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NAVY'S TASK IN NORTH AFRICA.

To ports along the North African seaboard come the heavily-laden convoys bearing the necessities of war for the Allied Armies overseas. Troop transports too fill the many harbours, disembarking men at points along the thousand mile coastline. The immensity of this task is almost beyond comprehension. This is a First Army affair and does not bring into account the efforts being made for our 8th, 9th and 10th armies in the field.

By these pictures we are given some small idea of the measure of armed might being poured into North Africa. Let it be said here and now that "it is upon the Navy" - the Royal Navy and Merchant Service - that these stupendous undertakings depend. Thousands upon thousands of tons of sea-borne equipment, supplies and weapons delivered under extremes of danger and difficulty. When these great armadas are delivering their freight, they frequently become the targets of Axis attack. The perils they faced in transit are still with them at the end of their journey. Here is the aftermath of one such visit. Fire on board a merchant ship during salvage operations. Water had to be poured on the scorching decks so that the fire parties may fight the blaze at close quarters.

How the Navy, the Merchant gunners and shore batteries meet these day and night attacks is shown in these vivid pictures taken by the light of gun flashes, as another determined assault is made to bomb the harbours.

Daylight brings other planes over from enemy airfields within easy range of this port. To bomb and sink the ships before they can unload their precious cargoes is their aim, but to achieve this they have to run the gauntlet of a withering anti-aircraft fire.

A supply ship in the basin is hit, and fire has got hold of her. Naval launches and motor boats hurry to the scene to rescue the crew now clear of the blazing vessel.

Precious lives have been saved by the timely help of launches and escort ships. Smoke from the burning vessel will provide a valuable guide to the enemy for further bombing operations, so our own naval forces sink her before leaving.

With the splendid, efficient grace of warships, the escort heads out to sea to sweep the waters clear of their charges. The lurking U-boats have to be contended with. One battle merges with another.

Yes, it is upon the Navy. A famous Naval commentator once asked us (in our quiet moments-) to remember these gallant men. We will!