

10311-0  
49/78

## EXERCISE "BULLDOG"

### FIVE NATIONS JOIN IN GIANT AIR MANOEUVRES

The scene - a bomber station somewhere in England. The speaker - a senior briefing officer; the occasion - "Operation Bulldog," biggest air manoeuvres since the war. In a setting familiar to thousands of war-time fliers, is re-enacted not a Battle of Britain - but a Battle for Britain. The objective - to try out, firstly, tactics developed since the thousand-bomber raids. Above all, to test Britain's air-striking forces against highly organised defences. And, at the back of everyone's mind is the Bomb! The startling announcement that the Russians had unravelled the secret coincided with the start of the Exercise. At Bomber Command Headquarters the progress of the Lincolns is traced. Air Marshall Sir Aubrey Elwood, the Commander-in-Chief - maps out the master plan. Under the R.A.F.'s overall command come front-line units of the other Western Union Powers and the Third U.S. Air Division, at present based somewhere in Norfolk. The American B-50s (part of the attacking force) are to play a vital role in the operation - for, with others, it is their task to evade Britain's defensive system by day. French-piloted Vampires and Dutch-manned Meteors (who are out to stop the Americans getting through) add to the Atlantic Past flavour of this giant air manoeuvre.

With the start of operations delayed by fog for nearly 18 hours, R.A.F. Lincoln Bombers join in the offensive by day, instead of night, as had been planned. Their targets are industrial towns in the Midlands and Southern England. The bombs are, of course, only dummies, but the milk chocolate - "operational rations" - is real enough.

In this heavily-guarded, underground room at Observer Corps H.Q. the attacking planes are identified and traced all along their route. It is here that the progress of the battle is followed.

Observer Corps passes the alarm to headquarters and out goes the call to fighter stations: **SCRAMBLE!**

Anti-aircraft command plays a big part and the feel of battle is realistic enough. Like the ack-ack boys, the strafing and intercepting planes are using camera guns. 20,000 feet up, the aerial battle is joined. Meteors - their cannons stacked with celluloid - film away as they swoop down on the raiding Lincolns.

American B-50s (300 mile-an-hour Superforts, of the type that dropped the Atom bomb on Japan) now join in the battle. Results will take two months to analyse. Reports from observer posts, pilots and gunners will have to be checked first. Chief lesson is the need for more jet bombers and jet night fighters - both already in production. Chief object of the Exercise remains: to perfect our defensive plans so that the bulldog may long remain only an exercise.