

EUROPEAN SCENE

Air Activity

INTENSE activity in the air has been reported this week. Both French and British communiqués claim that the Nazi machines were swept from the skies. On November 26 an official message claimed that 50 German airmen and 19 'planes were destroyed in a week. Berlin admitted the loss of seven 'planes during flights over France; also the loss of 20 German 'planes during flights over Britain. Official German messages claim to have destroyed 52 British aircraft since the outbreak of war. Earlier in the month French and British forces claimed to have destroyed 15 German 'planes in one day, seven in air battles and eight by anti-aircraft guns. The French admit the loss of two 'planes.

There have been several flights of enemy 'planes over Britain and the Orkney and Shetland Islands. No bombs were dropped on land, but one bomb destroyed a seaplane in the Orkneys.

R.A.F. machines successfully flew over Wilhelmshaven and Heligoland, German naval bases, and secured 'valuable photographs from low altitudes.

Finland Invaded

The climax to weeks of tension on the Soviet-Finnish border came on November 29 with the recall by the Kremlin of the Soviet Minister to Helsinki and the severing of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Soviet also renounced its non-aggression pact with the Finns and on the following day, November 30, Soviet forces attacked Finland by land, sea and air. At the time of going to press, it was reported that a Soviet infantry thrust in the far north was driving rapidly into Finnish territory, while artillery duels were in progress in Karelia. Units of the Red Fleet were engaged in coastal bombardment, and 'planes dropped incendiary bombs on Helsinki airport.

Interest in N.Z.

Such is the interest in New Zealand's war activity in England that the High Commissioner, W. J. Jordan, has asked for a series of photographs depicting military life and preparation in the Dominion. The pictures will be displayed in the office in The Strand and others will be distributed to the various newspapers and publications in Great Britain. Last week officials from the Government Film Studios, working in conjunction with the Army publicity officer, paid a visit to Trentham Camp to obtain the first of the photographs. A pictorial record will also be taken from the other military centres and despatched to London as soon as possible.

Western Front

Severe winter weather, with heavy snow, has hampered ground operations on the Western Front. Berlin admitted that the French had advanced their lines slightly in the Moselle area.

Shipping Losses

Severe shipping losses have been reported this week as a result of the indiscriminate mine-laying, in open sea channels, by German ships. In the week ended Nov. 25 eleven British ships, totalling 25,787 tons, were lost, as well as four neutral ships. Since the beginning of the war 131 ships have been sunk by enemy action — 78 British, 10 French and 43 neutral.

ALLIED LEADERS (5): Admiral Darlan



VICE-ADMIRAL FRANCOIS DARLAN, Chief of the French Navy, is a clear-eyed, clear-brained man of 58, beloved by his men and his subordinate officers.

Secret Peace Proposals

Further details of the Dutch frontier incident suggest that the two Englishmen, Captain Stevens and Mr. Best, had been entrusted with the delicate task of examining peace proposals which had been put forward by a German party. Nazi agents evidently discovered the scheme and decided to prevent the agents from meeting. Secret police violated Dutch neutrality by crossing the frontier and abducting the two Englishmen. Full details have not yet been disclosed.

He received his commission in 1901, when he left the French Naval College.

A writer who called on Vice-Admiral Darlan soon after war broke out made this comment: "The Admiral's office in the Rue Royale is a magnificent room where everything suggests the sea — the great spaces of the ocean. An ash-tray, his pipe, a telephone and a sheet of white paper are the only things on his desk. But if anyone calls him, if anyone asks for a decision or an order, Admiral Darlan closes his eyes, hesitates for a moment, and then replies. He is blessed with an astonishing memory and a clear brain which is the admiration of all who speak to him. At Toulon, at Brest, in all ships of the French Navy at sea that decision is heard, understood and appreciated!"

At various times during his career Vice-Admiral Darlan has been stationed at the French Naval stations at Toulon, Brest, Dakar, Saigon and Bizerta (Tunis). During the war he served with the French Navy in the Mediterranean and was closely associated with the British Fleet, as he is to-day, though in a different capacity. The admiral has visited Australia and the United States on goodwill cruises.

Another Menace

The release of magnetic mines in shipping routes has added a new terror to marine warfare. In doing this Germany has broken still another international law. The mines are sown by ships or dropped from airplanes by parachute. Two hundred mines have been washed up on the Yorkshire coast. The Admiralty has officially announced that the new menace will soon be overcome. Many new mine-sweepers are being brought into service.

Allied Reprisals

Britain and France have decided to seize all German goods outward bound on neutral ships. This is a reprisal for the unrestricted mine warfare instituted by Germany. Holland and Belgium have officially protested against such action by the Allies, and it is expected that some of the other neutral countries will do the same. Italy so far has not made any statement.

Arms From U.S.A.

Arms export licences for the month of October in the U.S.A. were double the normal number. Included in the licences was over 3½ million dollars' worth of airplanes, howitzers and ammunition for China.

Mr. Chamberlain Speaks

Mr. Chamberlain delivered his first broadcast address since his declaration that Britain was at war with Germany. He outlined the Allied war aims — the establishment of a new Europe on a basis of security. Mr. Chamberlain stated that the menace of the magnetic mine would be overcome, just as the U-boat menace had been mastered.

Sweden's Protest

Sweden has officially protested to Germany against the placing of a minefield at the south-west point of Sweden. Only one deep sea passage has been left. Mines have been placed three miles from the shore.

Crisis in Rumania

As a result of a political crisis in Rumania, the Government resigned over the German trade negotiations. A new Government, anti-Nazi in feeling, has been formed. The Balkan States are disturbed, as it is thought that Rumania may now upset the neutral bloc in the Balkans, thus forcing Italy to take some definite action.

War Items

Sir John Simon announced that the war was costing Britain £6,000,000 a day.

The British destroyer, Gipsy, which struck a mine, was beached.

Fourteen members of the former German Royal family are serving in various war capacities.

A Rotterdam observer stated that the losses were greater behind the German lines than is popularly supposed.

Reports from the frontiers state that the man arrested for the Munich bomb plot, George Elser, was in Dachau concentration camp until a week before the explosion.

The Opposition in the House of Commons has asked for a secret session in the House. It will probably be granted.

Division of Poland

The approximate division of populations now agreed upon in Poland is as follows:

In territory annexed by Germany	
Poles	18,000,000
Jews	2,250,000
Germans and others	750,000
In territory annexed by Russia	
Poles	5,000,000
Jews	1,000,000
Ukrainians	6,000,000
White Russians and Lithuanians	2,000,000

During the last war, 324,860,000 cigarettes were supplied to the Forces through the Overseas League's Tobacco Fund.

The New Zealand Front

• Nov. 28: His Excellency the Governor-General inspected the military camps at Papakura and afterwards at Ngaruawahia.

• Nov. 28: Fifteen German nationals from Western Samoa were interned in New Zealand.

• Nov. 27: The Minister of Supply, the Hon. D. G. Sullivan, appealed to all people engaged in industry to do their utmost to help the Dominion to play its part.

• Nov. 23: The Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. M. J. Savage, announced that the Special Force would go overseas. No date was given.