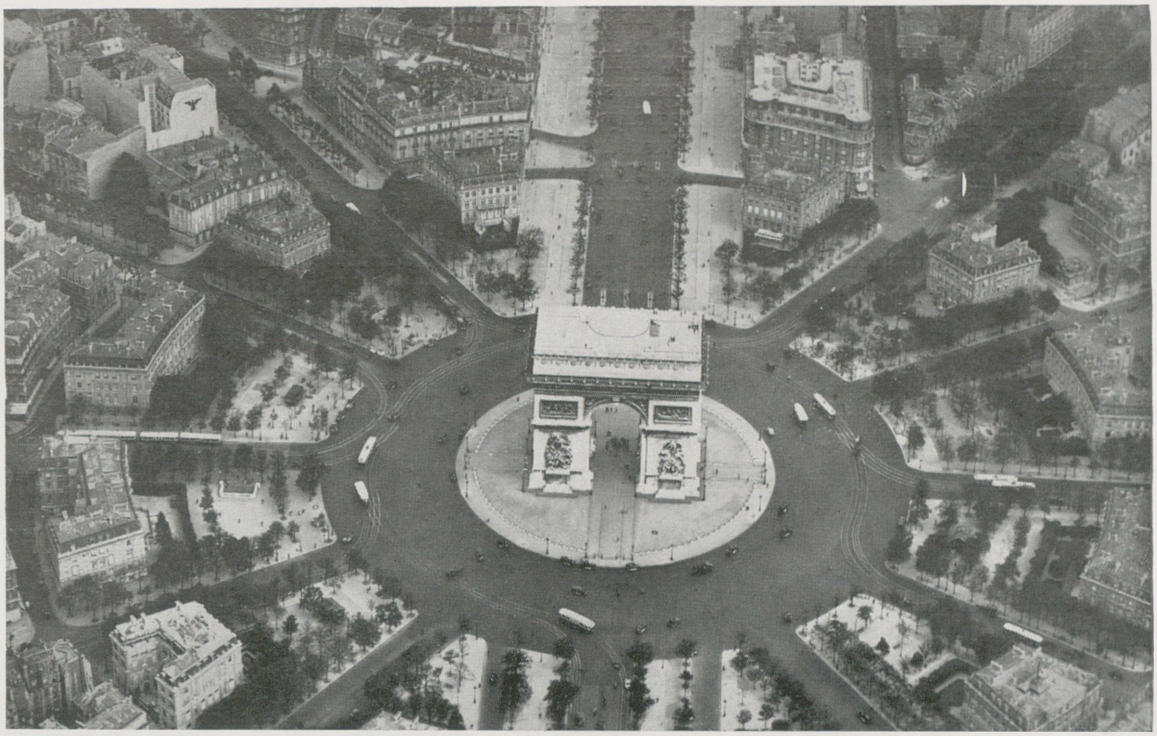
In the north of the appendix lies the town of Roermund, on the east bank of the Meuse. Thirty miles upstream (i.e. south of Roermund) lies Maastricht, on the west bank of the Meuse. Roermund is eighty miles from Antwerp, and Maastricht, sixty miles from Brussels.

When German tanks and dive-bombers attacked Roermund and Maastricht at 3 a.m. on Friday, May 10th, neither the Belgians nor the Dutch could make any effective resistance there: the Belgians because it was not their country, and the Dutch because it was too far from their main lines of defence.

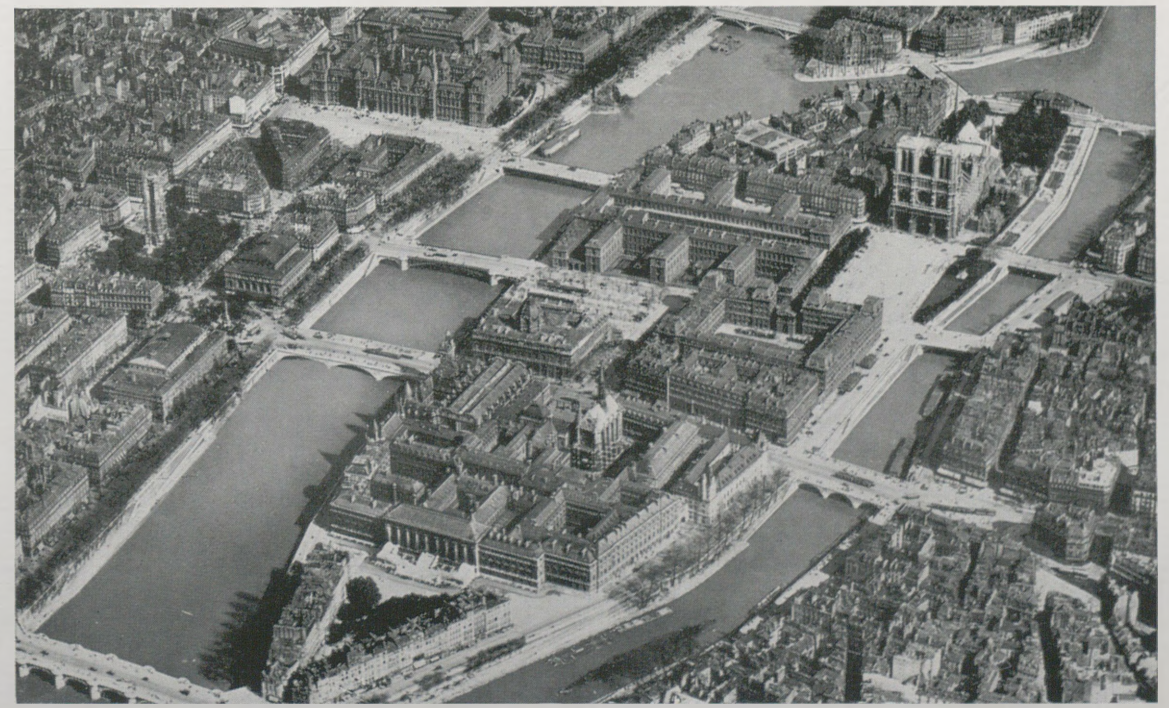
Behind the Meuse, and to the north of it, behind the Yssel River, the Dutch hoped that their flooding



The remains of a German medium-type armoured-car, put out of action by allied defenders during the rapid Nazi advance on Paris.



In the early hours of Friday, June 14th, the advance German troops entered Paris, meeting with no resistance. An aerial view of the historic Arc de Triomphe and Place de l'Etoile.



Once again, after 70 years, Paris, silent and stunned, falls under the heel of the German invader. An aerial view showing the Ile del a Cité, with Notre Dame, and the Ile St. Louis.

would arrest the Germans. On the evening of May 10th the High Command published a communiqué stating that Dutch troops were holding out on these rivers, and that four enemy armoured trains had been put out of action. In fact, however, the rapidity of the German advance was such that an important bridge over the Yssel at Arnhem had not been destroyed. The Germans penetrated here. They also occupied Roermund, and crossed the Meuse at Maastricht. In Berlin it was announced (for once truthfully) that "resistance near the frontier was everywhere broken, often in close co-operation with the Luftwaffe."

German aircraft crossed the Dutch frontier at 2.30 a.m. Amsterdam fired on enemy bombers at 3.42 a.m. German parachute troops landed at Waalhaven, the airport of Rotterdam, at 4 a.m. Schipol



No mercy was shown by Nazi airmen to civilians trying to escape from the horrors of war in Belgium. Here is but one incident of their brutality—a woman killed while trying to leave a bombed town.

airport, near Amsterdam, was heavily bombed at 4.50 a.m. At 7.05 a.m. the first batch of Nazi parachutists landed at Delft, 13 miles from The Hague.

Here from the rear, was an even greater danger than the blows on the frontier.

North and South Holland are divided by the Rhine and the Meuse rivers, which form with their various branches a large delta. Anglo-French troops arriving from Belgium would have to cross these rivers, by the Moerdyke bridge, south of Dordrecht, and another bridge at 's Hertogenbosch. The nearer and more important of these bridges, that south of Dordrecht, was only fifteen miles south-east of Rotterdam. The German plan was to isolate Northern Holland from any help the Allies might send by capturing the Moerdyke. This they accomplished by means of parachutists.

These men formed a *corps d'élite*, chosen for their knowledge of the country in which they were to operate. They flew in Junkers bombers, and jumped from low altitudes, with special parachutes designed to open quickly. Stories of their landing in disguise have probably been exaggerated, and recently British official sources have denied that they wore Dutch uniforms. They were armed with a rapid-firing "gangster" gun, similar to the Thomson automatic, which is a powerful weapon, but only accurate up to ranges of 200 yards. Bicycles, ammunition and rations were dropped by separate parachutes.



Scene of fierce fighting in the Great War, Soissons again suffered severely from the violence of the Nazi invaders.



The city of Beauvais, in the Avelon Valley, which did not escape the overwhelming violence of the tremendous Nazi attack.



Noyon the scene of some of the bitterest fighting in Northern France, where the Nazis suffered very severe losses before taking the city.



Rethel ,which suffered severely from German guns during the Great War, again felt the devastating effect of incessant Nazi bombardment.

Following the parachutists came troop-carrying aeroplanes, consisting of old bombers of every kind, which the Luftwaffe did not mind "crashing," for they expected to retrieve the wreck in a few day's time.

The task of these men was to seize vital points such as the Moerdyke, and to spread confusion behind the Dutch lines, thus engaging the attention of front-line troops who would have been invaluable elsewhere. They succeeded only too well. No General Staff except the German had foreseen what immense dismay and disorganisation could be produced by these tactics.

While the inhabitants of Rotterdam drank their morning coffee on that fateful Friday morning, the enemy had captured the principal bridges and two railway stations. Uncertainty added to the horror of the situation; men in police uniforms might be friends, or Nazis, or Dutch traitors; well-known



Light and medium British tanks, part of the great stream of supplies, guns and other material that was immediately sent to help Belgium after the German invasion of the Low Countries.

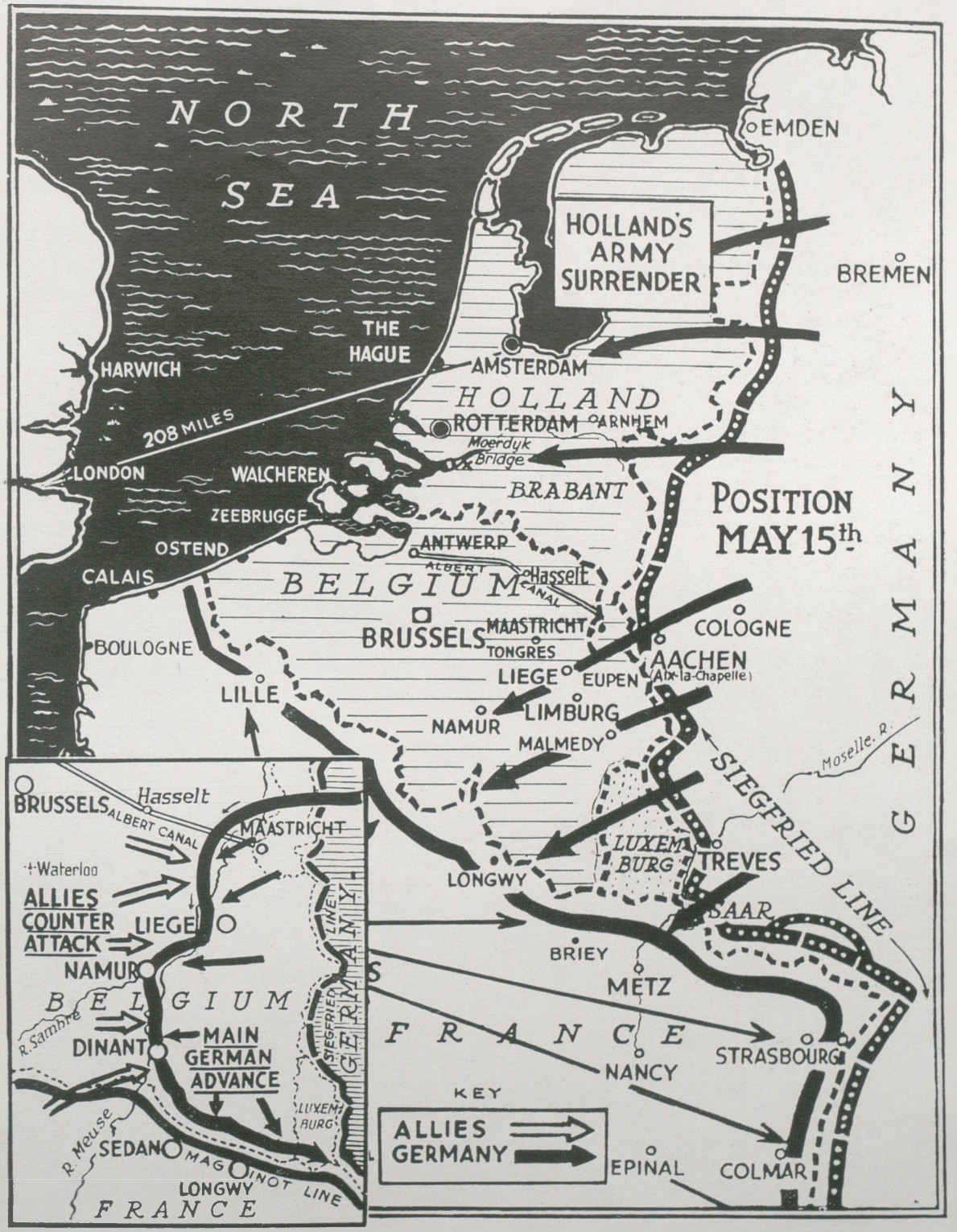
German residents suddenly appeared in their true colours to aid the invaders, and there were stories of women parachutists, and boys disguised as nuns and nurses.

The chief disaster of the day, however, was the arrival of German land forces at the Moerdyke, making any attempt at recapture unlikely.

The first German detachment arrived in a motor-bus, and surprised and overpowered the guard. They were soon reinforced by machine-gun detachments which had been concealed in barges on the river. A French division which was moving up from Breda, to form a connecting link between the British and Dutch forces, was too far off to give any help. The Moerdyke was lost, and Holland split into two parts.

All next day (May 11th) German parachutists descended near Rotterdam, Amsterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. The passage of the Meuse was forced in several places.

The undefended northern province of Gröningen was quickly occupied. By noon the Germans had reached the eastern shore of the Zuider Zee. Later in the day they pierced the Grebbe line, which ran from Amersfoort to the Rhine.

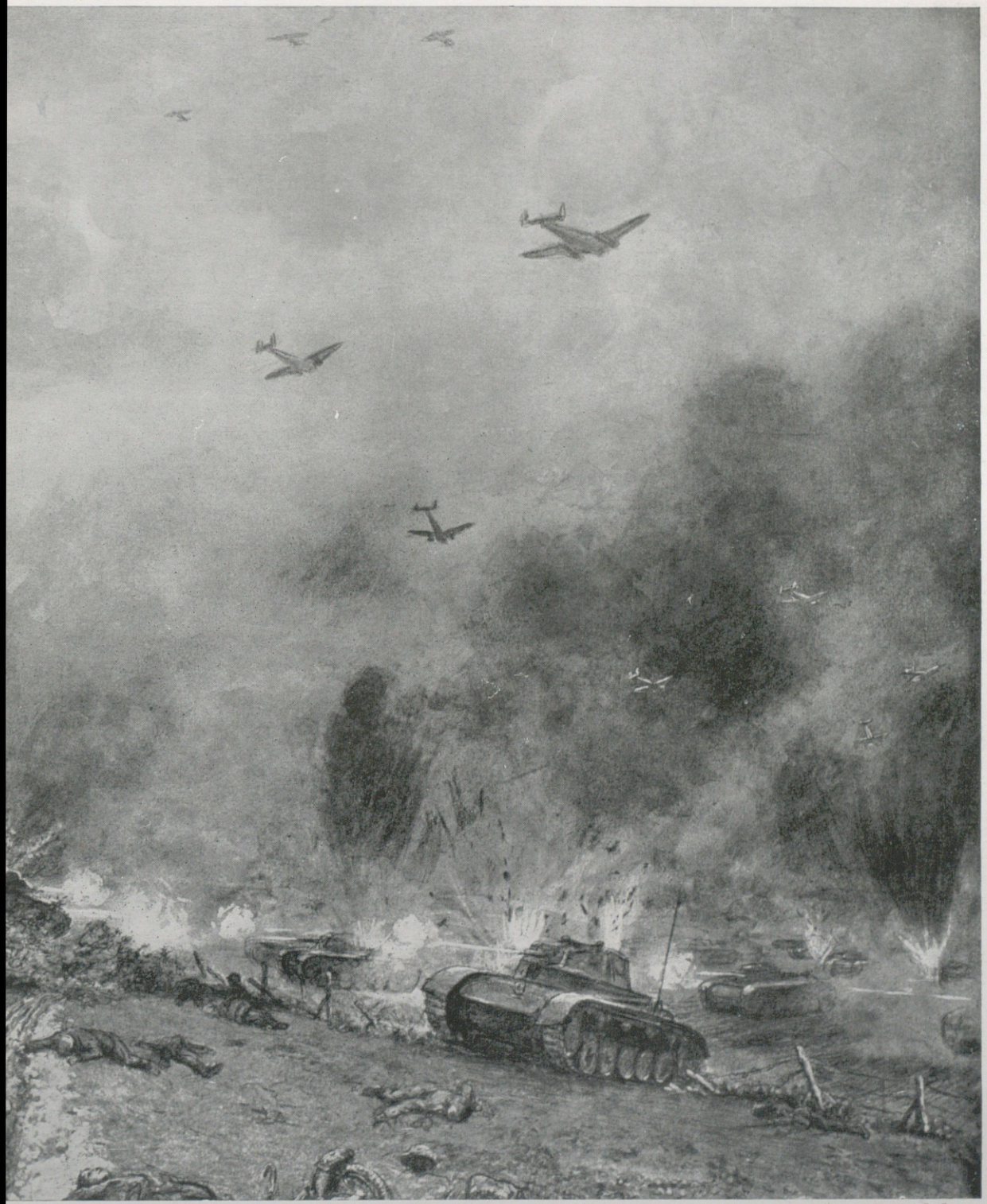


This map shows the German thrusts into Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg, giving the position on May 15th. The main attack extended from Liége, on the Meuse, to Longwy, west of Luxemburg. The inset map shows the Allies' counter-attack from the left bank of the Albert Canal to the right bank of the Meuse below Dinant.



From the original drawing by

The overwhelming strength of the German onslaught in Flanders and in France was due to the Nazi tank tactics, combined with close bomber support. It must be admitted that the Germans completely surprised the French and British General Staffs, in spite of the lessons which the latter should have learned in Poland. The picture above shows an attack at its height, with French heavy tanks (left) pounding their way

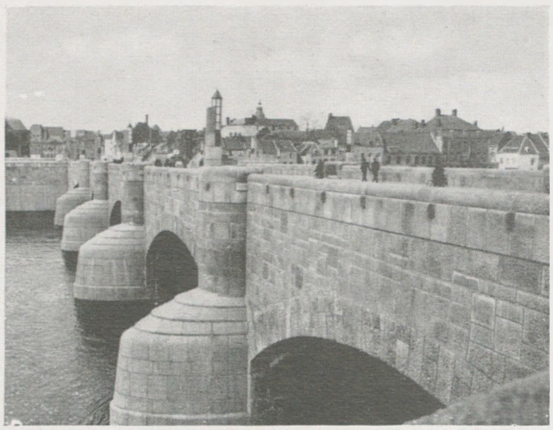


J. SIMONT

orward to meet the Nazi tanks, while French aeroplanes support them above. Unfortunately air support was inadequate on the Allied side. The French tried to deal with tanks by means of their formidable and extremely mobile field guns, but the Germans had such a numerical uperiority in the air that they were able to blast their way through all opposition.



Sedan, the city of the break-through, showing the Place Crussy.



The Wilhelmina Bridge across the Meuse at Maastricht.

By the evening of May 12th the Dutch Government had concluded that it could not expect any effective military assistance from the French or British. It was anxious that the Royal family should not fall into the hands of the Germans, so on the morning of the 13th, Princess Juliana, who was expecting another child, her husband, Prince Bernhard, and the two Princesses left for England in a Dutch steamer escorted by a British destroyer. They narrowly escaped death when an aeroplane dropped a magnetic mine across the bow of their ship.

Continual air attacks on the palace in The Hague made necessary the evacuation of the Queen, who was prevailed upon to leave for the Hook of Holland that evening. She expressed a desire to go to Flushing, and a British destroyer was placed at her disposal.

On the way to Flushing, however, the destroyer picked up a message to say that that port had been heavily bombed. Course was changed for Dover, but whether the Queen was informed of this at the time has not been made public. It is said that she desired to stay with her people, but that she yielded to the solicitations of the Dutch Government to remain on British soil.

By the 13th the enemy was already advancing on Utrecht and Rotterdam with armoured fighting vehicles. The Dutch forces at Dordrecht had been defeated, and further south, Roozendaal was taken.

On May 14th the centre of Rotterdam was attacked for three hours by squadrons of German bombers, who flew unmolested across the city, dropping hundreds of tons of high explosive. The Hague, with its historic buildings and glorious art galleries had already been bombed. Now the Germans were threatening Utrecht with a similar fate.

The Dutch Army had lost one-fourth of its effectives in four days. The small but gallant Dutch Air



Namur, at the junction of the Sambre and Meuse, showing the citadel and the Château des Contes.



A view of Liége, showing the Pont des Arches. The city and fortifications stand at the head of the Albert Canal.



British troops manning a machine-gun post at a street corner in a Belgian town. In the background can be seen houses that have been wrecked by bombs during a severe air raid. The advance of the British forces into Belgium was made without confusion. At their destination the troops almost immediately went into action.

Force had been wiped out. All the chief ports, aerodromes, arsenals, and dockyards were in the hands of the Germans.

Early in the evening of May 14th the Dutch Commander-in-Chief ordered his troops to cease fire. A few weeks later he was on his way to a German concentration camp, for failing to show sufficient zeal in collaborating with the conquerors. Judging by the scanty news which leaks out of Holland, the majority of that stubborn nation follows his example as closely as it can.

The Queen and Dutch Government established their headquarters in London, where they will remain until the Netherlands are freed; and from here they govern the Dutch overseas possessions, which are making a valuable contribution to the Allied war effort.

. . . . .

Further south, British and French forces, in answer to the Belgian appeal for support, had crossed the Franco-Belgian frontier at 7 a.m. on May 10th in high fettle. The future seemed bright with hope.

The Low Countries, honeycombed with tank-traps and land-mines, might form an insuperable obstacle to the *blitzkrieg*. We had gained rich Allies in Holland and Belgium, and our bombers might at any moment smash some vital link in the enemy line of communications. German tactics were all very well in the open plains of Poland, but could they operate against our combined air forces, and in densely populated areas?

If the Belgians could hold their line for a fortnight, or three weeks, the Germans might become involved in a disaster comparable to that of the Marne. Might . . . So many said, and some believed.

But at that very hour—7 a.m. on May 10th—an enemy armoured division was crossing the Albert Canal by a bridge which had been left intact, owing to the death by bombing of the Belgian officer detailed to blow it up.

Later, this bridge was the scene of one of the most gallant exploits of the campaign, when five volunteers from an R.A.F. dive-bomber squadron went out to attack it. None of them returned, but the



Belgian troops on a road leading out of Louvain, where some of the heaviest fighting and bombing from the air took place.



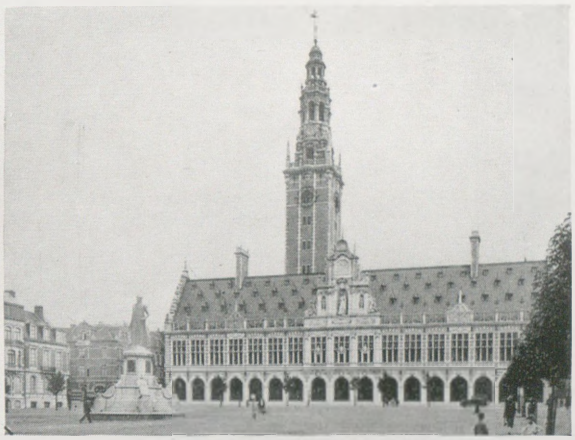
A view of Amsterdam, the commercial centre of the Netherlands, showing Prince Hendrik's Quay and the Nicholas Church.



Antwerp, a commercial centre and chief seaport of Belgium, which stands at the north-west end of the Albert Canal.



The Hague, seat of the Netherlands Government, was one of the chief objectives of the invading Nazi forces. On the right is the statue of William II.



Louvain, showing the University Library, one of the many Belgian towns bombed by the Nazi Air Force. Louvain was devastated in the Great War.



Rotterdam, Holland's great port, showing the Willems Bridge taken by the Germans, who landed from Dornier aircraft on the river.



Brussels, seat of the Belgian Government, was one of the first cities in Belgium to be bombed following the Nazi invasion of the country



A soldier of the B.E.F. in Belgium is seen here pushing home the plunger when blowing up an important bridge in an attempt to hold up the advance of German motorised units sweeping through the country.



This is one of the many obstacles that the Allies set up in Belgium and Northern France to delay the advancing Nazi forces—a demolished Belgian bridge.



British troops manning an anti-tank post amid the ruins of Louvain.

bridge was destroyed. Meanwhile, however, enemy tanks and cyclists had been pouring across the canal, and had reached Tongres and Waremme.

By May 11th, the great frontier fortress of Liége was already threatened on two sides. On May 12th, streams of refugees were passing through Brussels, and the Sunday papers did not appear. The Government prepared to evacuate to La Panne.

The B.E.F. took up a position east of Brussels, along the line of the Dyle river. As soon as they made contact with the enemy it became apparent that the Belgians were retreating everywhere, except at Liége, and that Holland was collapsing at an even greater speed.

On May 14th (when Holland surrendered) German troops in northern Belgium held the Tongres-Waremme line, and had pushed on to Aarschot, further north. To the south they had crossed the Meuse at three places between Namur and Mezières, ten miles inside the French frontier.

Three-quarters of the city of Namur had been heavily damaged by aerial bombardment before it was entered by ground troops. Tirlemont, Bicot and Aarschot were in ruins, and Louvain badly hit.

The Germans entered Louvain on May 15th, but were driven out by the Royal Ulster Rifles. This was the furthest east reached by any British contingent. Our troops held half the railway station, and had settled down, sniping, machine-gunning and harassing the enemy with hand grenades, convinced that they could hold out indefinitely. And so they might have, but for events further south.

. . . . .

Communication between General Gamelin, the French Commander-in-Chief in Paris, General Georges, commanding the French Armies of the North-East, and General Billotte, commanding the French troops in Belgium (fifteen infantry and three mechanised divisions) was poor, and still more inadequate was the liaison between these officers and Lord Gort, the British Commander-in-Chief. Also, Gamelin and Georges were always quarrelling.

The position of the Allied line in Belgium was precarious, not only owing to the extraordinary and terrible events at Sedan (described in the next chapter) but also because the Belgian forces in the north



British troops armed with rifles passing an upturned car in a ruined street of Louvain after a raid by Nazi bombers. Many houses and shops were completely gutted by fire caused by incendiary bombs.



Belgian citizens from a bombed area hurriedly leaving with bundles of their personal belongings.



School-children accompanied by Belgian nuns carrying all they have been able to pack as they flee from the Nazis.



Part of the constant stream of Belgian refugees making their escape.



A British soldier assisting an elderly woman from the ruins of her home.



A sorrowful mother with her baby leaving shattered Louvain.



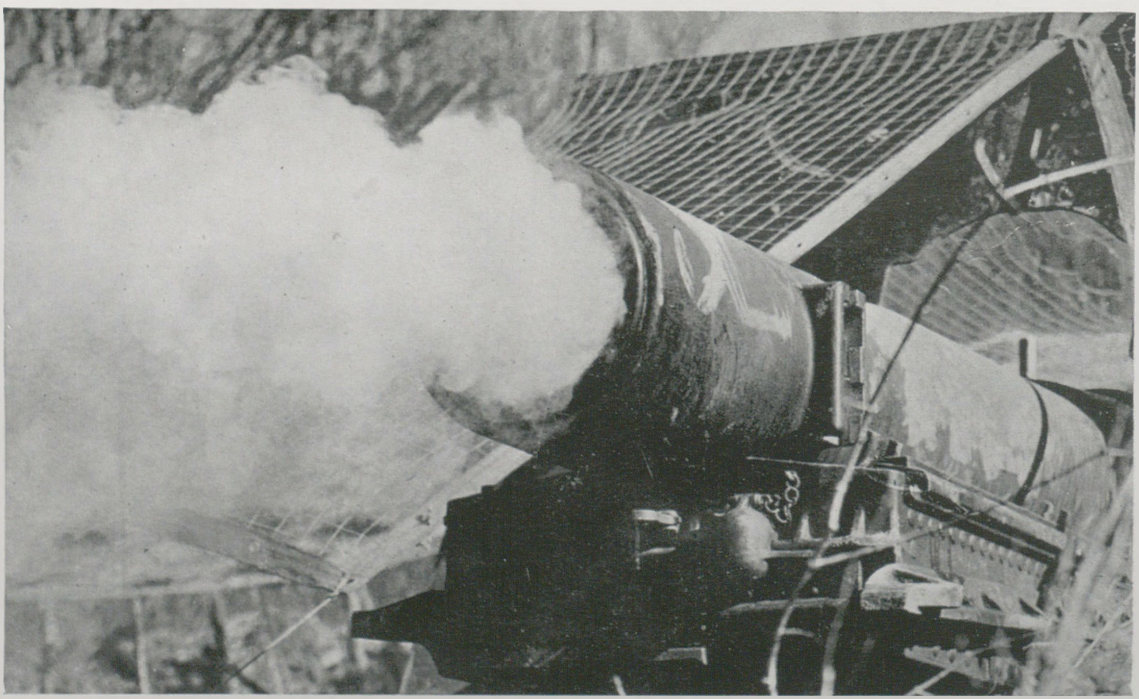
Belgian civilians whose homes have been destroyed by Nazi bombs, leaving the district in a motor-lorry.



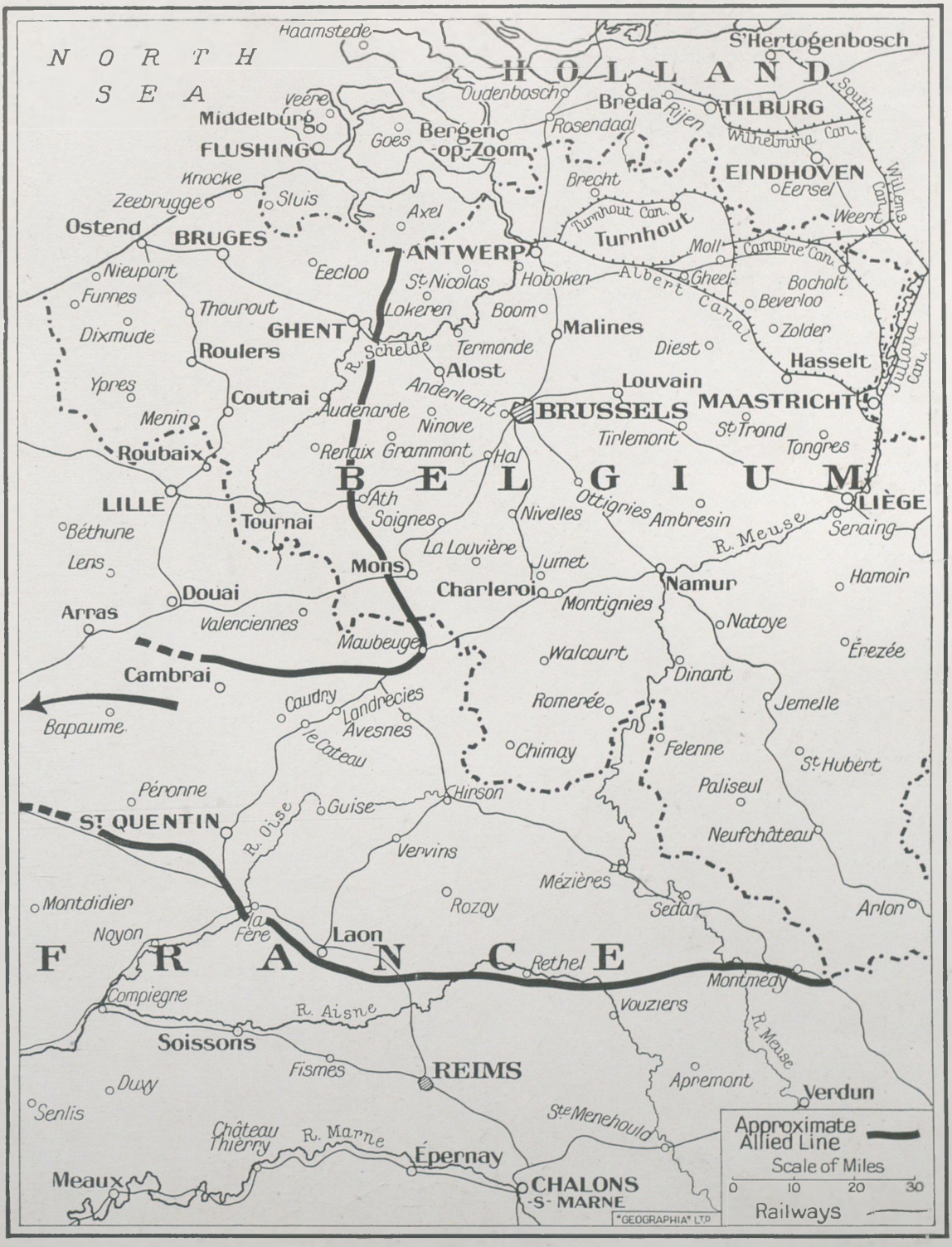
Peasants of Luxemburg, fleeing into France before the Nazi invasion, driving their cattle before them.



French infantrymen marching out of a village behind the fighting lines to relieve men resisting the enemy at the front. On May 27th it was announced that the French had made further progress on the Somme

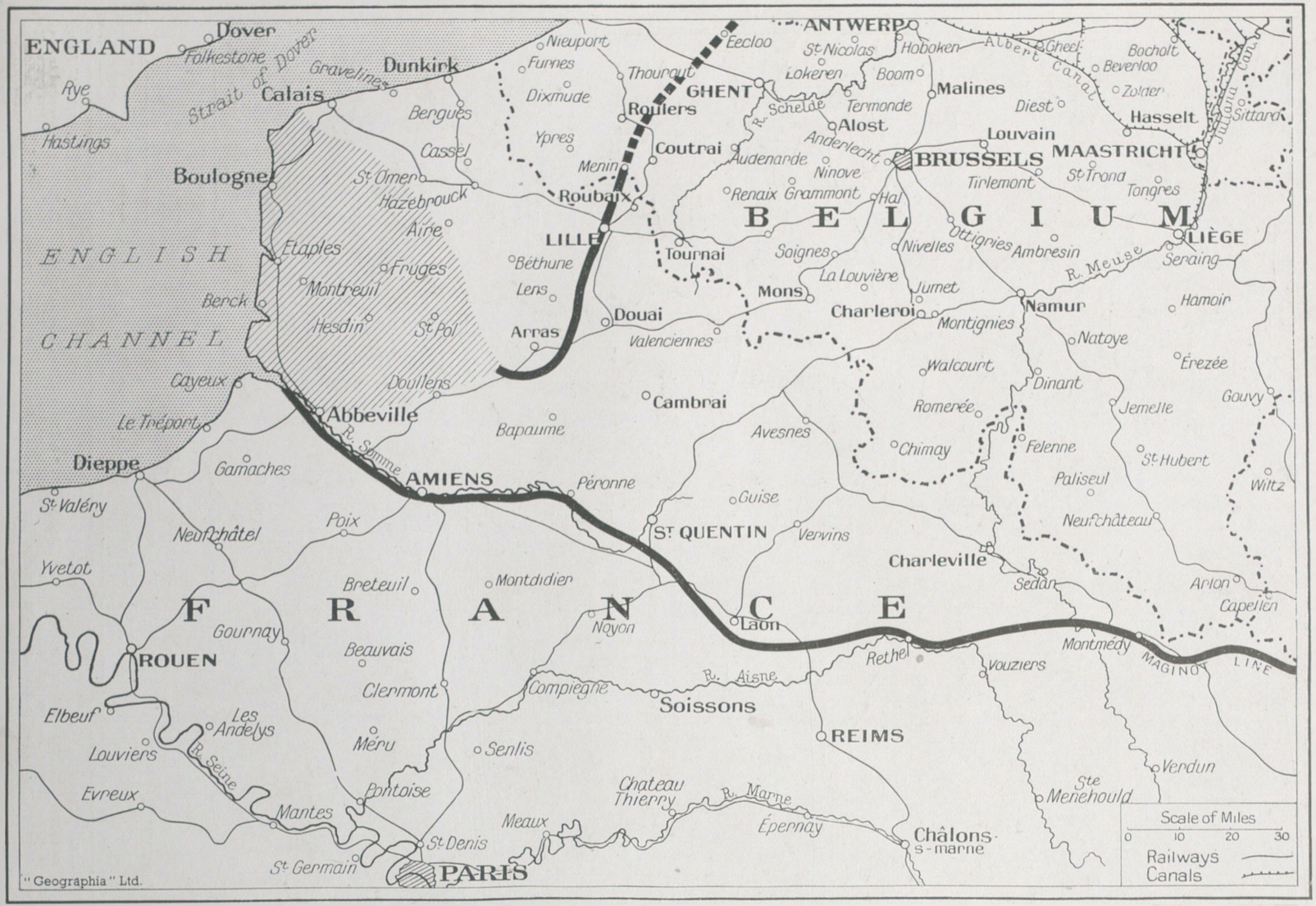


One of the many big guns in the French lines, seen the moment after it had been fired from its camouflaged position in the battle zone. A French communiqué on May 26th stated that artillery inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy.



Specially drawn *by* "GEOGRAPHIA" LTD.

The thick black lines on this map indicate the approximate fighting positions of the Allies on May 21st. Although the Nazi mechanised troops had pushed through the zone between Cambrai and the Somme, thus forming a wedge some 25 miles wide between the allied forces operating in Belgium and the French Army in the south, their positions were uncertain as the opposing forces were intermingled. The arrow indicates the direction of the Nazi advance towards the Channel ports.

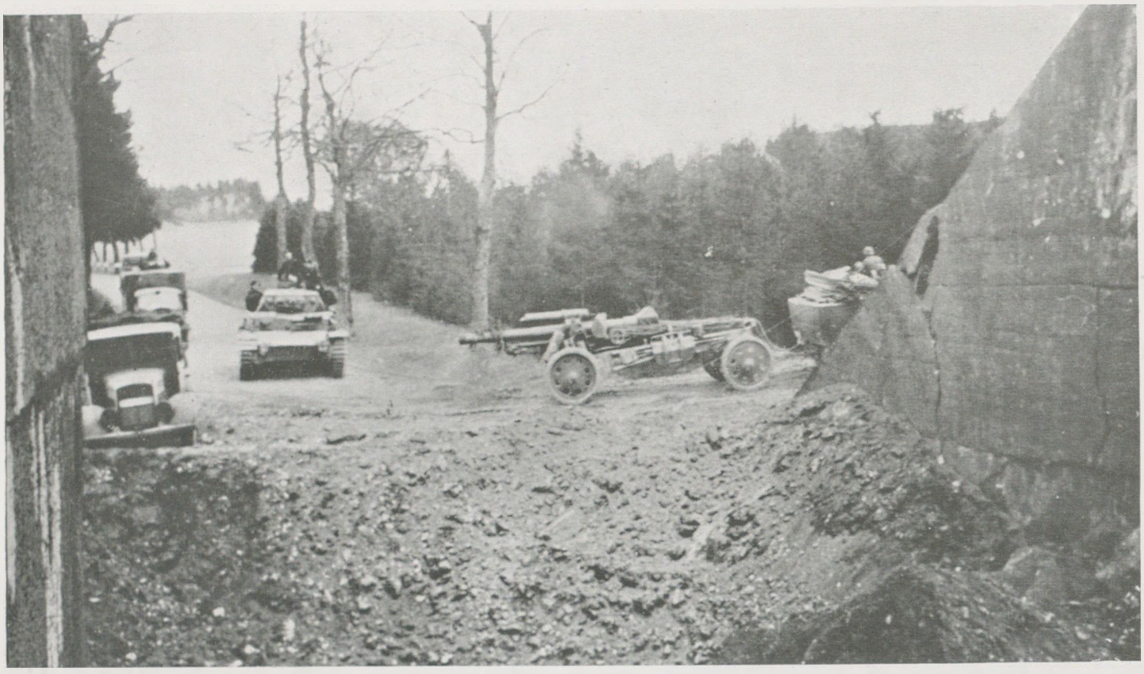


Specially drawn *by "Geographia", Ltd.*

This map shows the position of the Allied Armies on May 28th, 1940, also the area (shaded) in which German mechanised forces were operating through the gap and on the coast. The broken black line shows approximately the position of the Belgian Army which capitulated on May 28th.



