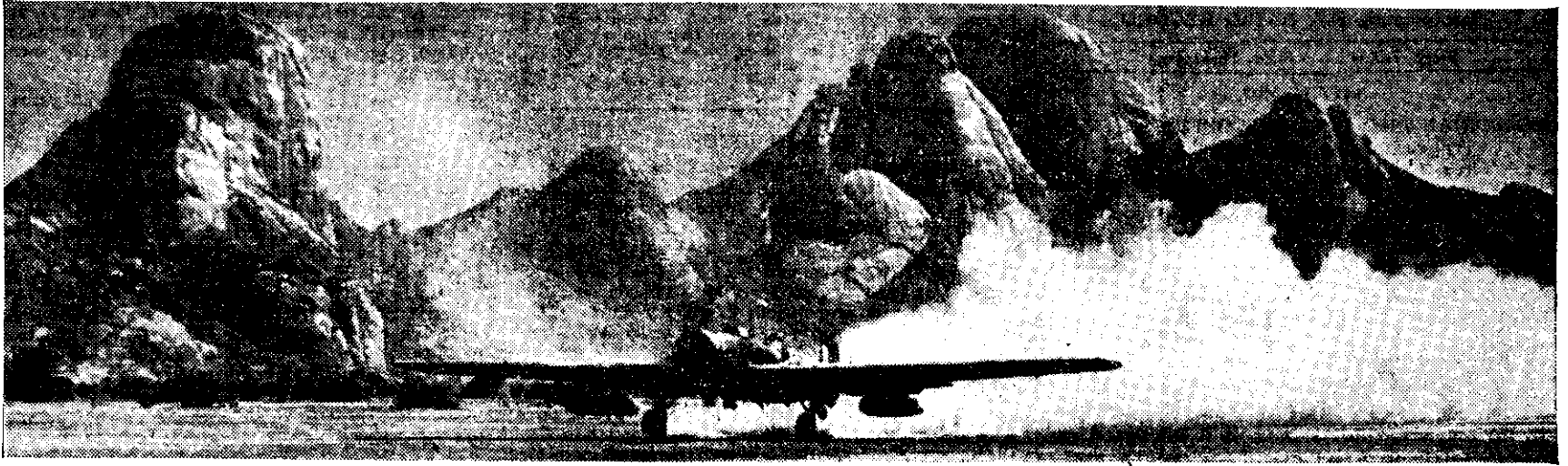# WAR DIARY

A BRITISH AIRCRAFT taking off from a typical aerodrome in East Africa

HISTORY AS IT HAPPENS

Thursday, May 1

The great bulk of the British and Anzac forces after fighting heroically in Greece, were safely evacuated from open beaches by the Navy and Merchant Navy. In the House of Commons, Mr. Churchill said 60,000 British troops had been in Greece and 80 per cent evacuated.

President Roosevelt ordered the immediate pooling of two million tons of merchant shipping to aid the democracies. From this pool, Britain will draw to replace tonnage.

R.A.F. bombed Kiel, Berlin, Hamburg, Emden and Mannheim.

Friday, May 2

Evacuation of the Empire Forces from Greece was reported to be completed. Forty-three thousand got away, and there were 500 casualties at sea.

Every piece of serviceable equipment left behind in Greece was destroyed.

An enemy attack was begun on Tobruk.

Lord Beaverbrook was appointed Minister of State and Colonel Moore-Brabazon appointed Minister of Aircraft Production.

The U.S. Maritime Commission placed 50 American tankers at the service of Britain.

Saturday & Sunday, May 3 & 4

The war in the Middle East flared up in a new and threatening theatre with a Nazi-inspired revolt in Iraq. The new Iraq Government, under Rashid Ali, protested at the arrival of further British troops, and their artillery opened fire on the British aerodrome at Habbaniyah.

British troops were marching on Bagdad from three directions.

After several days fighting, the Italian and German attack on Tobruk broke through the outer perimeter, and was then held up.

Battered Merseyside suffered its third successive heavy night raid.

Twenty-six American merchant ships, heavily loaded with arms and munitions, arrived at the Suez Canal.

Monday, May 5

Further British troops landed at Iraq, and tribes in northern Iraq rallied to Britain.

German bombers heavily attacked Belfast.

In a speech to the Reichstag, Hitler minimised German losses in the Balkans.

The German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau at Brest suffered direct hits from the R.A.F.

Tuesday, May 6

Major-General Freyberg was appointed commander-in-chief of the Allied forces on Crete, where the New Zealand Division was taken.

President Roosevelt directed the Secretary for War to increase the production of heavy bombers with all possible speed.

Wednesday, May 7

The U.S. Secretary for War, Mr. Stimson, in a nation-wide broadcast, advocated the use of the Navy to safeguard shipments of supplies to Britain. He warned Germany that America would not flinch.

The Emperor, Haile Selassie, entered Addis Ababa on the anniversary of the entry five years ago of the Italians.

The debate on the war situation was opened in the House of Commons by Anthony Eden.
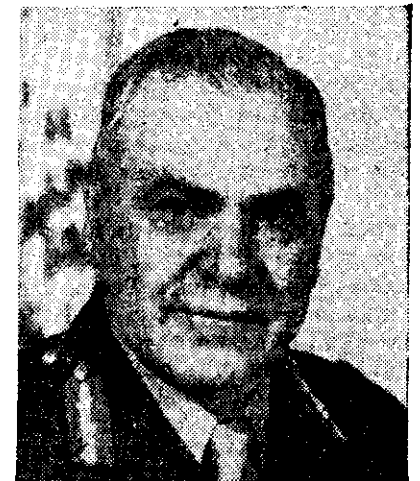
WAVELL'S DEPUTY
Sir Thomas Blamey's Career

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR THOMAS BLAMEY, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., the first General Officer Commanding selected for the 2nd A.I.F. and recently appointed Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, under General Sir Archibald Wavell, revealed himself in the Great War as a soldier with both brains and initiative. It is sometimes wrongly thought that he is an "office soldier," his brilliant record as Chief of Staff to General Sir John Monash having to an extent overshadowed his earlier service. As intelligence officer on the staff of Sir W. T. Bridges in 1915, however, he proved himself on Gallipoli both courageous and resourceful, and steady-handed on night patrols when it was necessary to shoot.

Like many other Australian officers, General Blamey was originally a schoolteacher. In 1906 he was appointed to the permanent forces, and before the outbreak of war in 1914 he had passed through the Staff College, Quetta, India, served with various regiments on the North-West Frontier, and travelled in the Balkans and Middle East. He was attached to a territorial division in England in August, 1914, when he was summoned by cable to join General Bridges in Egypt.

Several decorations came to him during the war, but the greatest recognition was not made until some years after, when his chief, General Sir John Monash, published his volume "Australian Victories in France in 1918." Sir John Monash reproduced in his book the battle orders drafted by General Blamey:

"Some day the orders which he drafted for the long series of history-making military operations upon which we collaborated, will become a model for Staff Colleges and Schools for Military Instruction," wrote Sir John Monash. "He possessed a mind cultured far above the

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR THOMAS BLAMEY

average, widely informed, alert, prehensile. A Staff College graduate, but not, on that account, a pedant, he was thoroughly versed in the technique of staff work and in the minutiae of all procedure. . . . Blamey was a man of inexhaustible industry and accepted every task with placid readiness. Nothing was ever too much trouble."

Such is the man who commanded the Australian Army Corps in the Middle East, and is second in command under General Wavell.