THE CAMPAIGN IN WESTERN EUROPE
1939-1940
PART FOUR
OPERATION "HERCULES"
or
THE BATTLE FOR FRANCE

by
Wilhelm Speidel
General der Flieger
Chief of Staff, Second Air Fleet
in Western theater, January-October 1940
CHAPTER 1. THE PERIOD BETWEEN OPERATION "CHERI" AND OPERATION "HERC."  
1. No Respite in Air Operations  
2. The Attack against Paris  
   Analysis of Operations against Marseilles  
3. The Attack against Paris—Operation Paula  
4. Minimization of Effort and Excessive Demands on German Air Force  
5. Air Strength Ratios  
6. Directives for Strategic Assembly and Attack of Army for Operation "HERC."  
7. Plans for Strategic Air Concentration and Attack  

CHAPTER 2. FIRST PHASE OF OPERATION "HERC."— 5-9 June 1940  
1. Preparations for the Offensive  
   Combat Missions Followed  
2. First Day of the Offensive  
   1. Weather Conditions  
   2. Reconnaissance  
   3. Combat Action  
   4. Air Situation  
3. Air Fleet Operations  
   A. Second Air Fleet  
   B. Third Air Fleet  
4. Operations against Targets in Britain  
5. Situation on the Ground  
6. Second Day of the Offensive—6 June 1940  
   1. Weather Conditions  
   2. Reconnaissance  
   3. Combat Operations  
   4. Air Situation  
   5. Situation on the Ground  
   6. Second and Third Air Fleet Operations
CHAPTER 2
5. Second Day of Operations—Continued
7. Overall Outcome on Second Day
9. Third Day of the Offensive—7 June 1940
1. Weather Conditions
2. Reconnaissance
3. Combat Operations
A. Second Air Fleet
B. Third Air Fleet
4. Air Situation
5. Situation on the Ground
E. Fourth Day of the Offensive
1. Weather Conditions
2. Reconnaissance
3. Combat Operations
A. Second Air Fleet
B. Third Air Fleet
4. Air Situation
5. Situation on the Ground
F. Experience Gained and Lessons Learnt in First Phase—5–6 June

ORGANIZATION AND ARRANGEMENT OF CHAPTERS 5–9
Chapter 5, Second Phase of Operation "Hat"—
9–25 June 1940
A. Pursuit to the Lower Seine River,
Direct Army Support—9–15 June
B. From the Seine to the Loire, Indirect
Support for the Army—14–16 June
1. 14 June
Weather Conditions
Reconnaissance
Combat Operations
Ground Situation
II. 15 June 1940
Weather Conditions
Reconnaissance Missions
Combat Operations
Air Situation
CHAPTER 3—Continued

B. 14-16 June—Continued

III. 16 June 1940

Reconnaissance

Weather Conditions

Air Situation

C. Attacks against Ports and Seaports at and off Atlantic Coast; Operational Air Warfare over Land and Sea; Britain—17-25 June

The Air Situation—17-25 June

German and Enemy Aircraft Losses

17-25 June

Summary of Chapter 3

206

CHAPTER 4. VIII (Close Tactical Support) Air Group in Operation "Hot."

210

CHAPTER 5. Third Air Fleet in Operation "Hot"—9-25 June 1940

239

A. Supporting Army breakthrough in Center—9-12 June

241

I. 9 June

Weather Conditions

243

a. Reconnaissance

243

b. Combat Operations

244

c. Air Situation

245

d. Ground Situation

245

Summary of First Day of Attack—10 June

245

Air Situation

246

a. Reconnaissance

247

b. Combat Operations

247

c. Air Situation

248

d. Situation on the Ground

249

Overall Situation

251

III. 11 June

251

Weather Situation

251

a. R Reconnaissance

252

b. Combat Operations

252
CHAPTER 5. Third Air Fleet—Continued

III. 11 June—Continued

Weather Conditions
A. Air Reconnaissance
b. Combat Operations
c. Air Situation
d. Situation on Ground

IV. 12 June

Weather Conditions
a. Reconnaissance
b. Combat Operations
c. Air Situation
d. Ground Situation

Summary of Events and Progress on 12 June

B. Third Air Fleet Shifts Emphasis to
Eastern Segment, 13–15 June

German First Army Joins the Offensive, 14 June

Situation on the Ground

German Seventh Army on 15 June

C. Air Operations in Far Enemy Rear
between Rhine, Loire, and Rhone Rivers, 16–19 June

Situation on Ground

Summary

17 June

18 June

19 June

D. End of Campaign in West—Air Power
again substitute for Artillery, 20–
25 June

Summary of Chapter 5

CHAPTER 6. CURRENTS ON THE ATLAS "BOX".

A. The Joint Military Command Approach
in Military Historical Research
B. German Air Force Command during Operation "Tot."
C. Air Situation and Air Supremacy
D. Air Tactical Lessons
1. Reconnaissance
2. Development of Main Power Concentrations
3. Surveillance over Enemy Ground Organization

CHAPTER 7. Statistics on German and Enemy Aircraft and Personnel losses
A. German and Enemy Aircraft Losses in Operation "Tot."
B. German Air Personnel Losses in Operation "Tot."
C. Total German Air Force Losses in 1940 Campaign in West
   I. Flight Personnel
   II. Flight, Ground Service, AAA, and Signal Corps (Air) Personnel
   III. Analysis
D. Final Analysis and Conclusions
E. Final After-Action Report by German Joint Military High Command on 1940 Campaign in West
   Epilogue
CHAPTER 1

THE PERIOD BETWEEN OPERATION "GELB" AND OPERATION "ROT"

CONTENTS

1. No Respite in Air Operations
2. Attack against Merseilles
3. Attack against Paris: Operation Paula
4. Scattered Air Effort and Excessive Demands on Air Power
5. Air Power Ratios
6. German Army Directives for Strategic Concentration for Operation "Rot"
CHAPTER 1
THE PERIOD BETWEEN OPERATION "GREB" AND OPERATION "ROT"

1. No Respite in Air Operations. While the battles of
envelopment and annihilation were still in progress in Flan-
ders and Artois, where the German ground forces were narrowing
down the operational areas from day to day,

while the German Air Force was participating in these
battles — the Second Air Fleet through direct air support
action for the ground forces within the envelopment areas
and the Third Air Fleet through direct and indirect air sup-
port action in the southern flank areas —

the German Army by means of a completely new disposition of
its ground forces was preparing for the continuation of the
overall campaign.

While the movement so far had been generally from east
to west and had resulted in dividing the enemy's armies into
two separate groups of forces and the annihilation of the
northern of these two groups, the next operation, which was
to develop into the actual "Battle for France," was planned
to move generally from north to south. For a large number
of the Army's attack divisions this implied a change of di-
rection not by only 90 degrees but by 180 degrees.
the Army was busy in the northern areas disentangling, reorganizing, withdrawing, and regrouping its forces and disengaging them on their southward drive, the Air Force with the bulk of its forces attacked Dunkirk in almost ceaseless operations.

Closely

On 1 June 1940, when these air operations, aimed at bringing the German forces to a decisive crisis which were designed to liquidate the British Expeditionary Corps on the Continent of Europe and which were destined to prove fruitless, and reached culmination point, the German army group headquarters received the new directives for Operation "Tot," namely, directives for the ensuing Battle for France. From this line the right flank forces in the Seine River sector were to jump off to the attack on 5 June, with those in the area of main effort farther east following on 9 June.

It stands to reason that the German Air Force received new missions for this final and decisive phase of the campaign in the West. Initially, these air missions were defined only in the previously mentioned Army strategic concentration directives for Operation "Tot" as follows:

Besides its mission of maintaining air superiority, the Air Force has instructions to provide direct air
support for the Army attack, to frustrate enemy efforts to establish forces capable of resistance, to prevent enemy troop movements, and to cover the western flank of the attack movement.¹

After the establishment of German air supremacy on 20 May—as set forth in Part Two of the present study—² there were only few missions left for the conduct of strategic air warfare.

It was to be assumed that for the German Air Force there would be even more emphasis than before on the missions of direct and indirect support for the Army. For this reason the operational plans of the Army, as the basis for the operations of the Air Force, must be presented in more detail here than was necessary for the previous phases of the campaign in the West.³

However, desirable as this would have been, the Air Force was to be given no opportunity to prepare for the newly planned operations. For this reason, air operations between the two offensives in the west will be dealt with before presenting the Army plan of operations.

1. See Chapter 7, Part Two of present study.
2. See Section 5 of present chapter.
3. See Section 5 of present chapter.
To begin with, the concentrated air attacks against Dunkirk were still in progress and were to continue until the evening of 2 June.

Simultaneously, two wing-wise missions were flown against the Mediterranean port city of Marseilles on June 1 and June 2, a subject which will be dealt with later. These two wings were missing in the operations against Dunkirk.  

Finally, the operations against Dunkirk were halted at such an early stage that considerable elements of the Anglo-French Army Force were able to escape across the English Channel without interference on 3 and 4 June.

