VOICE OF THE PRESS

THE OFFENSIVE WINS

When Hannibal's armies were at the very gates of Rome the Romans sent an expeditionary force against his homeland of Carthage. And Rome won the war. When the infidel Turk threatened all Christendom, the West did not wait for him to come and conquer. The crusaders advanced to the Golden Horn, defeated the Turk and threw him out of Europe. At the first battle of the Marne Foch despatched to the indecisive Joffre this message: "My right is exposed, my left is heavily attacked, my centre is unable to hold its position. I cannot redistribute my forces. The situation is excellent. I shall attack."

—Kitchener Record.

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HE'S ONLY HUMAN

To no one more than to Gen. Douglas MacArthur himself must many of these references to him seem a bit overdone. He is a good soldier, a capable leader who has done a good job in the Philippines, and, we hope, will lead the United Nations forces in the Pacific to victory. But he's only human; he can't perform miracles. And putting him forth as a superman isn't fair to him or to the cause.

—St. Thomas Times-Journal.

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WHY QUIBBLE?

C.I.O. protests to the National War Labor Board that wage rates set for shipyard workers at Kingston, Collingwood and Midland are lower than those in effect at Toronto and Port Arthur. And, by the same token, a bit better than those at Plymouth, where whole night shifts have been rubbed out while putting in 16 hours without overtime.

—Windsor Star.

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PROPAGANDA

"The dark meat of a chicken contains about twice as much vitamin B as the light meat." Slick bit of propaganda by father, who doesn't go for vitamins himself, to make the rest of the family take a leg and lay off the breast.

—Ottawa Citizen.

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WIFE TORTURE

Get appointed an air warden, and blow in at 3 a.m. with the announcement, "Sorry, dear — that's military information."

—Winnipeg Tribune.

—o—

AND SHIRT TOO

People who think they can't get by without a two-trouser suit should give some thought to what it would feel like if we had the pants beaten right off us.

—Ottawa Citizen.

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TIMELY WARNING

A Toronto baby ate her father's gasoline coupons. He'd better watch his spare tire—if any.

—Stratford Beacon-Herald.

Predicts Drop In Britain's Population

Great Britain will be populated by "old folks" after the war, according to Sir Henry Brackenbury, writing in the British Medical Journal.

"Nothing can prevent this during the next thirty or forty years," Brackenbury's article said.

"Unless effective measures can be taken to increase the number of births and the size of families, similar results will follow during the subsequent generation."

It has been estimated that the total population of England and Wales will decline by 3,540,000 by 1965.

British Call Planes By Fighting Names

We trust it is not unpatriotic to say that in the matter of finding good names for fighing planes the British have it all over us of the United States. According to newspaper accounts, General Knudsen arrived in Des Moines in a "21-passenger army transport." The same issue carried a story about Lieut. E. H. O'Hare shooting down six Japanese bombers in his "fighter plane."

The British, on the other hand, have given names to their plane types. We refer to one plane as a Lockhead P-38; the British call it the "Lightning." A plane which we call Consolidated B-24, they call "Liberator." They say "Catalina" for our Consolidated PBY-5.

As for British-made machines, who has failed to be thrilled by the mere sound of Tornado, Whirlwind, Spitfire or Defiant? Must we battle for freedom and human rights in Consolidated PBY-5s?

It is probably a small matter, but we should like "Knockouts," "Cyclones" and "Eagles" better.

VICHY LEGION: DISTINCTION OR EXTINCTION

Moving along a frozen Russian plain, without benefit of appurtenances of modern war, a unit of the French Legion fighting for Adolf Hitler on the Eastern Front pass a ruined homestead. They fight to win for France a place of distinction in the New Order. Their liquidation is proceeding.

Churchill's Pre-War Rhetoric

(A Syndicated Article in United States Newspapers, by Tom Treanor.)

The political wolves are after Mr. Churchill.

The accusations are being made that he hypnotized England with rhetoric and drugged her with phrases.

I have no axe to grind for Mr. Churchill. I have never met him, nor have I visited England since the war, nor am I a particular admirer of the English.

However, if England had permitted herself to be hypnotized by Mr. Churchill's rhetoric a little sooner, if she had drugged herself with his phrases 10 years earlier, she would not be where she is now.

It is obvious to anyone with a grain of sense that England's defeats at Singapore, Crete, Norway and Dunkirk were not due to lack of planning by Mr. Churchill.

They were due to England's failure to take his perfectly extraordinary warnings during the 10 years before he came to power.

He has only inherited the vast load of failure against which he warned England so vigorously year after year in the face of abuse and ridicule.

It must make him laugh, if a man can laugh at a time like this, that he, Winston Churchill, is being blamed for the defeats.

Those to blame have gone and in going they passed their load of failure on to this gallant old man who told them again and again what would happen.

And it has happened with a vengeance.

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Surely no reader believes for one instant that Mr. Churchill was so stupid that he did not think to protect Singapore with aircraft.

Not the Mr. Churchill who preached for 10 long lonely years the dominant role that aircraft would play in war.

Not the Mr. Churchill who knew before any of us what aircraft meant.

