

being acted on, and although no major operations took place in the Middle East during the latter months of the period of my command, administrative commitments continued on a large scale, and in some respects were greater than during the North African campaign. The administrative effort involved in the continued maintenance of our forces established in Sicily and Italy remained unaffected, and that the importance of the Middle East Base was enhanced and not diminished by the opening of the Mediterranean is shown by the fact that our military imports for August and September, 1943, reached the record figures of 305,000 and 297,000 tons respectively, whilst military exports throughout the year averaged over 200,000 tons per month.

359. The increased activity of the Middle East Base at this time is illustrated by the following statistics. During the period, February, 1943, to January, 1944, Royal Engineer workshops produced *inter alia* 2,660,000 forty-gallon petrol drums and, including Jerricans, 5,400,000 four-gallon returnable petrol containers. The output of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' base workshops was greater in December than in February, 1943, and included over 300 tanks, 600 armoured cars, scout cars or carriers, 3,500 "B" vehicles and 6,000 "B" vehicle engines. Similarly, the activity in ordnance installations during the quarter ending 31st December, 1943, was greater than during the quarter ending 31st March, 1943. Nearly 150,000 tons of ammunition were received compared with 135,000 tons; 113,000 tons of ammunition were issued compared with 102,000 tons; while 173,000 tons of stores were received compared with 148,000 tons.

360. In the same way as the changed role of the Command has not affected the volume of administrative effort, it has left the number of men under command largely unaffected. Like the administrative commitment, they showed a slight increase, rather than a fall in numbers. When I took over command I had 520,000 officers and men under command; when I handed over, there were 635,000 troops in the Command, and of these the large proportion of 113,000 were allies under training.

361. The change of role could not have taken place, and Middle East Command could not have maintained Eighth Army and mounted the forces for Sicily and Italy, without close co-operation with the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, an excellent administrative system, and confidence in internal security. For the last requisite, the uniformly good conduct of officers and men has been an invaluable contributory cause.

362. I wish to bring to notice the services of the undermentioned officers during my period of command: Lieut.-General Sir W. Lindsell, Lieut.-General in Charge of Administration, Middle East Forces. It was due to his outstanding capacity for administration and organisation that the Eighth Army in North Africa was maintained and the expeditions against Italy launched. In addition, as Chairman of the Middle East Supply Board and Civil Affairs Committee, he was responsible for the build-up and efficiency of these and other paramilitary organisations concerned with post-

hostility problems. In his work he was assisted in a most hearty and able manner by:—

Major-General G. Surtees—D.Q.M.G., G.H.Q., M.E.F.

Major-General R. K. Hewer—D.Q.M.G. (Mov. & Tn.), G.H.Q., M.E.F.

Major-General C. M. Smith—D.Q.M.G. (A.E.), G.H.Q., M.E.F.

Major-General C. le B. Goldney—D.S.T., G.H.Q., M.E.F.

Major-General C. H. Geake—D.O.S., G.H.Q., M.E.F.

Major-General W. S. Tope—D.M.E., G.H.Q., M.E.F.

Major-General Sir P. S. Tomlinson, Director of Medical Services, by his foresight and initial planning produced successful results in the hospitalisation and evacuation of casualties in the Central Mediterranean campaign.

Lieut.-General R. W. G. H. Stone, Commanding British Troops in Egypt, was responsible for the local administration and movement of the various formations and units during the concentration period, which proved of invaluable assistance to the staffs concerned. He has paid particular attention to the welfare of the troops in the Command and is responsible for raising it to a high standard of efficiency and popularity. He was responsible, throughout the period, for the maintenance of good relations with the Egyptian Government, a difficult and exacting task which he executed with tact.

Lieut.-General W. G. Holmes, Commanding Ninth Army, established firm and good relations with the French authorities in Syria and the Lebanon, in spite of great difficulties and provocation. He maintained throughout an attitude which enhanced the prestige of the army and avoided friction. He was responsible for the training of British and Allied formations; he produced good results and also dealt with certain political troubles that arose with the Greek Force with acumen and tact.

Major-General D. F. McConnell, Commanding Palestine Area, carried out a difficult task with commendable firmness and tact. He is responsible for the excellent relations existing with the Civil Government for dealing with disturbances.

A list of recommendations and awards has been forwarded under separate cover.

APPENDIX 1.

ORDER OF BATTLE, MIDDLE EAST, 14TH FEBRUARY, 1943.

* Denotes under command G.H.Q.

1. British Troops in Egypt (Lt.-Gen. R. G. W. H. Stone):—

*4 Airborne Division.

10 Bn. Parachute Regt., Army Air Corps.

156 Bn. Parachute Regt., Army Air Corps.

*6 N.Z. Division.

32 N.Z. Field Regt.

9 N.Z. Infantry Brigade.

31 N.Z. Bn.

32 N.Z. Bn.

33 N.Z. Bn.

*24 Armoured Brigade.

45 Royal Tank Regt.