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USAF HISTORICAL STUDIES NOS. 158 - 160

THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE GERMAN LUFTWAFFE AGAINST
THE ALLIES IN THE WEST, 1943 - 1945

By

P.R.C.

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PREPARED BY THE USAF HISTORICAL DIVISION
THROUGH THE COOPERATION OF THE HISTORICAL DIVISION, HEADQUARTERS USAFEUR

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

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STUDIES 158 - 160

THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE GERMAN LUFTWAFFE AGAINST
THE ALLIES IN THE WEST, 1943 - 1945

Volume II (with Annex Volume II)

THE STRUGGLE FOR AIR SUPREMACY
OVER THE REICH

1 January 1944 - 31 March 1944

Compiled from German Source Materials

By

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Göggingen, near Augsburg
April 1954

FOREWORD

Studies 158 - 160 are divided into two major parts, "The Air War in the West" and "The Air Defense of the Reich", reflecting the command organization within the Luftwaffe during World War II.

The problems connected with the procurement of necessary source materials, as well as the scope of the latter, have precluded the chronological preparation of Studies 158 - 160. The author was forced to complete first those sections for which source material was already available. Thus the first portion completed was the description of air defense activity in the Reich during the period from 15 September 1943 to D-Day (6 June 1944). This portion has been further divided into three volumes (each accompanied by an annex volume), as follows:

Volume I - Day and Night Aerial Warfare over the Reich, 15 September 1943 - 31 December 1943.

Volume II - The Struggle for Air Supremacy over the Reich, 1 January 1944 - 31 March 1944.

Volume III - Aerial Warfare over the Reich in Defense of Vital Luftwaffe Installations and Supporting Services, 1 April 1944 - D-Day (6 June 1944).

A critical comparison of Allied and German source materials dealing with the events of the selected period is forthcoming.

The present text (Volume II of the above) deals with the events comprising German air defense activity (1 January 1944 - 31 March 1944), excluding the commitment of antiaircraft artillery. Volume II is based en-

tirely on German sources. The illustrations pertaining to Volume II are to be found in Annex Volume II.

Source Materials Used for Volume II

The chief contemporary source utilized in the description of events was the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps. This Diary is of documentary significance. In a few instances, supplementary information has been taken from material salvaged from the former Military Science Branch, German Luftwaffe. This information may be considered to be quasi-official.

The few explanatory remarks pertaining to the air attacks on Berlin are based on the private notes of one of the air defense officials stationed there.

The critical remarks included in the monthly surveys represent the views of the author, tempered by the opinions of the following:

Walter Grabmann, Generalmajor a.D., former Commanding Officer,
3d Fighter Division, and

Guenther Radusch, Colonel a.D., former Commanding Officer, 5th
Night Fighter Wing.

The following were not considered:

reports prepared from memory, and

information contained in lay literature published during the war and subsequent thereto.

Evaluation of Volume II, Studies 158 - 160

The description of the events covered in Volume II is based on source materials from the middle echelon of Luftwaffe command. Combat reports by operational units are not available, and in view of the conditions prevailing at the end of the war, there seems to be little likelihood of obtaining documentary material dealing with the course of individual air actions. This, of course, is a decided lack as far as the writing of history is concerned, especially since subjective reports, based on the memory of individuals, can be assigned only limited significance.

The material contained in Volume II may be assumed to come close to historical truth. Minor errors must be accepted as inevitable, considering the limitations of the sources available and taking into account the fallibility of human memory.

It should be kept in mind that all references to the employment of Allied air forces are based on the information available to German military authorities at the time of their commitment.

The figures given (not, however, the time indications) can be properly evaluated only in terms of their reciprocal relations. The author's thoughts regarding the limited significance of statistics as well as the characteristics and deficiencies of the reporting methods will be given expression elsewhere.

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The photographs have been taken from the War Diary of the I Fighter
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CHAPTER I

DAY ACTIONS DURING JANUARY 1944

I. SURVEY

a. American Offensive Activity

The Command Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, suspected that the American Air Forces in Great Britain had received reinforcements during January 1944, especially fighter aircraft units. On the whole, however, although the total number of aircraft employed during January was larger than before, there was no appreciable increase in the striking power of individual attacks, nor were the successes enjoyed by the American Air Force appreciably greater than before.

Seven large-scale attacks were directed against the Reich, one of which was called off before the aircraft had left the ground, presumably because of adverse weather conditions. Weather conditions were such that sight bombing was possible on only two occasions, and one of these attacks was only partially successful. Inasmuch as the American Air Force units had to resort to instrument bombing during all the other attacks, the damage suffered by vital targets within the Reich was relatively insignificant, with the exception of the destruction wrought on Kiel.

As was the case in December 1943, American air commanders in Great Britain demonstrated caution in their choice of days characterized by

favorable weather conditions for their large-scale attacks.

No definite pattern was discernible in the choice of attack targets.

The penetration of American bomber aircraft into Central Germany on 11 January, with favorable weather conditions for the defenders, resulted in serious losses for the attacking units. At the time of this attack, the American escort fighters were not yet able to function adequately as a protective screen for the bombers and to shield them effectively against German single and twin-engine fighter aircraft attacking from a distance, even though the latter were numerically inferior.

After mid-January, American fighter units began more and more to carry out independent penetration actions into Germany via Belgium and Holland. It was assumed that these were chiefly orientation flights for the benefit of newly arrived fighter units.

As German military leaders had anticipated, in January 1944 the American Air Forces in Great Britain began to follow the principle of selecting several targets in the Reich for the same attack day and of carrying out large-scale attacks on occupied airfields in order to paralyze German defensive activity. Even so, the American attack of 31 January, on German airfields in Holland, was without effect.

Apart from the large-scale attacks, American air activity during

January was conspicuously limited. On eight days during the month there were very few American aircraft, or none at all, observed over the Reich.

There was a slight increase in offensive air activity against German targets carried out by the American Air Forces stationed in Italy. This was limited to attacks on targets in the Vienna area or in the Alpine regions.

In view of the increase in numerical strength of American Air Forces in Great Britain, the commanders of the I Fighter Corps were forced to give serious consideration to the possibility of an appreciable increase in American offensive activity as soon as weather conditions became more favorable in the spring of 1944.

b. The Commitment of the I Fighter Corps

Despite their numerical inferiority, the German single and twin-engine fighter units demonstrated on 11 January that the employment tactics and striking power of the daytime fighter units assigned to air defense operations were capable of inflicting such high losses on the American enemy, under favorable weather conditions at any rate, that they would soon exceed the limit of expendable loss. If weather conditions were unfavorable, however, the technical deficiencies of German fighter aircraft and the low training standard of replacement fighter pilots precluded steadily successful and effective combat

against American superiority at high altitude. Thus, January 1944 was again characterized by the inability of German forces to provide an effective defense against American day attacks on the Reich, let alone to prevent them. Only the utmost caution in employing aircraft in bad weather--especially when take-off and landing conditions were uncertain--was able to keep German losses within reasonable limits. Even so, approximately one-third of German aircraft losses was due to commitment under unfavorable weather conditions.

In compliance with the suggestion made in December 1943 by the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, the geographical concentration of daytime fighter units was carried out in northwestern Germany, eastern Holland, and in the area between Bremen and Hannover. Corresponding organizational changes were completed for almost all units at wing level.

The technique of combat by mixed units in close wing formation proved effective when weather conditions were favorable. The assembling of larger units in wing formation was rarely successful, however, under poor weather conditions. The technique of attack from the front, which has proved to be most generally successful, has not yet been mastered by all fighter units.

There has been no numerical reinforcement of the daytime fighter units assigned to Reichs air defense operations, although an increase was requested in December 1943 by the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps.

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The use of daytime fighter aircraft by so-called piggy-back groups belonging to single-engine night fighter units, and the high losses of the latter during January 1944 had a derogatory effect on the employability of the daytime fighter forces.

The supplying of aircraft for the daytime fighter units was, on the whole, satisfactory.

The total striking power of the daytime fighter units assigned to the I Fighter Corps was greater during January 1944 than during the latter months of 1943. The success obtained on 11 January (under favorable weather conditions) did much to increase the confidence--in command elements and line units--in an ultimately effective defense against American day attacks, although the tactical and numerical superiority of the American fighter units had by no means been fully demonstrated.

c. Successes and Losses During January 1944

During January 1944, the average total number of daytime fighter aircraft available for employment by the I Fighter Corps was:

400 single-engine fighter aircraft,

80 twin-engine fighter aircraft, and

100 night fighter aircraft suitable for daytime employment.

The total number of daytime fighter aircraft committed by the I Fighter Corps during January 1944 was: 2,306 aircraft.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the I Fighter Corps during

January 1944 amounted to: 122 aircraft, or 5.3% of the total number of aircraft committed.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the enemy within the area covered by the I Fighter Corps during January 1944 amounted to: 179 aircraft (excluding those brought down by antiaircraft artillery), or 2.5% of the estimated total number of aircraft (7,158) employed by the American Air Forces against the Reich.

d. ~~Other Significant Events~~ Remarks

Conference at Command Headquarters, I Fighter Corps

On 19 January 1944, at the Headquarters of the I Fighter Corps in De Breul, Holland, a conference was held with Luftwaffe signal communications officers attached to the Luftwaffe High Command, the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, and the Headquarters, Air Fleet Reich. During the course of this conference, the Commanding Officer of the I Fighter Corps pointed out that the majority of day fighter crews were incapable of operating airborne radio equipment. He emphasized that the signal communications officers and not the technical officers attached to the fighter groups were responsible for guaranteeing the functional reliability of airborne radio instruments and for assuring that the flying personnel were trained to operate such equipment. The Commanding General then requested that the Chief Signal Officer, Luftwaffe High Command, take action to assign capable signal communications officers to the fighter aircraft groups.

Extract from the Minutes of a Conference Held on 25 January 1944, at
Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, at De Briel, Holland

The conference began at 1230; among those present were the commanding officers of the 1st, 2^d, and 3^d Fighter Divisions, and Generalmajor Galland, General of the Fighter Aircraft Forces.

During the course of the conference, Generalmajor Schmid, Commanding General, I Fighter Corps, brought out the following points:

"The numerical strength of the American Air Forces in Great Britain has increased. We must face the fact that American offensive activity against the Reich will probably become greater during the coming weeks and months and that the American fighter escorts will become much stronger than they are at present. The estimated flight-range (as far as Braunschweig) of the Thunderbolts used as escort fighters has not yet been confirmed. On the other hand, we know that the Lightning fighters, equipped with supplementary gas-tanks, are able to provide a protective screen for the bombers as far as central Germany. It is extremely important that our high-altitude fighter units provoke the Lightnings to join combat, so that they will be forced to dump their auxiliary tanks. If they can be forced to do so, they will have no alternative but to break off combat and return to their bases before they run out of fuel. It does not seem likely that American fighter aircraft will be able to penetrate as far as Berlin at present.

It is anticipated that, in future, the American bomber units will

select two or more targets for attack on the same day. Careful note should be made of the flights of American morning reconnaissance aircraft, since these are nearly always charged with the mission of reconnoitering weather conditions and targets preparatory to an attack. It has often been observed that the following bombers use the same flight course as the reconnaissance aircraft which preceded them.

As regards the commitment of our day fighter units, we must try to follow the technique of assembling light, heavy, and twin-engine fighters at combat altitude and of bringing them to bear against the invading bombers in closed combat formation. In this way we should be able to maintain numerical superiority at a given time in a given place.

The practice of moving fighter units early in the morning will be discontinued; experience has shown that these units have not regained the required state of operational readiness by the time the American aircraft begin to appear. If weather conditions or the military situation should render the transfer of fighter units necessary, they should be transferred on the evening before an attack is expected.

In order to assure the smooth transfer of fighter units in the air from one/area of control to the other, all fighter divisions will announce their control frequencies every evening. Each divisional command will also inform its neighboring commands of the transfer of any of its units.

Before fighter units are ordered up a second time against the same group of bombers, they must be given all available information regarding

the position of the enemy aircraft, especially when the fighter units are not in their own divisional command area or have landed at fields other than those specifically assigned to fighter aircraft.

All fighter aircraft will be certain to tune in their identification equipment. This precaution is absolutely necessary in order to avoid their being fired upon by our own antiaircraft artillery.

The antiaircraft artillery officers assigned to the fighter divisions will be responsible for keeping the latter informed of the air situation and of the positions of our own fighter units in the air at all times. Artillery officers will direct their defensive fire in accordance with orders issued by the commanders of the fighter divisions."

II. DAY ACTIONS, 1 January through 16 January 1944 (excluding large-scale American attacks)

(see Figure 76, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The period was characterized by surprisingly little activity on the part of the American Air Forces. During the reporting period, the following actions were noted:

Approximately 40 American fighter aircraft penetrated as far as the Dutch coast; 34 aircraft, flying singly, were observed in the vicinity of the Dutch coast; and 4 Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft were reported over the West Frisian Islands and the English Channel.

Reconnaissance activity was carried out over Jutland and the western portion of the Baltic Sea as far as the Haff of Stettin. It was impossible to determine the flight course of one of these reconnaissance aircraft, which had approached over southern Holland.

On 14 January, several enemy aircraft attacked a German ocean convoy off the western coast of Jutland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

Several single-engine fighters, stationed at the airfield at Husum (in Schleswig), were sent into combat against the enemy aircraft attacking the convoy.

c. Allied Losses

2 aircraft certainly brought down

1 aircraft probably brought down

d. German Losses

None

III. DAY ACTIONS, 16 January through 1 February 1944 (excluding large-scale American attacks)

(see Figure 77, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The following actions were carried out by the American Air Forces during the reporting period:

Orientation flights over Holland - approximately 300 fighter aircraft.

Single flights over the Dutch coast - approximately 40 aircraft.

Reconnaissance flights - 9 Mosquito aircraft.

Attacks on German-occupied airfields - approximately 150 aircraft.

The following areas were covered by American reconnaissance activity: Jutland, the area around Rheine, Münster, the Ruhr District, and the Tyrol around Innsbruck.

The orientation flights were assumed to be for the benefit of recently arrived fighter crews. Moreover, from 1327 to 1427 on 25 January, a group of approximately 50 Thunderbolts attacked the airfield at Gilze Rijen in Holland. Relatively little damage was caused.

On 27 January, from ~~1429 to 1607~~ 0849 to 0906, six singly-flying fighter bombers bombarded the benzole factory at IJmuiden, in Holland.

On 31 January, from 1429 to 1607, a group of approximately 150 American aircraft carried out attacks on German-occupied airfields in Holland. The damage suffered by airfield installations was relatively slight, (see Figure 78, Annex).

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Although experience has shown that the prospects of success, in the commitment of fighter aircraft against American craft on close-range missions, are not great, approximately 30 single-engine fighters from the 3^d Fighter Division were sent up in scramble against the American attackers on 31 January.

c. Allied Losses

4 ^a Aircraft certainly brought down.

d. German Losses

None.

IV! THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON KIEL AND MÜNSTER, 4 January 1944

(see Figure 79, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 0800, German radio reconnaissance reported the assembling of American attack units in Great Britain. The take-off of a small force with course to the east was reported first. By 0935 they had reached

the Dutch coast. Here the group, consisting of approximately 150 bombers with a large fighter escort, split into three waves, which proceeded as follows:

first wave - over the [^]Island of Texel

second wave - over the Zuyder Zee

third wave - over Amsterdam.

Proceeding towards the east and southeast, all three waves continued into the Osnabrück, Münster, and Rheine area, where they bombarded Rheine and Münster and then headed back towards Great Britain. North of Dortmund they were picked up by additional fighter aircraft, which had flown in over the mouth of the Schelde at 0953.

The use of a small force initially, as described above, had prepared German fighter commanders for a larger-scale action later in the day. Thus it was no surprise when a larger force, consisting of approximately 400 bombers, 300 single-engine, and 30 twin-engine fighters, was reported over the North Sea. At 1012 their position was reported 90 kilometers northwest of the [^]Island of Texel, with course towards the northeast. Divided into at least six smaller units, the Fortresses continued their flight north of the Frisian Islands towards the coast of Jutland, which they crossed at 1110, at a point between the ⁱIslands of Röm and Husum. From here they proceeded directly to the attack on the city of Kiel. Sight bombing over the target was possible during only a part of the attack. The American bombers flew back to Great Britain in broad front formation, passing over a point between Esbjerg and the ⁱIsland of Texel, with course towards the west and northwest. The last returning bombers were observed over Emden at approximately 1330. A large group of American fighter aircraft came in over Emden and Wilhelmshaven at 1115 and proceeded as far inland as Neumünster, where they picked

up the returning bombers and escorted them home.

The American attack on Kiel caused a great deal of property damage, including several heavy industry plants. The damage inflicted on Münster and Rheine, however, was relatively slight.

In addition to the actions described above, the following operations were carried out by the American Air Forces on 4 January:

A group of approximately 50 single-engine fighter aircraft penetrated as far as the border of the Reich, flying over the mouth of the Schelde at ~~1015~~ 0909. Their return flight began at 1015, at an altitude of 3,500 meters.

Two aircraft flew over the islands located around the mouth of the Schelde during the time from 1336 to 1353.

A single aircraft flew over the ⁱIsland of Texel at 1406 on the way to Bergen. Its flight altitude was reported at 1,500 meters. At 1421 it crashed north of Bergen.

A single Mosquito reconnaissance airplane was observed 10 kilometers north of the ⁱIsland of Langeland at 1335. It flew on over Vordingborg as far as the ⁱIsland of Rügen and returned via Esbjerg. Its position at 1507 was reported 70 kilometers west of Esbjerg.

Between 1455 and 1548, approximately 30 Typhoon fighter aircraft flew in as far as as Gilze Rijen/Antwerp area, crossing the mouth of the Schelde. Their altitude was reported as 50 to 200 meters.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Units from the 1st and 2^d Fighter Divisions were sent up against the attackers at Kiel, and from the 3^d Fighter Division against the attackers at Münster. The total commitment was 316 ~~XXXXXXXX~~ single and twin-engine fighter aircraft.

Because of snow flurries and rapidly moving clouds, it was impossible to assemble fighter units in close formation in the air and to guide them to the enemy above the cloud cover. Only a few of our aircraft managed to make contact with the enemy, and these few became involved in uneven combat because of the numerical superiority of the American forces.

c. Allied Losses

1 aircraft certainly brought down

13 aircraft probably brought down

1 aircraft crashed near Bergen

d. German Losses

12 aircraft

personnel: 7 dead

2 wounded

4 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over Great Britain: 3 to 10/10 cover of cumulus and nimbus clouds between 500 to 700 and 3,000 to 4,000 meters.

Over northern Germany and Holland: violent snow flurries; clouds above 500 meters, flurrying snow between 300 and 500 meters; visibility less than one kilometer; cloud cover rated as varying from 5 to 10/10.

Over the target areas: rapidly moving clouds, accompanied by snow flurries.

V. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON KIEL AND DÜSSELDORF, 5 January 1944

(see Figure 80, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 0930 the first American bombers were reported approaching in a broad front extending from a point 100 kilometers west of the ¹/₂ Island of Texel to a point 200 kilometers west of the ¹/₂ Island of Terschelling with

their course towards the northeast. Passing over the North Sea, they crossed the coast of Jutland between the ^{is}land of Fanö and the mouth of the Elbe River and flew on towards the southeast to Kiel. After bombarding Kiel, they flew back towards the west at 1140, crossing the coast at a point between the ^{is}land of Pellworm and the Bay of Jade. By 1240 the last returning formations were reported at a point approximately 150 kilometers north of the island of Schiermonnikoog. The bomber group, consisting of approximately 400 aircraft, was protected along its southern flank by an escort of approximately 200 American fighter aircraft on both its approach and return flights. From 0955 to 1010, fighter forces were reported arriving over the coast near Bergen, and beginning at 1052 several fighter aircraft flew over the island of Texel and on into the area north of Hamburg.

As a defensive precaution, the city of Kiel was enveloped in an artificial smoke screen during the attack. Despite this fact, the American attack succeeded in inflicting serious damage on public and private buildings.

A second attack wave of about 200 bomber aircraft reached the areas of Duisburg, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Koblenz, and Trier. Although conditions were favorable for sight bombing, the damage in Düsseldorf, Neuss, and Jülich was relatively insignificant. The first report of this second attack wave was received at 1035, and gave the position of the enemy aircraft at 70 kilometers west of the mouth of the Schelde. Moving in broad front formation, they passed between Roermond and Malmédy and flew on into the Rhine area. Reaching the border of the Reich at 1135, part of the bombers turned around and returned, while the majority continued on to take part in the attack. After unloading their bombs, they began their return flights at 1236, with course towards the west. An American fighter

group, approximately 80 strong, appeared over the mouth of the Schelde at 1149, flew on to pick up the returning bombers over Holland, and returned with the bombers, crossing the Channel coast at about 1330 at a point between the mouths of the Schelde and the Somme.

In addition to the attacks reported above, the American Air Forces carried out the following actions on 5 January:

A single Mosquito aircraft carried out a reconnaissance mission over the area north of Stettin. It was first observed at 1219, west of the island of Rügen. Flying back, it passed over the islands of Moen and Ringkøbing and was lost to sight at 1401.

In the time from 1322 to 1447, a second Mosquito reconnoitered the area of Koblenz, Trier, and Verdun, having approached from south of Aix la Chapelle.

From 1428 to 1517, a third Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft was observed over The Hague and the Emmerich area. It flew back by way of Ostende.

A fourth Mosquito reconnaissance airplane flew over the island of Goeree at 1439, flew on to Duisburg, and back towards the west over Woensdrecht at 1547.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

With the exception of the single-engine fighter group at Dortmund, all available single and twin-engine fighter forces were employed against the invaders as they passed over the North Sea coast. Despite stormy weather conditions, the majority of our fighters were able to attack the American units in the area between Helgoland and Kiel. The fighting was fast and violent, but the American fighter aircraft were able to keep our fighters so occupied that they had little opportunity to get at the bombers. After weather conditions had improved, the fighter

group at Dortmund was sent up against the southernmost group of bombers, and succeeded in bringing down six.

The total commitment by the I Fighter Corps was 269 aircraft (single and twin-engine fighters).

There is no mention in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps of the employment of the units assigned to the 7th Fighter Division.

c. Allied Losses

16 bombers and 5 single-engine fighters certainly brought down

13 bombers and 5 single-engine fighters probably brought down

d. German Losses

11 aircraft

personnel: 1 dead

6 wounded

15 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over the northern German coast and Holland: scattered cumulus and nimbus clouds beginning at 500 meters and extending to 4,000 meters, sporadic rain flurries.

Over the northern edge of the Mittelgebirge and the Ruhr District: closed cover of low-lying stratus clouds, occasional snowfall.

Over Kiel: sparsely scattered stratus clouds between 4,000 and 4,500 meters.

VI. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON MANNHEIM-LUDWIGSHAFEN AND FRANKFURT/MAIN, 7 January 1944

(see Figure 81, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During favorable take-off weather in the British Isles, an American force consisting of approximately 550 bombers, 250 single-engine, and

50 twin-engine fighters, took off for an attack on targets located near the confluence of the Rhine and Main Rivers. Although this area was covered by high-altitude clouds, the attack inflicted serious damage on industrial installations in Mannheim.

At 1005 the bombers, protected by a large fighter escort, passed over the mouth of the Schelde, moving on towards the east and southeast over Emmerich and Aix la Chapelle, and penetrating as far as Limburg/Lahn, Frankfurt/Main, Mannheim, Kaiserslautern, and Traben-Trarbach. After unloading their bombs on Mannheim-Ludwigshafen, the area south of Frankfurt, and Kaiserslautern, the American units began their return flight with course towards the northwest, passing over the area south of Brussels. The last American bombers crossed over the Channel coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Fécamp at 1410. Many of the escorting fighters had turned around and flown back immediately after reaching the border of the Reich or over the Ruhr District. A group of fighter aircraft was reported over the mouth of the Schelde at 1155, waiting to pick up the returning bombers and escort them home. They met the bombers over the Brussels area.

In addition to the attack reported above, the American Air Forces carried out the following actions on 7 January:

At 1121 a singly-flying airplane was reported over the island of Amrum. It proceeded over the northern tip of the island of Laaland and over the island of Falster, where it disappeared from sight at 1144.

During the time from 1253 to 1324, a single aircraft was reported over the islands of Röm and Laaland. It was observed as far as a point 20 kilometers east of the island of Falster, where it disappeared from sight.

From 1320 to 1328, a group of approximately 20 aircraft was observed

flying along the coast west of the island of Walcheren.

One airplane was reported along the coast near Esbjerg/Jutland from 1318 to 1331.

At 1520 one aircraft was observed flying back towards the west over the island of Fehmarn, north of Flensburg and Esbjerg. Its last position was given as 60 kilometers west of Westerland at 1608.

An air attack on Wiener-Neustadt was carried out by a force of approximately 100 bomber aircraft from bases in Italy.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Several day fighter units were kept out of action by poor weather conditions.

c. Allied Losses

Allied losses could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

10/10 cover of multiple-str^a clouds between 500 and 2,500 meters.

Over the Bay of Helgoland: cloud cover beginning at 150 meters, rain.

VII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BRAUNSCHWEIG, OSCHERSLEBEN, AND OSNABRÜCK,
11 January 1944

(see Figure 82, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 0828, German radio reconnaissance detected the assembling of a force of approximately 500 American bombers in the area south of Ipswich. The first bombers, accompanied by a large fighter escort, were reported approaching at 1010; their ~~XXXXXX~~ position was given

as 150 kilometers west of the Dutch coast, with course towards the east. Reaching the coast at a point between Den Helder and The Hague, the American units moved forward in a widely-spread line, the northernmost end passing over Assen, Verden, and Gardelegen, and the southernmost units over Stadtlohn, Paderborn, and Nordhausen, as far as the Magdeburg, Merseburg, and Dessau areas. Although conditions were excellent for sight bombing, bombardment was sporadic, and the few hits scored on Bienrode (near Braunschweig), Braunschweig, and Oschersleben caused relatively little damage to industrial installations. At 1155 the bombers began their return flights, most of them with course towards the west, but a few flying towards the northwest. Flying in broad front formation, the bombers crossed the coast between the island of Borkum and the mouth of the Schelde. The majority of the escorting fighter units had turned back at 1120, when the bombers crossed the border of the Reich, leaving the latter to operate ~~without~~ without protection over the target areas.

At 1143, a group of approximately 100 Liberator bombers, reported 50 kilometers west of Bergen, followed in the wake of the main attacking force. Moving towards the east, they reached the area of Osnabrück, Bielefeld, and Münster, where they bombarded the cities of Osnabrück, Bielefeld, and Meppen, and headed for home at 1220. The returning Liberators were met by American fighter aircraft over Meppel and Appeldoorn, the fighters having flown over between Den Helder and The Hague shortly after 1200.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

1st Fighter Division: over Braunschweig

2^d Fighter Division: over Hannover and Paderborn

3^d Fighter Division: over Bremen and Bielefeld in their first

scramble; against the returning bombers over Münster in the second.

All three fighter divisions succeeded in assembling their units in close combat formation. Excellent high-altitude visibility enabled these to attack the American units (four-engine bombers) repeatedly and from the front. Our high-altitude fighters were able to keep the numerically inferior American escort fighters so occupied that our twin-engine fighters were free to attack the unprotected bomber aircraft. The aerial combat was carried out over the area bounded by Nienburg, Braunschweig, Oschersleben, Hannover, and Paderborn.

The defensive operations of the I Fighter Corps were crowned with success, ~~which~~ while our own losses remained within reasonable bounds. This success prevented the American Air Forces from carrying out their planned attack on industrial plants located in central Germany, and at least one-third of the total number of ^{bomber} aircraft employed by the enemy was destroyed.

A total of 239 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

113 aircraft certainly brought down, as follows:

by the 1st Fighter Division: 17 bombers and 3 fighters

by the 2^d Fighter Division: 54 bombers and 1 fighter

by the 3^d Fighter Division: 34 bombers and 4 fighters

33 aircraft probably brought down

~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~

d. German Losses

21 aircraft completely destroyed

19 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 6 dead

17 wounded

34 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Sparsely scattered stratus clouds between 1,200 and 1,500 meters.

Over the target area: predominantly clear with scattered clouds.

VIII. THE PENETRATION BY AMERICAN BOMBERS INTO THE DÜREN AREA, 24 January 1944

(see Figure 83, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The situation picture, Headquarters, I Fighter Corps (based on information received from radio reconnaissance stations and on reports from radar stations):

Reports were received to the effect that a force consisting of approximately 700 bombers and 300 fighter aircraft was assembling for take-off at American bases in Great Britain. At 0957, large enemy formations were reported crossing the Channel coast between Osterschelde and Dunkirk with course towards eastsoutheast. At 1020, after receipt of a radio message "Operation called off" (intercepted by German radio reconnaissance), the majority of the American bombers, then over Belgium, turned around and started back to Great Britain. Some 150 of the original group continued as far as Aix la Chapelle and Düren, then turned around and headed back to their bases. Several smaller fighter units penetrated as far as the Koblenz and Frankfurt areas. Beginning at 1106, large numbers of fighter aircraft flew over the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Cap Gris Nez, and continued on towards the southeast as far as the border of the Reich. The aircraft types identified were Thunderbolts, Spitfires, and Lightnings.

The situation picture, Headquarters, Air Fleet Reich (based on the reports of the eye-ear aircraft reporting stations assigned to the aircraft

observation stations, Luftwaffe administrative commands and headquarters, antiaircraft artillery divisions):

The American bombers penetrated as far as the areas of Koblenz, Frankfurt, and Mannheim. Here they separated into two groups, one to continue to Berlin, and the other to Nuremberg and Pilsen. On the basis of this information, airraid alarms were ordered in Berlin, Nuremberg, Regensburg, and Pilsen.

+++++

The aircraft observation commands probably received reports, based on the motor noise of German single and twin-engine fighter aircraft returning to their bases from Aix la Chapelle, Koblenz, and Frankfurt, and from these constructed American flight courses towards Berlin and Nuremberg.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

When the American force was reported crossing the coast, with course towards the southeast, the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, assumed that an attack on targets in the Rhine and Main River areas was planned. Accordingly, the following forces were sent up at 1000:

1st and 2^d Fighter Divisions: over Koblenz

3^d Fighter Division: over Brüssels.

Only a few of our fighter aircraft achieved contact with the enemy over Düren and Koblenz. One twin-engine fighter formation became involved in combat with American fighters over Koblenz. As soon as it was realized that the American units had been called home, the fighter units of the I Fighter Corps were ordered to land.

On the basis of the situation picture available at the Headquarters, Air Fleet Reich, the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, assumed that a large-scale attack on Berlin was forthcoming and took a personal hand in operations. In order to assure adequate defense against the anticipated attack on Berlin and, later, Pilsen, he ordered the Headquarters, Air Fleet Reich,

to send up all available fighter aircraft, including day and night units, belonging to the fighter divisions and fighter pilot schools. The Headquarters, Third Air Fleet, in Paris also received orders to attack the American units when they flew back from Berlin.

The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, however, was convinced that it was right in its assumption that the American units had turned around and headed for Great Britain as soon as they reached the Düren area, and therefore ordered its fighter units to land again at their take-off bases.

A total of 410 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft were employed by the I Fighter Corps.

Under the command of the Air Fleet Reich, 411 single and twin-engine fighters and night fighters were committed (aircraft belonging to the 7th Fighter Division, the Fighter Command Austria, and to several training units).

c. Allied Losses

1 bomber and 5 fighters certainly brought down by units from the I Fighter Corps

3 bombers and 1 fighter probably brought down by units from the I Fighter Corps

d. German Losses (I Fighter Corps)

6 aircraft

personnel: 4 dead

4 wounded

7 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

3 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds between 600 and 2,000 meters, some peaks rising as high as 4,000 meters. Orientation by reference to ground landmarks was possible as far as the Frankfurt area; further

east such orientation was precluded by the cloud cover.

f. Remarks

The lack of uniformity in the situation picture on 24 January 1944, and the resultant senseless mass commitment of aircraft and personnel of the day fighter units, gave rise to the following suggestion from the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, addressed to the Luftwaffe High Command through the Air Fleet Reich:

"In order to assure successful air defense measures within the territory of the Reich, the following conditions must be met:

1. one central agency should be given the responsibility of preparing the situation picture
2. all the reporting agencies engaged in home air defense activity (radio reconnaissance, radar, and eye-ear reporting stations) should report to a single central agency and should be made subordinate to this agency
3. a central commanding unit should be set up to direct the commitment of day and night fighter units in home air defense activity."

This suggestion was, in effect, merely a repetition of a recommendation made by the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, during the course of the map exercise on 11 December 1943. It was not carried out until 31 March 1944.

On 25 January 1944, the following telegram from the Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe was received at the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps:

"To Generaloberst Stumpff,

Generalmajor Schmid, and Comrades.

Yesterday's little maneuver may be considered a success, except for the fact that April Fool's Day is still two months away. I should like to express my appreciation, both to myself and to all participating commanders, for our excellent work in warding off the attack on the fortress of Köpenik.

s/Göring

Reichsmarschall"

IX. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN, 29 January 1944

(see Figure 84, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 0830, German radio reconnaissance reported the assembling of American air units in the Norwich and Colchester areas. The total strength of the enemy formations was estimated at 800 bombers and 700 fighter aircraft. At 0930 the first bombers appeared over the Channel coast near Vlissingen, Ostende and Dunkirk. A force of approximately 400 Fortresses and Liberators proceeded as far as Frankfurt/Main and Mannheim, its northern flank protected by a heavy screen of fighters. The American bombers unloaded their bombs over Frankfurt, causing serious damage in the central part of the city.

The bombardment was carried out by instrument. The bombers returned to their bases on a northwest course over Belgium, where they were met by several fighter aircraft formations which had flown in over the mouth of the Schelde, and escorted home.

In addition to the attack described above, the following activity was carried out by the American Air Forces on 29 January:

A single aircraft was observed over Emden and the island of Borkum during the time from 0739 and 0758.

Between 0757 and 0807, one airplane was reported 100 kilometers west

of Katwijk.

Two aircraft were reported over the island of Schouwen during the time from 1342 to 1343.

Between 0851 and 0855, a single aircraft was observed over the mouth of the Meuse River.

At 1338 a group of six aircraft flew over the island of Walcheren and proceeded on to the Gilze-Rijen area.

At 1523 several aircraft were observed above Hoek van Holland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

A successful commitment of the single and twin-engine fighter groups was prevented by poor weather conditions. It was planned to assemble all the units of the 2^d Fighter Division over Osnabrück (where the fire from our antiaircraft artillery stations would have served as a navigational aid) and all those of the 3^d Fighter Division over München-Gladbach (also antiaircraft artillery fire), but this plan could not be carried out. The majority of our units was unable to penetrate the very dense cloud cover prevailing above 3,000 meters.

2^d Fighter Division: The II Group, 11th Single-Engine Fighter Wing, was able to penetrate as far as the Leeuwarden and Gronigen area, and the II Group, 26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing, as far as a point west of Hannover - in both cases, by making a long detour towards the north. By this time, the American formations were already on their way back to Great Britain and, to prevent their running short of fuel, our units were ordered to land without having established contact with the enemy. The II Group, 26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing, had to be directed to an airfield on the North Sea coast in order to assure its landing safely.

3^d Fighter Division: The I Group, 3^d Single-Engine Fighter Wing, and the 10th Squadron, 2^d Single-Engine Fighter Wing, took off from the airfield

at Rheine, and succeeded in penetrating through the cloud cover. Twenty-one aircraft from these two units were involved in combat with American fighters over Frankfurt/Main and Aix la Chapelle.

The total commitment of the I Fighter Corps was 224 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft.

c. Allied Losses

4 fighters certainly brought down

1 aircraft probably brought down

d. German Losses

None

e. Weather Conditions

Unbroken cloud cover over all German-occupied airfields.

Within the area assigned to the 1st Fighter Division: dense cloud cover between 100 and 3,500 to 4,000 meters.

Within the areas assigned to the 2^d and 3^d Fighter Divisions: cloud cover beginning at 250 to 500 meters, ~~xxxxxxx~~ varying according to time and place; visibility was so poor even below the cloud cover that instrument flying was necessary above 150 meters; the upper limit of the cloud cover was between 1,000 and 1,400 meters, above which visibility was good.

Over Frankfurt: at the time of the attack, Frankfurt was hidden by a 10/10 cover of stratus clouds between 500 and 1,200 meters.

X. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BRAUNSCHWEIG, 30 January 1944

(see Figure 85, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1020, having assembled over the Norwich area, a force of approximately 400 bomber aircraft and a heavy fighter screen took off from the British Isles with course towards the east. Passing over the

coast between the island of Texel and The Hague, the American formations pushed on over northern Holland to Hannover, Braunschweig, and Magdeburg. Using instrument bombardment techniques, they dropped the majority of their bombs on Braunschweig, and a few on Hannover and Salzgitter, and at 1224 began their return flights towards the west and northwest. The formations flying farthest north crossed the coast at Den Helder, and those flying farthest south at Dunkirk. All formations had left the Continent by 1435. The total strength of the American fighter escort was approximately 300 aircraft. A part of these penetrated as far as Hannover and Braunschweig. At 1104 additional fighter aircraft were reported approaching between IJmuiden and the mouth of the Schelde. The fighters picked up the returning bombers over Minden and Rheine. The American attack caused medium-heavy damage to industrial plants and property in Braunschweig.

In addition to the attack on Braunschweig, the following actions were carried out by the American Air Forces:

During the time from 0841 to 0859, a group of fifteen Typhoon aircraft was reported approaching over the islands of Goeree and Schouwen.

Between 1426 and 1520 a force of approximately forty fighter aircraft advanced as far as Zwolle.

Between 1600 and 1605 twelve aircraft circled above the mouth of the Schelde.

Small bomber formations belonging to the American Air Forces based in Italy carried out attacks on Villach and Maribor.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Commitment was carried out as follows:

units from the 1st Fighter Division: over Braunschweig

units from the 2^d Fighter Division: over Hannover and Minden

units from the 3rd Fighter Division: over Münster, and Diepholz.

