THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

PART FOUR

CHAPTER 2

FIRST PHASE OF

OPERATION "ROT" -- 5-8 June 1940

CONTENTS

A. Preparations for the Offensive

B. First Day of the Offensive--5 June 1940

C. Second Day--6 June 1940

D. Third Day--7 June 1940

E. Fourth Day--8 June 1940

F. Experience Gained and Lessons Learned in the First Phase of the Offensive

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

CHAPTER 2

OPERATION "ROT", FIRST PHASE--5-8 JUNE 1940

65 A. PREPARATIONS FOR THE OFFENSIVE

The major missions which the German Air Force had been required to execute just prior to Operation "Rot," as described in the previous chapter, above, had left the Air Force neither time nor forces to prepare for the new missions in the way the Command had been accustomed to doing in the past. The impending operation, so far as the Air Force was concerned, was thus based more on improvisations than on thorough organization.

It is true that measures had continued to keep the front line units at full strength, but it had not been possible by 5 June to restore them to their full striking power. In particular the operations at Dunkirk had caused considerable losses which had not yet been fully replaced.

The ground organization from which operations were to be directed southward in the new offensive remained practically the same as in the past operations.

66 Besides the ground organization in Holland, the Belgian ground organization was also restored, furnished with the necessary supplies and placed in operation immediately after the end of the battles in Flanders and Artois, so

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

66 that the approach route to targets would be shorter, at least during the initial stages, for some of the units in their new missions. A newly established Air District Command Headquarters stationed in Belgium (at Brussels) assumed responsibility there for the direction of operations and for organization.

In some respects supplies remained a constant source of concern, since the actual current consumption of fuel and bombs considerably exceeded prior computations. On the other hand, the supply situation was somewhat relieved by the fact that the supply lines and supply points remained more or less the same as in the past. Furthermore, large elements participating in the new operations, particularly of those under the Third Air Fleet, were based on German tactical air bases.

It has been just as impossible to determine the distribution of the various units within the ground organization as it has been to determine the order of battle of the air fleets at the time.

Signal communications presented a particularly difficult problem requiring solution within the few days between the two offensives, since the entire trunk line system had to be wheeled out of the past east-west to the new north-south plans.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

67 It was not been possible to discover which main trunk lines had been prepared or what arrangements were made for intercommunications between the air fleet and army group headquarters, or between the air corps and the field army headquarters.

Reconnaissance during the days preceding the opening of Operation "Hot" proceeded independently of the conduct of tactical combat missions. Main emphasis was naturally on the areas in front of the new battle front facing south.

Near front reconnaissance produced small results. Apart from a number of motorized columns moving north to south and vice versa no sizable troops movements were detected during the 1-4 June period, and only a few troop and armor concentrations were reported. However, the information thus procured provided data for action against such targets with small forces held ready for such purposes.

The reports created the impression that the French Army was restricting its troop and supply movements to nights in order to escape German bombing. In most cases the larger columns reported were detected in the early morning hours and consequently were regarded as the end of a movement.

Rail reconnaissance extended beyond the actual area of operations to include the whole of southern France.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

67 On the whole only normal or light traffic movements were reported, the only exception bein Paris where reports showed sizable concentrations in certain rail depots. No indications were thus evident of any systematic concentration movements.

During railroad reconnaissance operations over southern France an incident occurred involving Swiss fighters. German reconnaissance units operating under escort by twin-engine fighters came under attack by Swiss Me-109 fighters west of the city of La Chaux-de-Fonds, situated in Switzerland. In the air battle which followed the German units lost one Me-110 plane and downed 4 Swiss Me-109, some of them during the pursuit over Swiss territory.

Airfield reconnaissance continued on a large scale over the whole of France. Reports showed no appreciable changes in the numbers of aircraft stationed at the various airfields.

In detail the following reconnaissance missions were executed:

1 June: Patrols flown over 45 airfields, with main emphasis over Paris, where 269 aircraft were detected;

2 June: 22 airfields as above (fighters detected on most)

3 June: 34 " " " " " " "

4 June: 84 " " " (1244 aircraft detected, 550 650 of them single-engin

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

69 Particularly lively reconnaissance activities were maintained over French ports on the northwest coastline and over the waters between France and Britain. These reconnaissance activities were connected partly with counteraction against British Operation Dynamo at Dunkirk and partly as a preparato y measure for the intending drive by the German right flank forces southwestwards to occupy the French Atlantic coastline.

COMBAT MISSIONS FLOWN

On the first few days of June most Air Force units were committed in the major attacks previously described. In response to support request from the Army or acting on reconnaissance reports, apparently small units from the Second Air Fleet and units from the VIII Air Corps, currently not committed, repeatedly attacked targets in the enemy positions south of the Somme River line, Abbeville-Amiens-Ham.

Units of the Second Air Fleet, for example, on 3 June attacked troop concentrations south of Abbeville and southwest of Bailleul (southeast of Abbeville); other action against armor concentrations immediately south of Abbeville produced good results.

On 4 June units again took troop concentrations south of Abbeville under attack a number of times; from the m

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

69 the reports these units were apparently from the VIII Air Corps.

