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WAR CABINET

WEEKLY RÉSUMÉ

(No. 120)

of the

NAVAL, MILITARY AND AIR SITUATION

from 0700 December 11th, to

0700 December 18th,

1941

[Circulated with the approval of the Chiefs of Staff.]
NAVAL SITUATION.

General Review.

AN Italian battle fleet has been at sea covering convoys to North Africa.
Two Italian cruisers have been sunk in the Central Mediterranean.
H.M.S. Galatea has been sunk by U-boat near Alexandria.
Three, possibly four, German U-boats have been sunk west of Gibraltar.
British and Russian submarines report successes from the Mediterranean and Northern Waters.
Shipping losses, apart from seizures in the Far East, have been slight.

Home and Northern Waters.

2. H.M. Destroyer Puckeridge was severely damaged by bombs off Milford Haven on the morning of the 17th and was towed into harbour.
H.M. Canadian Destroyer Restigouche suffered considerable damage from heavy weather whilst on escort duty south of Iceland (C) on the 14th.
H.M. Submarine Sealion sank an eastbound merchant ship in the North Cape area on the 5th.
Russian submarines also report successes from the North Cape area, where on the 28th November D 3 sank an escorted 6,000-ton ship, on the 5th December an escorted 10,000-ton ship and on the 6th a 5/6,000-ton ship. K 23 on the 26th November sank a 600-ton ship by gunfire off Loppen Island (Fuglo Sound).
H.M. Minesweepers Hasard and Speedy were in action with enemy surface craft, thought to be destroyers, at the entrance to the White Sea on the evening of the 17th. Speedy sustained slight damage and two casualties.
It is estimated that 13,000 tons of enemy shipping have been sunk or damaged by our aircraft during the period. Details are given under Air Situation.

North Atlantic.

3. H.M. Trawler Lady Shirley disappeared without trace from patrol in the Straits of Gibraltar on the 11th, and it is feared that she has been sunk by a U-boat.
H.M. Trawler Loch Oskaig was bombed and damaged off Lisbon on the 12th but was able to proceed on patrol; she was again attacked and claims to have hit the aircraft.

Mediterranean.

4. Before dawn on the 13th, when off Cape Bon, H.M. Destroyers Sikh, Legion and Maori and the Dutch Destroyer Isaac Sweers made contact with the Italian cruisers Alberto di Giussano and Alberico da Barbiano (5,069 tons, 8—6-inch guns) and two torpedo boats, on a southerly course. A Wellington aircraft also sighted the force and the enemy hearing her engines turned back, thereby placing our destroyers in a most favourable position for attack. The allied ships had the initiative and opened fire with guns and torpedoes. The two cruisers were set on fire and sunk; one of the torpedo boats was sunk and the other severely damaged. Our ships suffered no casualties or damage.
H.M. Cruiser Galatea (5,270 tons, 6—6-inch guns, complement about 450) was sunk by a U-boat to the westward of Alexandria on the night of 14th/15th. She was hit by at least two torpedoes amidships. There are about 150 survivors.
On the morning of the 17th a force of 3 Italian battleships, with cruisers and destroyers, was sighted west of Navarino, and a similar force was sighted five hours later 30 miles to the westward with four merchant ships in company. H.M. Cruisers Neptud, Aurora and Penelope with 14 destroyers made contact with this force at nightfall and engaged it for half an hour but later lost touch. What appeared to be the same Italian force was sighted by aircraft about noon on the following day, 150 miles to the east of Tripoli, apparently steering for that port.
5. The following successes by H.M. Submarines have been reported:

Triumph torpedoed a merchant ship and a salvage tug in Candia Harbour (Crete) on the 24th November.

Upright attacked two large unidentified ships and a destroyer south of Taranto on the night of the 12th/13th and obtained 4 hits.

Urge reported that she attacked two Italian battleships of the Cavour class south of Messina on the morning of the 14th and that she obtained 2 hits on one of them.

(Reconnaissance on the 15th showed five Italian battleships at Taranto.)

A 6,000-ton Italian merchant vessel is reported beached south of Navarino after being torpedoed by Porpoise.

On the evening of the 14th Talisman, when about 60 miles south of eastern Crete, shelled a U-boat and obtained a hit at the base of the conning tower.

Thunderbolt sank a 300-ton schooner in the Kithera Channel on the 25th November and Proteus sank a laden supply caique in the same area on the 8th December.

Our aircraft have sunk or damaged 15,000 tons of enemy shipping. Details are given under Air Situation.

During the week upward of 38,000 tons of French merchant shipping passed Gibraltar westbound and over 15,000 tons eastward.

Far East.

Philippines.

6. On the 13th it was reported that United States aircraft had hit a second battleship of the Haruna class off Luzon, and on the 14th obtained 3 hits on a battleship, probably of the same class. This latter ship was last seen on fire. Aircraft also seriously damaged a transport at Legaspi.

