

# I WAS THERE!

Eye Witness  
Stories of the War

## How We Cracked the Pill-Boxes at Kwajalein

Capture of Kwajalein, in the Marshall Islands, completed on Feb. 5, 1944, involved plenty of Japanese pill-box cracking, a grim operation with a technique of its own and described here by Howard Handleman, Daily Express correspondent in that area of the Pacific. See also illus. p. 660.

WHILE leaning on the side of a concrete pill-box in which Private First Class John Garrison had just bayoneted a lone Jap, I had a close-up view of the technique of pill-box busting. The Americans were cleaning-up on this Jap-held island in the Pacific. The Jap pill-boxes were close together. Old-fashioned they were, with gun-slots facing the Pacific Ocean, and foot-thick reinforced steel doors, which do not crack at all easily.

Pill-box cracking is a job for all kinds of specialists—riflemen, grenade-throwers, flame-throwers, tanks and engineers with "satchel charges" filled with T.N.T. Our men moved slowly from pill-box to pill-box, sweating in the sun as they lugged heavy equipment. A sergeant with camouflage and war-paint sweating off his face, reported: "Two pill-boxes cleared, three full of Japs. That's what is holding us up." He sent a runner back for the tanks, and it was comforting to see them.

Tank No. 13, with a pretty girl and the words "Miss Friday" painted on the side, rumbled through the jungle with a 37-mm. gun moving from the turret. The tank blasted two heavy explosive shells into a pill-box at less than 15 yards, crumbling the concrete. A flame-thrower began jetting two sheets of solid flame into the box. A great cloud of black smoke poured out.

A squad moved to the next box, hopping forward with the movement of men in fear of being shot. I ducked forward with them. The next few minutes gave a blue-print of anti-pill-box technique. Staff-Sergeant Jack Martin and another rifleman ran close to the pill-box and poured a stream of rifle bullets at it to keep the Japs under cover, while Private Edgar Johnson moved up with a flame-thrower.

The riflemen ran back as the flame-thrower moved into position all alone before the pill-box. Johnson squirted the sheet of flame directly at the door, another obliquely at the door, and a third at the concrete wall. The fuel consumed, he dropped back a few paces to refill. Asked if he got his Japs, he said, coolly enough, "I think so, sir, but I wouldn't want to say."

Then the soldiers moved forward to the next pill-box, which was the toughest of all. Tank No. 13 threw a few 37s at the box. The flame-throwers were refuelling, so they were not used. The riflemen shot lots of rounds. A machine-gun, newly

**FLAME-THROWERS** were used by American Marines to destroy this Japanese strongpoint on Namur, one of the islands of the Kwajalein atoll. Dynamite, bayonets, bombs and shells all featured in the great clearance. How enemy concrete pill-boxes were dealt with, one by one, in the furious battle of the Marshall Islands is told above.

Photo, Planet News

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arrived, covered the slot of the pill-box with steady-fire. Grenades were thrown. No. 13 continued to fire its vicious 37-mm. gun.

## I Walked Out of the War into Liechtenstein

The only country in Europe which has not a single soldier or a single gun: such is the remarkable little principality recently visited by Frederick Gleaner, Daily Express representative. He gives here the intriguing story of his interview with its ruler, Prince Franz Joseph, on March 14, 1944.

AT 11 o'clock this morning I crossed the River Rhine and walked right out of the war. By showing my passport to a Swiss guard at the frontier station of Buchs and crossing the ancient stone bridge, I stepped into the only country in Europe which has not a single soldier or a single gun—Liechtenstein, the tiny neutral principality on the borders of Nazi-land.

I was there to call on its ruler, 38-year-old Prince Franz Joseph II, who, with his fair-haired 23-year-old consort, lives in his small domain, simply and inexpensively. A smart grey-blue bus drove me past snow-covered farms into the capital, Vaduz.

