

WAR IN THE AIR (Continued)

fire, men in the uniform of the German Air Force came running from huts and lay down wherever they could find cover in the field, while others dropped their tools and scattered headlong. The second pair, also diving down through a gap in the clouds, this time a few miles inland from Boulogne, found a convoy of thirty military lorries on a road. They zigzagged above, firing bursts at the drivers, many of whom stopped their vehicles and jumped for cover. Troops also jumped from the lorries to lie down in ditches. The third pair flew to Montreuil, where they found a convoy of lorries and a petrol tanker which they shot up on a road. After this, they became separated in cloud, and one pilot returned to England, but the other saw two Messerschmitt 109s on the ground with their engines running and moving into position to take off. He attacked them, and one overturned on its side. He then saw four more Messerschmitt 109s hidden under trees on the edge of the aerodrome. He dived, firing a long burst, and smoke was seen to envelop one of them.

Later News

THE speed of General Wavell's movements almost takes one's breath away. Hardly had Tobruk been occupied when British troops began to make themselves felt at Derna, the next point along the Libyan coast. The R.A.F. have been bombing the aerodrome there for some time past, and they increased their raids as the advanced troops began to engage the defences.

Meantime the Army of the Nile is advancing in East Africa. The Italians are being driven out of Kenya, and Eritrea and Italian Somaliland have been invaded. The South African and Rhodesian squadrons are particularly active in those parts. The rising of patriots in Abyssinia is gaining momentum now that the Emperor Haile Selassie has returned to his country.

The aerodromes in Sicily, where the bulk of the German air contingent is stationed, are being raided again and again by the R.A.F. For instance, a Middle East communiqué gives the following details of action on the night of January 22-23:—

"At Comiso a quantity of incendiary and explosive bombs were dropped causing explosions which continued

AIR LOSSES TO JANUARY 25.

	GERMAN	BRITISH		NEAR EAST	
	Aircraft	Aircraft	Pilots	Enemy Aircraft	British Aircraft
Jan. 19	6	—	—	19	—
" 20	—	—	—	8	1
" 21	—	—	—	—	1
" 22	2	—	—	1	—
" 23	—	—	—	6	—
" 24	—	—	—	8	—
" 25	—	—	—	1	—
	8	0	0	43	3

British bombers lost over enemy territory: Jan. 22, 1.

German losses by R.A.F. and ground defences in Northern Area, 4,204.  
R.A.F. aircraft lost in Northern Area, 1714.

In the Middle East the R.A.F. have destroyed about 714 enemy aircraft and have lost 89.

for twenty minutes. Bombs were also dropped on Augusta aerodrome, but the results were not fully observed owing to low cloud. Several large explosions occurred in Syracuse and fires were started south of the bay. Other aircraft attacked the aerodrome at Catania and several fires and explosions took place near the runway and hangars. One stick of bombs landed in the middle of the railway junction north of the aerodrome. A particularly heavy explosion occurred followed by fires with heavy black smoke. All our aircraft returned safely from these operations."

In the Northern theatre of war the *Luftwaffe* has been very quiet for some time, but the R.A.F. bombers have defied bad weather and done a good deal of raiding of targets in territory occupied by the Germans. A story of a very chivalrous action has recently been published.

One night when heavy bombers of the R.A.F. were raiding Berlin, one of our aircraft failed to report to base. It had been shot about by anti-aircraft and was abandoned, the crew taking to their parachutes. Recently, however, letters have reached this country from prisoners of war camps in Germany which, pieced together, tell a tale which is worth recording. All the crew are now known to be safe. One of them, the navigator, has written to his wife: "I came down by parachute, unhurt." He then goes on to tell of the bravery of the captain of the aircraft, a sergeant pilot—who, incidentally, had come down from Oxford after his first year to join the R.A.F. "When it was decided that we must jump," says the letter, "I found that my parachute had been damaged. The captain ordered me to jump with his, and he, though wounded, made a successful landing with mine. He risked his life for me."

BOMBING RAIDS OVER GERMANY

More than 1,400 Areas Bombed Between Outbreak of War and January 1, 1941

THE increasing intensity of Britain's air offensive against Germany is revealed in maps recently issued in poster form for display all over the country by the Ministry of Information. These maps, prepared by the General Production Division of the Ministry, bring up to date the similar information issued at the end of September, and show that in the three months October-December, 1940, the number of raids by British aircraft on German territory was more than half the total number of raids in the entire preceding thirteen months of the war. At the end of September the number of target area attacks recorded was approximately 900. At the beginning of this year the figures stood at over 1,400.

The word "attack" here means the bombing of a particular target area containing one or more different types of objectives. Several such area attacks are, of course, usually made in a single night's operations. The classified list of bombed objectives over the sixteen months' period exceeds 1,500. The number of individual towns involved in attacks is over 270.

The heart of Germany's production machine—despite all frantic efforts to move its vulnerable factories eastward—is the congested Ruhr area with Krupp's great home-town Essen at its centre, and dozens of other important munition-making towns and railway centres from Munster in the north to Cologne in the south. Coal, steel, arms factories,

chemical works and oil plants are crowded together in this vital area which has been given the most intensive hammering of any part of the Reich. Over 500 raids of the total of 1,400 up to the beginning of this year have been carried out successfully inside this heavily defended area. This onslaught on the Ruhr is one of the most striking facts indicated by this new map since, whilst raids over the rest of Germany increased by some 50 per cent. in the last three months of 1940, those on the Ruhr factories were increased by two-thirds in this period. This is particularly noteworthy in view of Goering's boast prior to the war: "I have convinced myself personally of the measures taken to protect the Ruhr against air attack. We will not expose the Ruhr to a single bomb dropped by enemy aircraft." Not one bomb but literally thousands of tons of bombs have wrought havoc in the Ruhr since then.

The whole of the Ruhr area lies within a radius of 350 miles from London, but Germany's two other greatest munition areas are set deeper into enemy territory. A hundred miles higher up the Rhine, and stretching from Frankfurt-am-Main to Stuttgart, with Mannheim as its centre, is another heavily industrialised region, important also for its chemical works and oil refineries. One town in this area—Mannheim—has had 34 raids. This is equalled in the Ruhr by Duisburg-Ruhrort (35), Cologne (55), the Ruhr oil centre Gelsenkirchen (40), and, of course, the rail-