



PLATE I  
CLOUDY SKIES.

## A SERIES OF WAR EMBROIDERIES

By LOIS K. WILLIAMS

*Miss Williams, who is a painter as well as a talented needlewoman, recounts, in the descriptive narrative below, the circumstances that led her to work a series of embroidered pictures based on events preceding and during the second World War. Of this series, of which there are seven pictures in all, six deal entirely with war subjects. Of these four are here shown. Measuring each approximately twenty by twenty-seven inches, these pictures are worked in fine petitpoint in wool on canvas with silk employed for some of the details. The imagination shown in the handling of the various subjects, the dramatic effect of the pictures presented and the brilliant colors in which the representation is carried out combined to attract universal attention when the series was shown in the galleries of French and Company in the Exhibition of Amateur Needlework held in the spring of 1948. They were exhibited also a few months later in The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*

**I**N THE YEARS recently that I have been interested in the subject of needlework, I have produced a number of subjects all in the *petit-point* technique. In 1938, however, I designed and worked a needlepoint picture that was finally, as it happened, to lead to an entire set based on the events of the last World War. This first picture, which was destined to become the introductory number of the whole group, I called "Winter Skies." It was worked in shades of blue, green and gray, and depicted, peacefully enough, the winter constellation above the sea with a sailing ship and a spit of land below. This was a purely imaginative creation and was not intended to become the first, or indeed any part, of a series. However, as world events tended steadily to become more ominous in their implications, the idea occurred to me to work another picture of the same size as "Winter Skies" which would symbolize the world scene as it was in the spring of 1939. This second piece, which I called "Cloudy Skies," shows a rainbow on which are superimposed the American eagle, the British lion and the French cock. At the end, on the left is the Fascist emblem and at the right, the Nazi swastika, these two sur-



PLATE II  
SCORCHED EARTH.

rounded by black clouds. In the heavens, over a calm sea, are the rising sun of Japan and the Chinese dragon, with the hammer and sickle of Russia in the upper left balancing the star and crescent of Turkey at the right. Below, underneath these nationalistic symbols, appear the skyline of a modern city and, in the foreground, a lurking submarine. (Plate I.)

With this picture, using as themes the tragic events in world affairs that subsequently followed, began the series that was to deal with the war. "Blitzkrieg" was started in 1949. Again the sky constitutes two-thirds of the canvas with storm tossed flags of the invaded regions straining against the clouds amidst flashes of lightning which take the form, delicately delineated, of the swastika. The American flag alone is at full mast and flying clear. Green fields, hills and a tiny farmhouse form the base (not illustrated).

The succeeding embroidery, "Scorched Earth" shows burnt ground and tanks below a dark sky in which rising columns of smoke take the form of a V displaying against a sombre ground the flags of the thirty-two countries joined to form the United Nations. On this piece, in the lower corner, is worked the date "August 1942," an inscription that forced on me the realization that it now had become necessary to indicate the months as well as the years of events. (Plate II.)

"The Target," signifying D Day, comprises half the globe with an imaginary aerial map of England and the continent; the swastika marks the location of Berlin. At the right are paratroopers descending on the Normandy coast. Overhead are planes and below is the insignia of Shaef, Supreme Headquarters flanked on the sides by a tank and a destroyer. (Plate III.)

V Day is symbolized by what I have called "Vapor Trails." Planes trailing their long lines of light fly from a blue-skied Europe with a war devastated village toward a dark Asia with the sun of Japan setting behind Fujiyama. (Plate IV.)

The final picture of the series commemorates V J Day in "The Atom Bomb." August, 1945. Its mushroom form and column broken in the center rises over the world, conspicuously the small island of Japan with its bent and sagging flag (not illustrated). With this symbol of destruction ends this series of embroideries to be succeeded, it is my greatest hope, by others designed along more peaceful and happier lines.

