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R E P O R T

ON

ROYAL AIR FORCE OPERATIONS IN

S Y R I A,

BETWEEN 8TH JUNE AND 11TH JULY, 1941,

FORWARDED BY

A I R C O M M O D O R E L. O. B R O W N,

D. S. C., A. F. C.,

COMMANDING THE ROYAL AIR FORCE IN

PALESTINE AND TRANS-JORDAN.

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THE OBJECT OF THE OPERATIONS.

1. The aim of the Royal Air Force was to afford the maximum air support to the Army in its advance into SYRIA. The main object of the Army's advance into SYRIA was to prevent its occupation by Axis forces and especially to secure aerodromes in order to prevent their use by Axis air forces. The Army plan included the cooperation of Naval forces on the Syrian coast to bombard the Vichy ground forces operating on the coastal roads and to prevent the Vichy Naval forces from interfering with the advance of our own ground forces along the coast. The Naval operations off the Syrian coast absorbed a considerable proportion of the available fighter effort to protect H.M. Ships from hostile air action. Copy of H.Q., B.F. in F. & T-J. Operation Order No.7 dated 5/6/41 attached at Appendix "A.1".

**FORCES AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE
COMMANDER.**

2. At the outset of the operation the air forces available were:-

11 Bomber Squadron Blenheims, much depleted in aircraft and crews.

80 Fighter Squadron (Hurricanes) in the process of re-equipping.

208 (A.C.) Squadron, one flight Hurricanes.

3 R.A.A.F. Squadron Tomahawks, which was in the process of re-equipping.

"X" Flight Gladiators.

3. These forces were later supplemented by:-

260/450 (F) Squadron Hurricanes.

45 Bomber Squadron Blenheims.

806/803 (F) Squadron Hurricanes.

208 Squadron made up - 1 flight Lysander and
later - 1 flight Hurricanes.

14 Bomber Squadron which arrived too late for operations.

4. A list of the locations of the air forces during the operations is shown at Appendix "B". Ground forces employed are shown at Appendix "A.1".

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENEMY, HIS DISPOSITION
AND NUMBERS.

5. Vichy French Air Forces in SYRIA at the commencement of the campaign comprised:-

Bombers	14 Glenn Martin 167 6 Bloch 200
Bomber Transport	4 Potez 65
Fighter/Bomber/Recce	20 Potez 63
Single seater Fighter	17 Morane 406 26 Dewoitine 520
Sea Recce	5 Loire 130 F.B's.
TOTAL:	<u>92 Operational A/c.</u>

6. In addition, there were available a number of Civil transport aircraft, and approximately 45 Potez 25 TOE observation aircraft of slightly less performance than our own HART variants, and of varying degrees of serviceability. Through the assistance of the Axis Armistice Commissions in North Africa and France and the use of Axis landing grounds in Italy and other parts of occupied Europe, a constant flow of reinforcements was kept up. Despite considerable casualties inflicted by R.A.F. bombers and fighters, the Vichy Air Forces on 16/6/41 were estimated to have increased to the following figures:-

Bombers	Glenn Martin 167	14
	Bloch 200	4
	Leo 45	26
Bomber Transport	Potez 65	5
	Farman 222	6
	Dewoitine 338	13
Fighter/Bomber/ Recce	Potez 63	17
Single seater Fighter	Morane 406	16
	Dewoitine 520	53
Sea Recce	Loire 130 F.B.	5
	<u>TOTAL Operational Aircraft</u>	<u>159</u>

(NOTE: In addition to approximately 45 Potez 25 TOE mentioned earlier.)

7. Further reinforcements continued to arrive up to the last days of the campaign, but are believed to have been mainly intended to replace casualties and bring the Vichy Air Force establishment in SYRIA up to approximately the above figures. The disposition of the Vichy Air Forces at the commencement of the campaign is shown at Appendix "C". As the campaign progressed, increased numbers and the needs of dispersion, forced the Vichy Air Force Commander to divide his aircraft over a large number of satellite landing grounds, but the nature of the terrain restricted such locations in the South to the RAYAK - HOMS valleys and in the North to the flat country to the East of ALEPPO.

NATURE OF THE COUNTRY OVER WHICH
OPERATIONS WERE CONDUCTED.

8. The area over which operations were conducted comprised the whole of SYRIA and the LEBANON. The physical formation of this territory consists roughly of four belts running North and South:-

- (i) The coastal plain.
- (ii) The mountain ranges of the LEBANON and ANTI-LEBANON, carrying the headwaters of the LITANI and GRONTES rivers.
- (iii) The Central Depression from the South of ALEPPO to Lake TIBERIAS on the PALESTINE Frontier.
- (iv) The Eastern Plateau and Desert, including the JEZIREH Plain.

Between the Southern ends of (iii) and (iv) comes the mountain range of the JEBEL DRUZE, a natural fortress of which SUWEIDA is the central town.

9. The nature of the terrain allows little opportunity for the construction of aerodromes in the coastal plain, where the sole landing ground of operational dimensions is the aerodrome at BEYROUTH. A number of landing grounds exist in the JEBEL DRUZE area, but are all too small for use by modern aircraft, whilst desert landing grounds on the pipeline between HOMS and PALMYRA are mostly small and would present considerable transport problems to a Force lacking adequate supplies of petrol.

10. In consequence, after the fall of DAMASCUS, Vichy Air Forces had to be based in the aerodromes of the valley between the LEBANON and ANTI-LEBANON, or in the ALEPPO-HAMA area. In the former area the main bases were RAYAK, TALIA (MERDJAYOUN), BAALBEK and satellites, KUSEIR and HOMS. In the ALEPPO area, satellite landing grounds were brought into use late in the campaign on the WASRULLA road.

THE ARMY PLAN.

11. The dispositions of the Imperial and Free French Forces at the start of the advance into SYRIA were as follows:-

EXPORTER force advancing into SYRIA was under the command of Command Headquarters, JERUSALEM.

The 7th Australian Division, with Det. 208 (A.C.) Squadron under command, were on the left flank.

The 21st Australian Brigade was ordered to advance on BEYROUTH along the line of the coast road, and the 25th Australian Brigade to advance via METULLA and MERDJAYOUN. The Free French Division and the 5th Indian Brigade were on the right flank. The 5th Indian Brigade was ordered to secure DERRA and other strategic points on the railway along the frontier and subsequently to occupy SHEIKH MESKINE and EZRAA. The Free French Division were ordered to pass through the 5th Brigade, when their task was completed, and to advance on DAMASCUS.

The original intention was to concentrate the main strength of the advance of BEYROUTH, and then to swing round on DAMASCUS, the Free French remaining in position to the South of the city if they encountered any serious resistance.

12. On the 18th June, 1st Australian Corps took over the Command of EXPORTER force (208 (A.C.) Squadron Detachment now came under command of Australian Corps).

13. On the 21st June, the forces on the coast had encountered very heavy opposition, but DAMASCUS was occupied and the plan was now changed to an out-flanking movement on BEYROUTH from the DAMASCUS area. On the 22nd June, 3 (F) Squadron R.A.A.F. (Tomahawks) were placed under command of Australian Corps.

14. On the 21st June, HABFORCE started to advance on PALMYRA from H.3, with Detachment 208 (A.C.) Squadron (Lysanders) and "X" Flight (Gladiators) under command.

15. In the first days of July it became clear that the Vichy French were holding strongly immediately West of DAMASCUS and so it was decided to concentrate the attack in the coastal area once again, but to attempt to break through in the DAMASCUS area at the same time. Accordingly, on the 4th July, 45 (Bomber) Squadron, which had just arrived in PALESTINE, was placed under command of the 7th Australian Division, and two Hurricane aircraft of 208 Squadron Detachment under command of 6th Division, who had now taken over the direction of operations in the DAMASCUS area.

16. On the 1st July, the 10th Indian Division advanced from ABU KEMAI along the EUPHRATES River towards ALEPPO.

NAVAL COOPERATION WITH THE ARMY.

17. 15th Cruiser Squadron was based at HAIFA throughout the greater part of the operations. During the initial coastal advance these Naval forces successfully landed the S.S. Battalion at the mouth of the NAHR LITANI River.

18. The roles of the 15th Squadron were:-

- (i) To assist our ground forces in their coast advance by bombarding the Vichy Forces along the coast road whenever the opportunity occurred.
- (ii) To prevent the Vichy Naval Forces from interfering with our coast land operations.

19. A small force of Fulmar aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm operating from aerodromes in PALESTINE, were initially provided for the protection of our Naval Forces. The aircraft, however, proved ineffective against Vichy fighter aircraft, and as a result, two destroyers were damaged, and three Fulmar aircraft destroyed and one damaged, while only one enemy aircraft was shot down during these attacks on our destroyers. The responsibility, therefore, of protecting our Naval Forces had to be undertaken by the Royal Air Force Fighter Squadrons in PALESTINE at the expense of their normal role.

AIR FORCE PLAN.

20. The general Air Force plan was to provide the maximum air support to the ground operations in SYRIA whilst providing for the air protection of the port of HAIFA, of CYPRUS and PALESTINE generally.

21. With the small air forces available at the commencement of the operations, the decentralisation of squadrons for direct support work under the control of Army formations was found impracticable. The available air forces, with the exception of the Army Cooperation units, were retained under the control of this Headquarters, using the available bomber force for strategical reconnaissances and strategical bombing, and the fighter force for offensive/defensive work against the Vichy and Axis aircraft operating within the range of our fighter aircraft. Arrangements were, however, made for the provision of close air support, both with fighters and bombers, in the tactical area, whenever such action was justified and practicable with the resources available. The arrival of air reinforcements made it practicable at a later date to decentralise Squadrons under Army control for direct support work, see paragraph 61.

22. The added commitment to provide continuous protection for H.M. Ships when at sea off the Syrian coast proved a serious strain on the fighter resources available and often absorbed the whole of the fighter effort, to the exclusion of other tasks connected with the protection of our ground forces from Vichy air action. This situation was repeatedly represented to the General Officer Commanding, with a view to restricting the activities of H.M. Ships and thus releasing fighters for other tasks. The G.O.C. expressed the view that he was prepared to accept the situation in view of the importance of the Naval operations. Later, however, the Naval operations were restricted to a minimum in order to release fighters for other duties.

23. During the course of the land operations, two independent columns operated as follows:-

- (i) HABFORCE
from H.3 against PALMYRA.
- (ii) 10TH INDIAN DIVISION
along the EUPHRATES River towards ALEPPO.

These land forces became subjected to heavy air attacks and air assistance was requested. With the fall of DAMASCUS, restricted air assistance could be given to HABFORCE in the PALMYRA area, and after the fall of PALMYRA, restricted air assistance for the 10th INDIAN DIVISION also became practicable. The provision of air protection for both these forces did, however, present a serious problem owing to the distances involved and the lack of suitable aerodromes from which to operate.

24. The most effective method of reducing the Vichy air effort against these columns was to neutralise the Vichy Air Forces by attacking their aerodromes and, with this object in view, the "blitzing" of aerodromes became the most important offensive role of our air forces.

25. With regard to the task of neutralising the Vichy air forces on the ground, the plan had to be divided into three phases. During the first phase, only the aerodromes as far North as BAALBEK could be satisfactorily dealt with. After the capture by the Army of DAMASCUS the second phase commenced with the use of MEZZE aerodrome, when it became practicable to attack aerodromes as far North as HAMA. The third and last phase commenced after the fall of PALMYRA, when all Vichy aerodromes were within range of our fighters.

26. An additional factor which affected the general air plan was the need to divert a proportion of the air effort to the task of preventing sea reinforcements reaching SYRIA. In conjunction with Fleet Air Arm aircraft operating from CYPRUS it was necessary to have a force of bombers standing by for attacks against any Vichy shipping approaching the Syrian coast. This commitment, however, did not last for more than approximately one week and ceased when a Vichy ship containing reinforcements was sunk by Fleet Air Arm

action off Cape GELIDONYA, which resulted in the Vichy plan for reinforcing SYRIA being abandoned. The inability to reinforce SYRIA by sea was probably one of the main factors which brought about the final capitulation of the Vichy French in SYRIA.

DAY TO DAY NARRATIVE.

(For details of Bomber, Fighter and Fleet Air Arm Operations see Appendices "D", "E.1", "E.2", "E.3" and "F".)

27. June 8th.

(i) Information. Vichy Air Forces at DAMASCUS include a Potez 63 Group, which is likely to operate against our troops in that area, whilst the majority of Vichy fighters are based at RAYAK and ESTABEL. Aviation petrol stocks in SYRIA are definitely limited, and about 295 tons of the amount available are stored in barrels at the SOCONY VACUUM installation, BEYROUTH. The morale of the Vichy Forces is uncertain and the Syrian populace is mainly ill-disposed towards the French. Hostile aircraft were active against our Fleet off the Syrian coast.

(ii) Plan. The plan for the day's operations was to use the available bombers to attack the French Air Forces at DAMASCUS and the aviation petrol stores at BEYROUTH, whilst the fighters attacked hostile aircraft on the ground at RAYAK and ESTABEL, carried out protective sweeps over our troops advancing towards DAMASCUS, and provided fighter protection to Naval units owing to the destruction of Fleet Air Arm Fulmars by enemy aircraft. With a view to exploiting the morale of the troops and population, Bombay aircraft of No.216 Squadron were used to distribute propaganda leaflets over towns and military areas throughout SYRIA.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

3 sorties Blenheims over DAMASCUS landing ground.
6 sorties Blenheims Socony Vacuum, BEYROUTH.

June 8th (Cont'd.)

Fighter Operations.

9 sorties Hurricanes and Tomahawks
ground strafing enemy aircraft.
10 sorties Gladiators over SHEIKH
MESKINE area.
7 sorties Hurricanes and Tomahawks
bomber escort.
2 sorties Hurricanes Fleet protection.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

1 sortie Tac/R.
1 sortie Strat/R.

(iv) Result.

Reports received indicated that the bomb raids had inflicted damage on the aerodrome at DAMASCUS and that a large fire had been started at the Socony Vacuum installation at BEYROUTH. The fighters damaged a number of aircraft on the ground at RAYAK and ESTABEL, but the lack of incendiary ammunition prevented their complete destruction.

(v) Casualties.

One long-range Hurricane of No. 208 Squadron, pilot F/Lt. Aldis, failed to return. Casualties inflicted on Naval Fulmars by Vichy fighters necessitated the diversion of Hurricane fighters of No. 80 Squadron to assist in the protection of our Naval forces operating off TYRE and SIDON.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	9
80 Squadron	12
"X" Flight	5
3 Squadron	12
208 Squadron, Hurricane	8
" " " Lysander	1

28. June 9th.

(i) Information.

Hostile fighters and bombers were reported to be concentrating their attacks on our Naval forces off the Syrian coast, and against the ground forces in the SHEIKH MESKINE - SANAMEIN area. Information was received that Vichy forces were trying to rail petrol from TURKEY.

(ii) Plan.

The plan for the day's operation was to provide maximum fighter protection for the Naval forces to enable them to carry out their operations in support of the Army in the coastal sector, and

June 9th (Cont'd.)

at the same time to make use of the Gladiators over our ground forces in the Eastern sector. The bomber force was kept in reserve, one Blenheim being used for a reconnaissance of ALLEPPO-HAMA-HOMS-BEYROUTH to check the disposition of Vichy aircraft and shipping.

(iii) Operations. In all 35 sorties (protective patrol) were carried out by our fighter aircraft over H.M. ships and 7 over forward troops in the SHEIKH MESKINE - SANAMEIN area. All available bombers stood by to attack petrol tankers ex TURKEY.

(iv) Result. One Potez 63 and two Dewoitines 520 were confirmed shot down and one Bloch 200 unconfirmed, whilst attacking H.M. ships. Four Vichy Glenn Martins attacking our troops near SANAMEIN were driven off by the Gladiators, one bomber being damaged.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	8
80 Squadron	11
3 Squadron	10
208 Squadron Hurricane	4
" " Lysander	2
"X" Flight	2

29. June 10th.

(i) Information. Photo recce on 9/6 showed 17 aircraft on ALLEPPO aerodrome, which had been reported as a base for night operations of hostile aircraft. Visual recce reports indicated a number of aircraft on EI BEIDA landing ground. Enemy aircraft continued to be active against our Naval forces wherever protection was not provided. Vichy forces continued to expect petrol by rail from TURKEY.

(ii) Plan. The plan was to use the bombers to attack hostile aerodromes whilst the fighters protected the Naval forces in support of our ground forces on the left flank and our troops South of DAMASCUS. In addition to fulfilling recce requirements for the Army, Strat/R's were arranged to cover PALMYRA and the aerodromes between HOMS and RAYAK, and also BEYROUTH harbour.

June 10th (Cont'd.)

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

2 Blenheim sorties on ALEPPO landing ground.
3 Blenheim sorties on PALMYRA landing ground.
All available bombers stood by to attack petrol from TURKEY.

Fighter Operations.

24 sorties Hurricanes and Tomahawks over the Fleet.
9 sorties Gladiators offensive patrol over troops South of DAMASCUS. (Without any interceptions.)

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

2 Strat/R for aircraft locations and shipping movements.
2 Tac/R under Army control.

(iv) Results.

Bombs fell on the flare path, buildings and hangars at ALEPPO and the hangars were hit at PALMYRA, the alternative target for the Blenheims attacking EL BEIDA, which had been vacated before the bombers arrived.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	9
80 Squadron	6
3 Squadron	8
208 Squadron Hurricanes	9
" " Lysanders	1
"X" Flight	3

30. June 11th.

(i) Information. Considerable Vichy A.F.V. and M/T activity was reported in the KUNEITRA area and in the vicinity of DAMASCUS. Hostile air reinforcements were still expected at ALEPPO. Petrol was still expected from TURKEY.

(ii) Plan. To attack ALEPPO in the early hours of 11/6 with three Blenheims, and to use available fighters against M/T and A.F.V's and for protection of our forward troops in the KISSOUE area.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

2 Blenheim sorties on ALEPPO landing ground.
All available bombers stood by to attack petrol from TURKEY.

June 11th (Cont'd.)

Fighter Operations.

8 Tomahawk sorties against M/T and A.F.V's.
6 sorties Gladiators offensive patrol KISSOUE area.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

2 Strat/R LATTAKIA-ALEPPO and BEYROUTH-DJOUNIEH areas for location of aircraft, rail and shipping movements.
1 Tac/R.

(iv) Results.

Bombs fell on the runways, dispersed aircraft and hangars at ALEPPO and caused a large explosion. Recces located Vichy aircraft at ALEPPO and RAYAK; air photos of shipping in BEYROUTH were obtained.

Aircraft available.

80 Squadron	8
3 Squadron	6
208 Squadron Hurricanes	3
" " Lysanders	1
11 Squadron	9
"X" Flight	3.

31. June 12th.

(i) Information. Enemy ground forces were strongly situated in the KISSOUE area and were believed to be about to attempt to out-flank our troops.

(ii) Plan. To use the bombers against enemy ground forces, and to allocate such fighters as were available after providing for the protection of Naval forces supporting the Army in the coastal sector, for close support.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

3 Blenheim sorties against gun positions 4½ miles North of KISWE.
3 Blenheim sorties against gun positions 2 miles South of KISWE.

Fighter Operations.

22 sorties Fleet protection.
6 sorties close support.
12 Gladiators sorties for protection of forward troops in KISSOUE area.

June 12th (Cont'd.)

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

3 sorties Tac/R and Photo/R for Army.
1 sortie Strat/R BEYROUTH-TRIPOLI-TEL
KELAKH-PAIMYRA-DAMASCUS.

- (iv) Results. Results of bombing unobserved. Four Tomahawks could not locate suspected out-flanking movements, but two Hurricanes successfully attacked hostile M/T North of MERDJAYOUN.
- (v) Casualties. One Blenheim bombing in close support was fired on and hit by A.A. from our troops, being mistaken for a Glenn Martin, but the pilot was able to bring his aircraft back to base.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	12
80 Squadron	11
3 Squadron	6
208 Squadron Hurricanes	6
" " Lysanders	2
"X" Flight	4

32. June 13th.

- (i) Information. Enemy ground forces were hardening their resistance in the area South of DAMASCUS. Vichy destroyers based on BEYROUTH were attempting to retard our troops' progress in the Coastal sector by bombardment. Enemy aircraft were likely to be active against our Naval forces operating off TYRE and SIDON to prevent bombardment by Vichy warships.
- (ii) Plan. To assist the Army by close support and to provide fighters for Fleet protection.
- (iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.
- 1 Blenheim sortie against AADLIYE village
1 Blenheim sortie against NAHJA village.
1 Blenheim sortie against HIRJILLE.

Fleet Air Arm Operations.

5 sorties against Vichy warships at BEYROUTH and DJOUNIEH.

Fighter Operations.

32 sorties Hurricanes and Tomahawks
Fleet protection.
11 sorties Gladiators over forward
troops in KISSOUE area.

June 13th (Cont'd.)

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

5 sorties for Army Tac/R and Photo/R
KISSOUE, SAIDA and AADLIYE areas.
1 Blenheim Strat/R BEYROUTH-TRIPOLI-
HOMS-PALMYRA.

- (iv) Results. Bombs reported to have fallen amongst
M/T and troops in area North of
KISSOUE. Fleet Air Arm claim one
warship torpedoed and sunk in DJOUNIEH.
Tomahawks destroyed three Ju.88's
and damaged two more, which were
attacking the Fleet.
- (v) Casualties. 1 Photo/R Blenheim SAIDA failed to
return.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	12
80 Squadron	10
3 Squadron	9
208 Squadron Hurricanes	4
" " Lysanders	1

33. June 14th.

- (i) Information. Enemy air forces were reported to be
expecting reinforcements, to arrive
at ALEPPO.
- (ii) Plan. To attack enemy aircraft on their
aerodrome before they are dispersed.
To keep fighters available at call for
Army or Naval needs. To carry out
Strat/R for hostile aircraft and
shipping locations.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

6 Blenheim sorties against ALEPPO
landing ground.

Fighter Operations.

5 sorties Gladiators over troops in
KISSOUE area.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

2 sorties for Army Tac/R and Photo/R
KISSOUE and HASBAYA areas.
1 Strat/R IATTAKIA-ALEPPO-HOMS-BAALBEK-
BEYRCOUTH for aircraft locations and
rail and shipping movements.

June 14th (Cont'd.)

- (iv) Results. All bombs are reported to have fallen in the target area at ALEPPO. One aircraft was burnt out and several more damaged.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	8
80 Squadron	8
3 Squadron	10
208 Squadron Hurricanes	2
" " Lysanders	1
"X" Flight	5

34. June 15th.

- (i) Information. Hostile aircraft reported to be very active against our forward troops.

- (ii) Plan. To use fighters for protection of and in support of our forward troops, and for the protection of Naval forces operating off SAIDA.

- (iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

Nil.

Fighter Operations.

35 sorties Tomahawks and Hurricanes.
16 sorties Gladiators protective patrols over forward troops in all sectors.
7 sorties Tomahawks close support.
12 sorties Hurricanes Fleet protection.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

3 sorties for Army.
1 Strat/R ALEPPO-HOMS-RAYAK-BEYROUTH.

- (iv) Results. Tomahawks shot down two Glenn Martins over forward troops and attacked five A.F.V's and 4 M/T EZRAA area. Four Gladiators engaged twelve Dewoitines, destroyed one, and one unconfirmed, KISSOUE area. Hurricanes over Fleet destroyed one Ju.88 and damaged two more which were attacking our ships.

- (v) Casualties. One Gladiator and two Strat/R Hurricanes failed to return. One of the latter is reported to have been shot down by our own light A.A. whilst dropping a message.

June 15th (Cont'd.)

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	7
80 Squadron	7
3 Squadron	9
208 Squadron Hurricanes	1
" " Lysanders	1
"X" Flight	5

35. June 16th.

(i) Information. Hostile aircraft from RAYAK have been active against our forward troops. A Vichy destroyer was reported to be damaged at sea off TRIPOLI. Our troops were still being held up in the forward areas, and Vichy troops were counter-attacking at KUNEITRA.

(ii) Plan. To attack hostile aircraft on the ground and Vichy shipping at sea with the bombers and to use the fighters in close support of the Army.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

2 Blenheim sorties against RAYAK landing ground.
2 Blenheim sorties against a merchant ship at sea.

Fighter Operations.