The weather was so overcast that assembly in closed combat formations proved very difficult. Only 137 of our single and twin-engine fighters were able to contact the enemy, and most of these became involved in individual combat. This, together with adverse weather conditions, resulted in rather high German losses. On the whole, 30 January 1944 had to be chalked up as a failure for the day fighter units assigned to home air defense.

A total of 351 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was committed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

17 bombers and 6 fighters certainly brought down

9 bombers and 1 fighter probably brought down

d. German Losses

30 aircraft completely destroyed

21 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 9 dead

13 wounded

30 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

10/10 cloud cover between 300 and 3,000 meters

f. Remarks

In the magazine "Aviation and Aeronautics" (published in Zürich) for June 1949, mention is made of an American attack on Klagenfurt, allegedly made on 31 January 1944 by units based in Italy.

There is no confirmation of this attack in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps or in the material of the former Military Science Branch of the German Luftwaffe.

CHAPTER II

NIGHT ACTIONS DURING JANUARY 1944

I. SURVEY

a. British Offensive Activity

British air commanders had designated Germany's capital as the chief target for nocturnal bombardment during the month of January 1944. Nine major attacks were carried out, and six of these were directed against Berlin. The purpose behind this planning was presumably to demonstrate to the world a counterpart of the German air attacks on London during the fall of 1940 and to indicate the increase in the striking power of the RAF since that time. Although the total number of British aircraft employed against Germany during January was nearly double the number used during December 1943, there was no appreciable increase in their effectiveness. Bad weather on attack nights and what seemed to be a lack of effective organization of the attacks themselves had a detrimental influence on British operations. There was no indication of British and American coordination as regarded the selection of targets.

On eighteen evenings during the month of January, the Bomber Command carried out harrassing attacks on targets in the Ruhr District, utilizing Mosquito bomber aircraft for this purpose. Most of these attacks were directed against objectives in the industrial areas of Rhein-Westfalen. The fact that there were twelve nights during January in which no aircraft whatsoever were committed against Germany would seem to indicate that the RAF was following the policy of selecting nights with fair weather for its attacks.

On four nights mining activity by the RAF was reported.

b. British Offensive Tactics and Radio Interference

The Bomber Command attempted to offset the effectiveness of the

German night fighter defense by wide detours over the North Sea and Jutland, as well as by the employment of Mosquito raiders and mine-laying aircraft in diversionary attacks. These measures had only limited success in deceiving the commanders of the German night fighter defenses. Frequent attempts were made to conceal the intent to attack ~~by the use of~~ with heavy bombers by employing Mosquito bombers at the same time in the general area of the intended target. The German identification stations, however, were able to identify the Mosquitos flying with the bomber streams because of their greater speed and could thus distinguish them from the four-engine bombers. British efforts to jam the German radar instruments and to interfere in German radio communication continued through January. Inasmuch as there were no innovations in the techniques heretofor applied, these measures had only limited success.

c. The Commitment of German Night Fighter Units

Adverse weather conditions during January 1944 precluded fully effective employment of night fighter aircraft. Nevertheless, on no occasion were the British able to attack without meeting some sort of defense. In every case, British assembly activity for night missions was recognized well in advance, and our radar stations, using their Rotterdam direction-finding equipment, were able to follow the flight course of the British bomber streams with almost perfect accuracy. Thus, all the conditions necessary for a systematic commitment of our night fighter units obtained. On the whole, however, such commitment was practicable only in the case of the units belonging to the 3^d Fighter Division, since these were the only aircraft equipped with airborne search instrument, SN-2. Because of extensive British radio interference activity, the 'Himmelbett' technique gave promise of success only against mine-laying aircraft and against the bombers on their return flights.

Moreover, night fighter aircraft standing by in the Himmelbett areas of the 3^d Fighter Division (over Holland and Belgium) were frequently successful in controlled pursuit operations starting from these areas.

In order to meet the threat represented by the British Mosquito bombers, the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, employed night fighter aircraft provisionally equipped for operations at high altitudes and at high speeds. The aircraft types He 219, Me 110, and Me 109 were utilized in these attempts, but did not prove very successful. Thus it may be said that the German night fighter forces had no effective means of meeting the British harrassing raids.

All the attempts on the part of the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, to initiate action - in coordination with the High-Altitude Flight Station at Oranienburg and with various agencies of the German aircraft industry - to improve the performance of the night fighter aircraft to a degree which would render them an effective defense against the Mosquitos, met with so little support from higher headquarters that the results were negligible.

During January the night fighter crews made considerable progress in the techniques of controlled combat against specific objectives and in night pursuit operations during adverse weather. Both officers and enlisted men demonstrated laudable devotion to their duty, and although we were unable to effect complete neutralization of any one bomber stream, still it can be assumed that the losses suffered by the British bomber forces were painful ones. The striking power of the German night fighter forces had increased.

d. Successes and Losses During January 1944

During January 1944, the average total number of night fighter aircraft available for employment by the I Fighter Corps was 225 twin-

engine fighter aircraft.

The total number of night fighter aircraft committed by the I Fighter Corps during January 1944 was 1,436 twin-engine fighter aircraft.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the I Fighter Corps during January 1944 amounted to 59 twin-engine fighter aircraft, or 4.2% of the total number of aircraft committed.

The total losses suffered by the enemy within the area covered by the I Fighter Corps during January 1944 amounted to 268 aircraft (excluding those brought down by antiaircraft artillery), or 5.3% of the estimated total number of aircraft (5,036) employed by the RAF against the Reich.

e. ~~Other Significant Events~~ Remarks

At 1930 on the evening of 19 January, a conference of Luftwaffe signal communications officers from the Luftwaffe High Command, ~~the Chief Signal Officer~~ Office of the Chief Signal Officer, and from the Headquarters, Air Fleet Reich, was held at the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, at De Breul. At this meeting the Commanding General, I Fighter Corps, requested that the following steps be taken:

that the network of Wismar stations be tightened, so that an increased number of flame position reports might be available to serve as confirmation of the flight course of the British bombers;

that the number of Gerhard position-finding stations be increased, for the same reason as indicated above;

that the delivery of the airborne search instruments (SN-2) be speeded up, so that all the night fighter aircraft belonging to the 2^d Night Fighter Wing might be supplied as soon as possible;

that all night fighter aircraft be equipped with search instruments of the Liechtenstein BC type;

that the panorama objective be removed from all night fighter aircraft;

that immediate action be taken to resolve the difficulties impeding the production of the LV-1 tubes for radar equipment;

that action be expedited on the installment of airborne search instruments of the Naxos and Rosendahl-Halbe types in a sampling of aircraft from the 1st Night Fighter Wing for purposes of testing; it was suggested that the operational testing be accomplished in line units rather than at the Experimental Station at Werneuchen, so that fighter crews might be trained immediately in the use of these instruments under battle conditions.

On 25 January 1944 there was another conference at corps headquarters at De Breul. This meeting was attended by the commanding officers of the fighter divisions, the commanding officer of the 30th Fighter Division (single-engine fighters), and Generalmajor Galland, General of the Fighter Aircraft Forces. The following is quoted from the talk given by the Commanding General, I Fighter Corps:

"The RAF is employing a new tactic, that of making wide detours out to sea. If our radar stations are to be able to follow their flight course, the "flame" and "Gerhard" position reports, as well as the reports based on the data of Rotterdam direction-finding equipment, must assume increasingly greater significance. The fighter divisions, as well as our reconnaissance aircraft, must be on the lookout for flare signals sent up by the aircraft reporting stations. The techniques heretofore in use in night pursuit operations have proved very satisfactory and will be continued. Whenever possible, night fighter aircraft already standing by in the "Himmelbett" areas on the outer border of the air defense zone should be utilized in pursuit operations. The use of the two airborne search instru-

ments, SN-2 and Liechtenstein BC, together gives promise of success. Every effort should be made to overcome difficulties impeding the installment of airborne radio equipment in night fighter aircraft. The powerful short-wave transmitter stations located within fighter division areas will be used as a last resort, in case enemy interference in our aircraft control frequencies should become too bad. The successful application of the "Himmelbett" technique requires constant practice on the part of our night fighter crews and the aircraft control officers in our radar stations.

Careful preparations on the part of the fighter divisions are a sine qua non for the effective employment of fighter aircraft in "Himmelbett" areas. It is imperative that the aircraft control officers manning the radar stations and the fighter commanders plan the coordination of their efforts well in advance of the date of employment, and that the flying crews be informed fully and in time."

II. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON BERLIN, 1/2 January 1944

(see Figure 86, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the time from 1830 to 2050, in the absence of any preliminary reports from German radio reconnaissance stations, a group of approximately 30 Mosquito aircraft carried out surprise harrassing raids on the Ruhr District. Approximately 25 Mosquitos had approached from the Zuyder Zee, while five of them had come in over the mouth of the Schelde. By 2132, all the aircraft had left the Continent via the mouth of the Schelde.

At 0110 the first bombers of the major British force (numbering approximately 400) were sighted at a point about 130 kilometers west of the Dutch coast, heading east. The bombers crossed the coast in four waves between the island of Texel and Rotterdam. Mosquito bombers, preceding

the main force, opened the attack on Berlin and then headed for home. Flying in tight formation, the heavy bombers passed over the Hannover area, where they fanned out and moved on towards the east and southeast, some of them to Berlin and others to Leipzig, Altenburg, Gera, and Weisensfels. No definite direction of attack was discernible, and in fact it seemed as if poor weather conditions were preventing the attack from being carried out according to plan. The bombardment of Berlin, between 0230 and 0355, was sporadic, and the damage caused to industrial installations and private property was slight and restricted to the southern part of the city. The bombers flew back over Erfurt and the Frankfurt area, passing over the Channel coast at 0628. Their flight altitude during the approach and return flights varied between 3,600 and 7,000 meters.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

On the whole, commitment was rendered difficult by poor weather.

The following forces were employed:

in "Himmelbett" areas against approaching bombers:

formations from the 1st and 3d Fighter Divisions

in "Himmelbett" areas against returning bombers:

formations from the 1st, 2d, and 3d Fighter Divisions

in night pursuit operations:

units from the 3d Fighter Division, which were directed into the enemy bomber stream over Holland

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacons Berte and Pente

units from the 2d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacons Quelle and Zebre

From their assembly points, the night fighter aircraft from both divisions were directed on to Berlin and Leipzig.

Reconnaissance aircraft stood by over Bremen, Hannover, and Berlin.

A total number of 167 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

18 bombers brought down

d. German Losses

15 aircraft, 11 of which were lost because of difficulties occasioned by poor weather conditions.

personnel: 18 dead

8 wounded

8 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Over the Ruhr District: uninterrupted cloud cover up to 6,000 meters; danger of icing above 2,000 meters

On the enemy approach course to Berlin and return course over Frankfurt/Main: 10/10 cloud cover between 1,000 to 2,000 meters and 4,000 to 6,000 meters

Over Berlin: rain.

III. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON BERLIN, 2/ January 1944

(see Figure 87, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the evening, German radio reconnaissance reported a British attack in preparation for the second half of the night. At 0031, a stream of approximately 300 bombers was reported approaching about 120 kilometers west of the Dutch coast. Flying over the coast between the island of Texel and The Hague, the bombers headed towards the east and maintained

this course as far as Hannover. Here the attackers split into three ~~three~~ groups and continued as follows:

one group over Lüneburg, Stettin , and Eberswalde to Berlin,

one group direct east to Berlin,

and one group over Halberstadt and Bitterfeld to Berlin.

Their return flight, towards the west and southwest, began at 0250. They crossed the coast between the islands of Vlieland and Schouwen, the last aircraft reported departing the Continent at 0615.

Favored by a strong tail-wind on their approach flight, the bombers, flying through the clouds, attained a speed of 440 kilometers per hour. Their flight altitude varied between 3,000 and 7,000 meters. The bombardment of Berlin, between 0240 and 0310, was not concentrated, but managed to cause considerable property damage in the northeastern sectors of the city.

In addition to the attack described above, the RAF carried out the following actions:

Beginning at 1850, a force of fifteen Mosquitos carried out harrassing raids on Duisburg. They had penetrated to their target between 1821 and 1949, crossing the coast between Bergen and The Hague and proceeding to the Gronau, Duisburg area. They returned to their bases at 2105, flying back across the mouth of the Schelde.

At 2118 a single aircraft flew over the island of Rottumeroog and on to Groningen, Assen, and Meppel. It returned over Amsterdam at 2149.

Between 2337 and 2345, a single aircraft circled over the islands of Terschelling and Borkum.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

A cold front, moving east into the air defense zone, made effective commitment extremely difficult.

The following forces were employed in pursuit operations and in controlled combat against specific objectives:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacons Marie and 12

units from the 2d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacons Quelle and Marie

units from the 3d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacons Ludwig and Philipp.

Part of these fighter aircraft were directed into the enemy bomber stream by way of the Zuyder Zee, and part of them directly from their assembly beacons.

A total number of 128 twin-engine fighter aircraft was committed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

20 bombers brought down

d. German Losses

9 aircraft

personnel: 6 dead

5 wounded

9 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

10/10 cover of multiple-stratus ^c clouds between 1,500 and 7,000 meters; danger of icing above 2,000 meters; ground squalls.

IV. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 3/4 and 4/5 January 1944

(see Figure 88, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

3/4 January 1944: During the time between 1826 and 1859, a courier aircraft was observed flying over the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden.

At 0351 a singly flying aircraft passed over Ringkoebing as far as Husum. At 0437 it departed from Schleswig-Holstein, flying towards the west over Friedrichsstadt.

Beginning at 0502, a force of ten Mosquito bombers attacked Frankfurt/Main. At 0410 they had come in over Calais and Dunkirk, flying southeast as far as Frankfurt/Main and Giessen. By 0605 they had left the Continent, crossing the coast between The Hague and the mouth of the Schelde.

Two raiders appeared at 0508 over Essen. They had come in over Den Helder at 0430 and departed via Katwijk at 0525.

Between 0528 and 0606, a single aircraft was reported circling above the island of Texel, Harlingen, and Den Helder.

4/5 January 1944: Approaching at 1934 over the southern portion of the Zuyder Zee, a group of 15 Mosquitos flew over the Rhine industrial area and attacked the city of Krefeld. The return flight was carried out over the mouth of the Schelde, Brussels, and Blankenberghe, the last aircraft crossing the coast at 2052.

During the time from 1937 to 2018, one airplane was observed flying over the island of Texel, Assen, LM Lingen, and the Zuyder Zee.

Brandenburg on the Havel was the victim of a harrassing raid carried out by a force of ten Mosquito bombers. They had penetrated over southern Westerland beginning at 2221 and continued towards the southeast as far as Neurippen and Brandenburg. Their return flight was carried out in broad front formation towards the northwest. They crossed the coast between the island of Terschelling and Leyden, the last aircraft disappearing out to sea at 0035.

At approximately 0029, four Mosquitos flew over the coast between the islands of Texel and Vlieland, heading towards the southeast. Two of them turned around at Lingen, and the other two continued on over Rheine and

Hannover as far as the area northwest of Berlin, where they circled around for rather a long time. They were reported leaving the Continent between Den Helder and The Hague at 0314.

At 0307 two Mosquito bombers were reported approaching over Husum. After circling over Husum, they turned towards the southeast and flew as far as Hamburg. They departed at about 0407 over Wilhelmshaven and the island of Terschelling.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

3/4 January 1944: no commitment

4/5 January 1944: the following aircraft were employed:

during the harrassing raid on Essen:

1 Me-110 from the airfield at Twente

1 Me-109 from the airfield at Bonn-Hangelar

during the harrassing raid on Brandenburg:

1 Me-110 from the airfield at Stade

1 Me-110 from the airfield at Twente

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None

e. Weather Conditions

3/4 January 1944: broad bad-weather zone extending from southeastern England over Belgium and Holland as far as central Germany; gradual dispersal of the cloud cover and a transition to post cold front conditions, beginning in the north and moving inland.

4/5 January 1944: 4/10 cover of cumulus clouds between 800 and 3,000 meters; occasional rainstorms until 2000; cloud cover dispersing rapidly after midnight.

V. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON STETTIN, 5/6 January 1944

(see Figure 89, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At midnight, preparations for the take-off of a large bomber force were reported in the area of The Wash. At 0032 our long-range search instruments picked up the approach of a bomber stream located approximately 200 kilometers west of the island of Terschelling and heading towards the northeast. After crossing the North Sea, the bombers flew over the western coast of Jutland south of Lim Fjord, crossed northern Jutland, and flew east as far as Aarhus. Here they turned towards the southeast and continued over the islands of Laaland and Rügen to Stettin and Berlin. The bombers, approximately 400 strong, directed their attack at the city of Stettin. German reports on the flight course of the enemy bombers, especially those based on the data of the Rotterdam direction-finding equipment, made an attack on Berlin seem imminent. The observation station network of the I Fighter Corps was presumably too weak along the Baltic coast to pick up a clear report of the enemy's flight course over the western Baltic into Stettin. It is also possible that the British Bomber Command deliberately sent a few Mosquitos to Berlin in order to divert our attention from the main attack. The bombers left the attack area at 0347, flying west and northwest towards the Bay of Helgoland. The departing aircraft were last reported from the western coast of Jutland at 0656 and from the Dutch coast at 0535.

In addition to the attack described above, the RAF carried out the following actions during the night of 5/6 January 1944:

A force of fifteen Mosquitos flew in at 1835 between the mouth of the Schelde and Dunkirk, carried out harrassing raids over Bonn and Mayen, and returned towards the west.

At 1904 a group of ten Mosquitos raided the city of Essen. They had

flown in between Den Helder and IJmuiden at 1847, and returned between The Hague and ~~the~~ Westerschelde at 2030.

At 2100 the city of Krefeld was raided by a force of twenty Mosquitos, which had come in over Amsterdam and the southern Zuyder Zee at 2028. The bombers flew back over Rotterdam and the mouth of the Schelde at 2330.

From a base in Italy, a single aircraft penetrated as far as Frankfurt/Oder, where it dropped supplies or agents. Its flight course, picked up at 2137, took it over Glatz, Breslau and Glogau to Frankfurt. Its return course over Cottbus, Bautzen, Prague and Klagenfurt was lost at 0245.

At 0729 a single aircraft was reported over northern Jutland. It flew as far as Horsens Bay, then returned over the islands of Roem and Sylt and was lost to observers at 0801.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed:

in night pursuit operations:

a few night fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division over northern Jutland

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon 12 and guided on to radio beacon 13

units from the 2d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Quelle and guided on to radio beacon 13

units from the 3d Fighter Division, assembling at radio Beacons Philipp and Quelle and guided on to radio beacons Quelle and 13

Those fighter aircraft assembling at radio beacon 13 were directed on to Berlin to meet the expected attack and then rerouted to Stettin.

Some of the fighters recognized the fire over Stettin and headed for that city without waiting for directions. The majority, however, arrived

at Stettin too late for effective accomplishment of their mission.

from Himmelbett areas against the returning bombers:

smaller formations belonging to the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions, over the Bay of Helgoland and in northern Holland.

Deceived by the British detour maneuver, the German night fighter commanders expected a large-scale attack on Berlin and were unprepared for the actual attack on Stettin.

A total number of 143 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

11 bombers brought down

reports were received that one British bomber was so badly damaged that it was forced to make an emergency landing in Sweden.

d. German Losses

3 aircraft

personnel: 3 dead

5 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

In the area covered by the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions: almost impenetrable cover of strato-cumulus clouds; cover as low as 300 to 500 meters over Jutland.

In the area covered by the 1st Fighter Division: rapidly dispersing cloud cover of 3/10 to 5/10, beginning at 2,500 to 3,000 meters.

VI. THE BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACK ON DORTMUND AND DUISBURG, 6/7 January 1944
(see Figure 90, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 1917, a force of fifteen to twenty British Mosquitos raided the cities of Dortmund and Duisburg. Their approach courses were

as follows:

approximately fifteen aircraft; between Bergen and the island of Texel from 1841 to 1915,

approximately five aircraft: over the mouth of the Schelde.

The last aircraft were reported departing from the Dutch coast at 2030, their course towards the west. The damage in Duisburg-Hamborn and Dortmund was slight.

Between 1844 and 2342, three courier aircraft were sighted over the Skagerrak, one on its way to Sweden and the other two returning to Great Britain.

At 0215 a single Mosquito crossed the Channel coast near Bruges and flew on over Charleroi and Luxemburg as far as the Karlsruhe area. It returned to Great Britain by way of Metz, Valenciennes, and Berk s.M., crossing the coast at 0401.

Fifteen mine-laying aircraft were reported north of the West Frisian Islands at 0546. At 0624 they reached their destination, mined the waters lying between Cuxhaven and Helgoland, and at 0650 returned to their bases.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following aircraft were employed:

during the harrassing raids:

two twin-engine fighter aircraft, guided by the Y-Method

against the mine-laying aircraft:

30 twin-engine fighter aircraft, from Himmelbett areas over the Bay of Helgoland. This mission was without success due to the fact that the mine-layers were flying at a very low altitude and were protected by heavy rain flurries.

A total number of 32 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

1 Ju-88

personnel: 2 dead

e. Weather Conditions

10/10 cover of multiple-stratus⁶ clouds from 500 to 2,500 meters.

Over the Bay of Helgoland: cloud cover beginning at 150 meters; rain; scattered cloud fields at 5,000 meters.

VII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON THE RUHR DISTRICT, 7/8 and 8/9 January 1944

(see Figure 91, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

7/8 January 1944: Radar reports seemed to indicate a large-scale take-off from the area lying south of The Wash. The British formations penetrated as far as twenty kilometers west of the mouth of the Schelde and then turned towards the west.

A force of twenty aircraft attacked the city of Duisburg, coming from the southern tip of the Zuyder Zee in the time from 2038 to 2230. On their return flight, the last airplane was reported crossing the mouth of the Schelde at 2340.

Two Mosquito aircraft were observed over the Freiburg/Breisgau and Constance areas between 2144 and 0350. Both their approach and return flight courses took them over northern France and Lorraine.

Three courier aircraft were reported over the Skagerrak.

8/9 January 1944: Three groups of Mosquito bombers penetrated into the Ruhr District as follows:

The first group, consisting of twenty aircraft, crossed the coast between

between Ostende and Boulogne s.M. at 1812, and continued as far as St. Vith, Aix la Chapelle, Cologne, and Munchen-Gladbach. They returned at 1858 over the mouth of the Schelde.

The second group, consisting of ten aircraft, approached over Den Helder and Amsterdam at 1835 and penetrated as far as Rheine, Dortmund, and Düsseldorf.

The third group, consisting of fifteen aircraft, was reported approaching over the mouth of the Schelde at 1909. Five aircraft turned back after reaching Cologne, and the rest continued on over Giessen, Frankfurt/Main, Heilbronn, Mainz, and Koblenz. The last aircraft to leave the Continent were reported crossing the mouth of the Schelde at 2113.

Scattered bombs were dropped on Aix la Chapelle, Cologne, Dortmund, Düren, Elberfeld, the area north of Frankfurt/Main, and Offenbach.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

7/8 January 1944: 22 twin-engine fighter aircraft were ordered to stand by in their Himmelbett areas over Holland for possible commitment against the British attackers.

8/9 January 1944: one Me-109 (guided by the Y-Method) was employed during the harrassing raids.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

7/8 January 1944: 5/10 to 10/10 cover of strato-cumulus clouds between 500 and 4,000 meters.

8/9 January 1944: closed cover of strato-cumulus clouds between 300 and 4,000 meters; danger of icing above 1,500 meters.

VIII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON BERLIN AND SOLINGEN, 10/11 January 1944

(see Figure 92, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

There were two harrassing raids carried out by Mosquito bombers. The first of these was accomplished by a force of approximately fifteen Mosquito aircraft, whose approach was reported at 1810 over the mouth of the Schelde and northern France. After bombarding Solingen and dropping scattered bombs on München-Gladbach and the area lying north of Venlo, they departed over the mouth of the Schelde at 2030.

The second attack was on the city of Berlin, and was carried out by a group of ten aircraft. Approaching over Bremen and Stendal at 0257, three of them turned back over Holland and Oldenburg. After bombarding Berlin, the rest returned by way of Hannover and Münster, leaving the Continent at 0537 over the mouth of the Schelde.

In addition to the above, the following actions were noted:

During the time from 1950 to 2009, a single aircraft was reported circling over the coast in the vicinity of Vlieland, Leeuwarden, and the island of Terschelling. Its altitude varied from 200 to 1,500 meters.

One airplane was observed over the island of Walcheren and Gilze Rijen between 2330 and 0005.

Two aircraft were reported over the area of Katwijk and Utrecht from 0308 to 0410.

From 1807 to 0500, five aircraft were sighted over the Skagerrak, three of them flying from Sweden to Great Britain and the other two on their way to Sweden.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

Three twin-engine fighter aircraft were employed from Himmelbett areas over Holland.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

In the area covered by the 1st and 2d Fighter Divisions: 3/10 to 5/10 cover of strato-cumulus clouds between 800 and 2,000 meters.

In the area covered by the 3d Fighter Division: 8/10 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds between 1,000 and 1,600 meters; scattered clouds between 5,000 and 6,000 meters.

IX. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON ESSEN AND DUISBURG, 13/14 January 1944
(see Figure 93, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the second half of the night, the cities of Essen and Duisburg were the targets of British Mosquito raiders.

Beginning at 0325, two waves of Mosquitos were reported approaching, the first over the mouth of the Schelde and the second over the Zuyder Zee.

A force of ten aircraft circled above the following areas in Holland: Amsterdam, Zwolle, Hengelo, Twente, and Gilze Rijen.

The group bombarding the two industrial cities consisted of twenty-five aircraft, two of which penetrated as far as the Koblenz area.

After carrying out their bombardment mission, the Mosquitos left the Ruhr District with course towards the northwest, passing over the coast between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde. The last aircraft were reported leaving the Continent at 0610.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

one Me-110 from a Himmelbett area.

c. Allied Losses

1 Mosquito brought down.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

In northern and central Germany: extensive ground and high-altitude fogs.

In western Germany and Holland: heavily overcast between 300 and 5,000 meters.

X. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON BRAUNSCHWEIG, 14/15 January 1944

(see Figure 94, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1747 German radar stations picked up the first aircraft of a British bomber stream consisting of several hundred aircraft at a point some 120 kilometers west of the island of Texel and IJmuiden. Maintaining a direct course, the British bombers flew over the Zuyder Zee, Rheine, Osnabrück, and on to Braunschweig and Magdeburg. A force of Mosquitos, flying ahead of the main bomber stream, diverted attention from the actual target of the attack by continuing their flight towards Berlin, Fürstenwalde, Torgau, and Leipzig. At 1930 the bombers began their return flight towards the west, the last aircraft crossing the Dutch coast between the island of Terschelling and Westerschelde by 2145. No systematic plan was discernible behind the British attack; bombardment was widely scattered, with the area around Braunschweig apparently the focal point of the attack. Bombs were also dropped on Oschersleben, Brandenburg, and Leipzig.

In addition to the above, the following RAF actions were observed during the night of 14/15 January:

During the time from 1826 to 1854, a force of ten aircraft mined the waters immediately north of the islands of Terschelling and Langeoog. The flight altitude of the mining aircraft was reported as varying between 100 and 600 meters.

Between 1818 and 1929 five Mosquito aircraft crossed over the mouth of the Schelde, flew on over Emmerich, Wesel and Munster, and joined the main bomber stream.

Between 1714 and 2239, four courier aircraft crossed the Skagerrak on their way to or from Sweden, passing over the northern tip of Jutland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed in connection with the main enemy attack:

From Himmelbett areas during the approach and departure flights of the bombers: partial forces belonging to the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions.

In night pursuit operations:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Zebra and directed into the bomber stream over Hannover;

units from the 2d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Phillip and beginning pursuit operations in that same area; and

units from the 3d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Ludwig and taking up pursuit action over Twente in Holland.

Some of these units continued their pursuit activity during the return flight of the enemy bombers.

It is the opinion of the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, that the dissipation of the British attack force may be attributed to the rapid and effective action of our fighter aircraft against the bomber stream.

61

A total of 162 twin-engine fighter aircraft was committed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

39 bombers certainly brought down

5 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses

2 aircraft

personnel: 3 dead

3 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over the area covered by the 1st and 2d Fighter Divisions: 5/10 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds between 800 and 1,200 meters.

Over the area covered by the 3d Fighter Division: predominantly clear.

f. Remarks

Second

During the night of 14/15 January, Lieutenant Breukel, of the 4th Squadron, 2d Night Fighter Wing, brought down a total of six enemy aircraft.

XI. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON BERLIN, 20/21 January 1944

(see Figure 95, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the early evening hours, several hundred British bombers crossed over the southern part of the North Sea, with course towards the east and northeast. At 1709 their position was reported as approximately 160 kilometers west of the island of Terschelling. Flying in a fairly broad stream, they appeared over the Bay of Helgoland between Westerland and Norden, passed over the Bay of Kiel and Hamburg and continued towards the southeast to Berlin and Frankfurt/Oder. They bombarded Berlin between 1910 and 2000, causing some property damage in the eastern sector of the

city. Bombs were also dropped over Neubrandenburg, Eberswalde, and the area lying south of Berlin.

At 1928 the bombers began their return flight, the return course bounded towards the north by the line formed by Wittenberge, Bremen, and Borkum, and towards the south by the line formed by Altenburg, Bebra, Wuppertal, and the mouth of the Schelde. The last aircraft was reported passing over the coast at 2243.

At 1807 approximately seven Mosquito aircraft crossed the Dutch coast between Bergen and Den Helder, flew directly on over Meppen, Braunschweig, and Berlin, and joined the main bomber force there. By diversionary maneuvering between Berlin and Dresden, they attempted to camouflage the actual target of the attack.

The following actions were carried out during the attack on Berlin, and were assumed to be attempts to divert our attention from the latter: a mining mission in the southern part of the North Sea, and a harrasing raid on the city of Stettin by a group of Mosquito aircraft.

In addition, Duisburg and Düsseldorf were attacked by a force of approximately ten Mosquitos. ~~They~~ They had penetrated the Continent between Ostende and Calais, beginning at 2025, and had flown over Malmedy and Aix la Chapelle into the Ruhr District.

Between 2238 and 2258 a single aircraft was reported circling over the islands lying at the mouth of the Schelde.

During the night of 17/18 January, between 1725 and 1759, one British courier aircraft crossed the Skagerrak.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Weather conditions were so bad that only the most experienced night fighter crews were selected for employment, as follows:

63

In night pursuit activity during the approach flight of the bombers:

several night fighter aircraft from the 1st Fighter Division, which were directed into the bomber stream by means of the Y-Method;

units from the 3d Fighter Division; the Ju-88's assembling at radio beacon Ludwig and guided into the enemy stream over radio beacon Quelle and over the mouth of the Elbe; the Me-110's assembling at radio beacon Marie, and guided into the bomber stream over Parchim.

From Himmelbett areas during the return flight of the bombers:

small units from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions, over northwestern Germany and Holland.

In night pursuit activity during the return flight of the bombers:

a few night fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division.

A total number of 98 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

Despite their numerical inferiority, the defensive activity of our night fighter forces may be termed a noteworthy success. The majority of the British bombers brought down were hit during their return flight, by which time weather conditions had improved somewhat.

c. Allied Losses

33 bombers brought down

d. German Losses

7 aircraft, one of which was brought down by German antiaircraft artillery fire at 2208 over the freight station at Herne.

personnel: 5 dead

10 wounded

e. Weather Conditions

Over the area covered by the 2d Fighter Division: a bad-weather zone, some 200 kilometers in width, moving slowly towards the east; 10/10

cloud cover starting at 75 to 200 meters and extending as high as 5,000 to 7,000 meters.

Over the area covered by the 1st and 3d Fighter Divisions: 9/10 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds, starting at 200 to 600 meters and extending as high as 1,000 meters; danger of icing above 2,000 meters.

f. Remarks

During the night of 20/21 January, Captain Fellerer, Commanding Officer of the II ^Uroup, 5th Night Fighter Wing, brought down five British bombers.

XII. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON MAGDEBURG, 21/22 January 1944

(see Figure 96, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 2050 a British bomber stream coming from the Harwich area was reported about 120 kilometers west of the island of Texel. The group, consisting of ~~some~~ several hundred four-engine aircraft, flew over the North Sea with course towards the northeast and moved on towards the mouth of the Elbe. South of Helgoland, a small group broke off from the main force and attacked Wilhelmshaven, evidently in an attempt to draw our attention away from the continuing flight of the main stream. Over Husum and Norden, the main force wheeled about towards the southeast and continued as far as Magdeburg and Dessau. At the same time, Mosquito bombers were harrassing Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden - again in an attempt to camouflage the real targets of the attack, Magdeburg and Dessau. Dummy flares were dropped over Berlin, the area south of Magdeburg, and near Leipzig. The Mosquito aircraft participating in the diversionary actions had come in over the Zuyder Zee and continued on a direct course to Berlin, and could be clearly distinguished by our Rotterdam direction-finding equipment from the bombers

making up the main force. Thus, British diversionary actions did not succeed in confusing the situation picture available to the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps. At 2248 the British bombers began their return flight, most of them heading towards the west. They left the Reich in broad front formation, and crossed the coast between Wesermünde and Duhkirk, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 0145. Approximately ten of the bombers left the Continent after the attack by way of the Bay of Kiel, flying out to sea over Ringkoebing. The attack on Magdeburg was fairly severe and caused considerable damage in the eastern part of the city.

In addition to the attack described above, the RAF carried out the following actions during the night on 21/22 January:

Between 1928 and 2012, three Mosquito aircraft, presumably long-range night fighters, crossed the mouth of the Schelde and flew as far as Rheine and Osnabrück.

During the time between 1935 and 2027, a single aircraft carried out an observation flight over Bergen and the Zuyder Zee area. The aircraft was identified as a long-range night fighter, and its crew was apparently reconnoitering the airfield at Leeuwarden.

A group of three Mosquito aircraft, approaching over Rheine at 2027, carried out a harrassing raid on the city of Haltern.

Cologne and Duisburg-Oberhausen were subjected to a harrassing raid by a force of some twenty Mosquito bombers. The bombers approached over the mouth of the Schelde at 2004 and began their return flight towards the southwest at 2100.

During the time from 2010 to 2028, one courier aircraft was observed over the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

66

In pursuit activity or in controlled combat against specified objectives during the approach of the British bombers:

units from the 1st Fighter Division: assembling at radio beacon Hahn and directed into the bomber stream between radio beacons Hahn and Quelle;

units from the 2d Fighter Division: assembling at radio beacons Hummer and Quelle and directed into the bomber stream between Helgoland and Hamburg;

units from the 3d Fighter Division: assembling at radio beacons Ludwig and Hummer and guided on to radio beacon Quelle, from which they were guided into the bomber stream between Helgoland and Hamburg.

From Himmelbett areas during the return flight of the bombers:

small formations from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions, employed over northwestern Germany and Holland.

In night pursuit activity during the return flight of the bombers:

several night fighter aircraft belonging to the 4th Fighter Division, and employed from the area assigned to the 3d Fighter Division.

A total number of 169 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

37 bombers certainly brought down

4 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses

6 aircraft

personnel: 3 dead

7 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

4/10 to 9/10 cloud cover between 300 to 800 meters and 2,000 meters;

Intermittently clear over the Dutch coast; light fogs at all altitudes.

f. Remarks

During the night of 21/22 January 1944, two officers were killed in action:

Major Prince of Sayn-Wittgenstein, Commanding Officer of the 2d Night Fighter Wing. This officer had brought down a total of eighty-two enemy aircraft in night combat, and had been awarded the Knights' Cross of the Iron Cross, with Oak Leaves and Swords. He began his career in the Luftwaffe as a bomber pilot, then became a fighter pilot, ^{had} and been assigned to the eastern front prior to his present mission. There he had brought down twenty-nine Soviet aircraft in night combat. During the night of 21/22 January he succeeded in shooting down five British bombers before his own airplane, a Ju-88, crashed in the vicinity of Magdeburg, the victim of a British long-range night fighter. His radio man and mechanic were able to parachute to safety, while the Prince himself, who always flew without a parachute, died a hero's death.

Captain Meurer, Commanding Officer of the I Group, 1st Night Fighter Wing, holder of the Knights' Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves, and Master Sergeant Scheibe, Captain Meurer's radio man, who had been awarded the ^AKnights' Cross of the Iron Cross. This night fighter crew had brought down a total of sixty-three enemy aircraft. Captain Meurer's airplane, an He-219, collided in mid air with a British bomber. Both aircraft crashed, the two wrecks coming to lie within 600 meters of each other.

67a

Major Prince of Sayn-Wittgenstein

Killed in Action During the Night of 21/22 January 1944

67b

Captain Meurer

Killed in Action During the Night of 21/22 January 1944

XIII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON DÜSSELDORF, 23/24 January 1944, AND
ON AIX LA CHAPELLE, 25/26 January 1944

(see Figure 97, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

23/24 January 1944: During the time from 1940 to 2330, a group of approximately forty Mosquitos carried out harrassing raids in Holland and the Rhine River area and bombarded the city of Düsseldorf. The action was accomplished in three waves, as follows:

an initial group of twenty aircraft, approaching between Dunkirk and Berck and flying towards the southeast as far as Koblenz, Bingen, and Trier,

a second group of fifteen aircraft, approaching over the mouth of the Schelde and flying on to bombard Düsseldorf, and

a third group of five aircraft, approaching between Haarlem and Leyden, and penetrating as far as Meppel and Deventer.

On their return flight, the aircraft maintained a westward course across Holland and Belgium.

At 0214 a single Mosquito passed over the island of Vlieland and flew on over Assen and Kloppenburg into the area lying twenty-five kilometers west of Hannover. Its return flight course led it over Bielefeld, Gummersbach, Liège, and Amiens, leaving the Continent at 0408.

Between 0141 and 0202, a courier aircraft was observed crossing the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden.

Several aircraft from the British base in Italy carried out a raid on the city of Maribor in Carinthia.

