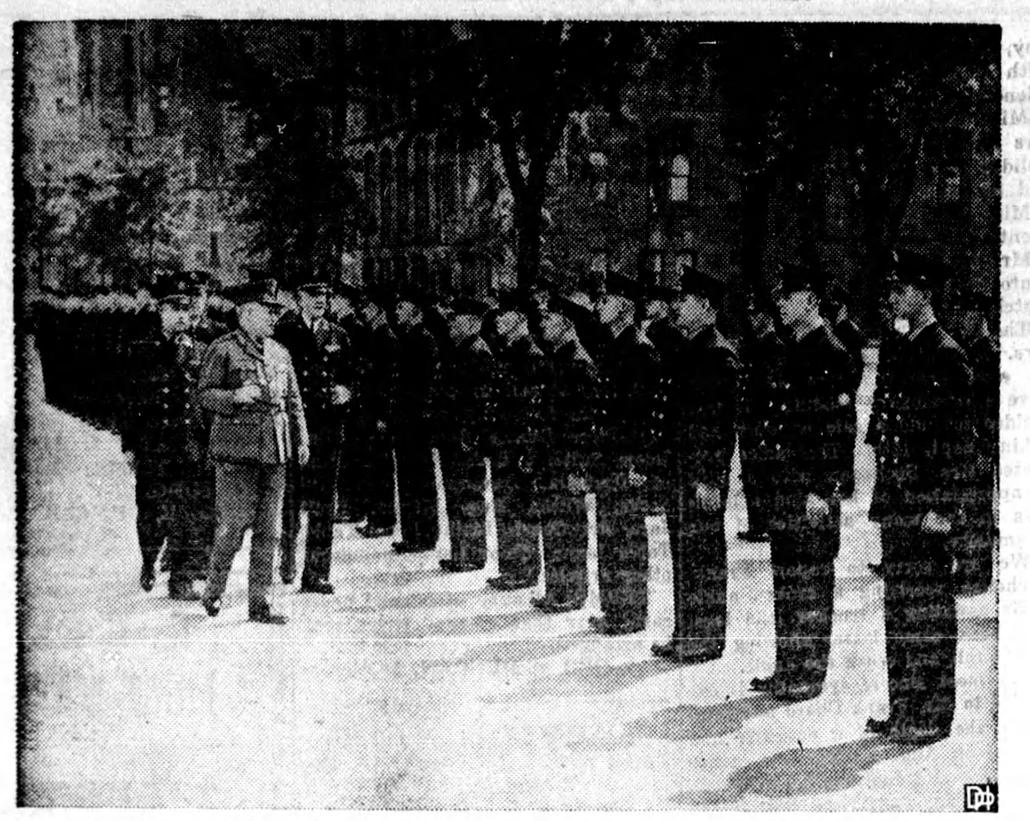
CANADIAN FIREFIGHTERS LEAVE FOR BRITAIN



Announcement of the safe arrival in London of a detachment of Canadian firefighters releases the above photograph, taken at an inspection parade on the eve of their departure. Major General L. R. LaFleche, associate deputy minister of National War Services, is shown inspecting the men, accompanied by Flight Lieut. G. E. Huff, officer commanding the Canadian Corps of Firefighters for Service in Great Britain. F/L Huff appears at Gen. LaFleche's right. These Canadian volunteers, of whom there are now two detachments in England, are well trained in firefighting, many of them veterans of some years with Canadian fire departments.

THE WAR · WEEK — Commentary on Current Events

WHERE WILL RED ARMY MAKE LAST STAND TO STOP NAZIS?

Not one step back! The execution of this task means the preservation of our country, the destruction of the hated enemy and a guarantee of victory.

With these words, Joseph Stalin last week called on the Red Army for a desperate stand against the advancing Wehrmacht, says the New York Times. He gave notice to his 190,000,000 countrymen that their nation had never faced a graver moment—not even in a past that has been scourged by invading Tatars, Mongols, Swedes, Poles, French and another generation of Germans. The feeling of crisis had been matched only last Fall when Adolf Hitler's guns were heard in Moscow's suburbs and the capital's citizens were summoned for "the hour of supreme sacrifice." It was a feeling that rippled ominously from seared meadows and orchards of the Don valley, from bloody river crossings and machine-littered fields at the fringe of the Caucasus, into the capitals of the Allies abroad. The plight of the Russian colossus was the plight of the whole anti-aggressor cause.

