



**EIGHTH ARMY WEEKLY**

Issued to the Fighting Forces in the desert

No. 28 Vol. 3 November 9, 1942

## Review for the Blue

### AMERICA

For shipment to Russia, the United States Government is buying the complete tyre factory at Detroit, Michigan, of the Ford Motor Company. The plant turns out a million tyres a year. It will go to Russia in bits... Ford soon will start building mass-production invasion gliders, to be towed behind aircraft. Each will carry 15 fully-equipped troops.

### GERMANY

The big bang that comes from the new four-ton bombs of the R.A.F. is described in a Swiss newspaper. During the last raid on Cologne, a third of the fatal casualties occurred in air raid shelters. They just caved in under the blast. Many large buildings were pierced from top to basement by the new bombs.

### SCOTLAND

"Hitler is not an accident he is a symptom," said Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden at a Scottish Unionist conference. "When Hitler, and even Hitlerism in its crudest form, is a thing of the past, we shall still be faced with the problem of Germany."

### SOLOMONS

Although outnumbered and surrounded on three sides, the Americans on Guadalcanal Island, in the Solomons, continue to inflict casualties on the Japanese. The Americans retain possession of the island's aerodrome. In New Guinea, the Australians are pushing the Japanese back through the gap in the Owen Stanley Range, have captured Kokoda.

### ENGLAND

Several new towns have sprung up in England. They are supply depots for the British and United States armies. The towns have miles of roads and railway tracks and row on row of semi-detached houses. They handle everything from bullets to the biggest guns.

### RUSSIA

"Today, the Russian soldier is the proudest man in the world," said Alexander Werth in a B.B.C. broadcast. At time of going to press, the Russians still held Stalingrad and showed no sign of losing it. Snow was falling at both Stalingrad and on the Caucasus Front, where there was a slow Russian retreat.

# MIGHTY ARRAY

By W.M.J. Charlton

By night we advanced. Once more there was a barrage of our guns swamping all other sound. And when morning came we were a mighty array. Our horizon was a crescent of desert and inside that crescent were tanks, guns and behind them our infantry.

The enemy was fighting back. His screen of anti-tank guns, well dug in and cunningly concealed, blasted at our forward tanks. You looked and you heard. You saw a fountain of black smoke and flame lift to the sky and one of our tanks had been destroyed.

Overhead you heard our shells swishing towards those lumpy shapes ahead. They were the enemy. You crouched as you heard the sound of 88 mm. shells roaring like an underground train towards its target. Hot splinters fell nearby and you began to wonder if anything could escape for long. You sheltered by the side of one of our larger tanks and then you had time to look around.

### Flash of Guns

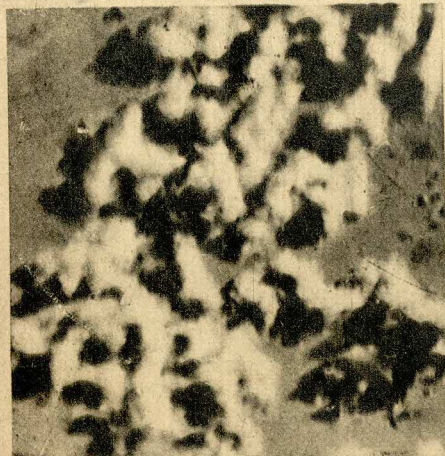
In the distance you saw the flash of the enemy guns and you counted and then there was a crunch and twenty yards away it landed. Over there one of our ammunition lorries was zigzagging its way through the crowded battle of tanks and vehicles. You watched him and wondered if the next shell could possibly miss; and then you shuddered and turned to see explosions 2,000 yards away as our gunners slammed the enemy.

There was evidently an ammunition lorry hit. You could see vague pieces fountaining in the black smoke and flames. Then came the irregular explosions of burning ammunition. For a moment there was quiet — just the ordinary sounds of battle which were part of a normal background.

### Cockney's Cry

Nearby the tank crews were getting more ammunition. Somehow they seemed to be loading the shells too slowly. Inside one tank a shell had jammed and a Cockney gunner pushed his head out and said: "What a bloody Harry Tate. I've waited a long time to have a go at those so-and-so's and now this has to happen." He poked away at the shell with what seemed to be a broomstick.

Behind, the sappers began to blow up dug-in enemy tanks we had overrun. They



"... the solid throb of our bombers." Picture shows pattern bombing by Baltimores.



A British sergeant tests gun in captured German infantry carrier. — F.L.P. Palmer.

set one on fire after taking the Italian occupants prisoner and when the fire began a German who was hiding underneath came out from his hole like a ferreted rabbit.

Overhead the staccato of machine-guns told of an aerial battle. You looked up and saw an aircraft diving like a wounded bird to the ground. You couldn't quite make out the markings which you hoped to God were German. Then out of the sky, as though a magician had waved his wand, there appeared a parachute with a toy-like form dangling from it.

Then overhead came the solid throb of our bombers. They swooped down just a little, straightened and we could see in the sun a dozen bombs, silver-blue, curving towards the earth. You looked and watched for the explosions and they came as the bombs fell on enemy gun positions, ammunition and vehicles.

### Pointing West

Very slowly we were moving forward. On our horizon was a ridge. We had to get there. You noticed a man lying frozen in motion and with a shock you recognised the uniform. It was one of us. Somehow they all seemed to be lying in the same way, within their heads pointing West — for that way lay the enemy.

The last of the light was going. The noise of our guns seemed to grow with it. There was one idea — to press on. And slowly we did. Not far away the infantry lay ready to move again. All day many of them had been cleaning captured enemy weapons. A man swore at the Italians because, he said, anyone who drank chianti instead of whisky deserved the swearing!

There was no rest and no sleep. Yard by yard you fought on. You remembered the slim figure of General Montgomery in the morning when he had come to see for himself. You remembered how you had smiled to see he was wearing a tank beret and then you remembered his words. And you went on.



Here is an intimate picture of life in London as the city enters its fourth winter of war. Already dimmed by the black-out, the city's lights are becoming dimmer, the lives of the people darker. Howard Marshall tells you how London is going...

I have no winter overcoat and it is perhaps because of this that most jobs now seem dull to me. This is an odd state of affairs, but then, many things are odd in war time.

I recently left my small flat in order to take over a smaller one and, as there would not have been enough room in the new one for all my clothes, I sent most of them to the tailors to be looked after; among them was my overcoat.

Recently, when a cold nip in the air made me go and ask him for it, the tailor said that my overcoat was in cold storage along with the rest. He said that he had not enough staff and that what he had was already very much overworked. He told me that he would let me have it some time.



This is a chilly thought but I suppose that if the overcoat is frozen, most of the moths which might have eaten part of it are frozen too. I have an uncomfortable feeling that I may well spend most of the winter thawing out my own overcoat and that is indeed a bleak prospect in these days of fuel economy.

Our lives will be darker, too; not because of the black-out but because we must save light. There will be no bright homes to welcome the worker at the end of his day this winter. I think it was Mark Tapley in one of Dickens' book, which one I do not remember, who said that it was easy to look cheerful when things went well but that it was not as creditable as looking cheerful when things look bad. One should look for things to be cheerful about was his idea and I feel that that is not a bad approach now.

We are reverting to the times of Dickens anyway. London today is like the London of which he wrote — dark streets and torches, carried like the flares of the "link" boys.

I went to see some friends the other day. They live in a mews flat near Hyde Park. To get there you go through an arch into a cobbled yard and up a long flight of wooden stairs. As I went up the stairs I heard a rumble of wheels upon the cobbles and the noise of horses' hooves.

\* \* \*

I looked down as, into the yard, came a sort of super pony trap. It must have been a gig or a brougham though I am not sure of the proper term. It was drawn by a beautifully cared for horse and driven by a man who must have been sound asleep since the coaching days of Dickens. He wore a smart grey bowler hat and had a carnation in his buttonhole, a yellow choker and a large, jovial and very red face. It was an unexpected sight but one gets used to queer modes of travel these days.

Everyday you see tandems going along with a little side-car attachment for the baby or parents riding along on separate machines with their children strapped onto the back. Recently I saw a whole family riding through the streets of London. The father of the family was going on ahead and the children followed in line behind, rather in the manner of a convoy at sea.

I myself cycled to Richmond the other day to spend a couple of hours by the river. As most of you probably know, the Thames

at Richmond is a wide river, about 100 yards across. It is a beautiful spot, with islands dotted about and old houses with gardens coming down to the water's edge. Life was peaceful for a little while. It was so peaceful, in fact, that I looked around for a flat there, in the neighbourhood of Richmond Green. It would have been very restful living there, though transport would have been tiring; but I could not find a flat.

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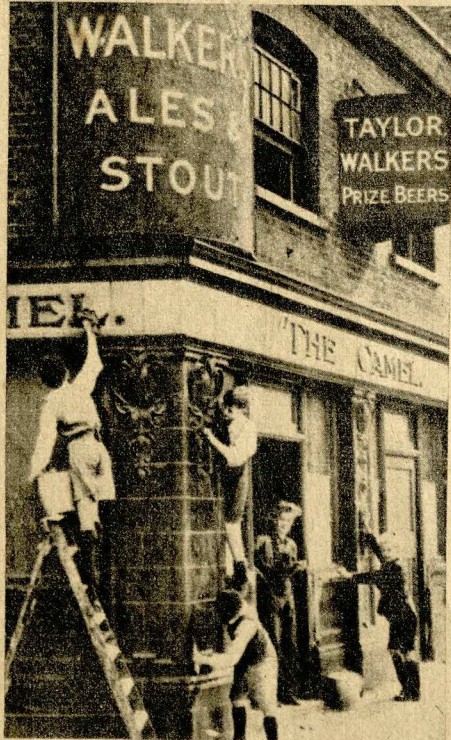
In London now, flats with any sort of service are about £7 or £8 per week up. Rents are high and flats difficult to find.



"...a sort of super pony trap"

People live as near to their work as they can because of the black-out. I found one flat which seemed passable; it was a long way out in Kensington, just three rooms, no furniture, no fittings of any sort and no service, and the rent was £200 per year. I am still looking for a flat.

Another worry recently has been that my children have gone off to a new school. Clothing them used up all our clothing coupons and that may be why I was so glad the other day when I found a shop which takes three old pairs of socks and turns out two new pairs. Women go without stockings so I do not see why we men should not go without socks. Many of us are already doing without hats, but I suppose they will let us hang on to our socks even if it is only so that we can continue to pull them up, which our politicians are constantly telling us to do.



"The Camel" in Bethnal Green has run dry! Sponsors of the "Save the Children" Fund have acquired the premises and are converting them into a boys' club. Picture shows kids cleaning up "The Camel's" exterior. We remember when they sold Taylor Walker's best bitter on draught. Can you wonder why pop's putting in overtime at a munitions factory to speed up Adolf's end?



## Moonlight on the Nile

By Bdr. T.C. Sibbald

I used to think I had a touch of romance and poetry in my soul, but it must be in cold storage for the duration.

What do you think of this, chaps?

The other day I had a letter from Blighty which made me grin a bit ruefully, for it contained a sort of whimsical half-question about "Moonlight on the Nile." You see, that's what the romance novelist has done for the Great British Public. You know the sort of thing.

"Silvery moonlight bathing the Pyramids — the great, silent, mysterious waste of sand, silver under the clear pure rays of the African moon."

"Moonlight on the Nile"! Give me strength! I'M AN ACK-ACK GUNNER!

\* \* \*

Apart from the fact that I haven't seen the Nile for a year, I think of "Moonlight over Matruh," "Moonlight over Tobruk," "Moonlight over Desert 'Dromes," "the great silent waste of sand" (resounding with the bark of 3.7's, the stammer of Bofors, the rattle of small arms) "the clear pure rays of the African moon" (alive with the fiery splash of bombs, the blinding flash of the 'heavies,' the ribbons of angry tracers...)

What is the Blighty equivalent of Gen and has it a feature "Keep up with the Eighth Army"? Editors these days are pretty broadminded, so he might print our blasphemous views on "Moonlight" — on the Nile or in the desert.

All the same... Moonlight... on the Nile... someday... with Margaret?



## Cookery Nook

By Jeff

One or two letters have come in this week from men who want to become cooks. Well the answer is simple. For instance, you, Pte. Maxfield: there is an Army Order which asks for volunteers for cooking, for as all of you know, there is always a shortage of cooks in the army. All you have to do is this. Apply for a transfer to the A.C.C. in accordance with A.R.O. No. 499 of 1942. If your O.C. thinks you would be better suited cooking than doing your present job, then he will pass your name forward to the formation Catering Adviser and in time you will be given a course and become a member of the "Cookhouse Cossacks."

### THE WEEK'S RECIPE

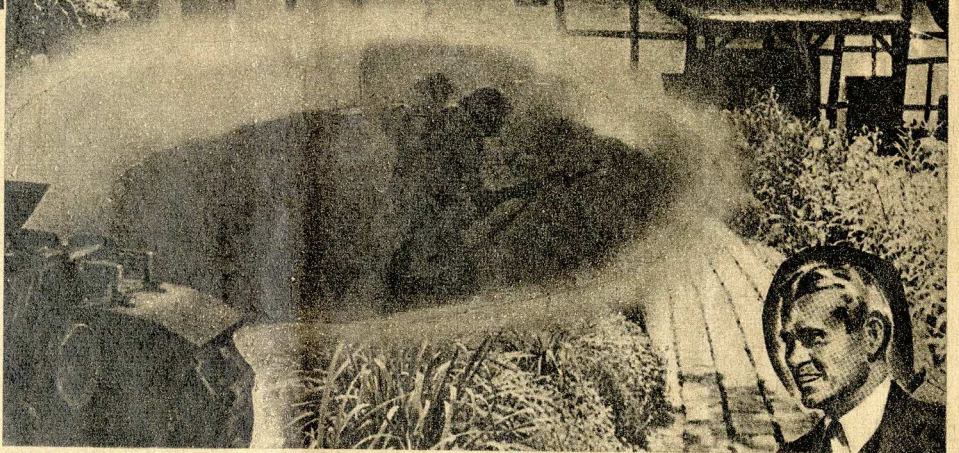
And here's another recipe at which even "The Berkeley" would not turn up its nose:

**Chapvallon of beef.** — Ingredients; 10 one-man steaks, 10 onions, 5 lbs potatoes, seasoning.

**Method.** Take a roast tray (half petrol tin to you)—grease the bottom slightly; spread out a layer of sliced onions. Now fry off with the potatoes sliced about 1/4" thick and laid over the whole dish. Season and just cover with water. Finish off in a slow oven for about 1 1/2 hours.

Yes — I know it looks like hot pot, but the frying off of the steaks makes all the difference in the world. Try it.

# I Remember...



Some day in the cool of an English summer evening I can see someone asking me "And what do you remember of the desert?" This will be my answer.

I remember first the sign at the Y shaped cross-roads; it reads "Western Desert" and an arrow points the way. I recall the thrill of pride as we passed and knew the first stage in the process of becoming a desert rat had begun.

### By "PAT"

I remember a blue lagoon at Bagush, where we bathed naked under the burning rays of the sun, and I remember the nights when we slept fitfully on the metal floor of a truck and woke in the morning cold as an iceberg.

I remember another driver's cheery hand-wave as our trucks passed way out in the blue: monarchs of all we surveyed. I remember thinking "Who wants to be a monarch of this?"

I remember the "brews" in the desert, when we halted and had sausages and

beans, tea and toast all cooked on a primus, and felt we had eaten better than a king at a banquet.

I remember a cold wet morning at "Piccadilly." Our truck was stuck in the mud and we couldn't hope to get her out unaided. But, as always in the blue, someone turned up. A convoy of Springboks this time, and with that true comradeship of the desert they soon had us out and we were on our way again with a thankful wave to our helpers.

I remember that sickly sweet smell I first encountered just outside Tobruk. Someone said "That's the smell of Death", and ever afterwards I hated it. Of Tobruk I remember so much, the row of captured enemy guns by the P.W. cage at the cross-roads, broken, beaten and twisted things — I'll always remember them as a symbol of "things to come" for the German war machine... The church by the square, with its gaping roof and that inspiring message from a British sailor and the statue of the Virgin leaning so pitifully to one side. They say it still stands, but the church is now a total ruin. I remember the duststorms of Tobruk — I'll never forget them, and the sand-covered, unrecognisable men who cursed and swore but still carried on.

### BLACK CROSSES

I remember the black crosses on German graves at Sidi Rezegh and a human-shaped cinder in a burned out tank there. I remember that carpet of crosses laid over a knoll by the roadside east of Barrani, and those others, a cluster of them in a hollow near the foot of Sollum pass.

I remember the lurid flash of bursting bombs against the dawn light and afterwards a still figure stretched by his truck.

I remember seeing those men of Bir Hacheim come back, "battered and worn", but still the FIGHTING French.

All this, and much more, I remember of the desert.

And I remember, after a few months spent in the blue, even though it makes you cold and hungry, tired and thirsty, makes you long for the sight and sound of a mountain stream, the touch of a woman's hand, the firelight's dancing shadows in a cosy room — in spite of all I remember the proud consciousness of knowing that one has been "Up there."



Sentry guards wounded German officer who waits for ambulance.

— Front Photographer Chetwyn —



# Great Green Jackets



Wounded company commander rests under shelter of truck. — F.L.P. Keating.

We moved up to occupy the post at night. We're used to moving when the sun's gone down — we've been doing it for more than two years.

There was a very yellow moon and as we advanced we came in for a spot of bother from some German 88 mm guns. Our post was on a small ridge and diamond shaped. The Germans had not long left and it was in a filthy state. From the moment we got there until we left we were pestered by flies!

## SOMETHING BIG

After we had our twelve 6-pounders ready to do their stuff there was a chance to take a good look at the ground. It was just flat open desert, with the usual scrub.

The enemy started machine-gunning us and sending over mortar bombs. In the brilliant moon I could see the tail of smoke trailing behind the bombs.

We knew something big was starting — you get a funny sort of instinct after you've been through scraps. A thousand yards

away I could see the lumpy shape of the leading German tank. It was a Mark IV Special. We held our fire. Those were the orders. They came rumbling on, spurting at us with their machine-guns and backed by shells and mortar bombs.

They came on and on — they weren't more than five hundred yards away. There were fifty odd tanks and a staff car leading them. Still we held our fire. I could almost hear my heart pounding and it seemed louder than the bursting bombs and rumbling tanks.

I let go at 150 yards. You couldn't miss. All our guns seemed to be firing at once. My target burst into flames but came on for another fifty yards before it halted. Suddenly the night was bright with burning tanks. Over on my left one blew up at two hundred yards.

We were giving them hell, but we weren't by any means getting away with it. Our position was rather exposed and they let us have everything they had got. They even attacked us with lorried infantry.

## DIRECT HIT

It was our twelve guns against fifty tanks, and when they turned about and retired we knew that for the moment our guns had won. Some of the enemy tanks tried to hide by mixing up with knocked out tanks and derelict vehicles — but we are used to most of Jerry's tricks. The crew of one German tank tried to repair it on the spot. We picked them off with a rifle. I heard an 88 mm. banging away at us on a flank — then silence as one of our guns scored a direct hit.

All this time the enemy never let up; nor did we. Time seemed to be lost in the battle. My gun had smashed up five tanks in that first attack — and I am only counting those that "brewed up" — that's our way of saying they burnt out.

Some of our guns were out of action. Some had run out of ammo. I can't remember how many. The thing that sticks out is the Company Commander saying that we were cut off and that there wasn't anything that could get through to us. We would fight it out. Keep on firing as long as we had a shell or bullet. Yes. We understood.



Hungry Jerry could not wait until he got to P.O.W. cage. — F.L.P. Palmer.



Some of the men who took part in "one of war's finest actions." All from London. — F.L.P. Keating.

## General's Tribute

"ONE OF THE FINEST ACTIONS OF THE WAR." THAT'S HOW THE GENERAL COMMANDING EIGHTH ARMY'S 10 CORPS HAS DESCRIBED THE ACTION OF A COMPANY OF RIFLEMEN WHO, WHEN ISOLATED BY THE ENEMY, FOUGHT FOR THIRTY-SIX HOURS, DESTROYING THIRTY-SEVEN ENEMY TANKS AND PROBABLY MANY MORE. HERE IS AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE BY 24-YEAR-OLD SERGEANT CHARLES CALLISTON M.M., (OF EARLHAM GROVE, FORREST GATE, LONDON).

And when you had time to listen it was only then you realised that you had fewer and fewer guns firing. We were also short of water, but somehow you didn't think about that.

Two of my gun crew crept out on their bellies — right into the open to get to some ammo. They were under enemy fire the whole time and their progress was terribly slow. Then our platoon officer



The Company Commander.

decided to reach his Jeep, which had four boxes of ammo on board.

God knows how he got to it—they were machine-gunning the whole way. He started coming towards us and then they hit the Jeep and it caught fire, but he kept on coming. We got the ammo off and then I had an idea. We hadn't had a thing to drink and we naturally hadn't been able to light a fire but here



Member of knocked out German tank crew surrenders as our infantry rush tank. — F.L.P. Thetwyn.



A 6-pounder. There were 12 against 50 tanks. "We were giving them hell..."

was a perfectly good one. So I put a can of water on the Jeep and it brewed up well enough for three cups of tea!

Our Colonel kept going from gun to gun. How he inspired us! The enemy tried to shift us with an infantry attack but we soon sent them on their way with our Bren-carriers and our infantry, who were in position in front of us.

When the next tank attack came in the Colonel was acting as loader on my gun. He got wounded in the head — a nasty wound and we wanted to bind it up but he wouldn't hear of it. Keep firing — that's what he wanted and we didn't pause. When the gun ran short of ammo he got it from one of the others.

## A HAT TRICK

When the Colonel was too weak to refuse attention we bound up his head and put him behind some scrub. He called out that he wanted to know what was happening and my officer kept up a running commentary. We hit three tanks with three successive shots and the Colonel yelled out: 'Good work — a hat trick!' Another gun got two tanks with one shell — they were one behind the other and it passed right through the nearest one into the other and knocked both of them out.

The ground in front of us was littered with broken tanks. We had been fighting for nearly thirty-six hours. I've been talking most of the time about my own gun but what I've said goes for all of them. There was a rifleman and a sergeant who had fourteen tanks to their credit; and a sergeant who had four and so on. The officers were all of them working on the guns with us.

Suddenly I realised that my gun was the only one firing and that we had only two rounds of ammunition left... We took a line on two tanks and got both of them.

Then came the order to make our way back to our own lines as best we could. We had to go under fire the whole way for two and a-half miles. We removed the breech blocks and the sights of our guns.

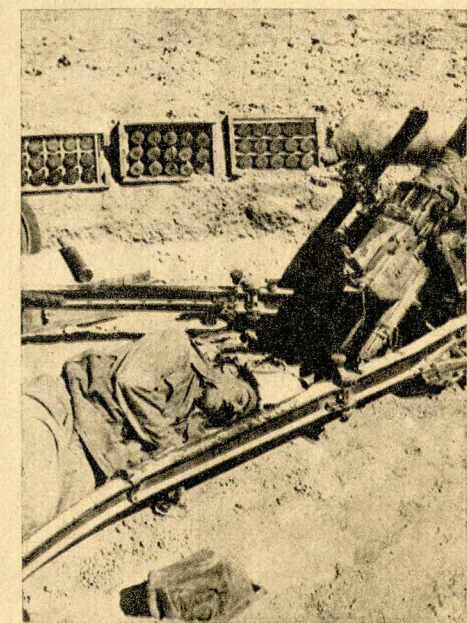
We had men with tommyguns leading and we carried the wounded in the centre. Before we moved off I did something you may think rather stupid — I went back and kissed my gun.

I carried one of our wounded on my back. Freddie — that was his name. He had volunteered to come out here. Been out only a few weeks. He had a wife and four children. He had been wounded trying to help someone else. They got him on the way back — shot him through the head.

## FOUR HOURS

It took us four hours to do that two and a-half miles and then we reached our own lines. We had had about 33 casualties and we had had to destroy our guns — but there were at least 37 enemy tanks smashed beyond hope of recovery and about twenty more knocked out.

Today I heard that some of our troops are back on our position. I hope they have our guns — we still have the breech blocks you know!"



Italian soldier lies dead in pit beside his Breda gun. — F.L.P. Palmer.



# BLUE LETTER BOX

**Eighth Army SAYING SOMETHING**



"Donald" is mascot of C.M.P. of Armoured Division H.Q. He's never seen a pond —hates water!

Lt.-Colonel W. B. Rowntree, R.A. : It gave me quite a shock too when I read your article "Post Script" in "Crusader" and found that A.P.O. had a few supporters ! Quite frankly I have always been a severe critic of that organisation. My post orderlies are average and interested and your article reminds me of a saying the men use about — 'something to do with Bulls' — (the exact phrase doesn't really matter) — 'baffling brains.' The reason for my hate ? Well, simply that my mail takes the most fantastic time to reach me and bears signs of faulty work at A.P.O., that's all !

Here is a typical case of an airgraph delivered to me yesterday and written by a very worried mother on 7 July, 42. It is correctly addressed, yet it has taken over three months to get to me. You will observe that the envelope is stamped 24 August 1942 and some peculiar person has endorsed it "Not known at — A.A. Bde." That strikes me as funny because, after all, there is nothing to indicate that I ought to be known at that H.Q. ! This is typical of most of my letters.



I have been in the desert now for an unbroken spell of 18 months. I am the only A.A. Gunner of the name in H.M. Forces in any part of the world, and I feel that if A.P.O. were so awfully good they'd do something about it. Letters addressed to me correctly from friends in the Delta even, are anything from 4 to 11 days in transit, and telegrams and cables are just a joke. One such letter, received yesterday is endorsed "Not S.A.I.T.B." Whoever said I was ?

What have I done about it, you ask ? Well, quite truthfully I am tired of hearing the blame put on the unit post orderly, and that is all any enquiry seems to produce. I think the answer is that A.P.O. does not cater for the ultra-small operational unit of 12 or so bodies. It will take a long time for our mail to fill a complete sack !

Cpl L.T. Hughes : I have a crib. In each copy of "Crusader" which we receive, we find that the fighting forces have been given all the news. This is right in principle and probably makes the people in Blighty feel proud that their menfolk are in these fighting regiments. But I do think you should give a little space to the men of the medical units, who, although they don't kill Jerries or knock out tanks, see nearly as much action as those who do. In doing this service to these medical units you will wipe out the too common idea that the "blood waggons" have a soft time. People at home, and even many troops, forget that ambulances go into a tank battle to bring out the casualties.

What "the boys" think of our work is indicated by the remark of a sergeant in a tank regiment who poked his head out of the "Grant" and said to one of our ambulance drivers, "I wouldn't have your job for a pension mate."

P.S. — One of the boys would like to know where all the pretty ladies are who have been touring the desert. He remarks he thinks they only tour round on the back of "Crusader," because he hasn't met any yet.

We agree heartily about the good work done by the medical boys in the blue. The article "Blue St. Bernards" in "Crusader" Oct. 26 was an attempt to express this.

We did see the pretty ladies in the blue on one occasion, but we haven't met any of the ladies on the back of "Crusader." Maybe it's just as well, seeing some of us are married !

\* \* \*

Pte. R. Galbraith : In answer to the paragraph in "Crusader" asking for translations of slang words used by desert rats, I would point out that most of the odd words we



use are Arabic. I have noticed many new boys quite perplexed over them so I suggest that they should set to work and pick up some Arabic, as we had to do.

Cpl Madams (R.E.) : I have just finished reading the article by C.S.M. Maroney, in your issue of October 19 and found it amusing but certainly not instructive. In fact, one statement may cost the lives of men who may follow the instructions given. The C.S.M. dealing with action against flies, says "spray the walls (of the bivouac) with petrol" ! ! ! I know of a case where two men were badly burned, through spraying a dug-out with petrol, returning later and one of them striking a match causing an explosion with disastrous results.

