

# GLIDING INTO ACTION

## Offensive Operation Value of Britain's Engineless Aircraft

By Squadron-Leader JOHN MACADAM,

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**W**ITH THE introduction to modern warfare of the towed engineless aircraft, the extension of the use of the transport aircraft, and the parachute, ground forces have been given a mobility and speed of movement that would have been ridiculed less than a decade ago.

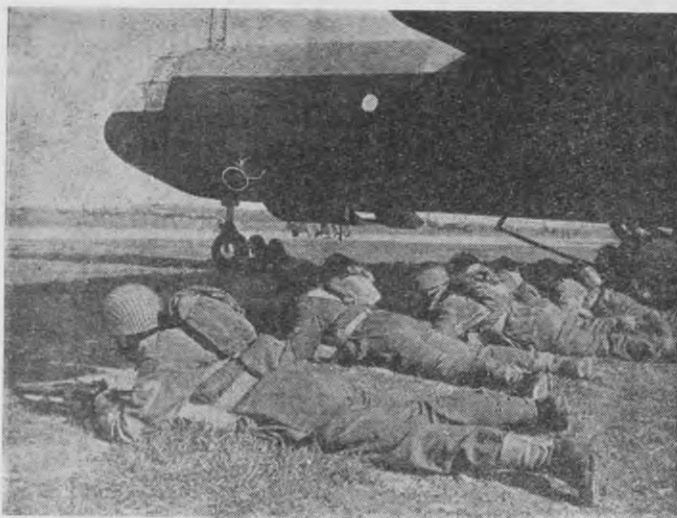
By the use of navigational aids, modern aircraft flying from Britain—or other Allied bases—are able to find their way to targets that would have been closed to them less than two years ago, and, once over that target, the so-called glider and the low-level parachute enable them to place troops within a few yards of their pin-pointed objective, armed with light or heavy equipment, as the situation demands.

That is a very large contribution to the scientific planning of a modern battle and Allied tacticians are thoroughly aware of the potentialities of the new weapon. It is true that sometimes Jules Verne claims have been made for gliders that are fancifully pictured as being towed in low trains at tremendous distance from their objective, on which they swoop in utter silence and then disgorge anything from a battalion of the Guards to a Mountain Brigade.

### Gliders Aren't so Flimsy

The facts are less exotic, more compelling. In the first place the large up-to-date glider is not really a glider at all. It is no sensitively-controlled creature sniffing out helpful currents of air on which to dart and swim like a bird in flight. It is a heavy business-like piece of solid wood and fabric whose main business is to be towed over a target with a certain load, and, when over that target, to get down on it with the greatest possible speed.

To this end it begins to lose height as soon as it is released by the towing aircraft, gets its nose down on its target at a terrifying angle, hurtles earthwards, straightens out at the appropriate



Under the shadow of a Horsa's wing. Army air-borne troops mount guard whilst the glider is unloaded.