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AIR OPERATIONS BY AIR DEFENCE OF GREAT BRITAIN AND FIGHTER COMMAND IN CONNECTION WITH THE GERMAN FLYING BOMB AND ROCKET OFFENSIVES, 1944—1945.

The following report was submitted to the Secretary of State for Air on 17th April, 1948, by Air Chief Marshal SIR RODERIC HILL, K.C.B., M.C., A.F.C., Air Marshal Commanding, Air Defence of Great Britain, Royal Air Force, from 15th November, 1943, to 15th October, 1944, and Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Fighter Command, Royal Air Force, from 15th October, 1944, until the end of the war in Europe.

PART I: PRELIMINARY

(a) Command and Higher Organisation of A.D.G.B. and Fighter Command.

1. Towards the close of 1943 the Allied fighter, tactical reconnaissance, and tactical bomber forces in the United Kingdom began to assemble under the command of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, K.C.B., D.S.O., in readiness for the landing in north-west Europe which was to take place in the spring. The name of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force was given to this combination, part of which was set aside, under my command, for the defence of the British Isles.

2. The Force that I commanded was functionally a successor to Fighter Command. For the time being, however, that name was abandoned, and the old name of Air Defence of Great Britain was revived.

3. I commanded Air Defence of Great Britain from its inception on 15th November, 1943, until 15th October, 1944, when the Allied Expeditionary Air Force was disbanded. My Command then became an independent one and the name Fighter Command was restored.

Thereafter, I held the post of Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Fighter Command, until the end of the war with Germany.

4. Throughout the life of Air Defence of Great Britain, and especially after the landings in Europe had begun, the control over my handling of operations which was exercised by Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory in his capacity as Air Commander-in-Chief was little more than nominal. His energies were engrossed by offensive tasks. As the Armies in France pushed on, these tasks made it necessary for him to spend more and more of his time on the Continent. I was obliged, therefore, with the Air Commander-in-Chief's knowledge and consent, to deal directly with the Air Ministry, the British Chiefs of Staff, and governmental bodies on many points of operational policy. On the other hand, Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory continued to exercise, through his staff, a close supervision over certain aspects of administration, especially those affecting personnel.

5. On 17th November, 1943, I received from Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory a directive which defined the functions of my headquarters "under the general direction of the Air Commander-in-Chief" as follows:—

(a) To be responsible for the air defence of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

(b) To command Nos. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 60 and 70 Groups and exercise operational control of fighters in Northern Ireland.

(c) To control operationally the activities of A.A. Command, the Royal Observer Corps, Balloon Command, "and other static