TEL. No.: VICtoria 4433

Any communication on the subject of this letter should be addressed to:—

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE,
HOME OFFICE, (FIRE BRIGADES DIVISION),
CLELAND HOUSE,
PAGE STREET,
LONDON S.W.1.

and the following reference quoted :—

HOME OFFICE,
CLELAND HOUSE,
PAGE STREET,
LONDON, S.W.1.

F.B.Gen.76/17 CONFIDENTIAL. 29th June, 1940.

Sir,

F.B. Circular No.91/1940.

Effect of Military operations on Emergency Fire Brigade arrangements.

I am directed by the Secretary of State to bring to your notice the following instructions which were issued on the 7th instant, by direction of the Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, to military authorities on the subject of co-operation between the military and civil authorities:-

"6. In order to ensure the smoothest possible working, it will be a great help if General Officers Commanding-in-Chief and local Military Commanders will conform to the following procedure in formulating any request which they may wish to make:-

(a) if the matter at issue is a local one and not of major importance the appropriate senior officer of police should be approached. He will know whether he has power to act or must refer to higher authority. All police forces have instructions to assist Commanders to the utmost of their power;

(b) major matters and matters affecting more than one Police Authority should be taken up with the Regional Commissioner through the Military Liaison Officer stationed at the headquarters of the appropriate Civil Defence Region.

(c) questions of general policy e.g. the introduction of new restrictions to Police Forces or Local Authorities generally, will as a rule be dealt with by General Headquarters in consultation with the Home Office or other appropriate Department, and any question of this kind which may arise should be submitted through the appropriate military channel;

(d) generally, if the police are to be called upon to take executive action, for example destroying or removing supplies, blocking roads

The Clerk of the London County Council,
The Town Clerk,
The Clerk to the Council.

Issued to:-
The London County Council,
All County Boroughs and Boroughs,
All Urban and Rural Districts in England and Wales.

Copies sent for information to
Chief Officers of Fire Brigades
Chief Constables in England and Wales.

or if the military are proposing to take action which will affect police or fire brigade operations, some previous intimation should be given, wherever practicable, and procedure be prearranged. (This is desired to meet practical difficulties which have arisen).

7. In the case of the Fire Service any calls for fire brigade assistance should be made direct to the local fire brigade headquarters, and all military establishments should have the appropriate address and telephone number recorded for use in case of need. For the rest, the general observations in the foregoing paragraph as to reference to Regional Headquarters will apply, and in any case of doubt as to the local fire brigade organisation, reference may also be made to the Fire Brigades Inspector at Regional Headquarters.

x x x x x

9. It would help in all these matters if Area and Divisional Commanders would designate a member of their staff to act as Liaison Officer with the Civil Authorities. It would further be helpful if, in the formulation of plans in which the co-operation of the police or any Local Authority service may be required at some stage, advance information could be given to Regional Commissioners.

These instructions have special reference to measures in which the police would be mainly concerned, but apply, in many respects, to fire brigade co-operation also. Particular attention is drawn to the following points:-

(1) Every possible assistance should be given to the military authorities;

(2) Local measures which do not involve any issue of importance should be settled locally (see paragraph 6(a) quoted above);

(3) Major matters or those affecting a number of fire brigade areas will be taken up, as a rule, through the Regional Commissioner (see paragraph 6(b) above). Any question which may arise locally on matters of this kind should be referred to Regional Headquarters, through the Regional Fire Brigades Inspector, who will consult the Home Office (Fire Brigades Division) if necessary.

(4) Questions of general policy will be taken up by the military authorities with the Home Office.

(5) The military authorities have been asked to give prior notice, wherever practicable, if they are proposing to take measures which may affect fire brigade operations, so that the procedure may be pre-arranged. In this connection it is particularly important that Chief Officers of Fire Brigades should maintain contact with the military authorities regarding their measures for blocking roads, or restricting movement in other ways, in order that they may be made aware of fire brigade requirements and may plan the necessary measures with due regard to fire brigade requirements, so far as practicable. They should be informed, for instance, of the dimensions of the fire brigade appliances which might be in local use; and the procedure to ensure them right of passage, so far as possible, should be pre-arranged. The necessity of allowing fire brigades access to all available supplies of water is also a matter which should be specially stressed. If, on the other hand, it should be necessary to modify the local fire brigade arrangements to conform to military requirements, the necessary measures for this purpose should also be carefully pre-arranged.

(6) It will also be desirable to make sure that the local military authorities are familiar with the correct procedure for obtaining fire brigade assistance if required (see paragraph 7 of the instructions which have been quoted).

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

F. Pierce