Malaya.

7. The Dutch Submarine O.16 sank four southbound laden transports off Patani on the 12th, and K.12 sank a merchant ship and an oiler on the 12th and 13th respectively off Kota Bahru.

A convoy of about 100 ships escorted by aircraft carriers, destroyers and submarines was reported off the Indo-China coast on the night of the 12th/13th, and on the 14th a convoy, believed to be the same one, was reported in Camranh Bay.

Hong Kong.

8. H.M. Destroyer Thrucian destroyed two river boats in Kowloon Bay on the 14th.

Pacific Islands.

9. Johnson Island, 750 miles W.N.W. of Hawaii, has been bombarded by two surface vessels. Wake Island was bombed on the night of the 15th/16th and on the following day. A Japanese U-boat fired several rounds at Kahului on Maui Island (Hawaii) on the 16th.

Anti-Submarine Operations.

10. H.M. Destroyers Croome, Foxhound and Nestor destroyed a U-boat to the southward of Cape St. Vincent on the 15th.

On the 17th the escort of a homeward-bound convoy, including aircraft from an auxiliary carrier, about 400 miles to the westward of Gibraltar located and sank U. 151 and took 55 prisoners. A Martlet aircraft was shot down in the encounter and the pilot killed.

Contacts with U-boats following this convoy continued on the 18th and at least one, and probably two, more were sunk by the escorts.

In addition to other attacks in the Gibraltar area U-boats have also been attacked by aircraft off St. Nazaire and by surface craft west of the Canaries.
Enemy Intelligence.

Main Units.

11. All the German main units except Seidlitz and Lutzow are now considered to be fit for sea. In the Baltic, Tirpitz, Scheer and Hipper, have been continuing their exercises. At Brest the Prinz Eugen was seen to have left dry dock and moved alongside the fuelling station on the 15th.

U-boats.

12. There has been very little U-boat activity in the past week and the general trend of submarines to the Mediterranean seems to have continued. A number have passed Gibraltar, and there are indications that several may have turned back after having been attacked and damaged.

Japan.

13. The Japanese losses in the operations in the Far East are believed to be one battleship sunk and two damaged, in addition to casualties to light craft and transports.

Enemy Attacks on Seaborne Trade.

14. During the period one ship has been sunk by mine off the Humber. U-Boats have sunk a British ship off Cape Spartel, a Spanish ship off Malaga and a Portuguese ship to the south west of Cape St. Vincent. A British tanker was torpedoed off Alexandria but reached harbour. Last week a Norwegian and a British ship were sunk off Luzon and a British ship was damaged in Manila. Little information from the Far East of mercantile losses has yet been received, but it is known that some British ships, including a number of local trading vessels, have been seized by the Japanese, who claim to have captured 120,000 gross tons.

Protection of Seaborne Trade.

15. During the week ending 17th December, 998 ships, including 226 allied and 32 neutral, were convoyed. One cruiser, two armed merchant cruisers, 5 anti-aircraft ships, 86 destroyers (including 25 United States destroyers) and 110 sloops, corvettes and minesweepers were employed on escort duties. Imports into the United Kingdom during the week ending 13th December totalled 1,043,000 tons compared with 973,000 tons during the previous week and an average of 948,000 for the past ten weeks. There were 350,000 tons of oil of various grades.

Enemy Minelaying, British Minesweeping.

16. Enemy minelaying by aircraft was mainly concentrated on the East Coast between Flamborough Head and Yarmouth, but Plymouth and Falmouth were visited on one night. Seventeen magnetic and nine acoustic mines have been destroyed during the week. The mine totals are now: Magnetic 1,613, acoustic 1,191 and contact 1,063.

Enemy Merchant Shipping.

17. According to a broadcast from Oslo, the Norwegian coaster Topaz, (142 tons), was bombed and sunk by a British aircraft on the 14th December off the west coast of Norway. The crew of six were lost. The German Osorno, 6,937 tons, which has been in dock, returned to her anchorage at Yokahama on the 2nd December. She appeared to be unarmored. There are 36 German and Italian ships in Japanese controlled ports. Thirteen of these have sufficient endurance to sail to Europe without refuelling on the voyage.

Vichy Merchant Shipping.

18. The sailings of Vichy ships through the Straits of Gibraltar declined during November to 50 per cent. of the monthly average from January to August.
1941. This is due partly to a seasonal decline in the exports from French West Africa, partly to our interference with Vichy shipping in the Far Eastern route and partly to fuel shortage. Services between unoccupied France and French North Africa have been maintained, the total tonnage remaining approximately the same, though the number of ships employed now is only about half as many as in 1940. At least 20 of the British, Allied and Danish ships held by the Vichy authorities after the armistice are now employed on this route; they total some 50,500 tons. Convoys have been introduced between French North Africa and France, but otherwise activity seems to be much as usual. Thirty-one Vichy ships, totalling approximately 137,000 tons, are in Far Eastern waters, eleven of them passenger liners. None of them is reported to have sailed for France since Japan entered the war.

