

EUROPEAN SCENE

On the Belgian Frontier

Disturbing stories continue to arrive from the Dutch and Belgian borders stating that large concentrations of German troops have been remarked north and south of Aachen (Aix la Chappelle) and in the town itself. Dispositions of German troops near the Swiss border are also unchanged. Neutral countries report the building of giant airdromes behind the German frontiers of France and Belgium.

All Quiet

Little or nothing has been reported from the Western Front this week, except that intermittent artillery fire has harassed both sides. Winter weather is delaying any active operations and both the Allied and enemy defences are being strengthened.

Woman Fighters

The first reports of woman's active part in the present hostilities have arrived from Helsinki, capital of Finland. The body of a Russian airwoman was found in the wreckage of a Russian bomber which was brought down by the Finns.

Russia and Finland

At the time of going to press Russia was still attacking Finland, which had appealed to the League of Nations to take action against the Soviet. Russian troops attacked Finland in the north, south and centre, but reports stated that the Russian advance had been held up. Blinding snowstorms have delayed some of the attacks. Part of Finland lies in the Arctic Circle and intense cold has added to the difficulties of both defenders and attackers. Soviet planes have bombed Helsinki, the capital, and other towns, destroying many buildings and killing and wounding women and children. The Finnish Prime Minister, M. Ryti, has stated that Finland will continue the struggle. Fantastic and unconfirmed reports state that the Russians machine-gunned their own men. Two Finnish Governments are at present operating and adding to the confusion of reports. One is constitutional; the other is a puppet Government, operating near the Russian border. Official communiques from Finland claim 18 tanks, 21 Russian planes and 700 prisoners. Finland has informed the League of Nations that she is fortifying the Aaland Islands, one of her most vulnerable points in the Baltic Sea and a vantage point desired by Russia.

Not at War!

The Russian Prime Minister, M. Molotov, has stated that the Soviet did not recognise the Constitutional Finnish Government and would not negotiate with it. Russia did not intend to seize Finnish territory, but wished only to liberate Finland from her oppressors. He also stated that Russia was not at war with Finland.

The World Protests

World reaction against Russia has followed the attack on Finland. All Scandinavian countries have protested. Sweden is alarmed. Norway is appre-

hensive and Denmark has openly expressed sympathy for Finland. Russian embassies have been guarded against attack by angry mobs.

Public opinion in the U.S.A. is in favour of Finland. President Roosevelt has condemned the bombing of towns and unofficially called for an arms embargo against Russia. The severance of diplomatic relations with the Soviet has been demanded, but up to December 6 no action had been taken.

Sweden Supports Finland

Sweden is disturbed by political disagreement. A Coalition Government has

damaged. Earlier in the week R.A.F. machines raided Borkum. One Dornier plane was shot down over the North Sea, a Norwegian ship picking up the German crew afterwards.

Losses at Sea

Our greatest loss at sea this week was the Doric Star, 10,086 tons, on her way to England from New Zealand and Australian ports. She was attacked in the South Atlantic by an enemy raider, which has not yet been officially identified. Several smaller British boats have been sunk either by torpedoes or mines, but the losses have been fewer this week.

Since the outbreak of war 410 British lives had been lost up to December 4 as a result of mine and torpedo activity.

The King in France

King George VI. paid an unexpected visit to France, accompanied by the Duke of Gloucester. He personally inspected the armed forces and the air arm.

Frontier Clashes

Reports from Hungary state that Russian and Hungarian troops have clashed on the border. There are fears, also, that Russia may soon turn her attention to Bessarabia.

The New Zealand Front

• Dec. 5: The Minister of Defence, the Hon. F. Jones, stated that men of the 2nd New Zealand Division would go on leave on Dec. 14, 15 and 16 and return to camp on Dec. 28, 29, 30.

• Dec. 3: Group-Captain L. M. Isitt, Acting Chief of Air Staff, farewelled at Auckland the first batch of New Zealand pilots to leave for England since the outbreak of war.

• Dec. 1: The Acting Prime Minister, the Hon. P. Fraser, had an audience with the King in London. Mr. Fraser has also paid a visit to Scotland.

• Dec. 1: The Minister of Defence, the Hon. F. Jones, stated that the health of soldiers in camp was excellent. Only one death had been reported, and that was from causes existing before enlistment.

• Nov. 30: The Minister of Defence, the Hon. F. Jones, reviewed the National Military Reserve in Wellington.

ALLIED LEADERS (6): General Vuillemin



Vuillemin: "In order to understand the confidence of the French in their Air Marshal, one must hear his comrades, his officers and his pilots say, 'Ah, the general,' when they talk of him. The accent speaks volumes."

Despite his years, General Vuillemin is strong and alert, with almost dynamic energy. Although he is continually flying from one air centre to another and, frequently, to Africa, he keeps himself in perfect physical health by swimming daily. Like most Frenchmen he began his career in the Army. Then he transferred to the Air Force, passing through every branch of that service with honours. General Vuillemin was one of the finest pilots of the French Air Force, and is remarkable for his technical knowledge of the machines under his control. As a tactician he is still more famous, and the recent success of the French air pilots in the field is partly due to his methods of training. Since 1918 he has worked indefatigably in various important posts until he was appointed supreme air chief.

His office is on the seventh floor of the Air Ministry in Paris. "That is as near to heaven as I can get in my work" he says. He has a wife and three children, one of them an adopted orphan.

"HE was made for wings," the French say of their Chief Air Marshal, General Josef Vuillemin. He is 56 years old and has 5,000 hours of flying to his credit. Recently a journalist wrote of General

been formed but it is expected that it will be defeated and that a new party will be formed which will aid and support Finland.

Australians to Sail

Mr. Menzies, Australian Prime Minister, announced on November 30 that Australian troops would sail overseas early in January for further training. They would take their place in the theatre of war next spring.

Air Activity

Enemy air raids have decreased this week, but R.A.F. activity has not relaxed. On December 4 our machines raided the island fortress of Heligoland, and reported damage to enemy ships and fortifications. Valuable photographs were taken, and while Berlin admitted the loss of one plane, all British planes returned, including one which was

In that same period 33 German merchant ships, of 171,300 tons, had been put out of action with the loss of only four German lives, the result of the U-boats' own action. Three U-boats have been officially reported sunk this week.

An unconfirmed report states that between 30 and 35 U-boats have been destroyed by the Allies.

Poles Executed

General Sikorski has reported to the Polish Ambassador in London that there have been ruthless executions of Poles in territory occupied by Germany.

Contraband Cargoes

In the first 12 weeks of the war, British Contraband Control has detained nearly 463,000 tons of products, including 100,000 tons of petroleum products. A New York report states that Germany is facing diminishing supplies of petrol.

New Dress Uniform For New Zealand Soldiers

Men of the 2nd New Zealand Division are to be issued with new drill uniforms before they go on their Christmas leave, which will begin about December 14.

The new uniform will be a dress uniform. Many thousands of them have been made in readiness for the issue, which is suitable for summer weather and is to be worn on leave or for special occasions. This new dress can be easily pressed and kept in order.

New Zealand's soldiers will soon be regarded as the best-dressed in the world. They have their denims, their serviceable khaki, and now their drill uniforms to complete the most comprehensive wardrobe ever issued to an army. It is hoped that the men will be in camp for a few days after the issue of the new uniforms, so that the general fit may be observed by the authorities.