

## WAR IN THE AIR

lease some very quick work on the controls would be called for to prevent the aircraft making contact with the hill through which the tunnel ran. The bombs had special delayed-action detonators.

The cutting of a railway line for military purposes has always been a matter for judgment. Damage on a straight, open stretch is almost useless, as it can easily be repaired. To bomb the line as it goes through a cutting is the usual ambition, for almost certainly plenty of earth from the hillside will be brought down on the line. Moreover, repair workers are bound to be conspicuous, and can be attacked on subsequent days. But all anti-railway work needs to be planned by railway experts, as it doubtless is being done on the Western Front now. All tunnels cannot be equally important. To block a really important one by an explosion (and such an explosion!) inside must certainly give the maximum of trouble to the most ingenious repair engineers.

### Yet Once More

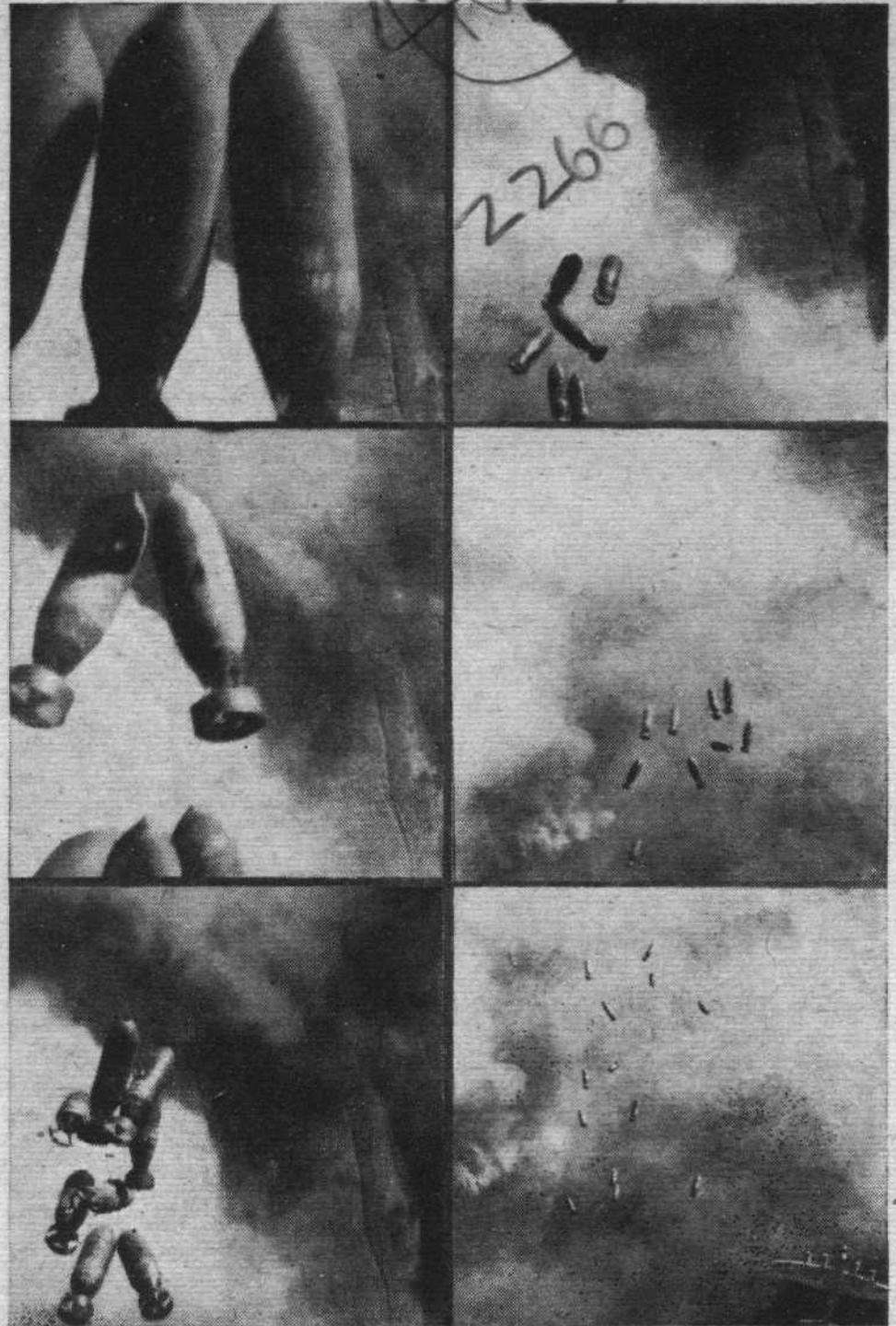
ANOTHER New Year's Day present for the Germans was the draining for the fourth time of the Dortmund-Ems Canal. This was done by Lancasters in daylight. Perhaps the Germans hoped that in time Bomber Command would get tired of bombing this familiar target. At any rate, immediately after the last attack they began repairs, and by working night and day they got the canal into order after five weeks. Six barges were then spotted moving through it. All the result of that great effort was undone in one brief period of bombing. Perhaps the Germans have by now already started to repair it once again—though they must have given up hope that breaching it is an amusement which will pall on Bomber Command.

The attack on German coastwise shipping has lately developed into a regular battle of Skagerrak. Coastal Command is the aggressive party in it, and its Halifaxes have been going out by night as well as by day to catch the oil tankers and other rich prizes and set them ablaze. There are usually formidable escorts, and the British bombers do not always come home unscathed; but the Germans lose a lot of stuff which they are very loth to lose.

### Winter Fighting

IN olden days armies used regularly to go into winter quarters, and an unofficial truce was observed until the spring. Marlborough was one of the first commanders to prolong his campaigns well into the winter and the military pundits of his day did not much approve of his doing so.

Winter campaigning now brings



**DOWN GERMANY WAY:** A remarkable series of photographs showing a salvo of 1,000 lb. bombs falling from an Avro Lancaster. It is interesting to note how the missiles appear to point in different directions, even in the bottom right-hand photograph where they are the farthest away from the aircraft.

special problems of its own. So much depends nowadays on the air that the weather has taken on a new importance, not connected with the hardships of the infantryman trying to sleep in a very cold slit trench. Critics have asked whether the surprise which Rundstedt sprang upon the Allies by his Ardennes offensive was not made possible only by the fact that for some time past the reconnaissance aircraft had not been able to do their work, and that modern commanders have come to rely so entirely on the air that they have neglected other means of gathering information. Well, there are now no horsed cavalry in Western Europe, and if there were it is doubt-

ful whether they could find out much in modern conditions.

Wintry weather and its effect on the powers of aircraft may, perhaps, have another important effect on the present Ardennes battle. Suppose that Rundstedt decided to "call it a day," as the saying goes, and to withdraw his forces from their present bulge lest a worst thing befall, his ability to do so would depend very much on the weather. If it turned bright and clear for a reasonably long period, the Allied Air Forces would almost certainly make it impossible for the German commander to get away without losses which might well prove disastrous. Even in bad weather the going would