At the main gate of Liechtenstein Castle four old cannon pointed their muzzles across the wide Rhine valley towards Switzerland. "You will notice the birds' nests in the muzzles of these old relics," said my guide. Inside, the castle breathed an air of solid, Victorian comfort. The walls of the main hall, with its open fireplace, were hung with priceless Van Dyck and Brueghel canvases. Packets of English and American cigarettes were on a table.

The door opened, and Prince Franz Joseph came in. He is a tall, youthful-looking man, dressed in tweed jacket and golfing trousers. His eyes are dark, he has a well-

Finally, an engineer, with spectacles, trudged up with T.N.T. wrapped in gun-sacking, and bound with wire. This is the "satchel charge." Under fire and machine-gun cover, Corporal Chester Gibson crouched low, and moved as close as he possibly could to the box.

The sergeant shouted: "Everybody down!" and everyone hugged the earth as Gibson threw the charge at the box, and grabbed the earth himself. The charge which blew up the pill-box stunned everyone in a wide radius as the ground shook, and ears tingled. It sounds easy. It is not.

trimmed black moustache and the heavy lower lip of the Hapsburgs. He speaks German with an Austrian accent, and uses his hands frequently when talking. (He succeeded his great-uncle, Prince Franz Joseph I, in 1938.)

The Prince offered me an English cigarette as we sat down in a window seat and talked informally. He began by saying: "So far the Germans have not interfered with either my country or myself. I am able to travel wherever I wish on a German visa, and frequently visit my estates in Vienna and Czechoslovakia."

He did not agree that life was either lonely or monotonous in Liechtenstein. "We receive guests frequently," he said. "Then there is mountain climbing, chamois hunting and trips to Zurich. We enjoy English movies like *In Which We Serve* and *Mrs. Miniver*, which the Swiss cinemas are now showing."

Prince Franz said his country had no outstanding international problems, except the possibility that the tiny principality (its total area is 60 square miles, population 10,000) may one day be swamped with hordes of refugees. "We have anticipated this," he said, "by increasing our regular police force from seven to 87. We believe this force



will be sufficient to cope with the refugee problem should it arise."

But though Liechtenstein is neutral in practice, she is still technically at war with both Germany and Italy. In 1866, together with her big ally Austria, she declared war on Prussia and Italy. She furnished one officer and 58 sharpshooters to the joint war effort; but when Austria made a peace treaty with her enemies, Liechtenstein was not included. And a separate official peace treaty was never made.

None of Liechtenstein's £100,000 budget has to be spent on war needs. Very little is required for the maintenance of law and order. The police force's last big job was in autumn 1939, when a score or more of Nazi thugs staged a "march on Vaduz," with the declared intention of liberating the population from the princely yoke. Sergeant Joseph Brunhart, chief of police, quickly handled the situation by clapping four ringleaders into gaol, sending the rest home to mother.

### This is the Fire-Raked Cockpit of Anzio

"The whole compact and ferocious bag of tricks is contained in a cockpit less than the area bounded by Battersea, Marble Arch, Holborn, and Southwark," declared an observer who recently returned from the beach-head in Italy and gave the following impressions to a Reuter correspondent. Stories of the beach-landings on the morning of Jan. 22, 1944, and the magnificent work of the Reconnaissance Corps in that area, are in pp. 601 and 697.

TAKE a large London suburb, fill it with some of the finest Allied troops and drop it in the middle of enemy territory, and you have some idea of what is going on at Anzio. Every acre can be swept by enemy gunfire. The Fuehrer sees an immense political prize in throwing the attack back into the sea.

The Allies, with the possibility of gaining another foot in the door of Europe, know that the eyes of the world are on this splintered wicket gate. The most murderous entertainment being dished out on the beach-head is exported to Jerry.

The German prisoners are a strange crew. They are for the most part either extraordinarily young or obviously too old. They are made up of divisions from widely scattered parts of Europe. There is a tough backbone among them, but the usual run of customers in the prisoner of war cages are anything less than Herrenvolk.

All the prisoners of war look as if they had "had it" when they were nabbed. They have the effusive relief of men who have been suddenly released from the hail of shells, bombs and mortars. Those that I saw were young, dishevelled loons—disillusioned clods whom five years ago I saw at Nuremberg.

