



War Posters from Britain

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Article Summary: Berry describes new additions to the Society's collection of World War II posters, comparing British and American examples.

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"NEVER WAS SO MUCH
OWED BY SO MANY
TO SO FEW"



BOYS OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

War Posters from Britain

MYRTLE D. BERRY

The Historical Society's ever increasing collection of posters of World War II was enriched recently by an assortment of some forty items from the British Information Service in New York. The Society deeply appreciates this gift and also the receipt of pamphlets and other material from the same source.

It is interesting to compare the British posters with our own. For the most part they are much smaller, reflecting the shortage of paper in England. And, on the whole, they are more factual, less symbolic. This is shown by such captions as "British Tank Attack in the Western Desert," "British Battleship's Big Guns," "War Supplies for Russia—Lorries on the Persian Route," and "Great British Convoy Sailing into Murmansk."

Other posters in the collection feature the women's auxiliary services, war savings, careless talk, steel scrap, the blackout and—the Royal Air Force.

It was the R. A. F. which, nearly three years ago, captured the imagination of America. And now looking at the young English faces of the pilots depicted in these posters, one is thrilled anew. Here too, are Winston Churchill's immortal words, "Never was so much owed by so many to so few."

In connection with the current War Bond drive in Lincoln there is displayed on the lawn of the City Hall a British Spitfire with a placard describing it as the plane which saved England.

The first thought which comes is, "Such a little thing to have done so infinitely much." For in those terrible days of 1940 the brave young pilots of the R. A. F. saved not England only, but the world. With incredible courage and skill these British boys fought in the inferno above Dunkirk to make possible that soul-thrilling rescue. And later, with their tiny Spitfires in the skies over burning London, they won the Battle of Britain. The tragedy is that so very many died without knowing if their sacrifice had counted; without knowing if the White Cliffs of Dover still stood inviolate.

There have been and will be many great feats of arms in this war, but the epic miracles of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain can never be surpassed.