

Year of Respite

By Maj. Al Williams

THE THIN RED LINE of Royal Air Force fighting planes, holding the German air hordes at bay, is possible only because of the single year of respite won for the British by the late Neville Chamberlain.

How could the people of England, or of America for that matter, understand that a gigantic airpower had been in the making for six years on the Continent, when their loose-mouthed leaders boasted and waged a war of big words? Did they tell the Englishman of 1938 that there were only about half a dozen Supermarine Spitfire single-seater fighting planes available for immediate use? Certainly they didn't. Chamberlain didn't, either, because that would have been a disgraceful publication of just how inadequately England was armed for air war or air defense. The truth, and only part of the truth at that, comes to light from the lips of Sir Nevile Henderson, former British Ambassador to Germany, who said recently:

"The Munich Agreement had given Great Britain time to prepare for the Britain's defenses of Sept. 28, 1938, consisted of two experimental Hurricanes fighting planes and no Spitfires. (And mind you, it's the Spitfires and Hurricanes that compose that thin red line in the air over England). Further Henderson disclosed: "London's defense had seven modern anti-aircraft guns, while 400 were deemed necessary. . . . Germany could have dropped 2000 bombs a day on London and we could have given no reply."

"A Shocking State of Affairs"

The Yorkshire Post has this to say: "Henderson's allegations, if true, reveal a shocking state of affairs, considering that by that time we were supposed to have been rearming for a very considerable time."

(Ernie Pyle is en route to London)

Inside Indianapolis (And "Our Town")

THE AUTOMOBILE LICENSE plate situation is turning out to be a Grade-A headache for the Republicans. It appears, however, that the Dec. 31 deadline for buying the plates isn't going to stymie much of an official rumpus.

In recent years Governor Townsend has always extended the deadline to March 1. But not this year. Officially, the Democrats say the additional leeway for tax-payers isn't necessary because business conditions are better—besides, the law specifically says Dec. 31. Unofficially, you can bet your old 1940 plates its that \$35,000 in fees taken at the various branch offices, all headed by deserving Democrats.

The Republicans can't say much because they passed up the chance to get this fat sum back in 1939. It happened this way, in case you've forgotten: Governor Townsend asked the Legislature to make the license deadline March 1. The bill got through the Senate, which was democratic, but was kicked around in the Republican-controlled House. In the last hectic hours of the session, it got lost.

If it had only passed, the Republicans now see, the G. O. P. would have been in control of the Legislature in January, could have taken over the tag-selling business completely, and collected the gravy.

In addition, some of the organizations which favor the later deadline are hamstrung because their groups have branch offices scattered around over the State. If they protest, they'll lose their share of the spoils.

Watch Dewey Myers for 1942

RIGHT NOW, JUDGE DEWEY MEYERS is the hottest tip for the 1942 mayoral race, a Democratic

But during the time leading up to Munich, British politicians were confusing the people with loud talk, and offering the sedative of appropriations running into more billions of pounds.

Here are facts and figures and dates. The Spitfire, an eight-gun single-seater, is England's finest defense against air raiders. It is the direct result of the planes built in England for the Schneider Trophy competitions. In 1933 England won the last of these Schneider races. In 1934 the Air Ministry called for a fighting plane built on all that had been learned from the Schneider winner, the S-GB. The design of the fighter was completed in 1935, and the first ship (Spitfire) was completed and flown in June, 1936. Meanwhile the Hawker company had built another fighting plane, the Hurricane. That, too, was ready for flight in the fall of 1936.

Changes Delay Production

I saw these planes in 1936. One of each make. In 1938 I returned to England. A few sample copies of the Hurricane had been built and were being tested out in squadrons. And on the Eastleigh Airport, where my own plane was being uncaged and assembled for flights through Europe, I saw the sixth (claimed) Spitfire being tested before delivery and flown. Here, then, is the record of the Spitfire. The specifications were drawn up in 1934, it was designed and built in 1935, first Spitfire tested in 1936, and number six delivered for squadron service in 1938.

Six planes—six Spitfires—delivered in three fatal years. Six Spitfires and probably a dozen Hurricanes ready to take the air against Germany's air horde in 1938, just before Munich!

When I saw the sixth Spitfire in 1938, it was crude; it had a fixed-pitch wooden propeller, and the British were still altering it. The present Spitfire looks quite unlike the one I saw in 1938. The British were always altering and changing plane designs. And that same disease, which nullifies mass production, is now hampering our air armament program.

