

Photo News

WAR IN THE AIR

ENEMY AIR LOSSES TO JANUARY 1st				
	Over G.B.	Continent	Middle East	N.W. Africa
Dec. 19	1	0	0	43
" 20	0	12	0	28
" 21	0	4	2	1
" 22	0	0	0	0
" 23	0	1	1	2
" 24	0	1	0	1
" 25	0	1	0	1
" 26	0	0	0	0
" 27	0	2	0	0
" 28	0	1	0	20
" 29	0	1	0	0
" 30	0	5	0	11
" 31	0	4	0	0
Jan. 1	0	2	0	0
Totals:	1	34	3	107

Totals: West, 7,828; Middle East, over 5,760; North-West Africa, 3,890

have shot down some 250 enemy night fighters. This is not a crippling loss to the Germans, even though they are very short of fighters, but the important point is that never have the German defences prevented a night force of Bomber Command from achieving its object. During 1943 air attack by night has undoubtedly had the mastery over air defence.

Incidentally, although revenge and reprisals are no part of the plan of the Air Staff and the higher authority which controls it, it is interesting to remember that December 29th was the third anniversary of the German raid which produced the great fire of London.

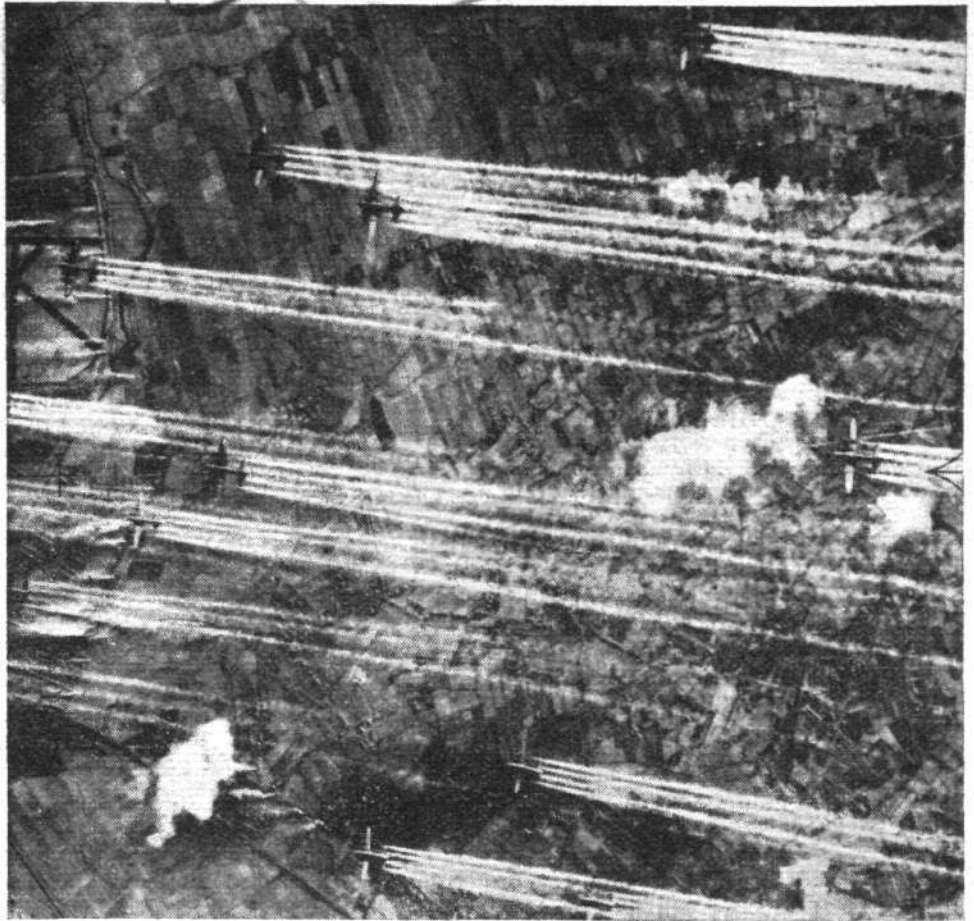
Middle and Far East

NO war commentary would be justified in omitting reference to the magnificent forward thrusts of the Russians on the two sections known as the Vitebsk front and the Kiev salient, even though the reports of air activity there are as meagre as usual. One has noticed that of late the Russian claims of enemy aircraft destroyed have been very modest, which may mean that the weather has not permitted much flying, or perhaps that the Germans have not given the Russians many opportunities of shooting down *Luftwaffe* aircraft.

For a long time past everyone has

BRITISH & U.S. AIR LOSSES TO JAN. 1st				
	Over G.B. A'cft.	Continent B'brs. F'trs.	Middle East A'cft.	N.W. Africa A'cft.
Dec. 19	0	0	0	16
20	0	67	11	11
21	0	0	8	1
22	0	0	4	2
23	0	17	1	0
24	0	1	0	0
25	0	1	0	3
26	0	0	0	0
27	0	0	0	0
28	0	2	1	11
29	0	20	0	0
30	0	22	13	6
31	0	29	3	3
Jan. 1	0	28	0	0
Totals:	0	187	41	53

Totals: West, 8,980; Middle East, about 2,342; North-West Africa, 1,472.



THE WRITING ON THE WALL: A fantastic pattern made by the exhaust trails of high-flying Fortresses on their way to Bremen. The photograph was taken from an even higher formation.

known that the German strength in fighters on that front has been jejune. Now it is quite probable that with prospects of invasion in the West looming nearer, the enemy is doing his utmost to concentrate a useful force of bombers there to strike at the Allies when they start to land.

However, a report from Moscow states that on the Vitebsk front the failure of the *Luftwaffe* and A.A. fire to keep off the damaging attacks of the Red Air Force has had a most depressing effect on the fighting spirit of the German soldiers. In their earlier campaigns the Germans were accustomed to rely on the *Luftwaffe* to get them out of most of their difficulties, and now the tables are turned.

In the slow-moving Italian campaign the New Year was ushered in by such terribly bad weather that air activity was reduced to a minimum, but the Allied lighter classes of machines managed to do some patrols and to help the infantry in their painful advances against hill villages which the Germans defended resolutely. It is unusual for anything to be heard of German aircraft in that fighting, and one cannot say that their plan of conserving their exiguous air strength on that front has not been prudent. The mountains, the weather and the mud have provided the Allies with quite sufficient difficulties.

In the Aegean, on the other hand, the aircraft of the Middle East have been very active. They are being used,

somewhat belatedly, to try to make good the set-back which our men received when they attempted to seize the three Dodecanese islands of Cos, Leros and Samos. Now Rhodes has become the centre of attention, as it should have been from the first, and is being treated to an intense bombardment from the air. It has been described as a German Malta, but little fear is felt that it will emerge from its trials in the victorious fashion of the real Malta, and it is not likely to receive from Hitler the decoration *Pour le Mérite*, or any other sort of equivalent to the George Cross. The inhabitants of Rhodes would certainly not appreciate any German decoration.

This aerial bombardment is obviously a preliminary to some forward move, though when and how it will come cannot at present be foretold. An invasion of the Balkans is one of the possibilities now being widely discussed, and if it takes place it will be quite necessary for the Allies to dominate the Aegean Sea and its many islands. The Dodecanese are the nearest, and have to be dealt with first.

Far away in the Pacific the Americans have been gallantly pressing forward in New Britain, always making it a point to secure airfields as soon as possible. Marines captured the strips at Cape Gloucester just before the close of the old year, and the threat to the great Japanese base at Rabaul is daily growing stronger.