Subject: Construction Bezmer Airfield

From: Greece, Athens Report No: [illegible] Local File No:

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Report Made By: PENNOCK/BELTON Approved By: Lloyd K. Desmond MHW

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Source, Operational Data, and Comments:

1. The information contained in the attached report was obtained through interrogation of Spas Todorov Raikin, Zdravko Kostadinov Damyanov and Stefan Petkov Peltekov, Trudovaks who deserted their unit working on the Balchik airfield and made their way to Plovdiv and then to Greece.

2. The reason for their desertion was to join an alleged illegal group working in the mountains south of Plovdiv. Their contact was a Master Sergeant who resided in Plovdiv and who was supposed to put them in contact with the illegal group. The Sergeant became frightened and refused to do so. From 7 May until 19 June the group wandered around the mountains getting provisions from relatives and friends. They finally could hold out no longer and entered Greece on 19 June 1951.

3. Spas Todorov Raikin was born 26 October 1922, in Zelenikovo (RA 7729). He is single and has two brothers, Petur and Stoyu, who are farmers in Zelenikovo. His father, Todor Petkov Raikin, is living and is a farmer also. Subject finished the theological Seminary in Plovdiv and the Theological Faculty in Sofia. He then taught for one year on the Sofia Faculty. He was then called up on 5 April 1950 for his military service and assigned to the 309 Podelenie (Trudovak) at Bezmer airfield. On 22 December 1950, he with his unit were transferred to the Balchik airfield where they became Podelenie 5463. His desire to desert was to join in the fight against communism in the name of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. When he found it would be impossible to do so inside Bulgaria, he decided to escape to Greece and join such a church group there, if such existed. In the event there was no existing church group, he desires to form such a militant illegal church group to fight communism inside Bulgaria.

4. Zdravko Kostadinov Damyanov was born 6 September 1928 in Belashtitsa (RF 4892). He is single and prior to his induction into the Trudovaks was a farmer on the family farm where he lived with his father, Kostadin Georgiev Damyanov, his mother, Stoina, aged 45, and his sisters, Vasilka aged 18, Stefka aged 3, and brothers Yordan aged 16, Nikola, and Zhivko. The latter two boys are in grade school. Subject graduated from the Plovdiv high school in 1949 and spent one year on the farm prior to his induction. He served in the same units as Raikin and was inducted the same day.

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5. Stefan Petrov Peltekov was born 11 Laych 1929, in Brani Pole (RF 4994). He is single and prior to his military service he lived at home with his father, Petur, mother, Velika, and his sister Maria, aged 26 (now imprisoned by the State Security on 17 May and has not been heard from since). He finished high school in Plovdiv in 1949 and went to work as a laborer in a government automobile repair shop in Plovdiv. On 5 April 1950 he was drafted into the Trudovaks and his military service is identical with the other two.

6. During interrogation, all three men have cooperated extremely well and have been able to give good concise information on the various projects where they worked.

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Country: Bulgaria

Report No: [CIA] 6358

Subject: Construction of the Bezmer Airfield

Date of Info: 5 April to 22 Dec. 1950

Place Acquired: Greece, Athens

Date Acquired: 9 July 1951

Evaluation: C-3

Date of Report: 9 July 1951

Source: From a fairly reliable source whose informants were Spas Todorov Raikin, Zdravko Kostadinov Damyanov and Stefan Petrov Paltukov, all former laborers on the airfield.

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INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Bulgaria

DATE DISTR. 22 Aug. 1951

SUBJECT Construction of Bezmer Airfield

NO. OF PAGES 1

PLACE ACQUIRED Greece, Athens

NO. OF ENCLS. (LISTED BELOW)

DATE OF INFO ~~ACQUIRED~~ 6 April - 22 December 1950

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE Through a fairly reliable source whose informants were Spas Todorov Raikin, Zdravko Kostadinov Damyanov and Stefan Petrov Peltekov, all former laborers on the airfield.

1. The attached report on the construction of the airfield at Bezmer is forwarded for your information.

2. It is requested that this document be returned to this office by 21 September 1951.

3. An evaluation would be appreciated.

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1. During the early pa[rt] SECRET work was begun on the Bos[ ] airfield located two kilometers southwest of the Bozmer railway station on the Plovdiv-Yambol line. For further orientation, the airfield is located three and one half kilometers southwest of the village of Bozmer (RB 6634), two kilometers north of Belyarsko (RB 6228), and two and one half kilometers southeast of Bosadjik (RB 6034). The airfield itself is located 700 meters south of the railway line.