The reasons for the decision to forego annihilation of the remnants of the Allied Forces still on the Continent have been mentioned previously: the entire German Air Force was to participate in a concentrated air operation against the French air base zone around Paris on 3 June.

4. Chapter 9, Part Two of present Study.
5. Ibid
6. Ibid
7. Ibid
2. The Attack against Marseilles. The air attacks against Dunkirk and Marseilles were carried out at one and the same time: on 1 and 2 June 1940. The attack against Paris was planned for 5 June. This filled the period between Operation "Gelb" and Operation "Rot."

The brief heading of this section "The Attacks against Marseilles," is in a strict sense inaccurate, primarily because the operations involved were not restricted to attacks against Marseilles alone but included strikes against the railroad system in Southern France, namely the routes leading from the French Mediterranean ports to the decisively important areas of operations.

The first question which arises here is: Why did the German Command, during this in military and all other respects imminently critical period, consider these ex-centric attacks (as seen from the tactical viewpoint) against the Mediterranean port city of Marseilles and against railroads in southeastern France essential?

The reason for the intensified reconnaissance operations followed later by the attacks was that the German command had received reports concerning transportation movements from apparently the African coast to the Mediterranean port of European France.
Intelligence activities had been directed systematically against the French airfields in the Marseilles region, and on 25 May it was known that a total of 305 aircraft were stationed on these airfields, comprising 197 single-engine and 121 twin-engine land-based aircraft plus 23 seaplanes.

Concurrently, intelligence reports showed that 1,800
railways were at the Marseilles rail depot and 1,300 at the Sète rail depots.

Meanwhile, the German Command had come to the conclusion that the French, as appeared from a number of reports received, had commenced a steady movement of additional French divisions from North Africa to France. Reports giving unit designations also showed that reinforced forces were also being embarked for shipment from Tunisia and Algeria to Europe.

Air reconnaissance against the Mediterranean coastal areas was now intensified.

On 26 May an admittedly unconfirmed report was received that two divisions had already left Algeria on their way to Marseilles.

On 21 May air reconnaissance over the port of Marseilles showed a number of railway trains stationed at the
wharves and approximately sixty merchant vessels with a
total tonnage of approximately 350,000 tons plus a battle
cruiser and other naval units in that port. Approximately
another twelve merchant vessels with a total tonnage of
around 90,000 tons were anchored in the bay.

Concurrent air reconnaissance over the Lyon-Marseilles
rail route showed little traffic in the section between
Valence, in the Rhone river valley, and Marseilles, this
being the southern section of the entire route, and no
large concentrations at rail depots with the exception of
2,110 rail cars at Valence, 1,200 at Beauvalon, and 1,800
at Miramas.12 Such heavy concentrations of rail cars at
these rail depots necessarily seemed significant and could
be assumed to have some connection with the traffic con-
centrations at Marseilles.

Reconnaissance over the airfields in the Marseilles
region produced no information of especial importance. Reports
showed that aircraft were stationed on the Istres, Miramas,
Barre, and Marseilles airfields, all north of the city of
Marseilles.

Notes: less, the overall intelligence picture, and

12. Miramas, Rail junction northwest of Marseilles.
particularly the concentration of shipping in the port of Marseilles, created the impression that large troop debarkation movements were either in process or imminent. This seemed to confirm reports received earlier by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force concerning transportation movements in the western Mediterranean areas.

Acting on the information thus available, the Commander in Chief of the Air Force thus ordered the attack against Marseilles and the rail routes leading north from that city.

The first attack against targets in southern France was staged on 1 June, the day on which the Second Air Fleet endeavored alone to prevent the evacuation of the Anglo-American armies from the Continent to Britain by means of continuous attacks against Dunkirk.

The attack against Marseilles was preceded in the forenoon by repeated reconnaissances, which showed merchant rafts and 14 naval craft in port there; towards midday another seven large and five smaller merchant vessels were in the roadstead. Shortly after this bomber units of the Third Air Fleet took off in the afternoon for the attack. The attacking units met one large merchant vessel and one scow on fire in the congested port of Marseilles. Sites and fires were also observed in the sheds and other parts for footnotes 13 and 14 see p. 10.
It appears that the attacks were directed primarily against the rail routes from Marseilles northward. The Lyon-Marseilles route was badly damaged at seven points in its northern section: the rail depots at Givors (southwest of Lyon) was damaged, and a sovery northwest of Givors was set on fire. Further east, attacking units halted traffic on the rail route from Mt. Cenis into the Rhone river valley region by destroying the Culoz and Aix-les-Baines rail depots, the latter approximately 43 miles east or southeast of “yon, and in cutting the Culoz-Châtillon-fives route.15

These rail interdiction attacks seem to have been a sound measure, since they blocked the only alternate route which could have been used by the French, in the area of the northward Rhone river valle route from Marseilles through being cut by bypassing Lyon and divert traffic through Grenoble, Ambony, and Bourg. In addition, they prevented any possible movement of troops from the Alps front northward for deployment against Italy. It also appears to have been a sound decision to interdict the rail routes at points relatively far north, approximately 150 miles north by air.

13. Air Intelligence Report No. 270, 2 June 1944.
14. It has not been possible to determine the size of the forces employed. According to General one wing was used. Present author is of opinion that considerably stronger forces must have been involved, since evidence shows that Third Air Fleet carried out no other missions this day.
from Marseilles, since no information was available concerning how far the assumed French rail transport movements might already have progressed.

Finally, two attacks were flown against the Auberive airfield, approximately 25 miles northeast of Lyon and on the previously mentioned alternate rail route.\textsuperscript{15}

Heavy antiaircraft defense fire was encountered in all Rhone River valley areas and at Marseilles; defense fighters were encountered over Lyon and Montblamar (between Valence and Avignon).

On 2 June units of the Third Air Fleet staged a second attack against targets in southeastern France.\textsuperscript{16} Here again no information is available on the size of the units committed.

In contrast with the previous day, reconnaissance preceding this operation showed no naval vessels in the port of Marseilles. Reconnaissance over rail routes in the Lyon-Valence region showed a picture of generally normal or light rail traffic. Defense fighters were discovered at Lyon and Valence.

\textsuperscript{15} Rhone is in the Isere Valley, northwest of Grenoble.
\textsuperscript{16} The CINC, Air Force, estimated five aircraft destroyed and fifteen damaged.
\textsuperscript{17} Air Intelligence Report No. 271, 3 June 1940.
\textsuperscript{18} According to Schmidt again only one wing.
Following the reconnaissance action the bomber units were dispatched on their missions against

1. the Lyon-Bron airfield, situated east of the city, and the aircraft park there. Here, bomb hits and explosions were observed, and at least fifteen aircraft were destroyed;

2. the Lyon-Marseille rail route, which was interrupted at two points 12 miles south of Valence;

3. the general area of Marseille, where attacking units set tank installations and oil refineries on fire and destroyed the Berre airfield. Assumed hits on two or three merchant ships were reported, and fires were observed still burning in the port areas from the attacks of the previous day.

Around Marseille and Lyon French fighter units equipped with Curtiss and Morane aircraft set up determined but ineffective resistance, and heavy antiaircraft artillery fire was encountered throughout the target areas.

The impression is that the units participating in this second attack found no more profitable targets, and the selection of targets reveals a dispersion of effort in the employment of the bomber units involved, with no sign of a clearly developed area of main effort.

During the next few days individual planes were dispatched on reconnaissance missions over the Mediterranean coast. However, these units encountered strong fighter opposition.
defences and were unable to accomplish their reconnaissance
missions.

It is not possible to ascertain what results these two
attacks on 1 and 2 June achieved and whether they succeeded
in interfering with and appreciably delaying the assumed
French movement of divisions from Africa to the decisively
important operational area in the north. There can be no
doubt, however, that they did achieve one important result
in that they tied down a strong defensive air force in south-
eastern France which were not available to the French Command
for commitment in the decisive battle in progress in the
north.

For strength reasons alone if for no other there was
no possibility to direct further air attacks against targets
in southeastern France for some time, since all units of
the German Air Force were committed on 3 June in the attack
against Paris. From 5 June on all air units were committed
in support of the Army drive southwards in Operation "Bast,"
a mission which tied up all Air Force units for the time
being.

Another point which merits mention was the approach
flight to targets in southeastern France was not without
complications. Owing to the necessity to avoid crossing
over Swiss territory the participating units had to sove-
exceedingly long distances to reach their target areas.\textsuperscript{19} According to German sources, the units participating in the first attack on 1 June came under attack by Swiss fighters, because of an alleged infringement of Swiss territory. It is an irony of military history that these Swiss fighter units had He-109 aircraft purchased from Germany, with which they shot down two or three of the German bombers.\textsuperscript{21}

In the case of the second attack, on 2 June, fighter units escorted the German bombers as far as the Swiss border. Once again Swiss fighters put in an appearance in a strength of ten to twelve aircraft, all of which were shot down by the German escort fighters.\textsuperscript{22} No comments from Swiss sources are available concerning these incidents.