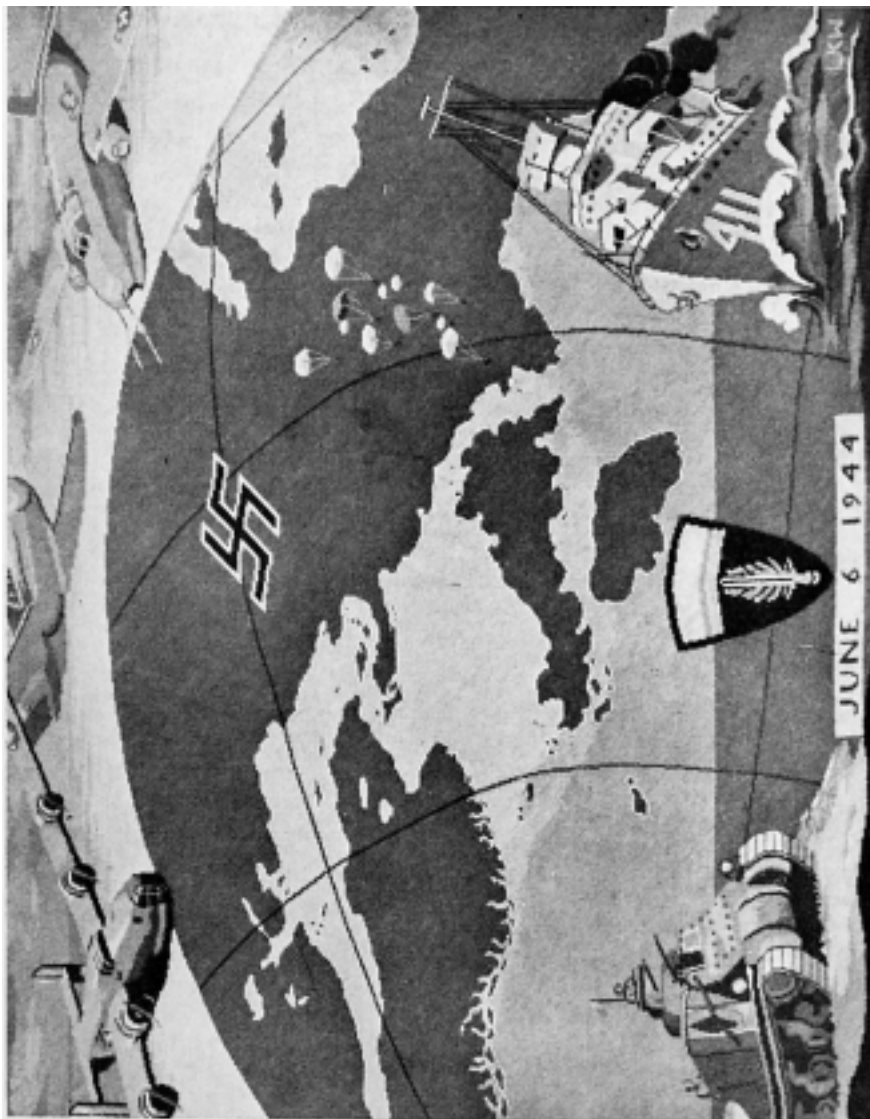


PLATE III  
THE TARGET — D DAY.