25/26 January 1944: At 1905 a single Mosquito crossed over Abbeville and penetrated as far as Liège. After circling over Liège until 2029, the aircraft returned home over the mouth of the Schelde.

A force of some fifteen Mosquito aircraft, approaching between Dun-

kirk and Calais, carried out a harrassing raid on the city of Aix la Chapelle, flying back across the mouth of the Schelde at 2245.

At 0300 a single Mosquito flew over the mouth of the Schelde and continued on over Antwerp to the Mainz area. Flying back, it passed over Metz, Reims, Beauvais, and Le Treport, leaving the Continent at 0507.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

23/24 January 1944: four twin-engine fighter aircraft (directed by the Y-Method) during the attack on Düsseldorf.

25/26 January 1944: one twin-engine fighter aircraft (directed by the Y-Method) during the raid on Aix la Chapelle.

Thus, a total number of five twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps on these two nights.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

23/24 January 1944: 2/10 to 6/10 cover of cumulus clouds from 500 meters to 1,000 meters; scattered rainstorms.

25/26 January 1944: 5/10 to 10/10 cloud cover between 300 to 600 meters and 3,000 meters; scattered rain flurries between 5,000 and 7,000 meters.

XIV. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON BERLIN, 27/28 January 1944

(see Figure 98, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At approximately 1800 a bomber stream took off from the Norwich area in the British Isles and proceeded across the southern part of the North Sea into the Bay of Helgoland and towards the mouth of the Elbe.

At this point a group of Short-Stirling four-engine bombers, flying at a lower altitude than the rest, reversed their course and began dropping mines into the sea. Their maneuver was a success and they were able to divert attention from the main bomber stream, which flew on towards the southeast, over the islands of Terschelling and Borkum, over the Kassel and Hannover areas, and finally on to Berlin, which they attacked from the south and southwest. Some of the bombers made a detour over Cottbus and Frankfurt/Oder.

At the same time, several singly-flying Mosquitos approached over the Zuyder Zee and flew on, on a direct course, to Berlin, Frankfurt/Oder, and Leipzig in an attempt to confuse the German situation picture.

On their return flight, the bombers passed over the southern Ruhr District and Frankfurt/Main. According to statements made over the British radio, 1,500 tons of bombs were dropped on Berlin. The attack lasted from 2015 to 2050 and was directed chiefly at the eastern part of the city. Scattered bombs were also dropped over Leipzig.

In addition to the main attack described above, the RAF also carried out the following actions:

From 1920 to 2024, a single night fighter raided the areas of IJmuiden, Arnheim, and Zwolle.

One airplane was observed circling above the island of Texel between 1929 and 2002.

Between 2030 and 2104 two aircraft penetrated as far as the areas of Katwijk and Apeldoorn.

At about 2035 a force of seven Mosquitos flew over IJmuiden and Zwolle, presumably on their way to Berlin.

Between 2102 and 2114 two aircraft flew along the coast from Bergen to Alkmar.

A group of eight Mosquitos, having approached at 2135 between Dunkirk and Calais, raided the city of Aix la Chapelle and returned home together with the main bomber stream from Berlin.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed:

In pursuit activity and in controlled combat against specific objectives during the approach flight of the bombers:

Units from the 1st Fighter Division (Northern Sector), assembling at radio beacon Hahn; as soon as the British mining maneuver in the Bay of Helgoland was recognized as a diversionary action, the aircraft were guided on to radio beacon Berta, and from there to combat over Berlin,

Units from the 1st Fighter Division (Southern Sector), assembling at radio beacon Fliege and directed into the bomber stream southwest of Berlin,

Units from the 2d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Hammer; after the real purpose of the British mining action was recognized, the aircraft were directed towards the south and met the bomber stream in the vicinity of Braunschweig,

Several night fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division (Northern Sector), directed by the Y-Method from their own airfields into the bomber stream,

Units from the 3d Fighter Division (Southern Sector), assembling at radio beacon Ludwig and moving on to radio beacon Quelle, from which they were directed towards the south into the Braunschweig area, and

Several night fighter aircraft belonging to the 7th Fighter Division, which were directed into the bomber stream from radio beacon 10.

From Himmelbett areas during the return flight of the bombers:

A small number of aircraft from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions, em-

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ployed over Hannover, the Rhine area, southern Holland and Belgium.

A total number of 167 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

Because of the successful British diversionary maneuver in the Bay of Helgoland and the detours made necessary by it, only twenty-four of our night fighter aircraft managed to contact the enemy.

c. Allied Losses

20 bombers certainly brought down.

d. German Losses

9 aircraft

personnel: 5 dead

9 wounded

1 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

5/10 to 10/10 cloud cover between 200 to 1,000 meters and 1,500 to 2,000 meters; visibility varying from five to fifteen kilometers.

Over Berlin: visibility from one to three kilometers; high-altitude winds at 5,000 meters from 290°, velocity 120 to 140 kilometers per hour.

f. Remarks

Several of our night fighter crews were taken in by false commands issued in German by British interference transmitters; two aircraft obeyed British orders to land.

One Ju-88, piloted by Master Sergeant Giesshaber, was shot down over Osendorf (seven kilometers ~~xxx~~ south-southeast of Halle) by our own anti-aircraft artillery.

One Ju-88, piloted by Captain Billich, was hit by antiaircraft fire while flying at 5,000 meters over Braunschweig. The fuselage of his air-

plane suffered a direct hit, and the fuel-line was damaged.

One Me-110, flown by 1st Lieutenant Baake, collided with a British aircraft over Bonn. Both aircraft crashed, but 1st Lieutenant Baake was able to parachute to safety.

For the first time it was reported that British aircraft were equipped with phosphorus sprays, which went off whenever German fighter aircraft approached the bombers. This defensive measure on the part of the British was without effect.

XV. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON BERLIN, 28/29 January 1944

(see Figure 99, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

First half of the night: Singly-flying Mosquitos bombarded the night fighter airfields at Leeuwarden, Deelen, Gilze Rijen, and Venlo. The bombs were dropped from a very high altitude.

During these attacks, a group of from fifty to sixty British aircraft was reported at about 1850 approaching from the Harwich area. The group flew over the southern part of the North Sea as far as the western corner of the Baltic Sea. It was not until they had crossed Schleswig-Holstein that their mission was recognized as a mine-laying one. The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, had presumed that they were bombers. Mines were laid in the mouth of the Elbe and in the western waters of the Baltic Sea.

Between 1920 and 2000 a single aircraft penetrated over the island of Schouwen as far as Brussels.

During the time from 1950 to 2200 a group of ten Mosquitos penetrated into the Ruhr District. They approached over The Hague and departed via the mouth of the Schelde.

Approaching at 2045 over the island of Terschelling, Osnabrück, and Hannover, a force of five Mosquitos raided the Berlin area. They flew back

between Bielefeld and Paderborn over the mouth of the Schelde, leaving the Continent at 2317.

Between 2221 and 2250 five aircraft flew along the coast from Bergen as far as the island of Terschelling.

Last half of the night: About 0030 a force of approximately 500 aircraft took off from the Norwich area and proceeded towards the northeast, crossing the southern part of the North Sea, as far as Kiel. The main stream was preceded by single aircraft, flying very low, whose mission was presumably to mock a mine-laying action. After dropping flares over Kiel, the British bombers turned towards the southeast and headed directly for Berlin. A small number of the four-engine bombers flew on towards the east from Kiel, and reversed their course over the western corner of the Baltic Sea.

Leaving Berlin, the bombers passed over Bremen, Kiel, and Holstein and flew out over the North Sea. Despite a cloud cover of 10/10, the British attack, lasting from 0310 until 0340, had been accurate and devastating. Unter den Linden and the Zoological Gardens suffered particularly severe damage.

At approximately 2310, some twenty Mosquito aircraft which were assumed to be long-range night fighters, penetrated as far as Münster, Hannover, and Osnabrück. Three of the twenty continued on as far as Perleberg and Greifswald.

At 0020 two Mosquitos, coming from the Calais and Florennes area, passed over Koblenz and flew on to Frankfurt/Main, where they circled for some time. Returning, they flew over Trier, and Cambrai, and crossed the Channel coast at about 0250.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

First half of the night: The following forces were employed:

~~From Himmelfart~~

From Himmelbett areas against the Mosquito invaders:

Several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division.

From Himmelbett areas against the mine-laying aircraft:

Several aircraft from the 1st, 2d, and 3d Fighter Divisions, over the Bay of Helgoland and over the coastal areas of the western Baltic Sea and Holland.

In pursuit activity against the mine-laying aircraft:

A small force from the 1st Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon 13.

As soon as it was realized that the enemy approach flight over the North Sea was merely a mine-laying mission, all aircraft were ordered to land.

Last half of the night: The following forces were employed:

From Himmelbett areas, during both the approach and departure of the bombers:

Several aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, employed over the Dutch coast.

In pursuit activity and controlled combat against specific objectives:

Units from the 1st Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacons Hein and Eichenknecht and directed on to controlled combat over Berlin,

Units from the 2d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Quelle and directed into the bomber stream over Lübeck,

Units from the 2d Fighter Division (Northern Sector) were guided to the enemy bomber stream directly from their home airfields,

Units from the 3d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacons Ludwig and Quelle; the aircraft at radio beacon Ludwig were directed on to radio beacon Quelle, and from there the entire group was guided to the bomber stream between Kiel and Lübeck, and

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A reinforcement force from the 7th Fighter Division, together with formations from the 3d Fighter Division which were unable to take off with the others, was assembled at radio beacon Gertrud and directed on to controlled combat over Berlin.

The total number of twin-engine aircraft employed during both halves of the night was 187.

c. Allied Losses

42 bombers brought down.

d. German Losses

2 aircraft

personnel: ~~3 dead~~ 3 dead

e. Weather Conditions

First half of the night: The border between the operational areas of the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions, as well as the adjacent coastal area along the Bay of Helgoland, were enveloped by a 10/10 cloud cover zone extending some 100 kilometers; the cloud cover hung as low as 100 to 400 meters and extended to 4,000 to 5,000 meters; visibility varied between one and three kilometers; ~~axis~~ outside this zone, in the area covered by the 3d Fighter Division the cloud cover was 10/10, and in the areas covered by the 1st and 2d Fighter Divisions, between 5/10 and 10/10 from 500 to 1,000 meters; scattered clouds above 2,500 meters.

Last half of the night: In the western part of the operational area assigned to the 2d Fighter Division and in the coastal area lying towards the northwest, there was a bad-weather zone some 100 kilometers in width, moving slowly towards the east; within this zone the cloud cover was 10/10 between 100 to 400 meters and 4,000 to 5,000 meters; outside this zone, in the area covered by the 1st, 2d, and 3d Fighter Divisions, the cloud cover varied between 5/10 and 10/10, beginning at 500 to 1,000 meters and dispers-

ing at 1,200 to 1,500 meters; scattered clouds above 2,500 meters.

f. Remarks

The effectiveness of the British attacks on our airfields in Holland:

Deelen: six demolition bombs and eight type "33" aerial mines, several of them equipped with delayed-action fuzes; several runways and landing-strips were slightly damaged.

Venlo: twelve bombs, demolition and incendiary, some of them equipped with delayed-action fuzes; one Me-109 destroyed, and several runways seriously damaged.

Leeuwarden: twelve demolition bombs, some of them equipped with delayed-action fuzes; two runways damaged.

Gilze Rijen: several demolition bombs; two runways damaged.

The British attacks were instrumental in delaying the commitment of our night fighter aircraft during the night of 28/29 January (see b, above, regarding the late start of several formations belonging to the 3d Fighter Division).

XVI. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON BERLIN, 30/31 January 1944

(see Figure 100, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the night of 29/30 January: Several Mosquito aircraft appeared over the Ruhr District. One airplane was reported over the island of Goeree between 2344 and 0019. At 0304 a single Mosquito flew over the island of Texel and on to Meppen, Vechta, and Celle; it flew out to sea over Cuxhaven at 0413.

During the night of 30/31 January: At 1815 a force of several hundred British bombers took off from the Norwich area for Berlin. Their course led them over the southern part of the North Sea and Schleswig-

Holstein as far as the Bay of Kiel. Here they turned towards the south-east and headed directly towards Berlin. At the same time, a force of fast Mosquito bombers was reported having crossed the Zuyder Zee on its way to Berlin. The attack on the capital lasted from 2000 to 2100 and was unusually severe, causing not only serious damage to property and to industrial installations, but also setting fire to large sections of the city. The sectors most severely hit were the center, and the western and southern portions. Crossing northwestern Germany and Holland, the British bombers returned to their bases.

In addition to the attack described above, the RAF carried out the following actions during the night of 30/31 January 1944:

Several Mosquito aircraft carried out a harrassing raid on the city of Cologne. The aircraft had approached between Ostende and Calais at approximately 1830, and flew back over the mouth of the Schelde at 2040.

Between 1919 and 1927 a single aircraft was reported circling above the mouth of the Schelde and the adjoining coast.

From 1848 to 2328, Two aircraft were observed above the Skagerrak, one on its way back to Great Britain and the other on its way to Sweden.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

From Himmelbett areas during both the approach and departure of the bombers:

Several aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, employed over the northern coast of Holland.

In pursuit activity and controlled combat against specific objectives:

Units from the 1st Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacons Hahn and Wienbrunn, and directed into the bomber stream ~~west~~ east of Parchim,

Units from the 2d Fighter Division, the majority assembling at radio beacon Quelle and directed into the bomber stream north of Kiel, together with the forces from the 3d Fighter Division; those night fighters based at Grove and Westerland were guided to the bomber stream over Schleswig-Holstein, and

Units from the 3d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacons Ludwig and Quelle.

Reinforcements from the 7th Fighter Division and several formations from the 3d Fighter Division were assembled at radio beacon Gertrud, transferred to radio beacon Berta, and sent on to controlled combat over Berlin.

The total number of twin-engine fighter aircraft employed by the I Fighter Corps was 146.

c. Allied Losses

43 bombers brought down.

d. German Losses

6 aircraft

personnel: 4 dead

3 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

29/30 January: 10/10 cover of high-altitude fogs between 200 to 400 meters and 900 to 1,200 meters; visibility three to six kilometers.

30/31 January: cloud cover varying between 6/10 and 10/10, beginning at 400 to 800 meters and extending as high as 1,000 meters; over the Bay of Helgoland and Berlin: cloud cover beginning at 75 to 300 meters and extending as high as 2,000 meters, or even 4,000 meters in some areas.

CHAPTER III

DAY ACTIONS DURING FEBRUARY 1944

I. SURVEY

a. American Offensive Activity

American offensive activity against the Reich increased appreciably during February 1944. Allied newspapers and radio releases announced the beginning of a large-scale air offensive against Germany, and this offensive materialized after 20 February, as soon as weather conditions improved. The American Air Force units stationed in Great Britain were obviously coordinating their daytime attacks with those Air Force units stationed in Italy, and their chief target was apparently the installations of the German aircraft industry. The effectiveness of their attacks was greater than heretofore, and they succeeded in disrupting the operations of German air armament plants to such an extent that the systematic supplying of the needs of the German air defense forces was impossible.

During the reporting period, the American Air Forces carried out a total of fifteen large-scale attacks on targets located within the Reich. Four of these attacks were carried out by units based in Italy. On three of the days selected for attack, weather conditions permitted unlimited sight bombing. On three other days instrument bombardment was necessary, and on five days, partially so. American aircraft losses during the large-scale attacks after 20 February were fairly great, with 234 aircraft in the area covered by the I Fighter Corps alone. If one gives due consideration to the number of attacks, the total number of aircraft employed, and the total number of aircraft destroyed, one realizes that the Americans paid dearly for the effectiveness of their attacks.

The American practice, in operations originating from Great Britain,

of flying several bomber missions on the same day, served to dissipate the German fighter defenses. Moreover, the coordination of the time of attack and the target to be attacked by the forces coming from Great Britain and from Italy served the triple purpose of reducing the effectiveness of German defenses, increasing the effectiveness of the American attack, and reducing the American losses. The increase in American fighter aircraft mentioned in connection with the events of January 1944 reached its full effectiveness during February. Large escorts of single and twin-engine fighters accompanied the bombers during their approach and return flights, and remained in most cases as a protective screen during the attacks themselves. Only in rare instances did the well-organized system of fighter escort relief fail in its purpose. There were very few successful attacks on German-occupied airfields. Even ~~except~~ apart from the days selected for large-scale attacks, American air activity was rather lively, most of it devoted to target reconnaissance and to observation flights to ascertain the effectiveness of previous attacks. The chief objectives for reconnaissance activity seemed to be the Ruhr District, Jutland, and the western coast of the Baltic Sea, although reconnaissance aircraft also evinced interest ⁱⁿ for the area north of Berlin, the Bay of Helgoland, the Hanover and Braunschweig area, and the Frankfurt area. Independent flights (i.e. not as fighter escorts) by fighter aircraft, as well as flights along the coast of the Bay of Helgoland and Holland, were extremely rare. On only four days during the reporting period were there no American aircraft at all observed within the area of operation of the I Fighter Corps.

b. The Commitment of the I Fighter Corps

The beginning of the American air offensive in February 1944 was no surprise to the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps. The order, issued by the Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe, to concentrate on bringing down

as many enemy bombers as possible, was still binding for the forces engaged in defense against the American daytime attacks. There had been no increase in the number of units assigned to air defense activities. Thus, the enemy's numerical superiority continued to have a detrimental effect on the outcome of aerial combat actions. In addition, on six of the days selected for attack, poor weather conditions rendered effective commitment of the German fighter units extremely difficult or even impossible. Since the American Air Forces carried out attacks on targets scattered throughout the entire Reich, including several in southern Germany and in Austria, the decentralized command organization of the German defensive forces proved to be a decided disadvantage. The 7th Fighter Division, in southern Germany, and the forces assigned to the Fighter Commander (Ostmark), in Austria, operated quasi independently in their assigned areas, subject only to instructions issued by the Air Fleet Reich.

In general, the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, had assigned the following missions to the various air defense forces:

I Fighter Corps: the defense of the northern sector, particularly of the industrial districts in Rheinwestfalen and in central Germany, ~~and~~ of the coastal areas devoted to naval operations, and of the Berlin area.

7th Fighter Division: the defense of southern Germany, with special emphasis on the protection of the industrial areas around Frankfurt/Main, Mannheim, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Munich, and Augsburg.

Fighter Commander (Ostmark): the defense of vital installations in Austria, particularly in Vienna, Wiener-Neustadt, Steyr, and Linz.

The day fighter forces placed at the disposal of these three commands were too few for effective accomplishment of the missions assigned. Coordinated action by all three groups was rarely attained, because the area to be protected (the Reich including Austria) was far too extensive in view

of the limited range of our fighter aircraft, and because each of the three commanders was naturally most concerned with fulfilling his defensive mission within the operational area assigned to him.

After the American air offensive had begun, the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, put forth a plan for the geographical concentration of all the daytime fighter forces assigned to northwestern Germany and the Frankfurt area. The plan was motivated by the thought that a united, relatively strong German fighter defense might have a chance to meet the American attackers successfully, especially if the American fighter escort units were selected as the chief target. During a conference at Carin Hall on 22 February 1944, the Commanding General, I Fighter Corps, was given the opportunity to present his suggestion to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. The conference, lasting from 1200 to 2130, had been called by Reichsmarschall Goering to discuss the havoc being wrought in the German air armament factories by ~~the~~ enemy bombardment. The occasion was hardly an auspicious one to present to the Reichsmarschall a plan calling for the concentration of all available daytime fighter units in a relatively ~~small~~ area and for a centralized command of all air defense operations within the Reich. Towards the end of the conference, the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, indicated that he was already aware of the successes ~~and losses~~ attained on that day by the units of the I Fighter Corps; they were as follows: 55 enemy bombers and 10 enemy fighters certainly brought down and 9 bombers probably brought down (translator's note: not quite accurate, see XII, c). The results of the conference on 22 February are indicated in I, d, below.

Despite the unfavorable conditions under which they were forced to operate, the daytime fighter units of the I Fighter Corps succeeded in inflicting heavy losses on the American Air Force units stationed in Great

Britain during the interval from 20 February, marking the beginning of the large-scale American air offensive, to 29 February. They were unable, however, to turn back a single one of the American attacks completely. Our own losses during this period, in terms of aircraft totally destroyed, did not exceed bearable limit, although the number of aircraft damaged was inordinately high.

By the end of February 1944, the evaluation of the air situation was as follows, as far as the German air defense forces were concerned:

"From two separate bases, Italy and Great Britain, the American Air Forces have launched concentrated and effective attacks on targets lying within the heart of the Reich. The German air armament industry was the first objective selected for intensive bombardment. We must assume that the Allied air commanders are prepared to continue their large-scale attacks, and, in fact, to broaden their target area to include vital war industries in all parts of the Reich. It is probable that American blind bombardment techniques (with the help of radar) will be perfected, increasing tremendously their chances of attaining direct hits even on days when weather conditions are too bad to permit sight bombing. The total effectiveness of the Allied air attacks will be augmented by the night attacks carried out by the RAF. This threat to Germany and to German-occupied territory has shaken badly Germany's position as an air power in Europe. The smooth functioning of Germany's war industries is the primary prerequisite for a successful conclusion of the war. The systematic destruction, by bombardment from the air, of German armament plants is bound to have a catastrophic influence on the outcome of the war, especially in view of an Allied invasion of Europe.

In number as well as in technical performance, the daytime fighter units assigned to German air defense activity are inferior to the American fighter aircraft forces. In spite of their demonstrated courage and their

willingness to make every sacrifice for their country, in the long run ~~they~~ ^{our forces} are fighting a hopeless battle. On the basis of the average number of aircraft committed each day, the numerical ratio during the month of February was as follows:

total American strength (bombers and fighters)	:	German strength in single and twin-engine fighters (I Fighter Corps)
3.6	:	1
American fighter strength	:	German strength in single and twin-engine fighters
1.6	:	1

The initiative in selecting days characterized by favorable weather conditions for large-scale undertakings lies with the American air commanders. The nature of the command organization within the German air defense forces precludes coordinated and economical commitment of the available forces. The tactics presently employed by the German fighter units, i.e. going after the enemy bombers, should be revised and modified, since they are leading to heavy losses. Knowing that they need not fear an attack by the German fighter aircraft, American fighters are able to move into range and attack the German fighters from above. Because of our heavy personnel losses and the lack of sufficiently well-trained replacements, our daytime fighter forces are unable to maintain any degree of effectiveness in a lengthy combat. If the German air defense forces continue to operate as they have in the past, there will be no chance of their minimizing the effectiveness of the American day attacks. Continuation of the present system is tantamount to the deliberate destruction of valuable personnel and materiel without hope of tangible results.

For this reason, in the interest of the over-all conduct of the war, the Luftwaffe must face the fact that its most important mission is the prevention of American daytime attacks on the Reich. The most vital pre-

requisite to the successful accomplishment of this mission is the regaining of air supremacy over the territory of the Reich.

It is doubtful that this goal can be attained with the fighter aircraft models presently available, especially in view of the fact that Germany is not in a position to rival the United States in the production of fighter aircraft.

On the other hand, the Luftwaffe does have the Me-262, a jet fighter which came through its first round of tests on 24 May 1943 with flying colors and which is technically far superior to any fighter aircraft which the Americans have been able to produce.

Thus, the conversion of our daytime fighter units from their present aircraft models to the Me-262 seems urgently indicated. The Me-262 represents our only chance to regain our lost air supremacy.

In preparation for such a conversion, the following steps must be taken:

Mass production on the Me-262 jet fighter must be speeded up in all available factories.

The air defense forces must be given top priority in the acquisition of personnel and materiel, while all other functions of the Luftwaffe must be relegated to the background.

Courses in navigation and instrument flight must be introduced immediately in all fighter pilot training schools.

The Me-262 must be equipped with the instruments necessary for blind flying and for bad-weather landings.

Without waiting for the conversion to Me-262's, the daytime fighter units assigned to air defense activities must make it their chief mission to win back Germany's position of air supremacy. The following steps are prerequisites to the accomplishment of this mission:

All available daytime fighter aircraft must be concentrated within the Reich, even if this means withdrawing them completely for a time from every other front.

All fighter aircraft must be welded into a single group under centralized command, for commitment in decision-seeking aerial combat with the enemy.

The chief objective to be considered in the commitment of this group must be the destruction of the American fighter forces. The problem of turning back the American bombers from the borders of the Reich can be dealt with later. Bad-weather periods, during which large-scale enemy attacks need not be anticipated, should be utilized to send fighter forces into Great Britain to harrass the flight maneuvers of the American attacking forces."

Unfortunately, the above evaluation of the air situation was given no consideration at the end of February 1944, nor were any of the suggested measures put into effect.

c. Successes and Losses During February 1944

During February 1944, the average total number of daytime fighter aircraft available for employment by the I Fighter Corps was:

350 single-engine fighter aircraft,

100 twin-engine fighter aircraft, and

50 night fighter aircraft suitable for daytime employment.

The total number of daytime fighter aircraft committed by the I Fighter Corps during February 1944 was: 2,861 aircraft.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the I Fighter Corps during February 1944 amounted to: 299 aircraft, or 10.3% of the total number of aircraft committed.

The total number of aircraft lost by the enemy within the area covered

by the I Fighter Corps during February 1944 amounted to: 310 aircraft (excluding those brought down by antiaircraft artillery), or 2.9% of the estimated total number of aircraft (10,452) employed by the American Air Forces against the Reich. This estimated figure does not take into account the aircraft committed from bases in Italy.

d. Remarks

From 9 through 12 February the Commanding General, I Fighter Corps, paid inspection visits to seven of the units under his command. The following is quoted from his inspection report to the Air Fleet Reich, as it appears in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps:

"The morale and military attitude of the flying crews is excellent. In those units commanded by superior officers, it is better than excellent. Our daytime fighter crews are young and eager for action. The recent heavy losses, however, are ample indication of the fact that they are inexperienced in flight technique as well as in tactics. I should suggest that, even after they have been assigned to their units, their training be continued until they are actually needed for commitment. Intensive training with FW-190's, with the conditions of actual combat closely simulated, is urgently indicated from the point of view of personnel economy, and the extra time required would more than pay for itself in the form of more experienced crews with better developed tactical ability and of increasing effectiveness with fewer losses.

The squadron captains, as deputies of their respective commanding officers, should be given continuous training in the exercise of command authority, even to the extent of granting them greater initiative in the accomplishment of actual missions. Personnel officers must be extremely careful to select only the best-qualified men to fill these positions as they become vacant. Bureaucratic one-sidedness, which gives chief con-

sideration to length of service in awarding such appointments and ignores tactical ability and training, can lead only to a serious decrease in the effectiveness of our command organization.

The last-minute transfers from one airfield to another, which are often necessitated by tactical considerations or by weather conditions, are having a detrimental effect on the smooth functioning of the command organization. In future, every effort should be made to allow each unit to take off according to plan from its own airfield and then to assemble all the units at that airfield which is most favorably located for the purposes of the undertaking planned. In carrying through such assembly actions, care should be exercised to make sure that all squadrons belonging to one group be assembled at the same airfield. Provided the airfield in question is large enough, it is desirable to assemble two entire groups there at once.

The enemy fighter escorts are becoming larger and stronger. Some way must be found to meet these fighter aircraft effectively, otherwise our own fighters will be unable to get at the enemy bombers. A concentrated blow against the enemy fighter escort forces would represent a tactical and moral success."

On 23 February 1944, from 1230 until 1630, a conference was called at the Headquarters, 2d Fighter Division, at Stade. The conference was led by the Commanding General, I Fighter Corps, and was attended by the General of the Fighter Aircraft Forces, the commanding officers of the fighter divisions, and the commanders of the fighter wings assigned to the I Fighter Corps. The following quotation is taken from the minutes of the conference, as they appear in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps:

"General Schmid: The enemy obviously plans to assure his own air supremacy as a prelude to a large-scale invasion. The air situation in

the Reich is tense and serious. The damage which the enemy has inflicted on our air armament industry is not inconsiderable. In order to meet the threat inherent in the enemy daytime attacks, all available units must be prepared for all-out commitment. We must find a way to turn back the enemy before he can enter the Reich; otherwise we may soon be faced also with British attacks during the day. The tactical mistakes made during the last few days are not the fault of the operational units, but of the fighter division headquarters. Chief among these was the failure to recognize in time American diversionary maneuvers for what they were. In compliance with the orders issued by the Reichsmarschall, the commitment of our daytime fighter units will be guided by the determination to provide adequate defense for the air armament industry throughout all of Germany at the same time.

Within the area assigned to the I Fighter Corps, the following distribution of forces will become effective immediately:

1st Fighter Division:

~~3d Fighter Wing~~

3d Single-Engine Fighter Wing, including I through IV Group

26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing

3 groups of single-seater night fighters drawn from the 300th and 302d Single-Engine Fighter Wings

2d Fighter Division:

11th Single-Engine Fighter Wing, including I through III Group

III Group, 54th Single-Engine Fighter Wing

3d Fighter Division:

1st Single-Engine Fighter Wing, including I through III Group

I Group, 300th Single-Engine Fighter Wing, Bonn (single-seater night fighter aircraft).

The following operational areas are assigned:

1st Fighter Division: Hannover and Magdeburg

2d Fighter Division: Oldenburg, Bremen, and Rotenburg

3d Fighter Division: German-Dutch border.

At the suggestion of the General of the Fighter Aircraft Forces, the Reichsmarschall has agreed that one fighter group from each fighter division shall be designated for combat against the American fighter escort forces. The enemy fighters will be attacked ~~by~~ ^{by} small groups of two or three German aircraft, plunging down on them from above. The Me-109's employed for this purpose will be equipped with light armaments and with automatic ammunition loaders.

As many of our fighter aircraft as possible should be sent up against the bombers a second time when the latter are on their return flight. Heretofore, many of our fighters have landed at the wrong airfield after completing their first scramble and by the time they were located, it was too late to send them up a second time. From now on, specific airfields will be designated as fighter aircraft fields. These airfields will have supplies of ammunition, gasoline, oil, and oxygen, whereas all other airfields will be limited to gasoline supplies. Thus, if a fighter aircraft should land at a non-fighter airfield, he will refuel immediately and take off for the nearest fighter aircraft field, from which he will be recommitted."

II. DAY ACTIONS, 1 February through 12 February 1944 (excluding large-scale American attacks)

(see Figure 101, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the seven days on which there were no large-scale attacks, American air activity on the whole was very slight. Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft were almost the only enemy aircraft observed. A total of approx-

imately twenty-five Mosquito aircraft carried on reconnaissance activity over Stettin, Kiel, Hamburg, Hannover, and the Ruhr District. In addition, some twenty-four enemy aircraft were observed during the reporting period over the coastal area along the Bay of Helgoland and over the Dutch coast, and several low-flying aircraft were reported near the West Frisian Islands, where they presumably were laying mines.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

Eight single-engine fighter aircraft were employed on 9 February against Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft over the Ruhr District.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

III. DAY ACTIONS, 12 February through 19 February 1944 (excluding large-scale American attacks)

(See Figure 102, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Approximately one hundred enemy fighter aircraft penetrated as far as the Dutch coastal area. Thirty of these attacked the airfield at Gilze Rijen on 14 February, but without causing much damage. A total of ten Mosquitos were observed to be engaged in reconnaissance activity, the chief objectives of which were Anklam, Rostock, Lübeck, Bremen, Rheine, and Brandenburg/Havel.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

Sixteen single-engine aircraft were employed against the enemy reconnaissance aircraft over the western coast of the Baltic Sea, and twenty during the attack on the Gilze Rijen Airfield. Thus, a total of thirty-six single-engine fighter aircraft were employed by the I Fighter

Corps during the reporting period.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

IV. DAY ACTIONS, 19 February through 1 March 1944 (excluding large-scale American attacks)

(see Figure 103, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Despite the fact that six large-scale attacks also fell within this reporting period, other enemy air activity was continued as usual, and a total of thirty Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft and forty fighter aircraft were reported within the area covered by the I Fighter Corps. The chief reconnaissance targets seemed to be the following: the Oder and Warthe area between Landsberg/Warthe and Stettin, the western coast of the Baltic Sea, Jutland and the Great and Little Belts, the Ruhr District, Kassel, and Paderborn, and the Rhine and Main river areas, including Frankfurt/Main, Würzburg, Mannheim, and Karlsruhe.

The majority of the fighter aircraft were reported over the Dutch and Belgian coasts.

On 23 February a force of approximately 180 four-engine bombers, accompanied by an escort of some eighty Lightnings, bombarded armaments plants in Steyr, Austria. The attack was carried out from the American base in Italy, and was apparently a part of the over-all American offensive which began on 20 February.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Since we ^{had} ~~have~~ no aircraft types really suited to the purpose, no attempt was made to interfere with the Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft.

There is nothing in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps to indicate any commitment on the part of the 7th Fighter Division or the Air Commander (Ostmark) against the American attack on Steyr.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

V. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON WILHELMSHAVEN, 3 February 1944

(see Figure 104, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 0955 the first aircraft of an American force consisting of approximately 350 bombers, 300 single-engine fighters, and 50 Lightnings were reported at a point about 150 kilometers west of Den Helder. Flying towards the east, they continued on between the island of Vlieland and Katwijk as far as the area north of Rheine and Groningen. Here the force split up into numerous smaller formations and moved on to attack Wilhelmshaven, the majority of them bombarding the city by instrument. Several aircraft had penetrated as far as Hannover and Neumünster. With their course towards the west and southwest, the American bombers departed from the Continent between the island of Wangeroog and Bergen, the last aircraft crossing the coast at 1225. In Wilhelmshaven the damage to private property as well as to industrial plants was considerable. The wharves were also badly hit. Extensive fires broke out in the southern part of the city. A few bombs also fell on Westerstedt, twenty-five kilometers northwest of Oldenburg, and on Farge, near Vegesack, approximately twenty kilometers northwest of Bremen. At ~~1400~~ an antiaircraft artillery battery was hit.

During the morning, between 0848 and 0900, eleven fighter aircraft were observed circling above the mouth of the Schelde.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

Units from the 1st Fighter Division, over the Bremen area,

Units from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Wilhelmshaven area and over Bremen, and

Units from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Oldenburg area.

Poor weather conditions made it very difficult for the units to assemble according to plan. Only fifty-two aircraft, flying singly, were able to penetrate the cloud cover, where they became involved in combat with American fighters over Bremen and Oldenburg. All in all, the day's operations had to be chalked up as a failure for the German air defense forces.

A total number of 225 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

2 Thunderbolts certainly brought down,

1 Thunderbolt probably brought down.

d. German Losses

6 aircraft totally destroyed,

5 aircraft more than 60% damaged;

personnel: 4 dead

2 wounded

6 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Area covered by the 3d Fighter Division: 5/10 to 8/10 cover of scattered multiple-strata clouds between 500 and 1,800 meters;

Area covered by the 2d Fighter Division: fairly impenetrable cloud cover and cloud fields above 3,500 meters; over the Bay of Helgoland:

high-altitude fogs between 100 and 200 meters;

Area covered by the 1st Fighter Division: closed cloud cover beginning at 500 meters and extending as high as 2,500 meters; stratus clouds above 4,000 meters; south of the line Stettin-Bonn: closed cloud cover hanging as low as 200 meters in some localities; over the target: cloud cover with occasional gaps, beginning at 500 meters.

VI. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN, 4 February 1944

(see Figure 105, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At about 0900, German radio reconnaissance reported the assembly of a large American bomber force in Great Britain. At 1040 the first aircraft began appearing over the mouth of the Schelde, and soon the entire force, consisting of some 500 bombers with a strong fighter escort, was on its way towards the southeast. Flying above the clouds, the enemy force passed over Emmerich and Liège and continued on to the Giessen and Frankfurt/Main area. On their return flight, the bombers crossed the Channel coast between Bergen and Calais, the last aircraft flying out to sea at 1410. The total strength of the fighter escort was approximately 300 single and 50 twin-engine fighter aircraft, the majority of which had approached over the mouth of the Schelde between 1130 and 1230 to pick up the returning bombers. Some of the fighters had come only as far as the border of the Reich and had reversed their course over Arnheim.

The bombardment, by instrument, of Frankfurt/Main caused considerable property damage in the suburbs of the city. Bonn and Bad Godesberg had also been hit by scattered bombs.

In addition to the attack described above, the American Air Forces carried out the following actions:

At 1215 a single Mosquito flew over Esbjerg and on to reconnoiter

the islands of Fünen and Laaland and the Bay of Mecklenburg. At 1450 it returned home over the island of Roem.

Between 1404 and 1513, a group of five fighter aircraft flew at a very low altitude over The Hague and Rotterdam.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

A cloud cover several thousand meters in thickness prohibited the commitment of large aircraft formations. Only a few aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division succeeded in penetrating the cover above the Dutch coast, where they encountered an American bomber formation.

c. Allied Losses

1 aircraft brought down.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

10/10 cloud cover between 400 to 600 meters and 6,500 meters.

f. Remarks

By rights the Frankfurt area did not belong in the air defense zone assigned to the I Fighter Corps. Since the preparation of the air situation picture as well as the measures taken by the air commanders in the Frankfurt area on 4 February had proved unsatisfactory, the Commanding General, I Fighter Corps, had been called to the Headquarters, Air Fleet Reich, in Berlin for a conference regarding the ways and means of remedying the situation. On this occasion the Commanding General, I Fighter Corps, suggested to the Commander in Chief, Air Fleet Reich, that the responsibility for the preparation of air situation pictures and for the commitment of the fighter aircraft forces engaged in air defense operations be placed in a single central command agency.

VII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN, 8 February 1944

(see Figure 106, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 0956, a force of approximately 300 bombers, accompanied by a like number of fighter aircraft, flew over the mouths of the Schelde and Somme rivers and moved on across Belgium and northern France towards the southeast and east as far as the Rhine and Main river area. Since about 1100, American fighter formations had been penetrating as far as Luxemburg and then reversing course, while at the same time other fighter groups were approaching from the Channel, crossing the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Dieppe, and continuing on towards the southeast to pick up the returning bombers at the German border. After bombarding Frankfurt, the American bombers had begun their return flights towards the west and northwest at 1133. They crossed the Channel coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Dieppe in broad front formation, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 1330. Even though sight bombardment was possible only during a portion of the attack, the city suffered serious property damage.