2. The first Trudovak units brought in to commence work on the airfield arrived 6 April 1950 and stayed there until completion on 22 December 1950 of the runway. The following units and their approximate strength were used in the construction of the airfield.

Podelenie 305 - 625 men
Podelenie 307 - 490 men
Podelenie 308 - 500 men
Podelenie 309 - 200 men
Podelenie 321 - 100 men

3. Podelenie 305 and 307 were used for mixing and pouring the concrete on the runway. Podelenie 308 was used in the stone quarry to the north of the airfield. Podelenie 309 was the transport Podelenie and their job was to furnish, drive and unload trucks, narrow gauge bucket cars, and horse-drawn vehicles. Podelenie 321 was a technical Podelenie which included engineers or specialists who tested sand, water, concrete and any other elements used in the construction of the airfield. There was one Soviet engineer and a small group of about five Soviet specialists who worked on the airfield at the beginning, and later visited the airfield every two or three days. There were no Bulgarian Air Force officers at the field, but such officers did pay occasional visits to observe the progress of the field.

4. The field is being constructed primarily as a jet fighter field. The main runway is 2,500 meters long, with 150-meter parking spaces on either end, and is 50 meters wide. On either side of the runway are flat turf fields which can be used as auxiliary runways in good weather. These extend along the entire length of the concrete runway and are 150 meters wide. The turf field to the north of the main runway is crossed by taxi-ways which lead to a planned auxiliary concrete runway to be built in the future. The dimensions of this planned runway are not known.

5. On the northeast side of the airfield are eight buildings of a temporary nature which were used to house troops and equipment.

6. The electricity for flood lights and ordinary lighting was obtained from Yambol. Flood lights were placed on the turf runway to the north of the main runway about four meters from the concrete edge and spaced about 60 meters apart. The towers holding the flood lights were approximately ten (10) meters high. There were three electric sub-stations on the airfield, along the concrete runway, and one servicing the various temporary buildings and located in their midst.

7. There was one Soviet officer and several Soviet civilian workers who used a power drill near the Trudovak winter quarters. This drill was similar, but on a much larger scale, to a well drill, and the Soviets told the Trudoveks that they were drilling for water. There were good water wells on the airfield already and during the entire time of construction the Soviets drilled in the same hole continuously. What they were drilling for is not known.

8. The concrete runway was made up of the following elements, after the surface earth had been removed:

a. A layer of sifted earth.

b. Sea sand, 20 centimeters in depth which was tamped by mechanical means. The sea sand was brought from a beach one kilometer south of Burgas called "Kvartal Pyasachen", and was dug with a large sand shovel in use since 1910.

c. A layer of tar paper.

d. Cement blocks, 20 centimeters thick, hexagonal in shape, each side being 1.97 meters, composed of sand, (quantity unknown), three types of gravel, (fine, medium, and large), and 350 kilograms of cement, all of which was mixed with water in a concrete mixer. The proportions of the gravel are not known, but they are described as follows:

Fine--gravel up to and including the size of a pea
Medium--size between a walnut and an egg
Large--size of an orange

This gravel was called correspondingly first, second, and third "fraction". Two cubic meters of prepared concrete were used in each block.

9. The method of operation used in constructing the runway was to first dig out the top soil from the runway and use rollers over its entire length. Two layers of sand, 12 centimeters each, were then poured on and an electric "vibrator", Bulgarian manufacture "ELFROM", with a 750 kilograms striking power, was used to pound each layer in, thus giving a 20-centimeter thickness for an initial 24 centimeters. The air strip was then covered over completely with impregnated tar paper, after which the engineers most carefully laid out the patterns to be made with the cement blocks. The cement was poured into hexagonal frames in alternate spaces, then tamped into the frame with a wooden tamper and evened off on the top with a small wooden trowel. The block was then allowed to dry from between seven and eight hours, until the concrete solidified. The sides of the alternate dry blocks were then covered with a single layer of tar paper extending from the bottom of the block to the top, and the alternate spaces were then filled in the following day, to form a complete pattern of blocks.