Although engaged so heavily in such diversified missions in the period between Operations "Gelb" and "Rot," the German Air Force nevertheless did its part with small units to enable the weak Army forces on line to hold their positions on the south front until the offensive commenced. Units of the Air Force AAA corps played a by no means small part in support of the Army, particularly in action to repel enemy tank attacks against the bridgeheads south of the Somme River.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

71 B. THE FIRST DAY OF THE OFFENSIVE--5 June 1940.

1. Weather Conditions. The offensive began in exceptionally favorable weather, weather reports reading as follows:

France "Clear to cloudless; during daytime isolated formation of cumulus clouds (Quellbewoelkung) particularly in southern areas; early morning haze; good visibility."

Holland and Belgium "Clear to cloudless; early morning haze; good visibility."

Germany "Predominantly clear; in West and South largely cloudless."

2. Reconnaissance Activities. Main emphasis in reconnaissance was naturally ahead of the south front. Early morning reconnaissance detected "nothing specially noticeable in road and rail traffic," but localized armor and troop concentrations close behind the enemy lines.

In addition, closely meshed airfield reconnaissance was conducted. 122 airfields were kept under surveillance. 64 of these fields had a total of 1362 aircraft, 555 of them single-engine units. Again large numbers of aircraft were found on the airfields around Paris.

3. Combat Action. The Army forces on the right flank jumped off to the attack between Abbeville and Laon in the morning on 5 June to reach their assigned objectives for this preliminary attack on the evening of 8 June.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

72 The attack on the ground received support from the concentrated bulk of both German air fleets committed in the west. The air units thus committed prevented action by the enemy air forces over the battle areas, and attacked enemy troop concentrations, artillery positions and reserves, and march movements, as well as pockets of resistance which developed in infantry battle during the day. They prepared the way for the infantry to break through the positions which the enemy had been preparing for some time past.

Particularly effective were continuous dive-bombing attacks, which had started already early in the morning, against targets in the battle sector south of Amiens, roughly in a line from Montdidier to Conty. These attacks were directed against assembled enemy reserves, which were scattered, and against artillery positions. Other dive-bombers were directed against positions in the attack zone south of Laon and on the Chemin des Dames, as well as against the Aisne River bridges.

As was the case with the tactical ~~[illegible]~~ bombing units, the ~~[illegible]~~ strategic bombing units were also committed in direct Army support action. Their attacks were directed at the same types of targets as in the case of the tactical bombing units all along the line.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

73 Main emphasis in their action was left of a line between the Aisne Canal and the Aisne southwest of Laonand on the right in the Beauvais-Senty-Aumale area, where they destroy- large bodies of troops moving forward.

4. Air Situation. The single- and twin-engine units were also employed in action serving the priority mission of direct support for the Army. They were committed primarily to protect the ground forces against enemy air action.

Strong enemy defense fighters were encountered in some areas, primarily in the Braisne-Soissons-Compiègne area and at Noye-Peronne, that is in the attack zone of the Third Air Fleet. In contrast, remarkably little resistance by enemy fighters was encountered in the area northeast of Paris. What has been said of the enemy fighter defenses applies equally to enemy antiaircraft artillery fire.

The air situation is characterized by the number of enemy planes downed and own planes lost, which showed clearly that on the first day of the offensive the German air supremacy could by no means be maintained without effort.[1]

1. The aircraft reported downed revealed a remarkable variety of types in service with the enemy. 67 enemy planes were downed in air combat, namely, 5 Morane, 4 Curtiss, 4 Hurricane, 3 Potez-63, 1 Douglas D-B-7, 1 Léo, 1 Br'guet-690, 1 Lysander, and 45 unknown types. In addition AA fire accounted for 3 enemy planes and 55 were destroyed on the ground, making a total of 125 enemy planes destroyed against a loss of 23 German planes.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

7. 5. Air Fleet Operations.

A.

A. Second Air Fleet. Besides its mission of direct support for the Army over the field of battle, and in addition to ceaseless attacks against enemy troop targets of all types and against rail depots and rail installations, the Second Air Fleet already on the first day of the offensive directed attacks against targets far in the enemy rear.

In and around Rouen, the initial objective of the right flank army (Fourth Army), units bombed a cantonment (apparently British) and tent camp, a number of railroad intersections, rail installations, enemy bridgeheads, railway goodsyards, and similar targets.

The only airfield attacked was that at Pontoise, northwest of Paris and in the near enemy rear.

Finally, units of the Second Air Fleet during the night attacked the naval and general port of Cherbourg with heavy bombs to interrupt traffic between the Continent and England.

B. ~~Third Air Fleet.~~ As in the case of the Second Air Fleet, main emphasis for all bomber units of the Third Air Fleet was on action against targets in the line of advance of the attacking infantry. Units attacked and destroyed all troop targets detected in the enemy rear. Focal points in th

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

74 battle on the ground, in which the air units participated, evolved already on the first day in the area between Laon and Soissons as well as between Peronne, Ham, and Noye.

75 In the far enemy rear, units of the Third Air Fleet attacked the following targets:

a. Six airfields: Tours-Parcay-Meslay
Romorantin-Prunniers
Bourges
Chateauroux-la Martinerie
Nevers-Sermoise
Is-sur-Tille.

All of the above airfields were within and south of the Loire line and thus in an area in which it was assumed that the operational reserves of the French bomber forces were still present. At the same time it appears significant that no units of the Third Air Fleet attacked any fighter, ground-attack, or other airfields in the near front areas.

b. Rail Routes in the enemy rear:

the Auxerre-Avallon route
the Dun sur Meuse-Givre sur Meuse route
the Givre sur Meuse-Damvillers route
the Noyon-Compiègne route
the Hagenau-Ingweiler route
the Vitry-le-Francois and at Braisne

Of these targets only four can be considered to have had any direct or indirect bearing on the current operati-

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

75 on the ground. The other three were connected with road interdiction operations.

c. Road Interdiction Targets: with main emphasis on the area along the Meuse River and farther east at Hagenau.

