

Britain's secret defensive weapon, the detection and location of aircraft and ships by radio, was under active development for some years before the outbreak of war in September, 1939. It remained a closely guarded secret until, in June 1941, its existence was announced to the world by the minister of state, Lord Beaverbrook.

The revelation was made largely in order to stimulate interest in the training of suitable technicians, of which many thousands were required for its installation, operation and maintenance. Simultaneously with this announcement came the announcement by Field Marshall Smuts, at the opening ceremony of the Wolf Hillman Building at the University of the Witwatersrand, that radar research and development had been proceeding at the Bernard Price Institute ever since the outbreak of war.

The story of this development and the parts played by the people concerned in it, are unfolded in the photographs and cuttings in these pages.

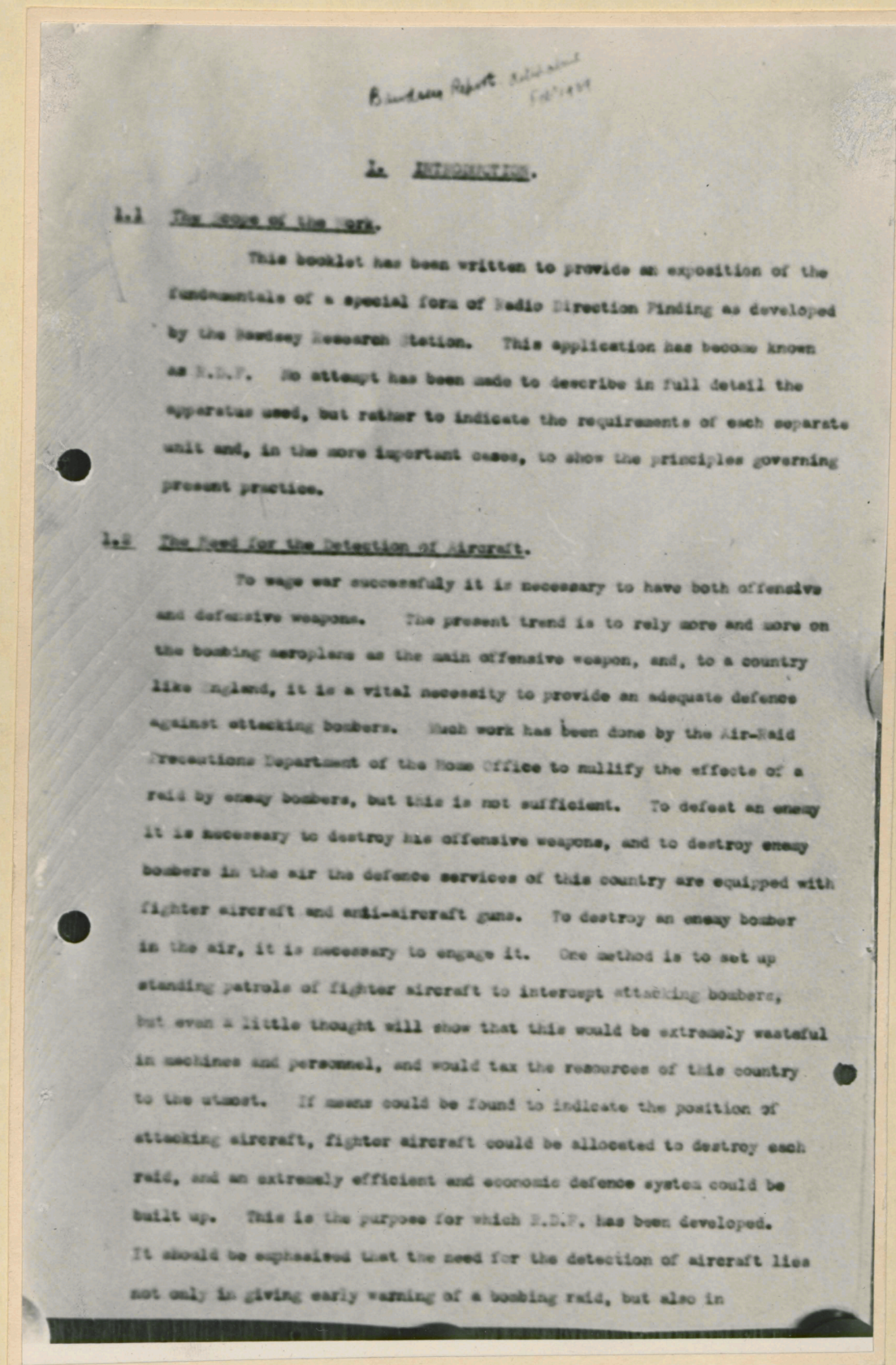
As the result of correspondence between the War Office, London, and the Military Adviser to the Union High Commissioner, arrangements were made to select a South African scientist to gather what information there was available and to initiate a research programme in the Union.

