# VICTORY CELEBRATIONS: SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

FOR some who saw the Victory parade on Saturday the affair had begun the morning before, if not earlier. One or two small parties or family groups, indeed, settled in along the Mall on Thursday evening, and thus endured or enjoyed two nights in the open air to make sure of their places.

By Friday evening the early birds were so thick on the ground that they had ceased to attract much notice. At that time the weather was still settled enough—though there was to be some rain in the night—to make the prospect of sleeping out appear no more than mildly adventurous. Whitehall, the Mall, and Trafalgar Square that evening were patrolled by scores of thousands of citizens and visitors to London, viewing the decorations, staring at grey Buckingham Palace and the Royal Standard that told them the King and Queen were in residence, and increasing the takings of sellers of ice-cream, paper hats, and programmes. The backs of the bronze lions in Trafalgar Square were already occupied in readiness for the procession; the surrounding pavements were fringed with seated figures, parked for the night.

### EARLY CAMPERS

In the Mall, between unending traffic of motor-cars and the streams of pedestrians, enthusiasts were arranging themselves and their belongings according to very various standards of comfort. There were women curled up in ones or twos in corners that they had furnished with little more than a rug, a cushion, and a packet of food. By way of contrast, half-way up Constitution Hill a solitary middle-aged man had laid a full-sized mattress on the ground and assembled on it food and apparatus of a variety suggesting the experienced camper.

Under the lee of an official stand at Marlborough Gate a resolute-looking young woman, perhaps not long out of uniform, had set up a bed, camp, folding, officer's, and was chatting with two women friends before retiring. A little later a couple of Wrens, whose example was copied by some ratings, slung hammocks between lamp-standards and trees by the Duke of York's steps. By 11 o'clock two of the bluejackets were asleep above the heads of marvelling crowds. Camp-fires burned through the night near the Mall, with groups clustered about them.

Most evocative of all were the scenes as near the saluting base as police regulations permitted. Here reclined or squatted, three and four deep, a company that might have been posed deliberately to represent in the Victory celebrations an element unaccountably omitted from the procession—the night life of the public shelters of London under bomb-fire. In the period when the Tube station platforms had been opened to shelterers, but before the platforms were fitted with bunks, the people made their beds just like this—each person's territory marked out by blanket or groundsheet, on which the owner slept surrounded by chattels. To see them spread out thus in rows in the Mall on Friday evening, chatting amiably if they were not munching or blowing noisy instruments, was to be reminded forcibly that the morrow was to be an occasion, as never before, to signalize the share in victory of a whole people.

### BARRIERS CLOSED

In the first daylight hours of Saturday the people who had slept in their own beds quickly began to flood the centre of London. At 7.30 the Mall had to be closed to all except ticket-holders. Soon sightseers were packed 10 or 12 deep in Oxford Street, and along the Victoria Embankment from Charing Cross to Westminster. Underground stations on the line of the marching column were shut at or before the prearranged time, and the stout and high barriers across tributary streets were closed.

In the Strand, in streets just east of Charing Cross Road, and no doubt elsewhere, there must have been many thousands of people cut off by those barriers from sight, if not sound, of most of the morning's events. Others found in time that there were still Tube trains running into the desirable area on the far side of the obstructions, and that by travelling underground to Piccadilly Circus or Green Park there was still a chance to see something. The more extended route of the mechanized column—a route lined if not crowded the whole way with spectators—gave much better opportunities to view that part of the procession at close quarters.

It can hardly be possible to form any trustworthy estimate of the numbers in the vast crowds and how they compared with those on other great national occasions. Many areas on the route of the processions were as full of spectators as they could possibly be. On the other hand, there was some room to spare at the very bottom of the Mall, on the open ground between which and the Victoria Memorial the columns were to pass—even though it was only those in the front rows who saw much of the marching troops beyond flags and bayonets.

### CROWD CHARACTER

In the Green Park behind was a well-managed refreshment tent, and after the setting out of the King's cavalcade from Buckingham Palace for the saluting base the Canada Gates were opened to let people pass in and out of the Green Park. Here, therefore, some movement in the crowd was possible, and one might observe "what kind of a people," as Mr. Churchill once said, they were who waited good-temperedly and laughed and cheered, as cheer they did when anything noteworthy happened.

They were, the great majority of them, civilians—or at least in mufti; though many of the younger adults must have owed something of their civilian smartness to their "demob suits," in one of the few countries whose inhabitants delight in getting out of uniform rather than getting into it. An animated frieze of spectators crowned the tall Canada Gates. The feat of climbing that eminence, not to say that of remaining there for hours, was one for only the fit in physique and nerves, yet by no means all the watchers on the gates were in uniform, and a girl was among them.

