TEDDER

Quietly in Command

VINCENT ORANGE

University of Canterbury
Christchurch, New Zealand

Foreword by
WILLIAMSON MURRAY

FRANK CASS
LONDON • PORTLAND, OR

TEDDER

Frontispiece: Tedder sent this pencil sketch, made in Jerusalem in March 1942, to his wife Rosalinde in England. 'It's rather your more tired and serious face', she thought: 'not your scintillating self – though I'm not sure that it isn't the best portrait you have had.' Portrait in pencil by Sir Arthur Robitschek, Jerusalem 1942. [Family]

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Foreword

One of the most surprising aspects of the massive literature on the Second World War is the fact that until now there has been no scholarly, readable and intelligent biography of one of the most important British military figures in the war, Arthur Tedder. In this outstanding biography, Vincent Orange has filled that need in every respect. Through diligent research, a deep understanding of the history of the war, and a sense of the importance of air power, he has provided the huge reading public interested in that greatest of all conflicts with a definitive biography of a great airman and a great joint commander, who exercised an important part in the winning of the war.

Arthur Tedder did not have a particularly outstanding career in the First World War. He was certainly not a great ace, but he learned and grew and absorbed the emerging lessons of that terrible conflict. By combining wonderful leadership skills with a thorough understanding of the importance of skillful management, Tedder became one of a truly modern military figure in the second great war. Far more quickly than the other commanders in the Middle East, Tedder mastered the supply and maintenance aspects of modern war. He also developed capabilities and attitudes in the Royal Air Force that made that service's efforts in the Mediterranean truly joint, but at the same time fully capable of utilizing air power's range and combat power to the maximum extent possible, given the resources available. Unfortunately, not until the arrival of Montgomery in the theater was Britain's Desert Army capable of taking full advantage of what the RAF could contribute to the joint battle.

The organization for air–land cooperation that Tedder created in the Middle East the served as the model for how the Anglo-American allies would eventual integrate air and land not only in the Tunisian and Italian campaigns, but the European Theater of Operations. Dwight Eisenhower, the other great combined and joint commander in Europe, would

eventually pick Tedder as his deputy for Operation *Overlord*. In that capacity Tedder would prove a true Allied commander, willing to criticize the performance of his own nation's military forces as well as the Americans, the latter a penchant of all too many British commanders, who had nothing but praise for their own forces.

In the end, Tedder was a great military figure because he was so modern. He understood the technological and scientific basis of modern war as well as the necessity for a complex support structure to support combat operations. He was in every respect a great man. And now, in this wonderful biography, he has received his due. Vincent Orange has told a story that has long needed to be told. As such, this book represents a major contribution to the historiography of the Second World War.

Williamson Murray
Professor Emeritus, Ohio State University

Series Editor's Preface

At a time when an Anglo-American-Australian coalition has once again fought a war in the Middle East, and in doing so re-learnt many of the lessons of alliance warfare, it is entirely appropriate that a new study of one of the most practised British proponents of the art should appear. In these pages Vincent Orange provides historians and the general reader alike with a detailed and scholarly account of one of the most influential British military figures of the Second World War: one who had the ear of the most powerful soldier in the Western alliance, and who could, if he chose to, unleash on a target the fearsome power of several thousand strategic bombers. Yet, despite his manifest achievements, the name of Arthur Tedder is little known other than to military historians and students of air power.

He was an unusual officer far outside the normal mould for senior military figures. He was physically small, modest, of quiet demeanour, and not much given to the sort of boisterous behaviour so beloved of airmen in both fiction and reality. He was also something of an intellectual, with a Cambridge degree and a serious historical study of the Royal Navy in the Restoration period to his name. For relaxation he liked to play the piano, sketch, or simply smoke his much-loved pipe. These characteristics were far from typical for a senior officer in the Royal Air Force at the time, and some might have been considered positively disadvantageous. Despite this, Tedder rose to the highest rank in the service, became Chief of the Air Staff, and ended his days as a member of the House of Lords. His elevation was the result of a shrewd and analytical mind combined with a courageous and determined character. His leadership was based on professional knowledge and competence, allied to a capacity to talk on the same level to anyone, be they air marshal or corporal, soldier or sailor, American or Scot. This, allied with a willingness to listen, a natural humanity, and a character almost devoid of obvious showmanship, produced an unusual amalgam ideally suited

to leadership in a coalition era, whether as the senior airmen in a tri-service command structure in Egypt, or as Deputy Supreme Commander to the equally determined but diplomatic Dwight Eisenhower during Operation *Overlord*.

Tedder's quiet approach did not always instantly impress, however, and, as Vincent Orange shows, when linked with his sometimes perverse sense of humour, occasionally led to his making enemies. Some could have been fatal to his career, notably Lord Beaverbrook, whose extrovert style coupled to his own lack of knowledge and unwillingness to listen led to serious disagreements with Tedder. Beaverbrook undoubtedly sought to damage Tedder's prospects with Churchill, and might well have succeeded had Tedder not enjoyed consistent and determined support from Sir Charles Portal and Sir Wilfrid Freeman, the two most senior airmen in the wartime Air Ministry. Tedder's survival and subsequent ascent owed much to Freeman, and Churchill was later to admit that he had been wrong in believing what he had been told by others. Had Tedder not been protected and promoted against the whims of politicians by more senior officers with the will and position to do so his career might have stalled, with incalculable consequences for the conduct of the war.

As the author points out, when Eisenhower (no mean judge of character and ability) still believed that General Marshall and not he would be the supreme commander for Operation *Overlord*, he nevertheless advised his superior in Washington that Tedder was the only man, British or American, with sufficient stature and understanding of both strategic and tactical air power to act as senior airman for the invasion of Europe.

In fact, the rather bizarre air command structure for *Overlord* reflected the fact that an airman with those qualities of tact and leadership was needed to impose the judgements of a Solomon on the forceful strategic commanders, Carl Spaatz and Arthur Harris, and the pompous and narrowly focused Trafford Leigh-Mallory. Tedder did not disappoint in this regard, and he almost certainly was the only Allied airman capable of bringing both the senior strategic commanders into line, and doing so in such a way as to retain their respect. It is worth noting the comment quoted by Harris's most recent biographer that he believed the brief period when he served under Eisenhower and Tedder was the only time in his three-and-a-half years at Bomber Command that the control of his bomber forces from higher up showed a proper unity of purpose and direction (see H. A. Probert, *Bomber Harris: His Life and Times*, Greenhill Books, London, 2001, p. 303).

