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Seversky: Victory Through Air Power

Continued from Page One

that here, at last, was a regulation "ocean battle according to the familiar rules of naval textbooks. But they spoke too soon.

Having sunk the Hood, the Bismarck disappeared. Because of its edge in speed it normally would have eluded the enemy and lived to pick off shipping convoys.

But long-ranged R.A.F. planes of the coastal patrol—incidentally, American-built planes—intercepted the German dreadnaught and thereafter directed its hunt from the skies.

HANDIER BY PLANES
The R.A.F. overtook the Bismarck about 350 miles westward of Brest and the vessel rests on the floor of the Atlantic about 400 miles from Brest.

For 150 miles, therefore, the Bismarck was hunted by air-planes until it was reduced to a helpless derelict. At that point a British warship moved in for the kill.

However, had there been no fleet within hailing distance, a squadron of aerial bombers and torpedo planes could have finished the job. Once a battleship is disabled, the remainder of its final disposition is of relatively minor importance.

In this decisive battle, the British sea forces played an auxiliary role in helping dispose of a ship made derelict by aviation. It was the arm of the fleet, in the shape of carrier-based aviation, that did the major part of the work.

LAND PLANES BEST
This fact has been made the basis for superficial assertions that modernized sea power, in the sense of navies carrying their own aircraft, has been demonstrated as the best solution of the problem of sea warfare.

Such a deduction collapses when it is realized that there is nothing which carrier-based aviation can do that cannot be done more effectively by land-based planes.

Obviously torpedo planes taking off from land could carry bigger and more deadly torpedo loads than aircraft embarked with all the prerequisites for operation from ship decks.

Indeed, had the airplanes which discovered the Bismarck been equipped with torpedoes they could have struck at the Nazi warship there and then.

It is only the lack of adequate range which necessitates "floating bases" in the form of airplane carriers.

After the Bismarck had been subjected to bombardment, the British Navy, after all, had not

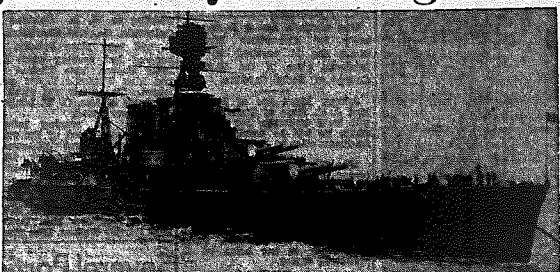
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The three-ton British battle cruiser Hood (above) was sunk in an old-style naval engagement with the German battleship Bismarck in Denmark strait. A "lucky shot" by the Bismarck into the magazine destroyed the Hood.



The Bismarck (above), one of the most powerful warships afloat, was the victim of air power. The Nazi dreadnaught escaped the British fleet but was overtaken by R.A.F. planes. Reduced to a helpless derelict by aerial torpedoes and bombs, the Bismarck was an easy mark when fleet units arrived.

had much chance in this war to practice on a live target! It was finished off by the cruiser Dorsetshire with two torpedoes fired at close range.

Those torpedoes might just as easily have been fired by airplanes from a carrier or R.A.F. coastal patrol. The coup de grace was left to the Navy as a matter of jurisdiction. It was a "Navy show" and the R.A.F. kept politely aloof.

OPPORTUNITY WASTED

It should be noted that the British Navy trivialized sacrificed a providential opportunity to ascertain whether air bombardment was capable of sinking the most modern type of battleship, as claimed by "air-power enthusiasts."

When the Bismarck had been reduced to a derelict, condition from the air, it offered a perfect target to help settle a much-disputed question, the answer to which was of extreme importance to the further conduct of the war.

The chance was thrown away. The enemy dreadnaught was disposed of in the traditional fashion—almost as if to perpetuate the legend of the inviolability of battleships to the blows of air power.

Unfortunately the demolition of that legend was left to Japan, at the cost of the British battleships Prince of Wales and Repulse, not to mention American victims.

The crucial fact about the advent of air power is that it has widened the choice of methods for enforcement of a nation's will on an adversary.

At one end, modern aviation reinforces the old patterns of warfare without the limitations of invasion and occupation.

At the other, it can strike at an enemy nation as a totality, reducing that nation to helplessness without the time-honored preliminaries of invasion and mile-by-mile conquest.

In the final analysis, the aim in armed conflict is to disarm the enemy. Until the advent of air power, this could be done only by armies. Navies merely provided the transportation.

Air power revolutionized human conflict in that it provided the means to disarm an enemy directly—by knocking the weapons out of its hands, so to speak, through destruction of its entire war potential.

THE QUESTION
As the full potentialities of air power are unfolded—and we have seen only the crude beginnings—the question in relation to a war, or to any specific campaign, will be:

Does the attacker aim at the possession of the enemy coun-

try or at its elimination as an economic and political factor?

Once control of the air over hostile territory is assumed, the further disposition of that area is normally at the will of the conqueror.

On the one hand, he may find the elimination of the country as a world factor more desirable than its actual subjugation. On the other hand, he may find the acquisition of an area intact, for its resources or industry or other economic values, more desirable than its destruction.

The deeper the civilization and the national pride of a people, the more likely it is to be subjected to the method of extermination, since such a people cannot be reconciled to living the life of the vanquished.

Because they represent a constant source of danger to the conqueror, through the threat of a "comeback," advanced peoples must, if possible, be reduced to impotence beyond any recovery, through annihilation of the industrial foundations of their life.

Industrialized nations, in addition, are more vulnerable to the wars of total destruction, as we have noted in another context.

At least part of the secret of China's continued resistance to the Japanese war from the

air is that its primitive economic existence cannot be destroyed as easily as a complex machine-age society would.

