

M.A.P. Exhibition

Showing the R.A.F.'s
Fine "Tools to Finish
the Job"

TO-DAY marks the opening of the exhibition officially designated "Britain's Aircraft," organised by the Ministry of Aircraft production in conjunction with the Campaign and Exhibits Division of the Ministry of Information, sited amid the bombed-out premises of John Lewis & Co., Ltd., in Oxford Street, London. The opening time, originally fixed for noon, was advanced to 11.30 a.m., and Lord Beaverbrook, having been the first Minister of Aircraft Production, was chosen to perform the opening ceremony.

In *Flight* of June 7th there appeared a description of the scope and nature of this exhibition, together with a plan of its layout, and as a whole page was devoted to this advance reference there is no point in recapitulation. At the time of going to press with the present issue, the exhibition was hardly in a sufficiently advanced stage of preparedness to enable a description of its presentation to be prepared, but this will appear in the next issue of *Flight* on June 28th, with as many illustrations as space permits.

Preparations

To-day we publish three pictures taken during the earlier stages of the exhibition's preparation. The top photograph will give some idea, to Provincial and overseas readers who are not familiar with this blitzed corner of London, of the decidedly unpromising surroundings in which those responsible for the exhibition's layout have been obliged to work. On the other hand it might be said that there is a certain dramatic value in staging a demonstration of Britain's present air power in a space blasted open by German bombers while that air power was still being doggedly built up. It is not suggested, however, that any such poetic thought actually dictated the choice of this site which, in any case, has been the scene of previous exhibitions. How well the technicians have overcome the handicaps of the site will be decided by the general public as from to-day.

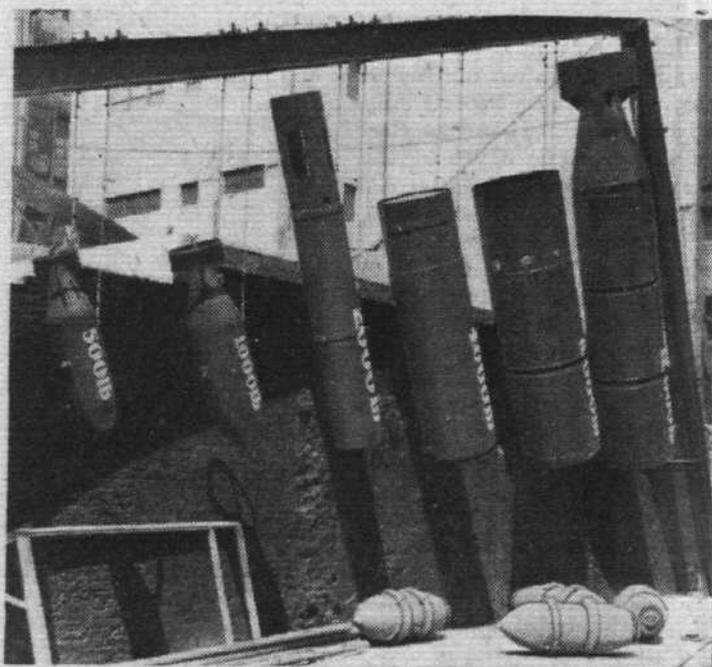
The middle picture is of an exhibit which may be taken as aptly symbolic of the steady increase in the R.A.F.'s striking force—an increase only possible through the scientific progress made by the celebrated "back-room boys" working for M.A.P. This, of course, applies not only to the bombs depicted here, but to the aircraft which bore them to their targets



PREVIEW: The public crowded round the Halifax III, "Friday 13th," the moment it reached the Oxford St. site. They were not superstitious either!



ORDER AMID CHAOS: The blitzed background may have dramatic value.



BOMBING-UP: Six symbolic stages in the growth of the R.A.F.'s striking power are depicted by this exhibit, here seen taking shape.

ever faster, more numerous, and further afield; it equally applies to the more and more precise and complicated equipment demanded for the success of such operations.

As will be seen in this middle picture, the bombs step up from 500lb. to 12,000lb. At the start of the war we relied chiefly on the 250lb. and 500lb. bomb, known as the "General Purpose" bomb. The 500lb. bomb was regarded as a phenomenal achievement towards the end of the 1914-18 war, but it soon became evident that something bigger and with more blast effect was needed to deal with modern steel and concrete. Thus the size and power went up via the 1,000lb., 2,000lb., the 4,000lb. "Cookie," the 8,000lb. "Blockbuster," to the 12,000lb. "Earthquake" bomb. Finally the present peak was reached with the 22,000lb. bomb known as "The Grand Slam," or more popularly as "Ten Ton Tess." This monster of destruction is honoured with a stand of its own.

The bottom picture is of the Halifax bomber "Friday 13th," whose crew defied all superstitions and completed 128 operations, including Berlin and almost every other major German target.

Key stone