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## PLANES FOR THE MIDDLE EAST.

This story has a pre-war opening. At a place on the West Coast of Africa a large area of swampland was reclaimed to build an aerodrome. It was to form part of the chain of landing grounds for the expansion of civil aviation. The war overtook its construction and its significance took on a new meaning. From 1940 onwards British Overseas Airways made good use of it but it was when shiploads of British Fighter planes began arriving at a nearby harbour that the onetime wasteland became an important link in the business of war. Big transport lorries laden with crated aircraft lumbered towards the aerodrome which now had its own anti-aircraft defence. Where once tropical life abounded, there came the rumble of machinery and other strange sounds of "Civilisation". A curious blending of progress and the primitive.

It is only now, as we see these Hurricanes leaving their packing cases, that we come to learn what part this jungle airport is playing in the war. At this far distant spot on the map, fighter planes are assembled and got ready for trans-continental flight to the battlefields in the Middle East.

Many of the local lads are willing helpers, not only on the crates, but with the fire-fighting teams. When the time comes for an aerial convoy to take wing, the Hurricanes form up under the leadership of a Blenheim whose navigator is responsible for ~~xxxxxx~~ ensuring that the formation finds its way safely over the African Bush. Throttles are opened up and away they go on their way eastwards,

Extra fuel tanks are fitted for the trip which takes them hundreds of miles over inhospitable country, where a forced landing would mean "curtains" for pilot and plane.

The skyway across Africa is sending reinforcements for the R.A.F.