As Vincent Orange so shrewdly observes, many of the problems experienced by Tedder and Eisenhower stemmed from the unfortunate

attitude to both (displaying arrogance and ignorance in equal measure) shown by the senior echelons of the British Army, notably Sir Alan Brooke and Montgomery. This was not simply a matter of excessive pride or inter-service rivalry souring personal relations, but extended to Montgomery's deliberately misleading the RAF about his real strategic intentions. It was this attitude, when added to resentment of Montgomery's earlier unwillingness to share with the RAF the credit for his desert victories, which underlay Tedder's determined efforts to have Montgomery removed from his command. Yet it was more than simple pique and aggravation which led him to this judgement. As this study reveals, Tedder had a better understanding than either Brooke or Montgomery of the strategic problems facing Eisenhower, and supported his superior against the British generals and Churchill over matters such as the Anvil landings. Tedder's deep understanding of the *alliance* strategy, land as well as air, for the north-west Europe campaign also reinforced his concerns over the damage that Montgomery's more vainglorious preachings could do to the internal cohesion of the coalition. Here, he was sadly very quickly proved right, and there are many lessons and echoes for today, when Western coalitions again face internal and external pressures which can all too easily fracture them.

Tedder was in many ways the perfect coalition commander. He was not only acutely aware of the need for sensitivity in all matters when conducting coalition warfare, whether relations with the press or relations with other Allied commanders, but he was also adept at achieving his military objectives within such a framework. He did so in such a way as to ensure he got most of what he wanted without causing dissension, and frequently against the previously expressed preferences of those with whom he had to deal. He accurately assessed the contributions each form of military power could make to the overall war effort, and would resist parochial interests whenever they arose, irrespective of whether they were those of airmen or soldiers. This did not always endear him to others, and his unwavering support of Eisenhower's strategy certainly upset the senior echelons of the British Army. Yet Tedder, who at the start of the war had been a rather obscure two-star officer, was by war's end capable of holding his own both with senior soldiers and airmen and with statesmen of the stature of Churchill and Stalin. He was not overawed by such powerful personalities, and was perfectly capable of operating in a political milieu when required; a capacity which stood him in good stead not only during the war, but afterwards when he became Chief of the Air Staff and, subsequently, on his appointment to the British Military Mission in Washington at the height of the Cold War.

Those who read this book will discover a commander who can be held

up as a model for a modern senior officer. Intelligent, articulate, courageous, tactful and largely free from the parochial single-service concerns which so often cripple commanders once they leave the narrow confines of their own service, Tedder proved himself able to operate at the highest level in an international coalition. His contribution to the successful use of air power at every level from the tactical to the strategic stands comparison with any of his contemporaries. He and Eisenhower proved themselves the ideal leadership pairing in the most complex and difficult coalition war ever fought, and they epitomise the effectiveness of a school of leadership which eschewed the flamboyance shown by others in favour of a quieter and more thoughtful approach.

That Tedder was indeed one of the most thoughtful of airmen is shown by his own writings. In particular his autobiography, typically entitled *With Prejudice,* and his Lees Knowles lectures on war, delivered at his old *alma mater*, Cambridge. Yet perhaps his most impressive thinking was produced in the autumn of 1944, when he put forward his proposals for the use of Allied air power, and most especially the awesome power of the strategic bomber forces. His conceptualisation of a campaign which utilised all Allied air power against a variety of 'common denominator' targets deserves to be known far more widely than it is. It is in many ways the intellectual precursor of much modern thinking on air power. This intelligent study of Tedder's methods and achievements may perhaps bring his achievements to a wider audience, and should certainly be required reading for any of today's commanders, of whichever service, as they strive to understand the complexities of joint and coalition warfare in the modern era.

Sebastian Cox
Series Editor

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I most warmly thank Lord Tedder's daughter Mina, who introduced me to the wonderful Fife Peninsula, took me to her father's birthplace – Glenguin (now Glengoyne) distillery – and shared her memories as well as her papers, photographs and pictures with me. I corresponded with her brother John, who was prevented by long illness and untimely death from completing his own account of Lord Tedder's life, but Mina introduced me to John's widow, Peggy, who gave me access to his notes and her memories. She also put me in touch with her son Robin: he has transported the name Glenguin to New South Wales (where he makes wine, not whisky) and was helpful and encouraging. Not least must I thank Richard – Lord Tedder's son by Toppy, his second wife – for essential contributions to this biography and the opportunity to roam round an ancient Kentish house.

The Tedders made it possible for me to tap into the memories and

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PART I

1890 TO 1914: RISING

1

A Boy of Philosophical Calm, Artistic and Fanciful

From Glenguin to Croydon, July 1890 to July 1909

Arthur William Tedder was born at Glenguin (now Glengoyne), a distillery about 20 miles north of Glasgow, on 11 July 1890. The name Tedder, he thought, was a corruption of Tudor. 'Henry Tedder the Eighth', he told his first biographer, 'is an ancestor we don't care to mention'.[1] Tedder's known ancestors were sober, hard-working smallholders and shopkeepers from Stanstead in Essex.[2] His grandfather, William Henry, married Elizabeth Ferris in 1849, moved to London, became a prosperous grocer in South Kensington, and then moved on to Ripley, east of Woking in Surrey, in 1861. Between 1850 and 1871, they produced 11 children (seven boys, four girls), ten of whom survived infancy, though only four married.[3]

Their first child, Henry Richard, rapidly rose from grocer's son to gentleman status and would play a significant part in his famous nephew's life. Educated privately in England and later in France, Henry was employed during 1873–74 to organise Lord Acton's immense collection of books into a library. Acton, general editor of the *Cambridge Modern History* volumes, then recommended Henry to the Athenaeum, an exclusive London club. He remained there for the rest of his career, as librarian and secretary, although 'it was never a secret that he preferred his bookshelves to his kitchen accounts'.[4] His portrait still hangs in the club's hall. 'I had very good personal reasons for being grateful to my uncle', wrote Tedder in March 1965, 'for the pressure he brought to bear on my parents to send me up to Magdalene College, Cambridge, to take a History Degree (incidentally, dead against the advice of my Headmaster).'[5]

The second child of William and Elizabeth was Tedder's father,

Arthur John. Like Henry, Arthur was educated privately in England and France. He joined the Inland Revenue Department in 1871 and rose high. In 1906, he became Chief Inspector, Excise, and in February 1908 appeared as an expert witness before a Royal Commission set up to determine what materials and processes might lawfully be used to make whisky and other spirits. He strongly supported the grain distillers' arguments, and in 1950 the Distillers' Company remembered his 'helpful and conciliatory' services by appointing his son a director. Arthur was knighted in July 1909; appointed Chief Inspector, Customs and Excise, a year later, and served as Commissioner from 1911 to 1918. On retirement, he was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath.[6]

Arthur went on holiday to the Channel Islands with brother Henry in 1875 and there met a cousin, Emily Charlotte Bryson, whom he married in August 1877. They had three children: Henry John (known as Harry, born in January 1879), Margaret Elizabeth (January 1882) and – an afterthought – Arthur William in July 1890. A small woman, Emily 'aimed at a perfection which wasn't always attainable', in her daughter Margaret's careful words. Tedder himself was blunter. 'She was a martinet in every sense of the word', he recalled in 1951, 'and at times ridiculously fussy.' His father 'was more human. At least he had a human side to him, though I hear that officially in the Civil Service he could be a tough opponent.'

