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WAR DIARY

DE GAULLE WAS RIGHT

The following reference to General de Gaulle, leader of all free Frenchmen, was made in a talk over the air by George Bagley:

"I SUPPOSE there isn't a British person anywhere in the world who doesn't by now know the name of General de Gaulle, who bears a simple title, but one full of meaning in these present days—the leader of free Frenchmen. Yet to very many people he was a complete non-entity when after the signing of the armistice of Compiegne he issued his famous appeal calling on Frenchmen in all parts of the world to rally around him to prolong the struggle against Germany and Italy. Fewer people, still, could have known anything about him in the early days of June when the French Premier, M. Reynaud, gave him a political post at the War Ministry. It is even doubtful whether many Frenchmen outside of military circles had at that date ever heard of him. Yet years ago this quiet, unassuming little general foresaw the Belgian disaster and the possibility of Germany using overwhelming masses of tanks to make a surprise break-through by way of the Ardennes and the Meuse.

"General de Gaulle began his career in the Great French military school of Saint-Cyr from which he emerged in 1911 with a commission as sub-lieutenant in a French infantry brigade. He was wounded near Dinant in August 1914, but recovered in time to take part in the desperate fighting around Verdun, and in March 1916 he was taken prisoner near Douaumont. So his war service was not spectacular in the amassing of honours and decorations—merely the simple tale of sacrifice and devotion which could apply to any ordinary soldier. After the war de Gaulle was appointed first to the French Headquarters staff on the Rhine, and later to the staff of Marshal Petain. Later he was on the staff of the French Army in the Middle East at Beirut. For years he had been an ardent advocate of rapid mechanisation for the French Army, and on his return to France from Syria he was given command of a tank regiment. It is an odd thing that he proved to be a prophet almost to the detail in his forecast of what could happen to France if she was attacked by a fully mechanised enemy. The following extracts from a book which he wrote seven years ago, and which unfortunately was treated rather contemptuously by the French General Staff, could serve to-day as an exact description of what actually took place in Northern France in June 1940.

"He says: 'To-morrow entire armies will be transported on caterpillars. Each element of the troops and of the auxiliary services will be carried up hill and down dale by appropriate vehicles. Not a man, not a gun, not a shell, not a loaf of bread but will be transported to its destination by this means. A large fighting unit, striking camp at dawn, will be 100 miles away by nightfall.' After describing a strongly armoured brigade as rolling across country as fast as a horse can gallop, armed with 150 medium guns, 400 smaller guns, and 600 machine-guns (incidentally a pretty

accurate description of the German tank arrowheads), he goes on to say: 'Audacity will multiply the great cavalry operations of former days. This mechanised system of fire, shock, speed, and camouflage will show itself, in the first irruption by throwing into battle at least 2000 tanks.' But General de Gaulle actually went further and pointed out that although the Maginot Line presented a formidable wall, it could be turned at Belfort, near the Swiss frontier and, (I quote his own words), 'the heights of the Moselle and the Meuse, leaning at one end on the Lorraine plateau, and at the other on the Ardennes, offer considerable obstacles, but they have no depth, and a single error would suffice for their loss, rendering vulnerable from the rear any attempt at a withdrawal through Flanders.' Indeed General de Gaulle knew what he was talking about."

READING FOR SOLDIERS

Appeal For More Books

At most of the camps and air forces training schools throughout New Zealand libraries have been established. Furniture and library equipment have been provided and librarians have been put in charge. Many people have given books generously, but more are needed to fill the shelves.

The men using these facilities have frequently shown their appreciation. A wide range of reading interests has been discovered by the librarians, and many requests for non-fiction books have been made.

The War Library Service aims to provide reading for all tastes—travel, adventure, biography, fiction. All books in good repair will be welcomed and will be cared for and distributed to the camp libraries, where they are most urgently needed.

Perhaps you have some books which you know will be suitable? Label your parcel "War Library Service," and take it to your public library or send it to the Country Library Service, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

British Somaliland

British Somaliland, which the Italian forces from Abyssinia have now entered, extends along the Gulf of Aden for 400 miles between French Somaliland and Italian Somaliland, and has been administered by Britain since 1884. The country consists of an undulating plateau, mostly parched and barren. There are two rainy seasons each year, each lasting for two or three months. Rivers and streams which for most of the year are dry watercourses then become raging torrents. The rivers and streams of the high country never reach the sea, as their water disappears into the sandy regions. Game and wild animals abound

MATRON-IN-CHIEF APPOINTED

MISS E. M. NUTSEY, M.B.E., lady superintendent of the Auckland Public Hospital, has been appointed Matron-in-Chief for nursing services overseas. She will begin her official duties with the forces in October.

Miss Nutsey served for four and a-half years during the last war, and was made an Associate of the Royal Red Cross and mentioned in despatches for her bravery.

When she returned to New Zealand she was appointed Matron of the Opatiki Cottage Hospital, leaving that position to join the department of school hygiene



MISS E. M. NUTSEY, M.B.E.

as a school nurse. Miss Nutsey then went to South Africa for two years where she undertook surgical nursing. On her return to the Dominion she was appointed Matron of the Stratford Hospital, and later Matron of the Hawera Hospital. In 1928 she was appointed to the Auckland Public Hospital.

In 1937 Miss Nutsey received the M.B.E. for her services to nursing in New Zealand.

The new Matron-in-Chief was born at Christchurch in 1887. She was educated at Auckland and received her training at the Auckland Public Hospital.

in some parts of the territory. These include elephant, hippopotamus, lion, leopard, antelope, waterbuck, monkey, ostrich, marabou stork and crocodiles. The vegetation of Somaliland is sparse. All trade consists of the natural products of the territory—myrrh, ostrich feathers, frankincense, hides, coffee, resins, skins and salt—and is exchanged for goods required by the natives at trading ports along the coast. Under the Treaty of London, 1924, Great Britain ceded 33,000 square miles of her territory to Italy. Earlier, in 1894, Britain had ceded the first of Somaliland to the Italians and in 1897 a further area to Abyssinia. In 1910 she agreed to withdraw her troops from the interior.