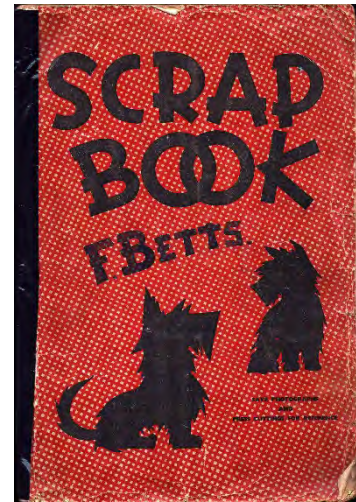


The Reckoning by David Gray

I have a large scrapbook (*right*) in my collection which begins with cuttings relating to the First World War, the first is from 'The Daily Graphic' dated Monday, December 14th 1914, and the headline reads, 'Sweeping the German Flag from the High Seas'. I doubt that the person who cut this out and pasted it into their new scrapbook thought for one second that their final cutting on the back page of the book would be the final count, 'The Reckoning', at the end of the Second World War.

After only a few pages of cuttings with stories relating to the Royal Navy, such as the loss of **HMS Audacious**, and pictures of **HMS Queen Mary** and **HMS Lion** taking part in the Battle of Jutland, the cuttings soon sprawl into stories relating to the inter-war years with subjects such as a story about the steamship **Marie Moller** which caught fire in October 1937, a picture of Royal Naval aircraft over Gibraltar published in June 1938 and the accidental sinking of the R.N. submarine HMS Thetis in June 1939.



The odd story relating to the Second World War does begin to appear now but without dates, and scattered amongst other inter-war articles. Although there is one page (out of sequence) of three stories dated August and September 1940, the earliest wartime cutting, and the beginning of the chronological series, is a story from the 'Daily Mail' concerning a mined London steamer, the **Eskdene**, which had been towed into port, dated Saturday, December 9th 1939.

Stories continue in the same vein with articles covering the rescue of the crew of the Dutch steamer, **Louis Sheid**, which ran aground carrying survivors of a torpedoed Dutch freighter the **Tajandoen**, a picture of the British armed merchant cruiser **Rawalpindi** which had been announced sunk in action, a story about the destroyer **HMS Gypsy**, which had been sunk after hitting a mine and an article covering two ships, the British minesweeper **Aragonite** and the Italian steamer **Fianona**, both of which struck mines while travelling together. There is a very strong naval theme that runs throughout the book which leads me to believe the owner was either in the Royal Navy, or had a great interest in the subject. The book makes up for these Allied loses now by covering the sinking of the German 'pocket-battleship' the **Admiral Graf Spee**, over a total of three pages (*right*).

The book goes on to cover the rest of the war, with a definite interest in 'The Blitz',



(which makes me think the owner might well have been a Londoner) but all the time focusing on the war at sea. The back page (*below*), however, is given over totally to a series of small cuttings that were published in 1944 and 1945 which give the news in numbers.



The cutting at the top of this last page is entitled ‘The Reckoning’ and seems a good title for the whole collection of articles. We don’t know the date of all of these articles and even the ones dated 1945 would have clearly been updated and amended for years after the war as more information was discovered.

‘The Reckoning’ begins with the statement that ‘The total cost to Britain of the Hitler war will not be known for months to come. But from figures already announced we can estimate what the staggering bill in human life and war material and property will be. [The figures in this particular article clearly relate just to Britain].

Forces Casualties (to February 28th 1945)

- Killed: 216,287 (Excluding natural deaths)
- Missing: 30,967
- Wounded: 255,142
- Prisoners: 183,242 (Excluding repatriated prisoners).

Merchant Navy

- Dead and missing: 30,179
- Interned: 3,982

Civilians

- Killed and missing: 59,793
- Injured and detained in hospital: 84,749

Warships (Vessels lost up to September 1944)

- Capital ships: 5.
 - Royal Oak
 - Prince of Wales
 - Repulse
 - Barham
 - Hood
- Aircraft Carriers: 7
 - Courageous

- Glorious
- Hermes
- Eagle
- Ark Royal
- Audacity
- Avenger
- Cruisers: 28
- Destroyers: 127
- Submarines: 69
- Armed Merchant Cruisers: 14
- Corvettes: 28
- Frigates: 10
- Sloops: 14
- Minesweepers: 47
- Trawlers: 181
- Smaller Craft: 117

Aircraft lost to April 28th 1945

- Home Based
 - Bomber Command: 7,997
 - Fighter Command: 2,998
 - Coastal Command: 454
- Middle East: Approximately 2,200
- Mediterranean: 6,300 (these include American machines since 1942).
- Far East: Figures not available but Air Ministry say probably under 500.

Houses Bomb Damaged to September 1944

- Destroyed or damaged beyond repair: 202,000
- Damaged and rendered uninhabitable: 255,000
- Damaged but not rendered uninhabitable: 4,073,000'

I will now continue with the various articles pasted on this page, giving the dates of publication in green where they have been stated. I have added the pictures.