In November 1890, Tedder's parents moved to Edinburgh; then, in 1894, the excise service sent them to Lerwick in the Shetland Islands. Their home, 'Braeside', overlooked the harbour and young Tedder spent many hours gazing down on fishing vessels of every size and type.

Late in 1898, the Tedders moved 190 miles south to Elgin, near the Moray coast, where Arthur attended the academy. He returned to Elgin in May 1961 to attend the opening of the Scottish Malt Distillers' new offices and gladly accepted an invitation to visit his old school. He impressed everyone with his 'unassuming disposition', his old raincoat and his readiness to gossip with all and sundry, though he refused to make a formal speech.[7]

During 1901, the Tedders made an even longer move south – of some 460 miles – to Croydon, south of London, and in January 1902 Arthur began his career at Whitgift School. One boy remembered his arrival causing 'a mild stir', for he had an almost unintelligible Scottish accent and wore a kilt: 'the first we could take in our stride, but the latter, I am afraid, caused much juvenile ribaldry, which Tedder took in perfectly good part and with philosophical calm'.[8]

Until 1912, when he fell in love, Tedder regularly wrote long letters – often illustrated with tiny, neat sketches – to his parents and to Margaret. After 1912, they were less frequent, but never ceased and were

rarely perfunctory. In all his letters, he revealed a talent for describing places and people, often with humour or irony, as well as a profound interest in the changing lights and vivid colours of open country: an interest typical of a natural artist and keen photographer. He also told his family more than they may have wished to know about rugby matches, cross-country runs and the numerous 'war games' played by the Officers' Training Corps (OTC).

Tedder spent more than seven years at Whitgift: until July 1909, when he was 19 and a senior prefect. He had two seasons of first-XV rugby, and competed well both in arduous cross-country races and on the track, where he almost broke five minutes for the mile. He rose from private in the prestigious OTC to the coveted rank of 'cyclist-sergeant' – the social equivalent of regular army cavalry – and became an accomplished shot. He was also a competent actor in male and female parts; a prominent member of the literary and debating society; a careful librarian; a diligent editor of the school magazine (the *Whitgiftian*); a clever cartoonist; and an occasional poet. Taught by his mother and encouraged by his sister, he played the piano moderately well – though never to his own satisfaction. According to one school contemporary, he 'was the sort of boy one couldn't tell a dirty story in front of. Not that he was "pi" [pious], mind you – but he was very serious.'[9]

Many public-school boys of Tedder's generation, 'unwilling to lose caste by adopting jobs in industry, commerce and trade', expected to make their fortunes overseas, somewhere in the British Empire. He would be strongly influenced both by their example and by a post-Boer War enthusiasm for military training.[10] Hundreds of Whitgift boys joined the OTC and more than 250 would be killed during the Great War; among them, seven of the 14 boys who left school when Tedder did.[11]

Tedder acquired a telescope in 1906 and developed a life-long interest in astronomy and its practical offspring, navigation: an interest that would always be valuable (and sometimes vital) during his aviation career. In a letter to Margaret in February 1907 he advised her to 'look out for Mercury this week immediately after sunset, half way between Venus and the place where the sun sets'. All five of the major planets would be above the horizon at the same time this week, he enthused, and with a pair of field-glasses 'you should be able to see the *disk* of Jupiter just now, as it is at opposition and is at its nearest to us'.

Tedder loved to be out of doors: cycling, running, walking and, not least, scrambling through bushes and streams, often in darkness, on military exercises with the school cadets that were supposed to be realistic and were certainly fiercely competitive. *The Times* commended

a good performance at Aldershot in March 1907 and, not surprisingly, the *Whitgiftian* described it at length.[12] Tedder's first published work, an account of camping out, appeared in the *Whitgiftian* in November 1907. 'I may say', he concluded, 'that the ten days I spent in camp were by far the most enjoyable days I have ever had – I should have liked a week more of it – and I am sure that the rest of the Whitgift detachment will bear me out.'[13]

Fortunately, Tedder could also find satisfaction indoors and during November and December 1907 became deeply involved on both sides of the footlights. He played Dangle in Sheridan's *The Critic* and Prince Hal in scenes from *Henry IV*, *Part 1* and assisted a professional – Percy Vernon – in the rehearsals, staging and costuming of both productions. Vernon was greatly impressed by Tedder's management skills – 'What a capital little man of business you are!' – and the school's critic was equally impressed by his playing of two such contrasting roles.[14] He also spoke regularly in school debates, most notably to *oppose* a motion on 10 February 1908 'That this House is in favour of the extension of the suffrage to women'; his side won the debate handsomely.[15]

In December 1908, Tedder went scholarship hunting to Cambridge. 'As far as I know', he told his father, 'I have not come any bad croppers'; sadly, the examiners did not agree and Tedder's further education depended on his parents and uncle Henry. His school career ended in July 1909, on a day of military exercises amid 'much applause', as the *Whitgiftian* recorded, for 'the amazing evolutions of the Cyclists, under Cyclist-Sergeant Tedder, who dodged hurdles, brushwood, small boys and one another in a most graceful manner, as though they had been born on wheels'. Later, he took part in the 'Balaclava Mêlée', an event showing that 'sword engagement on cycles would do much to lighten modern warfare'. His side lost: 'while Sergeant Tedder, their last survivor, was bravely engaging with three opponents, Private Bond deftly removed his plume from the rear and finished the engagement'.[16] Tedder organised the events, which made a profit of nearly £15, and his reward would be a Certificate A, qualifying him for a highly prized commission in the supplementary reserve of officers.

2

An Amiable Chap, with Many Interests but Few Achievements

Cambridge, October 1909 to June 1912

Tedder went up to Magdalene College, Cambridge, in October 1909, to read History. One of the poorest and smallest colleges (only 90 undergraduates in 1909), Magdalene nevertheless offered two advantages from which Tedder benefited greatly. One was a tradition, as the Master told freshmen on 12 October, 'that everyone should know everyone else, and there should be no cliques'; the other was the teaching – and better still, the guidance and affection – he received from A. C. Benson and F. R. Salter throughout his four years there.

Benson belonged to a distinguished family that had made a deep impression on British religious, educational, literary and theatrical life.[1] He was elected a Fellow in 1904 and during the next 20 years was largely responsible – as Fellow, President and Master – for transforming the college, financially and academically.[2] As for Salter, he was elected a Fellow in 1910, Tedder's first year. Three years older, he quickly became a friend as well as an academic guide. 'Salter is a most excellent fellow', he told Margaret in November 1909: 'one of his ancestors helped to chop off Charles I's only head … and, above all, he asked me to lunch last Tuesday. A very good lunch too, which I was all the better able to appreciate since I usually lunch off bread, water and blackberry jam.' At Salter's urging, Tedder joined the Liberal Club, but needed no persuading to join the Officers' Training Corps (OTC). An excellent shot, he would get a rifle club going during his second year. The Master, already pleased to learn of Tedder's enthusiasm for the OTC and sport, was equally pleased to learn that he was a nephew of the Athenaeum's highly regarded secretary, and Uncle Henry, who helped to finance

Tedder at Magdalene, always took the keenest interest in such academic progress as his happy life there permitted.

