

Historical Officers Report From the Pages of the Camden Advertiser September 1941

11th September

LOCAL "BLACK OUT" On Sunday Week

This district will experience its first trial "black-out" from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday week, September 21. The whole of the Metropolitan Area will also be plunged into darkness for one hour in this test. In a message to the people of Camden district, through this newspaper, Mr. Heifron, the Minister for National Emergency Services, says: "The idea of the black-out is really twofold: To have a complete absence of light visible from the air and so make the task of the enemy bomb-aimer more difficult, and at the same time to have normal home life and industry carrying on as usual. The mere switching-off of lights in the home certainly does not give you the conditions you desire if we were forced to have permanent black-outs. So on Sunday week from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. please conduct an experiment in your home: Screen windows, doors and ventilators and use at least one room, with the lights on, and learn just what has to be done to black-out your home so as to give you normal living conditions." The Minister adds that it is not a difficult or expensive task to screen a room. Suitable black-out paper will probably be available at most stores. Paper-covered frames could then be made and placed over the windows. The making of a black-out blind would also be a simple matter.

Peculiar- Accident: Little Dorothy Reeves, aged 10 years, of Hammondville she, decided to "oil" her scooter with methylated spirits. When she sped away again the spirits ignited and burnt her leg. She was taken to Liverpool Hospital and treated.

THE EDITOR WRITES— Tobruk Message: "The opposition can't take it, for they run at the least little bit of action", writes Private J. A. Haydon, a former Camden boy, in a letter from Tobruk to Mr. C. J. Biffin, of "Woodburn". Camden.

At Port Moresby: Aircraftman John Cummins, of Menangle, is now with the R.A.A.F. at Port Moresby (Papua). In a letter to his parents he said he much enjoyed the trip through the Barrier Reef, Also at the same R.A.A.F. station is Aircraftman Ernest Wilson, of Narellan.

First Stripe: Formerly a member of Camden Council's clerical staff. Lance Corporal Harold Coleman, of Bringelly, recently gained his first promotion. j

Bombed from Bed!

The conclusion from an enemy aircraft bomb caused Private Owen Smart's bed to collapse during a raid on his unit's position early in August. Quite a few enemy aircraft were shot down that night; the Australians watched the planes falling in flames. Owen's parents received this information in a letter written in the "Never Never" of the desert, where for hundreds of miles the machine-gunners saw nothing but sand and rock. "Jimmy Biddle and all the other Camden boys are quite well", added Owen.

M.G.'s at Frontier: The A.I.F. machine-gunners have, so far, had a waiting role, although they have experienced plenty of enemy air raids. This report was cabled from Cairo on September 4th by the A.I.F. War Correspondent of the "Sydney Morning Herald", who stated that Australian troops along the Egyptian frontier included artillery, machine-gunners, and anti-tank units.

18th September

The Editor Writes— Angus Ross Wounded. Out on patrol at 1 o'clock one morning at the end of June, Lance Corporal Angus Ross was "blown up" by a mine near the enemy trenches. The steel bottom of his patrol-truck saved his life. The Huns then opened with machine-gun fire and caused

some damage. Angus mentioned the exciting incident in a letter to a Cobbitty friend. He is a former Camden boy who enlisted in Queensland.

Tribute to Hospital: Mr. E. W. Longhurst, of Oakdale, who spent several weeks at Camden District Hospital with a fractured leg the result of being kicked by a horse he informs us that the institution possesses "a wonderful staff." Mr. Longhurst by the way is one of the trustees of the new Oakdale Hall which will be officially opened at an early date. He is also an honorary ranger under the Wild Flowers' Protection Act.

Rail Service Declines: Fifteen years ago, when Menangle Park settlement was very sparse, rail facilities were provided to convey children to Menangle. To-day youngsters, aged from 6 to 12 years, are forced to walk six miles each day to school. This information was revealed at Menangle Park Progress Association's monthly meeting when a report was given of a visit by Inspector Baker (Railways) relative to the transport of school children. (States our Menangle Park correspondent).

25th September

Troops' Parcels Convey Joy: In a letter to the Camden W.V.S. Centre, Lieut.-Colonel Denzil Macarthur Onslow D.S.O. who won his decoration earlier this year for gallantry and leadership in several engagements against the Italians in the Middle East, writes:— "Your members may rest assured that their splendid work and efforts are of national importance, for it is difficult, if not impossible for those at home to be able to comprehend what joy and pleasure the receipt of a parcel from home can bring to our lads in the field.

The Editor Writes: 300 Years to Build Covering an area of 14 acres and erected to Jupiter some 2,000 years ago, the ruins of the largest Roman temple in the world were recently seen by Sergeant Maurice Dowle during his visit to Baalbek. The temple occupied a building period of 300 years, the granite pillars being brought from Egypt. Maurice's unit was encamped amongst the olive groves of the Lebanon Mountains when he wrote on September.



Beautifying Camden Continuing its parks and street beatification policy, Camden Council has completed its annual tree-planting by placing nearly 100 young trees in different parts of the municipality. These were planted in Alpha road (16) Macarthur road (25) Onslow Park (36) , John street (replacements), and the stock-route (16 popular).

LOCAL NAVAL MAN ASSISTS IN RESCUE WORK DURING BLITZ

"The life at sea is far less exciting than a week's leave in London, at least while raids are in progress" writes Sub-Lieutenant Eric Longley, R.A.N. V.R. in a most interesting letter addressed to Mrs. Crookston and Mrs. Terry, of Camden. "I was caught in London during the biggest 'Blitz' of 10th May, while a sick leave and I have never seen more action crammed into a few hectic hours." My bedroom was burned out, and fifteen of us, all from the Dominions, spent the whole night digging a woman out of a wrecked 5-storey apartment. We were about a hundred yards from a huge gasworks, and for five hours we alternately dug and ducked as the bombs screamed down all around. It is rather a queer experience, and it is impossible to express the relief one feels when dawn breaks and the bombers disperse, and an uncanny silence settles on the streets strewn with broken glass, debris and dust. On that particular night the whole place was ablaze with the lurid glare of a burning paper factory, and, until mid-day next day, ashes rained down like black snow over an area of twenty square miles.

Brave English Women "Throughout the whole of that night two girls worked side by side with us. They were absolutely unconcerned at the whistle and thud of the bombs, even when houses disappeared not a stone's throw away. Their pluck is incredible. "At four o'clock, a frail old lady came rattling over the glass-strewn streets in an old van, ignoring the bombs, and calmly poured out a cup of steaming tea for each of us, evidently quite as much at home as if she were playing the hostess at a garden party. She adopted the attitude of 'Poor, dear lads, you must be tired.' Goodness knows how she found the energy to carry on, but that's how it is with all these English people, especially the women. Just sheer pluck!

Eric was studying for his commission at an English college when he wrote a recent cable states that he was successful in his final examination and declared that life was luxurious there, "after six months of convoy and E-boat patrol, dodging torpedoes in the dark and chasing elusive 50-knot targets into smoke screens from the light of star-shells, dive bombers in the Channel (our ship shot one down about six weeks ago) and suspected submarines in the Atlantic."

Perfect Black-Out The people of Camden and district were awarded 100 per cent, marks for the effectiveness in the first trial blackout on Sunday evening last. The pilot of a plane, which covered the district, reported that no light visible from the air. The blackout lasted for one hour from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. Appreciation for the degree of operation was expressed by the Chief Warden (Ald. H.S. Kelloway) and his deputy (Mr. K. B. Wilson).

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