

COPY No. 18

R.A.F. NARRATIVE  
(SECOND DRAFT)

# SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS IN EUROPE

AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH(1)  
AIR MINISTRY

R. A. F. N A R R A T I V E

(Second Draft)

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NOTE:

This History is intended to cover the work carried out by the R.A.F. on behalf of S.O.E. in Europe. Part I, divided into three Sections, covering respectively the periods 1940-52, 1942-June 1944 and June 1944-May 1945, will describe the setting up of S.O.E., the Directives given to the Organisation by the Chiefs of Staff and the efforts of S.O.E. to obtain more aircraft in order to fulfil these Directives. Views expressed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Office, the A.O.C.-in-C, Bomber Command and the various Theatre Commanders on the policy to be followed with regard to resistance movements will also be included. The story of the development of resistance will be told chronologically, and several main threads in the pattern will appear more than once: the particular problems of the four most important countries for which extra S.D. aircraft were required (France, Poland, Yugoslavia and Italy), the Gestapo penetrations and the parachute problems. Although a chronological treatment of the subject will involve a certain amount of repetition, it is felt that this is the only way in which the interlocking of all the various factors can be clearly shown.

Part II details the actual squadrons engaged on S.D. operations and describes the administrative and technical problems involved together with the staff work and procedure employed in the mounting of operations. It will include a short account of the landing operations undertaken by the R.A.F., and a general survey of successes, failures and

losses. Assistance given by the R.A.F. to S.O.E. other than by S.D. aircraft, will be briefly described.

Part III consists of a very short account, country by country, of the growth and work of the Resistance Movements, showing how the material delivered by S.D. aircraft was used in the field.

February 1946.



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CHRONOLOGY

	<u>Military Operations.</u>	<u>U.K. Based.</u>	<u>S.D. Operations.</u> <u>Mediterranean Based.</u>
<u>1940</u>			
June:	Capitulation of France: Dunkirk.		
July:	Battle of Britain.		Establishment of S.O.E.
August:	Battle of Britain.		419 Flight set up at North Weald.
Sept:	Battle of Britain.		
Oct:			419 Flight moves to Stradishall.
Nov:			S.O.E.'s First Directive.
Winter 1940/41.			First S.D. Operations into W. Europe from UK.
<u>1941</u>			
Feb:			419 Flight moves to Newmarket.
July:	Germany invades Russia.		
Aug:			419 Flight becomes 138(SD) Squadron.
Sept:			First S.O.E. Lysander Pick-up in France.
Oct:			S.D. Flight to be formed in M.E.
Dec:	Japan attacks Pearl Harbour.		
<u>1942</u>			
Feb:			161(SD) Squadron formed at Newmarket.
March:			138 & 161 Sqdns. move to Tempsford.
May:			S.O.E.'s Second Directive.
Oct:	El Alamein.		X. Flight of 148 Squadron operating from Delta.
Nov:	Torch: Invasion of N. Africa.		



(Chronology contd).

	<u>Military Operations.</u>	<u>U.K. Based.</u>	<u>S.D. Operations.</u> <u>Mediterranean Based.</u>
<u>1943</u>			
Jan:	Relief of Stalingrad.		
March:			S.O.E.'s Third Directive. X Flight reconstituted as 148 Squadron.
April:		S.D. Ops placed under Bomber Command.	624(SD) Squadron estab. at Blida.
May:	Trident.		
July:	Husky: Invasion of Sicily.	Parachute Crisis. First J.I.C. report in penetration of S.O.E. circuits.	
Aug:	Quadrant. Italy surrenders.		149 Squadron at Tocera.
Sept:	Windsock: Invasion of Italy.	Decision to allocate 2 U.S.A. Squadrons for S.D. work.	
Oct:		Appointment of the Air Adviser to S.O.E.	
Nov:	Sextant.		Base for Polish Ops moved to Mediterranean.
Dec:		2nd J.I.C. report on penetration of S.O.E. circuits: temporary suspension of air ops to Poland, Denmark & Holland.	

1944

Jan:		SO(M) set up. S.D. bases move to Italy. 334 Wing formed at Bari.
Feb:	Large supplementary Air Defence Committee lift from 3 Group & 38 Group allocated for France in Feb, March and April.	Steady increase in S.D. a/c including bombers, Dakotas, and Italian Air Force, and American.

(Chronology contd).

Military Operations.S.D. Operations.U.K. Based.Mediterranean Based.1944  
contd.June: Overlord: Invasion of  
N. France.

E.M.F.F.I. set up.

Formation of B.A.F.

Aug: Dragoon: Invasion of  
S. France.

Warsaw Rising.

Sept:

2641 Special Group (USA  
formed at Rossignano.

Nov:

S.O.E.'s Fourth Directive.

1945

May: Germany Surrenders.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

On September 1st, 1939 the German armies invaded Poland; and on September 3rd, in accordance with her pledges, Great Britain with her ally France declared war on Germany. The rest of the world at this stage of the second Great War, with the exception of Russia, which had invaded Poland, was neutral. The campaign in the east was soon over and in the first few weeks of the war Poland was overrun to join Czechoslovakia in the ranks of the occupied countries. After a pause of nearly six months 'phoney' war the German forces once more took the offensive and on the 9th April 1940, Norway and Denmark were invaded. On 11th May the Low Countries were attacked and by the last week in June the struggle in Western Europe was temporarily at an end.

By this time Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium had also fallen under German occupation. The northern part of France was completely in German hands, the southern part under the rule of the Petain Government which had no power to oppose German wishes. There was clearly nothing to prevent the Germans from extending their occupation to whatever other countries on the Continent they chose, occupying them according to their convenience either as their enemies or their allies; and in the course of a year they thus added to their dominions Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece. Italy lost most of the reality of her independence after the fiasco of her Greek campaign in the winter of 1940-41 and fell to a status but little less humiliating than that of the more definitely occupied countries.

In the summer of 1940 Great Britain alone stood undefeated, the rock on which Hitler's dreams of World domination were doomed eventually to founder. But though at that time the British Government was determined not to surrender, it was impossible not to recognise the fact that there was no prospect for many years to come of our army being able to conduct any successful campaign on foreign soil against the German army. It was indeed far from easy to see how we should ever be able to invade the Continent unless other great countries - Russia and the United States - which up to that time had shown little sign of any wish to come into the war against Germany, should somehow become involved in it as our Allies.

At the same time, if we were not going to surrender it was useless to await the German assault on these Islands in a state of mere inaction, and we must make the most we could, limited as our power might be, of all available means of hampering the German war effort. Accordingly we attempted to blockade the Reich by sea, even though it was evident that, with the Russian trade still open, with the Italian Alliance, and with our naval position in the Mediterranean wholly insecure, no very spectacular success could be expected from such a policy.

We set to work slowly and patiently to make up our deficiencies in arms and in particular to build a bomber force which could carry the attack into the very heart of Germany itself; and to the Blockade and the Bomber we added a third policy of planned and co-ordinated sabotage which should hamper Germany's war effort in all the occupied countries and compel her to disperse her armed forces.

Already in the autumn of 1940 there were contacts with rebellious patriots in Poland and Czechoslovakia and small



quantities of arms and explosives were being smuggled into these countries. In the other occupied countries also the spirit of resistance was spontaneous. Although defeat seemed to have temporarily stunned the peoples of some of the occupied countries, the will to resist was not lost and everywhere was fanned into flame by the violence, cruelties and mass murders which were the routine Nazi methods of occupation. The Germans could hardly have expected to be made welcome in any event, but had they had the political wisdom to pursue a conciliatory policy they might well have been accepted in the end by large numbers of people on the argument that their strength was overwhelming and their victory inevitable. Instead of this, however, they displayed the usual Teutonic lack of understanding of other nationalities, and prepared to use every traditional and modern weapon in the ruthless enforcement of a policy of rigorous suppression. Fortunately for the future of Europe they behaved in such a way that to masses of people in the occupied countries any suffering, however desperate the hope of deliverance, was thought better than submission.

Here was a situation which, great as were the difficulties, it was possible for British policy to exploit. Had it been left to little knots of desperate men in this country and that country to carry out their acts of resistance without extraneous assistance then, under modern conditions of war, the German task would have been an easy one, and there could have been no results save the useless sacrifice of gallant lives. If anything was to be effected, action must be co-ordinated and timed. This could only be done from the one free base in England. The small scale smuggling of arms into Poland

and Czechoslovakia must be expanded and intensified until channels of communication were established between England and the occupied countries by which men, material and messages could be delivered. It was important that England should give such help not only for its material but also for its moral and political value. By our policy we showed the oppressed people of Europe that they were not forgotten, and gave proof that even in our darkest hour we remembered that we were fighting not only for our own freedom but for that of all the world.

In order to implement this policy the Special Operations Executive was set up in the summer of 1940 with orders to 'co-ordinate all action by way of subversion and sabotage against the enemy overseas.'

The business of supporting organised Underground Resistance Movements in enemy-occupied or enemy territory was not an entirely new one. At various periods in the history of the world it had been attempted by different Governments within the framework of the particular conditions of their time. The Trojan Horse is perhaps the earliest example of S.O.E. work, although here the 'resistants' were not indigenous but were infiltrated from outside. In general the effort of an enemy, sometimes military, but more especially political, is to overcome his opponent from the inside (which is also in a military sense his rear) and so to save the risk of loss of battle. At this art the Mongols were especially expert and much of the rapidity of their success in their Western advances across Asia was due to their skill in subversion, as also to corruption and intimidation, the other main branches of 5th Column Activity. National states as they developed were comparatively invulnerable on this head; but states still had an Achilles heel in the

shape of minority or oppressed populations; Spain for example, had a permanent weakness in Catalonia, England in Ireland. English sixteenth-century history provides several examples of the support of rebel elements by an enemy power. In England itself, the use by Spain of the Catholic minority, culminating in an extraordinarily widespread, yet close-knit, network of Underground Organisations is in the best S.O.E. tradition. Ireland and Scotland, the two vulnerable points through which England might be attacked, were both encouraged in rebellion, financed and, to some extent, armed by the enemies of England: the one by Spain and the other by France, through Mary Queen of Scots. In the Napoleonic wars the Alliance between the leaders of the French Revolution and Wolfe Tone who aimed at (and very nearly achieved) a French invasion of Ireland which would have been supported by Irish patriots is another example of the use of an "occupied" country by an enemy, while on the other hand the English, playing the same game, encouraged and supplied the patriots of Portugal and Spain in their resistance to the Grand Army. In the First Great War, the famous Casement affair, in which an Irish rebel movement was encouraged and financed by Germany, is a very fair parallel to S.O.E.'s work. Other German activities in that war which bear a striking resemblance to S.O.E.'s work between 1940 and 1945 were the sabotage carried out by von Rintelen in the United States and the well-timed smuggling of Lenin back to Russia in a closed train.

It was part of the traditional policy of Great Britain to oppose the exclusive domination of an aggressive power on the Continent of Europe by encouraging and supporting European allies - if possible, even after they had been defeated or overrun.

Money, equipment and even troops were distributed widely by the British Government during the Napoleonic wars in an effort to keep some Continental armies in the field and so disperse the enemy's forces. The weakness of England as a military power made such a policy essential, while her tremendous strength at sea made it practicable. In the Second Great War Hitler's successful occupation of most of the Continent, like Napoleon's, left England isolated and without active Allies. Until her inferior military strength had been built up she could not hope to obtain a foothold in Europe. Meanwhile the enemy's forces must be dispersed and worn down as far as possible, and since there was no regular army in the field against him he must be attacked by subversive methods. The German occupation of all her continental allies provided England, armed with the appropriate modern weapons (notably aircraft and W/T), with an opportunity to strike at the enemy from inside his fortress. The Prime Minister, with his imagination and historical insight, was the first to seize on this and his personal influence on the policy of encouraging resistance forces was felt again and again.

It fell to S.O.E., staffed by amateurs (since England had no history and tradition of this type of warfare) to exploit with the aid of these modern weapons the possibilities of underground resistance. Clearly its first task must be that of establishing channels of communication between the occupied countries of Europe and the United Kingdom so that agents, instructions and supplies could be infiltrated to the resistants while they, on their side, were enabled to send out intelligence, requests for help, reports on results, and military and political representatives. Above all W/T links must first be forged, and for this wireless sets and wireless operators must



be sent into Europe. There were two possible methods by which men and material might be conveyed: by sea or by air. It is with the story of the R.A.F.'s part in the supply of Resistance throughout Europe that this narrative is concerned.

PART I.

CHARTER & DIRECTIVE GIVEN TO S.O.E.  
BY THE CHIEFS OF STAFF AND ALLOCATIONS OF  
AIRCRAFT ON SPECIAL DUTIES.

A. PIONEER PHASE. 1940 - November 1942.

1. S.O.E.'s Charter and First Directive.

WP(40)271.  
19 July 40.

Special Operations Executive was established, and its first Directive given, in a War Cabinet Meeting Memorandum of July 1940, in which it was recorded that the Prime Minister had decided, after a consultation with the Ministers concerned that a new organisation should be established forthwith to coordinate all action by way of subversion and sabotage against the enemy overseas. S.O.E. was to be under the Chairmanship of Mr. Dalton, Minister of Economic Warfare, who would have the cooperation of the Directors of Intelligence of the three Service Departments, and of the Secret Intelligence Service (M.I.6), for the purpose of the work entrusted to him. The Memorandum emphasised that the general plan for irregular offensive operations should be kept in step with the general strategical conduct of war, and that Mr. Dalton should therefore consult the Chiefs of Staff as necessary keeping them informed in general terms of his plans, and in turn receiving from them the broad strategic picture.

COS(40)27(0)  
25 Nov. 40.

In November 1940 the Chiefs of Staff issued their first Directive to S.O.E. In this paper the importance of planning subversive activities within the framework of military strategy was underlined again, and S.O.E., the Joint Planning Staff, the Director of Combined Operations, and the Air Staff were told to keep in close touch with each

other. The Directive stated that the process of undermining the strength and spirit of the enemy armed forces, especially those in the occupied territories, should be the constant aim of S.O.E. On a long view, it should be S.O.E.'s particular aim to prepare the way for the final stage of the war, when by coordinated and organised revolts in the occupied countries and by a popular rising against the Nazi Party inside Germany, direct and decisive military operations against Germany herself might be possible.

After explaining the impossibility of laying down with any precision the areas in which military operations would eventually take place, the Chiefs of Staff said:

"We are, however, very conscious of the important and even decisive part which subversive activities may play in our strategy.....we feel that if we are to exploit the use of subversive activities to the full, these activities must be planned on a very big and comprehensive scale. Our aim, in fact, should be to get subversive activities laid on and ready for execution in all areas where there is any chance that they may be needed, so that, wherever the fortune of war may require action, the ground will be prepared in advance."

In the enemy countries S.O.E.'s aim was to be the creation of political disunity, discontent, economic disorganisation and dislocation of communications.

Offensive operations by the Allies in Western Europe and the Mediterranean were envisaged, and S.O.E. was directed to encourage subversive activities in the enemy-occupied countries of these areas. The importance of guarding against any premature revolt was emphasised and S.O.E. was warned that abortive attempts could only lead to the elimination of individuals and organisations which might later be needed.

## 2. Necessity for Use of Aircraft by S.O.E.

Deep penetration of the enemy's Fortress of Europe, as envisaged by the Chiefs of Staff, necessitated the use of aircraft as a means of transport. The difficulties of transporting supplies inland from the coast, and the increasing German surveillance of the coastal areas, particularly in Western Europe, served to put the emphasis more and more upon air transport. As early as the summer of 1940, therefore, the first aircraft were set aside for S.D. work, when the Director of Plans, Air Ministry announced the formation of No.419 Flight at North Weald. These aircraft were not allotted for S.O.E.'s exclusive use but were to be shared between S.O.E. and S.I.S.

3039/PDDO  
20 Aug.40.

## 3. First S.D. Operations and S.O.E. Reports on Results.

During the winter of 1940-41 the first operation to Western Europe was carried out by this Flight, and although the weather was consistently unfavourable and the number of successful operations correspondingly small, organisers, W/T operators and coup-de-main teams were dropped in the countries of Western Europe.

Assistance had been given to the Services in a number of operations by S.O.E. The first raid on the Lofoten Islands and operations "Shamrock," and "Hemisphere" and particularly "Rubble" owed something of their success to intelligence and special equipment supplied by S.O.E. or to personnel trained by S.O.E. R.A.F. raids on the Bergen/Oslo railway and on Hoyanger were given assistance by S.O.E. agents who

arranged for light signals to be shown on the ground, and in the former case the raid was planned on photographs printed by S.O.E. Apart from these semi-military operations, small scale sabotage had been carried on continuously against enemy communications by organisations financed and supplied with material by S.O.E. Attacks on railways and locomotives and a number of acts of industrial sabotage had met with a wide measure of success.

4. S.O.E. Plans: General necessity for Aircraft. April 1941.

On 21st April 1941, a paper entitled "The Prospects of Subversion," was submitted to Lieut.General Sir Hastings Ismay by S.O.E. After recording that considerable progress in the organisation of Resistance had been achieved, S.O.E. pointed out that there was still immense scope for development in this branch of warfare. The possibilities in all parts of the world were now being studied while existing fields were being further exploited, and support given. Like the other Services, i.e. the Navy, Army and Air Force, S.O.E. were handicapped by the existing shortages of arms, of aircraft and of transport facilities; when these were made up, progress was expected to be quicker. If S.O.E. were to be responsible for the organisation of the "Fifth Column of the ~~Free~~" they declared that provision must be made for their needs, and urged that long-term planning should take place at once, unless S.O.E. were to lose their whole raison d'etre they would have to train and infiltrate large numbers of agents during the coming year. Four to five hundred men were actually already in training. Suitable aeroplanes in sufficient numbers must be made available, and above all communications ensured.

A letter to  
H.M.G. Jobb,  
Esq.  
24 April.41.

General Ismay replied that it would be asking for the impossible to expect the Chiefs of Staff to give a definite undertaking that they would make available, from their respective Services, the men and material necessary for carrying out all the S. .E. plans. This would commit them to an almost unlimited liability. Unfortunately the Chiefs of Staff were at present faced with the problem of having to feed many hungry mouths with bread, on which the butter had to be spread very sparingly, and he felt sure that though they would agree, in principle, with S.O.E.'s paper, they would not be prepared to give S.O.E. the carte blanche for which they asked.

5. S.O.E. Plans: Sabotage and Secret Armies.

COS(41)147(0)  
21 July.41.

In July 1941, a paper submitted by S.O.E. to the Chiefs of Staff set forth an outline plan of S.O.E. operations from September 1941 to October 1942. S.O.E., working to a target date of the autumn of 1942, had evolved plans for the organisation both of subversive sabotage groups and of Secret Armies for guerilla warfare, had strongly urged that the formation and equipment of Secret Armies should be undertaken. The total number of aircraft sorties, which, it was estimated, would be necessary to fulfil the plans, was, 2,334, of which 584 were needed to equip the sabotage and subversive groups, and 1,750 for the Secret Army.

JP(41)649  
9 August.41.

This paper was considered by the Joint Planning Staff, and later by the Chiefs of Staff Committee, and both emphasised the distinction between the two types of organisation which S.O.E. proposed to encourage. The Joint Planning Staff suggested that sabotage might be a most

valuable complement to the bombing effort of the R.A.F. and should therefore be directed chiefly in accordance with the bombing policy aim. The organisation of Secret Armies on the other hand, should be limited to those areas where it was anticipated that an Allied Offensive would later be possible, and since they could not operate until bombing had first created suitable conditions, it would be unsound to sacrifice the effectiveness of our bombing effort to these activities. The Joint Planning Staff therefore recommended that subversive activities should be given preference over Secret Armies.

The report of the Joint Planning Staff was considered by the Chiefs of Staff Committee who agreed that subversive activities should be given every encouragement but the prospects of raising Secret Armies, which depended on our ability to provide arms and ammunition, were to be reconsidered at a Chiefs of Staff Committee meeting the next day. (see para 7).

COS(41)287th  
Meeting.  
Item 10.  
14 Aug. 41.

6. Increase of Aircraft for S.D. work. October 1941.

If subversive activities were to be given every encouragement the first essential was an increase in the number of aircraft allotted to S.D. work, so that men and supplies could be sent in to the occupied countries to intensify Resistance activities. From the R.A.F.'s point of view the allocation of more aircraft for S.D. work inevitably meant a loss to the bombing effort. The D.C.A.S., in a minute to the Director of Plans on 10th August 1941, pointed out the difficulty of deciding whether the sacrifice to the Bomber effort was compensated

DDP/598  
5 Oct.41.

COS(41)287th  
Meeting.  
Item 10.  
14 August 41.

by an equal or greater success in sabotage, and also remarked that the fact that S.D. operations could be carried out only during the moon periods meant that aircraft engaged on this work were used much less intensively than normal Bomber Squadrons. The Director of Plans, however, writing to the V.C.A.S. argued that although the diversion of two or three Heavy Bombers from Bomber Command would entail a proportionate drop in the bomber effort, it was possible that the results obtained by sabotage might outweigh the loss. Germany was now intensifying her efforts to crush the Underground organisations in the occupied countries and this might well be the most appropriate moment to show by practical help that these subversive activities were valued. It could be argued that the ultimate aim of the bombing policy and the purpose of S.O.E. activity were identical. Without the lifeline of air transport, resistance could not continue on an effective scale. The Chiefs of Staff Committee, therefore, in directing that subversive activities were to be encouraged took note that the Air Ministry would try to expand as soon as possible the Special Flight. By the end of 1941, 138 Squadron had been formed, and was engaged on S.D. operations. In the spring of 1942, a second Squadron (161) was also allotted to S.D. work, and for the greater part of the next two years it was left to these two Squadrons to carry out the operations from the U.K. necessary to implement the Chiefs of Staff Directives to S.O.E.



## 7. Secret Armies.

COS(41) 288th  
Meeting.  
Item 14.  
15 August 41.

JP(42)465  
1 May 42.

As had been arranged, the problem of the Secret Armies was further discussed by the Chiefs of Staff when the Committee agreed to reconsider the raising of Secret Armies after the War Office report on the availability of the necessary arms and equipment had been circulated. A Joint Planning Staff paper of May 1942 reports, however, that at the above Chiefs of Staff Meeting, it had been decided that secret armies and sabotage organisations in the nearer countries (Northern France, Belgium, Holland and Norway, in that order of priority) should be supported by the delivery of personnel and materials, while action in Poland and Czechoslovakia must be limited to the support of sabotage groups alone, as sufficient supplies for a secret army could not be transported without an unwarrantable diversion of bomber effort.

## 8. S.O.E.'s Second Directive. May 1942.

COS(42)133(0)  
12 May 42.

In May 1942, S.O.E. received its second directive from the Chiefs of Staff. Future military operations were expected to comprise a series of raids to be carried out on the coast from the north of Norway to the Bay of Biscay; an active air offensive over North Western Europe; a large scale raid to bring about an air battle and/or the capture of a bridgehead in France; and a large descent on Western Europe in the spring of 1943. S.O.E. were required to ensure that plans for the use of Resistance conformed with this general military strategy, and was instructed to work in continuous collaboration with the Planning Staffs. In particular S.O.E. should endeavour to build up and equip para-military organisations in the area of the projected operations. The action of such organisations would be directed particularly against

the enemy's road, rail and signal communications.

The emphasis was already beginning to shift from the exclusive support given to clandestine sabotage: in future S.O.E. were requested to plan for more military organisations which were, in effect, the Secret Armies of which they had long dreamed.

#### 9. First Operations in the Mediterranean: Yugoslavia.

As early as the autumn of 1941 reports from Yugoslavia had shown that guerilla activity was growing up under a more or less unified command, and in October the A.O.C.-in-C. Mediterranean and the C-in-C Mediterranean agreed to allocate two Wellesley Bombers based on Malta and three bomber sorties from Cairo for dropping supplies to Montenegro.

COS(41)339th  
Meeting.  
Item 2.  
1 October 41.

At a Chiefs of Staff Meeting, a statement was given of S.O.E.'s transport requirements in Malta and the Middle East. A telegram dated 29th September which had been received from the Middle East reported that the M.E.W.S.C. had agreed, with the approval of A.O.C. Middle East, to proceed with the immediate formation of a small flight to be supplied, operated and maintained by the R.A.F. and capable of expansion as demands increased. S.O.E.'s representative agreed that this arrangement went a long way towards meeting their requirements.

British Liaison Officers despatched by sea succeeded in contacting General Mihailovic, at that time the most promising leader in Yugoslavia. Two Whitleys were sent to the Mediterranean, but they proved to be too slow for

daylight sorties, and owing to their general limitations only one sortie was successfully completed. Ill luck continued to hamper Yugoslav plans: of the four Whitleys allotted to Malta, one burnt out in England and two were destroyed or badly damaged on the ground in Malta by enemy action.

COS(42)139  
26 February 42.

A memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs reported that Great Britain's policy towards the revolt in Yugoslavia had hitherto been that although we were not in a position to give any substantial military assistance we would do our utmost to provide the rebels with the supplies necessary to maintain the movement in the hills. Circumstances, had, however, rendered even this moderate degree of help unattainable.

COS(42)215  
10 April 42.

In April a memorandum was received from the Yugoslav Legation which, after stressing that General Mihailovic had by this time been leading a fight in Yugoslavia ~~against~~ enormous odds for nine months, stated that it was essential that the material help, already prepared in Malta should be transmitted to General Mihailovic as soon as possible, and urged that a Bomber Squadron or Flight of long range aircraft should be formed as soon as possible for liaison with General Mihailovic.

COS(42)117th  
Meeting.  
13 April 42.

The Chiefs of Staff considered the problem and agreed that it was very desirable to give such support as could be afforded to General Mihailovic, whose activities in Yugoslavia had become "an extremely valuable contribution" to the Allied cause. On the subject of the provision of long range aircraft, the V.C.A.S. said that Liberators were the only aircraft suitable for the task of dropping supplies to Yugoslavia. Two were already available in the Middle East and the Commander-in-Chief had been

asked to modify the remaining two. The Committee agreed that when additional Liberators became available in the Middle East (probably in the following month) it would be for the Commanders-in-Chief to decide where they should be employed.

#### 10. Review of 1941 and 1942.

1941 and 1942 were the lean years for Resistance. The speed of the lightning German advances and the apparently irresistible strength of their forces had combined to stun the peoples of Occupied Europe, and apathy and confusion were widespread during the early months. The spirit of Resistance, however, had not been long in showing itself, and although the process of contacting indigenous Resistance Movements and organising subversive groups was, in the first two years, painfully slow, S.O.E. by the end of 1942, had established a network of clandestine organisations in most of the occupied countries of Europe. The work had not been carried out however without some setbacks and many losses. The principle difficulty inherent in the task allotted to S.O.E. was that sabotage had to be carried on continuously, whilst the organisation was being developed and nursed, to enable it to play a fuller part when the immediate support of regular forces was required. The more active resistance organisations became, the greater was the risk of penetration by the enemy; and in attempting to fulfil the dual task of inflicting day-to-day damage to the enemy, and yet preserving its striking power for D-Day, the Resistance Groups in the field had inevitably suffered certain losses in men and material. Similarly, coups-de-main carried out directly from England

by specially trained parties had led to reprisals which had caused temporary setbacks.

The results on the whole however had been satisfactory. By the end of 1942, sabotage was on the increase throughout Europe, although if S.O.E.'s tasks were to be fulfilled it must be stimulated much further. There were many reports daily of bomb outrages, arson, destruction of property and of power supplies and interference with communications in occupied territories. Even in the enemy countries themselves, sabotage had increased during 1942. The tempo and success of sabotage activity varied considerably, but although in some areas the sabotage organisations in the various countries had been penetrated and broken up, yet on balance the strength of these organisations was increasing. Side by side with violent sabotage, methods of "insaisissable" sabotage had been developed to hamper the German machine in every way possible.

The equipment of Secret Armies had as yet hardly begun, although their organisation was beginning to take shape. The main reason was the shortage of transport facilities for arms and materials. Deliveries had increased from 20 or 50 containers a month in 1941, to over a hundred in the months of September, October and November 1942. Even this number, however, had proved wholly insufficient to meet the demands from the field.

D. THE BEGINNING OF THE OFFENSIVE. November 1942-June 1944.

By the end of 1942 the Allies had succeeded in building up their strength and were ready to take the offensive on a limited scale. The landing in North Africa inaugurated a new phase of the war in which for the first time the Allied Commanders, not the enemy, held the initiative. In occupied Europe the Resistance Movements also felt the new impulse. The capture of bases in North Africa facilitated S.O.E. work in Southern France and Italy. There was greatly increased activity in the Balkans and an increased volume of supplies poured into Western Europe. Resistance was everywhere intensified. Despite the vigilance of the Gestapo and a number of losses new groups were established and sabotage increased. By D-Day the patriots of Western Europe were ready to take the game into their own hands and the summer of 1944 saw a great flaring up of resistance activity in that area while in Eastern Europe the guerillas maintained their steady pressure on the enemy.

11. S.D. Aircraft situation at the beginning of 1943;  
Diversion of S.D. effort; A/c for Poles and new S.D. base in  
North Africa.

Plans/350/764  
8 Feb.43.

In February 1943 the Director of Plans of S.O.E. reviewed the case for S.O.E.'s aircraft requirements, and recapitulated the situation up to that date. The Air Staff, and more particularly the C-in-C Bomber Command, were bound to see in the provision of aircraft for S.O.E. a diversion for a job which to them must be of less importance than the Bomber Offensive. In spite of this they had provided first of all a Special Flight, which was later expanded into a Squadron. In September/October of 1942

when S.O.E.'s demands for air transport operations increased considerably, he, The Director of Plans, had pointed out to the Air Ministry that S.O.E. would require more and more aircraft, and the increase in the establishment of No.138 Squadron and the use of No.161 Squadron were to some extent the result of his verbal representations. These representations had fallen under four main headings: efforts to increase the number of aircraft allotted to S.O.E. both in the U.K. and in the Middle East; efforts to retain the aircraft allotted to S.O.E. by trying to prevent their diversion to other work; and efforts to obtain extra aircraft specifically for the Poles.

MO/D2/337  
11 Sept.42  
Ti Air Min.  
CD/3454 of  
11 Oct.42  
to M.E.W.  
DCDO/1471  
26 Oct.42.  
to M.E.W.  
MO/A2/572  
7 Nov.42.

The Director of Plans reported that during the last months of 1942 S.O.E. had several times put on record their conviction that an increased number of S.D. aircraft based in England would shortly be required. Efforts had also been made to obtain aircraft from American sources. As far as the Middle East was concerned Air Ministry had promised to provide six Halifaxes for S.O.E. work by the end of February. These were on their way but for various reasons it was feared that they might not prove suitable for work in that Theatre. The Western Mediterranean had also by now become a sphere of S.O.E. operations. An S.O.E. base had been established at Algiers at the end of 1942 to work into Italy, Corsica, Sardinia and Southern France, and S.D. aircraft were required in North Africa.

MOA/1174  
1 Oct.42  
to S.O.E.  
representatives  
in Washington.  
CMcVG/1408  
10 Oct.42.  
to Col.  
Guenther. of  
O.S.S.

Plans/350/118  
22 March 43.  
to DDI(2).

The use of S.D. aircraft for other duties had become a serious problem. At the end of 1942 there were 18 + 2 aircraft available in the U.K. for S.O.E. and S.I.S. work, and 10 in the Middle East. Unfortunately it had not even

Plans/350/798  
July 1943.

been possible for S.O.E. to retain the whole-time services of the aircraft that had been allotted to them. It was true that during these early years there were months when S.O.E.'s operational programme was not sufficiently large to keep the aircraft of two Squadrons fully employed. In order to make full use of the squadrons, therefore, Bomber Command occasionally withdrew aircraft for bombing operations. Even when this practice was confined to the non-moon periods, it was liable to have serious results for S.O.E. Aircraft might become unserviceable or due for major inspections when they were required for S.O.E. work; there was the possibility that aircraft and their specialised crews might be lost while engaged on bombing operations; less time would be available during the non-moon period for training, practice and development in S.O.E. work; and even at best the operational flying life of the highly trained crews employed in the S.D. squadrons was reduced so far as S.O.E. operations were concerned. Aircraft from S.D. squadrons were also used for the transport of essential stores to the Middle East and North Africa. Here again there was a serious risk that the modified aircraft and trained crews essential for S.O.E.'s work would not be available in England when they were required. Even if all went well, and the aircraft were able to return on schedule, this diversion meant a serious loss to S.O.E., but on more than one occasion, S.D. aircraft engaged on this type of work suffered casualties. In November 1942, eight Halifaxes from 138 Squadron were sent to the Middle East to transport a quantity of urgent stores. Of these aircraft only four returned to England: two



CMoVG/964  
12 June 42.  
to DDI.2.  
CMoVG/54  
18 Nov.42.  
to A.C.A.S.I.  
CMoVG/131  
7 Dec.42 to  
Brig.Hollis  
of C.O.S.  
CMoVG/226  
22 Dec.42 to  
A.C.A.S.(I).  
CMoVG/115 of  
2 Dec.42.  
to A.V.M.  
Medhurst.

CH/4314.

crashed, although the crews were saved, and two more,  
including a Polish crew and the only Czech crew, were lost.

A series of letters from S.O.E. to the Air Ministry during  
1942 requested that diversions of S.D. aircraft to other  
work should not be made unless absolutely essential.

On 24th January 1943, Major-General Gubbins wrote a personal  
letter to Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portant asking him to  
use his influence to ensure that aircraft and crews should not  
be removed from S.D. work. The C.A.S. replied on January  
20th (unreferenced) that, while he appreciated S.O.E.'s  
anxieties, there were occasions when the diversion of S.D.  
aircraft was absolutely essential to the success of other  
operations. He pointed out that every suggestion for the use  
of S.D. aircraft on other work was put to the Chiefs of Staff  
for final decision.

So far as the Poles were concerned they had made their  
own approaches both to the Air Ministry and to the Americans,  
and although S.O.E. had represented their case to the Air Ministry  
from time to time it was largely due to their own efforts that  
Polish crews were introduced into the Squadron and the  
extra long-range Halifax was provided. The U.S. Chiefs of  
Staff, who had received a request for aircraft from the  
Polish Military Attache in Washington, had replied  
that they could not take action on this request without  
jeopardising basic agreements between the United States and  
Great Britain in accordance with which Poland was within a  
British theatre of operations and responsibility. The  
Polish request had therefore been referred to the British  
Chiefs of Staff. On January 8th, 1943, the President wrote  
to the Prime Minister:

JSM/544.  
9 Dec.42.

"I feel however that his (General Sikorski's) proposal has a great deal of merit and I told him therefore that I would refer the matter to you with the request that you would give it all possible consideration."

Plans/350/764  
8 Feb.43.

The Director of Plans concluded his review by pointing out that the Air Ministry could not be blamed for not giving S.O.E. a larger share of what was after all their own principal weapon. It was up to S.O.E. to represent their case to the Chiefs of Staff who must decide whether bombing, convoy protection or S.O.E. work was the most important, and who must lay down what proportion of the Bomber Force was to be allotted to each. At the request of the War Secretariat, however, S.O.E. were requested to postpone the submission of a paper on aircraft requirements until the Chiefs of Staff had issued their new comprehensive Directive to S.O.E.

DCDO/553  
12 Feb.43.

12. S.O.E.'s Third Directive. March 1943.

COS(43)142(0)  
20 March 1943.

The Chiefs of Staff directive to S.O.E. for 1943 laid down that S.O.E. activities should be concentrated to the maximum extent in support of military strategy, and in general emphasis should be laid on current activities rather than on long-term preparations. Sabotage must be pursued with the utmost vigour and should as far as possible be coordinated with the aims of the Bombing Policy, and full advantage should be taken of bombing cover for the execution of sabotage operations. In general the organisation of active guerilla formations should not be permitted to interfere with current activities. An order of priority was given: first, the Italian Islands, Corsica and Greece, where S.O.E. was to encourage revolt against the

Fascist Government and the Germans as a part of the overall plan of eliminating Italy during 1943; the Balkans, where an intensified campaign of sabotage and guerilla activities during spring and summer was considered to be of the first strategic importance in order to impede the concentration and consolidation of German forces on the Eastern front; France, where industrial sabotage and attacks on communications were to be continued in conjunction with the supply, when practicable, of Resistance Groups, which might later play an active part in support of Allied strategy; Poland and Czechoslovakia, where the sabotage of German communications to the Russian front was of primary importance, but the organisation of Secret Armies should be continued as far as possible; and Norway and the Low Countries, where sabotage and coup-de-main attacks were to be increased. The Chiefs of Staff then invited S.O.E. to prepare an appreciation stating what could be done with the available resources for the support of United Nations strategy in 1943 in accordance with this directive.

COS(43)175(0)

On 3rd April the Committee for the Equipment of Patriot Forces reported to the Chiefs of Staff recommending that equipment should be provided for Resistance Groups of a total strength of 300,000 and that this should be taken as the target at which S.O.E. should aim.

COS(43)267(0)  
22 May 1943.

In a supplementary report in May, the E.P.F. Committee pointed out that one of the factors contributing to the selection of the figure of 300,000 as the target (as against the total of a million given by S.O.E. as the potential strength of Resistance Groups) was the fact that 300,000 seemed the highest figure which it was possible to justify in relation to probable future facilities for delivery.

CC(43)43  
6 April.43.

S.O.E.'s directive for 1943 was examined by the Joint Operational Staff who reported that they were satisfied that S.O.E.'s present activities were in accordance with the new directive and were being carried out effectively in so far as limitations imposed by shortages of aircraft would allow.

13. S.O.E.'s Appreciation of this Directive.

COS(43)212(0)

The Appreciation called for by the C.O.S. Directive was submitted by S.O.E. on 24th April. It emphasised the importance of the production of adequate transport facilities and pointed out that the demands for transport exceeded the means of delivery by about 200%. Since one of the essential characteristics of Resistance Groups was that unless they were served sufficiently to enable them to retain their dynamic quality they tended to disintegrate, the demand for supplies was progressive and the lack of adequate transport facilities not only retarded their expansion, but threatened their very existence.

JP(43)170.Final.  
10 June 1943.

The Joint Planning Staff considered S.O.E.'s appreciation of their directive and suggested that the order of priority in some areas already given to S.O.E. should be slightly amended to read: Corsica, the Balkans, France and Poland. The Joint Planning Staff further suggested that the equipment of at least three hundred thousand personnel of Resistance Groups, by 30th September 1943 in the case of the Balkans, and by 1st April 1944 for all other areas, was desirable for the implementation of future strategy.

COS(43)128th  
Meeting(0)  
Item 4.  
17 June 43.

The air transport requirements and the implication of its fulfilment must be balanced against the major claims of the bomber offensive, and the transport requirement for airborne forces. The Joint Planning Staff therefore invited the Air Ministry, in conjunction with S.O.E., to examine immediately and report to the Chiefs of Staff ways and means of increasing deliveries by aircraft: by improving the facilities for aircraft at present allotted to S.O.E.; by meeting S.O.E.'s present request for an initial increase of 18 first-line aircraft and the necessary training flight, and by assessing the aircraft required to meet S.O.E.'s full requirements. In June the Chiefs of Staff Committee approved the amended order of priority given by the Joint Planning Staff, and invited the Air Ministry in conjunction with S.O.E. to examine and report on the possibility of increasing aircraft deliveries.

#### 14. Yugoslavia: Shortage of Aircraft.

By this time the position with regard to Yugoslavia had become acute. During the winter of 1942/43 several requests by S.O.E. for additional aircraft had been made with special reference to the Mediterranean Theatre.

COS/3594  
30 Jan.43.

A telegram from S.O.E.'s Cairo H.Q. reported that it was becoming increasingly difficult to convince people in the Middle East that British interest in Serb resistance was serious, especially in the face of intensive Allied propaganda regarding air supremacy and current production. The Prime Minister himself during his visit to Cairo in February 1943 took a particular interest in the support of guerilla activities in Yugoslavia. At his own request he was given a memorandum on this subject

COS(43)44.  
11 Feb.43.

prepared by S.O.E. and G.H.Q. Middle East which stressed the necessity of increasing the volume of supplies to the guerilla fighters if resistance was to be maintained and raised to a level where it would be of real military value to the war effort. The Prime Minister himself showed this note to General Eisenhower in Algiers with a view to enlisting his interest and possibly his support.

Srl.No.DM/2/3.  
12 Feb.43.

On his return to England the Prime Minister minuted to Major Morton:

"Please show Lord Selborne the report I had from the S.O.E. section dealing with Yugoslavia (COS(43)44 of 11th February 1943). I agree with this report in general terms. I consider it is a matter of the greatest importance to establish the desired closer contacts with Yugoslav leaders. The number of enemy divisions being contained in these regions is most remarkable.

"I appealed strongly to General Arnold as he passed through Cairo to give us eight more Liberators fitted for discharging paracargoes or agents. He was going off the next morning, but gave instructions to General Spaatz. I believe a meeting was held with S.O.E. people on the subject. I also spoke to General Eisenhower in favour of the eight additional aircraft.

"Pray let me know how the matter stands and whether there is anything more we can do. If you show me where it is being held up, I can probably get the block removed. "

This minute was sent to the Minister of Economic Warfare by Major Morton on 15th February 1943, who replied (unreferenced)

"The Prime Minister kindly refers in his minute to the possibility of further action on his part. I think there are two ways in which he could help. The first is to intervene again with the Americans about the eight Liberators for the Middle East if his previous intervention does not do the trick. The second to be so good as to inform the Chiefs of Staff of his interest in the question of aircraft for S.O.E. at the time when they receive from the J.P.S. for consideration the new directive now being prepared. If the Prime Minister

would be willing to do this I would, of course, let you know immediately the J.P.S. have this new directive ready to submit to the Chiefs of Staff."

On 23rd February, Major Morton wrote to the Acting Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (unreferenced):

"When in Cairo and since his return, the Prime Minister has taken a special interest in the provision of aircraft for S.O.E.'s operations, both from the Middle East to serve Yugoslavia and from England, especially in co-operation with the Poles.

"At the Prime Minister's direction I have had correspondence with Lord Selborne on this subject, while the Prime Minister himself has addressed minutes to Ministers and Chiefs of Staff."

Support was also given by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to S.O.E.'s request for additional S.D. aircraft in the Middle East. A minute from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Economic Warfare on a M.E. telegram of 22nd February in which the M.E.D.C. reported that S.O.E. had asked for an increased allocation of aircraft which could not be supplied from the present Middle East resources, stated that they felt that an extension of the activities of the Secret Organisation in the Balkans was highly desirable in view of the approach to the Eastern Mediterranean of war developments.

The view had been expressed in a note on a Chiefs of Staff meeting to consider the telegram that the allocation of aircraft which had already been made for the support of operations in Yugoslavia was about correct, and that it would not be right to send further aircraft from the United Kingdom for this purpose. Mr. Eden and Lord Selborne felt that the present scale of support to Mihailovic in Serbia must be

maintained, and that operations to gain contact with and give support to resisting elements in Croatia and Slovenia should be started as soon as possible; they therefore urged that eight more Liberators with trained crews should be allotted for this purpose, in addition to the six Halifax bombers already promised to S.O.E. Cairo.

On 25th February 1943, the Chief of the Air Staff  
COS(43)38(0). reported that he had now seen the Foreign Office's paper stating that our ability to embark on a new policy towards the Anti-Axis parties in Yugoslavia depended entirely on whether we could or not increase the aircraft available (this paper is in the Middle East, and considered that he could increase an Annex to COS(43)76(0)). the establishment of special aircraft in the Middle East by an additional 4 Halifaxes with only very slight setback to Bomber Command expansion.

COS(43)34th  
Meeting. (9)  
Item 7.

At a later meeting the Chiefs of Staff approved the proposal of the Chief of the Air Staff to increase the establishment of special aircraft in the Middle East by four Halifaxes, but it was generally agreed that further aircraft could not at present be provided for these special operations.

This brought S.O.E.'s aircraft allocation in the Middle East up to fourteen. Further efforts on the part of S.O.E. in the Middle East to obtain more aircraft were unsuccessful. On 3rd April, the Minister of  
No. 83 ARFAR. Economic Warfare, replying to the Minister of State, Cairo, who had reported S.O.E.'s requests, declared that he sympathised with the requests but it had to be remembered that S.O.E. Middle East already had a large proportion



of the total aircraft available to S.O.E. - in fact, a larger proportion than the number of their operations compared with those mounted from the U.K. would strictly justify. Moreover, it had not yet been established by actual trial to what extent the fourteen aircraft allocated to S.O.E. Middle East would be able to fulfil S.O.E.'s needs in the Balkans when their crews were fully trained and full experience of their handling had been gained. He felt, therefore, that until the existing facilities had been fully tried out he could not justify a further approach to the Chiefs of Staff for more aircraft for S.O.E. Middle East. The Minister of Economic Warfare sent to the Prime Minister a report by S.O.E. on the position in Yugoslavia showing that the inadequacy of the support to the guerillas was seriously hampering their activities.

COS(43)336(0).  
23 June 1943.

The Prime Minister minuted to the Chiefs of Staff:

"All this is of the highest importance, and should be brought before the Chiefs of Staff Committee and C.A.S.

"I understood when I was last in Cairo, that an additional number of aircraft were to be made available. I consider that at least a dozen should be placed at the disposal of the S.O.E. authorities for this, and that this demand had priority even over the bombing of Germany.

"We might discuss this after the Staff Meeting at 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday (tomorrow). The Minister of Economic Warfare should be invited with anyone he wishes to bring."

The Staff Conference was held at No. 10 Downing Street on Wednesday 23rd June 1943, when the Prime Minister emphasised the very great importance, particularly at the present time of giving all possible support to the Yugoslav Anti-Axis movement which was containing some 33 Axis divisions in that area.

COS(43)135th  
Meeting(0).  
Item 2.

This matter was of such importance that he considered that the small number of additional aircraft required to increase our aid must be provided, if necessary at the expense of the bombing of Germany and of the anti-U-boat war. Air Chief Marshall Sir Charles Portal said that he proposed to place the 22 Halifax aircraft which would be shortly available for S.O.E. and S.I.S. operations in the Mediterranean Air Command. With these aircraft, and using aerodromes in Tunisia and Libya approximately 150 tons of supplies could be delivered each month in Yugoslavia. The Prime Minister said that the delivery of the increased amount of supplies was a small price to pay for the diversion of Axis forces caused by Resistance in Yugoslavia, and every effort must be made to increase the rate of delivering supplies, working up to 500 tons or so each month by September. It was essential to keep this movement going. The Conference therefore approved the Air Ministry's arrangements to increase delivery to the Resistance Movements in Yugoslavia and for Greece up to 150 tons each month.

#### 15. General Shortage of S.D. Aircraft.

The serious effects of the shortage of S.D. aircraft were not limited to Yugoslavia however. On 21st July 1943, the Minister of Economic Warfare wrote to the Prime Minister setting out the difficulties with which S.O.E. had found themselves faced as a result of the small number of aircraft available for S.D. operations. He reported that for some weeks past he had been in communication with the Air Ministry on the question of increased supply of aircraft for S.O.E. As far as the Balkans were concerned, it had been decided at the Staff Conference held on

24th June that S.O.E. must increase the rate of deliveries to 500 tons per month by 30th September. This would require 35 additional Halifaxes. Increased supplies were also needed urgently for the rest of Europe. After two-and-a-half years intensive preparation, S.O.E. were servicing movements in Poland, France, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Holland, Belgium and Denmark, most of which were now expanding rapidly. The contribution that they were making in sabotage and subversion was a powerful auxiliary in the softening of German resistance, and the contribution that they could make to the operations of the Allies' regular forces on D-Day was very considerable.

After analysing various figures and calculations, the Minister assessed the increase required at a total of 63 aircraft, 28 for the U.K. and Algiers bases, and 35 for the Eastern Mediterranean; and he concluded by saying that unless aircraft could be soon provided on the scale he had suggested, S.O.E. would be unable to fulfil the directives it had received.

16. S.O.E./Air Ministry Report on S.O.E.'s Aircraft requirements.

COS(43)404(0). The Joint S.O.E./Air Ministry Report for which the Chiefs of Staff Committee had asked in June was submitted, with a covering note by the Chief of the Air Staff, on 25th July 1943. The report showed that in order to achieve the target figures of men armed and tons of stores infiltrated, S.O.E. had at present in all theatres only 47 aircraft, or about the equivalent of three Heavy Bomber Squadrons, and would need over the period an average of 117 aircraft or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  additional Heavy Bomber Squadrons. The report pointed out that one Halifax

Squadron would on the average drop 240 tons of bombs a month on the enemy, and since the present operational strength of Bomber Command in Heavy Bombers was 40 Squadrons, the full S.O.E. requirements of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  squadrons would represent a substantial diversion from the Bomber Offensive.

#### 17. C.A.S.'s Views.

The C.A.S.'s note is worth quoting at length, since it sets out the problem, to the Air Staff, of diverting aircraft from Bomber Command to S.D. work.

"This proposed diversion is so great that it leads me to call in question the whole basis of our S.O.E. plans in relation to our general strategy. Desirable as it may be to maintain and foster S.O.E. activities, we must bring the problem into focus with the whole strategic picture.

"The issue is a plain one. As we cannot provide aircraft for the transport of arms and materials to Resistance Groups except at the direct cost of the Bomber Offensive, what is the exact price which we are prepared to pay? I suggest that the answer should turn, not on a C.O.S. directive issued in general terms in March last, but on an impartial consideration of the present strategical situation.

"We are unquestionable obtaining great and immediate value from the bomber offensive. For all that, the weight of our attack falls far short of what it should be. At the end of June we were still 3 Heavy Bomber Squadrons below the target figure of 58, and in spite of every effort it has only been possible to increase the number of effective Medium and Heavy Bomber Squadrons in Bomber Command by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in the last three months.

"I have no doubt about the value of what is being done by S.O.E. in the Balkans, or about the need to do as much more there as

is possible. These activities accord with our general strategic plan, they exploit our present successes and should give us good and immediate results.

"The same, however, cannot be said about the rest of Europe, where the efforts of Resistance Groups cannot be really profitable until next year. The real value which we shall obtain from these Groups will be an up-rising. If such an up-rising is to be successful - and it can only succeed once - it will demand conditions in which German resistance in the West is reaching the point of disintegration. We are not in a position to begin to apply the necessary pressure for another nine or twelve months, unless the German war machine cracks seriously in the meantime. The most likely cause of this accelerated collapse is the bomber offensive which must not be handicapped by diversions to an operation whose value is obviously secondary.

"Thus on strategic grounds, while I feel that there is a very good case for providing aircraft to back S.O.E. activities in the Balkans, even at the cost, as it must be, of some small distraction from the direct attack on Germany, I feel that it would be a serious mistake to divert any more aircraft to supply Resistance Groups in Western Europe, which will only be of potential value next year, when these aircraft could be of immediate and actual value in accelerating the defeat of Germany by direct attack."

The C.A.S. went on to suggest that the total number of aircraft allotted to S.O.E. before January 1944, should be limited to 58. 36 of these should be based in the Mediterranean Theatre, of which 4 would be in North West Africa for the use of Resistance Groups in Algeria, Southern France and North Italy, while the remaining 32 would be available for the Balkans. This represented an increase of 14 aircraft over the present establishment in the Mediterranean area. In the U.K. the present establishment of 22 aircraft for operations to Western Europe should be maintained, and should be capable of sustaining Resistance Groups in lively and vigorous condition until we could concentrate in turn on their ultimate exploitation. The C.A.S. added that he was investigating what contribution towards S.O.E. requirements

COS(43)173rd  
Meeting.  
27 July.43.

in France could be made by Squadrons in Bomber Command without prejudice to their offensive against Germany and Italy. This proposed allocation of aircraft for S.O.E. purposes to cover the period up to 1st January 1944, was approved by the Chiefs of Staff in July.

18. Defence Committee consider aircraft for S.O.E.

COS(43)176th  
Meeting, (0).  
Item 7.  
30 July.43.

The problem, however, was not yet settled. Three days later the Chiefs of Staff were informed that the question of aircraft for S.O.E. purposes was to be raised at a Defence Committee to be held on August 2nd. This meeting was called by the Prime Minister himself, who sent a minute to General Ismay for the C.A.S. and C.O.S. Committees pointing out that a political and not only a military appraisal of the profit and loss must be sought.

DO(43)17.  
30 July.43.

DO(43)  
7th Meeting.

The Defence Committee met on Monday 2nd August and had before them minutes by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Economic Warfare and the Chief of the Air Staff regarding the allocation of aircraft to the Special Operations Executive. Lord Selborne reported that Resistance movements throughout the territories that had been overrun by the Germans had, during the last eight months, been booming. The problem of keeping these movements alive by the provision of supplies was becoming increasingly difficult. These movements could not be left unassisted until D-Day: if they were not continuously stimulated by the supply of arms and ammunition they would die; and it would be deplorable to allow all the work that had been put in during the last three years to go for nothing. The proposals made by the Chief of the Air Staff for the provision of aircraft

for the Balkans met the essential requirements of S.O.E. but they were made at the expense of the requirements of Western Europe and Poland. During the summer months it was only possible to carry out special operations in France and the Low Countries, but when the nights lengthened there would be an increasing demand for operations in Norway and Poland. The Prime Minister stated that he had no doubt of the value of resistance operations. The question the Committee had to decide, however, was the relative priority to be accorded to particular areas, and the most economical use that could be made of the resources at our disposal. At present the Balkans took first place.

The C.A.S. explained the difficulty of allocating a large number of S.D. aircraft for the permanent use of S.O.E. in Western Europe, but suggested that if the control of all aircraft used for this purpose were transferred to Bomber Command from Air Ministry, Bomber Command would then undertake the responsibility for the provision when needed of supplementary aircraft for carrying out S.O.E. operations, provided that the priority of these operations was settled by the Chiefs of Staff.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs recorded his conviction that there was no doubt that the first call on our resources at the moment must be the Balkans since it was there that the largest dividends could be earned. The Prime Minister again emphasised the immense value to the war effort of stimulating resistance amongst the people of Europe. He recognised that acts of rebellion against the Germans frequently resulted in bloody reprisals, but the "blood of the Martyrs was the seed of the church," and the result of these incidents had been to make the Germans hated as no other race had ever been hated. Nothing should be done which would result in the falling off of this most valuable means

if harassing the enemy. The Committee finally agreed:

(i) that S.O.E. should retain, as a minimum, their existing lien on 22 special aircraft based on the United Kingdom.

(ii) that Bomber Command should undertake the responsibility for carrying out such additional work for S.O.E. as S.O.E. required to be undertaken, subject to the direction on priorities as decided by the Chiefs of Staff.

(iii) it is open to the Minister of Economic Warfare to appeal to the Defence Committee, if at any time he considers that S.O.E. requirements are not being given a sufficiently high priority.