Tedder began to attend lectures on 15 October 1909. The first, on constitutional history, given by an eminent historian, J. R. Tanner, was 'very good, a lot in it and very interesting', he told his parents; he was less impressed by Tanner's habit of pausing, after reading an allegedly amusing passage from a contemporary document, to invite applause; later, he was even less impressed on perceiving, when Tanner discussed Oliver Cromwell, that he was 'a hopeless old Tory'. Tedder also attended his first debate in the Union, on a major issue of the day: the opposition of many peers to Lloyd George's 'People's Budget'. As a devout Liberal, he thought the result 'most excellent': 168–152 against the Lords.

Tedder enjoyed cross-country running even more than debates: 'across plough unlimited, turnip and potato fields, over huge ditches, through horribly prickly hedges … two or three farmyards and twice through the river … we had over a dozen water jumps of different sizes to do. A number of men went into some of them and howled at the cold.' Military exercises – even in darkness over the same difficult country – were just as exhilarating. 'We were attacking a bridge on the Cam', he told his parents in November 1909, 'and were intended to rush it and hold it from the other side while the engineers mined it and then re-cross it and retire to let it blow up.' Even though 'the enemy' discovered their intentions, 'a headlong rush' brought victory to Tedder's men and the bridge was duly 'blown up'.

The thought seems never to have crossed Tedder's mind that the denial of a university education to Margaret – now in her late twenties – had been unjust, although her parents gave her opportunities to travel in France and Germany. A generation later, Tedder's own sons went to university, but his daughter did not. In 1909, he at once followed the male herd in disparaging, even in letters to Margaret, the 'damsels of Girton and Newnham', who 'all look like out-of-work servant girls'. They were not, he smugly observed, '*bona fide* members of the varsity', and therefore he felt able to join in the cheering and foot-stamping that greeted any who happened to arrive late for lectures.

When at rest from athletic or quasi-military activity, Tedder relished endless conversation (over tea in rooms, rather than over beer in pubs) about Life and its Meaning. He enjoyed mainstream classical music and was in the audience on 30 November 1909 when Vaughan Williams' now-famous incidental music to accompany a production in Greek of Aristophanes' play, *The Wasps*, was first heard.

Tedder's other non-athletic interests included college architecture, paintings and especially astronomy. The gradual re-appearance of Halley's

Comet between September 1909 and its spectacular departure at the end of May 1910 enthralled him, and he often advised his parents and sister how best to observe it. Pressed by Salter, he agreed in January 1910 to trudge about the Cambridgeshire countryside to get the Liberal vote out in the general election. Their man got in, but the experience purged him of any enthusiasm for political canvassing.

Tedder's most demanding academic tasks were weekly essays for Benson and Salter. These had nothing directly to do with his degree course and were intended merely to exercise his brain and pen. For example, Salter gave him 'a beast of a subject': the Domesday Book. 'He told me I could write anything I liked about it so long as I did not do too much! I have let him off with eight closely-written pages.' The essays in this and subsequent years are all short on facts and long on elegant expression, with many examples of his liking for irony and gentle mockery. One of these, he confessed to Margaret, contained the word 'spank', and of another which impressed Benson he commented: 'I thought it started with a platitude, ended with one, and had a platitude for its main point.'

On 31 December 1909, Benson wrote to Tedder's father for the first time.[3] He had been discussing the progress of 'your boy' (then in his 20th year) with Salter. 'He is cautious in statement', they agreed, 'but one finds that he knows more rather than less of a subject than he allows at first to appear.' Three months later, on 29 March 1910, Benson reported again. 'What I like about his work', he wrote, 'is his independence of judgement and his caution in argument and statement, unless he knows his ground.' He got on cheerfully with everyone, 'though I do not think he cares about too large a circle'. Benson's third report followed on 3 July, at the end of Tedder's first year. 'He is a thoroughly nice fellow in all ways: modest, pleasant, sensible. He seems to me to be much more thoughtful than many men of his age, anxious to form a real opinion of his own and to do it by carefully weighing the pros and cons.'

During these years, Tedder was strictly teetotal and spent money sparingly – at least, he thought he did – except on such necessities of life as pipe tobacco (an addiction for the rest of his life), and was therefore surprised to discover that his income stretched little further than that of wilder students. He readily joined in student 'exuberance' on festive occasions. The celebration of Guy Fawkes Night on 5 November 1910 got sufficiently out of hand to be reported in the local press and he described it for Margaret, but not for his parents. It was all 'harmless and quite good-humoured', thought Tedder, except when some 'townee roughs' got involved and deserved 'a little more boot on various occasions'.

By December 1910, Tedder's 'philosophical calm' (first observed at Whitgift) was recognised at Magdalene when he was elected as chairman and secretary of a committee to consider various kitchen grievances that were sharply dividing the student body. 'The humour of my position', he told his parents, 'lies in the fact that I am really of neither party, being on absolutely excellent terms with even the extremists on both sides.' By arranging to have the grievances discussed, openly and calmly, Tedder helped to end the rift.

Literate essays, physical activity, a pleasant personality and an upright character do not, alas, a degree course make, and by April 1911 Salter had raised the spectre of a personal coach to help Tedder through his forthcoming examinations. Disregarding their son's protests, Tedder's parents hired one and Tedder admitted in May that he was 'being a great help, I think', though 'rather a nuisance in making me buy books which I have always made a point of getting from the library or borrowing before.' Academic fears, though growing, did not prevent Tedder from taking part in a display of student 'exuberance' that caused all trains out of Cambridge to be delayed for nearly an hour. Not surprisingly, then, Tedder became 'horribly afraid' that he would 'come a bad cropper' in his examinations. The coach, 'a very uninspiring person', was pumping various facts into him twice a week, 'but they are mere drops from the ocean of things unknown. I shall have to trust to luck and keep my pen at work.' As it happened, Tedder's result was moderate: 2nd-class Honours (Division 2) in Part I of the History Tripos.

Tedder turned 21 in July 1911 and began to think about a career. In September he decided to go in for the consular service. On 10 October, however, Benson noted in his diary that he was being 'very tiresome – he wants to leave Cambridge soon – not to go on "pottering" – so he tells Salter one thing and me another and his father another … I sent for him and said we were quite ready to meet his wishes, in a reasonable way, if only he would say what they are.'[4] His courses for the year were settled on the 14th, after a flurry of letters between Sir Arthur, Benson and Tedder himself, who apologised to his father for 'thoughtless and ungentlemanly' conduct: it is 'my disgusting temper, coupled with the over-keen desire I have to finish with preparation and start *doing* something, that has caused an outburst on my part that I shall always from the bottom of my heart regret'.

