

OPERATION SNOWDROP

Aircraft-Carrier Glory was briefed for Operation Snowdrop. Supplies were quickly taken aboard at Glasgow. The work was against time. People, cattle and sheep required aid.

Messaged Helicopters reported at Lossiemouth for ^{as part of} the Navy's Operation ~~Snowdrop~~ ^{relieve crofters, farms &} ~~the relief of~~ villages in Sutherland and Caithness. It was now plain that only by air could food, fodder and medical supplies reach people ~~whose villages were~~ out off by heavy snow. Lossiemouth sent the helicopters over Moray Firth to Wick, selected base on the north east coast. So, into the news headlines came a little-known, sparsely populated area of Britain. Help was asked, not by the remotest ~~crofters~~ ^{inhabitants}; they are isolated every winter and provide against it; but by people who rely on travelling shops ^{& trucks} which found the roads impossible. Needing food for animals, perhaps themselves, they lit signal fires, as directed by radio. The code, written on the snow, was F., human food; C, cattle food; D for doctor.

H.M.S. Glory was now anchored off the Kyle of Durness, extreme north west, with attendant destroyer. Here too the helicopters were busy, and (not shown in this report) R.A.F. aircraft sent supplies from Kinloss.

Refuelling was only a matter of minutes. From H.M.S. Glory, from Wick and Kinloss, 48 different places were supplied with 2-and-a-half-tons of food and grain. The helicopters played an indispensable part. As well as from the carrier they flew 35 sorties from Wick.

~~Farmers and crofters anxiously watched the operation.~~

[Reloading and refuelling at Wick was speedily accomplished. The plight of starving sheep and cattle made even minutes important. ^{On} Caithness and Sutherland graze nearly 40,000 cattle, about half-a-million sheep.

Helmsdale (typical of many isolated little communities) had good cause to be thankful for the brilliant success of Operation Snowdrop.