

so that they could take their place in a British field force.

258. The 2nd Polish Corps, under command of General Anders, was the largest allied force to be trained and equipped in this manner. In August, 1943, a Polish Corps of two infantry divisions and one tank brigade began to move to Middle East from Persia and Iraq Command. By the middle of October the first part of the move was complete, and most of the corps was concentrated for training in Southern Palestine. At the end of November the corps moved to Egypt, preparatory to moving overseas to Italy. Here re-organisation took place on the latest British war establishments, to bring the corps into line with British formations and units, and on 10th December the move to Italy began. The corps was landed in Italy fully equipped with the exception of a small number of technical vehicles, of which there were none available in the Middle East.

259. The Fighting French have also been trained and equipped by Middle East. In February, 1943, General de Larminat requested that a Fighting French Division should be formed from the two independent Fighting French Brigades then concentrated at Gambut. This was agreed, and the division was completely equipped by the end of March and moved from Tobruk to Tripoli on 18th April. There it came under command of the 10th Corps and moved up to relieve the 51st Division in the line at Enfidaville on 6th and 7th May. A Fighting French Flying Column was also placed under command of Eighth Army during the advance to Tunisia. It came under command of the 30th Corps at Ben Gardane, and after a short attachment to the 4th Light Armoured Brigade it passed, on 31st March, under command of General Leclerc as part of "L" Force, which had come up from Chad.

260. After the defeat of the enemy in Tunisia, the French forces were withdrawn to Tripolitania for re-organisation; the 1st Fighting French Division was organised as a normal British Division and the 2nd Fighting French Armoured Division was formed from "L" Force, the Flying Column, two Tank Squadrons which had arrived from the Delta by sea at the end of June, and from recruits from Tunisia. The 1st Fighting French Division remained on British war establishments and with British equipment, and its battle losses were made up from the 2nd Fighting French Armoured Division, who were to be equipped from American sources. Both divisions and the 4th Fighting French Brigade passed under French command at the end of August. French forces in Syria have acquitted themselves creditably in the static role to which they have been assigned.

261. The Poles and the French brought considerable numbers to be trained and equipped; the Greeks have been fewer in numbers, but have none the less presented a difficult problem. In February, 1943, two Greek Brigades were training under command of Ninth Army. At this time the formation of the 1st Greek Division, which was to be a training and administrative formation, was under consideration and the staff was being collected and trained in Cairo. Political unrest, which had been a considerable source of anxiety during the period under review, then broke out and at the beginning of March, 1943, led to a grave state of

indiscipline in both brigades. The instigators of the disturbances were left-wing officers and men with violent anti-Metaxist sympathies. It became necessary to remove a number of officers, but for political reasons the ringleaders could not be removed. The formation of the 1st Greek Divisional Headquarters was discontinued and the command of both brigades was taken over temporarily by British Brigadiers. On 6th July further disturbances took place, this time mainly in the 2nd Greek Brigade, as a result of which two battalions of the 2nd Brigade were disbanded, and the 1st Brigade was completed to war establishment from the reliable elements of the 2nd Brigade. The 8th Greek Battalion, which was intended for guard duties only, was formed from the remnants of the 2nd Brigade, less the ringleaders, who were sent to the Sudan. There were no further disturbances throughout the period and in December, 1943, the 1st Greek Brigade was pronounced fit for an operational role.

262. The Greek Sacred Squadron, which represents the finest elements in the Greek Army, was part of General Leclerc's "L" Force from the middle of February to the end of March, 1943, and took part in active operations under command of the Fighting French Forces. On 1st April it came under command of the New Zealand Division, and on 17th April it left them at Enfidaville to return to the Delta. The Squadron was re-organised by the middle of May and came under command of the Special Air Service Regiment. It was trained in combined operations as a parachute squadron, and on 29th October part of the squadron went to Samos by sea, the remainder being dropped by air three days later. On the fall of Samos they were safely evacuated to Middle East through Turkey.

263. The Greek Armoured Car Regiment, of two squadrons, has been a first-class unit throughout my period of command. It has been stationed in Syria, under the command first of the 10th Armoured Division and then of the 9th Armoured Brigade.

264. At the beginning of February the Yugoslav Army in the Middle East consisted of a headquarters, one battalion and a depot. The battalion came under command of the 10th Indian Division (25th Indian Infantry Brigade) on 21st July 1943, and moved to Ar Rama; it has remained under command ever since. By October the battalion, fully equipped and up to strength, had reached a high standard of training and was included in the Order of Battle for operations in the Aegean.

265. At the end of December, Partisan propaganda leaflets were distributed in the battalion by the sympathisers of Marshal Tito. Shortly afterwards about one-third of the men and one officer from the battalion signed a declaration refusing to obey orders from the General Headquarters of the Yugoslav Forces, and placed themselves under British command until such time as they could join the Partisan Forces. They were segregated and put into a camp at Geneifa.

266. A Belgian Brigade Group arrived in the Middle East from the Belgian Congo between the middle of April and the middle of June, 1943. It was organised on Belgian war establishments and had been trained for jungle warfare.