



At Sea, 16th February, 1944.

Number 7

THE GATEWAY TO INDIA

The docility and good humour which have marked the conduct of the troops on this transport underwent a severe test when it was first announced that we were not to have shore leave at Bombay and later that only a proportion of our number were to make actual contact with the great Indian city. Even the comparative few who were transported across the harbour felt that the trip lacked some of the pleasure that it might have given them, for their mates were left behind on the ship and, in any case, their time in the city was severely limited.

Those whom chance did not favour in the ballots spent a somewhat despondent day on board. Some leaned over the rails watching harbour movements or throwing overboard bottles, coins, and a variety of waste which was obviously treasure to the group of urchins who circled round the ship in their canoes appealing for "bucksheesh." It is worthy of note in passing that at least one little black-faced rascal demonstrated the spreading influence of the U.S.A. by accepting a bottle with a cry of "O.K. Thanks a lot." But even such novelty as the harbour provided palled a little, especially when thoughts reverted, as they often did, to the fact that we had travelled so far and come so near the reality of Indian life without being able to set foot ashore in this ancient and wonderfully interesting country. For most it was a dull day until the shore-going party arrived back with its fruit, its trinkets, newspapers, and a variety of souvenirs; and tongues never wagged so busily on board as they did when all hands gathered on the mess decks to listen to the tales of the day's experiences ashore.

For the majority of the troops, memories of our Bombay visit will always be tinged with disappointment, but soldiers are cheerful folk (as anyone on board may observe for himself) and, when once more our ship began to move, the atmosphere of gloom was rapidly displaced by one of pleasant anticipation, for we knew that we had begun the final stages of the long voyage to our destination and to a reunion with relatives and friends serving with the 2nd N.Z.E.F., in the Middle East.

J.G.

NEWS SUMMARY

RUSSIA The Red Army advance continues relentlessly. On all fronts the Germans are offering fierce resistance and leaving many dead on the battlefields. In the Dneiper Bend, remnants of the ten German divisions are surrounded and being wiped out by Russian artillery. When this is completed, large Russian forces will be released for the drive to the River Bug which is within a few miles of the 1939 border. In the North, the Russian advance has practically isolated **ESTONIA** which was previously occupied by Russia in 1940.

ITALY British troops in the ANZIO bridgehead have now gone over to the attack, after a week of fierce German Infantry and tank attacks. Our line has advanced at several points. Air Force and Navy have assisted the attack. The 5th Army are still held up at CASSINO.

AIR OFFENSIVE American and R.A.F. bombers continue nonstop bombing of military objectives in France, meeting little fighter opposition. Fighter planes of all types are carrying out offensive patrols, and our losses have been negligible.

MORE SPORT PERSONALITIES

Looking around we find a host of sporting lights on board this ship in addition to those we mentioned in a previous issue.

Eric Pocock held the Canterbury Welter boxing title from 1921 to 1924, was South Is. champion in 1924 and runner-up to the N.Z. title in 1930. Since hanging up his gloves he has been in the leading rank as a referee in N.Z. championships and many more important tournaments.

Colin Sullivan was Taranaki Rugby rep., from 1939 to 1941, All Black trial player 1939 and Captain of Manawatu team 1943.

N.L. Kane represented Poverty Bay-Hawkes Bay Rugby in 1939 and 1940 and Tauranga in 1943.

Athol Harding represented Auckland in the N.Z. Harrier Championships for some years. Bill Brown has also worn the Auckland colours.

Frank Pierce held the N.Z. flyweight boxing title in 1929 and the Auckland title for 1927, 1928, 1929 and 1931.

Seen refereeing on deck is an old-timer, A. Birchfield, and he tells me he has a promising bunch of mitt-slingers.

Tay Bush has broken evens on the sprint track and can exceed 21 feet in the long jump.

CRICKET NEWS

Cricketers well known in N.Z. who were to take part in a recent Services match in Bombay included D. Jardine (Capt.), Sgt. Butler (Notts. fast bowler), Major Cramner (Warwickshire), Gnr. Craig (Essex opening bat), B.S.M. J. Hardstaff (England & Notts.) The Nawab of Pataudi was invited to lead the opposing Indian side but there was doubt as to his appearance. Another outstanding member of the Indian XI was V. S. Hazare who scored 223 out of 447 hit up at Poona by a States of India XI led by Pataudi. This was the second double century scored by Hazare this season.

A Maharaja offers the hand of his daughter to suitable applicant—dowry 50,000 rupees per annum—members of the Armed Forces excluded.

CAIRO SIGHTS

There is a good deal more to see in Cairo than the insides of bars and cabarets.

The Pyramids are, of course, the best known of Cairo attractions, and the cheapest way to get there is by tram from the centre of the city. It costs merely 1 piastre (twopence half-penny) to get to this wonder of the ancient world.

There are 400 mosques in Cairo and many of them such as Sultan Hassan, Ibn Tulun, Qualam and the Citadel Mosque are beautiful and well worth a visit. In some of them it is necessary to wear leather slippers over one's shoes before entering.

Set amidst pleasant gardens and trees, the Zoo covers many acres and contains many animals, birds and reptiles not seen in Zoos in N.Z.

The Egyptian Museum containing the treasures of Tut Ankh Amon is closed for the duration, but there are several others worth seeing including the Arab Museum, the Museum of Hygiene and the Military Museum.

The main bazaar area in the city is the Mouski, which is best reached by gharri. Here one can bargain to one's heart's content. Streets are set apart for gold and silver ware; in fact, each street has its own particular class of merchandise.

Racing fans will be sure to pay a visit to Gezira or Heliopolis for the Sunday Races.

A.S.H.

QUIZ

1. What country won the last contest for the Schneider Cup?
2. Who is the president of the U.S.S.R.?
3. Who was the New Zealander who commanded the first R.A.F. Wing in Russia?
4. Who commanded the N. Z. Division at the outset of the 1914-18 war?
5. On what part of the uniform did officers wear their badges of rank during the last war?

(Answers contained in next issue.)

N. Z. will start meat rationing within the next few weeks. She will be the last Dominion to adopt it.

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