

## Nazis Shove U.S. Troops Back at Faid

### Tank Forces Overwhelm Artillery, Threaten Troops at Gafsa

ALLIED HQ, North Africa, Feb. 15 (AP)—Rommel hurled armor against the American positions west of Faid Pass, breaking through about 20 miles and endangering Gafsa, held by U.S. forces.

Overwhelming American artillery positions guarding the westward exit of the pass, German tanks, possibly 50 in number, branched out northwest and southwest after the initial attack.

American anchor positions at Gafsa were obviously in danger of being cut off by the German spearhead of the Panzer division, and it was assumed Gafsa might soon be evacuated.

#### Stukas Strike Hard

From dawn to dusk American Twelfth air force light bombers and fighters swept over enemy troop concentrations, gun positions and motor convoys, strafing them heavily in an attempt to weaken their thrust against the Allied line.

Stukas, however, played an important role in Rommel's initial success, hitting hard at American ground forces.

An American force at Sidi Bou Zid suffered heavily yesterday morning, and was last reported moving back in a south-westerly direction.

Another German armored smash cut the road between Sidi Bou Zid and Gafsa and proceeded in a northwesterly direction. Presumably to link up with the columns rolling towards Sbeitla, which the Americans obviously must attempt to hold at all costs.

#### Attack Expected

A high Allied officer said that Rommel's attack was expected, for he was known to be concentrating armor around Faid, and it was strategically necessary for him to gain more room to maneuver from the coast.

The officer said it was doubtful if Rommel would develop a major battle, for he could hardly afford the losses in men and equipment that this would entail, particularly when the British Eighth Army was coming up from the southern Tunisian border.

Rommel's advance tanks were within 15 miles of Sbeitla at 6 o'clock last night, when the last report was received at Allied Force Headquarters, having showed his line forward about 20 miles.

A very small British element was known to have been in the area of the German attack.

#### Planes to the Rescue

Rallying in support of the American troops, the U.S. Twelfth Air Force Douglas light bombers, Spitfires and Airacobras strafed the enemy almost endlessly.

Spitfires and Airacobras forced a formation of Me109s and FW190s to jettison their bombs behind the German lines, then went on to escort the Douglas, which bombed 100 troop-carrying trucks south of Sidi Bou Zid.

This column of troop trucks had previously been strafed by Airacobras and Spitfires and was at a standstill. Seven vehicles were destroyed by strafing, and the bombers put an undetermined number out of action.

North of Faid American fighters strafed 100 troops, a number of trucks and four machine-gun emplacements. A Nazi tank concentration on the Faid Pass was splattered with bombs from Douglas.

#### Difficult Terrain

The German ground push was staged in a sector most difficult for the Allies to supply from Mediterranean bases, for all men and equipment must move hundreds of miles across difficult mountain roads to reach the front.

From Gafsa, however, the Allies have been on a vital springboard for a quick attack towards the Axis, one good north-south coastal road near Sfax.

Should Rommel consolidate his Sunday gains, he would, in effect, turn the Allied line into right angle with the south Allied flank in a difficult weakened state.

## Malta Gas Was So Low Planes Were Not Taxied

MALTA, Feb. 15 (UP)—There was a time last year when Malta's gasoline supplies were so low that British Spitfire pilots were not allowed to taxi their planes out to the runways or back to the hangars again when they returned. Every ounce of gasoline was needed to keep them in the air.

"But today there is plenty and we are running the war to suit ourselves," said Wing-Commander Peter Hanks, DSO, DFC, who commands one of the Spitfire squadrons on the island.

## Hitler No Longer Signs Orders for Wehrmacht

In the last two weeks, all important German army orders have been signed by the High Command instead of Hitler, indicating the Fuehrer no longer is actively directing the Wehrmacht, a usually reliable foreign source discloses, according to The Associated Press.

Hitler still retains the title of commander-in-chief and an announcement of a change is unlikely, "but it looks like the General now is making the decisions, not Hitler."

"This leads to the belief that Hitler either has been presented with an ultimatum by the Generals, who bluntly pointed out his military blunders, or the Fuehrer has suffered one of his hysterical fits and now is in ill health as a result of Russian reverses," said the source.