The older and more sedentary stayed on ground level; which some, nevertheless, had altered to their own advantage by heaping up private sandcastles whereon to stand. An Airborne officer had brought a pair of steps to be his grandstand. It was a representative crowd in the widest sense, including men and women of many races and complexions from the Empire's forces, allied sailors, soldiers, and other visitors and guests from oversea, fathers and mothers with children, boisterous hobbledehoys—above all, the common people of Britain who, in or out of uniform, secured victory.

## From THE TIMES of 1846

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*HER MAJESTY'S BIRTHDAY*

Yesterday having been specially appointed for the due celebration of Her Majesty's [27th] birthday, the royal standard was hoisted on the principal church steeples, at an early hour, amid the ringing of merry peals, the ships in the river, and the principal public buildings. At 10 o'clock a very large number of well-dressed personages was congregated in St. James's-park to witness the inspection of the Household Brigade. The Life Guards formed on the right of the Infantry, attended by their band in state liveries, as also by their splendid massive kettle-drums.

The troops looked extremely well in their new uniforms, and went through their evolutions in a most soldier-like manner, to the evident satisfaction of the illustrious personages and distinguished officers present; among whom were Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington, Commander-in-Chief, in his uniform as Colonel of the Grenadier Guards; Field-Marshal His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, as Colonel of the Coldstream Guards; Field-Marshal His Royal Highness Prince Albert, as Colonel of the Scots Fusilier Guards; and His Royal Highness Prince George [afterwards Duke] of Cambridge as Colonel of the 17th Lancers.

** Royal salutes were fired at Windsor and the streets of London were illuminated. "Most of the principal streets were nearly impassable until after 11 o'clock, owing to the innumerable carriages, carts, waggons, omnibuses, &c., crowded with people from all parts of the suburbs."

## THE WHITEHALL SCENE

### CROWD'S GREETING TO WARRIORS

Whitehall was obviously one lap of the route where the armour would make a spurt if it could. And there was likely to be fresh, keen striding by the marching column after their half-hour rest between Big Ben and the Charing Cross Road. Whitehall, too, had been the brain and the heart of the Imperial forces for seven years: Churchill's home quarter, the daily background of the War Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff, the street where Combined Operations grew up, the vista which includes the Abbey, the Cenotaph, and the slope up to Nelson's Column.

So the people thronged there 14 deep on each side of the processional way, so thick that when one fainted—as many did—200 around swayed like a football crowd. They did most of their own police work behind a thin line of constables dotted with Boy Scouts and R.A.F. police. A quiet and philosophical crowd in a steamy grey morning; the Cockneys had obviously stayed in their own parts to see the procession. There was little room to use the rattles, flags, and folding stools over which many a half-crown had changed hands the night before.

At last the usual single trooper of the Household Cavalry appeared round the corner from Parliament Street, church bells pealed, cheers rang out, and the pageant had begun. First the captain's escort, groomed to perfection; then the State landau, with the King in naval uniform, the Queen in mauve, and the Princesses in pale blue. Swelling cheers, more cavalry, and then a pause.

Before this the Chiefs of Staff and three British officers who had been Allied Supreme Commanders had passed in cars, suddenly and perfunctorily, as if on their way to a Downing Street conference. Alanbrooke, Cunningham, and Portal were together in the first car; behind them together drove Alexander, home from Canada, and Mountbatten, here from S.E.A.C. The crowd hesitated over Maitland Wilson, an unfamiliar figure to them; many thought the late Prime Minister and Minister of Defence would have been in this military company. They could hardly have shouted louder if he had been.

There was a loud roar from Parliament Square as the police motor-cycle patrols, in perfect station, brought behind them the new Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Montgomery of Alamein, not the austere, stern master of the headquarters caravan, but a cheerful, animated figure, enjoying the crowd and the occasion. The tide of cheering took the 40-odd allied commanders behind him in its stride, and there were hopeful arguments in the crowd about whether the Russians were there or not. They wanted to believe they were. Then came many famous British fighting men of the three services—Tedder, Slim, Dempsey, Fraser, O'Connor, Ritchie, Sholto Douglas, all perched high in their scout cars like coachmen on the box.

Now came 400 armoured vehicles of all three services, labelled for a child to read, polished like new leather, manned with straight-backed men sitting or standing at attention. Some had jocular names like weazel, duck, and jeep; others such names as many had never heard of. There was a dental caravan and an airfield snowplough to raise a laugh; a petrol tender for 2,500 gallons marked "No smoking," an aerial lighthouse and a landmark beacon, both alight and winking. No one noticed how quickly one here passed from the military to the civilian equipment with sinister memories: blood transfusion vans, "war débris tippers with skips," all the panoply of the much-cheered fire service, a farm tractor and binder of which the gesticulating crew of landgirls got the biggest cheer of the hour.