The long-range attacks against rail routes and road targets give the impression of a certain degree of dissipation of effort. The action by units against targets in the Meuse River area and in Alsace can only be taken to mean that the German air command intended to interrupt and delay the dispatch of enemy forces from there to the decisively important front. It has not been possible to ascertain whether German reconnaissance detected such movements already on the first day.

6. Operations Against Targets in Britain. During the night eleven airfields in England come under attack.[2] These attacks were undoubtedly designed to eliminate or neutralize the British ground service organization from which it would have been possible to interfere in the battles on the Continent. They were thus connected with the battle being fought to decide the final issue.

It has not been possible to ascertain which headquarters dispatched the units carrying out these attacks. It was certainly not the Second Air Fleet, so that the units attacking the targets in Britain may have come from the

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

76 9th Air Division or from the X Air Corps. What makes it seem probable that they were from the X Air Corps is the fact that continuous bad weather at the time precluded any possibility of reconnaissance or bombing operations over Norway.

7. The Situation on the Ground. On the evening of the first day of attack the Commander in Chief of the Air Force interpreted the situation on the ground as follows: "The.... attack is making good progress."

2. The airfields at Dishforth, Driffield, Hemswell, Cranwell, east of Cambridge, Lincoln, Leister, Norwich, Marham, Grimsby, and Honington.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

78 C: THE SECOND DAY OF THE OFFENSIVE, 6 JUNE 1940.

1. Weather Conditions. The weather report for the areas over France was as follows: "Clear to cloudless; .....; early morning haze; visibility generally good."

The base areas from which the German Air Force units were operating in Belgium, Holland and western Germany had the same conditions of high atmospheric pressure.

2. Reconnaissance Operations. Main emphasis in reconnaissance activities was on the detection of troop movements and troop concentrations in the southward line of advance as far as the lower and middle reaches of the Seine River to a line Paris-Troyes-Chaumont and on the detection of railroad movements from the line Bordeaux, Limoges, Lyon, Besancon leading north and northwest.

On the whole reconnaissance on this day still showed no signs of interconnected enemy transportation movements. Individual rail depots in Central France showed an increased density of traffic.

Airfield reconnaissance also continued in the areas north of a line Rochefort-Lyon. 131 airfields were covered 78 of which held 1063 aircraft. Of this number 608 (including 349 single-engine units) were on fields south and sout west of Paris and thus opposite the German attack front.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

79 3. Combat Operations. Main emphasis in combat operations was again on support for the advancing Army forces.

Close-range and long-range bomber units without pause attacked all targets visible in the immediate battle area, such as troop concentrations, infantry positions, battery positions, and so forth. Farther in the rear of the enemy operational zone units also scattered troops on the march, destroyed traffic bottlenecks on roads and rail routes.

The distribution of forces and the designation of areas of main effort will be treated later in this study.

Besides the air units, the two AA corps of the Air Force also supported the attack on the ground. Strong elements closely followed up the advance and protected the rapidly advancing infantry divisions against enemy tank attacks. With other units echelonned in the rear they covered the flanks of various German tank drives and protected the Somme River bridges.

4. Air Situation. On the first day of Operation "Rot" it had become obvious that the twin- and single-engine units were employing new tactics. They were committed in action to protect the Army forces against enemy air action and in execution of this mission they cooperated very closely with the antiaircraft artillery units distributed along the line. This created what might be called a protective

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

79 canopy f om under which the units could fly out for low-
80 altitude strikes against ground targets, such as tanks, in which excellent results were achieved.

The German Air Force Command thus seems to have been firmly convinced that it had complete air supremacy over the battle areas.

The same tactics were employed on the second day of the offensive. However, it now already became necessary, as had been the case formerly, to detach units to escort bomber units on missions in the far enemy rear, since French fighter activities had increased quite considerably.

Initially, strong French fighter defenses were encountered only in the near front areas, at Ham and Soissons, with only negligible resistance by fighters farther in the rear. Later in the day, however, French fighters and antiaircraft artillery became more vigorous all along the line in front of the German west flank forces and at Le Havre. French air activities had increased.

British aircraft also put in a sudden appearance for participation in combat on the ground. On this day they were encountered for the first time north of the Somme River, where British bombers (Blenheim aircraft) attacked German troops on the march. Lacking adequate fighter escorts and since they flew into the German "protective ca-

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

80 canopy" the British units suffered exceedingly heavy losses. This put a stop to these British attacks.

81 5. Situation on the Ground. Before discussing the operations of the German Air Force in d tail it is necessary at this point to consider briefly the tactical situation on the ground, since it was even more emphatically than before the determining factor in the planning and execution of missions by the majority of the units of the operational air arm required to give the Army direct air support.

It had evolved already on the first day of the attack that the French were offering tenacious resistance in the sectors under attack and that they were employing new defense tactics. This impression was confirmed on the second day of the attack.

On the second day the advancing ground forces again encountered strong resistance based on a method of dispersed combat backed by localities, wooded sections, and terrain areas secure against tank action. German panzer drives frequently found no targets, while in between them and in their rear the French continued to ~~offer the German troops~~ defend themselves tenaciously in pockets of resistance against the attacking German infantry. In some places this seriously delayed the German advance.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

81 This created new combat missions by the Air Force and necessitated new tactics calling for still closer co-ordination with the ground forces, which necessarily led to a breakdown into individual plane missions.