## Enemy Frantic In Effort to Halt Russian Drives

### Try to Fix Defense Line After Fall of Rostov, Voroshilovgrad

MOSCOW, Feb. 15 (AP)—Driven from deep Donbas positions west of Rostov and Voroshilovgrad, the Germans tried desperately today to form a line to hold off the powerful Red Army push.

Following up the most sensational single day's offensive in the history of this war, the Russians pounded the perplexed Germans from the north of Kursk to the last remaining German positions on the Black Sea coast.

They wedged deeply into broken Axis fortifications over a wide front, and continued the assault in the direction of Kharkov.

In the region of Grugiev the Russians made further progress. Latest reports from this sector had the Red Army seven miles from the Ukrainian industrial capital.

#### Ordered to Die

Pravda, which gave the first details of the Rostov-Voroshilovgrad battles, said that their ferocity increased when Hitler ordered powerfully equipped reserves and tank forces to die rather than retreat from Rostov. Hitler ordered his generals to defend the city to the last.

Many areas surrounding Rostov were the scene of bloody battles which were carried from yard to yard and house to house.

Cossacks attacked the city from the southwest and took hundreds of German prisoners.

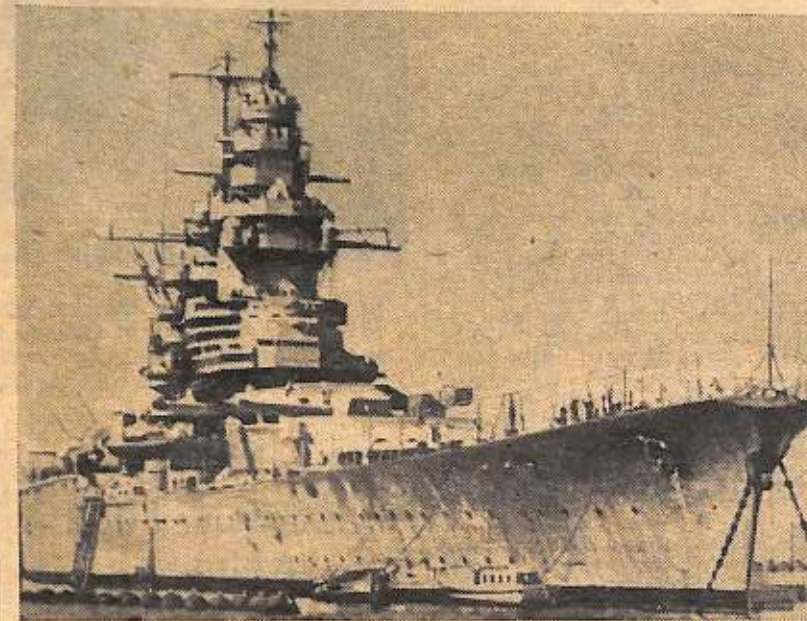
In Rostov itself Soviet infantry met fierce resistance. Pravda said the Germans directed streams of machine-gun and automatic rifle fire from yards and from behind walls, trees, roof tops and attics.

Hourly the battle became sharper. The

(Continued on page 4)

# French Warships Join Allies; Richelieu and Other Vessels Arrive in U.S. to Be Repaired

## Battleship Richelieu Safe in New York



Associated Press Photo

This is the French battleship Richelieu, one of the French warships which arrived at American ports last week to join the fight against the Axis after nearly two years' inactivity.

## All Units Not in Nazi Hands Will Aid Fight on Axis

NEW YORK, Feb. 15—A number of ships of the French fleet have arrived in United States ports to be repaired and then join the Allied naval force in its fight against the Axis, it was revealed today.

One of the warships was the 35,000-ton Richelieu, damaged by the British Navy at Dakar in 1940 in an effort to keep it out of Axis hands. Appearing in fighting trim, though needing repairs from the 1940 engagement, it sailed into New York Harbor last Thursday, but security prevented news of its arrival from being released earlier.

Arrival of the vessels—"a very important contingent"—was announced today by Adm. Raymond Fenard, head of the French Naval Mission to the United States. They were all vessels under Gen. Henri Giraud's jurisdiction and did not include Fighting French units.