\textsuperscript{19} The distance from the Rhine River at Freiburg im Breisgau to Marseilles is roughly 360 miles, allowing for a westward detour to avoid Swiss territory. In addition the units had to cross German territory on their way from bases in southern Bavaria to the Rhine River.

\textsuperscript{20} According to Sekmid.

\textsuperscript{21} According to Air Intelligence Report No. 270, 2 June, only one K-111 was shot down.

\textsuperscript{22} According to Sekmid. It seems significant that this second incident is not mentioned at all in the situation reports by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force.
ANALYSIS OF THE OPERATIONS AGAINST MARSEILLES

Two points of cardinal importance still require clarification:

1. Had the French Army actually moved appreciably strong forces from Africa to the Mediterranean at that time;

2. If so, would these forces have been able to participate in the decisive battle, which was to commence on 5 June according to German planning.

Failing clarification of these two points it is difficult to arrive at a final appraisal as to whether the German action against Marseille was justifiable or an error.

From the German viewpoint, however, and taking into consideration all strategic circumstances in the continental theater of operations, it is hard to understand the German Command's decision to employ strong elements of the Air Force against an off-center target—action against which actually was not essential, at a juncture when the re-grouping and concentration of forces for the new and decisive plan of operations, and for the direction of appropriate supplies for that purpose, should have taken precedence over all other measures. It would have been impossible to achieve the destruction or even temporary elimination of Marseille as a sea port for any appreciable length of time unless adequate forces could be made available for the purpose.
In view of the overall situation and overall planning, the dispersion of effort involved must be considered an irresponsible act, since the forces thus employed against targets in southeastern France were lacking at Dunkirk, where in the meantime the Second Air Fleet was left alone to bleed white.

The question must remain open whether this off-center operation southwards was ordered by the highest military authority (Hitler, Wehrmacht High Command) and in such case presumably in response to Army requests, or whether the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force himself believed that he could afford to spread his Air Force over the entire continent of Europe—-from Harvli in the North to Marseilles in the South—in spite of his guarantee to Hitler that his Air Force would settle the matter of Dunkirk.

**Bulletin**

The Joint Military High Command of 2 June 1940 reports as follows on the 1 June attack against Marseilles:

For the first time bomber units of the Air Force attacked the port of Marseilles and there set two large merchant ships on fire through bomb hits. The rail route Lyon-Marseilles was damaged by bombs at a number of points.

The bulletin on 3 June 1940 remarks only as follows:

Otherwise, attacks by the Air Force were extended to targets in the Rhone River valley and at Marseilles.
3. The Air Attack against Paris—Cherbourg Peninsula. At
writing it has not yet been possible to discover the reasons
for this large-scale operation by the entire German Air
Force against Paris, carried out on 3 June under orders from
the Supreme Command. They developed from a complex of po-
itical, morale, air tactical and air strategic considerations
and the urge to put on a demonstration. Probably all of
these considerations contributed equally towards the decision,
for which it is not easy to find an inherent main motive. No
directives or orders from the Joint Military High Command or
from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force are known to
exist from which it would be possible to deduce the motives
for the attack.

According to General Haldor all that was intended was
exclusively to deliver a heavy blow against the base area
of the French air forces around Paris, and the pertinent
entry in his diary reads: “Large-scale attack against enemy
(French) air forces planned for 4 June.” 23 and another entry
“Successful air attack against fighter base area around
Paris.” 24

A little more illuminating is an entry in the diary of
General von Waldau under 4 June, 25 reading

23. Haldor Diary, Entry 1 June 1940
24. Ibid., 4 June 1940.
25. General von Waldau at the time was Chief of the Air
Force Operations Staff, HQ, CINC, Air Force.
A strike against the air ports around Paris, planned
with loving care, was staged at 1436 on 3 June. Roughly 500
bombers together with 500 single- and twin-engine fighters
attacked.

We expected from this action:
1. a marked neutralisation of those elements of
   the French air forces which were again ready for action,
   and concurrently
2. destruction of parts of the engine and other
   aircraft industries in the center of Paris, and
3. desirable repercussion on the morale of the
   population of the French capital.

It is probably not wrong to assume that the above entry
expresses the ruling opinion held by the Commander in Chief
of the Air Force at that time.

In the reasoning of the German Air Force in general,
Operation Paula, namely, the air operation against Paris, was
a concentrated blow against the operable elements of the
French air forces concentrated in the general area of Paris
and its purpose was to destroy those elements and the French
aircraft industries within the same general area in prepara-
tion for the coming German offensive towards the south. Thus,
it was motivated by purely military, air tactical, and air
strategic considerations as an aggressive air operation
serving such purposes.

Confirmation for this view is offered in the final
After-Action Report on the Campaign in the West issued by the German Joint Military High Command on 2 July 1940 (Schlussbericht des OKW über den Feldzug im Westen) in which a passage reads:

As an introduction to the new operations, strong elements of the German Air Force on 3 June attacked the air fields and aircraft industries in the general area of Paris with annihilating results.

However, this does not exclude the possibility that in assigning the mission, Hitler was motivated largely by important political motives and viewpoints. The old saying that "Paris is France" may well have provided the impulse for this decision for a military attack against Paris. Political and morale pressure were to be brought to bear on the French Government and action in order to soften them up for an early capitulation. It is safe to assume, in fact it is almost certainly the case, that the authority responsible for the execution of the mission, namely, the Commander in Chief of the RLM/XII Air Force, was not expressly apprised of the secret intentions of Hitler. This assumption is confirmed by a paper written by the then Chief of Air Intelligence, Air Force Operations Staff, HQ, CINC Air Force, which commences with the passage:

The purpose of the attack was to prepare the French capital city for capitulation by means of the impact of a demonstration of air power on the morale, and closes on the note

The main result of the attack against Paris was that it contributed largely towards the capitulation of the city.

This appears to offer confirmation for the political motive for Operation Paula. However, the passages were written ten thirteen years after the event from personal recollections, whereas the views expressed by von Waldau, previously quoted above, were formulated immediately after the event, so that they probably have to be accepted as the appraisal valid in circles around the Commander in Chief of the German Air forces at the time.

On the other hand, more far-reaching considerations would seem to speak against a practical necessity to destroy the French air industries in the general area of Paris. What makes their destruction seem all the less necessary is the fact that it is the fact that there was reason to hope at the time that in the course of the imminent ground operations the general area of Paris, and thereby the French aircraft industries, would come under German control at an early date and in an undamaged condition anyhow, since plans provided for the capture of Paris by means of an
enveloping movement from both sides of the city and without any direct attacks against the city itself. This will become evident from the presentation of the plans for Operation Pauls given later in this study.

Although it cannot be proved, the assumption thus remains that Hitler was influenced primarily by political motives in his decision to dispatch the entire German Air Force in an attack against Paris. The formulation “against Paris” is in fact misleading, since not a single attack was flown against the city of Paris itself throughout the entire campaign in the west. The large-scale attack staged on 3 July June 1940 was directed exclusively at the airfields and the center of the French air armaments industry in the outskirts of Paris.

The directives for the commitment of the entire German Air Force were issued by the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, and served to coordinate the operations of the two air fleets.

Apparently all available heavy bomber units were committed with strong single- and twin-engine fighter escorts from the escort units concentrated for the purpose.

The mission of the attacking units was to attack the selected targets of the French air armaments industries, all of which were situated in the outskirts of Paris. 


was to be primarily on action against aircraft engine and fuselage factories, permanent installations, and aircraft stationed on the airfields around Paris—here primarily on fighter airfields—and, finally, antiaircraft artillery positions and other air defense centers, all of which were to be taken under attack and destroyed.

Available sources agree on the subject of the strength of the forces committed in the attack. It appears that approximately 1,100 to 2,000 aircraft participated, of which number 2/3 were bombers. This figure of 1,200 aircraft is also confirmed by a report prepared by the Commodore of one of the fighter wings participating in the attack, a report apparently based on sound sources. According to that report, however, the aggressive units from only three air corps participated. However, it is impossible that these three corps alone could have as much a large number of operable aircraft available for the attack. It can be assumed with certainty that all long-range bomber units of the entire German Air Force were committed. Only the dive-bomber and ground attack units of the VIII (Tactical Air Support) Corps were not committed because of their inadequate range, but the corps’ fighter units also participated.

The report by Ibel gives such a graphic description of the operation from the viewpoint of the front line units that estimates from it are being included with this study in Appendix 79.

Opinions differ on the subject of the effectiveness of the enemy defenses encountered. The Halder Diary contains the passage:

"It was like a national socialist Party air celebration over Paris [by planes of National Socialist Party] Resistance negligible." 29

According to Nebel, "fighter resistance was weak; anti-aircraft artillery defense fire was considerably weaker than had been expected and had little effect." According to Ibel, however, "...enemy anti-aircraft artillery fire over the target area was heavy and in parts well placed." Since Ibel was the only one of the quoted authorities who was actually present over Paris, his appraisal seems the most acceptable.