82 A noticeable feature in the after-action reports, particularly in the case of the Third Air Fleet, is that the most frequent targets of attack mentioned are "built-up areas," wooded sections," and "field positions," against which the air units had to fly strikes in order to break local enemy resistance. The French appear to have devoted special care and attention to camouflage, because in many cases the reports speak of "assumed" enemy troop concentrations," localities "presumably" occupied by enemy troops, "assumed" battery positions, and so forth, as the targets of attack. There can be no doubt that the French command and troops had learned from Operation "Gelb," where experience had taught them how to complicate German tank and air attacks and oppose them with new defense tactics on the ground.

Unfortunately it is not possible to ascertain on documentary evidence what repercussions all this had on the German Air Force field commands, since all records on the conduct of operations by the air fleets and air corps are missing. However, it is nevertheless possible to

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

82 reconstruct a picture of the unit target distributions, from which it is obvious that smallest elements were dispatched to attack targets, presumably in most cases in response to requests from the Army for air support.

83 6. Air Operations by Second and Third Air Fleets.

A. SECOND AIR FLEET. As on the previous day, Second Air Fleet units supported the advance by the Fourth Army through attacks against troop concentrations and moving columns of all types. Concurrent with the forward movement of the army forces, the target areas shifted farther ahead to the line Dieppe-Forges les Eaux-Beauvais. Main emphasis was on targets northwest of Beauvais, on either side of Amiens--where enemy forces were still offering resistance, around Aumale-Foix, and between Elbeuf and Nadfchateau. The farthest targets attacked by Second Air Fleet units were two cantonment type camps detected at St. Saens and Forges les Eaux, and the port and city of Dieppe.

From the direction of the bombing attacks by units of the Second Air Fleet it is possible to discern already on the second day the direction of the German drive on the right flank (Fourth Army) towards the lower Seine River on either side of Rouen, while an examination of the missions

3. Reported enemy planes downed on this day included alone 14 Blenheims out of a total of 63 shot down in air combat.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

84 flown by Third Air Fleet units showed now that the German advance was beginning to fork apart for the purpose of by-passing Paris on either side.

Late in the evening units of the Second Air Fleet attacked the port installations at Cherbourg and Le Havre, scoring well placed hits on the quay and other installations. The small number of bombs delivered in these two attacks serves to show that they were designed as nuisance raids and not as destructive attacks.[4]

b. THIRD AIR FLEET: The target types in the zone of the Third Air Fleet were the same as those in the Second Air Fleet zone.

In all types of air attack main emphasis was on the area around Roye, 24 miles southeast of Amiens; the area west of Noyon; and above all the area around Soissons, between Soissons and Senlis, and around and north of Clermont. The farthest group of targets attacked was in an isolated area in the Marne valley, east of Chateau-Thierry.

The Tactical Air Support Corps of the Third Air Fleet supported the attacks by long range bomber units ahead of the right and center, with the majority of its units operating in the Second Air Fleet's zone around Aumale and

4. Over Cherbourg, for example, the units delivered only nine SC-500 and 25 SC-250 bombs.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

84 in the area between Amiens and Beauvais.

A glance at the map shows that the general area of Compiègne had thus now become the scene of the major attack operations by both air fleets. It also shows that the operations of the Air Force also indicates the southeastward direction of the German drive on the right and thereby the divergence of the overall advance in two directions passing Paris on the west and east. The initial objective in the preliminary operation lasting from 5 to 8 June[5] is already taking shape in the operations of the Air Force.

Besides its missions of Army support, the Third Air Fleet continued its counter-air operations, which took the form of an attack in the early morning of 7 June. The attack struck ten French airfields: Bourges, Dijon, Nevers, Chalons s. S., Metz, Orléans, Cormeaux, Romilly s. S., Sézanne, and Anglure, and thus in most cases airfields from which it could be expected that the presumably still existing French "operational reserve" could operate against the German flank.

An outline map is included as Appendix 84 for a better understanding of the presentation given here of the German Air Force operations in support of the Army on the second day of the offensive, which it would be impossible to follow anyhow without the use of a suitable map.[6]

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

85 In painstaking work the outline map has been prepared by a transposition of the innumerable detail entries from the original French map, Scale 1:200 000 to the map with a scale of 1:1 000 000. The individual reports have been consolidated to form main bombing areas in which the majority of the missions were executed.

Apart from the areas of main effort in army operations, the portrayal thus presented shows:

a. The intensity of the attack operations within the individual areas of main effort, which shows an obviously heavy massing of units in the zone of the Third Air Fleet, which actually had a considerably larger effective strength than the Second Air Fleet. In the attack areas of the Second Air Fleet it was found that the attack intensity was considerably less.

b. According to the Order of Battle for Operation "Rot"[7] the VIII (Tactical Support) Air Corps was actually assigned under the Third Air Fleet. Its operations on this day of battle, however, overlapped both air fleets with clear emphasis on the Second Air Fleet zone of operations. The corps thus in a sense compensated for the small effective strength of the Second Air Fleet over the battle area and thereby made possible the early breakthorugh by the Fourth Army towards the lower Seine River which in itself and through its repercussions set the advance in the sectors south and southeast of Amiens in motion. Whether

5. The line Chantilly-Senlis-south fringes of Compiègne forest-Soissons-Aisne River sector east of Vailly. See map in Appendix 83 to Chapter 1, above.
6. Even the 1:1 000 000 map is hardly adequate.
7. See Chapter 1, Section 7, p. 60, above.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

86 the VIII Air Corps on this day was assigned tactically under the Second Air Fleet, or whether the Commander in Chief of the Air Force directed its operations in the zones of both air fleets, these are questions which must remain unanswered.

c. Finally, on the outline map it is possible to reconstruct the probable boundary line between the two air fleets (Second and Third Air Fleets), which were to become of less and less importance by the day, however, as the two separate drives on the ground diverged more and more.