#### Others to Join Allies

All French warships not in German hands, whether at Alexandria, Martinique or elsewhere, will fight with the Allies as soon as they can, Adm. Fenard declared. The aircraft-carrier Bearn, at present at Martinique, probably will go also to the United States for refitting, he revealed.

The crews, particularly the men at Alexandria, are "anxious to get going," the admiral asserted.

"After more than two years of enforced inaction they are anxious to take up the fight once again against our common enemy," he said. "They will soon join their comrades of the French Navy, who, since last December, have taken their places with the British and American navies and are doing their share in keeping open the sea lanes to the North African front."

"We are sure all the warships based on Toulon are finished," said Adm. Fenard. "The scuttling at Toulon was prepared even from the time of the armistice with Germany."

#### Big Threat to U-boats

Their addition to the United Nations' fighting force will be a tremendous advantage in the fight against the U-boats, the biggest single problem now facing the United States and Great Britain.

Most of the vessels are to undergo repairs at various Atlantic coast yards. Some, however, already have been fixed up and are at sea. The destroyers Fantasque and Terrible, for instance, accompanied the Richelieu across, then left New York for an undisclosed destination. The 7,600-ton cruiser Montcalm is at Philadelphia.

The Richelieu slid into New York harbor Thursday, crippled but far from impotent, after dodging a pack of submarines and riding out the toughest gale many of her crew ever had experienced. The trip from Dakar, where she and the Montcalm and other vessels had been moored, took three weeks, Adm. Fenard disclosed.

U.S. and French destroyers escorted the Richelieu all the way across.

Transfer of the Richelieu officially to the Allied naval forces ends a year and a half of fear that the mighty warship might fall into Axis hands.

"The French crews are glad to be fighting by the side of the United Nations," the admiral said. "The vessels will be used to keep the sea lanes to Africa open."

"The ships will fight anywhere under

(Continued on page 4)

## Extension of Social Security For Forces Is Recommended

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15 (AP)—Extension of Social Security coverage to members of the Armed Forces, as well as to millions of others at present outside the program, will be recommended soon by the Social Security Board.

Informed sources reported that the adoption of this recommendation, plus other board suggestions for an expansion of the program to provide hospital treatment and cash benefits for disabled workers, might eliminate the need for special veterans' legislation like that which followed the last war.

Several bills proposing the extension of social security coverage to members of the fighting services are pending in Congress; but there has been slight pressure for speedy adoption because the men are at present in the services, and their dependents are protected in many ways by laws enacted for veterans of previous wars.

These laws, among other things, provide for payments to dependents in case of death and to the soldiers themselves for disability incurred in line of duty.

But it should be noted that benefits given veterans of the last war for disability in ways not connected with military service have not so far been extended to cover those of the present war.

The present status under social security

(Continued on page 4)

## Libs and RAF Strike Dunkirk

### Forces Team Up First Time to Raid Port Two Hours Apart

American and RAF bombers smashed at Dunkirk, just across the English Channel, in daylight yesterday.

Just two hours after Boston bombers of the RAF had pummeled the historic Nazi-held port on the French coast, nearly opposite Dover, Liberators of the Eighth Air Force attacked "with good results," Headquarters, ETOUSA, reported in a communique issued jointly with the British Air Ministry.

RAF, Dominions and Allied fighters covered the bombers and destroyed ten enemy fighters without loss. Two Liberators are reported missing.

#### First Dual Raid

It was the first time the two air forces had teamed up in such a bombing operation—first the RAF, then the U.S. force.

The raid was made in what the communique described as "excellent visibility," and pilots reported "much wreckage" seen before smoke from bomb explosions drifted over the docks and shipping which were the target.

The daylight air blows against the Nazis came after a double night attack by RAF heavy bombers on Cologne in Germany and Milan and Spezia in Italy, where large fires were started. The night's operations cost 11 aircraft, Bomber Command reported.

The joint communique stated that "towards the end of the attack by the Liberators, smoke from bomb hits made observation of results difficult, but much wreckage was seen."

There was no announcement as to how many enemy fighters were shot down by the bombers.