#### 19. S.O.E. and the Chiefs of Staff.

The meeting also discussed S.O.E.'s position vis-a-vis the Chiefs of Staff. It was decided that the Chiefs of Staff were to be kept continually informed of S.O.E. activities and intentions, and that S.O.E. should be given opportunities to express their views in person to the Chiefs of Staff Committee when S.O.E. matters were under discussion. A Committee was later appointed to study the question of closer liaison between the Chiefs of Staff and S.O.E., and its recommendations, including the submission of a weekly report by S.O.E., were accepted by the Chiefs of Staff Committee in October.

COS(43)180th  
Meeting (O).  
Item 5.  
4 August 43.  
COS(43)505(O).

COS(43)240th  
Meeting.  
7 Oct.43.



20. Bomber Command's responsibility for S.D. Operations from U.K.

180th Meeting  
(0). 4 April.43.

(this directive  
was later circ-  
ulated as an  
Annex to  
COS(43)491(0).

Further clarification of Bomber Command's responsibilities towards S.O.E. was given at subsequent meetings of the Chiefs of Staff. In April the C.A.S. reported that the Air Ministry were preparing a draft directive to Bomber Command regarding their responsibilities in connection with S.O.E. activities. In future the operational as well as the administrative responsibility for S.D. aircraft based in the U.K. was to be undertaken by Bomber Command, with the object of bringing the Special Operations more closely into line with the normal operations of Bomber Command, and of facilitating the employment when necessary of supplementary aircraft for S.D. work (Copy of this paper at Appendix "A").

21. Parachute Crisis.

At the end of June 1943, a shortage in another supply vital to S.O.E., this time parachutes and containers, threatened to curtail the number of S.D. operations that could be undertaken, and was sufficiently acute to have a direct bearing on the number of aircraft which S.O.E. could employ.

During 1941 and 1942, parachutes and containers were obtained by A.I.10 for S.O.E. on the requisitions placed by the Operational Sections for Western Europe and the Middle East. Six monthly estimates were given to the R.A.F., but these were always on a small scale as the number of aircraft available for S.D. operations was very limited, and for this reason Air Ministry would never undertake a big production programme for S.O.E. At the beginning of 1943, with the volume of S.D. operations increasing, S.O.E. began

to build up a reserve of parachutes and containers in anticipation of increased air resources in the early summer. A reserve of five thousand parachutes and containers, as well as a number of packages was aimed at in April. The Middle East Sections, who had hitherto been operating on a very small scale, had now asserted that their claims would require considerably large quantities of these stores than had been anticipated, and at the beginning of May some immediate shipments to Cairo were authorised. Meanwhile S.O.E. instructed A.I.10 to request increased production.

236/43/DDI2.  
13 May.

On 13th May, D.D.I.(2) informed S.O.E. of the position with regard to parachutes and containers. The Director-General of Equipment had visited A.C.A.S.(I) to explain that unless provisioning was done on the largest scale, there would be a serious shortage of all parachute equipment in the future. The growth of demands for containers, parachutes and other stores from the Middle East had been considerable, and it is likely that existing stocks would have to be shared by all 'customers'.

In June the situation became critical. Two main problems now faced S.O.E.: the immediate supply of containers and parachutes for Cairo and the U.K., and the long-term requirements up to the end of 1944. During June the stocks in the U.K., including the London reserve, were depleted as far as possible so as to increase the supplies sent to Cairo to tide over their immediate difficulties in that area. As production became available it was allocated and the Cairo portion shipped

or flown on the highest priority. In addition a number of parachutes and containers were allocated from Airborne forces for use in the Mediterranean.

On 28th June, Major-General Gubbins wrote to the V.C.A.S. asking him to give warning to A.M.S.O. of S.O.E.'s increased requirements of containers and parachutes. It seemed that the limiting factor in any expansion of aircraft resources would be the provision of these items. Sudden increases in the delivery of material from the Middle East into the Balkans had led to a much heavier consumption than S.O.E. had anticipated, and further increases were to be decided upon by the Chiefs of Staff, S.O.E. requirements would be still greater. It appeared that it was going to be extremely difficult to meet S.O.E.'s requirements. Present production was round about 2,000 per month while S.O.E.'s requirements now were 3,300 and would rise to 7,144 if they were called upon to meet the full commitment in Europe.

During August the problem of production was continually under examination on Air Staff level at Air Ministry, and two main questions of priority began to arise: on the one hand between the availability of the fabrics for parachutes and other uses such as balloons, and on the other hand between the various users of parachutes, principally the Airborne forces and S.O.E. In a letter to D.D.I.(2) S.O.E. emphasised that although no immediate increase had been made in the number of aircraft available for S.D. operations it was perfectly possible that circumstances might arise during the next year when an increased allotment would be made. Unless planning was carried out now, S.O.E. could not guarantee to have the necessary number of parachutes and containers

Plans/358/907.  
11 August 43.

available, and it was essential that both in the U.K. and in Overseas Theatres some reserve should be built up against future contingencies. Even in present circumstances there was a variable and possibly very large factor in the air lift available to S.O.E. since Bomber Command had been directed to provide what additional assistance they could, and there was always the possibility that this might be on a very considerable scale.

Plans/358/1024.  
1 September.43.

See COS(43)  
336(0).

By September, the position had become slightly easier. A minute from D/Plans of S.O.E. to senior S.O.E. officers reported that the allocation of Supply Dropping parachutes to D.of Ops (Tac), i.e. Airborne forces, and A.I.10 was to be 65% of the total requirements of each. Moreover, in view of the fact that A.I.10 were engaged in continuous ops, they were to be given first priority for 1943.

LM/1117/43  
D.D.I.2. to  
D.W.O.  
Copies to  
D.G.E., D.D.E.5,  
Nov.3., Nov.5,  
D.D.A.S.P(G)  
of 14 Sept.43.

Production was increased as far as possible, but the problem of distribution to the Mediterranean Theatre still remained. That Air Ministry were aware of the urgency of the requirements is shown in a letter from D.D.I.(2) which stated that unless the maximum speed and priority was given to the shipment of containers and parachutes to the Mediterranean area, there was every likelihood, within the next few months, that operations scheduled to be undertaken from Mediterranean bases would be held up, even though the parachutes and containers are in existence and allocated to A.I.10. Addressees of this letter were therefore requested to take concerted action to ensure a high priority in the movement of this equipment.

22. "Big Three" - Washington (Trident).

The activities and support of Resistance Groups in occupied Europe were by this time sufficiently important to be included in the agenda at the "Big Three" meetings. At the Washington Conference in May 1943, the problem of providing support in some form to the Partisans in the Balkans was introduced into the discussions by the British representatives, but there were no policy decisions made, and the subject was not specifically included in the "Agreed Summary of Conclusions," presented by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to the President and the Prime Minister.

23. "Big Three" - Quebec (Quadrant). Resistance in Europe.

At the Quebec Conference in August 1943, the active problem of providing some support for Resistance Movements in Europe was given consideration, and at the conclusion of the conference it was recorded as part of the agreed policy that help should be afforded to them.

In a paper on the "Agreed Strategic Concept of the Defeat of the Axis in Europe, " which was considered by the C.C.S., there was included among recommended operations: "Air Supply of Balkan Guerillas." After discussion the C.C.S. approved the recommendations contained in the paper,

The Prime Minister at the first plenary meeting remarked on the possibility of supporting by air French partisans in the south-east of France as an alternative to a beach landing. He described the operation he had in mind as "air-nourished guerilla warfare." The meeting agreed that the possibilities of the Prime Minister's suggestions should be explored. The President, at the second

COS 303/3.  
17 Aug 43.

COS 110th Mtg.  
Minute 1, of  
17 Aug 43.

1st Plenary Mtg.  
29 Aug 43.

2nd Plenary Mtg.  
23 Aug 43.

plenary meeting, expressed the view that guerilla operations might be initiated in south central France as well as in the Maritime Alps.

CCS 113th Mtg.  
Minute 4, of  
20 Aug 43.

Possible activities in Sardinia and Corsica were also discussed, and the C.C.S. agreed to send a telegram to General Eisenhower called attention to the excellent conditions then existing, with Italy in a state of confusion, for establishing such conditions in Corsica and Sardinia as would lead to unopposed occupation. It was suggested that S.O.E. and O.S.S. (their American counter-part) might collaborate in these operations. It would be an excellent opportunity for both organisations

2nd Plenary Mtg.  
23 Aug 43.

to gain experience. The Prime Minister expressed his approval of this action.

CCS 319/5,  
paras: 15, 16,  
17, 65, of  
24 Aug 43.

The action finally recommended with regard to the support of the Partisans in Europe is given in the summary of the C.C.S. decisions presented at the conclusion to the President and Prime Minister. It is as follows:

- i) Under "Air Operations" - "Air Supply of Balkan and French Guerillas."
- ii) Under "Operations in Southern France" - "Air-nourished guerilla operations in Southern France, will, if possible, be initiated."
- iii) Under "Special Operations in Sardinia & Corsica" - "General Eisenhower has been asked to examine the possibilities of intensifying subversive activities in Sardinia and Corsica, with a view to facilitating entry into these islands."

The problem of support of the Polish Resistance Movement did not, it may be noted, enter into the discussion or

recommendations at any point.

The Combined Staff Planners were then instructed to estimate the availability of actual resources necessary to implement the operations agreed upon at the Conference. Regarding support to the Partisan movements, they remarked that the extent of air operations would be limited by the supply of heavy bomber aircraft, and must in any case be related to the advantages likely to accrue. They also made the following definite recommendations.

- i) British aircraft were allocated to the support of Resistance Groups in Europe and the Balkans as follows:

	Heavy Bombers.	Miscellaneous Aircraft
U.K. Bases.	22	14
Mediterranean Bases.	36	Nil.

ii) No further allocation of heavy bomber aircraft could be made for this purpose without affecting the build-up of heavy bomber squadrons in the British Bomber Command.

iii) Aircraft for the support of Resistance Groups in Greece and in the Balkans had recently been given priority.

iv) Further assistance to Resistance Groups in Europe could only be given at the expense either of the Combined Bomber Offensive or of the support of the partisans in Greece and the Balkans.

v) The heavily-armed, high-altitude day bombers as used by the U.S.A.A.F. were not suitable or available for night operations in support of the guerilla forces.

24. British C.O.S. on Balkan Resistance.

CC/266 of  
30 July 43.  
Answer to F.O.  
tel.DEDIP.2365  
quoted in  
COS(Q)17 of  
11 Aug 43.

COS(ME)402  
5 Aug 43.

A purely British comment on the support to the Balkan Partisans is recorded in an exchange of telegrams between the Commanders-in-Chief, Middle East and the British Chiefs of Staff. The Commanders-in-Chief stated that agents were being used in, and supplies sent to, the Balkans to the limit of aircraft availability, and that an increase in the number of aircraft would be welcome. General Eisenhower had agreed verbally with General Wilson that facilities for an advanced base for S.O.E. and raiding parties would be granted in captured areas west of the Adriatic.

COS(ME)402  
5 Aug 43.

The British Chiefs of Staff replied with the approval of the Foreign Office that the question of increasing still further the number of aircraft available for the Commanders-in-Chief, Middle East for the above purpose was being actively considered.

25. U.S. Point of view on Resistance.

COS/317  
18 Aug 43.

The U.S. point of view on the support of Resistance Groups in Europe is indicated in a paper which was prepared by the U.S. Staff Planners at the time of the Quebec Conference, but upon which action was deferred by the C.C.S. They postulated their problem:

"To consider requirements for material for equipping allies, liberated forces, and friendly neutrals, and determination of basic policies which will govern the meeting of such requirements."

So far as support by air was concerned, they made the following observations:



a) Balkans. In the past, the supply of these guerilla forces had been carried out by Middle East Command in some 100 scattered sorties, dropping only bare necessities, e.g. medical supplies etc. Their principal needs were machine guns, light (horse) artillery, and medical supplies. After stating the decision of the conference that equipment to be supplied to the Balkans would be limited to support of guerillas by air and sea transport, the U.S. Planners said that for planning purposes the forces to be equipped must be limited to 175,000 men (six divisions) and supporting troops.

b) Poland. According to U.S. Intelligence sources, the Polish "Secret Army" was estimated at some 65,000 men. Equipment for this organisation would require 500 sorties initially. In the past the British had occasionally dropped small quantities of explosives and of communications equipment. The Polish plan (see para 26) envisaged transporting the Polish forces then in U.K. and M.E. by air after the "break-through contact with the Secret Army had been established." The U.S. Planners estimated that support of this operation would need some 2,000 sorties by heavy transport planes, and that such an air lift was not possible without a serious effect on other air operations. The U.S. Planners therefore recommended that no equipment should be provided for Polish Forces in Poland except that which could be flown in to guerilla and underground forces extant within the limits of Poland. (The limitations imposed by the fact that all material must be flown in by air would restrict the forces that could be supplied to an optimum figure of 50 modified infantry battalions). This would be a British commitment.

c) France. The U.S. Planners' comment was brief.

Certain Resistance Groups in France were being equipped by air delivery with small arms. This was a British commitment. Any demands on U.S. for weapons or equipment for this purpose would be negligible.

26. Special problem of Poland - Polish plan and C.J.S. View.

Further information on the views of the Combined Chiefs of Staff with regard to the support of the Polish Secret Army is given in a series of C.C.S. papers prepared for the consideration of the Standing C.C.S. Committees in Washington. Towards the end of June 1943, the Polish Liaison Officer within the C.C.S. had produced a lengthy paper on "The Armed Forces and Secret Military Organisation of Poland as a Factor in General Allied European Planning." This paper outlined the plan of the Polish Commander-in-Chief to prepare the Polish armed forces abroad and the "Secret Armies" in Poland, for the primary purpose of obtaining control of central Poland. His plan regarding the Secret Army was divided into two phases: - Phase 1; starting in September 1943, there would be intensified sabotage together with the continuation of the Polish Intelligence system: phase 2; an insurrection of the Secret Army would take place in coordination with, and in support of, contemporary Allied operations. It was believed that the Secret Army could exist in isolation for only 20 days. The timing of the insurrection would therefore have to be carefully considered.

Attached to  
Plans/401902  
6 Aug 43.

S.O.E.'s views on this plan were given in a paper of August 1943, and the necessity was emphasised of obtaining a greatly increased number of aircraft, if the

plan, especially the part of it which envisaged the use of the Polish Parachute Brigade, were to be implemented.

CCS.100th Mtg. The plan was the subject of discussion at a C.C.S. Meeting of 2nd July 1943, but no comments were made.

CCS.267/1 of  
3 Sept 43.

Early in September 1943, the Combined Staff Planners submitted their observations regarding the plan and, after some minor amendments had been incorporated, their recommendations were approved by the C.C.S. These recommendations were:

i) that no approval would be given at that time for the furnishing of supplies necessary to equip the Secret Army, but that supplies necessary to maintain the sabotage and intelligence activities would be furnished to the Polish Government in London from both U.S. and British sources.

CCS.267/3 of  
17 Sept 43.

ii) that no U.S. Heavy Bomber aircraft would be assigned at that time to the Polish Government for the delivery of supplies to Poland. As soon as possible, without interference to the Combined Bomber Offensive, one Squadron initially, and eventually two Squadrons of U.S. Heavy Bombers would be organised to operate from the U.K. for this purpose. These Bombers should be such as were not operational for full daylight combat, and should operate under the command of the Commanding General, 8th U.S. Army Air Force.

The Polish Liaison Officer was informed that the C.C.S. had approved the above recommendations in a letter dated 23rd September 1943. Owing to the heavy operational

CCS.267/4.

requirements of active theatres; the inability of the Secret Army to take an active part against the Axis until direct land or sea communications were immediately in prospect, and the lack of suitable aircraft for the delivery of large quantities of supplies to Poland, the Combined Chiefs of Staff were unable to see their way to the allocation of the equipment required for the Polish Secret Army. Supplies for sabotage and intelligence activities had been approved, but there was still a shortage of heavy bomber aircraft and it was not possible to allocate such aircraft to the Polish Government. The Combined Chiefs of Staff, however, were anxious to give what help they could, and with this in view, one squadron and eventually two squadrons of U.S. Heavy Bombers, which were not operational for full daylight combat, would be organised to operate from the U.K. under the commanding General of the 8th Air Force for the support of sabotage and intelligence activities by Polish and other underground groups in Europe.

27. Allocation of American aircraft for S.D. work.

CCS.119th Mtg.  
17 Sept 43.

During the discussion on the C.S.P. recommendations the Head of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington, Field Marshal Sir John Dill, expressed his pleasure at the decision to allocate some U.S. Heavy Bombers to these activities, and pointed out that S.O.E. coordinated all such activities in the European Theatre and that the R.A.F. Bomber Command worked closely with them and were responsible for these operations.

R-3223 of  
17 Sept 43.

A telegram from Combined Chiefs of Staff to ETOUSA confirmed the allocation of one squadron initially and eventually two squadrons of U.S. Heavy Bombers for S.D. work.

28. Difficulties of Polish Operations.

The Polish Government, however, were not content with the arrangements made for their operations, and their dissatisfaction was aggravated during the next months of 1943. In September, the first month of operations to Poland, only 16 flights were successful; and before the October moon period began Polish H.Q. transmitted orders to Poland for the preparation of no fewer than sixty reception committees - a figure considerably in excess of that advised by S.O.E. Experience during September, however, had shown that enemy opposition on the route previously used for flights to Poland was considerably heavier than had been the case in previous seasons. Out of a total of twenty-two aircraft despatched to Poland during September six did not return. It was therefore necessary to consider a new routeing for these flights, but the decision of the Station Commander was not made known to S.O.E. until the first day of the October moon period. The new route was longer than that used hitherto and resulted in all but six of the sixty reception committees becoming out of range, a fact which naturally upset the Polish Government. They further complained that aircraft allotted for their work were being diverted to other tasks, but this complaint, in the opinion of S.O.E. revealed a fundamental misconception on the part of the Polish H.Q. Six of the Tempsford aircraft were manned by Polish crews, but it had already been made clear to the Poles, that, although primarily

intended for the work in Poland, these aircraft must be regarded as an integral part of the Squadron, subject only to the overriding Polish priority; and in addition to this, R.A.F. Station Tempsford, had in fact given assistance whenever possible from their own aircraft for Polish operations. On one occasion in the September moon period no fewer than eleven aircraft were despatched on Polish operations.

Plans/410/1459  
16 Oct.43.

An S.O.E. paper of October 1943 suggested that certain deeper causes of discontent lay at the root of the Polish dissatisfaction. The desire of the Polish Government to be responsible for the organisation of resistance in their own country without the necessity of working through the medium of S.O.E., their growing suspicion of Russian influence, and the Polish desire that their own aircraft should be employed on supply dropping to Poland, were among the causes of discontent of the Polish Government. This analysis of the psychology of the Polish Government was true not only at this moment but throughout the period of S.D. operations to Poland.

29. Proposed move of Polish Base to Mediterranean.

It was hoped that the establishment of a base in the Mediterranean from which operations to Poland could be conducted would provide a shorter and safer route to the target area, and discussions were held between S.O.E. and the Air Ministry to obtain Air Ministry's approval of this project. A telegram from M.A.C. to the Air Ministry of 20th October reported that

(0601)

"We can accept Polish S.O.E. Flight consisting of 3 Liberators and 3 Halifaxes in December."

30. The Poles complain of shortage of aircraft.

On 21st October 1943, the Minister of Economic Warfare reported to the Prime Minister that the Polish Commander-in-Chief, General Sosnkowski, had lodged a serious complaint concerning the degree of help that S.O.E. were able to give to the Polish Resistance Movement. After the R.A.F.'s decision on re-routeing aircraft to Poland, Polish G.H.Q. had boiled over with indignation, and had intimated that unless facilities could be materially increased they would be forced to give orders for the cessation of resistance in Poland and of transmission of intelligence. The Minister considered that there were only two possible methods by which the programme for Poland might be fulfilled: firstly by basing the bulk of the Polish operations on S. Italy instead of England. By this means it should be possible to obtain a shorter route into S. Poland and to avoid the German night fighter belt. It was important, however, that the aircraft which were sent from England for this purpose should be earmarked for Polish work and should not be regarded as part of a pool which M.A.C. could order into France or Yugoslavia in priority to Poland. The Poles had been told by both the Secretary of State for Air and the C.I.G.S. that these aircraft were "primarily at their disposal." The second method by which deliveries to Poland might be stepped up was an all-round increase of S.D. aircraft. The supplementary assistance which Bomber Command, at the Defence Committee of August 2nd, had been instructed to give, had not so far amounted to very much, primarily because the crews

were not trained in S.D. work. On the other hand, S.O.E. now had a promise of two U.S. Squadrons and there was a fair prospect that the first of these would be operating by December. The Chiefs of Staff had recently decided that 25% of the total S.O.E. air effort available for Europe, less the Balkans, should be allotted to Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, which meant that the Poles would have a prior claim upon six aircraft out of the present 26, and an additional 3 as each U.S. Squadron came into service. They should, therefore, reach a total of 12 by January. In the circumstances, the Minister did not propose to ask for an increased allotment of aircraft for S.O.E. work at that moment, but he said that he would feel bound to ask shortly for more aircraft for 1944 and the claims of Poland would occupy a prominent place in his case.

He went on to say that he sympathised with the Polish standpoint and added "For the Poles to be told that Britain cannot afford them more than 6 aircraft is a bit hard." The case for increased assistance to Poland rested less on strategy than on Polish morale, to which the Minister attached great importance.

### 31. The Air Ministry replies.

A copy of the Minister of Economic Warfare's Minute was also sent to the Secretary of State for Air who replied on 30th October 1943 that Bomber Command had in fact done its best to help. In the previous month they had suffered between 25% - 30% casualties on



S.D. work - six times the normal rate of casualties in Bomber Command. Arrangements had been made for the Polish Flight to operate from a base in the Mediterranean area in the near future. This would have distinct advantages over a Flight operating from the U.K. and should do much to relieve the Polish difficulties. Meanwhile, Sir Archibald Sinclair assured Lord Selborne that the Air Ministry would do all it could, in the present air situation, to help the Poles.

32. Polish Base transferred to Mediterranean.

LI/43/D of I(R)  
3 November 43.

In November 1943 a letter from D. of I.(R) to the Polish General Staff recorded that preparations were in hand for the move of the Polish Flight from Tempsford to the Mediterranean. The problem of continuing operations to Poland from the U.K. was a difficult one, since the removal of 6 aircraft of the Polish Squadron meant that there would be only 10 plus 2 Halifaxes in No. 138 Squadron and 6 in No. 161 Squadron to undertake work to all countries with the exception of Poland and the Balkans. S.O.E. were prepared to continue to observe the principle that Polish operations should be undertaken from England. In view of the limitation of the number of aircraft available, however, S.O.E. did not feel able to undertake more than nine sorties to Poland in any one month. Moreover, in making such attempts, not more than three aircraft would be made available on any one night.

The R.A.F. authorities, however, were very anxious that in order to overcome the difficulties of routing aircraft from England to Poland all S.D. operations to

Ops.1(s)217/43.  
13 November 43.

that country should be carried out from the Mediterranean, and a letter from the Commander-in-Chief, Bomber Command urgently requested that all flights to Poland on behalf of S.O.E. should be carried out from an advanced base in the Mediterranean.

### 33. Organisation and Control of S.O.E. in Middle East.

Meanwhile the whole problem of S.O.E.'s work in the Middle East had come to a head. Asguerrilla activities in the Balkans grew in 1942 and 1943 their closer integration with military plans became essential. The task of equipping and controlling guerilla armies in the Balkans inevitably raised disputes on the extent of S.O.E.'s Charter and led to a large expansion and modification of its structure.

CRME/78674/G(O).  
9 September 42.

In September the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East had described the long-term object of S.O.E. in the Middle East as the organisation of a concerted rising amongst the peoples of territories occupied by the Axis, while the short-term policy of S.O.E. was to create as much administrative difficulty as possible for the Axis. At this date the short-term policy was clearly of more immediate interest to the Army, and numerous suggestions for operations of a sabotage nature were received from the Services for execution by S.O.E., if possible. In fact the activities of S.O.E. at this date impinged only in a minor degree upon the sphere of military action.

During the next months, however, and throughout

the summer of 1943, the activities of S.O.E. in the Balkans necessarily assumed an increasingly military character. Sabotage and guerilla activities in Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania were containing substantial Axis forces, and the Middle East Defence Committee considered that Resistance activities were likely in the future to be an increasingly important factor in the planning and execution of operations in the Mediterranean. In these circumstances, the M.E.D.C. in September 1943, suggested a re-organisation of S.O.E. in the Middle East since the S.O.E. organisations in the Balkans had become a predominantly operational instrument of war, and were of such importance that it was essential that their activities should be coordinated and controlled by the responsible Commanders in the Theatre.

They recommended, therefore, that S.O.E. Cairo, in so far as activities in and on the Balkans were concerned, should now be brought directly under the control of M.E.D.C. and become in effect a branch of G.H.Q. Middle East.

A Memorandum on this subject by the Minister of Economic Warfare was circulated to the Chiefs of Staff Committee in which he agreed that, although S.O.E. Cairo, should be entirely subject to the military direction of the Commander-in-Chief Middle East, and the political direction of M.E.D.C., but explained why it must be an integral part of the S.O.E. organisation able to deal direct with S.O.E. London, on technical questions, supplies, personnel, and on matters both operational and administrative, which had a bearing upon S.O.E. activities outside the Middle East Theatre.

COS(43)594(0)  
30 Sept. 43.

In September the Chiefs of Staff Committee considered the proposed reorganisation of S.O.E. and recorded that the S.O.E. organisation had been built up over a period of years into an effective machine. They considered that any drastic change of the organisation itself at this eleventh hour would militate against its efficiency at the very time when it was required to play a prominent part. On the other hand, there were military advantages to be gained by transferring the higher control and direction of the organisation to the Chiefs of Staff, acting in consultation with the Foreign Office. The Chiefs of Staff therefore considered that arrangements in the Middle East should be on the broad lines proposed by the Minister of Economic Warfare.

COS(43)618(0).

A Meeting of Ministers, at which the Prime Minister was in the Chair was held on 30th September 1943, to consider the whole problem. The Conference agreed that S.O.E. organisation should preserve its integrity under the Minister of Economic Warfare. The main policy for S.O.E. would be settled in London between the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of Economic Warfare, while the execution of S.O.E. policy in operational theatres would be under the sole control and direction of the appropriate Commander-in-Chief.

34. S.D. Operations in the Mediterranean.

The transfer of the Polish Flight of 138 Squadron to the Mediterranean, together with the establishment in the autumn of a base at Blida from which S.D. aircraft

could operate to southern France and Italy, raised once more the problem of the S.D. aircraft available in that Theatre. A meeting was held in the Air Council room on 15th October 1943 to consider the conduct of S.O.E. air operations in the Mediterranean Theatre. The V.C.A.S. and the A.O.C.-in-C., Middle East, were present, together with a number of senior R.A.F. officers and representatives from S.O.E. and S.I.S. (There are no referenced minutes of this meeting). The A.O.C.-in-C., Middle East said that the Balkans had now developed into a military theatre and the Commanders-in-Chief Middle East looked upon S.O.E. as their agent for the conduct of operations there.

The V.C.A.S. referred to proposals to establish a base in Italy from which aircraft of the Special Units would be able to operate more economically into the various territories, and the Meeting agreed that H.Q. No.334 Wing should eventually be moved to this base and that all units permanently employed on these special tasks should be controlled by it. It was also agreed that it would greatly simplify the control of operations if an S.O.E. coordinating section under a senior S.O.E. Officer could be set up close to the Wing H.Q. to control S.O.E. administrative arrangements in connection with air operations, and to indicate priorities to the C.O. of No.334 Wing.

Both S.I.S. and S.O.E. requested that aircraft for landing operations should be established in the Middle East and the V.C.A.S. said that if there really was a role for the Lysander there should be no difficulty in transferring some from this country.

35. S.O.E. Report. April to October 1943.

In spite of the shortage of aircraft and other difficulties a large measure of success had been attained by S.O.E. in their work in occupied countries during the year.

SOE(43)R23.

In October 1943, S.O.E. submitted a report to the Chiefs of Staff Committee on the extent of fulfilment of their 1943 directive during the period 1st April - 1st October. This report recorded a notable increase in subversive activities all over Europe. In Italy groups controlled by, or in touch with, S.O.E. had played a substantial part in the stimulation of Anti-Fascist feeling and the riots which had followed the fall of Mussolini. In Greece an intensive campaign of sabotage and guerilla activities was achieved during the spring and summer, and planned attacks on communications immediately prior to "Husky" caused up to two German Divisions to be diverted to Greece in anticipation of an Allied landing. Over 20,000 men had been armed and organised in Greece by this time, but progress was threatened by political crises, and internal feuds. In the Balkans guerilla activities had contained over 30 Axis divisions, Yugoslavia being the main centre of activity, and Partisan forces now numbered 130,000. Though the Chetniks under Mihailovic and the Partisans under Tito were continuing to fight each other they were also, especially the latter, harassing the enemy. In Albania guerilla activities had been organised on a substantial scale, though training and equipment was still inadequate. In France sabotage against communications and military and industrial objectives had risen to a high level during the summer of 1943.

Plans for assisting military operations were being coordinated with COSSAC, and were making good progress. In the Low Countries Resistance had increased, and a high level of sabotage activity had been maintained. Activities in Poland had been curtailed by the extremely small quantities of supplies which it had been found possible to deliver during the summer months, but minor sabotage of communications was continuing. In Denmark a major sabotage campaign had been planned and carried out with complete success, leading to riots and disorders, and forcing the Germans to take control of the administration of the country. Norway, like Poland, had suffered from the limitations on air transport during the summer months, and no sabotage of importance had been achieved except attacks on shipping. Earlier in the year, the attack by a coup-de-main team on the Norsk Hydro "Heavy Water" plant had met with complete success, and had resulted in the putting out of action of the enemy's principal source of Heavy Water production. Air operations during the six months up to 1st October had succeeded in delivering to Europe 587 men, and over 1,500 tons of stores for the loss of 16 aircraft.

36. Penetration by Gestapo - Summer 1943.

Within the normal cycle of resistance activities in the field such a volume of sabotage activity was bound to bring in its train an intensification of Gestapo activity. The Gestapo method of concentrating in force upon a limited area and waging an intensified battle against resistance movements within a certain town or district inevitably attained a certain measure of success. The special task with which

S.O.E. circuits in the field were called upon to perform inevitably left them vulnerable to Gestapo penetration. Their very *raison d'être* lay in the volume of activity in terms of sabotage which they could maintain, therefore their membership must increase and the security of any clandestine organisation is bound to be diminished if the organisation contains a large number of persons.

Throughout the whole period of occupation individual resistance organisations were penetrated in this manner by the enemy: and although this was usually discovered by S.O.E. at an early date by means of a complicated system of checks on signals and by personal questions to agents, there were occasions when the Gestapo were successful in maintaining the deception over a comparatively long period.

In the summer of 1943 with the tempo of resistance activity rising there were a number of arrests by the enemy. In France particularly both the Independent British-controlled French and the Fighting French de-Gaullist organisations suffered from the loss of several of their most valuable leaders. In the case of the Independent circuits, where the principle was always maintained that each organisation was independent from its neighbour, the arrests, while extremely serious locally, were limited in their effect. Arrangements were made by S.O.E. to send out new organisers and W/T operators and, while old organisations were written off, the work went on again under the leadership of new officers. The Fighting French organisation in the field, since it was highly centralised, was more affected by the enemy's successes. The arrest of several senior



members of the organisation together with the "blowing" of a number of codes had the effect of temporarily decapitating the Fighting French organisations in the country. The occasion was seized by S.O.E. to urge once more upon General de Gaulle and F.F.H.Q. the necessity for observing the principles of independence and separation in the organisation of clandestine activities.

In July 1943 the C.A.S. reported at a Chiefs of Staff Meeting that he had received a note based on reports from "Most Secret" sources on the situation of certain of the resistance groups in France. He suggested, and the Chiefs of Staff agreed, that the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee should be instructed to examine these reports. The Minutes of a later Chiefs of Staff Meeting recorded that the Chiefs of Staff took note that the J.I.C. report was to be considered at the Defence Committee Meeting on August 2nd. At this meeting the C.I.G.S. referred to the receipt of information on resistance groups by the Chiefs of Staff from S.I.S. and drew the moral that a closer relationship was required between S.O.E. and S.I.S. He considered it was wrong that important information had reached the Chiefs of Staff in this way and they should have received it from S.O.E. themselves. This is the only mention at this meeting of the S.I.S. report on penetration of S.O.E. circuits. Arrangements were made however for closer coordination between S.O.E. and the Chiefs of Staff. (see para 19).

### 37. Control by Theatre Commanders of S.O.E.

By the end of 1943, S.O.E. was organised into an H.Q. and three main groups corresponding to the principal theatres.

COS(43)173rd  
Meeting(0)  
Item 11.  
27 July 43.

COS(43)178th  
Meeting(0)  
Item 12.

JIC(43)325(0)

DO(43)7th Mtg.

COS(43)237th  
Meeting (0),  
Minute 11,  
15 May 1943.

COS(43)618(0).

The North West Europe or London Group was placed under the operational control of COSSAC as soon as COSSAC became an operational H.Q. The functions of COSSAC were later taken over by SHAEP. Similarly, it was agreed that S.O.E. activities under the then Middle East Theatre should be under the operational control of the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East. The same principle had always been in operation in the Western Mediterranean Theatre controlled by A.F.H.Q. It was confirmed by the Allied Commander-in-Chief that this principle was to continue throughout the new unified Mediterranean Theatre.

Operational control of S.O.E. activities in all parts of Europe had therefore been divided between the two Allied Commanders in London and the Middle East. The only exceptions to this rule were Poland and Czechoslovakia; activities in these two countries, and for a time in Austria, remained directly under the operational control of the Chiefs of Staff.

38. S.D. Aircraft available at the end of 1943:  
U.K. and Mediterranean bases.

The total number of aircraft now engaged on S.O.E. operations was approximately four Squadrons: two of these (161 and 138) based on Tempsford in the U.K. while the remaining two were in North Africa, 148 at Tocera, and 624 at Blida. Temporary increases to the number of S.D. aircraft available were made by Bomber Command in the last months of 1943 by the addition of some Stirlings, and later of some Lancasters, to the aircraft strength at Tempsford. Two American

CCS.267/3 of  
17 Sept.43.

Squadrons of Liberators had been allotted (see para 27), for this work, but were not yet operational. The increase was comparatively small, and the airlift available was still entirely inadequate for S.O.E.'s work.

39. "Big Three" - Cairo (Sextant). Support of Balkan Partisans.

The problem of supplies for the Balkan partisans was considered at the "Big Three" conference in November/December 1943, and the Prime Minister showed himself markedly interested in the problem. The question of support to the French and the Polish underground movements, however, was not brought up in any of the recorded discussions.

COS(Sex)Prelin.  
18 Nov.43.

At a preliminary C.O.S. Meeting in Malta with General Alexander, Admiral Sir John Cunningham, and Air Chief Marshal Tedder attending, the Prime Minister referred to the deterioration of the situation on the Dalmatian coast, where the Germans were pushing back the Partisans.

The C.I.G.S. commenting upon the Prime Minister's remarks observed that a General Officer had now taken over there, working in close collaboration with S.O.E. and the other two services. Two days later, en route to Cairo, the Prime Minister submitted to the British Chiefs of Staff a minute in which he indicated the general line he proposed to take at the Plenary Conference in his review of the current situation in Europe. He expressed his view in unequivocal terms on the generally unfavourable situation in the Mediterranean. Regarding the Balkans, he remarked that we had failed to give any real support to the Partisans in Yugoslavia, and Albania - they had, he said, been nourished up to that time only by droppings from the air;

COS(Sex)1  
(Revise) of  
20 Nov.43.

para 3.

para 4.

and from his subsequent remarks it was clear that such efforts as had been made to assist the Partisans were viewed by him with unconcealed dissatisfaction. The cause of this failure to provide effective support, he attributed to the artificial and unsatisfactory lines of demarcation between the areas over which the Commander-in-Chief, A.F.H.Q., and the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, respectively, had responsibility. So far as the Balkans were concerned, General Wilson had the responsibility without the forces necessary to provide adequate support: General Eisenhower had the forces, but not the responsibility.

This unsatisfactory state of affairs was used by the Prime Minister as a cogent argument for unification of command in the Mediterranean area as a whole - a policy which was strongly championed by the British representatives at this Conference, and which was unanimously approved.

COS(Sex)1st Mtg.  
Minute 3.  
22 Nov.43.  
COS(Sex)2nd Mtg.  
Minute 1.  
23 Nov.43.

The British Chiefs of Staff considered the Prime Minister's minute, and offered their comments. On the Balkan issue, they remarked that they shared the Prime Minister's views and considered that the reasons for the unsatisfactory state of affairs were:

i) the divided command in the Mediterranean.

ii) the fact that the operation had grown beyond

the capacity of S.O.E. to organise and control.

The fault given in ii) above was in process of being remedied.

2nd Plenary Mtg.  
24 Nov.43.

The Prime Minister at the second Plenary Meeting

reviewed the general European situation on the lines he had indicated in the minute which he had submitted to the British Chiefs of Staff, and conveyed to the meeting his thoughts on the Balkan support question, advocating as a definite item of our combined policy in Europe the provision of supplies to Yugoslavia. There was no specific comment on this item by the U.S. Representatives.

That the British Chiefs of Staff themselves had misgivings regarding the handling of the Balkan support by Middle

COS(Sex)4th Mtg. East authorities is indicated by a discussion at one of their Minute 3.  
25 Nov.43.

CC/351.

earlier meetings at Cairo. The C.A.S., referring to a telegram from the Commander's-in-Chief Middle East, observed that it would appear that such steps as had been taken regarding the provision of support to the Balkan guerillas did not altogether meet the wishes of the Chiefs of Staff Committee as expressed in a telegram which had been sent by the Committee to the Commander's-in-Chief, Middle East. The C.I.G.S. said that in his view what was required was the appointment of one man, assisted by an interservice Staff, responsible for organising the delivery of supplies by land, sea and air, and for coordinating the employment of any aircraft operating in support of the Partisans. He suggested, however, that the matter be held in abeyance pending the decision of the conference regarding the proposal to unify command in the Mediterranean. A telegram was sent to the Commander's-in-Chief, Middle East, conveying the sense of the C.I.G.S. remarks.

COS(Sex)2nd Mtg.  
Annex I, para 15.  
23 Nov.42.

It may be noted from a comment by the British Chiefs of Staff on a proposal by the Prime Minister that a bridge-head should be established on the Dalmatian coast,

that they were not in favour of such an operation (although they had been at the Quebec Conference), and that their disfavor was shared by General Alexander, who had confirmed the opinion expressed by General Marshall at Washington in May, that the operation would require too great a proportion of the Allied resources. They further stated that in their view as much support could be given by smuggling operations along the coast and by air, and that successful prosecution of the operations depended much more on good organization. They re-iterated that the business had got too big for S.O.E., and should be taken over by a proper Staff.

CCS. 131st Mtg.  
25 Nov. 43.

General Eisenhower and Air Chief Marshal Tedder were invited to give their views on the Mediterranean operations at one of the C.C.S. Meetings. As far as the Balkans were concerned, General Eisenhower reported that one officer had been placed in charge of all operations regarding the supply of equipment to Yugoslav guerrillas, and the arms captured in North Africa and Sicily were being sent in. He believed all possible equipment should be sent to Tito as Mihailovic's forces were of little value. Air Chief Marshal Tedder said that he felt that the present system of air operations into the Balkans worked reasonably well. The tactical commander in Italy was given targets by the Middle East organization. He agreed with the C.A.S. that a Joint Staff under the officer responsible for Balkan operations would lead to a better coordination of effort.

CCS. 132nd Mtg.  
20 Nov. 43.

At the meeting of the C.C.S. prior to their final

meeting with Marshal Stalin at Teheran, when the specific items of future policy on which they felt it desirable to reach agreement with Marshal Stalin were under discussion, it was decided that one item should be:

"All possible help to the Partisans in Yugoslavia."

This item of proposed policy was agreed at Teheran and was incorporated in the list of agreed decisions.

CCS.426/1.  
para. 9(a) of  
5 Dec.43.  
CCS.133rd Mtg.  
Minute 2. of  
3 Dec.43.

The Combined Staff Planners were then instructed to prepare the necessary directive to implement this decision.

CCS.425 of  
5 Dec.43

Their recommendations appeared as a C.C.S. paper which was approved by the C.C.S., who gave instructions for its inclusion in the comprehensive directive, then in course of preparation, which was to convey to the Commander-in-Chief

CCS.135th Mtg.  
Minute 6.  
5 Dec.43.

Allied Forces, North Africa, the C.C.S. decision to unify command in the Mediterranean. The instruction regarding Balkan support appeared as an appendix to the main directive, and informed the Commander-in-Chief that it had been agreed at the Conference at Teheran that the support of the Balkan Partisans for which he would now be responsible should be intensified: support should be provided to the greatest extent practicable by increasing the supply of arms and equipment, clothing, medical stores, food and such other supplies as might be necessary. The Commander-in-Chief should furnish whatever air support he considered advisable, taking into account the overall situation. The possibility should be examined of continuing to supply the Partisans with Italian equipment, with which they were already familiar, making good any deficiencies so far as necessary with available British or American equipment. This Mission

CCS/387/3,  
Appendix B.  
5 Dec.43.

was regarded of such importance that it was best controlled on a regular basis by a Special Commander, and a Joint Staff.

The Combined Administrative Committee were then instructed to consider the availability of resources necessary to give effect to the Conference decisions.

CCS/428.  
Encl. Annex IV.  
Appendix F.  
15 Dec. 43.

They reported that aircraft based as follows were allocated to the support of Resistance Groups in Europe and the Balkans.

	<u>Heavy Bombers.</u>
U.K. Bases.	16
Mediterranean Bases.	42
TOTAL:	<u>58</u>

The formation within the 8th U.S. Army Air Force in the U.K. of two squadrons of Liberators had been agreed. No Liberators suitable for day combat duty should be allocated for this purpose. Support given to the Resistance Groups in Europe would not cause any interference with the intensification of the Combined Bomber Offensive.

40. Penetration by Gestapo - Investigations:  
December 1943 - January 1944.

During the autumn of 1943 further reports were received from the field showing the extent of the enemy's success in penetrating certain of the S.O.E. organisations, and in particular those in Holland. On December 1st, while the Cairo Conference was still sitting, the Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee informed the Deputy Prime Minister that information had just come into the hands of the Vice-Chiefs of Staff which



seemed to show that the whole S.O.E. organisation in Holland was penetrated by the Germans, and had been run by the Germans for the last year. This information came from two agents who were dropped in Holland - one in December 1942, and one in March 1943 - who were received by the Germans and placed in a prison camp, from which they had now escaped. If this information was accurate, it meant that for over a year every man and container of material sent to Holland had fallen directly into the hands of the Germans, and that the Germans had been operating wireless sets in Holland which communicated with S.O.E. in England. The Vice-Chiefs of Staff regarded the position with great disquiet. Action had been taken to suspend all S.O.E. operations to Holland, where for some time past R.A.F. losses on S.O.E. sorties had been abnormally high (18%). The A.O.C.-in-C., Bomber Command, had gone further and had temporarily suspended all S.O.E. operations over Europe, but the Secretary of State for Air was looking into this, as so drastic a step might not be necessary. The Vice Chiefs of Staff proposed that an enquiry should be conducted by the Joint Intelligence Committee who should be instructed to investigate the truth of the allegations concerning S.O.E. operations in Holland and, if these allegations proved to be well founded, to examine the position elsewhere, so as to find out the extent of the German penetration of the S.O.E. organisation in Europe.

FL145/127.

The next day the Minister of Economic Warfare wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister about the manner in which S.O.E. affairs were apt to be handled. It had been known in London for some ten days that there were very grave doubts about the integrity of the S.O.E. organisation in Holland.

Information had accordingly been given to the Air Ministry by S.O.E. that they did not intend to ask for any sorties to Holland other than to drop 'blind' (that is without Reception Committees) two Organisers intended to lay the foundations of a new D-Day organisation in that country. On 30th November, the A.O.C.-in-C., Bomber Command, without any prior consultation with S.O.E. had cancelled all S.O.E. air sorties from the U.K. and on 1st December the whole question, again without any reference to S.O.E., had been considered by the Vice Chiefs of Staff. In fact, the first official notification which the Minister himself or S.O.E. received of the whole question had been a copy of Brigadier Jacob's Minute to the Deputy Prime Minister informing him of the Vice Chiefs of Staff discussions. The Minister protested strongly against the tendency for other Government Departments to consider themselves entitled to discuss and sometimes even to take decisions upon matters connected with S.O.E. without prior reference to or consultation with that Organisation. In such circumstances it was extremely difficult for S.O.E. to do the work with which they had been charged by H.M.G.

#### 41. Suspension of Operations - Poland.

See S.O.E.  
Archives for  
notes of this  
Meeting.

A meeting was held at Air Ministry on December 2nd to discuss the question of the suspension of Polish operations at which the Minister of Economic Warfare, the Secretary of State for Air, D.C.A.S., A.C.A.S.(I) and the Vice Chief of S.O.E. were present. Although it had been arranged that Polish operations were to be flown from a base within the Mediterranean Theatre the Polish Government had certain important agents whom they wished

to infiltrate immediately from England. This would involve nine sorties. Since the re-routing of the aircraft on the Polish run the casualty rate had dropped most satisfactorily, and since it appeared that C-in-C. Bomber Command's worries over Poland were not concerned with the security of the Polish organisations but with the operational hazards of the flight itself, the S.O.E. representatives suggested that these nine sorties should be authorised without any Polish enquiry by the J.I.C.

The D.C.A.S. said that in his view the operational hazards, which he agreed the J.I.C. were not competent to judge, were so great that the C.-in-C. was anxious to discontinue all sorties to Poland from the U.K. at the earliest possible moment. It was therefore agreed that the Polish agents should be ferried to North Africa immediately in order to enable them to be dropped into Poland by the Polish Flight operating from North African territory.

The next day, however, the Minister of Economic Warfare reported in a minute to the Secretary of State for Air that the arrangements which had been agreed at the meeting to ferry Polish agents to North Africa in order to enable them to be infiltrated into Poland from there was for various reasons unsatisfactory. After strongly pressing the Polish case and underlining the difficulties of the Reception Committees in the field, he suggested that his argument should be put to the C-in-C. Bomber Command with the request that he should most urgently reconsider his present refusal to allow Polish operations to be flown from the U.K. and also that the J.I.C.'s enquiry into the security of the operations in Poland should be called off.

The Minister sent a copy of this minute to the Deputy Prime Minister on December 5th and reported that the C-in-C. Bomber Command had now agreed to permit the sorties to take place, by a new route which was unfortunately not only safer but also longer. None of the Reception Committees which had been arranged and were already standing by in the field could be reached if this route were followed. The previous difficulty over ranges and routes was recapitulated and the Minister added that if the C-in-C. Bomber Command refused to allow the use of the shorter route (which his officers had previously approved), then in fact none of the sorties from the United Kingdom, upon which the Poles had been relying, could take place, and it would be impossible to send any money for the maintenance of their organisations in Northern Poland. This would be a disaster of first-class magnitude.

A Staff Conference was held on 6th December at which were present the Deputy Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Air, the C-in-C. Bomber Command, the Minister of Economic Warfare and the R.A.F. and S.O.E. representatives. The Minister of Economic Warfare said that at the previous Staff Conference held on December 1st he had been surprised to learn that the C-in-C. Bomber Command, required that S.O.E. operations from the U.K. over Poland and Denmark as well as over Holland should be suspended. He, the Minister of Economic Warfare, had been very willing that the suspension of S.O.E. operations over Holland should be continued pending the result of the enquiry by the Joint Intelligence

Sub-Committee. He had also agreed at the meeting to the suspension covering Denmark and Poland. The Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee had produced their report regarding Denmark with considerable speed and as a result it had been possible to lift the ban on operations over that country. He had realised after the meeting that he should not have agreed to the ban on operations over Poland. He recounted the difficulties in which S.O.E. and the Polish Government found themselves as a result of the cancellation of the Polish operations from U.K.

The C-in-C. Bomber Command said that since the middle of November, it had been increasingly borne in upon him that flights over the northern route to Poland involved an unjustifiable risk. The heavy Allied attacks on Berlin were resulting in considerably increased air defences in Northern Europe.

The Deputy Prime Minister pointed out that S.O.E. had a valid cause for complaint since they had believed that a firm commitment had been entered into by the Air Ministry. There appeared to be a lack of proper liaison between the Air Ministry and S.O.E. This whole matter had arisen out of a meeting on 1st December called to consider the alleged penetration of the S.O.E. organisation in Holland. It was now clear that the Air Ministry's objection to operations over Poland from the U.K. was not based on any suspicion of penetration by the enemy of the organisation in that country.

The Secretary of State for Air suggested that a solution to the problem might be found by the Air Ministry agreeing to send out the necessary aircraft to the Mediterranean so that the sorties could be flown from an advanced base in Italy, and this was agreed by the meeting.

It was further agreed that the C-in-C. Bomber Command would make up the effort on S.D. operations from the U.K. which would otherwise be lost by the despatch of four Tempsford Halifaxes to North Africa. The meeting further invited the Secretary of State for Air and the Minister of Economic Warfare to arrange for closer association of the R.A.F. liaison staff with S.O.E. planning at all stages. (see paras 43 & 44).

#### 42. J.I.C. Report on S.O.E. Penetration.

JIC(43)517  
22 Dec.43.

DO(44)  
2nd Meeting.

The J.I.C. report on the degree of penetration by the enemy of S.O.E. organisations in Europe was considered at a Meeting of the Defence Committee on January 14th. The principal conclusions of the J.I.C. were that the organisations established by S.O.E. in Holland had for a long time been penetrated, that there was doubt as regards the situation in Poland owing to the lack of information on this subject, and that in France there was a tendency to centralisation in those resistance organisations which were directly under the control of Fighting French Headquarters.

The Minister of Economic Warfare stated that while it was easy to be wise after the event, S.O.E. themselves now thought that they might have been more suspicious regarding the situation in Holland. He reminded the Committee, however, that S.O.E.'s principal function was to fight. It was not until June 1943 that his organisation seriously suspected that penetration in Holland had taken place. They had hoped that two parts of the Dutch organisation had even then escaped penetration.

In agreement with the Air Ministry they had therefore decided to test out these two parts. The event showed that the entire organisation had been penetrated.

The Secretary of State for Air said that S.I.S. had been consulted and in the summer of 1943 had been unable to produce any evidence of penetration of the S.O.E. groups in Holland. The air evidence on the whole question had been important: those who were concerned with the air operations carrying agents into Holland did have their suspicions aroused and had remarked on the apparently unnaturally good reception arrangements. He stressed his opinion that Air Ministry representatives in S.O.E. should be much more than advisers but should be brought into consultation on every state of planning special operations of this nature. The Minister of Economic Warfare asked that decisions should be taken as soon as possible on the question of renewing operations to Holland and on the allocation of aircraft for S.O.E. purposes. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs strongly supported the Minister of Economic Warfare. The Committee in conclusion recorded their opinion that R.A.F. officers attached to S.O.E. should be associated at all stages with the planning of S.O.E. Air Operations. They also agreed that S.D. operations over Holland should be resumed and developed if feasible, invited the Chiefs of Staff to give urgent consideration to the question of S.O.E.'s aircraft requirements, and recorded their opinion that high importance should be attached to the development of special operations during the coming months.

43. R.A.F./S.O.E. Coordination -  
Appointment of Air Adviser to S.O.E.

The problem of R.A.F./S.O.E. coordination, thrown into relief by the news of the penetration of S.O.E. organisations, had been under discussion for some time. Verbal arrangements between the Air Ministry and S.O.E. had led in the autumn of 1943 to the appointment of a senior Air Adviser within S.O.E. After this officer had been working in S.O.E.

circ. within SOE for some weeks it was found necessary to clarify his duties as VCD/538 of 22 October 43, and responsibilities, and a Directive was therefore agreed under heading "Status and Responsibilities of the Air Adviser to SOE." between S.O.E. and the Air Ministry. This document laid down that the Air Adviser would be responsible to the Air Staff for all liaison between S.O.E. and the Air Ministry on matters concerning the air policy and air operations undertaken on behalf of S.O.E. He would represent S.O.E. at discussions involving demands for increased aircraft and would act as the senior R.A.F. Liaison Officer between S.O.E. and H.Q. Bomber Command. He would also keep both Air Ministry and S.O.E. fully informed as to the general purpose and aim of projected S.O.E. operations on the one hand and the capabilities and limitations of air operations on the other.

As the volume of S.D. operations increased, the importance of good liaison between the R.A.F. and S.O.E. and of machinery that would work both efficiently and rapidly for the mounting of S.D. operations became of greater importance. Various suggestions were put up as to ways in which the existing liaison and machinery could be improved. For instance, the Air Adviser to S.O.E. in November raised the question of A.I.2(c)'s responsibility for passing the pinpoints



for S.D. operations and suggested that this function might be transferred either to Bomber Command or to R.A.F. Station Tempsford. The necessity for S.O.E. air operations officers to make frequent visits to the Air Ministry authorities responsible for passing pinpoints was a serious objection to this suggestion, since both Bomber Command and Tempsford were situated at some distance from S.O.E. H.Q. The question of strengthening the liaison between the R.A.F. and S.O.E. by the provision of additional R.A.F. officers to the staff of S.O.E. H.Q. was also put forward.

A Meeting was held at the Air Ministry on December 2nd at which were present the Minister of Economic Warfare, the Vice Chief of S.O.E., the Secretary of State for Air, D.C.A.S., and A.C.A.S.(I). This meeting was convened primarily to discuss the question of the suspension of S.D. operations as a result of the allegations that had been made as to the penetration of S.O.E. circuits, but it went on to consider the question of organisation and procedure as between S.O.E. and the R.A.F. The D.C.A.S. said that Air Marshal Harris was not satisfied that the operations carried out from S.O.E. were properly considered from an air operational point of view. The Air Adviser to S.O.E. had suggested to him that the right solution would be for Bomber Command to put an R.A.F. officer with operational experience into every country section of S.O.E. The C-in-C. was also anxious that the Station Commander should have a veto of sorties not only on grounds of weather but also if he considered that the operational hazards of a proposed flight were too great.

The Minister of Economic Warfare said that S.O.E.

V/CD/751 of  
2 Dec.43.

welcomed any suggestion for strengthening liaison with the R.A.F. and good operational officers would be most welcome. He could not agree, however, to the expansion of Functions proposed for the Station Commander. At this point A.C.A.S.(I) remarked that the C-in-C. seemed to be under a misapprehension if he was worrying about the air operational aspect of the sorties involved since the D. of I(R) and A.I.2(c) went most carefully into the air operational considerations of every single projected sortie, and none were accepted on behalf of the Air Ministry or passed to Tempsford until the experts in the Air Ministry were fully satisfied with the pinpoint and route to be taken, the defences in the neighbourhood, the meteorological aspect and all the other technical considerations involved. Both the Secretary of State and D.C.A.S. said that they had on the previous day received the impression that the C-in-C. Bomber Command had not known anything about these arrangements and did not realise that the operations received this consideration from Air Ministry experts. It was undoubtedly largely for this reason that he had asked for reassurance and it was clear that some misunderstanding had occurred.