### ROAR OF TANKS

Not till the National Savings vans had brought up the rear of the civilian services was the roar of the tanks heard. Across Parliament Square they changed up and were doing 15 miles an hour as they split into two columns to pass the Cenotaph; Comets, Churchills, Shermans, Cromwells, Flails, Bridge-layers. Children thrust fingers into ears as they passed and the dust rose as it used to on the French and German roads. Then came the guns of the Royal Artillery, neat and shiny, and after them much strange apparatus of the Royal Engineers, Royal Signals, Royal Army Service Corps, and Royal Army Ordnance Corps. Many civilians saw for the first time the ingenuity, organization, and sheer power which keeps the foot-soldier in the field. The Special Forces with their miniature airborne transport got a special cheer, and one learnt for the first time of the existence of Boot Repair Plants (Air Transportable).

In a minute or two the crowd was giving the allied troops the reception they deserved. The Americans had the place of honour in front, and for once we saw the unfamiliar dress uniform of the Marine Corps. The mind darted this way and that over the world map as the units were identified: each with its quota from each service. Ethiopia, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Luxembourg was a baffling sequence.

Then came the Dominion troops to give the first picture of infantry mass: two columns, six abreast, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, in that order. Their stern khaki was followed by the old Londoners' thrill, the Indian contingents, with the band of the Royal Garhwal Rifles in a gorgeous uniform which made one sigh for the gold of the Household Cavalry band. Everyone spotted the Gurkhas by their kukris.

Hundreds of men and women from the Colonial Empire followed, their khaki and the swing of their arms the symbols of their common allegiance and discipline. Every type of Crown government was represented, many stages of civilization and independence, years of training, education, and example. They bore themselves proudly, swinging and striding with the best. They came from Fiji, from Hong-kong, from Cyprus, from Borneo, from Aden, from Malta, from Ceylon, and the West Indies, as well as from three quarters of the African continent. Some of them were marching to commemorate liberation as well as victory.

### CIVILIAN HEROES

For a few minutes civilians filled the eye. Fishermen, merchant seamen, coastguards, and lifeboatmen; then the police, civil defence services, nurses, and land girls. There were uniforms here, breeches, starched collars, berets, W.V.S. green and overalls, but also blue suits, summer dresses, and high-heeled shoes, mackintoshes and umbrellas, some shaky but determined marching, and many grey heads.

As the bands turned into view it was clear there would be cavalary but no more horses. Here were famous troopers of the Queen's Bays, the Royal Dragoons, the Lothians and Border Horse, and Mr. Churchill's old regiment of Hussars. The men of the new cavalry were on foot and marching well. Their machines had gone before.

Then came a mass of colours—the colours of the Guards, of the county regiments, of the Scottish, Welsh and Irish, and behind them glider pilots, parachutists, special service troops, and commandos. Once again there was mass and rhythm, and the spirit of pageantry which had risen and fallen throughout the two hours of procession. They could not know it, but the Royal Marines, marching earlier with the naval forces, had stolen some of the glory by their superb marching. But then they had their own band playing as they passed and helmets fit for gods.

That was the end of the Army, and the troops of the home front appeared again. The Home Guard with their own band, the A.T.S. marching as if they had practised for weeks. After them the men and women who had made and carried and tested and repaired and protected all that had gone before—feeders and tenders of the fighting machine, many of whom might well have been marching with civil defence services to which they gave their leisure. The crowd could not cope with every trade, every industry; so they singled out the miners with their helmets and lamps for a special greeting.

There was just enough breath and energy left after two hours to greet the R.A.F. as they deserved, both on the ground and in the fly past. There were all commands on parade, and of them all the bombers and the allied fighter pilots were the favourites.

By now the rain was falling and the crowd broke up slowly, heads craning for the fly past, uncertain where to go next.

## SIGHTSEERS LAST NIGHT

### CROWDED STREETS

The victory celebrations were continued in London last night. Soon after dusk crowds gathered to see the floodlighting, river illuminations, and decorations, and Whitehall, Trafalgar Square, and Piccadilly were thronged.

The streets had been filled with sightseers during the day, many of them walking along the route of the procession to see the decorations. Among them were troops who had taken part in the parade. Many of these men were invited to the homes of Londoners and hospitality was provided for them, and sightseeing tours were organized for others.

The naval vessels lying in the Thames proved a great attraction. There were many visitors to the submarines Token and Thermopylae in Shadwell New Basin, the cruisers Diadem and Bellona at Greenwich, the destroyers Myngs, Zambesi, Zest, and Zealous at Woolwich, the sloop Stork and the corvette Bamborough Castle at Deptford, and four minesweepers—Peak, Steadfast, Matvel, and Myrmidon—in the Upper Pool. The ships will be open again to visitors to-day between 12.30 and 8 p.m. The motor-torpedo boats moored between Chelsea and Blackfriars will not be open to the public.

