

HOLLAND OFFICE
6801 MIS-X DETACHMENT
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE
UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 887

10 June 1946.

SUBJECT: History of the Holland Office of 6801 MIS-X Detachment.

TO : Hq 6801 MIS-X Detachment (Attention: Historian).

1. MISSION OF THE HOLLAND OFFICE.

The Holland Office was established in June, 1945, for the purpose of investigating the help given by Dutch nationals to American and British aviators who were forced to evade the enemy in Holland during the war. The British Army had maintained an office or like research since a date approximately two months prior to the United States counterpart, and the original estimates of the quantity of work to be done in this area were made on the basis of their investigations. The M. I. 9 Section of the British Forces had maintained almost constant contact with activities of the underground in Holland since the early days of the occupation of that country, and were in the position of having an office already functioning on pilot-helping activities here from the day of liberation, in the province of Brabant, south of the Waal river. They continued contact, and after liberation of the northern provinces, moved up to Wassenaar. Therefore, the I. S. 9 unit, which succeeded M. I. 9, established the location of the headquarters, and had the original plans for operation in process when the members of the United States unit arrived to take up joint research.

The end result of the investigations of the Holland Office were to forward for approval of the headquarters unit recommendations for recognition awards to be given to Dutch Nationals who had contributed materially to the escapes and evasion of American and British personnel. These recommendations were to be made on the basis of the quantity and quality of the evasion help given, and upon the amount of personal risk in that aid. The recommendations were to arise out of a joint conference of the British and American units to bring both units in accord on the final award given by any helper of Allied pilots. The work was, first, considered to result in a joint award of the British and American governments, with the possible inclusion of the Dutch government, but was later modified to a policy of separate awards, meeting with the approval of the Dutch government. Nevertheless, since

no differentiation had been made by underground workers in the handling of evasion personnel of the two governments, helpers were to be recognized for their work irrespective of the American or British nationality of the personnel which they had aided.

An additional duty of the Holland Office was to ascertain the existence of any claims which might be outstanding or forthcoming from Dutch Nationals as a direct result of their evasion help. In the beginning it was not clear to what extent there might be persons eligible to file claims against the Allies for difficulties such as deaths and imprisonments that had arisen out of voluntary work done to evade downed airmen. The claims policy itself was in the formative state, and required further definition for accurate application in the region. Minor claims for losses of articles of clothing and food, and vehicles such as bicycles, were settled by following the British precedent of obtaining parcels and bicycles as explained below in the section on claims.

2. ORIGINAL ORGANIZATION OF THE UNIT.

The unit opened with an organization of two officers and two enlisted men, Floris D. Hartog, 1st Lt. MAC, O-3546031 and Sgt. Lux H. Ewald, 32900931 arriving in Wassenaar on the 21st of June 1945, and Franklin D. Coslett, 1st Lt., O-801361, and Cpl. Robert H. Mitchel, 16185945 joining them on the 1st of July. The organization was first considered to work directly with the office of I. S. 9, British Army, but, with the location of suitable quarters, separated and established an individual working office. Cooperation continued closely with the British office, but work of the American unit functioned independently.

Franklin D. Coslett, promoted from 1st Lt. to Captain after assignment, was the officer in charge of the unit, and was especially suited to this assignment, having himself been an evader following the forced landing of his plane in Holland in the Spring of 1944. During his evasion time he had become well acquainted with underground workers of the Amsterdam area, and was well aware of the difficulties surmounted by those workers to hide and transport downed Allied personnel. Likewise, this experience made him particularly sensitive to the needs of these people, and his efforts to reimburse in some measure those persons who had been loyal helpers of the pilots was great from the start. His entire period of service was marked by an untiring effort to accord these helpers the reimbursement they most needed, whether it was replacement parts for a bicycle damaged in transporting evaders, assistance in getting a visa and travel permit through diplomatic representatives, or recognition of financial claims arising out of loss of important members of pilothelping families. His desire to see

all helpers recognized in one way or another led to energetic pacing of his co-workers, and constant pushing of his investigators. When any area was to be covered, he explained clearly how it was his intentions that every helper should be contacted, if possible, personally, and one of the outstanding results of the office's work was the personal contact achieved with the majority of the thousands of cases handled.

Lt. Hartog was the administrative officer for the unit and continued in that capacity until his redeployment in December 1945. Having been born and raised in Holland, prior to naturalization as an American citizen, he was able to take charge of the development of a records section in the Holland Office and conducted much research on the tracing of escape routes. Investigators were added during the month of July to conduct the actual field work, Mr. Rolf Nathan, a Dutch National who had worked for American installations in France, began investigations in the Amsterdam area, and later expanded to cover much of the area between The Hague and Amsterdam. For liaison with the Dutch, Officer Candidate Bernard de With of the Netherlands Army joined the unit, and continued for a period of a month and a half as an investigator and liaison officer. When he left the unit, liaison activities were continued jointly with the British through Lt. Bettenheim, later Captain.

In the administration of the unit, problems of supply, housing and messing and transportation were difficult because of the distance of the unit from organized lines of supply of the United States Forces. The SHAEF Mission to the Netherlands was the chief representative unit in the vicinity, and had to be relied upon for the drawing of rations, and for the securing of civilian personnel. Housing was arranged through them with the British Town Major, and two buildings were secured in the first month of operations. The address of 36 Bloemkampaan was the first secured and has served as living quarters and office throughout the existence of the unit. This address also became known to all Dutch civilians with whom the unit had contact as the mailing and visiting address of this unit of the Military Intelligence. In the middle of July a second house in Wassenaar was placed into use as living quarters for part of the assigned personnel, its address being 176 Wittenburgerweg. At the end of October, the second house was released, and the unit moved to an 18th century farmhouse at 35 Raaphorstlaan for living quarters. This building had been occupied by OSS "Mission Melanie". Supply of some of the furnishings was arranged through Mr. Kroon of the Political Research Department of the Dutch Government, and items of furniture that had belonged to imprisoned collaborators were allotted to the use of the unit.

