



At Sea, 19th February, 1944.

Number 8

THERE AT LAST

By the time this issue is in troops' hands we shall almost have reached our destination and, "Down the Hatch," will have come to the end of its comparatively short, but, we hope, useful life. The troops generally have done us the honour of welcoming our various issues, encouraging the belief that we have been able to provide helpful information and to contribute some relief from the monotony of the voyage. We, in turn, have derived much pleasure from the small service that we have been able to render. It only remains for us to extend our best wishes to those on board for their success in the task which we know them so well fitted to accomplish.

ADEN

Kipling wrote of "old Aden, like a barrack-stove that ain't been used for years and years." But a place where Noah is said to have built his ark, and where cisterns built in Sheba's time collect water from the hill-sides when it rains (twice or three times a year) cannot be dismissed so lightly.

The town itself is in a crater of a volcano that erupted eighty years ago and covered the soil with lava. Apart from Sheba's cisterns, there are Artesian wells providing plenty of water.

The native craft, called yarugs, are no different from those used in biblical times, and are built without metal nails or screws.

The hinterland of 9,000 square miles, is a protectorate administered from Bombay, and Indian currency is used.

Troops stationed at Aden play all the major sports except rugby, boxing and skiing. The two former are too strenuous for the climate.

The population consists of white troops and officials, Arabs, Somalis, and natives of Aden, who were originally a mixture of Arab and Somali, but have developed into a special type with their own way of life.

The entrance to the Red Sea is called "Bab-el, Mandeb" - Gateway of Tears. Aden is said to hold the tomb of Cain. Beer is scarce.

H.W.G.

NEWS BREVITIES

RUSSIA The steam-roller advance of the Red Army, down the Estonian Border, continues. Now threatened is the German-held strongpoint of PSKOV. Russian strategy has forced the Germans to abandon their fortress-town of STARAYA RUSSA which looked like becoming another "Stalingrad."

The remnants of the ten German divisions in the Dneiper bend have surrendered. A big Russian advance in this sector can now be expected. Holding this small pocket in the Dneiper bend, cost the Germans 100,000 troops.

PACIFIC American landings in the Marshall and Caroline Islands are important and bold steps on the road to Tokio. With the occupation of Green Island by American and New Zealand troops the campaign in the Solomon Islands is virtually finished. The Allied air offensive against Jap bases in New Ireland, New Britain, and New Guinea is taking big toll of enemy shipping and air forces.

ITALY German attacks against British troops in the ANZIO area have reached new ferocity but so far our troops have held them.