This is a German artist's impression of a Nazi advance post in action against allied troops in an evacuated town on the Western Front.



Among the various means adopted to stem the German advance was the destruction of main roads. Here Nazi tanks and motor-lorries are seen making a forced detour on account of the impassability of the principal roads.

were giving way. A counter-attack was launched between Namur and the Albert Canal, but in view of the German advances to the north and south it had no chance of success.

The order for the withdrawal of the B.E.F. to a line west of Brussels was given on the evening of May 15th, but was apparently not received until the afternoon of May 16th. Our forces fell back in good order to a line which ran approximately north and south from Antwerp, along the Scheldt and Dendre rivers. The Germans entered Brussels and Malines on May 17th.

We stood firm in our new position, in the centre of the Allied line, but the Belgians to the north and the French to the south were compelled to give way. They were harassed in the rear by light mechanised units which had broken through and were disorganising communications. Parachutists were also at their deadly work, though they were not used as frequently in Belgium as they were in Holland.

The capitulation of Holland had released other German forces which threatened Antwerp from the north and west. On May 18th this great fort was evacuated.

"We must not allow ourselves to be intimidated," Mr. Churchill said in a broadcast to the Empire on May 19th, "by the presence of these armoured vehicles in unexpected places behind our lines. If they are behind our front, the French are also in many places fighting actively behind theirs. Both sides are therefore in an extremely dangerous position. It would be foolish, however, to disguise the gravity of the hour. It would be still more foolish to lose heart and courage or to suppose that well-trained, well-equipped armies numbering three to four millions of men could be overcome within the space of a few weeks or even months by a scoop or raid of mechanised vehicles, however formidable."

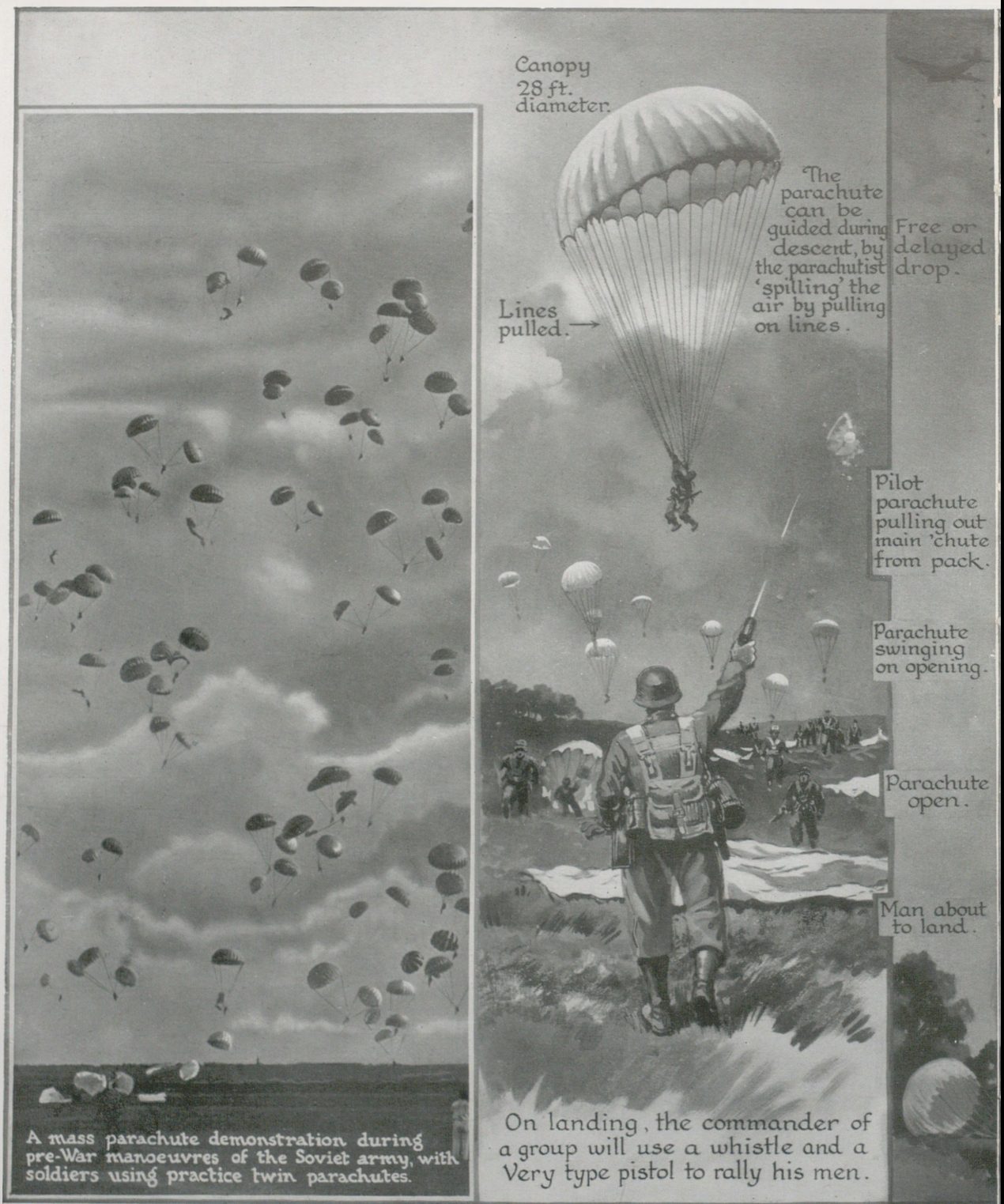
That day, the French had announced that German tanks were at St. Quentin, 75 miles west of Sedan.

How was General Weygand to save the situation, now that the fortifications along the Franco-Belgian frontier had been taken in rear? The only chance was to attack on both sides of the "bulge," which extended, on May 20th, right across France as far as the outskirts of Abbeville. Its narrowest part was between Péronne and Arras, a distance of some 30 miles, and it was hoped that this gap could be closed.

Had this operation been successful some five German armoured divisions would have been cut off from their lines of supply, and what had begun for them as a brilliant victory would have turned to dire defeat.



The magnificent defence of the Citadel of Calais by a small allied garrison drew off powerful German forces which would otherwise have been available to attack the flank of the B.E.F.

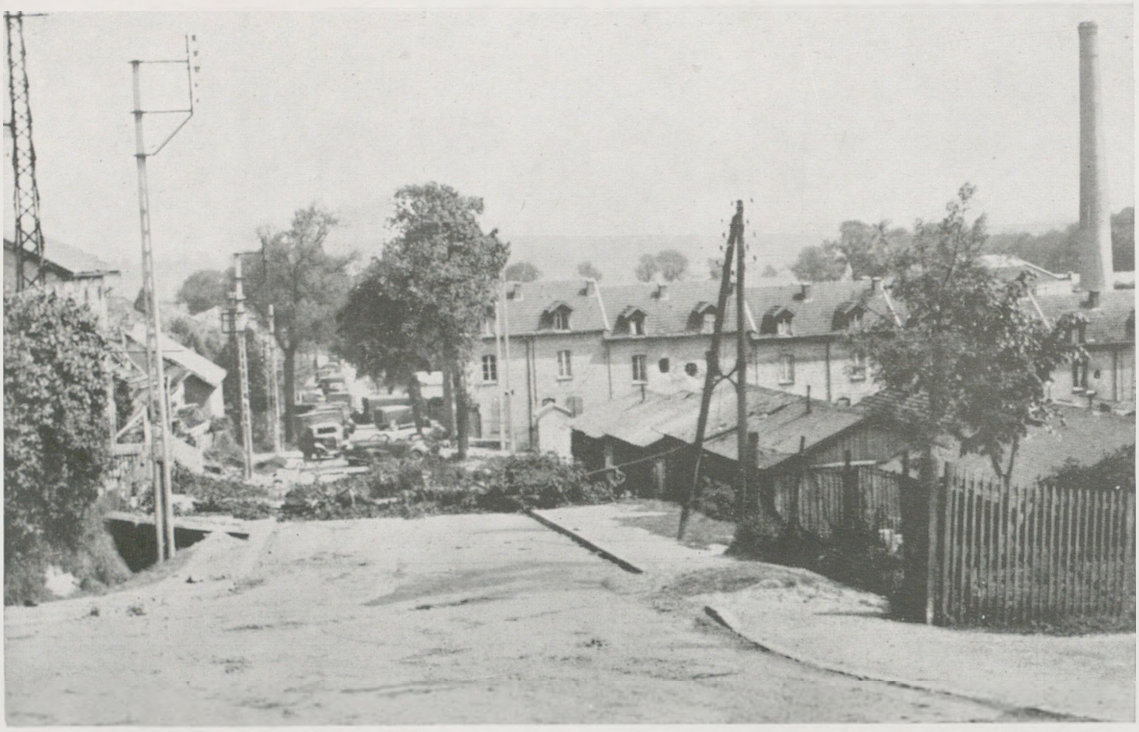


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Originally a device of the Soviet Army, the dropping of parachute troops fully equipped for instant ground warfare has played an important part in the Nazi invasion of Holland and Belgium. In 1936,a Russian report stated that air infantry descending in the rear of the "enemy" had characterised the autumn tactical exercises of the Red Army forces of the Moscow military district. The Nazis, however, have improved on the



Soviet device. So that the troops may not be too widely scattered, the opening of the 'chute is delayed. To avoid collision with other parachutists and to prevent fouling during the downward fall, the air is spilled from the apparatus as desired by pulling on the lines.



A country road blocked with debris and trees to slow down the rapid advance of German mechanised troops through a little village at the front. Lorries and cars have also been used to block the road.



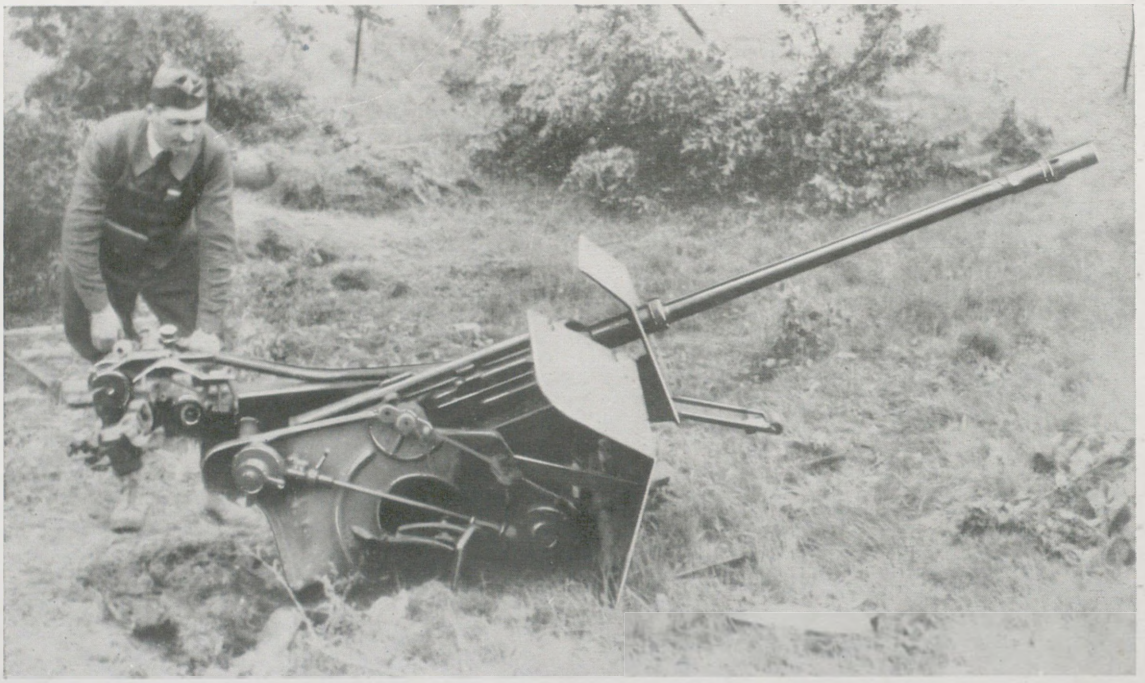
Camouflaged by wire-netting and screened by foliage, one of the great French guns used at the front to bombard the oncoming German forces. The gun crew are seen above preparing to fire.



This drawing by Montague B. Black is an impression of a scene in a typical French town as troops of the British Expeditionary Force, threatened on all sides by Nazi troops and planes, fight a furious rearguard action.

On May 20th General Sir Edmund Ironside (then Chief of the Imperial General Staff) arrived at British General Headquarters for a conference with Lord Gort and General Billotte. The B.E.F. had then seven divisions facing the enemy. It was decided that the two British divisions in reserve (the 5th and 50th) supported by the light armoured vehicles of the French 1st Cavalry Corps, and other French troops, should attack Arras on the following day.

On the morning of May 21st, however, the French were not ready. Gort attacked, none the less, with the support of all the tanks he could obtain, and carried his first objective, the Cojeul River, south-east of Arras. Here he discovered that the flanks of the "bulge" were held by well-equipped infantry that had followed the armoured divisions, and that the Germans were already strongly entrenched. The "bulge" was not a salient, as we understood the term in the last war, but a sally-port, bristling with defences, from which the enemy issued to carry havoc far and wide into France.



This German anti-aircraft gun captured by the French was used also as an anti-tank gun. A French soldier examines the mechanism of the allied trophy.

The B.E.F. drove the Germans from Arras with heavy loss, but could not advance any further. The gap was not closed.

Weygand arrived by air to confer with Billotte on May 22nd. He had caught a chill, which gave him a stiff neck, and he looked the tired man he was. By some mistake, neither King Leopold nor Lord Gort arrived at the conference, but Billotte met the British and Belgian Commanders-in-Chief soon afterwards, at Ypres, and outlined the new plan of attack.

Next day General Billotte was killed in a car accident, and General Blanchard took over command of the Allied Armies in the north. This inevitably caused further difficulties in liaison between the three principal commanders.

From Douai and Valenciennes in the north, and from Roye in the south (25 miles south-east of Amiens) a simultaneous attack was to be launched on May 26th. The objective for the two British and three French divisions coming down from the north was to be Marcoing, where the southern troops from Roye were to join hands with them. But the attack was never made, for on May 25th the Belgian troops on the Scheldt had been driven back to their last defensible position on the River Lys, and were in desperate straits. Gort decided to send his two reserve divisions to reinforce them.

It was a forlorn hope, and General Blanchard, deprived of British support, made no move either. Nor was any serious attack delivered from Roye. The gap became a chasm.



Troops of the B.E.F. carrying their anti-tank rifles and other arms during a divisional exercise at the front.



Sherwood Foresters, serving in a forward area occupied by the B.E.F., going over the top during training.



Men of the York and Lancaster Regiment on guard in a trench in a forward area on the Western Front. During the Great War (1914–18) twenty-two battalions of the regiment went into action.



A British platoon, finding itself surrounded by Germans, jumped from its lorries and took up defensive positions by the roadside to repel the enemy attack. Later it succeeded in making its way back to the main British line.



Taking advantage of natural cover and with foliage screening their steel helmets, the infantry move forward.



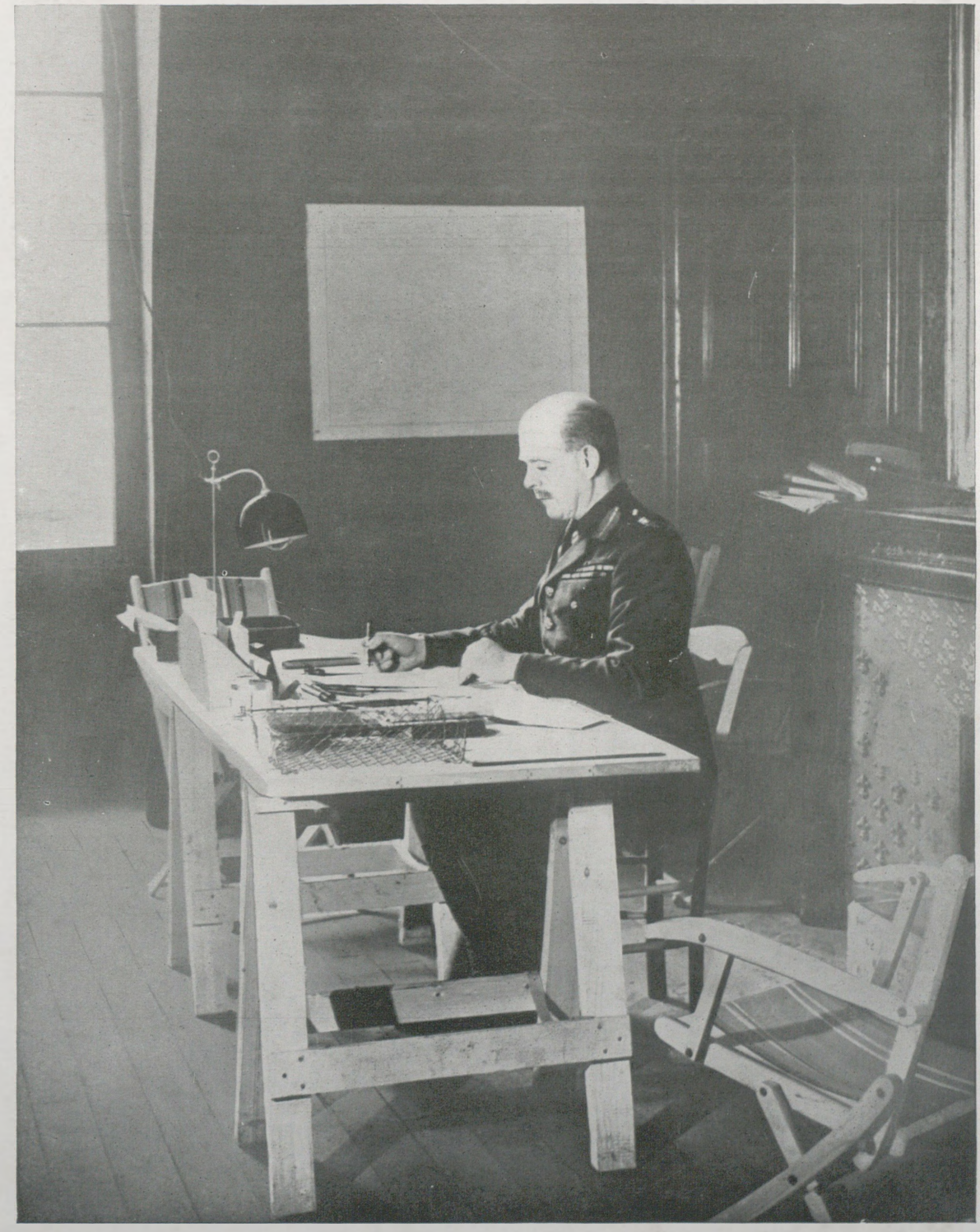
With a range of some 30 miles, the huge 400 mm. railway guns of our Allies wrought tremendous havoc among the German emplacements. One of these mighty guns is seen belching out a dense cloud of grey smoke at the moment of firing.



British and French soldiers wounded during the fighting in Belgium are seen above enjoying a game of cards in a hospital in England.



A happy scene in a British base hospital behind the lines in France. The cheerful atmosphere did much to restore these soldiers to health.



Lord Gort at his desk.

Between May 25th and 27th King Leopold, sleepless and exhausted, was debating in his mind (and taking counsel from very few advisers) how best to save his country, which was caught in the grip of such a panic that 3,000,000 people had left their homes, to wander hopelessly towards the south and west.

When the Weygand plan to close the gap had failed, he knew that the situation of Belgium was hopeless. At 4 a.m. on May 28th he ordered his troops to cease fire, and sent an envoy to the Germans announcing the surrender of his country.

Many reasons have been advanced to account for the King's action. Some of his friends declare that he had been warned by the Germans that Brussels and Antwerp would be razed to the ground by German bombers; others, that he could no longer bear to see the helpless streams of refugees being bombed and machine-gunned on the roads. Even his enemies have never doubted his personal courage.

He has been blamed for not taking the advice of his Ministers, who urged him to leave Belgium with the Government, and continue the struggle abroad. He refused, saying that the place of a King is with his soldiers in the field, and with his people in the hour of their adversity. Let us not censure him too hastily. It is true that he had appealed for our help, but it is also incontestable that that help (through no fault of the B.E.F.) had not been effective.

The King's decision, however, placed the B.E.F. in grave peril, for Lord Gort was suddenly compelled—when himself desperately hard pressed—to take over a new line of thirty miles, from his northern flank to the North Sea, where the Germans would have certainly broken through if they had been unopposed. Had our northern flank been turned we should have lost our whole army.

Holland had gone, now Belgium. Nearly a million fighting men had laid down their arms. Hundreds of Belgian officers and men, however, refused to surrender. Some made their way into France, others fought through the enemy to join the British at Dunkirk.



This drawing by a German war artist depicts hand-to-hand fighting in France. A Nazi patrol resisting a fierce British attack. The soldier in the centre is using an automatic gun while the other men throw grenades.



Men of the B.E.F. in France checking a shot—the explosion can be seen in the distance—that has been fired from the mortar in the foreground. Trench mortars have been greatly improved since the last war. The 3-in. mortar throws a 10 lb. bomb.



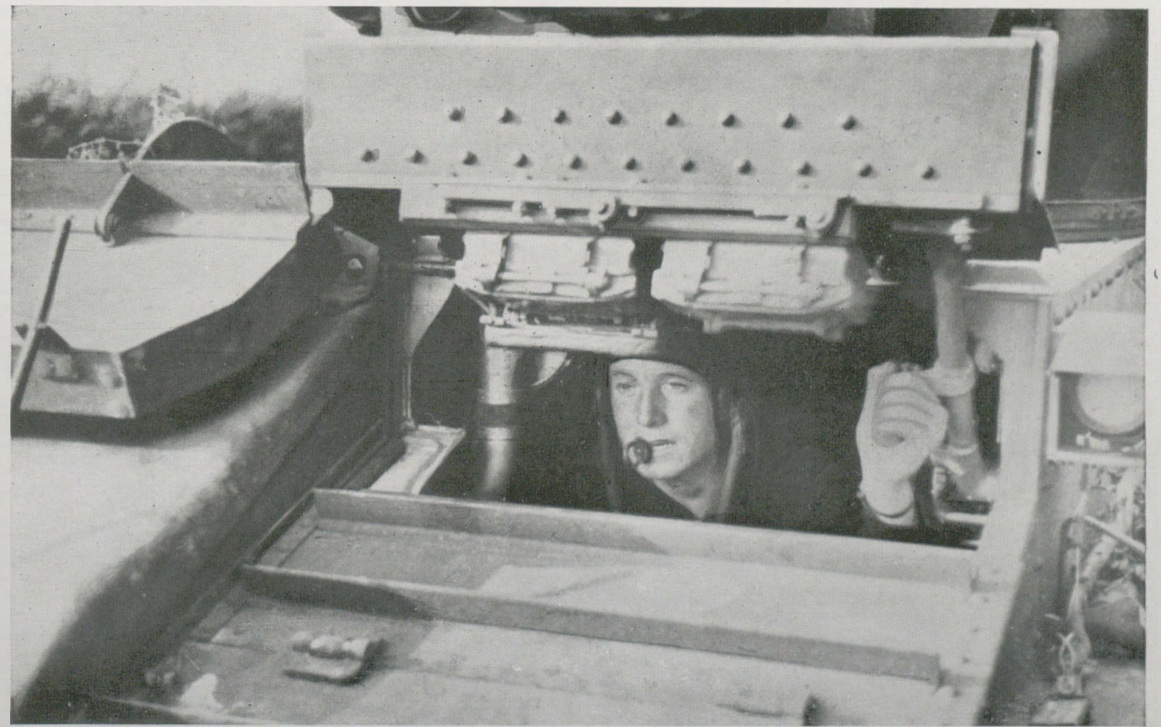
Nazi infantrymen marching past a great pit in the road caused by French big guns which pounded the enemy lines of communication unceasingly. The Germans sustained heavy losses during these bombardments.



A Belgian railway station which was completely destroyed by French soldiers as they made their withdrawal during the continued advance of Nazi troops into Belgium. The railway lines were blocked with debris.



During the early stages of the Northern France fighting in June, British tanks rendered great help to our infantry holding the left of the line. Here is a Brigade Commander and his Number 2 supervising operations



The strain put upon the driver of one of our modern swift-moving tanks is eased somewhat by a novel method he adopts when making his way to the front line. He chews a baby's teat, which acts as a shock absorber.

"C'est de nos soldats que nous pensons," cried M. Reynaud in a bitter broadcast from Paris, announcing the Belgian surrender on the morning of May 28th. In London, Mr. Churchill warned the House of Commons to prepare for "hard and heavy tidings," although he added that our troops were in good heart, and fighting with the utmost discipline and tenacity.

"Then was seen," as Napier wrote in *The Peninsular War*, "with what strength and majesty the British soldier fights : nothing could shake that invincible infantry."

These words are as true to-day as when they were written. Our men were tried as no men were ever tried before—not at Corunna, Kandahar, or Mons—and showed themselves more than worthy of their ancestors.

For nearly three weeks they had been on the move, bombed and shelled continuously, fighting rear-guard actions, and suffering from lack of sleep. The worst of their ordeal was yet to come, but before we survey the scene at Dunkirk we must return to the events in France which led up to that testing moment in our history.



During a vital stage of the German advance on the Somme, a British infantry regiment was cut off. They commandeered lorries and were able to harass the enemy by making unexpected assaults on various points of the line.

V

DUNKIRK AND THE FALL OF FRANCE.

A brief chronology will co-ordinate the events in the Low Countries with those in France.

On May 14th, when the Dutch Commander-in-Chief issued the order to cease fire, the Germans had reached the Meuse, from Namur in Belgium to Sedan in France.

General Corap's 9th Army, with headquarters at Sedan, appears to have been completely surprised by the appearance of German tanks from the Ardennes. Even so, it is a mystery why the bridges over the Meuse were not destroyed, and why the considerable defences of this zone were unable to resist.



One of the many objectives of German bombing planes during the famous rearguard action of the B.E.F. were the routes of communication of the Allies. Above is seen the station and docks at Ostend on fire after a raid.

This Army was the pivot on which the French defences turned, linking the Maginot Line troops with the Allied Forces which had marched north to Belgium.

Five German armoured divisions poured through the gap, followed by fifty divisions of infantry. This was the main German attack, the blow to the heart.

Transport for these troops, if assembled on a single road, would have stretched as far as from London to the Faroe Islands, or to Florence. It followed parallel roads, of course, as far as possible, nevertheless the handling of these immense columns—and in particular the fuel supply of the armoured divisions—must be recorded as a brilliant feat of organisation on the part of the Germans.

At first, military spokesmen in Paris and London declared that the Maginot Line ran well to the west of Sedan (although the maps available to civilians showed the contrary) and that the Germans had not crossed the Meuse. But presently it was obvious that there was a break-through. It was called a "bulge," and the public comforted itself with the thought that the Germans were in a dangerous position. When, however, a few days later, the French announced that the battle from Namur to Sedan had "assumed the character of open warfare" it began to seem possible that this was a euphemism for "full retreat." However, Marshal Pétain, recalled from Spain, would restore matters, together with General



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In his speech in the House of Commons on June 4th, Mr. Winston Churchill told the story of the epic struggle to save the Allied Forces at Dunkirk. He stated that the enemy had sowed magnetic mines in the Channel and on the seas. Repeated waves of Nazi planes, sometimes more than a hundred strong, bombed and machine-gunned the sand-dunes where the troops had arrived. The vessels bringing the troops from Dunkirk were constantly attacked by U Boats and enemy motor-boats. "It was in such conditions as these," said Mr. Churchill, "that our men carried on with little or no rest for four days and nights, making trip after trip across the dangerous waters. At least 335,000 men were brought out of the jaws of death. The miracle of deliverance was achieved by valour, perfect discipline, faultless service and resource and skill of all." The Prime



THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

Minister paid special tribute to the magnificent work of the Royal Navy and expressed the nation's gratitude to the young men of the R.A.F. who had given, and would continue to give, their life and their all for their native land. The above drawing, from descriptions of eye-witnesses shows an example of the unfailing resourcefulness which made possible the saving of the B.E.F. at Dunkirk. A naval officer on the beach did a great service in organising a series of jetties constructed out of lorries which were run out over the tide-marks at low water at points where boats could not get close in. This made it possible for the men to get aboard dry-shod instead of wading through the water, as so many of our gallant men did.



Hundreds of troops on a Flanders beach, with lorries and other equipment, waiting to be evacuated. Almost every kind of craft, down to the smallest rowing boat, was used to carry the men to safety.

Weygand, recalled from Africa. On these veterans—whose combined ages were over 150 years—rested the responsibility for stemming the German advance, and saving the twenty-five Allied divisions in Belgium, who were in hourly-increasing danger of being cut off from their bases.

On May 15th the Germans continued to drive a wedge between the northern armies and those pinned to the Maginot Line. General Gamelin might still conceivably have saved France, by withdrawing the Allied Forces from Belgium, southwards, towards Amiens. Whether the twenty divisions of the Belgium army would have consented to follow the Anglo-French is doubtful. However, the decision was not taken. The speed of the German advance induced a kind of paralysis in the French High Command. A traveller who had occasion to visit an important French General found him sobbing over his maps, incapable of any decision. By the time General Weygand arrived, on May 19th, the enemy was sweeping over the country like a flood-tide.

On May 16th, the breach in the French front was 70 miles wide. Mr. Churchill flew to Paris. The B.E.F. in Belgium was fighting as far east as Louvain.

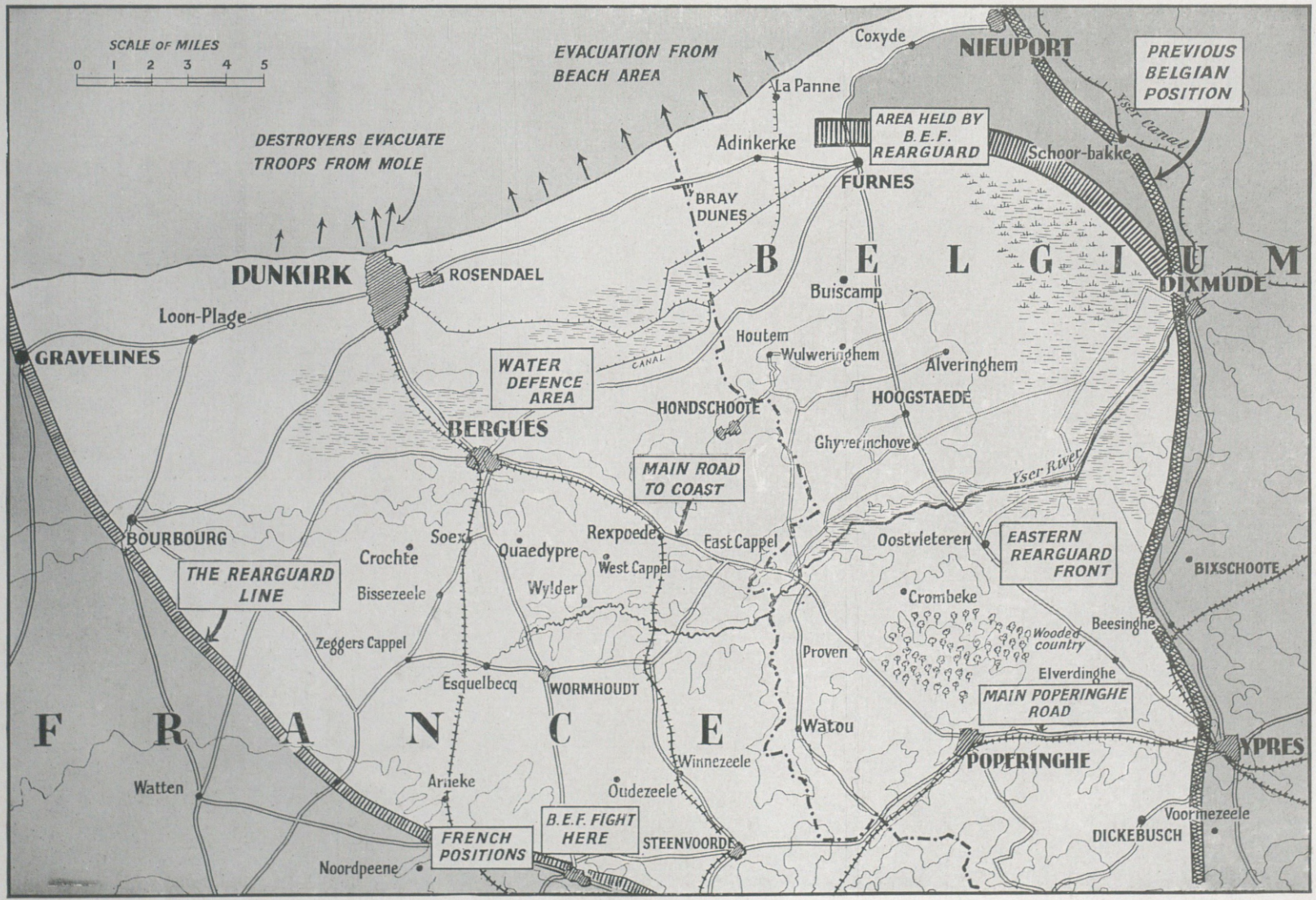
On the 17th, General Gamelin issued an order to his troops "to conquer or to die," but the German General Staff reported advances on all parts of the line. The B.E.F. retired west of Brussels.

On the 18th, German armoured divisions had reached Guise and Landrecies. Antwerp was abandoned by the Belgians.

On the 19th (when General Gamelin was replaced by General Weygand) the Germans had already



A British naval communiqué stated that 222 British naval vessels and 665 other British craft took part in the evacuation of Dunkirk as well as large numbers of French naval and merchant ships. Part of the great armada is seen above.



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THE SPHERE

This map shows the area of the successful rearguard action between the lines extending from the Nieuport-Dixmude arc through Ypres southwards, and the area of the evacuation from Dunkirk and the surrounding beaches.

crossed the Oise River between Maubeuge and La Fère, and captured St. Quentin and Le Cateau. Enemy tanks reached the banks of the Aisne at Rethel, thereby securing their left flank ; and were also operating north of Laon. In Belgium, the B.E.F. were holding the line of the Scheldt with seven infantry divisions. In London, plans were already being made for the possible evacuation of our troops through Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne.

On the 20th, the enemy crossed the Aisne at Rethel, and occupied Amiens, and part of Arras. In the north it was decided to attack Arras with two reserve divisions of the B.E.F., the French co-operating.

On the 21st, the Germans reported that Arras and Abbeville were taken. Beyond Laon their troops had advanced to the Chemin des Dames ; so that they were threatening both the Channel ports and Paris. In Belgium, Lord Gort launched his attack on Arras, unsupported by the French.

In Paris, M. Reynaud told the Senate that the French classic conception of war had encountered a new



Heading bravely for England, a fussy little tug, with a motor-launch in tow, laden with heroes of Dunkirk, like the hundreds of other vessels that comprised this amazing armada which performed a "miracle of deliverance"

and better idea. It was the plain truth. The Allies were still thinking of lines of defence. The Germans were thinking of how to reach and ravage the heart of France.

In war the object is to shoot the enemy. The Germans were doing that. The Allies would have liked to strangle Germany, but could not contain her. It might conceivably have been better, from an abstract strategical point of view, for Great Britain to have confined herself to a naval and air blockade, without dissipating her strength by raising a continental army. But, as has been explained, such a policy would not have been supported, because it would not have been understood, by the people of France or Britain. We had made our bed in a morass of guarantees.

On the 22nd, the Germans occupied Montreuil and St. Pol. "If we hold out for a month," M. Reynaud declared, "we shall have covered three-quarters of the road to victory." This statement may be compared with the announcement in London that "as at present advised no interruption in racing next week is anticipated." In Belgium, the British took Arras after heavy fighting, but had to evacuate next day, as they were unsupported and in danger of encirclement. Again Mr. Churchill flew to Paris.

On the night of the 23rd, Boulogne fell, and the enemy were advancing on Calais. Dunkirk was heavily bombed. Of the three ports feeding our army only one was available, in a battered state. In Belgium, Generals Weygand and Billotte were conferring fruitlessly on how to close the gap between the northern and southern armies.



Unperturbed by German air bombing and artillery action, allied troops wading from one of the beaches at Dunkirk to their rescuing vessel, a Clyde river steamer. The man nearest the vessel is swimming to it. In the background are the Bray dunes.

On the 24th, strong enemy armoured units surrounded Calais, and pushed on in an attempt to cross the Aire Canal. Had they succeeded, they would have cut off the retreating B.E.F. from Dunkirk.

On the 25th, it was announced in Paris that fifteen French generals had been relieved of their commands. The collapse of Belgium was beginning. The enemy broke through the line of the Scheldt, as far as the Lys River.

Sunday, May 26th, was observed throughout the British Empire as a special day of prayer and intercession. It marked the beginning of the Dunkirk evacuation: "the greatest thing this nation has ever done."[1]



As bombs were bursting and Nazi machine-gun bullets were raining on the beach at Dunkirk, the allied troops took what cover they could find on the unprotected sands. The troops are seen here during a bombardment.

In twelve days all Northern France had been conquered. The whole Allied plan of campaign had done more than go wrong. It had ceased to exist. There was no plan, only a catastrophe.

Defeatism existed among all classes in France. Too many mayors, station-masters and other smaller fry in the administration left their posts in a hurry when they saw disaster in the offing. The river of refugees from Belgium was cumulative in its effects; as it passed into France it gathered in volume and virulence. All sorts of rumours were abroad. As early as May 16th M. Reynaud found it necessary to declare that it was untrue that the Germans were at Rheims and Meaux, and that the Government had no intention of leaving Paris.

In fact, the Germans were on their way to Rheims, and certain members of the French Government were already contemplating the move to Tours.

[1] *The Nine Days Wonder*, by John Masefield. Heinemann, 1941.



British and French troops are seen here massed on the dunes at Dunkirk in readiness to be taken aboard ships assisting in the evacuation.

To combat defeatism, the French censorship was fatuously determined that nothing but good news should be published. Objectivity was not permitted to war correspondents and military writers; nothing but praise and fair promises saw the light of day.

The effect on a public opinion which was accustomed to think for itself was deplorable. Prior to the war, the French Press, for all its faults, had been extremely well-informed. Overnight, with the orders for general mobilisation, free opinions could no longer be expressed in print. The change was too drastic to be healthy; but maybe the battle for France was lost before it began, and the large gaps in the newspapers were merely a symptom of the blank spaces in the minds of its governors.

MM. Daladier and Reynaud were neither of them supermen but they tried to serve France according to their lights. It is a melancholy task to look back on the panegyrics about them published in this country and compare them with the miserable stories of feminine wire-pulling and financial intrigue that are now told by their compatriots. The French Republic was hopelessly corrupt. Marshal Pétain came too late. So did General Weygand, who had the ability and the prestige to save his country, but not the time.



Troops of the British Expeditionary Force on the pier at Dunkirk about to board a British destroyer.

Our faults in dealing with the French were many. We should have realised, far sooner than we did, that they had mobilised the whole of their man power, while we had conscripted only a fraction of ours. Of course there were reasons. There are always good reasons for losing battles.

When all is said, however, the chief cause of our defeat was that the Allied Staff were wedded to a wrong theory of war. Since modern weapons had not been tested in a *large-scale* modern war, it was permissible, but erroneous, to suppose that twice two hundred tanks made four hundred. Four hundred tanks—a division—was at least ten times as effective as half a division. To get results it was necessary to employ tanks in mass.

