

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

55, WHITEHALL,
LONDON, S.W.1

PRESS NOTICE

13th November, 1944
M.A.F. 1273.

REPLACEMENTS FOR DOMESTIC POULTRY KEEPERS

Additional rations are being allowed again this season for accredited poultry breeders in England and Wales, including those on probation, to enable them to rear pullets for sale to domestic poultry keepers. The breeders and hatcheries who are participating in this scheme have undertaken to rear the pullets for sale at not less than 8 weeks old, but the rations allowed to breeders are sufficient to enable them to offer a proportion of their output at ages over 16 weeks to provide for the needs of those domestic poultry keepers who wish to purchase replacements that are nearing the laying age.

Breeders are expected to observe the following agreed schedule of maximum ex farm prices for commercial grade pullets:

8 weeks	11s.
10 "	13s. 6d.
12 "	16s.
16 "	20s.
20 "	25s.

Domestic poultry keepers requiring replacements at any time during the next 12 months, or persons intending to become domestic poultry keepers, are urged to take advantage in good time of the opportunities provided by this scheme to get good quality pullets from accredited breeders rather than buy nondescript pullets of unknown origin or attempt the hazardous task of rearing day-old chicks of unknown sex. Although preference will be given to orders from domestic poultry keepers, breeders are free to sell any surplus to other buyers, so that it is desirable that orders should be placed well in advance. Domestic poultry keepers may place their orders either through the Secretary of their Domestic Poultry Club or direct with the breeder, but under no circumstances will the pullets be sold to agents or distributors other than Secretaries of Domestic Poultry Clubs.

The names and addresses of accredited poultry breeders can be obtained through the Council's Area Organisers.

2nd TAF/FB/AIR. INF. 670.

BELGIAN SPITFIRE PILOT HOME AFTER 10 YEARS

Squadron Leader Albert van de Velde, Commanding Officer of a Belgian Spitfire squadron of RAF 2nd TAF, has just had a homecoming - the first for 10 years.

His squadron has fought its way from the invasion landing strips, and is now stationed in its homeland.

Van de Velde's home is at Asper, between Cudenarde and Ghent. Until he went there by road he had not been home since 1934, when he was 20 years old.

"My family had a business there as manufacturing chemists," he said. "I left home to join the Belgian Air Force, telling my father, who forbade me to fly, that I was off to join the Army.

"In 1942 my Belgian squadron of the RAF was formed from personnel who had escaped from Belgium through France, Spain and Gibraltar. We were sent to Africa, but were brought back almost immediately to take part in the war nearer our homeland.

"In March, 1944, we were brought into the Second Tactical Air Force for the great invasion; and now we're home again even sooner than we had hoped.

"Sometimes I used to come down low and circle my home at Asper when returning from operations; and the folks would come out holding a huge Belgian flag by its four corners as a sign that they knew who I was. Now I can visit them properly."

S/Ldr. Van de Velde is one of a few pilots to fly with a broken back. Within a few weeks of the accident which resulted in it, last year, he flew aerobatics in a test whilst in plaster, was able to satisfy a medical board that he was capable of flying against the enemy, and accordingly returned to his squadron in time to take part in the invasion.

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BEFORE 0830 B.S.T. (i.e. FOR EVENING PAPERS) ON
NOVEMBER 13, 1944.

THIS EMBARGO SHOULD BE RESPECTED OVERSEAS BY PREFACING
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Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No.16328.

THEY ESCORTED THE PRIME MINISTER

Spitfires of R.A.F. Fighter Command provided escort to the aircraft in which the Prime Minister and his party flew to France during the week-end.

They included pilots of the county of Nottingham squadron, commanded by Squadron Leader Michael Kellett, of Maida Vale, London.

They escorted the first Airborne Division on part of their flight to Arnhem and in the succeeding days gave cover to reinforcements.

Two peacetime farmers, both of whom have served in the Middle East, are the squadron flight commanders. They are Flight-Lieutenant Robert Seed, D.F.C. of Horsham, Sussex; and Flight-Lieutenant Tony Fowler, of Fielding, New Zealand. Flight-Lieutenant Fowler was 17 days in a German field hospital in Tunisia after crash-landing his aircraft in enemy territory. He was rescued by British troops when the Germans fled.

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PICTURE OF SQUADRON LEADER KELLETT AVAILABLE THROUGH B.I.P.P.A.

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THAT FEMININE INTEREST!

Glamour Girls not Essential in
Troops' Stage Shows, says Army
Entertainments Organiser

By a Military Observer

Shapely legs and feminine charm cut little ice with the average Services audience unless these glamour girls have an act as well as an attractive figure. This is the considered opinion of Lieut. Richard Gilbert, The Queen's Royal Regiment, who commands the entertainment unit of 56. (London) Division. Although Gilbert's opinion is a highly controversial one, he has a water-tight reply to those who claim that a troops' show must have a bevy of beautiful women to guarantee its success.

To prove his point, he recently invited me to witness a performance of his latest revue, "Hotel The Truth" which, as usual, has an all-male cast of serving soldiers, several of whom were professional musicians or actors before enlisting in the Army.

The show was staged in a magnificent Opera House, comparatively small, but extremely well-appointed. The local Italians have every reason to be proud of their theatre which, before the war, was a shrine of musical patronage, attracting visitors from far and wide.

Lieut. Gilbert's entertainers, were delighted to find such an excellently equipped theatre at their disposal. Accustomed to make-shift performances in fields, wadis, barns and derelict outbuildings, they were able to do full justice to their peppy revue.

Lieut. Gilbert, O.C. and founder of "The Party", is a professional actor. His home is at 138, Chiltern Court, London, W.1. He has an intimate knowledge of Theatreland, having always lived in and around London's West End.

He appeared with Geoffrey Toome, Joyce Blond, Olga Lirado and George Woodbridge in Shakespeare's "Cymbeline", at the Embassy Theatre. He was also with George Woodbridge in "Chu The Sinner", a Chinese fantasy which ran at the Embassy Theatre. He also appeared in "Judgment Day", at the Phoenix Theatre, in films, and with the B.B.C.

