

29.10.43. No. 5

MIDDLE EAST AIR COMMUNIQUE

Headquarters,
Royal Air Force,
Middle East.
29.10.43.

Maritza airfield, Rhodes, was again attacked by Royal Air Force heavy bombers last night. An explosion occurred in the northern half of the airfield, followed by a large fire and other explosions.

After a bombing attack on five small vessels in Stampalia Harbour, Aegean Sea, yesterday, debris was flung into the air and considerable wreckage was seen floating on the water.

During the night of October 27/28, Heraklion airfield, Crete, was bombed and large explosions occurred in an aircraft dispersal area.

From these and other operations three of our aircraft are missing.

29/10/43 - No. 6

FOR PUBLICATION AT 10 A.M.

MAILS LOST AT SEA

The Postmaster General regrets to announce that the undermentioned OUTWARD SURFACE mails were involved in a mishap at sea (not due to enemy action). Some of the mails were so damaged as to be useless, but others were salvaged and sent forward to destination.

Letters for:-

Districts & approximate dates of posting

India

West of England and South Wales: 10 July - 1 August

Elsewhere:

27 July - 1 August

Printed Papers for:-

India

North-West and West of England:

Scotland and Wales:

10 July - 1 August

Elsewhere:

27 July - 1 August

Parcels for:-

India

Scotland:

9 - 31 July

Elsewhere:

7 - 30 July

The undermentioned INWARD SURFACE mails were lost by enemy action:-

Letters and Printer Papers from:-

Nyasaland

1 - 8 June

GENERAL POST OFFICE

NOT FOR PUBLICATION, BROADCAST IN OVERSEAS BULLETINS OR USE ON
CLUB TAPES BEFORE 2330 B.S.T. ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1943.

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ANY MESSAGES FILED WITH THE EMBARGO

SPECIAL AIRGRAPH FORM FOR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR GREETINGS

The Postmaster General announces that a special form for sending Christmas and New Year Greetings by Airgraph to members of the Forces and civilians in countries to which the Airgraph service extends will be available at Post Offices on and from Monday, November 1.

No special charge will be made for the form, but, to avoid wastage, it will be issued only against the purchase of postage stamps to the value of the appropriate Airgraph fee, viz., 3d. if the Airgraph is being sent to a member of the Forces or of the Merchant Navy and 8d. if it is being sent to a civilian address.

Members of the public are asked when applying for forms to say whether the form will be sent to a member of the Forces (or Merchant Navy) or a civilian.

The Greetings Airgraphs will be retained abroad for delivery at Christmas, or (in the case of the Forces) as near to Christmas as active service conditions permit, and there will be no advantage to the senders or addressees in deferring posting until the latest date for Christmas delivery, which will be announced later. The public are therefore requested to obtain and post their Greetings Airgraphs without delay.

GENERAL POST OFFICE

29.10. 43. No.12

Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No.11919

BRAZILIAN AIR MISSION IN ENGLAND

A Brazilian air mission arrived in Britain today for a tour of
A.F. Stations.

The mission is led by Colonel Fabio Sa Earp, senior colonel of
the Brazilian Air Force, who received some of his early flying training
in this country.

Other members of the mission are Lt.Colonel Reynaldo Joaquim De
Carvalho, who is in charge of the Brazilian Government air mail service.
Captain Affonso Araujo Costa, Captain Hamlet De Azambuja Estrella, a
well-known Brazilian flying instructor, and Captain Henrique Do Amaral
enna.

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29.10.43 - No.13

INDIAN JOINT WAR COMMUNIQUE No.258

New Delhi,
29.10.43.

In the course of offensive sweeps along the railways running east and west from Mandalay, R.A.F. Beaufighters yesterday and on Wednesday heavily damaged five locomotives and more than 80 wagons. Others patrolling the Irrawaddy river attacked and damaged a large paddle steamer and various other rivercraft in the Pakokku area.