The service of Dutch civilians were arranged through the British Civilian Labor Office, who were responsible for the payment of their wages until an United States Labor Office was established, first in Antwerp and then in Rotterdam in 1946. At that later time administration of civilian labor was conducted through the Mission to the Netherlands.

Transportation from the start was one of the most difficult problems of the organization, first because of the poor condition of public carrier service in all of Holland, and secondly, because of the distance from United States ordnance shops. The nearest ordnance depots of the United States Forces were in Belgium in the vicinity of Antwerp, and maintenance of unit vehicles had to be carried on through these organizations. With field investigations conducted in the far corners of Holland, necessitating dispersion of unit transportation, the early weeks of operations were definitely hampered by a lack of vehicles. When maintenance services of higher than second echelon category were necessary, not only was the vehicle immobilized for several days while being worked on in Belgium, but also personnel was diverted from the mission of the unit during that time because of the distance involved. Some servicing of the organic vehicles was possible through the Royal Army Service Corps, but for replacement parts and major repairs, Antwerp was still the closest point. However, by the end of the year sufficient transportation was made available with the assignment of jeeps and a truck.

On the 30th of June, 1945, a unit mess was established for the Holland Office, with rations originally drawn from the SHAEF Mission. Equipment for the mess, such as refrigerator, kerosene stoves, china, kitchen utensils, and a table was obtained partly from the OSS detachment in Wassenaar, and partly from local resistance groups out of confiscated houses. Supply of rations was later shifted to the rations breakdown in Antwerp, with a weekly trip into Belgium to draw rations for the seven day period.

3. OPERATIONS OF THE HOLLAND OFFICE.

Operations in Holland began by equipping the unit with reports obtained from evaded personnel and from interview forms filled out by released prisoners of war. Miscellaneous sources of pilot helpers names were furnished also from British investigations which had been in progress for two months when the Holland Office was established, and, in addition, from civilian censorship offices. The first reports, referred to as E & E reports, were the end product of the wartime researches of the MIS-X Detachment working in cooperation with the M. I. 9 section of the British Forces. In these reports the pilots who were evacuated to England or to liberated territory from the

evasion routes, mentioned either the names or made references to persons who had helped them in Holland as well as the other countries traversed in evasion. Many of these reports were very indefinite in their references, and it was only with great difficulty that the majority were traced by investigators. In addition, one of the difficulties experienced tracing helpers from the references in the E & E's was the fact that many helpers working with the underground organizations were themselves hiding in a region remote from their actual homes. When located, many were at an address some distance from the place of reference. Also, many of the helpers had made use of assumed names in their work.

The RAMP reports taken from Repatriated Allied Military Personnel, had been filled out by the released prisoners of war, very shortly after their release, when they were not much concerned with events of the past, and were accomplished for the most part, not by personal interrogation, but individually after a form had been given to them in processing upon release. Thus, the majority of these forms were either incomplete in naming helpers, or were incorrect in their references or the spelling of those references. Nevertheless, the RAMP reports served as an additional important source of names of helpers of pilots.

Because so many of these references demanded more complete information as to location and proper identity, it was decided to conduct investigations by locating the investigator, and there he could personally contact members of the underground organization, and ferret out the many pilot helpers who otherwise would have gone unidentified or unfound. Each such helper found upon investigating an original reference usually resulted in references to several more with whom the first helper worked. It was in this way that the files grew from the original several hundred references to a file of over ten thousand. Moreover, this close personal contact with the individuals involved in pilot helping disclosed the exact details of the evasion practices, and brought out the involved character of the transportation, guiding, and housing of the evaders. In many cases this included two or more persons who guided and cleared the way for a single transport of only several kilometers, and at other times the evader was shifted from hiding place to hiding place every few days to avoid his being detected by the German police. All these factors acted to increase the number of persons who ran measurable risk in the evasion of pilots, and further complicated the problem of identifying each person who dealt with even the shortest legs of the pilots' journey.

The operating procedure for the Holland Office developed along the following pattern following the initial establishment of contact with the underground leaders in the chief pilot helping areas. The references to pilot helpers, having been placed on index cards and separated by internal political provinces of the country, were turned over to the investigator who was preparing to work in a particular area. The investigator's job then was to establish himself in one of the principal cities of the province, make contact with the resistance leaders, and with the police agencies of the area. From these groups he was able to learn the general pattern of evasion activities for the region, and, at the same time determine the location of the persons of whom he had references. A systematic search was then begun of the entire area to effect personal visits at the homes or working places of all persons indicated as helpers. With them the investigator filled out a form questionnaire which summarized the services of the helper, furnished the office with a record of personal data by which the subject-helper was clearly identified, and by which he could be relocated in the future. If it was known by the helper, the identity of the Allied person or persons so helped was also entered on the form, with a statement of from whom the pilot was received and to whom delivered.

