

ARMY WEEK

The following is the text of the introduction to Army Week entitled "Britain Calls her Armies" to be broadcast by B.B.C. tonight, after the 9 o'clock news:-

JOHN SNAGGE: Tonight begins Army Week, a week in which the British Broadcasting Corporation pays tribute to the British Armies serving throughout the world.

First, from London, warm greetings to our soldiers, in Africa, in India, in Burma, in Persia, in your barracks, your huts, your canteens, in your homes on leave, wherever you may be - good luck to you. May God bless and protect you all.

This week we are telling your story. The story of your setbacks, your training, your lives, the story of the tradition which is the proud heritage of the service.

We hope, too, to entertain you; to let, for example, the soldier in the desert hear his comrades at home in their garrison theatres. Each day there are programmes whose inspiration is the British Army. To you at home, also, we wish very good listening, for there is none of us who is not vitally interested in the service in which so many of our relations are serving.

Here, on the occasion of the opening of Army Week, is the Secretary of State for War - the Right Honourable Sir James Grigg, K.C.B.

SECRETARY
OF STATE:

This week you will be hearing on the wireless something of the work of your Army.

It is your Army in a very special sense, for there can hardly be a family in the land which is not represented in it by a husband, a father, a son or a brother, or perhaps by a daughter or a sister.

Between wars we neglect the Army. When we think of it at all we tend to do no more than make depreciatory jokes about it. Of course there has never been any justification for this mildly derisive attitude. For the citizen Army could never be built at all except on the foundation of the small but efficient Regular Army. It sometimes think that it is really a kind of protective mechanism assumed to excuse our neglect. Moreover there is not in peace time that close bond with the Army arising from the fact that in war nearly everybody has some near relation in it.

When war comes, the Army is invariably thrown - not fully trained and very far from fully equipped - into stemming some mighty flood. Naturally the flood breaks through in places, and often breaks through to great distances. Then we are tempted to say how right was our peacetime attitude. Luckily, however, it doesn't stop at that. We are always instant to increase the size of the Army and to speed up its training and equipment, and in time we discover again - what we ought to have known all along - that the British soldier, properly trained and equipped, is the finest in the world. That, I believe, is the stage we have reached today.

In the earlier phases of this war we have had Norway, Dunkirk, Burma and the backswings of the pendulum in Africa. But let me point out that even in this stage, though we had great disasters, the enemy was always stopped short of the objectives which it was vital for him to reach quickly, if he was to win the war at all. The Nazis reached the Channel but never crossed it. The Japanese occupied practically the whole of Burma, but were never allowed to advance into India. Rommel saw, but never reached, the Nile Delta. And apart from this, don't let us forget that it was in this stage that we showed up the Italian Empire for the gimcrack thing it was, and gave 250,000 members of this great imperial race a safe home for the rest of the war!

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But now we are within sight of being able to say that the Army is properly trained and adequately furnished. What our soldiers can do when this stage is reached the sixteen hundred mile advance of the Eighth Army has shown. Later in the week I hope that you will be able to hear the Commander of that Army himself, General Montgomery. That is why I say no more about the Eighth Army tonight.

But we have other armies, all over the world, waiting to show that the Eighth Army for all its achievements is not unique. These other armies are hoping to emulate, not only their own brothers, but the valiant Red Army as well. They include men of many races from all parts of the British Commonwealth. They are standing to arms in three of the five continents. They are prepared to make that supreme sacrifice which some have already made - the sacrifice which, notwithstanding all the sorrow, brings to those left behind the consolation that the victory of right over wrong is assured.

JOHN SNAGGE: "Armies, all over the world ... standing to arms in three of the five continents."

Here are recorded messages from the Commanders in Chief of the Armies, telling you of the spirit and the firm intention of the men who serve under them ...

Britain Calls Her Armies!

JOHN SNAGGE: General Sir Bernard Paget, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C., C. in C., Home Forces!