7. The Overall Outcome of the Second Day of the Offensive. From the point of view of the German Air Force, the total outcome of operations on the second day of the offensive can be summed up, and at the same time supplemented, as follows:

1. Emphasis in operations was on direct support for the Army on the field of battle as it developed in this "preliminary offensive." Besides the tactical close support air units which operated in the zones of both the Second and Third Air Fleets, the bulk of the long-range bombers were also committed to support the Army on the field of battle.

Briefly stated: practically the entire operational arm of the Air Force was committed as what might be called a long-range artillery arm of the ground forces.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

87 2. Although under a considerable strain in the execution of its mission of direct support for the Army on the field of battle, the operational air arm did not neglect its mission of operating against the enemy rear communications. Besides the necessity for close-range tactical commitments, the strategic objective was always kept in mind.

The depth of the tactical combat zone for the two air fleets in the line of advance on the ground on 6 June is defined pretty clearly by the line Diepe (Atlantic coast)-Forges les Eaux-Beauvais-Senlis-Villers Cotterets-Soissons-the Aisne River sector east of Vailly. Beyond this line only a few strikes were still directed at communication lines in the eastern parts of the zones of operations, in the Marne valley on either side of Dormans (roughly 12 miles east of Chateau Thierry).

The overall picture thus reflects a clearcut concentration of all forces in the area of the "preliminary offensive" north and northwest of Paris.

3. At the same time the operations of the aggressive air forces on the second day already reflects how the offensive was forking into two diverging directions of attack.

4. The conduct of strategic air warfare remained restricted to widely extended reconnaissance against the

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

88 ground organization of the French air forces plus attacks against ten air bases in the far rear of the zone of operations. The probable purpose of these attacks was to neutralize the "operational reserve" of the French air command, which the French might have been able to commit against the zone of operations in the German offensive.

The other attacks, against Cherbourg and Le Havre, were carried out by only small forces and can probably also be ascribed to the conduct of strategic air warfare. However, they were also already related with the mission of direct support for the Army in the planned operations of the Fourth Army, on the right flank, against the Atlantic coast, which was to be reached after the German advance was carried across the Seine River line on either side of Rouen.

89 5. To round out this picture of overall Air Force operations on this day mention must still be made of what was called "armed reconnaissance" over England, which was carried out by units which attacked British night air ports on the night of 6-7 June. Bombs were also deliver over Dover.

In view of the severe strain on the relatively weak forces of the Second Air Fleet it is hardly likely that the daytime agressive units also carried out thes night

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

89 attacks. It is possible that units of the X Air Corps were committed for the purpose, since, as had been the case on the previous day, no missions were flown over Norway on this day because of weather conditions.

6. Finally, the 9th Air Division during the night executed what was called a special mission (Sonderunternehmen--the term applied to the nighttime mine-laying operations of the 9th Air Division) against British and French ports along the English Channel (Dover, the Isle of Wight, Poole, Portland, Caen, Cherbourg, Le Havre, Dieppe).

For the purpose of placing the geographically defined operational main effort area of the German Air Force (in which the Second and Third Air Fleets gave direct support to operations on the ground) within the overall picture of the Western Theater of Operations, a separate outline map is enclosed as Appendix 85.

Besides the direct Army support missions entered in Appendix 84, the map included as Appendix 85 shows all missions flown serving as indirect support for the Army or the conduct of strategic air warfare. The picture thus presented, which is naturally only diagrammatic (schematisch) show how great the demands made on the operational air forces were in point of diversity and in point of the extensive areas involved; it also shows how all missions

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

90 reconnaissance and combat, served the strategic objective in the conduct of warfare in the Western Theater.

In detail, the outline map shows:

1. The combined zones of operations of the Second and Third Air Fleets in their mission of direct support for the Army on the field of battle--a consolidation of the detailed missions entered in Outline Map 84.

2. The depth to which strategic air reconnaissance extended southward:

a. Against troops movements and troop concentrations;

b. Against rail movements;

c. against the ground organization of the French air forces.

3. The attacks against the French ground organization in central and northern France.

5. The attacks against the ground organization of the British Home Air Defense system in southeastern England.

6. The "special mission" executed by the 9th Air Division involving the laying of naval mines in the general area of the English Channel.

Appendix 86 offers explanations to the outline map included as Appendix 85.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

91 Since no details are available concerning the effective strengths of the forces on line, it is not possible to assess whether this diversity of missions in the existing situation can at the same time have represented a dissipation of forces. Even though it appears safe to assume that elements of the X Air Corps, available for action on this day anyhow, were committed in the west, it can be assumed that the object of the strategic missions flown and the results they produced served rather to harass the enemy than to cause destruction.

8. <u>The Situation on the Ground on the Evening of 6 June 1940</u>. The German right flank had reached the Bresle sector east of the coast as well as the areas of Oisemont (roughly ten miles southsoutheast of Abbeville) and Poix (12 miles southwest of Amiens).