The Meeting therefore agreed to set up a Committee immediately to consider the whole question of the aims and conduct of air operations carried out on behalf of S.O.E. The constitution of this Committee and its terms of reference were to be agreed between D.C.A.S. and the Vice Chief of S.O.E. and then submitted to the Secretary of State and the Minister of Economic Warfare for approval. The general conclusion of the

Meeting was that it was most desirable to improve the relationship between the Air Ministry and S.O.E. to tighten up the whole system and to do everything to promote easy and harmonious working.

44. Ad Hoc Committee on R.A.F./S.O.E. Liaison.

A Committee, consisting of representatives of S.O.E. and of the R.A.F., was accordingly set up and meetings were held during December and January. It was clear throughout that the views of the C-in-C. Bomber Command were fundamentally opposed to the continued maintenance of special squadrons engaged on S.D. work. At a meeting held on January 4th the C-in-C. Bomber Command said that in his view all heavy bombers should logically come under the operational control of Bomber Command. He believed that it should be perfectly possible for Bomber Command to play a full part in meeting S.O.E. requirements, more particularly since under present conditions Bomber Command tended not to operate under the moonlight conditions which were particularly suited to S.O.E. operations. He was aware that cooperation between Bomber Command and S.O.E. had not been very satisfactory, and this was largely because Bomber Command had not felt satisfied that S.O.E. operations were planned with full knowledge of the air aspect involved. If, in the past, experienced R.A.F. officers had been available in S.O.E. he was of the opinion that many losses and abortive efforts could have been avoided, and a much greater effort put out. It was in his view essential that competent R.A.F. officers should be associated with S.O.E. activities from the initial planning stages. If full support were to be forthcoming from Bomber Command, he would wish to be assured:

a) that for any given operation the risk in aircraft and crews was justified.

b) that the operation was tactically practicable.

Under present arrangements and in the absence of experienced air advice he could not feel satisfied that the risks taken by Bomber Command in carrying out S.O.E. operations were justifiable.

The S.O.E. representative pointed out that a suggestion had been made that the S.D. aircraft might be placed under the control of COSSAC, in which case the removal of 138 and 161 Squadrons from the control of Bomber Command would be involved. It was true that S.O.E. would then have to sacrifice the supplementary effort which they had received from Bomber Command but there was hope that A.E.A.F. might possibly be able to contribute towards S.D. work in the same way as Bomber Command were contributing. With regard to the question of wasted effort he was in entire agreement that competent air advice should be available at all stages in the carrying out of operations, but he was doubtful if the advice of Air Officers situated in the country sections of S.O.E. could be of assistance in the initial planning of operations. The broad directive for S.O.E. was laid down by the Chiefs of Staff and faulty operations arose usually as a result of some contretemps on the ground side. It was questionable whether it would be either practicable or useful to train airmen to work in S.O.E.'s country sections.

In the opinion of the S.O.E. representative the solution was that the special Air Section of the London

Group should be so qualified as to have the confidence of the R.A.F. authorities concerned, in this case Bomber Command, that its views on the feasibility and worth of a projected operation would be accepted by them.

In discussion it appeared that there were two levels on which the Air Ministry required strong representation within S.O.E.: both on the S.O.E. Council, where officers of Air Rank would be concerned with the high policy of S.O.E. as a whole, and on the executive level of the Air Transport Section. The C-in-C. Bomber Command added that in his view it was essential that the Command concerned in the air operations should be fully represented throughout the planning departments of S.O.E. by Air Force officers of operational experience, organised as an Air Staff and directly responsible to the Air Officer on the S.O.E. Council. The Air Officer on the S.O.E. Council would thus be enabled to keep his finger on the pulse of the entire organisation from top to bottom.

The meeting also considered the arrangements which should be made for improved liaison between the Air Ministry and S.O.E. H.Q. and it was generally considered that it would be very desirable to have one officer in the Air Ministry as the channel through which all S.O.E. operations should flow. Both D. of I(R) and A.C.A.S.(I) were at present concerned with S.O.E. air operational affairs and it was suggested that a new directorate might be formed to cover all Air Ministry functions with regard to S.O.E. It was further suggested that this post should be amalgamated with that of the Air Adviser to S.O.E.

The Meeting recommended that there should be appointed within the Air Ministry a new Director under A.C.A.S.(Ops) charged with the responsibility for all questions affecting air operations on behalf of S.O.E. and S.I.S. This officer, would also hold the appointment of Air Adviser to S.O.E. Council. The operational control of the S.D. Squadrons should be transferred to No.38 Group, A.E.A.F., under COSSAC. In the event of such a transfer taking place, Tempsford should be retained as the S.D. airfield. The Head of the Air Transport Command Organisation in S.O.E. and certain of the staff should be provided by the Command responsible for S.O.E. air operations, and should be responsible to the C-in-C. of the Command concerned and also to the Controller of the London Group.

The C-in-C. Bomber Command, however, dissociated himself from the conclusions.

On 14th January the Minister of Economic Warfare wrote to the Secretary of State for Air asking that the necessary new R.A.F. officers should be appointed to S.O.E. as soon as possible. Further discussions and correspondence ensued on the question of the transfer of S.D. Squadrons to A.E.A.F., the responsibilities of the Air Adviser on the S.O.E. Council, and the amalgamation of the various departments within Air Ministry concerned with S.O.E. affairs. A letter from the Secretary of State for Air to the Minister of Economic Warfare, dated 23rd January (no reference) proposed that there should be no doubling of the roles of Air Ministry Air Staff Director and Air Adviser within S.O.E., that the S.D. Squadrons should be transferred to A.E.A.F., that

one R.A.F. officer should be appointed to the staff of the country sections concerned with Western Europe and that the Head of the Air Transport Section in S.O.E. and certain of his staff should be provided by the R.A.F. Command responsible for S.D. operations.

VCAS.DO/8/44/  
CMS.407.

The proposal to transfer the Tempsford units from Bomber Command to A.E.A.F. was held in abeyance in view of the special effort required from Bomber Command during the early months of 1944. However, arrangements for the coordination of functions within Air Ministry proceeded and Air Marshal Evill writing to S.O.E. on 1st February 1944 stated that the Air Ministry recognised that a single authority was needed within the Air Staff who would be responsible for S.O.E. requirements and operations and for general coordination of the Staff action on these and cognate matters for S.I.S. He proposed therefore that D of I (R) should become the responsible Air Staff Director for S.O.E. and S.I.S. operations.

The question of the R.A.F. representation in S.O.E. was also settled during February and further R.A.F. officers were appointed to the staff of S.O.E. H.Q. R.A.F. officers were appointed to the Western European Country Sections of S.O.E. and the duties of the Air Liaison Section were laid down. (see Appendix "C" for details). At the same time the status and responsibility of the Air Member of S.O.E. was defined again. (see Appendix "B" for the second directive to the Air Member).

45. S.O.E.'s Aircraft requirements. January - March 1944.

The paper on which the Minister of Economic Warfare had

asked at the Defence Committee on January 14th for an urgent Chiefs of Staff decision was S.O.E.'s "Air Transport Requirements for January to March 1944." In Western Europe all roads now led to Overlord. For some months, S.O.E. had been making plans in conjunction with COSSAC for the use of the Resistance Forces in the countries of Western Europe, and it was evident that if Resistance organisations were to fulfil the role that had been allotted to them enormous quantities of stores must be despatched to the field. France had by now become a special problem: the imposition by the Germans of the Rôleve had resulted in the establishment of large groups of "Maquisards" all over the country and particularly in the mountainous areas at the South East. These Groups urgently required both food and clothing with which to maintain themselves in the mountains, and arms and ammunition with which to fight off the Germans who were making every effort to liquidate a threat so vital to themselves.

SHAEE/2142/  
25/SD. of  
14 January.

A meeting was held at S.H.A.E.F. on January 14th at which senior R.A.F. and S.O.E. representatives were present. The tonnages of stores required for the implementation of the D-Day plans, for arming guerillas and for maintaining current sabotage were estimated, and it was clear that with only the present number of aircraft available for S.D. work there would be a serious deficiency. The importance of weighing carefully any demands which required a diversion of bomber effort from Overlord was stressed and various means were considered to fulfil essential requirements without further demands. The Meeting however came to no definite conclusion.



COS(44)15th  
Mtg. (O).  
Item 14.

SOE(43)Plans/350  
circ. as  
COS(43)781(O)  
of 22 Dec.43.

On January 19th, the Chiefs of Staff considered the problem of S.O.E.'s aircraft requirements as set forth in the Memorandum which they had submitted in December 1943. The anticipated monthly lift of the aircraft at present available to S.O.E., together with the target figures for the various areas was shown as follows:

	<u>Present</u> <u>%.</u>	<u>Present Monthly</u> <u>Tonnage.</u>	<u>Target Monthly</u> <u>Tonnage.</u>
Balkans:	32	278	680
Italy & S. France.	4	20	168
Western Europe.	16	86	560
Central Europe.	6	20	60
	<u>58</u>	<u>404</u>	<u>1468</u>

If all the Directives issued to S.O.E. were to be implemented then theoretically the effort of 300 aircraft would have to be employed if the full target commitment, amounting to over 1400 tons per month, was to be met. In the Mediterranean, the unification of command under S.A.C. MED, and M.A.A.F. would permit the pooling of all aircraft in accordance with strategic requirements for the supply of the Balkans, North Italy, South France, and Central Europe. In Western Europe, it had to be remembered that the first three months of 1944 were the vital period, after which little could be done to influence D-Day plans. With the present resources there was a very considerable gap of over 1,000 tons per month between the operational requirements and the estimated lift, and S.O.E. suggested that all squadrons engaged on S.D. work should be brought up to full strength; this, together with the addition of American Squadrons, would result in a total of

54 aircraft in the Mediterranean and 44 based on the U.K. Even this would not be adequate, and S.O.E. suggested that a supplementary effort should be made available to enable the Organisation to fulfil its plans.

The Chiefs of Staff Committee at the same meeting considered a Memorandum by S.O.E. on their plans for the intensification of sabotage and guerilla activity in Poland, and a request from the French Committee of National Liberation for increased supplies of material for Resistance Groups inside France. The Committee agreed that the French requests for increased supplies was now a matter which should be considered by the Supreme Allied Commander who had been made responsible for all S.O.E. operations in France. With regard to Poland, the C.A.S. said that any substantial increase in the air effort available for Polish operations must come out of the general allocation of aircraft for S.O.E. purposes. In considering S.O.E.'s paper on their aircraft requirements, the C.A.S. remarked that there appeared to be no record of a target commitment of 1,400 tons per month having been accepted by the Chiefs of Staff and the S.O.E. representative explained that this figure had been calculated from the general directive which had been approved by the Chiefs of Staff. The C.A.S. then emphasised that Bomber Command were between 70 and 80 Halifaxes short of their expansion programme. The provision of any additional aircraft for S.O.E. would cause a corresponding increase in this deficiency. He considered, therefore, that apart from expanding some of the present S.D. Squadrons, the maximum contribution to subversive operations that we

could possibly afford to make at present was a supplementary effort of some 60 sorties per month by the Stirlings of No. 38 Group. This would mean an additional delivery of approximately 60 tons per month. The Committee agreed that these proposals represented the maximum justifiable allocation of aircraft to S.O.E. operations for the current quarter, and further agreed that an approach should be made to the U.S. Chiefs of Staff for additional aircraft for O.S.S./S.O.E. work in the Mediterranean as well as the Western European Theatre.

COS(44)23rd  
Meeting (O).  
Item 13.  
25 Jan. 44.  
COS(W)1095  
25 Jan. 44.

JSM/1509  
12 Feb. 44.

A telegram, approved by the Chiefs of Staff was therefore sent to Washington, requesting that the Americans should increase their contribution of aircraft for S.D. operations. The reply from Washington reported that the American Chiefs of Staff were considering every possibility for increasing their activities of this type, but owing to their commitments of personnel and equipment to various theatres the prospects were not hopeful. General Arnold had stated that no additional aircraft could be allocated from the United States Army Air Force specifically for S.D. purposes, but local United States Commanders had been directed to employ for this purpose any aircraft that could be spared.

After learning the decision of the Chiefs of Staff on S.O.E.'s aircraft requirements, the Minister of Economic Warfare wrote to the Prime Minister on 26th January 1944 that he was afraid their conclusions would mean that the Resistance Movements in Europe would be greatly disappointed. He pointed out that the increased allocations just made by the Chiefs of Staff still left a very large gap between the quantity of material which could be delivered to the field and the quantity necessary to enable S.O.E.

organisations to fulfil their directive. He emphasised the importance of the time factor, recalling that the consideration of his paper of 18th December on S.O.E.'s aircraft requirements had been held up pending the result of the J.I.C. enquiry. So much time had been lost through this cause that the additional assistance could not now be readily in time to affect S.O.E.'s Overlord plans. The responsibilities of the British Government towards Resistance Groups in occupied territories was a solemn one. These Groups were already extremely dissatisfied with the amount of support they had received, and the effect of further disappointment on their morale would be serious.

46. Prime Minister calls a Meeting on France.

During January, General de Gaulle and M. Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigerie, (Commissioner for the Interior, French National Committee, and prior to that one of the three heads of Resistance inside France), had seen the Prime Minister at Marrakesh on the subject of supplies to the guerillas in France, particularly in the south east, and had succeeded in interesting him in the problem.

COS(44)92(0)  
29 January.

A Meeting of Ministers was held on Thursday, 27th January, at which were present the Secretary of State for Air, the C.A.S., the Minister of Economic Warfare, M. d'Astier, and representatives from the Foreign Office and S.O.E. The Prime Minister stated that he had called the meeting to consider what could be done to assist the Resistance Movements in France during the coming critical months: a matter to which he attached

high importance. The Minister of Economic Warfare said that S.O.E. were giving every assistance that lay within their power, but their help was limited by the number of aircraft that the Air Staff could make available for S.D. work. M. d'Astier pointed out that the situation of the bands of patriots in the Maquis, particularly in south-eastern France, was now acute and their needs were urgent. The Prime Minister said that he wished and believed it possible to bring about a situation in S.E. France comparable to that existing in Yugoslavia. Brave and desperate men could cause the most acute embarrassment to the enemy, and it was right that we should do all in our power to foster and stimulate so valuable an aid to Allied strategy.

The C.A.S. said that, while the Air Staff fully recognised the urgent need to assist the Resistance Movement in France, he must ask that no decision be taken which would result in the diversion of any part of the major bombing effort over Germany. The Secretary of State for Air asked that the Air Staff should not be asked to allocate at this stage particular squadrons for full time duty on this task, and requested that the Prime Minister should give the Air Ministry instructions that the effort of Bomber Command during the month of February should be directed primarily to the Bomber Offensive, but that the Maquis should be given priority over other activities of Bomber Command.

The Meeting agreed that during the month of February 1944, the primary effort of Bomber Command should be directed to the bomber offensive against Germany and that, subject to the needs of S.I.S., and the first two priorities of other operations of Bomber Command during that month should be the Maquis, and other S.O.E. operations.

The Minister of Economic Warfare, in consultation with M. d'Astier and the Air Staff was invited to enquire into the air facilities that could be made available for S.O.E. operations in support of the Resistance Movement in the Maquis during February, and to prepare an outline plan of assistance and to submit a report to the Prime Minister by 31st January.

Annex V to  
COS(44)125  
3 Feb.44.

On the scheduled date the Minister of Economic Warfare reported to the Prime Minister on the conclusions of his Committee, submitting for the Prime Minister's decision a plan for arming Resistance Groups in the French Maquis during the February moon period which embodied the unanimous view of the Committee. The scale of air effort which the Air Staff proposed to use in order to implement the plan included the reinforcement of the Tempsford Squadrons in order to bring their total strength to twenty Halifaxes, the use of one American Liberator Squadron which was by now converted and trained for special duties, a supplementary effort by No. 38 Group sufficient to provide a total of 60 attempted sorties, and two squadrons of Stirlings. Arrangements were also under consideration by C-in-C. M.A.A.F., to provide a total of 120 attempted sorties from North Africa into Southern France.

The Minister pointed out that this plan had been made at short notice (in fact S.O.E. were only able to begin work on it four days before the February moon period began), and that about half of the air crews engaged would be undertaking S.D. work for the first time, and concluded by requesting that his Committee

should be instructed to prepare less hurriedly another special effort for the March moon, when prospects of achievement were likely to be considerably improved.

On February 2nd, the Prime Minister wrote to the Minister of Economic Warfare and the Chiefs of Staff:

Annex I to  
COS(44)125(0)  
3 Feb.44.

"I approve the proposals in your minute of 31st January for arming the Maquis, but if through bad weather or any other reason the number of sorties in February looks like dropping below your estimate, I want extra effort made to improvise additional sorties to the Maquis on nights when conditions are favourable. Even if fully successful the February programme is not enough. Pray start at once on a programme for the March moon. Let me see it in plenty of time. I want March deliveries to double those planned for February. I am told that the stocks of ammunition in the Maquis are far below what is reasonable, even for the few weapons they possess. M. d'Astier has also asked me to send in some concentrated foods and vitamins. You should consult with the French about all this and arrange to pack accordingly your containers to be dropped in March."

ACASE/5974 of  
28 January.

At the end of January a letter from the Air Ministry to Bomber Command recorded the steps taken by the R.A.F. to increase the aircraft available for S.O.E. purposes. Large scale operations were to be undertaken to the Haute Savoie, without prejudice to the Bomber effort. Proposals to transfer 138 and 161 Squadrons to 38 Group were in abeyance, and the re-equipment of Bomber Squadrons with Lancasters was to be carried out in such a way as not to affect the crews experienced on S.D. work until as late a date as possible.

The Chiefs of Staff considered the correspondence between the Prime Minister and the Minister of Economic Warfare, and took note, with approval, of the arrangements

COS(44)37th  
Meeting (0).  
Item 12.  
7 Feb.44.

Annex VIII to  
above ref.

proposed for February for delivering supplies to the Maquis.

The Secretary was instructed to submit a reply to the Prime

Minister's Minute of 2nd February reporting that a plan for considerably increased deliveries during March was being worked out by the Air Staff and S.O.E.

CCS.492 of  
17 Feb.44.

A French suggestion that representatives of the American, British and French services should meet to discuss plans for assisting Resistance did not meet with the approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff who considered it unnecessary since General Eisenhower had the machinery within his staff to handle the matter of procurement and distribution of material and he was responsible for the coordination of the activities of these groups with his military forces.

47. The Defence Committee consider aircraft for Poland.

DO(44).4th  
Meeting.  
Item 2.

Meanwhile the problem of increased supplies to the Polish resistance groups had once more been raised and was considered at a Defence Committee held on 3rd February. The Minister of Economic Warfare asked the Committee to give directions for an increase in the assistance to be given to the resistance movements in Poland, since at present only six aircraft had been allocated for this work. He urged the Committee to authorise the allocation of seventeen aircraft for Polish operations. The Chief of the Air Staff said he felt confident that an increase of supplies to Poland could be achieved were the pool of aircraft for S.O.E. operations in the Mediterranean not restricted as to the operations they were permitted to



carry out, instead of being limited to Balkan operations.

The Foreign Secretary stated that the number of aircraft allotted for S.O.E. work over Yugoslavia, Greece and Poland seemed a very small allocation in view of the importance at this stage of the war of encouraging the patriot forces in those countries. The Chief of the Air Staff said that our supreme task in the air was to sustain the battle which was being waged by Bomber Command, and which might prove decisive if we did not allow ourselves to be drawn away by less essential calls on our resources. The Prime Minister said that he considered it a matter of high public importance that greater assistance should be given by the Air Staff to Resistance Movements in occupied Europe, even at some small expense of the other responsibilities of the R.A.F. Treble the present allocation of aircraft to Poland should be accorded. A diversion of 12 aircraft from the bomber effort over Germany was a small price to pay.

After discussing the question of the control of special operations in Poland and Czechoslovakia and deciding that it should remain, as at present, with S.O.E. London, subject to the direction of the Chiefs of Staff, the Committee invited the Air Ministry to submit proposals for tripling the load dropped in Poland during February, March and April without reducing the support given to the Resistance Movements in Yugoslavia, Greece and France.

F.1676/125.

On February 8th, the Minister of Economic Warfare wrote to the Polish Prime Minister to confirm that it had been decided to increase three-fold the aircraft allocated to S.O.E. for Polish operations. The services of other aircraft in the

general pool would be added to those whenever the opportunity arose.

F.1914/125.

Further information on the increase of aircraft for Polish operations was given by the Minister of Economic Warfare to Polish G.H.Q. on February 24th. Six special Halifax aircraft were to be flown to Italy by Polish crews, bringing the first-line strength of the Polish Flight up to 12 aircraft. The balance of effort required to raise the figure of 18 was to be provided by Air Marshal Slessor, from his Halifax squadrons at Brindisi. The Air Ministry was also providing a reserve of two aircraft for the Polish Flight.

The Minister explained that the Deputy Air Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean was anxious that all resources at his disposal should be pooled, thus enabling him to devote the maximum effort, on any one night, to an area to which weather might permit operations. He had undertaken to support the effort to Poland with extra aircraft on nights when weather conditions were favourable for flights to Poland, and the Minister felt that Air Marshal Slessor's plan should be accepted. General Sosnkowski, replying to the Minister, agreed that the principle of pooling aircraft resources was reasonable.

J.C.S./334  
10 March.

In March a telegram from H.Q. H.A.A.F. assured the Poles that whenever weather permitted all available aircraft would be put on to their targets up to the limit of capacity for reception at any one time.

48, M.A.A.F.'s Contribution.

At their meeting on 10th February 1944, the C.A.S. reminded the Chiefs of Staff that General Wilson had not yet been informed of recent decisions to increase the scale of air effort to be devoted to S.O.E. operations for sustaining resistance groups in Axis-occupied Europe. A telegram to General Wilson was therefore approved by the Chiefs of Staff reporting that the Defence Committee who were much impressed with the results which might be expected from a larger scale of operations in the French Maquis and to Poland, had directed that operations to these two areas should be considerably extended.

In order to supplement the greatly increased scale of effort to be exerted from the U.K., M.A.A.F. were to carry out if possible a total of 60 successful sorties during the February moon period rising to 120 successful sorties during March. The load to be delivered to Poland was to be trebled, and the effort available for Yugoslavia, Greece and other areas was not to be diminished. With the exception of the Polish Flight in the Mediterranean all R.A.F. S.D. Squadrons in M.A.A.F. were to be regarded as a single pool for employment wherever suitable.

General Wilson was further informed that the Chiefs of Staff recognised that the numbers of S.D. aircraft available in M.A.A.F. must be increased if full success was to be achieved. An appeal had already been made to the U.S. Chiefs of Staff, and the C.A.S. was in contact with Air Marshal Slessor about the despatch of further aircraft and crews for S.D. Squadrons and for the Polish Flight. The telegram reported that the C.A.S. had also suggested to Air Marshal Slessor that the

COS(44)43rd  
Meeting (0).  
Item 7.

COSMED.27  
10 Feb.44.

greatest possible use should be made of any other aircraft of M.A.A.P. which could be spared from urgent operations. In particular, he hoped that considerable help could be provided by transports and possibly by night bombers.

#### 49. Supplies to the French Maquis.

The delivery of supplies to the Maquis in the mountainous country of south-eastern France in the month of February was never considered very practical by the air authorities. Events confirmed the difficulty of the operation.

On 9th February 1944, the Minister of Economic Warfare reported to the Prime Minister that the results achieved during the first half of the February moon in increasing the volume of supplies to France had so far been extremely disappointing. The sole cause had been the fact that nearly every night low clouds had lain over the Maquis area which rendered operations in mountainous country impossible. The great majority of sorties had therefore been directed to normal S.O.E. work in other parts of France, and although the Maquis had every priority it seemed unlikely that it would receive anything like the supplies projected during the February moon period. In the meantime the Germans and the Vichy authorities had organised a concentrated drive of 10,000 troops on the Maquis who had appealed to S.O.E. for help. The Minister suggested that the only other method of delivering stores might be by mass daylight operations: but he added that it was probably true to say that the time for an operation of this character had not yet come. The Minister's opinion on the feasibility of daylight operations was

66/44D. of I(R) confirmed by the Air Ministry, when D. of I(R) reported that the  
12 February. Air Staff after careful consideration had decided not to approve  
to S.O.E.'s Air Adviser. the proposal since for various reasons it would involve a very  
high casualty rate of aircraft. The success to be anticipated  
would be of a very low order and certainly not sufficient to  
justify the high risks involved.

The Prime Minister's views on the Minister's report were  
contained in a letter by Major Morton to the Minister of  
Economic Warfare dated 14th February. The Prime Minister felt  
that the French should be urged to organise themselves better  
for the acceptance of sorties in the Maquis. He was afraid that  
M. d'Astier and his people were too complacent about this and  
were inclined to regard it as our fault if the sorties failed.  
If we were to help them, they must help themselves and make  
really strenuous efforts to mark dropping places with bonfires,  
or other signals easily recognisable by the less skilled pilots.  
In general the Prime Minister felt that the French must show  
much greater zeal in trying to remedy their own considerable  
defects.

After a run of bad weather during the first half of the  
February moon it was decided to mount a special operation  
("Fumiste") in which the pilots, after a dead reckoning run of  
not longer than 30 miles from a definitely identified pin-  
point dropped their load from a considerable height and  
through cloud. This operation was attempted on three  
nights and a total of 220 containers were dropped. An agent  
reported "Haute Savoie delighted parachute operation," but it  
was inevitable that a proportion of material dropped from so  
great a height should fall into the wrong hands. A Vichy  
broadcast claimed that a large quantity of stores parachuted

M.123/4.

into France had been seized by the Germans or the Vichy authorities. On February 16th, the Prime Minister wrote to the Minister of Economic Warfare asking for a report on the alleged loss of stores.

"What proportion does this represent of the arms which were actually dropped? Were they dropped in the wrong place, or how is it that the right kind of Frenchmen was not in the right place to receive them?"

F.1905/38.

The Minister of Economic Warfare reported on February 17th that during the February moon 2,237 containers had been dropped in the whole of France of which 495 had been delivered to the Maquis area. Full reports had not yet been received from the field but it was known that 2% of the containers sent to the Independent French circuits and 4.5% of those delivered to the de Gaullist French had been lost. It was probable that the remaining 98% in the case of the Independent French had reached their proper destination. Acknowledgements of the remainder of the de Gaullist French were still far from complete. Even if the Vichy broadcast were entirely correct - and the quantity of arms and explosives cited did not correspond with the makeup of container loads - the estimated maximum number of containers involved would represent only 4.6% of the total delivered to France during February. In view of the large number of untrained crews employed and the unfavourable weather conditions, the Minister submitted that this wastage was rather less than might have been expected.

On February 23rd the Minister wrote to the Prime Minister outlining S.O.E.'s plans for the March moon period. A further air effort from Bomber Command and the

2nd American Liberator Squadron was expected to be more than sufficient to double the February effort to the Maquis. The weather was the principal limiting factor, however, and instructions had therefore been given that on nights when it was possible to fly to France, but not to the Maquis areas, aircraft were not to be allowed to stand idle but were to be used for S.O.E. operations required to fulfil S.H.A.E.F. Directives. Arrears in the Maquis programme were to be reduced as far as possible by using all the available aircraft, including those set aside for normal S.O.E. operations, on any night when the weather was favourable in the Maquis area; and by still greater air efforts from 38 Group and Bomber Command.

By the end of February sufficient reports had been received from the field to give a fairly clear picture of the results achieved during the February moon period. On February 28th, the Minister reported to the Prime Minister that out of the target figures of 126 sorties from England, 102 had actually been flown, and from North Africa 28 out of 60. The total number of successful sorties were 47; 37 from England and 10 flown from North Africa. The causes of the comparative failure were bad weather, insufficiently expert aircrews and Reception Committees, and lack of time in which to perfect arrangements. The Minister stressed the difficulty of rapid extensions and improvisation in clandestine warfare, and pointed out that S.O.E. work needed much preparation and training. The C.A.S. also submitted a report to the Prime Minister in which he admitted that the results achieved in Poland and to the Maquis had been very disappointing, owing primarily to the weather though a contributory cause in the Maquis area had been the inadequacy of some of the reception arrangements.

F.1965/38.  
Annex I to  
COS(44)212(0)  
3 March 44.

Annex II to  
COS(44)212(0)  
3 March 44.

At the beginning of March it was suggested that the Committee set up under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Economic Warfare to consider the arming of French Resistance should include a representative from S.H.A.E.F. The Prime Minister agreed to this suggestion while making it clear that he did not wish the plans for the March moon period to be altered. Difficulties between the French and the Americans, however, led to instructions to General Eisenhower from the President that he was to have nothing whatever to do with the French, and in these circumstances General Eisenhower gave orders that no member of his Staff, British or American, was to attend any meeting at which Frenchmen were present. The proposed inclusion of a S.H.A.E.F. representative therefore fell through and it was left to the S.O.E. representatives, an American and a British officer, to keep S.H.A.E.F. fully informed,

21/22.

On March 21st, Major Norton wrote to the Vice Chief of S.O.E. to explain the Prime Minister's wishes with regard to the respective claims of the Maquis and of the Overlord plans to deliveries in the March moon. Major Norton reported that whereas the Prime Minister wished no alteration to be made in the plans for the March moon as submitted by Lord Selborne to him, he agreed that General Eisenhower's wishes in respect of Overlord should be given prior consideration in regard to any plans for the April or other future moons.

F.1359/38.

The report on the March moon operations submitted by the Minister to the Prime Minister on 27th March, showed a very great increase in the number of successful sorties compared with the February moon.



358 sorties had actually been flown from the U.K. although the target figure was only 261 and of these 192 were successful. From North Africa 83 sorties had been flown out of a target of 120 and 23 had been successful. A sufficient quantity of stores had been delivered to the Maquis to provide arms for 18,000 men. As a result of the greatly increased number of sorties a certain quantity of material had inevitably fallen into enemy hands: as far as was then known this proportion was in the region of 6%, and it was not expected that subsequent reports would greatly increase this figure.

In view of the comparatively satisfactory results of the March moon and of the substantial quantities of equipment delivered to the Maquis areas, S.O.E. agreed with S.H.A.E.F. that priority of effort for the April moon should be directed into northern France to complete the deliveries required for the D-Day railway and road plans, and for arming Resistance for guerilla warfare. On March 23rd, the Minister reported this change in priority to the Prime Minister for his approval and also asked for instructions that the deliveries to be effected during the April and subsequent moons were to be made in accordance with the instructions of the Supreme Allied Commander. The Prime Minister agreed this.

During the April moon period the supplementary effort allotted for air operations was reduced, and the weather was less favourable than in March; 3,325 containers were delivered to France, as against 3,895 in the March moon period. In accordance with directions from the Supreme Commander the first priority was given to the north of France and the remainder of France including the Maquis was accorded second priority. It was estimated by S.O.E.

ADE/29 of  
19 April.

that the deliveries during the March moon period would provide arms for twenty-three thousand men, and taking into account February and March as well it could be said that arms had been provided for approximately 65,000 men.

On 18th April, Major Morton wrote to the Vice Chief of S.O.E. that the Prime Minister was not satisfied with the proportion of failures, apparently due to no reception in the field. In view of the urgency with which M. Emmanuel d'Astier pressed him to increase British efforts to arm the Resistance Movement in France, the Prime Minister did not feel that the French had done their fair share in making the resultant British effort a success. It was wrong to risk the lives of British air crews on hazardous operations doomed to failure from the outset through lack of efficiency in reception arrangements at the other end.

F.1525/38 of  
25 April.

In forwarding S.O.E.'s report on the April moon to the Prime Minister stated that neither the R.A.F. nor S.O.E. considered the proportion of unsuccessful sorties to be unduly high. Out of the total sorties attempted in January 56% had been unsuccessful and in February 60%. This figure had been reduced in the last two months: in March 53% and in April 47% of the sorties had failed. Apart from the ordinary difficulties of enemy opposition, engine trouble and navigation, which accounted for a small proportion of the failures, the main reasons of failure of S.O.E. operations were always weather and "No Reception." The Minister pointed out that the evidence of non-reception was based largely on Pilot's reports and in many cases no evidence confirmatory or

otherwise was received from the field. Since the pilots could be interrogated and the committee could not, the percentage of failures due to the absence of reception committees was probably less than appeared and accounted for to some extent by faulty navigation. The percentage of failures was in fact pretty constant and much the same as in the northern countries of Europe.

Operations to France in May were to some extent handicapped by the necessity, for deception reasons, of directing a large proportion of the operations into northern France, which had first priority, into the area north of the Seine, including Holland and Belgium. This meant that aircraft had to operate over the most heavily defended area in France. The supplementary effort from U.K. was reduced although the long expected increase in aircraft began to materialise in North Africa. In spite of the difficulties, operations in the May moon period were the most successful so far carried out, and a total of over six thousand containers were delivered to France and three hundred and sixty four to Belgium. The proportion of heavier arms delivered was higher than in the past and P.I.A.T.S., Bazookas and Brens were to some extent substituted for Sten guns. The deliveries to the whole of France would, it was estimated, arm 37,500 men and this added to the February, March and April deliveries would result in 102,500 men being armed.

The Prime Minister received Lord Selborne's Minute concurrently with a Minute from the C.A.S. reporting air operations in support of S.O.E. and S.I.S. during the moon period, and minuted on the latter:

"Good. Pres. on."

50. Difficulty of expanding Reception Committee machinery to meet increased aircraft resources.

The sudden and enormous increase during the early months of 1944 of the number of aircraft available for S.O.E. operations raised an acute problem in Western Europe, where, apart from a few areas such as the south-east of France, the countries were still rigidly policed and controlled by the enemy. The Resistance organisation was necessarily less flexible and less capable of sudden expansion than in the Balkans, where partisan control of large regions made the receipt of bulk supplies and the arming of large numbers of men an altogether easier task. For well over a year many S.O.E. groups in France, Belgium, Holland and Scandinavia had been begging and bullying, cajoling and cursing for increased supplies: the shortage of aircraft in 1943 had inevitably discouraged some groups who now found themselves, with very little warning, called upon to receive vastly increased quantities of stores. Reception Committee machinery had to be expanded at a moments notice in order to provide the R.A.F. with a reasonable choice of operations through a moon period, spread over as wide an area as possible. All organisers were asked to lay on as many operations as they could take; and by repeating deliveries to the same ground and mounting multiple operations (especially in the Maquis) enough work was provided to keep the R.A.F. busy on those nights during the February moon period when the weather permitted operations. In March, with the further increase of aircraft and good weather throughout the moon period, S.O.E.'s operational programme proved to be too small

to allow the U.K. based aircraft a reasonable choice of grounds and even, on one or two nights, did not provide enough operations for the aircraft available. The organisers had again been asked to send in their maximum programmes, but a certain time lag was inevitable before the extent of the increase was realised: particularly in view of their long months of disappointment. This was the only month when S.O.E. were unable to make full use of the aircraft at their disposal. By April the field had realised how much greater were the facilities for supplying them and the operational programmes in the May and June moons proved larger than the aircraft could complete.

51. American Contribution to French Resistance.

The great bulk of the increased supplies delivered to France in the early months of 1944 had been carried by aircraft of the R.A.F. For political reasons the State Department, Washington, became interested in destroying an impression that the British were doing all that was being done in the field, but General Eisenhower, replying to the American Chiefs of Staff, pointed out that in the past the effort had been preponderantly British since no American aircraft had been made available for the delivery of supplies until January. The permanent allotment of aircraft for S.D. work in the U.K. was 32 American and 22 British, but a very large supplementary British air lift had now been made available. In answer to a request from the Combined Chiefs of Staff for detailed facts and figures, SHAEF sent a report showing that in the months of February, March and April, American planes, flying 209 sorties had delivered 190 tons; British aircraft flying 1,292 sorties had delivered

AGWAR to ETOUSA  
W 24345 of  
17 April 1944.

S/51066.

S/51396 of  
6 May 1944.

COS/429/4 of  
29 May 1944.

1,113<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> tons. The French apparently continued to believe that the increase in the delivery of stores was mainly due to the British; and the United States Chiefs of Staff submitted a memorandum to the Combined Chiefs of Staff recommending that the French Committee of National Liberation should be informed that the supply of Resistance Groups was a matter of combined United States/ British responsibility.



C. CLIMAX IN EUROPE June 1944 - May 1945.

The tide which had turned for the British Armies at El Alamein was now about to flood into Western Europe and the invading regular Armies of the Allies were to receive substantial assistance from the Resistance forces now reaching their climax of guerilla activity.

The patriots of France, the Low Countries and Scandinavia organised, trained and armed, were ready to rise against the hated oppressor and revenge themselves for four years of slavery. For this moment they had waited long and anxiously, sometimes in doubt and disappointment, and now that their call to action had been sounded their response was immediate and overwhelming. Throughout Western Europe the patriots sprang to arms during the summer of 1944: in Eastern Europe the climax was to come a few months later with even greater intensity.

52. Overlord.

So great a weight of supplies had been delivered to Western Europe during the first months of 1944 that on the eve of the invasion of France Resistance movements everywhere found themselves sufficiently well equipped to fulfil, even beyond S.O.E.'s expectations, the role which they had been allotted. The D-Day plans were implemented on the receipt of the D.D.C. messages; railways and roads were attacked and the enemy found his lines of communication continually cut, while isolated German units were harassed by guerilla bands. The action of the Resistance Groups south of the Loire resulted,



"The value of  
SOE operations  
in the Supreme  
Commander's  
Sphere.  
13 July 44.

according to S.H.A.E.F. in an average delay of 48 hours in the  
movement of enemy reinforcements to the bridgehead area, and  
in some cases this period was much longer. From the  
mountainous areas the men of the Maquis were able to take the  
offensive and in southern and central France the enemy found  
himself faced with a battlefield behind his own lines.

M.753/4.  
Annex I to  
COS(44)556(0)  
22 June 44.

On 20th June 1944, the Prime Minister sent a minute to the  
Minister of Economic Warfare:

"The Maquis has started open guerilla warfare  
and is in temporary control of certain areas of  
southern France. The Germans are reacting  
strongly with fully armed troops. Every effort  
must be made to supply the Maquis at once with  
rifles, Bren guns, Piat guns, mortars and  
Bazookas with ammunition, and whatever else  
is needful to prevent the collapse of the  
Movement and to extend it. What is being  
done about this? Have you any difficulty  
in getting men to repack containers with the  
right sort of weapons? Could General Wilson  
help from North Africa? Pray tell me if I  
can help you to accelerate action."

Annex II to  
COS(44)556(0)  
22 June 44.

The Minister replied on the same day pointing out that with  
proper support it would be possible for the guerilla fighting  
to be so developed as to become a most important factor in  
deciding the Battle of France. He envisaged an increased  
supply of stores by mass daylight operations by the 8th  
U.S.A.A.F. and possibly employment of bodies of regular troops  
to stiffen resistance and enable it to take over control of  
large areas; he also suggested that at a later stage a  
mass up-rising in France might be called for.

COS(44)208th  
Meeting (0).  
Item 7. of  
24 June 44.

This exchange of correspondence was considered by the  
Chiefs of Staff two days later when the C.I.G.S. said that

in so far as the Resistance movements in the centre and south of France were concerned, Generals Eisenhower and Wilson were in close touch and were coordinating their plans.

The Minister also reported the integration

See directive of S.O.E.'s Anglo-American staff with French on "Command & Control of the Forces of the Interior, (Northern Zone)" advised the Prime Minister that S.O.E.'s issued by SHAEEF requirements were for continuous sorties on a on 1 Aug 44.

big scale to maintain the forces in the field, for certain types of heavier arms and for parachutes. In a separate minute of the same date he reported the successes achieved by Resistance action, and added that chaotic conditions had been created in large parts of France, generally hampering the German military machine. In limited areas, Resistance was in complete control. The continuation of aggressive offensive action depended largely on supplies by air and measures were being taken to increase these. S.H.A.E.F. were well satisfied with the results so far been achieved.

53. S.O.E., O.S.S., E.M.F.F.I.

As early as 1942 it was agreed between S.O.E. and O.S.S. (S.O.) (their American counterpart) that the field force should be treated as a single Fifth Column organisation to assist an invasion force, whether British or American. Coordination was to be effected in London. This principle was the main condition made by the British Chiefs of Staff in September 1943 when giving the formal consent requested by the United States Chiefs of Staff

COS(W)810  
15 Sept.43.  
JSM.1174 of  
31 Aug.43.

for the operations of O.S.S. (S.O.) in North Western Europe, which at that date was a British Theatre. American Liaison Officers were attached to S.O.E. in the summer of 1943 and an integrated Anglo-American Staff was established to cover the countries within the sphere of S.H.A.E.F.

Immediately after D-Day, the Resistance forces in France were placed under the command of General Koenig and an Anglo-American-French staff known as E.M.F.F.I., which separated from the main S.O.E. organisation and worked operationally directly under S.H.A.E.F. The difficulty of this arrangement, as far as air transport was concerned, was set out in a letter of October from S.O.E.'s Air Adviser to D. of I(R).

S.H.A.E.F.'s instructions that General Koenig, with a tripartite staff, mainly French, should plan all operations behind the enemy lines in France meant that S.O.E. had virtually no control over these operations and had become in effect merely agents to carry out General Koenig's plans. The Air Adviser had explained this to V.C.A.S. at the beginning of August and V.C.A.S. had accepted the position. All S.O.E. operations to France had therefore been conducted in accordance with General Koenig's plans which were, of course, approved by S.H.A.E.F.

54. Air Lift in the Mediterranean for S.D. Operations:  
Organisation of SO(M): Liaison with Russians.

The liberation of the heel of Italy enabled the R.A.F. to establish bases on the mainland of Europe. The S.D. Squadrons, moved from North Africa into southern Italy in January, were now based considerably nearer their target areas and deliveries were consequently facilitated.

On 11th February the United States Chiefs of Staff asked for details to be obtained from the Allied C-in-C

AIR/506/725  
17 Oct 44.

JSM.1506.

CCS.337/3,  
Appendix B.

Mediterranean as to the steps taken to implement the directive regarding the supply of arms and equipment to Resistance groups in the Balkans.

COS(44)1630

A Memorandum by S.O.E. dated 14th February 1944 described the organisation of Special Operations in the Mediterranean. In the early autumn of 1943, Force 133 (i.e. S.O.E. Middle East) was centred at Cairo under the control of C-in-C. Middle East, and entrusted with all operations to the Balkans. An advanced base of Force 133 was set up in the Bari area.

In January 1944, when the command of the Eastern and Western Mediterranean was unified under A.F.H.Q., it was agreed that it would be necessary to have a corresponding central H.Q. to coordinate all special operations in the Mediterranean Theatre. It was then decided to establish H.Q. Special Operations (Mediterranean), known as S.O.M. which after an interim period came into existence officially on 12th April 1944, responsible for the coordination and technical efficiency of all S.O.E. units in the Theatre; the coordination of S.O.E. and O.S.S.(S.O.) activities and the coordination of S.D. operations for all special agencies, S.O.E., S.I.S., O.S.S., M.I.9. and P.W.B. The S.O.E. Units working into different countries under the operational control of various military commanders were as follows:

<u>Unit.</u>	<u>Military Command</u>	<u>Target Area.</u>
1. I.S.S.U.6.	7th Army (Force 163)	S. FRANCE.
2. Special Force.	15th Army Group.	ITALY.
3. Adv. Force 133 (later Force 266 & Force 399.)	i) SOM (till June 44). ii) DAF (from June 44).	YUGOSLAVIA. ALBANIA. HUNGARY.
4. Force 133.	G.H.Q. Middle East.	GREECE. ROMANIA. BULGARIA.
5. Force 139.	C.O.S. London (thru SOE London).	POLAND. CZECHOSLOVAKIA.
6. Mil.Est.43.	A.F.H.Q.	AUSTRIA.

H.Q. SOM. was established near Bari, having liaison staffs with A.E.H.Q. (first at Algiers and then from July 1944 at Caserta) and M.A.A.F.

COS(44)163(0).

S.O.E.'s Memorandum also set out the position with regard to S.D. air operations. The high priority accorded to operations in support of the Maquis in southern France had necessitated the transfer of aircraft from Brindisi to Algiers. Demands for operations to Northern Italy had also to be met and the consequent loss to Balkan operations was made good by the movement to Brindisi for work into the Balkans of two Squadrons of D.C.3s. In February the S.D. aircraft consisted of a Squadron at Algiers working into southern France (624), three Squadrons in the Brindisi area working into northern Italy and the Balkans (148), and two Squadrons of D.C.3s. A packing station and air supply base had been set up near Brindisi airfield. In addition to these a certain number of Italian aircraft of the Italian Air Force were operating from southern Italy primarily to maintain Italian forces cooperating with the Balkan partisans.

COS(W)1149.

The British Chiefs of Staff informed the Americans of the position in a telegram of 15th February.

MEDCOS.44.

During the next months the problem of liaison with the Soviet authorities concerning action in the Balkans became increasingly important. On 26th February General Wilson reported that he was concerned with the lack of any operational liaison between his command and the Russian Service Authorities. In this telegram the C-in-C referred only to liaison on normal military operations such as air bombing, but in a later telegram dated 14th

MEDCOS.93.

April, he again raised the question of the establishment of some form of liaison between his Headquarters and the Russians and added that some cooperation on the subject of air supply to Tito's Partisans was now becoming necessary since Russian aircraft were understood to be already operating into Tito's country from the East.

COS(W)1288.

A telegram from the Air Ministry to the Joint Staff Mission, Washington, repeated to General Wilson, reported that the Air Ministry did not see much hope of successful coordination of bombing operations in the Balkans between the Russian Air Force and M.A.A.F., and were also doubtful about the wisdom of attempting to coordinate air supply to Tito. It was considered that the coordination of supplies to the Partisans would be much better done in Yugoslavia and in Italy.

COS(44)342(0).  
15 April 44.

A Chiefs of Staff paper of 15th April set out a report recently submitted by A.F.H.Q. to the Combined Chiefs of Staff describing the organisation

of control of Special Operations in the Mediterranean Theatre. The increase of aircraft establishments for Special Operations had recently been authorised and the strength of 624 and 148 Squadrons and of the Polish Flight was to be increased. C.47 aircraft were temporarily undertaking S.D. operations under 334 Wing when their normal work permitted, and an American contribution was being made by 68 American Reconnaissance Group.

The Italian Bomber Transport Force of approximately 40 aircraft was also engaged on S.D. operations.

#### 55. S.D. Operations to Poland.

C.5451/451G. An increase in the number of S.D. operations to Poland had been effected in the months of March and April. On 23rd April the Polish Prime Minister saw Mr. Churchill and expressed his warm gratitude for the notable increase which had taken place in supply droppings during recent weeks. Mr. Churchill said that he was very glad to hear this and he wished the proper British authorities to be instructed to make every effort to see that supplies to Poland were kept at the highest possible level during the next weeks.

As the Russian Armies approached Poland, it became evident that the time was approaching when action by the Polish Secret Army would be most likely materially to assist the operations on the Eastern front and Allied operations in general. Moreover if the Secret Army did not act soon it was likely to be overrun by the Russian advance without ever having acted at all. In May the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee, in consultation with S.O.E., reported how the activities of the Polish Underground Movement could be related to allied strategy

JIC(44)204(0)  
Final.

COS(44)165th  
Meeting (0).  
Item 8 of  
20 May 44.

and forthcoming operations. This report was considered by the Chiefs of Staff Committee who agreed that the timing of the rising in Poland must be left to the Polish Commander on the spot. The C.A.S. pointed out that the possibility of increasing supplies to Poland would depend largely on the time of year at which the rising took place. It was in any case doubtful if the supplies which could be introduced by air would be sufficient to make any material difference in the event of a general rising. The Committee therefore agreed that the responsibility and the timing for a general rising in Poland must be left to the Polish authorities and the Polish Commanders on the spot respectively, that planning should continue on the basis that the scale of assistance to Poland would not be greater than it was at present, and that we should concentrate on urging the Poles to intensify partisan sabotage and diversionary operations. S.O.E. should meanwhile continue their efforts to arrange for better coordination between the Russians and the Polish Underground Movement.

COS. Special  
Meeting 241.

On 12th June, General Tabor of the Polish Secret Army had the opportunity of speaking to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the subject of assistance to the Polish Underground Army, but no decisions were taken.

In the next few weeks the Polish Government made further efforts to increase the flow of supplies to Poland. It was suggested that air operations should once more be undertaken from the U.K. or, if this were impracticable, Liberator aircraft might be substituted for Halifaxes and the proposed Stirlings for operations from Italian bases. The Combined Chiefs of Staff, however, agreed

COS. 612/2 of  
1 August 44.



that the decision of types of aircraft to be used must be made by the Air Ministry in conjunction with the Polish authorities concerned.

At the end of July the aircraft available for flights to Poland consisted of 1586 Flight (14 aircraft: 11 Halifaxes, 3 Liberators) and aircraft from 334 Wing which could be used for Polish operations if they were not operating to other countries. During the four months from April to July over 150 successful sorties had been flown and 231 tons had been delivered to the country. All but a few tons of this material had been delivered to the Governor Generalship of Warsaw.

#### 56. The Warsaw Rising.

On 1st August the Polish Commander in the field, encouraged by the Soviet broadcasts, ordered a general rising of the Secret Army. On 3rd August, the Chiefs of Staff informed A.F.H.Q. and M.A.A.P. that telegrams had been received by the Polish Government in London from the Commander of the Polish Secret Army, reporting the outbreak of hostilities in Warsaw and urgently requesting stores. An immediate Russian attack from outside the city was also called for. A.F.H.Q. were instructed to communicate this information to the Soviet Military authorities and to inform them that the request for supplies had been passed to our authorities in Italy for immediate action. Another telegram from the Chiefs of Staff reported that the Polish Government had made a most earnest appeal to the Prime Minister for supplies to be delivered to Warsaw if possible that very night and added that His Majesty's Government attached the greatest importance to complying with this appeal if operational factors permitted.

F.79096.

The weather fought against the Poles, however, and it proved impossible to make any deliveries in the next two nights. On 4th August General Wilson and Air Marshal Slessor reported to the Chiefs of Staff that the delivering of supplies to Warsaw seemed to them to be an impractical proposition, even if weather permitted - which seemed unlikely. The losses in aircraft would probably be considerable and this would in turn reduce activities in other areas which were equally important. If deliveries were made by daylight, the height from which they would have to be dropped made it almost certain that a very large proportion of the supplies would fall into German hands. They were therefore forced to the conclusion that this was just not an operation of war. Pressure should be exerted on the Russians, who were in a much better position to know exactly what was going on in Warsaw.

COS(44)261st  
Meeting (0).  
Item 3 of  
5 August 44.

Tels: AMSSO.  
4176 of 4 Aug.  
to 30 Military  
Mission, & COS  
(W) of 12 Aug.

COS(44)704(0)  
7 Aug.44.

The Chiefs of Staff agreed with the view put forward by General Wilson and Air Marshal Slessor and it was therefore suggested to the Soviet authorities that they should examine the possibilities of dropping supplies to the Polish Secret Army. An appeal was also made by the Polish Government to the American Air Force to carry out a daylight drop. The Polish authorities then asked that at least the Polish Flight in the Mediterranean might be allowed to carry out operations to Poland.

COS(44)262nd  
Meeting (0).  
Item 4.

The position was considered at a Chiefs of Staff Committee Meeting on 7th August. The C.I.S. said that from the many approaches made by the Poles in the course of the last few days it appeared that they were trying to pass on to us the responsibility for

failure of the operations of the Polish Secret Army which might result from this force having undertaken open warfare prematurely. Operations to Poland had been attempted from the Mediterranean on the night of August 4/5 and had resulted in the loss of 5 out of 13 aircraft despatched. These aircraft had been despatched to selected areas in open country which were likely to be undefended. If they had been sent to Warsaw the losses would almost certainly have been greater. He agreed with General Wilson and Air Marshal Slessor that the delivery of supplies to Warsaw by aircraft of R.A.A.F. was not a practicable operation. The Committee also took note of a telegram from Marshal Stalin to the Prime Minister suggesting that the information communicated to the latter by the Poles was greatly exaggerated.

T.1571/4.

COS(44)263rd  
Meeting (0).  
Item 4.  
9 Aug.44.

At a Meeting the next day the Chiefs of Staff considered the Polish request to allow the Polish Flight to carry out supply dropping operations to Warsaw. The C.A.S. reported that, in anticipation of the approval of the Committee, he had already obtained the concurrence of the Secretary of State for Air in the despatch of a telegram to Air Marshal Slessor instructing him to permit the Polish Flight to carry out these operations.

COS(44)711(0)  
8 Aug.44.

A letter from General Sosnowski to the C.I.G.S. recapitulated the development of the situation from the initial rising in Warsaw. Operations of the Russian Army on the Warsaw sector had virtually ceased, while on the other hand the Germans had brought heavy armour into action against the insurgents within the city.

"The people are either being massacred or used as mass shields for German tanks trying to break into Polish barracks."

In spite of this, the G.O.C. in Warsaw had stated that he could hold the major part of the city if he received immediate assistance in supplies and air cover.

4347. The first supply dropping operations to Warsaw had been flown on 4th August. On the 8th, 9th, 12th and 13th, operations were again carried out, but the Germans had by then moved in very strong anti-aircraft defences and the aircraft losses were very heavy. On 11th August, the Chiefs of Staff informed the Joint Staff Mission in Washington that the seriousness of the situation in Warsaw was fully realised. The responsibility for helping the Poles in Warsaw must rest primarily with the Russians and Marshal Stalin had accepted this responsibility. The short nights and the full moon had prevented large scale dropping operations but Air Marshal Slessor was now hoping to start operations immediately on a large scale with British crews.

4375.

By 12th August reports from Warsaw indicated that the Poles were losing ground and stated that without immediate support the fight would collapse in a few days. A telegram from the Chiefs of Staff to General Wilson and Air Marshal Slessor reported that Marshal Stalin had agreed to send help, but there was no indication as to the form this would take or its extent. At a Chiefs of Staff Meeting on 12th August, Sir Douglas Evill said that the C.A.S. had received a further letter from General Sosnowski and that he, the V.C.A.S. had answered it, explaining that even before the Chiefs of Staff Meeting a personal telegram had been sent to Air Marshal Slessor from the C.A.S. emphasising

COS(44)273rd  
Meeting (0).  
Item 7.  
12 Aug.44.

the importance of delivering supplies to Warsaw and expressing the hope that he would be able from henceforth to make a substantial British contribution . It was also agreed at the Meeting that an approach should be made to the United States Chiefs of Staff for American assistance.

