

In that case one wonders why the Japanese did not close with the American fleet, using the fighters from their own carriers as an "umbrella." It is true that the Americans had shore-based aircraft, probably including fighters, at their command, and that they would be superior in quality to the ship-borne machines of the enemy; but the latter had large numbers of aircraft, and it seems most unenterprising on the part of the Japanese Admiral not to have made every effort to bring his battle-ships within range of the American ships. Had he done so, then, according to all the laws of probability, he ought to have sunk the American fleet. Instead, he allowed himself to be heavily hammered at long range by the U.S. aircraft without ever bringing off a true naval engagement.

For the result we may all be profoundly thankful, and we are. It seems that Japan's great reputation as a naval power, founded on the one victory of Tsushima in the Russo-Japanese war, is a bubble which is being pricked.

At Tsushima Admiral Togo (formerly a cadet on the training ship H.M.S. *Worcester*) was opposed to a thoroughly inefficient Russian fleet which had steamed all the way round from the Baltic; but if he had not very much in the way of opposition he at least did his job very well. The Admiral of the Japanese fleet at Midway seems to have had all the odds in his favour and to have made a thorough mess of everything.

Blasting Them?

WRITING of the Airacobra and its armament (*Flight*, September 25th, 1941), Mr. Lawrence Bell, of the Bell Aircraft Corporation, said: "I am willing to concede that it might be possible to bring down a multi-motor bomber if you fired enough rice at it." He was arguing in favour of the 37 mm. shell-firing aircraft gun. In this issue a contributor argues that we are on the wrong track, as regards naval anti-aircraft defence, in placing so much reliance on such weapons as the multi-barrel pom-pom, and suggests that for defence against the dive bomber and the torpedo aircraft ships should be armed with a new type of weapon, something between a gun and a mortar.

Firing would be at point-blank range, and the fusing of the shells would appear to be the critical feature of this form of defence. It should, however, be possible to have, on large naval vessels, at any rate, several of the guns suggested, the shells for each gun being fused for a certain distance, different from that of the others. One may, for example, visualise three guns, of which No. 1 would begin the firing, No. 2 would take the "middle distance," and No. 3 the nearest range to which the dive bomber or torpedo plane would approach. Some such arrangement would probably have to be adopted, as there would scarcely be time for fusing the shells after the enemy aircraft were in sight.

CONTENTS

The Outlook - - - - -	603	Aircraft Characteristics - - - - -	614, a and b
War in the Air - - - - -	605	Behind the Lines - - - - -	615
King's Birthday Honours - - - - -	608	Naval A.A. Defence - - - - -	616
Ahead of their Time—5 - - - - -	609	Air Transport Auxiliary - - - - -	617
Wings in Palestine - - - - -	611	Bermuda-Buccaneer - - - - -	622
Canada's Air Minister Calls for Unity - - - - -	613	Correspondence - - - - -	623
Here and There - - - - -	614	Service Aviation - - - - -	624

SOVIET BOMBER



The Russian bomber in which Mr. Molotov flew to this country and to America. It appears to be roughly of the same dimensions as the Halifax and is powered by four liquid-cooled engines, which are probably of the 1,000 h.p. M-100 type. Another photograph of this machine appears on page 607.

CH 5720

B-1000