The left prong had reached Roye (about seventeen miles southsouthwest of Péronne) and established bridgeheads across the Avre River.

The attack from west and south of Laon had reached the Aisne west of Soissons and was close to the river on the east of the city.

The area immediately south of Amiens is not mentioned--the situation there remained unclear.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

91 For the rest the reader is referred to the Army's presentation in the Nazi Volume of the Army High Command.[8] A comparison of the Army situation map for the evening of 6 June with the situation as described above as seen by the Commander in Chief of the German Air Force shows the following divergencies and offers the following additional information:

Spearhead elements on the right flank of the attack (Fourth Army) were already advancing on Abancourt (southwest of Foix). Advancing south from Amiens, the XVI Panzer Corps had reached Essertaux (12 miles south of Amiens). Farther east the German advance was still fairly far behind and had not gained much ground south of the Somme River between Amiens and Ham. Contrary to orientation by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force, Roye and Nesle were still at a considerable distance behind the French lines. Soissons was also still held by the French, and German forces had reached the Aisne River at only one point west of the city.

The above gives a picture of the initial situation on the ground on the following day, the third day of the attack.

The second day of the attack had thus not resulted in the anticipated battle of pursuit but rather bore the

8. "Der Feldzug in--Continued

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

92 imprint of a breakthrough battle not yet finally won.

On the whole this came as a surprise. Defeated in all past battles and assessed as demoralized, the French Army forces had fought more tenaciously than had been expected. The French troops, on the defensive, had countered the German tactics of tank attack with newly devised defense tactics.

Even the concentrated attacks by the German Air Force, massed as never before, has not enabled the German troops to break through the French lines of defense at the first onslaught. The German Air Force also found itself compelled to adapt itself to the new tactics employed by the enemy. This it did by means of a sound system of areal concentration going hand in hand with detail action against all targets detected or presumed to exist, confining its action purposefully to the field of battle on the ground. With such a sudden change to a new system of attack tactics friction and difficulties in the combined control and in cooperation between the various units were unavoidable.

This realization and this experience were probably the main features characterising the first two days of the new German offensive, on which a exceptionally good weather had favored a flexible use of air power.

8. "Der Feldzug in Frankreich vom 10 Mai bis 25 Juni 1940," published by the German Army High Command. Karlsruhe Document Collection.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

94 D. THE THIRD DAY OF THE OFFENSIVE, 7 JUNE 1940.

1. Weather Situation. Weather conditions remained favorable for air operations. Throughout Western Europe the weather was fine to cloudless, with good air-visibility. During the day light formations of cumulus clouds.

2. Reconnaissance Activities. Early morning reconnaissance in the line of advance to a line Dieppe-Rouen-Mantes-northern outskirts of Paris-Compiègne-Reims besides detecting troop concentrations around Beauvais, Compiègne, and Clermont, and thus in the center of the German line of advance, discovered "endless motorized columns" moving northeast along the Les Andelys to Gournay road, that is, from the Seine River area between Rouen and Paris towards Amiens.

At the same time retrograde enemy movements southward and southeastward all along the line were noticed, an impression which was to be confirmed repeatedly during the forenoon and late the afternoon.

The reported findings of railroad reconnaissance caused the Commander in Chief of the Air Force on this day to assess the French railway situation as follows: The large and varying concentrations of rolling stock noticed constantly in rail depots, without any indications of a consistent troop movement on any sizable scale being detected, indicated that these movements take place primar'

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

95 at night.

In detail it was assumed from the concentrations of rolling stock noticed in rail depots, that a movement had terminated near Paris. It was assumed that this movement was related to the heavy rail traffic observed on this day along the Chalon.s.M.-Chateau Thierry Meaux-Paris route in a westerly direction, that is, along the Marne valley parallel with the front and in parts only between 24 and 26 miles in the French rear.

Increased train traffic was also observed on the southern routes (Dijon-Langres and Gray-Vesoul). All in all, air reconnaissance on this day reported the precise number of trains in forty major rail depots.

Airfield reconnaissance continued, with 80 airfields under surveillance north of the line Poitiers-Nevers. 54 of these contained 1 044 aircraft. Most of the aircraft on the airfields north of the line Rouen-Paris-Melun-Troyes-Toul were single-engine units (fighters); about 50 percent of those on airfields south of that line were single- and twin-engine aircraft.

3. Ground Operations. Combat operations on the third day of the offensive present very much the same picture as on the previous day; the bulk of the aggressive air forces w were committed in action supporting the advance on the

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

96 ground along the frontage extending from Le Tréport and the Channel coast to Cramonne, a frontage of 138 miles.

As a adapting their methods to the new French defense tactics, the Air Force commands dispatched units to bomb all of the particularly numerous wooded sections and settlements in the French rear in which troop concentrations or columns had been detected or were even only assumed. Hits were observed on vehicle columns, troops concentrations and assemblies, together with forest fires. From these observations the Commander in Chief of the Air Force drew the conclusion that "This shock to the reserves reduced the enemy power of resistance."

A new feature of this day were the strikes flown against sizable troop movements on the approach roads in the enemy rear, as well as against rail routes on which reconnaissance had detected troop movements. Units kept these movements under observation throughout the day and when necessary their reports were followed up by continuous air strikes. Besides the usual road interdiction operations this day also brought about a new major effort in strikes against the numerous man-made traffic structures between the coast and Chateau-Thierry, such as rail depots, bridges, railroad installations, and stationary or moving railway trains. Eastward traffic from Paris was halted

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

97 Finally, units attacked and destroyed the French railway guns which had taken the German rear communications under fire.