GENERAL PAGET: I speak as Commander-in-Chief of the Army at home and the Home Guard, to the Army Overseas. We look to you with admiration and with envy - admiration for your achievements and envy of your opportunities for fighting and defeating the enemy. It is our ambition that through high morale and tough training we may be ready at the earliest opportunity to emulate you and to strike the enemy a knock-out blow. I am fully confident that the Army at home will be found fit and ready to make the most of their opportunity when it comes, and we sincerely hope that we shall not have much longer to wait for the stimulus of battle. We send you our best wishes for your further successes and we look forward to the day when as one army we advance to final victory.

JOHN SNAGGE: General Sir George Giffard, K.C.B., D.S.O., G.O.C. in C., West Africa!

GENERAL GIFFARD: All ranks, British and African, send greetings to the rest of the Army at home and abroad. Our task is the defence of our West African colonies. Their importance has greatly increased with the development of air communications in which West Africa forms an important, if not vital link between the American Continent and Asia. In the two and a half years since the Command was formed, a small number of officers and N.C.Os, drawn from the United Kingdom and Southern Rhodesia, together with West African official and unofficial residents, have created an African Army by sheer hard work and enthusiasm. The way in which the Africans have responded to the many calls made upon them has been a surprise even to me who have always maintained that there was nothing that the African soldier could not do. Except for one brigade each from Nigeria and the Gold Coast, who made great names for themselves in Abyssinia, the rest of us have so far had no chance of showing our mettle. We are longing to do so, and I am sure that the impatience for active service among my own African troops is shared by those under my old friend, General Platt, in East Africa.

JOHN SNAGGE: Lieutenant-General Sir William Platt, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.S.O., G.O.C. in C., West Africa!

GENERAL PLATT: To all of you in England, soldiers and civilians, East Africa Command sends best wishes, or, as my Askari would say, Jambo Wa-Ngerezza. Just two years ago troops under General Cunningham commenced that memorable drive on Addis Ababa, which, together with operations from the Sudan brought about the eclipse of the Italian East African empire. The bombast of Goliath was

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silenced by a handful of Davids from many lands. Today the Askari stands on guard from Ethiopia to the Zambesi and on islands in the Indian Ocean. He sharpens his revenge, to use his own words, on those dirty little Jampans who sold him rotten bicycles. India. You have some of our soldiers. Our greetings to them. Tell them all is well at home. Field Marshal Wavell. We have served under you before. We have plenty of volunteers anxious to join those Indian soldiers of yours who fought so grandly at Keren and Amba Alagi. Give them my best wishes.

JOHN SNAGGE: Field Marshal Sir Archibald Wavell, G.C.B., C.M.G., M.C. (C. in C., India).

FIELD MARSHAL
WAVELL:

I greet you on behalf of the Indian Army and of the British troops serving in India, Ceylon and Burma. The Allied war effort is indebted to the Indian people and our old ally of Nepal in a measure not yet fully appreciated, for manpower already nearly two million stout warriors have volunteered and added a great and growing output. That aid will be given to the end. For the first two years India faced West and poured out everything she could produce in trained men and material to meet and defeat the threat in Africa and Western Asia. Today we face East, not defensively, not with any doubt or apprehension, but aggressively, with confidence and determination. We have never left a defeat unavenged, a task unaccomplished and we do not propose to do so now. There lies our way, due East. Our western marches are secured by forces under my old friend General Wilson. May his shadow never grow less.

JOHN SNAGGE: General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.S.O., C. in C., Middle East.

GENERAL WILSON: As the result of the changes in command announced by the Prime Minister I speak on behalf of the troops in both the Persia-Iraq and Middle East Commands and send you their greetings. The former have had as their task the guarding of one of the life lines of our ally Russia and are now in fine fettle eagerly awaiting the moment when they may meet the enemy. After serving in many countries, I am glad to be back with the troops of the Middle East, the veterans of the first Libyan campaign, and their successors. These troops have a fine record and although standing on guard at the moment await the future in a spirit of confidence, sure of their ability to carry out any task that may be set them. All of us are certain that we are on the road to victory which has been opened to us by the successes of General Alexander.

JOHN SNAGGE: Lieutenant-General Kenneth Anderson, C.B., M.C., G.O.C., First Army.