In addition to the attack described above, the American Air Forces carried out the following actions:

One Mosquito, apparently on a reconnaissance mission, flew over the area north of Hamburg. Its approach course was picked up north of Helgoland at 1112. Its return course led it along north of the Frisian Islands, and its last position reported, at 1219, was forty kilometers north of the island of Vlieland.

Between 1242 and 1255, eight enemy aircraft flew along the coast from Bergen as far as Den Helder.

Between 1304 and 1319, five aircraft circled over the mouth of the

Schelde.

A single aircraft, approaching at about 1300 over Tondern and Flensburg, reconitered the area north of Schwerin, and returned the same way at 1447.

At 1358 a single aircraft was observed circling over the island of Texel.

Between 1405 and 1415, two aircraft flew along the coast from IJmuiden as far as Alkmar.

Approaching at about 1432 over the island of Walcheren and Gilze Rijen, one Lightning penetrated as far as Duisburg, apparently for reconnaissance purposes. It departed via Gilze ~~Rijen~~ Rijen at 1443.

Between 1648 and 1651 a single aircraft was reported circling above Den Helder.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

Units from the 2d Fighter Division, over Frankfurt/Main; because of difficulties encountered in assembling, these formations were unable to take part in combat.

Units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Koblenz and Wiesbaden; because of unfavorable weather conditions, only sixty aircraft managed to contact the enemy.

A total number of 137 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

3 bombers and 2 fighter aircraft certainly brought down,

1 aircraft probably brought down.

d. German Losses

8 aircraft

100

2 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 1 wounded

8 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Area covered by the 1st, 2d, and 3d Fighter Divisions: rain and hail storms; visibility 200 meters in storm areas, otherwise varying from 500 to 1,000 meters; danger of icing above 1,000 meters.

Over the target: 8/10 cloud cover, with occasional gaps; cumulonimbus clouds with peaks as high as 5,000 meters; cloud cover beginning at 200 to 300 meters in rainy areas, otherwise at 500 to 800 meters; adjoining mountain area enveloped in clouds.

VIII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BRAUNSCHWEIG, 10 February 1944

(see Figure 107, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 0830 the assembling of an American bomber force over the British Isles was reported. At 1010 the attackers took off--approximately 300 bombers, accompanied by an escort of 200 single and 50 twin-engine fighter aircraft. Crossing the coast between Den Helder and The Hague, the group moved on towards the east over Cloppenburg, Rheine, Soltau, and Minden into the Braunschweig area. The fighter escort split into two groups at the German border, one group reversing its course in two sections, one at 1104 and the other at 1140, and the other group remaining with the bombers as far as Hannover and Braunschweig. After dropping their bombs, with limited sight, on Braunschweig, at 1202 the bombers turned back towards the west. Over Rheine and München-Gladbach, they were picked up by several fighter formations which had come in over the mouth of the Schelde and Den Helder between 1220 and 1250. The last departing aircraft left the Continent between Haarlem and the mouth of the Schelde at 1340. The

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damage inflicted on Braunschweig by the attack was relatively slight.

In addition to the attack described above, the American Air Forces carried out the following actions:

Between 1116 and 1216, several fighter aircraft penetrated as far as Münster, approaching by way of The Hague.

A single reconnaissance aircraft flew over Ringkoebing at 1329, on over the islands of Samsø and Seeland as far as Stralsund. It returned via the Bay of Kiel and the island of Amrum at 1509.

Between 1345 and 1413, a group of twenty-five single-engine aircraft penetrated into the area of The Hague and Haderwijk.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

Units from the 1st Fighter Division, over Braunschweig,

Units from the 2d Fighter Division, over Soltau and Hannover, and

Units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Diepholz and Bremen.

Despite the stormy weather, all the fighter divisions were able to carry out their assemblies according to plan, and the close combat formations were able to stage repeated attacks on the American bomber formation. Aerial combat with American fighter aircraft over Bremen, Braunschweig, and Osnabrück was violent and resulted in heavy losses for our units. Due to poor bombing visibility and the successful attack by our fighter units on the bomber stream, the American attack on Braunschweig was robbed of full effectiveness.

A total number of 303 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

43 bombers and 28 fighter aircraft certainly brought down,

5 bombers and 6 fighter aircraft probably brought down.

102

d. German Losses (as of 2300, 10 February)

30 aircraft totally destroyed,

16 aircraft more than 60% damaged,

personnel: 3 wounded

33 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Area covered by the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions: 5/10 to 10/10 cover of nimbus clouds with scattered snow flurries; high-altitude visibility good.

Area covered by the 1st Fighter Division: 10/10 cloud cover and intermittent snowfall; cloud cover beginning at 100 to 300 meters and extending up to 5,000 meters;

Over the target: cloud cover varying between 7/10 and 10/10.

IX. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN, 11 February 1944

(see Figure 108, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 0830 German radio reconnaissance reported the assembling of an American bomber force in the vicinity of Ipswich. At 1010 the 300 bombers and 270 fighter aircraft making up the group took off towards the southeast and flew over Belgium, the Eifel area, and Luxembourg into the Frankfurt/Main and Mannheim area. They crossed the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Dunkirk. At Traben-Trarbach, part of the fighter escort reversed its course at about 1111. Beginning at 1145, the fighter formations assigned to pick up the returning bombers made their appearance between the mouth of the Schelde and Calais. A few formations flew on as far as St. Trond, and the rest into the Rhine river area. At 1229 the bombers, having bombarded Frankfurt, returned towards the west and northwest, flying over the coast between Dunkirk and Dieppe. The last

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aircraft were reported leaving the Continent at 1400. Sight bombing was possible during most of the attack on Frankfurt, and the damage to both industrial plants and private property was very great.

In addition to the attack on Frankfurt/Main, the American Air Forces carried out the following actions:

Between 1407 and 1430 a single aircraft flew over the mouth of the Schelde and on as far as the Utrecht area.

From 1700 to 1710 four aircraft flew along the coast from Den Helder as far as the island of Texel.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

Units from the 1st and 2d Fighter Divisions, over Frankfurt/Main, and

Units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Bonn and Koblenz.

Weather conditions were so bad that our units encountered great difficulty in reaching their appointed place of commitment; several groups were forced to return to their bases. Only seventy aircraft were able to participate in combat over Koblenz and Frankfurt.

A total number of 187 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft ~~was~~^{was} committed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

3 bombers and 10 fighter aircraft certainly brought down,

1 bomber and 12 fighter aircraft probably brought down.

d. German Losses (as of 0900, 12 February)

12 aircraft totally destroyed,

5 aircraft more than 60% damaged,

personnel: 2 dead

2 wounded

16 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Loosely scattered nimbus clouds between 500 to 700 meters and 2,000 to 3,000 meters; cloud cover dammed up against the mountains.

Over the target: cloud cover varying between 4/10 and 9/10, with large gaps torn by strong south winds.

f. Remarks

On 12 February 1944, Major Beyer, Commanding Officer of the IV Group, 3d Single-Engine Fighter Wing, was killed in action. He had brought down a total of eighty-one enemy aircraft and had been awarded the Knights' Cross of the Iron Cross.

X. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BRAUNSCHWEIG, 20 February 1944

(see Figure 109, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

20 February marked the beginning of the Anglo-American large-scale air offensive against the Reich.

The first assemblies of American aircraft were reported in the Ipswich and Norwich areas. The American offensive operation on 20 February was carried out in the following phases:

At 0955 a group of some one hundred bombers (twin-engine) flew over the mouth of the Schelde at an altitude of 5,300 meters, and attacked targets on the island of Schouwen. At 1041 they flew back out to sea. As far as we could discern, this action had no particular purpose.

Another group, consisting of approximately 150 bombers, was also reported approaching at 0955, its position about 120 kilometers west of Den Helder and its course towards the northeast. This group crossed the southern part of the North Sea, reaching the coast of Jutland between the islands of Fanø and Sylt, and detouring over the islands of Fünen and Seeland to attack targets in the Greifswald and Stralsund areas. At 1315 the American

bomber force crossed the Bay of Kiel flying towards the northwest and left Jutland between Husum and Esbjerg at 1503.

The lead aircraft of the main American attacking force appeared at 1059 at a point approximately 200 kilometers west of Katwijk, their flight course towards the east. This force consisted of 450 bombers, accompanied by a fighter escort. After crossing the coast between IJmuiden and Hoek van Holland, the bombers flew on to Braunschweig, Magdeburg, Dessau, and Halle, their northern flank moving over Cloppenburg and Nienburg, and the southern one over Münster, and Bielefeld. A part of the fighter escort, which consisted of 300 single and 100 twin-engine fighter aircraft, left the bombers at 1245 over the Rhine area. The first bomber formations to leave the target area departed at 1335, heading towards the west and southwest. The returning bombers were picked up by a fighter escort over Kassel and Frankfurt/Main, the escort having flown in beginning at 1309 between the mouth of the Schelde and Calais. Widely scattered on their return flight, the bomber formations flew over western Germany, Holland, and Belgium towards the Channel coast and crossed it between Den Helder and Etaples, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 1548. The bombardment, directed chiefly at aircraft plants in the vicinity of Braunschweig, Bernburg, and Gotha, had not been particularly concentrated, although a great deal of property damage was caused.

At 1140 several aircraft, flying between 3,000 and 4,000 meters, crossed the coast between Hoek van Holland and the mouth of the Schelde, and penetrated as far as the Ruhr District before reversing their course and flying back over the mouth of the Schelde. A few of these aircraft flew on as far as the target area and joined the bombers; apparently their mission was to ascertain the effectiveness of the attack.

At 1714 approximately sixty American aircraft were reported thirty

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kilometers north of the island of Terschelling, with course towards the east. They reversed their course over the Bay of Helgoland and returned towards the west, their last position reading (at 1807) being northwest of the island of Texel. Observers were unable to determine the purpose of this flight; it is assumed that the aircraft were engaged in a sea-rescue mission.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

Against the enemy penetration flights in the north:

day fighter units and some night fighter aircraft from the 1st Fighter Division, over Greifswald and Stralsund,

a few night fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division, over Schleswig-Holstein, against the returning bombers.

During the main American attack:

Units from the 2d Fighter Division, over Braunschweig and Harz,

Units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Münster.

Weather conditions precluded the assembling of our aircraft into large closed combat formations. Some of our smaller formations succeeded in contacting the enemy, and became involved in heavy combat with American fighter aircraft. The casualty rate was very high.

A total of 362 single and twin-engine fighters and night fighters were employed, only 155 of which managed to participate in combat.

c. Allied Losses

27 bombers and 8 fighter aircraft certainly brought down,

15 bombers and 6 fighter aircraft probably brought down.

d. German Losses (as of 1100, 21 February)

28 aircraft completely destroyed,

21 aircraft more than 60% damaged

107

personnel: 10 dead

19 wounded

34 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

South of the line: southern Zuyder Zee - Bremen - Neurippen, and north of the line: coast of the Bay of Helgoland - Neumünster - Greifswald, the cloud cover was 10/10, between 300 to 500 meters (as low as 150 meters in some areas) and 1,000 meters (as high as 1,500 to 1,800 meters along the mountain range); danger of icing in the clouds; in the mountains and foothills there were light snowfalls; in the area lying directly between the two lines indicated above, predominantly clear and ~~cloudless~~ cloudless.

Over Stralsund: 10/10 cloud cover between 500 meters and 1,000 meters.

Over Braunschweig and Dessau: cloud cover varying between 4/10 and 10/10 between 500 meters and 1,500 meters; high-altitude mists.

XI. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON CENTRAL GERMANY, 21 February 1944

(see Figure 110, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1222 several hundred American bombers, accompanied by a large fighter escort, flew over the Dutch coast between The Hague and Den Helder. They flew towards the east over the Zuyder Zee and Hannover as far as the areas of Braunschweig, Magdeburg, and Halberstadt. Here they circled, seeking an opportunity for sight bombing. Finding none, they discharged their bombs over a widely scattered area, and left the target zone at 1420. Over Osnabrück, at 1350, they turned and headed back to the British Isles. A fighter aircraft force, which had penetrated as far as Vechta and Osnabrück, crossing the coast between Den Helder and Katwijk between 1325 and 1400, picked up the returning bombers over Osnabrück and accompanied them back to their home bases. The last aircraft departed from the Continent

between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde at 1605.

In addition to the action described above, the American Air Forces carried out the following operations:

One Mosquito aircraft, apparently on a reconnaissance mission, penetrated as far as the Emden area. It appeared over Zandvoort at 1215, flew on over Zwolle, Assen, and Emden, and returned the way it had come at 1245.

Between 1445 and 1551 a group of approximately forty ~~Mosquito~~ fighter aircraft flew over the mouth of the Schelde and circled above Breda and Hertogenbosch.

One Mosquito aircraft was observed on a reconnaissance mission over southern Bavaria. It crossed the mouth of the Somme at 1210, and flew on over Metz and Ulm as far as Munich and the area immediately south of Munich. Its last reported position on the way home was over Altötting, at 1405.

At 1302 two Mosquito aircraft passed over Husum, Kiel, Rostock and Neubrandenburg, apparently also on a reconnaissance mission. It departed, leaving the Continent between Westerland and Esbjerg, at 1445.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

Units from the 1st Fighter Division, over Braunschweig and Magdeburg,

Units from the 2d Fighter Division, over Braunschweig and Hannover, and

Units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Osnabrück and Bremen.

Low-hanging clouds and poor visibility delayed the take-off of those units stationed in the southern sector of the areas assigned to the 2d and 1st Fighter Divisions, and as a result the 3d Single-~~Engine~~ Engine Fighter Wing and the 26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing arrived late at their appointed place of employment.

A total number of 282 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

20 bombers and 7 fighters certainly brought down

5 bombers and 2 fighters probably brought down.

d. German Losses

11 aircraft totally destroyed

14 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 6 dead

9 wounded

14 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Clouds dispersing gradually in the face of winds moving from the north as far as a line from the mouth of the Weser via Hamburg to Stettin; light snowfall south of this line; cloud cover between 200 to 500 meters and 1,000 to 1,500 meters; visibility above the cloud cover, 50 to 100 kilometers; ground visibility three to ten kilometers; at the time of the attack, central Germany was covered by an impenetrable cloud layer, its peaks reaching as high as 1,500 meters.

XII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON OSCHERSLEBEN AND BERNBERG, 22 February 1944
(see Figure 111, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Since 0815 German radio reconnaissance agencies had been reporting on the assembling of an American bomber force over Great Britain. Taking off at 1010, several smaller formations of Marauders (approximately 100 aircraft in all), accompanied by a fighter escort, flew over Rotterdam as far as the areas of Breda and Antwerp, where they bombarded the airfields at Gilze Rijen and Tilburg. On their return flight, the last bombers were reported over Antwerp at 1102.

The main force, totalling some 500 bombers and a great many fighter

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aircraft, followed at 1118, crossing the coast between Katwijk and the mouth of the Schelde. Moving directly towards the east, the bombers flew on to Braunschweig, Magdeburg, Halle, and Oschersleben. They bombarded aircraft plants in Bernburg and Oschersleben, causing severe damage.

The bomber formations departed from the target area at 1430, headed towards the west, and, flying in loose formation, crossed the Channel coast between Bergen and Calais. The last aircraft left the Continent at 1630.

The fighter escort of approximately 400 aircraft remained with the bombers throughout their approach flight, some of the escort aircraft even following into the target area. The rest of them left the bombers at 1213 over southern Holland and headed for home. Beginning at 1250, several formations of Lightnings appeared to take up escort duty over the target area. At 1302 another wave of fighter aircraft appeared between IJmuiden and the mouth of the Schelde. This wave penetrated as far as the Münster area and there, at 1340, reversed their course. From 1354 on, additional fighter formations, coming in over the mouth of the Schelde and making a detour towards the southeast over Koblenz, flew on to Marburg to pick up the returning bombers for the flight home.

In addition to the activity noted above, the American Air Forces based in Italy carried out ~~xxxx~~ an attack on the air armament plant at Regensburg.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

Units from the 1st Fighter Division, over Magdeburg,

Units from the 2d Fighter Division, over Harz and Kassel, and

Units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Bielefeld and Paderborn.

Since weather conditions were favorable and high-altitude visibility good, our assembly maneuvers were carried out smoothly and without interference from the enemy. Although, on the whole, the American fighter escort

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was a strong one, during the time from 1350 * until 1415 the bomber formations were flying without escort. Thus our fighter aircraft, approaching from the north, were able to make repeated attacks on the bombers and succeeded in bringing down a goodly number, while keeping their own losses to a reasonable minimum. Despite this successful interval during the over-all action, the day fighter units of the I Fighter Corps were unable to prevent the American attack on central Germany.

A total number of 332 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

There is no record available of any employment on the part of the 7th Fighter Division or the Air Commander (Ostmark) against the American attack on Regensburg.

c. Allied Losses

55 bombers and 10 fighters certainly brought down

6 bombers and 3 fighters probably brought down.

d. German Losses (as of 1200, 23 February)

11 aircraft totally destroyed

16 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 6 dead

5 wounded

17 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

North of the line: Cologne - Kassel - Braunschweig - Jüterbog:
predominantly clear, scattered clouds at 1,000 meters and at 4,000 meters.

South of the line indicated above: an almost impenetrable cover of stratus clouds, their peaks reaching as high as 1,500 and 2,000 meters; high-altitude visibility good; high-altitude winds from 60-70°, velocity 80 kilometers per hour.

Over the target area: scattered clouds.

f. Remarks

On 22 February 1944, Captain Tratt, Commanding Officer of the II Group, 26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing, was killed in action. He had brought down a total of thirty-eight enemy aircraft, and had been awarded the Knights' Cross of the Iron Cross.

XIII. THE AMERICAN ATTACKS ON SCHWEINFURT, GOTH, ROSTOCK, GNESEN, and STEYR,

24 February 1944

(see Figure 112, Annex)

The fourth day after the beginning of the Anglo-American air offensive marked its peak. According to German sources, the American Air Forces committed a total of 960 bombers and 680 fighter aircraft on that day (24 February).

1,360 of these aircraft appeared in the area covered by the I Fighter Corps, where they were met by a total of 336 German aircraft. The latter figure includes second sorties by both daytime and night fighter aircraft.

a. Enemy Activity

American air activity on 24 February was carried out in the following stages:

1. Attacks by ~~Marauder~~ Marauder bombers on German night fighter airfields in Holland:

The first attack was carried out by a force of approximately sixty aircraft on the airfield at Gilze Rijen between 0943 and 1056. The course of their approach and return flights led over the mouth of the Schelde.

The second attack, also by a force of about sixty aircraft, was directed against the airfield at Deelen and lasted from 0957 until 1055. The invaders approached their target from The Hague, and departed via Amsterdam.

The third attack, again by a group of some sixty aircraft, was on the

airfield at Leeuwarden. Approaching over Den Helder, the Marauders bombarded the airfield between 0957 and 1048, and returned to their home bases via the island of Vlieland.

In all three instances, the Marauders were protected by American fighter escorts. The invaders flew at an altitude of 3,500 to 3,600 meters.

2. Diversionary attack by about 200 bombers on air armament works at Rostock and Gnesen:

At 1016, the American bomber formations were reported some 120 kilometers west of the island of Texel, with course towards the northeast. Their continued flight across the southern part of the North Sea could also be followed by our radar equipment. After crossing the coast between Esbjerg and Husum, the bombers turned towards the southeast and divided into two groups. The first of these flew on over the Bay of Kiel into the Rostock and Stralsund area, and the second over the Haff of Stettin, Stargard, and Schneidemühl to Gnesen. The following targets were bombarded:

aircraft plants in Rostock-Marienehe (beginning at 1240), by a force of 120 bombers, and

the aircraft plant at Gnesen (beginning at 1404), by a force of approximately eighty bombers.

After discharging their bomb-loads, the American invaders started their return flight towards the northwest, crossing the western portion of the Baltic Sea, and the coast of Jutland between Esbjerg and the island of Sylt between 1441 and 1633.

The damage in Rostock and Gnesen was relatively slight.

3. The main attack, carried out by a force of 400 bombers (with a fighter escort of 600 aircraft) on industrial installations in Gotha and Schweinfurt:

At 1109 the main force took off from bases in Great Britain.

Crossing the coast between the island of Texel and The Hague, they pushed on towards the southeast and south over Münster and Rheine as far as Nordhausen, Erfurt, Schweinfurt, and Kassel. Since the weather was clear and high-altitude visibility excellent, the bombers were able to attack their ~~key~~ targets in Gotha and Schweinfurt with great precision, and caused a great deal of damage. The first aircraft departed from the target area at 1330, flying over Würzburg, Darmstadt, Cologne, and Giessen, and crossing the Channel coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Berck s.M. The last bombers left the coast behind them at 1530. The ~~first~~ ^{first} groups making up the fighter escort left the bombers as follows and returned home:

at 1216, northwest of Meppel,

at 1233, over Meppen, and Osnabrück, and

at 1250, south of Hannover.

Several fighter formations, which had flown in over the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Dunkirk between 1316 and 1440, picked up the returning bombers over Mainz, Giessen, Cologne and Liège. In the target area itself, the bombers were protected by formations of Lightning aircraft.

4. Secondary attacks on air armaments works in Steyr and Linz from the American bases in Italy:

Secondary attacks were carried out by a total of 160 bombers and 80 Lightning fighters. At 1123 the invaders were reported over Split, headed towards the north. They flew on over Zara and into the Salzburg and Linz areas. Their return flight, following the same course as was used during the approach flight, began at 1325. The damage caused by the attacks was fairly serious.

5. In addition to the above, the following air actions were noted:

Between 0829 and 0832 a single aircraft was reported flying over the Katwijk area.

At 1052 a single Lightning flew over Bergen on its way via Zwolle and

Nordhorn to the Osnabrück area. The airplane, presumably on a weather reconnaissance mission, turned back towards the west at 1125.

Approaching at 1043 over Ostende, Brussels, and St. Vith, a single Mosquito reconnoitered the Mainz area and flew back towards the west. Its flight course was lost over Darmstadt at 1141.

At 1127 a single Lightning reconnaissance aircraft flew over the island of Texel on its way to the Oldenburg area. Departing at 1216, it returned over the island of Schiermonnikoog.

Between 1136 and 1318 a group of three fighter aircraft penetrated as far as the Duisburg and Düsseldorf area. Their approach course led over Westerschelde and Eindhoven, and their return course over Dunkirk.

Approaching from the island of Terschelling at 1145, a single aircraft pushed on to reconnoiter the Bremen area. It departed at 1217.

At 1540 a reconnaissance aircraft flew over the island of Goeree and on to Dordrecht, where it was lost to observers.

The Lake Constance area was reconnoitered by American aircraft which had flown in over Metz and Strassburg at about 1320. The aircraft departed via Ulm at 1427.

Between 1542 and 1654 a group of fifteen Thunderbolt fighter aircraft penetrated into the Eindhoven area. They had approached over the island of Walcheren, and returned over Apeldoorn and Hoek van Holland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

During the attack on Rostock and Gnesen:

Units from the 1st Fighter Division, over Rostock,

Several formations from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Bay of Lübeck, and

Night fighter formations from the 1st and 2d Fighter Divisions, over

Jutland, Greifswald, and Stettin.

During the main American attack:

26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing from the 2d Fighter Division, over Halberstadt and Gotha, and

Units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Paderborn and Kassel.

All of our day fighter units were able to carry out their combat assembly maneuvers successfully. Some fighter formations succeeded in finding and attacking American bomber formations which were flying without fighter escort, over Holzminden and Göttingen. The majority of our single and twin-engine fighter aircraft experienced at least some combat with American fighter aircraft. It should be emphasized that all of our daytime fighter crews, despite the mental and physical strain caused by their almost steady commitment since the start of the American air offensive, fought stubbornly and courageously in the face of overwhelming American numerical superiority. Although their record of enemy aircraft destroyed ^{was} ~~in~~ worthy of admiration, they were unable to prevent the American attack from attaining its full effectiveness.

A total number of 336 single and twin-engine fighters and night fighter aircraft was committed by the I Fighter Corps.

There is no record in the War Diary, I Fighter Corps, of any commitment on the part of the 7th Fighter Division or the Air Commander (Ostmark) against the American attacks on Steyr and Linz.

c. Allied Losses

52 bombers and 7 fighters certainly brought down,

1 bomber and 1 fighter probably brought down.

d. German Losses

26 aircraft totally destroyed,

12 aircraft more than 60% damaged

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personnel: 3 dead

9 wounded

27 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Cloudless.

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Night Fighter Aircraft Attack in a Day Action over

Stettin,

24 February 1944

XIV. AMERICAN ATTACKS ON AUGSBURG, REGENSBURG, and FÜRTH, 25 February 1944

(see Figure 113, Annex)

A. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 0900, reports were received regarding the assembling of American formations over the British Isles. With all the participating formations apparently taking off at the same time, the attack force split into ^{two} ~~three~~ groups as follows:

At 1109 the first aircraft of a bomber force consisting of approximately 200 aircraft were reported some 100 kilometers northwest of the island of Vlieland, with course towards the northeast.

The second group, consisting of 500 bombers, appeared at 1110 over Dieppe and the mouth of the Somme, with course towards the east southeast.

At approximately the same time, at 1110, a group of 200 bombers, accompanied by 80 Lightning fighters, was reported over Klagenfurt, with course towards the north. This group came from the American base in Italy.

At 1220 it was realized that the group moving across the southern part of the North Sea was engaged in a diversionary maneuver. While still over water, approximately seventy kilometers west of the island of Sylt and Esbjerg, the American bombers reversed their course and headed back to Great Britain. Although it was first assumed that their mission was to mine the waters off the western coast of Jutland, this seems improbable. On their flight towards the west, the returning bombers were reported 100 kilometers north of the island of ~~Terschelling~~ Terschelling at 1346.

In the meantime the second group had crossed northern France and the Rhine River (between Mannheim and Karlsruhe) and had launched their attack on the aircraft factories in Augsburg, Regensburg, and Fürth. At

1350 the American bombers departed from southern Germany and headed for the coast, some of them via Darmstadt and Aix la Chapelle, and the rest via Karlsruhe, Saarbrücken, and Strassburg. They crossed the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Dieppe. The bomber operation was supported by a force of some 500 fighter aircraft, as follows:

At 1215 several Lightning formations approached between the mouth of the Schelde and Bruges and flew on over Koblenz and Darmstadt to join the bombers over Mannheim and Ansbach.

At 1235 a single fighter formation flew over the mouth of the Schelde and continued towards the southeast as far as Bad Kreuznach. Here the aircraft reversed their course and returned, crossing the coast between Calais and the mouth of the Schelde. The bomber aircraft were picked up by an escort of approximately 100 fighters over Koblenz and Traben-Trarbach at 1445. These fighters had come in over the mouth of the Schelde and Brussels beginning at 1405.

The third of the groups mentioned above, the one from Italy, approached Germany over Linz, Austria, and attacked the Messerschmitt works at Regensburg at 1300.

All the aircraft factories attacked on 25 February suffered heavy damages.

In addition to the above, the American Air Forces carried out the following actions:

Between 0815 and 0824, two Spitfires were reported flying at about 2,600 meters above the island of Walcheren.

From 0846 to 0917, two aircraft were observed circling over the mouth of the Schelde.

At 0944 a single aircraft flew over the island of Goeree and on over Amsterdam and Utrecht as far as Arnheim. At 1039 it returned towards the

west over Katwijk.

Approaching at 0945 over Bruges and Antwerp, a single aircraft reconnoitered the Maastricht area, and flew back at 1012 over Brussels.

Between 1005 and 1038 several fighter aircraft, approaching from the mouth of the Schelde, penetrated as far as Venlo, Hamm, Aix la Chapelle, and Liège. They returned towards the west, passing between Rotterdam and Bruges, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 1113.

The Münster and Paderborn areas were the object of a reconnaissance flight by a single Mosquito aircraft. It appeared at 1115 over Katwijk, and flew on over Arnheim; its return flight course was over Osnabrück, Zwolle, and the Zuyder Zee, at which point it left the Continent at 1223.

Approaching at 1113 over the mouth of the Schelde, a single Mosquito aircraft flew on over Volkel as far as Duisburg and Herne, apparently engaged on a reconnaissance mission. It returned to the west, flying over Brussels and Ghent at approximately 1217.

Between 1809 and 1812 a single aircraft was observed circling over Katwijk and Hoek van Holland.

During the time from 1510 to 1539, one Mosquito aircraft flew from Mühlhausen to Switzerland, crossing Friedrichshafen and St. Gallen.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

In expectation of a large-scale attack on targets in northern Germany, the day fighter units of the 1st and 2d Fighter Divisions were placed on alert status but not sent up. Thus the American diversionary maneuver over the North Sea may be reckoned a success.

The following units were employed during the attack on Augsburg:

Units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Mainz and Mannheim.

The fighters from the 3d Fighter Division were sent up just in time

to catch the last of the American bombers on their approach flight over the Karlsruhe area. Although the original plan called for a second sortie for these fighter aircraft as soon as they had refueled, this plan was not carried out.

All things considered, 25 February must be chalked up as a failure for the I Fighter Corps.

A total of 100 single-engine fighter aircraft were employed.

There is no record in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps of any commitment on the part of the 7th ~~Air~~ Fighter Division or of the Air Commander (Ostmark) in connection with the American attack on aircraft works located in southern Germany.

c. Allied Losses

6 bombers certainly brought down,

3 bombers probably brought down.

d. German Losses (as of 1200, 26 February 1944)

5 fighter aircraft totally destroyed,

1 fighter aircraft more than 60% damaged,

personnel: 2 wounded

5 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Cloudless.

XV. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BRAUNSCHWEIG, 29 February 1944

(see Figure 114, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

By 0800 German radio reconnaissance had picked up the assembling of an American attacking force over Great Britain. Beginning at 0940, the first bomber formations crossed the Dutch coast between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde. The bombers, accompanied by a

fighter escort, were headed towards the east. They flew on over Oldenburg, Verden, Hameln, and Münster to the Braunschweig area. Sight bombardment was impossible, and the attack, carried out by some 200 bombers, resulted in comparatively slight damage. At 1100 a part of the fighter escort had broken away from the bombers, over Osnabrück, and returned towards the west. The majority of the fighters remained with the bomber force as far as Celle and Lüneburg. At 1115 the first bombers began leaving the target area. Eye-and-ear observation stations reported that motor noise stopped at 1311 in the area between The Hague and the island of Terschelling. Between 1100 and 1205 fighter escorts had flown in over Den Helder and Katwijk, and picked up the returning bombers over the Min-den area. The "Big Week" of the American offensive during February 1944 was concluded by a penetration flight by a group of some thirty fighter aircraft. Between 1229 and 1322, they appeared over the mouth of the Schelde, as usual, and flew on as far as the Gilze Rijen area.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

Due to an enveloping fog, which covered the entire area assigned to the I Fighter Corps, no aircraft were committed on 29 February.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

CHAPTER IV

NIGHT ACTIONS DURING FEBRUARY 1944

I. SURVEY

a. British Offensive Activity

The pattern of British nocturnal bombardment missions against the Reich was different during February than during January 1944. The RAF carried out only five large-scale attacks, four of which occurred immediately after the beginning of the Anglo-American air offensive. The average number of aircraft employed during one night reached a peak during this period, with 800 or 900 participating. There seemed to be no specific reason for this reduction in the number of British night actions. Weather conditions, though frequently adverse, could not, alone, have accounted for the decrease in activity.

Secondary air actions (i.e. actions other than large-scale attacks) were frequent and consisted chiefly of missions carried out by Mosquito aircraft. Included in these actions were sixteen harrassing raids carried out by a total of approximately 900 Mosquitos and directed chiefly against the industrial areas of Rhine-Westphalia. Mine-laying missions also increased in number, approximately ten such missions being observed over the waters of the western Baltic Sea, the Bay of Helgoland, and along the Dutch coast.

The first attack carried out by the RAF within the framework of the Anglo-American air offensive was the one on Leipzig during the night of 19/20 February, an action which resulted in heavy losses for the British. It was not until the attacks on Schweinfurt and Augsburg, carried out during the nights of 24/25 and 25/26 February respectively, that it became evident that the British and American air commanders were coordinating closely in their selection of attack targets and times.

The total effectiveness of the five British large-scale attacks was great; many residential areas were destroyed, and the installations of the German armaments industry suffered heavy damages. The fact that the British night attacks were preceded by American day attacks on the same targets greatly increased their effectiveness and hindered tremendously the clearing away of rubble and the accomplishment of urgent repair work. The many British harrassing raids, on the other hand, had little effect on the producing capacity of the German armaments industry.

There were seven nights during the reporting period during which no British aircraft whatsoever were observed over the Reich.

b. British Offensive Tactics and Radio Interference

In carrying out their large-scale attacks on the Reich, the RAF made extensive use of deception and diversionary maneuvers such as the following:

the scrambling of mine-laying aircraft belonging to the Coastal Command over the North Sea, hoping that we would think them a bomber stream and send up our fighters,

the employment of Mosquito units equipped with target locating devices, for the same purpose as above,

having the main bomber stream change its flight course a number of times, to camouflage the actual location of the intended target, and

the concurrent employment of small Mosquito formations in harrassing attacks to blur the air situation picture.

In an attempt to dissipate the German night fighter forces, the British Bomber Command began to follow the practice of sending up two bomber streams during the same night, starting at different times and following different flight courses to the same target. In addition, the RAF tried to prevent the employment of German night fighter units by

staging bomber raids on our night fighter airfields in Holland. Since these raids were carried out by very small units, they did not have any appreciable effect on our commitment of night fighter forces.

During the reporting period there was a substantial increase in the employment of British long-range night fighter aircraft. Their chief mission was to appear over illuminated German airfields and to harrass the take-off and landing maneuvers of the German night fighters.

There was no noticeable intensification of British radio and radar interference activity. The practice of dropping tinfoil strips from four-engine bombers as well as from Mosquitos was continued, and had an extremely detrimental effect on the functioning of our radar stations in France and southern Germany, rendering it very difficult to follow the flight course of enemy aircraft.

c. The Commitment of German Night Fighter Units

During February 1944, it became apparent that the German night fighter forces had established themselves as an effectively functioning defensive body in northern Germany. This was demonstrated by the fact that they succeeded in following British flight courses despite the extensive use by the enemy of harrassing and deceptive maneuvers and that the employment of night fighter units in both pursuit operations and in controlled combat against specific objectives was highly successful even under adverse weather conditions. The number of enemy aircraft brought down by units from the I Fighter Corps during the British attack on Leipzig (19/20 February) bore eloquent testimony to the effectiveness of German night air defense measures.

The weak points in the functioning of the night fighter defenses of the I Fighter Corps remained the employment of aircraft in controlled combat which, in the defense against British mine-laying operations, for

example, was almost a complete failure because of British radio interference measures, and the problem of a defense against the harrassing operations carried out by British Mosquito aircraft. Although efforts were continued during February to create an airplane capable of meeting the Mosquito by increasing the climbing ability and speed of some already extant aircraft model, none of these attempts was successful. During the month of February approximately 900 Mosquito aircraft penetrated into the area covered by the I Fighter Corps; only one of these was brought down. Nor was there any hope of alleviation of our helplessness. As yet there was no information available regarding the possible employment of jet-propelled aircraft within the night fighter units against the Mosquitos.

The British attacks on targets lying in southern Germany by bomber forces approaching over France brought additional difficulties in the employment of the German night fighter forces. On the whole these difficulties could be traced to the decentralized command organization of the Reichs air defense forces, and particularly to the preparation of air situation pictures and the command of such forces in southern Germany and in France, outside the area of jurisdiction of the I Fighter Corps. Both the radar stations and the direction-finding posts serving the areas covered by the 7th Fighter Division and the 4th Fighter Division, Third Air Fleet, were inferior in respect to personnel and equipment. Moreover the personnel manning these stations had had no experience in following the flight course of enemy aircraft and in guiding our own aircraft in combat from the ground in the face of British radar jamming activity. As a result the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, was often ~~was~~ forced to employ its night fighter units in the defense of southern German targets under British attack, and this in the total absence of a servicable air situation picture. Moreover, once these night fighter units had been passed on to

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ground control stations of the 7th and 4th Fighter Divisions, guidance from the ground became very meager indeed; this was true for all types of night fighter activity, i.e. pursuit, controlled combat, etc. Because of the distance they had to travel and the confusion of the air situation picture, the units from the I Fighter Corps rarely managed to arrive at the target in time to be of any help. The Reichs air defense system ought to have a central command agency whose job it would be to standardize the personnel and equipment of all radar and ground control stations and to shift these personnel from time to time so that they might all gain experience in specialized techniques and functions.

The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, suspected that British commanders had developed a liking for the flight course over France and that the RAF would concentrate in the future on targets in southern Germany. Thus the suggestion was made to the Air Fleet Reich that the 7th Fighter Division, and especially the Frankfurt area, be supplied with experienced radio and radar personnel and with modern direction-finding equipment from the Holland area. This suggestion was put into effect at the end of February.

The three single-engine night fighter wings, under the direct command of the 30th Fighter Division, Air Fleet Reich, had been employed with complete independence since August 1943. During the winter of 1943/44 they had been committed in controlled combat against specific objectives, under their own command organization and independently from the activities of the I Fighter Corps. Their frequent failures, due to inadequate air situation information, and their heavy losses decided the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, to deactivate the headquarters of the 30th Fighter Division, effective 15 February 1944. Effective 16 February, the 300th and 302d Single-Engine Night Fighter Wings were assigned to the Headquarters, I Fighter ~~Corp~~ Corps.

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Disregarding the problem, still unsolved, of an adequate defense against the Mosquitos, the situation of the night fighter forces within the Reichs air defense system was fairly favorable as of the end of February.