Men who have accounted for about one in seven of the enemy regard this as the bloodiest affray since the Fuehrer "put on that coat which was most dear to him." The Reconnaissance Regiment, Guards, infantry, gunners and all the rest of them have fought

through the horror and filth of this campaign with the fury and courage that in wartime comes from our cities, our shires and our hills in such abundant measure.

If Barnum and Bailey, Von Moltke, Cecil B. de Mille, Ludendorff, Genghis Khan and Charles B. Cochran got together for a warlike conference, maybe they could stage an Anzio in the heart of England. It would smash half the country to a solid pulp. It would bring ammunition dumps, wagon lines, gun parks, prisoners of war cages, petrol points and graveyards. It would bring misery and death.

### Four Times Our Submarine Bumped the Sea-bed

H.M. submarine *Stubborn* has returned safely after one of the most remarkable patrols of this war. She is commanded by 24-year-old Lieut. A. A. Duff, D.S.C., R.N., and this is his story, told on his arrival back at the home port, where he and his crew were given a tremendous welcome.

WE had torpedoed two of a convoy hugging the enemy coast. This convoy, which was escorted by four trawlers, a minesweeper and another patrol vessel, was the second large one we had successfully attacked on the patrol. The first lot of depth charges didn't worry us much, but the large number which came hurtling down in the next fifteen minutes were much too close. Our after-hydroplanes—used for obtaining the desired depth—were jammed at hard-a-dive; the starboard propeller was put out of action, and a tank which is used for quick diving was inadver-

tently flooded. We went whistling down and were dangerously deep before I could pull up by blowing main ballast and regain trim by rushing all hands aft to bring up the bow. One after another the hands scrambled through narrow openings in watertight bulkheads and down the shoulder-wide alley, until they were heaped like a collapsed Rugby scrum in the aftermost compartment. Then, for some unknown reason, the submarine rose to the surface. Nothing could stop her, and we lay for a brief period in sight of an armed patrol vessel. Then we went into another steep dive, which I again managed



Lt. A. A. Duff, D.S.C., R.N., captain of H.M. submarine *Stubborn*, was on his first voyage as her commander (although he had sailed in her before) at the time of the exciting incidents which he relates below. Photo, British Official

But the scale of this terrific fight would be wrenched from the comparative serenity of newspaper headlines and brought out into its proper perspective.



ON THE ANZIO BEACH-HEAD, day and night, showers of anti-personnel bombs sent down by the Luftwaffe failed to shift these British gunners, who had dug for themselves holes to which, with the unflinching humour of our troops, they gave such names as "Sea View" (left). One of the many guns (right) which, with a concentration of fire seldom equalled in this war, smashed the German attacks; it is a 5.5 in. manned by the Royal Artillery. See story above. Photos, British Official

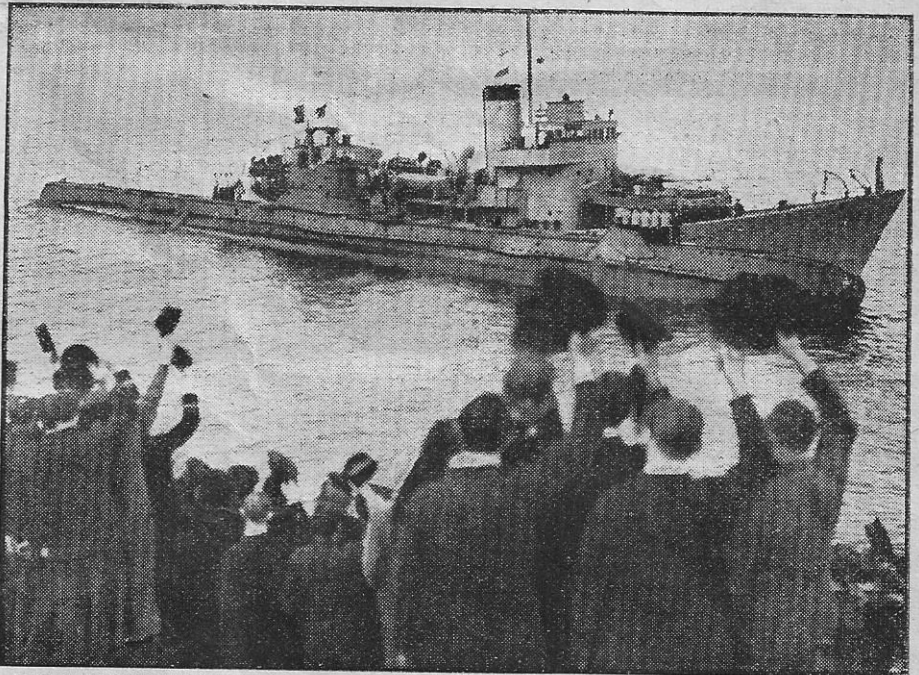
to check when we were very deep indeed—and more depth charges came down.