The Axis sweep to the Don in the first month of the grand 1942 campaign had overrun some 30,000 square miles of grain and cattle country. It had breached the Rostov entrance to the Caucasus, opened the way for a drive to the lower Volga and the Caspian. If the Germans could add the farms of the North Caucasus to their White Russia, Ukraine and Don Basin conquests, they would possess perhaps a quarter of the Soviet's cultivated land. If they could take the oil fields of the Caucasus, they would hold the fountainhead of 80 to 90 per cent of the Soviet's petroleum. At the Volga and the Caspian they would be in position to sever the Allied supply line from Iran.

Russia's Final Stand?

German successes along the Don, according to the Christian Science Monitor, raise the all-important question whether and where the Nazis can be stopped. Will it be at the Volga or in the Urals? Will they be able to cross the Caspian Sea and threaten India from bases in Iran, Turkmen, and Afghanistan?

As long as the Russian armies remain intact, withdrawing from one position to the other, Germany cannot even dream of having won victory over Russia. The Russian Front is extremely flexible but its "final stand" will always depend upon the army. No natural obstacles except the mighty Volga River protect the Russian hinterland.

The Urals are a geographical conception, the traditional dividing line between Europe and Asia, but their hills and forests never mislead Russia to a Maginot Line complacency. The importance of the Urals is based on their natural resources and the industries which have been built around them but not on strategic considerations. From that point of view, the Caucasus alone shields the two main approaches to the oil of Baku.

Russia's Manpower

The Russian military strength, therefore, depends primarily upon its manpower and the amount of available planes, tanks and guns. It does not matter whether the three latter are produced in factories close to the front, or far from the front, or shipped from the United Nations. What matters is that trained soldiers get them in time for use.

In manpower the Russians have a great advantage over the Axis and their satellites. While the women take over the work of men, millions of soldiers are mobilized. Russia can put into the field trained armies of 10,000,000 and 20,000,000 soldiers without affecting its war industry or agriculture. Every year 1,600,000 young Russian men come into the military age. Their number will rise to 2,000,000 by 1946. On the other hand, the German manpower reservoir supplied 640,000 men who reached the age of 20 in 1940, while the number of new recruits will decline to 530,000 by 1946. Russia thus produces three times as many young men fit for military service as Germany.

The Russian armies can retreat and resist over a distance of several thousand miles. Russia has 3,000,000 square miles of forests chiefly east of the Urals and there its army could disappear before the eyes of the invader without the danger of a crushing defeat. As the Germans advance, that prospect becomes increasingly probable.

Nazi Drive For Oil

If the Nazi forces are driving for Russia's great oil reserves of the Caucasus, their purpose is not only to secure the oil for themselves, but to deprive Russia of one of its most vital supports in the war.

Germany wants to cut off the oil from the powerful Russian war machine and put out of combat those tanks and airplanes upon which everything depends now and which already have dealt most severe blows at the enemy. Russia has a completely mechanized agriculture which deprived of oil could not function.

While the huge spaces of Russia will permit its army to withdraw properly, thus evading indefinitely a final German victory, the Germans would attempt to blockade Russia economically and to reduce its fighting power to insignificance.

The Germans are on their way to the Volga and an occupation of Stalingrad and Astrakhan at the Caspian Sea would cut off all communications between the Central Front and the forces which protect the Caucasus. Besides this military threat which as such may be less serious in the case of a strong army defending the Caucasus, the flow of Russian oil toward the industrial centres of European Russia would come to an end.

Russia would suffer tremendously under the loss of 85 per cent of its oil output. Great stocks of oil have been accumulated, however, and in addition with the remaining production Russia's armies would not be crippled.

War tactics would have to be changed, transportation would have to be curtailed, agriculture neglected, but there would be sufficient oil for the war machine. We must not forget that even the German war machine is considered to run on less than 70,000,000 barrels of oil annual consumption under full warfare. The next winter would permit Russia to reduce its war of movement and thus save much gasoline and permit new stocks to accumulate.

Russian agriculture would suffer but power substitutes made from grain and wood, most abundantly available in Siberia, would permit the continuation of the use of tractors and vehicles. Finally, more horses could be raised in a relatively short period as the oil stocks would permit the maintenance of curtailed consumption of oil over a period of several years.

Scorched earth policy would deprive Germany of the conquered oil at least for several months. But it could not be prevented from utilizing the abundant oil resources of the Caucasus sooner or later, once in possession of this region.

From the Caucasus German armies would threaten the oil of Iraq and Iran and make the United Nations position there most precarious. The well-developed Russian river and canal system would permit the distribution of the oil to the Ukraine and over the Polish and Baltic river systems to the consuming centers of Germany.

Even if Russia can withdraw all its 40,000 tank cars and the large number of oil barges, destroy all pipelines and oil wells and save the Black Sea Fleet by the concession of free passage through the Bosporus to United Nations ports, the whole strategy of the war would have to be changed.