During the visit with the helper, the investigator was able to see personally the situation of the family or helper concerned and could guide the Hague office on the execution of claims that were possible. In this matter the claims policy of the Holland Office has in part followed the principle of necessity in encouraging eligible pilot helpers or their survivors to file such claims against the U. S. and British governments. The desirability of having each helper visited personally was always made clear in the briefing of each investigator when he joined the Holland Office. Following the precedent of the I. S. 9 unit, Captain Goslett arranged for the acquisition of clothing and food parcels, and other items such as bicycles for distribution to helpers by the visiting investigators. In a country where such items were definitely among the scarce or nonexistent materials, these gifts were welcomed as God-sends by these helpers who were deemed deserving of them. Further, the personal visits of the investigators, even with the more casual helpers afforded the Office detailed knowledge of the personalities involved in the evasion organizations, and a clearer view of the terrain over which the evasions were effected. 5*

Upon returning to the home office in Wassenaar, the investigator filed his reports, submitting the questionnaires to the records section for further checking and research, as well as final preparation

for conference discussion and approval with the British counterpart. The information on the questionnaire thus submitted was summarized on locator cards, the pilot names were checked for possible verification against the E & E reports and the RAMP reports, references to other pilot helpers known to the subject were added to province lists for future investigation, and the questionnaires were placed on file pending conference. When the case had been reviewed by the officer in charge of the Holland Office, it was taken into joint conference with a representative of the British unit, usually Major Windham-Wright and the Dutch liaison officer, Captain Bottenheim, and given its final discussion and grading. The action of these joint conferences was recorded in official conference minutes, and the decisions therein were communicated to Paris. The final action of the awards recommendation conference was communicated to Paris Headquarters in the form of a summary of services giving a brief of the type of pilot help given by the subject-helper. A final file of questionnaires and subsequent correspondence was made of all completed cases.

Correspondence with Dutch civilians grew to such an extent in the first month that it was seen to play a large part in the total work of the office. Captain Goslett hired a secretary to take charge of a correspondence and translator section, securing for this position Mr. Jan Wamsee. This man was himself an active pilot helper, and was considered one of the most capable resistance organizers in Holland. As the volume of mail increased with operations, this section grew to receive and translate all letters as well as to type all questionnaires that came into the office. Mr. Wamsee personally received and read all such correspondence, and initiated action on replies. In addition visitors to the office were received and interviewed by him. Translator service was received through the interpreter section of the Dutch Army with headquarters in Eindhoven, and personnel was placed on detached service from that unit. From this corps the Holland Office received the services of 1st Lt. Jules Kan, and Sgt. Peter Luiten, Sgt. Jack Voegt, and Sgt. Jan van Enk. These Dutch interpreters worked both in the translator section and on field investigations.

Indications of the amount of work engaged in this first half year of operations can be received from the record of cases handled by the above described method. From the opening of the Holland Office until the end of the year 1945, approximately seven thousand cases of pilot helpers were entered in the files of the British and American Offices. Of this total approximately

five thousand were being handled by investigators from the American Section. Twenty-five conferences had been completed with the British and the Dutch from which more than two thousand recommendations for awards were completed. These thousands were transmitted to Paris headquarters in the form of summaries of services, accompanied by identifying personal data on each case concerned. On the financial side, eight cases involving claims against the United States had been completed and submitted for approval of the Paris headquarters.

4. FIELD INVESTIGATIONS OF THE HOLLAND OFFICE.

Captain Coslett began the field investigations of the Holland Office with the retracing of his own pilot escape route, and by renewing contacts he had made during his months of hiding in the Amsterdam and Zwolle districts. Capt. Coslett had been shot down in the Zwolle area, and had remained for some months in hiding at many addresses in that district doing active work in the local underground group. During that time he had made the acquaintance of many of the prominent leaders of the area, and upon revisiting them was able to secure their cooperation in the further investigations of the area. Since much of the pilot routing was executed through persons in and about Amsterdam, contacts there proved especially valuable in securing the cooperation also of underground leaders in the outlying districts of Holland. From Amsterdam, Coslett enlarged his contacts by visiting Arnhem, Deventer, Harderwijk, Zwolle, Groningen, and Sneek. He was accompanied on these trips by a representative of I. S. 9, Lt. Kiek. For this work he arranged to have preliminary distributions of questionnaires made through the existing underground leaders, so that a more accurate idea could be obtained of the extent of the job to be done by the Holland Office. For this purpose Coslett adopted the use of the questionnaire form that had been developed previously by the British in their investigations prior to the establishment of the American Office. It was a printed form with the questions presented in Dutch. A supply had been promised for the work by Major Neave of I. S. 9.

Mr. Rolf Nathan joined the unit on the 13th of July, coming from a directive post in a German Prisoner of War Camp in the Reims area of France, and, being a Dutch civilian with a pre-war business in Amsterdam and the Hague, was able to effect ready location of pilot helpers from the references furnished. Following a coverage of Amsterdam, he moved to Utrecht, and continued investigations in that area, turning up another group of helpers, their importance arising from the fact that Utrecht is a communications hub in Holland, subsequently it was a necessary point of channeling many of the moving evaders

Nathan moved into the Rotterdam region later, and investigated that region south and west of Dordrecht.

In order to have a central point from which to work in the northern provinces, Captain Coslett established a combination office and dwelling place in the community of Zwolle to be shared as an operational branch office with the I. S. 9 Office, 1st Lt. De Maria, joined the organisation on 25 July, and was sent to this location with Officer Candidate De With of the Dutch Army as his interpreter. Captain Coslett had opened the investigations of this office by a personal visit aided by Lt. Kiek of I. S. 9, who remained to represent the British, in cooperation with Lt. De Maria and De With. Coslett had benefited in these arrangements from his personal contacts of his own evasion days, and effected interviews in both Zwolle and Ommen himself. The first heavy returns on investigations came from this area, and taxed the existing office force of the Wassenaar office, the staff work there being done by Lt. Hartog and Sgt. Mitchell. At this point also the extent of claims to be placed by helpers was estimated to be very inconsiderable, many of the helpers turning down the possibility of filing claims even when they fell within existing qualifications. This condition continued generally true throughout future investigations, the principle adhered to by the underground workers, involved being that their services were given without thought of reimbursement, and the preference being that no price be placed on their contributions.

When Lt. Mason joined the unit in the beginning of August 1945, investigations were expanded into still another area, with this officer sent to the Achterhoek area of the Gelderland province. This officer was of Dutch ancestry so that he was able to conduct investigations directly without aid of an interpreter. The IJssel river was considered as the western boundary of American investigations in Gelderland, with the remaining portion handled by British investigators.

