

thus appreciated the power and efficiency of the Royal Navy. I have already spoken of the work of the Royal Navy in the operations in Somaliland in the despatch dealing with that campaign.

53. It would be difficult to speak too highly of the work of the Royal Air Force in the Middle East and of their support of the Army to the limit of their capacity. Both the original A.O.C.-in-C., Air Chief Marshal Sir William Mitchell, K.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., A.F.C., and his successor, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore, K.C.B., D.S.O., have co-operated wholeheartedly in combining the operations of the Army and the Air Force to the best advantage; and the relations between the two Services, at G.H.Q. and in the various Commands, have been always close and cordial.

It has become more obvious with every phase of the war in the Middle East both that the development and reinforcement of the R.A.F. must keep pace with the growth of the ground forces, which it has not done up to date, and that co-operation between the ground and air forces in all stages of any operation need the closest study.

54. Co-operation in planning between the three Services is maintained by the Joint Planning Staff, whose work has been uniformly excellent. They have never failed to produce an agreed solution of any problem put to them.

55. I desire to express my gratitude to the Commander-in-Chief in India, General Sir Robert Cassels, G.C.B., C.S.I., D.S.O., and to the Army in India for the manner in which requests for assistance in units, officers or material have invariably been met to the limit of India's capacity. The Indian troops sent to the Middle East are well maintaining their high reputation in the camp and in the field.

56. The co-operation of the Egyptian Army in the defence of Egypt has been hampered by the lack of a definite policy by the Egyptian Government, who have never quite decided the point at which resistance to the enemy by the Egyptian Army should begin. For some time Egyptian units formed part of the garrison of Matruh, and an Egyptian A.A. unit did excellent work in defending Matruh against air attack though frequently subjected to heavy bombing.

At present part of the Egyptian Frontier Force is defending the Siwa Oasis, and an Egyptian Mobile Force, under Prince Ismail Daoud, is in readiness to support the garrison of Siwa. Egyptian A.A. and C.D. units are assisting in the defence of the Fleet Base at Alexandria; the Egyptian Army provides a force for the defence of Wadi Halfa against possible enemy raids, and guards vulnerable points in the Delta.

#### *Appreciation of Services.*

57. I should like to call particular attention to the services of Lieutenant-General Sir H. M. Wilson, K.C.B., D.S.O., G.O.C.-in-C. British Troops in Egypt. He has had a very onerous task in providing for the defence of Egypt with inadequate resources, in fitting for war the troops sent to his Command, in organising the expansion of the base in Egypt, in securing the co-operation of the Egyptian Army, and in dealing with many difficult and delicate problems in the relations between the forces in Egypt and the Egyptian Government and

people. His sound knowledge and imperturbable common sense have enabled him to deal effectively with all these problems and he has obtained the confidence and liking of the Egyptians with whom he has had to work. It is largely due to his direction that the small British force in the Western Desert has so effectively delayed and checked the Italian advance.

58. Major-General W. Platt, C.B., D.S.O., has commanded the troops in the Sudan throughout the period with marked efficiency. He kept his head during the dangerous period when the Sudan was exposed to the attack of greatly superior Italian forces and used his slender resources to the best effect to meet the danger. With the arrival of reinforcements he has initiated offensive action against the enemy whenever possible, though still inferior in numbers.

59. Lieutenant-Generals M. G. H. Barker, K.C.B., D.S.O., G. J. Giffard, C.B., D.S.O., and P. Neame, V.C., C.B., D.S.O., have in succession held the command in Palestine. I consider that all three have shown ability and tact in dealing with the military and political problems of the country.

60. Major-General D. P. Dickinson, D.S.O., O.B.E., M.C., did most valuable work in the early part of the war in organising our war effort in East Africa under difficult conditions.

61. I have been fortunate in my staff and desire to place on record my appreciation of their work, their willingness and their efficiency. In particular, I owe a deep debt of thanks to Major-General A. F. Smith, D.S.O., M.C., Deputy Chief of the General Staff, who has been the chief General Staff Officer of the Middle East Command since its beginning. He has shown himself an admirable staff officer in every way, and his personality and unfailing cheerfulness has made its influence felt throughout the staff and has impressed the many foreign officers with whom he has had to deal.

Major-General B. O. Hutchison, C.B.E., Deputy Quarter-Master General, joined Middle East in October, 1939, as principal administrative officer and has directed the expansion of its administrative responsibilities ever since. His capacity for hard work, organizing ability and foresight have been most marked. He is an outstanding administrative staff officer.

#### APPENDIX A.

##### *Army Council Instructions to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief in the Middle East.*

1. You are appointed General Officer Commanding-in-Chief in the Middle East.

2. The area over which your command extends in peace comprises:—

Egypt.  
The Sudan.  
Palestine and Trans-Jordan.  
Cyprus.

3. In these areas you will exercise general control over all British land forces in matters of high policy in peace and will, in particular, be responsible for the review and co-ordination of war plans for reinforcements in emergency, including the distribution of available land forces and material between these areas.