GENERAL ANDERSON: In the name of all ranks of the First Army I send warm greetings to you at home, especially to our brothers in the Army. Everyone of us here is determined to give his utmost effort of soul and will and body to ensure victory. The magnificent fight of the Hampshires at Tebourba is an example of the spirit of today. Our task is to clear the enemy out of his last stronghold in Africa. In closest co-operation with the Eighth Army, we are resolved to do this, whatever the opposition, as a first step to greater happenings. We British are proud to be fighting alongside our American Allies and with the gallant soldiers of the French Army of North Africa. And not least of our incentives is the desire finally to free gallant Malta by opening the seaways to her once again.

JOHN SNAGGE: Field Marshal The Viscount Gort, V.C., G.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.V.O., M.C., Governor General and C. in C., Malta.

FIELD MARSHAL
GORT:

We, the Services and the people of Malta, send greetings to you - the Army and the folk at home. I also take this opportunity to send a

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special greeting to my old comrades in the B.E.F. who served with me in France.

I am proud to speak for Malta - the George Cross Island - which despite more than 1700 air raids remains undaunted in spirit. She is never forgetful that more than 1150 victories have been won in the skies over Malta and she cherishes the memory that for more than 2½ years she has been the lonely but unconquered outpost of the British Empire in the Central Mediterranean.

During those months of hard trial and anxious waiting no man or woman ever flinched because none ever doubted the outcome; indeed so certain was everyone that the tide would turn that, when the moment came for the United Nations to pass to the offensive, Malta was ready and prepared to play her part.

The skill of our pilots, gunners and searchlight detachments, the endurance and versatility of all our troops, the splendid courage of the civil population, and the devotion and gallantry of the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy who brought us vital convoys, have all combined to keep Malta inviolate - as also is her sister fortress Gibraltar under the command of General Mason MacFarlane.

JOHN SNAGGE: Lieutenant-General Mason MacFarlane, C.B., D.S.O., M.C., Governor and C. in C., Gibraltar.

GENERAL
MACFARLANE:

To all of us here, and to most of you, Gibraltar is and always will be the Rock - and I'm speaking for the Rock. In the name of the garrison I wish all our comrades overseas and at home all possible good fortune.

We here lead an incredibly congested existence. But we've got two big jobs to do - and we're doing them. We are a vital Empire Junction - and we are a fortress. Our time is spent either in running the former or in preparing the Rock and ourselves to stop anyone from interfering with us.

Tunnelling and Training, Concreting and Climbing, Docking and Digging, - that's what most of us are doing day after day. But though at times we may feel a bit browned off we never get downhearted. We are proud of our Rock, and the work we've done, and though we have not had to show our teeth often we know that they are sharp.

Before handing over to a recent visitor of ours, General Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, said "I'll summarise our Rock for you:"

Symbol of all that stands for Strength
And chivalry throughout the length
Of years replete with fate;
Great Sphinx in armour standing guard
And keeping tireless watch and ward
Over your narrow strait;
Token of Britain's steadfast might,
Watchfully crouching day and night
While other Empires wane.
They thought your arms were laid aside.
But you can tell them now with pride
"I'm fighting fit again."

JOHN SNAGGE: General Sir Alan Brooke, K.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

GENERAL BROOKE: Whilst the voices of the various leaders of the British Army still ring in your ears I wish to convey a final message concerning the Army as a whole. For over three years the Army has followed a hard and rocky road; it has met with much hard fighting and some painful reverses; it has spent countless hours fitting itself for war through the most strenuous training under all climates and in all weathers; it has also suffered from long periods of separation from families and friends. Yet it has met all these trials and all these hardships with that same wonderful courage, tenacity and cheerfulness for which it became famous at Dunkirk. Throughout these hard days it has been guided by a calm faith that in the future, adequate equipment and training, combined with fair odds in the conflict, would enable it to prove that it still contained the same material as has made the British Army famous throughout history. Its patience has at last been rewarded, the Eighth Army has given a proof which cannot fail to stir in the hearts of all British citizens a deep pride for their Army. That Army naturally counts on your generous appreciation of its difficulties and sacrifices and now that the tide has turned it is sure of remaining true to its best traditions and worthy of the country's confidence.