Then on top of all that, the C.S.M. states, in brackets after his statement, referring to petrol, "there's lots more where that came from." I thought that attitude was to be discouraged ; and yet here is a warrant officer making a statement which can be quoted with devastating effect by anyone who is pulled up for wasting petrol.

I won't go on with the C.S.M.'s statement about gathering in petrol tins for a protective wall around said bivvy, although personally I thought that tins were to be returned to salvage !

Well, well, "we" thought that even a blind man would see that C.S.M. Maroney's article was a satire, to be read as a denunciation of all the sort of skulduggery he describes in his "tips." But in case Cpl Madams is right, we state here and now that C.S.M. Maroney's advice is NOT (repeat NOT) to be followed by well bred desert rats !

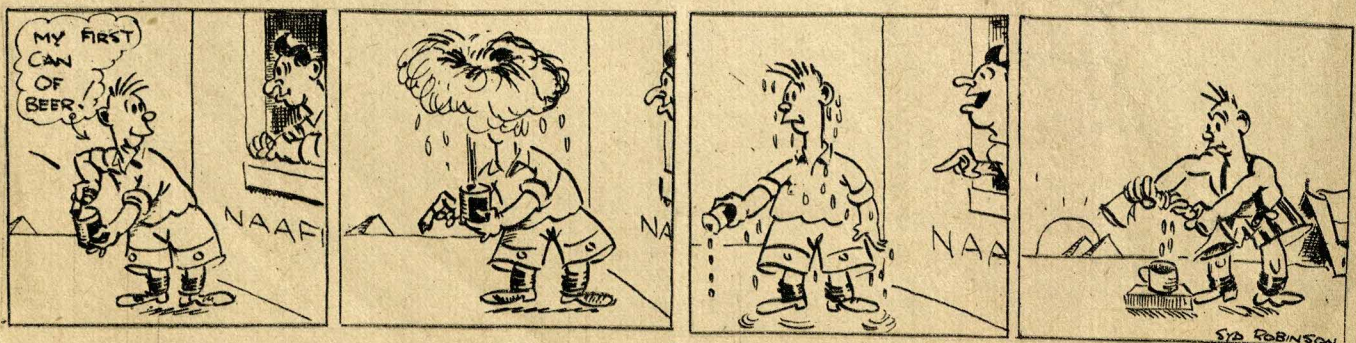
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Pte J. Harvey (a Vehicle Section, R.A.O.C.) : In your edition of "Crusader" dated the 19th. October, there is a photograph of Pte W.T. Keeble of Bermondsey. He is my uncle and I have been trying to find him for some time for the benefit of my mother, who is his sister. Could you please forward his address ?

Will Uncle Keeble please oblige ?

## George Gumption

## No. 6 Desert Refreshment !



SYD ROBINSON



# Radio Review

## Crusader Cutie

No. 12

### B.B.C. FORCES

(On 19 metre band from 5.45 to 7.45 p.m.; 31 m. from 7.45 to 11.0 p.m., 25 m. from 10.0 to 11.0 p.m. and on 31 m. from 11.0 p.m. to 12.45 a.m.)

This new service for the M.E.F. gives 7 hours continuous entertainment. The following are the fixed points in the new schedule.

**Monday.** — 7.15 "Songtime in the Lager," with Jack Payne's Orchestra and guest artistes. **Tuesday.** — 7.15 Doreen Villiers entertains Eighth Army; 7.30 Colin Willis reads Australian News, Arthur Highway New Zealand news and Cyril Watling South African news. **Wednesday.** — "Swing Show Case" (recorded highlights of jazz history); 6.30 Anne Shelton, with Ambrose Players in "Words and Music." **Thursday.** — 7.30 Radio Rhythm Club; 9.15 Roy Rich in "Record Time"; 10.15 Brains Trust. **Friday.** — 6.0 p.m. Anzac Hour, Double or Quits Quiz; 7.30 "Shipmates Ashore"; 9.30 Tommy Handley's "Itma"; 10.30 Bob Hope. **Saturday.** — 9.30 "Irish Half-Hour."

At 8.0 p.m. each evening is a news feature followed by news from home, except Fridays, when special'y edited "World Affairs" feature replaces home news.

### CAIRO

Forces Programme : Reading of Communiqués daily at 5.30 p.m.

**Sunday.** — Reading of the Day's Communiqués. Records.

**Monday.** — Programme for American Forces. **Tuesday.** — "Out of the Blue" §, a programme produced by the Services at home for the entertainment of their comrades overseas. R.A.F. Fighter Command supply the talent.

**Wednesday.** — "Sitting on the Fence"; "South Africans present".

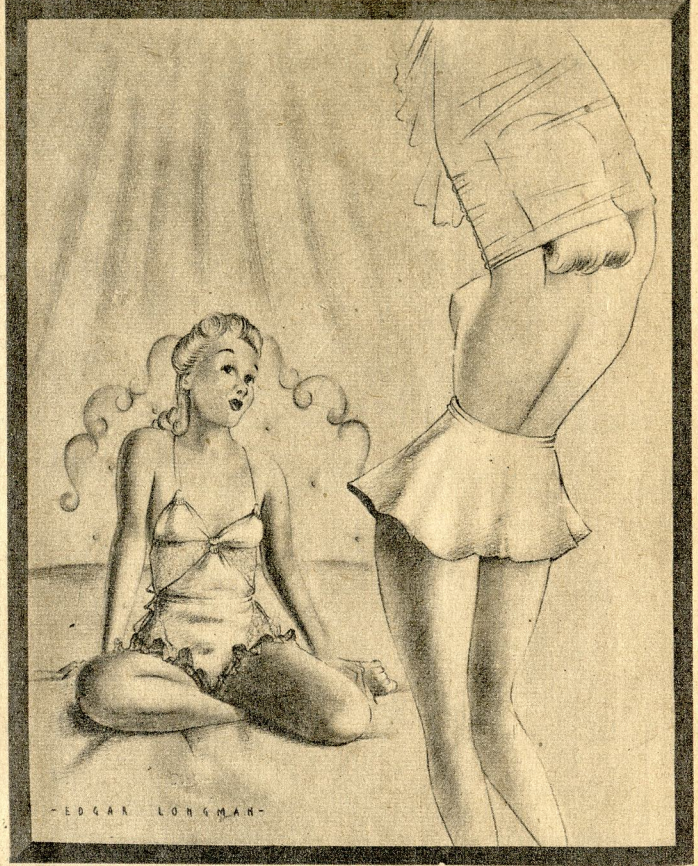
**Thursday.** — R.A.F. Orchestra; New Zealand Calls the Boys Overseas.

**Friday.** — Forces Radio Variety Programme.

**Saturday.** — N.A.A.F.I. Radio Theatre (relayed from a Military Hospital); Swing Music. §

### Airgraph Record

The airgraph branch of the London G.P.O. has tackled its biggest job during the last few days. Incoming mail from the Middle East contained two million letters. Flying conditions held up some of the mail 'planes, and when one 'plane did get away it carried several mails. Its load was a record for airgraph services since the inception.



"He said he's going to run a competition to find Eighth Army's 'Victory Sweetheart' — and I won it, last night!"

## THE GRIFF



Battle Rationed ! But we've found a corner for our "Back Page Lady." Tahitian temptress is Peggy Drake, R.K.O. starlet.

That our offensive came as a surprise to many of the enemy forward troops is indicated by the bewilderment of German prisoners taken on the first night.

One sergeant of a Panzer Grenadier Unit turned up in the P.W. cage dressed only in an overcoat and stockings. Another had just time to pull on a pair of pants before being put in the bag.

A German unit was being served with a hot evening meal when our barrage opened up. The meal was never eaten.

The accuracy of our gunners is shown by the number of enemy anti-tank guns, artillery positions and dugouts hit. One German officer was in his dugout when it received a direct hit. He was left for dead by his comrades and when he came to he heard our troops in the position. Thinking it was only a strong raid, however, he 'lay doggo' in the hope that they would soon depart. He discovered his mistake when he emerged some time later.

### IS THAT SO ?

A newspaper cutting with the headline "Rations of the German Afrika Korps" was found among the papers of a private of the Panzer Grenadier Regiment.

The article lists the following items of diet among rations issued to Germany's desert soldiers :

"Calf fricassee, beef meat conserves, chicken fricassee, mixed beef and pork meat, mutton stew, ham, rice, potato and beef rissoles, cabbage and sausage, tinned potatoes and veg., semolina with fruit, tomatoes, cu-

cumbers, Swiss cheese, blood sausage, fish conserves, chocolate, lemons, oranges, fruit juices, beer and wine."

In the margin of the cutting is this one pencilled comment : "Is that so ? ? ?" in German.

### TOO BAD !

"Once we have conquered England we can make peace with Russia — not with Stalin, of course, but there will be a revolution over there. There can be no revolution among the German people — the Gestapo will see to that...."

"The difficulty is that even if we march into London the English will carry on the war from the Colonies. On the other hand, if the English were to march into Berlin what would be the good of our continuing to fight in Africa ?"

(Letter from a soldier of the Afrika Korps).

### "DOCUMENT OF BARBARISM"

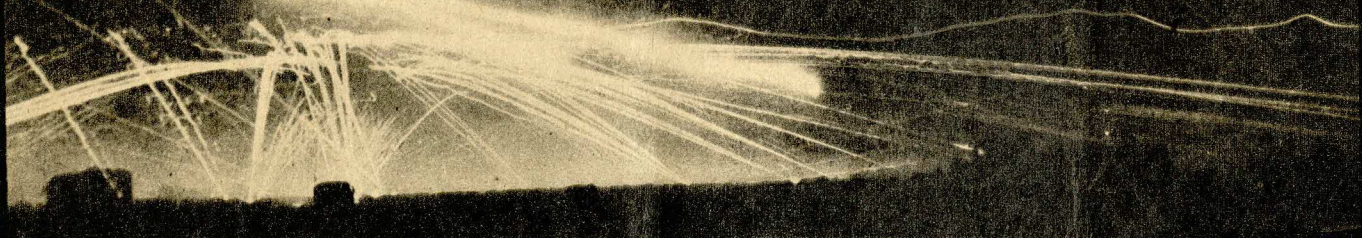
"Unheard of brutality, inconceivable ferocity" says the Italian *Messaggero* of October 15 splashing on the front page a "Document of Barbarism," in other words, part of an alleged order to a British landing party in the raid on Tobruk to attack and wipe out the garrison of a certain strategic shelter.

Next to this "Document of Barbarism" is a headline announcing "Himmler in Rome—cordial conversation with the Duce."

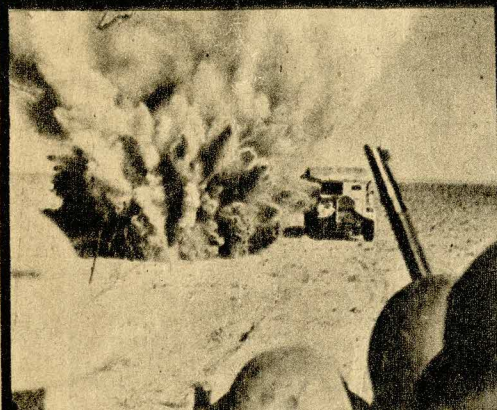
Our guess is that Gestapo-butcher Heinrich H. had a quiet chuckle when he read about British ideas of "barbarism."



# Back Page in Battle Dress



Night picture taken during enemy air attacks on new forward British positions.



Infantry carrying truck is heavily shelled.



The Army Commander and Lt. General Morshead pose informally for this battlefield picture.



Wounded tank man helped to ambulance.



Infantry advance towards enemy position through smoke and dust of bursting shells.



"V" sign — with "V" smile



Captured Nazi striping



There's no doubt about their nationality.

Photos by Front-line Photographers Gladstone, Fox, Mephram, Chetwyn and Garnham.



# Christmas Number



**EIGHTH ARMY WEEKLY**

*Issued to the Fighting Forces in the desert*

**No. 34 Vol. 3 December 21, 1942**

## Review for the Blue

### NORTH AFRICA

While Eighth Army's advance past Mersa Brega into territory vacated by Rommel is slowed up by mines and booby traps, and torrential rains have turned the Tunisia battlefield into a quagmire, Allied air forces are pounding the enemy in both theatres.

The British advance from Agheila is taken in London as an indication that Rommel has been out-generalled and out-manceuvred again. Morley Richards, "Daily Express" military correspondent, suggests that if it is the German intention to hold the Tunisia tip to gain time for the building up of defences in southern Europe, a series of "nuisance" delaying action by the Axis forces may be expected along the 350-mile road west.

### RUSSIA

Latest reports from the Russian front show that the Germans are rushing up reinforcements and launching day and night counter-attacks west of Rzhev in an attempt to check General Zhukov's forces. German pressure is also increasing south-west of Stalingrad, in an attempt to break through the 23 divisions trapped between the Don and the Volga. All German efforts to relieve the trapped army have also been smashed. In the central sector the Red Army has captured several German strong points after four days' fighting.

### NEW GUINEA

Buna, last Jap stronghold on the east coast of New Guinea, was occupied by Allied troops after hard fighting. Allied air forces shattered a final attempt by the Japs to bring up fresh troops and supplies.

### CHRISTMAS CARTOON by Brian Robb.

"SORRY, MATE — NO TIME"

*We don't know her name, but with an expression that combines the confidence of Churchill with the cheek of Max Miller, she makes the ideal "Crusader" Christmas cover baby. Photograph was taken by Norman Smith. "All the best to Eighth Army—from Blighty," was his caption. Norman, now back home after serving in the blue, took many of the Tobruk pictures during the siege.*

## To You - From Us

This is your paper's first Christmas and we wish you all the best and may your next Christmas be at home.

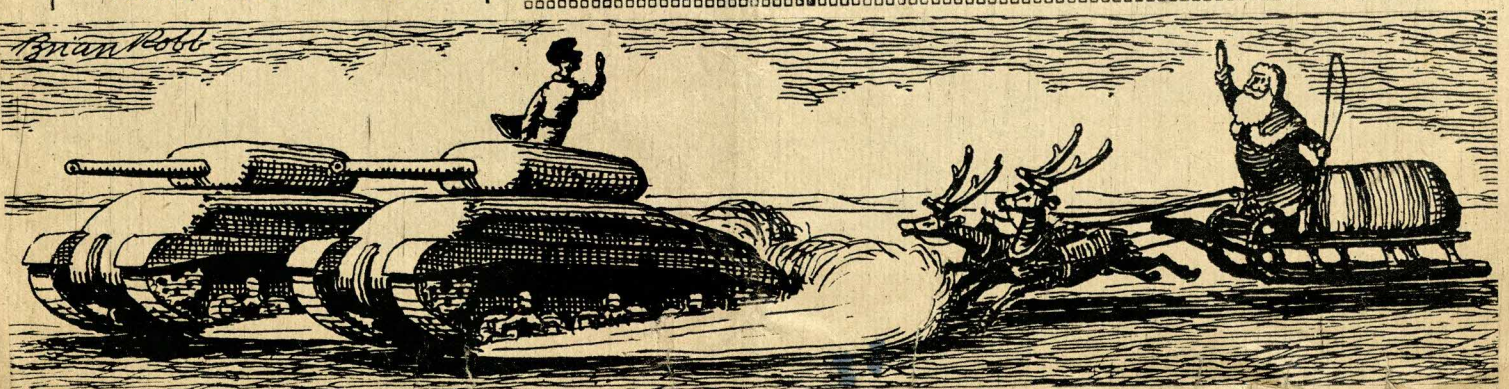
You'll notice that "Crusader's" few pages are not bedecked with holly, pictures of Christmas puddings being stirred, and sledges slipping through snow, driven by bearded Santa Claus. Our Christmas in the desert won't be like that.

Some of us may get a few extras, but many won't. First priority is the stuff with which we fight our battle. For all that our Christmas will be a good one. We've given them one present at home with the victory at El Alamein. They rang the bells for us and now once more we face the enemy and a tough battle.

There won't be one of us who doesn't pause and reflect on the Christmases we spent at home and those we live and hope for in the future.

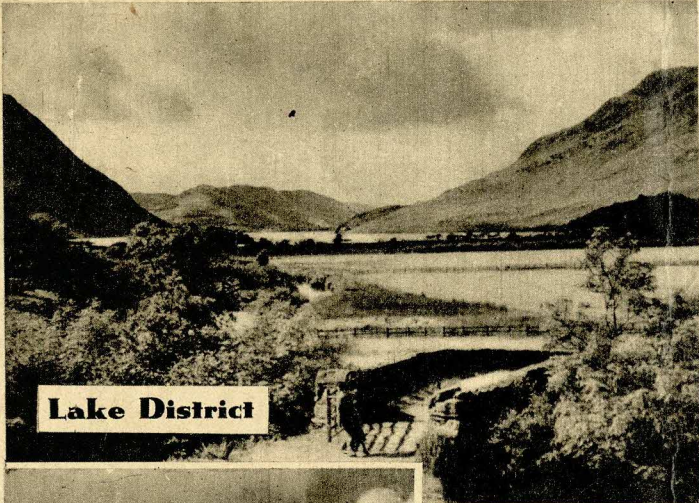
So to all of you—wherever you may be in the vastness of the blue—a victorious Christmas, for that will bring us nearer to our ideal of what Christmas should be.

And to all those fathers who have not had the chance to play Santa Claus, and there are many of them, we hope the day may not be too far distant when you tell a bedtime story "Once upon a time, in a place called the blue, Santa Claus wanted to come and fill your stocking, but he was too far away and his sledge was laid up for the duration..."





*"Her fair and floral air and the love that lingers there"*



**Lake District**



**Wales**

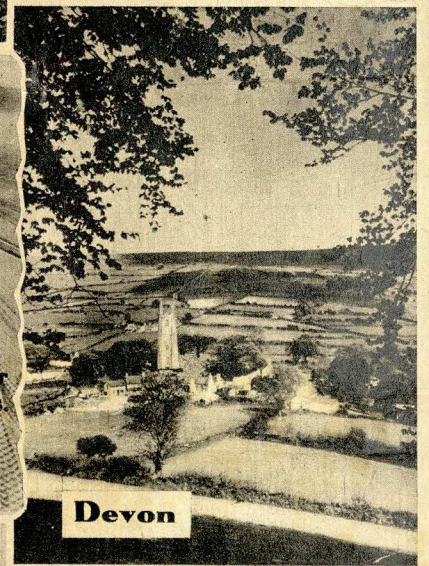


**Somerset**

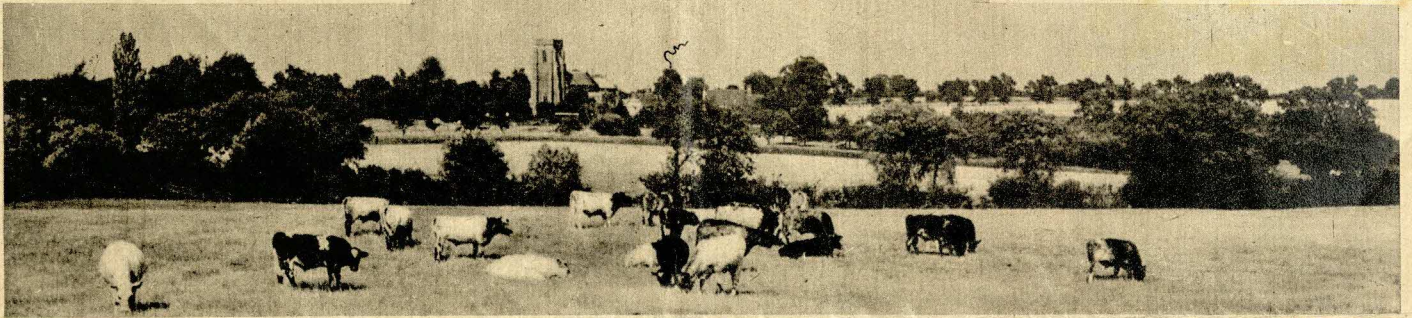
*"...but not our dreams"*

Myopic view of war must cease,  
 It is but prelude to a peace  
 And even poorest poet knows  
 How through the barbed wire shoots the rose.  
 They may divert, they do not stop the streams  
 And they can blast the town but not the hill :  
 The bombs may wreck our homes but not our  
 dreams  
 And nothing known to man can break our will.  
 ALAN CRICK

**Sussex**



**Devon**



**Midlands**



**Scotland**



# Through Enemy Eyes

This vivid description of his experiences in the recent battle was contained in a letter from an officer of an Italian Light A.A. Battery which was found in the field.

## "Horrific" News Reel

"Every day is a sequence of violent episodes, which follow one another like a cinema reel. Two more air raid warnings this morning (26 Oct.). Two more during the afternoon, and towards evening a final tragedy.

I was waiting to have my meal. Canavia and I had seen a formation of Stukas go on their usual mission towards the enemy lines. The sight of these Stukas cheered us up no end. It warmed the cockles of the heart, especially ours who feel so keenly the enemy's superiority in bombers. (Actually, one Stuka is worth ten four-engined 'planes). Just before then we had admired a long column of some three hundred M.T. driving towards El Alamein. Apparently the battle still rages.

That was how things stood when suddenly I heard M.G. fire "They are attacking the column!" I shouted to Canavia. But it was not so.

### Terrifying Sight

We then witnessed a terrifying sight. Four or five Stukas and a couple of Me's are flying towards us when they are caught in the terrific fire of a German 20 mm A.A. troop from a position in front of us, near the shore. The 'planes immediately throw recognition flares which illuminate the sky, and switch on the navigation lights on wings and tail, but in vain. With blind fury the Germans continue firing on these unfortunate 'planes. We see with horror one Stuka catch fire. Another crash-lands on our right. Then, at last, the firing subsides.

We are stunned by this incredible incident. What madness has taken hold of these German soldiers? During the evening we hear another version of the story. But the new version is rather weak. It is said that a Curtiss was chasing the Stukas. One Stuka was shot down by the Curtiss and it was against this attacker that firing was directed. A very poor explanation, as two Me 109's were escorting the Stukas!

They would never have left the Stukas undefended. Moreover, this version clashes with what I saw personally, and I would willingly bear witness if necessary.

During the night infernal firing on the front line. However, the news bulletin is satisfactory. It was also announced that the English attempted to land at Mersa Matruh during the previous night to my visit. I had a narrow escape!

### "Horror of it"

"This day (Nov. 3) has been so frightful that I haven't the pluck to describe it. I'd rather not revive all the horror of it. The trucks were on the way during all the morning. We thought it must be a withdrawal, and this was confirmed by the disappearance of all the German units around us.

In case we have to withdraw, too, our situation will be precarious, so short are we of M.T. We call for transport to come from the "M.T. Pool" but I fear it has too much to do for its own removal to think about us! Canavia is undecided, so I persuade him to go and speak to Major Congi. For a moment we thought we might end as prisoners in British hands. The news Canavia brings back is comforting. As soon as we receive orders to withdraw we also will get some M.T. That's good!

Towards midday the show starts. We should be thankful to the Lord for being still alive! I am unable to put on paper what we went through. Five times machine-gunned and twice bombed!

The first attack puts a gun of No. 1. Section out of action. The 18 bombers aim at the ammunition dumps. A few cases are

### Little Known Units of the W.D.

by Brian Robb.



No. 5 — No 375 (Locally Enlisted) Forward Supply Group.



The Army Commander with a gun crew.

blown up. We hear the bombs whistle and we close our eyes. The explosions are terrific, and I never thought I could feel such a sense of fear. The other Sections continue firing bravely.

We have not yet recovered from the shock when 20 fighters go for us, flying between us and the road at a very low-level and straffing fearfully. I am still at H.Q. and I immediately make for a trench. We are six men in a trench of two-square metres. The bullets whistle around us like deadly mosquitoes, while the cases of ammunition continue to blow up with an infernal din.

Suddenly, over our heads, another squadron of bombers. I go to the telephone to inform the others. When I hear the first explosions I am overcome with terror. My teeth chatter and I close my eyes. I jump everytime I hear a whistle. This is the end — this is the end! I hear over my head the rattling of an M.G. Oh, my God, how vile I am! Oh, God, how shameful! The gunners, as if conquered by fright, fire angrily. It is the first time I had bombs drop so close to me. I must be as white as a sheet. I cannot justify it, but I am utterly unable to overcome my fear, and my heart beats violently, whilst I'm gasping for breath. That, too, has passed, but still it is not the end.

Another straffing, it's terrifying. 1 Section fires with one gun, then 2 Section, and so do we. Unfortunately, our second gun is jammed. However, Omodeo, who is really very plucky and in much better form than I am, continues with one gun only. Thank God, some of our fighters appear at last. At one go, I see one of the British fighters hit by Omodeo's gun and some shot off an odd Fritz. He starts going round and round and lands not far away from us.

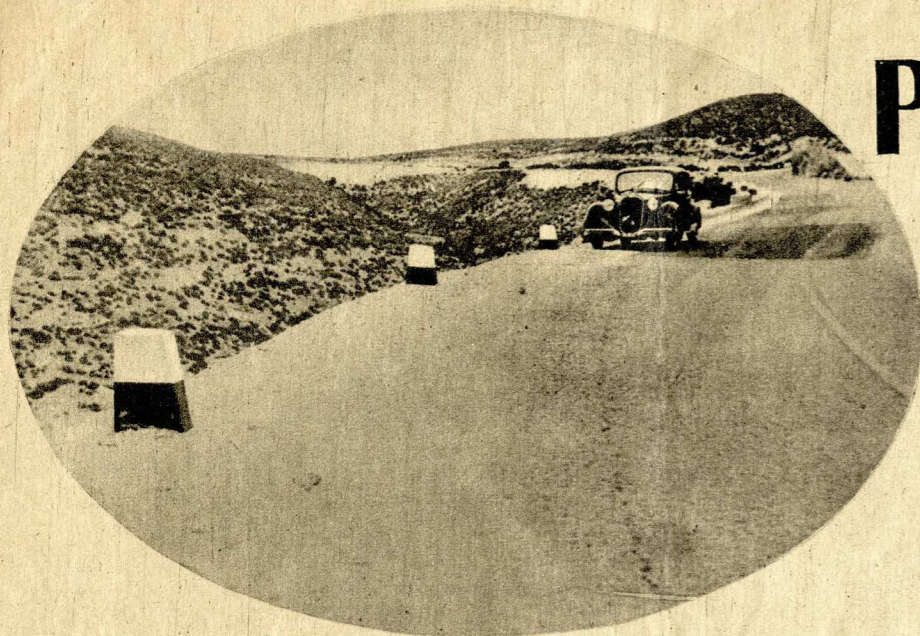
### "God help me"

Accompanied by three gunners armed with rifles, I run towards the 'plane to capture the pilot. Whilst we are on the hillock, they come over and start machine-gunning. I throw myself flat on the ground; so do Santremenna and Nardo. Rizzo is not far away. For ten minutes the bullets whizz over our heads. We are flattened on the ground and invoke all the Saints, may God help me. It seems as if the English airmen wish to do as much harm as possible to avenge their fallen comrade.

From sunset until 21.00 hrs I remain in a trench with Camavia. At 21.00 hrs I retire to my tent, then decide to sleep amongst the gunners. At 01.00 we are awakened. Bengal flares; bombs; for a whole hour we stay in a trench. The night is bitterly cold. We then manage to sleep until dawn."



# PRELUDE TO TRIPOLI



One of the excellent motor roads which connect Tripoli with the principal towns in Libya — showing a typical landscape.

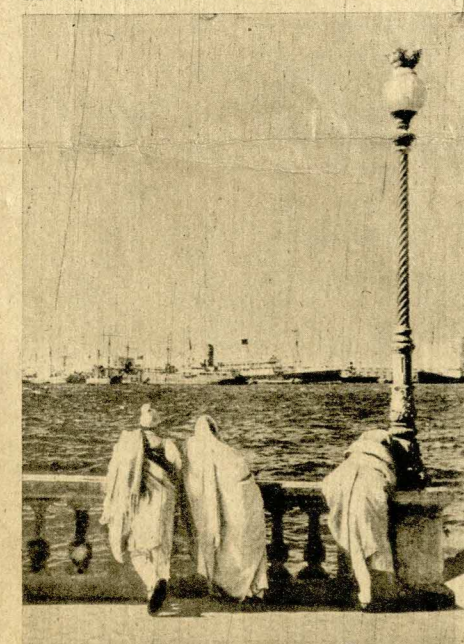
Hundreds of miles of small oases with clean-looking native villages and great olive-groves will be your prelude to Tripoli as you come from Cyrenaica.

