

Y. RUSSIAN FRONT.

ART. POSITIONS IMPROVED.

Y. PLANE LOSSES.

CK. INLAND SEAS REPORTED.

LONDON, May 5.—According to last night's Moscow communique the Russian troops yesterday took the offensive in several sectors and improved their positions. Twelve German planes were destroyed on Sunday for the loss of 8 Russians. The Germans lost 264 planes last week and the Russians 71.

The "Daily Express" correspondent in Moscow, who flew 600 miles from the front to Moscow yesterday, says that the armies are now separated in some areas by many hundreds of miles of waterlines made by the Don and upper reaches of the Oka and the Dneiper Rivers, so that major operations for the present are ruled out. The correspondent says that he saw vast inland seas.

The Stockholm correspondent of "The Times" states that the Russians and Germans are strenuously accumulating men and material from Leningrad to Kha-kov, but the fighting scarcely anywhere exceeds patrols clashes, air reconnaissance and guerilla activities, with occasional artillery duels. General Dietl's northern German forces, which have been at a standstill since the autumn in the angle of the River Liza to the Arctic seashore, appear non-plussed as the Russians retain the initiative, except for the occasional German bombing of Murmansk. General Dietl expected large reinforcements. Certainly a proportion of his troops have been relieved, but British transport sinkings have hitherto disappointed his hopes of resuming the offensive when the days lengthened. The days are now long, but a German rush to Murmansk has not materialised and the soft ground makes the attempt unlikely before the summer. The Germans admit that the improvised roads have quickly softened, swallowing up men and material. Even horses have been drowned on the roads which seemed firm enough when completed. Officers generally have shot the horses before they disappeared. Activities have been relatively suspended on the Svir front stretching between Lakes Ladoga and Onega. Axis preliminaries for a more determined effort to drive the Russians from the Kerch Peninsula continue.

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AMERICAN SHIPPING.

COASTAL LOSSES DOWN.

Evidence of Better Defence.

LOS ANGELES, May 5.—The Secretary of the Navy Colonel Knox declared to the Press today: "There is a definite subsidence in sinkings on the Atlantic coast. Whether it is due to increased protection of shipping or whether Germany has called in her submarines for overhauling and re-equipping, I do not know, but we are gradually establishing the type of defence that has proved effective around England and the North Atlantic. There are very few sinkings in the North Atlantic, due in part to the system of protection against submarine attack that has been perfected in that area."

VOYAGE TO SAFETY

AIRMEN ESCAPE FROM JAVA

AT SEA 44 DAYS

LANDING ON WA COAST

MELBOURNE, May 5.—How 12 men, members of a mixed RAF-RAAF party, made an amazing 44-day trip in an open boat across more than 1,500 miles of the Indian Ocean, starting as Java fell to the Japanese, is told in a report made by the leader of the party.

The party was scrutinised by a Japanese submarine, which unaccountably permitted it to proceed, was almost upset by a monster whale, was ignored by an Australian flying boat, the pilot of which mistook it for a pearler, and was in turn becalmed and swept by violent tropical storms. Finally the party reached the West Australian coast.

Yet under the stress of all these hardships and perils the party pushed on without thought of surrender, and by great skill, patience and co-operation reached a haven in Australia. Each Saturday night during the journey they toasted the King and their wives and sweet-hearts.

"Looking back on six and a half weeks of trial," says the leader of the party, "I can say that I would not, if the opportunity again occurred, alter one of my crew. They were magnificent. We remained staunch friends in adversity."

The party consisted of Wing-Commander Jeurwine, Pilot-Officer Streatfield, Squadron-Leader Passmore and Pilot-Officer Turner of the RAF, and Pilot-Officer MacDonald (of Western Australia), Sgt-Pilot Seyer, Sgt-Pilot Lovegrove, Sgt-Pilot Cosgrove, Sgt-Pilot Longmore, Sgt-Observer Snook (of Western Australia), Sgt-Gunner Haynes (also from this State) and Sgt-Gunner Corney, all of the RAAF.

Telling his story, Wing-Commander Jeurwine said: "Some of my squadron had remained in Java, and when efforts to defend the island had collapsed we set about searching the harbour for some likely craft in which to get away to Australia. All we could find were two ship's lifeboats 30ft long without auxiliary engines.

broke loose again and Corney and Lovegrove, after 36 hours' toil, managed, by using a piece of metal which they beat out with all sorts of makeshift tools, to get it in good order. It was another excellent piece of work.

"All this time huge fires were raging in and around the harbour, and mighty clouds of black smoke were rising into the sky as the result of the scorched earth policy.

