

preparatory period and paragraph 403, covering the period from D-Day to 30th September,

will show that the overall losses per sorties flown are reasonably low.

Personnel Casualties of Allied Air Forces Operating in Western Europe

Period 1st April–30th September, 1944

	<i>Killed in Action or Died of Wounds</i>	<i>Missing and P.O.W.</i>	<i>Wounded</i>
<i>A.E.A.F. :—</i>			
U.S. Personnel	216	1,839	660
British Personnel	694	1,361	864
<i>R.A.F. Bomber Command</i> ...	2,318	9,265	1,109
<i>U.S. Eighth Air Force :—</i>			
Bomber	931	15,057	1,716
Fighter	49	959	77
<i>R.A.F. Coastal Command</i> ...	352	597	239
	<hr/> 4,560	<hr/> 29,078	<hr/> 4,665

PART IV—SPECIAL FEATURES

409. The mounting of air operations of the complexity and scale recorded in this Despatch was only made possible by an adequate ground organisation. I wish, therefore, in this Section to pay some tribute to the background work against which these operations were carried out, and upon which they depended for success.

410. For convenience, comments on some of the special features have been arranged under the following headings:—

- (i) Administration.
- (ii) Airfield Construction.
- (iii) Air/Sea Rescue.
- (iv) Air Transport and Evacuation of Casualties.
- (v) Employment of Balloons.
- (vi) Provision of Maps.
- (vii) Signal Communications and Radar Cover.

Administration

411. Although I did not have administrative control of the United States Ninth Air Force, there were many and varied administrative matters affecting all forces in the Allied Expeditionary Air Force which set difficult problems to be solved. Administration, maintenance and the provision of equipment, fuel and ammunition to keep modern air forces fighting all had their peculiar complications.

412. An idea of some of the special problems met and overcome by the administrative and other ground staffs is given in the following paragraphs.

413. On 16th November, 1943, the British forces, Second Tactical Air Force and Nos. 38 and 85 Groups had been built up to about 35 per cent. only of their final strength. The United States Ninth Air Force at this time was only approximately 25 per cent. of its final strength. To develop these forces in the winter and following spring, and to have them suitably deployed in readiness for the opening of the campaign was a race against time which involved, *inter alia*:—

- (i) A comprehensive plan whereby aerodromes and landing grounds in the south of England were progressively evacuated by units not participating directly in "Overlord", and occupied by "Overlord" forces as the U.S.A.A.F. arrived from overseas and by the British forces as they were augmented.

- (ii) Providing Second Tactical Air Force with a fully mobile organisation for repair, and for the supply of Royal Air Force equipment, in substitution for the service normally provided by the Royal Air Force Maintenance Command in the United Kingdom.

- (iii) Integrating the U.S.A.A.F. and R.A.F. administrative services where necessary.

- (iv) Re-equipping 110 Royal Air Force squadrons with the most up-to-date types of aircraft.

- (v) Changing Second Tactical Air Force from the home system of personnel administration and accounting, to the overseas systems, including the establishment of a Base Personnel Staff Office and a Base Accounts Office.

- (vi) On D-Day the British totalled approximately 232,000 personnel and the Americans 181,000. The organisation of the British part of the force alone involved the formulation and issue of some 250 new type establishments.

414. After D-Day, the principal administrative tasks to be executed, and for which full preparations had been made were:—

- (i) By means of the inter-Allied and inter-Service machinery known as BUCO and MOVCO to control the transfer of Air Forces to the Continent, together with the stores for immediate use, and to build up reserves.

- (ii) Special arrangements to ensure that squadrons could operate at full effort, whether from the United Kingdom or the Continent, even though their normal maintenance organisation was in process of transfer.

- (iii) Arrangements by which United States air forces could re-arm and re-fuel at British air strips and vice versa.

- (iv) Rapid replacement of personnel casualties, aircraft and equipment.

- (v) The institution, quite early in the operations, of arrangements for salvaging aircraft carcasses and certain other equipment, and for returning this material quickly to the United Kingdom by L.C.T. for use by the production organisation there.

- (vi) Finally, maintaining a high state of mobility for the Tactical Air Forces which were taxed to the limit to keep up with the advance.