The man selected for this purpose was Dr. B.J.F. Schonland, then Director of the Bernard Price Institute of Geophysical Research and Professor of Geophysics at the University of the Witwatersrand.



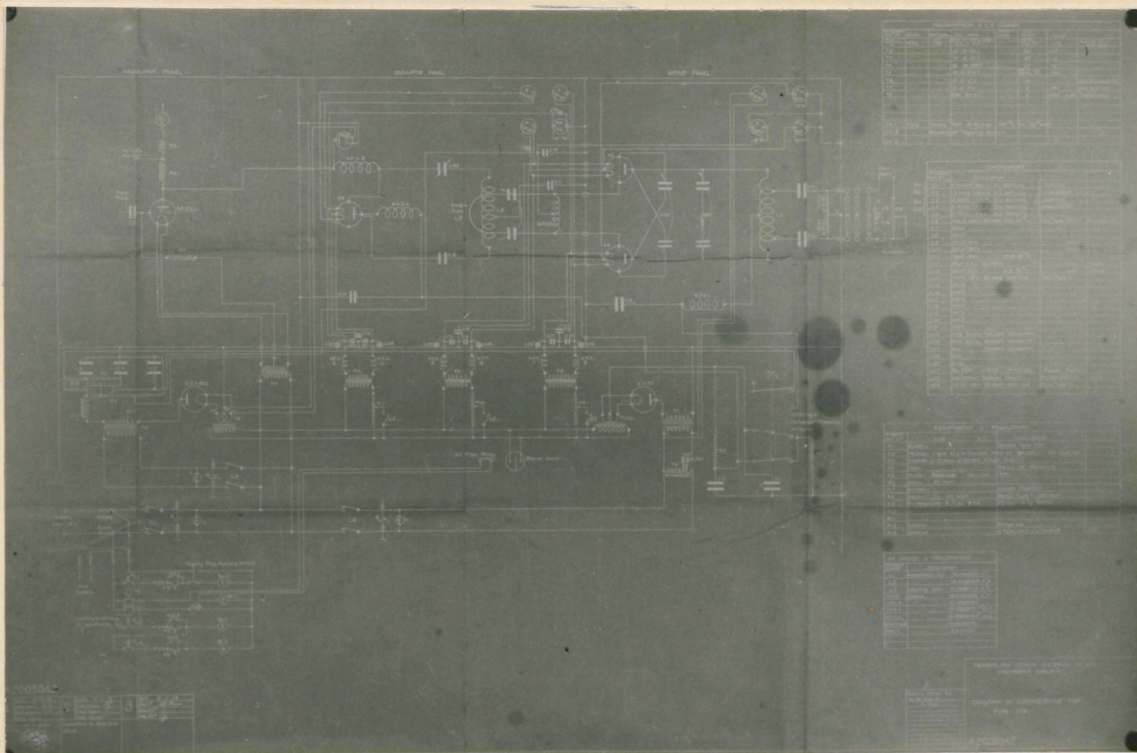
BRIGADIER B.J.F. SCHONLAND C.B.E. F.R.S.

In 1939, Brigadier Schonland travelled from Cape Town to Durban with Dr. Marsden, who was on his way back to New Zealand, and obtained from him the first details of Radio Direction Finding (later known as Radar)



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On their arrival in Durban, advantage was taken of the few days at their disposal to make photostat copies of a report issued by Dr. Marsden by the Research Station at Bawdsey, in the form of a booklet entitled "R.D.F. Manual", and dated February, 1939.



TYPICAL CIRCUIT DIAGRAM CONTAINED IN THE R.D.F. MANUAL.



DR. SCHONLAND (CENTRE) WITH DR. HODGES (LEFT) AND MR. PHILLIPS photographed at the time of the copying of the R.D.F. MANUAL in Durban.

The copying had to be carried out with the greatest secrecy and was made possible by the cooperation of two members of the staff of Howard College, Durban. These were Dr. Hodges, Professor of Physics and Mr. W.E. Phillips, Senior Lecturer, Department of Electrical Engineering.

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