

UP ROMMEL'S H.Q.

Swam ashore from Commando submarine

TWENTY-THREE survivors of the British Commando raid on Rommel's headquarters, in which Colonel Keyes won the VC, are now interned in Italy, it is revealed by repatriated New Zealanders.

They include Sergeant, Charles Nicol, of Aberdeen; Sergeant Charles Bruce, Brechin, Angus; and Bombardier D. Brodie, of Ballinluig, Perthshire.

They and other Commandos told the New Zealanders that they had been taken up the coast in a submarine.

They were at first unable to land at their destination because of storm, but on the following night they put off in rubber boats, one of which capsized. Some of the men swam ashore in life-belts.

Sergeant Bruce was nearly drowned, but was dragged out by Sergeant Nicol.

On the beach, which was swept by a gale, they were met by an intelligence officer who was dressed as a desert nomad. He guided them to Rommel's headquarters.

They travelled two days. On the final stage a thunderstorm soaked their bomb tuses.

While shooting up Rommel's house Bombardier Brodie blew up the generating equipment with three bombs. Bad weather prevented the survivors from getting away by sea.

Sergeant Charles Bruce, 41-year-old Brechin man, went to Australia when he was 21.

He was working on a farm there when war broke out. He tried to enlist, but without success.

So he came home, volunteered, and joined an Army unit in December, 1939, transferring to the Commandos more than a year ago.

EX-PLOUGHMAN

His parents, Mr and Mrs Charles Bruce, of Montrose-st., Brechin, have had letters from him since he was taken prisoner.

Villagers of Ballinluig, Perthshire, didn't know that Bombardier Brodie, 27-year-old ex-local ploughman and forester, had been in the raid.

He is the son of the late Mr and Mrs G. Brodie, West Balmald.

His sister, Mrs Dochart, of Buailbhan, Ballinluig, had received official notification that he was a prisoner of war in Italy.

But she had not heard how or when he had been captured.

Brodie served with an RA unit before becoming a Commando.

He volunteered for service in February, 1940, and was in action in Syria.

POCKET CARTOON



"As I was saying, Sidebotham, I'm convinced these notices are solely designed to bluff the Germans."