

2-18F201

54/25.

EMPIRE WINDRUSH.

30 miles off Algiers the British troopship Empire Windrush was set ablaze following an explosion in her engine room. Four men died in the fire, but although the flames spread quickly through the ship, 1,500 men, women and children were rescued. A Dutch, a Norwegian an Italian, and a British ship brought them to safety within two hours of the explosion. Arrangements were made for the aircraft carrier Triumph to speed the majority of the rescued from Algiers to Gibraltar from whence they were to be flown to England. We have heard since the full story of the rescue - how, following the order to abandon ship, women and children were hurried to the lifeboats first. How they waited patiently and with iron clam on the deck of the blazing vessel. Confidently, they followed the drill they had been taught. Superb discipline and good humour, (the two qualities that make Britain's fighting men second to none) ensured there would be no panic.

All the passengers were troops returning from service in the East, and their families. They had been picked up by the Windrush from Singapore, Aden and Port Said during her voyage from Japan. The ship's master, Captain Wilson, was the last man to leave the trooper. His cool handling of the emergency helped to avert what might well have been a major sea disaster.

Later, the Empire Windrush sank while being towed to port. The epic story of her last voyage had made naval history - she had been the setting for a drama in which British men and women had shown once more their shining courage and steadfast discipline that is the admiration of the world.



2-18F701

EMPIRE WINDRUSH

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