

from water is full of air, and that makes condensing difficult; air-pumps and so on. Ammonia was tried a long time ago and other true fluids, but the mechanical difficulties were too great. Then Janes struck on a true fluid that answered the purpose.

"And then came war.

"You don't want to hear about it? Well, we had a Labour Government, and the Army and Air Force became less than nothing, and the Navy was rather down at the heel, and the Empire was on the verge of breaking up. So a pushing Island People made a snatch at Australia and the islands in the Pacific. The League of Nations? That for practical purposes was the British Empire and America, and the enemy tackled both. Fortunately, our Navy had about twenty ten-thousand horse-power flying-boats. I joined up at once and saw the only fleet action.

"Remember the comic Russian with the aerial torpedo they were experimenting with in 1917? Right idea, but wrong principle. Wouldn't work. The gunnery sharks took the idea, pulled it about, worried it, and produced the flying bomb. I believe Sperry tried it in 1915. They produced ton bombs with wings. Each boat carried two.

"We ran into the enemy in force. While the warships were piling on the heavy stuff we unloaded from ten thousand feet. The bombs glided a mile and a half for every thousand feet we were up. They were balanced by a gyroscope and steered by wireless. We nose-dived them into the lightly-protected decks and made rather a wreck of the enemy. What was left of him was bottled up in his ports.

"Then we went after them. We'd let go from twenty miles out and the bombs would sail over boom and harbour defences. The surface ships had no chance. When we were finished you could have bought the Navies of the world for a song.

"The enemy was a stiff-necked and brave people, so we had to smash up a few of his coast towns before he surrendered. Aeroplanes? They hadn't got our speed, and if they had got at us we could have settled them with our one-inch quick-firers before they could have got close enough to get home. Anti-aircraft guns? We always unloaded too far away for them to touch us. You see, we didn't have to pass over the target.

"And that was what put flying-boats on their feet. The whole of the British Navy is now in the air. It's a fine sight to see a destroyer flotilla.

"The bigger the boats got, the faster they were. Scale effect. Stream-line 'em better and save weight in the hull. No trouble getting off or on, there's lots of water. Fog? No more dangerous to us than it is to surface ships. The Wireless Navigator tells us where we are to within a mile. And if the