



SUPPLEMENT TO The London Gazette OF TUESDAY, 23rd OCTOBER, 1951

Published by Authority

Registered as a newspaper

MONDAY, 29 OCTOBER, 1951

THE PART PLAYED BY THE ALLIED AIR FORCES IN THE FINAL DEFEAT OF THE ENEMY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN THEATRE, MARCH TO MAY, 1945.

The following despatch was submitted to the Secretary of State for Air in September, 1946, by Air Chief Marshal Sir GUY GARROD, K.C.B., O.B.E., M.C., D.F.C., Commander-in-Chief, Royal Air Force, Mediterranean and Middle East, and Deputy Air Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Allied Air Forces.

INTRODUCTION.

1. This despatch bears witness to the part played by the Air Forces in the final stages of the Mediterranean campaign. Their contribution was one of the deciding factors in the final victory in that Theatre. The despatch covers the period of my appointment as Commander-in-Chief, Royal Air Force, Mediterranean and Middle East, and as Deputy Air Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, from 16th March, 1945, when I assumed command from Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, until hostilities ceased in the Theatre—on 2nd May, 1945, for the Italian Sector, and 8th May, 1945, for the Balkan Sector.

2. The purpose of a despatch is to give a short and lucid account of the main events during the period of a Commander-in-Chief's appointment. This task may not present any major difficulty in the case of a Command such as Bomber Command, which is purely functional, with singleness of aim and resources. But in the case of a geographical Command such as MEDME, the task is more complicated. Not only did my Command contain within it the three main types of functional command—Strategic, Tactical and Coastal—so that I was responsible for a complete range of operational air activity, but it also presented a large

number of problems not directly operational in character, some of them purely air matters, such as questions of Transport Command bases, some of them of a political nature, such as my dealings with the Greek and Yugoslav governments.

3. Then again, MEDME command had an unusual structure, arising out of the development of the war in the Mediterranean, in that it contained as a sub-command the R.A.F. Middle East, whose chief problems in 1945 concerned internal security and training matters. It was desirable therefore that the A.O.C.-in-C. R.A.F. Middle East, though under my command, should exercise a large measure of autonomy.

4. Finally, the operations of the Royal Air Force in MEDME were inextricably bound up with those of the United States Army Air Force. An integration of Command had been achieved which was more complete than that to be found in any other Theatre. So it would be quite impossible to write a despatch dealing only with R.A.F. activities—it would be like trying to build a house with only two walls.

5. Under these circumstances, I have not attempted to deal with every subject which arose during my period of command, but only with outstanding events. I have given only as much detail as was necessary to present a balanced picture of these events. In particular, I have not attempted to cover the problems which arose in the Middle East, nor have I given a complete history of each of the R.A.F. formations under my command—their activities are covered only in so far as they participated in the main events described.