Concerning the execution of Operation Paula, the present author personally remembers three facts:

1. The plan of operations provided a minutely calculated attack program according to targets, timing, areas, and altitudes. It is no longer possible to state reliably from memory whether the attacks by units from the Second and from the Third air fleets were coordinated by target areas or by attack sequences. It is certain,

28. Halder Diary, Entry 4 June 1940.
29. Under a "National Socialist" Halder, according to current usage at the time understood the peacetime parade-type of air demonstrations staged annually over the parade ground. Continued.
However, that the entire fighter escort service for all of the attacks flown against Paris was centrally controlled and uniformly organized. For this purpose Fighter Command 5 (Third Air Fleet), under General von Massew, was given command also over the single- and twin-engine fighter units of the Second Air Fleet.

2. The results achieved in the attack were that all designated targets were actually hit, but that the actual destruction caused was small because of the fact that each target came under attack only once by relatively small forces.

Immediately after German occupation of Paris, the present author made an on-the-scene investigation of the damage done by bomb hits. The bombing units had actually done what can be called a precision job. Apart from the actual and precisely designated targets of attack, only a very small number of non-military buildings and installations as a result of normal dispersion.

3. The losses suffered in this operation are difficult to assess. The Joint military High Command units "fine German aircraft missing," but actually losses were heavier. The present writer can recall alone the loss of two higher level unit commanders, namely, the officer directing the entire fighter escort operation—30, Fighter Command 5, who was shot down with his plane by antiaircraft guns; and the wing commander of the 51st fighter wing.

Be that as it may, the operation had insured losses and thus added to the serious losses suffered by the Air Force on the previous days at Dunkirk.

The German Air Force thus entered upon operation "Rot" with reduced operable strengths, and the statement in the otherwise so eminently reliable work of
General von Rippelskirch that "...the German Air Force entered upon operation 'Rot' with strengths not seriously depleted" needs correction in this respect, although the weakened state of the Air Force for the time being produced no noticeable results while facing an inferior air opponent.

The overall results achieved by Operation "Jaula" are hard to define. It is difficult to balance its effects in material damage caused, its impact on morale, and its influence on the political level one against the other. It can nevertheless be assumed with certainty that the opinion held by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force at the time is reflected in the previously mentioned diary of General von Waldau, where an entry reads:

The weather conditions, with a 4-104 cloud cover represented a favorable compromise between partical cover against antiaircraft artillery fire and the requirement for that degree of freedom of movement essential for the simul-aneous presence of 1,100 very fast aircraft within a very small area.

and another entry:

The attack against Paris took the enemy by surprise.
and produced very good results. Fires in depots, the Citroen and Gnome-Rhone aircraft engine factory badly hit. The threatened reprisals practically failed to materialize.

The Joint Military High Command Bulletin on 4 June 1940 states inter alia:36

As previously announced in a special report, the Air Force on 3 June with strong units of all types attacked the base areas of the French air forces around Paris in a surprise operation. The attacking forces succeeded in neutralizing the enemy air defenses and in achieving resounding success in concentrated high- and low-altitude attacks against ports and industrial installations supporting the French air forces. Numerous fires and explosions were observed. 75 enemy aircraft were shot down in air battle and 300 to 400 were destroyed in hangars and otherwise on the ground. German antiaircraft artillery forces on 3 June brought down 21 enemy aircraft. Against these exceptional successes only nine German aircraft are missing.

If the figures on enemy planes downed given by the German Joint Military High Command Bulletin are correct all they serve to prove is that the French fighter arm was by no means completely neutralized at the time but had in contrast resumed defense action over Paris apparently in large numerical strengths.

The "300-400 aircraft" allegedly destroyed on the ground mean very little. Apart from the operable fighter 36, Dr. E. Varasdi: "Der Durchbruch ist Keaten," Gerhard Stalling Verlag, 1940.
fighter aircraft, plus civilian planes of all types, stationed on the numerous airfields in the general area of Paris, there must have been also large numbers of inoperable front line aircraft as well, possibly, as dummies.

Legal opinions on the legality of the air attack against Paris have already been stated by German authorities. These legal opinions confirm the legality of the attack in terms of International Law. The text of a legal opinion on the matter is included with this study as Appendix 39.\(^{37}\)

As far as is known at writing, Germany’s opponents in World War II have not raised any question concerning the legality of Operation “Paula” under International Law. An English publication, for example, merely states.\(^{38}\)

During this period an attack occurred against the French air force supporting industries around Paris, and another attack against the fuel installations in Marseille.

The opinions and statements quoted so far on the subject of Operation “Paula” have all been more or less subjective. Even the German Joint Military High Command Bulletin of 4 June 1940 cannot be described as an objective and dispassionate presentation of the results achieved by the air attack and their repercussions.

The most reliable sources available on the subject seem to be the situation reports issued by the Intelligence Division, HQ, CINC, Air Force, at the time, which were compiled immediately after the event on the basis of reports received from the troops in the field. These situation reports now follow.

From the situation reports it is evident that systematic surveillance and reconnaissance had been maintained over Paris for a considerable time. However, this fact does not make it possible to deduce the time at which the German Command reached its decision to stage the large-scale attack against Paris, since the general area of the city became an important factor at an early stage during the Army execution of Operation "Ober" and for the imminent Operation "Rot" this importance increased steadily, the "Problem of Paris" having been dealt with exhaustively during the operational planning stages.

Concurrently, the impression gained steadily in the "Wing Air Force that the area around Paris had become the focal point of French air resistance. With its numerous airfields of all types, combined with the numerous aircraft servicing and supply installations and the aircraft manufacturing installations also concentrated in the area. It is clear that the Air Force was well aware of the importance of the Paris airfields and had taken steps to reinforce them, thereby increasing the difficulty of attacking them.


39. Rise and Fall of the German Air Force.
could have turned into a sort of National Redoubt for the French conduct of air warfare.

For operational reasons alone, developments in and around Paris therefore called for constant careful observation and surveillance.

On 29 May 39 reconnaissance revealed that the airfields in the close vicinity of Paris were very heavily occupied, in particular the Villacoublay and Villacoublay-Notre airfields, both immediately south of the city. Altogether 570 aircraft were identified, including approximately 400 single- and 170 twin-engine units.

These large numbers are astonishing, particularly when compared with the figures given at the time for aircraft lost by the French air forces. It can be assumed nevertheless that the French had concentrated primarily large numbers of fighters around Paris, even when it is presumed that the 400 single-engine aircraft identified undoubtedly included a considerable percentage of inoperable military as well as civilian type aircraft.

The next consolidated report on airfield reconnaissance was compiled on 31 May 40. This consolidated report covered only a few airfields and showed "...no significant findings."

39. Air Intelligence Report No. 263, 26 May 1940
40. " " " " 269, 1 June 1940.
On 1 June 1940,\textsuperscript{41} reconnaissance in German airfield reconnaissance activities was on the general area of Paris. Visual observations showed particularly heavy concentrations at the Vélizy-Villacoublay airfield (1,000 single- and 26 twin-engine aircraft) and Vélizy-Villacoublay (41 single-engine aircraft) and Issy-Les-Moulineaux airfield (92 twin-engine aircraft). This total was smaller than that of 25 May. However, it is not safe to assume that the number of aircraft had actually decreased, since visual observations, as experience shows, are not as reliable as photo reconnaissance.

Apparently, airfield reconnaissance over the Paris area was not stepped up on 2 June 1940, the day preceding the execution of Operation "Paula."\textsuperscript{42} A report states "Random reconnaissance against airfields in northern and southern France showed no significant change in the distribution of aircraft." Actually, reconnaissance was flown over only a few airfields on the outer perimeter of the Paris area (such as the airfields at Chartres) and produced no important information.

Operation "Paula" was staged in the afternoon on 3 June 1940.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41} Air Intelligence Report No. 270, 2 June 1940.
\textsuperscript{42} "" "", "", 271, 3 June 1940.
\textsuperscript{43} "" "", "", 272, 4 June 1940.
The actual attack was preceded in the forenoon by reconnaissance over the airfields, air parks, and aircraft industrial installations in the general area of Paris. The results showed a total of 260 aircraft in the area.

The situation report issued by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force covering the afternoon attack is quoted verbatim as follows:

In the afternoon the bulk of all bomber and fighter units were committed in a concentrated attack against the installations of the French air forces in and around Paris.

Soundly coordinated high- and low-altitude bombing action with the action by single- and twin-engine fighter escort of and proper exploitation of the advantage of surprise secured a resounding success at an exceptionally small cost in own losses.

The individual attacks were directed at sixteen airfields (six of the air bases), 3 air ordnance offices, and a number of factories of the air armament industries.

Well placed hits were observed with very effective fire and explosive results. In some cases the attacked targets NANTES/COUVRE were still burning on the following morning. It can be assumed with certainty that very large numbers of aircraft were destroyed on runways and in sheds.