Twelve merchant ships and two tankers, totalling 150,746 tons, were seized in United States ports by U.S. authorities on the 13th December.

MILITARY SITUATION.

(An outline map showing Axis operations against Russia is included in this Résumé as an inset.)

Russo-German Campaign.

Central sector.

19. The Russians have had marked successes both North and South of Moscow, i.e., from Klin and Tula areas, where the Germans have been forced back with heavy casualties and much loss of equipment. Between these two sectors the Germans have made a slight withdrawal in the Zvenigorod area (due west of Moscow).

20. The depth of the withdrawal in the Tula area between Ser Prudy and Urusovo is as much as some 60 miles.

Ukraine.

21. There has been no change. Despite heavy casualties the Germans continue to hold the line of the River Mius and possibly Taganrog.

Crimea.

22. The Russians still hold Sevastopol. No German attempt has been made to cross the Kerch Strait.

Conclusions.

23. After attempting for over two months to capture Moscow the Germans apparently decided to stabilise and withdraw to a shorter line suitable for defence during the winter. Their unsuccessful offensives had, however, so much reduced their fighting capacity that the Russians have been able to launch and press home heavy counter-attacks along nearly the whole of the Central sector. The Russians now hold the initiative and have removed, at any rate for the winter, the threat to Moscow and the railway to Riazshsk and Voronezh. It is too early to estimate what the outcome of this fighting will be, but the Germans may well have to revise their original intentions as to their winter line.

Libya.

24. Last week's Résumé covered the period up to the 9th December, by which date El Adem had been occupied, but the enemy was still resisting strongly west of Tobruk.

25. On the 10th December the enemy evacuated Acroma and it became apparent that a general withdrawal on Gazala, 35 miles west of Tobruk, was taking place. The enemy's new line extended from Gazala for some 25 miles southward. His main position was about Gazala with a tank detachment astride the Trigh El Abd. The remaining Axis armoured forces, by this time reduced to about 50 tanks and some lorried infantry, were disposed in the centre of his line, some 12 miles south of Gazala,
26. Practically all the Axis forces in Cyrenaica which were fit for battle 
(the greater part of two Italian motorised divisions, two infantry divisions and 
the remnants of the three Axis armoured divisions) faced the 8th Army in the 
enemy's new position. In spite of this display of strength, it was believed that 
General Rommel was contemplating a further withdrawal, probably to the line 
Mekili-Derna, as soon as his preparations were complete. General Ritchie's aim 
was therefore twofold: to bring the enemy to battle and destroy the greatest 
possible part of his forces before he could withdraw to the difficult country further 
west and to forestall him on the Mekili-Derna line.

27. By the 11th December, while a New Zealand formation was in contact 
with the enemy's main position some 6 miles east of Gazala, Indian troops, 
supported by "I" tanks, were ordered to by-pass Gazala to the South and 
advance North-West across the enemy's line of withdrawal. Meanwhile, mixed 
mobile columns of tanks, armoured cars, artillery and lorried infantry were 
directed in a wide sweep around the enemy's southern flank towards Derna, 
Mekili and Tmimi.

28. Throughout the 12th and 13th December, while the New Zealanders 
made steady inroads into the Gazala position, a series of heavy counter-attacks 
were launched on the Indian formations advancing against the enemy's centre. 
These were repulsed with the loss to the enemy of 16 tanks. On the following day 
further tank counter-attacks in this area were driven off. Progress was, however, 
slow.

29. On the evening of the 15th December the situation was confused, but 
appeared to be developing favourably. Moreover, it was apparent that, whatever 
had been General Rommel's original intention, the bulk of his force was now 
committed to battle on the Gazala line. An armoured force was accordingly 
despawned around the enemy's southern flank directed upon Bir Haiegh El Eleba 
and Tmimi. By the 16th December, part of this force was astride the Gazala-
Derna road at Tmimi, while the remainder was engaging the enemy north of the 
Trigh El Abd from the rear. Details of this engagement are not available, but 
it is known that four German tanks were destroyed.

30. During the night of the 16th/17th December the anticipated with­
drawal began. Under cover of darkness a force of tanks and M.T., probably the 
bulk of the remnants of the two German armoured divisions, succeeded in slipping 
away from the battle field and is thought to have by-passed Tmimi and made its 
way to the vicinity of Derna. The remainder of the enemy forces stayed in their 
position until the morning of the 17th December, when they, too, began to with­
draw. During the 17th December our troops pursued the retreating enemy for 
a distance of over 30 miles. By the late afternoon our armoured forces, with 
Indian troops in close support, had crossed the Mekili-Tmimi road on a wide 
front with lighter mobile forces thrown out widely towards Mekili and to the 
North-West.

