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SHAEF FORWARD

STAFF MESSAGE CONTROL

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REF NO: S-82110

SHAEF FWD 99/26

In view of the lack of Airborne forces in the AFHQ sphere and the general Southwest movement of PW, SHAEF should be prepared to carry out protective airborne operations in AUSTRIA by arrangement with SACMED.

Although Germans are responsible for feeding PW, emergency rations for free dropping by air have been stockpiled in the UK, as well as medical supplies for dropping by parachute. Likewise a reserve of rations has been stockpiled on the Continent for supply through normal channels by Ground Forces.

It is considered undesirable to air drop clothing or blankets, because of the undesirability of clothing and blankets getting into enemy hands. And the fact that the clothing PW already possess may be satisfactory during summer months.

Since the maximum capacity of all Truck Companies available may be utilized in supporting the fighting forces, it may be easier to evacuate liberated Prisoners of War to rear areas as overrun than to supply them for extended periods in the PW camps during the early stages of "ECLIPSE".

Supplementary evacuation by air is planned both by heavy bomber and troop carrier provided sufficient airfields in GERMANY can be secured. Sick and wounded PW can be evacuated by air under existing arrangements for battle casualties.

My outline plan is as follows:

INFORMATION MEASURES

A. Central Organization: All information from both political and military sources, regarding conditions of Prisoners of War in GERMANY is collated at SHAEF and disseminated to all interested formations and organizations.

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B. Parachutable reconnaissance teams: - These teams equipped with radio transmitters are formed to be dropped into GERMANY when conditions permit, near known Prisoner of War camps with the object of reporting on conditions at the PW camps and placing the PW in wireless communication with SHAEF. They will also help to arrange reception of supplies.

C. Air reconnaissance: - Arrangements have been made with the Tactical Air Forces for reconnaissance flights over all known PW camps. Arranged signals have been notified to certain camps in the form of ground strips to be displayed.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES

D. Land forces: - Army Group Commanders will be prepared to despatch relief columns to Prisoner of War camps near their axis of advance, provided that such action is not at the expense of the success of the main operations.

E. Airborne forces: - FAAA will be prepared to despatch Airborne detachments each of the strength not less than 1 Bn for the protection of Prisoner of War camps outside the reach of our advancing Ground Forces. This protection may extend to camps not yet uncovered in the Russian sphere, and to camps in AUSTRIA as agreed with SACMED.

SUPPLY MEASURES

F. The Ground Forces will maintain all PW they uncover in cases where the Germans fail to do so. They will make full use of such German supplies as may be available.

G. Plans have also been made for dropping rations and medical stores by air to camps before they are overrun, in cases where this is necessary. It is not proposed to drop clothing and blankets. If airlift is required after arrival of Ground Forces, this will be arranged in accordance with existent procedures.

EVACUATION MEASURES

H. As Prisoner of War camps are overrun by advancing

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forces, empty transportation returning to the rear will be utilized for the evacuation of able bodied Prisoners of War. There will, however, be a shortage of ambulances and hospital trains and therefore the fullest use will be made of air transport to evacuate liberated Prisoners of War unfit to travel by truck. Air lift will supplement rather than supplant other means of evacuation. The extent to which air evacuation is carried out will depend on the intensity and priority of other air lift operations during "ECLIPSE" and the conditions prevailing in GERMANY at the time. Sick and wounded PW will be evacuated under the existing arrangements for combat casualties.

I. The preparation of machinery for the employment of air resources, both Strategic and Troop Carrier on these and other "ECLIPSE" air lift tasks, is well advanced and has been coordinated with USSTAF and RAF Bomber Command.

FACS 145, Ref No: WX-48767 is FS IN 614, 27/2/45, G-1
 SCAF 222, Ref No: S-81183 is SMC OUT 565, 6/3/45, G-1

ACTION: AGWAR
 INFORMATION: SGS
 G-2
 G-3
 G-4
 G-5
 POLITICAL OFFICERS
 AIR STAFF
 USSTAF
 AG RECORDS

PS IN 3453 26 Mar. 1945 1945A DWR/rob Ref No: S-83110

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