

HISTORY AS IT HAPPENS

Thursday, May 8

After an effective speech by Mr. Churchill, reviewing the campaign in Greece, the House of Commons voted confidence in the Government by 457 to 3.

Twenty-three enemy bombers were destroyed over Britain during the night, May 7-8.

Approximately 3,000 Australian casualties were suffered in Greece.

Friday, May 9

Reports from Cairo indicated that the Germans were gathering parachute troops in the Middle East for attacks on Crete, Syria and Iraq.

Further British troops arrived in Iraq, where the situation had improved.

A German armed merchant cruiser, acting as a commerce raider in the Indian Ocean, was intercepted and sunk by the British cruiser Cornwall.

Twenty-five ships, totalling 200,000 tons, were chartered to Canadian interests under Roosevelt's plan for the two million ton shipping pool to assist Britain.

The heaviest British bombing attack yet made on Germany took place on Thursday night, and the German radio commented on the power and speed of the British bombers.

Secret German military documents captured on Lofoten Islands and published in England showed the unyielding opposition of the Norwegians to the Nazis.

Saturday and Sunday
May 10 and 11

Full scale blitz returned to London on Saturday night, when high explosives and incendiary bombs fell on the city with unrelenting fury. Among the many historic buildings hit were the debating chamber of the House of Commons, and Westminster Abbey.

At least 33 raiders were shot down, the highest total yet destroyed in one night.

The cruisers Leander and Canberra intercepted in the Indian Ocean a German merchant ship which had been supplying a raider, and a Norwegian tanker, captured earlier by the raider.

Cairo reported that demonstrations hostile to Rashid Ali occurred in parts of Iraq.

British forces in Abyssinia were closing in on the few remaining Italian strongholds.

Benghazi was bombarded by the Navy at close range.

Monday, May 12

Private reports from Spain indicated that General Franco had given Hitler leave to move troops across Spain to Gibraltar.

British defences brought down 131 German night bombers in the first 11 nights in May.

American newspapers reported that the Japanese army and government had reached the parting of the ways and the outcome might be a complete reorientation towards either the Axis or China.

Tuesday, May 13

Rudolf Hess, Deputy Fuhrer of the Nazi party, landed in Scotland on the night of May 10. He flew in a Messerschmitt 110 fighter, made a parachute descent and was in hospital with a broken ankle. The German radio reported earlier that he had escaped by aeroplane and that he was mentally unbalanced.

The situation in Iraq improved through action by the R.A.F. and desertions in the ranks of the rebels.

Wednesday, May 14

Further news was available of the arrival of Hess, whose dramatic flight surprised the world. It was believed that he fled after a difference of opinion within the Nazi Party.

Diplomatic circles in Vichy believed that Admiral Darlan had secured from Hitler an agreement to liberate Paris and large parts of France in return for advantages elsewhere.

The *New York Times* reported that the German High Command would make its second spring offensive through Turkey and across Syria into Iraq, aiming to seize oil wells.

Personal

Lieut. O. A. Gillespie, M.M., Headquarters Staff, 8th Infantry Brigade, N.Z.E.F., Overseas, has been promoted to the rank of Captain. Before he joined the Expeditionary Force, Captain Gillespie was on the staff of *The Listener*.

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THE A.T.A. SERVICE

All the Risks of War, But No Glory

The death of Amy Johnson over the Thames Estuary while on duty for the Air Transport Auxiliary reminded the public that such a service is in being, and awakened curiosity about its activities. Its work is known to few. How it works and who man it is known to fewer still. The story is told by J. Wentworth Day in "London Calling":

the sailplane expert, was one. C. S. Napier, the aero-engine designer, was another. So was Wally Handley, the racing motorist. Keith Jopp, who lost an arm and an eye in the last war, also joined. He is the oldest pilot of them all, but he has flown more than 150 Spitfires to date.

Since then, A.T.A. has flown over one and a-half million miles and delivered many thousands of machines; it operates

WITHIN a few days of the Thames Estuary tragedy, one other name was added to the death roll of the A.T.A. Captain Horsey, famous civil air line pilot, lost his life while serving with the A.T.A. He was yet another of that body of pilots of no Service rank or status who, on flying duties of a special kind, have the right to fly anywhere in Britain at any time.

They fly Spitfires, Hurricanes, Wellingtons, Ansons and the most hush-hush aircraft that were ever wheeled on the tarmac. They wear a private uniform of their own or just civilian clothes. They must be ready to fly anything, anywhere, in almost any weather.

They are paid, but some of them refuse to take the money. Yet they fly more types of aircraft than many a Service pilot has ever seen. Though they are sometimes in areas thick with the enemy, they carry no arms and fly machines without guns or bombs. In fact, they have all the fun of the war, some of the risks, none of the glory, and nothing to hit back with.

But They Can Fly

Everyone is a volunteer in the A.T.A. Some are millionaires, and some are farmers. Several are stockbrokers, and one is a professional huntsman. Three of them have only one arm, and one man has one arm and one eye. Most are British, but some are Poles, and others are Americans. But each man, whether he is 50 or 20, can fly. I doubt if anywhere in the world there is a body of men who have flown more different types of aircraft or had more diverse flying experience than these men—and women.

An A.T.A. pilot's job would not be easy for the best all-round pilot in the world. He is almost invariably a man who has been refused for the R.A.F. because of age or disability. His job is to collect new aircraft either from the factory or from the "collecting point" and fly them to whatever units of the Service need them.

The idea of the A.T.A. was born in the brain of Mr. d'Erlanger, who sought out Captain F. D. Bradbrooke, the well-known air journalist, and they began to rope in all the pilots of any age who were unfit for R.A.F. service to form an emergency communication body of light aircraft.

"Plenty of us about who'd flown in the last war and since, you know; but when we offered ourselves they said: 'Oh, try A.R.P.'"

Within three weeks, Mr. d'Erlanger had forty expert pilots. Phillips Wills,

Gift Portrait of General Freyberg

With this issue is included a gift portrait of Major-General Bernard Cyril Freyberg, V.C., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., LL.D., Commander-in-Chief of the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and now Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in Crete. He is New Zealand's greatest soldier and most distinguished hero of the Great War, 1914-18. He was born in London in 1890, but lived in Wellington as a boy, and was educated at Wellington College, and practised as a dentist in New Zealand before joining the British Army, where his name became almost a legend — Dardanelles with the Hood Battalion, R.N.R., Brigadier 1917 (aged 27), with the 29th Division, mentioned in despatches six times, wounded nine times, D.S.O. and two bars, and V.C. December, 1916, for courageous action near Beaumont, France. Before the Gallipoli landing, he swam two miles to the shore and lighted flares to decoy the Turkish forces at Bulair and enable a British landing to be made at the other end of the peninsula. Twice in later years, he tried to swim the English Channel. After the war, he commanded a regiment in the British Army, was Assistant Quartermaster-General of the Southern Command, and General Staff Officer, 1st Grade, War Office. He is married, and has a son serving as a private in the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces

from eight different stations. There are 220 pilots, of whom twenty are ex-civil air line pilots, seven are Poles and twenty-five are Americans.

They have their own sense of humour—a little boyish, sometimes macabre. There was the case of my host flying north at 1,200 feet. He had expected no German lower than 20,000 feet when out of a cloud, a couple of hundred yards away, four Stuka dive bombers flew straight past him.

"Passed me on my starboard bow—so close I could see the chaps sitting in 'em. Couldn't shoot them, as I hadn't a gun. So I waved. They didn't wave back. No sense of humour, these Germans."