Similarly with regard to the combined power of tanks and aeroplanes. They did not merely add to each other's effectiveness, but multiplied it.[1] The value of one hundred tanks and one hundred aeroplanes, working together, was not two hundred units of fighting power, but about ten thousand.

. . . . .

The strong German forces which surrounded Calais on May 24th had orders to take the city and then move with all possible speed to Dunkirk. But Calais held out, thereby enabling Dunkirk to be defended.

The garrison of Calais consisted of a battalion of the King's Royal Rifle Corps, a battalion of Queen Victoria's Rifles, a thousand French soldiers, and a battalion of the Royal Armoured Corps: some 4,000 men all told.

Fierce fighting occurred on the outskirts of the city during the afternoon of May 24th, against the 400 tanks of an armoured division. In spite of the odds against it the British and French garrison held its ground until nightfall, when it retired to an inner line. Next day the enemy again advanced to the attack, reinforced by another armoured division, as well as by artillery and infantry.

An overwhelming force was now opposed to the defenders of Calais. Eight hundred tanks attacked them, and a greatly superior force of infantry. They were short of munitions, food, water, and

[1] Major-General J. F. C. Fuller in an article in *The Evening Standard* of May 25th, 1940.

the Rifle Brigade had not been able to land three-quarters of its vehicles and equipment, owing to German bombing. That night terrific shell-fire set the town alight and reduced it to a shambles; but the garrison fought on, amidst flame and smoke and the panic-stricken inhabitants.

Not until May 27th did Calais surrender, by which time, the dykes at Gravelines had been flooded, holding the enemy off so that the evacuation from Dunkirk was possible. In Mr. Churchill's words, this glorious defence had "added another page to the glories of the Light Divisions."

. . . . .

A bare statement of the German advance through France gives little idea of the fighting, which was so confused that the only pictures of it that correspond to reality are those painted by the rank and file. These were "soldiers' battles." Generals often lost touch with their commands and sometimes lost themselves. For instance, on May 19th General Giraud flew to the Headquarters



The statue of Jean Bart, patriot of Dunkirk, is seen here in the centre of the town surrounded by the ruins of buildings bombed by the Nazis in their attempt to prevent the historic withdrawal of the Allied Forces.

of the 9th Army to replace General Corap: he arrived at his command only to find that it was in the hands of the Germans, and was immediately made a prisoner.

"Our men's ordeals," wrote Mr. J. L. Hodson, who had been in the thick of the mêlée, "are greater than those which we, who soldiered in the last war, knew. The weight against us is greater; the bombing tenfold. You meet men who haven't smoked for five days; others who haven't slept for three or four nights.

"Our men have undertaken military tasks possibly more varied, more valiant, more desperate than any serving soldier remembers, and have such tales to tell as have seldom been equalled in our annals. It is possible the adequate story will never be told—not the half of it."[1]

Many of this valiant host, when they eventually returned to England, had no idea of where they had been during those nightmare days of dive-bombing, and long night-marches, along roads packed with bewildered people, themselves going they knew not where.

Hand-to-hand fighting was a rarity. "Looking back through all those twenty-one days," said a

[1] *Gentlemen of Dunkirk*, by J. L. Hodson. Cherry Tree Books, 1940.

sergeant in a Territorial battalion[1]—"the queer thing is that not once did my company have a real go at Jerry. That's all I want now."

For the infantry soldier, the Flanders fighting began with a long train journey, followed by a long wait in some Belgian village or farmhouse, where he and his fellows entrenched themselves. With morning light came shells and bombs. The enemy had an enormous superiority in every kind of weapon, especially, of course, in aeroplanes. The R.A.F. performed prodigies of valour, but there was a limit to what flesh and blood could stand. One of our pilots, after seven fights, left his aeroplane only to stumble to the ground in a stupor. He slept round the clock before regaining consciousness.

Millions of people were running away. Flanders was full of lost beasts. Only the cats remained, home-loving and aloof from human quarrels.

"The French were evacuating like madmen. It was dreadful to see how callously they were abandoning their homes, and even their animals. Everywhere the picture was the same: unmilked cows, song birds dead in their cages, rabbits starting in their hutches, dogs and cats shut in back rooms. The English soldier is a sentimental creature. At every village it came to, the motley brigade fell out, and didn't fall in again until it had set free all the animals it could lay its hands on."[2]

That is a true account of what was happening in Flanders, but we must remember that the French and Belgian armies fought magnificently on many occasions.

When there was any guidance, civilians and soldiers stood their ground; but lack of it naturally led to panic. Fear is infectious, and the majority of the unfortunate people who fled from the advancing Germans were the victims of Fifth Column rumours, and of lack of resolution on the part of the civil administration. They made the task of our army almost impossible, and the burden of responsibility which rested on Lord Gort during those days at the end of May was heavy indeed. No counter-stroke could defeat the enemy now. We could not fight our way back to the French, but there was just a hope—no more—of reaching the sea.

[1] *My First War*, by Captain Sir Basil Bartlett, Bt. Chatto and Windus, 1940.

[2] *Their Finest Hour*, edited by Allan A. Michie and Walter Grabner. George Allen and Unwin, 1940.



Merchant ships on fire in Dunkirk Harbour after an intensive German air raid. The jetty, along which thousands of allied troops walked to waiting ships, was damaged, but it was still used.



British and French troops marching through a street in Dunkirk, littered with debris and surrounded by burning buildings, during a lull in the German air bombardment of the town. A burning lorry can be seen on the right.



Fires raging in Dunkirk as seen from aboard a destroyer taking part in the epic evacuation. Despite heavy attacks by the enemy from land and air, four-fifths of the B.E.F. were withdrawn from Flanders against tremendous odds.

On May 28th (when Belgium surrendered) the Germans had captured Douai and were threatening Lille. Worse still, they were at Hazebrouck, within an ace of cutting us off from our last port. The B.E.F. retired on Nieuport, Furnes and Dunkirk. The floodgates of the Yser river south-west of Dunkirk were opened, allowing its waters to flood the area from Gravelines to St. Omer.

In the House of Commons Mr. Churchill told members that "the situation of the British and French armies, now engaged in a most severe battle, and beset on three sides, is evidently extremely grave. The House should prepare itself for hard and heavy tidings." The Prime Minister afterwards admitted that he did not expect more than 30,000 of our troops to be evacuated.

Next day (May 29th) the Germans captured Ostend, and their vanguard reached Dixmude. Lille fell after a gallant defence, and with it the richest industrial district in France, the most valuable coalfields and tens of thousands of prisoners.

It was certainly a bewildered but a far from beaten army that assembled on the dunes of Dunkirk. It had marched forward to the attack, then back to the sea, often without seeing a human enemy, though continually harassed by his machines. It did not know what was happening. It was fighting in the midst of panic-stricken people, and was being attacked by the enemy from every direction. It was short of sleep, food, ammunition, sometimes even water. Yet some battalions did not lose a single straggler. All were in good discipline and good heart.

Only by bitter fighting was a space kept clear to allow the evacuation to proceed. Gun ammunition was running out, for there had been only 160 rounds per gun in Northern France on May 10th. (The remainder of the reserves were south of the Somme, as also, most fortunately a British armoured division.) Dunkirk had suffered cruelly from bombing. The water supply had been blown up on the 26th, and soon the wells became brackish owing to the flooding of the water-lines, so that no one had enough to drink. The plight of the wounded was serious.



A British destroyer packed to capacity with men of the B.E.F. who have been brought safely to a British port from the beaches around Dunkirk. On landing, the troops quickly entrained for various bases.



Gratitude to the Royal Navy for the great part they played in the famous withdrawal of allied troops from Dunkirk has been expressed by thousands of the men who were brought safely home. Destroyers are seen above packed with troops on their arrival at a British port.



Motor-launches, fishing smacks, small pleasure craft and coastal freighters taking aboard allied troops during the evacuation. It was these types of craft that did such heroic work with larger ships in getting the men out of Dunkirk.

Over the town hung a pall of smoke, and round it was a curtain of flame. Hour after hour the German bombers came—ten—twenty—fifty at a time—dropping screaming bombs. Casualties were surprisingly few, but the material damage was immense. Fortunately the bridge to the harbour remained intact, as did one pier, from which our men were steadily embarked from the morning of May 27th, until 11.30 p.m. on June 2nd, when the Senior Naval Officer signalled that the B.E.F. had been evacuated. More French troops were evacuated on June 3rd.

The single pier, was entirely inadequate to deal with the three hundred and fifty thousand men who were waiting to get back to England. British, French and Belgians waited patiently on the beaches, outside the burning town, while the work of embarkation proceeded under constant shell fire and bombing.

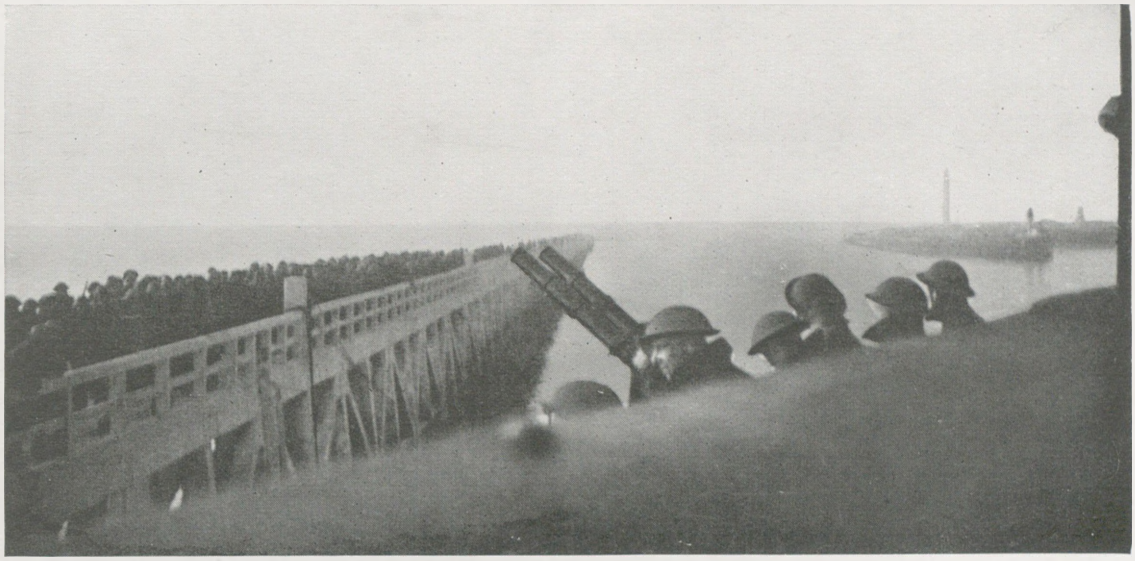
Ships that could not be accommodated at the pier anchored off the beach. Men waded out to them, waist-deep or neck-deep, or swam, if they could. Others were picked up by boats, of which there was at first a shortage. Many foundered. Had the weather worsened, thousands would have perished, or fallen into the hands of the Germans.

Embarkation continued by night as well as day. During the hours of darkness Sir Basil Bartlett describes the scene: "It was queer to be loading up strange soldiers into strange ships and handing them over to strange sailors. Even the sergeants who worked with me were strange. We shared water-bottles and biscuits and chocolate. And we saved each other's lives. But we never saw each others' faces."

On May 27th, five troopships took away nearly 4,000 men, and 2,000 were removed in ship's boats from the beaches. It was a discouraging total, and a storm seemed to be coming up from the Atlantic. Mercifully, however, the weather held, and the embarkation began to work more smoothly after the first day, when line-of communication troops and non-combatants had been handled. When the turn of the front-line soldiers came, the task of the sailors was eased.

On May 31st nearly 60,000 troops were brought to England, and on the following day nearly 62,000.

All the best qualities of our race were displayed at Dunkirk, but Mr. Churchill was wise to check the tendency to consider it a victory. (No one but a nation of poets at heart would ever have made an



A double-barrelled machine-gun on a destroyer pointing skywards as troops of the B.E.F., who fought in one of the greatest rearguard actions in history, make their way along the pier at Dunkirk to embark.

assumption so completely at variance with the facts.) We had been driven out of Europe, with the loss of all the stores and equipment with the northern army. Our casualties were 30,000. We had abandoned a thousand pieces of artillery, and all our light tanks and armoured vehicles. Against our losses may be put the glorious achievement of the R.A.F., who brought down 377 enemy machines during the evacuation, for 87 of ours. Their most glorious day—breath-taking when we consider the results of this aerial Trafalgar—was May 30th, when they shot down 76 of the enemy for the loss of five machines.

The operation would have been impossible without the endurance, imperturbability and powers of improvisation of the men evacuated, the superb shooting of our pilots, who took on odds of ten to one as a matter of course, and the skill and self-sacrificing devotion of the Navy, the Merchant Marine, and the amateur sailors who had volunteered for a dangerous and unknown task.

The heroes of Dunkirk are mostly humble and unknown men, who sweated and shivered and bled and died to help their fellows, with no thought of self, or expectation of reward. Their fortitude and initiative were superb. Leadership there was, but the circumstances were such that unless every man Jack had done his best, the survivors would have been few. Every man Jack was a hero ; and we brought a total of 316,663 persons from those blood-stained beaches and that crazy pier.[1]

All this sacrifice, co-operation and dauntless courage, unseen and unrecorded except in the visible result, did not make a victory, but it was a triumph of Christian virtues over the pagan doctrine of force.

The worst that the Germans could have done would have been to capture our army. They did not succeed, and they were never even near to breaking our spirit. We saw in that dark hour how the world will be saved, and beauty born again out of the ruin of the present. The living held that faith, and the others went confident to their rest.

"Went the day well or ill ?
We died and never knew ;
But well or ill,
England, we died for you."

. . . . .

[1] Of this total, 186,587 belonged to the B.E.F., and 123,095 to the French army, while 6,981 wounded were lifted in hospital ships. *The Nine Days Wonder*, by John Masefield. Heinemann, 1941.



Sailors helping to carry a wounded soldier of the B.E.F. ashore on arrival from Dunkirk at a British port.



A British soldier giving a comrade a drink of hot tea on the quayside after the hazardous voyage home.

Mr. Churchill closed his historic statement to the House of Commons on June 4th, concerning the "miracle of deliverance at Dunkirk", with words that will ring down our history: "I have myself full confidence that if all do their duty, and if nothing is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our island home and ride out the storm of war, and outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone. . . ."

If necessary alone.

These words stuck in men's minds, while their eyes were turned to the map of France, where Teuton and Gaul faced each other from the Atlantic to the Alps.

General Weygand had had little time to organise his defences, which consisted of a series of strong points, extending far to the rear of the outposts, which followed the lines of the Somme, Ailette and Aisne rivers, from Abbeville to Amiens, to Péronne, to Soissons, to Rethel, to Attigny, and thence north-east to Sedan. Perhaps he placed too much reliance on rivers (which proved minor obstacles to the German bridging trains), nevertheless it seemed reasonable in those early days of June to believe that we had the men and weapons to hold the enemy in the Somme-Aisne zone.

The British had a small but well-equipped force in north-west France. At Dieppe, Le Havre and Rouen our supply bases were still intact. An armoured division was billeted behind the Somme, and a Highland division of fully motorised infantry was already in the front line near Abbeville. And in the



Despite the terrible ordeal through which they had passed, these B.E.F. heroes are in high spirits after landing.



A typical party of B.E.F. heroes disembarking. The man on the right is carrying a sword—his souvenir.



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The Germans occupied Boulogne, Northern France, on the night of May 24th. This impression of the last night before the Nazi entry was made while an air raid was in progress, and shows a German seaplane being brought down by anti-aircraft fire.

Champagne country some eight squadrons of the R.A.F. (a number sadly disproportionate to that of the enemy, and to the needs of the Allied Armies) were still in close and active co-operation with *l'Armée de l'Air*.

Our supply and repair bases stretched right across France, as did the Allied aerodromes. The French had ample man-power and a considerable force of fighting vehicles, if they could gain time enough to bring them to vital points. Moreover, the Allies possessed great stores of oil fuel, and behind them an inexhaustible supply guaranteed by their Navies, whereas the Germans were then using up their stocks (replenished, unfortunately, in the Low Countries and northern France) at the rate of more than a million tons a month.

True, the enemy held bridgeheads at Abbeville, Amiens, Péronne and Ham, which threatened the French zone ; still, surprise was no longer a factor in favour of the Germans ; and there was good hope that we could hold their air plus tank attacks.



General Lord Gort, G.C.B., V.C., with General Sir John Dill, in London.

Dive-bombers are not as deadly as they seem. They must hold a straight course to their objective and therefore form an excellent target for a machine-gunner with nerve enough to stand his ground. Again, the deck armour of even the heaviest tanks is thin, so that cannon-firing aeroplanes can destroy them whenever and wherever they can be located.

When the great battle opened there were many who believed that the strength of Frenchmen fighting for their fair land would prove irresistible. Certainly the position was by no means hopeless.

General Weygand issued an order to the troops on June 5th, calling on them to hold fast with unshakeable resolution: "Cling to our soil, and look only forward !"

"The greatest battle of all time," said Hitler in a rival proclamation, "has been brought to a victorious conclusion. The greater part of the British Expeditionary Force has been annihilated, taken prisoner, or forced to flee. Three French armies have ceased to exist. Thus the danger of an invasion of the Ruhr territory has been definitely averted."

Flags were to be flown for three days from every house in the Reich, and church bells were to be rung for eight days. "May their ringing," the Fuehrer concluded, "accompany the prayers which the German people will continue to offer for their sons, because this morning the German divisions and air units have been assigned new tasks."

. . . . . .

Along the whole line the Germans "tapped," looking for weak places.

They found them all too soon, for already, on June 6th, the French communiqué spoke of "slight withdrawals" and of enemy tanks that had penetrated their advance positions, without affecting the general situation. The Germans claimed to have forced all the crossings of the Somme on the first day of the battle, and to have penetrated as far as the Bresle river on June 6th.

"If Germany were to conquer", said M. Reynaud in a broadcast from Paris : "It would be the Middle Ages again, which would not be illuminated by the mercy of Christ. This dream of German hegemony will be smashed against the French resistance. . . . We have but one thought—to save France."

Alas, these words were only too true. The Government thought of safety, rather than attack.

From a military point of view the German advance does not diverge from the tactics employed in previous campaigns, except that it went forward at an accelerated tempo.



A girl of the Mechanical Transport Training Corps handing welcome mugs of tea to heroes of the B.E.F. on their return from the battlefields of Northern France and Flanders. They are seen here just before they left for an Army base.



A party of troops of the B.E.F. seen on their arrival in London from Flanders. Mr. Anthony Eden said on June 2nd: "We have had great losses in equipment, but our men have gained immeasurably in experience of warfare."

There were two main thrusts. The first was directed towards the key city of Rouen, and thence to the French Atlantic ports, which would divide the British from the French armies, and prevent the two nations from supporting each other. The second thrust, which developed later, was towards the key city of Rheims, to mask the Maginot Line and surround Paris from the west.

Had the French defended their capital, an investing force would probably have been left in the northern outskirts, and Paris would have been by-passed by the armoured divisions, who would have seized Dijon on the east and Nantes on the west.

We have already examined the causes of the French collapse. Once broken, the Army, whose courage is unquestioned when well led, could not rally except in isolated sectors of the front where it was encircled and swept away by armoured vehicles on every side. There were no reserves, or rather they were all immobilised and sunk out of sight in the Maginot Line, victims of the idea that there can be safety in passive defence.



Some of the thousands of allied troops disembarking from a warship at a British port on their arrival from Dunkirk. Although they had just returned from the most terrific battle of all time, the men were in excellent spirits.

It is a sad story, which must stand as a warning to future generations who may be assailed again by doctrines which so nearly brought us all to ruin.

"Without counting his losses," ran the French communiqué of June 7th, "the enemy throws new masses into the attack along the whole front."

It was a day of gloom, both in London and in Paris, for even the most optimistic began to feel that our defences were being overrun with horrifying rapidity.

If we were driven back from the Weygand zone, it was difficult to see how the capital could be defended ; and south of Paris there was only the course of the Loire on which to reassemble. But if the shorter defences could not be held, what hope was there for the longer line, especially as by then half the Maginot Line would be taken in the rear ? On this day (June 7th) the most violent enemy thrusts were at Compiègne, where the Germans were said to have massed forty divisions and 2,000 tanks.

But there were more enemy tanks and new enemy divisions everywhere. On June 8th the French military spokesman in Paris announced a great German offensive between the Bresle and Oise, in which half a million infantry and 4,000 tanks were being employed. Our troops had not retreated, he averred,



The first evacuation from Dunkirk was a brilliant epic. The second evacuation was in many ways an even greater achievement for in addition to the men the greater part of the stores was saved. A scene at the French port of St. Malo.

but there had been withdrawals in conformity with the strategy plans of the High Command, to better positions. So we were retreating. There was no suggestion of counter-attack.

On the 9th, the battle spread as far as the front of the Argonne, and a German armoured division was in action at Rouen and Gisors, uncomfortably close to Paris. A Government spokesman declared that one thousand tanks had been destroyed in recent actions, and that as to the capital "we would rather have the city razed to the ground than that it should fall into the hands of the Germans." Two days later the Government left for the south.

General Weygand issued a new order to the troops, saying that the offensive had been launched along the whole front, from the sea to Montmédy. "It will extend to-morrow as far as Switzerland . . . The enemy has suffered considerable losses. He will soon be at the limit of his effort. We are at the last quarter-of-an-hour ! Hold on !"



In perfect order, calmly awaiting their instructions to embark, men of the B.E.F. parade with full equipment at the docks of Cherbourg. So sees the return to England of the second British Expeditionary Force to France.

In England we were still planning to send troops to France, but on the Continent our soldiers were already being compelled to fall back, in conformity with the French movements. A brigade marched to Le Havre, others were converging on Dieppe.

When Italy entered the war on June 10th, the Germans had already crossed the Seine in small bodies, by means of smoke screens. They announced that "operations were taking their expected course, towards the Marne and in Champagne."

It was indeed *le dernier quart d'heure* and a *mauvais quart d'heure* at that.

The world looked anxiously to the fate of Rheims : if that city were taken then there would be no pivot of manœuvre. The Huns were at the gate, but there was still a glimmer of hope . . . Given time . . . Even in these last days before the crash it seemed impossible that the magnificent armies of France which had not been engaged should yield without striking a blow.

On the 11th, the Germans crossed the Seine in force. To the north-west and north-east of Paris their patrols had reached to within 38 miles of the capital.

The B.E.F. in France was cut off from the French forces on its right by an armoured division, which



The German seizure of Le Havre after a terrific bombardment and an heroic resistance proved an overwhelming blow to France. Second only to Marseilles as a port, Le Havre was used throughout the Great War (1914–18) as an allied base and the temporary seat of the Belgian Government.

had pushed forward from Rouen. Another evacuation was necessary, and a brigade of the Highland division was safely embarked at Le Havre.

The other two brigades were not so fortunate. It had been arranged to evacuate them from St. Valéry-en-Caux the following day, but when they reached the coast they found that the town was in the hands of the enemy, and they were compelled to surrender. We lost here 6,000 first-class soldiers.

On the 12th Rheims fell.

Now nothing but a miracle could save France, and there was no Joan of Arc. But the gold of France was saved. This day £250,000,000 was transferred to Brest, and embarked on a French cruiser, which carried it to Martinique.

Mr. Churchill, Mr. Eden and General Sir John Dill returned from visiting M. Reynaud and General Weygand. A communiqué stated that "complete agreement had been reached as to the means to be taken to meet the developments in the war situation." This seemed improbable. At any rate the situation moved so fast that Mr. Churchill had to return to France the following day.

Now the enemy had penetrated as far as Senlis, 20 miles from Paris, where there was fighting described by the military spokesman as "bitter"; but the fact could not be disguised that the French army was almost everywhere in full retreat.

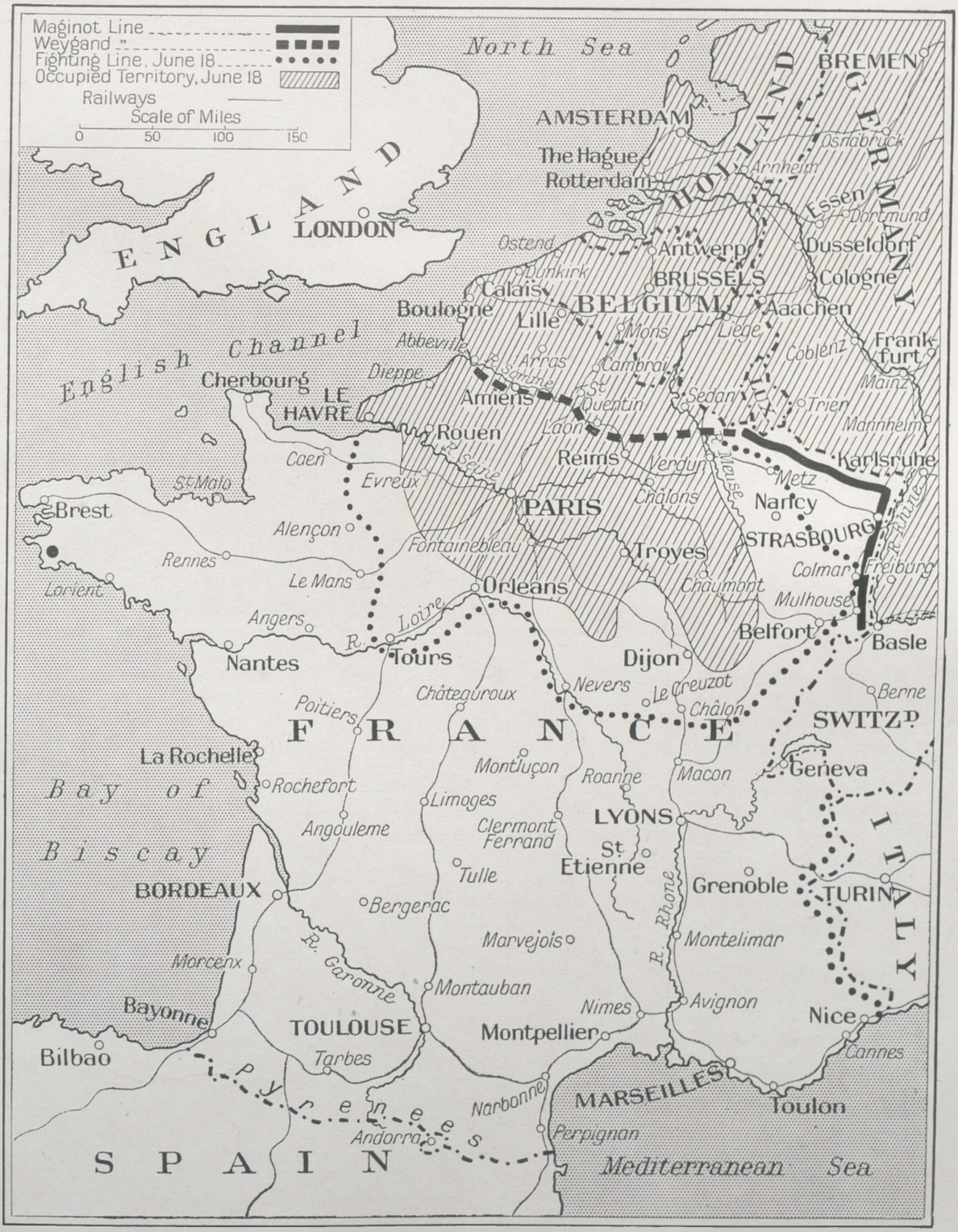
Could Brittany at least be saved? From Caen, the Orne river forms a fair defensive zone, which might have been continued through Chartres to Orléans. Had such a defence been possible, we should have saved the great French naval arsenal at Brest, and the Channel Islands, from which we were soon to be compelled to withdraw. But it was not to be. We had not the men to defend Brittany, and the French were by now so disrupted that they would not have been able to stand anywhere this side of the Mediterranean.

North Africa was the only hope. Many discussions must have taken place between the leaders of the Armies, Navies and Air Forces of the Allies, as to the prospects of continuing the war from Morocco; but they yielded no tangible results.

"The Armies are broken," General Weygand is said to have announced to the War Cabinet assembled at Tours on the night of June 12th, as a preface to his appreciation of the military situation.



Their lorries camouflaged and heavily loaded with stores, the B.E.F. carry out their orderly evacuation, once again under the protection of the Navy and Air Force. A scene on the dockside at the port of Cherbourg.



Specially drawn *by "Geographia", Ltd.*

The extent of the Nazi advance into France at June 18th, 1940, is indicated on this map by the shaded area. The approximate fighting line at the same date is also shown.



Brest, France's naval base in Brittany, presents a desolate picture as French troops sail for England. After making a desperate last-minute stand and destroying everything of value to the enemy, the allied troops made for England.

Troop movements of the next eight days—from June 13th to 20th—show that the German progress through France was practically uninterrupted. The scene shifts from the zone of the operations—in one of the most stricken fields in history, its skies blackened by bombers, and its roads packed deep with frightened and half-starved refugees—to the council chambers and staff-rooms where tragic decisions were taken.

Paris was declared an open city on the 13th. On the same morning was published M. Reynaud's appeal to the President of the United States, made on June 10th, in which he declared that his Government would "fight before Paris, fight behind Paris, shut ourselves up in one of our provinces, and, if they drive us out go to North Africa, and if they drive us out there, go to our American possessions."

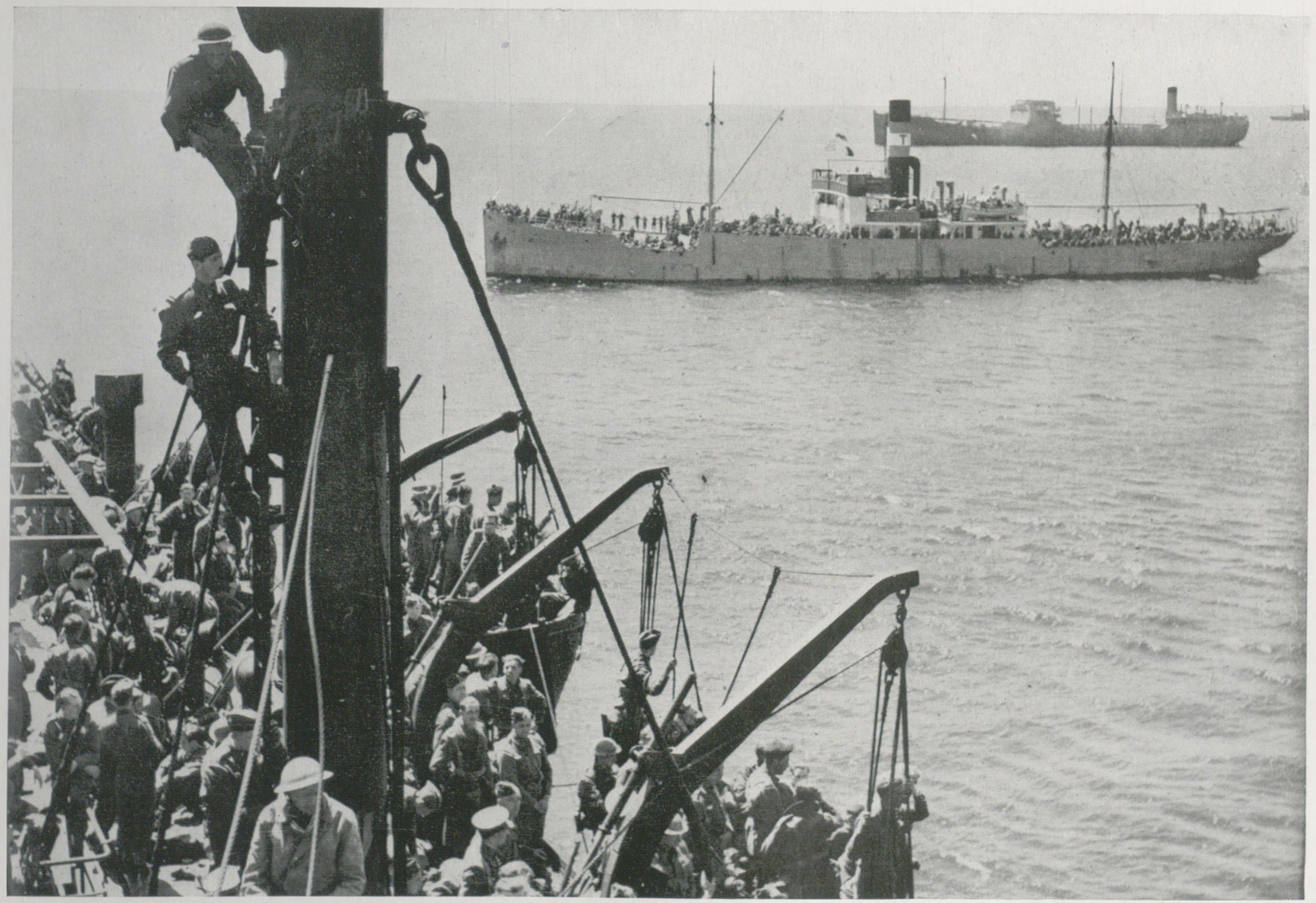
"I beg you to declare publicly," M. Reynaud continued, "that the United States will give the Allies, by every means, their moral and material support, without an expeditionary force. I real se the gravity of such a gesture. Its very gravity means that it should not come too late."

That afternoon Mr. Churchill arrived by aeroplane in Tours. accompanied by Lords Halifax and Beaverbrook. They were to discuss the situation with the French Cabinet, but apparently did not do so : it was considered more expedient that they should confer privately with M. Reynaud and his Minister of the Interior, M. Mandel.

Exactly what passed at this momentous meeting has never been published, but M. Reynaud asked Mr. Churchill to release France from her obligation not to negotiate for an armistice without British permission. Mr. Churchill did not consent, but he suggested that M. Reynaud should make one more appeal to the President of the United States, and that if the reply was not sufficiently favourable to enable France to go on fighting, that they should have another meeting.

Necessarily, these grave matters were not revealed in public. The British communiqué stated that "we take this opportunity of proclaiming the indissoluble union of our two peoples and our two Empires."

M. Reynaud's further appeal to the United States was broadcast shortly before midnight. "Our race," he said, "does not allow itself to be beaten by invasion. It has seen so many of them in the course of the centuries. But it has always repulsed and dominated the invader. All that—the courage and the sufferings of France—the world must know. All free men must pay their debt to her. The hour has come. The French army is the advance guard of civilization, and has sacrificed itself. In losing this



The third evacuation of the British Army, from the area south of the Somme, was carried out with proper discipline, like those from Norway and Dunkirk.

battle it has inflicted terrible blows on the common enemy. Wounded France has the right now to turn to the democracies and say to them: 'I have claims on you!'

"But it is one thing to approve, and another to act. We know what place the ideal holds amongst the American people. I address a new and final appeal to the President of the United States . . . It is a question to-day of the future of France, of the very life of France . . . Clouds of aeroplanes must assist us. Forces must come from the other side of the Atlantic and crush the evil forces which dominate Europe. We have the right to hope that the day is approaching when we shall receive that help."

American citizens were impressed, but a little uneasy about the "clouds of aeroplanes" and the "forces from the other side of the Atlantic." As to the debt that all free men must pay to France, there was also a debt that France had freely incurred from the United States, during the last Great War.

On the same day, the Hearst Press published an interview given by Hitler to Mr. Karl von Wegand. The German leader denied emphatically that he had any intention of interfering with the Western Hemisphere, or even of smashing the British Empire: he wanted only to destroy those who were destroying that Empire. He intended, however, to take back the German colonies, to rid the world of "the British capitalist clique," and to end British supremacy at sea.



The 84-year-old Marshal Pétain, broadcasting his reasons for the French armistice.

As for his aims, he declared that they were peace and nothing else. It could not be reached by treaties alone, he admitted, "but must come by the dawning of reason among the nations."

Meanwhile the tanks went forward.

German troops entered Paris on the early morning of June 14th by the Aubervilliers Gate, and Hitler ordered church bells to be rung for a quarter of an hour throughout Germany. French soldiers had packed up and escaped as best they could, but the metropolitan police remained to keep order. There were no "incidents" in Paris, and the enemy is said to have behaved with decorum towards the citizens. German cavalry trotted down the Champs-Elysées, and soon large Swastika flags were flying from the Arc de Triomphe and from the Eiffel Tower.

In western France Le Havre was occupied, and armoured divisions were reported to be on their way to Cherbourg, St. Malo and Brest.

Verdun fell on the 15th. The Rhine was crossed between Strasbourg and Basle, and the Maginot Line breached in several places.



Austrian troops, during the occupation of Paris, marching past the famous Arc de Triomphe.

Tours was too congested to hold the French Government (it had also been heavily bombed) so it was transferred to Bordeaux. On this day (the 15th) it met in the *Préfecture* in that city, and was attended by President Lebrun, and the Commanders of the French Navy and Air Force, Admiral Darlan and General Vuillemin. There was still no answer from President Roosevelt to M. Reynaud's last appeal.

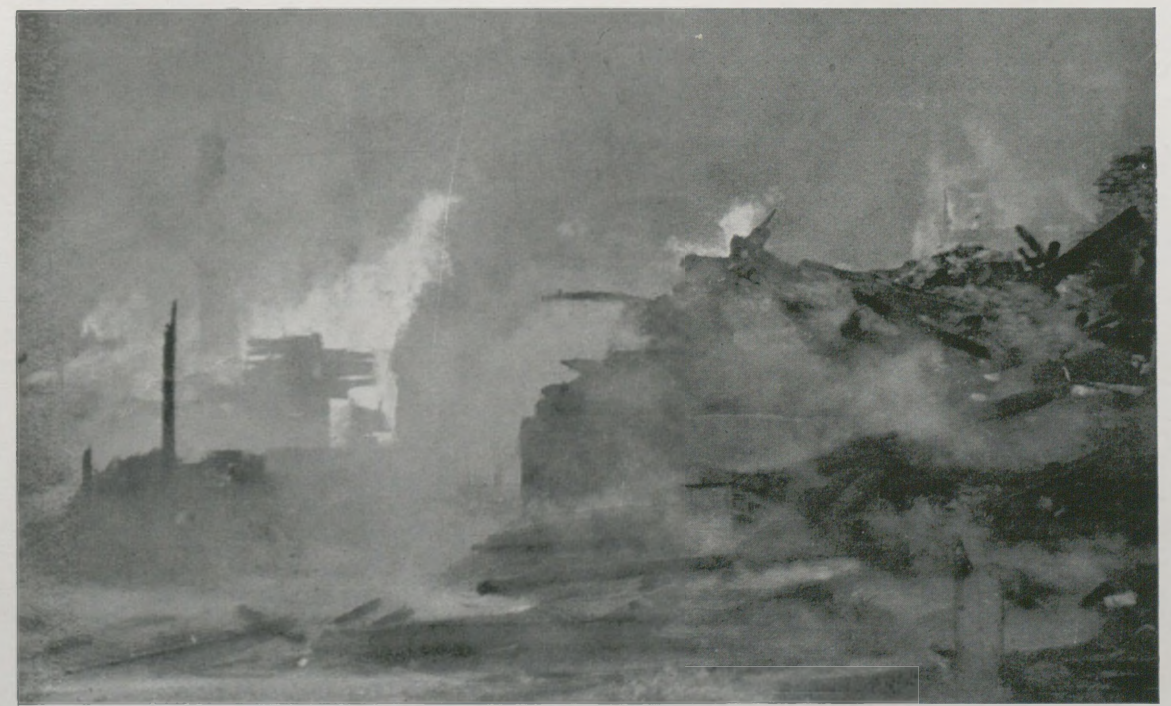
The reply arrived next day, the 16th. The Cabinet met three times, to consider it in the light of a general situation. Meanwhile the Germans had reached Dijon.

"I am sending this reply to your message," Mr. Roosevelt wrote, "which, I am sure you will realise, has received the most earnest as well as the friendliest study on our part. First, let me reiterate the ever-increasing admiration with which the American people and their Government are viewing the splendid courage with which the French Armies are resisting the invader. I also wish to reiterate in most emphatic terms that, making every effort under present conditions, the U.S. Government has made it possible for the Allied armies to obtain during the past weeks aeroplanes, artillery, and munitions of many kinds, and that this Government, so long as the Allies continue to resist, will redouble its efforts in this direction. I believe it is possible to say that every passing week will see additional material en route to the Allies."