JSM/199  
15 Aug.44.

A telegram from Washington confirmed that General Eaker still held his former opinion that it was definitely an impracticable operation to deliver stores by daylight to Warsaw area. The United States Chiefs of Staff had therefore asking General Eisenhower if the Air Forces under his command could give any assistance to the Poles.

COS(44)277th  
Meeting (0).  
Item 10.

At a Chiefs of Staff Meeting on 16th August the C.A.S. reported that, on the night of the 14/15th August, out of 26 aircraft despatched to Warsaw 8 were missing. As a result of this Air Marshal Slessor intended to direct further operations to the areas immediately outside the city. General Spatz had hoped to carry out a supply dropping operation with American heavy bombers the previous day, but had been unable to clear the matter with the Russians. The operation would be launched as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made. The Committee were informed that the British Ambassador in Moscow had reported that he had discussed this question with the Russians whose attitude to affording assistance to the Poles fighting in Warsaw had been unhelpful.

Annex to  
COS(44)755(0)  
21 Aug.44.

A telegram from Air Marshal Slessor to the C.A.S. five days later reported that the Russians were still being unhelpful. It was difficult to resist the conviction that the Russian failure to supply Warsaw was a deliberate policy. Air Marshal Slessor added that the assistance being given by M.A.A.F. to the Russian activities in Yugoslavia might

COS(44)285th  
Meeting (0).  
Item 2.

be used as a bargaining counter for obtaining Russian help for Warsaw. The Foreign Office agreed to this suggestion, but at a Chiefs of Staff Committee Meeting two days later the V.C.A.S. pointed out that the aircraft concerned on the Russian-Yugoslav operations actually belonged to Russia and that the Russians intended to employ them on a shuttle service between Russian or Russian-occupied territory and Italy, carrying out dropping operations to Yugoslavia en route. A letter to the Foreign Office was therefore approved by the Chiefs of Staff stating that everything practicable had already been done to persuade the Russians to take measures for the assistance of the Poles in Warsaw; it would be quite impracticable to suggest that their shuttle service to Italy for the supply of Yugoslavia should be made contingent in any way upon their so doing.

COSMED.174.

On 23rd August a Polish appreciation of the situation was forwarded to A.E.H.Q. and Washington. The Polish authorities requested that the Polish crews should be allowed, regardless of losses sustained, to fly to Warsaw and Poland and to be used exclusively on operations to Poland, and that the British crews and aircraft of 148 Squadron should continue their assistance by carrying out operations to southern Poland. These night operations to relieve Warsaw should be attempted independently from American daylight operations from the U.K.

COS(44)297th  
Meeting (0).  
Item 3.

The problem of daylight deliveries hinged on the Russian willingness to permit the use of their bases for shuttle operations. At a Chiefs of Staff Meeting on 4th September, the C.A.S., discussing the possibility

of a large scale operation to Warsaw by Bomber Command, stated that in view of the distance involved, the heavy losses which would probably be incurred, and the small proportion of the supplies dropped likely to fall in to the right hands, the Polish authorities should be informed that the project was not practicable. As the Russians had refused to allow American aircraft to land on airfields in Russia the only practicable method of delivering supplies to Warsaw was by operations from the Mediterranean. The A.O.C. in that theatre had been instructed to consider how the scale of air assistance to Warsaw could be increased. On 10th September, a telegram to General Eisenhower from the Combined Chiefs of Staff informed him that the British Ambassador to Moscow reported that the Soviet Government were now prepared to cooperate with the British and Americans in organising assistance to Warsaw.

Agreement with the Russians for the attempt of a daylight shuttle operation and for their own despatch of supplies had at last been reached, and on 10th September, and after several abortive attempts, the Americans staged a mass daylight flight to Warsaw of 110 Fortresses escorted by fighters. Of the three dropping areas, two were missed completely and the central area of Warsaw alone received 380 containers. The material result of the operation was therefore inconsiderable however great was its moral encouragement. One bomber and one fighter were lost. A certain quantity of stores was delivered by Russian aircraft, but the Russian support was on too small a scale and offered at too late a date to affect the final issue. A further American operation was laid on, but owing to bad weather it was never carried out. The food situation within the city was now desperate, and although the

small Russian deliveries included food as well as ammunition the supplies were dropped without parachutes and were of poor quality. On October 2nd, Warsaw finally capitulated and the long drawn out tragedy came to an end. During the whole of the siege only 1,719 containers and 254 packages had been received within the city.

57. Emphasis on Yugoslavia: B.A.F.

After the refusal of Mihailovic to accept the directive issued to him by H.M.G. in the summer of 1943, increasing support had been given in supply dropping operations to Marshal Tito and his Partisans at the expense of the Chetniks. The establishment of air bases in the heel of Italy in January 1944 greatly facilitated S.D. operations to Yugoslavia and it was, moreover, possible to infiltrate considerable quantities of stores by sea.

The conflict between Partisans and Chetniks continued, however, and it became increasingly obvious that the value of the forces commanded by General Mihailovic to the cause of the United Nations was practically nil since, as he himself admitted, he regarded not the Germans but Tito as his real enemy. Marshal Tito's Partisans, on the other hand, were carrying out constant attacks on communications and upon enemy units, and guerilla activity in the Balkans was containing a number of German Divisions.

In May 1944, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs suggested that the best possibility of resolving



the conflict within Yugoslavia would be to increase the size of the Partisan groups in Serbia owing allegiance to Tito, by making it plain that they could fight as separate units within his forces; if this were done, then the King might appeal to the Serbs to join up with Tito on these conditions. The military issues of this suggestion, were, on the Prime Minister's instructions, referred to the Chiefs of Staff, who instructed the Joint Planning Staff to prepare a paper on the subject. The Joint Planning Staff considered that the limiting factor in the implementation of the plan was the means of transporting supplies. There were considerable strategical advantages in increasing the size and power of Partisan Resistance Groups in Serbia, but it would be impossible to deliver sufficient supplies to enable the Foreign Secretary's proposal to be implemented at present. No increase in transport facilities was likely to be possible until further transport aircraft could be allotted or until the reduction of the German garrison in Yugoslavia permitted an extension of air and sea operations. The Chiefs of Staff agreed with these conclusions.

COS(44)412(0).  
11 May 44.

JP(44)133  
(Final).  
24 May 44.

COS(44)174th  
Meeting (0).  
Item 13.  
27 May 44.

The increasingly military character of Partisan operations in Yugoslavia, and the consequent quantity of stores which they required, meant that support of the guerillas was by now less of a "Special Operation" than a military commitment. In May 1944, General Wilson submitted to the British and United States Chiefs of Staff a suggestion for the introduction of a measure of unified control of Trans-Adriatic operations at a lower level than A.F.H.Q. This involved the formation of a coordinating authority which, in this case, General Wilson considered should be the Airman.

MEDCOS.121  
20 May 44.

JP(44)144(S)  
Final.

COS(44)552(0)  
21 June 44.

This proposal was considered by the Joint Planning Staff and by the Chiefs of Staff, who agreed and issued the Directive to the Commander, Balkan Air Force, in June. The Commander was informed that he would be responsible for ensuring the coordination both of the planning and of the conduct of combined amphibious operations and raids on the islands and shores of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. The system of joint command would be followed in Trans-Adriatic operations: directives and special instructions would be issued to the Commander as appropriate by the Supreme Allied Commander, defining the policy to be followed in the conduct of regular and special operations in the area of joint responsibility. B.A.F. were to exercise operational control of Special Operations in Hungary, Yugoslavia and Albania. Liaison with Marshal Tito was effected through a British Mission led by Brigadier Maclean whose rear headquarters would be located at B.A.F. H.Q.

For air operations the Commander, B.A.F., was to be responsible under the air C-in-C. Mediterranean. While B.A.F. were not responsible for the control of Special Operations in Italy, Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece, Czechoslovakia or Poland, it was to be responsible for the operation of Special Duty aircraft employed in these areas through the various S.O.E. H.Q.'s concerned. The allocation of the available air lift to various territories would continue to be laid down by A.F.H.Q. and the Commander, B.A.F., was to act as Chairman of a Special Operations Committee which would ensure day-to-day coordination of the air aspect of Special Air Operations over the various territories and advise A.F.H.Q. on the allocation of effort.

This arrangement, by which the Commander was wholly responsible for certain areas and in addition responsible for providing air effort to areas outside his theatre, was not entirely consistent. Apart from operations into Yugoslavia, Albania and Hungary, D.A.F. acted more as a transport agency making deliveries to meet the requirements of SO(II) on behalf of A.F.H.Q.

JP(44)291  
(Final).  
24 Nov.44.

In November 1944, the Joint Planning Staff, after examining a telegram from General Wilson asking for guidance on the policy regarding supplies to Yugoslav Partisans concluded that the present policy of equipping 300,000 Partisans with guerilla-type equipment only should be continued. Further heavy equipment should not be provided.

#### 58. Mediterranean Air Lift - Autumn 1944.

By now, rather later than in Western Europe, Resistance activities in Eastern Europe were reaching their climax. During the summer of 1944 the demands on S.D. aircraft for supply operations into Poland, Yugoslavia and Italy continued to increase. On 6th October, S.O.E. submitted a paper to the Chiefs of Staff on "Special Operations Mediterranean Theatre: Air Lift Requirements." It was pointed out that since the allocation early in 1944 of addition Special Duty aircraft for operations from the Mediterranean Theatre the military situation had changed completely. Whereas at that time the Balkan countries had been the primary target, the progress of the war during the past four months had given considerable impetus to the growth of resistance in more distant areas such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Northern Italy, Austria and Hungary. The resulting air lift requirements were

becoming greater than could be met by the heavy aircraft at present available. Two of the countries concerned, Poland and Czechoslovakia, were outside SACRED's theatre, but support to them must be provided from the Mediterranean. Apart from the battle for Warsaw, active resistance to the enemy was being carried out by the Polish Secret Army in those areas still under German domination, and supplies were urgently needed. The Foreign Office were keenly interested for political reasons in the maintenance of supplies to Poland and the War Cabinet had recently agreed that S.O.E. observers (British personnel) should be sent to join the movement behind the enemy lines. In Slovakia revolts had broken out, and although S.O.E. were not at present delivering supplies to the insurgents, the Foreign Office had agreed that an S.O.E. party should be sent to that province. This would involve a minor supply commitment. Bohemia and Moravia were, it had been decided by the Chiefs of Staff, a Russian commitment, but there were already some parties in position who had been sponsored by S.O.E. and a small commitment for their maintenance already existed.

Of the countries within the theatre of SACRED, Northern Italy had proved very fruitful ground for the organisation of partisan warfare, and the enemy had been compelled to maintain considerable forces in the area in an attempt to preserve order and maintain the security of his communications. Action had already been taken by A.F.H.Q. on the representations of H.Q. SO(M) to increase supplies to meet the requirements of the partisan groups and B.F.O.'s in Italy, and the delivery of 600 tons during October had been fixed as the target. In Austria,

although there was no effective organised resistance, S.O.E. had established a series of despatch posts manned by British officers situated along the Austro-Italian and Austro-Yugoslav frontiers. Resistance activity was also being carried out by the Slovene minority in South Carinthia. As far as Hungary was concerned the air lift requirements concerned only the introduction and maintenance of British Missions into the country, involving an estimated average of eighteen sorties per month.

Although the nearby Balkan areas could be served from Italy by unarmed transport aircraft, the penetration of more distant countries necessitated the use of heavy armed aircraft. The only S.D. heavy aircraft in the Mediterranean were those of 148 Squadron and 1536 Polish Flight. With these it had not proved possible, even in the best month of the summer, to meet the requirements of the Resistance forces, and the position had recently been worsened by the losses sustained over Warsaw. In the winter months weather conditions would probably militate against the success of S.D. operations, and it was clear that the existing resources were insufficient to provide the air lift requirements to meet the needs of Poland, Austria, Hungary and the small commitment to Czechoslovakia. S.O.E. therefore requested that the Chiefs of Staff should consider the importance which they attached to Special Operations in these countries and should give guidance to SACMED accordingly.

#### 59. Supplies to the Italian Maquis.

On 24th October, General Wilson reported to the British and American Chiefs of Staff on his plans in the Mediterranean. After outlining his proposed Italian campaign, he added that

MEDCOOS/205.

the situation in the Balkans called for some immediate preparatory action. If we were to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the enemy's present critical position east of the Adriatic to destroy as large as possible a proportion of his forces now in Greece and Yugoslavia, we must accept some immediate reduction in the weight of our air offensive in North Italy. Only the partisans and the Air Force could act in Yugoslavia before the winter set in, and the winter itself might set the seal on their efforts. The air resources which were essential to early and decisive results in the Balkans could be found only at the immediate expense of the offensive in Italy. General Wilson had therefore requested the Air Commander-in-Chief to give priority for air supply to the Partisans in northern Yugoslavia over those of northern Italy, and to be prepared to divert heavy and light bombers for operations in Yugoslavia, either bombing or supply dropping, as might be required by the Commander, Balkan Air Force.

Annex I to  
COS(44)933(0)  
29 Oct.44.

On the same date the Minister of Economic Warfare wrote to the Prime Minister to emphasise the importance of delivering supplies to the Italian Maquis. He pointed out that General Alexander himself had testified to the excellent work which these Partisans were doing and there was no doubt that their action had considerably assisted regular military operations. General Alexander had planned an important role for them during the coming months. But the winter would be a hard time for the Partisans, and if we could not send them the reinforcements and supplies they needed we should be depriving ourselves of a valuable weapon, crippling the existing Missions in

the field and laying numbers of Italian communities open to fearful German reprisals.

The target of 600 tons which Air Marshal Glessor had agreed should be delivered to Italy in October had been beyond reach: meanwhile, as a result of bad weather the total had been very disappointing, and only 45 tons had so far been delivered. The Minister referred to a proposal to move to Italy the two American Liberator Squadrons which had been assisting in the support of French Resistance and said that he felt it was important, for political reasons, to maintain the British effort as well. He felt strongly that at this stage priority should be given to the Italian Partisans in view of their direct contribution to our main military operations in Italy.

MEDCOS/205.

Annex 2 to  
above COS  
paper.

On 26th November, the Minister again wrote to the Prime Minister, after having seen General Wilson's telegram, to protest against the decision to give Yugoslavia priority over northern Italy.

"Acting on instructions I called the Italian Maquis out and they have done a magnificent job, far better than I ever expected; in fact, just as good as the French did.

"The decision now is that supplies to Northern Italy be restricted to minimum tonnage necessary for the maintenance of existing commitments. I plead that this be liberally interpreted.

"When you have called a Maquis out into open warfare it is not fair to let it drop like a hot potato. These men have burned their boats and have no retreat. If we fail them with ammunition, death by torture awaits them.

"General Alexander will tell you that Italian resistance has paid a rich dividend. I plead that if more support is to be given to Marshal Tito it should not be at the expense of the Italian partisans."

D.258/4.

The Prime Minister then wrote to General Ismay for the Chiefs of Staff on 28th October:

"While I am well aware of the views of Air Marshal Slessor, I still think that it is of the utmost importance to keep the Italian Maquis in the field, and anyhow General Alexander's opinion must be sought upon this. The demand is not a large one and it ought to be possible to move these small quantities without abandoning our other plans."

COS(44)352nd  
Meeting (U).  
Item 4.

The matter was considered by the Chiefs of Staff on 30th October. The C.A.S. reported that the two American Squadrons which had been employed on supplying French Resistance had now returned to their normal bombing role. It was generally agreed that the Yugoslav Partisans, could under present circumstances, make a greater contribution to operations against Germany than could those in Northern Italy, and that the decision as regards the priority for air supply would be allotted to the two areas was one which must be taken by General Wilson.

#### 60. Parachutes again.

Encl.1. to  
Air 2/0.0/81(c)  
of 8 Dec.43.

With the growth of the Airborne forces the War Office became seriously concerned with the availability of parachutes, and in November 1943, the Q.M.G. had formed an inter-departmental Committee on Maintenance by Air upon which S.O.E. were represented, which was to plan, inter alia, production and requirements of parachutes. The question of priorities as between Airborne Forces and S.O.E. was agreed **not to be** the responsibility of the Air Ministry, but that of the Chiefs of Staff who delegated this to the Director



of Air, War Office, subject to the right of appeal by S.O.E. to the Chiefs of Staff.

At S.O.E.'s suggestion it was agreed that a reserve of five thousand parachutes should be prepared in the U.K. for use in operations either by Airborne forces or by S.O.E.

During November and December the Maintenance by Air Committee endeavoured to ascertain the total requirements and supply position of parachutes. With the greatly increased aircraft resources supply at S.O.E.'s disposal during the early months of 1944 the demand on parachutes and containers became correspondingly heavier. S.O.E.'s demands for these supplies were supported by S.H.A.E.F. who after March themselves made the allocation between the users in their Theatre. A reserve of some twenty thousand packed containers was built up in the U.K. In April A.F.H.Q. supported S.O.E. in the Mediterranean for further increased demands of parachutes. In May S.O.E. drew four thousand parachutes from the S.H.A.E.F. reserve in preparation for Overlord, and a further five thousand in mid-June. American G.I. type parachutes were converted for use with British containers, and the position for S.O.E. was thus eased.

At the beginning of November 1944, the greatly increased air lift in the Mediterranean caused a fresh crisis in parachute supply in that area. This was reviewed at a War Office Meeting on 1st December at which S.O.E.'s revised requirements were accepted. With the increased use of Dakotas and the rapid liberation of France and Belgium, demands for parachutes diminished considerably in January 1945.

Minutes of 4th  
Mtg. of Army  
Requirements  
Supply Committee,  
Maintenance by  
Air, of  
8 April 44.  
DM. 359/43 O  
(Ops D & T).

Air 3/00/476,

61. Post-D-Day Resistance in Western Europe.

After the invasion of France S.D. Squadrons based in the U.K. continued to supply Resistance in the areas behind the enemy lines. A number of mass daylight deliveries were made by American Fortresses of the 8th U.S.A.A.F. to Maquis Groups in Southern and Central France, and open warfare was carried out in these areas on a scale more nearly approximating to the Balkan guerilla activities than anything else in Western Europe. On the invasion of Southern France from North Africa the Allied Armies found that large areas had already been taken over by the Resistance Forces and their advance was very materially assisted by the Forces Francaises del'Interieur. Meanwhile, deliveries to the Low Countries and to Scandinavia continued. As the Allied Armies advanced and larger areas were freed from German domination the demand for supplies to Resistance contracted. In August the two American Squadrons were withdrawn from S.D. work and returned to a normal bombing role, and S.D. operations were flown by the two Tempsford Squadrons and aircraft of 38 Group.

62. S.O.E.'s 4th Directive - November 1944.

COS(44)957(0)  
9 Nov.44.

In November 1944, the Chiefs of Staff issued to S.O.E. their fourth Directive. (It is worth noting that no Directive was given to S.O.E. between March 1943 and November 1944). S.O.E. were once more instructed to ensure that subversive activity was planned in close coordination with strategical policy and operational plans. Where S.O.E. activities came within the operational theatres of S.C.A.E.F.,

S.A.C.M.E.D., or S.A.C.S.E.A., operations would be directed by the responsible Supreme Commander within the general provisions of the Directive. The general object of sabotage was to promote economic, industrial and military disorganisation and the dislocation of communications in German-occupied Europe. Sabotage should be pursued with the utmost vigour; attacks on communications and other targets must be carefully regulated and integrated with our operational plans. Sabotage against oil targets, enemy U-boats, air operations and shipping was of special importance. In organising guerilla activities S.O.E. was reminded that they should be aimed at hindering as far as possible the concentration and consolidation of German forces on the respective fronts. They should also aim at intensifying Germany's already severe shortage of man-power by increasing her internal security commitments in occupied territories. Resistance Groups should be prepared to act in support of any United Nations Forces which may operate in their countries but any premature uprising is to be discouraged.

In Western Europe all S.O.E. military operations were to be carried out in accordance with directives from S.C.A.E.F.; in Southern and Central Europe in accordance with directives from S.A.C.M.E.D. In Poland and Czechoslovakia, the two countries in which S.O.E. were under the operational direction of the Chiefs of Staff, every possible support should be given to the Resistance Movements. However, S.O.E. must not encourage either the Polish or Czech authorities to believe that sufficient arms and supplies would be forthcoming from the Western Allies for a general rising.

63. Poland: Russian attitude.

P.3279/125.

After the fall of Warsaw the Polish Secret Army continued to attack the Germans in the areas still under German domination, but the difficulties of distance and weather and the shortage of heavy aircraft on S.D. operations from the Mediterranean limited the quantity of supplies which it was found possible to deliver to Poland. On 30th October 1944, the Minister of Economic Warfare wrote to the Secretary of State for Air to ask for an increased allocation of S.D. aircraft for Poland. General Tabor of the Polish General Staff had been to see him to ask if it was possible to reopen S.D. flights to Poland from the U.K. in order to supplement the effort from Italy, a suggestion which the Minister strongly supported. It was clear that the Poles felt that the Prime Minister's ruling, given at the Defence Committee held on 3rd February 1944, for an increase in the airlift to Poland from Italy had never been fully implemented in practice. Since his return from Moscow the Prime Minister had urged Lord Selborne to put as many people into Western Poland as possible and to do everything possible to support the Polish Home Army there. This could not be done without some augmentation of the effort which the available Italian-based aircraft were likely to be able to achieve.

The Secretary of State for Air replied on 14th November to say that authority had just been given for the issue of an extra twelve new Liberators to the Polish Squadron in M.A.A.P. This should go a long way towards giving the Polish Army the extra support which General Tabor desired. He reported that the Air Ministry

felt unable to adopt the suggestion of renewing operations to Poland from the U.K.: the difficulties of routeing aircraft on this trip were, if anything, even greater than they had been, and if Bomber Command were to attempt deep penetration as far as Poland they would have to expect prohibitive casualties. He concluded by quoting figures to show that the Air Ministry had done all within its power to implement the Defence Committee's ruling, concerning the trebling of deliveries to Poland.

F.3355/125. On 22nd November the Minister again wrote to Sir Archibald Sinclair thanking him for the reinforcements of Liberators, but reiterating his request that operations should be undertaken to Poland from U.K. He pointed out that the figures quoted by the Secretary of State for Air were not exactly the same as those compiled by S.O.E. and by the Poles. He concluded by urging very strongly that, on the few nights when Polish operations from U.K. were possible, these should be undertaken within the limits of existing resources,

Meanwhile operations continued from the Mediterranean; but the weather was bad and the refusal of the Soviet authorities to allow S.D. aircraft to fly over their lines, thereby forcing them to make the more dangerous trip over the enemy lines, did not help matters.

On 24th November the Minister of Economic Warfare wrote to the Prime Minister, sending a copy of his minute to the Secretary of State for Air. He reported that the number of Polish operations successfully completed in the last eight weeks had been extremely disappointing. He recommended that most vigorous representations should be

made to Moscow over the Russian refusal to allow flights from Italy across Hungary, that the importance of flights to Poland at that moment should be confirmed to Air Marshal Slessor, and that S.O.E. should be permitted to use S.D. aircraft based on the U.K. for flights to Poland whenever weather conditions permitted.

The Secretary of State for Air replied on 28th November that the A.O.C.-in-C. Bomber Command was emphatically of the opinion that the northern route to Poland was one which would undoubtedly involve heavy casualties without helping the Poles to the extent which they expected. He did not consider it a reasonable operation of war. The Air Ministry remained convinced that the casualty rate over the northern route would be so great as to make the operation impracticable. The position regarding the Minister's other two recommendations in his Minute to the Prime Minister was that the C.A.S. had given the Prime Minister a draft telegram to Marshal Stalin urging that flights to Italy across Hungary should be allowed, and that Air Marshal Slessor certainly appreciated the importance of the flights to Poland.

Changes in the Polish Government and political friction between Poland and Russia aggravated an already difficult situation. The problem was considered by the Chiefs of Staff on November 28th when the C.A.S. reported that the Foreign Office had asked the Air Ministry to suspend, for the time being, the delivery of supplies to Poland. The necessary instructions were therefore being issued by the Air Ministry to the Mediterranean Air Force.

Six days later, however, the Foreign Secretary suggested

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Meeting (O).  
Item 6.  
28 Nov.44.

PM/44/742.  
4 Dec.44.

to the Prime Minister that, irrespective of any approach to the Russians, the Polish crews should be allowed to continue their flight to Poland. The Minister of Economic Warfare also wrote on 8th December to the Prime Minister to support the Foreign Secretary's suggestion and pointed out that whatever Polish Government was in office, it was the people inside Poland who had proved themselves so loyal to the Allies, and who still turned to us for assistance in their need.

PM/44/763.  
12 Dec.44.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs again wrote to the Prime Minister on 12th December. Recent developments had shown clearly that the Russians desired to prevent us from sending further assistance to the Polish Underground Movement. The only way to ensure the maintenance of reasonably effective support to the Poles was for the Prime Minister to approach Marshal Stalin and try to persuade him to change his attitude, but Mr. Eden was not hopeful of such an approach proving successful. It might even prove prejudicial to our hopes of Soviet cooperation and it was doubtful whether we should run this risk, when the military advantages of sending supplies into Poland were so small. On the other hand, Mr. Eden was reluctant to abandon the Polish Underground Army, and he suggested that a possible compromise might be to authorise the resumption of flights to Poland by the longer route over German-held territory, or even to resume direct flights to Poland from the U.K.

F.3533/125.  
9 Jan.45.

On 9th January, the Minister of Economic Warfare wrote to the Foreign Secretary to say that he personally felt most strongly that both our honour and our interest demanded a continuance of the supply flights. Political and military considerations alike demanded that we should continue to make deliveries to Poland even although they could only be in

insignificant quantity.

By this time however, the largest part of Poland had been freed by the Russian Armies from German domination and the Chief of the Polish General Staff informed the Combined Chiefs of Staff of the disbandment of all units of the Polish Secret Army within the Soviet occupied part of Poland. A few air operations were flown to Poland during the months of January and February, but by 15th February, the Polish President felt compelled to order the dissolution of the Polish Secret Army.

CCS. 645/3.

#### 64. The Last Winter of Occupation.

During the winter S.D. operations to Yugoslavia and Northern Italy continued. The Partisans in Italy were warned by General Alexander that it would prove impossible during the winter to give them the supplies they desired; they should therefore conserve their energies and lie low until deliveries could be made to them. In the early spring large scale dropping operations were carried out by day and by night chiefly into the Apennine regions, and thus armed the Partisans were able to take the offensive, engaging the enemy in pitched battles and gaining control over large areas including a number of important towns in Northern Italy. When the Germans began seriously to withdraw their forces from the Balkans action by Yugoslav guerilla bands was directed towards harassing them. The advance of the Russian Armies removed Bulgaria, Rumania, and later Austria and Hungary from the sphere of Special Operations.



In Western Europe S.D. operations were flown throughout the winter of 1944/45 to the Low Countries and to Scandinavia. One of the Squadrons that had been engaged for so long on S.D. work returned to normal bombing duties on the understanding that a corresponding effort should be made available to S.O.E.

SHDCS/TS.1122/  
AIR. of

when necessary from 38 Group. In March 1945, Tempsford Station passed under the control of 38 Group and it was agreed that on the termination of hostilities it should become a Transport Command Station. Its period of service under 38 Group lasted therefore only two months.

CMcVG/6093.  
15 June 45.

On 15th June 1945, the Head of S.O.E. wrote to Air Vice Marshal Williams to record the end of S.D. operations in Europe.

"I confirm that S.O.E. no longer requires S.D. facilities either in the U.K. or in the Mediterranean and I note that Transport Command could probably undertake any further work which we might have .....

"I should like to take this opportunity of expressing the most sincere thanks, not only of myself, but also of the whole of S.O.E. for the magnificent work which the S.D. Squadrons in Europe have accomplished; these have contributed in no small degree to the discomfiture of the enemy."

## PART II.

### ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY THE R.A.F. TO S.O.E. PROBLEMS AND PROCEDURE OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS.

#### 1. The Scope of the Problem.

Exact figure  
not known.  
Feb. 45.

From 1942 to 1945 the total of all operations in Europe by British Airborne Forces involved the parachuting or landing of thousands of troops and thousands of tons of stores. These operations were regular military operations carried out in force at considerable intervals of time. During the same period the organisation and supply of resistance movements in enemy-occupied Europe, carried out continuously under exacting conditions of secrecy and security, involved the parachuting or landing of 6,700 personnel of 18 different nationalities and 42,800 tons of stores.

The continuous clandestine air transport of this tonnage and the large number of highly trained organisers and specialists required no fewer than 33,000 sorties by aircraft of the R.A.F. and ultimately the U.S.A.A.F. These 33,000 sorties (except for a small percentage of formation flights under specially favourable conditions and a number of sorties in which two or more operations were combined in the same aircraft) represented an equivalent number of separate individual operations, each one separately planned, involving navigation by night to an exact pinpoint in enemy-occupied territory and (with an almost negligible number of exceptions, namely "blind" drops) requiring the presence of a Reception Committee at that same pinpoint at the right hour to receive, hide and distribute the stores and personnel to be dropped.

Of these 33,000 sorties over 22,000 were successful and nearly 11,000 were failures. With the exception of the few "mass" drops and "blind" drops every single sortie, whether a success or failure, involved an average of 3 or 4 signals between base and the men in the field, the special briefing of the aircrew and the packing and loading of the particular supplies required. In the early days of 1941 and 1942 sorties were few and far between; the supply requirements were small and the base organisation was in the workshop stage of development; the mounting of every individual operation and the packing of its supplies could be and normally was supervised by an officer personally familiar with every detail of the requirements of the man in the field. But from 1943 to 1945 the underground movements in Europe had been built up to operate on an increasing scale; the base organisations (both in the U.K. and the Mediterranean) passed into the factory or mass production stage, each one being eventually capable of handling up to 100 or more sorties a day, which according to the type of aircraft employed might involve anything from 1,000 to 2,000 containers or packages a day, and corresponding amounts of parachutes and supply dropping equipment. During the climax of the summer of 1944, operations, both in the U.K. and the Mediterranean were being mounted from 6 or 7 different airfields to scores of different pinpoints in several different countries.

The total figures, details of which are given in the Appendices, were as follows:

<u>Bases</u>	<u>Total Sorties</u>	<u>Succ. Sorties</u>	<u>Gross Tonnage</u>	<u>Personnel delivered</u>	<u>Personnel evac.</u>	<u>A/C lost.</u>
U.K.	11,894	7,602	11,141	2,028	559	154
M.T.O.	21,501	15,304	31,685	4,683	20,173	115
<hr/>						
Total:	33,395	22,906	42,826	6,711	20,732	269

S.D. operations were undertaken at different times by different types of aircraft: the Wellington, Whitley, Wellesley, Halifax, Hudson, Dakota, Lancaster, Liberator, Stirling, Albemarle, Mosquito and Fortress all played their parts. Each of these carried a different quantity of stores and most had to be specially modified in order to take containers and packages. To the Bomber pilot dropping supplies was perhaps less exciting than dropping bombs, but to the people in the occupied countries the supply bomber represented their hope, not only of deliverance, but of participation in victory.

Not only were supplies delivered by parachute to occupied Europe, but in many countries landing operations also were carried out. This was perhaps the most spectacular activity of the R.A.F. in helping Resistance Movements. In some countries it was never possible throughout the whole war to arrange for such an operation, owing to the difficult nature of the terrain or the particularly vigilant control of the enemy. Norway, Denmark, Holland, and Austria never received any landing operations; but conditions in other countries were less difficult, and in Yugoslavia, Greece and France these operations, carried out by Lysander, Dakota and Hudson, became an important source of supply, and an invaluable method of transporting reports and personnel back to S.O.E. Headquarters. The evacuation of personnel by 'pick-up' operations was an important and remarkable feature. It made possible the quick return to base of officers and agents, whose missions had been accomplished, to report and give the first-hand and up-to-date intelligence which was vital for the clear appreciation of the progress and

problems of the resistance movement. It enabled leading personalities to be brought out for consultation or rescued from immediate danger: a few prominent examples being General de Lattre de Tassigny (France), M. Arciszewski and General Tabor (Poland), Marshal Tito and his G.H.Q. Staff (Yugoslavia), General Zervas and General Sarafis (Greece): (see Appendix L). Finally under favourable conditions it enabled wounded officers or Partisans to be rescued; from Yugoslavia nearly 18,000 wounded or sick Partisans were evacuated to Italy.

The organisation of air supply to resistance movements in Europe was thus a major task; it had to combine flexibility, speed and accuracy and to deliver big loads of stores covering a wide range of items without neglecting the individual needs of every customer. When the first tests and experiments were carried out in England in 1941, it appeared doubtful in the extreme whether it would ever be possible to overcome the many obstacles; the air problems of navigation by night to a pinpoint in enemy-occupied territory, locating the feeble torches of friends on the ground, and distinguishing them from casual lights or from deliberate enemy deception; the ground problems of patriots assembling secretly, waiting perhaps night after night for their aircraft to appear, retrieving and hiding in the dusk twelve or twenty heavy containers or packages dropped at night; and the communications problem of maintaining speed and cypher security. It can at least be said with certainty that none of those who took part in the pioneer work in 1941 could have anticipated or even hoped for results on the scale achieved in 1944.

2. Squadrons engaged on S.D. Work-U.K. & Mediterranean Bases.  
(See Appendix K for aircraft available U.K. and Mediterranean.)

3039/PDDO  
20 Aug.40.

The setting up of 419 Flight at North Weald in August 1940 was the first contribution made by the R.A.F. to S.O.E.'s work. This Flight was to consist of 2 plus 2 Lysanders of which two were to be fitted with long range tanks. It was to be shared between S.O.E. and S.I.S. By October 1940 the establishment of the S.D. Flight was increased by 2 plus 1 Whitley V modified for dropping and fitted with long range tanks.

S.5998/01  
2 Oct.40.

BC/S.24455/  
ORG.  
6 Oct.40.

In October the Air Ministry suggested to Bomber Command that since the Special Duty operations of 419 Flight were more closely akin to the operations of Bomber Command, than those of Fighter Command, and since the Flight used Bomber Command lanes 419 Flight should move to one of their Stations. Bomber Command suggested that the most suitable aerodrome would be Stradishall of 3 Group and in October 419 Flight was transferred from Stapleford Abbots of Fighter Command where it had latterly been stationed. At Stradishall better maintenance and other facilities were available for the Whitleys, but the station was not very convenient for the Lysanders. Facilities were therefore arranged at Tangmere which was used as an advanced base for pick-up operations.

The first S.D. operations were carried out by 419 Flight to Western Europe during the winter of 1940/41. In these early days many of the difficulties were still unsolved: shortage of staff, lack of accommodation and a general uncertainty as to the exact position of S.D.

operations in the R.A.F.'s scheme of things increased the difficulties that had to be faced by 419 Flight. In addition, the weather during the first winter was consistently bad and very few sorties could be attempted. During 1941, however, a number of successful dropping operations were carried out, including the first S.D. operation to Poland (Adolphus, February 1941), and the first Lysander pick-up operation carried out for S.O.E. (Lovee/Facade, September 1941). Events had already shown that S.D. operations in Western Europe would mainly take the form of supply dropping: there would be comparatively few landing operations since only small quantities of stores could be infiltrated by this means into countries where German control was comprehensive and always alert.

In February 1941, the S.D. Flight was moved from Stradishall to Newmarket still in No.3. Group, and was renumbered 1419 (S.D.) Flight. The aircraft establishment had now become:

3 + 1 Witleys.  
1 + 1 Lysander.  
1 Glen Martin 167 for possible pick-up  
development.

During the summer action was taken to raise the aircraft establishment to 6 plus 1 Witleys and a Polish and a Czechoslovak crew were added to the air crew strength.

In August 1941, 1419 Flight was raised to Squadron status as No.138 (S.D.) Squadron, and steps were taken to raise the aircraft establishment to 8 plus 2 Witley V and 2 plus 1 Halifax I, the Halifax being intended for the Polish sorties which were beyond Witley range. At the same time it was recommended that the Squadron be moved to a station nearer London, to render the despatch of agents

easier. In October a Wellington was added to the establishment for experimental purposes, and the Glen Martin, which was never used, was removed.

A second squadron was made available in February 1942, when No.161 (S.D.) Squadron was formed at Newmarket, the basis of the Squadron being the aircraft and personnel of the King's Flight, under the command of its Captain. The consent of His Majesty was obtained for this action. The aircraft establishment of this Squadron was 4 plus 1 Whitley V, 6 plus 1 Lysanders (transferred from 138 Squadron), 2 Wellingtons (for experimental purposes, and 1 Hudson I (ex-King's Flight). At the same time the establishment of 138 Squadron was altered to 8 plus 2 Whitley V and 5 Halifax I or II. All pick-up operations were henceforward undertaken by 161 Squadron whose establishment included the Lysanders and Hudsons, while 138 Squadron was concerned only with dropping operations.

On 11th March 1942 both Squadrons were moved to R.A.F. Station Tempsford still in No.3 Group, Bomber Command, from which Station they operated until the end of the War in Europe. In the early stages Graveley was used as a satellite airfield.

In June 1942, the aircraft establishment of 138 Squadron was changed to 10 plus 2 Halifax II and 5 Whitley V, to allow for a continued increase in the demands for long range sorties. By November, however, it had been decided that the continued employment of Whitley aircraft was no longer sound or economical, and they were replaced in both Squadrons, the respective establishments then becoming: -



138 Squadron: 13 plus 2 Halifax II.

161 Squadron: 5 Halifax II, 6 plus 1 Lysanders, 1 Hudson I and  
2 Wellingtons (for development).

In the early days these Squadrons were not engaged full time on Special Duty work, since time was needed after the dropping of the original organisers for their circuits to grow and for their demands for air supply to increase. In June, July and September 1942, 161 Squadron was mainly used for bombing work and only a certain number of "Nickel" raids were carried out on behalf of S.O.E. The pioneer stages of the work largely took the form of transporting to enemy-occupied countries, notably France, those agents whose mission was to organise resistance groups in selected areas. Meanwhile the pick-up Flight was engaged on extremely valuable work in withdrawing from enemy-occupied France S.O.E. officers and senior French military and political resistance leaders.

In 1942 a second base for Special Duty operations was established in the Mediterranean when 'X' Flight of 148 Squadron (Liberators) began operations into the Balkans from the Delta. In March 1943 the Flight was reconstituted as 148 Squadron with the reinforcement of fourteen Halifaxes. From the Delta the supply dropping aircraft had already moved their base westwards more than once, to Gambut and then to Shandur. During the first part of 1943 they again moved behind the advancing Desert Armies first to Derna and in August to Tocra. In the summer of 1943 the dropping of supplies to Marshal Tito's forces required the use of an advanced base at Protville but even then the fitting of three overload tanks to Halifaxes was necessary to give

them sufficient range. If the Special Duty aircraft were unable to meet their operational commitments the A.O.C.-in-C. M.E. sometimes permitted the occasional use of a Wellington for a Special Duty operation.

During the summer of 1943 a second Mediterranean base was established for S.D. operations when 624 Squadron, based on Blida, was made available for supply dropping work in Southern France, Corsica and Italy.

During 1943 the work of supplying resistance from England was continued by 138 and 161 Squadrons. 161 Squadron's first responsibility was to S.I.S. and only in default of S.I.S. operations could these aircraft be used by S.O.E. The S.O.E. operations were therefore flown mainly by 138 Squadron, although S.I.S., by the very nature of their work, needed far less supply dropping to do and 161 was thus able to aid S.O.E. to a considerable extent. Until the autumn of 1943 all Special Duty operations flown to Europe were the work of these two Squadrons.

Towards the end of 1943, however, it became obvious that these two Squadrons alone could not hope to meet the growing demands from the field. All over Western Europe the number of resistance groups was increasing and their appetite for supplies becoming correspondingly larger. Squadrons of Stirling aircraft were therefore allocated by Bomber Command during the autumn of the year for Special Duty operations, normally remaining at Tempsford for a period of about a month. For a short time the cooperation of some Lancasters was also given. The two American Liberator Squadrons allocated for S.D. work in Western Europe arrived

at Tempsford towards the end of 1943 and it became the task of 138 and 161 Squadrons to train these enthusiastic helpers to that pitch of efficiency already attained by their tutors. In the early days of 1944 these Squadrons moved to Alconbury and were later transferred to Harrington where they continued Special Duty operations until the eve of D-Day. This cumulative and sustained effort on the part of Tempsford over a period of over three years (April 1942 until May 1945) resulted in the delivery to the field of a total of nearly 29,000 containers, over 1,000 personnel and nearly 10,000 packages.

The Prime Minister's decision at the beginning of 1944 that the volume of supply operations was to be increased resulted in the allotment of more aircraft, both in the Mediterranean and in England for S.D. work. In England 161 and 138 Squadrons continued to operate from Tempsford and the two American Liberator Squadrons became fully operational during the first months of the year. In February, only four days before the moon period began, a supplementary effort of thirty-two Stirlings from 3 Group and sixty aircraft sorties from 38 Group was added to the S.D. aircraft allocation in England. Two new aerodromes were involved in this increase, (Hurn and Lakenheath) and only standard load operations were attempted by them. An even greater variety of aircraft had now been reached: in addition to the Halifaxes and Liberators at Tempsford and Alconbury, Stirlings and Albemarle were also used. In spite of the fact that they had never before embarked on Special Duty operations both Hurn and Lakenheath achieved a considerable measure of success during their first moon period. In March the effort was further stepped up and seventy-two Stirlings from 3 Group together with ninety aircraft sorties from 38 Group were allocated for S.D. work. S.D. operations were now flown from Lakenheath, Tuddenham,

Mepal (3 Group), and at different times from Harwell, Keevil, Fairford, Brize Norton, Earls Colne, Tarrant Rushton, Wethersfield, Great Dunmow, Shepherds Grove, Riverhall (38 Group). This was the largest number of aircraft ever made available from England: by April the supplementary effort was reduced and during the succeeding months, as the occupied countries were liberated by the advancing Allied Armies, the demands for S.D. work and therefore the number of aircraft engaged on it were steadily diminished. During the summer of 1944, American Liberators of Air Transport Command, operating from Leuchars, carried out a number of S.D. operations to Scandinavia.

Meanwhile, in the Mediterranean 624 Squadron had received an increased number of aircraft, and some American fortresses were also based on Blida for S.D. work. The liberation of the heel of Italy opened up bases for S.D. aircraft much nearer to their targets; and in January 1944, 624 and 148 Squadrons were combined to form 334 Wing and transferred from North Africa to Brindisi. The Polish Flight 1586 was also assigned to Special operations in Italy. In February, however, 624 Squadron moved back to Blida in order to serve the duties of supplying organisations in Southern France, and in March three American heavy bombers were added to the aircraft available at this base.

In January 1944 a transport group of D.C.3s was moved to Brindisi to join 334 Wing and in the summer of 1944 the Polish Squadron 301 came into operation with Poland as its first priority target, Czechoslovakia as its second. For political reasons these aircraft were not used over Yugoslavia.

267 Squadron (D.C.3s) based on Bari also delivered supplies during the early part of 1944 to Yugoslavia and Italy, but as Italy became too dangerous for this type of aircraft in view of the concentration of flak, the Squadron was used mainly for Yugoslavia, and in the summer of 1944 did a number of landing operations in that country. 267 Squadron left for Burma in July 1944 and was replaced by 44 S.A.A.F. under 236 Wing. A Russian Squadron of Dakotas also based on Bari flew to targets given by the Russian Liaison Officers in Yugoslavia and worked in fairly close liaison with 267 Squadron. From Lecce the Italian Air Force carried supplies to Yugoslavia and at Foggia 205 Group consisting of normal bomber aircraft were used extensively on Italy and Yugoslavia for mass dropping operations. Their work to Yugoslavia often under fighter escort was especially successful.

In the Mediterranean, as in England, assistance in this work was also given by American Squadrons, 885 Squadron U.S.A.A.F., based at Blida operated to Southern France until October 1944 and then operated from Brindisi to Northern Italy and the Balkans. It was reinforced late in 1944 by 859 Squadron to form 2641 Special Group, (subsequently known as 15 Bomber Group Special). At the end of March 1945 this Group moved its base north to Rosignano and until VE-Day was solely responsible for all sorties to Italy, Austria and Czechoslovakia, while 334 Wing and 205 Group remained at Brindisi and Foggia and were exclusively responsible for S.D. sorties to Yugoslavia.

A further American S.D. contribution in Italy was made by 64 Troop Carrier Group U.S.A.A.F. operating first from Malignano in December 1944/January 1945 and subsequently Rosignano, into N.W. Italy. This contribution arose from the representations made in October/November 1944 regarding the

need for maintaining Italian Resistance through the winter, notwithstanding the higher priority accorded to Yugoslavia. To meet the North Italian requirements M.A.A.F. in November 1944 invited M.A.T.A.F. (operating in support of 15th Army Group) to provide a supplementary S.D. effort for Italian partisans. From December 1944 M.A.T.A.F. made available up to 20 C47 (Dakota) aircraft out of 64 Troop Carrier Group. The maintenance of Partisans in N.W. Italy during the winter was largely due to the effort of this U.S. Unit.

After the invasion of France the volume of supplies delivered to resistance groups was substantially increased by a number of mass daylight dropping operations carried out by 8th U.S.A.A.F. to various parts of France where the Maquis were in open conflict with the enemy. An operation of a similar type was later carried out in Belgium and also in Holland. As the Allied Armies advanced the delivery of supplies to the still unliberated areas of Western Europe continued, while in the Mediterranean, where the crisis was to reach its height several months later than in Western Europe, supplies continued to pour into the Balkans and North Italy.

In the Autumn of 1944 Bomber Command requested that 138 Squadron should be released for normal bombing duties and S.O.E. agreed to this, provided that a corresponding air effort was made available if necessary from 38 Group. At a meeting held at Air Ministry on Thursday, 4 January 1945 the S.O.E. representative declared that his organisation "wished to record how extremely sorry S.O.E. were to lose 138 Squadron with whom they had worked in the closest cooperation for so long. They had

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done a marvellous and efficient job." In February it was decided that 161 Squadron at Tempsford should be transferred to 38 Group at an early date and this was effected on 10th March 1945. It had already been agreed by S.O.E. that at the conclusion of hostilities in Europe R.A.F. Station Tempsford should be transferred to Bomber Command and since victory in Europe was declared on 8th May, Tempsford's sojourn under 38 Group lasted for only two months. Similarly, as the enemy's retreat in southern and south-eastern Europe culminated in surrender, the R.A.A.F. squadrons employed on S.D. work were transferred to other duties.

### 3. Types of Aircraft.

#### Dropping Operations.

The first aircraft to be used on S.D. dropping operations were Whitleys. In the spring of 1941 the first supply delivery to Poland was made by an aircraft of this type - a round distance of 1,700 miles. Targets at this range, however, were clearly beyond the normal capabilities of Whitley aircraft and the Poles very soon began to ask for the use of Halifaxes on their operations. Owing to the demands of Bomber Command these aircraft could not be spared for S.D. work until the autumn of 1942, when both 161 and 138 Squadrons began to change over from Whitleys to Halifaxes. By the spring of 1943 Whitleys were no longer used for S.D. operations flown from England and throughout that year the great bulk of deliveries was made by Halifaxes.

The increased allocation of aircraft for S.D. work by Bomber Command in the autumn of 1943 brought both Stirlings and Lancasters on to this type of operation, and with the allotment

of sorties from 38 Group during the spring of 1944. Albemarle were also included. Certain types of dropping operations, including only personnel and packages, were also conveyed by Hudson during 1944.

The American effort from the U.K. consisted of Liberators which came into operation in the spring of 1944.

When an S.D. base was set up at Blida in the summer of 1943 the first aircraft used were Halifaxes which operated into Southern France and Italy. At a later date the Americans contributed both Fortresses and Liberators to this force.

Each of these different types of aircraft carried a different quantity of containers and packages at various ranges. A table is attached at Appendix K showing the various aircraft used on S.D. work from England in the Mediterranean, and Appendix D shows the capacity of the aircraft from Albemarle to Stirlings. Aircraft which were allocated permanently for S.D. work were modified in order to facilitate the storage and release of containers and packages.

The first aircraft to operate from Egypt into the Balkans were Liberators: by the time it was possible to establish air bases in Italy the value of transport aircraft for delivering supplies to the Balkan areas had been recognised. Enemy opposition here was comparatively slight and it was therefore possible to use unarmed Dakotas and Italian aircraft which could not have faced the more formidable defences of Western or Central Europe. It was at first proposed that Stirlings should be sent out as the



supplementary effort with which to equip the increased forces : available for S.D. work in Italy, but after they had been actually ordered they were cancelled on Air Marshal Slessor's intervention and Dakotas were sent out instead. The Italian Air Force, flying S.M. 82's and Cant. 2.100's with no instruments, were also engaged on supply dropping in Yugoslavia. The normal bomber aircraft of 205 Group (Liberators and Wellingtons) were used extensively in both Italy and Yugoslavia.

#### Landing Operations.

In Western Europe the first aircraft to attempt to land in enemy-occupied territory were Lysanders. The first Hudson landing operation was carried out in February 1943. Lysanders were frequently used in pairs and even in threes: even Hudsons were occasionally used in this manner. American crews flying Dakotas carried out a number of landing operations in France in the months after D-Day.

In Western Europe, where small groups of resistants controlled only limited areas of country, it was essential that a small, light and easily manoeuvrable aircraft should be used for these operations. The length of runway for a Lysander was substantially shorter than that needed for either a Hudson or a Dakota, and it was therefore considerably easier to discover fields suitable for pick-up operations by Lysander. In the early days it had been suggested that a Glen Martin aircraft could be used for pick-up operations, but the high landing speed of this aircraft necessitated a long runway and made its use less practicable from the point of view of the men in the field.

Conditions in the Balkans were very different from those in Western Europe. In Yugoslavia and Greece powerful Partisan Forces were able to control large areas of country, and could even, if necessary, build their own landing strips. A small number of operations was carried out by Lysander to Northern Italy and Yugoslavia; but the most successful aircraft for work in the Balkans, on landing as on dropping operations, was the Dakota, since it is easily handled, has a comparatively low landing speed and a large capacity for passengers and stores.

#### Fast Dropping Operations.

In certain circumstances, when organisations were in urgent need of money or W/T equipment but unable to receive large quantities of stores, the most efficient way of delivering material was by fast aircraft. From North Africa this was successfully attempted once by Spitfire: on a daylight operation when the pilot threw a package to the waiting Reception Committee. In 1943 and 1944 operations of this type were occasionally flown from the U.K. by Mosquito aircraft.

#### 4. Foreign Air Crews.

It was natural that the Allied Governments co-operating closely with S.O.E. in the organisation of Resistance within their countries, should regard the employment of their own nationals on supply dropping operations as an ideal arrangement. There was in fact no other way in which an exiled Pole or Czech could give direct assistance to his oppressed countrymen; and many of the Allied Governments were anxious that their Air Forces should be used for S.D. work.

The problem was first raised during 1941, when the Polish, Czech and French Governments each separately requested that aircrews of their own nationalities should be used on S.D. operations. The practical disadvantages of this policy, however, were considerable. It was argued by the Air Ministry that the local knowledge a Pole or a Czech might have of his own country could not be at once sufficiently comprehensive and sufficiently detailed to help materially in carrying out S.D. operations. Moreover the standard of R.A.F. crews was on the whole higher than that of foreign crews, with the possible exception of the Polish Air Force, and the general standard of S.D. operations would undoubtedly decline if a large percentage of other nationals were employed on this work. In addition to this, the use of foreign crews only on operations to their own countries would inevitably involve a lack of economy; and if they were to be allowed to fly to countries other than their own, there would seem to be little point in the plan. The administration of a mixed squadron composed of nationals from various countries was bound to be difficult, and later experience showed that it did in fact involve a degree of disunity under the Squadron Commander, and sometimes even of disloyalty towards him.

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The D.C.A.S., however, agreed in August 1941, that one Czech and one Polish crew should be posted to 1419 Flight in order "to make use of their special knowledge and experience." In September 1943 the Polish crews in 138 Squadron were formed into a Polish Flight and the Squadron establishment was increased by 3 plus 0 Liberator III. During most of the period a Czech crew was attached to the S.D. Squadrons. Apart from this, however, S.D. operations were undertaken from the U.K. entirely by the R.A.F., later assisted by the U.S.A.A.F. and the R.C.A.F.

(Mosquito operations.)

In October 1943, when the base for S.D. operations to Poland was transferred to the Mediterranean, the Polish Flight were moved to this theatre as 1586 (S.D.) Flight, and by the summer of 1944 the Polish Squadron 301 was carrying out S.D. work from Italy. A Czech S.D. crew was also transferred to the Mediterranean and for a short time Italian crews belonging to the Italian Air Force were also employed on supply dropping in Yugoslavia. In this theatre, also, however, the great bulk of the work was undertaken by British, Dominions and American crews.

5. Containers and Packages.

Stores were dropped from aircraft both by container and package, the containers fitting into the bomb-bays and the packages being stowed in the fuselage of the aircraft and then either dropped out of a hole or pushed out of the door. The limiting factor to the amount of stores that could be carried by an aircraft generally proved to be volume rather than weight. The containers took up about the same space as bombs but were considerably less heavy. Packages were used in order to increase the pay load on each sortie: here again the limit to the number of packages that could be carried was fixed by the storage capacity of the fuselage of the aircraft rather than by their individual weights. It should be remembered also that for security reasons the aircraft could not remain for too long a time over its dropping point. The Reception Committees themselves sometimes specified that only one or two runs over the target were to be made; even if this was not definitely laid down by the field, pilots were always instructed to make

as few runs as possible and thus draw as little attention to the area as they could. The number of containers and packages was therefore further limited by the speed of release: only a certain number of containers, and particularly of packages which were rather slower in release, could be despatched over the target area on any one run.

#### Containers.

Different types of containers were used by S.O.E. at different times. The first to be used was the "C" type container, consisting of an outer shell or casing with three inner cells, the outer shell hinged to allow the cells to be lifted out with ease. The containers were cylindrical, of 5ft. 8ins overall length and 15ins. diameter; their gross weight was 330 lbs. and the load (i.e. the weight of the stores that could be carried exclusive of the container) 220 lbs.

The "H" type container was invented in 1943 by Polish officers in conjunction with the Polish Country Section of S.O.E. The hard nature of the Polish soil did not lend itself to the disposal of the "C" type outer shell and the Poles required a container that after dismantling would leave very little extra material for disposal. The "H" type container was produced with the assistance of the staff of the South Metropolitan Gas Company and the prototype came off the assembly line within three weeks. After much trial and error and many drop tests, which were carried out by 138 Squadron, a satisfactory container was evolved. It consisted of five cells interlocked together and joined into one unit by metal rods. No outer casing was employed and five webbing carrying straps were sent with each container to enable the cells to be transported separately on the backs of the members of the Reception Committee. Its

overall length was 5ft. 6ins. and its diameter 15ins; its gross weight was 330 lbs. and the pay load 235 lbs. The "H" type container had two main advantages over the "C" type: it could deliver a higher pay load to the field, and the absence of an outer casing meant that stores could be carried more quickly and easily from the reception ground, while there was no extra covering to be buried or otherwise hidden.

