

**COPYRIGHT, 1941,
NEA SERVICE, INC.**

By HAROLD GRAY



MALTA, lying 140 miles from the Italian mainland and 180 from Africa, is Britain's naval base in the middle Mediterranean. It is a British bulwark between Gibraltar on the west and Alexandria and Suez on the east.

Since 1798, when England seized the island from Napoleon, Malta has been under British control. It is a British Crown Colony consisting of three islands, Malta, Gozo and Comino. The government issued the stamp above, showing the important harbor at Valletta, in 1901.

Lord Nelson, who captured the island, said: "Malta is absolutely worthless as a British naval base." Until the myth of Italian military strength was exploded in World War II, Malta was considered hopelessly vulnerable by the British. The proximity of the island to Italy along with the vaunted Italian air arm were thought to be too severe handicaps for the British defenders.

Italy has boxed in the island fortress by mines and subjected it to repeated air attack without much success.

"A man, when I get off your bus don't let me forget
have three packages, two suitcases and a husband!"