After recalling the Governments' policy of not recognising the results of territorial conquests by military aggression, Mr. Roosevelt stated that the United States would not consider as valid any attempts to infringe by force the independence and territorial integrity of France. He also said that "I can further assure you that so long as the French people continue in the defence of their liberty, which constitutes the cause of popular institutions throughout the world, so long will they rest assured that material supplies will be sent to them from the United States in ever-increasing quantities and kinds."

But was there the faintest suspicion of a sting in the tail of this message, as if to remind M. Reynaud that after all it was not the United States but the French and British who declared war in September, 1939? : "I know you will understand," he wrote, "that these statements carry no implication of military commitments. Only Congress can make such commitments."

While the French Cabinet were considering the American President's reply, an extremely important, and to some Englishmen, a startling suggestion was submitted to them by the British Ambassador, on the authority of the British Government. It was nothing less than a Draft Declaration of Union, which would have bound France and Great Britain into a single unit which neither partner could revoke.



Resisting fiercely, British and French troops retired to the coast, leaving nothing but burning ruins in their retreat. A scene at Brest as it was left by Allied troops, the great French port a shambles.

"At this most fateful moment in the history of the modern world," ran the proposed Draft, "the Government of the United Kingdom and the French Republic make this declaration of indissoluble union and unyielding resolution in their common defence of justice and freedom against subjection to a system which reduces mankind to a life of robots and slaves.

"The two Governments declare that France and Great Britain shall no longer be two, but one Franco-British Union. The Constitution of the Union will provide for joint organs of defence, foreign, financial, and economic policies. Every citizen of France will enjoy immediately citizenship of Great Britain. Every British subject will become a citizen of France.

"Both countries will share responsibility for the repair of the devastation of war wherever it occurs in their territories, and the resources of both shall be equally and as one applied to that purpose.

"During the war there shall be a single War Cabinet and all the forces of Britain and France, whether on land, sea, or in the air, will be placed under its direction. It will govern from wherever it best can. The two Parliaments will be formally associated.

"The nations of the British Empire are already forming new armies. France will keep her available forces in the field, on the sea, and in the air.



Inside Mussolini's armoured train during the Brenner Pass conference of October 5th. Fighter planes circled overhead as the Axis partners plotted for three hours. The picture shows Mussolini, Hitler and Ciano.

"The Union appeals to the United States to fortify the economic resources of the Allies and to bring her powerful material aid to the common cause. The Union will concentrate its whole energy against the power of the enemy, no matter where the battle may be, and thus we shall conquer."

There was an insuperable impediment, however, to this marriage of true minds; for the majority of the French Cabinet (including probably President Lebrun, and certainly Marshal Pétain and General Weygand) were in favour of making peace as soon as possible. The proposal therefore fell on deaf ears, or rather on ears that heard only the cries of the refugees, and the mutterings of Communist unrest. France must be saved. The only sacred union was that of Frenchmen with the soil that bred them.

According to one Bordeaux rumour, the British proposal was rejected by a majority of fourteen to ten. Others allege that M. Reynaud was in a minority of one in desiring to continue the war.

Mr. Churchill was actually on the way to Bordeaux, when he received the news of the decision. He returned immediately to London.

The French Cabinet resigned after a third meeting, and Marshal Pétain was asked to form a new Ministry. General Weygand was to be the Vice-President of the Council. That night he sent for Señor

Lequerica, the Spanish Ambassador, and asked him to get into touch with the Chancellor and Fuehrer of Germany, in order to "seek a means of putting an end to hostilities."

Speaking later in the House of Commons Mr. Churchill said that on June 16th he had received a message from M. Reynaud to say that the American response was not satisfactory, and requesting the formal release of France from her obligations under the Anglo-French agreement. The British Cabinet was immediately convened, and they sent a message to the effect that separate negotiations, whether for an armistice or peace, depended on an agreement made with the French Republic, and not with any particular administration or statesman. They therefore involved the honour of France. However, in view of all that the French had suffered and of the forces evidently working on them, *and provided that the French Fleet was despatched to British ports, and remained there while negotiations were conducted,* His Majesty's Government would give their consent to the French Government asking what terms of armistice would be open to them.



Marshal Pétain, hero of Verdun in the last war and leader of humiliated France in the present conflict, meets Hitler. Field-Marshal Keitel is in the centre and Ribbentrop on the right.

After the fall of M. Reynaud, the French Government ignored the condition laid down by the British Government regarding the French Fleet.

At 12.30 p.m. next day, June 17th, Marshal Pétain broadcast the news of the French capitulation :—

"Frenchmen ! On the appeal of the President of the Republic, I have assumed to-day the direction of the Government of France.

"I am, in heart and thoughts, with our admirable army who, with every heroism and without precedent, have continued a glorious military tradition against an enemy superior in numbers and in arms, our army which has known, by its magnificent resistance, how to fulfil its duty towards our Allies.

"Certain of the help of the Ex-Service men whom I have the honour to command, and assured of the confidence of the whole people, I give myself to France to help her in her hour of misfortune.

"In these painful hours I am thinking of our unfortunate refugees, and all their extreme distress. I express to them my compassion and my solicitude.

"It is with a heavy heart I say we must cease the fight. I have applied to our opponent to ask him if he is ready to sign with us, as between soldiers after the fight, and in honour, a means to put an end to hostilities.

"Let all Frenchmen group themselves around the Government over which I preside during this painful trial, and affirm once more their faith in the destiny of our country."

To give continuity to Marshal Pétain's thoughts in this grave hour, we must read his subsequent broadcast of June 20th, when he announced that he had appointed plenipotentiaries to receive the armistice conditions.

"I took this decision," he said "with the stout heart of a soldier, because the military situation imposed it.

"We had hoped to resist on the Somme-Aisne line. General Weygand had regrouped our forces, and his name alone presaged victory. The line yielded, however, under the pressure of the enemy and our troops were forced to retreat. From June 13th the request for an armistice was inevitable. The blow surprised you, and remembering 1914–18 you sought the reasons for it. I am going to give you them.

"On May 1, 1917, we still had 3,280,000 men under arms, in spite of three years of murderous fighting. On the eve of the present battle we had 500,000 fewer.

"In May, 1918, we had 85 British divisions ; in May, 1940, we only had 10. In 1918 we had with us 58 Italian divisions and 42 American divisions. The inferiority of our material was even greater than that of our effectives. French aviation has fought at odds of one to six.

"Not so strong as 22 years ago, we had also fewer friends, too few children, too few arms, too few allies. There is the cause of our defeat. The French people do not deny the blow. All peoples have known ups and downs. It is by the way they react that they show themselves to be weak or great. We will learn a lesson from the battle which has been lost.

"Since victory, the spirit of pleasure has prevailed over the spirit of sacrifice. People have demanded more than they have given, they have wanted to spare themselves effort. To-day misfortunes come. I was with you in the glorious days. As head of the Government I will remain with you in the dark days. Stand by me. The fight still goes on. It is for France, the soil of her sons."

Following Marshal Pétain's first broacast, on June 16th, the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Baudoin, broadcast a statement that evening in which he declared, *inter alia* :—"Although the enemy has terribly diminished our resistance he has not impaired our morale. Forty million Frenchmen have found themselves in the end facing almost alone 80,000,000 Germans, to whom the Italian nation have now added themselves.



In this radioed picture General Keitel, with Hitler on his right, reads the preamble to the armistice terms. Among others present are Admiral Raeder, Field-Marshal Goering, General von Brauchitsch and Herr Hess, with General Huntziger, Admiral Leluc, M. Leon Noël and General Bergeret representing the French.



The Vichy Government, France's puppet control, assembled to discuss Hitler's meetings with Marshal Pétain and M. Laval. The aged Marshal is seen third from the left. Laval is third from the right.

"We have, it is true, received marks of sympathy. We have had the assistance of Great Britain, whose fleet, united to ours, has never lost the mastery of the seas, and whose troops and magnificent Air Force have shared our battles. We have also had the help of Poland, Holland, and Belgium. But modern war cannot be improvised, and our friends have not been able to bring us the support necessary to the advance-guard which the French Army represented."

It was true, that modern war cannot be improvised.

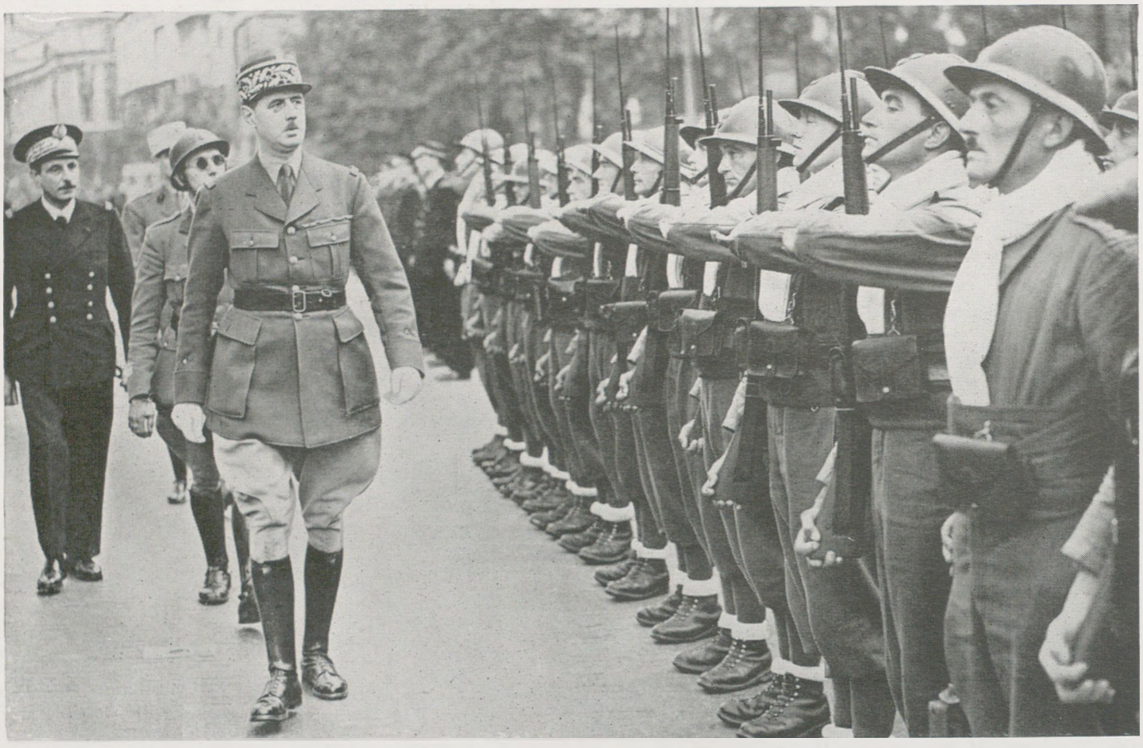
There were 6,000,000 homeless people in France. The armies had been split up into four groups: only the western and the Alpine sectors were resisting. Yet history may decide that the French were only beaten because their leaders gave up hope. A General in the British Army, writing later to the Press, asserted that the morale of the French Army remained high, and that he called, at 3.30 a.m. on June 22nd at General Weygand's headquarters in Bordeaux, in the hope of speaking to him. "I only saw the back of the Commander-in-Chief," he wrote, "as he sat, collapsed in despair, at his desk, his head buried in his clasped arms. His Chief of Staff turned me away, telling me to 'put it in writing'."

This officer made his report, to the effect that the Germans were exhausted, that they were short of fuel, that their advanced units were badly led, and scarcely able to defend themselves, and that pursuit columns could hurl the enemy back. But the armistice had already been granted.

General de Gaulle, speaking from London, expressed what many patriotic Frenchmen were thinking on the morrow of the tragedy. "The Generals," he said in his broadcast of June 18th, "who for many years have commanded the French Armies have formed a Government. That Government, alleging that our Armies have been defeated, has opened negotiations with the enemy . . . We certainly have been, and still are, submerged by the mechanical strength of the enemy, both on land and in the air. The tanks, the aeroplanes, the tactics of the Germans, far more than their numbers, were responsible for our retirement.

"The tanks, the aeroplanes, the tactics of the Germans astounded our Generals to such an extent that they have been brought to the pass they are in to-day.

"But has the last word been said? Is the defeat final? No! Believe me, France is not lost. She can unite with the British Empire, which holds the seas. In spite of all our mistakes, all our deficiencies, all our sufferings, there are in the universe sufficient means to enable us to crush our enemies."



A tremendous reception was given to General de Gaulle on his arrival by a great assemblage of people in Whitehall. The General, accompanied by Vice-Admiral Musélier, is here seen inspecting a guard of honour.

He concluded by inviting all French officers and men then on British soil to get in touch with him. "Whatever happens, the flame of French resistance must not and shall not be extinguished."

It was not extinguished overseas, but in Europe it flickered dimly. France had been brought to her knees in less than a fortnight. It was natural that the Germans should rejoice. "We are not revengeful," wrote the *Völkischer Beobachter*, "but we have at last ceased to be good-natured German blockheads, thanks to the gentlemen of the West, above all Winston Churchill, who declares that England will fight on to victory. To victory? Yes, but a German victory." "The old Europe," declared a Berlin evening paper, "was the product of the blind and furious hate of a Richelieu and a Clemenceau. The new Europe will be built by the love and faith of the Fuehrer."

The plenipotentiaries of the French Government who went to Compiègne to receive the practical expression of this love and faith were General Huntziger, M. Noël, Admiral Leluc and General Bergeret.

When they arrived, on June 19th, they passed the spot where was graven the fact—and nothing that the Germans could do could alter a line of it—that "here, on November 11th, 1918, the criminal pride of the German Government succumbed, having been vanquished by the free peoples it tried to enslave."

Hitler met the French Mission in the Pullman dining-car in which Foch had given the Germans the stern conditions of *his* armistice. General Keitel read out the new terms, of which the following were the main clauses :—

French troops which are surrounded to lay down arms.

The zone of occupied France was defined. Germany agreed to reduce to a minimum the occupation of the western coast after the cessation of hostilities with Great Britain.

Demobilisation of French armed forces, which must not leave French soil. No Frenchman to serve against Germany in the service of other Powers. No French merchant shipping to leave harbour except with the authorisation of the German and Italian Governments. Aerodromes to be under German or Italian control.

The French Fleet, except that part left free to safeguard French interests in the Colonial Empire, to be



General Maxime Weygand, a brilliant soldier and military tactician, was made Chief of Staff to Marshal Foch during the Great War. In 1920 he reorganised the Polish Army which, under his command, defeated the Russians. After holding other high military positions in France he again became Chief of General Staff in 1930.

collected in ports to be specified, and to be disarmed under German or Italian control. The German Government solemnly declare that they have no intention of using for their own purposes during the war, the French Fleet stationed in ports under German control.

All German prisoners of war to be released. All French prisoners of war to remain so until the conclusion of peace.

Cessation of hostilities will occur six hours after the French Government have concluded an agreement similar to the above with the Italian Government. This will be announced by wireless. The armistice will remain in force until the conclusion of peace, but may be denounced at any moment if the French Government does not fulfil its obligations.

. . . . . .

It is worthy of note that the Germans, like the Italians, expected Great Britain to ask for an armistice, otherwise the provision about reducing to a minimum the occupation of the west coast of France would not have been inserted in the agreement.

Before signing the document, General Huntziger said that he hoped it would provide the possibility of two great nations living and working together in peace. It was a difficult moment for him, as a soldier, and he hoped that French soldiers would not regret the step now taken.

General Keitel replied that he acknowledged the French Government's acceptance of the terms, and that "as a soldier I have only to say that we know how to honour a defeated, courageous foe."

. . . . . .

Already France had applied also to Italy for armistice terms. Immediately after the ceremony at Compiègne the French delegates left by air for Munich, whence the flew to Rome next day.

Even during these dark days the French army of the Alps fought tenaciously against the Italians, but on June 21st the latter launched a general attack from Mont Blanc to the sea, and reached the valleys of the Isère, Arc, Guil, Ubaye, Tinée, and Vésubie.

Next day they entered Mentone, and the war between France and Italy was at an end.

In Rome it was agreed that Italian troops were to stand on the advanced lines they had reached in all theatres of operations, and that a zone 30 to 100 miles in depth in front of these positions was to be demilitarised.

The clauses which especially affected the British in the Mediterranean Basin and Africa laid down that the frontiers of Algeria and Tunisia which marched with Libya were to be demilitarised; the coast of French Somaliland was to be demilitarised, and Italy was to have the right to use the port of Jibuti and the French section of the railway to Addis Ababa. As long as war continued between Italy and the British Empire the fortified bases of Toulon, Bizerta, Ajaccio and Oran were to be demilitarised. The Italian armistice commission was to take into account, in fixing the procedure for demobilisation and disarmament, the particular importance of maintaining order in French North Africa, Syria, and on the coast of French Somaliland.

. . . . . .

According to the terms of the armistice the Germans continued hostilities until six hours after they had been notified that the French had accepted the Italian terms, but there was naturally little resistance. They captured Brest, Épinal, Toul and Lunéville on June 20th. Next day they took Strasbourg and Colmar in the east, Lyons in the centre, and St. Nazaire on the Atlantic coast. The armistice took effect at 12.35 a.m. on June 25th.

At Compiègne, by Hitler's orders, the railway-carriage and the tablet commemorating the German surrender in 1918 were removed to Berlin, and the ground where they had stood was ploughed up. The statue to Marshal Foch was allowed to remain.

. . . . . .

From all the frontiers of France a hurried exit of diplomats, politicians and journalists had begun directly the intention to conclude an armistice became known. M. Daladier and M. Mandel, with other leading figures of the previous administration, tried to reach North Africa. They were roughly handled by a crowd, and subsequently arrested, and sent back to Vichy, where the French Government had established its headquarters.

M. Pierre Cot, who has often been accused of responsibility for the grave deficiencies of the French Air Force, arrived in London and wrote an article explaining how little he was to blame for the condition of *l'Armée de l'Air*. He then left for the United States, where he had been preceded—amongst many others—by those bellicose publicists, "Pertinax" and Madame Tabouis, whose love for the English-speaking world is of recent date.

M. Paul Reynaud was making a dash for the Spanish frontier when his car ran into a tree. He was injured, and his companion, Comtesse Hélène des Portes was killed. He was later arrested and joined the other politicians in captivity.

. . . . .

Armed resistance was at an end. The Germans held two million French prisoners, and administered three-quarters of the country, including the richest industrial districts. But Marshal Pétain still possessed the Navy and the Empire.

For years to come the reasons why a great nation was crushed in six weeks, and a great army was defeated before the majority of its soldiers had fired a shot, will be explored and explained. The tragedy will not be attributed to cowardice, but to corruption amongst those in authority. Here certainly was a democracy that was decadent. The tall tree of France, which had stood so nobly in the garden of Europe, fell with a crash because it had rotted within. But trees seed themselves, and nations have an infinite capacity for renewal.



Some of the toughest fighters in the world are men of the French Foreign Legion. When France capitulated, hundreds of these warriors made their way to England, pledging themselves to fight in General de Gaulle's Army of Free Frenchmen.

VI

THE HOME FRONT

WITH the capture of the French Channel ports the term "Home Front," which had long been used figuratively, became a stern reality.

Soon after the attack on the Low Countries the Government took steps to provide for resistance against invasion, which had become an imminent possibility. On May 14th, Mr. Eden, then Secretary of State for War, announced the raising of a body for Local Defence, to be formed of volunteers between the ages of 17 and 65, who would serve in their own towns and villages in their spare time. The response was

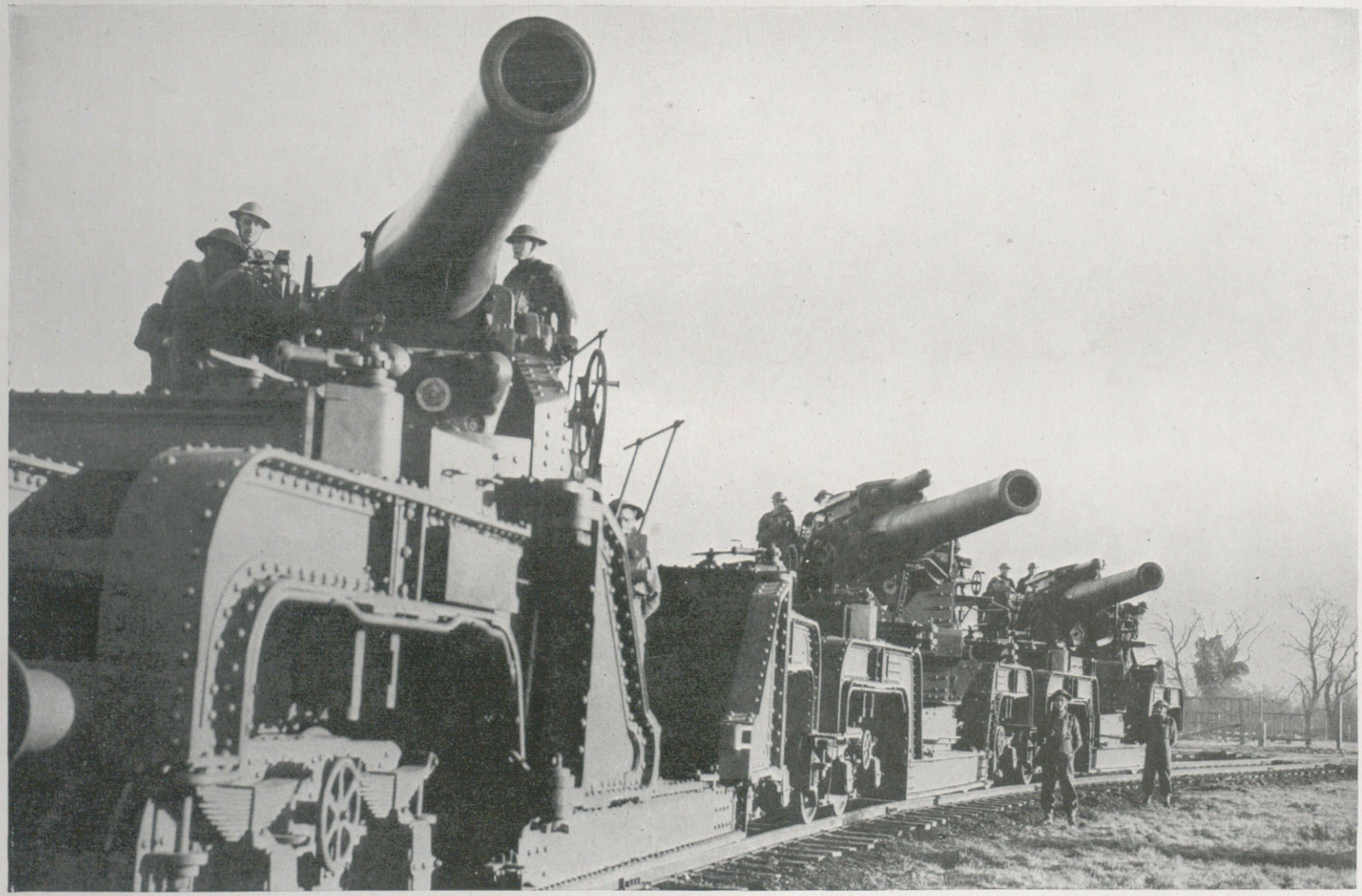


Machine-gunners of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers—the famous Fighting Fifth—maintain a proud tradition. Fifty-two battalions served in 1914–18, and in the present conflict they have already given a good account of themselves.

immediate (hundreds of thousands volunteered within twenty-four hours of the appeal) and came from the instinctive well-springs of our national life. By August, nearly a million and a half men had been enrolled.

It was the continuance of an old tradition. The same force had sprung into being in the days of the Armada, and again when Napoleon's Grand Army had waited on the cliffs above Boulogne. Once again it included men of all types and classes; retired Generals served in the ranks with farm boys, and managing directors mounted guard under their workmen.

At the beginning, there were neither uniforms nor arms, only forage caps and arm-bands to give the men combatant status. The Germans declared that such a corps of "*francs-tireurs* and assassins" should be shot out of hand, and their fears were discernible through their sneers: they saw clearly enough that these volunteers had made the employment of air-borne troops an operation requiring long and elaborate preparation.



Howitzers to answer Hitler's invasion threat. The mighty weapons with which we shall withstand the projected Nazi assault. They are shown on their railway mountings, with barrels swung inboard ready for travel.

"Now it has come to us to stand alone in the breach," said Mr. Winston Churchill, in a broadcast address on July 14th, "and face the worst that the tyrant's might and enmity can do. Bearing ourselves humbly before God, but conscious that we serve an unfolding purpose, we are ready to defend our native land against the invasion by which it is threatened. We are fighting *by* ourselves alone. But we are not fighting *for* ourselves alone. Here in this strong city of refuge, which enshrines the title-deeds of human progress, and is of deep consequence to Christian civilisation . . . we await undismayed the impending assault.

"Perhaps it will come to-night. Perhaps it will come next week.[1] Perhaps it will never come. . . Hitler has not yet been withstood by a great nation with a will-power equal to his own.

"Two months ago, nay one month ago, our first and main effort was to keep our best army in France . . . Now we have it all at home. Never before, in the last war or in this, have we had in this island an army comparable in quality, equipment, or numbers to that which stands on guard here



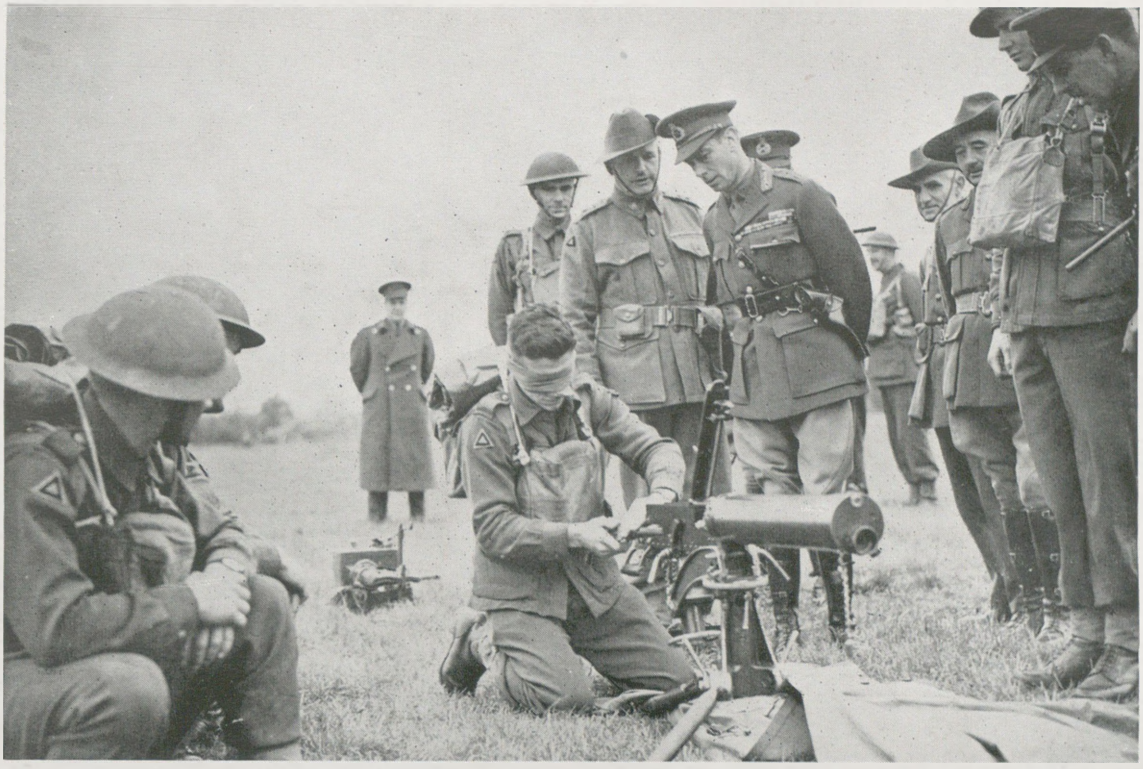
Used with success in the Finnish war, the so-called "Molotov cocktails" were considered effective against tanks, and were adopted by the Home Guard, while waiting for more effective weapons.

to-night. We have a million-and-a-half men under arms to-night, and every week of June and July has seen their organisation, their defences, and their striking power advance by leaps and bounds . . . Behind these we have more than a million of the Local Defence Volunteers, or as they are much better called, the Home Guard . . .

"Should the invader come, there will be no placid lying down of the people in submission before him, as we have seen—alas !—in other countries. We shall defend every village, every town, every city . . . We would rather see London laid in ruin and ashes than that it should be tamely and abjectly enslaved."

It was a fine fighting speech, expressing the feelings of a people who had never felt less like lying down. Mr. Churchill spoke the truth about our 1,500,000 soldiers, but quite rightly, in that emergency, not the whole truth. He did not mention (what is now common knowledge) that our shortage of munitions was then serious. We had a large army, but insufficient rifles and ammunition for it, and for the Home Guard. The latter continued for many weeks to drill with broomsticks.

[1] A popular prediction was that invasion would be attempted on the full moon of July 19th, 1940.



This Australian soldier knows his Vickers gun so well that he can assemble it blindfold. The operation took five minutes and was watched with interest by the King—unknown to the soldier.



German and Austrian men between the ages of 16 and 60 entraining at a London station under armed guard for an internment camp. All male enemy aliens between these ages were ordered to be interned for the duration of the war.

In tanks, anti-tank guns, artillery, machine-guns, aeroplanes: in everything required to repel an invasion, except stout hearts,we were woefully deficient owing to our losses in France.

Some even doubted—though not the masses—that our hearts were stout enough to stand the strain. The Ministry of Information started a campaign to appoint "Mr. Sensibles" in every community, who would sustain any dropping spirits they might discover, and report on the morale of their neighbours at frequent intervals. "Cooper's snoopers," they soon came to be called. They, and some egregious advertisements in the newspapers ("What do I do if an air-raid comes? I say to myself, 'This is where I keep cool'.") were the subjects of ridicule wherever the natives of these islands foregathered.

The country was in danger, and the British people knew it. As never before, we became conscious of the strangers in our midst, and it was only natural that public opinion should swing abruptly towards suspicion, sometimes even intolerance.

At the beginning of March, 1940, there had been 62,244 Germans and 11,989 Austrians in the country:

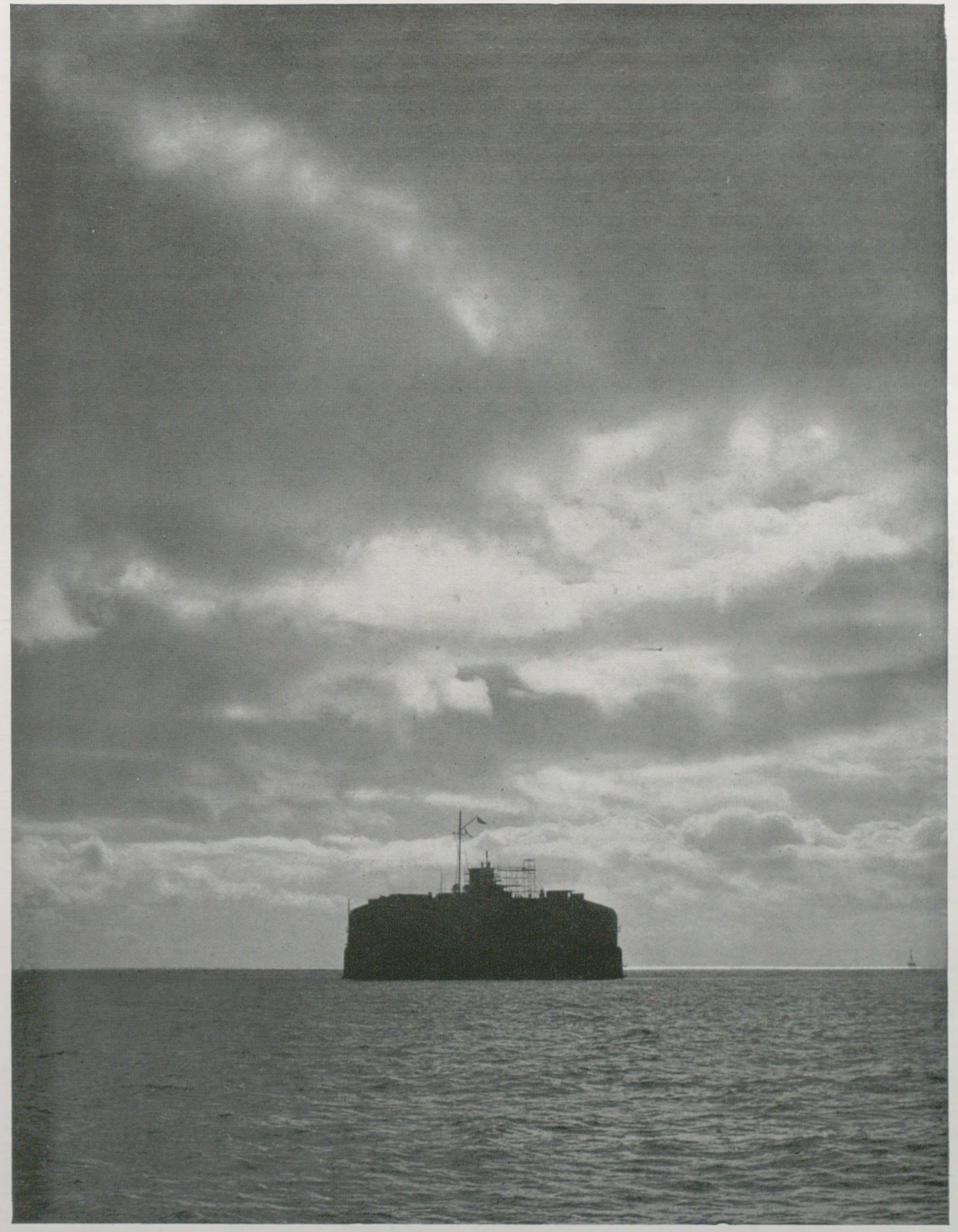


During the summer of 1940 road blocks were made everywhere, somewhat indiscriminately at first.

most of whom had been refugees from Nazi persecution. The tribunals had ordered the internment of 569 persons of Category A (regarded as definitely dangerous); 6,782 of Category B (doubtful) who had to observe certain regulations; while 64,244 persons of Category C were considered as friendly, and were freed from any restrictions. A total of 71,575 cases had been considered out of 74,233.

On May 11th the Home Secretary ordered the internment of all male Germans and Austrians (regardless of their categories) who were living on the east and south-east coasts of Scotland and England; and from that date onwards, largely because of a growing demand from the public, the restrictions imposed on aliens were increased in scope and severity.

The Home Office, however, was also inundated with protests as to the treatment of men declared to be well known as friends of this country: it was being pulled in two directions, and the task of discrimination was rendered extremely difficult by the flood of refugees which we had welcomed and encouraged from the Continent. Amongst this spate there were undoubtedly some spies, for in our years of fatness our sympathy for persecuted foreigners had been somewhat uncritical.



One of the sea forts which guard our island against invasion.

Mistakes were made, and on the night Italy became a belligerant (June 10th) there were some regrettable scenes in Soho; but under what was certainly a serious emergency overworked officials felt that it was better to be "sure nor sorry," and in this opinion they were certainly supported by the public.

No such drastic legislation as that passed through both Houses of Parliament on May 22nd (The Emergency Powers Defence Act, 1940) has ever before been submitted to our people. From that date the person and property of every individual is at the disposal of Government. Yet the only complaint commonly heard is that insufficient use has been made of its powers.

If aliens suffered under the new regulations, so did British subjects, under Clause 18B of the Defence Regulations, which empowered the Home Secretary to imprison "members of organisations which had associations with the enemy, or are subject to foreign influence or control; and which may be used for purposes prejudicial to national security."

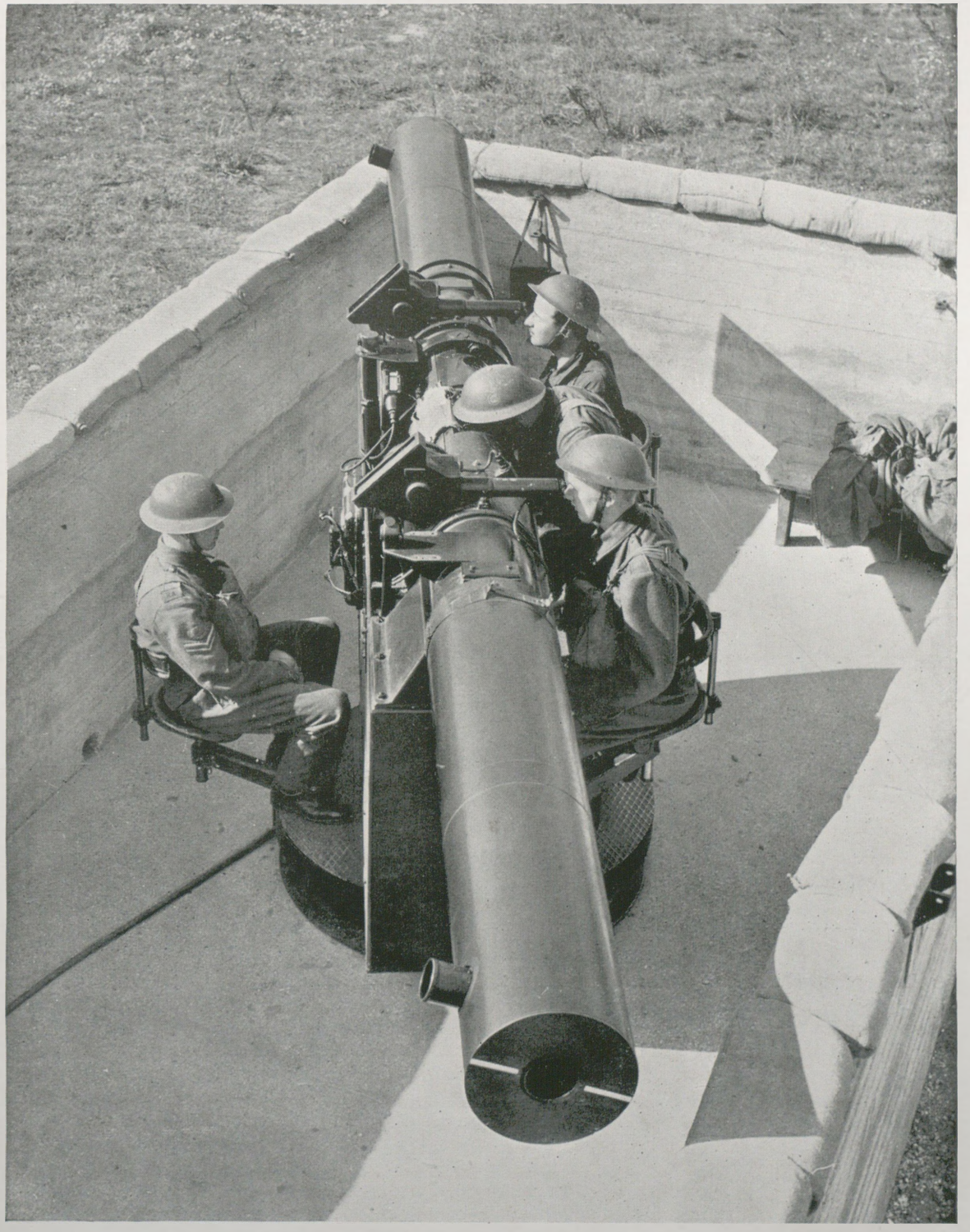
Sir Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British Union of Fascists, was arrested, and subsequently his wife, whose child was only three weeks old. There were many other arrests, including that of Admiral Sir Barry Domville, who had been Director of Naval Intelligence in the last war, and aide-de-camp to King George V.

It is not possible at this time to discuss the wisdom of these measures, which suspended Habeas Corpus and brought all our lives under the dictatorship of the War Cabinet. They met with the approval of the country as a whole, and the Trades Union Congress, representing 5,000,000 workers, endorsed the Act with only four dissentient votes. An immense majority of Members of Parliament approved the measure, although there was some uneasiness at the fact that whereas many men who had fought for their country in previous wars were arrested, many Communists and pacifists, whose attitude to the war was at that time plainly anti-national, were allowed to remain in freedom and expound their doctrines.