Germany would have gained a most important base on her way to India, and its strong air fleet, once supplied with the urgently needed oil, could harass the United Nations supply lines in the Middle East and keep the Russians at bay behind the Urals with the main instrument of the air force and a relatively small land army in the east. Thus, the bulk of the German army would be freed to fight elsewhere.

OH, MEMORIES!

Word comes from Regina that Saskatchewan will need 30,483 men for harvest labor this season. Oh, for the good old days of the Harvest Excursions!

—Owen Sound Sun-Times

VOICE OF THE PRESS

A ROUGH IDEA

Bombing on a huge scale must disorganize the defences and stun the people who are going through it. At Cologne, it is said that one bomb fell on the average every six seconds. If you are afraid of lightning, think what it would be like to go through a thunder storm with a new lightning flash every six seconds. Then remember that probably none of those lightning strokes hit your town, while every bomb scores a hit and blows up something. That will give you a rough idea, at least.

—Fergus News-Record

—o—

SOME FOOL'S VICTIM

If a psychiatrist investigated the fears of non-swimmers he would probably find that early in life they had been mischievously or deliberately pushed into the water, or ducked when they did not expect it and got a fright. Children should never be made afraid of the water.

—St. Thomas Times-Journal

—o—

AREN'T WE ALL?

Explaining his attempt to escape from a Quebec military hospital, a captured German merchant seaman said that he was "fed up with the war." We haven't accomplished our purpose until we have made another Nazi, much more highly placed, feel the same way.

—Windsor Star

—o—

50 YEARS AGO

In one day recently seven carloads of cheese were shipped from Listowel for the British market, and three carloads from Atwood. This made $20,000 worth of cheese shipped in one day from the factories of one district.

—Stratford Herald, July 24, 1892.

—o—

YOU'RE BRITISH, AREN'T YOU?

What's this? Are you going around with your head in a sling? Are you losing heart because the war is going a bit thick these days?

What's the matter? Keep that chin up! You're British aren't you!

—Windsor Star

—o—

TRY TO AVOID THIS

It is a terrible thing to raise children who are just as thoughtless of you as you were of your parents.

—Brandon Sun

Canada's New Catalina Plane

Destined to Play Important Role In War and Peace

Canada's new Catalina PBY-5 amphibian planes, far-ranging sea scouts of a growing air armada, are described officially as possessing the greatest range of any two-engined bomber in the world.

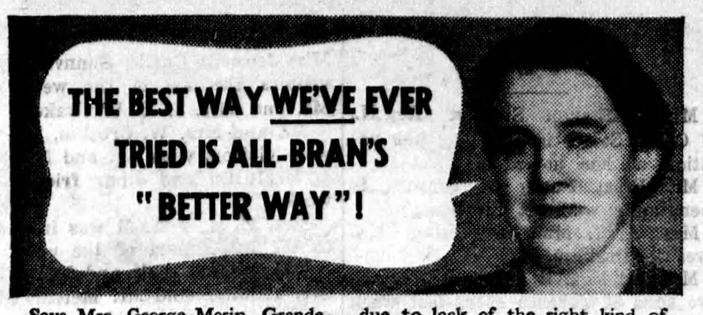
The new 14-ton, $250,000 aircraft are destined to play an important role in both war and post-war plans.

Built in a huge plant employing nearly 2,500 women, the aircraft has more than 100,000 parts and takes more than 100,000 man-hours to produce. Its hull is as long as a Pullman coach and its wing span is so great that 10 automobiles could be lined end to end along the length of each. Its wing-floats are as big as canoes.

Maximum speed of the Catalina at an altitude of 8,000 feet is about 200 miles per hour and its cruising speed at the same altitude is approximately 175 m.p.h. It has a ceiling of almost five miles and its maximum cruising range would permit it to fly from Halifax to Vancouver and back to Winnipeg without refueling.

The wartime role of these patrol ships is important. They summon the fighting planes and ships when the enemy is sighted.

And after the war is over, these aircraft will still be in great demand supplying the peacetime answer to the need for long-range transoceanic flying boats.



Says Mrs. George Morin, Grande-Baie, Quebec: "We have been users of KELLOGG'S ALL-BRAN for a long time . . . and for a good reason. ALL-BRAN, besides being a most delicious cereal, really does keep us regular . . . naturally."

Why don't *you* try ALL-BRAN'S "Better Way" to *correct the cause* if you're troubled by constipation due to lack of the right kind of "bulk" in your diet? But remember, ALL-BRAN doesn't work like cathartics. It takes time. Eat it regularly and drink plenty of water. Get ALL-BRAN at your grocer's, in two convenient size packages, or ask for the individual serving package at restaurants. Made by Kellogg's in London, Canada.