We corrected the trim, with most of the crew placed forward this time, and the *Stubborn*, proceeding on her port motor, with her bow up at an angle of 25 degrees, was headed to make a rush through the minefield. We got along like that for a time, until the rate of rise got out of control, and we broke surface again. This time we were seen by the minesweeper which was only a mile and a half away. We dived with the utmost speed and went down and down, out of control. The ultimate figure on the depth gauge was passed; the needle stuck, and we were still going down.

And here the Guardian Angel stepped in and provided an entirely unexpected sea bottom. A study of the chart shows no shallow patch in the deep waters anywhere in that vicinity. But we had no doubt that we had touched bottom, because the *Stubborn* bumped on the sea-bed four times before she came to rest with a nine degrees bow-down angle. Many more depth charges were dropped very close, so that the boat was lifted off the bottom by the force of the explosions, but that was the last we heard of the enemy . . .

Lieutenant Duff waited until it was dark before he tried to move, and then it was found that the *Stubborn* was firmly stuck. The after-hydroplanes had fallen off, but the starboard propeller had freed itself. Attempts were made to get her off stern first and rock her free by running the crew about, but all failed. By now the pressure of air inside the submarine was abnormally high, and Lieutenant Duff decided to run his main air compression, drawing air from inside the boat—a very unusual procedure. In this way he pumped up an air group to 3,000 lb. per square inch and was able to pull the submarine off the sea bed. Continuing his story:

She shot up at an angle of 70 degrees. I was lying flat on the conning tower ladder. Everyone was slung in a heap. But we surfaced all right and steamed as fast as we could away from the enemy coast. The ordeal was by no means over. On the



H.M. SUBMARINE *STUBBORN* lived up to her name in one of the most remarkable patrols of the war. She is here seen coming home, escorted by the Norwegian destroyer *Narvik*, passing a cheering crowd of sailors aboard her depot ship H.M.S. *Forth*. See facing page for commencement of the story of her adventures. Photo, British Official

following afternoon her rudder suddenly failed to answer the wheel. She lay helpless in enemy-patrolled waters, and it was blowing a gale. The boat lay beam on to the sea, rolling horribly. I ordered a sail to be rigged to the periscope standard, hoping that would bring the ship's head to sea. But in a few seconds the canvas was torn to ribbons.

Only at this stage did the *Stubborn* send a signal for help. Destroyers were sent immediately, but the weather was so bad that it was two days before they

were able to sight the stricken submarine. Then, for six hours, they could not take her in tow because the weather was too bad. They had to wait until it moderated sufficiently to get the tow line made fast. Eventually, this was done after dark—a fine feat of seamanship by both craft—and they steamed away from the danger zone. When the *Stubborn* had been in tow for eight hours the cable parted. But now Lieut. Duff's experiments in steering without a rudder were rewarded, because the *Stubborn* was able to proceed under her own power at about 7½ knots and carry out an efficient zig-zag as though under continuous helm. She steamed thus for about 300 miles and then she was taken in tow again and brought safely home.

