

United States IXth Troop Carrier Command carried the American divisions and No. 38 Group and No. 46 Group of the Royal Air Force, carried the British Force.

222. *U.S. IXth Troop Carrier Command.*—The paratroops of the 101st Division were dropped by aircraft of the United States IXth Troop Carrier Command in the general area of St. Mere Eglise, shortly after midnight on the night of June 5th-6th (Operation Albany). The glider force of the 101st Division went in at dawn of D-Day into the same area, in 58 gliders (Operation Chicago). A re-supply mission was flown for the 101st Division on the night of D + 1 (Operation Keokuk). This re-supply mission was necessary as there had been no contact between the 101st Division and the seaborne assaulting forces.

223. Paratroops of the 82nd Division were flown in in aircraft of IXth Troop Carrier Command and dropped in the general area of St. Sauveur le Vicomte (Operation Boston), shortly after midnight of 5th-6th June. Glider elements of this division were flown in as follows:—

52 Gliders at dawn of D-Day (Operation Detroit).

177 Gliders at dusk of D-Day (Operation Elmira).

98 Gliders at dawn of D + 1 (Operation Galveston).

101 Gliders at dusk of D + 1 (Operation Hackensack).

Re-supply missions for the 82nd Division were flown on the nights of D + 1 and D + 2 with 148 and 117 aircraft respectively, carrying a total of approximately 432 tons of supplies. (Operations Freeport and Memphis.)

224. *Nos. 38 and 46 Groups, Royal Air Force.* The tasks of these groups were as follows:—

(a) Dropping of S.A.S. troops—

(i) D - 1/D-Day:

Reconnaissance parties to be dropped in each of six areas (Operation Sunflower I).

(ii) D + 1/2:

Dropping of task forces in Brittany (Operation Coney).

(iii) D + 3/4:

Dropping of base parties in the six areas mentioned above (Operation Sunflower II).

(iv) Re-supply to base parties as required (Operation Sunflower III).

(b) Dropping and landing of 3rd and 5th Paratroop Brigade Groups plus a proportion of Division troops on the night of D - 1/D-Day (Operation Tonga).

(c) Landing of the 6th Air Landing Brigade on the evening of D-Day (Operation Mallard).

(d) Re-supply of the 3rd and 5th Paratroop Brigade Groups on the night of D/D + 1 (Operation Robroy I).

(e) Subsequent re-supply mission for the 6th British Airborne Division (Operation Robroy II, III, etc.).

225. All these operations were carried out successfully, and with a remarkably low casualty rate, as will be evident from the statistics following para. 233. Total losses

amounted to 3½ per cent. and 2½ per cent. respectively of the British and American sorties flown.

226. These airborne operations constituted the greatest air lift of assault forces that had ever been attempted. Up to date, they are exceeded only by the immense operations of the First Allied Airborne Army in mid-September. The accuracy with which these forces were delivered to the allotted zones contributed greatly to the rapid success of their coups de main.

227. *Provision of Air Support.* All the airborne forces and re-supply missions which were flown in daylight were given adequate fighter cover; in addition, the fighter cover to the assault areas and reserves were held in readiness to assist in the protection of these forces. There were no losses due to attack by enemy aircraft on any formation of troop carriers.

228. In the period D-Day to D + 4, 1,839 sorties were flown by special fighter escort to airborne forces, and a further 419 sorties were flown as escort to later re-supply missions. As additional support, special forces of intruders operated against anti-aircraft positions in the vicinity of the dropping and landing zones and others preceded the main forces across the coast to silence light anti-aircraft batteries on the run-in. The lightness of the casualties, which were much fewer than might reasonably have been expected, is evidence of the effectiveness of these support operations.

Review of Additional Air Operations in Support of the Assault.

229. In addition to the specific tasks set out in the preceding paragraphs, many subsidiary ones were also undertaken by the Allied air forces during the assault period. These operations are briefly reviewed in the next paragraphs.

230. Fighter escort was given to the bombers operating by day and these fighters then went on to attack enemy movements. The fighters of A.E.A.F. flew offensive patrols against all road and rail movement within the tactical area and the fighters of the United States Eighth Air Force continued this work farther afield beyond the boundary of the tactical areas.

231. A large effort was expended on reconnaissance sorties on both D-Day and D + 1. The deep reconnaissances revealed the reactions of the enemy, as shown by his movements of reinforcements to the battle area. The short range reconnaissances were also of invaluable assistance to the Army Commanders.

232. With such large forces operating, the Air/Sea Rescue Service was fully occupied. 198 patrols were flown during the two days and, together with the surface craft, these patrols succeeded in locating and rescuing a considerable number of Allied personnel.

233. The following statistics, covering the air operations in support of the assault, show the great effort of the Allied air forces on D-Day and D + 1. This effort, concentrated over a comparatively small area, surpassed in strength any air operations that had ever before been mounted.