/"Light

"Light entertainment helps the troops to relax", Lieut. Gilbert told me. "I know we serve a very useful purpose in producing from them a laugh or a grin when they have come out of the tough spots.

"Troops want good music and singing, with plenty of colour; they also enjoy good tap, and other dancing. We have proved that entertainment by an all-male cast can operate right up in the forward areas; and, what is more, is highly appreciated by officers and men.

"Glamour girls are not essential in troops' stage-shows. Experience has proved that even a pretty girl with an attractive figure has to act, sing or dance effectively to gain the full appreciation of the average critical Services audience."

Gilbert's show, "Hotel the Truth", which is scoring a big success not only with 56. Division personnel, but with Canadians, Americans, nursing-officers, and thousands of others who have seen this sparkling ~~revue~~, has all the ingredients of a well-produced pot-pourri of music, wit, song and dance. Every member of the 16 entertainers is a specialist showman and the production is slick and extremely colourful. The Gaucho Tango Orchestra sequence is a high-spot; and Richard Gilbert, as the female-impersonator, provides all the necessary "feminine" allure, with the aid of an extensive wardrobe of fashionable finery.

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SAFE CONDUCT
SCRAP OF PAPER IS WHITE FLAG FOR WAR-
WEARY GERMAN SOLDIERS
By a Military Observer

A scrap of paper, with the text printed in German and English is serving as a White Flag of surrender for war-weary enemy troops on the Eighth Army Front in Italy.

Fired in "propaganda" shells by our 25-pounders, these slips of white paper, inscribed with the word PASSIERSCHEIN (Safe Conduct), are being eagerly snatched up by Reich troops who impatiently await their opportunity to put them to effective use.

And that use is fully outlined in the bi-lingual instructions, printed in bold type on each Mercy Slip of paper projected into the enemy's lines.

The product of Psychological Warfare Branch, they bear the following text:

The GERMAN SOLDIER who carries this SAFE CONDUCT is using it as a sign of his genuine wish to give himself up. He is to be disarmed, to be well-looked after, to receive food and medical attention as required, and is to be removed from the danger zone as soon as possible.

That the average German soldier who surrenders under the protection of the Mercy Slip of SAFE CONDUCT has "a genuine wish to give himself up", is evidenced by the considerable batches of war-weary German infantrymen who gladly take advantage of this golden opportunity of getting out of the war, even at the cost of internment.

For although his Nazi masters have done everything within their power to instil into the minds of their serfs a deeply-rooted terror of the alleged fate of German prisoners-of-war who fall into Allied hands, the average German soldier appears to have no hesitation in taking the chance of being subjected to "torture and starvation."

The other day I saw a number of these SAFE CONDUCT prisoners-of-war making their way towards a P.O.W. cage of 56th. (London) Division. Most of the men were fully armed, but when they gave themselves up, the majority disarmed themselves before producing the SAFE CONDUCT slip.

Contrary to being "terrified", they were obviously only too glad to surrender, especially as one of the guarantees of the SAFE CONDUCT leaflet was to the effect that they would be "removed from the danger zone as soon as possible."

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CANADIAN OFFICER SERVING WITH HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT

(By a Military Observer)

Captain F.A.N. Chesham, of London, Ontario, is one of a number of Canadian officers now serving with the British Army who were recently in the thick of the fighting to reach the trapped 1st Airborne Division of Arnhem. Serving with the Hampshire Regt. Capt. Chesham has been in action on the Western Front since a fortnight after D-Day.

When the Second Army plunged across the Dutch frontier in September on its daring drive through Eindhoven and on to Nijmegen, a battalion of the Hampshire Regt. was in the vanguard of the advance. It helped to clear Nijmegen of the enemy, guarded the vital bridges north of the town, and then on the next day fought its way to the south bank of the River Lek to help supply and finally evacuate the survivors of the gallant 1st Airborne from the north bank. It was the company commanded by Capt. Chesham which got stores across the river on the night of the 24th Sept. when troops of the Dorset Regt. went over in a brave attempt to extend the bridgehead. His company then covered the Airborne withdrawal on the following evening and for some eight days fought bitter actions in that inhospitable fenland whilst the Germans attempted to counter attack from across the river.

Captain Chesham also took a leading part in the famous battle for Mont Pincon in Normandy early in August. It was his battalion of the Hampshire Regt. which launched a diversionary attack through Roucamps to draw off the German strength from the main assault on the hill which came in from the west. The Hampshires attack, in which Capt. Chesham was commanding a company, had a big hand in the final capture of that vital feature.

Captain Chesham, who is a regular officer commissioned from the University of Western Ontario in 1939, is all for the loan scheme of Canadian officers to the British Army. It was under this scheme that he volunteered and eventually joined the Hampshire Regt. in April this year. His choice of the Hampshire Regt. was due, amongst other reasons, to the fact that a gardener at his home had previously served with this regt.

Capt. Chesham first arrived in England with the 1st Canadian Division in 1939 as a member of the Royal Canadian Regt. He returned to Canada in April 1942 on promotion to a new battalion and in August '43 went with the Canadian Brigade to the Aleutian Islands.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION, BROADCAST IN OVERSEAS BULLETINS OR USE ON CLUB TAPES BEFORE 2330 B.S.T. ON MONDAY 13th NOV. 1944 (i.e. FOR TUESDAY MORNING PAPERS). NOT TO BE BROADCAST IN THE MIDNIGHT NEWS OF NOV. 13/14 THIS EMBARGO SHOULD BE RESPECTED OVERSEAS BY PREFACING ANY MESSAGES FILLED WITH THE EMBARGO

FIFE AND FORFAR YEOMANRY IN WESTERN EUROPE

The Fife and Forfar Yeomanry have been fighting as armoured troops in Western Europe since the early days of the Normandy campaign. Their formation landed little more than a week after D-day, and during the last days of June was in action helping to establish a bridgehead over the Odon against very stubborn opposition.

