

13/8/53 - No.8

MEDICAL AID BY ROYAL NAVY
FOR EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

THIRD PRESS RELEASE

Four additional medical officers and fifteen sick berth ratings and also a wide range of food and clothing were embarked in H.M.S. DARING before she sailed from Malta yesterday evening for the Greek islands devastated by days of earthquakes. Demolition stores were also taken on board, as well as lamps, candles, spades and pickaxes, blankets, bicycles and motor-cycles, radio sets, tents and marquees, field kitchens, and a jeep and trailer.

H.M.S. WRANGLER, a fast frigate, due to arrive at Sami from Malta at about noon to-day, has taken on board three doctors and ten sick berth ratings, and a shipwright party in addition to medical and victualling stores.

Admiralty, S.W.1.
13th August, 1953

13.8.53.

No. 10

No. 219/53

NAVAL CRUISER ARRIVES AT GREEK QUAKE ISLANDS

SECOND PRESS RELEASE

The cruiser GAMBIA, which was diverted to the scene of the disaster while on passage from the Canal Zone to Malta, reported that the town of Zante on the island of that name, south of Cephalonia, was in ruins with large fires still burning. Half of the inhabitants had been evacuated to nearby hills, while casualties were being removed by landing craft. In a later message to the Admiralty, the GAMBIA stated that threequarters of the town had been burned out.

Admiralty, S.W.1.
13th August, 1953

13,853 - No.11

GREEK ISLAND THANKS ROYAL NAVY

FOURTH PRESS RELEASE

The following message has been received by H.M.S. DARING, which arrived at the devastated town of Argostoli at dawn to-day with medical and other aid for earthquake victims, from the Chairman of the Hospital Committee of the town:-

"The Hospital Committee wish to extend their sincere thanks to the British Navy for their quick aid and help, the British Navy being the first to arrive on the scene. We are deeply grateful for their quick response for aid to the Ionian islanders."

Admiralty, S.W.1.

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13.8.53 - No. 12.

NAVY SPEEDS AID TO GREEK QUAKE VICTIMS

FIRST PRESS RELEASE

H.M.S. DARING, carrying doctors, medical supplies and rescue equipment from Malta to the earthquake-stricken Greek island of Cephalonia, reported to Admiralty that not a house could be seen standing in the capital town of Argostoli when she arrived in the harbour soon after dawn early to-day when the ship shook "as if distant depth charges were being dropped".

Earlier, the DARING had steamed past Lixuri, where the ship's company on deck could see broken houses with roofs on the ground and breaks in the sea-wall, although the lighthouse was still working. There were no signs of life ashore.

On arrival later at Argostoli, it was learned that 50,000 people were without food and water, although most of the injured had been evacuated. A large group of people were seen sheltering beneath a clump of trees as the ship approached the town, and further along the shore there was a marquee flying a Red Cross, which was presumably being used as a local evacuation centre.

When ship's officers went ashore at Argostoli, it was found that the whole town had been completely destroyed. Although casualties had been already evacuated, several hundred people who had taken mattresses and chairs on to the foreshore were without food and water. Local authorities stated that not one house remained standing on the island of Cephalonia, on which further earth tremors were felt as the DARING landed doctors, medical supplies, food and water.

"The people are amazingly calm and for the most part stand quite quietly waiting for us to do whatever we can. There are a few English-speaking residents, who are doing splendid work as interpreters, and we are getting gangs of local men organised carrying our supplies from the jetty to distribution centres," it was reported.

Other vessels are expected at the scene of the disaster shortly to help evacuate the population to neighbouring islands.

Admiralty, S.W.1.
13th August, 1953

TELEPRINTED TO AGENCIES

ADMIRAL MOUNTBATTEN VISITS
GREEK ISLANDS

13.8.53 - No. 14.

FIFTH PRESS RELEASE

The Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean, Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, has flown to Argostoli from Malta in an R.A.F. Sunderland flying boat. He will probably visit ships of the Royal Navy assisting in the rescue operations in the Greek islands, where heavy casualties and severe damage have been caused by days of earthquakes.

Admiralty, S.W.1.
13th August, 1953

13.8.53. No. 15

MORE H.M. SHIPS TO EARTHQUAKE RELIEF
SIXTH PRESS RELEASE

The Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean, Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, who has flown to the earthquake-stricken Greek islands, is to make an on-the-spot survey and decide what further relief measures are necessary. He is accompanied by the Countess Mountbatten, who is Superintendent-in-Chief of the Nursing Divisions of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, and also a number of staff and technical officers.

The cruiser BERMUDA and the L.S.T. REGGIO are being loaded at Malta and it is expected that they will sail for the earthquake area at dawn to-morrow. Among other stores, they will be carrying Army equipment from the Malta Garrison, including tents, cookers and bulldozers.

H.M.S. FORTH, the submarine depot ship, is also being prepared for sea at Malta.

It is recognised at Malta that there is an urgent need for helicopters to assist in relief operations. There are five Naval helicopters at Malta and three of these are immediately available for service in the islands. It is hoped that some, if not all, of the serviceable helicopters will be embarked in the ships leaving Malta to-morrow.

Relief helicopter pilots are being flown to Malta from the United Kingdom.

Admiralty, S.W.1.
13th August, 1953

GAMBIA LANDS FOOD AT ZANTE

SEVENTH PRESS RELEASE

Working parties from the cruiser GAMBIA have taken food to parts of the devastated town of Zante and are arranging for other supplies to be landed by boat for other men, women and children isolated by mountains of rubble. Fires are still burning and attempts are being made to isolate petrol tanks.

Naval ratings landed from the GAMBIA are unloading stores from the Greek L.S.T. HOMNAS which has berthed alongside in the harbour. Another Greek naval vessel, a Landing Craft (Tank) has sailed from Zante with the first party of wounded.

Naval medical stores left Bovington Airport for Malta this morning. The request for them was received at Admiralty, London, yesterday evening and they were assembled at Chatham throughout the night and brought to London early to-day for despatch. Among other items are penicillin, sulphur drugs and tetanus anti-toxin.

Admiralty, S.W.1.