His remorse at what was in fact a mild outburst was all the keener because he already prided himself on his ability to argue calmly and cogently, especially on paper. The upshot – as his father, Benson and Salter all advised – was that he should complete his BA at the end of the current year, by taking the History Tripos Part II, and then spend a

fourth year in residence, studying German and visiting that country, to prepare himself for the consular examination.[5]

Tedder's resolve to study harder in his third year quickly withered, as he confessed to his parents on 7 November 1911: 'I seem to be incapable of doing any solid work – four hours sitting down in front of books produces about half an hour's work.' At a low moment he opened his heart, most untypically, to his mother: 'I'm afraid I shall never reach what you and Father wish me to be – what Harry [his elder brother, who died in India aged only 27] was – I only wish I could, I'd give anything to be like that; that is and always will be my ideal, but like all ideals, out of reach.' He sensed 'a great change, a revolution' going on in him and urged her not to be so anxious about him: 'I will not disgrace you and I will do my utmost not to disappoint you.'

During the early months of 1912 it became clear to Benson, to Tedder's parents and also to a somewhat chastened Tedder that another personal coach must be provided if he hoped to equal even the modest academic performance of 1911. Although Benson reported as positively as ever to Sir Arthur on the various merits of 'your boy' in April, he was obliged to admit that 'he doesn't always put his back into it – and he is often very much belated with his work'; also, his grasp of economics was 'not very firm'. In the event, he completed his BA degree with the award of 2nd-class Honours (Division 2). On 16 June 1912, when thanking his parents for their congratulations, he fairly added: 'I am afraid they are not well earned, but at any rate I have a decent degree.' All his Whitgift contemporaries, he added without evident grief, 'did badly this year, everyone except myself dropping a class. The Head will be rather annoyed, I expect.' He then celebrated his achievement by climbing up on the college roof and dressing a stone-winged dragon, known as a wyvern, at the end of the main building in full academic robes.

In spite of Tedder's moderate examination performance, Benson considered him capable of academic research at the highest level. He recommended, and both Sir Arthur and Uncle Henry agreed, that Tedder should return to Cambridge for a fourth year in October 1912. He would find a suitable subject for research, submit the result for the Prince Consort Prize and (by this means or subsequently – Benson was silent on a vital point) prepare himself for the consular service examination.[6]

Meanwhile, Tedder deserved some reward for at least obtaining a degree, only the second awarded to a member of his large family. He was glad to escape abroad to a language institute in Berlin and there begin to learn German, which his elders and betters considered would help him through the consular examination. During this working holiday, he met

a young Australian woman. Their love for each other gradually became so powerful that it drew out of him a capacity for application that his parents and teachers had sought in vain during his school and undergraduate days. The future would show that this amiable chap with many interests but few achievements was in fact among the outstanding men of his generation.

3

A Sudden Sense of Absolute Intimacy, Harmony and Understanding

From England to Fiji via Germany, June 1912 to December 1914

Tedder left England for Germany on 22 June 1912 and enrolled at the *Institut Tilly* in Lichterfelde, a suburb of Berlin.[1] He was to study German there for eight weeks, before returning to Cambridge in October. A year later, he remembered 'sitting outside that café at the back of the Institut in an awkward silence (that lasted for three weeks!)', listening to other young men talking 'what even then I knew was the most atrocious German'. As it happened, Tedder never mastered the language either. Instead, he fell in love with an Australian fellow-student, Rosalinde Maclardy. Truly in love: it rapidly became on his part (and later on hers) a love of quite exceptional intensity, which lasted until Rosalinde's death more than 30 years later.

Rosalinde and her sister Una, always devoted to each other, left Sydney for London in May 1910 and arrived in July. They had a host of relatives and friends on both sides of the globe, some wealthy. While Una pursued theatrical ambitions, Rosalinde decided to sample German cultural life and learn something of the language. All instruction at the institute was in German and students undertook not to speak their native tongue while in residence. Consequently, the Englishman and the Australian, neither of them at all comfortable even in their own language while talking to the opposite sex, were obliged to converse in German. The ice began to break on 1 July, when the Tillys took all the students for a day trip to Potsdam. It was on this outing that he and Rosalinde first smiled at each other, though they did not, of course, attempt to speak. A few days later, on 11 July, Tedder turned 22 and as usual felt uneasy at being made a centre of

attention, except that Rosalinde actually spoke to him on this significant occasion. By early August, Tedder was accompanying 'my Australian acquaintance' to art galleries and theatres, and they parted with carefully masked regret at the end of August when Tedder returned home.

Home was about to change. During July, Tedder's parents decided to buy a house named 'Windlehurst' in Hemyock village, Devon. It was from Windlehurst on 1 September 1912 that Tedder wrote the first of hundreds of letters, many very long, and several with illustrations, to his *gnädiges Fräulein* (gracious lady), whom he otherwise still addressed as 'Miss Maclardy'; she, very properly, addressed him as 'Mr Tedder'. He asked, in his whimsical vein, how the institute was getting along 'without its most brilliant member, who was wont to hold the table spellbound by scintillating conversation'; he was already missing 'perpetual German' and wondered if she might like to keep in touch.

Rosalinde had been impressed by her new friend. As she wrote to Una on 20 September: 'I thought of how a short time ago I used to hear a laugh and in looking over my balcony I could see a dark head, a pipe, a Cambridge-blue old coat and perhaps a sketching-book … Then I think of perhaps seeing the "old head" in London and instinctively I smile as I think of some of the remarks that will be exchanged.' They met again a week later in London and from then on wrote regularly to each other whenever they were apart.

At 22, Tedder's physical appearance was set for many years to come. In fact, until he was at least 60, his youthful appearance was often remarked upon, helped by an unlined face and a full head of neatly groomed dark-brown hair. He was a small, slim man (much under-weight, in the opinion of his parents and relatives), given to adopting, at least for photographers, a 'soulful' expression, and was rarely seen in public without a pipe.

Rosalinde was born on 29 March 1891 and was thus some eight months younger than Tedder. A small, slightly built woman with a fine head of light-brown hair, she had a pale complexion and large eyes that often looked sunken and tired because she sewed relentlessly, regardless of poor light. Her usual expression was serious, and so she looked older than her years. Yet she had a strong sense of fun, most readily brought out by Una. Nearly four years older, more vivacious and robust, Una had taken special care of Rosalinde since their mother died in 1904.

Rosalinde's main base from October 1912 onwards was at 4a Belsize Parade, Hampstead. It was with the 'dear, sympathetic, understanding peops' who lived there that she – and later Tedder – were most content: young, theatrical, literary and artistic. They brought out of him, as a Whitgift friend noticed, 'a marked, almost dilettante streak, a light smile,

a cynical touch'.[2] Una had fallen in love with a fellow-actor, Alexander Austin Elder (known as Mark), who returned her love entirely. Among Mark's five sisters were Ann (secretary to George Bernard Shaw) and Elinor, known as 'Eld', an actress and director. That flat, as Rosalinde later recalled, was 'the very centre of all our earthly happiness'.