11 sorties ground attack KUNEITRA and South of DAMASCUS.
1 sortie defence of PALESTINE.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

2 sorties Strat/R LATTAKIA-ALEPPO and BEYROUTH-HOMS areas.

(iv) Results.

Bombs fell across runway, hangars and buildings at RAYAK and caused a large explosion at North East end of landing ground. One direct hit reported on bows of Vichy merchant ship attacked off TRIPOLI.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	9
80 Squadron	9
3 Squadron	8
208 Squadron Hurricanes	1
" " Lysanders	1
"X" Flight	1

36. June 17th.

(i) Information. Photo recce shows that HOMS landing ground has been enlarged and two Squadrons are reported to be based there. Intelligence indicates that aviation petrol supplies are being removed by rail from TURKEY and that the most vulnerable part on the railway is a long viaduct at HEREDERE. KUNEITRA has been recaptured by a Vichy French Mobile Force.

(ii) Plan. To bomb enemy aircraft on the ground at HOMS and to attack the bridge at HEREDERE with a view to interrupting rail communications between SYRIA and TURKEY. Fighters to be used for attack against Vichy forces at KUNEITRA and protection of our Naval forces supporting the left flank.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

1 Blenheim sortie against HOMS landing ground.
3 Blenheim sorties against HEREDERE bridge.

Fighter Operations.

3 Tomahawk sorties ground attack KUNEITRA.
6 sorties Fleet protection.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

1 sortie Tac/R.
2 sorties Strat/R BEYROUTH-RAYAK valley and LATTAKIA-ALEPPO.

(iv) Results. Direct hit aircraft at HOMS. HEREDERE bridge missed.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	6
80 Squadron	8
3 Squadron	7
208 Squadron Hurricanes	1
" " Lysanders	2
"X" Flight	1

37. June 18th.

(i) Information. The fort at SUWEIDA was strongly held against our attacks, and popular feeling in the JEBEL DRUZE was still an uncertain quantity. Our troops were being held up on the right flank by determined opposition of the Vichy French. Vichy warships operating from BEYROUTH had been active against our troops in the coastal sector.

June 18th (Cont'd.)

(ii) Plan. To attack the fort at SUWEIDA and drop pamphlets in the adjacent villages.
To provide bombers in close support of our troops in the QATANA area.
To repeat the attack on HEREDERE bridge in order to break the SYRIAN-TURKISH railways. To attack destroyers in BEYROUTH harbour with Fleet Air Arm aircraft.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

1 Blenheim sortie against SUWEIDA fort.
3 Blenheim sorties against HEREDERE bridge.
1 Blenheim sortie against troops at point 192168.
1 Blenheim sortie against QATANA village.

Fighter Operations.

15 sorties over forward troops in QATANA-DAMASCUS areas.
12 sorties bomber escort.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

2 sorties Strat/R LATTAKIA-ALEPPO-HOMS and RAYAK valley.

Fleet Air Arm Operations.

5 sorties attacking destroyers in BEYROUTH.

(iv) Results.

Bomber mainly near misses, some bombs on troops in QATANA area. Fighter 5 Gladiators destroyed 2 Dewoitines 520 in DAMASCUS area.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	8
80 Squadron	9
3 Squadron	7
208 Squadron Hurricanes	1
" " Lysander	2
"X" Flight	1

38. June 19th.

(i) Information. Vichy warships were continuing their activities off the SYRIAN coast. Resistance to our ground forces continued to be violent in the area South of DAMASCUS and around MERDJAYOUN.

June 19th (Cont'd.)

(ii) Plan. To attack Vichy warships in BEYROUTH and to provide close support to our troops in the QATANA area with the bombers. To drop leaflets on the Vichy troops on the left flank. Fighters to be used to escort bombers and for protection of our Naval forces containing Vichy warships operating from BEYROUTH.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

1 Blenheim sortie QATANA village.
3 Blenheim sorties against Vichy destroyer in BEYROUTH harbour.

Fighter Operations.

12 sorties Fleet protection.
13 sorties Bomber escort.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

1 Strat/R BEYROUTH-TEL KELAKH-RAYAK.

(iv) Results. Reported bombs fell among troop concentrations QATANA area.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	7
80 Squadron	9
3 Squadron	6
208 Squadron Hurricanes	1
" " Lysanders	4

39. June 20th.

(i) Information. Vichy forces are reported to be evacuating DAMASCUS and mainly retiring towards BEYROUTH.

(ii) Plan. To support ground forces by attacking Vichy M/T with bombers and fighters. To provide fighters to protect our Naval forces operating off SAIDA and for offensive patrols over our advance troops approaching DAMASCUS.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

3 Blenheim sorties against M/T near BETER village.
4 Blenheim sorties against M/T on DAMASCUS-~~SAIDA~~ road.

Fighter Operations.

10 sorties Fleet protection.
5 sorties bomber escort.
5 sorties over forward troops South of DAMASCUS.
8 sorties ground attack on M/T on DAMASCUS/BEYROUTH road.

June 20th (Cont'd.)

- (iv) Results. Bombers claim damage to 20 M/T and to the roads North of JEZZINE and the DAMASCUS-ZAHLE road. Fighters report 100 M/T damaged or destroyed by front gunning on DAMASCUS-SHTAURA-BEYROUTH road.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	7
80 Squadron	8
3 Squadron	7
208 Squadron Hurricanes	1
" " Lysanders	4
"X" Flight	-

40. June 21st.

- (i) Information. Having withdrawn from DAMASCUS, Vichy forces were retiring into the LEBANON.

- (ii) Plan. To assist ground forces in harassing enemy's retreat, to protect forward troops against enemy aircraft attacks and to provide fighter protection for Naval forces operating off SAIDA in support of our left flank.

- (iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

3 Blenheim sorties against M/T on DAMASCUS-BEYROUTH road.

Fighter Operations.

13 sorties Hurricanes Fleet protection.
3 sorties bomber escort.
7 sorties Tomahawks ground attack DAMASCUS-BEYROUTH road.
4 sorties offensive patrol over MEZZE area.

- (iv) Results. Bombs fell among 40 M/T on DAMASCUS-BEYROUTH road, many of which are believed to have been damaged. Fighters claim hits on approximately 34 vehicles, and dispersed two troops of cavalry between DAMASCUS and SHTAURA.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	8
80 Squadron	8
3 Squadron	8
208 Squadron Hurricanes	4
" " Lysanders	4
"X" Flight	2

41. June 22nd.

(i) Information. Photo recce showed Vichy destroyers which were operating against our forces on the SYRIAN coast in BEYROUTH harbour. Vichy ground forces in the coastal sector continue to offer strong resistance to our advance.

(ii) Plan. To use bomber forces against Vichy shipping. To assist ground forces by placing No. 3 R.A.A.F. Squadron under command of Australian Corps H.Q. and "X" Flight under control of Habforce at H.4.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

6 Blenheim sorties against destroyer in BEYROUTH harbour.

Fighter Operations.

12 sorties under Australian Corps H.Q. carried out ground attacks on M/T in RAYAK area.

6 sorties bomber escort and ground attack.

6 sorties offensive patrol DAMASCUS-BEYROUTH.

Recce Operations under A.H.Q.

2 sorties Strat/R ALEPPO-HAMA and SYRIAN coast.

Fleet Air Arm Operations.

2 sorties against destroyers.

(iv) Results.

Bombers claimed one direct hit on Guépard class destroyer, believed sunk and one hit on merchant vessel at North Mole, BEYROUTH. It was later ascertained that the destroyer was not sunk, but badly damaged.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	7
80 Squadron	9
3 Squadron	11
208 Squadron Hurricanes	3
" " Lysanders	4

42. June 23rd.

(i) Information. Resistance in the SUWEIDA area continued to be determined. Concentrations of enemy aircraft were located from photo recce on TALIA, RAYAK and KUSEIR aerodromes.

June 23rd (Cont'd.)

(ii) Plan. To attack SUWEIDA fort with bombers and to use fighters for ground strafing enemy aircraft on aerodromes, operating from DAMASCUS as an advanced landing ground.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

1 Blenheim sortie against SUWEIDA fort.

Fighter Operations.

17 sorties Hurricanes ground strafing enemy aircraft at TALIA and RAYAK.

12 sorties Tomahawks ground strafing enemy aircraft at KUSEIR.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

2 sorties Strat/R.

(iv) Results. Bomber results unobserved. Fighter - TALIA and RAYAK 8 enemy aircraft destroyed, 26 damaged KUSEIR - 1 bomber, 1 hangar destroyed. M/T and rail trucks damaged. 2 Dewoitines 520 shot down, one damaged.

(v) Casualties. 3 Hurricanes failed to return but one pilot believed safe. Success of ground strafing appears largely due to weakness of Vichy A.A. defence.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	4
80 Squadron	10
"X" Flight	3
3 Squadron	10
208 Squadron Hurricanes	8
" " Lysanders	4

43. June 24th.

(i) Information. Vichy shipping renewed in BEYROUTH harbour. Vichy aircraft were still using RAYAK aerodrome, whilst approximately 100 trucks stood in the adjacent sidings. Resistance continued at SUWEIDA. Enemy aircraft active against our troops at PALMYRA.

(ii) Plan. To attack Vichy shipping in BEYROUTH, aircraft at RAYAK and the fort at SUWEIDA, and to protect our Fleet bombarding DAMCUR.

June 24th (Cont'd.)

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

3 Blenheim sorties against RAYAK railway sidings and stores.
7 Blenheim sorties against SUWEIDA Citadel and fort.

Fighter Operations.

5 sorties bomber escort.
5 sorties Fleet protection.
4 sorties local defence.
10 sorties Tomahawks offensive patrol over RAYAK.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

1 Strat/R LATTAKIA-ALEPPO-HAMA-RAYAK for aircraft locations and rail movements.

(iv) Results.

Direct hits on rail sidings at RAYAK. Fleet Air Arm one stick of bombs on jetty near destroyers.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	5
80 Squadron	7
3 Squadron	10
208 Squadron Hurricanes	6
" " Lysanders	4

44. June 25th.

(i) Information. Hostile batteries were active near ADINAS, which could not be reached by our own gunfire. Enemy aircraft were active against our ground forces in the PALMYRA area.

(ii) Plan. To attack hostile batteries with bombers and to provide fighter protection for ground forces in the PALMYRA area.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

2 Blenheim sorties against two heavy gun positions near DIMAS.

Fighter Operations.

7 sorties Tomahawks patrol PALMYRA.
11 sorties Hurricanes patrol RAYAK area.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

1 Strat/R BEYROUTH shipping.
Pamphlets dropped on SUWEIDA.

June 25th (Cont'd.)

- (iv) Results. Bomber - not observed.
Fighter - Tomahawks shot down 3 Potez
63 confirmed, 1 unconfirmed, South
West of PALMYRA.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	4
80 Squadron	7
"X" Flight	1
3 Squadron	8
208 Squadron Hurricanes	5
" " Lysanders	3

45. June 26th.

- (i) Information. Vichy warships were still based in BEYROUTH operating on occasion at night. Large stores of aviation and M/T petrol were held in a series of dumps at TEL KELAKH. Enemy aircraft were operating from HOMS, KUSEIR and RAYAK aerodromes.
- (ii) Plan. To attack Vichy warships at night with Fleet Air Arm aircraft, to use bombers against the TEL KELAKH petrol dump, and to use available fighters for front gunning enemy aircraft on their aerodromes, and to protect Naval forces returning to HAIFA after a night operation.
- (iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.
4 Blenheim sorties against TEL KELAKH dump.
3 Blenheim sorties against DEIR-EZ-ZOR.
- Fighter Operations.
20 sorties ground strafing HOMS, KUSEIR and RAYAK.
6 sorties offensive patrol PALMYRA area.
12 sorties Fleet protection.
- Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.
2 Strat/R BEYROUTH-LATTAKIA for shipping and RAYAK-HOMS for locations of enemy aircraft.
- Fleet Air Arm Operations.
3 sorties against BEYROUTH shipping.

June 26th (Cont'd.)

- (iv) Results. Bomber - bombs fell in target area and railway siding and started a large fire. Fleet Air Arm Swordfish attacked small motor vessel off BEYROUTH with torpedo, but no results observed. Fighter - 8 enemy aircraft destroyed on ground, 19 reported damaged at BAALBEK, HOMS and TALIA, also hangars and M/T machine-gunned.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	5
80 Squadron	6
"X" Flight	1
3 Squadron	8
208 Squadron Hurricanes	6
" " Lysanders	2

46. June 27th.

- (i) Information. Our ground forces were being held up by Vichy concentrations in area West of DAMASCUS.
- (ii) Plan. To provide close support for our ground forces and protection for our ships bombarding Vichy positions in the DAMCUR area.
- (iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

13 Blenheim sorties against gun batteries at point 178183.

Fighter Operations.

11 sorties Fleet protection.
7 sorties local defence.
11 sorties bomber escort.

Recce Operations. under A.H.Q.

1 long range Hurricane recce for Army.
2 Strat/R's LATTAKIA-ALEPPO and HOMS-RAYAK.

Fleet Air Arm Operations.

1 sortie dusk sweep against shipping in BEYROUTH.

- (iv) Results. Bombers claim hits on Vichy M/T concentrations in DIMAS area.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	7
80 Squadron	6
"X" Flight	2
3 Squadron	6
208 Squadron Hurricanes	5
" " Lysanders	2

47. June 28th.

(i) Information. Vichy forces at PALMYRA were continuing their resistance. Accumulations of rolling stock at RAYAK were increasing.

(ii) Plan. To bomb Vichy forces at PALMYRA and rolling stock at RAYAK, using fighters for bomber escort and for protection of Naval forces engaged in bombardment off DAMOUR.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

4 Blenheim sorties against stores at PALMYRA.

5 Blenheim sorties against barracks at PALMYRA.

3 Blenheim sorties against railway sidings and hangar at RAYAK.

3 Blenheim sorties against railway sidings at RAYAK.

Fighter Operations.

8 Tomahawk sorties bomber escort.

24 sorties Hurricanes Fleet protection.

3 sorties Hurricanes local defence.

(iv) Results.

Bombs hit stores at PALMYRA and started a fire. At RAYAK there was a direct hit on the railway line. The Tomahawk escort of the bomber force shot down 6 Vichy Glenn Martins attacking our troops at PALMYRA.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	7
80 Squadron	7
260 Squadron	10
3 Squadron	6
"X" Flight	2
208 Squadron Hurricanes	7
" " Lysanders	3

48. June 29th.

(i) Information. Instructions from Headquarters, Middle East, indicated the Residency at BEYROUTH as a suitable target. The Vichy resistance at PALMYRA was still as strong as ever. Vichy aircraft were still based on aerodromes in the valley from RAYAK to KUSEIR, many in process of repairs after our former attacks.

June 29th (Cont'd.)

- (ii) Plan. To bomb PALMYRA and the Residency at BEYROUTH and to use available fighters against hostile aircraft on the ground and for protection of our Naval forces off DAMOUR.
- (iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.
- 5 Blenheim sorties against PALMYRA stores.
5 Blenheim sorties against PALMYRA barracks.
4 Blenheim sorties against General Dentz's Residence, BEYROUTH.
- Fighter Operations.
- 7 sorties bomber escort.
12 sorties Fleet protection.
8 sorties Tomahawks ground strafing enemy aircraft on KUSEIR landing ground.
- Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.
- 1 sortie Photo/R for Army.
2 sorties Strat/R TRIPOLI-HOMS-RAYAK and LATTAKIA.
Pamphlets dropped by bombers and recce aircraft PALMYRA, HOMS and BEYROUTH.
- (iv) Results. Bombs hit stores at PALMYRA and Residency, BEYROUTH. Tomahawks destroyed 4 Glenn Martins, one Dewoitine 438 on ground at KUSEIR and one Glenn Martin in the air over the sea off BEYROUTH.
- (v) Casualties. Recce LATTAKIA returned to base after being driven off by Vichy fighters.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	10
80 Squadron	8
260 Squadron	10
"X" Flight	1
806/803 Squadron	9
3 Squadron	6
208 Squadron Hurricanes	7
" " Lysander	2

49. June 30th.

- (i) Information. Vichy troops SUWEIDA and PALMYRA continued to hold up our ground forces. Visual and photo recces indicated that a number of Vichy aircraft had been concentrated at BAALBEK.

June 30th (Cont'd.)

(ii) Plan. To attack PALMYRA and SUWEIDA with bombers and to use available fighters for front gunning enemy aircraft on the ground at BAALBEK.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

10 Blenheim sorties against barracks and stores at PALMYRA.

3 Blenheim sorties against Fort and Cité Militaire, SUWEIDA.

Fighter Operations.

10 Hurricane sorties ground strafing at BAALBEK.

6 sorties local defence.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

1 sortie Strat/R for Army PALMYRA area.

1 sortie Strat/R ALEPPO-MEIDAN EKBEZ-LATTAKIA.

Pamphlets dropped SUWEIDA.

(iv) Results.

Bombers - some hits on both targets.
Fighters - 5 twin-engined, 9 single-engined aircraft destroyed or damaged and buildings machine-gunned BAALBEK.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	12
80 Squadron	8
260 Squadron	10
"X" Flight	2
806/803 Squadron	9
3 Squadron	7
208 Squadron Hurricanes	9
" " Lysanders	1

50. July 1st.

(i) Information. PALMYRA and SUWEIDA continued their resistance to our forces. Enemy aircraft were active against our troops in the PALMYRA area, and were believed to be operating from the RAYAK valley.

(ii) Plan. To bomb Vichy forces at PALMYRA and SUWEIDA, to provide fighter protection for our ground forces attacking PALMYRA, and to attack enemy aircraft on the ground in the RAYAK valley.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

10 Blenheim sorties against barracks and stores at PALMYRA.

3 Blenheim sorties against Fort and Cité Militaire, SUWEIDA.

July 1st (Cont'd.)

Fighter Operations.

10 sorties offensive patrol PALMYRA.
3 sorties local defence HAIFA.
7 sorties ground strafing aircraft
BAALBEK.
8 sorties ground strafing M/T.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

2 sorties Tac and Photo/R for Army.
2 sorties Photo/R shipping at BEYROUTH.
1 sortie Strat/R BEYROUTH, Homs, RAYAK.

(iv) Results.

Bombers reported direct hits on both targets. Fighters claimed two enemy aircraft destroyed, four damaged on the ground BAALBEK area, two A.F.V.'s and 20 M/T destroyed in RAYAK valley area.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	12
80 Squadron	8
45 Squadron	13
260 Squadron	10
"X" Flight	2
829 Squadron	3
806/803 Squadron	12
3 Squadron	10
208 Squadron Hurricanes	11
" " " Lysanders	1

51. July 2nd.

(i) Information. The Vichy French forces having failed to obtain the passage of reinforcements through TURKEY, were expecting to receive them by sea via SALONIKA. Vichy destroyers left BEYROUTH on 1/7, presumably to meet and escort transports. Loire 130 flying boats based at TRIPOLI were being used to shadow our Fleet. The garrison at SUWEIDA continued their resistance to our ground forces. Our Naval forces are becoming the special target for enemy aircraft attacks.

(ii) Plan.

To locate and attack Vichy transports and warships with bomber aircraft, and to bomb the garrison at SUWEIDA. To use the fighters against the seaplanes at TRIPOLI and for protective patrols over our troops at PALMYRA and our Naval forces off the SYRIAN coast.

July 2nd (Cont'd.)

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

4 Blenheim sorties against Fort and Cité Militaire, SUWEIDA. Remaining available bombers were standing by to attack Vichy sea reinforcements.

Fighter Operations.

27 sorties Fleet protection.
10 sorties offensive patrol PALMYRA.
1 sortie local defence HAIFA.
6 Tomahawk sorties attack on flying boats at TRIPOLI.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

2 sorties Strat/R, one BEYROUTH and one search for Vichy destroyers.

(iv) Results.

Re see then they were only destroyers!!

Bombers scored direct hit at SUWEIDA. 2 Loire 130 flying boats damaged at TRIPOLI. Vichy destroyers not located off SYRIAN coast.

Aircraft available:

11 Squadron	14
45 Squadron	9
80 Squadron	7
260 Squadron	12
"X" Flight	5
806/803 Squadron	5
3 Squadron	10
208 Squadron Hurricanes	11
" " Lysanders	2

52. July 3rd.

(i) Information. A Vichy ship originally reported as a light cruiser but believed to be a merchant vessel was located in CHEKKA BAY, where it would be of use in arranging the disembarkation of reinforcements should the expected transports arrive. Vichy aircraft based on HAMA were operating against our forces in Eastern SYRIA.

(ii) Plan. To locate Vichy shipping and attack all vessels likely to be concerned with the transport of reinforcements or supplies. To relieve the pressure of air attack on our forces in Eastern SYRIA by attacking Vichy aircraft on the ground at HAMA, and to provide protection for our Naval forces patrolling off the SYRIAN coast to intercept Vichy shipping.

July 3rd (Cont'd.)

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

2 Blenheim sorties against a light cruiser in CHEKKA BAY.
Remaining available bombers standing by to attack Vichy sea reinforcements.

Fighter Operations.

10 sorties ground attack: HAMA.
20 sorties Fleet protection.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

1 sortie Strat/R shipping and movement on coast LATTAKIA-BEYROUTH.
1 sortie Strat/R Vichy aerodromes East of ANTI-LEBANON.
1 Photo/R for Army.

(iv) Results.

no - feet.

Bombs missed ship in CHEKKA BAY, which air photos showed to be a 110' coaster. 2 Vichy bombers destroyed and eight damaged at HAMA by Hurricanes ground strafing.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	14
45 Squadron	9
80 Squadron	7
260 Squadron	12
"X" Flight	4
806/803 Squadron	9
3 Squadron	7
208 Squadron Hurricanes	14
" " Lysanders	2

53. July 4th.

(i) Information. Vichy reinforcements were still en route to SYRIA by sea. Vichy aircraft based on HAMA and LITANI valley aerodromes were operating against our forces in Eastern SYRIA.

(ii) Plan. To attack Vichy shipping in order to prevent the arrival and disembarkation of supplies or reinforcements. To attack and neutralise Vichy air forces on the ground. To give fighter protection to our Naval forces off the SYRIAN coast. To place one Bomber Squadron under the command of Australian Corps H.Q. in direct support of ground operations.

July 4th (Cont'd.)

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

6 Blenheim sorties against aircraft on landing ground West of HAMA.
5 Blenheim sorties against merchant ship in TRIPOLI harbour.
Remaining available bombers were standing by to attack Vichy sea reinforcements.

Fighter Operations.

10 sorties ground strafing aircraft on landing grounds in BAALBEK area.
21 sorties Fleet protection.
3 sorties local defence HAIFA.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

1 sortie Strat/R for shipping.
1 sortie Strat/R aerodromes.
2 sorties Photo/R for Army.

(iv) Results.

Bomber - 1 Vichy Glenn Martin destroyed, 1 damaged, in raid on HAMA.
Fighter - 6 bomber and 1 transport aircraft damaged at BAALBEK.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	13
45 Squadron	13
80 Squadron	15
260 Squadron	11
"X" Flight	5
806/803 Squadron	9
3 Squadron	4
208 Squadron Hurricanes	9
" " Lysanders	2

54. July 5th.

(i) Information. Vichy forces in SYRIA continued to expect reinforcements by sea. Vichy ground forces South of BEYROUTH, with Headquarters at BEIT-ED-DINE, continued to hold up the advance of our troops, whilst resistance continued at SUWEIDA.

(ii) Plan.

To concentrate bomber attacks on BEIT-ED-DINE and close support objectives, to use fighters against hostile aircraft on the ground, and to maintain recce for shipping and transport movement relevant to Vichy plans for reinforcing SYRIA. To provide fighter protection for Fleet units patrolling off the SYRIAN coast.

July 5th (Cont'd.)

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

24 Blenheim sorties against Chateau and copse at BEIT-ED-DINE. Remaining available bombers were standing by to attack Vichy sea reinforcements.

Fighter Operations.

20 sorties Fleet protection.
7 sorties local defence HAIFA.
10 sorties ground strafing enemy aircraft.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

1 Strat/R SYRIAN coast and harbours. Pamphlet dropping - 2 sorties SUWEIDA. No.3 R.A.A.F. Squadron and one Flight No.208 Squadron under control of Australian Corps Headquarters, and "X" Flight under control of Habforce.

(iv) Results.