The RAF's raids against Milan and Cologne Sunday night comprised the

(Continued on page 4)

#### Speed Deferment for Fathers

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15 (AP)—The house military committee speeded action today on legislation granting draft deferment to men with dependents, after selective service and manpower officials had served notice on the radio and in the press that most of the 12,000 men inducted daily in 1943 would be fathers.

## Maj. Gen. Eaker Appointed To Head Eighth Air Force

Maj. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, an Army aviator for 25 of his 47 years, has assumed command of the Eighth Air Force in the European Theater of Operations. He has been acting commanding general of air forces in the ETO since Dec. 1, in the absence of Maj. Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, air officer for Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower in the North African Theater.

Commanding General of Eighth Air Force Bomber Command since Feb. 22, 1942, Gen. Eaker has played a prime role in the development of American bombing strength in the British Isles and in the raids against occupied France and Germany.

Gen. Eaker has won the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Silver Star and decorations from the Chilean, Peruvian and Venezuelan Governments.

The Silver Star was awarded him for his part in the first American heavy bomber attack on Europe, at Rouen, last Aug. 17.

As one of the pilots of the "Question Mark," which set an airplane endurance record in January, 1929, he was awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to the DFC which he won during the Pan-American flights of 1926 and 1927.

Membership in the Caterpillar came to Gen. Eaker while flight-testing an airplane at Bolling Field, Va., when he had



Maj. Gen. Ira C. Eaker

to bale out after the ship refused to come out of a spin.

Born April 13, 1896, in Field Creek, Tex., Gen. Eaker served as an Infantryman in 1917 and qualified as a pilot in 1918.

# They Battle Unseen Foe in the Skies

## THE STARS AND STRIPES

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## GI You Can Join

The American Legion on November 20, 1942 secured a congressional amendment to their charter, making World War II veterans eligible to Legion membership. This amendment reads as follows:

"That no person shall be a member of this corporation unless he served in the naval or military services of the United States between April 6, 1917 and November 11, 1918; or between December 7, 1941 and the cessation of hostilities as fixed by the United States government, all dates inclusive; or who, being citizens of the United States at time of enlistment, served in the military or naval services of any of the governments associated with the United States during either of said World wars; provided that such persons shall have an honorable discharge or separation from such service, or shall continue to serve honorably after the date of cessation of such hostilities, as determined herein."

This means that you, Mr. GI Joe, are now eligible for membership in the American Legion as well as in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

So conventions here we come... and won't it be fun having the WACKS in the same organization... boy... Oh... Boy.

## So Sorry

The precariousness of Japan's supply line to her newly conquered island outposts in the South Pacific and the wretchedness of the Japanese soldier's life on the island front is emphasized in a letter found on the body of a Japanese soldier killed fighting in East China.

The letter, which was written by a Japanese war correspondent from a naval base in the South Pacific, says that Japanese ships carrying war material and troops to the South Seas are regularly bombed by American aircraft and shipments "often fail to reach their destination." American air superiority has forced the Japanese to carry out all landing and unloading operations under cover of darkness.

Once ashore on the islands the Japanese soldier is forced to subsist on cold and often on raw food for days at a time. They are ordered not to light cooking fires for fear of revealing their position to American aircraft. How great that fear is, and how great the reason for it is told in the letter, which says: "Soldiers stationed in the thick jungle where day and night are indistinguishable, now know it is nightfall when the drone of American planes overhead ceases. They are able to distinguish, and shudder at, the sound of a Grumman Wildcat's motor!"

As the Japs would say it—speaking one to the other, O kino-doku sama... so sorry for you.

## Watch Your Manners

"One of the arts a soldier in this war has to learn is how to get on with 'queer' people. The adjective is not used disparagingly. If the ways of the Chinese, the Guadalcanal head-hunters, the East Indians, the French, the Egyptians, the Eskimos or the British seem strange to us... how can we suppose our ways seem to them?" asks the New York Times in a recent editorial.

With this line of reasoning we agree, and in turn suggest that we make every effort to adjust ourselves to the local situation... to adopt, at times, local customs.

Instructions have gone out on how to behave in foreign parts. Englishmen regard their pubs as clubs... not as beer joints, and conduct within English pubs should be on the English standard. The Moors prefer not to have soldiers make eyes at their wives and daughters; they do not understand flirtation. A Chinaman doesn't like to be slapped on the back, and a Chinese girl is insulted if you try to hold her hands.