(Ernie Pyle is en route to London)

birdie tells us. . . . Over at the National Art Week exhibit, they've introduced bargain prices—\$29.50, \$67.50, etc. That's good business. . . . That Red Cross flag atop the Merchants' Bank building is taking an awful beating from the high winds. It already has lost several inches off the front end. . . . The Indiana Republican State Committee is getting a little touchy about that \$500,000 campaign report, and points out that almost half of it—\$225,561, to be exact—actually was turned over to the county committees and spent by them rather than by the state group. . . . Which recalls the chuckle turned up by a Democratic leader the other day: "That wasn't an election—it was an auction." . . . Seen on Ohio St.: Fred Bays, State Democratic chairman, a study in brown, pausing for a glance at the Oriental Art Store and halting again next door for a long inspection of fur coats at the Indiana Fur Co., then disappearing into a crowd.

About Telephone Books and Fish

AS IF OUR POOR officials didn't have enough to worry about, they are having mail trouble again. For instance, Mayor Sullivan found this in yesterday's stack: "Hon. Mayor: Please send me one or more pages from the latest telephone book containing names and addresses of wholesale and retail druggists in your fair City and oblige." Our latest check showed Hizzoner's phone book still intact.

But Governor-elect Schricker thinks he has that one beaten. He received a six-page letter by special delivery yesterday from a taxpayer wanting to know why there are no fish in Bean Creek. The writer said there had been no fish in Bean Creek since 1936 and demanded to know what the Conservation Department was going to do about it.

Our latest check found Mr. Schricker's secretary still trying to locate Bean Creek on the map.

By Raymond Clapper

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29.—The action of the Army in cracking down on expansion of commercial aviation production is but a taste of what may come. That is not the only place where civilian needs may have to be run onto a sidebar to clear the way for maximum defense production.

Airplanes, machine tools and steel are the three tightest bottleneck in the defense program. They are the points at which defense needs are coming into collision with civilian demands.

The Administration has delayed facing the issue. It was not the kind of question anyone wanted to raise during a political campaign. Furthermore, the partiality of civilian consumption is a step to be taken with the greatest reluctance. The Administration desires to avoid resorting to priorities at the expense of civilian life as long as possible. And there is no intention of doing it except where it must be done to save the defense program. In all other fields, maximum consumption is to be encouraged.

The aviation situation is especially acute, because it concerns not only our own defense needs, but the vital need of Britain, whose production is suffering under German air attack.

Commercial Lines Booming

For months the Army has been concerned about the amount of aviation production scheduled to go into expanding commercial airplane manufacture. Commercial air lines are booming and additional planes are much in demand. But the War Department finally moved into the situation to check the lag in military schedules, and particularly to check the development of airplane engines, which are more of a bottleneck than plane bodies are. This week the War Department laid down the policy that commercial aviation production should not be expanded further and should be confined only to that necessary to maintain existing air-line services.

Airplane engines are now being produced at the rate of 2000 a month, as against 750 a year ago. That is

By Eleanor Roosevelt

Today I am gathering up the threads of all the unfinished shopping and attending to such unpleasant details as a dental appointment.

I wonder if you feel as I do when I turn on the radio every morning to listen to the news from Berlin and London. It seems to me that those boys sent out from Germany to destroy innocent people in England, and the other boys of the R. A. F. rising from the ground in their planes, trying to drive back the invaders, must occasionally want to rebel at the destruction which it is their patriotic duty to create.

Of course, for both of them, military objectives are marked on their maps. But they know that it isn't possible to be absolutely accurate and their most moments when facing the actual results of their work must be difficult.

At least, the boys in the R. A. F. can feel that they are fighting against great odds. Just as the Spanish aviators in the Loyalist cause performed extraordinary feats, these English boys, because of the odds against them, prove their extraordinary gallantry over and over again. We, who watch them and know what their victory means to civilization, must pay them the tribute of gratitude and admiration.

After a little more shopping in the afternoon, I went to see Mrs. Samson Barlow, who is very anxious that we should do a little more effective relief work along certain lines. I hope very much that it may be possible to work it out, for when you look at the newspapers, you realize how ruthless present conditions seem to have made people in the war-torn countries.

There is hardly a ripple when one group wipes out an opposition group, so you cannot help feeling that it is necessary to keep alive the desire of people to be merciful and to help to alleviate suffering.



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My Day

NEW YORK, Thursday.—Yesterday was almost entirely given over to personal affairs. Two people joined me at 9:30 and went as far as the entrance to the building where the U. S. Committee for the Care of European Children was meeting, in order to tell me some of their difficulties in attempted aid to liberal publishers and editors in Europe today.

I tried on some clothes, practically finished my Christmas shopping (except for the inevitable last things which keep popping up) and was home at my apartment for lunch. Three of my young cousins, whom I see rather rarely, were with me for a delightful visit.

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