The province of Groningen was opened to U. S. investigations when Officer Candidate De With, serving also as Dutch Liaison officer with the Holland Office, began his researches in that area with the aid of Lt. van Wijngaarden of the British Office. The early reports from this area dealt mainly with American pilots, and since verification was more readily possible from the American E & E reports, the entire area was set aside for complete American investigation. However, De With was recalled by the Dutch Army in August, and investigations were held up in that area for several weeks until

another officer was procured.

Investigations were opened in the province of Friesland late in September of 1945. For this area the services of Lt. Antonie J. Dwars of the Netherlands Rijkspolitie were secured, and he established himself in this northern province along with one of the American soldier drivers of the unit. This use of other than an American officer as the chief investigator for an area was not desirable according to the original intentions of the headquarters unit when the work of investigating possible awards recommendations was begun. However, because of the difficulty of obtaining U. S. military personnel, and further difficulty arising out of the recall of such officers as Lt. De Maria and Lt. Hartog, the use of investigators from other sources was deemed imperative to the furtherance of the work. Precedence for this practice was furnished by the British counterpart unit, which, from the start had utilized Dutch Nationals which had been tested by their wartime employment as agents. To maintain proper representation of the U. S. Army in the contact of helpers, each such investigator was accompanied by American driver.

For coverage of the province of North-Brabant, one of the southern provinces of Holland where a considerable number of evaders received assistance, Lt. Hingel and T/5 DeLoey, interpreter, were established with sub-headquarters at Mierlo, south of Eindhoven. Here they worked in conjunction with two teams of I. S. 9 personnel. Numerous pilot helpers in this district were associated with the border-crossing activities of evasion, and more frequent handling of pilots resulted from the jockeying to place the pilot in the most advantageous route for the actual crossing into Belgium.

In September and October Lt. van Wijngaarden, at that time assigned as Dutch Liaison officer was carrying out investigations in the province of Drenthe, and was in constant relation with the U. S. officer Lt. Courtney, who was working in the adjoining province of Overijssel. Lt. Hartog, upon return from Paris, maintained contact between the provincial investigators and the Wassenaar Office by making a tour of the provinces to supervise the work of the investigators. This achieved the additional service of assuring uniform handling of contacts with helpers.

The work in the Drenthe area was taken over by Lt. Joseph Burke of the U. S. Army during the month of November 1945. Lt. van Wijngaarden had been recalled and demobilized by the Dutch Intelligence Service. With the aid of an interpreter, Lt. Burke brought the majority of the cases outstanding in that area to completion, and combined his early contacts with special trips to distribute bicycles to helpers who had lost their vehicles

through their aid to evaders. During the same period, the work in the province of Overijssel became more complicated by the uncovering of a quantity of previously undisclosed references to pilot helpers. Lt. Courtney was continuing his work in this area aided by an interpreter, Mr. Wubbo Graafhuis, himself a pilot helper of considerable worth, and personally familiar with the intricacies of evasion channels and operations. The chief reason for the increase in that area is that, following the investigation of pilot help completed by the members of the underground organisations, Lt. Courtney turned up a great number of helpers who had been members of no organisations whatever, and who had had only casual contact with other helpers. Therefore through systematic checking of the villages he was able to obtain references to the helpers who were effective in isolated locations. 1st Lt. Felix Bilgrey, began working with the unit replacing Lt. Hingel in the area south of Eindhoven and in the neck of Limburg province.

Until the end of the year and the end of the period covered in this report of the first six months of operation of the Holland Office, the field investigations ^{were} toward the end of comprehensive coverage of the areas mentioned specifically above, these areas having been the accepted responsibility of the American unit in its cooperation with the British counterpart. At the end of the period until 1 January 1946, Captain Goslett reported to the Paris headquarters that the work originally accepted by the American branch was virtually completed and that in some instances even assistance was being accorded to the British office by sending investigators from the American office into the areas assigned to the British. In that report Goslett made clear that of the total cases on file (7000) to the end of the year, about 5000 were being handled by the investigators of the American Section. This condition was in spite of the fact that the British investigation Section began its work a month or more before the establishment of the American office, and further despite the fact that the office staff of the British was much larger than the American.

A contrast in operational and administrative technique may be made for purposes of record between the I. S. 9 unit and the unit of MIS-X. Captain Goslett realized that the duration of time allowed to complete contact with all persons involved in aiding Allied escape personnel would not be of an unlimited nature, and that, following the normal policy of the United States Army, the Holland Office might at any moment be called upon to draw to a close its investigations and recommendations to the headquarters Office. In addition, the policy of the U. S. on the redeployment of army personnel was such that no member of the staff could be con-

sidered to be continued in his capacity if investigator for an indefinite period. With these two factors in mind, Captain Coslett was constantly pacing the work of the individual investigators and checking them very closely in an effort to prod them into the most efficient coverage of the areas assigned. In this way, the American representatives were instructed and coached in the policy of restricting waste motion, and working the maximum number of hours possible. Two visits to the same contact were never made if one would suffice to gain the information pertinent to defining the services of the subject-helper and ascertaining the details of that service and the pilots and other helpers involved. Many of the investigators for the Americans thus lengthened the number of hours that should otherwise have been expected of them to continue their investigations long into the evenings, taking only long enough to eat a few sandwiches during investigative trips instead of formally stopping an hour or two for a hotel dinner. The authenticity of helper claims was ascertained in the region itself by seeing all the helpers associated with the case being investigated, or personally tracing the routes of transport and housing brought out in the interviews. Investigators were encouraged to remain with contacts only long enough to be consistent with the collection of the desired information and courtesy due to persons being interviewed.

