

Lieutenant-General Eaker had been in Command of M.A.A.F. since January 15th, 1944. He was succeeded by Major-General J. K. Cannon on March 28th, 1945.

27. By the beginning of April practically all the squadrons were based in Italy. An analysis shows that at this time the Air C.-in-C., M.A.A.F., had under his operational command a total of 258 Squadrons consisting of 155 American, 77 Royal Air Force and Dominion Air Force, 13 co-belligerent Italian, 5 French, 2 Yugoslav, 2 Polish, 3 Greek and 1 Brazilian. To man and maintain these squadrons there were 164,000 American personnel and 79,000 British personnel, besides many of our other Allies. I should like to mention here the fine contribution made to the British effort by the South African Air Force which, at this time, maintained a total of 23½ squadrons in the Mediterranean and Middle East Theatre.

#### HEADQUARTERS, MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED AIR FORCES.

28. The Air Commander-in-Chief's Allied Headquarters was a comparatively small one, consisting of integrated staff sections for planning, operations, intelligence and signals. The keynote of these sections was the inter-leaving of British and American personnel.

#### THE CHIEF FIGHTING FORMATIONS.

29. The chief fighting formations under the Command of the Air Commander-in-Chief were the Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force, the Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force, the Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force and the Balkan Air Force.

#### *Mediterranean Allied Strategic Air Force.*

(Major-General N. F. Twining, Commanding General.)

30. M.A.S.A.F. was predominantly an American organisation, and consisted of the United States 15th Air Force, and 205 Group of the Royal Air Force (Commanded by Brigadier J. T. Durrant, C.B., D.F.C., S.A.A.F.). There were 109 U.S.A.A.F. and 8 R.A.F. and Dominion Squadrons.

31. M.A.S.A.F. formed part of the team of Allied Strategic Air Forces in Europe, the other members being the United States Eighth Air Force and the Royal Air Force Bomber Command. The aim of these forces was the progressive destruction and dislocation of the German military, industrial and economic system, and the direct support of land and naval forces. All M.A.S.A.F. squadrons were based in South-East Italy, chiefly on the Foggia Plain.

#### *Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force.*

(Major-General J. K. Cannon, Commanding General.)\*

32. M.A.T.A.F. was composed of the United States 12th Air Force and the Royal Air Force Desert Air Force, which were roughly equal in size. The role of M.A.T.A.F. was to provide the air support required for the operations of Allied land forces in the Italian theatre. To perform this task it had 89 Squadrons, consisting of 42 U.S.A.A.F., 44 R.A.F. and Dominion, 1 Brazilian and 2 Polish.

33. There were four main operational formations within the organisation of M.A.T.A.F.—the Desert Air Force, 22nd Tactical Air Command, the 57th Wing (Medium bombers) and the 51st Troop Carrier Wing.

34. *The Desert Air Force*, commanded by Air Vice-Marshal R. M. Foster, C.B., C.B.E., D.F.C., consisted of a total of 43 squadrons, and was employed chiefly in support of the British Eighth Army. It was composed for the most part of Royal Air Force and Dominion squadrons (11 of which were South African Air Force) but it had also under its operational control three squadrons of American long range fighter-bomber aircraft in order to give it a flexibility not obtainable with the British types of aircraft at its disposal.

35. *The 22nd Tactical Air Command*, commanded by Brigadier-General Chidlaw, was employed chiefly in support of the American Fifth Army and consisted mostly of U.S.A.A.F. squadrons. It did, however, have under its operational control two R.A.F. tactical reconnaissance squadrons and four R.A.F. and Dominion short range fighter and fighter-bomber squadrons.

36. *The 57th Wing* was a purely American formation controlling twelve squadrons of B.25 medium bomber aircraft, and was employed anywhere within the Italian theatre as required. This wing played an outstanding part in the strangling of the enemy's communications.

37. *The 51st Troop Carrier Wing* was also a purely American formation, controlling twelve squadrons of C-47 transport aircraft. It performed a wide variety of functions, including airborne assaults if required, supply dropping, and air ambulance work.

38. Headquarters Desert Air Force and Headquarters 22nd Tactical Air Command were always located alongside Headquarters Eighth Army and Fifth Army respectively. Demands for air support were passed by each Army Headquarters to its fellow Air Headquarters.

#### *Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force.*

(Air Vice-Marshal J. Whitford, C.B., C.B.E., Air Officer Commanding)

39. The direction of M.A.C.A.F. was almost entirely an R.A.F. concern by March, 1945, by which date the formation consisted of seven R.A.F. and Dominion squadrons, four Italian squadrons, four French squadrons and two U.S.A.A.F. squadrons. The operational role of M.A.C.A.F. was the air defence of Allied shipping, the attack of enemy shipping, the air defence of the Italian peninsula (with the exception of the forward areas where the responsibility was M.A.T.A.F.'s) and finally the operation of Air Sea Rescue services in the Adriatic and the Western Mediterranean up to the area of responsibility of Air Headquarters, Malta. By the Spring of 1945 M.A.C.A.F.'s operational activities had been greatly reduced, and in fact it had all but finished its work, and had won a hard battle against what had once been great odds.

#### *The Balkan Air Force.*

(Air Vice-Marshal G. H. Mills, C.B., D.F.C., Air Officer Commanding.)

40. The functions and organisation of the Balkan Air Force are dealt with fully in Part III and here I shall deal only with its purely

\* Major-General Chidlaw from April 5, 1945.