In spite of all the instructions in the world there will be occasional misunderstandings; but the point is to regard them, when they occur, as in the family and between friends. Be generous in your forgiveness.

Those of us in the army have the advantage of learning first about local customs from a book. If, in addition, we learn to live with other people without "looking down on them," the rest of America may be able to learn this lesson from us when we return home. Then on the basis of respect, one race for another, we will be able to build a lasting peace, remembering always that we cannot build a better world on contempt, criticism, mistrust or open hatred.

## Hash Marks

A second lieutenant stationed in the south Pacific wrote his family that he had been promoted and added that it was so hot that he hadn't worn a shirt or blouse for weeks. His sister sent him a set of first lieutenant silver bars—neatly mounted on adhesive tape.

The navy is pretty resourceful, too. Several hundred midshipmen were left standing in formation outside Hayden



Planetarium while their commanding officer conferred indoors. Some small boys started pelting the midshipmen with snowballs, the middies sustaining several direct hits. Just as the navy appeared on the verge of a serious loss, an officer emerged from the building, sized up the situation, ordered "Left face, fire at will!"—the foe retired in disorder.

Presence of mind and a Boy Scout hat saved his automobile for Russell Smith of Oklahoma City. Two men stopped Smith on the highway and said, "We'll have to take your car, buddy." Smith switched on his dashlight and radio and barked into the loud speaker, "Calling all cars, calling all cars! Reporting a robbery at 37th street and Classen avenue." "Wow," shouted one thug, "this guy's a highway patrolman." Both men fled without discovering that the radio was a receiving set and the official looking hat on Smith's head meant that he was a Scoutmaster.

You've heard of guys talking their way into a job, but Ralph Dangelo, of Newark, N.J., went a step further—he had his jaw broken so he could get in the Marines. When he was ten years old he broke his jaw; it was badly set and this caused him to fail his Marine exam. So he had it rebroken and reset.

Mothers are like that! Mrs. S. L. Wilson, of Kansas City, has attended a theater four times attempting to see her son, Pvt. Melvin Melvin Wilson, in newsteel shots of the action on Guadalcanal. Her husband, a doctor, accompanies her each time, ready with restoratives as Mrs. Wilson always faints just before her son appears on the screen. Said the determined Mrs. Wilson: "Things just seem to go black when I think I am about to see him, but I'll see him yet."

An unhappy man is Philip David Kofsky of Los Angeles. Kofsky pleaded guilty to wearing an army officer's uniform



illegally. He told federal officers that he wore it so he could leave home nights to play poker with the boys. "My wife thought I was going to drill," he explained.

J. C. W.



In the decompression chamber Sgt. Harold Lichty, of New York; Maj. J. F. Tilden, of Olathe, Col., and Maj. J. L. Anderson, of Orlando, Fla., watch the behaviour of Capt. R. B. Zerbie, of Tremont, Pa., who is acting as the "guinea pig" without his oxygen mask under conditions approximating those at 15,000 feet. At the controls, Lt. Richard Trockman, of Evensville, Ind., peers through the port.

## Airmen Need Oxygen To Survive High Altitudes

By Andrew A. Rooney  
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

AN AIR TRAINING DEPOT, England, Feb. 15—Twenty thousand feet and more above the green of the English countryside, up where the cold begins, American and British flight surgeons today are carrying on their own warfare against an enemy swifter and quieter—and every bit as deadly as the Luftwaffe itself.

That enemy is the "thin" air of high altitudes; the air whose chemical makeup is deficient in the vital oxygen which keeps men alive.

After you pass 10,000 feet—and that's just about tree-top level for today's aerial warfare—the oxygen content of the air you breathe begins to get lower. So you switch to bottles of oxygen, breathed through a mask.

But let anything happen to that artificial oxygen supply, once you're up where the cold begins and the horizon is the ends of the earth, and you die, or at best become unconscious and unable to handle your plane.

