

13/12/41 - No. 1

Air Ministry No. 5856

AIR MINISTRY AND MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY COMMUNIQUE

Last night there was a little enemy activity which was restricted to coastal districts.

Bombs dropped at one point caused neither casualties nor damage.

---

13/12/41    No:2

'Y' SCHEME

The Admiralty announce that the recent decision to register all boys between sixteen and eighteen years of age for National Service should not be confused with registration under the National Service (Armed Forces) Act, and that entry to the 'Y' Scheme is unaffected by it.

—

ADMIRALTY, S.W.1.



Air Ministry News Service

13/12/41 - No. 3.

Air Ministry Bulletin No. 5858

U-BOATS' FUEL IN FLAMES

Beauforts and Hudsons of Coastal Command raced across Northern France in formation yesterday evening as daylight was fading and fired oil and petrol tanks at Donges, near St. Nazaire, which hold stocks of fuel for U-boats.

A red glow lasting over a minute followed the first salvo of high explosives. It grew into a sheet of white flame and columns of smoke from burning fuel hung over the area.

On their way into the target, the Beauforts flew low over a market square in which numbers of people waved to the crews. One pilot was so low that he swept past a church steeple and saw the spire above his wing tips.

-----



13/12/41 - No. 4

POST OFFICE "PARCEL HOSPITAL" SHORT OF PACKING PAPER

Brown paper, cardboard boxes, shavings, wood wool and corrugated wrappings were all once used in the "Parcel Hospital" at Mount Pleasant sorting office to repack damaged parcels. These are practically unobtainable now, and all that is available is paper salvaged from packets and parcels which cannot be delivered for various reasons.

So pack your Christmas packets and parcels as carefully as possible with the best wrapping material you can obtain.

"The general standard of packing", said a Post Office official, "is good and shows that people are saving what strong brown paper they manage to secure for their Christmas parcels. If the public take care with their packing it saves us considerable labour, for at rush periods it is sometimes necessary to withdraw as many as twenty sorters to deal with broken parcels."

+++++

GENERAL POST OFFICE



13/12/41    No:5

Air Ministry No:5859

AIR MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE

Last night the docks at Br  st and Dunkirk were attacked by aircraft of Bomber Command.

Coastal Command aircraft bombed an oil refinery at Donges, near St. Nazaire, and started large fires among the oil tanks. A Hudson of the same Command bombed a large supply ship off Tezel, hit it and left it enveloped in black smoke and steam.

Enemy aerodromes in France and Holland were attacked by aircraft of Fighter Command on offensive patrol.

From these night operations one aircraft of Coastal Command is missing.

13/12/41 - No.8.

ROYAL GIFT TO PRISONERS OF WAR

1,700 BOOKS FROM THE KING AND QUEEN FOR CAMP LIBRARIES

The King and Queen have made a Christmas gift of some 1,700 volumes to prison camps in Germany and Italy. Each book contains a bookplate bearing the following inscription:-

This Book  
forms part of the Library  
presented at Christmas, 1941  
by

THE KING AND QUEEN  
to the  
British Prisoners of War  
with their Majesties'  
Best Wishes

The books were chosen under the direction of Mr. Owen Morshead, Librarian at Windsor Castle and have been dispatched through the Red Cross at Geneva to 37 prison camps and hospitals, where they will form part of the camp libraries, established under the auspices of the Red Cross and St. John.

There are 84 titles in all, more than half of which are non-fiction. The books cater for every kind of taste, the fiction ranging from "Robinson Crusoe" to "How Green was My Valley" and the non-fiction from Gibbon's Autobiography to "The Week-End Book".

---

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION.



13/12/41 - No.9.

CANADA'S MUNITIONS OUTPUT

The disclosure by President Roosevelt that Mr. Churchill and Lord Beaverbrook had offered to turn over to the United States the entire shell-making output of three factories in Canada has thrown into relief the remarkable productive capacity of Canada's war machine, the present output of which is considerably greater than that of the United States.