The Peace Pledge Union, said to number some 100,000 members, continued its activities more or less unchecked by the police; but it made few converts and suffered from many resignations as the air attack on Great Britain increased. In Leeds University a Students' Congress passed a resolution by 281 votes to 150 stating that the continuance of the war was against the interests of every country. The National



A group of the first Local Defence Volunteers receiving expert instruction in rifle shooting.

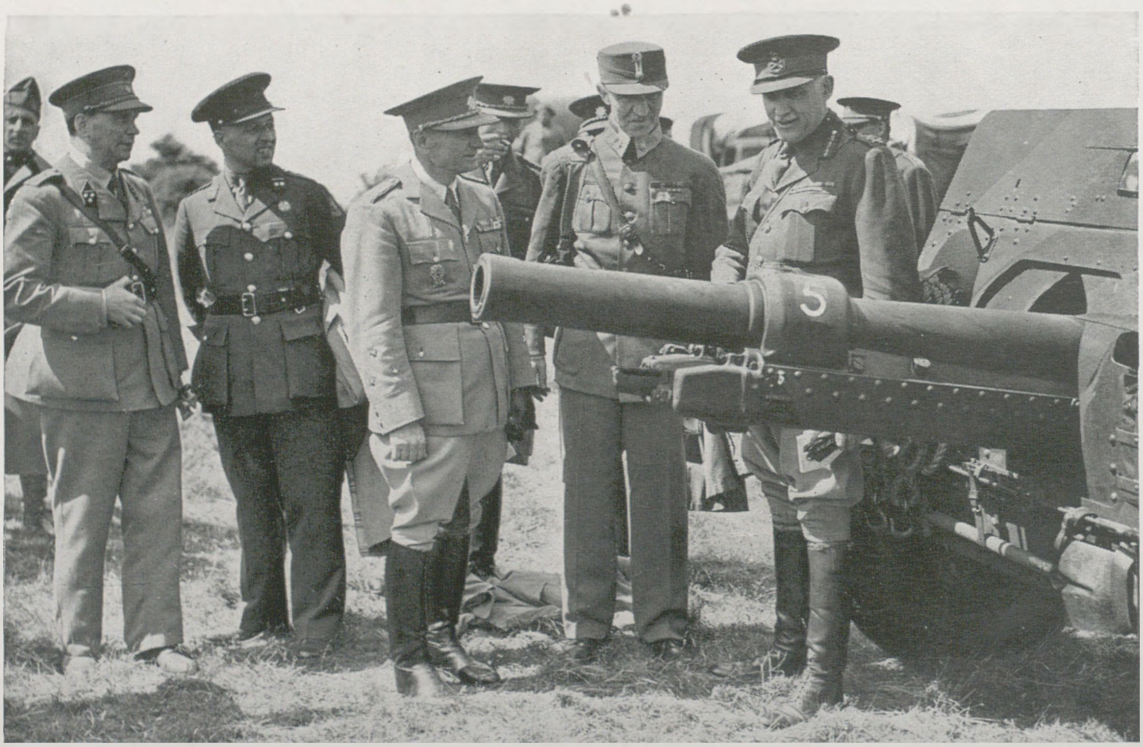


Men of a heavy anti-aircraft battery operating a height indicator ; their calculations govern the action of the big guns they serve.

Union of Clerks demanded an immediate armistice and a Socialist peace, and the Shop Assistants' Union also condemned "this Imperialist war." But such resolutions were passed before the *blitzkrieg*. After it, only the *Daily Worker*, ever sedulous to propagate the views of Moscow, did its small best to criticise and condemn the Government, until it was suppressed in January, 1941.

In 1939, there were 16,000 avowed Communists in Great Britain and 4,500 Young Communists. It is hard to say how many sympathisers there were then, and now are, but no one who is not a militant worker is accepted as a member of the Party, so that these figures represent the spear-head of the Red movement. The circulation of the *Daily Worker* was 80,000 a day, and was no doubt seen by three times that number of readers. There was also a more subtle and sinister lithographed news-sheet, *The Week*, enjoying a considerable circulation in "intellectual" circles: this was suppressed at the same time as the *Daily Worker*.

Conscientious objectors were less than 40,000 up to the end of 1940. Their numbers diminished as



Polish, Czech, Norwegian, Dutch, and Belgian officers attended a demonstration of mechanised arms at a depot near London. Here is a representative group inspecting a howitzer of a type with which our Allies are being equipped.

each age group was called up: the worse our situation the fewer were those who desired to abstain from helping the national war effort. As to the majority of British citizens, they laid aside politics in the hour of national danger.

When the Emergency Powers Defence Act was passed the vital need of the moment, and of the future, was to increase our production. It was necessary to put the whole country to work as it had never worked before; and although we are still far short of an ideal utilisation of our available man-power and woman-power, the wheels of industry have begun to turn at double, and sometimes at four times' their previous speed.

Women have played an important part in this war, as they did in the last. When the world was still at peace, in July 1939, there were 440,000 women engaged in making motor vehicles, bicycles, and aircraft, 330,000 working in other metal trades, and 92,000 in engineering: it is no secret that these numbers have been greatly increased, and that women have replaced men in industry on an enormous scale, with the full approval of the Trades Unions concerned. Thousands of firms are engaged in training women workers,

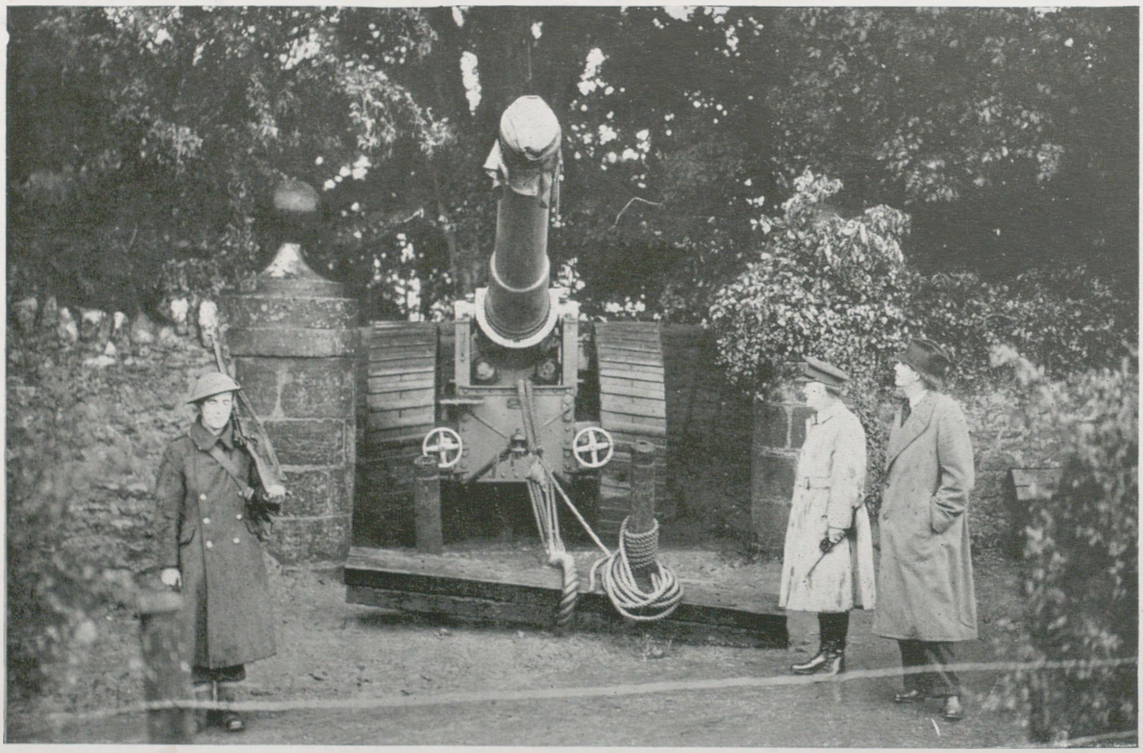


Engaging a tank and motor-cyclist scout during invasion manœnvres.

thirty organisations deal with welfare problems, and hundreds of day nurseries have been established to enable married women to play their part in the national effort.

In the Services, the Auxiliary Territorial Service ("Ats") numbers some 35,000; the Women's Royal Naval Service ("Wrens") had 7,000 in actual employment at the end of the year under review; while the Women's Auxiliary Air Force ("Waafs") whose establishment was 10,300 at the outbreak of war, has kept pace with the expansion of the Royal Air Force.

Other spheres of feminine activity are the Women's Land Army, numbering more than 8,000 in actual employment, the Women's Voluntary Service, which mobilised more than 800,000 women to deal with evacuation, refugees, communal feeding, canteens, etc., the Civil Nursing Reserve, with a strength of more than 100,000, and numerous A.R.P. workers, including 6,000 full-time women wardens, 13,000 full-time



The Scottish coast is strongly guarded against any attempt at invasion. A heavy naval gun in a well camouflaged emplacement being inspected by Mr. Anthony Eden, then Secretary of State for War, during a tour which he made of the formidable Scottish coastal defences.

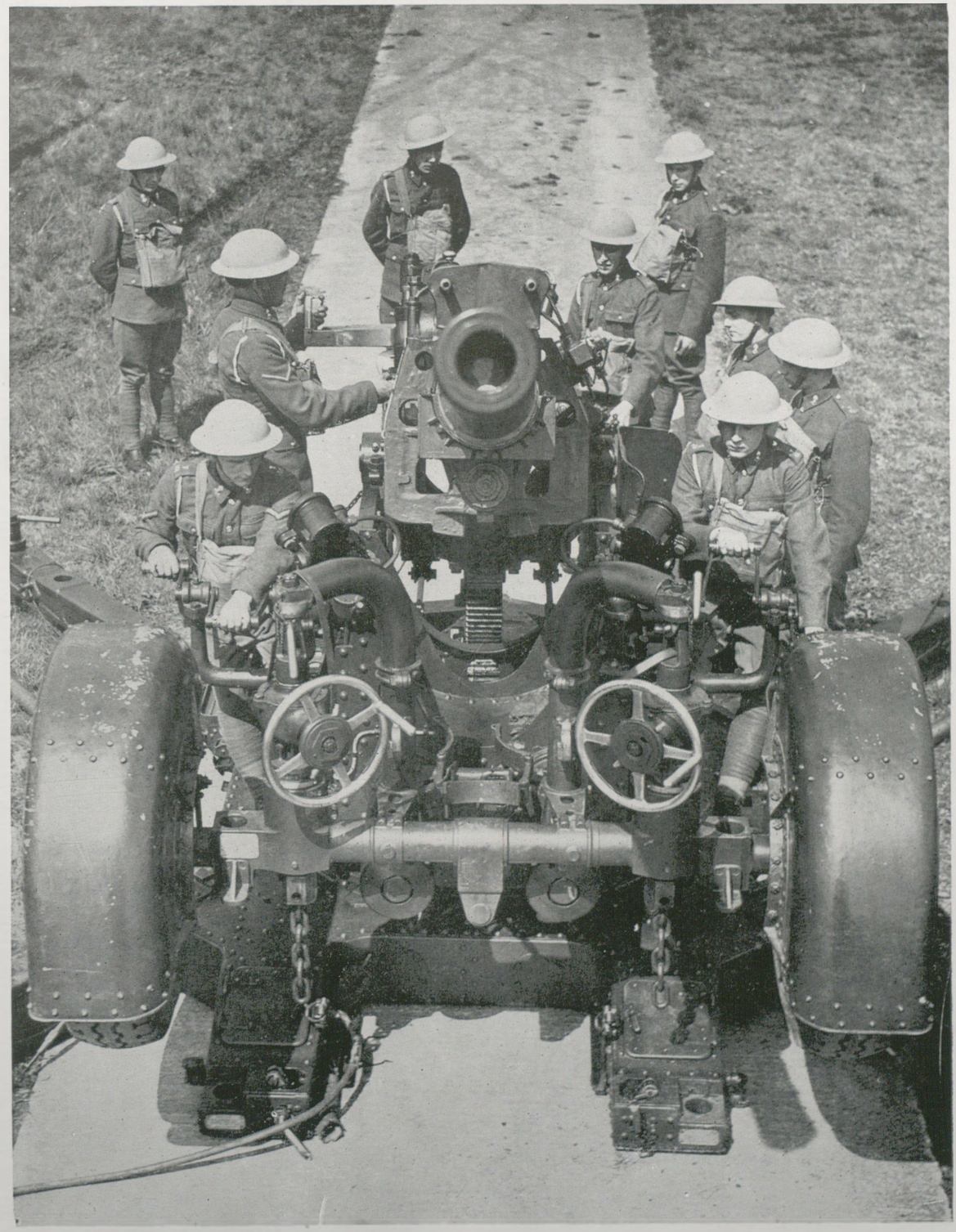
ambulance drivers, 16,000 full-time nurses at First Aid Posts, and 4,000 full-time Auxiliary Fire Service personnel: treble these numbers of women A.R.P. workers are engaged on part-time duties.

The courage and enterprise of British women were magnificent, and was supported by the determination of the whole population. Without this spirit, indeed, the heroism of the three Services would have been of no avail.

In September, 1939, when we were recommended by notices in railway carriages to lie down on the floor of the compartment during an air-raid, if space were available (!) we knew little of the trials and privations ahead. But when they came—darkness, unemployment, crowded trains, slow posts, bad telephones, separation, rationing, sirens, and sometimes ruin and sudden death—the British people rose to the occasion and showed a quality which had long lain dormant, a doggedness bred in the bone.

It is not easy to change the nature of a great nation. If the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, even to the third and fourth generation, so are their virtues.

When Hitler suggested a "common-sense" end to the war (on July 19th) which otherwise, he said, could end only in the annihilation of Britain or of Germany, we were all by then aware that this island was isolated, that Germany held most of the richest coal and iron mines of Europe, immense munition



Time and again our 3.7-in. anti-aircraft guns have proved their power against raiding Nazi aircraft. The fierce and accurate barrage of these guns has brought down many of the enemy.

industries, two thousand miles of coast-line opposite our shores, and most of the strategical advantages for sea and air war. We were facing enemies three times our strength (45 millions against 130), but we believed our rulers confidently when they told us that we could conquer.

The worst of the air attacks began in September, but the first large-scale raid occurred before France had signed the armistice, on June 18th. As the raids increased in intensity, so did the enterprise and energy of the Civil Defence Services. Air-raid wardens, auxiliary firemen, nurses, shelter marshals, and demolition squads, who had been inclined to languish under a sense that there was nothing for them to do, now discovered how urgent was the need of their services, and how valuable their training had been.

About 1,800,000 people were employed in the various branches of A.R.P. During the first winter there had been considerable confusion, duplication, and mismanagement. In theory the organisation left much to be desired, but in practice, thanks to a general spirit of resourcefulness, the arrangements worked well.

With regard to shelter and evacuation, the Government was confronted with problems of the greatest urgency, in which a false step might have brought in its train incalculable calamities. To remove children from danger areas was easier said than done. Compulsion was obviously undesirable if persuasion would avail. In spite of the terrible sufferings and hardship of the war there has been a countervailing advantage in the improved health and happiness of millions of children who have left our cities and learned for the first time to know their birthright of the countryside.

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During the summer of 1940, questions of priority engaged the constant and anxious attention of the War Cabinet, and it is no exaggeration to say that the whole course of the war was governed by the difficult decisions then made.

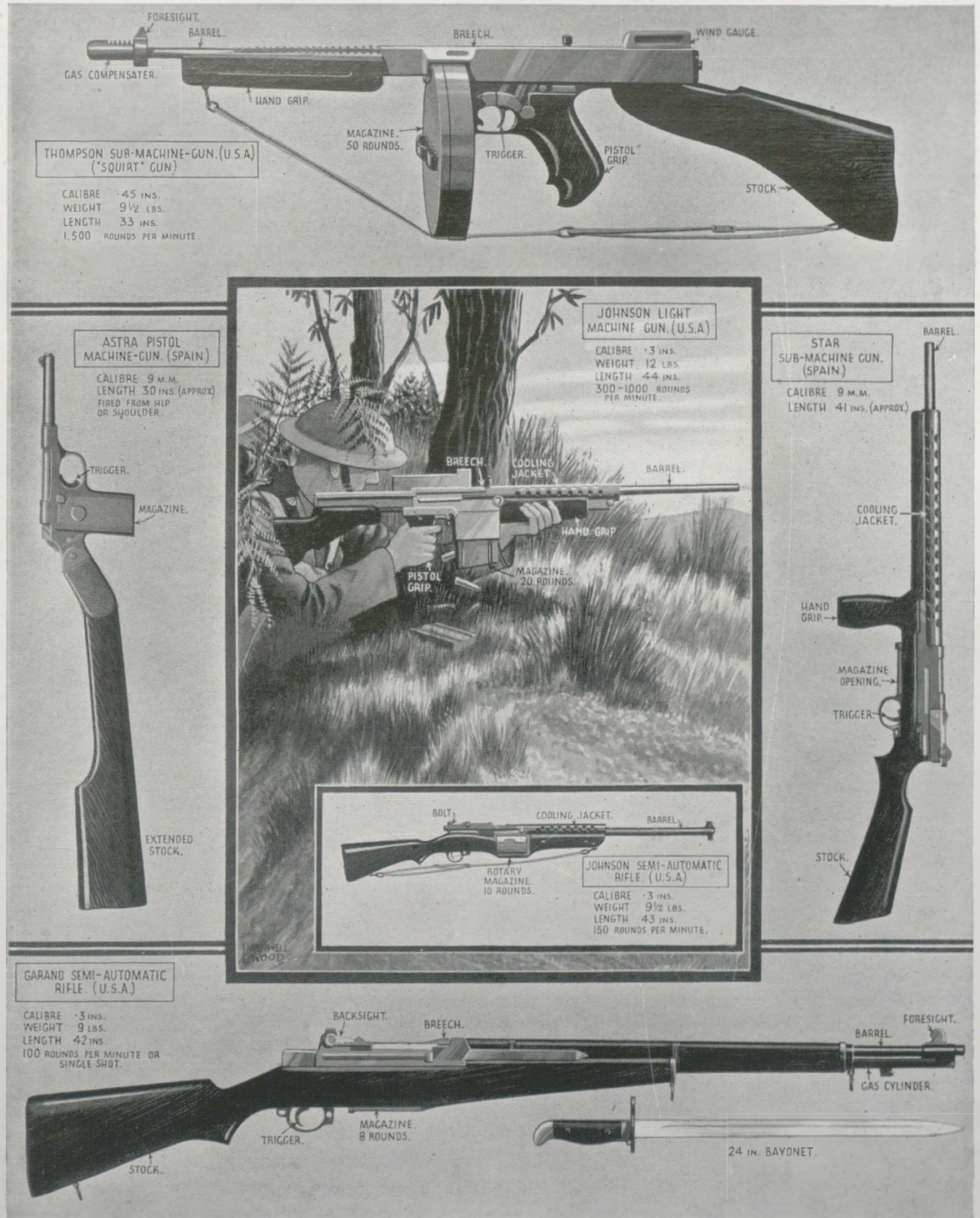
What size of army did we require, and how equipped? What proportion of available material



Mr. Churchill photographed on a railway platform during his visit of inspection to Scotland on October 23rd.



Accompanied by General Sikorski, the Polish Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill surveys coast defences.



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With the object of combating the landing of German parachute and shock troops in Britain, our Army is equipped with various types of sub-machine guns. One of the most effective weapons was the famous "Tommy" gun, many thousands of which were received from America but now there are even deadlier British weapons.

and man-hours should be allocated to tanks, and to aeroplanes, and of what kinds should these weapons be?

What was the priority as between merchant ships and men-of-war, both urgently needed?

What was the right balance between light, medium, and heavy armoured fighting vehicles? Between fighters, bombers, and Army co-operation machines? Between battleships, cruisers, destroyers, etcetera, *ad infinitum*? Few of these questions could be resolved without reference to what were then indeterminate factors, such as the help we might receive from the United States, and the possible effect of enemy submarines and aeroplanes in reducing our own industry.

We were still only a half-armed nation, with a leeway of laziness to overtake before we could steer for the port of victory. "The springs of our offensive strength" were being compressed, but how slowly—so it seemed—compared to our urgent need, especially in the Near East, where our small Army of the Nile seemed likely to be overwhelmed by a quarter of a million well-equipped Italians!



The smiling Sussex downs of peace-time are now the scene of active war operations. Bren gun teams keep ceaseless watch for attempted invasion by parachutists, and here they are on their switchback patrol.

The British Army has proved its valour wherever it had fought, but there had been undoubted deficiencies in the High Command, and our forces had taken part in nothing but retreats. We knew little, then, of all the toil and training that were going forward, both at home and abroad, and of the great reinforcements that were travelling to Egypt both by sea and air.

It is because Mr. Churchill had the courage—the great courage—to send men, munitions, tanks and aeroplanes to Egypt when our need for them at home was also urgent, that we were able to carry our flag as far as Benghazi.

. . . . . .

Although the Germans held most of the good strategical cards, we held two jokers, in our Empire Air Training Scheme, which gave us—with the industrial resources of the United States—the possibility of preparing an immense air armada under ideal conditions, and—again with American help—we had available the limitless oil resources of the New World.

The details of the Air Training Scheme do not come within the scope of this book, but its results, in providing an ever-increasing flow of pilots, air-crews and ground staff for the R.A.F., will profoundly influence the future of our military operations.



A convoy of tanks manufactured in the United States arriving at Camp Borden, Canada, where the vehicles are unloaded from their flat cars. More and more war material from America is being pressed into the service of Britain.

As regards the oil situation, there is, of course, a shortage in Germany of more than petrol; notably of tin, tungsten, chromium, and natural rubber. But oil is the chief lack.

Many calculations have been made as to the present reserves and future consumption of oil in Germany and Italy, but one thing is certain, that the Axis supplies must diminish as hostilities continue, and that they can be replenished only from limited sources, namely German production, of some 4,500,000 tons of synthetic and natural oil, and the amounts brought along railways, and up the Danube, from Poland, Rumania, and Russia. From these countries Germany may obtain, with difficulty, some 4,000,000 tons a year.

In peace-time, Germany used 12,000,000 tons a year, and Italy 6,000,000 tons. In war the amount consumed naturally depends on the operations in progress, and is not easy to calculate. A big bomber uses nearly a ton of fuel an hour. Tanks and men-of-war have immense appetites, especially the fast



Lord Halifax (*left*) and M. Jan Masaryk signing the military agreement defining the principles on which Czechoslovak forces will be organised for co-operation with the allied armies.

ships of the Italian Fleet. The war requirements of the Axis Powers have been estimated at 30,000,000 tons a year. Their probable fuel income is only about 8,500,000 tons a year, for Italy has to rely entirely on her reserves or her ally.

How soon will their reserves be depleted? We do not know the amount they have stored, but the day must come—some experts suggest it will be the midsummer of 1942—when both their war-machines will grind to a standstill. Whatever their reserves—say they are 20,000,000 tons—they cannot prosecute a long war without obtaining new sources of supply.

. . . . .

In the path of the Axis Powers stands this small island, and behind it the British Empire, the resources of the United States, and volunteers from all the lands over which the swastika has cast its shadow.

Across the Atlantic the greatest manufacturing country in the world (making 45 per cent. of all the



H.M. the King visits anti-aircraft batteries and searchlight units in South-East England, and displays the greatest interest in defence preparations. Here, an officer is explaining the operation of a sound locator.

world's goods) was harnessing, at the close of the year, her vast capacities to our cause. She was pledged to help us without stint or limit.

Without stint or limit, also, was the help given by the Dominions and Crown Colonies.

At the end of the year Canada had 50,000 men overseas, 100,000 in training at home, and 300,000 registered reserves. In Australia 119,000 men had volunteered for service overseas. In New Zealand 100,000 men—an enormous proportion of her population of 1,500,000—had joined the N.Z.E.F. South Africa had recruited 100,000 men for the Union Defence Force. In Southern Rhodesia conscription was introduced chiefly to keep men *out* of the army, for so many in key positions wanted to volunteer that it became necessary for the Government to control the man-power of the country.

India also made a considerable contribution to the Empire war effort. From a strategical and military point of view, her position is pivotal for the reinforcement of our life-line in the Near East—the Suez Canal—but her political situation is not entirely satisfactory. The Congress Party, representing the Hindu majority in India, demands independence, including (in its view) the right to rule some 90 million



"Action stations" at a battery on the English East coast.

of its Moslem fellow-subjects, whereas these people (chiefly in North India) do not desire to be governed by Hindus, and are inclined to demand separation.

Although, for these reasons (perhaps too generalised and abbreviated) India has not been able to speak with a united voice, the deadlock has not interfered with the co-operation of the Indian Princes who have sent important contingents to the front, as they did in the last Great War; nor has it weaned the soldiers of the Indian Army, whatever their faith, from their old and well-tried loyalty to the British Empire.

In spite of political quarrels, leaders of all shades of opinion are united in their detestation of the Nazi *weltanschauung*. The Hindus are a race of too ancient a culture to be attracted to the Aryan creed of Rosenberg, while to Moslems the world over (and they number 165,000,000) democracy is a part of their religion.

As a source of supplies, only the surface of India's vast possibilities have been scratched. When they are fully developed they will add enormously to the war potential of the Empire, and to her own wealth. She is to make 3,000 armoured fighting vehicles next year (1942) and this year Indian factories are producing 100,000,000 rounds of small arm ammunition, and huge amounts of jute, canvas and leather goods.



A scene on the South Coast, showing a gun captured from the Germans and now brought into service against the enemy. The Royal Artillery say that Britain's guns are superior—but every little helps.



Our own gunners have been quick to master the working of German artillery and are now ready to bring the enemy guns into action against their former owners. Here, a dial sight is shown in operation.

Beside our own people, stand our allies from the conquered lands. Lake Chad Territory, the French Cameroons, and French Equatorial Africa have brought notable accessions to the Free French movement, and many volunteers have come from Syria to join the Army of the Nile.

Thousands of Polish troops, and hundreds of Polish airmen (whose exploits are now the admiration of the R.A.F.) made their way out of their own country and eventually reached France, where they fought with great gallantry. In the midst of the French defeat they maintained their formations intact, and marched to Bordeaux. There General Sikorski, their leader, refused to accept the terms of the French armistice, and induced the British Navy to bring his troops to this country, where they were re-armed and equipped.

Units of the Czechoslovak Legion, who had also been fighting in France, formed the nucleus of a new Legion. So did Norwegian, Dutch, and Belgian contingents.

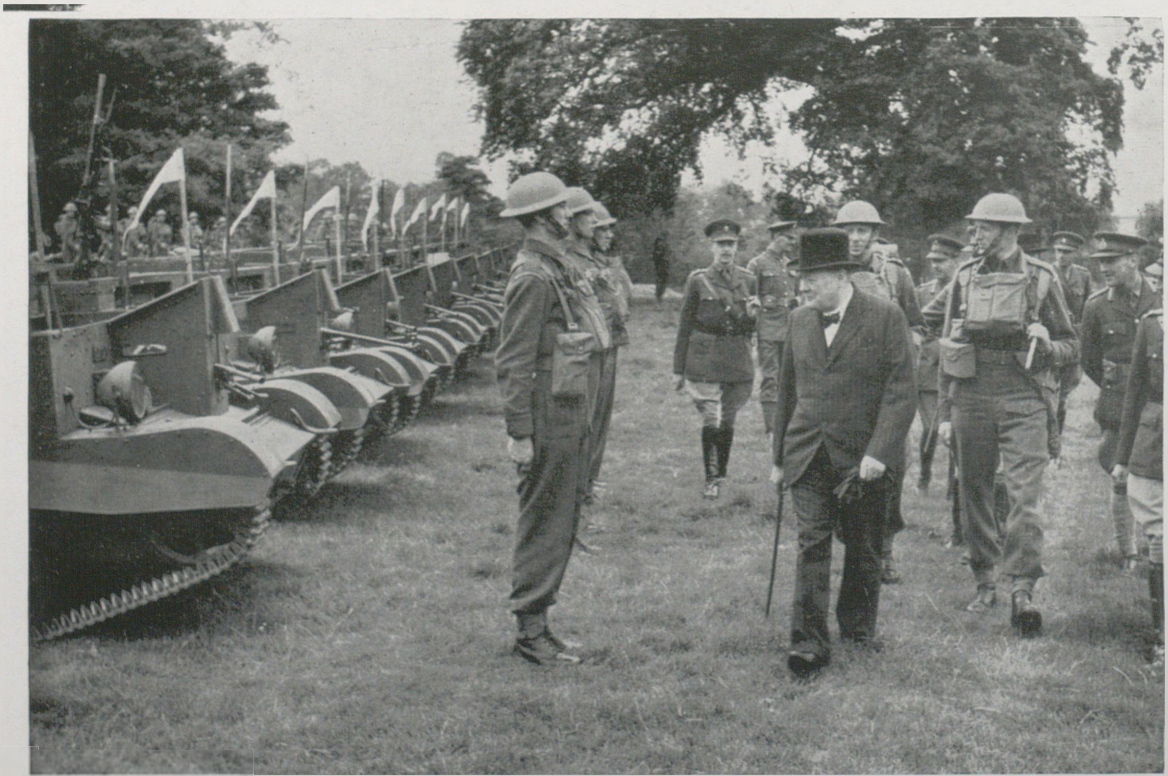
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No doubt the invasion of Great Britain would have been attempted if we had not brought down 185 German aeroplanes on September 15th, to crown the previous air victories at Dunkirk in May and over the Home Counties on August 25th, 30th, 31st, and September 2nd. Still the possibility remained, and remains.

Why tarried the wheels of their chariots? We waited and wondered in September—and are waiting still.

The wide beaches of the East Coast saw strange summer visitors. Instead of children's sand castles there were strong-points at which men in uniform laboured unceasingly. Barbed wire entanglements took the place of deck-chairs along the shore; there were neither bands nor concert parties, but band-stands and piers put to new uses.

There were no day trips for visitors up and down the coast; those who went on day trips did so in trawlers and drifters, flying the White Ensign. The smart yachts and motor boats were now a businesslike



With traditional smartness the Grenadier Guards line up in front of their Bren-gun carriers for inspection by the Prime Minister.



A camouflaged coastal gun at practice.

grey, as they raced in and out of harbour, and they were manned by oddly-assorted crews in oddly-assorted rigs, very often retired naval officers, to whose oddly-assorted ages the Admiralty turned a blind eye.

Home Guards patrolled the lanes, the railway bridges, and the factories where the machinery was never still, and grumbled that rifles were hard to get.

The Civil Defence Services were coming into their own : they had proved their mettle first in a hundred raids on the East Coast, and then in three months' bombing of London and in savage attacks on our great industrial cities.

Meanwhile, a great army was under canvas, or in billets throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain.

No longer were we lapped in dreams of "assurance of victory." Very distant seemed those days of



The Prime Minister with New Zealand gunners.

September, 1939, when we dropped leaflets over Germany, telling the people that we had no enmity against them, and that "our resources, and those of our Allies, in men, arms and supplies are immense. We are too strong to break by blows, and we could wear you down inexorably."

That was a year ago, but what centuries seemed to have passed !

We were more confident than ever, after we had been induced, with a politeness that veiled a menace, to close the Burma Road, and to withdraw our garrisons in the Far East. Submarine sinkings were increasing. There were leakages in our blockade, through Russia, by the trans-Siberian route. A counter-blockade was being wielded by the enemy with disquieting effect, now that his submarines were based on the French Atlantic ports, and that we were denied harbourage in Eire. The long nights of winter were soon to begin, and already the sirens sounded every evening.

Even friendly neutrals predicted the coming triumph of the Axis Powers ; but we had strong knees, and had fought our way out of tight places before.

We had been near complete disaster in 1797, when we were bankrupt, when Ireland was on the verge of rebellion, and when the Naval mutineers at the Nore had hoisted the Red Flag of the French



As the night bombers come over the capital, they are challenged by the roar of anti-aircraft guns. This dramatic photograph was taken in the glare of gunfire at the moment the enemy was dropping flares. They can be seen at the top right.

Revolutionaries. The last of our Allies had made peace with Napoleon, and we were fighting a military genius who had behind him a population three times the size of this country.

At the end of 1940 we had the gallant Greeks for allies. We were not bankrupt (although nobody could describe our financial position as sound) and as to the Navy it had never been in better heart, and better found. Nor was there a military genius in the enemy ranks, but two ex-corporals, and behind them some competent German generals who worked out the purposes—and cross-purposes—of the dictators, sometimes with marked distaste.

. . . . .

As if to lighten the hearts of those who served her, England whispered to them during that gorgeous autumn, and the trees seemed a richer red than usual, and the corn a brighter gold: "Am I not fair, and worthy of sacrifice?"

Young men went forth to their glorious deeds—and to their death—in the skies above her, and soldiers, sailors, workers, served her as Helen was served when the world was young, and Troy beleaguered. The age has yet to produce the poet that will record the grandeur of the nation's spirit.

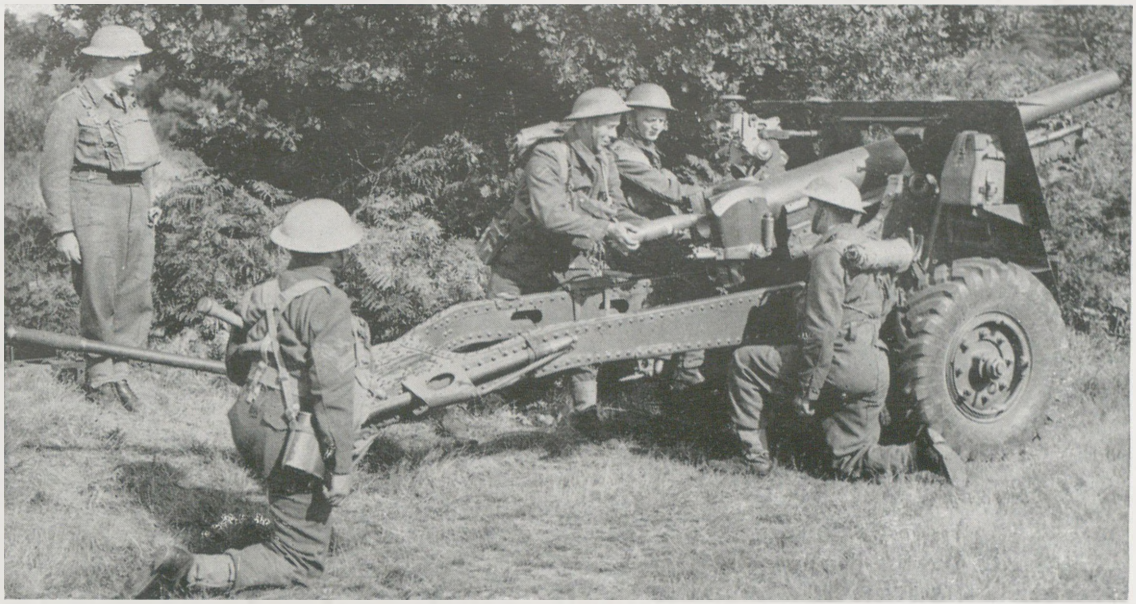
In the cottage gardens hollyhocks stood rank on rank, and rambler roses climbed up to the thatched roofs: Norman castles, built by the last invaders, drowsed above their moats; the red houses of the rich Elizabethans, the elegant Palladian pillars of eighteenth-century manors, and the parks and palaces of the Industrial Revolution, spoke of peace, prosperity, security. But day after day and night after night, the silence was broken by the drone of bombers, the crash of high explosives, the bark of guns. Our cities were in the throes of a terrible ordeal, and their citizens were to set the world an example which will endure long after the causes of this war are forgotten.

Across the world friends and enemies watched, fearing or hoping that this easy-going, comfort-loving people would take the way of compromise.

But our enemies forgot that though our weaknesses were apparent, our strength was buried deep. The hour of Austerlitz had come again, and with it there awoke the thankfulness of past mercies, and the confidence in the future which had animated Pitt and his countrymen, and had steeled them to fight "for our very name as Englishmen."



Lieut.-General Sir Alan Brooke, Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces (centre) studying a map of our island defences.



An 18-lb. shell is being slid into the breach during manœuvres. New Zealand artillerymen who have made the long voyage to the Mother Country photographed Highly trained, they are ready to play their part in the Battle of Britain.



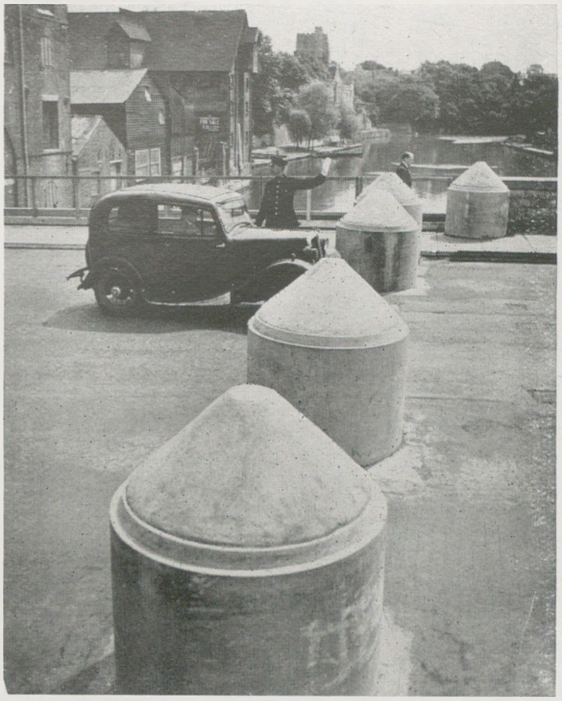
Oldest of our colonies, Newfoundland quickly responded to Britain's call to her sons. Members of a 9.2-in. howitzer unit now stationed in this country ram home a charge during gun practice in readiness for the "real thing".



Dominion troops are now receiving instruction in anti-invasion tactics at a military science college in the north of England. Dispensing with bridges, a lorry is here seen towing a gun and limber across a river.



A camouflaged gun on the East coast, sends out a cloud of thick smoke as its shell hurtles seawards



This peaceful country town sees its beauty marred by ugly concrete road blocks, to obstruct any invader.



Concrete pipe sections scattered about broad fields make an effective defence against enemy aircraft landings.



This ridge in the south of England has its double guard of sentry, on the right, and strong concrete road blocks. Every town and village has its own effective method of meeting the threat of enemy invasion.



Supporting the Regular Army against Hitler's invasion threat are more than a million members of the Home Guard. Some of them are seen at exercise. They have attacked a dummy tank with petrol bombs. In flames, it crashes against a road barrier.



A guard on duty at the entrance to a main line tunnel in England. All such vital points are guarded.