According to reports not yet confirmed, the French Air Ministry, situated at the Issy-les-Moulineaux air port was hit.

Both fighter and antiaircraft defense were encountered in only remarkably small strength.
In some cases the units carrying out low-altitude attacks came into the target area too low for the heavy antiaircraft batteries. In many cases the enemy fighters showed a lack of aggressiveness.

One point which must be emphasized is that the French at Chartres committed obsolete fighter types (biplanes and low-wing planes with fixed undercarriages).

On the whole the results achieved in the attack represent another considerable weakening of the striking power of the French air forces.

According to the supplements to the above situation report by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force the individual strikes flown as part of the overall attack were as follows:

**Second Air Fleet Units**

- Airfields and factories at Le Bourget
- Vic sur Aisne
- Langy le Sec
- Maulen-les-Mureaux
- Nancy-Saussicourt

**Third Air Fleet Units**

- Combined targets of airfields, air ordnance offices, air parks, and armament industries
  - Villeneuve - Only
  - St Cyr (Ordinance Office)
  - Chartres
  - Lagny-les-Mureaux (Mauron Factory, Citroen Works, Air Ministry)
  - Vélizy-Villacoublay (factory, Main Arsenal, Ordnance Office)
  - Etampes-Nemours (Ordinance Office and Air Park)

**Other Airfields**

- Gueyancourt
Third Air Fleet Targets—Continued

Other Airfields—Continued

Mangin-Bailly-Carries
Le Fort-Geuiker
Villaroshe
Corbel-Courcouronne
Melun.

Without a map showing the French air forces ground organization in the Paris region it is not possible to present a graphic picture of the attacks. It is also not possible to reconstruct the boundaries delimiting the attack zones of the two German air fleets. Finally, the situation reports alone are insufficient evidence for an appraisal of the actual results achieved in the attack.

One point which appears significant, however, is that air reconnaissance on the following day, 4 June 1940, showed that there were still large numbers of aircraft, particularly fighters, on the airfields in the Paris region. This fact is admitted in the next situation report by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force, as follows:

As on the previous day, the airfields around Paris, as well as the air bases southwest and south of the city were occupied by large numbers of aircraft.

The above statement was made on 5 June 1940. On the same day the German Army commenced its southward drive on the right flank. Operation "Rot" and commenced.

44, Air Intelligence Report No. 273, 5 June 1940.
45, " " " 274, 6 June 1940.
4. Dissipation of Effort and Excessive Demands on the
German Air Force. Dunkirk, Marseilles, and Paris, these
were the three large-scale missions assigned to the Air
Force in the brief interval between Operation "Gelb" and
Operation "Bock," and these were the three major missions
accomplished during that period.

In a critical examination from the historical viewpoint
it is essential to comment on the soundness or the futility
of the concurrence of these missions of the Air Forces.

There can be no doubt that in the circumstances ruling
at the time all three of these major missions within the
scope of operational air warfare appeared necessary and the
results achieved seemed a success in each case. Operation
"Gelb," just over, had also been a success largely due to
the effective support given by the Air Force. Operation
"Bock," just about to begin, was also destined to prove
successful. The development of the campaign in the West and
the success achieved thus appeared to vindicate the sound-
ness of the decisions and measures taken by the highest level
of German Air Force command.

The only question which remains open is whether the
actual results achieved were commensurate with the strain
to which the Air Force was subjected and with the losses
insured.
First of all there was the Dunkirk operation. Here, the tactical and strategic objective of the air mission was to destroy the British Expeditionary Corps and prevent the evacuation of the defeated British and French armies in the North, and that objective actually was not achieved. Churchill was able to claim Operation Dynamo as a "victory," a claim justified by events in the long run.

Goering's presumptuous claim that he, with his Air Force alone, could achieve victory at Dunkirk, was frustrated in no small measure by the fact that the forces committed for the purpose were entirely inadequate. The Second Air Fleet, relatively weak in long-range bomber units from the very outset, was badly depleted at Dunkirk, where the entire Air Force was committed for only a short spell. Finally, the German operations over Dunkirk were halted at a time when the British Operation Dynamo was still in full swing.

The primary reason for the inadequate concentration of air power at Dunkirk was first of all the off-center attack by the Third Air Fleet against Marseilles on the two most vitally important days in the operations at Dunkirk, where the Third Air Fleet with its particularly strong long-range bomber forces was thus not available when it was most sorely needed. The outcome was a division of available forces between two unrelated operational objectives. Whether the
Operation against Marseilles was essential at that particular moment and whether the results achieved in the attack had any impact whatever on the then imminent Operation "Not,
both of these questions must be left unanswered.

The dissipation of forces criticized above led with abrupt suddenness to the concentration of all available forces for the attack against Paris. Here again the question must remain open whether this attack was vitally essential for the overall operational development. At the moment Dunkirk was still the decisively important target, and the British command directing Operation Dynamo must have considered the German Operation Paula as a gift of the gods. Since the German side took no air action against Operation Dynamo after 2 June, the British were able to continue and complete that operation without any interference whatever.

The success of Operation Dynamo was no longer hampered but instead supported by the German Air Force.

Quite apart from this complete scattering of the power available in the German Air Force, whose units were now deployed from the Arctic regions to the Mediterranean, and apart from operational impact of this factor, the excessive demands made on the German Air Force particularly in the first few days of June 1940 appear to have been particularly fateful in view of later developments.
Operation "Gelb," just completed, had taken its toll of the operable forces of the German Air Force. Personnel and material were suffering from the strain. Both required a pause for rest and rehabilitation. There could be no doubt that the impending Operation "Red," which was to decide the issue in the West, would require an all-out effort, all the more so because the British and French air forces were by no means completely neutralised, as had happened at Dunkirk and Paris. In spite of the feeling of confidence in final victory and assured superiority in performances, there was no way of knowing what demands might yet be made on the German Air Force. At least as the troops and the field commands were unable to judge what was coming. However, the Supreme Command should already at that juncture have coordinated its future intentions with the means needed for their achievement. Both of these factors, the intentions and the means available, were already known to the Supreme Command at the time.

In spite of this, however, the Air Force during the interval between the two operations on the ground remained committed without respite in specifically air operations against Dunkirk, Marseilles, and Paris and was subjected to excessive strains. Not only the actual losses in personnel and material but also the excessive strain to which
both personnel and material had been subjected almost without a break prior to the commencement of Operation "Rot" for almost four weeks necessarily produced the result that at the end of the overall campaign in the West the German Air Force was over exhausted, tired out, and "burned out." With the forces available it had proved simply impossible to perform all assigned missions concurrently. What was lacking was a proper regard for the principles of power concentration.

Whether the Commander in Chief of the Air Force is to be blamed for this scattering and over strain of the Air Force; whether Hitler personally or the Joint Military High Command made practically impossible demands on the Air Force; these are questions for which no answer can be found on the basis of source material presently available. That remains an indisputable fact in that German air power was scattered, that the demands made on the German Air Force were excessive. That these two factors did not not make themselves felt in the execution of Operation "Rot" was due to the unexpected speed and smoothness with which the southward offensive progressed and to the inferiority of the French air forces, which were left to their own devices.

The consequences were to become evident later. The
Battle for Britain was waged by a German Air Force which, in the few weeks which had passed since conclusion of Operation "Fort," had recovered so far as morale was concerned, but not in the fields of training, physical condition, and in material.

In any study of the Battle for Britain or of the planned invasion of Britain (Operation Seelow) the student should take these factors as his starting point.
5. Air Strength Relations. It is necessary to state as a first fact that it is hardly possible to develop a reliable picture of the strength ratio in air power between Germany on the one hand and the Western Allies on the other in early June 1940.

Practically all British air units had left the Continent of Europe and returned to bases in the British Isles. According to an English source only very weak British air units were still stationed in France, where they were still in action. These were considered less as a decisively important combat factor than as a token force to allay the fears of their French ally. One passage in the quoted English source reads:

On these first few days of the new German offensive (from 5 June onward) our air forces could provide only small support for the Allied forces engaged in battle.

This can be understood if it is borne in mind that there were only three British fighter squadrons, stationed on airfields in France for operations against the German bomber forces in the area around Rouen, and that their effective strength had decreased to a total of eighteen operable aircraft. "And so," the English writer continues, "our weak forces exhausted themselves in an unequal battle." It is to be assumed that these reduced strengths represented the total British air support on the Continent at that time.
For the rest the Britons concentrated their efforts on
the build up and training of their home air defense forces,
the strength and effectiveness of which had been felt un-
pleasantly by the German air force for the first time in
the air battle over Dunkirk.

At the same time the British operational air forces
continued their nightly attacks against industrial centers
within Germany, without any serious measures being taken by
the German side to prevent the systematic execution of this
type of "strategic air warfare."

