

THE MARCH OF WAR

THE BATTLE OF TONS

(September 1942)

MORE THAN A MILLION

THE biggest news in September came, not from the battlefields of the land, but from those of the sea, in a number of special communiqués of the German High Command. These culminated in the one which gave the total sinkings for the entire month as 161 ships, aggregating 1,011,700 tons. (Of these, 126 ships, displacing 769,200 tons, were sunk by German submarines and 35 ships, displacing 242,500 tons, by the German Luftwaffe. 14 additional ships were damaged by submarines and 8 by the Luftwaffe, but their sinking was not observed.) This brings the average figure of ships sunk per day in September to 5.37 and per day in 1942 (up to September 30) to 3.9.

Once before, in April 1941, Germany topped the figure of 1 million tons when her forces sank 1,211,000 tons of enemy shipping. But that was largely due to the unusual concentration of enemy shipping in the Battle of Crete. The September figure of more than one million carries much more weight, as practically all the ships sunk were traveling in heavily protected convoys scattered over the length and breadth of the Atlantic and its approaches.

Having no official announcements from Italy or Japan on their sinkings in September, we have used the same figures for them as in our balance sheet published in October. There can, however, be no doubt that their navies and air forces have also sunk more Allied ships since

then. While Italy and Japan have hitherto sunk far fewer Allied merchant ships than Germany, they have with their powerful high-sea fleets forced a great part of the Anglo-American navies to adhere to tasks which keep them from convoy work. The Italian Navy, for instance, has tied down large enemy forces in Gibraltar and Alexandria, and the Japanese Navy is keeping a considerable portion of the Anglo-American fleets busy in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

The 13,664,163 tons with which the Allies entered the last quarter of 1942 represent only about 36 per cent of the 36,700,000 tons which, according to our estimate (August/September issue, page 145), are the Allies' minimum for the ordinary tasks of this war.

SUBMARINES JOIN HANDS

Among the sensational news from the sea was the announcement on September 23 in both Tokyo and Berlin that a submarine of the Japanese Navy had arrived at a German U-boat base on the Atlantic coast. This visit has shown to an astonished world the enormous radius of action that a submarine has nowadays, as well as the close cooperation of the Tripartite powers and their determination to stand together until final victory.

ARCTIC GRAVEYARD

Of all the sea lanes, the Arctic supply route of the Soviet Union is, from a military point of view, the most important at present, since

BALANCE SHEET OF ALLIED TONNAGE AS PER SEPTEMBER 30, 1942

| | Tons |
|--|-------------------|
| In service on September 3, 1939..... | 38,384,000 |
| Total replacements to date..... | 8,100,000 |
| Total to date..... | 46,484,000 |
| Losses since September 3, 1939 | |
| Through action of: | Tons |
| German forces..... | 21,784,087 |
| Italian forces..... | 1,430,000 |
| Japanese forces..... | 1,805,750 |
| Through mines (approx.) .. | 2,000,000 |
| Through ordinary hazards and depreciation (approx.) | 1,800,000 |
| Ships permanently under repair (average) | 2,000,000 |
| Ships seized by Axis nations (approx.) | 2,000,000 |
| Total losses | 32,819,837 |
| Left in service on September 30, 1942 | 13,664,163 |

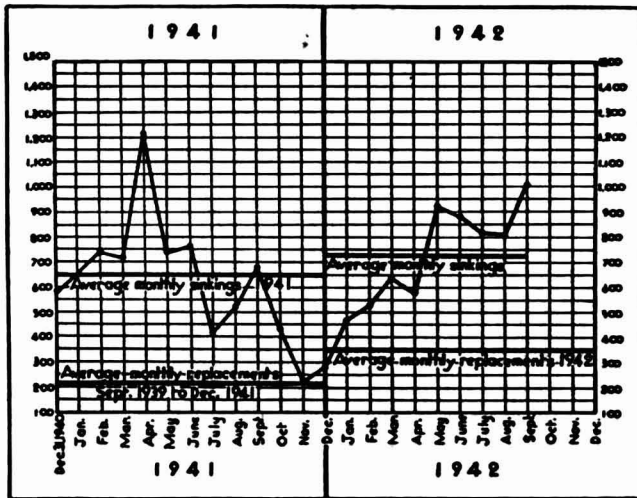
it is the only route by which quick relief can be brought to the hard-pressed Red Army. It is here that, during the last month, two devastating blows were again struck by Germany. In a battle lasting from September 13 to 18, 38 freighters (totaling 270,000 tons) and 6 protecting warships were sunk out of a very heavily protected convoy. The lion's share was taken by the Luftwaffe, which sank 25 vessels and 4 warships. This shows once again how dangerous a land-borne air fleet, manned by well-trained and courageous crews, is, not only to merchantmen but also to warships, even though they are especially heavily armed against attacks from the air. These successes were achieved in spite of very favorable conditions for the convoy. The weather was adverse to operations on the part of the German air force and submarines, and the position of the ice barrier allowed the convoy to take a course far to the north.

Along the same route, according to a German announcement of September 24, a convoy returning from the USSR and comprising more warships than freighters was attacked between Iceland and Spitsbergen and lost 5 transport vessels totaling 50,000 tons, 3 torpedo boats, and one auxiliary cruiser.

BAG OF THE MONTH

Experts have given the cup of the month to the commanders of the U-boats which sank 3 US troop transports of 19,000, 17,000, and 11,000 tons respectively, and damaged a fourth in a four-day battle in the North Atlantic. They consider this feat to be a masterpiece, as these ships were protected by a large number of warships and, moreover, were faster than the U-boats. Apparently the transports were crowded with some 13,000 troops, many of whom must have perished.