In this fighting the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry were conspicuous in helping an infantry brigade from another division mop up German forces which resisted fiercely in the Grainville-Colleville on the 27th June.

During July the Regiment with the rest of its formation advanced through La Hogue and Cagny into the heart of the Bocage country. The enemy made many attempts to stop these thrusts which cut his lines of communication with southern and eastern France, and the Yeomanry played an important part in containing and repelling many counter-attacks.

During August the River Noireau was crossed and, acting for some time as the spear-head of the Division's advance, the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry swept forward, passing, in the last week of the month, through L'Aigle, some 70 miles to the west of Paris.

The Regiment's formation was to the forefront in the headlong chase of the routed German forces across the Somme. The Fife and Forfar Yeomanry were in the vanguard of the troops forcing the line of the river, which they crossed by an intact bridge on the last day of August. The headlong advance continued and, early in September, the Regiment's formation covered 60 miles in a single day.

On 6th September strong enemy resistance was crushed on the line of the Escout Canal North East of Antwerp, and less than a week later the Regiment, with infantry support, having crossed the Canal, had swung across the width of Belgium and advanced into Holland as far as Deurne, 15 miles from the German border.

By 10th October, elements of its formation were in the Overloon area, then held by the Germans in force.

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CHRISTMAS AIRGRAPH POSTING

APPEAL BY THE POSTMASTER GENERAL

The Postmaster General announces that the 27th November is the latest date for the posting of 3d airgraphs intended for Christmas delivery to the British North African Force, Central Mediterranean Force, Middle East Force, Paiforce, and to members of the Forces in East Africa, Canada and the United States; and also to ships of the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy at ports in the Mediterranean, Red Sea, Persian Gulf, East Africa and North America.

The same date applies where the airgraph service is available for civilian addresses.

The Postmaster General points out that as far as possible greetings airgraphs will be retained abroad for delivery at Christmas, and there will be no advantage in deferring posting until the latest date. Early posting will help the Post Office in clearing the millions of airgraphs which will have to be dealt with.

The airgraph service is not available to civilian addresses in U.S.A.

As already announced, EFM telegrams will not be accepted in the United Kingdom from 6th to 25th December inclusive.

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HOW THE 43RD DIVISION SAVED THE 1ST AIRBORNE OF ARNHEM.
By a Military Observer.

Here, revealed for the first time, is the full magnificent story of the relief of the gallant 1st Airborne of Arnhem by infantry of the 43rd (Wessex) Division.

The climax of the Airborne expedition, of its heroic stand against over-whelming odds, in the story of 250 men of the Dorset Regiment who matched the heroism of the Airborne by their self-sacrificing rescue efforts. Theirs was the last stand on the north bank of the River Lek.

This story, which will rank with the great 'relief' stories of British Army history, is of men of unmatched spirit who, with their own supply line cut behind them, drove ten miles through enemy-held fenland - with Tiger tanks crashing into the flying column - to get supplies through; of four days and nights of dire effort by the Division to extend the 'thin red line' - already perilously long - to the banks of the River Lek; of a Dorset Battalion which at night crossed the river into the dark hell of the fast shrinking Airborne pocket; of a Colonel, self-appointed platoon commander, who was last heard shouting 'There they are - get them with the bayonet!'; of a Major who deliberately called a fierce British artillery barrage down on his own map reference; and of infantrymen who stood firm while the Airborne men got back across the river, and then fought on alone.

The grim, determined, fight of the 43rd Division to reach the Airborne force north of the River Lek began on September 22, four days after the first airborne landings. That day, with the fenland north of Nijmegen impassable to armoured columns, the Division was called upon to make its first attempt to get supplies to the airborne garrison. Two Brigades of infantry crossed the Nijmegen bridge. Supported by a small number of tanks they had orders to break through the dyke country, drive up the Arnhem road, and make contact with the Airborne force still believed to be holding out in Arnhem itself.

/Very

Very bitter fighting developed along the dyke roads and in the villages and woods of this inhospitable fenland between the two rivers. The drive up the main road made no progress. Many tanks were encountered and a village completely shattered in the fighting on the left of the road.

Reports coming in during the day showed that the Airborne pocket holding out west of Arnhem was already so tight and small that the R.A.F., in spite of gallant flying, had succeeded in dropping only 10% of its parachute supplies inside the perimeter. The Airborne were short of ammunition, were likely to be short of food, and needed medical supplies. Relief had to be got to them without delay.

That evening an armoured relief column, made up of an infantry Battalion of the 43rd Division and a squadron of an armoured unit, set out to crash through all opposition and reach the river with several 'ducks' loaded with ammunition and food, the infantry riding on the tanks and Bren carriers. On the way some five German tanks broke into the column, fortunately at a point where it had become split two-thirds of the way back. With Tiger tanks following it up, the head of the column sped on, covering the ten perilous miles in twenty minutes, and reached the river bank.

Behind it, a Company Commander - Major H. Parker, of Erdington, near Birmingham, collecting together a fighting force and all the Piats he could muster, set booby traps for the Tigers on the cross roads. A German dispatch rider, leading the hurrying tanks, was blown sky high. Firing from the ditches on the roadside, the Piat crews riddled the first tank at 5-10 yards range as it, and a second tank behind opened fire and endeavoured to hide themselves in a smoke screen. The first tank was set on fire, the second ran into the ditch after being hit. Two others following up behind also ditched themselves in their efforts to get off the road. All four were brand new Tigers which had passed out of the Nuremberg factory only a fortnight earlier.

The daring drive straight through the German-held territory had gained the river. But the effort was to be in vain. As the men struggled to get the laden 'ducks' down to the river in the darkness each 'duck' in turn slithered off the narrow road into the dyke. No supplies reached the Airborne that night.