The "H" type came into general use during 1943, but the "C" type container was still used for certain stores such as the larger types of Small Arms. Rifles, Brens, Bazookas and Piats were packed in the "C" type container with its inner cells removed; petrol and oil was also delivered by the cell-less "C" type container with Jerrycans, divided by plywood and hairlok as a shock absorbant, packed inside its outer shell.

During 1944 the rate of delivery to the field exceeded the supply of containers delivered from the manufacturers, and the C.L.E. container normally used by the Airborne Division was therefore employed by S.O.E. It was similar to the S.O.E. "C" type container but had an additional bracket for attachment to the aircraft. As soon as delivery of the "H" and "C" type containers was stepped up the use of the C.L.E. was discontinued.

The rate of descent of a container was 28 ft. per second and its striking force was therefore roughly equivalent to a drop from a twelve foot wall. Each container was fitted with a buffer head which absorbed ten percent of the shock of impact. Containers were identified by stencilled numbers on the container head and also on the parachute bucket.

Until 1944 packing material such as fibre, corrugated cardboard and paper waste was used to fill spaces within

containers, but in the delivery of bulk stores to the Maquis of France, clothing was used as packing material so that no inch of space should be wasted. In the Mediterranean, where food and clothing had for long been essential stores for the partisans, blankets, battle-dress, shirts, pants and vests, socks and scarves were despatched in this way.

Containers were packed at Special Packing stations both in England and the Mediterranean which were situated as close as possible to the airfields used by S.D. aircraft. In the early years each container was individually ordered by the Country Sections concerned, but as the volume of deliveries increased it became necessary to institute a system of standard packing.

The separate cells were standardised first, but in a short time the complete container had become the standard unit. There still continued to be a large proportion of "Special containers, but the standardisation of the bulk of the container deliveries considerably reduced the amount of work and time involved in packing.

#### Packages.

Packages, designed primarily for the packing of stores too delicate or too bulky for packing in containers, were used more and more in order to employ aircraft capacity to the full, were packed in England at R.A.F. Station Henlow and in the Mediterranean at the S.O.E. packing stations.

The resilient material used in the making of the first packages, in 1941, was sorbo rubber sheeting. This material was cut according to the size of the stores to be parachuted and the whole was enclosed in a tailor-made canvas outer-cover. In 1942, hairlok - 2ins. thick sheeting of horse-

hair impregnated with latex - superseded the sorbo rubber which was in short supply. Moulded boxes of hairlok were also available in different sizes, but for the most part packages of hairlok were made up from hairlok sheets. Until December 1943 all packages were packed in hairlok, and as the vast majority were tailor-made this was a long process, especially as each harness also had to be made individually as it depended upon the size of the package.

Mainly because of a hairlok shortage, but also because a speedier method of packing was necessary in order to keep pace with increasing package commitments, a pannier was introduced. The package pannier resembled a laundry basket in design in that it was in two parts which fitted one part into the other. It comprised a springy wire frame with a canvas cover: it was hinged with fittings at each corner to allow of its being opened out flat - an advantage to concealment in the field. These panniers were available in three sizes and were used, as far as size permitted for the packing of all items of a robust nature. Thus agents' suitcases of effects, food, clothing, and medical stores were packed in panniers, whilst W/T equipment and other fragile stores were still packed in hairlok.

Early in 1944 the 15in. "C" type container cell was put into use for package dropping. Ammunition and small arms were packed in this way. These cells required only a resilient base and top, for which hairlok discs were normally used. As the size of the cell was constant the web harness could be made up in advance in quantity.

In 1944 curled koran fibre was introduced as a supplementary



packing material. Koran was a fibrous material of little resilience, but as it was available either loose or needled on canvas it could be used either for wrapping or for internal packing. Special packages of unusual size, such as skis, rifles, Bren guns, etc. were wrapped in needled koran with hairlok sheeting as a base.

The size of packages was limited by two factors, the size of the aircraft's despatching hole; and the ability of the despatcher to handle the packages. In the Halifax, the despatch hole was 40 ins. in diameter. Packages were therefore restricted in size to a base of approximately 20ins. square with a height of say 30 ins. The taller the package the narrower it had to be. Thus, skis, rifles, Brens, etc., being long but narrow, could comfortably be tipped out through the hole. Although Stirlings Mk V had large rectangular holes for despatching, package sizes were not increased because of the despatchers' difficulty in handling them.

The internal dimensions of the wire panniers were:-

Type 'A'	22" x 16" x 16"
Type 'B'	24" x 18" x 20"
Type 'C'	29" x 18" x 13"

The "C" type container cell had a height of 19ins and a 15in. diameter.

The weight of packages was limited by the despatcher's ability to handle them, as each package had to be stowed forward for take-off and brought to the rear for despatching. A limit of 120 lbs. was therefore imposed for all packages. In exceptional circumstances - e.g. packages for special parties, when it was essential to keep the number to a minimum - weights up to 140 lbs. were allowed, but the

airfield had to be warned in advance so that arrangements could be made to provide an additional despatcher if need be.

Except for a few parachutes which had a single point, all parachutes had a two point suspension. The snaphooks on the parachute engaged the triangular rings sewn into the web harness of the package. The diameter of the canopy employed varied with the packed weight of the package thus:-

Weight up to 40 lbs.	12'	
" " " 41 - 80 lbs.	16'	
" " " 81 - 120 lbs.	20'	
" " " 121 - 160 lbs.	24'	
" " " 161 - 200 lbs.	28'	used only for "double" packages hooked together in the aircraft.

Bulk delivery of clothing was carried out by dropping the bales as received from Ordnance on a 62in. parachute which acted as a drogue.

Packages, like containers, were identified by a stencilled number and were also in the later stages standardised. The number of packages carried in an aircraft was determined by the stowage space in the fuselage, Halifaxes could carry only six packages normally, although on some occasions the Halifaxes operating from Blida took as many as fifteen. A Stirling Mk V carried up to ten and a Liberator twelve packages.

#### Free Drops.

Tests were carried out for the free dropping of packages (i.e. without parachutes) but the danger to the Reception Committees and the difficulty of dropping both parachuted and non-parachuted material at the same time were objections to this method. It was hardly ever used from England, but in emergencies when parachutes were in short supply it was a necessary expedient, and in operations to the Balkans was employed more extensively.

It was possible to overcome the objections mentioned above in areas where large scale guerilla activities prevailed. Where large areas were held by guerillas large bonfires could be lit at the dropping grounds and the Reception Committee could take post (if necessary) well back from the dropping ground. The suggestion was received from an Italian Partisan area in 1945 that in order to give warning of a free drop the aircraft should switch on its landing lights for some seconds on its run in. This suggestion was, after some discussion on security grounds, tried out and proved satisfactory, but it was only possible under two conditions: a strongly held Partisan area and the absence of any reasonable risk from enemy night fighters.

#### Types of Stores:

The variety of stores delivered to the field both by container and package was tremendous. Every type of small arms from pistols to bazookas, together with the necessary ammunition; quantities of high explosive and made up charges; food, clothing and W/T equipment were the most important of the stores delivered. In the later stages when groups of resistants had become more organised and more powerful, large quantities of petrol and oil were despatched in order to enable them to run their own transport. Instructions and explanations in various languages were sent with the arms and devices to enable resistance organisations to recognise and use them even if they had no trained operator in their midst. On one occasion, when dried egg powder had been sent to the Balkans for the first time, a message was received at Headquarters "Thanks for new explosive. Please send instructions for use". Officers in the field frequently asked for the delivery of special stores and these were often of a peculiar nature. As far as possible their requests

were met. One woman officer in France who had a wooden leg was supplied with special socks over a period of several months. Special demands for sleeping pills or, more melodramatically, for poison pills were also received. On one occasion a layette for twins was delivered to the field in response to an urgent demand, and articles of minor sabotage value such as itching powder were often included. Perhaps one of the greatest packing achievements was the delivery to France of two hundred glass bottles of Printers' Ink - not one bottle was cracked.

#### 6. Technical Problems confronting the R.A.F. on S.D. Work.

The nature of the work undertaken by the S.D. Squadrons produced problems which often differed from those faced by aircraft engaged on normal bombing operations.

##### Navigation

In particular, the difficulties of navigation were especially acute for the S.D. crew, the success, of whose work necessitated pin-point accuracy on a small, often ill-defined target after hours of flying across enemy country. The navigation, both on the journey and on the approach to the target, must obviously be of a very high order. Reception Committees were instructed to choose sites for their dropping grounds which could easily be seen from the air: but for many reasons this was often not possible for them, and the aircraft, after having found its target area, might have to search for some time before discovering lights half hidden by a wood, or obscured in a valley. As far as possible the ordinary navigational aids such as Gee were used: but to Mediterranean based aircraft these advantages were denied, and in any case Gee assistance could not be accurately obtained at

low altitudes. Ultimately the navigator nearly always had to rely on map-reading and D.R. and in order to enable him to do this, the pilot would take his aircraft across enemy-occupied Europe at a low altitude. Lysander pilots, with no wireless operator to help them, were especially dependent on accurate map-reading.

#### Terrain and Enemy opposition

The necessity for low-level flying in turn raised its own problems. In some countries the absence of distinguishing land-marks made navigation difficult even from this height. The Belgian Ardennes, and the forested hills of Czechoslovakia were always particularly difficult areas for the S.D. crew to tackle. On the other hand, the presence of mountains made low-level flying particularly dangerous. In Yugoslavia, Austria and S.E. France, Reception Committees were often found in the steep valleys between the mountains. If the release of supplies was made from a considerable height containers and parachutes might drift for miles and their discovery by the Germans would alert the whole district. Experiments were made from time to time with a device for delaying the opening of the parachute, but on the whole these did not meet with much success. If the load was not to be scattered over a wide area the pilot would have to take his aircraft down to a height of less than a thousand feet above the floor of the valley: a height which was often very much below the surrounding mountain tops. Handling a heavy bomber at this height in enclosed country, and at night, was a task requiring steady nerves and the highest possible degree of skill. A British Liaison Officer with a party on the Austrian border commented particularly in his report on the bravery of the R.A.F. crews in flying below the

level of the mountain tops in order to make accurate drops in the valleys.

Whereas the high flying Main Force bombers were more susceptible to heavy flak and fighters, the low flying S.D. aircraft were extremely vulnerable to light flak of all types but to a lesser degree to fighters. Should, however, a fighter attack develop when S.D. aircraft was flying at 600-700 feet above ground level, with flaps down and at a reduced speed preparatory to dropping supplies, it would fall a certain victim owing to its complete inability to manoeuvre under such conditions.

#### Weather

One of the chief considerations for any aircraft flying by day or by night must be weather conditions. In the execution of a job in which accurate navigation was essential weather was even more important, and could spell the whole difference between success and failure. Bad visibility on the journey would mean that map-reading was impossible, and would to low flying aircraft inevitably increase the dangers of crashing into hills. If, when the target area had been successfully located, it was found to be covered in cloud, the pilot would be prevented from seeing the Reception Committee lights and unable to make his drop. Moreover, when the lights were only ordinarily hand torches it did not need thick cloud to obscure them, and they were often hidden by light ground haze or the local river mist that is frequently found in valleys.

#### Navigational Aids.

In order to reduce the number of operations that failed because the aircraft could not find the Reception Committee

(due either to navigation or to weather conditions), two instruments were employed which, it was hoped, would help to guide the aircraft to its target. The supply of these instruments was never large enough to meet the demand, and in most countries this proved the limiting factor to their use. Moreover, the delivery of highly complicated and fragile machinery to the field involved an inevitable percentage of loss by damage. Agents had to be specially trained to use them accurately, and often time could not be spared for a recruit to undertake this extra course. Even if a serviceable instrument belonged to a Resistance Group which boasted a trained operator, it was not always possible for him to be present at every dropping operation - Reception Committees might be scattered over a large area. To the man on the ground the employment of these instruments meant the transport of additional and compromising material: to the aircrew, their use involved yet another set of buttons and gadgets which needed attention. The problems of fitting and maintenance of a highly technical instrument in the aircraft were also considerable.

Rebecca/Eureka - This was a type of "beam" navigational aids which enabled an aircraft fitted with Rebecca to home on to a Eureka sometimes from a distance of 70 miles. In Western Europe, and above all in France, Eureka's were dropped throughout 1943, and the field was urged to use them whenever possible. Yet results were on the whole unsatisfactory: a large proportion of the Eureka's despatched were never heard of again, and the R.A.F. were not always able to attempt the few operations which were mounted with the aid of Rebecca/Eureka, to the discouragement of the field. Of those operations which were attempted with Rebecca/Eureka assistance a very high proportion of success was achieved.

Towards the end of 1943, a system of "Depot" grounds was employed in France on which permanent Reception Committees, usually with a Eureka, watched for aircraft who were unable to locate their primary target. The system was very successful, and over a period must have saved the R.A.F. many abortive sorties, and provided Resistance with many container loads which would otherwise have been returned to base. Eureka's were also used to a lesser extent in the Low Countries and in Scandinavia, and achieved perhaps their greatest success in Norway.

A fixed "Beacon Grid" was planned for France during 1943, involving the use of larger and more powerful Eureka's than were normally sent to the field. These were to be under the control of a specially trained operator who would come on the air in answer to a special B.B.C. message. The locations of these Beacons were fixed by the R.A.F. at sites which would most help the aircraft operating into France, and the fixed Beacon operator was usually independent of any Reception Committee, and did not himself receive any stores direct. This grid proved extremely difficult to put into practice at a time when conditions in the field were becoming more and more dangerous; but several beacons were eventually set up, and proved of inestimable value.

In the Mediterranean, the supply position proved the chief limiting factor to the use of Rebecca/Eureka, but during 1944 a number were despatched to the field. Eureka was used with great enthusiasm on the part of the Air Force for daylight operations. Whenever possible the R.A.F. squadrons engaged



on S.D. work in the Mediterranean theatre were equipped with Rebecca. No Beacon Grid system was adopted here, since it was impossible to obtain the more powerful Eureka sets. As in England, the Eureka sets were packed and held by S.O.E., but the R.A.F. authorities were responsible for their maintenance, and of course for the fitting and maintenance of Rebeccas.

S-Phones - A method by which direct telephonic communication is established between ground and air would, it was hoped, fulfil a navigational function, since the agent on the ground could direct the aircraft towards him. Owing to language difficulties, however, and to the fact that in practice it proved more complicated than at first sight it seemed to direct one out of probably several aircraft flying in the neighbourhood, this particular function was not developed very far in Western Europe. In the Mediterranean the difference of language did not present the same difficulty since there were nearly always British Liaison Officers at the dropping grounds. One of the most interesting uses of an S-phone was by Pilot Officer McGregor who landed in Yugoslavia with an S-phone and a collapsible bicycle, found a landing-ground the same night, and as a one man Reception Committee received a Dakota a few hours later. On several occasions when French or Belgian Reception Committees had had to move their grounds at the last minute, as a result of German measures, the S-phone was used to instruct the pilot on the location of the new ground. There was the time when an aircraft operating to an area near Bordeaux searched in vain for some time for the lights of the Reception Committee. At last the rear gunner saw them over his shoulder, and shouted over the inter-com "There they are! What bloody awful lights!" The voice of the officer on the ground came

immediately back to him by S-phone and inter-com: "So would yours be, if the Gestapo were only a mile away from you!"

But the principal value of S-phones in Western Europe turned out in the end to be their use as a method of passing information. It was unlikely in most cases that a Reception Committee could provide an English speaker (and only too often a crew would be forced to switch off the S-phone as soon as contact had been established since a flood of Gallic eloquence was preventing the use of the inter-com). S.O.E. Country Section Officers were therefore allowed in the aircraft by special permission. On these occasions, while the aircraft was making its circuit and dropping the containers a long conversation could be held between the agent on the ground and his Country Section Officer in the aircraft. In the case of organisers who had lost their W/T operator or his set, a S-phone conversation might be the only means of re-establishing contact with H.Q. By this means much valuable and up-to-date information was transmitted.

#### 7. Reception Committees.

Throughout the whole period the development of Resistance depended to a very considerable extent on the efficiency of Air Supply as a channel of communication. In Western Europe the difficulty of delivering stores by Sea in the face of the increasing German surveillance of the Coastal areas served to put the emphasis still further on supply by Air. This in itself involved a developed organisation in the field, at S.O.E. Headquarters, and in the R.A.F.

In general, the ideal organisation of Resistance as S.O.E.

saw it involved the setting up of small independent clandestine groups, each one separated from its neighbour so that security should not be endangered, and with the emphasis all the time on the establishment of small bands of entirely reliable men rather than the collection of large conglomerations of amateurs and enthusiasts. The conditions in different countries, however, had obviously to be taken into consideration by S.O.E.; and these varied considerably. In Poland, for example, where a long history of underground warfare had already given the people intensive experience of the methods of conducting such a campaign, the English had little to teach and a great deal to learn, and S.O.E. confined itself mainly to supplying the already existing and well organised underground armies in Poland. In France, two separate types of Resistance Organisation grew up: the one inspired by, and owing its military allegiance to, General de Gaulle, the other a British-controlled network of small S.O.E.-type circuits headed by British officers. In the Balkans and Italy where considerable national movements were already in operation, S.O.E.'s task was to send political and military liaison Missions to make contact with the various leaders. In Scandinavia, Holland and Denmark, various types of indigenous Resistance movements grew up, and to these S.O.E. sent technical instructors on such subjects as weapons, explosives, and sabotage, and liaison officers to co-ordinate their activities and also brought leaders to England for instruction.

Whatever the type of underground armies developed in a country, the organisation of an efficient system for ordering and receiving supplies by air was clearly a task of the very first importance, since only by this means could the resistants hope to collect sufficient equipment and reinforcements. The training of both

agents and aircrews in Reception Committee procedure was obviously essential if air supply was to be carried out efficiently, and in 1943 a special "Reception Committee" School was established by S.O.E. in which Organisers learnt the principles of reception procedure including selection of grounds, lights, disposal of stores and S-phone and Rebecca/Eureka drill. It was perhaps unfortunate that such a school was not established earlier both in England and in the Mediterranean since there is little doubt that its effect on the ratio of success of air operations was considerable. Training for pick-up operations was particularly intensive: for these agents who it might be expected, would later need to lay on such operations, a special week's course was organised. During this period agents were taught the particular problems faced by the Lysander or Hudson pilot, the varying lengths of fields necessary for the different types of aircraft and above all the importance of transferring the incoming and the outward loads as quickly as possible. It was obviously essential for both pilot and Reception Committee that the aircraft should remain on the ground for as short a time as possible: and agents were therefore taught how to transfer baggage and passengers with the minimum delay.

Since it was the Air Force upon whom fell the burden of transporting stores for long distances over enemy country, it was essential that whatever system was used should be acceptable to and fully trusted by the Air authorities. The R.A.F. themselves decided what system of lights on the ground should be used in order to help their aircraft to find the dropping point. This lighting system might vary from country to country, but basically it consisted of torches or bonfires arranged in a certain pattern, with a flashing light which gave an agreed

morse recognition signal.

Owing to the difficulties of navigating to a small pinpoint at night the bulk of the work undertaken by the R.A.F. from the U.K. was done on moonlight nights. The later development of navigational aids such as Rebecca/Eureka and S-phone, and also the relaxation of German control, which permitted the use of bonfires, enabled the R.A.F. to increase the quantity of material delivered during the non-moon periods; but even then it was during the two weeks immediately before and after full moon that the weight of these supplies were delivered. The Mediterranean-based S.D. aircraft, owing to the very different conditions within the countries to which they operated, were able to carry out their work in moon and non-moon periods alike. Apart from the moon, the working time of Reception Committees was determined by the "stand-by" times, which were fixed by the R.A.F. in order to allow for variation in the weather. For U.K.-based aircraft, for instance, the Reception Committees normally stood by for four hours. A week or ten days before the beginning of each moon period, the Reception Committee were given reception instructions and the times of stand-by. In some cases, particularly in the early days, an agent might report that owing to security difficulties he could not arrange to stand-by at the regulation times: if possible the R.A.F. would then accept curtailed or alternative stand-by times for his particular operation.

The selection of grounds suitable for "parachutages" was one of the most important functions in laying on an air delivery, since a badly placed Reception Committee in a valley or near a wood could only be spotted from an aircraft with the greatest difficulty. Wide open spaces, if possible near some landmark, such as a river, lake, or railway line were the best grounds for

Reception Committees; but these, of course, while perfect from the R.A.F. point of view, were often unsafe for the men in the field. Reception Committees, emulating the Butcher, often

"Fixed on a spot unfrequented by man:  
A dismal and desolate valley" -

which, though comparatively safe for them, was practically undiscoverable from the air. A balance had always to be struck between security on the ground and the necessity for easy recognition from above. The co-ordinates of chosen grounds were sent in by W/T to the appropriate Country Section of S.O.E. by map reference, and the grounds, if agreed by the Air Ministry, were confirmed back to the field. In this way a register of grounds was gradually built up until at D-Day there were over 5,500 dropping grounds in France and in Yugoslavia.

The initiative in arranging for an actual dropping of material was nearly always taken by the field, although Country Sections might sometimes make suggestions to their Organisers. As a rule, however, the agent concerned, having decided that he needed a delivery of stores, would select a suitable ground, and arrange for a Reception Committee to man it. This Reception Committee worked under a Chief, and was of varying size, depending on the strength of the circuit, and the number of containers that it would have to receive. The Reception Committee was sometimes as small as three men: in the later years, and in some countries such as Poland, sometimes as large as five hundred. In the Balkan countries the same dropping zones were used over and over again for air deliveries with an almost permanent establishment of Partisans to act as Reception Committee. The co-ordinates of the ground (if they had not previously been submitted), details of the stores required, the

signal letter to be flashed by the Reception Committee, and the B.B.C. message to be used as their signal for the alert, were all sent by W/T to S.O.E. H.Q. In addition, if the Organiser possessed a Eureka or S-phone, the intended use of this instrument would be given. If for any reason the Reception Committee was unable to stand-by for the whole of the moon period, the alternative dates would be sent.

The operation, after having been agreed by the R.A.F. and the Air Liaison Section of S.O.E., would be mounted by the Country Section, and the agent in the field would be notified to that effect.

It was now only a question of waiting for the weather - often and especially in winter, a long, dreary, and disappointing period. Sometimes the squadrons would think during the day that an operation could be attempted that night, and the appropriate B.B.C. message would therefore be transmitted; but later the weather might close down and the aircraft would be unable to fly. By then it would be too late to warn the Reception Committee, who were doomed to spending four hours in vain out on a field in the middle of the night.

Balkan Reception Committees were given warning of an operation directly by signal while the B.B.C. messages which were used to alert the Reception Committees of Western Europe including Italy, were usually transmitted in news bulletins. In the case of France, for instance, they went out after the French News at 1.30, 2.30, 6.30, and 9.15. They consisted of a short, and usually meaningless phrase, and were introduced by the announcer as "messages personnelles." To anybody not concerned, ten minutes worth of "messages personnelles" must have been boring in the extreme.

but to the men of the Reception Committees waiting all over France it was the call to action. When they heard their particular message - "Les lions sont terribles," or "Adolf a deux sous" - they would leave their homes and families, and go out into the night to the pre-arranged ground, carrying with them such material as was necessary to their task. The most important equipment they needed was their torches. These were ordinary, unmarked hand-torches, pathetically small from the pilot's point of view, but as large as a man dared carry about in France. After a time the Gestapo learned to know these torches, and any man caught with one in the country after dark was immediately under suspicion. An S-phone could be strapped round a man's waist and hidden fairly effectively under a raincoat. A Eureka involved carrying two heavy suitcases. Every pound of such equipment made the task of the Reception Committee, not only more arduous, but also more dangerous. They would collect on their grounds in ones and twos, on foot or by bicycle, sometimes even by car or lorry. It was essential to have a good excuse for being out so late at night, in view of the curfew which the Germans imposed on the country. Sometimes the ground chosen was a field belonging to a nearby farmhouse, and the farmer and his labourers would form the Reception Committee. Sometimes a Reception Committee was less lucky, and might have quite considerable distances to cover in order to reach the appointed place.

When they had reached the field, there was nothing to do but wait, alert all the time for the sound of aircraft engines, or the noise of a German patrol. There was no way of telling which was their particular aircraft of all the aircraft flying in the region, and often Reception Committees would take up



their positions and flash their torches, only to hear the aircraft disappearing into the distance, possibly to deliver stores to another point, possibly on a bombing operation. Sometimes the aircraft was not English at all, and Reception Committees would flash hopefully at a passing Junkers or Dornier. At last, if the weather had been kind to them, the aircraft destined for their particular ground would arrive, circle once or twice and drop its containers and packages.

A great deal depended on the accuracy of the drop. If the stores fell on the ground, or close to it, the work of collecting them was comparatively simple and rapid; but if, as often happened (particularly if the aircraft made the drop from a greater height than usual or if there was a strong wind), the containers and packages were dispersed over a large area, the Reception Committee might well spend the rest of the night looking for them. To leave containers with their parachutes in a spot where they might be discovered by the Germans was to invite Gestapo examination of the whole district, and could not be risked. When the material had all been collected, it was either buried near the ground or taken away at once and stored elsewhere; then in the early hours of the morning - and sometimes, if there had been difficulties, even after daylight - the Reception Committee would return to their homes, knowing that they had to face a normal day's work since it was impossible for them to admit that they had not been sleeping soundly all night. Even this was not necessarily the end of the story. The cover which was usually given for S.D. operations in Western Europe was the dropping of leaflets usually on a town at some distance from the target area, though care had to be taken in choosing a district which would not compromise other dropping

grounds. At least one indignant agent reported that after spending the night on Reception Committee work, he had been forced by the Germans to spend the whole of the next day picking up the leaflets which had been dropped by S.D. aircraft.

The work of Reception Committees in partisan-held areas was less dangerous than that of their colleagues elsewhere, but certainly not less arduous. The disposal of hundreds of containers delivered by large scale operations involving scores of aircraft, and the management of a landing field, where Dakotas came in one after another throughout the night, demanded a high degree of organisation.

After the operation, the results were immediately sent to the Organiser or the local Air Operations Officer, who transmitted them by U/T to S.O.E. Headquarters. In the Mediterranean, particularly full and detailed reports based on a standard questionnaire were despatched after every air delivery. By the time they arrived the Country Section would also hold the pilot's report on the operation. Discrepancies might arise between the two reports, and the Country Section would then do its best to clear them up. If some containers had hung-up in the aircraft a telegram would be sent at once to the field to set the minds of the Reception Committees at rest and to prevent their searching uselessly for containers that had not in fact been dropped. Sometimes a Reception Committee would receive by mistake the loads of two aircraft, and this would then be explained to them; sometimes, on the other hand they might receive nothing, and the operation would then be remounted. If the pilot of the aircraft reported that although he had found the exact pinpoint there had been no Reception Committee, enquiries were made from the field. The ground might be badly

placed, torches might have been too dim; a German patrol might have scattered them at the last minute, or the B.B.C. message might not have been heard - there were any number of reasons why a Reception Committee could not be completely reliable. On the other hand, since the navigation of an aircraft to a small pin-point in enemy territory is not an easy matter it was also possible that the pilot was mistaken in thinking he had found the right spot. An analysis and comparison of the reports received from the field and from the Squadrons not only gave details of how much material had been dropped and received, but also constituted a valuable survey of the efficiency of Reception Committee system.

In different countries the reception of supplies varied both in method and in the conditions in which the work was carried out. In Poland, for instance, the organisation of Reception Committees, like the rest of the Resistance movement, was on a more military basis than in any other country. Committees were usually large, enabling the men to deal with large numbers of containers very quickly, especially as the "H" type container was normally used in Poland with each of the five cells packed as a complete unit so that each member of the Reception Committee could take one and carry it home himself immediately. The difficulties with which the Reception Committees had to contend were much the same as in other countries: curfew, problems of transport, and weather. Farm carts were often used to carry containers from the dropping grounds and sometimes a civilian Pole employed on transport work by the Germans would bring along his lorry. The weather in winter was bitter and one Polish Officer who came out of the country reported that members of Reception Committees had been known to freeze to death in the snow while waiting for their aircraft.

Torches were usually used for signalling, and in the later stages it was possible in some areas to light bonfires.

Throughout the period the Poles themselves showed the greatest determination not to lose an aircraft load and waste a sortie. Reception Committee exercises in England, which were later used for all Country Sections, were first instituted by the Poles. Nearly all the operations laid on were given alternative points and often in addition a "safe area" in which the pilot might drop his load if both the first Reception Committees were absent.

The strongest measures were taken against defaulting members of Polish Reception Committees: on more than one occasion the death sentence was carried out. The organisation on the ground, the collection of containers, and the checking of stores was astonishingly detailed and efficient, and several times the Polish Quartermaster in the field was able to report minor variations of load even before the Packing Station had noticed them.

Since Reception Committees were the only means by which the Resistance Organisations could be fed with arms and supplies it was naturally to their interest to ensure that they were as efficient as possible. No amount of enthusiasm in the field, however, could compensate for a mistake made in England. The procedure for arranging a supply dropping or landing operation was necessarily extremely complex and involved, and while the chain from the Resistance Groups' demand for supplies to their receipt was very long, a weakness in any of the links would render it useless. A very high degree of efficiency in the staff work entailed in mounting S.D. operations was therefore

required both at S.O.E. H.Q. and on the part of the R.A.F. authorities concerned, all of whom were conscious that their work directly affected the safety and lives of men in the field.

8. S.O.E./R.A.F. Procedure U.K.

(See Appendix H for details of S.D. operations by U.K.-based aircraft)

In the first two years the only aircraft available for S.O.E. operations (and these were shared by S.I.S.) were those of 1419 Flight. As these resources were increased, until in 1944 Special Duty operations were being flown by Tempsford, 3 Group, 38 Group and 46 Group, it was necessary to develop a very complex system of control and liaison. The normal method of control of its squadrons by the R.A.F. - from Command through Group to Station - had, in the case of S.D. operations, serious disadvantages. The main consideration, of course, was that of security: in order to safeguard the lives both of the men in the field and of the aircrews it was essential that as few people as possible should know that operations of this type were being carried out. The details of the actual pinpoints must be transmitted only to those persons whose work necessitated a full knowledge. Moreover, each S.D. operation was an individual mission: each aircraft had to be specially loaded and each aircrew separately briefed. On a good night operations from Tempsford might be flown to five or more countries of Western Europe. Above all, the staff procedure employed must be both flexible and speedy: decisions must be taken quickly and passed immediately to the authorities concerned. There must be the least possible delay in notifying all the various departments of the operational programme. The troops served by the S.O.E. and R.A.F. authorities by means of S.D. operations, were, unlike normal troops,

not in easy communication with their commanders. Apart from the known dangers faced by a W/T operator every time he came up on the air, his periods of contact with H.Q. were necessarily limited and defined. S.O.E., and to a less extent the R.A.F., were bound to work within the framework created by this fixed timetable of W/T schedules.

The normal R.A.F. machinery which was built for the requirements of large scale, multiple-aircraft operations, whether bomber or fighter, was clearly not the ideal means of controlling an aerodrome from which operations so diverse and so individual were undertaken. It was therefore considered by the R.A.F. that some procedure other than that usually adopted must be used to control the S.D. squadrons, and from the beginning the Air Ministry itself took a special and direct responsibility in this connection. On the formation of 419 Flight it was ruled that while 11 Group of Fighter Command should be responsible for its administration the Flight should, for operational control, come directly under the Air Ministry. In October of 1940, when 419 Flight was transferred to the Bomber Command Station of Stradishall, Bomber Command took up the problem of the operational control of the Flight and suggested that unless its work was very specialised it should be controlled in the normal way. A meeting was held at Air Ministry on 24th February 1942 at the instance of D.C.A.S. to discuss the question of the control of 138 and 161 Squadrons and to consider whether control could not be exercised by Bomber Command through the Director of Bombing operations at the Air Ministry. It was decided that some deviation from the normal machinery of operational control of Bomber Command was essential; that the higher authority must on many matters

3039/PDDO of  
20 Aug. 1940

see notes  
M/XX/382 of  
24 Feb. 1942  
in S.O.E.'s  
files.

BC/s. 24455/Ops.  
1(B)  
and S. 5998/Ol

deal directly with the unit (and not through the normal channels of the group); and that an R.A.F. officer should be posted or attached to S.O.E. to organise the air transport side of S.O.E.'s work. After correspondence between Bomber Command and the Air Ministry, it was agreed that while the details of the task to be undertaken by 419 Flight would be communicated direct to the Station Commander, the normal machinery of operational control within the Command would otherwise operate, and the Station Commander, in conjunction with his meteorological advisers, was responsible for deciding whether operational conditions were practicable. This method of R.A.F. operational control was maintained until the autumn of 1943.

The Air Ministry department responsible for the detailed operational control of the S.D. squadron, under A.C.A.S. (I) was A.I.2.(c), working directly under D.D.I.2., later D. of I. (R). The duties of this department included the "vetting" of pinpoints submitted by the field and, in the early years, the day-to-day operational control of S.D. operations on behalf of the R.A.F. A.I.2.(c)'s opposite number in S.O.E. was the Air Liaison Section (AL), commanded at first by a Lieutenant Colonel and later by a Group Captain. In the autumn of 1943, in order to strengthen the liaison between S.O.E. and the R.A.F. on a higher level, a senior R.A.F. officer was appointed as Air Adviser to S.O.E. (see Part I. Section 43).

Within S.O.E. the work of laying on air operations was shared between the Country Sections and AL. It was the Country Sections who were responsible for the Resistance Organisations within their particular country, for the despatch of all W/T messages to and the receipt of all W/T messages from the field, and who therefore were the first to deal with requests

for air deliveries and details of dropping or landing.

It was AL who had to arrange with the R.A.F. authorities for the despatch of aircraft in answer to these requests and who acted as the channel between S.O.E. and the Air authorities concerned with S.D. operations. Direct communication between AL and the R.A.F. authorities at Tempsford was not permitted, however. AL worked with A.I.2(c) only, but an S.O.E. Liaison Officer was attached to every airfield from which S.D. sorties were flown. (See Appendix G for Directive to Liaison Officer). This Officer's duties included receiving agents, checking their equipment and preparing them in their striptease suits for their drop, the correct selection of packages and containers for each operation and each aircraft, and the briefing of the despatchers. Being of course in direct communication with the Air Liaison Section, he was often able to inform S.O.E. of decisions made at the airfield before the news would otherwise have reached them through the normal A.I.2(c) channel.

Telegrams from the field requesting air deliveries which were received by S.O.E. were sent simultaneously to the Country Section concerned and to the Air Liaison Section. After a preliminary check the Country Section Air Operations Officer would request AL to proceed with the operation. The pin-pointing section within AL would then work out the ground in detail, plotting the proposed dropping or landing ground on a large scale map, and pass it to A.I.2(c) for their approval (see Appendix E for details.) A.I.2(c)'s primary responsibility was in the selection of suitable pinpoints for S.D. operations: if the ground appeared to be too near a danger spot such as a night fighter aerodrome or flak emplacement, A.I.2(c) refused to accept it and the field was told to select a point further



away. If the ground was approved, AL informed the Country Section who in their turn signalled the field. The Country Section then ordered from the stores department of AL the necessary containers and packages for the operation, and if personnel were concerned arrangements were made for their kitting up. The B.B.C. messages were laid on by the Country Sections, stores were packed and full details of the operations were then sent out by AL to the aerodromes whose squadrons would carry them. Even after A.I.2(o)'s approval the Station Commander might refuse to accept certain pinpoints, but this happened rarely; normally when suggested grounds had been agreed by A.I.2.(o) they were accepted by the squadrons concerned.

It should be noted that this procedure for the meticulous checking of dropping points was evolved only after some experience of S.D. operations: in the early days rather more amateur methods were used. Country Sections would tell AL that they wished to drop a man within a certain area and AL would obtain Air Ministry approval not for a pinpoint but for a whole area. An S.O.E. officer would go down to the aerodrome with the agent and the two of them would go into conference with the pilot of the aircraft to decide upon the exact pinpoint. This might not be fixed until as late as 1600 hours - when take-off might be at 1900 hours.

Once details of the operations had been passed to the aerodromes the Operations Room within AL Section took over S.O.E.'s share of control, working in the closest liaison with both the R.A.F. and the Country Sections. Once an operation was ready - operational orders having been sent to the airfields and the necessary stores having been packed - there was nothing to do but wait for good weather: a very variable period. In

some cases operations were held up for as long as five months, in others they might be despatched the very next night. Even when all arrangements had been made between the field and H.Q. and between S.O.E. and the R.A.F., there were circumstances which necessitate the cancellation or temporary withdrawal of an operation. The Organiser in the field or his W/T operator might be arrested; the Germans might unexpectedly intensify their controls in the area - sometimes even camping their troops on the prospective dropping ground by unlucky accident; messages or codes might be captured. Daily alterations in the list of "Operations Ready" were inevitable and could only be met by daily confirmation and reconfirmation by the Operations Room to the R.A.F. authorities.

Since the number of aircraft allotted to S.O.E. was, from 1942 onwards, unable to meet the increasing demands from the field, the list of "Operations Ready" was almost always far larger than the squadrons could possibly hope to complete. It was therefore necessary for S.O.E. to indicate the priority of the various operations, so that at least the most important deliveries could be attempted. Priority was shown by means of "stars" which were allotted by S.O.E. A Country Section Head could accord an operation one "star", a Regional Head (covering more than one Country Section) two "stars". Three "stars" were allotted by the Brigadier commanding the London Group of all S.O.E.'s Western European Country Sections, and were only given for vital and urgent operations such as coups-de-main. The "star" value of operations was included in the list of "Operations Ready" given to A.I.2(c).

During the early years the Operations Room's opposite number in the R.A.F. was A.I.2(c), who carried out in the same

way a day-to-day control of operations on behalf of the R.A.F. A list of the operations ready for the next night together with their "star" priority was checked by the Operations Room with the Country Sections and passed to A.I.2(c) each afternoon. It was then transmitted by them to Tempsford (see Appendix F for details of Tempsford procedure). Conversely, the Station Commander's decision on which operations were to be attempted each night was sent along the same channels in reverse - to A.I.2(c) and so on to S.O.E.'s Operations Room. The Operations Room, acting as link between the R.A.F. and the Country Sections, then passed the list on to the Country Sections concerned who arranged with the B.B.C. for the transmission of the appropriate messages. At the airfields, the R.A.F. authorities, in conjunction with the S.O.E. Liaison Officer, was responsible for loading and briefing the aircraft and aircrews for the separate operations; A.I.2(c) had satisfied themselves that the grounds to which sorties would be flown were operationally practicable; and from S.O.E. H.Q. the B.B.C. messages or signals advising the field of the intended despatch of an aircraft were being transmitted. the chain was now complete, and everything possible had been done to ensure that the Reception Committee and the aircraft met at the same point in time and space.

Last minute changes in the programme were notified by A.I.2(c) to the Operations Room and passed on to the Country Section in the normal way; but after the final B.B.C. message transmission of the day it was impossible to cancel the Reception Committee's attendance on the field. A Duty Officer was present in the Operations Room throughout the night to deal with emergencies, and to receive the reports telephoned through by the S.O.E. Liaison Officers at the aerodromes from the returning aircrews.

In the morning these results were passed on to the Country Sections who were thus in a position to assess the situation. As the list of "Operations Ready" was telephoned by the Operations Room to A.I.2.(c) on the afternoon of the day before they were to be attempted it was not normally possible to make changes based on the results of the previous night, but in special cases - for instance if the men in the field were actually engaged with the enemy - the R.A.F. were prepared to accept last minute amendments to the list that had been given.

Pick-up operations, which were flown by "A" Flight of 161 Squadron, were arranged in much the same way as dropping operations. As an additional check on the description of the ground submitted by an agent air photographs of the grounds considered were always obtained in the case of landing operations. Requests for such photographs were submitted to R.A.F. Station at Medmenham (A.C.I.U.) Z Section (G.I.L.D.) by Air Ministry. In the early days of 1942 requests came through A.D.I.(Ph) and were dealt with by R Section (Combined Operations). With the increase in demands for this type of work, and the preoccupation of R Section with preparations for the African landing, the requests were passed through R Section to Z Section, where they were dealt with by one or two senior or experience interpreters. A.I.2(c) now became known as the originators and it began to appear more clearly what was required. A more detailed and specialised form of report was evolved. In order to save time requests were often submitted by telephone as well as by correspondence, and the volume steadily increased throughout 1943 and 1944. A very large number of Topographical Reports were produced at A.I.2(c)'s request at short notice, and the technique evolved and the extremely speedy manner with which

Files concerned are MIM/MS/16 opened 1.9.42, which on 22.3. was changed to MIM/TS/212/1/Ops. which finally extending to seven parts remained in use until the end. "Historical Account of the Handling of Topographical Reports" of 4.7.45, gives a detailed description of the work done for S.D. operations at R.A.F. Station Medmenham.

all demands were dealt with deserved the highest praise. A very high proportion of successful landing operations in Western Europe can be directly attributed to the work done at Medmenham.

During the first years "A" Flight moved to an advanced base at Tangmere for the moon period, and although no permanent S.O.E. Liaison Officer was attached to them there an AI Section Officer and a Country Section Officer went down to the aerodrome on operational nights to give the pilot last minute information on the security of the ground and to welcome any agents that he brought back. In the winter of 1943/44 it was decided that "A" Flight should remain at Tempsford in spite of the extra flying distance this often involved.

In the autumn of 1943, when Bomber Command took over operational control of S.D. aircraft in England, the day-to-day operational control hitherto vested in A.I.2(c) was transferred to Bomber Command to which S.O.E. and S.I.S. Liaison Officers were posted. A.I.2.(c) continued to receive the details of all proposed pinpoints and in the first instance to accept or refuse them; and especially on landing operations the department maintained its interest and influence. The daily list of "Operations Ready" however, was no longer the concern of A.I.2(c) and was now transmitted direct from S.O.E.'s Operations Room to Bomber Command. The use of 3 Group aircraft in the early months of 1944 involved no problem, since this Group came under Bomber Command; but further complications were introduced when 38 Group, under A.E.A.F., also joined the S.D. effort. S.O.E.'s Operations Room was then responsible for dividing the list of "Operations Ready" between A.E.A.F. and Bomber Command and for ensuring that each authority was informed when necessary of the operations being undertaken by the other.

As a rule 38 Group undertook only "standard load" operations for S.O.E. owing to the difficulties of transporting special containers. For the same reason, aircraft operating from the more distant 3 Group airfields carried only standard loads. All "special load" operations were carried by Tempsford or by the American Squadrons at Alconbury (later Harrington) since these airfields were in close proximity to the packing stations.

Occasionally Mosquito operations were carried out by 46 Group for S.O.E. These involved only a small quantity of stores and were used only when organisations in the field had urgently requested some small but vital store, such as money or W/T crystals, and were unable to receive the normal Halifax container load. There were few of these operations and each was arranged individually with 46 Group. S.O.E. Liaison Officers normally went down to the aerodromes concerned in order to assist at the briefing and to hear the reports of the returning aircrews.

The American contribution to the S.D. effort consisted of two Liberator Squadrons of the 8th U.S.A.A.F. based first at Alconbury and later at Harrington which became operational in the first months of 1944. Pinpoints for operations to be carried out by these squadrons were submitted by S.O.E. to A.I.2(c) in the normal way, but the Americans, while accepting the facilities afforded by the R.A.F., did not consider themselves bound in the same way by A.I.2(c)'s decisions. S.O.E.'s Operations Room was responsible for allotting, from the complete list of "Operations Ready", a suitable selection for the American Squadrons, and this list was telephoned through to the airfields concerned. The system of direct communication between S.O.E. and the American aerodromes proved more flexible and satisfactory

than the procedure enforced by the R.A.F., by which all contact between S.O.E. and the squadrons at Tempsford had to go through Air Ministry. Since the American squadrons were working under a different operational command and with different meteorological advisers it not infrequently happened that there was a considerable difference between the conditions under which they would operate as compared with the R.A.F. squadrons. On certain nights and to certain areas the Americans might agree to attempt operations though the R.A.F. refused, while the opposite might be true on other occasions. These anomalies were sometimes difficult for S.O.E.'s Country Sections to understand.

The advantages of the establishment of all S.D. aircraft under a single command were stressed by S.O.E. in the autumn of 1944 when, on reduction of demands for supply dropping from Western Europe, 138 Squadron was withdrawn from Tempsford for normal bombing duties. S.O.E. then suggested that 161 Squadron and R.A.F. Station Tempsford should be transferred to 38 Group (which was then responsible for allocating an air effort corresponding to 138 Squadron if necessary) in order to have all S.D. aircraft under the same operational command. This was agreed by the R.A.F., and in March 1945 Tempsford and 161 Squadron were transferred to 38 Group, and operated under this command for the remaining two months of the European war.

Although throughout the four years the character of S.D. operations to Western Europe remained basically the same, their scope and scale expanded enormously as the Resistance forces in the occupied countries gained strength. In the early years Reception Committees were usually small in size and could handle only a limited number of containers. In order, therefore, to use the full pay-load of the aircraft two or even three Reception

Committees were served in one sortie. The selection of containers and the briefing of navigator and dispatcher were more complicated when two separate pinpoints had to be located and the correct load dropped on each one. If three operations were combined in the same aircraft the third Reception Committee was not infrequently disappointed: the aircraft, after searching for its first two pinpoints, often arrived at the third after the stand-by times were over and the Reception Committee had gone home. As the patriot organisations developed it became normal for a Reception Committee to receive not the half but the full load of a Halifax, and fifteen containers were the standard delivery. The use of many different types of aircraft each carrying a different quantity of containers and packages made the work of the Reception Committee more confusing and more difficult, since they could not always be warned in advance whether to expect a Halifax (fifteen containers) a Stirling (twenty-four containers on short range), a Liberator (twelve containers) or one or more Albemarles (six containers each). In the areas in Western in which the sparks of partisan activity developed in the later stages to the forest fires of guerilla warfare, large-scale multiple-aircraft deliveries added the necessary fuel to the flames, and operations involving anything from two to twenty aircraft were carried out to the same pinpoint or to Reception Committees in close proximity serving the same guerilla bands. After D-Day, deliveries to the field were further supplemented by mass daylight operations carried out by bomber aircraft of the 8th U.S.A.A.F. These operations, under fighter cover, resulted in the delivery of very large quantities of arms and ammunition. As many as thirty-six and sometimes even seventy-two aircraft dropped their containers to the same pinpoint. The tremendous development



of S.D. operations from the early days of 1941, when personnel together with only one or two containers or packages were despatched, to the mass operations of 1944, had placed a heavy strain on the machine. Both the procedure and the personnel involved had been tested. Fortunately for the men in the field, they were not found wanting.

#### 9. S.O.E./R.A.F. Procedure, Mediterranean

(See Appendix I for details of S.D. operations by Mediterranean-based aircraft)

From the summer of 1940 S.O.E.'s H.Q. at Cairo dealing with the Balkan countries and the Middle East maintained communications with the Continent of Europe by courier and there was no requirement for S.D. aircraft. By the middle of 1942, with the growth of patriot Resistance Movements in the Balkans, it became evident that deliveries by air would have to be undertaken. As in England the beginnings were small. The first aircraft to be placed at S.O.E.'s disposal in the Mediterranean were two Wellesley bombers, based on Malta, supplemented by Whitley aircraft sent from England. In 1942, at about the same time as the Allied landings in North Africa four Liberators of X Flight of 148 Squadron based in Egypt, were allocated to S.D. work. These resources were gradually expanded, until by the middle of 1943, the whole of 148 Squadron was engaged on S.D. work.

The organisation in the field of Reception Committees and the machinery at base for receiving air deliveries were set up in much the same way as in Western Europe. At Cairo (and from 1944 at Bari) S.O.E. had its own Signals Station, Country Sections, and Air Liaison Section, and requests for air deliveries from the field were dealt with very much as in Western Europe, with

H.Q. R.A.F. Middle East filling the place of Air Ministry and Bomber Command. Operations were mounted from Cairo, and the distance to the airfields which were moved westwards behind the advancing Desert Army together with the inadequate telephone communications were a fertile source of difficulties.

In the winter of 1942/43 an S.O.E. Mission was established at Algiers to work into the countries of the Western Mediterranean. A second S.D. base was later set up at Blida from which aircraft of 624 Squadron carried out deliveries into Southern France, Italy and Corsica on operations arranged by S.O.E. Algiers. During the early months, only a limited number of aircraft were available and the weather was consistently unfavourable. The main bulk of stores delivered by the Blida-based aircraft during 1943 was to Corsica. At the beginning of 1944 624 Squadron was brought up to strength and American aircraft were also added. The weather improved and operations to Southern France were conducted on a considerable scale.

While it was obvious that deliveries to the South of France could more economically be made from Blida than from England this was not easy to arrange. In the first place Southern France, although not within the theatre of S.C.A.E.F., was an area with which he was necessarily concerned, since Special Operations conducted there might affect his plans in the more northern areas. S.O.E. Algiers had therefore to ensure that the organisations built up in the South of France conformed with the overall strategy planned for the whole of France. Moreover, the actual day-to-day running of air operations from two bases as far apart as Tempsford and Algiers into the same country, and sometimes even to the same Resistance Groups, necessitated an extremely complicated procedure. The agents despatched by

London were in W/T communication with England; those sent in by Algiers with Algiers. Certain of the London agents were in the extreme South of France, and on the other hand, certain of the Algiers agents were located further north. Four types of French S.D. operations now existed: by U.K.-based aircraft to organisations in W/T communication with England; and by U.K.-based aircraft to organisations in W/T communication with Algiers. On the other hand, the S.D. aircraft based at Blida served all organisations in the South of France, including both those in touch with Algiers, and those in touch with England. Telegrams from the field concerning air operations, dropping points, stores required and so forth, were therefore not necessarily received at the S.O.E. H.Q. which would be responsible for mounting the air operation. By means of correspondence, and above all of telograms, between S.O.E.'s London and Algiers H.Q.s, the Air Operations Sections of both were kept fully informed. In order to cover the innumerable daily variations, a system of crack signals between the two Headquarters was instituted by which four-figure groups of numbers were translated into phrases such as:-

"Intend to attempt Operation Monkeypuzzle tonight."

"Our programme remains unchanged."

"All operations cancelled owing to weather."

These crack signals operated at fixed times during the day and were scheduled to fit in with the B.B.C.'s transmissions, so that if necessary the B.B.C. Reception Committee messages could be cancelled. The system, though extremely complex, worked very well, and certainly resulted in a valuable economy of effort. With the exception of operations carrying special stores, Reception Committees in both Southern and Northern France were served by aircraft flying from the nearest base and able to

carry the maximum load.

A small number of "shuttle" operations were flown between England and Algiers, in which the aircraft after leaving the U.K. carried out its dropping or landing operation and went straight on the North Africa. A second operation might be attempted on the return journey. Where special personnel or stores had to be delivered to areas which, because of the short nights, could not be served by aircraft returning to the U.K. this type of operation was extremely valuable, but so many problems of organisation were involved that the R.A.F. would agree to attempt only a limited number of high-priority deliveries by "shuttle" service.

Meanwhile S.O.E. Cairo continued to arrange for the despatch of increasing quantities of stores to the Balkan countries where partisan activity had now become a real menace to the enemy. In the summer of 1943, as a result of the Prime Minister's intervention, the number of aircraft available for S.D. operations into the Balkans was increased. Deliveries were facilitated towards the end of the year by the liberation of the heel of Italy which enabled Packing Stations and air bases to be established much nearer the target areas served by the aircraft. The S.D. base at Blida was maintained for operations into Southern France; but from January 1944 aircraft carrying supplies to Central and Eastern Europe were now based in the heel of Italy. S.D. operations to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany were now also flown from Mediterranean bases instead of from the U.K. in order to shorten the length of the flight involved, and to avoid the formidable defences of N.W. Europe.

In the winter of 1943/44 the amalgamation of the Eastern and Western Mediterranean theatres under A.F.H.Q. and M.A.A.F. radically altered the situation in the Mediterranean. The S.O.E. Units at this time consisted of Force 133 at Cairo, Advanced Force 133 at Bari, No. 1 Special Force at Monopoli, and I.S.S.U.6 at Algiers. I.S.S.U.6 at Algiers now worked directly with A.F.H.Q., though in close conjunction with S.O.E. London. In April Special Operations (Mediterranean) (SO(M)), was created with Headquarters near Bari. Its tasks were to centralise the administration and control of all S.O.E. Units and to provide central air operations and technical service and to a large extent the provision and packing of stores, not only for S.O.E. but for all Special Services such as S.I.S., O.S.S., M.I.9., and P.W.B. Thus SO(M) had a dual responsibility: to S.O.E. London and A.F.H.Q. for the administration and efficiency of S.O.E. Units, and to A.F.H.Q. for servicing and co-ordinating air sorties for several agencies.

Both operational and administrative control of the pool of S.D. aircraft in the Mediterranean was vested in M.A.A.F., who established a special section to handle the problems of S.D. operations. The allocation of tonnages of stores to be dropped month by month in each country was fixed by Special Operations Committee at A.F.H.Q., (including representatives of M.A.A.F., S.O.(M), O.S.S. and the Political Advisers), who decided the competing priorities on the basis of the requests submitted not only from S.O.E. and O.S.S., but also from S.I.S., P.W.B., and M.I.9.

In June 1944 the Balkan Air Force was created as Theatre Commander under A.F.H.Q., for Yugoslavia, Albania and Hungary, and was also made responsible for the air aspect of S.D. sorties

not only in those countries, but in all countries served from Mediterranean bases, with the exception of France. The division of functions was as follows:

A.F.H.Q. Special Operations Section: policy and strategy:

monthly allocation of air lift to the various countries:  
overall co-ordination.

M.A.A.F. Special Operations Section: air policy:

allocation of aircraft to meet A.F.H.Q. requirements:  
provision of air bases: air statistics: technical efficiency  
and training of S.D. Squadrons.

S.O. (M): Adviser to A.F.H.Q. on special operations, including

monthly allocation of airlift: day-to-day control of S.D. sorties (from June 1944 jointly with Balkan Air Force) for all countries and agencies within the framework of the monthly A.F.H.Q. allocations: provision and packing of supplies.

B.A.F. Theatre Commander, responsible to A.F.H.Q. for Yugoslavia,

Albania and Hungary: responsible to M.A.A.F. day-to-day control of S.D. sorties on the air aspect for all agencies, and countries (less France): responsible to M.A.A.F. for technical efficiency on air aspect of S.D. sorties and training of S.D. Squadrons.