**MARCH 15, Wednesday** 1,656th day  
Italy.—Cassino attacked with 1,400 tons of bombs; every unit of Mediterranean Air Force in action.

**Russian Front.**—Kalinovka, Turbov, Voronovitsa, Trostinetz, Obodovka, and Olgopol in Vinnitsa sector captured by Russians.

**Australasia.**—American troops landed on Manus Island in the Admiralties.

**Air.**—Brunswick bombed by Fortresses and Liberators for seventh time. Stuttgart and Munich attacked by over 1,000 aircraft at night.

**MARCH 16, Thursday** 1,657th day  
Italy.—Three-quarters of Cassino occupied by 5th Army troops. Castle Hill, N. of the town, captured.

**Russian Front.**—Vapnyarka taken by troops of 2nd Ukrainian Front. Nemirov, Voroshilovka, and Bobrinets captured.

**Air.**—Clermont-Ferrand, 30 miles S.W. of Vichy, attacked at night with 12,000-lb. bombs. Amiens raided.

**MARCH 17, Friday** 1,658th day  
Italy.—Cassino railway station captured by New Zealand troops of 5th Army.

**Russian Front.**—Dubno, Demidovka, and Targowica captured by Marshal Zhukov's troops.

**Burma.**—Announced landings made by British airborne troops in N. Burma and by British and W. African troops on coast of Arakan, 15 miles below Razavil. Chinese operating under Gen. Stilwell captured Tingkaw-Sakan.

**General.**—Finnish Government rejected Russia's armistice terms.

**MARCH 18, Saturday** 1,659th day  
**Russian Front.**—Zhimerinka, on Odessa-Lwow railway, captured by 1st Ukrainian Army. Yampol and Pomoshnya taken by 2nd Ukrainian Army. Liquidation of German Sixth Army on Lower Bug Front announced.

**Australasia.**—Lorengau, Japanese base on Manus Island, taken by U.S. troops.

**Air.**—Oberpfaffenhofen, Lechfeld, Landsberg, Friedrichshafen and Augsburg hit in great day attack by over 1,500 U.S. bombers and fighters. At night, 1,000 bombers went to Frankfurt and Bergerac.

**Sea.**—Loss of destroyer *Mahratta* announced by Board of Admiralty.

## OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

**MARCH 19, Sunday** 1,660th day  
**Russian Front.**—Krzemieniec, 20 miles inside 1939 Polish frontier, captured by troops of 1st Ukrainian Front. River Dniester forced along a stretch of 30 miles by Marshal Koniev. Soroka and Zhelanets occupied.

**Australasia.**—Emerau Island, 84 miles N.W. of Kavieng, invaded by U.S. troops.

**Burma.**—Announced that major offensive launched by Japanese troops in the Chindwin Valley along Indian frontier.

**Sea.**—Announced that in recent operations extending over 20 days in N. Atlantic six U-boats sunk by five British sloops under command of Capt. F. J. Walker, C.B., D.S.O. (two bars).

**MARCH 20, Monday** 1,661st day  
**Russian Front.**—Mogilev-Podolski, on the Dniester, and Vinnitsa, on the Bug, captured by Marshals Koniev and Zhukov.

**Australasia.**—Occupation of Emerau Is., N.W. of Kavieng, New Ireland, completed by American assault troops.

**General.**—Pierre Pucheu, former Vichy Minister of the Interior, executed.

**MARCH 21, Tuesday** 1,662nd day  
**Russian Front.**—Cernauti-Balti railway cut in Red Army southern offensive.

**Home Front.**—Many incendiaries dropped in fire attack on London.

**Burma.**—Fall of Jambubum and Sumpabum in northern Burma announced.

★ **Flash-backs** ★

1940  
March 15. Finns ratified peace terms with Russia at Helsinki.

1941  
March 16. Berbera, capital of British Somaliland, recaptured.

March 20. British Somaliland cleared of Italian troops.

March 27. Harar, Abyssinia, taken by 11th African Division.

1942  
March 22. Three-day Axis sea and

**MARCH 22, Wednesday** 1,663rd day  
**Russian Front.**—Pervomaisk, on River Bug, captured by 2nd Ukrainian Front troops.

