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CHEMISTS

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# PROUD THAT I WAS ONCE NORWEGIAN

(Written for "The Listener" by ANTON VOGT)

THE Norwegians were a nation of C.O.'s. We hadn't had a war for over 100 years. We were too civilised. But it takes two to keep a peace. When on April 8, 1940, the Norwegian Government heard that foreign warships were steaming into Norwegian waters, they weren't sure whether they were German or British. For some hours it seemed likely that we would be at war with both powers. But they were German all right. And

so were the bombers that came over, without declaration. And, of course, the merchantmen, who were spread out along the entire coastline — with Nazi soldiers under the hatches. Norway was C.O. for as long as it took to find that out.

The resulting campaign was a miracle of endurance. Unprepared, she fought for 62 days on her own soil against overwhelming odds. It was longer than Poland, France, or the Netherlands could hold out. And Hitler's losses were stupendous. Germany lost 65,000 men (more than Norway's entire fighting force), one third of her entire navy, over 300 'planes (more than had been lost over England up to that time), as well as hundreds of tanks and armoured cars, and such quantities of ammunition as Norway had never dreamed of possessing. And this was due almost entirely to the resistance put up by the Norwegians themselves.

## First Shots

The first shots were fired at the mouth of the Oslofjord, just before midnight on April 8, 1940. A small Norwegian patrol boat sighted a large German squadron, headed by the Gneisenau (27,000 tons), and the Blucher. The patrol boat opened fire. The Germans sank her immediately with a murderous volley, and her Commander, Welding Olsen, rolled himself over with both legs shot off. The war had begun.

Then followed a rush mobilisation, with the well-prepared Nazis striking simultaneously at all important points, cutting communications, bombing from the air, and issuing false messages from captured Radio Oslo. Quislingite activity was infinitesimal. There was no betrayal from within. It was David and Goliath, with Goliath armed. Norway was doomed.

But the heroism of the people was legendary. Armies without ammunition pelted the Nazis with stones. In North Oslo, three bus drivers drove themselves over a precipice one after the other, taking 40 Nazi victims each. The Germans drove their own lorries after that.

We have been well informed in this country of the progress of the campaign. The Government was forced to flee: acting on the advice of Parliament, hastily summoned at Elverum. All I

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BBC photograph  
H.R.H. PRINCE OLAV of Norway, broadcasting to Norway from a BBC studio on the occasion of the Norwegian Students' celebrations

## Leaders of the Empire

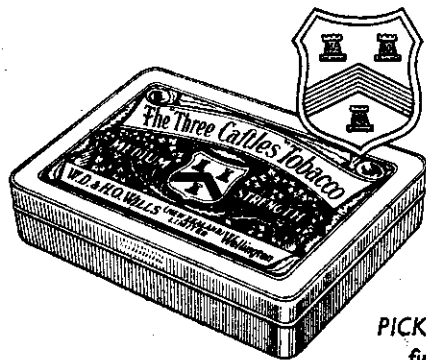
### Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal

Served in the 1914-18 War, first as despatch rider, then with Royal Flying Corps; awarded D.S.O. and Bar, and M.C. Has held posts of Director of Organisation in the Air Ministry, Member of the Air Council; Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Bomber Command; and now holds the supreme position of Chief of the Air Staff.



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★ THIS IS the Variety Orchestra, conducted by Henry Rudolph and featuring Rosaleen Hickmot (at extreme left), as vocalist, which provided bright music at the recent NBS concert at Trentham military camp. Organised by M. A. Rickard and produced by Bernard Beeby, it was held in Trentham's Y.M.C.A. theatre before a big audience of troops. Members of the NBS staff and several well known Wellington artists contributed to the programme. Part of the concert, which was the first of a series, was relayed by 2YA