**Fight to Conquer Air**  
Air is rare at that height; and lack of oxygen and the comparatively low pressure at which what air there is enters the lungs, does queer things to a man. Combating that problem is one of the major headaches of the Air Force Medical Corps.

Research at Randolph Field has brought improvements, but equipment such as pressure suits and pressure cabins are impracticable in fighting planes because of their vulnerability.

Here, USAAF flight surgeons are still trying to find out what happens to a

man at great heights. They are sure of one thing: A pilot and his crew must be made aware of the dangers that exist for them at those altitudes. Some of them are hard to convince.

Changing from their main oxygen supply to their "walk-around" bottle of oxygen, they have discovered that they can take several breaths of air at any height with no apparent ill-effects. This confidence is dangerous.

The Provisional Medical Flight Service School of the Eighth Air Force here in England are now using a mobile pressure chamber in which high altitude conditions can be simulated to convince combat crews that a lack of oxygen does impair their efficiency.

The chamber originally was used by the RAF. It is mounted on a vehicle that can go anywhere a one-ton army truck can go, and the plan is to take it to every U.S. station in England.

The decompression chamber itself was built from an old boiler. It seats three men on each side, is lined with paper-board, and is fully equipped with a communications system and of course oxygen equipment.

### Operator Keeps Check

At one end there is a small port-like window through which the man operating the decompression controls can watch the guinea pigs and give them directions over the phone system.

When the crews go through the one-hour test in the chamber, they won't go as "high" or stay "up" as long as they have in actual flight, but for the first time they can concentrate their full attentions on the oxygen problem without having to worry about flying the plane or dodging FW 190s.

In a typical test in the chamber flight surgeon Lt. Richard J. Trockman, Evensville, Ind., might be at the controls.

He seats the six men inside and makes sure the door is firmly closed, sealing the chamber. Back at the port he looks in at the men and starts the decompression machine.

"You are going up at the rate of 5,000 feet per minute," he explains. "You won't notice anything for a while."

In a short time he speaks to the men again.

"OK. All but No. 3 man on the right, put on your oxygen masks and set your indicator at 12,000 feet. Regulations call for all fliers to use oxygen at 10,000 feet, and the indicator should read up to 5,000 feet above your actual altitude."

The No. 3 man is going to be the guinea pig for the experiment. Lt. Trockman instructs the others to watch the man without the oxygen supply, closely.

### Pressure Affects Ears

As pressure in the chamber is decreased, the men's ears begin to cluck as the pressure inside the inner ear becomes adjusted to the lower pressure more slowly than the rapidly decreasing pressure outside. The mucus of a headcold will stop up the passages, hindering the process of equalization of pressure inside and out.

This greater pressure inside causes the eardrums to bulge and, in extreme cases, rupture. In other cases the mucus is forced down the Eustachian tube (connecting nose and middle ear), lodges there and causes infection.

If a flier is troubled with sinus infections his forehead may begin to pain as the pressure in the clogged sinus passages remains the same while the pressure outside decreases, causing an outward pressure in the passages.

Lt. Trockman continues: "Notice No. 3's nails. Blue underneath, aren't they? He looks a little pale. He is beginning to suffer from anoxia, the name given to lack of oxygen in the system."

"He is beginning to feel a little numb, but supremely happy—or maybe he is getting irritated about something."

"Sounds like a cheap drunk," some-one comments over the inter-com.

"Exactly," the flight surgeon outside explains. "The symptoms of anoxia are often similar to those caused by too much alcohol."

"I think I look all right," says the No. 3 man confidently, beginning to feel light headed and cocky.

"How much is four times 13?" Lt. Trockman asks him.

"That's easy," the patient replies without a moment's hesitation. "Four times 13, is 74."

It is one of the first symptoms of anoxia. The victim begins to feel as though he could lick his weight in hand grenades.

### He Needed Oxygen

One story is told of a pilot who lost his oxygen connection while flying in formation. He stuck with the formation for some time, but soon he began to wander all over the sky. He called other planes in the formation over the inter-com and bawled their pilots out for crossing in front of him. Actually they were having all they could do to stay out of his way.

Even when he got back on the ground, that pilot couldn't believe that he hadn't been doing a superb job of formation flying. Lack of oxygen had affected vital nerve centers. His control was poor, his reactions slow, and his ability for self-criticism absolutely non-existent.