Direct hits on Vichy Headquarters and troops in the vicinity of BEIT-ED-DINE. Fighters reported no aircraft on HOMS, KUSEIR and RAS BAALBEK landing grounds.

(v)

Heavy dust storms and bad visibility in Eastern sector and HOMS valley.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	10
45 Squadron	12
80 Squadron	10
260 Squadron	11
"X" Flight	3
806/803 Squadron	8
3 Squadron	10
208 Squadron Hurricanes	11
" " Lysanders	2

55. July 6th.

(i) Information.

The Vichy troops continued to hold up our advance South of BEYROUTH and the Vichy forces in SUWEIDA refused to surrender. The orange groves and woods around DAMOUR were providing cover for Vichy French troops and M/T. Vichy destroyers were still absent from the SYRIAN coast and reinforcements under their escort were still expected to attempt to reach and land in SYRIA. Axis aircraft from RHODES had become very active against our Naval forces off the SYRIAN coast.

July 6th (Cont'd.)

(ii) Plan.

To use one Squadron of Blenheims under command of Australian Corps H.Q. for operations in close support on targets selected by 7th Division and dislodge Vichy forces from their hidden positions around DAMOUR. To keep the other Squadron of Blenheims available for attacks on Vichy shipping when located. Fighters to be employed on ground strafing and for protection of our Naval forces patrolling the SYRIAN coast to intercept Vichy surface craft.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

5 Blenheim sorties against bridge at JISREL CADI.

5 Blenheims sorties against bridge at JISREL CADI and orange grove East of DAMOUR.

Remaining available bombers were still standing by to attack Vichy sea reinforcements.

Fighter Operations.

67 sorties Fleet protection.

1 sortie local defence HAIFA.

4 sorties ground strafing BAALBEK and TALIA.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

2 Strat/R SYRIAN coast LITANI Valley. Pamphlet dropping - 1 sortie SUWEIDA.

(iv) Results.

Bomber - orange groves East of DAMOUR "plastered" with bombs, also buildings and woods Northern edge of DAMOUR.

Fighter - 1 Glenn Martin, 4 Leo 45 and 2 other aircraft damaged, hangars and petrol stores set on fire at TALIA and BAALBEK.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	10
45 Squadron	12
80 Squadron	10
260 Squadron	11
"E" Flight	3
806/803 Squadron	8
208 Squadron Hurricanes	11
" " Lysanders	2

56. July 7th.

(i) Information. The chief air objective was still to prevent the arrival of Vichy reinforcements and supplies by sea, and their disembarkation, the next consideration being close support for our ground forces South of BEYROUTH. Seaplanes based at TRIPOLI continued to shadow our Naval forces patrolling off the SYRIAN coast and Axis air forces from RHODES were being employed to attack the ships as the result of the shadowing aircrafts' reports.

(ii) Plan. To locate and attack Vichy shipping with bombers and to assist the Army with attacks - close support objectives. To use the fighters for Fleet protection and against hostile seaplanes at their base.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

9 Blenheim sorties against Chateau and copse at BEIT-ED-DINE.
4 Blenheim sorties against bridge at NAHR-ES-SAFA.
Remaining available bombers were again standing by to attack Vichy sea reinforcements.

Fighter Operations.

12 sorties Fleet protection - Tomahawks.
19 Tomahawk sorties ground attacks on M/T.
+ 4 Beaufighter sorties ground strafing seaplanes.

(iv) Results.

Bombers report direct hits on Vichy H.Q. at BEIT-ED-DINE. Beaufighters damaged Loire 130 seaplanes at TRIPOLI. Hurricanes protecting Fleet damaged one enemy bomber.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	10
45 Squadron	12
80 Squadron	10
260 Squadron	12
"X" Flight	3
806/803 Squadron	9
3 Squadron	14
208 Squadron Hurricanes	8
" " Lysanders	3

+ Temporarily attached from 201 Group.

57. July 8th.

(i) Information. Vichy forces South of BEYROUTH continued their resistance in the hope that reinforcements would yet arrive by sea. Accumulations of rulling stock at TRIPOLI indicated that port as a possible place of disembarkation.

(ii) Plan. To attack any Vichy ships arriving with reinforcements when located, to hinder any disembarkation by damaging port installations and rolling stock at TRIPOLI, and to provide support for the ground forces South of BEYROUTH. Fighter aircraft to stand by at call should our Naval forces be required to operate during daylight.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

4 Blenheim sorties against bridge
14692015.
4 Blenheim sorties against pin point
12722073.
1 Blenheim sortie against railway
sidings, TRIPOLI.
2 Blenheim sorties against tanker,
TRIPOLI harbour.
3 Blenheim sorties against warehouses,
TRIPOLI.
Remaining available bombers were
standing by to attack Vichy sea rein-
forcements.

Fighter Operations.

10 aircraft standing by for Fleet
protection.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

2 sorties Strat/R for shipping and
transport movement, SYRIAN coast and
ports.

(iv) Results.

Bomber - two direct hits on warehouses
at TRIPOLI harbour. Bombers attacking
Vichy ground forces hit target areas
and started some small fires.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	10
45 Squadron	12
80 Squadron	12
260 Squadron	8
"X" Flight	6
806/803 Squadron	6
3 Squadron	14
3 Squadron	10
208 Squadron Hurricanes	10
" " Lysanders	3

58. July 9th.

(i) Information. The expectation of reinforcements continued to be the main prop to Vichy morale in SYRIA. Movements of supplies and personnel had led to an accumulation of rolling stock at RAYAK, which might also become an item of strategic importance should the Vichy forces attempt to retire in Northern SYRIA. Vichy aircraft based at ALEPPO and satellite aerodromes in that area had been particularly active against our forces in Eastern SYRIA. The dumps at ZAHLE present a desirable target for our bombers.

(ii) Plan. To use the bombers to prevent the arrival of Vichy sea reinforcements, and to support our forces South of BEYROUTH, and against railway installations and rolling stock at RAYAK. To use available fighters against enemy aircraft on the ground in the ALEPPO area, and against M/T and ground objectives East and South East of BEYROUTH.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

3 Blenheim sorties against railway sidings at RAYAK.
1 Blenheim sortie against dumps at HAMMANA.
8 Blenheim sorties against dump East of EL BAROUK.
10 Blenheim sorties against dumps at ZAHLE.
Remaining available bombers standing by to attack Vichy sea reinforcements.

Fighter Operations.

19 sorties ground strafing enemy aircraft ALEPPO area.
6 sorties ground strafing M/T BEYROUTH area.
13 sorties bomber escort.
8 sorties local defence HAIFA.
6 sorties offensive patrol DAMOUR area.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

2 sorties Tac/R and Photo/R for Army.
2 sorties Strat/R SYRIAN coast.

(iv) Results.

Bombs straddled dumps at HAMMANA, East of BEYROUTH. One Potez 63 and one Farman 222 destroyed and eight other bombers damaged on the ground by aircraft attacking ALEPPO and satellite

July 9th (Cont'd.)

landing grounds.
The ZAHLE raid was negative on account of 10/10's cloud.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	8
45 Squadron	12
80 Squadron	13
260 Squadron	10
"X" Flight	5
806/803 Squadron	3
3 Squadron	13
208 Squadron Hurricanes	6
" " Lysanders	3

59. July 10th.

(i) Information. Although the hope of reinforcements appeared still to inspire Vichy resistance, troops and M/T movements North and East from BEYROUTH up the LITANI Valley had begun to be apparent. Vichy petrol supplies were reported to be getting low. The morale of the population of BEYROUTH was reported to be low, and anti-Vichy demonstrations were said to have occurred in BEYROUTH.

(ii) Plan. To attack any shipping carrying reinforcements and to attack petrol reserves, military dumps and M/T convoys with bombers. To use fighters against aircraft on the ground, M/T movements and for bomber escorts.

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

4 Blenheim sorties against dump at TEL KELAKH.

12 Blenheim sorties against dumps, HAMMANA.

8 Blenheim sorties against:-

- (1) Camp 2 miles South West of TALIA.
- (2) M/T 1 mile North East of ZAHLE.
- (3) Road 5 miles West of ZAHLE.
- (4) Road and railway $\frac{1}{2}$ mile South of HAMMANA.

3 Blenheim sorties against road block near BEIT EL RAMEL.

All remaining available bombers still standing by to attack Vichy sea reinforcements.

Fighter Operations.

22 sorties bomber escort and ground strafing.

9 sorties local defence.

7 sorties ground strafing.

July 10th (Cont'd.)

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

1 Strat/R ALEPPO area aerodromes.
1 Photo/R for Army.
Pamphlet dropping - 1 sortie dropped pamphlets with the G.O.C's proclamation over BEYROUTH at 2200 hours.

(iv) Results.

Bombers - direct hits on ammunition depot HAMMANA and on roads, M/T and buildings in the ZAHLE-TALIA area. Bombs missed petrol dumps at TEL KELAKH. Fighters - 8 aircraft damaged on TALIA landing ground. 5 Dewoitines shot down by Tomahawks whilst attacking our bombers over HAMMANA.

(v) Casualties.

3 Blenheims of 45 Squadron attacking HAMMANA were shot down, two in flames, but several of the crew are reported to have escaped by parachute. 5 attacking Dewoitines all shot down by escorting Tomahawks.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	10
45 Squadron	12
80 Squadron	10
260 Squadron	9
"X" Flight	4
806/803 Squadron	5
3 Squadron	12
208 Squadron Hurricanes	12
" " Lysanders	4

60. July 11th.

(i) Information. Vichy troops appeared to be continuing to withdraw behind their front lines up the LITANI Valley. Considerable rolling stock was accumulated at RAYAK, possibly for the withdrawal of troops and equipment Northwards. Resistance at SUWEIDA continued. Enemy aircraft operating against our troops in Eastern SYRIA located by photo recce on satellite landing grounds in the ALEPPO area.

(ii) Plan.

To maintain vigilance against Vichy shipping and to be prepared to attack any reinforcements located. To use the bombers to attack close support targets and to dislocate hostile M/T and rail communications. To use fighters to attack enemy aircraft on the ground.

July 11th (Cont'd.)

(iii) Operations. Bomber Operations.

3 Blenheim sorties against Fort and Cité Militaire, SUWEIDA.
1 Blenheim sortie against six gun emplacements 2 miles South West of TEL KELAKH.
2 Blenheim sorties against 4 M/T 20 miles North of TRIPOLI.
3 Blenheim sorties against stores building at RAYAK.

Fighter Operations.

20 sorties ground strafing enemy aircraft, ALEPPO area.
6 sorties bomber escort.
6 sorties local defence HAIFA.

Recce Operations, under A.H.Q.

1 sortie Strat/R SYRIA.
1 Tac/R (Habforce) Eastern SYRIA.

(iv) Results.

Bomber - direct hits on corner of Fort at SUWEIDA and on stores and railway and road crossing at RAYAK. Three enemy aircraft destroyed, 14 damaged by aircraft ground strafing ALEPPO area. One Dewoitine 520 attacking a Tomahawk ground strafing was shot down.

(v) Casualties.

One Tomahawk ground strafing HAMA shot down by one Dewoitine 520.

Aircraft available.

11 Squadron	9
45 Squadron	10
80 Squadron	11
260 Squadron	10
"X" Flight	3
806/803 Squadron	6
3 Squadron	10
208 Squadron Hurricanes	10
" " Lysanders	5

OPERATIONS WERE SUSPENDED AT 0001 HOURS ON 12th JULY 1941.

PROVISION OF DIRECT SUPPORT FOR THE
MILITARY FORCES.

61. At the commencement of the operations on the 8th June 1941, the scarcity of aircraft in the Command did not allow of the decentralisation of any units, other than Army Cooperation, under control of Army formations for direct support work. It was, however, considered that the available bomber and fighter forces might at any time be directed against targets in the tactical area in close support and provision was, therefore, made for the necessary Air Liaison Officers with the Army formations in the field, through which any close support demand would be submitted to this Headquarters. At this stage, the primary role of the Air Liaison Officer was to examine all demands for direct support and, in the light of the resources available and the type of support required, ensure that demands were reasonable and that the necessary information from an Air Force point of view was forthcoming to enable air action to be taken if aircraft were available.

62. At the outset, the forces on the ground in SYRIA consisted of the 7th Australian Division operating towards BEYROUTH, and a composite force, operating independently under G.H.Q., on DAMASCUS. An A.L. Section, consisting of a Wing Commander and a Squadron Leader, was allocated to the 7th Australian Division, and an A.L. Officer was allocated to the composite force operating against DAMASCUS. The A.L. Section and the A.L.O. were in direct communication with this Headquarters by W/T. The direct support afforded during this period consisted mainly of providing fighter protection over the areas where enemy aircraft were interfering with our land operations, providing fighter protection to cover any limited operation, and providing bomber attacks on well defined enemy defensive positions which were holding up the ground operation.

63. On the 18th June, the 1st Australian Corps took command in the field of all ground operations in SYRIA and the Air Liaison Section then became attached to the Corps Headquarters. The A.L.O. with the ground forces in the DAMASCUS area then came under the A.L. Section at Corps Headquarters.

64. On the 22nd June it was found practical to decentralise a fighter squadron under the control of Corps Headquarters and this squadron was employed on direct support work under the direct orders of the A.L. Section. Provision was, however, made to withdraw this squadron at short notice should it be required for other purposes under the direction of this Headquarters, chiefly in connection with the provision of protection to the Naval forces operating off the SYRIAN coast and for "blitzing" enemy aerodromes. This organisation proved satisfactory.

65. On the 6th July it was found practicable to allocate a bomber squadron under the control of the 1st Australian Corps. This coincided with the coastal advance on BEYROUTH by the 7th Australian Division and it was decided, therefore, to decentralise the two direct support squadrons under the control of the 7th Australian Division. An extra A.L.O. was provided and the Wing Commander, together with one A.L.O., went forward to the 7th Division Headquarters, leaving one A.L.O. at Corps Headquarters.

66. Owing to the nature of the terrain in the 7th Division operational area, it was impossible to obtain a landing ground in the vicinity of Divisional Headquarters and the squadrons concerned had, therefore, to be operated from landing grounds in the vicinity of Corps Headquarters. The Fighter Squadron was situated 40 miles from Divisional Headquarters and the Bomber Squadron 65 miles from Divisional Headquarters. The method of control was by W/T direct from the Air Liaison Section at Divisional Headquarters to the Squadrons, with an alternative telephone link through Corps H.Q. A detailed report on the direct support carried out from 6th July to the cessation of hostilities on the 12th July is attached as Appendix "G" to this report.

67. This report emphasises the importance of efficient intercommunication between the squadrons and the controlling Headquarters. It is essential that aircraft operating in direct support are situated as near as possible to the controlling headquarters, as the efficiency of the support depends on close personal liaison between the controlling headquarters and the direct support unit. It may not be practicable to achieve this close personal liaison and provision must, therefore, be made for a most efficient method of intercommunication at all times, particularly in mobile warfare. Reliance cannot be placed on provision of telephone communications, and, therefore, the intercommunication must be by wireless. R/T communication from the controlling headquarters to aircraft in the air will assist considerably in directing aircraft on to the desired targets, but the lack of general information concerning the situation on the ground at the unit concerned still remains a serious factor and some form of R/T communication between the controlling headquarters to the R.A.F. units concerned, which is practicable from a security point of view, is desirable under circumstances when personal touch is impracticable owing to distances. It is recommended that consideration be given to the provision of sets capable of providing scrambled R/T for this purpose.

68. With regard to the method of indicating the position of our troops to aircraft operating in direct support, it is considered that the adoption of a standard method is undesirable for security reasons, and that the method adopted in any particular operation should be decided at the time. The difficulty does not lie in the method, but in the inability of the ground forces to display the ground signs when required, and indicates that some action should be taken to

provide an organisation on the ground to ensure that the ground recognition signals are displayed; the importance of this duty would justify the provision of special personnel for this purpose, with the ground formations in the front line.

ORGANISATION AND TRAINING.

AIR REPORTING SYSTEM - SYRIAN CAMPAIGN.

69. At the commencement of the campaign the following sources of information were in operation:-

- (a) The Palestine Observer Screen (manned by the Palestine Police Force), comprising 31 posts.
- (b) One complete section of No.14 W.O.U., comprising 10 posts.
- (c) The three Air Report Centres, situated at JERUSALEM, HAIFA and TEL AVIV.
- (d) The A.M.E.S. Units, Nos.236, 503 and 508, situated in the HAIFA area.

70. In the earlier stages of the operations, the entire system, which had already had considerable practical experience, worked smoothly and efficiently. Information from the A.M.E.S. units and Observer Screens was disseminated by the Filter Room and A.R.C's and passed to those concerned with the minimum of delay.

71. Subsequently, with the arrival of new squadrons and personnel and the extension of operations over a wide area covering SYRIA and CYPRUS, and territorial waters adjacent thereto, difficulties of identification became most marked and imposed considerable strain on the Air Report system as a whole.

72. It is considered necessary to regard these difficulties as having contributed in no small measure to the lack of interceptions by the Fighter defences, and may be summarised as follows:-

- (i) Difficulties of reporting the movements of aircraft operating over this country from bases in EGYPT, IRAQ, CYPRUS and SYRIA.
- (ii) Difficulties of land line communications between temporary aerodromes, satellite landing grounds and the Air Report Centres.
- (iii) Continuous movement of operational units to new or more advanced aerodromes with the resultant further communication difficulties.

- (iv) Failure of new and visiting pilots to observe regulations due to inexperience in the Command.
- (v) Failure of the observer screen at times to identify aircraft as hostile or friendly.
- (vi) Failure of squadron personnel as a whole to appreciate the importance of keeping the Air Reporting system informed of aircraft movements.
- (vii) Lack of radio identification, which was fitted to only a very small percentage of the aircraft operating.

73. With the cessation of hostilities and all operational flying the position has again become stabilised and effective control of aircraft movements is now possible.

74. Mention must be made of the invaluable high standard of information passed by the special units in the HAIFA area, particularly during night operations, giving as they did maximum warning of threats to the target areas, with the resultant adequate preparedness of all concerned. Finally, mention must be made of the observer screen and Air Report Centre personnel, who worked untiringly under most difficult conditions occasioned through lack of advanced information of aircraft movements, resulting in frequent identification difficulties.

CONDITIONS OF TERRAIN FROM THE FLYING POINT OF VIEW.

75. The hilly nature of the country round SYRIA was responsible for clouds often being down on the hills in the coastal regions until late in the morning. In winter this effect would be even more pronounced. The nature of the soil at all the landing grounds in PALESTINE is such that those which have not got all-weather landing strips, such as LYDDA and HAIFA, will be unserviceable for long periods during the coming winter months.

DEFICIENCIES IN TRAINING.

76. The standard of bombing of new air crews suggests that insufficient attention is paid to this part of their training at O.T.U's.

FAILURE OF TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT.

77. Several Lockheed hydraulic pumps on Hurricane aircraft became unserviceable due to the rotor segments seizing in the housing, which resulted in the drive shafts sheering. The failure was attributed to "swarf" being left in the hydraulic pipe lines during manufacture, the aircraft having recently been transferred from

England. Several oil temperature gauges Mk.1A fitted to both Hurricane and Blenheim aircraft failed. The bourdon tubes of these instruments cracked and allowed the mercury to escape. The failure was due to faulty manufacture. (All instruments that failed were manufactured by Messrs. Coleys of Brentford, Middlesex. F.1022 action was taken.) A few cases occurred of the undercarriage retracting arms on Tomahawk aircraft bending and eventually causing the undercarriage to collapse. The fault was attributed to too high landing speed, with subsequent braking (when brakes are applied on Tomahawk aircraft, the retarding force of braking acts in such a manner as to cause the undercarriage legs to "toe out", which causes bending of the retracting arms).

DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPLIES AND TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT.

78. On occasions, a certain lack of coordination between the air and administrative branches, due in large part to these branches being housed in separate buildings, resulted in rather short notice being given to the administrative branch of moves of squadrons required. The forward movement of supplies was often "bottle-necked" at HAIFA, where trucks consigned from the South had to be off-loaded and reloaded on to the narrow gauge railway. The Army authorities required three days' notice of the tonnage to be moved. On two occasions, petrol and ammunition was not loaded on to the scheduled train as a result of the consignor unit omitting to label truck correctly and to give the Movement Control Staff advance information by signal as to truck numbers and destination. These consignments had to be forwarded by Service transport. No. 32 A.S.P. state that no major difficulties were experienced in the distribution of technical equipment, the transport question not being such a problem as the stores involved were of comparatively small bulk. Also reserves of aircraft could be obtained to replace those unserviceable.

79. Lack of supplies of incendiary ammunition for Tomahawks resulted in less enemy aircraft being set on fire and completely destroyed during attacks on enemy aerodromes, than would have been had there been supplies available. Tracer ammunition was sometimes successful in setting alight to aircraft, but is not as effective as incendiary.

REPORT ON MEDICAL ASPECT OF OPERATIONS IN SYRIA.

80. The general health of all ranks was uniformly good. Two cases of relapsing fever occurred. The source of this infection was investigated and found to be due to the men using dugouts previously occupied by Arab Legion troops.

81. There was no case of obvious flying strain in air crews resulting purely from these operations. The few cases which did occur and necessitated cessation

of duty were all in individuals who were already under the observation of their Unit Medical Officer.

82. From a medical aspect aerodromes and landing grounds were well sited and living conditions were good. Water was in each case plentiful and good. Mosquito nets and other anti-malarial measures were employed and although some areas from which operations were carried out were malarious, no case of primary malaria occurred. Rations were sufficient for the ground parties and no complaints on this score were received, but some hardship was caused by no reserve of rations for the use of pilots and air crews being kept at these landing grounds. It is pointed out that iron rations could have been taken in the aircraft.

OUR CASUALTIES.

PRISONERS OF WAR.

83 F/Lt. P.R.M. Williams	84 Sqn. 24/7. Released.
F/O. R. Eidsforth	84 Sqn. Released.
Sgt. Crowe	84 Sqn. Released.
Sgt. Black	260 Sqn. Released.
S/ldr. Russell (Liaison Officer, Spear's Mission.)	Released.

MISSING.

Sgt. J. Balch	84 Sqn.
Sgt. Wright	84 Sqn.
Sgt. Jones	11 Sqn.
Sgt. Ferguson	11 Sqn.
F/Lt. J.R. Aldis	208 Sqn.
P/O. P.K. Crowther	80 Sqn.
P/O. Lee	11 Sqn.
P/O. F. Baldwin	260 Sqn.

KILLED.

F/O. Craigie	"X" Flt.
F/O. C.W. Holdsworth	208 Sqn.
F/O. MacRostie	208 Sqn.
P/O. T. Lynch	80 Sqn.
P/O. Webster	84 Sqn.
P/O. A.W. Ryan	84 Sqn.
Sgt. Stalder	
Sgt. Wilkinson	84 Sqn.
A.C.2 Burford	

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HONOURS
AND AWARDS.

84. This has already been submitted under separate cover.

RESULTS ACHIEVED IN RELATION TO THE AIM.

GENERAL.

85. Air Operations implementing the akm may be divided under the following headings:-

- (a) The provision of Army Cooperation for the ground forces.
- (b) Air attack against strategical targets such as:
 - (i) petrol and ammunition dumps,
 - (ii) aerodromes,
 - (iii) shipping.
- (c) The provision of strategical reconnaissances for the Royal Air Force and also for the Army.
- (d) The provision of direct and close support aircraft for the military forces.
- (e) To prevent enemy air forces from interfering with our own land and sea operations, and also to protect important targets in PALESTINE.

ARMY COOPERATION.

86. In spite of the shortage of Army Cooperation aircraft during these operations it is considered that this shortage did not materially affect the ground operation for the following reasons:-

- (i) The static nature of the operation and the absence of Vichy reserves which could materially influence any particular sector of the front, confined the tactical reconnaissance requirements to the immediate front line. It is considered that in these circumstances the tactical reconnaissance sorties available were sufficient.
- (ii) The greatest use was made of bomber and fighter operations carried out in the tactical area to obtain information affecting our land operations in the forward area.

87. Successful tactical reconnaissance results were obtained though great difficulties were experienced in obtaining information, owing to the difficult nature of the terrain and the presence of low cloud on the hills.

88. Eight Arty/R's were carried out, of which two were failures, one being due to faulty wireless in the aircraft and the other due to a fault on the part of the Artillery. The majority of the shoots were, however, very slow and sometimes 20 observations had to be made.

