

AN AEROPLANE WITH A "BACKGROUND"

*American Fighter
may soon be seen
in Service in this
Country*

AMONG the types of American military aircraft which have been announced to be on order for the British Air Ministry is the Brewster fighter. As the machine may be seen over the English countryside soon, and as Service pilots will be handling it, it is thought that a description may be of interest to Service and civilian readers alike.

One is so accustomed to thinking of anything American as necessarily "new" that it comes as something of a surprise to find that in the case of the Brewster its ancestry, so to speak, goes back to the 1800s. Round about that time a young man by the name of James Brewster decided that the time had come when America should be independent of foreign countries for her high-quality horse-drawn carriages. The revolution was over, and after a period of depression prosperity began to return. Somewhere around 1810 he started his own business in New England, and by 1826 the business had grown to such an extent that it was decided to open a branch in New York. The official title of the company was "Messrs. Brewster and Co. (Broome Street)." Twenty years later the firm moved to new premises which occupied what is now the block on Broadway between 47th and 48th Streets.

The next important event in the history of the firm was the coming of the motor car and the transfer of the Brewster works to Long Island City, where the Brewster reputation for fine coachwork was established. Here it is of interest to recall a fact which is probably unknown to most people in this country. When the Rolls-Royce firm "invaded" the United States it was the Brewster company which built the bodies. That fact alone bears



witness to the esteem in which Brewster products were held.

So far as can be ascertained, the entry into the aviation industry took place in 1920 or so, when the firm undertook to build duralumin seaplane floats for the U.S. Navy. Later they were pioneers in the construction of spot-welded stainless steel floats. A bold step was taken in the early 1930s, in the middle of a depression, when James Work took over the aviation division of the Brewster concern and formed as a separate company the Brewster Aeronautical Corporation. Mr. Work was an aeronautical engineer of many years' standing, having been associated with the Naval Air Station at Lakehurst, and the Naval Aircraft Factory at Philadelphia, and later with the Detroit Aircraft Corporation. Under his leadership a start was made with the manufacture of wings and tails for the Grumman biplane fighters. Perhaps this explains the similarity between the Brewster and Grumman designs, when, in 1934, the firm decided to start out with their own types under the technical leadership of Mr. Dayton T. Brown, who had been with Mr. Work at the Naval Aircraft Factory and at the Detroit Aircraft Corporation.

BREWSTER XF2A-1
Wright Cyclone Engine

