

Ten years, after

2226

3rd May 1955

Huntingdonshire: A mission of remembrance begins at Upwood R.A.F. Station, as five Lincoln bombers are loaded with sacks of daffodil heads and thousands of leaflets - bearing messages of goodwill.

The target area is The Hague and the mission commemorates the dropping, in 1945, of nearly seven thousand tons of much-needed food to the people of Holland, during the final days of the occupation.

To-day, as The Netherlands celebrate the tenth anniversary of their liberation - the blooms bridge a friendship proved in war and peace. Yes, ten long years have passed since the Forces of Liberation unshackled an enslaved Europe - and crossed into Germany, to carry their freedom-message into the very heart of the Third Reich.

Remember how the greatest airborne army of all time bridged the Rhine, a joyous day for the <sup>townsfolk</sup> ~~city~~ of Arnhem. Yet one that was tempered with sorrow, for they still mourned the "Red Devils", the paratroopers who had tried so desperately to hold this same Rhine crossing, the previous Autumn - and so speed up the liberation of Holland.

The advance continued, into an alien Germany that was to reveal human suffering and degradation on a scale that sickened the war-hardened soldiers.

The horror camps of Belsen and Buchenwald - and this rotting legacy of Nazi power was filmed for all the world to see.

Yet, to many Germans, who for years had lived in daily fear of the concentration camp - the coming of British troops brought new hope. And they rejoiced when the horror camps were burned - for in the cleansing flames - they saw absolution for their kind of Germany.

Then came the victory link-up between the forces of East and West - the extension of a united front that spelt the final <sup>defeat of the</sup> ~~end of~~ <sup>of the Reich.</sup> ~~of Germany.~~

Then, early in May, on Luneburg Heath, Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery received the unconditional surrender of more than a million German troops. And around Britain's shores - the lurking peck of U-boats - surfaced and surrendered.

Hitler was beyond the reach of human justice: but Goering, Doenitz and other Nazi leaders, later stood trial at Nuremberg - for their crimes against humanity.

~~To~~ Britain, the capital, that for so long had been the rallying point for freedom, celebrated V.E. Day. The War had been won - the cost had yet to be counted.

~~It was in the early hours of May 8th,~~ In Berlin, came the final act, <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ unconditional surrender ~~signed by Field-Marshal von Keitel.~~

The German reign of tyranny ~~was~~ in Europe was over. In Denmark - a grateful people paid joyous tribute for their deliverance.

Norway - a brave and ~~valorous~~ ally throughout the darkest days, rejoiced in <sup>her</sup> ~~their~~ hard-won liberty.

And in Holland - complete liberation followed the ten days of "Operation Manna" - the R.A.F. Food-Dropping Mission that is commemorated to-day.

The Netherlands still hold grateful memories of Britain's timely hand of friendship in her ~~hour~~ hour of need. And as we celebrate this memorable

<sup>anniversary</sup> ~~landmark~~ - may the memories of the past inspire our hopes for the future.