31. Meanwhile, in the frontier area, the enemy is still holding out in the 
Halfaya position and at Bardia, where he is subjected to ever-increasing pressure 
from the South African investing force. The third enemy strong point at 
Ghirba, north of Sidi Omar, surrendered on the 11th December, and there seems 
little doubt that the supply situation of the remaining garrisons in this area is 
critical.

To sum up—

32. A great deal depends on the degree of confusion which can be created 
in the enemy forces now retiring from the Gazala position. The weather is had 
the enemy is to a great extent highly mobile. Nevertheless, whatever may be 
General Rommel's intention on reaching Derna, he is unlikely to have more than 
a much disorganised force at his disposal.

The Far East.

General.

33. In the light of events during the past week it seems probable that the 
Japanese plan was to seize as many U.S.A. islands as possible, so as to interrupt 
communications between America and the Philippines. To achieve this aim it 
was essential to knock out, partially or temporarily, the main U.S. Pacific base
at Pearl Island Harbour (Hawaii), against which the risk of attempting a major combined operation at a distance by sea of some 3,500 miles was overwhelming, so long as the American fleet was in being and at sea. Hence the surprise air attack which in the result was very successful. The island ring secured, Japan would then be in a position to conduct operations against her main objects of Singapore and the Philippines without having constantly to watch her eastern flank.

34. At the outbreak of war with Britain and the United States, Japan had available 62 divisions, of which approximately 14 are now committed in the south. As reserves available immediately, or at short notice, it is believed that she has a further 14 divisions and sufficient shipping to transport the equivalent of 12 divisions.

35. The present estimated enemy strength in North Malaya is three divisions and one tank regiment.

36. The chief factors in the situation at present appear to be time and the attitude of Russia. Japan must have quick results in view of her difficult economic situation and the inevitability of defeat, if the United States and ourselves are given time in which to build up our strength against her. She is also anxious not to start another front in the North, whilst fighting is still in progress on the southern and China fronts.

It therefore appears that after the initial phases of the war are over, the position of Japan, who has now been at war for over four years in China, will become precarious if operations are opened on her northern front, and if sufficient time becomes available to the United States and ourselves to strengthen our military position in the Far East.

Malaya.

37. In North-East Malaya 8 Indian Inf. Bde. holding the Kota Bharu area has been reinforced with one battalion and one field battery, and has now fallen back to a line covering Machang aerodrome (25 miles south of Kota Bharu). Since the 12th December activity has been confined to patrols.

38. In North-West Malaya heavy attacks by Japanese forces estimated at one division (subsequently reinforced by a second division) supported by a tank regiment (150 tanks) have forced back 11 Indian Division, with 12 Indian Inf. Bde. protecting its flank, to the line of the River Muda (12 miles north of Penang and approximately 70 miles from the frontier).

Heavv casualties in personnel and equipment have been suffered, and our troops have fought without respite. 6 Indian Inf. Bde. on our left were cut off and suffered severe casualties.

39. Penang, from which some troops have already been withdrawn to join the Kedah battle, is now seriously threatened. Heavy air attacks have produced a difficult position.

40. Japanese attacks are being pressed home with fanatical courage in spite of heavy losses.

Sarawak.

41. A Japanese landing took place on the 16th December at Miri, from which our small garrison, having completed the oil denial scheme, had been successfully withdrawn to Kuching.

No attack on North Borneo has yet been attempted.

Hong Kong.

42. In face of increased enemy pressure in superior numbers, our forces withdrew from the mainland and Stonecutters Island to Hong Kong Island in 
in accordance with the defence plan. The movement began at dusk on the
11th December and was completed during the following night without much
interference. All artillery and armoured cars were successfully evacuated,
together with most of the carriers and M.T. The coast defence guns on Stone-
cutters Island, the dockyard and important military establishments on the
mainland were demolished before evacuation.

Japanese artillery has bombarded the gun positions, naval dockyard and
pillboxes on the north shore of the Island with some effect, but military casualties
have so far been light. Our own artillery have effectively shelled enemy batteries
and troop concentrations on the mainland.

Concentrations of ferry craft on the mainland shore and of enemy troops
on Lamma Island, approximately two miles to the south-west of Hong Kong
Island, indicate that landings may shortly be attempted.

Civilian morale, though shaken at first, is improving and the distribution
of rice is becoming less difficult.

On the 13th December, and again on the 17th, the Governor refused demands
for surrender.

Western Pacific.

43. Ocean and Nauru Islands have been bombed from the air. The
phosphate plants at both places have been demolished by us, according to plan.
Three small islands in the Gilbert group have been occupied by the Japanese.

Portuguese Timor.

44. It has been announced by the Netherlands East Indies Government that
on the morning of the 17th December Portuguese Timor was occupied by Dutch
and Australian Forces. As far as is known, the occupation took place quietly.