The next day - September 23 - a bigger, organised attempt was made. A Brigade, armed with supplies and assault boats instead of 'ducks' moved forward. Battle was joined on the way. Tiger tanks again got in amongst the troops. The relief force was split. The fighting so delayed the eventual, hard-won, arrival on the river bank that darkness fell before the necessary reconnaissance could be made. But contact was made with Polish forces who had been dropped south of the river the previous day. They knew the country and offered to get the supplies across. Ferried over the fast river by Royal Engineers of the 43rd they did succeed in getting a quantity of supplies and a hundred of their own men across.

A beginning had been made. But it was not enough. It was clear now that the 'horseshoe' pocket held by the Airborne was already too small to operate any satisfactory relief landing behind it. It was so narrow that its base on the north bank was being severely enfiladed from both sides by German machine-gun fire. It was decided that the tiny bridgehead must be widened.

Again, this called for a night operation; no movement was possible on the river bank in daylight as it was completely overlooked for miles from the high ground to the north.

/A Battalion

Dorset -3-

A Battalion of the ~~Dorchester~~ Dorsetshire Regiment was to cross to extend the bridgehead the next night - Sept. 24. Urgent demands were made to the rear for more assault boats. The first lot to come up ran into enemy positions, were shot up and captured. Another two lorry loads fell into the dyke and had to be extricated before some 20 could be mustered for the operation.

Under cover of darkness the Dorset Regiment carried the boats some 600 yards down through an orchard and over obstructions to the river side. They were mortared and machine-gunned. One boat was set on fire and others holed before they could be got into the water. The first troops were crossing at 1.30. Some boats were hit and sank; others were carried downstream by the swift current. But by daylight the elements of four rifle companies were across, subjected to close-range attack - and some pinned down - as they landed. In small groups, none more than platoon in strength, they fought in the darkness to reach their objective - the high ground through the woods skirting the river.

To gain this ground meant fighting their way up a 60 degree slope with the enemy holding the top. It was here that the Colonel of the Battalion - Lieut. Col. G. Tilly, of Couldson Surrey was seen and heard leading a platoon forward along the lower slopes of the hill. Shortly after he was heard urging his men on and shouting - 'There they are - get at them with the bayonet.' He was not heard again and no trace was found of him.

As daylight came the majority of these brave men had fought their way up through the woods towards a burning factory on the left flank. Another small party had also made its objective - the link up with an Airborne Headquarters on the right. Two of these were officers, Major J. D. Grafton, of Gayfere Street, Westminster, London, ^{who alone} had been told by his Colonel of the plan to withdraw the Airborne force the next night, and Lieut. D. L. Eccles, of Dunderry Park, Navan, Co. Meath, Eire, who had been given the task of delivering an important written message to Airborne Division H.Q. And throughout daylight of Sept. 25 the men of the 43rd Division fought on in scattered groups in confused hand-to-hand battle. Pushing inland, though the odds were all against them, they gained that precious elbow room to allow for the withdrawal of the Airborne. It was very costly fighting.

It was during this time that Major Grafton, fighting with one of the many small groups into which the Airborne had been split, called over the radio for our own guns to put a concentration down on his own map reference! German tanks had infiltrated

/right....

right into the area. The fierce British barrage was effective and Major Grafton continued to call the artillery down on various targets to the great assistance of the Airborne pockets of resistance. Lieut Eccles also had succeeded in contacting the Airborne H.Q. with his message, and returned through the German positions to join Major Grafton. Shortly after they were forced by German pressure to destroy their wireless set and move their ground. Lieut. Eccles was later reported as missing.

So it went on throughout the day while Royal Engineers on the south bank made preparations under cover for the night's evacuation.

As darkness fell the assault boats, manned by the Royal Engineers of the 43rd, took the water. The Airborne began their fine, orderly withdrawal to the water's edge. To guide them Bofors guns fired two lanes of tracer continuously throughout the night across the river. The gallant infantry of the 43rd Division fought on in the woods, covering a withdrawal they did not know was taking place.

The evacuation went on quietly and orderly with the Germans pressing closer. An officer of the Dorsets, CAPTAIN R.F. HALL, of NOBURY, S.W.16. now slipped across from the south bank and bravely made his way alone towards his infantry to warn them for the first time that evacuation was ordered. They were to withdraw as best they could. He reached the woods, avoided German posts which were alert and shot up one which slept. Gathering up a few men, and assuring himself that no others could be found, he got them back across the river.

The evacuation of the 2,800 Airborne was achieved despite the Germans machine-gunning and shelling. At the collecting point on the south bank fine staffwork produced blankets, dry clothes, rum, cigarettes, and a Jeep and 'duck' taxi service.

But of the 250 men of the Dorsets who crossed to save the Airborne only some got back that night. Some swam back, others crossed in boats. During the next two nights officers and NCO's made several gallant efforts to gather up stragglers. Crossing again to the north bank, they placed lifebelts on the river side, and combed the woods. Another fifty, little groups who swam or floated across on logs, bit by bit found their own painful way back. The Colonel, some officers and many men of the 250 brave rescuers did not return. The gallant 43rd Division had saved the Airborne of Arnhem. It had made the sacrifice it was in honour bound to do.

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13.11.44. No.13

LIBERATED VILLAGERS GIVE DAGGER TO GENERAL

S.E.A.C.Hdqtrs
Nov.10,1944

Villagers in the Kabaw valley on the Burma front have presented a dagger to General Sir Montague Stopford, Commander of the 33rd Ind Corps which drove the Japanese from the area in gratitude for their liberation.

Men of the villages brought the gaily robed women folk to the solemn ceremony near Tamu. Attended by the headmen of Tamu and Hesin, each holding a gold covered umbrella used only on occasions of great importance, the general met the chiefs and elders of several of the Kabaw valley villages.

A band played the traditional ^{Burmese} royal march and then, shielded by the state umbrella, General Stopford sat listening to songs and also watched four dancing girls. In front of him squatted villagers - far more aware of the general than of the entertainment, the dancing girls sang a victory chant which the village poets had composed for the occasion.

The dagger was brought to the general on a red cushion. Its handle was of ivory bound with silver and its case carved from pinewood. Engraved in Burmese was "The headmen and villagers of Tamu and Hesin respectfully present this dagger to Lt.Gen.Sir Montague Stopford as a mark of respect and as a token of their firm reliance in him."