Canada has been making munitions of all kinds on a vastly increasing scale since shortly before the war and at least 8,000,000 shells have been turned out so far. Their production is now at a rate of millions a year. Ten million cases for shells have also been produced.

The munitions now being produced include 22 types of shell, many types of bullet, 500-pound bombs (these are being manufactured at the rate of 10,000 a year) depth charges, anti-tank mines, rifle grenades and eight types of explosives. Twenty plants are devoted to the manufacture of explosives and chemicals, one of them being the largest chemical plant in the British Empire.

Canada's total expenditure on munitions and supply since the war began is approximately £600,000,000 and a substantial item in this budget represents expenditure on shells.

---

CANADA HOUSE

(Through the Dominions Office Press Section).



13/12/41 - No. 11

HUGE CHRISTMAS MAIL TO FORCES AT HOME

Thousands of bags of Christmas letters and parcels addressed to men and women in the Forces in camps scattered throughout the country are passing through the post offices. Relatives and friends have certainly obeyed the advice to post early this year.

Puddings and pullovers seem to be the most popular present.

Those who have not yet posted their Christmas mail to the Forces at home should do so as early as possible. Postage is at the ordinary inland rates, and every letter and parcel must have the sender's name and address on it.

Parcels should be packed as securely as possible as, owing to movement of troops, it may be necessary to redirect the parcels to a second or even third address before they are delivered.

Addresses must contain the full details of rank and unit of the addressees.

+++++

GENERAL POST OFFICE



NATIONAL MILK SCHEME: APPLICATIONS FOR RENEWAL PERMITS

National Milk Scheme permits now current expire on December 31, and completed applications for renewal, on the official form, must be received by Milk Officers before Thursday, December 10, to ensure that the new permit will be valid from January 1. The form is obtainable from the Milk Officer at the local Food Office.

Special application is necessary to obtain cheap or free milk under the National Scheme. Permit holders should not assume that they have done all that is necessary when they have registered with a milk retailer by giving him the milk counterfoil from the Ration Book, or when they have obtained a "priority certificate" - for an expectant mother, for example - from a Food Office. These measures enable the consumer to buy milk at normal prices.

Some simple changes have been made in the procedure:-

(1) Besides the names of the children (or mother) who are to benefit, in Section 3 of the application from the National Registration (i.e. Identity Card) numbers must be given except in the case of a nursing mother. A nursing mother should give the Identity Card number of the baby she is feeding.

(2) In Section 5 of the application form the name and address of the milk retailer with whom the beneficiaries are registered must be given. When the permit is issued the supplier's portion must be given to the same retailer.

(3) The permit for the new quarter is different from the old permit. There are no monthly supply certificates on the new permit and permit holders will not be asked to sign receipts. In return they are asked to take more care to follow out the instructions printed on the permit. There are new instructions on change of address.

Mothers whose babies are being fed on National Dried Milk should note that it is no longer necessary for the certificate in Section 7 of the form to be signed when making application.



13/12/41 - No.13.

UTILITY LIGHTERS

Retail Price Controlled.

The Board of Trade after consultation with the Central Price Regulation Committee have made an Order fixing the price of utility lighters which are free from restriction of supply if complying with certain specified conditions. The lighters will bear the initials U.L. and the maximum price at which they can be sold by the retailer is 6/6d inclusive of Excise Duty. The Order lays down maximum cash margins for wholesalers and retailers and provides that if the lighter changes hands more than once at any stage the trader's margin at that stage must be shared.

Copies of the Order (S.R. & O. 1941 No. 2004) will be available at the Stationery Office and through booksellers on December 16.

---

BOARD OF TRADE.



13/12/41 - No. 14.

MIDDLE EAST WAR COMMUNIQUE

Our main forces continue their advance west and north-west from the area south of Gazala. At Gazala itself, enemy forces in defensive positions are now encircled by New Zealand troops and are being attacked in the general area south-west of Gazala.

Our mobile columns are causing great confusion and destruction amongst scattered columns of German and Italian troops and transport endeavouring to make their way north-west. Our tanks also attacked enemy tanks in this neighbourhood yesterday afternoon.