The French air forces could only be considered at the
time as badly demoralized and demobilized. The closing chapter
of Part Three of the present study gives numerical details
on the losses inflicted on the French. On the other hand,
however, events during the German execution of Operation
"Paula" had once again produced proof that the air supremacy
achieved by the German Air Force was not a permanent condition
which could be maintained without difficulty; the French
Fighters had once again offered resistance, and continued
resistance was to be expected.

According to the only German source available on the
subject: 47 the French at the time had "...only 400
46. Translated excerpts from "History of the Second World
War," United Kingdom Series, "The War in France and in
Flanders 1939-1940, Chapter XXI, p. 273, in Karlruhe
Document Collection.
qualitatively inferior fighter and 70 bomber aircraft available at the time to pit against the German onslaught. According to the same source the daily increase from French output was twelve aircraft, to which can be added five aircraft delivered daily from the United States of America. The intake thus available was naturally infinitesimally small and not nearly enough to replace daily losses.

Figures are also available from the situation reports of the Intelligence Division, Commander in Chief of the German Air Force, to serve as a check, but these also give no clear picture, except insofar as they represent the picture of the opposing air strength as the German Air Command at the time saw it or desired to see it.

Four findings now follow from the 4-7 June 1940 period, namely from the days immediately preceding the commencement of the new German offensive, during which German airfield reconnaissance over France was particularly intensified.

On 4 June 1940 the German Air Intelligence Report reads:

Extensive airfield reconnaissance in the area north of a line Spinal–Fontenelon–Dreux detected a total of 84 airfields with a total of 1,244 aircraft, including between 550 and 650 single-engine units.

49 These figures will have to be compared later with reported German successes in Operation "Not." According to a compilation from German Military High Command—Continued.
These figures are thus from reconnaisances covering the areas including northern France, Northwestern France (the Atlantic coastline), and central France (as far as south of the Loire River). The southwest Atlantic coastal area and southern France are thus not included.

Reconnaissance findings on 5 June 1940 were as follows:

Airfield reconnaissance in the areas Rouen-Caen- Nantes-Clermont-Ferrand-Lyon-Swiss border at Geneva-front lines registered 123 airfields, of which only 64 were detected in operation with a total of 1,362 aircraft (553 of them single-engine).

As on the previous day the airfields in the general area of Paris as well as the air force bases southwest and south of Paris had large number of aircraft.

In this case the reconnaissance area extended farther west, to the Atlantic coast, and farther south, to as far as Lyon, than on the previous day.

On 6 June 1940 the air intelligence report states:

Airfield reconnaissance in the areas north of a line Rochefort-Lyon registered a total of 131 airfields of which 78 were in operation with a total of 1,063 aircraft. 66 aircraft detected on 53 airfields.

---

43. Continued: Bulletin a total of 1,326 enemy aircraft were destroyed in June 1940, including the results of Operation "Paula." Only one of these two diverging figures can be correct.

49. According to Tisselekirch.

50. Air Intelligence Report No. 276, 5 June 1940.

51. " " 274, 6 June 1940.

52. " " 279, 7 June 1940.
The 7 June 1940 report stated

Of 80 airfields detected north of a line Poitiers-Rennes 57 reported in operation with a total of 1,044 aircraft.

An analysis of these few situation reports from the first few days of Operation "Lift" produces the following findings and realizations:

1. There is no possibility to compare the various reports because the reconnaissance areas they mention overlap in some cases, so that some of the aircraft reported were counted repeatedly.

2. The overall totals of aircraft counted on these four days (1,263, 1,263, 1,065, and 1,044, respectively) give no indication of the effective strengths in point of quality or numbers. It would have been erroneous to assume from these findings that the French still had approximately 1,000 operable aircraft available.

In addition to the actually available operable front line aircraft, the figures given undoubtedly also contained large numbers of aircraft moved meanwhile to central and southern France for repairs, to be placed in air depots, or for training purposes, as well as escorts and commercial aircraft.

53. Air Intelligence Report No. 276, 8 June 1940.
The plain figures appear so high that they must undoubtedly have included everything capable of taking to the air.

3. The figures given for single-engine aircraft (55-550 on 4 June and 553 on 5 June) provide no basis for the assumption that these were exclusively fighter units. Probably large numbers of them were training or sporting planes.

4. The reconnaissance finding from the general area of Paris would appear to confirm the previously mentioned assumption that the large-scale attack against Paris on 3 June had not produced a decisively important success, and that Paris still remained what had been called the "National Redoubt" of the French air forces until the French military command abandoned Paris because of strategic considerations.

All in all the reported reconnaissance findings provided no basis from which it would have been possible to deduce the effective strength of the French air force at and after the opening of the new German offensive. Whether the Commander in Chief of the Air force arrived at this fundamentally important realization remains an open question.

On the other hand, the fact that the German side was able to conduct such closely meshed reconnaissance over r...
widely extended areas allows the assumption that German reconnaissance operations were no longer seriously hampered. The small number of German aircraft reported lost at the same time seems to indicate that the French air defences were weak and disorganized, an assumption which also tends to confirm that too much importance was attached to the number of French aircraft detected.

For all of the above reasons it is not possible to develop a reliable picture, from available German sources, of the French capabilities for air warfare at the time under discussion here.

This stage of the present study, at which the period between the two German offensives in the West are being examined, seems the proper juncture for an investigation of French air armaments in broad outline during this critical phase for France, with particular emphasis on the role of the United States as the source of replacements and reinforcements in air material.

Authentic material is available from French sources for such an investigation, particularly for this period, in the form of the documents of French Prime Minister Reynaud, which were taken into custody by German troops in 1940 and were processed by the Military Science Division (French B) of the German Air Force General Staff. These documents are
suitable to round out the picture, view that far only from the German standpoint, of the situation in France at the time.

It will first of all be necessary to go back some time. As early as on 5 February 1940 it was stated at a meeting of the Supreme Allied Council that the German Air Force was numerically superior to the Allied air forces. This resulted in a demand for the purchase of new aircraft from the United States. It was assured on the basis of assurances received by a committee of experts which had been sent to the United States that deliveries from the American aircraft and aircraft engine industries would make it possible to cancel out the difference in numerical strengths between the Allied and the German air forces. Pétain, then Prime Minister of France considered that victory was not possible as long as the German air superiority continued on the scale at which it existed at the time.

In this connection mention was also made of the difference between aircraft production in France and in Germany. Germany, it was said, had provided better protection for her factories by decentralisation, so that they had less to fear from Allied air attack than the French from German air attacks. In France, in contrast, the two most important engine factories were situated in Paris; preparations had
been made for their movement to provincial sites, but the move would still take some time.

In the opinion of the French Government, the only possible remedy was therefore to accept American support. In reply to objections by the French Minister of Finance, Reynaud stated in this connection:

It would be better, however, to sell out the entire national estate of France than to deprive the nation of the essential air forces, even if the purchase of these air forces must be purchased at the cost of terrible sacrifices.

He went on to say that haste was necessary, however, because "what is placed on order now can be delivered in the spring of 1942."

The French Government continued its efforts in the United States.

On 16 May 1940, and thus at a time when German air superiority over France was already taking clear shape, the President of the United States, Mr. Roosevelt, read in the United States Congress a message in which he called for the immediate provision of gigantic credits for the purpose of national defense. He spoke with special emphasis about the air force, which in the United States he said must have available 50,000 aircraft. He continued literally:

I demand of Congress that it go as no decisions
which could prevent or delay deliveries of aircraft from American production to foreign nations which have ordered such aircraft or endeavor to purchase other aircraft. From the viewpoint of our national defense that would be an very short-sighted policy.

These statements by the president of a country still "neutral" in 1940 must be especially emphasized, since "democratic" statesmen have rarely used such "dictatorial" forms of address.

In the meanwhile it had become quite clear in France that French efforts in the field of aircraft manufacture were inadequate to rebuild and rehabilitate the daily decreasing stocks of fighter and bomber aircraft. The war costs more than 30-40 aircraft daily.

On 27 May 1940, at a time when the "Battle in Flanders and Artois" was still in full raging swing, the French Ambassador in Washington received instructions to investigate the possibility of having orders placed by the US Army and currently under production in France. The contracts involved the following aircraft:

- 200 Curtis P-40
- 150 Glen Martin
- 200 Douglas

quite apart from the contracts currently being processed for Sweden and Norway, which also could be transferred.
The President of the United States replied two days later expressing his "deepest sympathy" and his "admiration in view of the danger threatening France."

However, such expressions of friendship were no real help alone for France, since by means of representations through the French Ambassador continued to press for more material support.

The reply remained however that the President sincerely regretted that the Government was unable to expedite the aircraft deliveries at the expense of the American Army and Navy.27

That describes the psychological and the material situation after the close of Operation "Colb" and prior to Operation "Not."

From the very outset the French Government had in its calculations included the United States as a passive Ally and on the very day on which the new operation opened appears to have regained some of its optimism.28

Namely, on that day—5 June 1940—the French Premier in a telephone conversation with Roosevelt stated that the enemy (Germany) were admittedly numerically superior but obviously worn out, and that the Allied troops actually had the upper hand.
Want an erroneous interpretation of circumstances!