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13/11/44 - No. 17

SOUTH EAST ASIA COMMUNIQUE NO. 315

S.E.A.C. Headquarters

November 13th, 1944

CHIN HILLS: Troops of the Fifth Indian Division have cleared the stockades, two strongpoints on the road east from Tiddim, and have pushed on to within ten miles of Kalemyo.

KABAW VALLEY: East African forces, advancing on Kalemyo down the Kabaw and Kale Valleys, are shelling the town.

CHINDWIN SECTOR: Progress is maintained by other East African forces operating against the enemy on the west bank of the Chindwin.

ARAKAN: Japanese suffered casualties in patrol clashes with West African troops around Paletwa and with troops of the 25th Indian Division south of Maungdaw.

NORTHERN BURMA: In the Bhamo area Chinese troops have met much stiffer enemy resistance. Units in the Momaik area are now engaged in heavy fighting. Chinese troops have advanced south of the Taping River to a village seven miles north east of Bhamo.

In the railway corridor units of the British 36th Division have also met increasing resistance from strong Japanese defences. In hard fighting British troops made minor advances and are now half a mile from Pinwe, seven miles north of Naba Junction.

In the Shwegu area there is no change.

AIR: Aircraft of Eastern Air Command attacked enemy positions, buildings and communications yesterday in the Chindwin region and in Central Burma.

On the night of November 11 mines were laid in enemy waters.

During an attack on airfields in Central Burma on November 11, one enemy aircraft was destroyed and another probably destroyed on the ground.

The enemy aircraft yesterday claimed as damaged off the Arakan coast is now known to have been destroyed.

Two Allied aircraft are missing.

13.11.44 - No.20.

MEDITERRANEAN COMMUNIQUE

Allied Force Headquarters,
13th November, 1944.

ALLIED ARMIES IN ITALY: In the coastal sector British armour and infantry of Eighth Army have crossed the CHIARA canal south of RAVENNA. Further progress has also been made northwest of FORLI despite very strong resistance. Elsewhere there is no change in our forward positions.

MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS: Escorted heavy bombers of the Fifteenth A.A.F. yesterday attacked four rail bridges on the BRENNER PASS line in Northern Italy.

Aircraft of the Tactical Force attacked military objectives in the battle areas of Northern Italy, and communication targets in the PO VALLEY.

Coastal Aircraft were active against shipping in the Adriatic, and Balkan Air Force units flew missions to ALBANIA and YUGOSLAVIA, attacking transport concentrations and other enemy targets.

Last night our bombers attacked CASARSA rail bridge in north-eastern Italy.

From these operations eight of our aircraft are missing.

It is now known that two additional enemy aircraft were destroyed on November 10.

M. A. A. F. flew 1,200 sorties.

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13/11/44. No. 21.

RELEASE REGULATIONS FOR INDIAN ARMY

The Government of India have approved release regulations for the Indian Army and the Women's Services of India. These are based on the same principles as the release regulations issued by the War Office and apply equally to all personnel, British or Indian, of the Indian Army and the Women's Services of India. They envisage three types of releases.

CLASS 'A' Personnel surplus to requirements who will be released in the priority of their ages and length of service.

CLASS 'B' Personnel urgently required for reconstruction work of national importance.

CLASS 'C' Compassionate cases.

No individual will be released against his or her will, provided that he or she can be usefully employed. Similar regulations for the Royal Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force are under consideration.

While approving this measure, the Government of India fully appreciate that there can be no reduction in India's fighting commitments until Japan is defeated. Until this has been achieved it is unlikely that there will be any personnel surplus to requirements. In consequence, every release, except in compassionate cases, will be subject to prior replacement by a trained substitute. This may result in delay in the release of individual men and women who wish to go, but the Government are confident that all ranks will understand the difficulties. For their own part, they are taking all possible steps to reduce such delay to a minimum.

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INDIA OFFICE.

13.11.44. - No.24.

SCRAP METAL

Since the beginning of the war Northern Ireland has sent on an average three ship-loads of scrap metal per week to steel works and foundries in Great Britain, the tonnage exceeding 270,000. This was sufficient to build five battle-ships, 5 cruisers and 52 destroyers. Industry has supplied the greater part.

GOVT. OF NORTHERN IRELAND

REVIEW OF THE BURMA FRONT

DURING THE WEEK-ENDED NOVEMBER 10

Headquarters, South
East Asia Command

The picture of 14th Army operations on the Central Burma front has become much clearer with the release during the week under review of information regarding the current operational role of the 11th East African Division. It had been known for some time that this division was on the Burma front but it has now been disclosed that East African formations are in contact with the enemy near the west bank of the River Chindwin, just north of Mawlaik, and further to the south in the Kabaw Valley - the long trough which with its extension (the Kale Valley) - runs from Tamu to Kalembo.

This information, coupled with the advance of the 5th Indian Division along the Tiddim-Fort White-Kalembo road discloses the strategy of the rolling up of the front of more than sixty miles which the Japanese had hoped to stabilize running west from Kalewa on the River Chindwin, along the Myittha River, across the Kabaw and Kale valleys, and thence to Tiddim in the Chin hills - a front which was designed not to be an unbroken line but rather a series of isolated strongpoints such as Kennedy Peak and Fort White and of which Mawlaik (30 miles due north of Kalewa) was to be an important outpost or bastion. The 5th Indian Division has had an exceedingly good week, successively over-running the Japanese defensive positions at the vital corner at Kennedy Peak and Fort White.