"Then we ran into a calm, and for 6 days we lay on a glasslike sea. The heat was terrific. To keep everyone amused and good-tempered in those days I organised a series of mental tests such as the longest list of film stars whose names began with "S," the longest list of subjects named in a minute, competitions between the focsle and the quarterdeck. There was only one drawback to these contests. They made us tremendously hungry and tremendously thirsty.

"Into each lifeboat we decided to put 30 men with 5 others in a motor boat which we had salvaged, and which we hoped would tow us until her petrol petered out.

Cared by a Whale.

"As we were working one of my officers dashed up to say that a Dutchman had just informed him that the Japanese were landing at the other end of the harbour. He had barely finished telling us when loud explosions occurred as the Dutch blew up bridges connecting the harbour and docks area with the mainland. We had salvaged a ship's sextant, 2 compasses and a 1/15,000,000 map but no proper charts. Our food supplies consisted of biscuits, bully beef, meat and vegetable ration, a little camp pie, some cans of tomato, plums, beans and 2 tins of jam, some tinned milk, 6 pots of honey, 2 dozen jars of fish paste, some sardines, 6 bottles of whisky, 4 bottles of brandy and some cocoa.

"After the sixth day a breeze sprang up again and once more there was plenty to keep us occupied. During our respective watches we had seen whales blowing in the distance, but had thought little or nothing about them. Then, about a month after we had started our voyage, we received the worst fright of our lives. A mighty whale surfaced about 200 yards astern, blew and began rapidly to overtake us. It came right alongside, its great powerful tail beneath us. Then, in some extraordinary way, its head appeared above water. I am certain it was then not more than three feet away from us, and this awful looking monster stayed there staring at us for what seemed a lifetime. I know that I was terrified. We all kept perfectly still. A flick of that tail and it would have been the end of us, lifeboat and all. Then, as sun-

"We also had 2 'Tommy Cookers' and after 2 severe storms through

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Colonel Knox, proceeding, revealed that the American Navy will comprise 1,000,000 men before July 1, 1943; and that it now comprises over 500,000.

NAVAL STRENGTH.

Improving Position.

NEW YORK, May 5.—The Price Administrator, Mr Leon Henderson, said today: "Up to date we have been forced to fight a two-ocean war with a one-ocean navy, but next year it will be different. We will at least have a one-and-half-ocean navy."

"He declared that American production no longer presents a problem since the problem had been licked. The sleeping giant of the American productive system had been awakened. The United States index of production was 112 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. It had now mounted to 175 and it would reach 200 within the present year."

Important Promotions.

WASHINGTON, May 4.—President Roosevelt has nominated Rear-Admirals Adolphus Andrews and John Greenslade to be Vice-Admirals and he has nominated Pay Inspector William Young to be Paymaster-General of the Navy.

U-BOAT ACTIVITY.

Dutch Vessel's Short Shrift.

NEW YORK, May 4.—The Navy announced today that a small Dutch merchantman was torpedoed on the Atlantic coast on April 28. It is believed that 6 of the crew went down with the ship. The remaining 37 were picked up by a naval vessel and were landed at Lewes, Delaware, today. The merchantman had left an Atlantic port only 4 hours before she was sunk.

Other Recent Losses.

WASHINGTON, May 5.—The Navy announced today that a medium-sized British merchantman had been sunk off the Atlantic coast a fortnight ago on her maiden voyage. All the 43 members of the crew and one passenger were picked up and landed at various United States ports.

A message from Caracas (Venezuela) states that 48 members of the crew of the Standard Oil Company's tanker Harry Seidel, torpedoed in the Caribbean Sea, had been landed near Carupano. According to news dispatches two others were killed.

A survivor of a recent torpedoing off the Atlantic coast declared upon arrival at an American port that the commander of the Italian submarine that sank the vessel was unmistakably German. The submarine, which carried Italian markings, surfaced and the commander spoke to the survivors in the lifeboats with a broad German accent.

Brazilian Freighter Torpedoed.

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 4.—The Brazilian Press Department announced today that the Brazilian ship Parvahyba (6,692 tons) had been torpedoed off Trinidad on May 1.

BUILDING IN AMERICA.

Deliveries Increasing.

WASHINGTON, May 4.—The Maritime Commission announced today that American shipyards delivered into service 36 merchant vessels during April. The deliveries for the previous months were: January, 15; February, 28; March, 27.

During April 51 vessels were launched which was double the January figure. For the first four months of the year 200 keels were laid and 106 ships were placed in service.

THE MEDITERRANEAN.

...some cocoa.