Burma.

45. The general situation in Burma is reported as being quiet. All
necessary defence arrangements have been put into operation and all Japanese
and about 300 Fifth Columnists arrested. Victoria Point, Mergui and Tavoy
(all in Tenasserim) have been bombed, but Rangoon so far has had warnings only.
Japanese forces are reported to have landed on the Thai coast at
Chumphorn and Prachuab Kirikhan, and to have occupied Marang (35 miles
North-East of Victoria Point, in Tenasserim).
The plan for demolitions of Victoria Point has been put into effect, and
the garrison withdrawn.

A raiding party from Mergui to cut the railway south of Prachab Kirikhan
met strong enemy opposition and suffered some casualties. It withdrew without
achieving its object.

Commander-in-Chief, India, assumed command of Burma, with effect from
the 15th December, 1941.

Intelligence.

France.

46. Recent reports provide no confirmation of the rumours of a German
concentration in S.W. France. It is probable, however, that a number of tired
divisions have returned from the Eastern Front to France for rest and refit. To
balance this, there are indications of the departure eastwards, as drafts, of an
equivalent number of troops, including possibly one low-category division for
L. of C. duties.

The estimate of German divisions in France remains at 24, of which two
are in the area south of the River Gironde. Air reconnaissance of the Western
end of the Franco-Spanish frontier on the 11th and 12th December reveals no
unusual activity.
AIR SITUATION.

General Review.

47. Slight improvement in the weather enabled our bombers to resume night operations on a heavier scale than had been possible during recent weeks. Attacks on enemy shipping were continued by day and by night.

Enemy activity against this country continued at a low level.

In Malaya and Burma attacks by Japanese aircraft were directed against our aerodromes, several of which were evacuated.

In Libya our aircraft provided effective support for our ground forces, and heavily attacked enemy communications.

Germany and Occupied Territory.

Day.

48. Bomber Command despatched 34 sorties. Fighter Command flew 57 sorties against shipping and over occupied territory. Attacks on shipping are reported under "Coastal Operations."

49. Three Coastal Command Beauforts bombed the Donges oil refinery at St. Nazaire, starting fires among oil containers. Spitfires carried out promising attacks on barges at Nieuport and on two railway trains near Calais.

Night.

50. Bomber Command despatched 548 sorties and dropped a total of 553 tons of H.E. bombs and 22,380 incendiaries. Our aircraft operated every night except one, the principal objectives being the enemy warships at Brest, the docks and town of Wilhelmshaven, and Channel ports.

51. Brest was attacked on six nights by a total of 107 aircraft, which dropped 277 tons of H.E. bombs, including nine of 4,000 lbs. and 39 of 2,000 lbs. A number of these were seen to burst in the dock area and one 4,000-lb. bomb caused a particularly large explosion, followed by a red glow; a number of fires were also reported, but intense darkness and efficient smoke screens made it impossible to observe whether the battlecruisers were hit.

52. Seventy-one tons of H.E. bombs (including three of 4,000 lbs.) and 10,600 incendiaries were dropped on Wilhelmshaven during a raid by 69 bombers. Numerous fires resulted, and bomb-bursts were seen near the main railway station and the docks and in the North-Eastern and the Western parts of the town.

53. Attacks on a lighter scale were made against Ostend, Havre, Cherbourg and Cologne.

United Kingdom.

54. Fighter Command flew 1,436 sorties by day and 532 sorties by night. Enemy operations were on a small scale, comparable with those of the previous week. An insignificant number of aircraft penetrated inland.

Coastal Operations.

55. Coastal Command flew 228 patrols (362 sorties) and provided 33 convoy escorts (76 additional sorties). Shipping protection patrols by Fighter Command totalled 506 (1,259 sorties).

56. Hudsons sank a 1,200-ton ship off Haugesund, and reported hits on an 8,000-ton merchant vessel off Texel and another of 4,000 tons off Ameland. Beauforts and Beaufighters, escorted by long-range Spitfires, attacked a convoy off the Dutch coast; a Flak ship was hit and other ships damaged.

57. Thirty-five aircraft were despatched to lay sea-mines off Brest and in the Jade and Weser rivers; ten of these operated by day.

58. The results of enemy operations against shipping were negligible, apart from minelaying, which cannot yet be assessed. Four attacks on shipping
were reported during the week; one off Milford Haven and another off the Shetlands by day, one at dusk off Spurn Head and the fourth by a F.W. 200 off Portugal.

Mediterranean.

Cyrenaica.

59. Marylands, Blenheims, and Hurricane bombers operated in close support of our ground forces, though on some days their activities were curtailed by sand storms and unfavourable weather conditions. Concentrations of enemy M.T. near El Tmimi were bombed and attacks were made on motor vehicles on the Bomba-Derna road and on the road north of El Tmimi; many direct hits were observed. An attack, carried out by six Bostons in poor weather, was intercepted by 12 Me. 109s, and five Bostons failed to return and the sixth was badly damaged.