(Note:) In March 1945 M.A.T.A.F. took over from B.A.F. all responsibility for S.D. sorties to Italy, Austria and Czechoslovakia, and from that date to VE day B.A.F. was responsible only for Yugoslavia).

It will thus be seen that S.O. (M) and B.A.F. had each a dual role and a dual responsibility. In the case of B.A.F. the appointment of A.O.C. B.A.F. as Theatre Commander was due to the special circumstances of TransAdriatic operations. In 1944 in spite of various projects for raids or the establishment of bridgeheads on the Dalmatian or Albanian coasts, resources were

not sufficient for any substantial measure of ground support to the Yugoslav or Albanian partisans. Air supply and air support, bomber and fighter, were the only available means, apart from the delivery of supplies by sea on a more or less clandestine footing. The creation of B.A.F. was therefore a logical step. But B.A.F. was often placed in a difficult position by reason of its two roles of Theatre Commander for three countries and S.D. air transport agency for seven other countries.

In July 1944 the Yugoslav Country Section and Field Missions of S.O.E. were converted into a regular military mission, known as 37 Military Missions, under B.A.F., as liaison with Marshal Tito, now recognised as an Allied Commander. It was found at the time quite impossible for technical reasons for Army or Air Force Signals to take over communications with mobile stations operating at long range in enemy-occupied countries. S.O.E. therefore continued to handle both the signals and the packing of stores for enemy occupied Yugoslavia, but the operational control of activities in that country passed to 37 Military Mission under the command of B.A.F.

Meanwhile the advance of the Allied Armies up Italy enabled both S.O.E. and R.A.F. bases to be established further north. In September, operation Dragoon effected the liberation of Southern France which therefore ceased to be a sphere of Special Operations. In October operation Manna similarly liberated Greece. By the end of the year Albania, Rumania, and Bulgaria had also been evacuated by the enemy and were of no further concern for S.D. operations. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Northern Italy remained (apart from Yugoslavia) the only countries in which Resistance movements still required support.

Complex as the situation was in England in the summer of 1944, it was even more involved in the Mediterranean. Under A.F.H.Q. no fewer than four Theatre Commanders (Seventh Army, 15th Army Group, B.A.F. and G.H.Q. Mid. East) were involved; and in addition S.D. operations were flown to countries under the direct control of the Chiefs of Staff. S.O.E. in the Mediterranean was split into several sub-Headquarters at Cairo, Algiers and several bases in Italy, all co-ordinated under S.O.(M) but under the operational control of the various military commanders. There were aircraft engaged on Special Duty work based at half a dozen different aerodromes in Italy and North Africa. The problems of packing and transporting containers to these separate bases in countries where communications by telephone, road and rail were always bad and where all stores had to be imported in the first place from overseas, were enormous. The co-ordination and control of S.D. work was made possible by a relation at once closer and more elastic between S.O.E. on the one hand and the R.A.F. and military authorities on the other than was attained in England. In the semi-"active service" conditions of N.Africa and liberated Italy it was easier to establish close personal liaison between S.O.E. and R.A.F. officers than in the office-bound atmosphere of London. Moreover, since S.O.E. in the Balkans had a more definitely military role to fulfil, the considerations of secrecy and security which in England often confused the R.A.F. were in the Mediterranean not permitted to hamper liaison to the same extent.

#### 10. Landing Operations.

The problem of secretly withdrawing agents from enemy-



occupied territory is even more difficult to solve than that of introducing them. On the establishment of the enemy's "Fortress of Europe", all normal channels were closed, and new and clandestine transport arrangements had to be made. In some cases the traditional method of crossing the frontier into a neutral country could still be used: in other cases agents might be brought out at night from lonely parts of the coast by submarine or motorboat. A third method was by air transport, and involved night landing by aircraft in enemy-occupied territory.

The pick-up operation is not new. During the first World War aircraft were used fairly extensively for carrying agents across the lines and back: but the problem then was in some ways easier. The aircraft were only required to fly short distances. They were slow, with low wing loading, and low landing speeds, and could alight easily in small fields almost without noise. As they were so light the risk of their becoming bogged in an ordinary meadow was small. Enemy opposition, in the form of night fighters or A.A., was not then a serious risk. Moreover, because the distances involved were short, the aircraft could cross the lines by twilight and land in enemy territory at dusk, so that navigational difficulties were slight and no Reception Committee was needed on the landing ground to lay a flare-path.

In 1941, however, the requirements were different. The distances involved were very much greater. From Tangmere for instance, landing aircraft were frequently required to carry out operations to points as far distant as Lyons, and even the shortest mission necessitated a long sea crossing or a journey across enemy defended territory which could only be penetrated during the hours of darkness. The navigational difficulties were therefore considerably greater. The aircraft used

required a good range and a reasonably high cruising speed. This in its turn meant that the aircraft would be heavier, and have a higher landing speed, than those of 1914-18, and would therefore need a larger field to land in and a smooth firm surface. The necessity for night landings moreover, meant that trained agents must be on the ground to lay a flarepath. The amount of light which could be shown on the field was not enough for landings to be made safely except in moonlight, and this factor combined with the navigational difficulties restricted operations to the moon period.

Landing operations were carried out by the R.A.F. for S.O.E. into France and Belgium from the U.K., and on a much larger scale, from the Mediterranean into the Balkan countries. A small number of Lysander and Dakota operations was also carried out into Northern Italy, and three Dakota landings were made in Poland. The methods used in each country were very similar, but the conditions varied enormously. In the Balkans, the landings of aircraft on prepared landing strips became almost a Transport Command function: in France, on the other hand, the Germans were in complete control of all districts and landing operations, if they were to be successful at all, must be conducted clandestinely.

The most suitable aircraft available for operations from the U.K. was the Westland Lysander. Designed for Army Co-operation it could cruise at 165 m.p.h. and land in restricted spaces. Its normal range was short, but fortunately it was found possible to place a large extra tank between the legs of the under-carriage which gave the aircraft an operational range of 900 miles. To compensate for this extra weight, all

armament and armour had to be removed together with all wireless equipment, except for an R/T set worked by the pilot. Thus modified, the Lysander could carry three passengers in the rear cockpit and weighed about four and a half tons fully loaded. It required a landing strip 600 metres long, with clear approaches and a firm level surface. Specially trained and experienced pilots were needed for Lysander operations: not only had the pilot to land by night in a small unknown field on a flarepath, composed of three dim lights, but he had to find his way there, navigating single-handed by map-reading, across enemy country.

The second aircraft to be used for landing operations was the Lockheed Hudson twin-engined bomber. This aircraft was armed and carried a crew of four; its range allowed it to operate anywhere in France from England, and it could carry ten passengers. The all-up weight was about ten tons, and the Hudson needed a landing strip 1,000 metres long with clear approaches. The presence of a navigator in the Hudson crew removed most of the navigational difficulties inherent in Lysander operations, but on the other hand the aircraft was a good deal more difficult to land under clandestine conditions than the Lysander, and a more elaborate flarepath was needed.

The third and last type of aircraft to be employed on this work was the Douglas Dakota or D.C.3. which carried a crew of four. This aircraft was extensively used in Yugoslavia, from February 1944, and during 1944 was also employed on French operations. It had much the same range as the Hudson, and needed a landing strip of the same length with the same type of flarepath, but it could carry twenty passengers or two tons of freight. Like the Lysander it was unarmed.

The Lysanders and Hudsons employed on landing operations from England belonged to "A" Flight of 161 Squadrons, and were stationed at Tempsford with an advanced operational base at Tangmere. The Dakotas belonged to the U.S. 8th Air Force, and operated from Harrington.

In the Mediterranean a Lysander Flight carried out the small number of Lysander operations into Southern France and Northern Italy. The Dakota operations were carried out by a number of Dakota Squadrons: 267 R.A.F. and 44 S.A.A.F., and also by the U.S.A.A.F. Dakotas of 51 T.C. Wing and 60 T.C. Group.

If training was necessary for both agents and aircrews in the conduct of dropping operations, this was doubly true for landing operations. Since so much depended on the establishment of mutual confidence between pilot and Organiser, special training was always undertaken in order to qualify agents to mount landing operations, and in this course the landing pilots were themselves the instructors. The course aimed at teaching the agent the requirements for an acceptable landing ground as regards dimensions, approaches, slopes and surface; how to survey it and describe it to London; how to lay out a flarepath and flash a Morse signal letter with pocket torches; and how to organise the rapid exchange of passengers and luggage so that the aircraft spent as short a time as possible on the ground.

The difficulties of selecting a suitable ground for landing operations were obviously even greater than in the case of "parachutages." In the early days disused airfields were sometimes used, but the enemy soon realised what was happening

and ordered all disused landing grounds to be obstructed so that the agent had to fall back on large meadows. More than once the enemy tried to put these too out of action. Farmers were ordered to plough up large fields or even obstruct them, but there were usually methods of getting round this difficulty. The farmers might not have enough petrol to carry out their orders, or fences and posts planted as obstructions might be removed at the last minute to leave a clear field. In countries such as Greece and Yugoslavia the geography itself was such that fields of sufficient size were practically nonexistent. Where nature had failed to provide, man must improvise; and the partisans themselves, under the guidance of Army and R.A.F. Liaison Officers, constructed landing strips out of the unpromising terrain. This of course was a major activity which could hardly be conducted in secrecy. A B.L.O. organising a landing ground at Trikkila in Greece reported that he had had to employ for the purpose a steam roller which belonged to the local village. In such circumstances, probably even the Germans themselves realised what was happening, but fortunately the partisans were strong enough to be able to hold the districts concerned against the enemy. In Western Europe it was usually impracticable for security reasons to do much work on fields to make them fit for landings, but it was sometimes possible to persuade the owner to plant lucerne or clover on a suitable large field in order to give a good surface for aircraft to land.

Apart from the difficulties of choosing the ground, the agent had to arrange for a nearby safe-house to receive the incoming passengers and to shelter the outgoing ones during the period of waiting for the aircraft. When the ground had been

accepted by the R.A.F. authorities and the operation had been confirmed back to the agent by signal, he assembled his passengers there and waited for the pre-arranged B.B.C. message. Owing to bad weather the waiting period was sometimes long, and the presence of the prospective passengers, always liable to be an embarrassment, might become an acute danger to the Organiser.

In the Balkans the use of improvised landing strips within partisan-controlled areas made large scale landing operations possible, and the main problem became purely one of traffic control.

In Western Europe, however, the position was very different. On receipt of the arranged B.B.C. message the Organiser conducted his passengers to the landing point, posted his guards and waited. When an aircraft came near he challenged it with an ordinary pocket torch in Morse, and on receiving the correct reply lit his flarepath. The aircraft approached, touched down by the first lamp where the agent was standing with his passengers, and at the end of its landing run turned round and taxied back to a point alongside the agent. It then turned round again and stood facing into wind, with the engine ticking over ready to take off. Even a Lysander makes a considerable amount of noise in the silence of the night. A twin-engined aircraft such as a Hudson or Dakota was inevitably even more disturbing; and yet there were occasions on which landing operations were carried out within three or four miles of German troop detachments. Clearly the most important thing was to keep the aircraft on the ground for as short a time as possible. The passengers and luggage were quickly exchanged and the aircraft opened up its engine and took off. All lights were then

extinguished and removed, leaving no trace of the operation except perhaps wheel marks in the grass. The time spent on the ground was usually about three minutes. Sometimes two aircraft were used; in this case the second landed immediately after the first had taken off and the total time on the ground for the two aircraft was about eight minutes. Both Lysanders and, at a later date, Hudsons operated in this way, and occasionally even treble Lysander landing operations were carried out. Sometimes when this was done, one of the aircraft would beat up an area some distance away as cover for the others' landing.

The actual procedure by telegram and telephone for mounting a landing operation was similar to that used for dropping operations. Since the operations were known to be especially difficult and hazardous, even greater care was taken in the selection and acceptance of grounds and the other necessary details. The over-riding priority accorded to S.I.S. for landing operations meant that S.O.E., who shared the same aircraft, sometimes suffered delay. S.O.E. landing operations had to wait until the weather was good and the aircraft available - two conditions for which they might sometimes wait a long time.

Practically every one of the landing operations carried out from the U.K. is worth a whole story to itself. The first, (Levée/Façade, 4/5th September 1941, S/L. Dufort) attempted in September 1941, was rather an inauspicious start to S.O.E. pick-ups. The agent laying the flare-path was disturbed by the police and could not use his original field which had been accepted for the landing. He managed, however, to lay the flarepath in an adjacent field which of course had not been passed. The aircraft landed safely, but struck some wires on

taking off and was damaged, although not sufficiently to prevent it getting home. The next operation, delayed owing to priority difficulties, was not attempted until December 1941 (Stoat, 8/9th December 1941, F/Lt. Murphy). The pilot found his landing point without difficulty shortly after midnight, but was not entirely satisfied with the signal he received, and the lights were not correctly laid. He circled around for some time, and eventually decided to land, using his landing light. As he touched down he saw a trench running between the lights of the flarepath. He immediately opened up his engine, and then landed on the other side of the landing ground about 400 yards away, where he waited for the agent to come over to him. Although suspicious, he was not seriously alarmed until he saw in the moonlight a line of figures advancing towards the aircraft. He was then fired on and wounded, but managed to take off; and in spite of considerable loss of blood he landed at Tangmere 3½ hours later. It subsequently transpired that the Organiser of the operations had been surprised and captured by a chance patrol, which then improvised an ambush for the aircraft. In the confusion caused by the shooting and the aircraft taking off the agents had managed to make their get-away. Although the Gestapo often tried to organise a false reception this was the only time an aircraft was ever ambushed, and it was the only S.O.E. pick-up operation ever attempted in Belgium. The density of population increased ground security difficulties, and together with good strong A.A. defences ruled the area out altogether for landing operations.

By 1942 the drill for pick-ups had been developed from early experiences and the procedure was fully organised. Nine Lysander operations were completed during the year, including a



double. The only serious incident occurred in December (Chubb Minor/Merhaden/Starfish, 17/18th December 1942, S/L Lockhart), when a Lysander, in making a landing along a bumpy field, damaged the tail wheel and partly jammed the elevator. This caused the aircraft to climb steadily during the homeward flight, and the pilot was only able to maintain the required low altitude by throttling back and stalling the aircraft every few minutes in order to lose height.

Operations completed in 1943 showed a big increase over the 1942 figures. Requirements had increased to such an extent that nearly all Lysander operations were doubles and one treble operation was successfully completed. For the first time Hudsons were used on this work and one double Hudson operation was carried out. A total of thirty-nine operations were successfully completed, involving thirty-eight Lysander, and sixteen Hudson landings. One Lysander was lost (Sten 10/11th December 1942, F/O Bathgate), the pilot and his passengers being the only losses sustained on S.O.E. landing operations.

1943 was perhaps the best and most important year for this type of work. The missions were flown by a hand-full of pilots, all of whom were experienced in pick-up operations. The success of these operations during this critical period was an important factor in maintaining a close liaison between S.O.E. H.Q. and the Resistance Groups in the field, and the information and personnel brought back to England were of the greatest value to S.O.E. in formulating its future plans.

1944 was a more difficult year for many reasons. The heavy bomber attacks had led to an intensification of the German anti-aircraft defences, and the enemy's determined efforts to

eliminate Resistance Groups before the anticipated invasion took place increased the ground risks. Towards the end of 1943 the Lysander Flight had suffered several casualties, and most of the remaining pilots had completed their operational tour: this meant that very few of the original pilots were left.

A Hudson operation early in the year (Bludgeon, 8/9th February 1944, F/O Affleck), which nearly ended in disaster, did much to damage the good relationship between the pilots and the agents. The aircraft got bogged on the landing ground and was extricated only after three hours of concentrated work on the part of the Reception Committee, the entire local village, three horses and two oxen. Eventually the aircraft managed to take off and returned safely. It was argued that in this case the agent should not have allowed the aircraft to land, and the confidence of the Squadron and Air Ministry in the reliability of agents' judgment was badly shaken. The agent concerned, however, had been waiting for a landing operation for some months and was anxious to send both personnel and reports to England at the first possible moment. He knew the ground was soft and realised the danger to the aircraft. When he heard his B.B.C. message he had a difficult decision to make. From the R.A.F.'s point of view he chose the wrong course, and for some time afterwards was forbidden to arrange further landing operations.

In this year the Lysander pick-up Flight was formed in the Mediterranean to operate from Corsica to the South of France. The difficulties of communication by signal and crack signal were very great and had serious results on one occasion (Thicket 2, 11/12 July 1944). The signal from Bari was not received in London in time for the Reception Committee to be warned and when the aircraft arrived at the landing point there was no reception.

Had the pilots of the two Lysanders carried out the correct drill and returned to Corsica without landing all would have been well, but they knew the ground from previous visits and decided to land in the moonlight using their landing lights. One of the aircraft overshot badly on landing and ran into some rough ground. This caused the engine to stop and the pilot was unable to re-start it. A farmer from a nearby farm, which had been used as a safe house for previous operations had heard the aircraft circling and now arrived on the scene. The pilot of the disabled aircraft got into the other aircraft which took off and returned to Corsica without further incident. The farmer looked after the incoming passengers, and as the Reception Committee had not been warned there were no outward passengers waiting. The farmer then set the disabled Lysander on fire. When it was completely destroyed he telephoned to police and told them that an unidentified aircraft had crashed in his field and burst into flames. The police were unable to prove anything against the farmer and finally decided that it was an ordinary flying accident. The Gestapo might have been more difficult to convince, but the situation in France was developing rapidly and they were presumably occupied with other matters. This was fortunate, since if the Gestapo had made a serious enquiry the farmer would almost certainly have been arrested and probably shot. Once again the moral was underlined: stick rigidly to the agreed drill.

The most interesting development during the year was the entry of the U.S.A.A.F. Dakotas into the field of pick-up operations. These aircraft needed the same length of landing strip as the Hudson but could carry twenty passengers or about two tons of freight which made them extremely valuable. The first Dakota operation (Mixer 1, 7/8th July 1944, Col. Heflin) was to a ground near Nantua not far from the Swiss border.

The ground was in a small controlled area, and as the nights were too short to allow the return journey to be made in darkness it was arranged that the aircraft should land in the dark, remain hidden during the following day, and return to the U.K. at nightfall. The Dakota was hidden with branches and camouflage netting and weather reports were passed by pre-arranged B.B.C. phrases. The aircraft took off from Harrington on 7th July and owing to bad weather at base had to remain hidden at the landing point for two days. The pilot, who was the Station Commander, spent the time in inspecting the local guerillas and accepting French hospitality. The aircraft took off again on 9th July and returned to U.K. after a completely successful trip.

There were several subsequent Dakota operations to this ground. The Dakotas were also used extensively after D-Day for taking heavy weapons to controlled areas - a much more economical method of delivering material than by parachute. Large numbers of Allied airmen were brought out by Dakota and Hudson. On one operation (Gunner, 2/3rd September 1944, Lt. Col. Brekerson and Major Saunders), two Dakotas brought out forty evacuees: a record exfiltration for French landing operations.

By now the character of landing operations in France had changed, and from being fully clandestine they were developing into something comparable to the Yugoslav pattern. Night landings were carried out into controlled areas and finally by the middle of September it was possible to operate by daylight.

The extraordinarily high ratio of success of landing operations and the even more surprisingly low percentage of

losses in aircraft were perhaps due in part to the very audacity of the scheme. Even when the enemy had realised that such operations were taking place it is unlikely that he grasped the scale on which they were being used. In the Balkans the areas surrounding the landing grounds were in any case protected by strong partisan forces. In Western Europe, where landing operations had to be conducted clandestinely, the Germans were always slow in reacting and ordering their counter-measures. Another factor, and one of the most important, was the high degree of training imposed on both agents and pilots, which engendered complete confidence between the two. In many cases they knew each other personally, having taken part as trainees or instructors on the same courses. Moreover, because the operations were prima facie so difficult and dangerous, special care was always taken in arranging them. The agents' reports on the ground were very detailed and were always supplemented by photographic reconnaissance of the grounds by the R.A.F. But after everything else has been taken into consideration, the skill and daring of the pilots concerned in navigating an aircraft - in the case of Lysanders singlehanded - to a point sometimes hundreds of miles within enemy-occupied country, and in landing at night on a strange field known to them only by description and photograph, remains the principal reason for the success of this type of operation.

#### 11. Failures and Losses:

(See Appendices H, I and J)

The difficulties and hazards of S.D. operations inevitably resulted in a proportion of wasted effort. Success here did not depend entirely on the R.A.F.: unlike their other operations,

supply dropping required the help of trained assistants on the ground. In bombing the pilot could be certain that his target was there - even though he could not see it; but a Reception Committee did not, and could not, attain such reliability. The pilot had his own special problems, arising principally from the need for absolutely accurate navigation and low level night flying; the Reception Committee faced all the dangers of clandestine life. Arrests, curfew times, German patrols, jamming of the B.B.C., the difficulties of obtaining torch batteries, the problem of transport; all these, and many other circumstances might prevent the Reception Committee from being present on the ground, or, if there, from being seen. The position in the field altered not only from day to day but from hour to hour, and there might not be time to warn the R.A.F. of the changed conditions. In spite of all that skill and staff work could do there remained a wide margin of luck. Every separate S.D. operation was, to some extent, a chancy affair and its success required good fortune as well as good management.

The success/sortie ratio was therefore often disappointing. For the U.K.-based aircraft, operating into countries where Resistance could only exist clandestinely, the average proportion of successful flights on dropping operations varied between 45% and 65%. In the later stages, improved methods and the relaxation of German control increased the chances of success. For landing operations the proportion was considerably higher: between 75% and 85%.

In the countries served from the Mediterranean bases the situation on the ground was easier and the proportion of successful sorties was higher than that achieved from England:

on Yugoslav operations, an average of nearly 80% of the total sorties were successful, on Greek 80%. Of flights to Poland, 49% were successful: a very high figure in view of the special difficulties of operations to Poland, and achieved partly by the determination of the Polish Underground Army not to waste a sortie and partly by the skill of pilots operating at extreme range over difficult country.

Of the sorties which were unsuccessful, by far the largest number failed for one of two reasons: bad weather, or "No Reception Committee". The need for absolutely accurate navigation enhanced the importance of good weather conditions. An average of 25% of the unsuccessful sorties was due to bad weather conditions. In the winter months this proportion might rise to as high as 35%. The exact number of operations which failed because the Reception Committee were not present on the agreed spot at the agreed time is difficult to determine. In a number of cases when the pilot reported that, after locating the pinpoint he had been unable to find the Reception Committee, the organisers in the field insisted that the Reception Committee had in fact been present. There is no doubt, however, that a very large proportion of the failures was due to the to the Reception Committee's inability - no doubt through circumstances beyond its control - to keep its appointment. The reason for over a third of the failures, on an average, was recorded as "No Reception".

The remaining unsuccessful sorties were due to a variety of causes. A proportion varying between 5% and 15% was due to navigation, the pilot himself reporting that he had got lost. A smaller number failed owing to engine trouble or other mechanical failure in the aircraft. In a number of cases - a

proportion varying considerably - the aircraft failed to return, although sometimes information was received from the field that the operation had been completed, and the aircraft had presumably crashed on its return.

On the whole, the proportion of aircraft lost on S.D. work was extraordinarily small. (see Appendix J for details). In Western Europe it never exceeded the Main Force ratio, and was usually substantially lower. On French operations the number of aircraft lost varied between 1.5% and 3% of the total sorties: in Holland and Belgium it was a good deal higher. The Scandinavian losses averaged roughly 2.5%. The situation was even better for the Mediterranean-based aircraft operating into Central Europe and the Balkans: over the whole period only approximately .1% of the aircraft flying on S.D. work failed to return. For Polish operations the normal loss ratio was 2%: but in the attempt to fly supplies to Warsaw the losses suffered were as high as 25%.

The low incidence of loss among the pick-up aircraft was even more surprising. In France, only two Lysanders were lost in the four years during which 112 landing operations (including twenty Dakotas) were successfully completed, and of these one pilot was successfully brought out later. In Yugoslavia, up to June 1944, five aircraft were lost for 186 successful operations; and in Greece nine landing operations were carried out up to the end of 1943 but no aircraft were lost.

#### 12. S.O.E. assisting Air Force escapees.

On many occasions the crews of aircraft that crashed in



enemy-occupied country were looked after by S.O.E.'s Resistance Groups in the field and were guided over the frontier into neutral countries. Sometimes landing operations were laid on by S.O.E. to evacuate such personnel. Several of the S.D. crews were assisted in this way by the men in the field for whose sake they had undertaken the operations. The crew of an S.D. aircraft that crashed in Denmark, for instance, was sent over to Sweden within a matter of days. A number of aircrews baling out over France were escorted to Switzerland or Spain. Perhaps the most interesting case was that of S/L Griffiths who, after his aircraft had crashed on Operation Pimento 12 leaving him the sole survivor, joined the Maquis and after many adventures eventually reached Switzerland.

The total figure for the number of airmen who escaped from Western Europe through S.O.E. channels, including R.A.F., U.S.A.A.F., R.C.A.F., and R.A.A.F. is as follows: (there is no record before September 1943):

<u>September - December 1943.</u>	40
<u>1944</u>	245
<u>1945</u>	45
	<hr/>
Total	330
	<hr/>

13. Assistance given by the R.A.F. to S.O.E., other than S.D. operations.

The help which the R.A.F. gave to S.O.E. was not confined to S.D. operations, although these were by far its largest contribution. Normal bombing operations were sometimes mounted by the R.A.F. at the request of Resistance Groups in the field, and moreover the Air Force were able to supply S.O.E. with air

transport, with stores and equipment, and with personnel, both Staff officers and agents.

#### Bombing.

There were a number of occasions on which Resistance Groups in the field found themselves in urgent need of assistance by Allied bombers, since some of the opposition with which they were faced was too strong for them to deal with by the ordinary methods of sabotage and guerilla attack. Targets for which bombing was requested by the field included Gestapo and Quisling Headquarters, local enemy troop headquarters and enemy units who were attacking the Resistance strongholds. There were also occasions on which S.O.E. Officers in the field were able to give information on military targets. In 1941-1942 two members of the Air Ministry Bomb Target Section were transferred to S.O.E., and S.O.E. were represented at every weekly meeting of the Bomb Targets Committee at Air Ministry. Industrial records and often plans of every factory of importance were thus available to S.O.E. through this arrangement, while Bomber Command received a corresponding benefit.

SHAEF/17240/  
10/Ops. of  
15 May 44.

Requests for bombing received from Western Europe by S.O.E. were forwarded to the Air Ministry for such action as they considered practicable. A procedure for handling such requests for air assistance to Resistance Groups was laid down. This procedure worked smoothly as regards the actual passing of the requests, but in view of the many other calls on air effort it was not possible to give sufficient priority to Resistance targets. It was decided, however, that the procedure was adequate and should be maintained. A letter from S.H.A.E.F.

SHAEF/17240/10/  
Ops. (C) of  
30 July 44

to S.F.H.Q., S.O.E. reported that the Army Liaison Section at Air Headquarters of S.H.A.E.F. were fully apprised of the urgency of meeting requests for air assistance from Resistance Groups. Requests of this nature should be transmitted by S.O.E. to the Ops. 'C' Sub-Section at S.H.A.E.F. (Main) who would notify S.O.E. on the acceptance of the proposed targets, and forward requests without delay to the Liaison Section at Air Headquarters.

SHAEF/R/A/HEPW/  
DO of  
17 November 44

In November 1944 this procedure was slightly elaborated S.O.E. was to signal bombing requirements to their representative at S.H.A.E.F. Air Main, repeating the signal from S.H.A.E.F. Air Rear. If urgent action was required S.H.A.E.F. Air Rear would clear the operation with S.H.A.E.F. Air Main in the shortest possible time, but would only take action on S.O.E.'s requests if speed was essential, as it was important that the two Staffs should not concern themselves with the same operational problems.

Difficulties were sometimes experienced in obtaining the agreement of the Allied Governments concerned to the bombing of targets within their countries and this necessity for political clearance sometimes involved delay. Operations were flown either by the Tactical Air Force or, if it was considered more suitable, by Bomber Command. In Western Europe there were only a limited number of bombing attacks carried out at the request of Resistance Groups, two of the most spectacular and successful being the attacks on the Gestapo Headquarters in Copenhagen and Oslo.

In the Mediterranean requests for such special air assistance were forwarded by S.O.E. to M.A.A.F. (or B.A.F. or M.A.T.A.F.) who dealt with them as and when conditions permitted. When the front was moving it was difficult for S.O.E. to get facilities for bombing operations since all bomber aircraft were engaged on tactical work in support of the current military operations.

During the static periods, however, bombing operations in support of, or on information supplied by, Resistance Groups in the field was provided by the Air Forces very generously. Information on troop movements, for instance, was signalled by agents in the field to S.O.(M) and passed to the appropriate military authorities who arranged for bombardment. A particularly flexible W/T system was established whereby information was passed to the Air Forces until the last possible moment. Diversionary bombing to cover sabotage attacks was also undertaken by the Air Forces based in the Mediterranean Theatre, and sabotage and bombing were used as complementary methods of attack to an unusual degree.

#### Air Transport.

By the nature of its work, S.O.E. required to use air transport facilities to a considerable extent, and in the transportation of S.O.E. personnel overseas by air, the Air Ministry gave generously of its own limited resources.

In 1941 the air transport situation was very bad indeed. The most crowded route was England to Cairo. The B.O.A.C., operating a service to Cairo via West Africa, ran one aircraft every ten days which carried five passengers, and these seats were sought after by all Government departments. Bombers going out to reinforce the Air Forces in the Middle East occasionally carried passengers, but the priority had to be very high indeed to displace the urgently required operational spares normally carried by these aircraft.

As a result of the congestion and uncertainty of this route - often a selected passenger was turned off at the last moment to make room for someone with an even higher priority -

it was quicker to send passengers for Cairo to West Africa by sea and from there by air to Cairo and, when this route too became congested, by sea to Durban and then on by air.

In March 1941 a priorities board was formed to collate and grade the various applications for air passages to the Middle East and onwards and to allocate seats on the aircraft available, both British and American. Since the formation of the Board S.O.E. was always given fair treatment whenever adequate reasons were quoted for the passages requested.

Another congested route was the one operated by B.O.A.C. with K.L.M. crews from England to Lisbon. Although this was a daily service it was the only air link with the American trans-Atlantic Clipper and with enemy-occupied Europe, and bookings had normally to be made about three weeks in advance. However the Air Ministry were very helpful in unloading passengers, and sometimes freight, so as to carry S.O.E. passengers at short notice.

In addition to these regular services, B.O.A.C. operated an irregular service to Stockholm from which S.O.E. derived the most benefit. At first the only aircraft available for use on this flight was an old Lockheed, but this was later augmented by three Hudsons, and by two Lodestars purchased from America by the Norwegian Government. Some Witleys were added and later some Dakotas operated by American A.T.C. crews. Mosquitos were also used on this route, the passengers travelling in the bomb bay.

In spite of the number of aircraft available it was never possible to operate a regular service to Stockholm as it was so dependent on the weather, and the aircraft were liable to be attacked when passing over the tip of German-occupied Norway.

As air transport facilities increased, B.O.A.C. and

more frequent and varied it became obvious that special  
for R.A.F. equipment, and as the requests from S.O.E. became  
A.I.10, as an Intelligence branch, had no power to indent  
among these were rubber dinghies and sorbo rubber pads for  
for operations and for use in the United Kingdom. Earliest  
certain articles of equipment which would be very useful both  
Early in 1941 S.O.E. began to find that the R.A.F. possessed  
Equipment.

public funds.  
S.O.E., all costs being charged by Air Ministry to normal  
Since June 1942 no air passages have been paid for by

Italy.....	218	China.....	2
North Africa.....	81	Switzerland.....	3
India & Ceylon.....	354	Tangier.....	2
Australia.....	33	Iceland.....	1
" (sea/air).....	3	Moscow.....	3
Cairo.....	37	Athens.....	1
New York.....	14	Leopoldville.....	1
Gibraltar.....	11	Tehran.....	1
Lisbon.....	13	France.....	20
Madrid.....	9	To and from Shetlands.....	210

1st June 1944 - 31st May 1945

U.K. to Lisbon.....	78	To and from Shetlands.....	81
Takoradi to Cairo.....	43	West Africa.....	2
Durban " ".....	10	Belfast.....	5
Cairo (direct).....	2	Russia.....	1
Far East " ".....	3	New York.....	2
" " via Durban.....	3	Toronto.....	5
" " Takoradi.....	5		

1941

Transport Command carried an increasing number of S.O.E.  
passengers, and the following approximate figures will give  
some idea of the extent to which S.O.E. is indebted to them  
and particularly to the kindness and patience of the staff of  
Transport Command and A.C. Admin. Air Ministry.

arrangements would have to be made to deal with them. Eventually, after some discussion, A.M.S.O.'s department at the Air Ministry agreed that all requests for R.A.F. equipment should be initialled by A.C.A.S. (I) or his representative and passed to a central equipment branch who would authorise the issue of the equipment which would then be struck off charge and no further accounting action taken.

At first this arrangement only covered normal Air Force stores, but in September 1941 it was decided to include containers and parachutes, which had formerly been made by Air Ministry contractors but had been paid for in cash by S.O.E.

The following are the approximate figures of containers and parachutes received from the R.A.F. (N.B. Containers and parachutes made locally in India and the Middle East are not included.)

ISSUE OF SUPPLY DROPPING EQUIPMENT TO ALL THEATRES

MIDDLE EAST

	<u>Approx.</u>
Parachutes, Container, 28'	20,000
Containers, Type "C"	10,000
Containers, Type "H"	200

N. AFRICA

Parachutes, Container, 28'	25,000
Containers, Type "C"	14,000
Containers, Type "H"	8,000

ITALY

Parachutes, Container, 28'	100,000
Containers, Type "C" & C.L.E.	26,000
Containers, Type "H"	20,000
Parachutes, Type "X"	500

INDIA

Parachutes, Container, 28'	30,000
Container, Type "C"	20,000
Container, Type "H"	16,000
Parachutes, Type "X"	2,000

AUSTRALIAApprox.

Parachutes, Container, 28'	500
Containers, Type "C"	510
Containers, Type "H"	120

U.K.

Parachutes, Container, 28'	150,000
Containers Type "C" & "H"	116,250
Parachutes, Type "X"	3,150

Since this arrangement came into operation early in 1941 S.O.E. received from the R.A.F. what was virtually a gift of many millions of pounds worth of equipment including such things as machine guns, air-sea rescue boats, wireless transmitters and receivers, generators, mobile wireless workshops, motor vans, flying clothing and countless valves, plugs and sockets and other wireless parts. Some of S.O.E.'s wireless stations were largely equipped with material supplied from R.A.F. sources. In addition, the Air Ministry photographic staff carried out much work in connection with the reproduction of codes for use in the field.

Personnel.

As far as personnel were concerned S.O.E. obtained from the Air Force the Services of a number of senior and junior R.A.F. and W.A.A.F. officers and a small number of other ranks. Some of these were used on work concerned with Air Operations, in Sections such as the Air Liaison Section while others took their place in S.O.E.'s Country Sections and in other S.O.E. Departments. Sixteen R.A.F. officers and 10 W.A.A.F. officers volunteered for duty as agents in the field, the Air Ministry agreeing to give special commissions in the W.A.A.F. to a number of the brave women who were under S.O.E. training. One of the most outstanding of these was W/Cdr. Yeo Thomas, who carried out three separate missions to France, acting as a senior British Liaison



Officer to the Fighting French organisations. On his last mission he was captured by the Gestapo, and after fifteen months in various prisons and camps, including Buchenwald, succeeded in making his escape.

### PART III

#### RESISTANCE IN EUROPE

The outline story of Resistance in the occupied countries necessarily follows in general the same pattern, although the details and the timing may vary considerably. The organisation of sabotage groups and Secret Armies can be divided into three main stages:- the pioneer phase, in which organisers and W/T operators are dropped in order to contact indigenous Resistance movements and report on their potentialities; the second period, which may last some years, of building up the groups which have been initiated and contacted, of encouraging clandestine sabotage activity and preparing the ground for offensive action later; and the final stage, not necessarily attained in every country, in which large and well-equipped partisan formations are in a position to take the offensive against the occupying forces.

Within this broad framework, however, the tempo and efficiency of Resistance activities might vary considerably. In Germany and its satellite countries it might never be possible to get beyond the first phase: in the more bitterly resistant of the occupied countries the third stage might be reached long before the Allied Forces were able to land and take part in military operations with them. In other areas, such as Scandinavia, where there was less necessity and less scope for guerilla activities, the organisation of Resistance activity might reach its fullest development in the second stage.

In analysing the work carried out by S.O.E. with the help of the R.A.F. it is convenient to divide the countries of occupied Europe into three categories: those in the West (France, Holland, Belgium, Norway and Denmark) which were served throughout the whole period mainly by aircraft based on the U.K.; Central Europe, (Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria) which were served during the early years from the U.K. and later from Mediterranean bases; and the countries of Southern Europe and the Balkans (Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Albania, Crete and Corsica), to which stores were delivered by aircraft based first in North Africa and later in Italy itself. It is worth emphasising, in fairness to the people of the occupied countries themselves, that this brief record is concerned only with their operational activities. The work which they carried out for the Intelligence Services is not considered here.

A. Western Europe - supplied by U.K. and Algiers based aircraft.

1. France.

(See Appendices H.1 & 2 and I.2 for details of S.D. Operations to France.)

By the winter of 1940-41, S.O.E.'s first recruits were ready to go to the field, and the earliest operations carried out included the dropping of coup-de-main teams in France. The reports of the members of those teams (who had been sent in by the "Independent" French Section of S.O.E.), convinced General de Gaulle that Resistance was a force to be reckoned with, and after some persuasion the Fighting French proceeded to make their own contacts with the Resistance movements in France through S.O.E. A Fighting French Section was accordingly set up in S.O.E. to work in liaison with General de Gaulle's staff, but the Independent circuits already established were maintained and expanded, since it was

recognised in this country that many Frenchmen, although definitely anti-German, were not pro-de Gaulle. From the beginning, H.M.G. reserved its right to contact any Resistance element in France of whatever political faction, while at the same time giving General de Gaulle such facilities as he needed for his own work. In a letter from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of November 1941, it was laid down that:

"H.M.G. must be free to co-operate  
meanwhile with any Frenchmen who are willing  
to aid the common cause."

The continued existence of the British controlled circuits in France was a perennial bone of contention between de Gaulle and H.M.G. But the soundness of our policy was proved both by the extent of the support given by Frenchmen in France to the Independent organisations, and the consequent success of their work, and by the higher standard of security which was attained. Security is an indispensable condition of existence for clandestine organisations but was also, apparently, an idea foreign to the officers of Fighting French Headquarters. If all the subversive organisations in France had been under the control of Fighting French H.Q., it is unlikely a network of efficient and active circuits could have been maintained in the face of the repeated Gestapo drives. As it was, the existence of the two organisations allowed for complementary activities and for planning in duplication and in depth. Moreover, they were on occasions able to be of assistance to each other: for example the Leader of the Resistance Movement "Liberation", a de Gaulle contact and a later member of the Provisional Government, was brought to this country by the Independent French Section

at the General's request.

The methods used by the two sections were very different. The nucleus of the Independent French circuit was the organiser with his W/T operator: British officers were generally employed, and round these centres small watertight circuits were gradually built up all over France. If the Gestapo succeeded in breaking up a circuit a new organiser would be sent to the area and the work would begin again. In general the size of these circuits was limited; in some cases it became considerable, but a large organisation nearly always proved insecure in the long run, and the organisers were instructed to confine themselves to establishing small bodies of well trained and entirely reliable men. Fighting French Headquarters, on the other hand, for political reasons, aimed at reaching the masses of the French people. General de Gaulle, having failed to create his own Resistance Movement responsible directly to him, began in 1942 to try to make contact with those indigenous Resistance Movements already in existence. To this end French Liaison Officers and W/T operators were despatched, together with a co-ordinator to control their activities, and Resistance Leaders and politicians representing every shade of French political opinion were brought back to this country. By the end of the year most of the great Resistance Movements had agreed to recognise de Gaulle's military, though not his political, leadership.

By the autumn of 1941 information showed that sabotage in France was on the increase. In September, nineteen separate sabotage "incidents" on communications were reported together with a number of fires which had damaged petrol stocks and lorries. The coup-de-main operation "Josephine" had succeeded in affecting the electrical supply for a wide area around Bordeaux, and the

Germans were offering a one million franc reward for information leading to the arrest of saboteurs. The turntables at Le Mans were put out of action, and the first Lysander pick-up operation was successfully carried out in this month.

This operation is perhaps worth recording in greater detail. The officer who was to be picked up had engaged rooms in a hotel about 15 kilometres from the landing ground, for himself and a French assistant. On the evening of the day on which he heard the warning B.B.C. message the hotel was visited by the Police who examined the papers of every person staying there, and prevented his leaving the hotel until sometime after he had planned. When they were at last free, he and his assistant took to their bicycles and throughout a hot summer evening cycled furiously along the hilly roads of France, in an effort to make up for lost time. As they neared the landing ground they could hear the Lysander circling above them in the darkness, and since they were already very late, they were afraid that the pilot might soon decide to abandon the attempt if they did not show their flare-path quickly. They, therefore, chose the nearest field which, as far as they could see, would be suitable for the operation, climbed over the hedge, and laid out the flare-path. The Lysander landed without mishap. It had brought over another officer who now quickly climbed out while the returning organiser took his place after a brief hand-shake. The 'plane took off but on its way hit the telegraph wires alongside the road and several yards of wire became attached to the 'plane. On reaching England the pilot found thick ground mist and at the same time his wireless failed.

Listeners at the aerodrome heard him circling around and he was given his direction by search-light signals. Meanwhile, the officer who had landed was quietly setting off along the road when he heard a voice hailing him. This was the Frenchman who had assisted in laying the flare-path. However, he was not to know this, and immediately assuming it was the Police he set off at a great speed, hotly pursued by the eager Frenchman who was encumbered with two bicycles.

In spite of this series of misfortunes, the operation had succeeded, and the Lysander brought back important reports from the field.

During the winter of 1941-42, more organisers and W/T operators were dropped both to the Occupied and the Unoccupied zones. The weather was poor, however, and the number of successful sorties was small. In April and May it was discovered that some of the subversive groups had been penetrated by the Gestapo, but new plans were ready, new men were sent to the field, and the work went on. A coup-de-main attack by Fighting French agents on Radio Paris wireless station, the main channel for Axis and collaborationist propaganda, was extremely successful.

In the autumn more stores were dropped and five Lysander operations were completed bringing out from France, among others, some senior Staff officers of the Fighting French Organisations. The first water-drop was carried out in the December/January moon period when an organiser with his W/T operator were successfully dropped into a lake.

The effect of the Allied invasion of North Africa was to enhance the French sense of alliance and participation, and the consequent German occupation of Southern France, while immediate-

ly unfortunate since it resulted in many arrests, caused a powerful resurgence of patriot feeling of which S.O.E. was not slow to take advantage.

At the beginning of 1943 the Independent French Section sent into France an officer specially trained for pick-up operations. The number of landing operations increased. In March, the first reports were received of the existence of Maquis groups in the Haute Savoie. The Germans, in an effort to relieve their man-power shortage were now making serious efforts to conscript labour from the occupied countries, and many young men preferred outlawry in the mountains to deportation to Germany. The existence of these Patriot Groups was a considerable problem to S.O.E., who had not sufficient aircraft resources to maintain them in hiding against the inevitable German counter-measures, and who, moreover, were afraid that large deliveries of stores to them might encourage premature revolt in France. It was decided that a limited quantity of stores, sufficient to keep the Maquis alive, should be despatched, and in the March/April moon period a quantity of food, 270 Stens, and 1,350 Grenades were sent to the Haute Savoie. A British Staff officer was despatched to France with a senior Staff officer from Fighting French Headquarters to review and report on the position generally.

The weather throughout the summer of 1943 was fortunately good, and the R.A.F. made an outstanding effort. In the April/May moon period 331 containers were sent to the field, in the July/August moon, 660, August September, 1,446, which included 10,000 Stens, 2,600 pistols, 20,000 Grenades and nearly 18 tons of high explosive in addition to essential wireless equipment. Over the September moon period, an average of  $7\frac{1}{2}$



flights per crew was made - or an operation more often than every other night.

The response to the increased quantity of stores delivered was terrific. In April one organiser reported that his group alone wrecked several railway engines a month. In June, 14,000,000 litres of alcohol in a distillery at Saint L'Aumont, and 1,000 tons of rubber at the Michelin factory at Clermont Ferrand were destroyed. By the summer rail cuts, attacks on rolling stocks, and train derailments, had reached a daily average of 100, and so intense was the sabotage activity that the Germans were led to believe that the Allied invasion was impending. The Hispano Suiza works and Tarbes were virtually put out of action. A Transformer station at Le Creusot was damaged by a coup-de-main team, and the attack on the Gigny Dam, scheduled to coincide with the invasion of Sicily, succeeded in preventing for five weeks the transport southward along the Saone of German naval craft. In September 1943, the total strength of the Independent Groups was estimated at 100/200,000 men, and in addition powerful Fighting French groups were directed and equipped by S.O.E. in collaboration with Fighting French H.Q. Attacks on German personnel had succeeded in killing 800 and wounding 8,500 during the previous six months. Damage to railways had been very great and over 200 locomotives and 2,000 waggons had been affected.

During the autumn the volume of supplies fell off, as a result of poorer weather, but sabotage continued on a high level. An aviation fuel dump for the aerodrome at Istres (1 million litres) and 12 million litres of oil at Varennes-le-Grand were destroyed. Attacks on waterways were extremely successful: in one "incident" the Rhine/Marne Canal was

emptied for a stretch of 17 miles.

A second attack on the Gigny barrage once more closed the Saone to shipping. In November, a British officer recently returned from a two months tour of inspection in France reported that the rank and file of Resistance was sound and pro-British: the officers on higher levels were less reliable, being pre-occupied with the question of "prise de pouvoir."

The establishment of an S.O.E. Mission at Algiers (Massingham) and an S.D. base at Blida enabled operations to be carried out into Southern France - an area difficult to reach from England. S.D. operations were first attempted from here during the second half of 1943, but it was not until the beginning of 1944 that, with increased aircraft resources and better weather, they reached a significant level.

Two new developments in the technique of relating sabotage to bombing were made during the autumn of this year. An S.O.E. officer in France reported that the workmen and management of one of the Peugeot factories were prepared themselves to sabotage the works provided that the R.A.F. should refrain from bombing them. After consultation with the Air Ministry, S.O.E. replied that the factory must be put out of action for at least six months, and photographs must be produced in order to substantiate the claims of the saboteurs. The sabotage was successfully executed. In the months that followed this "Blackmail" technique was developed further, and several factories were put out of action by either the workmen or the management, who preferred this method to bombing raids by the R.A.F.

Among the stoutest Resistance supporters were the "Cheminots"

who themselves suffered considerable loss of life as a result of the R.A.F. train-busting activities. On November 15th,

unreferenced, the Minister of Economic Warfare wrote to the Prime Minister, attached as Annex to COS(43) on the subject of fighter attacks on French locomotives. 287th Meeting.

"S.O.E. agents returning from France have for some time past called attention to the disproportionate loss of life among drivers and firemen of locomotives attacked by Fighter Command aircraft in comparison with the damage done to the locomotives themselves. The French assert that the average period for which the locomotives are out of action after attack is between 36 and 48 hours whereas many drivers and firemen have been killed.

"Our agents emphasised the adverse effect of these attacks on the morale of the S.N.C.F., the Trade Union of railwaymen, who are among S.O.E.'s best contacts and wholeheartedly working for the Allies."

The message went on to cite the example of the Peugeot factory, and reported that S.O.E. had now received information that effective sabotage had resulted in putting the plant completely out of action for one month and to the extent of 70% of its capacity for a further five months.

"If S.O.E. can make bargains on behalf of the R.A.F. we may be able to get the necessary damage done better and without sacrificing French lives."

He therefore asked that the Chiefs of Staff Directive to Fighter Command on the subject of locomotive attacks should be rescinded.

The Chiefs of Staff considered the problem at their 287th Meeting. Sir Douglas Evill said that the Air Ministry had gone into the question and were prepared to agree with the views expressed by Lord Selborne. Operations against locomotives in enemy-occupied N.W. Europe had now been cancelled.

"S.O.E. had been informed of the action taken and had been invited to do everything possible to interfere with transportation by stepping-up sabotage operations on the French railway system."

The railway workers played their part, and in the event more locomotives were put out of action through sabotage than had been possible by air attack. This policy was to the material advantage of the French people, and of Fighter Command.

D-Day plans for France were by thistime fairly well-developed, and the tremendous increase in the number of S.D. aircraft in the early months of 1944 led to an increase in the quantity of stores sent to the field. In many areas the Maquis had now for some time been in open revolt. In the Haute Savoie, regular German Army divisions had finally had to be employed in the effort to overrun the Maquis strongholds. Allied Missions, consisting of British, American and French officers, were despatched to the chief Maquis areas to strengthen and direct Resistance activity, and a large proportion of the supplementary air lift was used to send stores and supplies to these areas. The arming of groups in strategic areas such as Normandy was clearly desirable: but the Cover plan laid down by S.H.A.E.F. decreed that at least twice - sometimes three times - as much material should go into the area north of the Seine as into Normandy. The first fast dropping operation was carried out in January 1944, when a Mosquito delivered a small package of money, and W/T equipment to the field. This type of operation was never widely employed, but on some occasions was invaluable.

In April, the Timken ball-bearing factory was put out of action by "Blackmail" sabotage. The volume of sabotage activity was now rising steeply. As a result of the increased air deliveries of the last few months, Resistance was now

well-equipped to play its part within the general military strategy. On June 1st the "warning" signal for the D-Day plans were transmitted, and these were followed on the evening before D-Day by the "action" messages. The subversive groups all over France went into action; and a very high proportion of the allotted targets was attacked. News of the Invasion of France stimulated Resistance activity to the highest possible pitch, and thousands of Frenchmen joined the Maquis Groups. The Germans found themselves faced with a continual disruption of their lines of communication: attacks on railways and roads delayed the employment of reinforcements to the Bridgehead area, telephone communications were constantly put out of action, so that the Germans were unable to issue orders to their subordinate formations and in many areas the Maquis, at last taking the offensive, was able to attack individual German units. The mass daylight operations by the 8th U.S.A.A.F. supplied the guerilla groups with quantities of arms and ammunition, and the execution of both Overlord and Anvill was materially assisted by the action of the Resistance forces behind the enemy lines. Deliveries were continued to the still unliberated areas of France until the winter

## 2. Holland

(See Appendix H.5 for details of S.D. operations to Holland)

Holland was among the most difficult of the Occupied countries in which to organise Resistance. The tough, stubborn nature of its people and its important geographical position made it one of the areas most severely controlled and suppressed by the Germans. Moreover it is a small country, very flat, and well-populated; there are practically no districts in which the nature of the terrain lends itself to Maquis work. In

Holland Resistance organisations had to remain clandestine or be liquidated: there was no possibility of retreat to the hills.

The first officers to be despatched to Holland were dropped on 7th September 1941, and consisted of two couriers whose mission was to establish contact with local Resistance movements. In November an organiser and W/T operator were dropped, and in December the first W/T message was received. During 1942, a small number of operations were completed, delivering a quantity of stores and more agents to the field. The building up of clandestine organisations went on slowly throughout the winter and spring of 1943. In the last three days of the June moon period 25 containers and 4 packages were despatched to the field, but the high percentage of aircraft losses on Missions to Holland caused the Air Ministry to cancel all operations to Holland for three months. In September it was agreed that two sorties should be attempted, but neither aircraft returned from its Mission. In November it was confirmed that the para-military organisation in Holland had been penetrated by the Gestapo some months previously and must be considered as a total loss. Air operations to Holland were once more cancelled.

DDI2/441/43 of  
4th September  
1943

It is unlikely that the high percentage of loss on supply dropping operations to Holland was a result of the enemy's knowledge of the Resistance movements. From the Gestapo point of view, the shooting down of a few English bombers could not be as valuable as the knowledge of Resistance plans which they could continue to acquire so long as the British were in ignorance of the fact that the organisations

were penetrated. The less attention that was drawn to them, the longer they might continue to play a double game. It is more likely that the aircraft lost were due to the normal enemy anti-aircraft defence measures. At this time, when Bomber Command was making a series of major attacks on the Ruhr and the Rhineland, both the ack-ack and the night fighter defences in Holland were formidable. Moreover, supply dropping bombers, flying singly and usually low, were easily tracked in by the enemy and were an easy prey to his fighter aircraft.

In spite of the loss of so much of the Resistance organisation, information from Holland showed clearly that the Resistance spirit itself was still very much alive. At the beginning of 1944, the Air Ministry agreed to undertake operations to Holland once more, although these were to be limited at first to the "blind" dropping of agents. More officers and W/T operators were sent in, and the work of contacting and establishing Resistance Groups was begun again from the beginning. A tremendous leeway had to be made up, however, since the quantity of stores delivered to the field was already well behind schedule.

Sabotage in Holland was encouraged by the news of the Allied landing in June, and in August S.O.E. was able to report that the principal Resistance Movement (R.V.V.) was sound. Aircraft losses were still high, however: out of a total of nine sorties three had been lost between May and August. In September, a vastly increased quantity of stores was delivered. Two operations had been successfully completed in August: in September 42 out of 86 sorties were successful, delivering 111 tons of stores to the field. In November there was another wave of arrests in the country, but the impetus of Resistance

was by now too powerful to be checked. Operations continued on a small scale in the winter of 1944 and the spring of 1945, and in March 25 out of 40 sorties were successful.

Despite the limitations imposed on it by the severity of the German control and by the difficulty of delivering supplies by air, Dutch Resistance had played a not unworthy part. The sabotage of communications and waterways throughout the country, which had been continued over most of the period, with increased enthusiasm after the invasion of France, provided the enemy with a considerable problem. The flooding of large areas of the country was the only answer the Germans could find to the tough and resilient spirit of the Dutch.

### 3 Belgium.

(See Appendices H.3 & H.4 for details of S.D. operations to Belgium)

By the summer of 1941 reports from Belgium of fires and industrial sabotage showed that the spirit of Resistance was active here too, and organisers and W/T operators were despatched to the field in the autumn. The first agent, who had been dropped on the night of 12/13th May, sent his first message on 14th September, reporting that he had been landed about forty miles N.E. of his intended pinpoint; that he had found himself on the Germans side of the border in a prohibited area, and had had great difficulty in escaping to Belgium. Not until four months afterwards was he able to contact one of the S.O.E. wireless operators whom he had known in this country, and report on the progress he had made. He stated that he had been busy organising sabotage groups, and that the Belgians were waiting impatiently for help to be sent to them from England. When the necessary materials could be delivered



there was a great deal of good work to be done.