The King and Queen and the Princesses and Queen Mary attended morning service at Westminster Abbey. About 200 people saw them arrive, but while the service was being held the news spread quickly and thousands gathered to cheer them. When the Royal Family left the Abbey traffic was held up for about 10 minutes while mounted police cleared a way for their cars. The King and Queen, accompanied by Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, later in the day left for Windsor.

At 10 o'clock last night there were almost as many people outside the Houses of Parliament as there had been during the procession. Buses and cars could move only with difficulty because of the crowds in the streets.

## CENTRE OF THE CELEBRATIONS

### SALUTING THE KING

### SYMBOL OF EMPIRE FEELING

The King, as he acknowledged the salute to victory, was at the centre of this day's memorable celebrations. It was not merely that the victory march reached its climax at the saluting base; it was of greater significance that the salute was given with affectionate loyalty, and was indeed a symbol of the whole Empire's proud gratitude towards its Sovereign.

The King was surrounded in the royal enclosure by his own family and royal guests from other lands, by his Ministers, the chiefs of the fighting services, Dominion statesmen, and Ambassadors of other nations. With the King's Ministers were also those who had held office in the war-time National Government, politically in the "wilderness" but, in the kindly British conception of democracy, remembered in the hour of victory.

The saluting base, with the royal enclosure round it, occupied for its specially reserved purpose only a short length of the Mall, leaving to the general public the rest of that fine highway from which to watch the processions. The main enclosure was designed in pale blue, edged with white. The royal arms in white on a blue background were at the centre of the stand immediately above the actual saluting base. From six masts at intervals along the roof were flown pennants bearing floral symbols of Great Britain and the Dominions. The Union flag was flown from each of the masts next to the saluting base, and for the whole length of the Mall a succession of these masts bore, on one side, the flags of the United Nations and, on the other, the flags of countries within the British Empire.

As many distinguished guests took their places in the royal enclosure, the general outline of its arrangement became clear—war-time Ministers in the front rows of the centre, members of the present administration behind them, the diplomatic corps on each side. The massed bands of the Guards took up their position opposite the saluting base, and for a while there was stirring music to enliven the interval still to wait before the main events of the march past. Then came the arrival at the saluting base of the chiefs of staff and supreme allied commanders, a swiftly moving procession of service cars. The two admirals among them were striking figures—Lord Cunningham of Hyndhope, the sailor who had endured, and won through, such stress and storm in the Mediterranean, and Lord Louis Mountbatten, whose command had inspired a host of allied forces in the Far East. Of the soldiers, Field-Marshal Lord Alexander looked the same calm and imperturbable leader that he always showed himself to be when he drove in just this same unruffled way along the roads of Africa and Italy to see his forward troops. The service chiefs, at whose arrival those already in the royal enclosure rose to their feet and cheered, took their seats in the front row to the right of the saluting base.

Next came, a few minutes later, the three State landaus, the first with the Prime Minister and Mr. Churchill. Their progress from Downing Street along the Mall was a picturesque and almost ceremonial episode, though lacking the swift movement of the service chiefs. From opposite the saluting base the cheers of the vast crowd stretching away to Admiralty Arch echoed along the Mall, and at the saluting base itself the two statesmen were given a tremendous welcome.

Mr. Attlee and Mr. Churchill, each in morning dress and wearing medals, took their seats in the front row of the royal enclosure to the left of the King's position, and next them sat Mr. Mackenzie King and Field-Marshal Smuts, who had arrived in one other of the State landaus. Mr. Churchill in particular looked in excellent form, and immediately proceeded to a round of smiling, friendly talks with other guests.

The next arrivals came from the opposite direction of Buckingham Palace and in a series of closed cars. Among them were the Duchess of Kent, in the uniform of the W.R.N.S., with her daughter, Princess Alexandra, Princess Juliana of the Netherlands and Prince Bernhard in khaki, the Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Norway, the young King Feisal of Iraq, the King of the Hellenes, Prince Felix of Luxembourg, Lord and Lady Milford Haven, and Lady Louis Mountbatten.

Shortly afterwards a most affectionate welcome from the crowd was given to Queen Mary as the car with her royal standard drove along the Mall. The Queen Mother, a regal figure in light blue, walked into the royal enclosure while cheers were still echoing along the processional route. She was greeted with a curtsey and kiss from the Duchess of Kent and other Princesses of the Blood Royal, and then passed on to speak with some of the Ministers and statesmen present and with the service chiefs. With Queen Mary there also arrived Princess Alice and the Earl of Athlone, and the Princess Royal.