Want a false assessment of the situation!

The French Prime Minister continued that the French Government

nevertheless needed support from the United States. "Can you

reach out a hand across the Ocean to us, to help us save

civilization? ..... Can you ..... sell us completely equipped

aircraft ready for action?" 56

Roosevelt's reply was "I shall go to the limit of what

is legally permissible." The practical outcome of this

telephone conversation was: The United States Minister of

Finance, Morgenthau, on the same day sent a message that

"..... 50 bomber aircraft of the Navy will be available im-

mediately."

Such aid, however, was merely "a drop in the ocean;"

quite apart from its questionable value in practice and

the question of when it would become effective.

In addition to material, however, France also expected

manpower support from the USA.

The French Government submitted the following sugges-
tions: 59

54. According to a cable from the French Ambassador in
Washington, Count Saint-Quentin.
55. According to the protocol of the 25 May 1940 sitting
of the War Cabinet.
56. According to a telegram from the French Ambassador in
Washington on 27 May 1940.
57. Cable from the French Ambassador in Washington to the
French Foreign Ministry on 28 May 1940.
58. By telephone from Reynaud to Roosevelt on 5 June 1940.
59. French Foreign Minister to French Ambassador to Canada
by telecommunication.
Since the French air training schools were overcrowded, a considerable number of... civilian aviators from the United States were... to Canada and given training with modern American aircraft types." The plan, the suggestion continued, provided for approximately 1,000 air... 1,000 aircraft mechanics. An interesting point in this suggestion, which is described explicitly as "a delicate matter," is the passage that "...the French Command places importance on recruiting more bomber personnel than fighter pilots." They had thus at a very late stage learned the obvious lesson from the German successes.

British aid was also requested, the demand being primarily that "British fighter forces be committed but also that British bomber action should be resumed. In place of comments the following cable from Raynond to Churchill is offered verbatim, the text of which speaks for itself:

Not only the fate of France, but also that of Great Britain is in the balance in the battle now raging at the Somme and the River.<br>

It would be wrong not to throw all military forces of both countries into this battle in their entirety.<br>

If the front is lost the armament efforts of the United Kingdom would no longer have any meaning. In these circumstances I cannot understand why you are withholding the major part of your air forces in England for the protection of your industries.<br>

I urgently request you to dispatch 500 fighter
fighter aircraft to France. The French airfields are ready to accommodate these aircraft.

I furthermore express the request that you throw all your bomber aircraft into the battle and refrain from operations of the type which the Royal Air Force has just carried out in the Ruhr region at a time when the French infantry, standing alone in the battle, are dependent upon support by the British bomber aircraft.

In the night of 16-17 May 1940 Churchill declared to Reynaud that in the event of a French defeat, Britain would continue the battle against Germany with her steadily mounting air forces. 60

He promised Reynaud immediate and considerable support through bombing attacks, but left the question concerning fighter support open. The negotiations continued, Reynaud indicating that France was primarily in need of fighter support "...since it appears likely that another German offensive must be expected at the Aisne River."

The initial reply from the British Government was that they would do nothing; owing to the disorganization resulting from their enormous losses, they were practically neutralized at the moment in the matter of aircraft. The British Government considered it an imperative necessity to first reform the fighter wings.

60. 25 May 1940 Sitting of the War Cabinet.
On 1 June 1940 Churchill at least promised the
dismantle of fighter units and also gave hopes of the dis-
patch of bombers. Reynaud also did not consider this ade-
quate aid. A French parliament member wrote to Churchill:

"It would be most regrettable if public opinion in
France should come to the conclusion that their Ally
was withdrawing to her island."

On 8 June 1940 Reynaud suddenly made the statement
that Churchill had fulfilled the requests made by France,
among other things in the matter of the commitment of
British bomber and fighter units in France.

In practice, however, almost nothing had happened in t
the matter. It appears, however, that the British promises
had not failed to produce some effect on the French morale,
since the minutes of the 7 June 1940 sitting of the Army
Commission of the French Senate, just two days prior to
commencement of the second German offensive, contains the
following passage:

"Economically and in point of morale the German
situation is in a bad position. In particular, the German
situation is strongly depressed by the massive bombing at-
tacks continuously carried out by the British Air Force.

This was a case of sheer self-delusion, at least at
that juncture, when the French front was already pierced."
and the British bombing offensive was as yet producing no
real results. It was the expression of the hope for help
from outside sources, help which either failed to arrive at
all or arrived too late to make itself felt.

While France in her precarious position was thus hagg-
lin with her present and future allies for aid, the German
Air Force was assembling its units for a devastating blow.

It is not possible to give the actual strength of the
German Air Force at that time expressed in reliable figures
on the number of units or aircraft available. Basing cal-
culations on the previously mentioned strengths committed
in the attack against Paris (Operation "Paula") roughly
800 bomber and 400 fighter aircraft were available for
participation in Operation "Rota." Added to these came the
units of the VIII (Tactical Support) Air Corps, which had not
been committed in Operation "Paula."

Taken together this gave the German side an enormous
superiority in air power. It appears, however, that a far
more important factor on the German side was the superiority
of the troops in point of morale, the consciousness of their
superior capability. With their morale strengthened in
the past three weeks by victory after victory, the units of
the German Air Force, although weakened in numbers, entered
battle from the outset in the conviction that in this see
and final phase of the campaign in France they would again be able to accomplish their mission usually and completely.

Although the air operations against Dunkirk, Marseilles and Paris had allowed the German Air Force, in contrast with the German Army, no pause in combat activities;

although, again, in contrast with the Army, this ceaseless commitment in action left practically no time for a systematic regrouping of forces for the new mission;

and although the units were using up their current supplies as fast as they received them, the German Air Force, with its air force on 5 June 1940 was ready for its new mission—striking southward.
5. Directive for the Strategic Assembly of the Army

For Operation "Net." The assembly directive for the Army provided the basis for the commitment of the German Air Force.

Even more so than had been the case in Operation "Selb" Army operations in Operation "Net" were the ruling factor in Air Force planning. Nearly any missions of "strategic air warfare" remained for the German Air Force in the second act of the French drama, so that its action was restricted to direct and indirect support for the Army. The Army's formulation of the mission for the Air Force has already been quoted verbatim. 64

The Strategic Assembly Directive to the Army for Operation "Net" had been preceded by orientation on the plans for "Continuation of the operations after Artois and Flanders." 65 This orientation was followed a few days later by the directive, issued as an order. 66

This directive formed the actual basis for the impending operations in the second phase of the offensive. It would exceed the scope of the present study to point out the differences between the initial orientation and the final draft of the directive or the changes made. An examination of these must be left to the reader who might have a special interest in such subjects 67.
From the plans prepared after receipt of the final directive for the ground operations, the following essential trains of thought can be discerned:

I. The overall objective in Operation "Rot" was, as expeditiously as possible after conclusion of the battles in Flanders and Artois, to first break through the hastily established French line of resistance in a southward drive, then, by means of a quick breakthrough into the far rear areas, to deny the enemy any chance to continue the struggle through an organized withdrawal and establishment of rearward defense lines. Finally, through a far-flung enveloping maneuver, the remaining French forces were to be annihilated in a pocket in the rear of the French Maginot Line.

II. In timing, the plans provided for three phases:

First Phase: Army Group B, on the west flank of the German assembly, was to advance from the Somme River line and from farther east on 5 June to gain jump-off positions on either side of Arras for the second phase.

Second Phase: On 9 June the advance was to continue all along the line, meaning that Army Group A, west of Army Group B, was now also to advance.

Third Phase: The main drive in the second phase

64. See section 1 of present chapter.
65. "Oberkommando der Heeres, Generalstab des Heeres, Wz.A."

Continued
was to be supported, at a time still to be determined, b. secondary operations from German territory, in which forces would break through the Maginot Line in a frontal attack from northeast and east.

III. Execution of the plan of operations was envisaged as follows: the main offensive in the first and second phases was to be in two diverging drives bypassing Paris, which was to fall without direct attack:

a. The right flank, comprising only the Fourth Army from Army Group B, was to bypass Paris in the northeast in a drive from the lower Seine to the lower Seine River, bring Laon and Beauvais under German control as speedily as possible and establish three bridgeheads across the Seine River in order to gain a base area for the continued advance to south and southwest.

Concurrently the Fourth Army was to provide cover for the west flank of the main offensive.

b. The bulk of Army Group B forces, the Sixth and Ninth Armies, were to advance in the first phase into the region northeast of Paris in order to establish a base area for the main drive in the second phase.

The line to be taken reached in the initial drive extended from Gantilly (5 miles south of Crail)—southern fringe of Compagnie Forest—south of Oisseau-Seyrig et Couin (14 miles east of Oisseau).

a. Immediately after the above movements the main attack of the second phase was to be carried forward by both army groups directed generally southeast through the area between Paris and the Argonne range. For this movement Army Group B would dispatch its Sixth and Ninth armies from the base area established in the first drive, while from Army Group A the Second, Twelfth, and Sixth Armies would jump off from the defense positions held in Operation "Celt.

