

44-9 2-725001

"KEEP 'EM FLYING" GENERAL ARNOLD.

A familiar sight in the daylight sky over Britain. Forts of the 8th U.S. Air Force returning from missions over Europe. Many a battle-damaged bomber has to force-land away from its home base, after struggling back across the Channell with engines shot away; flak, cannon and rocket-shell holes testifying to the fierce air battles which have gone on during the raid. Miracles of piloting have held them aloft until the last minute, when a potato field or grazing land has taken the impact of a belly-flopping B.17. At this point the 8th Air Force Service Command and Mobile Repair Unit takes over. Rushed to the scene of the wreck, the service men set to work. Where a Fortress has scraped home with its undercarriage out of commission, they insert pressure bags under the engine nacelles. The British system of balloon bag jacking which can raise a 30,000 lb bomber with only seven pounds of air pressure.

New engines may be installed; wing sections fitted; structural damage doctored. The ground crew's motto is "Keep 'em flying". A replacement leading edge is swung into position.

Here's another case where a bomber is returning with a ruined undercarriage. The crew has received its crash-landing instructions and the pilot brings her in for a perfect touch-down without wheels.

The crew steps out to survey the damage. The initial impact was taken by the props. The steel blades are bent back like toes with cramp.

Swift on the job come the repair men; ~~ke~~ jacking up and assessing the work necessary to have the Fortress on her feet again.

For this casualty they use tractor trollies; mobile caterpillars which will enable the bomber to be towed away for repair. Service Command Engineers are the Red Cross men of the aircraft.