

be little pleasure in meals seldom consisting of more than bully beef and biscuits, and an inadequate supply of water—bully beef is a great promoter of thirst.

Yet now, if never before, recognition ought to be given to the work of the ground crews, and also of the R.A.F. Regiment, who followed up the advance closely, and cleared 2,000 land mines from one landing ground in 48 hours, so that fighter-bombers were able to land on the ground, get ready, and take off at once to harry Rommel's retreating men round Es Sultan, where they must have thought that they were for the time beyond the reach of pursuit. It was a magnificent piece of work.

Two Convoys

LAST week's news included the story of two convoys, and convoys always mean co-operation by sea forces and air forces. In considering the pros and cons of attacks on convoys and the losses inflicted and suffered, one must always bear in mind that the rule is, in the words of Admiral Somerville, "The convoy must go through." That means that losses have to be faced by the escort, and also that a proportion of the merchant ships may be lost. The success or failure of the operation depends on the proportion of losses to the numbers concerned.

The Japanese made a strong effort to reinforce their troops at Lae in New Guinea, presumably sending stores as well as troops. Six merchant ships were sent, with a naval escort, and there was continuous cover from short-range fighters taking off from shore airfields, for the attempt to reach Lae was made by day. As a result of Allied air attacks three of the merchantmen were set on fire, but the other three seem to have reached harbour and discharged their cargoes during the night. A later report says that three transports were sunk, but it is not clear if these were the three which were set on

CONTENTS	
The Outlook - - - - -	29
War in the Air - - - - -	31
Here and There - - - - -	34
Mosquito (B) Squadron - - - - -	35
New Year Honours - - - - -	38
Mohammed and the Mountain - - - - -	39
Behind the Lines - - - - -	40
Aircraft Characteristics - - - - -	40, a and b
The Stearman in Canada - - - - -	41
Gipsy's 1,260 Hours - - - - -	44
Aircraft of the Anglo-American Forces - - - - -	46
Correspondence - - - - -	50
Service Aviation - - - - -	51

fire. Others were damaged, for Allied bombers pursued the convoy after it had left Lae. But cargo was landed, and that was what the enemy wanted. The price paid for this partial success was 133 aircraft probably put out of action. Allied air losses are described as slight. It is for the Japanese to consider whether the price paid was worth while.

The other convoy crossed the Atlantic, and suffered 35 attacks or attempted attacks by U-boats in the course of four days. The defence was by naval vessels and by Coastal Command aircraft, Liberators being specially mentioned. The official statement says that the co-operation of the naval vessels and the aircraft "secured the arrival in Britain of an important Atlantic convoy," but does not say if any ships were lost. Therefore, the object of the operation was achieved. It is believed that two U-boats were certainly sunk and a number of others damaged. Most important of all, the attackers were finally driven off, thus admitting their failure and probably the heaviness of their casualties. We may surely consider this action most encouraging.



PRE-SEAFIRE FLYING. Mark III Spitfires are used by naval pilots as training machines ashore before handling Sea Hurricanes and cannon-armed Seafires from carrier decks.