Tripoli itself is built in an oasis. Your first sight of it will be a series of clean, Italian-built native settlements among the palm-trees. Then you will drive into the European residential quarter, full of gay little bungalows set in their own gardens.

If you are lucky, you will turn off to the right and come out on to the promenade which runs along the coast, pull up outside some large, modern building and know that that is going to be your billet for a while.

On that promenade and in those large buildings centres the life of European Tripoli. The city was built by the Italians to attract tourists and on the promenade — the Lungo Mare Conte Volpi — are set its principal attractions. I have travelled a good deal but never in the south of France or anywhere else in Europe, have I seen anything to compare with its magnificent sweep and its little gardens.

In a series of blocks of flats, bright cafes, hotels, restaurants, cabarets, cinemas and



Tripoli harbour seen from the Piazza Castello, showing pillars of Rome and Tripoli.

theatres along the front, there stand out the town's two principal hotels — the Albergo el Uaddan and the Albergo Nazionale — built to look like huge mosques and the last word in comfort inside. And you will easily pick out, too, the Miramare restaurant, where there is good food, dancing and, in peace-time, a first-class floor-show.

As you wander along the Lungo Mare, you will find that Tripoli is one of the cleanest towns you have visited in Africa — for the very good reason that the Italians have tried to give their tourists the "glamour of the East" without its usual distractions.

## Polite Natives

To do this they have been very high-handed with the native population. No native is allowed into the European quarter of the town unless he is wearing clean clothing and all European bars, cafes and so on are out of bounds to even the highest-class natives.

You will find the natives extremely polite. I remember once stopping my car to ask the way. An Arab came up, gave the Fascist salute and stood rigidly to attention. I asked him the way in Arabic but he replied in Italian and steadfastly refused to



The unchanging East. A view of old Tripoli which might have been taken in Cairo.

Going West, young man? Then you'll want to know something about the towns you may visit when the Axis troops have been squeezed off the African coast. Here an Eighth Army N.C.O. who lived in Tunisia for many years before the war and was a frequent visitor to Tripoli tells you something of Tripoli, Tunis and Bizerta.

speak a word of Arabic. Whenever a European speaks to a native the native salutes and stands to attention.

At the West end of the promenade is the Castello, an old Turkish fort, relic of the days when the Ottoman Empire stretched the length of the Mediterranean, and behind it is the native quarter.

By rigid control and by building themselves, the Italians have Europeanised the native quarter, made it much more sanitary than native quarters in most north African towns—and robbed it of much of its picturesque character. In the soukhs you can buy the finest burnouses in the world, the famous Tripoli embroidery, local-made carpets and brasswork.



"The natives are extremely polite..."

There's a good brewery in Tripoli, but if you want to go native you can drink boukha, the local drink which is made from dates or figs. It tastes something like vodka; be careful of it — it is very strong.

The favourite local dish, as in Tunisia, is couscous — steamed barley with meat and vegetables and very good, too.

## Very Refreshing!

Very refreshing after the wastes of Cyrenaica will be the sight of the Tripoli girls. Dark-eyed and lush-figured, many of them are daughters of Italians who married Arab women before the Fascists forbade mixed marriages. There are many beautiful Italian and Maltese girls, too. None of them are stand-offish.

Not far out of the town is Tripoli's most famous peace-time attraction, the Autodromo della Mellaha, the world's fastest motor-racing track where the Grand Prix de Tripoli was held. I have seen Carraciola, Nuvolari and most of the other famous

European drivers there. When the races were on the members of the big automobile clubs were entertained by Marshal Balbo in the Palazzo el Governatore, another building which is well worth looking at.

If you like bathing, there are some good beaches to the east of the town, with rotunda cafes and all the usual seaside amenities.

Tunis, you will find a very different from Tripoli, but lots of fun. The French, instead of trying to Europeanise the natives, have

## Christmas At Agheila

Somewhere amid the wind-swept Libyan sands,  
In Stygian darkness, frozen to the bone,  
His greatcoat swathed about his ice-bound limbs,  
This Christmas Eve a soldier stands alone.

\* \* \*

For three years now he has not seen his wife,  
Three years of blood and sweat and toil and pain,  
Three Christmas Eves have seen him far from home,  
Perhaps one more will see him back again.

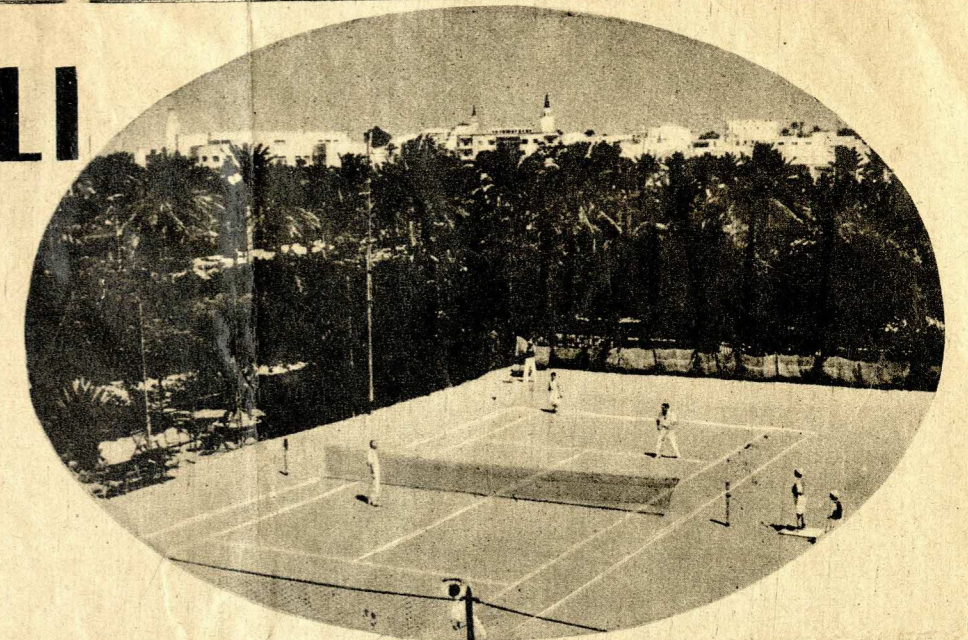
\* \* \*

For him no crackers, comic hats, no party-games,  
No Santa Claus to shake the kiddies hands,  
No Christmas cards, for him no family feasts,  
His company, the barren, empty sands.

\* \* \*

As midnight comes, it brings the next on guard,  
A muttered word, their conversations cease,  
The corporal, next relief, all three turn round,  
A Star blinks out; it is the Star of Peace.

Anon.



Tennis on palm-fringed courts under brilliant Mediterranean sunshine. Italians at recreation in peace-time Tripoli.

let them develop in their own way and things generally in Tunis are more free and easy.

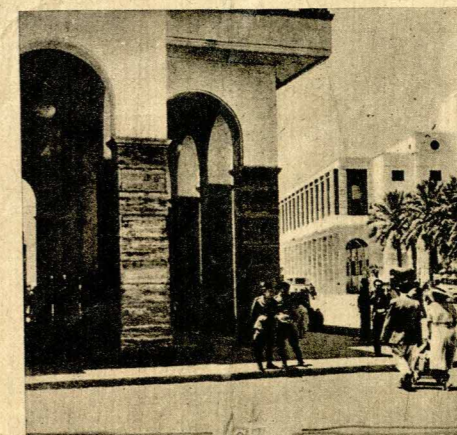
European life centres in the Avenue Jules Ferry, a three-kilo stretch of double-carriageway with trees in the centre, running from the ancient arch which marks the entrance to the old town to the Avenue Gambetta, near the harbour.

## The High Spot

On either side are cafes, restaurants, hotels, shops, modern cinemas and cabarets — I can specially recommend the Villa d'Este for a good evening. Among the cafes you'll find the famous Café de Paris, where the retired officers and higher civil servants used to sip their aperitifs — probably they still do, if there are any aperitifs left. Then there is the Grand Café du Casino with an enormous terrace which is extremely pleasant in hot weather. The highspot of entertainment is the Palmarium, a combined cinema and music-hall where you will find the best programmes going.

The Tunis soukhs are the finest outside Morocco and in them you can buy beautiful carpets made in Kairouan, one of the holy cities. If you like that sort of thing, go to the Institut Oceanographique de Salambo, which, in spite of its long name, is one of the finest aquariums in the world.

Tunis get rather hot in summer time and



Part of the European quarter of the capital, on which millions of lire have been lavished.

the French habit is to "estivate" (as we might call it if we used the word) — which means that as many of them as possible go to live at cool spots on the coast outside Tunis while those whose work keeps them in the town drive out to temporary homes every night for the three summer months.



Not stand-offish

I am not going into details about Bizerta. It is just like a French town and almost entirely a naval town. The French navy, in peace-time, likes to do itself well and the consequence is Bizerta has scores of cafes, restaurants, cinemas, cabarets and other places of amusement.

Tripoli, Tunis and Bizerta. They're not like home, but they're a lot more comfortable than the wastes of Cyrenaica.



The spacious harbour was always crowded with shipping in the days of peace.



# BLUE LETTER BOX EIGHTH ARMY SAYING SOMETHING

**L/Sgt. J. I. Patterson :** I hope the recent letter on the A.P.O. printed in your columns will help the authorities to realise how much importance is placed by the men of the Eighth Army on the quick delivery of their mail from home. It has become an essential part of their desert life and the non-receipt or delay of it causes much dissatisfaction among all ranks.

I fully agree with Colonel Rowntree that the unit Post Orderlies cannot be blamed for the delay and mistakes that occur. The only way they can help is to ensure that mis-sent mail is returned or re-directed as soon as possible after receipt.

The main fault appears to occur in Base and Rear Area Post Offices — e.g. My own unit is a small one and we receive mail in bundles of 20 or 30. Out of these sometimes as much as 20% or 30% is mis-sorted. Such a percentage of error would not be tolerated in our P.Os at home, and it seems obvious that either the sorting is not being done by men accustomed with the work, or they are working under great pressure.

Perhaps I should add that I am a P.O. worker in civil life.

While it may be impracticable for many P.O. sorters to be transferred from their present units, isn't it possible that some of us could be released to give closer supervision or lend a hand with the distribution, especially if it would help to accelerate the delivery of mail to the forces out here ?

All desert rats — and most others in M.E. — will agree with L/Sgt Patterson on the importance of a prompt mail service from home. It must be remembered, however, that with an Army in the field the A.P.O. has a much tougher job in many ways than the P.O. at home.

\* \* \*

**Spr A. J. Maguire, 573 Army Field Coy, R.E. writes :**

"Would you be so kind as to put an appeal in the "Crusader" for me ? I lost a small tin containing photos of great sentimental value. They were photos of my child and wife. I lost them on November 5th at El Alamein on the junction of the Quattara road and the Star track. I should be very grateful to you if this could be published.



Cpl. Stevens, R.T.R. asks us a number of questions about recent films and on behalf of four men in his unit asks us to print a photograph of Lana Turner.

We've passed your queries on to our film expert, and they'll be answered in due course. In the meantime, here's Lana.

\* \* \*

Sgt. J. T. Craig sends us a desert joke from home. It's a bit of a chestnut, but in case somebody hasn't heard it before, here it is:

"A signalman was sent into the blue to scout and send back messages at certain times. He had a camel, some homing pigeons, and a wireless set. One message came in thus — "Rommel captured, I am returning." Everything was prepared for such a distinguished guest when next day yet another message was received which read — "Ref previous message (.) "Rommel captured" should read "camel ruptured."

**Pal. 1587, Cpl. Reis M., 5 Water Tank Coy :**

Pte. J. G. Felix, Infantry Bde Workshops, R.E.M.E. asked about the abilities of the "Big Bertha," used by the Germans during the last war.

I won't enter this argument, as far as the artillery point of view is concerned, for in this direction I must admit lack of sufficient knowledge myself. What I want to point out is this :

1. The Germans used a long range gun for shelling Paris. It had a bore of 21 cm, the equivalent of which is about eight inches. As there was need for a very long barrel for getting the necessary high velocity and range, a long barrel, originating from a heavy Naval gun, was by special process welded together with a shorter 18 inch bore barrel at Krupp, Essen. The gun thus obtained had a barrel nearly 25 yds long. Because of its length it was named by the Germans "Der Lange Dax" (Long Max).

2. The famous "Big Bertha" was used solely for besieging fortresses. It was a 42 cm. calibre howitzer, the shells weighing about one and a half tons. Its range was up to 16 km i.e. 10 miles.

And now a suggestion : What about enlarging the "Crusader," with short stories, or even novels, written by our soldiers? Gen people are doing it, so why can't we try ?

Thanks, Cpl. Reis, for making clear the distinction between "Long Max" and "Big Bertha." Yes, we'd like to enlarge "Crusader" too, but at present there are technical and financial difficulties in the way.

\* \* \*

We have received the following airgraph from Mrs. Heffer, of 9 Glanleam Road, Stanmore, Middx., England :

"Can you please publish in your paper or send a card to my son, giving him greetings and congratulations on his 21st birthday 31st October, 1942. I know that I am asking a lot of you, but I

have never failed to get greetings to him on his birthday for the last 20 years and this is a very special occasion ! His name and address are : 2/Lt. O.J.M. Condeley, R.A., 44/69 L.A.A. Regt. R.A., M.E.F. He joined the H.A.C. on his 18th birthday and left England before his 20th. Please give him lots and lots of love from "Mother and Pop." — Isabel M. Heffer.

Your airgraph was wrongly addressed and it took until a few days ago to reach us but we publish your letter because we've always got a soft spot for the folks back home. Who hasn't, anyway. Don't worry because it hasn't reached your son on his birthday. In the desert time doesn't mean such a lot and anyway it's in time for Christmas.

\* \* \*

**Tpr. Hennesy :** On reading Tpr Blake's list of ancient platitudes, freely sprinkled with the first person singular, entitled 'On Going Home,' several queries arise.

Quoting his statement — 'Before I go home I've got to get this war finished,' may the Eighth Army be released for other duties ?

Do his pals call him 'Blakey of Benghazi' ?

Was anyone amused by, or interested in, the above-mentioned article ?

Finally is "Crusader's" armour not thick enough to deflect the 'bull' fired by his 'cow-gun' ?

Thank you for an otherwise fine magazine.

Sorry you didn't like the article. Some of our readers did.

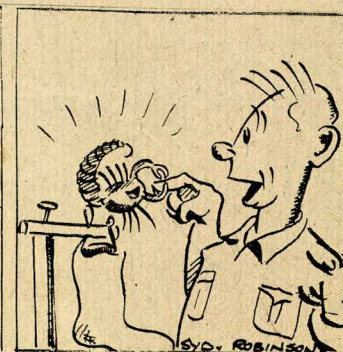
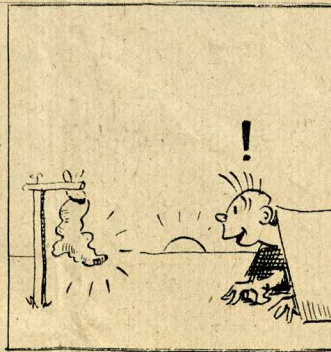
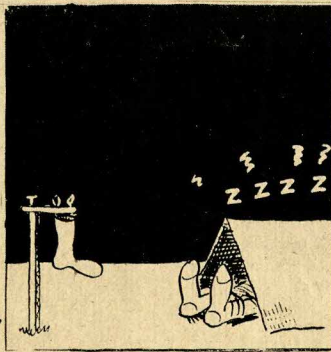
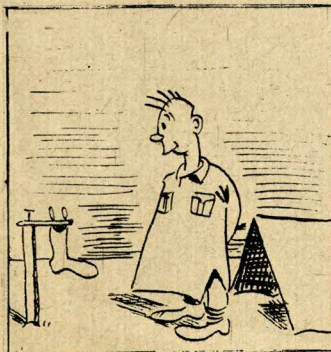
## Agony Corner

Each week "Crusader" receives so many letters from men seeking to contact "lost" friends and relatives, that it has become impossible for space reasons to print them.

The best way to check up on the whereabouts of any British soldier is to write to O i/c 2nd Echelon, M.E.F. giving as many details as possible.

## George Gumption

## No. 11 — Christmas Eve





# THE GRIFF

## ACHTUNG, PANZER !

We have just come across an interesting admission of the inferiority of present German tanks to the 26-ton Russian T. 34, armed with a 7.62 cm. gun (3") in a document recently captured in the Desert. It is a report from a German lorried infantry brigade dealing with experiences in Russia.

### Goering Changes His Name

Germans now call Goering "Herr Meyer." They have not forgotten his speech early in the war, when he promised

"Germany is bomb-proof. If ever your work should be disturbed by the R.A.F. or a single British bomb should fall on German territory, then my name is MEYER."

"The inferiority of German tanks to the T. 34 became again clear in the recent battles ; nor can this inferiority be concealed from our infantry" says the report. "The T. 34 is superior in tank v tank engagements to our Mk 2, 3 and 4, in armour, manoeuvrability and in armament. It can open fire from ranges at which our tanks have no chance of successful reply..."

halt after a few kilometres by one "For example, our counter-attack following the success gained on March 29 was brought to a or two T. 34's which drove up onto a commanding position and engaged our infantry and tanks with accurate fire at 1,600 yards, making any advance impossible.

"Again, our attack on Rubesh-

noje on March 25 collapsed because of the resistance of a few T.34's, in spite of the fact that the enemy infantry was completely beaten.

After complaining about the comparative ineffectiveness of present German A.Tk guns against these Russian tanks, the report says that nevertheless determined infantry, well dug in, can put up effective resistance especially against enemy troops followed up behind attacking tanks. "Experience has shown," it says, "that troops who allow themselves to be overrun by enemy tanks in their dug-in positions suffer only slight casualties whereas a company which abandons its positions suffers heavily. For this reason it is essential to dig-in deep and at once by every means. Above all, remain in position and allow tanks to go past."

### HIGH GRADE !

An M.O. who has been examining prisoners reports a considerable falling-off in the standard of German physique. "I have seen several minor deformities," he says. "There have also been some high-grade mental defectives... It is now rare to meet the type that was in the majority in 1941—physique above the average, sturdy and self-reliant in manner."

### Brutes' Loot

A box found at Galal station in Libya by the advancing Allied troops was marked "AMERICAN AID TO GREECE."



We hope she's got her love to keep her warm ! "Crusader" snow lady is Jane Randolph.

## IT BEATS US

Queer things happen in war. One of the queerest we have heard of happened to Private Taylor, a stretcher bearer with a field ambulance of the Highland Division.

It was on the first night of the battle. Jim's section had gone forward with the advancing troops, attending to the wounded as they came to them.

They came on three wounded Italians. Jim was left to treat them while the M.O. went on to deal with some of our wounded. He dressed their wounds and made them comfortable.

### "HANDS UP"

Suddenly he felt a revolver in his back. A foreign voice hissed in his ear "Put your hands up." Jim, unarmed as are all stretcher bearers, complied.

"Right, get going," said this Italian officer, as he appeared to be, after he had frisked Jim's pockets and made sure he had no weapons. As they went along the officer questioned Jim about his section. Jim gave him no information.

They had gone on towards the enemy lines for maybe five hundred yards, when the officer stopped and gave a shout. There was an answer from a slit trench, and then an Italian soldier, with rifle and bayonet stumbled out.

Jim's captor pushed Jim aside and fired his pistol three times into the Italian soldier's stomach! Then as he fell groaning he ran off. Jim ran in the other direction and got back safely to our lines.

That's the plain unvarnished story. No explanation. No case of mistaken identity, of shooting in self-defence. What was it ? A private vendetta — revenge for some insult of by-gone days — or just a mad freak ?

And why did he take Jim prisoner ? Why did he let him go

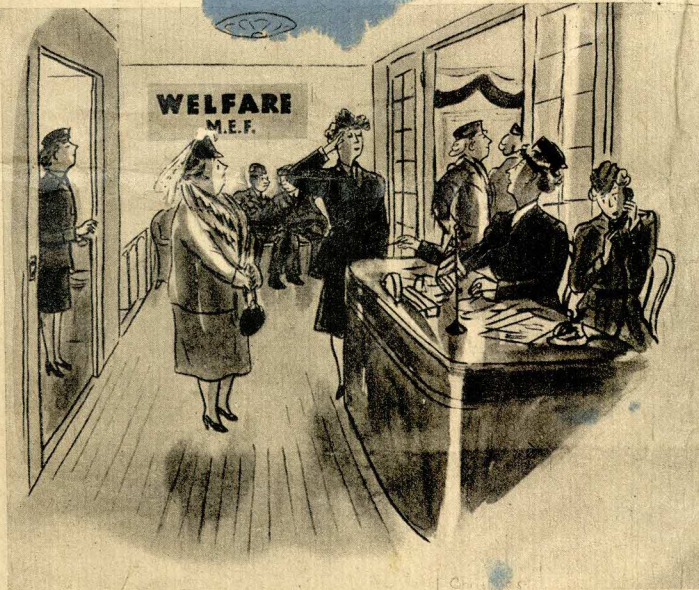
Jim can't tell you. Nor can we.

### Battery Clerk's

#### Lament

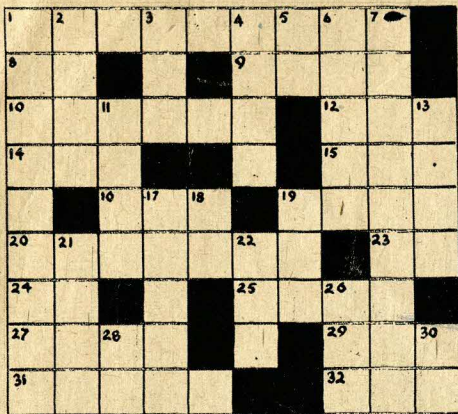
With reference to  
Your CRO 2E  
Oblique stroke F  
Oblique stroke G  
Oblique stroke five  
Oblique stroke four  
Oblique stroke — figures  
Five or more  
Here are the facts  
For which you yearn  
Another bloody  
Nil return.

Sgt. R.D. Kippax.



"It's Mrs. Pomeroy-Polkinghorne from Gezira. Give her two second lieutenants for Christmas dinner."





**Christmas Crossword**

**ACROSS**

1. With 1. Down is what you are doing; 8. Either an artist or a soldier; 9. Required shortly after Christmas; 10. Past of the Christmas feast; 12. Take nothing from an expression of pleasure; 14. Up above; 15. Three-sevenths of thrift; 16. We shall all do too much of this on Christmas day; 19. A relation to one who draws the sleigh; 20. This bowl will not be in evidence so much this year; 23. That is; 24. Heraldic gold; 25. Ends the service; 27. If you can't do this you can't do 1. Across and 1. Down; 29. This seems to be a steel one; 31. Some come in boxes to the feast; 32. Sure to bring you a cup of tea on Christmas morning.

**DOWN**

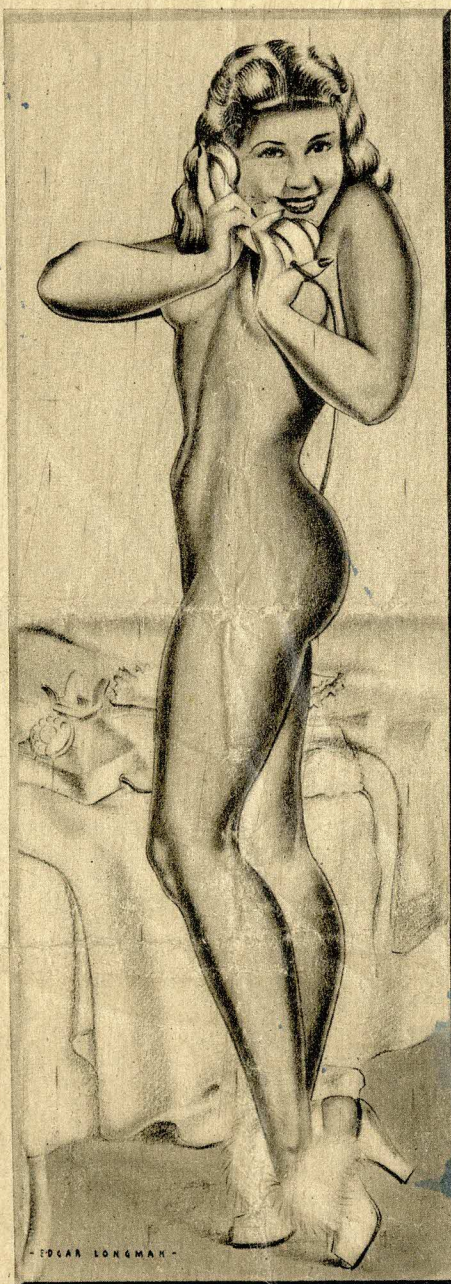
1. See 1. Across; 2. Part of a well-known carol; 3. A cosy place on Christmas Day; 4. Should be lit up; 5. Where we are; 6. Had to reassure the shepherds; 7. Kiddies like a big one; 11. Those for; 13. We shall probably need this on Boxing Day; 17. Not at the front; 18. Embodied more than three years ago; 19. A beheaded steering wheel; 21. Engineers surrounded by gunners; 22. A man with this Christian name wrote a great book about the last war; 26. Some have this for music and some haven't; 28. You're there if you're this; 30. A measure of type.

**Piastres for Poets**

Capt. J.S. Bishop, Education Officer has a generous offer to make to budding poets of the Eighth Army. He writes:—

With reference to the letter by Pte E. Lawson, in Blue Letter Box, Crusader No. 31. If you care to run a poetry competition I am prepared to offer prizes of £3, £2 and £1. The rules are:—

- (I) Poems to be not more than 100 lines.
- (II) Not more than two entries per person.
- (III) Entries to be on any subject but certified original and written while in Eighth Army.
- (IV) Closing date for entries February 28, 1943.
- (V) Entries to be addressed to Command Education Officer, Rear H.Q. Eighth Army. Well, there it is. Get cracking!



"Give me the Western Desert, I've thrown everything aside to send the season's greetings to Eighth Army."

**Christmas Queries**

**1. WORD ENIGMAS**

- a) Add a mixed greeting to something that is given and get some Christmas fare;
- b) Add a reversed cask to a part of the body and get more Christmas fare;
- c) Add part of the body to an indefinite article and get a bringer of good tidings;
- d) Add annoyance to a letter and get a Christmas cot;
- e) Add behold and a thousand and get Christmas fuel.

**2. CHRISTMAS ANAGRAMS**

- a) DPULPDMGNIU; b) CINPEMEL;
- c) UTSCMALE; d) KTOCGINS; e) LCROA.

**Desert Christmas**

Wherever you are, however distant you may be from home and friends, there's one thing that is always with you, and that's the spirit of Christmas.

People are inclined to think that the setting makes the celebration. They think that a Christmas without mince pies is a wash-out, and if there is no holly on the walls the whole thing lacks sincerity.

Well, at the moment a lot of us have no walls around us on which to hang holly, and mince pies will probably exist in the memory alone; but for all that December 25th does mean something. More to us, perhaps, because the associations with Christmas at home are so far away from us.

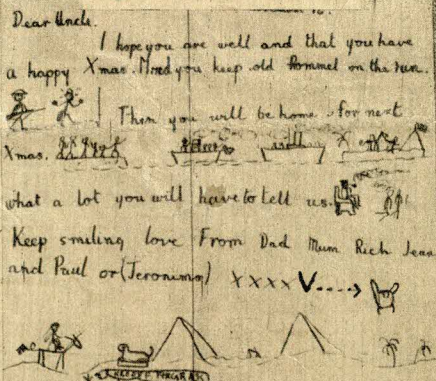
By Tpr. R. Blake

Christmas in the desert is often a quiet affair. It has to be. There may be a few bottles of beer or there may not. Cooks go to all lengths in the struggle to make field rations look more attractive than usual. An extra rum issue may be the one highlight of the day. But in spite of this, in spite of the fact that a battle may be in progress, the spirit of Christmas survives. That alone is something worth remembering.

