

- Collect from Kay

Theatre A -

R.A.F. FILM PRODUCTION UNIT.

Prod. No. A.S.30.

Date: 2.11.44.

Footage: 1400 ft.

AID TO THE BALKANS.

For many months past the Royal Air Force have been responsible for the supply of arms, ammunition, clothes and food, together with all kinds of medical supplies to the occupied countries in the Balkans.

These supplies have been dropped directly into the hands of the many guerilla forces fighting the Germans in these countries; in this way tremendous aid has been given to Marshal Tito and his Partisans.

The job of successfully dropping such supplies calls for a high degree of navigational skill together with full co-ordination between pilot and crew.

Only a small part of the tremendous work carried out by an Italian based R.A.F. Wing together with the full co-operation of an Army unit can now be revealed at this stage for security reasons.

At an Army depot in Italy - all kinds of stores and equipment are gathered together for packing into special containers. Many of these men are Partisans who have been brought to base hospitals from Yugo-Slavia for treatment and whilst waiting to be returned to their units, help the Army in this essential work.

Arms and ammunition are the first consideration, and all the latest weapons are available - from handy pistols to sub-machine guns - ammunition too is needed in great quantities.

All this is then transported to the packing sheds where men highly trained in skilful and economic packing, quickly and efficiently pack them away. Every space is made to pay - wrapping consists of Battledress, damp protection is supplied by gas capes. every inch of these special designed containers is used in some way or another.

Even specially designed radio sets, an absolute necessity for successful partisan warfare, are dropped in small attache cases.

At the packing station a whole section is devoted to parachutes, which are used in great quantities and must be as carefully packed as though their cargo were human.

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As soon as the lorries are loaded they head for the landing ground, where dozens of Special Halifax aircraft are being prepared for the mission - the Army are responsible for unloading and placing the containers, bags and chutes in the appropriate places by the aircraft - the actual loading is done by the R.A.F. Armourers. These men work extremely hard - many aircraft are loaded for an operation and each one of these containers is heavy.

The main containers are loaded into the main-plane and into the bomb-bay - other supplies are loaded into the fuselage itself - these are later thrown out over the target by hand - this is where the complete co-ordination between the crew is so necessary.

Over the target - and the supplies rain down - several runs over the reception area are necessary and this has to be done as quickly as possible - sometimes these drops are made within a few miles of the enemy's lines. The dropping area is small and the bombers must find the exact spot - as the collection of the supplies by the ground forces is preferably done without the knowledge of the enemy - it is not always a healthy assignment.

Today - this work is still going on, but we are now supplying our own troops fighting in Greece - quick supplies are being dropped on their own doorstep. The full value of the work done by this Army unit and the R.A.F. wing will one day be told in full - when it is it will be one of the romances of the war.

Sequence of Shots.

- Collecting material from stores, rifles, ammunition, Bren-guns, wireless sets.
- Material arriving at packing section.
- Packing the chute containers with revolvers, guns, radios, clothes, food.
- Folding and packing parachutes.
- Loading supplies and parachutes on to lorries.
- Lorries leave packing station.
- Lorries arrive at airdrome.
- Army types unload lorries.
- R.A.F. armourers start to bomb up supplies and load plane.
- Bombing drops.

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BALKAN AIR FORCE-YUGOSLAV FOOTAGE SHOT BY COMBAT CAMERA UNITS OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED AIR FORCES.