These positions which barred our advance along the Tiddim-Kalembo road were formidable and might have held our troops up for a considerable time had we not succeeded in each case in getting troops behind the enemy positions. Our attacks on all three strongpoints came in from two sides and this, combined with a preliminary softening-up by land and air bombardment, did the trick. Despite desperate Japanese efforts our out-flanking forces effectively prevented the enemy from reinforcing his crumbling defensive system from the rear. The vital corner fell on November 3, Kennedy Peak on November 4, while Fort White, a small mist-enshrouded village perched on the north-east side of an 8,000-foot mountain, was occupied by our troops on November 8. The Japanese had pulled out of the village before we entered it, fighting their way out of a well-laid trap, but there had been two day's fierce fighting on the north-west of the village with our
/outflanking troops

outflanking troops once again pushing in hard from the south. In each operation, the wild, Chin Hill country, some of the most difficult country in the world, enabled some of the Japanese defenders, hemmed in as they were on two sides, to escape in disorderly flight. So far the advance along the Tiddim-Kalemyo road represents a recovery of positions which General Slim's 14th Army had formerly held.

From Fort White onwards a new chapter opens.

In North Burma the position has been:

1. Troops of the British 36th Division continued to push forward with patrols south of Mawlu, on either side of the Mawlu-Nabu stretch of the railway.
2. Chinese troops were active in patrolling along the tapering river near Myothit, 24 miles north-east of Bhamo.
3. While this was happening, it was announced on Nov. 9 that a third thrust had been made southward into Japanese-held territory by Chinese troops.

The Chinese started from Hopin, the railway corridor, and, operated in the greatest secrecy, with wireless silence. They crossed the Irrawaddy at two points and on November 6 occupied the town of Shwegu, mid-way between Bhamo and Katha. For one of the two columns which crossed pontoons and outboard motors were dropped from the air. The other crossed in local rivercraft. This new thrust met with no more opposition than had been encountered in the railway corridor and on the Myitkyina-Bhamo road, the Japanese withdrawing in front of the advancing troops.

The fact that no great effort was made to defend Shwegu suggests that the Japanese were by no means ready for this speedy thrust. The country traversed by the Chinese troops was extremely difficult but only one stop was made at "Broadway", one of the airstrips used by the 3rd Indian Division (the Chindits) in their operations behind the enemy lines in the spring of this year.

The Chinese are now reported to be occupying more than ten miles of the south bank of the Irrawaddy.

This move, taken in conjunction with the advances in the railway corridor and on the Myitkyina-Bhamo road, clearly suggests the possibility that Bhamo and Katha may be outflanked. /In Arakan

In Arakan, West African troops, continuing their advance down the Kaladan Valley, have now come up against the enemy defensive positions guarding Paletwa. In the Buthidaung sector, our artillery has been active and there have been several patrol clashes.

Three records were broken during last Friday and Saturday's raids by heavy bombers on Rangoon's biggest marshalling yards. It was the first time that B-29 Super Fortresses have operated against a target in Burma. They carried the heaviest bomb load yet dropped in a single attack in this country, and they were escorted by fighters for the first time in any theatre of war.

On Saturday, Liberators and Thunderbolts from Eastern Air Command were used and on neither day was there much enemy fighter opposition. This may well have been the result of fighter and medium bomber (Mitchell) onslaughts on neighbouring aerodromes before the Fortresses and Liberators attacked the main target.

Throughout the week medium bombers and fighter-bombers of Eastern Air Command have continually given strong support, both close and remote, to ground troops. Close support from the air played a large part in the week's outstanding successes on the ground.

Communications of all sorts, road, rail and river, have been attacked and disorganised. Bridges particularly have suffered. R.A.F. Hurribombers on the Chindwin front scored two direct hits on the bridge at Hpaungzeik, destroying the remaining section. They subsequently knocked out a pontoon south of this main bridge. Mitchells of the U.S.A.A.F., and Thunderbolts, blew into the river a span of the railway bridge at Bawgyo on the Mandalay-Lashio railway, which is considered to be the second most important left to the Japanese in occupied Burma. Bridge-busting has now become a fine art in Eastern Air Command. Hurricanes have continued to foil Japanese attempts to use darkness as a shield for their movements and have added to the difficult daylight operations by strafing enemy lines of communications.

At night our bombers, too, have played a nightly part attacking enemy airfields both near and far. Heavy bombers ranged as far afield as Bangkok, where railway workshops were heavily bombed and airfields and communications attacked.

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13/11/44. No. 27.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION, BROADCAST IN OVERSEAS BULLETINS OR USE ON CLUB TAPES BEFORE 2330 B.S.T. ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1944 (I.E. FOR TUESDAY MORNING PAPERS). NOT TO BE BROADCAST IN THE MIDNIGHT NEWS OF 13/14 NOVEMBER. THIS EMBARGO SHOULD BE RESPECTED OVERSEAS BY PREFACING ANY MESSAGES FILED WITH THE EMBARGO.

CEREMONIAL PARADE OF HOME GUARD IN LONDON

A ceremonial parade to mark the stand down of the Home Guard will take place in London on Sunday, 3rd December.

Contingents representing units of the Home Guard throughout the United Kingdom will take part in a march through the West End of London, which will start from Hyde Park at 3 p.m.

The route of the march will be Piccadilly, Regent Street, Oxford Street, and back to Hyde Park via Marble Arch.

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WAR OFFICE.

13/11/44. No. 28.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION, BROADCAST IN OVERSEAS BULLETINS OR USE ON CLUB TAPES BEFORE 2330 B.S.T. ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1944 (I.E. FOR TUESDAY MORNING PAPERS.) NOT TO BE BROADCAST IN THE MID-NIGHT NEWS OF 13/14 NOVEMBER. THIS ARRANGEMENT SHOULD BE RESPECTED OVERSEAS BY PREPARING THE NEWS WITH THE DATE 13/14.

MEMORIAL SERVICE TO THE LATE LORD MOYNE

A memorial service to the late Lord Moyne will be held in St. Margaret's, Westminster on Friday, 17th November, at 12.15 p.m.

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W/R C/BINET OFFICE.

ATTACK ON NAZI SHIPPING

Low-flying Mosquitos and Beaufighters of R.A.F. Coastal Command attacked two small merchant vessels and a tug with an armed trawler and an R-boat as escort off the Norwegian coast today. The convoy was passing an M-class minesweeper which was already blazing fiercely and listing from a previous attack.