I remember one Christmas in particular. We had been travelling all day across the blue to re-join our unit. Within twenty miles of our camp the lorry in which we were travelling broke down and refused to start again in spite of all efforts. With dusk we decided to stay the night where we were. It was Christmas Eve.

There came the inevitable brew. Over hot tea and a can of meat and veg we sat thinking of other days, other evenings long ago on the night before Christmas. One of us started, as someone always does, to sing. There were three of us. On that evening in the heart of the Western Desert we went through every carol we knew. And we enjoyed it. I don't know why but we did. No, you can't kill Christmas; it's one of the things war has no power to destroy.

**Paul's Epistle**



Sergeant Paul Irwin sent us this Christmas airgraph which he received from his nephew, Paul, aged nine. We think it's a pretty good effort for a nine-year-old, and hope young Paul is right about next Christmas. "He signs himself 'Jeronimo', explains Uncle Paul, "because I used to tell him stories about the bold, bad Indian chief."





Issued to the Fighting Forces in the desert

No. 36 Vol. 3 January 4th 1943

## Review for the Blue

### RUSSIA

The big Russian thrust from the Don brought the Red Army within 80 miles of Rostov as "Crusader" went to press. Rostov is main supply centre for German armies in Southern Russia. According to front-line despatches Rostov is threatened by four Russian armies, while Kotelnikovo has been captured. The German are rushing up reserves in an attempt to cover the headlong retreat. A drive by a Russian army north east of Rostov threatens to bring the Russians into the rear of the German army in the Caucasus. German radio announces a big new Russian offensive on the Leningrad front.

### NORTH AFRICA

General Juin has been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the French Forces in North Africa after the assassination of Darlan. Communiqués from Tunisia report great air activity with sporadic shelling of positions by both sides. It is officially announced that French Somaliland has joined the United Nations. This means that all French Africa has now rallied to the Allies.

In our Christmas number we told you about Tripoli, Tunis and Bizerta. This week we give you a description of the route which lies between Agheila and the capital of Italy's North African empire.

# West To Tripoli

The road from Agheila to Tripoli is just over 500 miles — a little shorter than that from London to Aberdeen. The stretch to Sirte — slightly longer than the distance from London to York — is as arid and desolate at any to be found in North Africa. Save for a few scattered oases along the coast it is waterless desert.

Sirte, with its castles overlooking a cluster of narrow streets and faded buildings, is the only town of any importance. Sixty miles further on you come to Buerat, almost exactly half way between Agheila and Tripoli. This is little more than a military encampment and it was here that in the early spring of 1941 Rommel assembled those supplies which enabled him to carry out his first advance into Cyrenaica.

At Buerat the main road, which up to there hugs the coast, makes a wide detour inland to avoid a seventy-mile belt of marshland stretching westwards nearly to Misurata. These marshes owe their existence in part to a high plateau further west, a plateau intersected by numerous large wadis which though dry in summer are sometimes transformed into torrents during the winter rains. Unfortunately, the rainfall in North Africa is too meagre for these wadis to act like the river-beds of England; here the volume of water is too small to force its way to the open sea, so it drains away into the coastal marshes instead.

### Homes of Ex-Slaves

Along the inland fringe of these marshes however there is a considerable amount of cultivated land. Some of the villages are recently-founded Italian settlements; others, like Tauorga, are the homes of Sudanese ex-slaves.

Misurata is the first of a series of remarkably fertile oases that stretch with few interruptions all the way to Tripoli. With its schools, its hotels, its cinema and its civil hospital it is, after Tripoli, the most im-

portant town in Tripolitania. Unfortunately, the whole oasis is menaced by drifting sand-dunes, which the Italians have been trying to stabilise by planting with grasses and shrubs. These dunes have long been a feature of this part of Africa.

Seventy miles west of Misurata there stand today the excavated ruins of Leptis Magna. Built by the Phoenicians in the second century B.C., conquered and developed by the Romans later, it was at one time one of the most important cities on the Mediterranean coast. Later Vandals and Berbers sacked the town and its ruins were slowly engulfed by the encroaching sand-dunes.

### "Grandeur that was Rome"

When Italy invaded Libya in 1912 during her war with Turkey all that could be seen of Leptis Magna were the tops of the tallest pillars projecting from the sand. Under the Fascist regime these relics of "the grandeur that was Rome" were carefully excavated as part of the policy of inspiring modern Italian imperialism by the survivals of the Roman Empire.

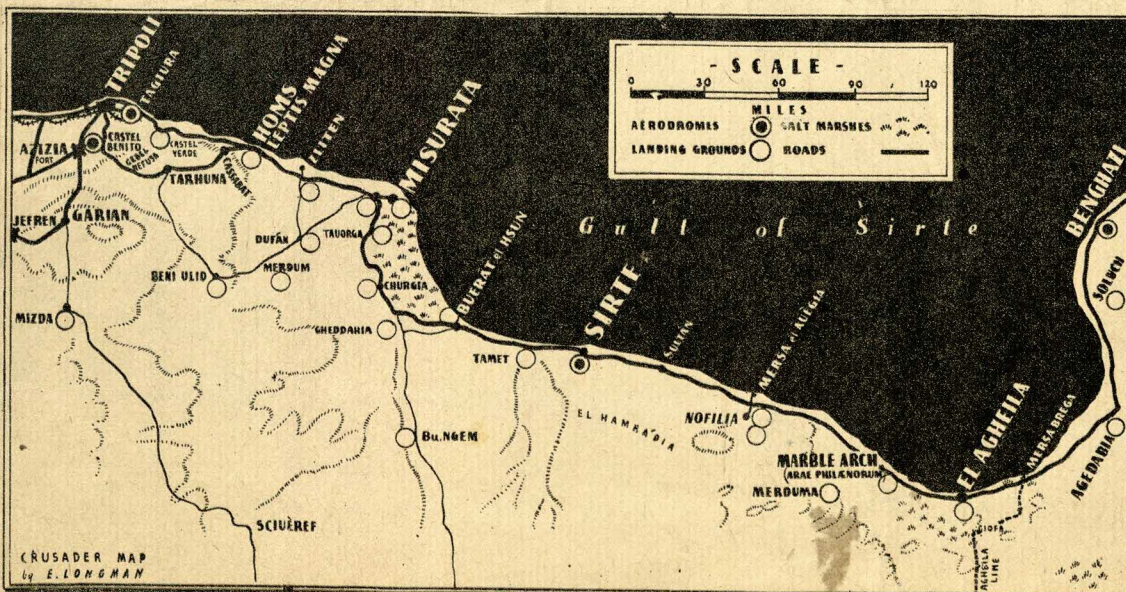
In peace time these magnificent ruins attracted a considerable tourist traffic — one of the reasons for the prosperity of Homs, a delightful little town a few miles further West.

Half-way between Homs and Misurata lies Zliten, known as the Holy City of Tripolitania because it contains the ashes of a famous Moslem saint. Besides being one of the most productive oases of the coast,

Zliten is noted for its tunny fish which abound in the coastal waters.

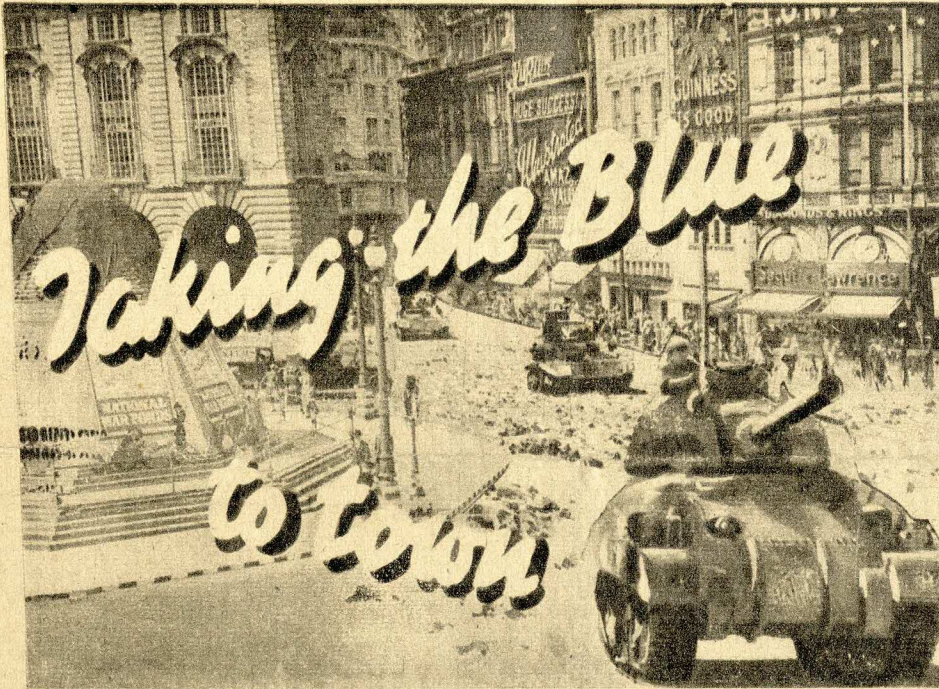
From Homs to Tripoli is 76 miles and it is along this stretch that the road leaves the plain to wind its way up the foothills of the Gebel Nefesa, which forms a semi-circular barrier around Tripoli. Actually the ascent is a good deal easier from the east and south than it is from the north. This Gebel has not the soft charm of its Cyrenaican counterpart; it is more rugged and mountainous. From its heights you can see hardly thirty miles away the palm trees and the dazzlingly white buildings of Tripoli.

R. du. V.



CRUSADER MAP  
By E. LONGMAN





# HOME FLASHES

Sgt. Evan Davies, formerly teacher at Bargoed senior school, has obtained permission from Army Council to fight Welsh University seat in House of Commons, and the necessary leave from the Army. He enters the field as official Socialist candidate.

\* \* \*

National Union of Scottish Mineworkers has asked Scots miners to work an extra shift as "a tribute to Eighth Army." Request adds: "Our heroes' victories and lives depend on what we do in the pits. We cannot fail them in their gallant work in Africa."

\* \* \*

Move to exclude children from cinemas on Sundays during periods of Sunday schools and children's services has been defeated in London County Council.

\* \* \*

New film at the Regal, London, called "Cairo", features Robert Taylor and Jeanette MacDonald. — "An arch story of a war correspondent pursuing spies around the Pyramids," according to the "Daily Express."

\* \* \*

NAAFI have been fined £20 with £5 5s costs at Fakenham, Norfolk, for permitting 268 lbs of fruit cake to be wasted. The cake had been stored in a damp cellar four feet from a damp and mould-covered wall.

\* \* \*

For the first time the Government has taken over a colliery. It is announced from London that the Government has taken over complete control of Clifton Colliery, Nottingham, because the Ministry of Fuel considers it is a case for the installation of more modern machinery.

\* \* \*

From the first day of the new year, anyone in Britain consuming gas or any other fuel beyond the consumption of the present year is liable to receive a visit from inspectors from the new Fuel Ministry. They have authority to inspect fittings and appliances and legal proceedings can be taken against anyone consuming more than his limit.

Perhaps it's rather early to begin talking about the "Victory March." But in a tank leaguer after dark there isn't much to do. You can't read, write or play cards — for the very good reason that it's too dark. You could knit, I suppose, if you were an expert knitter. But, accomplished as they are in many ways, the 3rd Tanks make no pretence at being clever in that direction.

The Colonel can sew on the metal buttons of his battle dress trousers when they come off as they sometimes do — he's asked me to appeal through the Press for better battle dress buttons — but even he needs day-light to do it.

### After Adolf

So, probably, the 3rd Tanks can be excused if they are a little premature with their suggestions for the Victory March. Anyhow the politicians at home are forever urging us to turn our minds to winning the peace and social re-construction and other things that are going to happen when we've disposed of Adolf. What's wrong then with a few ideas about the Victory March. It is a post-war problem, isn't it? Good — then here goes...

"The usual pomp and ceremony are all very well," says the representative of the light squadron, "but I'm all for a spot of realism."

"I'm with you there," chimes in one of the Sherman boys, "let's give the folks at



"We'll unhitch the brewing-up tins... and light our fires."

home a real life glimpse of a day in the desert."

"A splendid idea," this from the Doc. "A sort of tableau... an armoured regimental group in war array."

It's all settled then. All that remains is to work out the details...

"Whitehall and the Mall are wide streets," says a Buff who is one of the party, "but it won't be easy to pretend that they're part of the Libyan desert. We'll need all sorts of effects to produce the right atmosphere."

Ideas for effects present no difficulties. They pour out:

"The 'brewing-up' tins on the backs of the tanks, of course."

"Festoons of brush-wood on every vehicle..."

"Sheep-skin coats for the senior officers."

"An amplifier on the command tank so that the British public can get a first hand idea of what is said over the wireless during a battle."

"A demonstration of how to dig a two-wheeled drive truck out of soft sand — minus the sand, please, but complete with expletives."

### Bully or Bacon?

"And, late in the afternoon, just as the parade is reaching its climax, the whole regimental armoured group — tanks, carriers, guns and trucks — will come to a full stop."

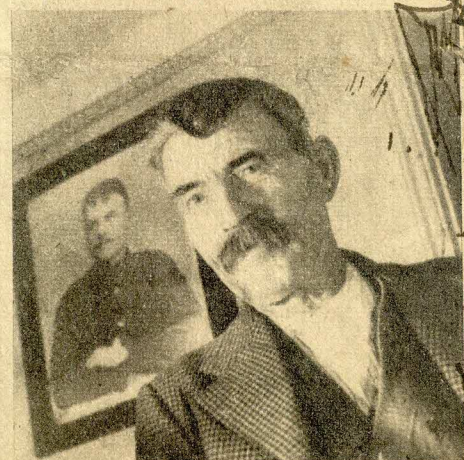
"We'll be cursed by the unit following behind but we'll point of the sky and say 'The sun will be down in half an hour. Have you forgotten already — no fires after sundown.'

"And there — at Admiralty Arch or wherever it may be — we'll unhitch the brewing up tins from our vehicles and light the fires. We'll open the ration lockers and lay out the tins in rows and debate in groups before the incredulous multitudes as to whether it's to be M and V, or beans, or bully and bacon."

"Yes — we could bring the desert home to them, all right. We wouldn't need any rehearsal."

And now — what are your ideas for the Victory March?

Capt. J. Macrae MacLennan



Age is no obstacle to war work today! 700,000 old age pensioners have gone into war work with a swing. In a newly established community at Manuden, Essex, where hundreds of old-age pensioners work on the land, is Harry King, 71-year-old Chelsea pensioner. The picture on the wall shows Harry as a sergeant in the Boer War.





Here's a home picture for Taffies en route to Tripoli. An old Welsh farmhouse with Snowdon in the background.

## Through Enemy Eyes

Here is the second instalment of the story by an Italian M.O. in the Pavia Division of his experiences in the battle of Alamein and of his disillusionment with Fascism.

17 October. — Went with the Colonel round the strongpoints of the regiment. At the command post of the 1st Bn. we found the Div. G.O.C. and were guests of the mess. We ate incredibly badly. The new commander of Pavia seems a very ordinary sort of man... The enemy is most active in the depression; it is noteworthy with what excellent vehicles he is equipped. He has recently appeared in a very speedy vehicle with two sets of MGs... it can do 60 miles an hour in such a bad area. One of these machines by itself could annihilate our patrol. Is it possible that a people like ours, which in spite of everything I maintain is intelligent, can have military commanders so lacking in intelligence? The Italy of tomorrow will have to put her finger on this running sore; the Italy in which we live and suffer most painfully is a real military tragedy. All the other nations in this cruel conflict have produced some commander of genius — only we are distinguished by our nonentities.

### Decadent Race?

Either we are a decadent race, condemned inexorably to decay, or else our General Staff is a sick and corrupt organisation which it is necessary to destroy and rebuild anew. Already, in the fatuous and lucky war in Spain, I felt and remarked on our military immaturity and in spite of the military bluster, the hosannas, the medals, the propagandist clamour and self-adulation, the fragility of our military frame-work was revealed to me clearly and unmistakably.

If my mother has kept my Spanish letters, there are some among them which refer to this situation clearly. It will also have to be noticed how much and in what way political interference has contributed to our military decadence. Up to now we have seen the tossing to and fro of responsibility. The soldiers put the blame on the Fascist Party, the Party throws it back to the soldiers—and up to now we have had to pay.

18 October. — If each one of us asked himself why he is fighting would the war still go on? But we continue to cut each others throats and the moon will continue to look down compassionately on the derelict graves spread through the vast desert.

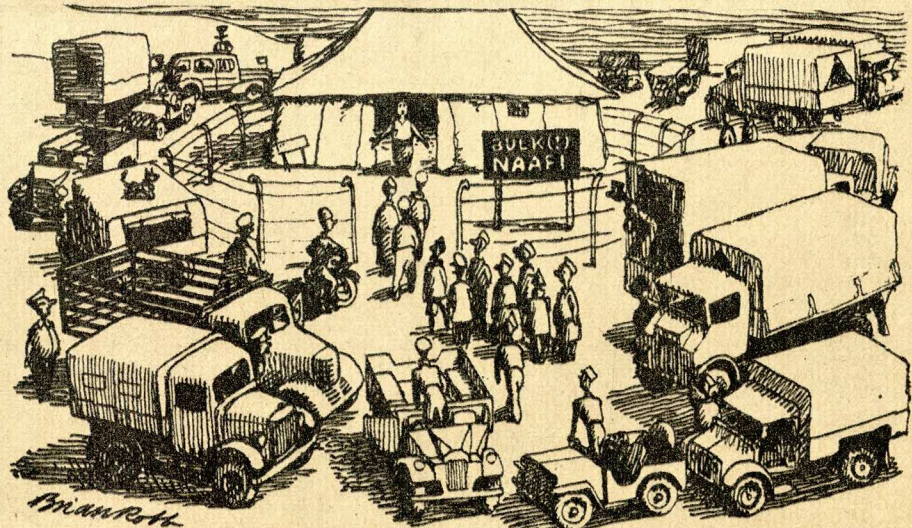
### Attack Imminent

19 October. — In the units of Folgore an imminent British attack is awaited. It is expected in the north-east salient of the line. Today General Ferrari Orsi who commanded the 10th Corps was killed... a mine threw him into the air from his car while he was going round his units in the line. All of us in 10 Corps are really upset. General Ferrari Orsi had captured the sympathy of the troops who had seen him everywhere, even in the most advanced sectors...

25 October. — The superiority in the air

### Little Known Units of the W.D.

by Brian Robb.



No. 7. — No. 3, 648, 450, 645 Field ABSTINENCE Centre.

### You Made These Figures

These Middle East salvage statistics speak for themselves:—

- 3,000 tons of scrap tyres and rubber are back in service on the roads.
- 6,000 tons of scrap steel have been shipped home to be made into tanks, guns, aeroplanes.
- 3,000 tons of repaired clothing and equipment come from M.E. workshops monthly.
- 5,000 cases and boxes are produced monthly from salvaged wood, nails and screws.
- 60,000 salvaged beer tins are filled daily with enough vegetables for 180,000 men.
- 240,000 gallons of used oil have been saved for regeneration.

### Salvage Saves Shipping

of the enemy is obvious. The bombardments which have begun in great style on Northern Italy must preoccupy us enough. How will our people, already tired and irritated by the lack of food and the shortage of heating material, react? I call to mind that vague, inexpressible and obscure "malaise" that I observed already in the days preceding our entry into the war.

Then I defended the idea of "armed neutrality." They said I was Francophile while I was only, and desperately, Italian! We could have been the arbiters of this world in flames. The war has destroyed our prestige — what are we now? "History has seized us by the throat." This admission is so powerfully dramatic that it needs no comment. I do not forget it, as I do not forget the clear theme of the Leader at the moment when he expressed it.

27 October. — The intentions of the enemy are still not obvious. The return of Marshal Rommel has been received with satisfaction by us all. We feel more tranquil under the command of a true master of war. Even I, naturally and ideologically anti-German, must recognise objectively the immeasurable material, intellectual, moral and technical superiority of the German High Command. (To be continued)



Hundreds of thousands of maps are swallowed up in Eighth Army every month. They are used in tanks, in fighter and bomber aircraft, by gunners, sappers, infantry, and hundreds of front line and L. of C. units. In fact, everyone who travels extensively in the blue has his map, and very comforting it is too, when one is miles from anywhere.

Without maps it would almost be impossible to wage war in the desert. Any map, however sketchy, is better than none at all, for it affords a mean of gauging distances, of giving locations, and has a dozen and one useful purposes in operations.

Most of us know how to read a map. That is, briefly, we know how to find our way about by means of one. But how many of us realise the "sweat, blood, and tears" that go into the making of that map?

### The Grid System

Spread any operational map out on a table. What strikes the eye first? Probably the roads and tracks, the names of important places, and, if the map includes a portion of the sea coast, the coastline. That is the impression you are intended to get. A good map is designed so that the more important features strike the eye first.

You will also notice that the map is covered with a regular network of squares, termed a "grid." This grid is put there to afford an easy method of reference for giving locations. Due to the fact that a grid is flat and the earth's surface curved, the same grid cannot be used to cover the whole surface of the earth. Instead we have a number of grids, each covering a certain area. Hence we had the Egyptian Red Grid east of Alamein and the Libyan Grid at Agheila. The origin of each grid is chosen so that all easting and northings in the area covered by the grid are positive.

### Aids to Reading

Features such as "birs," "wadis," salt-marshes, survey beacons, contours etc. are all represented by their respective conventional signs. In order to get the best out of a map these signs or symbols must be learnt "off pat." The conventional signs used on a map are listed either in the margin or on the reverse, with the magnetic declinations, a glossary of Arabic terms, and other useful information. In spite of these aids to map reading interpretation of conventional signs is sometimes difficult to newcomers. For example, it may take them some time to connect the little blue square on the map with the brown earthen mound (and well) on the ground, or the "bir."

The question now is: What are the necessary steps to be taken to collate all the information, and present it in the form of the finished map?



A plane tabler at work.

In the first place a framework has to be made over the area to be mapped upon which to base the detailed survey, much in the same way as the framework of a ship is composed of steel girders. This framework consists of a system of "beacons" covering the area at intervals of several miles. For the purpose of intervisibility these beacons are usually placed on high features.

### From The Stars

The next thing to do is to find out the map references of these beacons. To do this in previously unmapped country a base is measured on the ground which is oriented and positioned by star observations. The angles between all the beacons are then measured, and by using simple trigonometrical formulae, the map references of all the beacons are obtained, working outwards from the base. From the base measurement the scale of the map is also controlled.

These beacons are called "Trig beacons" by virtue of the formulae used in computing their positions, and the instrument used to measure the angles is the theodolite, which can measure angles both in horizontal and in vertical planes. Thus, if the heights of the ends of the base are known, the heights of all the "Trig" points can be calculated from their distances apart and angles of elevation or depression.

### Sunlight Reflected

In survey parlance, the construction of such a framework of trig points is called a triangulation. Even in parts where a triangulation already exists it may be necessary to establish a minor triangulation before mapping. If the points are very far apart or visibility poor, heliographs can be used as observing marks. By means of this instrument sunlight can be reflected from a mirror in the desired direction.

When the triangulation or control is completed the details of the map can be filled in. Probably the most rapid method of doing this is 'plane-tabling. The 'plane table is set up at one of the trig points and oriented from several neighbouring trig points with the aid of a telescopic alidade. The alidade is so constructed that distances can be obtained by reading intercepts on a surveyor's staff which is graduated in fractions of metres. One man stays at the 'plane table and another is sent with the staff from one feature to another and by means of the alidade each feature is plotted on the board to the correct scale. So the map is built up.

### In Flat Country

In flat country much time and shoe leather is saved sending the "staff man" on his rounds in a vehicle. One survey party had the ingenuity to wire the staff in a vertical position on the vehicle so that the staff man did not have the trouble of getting out and erecting the staff at each point. His movements are controlled by signals from the 'plane table. In broken country the staff has to be carried by foot up hill and down dale, a laborious and tiresome job at the best of times.

This process of building up the map requires considerable skill and when operating close to the enemy it is a tricky job, not to say a dangerous one. Dirty weather is the surveyor's principal foe, though it is bad enough to be shelled off a trig point by the enemy. But to have to contend with such vagaries of the weather as the shimmering heat of the desert summer or the rain squalls and high winds of winter, makes instrument work very difficult, and a real desert dust

# MAPPING the BLUE



The writer of this article, after taking a degree in surveying at Cape Town University, spent some time on surveys in the Karroo and Southern Drakensbergs. He joined up when war broke out and came to the Middle East where he spent five months in the desert as survey officer to one of the S.A. Bdes. Then followed many other jobs in the blue, of which the most exciting was a minefield survey on and around Ruweisat Ridge in July.

storm is the last straw. Surveyors sometimes gnash their teeth for hours on end while waiting for the dust to clear during a rush job!

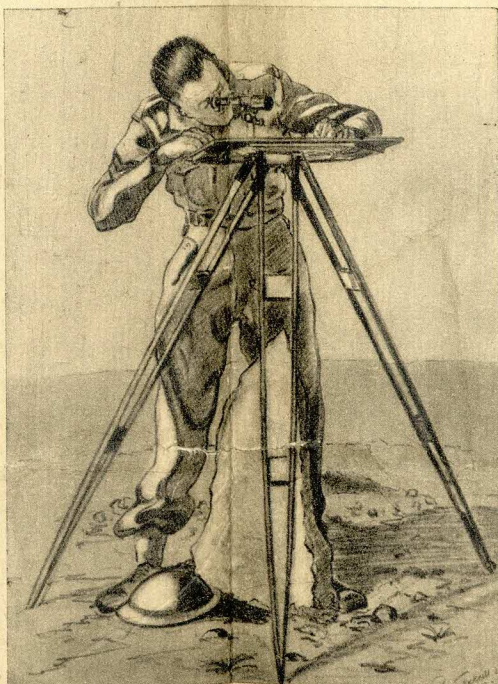
The best times for a surveyor to work are early morning or late afternoon, for in the heat of the day the shimmer and mirage effects are so bad that visibility even with a telescope is practically nil. In peacetime England the smoke and fog often made daylight work impossible so most of the theodolite work was done at night with the aid of signalling lamps. For obvious reasons this method is out of the question in forward areas in the desert. As it is, survey parties have been bombed, shelled, and machine-gunned from the air. They have had vehicles shot up and have suffered casualties — but that's all part of the game.

When the field-work is finished the 'plane table boards are brought in to the draughtsmen who proceed to make a pretty picture. Now much depends on the draughtsmen, not only for the appearance of the final map but also for its accuracy. If, when drawing to a scale of 1/250,000 he is careless and misplaces a "bir" by one eighth of an inch, he displaces it half a mile from its true position on the ground!

In some ways the draughtsmen have a harder time than the field men. They have to produce work with machine-like precision sometimes under very trying conditions. The final drawing must be perfect regardless of the myriads of crawling flies, or the dust which clogs the pen and gradually obs-

cures the plan, or the sweat which runs blindingly into the eyes. At least the topographer gets his full quota, of sleep, but during a "flap" job the draughtsmen is kept busy until the small hours.

In the field the final drawing is usually done on kodatrace, a durable transparent material similar to tracing paper. When the kodatrace has been checked the printing plate is made from it. First a grained zinc plate is covered with a sensitising solution, and the finished plate, from which the maps are printed, is made in much the same way as a "snap-shot" is made from a film negative. The kodatrace is a positive, the plate a negative, so that the imprint on the paper, when the maps are printed, is also a positive.