Bad weather during the winter of 1941-42 limited the number of successful operations, but in the spring the quantity of stores delivered began to increase to about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tons per month. Industrial sabotage, and attacks on communications began to increase. In September, a big power station was attacked, and in November an attack on railways and locomotives carried out by saboteurs under cover of an R.A.F. raid was partially successful. Bad weather prevented the R.A.F. from taking part on the scale originally planned, and only a few Intruder aircraft were used. The careful timing of this operation necessitated the establishment of daily communications with the field who were not, however, warned that the R.A.F. would be helping them in their work.

COS(42)386(0)  
of 7th Nov.  
1942.

S.O.E.'s work in organising Resistance work in Belgium was severely handicapped by the lack of co-operation by the Belgian Government. In spite of the C.I.G.S.'s Memorandum outlining S.O.E.'s responsibility as the co-ordinating authority dealing with the General Staffs of the Allied Governments of the occupied territories, and in contrast to the loyal and cordial co-operation received from the Belgian General Staff, the Belgian Government broke off relations with S.O.E. in August 1942. By November, S.O.E. had again established relations with the Belgian Government, but the task of obtaining help and support from them was always difficult.

It was discovered in the autumn of 1942 that the Gestapo had succeeded in penetrating many of the subversive organisations in Belgium and only two of the S.O.E. groups could be regarded as reliable (the same two that had carried out the locomotive attack). Once more the work had to begin again; but Belgian Resistance

was luckier than Dutch in that there was more time for reorganisation, and for the despatch of new officers and stores. Aircraft losses in Belgium, although higher than those in France, never reached the Dutch level, and during 1943 operations continued to this country. In September 1943 S.O.E. reported that contact with Belgian Resistance movements had been maintained and a total of some 350 containers had been sent into the country. Sabotage was continuing although it was less successful than in some other countries. In the winter bad weather once more curtailed the number of successful operations, but by the spring the number was increasing. In May, 32 out of 62 sorties were successful, and although on the Allied invasion, Belgian Resistance was still sadly under-equipped, the execution of their D-Day plans was carried out with proportionately even greater success than in France.

Between 10th and 20th June, 153 sabotage operations were carried out including a high percentage of road and railway destruction. Sabotage of telecommunications was widespread and effective. During July, clandestine attacks on all types of communications increased - 800 rail cuts were reported together with 42 derailments, and the destruction or damage of 65 road and railway bridges. A daylight operation carried out by the 8th U.S.A.A.F. to the Belgian Ardennes, where a large number of insurgents had found refuge, delivered a considerable quantity of stores to the Belgian Maquis, who were able to take the offensive and carry out minor harassing attacks on German formations. The liberation of large areas of France increased the number of aircraft available for supply dropping operations to Belgium, and stores continued

to pour into the country. At the request of the Army authorities, Belgian Resistance carried out a large number of mopping up operations, and in this way dealt with many isolated German units. Highly successful anti-scorch action of vital importance to the Allied Armies operating against Germany was completely successful, especially in Antwerp. By October 1944, the work was done, and Belgium, thanks in part to the efforts of her own patriots, had been liberated.

#### 4. Norway.

(See Appendices H.10 & H.11 for details of S.D. operations to Norway)

By the autumn of 1941 direct W/T contact had been established with the military organisation of Resistance in Oslo. The R.A.F. raid on the capital was reported to have had a tonic effect and its success facilitated S.O.E.'s work in the direction of Resistance. An example of the type of minor sabotage carried out in all the occupied countries was given by a Norwegian nurse who escaped to England and reported that Norwegian hospital staffs, ordered to hand over blankets to the German authorities, had caused them to be infected with scabies before complying with the order. Bad weather in the winter limited the number of successful operations: this was particularly unfortunate since operations to Norway could not be flown during the summer months owing to the distance involved and the short hours of darkness. One of the last operations carried out in the spring of 1942 was the successful landing of a Catalina, which delivered two couriers and special stores to the Norwegian Resistance Groups.

Operations were resumed in September, but the weather was still unfavourable, and the number of successes was small. The R.A.F. raid on the Knaben mines on 3rd March 1943, was based to

a considerable extent on intelligence provided by S.O.E. who were also able afterwards to report that the main objective had been demolished. In February the coup-de-main party "Gunnarside", that had been standing-by for some months was at last sent to the field, and carried out its attack on the Norsk Hydro Heavy Water plant with amazing success. Now that the story of the research on the atomic bomb is told, the importance of this attack, which destroyed the German's main source of heavy water, and was carried out on instructions from the War Cabinet, can be seen in its true perspective.

COS(43) 89th  
Meeting Item 2,  
of 12th April  
1943.

In April the Chiefs of Staff

"Instructed the Secretary to convey their warmest congratulations to S.O.E. in the outstanding success achieved in certain recent operations in Norway."

By May 1943 S.O.E., in reviewing its activities, was able to report that the Norwegian Secret Military Organisation had been maintained, and was continuing Resistance in accordance with a planned programme. A large number of coup-de-main attacks on various targets had met with considerable success. In the autumn air operations were once more resumed to Norway, and although a number of arrests were made during the winter the organisation of Resistance remained fundamentally sound and substantially intact.

News of the Allied landing in France stimulated the morale of the Norwegian Resistants, but instructions were issued that no premature risings should be made. Sabotage continued in spite of the inadequate supplies which were delivered to the country as a result of bad weather and partly because of the comparatively low priority of

Norwegian S.D. operations. By the spring of 1945 the volume of supplies had risen sharply; only 7 deliveries were made in January, but in February, 187, and in April, 156 operations were successful.

Resistance organisations were by now in a sufficiently strong position themselves to take over the country, and even before the formal surrender of the German Command in Chief of the area, all real authority had been wrested from him, and was in the hands of the men who had opposed him for so long.

#### 5. Denmark

(See Appendices H.12 and H.13 for details of S.D. operations to Denmark)

S.D. operations to Denmark began in the autumn of 1941. One of the earliest of these resulted in tragedy. Two agents were dropped, but the parachute of one failed to open and the officer who was to have been the chief organiser of Resistance in Denmark was killed. His W/T operator however, landed safely - in spite of the fact that with his equipment he weighed eighteen stone and on his practice jumps had first broken his leg and then injured his pelvis. The body of the officer who was killed was discovered by the Germans, and for security reasons it was decided that no more air operations should be attempted for three months.

Throughout 1942 deliveries to Denmark continued on a small scale. In May, and again in December, Gestapo activity and arrests in the field caused the postponement of operations. In the autumn the first water-drop into the open sea was successfully completed when an important Danish representative was dropped into the sea 150 yards off the north coast of Zealand. This drop, which required the highest degree of accuracy from the pilot lest the man should be dropped too far out and caught in the tides,

was extremely well done.

In January 1943, the R.A.F. carried out a raid on the Burmeister and Wain factory - a raid for which S.O.E. had pressed since January 1941, and for which they were able to provide detailed intelligence. After the raid a Danish officer was instructed by the Germans to deal with the delayed action bombs, and instead of removing them he insisted that they would have to be exploded on the spot. The Germans believed this. He was able to carry out his programme, and the amount of damage done on this raid was considerably increased by his efforts.

In the summer of 1943, a considerable increase in the number of sabotage incidents was reported. Among many other objects, the Scandia railway carriage shops at Randers were put out of action, and the factory of stores (valued at 400,000 pounds) of A.T. Hansen, which were working for the German army, were destroyed by fire. By September, a well-knit organisation had been created in Denmark, and had been responsible for a wave of sabotage throughout the country. The Germans were compelled to take over the control of a country which, until now, they had considered a model of the "New Order."

The delivery of stores continued on a small scale. By November the nightly average of sabotage attacks had risen to twenty, in spite of the enemy's precautions. In December an aircraft failed to return from a Danish S.D. operation, but its crew of eight landed safely and were passed through to Sweden by the S.O.E. Underground Groups.

On D-Day Resistance in Denmark, as in Norway, was not called into the open, but clandestine sabotage was continued. During the first week of July the tension prevailing

as a result of the Allied invasion and the consequent increase of sabotage culminated in a spontaneous strike in Copenhagen which spread to other towns under the Danish Freedom Council. This strike was so successful that the German authorities were forced to give way to the demands of the Freedom Council. In September, Danish resentment at German oppression once more found expression in a strike, but by November a series of arrests carried out by the Germans had caused the partial eclipse of the Freedom Council as the central authority of Resistance in the country, and general lawlessness prevailed throughout Denmark. The number of deliveries had by this time considerably increased; in September, 26 sorties were successful, and in February, 49. In March, the R.A.F.'s attack on the Gestapo H.Q. in Copenhagen was extremely successful, and Resistance was still further encouraged. 96 stores deliveries were made in March, and in April the figure had risen to as high as 155.

Owing to the German capitulation, Danish Resistance had no time to come into the open. Sabotage operations, however, continued on a large scale until the 5th May, when orders were sent for all activities to cease. In its way Danish Resistance had been as successful as any other in Europe, and had certainly learnt how to obtain the maximum results for the minimum losses.

B. Central Europe - Supplies by aircraft based first in the U.K. and later in the Mediterranean.

1. Poland

(See Appendices H.7 & I.15 for details of S.D. operations to Poland)

Throughout the whole war, the main difficulty inherent in operations to Central Europe was the distances involved, and

aircraft, whether based in England or the Mediterranean found themselves operating at the extreme limit of their range. This often entailed special modifications to the aircraft, so that they could carry extra petrol tanks. The shortness of the summer nights made it impossible for flights to be undertaken to Poland or Czechoslovakia during the hours of darkness, and therefore there was a period during the summer when no air operations could be flown to these countries.

In Poland, a country where the technique of Underground Warfare is part of the national tradition, the Secret Army was organised on a more military basis than in any other country of Europe. Resistance activity began almost as soon as the Germans had occupied the country, and requests for help and supplies were soon being received by the Allies. The first operation to Poland was flown by a Whitley in February 1941, and involved a flight of 1,700 miles. In the autumn, the first two Halifaxes were made available for operations and were modified for long range work. By the spring of 1942 a number of men and a small quantity of stores had been despatched to Poland. Operations were then suspended for the summer months, and although they were resumed in the autumn the weather severely limited the number of successful flights.

Sabotage in Poland had continued steadily throughout 1941 and 1942. In the four months between April and August 1941, a report from the field showed that 876 locomotives had been damaged, and 2,699 acts of industrial sabotage carried out. By the third quarter of 1941, the total number of sabotage acts had risen to 7,446 and included the damaging of 543



locomotives and 22 aircraft. By the end of 1942, the strength of the Secret Armies was estimated at 300,000. Wireless communications were good, and it was reported that 50 Reception Committees could be set up at once if necessary. In the autumn of that year the execution of simultaneous attacks on railway lines, which was carried out by personnel trained in the U.K. included great damage, and caused the Germans to carry out heavy reprisals.

Operations during the winter of 1942/43 were curtailed by a run of bad weather, but during the spring a number of successful flights were made, including deliveries during the non-moon period. At the end of April, operations were once more suspended until the autumn.

During the first part of 1943 operations to Poland were continued from the U.K., but in the autumn it was decided that in order to shorten the length of the flights involved and to avoid some of the most dangerous German anti-aircraft defences in the West, S.D. operations to Poland should be undertaken from the Mediterranean. A Polish flight was set up near Tunis, but at first results were disappointing owing chiefly to the bad weather throughout the winter of 1943/44. In April, however, when the air base had been established at Brindisi, conditions began to improve, and 66 out of 130 sorties were successfully completed during the moon period, resulting in the delivery of 70 tons of stores to the Polish Secret Army. The first landing operation to Poland was carried out in the same month, when three senior Polish Officers, including the second in command of the Secret Army, were brought out of the country. Two more landing operations, one of which brought out valuable information on the enemy's V.2 weapon, were also carried out

this year. At the end of July, the Resistance forces in Warsaw rose to attack the enemy and supplies were then urgently demanded. An increased allocation of aircraft was made and a large number of sorties were flown from Italy, including normal bomber aircraft, to the relief of the Secret Armies. In order to obtain pinpoint accuracy on the squares and streets of Warsaw the aircraft had to fly low over the city and were attacked by every type of German anti-aircraft gun posted on the roofs of the houses. The aircraft losses were considerable: in August, 30 aircraft failed to return from Polish operations and at one time the proportion of losses on Warsaw deliveries was as high as 25%. In spite of the efforts of both the R.A.F. and the U.S.A.A.F., however, the Secret Armies, after a protracted and gallant fight were forced to capitulate, and on October 2nd, Resistance in Warsaw came to an end.

Operations continued to Poland after this, but were not made easier by the Russian refusal to allow S.D. aircraft to fly over their lines. In November after the failure of negotiations between M.A.A.F. and the Soviet authorities, flights to Poland were resumed, but aircraft were forced to fly to the west of the Russian-occupied territory.

During the winter supplies were delivered to the German-occupied areas of Poland, but by February 1945, the Russian forces had liberated the whole country. Resistance in Poland, although well organised and heroically led, had been severely handicapped. The difficulty of sending supplies to so distant a country resulted in the Secret Army being permanently undernourished with arms and ammunition. After years of stubborn resistance, the Russian attitude towards them caused bitterness

and resentment. The Polish Secret Army was perhaps the first weapon of Underground Warfare in Europe, but for reasons beyond its control - and beyond the control of S.O.E. or the R.A.F. - it was never used to its full extent.

## 2. Czechoslovakia

(See Appendices H.8 and I.11 for details of S.D. operations to Czechoslovakia)

Resistance in Czechoslovakia, although rigorously suppressed by the Germans, began to show itself soon after the enemy occupation of the country. The entry of Russia into the war in 1941 had a strong moral effect on the patriots, and during September 14 major acts of sabotage and a large total of minor activities were carried out. In the autumn agents and W/T sets were dropped, and although weather was bad in January and February operations were later resumed. In an attack by Bomber Command on the Skoda Works at Pilsen, Czech resistants helped to guide the aircraft by lighting fires near the target.

In May 1942 the execution of Heydrich by Czech patriots despatched from this country by S.O.E. resulted in a German reign of terror. Organised cruelty and brutality on such a scale could not fail to be effective, and many Resistance organisations were broken up while others were forced to go to ground. In March, 1943, the leader and W/T operator of the last remaining S.O.E. party were arrested and committed suicide, but their reserve operator was still able to send messages, and reported that he was in contact with another Resistance group. In the autumn of 1943, it was decided that air operations to Czechoslovakia should in future be flown from the Mediterranean, and attempts were once more made to rebuild Resistance organisation in the country. The success achieved, however, was small.

The distance involved, the almost continuous bad weather, and the difficulties of navigation in Czechoslovakia combined to make S.D. flights to that country particularly difficult. Moreover, the German grip on Czechoslovakia throughout 1943 was still too tight to permit the establishing of subversive groups. A small number of operations were despatched during 1943 and 1944, carrying organisers, W/T operators and a limited quantity of stores to the field.

COS(44) 902(0)  
14th October  
1944

In October 1944 the Foreign Secretary wrote to the Chiefs of Staff, agreeing with the view taken by the C.I.G.S. that large scale air operations to assist a general rising should now be more properly conducted by the Soviet Air Force, and a letter embodying this argument and suggesting that sabotage

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(0) Item 9 of  
16th Oct. 1944

activity should be continued was sent to General Ingr. The Slovak rising which later took place was regarded as primarily a Russian responsibility. In January 1945, the Chiefs of Staff authorised A.F.H.Q. to undertake 10 successful operations per month to Czechoslovakia, but bad weather once more prevented the implementation of these plans, and in the January moon period only one daylight stores drop by fighter aircraft was successful. The weather continued poor throughout the spring; in February, 4 out of 15 sorties were successful; in March, 5 out of 14 and in April 13 out of 61. A message from the Council of Three of April 1945 sums up the Air Force assistance to their country:

(SOE/45/R.42)

"We thank you and Allied pilots for the operations. Few weapons were supplied, but nevertheless you have saved many lives, national property, and you have increased Anglo/American prestige. Every weapon will be multiplied many times."

### 3. Austria and Germany.

(See Appendices H.6 and I.7 for details of S.D. operations to Austria and Germany.)

Germany naturally presented the most unfavourable ground for the organisation of Resistance, and the people of Austria, whether because they favoured the Nazis or because they were too cowed to show their resentment, were almost as unpromising material as the Germans themselves. A small number of operations were flown to both countries from the U.K., until in the autumn of 1943, the aircraft base for operations to Central Europe was transferred to the Mediterranean. A number of agents were despatched to Germany to organise sabotage and go-slow methods, but comparatively little material was sent. Efforts to penetrate Austria were made during 1943, from bases in Yugoslavia, and in North Italy, and by February 1945, a small number of S.O.E. officers had been dropped or infiltrated by land-line, into Austria. The achievements of the Anti-Fascist Groups in this country, however, were throughout the period comparatively insignificant.

### C. Southern Europe - supplied by aircraft based in the Mediterranean.

From the very beginning, conditions in the occupied countries of the Balkans were very different from those in Western Europe. Powerful indigenous Resistance movements sprang up in countries such as Yugoslavia and Greece, where their historical traditions enabled the people to take to a guerilla life with ease and enthusiasm. As early as 1941, reports from these countries showed that Resistance was already beginning to crystallize around its own leaders, and to undertake sabotage and sometimes even military action against the occupying forces. In order to continue their work, however,

it was obvious that the patriots needed supplies of military equipment, of food and of clothing.

1. Yugoslavia.

(See Appendix I.3 for details of S.D. operations to Yugoslavia)

Ante-occupational work carried out by S.O.E. in Yugoslavia had to some extent prepared the ground for resistance to the enemy. In the autumn of 1941, after widespread activity, reports showed that some guerillas were operating under more or less unified command, and in October, the A.O.C.-in-C., Mediterranean, and the C.-in-C. Mediterranean, agreed to allocate two Wellesley Bombers, based on Malta, and three Bomber sorties from Cairo for dropping supplies to Montenegro. British Liaison Officers were despatched by sea, and by October were able to report that they had made contact with Mihailovic. By November, however, the first signs of internal disunity were seen, and in Montenegro Mihailovic and his Chetniks were reported to be fighting the Communists. An appeal, suggested by S.O.E., was made to both Moscow and King Peter to do their best to bring about a united front within Yugoslavia, but the Russians proved unwilling, and the King unable, to assist in dissolving the conflict.

Meanwhile, the lack of aircraft was seriously handicapping operations. Two Whitleys were sent to the Mediterranean, but they proved to be too slow for daylight sorties, and owing to their lack of de-icing and oxygen apparatus, only one sortie was successfully completed. Difficulties of maintaining communications with Mihailovic made air deliveries almost impossible. Ill-luck continued to hamper Yugoslav plans: of the four Whitleys allotted to Malta, one burnt out in England, and two

were destroyed or badly damaged on the ground in Malta by enemy action. During 1942, a limited quantity of stores was delivered to Yugoslavia by the aircraft of 148 Squadron. Sabotage directed by the British Liaison Officers on the spot had achieved some success and in the spring of 1943, with the news that Mihailovic had apparently accepted H.M.G.'s directive on his future action, prospects for Yugoslavia were brighter. In May 1943 the first British missions to the Partisans were dropped in Croatia and the first British mission under Major Deakin was dropped to Tito's Headquarters, then in Montenegro. In May the Chiefs of Staff, reviewing the operational policy in Yugoslavia, ruled that in the immediate future S.O.E.'s capacity to supply stores to the guerilla forces should be at the rate of 150 tons per month, rising as soon as operations elsewhere permitted, to 500 tons. The Prime Minister himself, after his visit to the Mediterranean emphasised the over-riding importance of giving help to the Yugoslav resistants immediately, and at a Staff Conference held on 23rd June, it was decided that the scale of support both to Mihailovic and to the partisans should be considerably increased.

The number of S.D. sorties to Yugoslavia was accordingly stepped-up. Further British Liaison Officers were sent in to both the Chetniks and the Partisans, and by September 1943 the senior British missions at the respective H.Q. of Tito and Mihailovic had been reinforced and each was headed by a Brigadier. In the July/August moon period,  $27\frac{1}{2}$  tons were despatched to Mihailovic's forces,  $17\frac{1}{4}$  to Tito's. In the August/September moon these figures had practically doubled:  $33\frac{3}{4}$  tons were sent to the Chetniks, and 34 tons to the Partisans, by a total of 51 successful operations. By this time there were 26 Allied missions

in the field, including 33 British officers, 37 British O.R.'s and 2 American Liaison officers. The total equipment delivered up to September 1943 included 118 tons of stores to Mihailovic and 71 tons to the Partisans; the strength of the guerilla forces was then estimated at 20,000 Chetniks and 75,000 Partisans.

Mihailovic had always shown a tendency to refrain from action against the Italians, but after the Italian armistice in September 1943 it was becoming increasingly clear that Mihailovic was becoming reluctant to use his forces even against the German occupying forces; on one occasion he went so far as to declare that he regarded Tito, and not the Germans, as his chief enemy. An Army which practically refused to fight the Germans was obviously of little value to the cause of the United Nations, and in January 1944, the Chiefs of Staff directed that the Partisans under Tito should receive 80% of all air sorties to the Balkans. Shortly afterwards it was decided to withdraw all British missions from the Chetniks and the evacuation of over 100 personnel was completed by air at the end of May 1944.

The establishment of air bases on the heel of Italy, which placed the S.D. aircraft at a comparatively short range from their targets, and the increased aircraft allotment for S.D. work in the Mediterranean, permitted a terrific expansion in the quantity of stores despatched to the field. Landing operations, which had been carried out on a small scale during the autumn of 1943, were now used to deliver equipment by the ton and to exfiltrate Liaison Officers, military and political delegates, and wounded guerillas by the hundred. In April, 303 tons of stores were sent to the Partisans.



In May, 418 out of 714 sorties were successful, and 582 tons of stores were delivered; 42 landing operations were completed, and 627 persons were brought out of Yugoslavia. June beat all previous records when 970 sorties were successful. In addition, on the night 3/4th June Tito himself, his H.Q. Staff and British, American and Russian missions totalling over 150 personnel were evacuated by air from an untried landing ground by American and Russian Dakotas at less than twelve hours notice, in response to an S.O.S. message resulting from a German concentrated drive.

These figures steadily increased. In July, under the pressure of a temporary parachute shortage, 386 landing operations were completed, delivering supplies and bringing out 4,880 people; in August 4,032 persons were evacuated. The record monthly tonnage was reached in November, when mass drops by 205 Group brought the number of successful sorties up to 1032.

Throughout the whole period, guerilla activities in the Balkans, centering mainly on Yugoslavia, had succeeded in containing a number of German divisions which could ill be spared. Large areas of country had been cleared of German and Italian occupying forces, and were entirely controlled by the Partisans. It was of course this circumstance which made possible the unparalleled use of transport aircraft on landing operations. Towards the end of 1944, the Yugoslav guerillas took advantage of the enemy's increasing weakness to increase their pressure, and by the spring of 1945 the Germans were withdrawing in large numbers from Yugoslavia. The long and bitter fight carried out from the inhospitable hills was over, and the Partisans had re-conquered their own country. In.

two years from June 1943 to May 1945 (see Appendix I.3) over 13,000 tons of stores were delivered by air and over 17,000 personnel, mostly wounded or sick Partisans were evacuated by air. In addition even larger quantities of stores had been delivered by sea.

## 2. Italy.

(See Appendices H.9 & I.4 for details of S.D. operations to Italy)

From Italy, reports were received during 1941 and 1942 that strong Anti-Fascist underground groups existed in the north. One operation, delivering two men was successfully completed by U.K.-based aircraft in 1941, but Italy was not really a practical proposition for S.D. operations from England. In the summer of 1943, the establishment of an S.D. Squadron at Algiers made it possible to supply the Italian groups by air, and one Liaison officer and some W/T operators and stores were dropped into the country before the end of that year. When Marshal Badoglio sued for peace, it was S.O.E. who provided a wireless operator and set to establish contact between his H.Q. in Rome, and A.F.H.Q. at Algiers.

The 1943 Armistice caused large numbers of deserters from the Italian Army and other resisters to take to the hills. This was the first beginning of the Italian Partisan movement, and although many bands had a good deal of arms and equipment at the outset, the demand for stores in N.Italy was far in excess of Allied capacity until the beginning of 1945.

Italian organisers and W/T operators continued to be dropped to the biggest groups in north Italy to report on

their potentialities. In the winter, however, bad weather limited the number of operations, but by the spring of 1944 the increased airlift made available and the use of Italian bases increased the number of sorties attempted and the volume of supply went up by leaps and bounds. In May 48 out of 106 sorties were successful, in June, 107 out of 197. British Liaison officers in uniform began to be dropped in June. The Partisan movement grew so rapidly in the summer of 1944 that the bands in the hills reached a figure of well over 100,000. By October 1944, when it was clear that the war would last to 1945, the position of the Partisans, faced by winter conditions and enemy reprisals, was extremely grave unless the airlift could be substantially increased. In November, mass daylight and night deliveries were made as an emergency measure to Partisan Groups in the mountains, but were not on the whole very successful. 205 Group, which carried out these Missions, were inexperienced in this type of work, and the delay action devices on the parachutes were not properly operated by the aircrews. The high drops, therefore, caused a great deal of scatter, and so much German activity was roused and it was decided that this method of supply should be discontinued. From January 1945, however, mass drops were attempted with greater success by Dakotas with fighter escort, based on Rosignano and between 1st February and 30th April over 2,700 tons of stores were poured into Northern Italy, largely by this means. Several pick-up operations by Lysander were also successfully carried out, and British Liaison Officers were withdrawn from the country to report on their work.

By April, 1945, S.O.E. missions in Northern Italy numbered over 100 British officers and O.R.s and Resistance

was sufficiently organised and well-equipped to make a tremendous response to the Allied appeal for guerilla activity in support of 15th Army Group's offensive and anti-scorch. The Partisans, under Allied officers, mainly British, were able to establish their authority over large areas of Northern Italy seizing Milan, Genoa, Turin and many other important towns, and capturing over 50,000 German prisoners. Italian Resistance, though late in the field, had proved itself to be one of the most successful of the patriot movements in Europe.

### 3. Albania.

(See Appendix I.10 for details of S.D. operations to Albania)

Albania had of course been occupied by the Italians in 1939, and therefore when the Italians launched their attack on Greece from Albanian bases in 1940, there was a certain chance of organising Albanian risings against the Italian rear. S.O.E. officers, including Abas Kupi a wellknown supporter of King Zog, entered Albania from Yugoslavia in 1941 but were unable to achieve a substantial rising. It was not until the summer of 1943, when British missions to the Greek guerillas had been established in Epirus, that it was possible for a British mission to be dropped in Epirus and move overland northwards into Albania. They found plenty of potential resistance elements, the right wing Balli Kombetar, the Zogist movement under Abas Kupi and the left wing L.N.C. or Partisans under Enver Hoxha. But organisation, training, equipment and co-ordination were non-existent. Consequently in the autumn of 1943 further missions were dropped, including a Senior Mission under a Brigadier, and the work of training

and organisation proceeded throughout the winter, in spite of casualties including the Brigadier himself who was wounded and captured.

The supplies which began to go into Albania in 1943 were dropped from Halifaxes of 148 Squadron. With the Italian collapse the Italian troops either took to the hills or were murdered and the Germans moved in to occupy Albania. At the same time the policy of the support and unification of two rival bands proved in Albania, as in other countries, to be full of difficulties. Both bands were mainly concerned with the prosecution of their private ends and it was difficult to decide which was the genuine Resistance movement. However, the Ball Kombetar tended more and more to a policy of collaboration with the enemy, M. Hoxha had the support of Marshal Tito, and therefore when we supported Tito in Yugoslavia we had to support M. Hoxha in Albania. Wherever his writ ran, he instituted a reign of terror and denounced as collaborators all those who would not obey him. He raised complaints against the British because they gave refuge in Italy to these "war criminals" (his rivals) who were fleeing from his vengeance.

The Germans were in possession of the country's few landing grounds, of which that of Tirana was the best. There is no level space in Albania. Improvised landing grounds were therefore not possible, no landing operations were carried out until the German withdrawal in November, over 900 tons of stores were dropped during 1944, (in addition to considerable tonnages delivered by sea), and the Partisan resistance to the Germans, which kept 2 or 3 divisions tied down, was of definite value to the war effort, since, apart from the casualties inflicted on the Germans, these divisions were diverted from

reinforcing German troops in Greece, Yugoslavia or elsewhere.

The Germans eventually withdrew of their own accord from Albania in the autumn of 1944 immediately after their withdrawal from Greece. M. Hoxha claims the credit of having driven them out, but the claim is absurd. The German tactics were to announce before hand the date of their withdrawal from a place, and to declare that if they were attacked the place would be burnt down. In obedience to this arrangement and time-table, the Partisans would enter the town some half-hour after the Germans had freely left and announce that they had captured it.

The German departure left the country in a desperate need of food, particularly in the south, some food was supplied by the British, but it was mostly delivered by sea, and in any event was in no way a Special Operation. With the beginning of 1945 the Albanian Section was closed down and Albania removed from the theatre of Special Operations.

#### 4. Greece.

(See Appendix I.5 for details of S.D. operations to Greece)

Preparations for the organisation of Resistance in Greece had been made in the early months of 1941 before the country was overrun by the Germans, and the organisation of clandestine resistance among the Greeks themselves began from the first moment of German occupation. Resistance began clandestinely in the towns, and strikes and sabotage developed throughout 1942, S.O.E. maintained communications and sent in funds and small scale supplies by overland routes from Istanbul and by caique through the Aegean from

Smyrna. The prime mover in organising Resistance was the left wing group known as E.A.M. and it was clear even in 1942 that British support to this group would produce political complications, unless the Royal Greek Government was prepared to broaden its composition to include representatives of the Resistance movement. The other chief leader was Colonel Zervas, who after prolonged pressure by S.O.E. in 1942 took to the hills.

In September 1942, a party of British officers was dropped in Central Greece to destroy the Gorgopotamos Bridge on the Salonica-Athens railway, so as to cut one of Rommel's main supply lines in preparation for the El Alamein offensive. They contacted Zervas and local E.A.M. supporters, and persuaded these rival bands to unite for the attack on the bridge which was carried out with complete success. The party was originally briefed to withdraw after the operation but were now instructed to remain in Greece and organise guerilla activity.

The party was therefore supplemented by other British missions throughout Epirus and Central Greece and began the task of organising and reconciling the main rival bands, E.L.A.S. which was the paramilitary wing of E.A.M. and E.D.E.S., the guerilla organisation of Zervas.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1943 Halifaxes of 148 Squadron were operating almost continuously in dropping missions and supplies every night during the moon period and every other night during the non-moon period - twenty nights a month from April to August. A large part of the supplies to Greece however went in not by air, but by caique through Smyrna.

August 1943 saw the first landing operations in Greece. On 7th August Squadron Leader Harris dropped a Flight Lieutenant with equipment to lay out a flare-path, and on 9th himself landed there in a Dakota and after eleven minutes on the ground took off the Senior B.L.O., Brigadier Myers and six guerilla leaders for consultations in Cairo with G.H.Q. Middle East and the Greek Government.

Unfortunately these talks proved abortive and thereafter there were such bitter divisions among the rival Greek Partisans that it was doubtful wisdom to supply them with further arms. The problem of reconciling conflicting political views with the necessity for military actions became acute. After the failure of our attempt to hold Cos and Leros the Greek situation deteriorated very rapidly. With the exception of Colonel Zervas, there was little guarantee that the Greek Partisan leaders would use arms to fight against the Germans. They were far more likely to use them, as they did in the case of Captain Hubbard on 14th October 1943, to murder British officers. With the growing strength of Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia, it was thought that our major effort could be more usefully transferred to that country. In November 1943, the Prime Minister specifically forbade the supply of any further arms to E.L.A.S. in Greece, though this ban was later modified in favour of E.L.A.S. bands known by B.L.O.'s to be actively fighting the Germans. At the end of the month Lysanders of C Flight of 148 Squadron brought out the Resistance leaders to attend the Lebanon Conference, returning them later to Greece.

In August 1944, Zervas and Sarafis, the leader of E.L.A.S. were brought out by air to attend the Caserta Conference at which



the areas to be held by E.D.E.S. and E.L.A.S. were laid down in anticipation of the German evacuation and British occupation. The network of British missions supplied to General Scobie and A.O.C. B.M.F. a volume of tactical intelligence throughout operation Manna, including intelligence on fighter and bomber targets during the German withdrawal. They also assisted in preparing advanced L.G.'s for R.M.F. fighters before the Germans withdrew. The Greek Resistance movement did not of course compel the German withdrawal but made valuable contributions by harassing and delaying the withdrawal and by anti-scorch activity which saved a number of important installations especially in Athens and the Piraeus. Resistance in Greece, more than anywhere else had been embittered and dissipated by internal feuds, and the tide of patriot feeling had been lost in the sands of political rivalries. Although much useful work had been done, the Greeks themselves had reduced the value of their Resistance forces by disunity and, when the enemy had withdrawn, were to poison the liberation which had been achieved partly through their own efforts, by civil war.

##### 5. The Satellite Nations - Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary.

(See Appendices I.12, 13 and 14 for details of S.D. operations to these countries.)

Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary provided, like Austria, unfruitful ground for S.O.E. activities.

In December 1943, a party of three British Liaison officers were dropped in Rumania but were caught and immediately placed in a villa surrounded with barbed wire by the local Rumanians. The Germans, hearing of this, asked that the British officers should be handed over to them, but the Rumanians refused to do this, and for seven months, until the

coup d'etat, the British Liaison Officers remained safe in Rumanian hands. A small number of S.D. operations was completed in 1944, but results were negligible.

In September 1943, S.O.E. had established V/T communication with elements in the Kallay Government who offered unconditional surrender; S.O.E. then began to prepare a mission to be despatched to Hungary, but political difficulties, however, delayed its departure until after the German occupation of March 1944. It was not dropped until May 1944, and all the members of the party were captured. The aircraft which carried out the operation did not return, and the Senior British Liaison Officer, who later escaped through Poland, and made his way back to this country, reported that while he himself was still actually in the air, he saw a German night fighter take up its position behind the bomber and begin its attack. A small quantity of stores was sent in to the country during 1944, and one pick-up operation which evacuated four persons was successful. By November the Russian forces had overrun the country.

A much larger quantity of stores was sent to Bulgaria than to the other two countries. The Russians were asked to assist Bulgarian partisans but their attitude was unhelpful. As many as four British Missions were at one time established within the country, but two of these were captured by rival Bulgarian organisations, and the officers, after hideous tortures, were executed and their heads stuck on spikes over Sofia station.

Although a fair quantity of stores was sent to Bulgaria, small dividends in the way of sabotage were paid, and most of

the equipment was apparently used for the prosecution of civil war within the country.

#### 6. Crete.

(See Appendix I.6 for details of S.D. operations to Crete)

Although most of the supplies sent to Crete went by sea, a small number of dropping operations were carried out during the autumn of 1943, and during 1944.

#### 7. Corsica.

(See Appendix I.9 for details of S.D. operations to Corsica)

Corsica provided a good example of the success that can be achieved by Resistance organisations under a unified command, well-equipped with arms, and directed in accordance with military strategy.. Colonna D'Istria, the man who achieved and maintained the unity of the patriot forces on the island was personally responsible in large measure for the success of the Resistance campaign.

During the first seven months of 1943 organisers were sent in to the Island, and the R.A.F. operating from N. Africa succeeded in dropping large quantities of stores. The Partisans of the Maquis were soon able to take over control of whole mountain areas, and the work of supply dropping was made easier by the use of bonfires. Stores were delivered sufficient to equip 12,000 men, and the Partisans then found themselves sufficiently well-armed and equipped to take the offensive against the Italian and German occupying forces, and to harass their withdrawal. Though the withdrawal was due mainly to the Allied landing at Salerno, the island was in fact liberated without

the employment of any regular Allied troops, except one French Bataillon de Choc, who had received special training from S.O.E. officers with a view to collaboration with the Maquis. Although of minor significance, the liberation of Corsica provided a classic of successful resistance activity.



## CONCLUSION



## C O N C L U S I O N

### 1. Value of S.D. operations to be judged only by the efficiency of Resistance.

It is impossible to estimate the value to the war effort of the work done by the R.A.F. on S.D. operations without assessing the effectiveness of Resistance activities. The Squadrons of Bomber, Coastal and Fighter Command in reviewing their work were able to report material and direct results; so many towns had been bombed, so many submarines destroyed, so many aircraft shot down. The S.D. Squadrons could report on the quantity of stores they had delivered and the number of men they had taken in and out of occupied Europe, but so far as direct damage to the enemy was concerned they had nothing to show. They were in the position of a Transport Unit, responsible for feeding an Army which was constantly engaged with the enemy. In the last resort the value of their work could be judged only by the use which was made by that Army of the stores they delivered.

That it would have been impossible to organise and sustain Resistance Movements without the help of the R.A.F. is patent. An army - even a Secret Army - must have supplies. Even communications, the other vital necessity, depend on supplies: of W/T operators, of W/T equipment, of codes and cyphers. Without the food, clothes, arms and ammunition sent in from outside, the patriots of occupied Europe must have battered themselves uselessly against the Nazi armour. The Germans, who know as much about methods of oppression as any other nation has ever learnt, would not have found it difficult to deal with unarmed and unorganised rebels. The leaders of the



Resistance Movements would probably have been captured and killed and the rank and file might have found it difficult to sustain their enthusiasm without direction and guidance. It may be said therefore that the very existence of organised and efficient Resistance groups depended on the work of the R.A.F.

The S.D. Squadrons themselves, trained to a pitch of technical efficiency hardly surpassed in the R.A.F., carried out their work in extremely difficult conditions with amazing skill and fortitude. Much depended on the efficiency with which the task of delivering stores and personnel to the field was carried out. A drop made from too great an altitude might mean a wide scatter of containers and packages on the ground and a consequent focussing of German interest on the neighbourhood; a drop made from too low might result in injury to personnel and damage to stores. The security on the ground of the Resistance group was inevitably endangered every time it received a stores delivery; only the R.A.F. could reduce this necessary risk to a minimum. There were, of course, occasions on which mistakes in dropping were made. On the whole, however, the standard of efficiency of the S.D. crews was extremely high. The R.A.F. personnel themselves realised how much depended on their efforts, and the skill with which they faced the innumerable problems of Special Duty work was equalled only by their courage and determination.

## 2. Types of Resistance activity.

However efficiently the S.D. operations were conducted, the results to which they contributed depended primarily on the men in the field. Broadly speaking the activities of Resistance groups in Europe may be divided into two types: clandestine sabotage and guerilla warfare. In nearly every case, Resistance

activities began with sabotage, and only later developed into semi-military offensive action against the enemy. This second stage was not necessarily attained in every country.

### 3. Value of Sabotage compared with Bombing.

It was early realised that the maximum value of sabotage attacks could only be obtained if they were based on strategic requirements and fitted into the plans for the bomber offensive. Sabotage and air bombardment must be regarded as complementary methods of attack. In their first Directive to S.O.E. the Chiefs of Staff emphasised this point and it was reiterated in every later Directive. Sabotage by itself cannot possibly obtain the results which may be reaped from large scale and continuous bombing, which include not only material damage, but also the moral effect on the enemy. Moreover, sabotage can only be carried out effectively within the conditions created by bombing. In Germany itself sabotage was as might be expected, on a small scale and it fell to Bomber Command to carry out the necessary attacks here. In the enemy-occupied countries the sabotage undertaken by Resistance would have been much less effective without the heavy bombardment to which German cities and industries were subjected. On the other hand although sabotage action cannot operate on so wide a scale as air bombing it is in some circumstances the most economical and effective method of attack. An onslaught directed against the enemy's industrial machine can only reach its maximum efficiency when either an important plant, preferably in the nature of a bottle-neck, is put out of action for a long time, or when all the factories of a certain type are simultaneously damaged. The industrial machine is

normally sufficiently flexible to withstand the destruction of one or two cogs without causing more than a minor delay in production.

It must always be remembered that sabotage and bombing were complementary methods of attack. The material damage and moral effect of a heavy bombing raid can hardly be overestimated.

Within its own limitations, however, sabotage might be more accurate and more deadly. It could not effect such general destruction, but it might reach the heart of its objective more surely. Air bombardment is not always a certain method of destroying the essential parts of a factory. Sabotage was able, at least to some extent, to fill these gaps. Where Bomber Command might hesitate to undertake heavy bombing raids on factories in enemy-occupied countries because of the inevitable loss of life to our Allies, sabotage attacks could be carried out in such a way that the casualties were reduced to a minimum. Other targets unsuitable for bombing might be tackled by sabotage action. In some specific cases Resistance forces were able to attack targets which had been unsuccessfully bombed by the Allied air forces. When the top priority on the target list was ball-bearing factories, S.O.E. was able to organise attacks on such factories in France and Norway and thus to complement the bomber raids staged by Bomber Command in Germany itself. On the other hand, sabotage attacks, in certain instances, were able to affect the vital parts of their objective more than bombing attacks. S.O.E.'s saboteurs, trained in England by industrial experts on the best methods of sabotaging every sort of machine and plant, could place their charges on the most vulnerable point, and with a couple of

pounds of explosive do more damage than tons of bombs.

#### 4. Sabotage by Resistance.

Throughout the five years of occupation both major and minor acts of sabotage were carried out by the Resistance forces of Europe, under the direction of trained agents and in conformity with a plan prepared at S.O.E. H.Q. under the instructions of the Chiefs of Staff and the Theatre Commanders and in co-ordination with the Air Forces. Coup-de-main teams were also sent in by S.O.E. to attack specific targets of high importance. Among the most effective of the major sabotage attacks were the destruction of Radio Paris, the damage inflicted in two separate attacks on the Gigny Dam and the destruction of the Gargopotamos Bridge. The most important coup-de-main operation planned by S.O.E. - by now famous, since the story has been reported in the press and by the B.B.C. - was the attack on the Norsk Hydro factory in Norway from which the Germans obtained the "Heavy Water" necessary for their research on the Atom Bomb. If S.O.E. had done nothing but the organising of this one operation, and the S.D. Squadrons had delivered only this one party of men with their stores, it might well be true that they had sufficiently justified their existence.

Apart from the major operations there were literally thousands of sabotage attacks on every sort of objective. Factories, rail and road transport, telecommunications, waterways, individual enemy soldiers and collaborators were all targets for this type of attack. Each individual act might be in itself unimportant; but the cumulative effect, on the morale both of the Germans and of the people of the occupied

countries, was enormous. Moreover a dividend of more direct military value was paid, in that the Germans were forced to extend and increase their occupation forces in order to maintain control over the countries which they had incorporated into the "New Order." Large numbers of troops must be used on police duties; and as Resistance feeling grew stronger and sabotage intensified the number must be increased. The relentless pin-pricking of sabotage activities caused a steady drain on the enemy's resources.

##### 5. Guerilla activities by Resistance.

The second type - and the second stage - of Resistance activities was guerilla warfare. Harassing action by bands of under-equipped patriots is unlikely to achieve startling results against well-armed regular troops. On the other hand, guerilla activities, well planned and well led, conducted from safe bases in the hills and carried out with the advantages of surprise and mobility, could do much to throw the enemy's troops into confusion. Guerilla bands, even more than saboteurs, need regular supplies, and it was the S.D. Squadrons who provided them with the food, clothes and arms without which they could not have maintained themselves. The very existence of armed bands in the hills compelled the enemy to maintain strong garrisons and large occupation forces and to mount punitive expeditions. In the Balkans the Partisans succeeded in containing a remarkably large number of German divisions throughout the whole period of so-called occupation. In south eastern France, Panzer divisions had to be employed against the Maquis.

In guerilla activities, as in sabotage, the work of the Resistance Movements must be co-ordinated with general military requirements - in this case: tactical rather than strategic.

It was undoubtedly always a good thing to attack German troops on the move: it was even better if an attack could be made on a particular division which was known to be moving up to the front. S.O.E. H.Q. was informed by the military commanders of suitable targets of this sort, and instructed their officers in the field accordingly. The military authorities were by this means able to command the services of an Army behind the enemy lines.

6. Tributes to the work of Resistance.

CinC/695

In the various theatres of Europe the efficiency and value of Resistance activities was vouched for by military and political officers. On January 20th 1945, the C.-in-C. Middle East Forces wrote to Lord Selborne on the occasion of the disbandment of Force 133:

"I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the excellent work done by this organisation whilst under my command."

The C.-in-C. reviewed S.O.E.'s activities in the various countries of the Middle East and concluded:

"I have been able to follow in detail the achievements of many of the personnel and have been glad to be able to confer a relatively large number of immediate awards. Their record in this respect bears witness to their courage and devotion to duty. I am satisfied that this Force has played a worthy part in the defeat of the enemy in this theatre of operations."

A copy of this letter was sent to the Minister Resident in the Middle East who wrote on the 26th January:

"I was deeply thrilled by the account of the

Force's activities which I heard last week, and I should like to associate myself unreservedly with the praise bestowed upon it by Sir Bernard Paget. Its achievements by sea, land and air were evidently due to its excellence in two ways - the imagination, resourcefulness and high courage of the officers composing it, and the really marvellous feat of organisation by which they were so successfully launched and so consistently supported. I must add the splendid esprit de corps which animated and inspired them.

"I frankly never dreamt, when you invited me to your headquarters, that I should hear and see in a small room in the course of one short hour so much that made me proud of my country and of the younger generation of my fellow-countrymen. I trust the epic for which they were responsible will be written and published as soon as possible. They have worked and dared with such amazing secrecy that very few at home have the remotest inkling of their existence, far less of their achievements. That secrecy was no doubt essential to our success while they were operating and may be desirable for other reasons a little longer. But the whole Empire should hear their story worthily told at the earliest possible moment.

"When it does, the Force will have the honour it deserves and will assuredly go down to history as proof that the spirit of Elizabethan times is still alive in all its brilliant daring. In the meantime I rejoice to have had the chance of hearing a little of that story betimes and of paying my small tribute to a most Gallant Company of Gentlemen Adventurers."

To the Italian patriots many messages were sent from military commanders and political leaders, including the Prime Minister himself. On 7th May Field Marshal Alexander sent a message to the President of the National Liberation Committee for North Italy:

"Now that the operations in Northern Italy have been victoriously concluded I should be grateful if you would make known to General Cadorna" (the military commander of all the Partisans in Northern Italy) "and all delegates of the Partisan Command my admiration and gratitude for the part they have played both in the destruction of the enemy and in the preservation of the plant and factories essential to the life of Italy."

Sir Noel Charles, reporting to the Foreign Office from Rome

"I should like to pay high tribute to the S.O.E. British Liaison Officers in Northern Italy who for the past month have been our main source of contact with the local committees of National Liberation and patriot local authorities. You will no doubt receive reports from Field Marshal Alexander on the military aspects but on the political side their work has been no less valuable .....I think it can safely be said that maintenance of law and order up till arrival of Allied troops and Allied Military Government and avoidance of arbitrary or independent action on the part of northern committees has largely been due to the tact and ability with which all these officers have carried out their duties."

A tribute to S.O.E.'s work in Western Europe was paid by General Eisenhower himself, who on May 31st 1945 wrote to General Gubbins:

"Before the combined staff of Special Force Headquarters disperses I wish to express my appreciation of its high achievements.

"Since I assumed the Supreme Command in January, 1944, until the present day its work has been marked by patient and farsighted planning, flexible adaptation to the operational requirements of Supreme Headquarters, and efficient executive action during operations. In no previous war, and in no other theatre during this war, have resistance forces been so closely harnessed to the main military effort.

"While no final assessment of the operational value of resistance action has yet been completed, I consider that the disruption of enemy rail communications, the harassing of German road moves and the continual and increasing strain placed on the German war economy and internal security services throughout occupied Europe by the organised forces of resistance, played a considerable part in our complete and final victory. In Denmark and Norway the commanders concerned have already reported on the great help which they have received from resistance forces in maintaining law and order during the early stages of liberation.

"The combination of certain sections of your two organisations, first established as Special Force Headquarters under the joint command of Brigadier Mockler-Ferryman and Colonel Haskell,



was the means by which these resistance forces were so ably organised, supplied and directed. Particular credit must be due to those responsible for communications with occupied territory. I am also aware of the care with which each individual country was studied and organised, and of the excellent work carried out in training, documenting, briefing and despatching agents. The supply to agents and resistance groups in the field, moreover, could only have reached such proportions during the summer of 1944 through outstanding efficiency on the part of the supply and air liaison staffs. Finally, I must express my great admiration for the brave and often spectacular exploits of the agents and special groups under control of Special Force Headquarters.

"I would be grateful if you would convey, as a personal message, my thanks to everyone at Special Force Headquarters for their work. And through you I would like to express my gratitude to the two parent organisations, without whose co-operation and help the great success of Special Force Headquarters could not have been achieved."

The Naval Authorities also bore witness to the value of Resistance activities. On June 14th Rear Admiral Mansfield wrote:

"On completion of hostilities in Europe and with the end of the German U-boat war, I would like to take the opportunity of thanking you for the valuable and gallant assistance which your organisation has rendered to the Anti-U-boat war effort, particularly in Norway.

"I well know the losses which have been suffered and the dangerous and arduous work which has been undertaken to interfere with U-boats and their facilities in harbour. Apart from the tangible results (such as the destruction of large quantities of diesel oil, of the torpedo store and workshops at Horten, of the accumulator factories in Denmark, and of U-boat battery acid factories in the Oslo area) the intangible results on U-boat morale and the feeling of insecurity which you engendered have been of the greatest value. The other multitudinous activities not specifically aimed against U-boats, such as destruction of communications, continually pin-pricked the enemy and made his operating conditions more difficult.

"Although I realise that this has been only a small part of their duties as a whole, nevertheless I would be grateful if you would convey to all concerned.....the war appreciation of the Navy on their fine efforts."

A special Order of the Day of November 2nd 1944 records that:

"His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to convey to Lord Selborne his great interest in the account, which was circulated to the Cabinet, of S.O.E.'s role in the preparation and execution of the invasion of France, and his admiration for the resource and courage shown by all concerned.

"He has further directed that his hearty congratulations be sent to all who contributed to the success of the operations."

7. S.H.A.E.F. study of Resistance work.

The most detailed study from a military point of view of

"The Value of S.O.E. Operations in the Supreme Commander's Sphere" unreferenced. the work of Resistance Forces in the field was made in a S.H.A.E.F. Memorandum of 13th July 1945. This paper stated that:

"Resistance assisted the Supreme Commander's operations in the two broad fields: Political and military."

The existence of organised resistance had fulfilled an important role in setting the oppressed peoples at loggerheads with the occupying power and thus keeping the enemy continually on the "qui vive". Militarily, organised resistance helped the main operations of the Allied Expeditionary Force by sapping the enemy's confidence in his won security and flexibility of internal movement; by diverting and dispersing enemy troops; by causing delay to the movement of enemy troops; by disrupting telecommunications in France and Belgium; and by enabling Allied formations to advance with greater speed through being able to dispense with many normal military precautions, such as flak protection and mopping up.

In discussing the delay inflicted on enemy movements by

rail to the Normandy beach head the paper stated that:

"Any consideration of this subject must be prefaced by an emphatic statement that the major cause of delay to enemy troop movements was action by the Allied strategic and tactical air forces. Resistance action was only a secondary element in causing delay. The widespread and continuous sabotage (3,000 confirmed rail cuts between 6th and 27th June) in this field, however, caused an effect outside the capabilities of Allied air effort unless it had been concentrated on railways to the exclusion of other priority tasks."

The programme of railway sabotage in France and Belgium resulted in delays to all troop movements; a reduction in the stock of serviceable locomotives to a point where there was an actual deficiency in the number required by the enemy at the time of and following the Normandy landing; an increase in the number of repairs required and a consequent swamping of the repair facilities; the increased use of steam locomotives and coal at a time when valuable stocks of both were depleted; and the deployment of railway troops and guards of all kinds to rebuild and protect the vital lines. Apart from direct sabotage S.O.E. had encouraged slow-downs, absenteeism and strikes. S.H.A.E.F.'s paper reports that:

"In this connection Rundstedt's Director of Military Transport has cited the slow-down of French railway as one of the significant contributory factors which led to the German failure to maintain transport facilities adequately to contain the Allied bridgehead in Normandy."

As far as sabotage of telecommunications was concerned the interrogation of German Commanders had shown that the effect was greater than had been anticipated, largely owing to the extreme stress under which the staffs were already working.

A somewhat unexpected role was fulfilled by the Resistance

Groups in their execution of minor military roles such as flank protection, the containing of isolated enemy garrisons, mopping up and the custody of prisoners. In Denmark and Norway, the Allied Forces on arrival found that Resistance had actually taken over control of essential services already. The effectiveness of anti-scorch action carried out by Resistance was considered, and S.H.A.E.F. concluded that whenever the enemy had sufficient time adequately to prepare his demolitions, Resistance could not stop him effecting them. A striking success was, however, attained in the case of Antwerp, which was preserved intact very largely through the action of Belgium Resistance Groups which had been organised for that purpose.

The value of the guerilla activities carried out in France was also considered. In June 1944 the Germans had been forced to employ 5,000 troops to disperse the guerillas in the Correze, and approximately 11,000 with artillery, were engaged against Resistance in the Vercors in July. On one occasion 18,000 men out of a column of 20,000 which was unable to escape eastwards because of the control exercised by Resistance on all lines of escape, were taken prisoner.

"There can be no doubt that at a time when the Germans were exerting every effort to obtain more manpower, the dispersion of troops in protective and internal security duties had an effect on the land battle."

In conclusion the S.H.A.E.F. Memorandum stated that:

"S.O.E. operations made a substantial contribution to the victory of the Allied Expeditionary Force. Widespread and continuous sabotage action against railways and telecommunications supplemented the air effort and completed the confusion of the enemy."

## 8. Allied Governments.

The foreign Governments for whom S.O.E. had worked so long recorded their appreciation of the work which had been done.

The Belgian Minister of Justice writing on September 2nd 1944 to General Gubbins speaks of:

"la collaboration qui, grace à vous, a pu aller en s'amplifiant entre l'effort allié et mes camarades de la Résistance."

M. Gerbrandy of the Dutch Government wrote to the Minister of Economic Warfare on October 4th:

"I shall always be grateful for the assistance we have received in this country, and in this you have played a major part. Your work has been of the greatest importance to us.

"I shall never forget the readiness with which you have always been willing not only to discuss the problems I have laid before you, but to tackle them. I have much admired the way in which you, and the men of your organisation, have solved our difficulties. Your wholehearted co-operation has so immensely lightened my own task."

ADE/5349 of  
11th May 1945

Prince Bernhardt also sent a message to S.O.E.

"Splendid results achieved by our interior forces are due to very large extent to the Organisation and guidance from your H.Q., for which these Forces and I are extremely grateful; also on their behalf I should like to express our appreciation to all your personnel for the great work they have done. The co-operation with you was always ideal, for which I want to thank you personally."