The crews attacked with cannon and machine-guns and all the vessels were left on fire, while there was an explosion aboard one merchantman and the minesweeper was down by the stern when they broke off the attack.

"A tug and a launch were near the minesweeper and, as we approached, the launch raced for the shore. We went after it with machine guns as we thought there might be someone important on board," said F/Lt. A.E. Richardson, of Park Road, Thornton-le-Fylde, Blackpool. "There were eight ships from the launch to the merchant vessel and nearly all were damaged. All the larger ones were on fire when we had finished with them."

None of our aircraft was damaged.

TYPHOONS DESTROY A V - 1.

Pilots of the R.A.F. 2nd T.A.F. Typhoon Wing who "wrote off" Rommel saved Belgium from at least one V-1 explosion recently.

They were returning from Rotterdam, after an abortive train-wrecking mission in bad weather, when they saw the V-1. Their air-speed indicators put the flying bomb's velocity at 220 miles per hour. Four of the pilots closed in and riddled the V-1 with cannon fire. It dived earthwards and exploded harmlessly in a field.

"It was a consolation prize for not getting Hun trains owing to the bad weather", said one of the pilots afterwards.

This was the first V-1 to be shot down over the West Front by Air Vice Marshal L.O. Brown's Group, to which the pilots belong.

13.11.44. No.33.

Air Ministry No.16338.

AIR MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE

The Tirpitz has been sunk.

Yesterday morning 29 Lancasters of R.A.F. Bomber Command, led by Wing Commander J.B. Tait, D.S.O., D.F.C. and Squadron Leader A.G. Williams, attacked the German battleship Tirpitz with 12,000-lb. bombs.

There were several direct hits and within a few minutes the ship capsized and sank.

One of our aircraft is missing.

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THE ADMIRAL VON TIRPITZ

The German battleship Admiral Von Tirpitz, which was completed in 1941, has an official standard displacement of 35,000 tons, but it is probable that the actual figure is nearer 45,000 tons. She has a complement of about 1,600 men, with a main armament of eight 15" guns and a secondary armament of twelve 5.9" guns. Her designed speed is 30 knots.

The TIRPITZ is believed to have left the Baltic between December 1941 and 23rd January, 1942, when she was seen at Trondheim.

The first attack on the enemy battleship was made in March 1942 by twelve Albacores operating from the aircraft carrier H.M.S. VICTORIOUS, but no damage was sustained by the enemy.

On 8th July, 1942 a Soviet communique stated that a Russian submarine had attacked the TIRPITZ in the Barents Sea. The submarine claimed to have obtained two torpedo hits and caused serious damage to the battleship.

In July, 1942, the TIRPITZ was at sea in the vicinity of a Russian convoy, but on learning of the presence of a strong force of naval escorts the TIRPITZ returned to Narvik. From Narvik she returned to Trondheim where she was believed to be undergoing repairs in October and November. She later went up to Altes Fjord where she was located by aircraft reconnaissance in June 1943.

On September 9th, 1943, the TIRPITZ made her only operational sortie, when in company with the SCHARNHORST and screened by destroyers, she raided Spitzbergen.

/She then

She then returned to her hideout in Alten Fjord, Northern Norway, where on 22nd September 1943, she was attacked by H.M. midget submarines and sustained such severe underwater damage that she was immobilised for many months.

On the 3rd April 1944, naval aircraft operating from H.M. aircraft carriers scored a number of hits with heavy and medium sized bombs on the TIRPITZ at Alten Fjord. The battleship sustained damage near the bridge, amidships, in the vicinity of the after-turret and on the forecastel. Large explosions were observed by the mainmast and on the forecastle, and the TIRPITZ was left on fire amidships.

Early in September 1944 naval aircraft again attacked the TIRPITZ in Alten Fjord, but smokescreens obscured the battleship and no results on the attack were observed.

On 15th September, 1944 Bomber Command Lancasters, operating from Russian bases, carried out an attack with 12,000 lb. bombs, but again a smokescreen obscured the target and made it difficult to assess the results of the bombing. Aerial reconnaissance however revealed significant indications of damage, and a later report claimed one direct hit with a 12,000 lb. bomb.

Following this attack, and the entry into Northern Norway by the Red Army, the TIRPITZ moved south from Alten Fjord to Tromso.

On 29th October, Lancasters of Bomber Command again attacked the TIRPITZ in her new hideout, and again claimed one direct hit with a 12,000 lb. bomb on the enemy battleship.

On the 12th November, 1944 Lancasters delivered the final attack against the TIRPITZ.

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NAVAL AFFAIRS

THE TIRPITZ SUNK

The Tirpitz has been sunk by Lancasters of R.A.F. Bomber Command. After capsizing she has settled on the bottom of Tromsø Fjord. Only her keel and some parts of the bottom of the ship can be seen above water. This result was the achievement of two squadrons of R.A.F. Bomber Command.

The Prime Minister has sent this message to Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, R.A.F. Bomber Command:- "Heartiest congratulations to all."

Sir Arthur Harris has also received this message from the Admiralty:- "Request you will convey our warmest congratulations and thanks to those concerned in this very successful attack. It was a good job well done."

Shortly before 10.30 a.m. yesterday a force of 32 Lancasters arrived over Tromsø Fjord, where the Tirpitz was lying. The Lancasters were led by W/Cdr. J.B. Tait, D.S.O., D.F.C., of Abercynon, Glamorgan, and S/Ldr, A.G. Williams, of Cirencester.

At 10.30 the Tirpitz was hit. At 10.45 she was seen to be on fire. As the last aircraft turned for home she was seen to be heeling over in the shallow water of the fjord.

Reconnaissance after the attack showed that the battleship had by then completely capsized, with about 700 feet of her keel sticking out of the water. All around the wreck was a great pool of oil, through which could still be seen the booms protecting the battleship from attack by torpedoes.