Finally the plate, being flexible, is fastened on a roller in the printing machine and the maps are run off. Maps can be printed at the rate of 2,500 to 3,000 an hour but this does not allow for the time taken to prepare the machine. For desert work these machines are fitted into lorries, being thus completely mobile. When maps are urgently required every minute counts, so the printers, like the draughtsmen, are often kept busy all night.

Air photos are most useful in mapping. If maps are required of enemy-occupied territory, detailed ground survey cannot be done so the details are obtained from air photos. Making maps by this means sounds a simple matter, but in actual fact it is quite a complicated process. Apart from the flying and

developing of the photos, there are all sorts of distortions to be corrected. Some are due to the fact that photos are often tilted, or taken from different heights giving varying scales. There are also routine adjustments to be made in making a map from air photos, so you can imagine the spade work which has to be done from the time the strips of photographs are taken to the time the maps are produced.

### Over Enemy Territory

A reliable but out-of-date map can very soon be brought up to date by covering the area with new photos and revising the map according to the new detail on them. The pilots who take survey photographs over enemy territory do so at great personal risk because they must fly straight and on an even keel and at a constant height. This makes them easy prey to patrolling Me 109's if they are spotted. Provided the angle of tilt is known oblique photos can also be used for mapping but it means that one more step is added to the process of producing the map.

The final link in the chain is the distribution of the maps. They must be put into the hands of the troops at the earliest opportunity. When printing is done by the mobile presses in the field they are whisked away to the troops almost before the ink is dry. The problem lies with maps printed at Base. Bulk supplies are passed on by map depots on the L. of C. to formations who distribute to troops. Consignments go by road, rail, sea or air, depending on the urgency or the means available of sending them on.

You may wonder what happens to old disused maps. In a rapid advance such as ours several map sheets are required in quick succession. In this case the old sheets are exchanged for the new at the map depots and if the old ones are unserviceable they are sent back to Base as salvage. There the paper is repulped and used again.

### Battle Maps

You may have gathered from what has gone before that mapping is not a haphazard business. On a battle map, in particular, the relative positions of features on the ground must be accurately represented on paper. This naturally requires the utmost care on the part of the mappers. Sometimes, through lack of reliable survey information of an area, captured enemy maps are reproduced. These are often inaccurate, but serve as a stopgap until such time as the survey information is forthcoming. Maps required in a hurry may also be produced from air photos which are inaccurate owing to insufficient ground control. Such maps are soon revised when the necessary ground control is obtained.

If the gunners use an inaccurate map they may shell their own F.D.L.'s instead of the enemy's. Similarly, the Air Force may bomb our own lines, especially in a position like Alamein where the bomb-line was very close to our own infantry positions. Hence every feature is surveyed with infinite care, and each step in the production of a map is checked and re-checked by men qualified for the job.

By mapping the blue our R.E. and South African companies have contributed considerably to the success of the Eighth Army. Much of this work is done miles from anywhere — often out in the patrol area where survey parties have occasionally been chased away from their work by ene-

my patrols. At Alamein they worked under shell fire and dive-bombing attacks and generally shared the same risks as the front line troops.

Apart from pure "routine" mapping, surveyors are called upon to do such jobs as track surveys to aid in revising out of date maps and also "barrel beaconing." Many readers have in their wanderings no doubt come across these barrels dotted about the desert, with useful map references painted on them. All the work of this hard working organisation of surveyors.

In mobile operations surveyors are invaluable as desert navigators, as many are experts at finding positions from the stars. If a formation is moving fast or fighting a running battle in poorly-mapped country it may have some doubt as to its exact position at the end of the day. The navigator is then called upon to do an "astrofix." He gets out his theodolite and pocket chronometer and starts work. In a matter of one hour he can give a location to within half a mile. If more observations are taken a better value can be obtained but often time does not allow.

### The Navy Helps

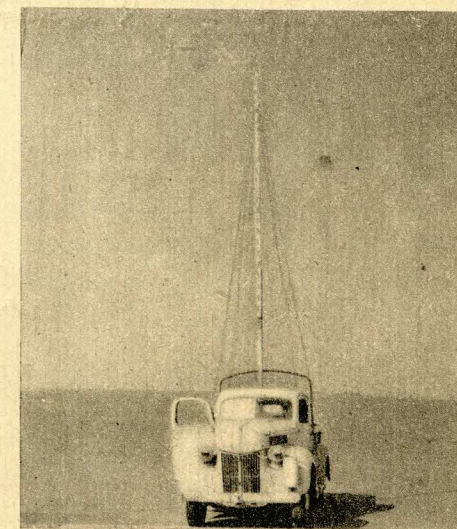
In rush periods much valuable help has been given to the gunners in establishing bearing pickets for their guns. The sappers have also called upon the services of surveyors for fixing minefields, and the Navy for harbour surveys and positioning of wrecks etc.

The troops themselves contribute much valuable information which goes into our maps. "Recce" and "Going" reports of armoured car and other patrols are all used. Topographical information is taken from these reports and collated by a special department. Reports come in from all branches of the army and much of the information derived from them finds its way into new and revised maps.

### It's Weight in Gold

Next time you pass a group of men peering through a theodolite or plotting on a plane table first cast your mind back to this article. Then take a firm grip on your map, for it is worth more than its weight in gold. Think of the organisation behind it, and of the hard work of the men who do the essential job of mapping the blue.

D.C.M.



For mapping by plane table in flat country the staff is wired to a vehicle.



# BLUE LETTER BOX EIGHTH ARMY SAYING SOMETHING

Lieut. W. Taylor : Forgive me for entering into the "big gun" controversy, but one of your correspondents seems to have gone off the rails somewhat in his reference to "Long Max." In course of a stay of over six months in North France and Belgium in pre-war days, I had occasion to visit "Long Max" sometimes three times a week, and without being frightfully technical, I can give the following particulars as being absolutely authentic.

(a) "Long Max" was situated at Maere, a hamlet in the plain of Flanders about 20 kms from Ostend on the Ypres-Disemude road. It was still on display here in its original emplacement, and up to the war was visited by thousands of tourists (entrance fee 3 francs).

(b) Its range was about 30 miles, and it was used for shelling Dunkirk, 28 miles away.

(c) It fired a 14 inch projectile weighing about three quarters of a ton and which took about 2 minutes to reach Dunkirk. (I have examined "Long Max" many a time, and have measured the bore myself.)

(d) In all, it pumped 450 shells into Dunkirk.

(e) So well was "Long Max" camouflaged that we were never able to destroy it, though we frequently destroyed a dummy gun some miles away which emitted a flash every time "Long Max" fired.

(f) At no time did "Long Max" ever shell Paris.

Thanks for the Griff on "Long Max." Now what WAS the name of that long-range gun that shell-ed Paris ?

\* \* \*

Sgt N.L.G. Brown : Whilst my name is quite a common one, it is hardly likely that there is anyone else in the M.E. with the same Army number as I. Also, it is difficult to believe that there is another person having the same initials as my own. Right from the "early days" I have been in no other Battery than the one in which I now am, so why should a postcard correctly addressed to me bear the official 0 2 E. M.E.F. rubber stamp stating that my last known location was a totally different battery ?

Hard luck. Maybe the A.P.O. were a bit "BROWN"-ed off that day.

Tpr J. H. Radbourne : Reference 'Eight Million Bayonets' in your issue dated December 7th I think your contributor has made a slight error, for he writes : "Witness their Isotta and Bugatti racing cars." Actually the Bugatti is French, being made, if my memory is right, at Molsheim. M.

Lt. Grose, R.T.R. "Crusader" keeps a step ahead of the news so far as I'm concerned. The day after I received the issue with Sapper Kinns's article on snakes I spotted a snake on the floor of my tent. I called out to my friend, who was lying on his bed, and his first reaction was "Is it poi-

Fool" was first shown publicly in London in 1929. You're wrong about it being Al Jolson's first picture, which was "The Jazz Singer" (synchronised sound — no talking) first shown in England (in London) in 1928. Neither of these films had a trade show in the provinces.

\* \* \*

Cpl Edgar Redman, R.E.M.E. — Sorry, but you're wrong. The first Frankenstein was Colin Clive, now dead. Boris Karloff has played Frankenstein's monster in all Universal's series, except "The Ghost of Frankenstein," in which Lon Chaney, Jr. played the part. You lose your bet, probably because you're labouring under the popular delusion that the monster in Mary Shelley's novel was called "Frankenstein." Frankenstein was the name of the scientist who created the incredible character. In the last celluloid epic of the antics of the monster, the part of Frankenstein was played by Sir Cedric Hardwicke. So pay up !

\* \* \*

Here are some more replies in brief to the many desert-rat-film-fans who've been causing us quite a lot of bother :

Sgm. Carter. — The "funny female," as you call her in the first "Gold Diggers on Broadway" was Winnie Lightner.

Cpl J. Adams, R.E. — "Ben Hur" in the silent (and only) picture of the charioteer, was played by Ramon Novarro. The "silent" bull-fighter in "Blood and Sand" was Rudolph Valentino. Tyrone Power did the talking later !

W.O. 11 Symonds, R.A.S.C. — We can't find out who spoke the commentary in "How Green was my Valley," but we are assured by Twentieth-Century-Fox that it wasn't Walter Pidgeon, so you win.

\* \* \*

We've got many more inquiries about films, which we'll answer as soon as possible. Remember we've got quite a lot to do, and there aren't many of us.



"14.05 hrs precisely gentlemen..."

Ettore Bugatti was the originator of the Bugatti which has always raced under the 'light blue' of France.

Isotta is admitted Italian, but to the best of my knowledge has never raced to any extent. Since about 1924 Alfa Romeo has been the most successful Italian racing car, the firm being subsidised by the Fascist Government since the early or middle '30's. Maserati cars have also represented Italy with success. After a period of retirement since about 1926 Fiat staged a comeback in small car racing of the years just before the war. Lancia have also put Italy on the map in some events.

Please forgive me pointing out these two errors in your welcome and interesting paper.

Thanks, we're always ready to learn.

sonous ? Where's 'Crusader' ?" Before we could find it, however, the snake bolted and my batman, who was just outside the tent, killed it so thoroughly that we could not compare it with Sapper Kinns's diagram.

The day after we received the issue in which George Gumption finds a scorpion in his sock, I lifted up my water-can — and found a large yellow scorpion underneath.

Third time lucky : I'm now keeping my eyes open for a real, live Crusader Cutie.

So are we—

\* \* \*

Pte J. Greenhalgh, R.A.M.C. Field Ambulance Company. — Thanks for all the nice things you say about us and for your New Year greetings. Here's the answer to your film query. "The Singing

## George Gumption

## No. 13 — Insult to Injury





— THE GRIFF —

**BROWNE-OFF**

"The story of my illness throws an interesting light on our medocos. The first diagnosed heart trouble, the second kidney trouble and when I reported fit in order to escape a starvation diet, the third said that I had jaundice and fever."

This is an extract from a letter by a browned-off Panzer Grenadier N.C.O. as usual he thinks very little of his Italian allies. He says "Our men always have to be sure of stripping a dead comrade of all his decorations since the Italian tramps pounce on them like hyenas — even gold teeth are not safe."

Thoroughly depressed, even in August, he says "What use is it if we advance a thousand kilometres and thrash the Eighth Army? There's still the Ninth waiting for us."

Although thoroughly tired of Nazism — "a political system for which I have no sympathy left" — this Grenadier did his best to put up a fight with his tommy-gun at the beginning of November, but he was pinned down most of the time by our air attack. Finally he put up his hands, and his only comment is: "They were Scots — but decent!"

**BOO (HOO!) TO A CARRIER**

A captured General Order by General Barbasetti, dated November 10th, complains that Italian patrols have reported attacks by British carriers which did not take place, that one patrol asked for reinforcements because it heard firing in the distance and another because it heard "noises."

"This behaviour will not be tolerated," went on the order. "A case has even been reported of an outpost being completely fooled by one carrier, which did what it wanted to unhindered whereas the prompt action of one good soldier could have forced the carrier to retire... The men in this particular outpost are to be court-martialled."

\* \* \*

**NO STOPPING THEM**

The Italian War Office recently issued an order to the effect that all men with a certain number of teeth missing would be demobilised. In one regiment in Africa there was such a rush to quack dentists to get teeth pulled that the Colonel had to order a special parade for teeth-counting — otherwise every man would have been a candidate for demobilisation in a few days.



"I know your eyesight is bad, but you needn't express your admiration in Braille."

**Sergt. PAUL IRWIN**

(former "Sunday Express" Sports Editor)

**Talking Sport**



A new arrival in Hollywood, Marie McDonald, formerly sang in a dance band.

Sport news from blighty has it that Jimmy Wilson, a 17-year-old up-and-comer, has been drafted into Fulham's wartime league eleven as left-half.

Who is this boy? He is the son of dark headed Andy Wilson, the Scot who came south of the Tweed in the not-so-distant past to foot it for Middlesbrough and then Chelsea.

**IN FATHER'S FOOTWORK**

Andy Wilson was a star in his own right. He had all the classic touches, the touches which put him into international football. They say that young Jimmy is following in his father's footwork.

Another son of a famous father with the authentic Soccer hallmarks is now on the books of Queen's Park, the top flight Scottish amateur club. This is Patsy Gallacher's boy. Unlike the "mighty atom," one of the greatest players of all time, he is keeping to the amateur ticket. Reason? He has a good job as an analytical chemist, thank you.

**THE OLD MAN KNEW**

Then there is Maurice Edleston, the quick-moving Reading inside forward — and an amateur in the bargain — who is good enough to be picked for England in the ersatz internationals of wartime. His father, you'll recall, quit a job with Brentford to take over the Reading managership.

Dipping into the memory, I remember when long-legged David Jack made his money-playing debut. It was for Plymouth Argyle,

the club his father managed. Nobody thought very much of him in those days; nobody, that is, except his dad.

What happened? Just this. With the Plymouth crowd hinting darkly that the fond parental eye was slightly out of football focus, David Jack was transferred to Bolton Wanderers. The rest of the story, of course, is in the record books — a story of England honours, a £10,000 move to Arsenal, Cup Final medals and such like trivia! It would seem that, after all, his old man knew something.

**SWITCH TO CRICKET**

Switching to cricket, I give you the news that down in Sussex they are talking of Maurice Tate's boy being the third member of the family to play for England. Grandfather Fred Tate figured against the Australians way back in the days of Ranji. Next came Maurice Tate. Now it is young Maurice who is the England proposition.

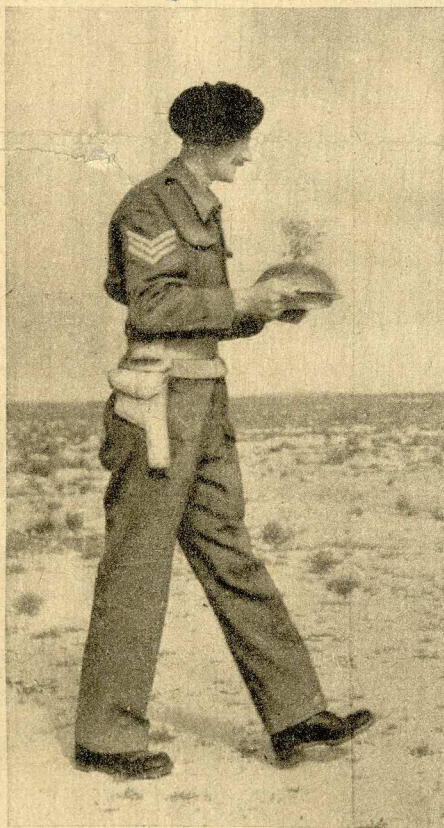
Though only 17 years old, Maurice junior is the spitting image of his dad — only he's the wrong way round. He is, you see, a left-arm bowler. The pace off the pitch, that last-second "nip" which made his father one of the finest attackers ever seen in Australia, is there. So, too, is the stamina.

Watch this boy follow in the Tate tradition when cricket gets going again at the war's end. He is certain to play for England. And now say I didn't tell you!



For After it's Over  
 "Crusader" presents  
 BACK PAGE

*Memory  
 Mirror*



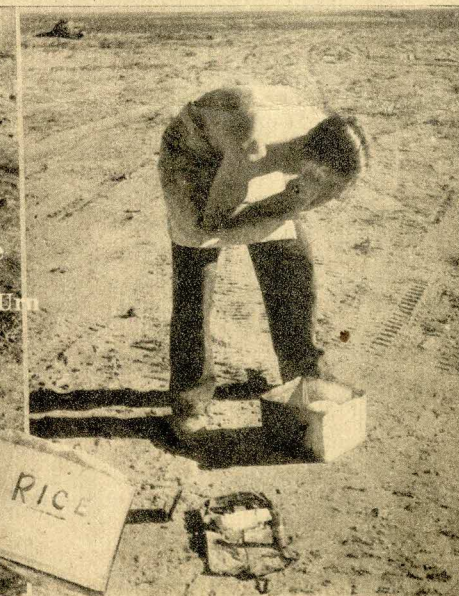
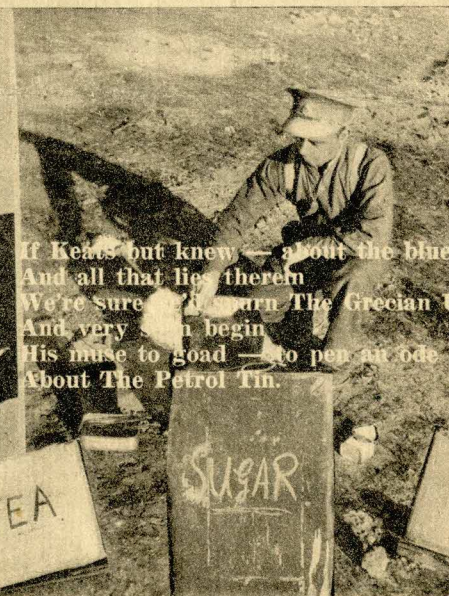
Tank crew in the blue managed to scrounge sufficient ingredients to make a Christmas pudding. Here the tank commander brings it to his crew.



An infantry patrol goes carefully through Mersa Brega.



The pudding seems to have turned out a complete success judging by the expressions of the crew. Note the "ersatz" holly sprig.



If Keats but knew — about the blue  
 And all that lies therein  
 We're sure to earn The Grecian Urn  
 And very soon begin  
 His muse to goad — to pen an ode  
 About The Petrol Tin.

All desert rats know what a pearl of great price the petrol tin is in the blue. These pictures show something of its adaptability and utility. For washing clothes, for cooking, for making fires, and for toilet purposes you can't beat the petrol tin.

Desert pictures in this issue by A.F.P.U. photographers Fox and Mapham.





**EIGHTH ARMY WEEKLY**

Issued to the Fighting Forces in the desert

No. 3 Vol. 3 January 11th 1943

## Ministers Talk Of Post War Plans

Whenever a Cabinet Minister makes a speech these days something is said about post-war Britain. Minister of Health Ernest Brown and Home Secretary Herbert Morrison have both had a word to say on the subject during the past week.

\* \* \*

### FOUR QUESTIONS

Said Mr Brown at Edinburgh: "With the bias of war turning in our favour, four questions are now occupying the minds of men and women in the Forces and industry. These are:

- (1) Shall we have a job after the war?
- (2) Shall we have good homes to live in?
- (3) Are our children to have a fairer chance than we had?
- (4) What kind of world shall we live in?

"After the last war there were idealisms which faded because of a lack of precise, hard practical work to transform the dreams of the majority into the realities of life. This time the Government must avoid making general rosy promises and get down to work to answer the questions now being asked."

\* \* \*

### THE COLONIES

And here's what Mr Morrison had to say at Newcastle:

"In the weeks following Dunkirk, the dependencies gave tangible proof of their most touching loyalty to Britain. I could however wish that our constructive, social, and economic policies had matched with the political enlightenment and humane integrity of our Colonial administration.



Herbert Morrison

"After the war I want to see the adoption, in a still fuller and more practical spirit, of the principle of administering the colonies positively for the benefit of their own people... Private undertakings are responsible only to their shareholders, and we should not have on our consciences the irresponsible handling by powerful bodies of the economic destinies of partially developed peoples."

# Review for the Blue

**Big Russian Gains in Caucasus: Six Towns Captured.  
Free French Advance 1,000 Miles to Tripolitania  
Heavy Jap Aircraft and Naval Losses in New Guinea  
Roosevelt Tells Congress "We shall strike hard.."**

The diversity of the Russian drives against Rostov are bewildering the Germans. Red Army movements south of the Don are jeopardising the German defence plans north of the River, while the advance along the Kotelnikovo-North Caucasus railway line constitutes a threat to the Germans' rear. In the Caucasus itself, the Russians have taken six large towns and railway centres.

The Germans, struggling through the foothills and mountains of the Caucasus are able to retain very little heavy material. The main force is being evacuated to Rostov.

A fortnight ago Berlin radio compared the Red Army with the hydra of mythology. Lop off one head and another grows. Now Radio Rome, chronicling last week's Axis reverses in the east said: "We naturally ask ourselves whether the Soviets are not by any chance reviving the story of the giant Antaeus, who grew in strength every time he touched the earth... even if the earth be snow or mud."

### NORTH AFRICA ACTIVITY

There has been plenty of small-scale action from both sides in North Africa, although the communique spoke of lull. In Tunisia, after heavy fighting, the British and Americans were thrown back from Jebel Azzag Ridge. While the French were attacking around Pont du Fahs and west of

the holy city of Kairouan, French troops on the "eastern Sahara front" entered Tripolitania and captured Tanout, Milet and Tacyonet. Having advanced more than 1,000 miles from the de Gaullist base of Fort Lamy, Fighting French troops under General Leclerc took Brach, almost on the southern borders of Tripolitania, and a Fighting French communiqué claimed the enemy retreat in the whole Fezzan area had become a rout.

### TUNISIAN PORT BATTERED

The R.A.F. and the U.S.A.A.F. both hammered Sousse, Tunisian port through which the Axis is trying to funnel two-way traffic, bringing in troops and supplies and shipping out phosphates for munitions and for fertilising Europe's exhausted soil.

With the last of the Japanese in Papua (British New Guinea) encircled at Sananander, the destruction of the Japanese army of 15,000 in Papua "may now," according to a MacArthur communiqué, "be regarded as accomplished."

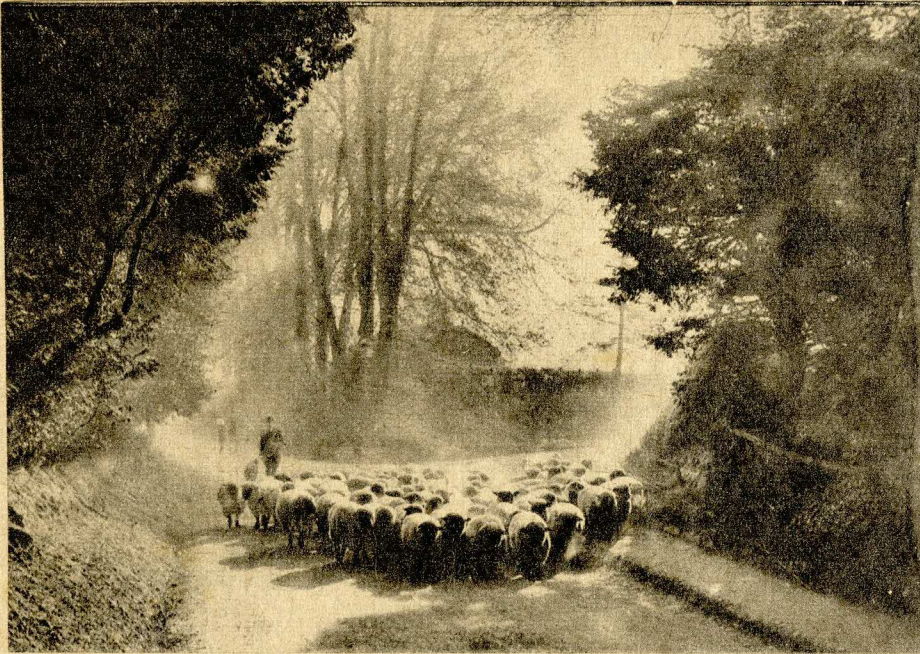
(Continued on page 5)

## Guns through the Jungle



News agency reports from New Guinea tell of great work of artillery units in recent operations against the Japanese. These pictures, sent to "Crusader" by the Australian Department of Information, are of special interest to gunners. Before they could get their guns into battle positions in the heart of the jungle, twenty-five pounders had to be dismantled and the parts man-handled through almost trackless bush to bring them within range of the enemy. The picture, which show a twenty-five pounder en-route for a battle area, give some idea of the tremendous task of jungle transport.





On the road to Wilton market in Wiltshire.

**THAT PAGE ON PUBS !**

Remember the article in a recent "Crusader" about the twelve best pubs in Britain? Apparently this caused quite a flutter in Bristol, and the "Western Daily Press" printed extracts from the story. The point that aroused such interest was the reference to a pub called "Auntie's," and the Bristol newspaper states: "The licensed house referred to by the writer in "Crusader" is the Park Hotel. How it came by the name of "Auntie's" can only be explained by the popularity of a lady hosetess of many years ago, Mrs Taylor. The name is as familiar now to those who take refreshments there as it was years ago."

\* \* \*

**"FIGHTING FIT"**

A "Fighting Fit" exhibition was opened by the Minister of Health in a London underground station this week. The exhibition sets out in pictorial form the things everyone should do to keep good health in war time. Visitors will learn how to obtain health giving foods and of the services available for children. Similar exhibitions are to be opened in large stores throughout the country.

**CHEESE RATION CUT**

The Ministry of Food announces a small reduction in the cheese ration from Sunday. Ordinary consumers will receive six ounces a week instead of eight and special cases (miners, agricultural workers, etc.) 12 instead of 16. The sweet and chocolate ration remains at 12 ounces per four-week period.

**HOME FLASHES**

**GEORGE AND RANDOLPH**

Bristol remains the traditional home of pantomime in the west country despite the fact that the Prince's was destroyed in a blitz and the Theatre Royal taken over by the Council for the Encouragement of Music and Arts. Two of Britain's veteran and most popular comedians — Randolph Sutton at the Empire and George Robey at the Hippodrome — are bringing in large crowds to both houses in *Cinderella* and *Robinson Crusoe* respectively.

**YOUTH'S POST WAR PLANS**

"Our next war will have to be waged against two eternal enemies against whom we have never openly declared war — poverty and ignorance," said Mr J. G. Savage, chief education officer to the L.C.C. He was speaking to 600 boys and girls from public and secondary schools from all over England attending a "Parliament" organised by the Council of Education for World Citizenship. Young people, he said, must make up their minds to create the kind of world in which they wished to live. The students took part in a three-day discussion on the subject of the post-war world.

\* \* \*

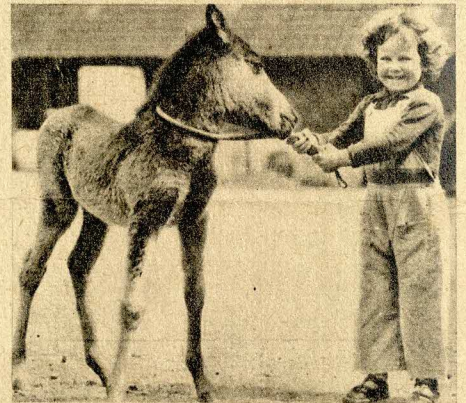
**KENT CAPTIVES' CLUB**

Forty-eight men of the Royal West Kents who are prisoners of war at Oflag 111-C, Germany, have formed an *Invicta Club* with "Invicta," the rampant horse of Kent and their regimental badge as its emblem. They sent Christmas greetings in a letter to the regiment's depot at Maidstone.

\* \* \*

**IN HARNESS AGAIN**

A 60-years-old brougham and a wagonette which was used in Queen Victoria's time took Manchester workers to an "ausetritry" dinner in the country. The petrol shortage has led to all kinds of horse-drawn vehicles appearing in town and country.



Youth gets together down on the farm. A study by Norman Smith.

**PLAGUE OF FOXES**

Foxes have greatly increased in number in Britain owing to the wartime stopping of hunting. The Poultry Breeders' Association urges nationwide campaign to destroy them.