At times, Tedder told Rosalinde in November, he felt 'a sudden sense of absolute intimacy, harmony and understanding with you'; a sense that he nurtured most diligently for the rest of her life. They quickly abandoned 'Dear Miss Maclardy', 'Yours sincerely, Arthur W. Tedder' as forms of address. For many months they used '*Brüder*' and '*Schwester*'. In part, this was Tilly's influence, encouraging them to sprinkle their letters with German words and phrases. But in part also it was a consequence of their mutual protestation that a 'spiritual' relationship, such as they were creating, should not be sullied by anything 'physical'. They became 'Bear' (derived from Tedder, Teddy Bear) and 'Bil' (from Wilhelmina, Rosalinde's other Christian name), private names that lasted throughout their life together. As people in love should, they devoted a great deal of time and energy to arranging meetings. In mastering the possible permutations of the railway timetables put out by the various companies, including the availability or otherwise of cheap tickets, Tedder revealed powers of application never seen by Benson, Salter, his parents or his sister.

Tedder, meanwhile, was elected a member of Magdalene's prestigious Kingsley Club in October 1912. Founded under Benson's patronage in honour of Charles Kingsley, it was intended for the college's intellectual elite and membership was strictly limited. Trafford Leigh-Mallory, two years younger than Tedder and one year behind him at Magdalene, was also elected a member on that day. Both men rose to very high rank in the Royal Air Force, but Tedder never mentions Leigh-Mallory during their varsity days and never speaks of him with respect, much less affection, during their service days.

Not until early in November, a month after Tedder's return to Cambridge, was the subject of his Prince Consort prize essay finally settled: 'The History of the English Navy from the Death of the Protector to the Restoration.' The finished essay actually covered a longer period, 1658–67, and required 'real research' at the Public Record Office in London, as well as in the 'Pepys Palace' and other archives. On 17 December 1912, Benson reported to Sir Arthur on his son's progress: satisfactory, except for 'his apparent inability to get work done by the time named … it seems little more than a habit'.[3]

In February 1913, Tedder repeated his roof-climbing exploit of the previous June. He and an Irishman named Brophy 'concocted and

executed a delicate rag on the college authorities', for having ruled that only tea and lemonade might be served at a forthcoming concert. 'Most of this morning,' he gleefully informed Rosalinde, 'people have been standing in the court gazing up at the roof and clock tower', which were decorated with two large teapots and a notice declaring that Magdalene men were allowed nothing stronger. Benson admired such 'alpine' exploits: 'most of the small jokes played, flags on the pinnacles, a surplice on the wyvern, bands on the swans' necks', he later recorded in his diary, 'were played by Tedder, who is a great roof-climber'.[4]

Rosalinde had at last declared her love for Tedder (though with strong reservations regarding anything public or physical) and his attention was therefore almost totally devoted, in long daily letters from Cambridge to London, to opening his mind to her and encouraging her to do the same for his benefit: 'I'm afraid I shall never do anything really big in the world', he declared, 'either in the worldly or the spiritual senses, but I know that we two can do far more – in the higher sense at least – than I alone could ever touch; you can help me and perhaps I can help you.' They became fascinated by the possibility, when apart, of transmitting and receiving thoughts, having discovered a book on the subject which they studied with deadly seriousness. They pondered the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius (121–180), finding the introversion of that great Roman emperor much to their taste: 'Look within', wrote Marcus. 'Within is the fountain of Good, ready always to well forth if you are prepared to dig deep enough for it.'[5] They also wondered whether they had been close friends, even lovers, in a previous incarnation.

Early in March, Tedder escaped from the Pepys Library to Oxford to meet an eminent seventeenth-century historian, C. H. Firth, who directed him to sources in the Bodleian Library; but he was also obliged to work at the British Museum, the London Library, agonise over the forthcoming varsity boat race and discuss careers with his parents and Uncle Henry. India, Rhodesia and Egypt were all possibilities, though 'Cairo doesn't attract me somehow' (a phrase that, if recalled in later years, would have tickled his ironic fancy). The Navy appealed, but not the Army, which is strange, in view of his enthusiasm for military exercises.

At the end of June, Tedder returned to Croydon and had a long interview with Uncle Henry at the Athenaeum, who offered yet more titles for his bibliography and arranged access for him to the Admiralty Library in Whitehall. Tedder was now shrewd enough to dip into a couple of German naval histories because 'I want to have one or two German quotations as well as French and Dutch ones – looks well.'

At the end of June Tedder had learned of an opening for a Lecturer in History and Economics at the University of Queensland in Brisbane.

Rosalinde agreed that he should apply; it was a respectable, permanent position; she intended to return to Sydney soon (though for how long, she did not know); they would both be in Australia and no more than 450 miles apart. But Queensland rejected him, as he learned in October, preferring an experienced teacher who would fashion an outstanding career in Brisbane.[6] 'They'll be tragic about it at home, I expect', he told Rosalinde, 'which I know will make me simply skittish, which again will probably pain them. What it is not to have a serious outlook on life.'

Tedder returned to Cambridge in October 1913. He was in close touch with Uncle Henry over his manuscript, sending him batches of pages as he completed them. Henry not only paid for the work to be typed and bound, but checked the text, footnotes and bibliography (to which he made valuable additions) and, not least, urged on both typist and author to get the thing done because the deadline for submission, 1 November, was fast approaching. Thanks to Henry's practical assistance and his own intelligent if spasmodic hard work, the thesis was completed and accepted for submission only one week late by a sympathetic Vice-Chancellor, M. R. James. It would win for Tedder the Prince Consort Prize, and a revised version would be published by Cambridge University Press in August 1916, with the title *The Navy of the Restoration from the Death of Cromwell to the Treaty of Breda: its Work, Growth and Influence*. Tedder's initial opinion that 'it's a shocking piece of work' is not supported by later scholars. According to Glenn Burgess, for example, 'Tedder's book, even in absolute terms and making allowance for its age, is an impressive piece of work. It retains a place, even in the latest (highly selective) bibliography of writings on Stuart history … It really is a very substantial and thorough piece of *research* by anyone's standards.'[7]

Recognising his nephew's capacity for research (and also his apparent incapacity for any other profession), Henry was anxious to help him into an academic career and was well placed to do so. But Tedder firmly turned his back on what then seemed his best prospect of a secure, respectable position. Instead, he astounded Henry – and the entire Tedder family – by applying in November for a position as a Colonial Office cadet in Fiji; his application was accepted in December and he left England in February 1914.

It is as difficult today, as it was for Tedder's family and friends in that winter, to understand why he did this, not least because he himself offered no positive reasons for going to Fiji and was quite prepared, almost until sailing-day, to back off if anything more appealing came up anywhere else in the world. The consular examination, incidentally, had been quietly forgotten about. Early in December, he was invited to accept a commission in the general reserve of officers, in view of the

'considerable time' that he had spent in the OTC, but even this hint failed to turn his mind towards considering a career in the Army that would have suited his interests and restlessness.