1944 (*Washington*)

'410 In Air 'Mistake' Ships' Guns Fired on Paratroops

Twenty-three transport planes and 410 infantrymen were lost when they ran into A/A fire from Allied naval and ground forces as well as from the enemy during the invasion of Sicily in July last year, said a United States Army announcement tonight. The planes were part of a flight in which 2,500 paratroops were flown into the Gela area.

"This action has been made the basis of a careful study designed to improve identification and timing and to prevent similar losses in the future," said the announcement.

AIRMEN PUZZLED

The statement said that a force of 170 aircraft carrying reinforcements “arrived in the battle area immediately following the enemy bombing attack and while their flares were still in the air. A combination of circumstances involving the approach immediately in the rear of a hostile bombing attack at night at relatively low altitude was a responsible factor in the loss of the planes.”



According to an eye-witness, the naval authorities said that the planes should have been directed on a course which would have taken them out of range of our guns. Surviving airmen said they were puzzled by the order to fly over the convoy.

The Army and Navy operated under a joint command in this campaign, while the Air Force operated separately, and some men blamed a lack of coordination for this affair.’

15.6.44 (Washington)

‘235,000 Casualties

Latest announced casualties of the U.S. Armed Forces from the outbreak of the war total 235,411, states the U.S. Office of War Information. This figure includes:

- Dead: 53,602
- Wounded: 91,576
- Missing: 47,575
- Prisoners of War: 42,658

Of 48,383 naval casualties, 20,363 are dead. Army casualties total 187,028, including 33,240 killed.’

29.12.44 (Liverpool Post)

‘Bomb Victims this Year – 8,098 Killed, 21,137 Injured

Civilian casualties for the first eleven months of the year were 8,098 killed and 21,137 seriously injured, it is stated in a survey of Civil Defence in 1944 issued last night by the Ministry of Home Security. This compares as follows with casualties in the previous four years:

Year	Killed	Seriously Injured
1940	19,779	25,665
1941	20,844	21,788
1942	3,122	3,953
1943	2,362	3,409
1944 (11 Months)	8,098	21,137

In the raids by piloted aircraft in February and March, which were the heaviest attacks on London since the 1940/41 raids, 90% of the fires were dealt with by Fire Guards. The highly organised mobilising system of the National Fire Service also proved its worth. No serious fire situation was ever allowed to develop and the majority of the fires were very quickly brought under control.'

10.6.45 (*Sunday Chronicle*)

'British Invasion Casualties – 144,000

Amended casualty figures for ground forces in the 21st Army Group given at S.H.A.E.F., Frankfort-on-Maine, yesterday, show that from D-Day to VE-Day the British suffered 144,194 casualties, including 30,649 killed, 98,951 wounded and 14,994 missing.'

13.9.44

'5,479 Killed by Flying Bombs

In three months, June to September – including 80 days of Flying bomb attacks – a total of 5,479 people were killed in air raids on this country. Injured and detained in hospital totalled 15,934.



Month	Killed	Injured
June	1,935	5,906
July	2,441	7,107
August	1,103	2,921
Total	5,479	15,934

Of those killed in August, 506 were men, 508 women and 89 children. London had 407 alerts during the battle of the flying bomb.'

14.6.45 (*Daily Mirror*)

'Empire Lost 2,570 Merchant vessels

Of 4,280 Allied merchant ships, totalling 19,720,000 gross tons, lost by enemy action from the start of the war to VE-Day, 2,570 belonged to the British Empire with a total tonnage of 11,380,000 tons.



In addition, the British Empire lost 610 ships of 1,120,000 tons through 'marine risks.' U-boats sank 2,770 vessels – 1,360 British, 440 American, 600 other Allies and 300 neutral. 520 were lost by mines, including 340 British and 15 American.

To surface raiders the total losses were 330 (210 British and 13 American), while aircraft sank 750, of which 440 were British and 58 American. 400 vessels went down through other or unknown causes. In this category there were 220 British and 12 American.

Altogether the U.S. lost 538 ships (3,310,000 tons) and the other Allies except the Empire, 1,172 (5,030,000 tons).'

10.6.43

'R.A.F. Bomber Losses – 874 Over Europe this Year

Captain Balfour (Air Ministry) said in Parliament today that 252 British bomber aircraft operating from this country were reported lost over Germany and Western Europe during May, bringing the total for the first five months of the year to 874.'

4.8.44

'One Day Off

U.S. bombers attacked targets in Germany and occupied countries on 30 days last month, flying about 59,000 sorties and dropping more than 73,000 tons of bombs. Losses were 550 heavy bombers – 1.5% of the total sent over. – and 180 fighters, 0.7%. Bomber gunners destroyed 95 German planes, while fighters shot down 270 and destroyed more than 100 on the ground.'

14.3.44

'961 Killed in Feb Air Raids – Highest Since 1941

Air raids on Britain in February killed more people than in any month since May 1941, when the last heavy attack on London was made. Last month's figures were: Killed (or missing believed killed) 961; injured (and detained in hospital) 1,712.