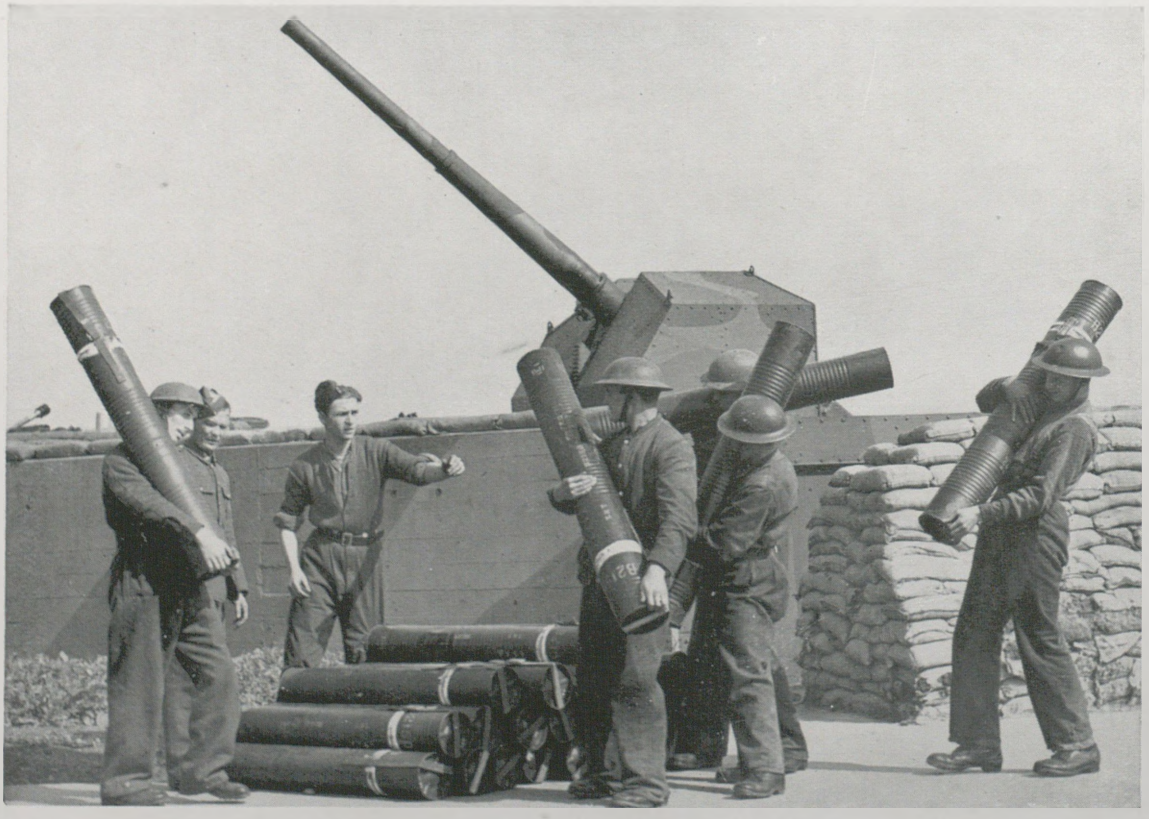
Barbed wire entanglements and troops at the Admiralty—part of London's "fifth column" precautions.



Wearing British battledress, and steel helmets, Norwegian artillerymen in training in Britain. Although their own country is in captivity, many of our allies remain free to continue the fight against German aggression.



The sound locator crew of a searchlight unit in the London area. From their sunken, sandbagged emplacement, they bring their "ears" to the support of the "eyes" in the defence of the capital.



Some of the men who help to throw up London's blazing barrage, the gunners of an anti-aircraft battery.



The coastline of Britain changes its peace-time appearance to one of war preparedness, ready for any attack which the enemy may contemplate. Lt.-Gen. Sir Ronald F. Adam, Chief of the Northern Command, and his Staff, are here seen inspecting defences on the Northumbrian coast.



The Earl of Athlone, Governor-General of Canada, visits soldiers in training at Petawawa Camp. He is seen watching a gun crew at work.



Troops manning the defences of Britain are being rapidly armed with the famous tommy-guns imported in large numbers from America. Weighing 9½ lb., these guns can fire 1,500 rounds a minute.



The Prime Minister's Scottish tour included an inspection of Polish troops. The soldiers are seen marching past Mr. Churchill and General Sikorski, their own Prime Minister, with eyes turned right in salute.



The ancient defences of England are once again the scene of warlike activities. Old castles have been turned into camps and are in use as training grounds for our modern men-at-arms. Here bren gunners are in position on the battlements of a feudal fortress.



Further evidence of allied activity. This picture was taken in Scotland and shows soldiers of the Polish army at work on the construction of coast defences. Like the Norwegians, they wear British battle dress.



General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, inspects the Western Command and pauses to chat with Staffordshire troops. Although Britain has a big army fighting in Libya, our own island remains strongly garrisoned against invasion.



Polish soldiers, many of whom have served on the battle-fronts, now play their part in the invasion vigil. This photograph was taken on the east coast of Scotland.



Barbed wire and armed sentries have replaced the carefree holiday crowds of many of Britain's seaside resorts. This picture was taken on the promenade of a south-coast town, where the strewn pebbles suggest wild weather.



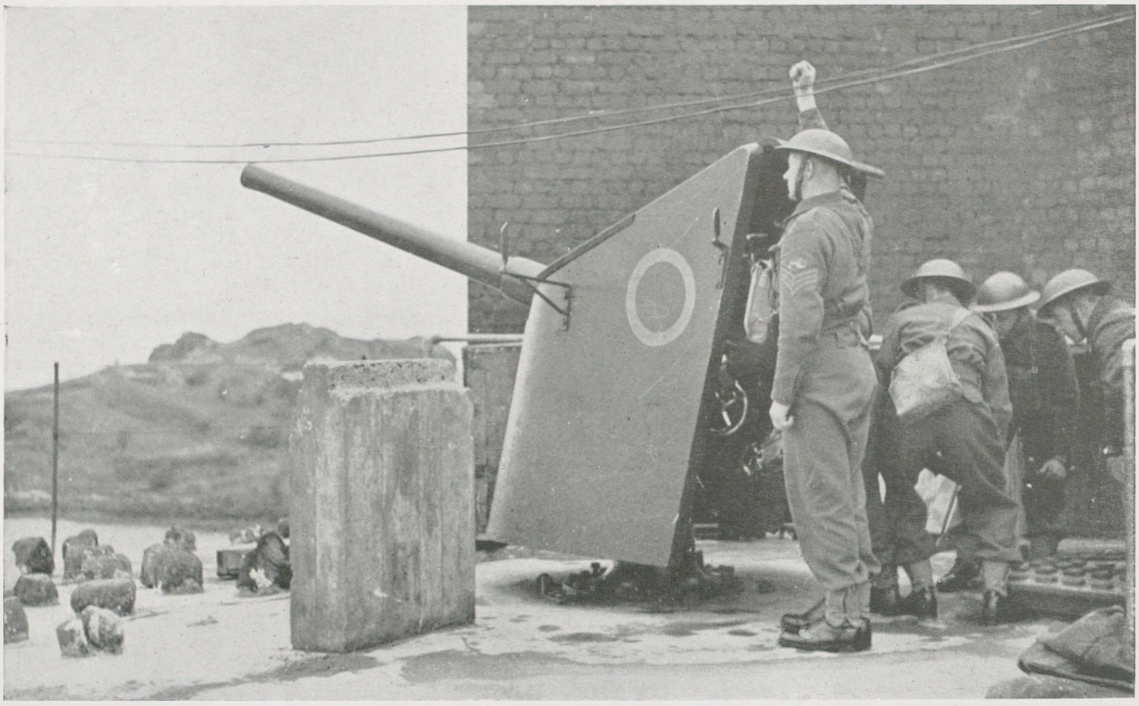
Scene on a Scottish island, heavily armed against Hitler's threat of invasion. A Bofors gun crew is shown at drill in a sandbagged emplacement. Most of the men were Territorials, called up at the outbreak of war.



Anti-aircraft has played a notable part in the repelling of Nazi raiders, and Junkers, Dorniers and Messerschmitts are falling to the accurate fire of our gunners.



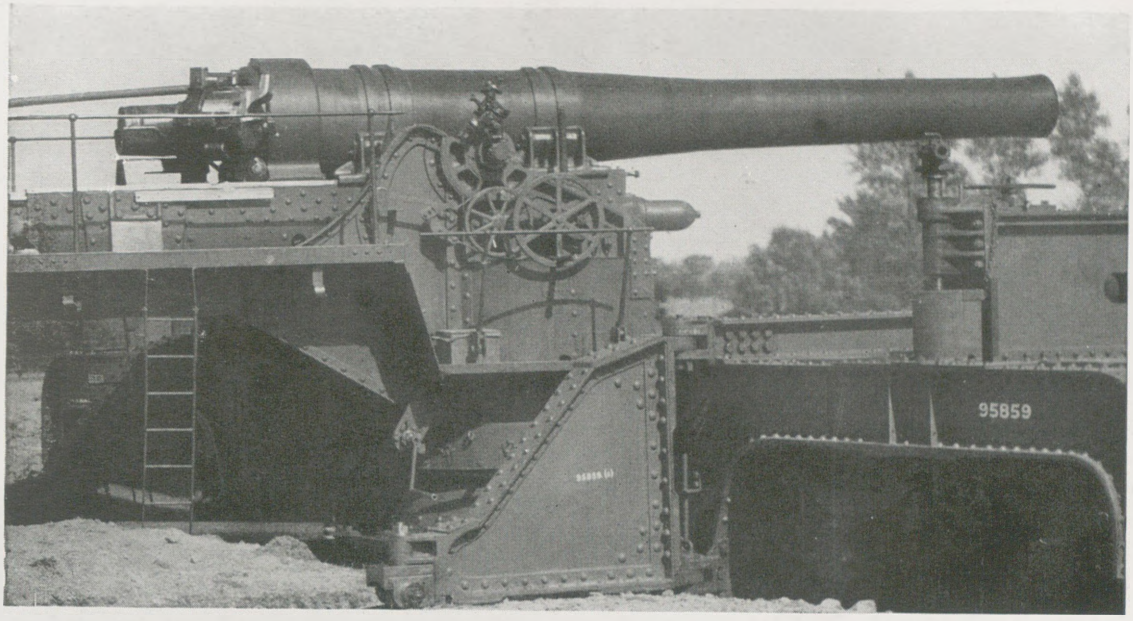
Officers and men in an observation post watching the flight of shells from a Coastal Defence gun.



Many of the Scottish islands are heavily armed against the possibility of invasion. Former Territorials are seen here at drill on a twelve-pounder gun. The sergeant is about to give his signal.



Another aspect of garrison duty in Scotland. This picture shows men of the Polish Tank Regiment, with their heavy vehicles drawn up in line. The tanks are French, brought by the Poles from the old battle-front.



Heavy artillery is mounted at strategic points in Britain's island fortress. Here is one of the giant guns of the Northern Command,.



The large scale exercises watched by Sir Alan Brooke, Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, included those of an armoured division. In this picture, tanks and scout cars are seen under cover.



Work at a signal training centre. Linesmen graduate from poles a few feet high to those of full size.



An old, but still useful method of keeping the lines open when other services have broken down.



True to their motto "Ubique", the Royal Artillery are to be found all round Britain's coast, ready to repel attempts at invasion. This picture shows a fire control post and four men at work.



In face of Hitler's invasion threat, many of the Scottish islands are heavily fortified, and their garrisons turn watchful eyes towards the sea. Here is a battery observation post, manned by former Territorials.



A night shoot by gunners of the Royal Artillery somewhere in Scotland. In the glare of the explosion the figures of officers watching the effect of the fire are thrown into sharp relief.



Large numbers of interested spectators watched between thirty and forty thousand troops, including an armoured division, at exercise Among them was Crown Prince Olaf of Norway, seen here (*on left*) with other Norwegian officers.

VII

WARS AGAINST ITALY

THE British people have the virtue and the defect of short memories for international disagreements, so that our mental attitude, as Fascist hostility became more and more apparent during the Spring and Summer of 1940, was one of aggrieved surprise. "Why did the Italians want to go to war with us?"

But we had quarrelled, and Mussolini had never forgiven us for leading fifty-two nations at Geneva in the imposition of Sanctions against Italy. The fact had been carved on marble slabs, and cemented into the walls of every important city in the Kingdom, and was referred to again and again in the Duce's speeches, always with the moral that Italy could defy the world.

It is unnecessary now to enter into the rights and wrongs of the Sanctions controversy. Our action cost us the friendship of Italy (it is impossible to convince even well-disposed Italians that we acted disinterestedly) and antagonised the section of public opinion in France led by M. Laval.

In spite of this, on the outbreak of war, the overwhelming desire of the Italian people was to avoid being drawn into the struggle. There was, however, a small but powerful inner group of the Fascist Party which was determined on intervention on the side of Germany as soon as the Army was ready.

During the winter of 1939-1940 the cost of living in Italy rose steadily, there was a shortage of fuel, soap and petrol, there were two meatless days a week—and there was no coffee.

The Italian Government made incessant protests against British contraband control, especially the blockading of German coal exported by sea from the Low Countries. To the equal annoyance of many people here the British blockade was again and again relaxed in favour of Italy, until it had as many holes as a fishing net.



Among the famous county regiments stationed in Egypt are the York and Lancasters, on whose list of battle honours the name "Egypt" is already inscribed. Officers of the regiment are shown here, photographed outside their mess.

Meanwhile German propaganda in Rome held out the prospect of glittering prizes in Africa and the Balkans, when the decadent democracies had been pushed from their tottering pedestals.

On our side, our diplomacy was not co-ordinated with the military situation. If we were strong enough to say 'No' to Italy concerning her desire to import coal, it was arguable that it would be advantageous to wage war against her, in order to stop the leaks in our blockade and to clarify the situation in the Near East, where the French and British had more than thirty divisions pinned, in Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, many of which might have been used against Germany.

If, on the other hand, our unpreparedness was still so great that we could not afford to quarrel with Italy, then we should have made all possible concessions to Mussolini while there was yet time.

During the winter of 1939–1940 we were on the point of concluding a commercial agreement with Italy which would have produced urgently-needed materials for our war effort, and would also have brought considerable prosperity to Italy. At the last moment it was cancelled by Mussolini himself,



Mr. Anthony Eden, Secretary for War, photographed outside the palace of the Emir Abdullah of Transjordania, during his 15,000-mile tour of Egypt and the Middle East. With him in the front are the Emir and General Wavell.

against the wishes of many prominent Italian industrial leaders. What further arrangements, political, territorial and industrial, might have won Italy to our side—if any—it is now impossible to say.

"The hour for irrevocable decisions" had come. The Italian Dictator had to make up his mind, as best he could with little personal knowledge of the British temperament, whether his last two Ambassadors in London were right when they told him that Great Britain would fight as she had fought before, or whether to believe other advisers who said that the British were decadent.

Amongst the latter it is said that his favourite daughter Edda, married to Count Ciano, took a prominent place. She had been a popular figure in London during a season, and had doubtless met many influential people. But the nature of England is not to be discovered in the drawing-rooms and at the dinner-tables of Mayfair, any more than the truth about Italy can be found in the Renaissance palaces of Rome.

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At the beginning of June, Mussolini decided on intervention. Longer delay, he thought, might leave him without the spoils, or at least the pickings, of the imminent German victory. On June 10th



Soldiers of a Scottish infantry regiment in Egypt practising with a trench mortar.



Military police of the Indian Army line up for inspection at an Egyptian outpost.



A New Zealand field artillery section in the Middle East.



Bren gun teams of the South Staffordshires, fully prepared for low-flying enemy aircraft.



In spite of mechanisation, the men keep fit by means of long route marches.



The South Staffordshires at musketry practice in the Libyan desert.



General Officer Commanding-in-Chief in the Middle East since 1939, Lieutenant-General Sir A. P. Wavell served in the Great War in France from 1914 to 1916. He was Military Attache with the Russian Army in the Caucasus in 1917, and he served with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force from 1917 to 1920. He commanded the troops in Palestine and the Trans-Jordan in 1937–38.



The Transjordania Frontier Force was raised after the last war for the defence of the mandated territories of Transjordania and Palestine. Here are two British officers, wearing astrakhan head-dress. Ninety per cent of their men are Arabs.



The Arabs who form such a large proportion of the Transjordania Frontier Force are among the finest horsemen in the world. Here, a trumpeter is sounding a call. Note the straight British sword and Western saddle.



The broken country of the Holy Land brings the horse soldier back into vital service. In this picture, a cavalry patrol of the Transjordania Frontier Force is seen making its way along a dried river bed.

Count Ciano summoned the French Ambassador at 4.30 p.m. and the British Ambassador at 4.45 p.m. handing them identical declarations of war.

Later that afternoon the Duce addressed the Romans from the balcony of the Palazzo Venezia:

"Fighters of the land, the sea and the air, Blackshirts of the revolutions and the legions, men and women of Italy, of the Empire and of the other kingdom of Albania, listen!

"The hour marked out by destiny is sounding in the sky of our country. A declaration of war has been handed to the ambassadors of France and Great Britain. We are going to war against the plutocratic and reactionary democracies of the West, who hindered the advance and often threatened even the existence of the Italian people."

He summarised the events of recent history as "half-promises, constant threats, blackmail."

They were taking up arms to settle the problem of their sea-frontiers, and they wanted to break the chains "which are strangling us in our own sea."

This struggle, he declared, was only a phase of the logical development of the Fascist revolution, the struggle of peoples poor in wealth, but rich in workers, against the exploiters who hold the gold of the world; the struggle of fruitful young peoples against sterile peoples on the threshold of their decline.

"Now of our own free will we have burned our bridges behind us! We have only one watchword—to conquer, and we shall conquer, to give at last a long period of peace with justice to Italy, to Europe, to the world!

"People of Italy: to arms!"



Once again Australian troops come forward to fight in a desert war. These men, seen unloading fast Bren gun carriers soon after their arrival in Egypt, have moved into the battle zone from Palestine.



Among the English soldiers in the Middle East are men of the King's Own Royal Regiment. Bren gunners defend their desert encampment; tents are scattered across the sands; the sun burns overhead.



A trench-mortar crew of the King's Own.

There was one curious omission in this speech: he never mentioned his Axis partner.

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Though no exact figures are available it was currently believed in Italy in September, 1939, that there were about a million men under arms; in December, 1940, Mussolini asserted that the number was two million.

In Libya there was a well-equipped force of 250,000[1] men; in Italian East Africa 180,000 (including native troops and irregulars), in the Dodecanese Islands about 20,000, and in Albania 60,000. By the end of August it was reported that the troops in Albania had been increased to 150,000, and the real



New Zealand troops at Bren gun practice.

figure may have been 200,000. It must be remembered, however, that such numerical strengths have little significance in modern war, compared to amount and quality of armament, training of troops, and the aerodromes and communications available.

For years the Fascist Government had made efforts to overcome the difficulty of equipping Italy's armed forces. Practically all the raw materials for the manufacture of arms and munitions have to be imported. The development of such coal mines as exist in the country, and in Sardinia, had not progressed very far. Coal was of low grade; iron, steel and all other necessary metals had to be bought from abroad. Reserves had been depleted during the Abyssinian and Spanish wars, and there had not been sufficient time to build up fresh stocks.

But the chief anxiety of the Duce and his Service Chiefs must have been with regard to oil. Italy's only source of supply, under her own control, was the oilfield in Albania, where the quantity available was small, and needed refining before it could be used.

Before her entry into the war, Italy had imported oil from Rumania, the United States and Mexico

[1] Between October, 1937, and January, 1941, Mussolini subsequently stated that he had sent to Libya 360,000 men, 1,900 guns, 15,300 machine guns, 11,000,000 artillery shells, 1,000,000,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition and 739 armoured cars.



A Bren gun team of the York and Lancasters.



A camp of the York and Lancasters' in Egypt.



When France surrendered, a brigade of Polish troops was stationed in Syria. Their position was significant ; their action was awaited with interest. The Poles decided to cross the border into Palestine, there to link up with British forces.



In this picture, the Polish Brigade are shown unloading equipment after their arrival in Palestine. They are eager to continue the fight for freedom.



Palestine, key position of the Middle East, stands guard against enemy attack. Strong anti-aircraft batteries protect the Holy Land, and in this picture a gun crew is seen in action.

up to the limit of her storage capacity. Her annual expenditure was in the region of 6,000,000 tons. The only source of supply remaining to her after June, 1940, was Rumania, but her Axis partner was a competitor in this market, the Black Sea route was closed, and the problem of providing rolling stock across Yugoslavia's single track railway was serious. From the Italian point of view the first desideratum was a short war.

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Strategically Italy occupies a predominant position in the Central Mediterranean.

The only deep water channel (40 miles wide) lies between the strongly fortified island of Pantelleria, south-west of Sicily, and the coast of Tunisia. Malta is only 20 minutes by air from Sicily, and was too vulnerable to be used permanently as a base by the British Mediterranean Fleet. On the other hand, before the French collapse, the aerodromes in southern France and Corsica threatened the important



Men of the Somaliland Camel Corps at an improvised rifle range.

hydro-electric power stations on which the railways in northern Italy depend, and also the Genoa-Turin-Milan triangle, in which the chief industries are situated.

The whole Italian railway system, running as it does along the west and east coasts, separated by the spine of the Apennines, is highly vulnerable, and ill-adapted to war conditions. From Genoa, the main junction for the industrial cities of the north, as far as Pisa, the double track runs along the sea coast, through frequent tunnels, and any interruption would starve the great arsenal of Spezia as well as Rome and all the cities of the south. All the traffic from the northern cities which does not pass through Genoa and down the west-coast route, passes either through Bologna, Florence, Rome, or else through Bologna and down the east-coast route. All communications between Germany and southern Italy depend, therefore, on two junctions—Genoa and Bologna.

Unless Italy held command of the sea and the air, she was in a dangerous position in her own territory. As to her Empire, it was immediately in dire peril in the event of war with Britain and France.

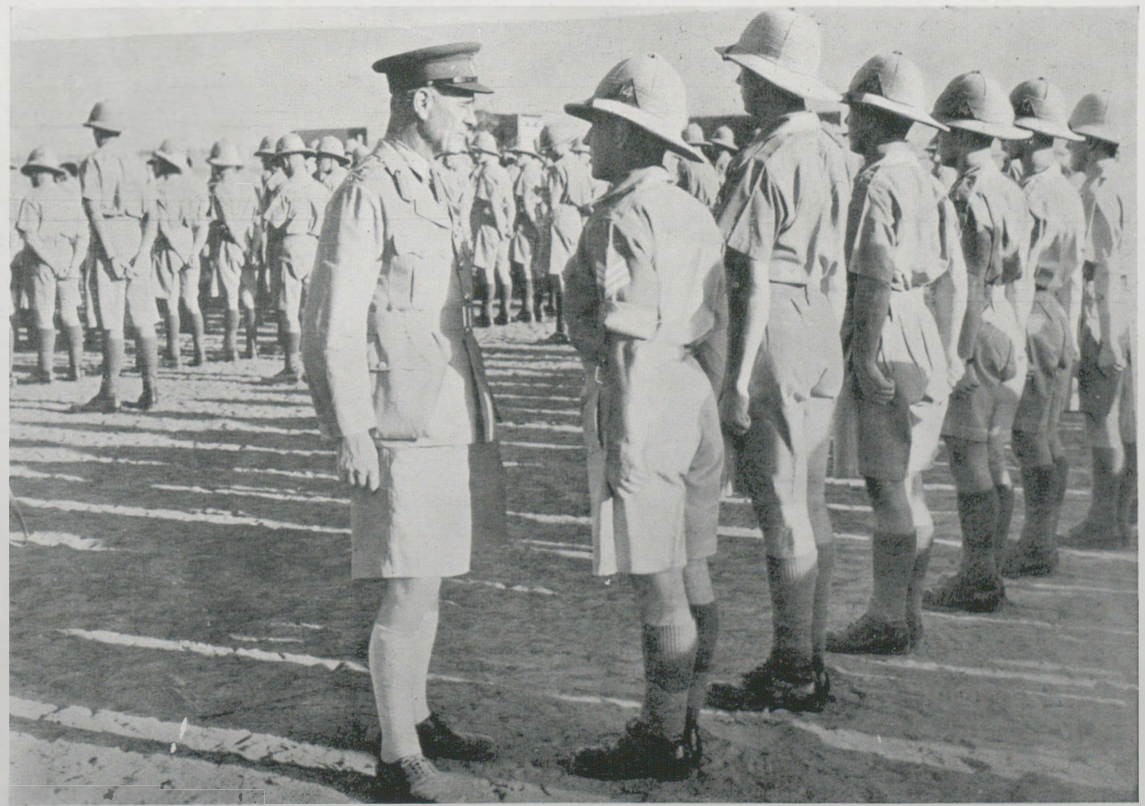
Eritrea, Italian Somaliland, Abyssinia and Libya were at the mercy of superior sea power, as were the Dodecanese Islands, strung out like a necklace along the coast of Asia Minor



Behind camouflaged netting, the crew of a British field gun awaits the order to fire.



Out of the shade of the palms come the men of an artillery unit, bringing shells for their guns.



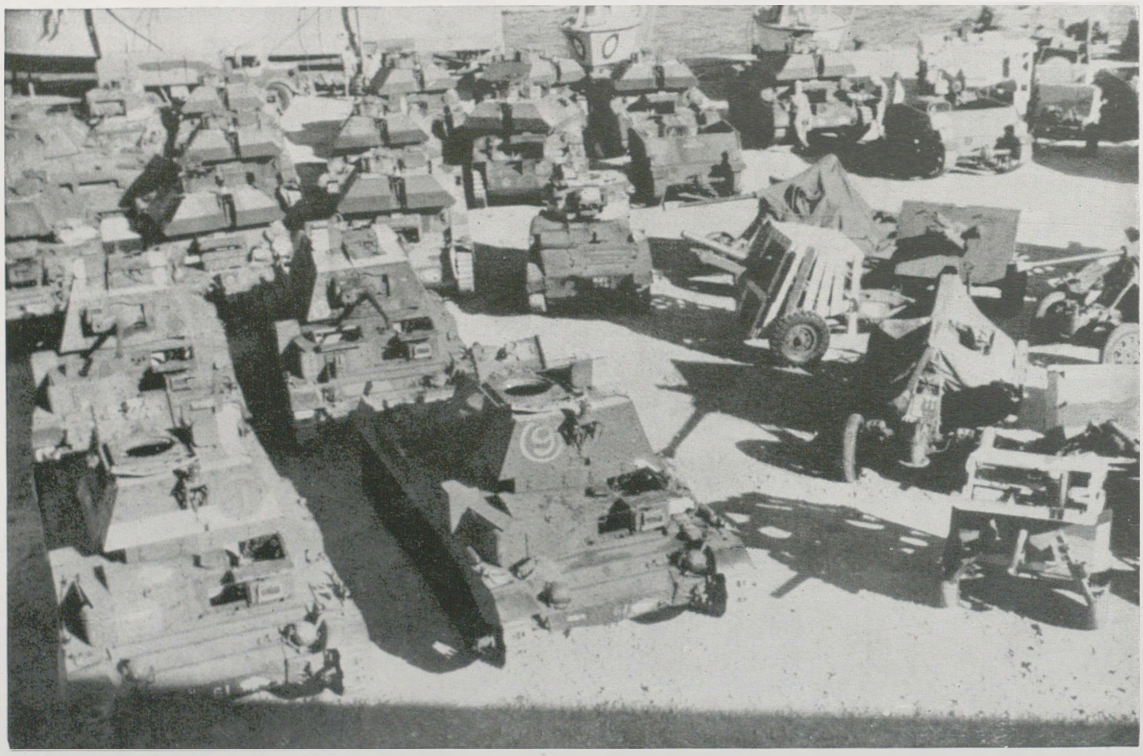
General Sir Archibald Wavell, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, inspects men of a Yorkshire regiment.

The collapse of France changed the whole strategical aspect of Italy's situation, especially in Libya, where Marshal Balbo was now free to concentrate his troops on the attack on Egypt. In Cairo thousands of Italian residents awaited (with mixed feelings) the coming of the Fascists. No doubt the Italian Government hoped also to reap the benefit of its anti-British propaganda in Palestine, and looked for an Arab rising.

. . . . .

The keystone of the arch of our Imperial communications was the Suez Canal, but we were threatened and out-numbered not only in Egypt, but in British Somaliland, Kenya, and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

British Somaliland is an arid stretch of hills and sand, on the south of the Gulf of Aden, covering 68,000 square miles, and encircled by Italian and French territory. Our garrison amounted to a weak



Men and materials were constantly being sent to the Near East, in spite of our needs at home, and it was this courageous policy of the War Cabinet which enabled General Wavell to win his victories.

brigade of mixed British, Somali and Indian troops, who were endeavouring—now that French support was denied—to hold a front of 150 miles.

On August 4th two Italian divisions, with pack artillery and tanks, supported by aeroplanes, crossed the Somaliland frontier in three columns and advanced on Odweina, Hargeisa and Garagara. The next day the enemy occupied the port of Zeila without opposition, and captured Hargeisa—a village of wattle huts—after an engagement in which the British delaying force inflicted severe casualties, including the loss of three tanks. On August 6th Odweina fell.

On August 11th a general attack was made on the British positions at the Yurgargan Pass over which runs the track to Berbera, which was the only port now in British possession. The enemy was held for three days but on the 14th he brought up fresh troops and launched a further violent attack.

After holding their position for some time the British forces retired in good order, and were embarked from Berbera. It was yet another evacuation—the fifth in four months—but the Navy was there, as it had been at Aandalsnes, Namsos, Dunkirk, the French Atlantic ports and the Channel Islands.

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Infantry of the Arab legion on the march. In the background stands a stone fortress, the crumbling walls of which were built for the Kings of Damascus in the thirteenth century.



Indian soldiers training in the use of anti-aircraft weapons.



A look-out post in the Western Desert, manned by Indian troops.



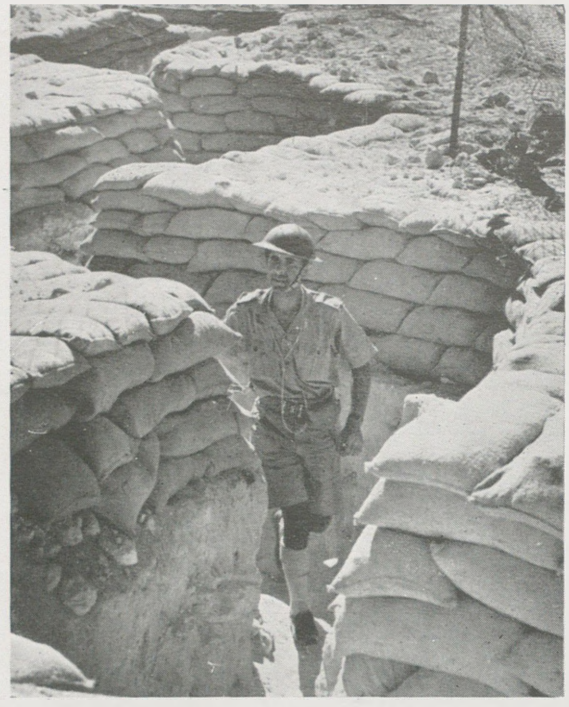
An Italian tank has been ambushed and Indian troops go forward to the attack.



A British sound location crew on duty in their pit in the Libyan desert, where they work in conjunction with their comrades operating searchlights and anti-aircraft guns.



How the Army maintains its lines of communication in the Western Desert. A telephone exchange below ground.



The zig-zag course of a communication trench, through which a British officer is seen making his way.



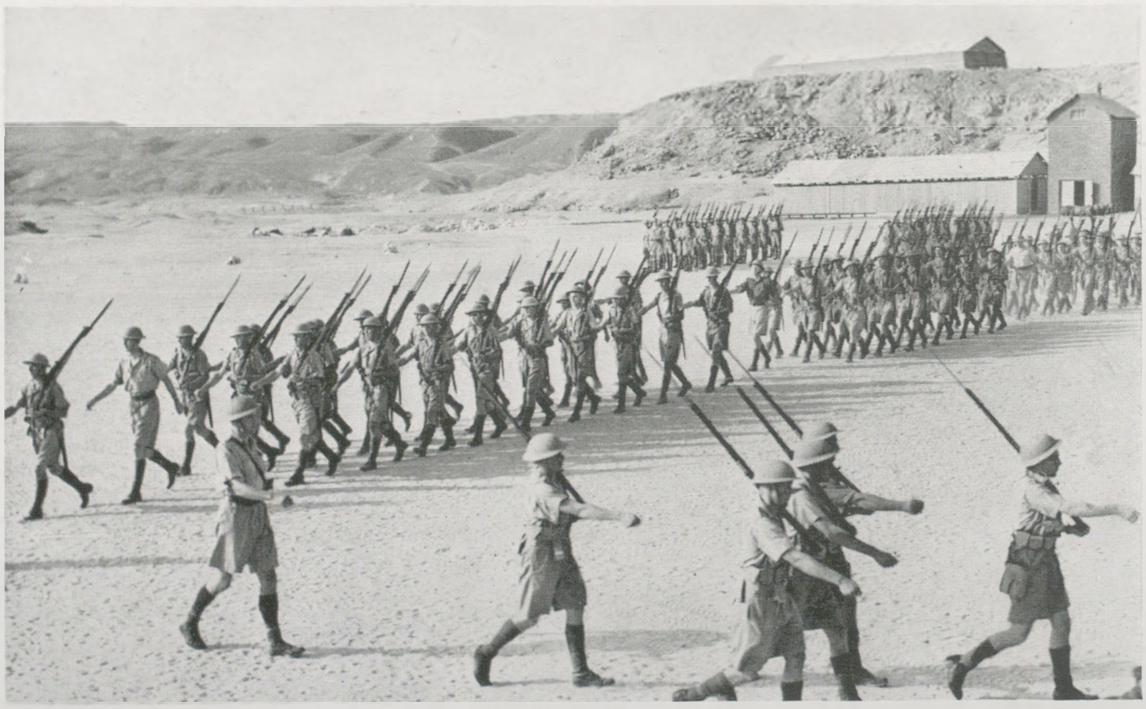
Brilliant staff work characterised the swift advance of the Army of the Nile. In this picture a commanding officer and his staff are shown directing operations from their underground headquarters.



British troops training to accustom themselves to desert conditions. Some of them are seen here, as they set out for a route march.

The Italians also attacked on the Kenya frontier. Their objective was Moyale, held by a handful of King's African Rifles. The assault began on June 28th and continued with varying intensity for three weeks; but there was little to be gained by trying to hold this frontier post, behind which lay 150 miles of scrub and desert. On the night of July 13th the garrison stole out and passed through the lines of the besieging force without being detected.

A far more serious threat to our position was the attack on the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The Italians, though cut off from supplies, had large reserves in East Africa, and a powerful army acting on interior lines. The threat to Khartoum, with its direct communications with Cairo, was extremely menacing.



New Zealand soldiers starting out on a route march in the desert. The fitness of the Anzacs, and their magnificent physique was as noticeable in 1940 as it was in 1914—1918.

During June there was desultory skirmishing, but on July 4th the enemy forces, comprising light tanks and armoured cars, supported by bombers, captured Kassala and Galabat.

Fortunately the Italians made no effort to exploit these early successes. They may have been unable to do so, owing to lack of fuel and ammunition, but the chief reason for their inactivity was doubtless the skilful handling of the small contingent of Imperial troops in this area, which led the enemy to believe that they were surrounded by a greatly superior force.

One such exploit was an attack by a motor patrol south-east of Kassala. It fell upon an Italian battalion near Tessenei, across the Eritrean frontier, and cut it to pieces, inflicting 450 casualties, while suffering no loss itself.

On November 7th, in an action north-east of Kassala, British forces detached some Italians from their main body, and took 134 prisoners and a quantity of arms and stores. On the same day a column of British and Indian troops drove the enemy out of Galabat. Five days later they were operating from this village and inflicting heavy losses on the Italians.

As the months passed, the brilliant harassing operations of our patrols began to tell on the morale of both Italian and native troops, while the Imperial forces gained in experience and were able to send



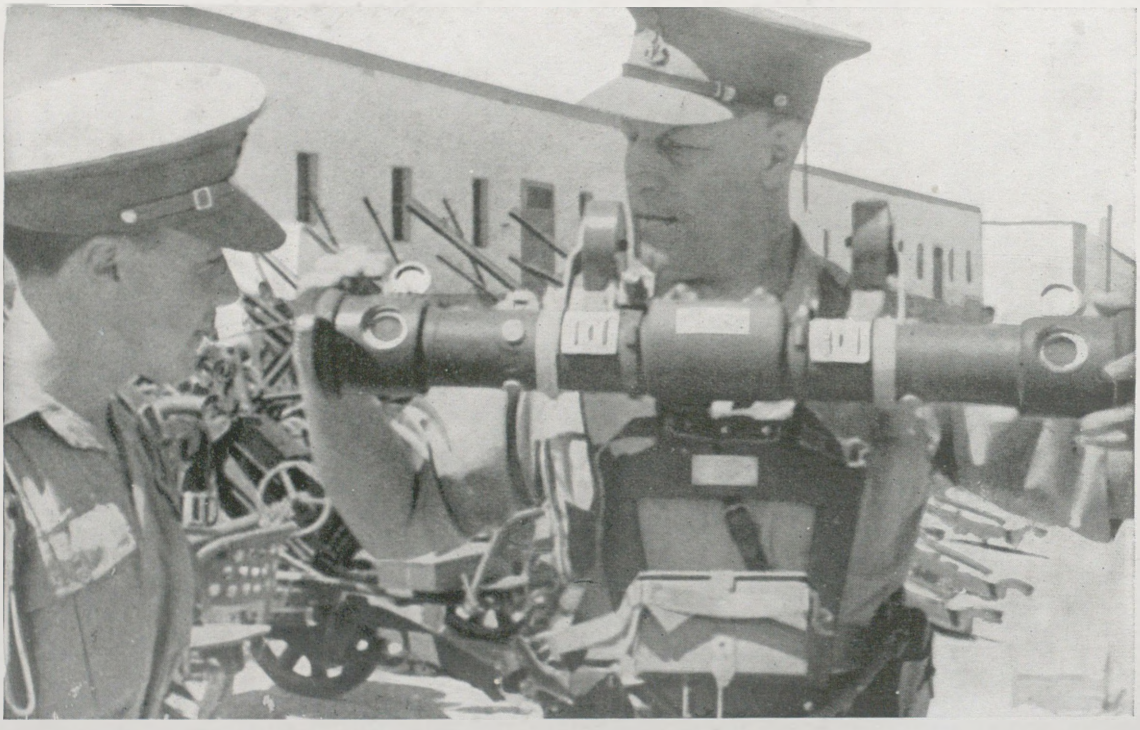
This British soldier had been in Egypt since February, 1940. After many months of waiting, he shared in the big battle which drove the Italians out of Egypt, and his task, when this picture was taken, was to guard some of the thousands of prisoners captured by our advancing troops.

British officers deep into Abyssinian territory, to organise the tribes against the Italians, in preparation for the advance in the spring of 1941.

Up to the end of the year, which closes the period covered by this book (except for the Libyan campaign) we were not again able to penetrate Abyssinia, the Somalilands, or Eritrea, but General Wavell's dispositions were such that the Italians were securely held with diminishing stocks of petrol and ammunition, while the increasing strength of the Army of the Nile was thrown (on December 9th) against the enemy in Libya.

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Whether or not we ought to have attacked in Abyssinia when we did is open to question. The dispersal of our forces made it impossible for us to prosecute the war in Libya to its geo-political conclusion.



In his examination of captured war material, this British soldier finds an Italian portable range-finder an object of interest. He casts an experienced eye over its mechanism while a comrade looks on.

However this may be, our troops would have moved sooner than they did from Mersa Matruh, but for events in Greece.

Although in 1928 Italy had signed a "Pact of Friendship, Conciliation and Judicial Settlement" with Greece, which she had solemnly reaffirmed on September 30th, 1939, a typical Axis "war of nerves" began in 1940. In August, Greece was accused of having permitted—even instigated—the murder of an obscure and elderly Albanian bandit, Daout Hoggia, and of harbouring the murderers on her soil. A campaign of abuse began in the Italian press: Greece was said to be oppressing the Albanian minority, and Signor Gayda went so far as to demand a revision of the frontier to Janina and Preveza.

On August 15th, the Greek cruiser *Helle* was torpedoed on a ceremonial visit to Tinos for the Feast of the Assumption. The nationality of the submarine was not disclosed until after the Italian attack, when it was officially stated in Athens that parts of the torpedo had been picked up, marked "Torino."

During September and the first part of October, Axis pressure on Greece increased. The dictators were at that time also hopeful of Spanish support (Señor Suñer was in Berlin at the end of September) and *Il Telegrafo* wrote that " in the struggle against England the realignment includes three, not two European powers; Germany, Italy and Spain," while the *Giornale d'Italia* declared that Axis policy "was enriched by new adherents, notably Spain."



Through the choking dust of the desert our troops go forward in pursuit of the enemy. This picture give a vivid idea of conditions of warfare in the Middle East.



In the barren land where the Army of the Nile was operating, supply of water was a problem of major mportance. It was overcome by the sinking of deep tanks, one of which is shown being filled.



Poland is held captive, but many of her soldiers continue to fight in the Allied cause elsewhere. Infantrymen who have shared in our victory in the Western Desert are shown on the march, with mule-drawn anti-tank guns.



Polish cavalrymen on the march in the Middle East.



A convoy of troopships reaches port in Egypt after the long voyage from England, a voyage in which no Italian warship or aeroplane was sighted. The men cheer as they arrive.