89. From 8th June until 11th July the total number of Tac/R's carried out by this Squadron was 140, the total number of Arty/R's was 8, and the total number of photographic reconnaissances carried out was 11, two being carried out by a specially equipped Hurricane, the remainder by Lysanders.

AIR ATTACK AGAINST STRATEGICAL TARGETS.

Petrol and Ammunition Dumps.

90. Bombing attacks on petrol installations met with a certain degree of success, a total of approximately 280 tons of petrol and oil being destroyed with 5 tons of H.E. and incendiary bombs, during 10 Blenheim sorties. In addition, considerable damage was inflicted on installations adjacent to the petrol dumps. Attacks on ammunition dumps were not so successful and in some cases even direct hits and near misses produced little result, beyond blowing off the roofs of the buildings.

Attacks against Aerodromes.

91. Bombing attacks against aircraft on aerodromes, despite a reasonable degree of accuracy in the bombing, produced small results. 52 sorties dropped 43,000 lbs. of H.E., plus 3,800 lbs. incendiary bombs and are reported to have destroyed only five aircraft. A large proportion of this bomb load was 250 lb. G.P.'s and better results may have been obtained with 40 lb. bombs. 250 lb. bombs were often used because, owing to shortage of bomber aircraft, it was necessary to have aircraft standing by, bombed up, to attack any one of a variety of targets, and a load comprised entirely of 40 lb. and incendiary bombs would not have been generally suitable.

92. The outstanding success of the campaign was the use of fighters against aircraft on the ground. A total of 140 sorties (81 Hurricane and 59 Tomahawk) claimed that they had destroyed 36 aircraft and damaged another 107, while an inspection of Vichy landing grounds after the Armistice showed that a total of 55 aircraft had been completely destroyed or were beyond repair as a result of ground strafing, and Vichy personnel admit that many others had been damaged but had later been repaired. The total expenditure of S.A.A. on these tasks was 210,000 rounds.

Attacks against Shipping.

93. During the whole of the operations the Coast of SYRIA was kept under observation with the object of locating the Vichy Naval forces and merchant shipping. At the beginning of July it was learned that the Vichy forces were endeavouring to reinforce SYRIA by sea. Constant reconnaissances were carried out, both from PALESTINE and from CYPRUS, in order to locate these reinforcements, and every available bomber and torpedo-carrying aircraft stood by to attack the reinforcements. A portion of the convoy, together with an escort of Vichy destroyers, was located in the Bay of ADALIA KEURFEZI and was attacked by Swordfish aircraft based on CYPRUS, which resulted in the sinking of the "St. Didier", a troopship, after which the intention of reinforcing SYRIA by sea was abandoned by the Vichy French.

94. The effect of this on the higher policy of the defence of SYRIA by the Vichy forces was much greater than was at first expected, and culminated in the early capitulation of the Vichy forces, although at the time, their land forces were well able to continue stemming the advances of our own forces. This is a good example of how an air force, acting independently against strategical targets, can more readily affect the issue of the operations than by its employment against tactical targets in close support of the ground forces.

STRATEGICAL RECONNAISSANCES.

95. During the whole of the campaign, strategical reconnaissances were carried out by Elenheim aircraft and long-range Hurricanes to obtain information concerning strategical targets for the Air Force, such as location of petrol and ammunition dumps, the presence of aircraft on enemy aerodromes, the enemy's lines of communication in the back areas and also in order to locate Vichy Naval forces and merchant shipping. The whereabouts of Vichy shipping was of great concern to the Naval authorities, who repeatedly requested reconnaissances for this purpose. In addition, strategical reconnaissances were frequently asked for by the military authorities. The results achieved by strategical reconnaissances were most satisfactory.

PROVISION OF CLOSE AND DIRECT SUPPORT FOR THE MILITARY FORCES.

96. The lack of Vichy French reserves, troop concentrations and even troop movements during these operations restricted the scope of close support air action and close support air action taken was, therefore, negligible.

97. The provision of air forces in direct support of military forces will usually depend on the availability of air forces for this purpose, in the light of the most economical and effective application of the available air power in the furtherance of the aim. The relative unimportance of the strategical targets afforded in these operations made it possible, after a certain period, to allocate bomber aircraft for direct support work. The conditions under which the direct air support had to be carried out were made difficult due to the lack of aerodromes in the required area for close liaison, the lack of suitable objectives in the tactical area, and the difficult terrain. In spite of the difficulties, however, a maximum of direct support was accomplished, though the effect was probably more moral than material. The actual results achieved by bombers in direct support is, however, impossible to assess.

98. The direct support afforded by fighter aircraft was subjected to the same limitations as for direct bomber support, but whenever the fighter aircraft located suitable targets, usually M/T on roads, the results achieved were good and undoubtedly had a considerable effect on the tactical operations. It is considered, however, that the fighter attacks on aerodromes, dealt with in this report, afforded the most effective direct support to our forward troops, in that they reduced the air attacks on our forward troops to the absolute minimum and by the most economical method from an air force point of view.

PROVISION OF AIR DEFENCE FOR LAND AND SEA FORCES, AND TARGETS IN PALESTINE.

General.

99. Throughout the operations, the enemy's air effort was concentrated against our land forces and the Fleet.

Land Forces.

100. At the commencement of the operation, the fighter forces available for the protection of our land forces were very small, and during the initial period, our ground forces were repeatedly subjected to quite heavy scale air attack, despite the fact that whenever possible we carried out protective patrols and sweeps in the forward area. Later on, however, when further reinforcements became available, regular attacks against aircraft on enemy aerodromes and landing grounds were instituted, which had a twofold result. Firstly, large numbers of enemy aircraft were destroyed and damaged, thus reducing the number of aircraft which could attack our ground forces. Secondly, it resulted in the enemy having to push back their aircraft on to their rearmost aerodromes. Towards the end of the operations, when all the aerodromes in SYRIA came within

range of our fighters, our ground forces were practically immune from enemy air attack.

Fleet Protection.

101. During the initial stages of the operations, Vichy bombers and fighters were a constant source of danger to our Fleet working in SYRIAN waters. Two of our destroyers were badly damaged and three Fulmars of the Fleet Air Arm escort were also shot down by enemy fighters. It was, therefore, necessary for the R.A.F. to take over the protection of the Fleet, using Hurricanes and Tomahawks. This was a serious extra commitment, but was found to be so essential that the military Commander agreed that, where necessary, fighter protection over our land forces would have to be reduced, and even taken away altogether, in order to provide the required protection over the Fleet. Once the R.A.F. undertook Fleet protection, there were no further casualties to our ships and after several Vichy aircraft had been destroyed while approaching the Fleet, they abandoned any further attempt to interfere with our Naval operations.

Targets in Palestine.

102. With the exception of a few raids on HAIFA by Vichy and Axis aircraft, during which one Glenn Martin and one Ju.88 were destroyed by A.A., the Vichy forces did not attempt to attack strategical targets in PALESTINE.

POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION.

COMMUNICATIONS.

103. The speed and accuracy with which orders and instructions can be passed from Headquarters to Units in the field is one of the determining factors in the efficient performance of an operation. This applies more particularly to the efficiency of air forces operating in direct support. As has already been pointed out in para.67, the controlling formations and the operational aerodromes or advanced landing grounds should be as close to one another as possible. This is an ideal to be aimed at, but can seldom, if ever, be attained in practice. Some other solution must, therefore, be looked for under conditions where personal liaison is impracticable. Attempting to find this, the requirements must first be stated; they are:-

- (a) some method by which orders and instructions can be passed with the same ease and fluency as if the addressor and recipient were in the same room.
- (b) Security of the information so passed must be of a first class order.

- (c) The means used for passing these orders must be sufficiently mobile to be able to go forward or retire with the general movement of the front line.

104. W/T has been used in the past, but its failing is that unless high grade cypher is used it is subject to interception and that even when the message is passed in cypher, a considerable delay is necessitated, while any queries which may arise from the instructions require a cypher message being passed back, entailing further delay. Land Line communication by telephone is an improvement in that a conversation can be passed between the Headquarters and the Unit, and queries can be raised and answered at the time, but the two disadvantages which occur are, firstly, that it is seldom that a Land Line communication can be established, and secondly, Land Line communication is also subject to interception.

105. The solution would, therefore, appear to be the use of radio-telephony. By this means, and providing the power of the sets is sufficient, normal conversations should be able to take place between Headquarters and the Unit. In order to prevent interception by the enemy of conversations so passed, both the sender and the receiver should be in possession of scrambler R/T sets similar in type to those which have been employed for several years in civil Trans-Atlantic radio-telephony. By this means, the speech transmitted by the sender is so scrambled that unless the receiver has a similar de-scrambling equipment, intelligible speech cannot be picked up. If it is considered necessary to guard against possible jamming by the enemy, it would be possible to transmit speech on two or more separate wavelengths simultaneously, in scrambled form, so that even if one frequency were to be jammed, it would still be possible to receive the speech quite clearly.

106. These sets would have to be reasonably mobile, that is to say, they would have to be contained in one or more trailers. The equipment would be somewhat expensive, but assuming that such a set would cost as much as three or four aircraft, its tactical value would still be far greater than a whole Squadron of aircraft operating inefficiently owing to poor communications.

107. This method may be considered impracticable, but it has been employed in civil radio-telephony, admittedly in a non-mobile form, for many years.

108. It is believed that there are certain technicians employed by the Royal Air Force in the Middle East, or at least available to them, sufficiently expert to be able to construct an experimental set of this sort, and it is suggested that permission be given for this Command to carry out experiments on these lines.

NEUTRALISING THE ENEMY'S AIR FORCE.

109. One of the objects during recent operations was to neutralise the opposing air forces and to prevent their attack upon our forward troops. This could have been done by close fighter support, either by carrying out constant patrols over the forward troops, or by organising fighter sweeps over enemy territory in the forward area. Both methods are, however, very uneconomical and, with the small fighter force available, the results obtained when these forms of attack were carried out, were disappointing, with the exception of one occasion when five Dewoitines were intercepted and destroyed.

110. The method finally adopted and which had the greatest success was the attack of dispersed aircraft on enemy aerodromes by aircraft controlled directly by this Headquarters. Bombing attacks against dispersed aircraft produced disappointing results. Fighter attacks were, however, very successful, though the poor defences of the landing grounds saved our fighters from many casualties which might otherwise have resulted.

111. Owing to the short ranges of action of the Hurricanes and Tomahawks employed on ground strafing enemy aerodromes, the attacks had to be carried out in three phases, as described in paragraph 25.

112. The lesson learned is that in these operations the more profitable method of affording protection for our forward troops against air action was the neutralisation of the enemy's air forces by fighter attacks against aerodromes than by the employment of fighters on close protective work.

BOMBER OPERATIONS.

113. The effect of the 250 lb. G.P. bomb fused instantaneously is remarkably small against targets such as buildings and petrol tanks, and it is submitted that this fusing should only be used for attacks on M/T and vehicles.

114. The blast and splinter effects of the 250 and 500 lb. G.P. bombs dropped amongst buildings of construction typical in the Near East are comparatively small, unless the bomb actually explodes inside the building, and as even in towns such as BEYROUTH, buildings cover only 60% approximately of the total area, the use of these bombs against buildings is uneconomic.

115. The efficiency of bomber operations in close and direct support of the Army is dependent on accurate information, particularly in respect of the targets to be attacked. In static or semi-static operations, photography plays an important part in this respect and with the provision of P.R.U. Units in the field, it

should be possible to obtain photographic confirmation of the disposition of the target in time to brief attacking crews, provided the P.R.U. Unit is based far enough forward.

DECLASSIFIED

Appendix "A" to
Operation Order No. 7
dated 5 June, 41.

ORDER OF BATTLE

H.Q. Force EXPORTER (Adv. H.Q. P. & T.J.)

7 AUST DIV.

H.Q. 7 Aust. Div.
One Coy H.Q. Gd Bn.
7 Aust Div Employment Pl

H.Q. 21 Aust Inf Bde
2/14 Bn.
2/16 Bn
2/27 Bn

H.Q. 25 Aust Inf Bde
2/25 Bn
2/31 Bn
2/33 Bn

DIV TROOPS.

CAV.

6 Aust Div Cav Regt
9 Aust Div Cav Regt

ARTY.

H.Q. 7 Aust Div Arty
2/4 Aust Fd Regt.
2/5 Aust Fd Regt.
2/6 Aust Fd Regt
2 Aust A/Tk Regt.

INFANTRY.

2/3 Aust Inf Bn
2/5 Aust Inf Bn
2/3 Aust HG Bn (Amended, S.D.C.)

ENGINEERS.

H.Q. 7 Aust Div Engineers
2/5 Fd Coy.
2/6 Fd Coy.
2/5 Fd Park Coy
2/2 Pioneer Bn.

SIGS.

7 Aust Div Sigs.

S. & T.

H.Q. 7 Aust Div AASC
7 Aust Div Pet Coy
7 Aust Div Amn Coy
3 Sub Pk 1 Aust Corps Amn Pk) as Div Sup Col.
3 Aust Sup Personnel Sec)

MEDICAL.

2/4 Aust Fd Amb
2/6 Aust Fd Amb
2/2 Aust Fd Hyg Sec

ORDNANCE

2/3 Aust A Fd W/Shop
3 Corps Sec
6 Div Sec
1 Res Veh Sec
39 Aust LAD
66 Aust LAD

PRO

7 Aust Div Pro Coy

MISC

7 Aust Div Postal Unit
7 Aust Div Salvage Unit
7 Aust Div Mob Laundry
7 Aust Div Fd Cash Office
7 Aust Div Mob Bath Unit

ADDITIONAL TPS. UNDER COMMAND.

CAVALRY Cheshire Yeo (Horsed)
 Greys) Composite
 Staffs Yeo) Mech Regt.

R.A.C. One Sqdn. Royals.

ARTY H.Q. 57 Lt AA Regt.
 170 Lt AA Bty. - 12 Bofors Guns.
 171 Lt AA Bty. (less one tp) - 8 Bofors Guns.
 One Tp 2/1 Svy Regt R.A.A.

ENGINEERS 2/9 Aust Fd Coy.

SIGS. 57 Lt AA Regt Sig Sec
 One Lt W/T Sec 1 Aust Corps Sigs.

S. & T. 57 Lt AA Regt RASC (less dets)
 5 Res M.T. Coy.

MEDICAL 14 Lt Fd Amb

ORDNANCE 1 Cav Div Ord Fd Park (less Div sec)
 57 Lt AA Regt W/shop Sec (less dets).
 6 Cav Bde L.A.D.

VET One Mob Vet Sec.

MISC 1 Aust A.I.L. Sec.
 One Mobile Met Unit.

5 IND INF BDE

HQ 5 IND INF BDE
5 IND INF BDE A/Tk COY.
5 IND INF BDE SIG SEC
1 ROYAL FUSILIERS
3/1 PUNJAB
4/6 RAJ RIF
1 Independent A/TK Troop.

ARTILLERY

1 Fd Regt

ENG

18 Fd Coy S. & M.

MED

14 Ind Fd Amb

ORD

17 Mob W/Shop I.A.O.C.

POST

25 Ind A.P.O.

ADDITIONAL TPS UNDER COMMAND

ARTILLERY

One Bty R.A.A. (for operation in para. 12 (a) (vi)
of Operation Order).

One Tp 169 Lt AA Bty - 4 Bofors Guns
(Under orders to join from Habforce).

One Tp 171 Lt AA Regt - 4 Bofors Guns.

S. & T.

Det. 57 Lt AA Regt RASC.

ORD.

Det. 57 Lt AA Regt W/Shop Sec.

FREE FRENCH DIVISION.

HQ Free French Div.

HQ Bde d'Orient and Sig Sec.

1 B.M. Bn
2 B.M. Bn
Foreign Legion
One Bty Arty (four 75 mm)
Transport Coy (sixty vehicles)
Ambulance Unit (10 Ambs)
1 Tank Coy
1 A/T Coy
1 Company Marine Fusiliers
1 Company Colonial Inf (Mech.)

FORCE TROOPS.

ARTY

5 Aust Hy AA Regt.

ENG

290 A. Tps. Coy.
660 Gen Constr Coy

SIGS

One D.R. Sec 1 Aust Corps Sigs.
H.Q. 1 Coy 13 Corps Sigs
59 Line Sec.
8 Line Maint Sec.
48 W/T Sec.
29 Ops. Sec.

S. & T.

25 A. Tank Bde Coy (129 Coy RASC - as Res M.T. Coy).
Det 2 Aust Hy AA Regt AASC Sec (for 5 Aust Hy AA Regt).

ORD

HQ 1 Cav Div W/Shops.
One Sde Gp Sec 1 Cav Div W/Shops.

H.Q., BRITISH FORCES IN PALESTINE & TRANS-JORDAN,
OPERATION ORDER NO.7.

5th June 1941.

JERUSALEM.

Ref: Map: LEVANT 1: 200,000.

Operation - Exporter
(Issued in confirmation of previous
verbal orders and instructions).

INFORMATION.

1. It is necessary for allied forces to enter SYRIA in order to prevent German occupation, and the establishment of German air bases. The occupation of aerodromes is of primary importance.

2. The military forces available for the operation are:-

7th Aust. Div. (less one Inf. Bde).
5 Ind. Inf. Bde. Group.
Composite Regt. Greys - Staffs Yeo. (Mech.)
Cheshire Yeo.
"C" Bn. S.S. Bde.
Free French Div.
Certain other artillery, engineer and ancillary units.

The full order of battle is issued as Appendix "A".

3. Air and naval assistance is being provided.

4. A British Proclamation regarding the entry of Allied Troops into SYRIA and a French Proclamation by General CATROUX are being issued at the appropriate time. Further information on this subject is being issued separately to all concerned.

5. Separate instructions are being issued on political matters and on the policy to be adopted towards

- (a) The French in SYRIA.
- (b) The population of the country.

It must be very strongly impressed on all that the attitude of the inhabitants, on which success largely depends, will depend very greatly on the behaviour and discipline of the allied troops.

6. Secrecy, surprise and swiftness must be the keynote of operations.

INTENTION.

7. Exporter Force will advance with the object of securing control of Southern SYRIA, south of TRIPOLI, in order to prevent its use by the Germans.
8. This operation will be divided into two main phases:-
- (a) Phase I. The capture of DAMASCUS, RAYAK and BEYROUTH.
 - (b) Phase II. A further advance to PALMYRA, HOMS and TRIPOLI. Instructions for Phase II will be issued later.

METHOD.

9. Command. Exporter Force will be organised into three groups as follows, each operating direct under orders of H.Q., British Forces in P. & T-J.

- (a) 7 Aust. Div. and attached tps, including "C" Bn. S.S. Bde.
- (b) 5 Ind. Inf. Bde. Group.
- (c) Free French Forces.

10. On completion of Phase I, or at such other time as may be decided, H.Q. 1st Aust. Corps will take over operational command of Exporter Force under orders to be issued later.

11. 7 Aust. Div.

- (a) Will advance by two main routes:-
 - (i) via METULLA - MERDJAYOUN on RAYAK.
 - (ii) via the Coast road on BEYROUTH.
- (b) The strength of forces by each route will depend on the opposition encountered and the amount of demolition which may have to be carried out.
- (c) 7 Aust. Div. will be responsible for protection of its right flank except in so far as this is secured by the advance of the detachment of 5 Ind. Inf. Bde. in KUNEITRA.
- (d) "C" Bn. S.S. Bde. will be used for landings on the coast, under orders of 7 Aust. Div.
- (e) Zero hour, which is the time at which the frontier is crossed, will be 0200 hours D.l. day.

12. 5 Ind. Inf. Bde. Group.

- (a) First Stage.
 - (i) Will capture DERAA and establish there a defensive flank against a hostile advance from the East.

- (ii) Will capture TELL CHEHAB 341233 and prevent the demolition of the railway bridge there.
- (iii) Will capture FIQ 215242 and advance to EL AAL 220245.
- (iv) Will send a detachment to prevent demolition of the railway bridge at NASSIS 262218.
- (v) Will employ such means at disposal to prevent sabotage of the railway in the YARMOUK Gorge.
- (vi) Will capture KUNEITRA by an advance via JISR BANAT YACOUB. For this purpose, 7 Aust. Div. will place one Fd. Bty. at disposal of 5 Ind. Inf. Bde. This may be withdrawn after capture of KUNEITRA.
- (b) Second Stage.
Will capture SHEIKH MESKINE 258249 and establish a defensive flank at EZRAA 267252 against attack from the East.
- (b) Zero hour, which is the time at which the frontier is crossed, will be 0200 hrs. D.1. day.
- (d) One Independent A/T troop now with HABFORCE has been ordered to move to IRBID. On arrival it will come under command 5 Ind. Inf. Bde.

13. Free French Forces.

- (a) In view of the shortage of transport to carry marching troops only, the following will take part initially in the operation. The remainder of the Division will be held in readiness to move forward by rail at a later date.

H.Q. Free French Division.
One Infantry Bde. (three Bns.)
One Motorised Coy Fusiliers Marius.
One battery (four guns.)
Det. of nine tanks.
Ancillary troops, incl. special British bus column of 100 - 20 seater buses.
Circassian Cavalry (about 300 strong) under Col. Collet.

- (b) The above force (less Col. Collet's Cav.) will move as follows:-

- (1) D - 1 day.
Leave QASTINA after 1200 hours.

Route: RAMLE - LYDDA - WILHELMA - TULKAR
JENIN - ZIRIN - BEISAN.

The head of the column will NOT reach JENIN before 2000 hours and BEISAN before 2100 hours.

The column will move at 15 v.t.m. and will not close up at halts.

Separate arrangements are being made to move det. tanks by rail to BEISAN.

(ii) D.1 day.

Head of column will leave BEISAN at 0600 hrs.

Route: JISR EL MENAMIE - IRBID.

Arrive IRBID 0800 hrs.

- (c) Close liaison will be established between H.Q., Free French Division and H.Q. 5 Ind. Inf. Bde.
- (d) The Free French Forces will advance from IRBID, via DERA A and SHEIKH MESKINE, and be prepared to pass through 5 Ind. Inf. Bde at 1000 hrs. if the situation permits.
The timing of this advance is the responsibility of Comd. Free French Div. His decision will be based on information received from 5 Ind. Inf. Bde.
- (e) On passing through 5 Ind. Inf. Bde one bty 1 Fd. Regt. will be placed under command of Free French Forces.
- (f) The Free French Forces will then advance via KISSOU 197157 on DAMASCUS.
- (g) Col. Collet's Cav.
 - (i) Will move from BEISAN area at 2100 hrs. D - 1 day to SAMAKH.
 - (ii) Will be prepared to move forward from SAMAKH to FIQ at first light D 1, when it will pass through det. 5 Ind. Inf. Bde. and advance via DJOU KHADAC 230259. Its subsequent operations will be ordered by H.Q. Free French Div.

14. D.1 day will be communicated separately to formation commanders.

15. A.A.

- (a) The distribution of 57 Light A.A. Regt. is shown in the Operational Appendix.
- (b) 5 Aust. Heavy A.A. Bty will initially provide A.A. defence of AFER and LYDDA aerodrome. It will be held in readiness to move forward for defence of aerodromes in SYRIA in accordance with the progress of operation.

16. Royal Navy.

- (a) Is arranging to cover the landing of "C" Bn. S.S. Bde. and to prevent interference by hostile naval forces.
- (b) Any further assistance will be asked for by Comd. 7 Aust. Div. through the Naval Liaison Officer attached to this Headquarters.

17. R.A.F.

- (a) One Flight 208 A/C Squadron Hurricanes is placed under control of 7 Aust. Div.
- (b) Further cooperation by fighters and bombers will be asked for through A.I.L. Sec. with H.Q. 7 Aust. Div. and through R.A.F. Liaison Officer with 5 Ind. Inf. Bde. (subsequently with Free French Div.)
- (c) A separate instruction giving further details concerning R.A.F. cooperation will be issued. This will include the question of tactical recce on front of 5 Ind. Inf. Bde. and Free French.
- (d) One R.A.F. liaison officer will be at H.Q. 7 Aust. Div. One R.A.F. liaison officer will be with H.Q. 5 Ind. Inf. Bde. until Free French forces pass through, when he will join H.Q. Free French Div.

ADMINISTRATIVE.

18. Administrative instructions are issued separately.

INTERCOMMUNICATION.