Raids during the moonless period at the end of February brought this sudden increase in the toll of lives. The January figures were 107 and 270. In May 1940 the death-roll was 5,520.

Between the London Blitz and the latest raids, the nearest total to February's was in April 1942, when 938 were killed. Since the war began 49,597 have been killed, 83,736 seriously injured.'

NO DATE (Reuter)

'First Atom Bomb – 244,000 Victims

The Japanese News Agency asserted today that 244,000 people were atom bomb victims in Hiroshima, the first city in the world to be so devastated.

"Only 6,000 out of the 250,000 citizens of Hiroshima escaped death or injury, according to the latest figures released by the Hiroshima Prefectural Government authorities today," the Agency said.

The report said that 60,000 people were instantly burned to death, 60,000 died from injuries sustained, 10,000 people are missing, 14,000 are seriously injured and 104,000 are slightly injured.'

9.7.44 (*Reuter's Special Correspondent at SHAEF*)

'25,000 Airmen Paid for Invasion

To make the invasion of France possible, nearly 25,000 young and highly trained men – equivalent to two divisions – died or were taken prisoner in the five months before the actual landings.

They were the British and American flyers fought to smash the Luftwaffe in its breeding grounds among the great aircraft plants of Europe, and in the air whenever it came up to answer the challenge

They fought to dislocate the communications of German occupied France so seriously that when the time came for landing on French soil the German supply system was too clogged to allow the swift rallying of German reinforcements.



The daily communique which announces that “Twenty-five of our bombers are missing” has become so regular that the effort and sacrifice by R.A.F. Bomber Command and the U.S. Eighth Air Force which made the invasion possible is liable to pass almost unnoticed.

In the first five months of this year – say to within a week of D-Day – the R.A.F. lost 1,483 bombers, mostly four-engined heavies, and the U.S. Eighth Air Force, in the same period lost 1,407.

Fighter losses were respectively 276 and 673, while the U.S. Ninth Air Force, operating medium and light bombers, lost over 100.

Flying these planes were some 24,260 young men, now listed as dead or prisoners. Many more were killed or wounded but their planes returned to their home bases.

THE BALANCE SHEET

This is the balance sheet in terms of men and blood:

I estimate that in this five-months pre-invasion period the two great air forces, the R.A.F. and U.S. Eighth Air Force, dropped the immense load of over 250,000 tons on selected tactical and strategic targets.

That is to say, that for every man lost, ten tons of bombs were dropped on some point of vital importance.

In terms of money alone, and money can never be offset against human life, the value of aircraft lost is at least £70,000,000.'

5.4.44 (Echo)

'Casualties 806,574 – Empire Total for 4 Years – Civilian Toll

Figures of casualties suffered by British Empire Forces, British Merchant Seamen and United Kingdom civilians, during the first four years of this war, given by Mr. Churchill yesterday in a written House of Commons reply to Mr. Rhys Davies (Westhoughton, Lab), show that civilian deaths from enemy action number nearly twice the total of seamen killed on British ships.

Civilian casualties (excluding those at sea) are given as 109,101, including 49,730 killed and 59,371 injured and detained in hospital.

Deaths of seamen total 26,317 and 3,997 are internees. These figures include nationals of the Dominions, India and the Colonies serving on British registered ships, but not those in ships otherwise registered.

158,741 KILLED IN FORCES

The aggregate of British Empire Forces casualties [to the date this article was published 5.4.44] is 667,159 - killed, 158,741, missing 78,204, wounded 159,219, prisoners 270,995. Details are as follows:



United Kingdom (including overseas personnel serving in these forces, in particular from Newfoundland and Southern Rhodesia), Killed (including died of wounds or injuries) 120,958, missing 29,479, wounded 93,622, prisoners of war 143,957; total 387,996.

Canada – killed 9,209, missing 11,887, wounded 29,393, prisoners of war 4,360; total 19,697.

Australia – killed 12,298, missing 11,887, wounded 29,393, prisoners of war 20,760; total 74,338.

New Zealand – killed 5,622, missing 884, wounded 11,315, prisoners of war 7,896; total 25,717.

South Africa – killed 3,107, missing 279, wounded 6,473, prisoners of war 13,966; total 23,825.

HONG KONG AND SINGAPORE

India - (including casualties to the Hong Kong and Singapore Royal Artillery), killed 5,912, missing 17,810, wounded 13,230, prisoners of war 72,810 (including 58,211 officers and other ranks missing but presumed to be prisoners of war); total 109,800.

Colonies – killed 1,635, missing 15,130, wounded 1,803, prisoners of war 7,218; total 25,786.

Total for British Empire – killed 158,741, missing 78,204, wounded 159,219, prisoners of war 270,995; total 667,159. The figures include personnel who subsequently rejoined and repatriated prisoners of war. Prisoners of war include Service internees in neutral countries.'