Finally a great volume of cheering that came along the Mall unmistakably heralded the arrival of the King. The escort of the Household Cavalry brought to this memorable occasion that atmosphere of pageantry which has so often before pleased the populace and did not fail to do so now. The royal carriage, drawn by four grey horses, was still being cheered as it drew to a standstill at the saluting base. At that moment the Union flag flying from a red mast surmounted by a crown was lowered and the royal standard took its place as the royal salute was sounded by a bugler.

### MAUVE AND BLUE DRESSES

The King, in naval uniform, was received at the enclosure by the Prime Minister, with whom he exchanged a few words and then passed on to greet Mr. Churchill, Field-Marshal Smuts, and Mr. Mackenzie King. The Queen, in a dress of mauve, and the Princesses in blue, followed closely behind the King, and walking to the saluting base greeted with a kiss Queen Mary. As the King stepped to the saluting base itself the band opposite played the National Anthem. For a moment or two after that the King and Queen moved forward to talk with the service chiefs and others in the royal enclosure. The sound of bagpipes then floated down the Mall and the King, returning to the saluting base, took the salute as the massed pipers of Scottish and Irish regiments marched along, their stirring music recalling many an occasion on which during the war the same strains had cheered the population of some town which our forces had relieved from enemy occupation.

The march past of the columns then began. Of all the allied commanders Field-Marshal Montgomery received the greatest round of cheers as he rose in his car to salute the King. In the long procession made by the mechanized column the King had a smile for the amphibious jeeps and the Queen by his side was particularly impressed with the Dukws. The big "radar" vehicles of the R.A.F. as they passed along seemed also to evoke special interest, and there was more than ordinary cheering for the lorry carrying a 22,000lb. bomb. The sea-rescue squad of the R.A.F. rightly gained enthusiastic applause as the column moved past.

In the civilian services which followed, the fire brigades and civil defence rescue squads were warmly greeted, and the King smiled at the decontamination squad which passed by in its gas capes that were later to prove useful. There was a special cheer too for the girls of the Land Army, and both the King and Queen joined in the laugh that greeted the presence of the ordinary London bus in this procession.

Next came the mechanized army with a noisy array of tanks and armoured vehicles, grim giants of war, but in this victory procession without the dust of battle on them. The Churchill tank called for a special cheer as it passed the saluting base close to the great statesman whose name it bears. Later in the column the huge bulldozers and other machines of modern road construction passed by with almost as much noise as the tanks but, like them, without the dust of active service. The Bailey bridge—one of the most amazing and ubiquitous developments of the war—was modestly represented. Towards the end of the column, just ahead of a mobile canteen, a jeep-load of war correspondents rode in greater comfort than they had sometimes done before.

The marching column began to reach the saluting base after a short interval, with the contingents of allied forces at its head. For their flags the leaders of the war who stood at the saluting base had grateful acknowledgement. The troops of the Dominions, of India and Burma, and then of the Colonial Empire made a long procession in which were many picturesque touches of dress and equipment which alone were impressive as showing from what distant parts of the world these men of the British Commonwealth had come. From nearer home there were many others—from the Navy, the Royal Marines, the Royal Air Force, and numerous regiments and services of the Army. The long column, with its representatives also of civilian services, marched past and the King acknowledged the salute of those who had served in almost every phase of the all-embracing national effort that enabled victory to be achieved.

As the last of the marching column filed past the saluting base the band struck up, as its final air, "There'll always be an England."

### THE KING'S MESSAGE

The following telegrams were exchanged last evening between the King and the Home Secretary:—

The King's message:—

I should be glad if you will convey to all who were responsible for the preparation of yesterday's celebrations my warmest congratulations on the outstanding success of their work.

GEORGE R.I.

The Home Secretary's reply:—

All concerned in arrangements for Victory celebrations tender loyal thanks for your Majesty's gracious message.

HOME SECRETARY.

## THE FLY-PAST

### POOR VISIBILITY FOR AIR DISPLAY

FROM OUR AERONAUTICAL CORRESPONDENT

The weather, which so often hampered air operations during the war, interfered with the fly-past of R.A.F. and Fleet Air Arm squadrons. When they were briefed for the flight the crews were warned of a bad weather front approaching from the west, but the meteorological department forecast that it would not reach central London until the afternoon.

Until the last moment the forecast promised to be accurate, for up to the rendezvous point over Fairlop aerodrome, near Romford, the rain held off, the cloud base was no lower than 3,000ft., and visibility was reasonably good. But in the short distance between the eastern suburbs of the capital and the centre there was a sudden change, and as the leading aircraft approached the City area the rain started in earnest, an almost unbroken curtain of clouds started to descend, and before Admiralty Arch, the "aiming point," was reached, visibility was restricted to about half a mile.

The conditions imposed a severe strain on the crews of the aircraft flying in formation, and it was only by superb handling of their machines that they managed to adhere to the strict timing programme and to maintain the prearranged order. In view of the adverse conditions the close formation flying was admirable.