60. By the 16th December there was a considerable movement of enemy M.T. to the north-west of El Tmimi in the direction of Derna and beyond; repeated air attacks were carried out, and concentrations of vehicles in the Mckili area were bombed, many vehicles being hit and set on fire. Reconnaissance disclosed a congestion of aircraft on the aerodromes in the Benghazi area, doubtless due to the fact that the enemy has lost at least six aerodromes since the campaign started. Marylands attacked Bimina aerodrome and destroyed two large aircraft and started some fires, and on the 17th December the landing ground at Barce was bombed and fifteen Ju. 52s were destroyed.

61. Fighters carried out continuous defensive and offensive patrols and provided escorts for bombers. During the earlier part of the week these patrols were largely over the Tobruk–El Gazala area. Many successful engagements were fought.

62. On the 11th December 24 Ju. 88s, with an escort of 10 Me. 109s, made an attack on the Tobruk area; they were intercepted by a patrol of Tomahawks which shot down two of the bombers and two of the escorting fighters; the same patrol then attacked six Me. 109s, three of which they destroyed. One Tomahawk was shot down.

On the two following days our fighters, whilst carrying out offensive sweeps and escorts, shot down 20 enemy aircraft and probably destroyed eight others, against our loss of 12 fighters. On the 15th and 16th December only two enemy aircraft were sighted, one of which was shot down.

63. The difficulties of supply by sea forced the Germans to rely largely on air transport, and on the 11th and 12th December an effort was made to intercept the Ju. 52s flying between Crete and Derna, as a result of which Marylands and Beaufighters destroyed 7, and damaged 13 others; 5 Marylands are missing.

64. Hurricanes operating from forward landing grounds made a series of attacks on enemy transport vehicles on the road between Ghemines (37 miles south of Benghazi) and El Aghila. During these attacks 173 vehicles, including 12 petrol tankers, were damaged or destroyed, and numerous casualties were inflicted.

65. On two nights a total of 35 Wellingtons successfully attacked Derna town and aerodrome. Two night raids were also made on Benghazi harbour by a total of 14 Wellingtons from Malta. Hits were seen on buildings near the harbour, in the centre of the town and at the base of the outer mole. During one of the attacks the harbour was mined by four further Wellingtons.

66. Enemy air operations continued on an intensive scale but the activity of dive-bomber units noticeably decreased. This may have been partly due to losses inflicted by our air forces on these units during the previous week and partly to supply difficulties. The reduced activity of dive-bomber units was counterbalanced to some extent by an increased activity of Ju. 88 bombers. These concentrated mainly on front-line targets and there was a noticeable absence of attacks on back areas and communications.

German single-engined fighter units have been employed to the utmost. In the course of engagements with our fighters many Me. 109s have been shot down, but generally speaking, the German single-engined fighters have been handled well.
Tripolitania.

67. Castel Benito aerodrome and M.T. in the Zuara area were attacked by aircraft from Malta. At Castel Benito three aircraft on the ground were destroyed and large fires were caused among the hangars. Two buildings and two petrol tankers were destroyed in the Zuara area.

Italy and Sicily.

68. On the night of the 15th/16th December and on the following night, a total of 32 Wellingtons attacked naval shipping at Taranto; hits were made in the target area and considerable damage was caused to naval buildings and stores, but an effective smoke screen prevented detailed observation. In an attack on Catania harbour one merchant vessel of 6,000 tons was set on fire and one or two hits were made on another ship of 5,000 tons. Naval Swordfish are believed to have sunk off Kelibia in Tunis a tanker of 4,000 tons in a night attack.

A day attack was also made on the aerodrome at Comiso (Sicily), and a munition factory at Cotrone was hit twice.

Malta.

69. Enemy night fighter Ju. 88s operating from Sicily have attacked Malta by night, but although some of the raids continued for many hours, the number of aircraft operating has not been large and little damage has been caused.

Greece and Crete.

70. Wellingtons attacked Patras at night and dropped 17½ tons of bombs; the quayside buildings were demolished, and it is believed that a 12,000-ton liner was hit, as much smoke was observed coming from her stern.

In daylight Blenheims carried out four attacks on shipping at Argostoli; one merchant vessel of 5,000 tons was possibly hit, but intense A.A. fire was encountered and four Blenheims are missing.

On the night 11th/12th December 20 Wellingtons bombed Maleme, obtaining a direct hit on a petrol dump and causing a number of large fires and explosions.

Russia.

German Air Force Operations.