The night fighter crisis which had been brought on by British radio interference and the British bomber stream technique, had been practically overcome. The long period of adverse weather conditions was coming to an end. The majority of the night fighter crews had mastered the techniques of uncontrolled night combat. Roughly one-third of the night fighter crews were capable of employment in bad weather. The assignment of the two single-engine night fighter wings to the I Fighter Corps had increased the latter's total striking power considerably. With the improvement of the radar and ground control stations in southern Germany, there was every prospect of inflicting sufficiently heavy losses on the British units to persuade the latter to discontinue their bomber operations against the Reich. This last, of course, ~~was~~ was based on the presumption that the British would not come up with any vitally important innovations in radar jamming and that they would continue to employ the bomber stream technique.

d. Successes and Losses During ~~January 1944~~ February 1944

During February 1944, the average total number of night fighter aircraft available for employment by the I Fighter Corps was 225 twin-engine fighter aircraft and, after 16 February, 80 single-engine night fighter aircraft.

The total number of night fighter aircraft committed by the I Fighter Corps during February 1944 was 1,115 single and twin-engine night fighter aircraft.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the I Fighter Corps during Feb-

ruary 1944 amounted to 53 aircraft, or 4.8% of the total number of aircraft committed.

The total losses suffered by the enemy within the area covered by the I Fighter Corps during February 1944 amounted to 153 aircraft (excluding those brought down by antiaircraft artillery and by the single-engine night fighter aircraft during the period 1 through 15 February), or 3.2% of the estimated total number of aircraft (4,857) employed by the RAF against the Reich. These losses represented 3.8% of the total number of four-engine bombers committed by the RAF.

II. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON BERLIN AND KREFELD, 1/2 February 1944
(see Figure 115, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The raids were carried out as follows: Berlin was attacked by a force of twenty Mosquito bombers, which were sighted first at 1853 over IJmuiden headed towards the east. Their flight continued over Osnabrück and Hannover to the Dessau, Berlin and Neurippen areas. They began their return flights at 2000, flying in loose formation over northwestern Germany and reaching the coast at a point between Borkum and the mouth of the Schelde. The last aircraft was reported crossing the coast at 2151.

Beginning at 1938, Krefeld was subjected to attack by a group of six Mosquitos. Beginning at 1906 they had approached between The Hague and the island of Schouwen and proceeded into the Bocholt, Essen, Düsseldorf and Aix la Chapelle areas. They departed from the Continent between The Hague and Blankenberghe, the last aircraft leaving at 2041.

In addition to the above, during the time from 1819 until 0025, five aircraft were observed over the Skagerrak, two of them on their way to Sweden, and the other three returning to the British Isles.

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During the night of 31 January/1 February, three British aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak towards Sweden between 1836 and 2308.

Two aircraft flew over The Hague, Rotterdam, and Tiel at approximately 1900.

At 1906 a single aircraft appeared over the island of Goeree, flew on over Gorinchen and Arnheim, and departed via Breda and the island of Zuid.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None

e. Weather Conditions

Closed cover of high-altitude clouds; visibility very poor; over northern Jutland: cover of multiple-strata clouds, fairly high.

III. THE BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACK ON THE RUHR DISTRICT AND THE MINING OF THE BAY OF KIEL, 2/3 February 1944

(see Figure 116, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the first half of the night, a force of twenty-five Mosquito bombers carried out harrassing raids on the northern and southern parts of the Ruhr District. No serious damage was caused.

During the second half of the night, some twenty to thirty aircraft appeared suddenly out of the North Sea along the western coast of Schleswig-Holstein, flying very low. They continued towards the east as far as the Bay of Kiel, where they dropped aerial mines. Their approach was erroneously interpreted by the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, as the approach

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of a British bomber stream.

In addition to the above, the RAF carried out the following actions:

Eight aircraft, sighted at 0232 over the Frisian Islands, came in to carry out a raid on the coasts of the Bay of Helgoland. They returned towards the west, leaving the mouth of the Elbe at 0307 and the Kiel area at 0321. The position reports on these aircraft, in connection with the reported approach of the mine-laying aircraft, were responsible for the confusion of the air situation report.

Between 2041 and 2123, a single aircraft flew in over IJmuiden as far as Enschede.

During the time from 0408 to 0416, a single aircraft was observed over the islands of Terschelling and Vlieland.

From 2000 to 2018, one aircraft was reported crossing the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden, and from 0045 to 0106, three on their way from Sweden back to Great Britain.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed in defense against the mine-laying aircraft:

from Himmelbett areas over Schleswig-Holstein:

several night fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division.

in night pursuit activity:

small units from the 1st and 2d Fighter Divisions, assembling at radio beacon Eienhörschen; as soon as it was realized that the aircraft approaching over the Bay of Helgoland were not bombers but mine-layers, the night fighter aircraft were ordered to land.

A total of 50 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

Over Holland and northwestern Germany: overcast, with clouds at 100 meters; rain; visibility poor.

Over the western Baltic Sea: dispersing clouds between 400 and 600 meters; ground visibility four to six kilometers.

IV. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON THE RUHR DISTRICT, 3/4 and 4/5 February 1944

(see Figure 117, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

3/4 February 1944. Krefeld was raided by a force of twenty Mosquito bombers. They were sighted first at 1914 over the southern part of the Zuyder Zee and the mouth of the Schelde, and flew on over Münster, Wuppertal and Cologne to their target. They returned via Bergen and the island of Walcheren, the last aircraft crossing the coast at 2100.

Two Mosquito bombers raided the city of Mainz. The first one approached at 2032 over Ostende, Namur, and Trier and returned at 2313 by way of Luxemburg, Namur and Maldegem. The second aircraft was reported at 2139 over the island of Goeree, and continued on over Antwerp and Koblenz to its target. Its return flight led it back over Liège, Brussels, and Westerschelle, at which point it crossed the coast at 2341.

In addition to the above, the following actions were carried out by the RAF:

A single aircraft was observed returning from the Frankfurt/Main area via Mainz and Malmedy at 0453; it left the Continent at Heyst at 0545.

Two aircraft, reported approaching at 0655, flew over Brussels and St. Trond and flew off again at 0722.

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4/5 February 1944. Between 1846 and 1922 a force of approximately twenty Mosquito bombers passed over the Channel coast between Etaples and the mouth of the Schelde on their way towards the southeast. Several of them entered the Ruhr District and the rest flew on into the Aschaffenburg and Frankfurt/Main areas. Düsseldorf and Frankfurt/Main were bombed and a few scattered bombs also dropped on Offenbach and Kaiserslautern.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

During both nights adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions (3/4 February)

Over the Ruhr District and Frankfurt/Main: 7/10 to 10/10 cover of cumulo-nimbus clouds between 500 and 4,500 meters; danger of icing above 1,800 meters.

4/5 February: 5/10 to 9/10 cover of moving cumulus clouds between 500 and 6,500 meters; widespread rain and snow flurries; danger of icing in the clouds above 500 meters.

V. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON BERLIN AND DUISBURG, 5/6 February 1944,
AND OTHER HARRASSING FLIGHTS, 6/7 February 1944

(see Figure 118, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

5/6 February 1944. The following actions were carried out by the RAF:

Between 1844 and 1944, three aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak on their way to Sweden.

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A group of approximately twenty Mosquito bombers carried out a harrasing raid on the city of Berlin. The aircraft were first reported approaching from the North Sea at 1910. They crossed the coast between the island of Pellworm and Heide, and flew on over the Bays of Kiel and Mecklenburg to their target. South of Schwerin, two of the aircraft turned back; the rest of the group bombed Berlin and several rural communities in the vicinity of Schwerin between 2030 and 2115 and flew back towards the west and northwest. They crossed the coast between the island of Terschelling and Zandvoort, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2210.

Approaching over Bergen at 2056, two Mosquitos penetrated as far as Hannover and dropped several bombs on the area lying south of the city. Returning, they joined the aircraft flying back from Berlin over Minden.

A force of twenty Mosquito bombers, reported approaching at 1935 between The Hague and Bergen with course towards the southeast, flew on to carry out a harrasing raid on the city of Duisburg. They reached their target at 2030; after the raid they returned towards the west, crossing the mouth of the Schelde at 2133.

A group of approximately thirty aircraft, presumably engaged in laying mines in the Skaggerak and in dropping supplies to agents in northern Jutland, was observed beginning at 2000 over northern Jutland. The aircraft returned towards the west at 2324.

Between 2031 and 2046 several aircraft on a harrasing mission flew over Hoek van Holland on their way to Woensdrecht. They crossed the coast on their return flight at the mouth of the Schelde.

6/7 February 1944. The following actions were reported:

During the time from 1825 to 2356, four aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak, two on their way from Sweden and two on their way to Sweden.

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Between 2056 and 2115 two aircraft circled over the waters north of the island of Terschelling.

A single aircraft, approaching at 1925 over Berck and Saarbrücken, flew on as far as Stuttgart, then turned back towards the west. Its return flight led over Mannheim, Trier, Liège and Heyst, and it left the Continent at 2306.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:

5/6 February 1944:

from Himmelbett areas over Jutland, against the British mine-laying aircraft: 30 twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division; against the harrassing attack on Duisburg: 2 He-219's belonging to the 3d Fighter Division.

6/7 February 1944:

from Himmelbett areas against the courier aircraft: 1 twin-engine fighter aircraft.

A total number of 33 aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps during the two nights indicated.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

5/6 February 1944: Over the areas assigned to the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions: 3/10 to 6/10 cover of cumulo-stratus clouds between 800 and 2,000 meters; visibility good; Over the area assigned to the 1st Fighter Division: 10/10 cover of multiple-strata clouds between 500 and 5,000 meters; widespread light snow flurries; danger of icing above 1,500 meters.

6/7 February 1944: 7/10 to 10/10 cloud cover beginning at 1,000 meters.

VI. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON WUPPERTAL AND FRANKFURT/MAIN, 7/8 February 1944, AND OTHER HARRASSING FLIGHTS, 8/9 February 1944

(see Figure 119, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

7/8 February 1944. The following actions were carried out by the RAF:

During the time from 1907 to 2032, several aircraft were reported circling over the waters north of the islands of Vlieland and Terschelling, apparently engaged in laying mines.

Beginning at 2250, a group of about twenty Mosquito bombers raided the city of Wuppertal. Their approach flight, lasting from 2208 until 2325, led them over the coast at a point between Amsterdam and Calais, and on over Stadtlohn and Cologne to their target. Their return flight followed the same course, and the last aircraft left the Continent at 0035.

Between 0044 and 0058, a single aircraft circled above the mouth of the Schelde.

Between 0231 and 0257, one courier aircraft on its way to Sweden was observed flying over the Skagerrak.

Reported approaching between 0306 and 0331 over the mouth of the Schelde, Cologne and Koblenz, a group of fifteen Mosquito bombers raided the city of Frankfurt/Main. They began their return flights at 0403 and followed a course leading them over Giessen, Duisburg, Trier and Lille. They crossed the coast between Rotterdam and Boulogne, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 0525. Two of the fifteen Mosquitoes continued on as far as the Nuremberg area, and returned by way of Rothenburg, Mannheim, Namur, and Dunkirk.

8/9 February 1944. At approximately 1900 German radar stations reported the assembling of a large force of British aircraft northeast of The Wash. Subsequent position-finding reports failed to confirm the take-off of such a large group. The following actions were carried out by the RAF:

Between 1930 and 1947, a single aircraft was reported circling above the islands of Vlieland and Terschelling.

At 1930 a single aircraft appeared over the island of Schouwen and flew on to the Breda area. It returned towards the west over the island of Goeree at 2004.

Beginning at 2008, a force of twenty Mosquitos raided Wuppertal. From 1930 on, twenty-five aircraft had come in between Den Helder and Noordwijk with course towards the southeast. Twenty aircraft flew on as far as the Ruhr District, raided Wuppertal, and returned towards the west. Fifteen aircraft continued on towards the east as far as Magdeburg, where they turned back at 2040. One of the group flew back via Rotenburg, Wesermünde, and the island of Borkum. The majority of them left the coast between the island of Vlieland and the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft crossing this point at 2152.

During the time from 0024 to 0050, one courier aircraft was observed crossing the Skagerrak on its way from Sweden.

Approaching at 0138 over Arnheim and Münster, two Mosquito aircraft penetrated into the Hannover area. They returned towards the west, over Frankfurt/Main and the mouth of the Somme, leaving the Continent at 0340.

Approaching at 0435 via Bergen and Osnabrück, a third Mosquito flew as far as Hannover. Its return course led it over the area north of Frankfurt/Main, Aix la Chapelle, and the mouth of the Somme; it crossed the coast at 0650.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

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The following forces were committed:

7/8 February 1944:

from Himmelbett areas over the northern coast of Holland: 6 twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division (against the mine-laying aircraft),

8/9 February 1944:

aircraft ordered to stand by in Himmelbett areas over the coast of the Bay of Helgoland: 13 twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division,

employed with the Y-Method against the Mosquito bombers:

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

from the airfield at Stade 1 twin-engine fighter aircraft

from the airfield at Venlo 2 He-219's.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

7/8 February 1944: 5/10 to 9/10 cover of stratus clouds between 500 and 1,500 meters; visibility under the cloud level, 5 to 10 kilometers; southwest of the line Cologne-Paris: closed cloud cover beginning at 100 meters; rainstorms.

8/9 February 1944: 5/10 to 9/10 cover of nimbus clouds with snow flurries; cloud cover reaching to 3,000 meters, with scattered peaks as high as 5,000 meters; high-altitude visibility excellent.

VII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON WUPPERTAL AND KREFELD, 9/10 February 1944, AND ON BERLIN AND AIX LA CHAPELLE, 10/11 February 1944

(see Figure 120, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

9/10 February 1944. The RAF carried out the following actions:

Between 1910 and 1912, a single aircraft was reported over the island of Vlieland.

During the time from 2000 and 2050, several aircraft were engaged in mining the waters west of Den Helder and IJmuiden.

Harrassing raids on the cities of Wuppertal and Krefeld were carried out by a total force of approximately thirty Mosquito bombers. The aircraft approached at about 0257 over the Zuyder Zee and flew on due east as far as the German border, at which point they altered their course towards the Ruhr District. One or two aircraft turned back over Zwolle and Meppel; the rest returned to the west via the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 0520.

Between 2144 and 2213, a single courier aircraft was reported over the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden.

10/11 February 1944.

During the first half of the night, a British aircraft was observed circling over the mouth of the Schelde for a few minutes.

During the second half of the night, German Rotterdam instruments revealed a large number of aircraft over the southern part of the North Sea, with course towards the east. The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, interpreted them first as the first aircraft of a bomber stream, and later as a mine-laying expedition. It was not until they crossed the coast of Jutland that it became clear that the group of twenty Mosquito bombers was on its way, ~~via~~ via Rostock, to bombard Berlin. The aircraft returned towards the west, flying across northwestern Germany.

At the same time, four Mosquito bombers, having approached over the mouth of the Schelde, carried out a harrassing raid on the city of Aix la

Chapelle. Their return flight led them over southern Holland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

9/10 February 1944: adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of night fighter aircraft.

10/11 February 1944: the following forces were ordered to stand by: against the supposed approach of a British bomber stream over the southern North Sea: from Himmelbett areas over the coasts of the Bay of Helgoland and for night pursuit activity over Hamburg and Kiel: 31 twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division.

c. Allied Losses

9/10 February 1944: one Mosquito bomber crashed over the Ruhr District.

d. German Losses

two Me-110's were damaged when they collided while taxiing at the airfield at Wittmundhafen.

e. Weather Conditions

9/10 February 1944: Over Holland: impenetrable cloud cover beginning at 100 meters; rain; over the Ruhr District: 7/10 to 10/10 cover of nimbus clouds with very high peaks; rain; Over northern Jutland: clear.

10/11 February 1944: Over Holland: 6/10 to 10/10 cover of cumulus clouds between 500 and 2,000 meters; scattered snow flurries; over Berlin: unbroken cover of stratus clouds between 100 and 1,500 meters; snowfall.

VIII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON WUPPERTAL AND DUISBURG, 11/12 and 12/13 February 1944

(see Figure 121, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

11/12 February 1944. Beginning at 1925, a group of about thirty

Mosquito bombers were reported approaching between the island of Vlieland and the mouth of the Schelde with course towards the east and southeast. They flew on as far as the border of the Reich, at which point a few of them turned around and flew back. Approximately fifteen aircraft headed for the Ruhr District, where they dropped a few bombs on Aix la Chapelle, Wuppertal, Duisburg, and Solingen. One Mosquito penetrated as far as the city of Kassel. They began their return flight at 2101, towards the west. Ten aircraft flew between Papenburg and Rheine into the Hannover area, Magdeburg and Hildesheim, where they bombed the area lying east of the last-named city. These Mosquitos headed for the west at 2118, and crossed the coast between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde. The last aircraft was reported leaving the coast behind at 2240.

At 1925 German radar stations reported the approach of a large force from the Norwih area, with course towards the east. According to the readings of our Rotterdam instruments, the bomber stream (if it was one) flew on with course towards the south southeast as far as the mouth of the Schelde, where it turned around and headed for home.

During the time from 1942 to 2303, two courier aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak on theyr way to Sweden, and one on its way from Sweden to Great Britain.

12/13 February 1944. The following actions were carried out by the RAF:

A group of thirty aircraft carried out a mine-laying mission on the waters off the East Frisian Islands. The aircraft were reported at 1920 at a point 160 kilometers west of the island of Terschelling, with course towards the east. They flew along north of the West Frisian Islands as far as the waters lying to the north of the islands of Borkum and Nordeney. They completed their return flights towards the northwest at 2037.

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A harrassing raid on the Ruhr District was carried out, with scattered bombs being released over the city of Duisburg.

At 1928 a group of fifteen Mosquito bombers appeared over the coast between Ostende and Calais. They flew on as far as Malmedy, Aix la Chapelle, and Cologne, and turned back towards the west and northwest at 2030.

Crossing the coast between IJmuiden and Noordwijk at 2008, a force of ten Mosquito bombers continued on into the areas of Bocholt, Duisburg, and Wuppertal. They began their return flights towards the west at 2030.

During the time from 2014 until 0219, four courier aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak, two on their way from, and two on their way to Sweden.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

11/12 February 1944: the following forces were ordered to stand by in case of a large-scale attack: several units from the 3d Fighter Division, to be employed in night pursuit activity; against the Mosquito raids: several night fighter aircraft from the 1st and 3d Fighter Divisions, to be employed by means of the Y-Method.

A total of 45 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft were placed on an alert status.

12/13 February 1944: the following forces were employed:

from Himmelbett areas over the coasts of the Bay of Helgoland, against the enemy mine-laying aircraft: small units from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions;

from Himmelbett areas over northern Jutland, against the courier aircraft: one night fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division;

against the Mosquito raiders: several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, to be guided by the Y-Method.

A total number of 14 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

One Mosquito bomber, brought down by an Me-410 during the night of 12/13 February.

d. German Losses

One Me-109, crashed while taking off on the night of 11/12 February.

e. Weather Conditions

11/12 February 1944: 3/10 to 6/10 cover of rapidly shifting stratus clouds between 800 and 2,000 meters; scattered clouds at 4,000 meters; visibility, both above and under the clouds, very good.

12/13 February 1944: 3/10 to 6/10 cover of loosely scattered stratus clouds between 800 and 1,000 meters; visibility very good.

IX. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON BERLIN, 15/16 February 1944

(see Figure 122, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

After their assembling had already been reported, at 1830 a group of some 500 British bombers was reported taking off from the Norwich area, with course towards the northeast. The bomber stream moved over the North Sea, crossed southern Jutland, and altered course towards the southeast over the island of Fünen. The attack on Berlin lasted from 2105 to 2145. The returning bombers flew, with course towards the west and northwest, over northwestern Germany and Holland.

During the period from 1938 to 2150, a total of seventy-five Mosquito bombers crossed the Dutch coast between Den Helder and the island of Goeree. The majority of them flew on over the Zuyder Zee to join in the attack on Berlin. Forty of them, flying at altitudes varying from 1,800 to 3,000 meters, attacked German-occupied night fighter airfields in Holland, causing slight damage at Deelen and Venlo. The attack on Berlin, on the other hand,

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inflicted severe damage on both industrial plants and private property in the sectors of Spandau and Siemensstadt.

At 2029 a British courier aircraft on its way to Sweden was reported crossing the Skagerrak.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Despite adverse weather conditions, which rendered the take-off extremely difficult, the following forces were employed:

in night pursuit activity:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Hahn, directed on to radio beacon Eichhörnchen and into the bomber stream over the Rostock area;

units from the 2d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Quelle from the airfields at Wittmundhafen, Vechta and Stade, and directed into the bomber stream over southern Jutland; assembling over the airfields at Westerland and Schleswig and directed into the bomber stream over Jutland;

units from the 3d Fighter Division; those night fighter aircraft from northern Holland were guided via Helgoland to Jutland, where they were sent into the bomber stream; the remainder assembled at radio beacon Quelle together with the forces from the 2d Fighter Division, and were employed with the latter.

All night fighter aircraft were ordered to leave the bomber stream at radio beacon Neunauge and not to fly on into Berlin, in order that the anti-aircraft artillery might have a completely free hand at all altitudes. By aiming for radio beacon Berta, the night fighters could pick up the returning bomber stream and resume pursuit.

from Himmelbett areas over northwestern Germany and Holland: units from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions.

Weather conditions were too bad to risk the employment of single-engine

fighter aircraft.

A total number of 143 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

39 bombers brought down

4 bombers brought down over Berlin by antiaircraft artillery

d. German Losses

11 aircraft

personnel: 11 dead

4 wounded

9 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Impenetrable cover of high-altitude fog beginning at 200 to 400 meters and extending as high as 1,100 meters; danger of icing in the cloud cover; visibility two to five kilometers.

X. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON LEIPZIG, 19/20 February 1944

(see Figure 123, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The RAF opened the February offensive of the Anglo-American air forces with a large-scale attack on the city of Leipzig. According to estimates made by German sources, 600 bombers, 50 Mosquitos, and approximately 30 long-range night fighters participated in this action. Leipzig suffered severe property damage through the British attack.

The British night action was carried out in the following stages:

1) Between 2314 and 2345, a total of twenty long-range night fighter aircraft flew in over the Dutch coast. At altitudes varying from 6,000 to 9,500 meters, they flew over the German night fighter airfields in Holland, and at 0036, departed from the area.

2) At the same time, a force of approximately 100 aircraft at-

bombarded the airfields at Leeuwarden, Deelen, Venlo, and Gilze-Rijen, causing severe damage and greatly hindering the commitment of the night fighter units.

3) Shortly after midnight approximately 500 bombers took off from Norwich, with course for the northeast. Our Rotterdam instruments were able to follow their flight course as far as the vicinity of the island of Sylt. As the lead aircraft flew over the coast of Jutland at a low altitude, they were recognized as mine-layers. They penetrated as far as the western Baltic Sea, dropped their mines, and returned over Schleswig-Holstein towards the west. The British mining maneuver did not succeed in confusing us, for the flight course of the main bomber stream had already been picked up.

4) As the mine-laying aircraft flew off towards the western Baltic, the main stream appeared north of the island of Terschelling, with its course clearly towards the southeast. It proceeded over the Frisian Islands, the Bremen area, and Hannover as far as the western edge of Berlin. Southwest and west of Berlin the bombers altered their course ^{towards} ~~for~~ the south for the approach to Leipzig. A group of about fifty Mosquitos, having approached over the Zuyder Zee, tried to confuse the air situation picture and camouflage the actual attack target by activity in the Berlin and Dresden areas. Their attack completed, the bombers left Leipzig and headed for the west as far as Kassel. Here a northern group split off and returned by way of Gütersloh, Osnabrück, and the Zuyder Zee, and a southern group followed a course leading over Cologne, Koblenz, and southern Belgium to the English Channel.

5) Because of the intense activity over the Reich, it was impossible to follow the flight course of another group of Mosquitos, presumably long-range fighters.

In addition to the above, the following actions were reported:

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At 0030, three to five long-range night fighter aircraft were reported north of Helgoland. They flew on over the mouth of the Elbe as far as Hamburg, and flew back out to sea with course towards the northwest at 0125.

At 0024 a single long-range night fighter aircraft flew over Dunkirk, and continued on over Charleroi and the area north of Giessen. Its course was lost to view at 0147, somewhere north of Erfurt.

At 0045 a single long-range fighter aircraft was observed over Bocholt. From here it proceeded to the area south of Münster and Bielefeld as far as Hannover. Here it circled from 0123 until 0150 and then departed. Its position was reported at 0206 over Soltau.

At 0320 three long-range night fighters flew over Bergen and the Zuyder Zee on their way into the Hannover area. The last position report was received at 0359.

At 0238 a single long-range night fighter aircraft was reported over the mouth of the Schelde. From here it moved on over Charleville and Koblenz. Its position at 0358 was somewhere north of Giessen.

At 0425 a single long-range night fighter aircraft flew over Katwijk and on into the Hertogenbosch area. It flew back over the mouth of the Schelde at 0500.

6) Flights over the Skagerrak:

16/17 February: four aircraft on their way to Sweden;

17/18 February: one aircraft on its way to Sweden and three coming from Sweden, during the time from 1933 to 0120;

18/19 February: one aircraft on its way to Sweden and two coming from Sweden, during the time from 1915 to 0532; and

19/20 February: one aircraft coming from Sweden, between 1925 and 1958.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed in defense against the attack on Leipzig:

from Himmelbett areas over Holland, during the approach and departure flights of the enemy bombers: units from the 3d Fighter Division;

from Himmelbett areas over northwestern Germany, during the return flight of the enemy bombers: parts of units from the 2d Fighter Division;

in night pursuit activity:

twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Hahn and directed into the bomber stream southeast of Bremen;

twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions and several units from the 4th Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacons Hammer and Quelle and directed into the bomber stream over Emden and Bremen;

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

single-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st, 2d, and 3d Fighter Divisions, scrambling over Berlin and directed on to Leipzig;

in the illumination of target areas:

the ~~Target~~ Illumination Group from the airfield at Münster, assembling at radio beacon Marie, and guided on to radio beacon Berta and to Berlin.

A great many of the twin-engine fighters assigned to pursuit activity in the bomber stream remained with the stream on its return flight as far as Kassel. The majority of the single-engine fighters arrived too late over Leipzig for effective action. Despite the deceptive and diversionary maneuvers carried out by the British, the night fighter units of the I Fighter Corps operated with considerable success.

A total number of 294 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was em-

ployed.

c. Allied Losses

74 bombers brought down (on the morning of 20 February, British transmitters indicated the loss of 79 bombers).

d. German Losses

17 aircraft, including one Me-110 which crashed over Brandenburg/Havel, one FW-190 which crashed while taking off from the airfield at Oldenburg, and one Me-109 which crashed during the take-off from the airfield at Wiesbaden-Erbenheim

personnel: 4 dead

16 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Cover of stratus clouds varying from 3/10 to 10/10 between 600 and 1,200 meters; visibility good both on the ground and at higher altitudes; slight danger of icing in the clouds.

XI. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON STUTTGART, 20/21 February 1944

(see Figure 124, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

British operations during the night of 20/21 February began with a series of attacks on German night fighter airfields in Holland, during which the following ~~next~~ were raided:

The airfield at Leeuwarden, by two Mosquito bombers which had been reported approaching at 2346 over the island of Texel. They returned the same way at 0006.

The airfield at Gilze-Rijen, by three Mosquito bombers. The raid began at 2348, and the aircraft flew back over the mouth of the Schelde at 0023.

The airfields at Deelen and Twente, by a total force of five Mos-

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quito bombers. They were reported first at 0013 over IJmuiden; after carrying out their attack, they returned towards the west, flying over Gilze-Rijen at 0059 and the mouth of the Schelde at 0104.

The airfields at Venlo and Twente, by several Mosquito bombers whose approach was reported at 0002 over the mouth of the Schelde. They returned via the same course, the last aircraft crossing the coast at 0210.

The airfield at St. Trond, by several Mosquito bombers which had approached via Ghent, crossing the coast between Calais and Dunkirk. Several bombs were also dropped in the vicinity of Ghent.

At 0041 our radar stations picked up the track of a large aircraft force over the ocean northeast of Norwich with course towards the east. This force, presumed to be a bomber stream, could be followed to a point some ninety kilometers north of the island of Vlieland, where it turned back towards the west at 0111. It was assumed that this was an attempted deceptive maneuver on the part of the British.

In the meantime it had been reported that a bomber stream consisting of 400 to 500 aircraft had taken off from the Norwich area and was moving towards the south; the lead aircraft were picked up at 0100 over the mouth of the Somme. Here the bombers altered their course towards the southeast and continued their flight over St. Quentin, Reims, and Strassburg into southwestern Germany, where they bombed the city of Stuttgart. Severe damages were sustained. Flying in broad front formation, the bombers left the attack area and returned towards the northwest, crossing the Rhine Palatinate, Lorraine, Belgium, and northern France.

In addition to the above, the following actions were carried out by the RAF:

Between 2037 and 2042, several aircraft circled above the waters lying north of the island of Borkum.

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At 0420 a single long-range night fighter flew over the ~~areas~~ of Vechta and Quackenbrück ^{areas and} ~~and succeeded in damaging~~ two hangars and several aircraft ^{illuminated} at the airfield at Vechta. ^{by aircraft began fire returned.} The enemy aircraft ~~flew back~~ via Meppen at 0450. ^{low distance fighter} Two aircraft on their way to Sweden, and one on its way from Sweden, were observed crossing the Skagerrak.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed in defense against the attack on Stuttgart:

in night pursuit activity:

twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division; ~~XXXXXX~~ ~~being~~ the Ju-88 units assembled at radio beacon Quelle, were directed on to radio beacons Philipp and Otto, where they joined forces from the 7th Fighter Division; the Me-110 units were assembled at radio beacon 12 and ordered to stand by in case the bomber stream should head towards northern Germany;

twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division; the Ju-88 units were guided by the Y-Method from their airfields to the Metz area, where they were to be directed into the bomber stream; the Me-110 units were assembled at radio beacon Ida, directed on to radio beacon Otto, and there joined units from the 7th Fighter Division.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

single-engine night fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over Frankfurt/Main and Mannheim.

from Himmelbett areas over southern Holland, against the departing bomber stream:

several night fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division.

The Target Illumination Group was directed from the airfield at Münster to radio beacon Otto, where it joined units from the 7th Fighter Division.

A total number of 103 aircraft was employed, including single and twin-engine fighter aircraft and members of the target illumination unit.

During the operations of 20/21 February, the ground control stations of the 4th Fighter Division at Metz were unsuccessful in directing the Ju-88's into the bomber stream. Moreover, due to their lack of experience, the personnel manning the ground control stations of the 7th Fighter Division were incapable of directing those night fighters of the I Fighter Corps which had assembled at radio beacon Otto into the bomber stream.

There is no information contained in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps regarding the commitment of units from the 7th Fighter Division or the Third Air Fleet.

c. Allied Losses

4 bombers brought down

d. German Losses

2 aircraft

personnel: 4 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Unbroken cover of stratus clouds beginning at 400 to 700 meters and extending as high as 1,300 meters; Over Belgium and Frankfurt: cloudless; Over Stuttgart: 10/10 cloud cover extending as high as 1,800 meters; in general, ground visibility was from four to eight kilometers and high-altitude visibility poor because of haze.

f. Remarks

The effectiveness of the British attacks on our airfields in Holland may be seen from the following:

Deelen: hit by several demolition bombs; damage very slight.

Twente: runways hit by five demolition bombs and one dud; landing strip hit by three demolition bombs.

Leeuwarden: hit by four demolition bombs; one runway and one landing strip slightly damaged.

St. Trond: runways hit by four demolition bombs and landing strips by three bombs.

Venlo: hit by seven demolition bombs; the taxiing area was damaged by two bomb craters; the other five were duds.

None of these airfields was too badly damaged to be fully utilized in take-off and landing maneuvers.

XII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON DUISBURG, 21/22 and 22/23 February 1944
(see Figure 125, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

21/22 February 1944. At the beginning of the first half of the night, approximately twenty mine-laying aircraft appeared over the waters northwest of the island of Vlieland. They circled above the East Frisian Islands and the Bay of Helgoland, and then flew back towards the west.

At the same time a force consisting of twenty Mosquito bombers flew in over Amsterdam to attack the city of Duisburg. Their return flight course led over the mouth of the Schelde.

Several Mosquito aircraft, approaching via northern France and Liège, penetrated as far as Stuttgart, and returned the same way they had come.

Two Mosquito bombers crossed the Zuyder Zee and penetrated as far as the Braunschweig area. Their return course led over Frankfurt/Main, Koblenz and Belgium.

In addition to the above, the following actions were noted:

Approaching at 2013, a single Mosquito aircraft flew over the Bay of Helgoland as far as a point south of the island of Pellworm, the Bay of Jade, and Emden. It returned via Groningen, Leeuwarden, and the island of Texel, crossing the latter point at 2109.

During the time from 2020 to 2033, a single aircraft flew along the Dutch coast from the island of Texel to a point south of Den Helder.

At 2035, a group of five aircraft appeared over the island of Schouwen and flew on into the areas of Eindhoven and Dordrecht. Four of these aircraft returned over the mouth of the Schelde and the other crossed the coast at a point south of Bergen. The last aircraft left the Continent at 2210.

At 0656 a single aircraft appeared above Westerschelde, ~~flying~~ and flew on as far as Rotterdam. Its flight altitude varied from 1,500 to 3,000 meters. At 0717 it flew over Hoek van Holland on its way back towards the west.

Two aircraft were reported flying over the Skagerrak, one on its way to Sweden and the other on its way back.

22/23 February 1944. At the beginning of the first half of the night, a large British bomber force took off from the Norwich area and flew as far as a point northwest of the island of Terschelling. Here they turned around and returned home. Presumably they had been recalled to their bases because of unfavorable weather conditions.

The city of Duisburg was subjected to a harrassing raid carried out by a group of twenty Mosquito bombers. They approached by way of Den Helder and returned over the mouth of the Schelde.

The Stuttgart area was subjected to attack by several Mosquito aircraft. The course used for both their approach and departure flights led over northern France and Mannheim.

Several aircraft carried out a mine-laying mission over the waters near Den Helder.

In addition to the above, the following actions were noted:

Two long-range night fighters carried out an observation flight over

The Hague, Rotterdam, Arnheim and Venlo. They approached at 2238 over The Hague and returned over the mouth of the Schelde at 2358.

At 0150 a single night fighter aircraft appeared over Brussels and flew on to St. Trond, apparently engaged in an observation mission. It returned via Antwerp and Bruges at 0244.

Approaching over the mouth of the Schelde at 0217, a single long-range night fighter on an observation mission flew over Gilze-Rijen and Volkel. It flew back over the island of Schouwen at 0327.

A single Mosquito bomber carried out a harrassing raid on the city of Frankfurt/Main. Its approach flight led over Arnheim, where it was reported at 0238, Dortmund, Marburg, and Giessen, and its return course over Mannheim, Saarbrücken, Verdun, and Chauny. It began the return flight at 0322.

One courier aircraft coming from Sweden was reported over the Skagerrak.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

21/22 February 1944:

from Himmelbett areas in northern Holland, against the mine-laying aircraft: 1 twin-engine fighter aircraft;

against the Mosquito bombers, one twin-engine fighter aircraft from the airfield at Venlo (guided by the Y-Method).

22/23 February 1944:

against the Mosquito bombers, two twin-engine fighter aircraft from the airfield at Venlo.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

21/22 February 1944: Over northern Holland, northwestern Germany, and the North Sea: clear; elsewhere: 8/10 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds beginning at 800 and extending as high as 1,000 to 1,500 meters; visibility five to ten kilometers.

22/23 February 1944: Over northern Germany: predominantly clear; Over southern Germany: 7/10 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds between 800 and 1,500 meters; scattered light snowfalls; ground and high-altitude visibility good.

XIII. THE BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACK ON DÜSSELDORF, 23/24 February 1944, AND OTHER HARRASSING FLIGHTS, 28/29 February 1944

(see Figure 126, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

23/24 February 1944. During the first half of the night, a force of twenty Mosquito bombers carried out a harrassing attack on the city of Düsseldorf. They approached over the mouth of the Schelde and northern France, and returned via the mouth of the Schelde.

Approaching at 2009 over Den Helder, three long-range night fighters carried out an observation flight over Leeuwarden, and returned at 2118, again over Den Helder.

A single Mosquito bomber, approaching at 0242 over Nieupoort, Brussels, Liège, Koblenz, Giessen and Magdeburg, harrassed the city of Perleberg. Its return flight, begun at 0426, led it over Uelzen, Vechta, Papenburg, and Emden. It flew over the coast at Den Helder at 0515.

One courier aircraft was reported over the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden.

27/28 February 1944. The only actions noted were two flights over the Skagerrak by courier aircraft, one on its way to, and one returning from

Sweden.

28/29 February 1944. At 0400 several Mosquito aircraft were reported over Helgoland. They moved forward over Kiel and Rostock and into the areas of Neustrelitz and Neurippen. Their return course led over Uelzen, Wesermünde and the West Frisian Islands.

One courier aircraft flew over the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed against the Mosquito bombers:

23/24 February 1944: one He-219 from the airfield at Venlo;

28/29 February 1944: one Me-109 from the airfield at Oldenburg.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

23/24 February: cloudless but hazy; Over the Skagerrak: high-altitude fog between 150 and 1,000 meters.

28/29 February 1944: Over Holland and the northern German coast: clear, with good visibility; elsewhere: very hazy, sometimes foggy; loosely scattered stratus clouds from 400 to 1,200 meters; high-altitude visibility good.

XIV. BRITISH ATTACKS ON SCHWEINFURT, 24/25 February 1944

(see Figures ~~122, Annex~~ 127 and 128, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At about 1830, German radar instruments picked up the track of enemy aircraft over the ocean northeast of Norwich, with their course towards the east. Later it was realized that these were a group of about thirty mine-laying aircraft which crossed the southern part of the North

Sea, Westerland and Schleswig-Holstein and dropped their mines over the waters of the western Baltic Sea. Their mission completed, they followed the same course on their return flight.