He didn't get aircraft to Singapore because he couldn't. He was too busy repairing the damage which his political enemies did many years ago when he had no power and when he was treated with cold disdain as an unwanted outsider.

As he said, during the past months he has had Germany at his throat and Italy at his belly.

He was hard put not to lose North Africa.

As he said, it took him four months to get a ship to Egypt and back, carrying planes.

How long would it take then to get them to Singapore? And where was he to get the ships?

The longer the trip to Libya took, the fewer ships he had to spare for Singapore.

As to the stupidities and the failure in the actual defence of Singapore, those are not Mr. Churchill's. Those are the inevitable consequences of a hopeless situation.

Demoralization precedes the certainty of disgraceful defeat.

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I will give you a few samples of Mr. Churchill's "rhetoric," prior to the war. This word "rhetoric" was used by his detractors in the sense of hollow phrases. See how hollow this phrase is:

"'For all these reasons we we ought to decide now to maintain, at all costs, in the next 10 years, an air force substantially stronger than Germany, and that it should be considered a high crime against the state, whatever government is in power, if that force is allowed, even for a month, to fall substantially below the potential force which may be possessed by that country abroad."

For which, or for similar remarks, he was attacked in this vein by his exponents:

"He comes forward," said Mr. Herbert Samuel, "and tells the nation that we ought straightaway to double and redouble our air force four times as big as we have now . . . That is rather the language of a Malay running amok than of a responsible British statesman. It is rather the language of blind and causeless panic."

And they are blaming Churchill that Singapore didn't have enough airplanes!

Both these statements, Churchill's and Samuel's, were made in 1934.

And is the following the sort of phrase that would drug the British?

"We are a rich and easy prey. No country is so vulnerable and no country would better repay pillage than our own. With our enormous metropolis here, the greatest target in the world, a kind of tremendous, fat, valuable cow tied up to attract a beast of prey, we are in a position in which we have never been before, in which no other country in the world is at the present time."

That was also in 1934.

He was accused of being caught unaware. But it wasn't unaware that he was caught. He was caught helpless to act because in "the years that the locust hath eaten" his political adversaries beat him back.

Does the following sound like a man who would be caught napping?

"Beware, Germany is a country fertile in military surprises. The great Napoleon in the years after Jena, was completely taken by surprise by the strength of the German army which fought the War of Liberation. Although he had officers all over the place, the German army which fought in the campaign of Leipzig was three or four times as strong as he expected. Similarly, when the Great War broke out the French general staff had no idea of the reserve divisions which would be brought immediately into the field. They expected to be confronted by 25 army corps; actually more than 40 came against them. It is never advisable to underrate the military qualities of this resourceful and gifted people, nor to underrate the dangers that may be brought against us."

This was in 1935.

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In the same speech he said:

"The Lord President asked me and us all not to indulge in panic. I hope we shall not indulge in panic. But I wish to say this: It is very much better sometimes to have a panic beforehand and then to be quite calm when things happen, than to be extremely calm beforehand and to get in a panic when things happen. Nothing has surprised me more than—I will not say the indifference, but the coolness—with which the committee has treated the extraordinary revelations of the German air strength relative to our country. For the first time for centuries we are not fully equipped to repel or retaliate for an invasion. That to an island people is astonishing. Panic indeed! The position is the other way round. We are the incredulous, indifferent children of centuries of security behind the shield of the Royal Navy, not yet able to wake up to the woefully transformed conditions of the modern world."

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The only great failure of Mr. Churchill was his inability to drive these thoughts through a lot of thick skulls—our own homegrown skulls among the thickest.

ATLANTIC CONVOY

By LIEUT. E. H. BARTLETT, R.C.N.V.R.

They are "Convoy Commodores," in whose ranks are admirals who once commanded battle fleets in the Seven Seas.

To-day they command fleets of comparatively slow, lumbering merchant ships.

Their years of sea experience made them invaluable when war broke out, and the call to service once more brought them gladly from retirement to serve afloat again.

Time and again they take their fleets through the danger areas. They sail in merchant ships—but they get their share of gunfire and of action; know what it is to see their fighting escorts seek out and engage the enemy; and know, too, the responsibility of manoeuvring fleets in battle again—this time the Battle of the Atlantic.

They have no staff officers. A few naval signalmen now compose their "staff," just enough men to maintain constant signal service to the rest of the fleets from the merchant ships which bear the commodores. Their quarters are generally cramped, sometimes uncomfortable — but the commodores who once paced their Admiral's Walk, ignore their changed roles as they glory in their active participation in the war at sea.

There were three such commodores in the mammoth fleet which this writer accompanied, in an escorting Royal Canadian Navy corvette, to sea. Three commodores, for at a certain point the fleet was to divide into separate convoys, each bound for their own ports in the war areas.

Naval terms followed the commodores into the merchant fleet. There was the senior commodore, whose ship was to take the head of the line when the fleet set sail. He had his Vice-Commodore and the Rear-Commodore, each to lead his own division.

