

Briefly the measures taken to improve the system of training and to ensure closer co-operation between the arms were:—

(i) The establishment at Sarafand in Palestine of a higher war course where potential divisional commanders were to receive instruction in modern methods of war.

(ii) Grouping in one area in Palestine all the tactical and weapon training schools, hitherto scattered throughout the Command. In this way it was possible to ensure that a uniform doctrine, which took account of the characteristics of all three arms and was attuned to modern conditions, was taught under a single direction.

The staff school at Haifa continued to progress and expand under the command of Brigadier G. K. Dibb, who carried on the good work of Major-General E. E. Dorman-Smith. During the period under review a strong Royal Air Force wing was added to the school, which officers of the Royal Navy also attended. A proper atmosphere of inter-service co-operation was thereby created and the value of the course was greatly enhanced.

Training in combined operations continued steadily at Kabrit on the Great Bitter Lake, and many formations and units were put through a comprehensive course of instruction. The services of Brigadier M. W. M. Macleod, who directed this branch of training, were outstanding.

Intelligence and Public Relations.

In March 1942 Brigadier E. J. Shearer under whose energetic and skilful direction the intelligence service had grown from nothing into a large, complex and most efficient organisation, was replaced as Director of Military Intelligence by Brigadier F. W. de Guingand, who proved an able successor to him. I took this opportunity of removing the responsibility for public relations from the Director of Military Intelligence, as I felt that it was growing so fast in scope and importance that it required an organisation of its own with direct access to myself. I accordingly appointed Colonel A. B. Phillpotts as my Deputy Director of Public Relations, and he filled this post entirely to my satisfaction.

Allied Forces.

The Free French Forces.—The Free French Forces continued to share in garrisoning Syria and the Lebanon.

The 1st Free French Brigade Group joined the Eighth Army at the end of January 1942 and fought throughout the battle of Gazala, distinguishing itself by its fine defence of Bir Hacheim. Troops from the Chad helped our offensive in Cyrenaica by attacking and destroying Italian posts in the Fezzan, some 500 miles south of Tripoli; these operations were ably conducted by General Leclerc in most difficult conditions some 2,500 miles in advance of his railhead in Nigeria.

It was necessary to send some French-African units back to Equatorial Africa for disciplinary reasons, but these units were eventually replaced by others brought from East Africa and elsewhere.

From General Catroux, who had no easy task to perform, I received the fullest assistance and I gratefully acknowledge the helpful and co-operative spirit he always displayed. The Free French Forces had their headquarters in Syria,

and it fell to General Sir H. Maitland Wilson, commanding the Ninth Army, to initiate and maintain cordial relations with them, a duty he carried out most successfully.

The Polish Forces.—In November 1941 the Polish land forces in the Middle East numbered some 7,000 men. The Polish Carpathian Brigade Group, which served under General Kopanski with particular distinction during the siege of Tobruk and in the pursuit of the beaten Axis forces to Gazala was the chief component of these forces. There was also a Polish Officers' Legion and a Base Depot near Alexandria.

The possibility of withdrawing a large number of Poles from Russia to the Middle East was being considered at that time, and General Sikorski, Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, visited Cairo in November to discuss with me the future organisation of the Polish Army.

The first evacuation of Polish troops and civilians from Russia through Persia and Iraq began in March 1942. The number involved, 31,000 soldiers and 2,000 civilians, was much larger and the rate of arrival must faster than had been expected. This imposed a serious strain on the administrative and liaison staffs responsible for the reception and transportation of the new arrivals. I decided to concentrate all the Polish troops in Palestine where accommodation and training facilities existed and the climate was good. The civilian refugees were accommodated temporarily near Teheran. In April, the Carpathian Brigade Group was moved from Cyrenaica to Palestine to form the nucleus of the 3rd Carpathian Division. Palestine proved an ideal training ground and by July an Army Corps of two divisions with the proper complement of Corps troops was beginning to take shape, the cadres for a second division being formed. Many units were under strength, however, and there was a serious, though unavoidable, lack of equipment.

During July the Soviet Government announced their intention of evacuating further Polish troops to the Middle East. The Germans had resumed their offensive in Southern Russia some two months earlier, and, in view of the growing danger of an invasion through the Caucasus, I decided to move the Polish Corps to Iraq and to combine it with the new troops from Russia, which were expected to amount to 40,000 men.

General Zajac took command of the Polish forces in the Middle East at the end of November and held the appointment until I relinquished my command. I found him a willing collaborator and a most competent adviser, and I am glad to have had the privilege of serving with him. I also had the great advantage of being able to consult with General Anders on his journeys to and from Russia and wish to record my appreciation of his ready co-operation and sound advice.

The Royal Greek Forces.—The organisation and training of the 1st Infantry Brigade Group of the Royal Greek Army in Palestine went on steadily, but progress was slow, due partly to lack of equipment and partly to the lack of suitable officers and instructors. An officer training unit, started in October 1941, was not a success. To deal with the arrival of a considerable number of Greeks from Greece and the