In the frontier area South African forces have now cleared up three defended localities held by the enemy south-west of Sollum, capturing much equipment. Mopping up operations in this area continue.

Our air forces have vigorously attacked enemy motor transport and troops on roads and tracks west of Gazala and Bir Hakeim and on the roads north and west from Tmimi, causing considerable dislocation of enemy movement, much damage to enemy vehicles and casualties to troops.

Ground troops on the 11th shot down four enemy aircraft.

-----  
WAR OFFICE



13/12/41 - No. 15

QUEEN WILHELMINA AND PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands sent the following message to the President of the United States of America, Washington; D.C.:

"It is a gratifying thought to me, Mr. President, that, now that an armed conflict has broken out as a result of Japan's wanton attack against the United States the Army, the Navy and the Air Force of the Netherlands will fight as comrades in arms and in the same good cause as the Military, Naval and Air Forces of the United States. My thoughts are with you and with the American government and people in this hour of our common trial from which, with God's help, we shall arrive victorious.

Wilhelmina."

President Roosevelt in his reply to Queen Wilhelmina said:

"My most sincere thanks for your message. It is indeed gratifying that the American people will have beside them in their trials your heroic people, who have shown such courage and determination. The strength of freedom is a sure sword which, with God's help, cannot fail.

Franklin D. Roosevelt."

-----cOp-----

NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT INFORMATION BUREAU



13.12.41. - No.16

MR. BUTLIN AND THE HOSTELS

The appointment of Mr. Butlin to be director of hostels for the Ministry of Supply has given rise to the impression that large scale changes in the management of the hostels were envisaged. This is not the case. Mr. Butlin pointed out today that the hostels will continue to be managed on behalf of the Ministry by the Co-operative Holidays Association Fellowship, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association and the Workers Travel Association. There is no intention - and no need - to change the present method of administration under which each voluntary association reserves its individual characteristics.

---

...  
MINISTRY OF SUPPLY

13/12/41 - No. 17

AMENDMENT TO MIDDLE EAST WAR COMMUNIQUE

The second sentence beginning "At Gazala" should finish at the word "attacked". The communique should continue "In the general area south-west of Gazala our mobile columns" etc.

+ + + + +

WAR OFFICE



13/12/41 - No. 18

NOT FOR PUBLICATION, BROADCAST, OR USE ON CLUB TAPES BEFORE  
00.30 B.S.T. (i.e. FOR MORNING PAPERS) ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER  
14. THIS EMBARGO SHOULD BE RESPECTED OVERSEAS BY PREFACING  
ANY MESSAGES FILED WITH THE EMBARGO

REDUCTION IN SUGAR PRICES

The Ministry of Food announces that the retail price of all varieties of sugar for domestic consumption will be reduced on December 29 by one penny per lb.

To relieve retailers of losses in stock values the reduction in the wholesale price of all varieties of sugar for domestic consumption will be made on Monday, December 15. Retailers will thus have a fortnight in which to dispose of stocks of sugar at the old prices and to replace them with cheaper sugar.

Some retailers have been holding more than two weeks stocks under the Ministry of Food's plan for spreading stocks, and arrangements are being made under which such retailers may claim at the rate of 1d. per lb. on excess stocks held on December 15. A further statement on the details of these arrangements will be issued shortly.

Arrangements are also being made to relieve dealers and wholesalers of losses on stocks held by them on December 15.

No alteration is made in the price of sugar for manufacturing purposes.

MINISTRY OF FOOD



13/12/41 - No. 19

The Home Office and Ministry of Home Security announce that Sir Harry Graham Haig, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., Regional Commissioner for the North Western Region, will succeed Mr. Harold Butler, C.B., as Regional Commissioner for the Southern Region when Mr. Harold Butler returns to Nuffield College on the 1st January, 1942.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Auckland Geddes, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., who is now able to resume duty as a Regional Commissioner, will become Regional Commissioner for the North Western Region.