He told Rosalinde that he was fed up with Cambridge and all its works: 'It's an unending diet of theory and books – the "academic" atmosphere – it's like being kept on a diet of "slops" in convalescence long after one is fit for ordinary food.' But within a week he was telling her that 'there is something fascinating' about Cambridge even on a wet November afternoon. 'For all my wanting to get out of it, I know I shall dream about it when I am right away from it.' Had he not gone to Fiji, he intended to return to Cambridge in 1914.

Rosalinde had spoken of returning to Sydney with Una in 1914, but not permanently. Neither woman would have been content for long in a town so lacking that metropolitan bustle to which they had become accustomed in London. Although keen to see Australian relatives again, they had relatives – also very special friends now – in Britain, and the idea of leaving Sydney for Fiji had no appeal whatsoever for Rosalinde. This only dawned on Tedder when he reached that remote island and began to wonder how long he might have to remain there (the probationary period alone was three years); where he might go if he ever escaped; and whether he could stand the colonial service for the rest of his working life.

'I should be very glad', Tedder had written to his mother on 20 November, 'if Miss Maclardy – and perhaps her sister too – could be asked down to Hemyock for a time next month.' His parents must not, however, suppose that he was bringing home *a girl-friend for inspection*; the bond between him and Rosalinde was altogether more elevated than mere courtship and no outsider might presume to inspect its tangled secrets. 'I mean', he concluded, 'if people can't conceive of anything other than sentimentality between people like us I'd far rather she didn't come down at all.' Lady Tedder, ignoring these feverish words, told him to invite them. Una, in fact, remained in London while Rosalinde visited Hemyock for the first time shortly after Christmas.

A naturally awkward situation, even though the family made her most welcome, was made unpleasantly tense at times by Tedder's childish pretence that he and Rosalinde were merely friends. She tried to persuade him to tell his parents the simple truth – that they were in love and had agreed to marry, one day – but he only did so when they asked directly; even then he did so petulantly. A month later, on the very eve of his departure for Fiji, Rosalinde had to *demand* that he reveal their engagement to his aunts. Tedder's love for Rosalinde had been obsessive from the start and he had a constant fear of losing her. Once the secret was out, her love might die. If that happened, he would collapse mentally

as well as physically. He needed her, literally; by June 1915, he had spent only one of the last 16 months in her company and so prolonged an absence almost drove him out of his mind.

Tedder sailed from Southampton for New York on 4 February 1914 aboard the White Star liner *Oceanic*. After the worst crossing in her captain's long experience, the battered, ice-encrusted *Oceanic* limped into New York, a port 'covered today in a mantle of snow ten inches deep'. Her dramatic emergence from a furious blizzard attracted front-page press attention, in both Britain and in the United States.[8] Tedder, a natural sailor, enjoyed the storm hugely. Violent weather always exhilarated him, for he thought only of storing its colours in mind, for later recording on paper, and not at all of any danger to himself.

Tedder had no time to enjoy his first visit to New York, for he saw it only briefly from a taxi window, but his first crossing of North America, by rail from New York via Toronto to Vancouver, entranced him. So also did his first crossing of the Pacific, via Honolulu to Fiji, aboard the *Niagara*. Long letters to his family (at Rosalinde's command) show that he could easily have made a living as a journalist or travel-writer. He had in addition the ability to illustrate his writing with accurate sketch maps, amusing cartoons and finished pictures, in crayon or water-colours. Even his letters to Rosalinde were, for the moment, exuberantly descriptive and there was little of the usual agitation about thoughts and feelings. 'I remember in Shetland when I was a kiddie', he told her on 2 March, 'a fine red sunset would rather frighten me – I couldn't help thinking the world might be on fire in spite of what people told me; a sky such as we had today would have terrified me.' Shedding his Cambridge blues and London smartness, Tedder gossiped cheerfully with all and sundry.

After a journey by sea and rail of 32 days, Tedder landed in Suva on Viti Levu on 7 March and found, to his inexpressible joy, the first of numerous long letters from Rosalinde waiting for him. In February, her father had sent money to England to pay for the sisters' passage home and they booked to leave on 4 June. The climate was officially regarded as 'equable and remarkably healthy for Europeans', except in the hurricane season, and the population when Tedder arrived had recently been 'estimated' at just under 150,000: 90,000 native Fijians, 50,000 Indian immigrants, 4,000 Europeans and the rest Polynesians. Suva, by far the largest town, was climbing towards 10,000 residents.[9]

Richard Rankine, Acting Colonial Secretary, gave Tedder his letter of appointment and told him about his duties: six months in Suva, then up-country; if he passed an examination in Fijian and basic regulations at the end of a year, he would be graded a 'passed cadet', entitled to

annual increments in salary. Further examinations would follow in Fijian, Hindustani and Law. He was introduced to the Governor, Sir Ernest Bickham Sweet-Escott: 'a very decent, kindly sort of man personally', he decided, 'though I fancy a perfect demon in the way of fussing officially'.

The daily routine was not at all strenuous: mornings free, in order to learn Fijian with a tutor, and then light office work during most afternoons 'in one big airy two-storied verandahed building, some little way up from the seashore and beautifully cool'. He took no part in rugby, athletics, rowing, cycling or rifle-shooting, although he learned to ride, made sketches, took photographs and, as ever, closely observed the local scenery and the night sky.

Early in July 1914, Tedder got his wish to leave Suva. He was sent to Lautoka, on the north-west coast of Viti Levu, 65 miles from the capital, as an acting Assistant District Commissioner. The next three weeks, which included his 24th birthday, were his happiest in Fiji, and every day he thought about Rosalinde and added another page or two to his ongoing letter. The idyll ended abruptly when news arrived on 5 August of the outbreak of war in Europe. Though shocked, Tedder was also relieved: he could now abandon with a clear conscience his already-weakening resolve to make the best of Fiji and find some means of receiving Rosalinde there. He would go home and seek a *regular* commission in the Army. For a patriotic gentleman, son of a senior government official, it seemed the proper thing to do.

On 5 August he wrote to the Colonial Secretary in Suva, requesting leave to join any troops being raised in Australia or New Zealand for British service because he had 'a somewhat wide military training' and 'local knowledge of certain parts of England and the Continent', which might prove useful.[10] Next day, he wrote to his parents and sister: 'of all the out-of-the-way specks on the other side of nowhere'. He had joined the Legion of Frontiersmen, an empire-wide cavalry organisation, and the Rifle Club was putting on a brave show, but in fact there were no well-trained, fully armed soldiers in the colony capable of resisting a rumoured German invasion from Samoa.

