

the Royal Navy also stopped stores-ships sailing to Castellosso. A number of ships was held loaded in Middle East ports ready to proceed if suitable opportunity offered, but in fact they never sailed.

240. During the most difficult period, after the fall of Cos, the system of maintenance to Leros and Samos was either by caique from Castellosso, by caique from Kusadasi in Turkey, by submarine from Beirut and Haifa, by destroyer from Alexandria, or by air-dropping from Cairo.

241. At this time Castellosso became, to a certain extent, the main transshipment point for the islands. Supplies were taken there either by caique from Cyprus and Haifa, by stores-ships from Middle East until the middle of October, by L.C.T. from Port Said, Haifa and Cyprus, by other naval vessels from Alexandria, or by air from Abuqir. After the use of stores-ships to supply Castellosso had been vetoed by the Royal Navy, and caiques had to be relied upon for this service, care was taken to ensure that only those caiques were used for this run which refused to sail into the Aegean. Supply by naval vessels was used only as an emergency measure. In addition, a number of flying boats and Italian float planes was flown from Abuqir Bay to carry forward personnel and stores urgently required. Originally, two Sunderlands and four Cants were available, but this number was reduced by November, when the daily lift did not exceed 3,000 lbs., excluding personnel.

242. A limiting factor to the transshipment of stores from Castellosso was that there was available on the island storage space for only 4,500 tons, of which only 800 tons could be petrol. However, towards the end of the operations, three caiques were used as a floating reserve of about 250 tons of petrol and oil. Further, owing to the extremely erratic operation of caiques and schooners, no reliable estimate of the carry-forward was available for maintenance planning. All that could be done was to ensure that supplies and stores of the right kind were always available when opportunity for transshipment offered.

243. In view of the difficulties of supplying Leros and Samos via Castellosso, and of the short distance from Samos to the Turkish coast, the supply route through Turkey was developed as fully as was possible. The primary object of this route was to ship supplies for the civil population. But there was also hope that certain military maintenance might be provided from this source and, in fact, the Turks allowed certain military stores to be supplied.

244. Up to 11th October, the Turkish supply route for Samos and Leros was rather improvised and piecemeal, but none the less substantial shipments continued until, on the 11th October, I formally placed the main responsibility for the island with Military Attaché, Ankara, working through Kusadasi, and drawing from the dumps which, with other objects in view, we had established in Turkey. As a result of this decision, and of the decision not to evacuate Samos and Leros as an immediate consequence of the loss of Cos, it became necessary to arrange for increased supplies, both for civil and for military consumption. Suitable arrangements were made with the Turkish

Government, and until the evacuation of the islands a regular service was maintained.

245. Supplies and stores were moved by rail and road from the dumps and were shipped in caiques from Kusadasi. But since only certain items, such as rations and a limited range of ammunition and stores, were available from these dumps, they were, by agreement with the Turkish Government, supplemented by stores (mainly supplies, petrol and oil) railed from Syria through Turkey to Kusadasi. Despatch started on 21st October, the first wagons crossed the frontier on 29th, and stores crossed the frontier at a daily average of 70 tons, until flow was stopped on 17th November after the fall of Leros. By this time a total of 1,400 tons had been sent into Turkey.

246. Although it was possible to move stores to Kusadasi, and the short journey to Samos presented no difficulty, the main problem was the onward distribution to Leros, since, after the fall of Cos, great difficulty was found in persuading the crews of the caiques to make the voyage to Leros. However, from 28th September to 16th November, a total of 3,000 tons was shipped to Samos and of 480 tons to Leros, including civilian foodstuffs.

247. From 11th October onwards, these supplies from Turkey were intended to be the main source of maintenance for the garrisons of Samos and Leros, but they were supplemented to a very considerable extent from other sources.

248. During the period, 16th October to 7th November, two British and five Italian submarines operated to Leros from Beirut and Haifa. The turn-round was estimated to be fourteen days and it was expected that 150 tons a week could be supplied by this method. The main limitation was the Royal Navy's inability to sail the submarines during the period of the full moon owing to the risks involved. Another limiting factor was the size and weight of the package that could be carried, the ideal being a 16-inch cube which could be lifted by one man. However, this limitation was overcome by close co-operation between the submarine commanders and the army personnel responsible for loading, and amongst other awkward loads twelve Bofors guns, six 2-pounder guns and one Jeep were sent, in addition to eighteen M.M.Gs. and 250 tons of more easily handled stores.

249. Stores and personnel were also carried in destroyers, mainly from Alexandria. The loads that could be carried by destroyer suffered from limitations similar to those carried by submarine, but much was accomplished by co-operation and improvisation. In order that no lift in destroyers or submarines should be missed through stores not being available, 300-ton dumps were established at Alexandria, Beirut and Haifa, and 100-ton dumps at Famagusta and Limassol. A priority which altered from time to time to meet the operational requirements was laid down for the despatch of these stores. By this means, 250 tons of stores and ten Jeeps were moved forward. This work, carried out by the Royal Navy under the most hazardous circumstances, was invaluable, and one of the main factors enabling the islands to be held as long as they were. Over the period of the operation H.M.