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The prepared spaces for blocks were placed under water from four to six days prior to pouring concrete, in order to determine any sinkage. In forming the patterns, the blocks around a central block sometimes had small cracks, but the blocks between patterns sometimes had a gap up to one centimeter. This gap was filled halfway from the bottom with tar paper, and after the block patterns were completely dry, the large cracks were then filled the rest of the way with tar.

10. In the beginning, nine concrete mixers were used and divided into two groups, (Zavod), with each used in alternate areas as the runway progressed. Towards the end, however, in order to expedite the finishing of the field, thirty mixers were used, which were divided into four groups and one reserve group. The eastern end of the runway was begun first, and from the eastern end to the midway mark until the proportions and quality of material were strictly adhered to. However, great difficulty was encountered in obtaining the amount and size of gravel needed; as a result the construction of the last half was not up to standard.

11. Up until 22 December 1930 no permanent installations had been built or started and plans for such future construction, both aboveground and underground, are unknown.

12. Attached are three sketches showing the location of the airfield and various construction details, respectively.

13. All coordinates are GSGS 1,250,000 Series, Bulgaria.

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SKETCH A

SHOWING LOCATION OF
BEZMER AIRFIELD

A. Trudovak barracks

B. Mess and Commissary

C. Headquarters Trudovak battalion; Office for engineers and technical personnel.

D. Corrugated sheet metal hangars 50 meters long, 20 meters wide and 15 meters high.

E. Winter barracks for Trudovaks

F. Proposed site for kitchen and garage

G. Storage area for cement

H. Guard Post

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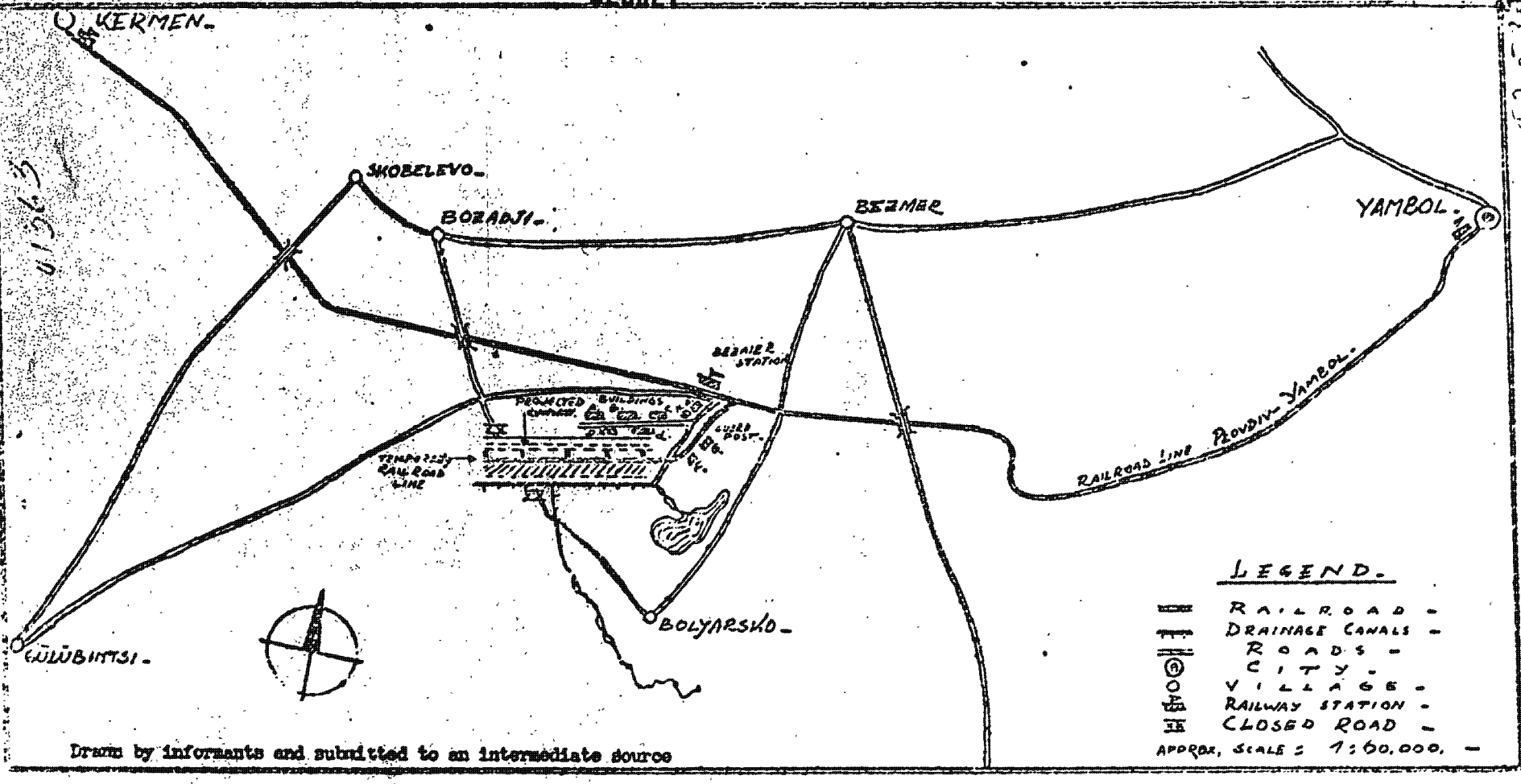

