

ROYAL NAVY TRIUMPHANT.

717

~~The British Navy is triumphant even in defeat,~~ for what victory could be more glorious than the defeat of ~~that~~ one armed merchantman sailing full speed ahead to give battle to a German battleship? But for the action of the captain, officers and crew of the Jervis Bay a whole convoy of 38 ships must have been sunk by the Nazi raider. As a result of their great gallantry, almost the whole convoy was saved. ~~There are no words to convey the awe we feel in the presence of such great courage. Every man in the ship knew that he went to meet almost certain death. No action in this or any other war can ever surpass their great heroism.~~

From the loss in the Atlantic we may now turn to great victories in the Mediterranean. A British submarine and British light forces acting independently met two Italian supply convoys. The submarine destroyed one supply ships and damaged the other. The light forces sank three supply ships out of four—set fire to the fourth and damaged an escorting destroyer.... crippling ~~many~~ blows to Mussolini's hopes of reinforcing his adventure in Greece.

Now for Taranto; ^{to} the much-boasted Italian Navy, though superior in numbers ~~to~~ Britain's Mediterranean Fleet, stayed in its bases under the protection of shore batteries. But the Fleet Air Arm went in to that great, safe Gulf of Taranto and dug it up ——— using aerial torpedoes like a winkle pin.

No praise can be too high for the work of the Fleet Air Arm, working under the offensive command of the Mediterranean C.-in-C., Admiral Cunningham.

We can reconstruct something of that ^{great} ~~victory~~ victory from the time the Navy's ^{wayplane} left the aircraft carriers ~~Illustrious~~ and ~~Exe~~ Eagle. Charged with one of the most difficult and dangerous jobs in all modern warfare, the planes used were probably Blackburn Skuas, accompanied by Swordfish which carry the devastating aerial torpedo. ~~The damage and sinking of the Italian Navy resulted in the Italian Navy losing half its battle fleet overnight. Two battleships crippled, another severely damaged. Two cruisers heavily hit and two auxiliaries with decks awash.~~ ^{lost} Once again --- it's a way they have in the Navy.

Just as a tit-bit to round off a day of triumph, the Royal Air Force took a hand at home. Italian bombers and fighters attempted a mass raid on Britain --- and these are some of the pilots of the Hurricanes that shot them down. ^{made a home} And ~~these~~ ^{these} awesome of the Italian airmen who came over --- and came down.

Eighteen bombers escorted by about sixty fighters came to Britain to celebrate Armistice Day. Unfortunately for them, two Hurricane squadrons decided to celebrate with them. Without loss to themselves, the Fighter Command of the R.A.F. shot down thirteen in fifteen minutes. For some extraordinary reason, the Italians brought over a collection of junk --- tin hats, bayonets and even cheese and wine. But the R.A.F. had the party.

(3)

717