The end of the victory parade was just turning into the Mall as the single Hurricane, flown by an anonymous Battle of Britain pilot, crossed the saluting base. It was followed by three Coastal Command Sunderland flying-boats and a similar number of Transport Command Halifaxes. The representatives of Bomber Command, 12 Lancasters of No. 35 Squadron, led by Wing Commander A. J. L. Craig, D.S.O., D.F.C., the R.A.F.'s youngest wing commander, came next, flying in a triangular formation. From my position in the nose of the leading Lancaster it was possible to catch only an occasional glimpse of any other aircraft.

### OLD AND NEW AIRCRAFT

Somewhere in the gloom to the rear of the bombers were Mosquitoes from the British Air Forces of Occupation in Germany and of Fighter and Coastal Commands; Beaufighters from Coastal Command; Naval Air Arm Firebrands, Fireflies, Seafires, and Sea Mosquitoes; and various types of Spitfires, Hornets, and Tempests, representing B.A.F.O. and Fighter Command, whose units of Meteor and Vampire jet-propelled fighters brought up the rear.

Altogether about 650 pilots and air-crew members took part in the fly-past, and four members of the W.A.A.F. travelled as passengers in Lancasters. They were Flight Officer Mary Smith, personal assistant to Air Marshal Sir Norman Bottomley, A.O.C.-in-C., Bomber Command; Sergeant Edna Coate, a watch-keeper in the operations room at Graveley, Huntingdonshire, where No. 35 Squadron is based; and L.A.C.W. Jean Forbes and Corporal Betty Jones, two clerks of No. 11 Group, who were being rewarded for having typed the whole of the instructions relating to the air display.

In the main, the aircraft in the fly-past were representative of the powerful air forces with which Britain ended the war. Only the solitary Hurricane was a veteran of the Battle of Britain, though to the layman there was little difference between the Spitfires and the earlier types which caused German crews to cry out in alarm, "Achtung, Spitfeuer." The Sunderlands, too, were little changed from those which guarded our convoys during the height of the U-boat menace. But one missed the familiar outlines of the Blenheims and Battles, which were the standard light bombers in the early days; of the Defiant fighters, with their backward-firing turrets which gave the *Luftwaffe* such a nasty surprise during the Dunkirk evacuation; and of the Wellingtons (the R.A.F.'s beloved "Wimpeys"), the Hampdens and the Whitleys, which carried the battle into the heart of Germany until the four-engined bombers were ready. From the ranks of the Naval Air Arm a noticeable absentee was the old and trusty "Stringbag"—the Swordfish biplane, which enjoyed the distinction of remaining in the front line from start to finish of the war.

The great dissimilarities in the speeds of the various types of aircraft participating in the aerial procession—they ranged from 150 m.p.h. to the 350 miles an hour cruising speed of the "jet" fighters—was a problem, but this was solved by so timing the convergence of the units that when the Hurricane was over the saluting base the Meteors were 68 miles away over Foulness Point and the Vampires were just taking off from West Malling aerodrome in Kent.

Having flown in tight formation at 1,500ft. from Graveley to the first turning point at Wattisham aerodrome, Suffolk, and turned again at Bradwell Bay, on the north side of the Thames Estuary, the Lancasters saw their first navigational aid at Fairlop aerodrome, the rendezvous point, where a balloon wobbled in the breeze and golden sodium flares could be clearly seen several miles away. As we flew across the much-battered East End, over Wanstead, Hackney, Bethnal Green, Shoreditch, Finsbury, and the Strand, to the Admiralty Arch, balloons spaced at intervals of about a mile showed the way, and occasional flares acted as guides.

Though it was not yet raining, the streets in the suburbs appeared strangely deserted. The City, too, with its war scars showing clearly, was almost empty, but as we left St. Paul's behind on our left and flew over Fleet Street and the Strand, London came suddenly to life. As the aircraft dodged in and out of wispy clouds one could see people standing in little knots on the pavements, faces upturned, waving or pointing upwards.

The last of the balloons and sodium flares soon showed the location of the Admiralty Arch, and by this time one could see the end of the procession marching down the Mall in the thickening rain. The intervening distance to the saluting base was covered in a few seconds, giving us little time to do more than note the dense crowds spilling over from the Mall to the parks on either side; the aircraft exhibition in Green Park, looking forlorn and unattended; the grey-green Thames, like a snake, away to the left; the wet streets, and the glistening roof of Buckingham Palace.

Reaching the Thames over Kew Bridge the fighters turned away to port and the bombers to starboard to return to their bases. In a moment or two the streets and buildings had given way to green fields again, and 20 minutes later we were back at Graveley, having flown low over St. Neots, as the wing commander said, to "give our locals a treat."