-----

HOME OFFICE AND MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY



13/12/41 - No. 21

THE MEDITERRANEAN DESTROYERS

Two of the three destroyers whose successful action in the Mediterranean has been announced today by the Admiralty, were built at Govan, Glasgow, and the third at Hebburn-on-Tyne.

H.M. destroyer MAORI was built by Messrs. Fairfields Shipbuilding & Engineering Co., Ltd., and H.M. destroyer SIKH by Messrs. Alexander Stephen & Sons. Ltd. H.M. destroyer LEGION was built by Messrs. R.N.W. Hawthorn Leslie & Co., Ltd., at Hebburn-on-Tyne.

-----

ADMIRALTY, S.W.1.



13.12.41. - No.22.

Air Ministry Bulletin No.5860

Air Ministry News Service

CANADIANS BAG TWO NAZI SHIPS

"It was like taking candy from a kid," was a Canadian pilot's description of a shipping raid made by Hudson aircraft of Coastal Command off the Dutch Coast early this morning.

The pilot successfully bombed a medium sized supply ship, and another Canadian left a large vessel enveloped in steam and black smoke.

The pilots are members of a Canadian squadron known to the Air Force as "the demons". They are one of the reasons why Nazi ships prefer to stay at home.

A flight lieutenant bagged the large ship. He dive-bombed it, pulling out at mast height and dropping a stick of delayed action bombs at the same time.

The rear gunner saw a brilliant flash, and immediately afterwards a large cloud of steam and black smoke completely obscured the superstructure.

The other Hudson, in the words of the pilot, was "stooging along at 800 feet" when a convoy was sighted.

A stick of bombs was dropped on one of the ships and the rear gunner saw a big bright flash. The red and green navigation lights on the ship were flung sideways into the air.

---



13/12/41 - No. 23

POULTRY AND RABBITS: LICENSING OF WHOLESALERS AND COLLECTORS

The Minister of Food has amended the Price Control Orders for poultry and rabbits to provide that all wholesalers of poultry and rabbits and all collectors selling rabbits on a first hand sale must, from February 2, 1942, be in possession of licences granted by him.

The amendments also require wholesalers to keep records of all sales and purchases, including particulars of suppliers and customers, quantities and varieties sold, and prices charged. Retailers must keep similar records of their purchases.

The Order under the Merchandise Marking Act requiring the marking of imported poultry is suspended.

The new Orders come into force on Monday, December 15.

MINISTRY OF FOOD



13/12/41 - No. 24

GREECE IN PEACE AND WAR

A warm tribute to the resourcefulness of the Greek people, which at the time of the Asia Minor disaster helped them to overcome their many difficult problems, was paid by Miss Dilys Powell in a lecture this afternoon at the St. George's Institute (lent by the courtesy of the Archdeacon of Middlesex) under the chairmanship of Sir John Stavridi. As an illustration of this resourcefulness, she mentioned the example which Greece set to the rest of Europe by the settlement of her million and a quarter refugees.

Miss Powell, who has visited Greece many times during the past few years, spoke with admiration of the warm-heartedness and hospitality of the Greek people. But the Greeks, she said, have an even more remarkable quality - their sense of human dignity, which so imbued the whole nation that at the time of the Italian invasion in October, 1940, the simplest and humblest of them were ready to fight, not for prosperity or material gain, but for humanity and the idea of liberty.

In thanking Miss Powell, Sir John Stavridi recalled that, in a six months struggle, the spirit of the Greek nation succeeded in humiliating the pride of the Italian blusterer. That same spirit compelled Greece to oppose even the might of Germany, thus making it necessary for Hitler to change his plans and delaying for six critical weeks the German attack on Russia.

In conclusion Sir John urged all lovers of Greece to pledge themselves, when victory is won, to work to the utmost for her reconstruction, for her needs will be great.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION



13/12/41 - No.25

Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin 5861

R.A.F. STRIKE IN MEDITERRANEAN

Medium bombers in the Central Mediterranean have completed a 24 hours intensive offensive on targets in Sicily and the toe of Italy.