\* \* \*

**EDGE OF THE WORLD**

Britain's loneliest island, Foula, "the edge of the world," twenty miles West of Shetland, was recently cut off from the mainland for four weeks by heavy seas.

\* \* \*

**SEVENTEENS SIGN ON**

Youths of 17 are to sign for national service. The plan is that at the age of 17 years and eight months they will have their medical examinations so that they may be called up for military service on their eighteenth birthday.

\* \* \*

**MAX-CRACK !**

Cheeky Chappie, Max Miller, is now telling the story of the old lady who asked a staff-sergeant what his crown and three stripes signified. Replied the staff-sergeant, "The crown means I'm married and the three stripes show I have three children." Next day the old lady saw a lance-corporal and slapped his face !

MIDDLE EAST, H.Q.  
13/11/42.  
Please convey my thanks  
to all that helped to bring about  
this splendid Victory.  
God bless you all,  
and wishing you all a happy  
Christmas,  
"THANKS"  
George.

Addressed to "The Eighth Army and the Royal Air Force, M.E.F." this postcard, posted in Colchester on 13th November, was delivered at the C.-in-C.'s office.



# Through Enemy Eyes

Last Instalment of the Italian M.O.'s Diary

## "No Past - No Future"

November 8. I passed the night with an English medical major, who was very kind. This morning they refitted me and while I was waiting with my ambulance to set out again, all my comrades of the 27th Infantry Regt arrived. Then I asked to remain with them, thereby giving up a comfortable journey in the ambulance and a certain good situation in the Italian Military Hospital in Alexandria. All are equally dispirited, depressed, humiliated, conscious of having fallen without fame, without honour, with the depressing knowledge of not having a past and the sad certainty of not having a future. Future? It will be still more sad, still more lugubrious, still more agonising...

### Miserable Man!

Nobody even looks at the Colonel or speaks to him. Miserable, despicable man, without even the beginnings of military dignity! I was assured that at the time of capture he fluttered about explaining that in the last war he was an ally of the British and fought with them: I have kept on my jacket all my medal and campaign ribbons, even the squadrista decoration. ("Squadrista" is an old member of the Fascist party who formed one of the squads used by the Fascists for street fighting and other 'strong-arm' duties before the March on Rome). For me it would be an act of shame to deny them now, at the time of trial. And I shall wear it only in order not to seem a coward. After such an epilogue, after all that has gone before, which the years slowly but inevitably determined, it would not be possible any more to believe in the Party itself. What an enormous fog was ours; we who believed with all our hearts! What a gigantic bluff!

November 10. We have been moving about and have had the depressing exper-

ience of seeing other columns of prisoners being moved back. For a short time I was with the Greeks. They did not treat us badly. Their racial affinity with us is so obvious that they might pass for Southern Italians — the same shape, the same expression, the same hair, the same build, the same colour of eyes. They, like us, have been defeated and forget the rancour and understand the suffering of our position.

### How Certain Then

We pass through what was our line of July 5th. How certain we were then of reaping success! It would have been enough to have had two fresh divisions to beach the Alamein line at the time.

November 11. After four hours of track we finally get to a road. It must be the one that leads to Alexandria. Here is the sea — the Mediterranean — never have I thought it less "nostrum."

Oh, Italy mine — so beautiful and so far away!

(The End)

## Freedom of Movement

"Thanks to the adaptability of the German High Command we have been able to retain complete freedom of movement both as regards the defensive and the offensive."

Comment by German military spokesman over Berlin radio on the situation in Russia.

Reminds us of Berlin's recent announcement that "Marshal Rommel continues to advance westward unimpeded in North Africa."

## Education Corner

By Capt. J.S. Bishop

Many enquiries are reaching me about correspondence courses, particularly those included in the new scheme announced in M.E., General Order No 1505 of 1942.

I am always glad to receive queries and will do my best to answer them individually. Often, however, very bald requests are made. It would help considerably if you would give some indication of your general standard of education, the time available for study and the end you have in view.

Courses available fall under two main heads: single-subject and group courses. The former are intended if you have no particular examination in view but simply wish to refresh or to improve your knowledge. The second group includes courses of a much larger scope having the primary aim of preparing students for an examination leading to a diploma or its equivalent.

### Note of Warning

The M.E. order which announced the new scheme gives very full details of its working and should be carefully studied if you are interested. Thereafter the first preliminary inquiries for additional information should be addressed to me.

I'd like to add a warning: the idea of taking one of these courses and of obtaining knowledge or even some professional or other qualification which may be of use later on may seem very attractive. But undertaking a correspondence course, even under ideal conditions, is not easy.

Write me, anyway. Address: C.E.O., Rear H.Q.



## Cookery Book By Jeff

I think you will all agree that Christmas was the best yet in the desert and the powers that be (who gave us our pork) deserve a real big hand, not forgetting the men who got it to us. I know just a few of you didn't get it but most of us did.

**Second Time Unlucky.** — A funny thing happened at "Dickie" Richards's Transit Camp at Christmas dinner. The adjutant noticed with pride an old Tank Corps soldier (the adjutant is a Tanky himself) with five good conduct stripes. As he lined up in the queue the adjutant wished him the compliments of the season. Half an hour later he spotted the same man coming round for another "do of pork" and a bottle of beer (Yes free beer at the Transit Camp: How's that for service?). The adjutant shouted "Hey you've been round before haven't you." At which four voices answered "Yes Sir" — But that's not half of it. Our old soldier friend never said a word!

Here's an unusual recipe from Gunner Deverson of "The Heavies." I haven't tried it myself, but it looks pretty good.

**Scotch Savoury (For 10 Men)** 1/2 lb oatmeal; 6 ozs cheese, 1/2 lb onions; margarine, tin of tomatoes (if available).

First make an ordinary thick porridge, slice your onions and sweat off in the margarine with the grated cheese; season; add the tomatoes; simmer for 5 minutes, and add the whole to the cooked porridge. Pour mixture into a baking tray, sprinkle with breadcrumbs and finish off in the oven.

## Little Known Units of the W.D.

by Brian Robb



Brian Robb

No. 10. — The Long Range Desert Tea Group.



"Tell your 'niner' to make sure he's got his 'Methodists' with him before he moves."

How often, I wonder, has this warning gone out over the air from a senior headquarters to a junior one since the opening of our offensive last October? Times without number!

No operation, however limited in scope, could be undertaken with confidence without the reassuring presence of the "Methodists," as the men of the Corps of Royal Engineers are often affectionately called by Eighth Army men. Few parties detailed for a "job of work" could afford to leave their sappers behind in this campaign, in which the enemy has been forced to use delaying tactics on a scale without precedent in the Middle East theatre of war.

For the sappers, modest heroes of every battle on the long road from Alamein to the heart of Tripolitania, are the boys who have an answer to every form of unpleasantness Rommel may strew in our path.

### They Must Cross

A mine-field is of little use unless it is covered by fire. Our infantry were well aware of this when they set out in their echeloned waves towards the enemy on October 23 at 10 p.m. At least two enemy mine-fields lay between them and their objective. They must cross them.

The sappers who accompanied the infantry knew also that the enemy would concentrate upon those wire-girt "cabbage patches" the fire of every weapon he could bring to bear... And for most of them the crossing of the mine-fields would be no steady walk but a slow, painful progress — a long period of perilous, nerve-racking labour.

That night as the infantry pushed on relentlessly our tanks were yelping in the rear, like hounds impatient to be off. In the fire-swept narrows between the infantry and the tanks during those anxious hours was made as great an offering of quiet courage and utter disregard of self as there can ever have been in so confined a space. That night, mad with leaping flame, was cloak for one vast act of heroism so perfect that it must have satisfied the most exacting of the gods.

We all know the result. The gaps were made. The tanks went through.

### They Didn't Grouse

It was irksome work — and highly dangerous. We could have forgiven the sappers had they groused. But they never did. They always went forward as though embarking on some new, gay adventure, and



Two armfuls of mischief. South African engineers with a load of mines.

not a familiar, oft-repeated task. Yes, they actually laughed and joked as they entered the danger zone equipped with their detectors — the good old "vacuum cleaners" — or prepared to prod the treacherous earth with bayonets.

How we admired their cheerful coolness as to the possibility that the next "innocent-looking" mine might be directly related to the most lethal of booby-traps, capable of destroying them all!



By Captain T. Macrae MacLennan

Some, alas, were so destroyed. Their fellows witnessed their end but never flinched. One thought, an unwritten law among Sappers, kept them going:

"The work must go on!"

Alamein and Matruh; Sollum and the highways of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. If the Sappers bore colours these would be among their battle honours.

It is a long road from the fringes of the Nile delta to the salt marshes around Mersa Brega. Here the enemy had carried out demolitions and sown instruments of death with a systematic thoroughness surpassing all previous efforts. So the "Methodists" went to work again.

There were surprises here. The enemy had introduced new forms of stealthy frightfulness. But they were mostly variations of old "booby-trap" methods. The sappers quickly got wise to them. They removed 1,000 mines in their initial drive



A sapper major examines booby traps found on an airfield near Nofilia.

to open the road. Danger areas were reconnoitred and wired off.

Mersa Brega marked the beginning of the enemy's policy of "demolish and delay." It was the red light. The sappers saw the light, knew what to expect on the rest of the road to Tripoli. They found it along the whole 300 miles from Mersa Brega to Buerat, two and a-half times the distance from London to Bristol; but they got the road open.

It is a self-imposed rule among sappers that when they have cleared a gap in a mine-field or a stretch of road or other likely spot for mines the officer in charge of the party himself drives up and down the area. It is not possible to guarantee that an odd mine or two may not have escaped detection and the Sappers like to take the first risk, just in case.

You may have received the impression that this work of removing mines, rendering booby-traps harmless and coping with demolitions has been the sole contribution of the Sappers to our advance. Far from it. It is only one of many useful works which they have done and are doing to facilitate our progress. I will dwell briefly on a few of them.

### Wells Repaired

**Water.** — Yes that is within their province. Your ration these days is meagre. If it were not for the Sappers you would have none.

At several places and within a few days by skilful reconstruction, bypassing and decontamination they restored to working order aqueducts which the Germans put out of commission for all time (so they hoped!)

Elsewhere they quickly repaired wells which had been blown up by the enemy and afterwards contaminated "just to make sure." A task calling for great patience, this. A man must be lowered down the ruined well and the rubble slowly removed by a chain and bucket system. Then must follow a long, painstaking scrubbing of the well to remove all traces of the German effort to discourage us from washing.

**Landing grounds.** — The sappers by efficient "delousing" methods have made possible the use of landing grounds within an incredibly short time of their arrival on the scene. They removed more than a 1,000 mines from one aerodrome alone. Another



landing ground, which had been liberally sown with every kind of novelty plant, was available to our aircraft — and perfectly safe — two days after the sappers had started work.

During the long advance at some stages captured landing grounds have been insufficient and wrongly placed to meet the needs of the R.A.F. Then the Sappers have made new ones.

So, thank the sappers for your fighter cover, too.

**Harbours.** — Along the coast the enemy tried hard to prevent our army using all available harbours and anchorages by demolishing docks, piers and jetties. Thanks to our sappers such damage as they were able to achieve was quickly repaired and the army got its supplies.

And remember, the sapper in the field has to do all these odd jobs without many of the resources of the civilian engineer.

**A Few Tips**

And here, as a parting "good turn," the sappers give you — through me — a few tips based on their hard-won experience which may help you to reach Tripoli intact...

**Road crater demolitions.** — Be careful how you drive round them. The enemy may have done some planting on likely detours. Watch all road demolitions for this little practice. One blown culvert alone had 300 mines sown in the neighbourhood.

**"S" mines.** — These are packed three to a box, three boxes to a crate. Nine mines in all. So if you find a crate there are probably nine parcels of potential death in the vicinity. If you must look for them don't be satisfied with eight. **Teller mines** are packed in pairs.

**Road verges.** — The sappers try to "de-louse" all verges on either side of the tarmac, but the advance of the Eighth Army has been too fast and too far for them to scour the whole countryside. Therefore, when you want to get off the road remember this — and use the "safe lanes," which the Sappers' sweeps have made for you.

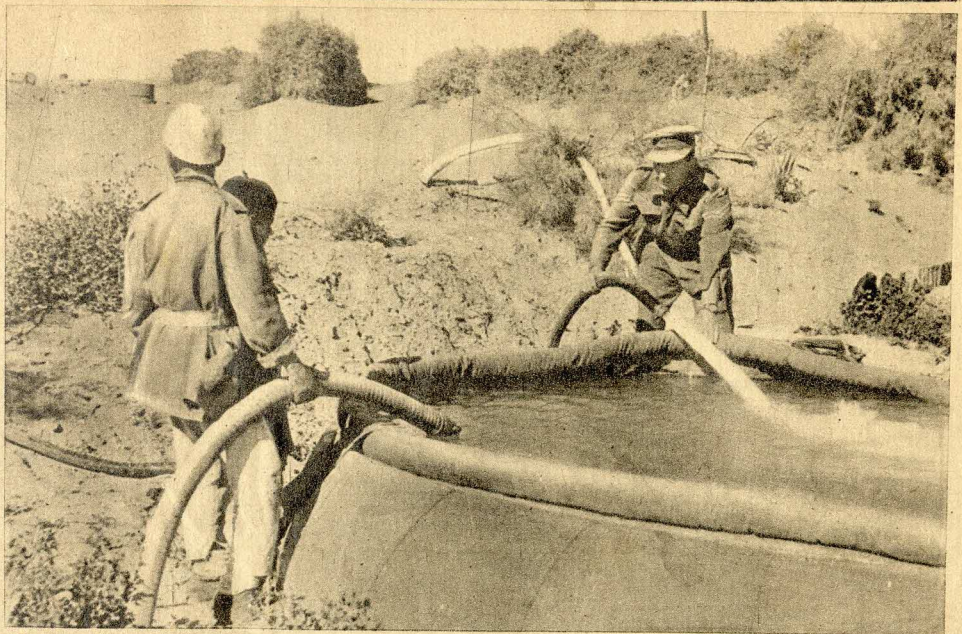
**Rubbish heaps.** — The enemy hopes you're not forgetting your tidy habits. So does your C.O. But be very careful as you tackle that rubbish dump that's such an eyesore and attracts the flies. It may be a genuine example of slovenliness by Axis soldiery. Or it may not.

And now it's time for me to say on your behalf

**MANY THANKS, SAPPERS!**



A sapper goes into action as a land mine sweeper. He is using as a detector a grid attached to a pole. The grid is connected electrically with the earphones.



Young Senussis were eager to help the sappers to make use of the fresh water available at Sirte. Here a tank is being filled with water for an Armoured Division.

**Review For the Blue**

From Page 1

**"Battle of Temples"**

Referring to Japanese air and shipping losses in the New Guinea campaign, an official spokesman of the U.S. War Department announced that at least 353 enemy aircraft, 18 warships and 85 merchantmen were destroyed.

In their northward drive through the Tappiahshan Mountains the Japanese took Lihuang, temporary capital of Anhwei Province. Next day the Chinese threw them out. Now both sides are reported fighting at Macheng, 60 miles north-east of Hankow.

**MAJOR ACTION**

In Burma, the "Battle of the Temples" at Rathedaung — 70 miles inside the Burma border — is developing into a major action. Temples converted by the Japanese into forts have been under heavy British machine gun fire and both sides are reinforcing.

\* \* \*

Opening the 78th Congress of the United States, President Roosevelt promised that the United Nations were going to strike — and strike hard — in Europe. The period of defensive attrition in the Pacific, he said, is passing. Now our aim is to force the Japs to fight. The year of 1943 will give to the United Nations a very substantial advance along the roads that lead to Berlin, Rome and Tokyo.

**Help for Russia**

Eight hundred thousand tons of ammunition, food and machinery together with 3,000 planes and 4,000 tanks were delivered to Russia from Britain up to November 1, 1942, it is announced in London, following the recent arrival in Russia of a large convoy. In addition, Russia has received 30,000 vehicles and 3,000 tons of medical supplies.

**French General Sentenced**

General de Tassigny who attempted to raise the standard of revolt when the Germans entered unoccupied France, has been sentenced at Lyons to ten years' imprisonment. He was charged with attempting to set up a dissident formation in France.

**Stop Press**

It was officially announced from London just before "Crusader" went to press that soldiers and members of the A.T.S. may now consult an officer at a stated place on any matter other than a formal complaint. O.R.'s whether privates or N.C.O.'s with personal problems or grievances may approach any officer privately without having to approach a warrant officer or N.C.O.

"Request Hours" are to be instituted in all branches of the Army. Each week an hour and place will be set aside for interviews which will be entirely private. If a soldier should raise a complaint against another soldier, N.C.O. or superior officer, the officer will advise him how to lodge a formal complaint.

The War Office announces that whenever a soldier of any rank wishes advice or help in any matter which is not a formal complaint, he may approach any officer direct at any time.



A large area of rough ground was crossed before Eighth Army reached Wadi-el-Gebir. Picture shows just how rough it was.



# BLUE LETTER BOX EIGHTH ARMY SAYING SOMETHING

**Captain A. K. Milne :** At the end of the letter from Lieut. W. Taylor on the subject of "Long Max" you ask for the name of the long-range gun that shelled Paris in the last war.

According to an article which I read some time ago in the German magazine "Signal," Paris was shelled by a big gun which they nicknamed "The Parisian." Where this gun was situated I don't remember.

Thanks. Now we seem to be running that gun to earth at last. We have :

1. Big Bertha, the heavy howitzer which shelled the Belgian forts at Liege and Namur in 1914.
  2. Long Max, which shelled Dunkirk at a range of 28 miles.
  3. The Parisian, which shelled Paris from about 70 miles.
- Any more offers ?

\* \* \*

**Dvr. T. Plumpton, of a Field Squadron of the R.E. :** In your Christmas number I read an appeal by a Spr. Maguire regarding some photographs he lost at Alamein. I enclose two photos, found by an Aussie at Alamein. He passed them on to me as he said they appeared to belong to a Tommy and that I might have a better chance of tracing the owner. One photo was taken at Blackpool, the other at Tonbridge. If they belong to Spr. Maguire, I hope you will be able to return them.

Calling Spr. Maguire. One photograph shows a charming brunette. The other taken at "While-U-Wait" Studio, Wellington Terrace, Blackpool, is of two little girls in white, and a man in horn-rimmed glasses. Are these yours, Spr. Maguire. If so let us know and we'll send them on. If not, does anyone else claim them ?

\* \* \*

**Cfn. J. Gardner, R.E.M.E. - L.A.D. :** To settle an argument between myself and some of the lads, kindly answer the following questions :

- (a) Were pit ponies ever used in coal pits ?
- (b) Are they still used down pits ?
- (c) Is a pit pony derby held yearly ?

With pleasure ! Answers : (a) Yes ; (b) No ; (c) No.

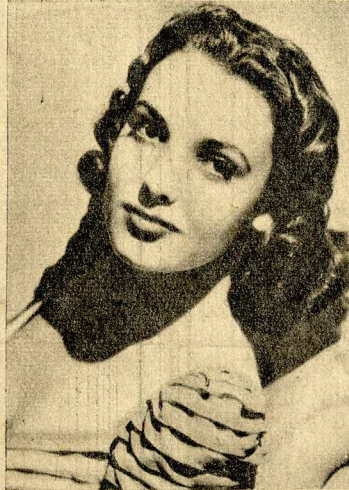
**Cfn. A. G. Sheridan, 7 Army Workshop, R.E.M.E. :** On December 2, 1942, I lost my battle-dress blouse, containing my pay-book and all my girl's photos just outside Barce. If any of "Crusader" readers can help I will be very grateful.

\* \* \*

**Dvr S. Mayne, No. 4 W. T. Coy, R.A.S.C. :** I have in my possession a public service vehicle badge No. CC 19714 which was found in the desert. Knowing how these badges are valued, perhaps you would be good enough to try through the columns of "Crusader" to trace the owner ?

\* \* \*

**Gnr. J. Rafferty, Gnr. J. S. Smith and Gnr. H. Johnson of a Lt. A.A. Battery :** Please do your utmost to comply with our wishes to publish in your next issue a portrait of our favourite star, Linda Darnell.



Okay, she's in !

\* \* \*

**Gnr. E. S. Onions, of a Med. Regt., R.A. :** I've just received "Crusader" No. 33. Like all the others it's very interesting, but I was specially interested in the home page. The snap is a leafy lane in Worcestershire — or is it ? According to my postal training and local knowledge Kings

Norton is in Warwickshire. Please let us have some more similar snaps as they bring home much nearer. I've missed England's countryside more than anything. By the way, is there any chance of making a date with "Crusader Cutie," and please can you increase the number of "Crusader" per unit ? It's a devil of a nuisance waiting one's turn to read it each week. One more request — more daring film stars to pin up on the truck please — this is a special request from our B.Q.M.S.

Yes, we slipped up in our home geography. The picture was sent to us wrongly captioned, but we should have checked up. We're doing our best to give you a slice of English countryside each week. Sorry, we can't fix a date with the cutie for you. She's too busy on war work. About the "daring" film stars, would you like Errol Flynn or Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. ?

\* \* \*

On the subject of the supply of tobacco to Eighth Army, the Assistant Controller of Canteen Services, M.E.F. writes: It will be appreciated that N.A.A.F.I. supplies are sent forward under arrangements made by Movement Control. Whenever a consignment is sent forward, special arrangements are made to include a fair proportion of all commodities in general demand by the troops, including pipe tobacco.

I have been in touch with the Officer i/c R.A.S.C. and arrangements have now been made to increase the proportion of tobacco sent forward. We have also requested the Officer in Charge, R.A.S.C./E.F.I. Eighth Army to look into the matter on the spot and ensure that there is a fair distribution of the supplies of tobacco going forward to Eighth Army. With regard to pipes, there is a general shortage of these everywhere, as the principal pre-war sources of supply are no longer available, but every endeavour is being made to compete with the demand.

**Lt. George Wallis, c/o D.C.E. Roads, Read H.Q. :** Being among those who feel that when we fail to get an issue of your paper, we are going on short rations for the week, I sympathise with Pte R. Grounell and Pte J. Garrett, R.A.M.C. ; who expressed their feelings in No. 35. Would it not be worth while to publish copies bound (a volume at a time) for the desert rats to get at ?

I should think a photographic reproduction even if a smaller size is used — for paper economy — sold at a price to cover the cost plus something for the Red Cross plus again postage to any address advised, would make a very interesting memento to all ranks of Eighth Army after the war ; even perhaps to those who would say "Good-bye to all that."

Sorry, but it is impossible to produce more "Crusaders" at present. We are now distributing more than 50,000 weekly and this is a maximum governed by printing difficulties. We'll bear your other suggestion in mind if such a scheme becomes practicable at a later date.

## Poets,

### Forward !

**Capt. J. S. Bishop, Command Education Officer** reports that entries in the "Piastrs for Poets" competition announced in our Christmas number total 13 to date. "So far," he says, "there has been plenty of verse, but precious little poetry."

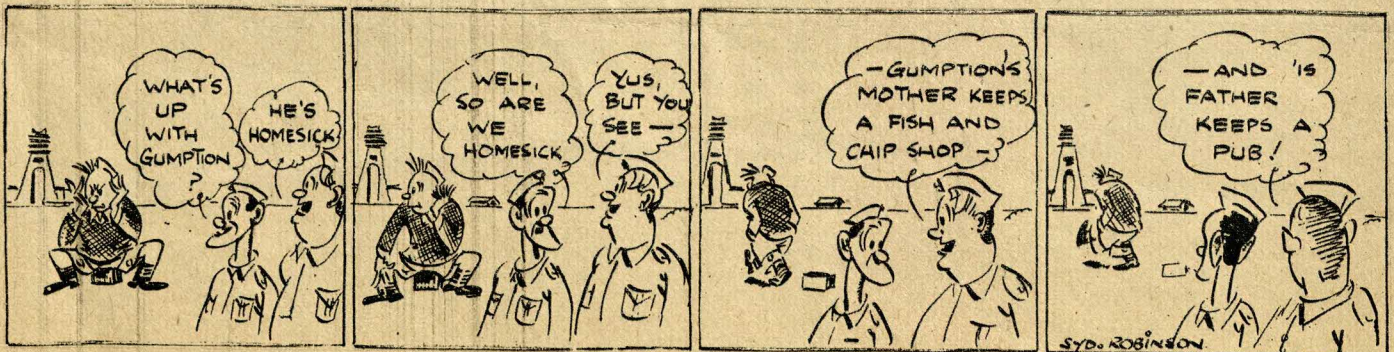
Remember you still have plenty of time. The closing date is 28th February.

**Gnr W. Jenkins :** Can you give me an approximate total of the Axis forces in North Africa at the present time ? And what type of tank is being used by them in Tunisia ?

One estimate is 50,000 troops. We'll find out about the tanks shortly !

## George Gumption

## No. 15 — Nostalgia — No Wonder !





# THE GRIFF

Crusader Cutie

No. 21

## "SHOOT ME!"

We cannot help sympathizing with the unfortunate Panzer officer, a former Heidelberg University lecturer, who tried to escape from a Redcape who used to be a professional runner.

"We'd been chatting with him before we rolled up in our blankets beside our lorry in the brigade leaquer" says the Redcap. "Then after an hour or so, I noticed him pull the blankets up over his head. A cold wind was blowing and I thought he was just trying to keep warm; but I suppose he was really getting his feet free from the blanket. Anyway, the next thing I knew he was up and had got the truck between me and him. Then he was away to the far side of the leaquer. I couldn't shoot at him without risk of hitting some of our boys so I yelled to the rest of the guard and went after him.

## FLAT OUT!

"He dodged through the outer column of vehicles and went off flat out over the desert. I could just see his shadow in the darkness. Once he got into open country I could have fired at him, I suppose, but somehow in cold blood its different. Besides, I used to be a professional runner. So I went on after him.

"After a few hundred yards I took off my overcoat, leather jerkin and hat and settled down in

earnest. I knew I could get him sooner or later and that it was just a question of minutes. But we must have gone a good way, for it took me the hell of a time to find my coat in the morning!

"After sprinting along for a bit I came on the Jerry lying on the ground, absolutely all in. He couldn't move or speak? And the first thing he gasped out when he got back a bit of breath was: "Shoot me! Shoot me!"

Yes, we've felt like that, too, after a bit of fastish cross-country work.

## GERMAN FAMILIES WRITE

Here are two extracts from letters written to Nazi troops in Libya and captured during Eighth Army's advance.

"In his last speech the Fuehrer said that we would never capitulate, but, in so saying, he did not feel pity for the poor people who have to give their lives. The authorities have announced that the relatives of a man killed in action would be paid 300 marks. That just shows what a man is worth.

(from Heidelberg - woman)

"In the beginning we used to laugh when the English spoke of the war ending in 1943. I think they were right, for they must have known even then that America would come in on their side."

(from Berlin - father)



Lovely Evelyn Keyes, Columbia star.



"Harry sends an airgraph to his fiancée every day — and she's just married the postman!"

Sergt. PAUL IRWIN

(former "Sunday Express" Sports Editor)

## Talking Sport

he report that tall, curly headed Don McCorkindale is to come back to the ring to box four rounds with Freddie Mills, the British cruiser-weight champion, has set me thinking about the top-liners we used to see along the sportsways.

Take McCorkindale, booked to lace on the gloves at a London charity tourney on February 2. Last time I heard of him was through his father-in-law, Ted Broadribb, who used to manage Tommy Farr but now pilots the Mills bombshell through his ring career.

Quitting the fight game after spine injuries received when he fought "Kingfish" Levinsky in the States, McCorkindale was a very sick man. Still, he volunteered for the A.F.S. when war came and went right through the London fire blitz.

## "PHALLING" PHIL

Striking along with him in the A.F.S., by the way, was none other than Phil Scott, one-time British heavy-weight champion. "Phalling Phil" he was called rather unkindly by the Americans, but he did a man's sized job when the bombs were falling. News reaching me via the grapevine route is that Scott, back to his original job as a fire-fighter, received a gallantry award.