**Air.**—Berlin attacked in daylight by Fortresses and Liberators. In greatest raid of the war, 3,000 tons dropped on Frankfurt at night by Lancasters and Halifaxes.

**General.**—German occupation of Hungary, reported to have begun on March 19, completed. Resignation of Hungarian Govt. announced. Hungarian Ambassador in Berlin, A. Sztojaj, appointed Premier.

**MARCH 23, Thursday** 1,664th day  
**Russian Front.**—Kapuchnitsy and Tremblova taken on the southern front.

**Air.**—Hamm rail-junction, Achmer and Handorf air bases, Munster and Brunswick factories, bombed by over 1,000 U.S. planes. Rail targets at Laon, and objectives at Lyons raided at night. Mosquitoes attacked Dortmund.

**MARCH 24, Friday** 1,665th day  
Italy.—Announced Germans had regained a quarter of Cassino.

**Russian Front.**—Announced that in five days' fighting troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front had broken German defences in the Tarnopol-Proskurov sector and advanced up to 60 miles. Czorkov, Gusiatsyn and Zalesczyk taken.

**Home Front.**—Intense flak barrage defeated enemy incendiary raid on London.

air attack on Malta-bound convoy in Mediterranean commenced.

1943  
March 15. Russians evacuated industrial city of Kharkov.

March 20. Assault on Mareth Line positions by 8th Army.

March 27. Fondouk, Tunisia, taken by American troops.

March 28. Mareth, Toujane, and Matmata captured by 8th Army.

**Air.**—Schweinfurt and Frankfurt industrial targets, French airfields of Nancy and St. Dizier, raided by Fortresses and Liberators. At night Berlin (2,500 tons) had its heaviest raid to date.

**MARCH 25, Saturday** 1,666th day  
**Russian Front.**—Proskurov, great German bastion in western Ukraine, fell to Marshal Zhukov. Fifty mile stretch of River Dniester reached above Mogilev-Podolski.

**Burma.**—Capture of Shaduzup in the Mogaung Valley by U.S. and Chinese troops announced.

**Air.**—Aulnoye rail targets (N. France) and objectives in Lyons area attacked at night. Berlin bombed.

**MARCH 26, Sunday** 1,667th day  
**Russian Front.**—Troops of 2nd Ukrainian Army reached the State frontier of the Soviet Union with Rumania, the River Pruth, on a front of 50 miles. Balti and Kamenets Podolski captured.

**Air.**—Military installations in Pas de Calais and Cherbourg areas, and E-boat nests at Ymuiden (Holland) bombed. At night, Essen subjected to saturation attack; Hanover and Courtrai (Belgium) attacked.

**General.**—Mr. Churchill said that the "hour of greatest effort and action is approaching."

**MARCH 27, Monday** 1,668th day  
**Russian Front.**—Soviet troops entered suburbs of Nikolayev. Gorodenka taken.

**Burma.**—Announced that Allied troops were in rear of enemy in Upper Burma, under command of Maj.-Gen. O. C. Wingate.

**Air.**—Nine airfields in central and S.W. France attacked by Fortresses and Liberators. Tours marshalling yards raided.

**MARCH 28, Tuesday** 1,669th day  
**Russian Front.**—Nikolayev, important Black Sea naval base and German strong-point on the southern Bug, captured by 3rd Ukrainian Army. Slobodka, on main line from Odessa to Zmerinka; Gvozdetz, district centre of Stanislavov region; Minkousti, and Chelmenti in Cernauti area, taken by Soviet troops.

**Air.**—French airfields of Dijon, Chartres, and Chateaudun bombed.

# THE WAR IN THE AIR

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

No operation in this war has been more novel and spectacular than the dispatch of a strong force by air into the heart of Northern Burma, where it alighted behind the Japanese "lines" within the area under "control" of the Far Eastern enemy. The operation was carried out by towed gliders and troop transport aircraft. This form of attack was strategically first employed by the German Army during the offensive against Holland and Belgium in 1940. The scene of the first glider attack was the fort of Eben-Emael, which the Belgians had built during the years between the wars to cover the approaches to the three vital bridges that spanned the Albert Canal.