The conclusion to be drawn from the September sinkings is that the convoy system, which saved Britain in 1917, will not save her again. In this war, Roosevelt and Churchill are out to restore the old order of the world; from their defense against submarines, as well as from their whole conduct of the war, it is apparent that their old, unimaginative world is fighting with outmoded ideas and means against rejuvenated, creative, and dynamic nations. Unless the Anglo-Americans invent a new weapon against the subs, they must lose the Battle of Tons.



MONTHLY ALLIED SHIPPING LOSSES
as announced by the German High Command
(in thousands of tons)
Losses through mines not included

REPLACEMENTS

From all recent information we have been able to gather on Allied shipbuilding, it appears that the replacement figures in our calculations are higher than in reality, and that the Allied situation is even worse than we assumed. From the report on 1941 by the American Bureau of Shipping we take the following figures: in 1941, 127 ships, total-

ing 991,000 gross registered tons, were launched in the USA (somewhat under 8,000 gross registered tons a ship), and only 95 ships, totaling 750,000 tons (28 of which were tankers, started about two years ago) could be put in service. Our figure for 1941 (August/September issue, page 142) was one million tons of new construction.

From a recent edition of the English periodical, the *Shipping World*, we learn that, from the beginning of the present war up to the end of 1941, Britain built 1,750,000 gross registered tons of ships, that she hopes to build 1,200,000 tons in 1942, and that America will put 3,000,000 tons in service in 1942. If these figures of a total of 4,200,000 tons of Allied replacements in 1942 are correct, it means that the Germans alone have sunk almost that much in the first six months of this year.

In an article in the Madrid paper *Informaciones* (September 1, 1942), we are reminded

that, when the Americans speak of ships which have been launched, it does not mean that they will automatically be put in service after a normal interval, for they then still lack many parts as well as the personnel to finish their construction and later to man them.

Incidentally, we must draw our readers' attention to the fact that all our figures for sinkings or replacements are given in gross registered tons, whereas the Americans use dead-weight tons when referring to replacements. The difference is about 30 per cent. Thus if the Americans speak of 1,000,000 tons of replacements, this represents only about 700,000 gross registered tons.

EFFECTS OF SINKINGS

The shipping losses of the past three years have made a "second front" impossible; they have kept the Soviet Union insufficiently supplied; and they are the cause for further rationing of food and other commodities in Britain and America. There is a severe shortage among the Allies of essential raw materials such as rubber, tin, scrap iron, and oil. Motor traffic, so important for America, faces a breakdown. While in Germany food rations have recently been increased, Britain faces an acute shortage of foodstuffs and other daily necessities.

ADMISSIONS OF DEFEAT

"I cannot say that the sinking of U-boats has kept pace with new construction." (Winston Churchill in the House of Commons, 8.9.42, Domei, Lisbon, 8.9.42.)

"The submarine danger has by no means been solved yet. There has been a decrease of sinkings along the US east coast, but the submarines have found new hunting grounds on the high seas." (US Secretary of the

| | 1941 | | 1942 | | | |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|-------|-----------------|----------|
| | Tons | Monthly Average (in tons) | Tons | Ships | Monthly Average | |
| | | | | | in tons | in ships |
| 1st quarter | 2,038,000 | 679,333 | 1,572,900 | 247 | 524,400 | 82 |
| 2nd " | 2,825,000 | 941,666 | 2,395,200 | 704 | 798,400 | 135 |
| 3rd " | 2,080,434 | 696,811 | 2,635,700 | 414 | 878,560 | 138 |
| 4th " | 930,170 | 310,056 | | | | |
| Full year | 7,853,604 | 654,546 | 6,603,800 | 1,068 | 733,755 | 118 |

Navy Frank Knox, at a press conference in Washington, 2.9.42, TO, Lisbon, 3.9.42.)

"We go around saying, 'We can't lose the war.' How about for a change just say-

ing we are losing the war and realizing we damn well mean it?" (Assistant US Secretary of the Navy Ralph Bard, in a speech to the shipbuilding workers of the CIO, 24.9.42, Domei, Lisbon, 25.9.42.)

"Britain's situation at sea is more catastrophic today than it ever was during the last World War when German U-boats nearly brought about the defeat of Britain. Germany has sunk more shipping space than the United Nations could construct, and Germany has constructed more U-boats than the United Nations could destroy." (Lord Winster, in *Picture Post*, DNB, Geneva, 10.9.42.)

"What does it mean if a freighter of 10,000 tons is sunk by German U-boats? A 10,000-ton freighter could load 2,600,000 gallons of petrol, sufficient to supply fuel for 1,000 medium-sized tanks to cover 1,300 miles, or fuel required by 1,000 bombers for a flight of 1,300 miles, or to supply 1,000 ten-h.p. motorcars for a journey of 78,000 miles. Or 15.5 million loaves of bread of 2 pounds each could be made from the wheat carried by a 10,000-ton freighter, sufficient to supply 42,000 Tommies with a daily loaf of 2 pounds for a year." (*Picture Post*, DNB, Geneva, 10.9.42.)

JOKE OF THE MONTH

President Roosevelt's Special Envoy Wendell Willkie declared to press representatives in Ankara that in August America lost 500,000 tons of ships, and that, if they could reduce this by half and if they could double the output, the Allies would be able to make good.