Australians, who had just arrived in Egypt, waiting to board a train which will convey them to the war zone.

Between 150,000 and 200,000 Italian troops were under canvas in Albania. Rains began in the Epirus in the middle of October, and winter was only six weeks away. It was clear that this army must soon seek billets elsewhere, and Mussolini certainly did not intend them to return home. They must enter Greece, either as friends or as enemies.

On October 4th the dictators again met on the Brenner Pass, where they discussed the situation for three hours with General Keitel in attendance. According to subsequent comments in the Axis press, the war had entered a decisive phase. Spain was being cajoled. Egypt must be alarmed. Already (September 20th) the Italians had advanced as far as Sidi Barrani, and the famous General Berganzoli (known in Spain as "Electric Beard") had told his troops: "From the cliffs of Halfaya the eye can scan the mists of the East. You have covered the first steps of the march to Alexandria. The emblems of the army which tried to bar your way have been trampled underfoot. Further and more important objectives now await you." When the march to Alexandria began, surely Greece would fall into line?



British troops who had just safely arrived in the Middle East.

Italy now protested to the Greek Government that its press was pro-British. Germany suggested that the drachma should be re-valued in her favour. Rumours were spread that the King of the Hellenes contemplated abdication.

To these manœuvres General Metaxas presented an outward complacence and pliability, which veiled preparations for resistance going forward with tremendous speed and secrecy. All the intrigues of the Axis were countered with masterly discretion while Greece mobilised, and strengthened her defences.

On the afternoon of October 27th the cafés of Athens were full of rumours—indeed, as usual—but for the first time for years the newspapers published Sunday editions. There was little news in them, however, except of movements across the Albanian frontier.

At 3 a.m. on the 28th, the Italian Minister in Athens called on General Metaxas, and presented him with the usual ultimatum, for the usual reasons, demanding the handing over of "certain strategic points." When General Metaxas asked out of curiosity what these points were, Signor Grazzi had ignominiously to reply that he did not know.

The dénouement was a surprise not only for Italy, but for all the world, except the Greek High Command.

The Italians attacked at 6 a.m. on October 28th. Orders from a divisional general, and a brigade



British troops disembarking in Egypt at the end of their long voyage from England.

commander were afterwards found, dated October 21st and 26th, giving instructions as to how the frontier posts were to be stealthily approached and overpowered. The assault had long been planned, but so had been the Greek answer. The Italians were met with a fire which staggered them. There was little heavy fighting that day, however: the Rome radio announced that no serious operations had been undertaken "in order to give the Greeks time to capitulate."

Meanwhile the Dictators had met yet again, this time at the Palazzo Vecchio, in Florence, where Hitler arrived in the early morning of October 28th, leaving again at 6 p.m. The talk was strictly private, and almost certainly acrimonious, for it is now obvious that Mussolini blundered by attacking Greece with the winter so near.

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The peace-time strength of the Greek army was between 65,000 and 85,000 men; but by now they



Fierce shelling from British artillery has reduced an Italian fort to a broken mass of masonry. This picture from the Western Desert shows our infantry moving in to occupy the ruins.

had mobilised some fourteen divisions (over 200,000 men) and a cavalry division. The total war strength was about 500,000 men.

Between 1936 and 1940 about £12 million were spent on defence, not including the cost of improvements on roads, railways and harbours. Equipment had been bought chiefly in Italy, so that the victories in Albania and Libya supplied much-needed reinforcements in weapons and munitions.

A "Metaxas line" had been built on the northern frontier, from Parga to Janina, across the northern slopes of the Pindus Mountains, and through Kastoric to Florina; another line from Koziani to Edessa covered the approach to Salonika.

The chief deficiencies in the army were of armoured vehicles, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, and mechanical transport. In the mountains, however, where the brunt of the fighting was to be, mules were of more value than motors. At the outbreak of the war Greece had about one hundred first line aeroplanes with a reserve of about 300 to 350 older machines. The Navy consisted of small craft, except for the elderly cruiser *Georgios Averoff* of 9,000 tons. But by air and sea the British were ready to redress the balance.

Help came promptly. On October 29th the Admiralty announced that naval aircraft had attacked the Island of Stampalia, the nearest aerodrome in enemy hands to Athens and Crete. Next day the



Native Italian prisoners are seen behind a barbed wire enclosure on the Libyan front.



An Italian general, one of the first prisoners to be taken, being interrogated by a British officer in Egypt.



Three Italian officers captured in the first days of fighting.



It was obvious from the start that many Italian native soldiers had little heart for fighting against British troops. Italian prisoners of war marching away to an unknown destination after being disarmed.



Troops of an Indian division on duty in the Western Desert. A mobile unit, their task is to maintain constant watch for enemy aircraft.



An Indian machine-gun post in the Libyan desert.



Specially drawn by MONTAGUE B. BLACK

An artist's impression of an engagement in the Western Desert, in which an Italian armoured unit of 200 vehicles was caught in withering British artillery fire. Many of the vehicles were disabled or destroyed by our gunners.



Fighting men of the famous King's African Rifles, who resisted the Italian assault from Eritrea and Abyssinia.

Navy had mined the waters of the Aegean and Ionian Seas, and on the 31st, British aircraft were operating from bases in Greece.

It was an Italian communiqué of November 2nd which gave the first news that British troops had landed in Crete; it naturally did not say that they had received a tremendous welcome. Nor did the Italians admit that on this day the Greeks were already $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles inside the Albanian frontier, having taken enemy positions in the important Florina sector at the point of the bayonet. This meant that they were on the northern side of the Morova-Planina mountains, south-east of the Italian advanced base of Koritza. The vital railway junction of Florina was safe, so that at some future time help might come from Yugoslavia. And not only was Koritza threatened: the Italian troops in the Epirus were in danger of having their communications cut. Day after day the Greeks pressed on, capturing height after height in hand-to-hand fighting. By November 6th they had brought up their artillery to positions commanding Koritza.

In the Epirus the Italians had begun by advancing slowly, complaining of the foul weather and difficult country. If they had been able to push forward rapidly to Janina, they might have made Greek mobilisation—still uncompleted—very difficult. But Blackshirts and regulars alike displayed little aptitude for that lightning war which an Italian general—Visconti Prasca—had been amongst the first to invent, on paper. Soon they were involved in disasters. Large forces lost their way in the mountains.

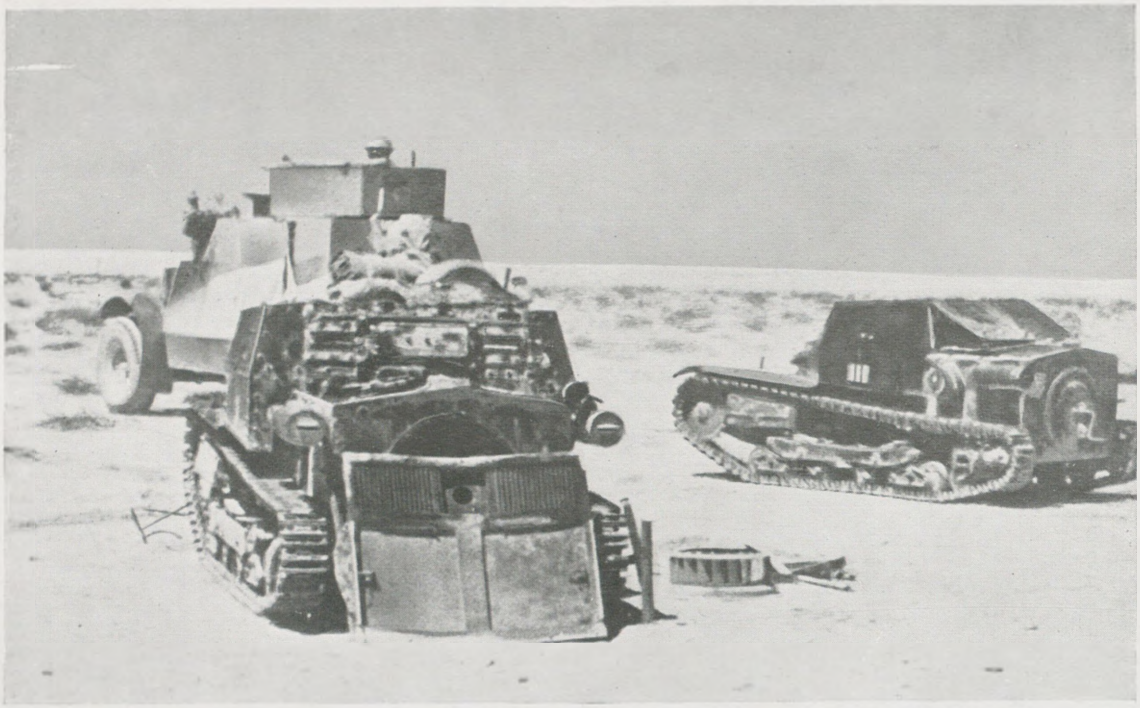


A unit of the Somaliland Camel Corps on patrol in the desert. The tenacity of these troops has been proved. Each man is an experienced campaigner and a deadly shot.

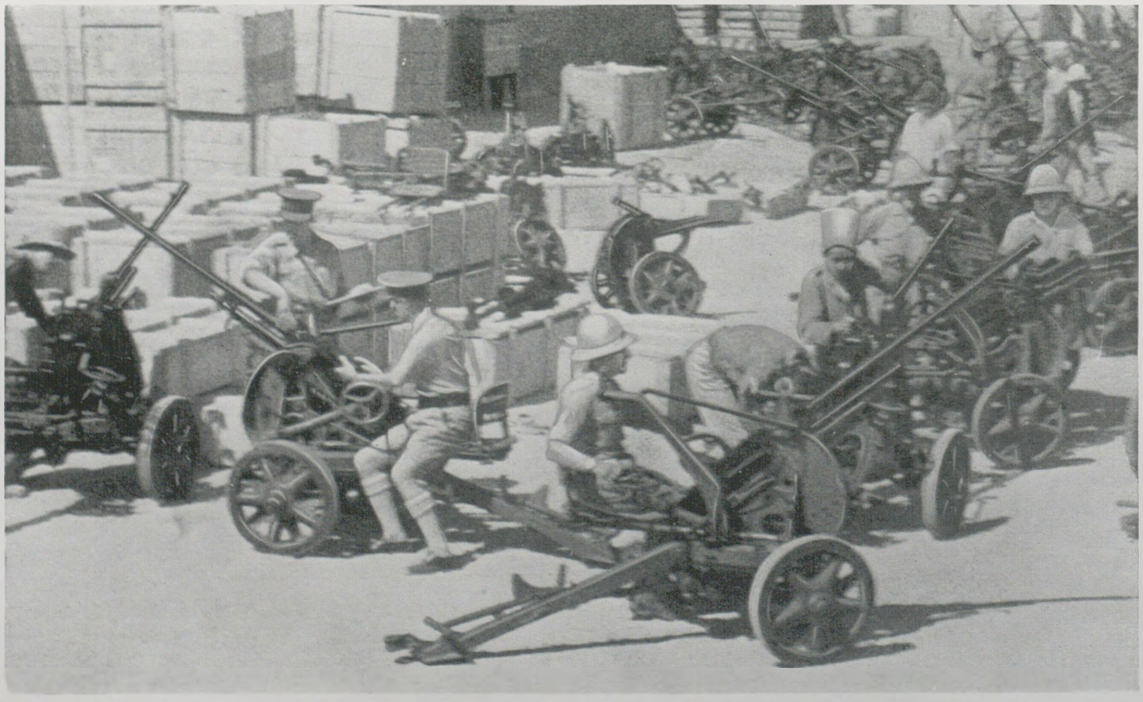


Specially drawn by M. MACKINLAY

Attacked by immense numbers of Italian troops, supported by artillery, tanks and aircraft, the small British force which held Somaliland resisted with the utmost gallantry in their withdrawal to the coast. In the words of the official communiqué, "Our troops contested every yard." Here is an artist's impression of the operations.



British troops operating in the Libyan desert penetrated deep into enemy territory, inflicting losses, harrassing outposts and capturing valuable war material long before our main attack. Here are two tanks taken from the Italians.



Anti-tank guns captured from the Italians.



A working party of Italian prisoners sets out for its daily tasks under armed guard. Note the high wired cage of the internment camp in the background.



Major-General Romolo L Strucci, one of the Italian officers of high rank captured in the Libyan Desert campaign photographed with fellow prisoners.

The 2nd Venezia Division was trapped and practically wiped out; an Alpini Division which endeavoured to make a rapid advance to Mostovo shared the same fate. On November 3rd three battalions which had crossed the Kalamas River—the extreme limit of the Italian advance—were nearly all captured or killed.

Already the Greeks were beginning to count their prisoners by the thousand, but quite as important was the vast mass of war material which they were capturing, and which they were immediately able to use against its former owners. Captures for the first two weeks' fighting included 14 heavy guns, 182 heavy and 237 light machine guns, 8,763 rifles, 239 lorries loaded with stores, large quantities of ammunition, and several hundred horses and mules.

On November 4th, the chief British liaison officer, Major-General Gambier-Parry, had been welcomed in Athens with his staff, and on the following afternoon the capital was to see the first Italian prisoners arrive, weary and hungry, but some of them not too dispirited to cry "Viva Grecia!" and "Abasso Mussolini!"



A column of Italian prisoners is seen marching under armed escort through the streets of Cairo. It is not the march they anticipated.

The great air victory of Taranto, on the clear night of November 11-12th, shortly before the moon had waxed to its full, further delighted the Greeks, as did our heavy bombing of Bari, Brindisi, Durazzo and Valona. We had crippled the Italian Navy, and plastered the Albanian invasion ports so that they were almost unusable. Count Ciano, who had flown to Tirana in the early days of this backwards-moving *blitzkrieg*, in order to be present at the triumphal entry into Janina, returned to Rome with grave tidings. The Greeks were advancing all along the line and the retreat in the Pindus had become a rout. How were the thousands of dejected soldiers returning from the Epirus to Argyrokastro to be accommodated in the town, which was already the headquarters of a division of 22,000 men?

On November 19th the last corner of Greek soil had been cleared of Fascists, and two days later—on November 21st—Koritza fell, in spite of the 75,000 men and 400 aeroplanes which the Italians had brought up for a counter-attack. The enemy was pursued into the town by his own tanks, manned by triumphant Greeks, who swept on to occupy another important objective further north—Pogradets—on November 23rd.

Every day now came communiqués giving news of Greek advances in all sectors, and of the ever-increasing number of men, guns and material captured. The Italians, in their hurried retreats, sometimes



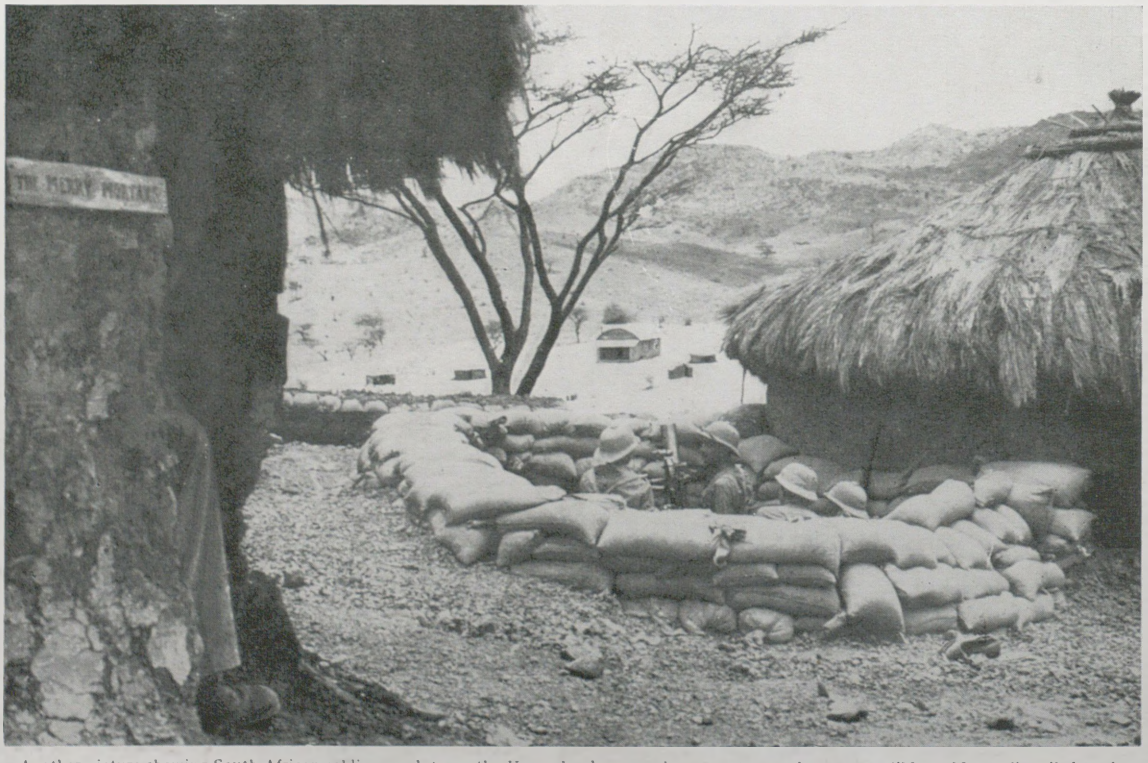
Shaking off the shackles of Fascism. A group of Ethiopian warriors, well-armed with trench-mortars, photographed within a few miles of the Abyssinian border. These men were engaged in guerilla warfare against their oppressors.



Taken prisoner by British patrols operating on the Abyssinian border, these men are Fascist native auxiliaries from Ethiopia and Eritrea, pressed into service by their rulers. Many of them are mere boys.



End of the day's route march. South African troops come back to camp after al ong "foot-slog" across the arid countryside of the Kenya border.



Another picture showing South African soldiers on duty on the Kenya border. manning a mortar emplacement.. "Merry Mortars", nailed to the mud wall of the hut in the foreground.



To the skirl of the pipes and the beat of the drum, South African soldiers near the end of a 17-mile route march. They are heading northward toward Abyssinia.



Bred and born in the veldt these South African troops are admirably equipped for bush warfare.



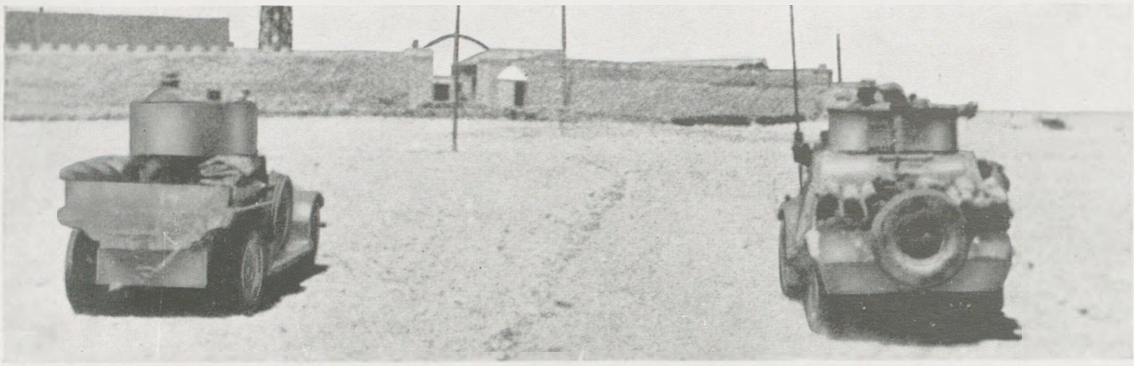
Although the Italians rushed up reinforcements, they were unable to hold Gallabat against intense British assault. This picture shows some of our troops after the occupation of the fort, which lies about them in ruins.



A photograph taken after the fight for Fort Gallabat, in which Rhodesian aircraft supported the troops by bombing and machine-gunning enemy transport. British soldiers are seen examining captured Italian guns.



The mud walls of the fort at Gallabat, which changed hands several times in the ebb and flow of frontier battles. Gallabat stands in wooded, broken country and is little more than a village.



Armoured-cars moving forward to take the Italian fort Maddalena, in the Libyan desert.

found time to blow up ammunition dumps and to burn stores, yet it was necessary to call up 3,000 Greek peasants to salvage what remained.

On December 5th the Greeks took the port of Santi Quaranta, and continued their northward thrust towards Himara. Next day Agyrokastro—the most important military base in Southern Albania—fell into their hands.

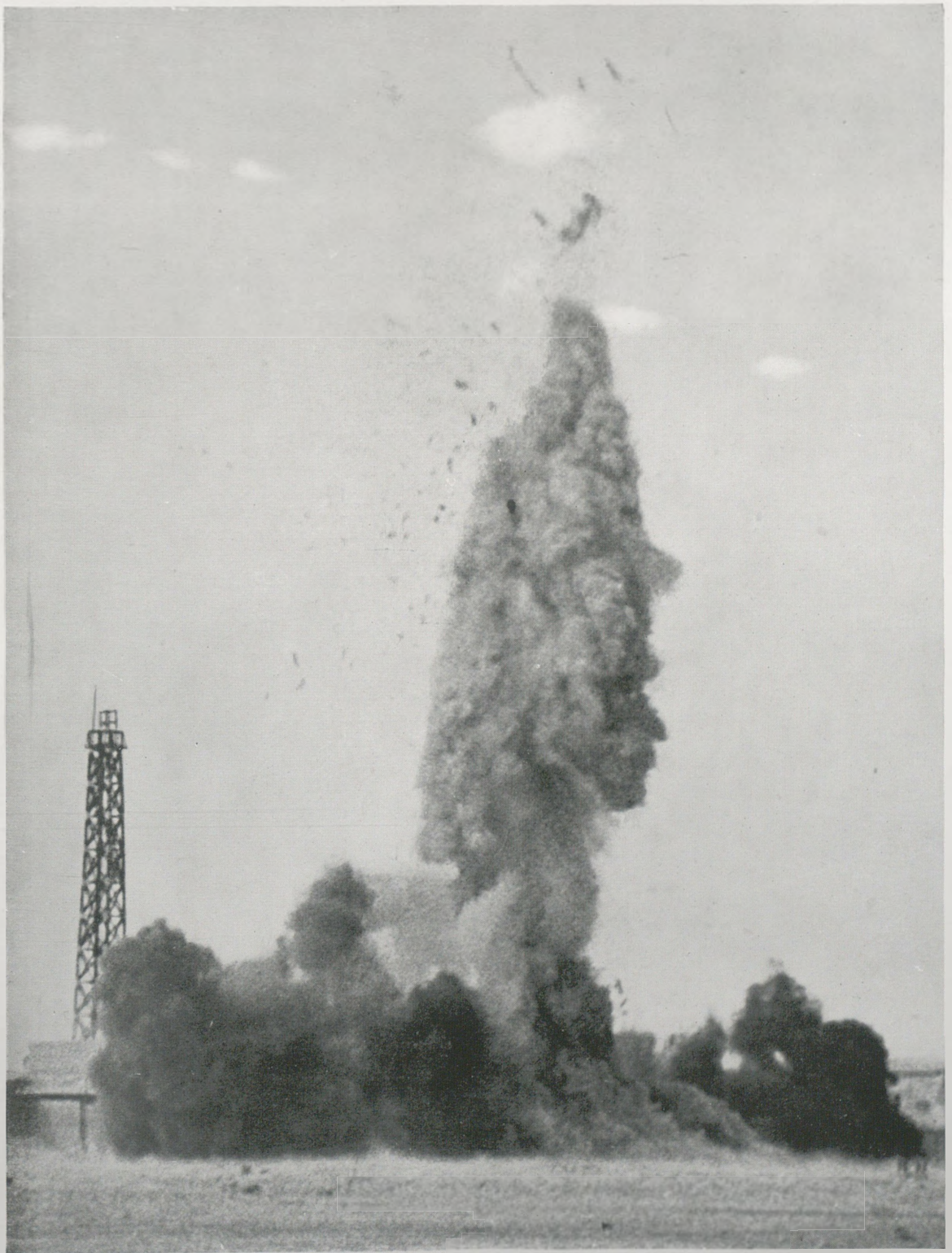
These advances were no military promenade. The Greeks themselves testified that the Italians were fighting fiercely. Height after height had to be taken by bayonet fighting, the mountains were five feet deep in snow, there was constant rain in the plains, and bitterly cold winds.

Certainly Farinacci, Editor of the *Regime Fascista*, and one of the leading atheists and pro-Germans in the Fascist Party, had grounds for his attack on the Italian High Command, whom he accused of lack of foresight and preparedness. But was it the fault of Marshal Badoglio? He was "relieved of his post at his own request" on December 8th, and there must have been many in Italy who saw in this distinguished soldier the successor to the "swollen bull-frog of the Pontine marshes."[1] The Italian Chief of the Naval Staff and the Governor of the Dodecanese (de Vecchi, a veteran Blackshirt) soon followed Badoglio into retirement.

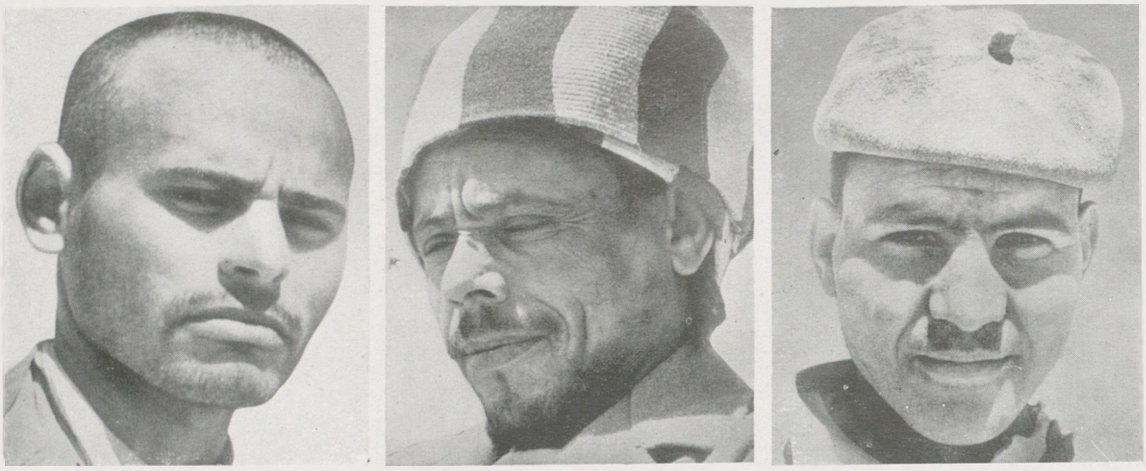
[1] Thus Mussolini was designated in private by the shrewd Ataturk.



The war in Eastern Libya. From their camouflage netting, British guns hurled a hurricane of shells at Fort Maddalena.



A close-up picture of the British artillery bombardment of Fort Maddalena, Italian outpost in Eastern Libya



These men fought for Mussolini, but their active service was short. They are native troops captured on the Libyan border. Note the close-cropped head of the man on the left and the curious headgear of the other two.

The initiative remained with the Greeks: a great tribute to the military skill of General Metaxas and Papagos, considering that Greece was but one-sixth of Italy's size. Despite the terrible weather they continued their attacks, fighting on an eighty mile front from the sea to the Yugoslav frontier. Every day brought news of the capture of more prisoners and war material.

Himara fell on December 23rd, with 29 officers and 677 men. A week later, when a height north of Himara was carried, the prisoners amounted to a thousand. On the northern sector the enemy was unable to bear the bitter cold of the mountains above Lake Ochrid and it was reported from Yugoslavia that many thousands of Italians had crossed the frontier and been interned.

Reinforcements continued to arrive from Italy and heavy counter-attacks were delivered, particularly from Tepelini and Klisura, in the centre sector, guarding Valona, but they did not shake the Greeks. The close of the year found them standing firm with trusted leaders. Since then Greece has sustained terrible blows, but she retains the admiration of the whole world. October 28th will live not only in the heroic annals of Hellas, but as a turning-point in human history.

. . . . . .



A batch of Italian native prisoners, taken in Libya, march under armed escort to the internment camp.



The burnt-out wreckage of an Italian war plane, destroyed in the battle for Fort Gallabat. British troops drove the enemy out in a short engagement which took the Italians by surprise.



The remnants of the Italian garrison at Fort Gallabat are marched off as prisoners.

As we have seen, the British Army in the Near East was compelled to adopt a defensive role by the collapse of the French. Our forces in Egypt were small, compared to those of the Italians. One estimate gave them as 80,000 men against 250,000.

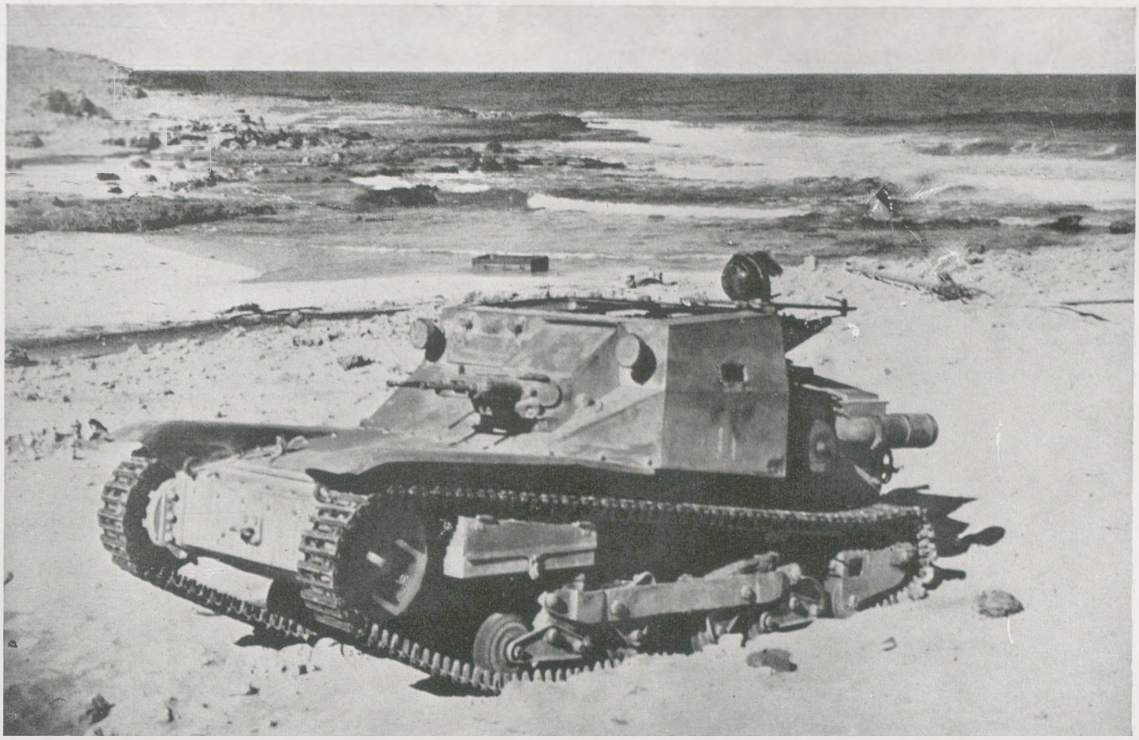
Our army, however, was well equipped, fully motorised, and commanded by exceptionally able officers. Sir Maitland Wilson, the G.O.C. of the Army of the Nile, was famous as a strategist before he proved himself in Libya. As to Sir Archibald Wavell, he was worth an Army Corps. He had been Military Attaché with the Russian Army in the Caucasus in 1917, and narrowly escaped death when the Bolsheviks attacked the British Embassy in Petrograd, and had served with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force from 1917–1920. During 1937 and 1938 he had commanded the troops in Palestine and in Transjordan, so that no one had a better knowledge of the various cross-currents of Near Eastern affairs. Sir Andrew Cunningham and Sir Arthur Longmore, respectively commanding the Mediterranean Fleet and the R.A.F. in the Near East, were colleagues of an equal calibre.



British troops testing light anti-tank guns taken from the Italians in Libya.

At first our armoured patrols took the offensive against the Italian outposts in Libya. On June 15th the fort of Capuzzo was captured, with 200 prisoners. Next day a dashing little action in this neighbourhood was even more successful, for the booty included 11 tanks, 3 guns, and an Italian general. Later, we were to capture generals by the dozen, but the first to be swept into the net of our scouts was rightly considered a valuable prize.

On June 28th Marshal Balbo, the Governor-General of Libya was killed in circumstances which have never been clearly explained. According to a broadcast from Rome, he had taken several journalists in his own aeroplane to see an air fight. While his machine was approaching Tobruk he saw that Italian anti-aircraft batteries were in action. Balbo's aeroplane "immediately hurled itself against the British formation, but was riddled by a shower of enemy bullets and crashed." This was the Italian story, but according to British sources our aeroplanes were not near Tobruk on that day. It has been suggested that his death may have been due to an ingenious and horrible method of sabotage invented by the Gestapo. A sparking plug, attached to a magneto, is submerged in the petrol tank of an aeroplane. When the machine has been running some time, the sparking plug appears above the level of the petrol,



The aftermath of Sidi Barrani. Beside the blue waters of the Mediterranean lies this Italian tank, abandoned in the enemy rout.



On one of their own lorries, captured Italian troops start their journey into captivity.

and ignites the mixture in the tank, causing an explosion. General Mola, the right-hand man of General Franco, is said to have been murdered in this way.

By the end of July the Italian losses in desert skirmishes amounted to 1,500 officers and men, against 50 of ours, and we had captured or destroyed 15 tanks, 16 guns and 65 motor vehicles. Enemy forts had been raided, convoys ambushed, patrols engaged with such continual success that the Italians only moved out of their strong-points very heavily guarded. Their usual formation was a "cluster" composed of three or four tanks, ten or twelve gun lorries, and motorised infantry with heavy machine guns. They moved with such immense precautions that they ended by remaining almost stationary, and not sending out sufficient patrols. When attacked by our skirmishers they withdrew like tortoises into their shells.

They built good roads, laid pipe lines, and tried—not without success—to colonise the desert, but they never regarded it, as we did, as a manœuvre-ground on which to defeat the enemy.



A wireless operator is seen at work in his pit in the Western Desert.

Sir Maitland Wilson, the G.O.C. the Army of the Nile, had only a very small force with which to carry out raids such as that on Capuzzo. Australians, New Zealanders and Indians were arriving, as well as troops and tanks from home, but meanwhile he was outnumbered by three or four to one both in men and machines. And in Egypt, although the majority of the people looked on the British with favour, there was a large Italian population, and other unreliable elements. These had to be watched. Troops had to be trained in desert tactics, and in co-operation with the Royal Air Force. Aerodromes needed improvement. Vast quantities of material had to be assembled and distributed at strategic points before any serious offensive was possible.

Making a virtue of necessity, Wavell seems to have been responsible for some astute moves to lure the Italians "up the path"—certainly no garden path—leading to Alexandria. Cairo headquarters explained the smallness of our forces, the insufficiency of our armaments, our dangerous position in Egypt. In London, military circles declared that if we lost the Suez Canal it would not be the end of the war. If gloom was not deliberately encouraged, it was certainly inferred. Reinforcements were hastening round the Cape to Cairo—an 11,000 mile journey—and it was important that the Axis Powers should underestimate our preparations. So far did this policy go that it is alleged (*se non e vero e ben trovato*) that one of Wavell's own staff officers went to him early in December, before the attack that was to sweep the Italians out of Cyrenaica to ask whether the rumours of our weak position could possibly be true?

On September 12th the enemy's defences west of the Egyptian frontier were visibly thickening. Next day the Italians came down from the high escarpment of Cyrenaica, through the steep Halfaya ("Hell-fire") Pass, and occupied Sollum. Three days later they had pushed on as far as Sidi Barrani



The battlements of the fort of Wajir, in the northern frontier desert of Kenya, with a patrol of Gold Coast Infantry setting out on a scouting expedition.



Trenches outside the fort of Wajir, manned by men of the Gold Coast Infantry.

(September 16th) meeting with considerable opposition from our rear-guards. The Navy took a hand, shelling Sidi Barrani and the road near Sollum next day, with what were laconically described as "good results." Meanwhile our forces had retired to Mersa Matruh, 75 miles away.

During the two-and-a-half months which followed, Italian troops contented themselves with establishing outposts and preparing an advanced base, with great quantities of munitions and provisions. A pipe-line was constructed to bring much-needed water to Sidi Barrani; and by the end of November it had been brought as far as Buq-buq, half way between Sollum and Sidi Barrani. The three hundred Italians working on it, when taken prisoner in December, asked to be allowed to remain at their posts, in order to complete their task.

Marshal Graziani has been blamed for not advancing more quickly. But the height of summer is a bad season for a campaign in Egypt. He would have been foolish to launch his troops further into a



The port of Salonika, familiar to thousands of British soldiers who served in the last war, now occupied by the Italians.

waterless desert, with a dangerous bottle-neck behind him, until he had improved his communications from Tobruk and Bardia. Only to bring water to his advanced troops, one hundred Italian lorries made a daily trip between Sollum and Sidi Barrani. The British were certainly few in number, but they occupied the railhead of the Alexandria line, and possessed plentiful supplies in their rear. And it must always be remembered (certainly the Italians were never allowed to forget it) that the Mediterranean Fleet commanded the coast road, and that the R.A.F. had already proved that Italian fighters were clumsy, and Italian bombers slow.

The Fast of Ramadan was to begin on October 3rd, and would last until the 30th: during this season Moslems abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sunset, and although their religious leaders can dispense them from the rigours of abstinence this is only done for a Holy War. The Libyan levies of Graziani were already disaffected and in no mood to fight a *jihad* for a master whom they hated.

Graziani probably guessed that Wavell would have liked to tempt him further into the desert. But to Mussolini, sitting in Rome, and accustomed merely to hammer his desk in order to have his wishes accomplished, the delay was tedious. The diversion in Greece on October 28th was designed to help the campaign in Egypt. Instead, owing to the heroism of our allies, and the courage of Wavell and Longmore in sending aeroplanes to Greece, the invasion added new and serious difficulties to the position of the



Specially drawn by "GEOGRAPHIA" LTD.

By launching an unprovoked attack on Greece, Mussolini sought to gain command of the Aegean Sea and to link up with the Dodecanese Islands. His campaign was a failure but he gained his objects later with German help.

Fascists. Italy was soon to have half a dozen wars on her hands; and on November 21st a cheerless statement was issued in Rome regarding the difficulties of the Egyptian campaign, what with the climate, the water-shortage, and the "300,000 troops, comprising the best divisions of the British Army," which were said to be facing the Italians. However, an attack was contemplated soon, probably when a consignment of lorries sent from Italy had arrived at Sidi Barrani. An order from Graziani was found on prisoners, taken on December 9th, stating that "the Blackshirts in Libya, together with the armed forces, send out their thoughts to the Duce in the certainty of victory."

No doubt, Graziani himself was less certain of victory that the commander of his advanced striking force. Information as to Wavell's movements was hard to get. After the swoops and pounces of September there was something sinister about the calm in the desert. British troops, tanks, trucks, guns, were sunk out of sight, appearing sometimes at unexpected places in the interior for a swift and savage raid, then vanishing again into the mirage.