As with the British defences at Singapore, the Belgian defences of fort Eben-Emael anticipated attack from a certain direction. Both these great fortresses were built before the rapid development of air power which followed the tremendous technical advances made during the past decade. And both fell to attack from the quarter whence it had been supposed not to be possible.

## GLIDER-BORNE Troops Landed on Fort-Top

The Belgian fort was put out of action within thirty-six hours of the beginning of the main German assault upon the Low Countries and France by glider-borne troops who descended in the night behind and even on top of the fort and who were reinforced by parachute troops. The bridge guards were attacked not from the front but from the rear. The German armies poured over the bridges and the great, or rather supposedly great, bastion of the Albert Canal proved almost valueless, due to the employment of new strategical and tactical methods of war.

But nothing of any importance in modes of war has been introduced by the Germans which has not swiftly been seized upon by the Allies and bettered. The Germans failed because they did not believe sufficiently in their new methods. One can perceive in case after case that the torpid mind of military orthodoxy interfered with the more advanced thinkers in the German military hierarchy. It is well for the world that it was so, or we should not now have turned the tables on our foe; there would have been no time to do so.

AND so the Germans who first used the glider as a means of taking troops into battle made provision for this form of military transport on so small a scale that their victories won by novel methods left them dry of resources sufficient to sweep them on to complete victory. What would have been the fate of Britain in 1940 had Germany possessed a great fleet of gliders that could have alighted in the darkness in numerous parts of Britain? It is sheer speculation to guess at the effect, but undoubtedly the war would not have gone as it has gone for us. We should have known the meaning of fighting in our own homeland.

Now, nearly four years later, a great air-

borne force was landed within the heart of Northern Burma by gliders, complete with all sorts of equipment for turning fields marked out for the initial landings into airfields suitable for the use of troop transport aircraft. And that meant no small parcels of equipment. Troop transport aircraft require considerable fore-and-aft and lateral room to alight. The approaches to the actual alighting area must be reasonably good, especially for night landings, for no air

efficient airfield, it would be so severely handicapped as to jeopardize its capacity to hit the enemy, or even to survive. For, surrounded by enemy forces, it depends upon air transport for its supplies of food and ammunition, weapons, medical requirements, evacuation of wounded and sick, and all the hundred-and-one details of a modern military command. Such supplies cannot continue to come in by glider; for there is a limit to the number of gliders that may be used in one operation, because the gliders can only return whence they came if air-tugs can get down to tow them off again, or unless the runways are of sufficient length and width to enable tugs to hook up the gliders from the ground while on the wing. But even the last-named method does not solve the

problem, for it is certain that in air operations of this kind a large number of gliders will be damaged in landing and so cannot be returned to their starting points by air.