Let's take a look at the other stars we used to know. Max Baer, the clouting clown who mixed wisecracks with his punches

when winning a world's title, is in the U.S. Air Force. So is his brother — the outsize, genial Buddy. And then, of course, there's Sergt. Joseph Lewis Barrow, better known to the customers as Joe Louis.

Looking homeward, we find dark, burly Dixie Dean in the Armoured Corps. The same goes for Alec Cheyne, the old Chelsea and Scottish international forward. Though Dean has finished with the big-time, he can still crack in goals as witness his five for Cambridge Town against an Air Force team the other day.

Who else? Well, Seaman Tommy Watson, one of our old fight champions, is back at sea as gunner on a merchant ship. Don Welsh, the Charlton and England centre, is home again after a trip overseas — he's a C.S.M.

And with the R.A.F., there's Squadron-leader Bill Edrich, the Test batsman. He's a D.F.C. winner; so is Laddie Lucas, the Cambridge left-hand golfer, not forgetting another in "Cam" Malroy, New Zealand tennis star.

Sergt. Tom Smith, the Sunderland scrapper, was at Dunkirk. So was Jackie Brown, quicksilver Manchester battler and former holder of the world's fly-weight title. Information about big-hearted little Brown isn't so good; I learn that he has been seen around in a bath-chair, a victim of arthritis.

And now say I didn't tell you!

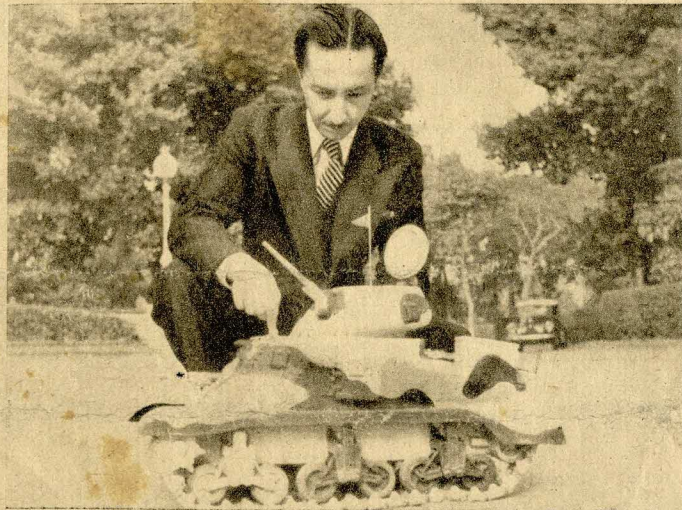




*Memory Mirror*



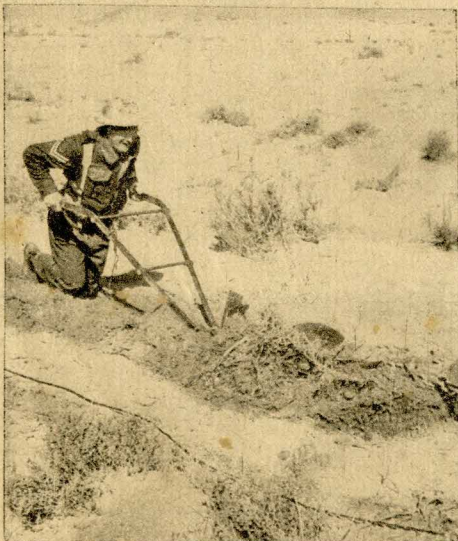
A signalman joins and solders overhead wires. A target for enemy aircraft, some of them have been killed while working on poles. Troops opened up with every available weapon when dive-bombed near Wadi-el-Gebir. Picture shows armoured car men firing at an enemy bomber while bombs burst in the distance.



This model tank was made for the boy king of Iraq in the workshops of R.E.M.E. It was presented to him by General Alexander, and here H.R.H. the Regent of Iraq inspects it with great interest.



The A.C.G. Eighth Army conducted a service for Polish boys in Bethlehem during the Christmas period. The lads listen with interest as the A.C.G. tells them of life in the Western Desert.



A signals corporal goes back to the land. He is ploughing — in a telephone cable.



A little Senussi boy in Sirte tries on a pair of German boots, many sizes too big for him.



R.E.'s found a good water point in the Wadi-el-Gebir and cans and carts were filled.

Desert pictures in this issue by A.F.P.U. photographers Keating, Gladstone, Smales and Mapham.

CRUSADER, Eighth Army Weekly, is published each Monday. Address correspondence to Advance H.Q. Eighth Army.





Issued to the Fighting Forces in the desert

No. 39 Vol. 3 January 25th 1943

# A WELLS NEW WORLD

One super government for the whole world after the war is an imperative necessity, said H.G. Wells in a broadcast on "The New World." Such a government, he said, was now feasible with the annihilation of distance.

"The question is," he said, "whether our species — we, our children and our children's children — can adapt ourselves and conquer the new world, or whether we are going to spin down this vortex to extinction, which has been the fate of all mighty races or animals that have lorded it over the world in the past.

## DISTANCE ABOLISHED

"This new world has a three-fold aspect. First there is the abolition of distance. Things have become simultaneous throughout the earth. Thirty years ago to think of one super government was an impossible dream.

"Next come the enormous increase of available power at present used mainly for destruction. All mechanical power, wind-power, horse-power and water-power used in Queen Elizabeth's time for one week would not equal that released in a moment by an 8,000 pound bomb ?

For these reasons, Wells said, there is no choice before mankind but worldwide control of power and production of our inheritance and the scrapping of hates and aggressions. He advocated the establishment of a group of commissions to rehabilitate the disordered world, to which all governments must surrender



H.G. Wells

er sovereign right to practice economic or political aggression against each other.

## TO TEACH — AND LEARN

In the radio, the film and the facility for rapid transport and specimens, we have all that is needed to cover the whole world with schools, and in the multitude of quickened minds a supply of men and women who have discovered that by teaching we learn.

Referring to the potentialities of a physically and mentally emancipated race, Wells said that great as were the achievements of chemistry, he believed every research chemist will echo Newton's saying that he is as yet merely picking up the pebbles on the beach of an unfathomable ocean.

# Review for the Blue

EIGHTH ARMY LAUNCH FINAL DRIVE TO TRIPOLI.  
RUSSIANS' THREE-PRONGED DRIVE ; LENINGRAD FREED.  
IRAQ DECLARES WAR ON AXIS POWERS.  
R.A.F. DROP 8,000 FOUNDERS IN BERLIN BLITZ.

While Eighth Army attacked in three parallel thrusts over a 60-mile front advancing over 70 miles in three days, a strong force of four-engined bombers blasted Berlin with 8,000-pounders and rained tens of thousands of incendiaries on the city for two nights in succession.

From the Russian front came news that the siege of Leningrad had been raised ; of the capture of more important towns and railway junctions. Kharkov, the great industrial centre and Hitler's main base in the Ukraine is threatened by the Red Army in their smashing new three-pronged offensive south of Voronezh.

In an attempt to hit back for the R.A.F.'s raid on Berlin the Germans carried out short but sharp "prestige" raids over London and certain areas of the south-east coast. One of the heaviest barrages Londoners remember leapt into action. Ten enemy bombers were destroyed. An Air Ministry communiqué says that damage was not on a large scale and was mainly confined to houses.

## NORTH AFRICA

When Eighth Army launched its final drive to Tripoli, the attack in the north was along the main road from Buerat to Gheddahia, while in the centre and south two further pushes were made across the secondary track from Gheddahia to Sedada, toward Wadi Zemzem. By shuttle service attacks on enemy landing grounds, the R.A.F. and the U.S.A.A.F. largely paralysed the Luftwaffe.

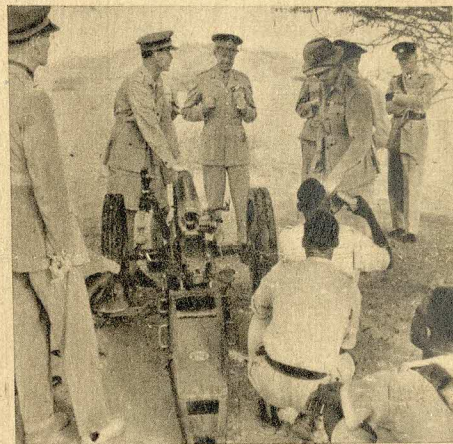
Swinging their offensive from Tunisia to Tripolitania, Malta's bombers went to the support of Eighth Army and attacked Tripoli, Rommel's last supply port and Italy's last colonial citadel. The value of Malta as an air striking base was never more apparent. Medium bombers from the island rained incendiaries on Tripoli to help one army ; other aircraft were attacking road convoys in Tunisia in support of the other.

## FORCES JOIN

In Southern Tripolitania, de Gaulle's troops advancing from Fort Lamy captured the entire Fezzan area and joined forces with ex-Vichy troops invading Tripolitania from the Sahara. Morocco Radio reported that French troops in the south of Tunisia had improved their positions despite strong enemy resistance.

Axis assertions that the North African issues were creating an Anglo-American rift were denied in London by Minister of Information Brendan Bracken, who said the Foreign Office was not backing General de Gaulle and the State Department General Giraud. The British Government, he said, gave power of attorney to General Eisenhower, has the greatest confidence in him and is backing him to the utmost.

The News Chronicle correspondent in Tangiers wrote : "The absence of a strong Allied policy in French Morocco and the



The C-in-C. watching native gunners at Chinda during his recent visit to Eritrea and the Sudan.

presence there of strong pro-Vichy and German-influenced elements are noticeable in Tangiers, where de Gaulle's are called traitors and anti-British feelings are openly boasted by certain French officials.

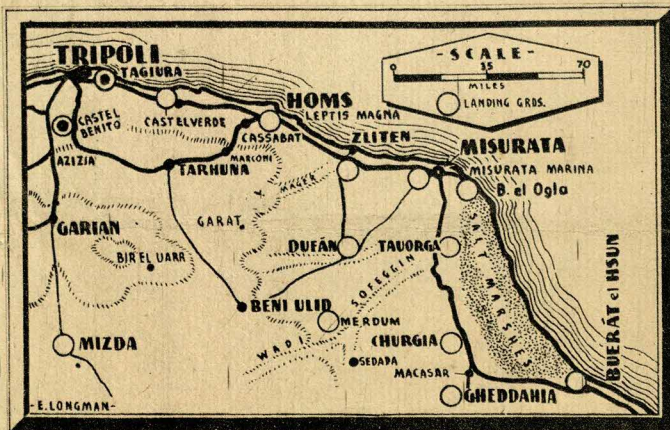
## IRAQ DECLARES WAR

By declaring war on the Axis, Iraq became the first Middle East independent state to enter the war. In a telegram to General Nuri el Said, Iraqi Premier, Churchill said : "It has given us special satisfaction to realise that a State which we helped to create during the first world war will henceforth participate with us."

## EXPENSIVE ELEPHANTS

On his return from the new Arakan Front in Burma, Field Marshal Sir Archibald Wavell, C-in-C., India, said the main problem there was transport. "We have been considering using elephants, but they eat too much... The clearance of this area of Arakan is useful... The Japanese are certainly feeling the draught."

(Continued on Page 5)





**BLITZ-GRIFF**

Facts and figures relating to the Battle of Britain published by the Ministry of Home Security settle the eternal argument about which provincial town in Britain "caught it worst" in the air blitz period of 1940-1941. "Liverpool," it is stated, "was Hitler's Target No. 1 outside London." Concentrated attacks on Merseyside (which included one of seven consecutive nights) killed 4,100 civilians up to the end of 1941. "In three months," it is stated, "36,000 H.E. bombs weighing 6,600 tons were dropped on London, and 12,696 civilians were killed in this period. Up to the end of 1941 190,000 H.E. bombs were dropped on Britain, killing 43,000 civilians, among them 5,460 children. On the afternoon of September 6, 1940, 375 bombers and fighters attacked Woolwich Arsenal and set dockland ablaze. After a two-hour break came a procession of 250 night bombers, guided straight to the target by innumerable huge fires." The report states that this was undoubtedly intended by Hitler to be Britain's knock-out blow.

\* \* \*

**COCKS AND CROCKS**

We wonder what the Anti-Waste people and the R.S.P.C.A. are going to say about a case that created some amusement at Birmingham. A Chinese man who was committed for trial had the case explained to him by an interpreter. Before the interpreter could take the oath a saucer had to be produced by a court officer. After the interpreter had cracked the saucer with a small piece of piping the clerk administered the oath: "You shall tell the truth or your soul will be cracked like this saucer." Later it was stated that the defendant could take the oath only by cutting the throat of a cockerel. In those circumstances, said his counsel, he did not propose to ask him to give evidence. Commented the prosecuting solicitor: "No doubt, the defendant's counsel will bring a cockerel to the assize court!"

\* \* \*

**BREAD RATIONING SCHEME**

Lord Woolton, Minister of Food, has addressed an appeal to housewives and caterers in Britain to use more potatoes and less bread in their menus. "I have considered rationing bread," he said. "We have a scheme already in the Ministry of Food for introducing bread rationing at the shortest possible notice if it becomes necessary."

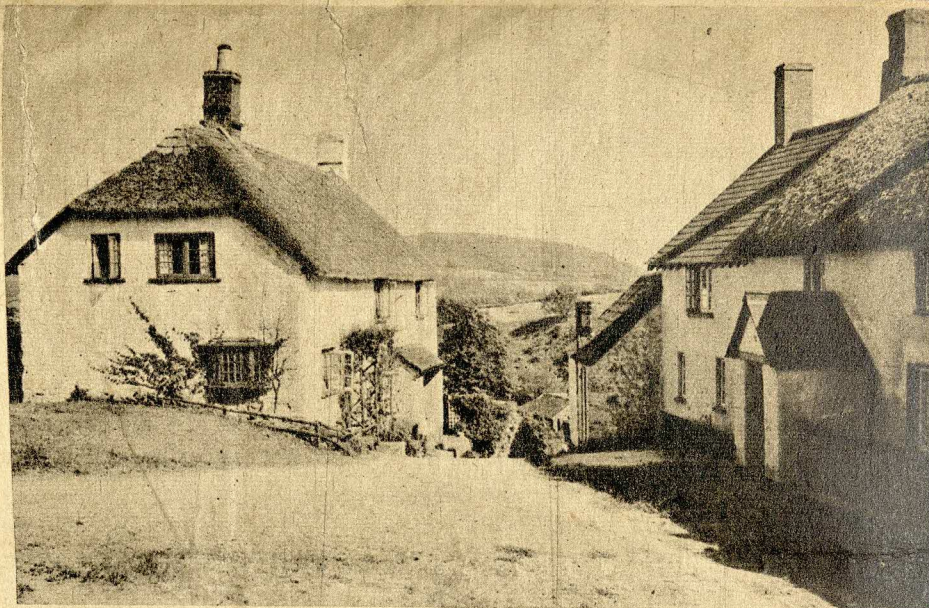
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**GIFT TO SCOTLAND**

Lieut.-Col. Anderson of Glen Etive, in Argyll, has given twelve thousand acres, comprising the entire Glen Etive Deer Forest, to Scotland, on the understanding that it shall become a centre of demonstrations for Highland farmers.



Young anglers examine their tadpole catch from an English pond. Photo: Norman Smith



The lane that leads to the moors, North Bovey, Dartmoor.

**WALES'S OLDEST CITIZEN**

Wales's oldest citizen, Mrs Sarah Hayes, Cliff Terrace, Wood Road, Pontypridd, who celebrated her 104th birthday on Christmas Eve, has died. Although bedridden she liked her glass of beer and a smoke. Her favourite smoke was a brand of shag tobacco and for many years the makers provided her with a free supply. A native of Somerset, Mrs Hayes lived in Western Valley, Monmouthshire, as a young woman, and later at Tonypany and Trebanog. In 1941 the window of her bedroom was shattered by a bomb. She had 19 children, but only one survives.

\* \* \*

**SOPHIE'S SERVICE**

Mrs Sophie Scott, Belvedere Terrace, Brighton, has received call-up papers. She is 65; has had 25 children. Her eighteen surviving children are all on war work, one of them, Ted, is a Redcap in the Middle East. Mr Scott, now on the catering staff of the Sports Stadium, agrees with his wife that she really has done her bit for Britain.

**HOME FLASHES**

**BATTLE-PADDLER**

All Londoners know the old paddle steamer, *Royal Eagle*, which used to take them to and from Southend in the piping days of peace. She is now *H.M.S. Royal Eagle*, and the Navy has just revealed some interesting facts about her war service. In two years she has been 520 nights and 132 days at sea and has covered 25,000 miles. She has been in action against enemy aircraft 52 times and has shot down two for certain, probably more. Honours won by her crew are two D.S.C.'s, four D.S.M.'s and 13 mentions in dispatches. Lives saved by her crew total 24. She made three trips to Dunkirk during the evacuation, was dive-bombed 48 times, and brought home 3,000 British troops, including General Pownall. Each man of the ship's company carries a silver penknife, a gift of a member of Cheshire Regiment whom she brought to safety.

**PANTO KING'S PURCHASE**

Prince Littler, panto king of the North, and boss of the Stoll Theatre circuit has bought six London theatres—His Majesty's Adelphi, St James, Lyric, Apollo and Cambridge—for £700,000. Now controls 42 theatres and music halls in London and provinces.

\* \* \*

**PAY — AND PRAY !**

The morning after bombs were dropped on a Birmingham golf course several months ago the following notice was posted on the club-house: "Danger — eight unexploded bombs on the eighth and tenth fairways. Visitors are requested to pay their green fees before going out to play."

\* \* \*

**NOT ONLY NAAFI !**

A committee of the Enfield District Council has reported that 1,208 cups and mugs, 3,638 forks, 748 knives, 3,319 plates, 1,012 saucers, 1,412 spoons and 1,110 tumblers have disappeared from Enfield's British Restaurants during 1942.

\* \* \*

**CONSCRIPTION AGE REDUCED**

A proclamation has been signed reducing the conscription age for women to nineteen instead of twenty, and for men to eighteen from nineteen. Women are to be given the opportunity of applying for specified jobs in industry if they prefer industrial work.

\* \* \*

**LI. G. — OCTOGENARIAN**

Lloyd George, "Father of the House of Commons," was 80 on Sunday. The "Daily Mail" speaks of him as being one of the outstanding leaders of history. The "News Chronicle" says that at the end of the last war Li. G. was "probably the most powerful man on earth."

\* \* \*

**MAN HUNT IN IRELAND**

A great man-hunt is going on in Northern Ireland following the escape from prison in Belfast of three Irish Republican Army men. They include the Chief of Staff who was serving a 15 years' sentence. A reward of £3,000 has been offered for his arrest.

\* \* \*

**SAFE DRIVING CAMPAIGN**

More than 100,000 drivers have entered a "Safe Driving" competition organised by newly formed Accident Prevention Society.



# THIRD DIMENSIONAL WAR

Here is an authoritative review of the part played by the desert Air Forces in the Battle of Libya. It is written exclusively for "Crusader" by J. Murray-Smith.

As, in mid-January, the first bombs from our Bostons and Baltimores fell among the hangars and workshops of Castel Benito, a few miles south of Tripoli, the last phase was reached of an air plan that may well prove a model for future historians.

It was, in fact, part of a greater battle plan in which all three Services, naval, land and air, were combined.

When the light bomber squadrons were based on landing grounds not far from Alexandria they were employed to launch an offensive which blasted the enemy's Alamein gun positions and destroyed his forward supply dumps.

Then the Eighth Army so smashed Rommel's forces that they broke and fled; and we pursued them with another weapon the use of which we had well-nigh perfected—the fighter-bomber.

## LIGHT 'PLANES STRIKE

All the way on that 1,000 miles thread along the North African coastline, past Mersa Matruh and on to Tobruk, and then beyond to Derna and Barce and Benghazi, south and west again to Aghella and Sirte, all that way we struck at the Axis troops by means of our most "mobile" aircraft, the light 'planes which needed the least amount of servicing on the ground.

Wherever resistance hardened, as it did twice, at Aghella and again at Buerat, the light bombers were brought up to give weight to the fighter-bomber attacks. But the main air pursuit was carried out by the fighter-bombers and not until the gates of Tripoli were they needed again in force, the Baltimores, Bostons and Mitchell B. 25's.

Here, however, the target was concentrated as it had been in Egypt, indeed much more so, for now it included the dock facilities and military objectives in the town itself.

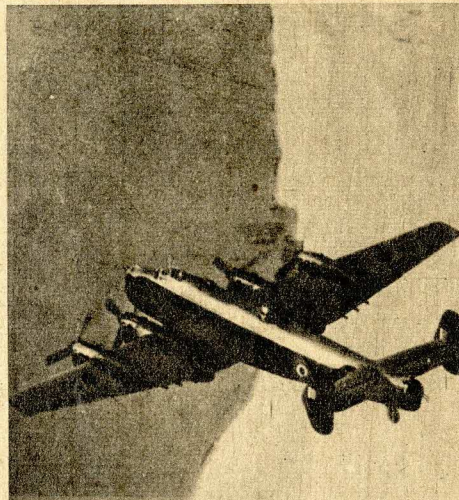
For more than a month the light bomber squadrons had remained on their landing grounds far in the rear, with air crews chaffing at the delay and wondering why there was nothing for them to do. Meanwhile, immense supplies of fuel, oil, bombs, ammunition, food and water were being sent westward and dumped adjacent to newly prepared landing grounds.

## BEGINNING OF THE END

The enemy knew well the meaning of the desert aerodromes we were building in Tripolitania. It was the beginning of the end. Frantically they attempted to delay the work by ground-strafting and fighter-



Air Vice Marshal Coningham, desert air chief.



bomber attacks. Macchi 202's came in to drop their bombs while Me 109's kept cover at a few thousand feet.

All to no purpose. The bombing and strafing were wild and inaccurate, and our fighters intercepted and destroyed the enemy. They lost nine 'planes in one single abortive raid. The landing grounds were completed and then the fighters and the light bombers arrived, squadron after squadron, and settled in.

The stage was set for the final act. Soon the scenes so common over Egypt last autumn, when our troops looked up at a sky filled with our 'planes, were repeated in western Libya. The "Eighteen Imperturbables" were back, another eighteen every hour as before.

## ROMMEL AT BAY

Rommel stood at bay across the road to Tripoli. He had wire and fortifications, gun positions and armour that provided ideal targets for pattern bombing. But he still had large numbers of fighters, too. Until we could bring them to battle and reduce them in sufficient numbers our bombers went over in daylight strongly escorted by squadrons of the R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F.; Spitfires and Warhawks for the most part.

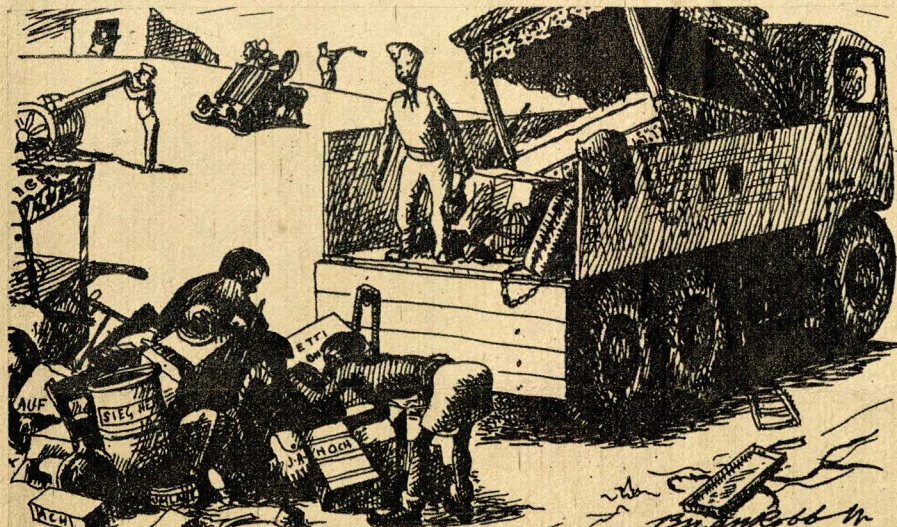
Here our tactical bombing by day was clearly related to long-range, strategical bombing by Liberators and other big bombers at night. Wherever the light bombers could be escorted in daylight, there they went. Most places beyond fighter range were attacked under cover of darkness. Between these hammer blows came the rapier thrust of the fighter-bombers, darting in to attack smaller targets, pockets of resistance and enemy aircraft on the ground.

## PLAN WORKED OUT

So, steadily and relentlessly, the plan of air war, fitting into the greater battle plan, was worked out. As the army under Montgomery pursued its campaign on the ground, so the air forces under Coningham carried on the war in the air. The navy played its incomparable part in ensuring the passage of supplies by sea. War had become completely "three dimensional" with the three Services each playing its own equally vital part.

## Little Known Units of the W.D.

by Brian Robb



No. 11. — No. 367 Miscellaneous Accumulation Squadron.



"If you don't shoot down the 'plane alongside the gun pit and then get a signed receipt from the pilot that it was your gun that hit him you'll never get credit for a hit," said the Ack-Ack sergeant.

We were listening to the news bulletin from London, waiting to hear from the announcer where we were, what we were doing and what had been done to us. Although we needed no elaborate details of what had been done to us we wanted to hear what London had to say about it. We always like to hear London talking about us.

"...There has been a slight increase in air activity in Tripolitania..." said the announcer and got no further as far as we were concerned. There was a yell of laughter.

"Slight increase ! Hell !" said the Ack-Ack sergeant.

### Their Best Day

It was rather natural that we should feel this way. Your own stiff neck is far more painful than your next door neighbour's tonsillitis, just as a dozen Messerschmitts over the Wadi el Chebir are much more keenly regarded than fifty Stukas over our Russian allies. And the Luftwaffe had been slightly increasing his activity over us, during the past two or three days.

Their best effort was on the thirtieth of December, and it was on this day that the sergeant evolved his grudge about planes which limp home carrying whole clips of Bofors shells in their fuselage.

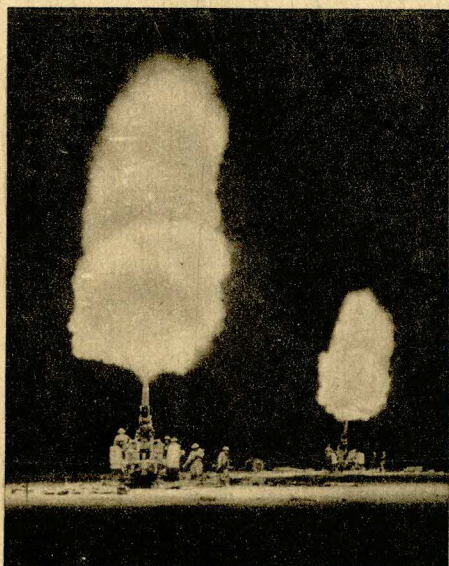
Dawn had just lifted an eyebrow in the east when we heard the drone of enemy bombers. Those lie-abeds who had turned over when the orderly sergeant came round to announce reveille found bombs coming down and shells going up before they had climbed out of their blankets.

Fifteen Stukas had come to blast us out of close laager and catch the Ack-Ack crews on the nod.

### Battle Was On

They were unlucky. We had already moved out of close laager and the Ack-Ack crews, the most vigilant men in the desert, were awake.

The detachment commander of each gun pit had received the warning 'Aircraft !'



This picture of anti-aircraft guns in action at night was taken by light from gun flashes.

# "SLIGHT ACTIVITY..."



from his spotter. The crews had grabbed helmets, the Bofors were swinging round and up, the Stukas were forsaking their usual formation dive for bombing in pairs, and the battle was on.

Within the time it takes to yawn the sky was filled with flying red tracer shells. From a distance it looked like neon lighting gone mad. When the Stukas was not overhead releasing their eggs you turned your attention to a distant Stuka-Bofors battle and watched the vivid red stitching in the sky.