In the chamber, the man without the mask is asked to perform several little jobs. Lt. Trockman may ask him to shuffle a pack of cards, tie his shoe lace, or write his name several times. Invariably he stumbles through these things. In his own mind he thinks he is doing a grade A job. His name never looked better to him on paper, he likes the way he ties his shoe lace, and thinks he shuffles cards like a Culbertson.

The flight surgeons tell a story of one test pilot who climbed to a high altitude without oxygen and took notes of his observation while he was up there.

When the pilot came down he couldn't find his notes. He had a pocket full of papers with doodlings on them but he was sure that he had taken accurate and complete notes. Obviously what he thought had been beautiful notes while he suffered from anoxia, were useless scratches on paper.

### Eyesight is Affected

In the test chamber Lt. Trockman has the "guinea pig" put on the oxygen mask before the danger point is reached.

"Note the almost immediate change in the color of No. 3. His complexion improves, things look brighter to him. One of the first things that is affected by the lack of oxygen is the eyesight."

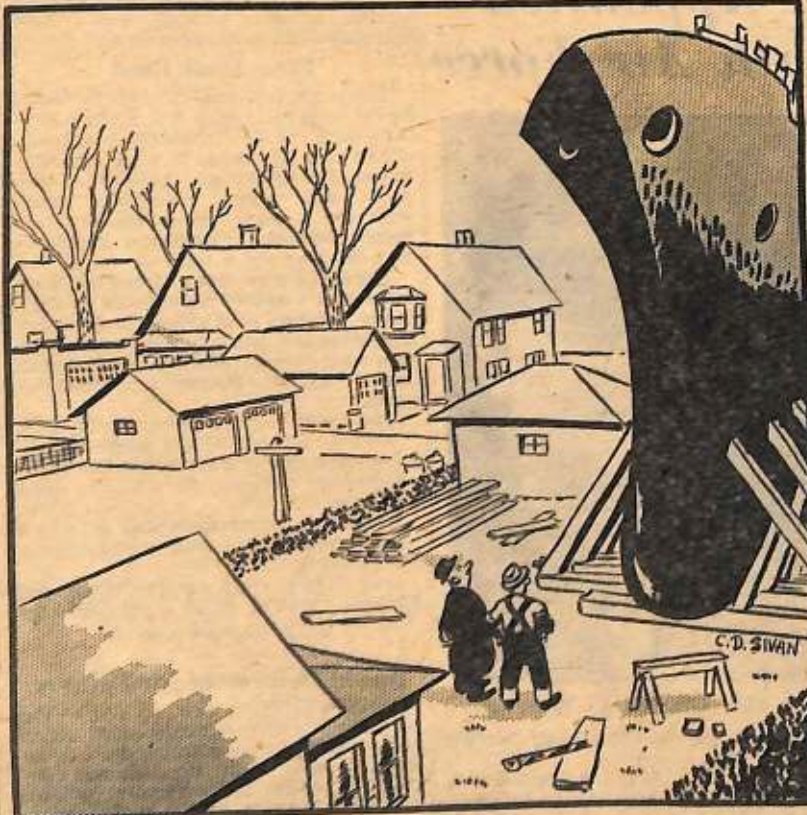
The RAF regulation is oxygen from the ground up on night raids, because it is the parts of the eye that provide good night vision which are particularly affected.

A decompression chamber designed at Randolph Field is also in England and will be used along with experiments in the RAF chamber.

The other problems of high altitudes are the "bends," the affliction usually associated with deep-sea divers. The bends, or aero-embolisms, are caused by the nitrogen and other gas bubbles which come out of solution in the blood as pressure increases, just as the carbon-dioxide comes out of solution in ginger-ale when the pressure is released with a bottle opener.

This problem is mainly one for fighter plane pilots, not for the medium altitude bombers. It is not a serious problem until a man reaches 35,000 feet.

In both these problems the mobile pressure chamber will be a help from the point of scientific observation, and more important, it will thoroughly acquaint the men who fly at high altitudes with their own problems, and in that way help them to overcome them.



"Remember that modern mechanix speed boat I started last summer?"