On the British side, the procedure was in the main one that led to extending rather than limiting the time necessary to bring the assigned mission to a complete and successful conclusion. First, agents were employed who had worked with the British Intelligence during the war, and, who were definitely associated with organized underground groups. In some cases these agents were Dutch Nationals who had been given the specific war mission of organizing clandestine groups for particular intelligence mission or for the evacuation of pilots. This was a policy of definite value in so far as these agents had first knowledge of the details of the evacuation work. It was a handicap in an overall sense, since these same agents were associated for the most part with the leaders of organisations, and were thus prejudiced in their recognition of contributions given by persons in the areas in which they had worked or in which they were investigating. As an example of this, Coslett reported in January of 1946 that the most muddled territory in the entire country was that of the Veluwe area of Gelderland province, which was the original working place of the British investigators and which had been the only place where they had consistently worked without help from the American office. A condition of chaos was to be assumed in that area because of the Arnhem-Nijmegen operations

which caused periods of evasion for hundreds of paratroopers. Investigation in this area was done by Dutch civilians with whom British Intelligence Agents had had contact during the time of war. It was difficult for them to assess impartially the contribution to evasion of various members of their respective organization groups. Likewise, in some instances, they did not take into consideration persons who were totally unallied with any organized group, many of whom rendered definite and valuable assistance to the Allied cause. Minor helpers were often reported on from second hand rather than personal contact. In conclusion, the two offices differed in the main in the fact that British were rather lacking in quantity of investigations, whereas this was the most successful part of the American operations. On the other hand, administration in the British office was always superior to the American office, since the office staff allotted to the British was more than twice the size of the MIS-X unit.

In summary, the areas investigated by the American section included Amsterdam and Utrecht and vicinity in South Holland, the provinces of Groningen, Friesland, Drenthe and Overijssel, that part of Gelderland which lies east of the river IJssel, and scattered areas in North Brabant. The British I. S. 9 unit had concentrated its efforts on the provinces of Limburg, the majority of South Holland, North Brabant, Gelderland west of the river IJssel, and most of Utrecht. Because of the few cases expected for the province of Zeeland, that area was left until after the first of the year 1946.

HOLLAND OFFICE
6801 MIS-X DETACHMENT
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE
UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 887

28 June 1946.

SUBJECT: Continuation of history of the Holland Office.
Period January 1, 1946 to June 30, 1946.

TO : Hq 6801 MIS-X Detachment (Attention: Historian).

A. GENERAL.

The history of the Netherlands Office of 6801 MIS-X began with its establishment and organization in the summer of 1945, and included its operations up to the end of the year. In this first report it was pointed out that the British and American Offices worked hand in hand in dividing the quantity of work to be done, developing investigations in one province after another until most of the country had been covered by the end of the period. Policies were gradually developed for the proper evaluation of information uncovered in the investigations, and, by year's end the various degrees of awards, and the requirements for financial claims, had been crystalized for the greater part. Among the handicaps to the work was a constant lack of personnel to complete all that had developed in the first months of research. Furthermore imminent redeployment threatened to take the majority of the personnel originally attached to the unit. Therefore the first period of work in the Netherlands is characterized by organization, establishment of working policies, and by pressure to complete the greatest bulk of the work with the personnel available.

January to June 1946, was a period in which the Hague Office was busy making final investigations in areas for which it had assumed initial responsibility. At the same time, work began in the remaining regions to speed up completion of the entire project. Newspaper and radio publicity was employed to uncover sources of pilot-helping activities heretofore not known. Conferences were speeded up toward the end of the period to conclude joint British and American consideration of

final cases prior to closing of the I. S. 9 branch. Arrangements were started in June for the procedure to be used later for the presentation of awards, and, by the end of June, plans were being drawn for suitable ceremonies. This second period of work in the Netherlands drew investigations to a virtual close, with the exception of a limited number of verifications pending. The bulk of the work settled on completion of the records, and development of awards procedures.

B. OPERATIONS OF THE HAGUE OFFICE, 1 January, 1946 to 30 June, 1946.

Field investigations during the month of January concentrated in the provinces of North Holland and South Holland. Investigators were located in Amsterdam for coverage of the North Holland district, and, with the combined efforts of five teams, the bulk of cases were completed by the middle of February. Captain Coslett had pressed American investigators to clear up the cases in their former respective areas by the second week in January. Following that time he began assigning areas which had originally been reserved for I. S. 9 investigation. Estimates of the work remaining in each area were submitted by each British investigator, and the cases outstanding were divided among enough American agents to complete the bulk in the shortest possible time. This policy brought the American Office into contact with virtually the entire region of the two provinces of North Holland and South Holland. Lt. Burke, Lt. Hingel, Lt. Bilgrey, Sgt. Luiten, and Mr. Graafhuis, were the five teams sent out into these two areas, where they remained several weeks. Field investigations were also being conducted in the provinces of Overijssel and the Achterhoek of Gelderland.

Aid of the Netherlands press was enlisted in January to bring into the open possible pilot-helpers not found during field-investigations. This gave all persons who had helped pilots a chance to make the fact known to the Hague Office. Newspaper releases, requesting pilot-helpers to send their names and addresses to Wassenaar, were given to the National information service, which disseminated the announcement to newspapers in the northern provinces. Responses from these releases appeared in the Hague Office within a few days after being printed, and the quantity received necessitated an increase in the working staff of interpreters and typists. Jan Wannee, who was in charge of the correspondence work, began building a correspondence and research staff, which later became one of the most important sections of the office. About eight hundred responses came in from this first publicity project.