Now and again a 'plane would come out of its dive and smoke would pour from it. You hoped it was a hit and not the usual smoke from the exhaust after a dive. The barrage seemed colossal. Despite the terrifying scrunch of the falling bombs there were few of our boys who were not giving a helping hand to the Ack-Ack crews Bren and rifle fire.

It was impossible for the fifteen 'planes to come out of that sky intact. Many were hit and one came down.

The raid lasted over a quarter of an hour and then the dive-bombers flew off, leaving a cloud of dust and smoke where their bombs had fallen, but not one column of smoke from ground to indicate a bomb hit.

Someone took a compass bearing on their direction when they formed up to depart. Then we had a look at the map, deduced the likely airfield and made a note on the map for future attention by the R.A.F.

### Waiting And Watching

It was still not light enough to make a fire and have that first mug of tea which wipes the sleep out of your eyes and the desert right out of your system.

So the Ack-Ack crews settled down again to the monotonous waiting and watching. That privileged and cursed gentleman 'spotter' who, in the course of his duties may disregard the highest general, hung his binoculars round his neck and waited. The rest of the crew stood and sat around their gun and waited. The cook in his nearby

lorry looked at his petrol cooker and waited. They hadn't long to wait.

In the eastern sky came the second string of the Luftwaffe — twelve Messerschmitts all ready for a pre-breakfast four hundred mile an hour dive, with cannon fire and machine gunning thrown in for luck.

Several more hits — but this time nothing you could point out on the ground and say "There, that's mine !" Then the Messerschmitts departed westwards.

We had breakfast in peace at eight-thirty.

For four hours the Ack-Ack crews sat round their pits. If they were lucky they read a tattered copy of *Lilliput*, wrote a

letter, thought of the days when the rest of the brigade had rested while they still stood on watch, reflected on their eleven unbroken months in the desert, and wondered what the cook would camouflage for dinner.

### "Time For Another"

But before dinner the Stukas and Messerschmitts combined to give us the third 'smartening up.' Again they were flying in a sky laden with bursting shells, again there were several hits (plus another acknowledged 'plane which came down in flames) and again they returned west.

Shortly before four o'clock the sergeant looked at the sun and said :

"Just time for another !"

He was right, too !

Out of the sun came the fourteen Stukas with an escort of twenty Messerschmitts.

The *Lilliput* was flung on the ground the letter home was tossed aside, the steel helmets were clamped home and the detachment commander, bombardier and gun crew went into action for the fourth time in nine hours.

By now everyone's blood was up. While the Bofors shells were ripping into the advancing aircraft, men were climbing into armoured cars and bringing Bren and Breda guns into action. Odd sky-snipers grabbed their rifles or captured German and Italian automatics, nipped into a slit trench or hid a piece of camel scrub and belted away.

by  
**LIEUT. COLIN MORRIS**



The Stukas bombed and then the Messerschmitts came in for the kill, flying knee high and strafing left and right.

You might find yourself getting a perfect bead on one 'plane flying across your rifle and, knowing it couldn't fire crossways with its fixed guns, let it have it, only to find another plane coming up from behind.

Of course there was the usual shout as someone paused to stick another clip in his rifle : "Where the hell's the R.A.F. ?" but we were mostly too busy to think. Anyhow we were doing all right !

We soon found it.

Coming up from the east were six little Kittihawks flying hell for leather to take on the twenty Messerschmitts.

**Yells and Cheers**

The 'planes dived and whirled and spiralled. For most of us it was impossible to tell who was who although you had a three to one chance of being right if you said they were Messerschmitts.

The men put down their weapons and yelled and cheered. It was as if fifteen cup finals were being decided in neighbouring fields. The language of the encouragement was absolutely unprintable but no players on the football field ever had the support that those six Kittihawk pilots had up in that sky.

One 'plane falls, smoke coming from it. Is it ours or theirs ? Someone cheers, someone groans. Then there is silence because the 'plane straightens out and, climbing again, joins in the melée.

Then, away to the south, we see an unmistakable Messerschmitt diving with a Kittihawk after it. Five hundred feet from the ground we hear the toc-toc-toc of the distant gun and then the enemy 'plane goes into flames, hits the ground, and a column of black smoke, centred by a red sheet, rises from the ridge. The Kittihawk goes back for another and does he carry our good wishes and congratulation !

Further over to the north we see another cloud rising from a ridge. We turn and ask someone who it was. One of ours or... ? One of theirs, he says.

Then the fight is over and the surviving Messerschmitts go home. A Kittihawk flies low over our strip of desert wagging its wings as it goes off to join the other five.

"...Slight increase in air activity..." says the B.B.C.



Anti-aircraft crew in action with Italian Breda 20 mm. on board a moving lorry.



"A dozen Messerschmitts over Wadi el Chebir..." A view of the wadi.

**Review For the Blue**

From Page 1

**Stalingrad's Revenge**

Announcing the lifting of the siege of Leningrad, a Soviet communiqué announced the capture of Schlusselfurg by Russian troops, the crossing of the southern Donetz and Manych rivers, and the capture of Divnoe and Cherkessk, two large towns near Kamensk.

Stalingrad which stood out for three months against the fury of the Nazis is now having the starkest revenge of the war. The 220,000 attackers are reduced to a tattered remnant of 70,000.

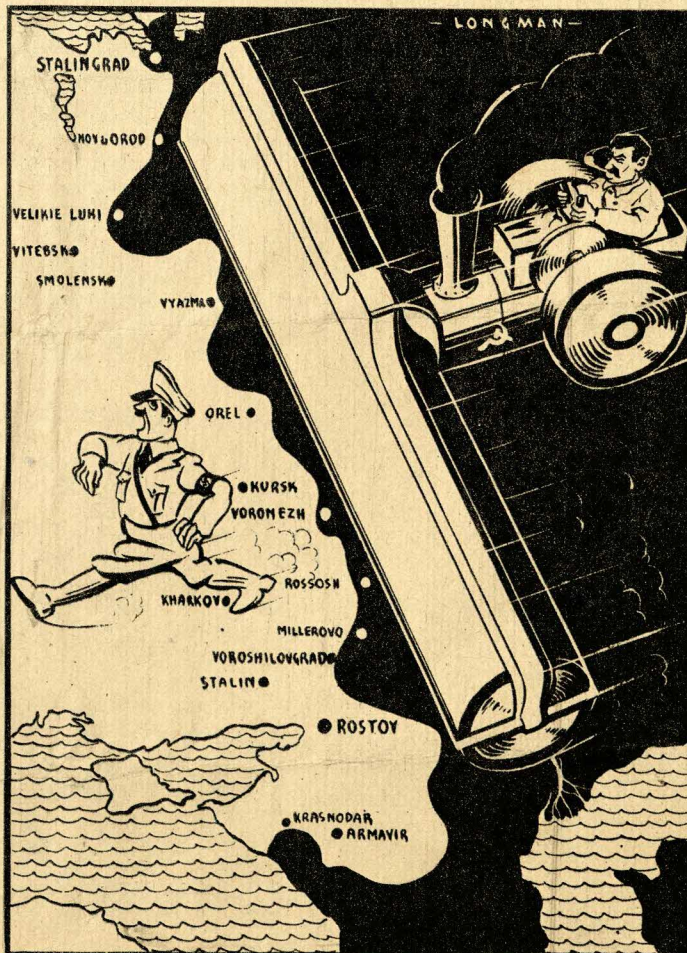
Germany's Gobbels and Italy's Ansaldo both tried to scare their countrymen over Russia. Said Gobbels : We are fighting an enemy which has brought total war to the point of inhumanity and barbarism." And this was Ansaldo's line : "It is a conflict which gives us an idea of how the Mongol invasions appeared to our distant forbears as terrifying."

**OUT-CLASSED**

General Sir Thomas Blamey, commanding land forces in the South Pacific, has announced after his tour of New Guinea, that the Japs have been out-classed, out-marched and out-fought by the Allied troops. He warned Australia that Japan would do all she could to destroy Australia before Australia became a base for Japan's destruction.

**SOUTHWEST PACIFIC**

The two outstanding developments during the week in the South West Pacific were a heavy and successful attack by Allied bombers on Rabaul, and the meeting of Australian and American forces in New Guinea, following the capture of Sananandar. Five more Japanese ships were sunk or badly damaged in the raid on Rabaul.



The Russian battle front. A news agency report refers to the "relentless Red Army steam-roller."



L/Sgt. J. A. Harsant, R.A. : In the many 'chai-time' arguments between the 'Regular' the 'Terrier' and the conscript, there has been one that has cropped up almost incessantly. This is the question of whether the regular soldier who has served 7 years abroad is really worthy of being repatriated in preference to a 'Terrier' or conscript who has served abroad for perhaps 2 or 3 years. Many suggestions have been raised — the favourite being that 'service abroad' for regular soldiers, should count from the time he actually arrives in a theatre of operations.

**RIGHT OF PREFERENCE**

It is generally agreed that in wartime one's family, whether one is married or not, becomes infinitely dearer than in peace-time. One assumes that this is caused by the closer proximity to death, as war must take its toll. Therefore, in spite of the regular being a professional soldier, in spite of his agreement to serve overseas, he still yearns to see those that he holds most dear.

The argument generally offered for this view is that as a regular is a professional soldier and has agreed to serve in any part of the world he should not have the right to preference, and, I suppose, should continue to serve abroad until the termination of the war, or even after that.

**THREE LONG YEARS**

Very often this regular has served on the frontier of India, and in many cases is a survivor of the original Middle East Forces who fought in the first campaign in the desert, in Eritrea and Abyssinia.. So it seems that in addition to being divorced from civilisation for so long he has spent three long years on the desert battlefield, which all who have experienced it agree is extremely wearying to say the least.

Regarding the relaxations and entertainments of soldiers in the Middle East, although admirable efforts are made by Welfare committees and organisations, there is little in comparison to that in England. In a number of stations in India, it is even less.

In peacetime, up to 1939, the term of service abroad was six years. From then onwards it was reduced to four years, but for

**BLUE LETTER BOX EIGHTH ARMY SAYING SOMETHING**

some unknown reason it was increased to seven years when war broke out when, I venture to say, it should have remained at four years. However, I daresay chaps would have been quite prepared to 'soldier on' for seven years. But in quite a number of cases men were not relinquished by their commanding officers even after having completed their seven years service overseas.

In view of these points, is it fair for a regular to expect to be repatriated after serving seven years overseas or is it not ?

**We can't make up our minds.**



**"BULLDOG" DRUMMOND**  
S/Sgt. A. Lamont sends us this picture of his "tough-guy" nephew, William Drummond, aged seven, who comes from Wallasey. He encloses a letter he's received from William who says he's the leader of a "pirut" gang in school and wants to be a soldier with Eighth Army. From the look of William we'd say we'd be glad to have him.

\* \* \*

Sgt R. Thomas, A.T. Bty R.A.: I would be much obliged if you could ask if any of your readers knows the whereabouts of L/Sgt J. Murison. He was wounded a couple of weeks ago in action. I hope this is not too much trouble to you.

Not at all.

Sgt. Patmore, "B" Bty of an A/Tk. Regt. : Please furnish me with the result of the Billy Conn and Joe Louis non-title fight and settle an argument.

Conn and Louis met only once — for the world's heavyweight title. Louis won by a k.o. in the 13th round. That was in June 1942. There was talk of a second meeting but it was killed by the U.S. Army chiefs.

\* \* \*

Pte. C. L. Hazelwood, of a Field Ambulance Coy. : My friend and I have an argument ; please settle it for us. I say that in a season between 1937 and 1940 Sheffield Wednesday beat Norwich City 7-0 at Sheffield in the Second Division. Am I right ?

Norwich City lost by 7-0 to Sheffield Wednesday in an away game during the 1938-39 season. They drew 2-2 in the return game at Norwich.

\* \* \*

Pte. D.L.W. Davis, 10 Corps Troops, O.F.P. : On January 8 between Benghazi and Sidi Magrun I lost my pack which contained all my personal possessions. It included a pigskin writing case with a zip fastener and some language study books. The writing case is of great sentimental value, as it was sent to me by a girl friend for my 21st birthday. I offer a reward of 200 piastres to anyone returning my personal stuff.

We hope they turn up.

\* \* \*

Rfn D. McFadden : I was wondering if it was possible to have the address of the anti-stand-offish girl referred to as 'lush figured' in the article on Tripoli in "Crusader" Christmas number. You must know the one I mean ; she has crowded ammunition pouches and a figure that winks at you every time she orders arms. Is the 'E.W.' on the left any clue to the bounteous beauty's identity ?

You'll know !



First reply to "Crusader's" invitation to send pet-pictures came from Corporal R.P. Bird of the Royal Corps of Signals.

Corporal Bird sends a photo of Suez (with himself in the background) who has been his company's mascot since they landed in Egypt, two years ago. Suez is a lady and has a puppy named Mena who has not yet made her bow to the camera.

\* \* \*

Cpl W. Mills sends us a poem in praise of the Tank Recovery boys. They deserve it, but we haven't room for more than a few lines. Here they are :

Now here's a tale that's not been told

Of the Recovery lads so bold ;  
Through shot and shell they work like hell

Though Jerry tries to sound their knell.

We do our stuff through thick and thin —

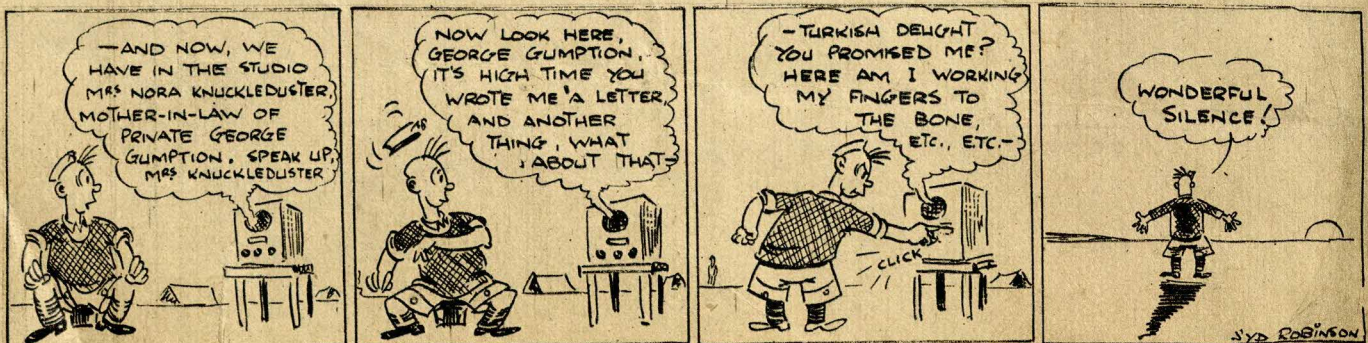
When a tank's knocked out, we knock it in !

\* \* \*

Tpr J. Smith : Thanks for the poems, which we have passed on to the Command Education Officer, who is running a prize competition for Eighth Army poets.

**George Gumption**

**No. 16 — Greetings-G-r-r-r !**





# THE GRIFF

Crusader Cutie

No. 22

## HINT FROM THE HUN

A tribute to the effectiveness of the R.A.F.'s low-level straffing of the enemy is contained in a recently captured German document, which says: Low-level air attacks have once again led to serious losses. In spite of this, troops still fail to seize the opportunity of destroying the enemy machines. Frequently no sort of defence is put up and the enemy's task is thereby rendered easier."

The order then goes on to repeat instructions issued to the Africa Korps over a year ago, in which the experience of Luftwaffe pilots who had been "shot up" by our ground troops was quoted to show the effect of small arms fire

"It has been proved" says the document, "that heavy losses can be caused to personnel and material by using infantry weapons. Aeroplanes are sensitive and are partially crippled by hits in the engine, petrol tank, ammunition, etc. A considerable success is scored when the pilot is put off his aim or his plane becomes a semi-casualty..."

The concentrated fire of all weapons not immediately engaged in ground defence has the best possibilities. Commanders at all costs are responsible for prompt and energetic defence against low level attacks. The plane must be met with a hail of bullets. No plane is invulnerable, so attack is the best means of defence.

## R.A. COMPLIMENTS "CRUSADER" ARTIST

One of Britain's most famous artists, Mr C. E. W. Nevinson, R.A., has paid a high tribute to the work of a Middle East artist who is well known to "Crusader" readers for his popular "Crusader Cutie" series.

He is Sergeant Edgar Longman, R.A.F., a fitter by trade in the services, but a commercial artist in London before the war. Recently he designed a poster in the Middle East for National Savings, which showed a typically English girl walking along a stretch of typically English coastline over the wording, "Worth Fighting For! Worth Saving For!"

Copies were printed in the M.E. and some reached London. National Savings Headquarters were so impressed that they reprinted the poster and circulated it wherever British men are serving. Mr Nevinson who "touched-up" the printed copy of the poster for reproduction purposes praised it highly.

In addition to his poster work Sergeant Longman is well-known for his war maps in "Parade" and "Crusader." We have received innumerable letters from men in Eighth Army asking for our "Cutie" to be published in small book form. Sergeant Longman is very silent on the subject of the source of his inspiration.



— EDGAR LONGMAN —

"I've got a job as private secretary to a staff-captain — with a lance corporal to do the office work."

Sergt. PAUL IRWIN

(former "Sunday Express" Sports Editor)

## Talking Sport

When a "three-seven" is nothing other than a train out of Euston, and the world generally has swung back to peace time standards, you will be seeing a lot of new faces kicking footballs around, as my ould Irish grandfather would say.

Anyhow, the well-known Irwin Pigeon Service has just winged in to the loft with red hot reports from blighty about Soccerdom's up-and-comers. For instance, there is another Bastin in action — Frederick Bastin, no less, an 18-years-old inside-right with Crystal Palace.

No, he isn't even related to Cliff Bastin. The Arsenal and England forward is a Devonian; the latest arrival was born just around the corner from the Palace ground.

The same goes for a 17-years-oldster name of Teddy Harding. Growing up, he used to hear the Selhurst cheers — not that Palace fans have had so very much to loosen their lungs over in more recent years — as he played in the ancestral backyard.

Look elsewhere. Liverpool have signed husky Marine Shepherd on professional forms. He is only 19, but as strong and tough as they make 'em. Or there is Nibloe centre-forward for Halifax, son of the old Aston Villa back.

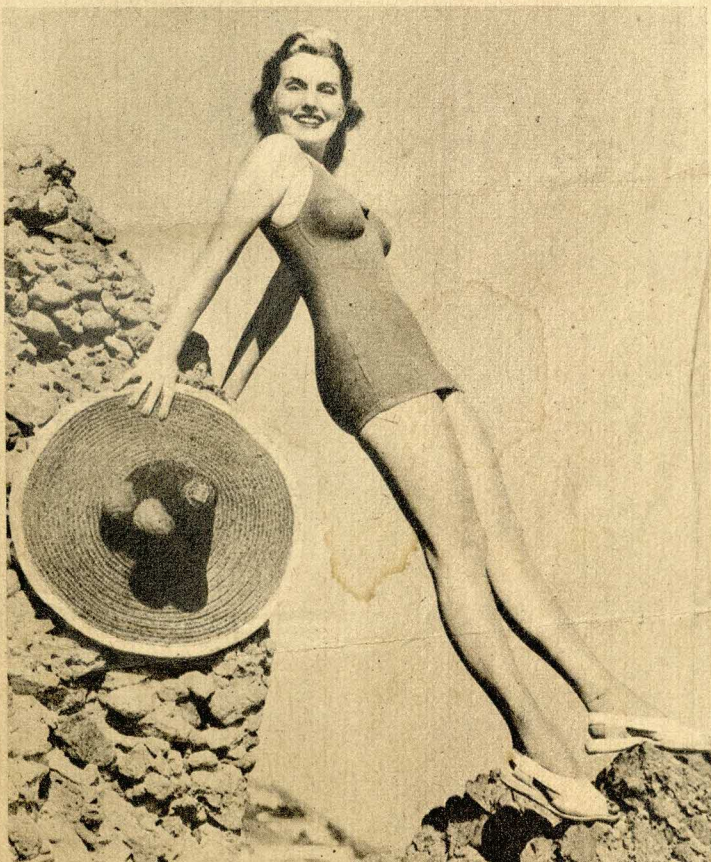
As ever, Wolves are very near-ly signing them fresh out of the cradle. Already this season they have set a League record by fielding a team with an average playing age of under 20.

Four of the boys are just old enough to smoke in public. Names? Barnfield (left-back), McLean (right-half), Crook (inside-right) and Rowley (outside-left). By the way, Rowley is a brother of the Manchester United goal-getter who also learned his football in Wolverhampton.

Recently taking the money-ticket with Tottenham Hotspur was Jack Chisholm. Spotted in a schoolboys' game, he signed amateur forms for the London Club at the age of 14. That was four years ago. Carefully groomed for stardom, he has developed into a class full-back.

So it goes in the big-time, or what must pass for the big-time until the game returns to the surge and sway of razor-keen competition. There's Norwich City with two downy faced wingers — Kenneth Shaw (15) and Gordon Addy (17). Or Fulham playing Andy Wilson's son, Jimmy, at left-half, and Queen's Park, the Scottish amateurs, bringing out Arthur Dixon, son of Glasgow Rangers' trainer.

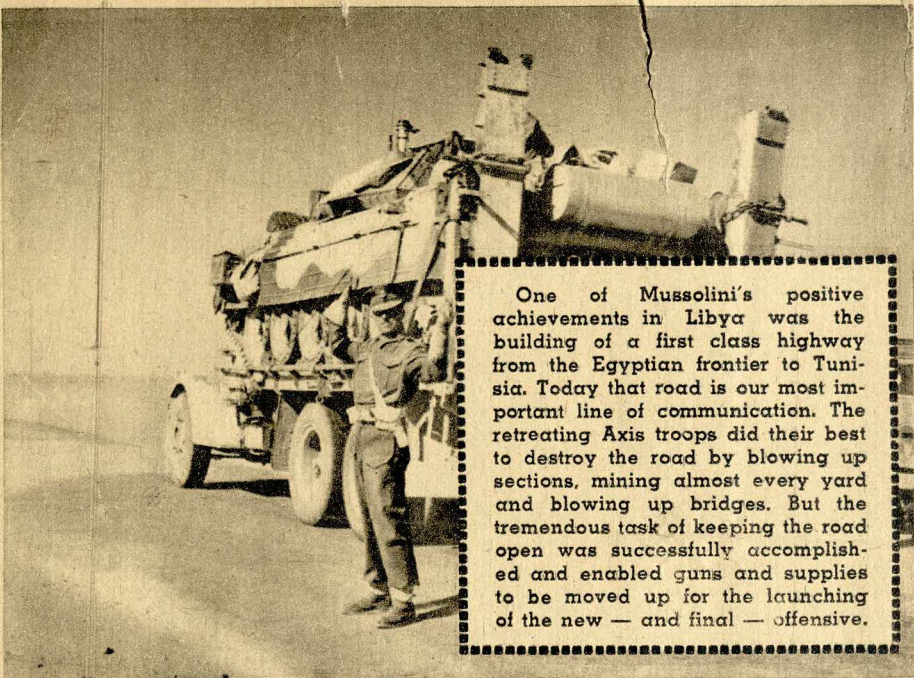
And now say I didn't tell you.



Brenda Joyce in beach attire.

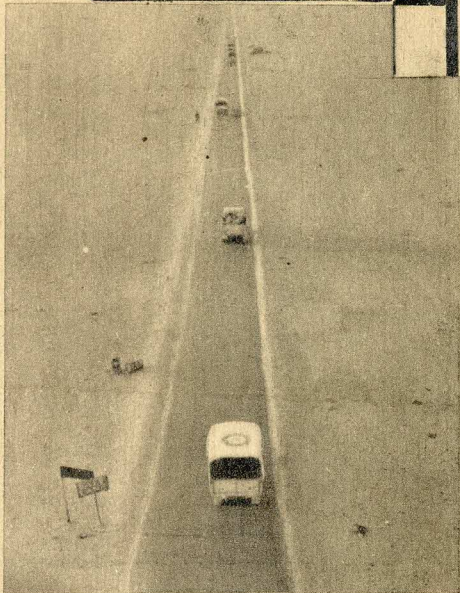


**TRIPOLI**  
(ROAD OPEN)

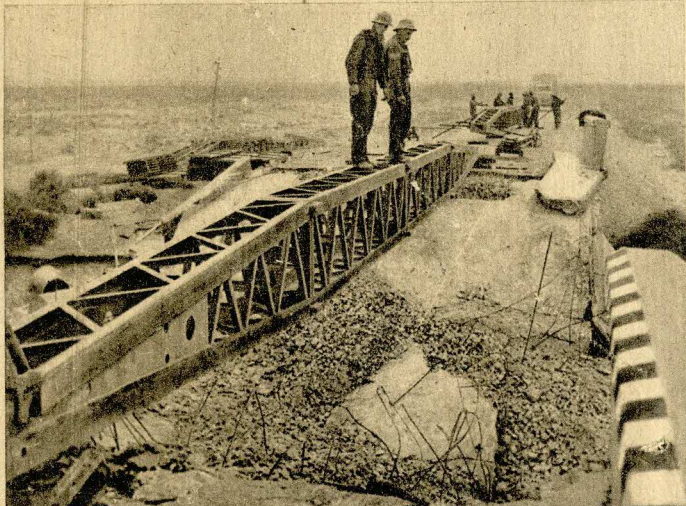


One of Mussolini's positive achievements in Libya was the building of a first class highway from the Egyptian frontier to Tunisia. Today that road is our most important line of communication. The retreating Axis troops did their best to destroy the road by blowing up sections, mining almost every yard and blowing up bridges. But the tremendous task of keeping the road open was successfully accomplished and enabled guns and supplies to be moved up for the launching of the new — and final — offensive.

As soon as a section is opened up, M.P.s. are on traffic control.



Traffic moving west of the Marble Arch.



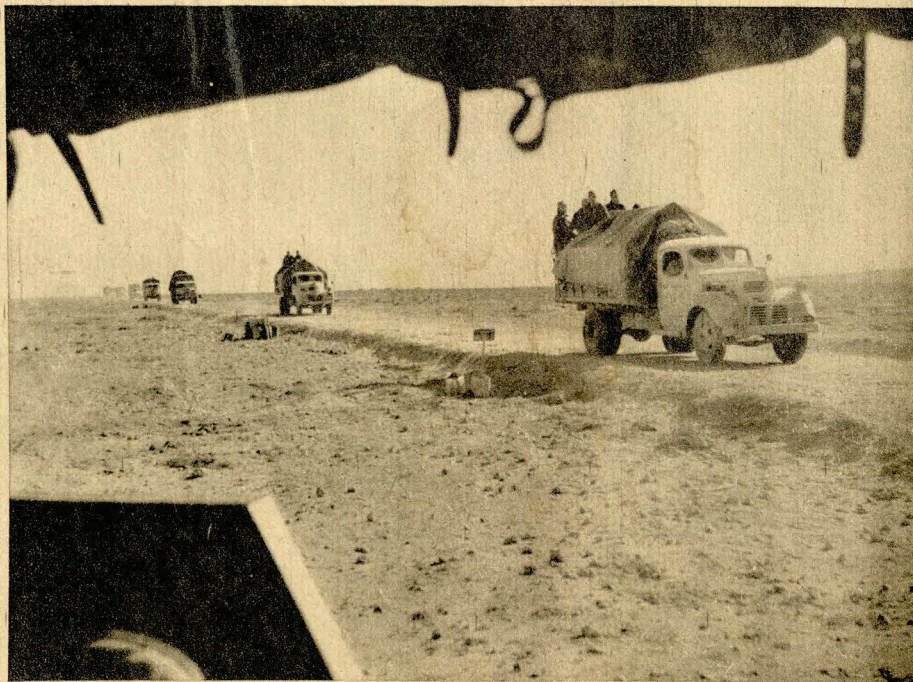
Temporary bridges enable the Army to keep moving.



A sapper removes a mine from the road centre.



"No loot; no view; mines bus!"



The coast road in full use. Traffic of all kinds brings supplies.

Pictures on this page by A.F.P.U. Photographer Mapham.