19. Force H.Q. (H.Q., B.F. in P. & T-J.) remains at Jerusalem.

20. Adv. Report Centre, Force H.Q. will be established at NAZARETH (CASANOVA) by 1800 hrs. D - 1.

21. All messages for Force H.Q. from formations of Exporter Force will be sent to Adv. Report Centre.

22. Wireless silence within Exporter Force will be observed until the frontier is crossed. Thereafter there will be no restriction on the use of wireless.

23. R.A.F. Tenders are allotted as follows:-

H.Q. 7 Aust. Div. (control).
H.Q.21 Aust. Inf. Bde (listening).
H.Q.25 Aust. Inf. Bde (listening).

24. The Naval Liaison Officer will have direct

W/T communication from NAZARETH with C. in C. Mediterranean and Naval Forces cooperating.

ACKNOWLEDGE (By Signal).

(Signed) D.F. McConnell,
Brigadier,
General Staff.

Issued thro' Sigs.,
Time of Signature 2000 hrs.

DISTRIBUTION

Comd 7 Aust Div	1 - 5
Comd 5 Ind Inf Bde	6 - 7
Comd Free French Division	8 - 10
Comd 5 Cav Bde	11
Comd T.J.F.F.	12
G.O.C.	13
B.G.S.	14 - 17
D.A. & Q.M.G.	18 - 25
G.S.O. (I)	26
G. (R)	27
C.E.	28
C.S.O.	29
B.R.A.	30
G.H.Q. M.E.	31 - 33
HABFORCE	34
Comd Aust Corps	35
Naval Liaison Officer	36
A.O.C.	37 - 38
War Diary	39 - 40
File	41

Reference:-
PTJ/114/10.

Copy No. 23.

3.6.41.

HEADQUARTERS, ROYAL AIR FORCE
PALESTINE & TRANS-JORDAN
OPERATION INSTRUCTION NO. 43
OF 1941.

A Military force will shortly carry out operations in Syrian territory. In addition to one flight of Army Co-operation aircraft, which will operate under the control of Force Headquarters in the Field, all available bombers and fighter aircraft in this Command will be operating in co-operation with the land operations. In addition to the provision of strategically reconnaissance and strategical bombing such immediate assistance to our land forces by air action within the general zone of land operations as is possible with the air resources available will be provided.

2. The two forms of air support for the immediate assistance of the land forces are:-

(i) Direct Support.

The isolation of the battle field by air forces. By this is implied the use of air forces against objectives some distance from our own troops to prevent reinforcements, supplies, etc. arriving in time in the battle area.

(ii) Close support.

The intervention of air forces in the battle field itself. By this is implied the use of air forces to overcome opposition which is hindering, or may hinder, an advance of our troops on the ground.

3. Direct support, if available, can be applied by this Headquarters in co-operation with H.Q., P. & T.J. as a result of air reconnaissance or other information. Close support, however, will generally have to be indicated by our own forward troops, and if applied, should be controlled by the Commander in the Field, as this form of support demands a close liaison between the R.A.F. and the Army Commander concerned.

4. Should aircraft be used in close support, such aircraft will, if practicable, be decentralised under the control of an air liaison section attached to the Commander in the Field. In this event it will be necessary to operate such aircraft from advanced landing grounds to facilitate close personal liaison between the air liaison section and the pilots employed on this role.

5. In order to provide the necessary liaison, if close air support becomes necessary and practicable, an air liaison section consisting of Wing Commander F.D. Cator, in charge, and S/Ldr. J.R. Gordon-Finlayson, D.S.O. together with the necessary inter-communication facilities, will be attached to the Army Headquarters in the Field.

6. The role of this section will be to advise the Army Commander in the Field on all air matters, particularly in matters of air support in the operational zone which must be considered in the light of the nature of the targets and the type and number of aircraft available to deal with such targets.

7. To facilitate the application of general air support in the zone of land operations it is necessary at all times to lay down a limiting line, or limiting lines, to preclude the possibility of our own ground forces being attacked. This line, or these lines, should be laid down and changed in accordance with the ground situation by the Force Headquarters in the Field and notified to this Headquarters. These lines to be known as "Bombing lines".

8. Any requests for air support from aircraft under the control of this Headquarters should contain the following information:-

- (i) Exact location of the target.
- (ii) Nature of the target.
- (iii) Any time limit after which bombing is not to take place.
- (iv) Any change in the bombing line or lines previously notified. If no change, this should be stated.

9. Speed is essential in passing back requests for air support. A direct Wireless link is being provided between the air liaison section and this headquarters for this purpose. Should aircraft be decentralised under the control of the air liaison section operating from an advanced landing ground, the provision of a telephone link from the air liaison section to the A.L.G. will be necessary and is the responsibility of the Royal Corps of Signals.

10. When practicable the advanced landing ground used by the Army Co-operation aircraft will be used, thus affording additional facilities for liaison with the bomber pilots. The air liaison section should, however, inform this Headquarters of any suitable landing ground for this purpose in the operational area throughout the progress of the ground forces. The necessary Signals Instructions affecting the air liaison section will be issued under separate cover.

11. The section will be mobile and attached to Force Headquarters in the Field for rations.

(Signed):- S.D. CULLEY,

Group Captain, Commanding,
Royal Air Force in
Palestine & Trans-Jordan.

DISTRIBUTION.

O.C. Air Liaison Section	Copy No.	1
Force Headquarters in the Field	" "	2
O.C. No. 208 Squadron	" "	3
H.Q. B.F., P. & T.J.	" "	4
H.Q. R.A.F. M.E.	" "	5
Ops. Room E.Q. P. & T.J.	" "	6
War Diary	" "	7 & 9
File	" "	8
Spare copies (S.A.S.O)	" "	10 - 23.

Headquarters, Royal Air Force,
Palestine & Trans-Jordan.

OPERATION INSTRUCTION NO. 50.

Copy No. 18.

Date:- 6th. June, 1941.

INFORMATION.

Enemy Forces.

1. A combined operation as between military ground forces and the Royal Air Force will shortly be initiated against Syria with the ultimate object of preventing the use of that country by enemy forces. This operation has not direct connection with the operations which have recently taken place in the Syrian Desert and Iraq and which, to a large extent, have now been completed, but it may be expected that certain enemy forces and particularly air forces from that area will be concentrated in Syria for use against our forces.

2. Recent information indicates that reinforcements of air craft, both axis and French, have arrived in Syria, the latter having come from French Morocco. Also, it may be expected that certain axis ground forces, particularly technical personnel, have arrived in Syria both by sea and by air.

3. A number of Syrian aerodromes have been taken over completely by axis forces and a measure of control over aerodromes occupied by the French Air Force has been instituted by the axis authorities. It is probable that axis reinforcements to Syria will consist of both fighters and bombers, but from all indications French reinforcements consist entirely of fighters.

4. The question of the supply of these axis and French air forces is undoubtedly a serious one, particularly in respect of petrol as an aviation petrol required by them must be brought into Syria from outside sources, i.e. by sea or air from axis sources in Europe, or by rail through Turkey. No aviation petrol is manufactured in either Syria or Iraq. Other items of material would also prove difficult to supply for air forces, particularly bombs and explosives which may be expected to be peculiar to the aircraft of the various nations operating.

Political.

5. The attitude of the French forces in Syria has not, as yet, been clarified, but there is little doubt that the higher authorities in Syria are obeying the instructions received from the Vichy Government which, in turn, is definitely committed to a policy of close co-operation with the Axis. Further, the recent reinforcements of French aircraft, particularly fighters, suggest that the personnel operating these fighters have been specially selected as being willing to carry out the orders of the Vichy Government and so will oppose any activity by our forces in attacking Syria. There is, however, a fairly large body of opinion among French forces in Syria, particularly the Air Force, against

this close co-operation policy of the Vichy Government with the Axis, and whilst this body may, to a large extent be neutralised by certain measures of the Syrian authorities, there is a potential possibility of the personnel concerned refusing to help the Axis-Vichy forces or even taking steps to aid our forces.

Our Own Forces.

6. The military forces to be employed will be not inconsiderable and, it is anticipated, will press into Syria along several lines of communication. These lines will be largely governed by roads, as our ground forces will be mechanised to a considerable degree. Details of these forces will be made available to the stations and units who are particularly concerned by the attached Air Intelligence Liaison Sections.

7. The air forces available in Palestine for the operation consists of the following:-

- No. 3 R.A.F. (Fighter) Squadron.
- No. 11 Bomber Squadron.
- No. 80 Fighter Squadron.
- No. 208 A.C. Squadron.

8. These air forces will be dispersed at various aerodromes and landing grounds in Palestine, Trans-Jordan and Cyprus, according to their particular functions, the air defence of Palestine, suitability of aerodromes and maintenance facilities.

9. Over and above the operations in Syria, there is a constant commitment for the air defence of Palestine, and particularly of the Haifa district, which will necessitate the allocation of certain fighter aircraft for this purpose.

10. If the necessity arises, and commitments in other theatres of operations permit, reinforcements from the Middle East Command may be expected, of fighter or bomber units, or both.

Air Intelligence Liaison Sections.

11. An Air Intelligence Section has been provided by the military authorities for the following units and formations:-

- (a) R.A.F. Station Aqir.
- (b) 208 Squadron Detachment operating with Force H.Q. in the Field.
- (c) H.Q. R.A.F. P. & T.J.

INTENTION.

12. To give air support to the military forces and prevent attacks by enemy aircraft on Palestine.

EXECUTION.

Application of Intention.

13. In order to implement the intention the following action may be necessary:-

- (a) To provide army co-operation aircraft for the ground forces.
- (b) To attack strategic targets in Syria by bombing.
- (c) To provide strategic reconnaissance of enemy forces and bases in Syria.
- (d) To provide direct and close support by bomber aircraft to the military forces.
- (e) In emergency, to provide fighter aircraft for attack on fleeting targets of enemy ground forces.
- (f) To prevent enemy air forces from attacking our forces on the ground or important targets in Palestine and Trans-Jordan.

Orders and Instructions.

14. Detailed orders and instructions in amplification of this instruction will be issued by this Headquarters to stations and units concerned by signal in accordance with the procedure outlined in this Headquarters Standing Operations Instruction No. 1 of 1941.

No. 3 H.A.F. Squadron.

15. All available Tomahawk aircraft of this Squadron are to be based at Lydda and will be employed for the attack of certain special targets in accordance with instructions from this Headquarters.

No. 208 Squadron.

16. This unit's permanent base will be at Gaza but it is to provide the following detachments:-

- (a) One completely mobile flight consisting of 4 short range Hurricanes with necessary personnel and M.F., to operate in the first instance from Haifa aerodrome. The function of this Flight will be close co-operation with the military forces. This Flight will be placed under the control of Force H.Q. in the Field.
- (b) 3 long range Hurricanes with necessary personnel to operate in the first instance from Aqir. The function of this flight will be strategical reconnaissance of Syria under orders of this Headquarters.

No. 11 Bomber Squadron.

17. All available Mk IV Blenheim aircraft with necessary personnel are to be based at Aqir. The function of this unit will be to act as a striking force in the attack on strategic targets in Syria and to afford direct and close support to the military forces if required.

No. 80 Fighter Squadron.

18. This unit will be based at Aqir and is to supply the following detachments:-

- (a) One Flight of 4 Hurricane aircraft, with necessary personnel at Nicosia in Cyprus. The function of this flight will be to provide air defence of that island.
- (b) One flight of 6 Hurricanes with necessary personnel, at Haifa. The function of this flight will be to:-
 - (i) Provide air defence of Haifa district and Palestine.
 - (ii) Provide fighter protection against enemy aircraft over our military forces.
 - (iii) Attack fleeting targets of enemy ground forces.

The function of the remainder of the Squadron will be to:-

- (a) Provide defence against enemy air attack of aerodromes and other targets in Palestine.
- (b) Act as reserve to the Haifa detachment.

Allotment of Striking Force for direct and close support of military forces.

19. Subject to the exigencies of the situation a small force of a maximum of 4 Mk. IV Blenheims of No. 11 Bomber Squadron may be allotted from day to day for employment in providing direct and close support to our ground forces. Such aircraft, if allotted, will operate from an advanced landing ground in the North of Palestine under special instructions to be issued by this Headquarters. Any such allotment will, however, be purely for a period not exceeding one day and such allotted aircraft are to return each day to their base at Aqir.

Direct and Close Support to Military Forces.

20. This form of action requires the most careful preparation and liaison and for this purpose an Air Liaison Section consisting of the following has been attached to the staff of the Force Commander in the field:-

W/Cdr. F.G. Cator.
S/Ldr. J.R. Gordon Finlayson, D.S.O.
R.A.F. O.R. personnel - together with inter-communication facilities.

21. The method by which this form of action will be employed is contained in this Headquarters Operations Instruction No. 45 of 1941, copy of which is attached to this Operations Instruction as Appendix "A".

Air Intelligence Liaison Section.

22. The sections allotted to R.A.F. Station, Aqir and to H.Q. P. & T.J. are to function in the respective Operations Rooms in close co-operation with the R.A.F. "Operations" Officer and R.A.F. "Intelligence" officer. All interrogation and briefing of pilots is to take place in the Operations Room of the station concerned and all reports or instructions are to be made from or received by the respective Operations Room only.

23. In the event of a detachment of No. 11 Squadron being decentralised to operate from an A.L.G., one Squadron A.I.L.O. is to proceed to the A.L.G.

ADMINISTRATION.

24. The Staff Officer i/c Administration, H.Q., P. & T.J. is to arrange for any requirements by units concerned in the operations to be met with the utmost despatch, and urgent items of equipment being collected by air from maintenance units in Egypt, making use of the Valentia aircraft now attached to the Communication Flight at Lydda, but in each instance obtaining the authority of the S.A.S.O. for the use of this aircraft.

2

25. Officers commanding the stations are to make all administrative arrangements necessary for the reception and accommodation of aircraft and personnel and for the operation of the aircraft. Any difficulties from the administrative aspect are to be referred immediately to the Staff Officer i/c Administration at this Headquarters.

Petrol, Oil and Explosives Supplies.

26. It is essential that the greatest care should be observed in maintaining stocks of these particular items at the aerodromes and landing grounds which are allocated for use in the operations or which may be brought into use as the operations develop. Instructions for replenishments and maintenance, or the installation of such stocks are to be issued by the Staff Officer i/c Administration, H.Q. P. & T.J. and to enable him to do this, he is to issue such instructions to Station Commanders as may be necessary in keeping him fully informed of their position.

27. The following stocks are to be maintained specifically at the aerodromes or landing grounds noted:-

(a) HAIFA.

Petrol D.T.D. 250 - not less than 3,000 gallons.
100 octane - not less than 10,000 gallons.

Oil D.T.D. 109 - not less than 200 gallons.
D.T.D. 472 B (Aeroball 100) - not less than 500 gallons.

S.A.A. - Not less than 100,000 rounds mixed as required for Hurricanes.

(b) AMMAN.

Petrol D.T.D. 230 - Not less than 50,000 gallons.
100 Octane - Not less than 2,000 gallons.

Oil D.T.D. 109 - Not less than 500 gallons.
D.T.D. 472 B (Aeroball 100) - Not less than 200 gallons.

S.A.A. - Not less than 1000,000 rounds mixed as required for Hurricanes.

INTER-COMMUNICATION.

Signals.

28. H.Q., P. & T.J. Signals Instruction No. 1 of 1941 is to be complied with in respect of all communications generally.

29. H.Q., P. & T.J. Signals Instruction No. 2 of 1941 specifies the signals organisation specially arranged for the Air Liaison Section attached to Force H.Q. in the Field, and has been distributed to those concerned.

Reports.

30. By telephone in the first instance to Operations Room, H.Q., P. & T.J., except for No. 208 Squadron A.C. Detachment working with the Force H.Q. in the Field. Detailed reports are to follow on the appropriate Bombing, Combat and Reconnaissance Report forms.

31. ACKNOWLEDGE.

(Signed):- S.D. CULLEY,

Group Captain,
Senior Air Staff Officer.

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DISTRIBUTION:-

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W/Cdr. Cator - 27, S/Ldr. Rolfe - 20,		O.C. Amman with Ops. Inst.	
No. 55 - 19, O.C. "X" Force - 21.			

LOCATION STATEMENT OF R.A.F. UNITS AS THEY BECAME OPERATIONALLY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX "B"

Date.	Squadron.	Base landing ground.	Operational landing ground.
8/6/41	3 R.A.A.F. 11 (B) Squadron. 80 (F) Squadron. 208 (AC) Squadron. "X" Flight.	Lydda Aqir Haifa Gaza Amman	Lydda Aqir. Ramat David and Cyprus. 1 Flight Haifa (Hurricanes). 1 Flight H.4 (Lysanders). Mafrag.
22/6/41	3 R.A.A.F. 11 (B) Squadron. 80 (F) Squadron. 45 (B) Squadron 208 (AC) Squadron "X" Flight	Mugeibila Aqir Haifa Aqir Ramleh Amman	Mugeibila Aqir. Ramat David and Cyprus. Aqir. 1 Flight Ramleh (Hurricanes) 1 Flight Rosh Pina (Hurricanes) 1 Flight H.4 (Lysanders) H.4
27/6/41	3 R.A.A.F. 11 (B) Squadron. 80 (F) Squadron 45 (B) Squadron 208 (AC) Squadron "X" Flight 806/803 Squadron	Mugeibila Aqir Haifa Aqir Ramleh Amman Lydda	Mugeibila. Aqir. Ramat David and Cyprus. Aqir. 1 Flight Ramleh (Hurricanes) 1 Flight Rosh Pina (Hurricanes) 1 Flight H.4 (Lysanders) H.4 Ramat David.
10/7/41	3 R.A.F. 11 (B) Squadron 80 (F) Squadron 45 (B) Squadron 208 (AC) Squadron	Rosh Pina Aqir Haifa Aqir Ramleh	Rosh Pina and Damascus. Aqir Ramat David. Mugeibila 1 Flight Ramleh (Hurricanes) 1 Flight Rosh Pina (Hurricanes).

DECLASSIFIED

Date.	Squadron.	Base landing ground.	Operational landing ground.
10/7/41	208 (AC) Squadron 260/450 Squadron "X" Flight 806/803 Squadron	Ramleh. Amman Amman Lyda	1 Flight Palmyra (Lysanders) Damascus. Palmyra. Ramat David.

APPENDIX "C".

DISPOSITION OF VICHY AIR FORCES AT COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS.

Base	Type	No.
RAYAK Note:- Some of these may be dispersed from time to time at Estabel or Talia.	Dewoitine 520	25
	Potez 65.	14
	Glenn Martin	13
	Potez 63	10
	Morane 406	12
	Glenn Martin 167	13
	Bloch 200	6
DAMASCUS	Potez 63	10
PALMYRA	Potez 25	3
ALEPPO	Morane 406	5
TRIPOLI Seaplane Base.	Loire 130	5

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF BOMB RAIDS ON SYRIAN TARGETS.

8.6.41 - 11.7.41.

June.	Squadron.	No. of a/c	O.O.	Target.	Result.
<hr/>					
8th					
0622	11	3 Blen.		Damascus L.G.	Damaged a/c and runways.
1440	11	3 Blen.		S.V.C.Beirut.	Missed.
1840	11	3 Blen.		do.	11 Bombs in Target Area large fire.
<hr/>					
10th					
0228	11	1 Blen.	93	Aleppo L.G.	Bombs dropped on runway and hangars.
0235	11	do	do	do	Among buildings.
1830	11	3 Blen.		Palmyra L.G.	Bombs burst near hangars.
<hr/>					
11th					
0330	11	2 Blen.		Aleppo L.G.	Runways damaged. 2 Fires among buildings on Northern side of L.G. Several direct hits.
<hr/>					
12th.					
1310	11	3 Blen.		Gun Positions 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles N of Kiswe.	Target unlocated. Bombs dropped on nearby troops and M.T. All overshot.
1335	11	3 Blen.		Gun Positions 2 miles S of Kiswe.	Bombs burst 1 mile south of Kiswe to W of road.
<hr/>					
13th					
1440	11	1 Blen.		AADLIYE Village.	Large fires started visible 30 miles away.
1440	11	1 Blen.		NAHJA Village.	Bombs fell in target area. No results seen.
1440	11	1 Blen.		HIRJILLE	Bombs fell on village, fires observed
<hr/>					
14th.					
0857	11	3 Blen		Aleppo L.G.	1 a/c burnt out, several severely damaged, tarmac damaged, all bombs on target.
Unknown	84	3 Blen.		Aleppo L.G.	2 a/c destroyed, runways damaged, fires seen.

June	Squadron	No of a/c	Target.	Result.
16th				
0020	11	1 Blen.	Rayak L.G.	Diagonal stick across main runway.
0430	11	1 Blen.	Rayak L.G.	Fires in buildings near Railway. 1 x 250 on runway. Terrific explosions N.E. end of L.G.
1247	11	2 Blen.	Merchant ship at sea.	1 direct hit on bows.
17th.				
0450	11	1 Blen.	Homs L.G.	a/c in north corner of L.G. hit by end of stick. No results seen.
1230	11	3 Blen.	Here Dere Bridge.	Bombs missed.
18th.				
1528	11	1 Blen.	Soueida Fort.	Bombs just missed.
1630	11	3 Blen.	Here Dere Bridge.	Bombs just short of bridge.
1653	11	1 Blen.	Troops 192168	Some bombs on target.
1657	11	1 Blen.	Qatana Village.	Buildings N.E. corner of village hit. No results seen.
19th.				
0718	11	1 Blen.	Qatana Village.	5 bombs on village
1255	11	3 Blen.	Destroyer Beirut Harbour.	All overshoot.
20th				
0825	11	3 Blen.	M.T. near Beter village.	20 M.T. destroyed. Road hit.
1825	11	4 Blen.	M.T. on Damascus to Zahle road.	Bombs on road and in a gorge.
21st				
1605	11	3 Blen.	M.T. Damascus to Beirut road.	Bombs among dispersed M.T.
22nd				
0940	11	2 Blen.	Destroyer in Beirut Harbour.	1 direct hit near stern.
1520	11	4 Blen.	Destroyer in Beirut Harbour.	Direct hit on Tanker "Pegasus".
23rd				
1435	45	1 Blen.	Soueida Fort.	Bombs jettisoned in sea.

June	Squadron	No. of a/c	Target.	Result.
24th				
0615	11	3 Blen.	Rayak rail sidings and stores.	Rail sidings hit. Buildings south of stores demolished.
1210	45	3 Blen.	Soueida Citadel and fort.	All overshoot.
1622	45	3 Blen.	Soueida Citadel and Fort.	1 direct hit on Citadel. No results seen.
1645	45	1 Blen.	Soueida Citadel and Fort.	Target believed hit.
25th				
1820	11	2 Blen.	2 Heavy gun batteries near DIMAS.	All overshoot.
26th				
1806	11	4 Blen.	Tel Kalakh Dump	Direct hits on railway line. Northern half of Dump gutted.
0545	Mosul	3 Blen.	Deir-ez-Zor	Bombs among aerodrome buildings and defences.
27th				
1530	45	4 Blen.	Gun batteries 178183	Unlocated. Overshot M.T. 300 yards.
1708 - 10	R1	9 Blen.	Ditto	Bombs among M.T.
28th				
1012	45	5 Blen.	Barracks Palmyra.	Overshoot.
17	11	4 Blen.	Stores Palmyra	1 x 250 direct hit buildings S.E. corner, stick across target. Large fires and smoke.
1617	11	3 Blen.	Railway sidings and hangar Rayak.	Sidings hit. Bombs on buildings in triangle formed by railway and road.
1619	45	3 Blen.	Railway Siding Rayak.	Stick straddled sidings
29th.				
0815	45	5 Blen.	Palmyra stores.	Overshoot.
0955	45	5 Blen.	Palmyra barracks.	Incendiaries on buildings.
1800	11	4 Blen.	General Dentz's House Beirut.	12 direct hits.

