

BRITAIN'S DEFENCE IS HIS JOB

BY sheer hard work and imaginative daring General Sir Edmund Ironside rose to the rank of Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Now he has been given command of the home defences of Britain. No more experienced or thorough officer could have been given this important task — more important than ever because of recent developments in France. When General Ironside was given the command of Gibraltar before war broke out, it was said of him that he turned "The Rock" inside out; he will probably do the same with the defences of Britain.

General Ironside is a Scot, 60 years of age, son of a surgeon. Apart from his recognised brilliance as a soldier, he is also a brilliant linguist, speaking 16 languages fluently. He stands a solid six feet four inches in height, dislikes the fashionable world, and has written a book, "Tannenberg," which is regarded as a military classic.

Along with his pipes and his bulldog he has become Britain's No. 1 hero, a position he could never have reached had he not been a born leader of men. There have been many violent changes in his military career, each one of which was shadowed by a storm in high places. Time and again he took positions usually regarded as retiring posts, but each time General Ironside has returned to do something bigger and more important. His one passion is hunters and hunting, but on the hunting field fellow riders always cried "Here comes the tank" when Sir Edmund hove in sight astride his massive steed.

No Advantages

General Ironside has no family associations to help him in his career. He was born to be a soldier. In 1899 the Ironside legend began when he gained his commission with the Royal Artillery. His name first appeared before the public when he was mentioned in despatches for his services in the Boer War. There he mastered the Dutch dialects. The Intelligence Service claimed him, and for a time he became a Boer transport driver with German troops in their campaign in German East Africa against rebellious natives. His duty was to obtain first hand information on German tactics, and his knowledge of the German language enabled him to succeed. Then he disappeared in the British Army again.

Great War Commands

By 1914 General Ironside was a Captain, the first British officer to land in France. His name became prominent in despatches. By 1916 he was a Brigadier-General wearing the D.S.O. He was given a Brigade of Canadians because of his habit of speaking his mind. The Canadians were unruly and it was predicted that they would break his heart. "Big Bill" Ironside became the idol of his men.

In 1918 he was given the heart-breaking job of leading an Allied force to Archangel, in North Russia, to prevent a German break to the Arctic. Ironside was made a Major-General; he found

himself up against Bolshevik propaganda with a collection of British, French, American, Chinese, and other troops. Morale was running low. Ironside harangued his men in various languages, learned Russian dialects and withdrew his troops successfully to receive a Knighthood and other honours. An equally famous feat was his next command—the troops of the Ismid Force at Constantinople. Here he had to deal with Turks, Greeks, Bolsheviks, and the intrigues of Turkey, and prevented the



GENERAL IRONSIDE

Russians from gaining control of the Bosphorous. Once again General Ironside succeeded.

His next feat of arms was his command of the North Persian Force in 1920, when he superintended their withdrawal from the Caucasus and Mesopotamia. While doing so he put a Persian officer, Reza Khan, in command of a Persian cavalry division. That man is now Reza Shah of Persia and sits on the Peacock Throne at Teheran. During this chapter of his life General Ironside had both thighs broken in an aeroplane smash.

Lieutenant of the Tower

In 1922, at the age of 42, he took over command of the Camberley Staff College. Four years later he became a General, commanding the troops at Meerut, India. When, three years later, he was made Lieutenant of the Tower of London, everyone said he was finished. Not he! In 1936 he was given command of the British Forces in the Middle East, returning to take over a key position—Chief of the Eastern Command, which includes the defence of London. In 1933

he was given command of Gibraltar—and really made it impregnable; then returned to England again to become Inspector General of Overseas Forces. When war broke out he replaced General Lord Gort as Chief of the Imperial Staff, while Gort took command in the field.

These facts emerge from General Ironside's career: He is experienced on more battle fronts than any other British officer, for he has commanded men in France, in the Arctic, the Near East, and in India; he is a veteran of diplomatic struggles; he has dealt with men and the political intrigues of early Soviet Russia, the Turkey of Kemal Pasha's early régime, and the buffer states of the Middle East; his experience is enriched by a knowledge of the languages of all the people with whom he has dealt. Moreover he has proved himself an accomplished lecturer. In 1936, without notes, he held his audiences spellbound when he lectured at the London University. He is one of the few men who is at ease with French generals because he

knows their language so well. This, then, is the man now in command of the defences of Britain against a possible attack.

Centre of Carpet Trade

Beauvais, where fierce fighting was reported last week, has been famous for its carpets and tapestries, particularly the Gobelin tapestries, since 1664. Today there are large factories for the production of shawls, carpets, cotton and wool. Among its fine buildings is the unfinished cathedral, which was begun in 1225. The choir, 153 feet in height, is one of the finest specimens of Gothic architecture in France. When Beauvais was besieged by Charles the Bold of Burgundy in 1472, the women of the town, led by Jeanne Hachette, displayed remarkable valour. When the Burgundian banner was planted on the walls of the town Jeanne Hachette tore it down. Every year, the young girls of Beauvais bear the banner through the town in a procession in honour of that heroine.

DEATH OF A HERO

Flying-Officer Kain Killed In Accident

NEW ZEALAND'S first air ace of this war, Flying Officer Edgar Kain, D.F.C., mentioned in despatches, has been killed in an accident while on active service in France. Since he fought his first air battle on his 21st birthday, November 8,

New Zealander. Messages expressing deep regret and sympathy have been sent from all quarters to Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Kain, the young aviator's parents, who live in Wellington. Mrs. Kain, accompanied by her daughter, left some weeks ago for England to visit her son, who



his career has been meteoric. Just before his death he had been credited with bringing down more than 40 German machines. In one fight he engaged, single-handed, six Messerschmitts, shot one down in flames and forced another to the ground although one of his own wing-tips had been shot away and his engine damaged. That was only one example of the courage and audacity of this daring young

was, to have been married this month. A public tribute to Flying Officer Kain was paid by the Prime Minister, Hon. P. Fraser, and newspapers throughout the Empire, France and America have published articles in honour of his courage and work. In the above photograph, taken in March, Flying Officer Kain (right) is seen talking with a sergeant pilot just after he made one of his gallant flights over enemy territory.