71. The German Air Force appears to have had little effect in holding up the Russian advances on almost all sectors of the front, but there is little indication as to the air operations which have been carried out. It is thought probable, however, that close support units which were at very advanced bases in the Klin-Kalinin sector have been forced to withdraw in face of Russian progress in this area. On the whole of the Central Front German Air Force supplies generally are believed to be adequate to meet the present requirements of the reduced air forces in this area.

72. In the south, Russian pressure appears to be heaviest in the Donetz Basin, but the commitments of the German Air Force in support of the Crimea operations and the line at present held along the River Mius to the north of Taganrog seem to preclude the possibility of an adequate air force to cover operations further north. The supply situation in the whole of this area east of the Dnieper bend is thought for some time to have been acute, and probably accounts for the failure hitherto to maintain air operations on an intensive scale.

The Far East.

Burma.

73. On the 11th, formations of 16 and 23 aircraft made two raids on our aerodrome at Tavoy, 225 miles S.E. of Rangoon. The aerodrome at Victoria was evacuated on the 13th (it is believed that demolition was previously completed). On the 13th, a total of 33 aircraft attacked the aerodrome and harbour at Mergui; a W/T post, petrol dump and barracks were hit. Two enemy aircraft were destroyed.

[23267]
Malay States.

74. Our aircraft and those of the Netherlands East Indies Air Force carried out daily reconnaissances of the coastal and battle areas. No reports of casualties to our aircraft have been received.

75. Penang was raided on the 11th by three waves of enemy bombers, totalling 77 aircraft, and these were succeeded by heavy attacks on the two following days. Ragan Luar was reported out of action for fuelling ships and Penang aerodrome was evacuated, after being demolished. The aerodromes at Butterworth, Jabi, Sitawan, Sungai Hue and Taiping were also destroyed and evacuated. On the 15th, 20 aircraft bombed our aerodrome at Ipoh (100 miles S.E. of Penang), damaging part of the petrol dump. On the 13th and 15th, low-flying machine-gun attacks were carried out on Kuantan aerodrome, without causing damage or casualties.

76. During the period 7th to 17th, a total of 17 enemy aircraft are known to have been destroyed, of which 13 are claimed by A.A. guns. Two more were seen to collide.

Netherlands East Indies.

77. On the 10th, six Hudsons of the Royal Australian Air Force bombed Tobi Island (200 miles N.W. of New Guinea) obtaining direct hits or near misses on a storehouse.

78. On the 17th, aircraft of the Netherlands East Indies Air Force, on reconnaissance, reported sighting an aircraft carrier and other naval vessels stationary off Miri (Sarawak). Six Glenn Martins and five Buffaloes were despatched from Sinka Wang (Borneo: 100 miles S.W. of Sarawak) and located, at Miri, three cruisers, six armed raiders or auxiliaries and a tanker; the aircraft carrier was not seen. A.A. fire from the ships and shore was heavy and no hits are claimed on the enemy warships. The attacking aircraft were engaged by Japanese fighters which are thought to have operated from the aircraft carrier. Aircraft despatched later were prevented from attacking by bad weather. A Dutch aircraft has claimed a direct hit on a destroyer.

Hong Kong.

79. Bombs were dropped on the Island in daytime on the 12th, 16th and 17th and on the nights of 14th/15th and 15th/16th. At Saukiwan, civilian casualties resulted, and the docks at Aberdeen were hit, but, in general, little military damage has been reported from air attack.

Two hostile aircraft were destroyed and hits were claimed on a third.

Sarawak.

80. On the 14th, Japanese bombers unsuccessfully attacked the garrison from Miri which was en route to Kuching (300 miles S.S.E. of Miri), which was reached safely.

American possessions.

81.—There is little official information on air operations in the Pacific but the following facts are of interest:—

(i) West Coast of United States.—On the 5th December, enemy aircraft were suspected in the locality to the seaward of San Francisco but their presence was not confirmed. The following night further alarms occurred but no raid developed.

(ii) Pearl Harbour.—Although information regarding the aircraft which took part in the attacks on Pearl Harbour is scanty, the indications are that they came from at least two aircraft carriers, which may have included the Shokaku and Zuikaku. The American report that 160 aircraft participated is thought to be exaggerated. The Shokaku and the Zuikaku are the latest aircraft carriers built for the Japanese Navy and each carry 48 aircraft. Forty-one Japanese aircraft were claimed to have been shot down.

(iii) Wake Island.—United States Marines were still holding out against attack on the 11th December, and claim to have shot down five enemy bombers by A.A. gunfire.
(iv) **Philippines.**—In operations against the Japanese forces attacking the Philippines the United States Air Forces claim to have sunk one transport and severely damaged two others. It is also reported that two battleships of the Kongo class, the *Haruna* (to which reference was made under “Naval Situation” in last week’s *Résumé*) and possibly the *Kirishima*, were engaged by bombers, leading to the destruction of the *Haruna*, as admitted in the Japanese press, and to severe damage to the *Kirishima*. According to para. 6 of Naval situation a third battleship was also damaged.