On Thursday morning in fine weather they made a lightning attack on several large vessels lying in the harbour of Catania. Aircraft crossed the coast at a low altitude, and the first, piloted by an experienced New Zealander, obtained direct hits on a medium-sized vessel. Showers of sparks and a series of explosions showed that the bombs had found their target, and the following pilot saw the stricken ship blazing fiercely amidships. He, in his turn, dropped his own load of bombs on another medium-sized vessel lying alongside the central mole.

The last aircraft was over the target before the ground defences had got their guns into action.

Later in the day another force of Blenheims hedge-hopped overland and bombed a medium-sized ship in Argostoli harbour.

Yesterday morning the Blenheims were again early on the Italian scene and attacked a munitions factory at Crotone.

A Canadian wing commander, after bombing the factory from a low altitude, flew into the cloud of thick black smoke that was issuing from its chimneys, and, under its cover, flew safely out to sea again.

Another aircraft bombed a factory beside the railway lines at Catanzaro, while a third, flying only a few feet from the ground, dropped a bomb on the viaduct west of Marina Di Gioiosa.

Early yesterday morning heavy bombers made the long journey to Patras and carried out a three-hour attack on shipping there. Through gaps in the clouds they dropped from a low altitude a large number of bombs on merchant vessels lying in the harbour. Clouds of smoke were soon rising from the bows of one ship after the attack, and a vessel straddled by a stick of bombs was seen to be engulfed by water and debris. Buildings on the quay were demolished by direct hits.

Other heavy bombers attacked the aerodrome at Pappos and the submarine base at Augusta.

Naval aircraft also had a successful outing yesterday morning, when they attacked the aerodrome at Castel Benito. The first of the formation, which dumped a stick on hangars, apparently hit a fuel dump, for a large fire broke out and clouds of thick black smoke rose several hundred feet into the air.

One pilot who bombed a hanger dropped his incendiaries among dispersed aircraft and destroyed three of them. He saw one blow up and disintegrate and others catch fire.

-----



13/12/41 - No.26

Air Ministry No.5862

AIR MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE

Fighters on patrol over Northern France to-day attacked a factory,  
a goods train, and a gun post.

No aircraft is missing.

\*\*\*



13/12/41 - No.28

Air Ministry No.5864

AIR MINISTRY AND MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY

A single enemy aircraft dropped a bomb harmlessly in North-East  
England this afternoon.

-----



13.12.41      No.29

Air Ministry No.5865

MIDDLE EAST COMMUNIQUE

H.Q., R.A.F.,  
Middle East,  
Saturday, December 13, 1941

CRETE: Bomber aircraft of the Royal Air Force successfully attacked the aerodrome at Maleme, in Crete, during Thursday night (11/12th December). A petrol dump which was ignited caused a number of violent explosions, and many fires broke out. Bombs also burst in the area of the landing ground.

GREECE: Objectives at Patras, in the Gulf of Corinth, and the aerodrome at Araxos were also raided during the same night. A liner in the harbour at Patras was probably hit, and quayside buildings were extensively damaged.

LIBYA: In Libya yesterday (December 12) our bombers raided enemy motorized units in the Gazala area with good results. Many direct hits were obtained.

Petrol tankers were set on fire by our fighters in the course of attacks on traffic on the Jedabya-El Agheila road, and many lorries and other vehicles were damaged.

Ju.52's flying from the north into Libya were engaged by our aircraft, four of the Junkers being shot down.

During Thursday night (11/12th December) naval aircraft attacked the aerodrome at Castel Benito, in Tripolitania, where three enemy aircraft on the ground were destroyed.

A fire of considerable dimensions broke out in one of the hangars.

SICILY AND ITALY: Our aircraft were active over Sicily and Southern Italy yesterday. At Marina di Gioiosa a viaduct was bombed and motor transport vehicles machine-gunned, while at Catanzaro Marina factories were attacked. During a raid on the aerodrome at Comiso, direct hits were obtained on buildings and hangars. The naval base at Augusta was also attacked.

From these and other operations, eight of our aircraft are missing.

-----