

FIVE MEN OF DESTINY

IN the hands of five men may rest the destiny of the Pacific and the homes and lives and safety of the people of New Zealand, not-so-distant outpost in a new and hugely-spread battle zone.

Sir Archibald Wavell, 58 years of age, known to the army as "Silent Archie" and described by Allenby as "the best British officer of the Great War," is supreme commander of the allied forces in the South Western Pacific. Admiral Thomas Charles Hart of the U.S. Navy, wiry, efficient veteran of three wars, is in command of all naval forces. Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek, who has measured his strength with the Japanese since 1937 and knows them better than any other one man in the East, will lead all land and air forces in China. Major-General George Howard Brett, chief of the United States Air Corps, and with more than 30 years' experience in aviation, is deputy to Wavell. General Sir Henry Pownall, one of the most brilliant of the younger generals in the British army, is now General Wavell's chief of staff.

SUPREME COMMANDER

ONE thing will long be remembered to Wavell's credit as a student of military affairs. When brass hats were sneering at the Soviets' ambitiously conceived Red Army, "Archie" Wavell took a year's leave from the British Army, went to Moscow, learned Russian, and made a close study of the Red Army. He was one of the first foreigners to admire the revolutionary technique of the Russian parachute troops.

Wavell could have been nothing but a professional soldier; it runs thick in his blood. He is the third general in three generations; his son is with the Black Watch Regiment; even his three daughters are in military work, and one is nicknamed "Trooper." He is a product of the Boer War and the North-west Frontier, fought the Turks with General Sir Philip Chetwode, and was a staff officer with Allenby, from whom he learned many lessons about desert mobility and about whom he has written a masterly biography.

Solely on his military talents, Wavell has been judged one of the military minds of this war. There are other, more intimate qualities, however, which reveal his strength as a leader. First, he is quietly efficient—efficient in details of organisation which he knows mean more to the rank and file than broad policy. He does a full day's job of work, rising at six, lunching briefly, and flying tire-

lessly to and from every corner of his command.

He is sociable but not social, and quotes Hotspur's speech about popinjay staff officers who shine so brisk and smell so sweet, and talk so like a waiting gentlewoman of guns and drums and wounds. His approach to war is practical and intellectual at the same time. In 1916 he summed up a vital phase of desert combat in a few words: "In pursuit you must always stretch possibilities to the limit. Troops having beaten the enemy will want to rest. They must be given as objectives not those that you think they will reach, but the farthest that they could possibly reach."

Wavell has been summed up as a student of speed. He knows its advantages ("Speed is armour") and its dis-

advantages. When he was told that a breach of regulations, he exploded, "If I couldn't see, how the hell could the flagship at the end of the line." He was officially rebuked and unofficially applauded.

Tommy Hart has, in fact, a peppery temper and a salty tongue. He is at war for the third time. The first was as



CHIANG KAI-SHEK

advantages ("Speed is an expensive commodity: in battleships, motor cars, race-horses, and women, a comparatively small increase in speed may double the price of the article.") Perhaps most important of all in a job so all embracing as the one he has been given, he is a reader and a thinker and not just a military machine. (A portrait of General Wavell appears on our cover.)

DISLIKES RED TAPE

ADMIRAL TOMMY HART, who as commander of our naval forces has direct charge of all Allied fleets in the Pacific, down to the smallest corvette in New Zealand waters, is not a man to be balked by red tape or rules. It is told of him that once, when he was captain of the battleship Mississippi, he was leading eleven other battleships in a pea-soup fog when he heard a destroyer's warning siren somewhere off his bow. Without consulting his fleet commander, he ordered the line to stop. When he was hauled up on the carpet for such a



ADMIRAL TOMMY HART

21-year-old midshipman in the Spanish-American war, when he was just out of Annapolis Naval Academy. (He had not distinguished himself particularly at Annapolis, graduating 13th out of a class which included, however, seven future admirals.) During the Great War he commanded two divisions of United States submarines operating with the British from bases in Ireland.

Following his submarine experience he was made, in 1931, Superintendent of the Naval Academy, and given the rank of Rear-Admiral and the nickname of "Turtleneck." Then he was given a division of cruisers to look after, then appointed chairman of the Navy's General Board. In July, 1939, he was made Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet, assuming the full rank of Admiral and permanent residence in a suite of rooms at the Manila Hotel, not far from the Cavite naval base. According to precedent, he should have retired last year when he reached the age of 64, but his experience and irascible courage made him invaluable, and he was retained.

ON A VITAL FRONT

CHINA IS NOT the least important theatre in the war against Japan, and it is not too fantastic a stretch of military terminology to say that one of New Zealand's most vital fronts is the struggling irregular line which represents the limit of Japanese occupation in China. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, charged



GENERAL SIR HENRY POWNALL, Wavell's chief-of-staff, has been Chief of the General Staff, B.E.F., Inspector-General of the Home Guard, Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and commander-in-chief in the Far East during the present war. The Far East appointment was in succession to Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, and he arrived in Singapore only at Christmas. He started his military career as an artillery officer, and commanded a battery during some of the fiercest fighting in France during the last war. He has been described as "rugged, handsome, and with a humorous twinkle in his eye."

now with the command of all land and air forces on behalf of the Allies in this theatre of war, has no doubt about the outcome. Eighteen months ago, when his fortunes seemed at a low ebb, he complacently observed to Edgar Snow (*Red Star over China, Scorched Earth*): "Japan has already suffered a spiritual defeat. Without the necessary spiritual foundations, operations cannot succeed. Because her spiritual foundations are incorrect Japan cannot win."

Chiang, who wields greater power over China's 450 millions than any Emperor of the past, was an inconspicuous, struggling officer until he met the pretty and talented Miss Soong Mei-Ling, youngest daughter of the rich Christian, Americanised Soong family. His marriage made him, posthumously, a son-in-law of the great Sun Yat-sen, father of the Chinese Republic, whom he had supported ably and ardently in the Chinese revolution of 1910.

Shortly after the Great War, Chiang went to Moscow, where, although he was no lover of Communism, he conceived a great admiration for the methods and strategy of the Red Army. Between 1927 and 1937 Chiang was political top-dog and commander-in-chief in China, but was still little more than a "war lord on the way up." On the eve of Japanese aggression, however, he made a truce with the Communists and set out to build a unified front against the invaders. When, within little more than a year, China's greatest cities fell, he fled with his wife, to Chungking, beyond the Yangtze gorges, there to dig in, and with limited help from the outside world, fight back.



MAJOR-GENERAL G. H. BRETT, who is deputy supreme commander, previously held the post of Chief of the United States Air Corps. He served with the Philippine Scouts, but transferred to aviation in 1916. A first-rate tactician, he has a good reputation in American staff colleges. As Chief of the Air Corps, he recently toured Great Britain and the Middle East, gaining first-hand information about modern air war.