Their badges of rank showed no differentiation. Each, on his sleeves, bore the broad gold ring of commodore's rank in the Navy. Above the ring was the small circle of criss-crossed braid which denoted the convoy appointments. In the Navy they would have worn the regulation "executive curl" of straight lace. The criss-crossed lace, the same as that used by the Naval Reserve, gave them yet another link with the merchant service in which they now sail.

The commodore was himself of the Naval Reserve, had commanded liners in peace-time and warships in conflict. In the last war he "bagged" a submarine, but disclaims any special merit in the feat.

"Just chased her into a minefield, you know," he explains, with a rather diffident smile. "Heard her blow up, and that's all there was to it. Only problem was not to get too close to the mines ourselves, tricky things they are."

It is on record that he "bagged" two submarines this war, before he was transferred from his fighting ship to sail with the merchant fleets. But of these two he tells nothing, as is the way of the Silent Service.

When it comes to talking of the merchant ship captains, then it is a different matter.

He holds them in the highest esteem, and does not hesitate to say so.

There is a Norwegian captain for whom he has an especially high regard. He tells of how this captain, in a tanker full of fuel oil, kept his ship in line although two torpedoes had struck home. One, hitting amidships, had set her afire. The other, hitting her stern, should have—but did not—send her to the bottom. An escort ship stood and helped the tanker fight her fire, and then escorted her as she struggled back into position in the convoy.

"I signalled to find out whether the tanker could keep up," the commodore recalls, "and was told that she could, but she 'couldn't stand any weather.' I should jolly well think she could not. Why, her bulkheads were going one by one and I don't know how she managed even to reach port."

"You know," he added, "that captain must have been very much of a man. His ship was spreading a slick of oil from her leaking tanks, and he signalled me to ask if he should leave the convoy as he was afraid the oil would give away our position to the submarines. Of course, I refused to let him go, he would have been sunk as sure as fate if he had left our protection. But just think of it—two torpedoes already and he was ready to go off and commit suicide in order not to bring danger to us."

The convoy commodore could see how the Norwegian captain "was quite a man." He did not seem to think that his own decision to keep the ship under his protection in itself told a tale!

He has a sense of humour which, however, rather deserted him one day when, having brought through a large convoy which had been under incessant attack, and which had seen eight ships torpedoed, five of which had been sunk, he was ordered to Gibraltar.

He told his wife, vaguely, the general direction in which his new duties would take him.

"You know," he says, "she said to me 'well, it looks as if you will be in the thick of it, now.'"

"'In the thick of it'", he repeated, "wonder what she thought that last convoy was?"

With his sense of humour is an understanding of his fellow-men which makes him many friends.

We escorted him to his ship, a stub-nosed cargo-carrier whose captain was waiting at the top of the gangway to receive him.

There were no shrilling pipes or sideboys in ceremonial salute. Instead there was the greeting of two friends, a broadly smiling welcome from the ship's captain, and a firm hand-shake.

"Not a very comfortable bunk for you, commodore," the captain warned.

"Don't worry, old man, I never take my clothes off on this job anyway," was the reply. "Let's just get on with it."

His signalmen made their way to the bridge, and a flaghoist rose on the halliards. The captain gave a brusque order or two, and the anchor windlass clanked into action. In a matter of minutes the ship was under weigh—the commodore and his fleet were "getting on with it."

The Vice and Rear Commodores were similarly engaged. The Vice (he had been an admiral) was rather proud of the fact that he had "drawn" an oil tanker for his Atlantic crossing.

"Most comfortable ships these, you know" he had drawled. "Very good accommodation, it's a pleasure to sail in 'em."

"Most comfortable"—"good accommodation"—yes, but his signalmen tell, too, that their "old man" doesn't take his clothes off when he seeks his bunk or settee for his sleep. At any minute of the day or night he is ready for instant action, which is another good naval trait.

They are "too old" to command fighting ships, now, but still they take their ships into the fight. Once they hoisted their flags in mammoth battleships, and directed fleets of fighting craft. Now they are pleased when they "draw" a tanker, and their skill is bent toward shepherding lumbering cargo carriers.

And, in the experience they gained in fighting ships, and the skill they have brought to directing merchant ships, lie one of the reasons why the convoys are "getting through."

Which is all these commodores, who once were admirals, ask.

Red Rains Follow Raging Dust Storms

When dust storms have been raging in Australia's dust bowl, which takes in most of the inland area, red rain is common—rain which falls through the dust pall overhanging the country.

When a really big storm blows up inland, 11,000,000 tons of valuable top soil is swept into the air, experts estimate. Some of it comes down on the coast, some settles in the Tasman Sea and helps to thicken the red sediment which coats part of the seabed there, while some carries on and paints a pink tinge on the snow of the New Zealand Alps.

Wind erosion has affected 10,000,000 acres of Victoria alone. The State Rivers Commission spends £100,000 a year on clearing sand out of its irrigation channels, trains are derailed and roads covered. But the dust goes on piling up. Loss of productivity is estimated at £500,000 a year.

LIFE'S LIKE THAT By Fred Neher

"Your Honor . . . . I want a divorce, alimony and a return bout!"

REG'LAR FELLERS—The Gadders By GENE BYRNES