In detail, the operations of the German Air Force present the following picture:

A. SECOND AIR FLEET. Within its zone, which remained unchanged, between the Somme and Seine Rivers but extending somewhat farther south than before because of the previous day's advance on the ground, the Second Air Fleet continued to support the advance by the Army.

However, main emphasis in its attacks had shifted slightly westward, approximately in a line Dieppe-Neufchatel-Bonnes les Eaux-Gournay. In the east the attack zone was bordered roughly by the line Beaumont s.O. (north of Paris-Beauvais-Breteuil.

Troop targets immediately ahead of the German attack on the ground remained the primary objectives. On this day, however, units also flew numerous strikes against troop movements on roads detected by reconnaissance and against railroad installations and railway traffic in the immediate vicinity of the combat zones north of the lower

98 Seine River.

So far as it is possible to reconstruct a picture of

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

98 the missions flown and the targets attacked from the detail-

ed reports of the Second Air Fleet, the missions flown were as

follows:

16 against moving columns on roads

22 against troops concentrations in settlements and wooded sections

15 against railroad targets of all types.

This at least provides some indication of how attack missions were distributed among the various target categories.

Only one attack struck at targets in the lower Seine River Region, where units attacked the Evreux airfield (30 miles south of Rouen) shortly before nightfall, destroying 16 planes on the ground and downing 4 in air combat.

B. THIRD AIR FLEET. ~~ACTION AGAINST PRIMARILY ON~~

Emphasis here was again primarily on action to neutralize troop assemblies in forests, localities, and on roads; artillery positions and premises reported as being occupied. As in the case of the Second Air Fleet, action against all types of railway targets came into prominence. The attacks flown were as follows:

99 a. 14 against troop concentrations in wooded areas

17-25 " " " " localities

12 " " " on roads

3 " troops in "premises"

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

99 b. 5 against artillery positions.

c. Traffic targets

3 against road sections

18-28 against traffic targets within built-up areas.

d. Railway Targets.

3 against trains

2 against sections of the open way

2 against railway bridges

2 against rail depots.

The map presentation shows the main emphasis in direct support for the Army was in the hitherto area of main effort, namely, the Meslé-Laye-Noyon area.

Emphasis in action against troop movements was primarily in the line of advance in the area Coulédme-Senlis-Villers Ko Cotterets-Château Thierry-Dire on Paris- Soissons.

Rail interdiction attacks were mainly in the Marne valley between Lorraine and Meaux. This was the route to Paris on which early morning reconnaissance units had reported traffic assumed to be a troops transportation movement.

Units of the Third Air Fleet did not attack farther south than the Marne River.

In operations against enemy airfields the Third Air Fleet on this day confined its activities to attacks against

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

100 against three airfields from which direct participation by French air units could be expected in the operations on the ground. These were the airfields at Orléans-Bricy, Etampes-la-Ferte (31 miles south of Morgans), and a new airfield southwest of Creil.

4. Air Situation. On the third day of the offensive the situation in the air had developed as follows:

Early morning reconnaissance on the 7 June had ascertained that French fighter defense focal points were noticeable only in the areas of Soissons and Paris; antiaircraft artillery fire had been particularly heavy at Paris.

During the day, however, the enemy fighter and antiaircraft artillery defenses proved very effective throughout the entire zone of operations. French fighters appeared in units of up to 40 Morane aircraft. These units repeatedly over the zone of operations on the ground engaged in battle the German twin- and single-engine fighter units assigned to provide cover against enemy air action.[9]

---

9. The Situation Report by the Commander in Chief of the German Air Force, No. 276, 8 June 1940 reports as follows on enemy planes downed and German planes lost:

a. Enemy planes downed

in Air combat		1 Hurricane
		6 Morane-406
		2 Curtiss
		3 Bloch-151
		2 Bloch-34
		2 Potez-63
		6 unknown types
		22
by AA fire	Potez 1	
	Unknown types 16	17
Destroyed on ground		16 (unknown types)
	Total	55

b. German losses 8 aircraft.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

101 As the French aircraft shot down on former occasions had shown, the French were using a large variety of various aircraft, including their latest types, such as the Bloch-151, Dewoitine-520, Bréguet-693, Lée-45, Douglas-DB-7.

Also, they on this day for the first time employed bombers in appreciable numbers against troop targets.[10]

The French air attack against the German armored corps concentrated in the bridgehead of Péronne on 5 June, mentioned by Tippelskirch,[11] was a result of these new French air tactics, which soon ceased, however, owing to their lack of adequate units. The Army habit of always exaggerating incidents of this kind has been criticized previously in this study. As a rule, the German Army evinced an extreme sensitiveness to air attack, but hardly found words to mention the German air attacks against enemy forces.

Photo reconnaissance on 7 June revealed that the airfields immediately in front of the German advance between Paris and Chalons s. M. had already been rendered unserviceable. On the other hand, reports arrived that French air units had been transferred from southern to northern France.

10. On this occasion German action brought down 13 Lee-45 alone.
11. See p. 109.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

101 The British Air Force apparently had already given up the idea of having their bombers operate from French bases, and only a few planes of the Blenheim type were still stationed in France. Apparently, the 2-engine units, which also participated in ground action, operated from bases in England, often using Shoreham for their take off and landing. It had also been noticed that both British bombers and fighters used the Somme River estuary as their initial orientation point on the approach to the continent, proceeding from there to their target areas.