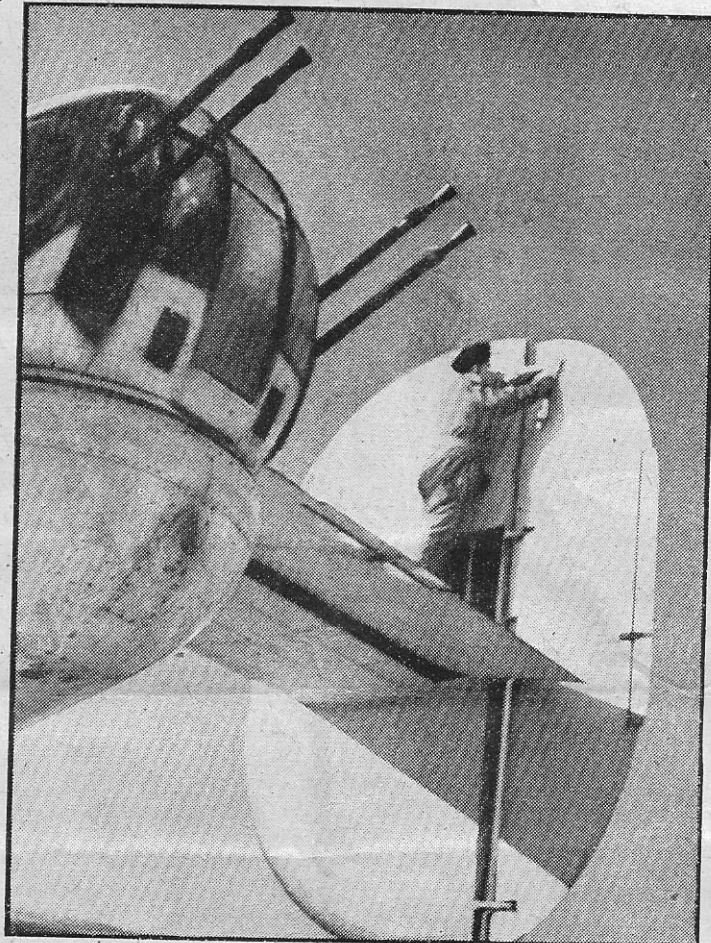
## CRASH-LANDING Safely in Confined Spaces

It is imperative to get an airfield into operation with the minimum delay and to provide for the adequate protection of that airfield. This means that a fighter force must fly in as soon as possible to give air cover, for in the case of the Burma air expedition, the scene of operations was too distant from airfields in India for adequate air cover to be provided from them. Soon one airfield is not enough. Satellite airfields are required to allow for dispersal in the event of enemy air attack succeeding in breaking through the fighter screen, so that the temporary damaging of one airfield will not hold up the stream of supplies and reinforcements. In this way, by the use of air transports, a really big army can be built up in an area where the enemy may have hoped that he was in occupation.

Why, it may be asked, are gliders used for the initial operation? Why not use air transports straight away? The answer is that gliders can be crash-landed in comparatively small spaces with relative safety to their occupants. They have no hot engines and lubricating oils or petrol to catch fire when they crash-land. They can be more lightly built, so that if they begin to disintegrate there are fewer heavy parts to cause injury to the occupants.

And they are far easier and quicker to build than air transports, requiring a relative handful of man-hours for their production compared with a power-driven air transport. Moreover, two or more gliders can be towed by one air-tug, so that a large force can be flown in quickly. And the gliders can get down in rapid succession one after another.

OUR admiration should go to the pilots who steered their gliders through the night skies over the jungle hills of Burma, for flying a towed glider is no easy ride. The glider strains and yaws on the end of its silk nylon rope as it follows the wake of its tug, heaves in the air, and makes great lunges about the sky. It is in no way a "willing" tow. It is so much dead-weight, a troop-packed engineless aircraft the safety of whose freight is absolutely dependent on skilful handling. Pilots have to work hard to keep them on their course. Certainly these glider pilots who landed in Burma have made their mark in military history.



BACK FROM ATLANTIC PATROL, aircraft of R.A.F. Coastal Command get routine inspection; here the tail unit of a Liberator is being overhauled. American-built, its wing span is 110 ft., length 64 ft., height 17 ft. 11 ins. Its speed is 335 m.p.h. at 16,000 ft. and its range 3,000 miles. The bomb load is 8,000 lbs.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

commander wishes unnecessarily to have excessive crashes which cost lives and block the runways and approaches with wreckage which takes time to remove, and in Burma may set the jungle alight from petrol fires and throw well-laid plans awry.

A MODERN military airfield is not just simply a place to land. It must have proper control over flying with signals organization, lighting for night landings, radio communication with bases and with aircraft in flight, telephone communication between one part and another of the widely dispersed area (so dispersed for security against bomb attacks), and runway surfaces which will carry modern aircraft weighing anything up to twenty tons. These cannot be conjured out of the jungle. The materials and appliances to create the airfield must be transported to the spot. And that was done in the case of General Wingate's airborne expedition in Northern Burma.

If for any reason such an expedition were to fail to provide itself quickly with an