June	Squadron.	No of a/c	Target.	Result.
30th				
0816	45	7 Blen.	Barracks and stores Palmyra.	-
0829 -30	45	3 Blen.	Stores and Barracks Palmyra.	Some 40 lbs hit southern corner of stores. 2 x 250 lb. inside building N corner of barracks.
1530	45	3 Blen.	Fort and Cité	1 direct hit Cité Militaire. 1 direct hit White Buildings NE.
<u>July.</u>				
<u>1st.</u>				
0818	45	10 Blen.	Barracks and stores Palmyra.	8 direct hits barracks. 1 direct hit stores. Smaller bombs on each target.
1300	45	3 Blen.	Fort and Cité Militaire Soueida.	Some direct hits Cite Militaire.
<u>2nd.</u>				
0855 - 0920	45	4 Blen.	Fort and Cité Militaire Soueida	1 stick direct hit on each target.
<u>3rd</u>				
1419	11	2 Blen.	Light cruiser Chekka Bay.	Overshot.
<u>4th</u>				
0850	45	6 Blen.	A/c on L.G. west of Hama.	1 Glen Martin destroyed. 1 Glen Martin damaged.
0825	11	5 Blen.	Merchant ship Tripoli harbour.	-
<u>5th</u>				
0930	45	12 Blen.	Chateau and Copse Beit ed Dine.	Northern corner of Chateau hit.
1600	45	12 Blen.	Chateau and Copse Beit ed Dine.	1 stick direct hit Chateau. 1 stick direct hit Copse. Bombs straddled village.
<u>6th</u>				
1030	45	5 Blen.	Bridge Jisrel Cadi	-
1539	45	6 Blen.	Bridge Jisrel Cadi and Orange grove east of Damour.	Orange groves "plaster- ered" with bombs.
-	45	3 Blen.	Buildings & Woods N. edge Damour.	Bombs dropped in target area.

July.	Squadron.	No. of a/c	Target.	Result.
7th				
1211 - 30	45	4 Blen.	Chateau and copse Beit ed Dine.	Near misses.
1628	45	4 Blen.	ditto	Direct hits on chateau.
1628	45	3 Blen.	Bridge at Nahr-es- Safa.	-
8th				
-	45	4 Blen.	P.P.12961998/12971998	No result.
1433 v	45	4 Blen.	Bridge 14692015.	-
1645	45	4 Blen.	Pin point 12722073	Bombs between radio mast and road, starting small fire.
1800	11	1 Blen.	Railway sidings, Tripoli.	-
1800	11	2 Blen.	Tanker Tripoli Harbour.	-
1801	11	3 Blen.	Warehouses Tripoli.	Two direct hits on two large warehouses eastern shore of northern jetty.
9th				
0715	11	3 Blen.	Railway sidings Rayak.	Undershot and overshot.
1206	45	1 Blen.	Dumps Hammana	Bombs straddled dumps.
1500	45	8 Blen.	Dump east of El Barouk.	-
-	45	10 Blen.	Dumps near ZAHLE.	-
10th.				
0903	11	4 Blen.	Dump at Tel Kelakh.	Bombs straddled village.
1055	45	12 Blen.	Dumps Hammana	Direct hits causing explosions.
1.1657	11	8 Blen.	1. Camp 2 miles S.W Talia.	1. 2 marquees or bldgs. destroyed. 1 marquee or bldg. set on fire.
2.1700	11	do.	2. M/T 1 mile N.E. Zahle.	2. Two hits on road.
3.1700	11	do.	3. Road 5 miles W. Zahle.	3. 1 lorry destroyed.
4.1710	11	do.	4. Road and railway $\frac{1}{2}$ mile S. Hammana.	4. Direct hits on road.
1707	45	3 Blen.	Road block near Beit el Ramel.	3 sticks each side of road.

July.	Squadron.	No. of a/c	Target.	Result.
11th.				
0730	11	3 Blen.	Fort & Cité Militaire Soueida.	Direct hit N.W. corner of buildings 200 yds S.W. Cité Militaire hit.
11th				
1530	11	1 Blen.	6 Gun emplacements 2 miles S.W. of Tel Kelakh.	-
1540	11	2 Blen.	4 M/T 20 miles N. Tripoli.	-
1540	11	3 Blen.	Stores building Rayak.	1 direct hit stores. 1 direct hit road and railway crossing.

FIGHTER OPERATIONS.
8th June 1941 to 11th July 1941.

Date.	Squadron.	Type of aircraft.	No. of Sorties.	Duty.
8/6	80	Hurricanes	4	Ground attack, Rayak.
8/6	3	Tomahawks	3	Ground attack, Rayak.
8/6	80	Hurricanes	3	Bomber escort.
8/6	3	Tomahawks	4	" "
8/6	80	Hurricanes	2	Fleet protection.
8/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	7	Sweeps - forward troops.
9/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	7	Troop protection, Sanamein area.
9/6	80	Hurricanes	3	Fleet escort S.W. Beyrouth.
9/6	80	Hurricanes	3	" " " "
9/6	80	Hurricanes	3	" " " "
9/6	80	Hurricanes	14	" " " "
9/6	3	Tomahawks	5	" " " "
9/6	80	Hurricanes	3	Cyprus.
10/6	80	Hurricanes	12	Fleet escort Haifa-Beirut
10/6	3	Tomahawks	12	" " " "
10/6	80	Hurricanes	1	E/a Haifa-Tel Aviv.
10/6	3	Tomahawks	2	" " " "
10/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	9	Troop protection S. Damascus.
11/6	80	Hurricanes	12	Fleet protection,
11/6	3	Tomahawks	16	" "
11/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	6	Troop protection S. Damascus.
12/6	80	Hurricanes	17	Fleet protection.
12/6	3	Tomahawks	5	" "
12/6	3	Tomahawks	4	Close support troops Kissoué area.
12/6	80	Hurricanes	2	Close support troop protection.
12/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	12	Troop protection.

Date.	Squadron.	Type of aircraft.	No. of sorties.	Duty.
13/6	3	Tomahawks	8	Fleet protection.
13/6	80	Hurricanes	2	Blenheim escort.
13/6	80	Hurricanes	13	Fleet protection.
13/6	3	Tomahawks	9	-do-
13/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	11	Troop protection Kissou area.
14/6	80	Hurricanes	3	Fleet protection.
14/6	80	Hurricanes	1	-do-
14/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	1	Drop photos Sanamein.
14/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	9	Troop protection.
15/6	3	Tomahawks	7	Attack armoured cars and trucks at Ezraa.
15/6	80	Hurricanes	6	Intercept bomber attack on Fleet.
15/6	80	Hurricanes	12	Troop protection, Jezzine-Saida area.
15/6	3	Tomahawks	23	Troop protection, Kissou area.
15/6	80	Hurricanes	1	Intercept e/a over Haifa.
15/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators.	16	Troop protection, Kissou area.
16/6	80	Hurricanes	1	
16/6	3	Tomahawks	5	Attack M/T Kuneitra- Damascus road.
16/6	3	Tomahawks	3	Ground attack A.F.V.'s S.E. Kuneitra.
17/6	3	Tomahawks	3	Ground attack M/T Kuneitra.
17/6	80	Hurricanes	8	Local protection and Fleet protection.
18/6	3	Tomahawks	6	Patrol Saida-Jezzine road.
18/6	3	Tomahawks	7	Escort Blenheims S. of Damascus.
18/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	5	Troop protection.
18/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators.	6	Escort Blenheims attack ing Sueida.
18/6	80	Hurricanes	4	Offensive patrol for reported e/a.

Date.	Squadron.	Type of aircraft.	No. of sorties.	Duty.
19/6	3	Tomahawks	6	Fleet protection.
19/6	3	Tomahawks	5	Escort for Blenheims on leaflet raid.
19/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	6	Troop protection and escort Blenheims Qatana
19/6	80	Hurricanes	6	Fleet protection.
19/6	80	Hurricanes	6	Escort Blenheims raid on Vichy destroyer.
19/6	80	Hurricanes	1	Local defence.
20/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	5	Troop protection, Damascus vicinity.
20/6	80	Hurricanes	5	Fleet protection.
20/6	80	Hurricanes	5	Escort Blenheims raiding Damascus-Beyrouth road.
20/6	80	Hurricanes	3	Local defence.
20/6	3	Tomahawks	5	Fleet protection.
20/6	3	Tomahawks	8	M/T concentration Damascus-Beyrouth road.
21/6	80	Hurricanes	6	Fleet protection.
21/6	3	Tomahawks	7	-do-
21/6	3	Tomahawks	7	M/T on Damascus-Beyrouth road.
21/6	3	Tomahawks	3	Escort Blenheims.
21/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators	4	Troop protection, Damascus area.
22/6	3	Tomahawks	12	Ground attack M/T
22/6	"X" Flt.	Gladiators		Patrol H.4
22/6	80	Hurricanes	6	Escort 2nd raid on Beyrouth. Ground attack M/T Damascus-Beyrouth road.
22/6	80	Hurricanes	1	Local defence.
22/6	260	Hurricanes	6	Sweep Damascus-Beyrouth road.
23/6	80	Hurricanes	17	Ground attack, Baalbek, Talia, Nayak aerodromes.
23/6	3	Tomahawks	12	Ground attack aerodromes at El Kuseir.

Date.	Squadron.	Type of aircraft.	No. of sorties.	Duty.
24/6	80	Hurricanes	5	Escort Albacories returning from Beyrouth.
24/6	260	Hurricanes	5	ditto
24/6	80/260	Hurricanes	5	Fleet protection.
24/6	80/260	Hurricanes	4	Local defence.
24/6	3	Tomahawks	10	Sweep Rayak area.
25/6	3	Tomahawks	7	Troop protection, Palmyra.
25/6	80	Hurricanes	11	Ground sweep Rayak area.
26/6	3	Tomahawks	8	Aerodromes, Homs, Kuseir & Rayak.
26/6	3	Tomahawks	8	Troop protection, Palmyra.
26/6	80/260	Hurricanes	12	Fleet protection.
26/6	80/260	Hurricanes	12	Attack a/c on Rayak a'drome.
27/6	80/0	Hurricanes	11	Fleet protection.
27/6	80/260	Hurricanes	7	Local defence.
27/6	3	Tomahawks	11	Escort bombers.
28/6	3	Tomahawks	8	Escort bombers.
28/6	80/260/33	Hurricanes	24	Fleet protection.
28/6	80	Hurricanes	3	Defence Palestine.
29/6	3	Tomahawks	7	Escort Blenheims on raid Palmyra.
29/6	3	Tomahawks	8	Escort Blenheims raid Palmyra
29/6	80	Hurricanes	12	Fleet protection.
29/6	80	Hurricanes	4	Local defence.
30/6	260	Hurricanes	10	Attack Baalbek & satellite landing grounds.
30/6	80	Hurricanes	2	Local defence.
30/6	806	Hurricanes	4	ditto
1/7	260	Hurricanes	10	Offensive patrol Palmyra area.
1/7	80	Hurricanes	2	Defence Haifa.
1/7	806	Hurricanes	1	ditto

Date.	Squadron.	Type of aircraft.	No. of sorties.	Duty.
1/7	3	Tomahawks	7	Attack aerodromes Rayak Valley.
1/7	3	Tomahawks	8	Ground attack Rhodes.
2/7	80/260	Hurricanes	27	Fleet protection.
2/7		Hurricanes	1	Local defence
2/7	260	Hurricanes	10	Offensive patrol Palmyra.
2/7	3	Tomahawks	6	Attack 2 Flying Boats Tripoli.
3/7	260	Hurricanes	10	Attack Homs Aerodrome.
3/7	80	Hurricanes	20	Fleet protection.
4/7	450/260	Hurricanes	10	Baalbek Main Aerodrome & Two Satellites.
4/7	260/806/803	Hurricanes	21	Fleet protection.
4/7		Hurricanes	3	Defence Haifa
5/7	450/60	Hurricanes	10	Attack aerodromes at Homs, Kuseir, Baalbek.
5/7	80/806/803	Hurricanes	20	Fleet protection.
5/7		Hurricanes	7	Defence Haifa.
6/7	450/260	Hurricanes	4	A/c on Baalbek & Talia L.G's.
6/7	80/806/803/ 450/260	Hurricanes	67	Fleet protection.
6/7	80	Hurricanes	1	Defence of Haifa
6/7	208	Hurricanes	1	Recce Damour area.
7/7	80	Hurricanes	6	Fleet protection.
7/7	272	Beaufighters	4	Attack Seaplanes Tripoli.
7/7	3	Tomahawks	19	M.T. Syria.
9/7	260	Hurricanes	10	Aircraft on ground at Aleppo.
9/7	80	Hurricanes	9	Attack a/c on L.G's Meskine area.
9/7	806	Hurricanes	8	Defence Haifa.
9/7	3	Tomahawks	6	Ground attacks.
9/7	3	Tomahawks	6	Escort photo recce.
9/7	3	Tomahawks	7	Bomber escort.
9/7	3	Tomahawks	6	Defensive patrol Damour.

Date	Squadron	Type of aircraft.	No. of Sorties.	Duty.
10/7	3	Tomahawks	8	Bomber escort.
10/7	3	Tomahawks	6	ditto
10/7	80	Hurricanes	7	Ground strafed aerodromes.
10/7	450/260	Hurricanes	8	Bomber escort.
11/7	3	Tomaha wks	6	Ground attack Fah, Aleppo and Hama.
11/7	80	Hurricanes	8	Attack Aleppo Satellite.
11/7	80	Hurricanes	6	Bomber escort (Blenheim)
11/7	450/260	Hurricanes	6	Attack Aleppo L.G. and Satellite.

<u>Total No. of Sorties.</u>	1040
of which	_____
Fleet protection	410
Ground strafing	244
Offensive/ fensive patrols	386
	1040

The above figures do not include a number of sorties of No. 3 Squadron R.A.A.F., while operating in the forward area.

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APPENDIX "E" (2)NUMBER OF E/A DESTROYED ON THE GROUND BY
OUR FIGHTERS.

Date.	Place and Time.	Own Aircraft.	Enemy Aircraft.	Own Casualties.	Enemy Casualties.
8.6.41	Rayak Satellite Estabel 0550	3 Hurricanes	Morane & C.R.42	Nil	1 Morane 1 C.R.42 destroyed.
8.6.41	ditto 0615	5 Tomahawks	Fighters	Nil	6 "Well Hit"
23.6.41	Talia 1325	6 Hurricanes	36 Glenn Martins & Potez 63	Nil	4 destroyed, 12 badly damaged.
23.6.41	Rayak 1340	2 Hurricanes	24 Dewoitines	Nil	6 Dewoitines damaged.
23.6.41	Talia 1355	5 Hurricanes	Potez 63 or Glenn Martin & possibly a JU.52	Nil	4 E/a destroyed, 8 E/a damaged. Note: Of these 8 possibly 1 was a JU.52
23.6.41	El Kuseir 1810	12 Tomahawks	1 Glenn Martin 1 Potez 63	Nil	1 Potez 63, 1 Glenn Martin destroyed.
26.6.41	Homs 1520	8 Tomahawks	Fighters (Dewoitines)	1 Badly Damaged Pilot Safe.	4 destroyed.
26.6.41	Deir Ez Zor 0545	3 Blenheims	Pote 33	Nil	3 Potez damaged.
26.6.41	Rayak 1800	12 Hurricanes	Unknown Fighters	Nil	4 Destroyed. 10 Damaged.
29.6.41	Kuseir 1830	9 Tomahawks	Glenn Martin	Nil	4 Glenn Martins destroyed. 1 Dewoitine 338 damaged.

Date.	Place and Time.	Own Aircraft.	Enemy Aircraft.	Own Casualties.	Enemy Casualties.
30.6.41	Baalbek 2nd Satellite 1800	10 Hurricanes	5 Twin Engined	Nil	4 Twin Engined a/c heavily hit.
1.7.41	Baalbek 2nd Satellite 0745	7 Tomahawks	8 Unidentified	Nil	1 destroyed, others damaged.
2.7.41	Tripoli 1745	6 Tomahawks	5 Loire 130	Nil	Two left in sinking condition.
3.7.41	Hama 1600	10 Hurricanes	12 Leo 45 ?	Nil	2 Leo's destroyed (on fire) 8 damaged.
4.7.41	Talia Satellite 1000	10 Hurricanes	9 Glen Martins.	Nil	4 damaged.
6.7.41	Baalbek & Talia 0630	6 Hurricanes	Glen Martin, Leo 45, & various unidentified A/c	Nil	1 Glen Martin damaged. 4 Leo's 45 " " 2 Unidentified " "
7.7.41	Tripoli 1330	2 Beaufighters	8 Flying Boats Unidentified.	Nil	4 Damaged.
7.7.41	Tripoli 1640	2 Beaufighters	8 Flying Boats Unidentified.	1 Beaufighter slightly damaged.	2 Damaged.
9.7.41	Aleppo 1250	10 Hurricanes	2 Mixed A/c	Nil	1 Potez 63) 1 Farman 222) Destroyed 7 Potez 63) 1 Glenn Martin) Damaged.

Date.	Place and Time.	Own Aircraft.	Enemy Aircraft.	Own Casualties.	Enemy Casualties.
10.7.41	Hama 0700	6 Tomahawks	8 Leo 45	Nil	2 Leo 45 Destroyed. 6 -do- damaged.
10.7.41	Talia 0730	6 Tomahawks	Unidentified	1 Damaged	3 Unidentified damaged.
10.7.41	Talia 1750	7 Hurricanes	9 Mixed A/c	Nil	6 Strafed but probably all had been shot up previously.
11.7.41	Fah Aleppo Hama 1320	6 Tomahawks	Various	Nil	<u>Fah.</u> 1 Three-engined A/c destroyed. <u>Aleppo</u> 1 Leo 45 destroyed. 1 Leo Damaged. 7 Unidentified Damaged. <u>Hama</u> 1 Potez 63 Destroyed. 1 Bloch 200 damaged. 2 Unidentified damaged.

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MOST SECRET.
APPENDIX "E" (3)

NUMBER OF ENEMY AIRCRAFT DESTROYED IN THE AIR BY OUR FIGHTERS.

Date.	Time (LT)	Own aircraft.	Hostile aircraft.	Own casualties.	Hostile casualties.
9.6.41	1030	3 Hurricanes of 80 Squadron.	1 Potez 63	Nil	1 probably destroyed.
9.6.41	1540	3 Hurricanes	3 Bloch 6 Dewoitines.	2	1 Bloch probably destroyed.
9.6.41	1605	3 Hurricanes	3 Dewoitines	1 (Pilot safe)	3 destroyed. One pilot safe.
13.6.41	1530	8 Tomahawks	8/9 JU.88	Nil	3 destroyed. 1 probably destroyed, 1 damaged.
13.6.41	1830	2 Hurricanes	2 Potez 63 3 Moranes.	1 damaged.	2 Potez destroyed. (Confirmed OPS)
14.6.41	1800	3 Hurricanes	3/4 bombers 6/12 Dewoitines.	Nil	1 Dewoitine probably destroyed.
14.6.41	1750-1815	1 Hurricanes	4 Loire 3 Morane	Nil	1 Morane damaged.
15.6.41	1800	5 Tomahawks	2 Glenn Martins	Nil	2 destroyed.
15.6.41	0950	6 Gladiators	12 Dewoitines	1 destroyed	2 destroyed.
15.6.41	1715	6 Hurricanes	Approx. 9 JU.88	Nil	1 JU.88 destroyed. 1 damaged.
18.6.41	1700	5 Gladiators	6 Dewoitines	Nil	2 destroyed, 1 pilot safe.
19.6.41	1645	5 Tomahawks	8 Glenn Martins	Nil	2 damaged.

Date.	Time (LT)	Own aircraft.	Hostile aircraft.	Own casualties.	Hostile casualties.
23.6.41	-	5 Hurricanes	3/5 Dewoitines	3 Hurricanes (1 pilot safe)	2 probably damaged.
24.6.41	1230	7 Tomahawks	4 Potez 63	Nil	3 destroyed. 1 probably destroyed.
28.6.41	-	9 Tomahawks	6 Glenn Martins	Nil	6 destroyed.
29.6.41	1245	1 Blenheim	3 Dewoitines. 2 Potez	Nil	1 Dewoitine damaged.
29.6.41	-	9 Tomahawks	1 Glenn Martin	Nil	1 destroyed.
6.7.41	0700	1 Hurricane	2 Dewoitines	1 Hurricane damaged.	-
7.7.41	1515	6 Hurricanes	1 JU.88	1 Hurricane damaged.	1 JU.88 probably destroyed.
10.7.41	1055	7 Tomahawks. 7 Blenheims.	5 Dewoitine 520	2 Blenheims des- troyed. (3 men baled out) 1 Blenheim badly damaged.	5 Dewoitines destroyed.
11.7.41	1320	6 Tomahawks	1 Dewoitine 520	1 Tomahawk destroyed.	1 Dewoitine destroyed. (Pilot safe)
14.7.41	1350	1 Hurricane	1 S.79	-	1 S.79 damaged.

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MOST SECRET.

RECORD OF FLEET AIR ARM IN SYRIAN CAMPAIGN
8th June to 1st July 1941.

APPENDIX "F".

Date.	Operation arranged.	Operation carried out.	Results.	Remarks.
8/6	803 Squadron (Fulmar) Protection of Fleet off Coast.	Protected Fleet from 0700 to 1830.	Two Fulmars shot down by French fighters. One forced landed in sea. Two shot up by French fighters.	This left three serviceable Fulmars. It was decided that these aircraft could not operate against shore-based fighters, and so fighter protection by No. 3 and No. 80 Squadrons R.A.F. would be substituted.
9/6	815 Squadron (Sword- fish) to dive bomb Vichy destroyers at Beyrouth.	Not carried out.	Nil	815 Squadron unable to carry out attack as, by mistake in their orders, they did not have bomb racks.
10/6	829 Squadron (Alba- cores and Swordfish) to dive bomb Vichy destroyers at Bey- routh at about 2330.	4 Albacores and 3 Sword- fish set out. 3 Albacores and 3 Swordfish arrived about 2400. 2 Albacores attacked.	Not seen. Nothing shown by RCN next day.	Vichy destroyers were not certainly located, and owing to cloud only two a/c attacked. Results were not observed.
	815 Squadron (Sword- fish) to dive bomb or torpedo destroyers at Beyrouth at about 0030/11	Not carried out.	Nil.	Orders were received from C in C Med. that no attack was to be carried out without his permission. As result of this 815 Squadron was told to cancel attack. When per- mission was finally granted, 815 was told to attack - but this signal never got through in time for them to attack.

NOTE: C in C Med. ordered at this stage that ships INSIDE the harbour were not to be attacks. This left as the only targets ships lying in the anchorage outside, or ships lying up the Coast.

RECORD OF FLEET AIR ARM IN SYRIAN CAMPAIGN.

Date.	Operation arranged.	Operation carried out.	Results.	Remarks.
11/6	829 Squadron (Albacores and Swordfish) to dive bomb destroyers lying in anchorage at Beyrouth at about 2330.	2 Albacores and 2 Swordfish attacked at 2400	Nil.	Aircraft attacked flotilla leader lying outside harbour in anchorage inside nets. All bombs missed, nearest being 10 ft.
	815 Squadron (Swordfish) to attack destroyers lying in anchorage at Beyrouth at about 0030.	3 Swordfish searched Beyrouth at 0100.	Possible hit on merchant ship.	No warships seen.
12/6	829 Squadron (Albacores and Swordfish) to attack destroyers lying in anchorage at Beyrouth. One a/c to patrol off harbour from dusk until 2230 to intercept enemy if they left harbour to disperse up Coast.	1 Albacore patrolled off Beyrouth 2030 to 2230, attacking after patrol. 2 Albacores 2 Swordfish attacked at about 2300. Of these latter only one dropped bombs.	Nil.	One a/c attacked a destroyer in the roads, and one a warship about 5 miles N. of Beyrouth steaming North. Both missed. One aircraft forced-landed in sea near Saida, crew safe, pilot S/Ldr. Phillips slightly injured.
	815 Squadron (Swordfish) to sweep down Coast Tripoli to Beyrouth to attack enemy warships. Attack after 0030/13th.	3 Swordfish carried out sweep armed with torpedoes.	One warship torpedoed in Djounieh harbour.	One Swordfish torpedoed largest of three warships in Djounieh harbour, 8 miles North of Beyrouth. No ships seen in anchorage outside Beyrouth. Enemy appears to be dispersing shipping up the Coast during the night.
13/6	815 Squadron (Swordfish) to sweep coast from Tripoli to Beyrouth.	4 Swordfish carried out sweep between 0300 and 0400/14.	One unidentified vessel torpedoed outside Beyrouth.	No warships in anchorage at Beyrouth. One suspected submarine in harbour at Djounieh. Oil observed at Djounieh confirming hit during attack of night 12/13th. RCN on 14/6 showed lots of oil in harbour at Beyrouth, probably from tanker ("Adour", thought to have been hit. Ship not sunk.