While the mine-laying operation was still in progress, a British bomber stream took off at 1900 from the area south of London and flew, on course towards the south, as far as the mouth of the Somme. Here it altered its course towards the southeast. The group, consisting of some 500 British bombers, flew over Amiens, Metz, and Karlsruhe and attacked the city of Schweinfurt from the south. Flying in very loose formation, the enemy aircraft returned via the Rhine and Main river areas, Belgium, and northern France.

Beginning at 1930 a group of fifty Mosquito bombers made their way across Holland, bombarding German-occupied airfields as they went, and carried out harrassing raids in the Ruhr District. Their chief target was the city of Düsseldorf. The airfield bombardments had no effect on the employment of the German night fighter forces.

As the first bombers began their return flights from Schweinfurt, at about 2100, a second bomber stream, consisting of some 300 aircraft, appeared over the mouth of the Somme. Following the same approach and return flight courses as the first group, this stream, too, moved on to attack Schweinfurt. The industrial installations in the Schweinfurt area had already been the target of an American day attack on 24 February and had suffered severe damages at that time. The British night attacks caused additional damage to factories and private property.

In addition to the actions described above, the RAF carried out the following operations:

During the first half of the night, British bombers based in Italy carried out an attack on Salzburg. Since bombardment was widely scatter-

ed, little damage was caused.

Approaching at 1920 over Helgoland and Rendsburg, several enemy aircraft participated in a harrassing raid on Lübeck. Their return flight, beginning at 2016, led them over Hamburg and Cuxhaven. The last position report received indicated that they were over the island of Spiekeroog at 2045.

Five long-range night fighter aircraft carried out observation flights over the Vechta area. Their approach was not picked up by our instruments. Returning towards the west, they flew from Vechta over Rheine at 0206, and crossed the coast between the island of Texel and Zandvoort. The last aircraft departed from the Continent at 0307.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed against the enemy mine-laying aircraft:

from Himmelbett areas over Schleswig-Holstein: several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division.

The following forces were employed in defense against the first attack on Schweinfurt:

in pursuit activity:

smaller units from the 2d Fighter Division, which had been transferred during the afternoon of 24 February to the airfield at Rhein-Main; and twin-engine fighter units from the 3d Fighter Division. All these aircraft were assembled at radio beacon Kuli and directed into the bomber stream over the Metz area.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

those units from the 2d Fighter Division which had not been transferred to Rhein-Main; assembly at radio beacon Philipp, transfer to radio beacon Otto and assignment to the 7th Fighter Division for employment over

Schweinfurt;

single-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions; assembly at radio beacon Fritz and transfer to Schweinfurt.

The ~~T~~arget ~~I~~llumination ~~G~~roup from the airfield at Münster was assembled at radio beacon Philipp, transferred to radio beacon Otto, and assigned to the 7th Fighter Division for employment.

The following forces were employed in defense against the second attack on Schweinfurt:

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

a small force from the 3d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Fritz;

one group of single-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st Fighter Division.

in pursuit activity during the return flight of the bombers:

several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Schweinfurt and Mannheim areas;

several single-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Mannheim and Karlsruhe areas.

A total number of 209 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft as well as aircraft from the target illumination group was employed.

The twin-engine fighter aircraft forces from the 1st Fighter Division were placed in alert status in case they might be needed to defend targets in northern Germany.

The War Diary of the I Fighter Corps gives no indication of any action by the 7th Fighter Division or the Third Air Fleet.

c. Allied Losses

24 bombers certainly brought down

2 bombers probably brought down

161

d. German Losses

4 aircraft

personnel: 7 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Cloudless but hazy; visibility five to ten kilometers; north-east of the Elbe River: 8/10 to 10/10 cloud cover at 400 meters.

f. Remarks

The effectiveness of the British attacks on our airfields in Holland may be seen from the following:

Twente: six demolition bombs dropped; one runway damaged.

Leeuwarden: seven demolition bombs dropped, but outside the limits of the airfield.

St. Trond: five demolition bombs dropped on ~~XXXX~~ taxiing areas and runways; very slight damage.

Venlo: six demolition bombs dropped; slight property damage.

Deelen: twelve demolition bombs dropped; slight property damage.

XV. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON AUGSBURG, 25/26 February 1944

(see Figure 129, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The attack on Augsburg was carried out by two separate bomber streams. At the same time a mine-laying action in the western Baltic Sea was carried out as a diversionary maneuver. During the same night, German-occupied airfields in Holland were subjected to bombardment. The night's operations were carried out as follows:

1. The first bomber stream, about 400 strong, took off from the area south of London and, by 1930, had reached the mouth of the Somme. Flying towards the southeast, the aircraft moved on over Metz, Strassburg, and Freiburg/Breisgau to the northern shore of Lake Constance. Here they turned

towards the north to attack the city of Augsburg. Their return flight began at 2140, their course leading them over southwestern Germany and northern France back to Great Britain.

2. As the first bomber stream, on its way home, passed over the Verdun area at about 2035, a second bomber force was reported taking off from the Norwich area, with course towards the east. The second group continued on over the southern waters of the North Sea and when they reached the western coast of Jutland they were recognized as a mine-laying group, consisting of about fifty aircraft. The majority of them dropped their mines over the waters of the western Baltic Sea, a few of them flying on as far as the island of Rügen and Rostock. Their mission accomplished, the mine-laying aircraft returned towards the west.

3. At 2200 a third bomber stream, consisting of about 200 aircraft, took off from the British Isles with course towards the east. Flying over the mouth of the Schelde, they penetrated into Holland, where they veered towards the southeast and flew on over the Rhine valley and the Frankfurt area towards Augsburg. At 0005, after completing their attack on the city of Augsburg, the bombers flew back over southwestern Germany and northern France, their course towards the northwest.

4. In addition to the three main actions described above, the RAF also carried out the following secondary operations:

Crossing the coast between Ostende and Dunkirk at 2100, five long-range night fighter aircraft penetrated as far as the Juvincourt area (radio beacon Kuli) on an observation mission. They returned via the mouth of the Somme, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2239.

A force of five Mosquito bombers raided the airfields at Gilze-Rijen and St. Trond. Their approach flight, from 2140 to 2158, led over the mouth of the Schelde, and their return flight followed the same course towards the

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west. The last aircraft departed from the Continent at 2215.

A single long-range night fighter aircraft carried out an observation flight as far as the Mainz and Wertheim areas. Its approach over the mouth of the Schelde and Liège was reported at 2110; our instruments lost the aircraft at 2203 over the Wertheim area.

Approaching between 0040 and 0100 over Bergen and the Zuyder Zee, a force of six Mosquito bombers ~~xxxxxx~~ attacked the airfields at Twente and Deelen, flying at altitudes varying from 200 to 700 meters. Two of these aircraft flew on over Münster into the Hannover area. Their return flight course followed the same route as the approach flight. The last aircraft flew over Bergen at 0237.

A single long-range night fighter carried out an observation mission over the Bonn area. Its approach was reported at 0107 over the Westerschelde, Brussels, and Liège, and its return flight at 0240 over the island of Walcheren.

Several long-range night fighters penetrated into southern Germany on an observation mission. They approached beginning at 0056 over Ostende, Luxemburg and Strassburg, and returned towards the west, following the same route.

During the time from 2018 to 2036, three aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak on their way to Sweden.

Effectiveness of the British attacks: The Messerschmitt aircraft works at the southern edge of the city of Augsburg had already been heavily damaged by the American day attack of 25 February. The British night attacks caused serious damage, both to private property and to industrial installations, in the city itself. The British attacks on our airfields in Holland caused very little damage, none of it serious enough to impair operations.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Bomber Corps

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The following forces were employed in defense against the first attack on Augsburg:

in pursuit activity:

twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d and 7th Fighter Divisions (3d and 6th Night Fighter Wings) which had been transferred during the afternoon of 25 February to the airfields at Rhein-Main and Mainz-Finthen; they assembled at radio beacon Kalt and were directed into the bomber stream over the Metz area;

most of the twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division; assembling at radio beacon Ida, they were guided on to radio beacon Kalt and directed into the bomber stream.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

those units from the 2d Fighter Division which had not been moved to Rhein-Main and Mainz-Finthen and the Do-217 group from the 1st Fighter Division; they assembled at radio beacon Otte, and were guided on to Augsburg by the 7th Fighter Division;

single-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division; they assembled at light beacon Fritz and were guided on to Augsburg by the 7th Fighter Division.

The Target Illumination Group from the airfield at Münster was guided to radio beacon Otte and turned over to the 7th Fighter Division for further employment.

The following forces were employed in defense against the second attack on Augsburg:

in pursuit activity:

night fighter aircraft from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions, sent into the bomber stream in the vicinity of radio beacon Ida; these aircraft had been employed from Himmelfett areas against the mine-laying aircraft (see below)

had landed, and were ready for renewed commitment.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

several night fighter aircraft from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions; these aircraft had also already been up once, had landed in the area assigned to the 7th Fighter Division, and were ready for renewed commitment.

The following forces were employed against the enemy mine-laying aircraft:

from Himmelbett areas over Schleswig-Holstein and the northern coast of Holland:

smaller units from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions, assembling at radio beacon 10;

most of the twin-engine fighter aircraft of the 1st Fighter Division.

A total number of 165 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft and aircraft from the target illumination group was employed.

Although the RAF had begun on 24 February to select for night attack the same targets which the American bombers had attacked during the day, the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, was not prepared for a British attack on the city of Augsburg, and allowed itself to be led astray by the British mine-laying mission. As a result, the majority of aircraft belonging to the 1st Fighter Division were held in abeyance for possible action in northern Germany and were unavailable to participate in the defense of Augsburg.

After 2300 on the night of 25/26 February, heavy high-altitude haze and occasional fogs impaired the effectiveness of German night fighter operations.

c. Allied Losses

16 bombers brought down

d. German Losses

10 aircraft, one of which (a Ju-88) was hit by fire from an enemy

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long-range fighter aircraft after it had landed at Munich-Riem, and burst into flames;

personnel: 4 dead

5 wounded

8 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over northern Germany: 7/10 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds between 500 and 1,000 meters; south of the line Cologne - Erfurt - Dresden: cloudless; heavy haze and fog after 2300.

f. Remarks

During the early morning hours of 26 February, Master Sergeant Vinke, from the 11th Squadron, 1st Night Fighter Wing, was killed in action. He had a record of fifty-four enemy aircraft brought down in night combat, and had been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

CHAPTER V

DAY ACTIONS DURING MARCH 1944

I. SURVEY

a. American Offensive Activity

During the month of March, American air operations against the Reich were characterized by a strong increase in the strength of the fighter escorts accompanying the bombers. The total number of single and twin-engine fighter aircraft employed in escort duty reached the number of bombers. In contrast to the effects of American losses on 14 October 1943 (during the attack on Schweinfurt), the losses suffered during the "Big Week" seemed to have no effect whatsoever on American air operations. Thanks to the striking power and the increased flight range of their fighter aircraft, the American forces captured air supremacy over almost the entire Reich and its territories. The only exception remained the German provinces in the east. The American bombers were able to extend their operations to include Berlin and Munich, and this meant the complete collapse of Germany's position as an air power.

No systematic plan could be discerned in the American conduct of air operations. The systematic destruction of German air armaments plants, which had begun with such great success during February, was discontinued, and German observers could find no concentrated purpose in the American selection of attack targets during March 1944. There was also no sign of close coordination between the operations of the American forces stationed in Italy and those in Great Britain, nor was the practice of American day attacks and RAF night attacks on the same target continued.

A total of fifteen large-scale attacks were carried out during March by the American forces in Great Britain, and three by the forces in Italy. Adverse weather conditions during the month made target location difficult.

Visual bombardment was possible on only three occasions; limited visual bombardment could be carried out on four occasions; and instrument bombardment was necessary during four of the attacks. The total effectiveness of the American attacks during March was limited to widespread property damage; damage to industrial installations was less heavy than during the preceding month. The attack on Berlin on 8 March was the only one which resulted in heavy damage to industrial plants. The effectiveness of the attacks on targets in Austria was very slight. There were very few American attacks (either by bomb or by airborne weapons) on German-occupied airfields in Holland, Belgium, and northern France, and these had no effect on the operations of the German air defense forces. The approach and attack tactics employed by the American air forces were, on the whole, simple and straightforward and created no particular problems for the German defense forces. During the reporting period, the American fighter escorts were so organized that the bombers were afforded continuous protection during both the approach and return flights.

American activity, apart from the large-scale attacks, was limited to target reconnaissance and observation flights to determine the effectiveness of previous attacks. These flights gave no indication of any systematic plan in the selection of targets. There were only two days during the month when there were no American aircraft whatever reported in the area assigned to the I Fighter Corps.

b. The Commitment of the I Fighter Corps

Despite the growing numerical superiority of the American forces, there had been no change in the organization or operation of the Reich's air defense forces. There could be no increase in the strength of our daytime fighter units since the production of fighter aircraft had fallen far behind schedule as a result of the successful enemy attacks on our aircraft

factories. For the same reason, no units could be activated. There seemed to be no chance of withdrawing fighter aircraft from other fronts. The command organization of the Reichs air defense forces had not been altered in any way, and thus no effective concentration of fighter aircraft forces could be achieved.

During March 1944 weather conditions played a tremendous role in the commitment of daytime fighter units. Poor weather, fogs, and high-altitude atmospheric disturbances all had a detrimental effect on the employment of German fighter units. On five days during the reporting period, weather conditions were so bad that all single and twin-engine fighter aircraft were grounded.

The striking power of the few remaining daytime fighter units assigned to the Reichs air defense system remained unbroken. Whenever weather conditions permitted the concentrated employment of all available forces in close combat formation in a single area, noteworthy success was achieved in bringing down enemy aircraft and in keeping our own losses down to a reasonable limit. The success of our defensive operations over Berlin on 6 and 8 March gave ample evidence of the fighting morale of our fighter crews and of their ability to carry on effective combat despite the technical inferiority of their aircraft, but such successes were not frequent enough to represent any threat to the American offensive forces. These successes, however, gave an indication of the effectiveness which might be attained by the Reichs air defense system if the forces in the Frankfurt area, in southern Germany, and in Austria could be made as strong as the force assigned to northern Germany. If the Reichs air defense system had had 1,000 to 1,200 fighter aircraft available, it would doubtless ~~have~~ have been in a position to alter the air situation, at least by day, in Germany's favor within a very short time, assuming, of course, that there were no

appreciable increase in the American fighter aircraft force.

During March 1944, air operations over the Reich proved conclusively that Germany's comparatively helpless position in the air was caused, first by the numerical inferiority of the daytime fighter aircraft employed by the Reichs air defense system, and second by the inferiority of their technical performance and by tactical errors. The strength ratio obtaining between the American and German aircraft may be seen from the following:

Total American strength (bombers and fighters)	:	German strength (single and twin-engine fighters)
7.5	:	1
American strength (fighters)	:	German strength (single and twin-engine fighters)
4	:	1

In those instances in which the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, committed only portions of full units, smaller units, or single aircraft (either because of adverse weather conditions or because of the difficulties involved in transferring units to distant areas for employment), the American fighters, attacking from above, had an easy time of it in bringing these down. Moreover, due to the increased flight range of the American fighters, it had become impossible to send twin-engine fighter units up against the enemy bombers without an adequate protective screen of single-engine fighters to hold off the American fighter aircraft.

The total losses sustained by the German daytime fighter units were comparatively high during March. The steadily increasing number of aircraft damaged by enemy fire placed an additional burden on repair installations and increased the problem of aircraft supply.

By the end of March the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, was less worried about the development of the air situation over the Reich than he had been during February, probably because of the decrease in American attacks on

German armaments works. It was evident that the success of our defense operations during the enemy attacks on Berlin also contributed to this feeling on his part.

By taking part himself in the action over central Germany, General-major Galland, General of the Fighter Aircraft Forces, had convinced himself of the tremendous difficulties of fighting against the numerically superior American fighter aircraft forces. Giving due consideration to the reduced capacity of our air armaments plants and to the critical gasoline and oil situation, which made the attainment of numerical parity impossible, he undertook to see that the Reichs air defense forces should be supplied as soon as possible with a fighter aircraft model whose technical performance should be superior to that of the American fighters. To this end he did everything in his power to speed up production on the jet fighter, Me-262, and on the rocket-propelled Me-163.

c. Successes and Losses during March 1944

During March 1944, the average total number of daytime fighter aircraft available for employment by the I Fighter Corps was:

300 single-engine fighter aircraft,

60 twin-engine fighter aircraft, and

50 night fighter aircraft suitable for daytime employment.

The total number of daytime fighter aircraft committed by the I Fighter Corps during March 1944 was: 2,226 aircraft.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the I Fighter Corps during March 1944 amounted to: 240 aircraft, or 10.9% of the total number of aircraft committed.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the enemy within the area covered by the I Fighter Corps amounted to: 302 aircraft (excluding those brought down by antiaircraft artillery). This number represented 1.6%

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of the total estimated number of aircraft (16,612) and 3.8% of the estimated total number of bombers (8,000) employed by the American air forces against the Reich. The aircraft committed from American bases located in Italy ~~has~~ ^{have} been included in these estimates.

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Generalmajor Galland, General of the Fighter Aircraft, Forces,

Returning from a Sortie

II. ACTIONS ON 1 March 1944

(see Figure 130, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The following American reconnaissance activity was reported:

At 1114 a single reconnaissance aircraft was reported over the mouth of the Schelde. It continued its flight over Cologne and Siegen as far as the Giessen area. At 1153 it reversed course and headed for home, crossing the coast at 1242 over the mouth of the Schelde.

At 1128 another reconnaissance aircraft was sighted over the mouth of the Schelde. It moved on over Hertogenbosch, Duisburg, and Dortmund into the Kassel area. At 1210 it departed from Kassel and flew back over Dortmund, Tilburg, and the area north of Ghent. It departed from the Continent at 1311, crossing the coast at Dunkirk.

Between 1141 and 1212 two reconnaissance aircraft were reported over the mouth of the Schelde and the Brussels area.

At 1249 a single reconnaissance aircraft was sighted over the mouth of the Schelde. Its flight continued over Cleve and the area west of Hamm. Its course was lost to observers at 1319 in the vicinity of Hamm.

Between 1206 and 1214 several Spitfire fighters flew over the coast near Bergen.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

III. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN AND MANNHEIM, 2 March 1944

(see Figure 131, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 0925, German observers reported the assembly of an American attacking force over the British Isles. The first bombers flew over the mouth of the Somme at 1050 and, accompanied by a strong fighter escort, streamed on towards the east over southern Belgium and Luxemburg into the Frankfurt/Main and Mannheim areas. One small bomber unit flew on as far as Amberg and Bayreuth. At 1224 the bombers began their return flight towards the west and northwest, flying over Giessen, Dortmund, Liège, and Antwerp. They crossed the coast between Bergen and Dunkirk, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 1502.

At 1100 American fighter units began to pour in over Dunkirk, St. Trond, and Liège as far as the Koblenz area. Returning fighters were sighted at 1140 over the mouth of the Somme and over Liège, and at 1155 over Koblenz. Relief fighter units, whose duty it was to pick up the returning bombers, crossed the mouth of the Schelde between 1210 and 1355 and flew on to meet their charges over Liège, Aix la Chapelle, Koblenz, and Kaiserslautern.

Although the chief target of the American attack was Frankfurt/Main, scattered bombs were also dropped on Mannheim, Koblenz, the area west of Limburg, and in the vicinity of Bad Kreuznach. All bombardment was by instrument. Frankfurt suffered fairly heavy damage to private property and some slight damage to industrial installations; the damage caused by the other bombs was negligible.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Because of bad weather, only a few fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division were sent up over the Cologne area, where they became involved in combat with American fighters. Fifteen aircraft were committed.

c. Allied Losses

175

1 Thunderbolt certainly brought down

d. German Losses

1 aircraft totally destroyed

1 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 1 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

7/10 to 10/10 cover of nimbus clouds between 300 and 5,000 meters;

heavy snow flurries.

IV. THE ATTEMPTED AMERICAN ATTACK ON BERLIN, 3 March 1944

(see Figure 132, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Although their assemblies began at 0823, it was not until 1028 that the first aircraft of an American bomber force appeared about 120 kilometers northwest of the island of Texel. Accompanied by a fighter escort, the bombers flew towards the east, across the southern part of the North Sea, and on to the western coast of Jutland. Here, between Esbjerg and the mouth of the Elbe River, the majority of the bombers reversed their course and headed back towards Great Britain, presumably turned back by heavy cloud banks ahead. Their return course led over the East Frisian Islands, where the last bombers were plotted (north of the island of Schiermonnikoog) at 1235. The rest of the bombers had continued on towards the southeast between Neumünster and Hamburg, over Schwerin and Waren, and into the Neubrandenburg area. Here, at 1213, they turned towards the southwest and flew as far as Magdeburg before setting course for the west and making for the Dutch coast. The last aircraft passed over the coast ~~xx~~ at 1356. The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, was of the opinion that the American force had been heading for Berlin, but had turned back because of bad weather.

The American fighter units maneuvered as follows:

At 1028, several fighter aircraft units flew over the coast between the island of Terschelling and Hoek van Holland and headed east. They flew on as far as Hannover, Braunschweig and Magdeburg. Approximately forty Lightning fighters penetrated to a point southwest of Berlin.

At 1130, fighter aircraft were reported returning from Osnabrück and Münster, and at 1207, from Magdeburg. The fighter units left the Continent between the East Frisian Islands and the mouth of the Schelde.

Beginning at 1257, several fighter units flew in between the mouth of the Schelde and Den Helder and penetrated, their course towards the east, as far as Münster, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Giessen and Frankfurt/Main. Returning towards the west and northwest, they began their flight at 1400 and crossed the coast between Den Helder and Calais at 1540.

The total strength of the American force was estimated at 400 bombers and 300 fighter aircraft.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps: units from the 1st Fighter Division, over Lübeck, units from the 2d Fighter Division; over Stade and Itzehoe, and units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Emden.

Weather conditions were too bad to permit assembly in closed combat formations, and only a few aircraft, flying singly, were able to participate in combat.

A total number of 213 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

9 bombers certainly brought down

2 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 1000, 4 March 1944)

177

4 twin-engine fighter aircraft completely destroyed,

10 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 11 dead

3 wounded

5 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

6/10 to 10/10 cover of nimbus clouds extending as high as 6,500 meters; heavy snow flurries; high-altitude visibility good.

V. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON NORTHERN GERMANY, 4 March 1944

(see Figure 133, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 1026, a force consisting of approximately 300 American bombers and a strong fighter escort crossed the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Calais and penetrated into Belgium. Their attack was carried out in two separate groups, as follows:

The larger group, flying farther towards the north, moved along the Rhine River to attack the cities of Bonn, Cologne and Düsseldorf. Its mission accomplished, the group split into several small formations and departed from the attack area at 1140. They crossed the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Calais and returned towards the west.

The smaller group, towards the south, made a wide detour over Trier, Frankfurt/Main, Giessen and Kassel and bombarded Braunschweig and Hannover. Its return flight course led over Diepholz and the northern tip of the Zuyder Zee.

At 1130 still another bomber group appeared over the Dutch coast between Bergen and The Hague. This group, approximately 100 strong and accompanied by a large fighter escort, flew over Meppen and Münster and on to the Hannover, Braunschweig, and Halberstadt area. Here the group split into three smaller

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groups, the first of which flew on to Stendal, the second to Berlin and Perleberg, and the third to Brandenburg/Havel. Bombs were released over the areas north and west of the city of Berlin. For their return flight, the aircraft regrouped themselves once more, following the routes indicated below:

1st group - with course towards the west via Uelzen,

2nd group - with course towards the west via Dessau,

3rd group - with course towards the south as far as Chemnitz and Greiz, then towards the west via Eisenach, and

4th group - with course towards the east via Berlin and Küstrin, which it reached at 1338, then towards the south as far as Frankfurt/Oder, and towards the southwest via Gera.

All four groups passed over the Dutch coast between the island of Texel and the mouth of the Schelde.

At 1343 a group of fifty Marauder bombers were observed over the coast between the Westerschelde and Ostende. They flew on towards the southeast over Antwerp and ~~Salzwijk~~ Koblenz as far as Giessen. Their return flight was completed together with the four-engine bombers.

The American fighter escort units maneuvered as follows:

At 1102 one fighter aircraft group flew over the mouth of the Schelde, Düsseldorf, and Paderborn as far as the Hannover area. Here the fighters picked up the returning bombers at 1320 and returned towards the west.

During the time from 1423 to 1611, several fighter formations flew over the coast between The Hague and Ostende and on to Emmerich, Cologne, Liège, and Charleroi. After they had picked up the returning bombers, the entire group, flying in broad front formation, crossed the coast towards the west between the island of Texel and the mouth of the Schelde. The last aircraft left the Continent at 1720.

The total number of fighter aircraft participating in escort duty was estimated at 500.

The bombardment, by instrument, of Bonn and Düsseldorf resulted in fairly heavy damage to private property, industrial plants, and traffic installations.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, over the Braunschweig area,
units from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Kassel area, and
units from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Cologne area.

Snow flurries, the danger of icing, and low-hanging clouds combined to render impossible the systematic employment of our daytime fighter units. Only a few fighter ~~xx~~ squadrons were able to join combat with the American fighter aircraft.

A total number of 149 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

7 bombers certainly brought down

2 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 1100, 5 March 1944)

4 aircraft totally destroyed

4 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 1 dead

4 wounded

4 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

8/10 to 10/10 cover of multiple-strata clouds beginning at 200 to 300 meters and extending as high as 4,000 to 5,000 meters; snow flurries;

danger of icing in the clouds.

VI. DAY ACTIONS, 5 March 1944

(see Figure 130, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

A single reconnaissance aircraft was reported approaching at 0930 over the island of Vlieland. It flew on along the West Frisian Islands, then turned towards the southeast and penetrated as far as the area lying north of Osnabrück. It returned over Zwolle and Katwijk, leaving the coast behind at 1110.

Between 1052 and 1101, a single aircraft flew along the Dutch coast from Bergen as far as Amsterdam.

From 1104 until 1126 a single aircraft flew along the coast from the mouth of the Schelde as far as the Breda area.

Between 1109 and 1129 a single aircraft flew along the coast from Westerschelde as far as Antwerp.

At 1102 a reconnaissance aircraft was observed over Esbjerg. Its mission carried it on over Odense, the island of Falster, and Stralsund as far as Swinemünde. At 1219 it began its return flight, moving north of the city of Rostock, across the Bays of Mecklenburg and Kiel, over Flensburg, Apenrade, and the island of Fanö, where it was lost to observers at 1316.

At 1120 three enemy aircraft were reported over the island of Goeree. All three flew on as far as Hertogenbosch, where one of them turned back at 1131 and flew off towards the west, passing over the island of Goeree at 1138. The second of the three aircraft continued on over Rheine, Osnabrück and Hildesheim into the Braunschweig area. Leaving Braunschweig at 1240, it returned via Hannover, Lingen, Zwolle, Haderwijk, and Amsterdam, and left the Continent at Katwijk at 1325. The third airplane of the group moved on over Bielefeld, Nienburg, and Lüneburg as far as the Schwerin area.

At 1240 it began its return flight over Lübeck, Neumünster and the island of Pellworm, which it passed at 1326.

Approaching at 1125 over the island of Vlieland, a single reconnaissance aircraft moved on over the West Frisian Islands and Helgoland. Its course was lost to observers at 1215, slightly west of Husum.

Approaching at 1142 north of Ringkøbing, a single aircraft, obviously on a reconnaissance mission, flew on over Viborg as far as the Bay of Aalborg. Its flight course was lost ~~from~~ ^{to} observers at 1208, southeast of Aalborg.

A single reconnaissance aircraft was observed at 1157 over Ijmuiden. It continued its flight over Meppel into the Bremen area. Leaving Bremen at ~~124~~ 1236, it returned via Oldenburg and the island of Borkum, flying over the island at 1247.

A single reconnaissance aircraft was reported approaching over Schleswig at 1315. Moving on over the Bays of Kiel and Mecklenburg and the city of Warnemünde, it penetrated as far as the area southwest of Greifswald. Here its course was lost to observers at 1348.

Approaching at 1418 over the island of Walcheren, two reconnaissance aircraft moved on over Antwerp, Aix la Chapelle, Koblenz and Limburg into the Schweinfurt area. Leaving this area at 1550, they flew back over the area north of Frankfurt, Wetzlar, Andernach, and Malmedy. Their last reported position was south of Namur at 1640.

At 1540 two reconnaissance aircraft were observed approaching over the island of Walcheren. Flying on over Antwerp and Maastricht, they reached the Koblenz area. Their return flight, begun at 1620, led them back over Malmedy, Charleroi, and Mons. Their last reported position was south of Tournai at 1648.

During the time from 1738 and 1740, four aircraft flew along the coast in the vicinity of Den Helder.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

No aircraft were committed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

VII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BERLIN, 6 March 1944

(see Figure 134, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1022, an American force consisting of 600 bombers, 250 single-engine fighters, and 150 twin-engine fighters took off from Great Britain to attack the city of Berlin. The bombers, with their large fighter escort, crossed the Dutch coast between Hoek van Holland and Den Helder, and, with their course towards the east, moved along the lines Münster - Meppen, Goslar - Uelzen, and Halle - Rathenow to attack Berlin from the west and south. The bombardment of Berlin lasted from 1245 until 1400. The return flight of the bombers was accomplished in loose formation towards the northwest and the west. The stream of bombers moving across the coast between the island of Terschelling and the mouth of the Schelde was unbroken until the last aircraft had left the Continent at 1550. Part of the original fighter escort had already left the bombers at 1140 and had turned back towards the west over Enschede, Vechta, and Osnabrück. At 1111 a group of fifty Lightning fighters flew in over the mouth of the Schelde, Tilburg, and Paderborn, and joined the bombers over the Nordhausen area. Between 1145 and 1515, several fighter formations appeared over Holland, waiting to pick up the returning bombers.

It can be assumed that the American attack on Berlin was seriously hindered by the effectiveness of the German air defense forces, for the

damage caused by the bombers was comparatively slight. Although some of the American fighter aircraft penetrated as far as Berlin, the Americans did not succeed in providing adequate fighter coverage for their bombers at all times during the attack.

In addition to the attack on Berlin, the following actions were carried out by the American Air Force:

Between 0902 and 0908, three aircraft flew along the coast between Ijmuiden and Amsterdam.

Approaching at 0942 over Heyst, a single reconnaissance aircraft flew north of Brussels, and over St. Trenz as far as the Venlo area. It returned via the Zuyder Zee and Bergen, leaving the coast behind at 1050.

From 0907 to 0909, a single aircraft was observed flying over the island of Terschelling.

Between 1106 and 1114, a single aircraft circled above the coast near the mouth of the Schelde and Breda.

Approaching at 1121, two reconnaissance aircraft carried out a flight over the Bay of Kiel, the island of Langeland, and Stralsund. At 1201, observers lost track of the aircraft over the Bay of Pomerania.

Approaching at 1325 over Husum, a single reconnaissance aircraft flew on over the island of Fehmarn, and Neubrandenburg as far as the area of Stettin. Here its flight course was lost to observers at 1438.

Appearing at 1430 over Dieppe, a single aircraft carried out a reconnaissance mission over the area from Reims to Metz. Its return flight led over ~~Mar~~ Reims and Paris, the aircraft flying over the French capital at 1610.

At 1750 two Spitfire fighter aircraft were observed circling over the area of Hoek van Holland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

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The following forces were employed against the bombers during their approach flight:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, over the Oschersleben area,
units from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Halberstadt and Uelzen areas, and

units from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Diepholz area.

The following forces were employed against the bombers during their return flight:

smaller units from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Goslar and Paderborn areas.

The units from all three fighter divisions were able to participate in the action, and heavy air combat ensued over Magdeburg, Halle, and Halberstadt. A single formation from the 2d Fighter Division managed to down forty-five enemy bombers. This formation was led by the commanding officer of the I Group, 26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing, who added considerably to his record of enemy aircraft brought down.

A total of 3 328 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was committed.

c. Allied Losses

95 bombers and 15 fighter aircraft certainly brought down

10 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 1200, 7 March 1944)

18 aircraft totally destroyed

39 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 14 dead

18 wounded

18 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over the Harz Mountain area, the Ruhr District, and southern Holland:

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widespread fogs at all altitudes, which, in the Ruhr District, had not lifted by 1400; fighter aircraft had to take off with visibility of one to two kilometers; over Berlin: 2/10 to 4/10 cover of cumulus clouds between 600 and 900 meters; over the rest of ~~Germany~~ northern Germany: loosely scattered clouds at 1,000 meters; visibility good above 1,500 meters; high-altitude winds from 30 to 50° between 5,000 and 7,000 meters, velocity 60 to 80 kilometers per hour.

f. Remarks

On 6 March 1944 1st Lieutenant Loos, captain of the 8th Squadron, 54th Single-Engine Fighter Wing, was killed in action. He had a record of eighty-five enemy aircraft brought down and had been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

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The Commanding General Expresses his Appreciation

to Members of the 26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing,

7 March 1944

VIII. DAY ACTIONS, 7 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the time from 1435 to 1439, two aircraft flew along the coast from Bergen as far as Ijmuiden.

Between 1509 and 1523, a group of five aircraft circled over the island of Texel and the Den Helder area.

At 1544 a single aircraft was observed circling over the island of Goeree.

From 1544 to 1611, five aircraft flew along the coast from the island of Walcheren to the Ijmuiden area.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the 1 Fighter Corps

Several single-engine fighter aircraft belonging to the 3d Fighter Division were employed.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

IX. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BERLIN, 8 March 1944

(see Figure 136, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1126, the approach of some 500 American bombers approximately eighty kilometers west of Den Helder and Haarlem was reported. The bombers crossed the Dutch coast between Den Helder and Katwijk and flew towards the east, following three lines, Bielefeld - Oppenburg, Goslar - Verden, and Magdeburg - Salzwedel, advanced towards the Reich's capital. At 1335 they began their return flight from Berlin, moving towards the west in the direction of the Dutch coast. The last bomber passed over the coast at 1640.

The bombers were protected by an escort of approximately 500 fighter aircraft, some of which had accompanied them all the way to Berlin.

A supplementary fighter escort of some forty aircraft flew over the mouth of the Schelde at 1200 and continued on over Arnheim into the areas of Bocholt and Emmerich.

Fighter aircraft formations were observed returning from the Arnheim and Zwolle areas at 1230, from Osnabrück at 1235, and from Braunschweig at 1330.

Fighter aircraft formations on their way to pick up the returning bombers were observed over Holland during the time from 1310 to 1600.

In addition to the attack on Berlin, the American Air Force carried out the following ~~attacks~~ attacks on German-occupied airfields in Holland:

A group of sixty Marauder bombers, approaching at 1018 between Katwijk and The Hague, attacked the airfield at Soesterberg. Their return flight began at 1110, and the aircraft crossed the coast on their way towards the west at a point between IJmuiden and The Hague. The last aircraft left the Continent at 1125. Their altitude during the attack was 3,500 meters.

The airfield at Gilze-Rijen was raided by a force of eighty Marauder bombers, which had penetrated the Continent at 1028, flying in between the Westerschelde and the island of Schouwen. Their flight altitude varying between 3,000 and 5,000 meters, the aircraft left their target at 1056 and had crossed the coast at the mouth of the Schelde by 1141.

The airfield at Soesterberg was subjected to a second attack by a force of 100 Marauder bombers. Their approach, beginning at 1638, had been via the mouth of the Schelde, and their return flight led back over the Zuyder Zee, which they had crossed by 1732. Their flight altitude varied between 3,000 and 5,000 meters.

In each case, the Marauder bombers were accompanied by a large fighter

escort.

The attack on Berlin had left in its wake serious damage to both private properties and industrial plants in the eastern suburbs of the city. The attacks on the airfields, on the other hand, caused very little damage.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, over the Goslar area,

units from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Uelzen and Hamelin areas,

and units from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Paderborn and Bielefeld areas.

After the first attacks by the German fighter formations, heavy fighting developed over Magdeburg and Braunschweig.

In comparison with the number of aircraft committed during the attack of 6 March, the number committed on this occasion was smaller due to the fact that not all the aircraft put out of action by the operations on 6 March had been repaired.

A total number of 282 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

50 bombers and 14 fighter aircraft certainly brought down

7 bombers and 4 fighter aircraft probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 1000, 9 March 1944)

21 aircraft totally destroyed

20 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 2 dead

8 wounded

21 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over the southern part of the area covered by the 1st Fighter Division and over the area covered by the 2d Fighter Division: both ground and high-altitude fogs, which hindered considerably the effective commitment of our fighter aircraft; in most areas, fogs began lifting during the forenoon; over Holland and the Berlin area: almost cloudless; high-altitude winds at 8,000 meters from 70°, velocity 70 kilometers per hour.

X. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BERLIN, 9 March 1944

(see Figure 137, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Despite a dense cloud cover, a force of 450 American bombers, accompanied by 500 fighter aircraft, attacked Berlin and Hannover on 9 March. At 1030 the approaching force was reported approximately eighty kilometers west of the Dutch coast. Following the lines Hengelo - Assen, Osnabrück - Oldenburg, Hannover - Lüneburg, and Rathenow - Prenzlau, the American bombers moved on to attack Berlin from the north and the west. A smaller group broke away from the main stream ~~xxxx~~ between Osnabrück and Magdeburg, and veered back to attack the city of Hannover. All the bombers returned with course towards the west, the last aircraft leaving the Continent between the islands of Texel and Walcheren by 1600. The first of the fighter escort units left the bomber stream over Zwolle and Osnabrück, but beginning at 1057, additional fighter formations began to stream in over Leeuwarden, Groningen, Hamburg and Parchim to provide a protective screen for the bombers along their northern flank. At the same time, still other fighter units flew in over southern Holland into the Paderborn area.