## 9. The S.D. Squadrons:

The number of aircraft engaged on the work of supplying Resistance Groups was, for three of the five years of occupation, extraordinarily small. Three principal squadrons were responsible for S.D. operations throughout the war: Nos. 138, 161

and 148. No. 624 Squadron also carried out these duties from the summer of 1943. In the last two years additional squadrons were allocated to Special Duties and played a distinguished part in the delivery of supplies to the field, but it is the four squadrons who initiated the work in the early, difficult days and who carried it through to the end whose names will be chiefly remembered in connection with Resistance.

Many telegrams received from the men in the field gave high praise to the work of the R.A.F. on S.D. operations. A large number of Foreign decorations were awarded to the aircrews of the S.D. squadrons, who also received an unusually large number of British decorations. H.M. the King was graciously pleased to award as many as 142 decorations to the aircrews of No. 161 Squadron, one of the Tempsford squadrons engaged on S.D. work for five years.

Although the work of the S.D. Squadrons did not, and could not, itself result in direct military damage to the enemy, it was more than justified by the achievements of Resistance, to whose success it had made a major contribution. Without supplies, the Resistance forces must have languished: with them, they were able to cause severe punishment to an enemy many times their weight. The value of the work carried out by Resistance in all theatres of Europe has been declared by senior military, naval and political officers, and the R.A.F.'s part in this work was of incalculable value.

Of the three Services, it was the R.A.F. from whom S.O.E. required the most and to whom they could give the least. Apart from the sabotage of a number of aircraft factories and of occasional aircraft there was little that Resistance could do to

help the R.A.F. The chief benefits of Resistance activities were reaped by the Navy and, above all, by the Army. In carrying out S.D. work, therefore, the R.A.F. themselves gained little; but the S.D. Squadrons had the satisfaction of knowing that they had made the major contribution to Resistance activities - one of the most outstanding success stories of the war.

A P P E N D I C E S



(Annex to C.O.S.(43) 491(0))

CONTROL OF OPERATIONAL UNITS ENGAGED IN S.O.E.  
AND S.I.S. OPERATIONS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the recent discussions which have taken place between representatives of the Air Staff and your Headquarters to inform you that it has been decided that you shall undertake full operational and administrative responsibility for the operational units engaged in S.O.E., and S.I.S. activities conducted from the United Kingdom.

2. The objects underlying this revision of the existing system of control are:-

- (i) To bring these special operations more closely into line with the normal operations of Bomber Command in order to ensure the maintenance of the highest possible standard of operational efficiency.
- (ii) To facilitate the employment when necessary of some portion of the normal Bomber Command effort on S.O.E. and S.I.S. activities, so as to supplement that of the squadrons specifically allotted for this purpose; and
- (iii) To ensure that no worthwhile opportunity is lost of providing this supplementary effort, whenever it can be made available.

3. The operational control of the S.O.E./S.I.S. units has hitherto been exercised by A.C.A.S.(I) whose staff has been responsible, in conjunction with S.O.E. and S.I.S., for the detailed planning entailed. It has now been decided that while full operational control of these units is to be transferred from A.C.A.S.(I)'s Branch to Bomber Command, the former will continue to be responsible for the initial planning of parachute dropping operations and for the selection and approval of landing grounds for pick-up operations.

4. Once planned, all S.O.E. and S.I.S. requirements will be communicated in a standard form to Bomber Command for executive action. Copies of the relevant instructions will be forwarded for information direct from the Air Ministry to the Base or Station Commander immediately responsible for the execution of the operations. This action has been agreed in order to obviate delay in the eventual execution of any urgent operation. These instructions will in any event be subject to your approval.

5. Any operations required by S.O.E. and S.I.S. (excluding those which are undertaken by Coastal or other Commands) which involve a departure from the normal form of these operations, will be submitted to you for consideration in the initial stages of planning. This procedure will cover for example:-

- (i) Ad hoc requests for the temporary use of other types of aircraft not allotted for these Special operations;
- (ii) the extension of operations to ranges or countries not previously involved;
- (iii) operations demanding air cover as a diversion

6. In order that the requirements of S.O.E. and S.I.S. may be fully represented to you it has been agreed that you shall have authority to consult directly with the R.A.F. representatives of S.O.E. and S.I.S. These representatives can speak with full authority for their respective organisations. They will also advise their organisations on the practical limitations which govern your operations generally.
7. In order to assist you in implementing these instructions, a further communication will be addressed to you by A.C.A.S.(I), outlining broadly the responsibilities allocated to S.O.E. and S.I.S. respectively. In addition A.C.A.S.(I) will be responsible for forwarding to you each month a Directive outlining in broad terms the air effort required in various geographical areas for the ensuing month. Specific day to day requirements will be communicated to you in accordance with the procedure outlined in paragraph 4 above.
8. In regard to the supplementary effort which can be provided by your normal squadrons, it is accepted that this must be limited to operations not involving the dropping of personnel, for which major modifications to aircraft would be essential. For your information the operations which your normal squadrons will be called upon to perform and which will involve the dropping of equipment only, are limited for the time being to France.
9. The extent of the supplementary effort which you can provide must naturally depend on operational and other circumstances prevailing at the time. It is clear that you will not normally be in a position to forecast the precise extent of the help which you can provide. These S.O.E. and S.I.S. operations, however, play a very important role in the general strategical plans approved by the Government and are largely complementary in their effect to that of the Bomber offensive itself. Consistent with the needs of your main current directive you should, therefore, make every effort to ensure that your contribution to these special operations is sufficient.
10. The revised procedure is to be introduced with effect from the 1st September, 1943. This will enable the operations already planned for August to be carried out without undue disturbance and will at the same time permit your staff to function under the new organisation in the arranging of operations to be undertaken in September and subsequently.
11. I am to request that you will submit your recommendations for any changes in establishments which you consider necessary under this revised organisation.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,

Air Marshal,  
Deputy Chief of the Air Staff.

The Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief,  
Headquarters, Bomber Command.

STATUS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
OF THE AIR ADVISER TO S.O.E.

The Air Staff have had under consideration the question of the status and responsibilities of the officer holding the appointment of Air Adviser to S.O.E. and as Senior R.A.F. Liaison Officer between that organisation, Air Ministry and Bomber Command. In agreement with C.D., the following lists of duties and responsibilities have been approved:-

- (i) the Air Adviser to S.O.E. will be a Member of the Council of S.O.E.
- (ii) he will be responsible to the Air Staff for all liaison between S.O.E. and the Air Ministry on matters concerning air policy and air operations undertaken on behalf of S.O.E.
- (iii) he will when necessary inform the Air Ministry of the general purpose and aim of any projected S.O.E. operations and satisfy them that the air effort required is justified. For this purpose he will have access to the Air Ministry branch or department appropriate to the subject concerned. He will, however, normally deal with the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Intelligence) who is responsible for the co-ordination of the detailed planning of S.O.E. air operations.
- (iv) he will exercise general control over S.O.E. air transport operations conducted from the U.K. If at any time he considers that any projected air operation is of doubtful value in relation to the operational risks entailed he will represent to the appropriate S.O.E. authority the need for modifying or abandoning any planned operation.
- (v) he will represent S.O.E. initially in any discussions which involve demands for increased aircraft establishment and will be required to speak with full authority and knowledge of the reasons and circumstances from which such demands arise.
- (vi) in relation to S.O.E. operations conducted from the U.K. he will act as the Senior R.A.F. Liaison Officer between S.O.E. and H.Q. Bomber Command. In this capacity he will speak with full authority on behalf of C.D. in so far as air matters are concerned.
- (vii) he will be responsible for keeping the A.O.C.-in-C., Bomber Command informed of the extent of supplementary air effort which may be required from time to time.
- (viii) he will advise C.D. of the views of the Air Ministry and A.O.C.-in-C. Bomber Command as to the capabilities and limitations of air operations in aid of S.O.E. work.
- (ix) he will be responsible for ensuring that operational experience obtained in special air operations is disseminated to S.O.E. organisations in all theatres.
- (x) he will advise S.O.E. of any special methods or types of aircraft suitable to particular conditions of operations in theatres overseas.

- (xi) he will be responsible for representing to the Air Ministry circumstances which may render necessary a re-distribution as between the various theatres of operations of the aircraft allotted for S.O.E. work and for keeping S.O.E. informed of the general distribution and employment of such aircraft in theatres abroad.
- (xii) he will be responsible for keeping S.O.E. informed of such technical developments in R.A.F. aircraft and equipment as may be of value for special operations.
- (xiii) he will be responsible for keeping the Air Staff generally informed of the progress of S.O.E. activities.

DUTIES OF THE HEAD OF THE AIR TRANSPORT  
ORGANISATION OF S.O.E. LONDON GROUP

Appointments.

The Head of the Air Transport Organisation of the London Group of S.O.E. should be a Group Captain and he and the R.A.F. officers on the staff of this section will all be selected by the Air Ministry after consultation with the R.A.F. Commands concerned.

Responsibilities.

2. The Head of the Organisation will be responsible to (the Commands concerned) and to the Controller, S.O.E. London Group in respect of the matters set out below:

R.A.F. Commands

- (i) Consideration of the practicability and feasibility of all projected S.O.E. operations involving air operations, having regard to their importance and the risks involved.
- (ii) The preparation of operation orders for individual operations.
- (iii) In conjunction with the Air Ministry (D. of I(R)), checking of dropping areas and landing grounds.
- (iv) The transmission of operation orders to the Group and R.A.F. Station concerned.
- (v) The delivery of agents and S.O.E. stores to the R.A.F. Station for despatch overseas.
- (vi) The preparation and submission of operational reports and returns to R.A.F. Commands concerned.
- (vii) Advice on the employment of such supplementary effort as No. 38 Group can make available from time to time.
- (viii) Liaison between S.O.E. R.A.F. Commands and the R.A.F. Stations concerned, in connection with the use of special S.O.E. equipment such as radio-navigation aids, pick-up devices, etc.

The Controller S.O.E., London Group.

- (i) Advice on the air aspect of projected S.O.E. operations.
- (ii) The preparation of particulars of landing grounds and dropping points and their submission to the Air Ministry (D. of I(R)) for approval.
- (iii) Recording of dropping points and landing grounds.
- (iv) Liaison with S.O.E. Country Sections on the air aspect of their operations.

- (v) The training of agents in air dropping and air landing and pick-up operations, and their final preparation in these matters, but not including training in parachute jumping.
- (vi) The training of S.O.E. personnel in the air aspect of reception committee work.
- (vii) Control of the S.O.E. packing station and despatch centre.
- (viii) The transport of agents and stores to the airfield.
- (xi) Demanding of stores and special equipment required at the packing station for transport by air.
- (x) Drop-testing equipment and devices to be delivered by air.
- (xi) Preparation of special packages for despatch, and liaison with No.13 M.U., R.A.F., Henlow, on the provision of special type of parachutes and packages.
- (xii) Liaison with the "special pigeon service."

3. He will be guided in the planning of air operations by principles laid down by the Air Member of the S.O.E. Council.

Status within S.O.E.

4. The Head of the Air Transport Organisation will have direct access to the Controller of the London Group and will be responsible for representing to him any objections he may have to planned operations, which, in his opinion involve undue risks to R.A.F. aircraft or unjustifiable effort. He will obtain from the Country Section concerned full explanations as necessary, including their exact significance and importance. In the event of his objections not being accepted by the Controller of the London Group he has the right to represent the case to the Air Member of the S.O.E. Council. He will also have the right to discuss problems affecting the R.A.F. with the Air Member.

Staff.

5. The staff of the Air Transport Organisation will consist of:-

- (i) R.A.F. staff appointed by the Air Ministry.
- (ii) U.S.A. and U.S.A.A.F. staff appointed by O.S.S. and Headquarters, VIIIth U.S. Air Force.
- (iii) S.O.E. staff.

AIR LIAISON - S.O.E.PINPOINTING SECTION.1. SUBMISSION OF DROPPING POINTS FROM THE FIELDa) France: First Method.

The agent in the field pinpoints his dropping ground onto a Michelin map, which has a scale of 1/200,000 and is divided by longitudinal and latitudinal grade lines which are sub-divided into fifths of a grade. These grade lines form large squares on the Michelin map.

To submit his dropping ground to London, the agent employs a celluloid grid which is divided by vertical and horizontal lines, the intersection of which form squares equal in area to 1 Kilometre on the ground. The squares running from West to East are lettered commencing from 'L' and those from North to South are numbered commencing from 11. Thus the top left hand square is called 'L.11'.

The agent fits his celluloid grid into the appropriate square formed by the grade lines on the Michelin map. He then transmits to London the number of the Michelin map, the name of the largest town lying within the square, and the letter and number of the small square on his grid in which his dropping ground is situated. Latterly the agent was required to give the distance and direction of his ground from the large town indicated. Each fold of the Michelin map is numbered round the edge; as an additional check the agent indicates the number of the appropriate fold.

Each dropping ground is allotted a code name by the agent.

Example of message:-

"New dropping ground VIOLET stop Michelin 59 Fold 15  
bearing 14 Kms. South South East CERCY Yorker 28..."

In the London office the pinpoint is interpreted by placing an identical celluloid grid over the appropriate grade square on the Michelin map and the point is ascertained by reading off the correct letter and number quoted and checking the distance and direction of the point from the town.

b) France: Second Method.

The agent in the field pinpoints his dropping ground onto a Michelin map (as previously described).

To submit his dropping ground to London, the agent measures the number of millimetres East and North of the appropriate grade lines. He must always give the distance and direction of the point from the nearest large town and state the number of the Michelin map.

The information he transmits would be as follows:-

Name: OLIVE  
Michelin: 60  
48 mm. East of 03 grade 00  
49 mm. North of 54 grade 40  
101mm. E.S.E. of St. GENT

In order to cut down the number of words involved in sending these co-ordinates, a special system was evolved. The message is divided into five distinct parts as follows:-

PRIMO:	OLIVE	(Code name of the ground)
SECUNDO:	60	(Number of Michelin map)
TERTIO:	48	(Number of mm. East of grade line)
	30	(Two central figures of the number of the grade line)
QUARTO:	49	(Number of mm. North of grade line)
	44	(Two central figures of the number of the grade line)
QUINTO	101	East South East St. GENT

c) Other Methods employed

Agents submitting dropping grounds from countries other than France employ various methods. In Norway, for example, the agent submits co-ordinates based on the meridian of Oslo, in Holland a six-figure grid reference is employed, and in Denmark he uses a map book in general use in the country, describing the position of his ground by means of page numbers and numbered squares on the page. The principle of always identifying the position of the ground in relation to nearby towns or landmarks is followed throughout.

2. ACTION TAKEN BY COUNTRY SECTION AS AFFECTING PINPOINTING SECTION

On receipt of the signal giving the new dropping point, the Country Section copies the details onto a form and submits them to the Pinpointing Section. The details must be copied exactly, even in cases where the agent has made an error, or the signal is mutilated.

3. ACTION TAKEN BY PINPOINTING SECTION

1. The pinpoint is not always used for an operation immediately. It is important, therefore, to record all details of the point carefully until such time as it is required.

The signal is filed in a box file under the name of the agent. An index card is made and filed under the code name of the ground. This card shows the reference number and date of the signal and the name of the agent. Any signal referring to the ground passing between the Country Section and the field are noted.

It is advisable to place the point on the Michelin map immediately it is received in order that any error in the co-ordinates may be noted and the error pointed out to the agent before any valuable time is wasted. The field are always asked to reconfirm co-ordinates which arrive mutilated in the signal.

2. When the pinpoint is required for an operation it is placed on the Michelin map by the method already indicated. Every detail of the agent's co-ordinates must be correct. It is very easy for the pinpointing section to guess what the agent really means if he has made a slight mistake, but equally easy to make the wrong guess. In case of doubt the agent is always asked to reconfirm his co-ordinates.

Having found the point on the Michelin map, the pinpointing section transfer it onto a large scale map and work out the co-ordinates in degrees of latitude and longitude based on the meridian of Greenwich. The same set of maps is used for every dropping point and every point is marked on the map and labelled. In this way it is impossible for two agents to submit the same dropping-point without the pinpointing section being aware of the fact. Similarly the pinpointing section can make a note of any two points lying within three kilometres of each other and be certain that operations are not laid on to both grounds on the same night. If a new point lies very close to a point belonging to a



different Country Section, the original 'owner' of the area is consulted before an operation can take place on the newer point.

The co-ordinates of the new point are then telephoned to the Air Ministry who are responsible for checking that the pinpoint lies in suitable flying country, that the aircraft will not fly into a flak belt of night fighter area, and that it is within range of aircraft based in Great Britain.

When the pinpoint has been accepted it is allotted its own permanent reference number. France, for instance, was split up into twenty areas and numbers allotted to each pinpoint in these areas consecutively. Thus the first point in area 11 in France would be called 11F/1, the second 11F/2 and so on.

#### 4. PERMANENT RECORDING OF PINPOINTS

##### a) Code Number Card

This card gives the Air Ministry co-ordinates of the point and the number of the large scale map. It is filed according to the reference number of the ground, e.g. 11F/1. The code name of the ground, the code name of the agent who submitted it and the date on which it was accepted by the Air Ministry are shown on the back.

If a successful operation takes place on the ground, the date and name of the operation are added.

##### b) Code Name Cards

This card gives the reference number of the point, the name of the agent who submitted it and the references of any correspondence referring to the point passing between the pinpointing section and the Country Section. It is filed alphabetically according to code names. The life history of the ground is shown in this card. All notes of other points in the area, dates on which the area has been loaned to another country section, adverse security reports from the field, etc. etc., are kept up-to-date. The signal letter allotted to the ground is usually noted, but this is really the responsibility of the Country Section. Once a successful operation has taken place on the ground, this card is "starred" so that in case of a future unsuccessful operation to the same ground the pinpointing section can be sure that the faults lie with the navigator or the reception committee and do not require to re-check their co-ordinates.

c) For system 1(a) as described on page 1 a further index card is necessary to cross reference 'CERCY Yorker twenty-eight' with the Code Name Card and the Code Number Card.

#### 5. LAYING-ON OF OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

The agent submits his programme for each moon or non-moon period about ten days before the period starts. The Country Section is responsible for assembling the programme, but the pinpointing section check all signals to and from the field and are able to examine the dropping grounds before the Country Section send in their operational order.

As soon as the Country Section have checked the programme they telephone to the pinpointing section a list of the grounds required and the pinpointing section, having previously assembled their own list from the signals are usually able to pass or refuse the grounds immediately.

At the same time the Country Section are informed if any of their grounds fall within three Kms. of a ground belonging to a different Country Section and they are required to come to an agreement with the other Country Section as to which operation may take place first and inform the pinpointing section of the arrangements made (This applied only to France)

The Country Section then submit an Air Transport Form No.1. to the pinpointing section, giving the code name and code number of the ground, the code name of the operation, the signal letter, load to be carried and any further particulars, such as S-Phone, Rebecca/Eureka, alternative pinpoints, interval between operations etc. The pinpointing section check all details from the signals, although the responsibility for the accuracy of the programme rests with the Country Section.

The pinpointing section issue the operational order, called Air Transport Form No.6. This gives all the details included in the A.T.F.1. and in addition the flying co-ordinates and map reference of the pinpoint.

Each ground, having been allotted an operational code name (not to be confused with the code name of the ground itself) is given a separate A.T.F.6. The same A.T.F.6. and operational code name are used for one ground from one moon period to another, so that if ground OLIVE is given operational code name CHARLEY 1, CHARLEY 1 will always be the name of any future operation laid onto the ground, except that the second successful operation to the ground would be known as CHARLEY 1A. the third CHARLEY 1B, and so on.

The A.T.F.6. is issued at least two days before the moon period begins to all who are concerned in any way with operation: i.e.

COUNTRY SECTION  
CONFERENCE ROOM  
AIR MINISTRY  
BOMBER COMMAND  
ALL AIRFIELDS WORKING FOR S.O.E.

From this moment the responsibility for the operation passes to the Conference Room and the Country Section, although the pinpointing section continue, in fact, to watch all signals from the field and to keep a check on all operations mounted each day. Alterations and additions to the programme and new dropping points arrive daily from the field. The pinpointing section issue these orders and amendments to the old orders to all who received copies of the A.T.F.6.

#### NORTH AFRICA/LONDON Procedure

S.O.E.'s H.Q. in North Africa (Massingham) was allotted a definite area in the South of France in which to operate. All grounds lying within that area were automatically passed to Massingham and the operations carried out from there. There were occasions, however, when the agent required special stores held in London to be delivered into the Massingham area. In this case the ground was loaned to London pinpointing section until the operation had been completed and a careful note of the arrangement held by the pinpointing section and the section dealing with Massingham operations in London. For obvious reasons it was important that one ground should not be served from both London and Massingham on the same night.

6. OPERATIONAL RESULTS.

The pinpointing section record the result of each operation on their card index and keep a card index of all successful operations showing the date on which it was carried out and the code number of the pinpoint.

If a pilot had reported that he found no reception at the pinpoint, the point is rechecked before the operation is attempted again. The pilot's operational report is studied carefully for any adverse criticism of the pinpoint, and in the case of a very bad report the pinpoint is cancelled for further use.

The signals from the field giving their operational results are likewise studied and the pilot's report and the agent's report compared. If the agent has by any chance confused the code names of the two grounds it is often very easy to see by this comparison where he is confused and to ask the Country Section to clarify the matter with the field.

7. MASSINGHAM

Procedure in Massingham was in all respects similar to that outlined above with the exception of a few minor differences.

TEMPSFORD PROCEDURE

The list of operations was phoned from the Conference Room to the Intelligence Section on the scrambler. It was given in priorities, one, two or three stars indicating the degree of importance of the operation. The points on the A.T.F.'s were plotted on maps in a room set aside for the purpose. When the daily list was received from the Operation Room, the priorities were shown by marking the target with a coloured ticket. Blue was used for the starred points, and the priority was marked in black. Green was used for non-starred targets. The American list was plotted in brown and the Three Group allocation in red. Any changes subsequently phoned through were also altered on the maps.

At 0930 hrs the following morning a Met Conference was held by the Station Cmr., Sqdn. Cmr., Nav. Officer, Int. Officer and the Met. Officer. Suitable areas for operations that night were discussed and then in the planning room targets were chosen in order of priority, the more difficult ones being given to the more experienced crews.

Once the allocations had been settled the chosen points were plotted on 1/1,000,000 maps, and routes were decided upon. Petrol loads were given by Sqdn. Cmr., and loads were worked out by the Liaison Officers. Timing was then done by the Navigation Officers, the necessary information being given to Ops for the Form J. All target points were then checked with the A.T.F. information and plotted on a 1/500,000 map, so that when the crews were briefed they could see their exact dropping point and the navigator could work out his best D.R. run.

Briefing was held as soon after lunch as possible and each crew was told the route, the load, height of drop, difficulties of terrain and such information as was available to intelligence about local Gestapo activities etc. Met. then gave the weather picture and the crews made final preparations for their operations.

As each aircraft became airborne Control informed Group and the W/T Section stood by to give assistance if required. Group were again informed as each aircraft landed, and the specialist Officers congregated in Intelligence to interrogate crews. When targets were widespread interrogation lasted for several hours and often the night duty people were still working on the Form Y when the day shift arrived.

After the nights work, diaries and Captains records had to be brought up to date, the daily summary completed and (if the weather allowed) the days operations commenced.

When Bomber Command in Feb' 44 installed a section to effect liaison between Air Ministry and Tempsford the procedure was very similar but necessarily slowed up as everything had to go through an extra channel.

INSTRUCTIONS TO S.O.E. LIAISON OFFICER AT  
R.A.F. STATION, TEMPSFORD

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1. You are appointed as S.O.E. Liaison Officer at R.A.F. Station, Tempsford.
2. Your duties are:-
  - (i) To ensure that personnel to be carried by No. 138 Squadron aircraft arrive at the aerodrome in time to prepare themselves for emplanement at the time required by the Squadron Commander, that they are properly dressed and equipped, and that they are fully informed on the drill for leaving the aircraft over the Dropping Point; you are also to ensure that the Dropping Point given to Aircrews corresponds to that given to the personnel to be dropped, by their appropriate Country Section Officers.
  - (ii) To inform the Officer Commanding S.T.S. 61, after consultation with the Squadron Commander, which particular operations are scheduled for each night, and to ensure that the material required for each operation is delivered to the aerodrome in adequate time to be loaded on to the aircraft.
  - (iii) To see that, in the event of an aircraft having to return without dropping its load, the equipment and containers are marked with the Code name of the operation concerned before they are returned to S.T.S. 61.
  - (iv) To attend at the briefing of the crews at the time laid down by the Squadron Commander, and to check that the briefs given to crews conform to the instruction in A.T.F. 4 or A.T.F. 2b. Should there be any discrepancy between the requirements stated in the A.T.F.s and the instructions given by the Officer in charge of Briefing, you should point this out to the S.I.O or his Staff.
  - (v) In consultation with the Station Parachute Officer, to ensure that all Parachuting equipment in aircraft scheduled for operations is complete, correctly fitted, and in good condition, and that no indication of the name of the operation is marked on containers or equipment after they have been loaded on to aircraft.
  - (vi) To ensure that Transport of S.T.S. 61, while at R.A.F. Station, Tempsford, is controlled in conformity with the Orders laid down by the Station Commander.
  - (vii) To see that adequate arrangements are made for the reception of personnel returning from uncompleted or unsuccessful sorties, and for their immediate return to S.T.S. 61.
  - (viii) To attend at the interrogation of crews returning from sorties and to obtain detailed information on the delivery of personnel and containers, including the efficiency of Reception Committee arrangements, so far as this Headquarters is directly affected. Any questions you may wish to put to crews for this purpose are to be asked at the conclusion of the interrogation by the S.I.O. or his staff.

3. In order to carry out these duties, you should normally report to the Squadron Commander by 1200 hours daily during the Operational period.
4. You are not to discuss details of Dropping Points, or the method of conducting particular operations, with Aircrews before the official Briefing takes place, nor are you in any way to alter instructions given by the Intelligence Staff at any time. Should late information necessitate any alteration in briefing, you will inform S.I.O immediately.

Signed C.M.Grierson.

22.7.42

## STATISTICAL APPENDICES

### H, I AND J

#### N.B. A. STATISTICS FOR U.K. BASED AIRCRAFT

1. The figures for aircraft missing years 1941 and 1942 are not available in this office.
2. The figures for sorties attempted years 1941 and 1942 are also not available in this office.
3. The figures given are compiled from monthly totals as far as possible, but in some cases there may be an overlap of the moon or non-moon period into the next quarter.
4. Tonnage delivered is worked out on the basis of 10 containers, and 20 packages, to the ton - to the nearest ton.
5. Figures include both landing and dropping operations.

#### N.B. B. STATISTICS FOR MED. BASED AIRCRAFT

1. From April 1944, operations carried out on behalf of other agencies are incorporated in these figures, as it is not possible to extract them from the totals. However the proportion of these operations is very low.  
See table below:-

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOTAL SUCCESSFUL SORTIES</u>	<u>TOTAL SUCCESSFUL SORTIES FLOWN FOR OTHER AGENCIES</u>
<u>1944</u>		
April - June	2729	71
July - Sept.	3829	117
Oct. - Dec.	3217	73
<u>1945</u>		
Jan. - March	3216	81
April - May	1196	29
	<u>14187</u>	<u>371</u>

2. Personnel infiltrated on both landing and dropping operations are given as a combined figure.
3. These figures are for operations carried out by all aircraft working from the Middle East of S.D. operations - landing and dropping operations.
4. Figures prior to June 1943 are not obtainable.

APPENDIX H

TOTALS FOR SPECIAL DELIVERY OPERATIONS

FROM THE U.K. 1941 - 1945

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>DROPPED</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>TONNAGE</u> <u>DELIVERED</u>
	<u>ATTEMPTED</u>	<u>SUCCESSFUL</u>		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
FRANCE	8651 <sup>+</sup>	5634	868 <sup>6</sup>	293	559	8455 $\frac{1}{2}$
BELGIUM	529 <sup>+</sup>	342	198	-	-	484
HOLLAND	630 <sup>+</sup>	372	120	-	-	554
GERMANY	43	26	42	-	-	1
POLAND	102 <sup>+</sup>	77	197	-	-	37
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	19 <sup>+</sup>	14	33	-	-	1
ITALY	2 <sup>+</sup>	2	2	-	-	-
NORWAY	1241	717	200	-	-	933
DENMARK	677 <sup>+</sup>	418	55	-	-	676

+ No record of sorties attempted for 1941 and/or 1942  
6 No record of men dropped " " " "



APPENDIX H.1

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN

BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

FRANCE

(R.A.F. ONLY - INCLUDING PICK-UPS)

DATE	SORTIES		MEN			TONNAGE DELIVERED	AIRCRAFT MISSING	REMARKS	
	Att.	Suc.	Dropped	Out	Home				
1941	22 <sup>+</sup>	22		1	1	1½		Conts. Packs. 9 11	
1942	93 <sup>+</sup>	93	140	15	19	23		201 64	
1943									
Jan - March	79	22	18	13	18	20	2	170 57	
Apr. - June	342	165	18	23	43	148	5	1361 236	
July - Sept	630	327	52	40	76	277	6	2566 399	
Oct - Dec	298	101	20	30	56	133	6	1202 263	
<u>Total 1943</u>	1349	615	108	106	193	578	19	5299 955	
1944									
Jan - March	1046	557	77	11	15	693	13	Including pick-ups 6096 1676	
April- June	1163	748	70	18	19	1162	20	12188 2828	
July - Sept	2358	1644	189	69	113	3223	21	29932 4591	
Oct - Dec	65	46	-	12	23	44	-	374 125	
<u>Total 1944</u>	4632	2995	336	110	170	5122	54	48590 9220	
<u>Total</u>									
1941 - 1945	6096 <sup>+</sup>	3725	584 <sup>b</sup>	232	383	5724½	73 <sup>e</sup>	54099 10250	

+ 1941 and 1942 figures for attempted sorties - no records obtainable  
<sup>o</sup> No record for 1941 - men dropped  
<sup>e</sup> " " " 1941 and 1942 - aircraft missing

APPENDIX H. 2

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN

BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

FRANCE

(U.S.A.A.F. - INCLUDING PICK-UPS)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>MEN</u>			<u>TONNAGE</u> <u>DELIVER-</u> <u>ED</u>	<u>A/C</u> <u>MISSING</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
	<u>Att.</u>	<u>Suc.</u>	<u>Dropped</u>	<u>Out</u>	<u>Home</u>			
1944								Cont. Pack.
Jan - March	119	52	6	-	-	73	2	619 228
April - June	545	344	76	-	-	524	4	2063 2359
Daylight Op.	180	177	-	-	-	209	2	2088 Zebra 25.6.44.
July - Sept.	1445	1076	195	61	176	1615	7	12328 7642
Daylight Op.	195	192	7	-	-	229	-	2286 Buick 1.8.44.
" "	71	68	-	-	-	81	-	814 Sept.44.
Oct - Dec.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1944</u>	2555	1909	284	61	176	2731	15	20198 10229

APPENDIX H.3

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN

BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

BELGIUM

R.A.F.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>MEN</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MISSING</u> A/C	<u>REMARKS</u>	
	<u>Att.</u>	<u>Suc.</u>				<u>Conts.</u>	<u>Packs.</u>
1941	11 <sup>+</sup>	11	12	1	-	8.	7
1942	56 <sup>+</sup>	56	70	22	-	214	10
1943							
Jan - March	25	6	7	3	-	23	7
April - June	19	11	16	7	1	50	24
July - Sept.	14	10	10	6	-	51	18
Oct. - Dec.	24	6	3	5	2	53	1
<u>Total 1943</u>	82	33	36	21	3	177	50
1944							
Jan. - March	23	13	18	11	-	81	29
April - June	50	24	22	37	5	347	49
July - Sept.	159	119	2	267	2	2247 26 men out/	840 1 home
Oct. - Dec.	19	19	-	45	-	452	
<u>Total 1944</u>	251	175	42	360	7	3127. 26 men out/	918 1 home
<u>Total</u> 1941 - 1944	400 <sup>+</sup>	275	160	404	10 <sup>6</sup>	3526 26 men out/	985 1 home

+ No record of sorties attempted for 1941 and 1942  
 6 " " " aircraft missing for 1941 and 1942

APPENDIX H.4

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN

BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

BELGIUM

U.S.A.A.F.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>MEN</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>A/C</u> <u>MISSING</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>	
	<u>Att.</u>	<u>Suc.</u>					
1944						Cont.	Pack.
Jan - March	9	5	-	3	1	24	5
April - June	84	40	10	53	3	467	97
July - Sept.	36	22	28	24	-	248 5 men/5 home out	105
<u>Total 1944</u>	129	67	38	80	4	739 5men out/5	207 home

HOLLAND - U.S.A.A.F.

None Undertaken.

APPENDIX H.5

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN

BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

HOLLAND

R. A. F.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>MEN</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>A/C MISSING</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>	
	<u>Att.</u>	<u>Suc.</u>				<u>Cont.</u>	<u>Packs.</u>
1941	2 <sup>+</sup>	2	4	-			3
1942	49 <sup>+</sup>	49	43	27		255	24
1943							
Jan. - March	26	13	11	12		114	15
April - June	20	14	6	15	5	135	28
July - Sept.	2	1	-	1	2	13	1
Oct. - Dec.	1	1	2	-	-	-	2
<u>Total for 1943</u>	49	29	19	28	7	262	46
1944							
Jan. - March	-	-	-	-	-		
April - June	3	2	6	-	1		4
July - Sept.	64	37	13	33	4	315	38
Oct. - Dec.	288	152	4	244	4	2302	274
<u>Total for 1944</u>	355	191	23	277	9	2617	316
1945							
Jan. - March	52	25	8	51	-	458	96
April - May	123	76	23	171	4	1576	264
<u>Total for 1945</u>	175	101	31	222	4	2034	360
<u>Total 1941 - 1945</u>	630 <sup>+</sup>	372	120	554	20 <sup>6</sup>	5168	749

+ No record of sorties attempted for 1941 and 1942  
<sup>6</sup> " " " aircraft missing for 1941 and 1942

APPENDIX H.6

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

GERMANY

R.A.F.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>MEN</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MISSING</u> <u>A/C</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>	
	<u>Att.</u>	<u>Suo.</u>				<u>Cont.</u>	<u>Packs.</u>
1943							
Jan. - March	1	1	1	-	-		1
April - June	-	-	-	-	-		
July - Sept.	1	1	1	-	-		1
Oct. - Dec.	1	-	-	-	-		
<u>Total 1943</u>	3	2	2	-	-		2
1944							
Jan. - March	1	1	1	-	-		1
April - June	3	1	2	-	-		
July - Sept.	1	1	1	-	-		
Oct. - Dec.	3	2	3	-	1		
<u>Total 1944</u>	8	5	7	-	1		1
1945							
Jan. - March	21	11	17	1	-	12	4
April - May	11	8	16	-	2	6 men out	4
<u>Total 1945</u>	32	19	33	1	2	12	8
						6 men out	
<u>Total</u>							
1943 - 1945	43	26	42	1	3	12	11
						6 men out	

APPENDIX H.7

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

POLAND

R. A. F.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>MEN</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>A/C</u> <u>MISSING</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>	
	<u>Att.</u>	<u>Suc.</u>				<u>Conts.</u>	<u>Pack.</u>
1941	3 <sup>+</sup>	3	12	1		8	3
1942	14 <sup>+</sup>	14	76	5		42	24
1943							
Jan. - March	51	34	76	14	1	179	116
April - June	1	1	1	-	-		1
July - Sept.	24	17	29	13	6	103	57
Oct. - Dec.	9	8	3	4	1	34	19
<u>Total 1943</u>	85	60	109	31	8	316	193
<u>TOTAL</u>							
<u>1941 - 1943</u>	102 <sup>+</sup>	77	197	37	8 <sup>6</sup>	366	220

+ No record of sorties attempted for 1941 and 1942  
 6 " " " aircraft missing for 1941 and 1942

APPENDIX H.8

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN

BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

R.A.F.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>MEN</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>A/C</u> <u>MISSING</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>	
	<u>Att.</u>	<u>Suc.</u>				<u>Cont.</u>	<u>Pack.</u>
1941	4 <sup>+</sup>	4	8	-			6
1942	10 <sup>+</sup>	10	25	1		4	10
1943							
Jan. - March	5	-	-	-	-		
April - June	-	-	-	-	-		
July - Sept.	-	-	-	-	-		
Oct. - Dec.	-	-	-	-	-	No ops. from U.K. 1944-1945	
<u>Total 1943</u>	5	-	-	-	-		
<u>Total</u> <u>1941 - 1943</u>	19 <sup>+</sup>	14	33	1	- <sup>o</sup>	4	16

+ No record of sorties attempted for 1941 and 1942

o " " " aircraft missing for 1941 and 1942



APPENDIX H.9

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

ITALY

R.A.F.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>MEN</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>A/C</u> <u>MISSING</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>	
	<u>Att.</u>	<u>Suc.</u>				<u>Cont.</u>	<u>Pack.</u>
1941	1+	1	2	-			
1942	-	-	-	-	-		
1943							
Jan. - March	-	-	-	-	-		
April - June	1	1	-	-	-		6
July - Sept.	-	-	-	-	-		
Oct. - Dec.	-	-	-	-	-		
<u>Total 1943</u>	1	1	2	-	-		6
<u>Total</u> <u>1941 - 1943</u>	2+	2	2	-	No ops. from U.K. 6 1944 - 1945		

+ No record of sorties attempted for 1941

APPENDIX H.10SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKENBY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOMNORMANR.A.F.

DATE	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>MEN</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>A/C</u> <u>MISSING</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>	
	Att.	Suc.				Cont.	Packs.
1941	-	-	-	-	-		
1942	22	11	21	6	-	53	14
1943							
Jan. - March	16	6	14	5	-	39	26
April - June	4	3	2	3	-	23	7
July - Sept.	4	3	4	3	-	25	10
Oct. - Dec.	26	12	25	13	-	104	52
<u>Total 1943</u>	50	24	45	24	-	191	95
1944							
Jan. - March	17	13	3	17	-	151	42
April - June	30	23	6	31	-	271	63
July - Sept.	2	2	2	3	-	23	22
Oct. - Dec.	144	50	33	90	4	762	276
<u>Total 1944</u>	193	88	44	141	4	1207	403
1945							
Jan. - March	497	326	40	533	9	4800	1065
April - May	280	170	25	255	10	2304	494
<u>Total 1945</u>	777	496	65	788	19	7104	1559
<u>Total</u> <u>1942 - 1945</u>	1042	619	175	959	23	8555	2071

APPENDIX H.11

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

NORWAY

U.S.A.A.F.

DATE	SORTIES		MEN	TONNAGE	A/C MISSING	REMARKS	
	Att.	Suc.				Cont.	Pack.
1944							
Jan - March	6	4	-	5	-	48	6
April - June	2	2	-	3	-	24	9
July - Sept	61	33	-	47	1	396	138
Oct - Dec	2	2	-	3	-	24	6
<u>Total 1944</u>	71	41	-	58	1	492	159
1945							
Jan - March	24	11	3	16	-	132	53
April - May	104	46	22	71	4	551	309
<u>Total 1945</u>	128	57	25	87	4	683	362
<u>Total 1944 - 1945</u>	199	98	25	145	5	1175	521

## APPENDIX H.12

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKENBY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOMDEMARKR.A.F.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>MEN</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MISSING</u> <u>A/C</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>	
	<u>Att.</u>	<u>Suc.</u>				<u>Cont.</u>	<u>Pack.</u>
1941	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1942	4 <sup>+</sup>	4	12				3
1943							
Jan. - March	4	2	8	1	-	4	5
April - June	4	4	7	2	-	14	3
July - Sept.	9	8	3	7	-	61	8
Oct. - Dec.	8	5	3	2	1	21	2
<u>Total 1943</u>	25	19	21	12	1	100	18
1944							
Jan. - March	3	3	2	3	-	24	3
April - June	8	7	3	8	1	72	10
July - Sept.	12	12	2	15	-	144	6
Oct. - Dec.	104	71	10	143	3	1402	54
<u>Total 1944</u>	127	93	17	169	4	1642	73
1945							
Jan. - March	83	54	5	109	4	1059	59
April - May	174	114	-	218	8	2061	231
<u>Total 1945</u>	257	168	5	327	12	3120	290
<u>Total</u> <u>1942 - 1945</u>	413 <sup>+</sup>	284	55	508	17 <sup>e</sup>	4862	384

+ No record of sorties attempted for 1942

e " " " aircraft missing for 1942

APPENDIX H.13

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN

BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

DENMARK

U.S.A.A.F.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>		<u>MEN</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>A/C</u> <u>MISSING</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>	
	<u>Att.</u>	<u>Suc.</u>				<u>Cont.</u>	<u>Packs</u>
1944							
Jan - March	-	-	-	-	-		
April - June	1	-	-	-	1		
July - Sept.	23	9	-	10	-	104	
Oct. - Dec.	-	-	-	-	-		
<u>Total 1944</u>	24	9	-	10	1	104	
1945							
Jan. - March	86	36	-	45	-	426	54
April - June	154	89	-	113	-	1037	178
<u>Total 1945</u>	240	125	-	158	-	1463	232
<u>Total</u> <u>1944 - 1945</u>	264	134	-	168	1	1567	232

APPENDIX ITOTALS FOR SPECIAL DELIVERY OPERATIONS FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>TOTAL SORTIES</u>	<u>SUCCESSFUL SORTIES</u>	<u>GROSS TON DELIVERED</u>	<u>PERSONNEL DROPPED</u>	<u>PERSONNEL LANDED</u>	<u>PERSONNEL EXFILTRATED</u>	<u>P.W.B. LEAFLETS IN TONS</u>
YUGOSLAVIA	11,632	8,640	16,469		2,500	19,000	536
GREECE	2,064	1,714	4,205	85	300	600	106
ALBANIA	673	572	1,205	134	201	502	74
CORSICA	89	79	140	2			4
S. FRANCE	1,713	1,129	2,878	578	31	34	98
POLAND	619	289	501	132	12	13	200
ITALY	4,280	2,652	5,907	538		24	169
HUNGARY	28	14	16	14			11
ROUMANIA	9	4	2	6			10
BULGARIA	183	107	218	22			
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	114	39	58	42			11
AUSTRIA	72	45	47	76			10
CRETE	31	20	39	10			

N.B. Records not available to distinguish between personnel dropped and landed in Yugoslavia, however, it is known that comparatively few were parachuted because of the large number of available landing strips.

APPENDIX I.1

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

<u>DATE</u>	<u>FRANCE</u> <u>SORTIES</u>		<u>ITALY</u> <u>SORTIES</u>		<u>POLAND</u> <u>SORTIES</u>		<u>CZECH</u> <u>SORTIES</u>		<u>BALKANS</u> <u>SORTIES</u>		<u>GERMANY &amp;</u> <u>AUSTRIA</u> <u>SORTIES</u>		<u>HUNGARY</u> <u>SORTIES</u>		
	Att.	Suc.	Att.	Suc.	Att.	Suc.	Att.	Suc.	Att.	Suc.	Att.	Suc.	Att.	Suc.	
1944															
Jan. - Mar.	246	91	207	78	19	1	-	-	555	327					4 a/c missing - 2 crashed on take-off. Balkans: Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania, Roumania, Bulgaria & Aegean.
Apr. - June	651	396	477	269	253	140	4	3	3286	2344	4	4	12	9	From May figures for other agencies included (see note attached) 22 a/c missing - 9 a/c crashed.
July - Sept.	743	593	642	369	280	135	5	4	2496	1856	3	2	5	4	49 a/c missing (2 France, 7 Italy, 39 Poland, 1 Yugoslavia) 16 a/c lost in crashes
Oct. - Dec.	-	-	959	554	67	18	7	2	3156	2594	4	4	-	-	26 a/c missing (11 Italy, 3 Poland, 12 Yugoslavia) 6 a/c lost in crashes
<u>Total 1944</u>	1640	1080	2285	1270	619	294	16	9	9493	7121	11	10	17	13	101 a/c missing - 33 a/c crashed
1945															
Jan. - Mar.	-	-	1533	976	-	-	32	9	2707	2160	25	11	-	-	11 a/c missing (10 Yugoslavia, 1 Italy) 4 a/c lost in crashes.
April - May	-	-	697	504	-	-	60	16	695	639	43	25	-	-	3 a/c missing (1 Germany & Austria, 1 Czechoslovakia, 1 Yugoslavia) 1 crashed
<u>Total 1945</u>	-	-	2230	1480	-	-	92	25	3402	2799	68	36	-	-	14 a/c missing - 5 a/c crashed.

APPENDIX I.2SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREAFRANCE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1943				
June	1	2	-	
July - Sept.	1	3	-	
Oct. - Dec.	6	4		
<u>Total 1943</u>	8	9		
1944				
Jan. - March	172	20+	-	Feb. and March figures for bodies not available
April - June	794	96	-	
July - Sept.	1100	474	30	
Oct. - Dec.	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1944</u>	2066	590	30	
1945				
Jan. - March	-	-	-	
April - May	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1945</u>	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1943-1945</u>	2074	599	30	



APPENDIX I.3SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREAYUGOSLAVIA

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1943				
June	37	18	-	
July - Sept.	144	81	-	
Oct. & Dec.	125	17	-	
<u>Total 1943</u>	306	116	-	
1944				
Jan. - March	251	14	89	No figures for Feb-March - Men out.
April - June	2602	235	3674	
July - Sept.	3014	919	9247	
Oct. - Dec.	2398	1812	1184	
<u>Total 1944</u>	8265	2980	14194	
1945				
Jan. - March	3347	882	2135	
April - May	1158	31	1353	
<u>Total 1945</u>	4505	913	3488	
<u>Total 1943-1945</u>	13076	4009	17682	

APPENDIX I.4

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

ITALY

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1943				
June	7	-	-	
July - Sept.	4	8	-	
Oct. - Dec.	1	5	-	
<u>Total 1943</u>	6	13	-	
1944				
Jan. - March	92	34	-	No figures for Feb-March.
April - June	398	143	-	
July - Sept.	650	171	-	
Oct. - Dec.	780	109	7	
<u>Total 1944</u>	1920	457	7	
1945				
Jan. - March	1,669	225	5	
April - May	875	244	20	
<u>Total 1945</u>	2544	469	25	
<u>Total 1943-1945</u>	4470	939	32	

APPENDIX I.5

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

GREECE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1943				
June	146	22	-	
July - Sept	395	84	-	
Oct. - Dec.	234	51	23	
<u>Total 1943</u>	775	157	23	
1944				
Jan - March	290	12	-	
April - June	201	42	15	
July - Sept.	219	57	336	
Oct. - Dec.	428	594	347	
<u>Total 1944</u>	1138	705	698	
<u>Total</u> <u>1943-1944</u>	1913	862	721	

APPENDIX I.6

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

CRETE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>OUT</u>	<u>MEN</u> <u>HOME</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
1943				
June	-	-	-	
July - Sept.	2	-	-	
Oct. - Dec.	10	-	-	
<u>Total 1943</u>	12	-	-	
1944				
Jan. - March	-	-	-	
April - June	3	-	-	
July - Sept.	6	-	-	
Oct. - Dec.	15	6	4	
<u>Total 1944</u>	24	6	4	
<u>Total</u> <u>1943-1944</u>	36	6	4	

APPENDIX I.7

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

<u>D. TE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1944				
April - June	4	3	-	
July - Sept.	.3	6	-	
Oct. - Dec.	2.4	11	-	
<u>Total 1944</u>	6.7	20	-	
1945				
Jan - March	4	16	-	
April - May	25	39	-	
<u>Total 1945</u>	29	55	-	
<u>Total</u> <u>1944-1945</u>	35.7	75	-	

APPENDIX I.8

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

SARDINIA

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1943				
June	3	6	-	
July - Sept.	.1	4	-	
Oct. - Dec.	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1943</u>	3.1	10	-	

APPENDIX I.9

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

CORSICA

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1943				
June	-	-	-	
July - Sept.	93	2	-	
Oct. - Dec.	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1943</u>	93	2	-	

APPENDIX I.10

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

ALBANIA

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1943				
June	4	-	-	
July - Sept.	57	28	-	
Oct. - Dec.	76	34	-	
<u>Total 1943</u>	137	62	-	
1944				
Jan. - March	121	-	-	No figures for Feb. and March - men out and home.
April - June	81	30	-	
July - Sept.	259	99	-	
Oct. - Dec.	463	108	245	
<u>Total 1944</u>	924	237	245	
1945				
Jan. - March	34	102	187	
April - May	5	4	70	
<u>Total 1945</u>	39	106	257	
<u>Total 1943-1944</u>	1100	405	502	



APPENDIX I.11

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1944				
April - June	1	11	-	No ops. 1st quarter
July - Sept.	2	14	-	
Oct. - Dec.	2	5	-	
<u>Total 1944</u>	5	30	-	
1945				
Jan. - March	9	5	-	
April - May	28	-	-	
<u>Total 1945</u>	37	5	-	
<u>Total 1944-1945</u>	42	35	-	

APPENDIX I.12

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN

BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

HUNGARY

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>LEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1944				
April - June	10	4	-	
July - Sept.	2	5	-	
Oct. - Dec.	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1944</u>	12	9	-	
1945				
Jan - March	-	-	-	
April - May	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1945</u>	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1944-1945</u>	12	9	-	

APPENDIX I.13

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

BULGARIA

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1943				
Oct. - Dec.	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1943</u>	-	-	-	
1944				
Jan. - March	58	3	-	
April - June	76	2	-	
Oct. - Dec.	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1944</u>	134	5	-	
<u>Total 1943-1944</u>	134	5	-	

APPENDIX I.14

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN BY  
AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

ROUMANIA

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1943				
Oct. - Dec.	.08	3	-	No ops. before this date.
<u>Total 1943</u>	.08	3	-	
1944				
Jan. - March	-	-	-	
April - June	.04	2	-	
July - Sept.	2	27	36	
Oct. - Dec.	-	-	-	
<u>Total 1944</u>	2.04	29	36	
<u>Total 1943-1944</u>	2.12	32	36	

APPENDIX I.15

SPECIAL DUTY OPERATIONS TO EUROPE UNDERTAKEN  
BY AIRCRAFT BASED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

POLAND

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TONNAGE</u>	<u>MEN</u>		<u>REMARKS</u>
		<u>OUT</u>	<u>HOME</u>	
1944				
Jan - March	3	-	-	
April - June	153	38	8	
July - Sept.	163	10	5	
Oct. - Dec.	24	33	-	
<u>Total 1944</u>	343	81	13	

AIRCRAFT MISSING - YEARLY TOTALS

YEAR	U.K. BASED	MED. BASED	REMARKS	TOTALS
1941				
1942				
1943	38			
1944	79	101	33 a/c crashed (M.E.)	180
1945	37	14	5 a/c crashed (M.E.)	51

These figures are incomplete - No figures available for aircraft missing for years 1941 - 1942 U.K. based aircraft, and 1941 - 1943 M.E. based aircraft.

AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE - U.K.

TEMPSFORD

Squadron:- 138  
161

10.3.45 138 Squadron to Bomber Command  
161 Squadron to 38 Group (Fighter Command)  
Last operation for this Squadron was to  
Norway 2.5.45.

38 GROUP

Squadrons:- 161 - From 10.3.45  
190 - (Stirlings)  
196 - "  
295 - (Albemarles)  
296 - "  
297 - "  
298 - (Halifaxes)  
299 - (Stirlings)  
570 - (Albemarles)  
620 - (Stirlings)  
644 - (Halifaxes)

Aerodromes:- (Headquarters: Netherhaven)  
Harwell  
Keevil  
Brize Norton  
Fairford  
Tarrant Rushton  
Tain

October 44. (Headquarters: Markshall, Earls Colne)  
Gt. Dunmow  
Rivenhall  
Wethersfield  
Earls Colne  
Shepherds Grove

Period of operation on S.O.E. operations:- 3.2.44 - 26.4.45.

3 GROUP

Squadrons:- 75 - (Stirlings)  
90 - "  
149 - "  
199 - "  
218 - "

(Majority of operations carried out by 90 and  
149 Squadrons)

Aerodromes:- Lakenheath  
Mepal  
Tuddenham  
Methwold

Period of operation of S.O.E. operations:- 4.2.44.- 10.7.44.

(214 and 617 Squadrons based on Tempsford supplementary effort  
from 10.12.43 to formation of Bomber Command supplementary  
effort in Feb. 44)

MOSQUITO OPERATIONS

Squadron:- 418 Mosquito Intruder Squadron

Aerodromes:- Holmesley South  
Ford

The first operation was flown on 21.1.44.

U.S.A.A.F.

Operated from Harrington and Leuchars

Period of operation 16.12.43 - 26.4.45.

AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE - M.E.

Squadrons:-

148 - (Halifaxes)  
1575 Flight - Polish operations  
Disbanded July 1943  
624 - (Halifaxes)  
Formed August 1943  
Italian Flight - (S.M. 62's and CANT. 2.1007's)  
January 1944  
1586 Flight - (Halifaxes and Liberators)  
January 1944  
62 T.C. - February 1944  
267 Squadron - (Dakotas)  
March 1944  
68 Recce Group - (Mitchells)  
March 1944  
122 Squadron - March 1944  
51 T.C. Wing - (Dakotas, Fortresses, Liberators)  
March 1944  
Lysander Flight - May 1944  
60 T.C. Group - (Dakotas)  
May 1944  
885 H.B. Squadron - (Fortresses, Liberators)  
June 1944  
205 Group - (Liberators and Wellingtons)  
October 1944  
859 Squadron - (Liberators and Fortresses)  
December 1944  
38 Squadron - (Wellingtons)  
December 1944  
44 S.A.A.F. Squadron - (Dakotas)  
February 1945 in place of 267 Squadron  
Moved to S.E.A.C.  
301 Polish Squadron - (Halifaxes and Liberators)  
November 1944 - March 1945



The importance of evacuation of personnel by air can be seen from the following summary of landing operations.

<u>France</u>	R.A.F. 383, U.S.A.A.F. 176	Total	559
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including Gen. de Lattre de Tassigny,

<u>Belgium</u>	R.A.F. 1, U.S.A.A.F. 5	Total	6
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<u>Poland</u>	R.A.F. 4	Total	4
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including M. Arciszewski, (last Premier of London Govt.) and Gen. Tabor (D.M.O. Polish Secret Army).

<u>Yugoslavia</u>	R.A.F., U.S.A.A.F. and	19,000
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U.S.S.R.A.F. including Marshal Tito and his G.H.Q. Staff and Allied Missions (over 100 personnel at 12 hours notice.)

<u>Greece</u>	R.A.F.	721
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including 6 representatives of ELAS, EDES and other guerillas in August 1943 and Gen. Zervas and Gen. Sarafis and staffs for the Caserta Conference in Aug. 1944.