Date.	Operation arranged.	Operation carried out.	Results.	Remarks.
14/6	829 Squadron proceeded back to Egypt.	829 Squadron proceeded back to Egypt.		
	815 Squadron intercepting French merchant ships off Cyprus.	815 Squadron intercepted ships.	Ships made to steer S.E. away from Turkish coast.	2 ships anchored in Turkish waters, but were persuaded by Swordfish to proceed S.E., towards Cyprus. No attack on Syrian coast arranged for tonight.
15/6	815 Squadron reinforced with 2 Albacóres from 829 Squadron.	Dusk attack.	Could not find target.	
	815 Squadron (Swordfish) to carry out dusk attack on Vichy destroyer attempting to reach Beyrouth from the West.	Attack by three a/c at 0400/16th.	One certain hit, two probable. Ship sank. 1 Swordfish lost.	Ship was hit and RCN by 815 next day showed oil and wreckage in the position of the attack. Reuter telegram of 17/6 quoting Vichy verifies that ship was sunk. A/c crew were not recovered, but dinghy was found amongst many empty rafts and boats. It is hoped that crew were taken prisoner by the French.
16/6	815 Squadron. Search by one a/c to find Swordfish missing on raid 15/16	Search carried out by one Swordfish.	Wreckage found East of Cyprus.	See above.

C in C Med. ordered Vichy destroyers to be destroyed, using F.A.A. and R.A.F. resources. F.A.A. put under operational control of H.Q., R.A.F., P & T.J.

RECORD OF FLEET AIR ARM IN SYRIAN CAMPAIGN.

Date.	Operation arranged.	Operation carried out.	Results.	Remarks.
17/6	815 Squadron. Sweep down Coast Tripoli to Beyrouth during moonlight, to destroy Vichy destroyers.	Sweep carried out 0300 to 0415 by 3 Swordfish.	No shipping sighted.	RCN carried out at 500 to 1500 ft. No shipping seen. One a/c forced landed near C.Kiti on return.
18/6	829 Squadron detachment arrived at Lydda (3 Albacores). 829 Squadron (Albacores) dusk torpedo attack on Vichy destroyers at Beyrouth.	Dusk torpedo attack on sloop or submarine, by one Albacore.	Unknown.	Vichy warships had been bombarding Coast. Intention was to torpedo one on arrival back in harbour. Sloop or submarine was encountered lying well out in anchorage, and was attacked. Aircraft forced landed near Saida, in sea. Cause: bullet in oil system. Crew unhurt.
19/6	829 Squadron. Night dive bombing attack on destroyers in Beyrouth.	Attack by 2 Albacores and 1 Swordfish flare-dropping at 2200.	One hit claimed on submarine, two or three on jetty.	Attacked ships lying alongside main warehouse jetty in Beyrouth.
20/6	815 Squadron, to intercept and attack Vichy destroyer en route Kaso-Beyrouth.	Shadowing aircraft lost touch.	Nil.	Destroyer subsequently entered Beyrouth.
21/6	815 Squadron (Swordfish) to attack 3 Vichy destroyers in Beyrouth after 2330/21 829 Squadron (Swordfish and Albacores) to attack 3 Vichy destroyers in Beyrouth before 2300/21.	No attack. Attacked shipping at Beyrouth at about 2230, with 2 a/c and 1 flare-dropper.	Nil Not observed.	One a/c dropped torpedo at centre one of 3 destroyers lying inshore in anchorage. Results not observed. One a/c bombed across edge of wharf between New Breakwater and Main Jetty.

RECORD OF FLEET AIR ARM IN SYRIAN CAMPAIGN.

Date.	Operation arranged.	Operation carried out.	Results.	Remarks.
22/6				
23/6	815 Squadron to attack Beyrouth destroyers before 0300/24. 829 Sqdn. to attack Beyrouth destroyers after 0300/24.	Attacked shipping in Beyrouth 2345 to 0015. (3 Swordfish). Attacked shipping in Beyrouth (2 Albatrosses) at 0430.	Not observed except for 1 stick on jetty near target. Hits seen on jetty near destroyer.	One stick on E. side jetty near destroyer. 1 a/c damaged by A.A. More A.A. than usual. 1 a/c did not drop. Dawn attack. Hurricane protection provided for return journey. More A.A. fire than usual.
24/6	806 Squadron two flights and ground personnel due 26 June -	arrived at Lydda preparatory to operating as Fleet protection Unit. Maintenance and equipment.		
25/6	829 Squadron attack destroyers in Beyrouth at any time.	2 Albatrosses attacked destroyers 2130 (bombs). 1 Swordfish (torpedo) found no target.	On jetty near target.	Two Albatrosses dive bombed destroyer alongside wharf between New Breakwater and Main Warehouse jetty. Sticks in approx. position of ship, but no certain results. One Swordfish with torpedo found nothing but a hospital ship, which it did not attack.
26/6	829 Squadron attack shipping Beyrouth and Northward, dusk torpedo attack.	1 Swordfish attacked small motor vessel off Beyrouth at dusk.	Unknown.	Small motor vessel proceeding towards Beyrouth from 5 miles N.W. No result seen.
27/6	806 Squadron moved to Ramat David, Satellite of Haifa.			
28/6	806 Squadron protect naval forces.	2 patrols over naval forces.	Nil.	Working under direction of Haifa R.A.F. and in conjunction with 80 Squadron, Hurricanes.
30/6	5 aircraft 826 Squadron arrived Lydda for special operations under 201 Group, concerning interception of Vichy reinforcements for Syria.			
1/7	8% 826/829 Squadron and 6% 806/803 Squadron departed for Cyprus, to be under the command of 201 Group.			

To:- The Air Officer Commanding, H.Q., R.A.F.P & T.J. & Syria.

From:- Wing Commander F.G.Cator.

Date:- 27th July 1941.

Subject: Close Support Operations in Syria, July 6th-12th, 1941.

Appendix "X" - A.L.S. Operation Instruction No.1.
Appendix "Y" - Precis of Air Operations.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit herewith a report on the Close Support Operations carried out by certain units of the Royal Air Force in conjunction with military forces in Syria during the period July 6th to 12th 1941. The report will take the form of an outline narrative of events followed by the general conclusions reached as the result of the experience gained. Attached, as appendices, are the Operation Order to the Royal Air Force units concerned, and a precis of sorties carried out by the bomber and fighter aircraft which were operated under Army control during the period under review.

Narrative of Events.

2. On July 4th a conference, presided over by the Air Officer Commanding, R.A.F., Palestine and Trans-Jordan was held in Jerusalem, and attended by representatives of the Royal Air Force and Army Headquarters, including Wing Commander F.G.Cator, at that time Commanding the Air Liaison Section attached to the First Australian Corps.

Decisions and Proposed Organisation of R.A.F.
Close Support Control.

3. As the result of the conference referred to above the following decisions were reached:-

(a) To allot immediately one bomber and one fighter squadron to operate under the control of the 7th Australian Division for an indefinite period, commencing July 6th. Whilst it was primarily intended that air support should be afforded to the 7th Australian Division, it was recognised that circumstances might necessitate the temporary withdrawal of all or part of the Air Force units concerned for operations elsewhere under the 1st Australian Corps or Headquarters Royal Air Force, Palestine and Trans-Jordan. No. 3 Fighter Squadron R.A.A.F. which was at the time already under control of the 1st Australian Corps, and No. 45 Bomber Squadron were the units selected.

(b) Wing Commander F.G. Cator, Air Liaison Officer at Headquarters 1st Australian Corps to be attached to the 7th Australian Division to act as Air Liaison Adviser to the G.O.C., and Officer Commanding the Close Support Wing under the Divisional Commander.

/.....(c)

(c) Flight Lieutenant Ratcliffe, previously Air Liaison Officer at Headquarters 7th Australian Division, to go forward to the 22nd Brigade to act as advanced Air Liaison Officer. Although in fact two Brigades were operating in the NAMOUR area it was not considered necessary to provide an Advanced Air Liaison Officer for both, in view of the narrow front involved. In any case no suitable officer could have been provided in the short time available.

(d) Squadron Leader J. Gordon Finlayson, D.S.O., D.F.C., previously attached to Headquarters, 1st Australian Corps, to remain there to act as Air Liaison Officer to the G.O.C. and at the same time to form a link between the 7th Australian Division and Nos. 3 and 45 Squadrons, should normal circumstances fail or prove to be inadequate.

(e) The main channel of communication between the 7th Division and the Close Support Squadrons to be W/T, supplemented by landline where necessary and available.

(f) The normal A.I.L.O. organisation to be maintained in the two squadrons.

(g) No. 3 Fighter Squadron R.A.A.F. to be located at ROSHPINA as previously and No. 45 Squadron to operate using MUQUEBILIA (Jenin) as their advanced operational landing ground and ACIR as their base for maintenance purposes. It was recognised that both ROSHPINA and MUQUEBILIA were considerably too far from the Headquarters 7th Australian Division, being respectively 40 and 65 miles from SAIDA. The lack of other and nearer landing grounds and the necessity for utilising landline communications, however, left no alternatives.

On July 5th., Air Liaison Section Operation Instruction No. 1 (copy attached) was issued, and the organisation outlined in para. 3 was brought into force with effect from 0001 hours L.S.T. on July 6th.

5. July 6th.

Operations carried out by both No. 3 and No. 45 Squadrons. No enemy aircraft or ground targets encountered by fighters. Bomber results satisfactory in view of difficult nature of targets. W/T communications very bad, hand line used with consequent considerable delays.

6. July 7th.

Operations by both No. 3 and No. 45 Squadrons. Some success ground strafing M.T. Bombing results satisfactory. Considerable delays again experienced in transmission of instructions by W/T due to failures. Landline slow due to congestion of other traffic, special direct lines could not be provided from Division to the Squadrons. All messages had, therefore, to be passed over the normal operational line to Corps and thence by special lines to the Squadrons.

7. July 8th.

During the day three raids were carried out by the bombers, and two attacks by the fighters. The results in general were poor due to prevalence of low cloud. Considerable delay in the transmission of orders was again caused by partial and recurring W/T failures.

8. July 9th.

Weather bad at first but improved later. Two ground attacks and one escort by fighters. Main bomb raid a failure due to an error in Navigation. W/T satisfactory.

9. July 10th.

Early morning attack by fighters on aerodromes successful. Bomber attacks against HAMMANA ammunition dumps most successful but bombers intercepted on their return journey by five Dewoitines. Three Blenheims shot down and one badly damaged. Fighter escort then intervened and shot down all five Dewoitines without loss or damage to themselves. During the course of a ground strafing attack by our fighters later in the day one of our own lorries was attacked and shot up without casualties.

10. July 11th.

All available fighters withdrawn temporarily from Division and placed under Force Headquarters and 6th Division. In consequence of the absence of fighters protection and alternative cloud cover no bomber operations were attempted.

11. July 12th.

Armistice declared at 0001 hours. Operations terminated.

COMMUNICATIONS.

12. In view of the distance between the Squadron landing grounds and Divisional Headquarters (see para. 3 (g) personal contact between the Wing Commander and the Squadron Commanders or A.I.L.O's was impossible. Direct land line communications were only possible between the landing grounds and Corps Headquarters, and thence to Divisional Headquarters via the general c rnational line. Delays between Division and Cops were, therefore, frequently unavoidable due to traffic congestion on this line.

13. The landline difficulty having been foreseen arrangements were made for the provision of special W/T links between Divisional Headquarters and the Squadrons in rear, and also to the Advanced Liaison Officer with the forward Brigades. A listening set was also provided at Corps Headquarters. This set also acted as a relay station in the event of communication breakdowns between Division and the Squadrons, and proved a great value in this connection. In order to reduce signals delays to a minimum a simple en clair operational code was introduced (see appendix 'A' to Appendix "X").

14. In spite of the provision of special wave lengths and constant supervision from experienced signals personnel signal communications were unreliable and a constant source of delay. It is believed that much of the troubles were largely due to the general lack of experienced signals personnel in the Command.

15. The special en clair operational code referred to in para. 13 was on the whole successful and no difficulty was experienced in its use. Under favourable conditions an average period of from 5 to 10 minutes was required for the passing of an operational instruction excluding encoding and decoding, which occupied a further 10 minutes, the best overall time being 15 minutes. The code, however, was only suitable for simple and easily identifiable targets. When detailed instructions were required it was necessary to make use of the landline, with consequent liability to extensive delays.

TARGETS.

16. A feature of the operations under review was the almost complete lack of suitable ground targets for bombing or machine gun attacks. This was due to the nature of the terrain which afforded excellent cover and the wide dispersion of the enemy forces even in battle areas. M.T. concentrations or convoys of any size were seldom encountered, the enemy carrying out most road movement by night by making use of previously prepared dumps. In this connection it must be remembered that the enemy were almost always stationary or in retreat and did not therefore require to bring supplies forward to anything like the same extent as was necessary to supply our advancing forces. The bombing of gun positions proved difficult and seldom profitable since they were most difficult to locate and covered by small areas. The really successful attacks on the ammunition dump at HAMARA and the ground strafing of aerodromes can hardly be considered as falling under the heading of close or even direct support.

17. It has been ascertained however, that the constant shooting up of roads and the bombing of likely areas whilst lacking in material results produced considerable moral effect. Had more bombers and trained night flying crews been available it would have been possible to interfere with enemy road movement by night.

ENEMY AIR ACTION.

18. Enemy air action was almost entirely confined to fighter and bomber attacks in the forward areas, gun positions being the favourite target. Dive bombing attacks were carried out by Glenn Martins and ground strafing by Potez 63. The Dewoitine and Morane fighters were almost entirely used for bomber escorts and defensive patrols over their own areas. The results obtained by the enemy bombers and fighters were poor attacks being seldom pressed home except in the case of the Dewoitine fighters who showed considerable skill and determination on several occasions. At no time however, were the Dewoitines at match for the Tomahawks but they appeared to be on about equal terms with the Hurricanes.

IDENTIFICATION OF OUR TROOPS.

19. A prerequisite for Close Support Air Operations is an exact knowledge of the positions of our own troops and the ability to identify them as friendly should the operations be of a highly mobile nature neither requirement could be fulfilled during the operations under review. The difficulty of keeping H.Q. formations fully informed as to the exact positions of the troops under their control is fully appreciated if reliance must be placed on the normal channels of communication such as runners, landline, or W/T. Identification from the air would appear to provide the solutions in both semi static and mobile operations provided that a single and readily portable means of identification can be devised. The method adopted by the German airborne and parachute troops in Crete would appear to provide a satisfactory solution to this problem. The ground strips system nominally in use during the Syrian operations proved unpracticable since small bodies of troops either could not or would not display these strips.

CONCLUSIONS.

20. The following are the main points which have come to light or been emphasized as the result of the air operations under review:-

- (a) The controlling formations and the operational aerodromes or advanced landing grounds must be sufficiently close to one another to enable constant and personal touch to be maintained between the Commanders of the air component and the squadrons under his control. By this means only can air crews be properly briefed and kept in touch with the Military situation. The maximum distance must of course depend on road conditions but should not it is considered exceed 15 miles.
- (b) Special direct landline communication between the controlling formations and the squadrons are essential. The distance factor referred to in (a) above will have a considerable bearing on their provision. Similar communications are required between advanced H.Qrs. and the controlling formations to minimise the delay when calling for air assistance or when opportunity targets occur.
- (c) R/T communication between bomber and fighter aircraft, and the controlling formation is desirable. By this means opportunity targets can be indicated to aircraft in the air, or instructions altered at the last moment in case of need. If R/T is employed, a simple code on the lines indicated in Appendix "G"(X) is required to provide at least a measure of security without introducing delay.
- (d) A reliable and simple method of indicating the position of our own troops is absolutely essential. (see para. 17).
- (e) Close air support cannot be really effective unless suitable targets are available, There is still a very considerable lack of knowledge in the Army as to the capabilities of aircraft. This applies in particular to the degree of accuracy and effects which can reasonably be expected from bombing under operational conditions, and to the number of fighter aircraft required to maintain a standing patrol.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) F.G. Cator.

Wing Commander.

Ref: LAS/Ops/1.

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MOST SECRETAIR LIAISON SECTION OPERATION
INSTRUCTION NO. 1.Map Ref: BEYROUTH 1: 20,000.
DAMOUR 1: 25,000.Appendix "A" - Code for Operation Orders.
Appendix "B" - Army Map Reference Code.INFORMATION.

1. The Army are commencing offensive operations in the DAMOUR-BEIT ED DINE-BEYROUTH area on July 6th 1941. Co-operation is being provided by the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force.

INTENTION.

2. To provide fighter and bomber co-operation in accordance with Army requirements.

EXE CUTION.

3. Command. With effect from 0001 hours L.S.T. July 6th, 1941, No. 45 (B) Squadron R.A.F. and No. 3 (F) Squadron R.A.A.F. will be placed under the control of the G.O.C. 7th Australian Division. Operational control over these units will be exercised through the R.A.F. Air Liaison Officer attached to H.Q. 7th Australian Division. In the event of a breakdown in communications operational control will be temporarily exercised through R.A.F. A.L.O. 1st Australian Corps.

4. Location of Units. No 3 Squadron R.A.A.F. are located ROSH PINNA, No.45 Squadron will be based at AQIR but will operate from the advanced landing ground at MUKEBELE (JENIN) during daylight hours with effect from July 6th.

5. Operation Orders and Instructions. For form and method of issue see Appendices A and B. All Operation Orders or Instructions are to be acknowledged.

6. Own Aircraft Movements. Departure and arrival signals are to be despatched in respect of all operational flights. Such signals are to be addressed to A.L.O. 7th Australian Division and sent in clear by W/T. the signal stating the number of aircraft and the time preceded by 'Out' and 'In' indicating departure or arrival. Ref is to be made to the relevant Operation Order or instruction. Times are to be coded in accordance with para.8.

7. Enemy Aircraft Reports. The presence of enemy aircraft in the operational area will be notified to units by the R.A.F. A.L.O. 7th Australian Division by means of the code word 'Hens' (bombers) or 'Gnats' (fighters) followed by a time and number.

8. Time. All times in Operation Orders or Instructions, aircraft movement signals, and Mayfys will be coded by the addition of 2 hours. @ 9 hrs w.e.f. 10.7.41. (i.e. when decoding subtract 2 hours to obtain correct time).

9. ADMINISTRATION.

Aircraft Serviceability. Mayflys are to be forwarded by W/T to R.A.F. A.L.O. 7th Australian Division as follows:-

- (a) At the conclusion of the days operations.
- (b) As soon as possible after the return from each operational flight.

Such signals are to be prefixed with the code word "Mossie" for fighters and "Shawk" for bombers followed by the time and number of aircraft operationally serviceable (includes pilots and crews). The time will be coded in accordance with para. 8.

10. COMMUNICATIONS. A direct and special W/T link has been established between H.Q.P.&T.J.R.A.F. A.L.O. 7th Aust. Div., R.A.F. A.L.O. 1st Aust. Corps, No.3 Squadron R.A.A.F. and No.45 Squadron R.A.F.; landline communication is also available for emergency use. Administrative traffic over these channels is to be reduced to an absolute minimum and is prohibited between the hours of 0500 and 2000 hours daily, except in extreme emergency.

11. W/T SILENCE. All W/T operators are to be impressed with the absolute necessity for maintaining W/T silence whenever possible in order that operational signals from A.L.O. 7th Australian Division may not be missed or delayed. In any case signals from A.L.O. 7th Australian Division take priority over all other traffic.

12. Detailed Signals Instructions are being issued separately.

13. ACKNOWLEDGE.

Issued at hrs.

(Signed) F. G.Cator

Wing Commander,
Attached 7th Australian Division.

<u>Distribution.</u>	<u>Copy No.</u>	<u>Method of Issue.</u>
1st Aust. Corps	1 - 2	
7th Aust. Div.	3 - 7	
HQRAFP&TJ	8 - 9	
3 Sqn RAAF	10	
45 Sqn RAF	11	
RAF ALO 1st Aust. Corps	12	
RAF ALO 6 Div	13	
RAF ALO 2 2 Brigade	14	
RAF Station Aqir	15	
P/O Watters	16	
Spare	17 - 19	(19 to 7 Div)
File	20	(17 to 7 Div) (18 to GHQ(L))

6 Sorties

Nature of target: Ground strafing Armoured Cars.

Result: Nothing seen.

6 Sorties

Nature of target: Escorting Bombers

Result: No enemy aircraft encountered.

7 Sorties

Nature of target: Ground strafing.

Result: Attacked 3 Armd Cars and some
MT

BOMBERS

7 Jul

6 Sorties

Nature of target: BEIT ED DINE

Result: Buildings hit

8 Sorties

Nature of target: (a) Bridge.
(b) Rd junc

Result: (a) Bridge straddled
(b) Rd junc near misses

FIGHTERS.

8 Jul

7 Sorties

Nature of target: Ground strafing

Result: 6 MT attacked

6 Sorties

Nature of target: Ground strafing

Result: One train and a few MT attacked.

BOMBERS

8 Jul

4 Sorties

Nature of target: Wood

Result: NIL result due to cloud.

4 Sorties

Nature of target: Bridge

Result: Bridge straddled.

4 Sorties

Nature of target: Same as for first sortie or area
on the coast.
Result: Bombs in area on coast; result
not known.

FIGHTERS.

9th Jul. 7 sorties.

Nature of target: Ground strafing.

Results: 3 Trains and 6 MT attacked.

7 Sorties.

Nature of target: Escorting bombers.

Result: No enemy aircraft seen but on completion of escort duty 1 Armd C, some MT and 4nguns were ground strafed.

6 Sorties.

Nature of targets: Offensive patrol.

Result: No enemy aircraft encountered.

BOMBERS.

9th Jul 10 Sorties.

Nature of target: Amm. dump HAMMANA.

Result: Only 1 aircraft located target due to weather.

9 Sorties.

Nature of target: Amm. dump BAROUK.

Result: Target area hit, no apparent result.

FIGHTERS.

10th Jul 6 Sorties.

Nature of target: Ground strafing aerodromes.

Result: 3 aircraft burnt, 8 damaged.

6 Sorties.

Nature of target: Ground strafing.

Result: Approx. 24 MT attacked.

7 Sorties.

Nature of target: Escorting bombers.

Result: Encountered enemy bombers and fighters. 3 of our Bombers shot down, 5 enemy fighters shot down.

8 Sorties.

Nature of target: Escorting bombers and ground strafing.

Result: Few Cav shot up. One car and one lorry (ours) attacked.

DECLASSIFIED

The following form will be used for the despatch of Operation Order by W/T in clear or by landline.

Prefix - for Fighter - ZOOM
 Bomber - BUSTER.

(a) Number of own aircraft to be used. If this is omitted the Squadron Commander will use his discretion.

(b) For fighter - Nature of task in following code -

ESCORT - FISHIN
 GROUNDSTRAFF - SHOOTIN
 OFFENSIVE PATROL - HUNTIN

and where required the nature of the target.

For bomber - Nature of target.

(c) Location in Map Reference Code No. 7 (Appendix B)

(d) Times between which air action is required to take place. Normally a starting and finishing time will be given. If the action is required as soon as possible the codeword ZIPPER is to be used, followed by the time by which the action must have been completed or cease. (All times will be coded by the addition of 2 hours (4 w.e.f. 10/7) i.e. to decode time subtract 2 hours (4 w.e.f. 10/7).

(e) Distance and approximate bearing of own troops from the target. (Only given if the distance is short).

e.g. for fighter:

ZOOM SHOOTIN MT 6 XYZERL ZIPPER 1215.

This indicates that "six fighters are to groundstraff MT at 160209 as soon as possible but not after 1015 hours LT".

For bomber

BUSTER FORT 9 AWIXOE 1630 1900 2000 270

This indicates that "nine bombers are to bom a fort at 132182 at 1430 hours and not after 1700 hours. The distance of our own nearest troops from the target is 2000 yards on a bearing of 270° from the target".

(f) Bomb Load

L = 100% 250-lb.
 S = 100% 40-lb.
 M = 50% 250, 50% 40-lb.
 V = 66% 250lb, 33% incendiaries.

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 M = 50% 250, 50% 40-lb.
 V = 66% 250lb, 33% incendiaries.