"We also had 2 'Tommy Cookers' and after 2 severe storms through which we later passed we were able to make steaming cups of cocoa for all the party that ultimately made the trip. We also had 3 ship's beakers of water, 2 of them partially full.

Two Boats Wrecked.

"We started shortly before 11 pm on March 6, but soon found that the motorboat would not tow the lifeboats. We tried our sails, but because of the overloaded state of the boats were again unsuccessful, so we decided to return to a small cove. Only two of us, Pilot-Officer Streatfield and myself, had had any experience of sailing, and we were each in charge of a boat. I decided to anchor off the cove, but Streatfield thought he could find a passage. However, his boat was holed and the motorboat was wrecked. There were, however, no casualties and we salvaged all the stores and got them ashore.

"We then decided that one boat should try to make the trip to Australia, and set about selecting our crew. Not more than 8 men in each lifeboat had escaped being violently seasick the night before when we attempted the tow, so we decided to pick the crew exactly as we would have done had we been selecting air crew for an operation. Turner was our only navigating officer.

"It was quickly decided that Australian members of the party should be given first refusal to make the trip and these we selected for their stamina, morale and initiative.

"It is pleasant to be able to state, after six and a half weeks of trial, that I would not, if the opportunity again occurred, alter one of my crew. They were magnificent. Naturally we had our disagreements. Our accommodation was so restricted that this was unavoidable, but in the main we remained staunch friends in adversity.

Japanese Submarine Appears.

"Our crew of 12 completed we set off again at dusk on March 7. The town and harbour were still like an inferno. All next night we were becalmed, and it was not until 2.30 o'clock in the afternoon that a slight breeze sprang up. We had just begun to move when, to our horror, a Japanese submarine surfaced a mile astern of us.

"Her conning tower opened and we saw a Japanese officer scrutinising us through binoculars. A rating stood forward at the breach of a six-pounder gun and another man was standing at a machinegun which, however, was pointing skyward. She approached to within 50 or 100 yards of us, made a half circle and then disappeared, still on the surface, towards the east.

"I do not need to emphasise our reactions. The breeze continued to hold and we set off, beating the whole way because of head winds, and steering south-east. I want to pay particular tribute to the work of 3 of the RAAF personnel aboard. Our rudder had been damaged when we salvaged the lifeboat, and the second day out it broke away completely. It would have been impossible to hold the boat on its course to Australia with an oar and I say unhesitatingly that had it not been mended we should never have survived.

"Sergeants Corney and Lovegrove appointed themselves our shipwrights and after at least 3 days' work they managed to make repairs with pieces of wire from bully beef tins and bits and pieces of salvage aboard. It was done in bad weather and was a fine piece of work. Sergeant Snook is also to be highly commended for his assistance in navigation.

A Day's Rations.

"I appointed Squadron-Leader Passmore to be our purser and he fixed the following ration scale for what we hoped to be a 30-day trip. Actually we had not made allowances for calms, of which I shall say more later. A day's ration for every man aboard consisted of 9oz of bully beef or camp pie, 6 biscuits, a little fish paste, a spoonful of beans or

...tail and it would have been the end of us, lifeboat and all. Then, as suddenly as it appeared, it submerged, and we never saw it or any of its kind again.

Early on March 16 Sgt Corney, who was on watch, said he was certain he had smelt spinifex. He had also seen lots of seaweed, and checking up I reckoned we should be about 50 miles off Roebourne. Then to my horror, when sunset came and I checked my watch, I realised it had lost possibly 43 minutes, and that we might be as much as 600 miles off the coast. I announced this to my crew on the morning of April 17 and you can imagine their feelings.

"We promptly cut our rations down and decided to do without a mid-day meal that day and the next. However we began to see unmistakable signs of land—two butterflies, some ordinary flies, seaweed and a species of jellyfish we had never seen before—which gave us hope.

Land At Last.

"On the night of April 19 we heard the sound of an engine, not loud enough to be an aircraft engine but possibly a small motorboat. Although we lit a red flare we got no response. Then, at 2.30 am Perth time we touched land at Fraser Island. We lay off till daylight and then went ashore for breakfast.

"After 44 days at sea we were at first like drunken men. Our legs would not support us and most of us promptly fell over. After breakfast we set off again. We saw a flying boat and flashed mirrors at it, but it passed on. It later transpired that the pilot had seen us, thought we were a pearling lugger and had not taken any further notice of us.

"Next day we touched another islet which we named Butterfish Island because there we used some hooks and parachute thread and caught our first fish meal for weeks. It was excellent and did us all good. We set sail again and that afternoon we saw another flying boat coming towards us. We raised a pyjama jacket as a signal of distress and the flying boat alighted.