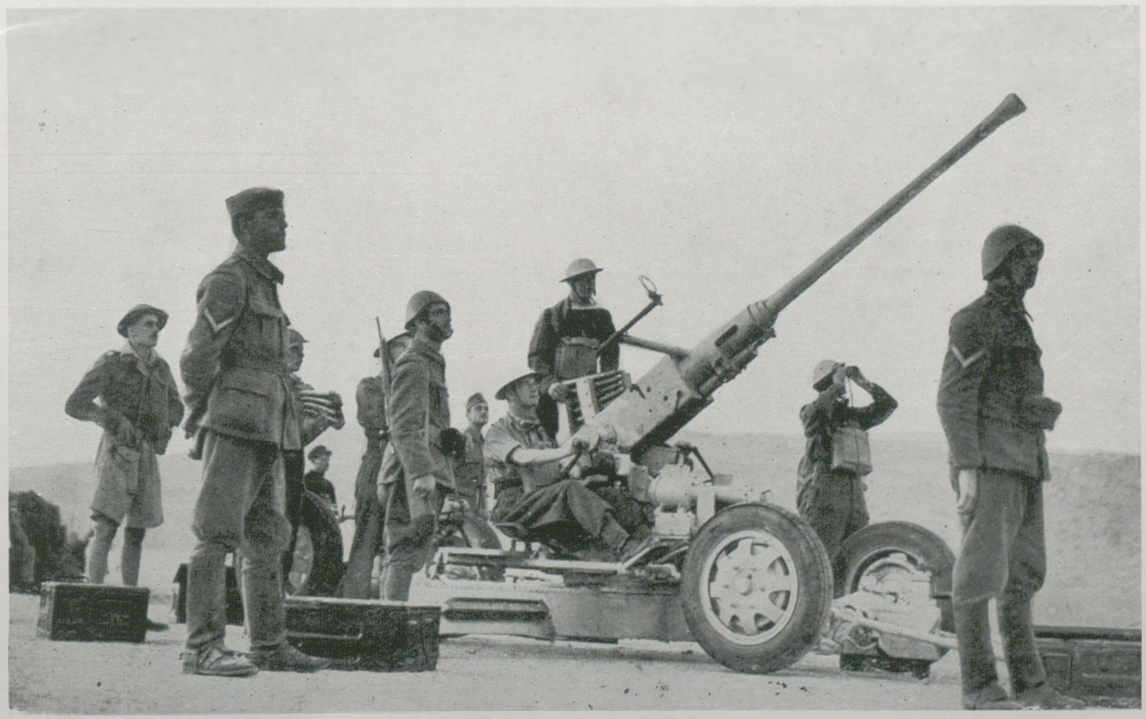
A crowd gathered swiftly when this British anti-aircraft gun made its appearance in a Greek town during the Italian attack from Albania.

Only seven of Wavell's senior staff officers were acquainted with the plan of attack which began on December 7th, when our forces left Mersa Matruh. The very troops who were to lead the first assault thought—until the last quarter of an hour—that they were engaged on one of the tactical exercises which they had so often practised during recent weeks. At Navy and Air Force headquarters a few more officers were in the know, but the whole operation—tanks smashing through from the south, the Navy pounding Sidi Barrani from the north, and the R.A.F. plastering all aerodromes in Cyrenaica (on the night of December 8th, 25 tons of bombs were dropped at Benghazi alone)—was co-ordinated and carried out in the strictest secrecy.

In the dark hours of Saturday night, December 7th, an armoured division went out into the desert, in a south-westerly direction, followed by a brigade of motorised infantry. When day broke on Sunday, the column halted and the men lay down. Their orders were to remain still. They were unable to light fires lest smoke should reveal their presence. To our troops, lying there under the vast arc of sky, with nothing to do, in a cold wind, with only cold food to eat, and even their water-supply strictly limited, this day must have seemed more than usually boring. They could not know that they were making



War leaders in council, presided over by King George of Greece. *Left to right* : Major-General M. D. Gambier-Parry (Chief British Liaison Officer); General Metaxas (Greek Prime Minister) ; King George of Greece ; Air Vice-Marshal J. H. D'Albiac (Air Officer Commanding in Greece) ; General Papagos (Greek Commander-in-Chief).



The crew of a British anti-aircraft gun in Crete.

history. But it was here, during this long, dull, disciplined immobility, that the coming battles were more than half won.

How much hinged on that water! Had our force been discovered, it would have given the Italians a taste of its quality, but without the element of surprise, and the means to exploit it, Wavell's main objective could not have been attained. He might have been able to report a successful skirmish at Sidi Barrani, but not a break-through and pursuit. He would have been compelled to return for oil and water, and then begin again from Mersa Matruh.

Our force was not discovered. Even our own fighter pilots, keeping the skies clear of the enemy, could hardly discern our scattered and camouflaged formations.

On that Sunday morning, when a few hundred British tanks stood merged with the rocks of the desert, and some three thousand of our soldiers remained as motionless as salt-bushes, the Italian position at Sidi Barrani contained the 23rd Army Corps, numbering 50,000 men. It consisted of a Blackshirt



Among the many troops in Transjordinia are the Arab Legion, who form a desert patrol of cavalry and infantry.

division, and two Libyan divisions, and General Maletti's armoured column of light and medium tanks, which was to be the spearhead of the attack on Egypt. They were to be joined next day, or the day after, by the 64th Division of regulars, then marching from Bardia, making a total of 65,000 men.

All was nearly ready for the advance to Cairo. The position swarmed with troops. There were petrol dumps, ammunition parks, heaps of tinned food, plenty of Chianti and confidence. Little was lacking except news of the enemy.

General Gallina, commanding the 23rd Corps, and his officers were well content with the dispositions they had made. Indeed, the major part of the eastward defences were well-braced against a British attack, with wire, tank-traps and gun-emplacements.

The Italian position was a triangle, with its apex pointing south, to Bir Sofafi in the desert, 25 miles south of Sidi Barrani. The northern base of the triangle ran along the coast from Maktila, 12 miles east of Sidi Barrani, to a point six miles west. At Sofafi, on the edge of the desert escarpment, there was a strong group of camps, then a gap, then the fortified posts of Nibeiwa, Habsa, East Tummar, and West Tummar, and a chain of outposts to Maktila. The flaws in this line—which had been discovered weeks before by one of Wavell's staff—were two: a gap between Sofafi and Nibeiwa, which could be used by tanks to take the northern positions in rear, and second, that Nibeiwa was a sort of "Beau Geste" camp,







The upper and lower pictures show native Italian artillerymen in action at El Sollum. In the centre picture, Italian infantry are seen attacking, harassed by bombardment from the air and by the guns of the British Fleet on their flank.



Taken prisoner when Sidi Barrani fell on December 11th, three Italian generals were flown to Cairo by the R.A.F. They are seen being escorted across the aerodrome on the second stage of their journey to a camp.



Some of the Abyssinian patriots who shared in the revolt against Italian domination, inspected by the Emperor Haile Selassie in the Sudan.



Italian and native troops attacking our positions in Libya.



A battery of Italian field guns in position. A large proportion of the crews are Libyans.



In shallow trenches scooped in the sand Italian infantrymen take cover from British artillery. A scene at El Sollum.



Specially drawn

In one of the swiftest advances of the war, British troops occupied Sidi Barrani, hub of the Italian positions in Egypt's Western Desert, on afternoon of December 11th. The capture of this town, which had been held by Italy since September 16th, was a triumph of tactics, which the Army of the Nile, the Royal Navy, and the Royal Air Force all played their part. The offensive opened at dawn on December 9 and while the R.A.F. were bombing every enemy aerodrome, our armoured units were going forward with breath-taking speed. In thirty-four hours, British troops had shattered the Italian right flank, and cut their way to the coast. It was an encircling movement, which drove wedge between the forces at Sidi Barrani and the enemy divisions supporting them to the west. To complete the isolation, the R.A.F. ma



by MONTAGUE B. BLACK

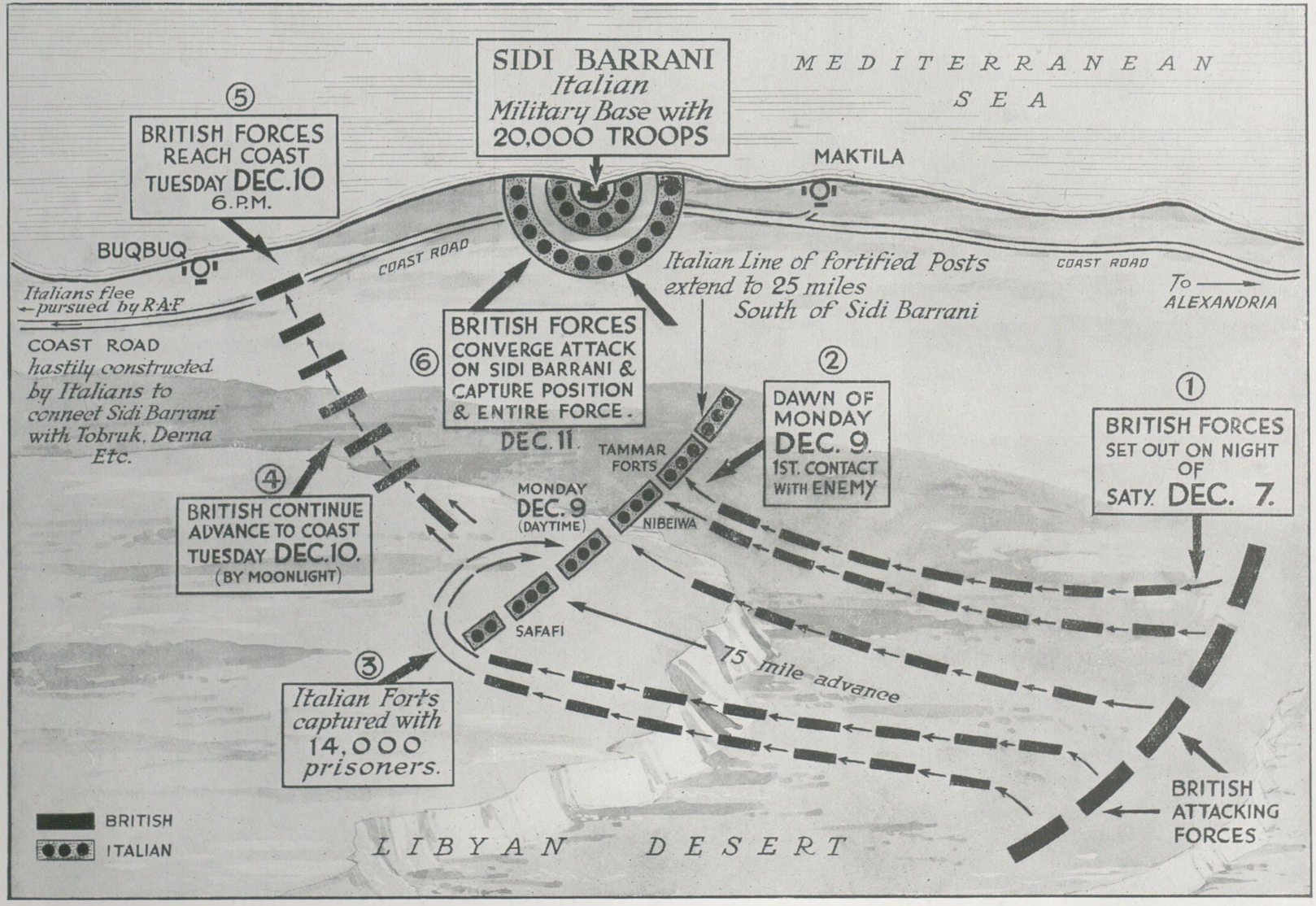
tained continuous assault on lines of communication, and the Fleet bombarded the Italian position very heavily. The town fell with the loss of large numbers of prisoners, including three generals and considerable war material. On the afternoon of December 12th an official communiqué stated that a total of 20,000 prisoners had been taken since the start of the advance, and in the House of Commons the Prime Minister announced a victory of the first order. Meanwhile, the British Army was pressing on without pause, and the toll of Italian loss was mounting steadily beyond these figures. Above is an artist's impression of the British tanks thrusting towards the coast. The sea lies in the background beyond the escarpment seen in the top right corner.



The line of Italian captives stretches to the skyline, but only two soldiers are required to guard them



The fall of Sidi Barrani, Italy's important base in Egypt, was hastened by the Royal Navy. The guns of the Mediterranean Fleet subjected the enemy stronghold to heavy bombardment, the effect of which on Italian barracks is seen here.



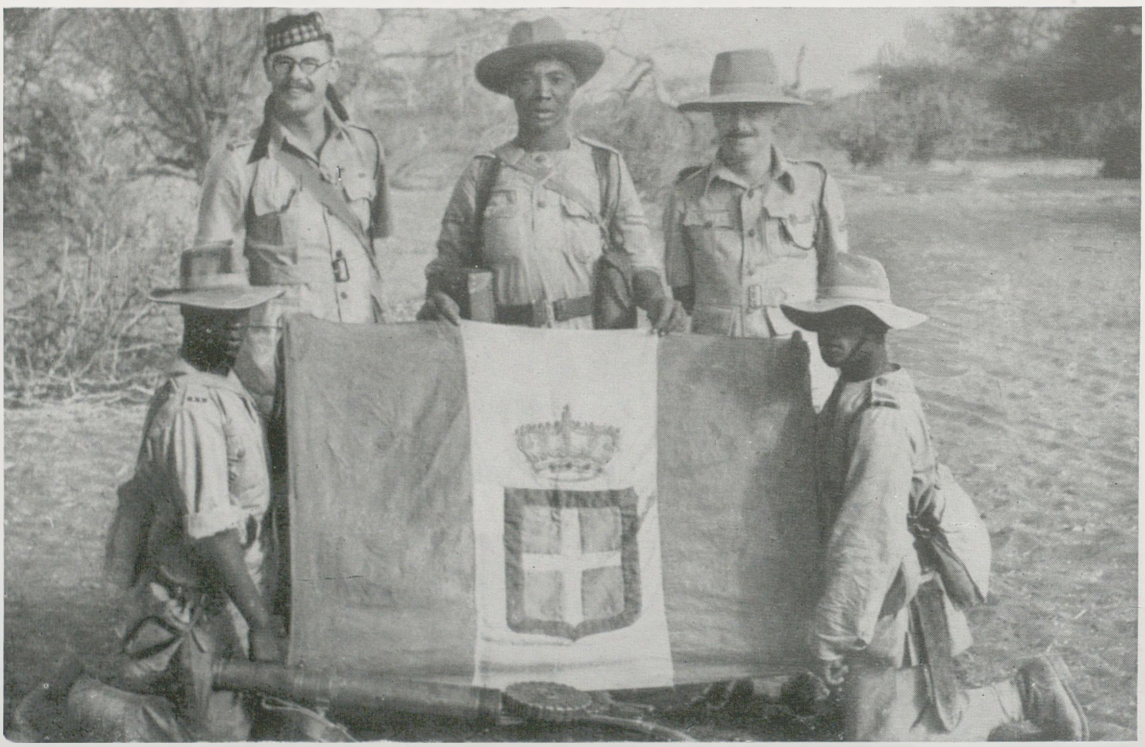
Reproduced from THE SPHERE

A map diagram showing the rapidity with which the British Army of the Nile advanced to the capture of Sidi Barrani. First contact with the enemy was made at dawn on December 9th, 1940. By 6 p.m. on the following day the Italian forces in Sidi Barrani were isolated. The town fell on December 11th.

surrounded by a double stone wall, which would have been all very well as a defence in the frontier warfare of twenty years ago, but was an inadequate obstacle against tanks, especially when defended by irregular troops, as Nibeiwa was.

Before darkness fell on Sunday (December 8th) our motorised infantry brigade stretched its cramped limbs and mounted its vehicles again, parting company from the armoured division, which remained in its hiding place. A long column of our vehicles now headed south-east, towards Bir Sofafi, raising a cloud of dust which could be seen for miles. But when night came, it changed its course, and headed north again, to take its place behind the armoured division, which was creeping through the gap.

Both forces bivouacked for a time, having reached their rendezvous with victory. Not for an instant



An Italian flag captured at El Wak by a small British force led by Capt. D. J. N. C. Henderson (wearing glengarry). Captain Henderson won the Military Cross and Pte. Asanu, of the King's African Rifles (*centre*), the Military Medal.

did the Italians imagine that a powerful force had already passed through their defences. The most they expected was a brush with a reconnaissance column.

At dawn on Monday, December 9th, the somnolent Libyans at Nibeiwa, who were supposed to be manning a post at every fifty yards of their stone defences, heard in their rear the crunch and clatter of tanks over rocky ground. They turned, but it was too late. Our armoured division, spitting flame and death, roared over wire entanglements, the double wall, and the machine-gun nests, crushing everything in its path. General Maletti was killed at his post. His second-in-command, Colonel Giusfreda, was made a prisoner. "We were completely taken by surprise," the latter afterwards admitted.

There was no time to count the prisoners or booty, for the division went forward to attack East Tummar, then to West Tummar. Habsa was isolated, and surrendered to Indian troops on December 11th. During this day, Indian troops rounded up 14,000 of the enemy at a cost of 28 men killed and 80 wounded.

By moonlight on December 9th (the moon reached her full on the 13th) one of our armoured brigades headed north-west, to the coast near Buq-buq, to cut off the Italian retreat. It encountered heavy resistance, ten miles from the coast, and was only able to advance on the afternoon of the following day. By then Sidi Barrani had been captured.



A battlefield in Libya, showing enemy transport completely destroyed by our armoured cars.



Large quantities of war material fell into our hands in the battles of the Western Desert. This picture shows an Italian field gun put out of action by a direct hit. Note the clean hole cut through the stout steel.

The motorised infantry which had followed the armoured division consisted of a South Country battalion, Highlanders, and Midlanders. Much depended on the speed and vigour of its attack. At dawn on Tuesday, December 10th, it went forward to consolidate the previous day's success. A Blackshirt division was holding the position before Sidi Barrani, with well-sited machine-guns, protected by wire, and ample artillery support.

The numerical odds against us were enormous. The issue was still in the balance, although the collapse of the outer camps, and especially of Maletti's mobile column, must have much dismayed the Italians. But had they resisted to the uttermost at Sidi Barrani, we could never have broken into Libya when we did.

The South Country battalion worked round the left flank, and called on some nearby tanks to help, and the Midlanders, on the right flank, were able to enlist the support of our motorised artillery. Both



Evidence of the ceaseless hammering Fort Capuzzo received while in Italian hands is provided in this picture from the desert battle-front. British Bren gun carriers are seen making their way past buildings shattered by shell-fire.

these attacks made good progress. At two o'clock in the afternoon (December 10th) the Highlanders, in the centre, who had not up to that time made much progress, charged the position facing them at the point of the bayonet, creating havoc amongst the Blackshirts in the front line trenches.

A sandstorm came on, limiting visibility to 200 yards, but already the white-walled houses of Sidi Barrani were in sight, and the sea beyond them. From east and west and south British troops poured in. A strongly fortified position had been captured in face of a greatly superior enemy in numbers and supplies, equipped with all the modern weapons of defence.

The armoured brigade, which had been held up at Buq-buq during the 10th, broke through the Italians during the night. Next day it encountered on the coastal road the 64th Italian Division of regulars, on their way from Sollum to Sidi Barrani. The whole force—14,000 men, together with their transport and ancillary services—surrendered in a body.

For some days it was impossible to gauge the extent of our victory. An early estimate of 20,000 prisoners was an understatement: the truth was nearer 40,000. The Corps Commander, two Divisional



The splendid exploits of the Indian Division in the Battle of Sidi Barrani are known to all. Here is a cheerful photograph of their commander, Major-General Beresford-Peirse, leaning against a captured lorry with two of his officers.



Evidence of the Italians' headlong retreat. Guns captured from the enemy at the taking of Sidi Barrani, which fell with the loss of thousands of prisoners. Italian "seventy-fives" and light automatics can be distinguished.

Commanders and a large number of other senior officers had been taken, and immense quantities of war material: four Italian divisions had been scattered, captured or destroyed.

"Perhaps their hearts are not in their work" Mr. Churchill said of them, while paying tribute to Italian courage in the Four Years War. "Perhaps they have been so long controlled and disciplined and ruled . . . that they have not felt those virile emotions . . . which are best nourished by discipline imposed on freedom."

By Saturday, December 14th—a week after the start of operations from Mersa Matruh—units of our armoured brigade were already inside the Libyan border, and some had even reached the road from Bardia to Tobruk. There was confusion and dismay all along the Italian line of communications, from Benghazi to Sollum. In constant sand-storms the main body of our tanks and infantry were being rushed as fast as wheels could take them to Halfaya Pass.

The heights were carried with magnificent dash, and Sollum and Fort Capuzzo fell on December 16th to our advance striking force, together with the frontier posts of Musaid, Sidi Omar and Shefferzen, extending southwards into the desert, and built by the Italians not so much to guard against British attack as to keep disaffected Libyans from crossing into Egyptian territory. In Sollum we packed Italian prisoners into the wire cages they had designed for the captives they had hoped to take on the march to Cairo.

No success on this scale had ever before been achieved with such small loss. Up to December 19th our casualties were 72 killed and 738 wounded. Enemy casualties in killed and wounded could not be



Some of the many thousands of prisoners taken by the Army of the Nile in the swift thrust across the Western Desert. One man takes a dog as his companion in captivity.



The terrific onslaught that was the prelude to the taking of Bardia from the Italians. Bombs and shells bursting in the enemy front line, smashing resistance in "a bastion of Fascism".



Photo *Gaumont Movietone Newsreel*

Closing in on Bardia. British tanks thunder across the sandy wastes of the Western Desert in their successful assault on the doomed Italian stronghold. The enemy were unable to withstand the ferocity of this attack.



Some of the guns that overwhelmed the Italian attempt to hold Bardia against the British assault. Our desert artillery in action in the great bombardment which was shared by the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force.

accurately ascertained but must be numbered in thousands. Up to the end of the year we had already counted 38,114 prisoners, of whom 24,845 were Italians. The battle-area from Sidi Barrani to the outer defences of Bardia was full of wandering Italians and escaping Libyans, tanks, cars, stores, live and dead mules. An endless line of Imperial troops, stretching all the way back to Alexandria, was moving steadily westward, to carry the Union Jack to Bardia and beyond. And that was only the beginning of the campaign.

. . . . . .

We cannot leave the Army of the Nile before Bardia, with its future unrecorded, but must follow it across the frontier to the victory of the year at Benghazi.

On the forenoon of the day when Sollum fell (December 16th) the weather cleared, and the pursuit



British artillery in action on the frontiers of Sudan and Abyssinia.

was continued relentlessly. By December 19th the Italians under the command of General Berganzoli —two Blackshirt Divisions, the 62nd Regular Division, and part of the 63rd Division—were locked into Bardia. The outer ring of defences, on which the enemy had worked for four years, extended for five miles on either side of the port. In this semicircle forty forts had been constructed, manned by thirty to forty soldiers each. Before it ran a tank-trap, sixteen feet wide and ten feet deep. There were also numerous caves and gullies, suitable for a desperate resistance. Berganzoli telegraphed to Mussolini that the defences were impregnable and it was apparently believed in Rome that the garrison could hold out at least two months, to give time for troops to be sent in relief from Tripoli.

To prepare for the assault was not the work of a moment. The rhythm of the pursuit lengthened but did not slacken. While our advanced forces tapped the defences at various points, and the R.A.F. hammered the Italians, hard and often, reinforcements and supplies were being assembled with masterly speed and precision so that once the attack was launched it penetrated much more than the Bardia defences; from then onward the campaign continued with constant acceleration. And this in spite of exceptionally bad weather.

In Italy there was consternation (although Gayda wrote that "the Italians have fought this battle

gloriously, realising that upon its issue the outcome of the war depends,") and in Germany the *Frankfürter Zeitung* declared in a curious leading article (December 15th) that "If Italy should collapse like a house of cards the British plans will have been proved right, but we expect, with Gayda, that Italy will resist, especially as she has large reserves at her disposal."

The reserves existed, by the million in Italy, and in their thousands at Tripoli, but they could not be brought in the right numbers to the right place, until the Germans, with their superior organisation, and large resources, remedied the disaster. But nothing that they have done has diminished the value of Wavell's daring advance. No new threat to Egypt can restore Graziani's army, nor diminish the geographical difficulties of the Axis in this theatre.

On the morning before the attack (January 2nd) our gunboats ran the gauntlet of the coastal batteries of Bardia and shelled the town at 5.30 a.m., followed by warships, with one ton shells, at 8 o'clock. Fires started by previous raids had been burning for a week. The Italians now expected that the crisis was moving to its climax, but they had to wait. No surprise such as had won the day at Sidi Barrani was again possible. There the Italians were lulled into seeming security: here the trapped enemy was kept on tenterhooks.

Zero hour was 5.30 a.m. on Friday, January 3rd. Before the Australians—young troops, not yet tested in battle, but soon to gain a glory equal to that of their fathers in the Four Years War—lay barbed entanglements, land-mines and machine gun nests extending to a depth of four miles.



A well-trained army, working to a carefully prepared plan, was responsible for the swift British advance into Libya. This picture shows Australian infantry advancing on Bardia.



Specially drawn by

A graphic impression of the taking of Bardia on the Libyan coast, when the British Army, the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force united t deliver a very telling blow against the harassed Italian enemy. "No power on earth," admitted one captured officer, "could have stood u to the bombardment." The drive to Bardia followed swiftly on the taking of Sidi Barrani and a force of more than 30,000 Italians were cut o in what the enemy described as "a bastion of Fascism." Hammered without pause by air, by sea and by land, the garrison surrendered in th early afternoon of January 5th, 1941. The town, with the total forces defending it, and all stores and equipment, fell into our hands.



MONTAGUE B. BLACK

General Berganzoli, commanding the Italian forces at Bardia, another corps commander and four senior generals became prisoners of war. A brilliant part in the operation was played by Australian troops, who advanced singing "We're off to see the Wizard of Oz." Travelling in high-speed tanks, they smashed down all artillery resistance. Other resistance was weak, and a position which had taken four years to fortify fell in the space of four days. British casualties were slight, the total being reported as approximately six hundred. Our artist shows the Australian tanks going forward during the final attack, while ships and aeroplanes simultaneously bombard fortifications in the background.



A British howitzer joins in the bombardment of Bardia, one of the most intense assaults ever made on a beleaguered stronghold. Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force shared in the operation.



A Free French machine-gun crew in action in the battle of Bardia.



An official photograph of Western Desert operations showing a gun position abandoned by the enemy. Discarded ammunition is scattered all around, and a dead man lies beside his silent gun.

A feint was made by a detachment of Australians at the south-east corner of the perimeter, and Free French forces worked round to the north-west, where they caught some Italians trying to escape. The main thrust was delivered at the centre, where a valley cut the outer defences into two distinct parts.

Our heavy tanks struck first, followed by the Australians with fixed bayonets. Shells from our artillery screamed overhead. More shells came from the north-east, where the Mediterranean Fleet was cleared for action. Overhead swooped British dive-bombers. Tanks and "diggers" went forward swiftly and surely. Clouds of smoke and dust drifted across them from the stricken city.

This first drive carried the attackers so far that within a few hours the Italian position was cut in two. The valley along which the main advance had been made led to the south shore of the port, and here the Australians established themselves. All day mopping-up continued, thousands of Italians coming out of hiding places when once they saw that we had carried the outer defences. Some even had their bags packed, ready for captivity.



Vast quantities of war material were taken from Marshal Graziani's beaten army in the swift British advance. A line of captured enemy transport is seen on its way back to one of our bases.

Fighting in the northern sector continued on January 4th, but with diminishing intensity, and all resistance ceased at 1.30 p.m. on the 5th, when the Italian flag was hauled down from Government House. Our casualties had been less than 600, and we had taken more than 30,000 prisoners.

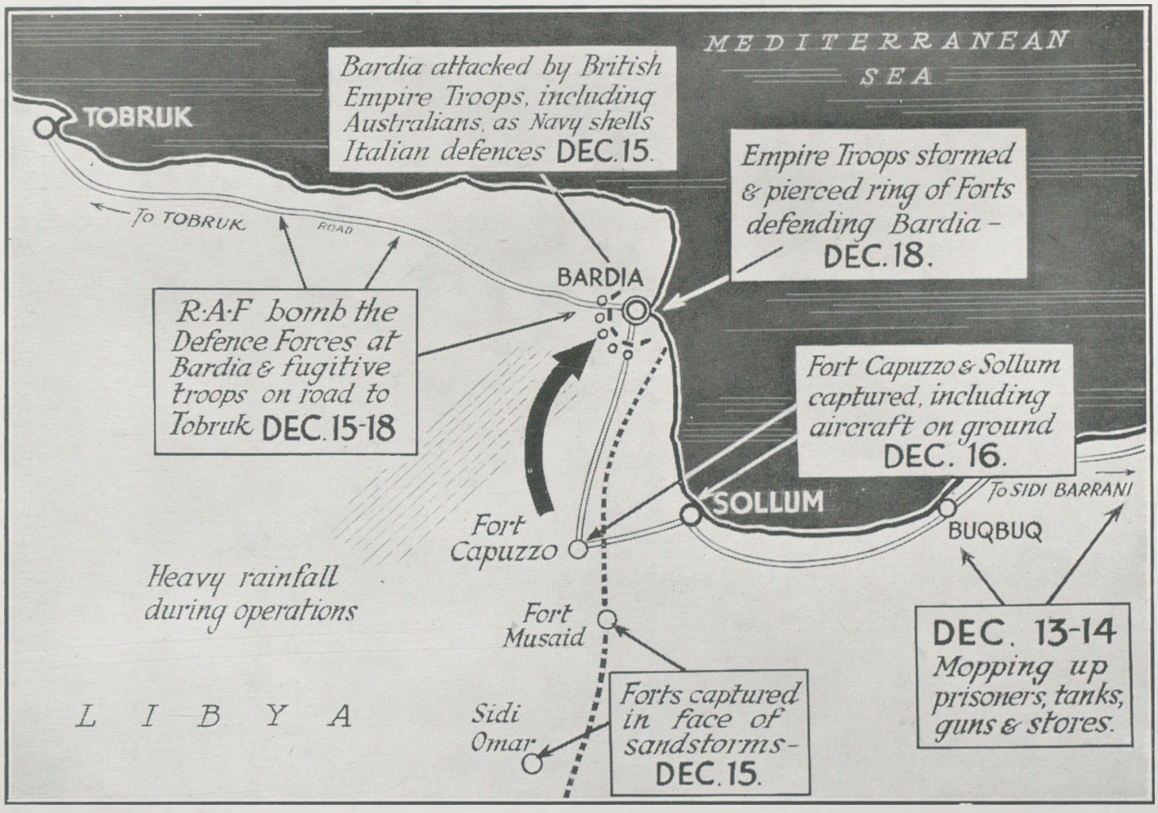
General Berganzoli, seeing the situation was hopeless, escaped with some of his staff during the night of January 4th-5th. The party passed through the British lines on foot, reaching Tobruk five days later. When Tobruk fell he took the last aeroplane out to Derna, and organised the resistance there until his artillery ran out of ammunition, when he escaped to Benghazi.

Once again, Wilson gave no respite to the enemy. Tobruk, the best harbour in North Africa, on which the Fascists had spent millions, is 75 miles from Bardia. Its western exits were seized by our advance-guards on January 8th, and the main body of the Army of the Nile arrived there on the 12th, when the moon was full and the weather fine.

A day later, however, a sandstorm blew up, and increased to the force of a hurricane by the 15th, so that lorries were overturned and tents and telegraph poles blown down. For some days all operations were impossible.

"Operations were impossible" is a statement giving little idea of the hardships of this campaigning. The sky was black, the sand penetrated everywhere, even the pores of the skin. Everything tasted of sand. Every mechanism was clogged with it, and nowadays an army is all machinery, even the infantry with its lorries and all kinds of light artillery, as well as rifles. For a month our army had been fighting without pause or rest or shelter, in bitter cold by night and a treacherous sun by day, on short rations and against superior numbers. Yet there were few sick, and few mechanical breakdowns. It is not invidious, where all did so well, to say that the Royal Armoured Corps deserves the highest praise, for theirs was the hardest task of all, in the maintenance of their fighting vehicles during those suffocating storms, and they bore the brunt of the battles.

Seventeen days after Bardia, Tobruk was taken (January 22nd) by the Australian Division, which had



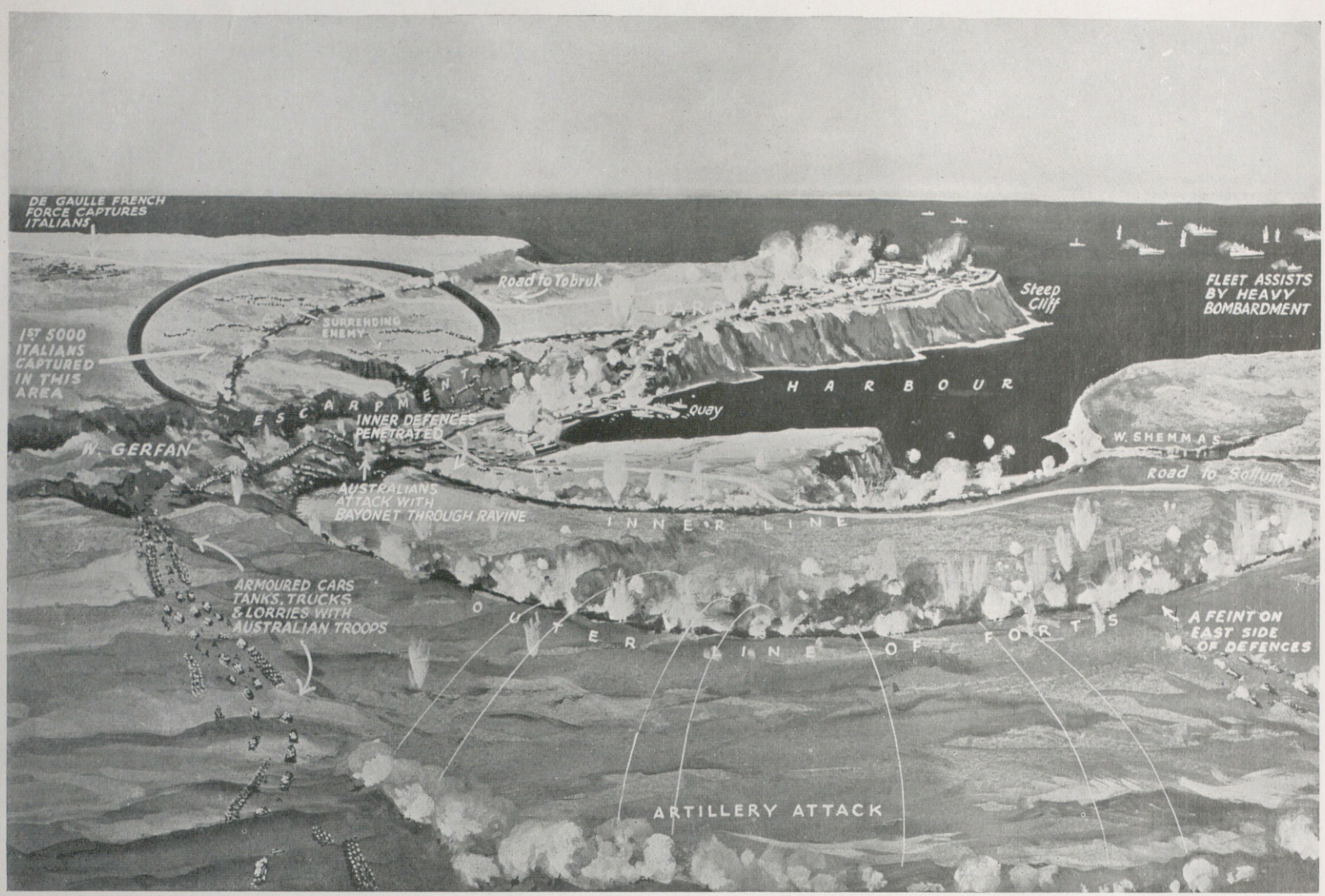
The progress of the Army of the Nile against the Italian forces in their advance into Libya is shown in the above map. The period covered is from December 13th to 18th, 1940.

penetrated the outer defences the previous day, and taken up positions dominating the town. An Italian Corps Commander, a Divisional Commander, two other Generals, an Admiral, and many naval and military staff officers fell into our hands, out of a total of 20,000 prisoners. Our casualties were under 500 and we evacuated 2,000 Italian wounded. These figures speak for themselves.

On the day following (January 23rd) our armoured units were already in touch with the enemy at Derna, 100 miles further west.

With the fall of Tobruk the door of Cyrenaica had been forced open. Egypt was safe and the Italian army was on the run. Was there a chance of trapping the enemy troops at Benghazi, as the other garrisons had been caught? Wavell thought there was. The Italians at Benghazi, making careful calculations of time and distance, thought not; but Wavell was right by two hours.

The pursuit continued to Derna, where our troops found a strong natural position, and the most determined defence yet made by the enemy. Fighting continued for three days in the hills and valleys round the port, before the garrison was driven out.



Reproduced from THE SPHERE

An artist's comprehensive view of Bardia and the surrounding country, showing the operations which resulted in the fall of the town on January 5th, 1941. Our troops made a feint on the east of the position, and attacked in strength down a valley on the west, while still further west the Free French forces blocked the escape of the enemy along the Tobruk road.

While this force was advancing by the coastal road to Benghazi, taking Derna on January 30th, and Cyrene on February 3rd, our armoured division was engaged on a most hazardous and ambitious project. Along the good road by the sea-shore, north of the Green Mountains, the distance from Tobruk to Benghazi is 260 miles, but there is a short cut south of the mountains—much shorter on paper, but actually 240 miles, owing to its windings—leading to a point seventy miles south of Benghazi and west of Soluk. It is only a camel track.

At the village of Mektili, 135 miles from Tobruk, the vanguard of this force encountered fierce opposition on January 26th and 27th. It drove the Italians off, and by the time Derna had fallen (January 30th) the division had assembled secretly at Mektili. By February 3rd, when Cyrene fell, all was ready for the dash to the coast. The object was to surround the Italians who were about to retreat from Benghazi.

Everything was sacrificed to speed. Men's water was reduced to a glass a day, and sleep to a few hours.



"Mopping-up" operations after the fall of Bardia.

A storm of rain, with icy wind, added to the difficulties of the darkness. Over salt-bushes, anthills and boulders the column bumped its way, led by compass bearing, with hardly a halt for 30 hours, until it had covered 150 miles, and was within sight of the sea. Men and tanks stood the strain marvellously.

On the afternoon of February 5th our advanced units struck near Soluk, between the vanguard of the Italian retreat and the main body of the enemy, which it surprised in column route. Another detachment—a motorised battalion of Rifles, with a battery of artillery—had made a dash still further south, and had held up the head of the Italian column.

General Tellera, the G.O.C. of the Italian 10th Army, had with him some 20,000 men and 150 tanks of a new and powerful type, the M13; together with motorised artillery and anti-tank guns. His first effort to break through our encirclement was an attack towards the sea-coast.

The Italians were at bay, and fought desperately: some of their tanks actually reached battalion headquarters. It was a crucial moment. We were outnumbered by five to one, and our men had been thrown straight into the battle after thirty-six hours of an exhausting forced march. They held on like bulldogs and knocked out the leading Italian tanks with the few rounds remaining to their Bofors guns. During the night, ammunition and tank mines were rushed to them from the main body.

Had Tellera attacked our eastern flank he might have succeeded in forcing a passage for his vehicles



Australians in Bren carriers moving up in battle formation.

and infantry, because our vanguard had pushed on so fast that there was a gap between it and the main body. But the stubborn resistance of the Rifles was well rewarded, for hardly a man, tank, or gun of the enemy escaped.

By the morning of the 6th our main body was astride the Italian line of retreat. Still the issue was doubtful, for we had travelled far and fast, and were greatly outnumbered. For fifteen hours a tremendous tank battle raged, with varying fortunes, but at last the Italians began to run short of ammunition, and lost many of their vehicles over the land mines we had laid during the night. When sixty Italian tanks had been destroyed, and some ten thousand troops had been made prisoner, the remainder surrendered.

General Tellera was mortally wounded in a tank in which he had been commanding the operations. General Berganzoli and five other generals were captured. In the wreckage of that field lay the hopes of the new Fascist Empire.

Meanwhile, the Australian division, advancing rapidly from Derna, took the town and port of Benghazi without serious resistance. Our armoured patrols pushed on southwards, as far as El Agheila, 175 miles from Benghazi.

Our victory resounded throughout the world. Had Wavell halted his troops at Tobruk, after having advanced 225 miles in six weeks, the Libyan campaign would still have been accounted an important success. Now he had advanced 500 miles in eight weeks. He had smashed the Italian North African Army and had proved beyond peradventure that our generals, as well as our soldiers—of the latter even the enemy had always entertained a wholesome respect—were worthy of our traditions. In all we had taken over 130,000 prisoners (more prisoners than we had troops in Libya) including nineteen Generals and an Admiral. Enemy troops killed, wounded and sick amounted at least to another 20,000. "The red star of the Island troops had risen," as Mr. Winston Churchill says in his *Marlborough*, "and there was a quality in their attacks which seemed to raise the fierceness of the war to a new degree." Soon that star was to shine on other battlefields.

THE END

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