This was the third attack to be made on the Tirpitz with 12,000-lb. bombs, but it was the first time that the attackers were able to see the ship properly. In the first attack, when the Tirpitz was in Kaa Fjord, the Germans put up a smoke-screen so rapidly that only one or two of the first air crews to arrive could see the ship. One 12,000-pounder hit and seriously damaged her then. The hit was unfortunately too far forward to be lethal, but she would have been useless as a fighting unit for at least six months, during which time she would have had to undergo dockyard repairs.

/The second....

The second attack, when the ship had moved westwards to Tromsø Fjord - on her way for repair in a German dockyard and because of the threat of the Russian advance into Norway - was made through cloud and crews could only obtain an oblique view of the target from some distance.

But yesterday the weather was clear and there was no smokescreen. One 12,000-pounder apparently hit the Tirpitz amidships, another in the bows and a third hit towards the stern. There were also apparently two very near misses which must themselves have done serious underwater damage, so violent is the explosive effect of these bombs when they burst in the water. The ship heeled over rapidly. The last air crew to leave the scene said they saw that something was going to happen and they turned hastily so that they might be over the ship to watch. By the time the turn was completed the Tirpitz had capsized.

The rear gunner of this Lancaster - an aircraft from a R.A.A.F. squadron despatched to make a film of the attack, stated that he saw the ship heel over when the aircraft was flying at a height of only 5,000 feet.

"We were just returning to make our run", he said, "when I saw yet another explosion - it may have been another direct hit, or something may have exploded inside the Tirpitz. It was impossible to tell. She seemed to be going over, and we turned again. By the time we had got round, she was already on her side."

F/Lt, B.A. Buckham, D.F.C. of Sydney, N.S.W., the pilot of this aircraft, said that the weather was ideal.

"Now at last", he said, "we knew that we had our chance. The first bombs fell just beyond the ship. Agonizing moments! Then came three direct hits in quick succession, the first amidships, the next in the bows, and the third towards the stern. Her guns had been firing like blazes when we first arrived, but after the first bomb had hit her the guns stopped firing. Not a shot came up after that. Smoke began to pour up. It spiralled at first in a column. Then it spread out over the doomed ship in the shape of a mushroom.

"Afterwards there were several explosions. One of them was very big and one of my crew shouted out over the inter-comm 'she's on fire, skipper, she's on fire'. The fire did not seem to last very long - not more than two or three minutes, I should say. It was difficult to see exactly what was happening at this stage. Smoke was pouring from the vessel and we could not see the Tirpitz clearly. Finally, she capsized."

The designer of the 12,000-lb. bomb is Mr. B.N. Wallis, of Vickers Armstrong, the scientist who also designed the special mines which breached the Mohne and Eder dams. Direct hits and near misses with these bombs have sunk the sister ship of the Bismarck. The Germans originally believed that these two battleships were unsinkable, and the amount of punishment which the Bismarck took before she was sunk in 1941, at least explains the origin of this belief.

The new "earthquake" bomb, however, is a weapon which could hardly have been imagined at the time when the battleships were built: it is a bomb which can penetrate many feet of concrete, as it did in the attack on the E-boat pens at IJmuiden, without losing its explosive force. Those who have studied the effects of this bomb have always believed that it could sink any capital ship.

The Tirpitz was as well protected against attack by air as any capital ship could be. Her decks had the thickest possible armour and she had 16 4.1 inch anti-aircraft guns and sixteen others of smaller calibre. Her main armament was very formidable - eight 15 inch guns and 12 5.9 inch guns. She also had torpedo tubes, which the Bismarck had not, and there were two catapults for aircraft. She was a vessel of 45,000 tons, 792 feet long, and with a speed of 30 knots.

Since the Tirpitz was completed in 1941 - she was laid down in 1936 - her importance as a threat has been out of all proportion to her actual achievement, but as a threat, her strategic value was that of a fleet in being and capital ships had always to be kept ready to fight her if she should make any sortie. It was evidently the intention of the enemy to use this and the other capital ships of the German navy as commerce raiders and the achievement of the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, which once sank about 20 merchant ships during their one brief expedition into the Atlantic, shows how much damage this far more powerful warship could have done.

/The Tirpitz

The Tirpitz was not ready for action until just after the Bismarck was sunk, so that the Germans just missed the chance of being able to use two battleships together.

On 1st June, 1941, four days after the sinking of the Bismarck, a reconnaissance photograph showed that the Tirpitz had left Kiel: she had been brought there from Wilhelmshaven, the naval base in which she was built.

After trials in the Baltic, and after spending some time in Trondheim Fjord, where she was twice attacked by Halifaxes of R.A.F. Bomber Command, the Tirpitz proceeded to Alten Fjord - Kaa Fjord is a branch of it - and there she stayed, apart from brief sorties, until she was moved a few weeks ago to her last station near Tromsøe.

In Alten Fjord she was a constant and formidable menace to our convoys bringing war material to Russia. There were long periods, however, during which she was too badly damaged to fight after attacks by the Fleet Air Arm and midget submarines of the Royal Navy.

The first attack by Lancasters with the 12,000 pounder was made on 15 September, 1944. Then came the move to Tromsøe - a move which took the battleship from her prepared defences in Kaa Fjord, and within easier range of the R.A.F. but very little nearer to the permanent naval base in which the damage done by the first 12,000-pounders could alone be repaired.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris seized the first opportunity, at a time when the weather has been constantly difficult, to make two more attacks on the Tirpitz while she was in this exposed condition.

The first attack on 29 September when a sudden cloud hid the battleship and in the second and conclusive attack yesterday.

As soon as the result was known, he sent the following message to Air Vice-Marshal R.H. Cochrane, C.B., C.B.E., A.F.C., the Air Officer Commanding the group to which the Lancasters belong,- "Congratulations to you and all the ranks of the squadrons concerned in the destruction of the Tirpitz. The skilful planning and courageous and determined execution of these operations put precisely that end to this ship which was inevitable as soon as the squadrons got a clear bead on her."

NOTE: Photographs of W/Cdr. Tait with B.I.P.P.A.