Hurricanes shot up enemy-occupied villages near Kalonyo, and Vengeances and Mohawks attacked positions in the Chin Hills and Mayu Peninsula with good results.

Last night, Wellingtons renewed their attacks on railway installations in Burma. This time, their target was the station at Monywa, which was straddled by high explosive and incendiary bombs. None of our aircraft is missing.

Yesterday morning there was some enemy activity over our positions in Arakan and a few bombs were dropped. The damage caused was negligible. There were a few civilian casualties.

29.10.43 - No.14.

NOVEL GUARD OF HONOUR FOR PRINCESS ROYAL

A "mixed" Guard of Honour, composed partly of operators and instrument mechanics of the Royal Signals and partly of wireless and teleprinter operators of the A.T.S. Signals, was formed for H.R.H. The Princess Royal, when she visited the War Office, Whitehall, to-day(Friday) to open a welfare hut for War Office Signals.

The Princess Royal, who is Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Corps of Signals and Controller-Commandant of the A.T.S., has taken a practical interest in the welfare of Signals personnel in all parts of the country and it was with her encouragement that the new hut was built to provide rest, recreation, light refreshment and a change of atmosphere from the signal office, wireless and teleprinter rooms, which are necessarily deep underground.

In the rest room the Princess Royal unveiled a plaque bearing the badge of the Royal Signals - the silver Hermes (or "Jimmy" as the Signals call him) - with the gold A.T.S. badge superimposed, the work of a serjeant draughtsman of the Royal Signals.

Her Royal Highness was accompanied by Senior Controller L.V.L.E. Whateley, D.D.A.T.S., War Office, and the Lady Maud Paillie, D.D.A.T.S., London District. She was received by Brig.-Gen. Lord Croft, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for War; Lt.Gen. Sir H. Colville, B. Weryss, Colonel-Commandant Royal Signals, Maj.Gen. C.W. Fladgate, and Maj.Gen. L. G. Phillips.

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MILITARY AFFAIRS

NOT TO BE PUBLISHED BEFORE
ANNOUNCED IN THE LONDON GAZETTE

29.10.43 - No. 15

GOVERNOR OF THE ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA

The following appointment is announced:-

General Sir Clive Liddell, K.C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E., D.S.O.,
Reserve of Officers (Retired Pay), Colonel, The Leicestershire
Regiment, to be Governor, The Royal Hospital, Chelsea, with effect
from the 27th October, 1943, in succession to General Sir Harry
Knox, K.C.B., D.S.O., (Retired Pay), Colonel, The Northamptonshire
Regiment, who vacates the appointment on that date.

WAR OFFICE

NOT FOR PUBLICATION, BROADCAST OR USE ON CLUB TAPES
BEFORE 1700 B.S.T. ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1943
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SIMULTANEOUS RELEASE HAS BEEN ARRANGED IN LONDON,
WASHINGTON AND OTTAWA

REORGANISATION OF COMBINED FOOD BOARD AND LONDON FOOD COMMITTEE

The Combined Food Board was set up in June, 1942, by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom with a view to assisting in the integration of the food policies of the United Nations. As a complement to the Board the London Food Committee was also established. The combined food planning organisation has now been operating for 15 months and has made a valuable contribution to this most important sector of the total war effort.

In order to ensure that the valuable work which has already been done can be continued and extended in future, the combined food planning organisation has recently been re-examined. In particular, the position of Canada has been reviewed in the light both of that country's contribution as a major supplier of food stuffs and the participation of Canadian representatives in the work of the Committees of the Combined Food Board, coupled with the acknowledged inter-relationship of all North American problems. As a result of that review, arrangements have been agreed by which Canada will become a member of the Combined Food Board in Washington.

The London Food Committee, which was established at the same time as the Combined Food Board to perform functions in relation to the countries represented upon it complementary to those of the Board, is being reconstituted as the London Food Council. The Minister of Food in the United Kingdom will be the Chairman and the High Commissioners in London for the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Secretary of State for India and the representative of India at the War Cabinet will be members.

