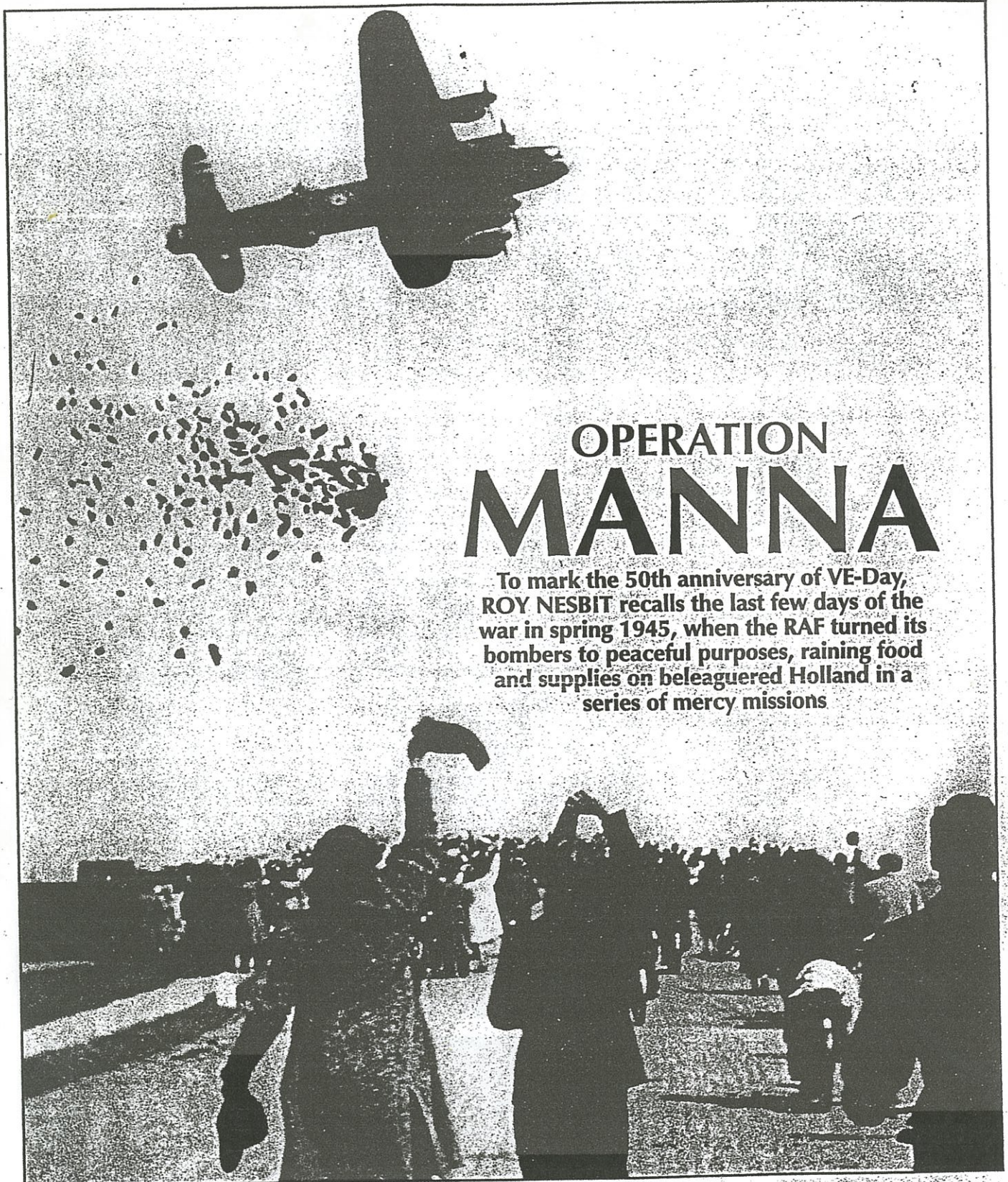


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## OPERATION MANNA

To mark the 50th anniversary of VE-Day, ROY NESBIT recalls the last few days of the war in spring 1945, when the RAF turned its bombers to peaceful purposes, raining food and supplies on beleaguered Holland in a series of mercy missions

MoD Air Historical Branch

When VE-Day was celebrated on May 8, 1945, I happened to be home on leave, awaiting the start of a long-distance navigation course. My parents wondered why I did not share in the general mood of jubilation, and were appalled when I told them of my intention to join an operational squadron in the war against Japan.

My motives for this voluntary posting were somewhat mixed. A genuine desire

to have a crack against the Japanese stemmed partly from the fact that a younger brother was serving with the 14th Army in Burma, but overriding this rather naive sentiment was the dismay I felt on returning home after a long stint as an instructor in Africa. The spirits of Londoners had been high when I left over two years before, in spite of the Blitz, but by early 1945 the people had endured five-and-a-half years of casu-

alties and restrictions. Quite understandably, they had become war-weary. England seemed cold, grey and depressing.

Perhaps selfishly, I decided that my home country was no place for me in these conditions. The prospect of another operational tour and a visit to the Far East at the expense of the RAF seemed far more attractive and exciting. Of course, at this time only a select few