SKETCH SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE BEZMER AIRFIELD

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SKETCH B

DETAILED SKETCH OF MEZHER AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION

A. Turf field 2300 meters long and 150 meters wide.

B. Taxiways between project and completed runways.

C. Projected auxiliary runway.

D. Main runway.

E. Low points on runway for drainage purposes.

F. Sewer grates.

G. Drainage canal.

H. Covered ditch into which drainage canal empties.

J. Open ditches which carry off drainage toward Bolyarsko.

K. Parking area for aircraft.

L. Road toward Bezmar.

M. Various buildings

N. Hangars

O. Vacant field

P. Distance between runway and hangars---500 meters.

Q. Light poles with flood lights.

R. Transformer sub-stations

T. Sketch of blocks used in runway construction; each 197 cm long, 20 cm thick.

X. Sketch showing construction details; tamped earth, sand(20 cm thick); tar paper; cement blocks and tar.

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DETAILED SKETCH OF BEZMER AIRFIELD
RUNWAY CONSTRUCTION

SKETCH B.

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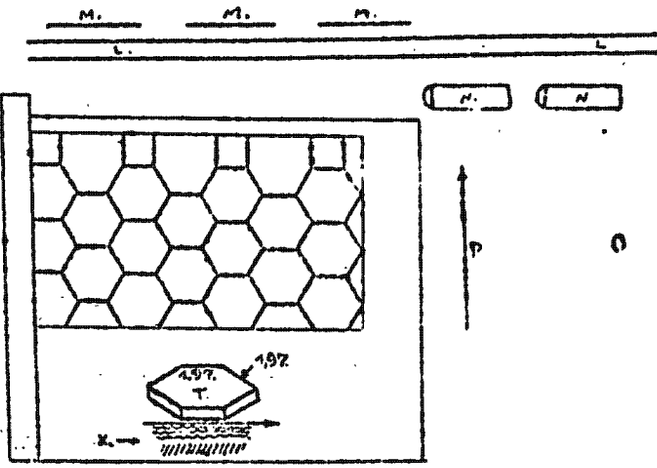