The Citizen's Army

INDIVIDUAL

By ALAN MAURICE IRWIN

A Weekly Column About This and That in Our Canadian Army

"Reveille will be at 3.30 a.m." That's how the order read when the unit of the Reserve Army with which I attended Summer Camp prepared to return to its armoury and to disband for a week's rest from evening parades, the citizen-soldiers to their jobs in offices, factories, stores, warehouses, railway yards and the dozen other classes of industry from which they came.

Sounds a little tough to the average man who can sleep in until six or seven, doesn't it? But it was not tough by the time we had finished fourteen days of training. We took it is our stride as we had taken the daily 6 a.m. reveille, the long hours of training and the occasional night operations which formed part of the intensive programme undertaken by units of the reserve army in summer camps throughout the Dominion.

Our units were made up of men between the ages of 17 and 19, and 35 and 50. And when I say men, I mean it as regards both ends of the scale. It is a toss-up whether the youths or the middle-aged were the keener men. There was certainly very little "soldiering",—to use a term that should be banished from our vocabulary. After a heavy route march there was a fair sized "sick-parade" but it was not the "sick-parade" to which old soldiers are accustomed. The line-up consisted of men anxious to have their blisters or callouses fixed up so that they would not have to miss drill periods the next day — not of men determined to wangle a "light duty" permit from the medical officer so they could evade the morrow's responsibilities.

There were many things about this year's Reserve Army camps that amazed the old soldiers who attended them and easily the most outstanding was the enthusiasm with which the new recruits absorbed instruction. The only "awkward squads", after the second or third day, were the voluntary ones that assembled under good natured non-commissioned officers during off duty hours. You would find them in the tent lines practising anything from left and right turns by numbers to the "present arms" from the "order." During the morning and afternoon 15 minute rest peroids when the only smokes of parade hours were indulged in, discussion groups formed themselves around officers and N.C.O.'s to ply them questions as to the "why" of this, the "how" of that, and the practical application of training to warfare. It was, until you thought about it, incredible!

When you thought about it the answer soon became apparent. These men have joined the reserve army, according to their age classifications, for two reasons. The youngsters in order to save time in their preparation for service when they are old enough to volunteer; the middle aged to fit themselves as fast as possible for home defence duties when they become necessary.

The Reserve Army men of today are not "Saturday night soldiers", they are patriotic citizens debarred by age or other limitation from taking their full part in the job of work we have to do. They are preparing for a grim business and they are going more than half way to meet their instructors in the use of the death dealing equipment made available to them for training.

The men in my platoon, by the time they returned from camp, had fired more rounds from Bren guns in two weeks than in the last war I had fired from a rifle by the time I had been in the army ten months. They fired with rifles on short and long ranges. They received instruction in the handling and stripping of the Bren gun. They learned about hand grenades and they put in strenuous hours practising the right way to deliver these presents to an enemy. They had their first lessons in "battle-drill." They practised stalking through the open and through cover. They learned the basic principles of bayonet fighting — but they didn't learn to "grouse."

This brings us to the second reason referred to above. There are two things that soldiers grouse about most. One is the endless round of unimaginative drill, the other, have you guessed?—food. There was no room for either of these complaints. Especially the latter, which caused many an old soldier to gasp. Fed under the new scale of rations N.C.O.'s and men enjoyed — and that word is well chosen — such meals as these:

Breakfast: grapefruit juice, wheat or oat meal porridge, scrambled eggs on toast, bacon, marmalade, toast and coffee.

Lunch: soup, cold roast beef, two vegetables, apple pie, tea.

Supper: beef stew, two vegetables, bread pudding with chocolate sauce, bread, butter, tea.

Sometimes there was cake. One meal was baked Virginia ham. On Friday's, fish and macaroni and cheese marked the two big meals — and you didn't mix it all up in the same tin "dixie" that had held your shaving water earlier.

Do those rations look heavier to you than the amount you consume at home? They are! But soldiers —even Reserve Army soldiers attending camp for only two weeks —need heavy rations.

You can't be on your feet from six in the morning till sometimes nine at night, carrying a nine-pound rifle, a bayonet, web equipment over rough ground and smooth, marching or doing physical training, without good food and lots of it!

That's why we are rationed. That's why eight ounces of sugar, a minimum of tea and coffee must suffice.

One of the jobs of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board is to conserve food for our soldiers, here and overseas — and those of us who are good soldiers will help the Board do that job.

Australia normally has a supply of 1,750,000 horses and exports about 4,000 annually.

REG'LAR FELLERS—Lip Reading

By GENE BYRNES