1. Marshal Tito arrives by plane the latter part of August at the Yugoslav island of Viz, headquarters of the Partisan Army of Liberation. Wing Commander Bartlett, CO of the airfield, greets him first. Tito kisses Ribar, President of the Yugoslav Parliament. He reviews a detachment of Partisans and climbs into his jeep with his dog, who accompanies him everywhere. British Ambassador also present.
2. The third anniversary of the formation of the Partisan Army in August is celebrated on the island of Viz. Speakers include British, Russian and American officers of the military missions. Units of the Partisan Army parade. These soldiers take part in raids against nearby German garrisons.
3. Spits and Hurricanes of the Balkan Air Force based on Viz go out on regular missions against enemy installations and communications. ~~The only Allied airfield on Yugoslav territory at this time, it allows quick action on information supplied from underground channels.~~ Partisans have been trained to act as ground crews. W/C Bartlett arrives to question four Spit pilots who have just landed after an attack on a German-held railway station. They are to go out again on another "turnabout" mission for which he briefs them while the Partisan ground crews service the planes. Hurricanes are loaded with rockets for an attack.
4. C-47's are loaded at Brindisi, Italy, with supplies for Partisans fighting inside enemy-occupied territory. These planes will land supplies and take out wounded from improvised airfields. Supplies include food, ammo, ordnance, plasma, surgical equipment. The unarmed transports, with Mustang escort, fly across enemy territory for hours, over high mountains and through rough weather, deep into Slovenia. At the field they must unload supplies and load wounded and get out fast. During some of these regular operations the enemy shell the meadow-airfields or try to capture them. Wounded include women and children, victims of enemy shelling and bombing, and Partisan soldiers. Also taken along are American airmen who bailed out over Yugoslavia and were rescued by the Partisans.
5. The First Dalmatian Battalion on "Pokret" or march, supplies carried on mule-back over hills. A young Partisan courier. The First Dalmatian Battalion on "live" maneuvers. Based on Viz, they have made many successful ambushes of enemy garrisons.

From days

Box 12952

ARMY FILM UNIT
DOPE SHEET

This material is
being cut to 800'
By War office

Cameraman: Lt. Hopkinson.
Story: Partisan Outpost.
Location: Island of Vis, Adriatic.
Length: 3,600 ft. X
Date: 29.8.44. X

A.808/1-4

Little is known of the small island of Vis, off the Dalmatian Coast of Yugoslavia, although it has a history as old as any outpost of the Mediterranean. Originally part of the Roman Empire it has changed hands many times since, in the ebb and flow of Mediterranean strife. Held by the old Venetian Empire at one time, and at another, by the British during the Napoleonic Wars. Seized by the Italians after the conquest of Yugoslavia by the Germans, it settled down to what might have been another long period of occupation.

Meanwhile on the mainland of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz was organizing the early beginnings of the Yugoslav resistance, and fighting successfully the first four German offensives against the areas liberated by his 'Yugoslav National Army of Liberation', himself adopting the name that was to become world famous, 'TITO'. Until the collapse of Italy, and the presence of Allied troops on the other side of the Adriatic, little could be learned of this movement, unless done for it. On the collapse of Italy Tito's Forces seized Vis, and disarmed the Italian Garrison. Contacts were established with the Allies and a plan drawn up for the maximum aid to be extended to the so called Partisans.

Today Vis presents a spectacle of what has been described as a 'Lung' of the Partisan Movement. Schools are established there where British personnel train the Partisans in the use of the best weapons of war. Partisans wounded are treated by British Medical specialists. The Garrison, half British and half Partisan, constantly carry out operations against the mainland, and the neighbouring occupied islands. Vis is indeed a 'lung' through which the resistance movement in Yugoslavia breathes, and well deserves its name, given to it in the Napoleonic days, "the Malta of the Adriatic". The Partisans with closer affinities to their mighty Slav Ally, call it, "The Kronstadt of the Adriatic".

This 3,600 feet shows a typical day in the life of Vis. In the early morning a Partisan Battalion is returning to its Camp. In the Schools Partisans are being instructed in the use of Radio sets, Mine detectors and Artillery. In the Hospital casualties are being cared for, while all the time British Garrison is no less idle. In the little ship yard work goes on with a small sailing craft, vital to the Partisan Line of Communications. At the end of the day the news is discussed, and a dance is given for neighbouring Partisans. As the sun sets, another raid sets off.