Although bombardment was by instrument, it was extremely effective and caused quite a bit of damage in the southern sectors of Berlin.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions prevented the employment of aircraft.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XI. DAY ACTIONS, 10 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Flying at a very high altitude, a single Mosquito aircraft appeared over the mouth of the Somme at 1145, and flew on over Reims, Toul, and north of Mülhausen, presumably on its way to Switzerland. Its last position reading was north of Constance at 1307.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

No commitment.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON MÜNSTER, 11 March 1944

(see Figure 138, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 0842 German long-range search instruments revealed the approach of an American bomber force approximately 160 kilometers west of the Dutch coast. The group, composed of 200 bombers and 150 fighter aircraft, crossed the coast between Bergen and Zandvoort and flew on towards the east as far as ~~the~~ the Ems River, at which point the aircraft altered course towards Münster. Their mission accomplished, the bombers left their target at 0955, and headed back to their bases. They crossed the coast between Leyden and Blankenberghe, the last aircraft departing from the Continent at 1103. The

damage caused by the American attack was negligible, and only a few buildings and industrial areas in Münster were hurt.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Owing to adverse weather conditions, no commitment was possible.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XIII. DAY ACTIONS, 14 March 1944

Several Mosquito aircraft were observed over the Reich, presumably engaged in reconnaissance missions. A few German fighter aircraft were sent up, but without success.

XIV. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BRAUNSCHWEIG, 15 March 1944

(see Figure , Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the forenoon a group of 400 American bombers and 700 fighter aircraft carried out an attack on Braunschweig. Bombardment was very heavy, accomplished by instrument through a closed cover of clouds, and destroyed much private property as well as causing medium heavy damage in industrial areas.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Because of weather conditions, only the single-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division and a few small formations from the 2d Fighter Division could be employed. Low-hanging clouds, the danger of icing in the clouds, and scattered snow flurries combined to render the assembly of our fighter aircraft extremely difficult.

A total of 161 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft were employed, and 115 of these managed to participate in action against the enemy.

c. Allied Losses

8 bombers certainly brought down

d. German Losses

12 aircraft totally destroyed

5 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 2 dead

3 wounded

12 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over the area covered by the 1st Fighter Division: heavy fogs at all altitudes; over the areas covered by the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions: varying cover of nimbus clouds between 200 and 5,000 meters; snow flurries; danger of icing in the clouds; over the Braunschweig area: 6/10 to 10/10 cloud cover extending as high as 1,500 to 3,000 meters; high-altitude visibility good.

XV. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON AUGSBURG, 16 March 1944

(see Figure 139, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 0944 a group of American bombers were reported advancing over the Channel coast between Ostende and Dieppe towards the southeast. The bombers flew on over France, Belgium, and the central Rhine valley between the lines Namur - Wiesbaden - Würzburg - Nürnberg in the north, and Beauvais - St. Dizier - Colmar - Friedrichshafen in the south. Most of the bombers followed the course mouth of the Somme - Reims - Nancy - Strassburg - south of Stuttgart - Memmingen, and attacked the city of Augsburg. Bombardment was by instrument. Ulm and the vicinity of Ravensburg were also the victims of scattered bombardment, and a small bomber formation also hit the city of Friedrichshafen. Leaving their targets at 1225, the bombers headed back

towards the northwest and the west. They crossed the Channel coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Le Havre at about 1507. The bombers which had participated in the attack on Friedrichshafen flew back over Switzerland.

The damage caused in Augsburg was relatively slight. The attacking force was composed of approximately 500 bombers and 600 fighter aircraft.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

units from the 2d Fighter Division, over Frankfurt/Main; none of these aircraft participated in combat;

units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Koblenz.

Take-off, assembly, and approach maneuvers were rendered very difficult by the impenetrable cloud cover. Ground visibility was so poor that the units from the 1st Fighter Division and those stationed in the northern part of the area covered by the 2d Fighter Division were unable to take off. One of the formations from the 2d Fighter Division was forced to return to base, its mission uncompleted, by poor visibility conditions and icing in the clouds; it was impossible to penetrate through the layers of cloud to the cloud-free area above. Of the aircraft sent up by the 3d Fighter Division over Koblenz, only thirty-seven made contact with the enemy.

A total number of 111 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

The War Diary of the I Fighter Corps contains no information regarding the commitment of aircraft by the 7th Fighter Division and the Third Air ~~XXX~~ Fleet.

c. Allied Losses

2 bombers and 1 fighter aircraft certainly brought down

1 bomber probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 2100, 16 March 1944)

194

3 aircraft totally destroyed

4 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 2 wounded

3 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over the areas assigned to the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions: 6/10 to 9/10 cover of multiple-strata clouds between 500 and 3,500 meters; Over Hamburg: dense cover of multiple-strata clouds between 500 and 6,000 meters; over southern Germany: 8/10 to 10/10 cloud cover beginning at 400 to 500 meters and extending as high as 2,800 meters.

XVI. DAY ACTIONS, 17 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

A group of twenty-five Thunderbolts raided the airfield at Soesterberg, Holland, in an attack which was not particularly successful. The aircraft were reported approaching over The Hague at 1548, flying at an altitude of 5,000 meters. Their return flight led them back over Arnheim and Rotterdam, at which point they were observed at 1648.

During the forenoon, a group consisting of 250 bombers and a fairly large fighter escort from Allied air bases in Italy attacked the city of Vienna. There was some damage to buildings.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

No aircraft were committed by the I Fighter Corps. Several aircraft were sent up over Vienna by the 7th Fighter Division, despite the bad weather, but without conspicuous success.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XVII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON MUNICH, 18 March 1944

(see Figure 140, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The American Air Forces in Great Britain carried out their first large-scale daytime attack on the city of Munich with a force of 800 bombers and 1,100 fighter aircraft acting as escort. The bombers approached via France, the lead aircraft appearing over the Channel coast at 1140 between Calais and St. Valery en Caux. Their flight course was bounded by the following lines: Cambrai - Bar le Duc - Strassburg - Reutlingen in the east and north, and Meaux - Chaumont - Colmar - Friedrichshafen in the west and south.

After bombarding Munich, the bombers began their return flight towards the northwest and west, flying in loose formation, and crossed southwestern Germany, the Frankfurt/Main area, the Rhine and Moselle Rivers, Belgium, and France. Some of the bombers also flew over northern Switzerland. Our instruments were able to follow their course as far as the line mouth of the Schelde - Paris. The last aircraft crossed the Channel coast at 1730.

The eastern penetration depth attained by the enemy aircraft was the line Bamberg - Regensburg - Landshut.

During the approach flight of the bombers, large fighter formations made their way over Antwerp and Koblenz into the Würzburg and Heilbronn areas.

Beginning at 1400, many formations of fighter aircraft also flew in via the Belgian coast and the mouth of the Somme and continued on as far as Stuttgart and Freiburg.

The American attack destroyed many buildings in the center of Munich, and also caused considerable damage to industrial installations. Scattered

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bombs also fell on Augsburg, Ulm, and Friedrichshafen.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed:

units from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Stuttgart area, and

units from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Mainz area.

Dense ground fogs prevented the employment of the units of the 1st Fighter Division and those of the 2d Fighter Division stationed in the northern part of the area assigned to that Division. Because of the long distance between their home airfields and the target, few of our fighter aircraft managed to participate in the fray. Only sixty fighters made contact with the enemy.

A total number of 133 ~~fighter~~ single-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

The War Diary of the I Fighter Corps contains no information regarding the commitment of aircraft by the 7th Fighter Division and the Third Air Fleet.

c. Allied Losses

22 bombers and 4 fighter aircraft brought down

d. German Losses

12 aircraft totally destroyed

5 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 2 wounded

12 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

3/10 to 8/10 cover of loosely scattered stratus clouds at about 1,000 meters; morning fogs; high-altitude winds from 340°, velocity 60 kilometers per hour.

XVIII. DAY ACTIONS, 19 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the forenoon a force of 250 American bombers, accompanied by a fighter escort, took off from the Allied bases in Italy. They attacked the cities of Klagenfurt and Graz, causing relatively little damage.

At 1726 the airfield at Gilze-Rijen in Holland was subjected to attack by a group of forty Marauder bombers. Approaching at 1700 over the mouth of the Schelde and Hoek van Holland, they flew on to Gilze-Rijen, Volkel, and St. Trond. On their return flight, they crossed the Channel coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Ostende, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 1758.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

No aircraft were committed by the I Fighter Corps. The 7th Fighter Division, however, sent up forces in defense of the attack on Klagenfurt and Graz, and with considerable success.

c. Allied Losses

20 aircraft certainly brought down

2 aircraft probably brought down

d. German Losses

No information available.

XIX. AMERICAN ATTACKS ON MANNHEIM AND FRANKFURT/MAIN, 20 March 1944

(see Figure 141, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Choosing northern France and Belgium as their approach route, 700 American bombers, accompanied by an escort of 400 single-engine and 100 twin-engine fighter aircraft, carried out an attack on Frankfurt/Main and Mannheim. Appearing at 1018 between Blankenberghe and Dieppe, they moved on towards the southeast over the routes Brussels - Reims and Malmedy - Metz into the areas of Koblenz, Frankfurt/Main, Würzburg, Crailsheim, Mannheim, and Saarbrücken.

Two small bomber formations turned back before reaching the target areas, one over Lille at 1125, and the other over the Charleville and Sedan area at 1133. For their return flight, the main force split into smaller formations, leaving the Mannheim area at 1145 and the Heilbronn area at about 1200. Flying towards the west and northwest, the bombers flew back towards the Channel coast and crossed it between Blankenberghe and Le Havre. The last aircraft were reported leaving the Continent at 1500.

In addition to the fighter escort which flew in with the bombers, the following fighter formations were observed:

At 1207 several formations flew over Heyst, on over Brussels and into the St. Vith and Schnee-Eifel areas;

At 1235 several formations flew over Ostende and on to the Ghent area.

In addition to the above, several fighter aircraft formations carried out raids on German-occupied airfields in northern France and Holland, using their airborne weapons.

Although the bombs were dropped by instrument on Mannheim and Frankfurt, they caused a great deal of property damage in both cities. Industrial installations escaped with little damage.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XX. DAY ACTIONS, 21 March 1944

A few American aircraft were observed over the Reich, apparently engaged in reconnaissance activity. A number of German fighter aircraft were sent up

against them, but to no avail.

XXI. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BERLIN, 22 March 1944

(see Figure 142, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Between 1310 and 1340, a group of 400 American bombers, accompanied by a fighter escort of 300 single-engine and 100 twin-engine aircraft, laid several bombing panels across the city of Berlin. The bombs, released by instrument, fell on the sectors Weissensee, Moabit, and Gesundbrunnen, but caused relatively slight damage to industrial installations. The aircraft appeared at 1019 over the water approximately 130 kilometers west of the island of Texel, and flew along north of the Frisian Islands over the Bay of Helgoland. Moving on to their target, they followed the lines Husum - mouth of the Elbe, Kiel - Hamburg, Lübeck - Lauenburg, Wismar - Salzwedel, and Neubrandenburg - Rathenow. During their return flight, their course was bounded by the line Neurippen - Lüneburg - East Frisian Islands - north of the island of Terschelling in the north, and Jüterbog - Hildesheim - Bocholt - Hoek van Holland in the south. The last bombers left the Continent at 1537.

From 1050 until 1440, fighter formations flew over the coast continually between the island of Texel and Zandvoort. They flew on towards the east, some of them as far as the areas of Schwerin, Salzwedel, Berlin, and Magdeburg.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XXII. AMERICAN ATTACKS ON BRAUNSCHWEIG AND MÜNSTER, 23 March 1944

(see Figure 143, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 0840, the first aircraft of an American bomber force were reported about 120 kilometers west of Den Helder and IJmuiden. The aircraft, some 400 bombers with a large fighter aircraft escort, crossed the Dutch coast between the island of Texel and Katwijk and flew on towards the east. Following the lines Assel - ~~Steppenburg~~ Hengelo - Cloppenburg - Osnabrück and Uelzen - Hannover, they reached the Uelzen and Salzwedel area and carried out their attack on Braunschweig from the north and west. Leaving their target at 1045, the bombers flew back towards the northwest and southwest over the area north of Hannover and over Paderborn.

Reported approaching at 0902, a force of 300 bombers accompanied by a fighter escort flew over the Channel coast between Westerschelde and Calais and on towards the east and southeast. They followed the lines Antwerp - Charleroi and Cologne - Koblenz until they were over Mainz, Giessen, and Siegen. Here they altered their course towards the north, part of them making a detour over Paderborn, and flew on to attack the cities of Münster and Hamm. On their return flight, the bombers joined the aircraft flying back from the attack on Braunschweig, and the group flew back out over the coast between Den Helder and Dunkirk. The last aircraft left the Continent at 1308.

At 0958, several formations of fighter aircraft turned back when they had reached Liège and Koblenz and headed for the mouth of the Somme.

Between 0950 and 1148, numerous fighter formations were observed crossing the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Den Helder. Moving on into the Reich, they followed the following routes:

Den Helder - Oldenburg - Soltau,

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Amsterdam - Osnabrück - Braunschweig,
 Westerschelde - Cologne - Siegen, and
 Antwerp - Dortmund - Münster - Vechta.

It was estimated that the total number of fighter aircraft committed by the enemy amounted to 900.

The American attacks varied in their effectiveness, causing slight damage in Braunschweig, a great deal of damage in Münster, and destroying quite a few buildings in Hamm.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed:

units from the 1st and 2d Fighter Divisions, over the Braunschweig area,
 units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Dortmund and Siegen.

While engaged in assembly maneuvers, our fighters were attacked by the American fighter aircraft. Heavy air combat developed over Braunschweig and Hannover.

A total of 259 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft were employed.

c. Allied Losses

20 bombers and 13 fighter aircraft certainly brought down

7 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 1100, 24 March 1944)

11 aircraft totally destroyed

15 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 4 dead

3 wounded

11 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

6/10 to 10/10 cloud cover between 800 and 1,500 meters; along the northern edge of the mountains of central Germany the clouds hung as low as

300 and 500 meters in some areas; scattered snow flurries.

f. Remarks

On 23 March 1944, Colonel Wilke, Commanding Officer of the 3d Single-Engine Fighter Wing, was killed in action. He had brought down a total of 161 enemy aircraft and had been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords.

XXIII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN, 24 March 1944

(see Figure 144, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 0746 an American bomber force totalling some 250 aircraft appeared on the Channel coast between Dunkirk and Ostende, moving towards the southeast. Flying on along the lines Brussels - Nivelles and Bonn - Wittlich, they reached Frankfurt/Main.

Some of the bombers flew on to Saalfeld, Coburg, Bamberg, and Würzburg. The bombers began their return flight at 0950, moving back towards the west and northwest. They crossed the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Calais, and the last bombers to leave the Continent were sighted over Dunkirk at 1205. A total of 300 fighter aircraft were assigned to escort the bomber force. The following maneuvers by fighter formations were noted:

At 0835, a large number of fighters flew over the mouth of the Schelde, Venlo, and Aix la Chapelle on their way to join the bombers over the Koblenz area.

At 0930, several fighter formations were observed returning from the areas of Koblenz and Bonn.

At 1032, several fighter formations flew over the mouth of the Schelde and on to Löwen.

At 1102, a single fighter formation flew over Dunkirk on its way to Valenciennes.

The attack caused fairly serious property damage and some slight damage to industrial installations in Frankfurt/Main. A few bombs also fell on the Schweinfurt area.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XXIV. DAY ACTIONS, 25 March 1944

Several American Mosquitos were observed on reconnaissance missions over the Reich. A few single-engine fighter aircraft were sent up against them, but to no avail.

XXV. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON KLAGENFURT, 26 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

A force of 250 bombers, accompanied by a fighter aircraft escort, carried out an attack on the city of Klagenfurt from Allied bases in Italy. The attack caused relatively little damage.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Units from the 7th Fighter Division were sent up from airfields at Munich and Vienna, but arrived over Klagenfurt too late to participate in any action.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Remarks

On 26 March 1944 Captain Hermichen, of the I Group, 11th Single-Engine Fighter Wing, was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

XVI. DAY ACTIONS, 27 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1012 a single Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft flew over Hoek van Holland and on over Rotterdam, Duisburg, and Wuppertal as far as the Cologne area. Its return flight led over München-Gladbach and Antwerp and out over the mouth of the Schelde, which it crossed at 1123.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

No aircraft were committed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XXVII. DAY ACTIONS, 28 March 1944

Several American aircraft entered the Reich on reconnaissance activity during the day. A few single-engine fighter aircraft were sent up against them, but without success.

XXVIII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BRAUNSCHWEIG, 29 March 1944

(see Figure 145, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1215, a force consisting of 250 bombers and a large escort of fighter aircraft flew over the Zuyder Zee with course towards the east. They continued on, following the lines Cloppenburg - Osnabrück and Soltau - Hildesheim, and bombarded the city of Braunschweig. A few of the bomber formations made a detour over Stendal and Magdeburg to the target area. At 1340 the

bombers began their return flights from the Magdeburg and Braunschweig area, flying towards the west and northwest along the lines Uelzen - Goslar, Bremen - Paderborn, and Emden - Dortmund. They crossed the coast between the island of Borkum and the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 1550. The bomber force was protected by an escort of some 400 fighter aircraft.

The following fighter maneuvers were observed:

At 1300 fighter aircraft were observed leaving the Cloppenburg area.

At 1335 several fighter formations left the Hannover area on their way home.

Beginning at 1340, fighter aircraft were observed departing from the Magdeburg and Gardelegen areas.

Between 1410 and 1430, fighter formations streamed in over the Dutch coast between Bergen and Katwijk and moved on to the areas of Meppen and Lingen.

Bombardment was by instrument, and caused medium heavy damage to property and industrial installations in Braunschweig.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, over Braunschweig,

units from the 2d Fighter Division, over Hannover, and

units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Minden.

Because of the stormy weather, assembly maneuvers proved very difficult. Only a small percentage of the aircraft sent up against the enemy was actually able to make contact with the American aircraft. The 26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing ran into heavy fighting over the Magdeburg area.

A total number of 258 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

7 bombers and 10 fighter aircraft certainly brought down

4 bombers and 2 fighter aircraft probably brought down.

d. German Losses (as of 1200, 30 March 1944)

12 aircraft totally destroyed

21 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 10 dead

5 wounded

12 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Weather conditions were fair, but favored the attacker rather than the defender.

f. Remarks

On 29 March the military post area of Braunschweig-Querum was caught in several American bombing panels. Several bombs fell on the headquarters buildings of the I Fighter Corps, causing considerable damage.

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Bombs Fall on the Command Headquarters, I Fighter Corps,

29 March 1944

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XXIX. DAY ACTIONS, 30 and 31 March 1944

a. Enemy Activity

During both days, several American aircraft, identified as Mosquitos, carried out reconnaissance activity over the Reich.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Several fighter aircraft, provisionally equipped to face the enemy Mosquito aircraft, were employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

One Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft was brought down on 30 March.

d. German Losses

None.

CHAPTER VI

NIGHT ACTIONS DURING MARCH 1944

I. SURVEY

a. British Offensive Activity

During March 1944, British night operations were characterized by two new factors. In the first place, the effectiveness of the British attacks was heightened by the increase in the tactical ability of the path-finder units in ~~illuminating~~ marking targets for the four-engine bombers. All the British attacks on German cities during March were characterized by a more intense concentration of bombs. In the second place, there was a marked increase in the harrassing activity carried out by Mosquito bombers.

A total of seven large-scale attacks were directed against targets in the Reich, six of these occurring during the second half of the month. During the first half of the month (when the full-moon period occurred), the RAF concentrated its attention on targets in France. As far as target selection was concerned, there was no indication of any coordination among Allied air commanders. The British attack during the night of 26/27 March was robbed of its potential effectiveness by adverse weather conditions, and the attack on Nuremberg, on 30/31 March, was effectively met by German fighter defenses. In addition to large-scale night attacks, the RAF carried out twenty-two harrassing raids on targets in the Reich, employing a total of 1,400 Mosquito aircraft. Thus March 1944 represented the peak of British harrassing activity. As before, these harrassing raids were directed chiefly against targets in the industrial regions of Rhine-~~Westfalen~~ Westphalia. Although the total effectiveness of the harrassing raids was less than the cumulative effectiveness of the large-scale bomber attacks, there was an appreciable decrease in industrial production due, first, to the actual damage caused by the raids and, second, to the many air-raid alarms, which, of course, took the workers away from their posts

temporarily.

The British Coastal Command continued its mining of the waters along the German and Dutch coasts. A total of seven mine-laying operations were carried out, and it seems probable that there were still other operations of this sort which were not noted by German observers.

Nearly all the large-scale bomber attacks were preceded by Mosquito raids on our night fighter airfields in Holland. German night fighter commanders came to rely on these attacks as a certain indication that a large-scale bomber attack might be expected during the same night.

Since the RAF employed Mosquito aircraft on harrassing raids during bad weather and during the full-moon period, there were only two nights in the month of March when no enemy aircraft whatsoever were observed over the Reich.

b. British Offensive Tactics and Radio Interference

By means of diversionary maneuvers during the approach flight of their bomber streams, the British air commanders tried to prevent the effective commitment of the German night fighter forces. Frequent attempts were made to camouflage the course alterations of the bomber streams by sending up Mosquito formations at the same time and having the latter remain on the course initially selected by the bombers. In order to confuse and dissipate the German fighter defense forces, the RAF carried out secondary raids timed to coincide with the beginning of a large-scale attack. German ground radar stations were effectively confused by the continuing British practice of dropping multitudes of tinfoil strips from both the four-engine bombers and the Mosquitos. By committing four-engine bombers and Mosquitos together, the RAF made early warning on the basis of motor noise impossible. Despite the variety of tactical diversionary measures employed by the British, these were by and large unsuccessful. The British bombers tuned in their target location devices as soon as they took off from Great Britain or as soon as they crossed the border into

the Reich. In this way, by getting position bearings for the enemy's target location instruments, our radar equipment was able to follow the flight course of the bombers without difficulty, and a consolidation of the individual reports from our Rotterdam stations gave an accurate picture of the enemy's ~~position~~ position. By comparing a series of such radar pictures, it was possible to distinguish between the four-engine bombers and the Mosquitos, since there was a considerable difference in their flight speeds. It was assumed that the chief purpose of the British diversionary measures was to render ineffective the operations of the German night fighter aircraft which were sent up in controlled combat against specific objectives, and to a great extent this purpose was achieved, at least so far as the German single-engine fighters were concerned. The measures employed by the enemy in an attempt to jam the airborne search instruments built into our twin-engine fighter aircraft were not successful, and therefore the prospects of success in pursuit activity by these aircraft continued to be good. During March, the British Bomber Command discontinued the practice, begun towards the end of February, of sending up several bomber streams at different times and on different approach courses to the same target, a practice which could easily have resulted in the dissipation of the German night fighter forces.

c. The Commitment of German Night Fighter Units

At the beginning of March, the Air Fleet Reich had ~~again~~ assigned the defense of the Frankfurt area to the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, and had placed the ground control stations in that area under the command of the I Fighter Corps. Since 1 October 1943 they had been under the command of the 7th Fighter Division. In view of the British attacks on targets in the southern part of Germany, the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, speeded up the measures which had been introduced during late February to reinforce the

ground organization in the Frankfurt area, in respect to both personnel and materiel. In addition, five twin-engine fighter groups (night) were transferred in mid-March to the Frankfurt area and to Lorraine, under the command of the 4th Fighter Division.

On the occasion of three of the large-scale enemy attacks, German defensive measures were seriously hindered by adverse weather conditions, particularly by very poor high-altitude visibility. The improved command organization in the Frankfurt area, however, soon demonstrated its worth, as is indicated by the fact that the British lost a total of sixty-eight bombers to the German night fighter forces during the attacks on Stuttgart, during the night of 15/16 March, and on Frankfurt/Main, during the night of 22/23 March. Towards the end of the month, the striking power of the German night fighter forces reached its peak. During their attacks on Berlin and Nuremberg, the British lost more than 10% of the total number of bombers committed. The noteworthy record chalked up by the German night fighter forces was due chiefly to the success of night pursuit operations carried out by our twin-engine fighters equipped with the SN-2 airborne search devices. Our single-engine fighters, employed in controlled combat against specific objectives, contributed very little to the over-all success of operations.

The struggle to find an aircraft capable of meeting the British Mosquito bombers effectively continued without success. The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, experimented with the twin-engine He-219 and Me-410 and with the single-engine Me-109, all of them provisionally equipped with devices to increase their speed and their performance at high altitudes, but none of these experiments was successful. In the face of the steadily increasing employment of Mosquitos by the RAF, the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, renewed its request to the Luftwaffe High Command that jet-propelled aircraft capable of combatting the Mosquito be assigned as soon as possible to

the Reichs air defense forces. At the time there were two aircraft types being tested, the Arado 234 and the Me-262, which could have fulfilled this requirement.

d. Successes and Losses During March 1944

During March 1944 the average total number of night fighter aircraft available for employment by the I Fighter Corps was 240 twin-engine fighter aircraft and 100 single-engine fighter aircraft.

The total number of night fighter aircraft committed by the I Fighter Corps during March 1944 was 1,334 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the I Fighter Corps during March 1944 amounted to eighty-seven aircraft, or 6.7% of the total number of aircraft committed.

The total losses suffered by the enemy within the area covered by the I Fighter Corps during March 1944 amounted to 256 aircraft (excluding those brought down by antiaircraft artillery), or 4.8% of the estimated total number of aircraft (5,325) employed by the RAF against the Reich. The number of aircraft brought down represented 6.0% of the total number of four-engine bombers committed by the RAF.

II. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON DÜSSELDORF AND DUISBURG, 29 February/1 March 1944

(see Figure 146, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 1949 a group of forty Mosquito bombers crossed the mouth of the Schelde, and flew on towards the east southeast along the Channel coast between Ostende and Dunkirk to raid the cities of Düsseldorf and Duisburg. In both cities, damage was relatively slight. Returning to their bases, the Mosquitos flew out over the Dutch coast between Katwijk and Ostende, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2103.

During the time from 2259 to 2322, a single British aircraft was observed circling above the coast near the islands of Schouwen and Goeree.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

There was no commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

8/10 to 10/10 cloud cover beginning at 200 to 500 meters and extending as high as 2,000 meters.

III. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON STUTTGART, 1/2 March 1944

(see Figure 147, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The main operation of the night was preceded by the bombardment of the German-occupied airfields at Leeuwarden, Deelen, Venlo, Volkel and St. Trong. These attacks were carried out by a total force of fifty Mosquito bombers, whose approach between the island of Ameland and the mouth of the Schelde was observed between 2244 and 0051.

At 0056 a bomber stream of some 700 aircraft was reported over the French coast between Le Havre and Valery en Caux. Flying towards the south-east, the bombers moved on as far as the Troyes and Bourges area. Here they altered course towards the east and flew on along the lines Neufchateau - Dijon and Strassburg - Basel into the Stuttgart area. A few smaller formations, presumably Mosquito aircraft, flew on as far as Munich. At 0255 the bombers began their return flights towards the west and northwest, flying over Luxemburg and northern France. They reached the Channel coast between Calais and Le Havre at about 0600. The majority of the bombers attacked

Stuttgart, where their concentrated bombardment resulted in fairly serious damage both to private property and to industrial installations. Scattered bombs also fell on Constance and Munich.

In addition to the operations described above, the RAF carried out the following actions:

During the time from 2229 to 2241, a single aircraft was observed circling above the islands of Schouwen and Walcheren.

At 0054 a single long-range night fighter aircraft flew in over the mouth of the Schelde and on into the Steenberg area, where it circled about until 0113. This aircraft was presumed to be on reconnaissance duty.

Between 0222 and 0248, a group of five long-range night fighters reconnoitered the Roermond and Zwolle areas. They approached over the island of Schouwen and departed via Bergen.

From 0256 until 0330, three long-range night fighter aircraft were observed on a reconnaissance mission over the island of Goeree and Tilburg.

A single long-range night fighter carried out a reconnaissance mission over The Hague and Venlo during the time from 0335 to 0403.

Approaching at 0307 over Luxemburg, a group of twenty Mosquito aircraft raided the area east of Pirmasens. They joined the four-engine bombers on their return flight.

Between 0637 and 0655 a single aircraft flew along the coast between The Hague and Katwijk.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:

in controlled combat against specific objectives over the Stuttgart area: fifty-three twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division. They were controlled through radio beacon Kuli.

Because of bad weather, the forces belonging to the 1st and 2d Fighter

Divisions were not sent up. Fighter aircraft actions over the target area were rendered extremely difficult by poor high-altitude visibility.

There is nothing in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps pertaining to the commitment of forces by the 7th Fighter Division.

c. Allied Losses

3 bombers certainly brought down

d. German Losses

2 aircraft

personnel: 5 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over Holland, Belgium, northern France and northwestern Germany: cloud masses gradually dispersing towards the south; over the rest of Germany: 10/10 cloud cover beginning at 200 to 300 meters along the mountain ranges and at 500 to 800 meters elsewhere, and extending as high as 4,000 to 4,500 meters; high-altitude visibility two to four kilometers; over southern Germany: snowfall; danger of icing in the clouds.

f. Remarks

On 2 March 1944, Captain Frank, former commanding officer of the I Group, 1st Night Fighter Wing, and Captain Geiger, former commanding officer of the 7th Squadron, 1st Night Fighter Wing, were posthumously awarded the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

IV. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON AIX LA CHAPELLE AND MÜNCHEN-GLADBACH, 2/3 March 1944, AND ON BERLIN AND DUISBURG, 3/4 March 1944

(see Figure 146, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

2/3 March 1944. During the night of 2/3 March, a group of twenty-five Mosquito bombers carried out harrassing raids on Aix la Chapelle and München-Gladbach. Their approach, over Bergen and The Hague, lasted from

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2004 until 2143. Their return flight led them back over the mouth of the Scheldt, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2258.

At the same time, several British aircraft circled at low altitude over Holland.

One courier aircraft was observed crossing the Skagerrak on its way from Sweden to Great Britain.

3/4 March 1944. During the night of 3/4 March, British Mosquito bombers carried out harrassing raids on Berlin and Duisburg. These actions were carried out as follows:

During the time from 0210 to 0304, a force of forty Mosquito aircraft crossed the coast between the island of Vlieland and Katwijk and flew on into the Osnabrück area. At 0255, ten Mosquitos turned back towards the northwest and flew over Bremen and on out to sea. At 0338, fifteen aircraft departed from Osnabrück and headed towards the west. Fifteen Mosquitos flew on over Hannover and Braunschweig to Berlin. After bombarding the city, they departed towards the west and northwest at 0414, and left the Continent behind at 0531, crossing the coast between the Bay of Helgoland and Katwijk. At 0300 fifteen more Mosquitos were reported approaching over the mouth of the Schelde. They flew on to Duisburg, bombarded the city, and returned at 0407. Their departure flight over the ~~mouth~~ mouth of the Schelde lasted until 0457. The attacks caused slight damage in residential sections of both cities.

During the first half of the night, a few low-flying aircraft were reported over the mouth of the Schelde and the Gilze-Rijen area.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

2/3 March 1944. A single twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division was committed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

2/3 March 1944: cloudless; 3/4 March 1944: 7/10 to 10/10 cover of nimbus clouds between 200 and 7,000 meters.

V. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 4 March through 7 March 1944

(see Figure 148, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

4/5 March 1944. During the night of 4/5 March, the RAF carried out harassing raids on the cities of Duisburg and Berlin. Duisburg was raided by a force of fifteen Mosquito bombers which approached over the mouth of the Schelde beginning at 0259, and continued on towards the east to their target, the Duisburg and Düsseldorf area. Their return flight led back over the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft crossing this point at 0425.

Berlin was raided by a group consisting of twenty bombers. Reported approaching at 0240 over the Zuyder Zee, they flew on over Osnabrück and Braunschweig into the areas of Magdeburg, Stendal, and Berlin. Their return course led back towards the west, and the aircraft crossed the coast between IJmuiden and the mouth of the Schelde, leaving the Continent behind by 0425.

5/6 March 1944. The cities of Aix la Chapelle and Duisburg were subjected to attack by a force of twenty-five Mosquito bombers. Approaching between Bergen and the mouth of the Schelde from 2108 until 2133, the bombers flew on towards the east to the areas of Duisburg, Aix la Chapelle, and Antwerp. Departing from the target area at 2134, they flew back towards the west and left the Continent via the mouth of the Schelde at 2228. One Mosquito aircraft flew on from Enschede to Osnabrück and Uelzen; its po-

sition at 2247 was north of Salzwedel. Flying back from the Stendal area at 0015, it moved on over Salzwedel, Soltau, Vechta, and Zwolle and crossed the coast over Bergen at 0127.

In addition to the above actions, the following operations were noted:

Between ~~213~~ 2150 and 2232, several enemy aircraft were observed circling north of the islands of Schiermonnikoog and Borkum at an altitude of 400 meters. These aircraft were presumably engaged in an attack on a German ship convoy.

Approaching at 0236 over the area south of Den Helder, a single enemy aircraft flew on over Meppel and Meppen into the area lying east of Nienburg. The aircraft left its target at 0320 and, following the same course back, flew out over Den Helder at 0348.

6/7 March 1944. During the night of 6/7 March, the cities of Braunschweig and Krefeld were subjected to attack by a force of some fifty Mosquito bombers. Their approach flight, between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde, lasted from 2000 until 2134. Fifteen of the aircraft flew on as far as Hengelo, Nymwegen, and Krefeld, attacked the latter city, and began their return flight at 2035. Fifteen other Mosquitos made their way to the areas of Münster and Osnabrück, and returned towards the west at 2045. The remaining twenty aircraft raided the Braunschweig and Oschersleben area, and returned to the west at 2110. The last aircraft crossed the coast between the island of Terschelling and Hoek van Holland at 2247.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:

4/5 March 1944: five twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over Holland;

5/6 March 1944: eight single-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st Fighter Division, over the Berlin area; and

6/7 March 1944: seven twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over Holland.

A total of twenty single and twin-engine fighter aircraft were committed by the I Fighter Corps during the three nights in the reporting period.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

5/6 March 1944: one single-engine fighter aircraft

personnel: 1 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

4/5 March 1944: 3/10 to 8/10 cover of stratus clouds; fog in some localities;

5/6 March 1944: cloudless; local fogs;

6/7 March 1944: cloudless.

VI. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 7 March through 12 March 1944

(see Figure 149, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

7/8 March 1944. During this night Duisburg and Krefeld were raided by a force consisting of twenty-five Mosquito bombers. Approaching at 2016 over the Zuyder Zee, the force split up over Holland. Several aircraft circled over Holland for a time and then turned around and headed for home. One aircraft, its flight altitude varying between 400 and 1,500 meters, flew on into the Münster area. The rest of the Mosquitos moved on to the areas of Düsseldorf and Oberhausen. By 2345 the last aircraft had flown back over the mouth of the Schelde on their way back to Great Britain.

8/9 March 1944. During the time from 2019 to 2053, a single British courier aircraft was reported crossing the Skagerrak on its way from England to Sweden.

9/10 March 1944. During the night of 9/10 March, Düsseldorf and Aix la Chapelle were attacked by fifteen Mosquito bombers. Crossing the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Calais at 1950, the aircraft flew on towards the east into the areas of Aix la Chapelle, Düsseldorf, and Solingen. Departing from their targets at 2010, they flew back over the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2120.

10/11 March 1944. During this night, Duisburg and Aix la Chapelle were raided by a total of twenty Mosquito bombers. Approaching at 2222 between Den Helder and The Hague, they flew on towards the east as far as the German border. Here they altered course for the south and proceeded as far as the areas of Düsseldorf, Essen, and Aix la Chapelle. After completing their mission, they flew back towards the west and northwest, and crossed over the coast between The Hague and Blankenberghe. The last of the Mosquitos left the Continent at 2345.

In addition to the above, the following enemy actions were noted during the night of 10/11 March:

Several aircraft were observed flying along the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and the Gilze-Rijen area.

A single aircraft penetrated as far as the Emden area, and then flew back over the Zuyder Zee.

One British courier aircraft was reported crossing the Skagerrak on its way from Sweden to Great Britain.

11/12 March 1944. During this night Krefeld and Duisburg were the victims of an attack by a group of forty Mosquito bombers. Approaching at 2014 between Bergen and the mouth of the Schelde, they followed a southeast course into the Ruhr District. Their return flight course led over The Hague back towards the west, at 2044.

In addition, the city of Osnabrück was raided by twelve Mosquito

aircraft. The Mosquitos were reported approaching at 2039 over the island of Sylt, Hamburg, and Lüneburg. They flew on over Nienburg as far as the Osnabrück and Minden area. Their mission completed, the Mosquitos flew back over the mouth of the Schelde, the last of them leaving the Continent at 2302. Scattered bombs were also dropped over the area south of Hamburg.

In addition to the above, several mine-laying aircraft were observed over the Bay of Helgoland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:

7/8 March 1944: four twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over Holland;

11/12 March 1944: two twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over Holland, and two single-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st Fighter Division, over the Berlin area.

During the reporting period, the I Fighter Corps employed a total of eight single and twin-engine fighter aircraft.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

7/8 March 1944: over northwestern Germany: clear; over the Ruhr District and southern Germany: closed cloud cover extending as high as 2,000 to 6,000 meters;

9/10 March 1944: cover of fog-like clouds between 200 and 600 meters; full moon;

10/11 March 1944: ground fogs;

11/12 March 1944: conditions varying from clear to cloudy; cloud cover

beginning at 500 meters and extending as high as 2,000 meters.

f. Remarks

On 11 March 1944, Lt Col Streib, Commanding Officer of the 1st Night Fighter Wing, became the fifty-fourth officer in the German Armed Forces to receive the Oak Leaves and Swords to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

On 12 March 1944, Major zu Lippe-Weissenfeld, Commanding Officer of the III Group, 1st Night Fighter Wing, and acting Commanding Officer, 5th Night Fighter Wing, was killed during a practice flight. He had a record of forty-eight enemy aircraft downed in night combat, and had been awarded the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

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Lieutenant Colonel Streib (third from right),
with Night Fighter Commanders

VII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 12 March through 15 March 1944

(see Figure 150, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

12/13 March 1944. During the night of 12/13 March, the cities of Duisburg and Aix la Chapelle were attacked by a force totalling twenty Mosquito aircraft. During the first half of the night, the enemy aircraft approached over the Zuyder Zee. Their return flight course led them back over the mouth of the Schelde.