From:- Officer Commanding, No. 208 Squadron, Royal Air Force.
 To:- Air Officer Commanding, Headquarters, R.A.F. P. & T.J.
 Date:- 28th. July, 1941.
 Ref:- 208S/18/Air.

Report on results of Army Co-operation work carried out by "C" Flight 208 Squadron, R.A.F. during the Syrian campaign.

TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE

The results obtained by the Flight were very successful though greatly hampered by low cloud and difficult terrain. In addition the comparatively small forces operating on both sides in close country gave pilots little scope for producing real "gen".

Except for one short period the demands from the Army were never excessive though many were quite unnecessary.

ARTILLERY RECONNAISSANCE.

Of the eight Arty/Rs. carried out only two were complete failures. One due to wireless failure in the aircraft and the other the fault of the gunners.

The majority of the shoots were, however, very slow, as many as 20 observations being given in some cases. R/T, air to ground, was used and proved satisfactory.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECONNAISSANCE.

The last minute arrival of the photographic reconnaissance Hurricane made only two photo. tasks possible. Both were successful, having been taken by pilots for the first time.

SUMMARY OF RECONNAISSANCES.

The summary of reccos. carried out shows an average of over 3 per day - a high rate for a single Flight and one that cannot be kept up indefinitely.

"C" Flight Reccos. - June 8th. to July 11th.

Tac/Rs.	103)	
Arty/Rs.	8)	<u>Total 113.</u>
Photo/Rs.	2)	

"A" Flight stationed Ramleh carried out 31 Tac/R 9 photo/R = 40.

"B" Flight Lysanders carried out 6 Tac/R.

TOTAL FOR SQUADRON = 159 sorties.

(Signed):- J.R. WILSON,
 Squadron Leader, Commanding,
No. 208 Squadron, R. A. F.

ASSESSMENT OF DAMAGE IN SYRIA

ALEPPO.

<u>Location.</u>	<u>Damage.</u>
Aerodrome.	<p>Direct hit on small hangar full of aircraft spares, hangar collapsed and material destroyed. Direct hits on four small stone houses, mens quarters and Officers' Mess. Quarters partially destroyed, dud hit on Officers' Mess only damaged roof as bombs were instantaneous. Six wooden huts, mens quarters, shattered by blast and bomb splinters. Others slightly damaged. One petrol waggon, 1 fire engine, 1 aircraft, 1 truck full of ammunition and 1 empty truck all close to each other near main hangar hit by bomb splinters and burnt out.</p> <p>Nearly a dozen incendiary bombs penetrated the roof of the main hangar and burnt out harmlessly on the concrete floor. The hangar was full of aircraft at the time (about nine aircraft) but the flames did not reach high or far enough to touch any part of the aircraft. In one case, an incendiary bomb penetrated the roof of the hangar and the top and bottom plane of an aircraft and burnt itself out underneath without even singeing the aircraft.</p> <p>Fifteen aircraft were destroyed by bombs and machine-gun fire (including two large Air France passenger aircraft) in the South West corner of the aerodrome. Several direct hits were scored on the runway. Seven aircraft were destroyed or rendered unserviceable in one attack by our fighters.</p>
Comment.	<p>It is reported that the Vichy forces at Aleppo usually had the following notice of approach of our aircraft:-</p> <p>From Iraq: 1 hour's warning by telephone from Deir-ez-Zor.</p> <p>From the coast: 15 minutes' warning.</p> <p>From S.S.E: No warning. Aircraft avoiding towns.</p>
Aleppo Railway Workshops.	<p>Four bombs dropped between workshop buildings and trains. One bomb destroyed three passenger coaches, two cranes, one gasoil tank waggon, one water tank waggon and damaged the framework of two workshops. The other three bombs damaged workshop walls and roofs but not the machinery or equipment inside.</p>
Aleppo "Baghdad" Railway Station.	<p>Direct hit on open large empty shed (steel framework) opposite main station building, wrecking one end of it.</p> <p>One delayed action bomb two yards from main line, destroying four passenger coaches and cutting line. Incendiary bombs on office building (50 yards N. of main station building) destroying several offices.</p>

At the time of the raid, an ammunition train was in the D.H.P. Station, which is half a mile South of the "Baghdad" station.

Aleppo Town.

Several bombs fell on the town, causing some damage to civilian property and several casualties. One bomb fell at the back of the Baron Hotel and the owner, who thought that his hotel had been picked out as the target (sic) because the German Commission had made it their Headquarters, asked the one remaining member of the Commission to leave the Hotel. The German left!

BAALBEK.

YAAT landing ground. 6 km. West of Baalbek.

Twelve aircraft were destroyed or damaged by machine-gun fire, i.e.:-

7 Potez 63-11 twin-engined monoplanes,
2 Potez Toe 2-seater single-engined,
2 passenger and Red Cross single-engined
biplanes,
1 large German (Capella painted on nose),

MAYDALOUN landing ground

2 Glenn Martins destroyed by machine-gun fire,
1 unidentified aircraft destroyed by machine-gun fire two miles North.

HAMA.

Aerodrome.

At South end of aerodrome bombs within 200 yards of each other blew five aircraft to pieces. (? Glenn Martins.) Some of these may have been destroyed by the exploding of the bombs on one which received a direct hit. Four SNCA Leo 451 twin-engined monoplanes were destroyed and six Potez 63-11 damaged by machine-gun fire.

HOMS.

Aerodrome.

Six aircraft were destroyed or rendered unserviceable by machine-gun fire. On the edge of the aerodrome, adjoining the railway station, a small petrol dump was set on fire by machine-gun fire. The fire spread to a nearby train loaded with ammunition which exploded with terrific force, damaging the station offices, Station Hotel, and some houses in the vicinity, and rocking the whole town. The railway line was cut and about 30 waggons destroyed.

HEREDERE.

Bridge

All bombs missed the bridge and train services were not interrupted.

KUSEIR.

Aerodrome. Five Glenn Martins and one Farman were destroyed or damaged by machine-gun fire. Large hangar and one billet were destroyed and a few billets damaged by bombs.

TEL KELAKH.

Railway. Railway line cut by direct hit and 3,000 gallons aviation petrol burnt out.

Tel Kelakh Village. Few houses destroyed or damaged, and sixteen casualties.

TRIPOLI.

Harbour. One seaplane sunk by machine-gun fire.

Port. Customs buildings slightly damaged by bomb.

Town. Some houses destroyed and about forty casualties in El-Mina (near port) by bombs.

BEYROUTH.

Port. Three bombs through main Western Customs sheds next to Base Militaire.

Installations. Roof partly destroyed, but building unscathed, No fire, no damage done to goods as there were none there.

One bomb hit a small galvanised shed next to the entrance of the Port, destroying a quantity of cement.

Five bombs hit a line of six sheds in the Base Militaire, blowing the galvanised roofs off three sheds and partly damaging the other three. Apart from superficial blast damage to the walls, the sheds remain intact. No damage caused because the sheds were empty.

Two bombs blew up the Railway line leading through the main entrance to the Base Militaire.

The red beacon at the end of the breakwater was damaged.

Two bombs fell near the Gare D.H.P. (Railway Station) of the port, doing little damage.

Comment. Owing to the fact that practically all the sheds in the Port were empty of goods, little damage was caused. Apart from destroyed and partly destroyed roofs, the sheds remain intact. The Railway installations within the Base Militaire were untouched and the two blocks of sheds at the Western end of the Mole were also untouched.

Port. It is confirmed that the "Pegasus" was hit amidships, causing a fire.

Shipping. It is confirmed that the destroyer "Vaughlin" received a direct hit, but did not sink. The aft gun was dismantled and used by the Army as an A.A. gun. Four sailors were killed.

BEYROUTH (cont) 4

Shell Co.

Petrol
Installations.

Tin factory destroyed. General store burnt out. Roof of 1 tank blown off. Others perforated by blast and splinters. 120 tons lubricating oil destroyed. 90 tons aviation spirit destroyed. 50 tons M/T spirit destroyed.

Comment.

A direct hit was scored on a tank filled with 400 tons of gasoil. The only damage done was to blow off the roof. Bomb splinters perforated the tank, but did not reach the level of the gasoil. The gasoil did not catch fire.

Socony Vacuum Co.

Damage nil. No bombs hit the target.

Nation Co. (Adjacent to S.V.C)

One bomb hit side of building where pumps were stored, doing a little damage to the building. 37 barrels containing 9360 litres of petrol were burnt. One bomb fell half a metre away from one of the big tanks, causing a big hole in the side of the tank and rendering it unserviceable. Two other big tanks and two small tanks were perforated by bomb splinters.

Comment

All the tanks were empty. With the exception of one tank, all the others are repairable. There were no casualties.

Mantacheff & Co. (Adjacent to National Co.)

One bomb fell on a shed containing the records. Shed gutted. One bomb fell on a shed containing petrol pumps, destroyed them all. A number of barrels containing the following were destroyed:-

Mineral Oil	1776 kilos	valued at	£S.	962
Petrol	2 tons	"	"	£S. 210
Benzine	15 tons	"	"	£S. 3169.

Comment.

A bomb happened to fall in front of the entrance to the Installation just as a passenger train from Djouné was passing. A carriage was hit and fourteen people killed.

Soc. de Nafte. (S.L.O.C.)

Three bombs fell near tanks and two tanks were perforated by bomb splinters. The tanks were empty. Barrels containing 1400 litres of petrol were burnt (20 barrels).

Comment.

No casualties. A number of bombs fell in the sea near this point.

The Residency,
Beyrouth.

One bomb fell in the drive 25 yards away from and directly opposite the main entrance, causing a fairly substantial amount of blast damage.

**The Residency,
Beyrouth.**

One bomb fell in drive 25 yards away from and opposite North corner of the building, doing a limited amount of superficial damage. Two direct hits through the smoking room (and bar) in the North West corner of the building, causing two metre holes in the roof and doing a lot of superficial damage to the walls. One bomb hit roof of verandah adjoining the smoking room. Fair damage. One bomb fell three metres away from the centre of the West side of the building (staircase) blowing in all the windows and doing a lot of damage to the woodwork and causing a lot of superficial damage to the walls. Six bombs were counted in the racecourse about 250/440 yards away. Two bombs were not accounted for.

Comment.

The Southern end of the building was hardly touched. In spite of three direct hits and three almost direct hits, the building is certainly no shell. Most of the roof is still intact, the walls are still standing, as is the verandah; the building is not wrecked and can be repaired in a fairly short space of time. What effect the bombing has had on the foundations is not known.

Reports that General Dentz was in the Residency at the time are not confirmed. Mme. Dentz would normally be in the building at that time, but happened by some coincidence to be in Aley on that day.

**Beyrouth
Civil.**

The main damage to civilian property was caused in the area near the Port, the Rue Gourand (parallel to the Port) and the Armenian Quarter near the Abattoirs.

1 x 500 lb. bomb fell 1 metre from the Omar Mosque in the Sursuck Suk, damaged the wall of the Mosque and completely destroyed two big blocks of flats (4 storeys).

3 unexploded bombs fell into the Municipality, 1 through the Director's room.

1 big block of flats in the Suk Jamil was destroyed.

A number of bombs fell in the Rue Gouraud at intervals of 100 yards, destroying several houses and damaging several others.

Six bombs fell very near the Regie Tabacs buildings, damaging them pretty badly. (Rue Boitros Dagher).

A number of incendiaries fell on the tram sheds, doing no damage at all.

A number of bombs fell near the Abattoirs, though none of them were direct and only a very little superficial damage was done.

Four bombs fell on the Armenian Quarter (tin huts) near the Abattoirs, destroying a number of huts and killing 20 persons.

Three bombs were dropped near the Garage Municipale destroying two houses and killing six persons.

The total number of houses seriously damaged is estimated at 50.

The total number of killed is estimated at about sixty-four.

The total number of wounded is estimated at about 108.

Beyrouth
Civil.
(Comment)

It is difficult to ascertain how much of the damage suffered by civilian property can be attributed to the R.A.F. bombing. Bomb pieces and fragments of German origin have been found near the American University and on the Boulevard Nahr el Beyrouth, and there is no doubt that German bombs are responsible for a proportion of the damage.

HAMMANA DUMP.

General.

There are two main dumps at Hammana, situated at about two miles from the village and to the West:-

1. One dump, distributed along terraces and hidden in a pine wood, was not touched at all.
2. The other dump, situated about 440 yards away, was located by the R.A.F. and bombed.

The first raid on the dump on 9/7/41 was unfruitful. The second raid on 10/7/41 was more successful.

Description of Dump.

The dumps are composed of two main types of buildings:-

1. Larger type, 30' x 28' x 18' high. Walls built of perforated bricks 5" thick. Roof of ferroconcrete, 9" thick.
2. Smaller type, 18' x 18' x 15' high. Walls built of perforated bricks 5" thick. Roof of ferroconcrete 9" thick.

There are 55 large type dump buildings at 75 yards intervals.

There are 12 small type dump buildings at 75 yards intervals.

Damage.

One dump building containing bombs received a direct hit through the roof causing a 3/4 metre hole in the roof. The force of the explosion expended itself on the roof and the bombs were left undamaged.

One dump building was hit by a bomb and blew up, causing a tremendous explosion.

One incendiary fell near the above dump, setting the grass on fire and burning a car.

One bomb fell in between a cluster of dumps, causing a huge crater of 10 yards deep and 45 yards wide. This explosion caused considerable blast damage.

Summary.

A total of 34 dump buildings were affected by the bomb raids. Of these, 12 dump buildings had at least two sides of the walls blown away. Doors blasted in.

HAMMANA DUMP.Summary.

Six dump buildings had their roofs blown off. Doors blasted. Sixteen dump buildings suffered lesser damage, such as blasted in doors.

The galvanised roofs of ten sheds (large) were torn off as the result of blast, though nothing in the sheds themselves was damaged. The sheds were: filling sheds, lathe and repair workshops, carpenter's shops, etc.

The N.C.O's barracks lost all their window panes as the result of blast.

The electricity supply was destroyed.

About 50% of the buildings were affected in varying degrees by bombs and blast, and yet only about 3.5% of the ammunition and bombs was destroyed. The main reason for this discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that the ordinary G.P. (instantaneous bomb) is ineffective against 8" ferroconcrete roofs.

RAYAK.

Aerodrome. Most of the bombs fell in the North East end of the aerodrome. None fell in the Southern, where the new large hangars are situated, and there were only two direct hits on the repair hangars, both of which failed to explode.

Summary of Damage. Two bombs destroyed M/T garage at N.E. entrance. Big fire. Four bombs fell near the Station Commander's Office and Meteorological Station, causing superficial bomb splinter damage to the walls. One direct hit (250 lb) on administrative building opposite Meteorological Offices. Bomb expended itself on roof and caused little interior damage. 4 other bombs exploded very near the same building, causing superficial damage to the walls. 2 unexploded bombs through machine and lathe workshop hangar roof. (Two direct hits on one of the main workshops). 2 bombs at North end of wall of water pumphouse, rendering the machinery temporarily unserviceable. 1 bomb (250 lb.) direct hit on the hospital, destroying S.E. corner of the building. 3 other bombs fell very close to the hospital, causing superficial blast damage to the walls, and destroying all the window panes. 1 bomb direct hit on N.W. corner of the N.C.O's Mess, situated at the junction of the Rayak-Baalbek road. In this vicinity, about 12 bombs fell near the buildings, doing a fairly high amount of superficial damage to walls, etc., through bomb splinters. 3 bombs fell very near the Recreation Hall (F.S.) in the rear of the building, doing a lot of superficial damage to the walls.

1 Dewoitine was found burnt out on the landing ground.
 1 Leo was also found with smashed undercarriage.
 1 Leo was found in a field near the aerodrome, partly burnt out.

RAYAK.
Summary of
Damage.

3 Potez 63 found in repair workshop hangar, two riddles with machine-gun bullets, the third seemed fairly serviceable.

Railway
Sidings.

Raid on 24/6/41.

Direct hit on a Hartmann engine, destroying it completely.
Explosion on first engine destroyed tender of another engine in front of it.
1 bomb fell in the middle of a huge pile of wood nearby, exploded, but failed to ignite the wood.
1 bomb fell 3 metres from another Hartmann engine, perforating the boiler, but not doing serious damage.
1 bomb fell near another engine, doing superficial damage.
1 bomb fell near a fifth engine, stripping the metal cover of the cylinder box.
1 bomb direct hit on a covered truck filled with wood. Truck gutted.

Rayak
Railway
Sidings.

Raid on 28/6/41.

1 bomb fell one metre from two wagons filled with barrels of petrol. The barrels rolled out of the wagon, but no petrol was burnt although the wagons were rendered partly unserviceable.

TALIA.

General.

There is no Landing Ground at Talia, the Landing Ground reported as Talia being, in fact, Majdaloun.

There is, however, a big ammunition dump. There were two raids on Talia, one on 6/7/41 and another on 10/7/41.

Raid on 6/7/41.

Seven fighters machine gunned a dump of ammunition and destroyed a dump of 105 mm. shells.

Raid on 10/7/41.

Out of a total of 126 dispersed dumps, 35 dumps were completely destroyed. The following damage was caused:-

Explosives 75 mm.	124,661 destroyed (i.e. 75%)
75 mm. shells (A.A.)	2,159 destroyed.
65 mm. shells	13,435 "
89 mm. shells (mountain guns)	1,025 "
Douilles of 105 mm.	2,568 "
Mortar shells 155 mm.	2,810 "
S.A.A. 7.5 mm.	1,365,000 "

Comment.

The Talia dump differed from the Hammana one in that the shells and ammunition were stored under ordinary galvanised iron sheds, with no side walls at all.

TALIA.
(Comment)

A direct hit on a dump of 75 mm shells was responsible for the 35 sympathetic explosions. Explosions lasted from 4 p.m. to 4 a.m. Three soldiers were killed. The raid may be described as very successful, though it was certainly greatly helped by the fact that there was no attempt to camouflage, no A.A., and the dumps themselves were completely unprotected.

DAMASCUS (Mezze)

General Aerodrome. The buildings have suffered no damage apart from a certain amount of broken panes of glass - the results of machine-gun attacks. They were on no occasion a target of our bomber operations. The following aircraft were ground strafed and destroyed:-

1 Leo riddled with bullets, lying on its belly.
1 Leo burnt out by incendiary machine-gun bullets.
1 Leo tailpiece riddled with machine-gun bullets.
1 Leo in hangar with machine-gun bullets through its fuselage. Not badly damaged.
1 JU. 52 with 'Iraqi markings', bearing evidence of having been machine-gunned.

Comment. Bombs falling on runways proved ineffective in the dry weather, and damage was easily and quickly repairable.

SUWEIDA.

The Citadel. Note: Operations against this target were subject to the limitations that for political reasons, it was undesirable that any bombs should fall in the town. The actual target area was the Citadel and the Cité Militaire, which occupy an area about a quarter of a mile square within 300 yards of the nearest part of the town.

1 bomb burst through stable, causing no damage. Horses had already been withdrawn.
2 bombs hit barracks opposite stables, doing superficial damage.
1 250 lb. bomb fell 1 metre from a big magazine next to a 105 mm. gun, tearing a big hole through the ferroconcrete 8" roof, and setting fire to a case of shells. Although the shells blew up there were no sympathetic explosions to the other cases that were stacked around.
2 bombs fell through railway shed, doing no damage.
1 bomb fell on water main leading to station, cutting water supply off for half an hour.

Quartier Vergne Barracks. 1 bomb fell through roof of Veterinary Clinic, destroying it. 9 bombs fell near various parts of barrack buildings, doing superficial damage to the walls.
18 bombs fell outside the barracks in the vicinity.

Quartier Buqsin. 2 bombs fell through the stables, doing no damage.
1 bomb fell through another stable, doing no damage.

SUWEIDA.

Artillery Barracks. 1 bomb fell two metres from a small ammunition and shell dump and set fire to a case of small aerial bombs. There were no sympathetic explosions.
 1 bomb fell 1 metre from another small stone built shed containing dynamite and gelignite, grazed a case of gelignite but caused no explosion.
 1 bomb fell 1 metre from another stone built shed filled with hand grenades, blew up one case of hand grenades, but caused no sympathetic explosions.

Raid on 28/6/41.

Railway sidings. Three bombs straddled a railway siding (covered). 1 kilo South of the main siding, doing the following damage:-

1 wagon filled with coal completely gutted,
 2 wagons blasted off the rails, partially damaged (repairable). Railway lines in the close vicinity turned up.
 1 bomb fell 1 metre from an armoured military wagon, blasting the turret.
 1 engine machine-gunned (already repaired).

Raid on 9/7/41.

It is reported that no bombs fell on the railway sidings during this raid and no damage was done to the railway or railway installations. Most of the bombs fell in the empty and open fields to the East of the station.

Raid on 11/7/41.

Results nil. Damage nil. No stores were hit, though the Recreation Hall of the Rayak aerodrome, about 50 metres across the road, was touched by bomb splinters. One bomb grazed the corner of the bridge crossing the railway line (on the Baalbek-Rayak road).

Comment.

It is of interest to note that three bombs hit three different and separate stone built ammunition and shell dumps, blew up a case of shells, and yet did not explode the other cases of shells which were stacked around, below and adjoining.
 The first time pamphlets were thrown over Suweida everybody was anxious to get a copy and nobody took shelter. Just as the pamphlets had been dropped, a bomb was dropped as a farewell present. Two soldiers were killed. This caused a very unfavourable impression.

KISWE AREA.

A'adlieh. At the time of the air raid there were no French troops in the village, because they had already retired to the Jebel Eswad.
 A number of bombs fell on the village, doing the following damage:-
 6 houses totally destroyed and a number partially affected.
 6000 kilos of corn destroyed by fire.

KISWE AREA.

A'Adlieh. 4 persons killed.
(cont'd) 6 persons wounded.

Comment. There were no military objectives in the village since the Vichy troops had already retired. There were no military supplies in the village.

Hirjilleh. At the time of the raid, the French troops had already retired to the Jebel Eswad. There were no military dumps or supplies in the village. The following damage was caused:-

6/7 houses totally destroyed.
9 persons killed.
4 persons wounded.
100 head of cattle killed.
1200 dunims of corn destroyed by fire.

Najha. At the time of the air raid there were no French troops in the village, having already retired to the Jebel Eswad. The following damage was caused:-

5 houses destroyed totally, and a number partially.
2 persons wounded, none killed.

Comment. The large fires caused were due to burning corn, not to military supplies.

ana. This village was raided twice, on 18/6/41 and 19/6/41. The following damage was caused:-

About 8 houses totally destroyed.
6 persons killed.
5/6 wounded.

Comment. There were no military targets in the village at the time.

BEIT ED DINE AREA.

Beit ed Dinè. There were 11 direct hits (if not more) on the The Citadel. Citadel, distributed in the following places:-

2 bombs in the guardroom.
2 through the new prison. The prisoners had already been transferred to Beyrouth.
2 in the courtyard of the prison.
2 direct hits in the Deir el Harim (ladies quarters)
1 through the old bathrooms, destroying the hot water installations,
1 x 500 lb bomb fell 1 metre from the N.E. end of the citadel, damaging the foundations and blasting all the windows on the East side.

The Village. About 9 houses were destroyed in the village, though no casualties were suffered by the civil population owing to the fact that they had already taken to the hills. Among the military two soldiers were killed and 14 mules killed.

BEIT ED DINE AREA.

- Comment.** It is reported that General Arlaboss was present during the first raid and General Dentz present during the second. After the first raid, all the ammunition which had been hidden in the village was transferred to Barouk and Ein Zhalta.
- Kiswe.** No damage as a result of air attack was seen, apart from about 12 M/T which might have either been ground- strafed or destroyed by artillery fire.
- Nahr es Safa.** About 18 M/T were destroyed by ground- strafing on the Barouk-Nahr es Safa road. Bomb damage in the village and on the bridge - nil.
- Barouk.** After the raids on Beit-ed-Dine on the 7/7/41, the Vichy forces transferred their ammunition dump to an olive grove 1½ kilos East of Barouk on the Ein Zhalta road. A number of bombs fell very close to the dump but no direct hits were registered and damage was nil. On the other hand, 20 M/T were destroyed as a result of aircraft machine-gun attacks. A Sergeant of the 6 Legion Etranger stated that three British aircraft had been shot down near Barouk.
- Famour.** Damage nil.
- Jisr el Qadi Bridge.** Damage nil.
- Dimas** Damage nil.