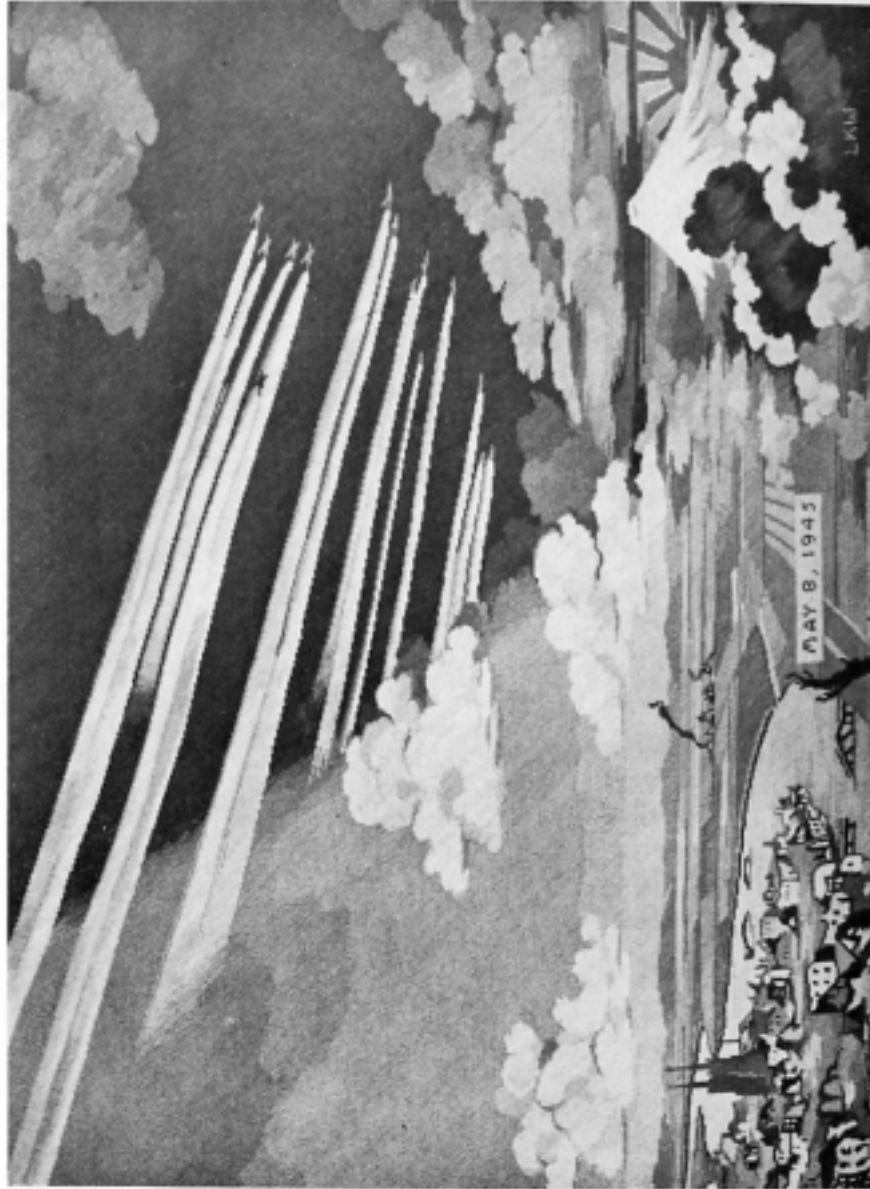


PLATE IV  
VAPOR TRAILS — VE DAY.

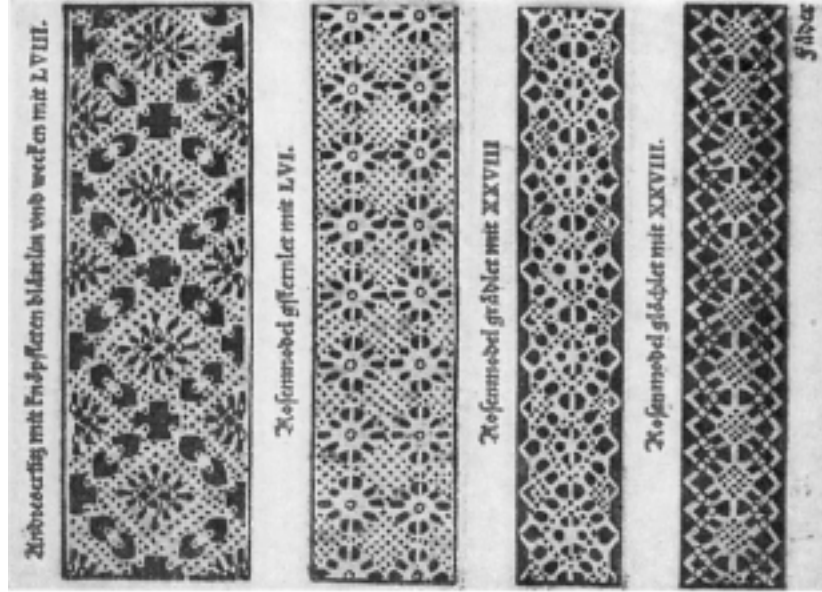


PLATE II  
PAGE FROM NÜW MODELBUCH.  
COURTESY OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.



PLATE I  
TITLE-PAGE OF NÜW MODELBUCH. PRINTED BY  
CHRISTOPH FROSCHAUER ABOUT 1561.  
COURTESY OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.