His leave application having been rejected on 17 August, Tedder resigned on the 28th. He assured Sweet-Escott that he was neither shirking his duty nor moved by 'any fit of pseudo-patriotism', but 'the special military training I have had at home is useless here and would be of use at home, where I know I can get a regular commission to fill one of the inevitable vacancies in the regular forces at the front.'[11] The authorities in Suva rejected his arguments: 'you are under orders', they reminded him, 'and at times of stress one should stand by one's job and have no right to chuck it because one would prefer to take part in the

central area of disturbance'. His military expertise was elementary; he merely wanted to get away; he must refund his passage money in full and would probably not be re-employed if the war ended soon and he found himself unwilling to remain a regular officer in peacetime.

Rosalinde had returned to Sydney with her sister on 20 July and wrote to Tedder early in August to say that she would marry him in Fiji. By then, however, the die was cast and Tedder intended to leave Suva for Sydney aboard the *Levuka* at sunset on 16 September. 'The evening before, about 6.30, I happened to pass the Bank Manager in the street. He stopped me and said: "I say, if you want to make sure of getting off on the *Levuka* I advise you to get on board tonight." I went down to the boat to see what was up and found she was leaving the first moment she could get up steam.' A rumour that German warships were nearby generated such panic in Suva that the *Levuka* fled without most of her cargo, passengers or crew. 'When the news, emphasised by the almost continuous shrieking of sirens, became generally known', reported the *Fiji Times*, 'there was an excited rush of people to the wharf … With the utmost haste passengers and luggage were crowded on board, the deck lights were extinguished and in partial darkness the *Levuka* moved off from the wharf and in a very short space of time disappeared outside the reef.'[12]

Sweet-Escort sent copies of his correspondence with Tedder to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on 8 October, 'I regard him as a young man of high character, excellent abilities and great promise'; his conduct has been 'exemplary' and the service is 'a loser by his resignation'. When these letters reached the Colonial Office in December, one official minuted: 'If Mr Tedder receives a commission from the War Office, I should be inclined as an act of grace not to insist on the repayment of the passage money', but another replied: 'I think not. One may appreciate his motives; but it is a pernicious example for a government officer to resign his appointment at such a time without permission'; he must therefore be made to pay.[13]

Tedder had arrived in Sydney on 22 September, suffering from dysentery as a result of travelling steerage to save money. A month of practical care restored his body, while endless talks with Rosalinde calmed his mind. He left for England aboard the *Osterley* on 24 October, having made enquiries about a possible job at Sydney University after the war. 'I've been thinking about the bush', he wrote on 1 November. 'I don't know if it's because of the days we had in it or because it is in you or why – but I am wanting it and I know I shall want it much more when I get into English country. I think I must have been in it in some previous incarnation.' In fact, he and Rosalinde would never again be

together in Australia. 'I have been wondering why I didn't go with you', she wrote after farewelling him, 'it seems so silly that we should spend any time apart.' But neither she nor Una (whose fiancé, Mark Elder, was already a soldier and would soon be on the Western Front) had the nerve to ask their father for the fare, having returned home, at his expense, so recently. That problem would be resolved six months later, in April 1915, when Tedder sent Rosalinde an incoherent cable asking her to marry him. She and Una sailed for England, via the United States, a month later.

PART II

1915 TO 1919: FLYING

4

Learning the Grammar of Command

From Wyke Regis to Calais, January 1915 to January 1916

Tedder left Sydney for England on 24 October 1914, described on the *Osterley*'s passenger list as a 'civil servant'[1] travelling second class: one steerage voyage had been enough to overcome even his powerful urge to save money. At this time, he had rarely seen an aeroplane, much less considered an aviation career, and yet some instinct already convinced him that the new weapon of air power had devastating potential. The Germans, he wrote to Rosalinde, 'have barely used their Zeppelins at all'; they might sink battleships and 'at every port, I am wondering whether we shall hear of London and Woolwich being blown up by Zeps. I think they're bound to make an attempt.' Clearly, his was a mind waiting for faith: faith in an aviation doctrine as yet unformed and untaught.

As for the world after the war, he liked the reference to a possible United States of Europe in a pamphlet written by Robert Blatchford.[2] 'I hope and believe', wrote Tedder, 'that that is the one great possibility of this war.' A generation later, after an even more terrible war, he would help to bring most of western Europe together in an alliance that may one day lead to such a union. On 17 November 1914, as the *Osterley* entered the Gulf of Aden, Tedder saw once more the Pole Star with the Great Bear above it. A few days later, he had his first sight of Egypt – a land that would play a vital part in his career, a land where Rosalinde's life would end – and then sailed through the Mediterranean, past Libya, Sicily, Tunisia and Algeria – places of unimaginable significance in his future.

He reached Plymouth on Friday, 4 December, and after a weekend in Hemyock reported to the Colonial Office in London on Monday morning. Next day, the 8th, he went to Cambridge, where the Military

Board of the University recommended him for a commission in the regular army. For the next month, while his application was processed, he felt 'a sort of silent reproach when one passes people in mourning – and there are many now in some parts' because he was not yet in uniform. He was appointed a second lieutenant in the Dorsetshire Regiment with seniority to date from 2 September 1913 (in recognition of his OTC service) but not to draw pay or allowances before 10 January 1915.[3] On the 14th, he was ordered to join the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion at Wyke Regis, near Weymouth. A week later, he wore regular uniform for the first time: 'Wonder how long it'll be before I take to mufti again?' The answer is 'more than 35 years', although at the time he doubted if the war would outlast the year.

On 4 February 1915 Tedder wrote to Rosalinde to say that he was getting plenty of shooting practice, machine-gun as well as rifle, and expected to be sent to France within a month. Meanwhile, he was learning how an officer should look after his men: 'I spent about two hours going round all over the place', he wrote on the 9th, 'examining the rations, smelling the meat, tasting the margarine, examining the potatoes and peas, seeing how things were served out, inspecting the camp from top to bottom, everything from feeding to sanitary arrangements, and finally inspecting the guard.'

Two days later, on 11 February, came one of those apparently petty incidents that in fact are life-shaping. He twisted his right knee. No more than that. Nor could he even recall how he had done it. 'Noticed it was a bit stiff this afternoon', he wrote, 'but thought nothing of it, started to walk to Weymouth and found it couldn't be done, turned back to find I couldn't walk at all.' He was collected and put to bed. The 'offending member' was tightly bandaged, put in splints, treated with iodine and got steadily worse. On 8 March, after three weeks 'in bondage', he was allowed up. 'The colonel spotted me on my triumphal progress with two sticks en route for the ante-room, dashed out and babbled: "Hello! You back from the front?"' Later, an old man came up to Tedder as he hobbled through the village, smiled, and murmured with deep sympathy: 'You've been wounded, haven't you?' To which our hero replied in his tart way: 'Not yet.'

His mother had heard of an officer in India who became an airman after damaging a knee and Tedder was anxious to do likewise. 'I've got to polish up my French and my Morse', he told Rosalinde on 29 March, 'as I mean to put them down among my qualifications when applying for the flying observer job.' He was, however, well aware that his prospects were poor. Scores of men with useful backgrounds that he could not match – as horsemen, craftsmen or engineers in civilian life or with years of military or naval experience already to their credit – were available to