Investigations in North Holland and South Holland were

virtually completed in the month of February, and teams were sent out to clear up Zeeland and other parts of Brabant. Lt. Hingel, working with an interpreter, finished his work in the vicinity of Leiden, South Holland, before leaving the unit for redeployment. Mr. Wubbo Graafhuis concluded his work in North Holland, and moved onto the islands of Goeree-Overflakkee, South Holland, and later onto islands of Zeeland. Lt. Bilgrey concluded his own investigations in North Holland during this month. Areas of Brabant were taken over from I. S. 9 and given to Sgt. Luiten and Lt. Kan, Dutch Army members, for investigation. The province of Zeeland was entered for the first time during the month of February when Lt. Richard F. Dundore was sent to the main islands of South Beveland and Walcheren upon his arrival with the unit. With the small number of pilots and helpers accredited to this province, the region was finished before the end of February.

Claims that had previously been granted were actually paid for the first time during the month of February. Lt. Mason made this first trip with a representative of the I. S. 9 Office, paying claims in the region of Overijssel and Gelderland. The original policy on the payments of claims was to have a representative from each of the offices present at the time of presentation of the payment. A more practical arrangement was later worked out to permit an officer from I. S. 9 to take charge of all actual payments.

A second newspaper release was made toward the end of the month, and plans were laid for a radio broadcast to take place early in March. The results of both these measures were not fully realized until the middle of March, but preparations were made prior to that time by adding personnel to the correspondence staff.

Field investigations in the month of March were devoted entirely to helping the British Office reach the many contacts left in their areas of Brabant and Limburg. Graafhuis worked in the vicinity of Eindhoven and Roermond along with Sgt. Luiten. Lts. Mason and Kan were in the area of Breda, Brabant, working with the I. S. 9 agent assigned to that territory. Scattered names that had appeared from all regions of Holland were investigated on a sweeping tour of all provinces by Lt. Bilgrey.

These two southern provinces of Brabant as Limburg were particularly difficult areas to investigate because of the concentration of evasion routes, and the intricate problem of crossing the border into Belgium. These crossings in all cases involved

special handling of the evaders from one national organisation to the other, with the subsequent reprocessing of identity papers. Many of the higher awards for the Netherlands subsequently come from this area. It is clear then, that more extensive investigation was required here than in any other area.

The chief concern of the month of March was the results obtained from the newspaper and radio publicity. A radio broadcast was given on the fifth of March with a nation-wide hookup to explain in a general way the desire of the Hague Office to hear personally from all pilot-helpers, or to hear about pilot-helpers known to exist in any region. An explanation was given about information that was wished, and suggestions made as to how best to submit the information. All correspondence was directed to the Hague Office address of 36 Bloemcamplaan, Wassenaar, and the typist-translator staff was organized to handle the incoming volume. Answering to the radio and news requests were a great number of persons who had previously been either too modest to identify themselves with pilot-help or had been engaged in pilot-help quite separated from known groups. In this way a huge volume of letters and postal cards began flooding into the office from persons who had helped one or two pilots in some remote spot, from helpers, who had been overlooked in checking local organisations, and from people who knew pilot-helping neighbors or relatives.

Results of the publicity can be measured by the quantity of correspondence that entered the office in the weeks following release of the article and the radio broadcast. Within a few days an average of fifty responses entered the office daily, and increased gradually to a maximum of three hundred in one day. A total of about fifteen hundred references to pilot-helping were received within the initial fortnight of March. Within a month and a half about two thousand responses were received that can be accounted to the publicity campaign. References received through the mail were grouped by area and turned over to an investigator for personal contact, or, if there were no longer investigators in a particular area, questionnaires were sent by mail. At the same time an increased number of pilot-helpers began visiting the office personally, the majority being seen and interviewed by Captain Coslett himself, aided by Lt. Kan, and Jan Wannee. Jan Wannee, who was in charge of the correspondence section, made a practice of personally examining each piece of mail that entered the office, and directing it properly for action.

Field investigations in the month of April were practically

at a close in all major areas. Captain Coslett had been pushing both the American and British offices to submit to conference all cases that were to be considered. It is fortunate that he had adopted this policy, because he was called away from the office on the 25th of April for emergency redeployment to the States. The majority of the work had been completed prior to his departure, and virtually all of the higher awards had been presented and approved by the joint conferences with the British. However, final investigations were still being conducted in the province of Limburg where Lt. Dundore was working in cooperation with I. S. 9 agents. In the province of Brabant, Lt. Kan from the U. S. Office was helping the I. S. 9 representative finish up the area around the town of Breda. Miscellaneous investigations were still going on in other parts of Holland, but on a limited scale. Aside from investigations two trips were made to distribute second-hand bicycles through Brabant and Limburg during the month. A total of about 150 bicycles were given to pilot-helpers at this time.

When Lt. Joseph Burke became administrative officer of the Holland Office, with Major Walter D. Creech as Officer in Charge, most of the activities of the office had concentrated back in Wassenaar itself, instead of out in the provinces. The administration of the office was reorganized to clear up the backlog of paper work left by the former concentration of the staff on field investigations. Administration included translation and typing of the great number of questionnaires that had been filed with the office and the research necessary for proper verification of pilot-helping claims made by correspondence with the Hague Office.

This later research included doublechecking references made on submitted questionnaires, and often involved extended correspondence with the helper concerned. In addition, all cases finally decided upon, had to be properly entered in the unit file systems, and forwarded on lists to the Paris headquarters.

This same work continued into the months of May and June, with special investigation trips made to settle claims cases and decide several instances of pilot-helping that additional information had disclosed as false, or based on falsified statements. In one of these cases, an inhabitant of the province of Limburg had constructed a noticable claim for pilot-helping on the basis of fraudulent statements, and was utilizing such ascertains for his personal ambitions. This particular case had been started by one of the British investigators, and when no satisfactory conclusion was achieved, the case was taken up by one of the American investigators. The resultant research disproved the false claims of this man, named SANGEN, and his case was closed by dropping him from consideration for a recommendation, and by the additional action of strongly admonishing Sangen for his attempt to falsify statements to a U. S. Army agency.