"The pilot was extremely cautious and it took some time for us to convince him who we were. I swam across to him but he would not let anyone aboard, quite rightly. I thought afterwards, although I had other views at the time. Eventually he offered to take 6 of us on board, but only 3 of the fellows volunteered.

"The rest of us resumed our voyage by boat, but the following day the flying boat appeared and said orders had been given that we were to be taken aboard and flown to Shark Bay. In the excitement of leaving the boat we left behind in the forward locker the squadron shield which consists of a scorpion and a Latin motto. We shall be immensely grateful if the boat drifts ashore and is found and that shield is returned to us.

"In conclusion, our health was remarkably good. We had no fever but we did suffer from ulcers and abrasions and also had eye trouble through exposure to sea and sun. We doctored chills with quinine and aspirin of which we had a small supply. We made a point of swimming over the side daily. Six of us went over while the others remained in the boat and kept watch for sharks."

HOME AGAIN.

RAAF Man Married.

With a beard down to his chest and dressed in borrowed American clothes, Sgt-Gunner Haynes gave his brothers and sisters and his grandmother, Mrs T. M. Haynes, a pleasant shock when he walked into his home at West Perth one night after his arrival back in Australia, but just as overjoyed at his safe return from an adventurous journey was Miss Gene Kennedy.

Sgt-Gunner Haynes and Miss Kennedy had been childhood friends from the time their families had lived in Broome and on Saturday last that friendship had a happy ending. They were married at Nedlands. Sgt-Gunner Haynes had been almost given up for lost as the last his family

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months of the year 200 keels were
laid and 106 ships were placed in
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THE MEDITERRANEAN.

Heavy Axis Losses.

ALEXANDRIA, May 4.—It was
officially announced today that over
1,250,000 tons of Axis merchant ship-
ping has been sunk in the Mediter-
ranean since Italy's entry into the
war. The Navy and the RAF sank
147,000 tons in the first four months
of 1942, compared with 715,000 tons
for the whole of last year. In addi-
tion eight ships totalling 32,000 tons
have been probably sunk this year
and 25 ships totalling 132,000 tons
have been damaged.

JAPAN FEELS PINCH.

New Construction Plans.

NEW YORK, May 4.—The official
Tokio radio said today that the Jap-
anese Government has announced
that an extraordinary session of the
Diet has been summoned for May 25
to vote approval of a new shipbuild-
ing programme. It is considered in
America that this indicates that the
Japanese are feeling the pinch of
their heavy shipping losses in the
South-West Pacific.

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for calms, of which I shall say more
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aboard consisted of 9oz of bully
beef or camp pie, 6 biscuits, a little
fish paste, a spoonful of beans or
tomato, occasional issues of plums,
about half a pint of water and a
12oz can of beer.

"To help maintain morale I in-
stituted the navy custom of Saturday
night at sea. On Saturday nights
we gave all hands an extra ration
of beer and we opened a bottle of
whisky. We all had a tot to drink
the King's health as well as the
old navy toast of wives and sweet-
hearts. As is also the navy cus-
tom, we called on the youngest mem-
ber present to reply to that toast.

"For covering we each had one
blanket. There were several ground
sheets and one or two anti-gas capes.
Our main problem was space. Sleep-
ing meant just lying down where any
sort of room could be found.

"After the first bad storm we lost
some of our water and much of what
was left was contaminated by sea
water. Our water position, therefore,
was serious. Then we ran into an-
other tropical storm and that down-
pour undoubtedly saved our lives,
as we were able to catch enough
water to fill up our water barrels.
During that terrific storm our rudder

SAINT SMOOK WHICH HE WALKED AWAY AND
home at West Perth one night after
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ner Haynes had been almost given
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had heard of him was when in-
formed he had been wounded in the
Far East.

Sgt-Obsener Snook was not posted
as missing but his parents thought
he might be a prisoner of war or a
casualty. "Still, we did not give up
hope," said his father Capt C. W.
Snook, of West Perth. "I returned
to Perth on a Friday and was told
at home that there was a pleasant
surprise for me." That surprise was
the safe return of his son.

ON FIRE AGAIN.

The Liner Normandie.

NEW YORK, May 5.—For the
fifth time a fire started today on
the giant liner Lafayette, the former
Normandie, but it was quickly
quenched.

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATED PRESS.

Except where otherwise designated the
overseas intelligence published in "The
West Australian" is transmitted to Aus-
tralia by the Australian Associated Press
from its worldwide sources of informa-
tion.