MINISTRY OF FOOD

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SUGAR AND PRESERVES

The Minister of Food announces that as from November 14 the housewife will be able to buy sugar against the P preserves coupon, or preserves against the sugar coupon at the rate of exchange of 1 lb. of sugar to 1 lb of preserves. This change is designed to give her greater freedom of choice between the two rations. It does not effect the special (R coupon) jam ration which can only be taken up in the form of one of the specified jams. The same freedom of choice will be available to establishments.

Also as from November 14 the housewife will be allowed to buy sugar in advance during the previous four-week period just as she can already buy preserves in advance. She will not be able to buy preserves in arrears after December 11. From that date onwards the sugar and preserves rations will therefore be buyable under exactly the same conditions, during the current or previous four-week period and will be interchangeable.

The Minister urges housewives to take advantage of this arrangement if they possibly can and to buy up to eight weeks' rations of sugar and preserves as early as possible after November 14. He also urges retailers to secure adequate stocks to meet the demands which may be made upon them.

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29/10/43 - No.19

NORTH AFRICAN COMMUNIQUE NO.351

Allied Force Command Post,
29th October, 1943

NAVY - Enemy shore positions in the Minturno area were bombarded by a United States cruiser and destroyers operating in the Gulf of Gaeta Wednesday night.

ARMY - Further progress has been made on the 5th Army Front where another important height has been captured.

Fighting continues on the 8th Army Front and additional short advances have been made by British and Canadian troops. Montefalcone has been captured.

Heavy rain has fallen in most operational sectors.

AIR - Fighter-bombers and fighters of the North West African Air Forces yesterday attacked road junctions, trains, bridges and enemy positions over the battle area. Landing fields near Orvieto, Littoria and Foligno were attacked by fighter-bombers. In these operations two enemy aircraft were destroyed.

None of our aircraft is missing.

29.10.43 - No. 21

"TELEGRAPHIST/AIR GUNNERS"

A Fleet Order announces accelerated promotion for Telegraphist/Air gunners in the Fleet Air Arm, as from August 27, 1943. Instead of requiring a minimum service of five years to reach the rank of chief petty officer from Naval airman, the new entrant is now promoted to leading airman as soon as he qualifies and can become a chief petty officer after 18 months service.

Candidates on reaching 18 years are now being called up for immediate training. Apart from ground instruction this includes more than 100 hours instruction in the air.

ADMIRALTY

29th October, 1943 - No. 23

MESSAGE FROM HIS MAJESTY THE KING TO THE
PRESIDENT OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

"On the 20th Anniversary of the foundation of the Turkish Republic, I send you, Mr. President, my warm congratulations, and I take pleasure on this occasion, in conveying to you, and to your countrymen, my sincere good wishes for the Republic's long-continued prosperity.

GEORGE R.I."

FOREIGN OFFICE NEWS DEPARTMENT

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PRIVATE SPRUILL GOES INTO ACTION

By Noel Monks, Representing the Combined British Press

With Sherman Tanks on the
Fifth Army Front, Thursday.

The coolness and courage of lanky, ex-milkman Private Thomas Spruill, of Battle Creek, Michigan, who found himself temporarily commanding two Sherman tanks on this front two hours ago, have had wide repercussions.

Spruill's two tanks were hidden in a vineyard just outside a town American infantry were attacking. Hundreds of "Yanks" had gone forward in a downpour of rain when Spruill, with whom I had been talking a few minutes before, was amazed to see fourteen German Mark IV tanks ploughing through the rain and mud towards him - and behind our troops.

Ex-milkman Spruill just had time to radio the rest of our tanks two miles back when he came within range. At 600 yards Spruill's tanks, "Old Bloodhound", opened fire, closely followed by his companion, "Bouncer" (both tanks had landed at Salerno on the first day.

The shots staggered the Germans who, thinking they had run into an ambush of a large tank force, halted.