IV. The operational objective in this main attack was as follows:

In a brisk advance southeastwards the forces of Army Groups B and A initially were to reach a line Beaum-Forest d'Othe-Treyer—Ryenne de Chateau-St Sizier—Bar de Dau.

Once this objective was reached the Supreme Command planned to initiate a large-scale envelopment maneuver, in which the objective would be "...to defeat the bulk of the French ground forces in the Paris-Belfort-sizes area and bring about the collapse..."
Maginot Line (Paragraph 1 of the Directive)."

V. The above main attack was to be supported during the third phase, at a time still to be determined, by the previously mentioned secondary operations, namely, by a frontal attack from German territory, in which:

a. The First Army (Army Group C), operating from the Saarbruecken area would break through the Maginot line and advance on Yvonne;

b. The Seventh Army (also Army Group C) would fight its way across the Rhein River on either side of Colmar and advance in the direction of Ysful and Vichy.

The plan of operations outlined above is presented in the map attached as Appendix 31.

Orders provided for the following distribution of forces:

Array Verrats

Fourth Army with 10 divisions and one brigade (6 Infantry, 2 Panzer, 1Mts. Infantry, 1 cavalry, divisions plus 1 mtn. rifle brigade.

Sixth Army with 16 divisions (10 infantry, 4 Panzer, 2 mtn. infantry)^

Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler Regiment^ Gross Deutschland Regiment^

+ Temporarily assigned.

68: The above distribution of forces is taken from Assembly Directive "Rot" (Aufmarschweisung "Rot")—Continue/
Army Group E—Continued

Ninth Army with 9 infantry divisions

Army Group A

Second Army with 8 infantry divisions
Twelfth Army with 12 infantry divisions
Sixteenth Army w/ 12 infantry divisions

Army Group C

First Army with
Seventh Army.

It remains to be added that the Eighteenth Army, controlled directly by the Army High Command, was to assume command over the units remaining in Flanders and Artois with the primary mission of coastal defense along the Franco-Belgian coastline as far as Bruges to prevent enemy amphibious operations against the coast.

The higher level armored commands are not mentioned in the directive for the assembly for Operation "Rot."

From a different source, however, it evolves that they were deployed in the rear of the armies on line, as follows:

In the rear of Army Group B in the Somme River Sector
Panzergruppe von Kleist (newly established) with 2 tank corps

An army type headquarters minus certain administrative staff sections.

69—Continued: Some parts of the information offered are at variance with the information on pp. 35-36 of von Hippelkirch that Army Group E accompanied the Fourth and Sixth Armies and Army Group A the Second, Ninth, Twelfth, and Sixteenth Armies. These changes occurred after... Continued
In the rear of Army Group A (Seventh Army)

Panzergruppe 2 (Udetian) (newly established) with
4 panzer divisions and
2 mss. infantry divisions.

Before closing this discussion of the operational
planning, the "Problem of Paris" merits special mention.

Paris presented a problem equally important from the mili-
tary and the political aspect.

According to the plan of attack discussed above, the
area around Paris was to be bypassed in the operations; the
two armies from the flank area--while advancing past Paris
on the east and west--were to protect the flanks facing the
city. That the German Air Force had also provided for
protective action will evolve later in this study.

An entry by Jodl in his diary reveals that there
was some concern at the German Supreme Command about the
possibility of a threat to the whole operation from the
general area of Paris. This entry by Jodl is confirmed by
an entry in "Notizen zum Kriegsvertrag" Chef Ruhmsschi-
rungsstab Maers 1939-May 1940 [Comments on the War Diary
of the Chief of Joint Military High Command Operations
Staff, March 1939-May 1940]."

---Continued: Issue of the directive is possible, but hard
classified and immaterial for the purposes of this study
70. Jodl Diary, Entry 26 May 1940: The problem of Paris
must be considered not only from the military--continue
under May 1940 reports:

Occupation of Paris. Hitler’s intention to make
occupation largely contingent upon political development
of the situation within the city.

Both of the above two entries from Joint Military
High Command circles reveal that the precedence of opera-
tional considerations, meaning purely military consideration
was established at an early juncture. The “political” factor
of Paris was not simultaneously the “military” objective.

Seen from this angle, the suggestion of a political motive
for the air attack on 3 June loses force of conviction,
while the possibility of “military”—in this case the
air tactical or air operational motives—gains in probability.

It can be safely assumed that the intention to shake
the morale of the population and the Government, one might
say as a secondary objective, also existed.

70.—Continued: but also from the political angle—If Paris
is abandoned or if revolutionary signs become evident,
Paris must be occupied immediately. If Paris is de-
defended, it will be necessary for the time being to
remain at a considerable distance from the city.
7. Plans for the Air Force Strategic Concentration and Attack. In contrast with the relatively lucid picture of the Air Force concentration for Operation "Gelb," it has not yet been possible to present a reliable reconstruction of the Air Force concentration for Operation "Fort."

From the few sources available it appears that emphasis in the distribution of forces and in the mission assignment shifted even more markedly than in the past from the Second to the Third Air Fleet. The following picture of the distribution of forces evolves:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second Air Fleet</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I Air Corps</td>
<td>Support Fourth Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8th Air Div</td>
<td>Air warfare at sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II AAF Corps</td>
<td>Support Fourth Army</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third Air Fleet</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VIII Air Corps</td>
<td>Support Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV Air Corps</td>
<td>attack in areas of main effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II Air Corps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V Corps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I AAF Corps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The composition of the various air corps has not yet been presented (meaning in Part Two of the present study) because the available records seemed inadequate for the purpose. The source material situation has not improved. See Part 2, Chapter II, Appendix III.
since completion of Part Two, for which reason an effort is being made here to establish the composition of the corps at least as far as documentation is available.

The following picture evolves for Operation "Hot:"

THIRD AIR FLEET

II Air Corps, controlling
93d, 3d, and 2d Bomber Wings

IV Air Corps, controlling
27th, 27th, and 54th Bomber Wings

V Air Corps, controlling
51st and one unidentified Bomber Wing

VIII (Tactical Support) Air Corps, controlling
2d and 77th Dive-Bomber Wings; 2d and 27th Fighter Wings; 11 Groups 2d Training Wing

SECOND AIR FLEET

I Air Corps
9th Air Division, controlling
4th, 50th Bomber Wings; 1st Training Wing (all uncertain)

Of the bomber wings in existence at the time, the 1st, 40th, 55th, 76th, and 77th are missing in the above compilation. These must have been assigned under the I, V, and I Air Corps.

With the exception of the VIII Air Corps, it has not been possible as yet to establish what dive-bomber, fighter and twin-engine fighter units were assigned under the various corps.
The assembly areas of the various air groups, it has not been possible as yet to reconstruct these accurately. They extended from western Belgium eastward to the Rhine valley areas; in the south the take off base area in Bavaria remained unchanged.

Plan of attack. No German Air Force records are available on this subject.

The only possible source, therefore, is to make use of the scanty source material available from the Army in the War Journal of Army Group A for the Western Theater. These must be used with the reservations necessary when using Army information on Air Force matters, which were naturally treated more or less incidentally by the Army. Lacking a full understanding of the structure and intentions of the sister service, the information received in Army records is naturally also not always reliable.

However, the following appears to be established as fact: During the first phase of the offensive from 5 to 8 June 1940, in which Army Group B, on the right flank, was to seize the base area northeast of Paris for the offensive it alone; the line, plans provided for all air power, under the Second and Third Air Fleets, to be committed in support of Army Group B. The development of a clearcut area of main effort is thus discernible at the open'
of the offensive, and, according to the sources quoted, was maintained throughout the first phase.

For the second phase of the offensive, from 9 June on, plans provided for a division of the available air forces: the Second Air Fleet on the extreme right was to support the Fourth Army and maintain surveillance over the entire area west of the Atlantic coastline; the Third Air Fleet was to support the main body of Army Group B and all forces of Army Group A.

From a conference between Army Group A and the Third Air Fleet on 8 June is it also evident that air force support was ensured "...by one wing for the Second Army and 2 wings for the Twelfth Army, with possibly 2-3 dive-bombers overlapping between Second and Twelfth Armies." (War Journal).

Supplementary to the above, other sources reveal that the VIII (Tactical Support) Air Wing was to be committed on the right flank of the main attack front, with main emphasis on support for Army Group B and the concurrent mission of providing cover against action from the Paris area.

What seems a significant feature in the agreements between Air Force and Army Staffs mentioned above is the fact that from the outset some of the bomber wings were
63 split up from the very beginning and earmarked to support specific areas, hence, to render direct support to the ground forces, although the air units in question were quite specifically, strategic bomber units.

It is to be assumed that these strategic bomber units of the third air class which were not thus split up and assigned were intended for missions of indirect Army support in the far rear or were to be withheld for anti-air action against French air forces if that should prove necessary.