## AT THE CONTROL POINT

### SMOOTH MOVEMENT ON TIME

The nodal point of the march past was at the junction of Whitehall and Parliament Square, for it was here that the mechanized and marching columns linked up, and here the Prime Minister's carriage party joined in from Downing Street on the tail of the chiefs of staff procession. Here too was stationed the central control vehicles, manned by Grenadier Guards and London District signals.

It had wireless communication with the officers in jeeps who marshalled the various groups of the processions, with the 10 recovery points along the route, formed by No. 1 Central Workshops, R.E.M.E., and with the saluting base, Scotland Yard, and the R.A.F. Alongside were stationed police and R.E.M.E. cars with duplicate wireless nets for their respective services.

The crowds in this sector, as elsewhere, were already assembled, at an early hour, in an orderly manner so that the police were enabled to keep open lanes for those wishing to cross, and for the evacuation of casualties. There was a good deal of fainting—enough to provoke rude howls when a commentator in the Mall announced over the loudspeakers that he had seen nobody faint in the crowd—but the St. John ambulance men, experienced in the seamy side of public rejoicing, found it "a cakewalk compared to the Coronation."

Children were brought to the front and a space kept in Parliament Square where they could sit on the ground. At one point a practical joker sought to enliven proceedings by exploding a couple of "thunderflashes," but otherwise everybody waited patiently for something to happen.

### POLICE REINFORCED

Punctually at 9.17 the procession of the chiefs of staff and supreme commanders was reported "off," and a minute later, again dead on time, the mechanized column left Clarence Gate. From then on messages from the "pace-maker" jeeps showed that all was running smoothly. At about half past 9 the crowd burst the cordons near the Oval, and police reinforcements were called for: but in less than five minutes order was restored.

Meanwhile in the seclusion of Downing Street there waited outside No. 10 three royal carriages, their horses specklessly groomed, the coachmen's scarlet coats adding a touch of pre-war colour to the scene. At 10.15 the supreme commanders motored by, and a Guards officer saluted and asked "Ready to move off, Sir?" of Mr. Attlee, who had taken his seat in the leading carriage, looking, if that were possible, as genial as Mr. Churchill, who sat by his side. With a clatter of hooves this party, the rear brought up by Field-Marshal Smuts and Mr. Mackenzie King, pulled out into Whitehall.

Twenty minutes later two outriders of the Household Cavalry heralded the approach of the Royal Family, and cheers rose to a crescendo as his Majesty, the Queen, and the Princesses came into view. The Captain's escort, though lacking some of its pristine splendour, made a brave enough show with standard, trumpet, and farrier's axe.

### ONLY TWO BREAKDOWNS

Still running to time, the head of the mechanized column arrived from Millbank at 10.52 and made a routine halt in Parliament Square. It was led by the allied commanders, many of whom dismounted, while the French general strolled over to "coffee-house" with the Americans. The march had been accomplished successfully—during the whole day the elaborate recovery organization had only two breakdowns to deal with, a flail tank and a vehicle of the R.A.F.

After 20 minutes the column started off again, the allied commanders, including Field-Marshal Lord Montgomery in an open car, followed by an array of admirals in scout cars painted battleship grey. The N.F.S., on account of their appeal to Londoners, received a special ovation, as did the Churchill tanks, presumably on account of their nomenclature. At the head of the Royal Regiment of Artillery drove the "Right of the Line" in self-propelled 25-pounders—horse gunners wearing the red and black rats of the 7th Armoured Division and 4th Armoured Brigade. On the whole the dressing of all in this column was good, and if sometimes some were not precisely in line it must be remembered that driving tracked vehicles in pairs round corners is no easy task.

Meanwhile the marching column had been making good time, and five minutes before it was expected, with a thump of drums and blare of brass, there suddenly rounded the corner from the Victoria Embankment a posse of mounted police, the band of the Grenadier Guards, and the massed colours of the United States contingent. As a halt at this point had been planned, no harm was done, and they were able to resume progress as soon as the mechanized column, which took rather over its estimated 38 minutes to pass, was clear.

Of the allied detachments, the red epaulettes and white képis of the Foreign Legion, that did so well at Bir Hachim in 1942, and the two kilted Evzones in the Greek colour party, stood out in vividness. The crowd seemed to take a particular interest in those that were "in the news," such as the Egyptians and the miners, and the spectators seated in a dairy were roused to a frenzy of applause when a party of those connected with their calling passed. The women's contingents, particularly the A.T.S. and the W.A.A.F., were noticeable for their steady marching round a difficult turn, and almost put the men to shame.