A concerted effort was made during the later part of May and the early part of June to close all but a minimum number of cases, and clear them through joint conferences with the representatives of I. S. 9, British Army. This counterpart unit of the Hague Office received a closing date for their work of 20 June, and final decisions of a joint nature had to be made prior to that date. The staff of the Hague Office went into an overtime session of several weeks to translate and prepare for presentation several hundred slated for joint consideration. The British Office actually moved out on the 23rd of June, and cases handled after that date were passed with American approval only. Prior to their departure the filing systems of the two offices were checked one against the other, and an effort was made to correct omissions or errors that had arisen in one or the other system. Major Creech and Lt. Burke were redeployed early in the month of June, and Lt. Bilgrey was named Officer in Charge.

Other activities during the month of June were arrangements with the Military Attache to the American Embassy for securing proper clearance from the Netherlands government for awarding Medals of Freedom. At the same time summary plans were outlined and presented for the actually awarding the Medals in ceremonies to be held at a later date.

The extent to which the investigations of the Hague Office covered the provinces of the Netherlands can be seen readily from a summary of the areas that were visited, and by the number of cases that were handled by U. S. representatives. In the northern part of the Netherlands the provinces covered included Friesland, Groningen, and Drente completely handled by the U. S. Office. In the eastern part the province of Overijssel was investigated by MIS-X along with the Gelderse Achterhoek (the eastern part of Gelderland). The western provinces of North Holland, much of South Holland, and all of Zeeland was investigated by American agents. Brabant and Limburg in the south were originally I. S. 9 territories, but final analysis discloses that, aside from the principal cities, the area was covered by MIS-X. The central province of Utrecht, and the Veluwe area of Gelderland, were areas covered almost entirely by I. S. 9 (British). In addition, correspondence research conducted by the Hague Office spread over all of the Netherlands, and contacted members of every region and pilot-helping group. Of the 12,000 cases on file with the Netherlands Office, approximately 6,000 had been contacted directly by investigators from MIS-X. An estimated 3,000 cases had been initiated through newspaper and radio releases, as well as through references uncovered in their research. The remaining 3,000 cases were submitted by I. S. 9 investigators.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CLAIMS.

The policies adhered to for recommending awards in the various grades established by the headquarters of MIS-X and I. S. 9 (Awards Branch) became increasingly well-defined as the number of cases handled placed the contributions of individual pilot-helpers in a more true relation to the whole. Some awards or groups of awards that were made early in the conferences of the two offices, later were reconsidered and raised or lowered depending on the truer evaluation of the work done. In general the policy on awards' recommendations followed the outline established by headquarters, but interpretations were of necessity made by the officers representing the respective sections to adapt that outline to the specific problems and risks involved.

One of the factors that had to be taken into consideration in this local situation was that the Netherlands underwent an occupation of a political rather than military nature. Because of this difference the resistance movement in the Netherlands is considered to have been more clearly defined and organized than in the neighboring countries of Belgium and France. Retaliations for underground activities were correspondingly vengeful, and pilot-helping was considered from the start of the occupation as serious an offense as espionage. Only these two activities were understood to carry a death penalty. From the beginning even those engaged in other underground activity were often reluctant to accept responsibility for pilot-help.

Grade 1 recommendations have been accorded to those persons who are accredited with having been the chief organizers of large groups operating over an extensive period of time. In addition to their having been the organizers, they should at all times have assumed active direction of operations, and in more than just local areas. Some exceptions to this general policy may be seen however. Grade 1 has been accorded to persons who assumed responsibility for and were in personal contact with an exceptional number of pilots as in the case of Joke Folmer who personally guided over long distances more than two hundred pilots, and sheltered another large group for varying periods. This was a case of little personal leadership, but exceptional personal contact and initiative.

In all there were eight persons in the Netherlands qualifying for the highest award of the Medal of Freedom. This large number of Grade 1's has been disputed in numerous discussions on higher awards. Nevertheless each case has been fully justified on the basis of total contribution as appearing in the

local situation. The evasion activities of the Netherlands was complicated not only by the vengeful spirit of the officials toward the resistance groups, but also because of the geographically segmented character of the Netherlands. Rivers, canals, and bays course the entire land and boundaries protrude out of the central body of the country. Large and active groups worked in the chief geographical regions of Holland with intercommunication only on the level of the chiefs and one or two courier-guides. Each group remained almost entirely separate and in ignorance of the other. At all times minimum contact was maintained between members of individual groups so that the breakup of one left the others unharmed. The individual contribution of the chief personalities in these separate organization equals fully the requirements exacted by the general policy for the degree of Medal of Freedom, Gold Palm.

Generally speaking, the Grade II recommendation was accorded to those persons who were the chief organizers of small groups operating over only local distances, or were active sub-leaders of large groups. In all cases the personal responsibility assumed by the individuals concerned was over a continuous period, and involved acts of particular cunning and courage. The case of Johannes Rombout, known as Jan Staart, is a good example of this. Rombout assumed extreme personal risk over a continuous period of time during the Slidrecht operations, but did not operate over a long enough period to qualify him for a Grade I. The number of pilots he helped numbered about fifty, which was too few for a Grade I. However, this man was not only the leader of the group doing the actual work, but personally accompanied the majority of evasions involved. His extreme personal risk was associated with the fact, that evasion was accomplished over a difficult water passage, actively guarded by defensive positions of occupying troops. A total of sixteen recommendations had been made for the Medal of Freedom, Silver Palm, by the end of June.

