

Paratroopers for Cyprus13th January 1956

Hampshire: Long before their Red Berets were reflected in the Eastern sky, paratroopers were arriving at Blackbushe Airport - living up to their proud motto: "Ready for anything!"

The mass airlift to the Middle East was under way. And as the men began boarding Shackleton Aircraft of Coastal Command - Brigadier Butler, (Commanding Officer of the 16th Independent Parachute Brigade) waved farewell to his wife.

Their destination was Cyprus, fourteen hours away, and despite the early hour, the Mayor of Aldershot was at the airport - bidding God Speed to the men who were flying out to reinforce the Middle East Command.

The role of the <sup>paratrooper</sup> "Red Devils" will be to protect British families and property should the need arise - as tension mounts in the Middle

East. ~~And~~ Throughout the day, the operation continued - in one of the biggest army airlifts since the war.