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HEADQUARTERS
8th Troop Carrier Squadron, AAF
Intell Office

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Statement of F/O Donald L. Daves Concerning Ladbroke Mission

1. After the take-off we circled to allow other planes and gliders to catch up. When the formation drew together we headed out to sea. About dusk I could see Pantelleria off to our right. It was dark when we passed Malta; I knew it was Malta when we altered our course to the left. Riding in the co-pilot's seat, I could not distinguish the island of Sicily until I saw the anti-aircraft fire and the searchlights.

2. On our first "run in" on the LZ we missed, so the tow plane took us around again. (During this time I could see nothing but anti-aircraft fire and searchlights. From the co-pilot's seat I could not distinguish the landmarks.) On signal from the tow plane the pilot (British) released and immediately turned left toward the LZ. It is my opinion that the headwinds, together with the heavily loaded condition of the glider, caused us to fall into the sea. Release altitude was 1400 feet. We lost the pilot and one soldier in the crash.

3. The glider did not appear to be damaged by the landing on the water. It broke up later in the rough water and started drifting out to sea.

4. We could distinguish the ground activity on LZ, but searchlights swept the bay and some fire was directed at the gliders and Commando boats.

DONALD L. DAVES,
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