Award Grade III was recommended to pilot-helpers who transported roughly thirty to forty pilots over local distances, who housed forty or more pilots for brief periods of time, or who housed a smaller number of pilots, thirty or forty, for longer periods of time. This was a variable category, as was also the award grade IV, and considerable discussion was necessary on borderline cases. Subsequently, gradings within this category frequently were changed on the basis of information received later in investigations. Where claims for numbers of pilots helped were not verified in total, but discounted after further testimony from associated helpers, the case was necessarily re-evaluated. However, it can be stated

that generally the conditions enumerated above held true for the advancing of recommendations in this grade.

To illustrate application of this principle, the case of Nico Landman may be taken as an exact evaluation within the grade. Landman organized the work of the border guards in the vicinity of Maastricht, Limburg, and enlisted aid for passing the pilots into Belgium. In all he dealt with about seventy evaders, but over only local distances. Although he maintained personal supervision of the evading operations, he always employed a second party to cooperate with him. Since Landman received his orders from the group chief of Maastricht, Major Symons, he is not the principal figure in the area. Therefore, his total work accomplished dropped from consideration for a possible grade II, and was evaluated as a III.

Grade IV's are noted for their having done a quantity of transporting or sheltering over an extended period of time, but are usually not leaders of their groups. Into this category fell persons who had helped fifteen or more pilots, had transported them over local distances, or had sheltered them during a major period of time. In cases where only ten pilots were helped, the entire contribution was considered greater if the time of operations was extended. Sheltering was often for no more than a few hours to a day, but in instances where successive shelters are recorded for nearly the entire period of evasion operations, recognition is recommended on the basis of dependability and continued loyalty to the working group. Again, where the number of assists is limited, the element of risk in the work undertaken merited recognition for the Medal of Freedom, basis degree. In all cases, however, the recommendation of Grade IV for a pilot-helper, indicated that he was definitely above the casual pilot-helping class, and was considered a conscientious evasion helper.

A Grade V was generally given for direct contact with at least one evader involving shelter of at least one night, or personal transport over a distance exceeding about 15 kilometers. A five was also awarded in cases of initial contact when the helper was the first to contact the airman after he had parachuted to safety. Subsequently, he actively aided the evader to escape from his landing spot. Rescue of a downed airman from his plane with instructions for escape merited a recommendation for the Eisenhower certificate. In case of personal contact, but for only a brief duration of time, it was required that a factor of danger be accounted in the aid, that is to say, a case in which

the Germans were actively engaged in tracking leads on the pilot's whereabouts. Included in the five category were numerous cases of organization activity, but in which no personal contact was involved. This later interpretation was made to discount from higher awards the contributions made to evaders involving virtually no personal hazard to the helper. Often it was found that underground leaders offered extensive advice and moral support, but did none of the work necessary to the success of operations. To the contrary, they remained definitely in the background where their actions could not be traced to themselves.

A great number of pilot-helpers of a more casual type are included in the category Grade VI. This was recommended for general help given not necessarily involving personal contact. Furnishing ration cards, suits of clothing, and other material necessities of life fall within this category. Also, helpers who entered into direct contact for only a very brief time, and in only one or two instances, or transported for a distance of less than about 15 kilometers, were given a Grade VI. Many helpers of the VI group have had their pilot-help confirmed, but it is not clearly established that the risk involved was taken entirely himself.

These gradings accounted for the vast majority of persons who had assisted evaders, but are not the only persons who were considered by the Hague Office in their awards recommendations. For one reason or another, otherwise pilot-helpers were considered to merit no award whatsoever, and therefore are accounted for by a classification of NIL or NO AWARD. Such a person may have done underground work not connected with pilot activity, but has been thought by someone to have been a helper. Others have not been passed for security reasons following a check with the files of Dutch Security. When the person's character and standing among the fellow members of his community is definitely established to be poor, the joint conferences felt it best not to recognize officially the contribution made. Here the factor was taken into consideration of awards which might be prejudicial to the American Government for any one of the following reasons: 1. The man was associated with black market activities, 2. He was an agent for the German government as well as for the Allies, 3. He willfully submitted fraudulent information to support his pilot-helping claim, 4. He had a generally unsavory reputation in his community.

When pilot-help was offered in time of actual battle, MIS-X did not advance an awards recommendation. A special section

had investigated and cited for awards persons associated with such actions. The Arnhem droppings on September 17th to 20th are rated as battle operations and have been accorded no award from the Hague Office. Exceptions to this policy were made in specific instances where medical help was given to soldiers who afterwards are known to have evaded. The area between forty and seventy kilometers southwest of Arnhem is considered an evasion area from 17 September. Here the droppings were premature and evasion attempts were frequently initiated. For the operation in the vicinity of Assen, in April 1945, the airmen involved were of French nationality and would not have come under the jurisdiction of the Hague Office for recommendations of evader-helpers. However, the forces involved were fighting with the 1st Airborne Division, and the help was directly to an American fighting force. Sheltering activities subsequent to this action were rated as evasion. In cases when a pilot was rescued but immediately turned over to German authorities, no award was given unless attempted evasion was thwarted for some reason beyond the control of the involved helper.

A statistical summary of the cases handled and graded by the Hague Office brings out the fact that up to the 30th of June 1946, about 12,000 names had been entered on the files and considered either positively or negatively for recommendation for recognition. Eight persons were recommended for presentation of the Medal of Freedom, Gold Palm, fourteen for the Silver Palm, sixty for the Bronze Palm, and one hundred and sixty-three for the basic award without palm. Totaling 245 Medals of Freedom recommendation. In the lower categories, 5353 were recommended for the presentation of the Eisenhower certificate, 2123 for the letter of thanks from the Military Attache to the Netherlands, and 998 were placed in the group to receive definitely no award. The remainder of the 12,000 names have been closed in the files as duplicates under pseudonyms or underground addresses, or have been accounted for as persons who were erroneously reported as having aided airmen.