China's life does not depend, as the life of the United States does, on a few colossal aggregates of electric power and industrial machinery. China lives on the earth, every locality more or less sufficient to itself.

What was from the air against an undeveloped country or region is left-night-for-fighter. It is one of the most modern features of the most modern weapons that it is especially effective against the most modern type of civilization.

Thus the United States, as the world's most industrialized area, is also the most vulnerable to aerial attack. Our great territorial expanses may give us the illusion that overhead attack would be sporadic and infrequent. The fact is that our essential targets are concentrated at a few spots.

For instance, the destruction of Detroit would paralyze our automotive strength and hence help to stall our mechanized forces.

In addition, the destruction of a few cities like Hartford, Paterson, Indianapolis, and Columbus, Ohio, would at once blow ground our air power, since practically all the output of airplanes and engines is concentrated in those cities.

A PERFECT TARGET
Industrial disarmament must be undertaken in the interest of security. As we stand today, America represents a perfect target for bombing from the skies, here an enemy can hope to achieve more devastation per ton of explosive than in almost any other part of the world.

Though these considerations may sound fantastic, they have been ignored by our established military writers, they represent a concrete aspect of the current world struggle.

In the conflict between Britain and Germany, the latter is waging a war of physical elimination. Despite their wealth of industries and communications, Hitler is more interested in destroying the British Isles than in acquiring them.

He would rather wipe out the British economic setup than capture it. He cannot hope to enslave it and exploit it as he might some African colony or some small European country. He must therefore seek to enfeeble it for as long a period as possible by demolishing its entire industrial structure.

By the same token, British aims must be to wreck German economy rather than to take it over; the memory of how a beaten Germany quickly recovered because it had the nucleus of a machine civilization and national pride is too fresh to be ignored.

The Nazis tried to capture England in line with the old pattern only because they had not yet realized the possibility of destroying it and consequently had not prepared for the task.

Without doubt they now recognize that with appropriate weapons they might have annihilated the British Isles. What they did to Rotterdam and Coventry and Belgrade they will try to do—stopped in time—to the islands as a totality.

When the skies over a nation are captured, everything below lies at the mercy of the enemy's air weapons. There is no reason why the job of annihilation should at that point be turned over to the mechanized infantry, when it can be carried out more efficiently and without opposition from overhead.

Indeed, the kind of large-scale demolition which would be looked upon as horrifying vandalism when undertaken by soldiers on the ground can be passed off as a technical preparation or "softening" when carried out by aerial bombing.

Only when the master of the skies wishes to conserve the property and the man power below for his own use or for some other reason will he normally need to take possession of the surface through employment of armies brought by land, sea, or air.

Seversky outlines some air power lessons America in The News tomorrow.

Police Exams To Be Given

Civil service examinations for jobs in the County Police Department will be given in the main assembly room of the Chamber of Commerce next Tuesday afternoon at 2 o'clock, said County Civil Service Board Chairman Victor Shaw today.

There are no vacancies in the department, but the department expects to lose seven men who plan to join the armed services.

Two types of examinations will be given. The first is for applicants for patrolman and the second is for applicants for identification officer, which includes fingerprinting.

Application forms may be obtained from County Police Headquarters in County Courthouse.

The examinations will be conducted by the Civil Service Board, which is composed of Vice-Chairman Archibald Currie, Secretary S. A. Van Every and Mr. Shaw.

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Dr. Teasdale Enters Army

Will Leave Tomorrow For Florida Air Base

Dr. L. R. Teasdale of 427 Penion Place, Charlotte eye, ear, nose and throat specialist, has accepted a commission as first lieutenant in the Army Air Corps and will leave here tomorrow for Morrison Field, West Palm Beach, Fla., to report for duty.

Since coming to Charlotte in 1939, Dr. Teasdale has taken an active part in professional and civic life here. He has been head of the Department of Otolaryngology at Memorial Hospital and has been physician in charge of the Varsity Club's Childrens Clinic. He is a member of Myers Park Presbyterian Church.

Born in Canada, Dr. Teasdale received his education at Delhousie University, Halifax, Canada. He interned in Montreal, Canada, and in England. Immediately preceding his coming to Charlotte, he was a resident physician in a hospital in Bristol, England.

Dr. Teasdale will be accompanied to West Palm Beach by Mrs. Teasdale and their two children.

Clemson Matriculates
CLEMSON, S. C.—(AP)—Clemson College freshmen were matriculating today.

Matriculation day for upper classmen is Sept. 14. Many already have arrived on the campus.

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FALL SKIRTS
\$2.98 and \$3.98

Young skirts tailored to a "4" for back-to-school wear. Choose from our large showing in plaids and solid colors. Flared and pleated styles. 7 to 14.

Girls' Fall Skirts, sizes 10 to 16
\$3.98, \$4.98, \$7.95

COTTON BLOUSES

\$1.19 and \$1.59

Dainty blouses in snowy white with colored embroidery trim. Lovely for Indian Summer wear.

RAYON BLOUSES

\$1.98

Charming blouse-companions for their back-to-school skirts. Tailored rayon blouses in all-white.

REVERSIBLE COATS

\$14.95 and \$17.95

These fair weather, rainy weather coats should be a part of every smart school girl's wardrobe. Water-repellent gabardine on one side, plaid or tweed fabric on the other. 7 to 14 and 10 to 16.

SCHOOL DRESSES

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Teacher will admire your youthful daughter when she appears in cunning fast-color frocks from our well-chosen collection. Dresses in poplins, slub broadcloths and spun rayons. Beautiful new patterns and combinations.

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