13/14 March 1944. During this night a force of thirty Mosquito bombers raided Frankfurt/Main. Their approach course led over the mouth of the Schelde, and their return course over Dunkirk.

14/15 March 1944. During the night of 14/15 March, a force consisting of forty Mosquito aircraft raided the cities of Cologne and Krefeld. The approach of the enemy, between Calais and the mouth of the Schelde, lasted from 2020 until 2050, and led him towards the south. Flying as far as the areas of Düsseldorf, Remscheid, Siegburg, and Koblenz, the aircraft accomplished their mission and, at 2050, began their return flights towards the west. The last aircraft left the Continent behind, flying out between the mouth of the Schelde and Berck sur Mer, at 2205. A single aircraft detached itself from the main force over Koblenz and flew on into the Paderborn area. At 2152 it left Paderborn and flew back over Lippstadt, Hamm, and Cleves, leaving the coast behind south of Rotterdam at 2232.

In addition to the above, the following enemy actions were noted during the night of 14/15 March:

Approaching at 0224 over Bergen, a single enemy aircraft continued on to raid the city of Göttingen. Its approach course led it north of Zwolle, north of Osnabrück, and south of Hannover to its target. At 0302 it departed from the target area and flew back towards the northwest over Osna-

brück and Assen. At 0346, it was reported over the island of Vlieland on its way back to Great Britain.

During the second half of the night, four four-engine bombers were observed over southern Norway, presumably on their way from Great Britain to Sweden. One British courier headed for Sweden, and one coming from Sweden were also reported over the Skagerrak.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:

13/14 March 1944: two twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, from Himmelbett areas over Holland.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

12/13 March 1944: 10/10 cover of stratus clouds between 150 and 6,500 meters; danger of icing in the clouds;

13/14 March 1944: varying cloud cover; snow and hail flurries; nimbus peaks reaching as high as 6,000 meters;

14/15 March 1944: 8/10 cover of cumulus clouds between 300 and 5,000 meters.

VIII. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON STUTTGART, 15/16 March 1944

(see Figure 151, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

A bomber stream consisting of 500 aircraft took off from the London area with courses towards the south and southeast. A smaller formation detached itself from the main stream and penetrated into the Amiens and St. Quentin areas. After bombarding the area, these aircraft returned towards the

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west. The main stream crossed the Channel coast between Caen and Le Havre at about 2000 and, heading towards the southeast, moved on to the areas of Orleans and Chartres. Moving on, they followed the lines Montargis - Melun, Chaumont - Bar le Duc, south of Epinal - Nancy, and Basel - Freudenstadt, and altered course for the north over Constance and Donaueschingen, to approach their target from the south. Several singly-flying aircraft, probably Mosquito bombers, flew on towards the east as far as the Munich area, where they dropped several bombs in an attempt to mask the real target of the attack. At 2312 the aircraft began their return flights towards the west, southwest, and northwest. Their return course was bounded in the north by the line Mannheim - Bingen - St. Vith - Dunkirk, and in the south by the line Freiburg - Chaumont - Paris - Fecamp. The last bombers left the Channel coast behind at 0205. The bombardment of Stuttgart was very concentrated and caused serious damage to both private properties and to industrial areas.

In addition to the attack described above, the RAF carried out the following actions:

A force totalling thirty Mosquito aircraft raided the German-occupied airfields at Deelen and St. Trond as well as targets in the Ruhr District. The enemy aircraft approached at 2005 between Westerschelde and Bergen, and flew on to the areas of Zwolle, Enschede, Dortmund, Bochum, Düsseldorf, Aix la Chapelle, Koblenz, and Liège. Their return flight towards the northwest lasted until 2350.

During the second half of the night, several Mosquito aircraft, presumed to be long-range night fighters, flew over the island of Texel and on as far as Uelzen and Braunschweig. Their return course led over Wesermünde.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:

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in night pursuit activity:

1st Fighter Division: the Me-110 Group (Erfurt), assembling at radio beacon Otto; these aircraft were guided by the Y-Method in pursuit of the returning enemy bombers over the Mannheim and Kaiserslautern areas;

2d Fighter Division: several Ju-88 units, assembling at radio beacon Philipp; these aircraft were directed on to radio beacon Christa and into the enemy bomber stream over Freiburg and Donaueschingen; and

3d Fighter Division: several Ju-88 units, assembling at radio beacon Karl; these aircraft were directed on to radio beacon Christa and into the bomber stream over Freiburg and Donaueschingen; several Me-110 units were assembled over their airfields in Belgium and France and were guided into the enemy bomber force by radar station Maffel.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

3d Fighter Division: the single-engine fighter groups from Bonn and Wiesbaden-Erbenheim were

from Himmelbett areas against the Mosquito bombers over Hannover, Braunschweig, and northern Holland:

several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st and 3d Fighter Divisions.

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of ninety-three single and twin-engine fighter aircraft.

There is no information in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps pertaining to the commitment of aircraft by the 7th Fighter Division and the Third Air Fleet.

c. Allied Losses

30 bombers certainly brought down

d. German Losses

9 aircraft

227

personnel: 1 wounded

13 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

6/10 to 10/10 cloud cover between 800 and 2,500 meters.

IX. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 16 March through 18 March 1944

(see Figure 152, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

16/17 March 1944. During this night the cities of Cologne and Bonn were subjected to attack by a force of forty-five Mosquito bombers. Approaching at 2050, the enemy aircraft flew over the mouth of the Schelde and over Calais into the Cologne and Koblenz area. Their return flight led them back over the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2220.

Several British aircraft dropped aerial mines into the waters around Helgoland and Sylt.

A single British courier aircraft was observed crossing the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden; two courier aircraft returning to Great Britain were also reported.

17/18 March 1944. A force totalling fifty Mosquito bombers attacked the cities of Cologne, Aix la Chapelle, and Krefeld. They approached between Hoek van Holland and Calais from 1957 to 2055, and flew on to the areas of Düsseldorf, Cologne, Koblenz, and Aix la Chapelle. At 2052 they began their return flight, following approximately the same course as during the approach flight. The last aircraft flew over The Hague on their way back towards the west at 2137.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:

16/17 March 1944: two aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over

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Holland; and

17/18 March 1944: two fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, also over Holland.

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of four single and twin-engine fighter aircraft during the reporting period.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

During both nights there was a cloud cover of loosely dispersed stratus clouds.

X. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN, 18/19 March 1944

(see Figure 153, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

An enemy bomber stream consisting of approximately 600 aircraft took off from the area northeast of London, and by 2000 had reached the Channel coast between Heyst and Dunkirk, flying towards the southeast. The bombers flew on, following the lines Luxemburg - Liège and Trier - Giessen, into the areas of Frankfurt/Main, Aschaffenburg, Würzburg, and Mannheim. Frankfurt was subjected to concentrated bombardment, which left in its wake very heavy damages to both private properties and to industrial plants. A formation of approximately thirty bombers had left the main stream over the area south of Aix la Chapelle and, by attacking the city of Kassel, attempted to camouflage the actual target of the main force. At 2200 the bombers left the Frankfurt area with course towards the northwest. By 0023, the last aircraft had left the Continent, crossing the coast between Blankenberghe and Calais. After completing its mission, the formation which had

attacked Kassel flew back towards the northwest, and by 2325 had left the Continent behind, crossing the coast between Den Helder and Katwijk.

In addition to the attack described above, the RAF carried out the following actions:

A total of forty Mosquito aircraft participated in harrassing raids on German night fighter airfields in Twente, Venlo, and St. Trond as well as in observation flights over that area. Approaching at 2009 between Bergen and the mouth of the Schelde, the Mosquitos flew on into Holland and into the areas of Hannover, Braunschweig and Goslar, and Göttingen. Their return course led towards the west, the aircraft passing over the coast between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde until 2256.

During the time from 2032 to 2123, a force of fifty aircraft was engaged in mine-laying operations in the Bay of Helgoland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Prior to the attack on Frankfurt/Main during the night of 18/19 March, the following transfers of forces were carried out: the 1st Night Fighter Wing was moved to France and assigned to the 4th Fighter Division; units from the 3d and 6th Night Fighter Wings were transferred into the Frankfurt area and to the airfield at St. Trond; and one more group from the 5th Night Fighter Wing was moved to the airfield at Erfurt.

The following forces were committed in defensive measures during the attack on Frankfurt/Main:

in night pursuit activity:

3d Fighter Division: the 1st Night Fighter Wing was assembled over its assigned airfields ^a was directed into the bomber stream at/radio beacon sent out by radar station Bulle; the twin-engine fighter group (St. Trond) was directed into the bomber stream southwest of its airfield; the 2d Night Fighter Wing was ordered from its assigned airfields (Twente, Quaken-

brück, and Langensalza) to radio beacon Kett, directed on to radio beacon Ida, and from the latter into the bomber stream; the twin-engine fighter groups from the Frankfurt area were guided by the Y-Method into the Koblenz area and directed into the bomber stream.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

1st Fighter Division: two Me-110 groups from Erfurt were assembled over radio beacon Otto and directed into combat;

3d Fighter Division: the single-engine fighter groups from Rheine, Bonn, and Wiesbaden-Erbenheim were employed in controlled combat over the Frankfurt area.

from Himmelbett areas:

a few twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division were employed from areas over southern Holland and Belgium during the return flight of the enemy bombers.

The I Target Illumination Group from the airfield at Münster was guided to radio beacon Otto and employed from there over Frankfurt.

In order to be prepared for a possible deviation of the bomber stream towards the east, the twin-engine fighter units from the 2d Fighter Division were provisionally assembled at radio beacon 10, leaving the remaining twin-engine fighter forces from the 1st Fighter Division for commitment over Frankfurt. After the British attack on Frankfurt had started, the units from the 2d Fighter Division were ordered to land.

A total of 168 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft as well as aircraft from the Target Illumination Group were employed.

Fighter operations were rendered difficult by poor high-altitude visibility.

c. Allied Losses

11 bombers certainly brought down

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d. German Losses

6 aircraft

personnel: 3 dead

7 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

4/10 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds above 4,000 meters; below this altitude there ~~xxx~~ were layers of haze; visibility very poor; over northwestern Germany: under the high-altitude cloud cover there was an additional cloud cover of 5/10 to 10/10 at about 500 meters; scattered high-altitude fogs; ground visibility three to six kilometers.

f. Remarks

The effectiveness of the British raids on our airfields in Holland is summarized by the following:

Twente: at 2048 two demolition bombs hit the taxiing area and two fell into the open field; no damage caused

Venlo: several bombs were dropped on the taxiing area; no damage caused

St. Trond: at 2042 one demolition bomb hit the runway and four were dropped in the open field; one dud also landed on the runway; no damage caused.

XI. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 19 March through 22 March 1944

(see Figure 154, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

19/20 March 1944: Aix la Chapelle and Düsseldorf were raided by a force of twenty-five Mosquito bombers. Approaching at 2000 between Dunkirk and Boulogne, they flew on towards the southeast as far as the areas of Aix la Chapelle, Cologne, Duisburg, and Düsseldorf. They flew back towards the west over the island of Goeree and Calais, the last aircraft fly-

ing over Calais at 2215.

Fifteen Mosquito aircraft raided the city of Berlin. They approached at 2120 over the Zuyder Zee and continued on over Hannover, Magdeburg, and Stendal. Their return course led towards the west and northwest, the bombers leaving the coast between the island of Texel and Rotterdam until 0030.

In addition to the above, the following actions were noted:

Several long-range night fighter aircraft were reported circling over Holland.

A single long-range fighter aircraft dropped two bombs on the airfield at Venlo. It had approached over the mouth of the Schelde and flown on as far as Koblenz and Paderborn. Its return flight course led over Osnabrück and the Zuyder Zee.

20/21 March 1944. Approaching at 2040 over Bergen, a force of twenty Mosquito bombers raided the city of Aix la Chapelle. They returned via the mouth of the Schelde, crossing this point at 2154.

A group of twenty Mosquito bombers, approaching at 2040 between Westerschelde and Dunkirk, carried out an attack on Munich and Innsbruck. Fifteen of the aircraft flew over Namur, Trier, Karlsruhe, and Stuttgart into the Munich area, and the other five over Charleville, Metz, Strassburg, and Sigmaringen into Innsbruck. They began their return flights at 2209 and flew back over the Channel coast by 2350.

Cologne was raided by ten Mosquito aircraft which had approached at 2110 between Calais and the mouth of the Somme and moved on as far as Cologne and Koblenz. The enemy aircraft left their target at 2153 and had departed from the Continent by 2241.

21/22 March 1944. A total of forty Mosquito bombers carried out raids on the cities of Cologne and Oberhausen. The aircraft were reported approaching over Hoek van Holland between 2020 and 2115. Their return flights

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began at 2054 towards the west. The last aircraft crossed over the coast at Ostende at 2229.

Several long-range night fighter aircraft were reported over northern Holland as far as the Oldenburg and Vechta areas. Presumably they were engaged in an observation mission.

A single Mosquito aircraft flew over Helgoland, southern Schleswig and Rostock into the Neubrandenburg area. Returning towards the west, it followed a course over Neurippen, Stendal, Münster, and the mouth of the Schelde.

One British courier aircraft on its way to Sweden and two on their way back to Great Britain were observed over the Skagerrak.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by means of the T-Method over Holland:

19/20 March 1944: three twin-engine fighter aircraft

21/22 March 1944: two twin-engine fighter aircraft

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of five twin-engine fighter aircraft during the reporting period.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

19/20 March 1944: cover of loosely dispersed clouds between 600 and 2,000 meters;

20/21 March 1944: 10/10 cloud cover between 300 and 7,000 meters; rain;

21/22 March 1944: 6/10 to 10/10 cover of nimbus clouds beginning at 800 meters.

XII. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN, 22/23 March 1944

(see Figure 155, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the first half of the night, the RAF opened its operations with a force of 100 Mosquito bombers which approached over the Dutch coast and flew on to raid the airfields at Leeuwarden, Twente, Deelen and Venlo in Holland, as well as targets in the Ruhr District and the city of Frankfurt/Main. During the Mosquito attacks, a British bomber stream consisting of some 600 aircraft took off from the Norwich area and, flying towards the northeast, moved on over the southern part of the North Sea.

A mine-laying formation detached itself from the main force and flew on over the island of Sylt and Jutland to mine the waters of the western Baltic. After completing their mining mission, the aircraft returned to their bases in Great Britain. The main bomber force altered its course towards the south over the waters north of Ameland, and continued on into the Osnabrück area. At this point a unit of Mosquitos left the main stream and headed for Berlin. They bombarded Berlin in an attempt to camouflage the target assigned to the large bombers. The large bombers, in the meantime, had proceeded in a tightly closed formation from Osnabrück to their target, Frankfurt/Main. After bombarding the city, the attackers headed back towards the west and northwest, flying over Belgium and northern France and leaving the Continent between Ostende and Dieppe. Whereas the Mosquito attacks were hardly effective, the large-scale attack on Frankfurt wrought considerable havoc on industrial

installations. The enemy mine-laying action in the western Baltic Sea resulted in the dissipation of the German night fighter forces, and thus must be chalked up as a success for British diversionary tactics.

In addition to the attack described above, the RAF carried out the following actions during the second half of the night:

Several long-range night fighter aircraft, engaged in reconnaissance activity over northwestern Germany and Frankfurt, raided the airfields at Stade and Langendiebach with their airborne armaments.

A single Mosquito aircraft flew in over the Zuyder Zee, Quakenbrück and Vechta into the Hannover area. It flew back over Bremen, Wesermünde, and the East Frisian Islands.

Three courier aircraft were observed crossing the Skagerrak on their way from Great Britain to Sweden.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:
in night pursuit operations:

3d Fighter Division: the Me-110 units, together with reinforcements from the 4th Fighter Division, were assembled at radio beacon Ludwig and directed into the bomber stream over Lippstadt and Paderborn; the Ju-88 units were directed from their airfields (Twente, Quakenbrück, Langensalza, and St. Trond) to radio beacon Quelle, and on to radio beacon Ludwig; from the latter they were guided into the bomber stream; the twin-engine fighter aircraft group from Mainz-Finthen was sent up in the direction of Kassel, guided on to radio beacons Marie and Ludwig, and directed into the bomber stream.

2d Fighter Division: the twin-engine fighter aircraft group from Vechta was assembled at radio beacon Quelle, directed on to Hannover and radio

beacon Ludwig, and directed into the bomber stream; the twin-engine fighter aircraft group from Westerland was assembled at radio beacon Hammer, guided on towards Bremen, and directed into the bomber stream west of Quakenbrück.

1st Fighter Division: the twin-engine fighter aircraft groups from Werneuchen and Erfurt were sent up towards radio beacon Hahn; before reaching it, they were directed to report ^{at} ~~to~~ radio beacon Ludwig instead, and were directed into the bomber stream east of Münster; the twin-engine fighter aircraft groups from Parchim and Stendal assembled at radio beacon Marie; after the British attack on Frankfurt had started, these aircraft were ordered to land again.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

3d Fighter Division: the single-engine fighter aircraft groups from Rheine and Wiesbaden-Erbenheim were assembled at the light beacon at Braunschweig; the group from Rheine was called back again because its flight range was too limited to enable it to reach the target in time; the group from Wiesbaden was employed in controlled combat over Frankfurt/Main.

2d Fighter Division: the single-engine fighter aircraft group from Oldenburg was assembled over Bremen and directed on over Soltau ~~intexike~~ in the ~~Frankfurtarea~~ direction of Frankfurt; because their flight range was too limited, they had to land before reaching Frankfurt.

from Himmelbett areas over Holland, against the Mosquito raiders and the returning bomber stream:

several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division.

The Target Illumination Group from the airfield at Münster-Handorf was assembled at radio beacon Marie and directed on over Hannover to Frankfurt. Weather conditions precluded its participating in action by dropping light

flares.

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of 243 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft as well as aircraft from the Target Illumination Group.

The double course alteration by the bomber stream and the British diversionary maneuvers carried out by the mine-laying aircraft and the Mosquito bombers resulted in a complicated pattern of employment for the German night fighter forces, with many last-minute changes. This accounted for the fact that German successes were not particularly noteworthy despite the excellent defense weather.

c. Allied Losses

38 bombers certainly brought down

d. German Losses

8 aircraft

personnel: 2 dead

6 wounded

12 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Scattered nimbus cloud areas beginning at 600 to 800 meters and extending as high as 2,000 meters; over the target area: clear; good high-altitude visibility.

f. Remarks

The damage caused by the airborne weapon attack carried out by the British long-range night fighters is summarized below:

Stade: 1 Me-110 destroyed

1 Me-110 damaged

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personnel: 4 wounded

Langendiebach: 1 Me-110 damaged

1 aircraft crew slightly injured.

One of our fighters was shot down over Frankfurt by our own antiaircraft artillery. The pilot was able to escape by parachute.

XIII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 23/24 March and 25/26 March 1944

(see Figure 156, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

23/24 March 1944. During this night the city of Dortmund was attacked by an enemy force consisting of thirty Mosquito bombers. Their approach course led them in between the Zuyder Zee and the mouth of the Schelde. Several aircraft, presumably long-range night fighters, flew on as far as Hannover and Ludwigslust. Most of them, however, flew into the Ruhr District. Their return course led them back out over the mouths of the Schelde and the Elbe.

A single Mosquito flew in over the Zuyder Zee and raided the city of Stendal.

25/26 March 1944. During the night of 25/26 March, Berlin was subjected to attack by a group of twenty-five Mosquito bombers. They were reported approaching over the Zuyder Zee at 2019. The aircraft flew on, following the lines Bremen - Hannover and Neurippen - Brandenburg/Havel, as far as Landsberg/Warthe, Frankfurt/Oder, and Küstrin. Some of the aircraft flew back from the Hannover area over the territory south of Emden. Most of them, however, flew back over the island of Texel and Rotterdam, the last Mosquitos leaving the Continent at 2350.

At 2019 an additional force of twenty-five Mosquitos penetrated into the Ruhr District. The course selected for their approach and return led over the

mouth of the Schelde.

Several British aircraft dropped aerial mines into the waters of the Bay of Helgoland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed against the enemy Mosquito bombers:

23/24 March 1944: one single-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, and

25/26 March 1944: three single-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division.

A total of four single-engine fighter aircraft were employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

25/26 March 1944: one Me-109 developed motor trouble and crashed; the pilot was able to parachute to safety.

e. Weather Conditions

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ 23/24 March 1944: over western Germany: dispersing cloud cover above 4,000 meters; over northern Germany: closed cloud cover of multiple-strata clouds; high-altitude winds from 300°, velocity fifty kilometers per hour;

25/26 March 1944: high-altitude cover of stratus clouds beginning at 2,500 meters and extending as high as 10,000 meters.

XIV. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON BERLIN, 24/25 March 1944

(see Figure 157, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1900 a British bomber stream consisting of 600 aircraft was reported approximately 120 kilometers northwest of the island of Vlieland. The aircraft flew on over the southern portion of the North Sea, crossed the western coast of Jutland between the island of Röm and Husum, and altered its course over the Bay of Kiel towards the southeast and Berlin. The bomber stream made a detour over Neubrandenburg and Königsberg/Neumark. Over the Bay of Helgoland a group of fifty Mosquito bombers left the main stream and flew on to attack Hamburg. A few of the four-engine bombers bombarded the city of Rostock, but the majority continued on to attack Berlin. Their attack lasted from 2200 until 2240, and caused a great deal of damage to industrial installations. A small bomber formation passed over Berlin and flew on to the east to drop its bombs on Dessau and Leipzig. The attackers left the Berlin area beginning at 2230, and the return flight towards the west and northwest was accomplished in broad front formation, the aircraft following the lines Wittenberge - Greiz and Bremen - Giessen. The returning bombers crossed the coast between the island of Vlieland and Ostende, the last aircraft leaving the Continent by 0130. Several aircraft were reported returning via the mouth of the Elbe. Those bombers which had raided Rostock had left their target at 2225.

In addition to the above, the RAF carried out the following actions:

Between 1950 and 2140, a force of some 100 Mosquito bombers flew into Holland between the island of Terschelling and Ostende. Some of them penetrated as far as Münster and the Ruhr District, where they attacked the German airfields at Leeuwarden, Twente, Venlo, and St. Trond as well as the cities of Münster and Duisburg.

The Mosquitos had completed their return flights over the Dutch coast

by 2235. One runway at the airfield at Leeuwarden was damaged; otherwise these attacks were ineffective.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:
in night pursuit operations (twin-engine fighter aircraft units):

3d Fighter Division: the group from Quakenbrück was assembled at radio beacon Bummer, directed on to radio beacon Marie, and guided into the bomber stream over Flensburg; the groups from St. Trond, Twente, and Langendiebach were assembled at radio beacon Marie and directed into the bomber stream over the Bay of Kiel; the group from Mainz-Finthen was assembled at radio beacon Gertrud and directed into the bomber stream over the area north of Berlin; the group from Langensalza was late in taking off because of radio trouble, but was guided by radio towards radio beacon Berta and directed into the returning bomber stream west of Berlin; the 1st Night Fighter Wing was ordered from France to the airfields at St. Trond and Venlo and committed at radio beacon Ludwig against the returning bomber stream.

2d Fighter Division: the group from Westerland was assembled at radio beacon Bummer and directed into the bomber stream over the Flensburg area; the group from Stade was guided by means of the Y-Method into the direction of Flensburg, where it was directed into the bomber stream; the group from Vechta was assembled at radio beacon Marie and directed into the bomber stream over the Bay of Kiel.

1st Fighter Division: the groups from Parchim, Erfurt, and Stendal were assembled at radio beacon Hahn and directed into the bomber stream over Fehmarn; the group from Werneuchen was assembled at radio beacon Marie and

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directed into the bomber stream over the Wismar area.

in controlled combat against specific objectives (single-engine fighter aircraft units):

1st Fighter Division: the groups from Rheine, Bonn, and Wiesbaden-Erbenheim were scrambled over the light beacon at Braunschweig and directed on into combat over Berlin.

2d Fighter Division: the group from Oldenburg was committed over Berlin.

1st Fighter Division: the groups from Ludwigslust, Zerbst, and Jüterbog were committed over Berlin.

The I Fighter Corps committed a total of 279 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft during the night of 24/25 March 1944.

c. Allied Losses

80 bombers certainly brought down

8 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses

14 aircraft, including one (an Me-109) which was hit by our own anti-aircraft artillery fire, and one (an FW-190) which crashed because of motor trouble.

personnel: 3 dead

9 wounded

14 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over northern Germany: cloudless; visibility good; over Berlin: 5/10 to 8/10 cloud cover between 1,000 and 2,500 meters; high-altitude visi-

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bility good; high-altitude winds from 360⁰, velocity 120 to 150 kilometers per hour.

f. Remarks

One Ju-88 was rammed by a British bomber in the air. The pilot, Captain Kröger, was able to land the airplane safely, but his radioman was thrown from the plane by the force of the collision.

XV. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON THE RUHR DISTRICT, 26/27 March 1944

(see Figure 158, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The RAF opened operations during the night of 26/27 March with a diversionary attack on Courtrai in Belgium, carried out by a small bomber formation. The bombers were reported taking off from the Norwich area at 2000. They followed a southeast course over the mouth of the Schelde and into the St. Nicolas area, where they altered course towards the southwest to attack Courtrai. A few of the bombers flew on as far as St. Quentin.

The main bomber force also took off from the Norwich area and, by 2042, the lead aircraft were already crossing the Dutch coast between Den Helder and Katwijk. Over the Zuyder Zee and the Zwolle area, the stream altered its course towards the southeast and southwest, and over the area bounded by Münster, Dortmund, Koblenz, Krefeld, and Wesel, the stream broke up into several smaller formations. Several bombers strayed into the Paderborn and Kassel area. Over Zwolle, a group of some thirty Mosquito bombers left the bomber stream and headed towards the east into the Braunschweig area in an attempt to camouflage the course alteration of the bombers. It was assumed that the high-altitude cloud cover prevented the RAF from carrying out its attack as

planned. The bombardment of the Ruhr District was widely scattered, bombs falling on the following cities: Wesel, Duisburg, Düsseldorf, Essen, Mülheim, Bochum, Wuppertal, Oberhausen, Ahrweiler, and Neuwied. Some property damage was caused by the attacks. At 2200 the first bombers began their return flights from the Ruhr District, most of them moving out over Brussels and Charleroi. They passed over the coast between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2313. A few of the bomber formations crossed the coast over the mouth of the Somme, the last aircraft passing this point at 0009. A total of 400 bomber aircraft participated in the operation.

b. Commitment of ~~the~~ Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Due to the very unfavorable weather conditions, only carefully selected night fighter crews could be employed. The following twin-engine fighter units were employed in night pursuit activity:

1st Fighter Division: the group from Erfurt was assembled at radio beacon Ida and directed on to radio beacon Ludwig; the groups from Parchim, Stendal, and Werneuchen were assembled at radio beacon 12 and directed on to radio beacon Ludwig.

3d Fighter Division: the groups from Langensalza, Twente, and Langendiebach were assembled at radio beacon Ida and directed on to radio beacon Ludwig; the groups from St. Trond and Mainz-Finthen were assembled over their assigned airfields and directed on to radio beacon Ludwig.

7th Fighter Division: two groups, temporarily assigned to the I Fighter Corps, were assembled at radio beacon Ida and directed on to radio beacon Ludwig.

245

Several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division were committed from ~~Himelett~~ areas over southern Holland during the return flight of the bombers.

Only a small percentage of the aircraft directed to radio beacon Ludwig actually got into action over Twente, Münster, and Dortmund. The majority of the fighter aircraft employed by the 1st and 7th Fighter Divisions arrived in the Ruhr District too late for effective participation in operations. Weather conditions favored the attackers rather than the defenders, and the employment of our night fighter forces was made particularly difficult by the danger of icing in the clouds. This factor also contributed to the very heavy German losses.

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of 105 twin-engine fighter aircraft.

c. Allied Losses

8 bombers certainly brought down

d. German Losses

20 aircraft, including two which were brought down by our own anti-aircraft artillery fire (one Me-110 west of Düsseldorf, and one Me-110 fifteen kilometers south of Umm)

personnel: 6 dead

4 wounded

35 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Impenetrable cloud cover beginning at 50 to 200 meters and extending as high as 4,000 to 6,000 meters; danger of icing in the clouds; aircraft were able to land safely only in the Frankfurt area, in Belgium, and in northern France.

XVI. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 27/28 March and 29/30 March 1944

(see Figure 159, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

27/28 March 1944. During the night of 27/28 March a force of twenty-five Mosquito bombers raided the city of Duisburg. During the time from 2046 to 2125, five aircraft flew in over Den Helder, Meppel, and Bocholt, and twenty over the mouth of the Schelde. Return flights towards the west began at 2118. The returning aircraft crossed over the coast between The Hague and the mouth of the Schelde, the last ones leaving the Continent behind at 2205.

One British courier aircraft crossed the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden.

During the first part of the night of 29/30 March, a single Mosquito aircraft approaching the mouth of the Schelde from the northern Channel, turned back before reaching its goal.

29/30 March 1944. During this night Cologne was raided by a force of twenty-five aircraft. Approaching at 0017 between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde, the initial force of twenty aircraft flew on over Zwolle and Duisburg. At 0235, five more aircraft flew in over Calais and Brussels. The aircraft began their return flight towards the west and northwest at 0045, and the last of them passed over the coast between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde by 0323.

During the same night a group of fifteen Mosquito bombers attacked the city of Kiel. Approaching at 0121 from the North Sea, they flew on over Westerland and Flensburg to their target. At 0204 they began their return flight towards the west, passing over the island of Helgoland at 0231.

One British courier aircraft crossed the Skagerrak on its way from Sweden to Great Britain.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

247

The following aircraft were committed by the 3d Fighter Division against the enemy Mosquitos:

27/28 March 1944: three single-engine fighter aircraft

29/30 March 1944: two single-engine fighter aircraft

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

27/28 March 1944: cover of stratus clouds between 800 and 1,500 meters;

29/30 March: 4/10 to 7/10 cover of nimbus clouds beginning at 1,000 meters; over the Cologne area: an additional cover of thinly dispersed clouds at 5,000 to 7,000 meters.

XVII. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON NUREMBERG, 30/31 March 1944

(see Figure 160, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At approximately 2230 the RAF opened its operations for the night with a force of approximately 100 Mosquito bombers. Approaching over the Dutch coast, the bombers raided the night fighter airfields at Leeuwarden, Twente, Deelen, and Venlo, as well as industrial targets in the Ruhr District. At the same time, a small aircraft formation appeared over the southern waters of the North Sea, presumably engaged in a mine-laying operation.

The main British force, consisting of approximately 700 bombers, took off from the Norwich area, with course towards the east. Over the northern waters of the Channel, they altered course for the southeast and flew in over the coast

between the mouth of the Schelde and Ostende. It took the large force from 2310 until 2350 to pass over the coast. Flying on over Antwerp and Brussels, they reached the area of Liège and Florennes, where they altered course once more for the east. The bomber stream crossed the Rhine River between Bingen and Bonn and flew on to Fulda and Hanau, where they again turned towards the southeast and continued on over the Main River area to attack Nuremberg. A group of Mosquito bombers, which had broken away from the main stream in an attempt to camouflage its flight course, separated into small formations, which then flew on to the following areas: Bonn, Cologne - Marburg, Kassel - Plauen, Zwickau, Nordhausen, and Frankfurt/Main - Mannheim. At 0120 the first bombers began to leave the Nuremberg area, flying first towards the west and then altering course towards the northwest. During their return flights, the bombers followed the lines Frankfurt - Stuttgart and Brussels - Reims, and left the coast behind between the mouth of the Schelde and St. Valery en Caux. The last returning bombers passed over the mouth of the Somme at 0454. A large number of four-engine bombers had left the main stream before it reached Nuremberg, and were observed on their return flights over Cologne and Kassel. The large-scale British attack was prevented from attaining its full potential effectiveness by the rapid initiation of German night fighter operations. Although many buildings in Nuremberg were destroyed, industrial areas suffered only slight damage.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:
in night pursuit activity (twin-engine fighter aircraft units):

3d Fighter Division: the Ju-88 groups from Twente, Quakenbrück, Langen-

salza, and Langendiebach were assembled at radio beacon Ida and directed from there into the bomber stream; the Me-110 groups from Venlo and Mainz-Finthen, the I Group, 6th Night Fighter Wing (borrowed from the 7th Fighter Division), and several units temporarily assigned from the 4th Fighter Division were also assembled at radio beacon Ida and directed from there into the bomber stream; the II Group, 6th Night Fighter Wing (borrowed from the 7th Fighter Division) was directed to radio beacon Otto and from there into the bomber stream; the group from St. Trond was assembled over radar station Bazi, guided on to radar station Marmeltier and directed into the bomber stream south of Aix la Chapelle.

2d Fighter Division: the groups from Westerland, Stade and Vechta were assembled at radio beacon Otto and directed into the bomber stream over the area northeast of Giessen.

1st Fighter Division: the groups from Erfurt, Parchim, Stendal, and Werneuchen were assembled over radio beacon Otto and directed into the bomber stream over the area between radio beacons Otto and Ida.

in controlled combat against specific objectives (single-engine fighter aircraft units):

3d Fighter Division: the groups from Rheine and Bonn were assembled light at ~~radio~~ beacon Otto and directed on to Frankfurt/Main, where they landed; the group from Wiesbaden-Erbenheim was assembled at light beacon Nordpol and given instructions to land in central Germany after accomplishing their mission.

2d Fighter Division: the group from Oldenburg was assembled at light beacon Otto, but was soon forced to land because the flight range of the aircraft was too limited.

1st Fighter Division: the groups from Ludwigslust, Zerbst, and Jüter-

bog were assembled at light beacon Nordpol, but were ordered to land again after the attack on Nuremberg had begun.

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of 246 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft during the night of 30/31 March.

The night fighter units from the I Fighter Corps were able to attain noteworthy success in their defensive operations, due to the following factors:

The bomber stream was recognized as such as soon as it had taken off from England, and its probable course was identified.

As soon as the bombers had left Great Britain, all participating twin-engine fighter units were assigned to the central sector of the western border of the Reich.

The bomber stream flew directly over the Rhine and Main River areas, which, of course, was the main headquarters of the German night fighter forces. Thus, the time factor as well as the attainable flight range of our aircraft permitted full utilization of the forces available.

Conditions permitted the majority of the German fighter aircraft to be assigned to night pursuit activity. Thus, they could take full advantage of their airborne search instruments (SN-2), which were not liable to British radar jamming.

The night was quite bright, and high-altitude visibility was good. Thus, the bombers were fully visible to our fighters at a distance of 1,000 meters.

The first bombers were brought down over Liège, Bonn, and Koblenz, and the flaming enemy aircraft served as flares, illuminating the bomber stream for the approaching German fighters.

Since pursuit activity began while the bomber stream was still left of the

Rhine, our fighter aircraft were able to stick with the stream for most of its approach flight, thus increasing their chances of bringing down the enemy.

Due to a fortunate coincidence, the radio beacons Ida and Otto, serving as assembly points for the twin-engine fighters, were also crossed by the approach course of the bomber stream.

The single-engine fighters played no part in the over-all success. They were unable to enter combat over Nuremberg because of their limited flight range, and were unable to participate in pursuit activity because they were not equipped with airborne search instruments.

The single-engine fighter units were ordered up so that they might be prepared to defend Frankfurt/Main if necessary, or in case the British bombers should decide to attack targets in central Germany or the city of Berlin. The whole operation served to demonstrate once more that effective controlled combat against specific objectives depends on the following conditions:

Participating fighter aircraft must have a sufficiently long flight range to permit them complete independence in the selection of the best place to make their attack.

The probable targets selected for attack by the enemy must be identified fairly early during operations and with some degree of certainty.

These two conditions did not obtain during the night of 30/31 March. The frequent course alterations of the bomber stream and the diversionary maneuvers carried out by the Mosquitos effectively prevented our identifying the target to be attacked in time. The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, did not become aware until fairly late that Nuremberg was to be the enemy target. The enemy

bomber stream, thrown into confusion by the German fighter aircraft encountered during its approach flight, arrived piecemeal over Nuremberg and did not begin its attack immediately. This led the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, to assume that the attack was actually destined for some other target. By the time the air situation became clear, the single-engine fighter units had already landed.

c. Allied Losses

107 bombers certainly brought down (on 31 March 1944, British radio reports indicated a loss of ninety-four bombers)

d. German Losses

5 aircraft totally destroyed

5 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 3 dead

1 wounded

8 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over Holland, the Ruhr District, and Frankfurt/Main: cloudless;
over southern Germany: 10/10 cloud cover between 500 and 3,500 meters; high-altitude visibility good; moon at half-full.

f. Remarks

During the night 30/31 March 1944, 1st Lt Becker, a squadron captain from the 1st Night Fighter Wing, brought down seven British bombers.

GLOSSARY

<u>Page</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
13	Piggy-back groups	Because of their limited radius of action, single-engine fighters (usually of the Me-109 type), were sometimes carried by more powerful aircraft as far as their targets, so that they might remain in action longer before having to return for refueling.
40 etc.	Rotterdam	A type of radar instrument
40 etc.	Himmelbett	"Four-poster bed" - a technique employed by German night fighter aircraft. The total area to be covered was divided into squares, or "four-poster beds", and fighter aircraft were stationed in these squares to lie in wait for enemy aircraft. Ground radar stations, known as fighter aircraft control stations, remained in constant radio contact with the fighters, in order to keep them advised of the positions of the enemy aircraft.
42	Wismar	Name assigned to a certain type of aircraft observation station.
42 etc.	flame reports	(?) No information available. Perhaps a code name assigned to a particular type of radar data.
42 etc.	Gerhard reports	(?) No information available. Perhaps a code name assigned to a particular type of radar data.
45 etc.	Berta, Ponto, Quelle, etc.	Code names assigned to the various radio beacons and light beacons. Some of them were given number designations instead of names.
54 etc.	Y-Method	A method employed to control fighter aircraft from the ground, guiding them towards their assigned targets.