"Old Bloodhound" and "Bouncer" pumped shell after shell into the undecided Germans. Spruill acted as Gunner and sighted through the rain by sticking his head out of the turret - he's six feet three - and scored hits on two tanks with his third and fourth shots. "Bouncer" set a third on fire. Both Shermans then received hits themselves, temporarily putting them out of action. The Germans ploughed towards them, when an unholy artillery barrage opened up on them scattering them in all directions.

Our tanks at the rear, knowing their inability to join the battle in time, had summoned artillery on receiving Spruill's warning.

Three more tanks were knocked out, making an afternoon's bag of six. Our infantry, which had been cut off by the German tanks, were relieved and were able to push forward securely. Before they did so scores of "Doughboys" returned to the two tanks and thanked the courageous crews who had saved them from possible annihilation and two war correspondents from capture.

AWARDS FOR GALLANTRY IN THE AIR TO A PILOT AND RADIO OFFICER
OF THE BRITISH OVERSEAS AIRWAYS CORPORATION

The King has been graciously pleased to approve the appointment of Captain GILBERT RAE, . . . and Radio Officer JAMES STANLEY WOOD PAYNE, both of the British Overseas Airways Corporation, to be an Officer and a Member respectively of the British Empire Order in recognition of their high courage over an extended period in flying unarmed aircraft on the civil war-time air service between the United Kingdom and Stockholm.

When Captain Rae was attacked some time ago over enemy-occupied territory his aircraft was damaged by cannon fire and the under-carriage hydraulic system was put out of action. By the most skilful evasive tactics and exceptional coolness in a most hazardous situation he was able to avoid further damage, to shake off his assailant, and eventually make a forced-landing in Sweden with the under-carriage retracted. The forced-landing was made with such skill that comparatively little damage was done to the aircraft.

A few days later Captain Rae was again attacked by two German aircraft but by his skill and coolness he was able to shake off his assailants and land safely.

On a third occasion, half-way across the North Sea with a very heavy load, one of his engines failed and it was only due to superb airmanship that he managed to get safely back to base.

On all these occasions Mr. Payne has been the radio officer of the aircraft. He has cheerfully and readily accepted the same risks as his pilot. His skill as a radio officer and his coolness in the face of extreme danger have been outstanding.

NOTE ON CAREERS

Captain GILBERT RAE has been a pilot with British Overseas Airways Corporation since early 1940, flying on the Lisbon and Scandinavian routes. He was appointed captain in October, 1942. Before joining B.O.A.C. he served as a ground engineer from 1934 to 1938 and as a pilot from 1938 to 1940 with Scottish Airways Limited. Born in March, 1917, at Dunfermline, he was educated at Dunfermline High School. He is unmarried.

Radio Officer JAMES S. PAYNE joined British Airways Limited in 1938 and the British Overseas Airways Corporation on its formation. He has served during this period as radio officer on European routes, particularly the Scandinavian route. For eleven years before joining British Airways he was a ship's radio officer and before that was employed as a clerk with the De Havilland Aircraft Company. Radio Officer Payne, who is married with two children, was born in August, 1908.

29/10/43 - No. 28

Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No. 11922

TYPHOONS HIT AIRFIELD

Typhoon bombers of Fighter Command, escorted by Typhoon fighters, successfully bombed Guipavas airfield, Brest, today without loss.

They faced anti-aircraft fire, but there was no enemy fighter opposition, and the pilots saw their bombs burst near a hangar, on a runway, and on buildings in the north-east corner.

One of the flight-leaders said afterwards: "It was really quite an uneventful show. There were no Hun aircraft about, though accurate flak came up at us, and after we had bombed we carried out a sweep in the Ushant area, hoping to find some enemy ships on which to use our cannon - but we were unlucky".

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29.10.43 No. 30.

Air Ministry No. 11923

AIR MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE

This morning Typhoon bombers and Typhoons without
loss attacked the airfield at Brest-Guipavas.

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