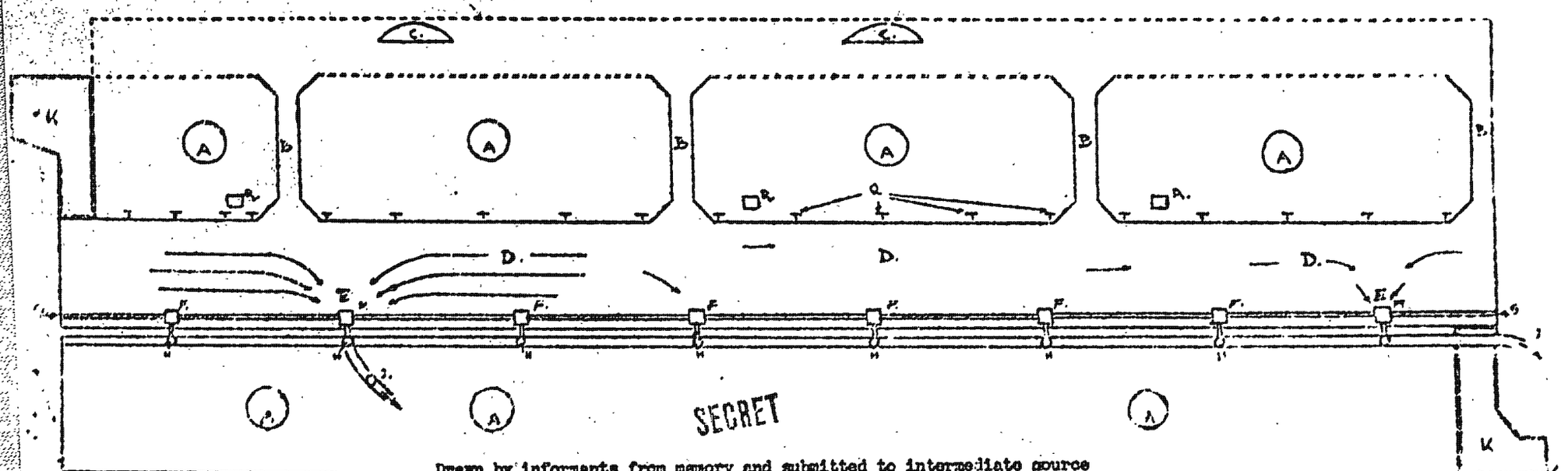

Drawn by informants from memory and submitted to intermediate source

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SKETCH C. CONCRETE BLOCK CONSTRUCTION OF [illegible]ER AIRFIELD

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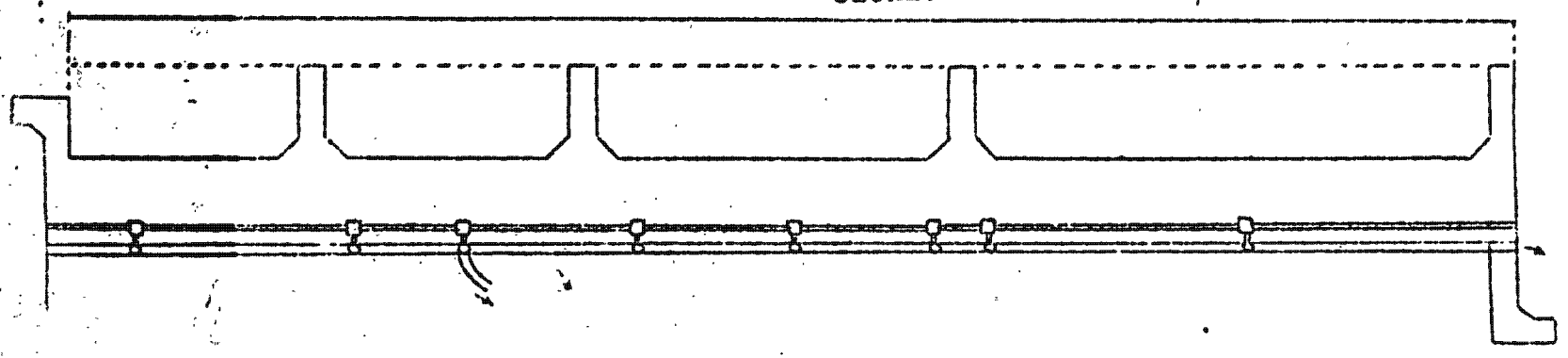

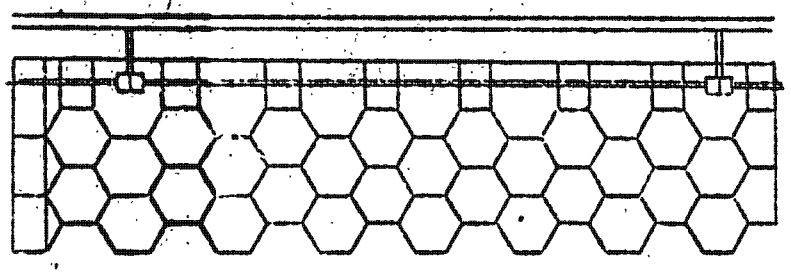

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Bulgaria

Construction of Bezmer Airfield

Greece, Athens

5 April - 22 December 1950

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