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# Esquire

• THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN



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Edited  
by  
ARNOLD GINGRICH

# Esquire

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

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Use of any person's name in fiction, semi-fictional articles or humorous features is to be regarded as a coincidence and not as the responsibility of Esquire. It is never done knowingly.

### On that which is forever England

This issue contains one especially significant article. It is the one about the Coldstream Guards, by Pakenham and Bellah, beginning on page 67. We urge you to read it. In it there is one especially significant sentence. We urge you to read that sentence twice. In fact, to heighten the chances of your doing so, we will give it to you right here, so you can read it now before you even turn to page 67:

"A war is only a passing incident in the History of the Coldstream Guards."

That sentence goes far, we think, to explain why Hitler can never hope to beat the British Empire. The British can be knocked down, but not out.

At mid-September, as this is written, London is being bombed savagely, the invasion attempt that has so long been expected daily is now expected hourly, and the papers and the loudspeakers are filled with expert explanations of the almost utter hopelessness of Britain's effort to catch up with the Germans after granting them a seven-years' head start.

But what almost everybody seems to have forgotten, in preoccupation with the horror of this obviously awful moment, is that other larger hopelessness—the hopelessness of any German effort at this late date to catch up with the British after their head start of almost seven hundred years.

Hitler has the mastery of Europe now. Whether he adds to it the mastery of John Bull's own little island is not, in the long run, particularly important. What is important, and what seems to have been forgotten in the general anxiety over the outcome of the Battle of Britain, is that a man can be Europe's master and still be the world's prisoner.

England's Empire is world wide. Let the Empire stand and England itself cannot fall beyond hope of rising again. In other words, England could lose the Battle of Britain, that is raging as this is written, and still win the Battle of the Empire that has not yet begun.

That's why there's as much truth as there is monotony in that time-tattered bromide to the effect that "England always loses every battle but the last one."

An American, tired of being told that same thing after Norway, and the fall of the Low Countries and Dunkirk, and the Battle of France, stopped one Englishman in the middle of that same old phrase,

with "Yeah, but what if you should lose the last one?"

The Englishman, who had obviously never thought of that, pondered it a moment without batting an eyebrow, and then with the air of explaining something to a not quite bright child said, "Well, you see, in such a case we'd simply have to go on with the dreary business until we came at last to a battle that we could win."

Throughout this past summer most Americans have hoped and wished that England might win, without really believing that she could, or at least without being able to see how.

They keep talking about England's back being to the wall. How could England ever hope to win back all that lost ground, even supposing for the sake of argument that she could hold off the Germans in the Battle of Britain? How, they want to know, could she ever get in, to drive the Germans back down out of Norway and back up out of France and Belgium and Holland?

Well, the answer to that one is easy. She couldn't. For England has even less chance, we should think, of beating the Germans now, militarily, than they have now or before or ever again of beating her economically.

But fortunately for England and for us, she doesn't have to.

That's the big point, that is unaffected by bombs on Buckingham Palace or anywhere else in the Island. England doesn't have to get into Europe again, to win this war. But Hitler has to get out. And battering Britain itself from now till doomsday would not alone be enough to turn that trick.

Duff Cooper realized that, when he went on the air during the depth of the darkest day in the Battle of Flanders, and reminded Englishmen everywhere that Hitler had to win that battle, whereas England could lose that one, and many more, and still win the war. Of course, Duff Cooper was speaking propaganda but it was good propaganda. It was the best. The truth.

Churchill knew it too, when he spoke on that other even blacker day, after the Battle of France had ended and the Battle of Britain seemed about to begin. He could offer nothing but blood and tears and toil and sweat, he said. But he must have done so knowing that they would be enough.

Put it this way. Europe is a cage that once held a lot of animals and now holds only the gorged tiger Hitler and his jackal bone-picker, Mussolini.

England is the clawed keeper, locked in the cage. But the bars of the cage are the British Empire. And the key to the cage is the British Navy. Eating up the keeper would not, of itself, be enough to melt the bars or pick the lock.

All of this seems to have led us far from our starting point, which was merely to recommend to your attention Messrs. Pakenham and Bellah's article on the Coldstream Guards. Yet perhaps we have not really digressed at all. For our next point was going to be an explanation of why that article was written, to the leitmotif of "men die but the regiment lives on," after the vanishing of all European fronts on which English soldiers might see action, and put to press at a time when most people seem to feel that England's own days are numbered. And maybe all we've said above has advanced, however indirectly, toward that point.

For our point in printing this article now is just this. If, as we believe it will be, England is still standing up to Hitler by the time this sees print, then this story of the Coldstream Guards will make excellent reading as a sidelight on British morale, and hence as an explanation of why England was still standing firm long after many experts had finished the count over British hopes. But if, by what we believe to be both remote and unhappy chance, England should have lost the Battle of Britain by the time this appears, then we feel that the article will make even better reading, as a contribution to the understanding of British morale, that intangible thing by which, soon or late, the British have always won their wars and will, we firmly believe, win this one, however often they may appear to lose it in the meantime.

Morale may be better cited than defined. We are reminded, for instance, of a cartoon from *Sketch*, reproduced in a recent issue of *News Review*, showing a golfer of the Colonel Blimp type at the nineteenth hole in a monologue to this effect:

"There I was, sir, on the third green with this dashed difficult putt to make, when this blasted German plane swoops down and begins splattering bombs all over the place. By gad, sir, d'you know, I very nearly missed it!"

We've often said, and we now say again, that those people can't be beaten. Partly because they wouldn't know it if, temporarily, they were. But read the Pakenham-Bellah article on page 67 for a fuller explanation of the sort of thing we mean.