(v) Air attacks have been delivered on numerous islands south-east of the Marshall Islands. It is known that four-engined flying-boats have taken part in these raids. There is no information dealing with activities of shore-based aircraft in the Mandated Islands, of which it is thought that there are 36 fighters and 12 heavy bombers.

**HOME SECURITY SITUATION.**

**General.**

**By Day.**

82. Twenty enemy shells fell in the Dover district on the 15th December, and a few bombs were dropped in the town on the 16th. No other incidents of any importance occurred.

**By Night.**

83. There was minor bombing on four nights of the week, with most of the incidents affecting South Devon and Cornwall.

**Damage.**

84. At Dover and in the district damage was caused to house property. Some damage was also caused to a military camp at Tor Point in Cornwall on the night of the 16th/17th.

**Casualties.**

85. Estimated civilian casualties for the week ending 0600 Wednesday, the 17th December, are four seriously injured.
APPENDICES I, II and III
will be published monthly.


APPENDIX IV.

Enemy Merchant Ship losses as assessed to 30th November, 1941.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Sunk, Captured or Constructive Loss</th>
<th>Seriously Damaged</th>
<th>Damaged</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>1,678,668</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>262,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>1,441,543</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>302,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other enemy ships and ships useful to enemy</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>119,859</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>3,239,569</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>603,350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above there are Russian claims estimated at about 400,000 gross tons sunk; also some 36,000 gross tons of Finnish shipping seized in Allied ports. Also nearly 500,000 gross tons of enemy merchant tonnage is in United States and South American ports and no longer at the disposal of the enemy.

APPENDIX V.

Casualties to H.M. Auxiliary Vessels and to Naval Personnel.

H.M. Auxiliary Minesweeper Banca, recalled from the east coast of Malaya on the 6th, failed to return and must be considered lost.

M. A/S Boat No. 30 fouled the boom in the Humber on the night of the 13th/14th whilst proceeding for rescue work and later sank.

The Auxiliary Patrol vessel Rosabelle was sunk off Gibraltar on the night of the 10th/11th by an unexplained explosion.

The following casualties to naval personnel have been reported:

Officers: 13 killed, 71 missing, 5 wounded.
Ratings: 140 killed, 4 missing, 34 wounded.

These figures include the officers lost in H.M. Ships Dunedin, Prince of Wales and Repulse.
APPENDIX VI.

Operational Aircraft Battle Casualties.

(These figures are based on the best information available at the time of going to press.)

0700 hours, Thursday, 11th December, 1941, to 0700 hours, Thursday, 18th December, 1941.

Metropolitan Area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British.</th>
<th>In the Air</th>
<th>On the Ground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighters</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Co-Operation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German.</th>
<th>Destroyed</th>
<th>Probably Destroyed</th>
<th>Damaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No account is taken of aircraft destroyed on ground.

Middle East.

0700 hours, Tuesday, 9th December, 1941, to 0700 hours, Tuesday, 16th December, 1941.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British.</th>
<th>In the Air</th>
<th>On the Ground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombers</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighters</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German.</th>
<th>Destroyed</th>
<th>Probably Destroyed</th>
<th>Damaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighters</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Italian.</th>
<th>Destroyed</th>
<th>Probably Destroyed</th>
<th>Damaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighters</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unidentified Enemy Aircraft.</th>
<th>Destroyed</th>
<th>Probably Destroyed</th>
<th>Damaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighters</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition 9 Bombers, 1 Fighter, 1 Troop Transport and 4 unidentified enemy aircraft were destroyed by A.A. fire in the Middle East.
APPENDIX VII.

Air Attacks on Enemy Territory in Europe.

Extracts from Recent Raid Assessment Reports.

The following reports of damage have been received during the past week from Air Reconnaissance and Intelligence sources:—

Germany.

Hamburg.—In the raid on the 9th/10th November the main station received a direct hit. The restaurant was destroyed and the station hall damaged.

Mannheim.—Bopp and Reuther, manufacturers of dynamo parts, have been damaged by fire and cannot recommence deliveries until 1942.

Occupied France.

Boulogne.—In the raid on the 12th/13th October, three barges loaded with fuel oil, and five M.T.Bs. were sunk in the harbour. The submarine shelters between the coaling station and the statue of Britannia were damaged.

Sea Mining.

On the 3rd December a fishing vessel sank off Lorient as the result of striking a mine.
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SECRET

AXIS OPERATIONS AGAINST U.S.S.R.
showing approximate advances.

LEGEND

Limit of German Advance.
German Front Line on 15-12-41.
Main threats of Russian Forces.

Note: It is emphasised that in the mobile warfare which has taken place up to date there can be no continuous front line. The lines on the map therefore indicate only the approximate limits of advance of the frontal forces.