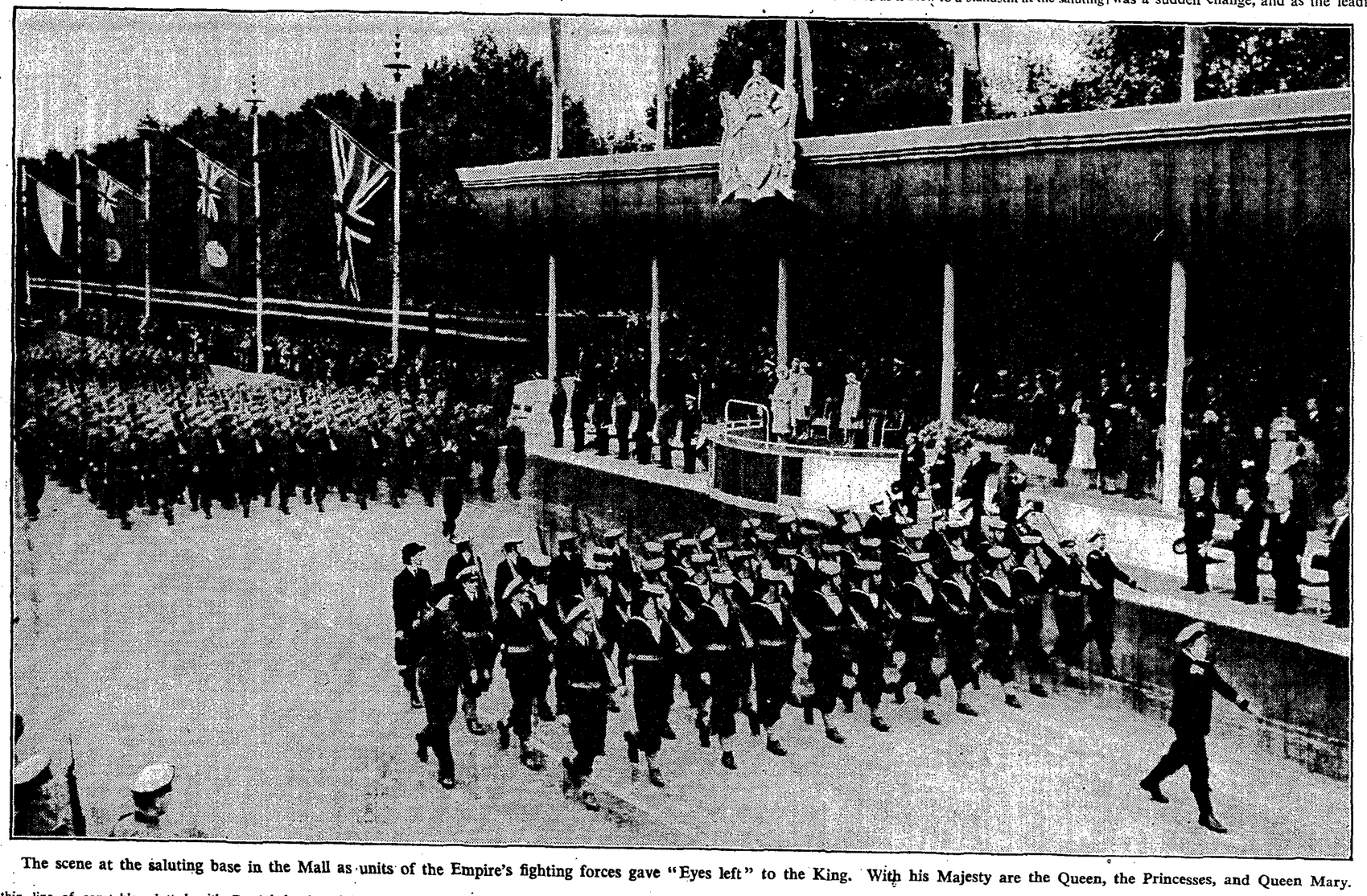
As the tail of the column receded past the Cenotaph, rain which had been spattering began to pour, and when the R.A.F. liaison officer was told that he could "let loose" the aircraft it was evident that the fly-past was going to be partially spoiled by the weather.

### MESSAGE FROM GENERAL EISENHOWER

NEW YORK, June 7.—General Eisenhower in a statement here said:—"To-day we commemorate the British people's magnificent achievements in the long and desperate struggle against the Axis attempt to enslave the world.

"Though long exposed to the full fury of attack, the Empire, both when alone and when fighting alongside her allies, refused to flinch from danger or modify her defiance. The British contribution to the final victory will always command the admiration, respect, and gratitude of all peoples devoted to the cause of freedom.

"I salute the British fighting forces and join them in reverent remembrance of their fallen comrades."—*Reuter.*



The scene at the saluting base in the Mall as units of the Empire's fighting forces gave "Eyes left" to the King. With his Majesty are the Queen, the Princesses, and Queen Mary.