On this day of battle action against the ground organization of the French Air Forces for the first time received little consideration. The German air command confined its action to continuous reconnaissance and the few attacks, previously mentained, against near-front enemy airfields within the scope of direct support for the Army.

Operational air warfare was confined to two night missions, probably flown by units of the 9th Air Division or the X Air Corps, but certainly not of the Second Air Fleet. These two missions were:

1. A repeat attack against the port installations of Le Havre, apparently without important results.

2. Strikes against the British Air Force ground

11. Von Tippelskirch: Geschichte des 2. Weltkrieges;" 1951, Atheneaus Verlag; p. 100.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

102 organization, in the form of what was called "armed reconnaissance. These were directed at the Grimsby and Barham airfields and an airfield south of The Hague. Other elements bombed Dover.

From the terminology used in reporting these attacks and the small number of targets involved they can only have been harassing attacks by small units. On this day A Air Corps units for the first time were again committed in combat missions over Norway.

5. Situation on the Ground. On this day again, the German attack encountered flexible but tenacious French resistance, but nevertheless made headway in some areas.

The appreciation by the Commander in chief of the Air Force presents the following picture of the ground situation on the morning of 8 June:

The greatest progress made was by the Fourth Army, on the right flank, where the German forces had broken through the French positions at Formeres (8 miles south of Aumale) and were advancing on the direction of Forges-Les Eaux, 21 miles northeast of Rouen.

The center was still farther back. South of Amiens the forward elements in the advance to the line Poix-Conty-Ailly-Moriel were held up by an antitank ~~XXXXX~~ a French position protected by an antitank ditch.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

103 In the eastern sector German forces in fierce battle around Neele-Noye had captures the Hills of Beauvraignes on either side of Noye. At the Oise River the towns of Chauny and Noyon were in German hands. Faced by this threat to their rear, the enemy forces still holding out farther north in the Somme line withdrew in a southwest direction.

German forces occupied parts of Soissons, reached the Aisne River on both sides of the town and crossed it at several points.

All in all it was thus evident that on the two flanks the German advance was making good progress and that breakthroughs were shaping up, by that the center was not making the progress planned.

The following realizations were important for the German Air Force in the continued execution of its mission of supporting the ground forces:

The French continued to apply their new tactics noticed during the past two days. Apparently the French divisions had received detached tank battalions for the conduct of this type of dispersed combat action. Finally, captured French orders showed that the French had intended to defend the Somme River Line. By evening on the 7 June they had already abandoned this entire line.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

105 E. THE FOURTH DAY OF THE OFFENSIVE.

1. Weather Situation. Compared with the previous days the weather was slightly less favorable without, however, hampering operations.

France, in the morning, had high-level fog and a closed cloud cover in considerable parts. During the day conditions improved, with clear weather in large parts, slight development of cumulus clouds, and improved visibility.

Over Holland and Belgium weather conditions were similar to those over France, but visibility was generally good.

Over western Germany the conditions of high atmospheric pressure and good visibility continued.

2. Reconnaissance Activities. Road reconnaissance in the line of advance detected signs of small-scale retrograde French movements towards Paris.

Rail reconnaissance had the primary mission of detecting transport movements towards Paris and covered the entire railway system in central France. Only light traffic was reported on the ~~Chateau-Romilly S.S.~~ Chateau Thierry-Romilly S.S. route leading west in the general direction of Paris. No appreciable

106 movements were noticed except in the area around Rouen. Units reported observing heavy traffic at rail depots in and around Paris, including unloading operations at the Versailles rail depot, during the night.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

106 Airfield reconnaissance covered 76 airfields found to hold 972 aircraft. The airfields were less densely occupied than on the past few days.

Reconnaissance patrols over ports reported the arrival of large convoys at Cherbourg and Caen. Heavy railroad traffic from Cherbourg towards the lower Sein River-Paris area allowed the assumption of debarkation operations in the two ports.

3. Combat Operations.

A. SECOND AIR FLEET.

The attack missions flown by units of the Second Air Fleet show two clearly defined areas of main effort in which the attacks were massed:

1. The Dieppe-Ivertot-St. Saens-Neufchatel area;

2. The Gournay-Gisors-Montataire-Clermont-Beauvais area.

The Seine River line between Rouen and Paris can also be considered as a third area of main effort in ~~XXXXXXXX~~ which units with obviously good results attacked rail ~~which units attacked the towns of Elbeuf, Les Andelys,~~ ~~XXXXX~~ depots, railway lines and installations, and rail and road centers in and near the towns of Elbeuf, Les Andelys, Vernon and Mantes repeatedly. Apparently the units did not attack bridges, since these were needed for the German troops which were expected soon to cross the Seine

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

107 River.

In the two principal areas of main effort mentioned first above, units on in the east attacked all types of troops targets, but also localities, raildepots, roads, and road intersections. From the targets attacked, it is ob obvious that less strikes were directed at "wooded sections" and "Localities" than in the east, but instead at such targets as troops and vehicle columns of all types--the French front had become fluid. The breakthrough by the German Fourth Army on the right flank was shaping up, and a connected enemy front line no longer existed. The fact that isolated French elements had remained behind could indicate that air attacks were still being directed at targets in the far French rear, for example at "e Trésort and its surroundings.

E. Italy Air Force. Here, main emphasis in attack operations on this day was on support for the Sixth and Ninth Armies in the Reims-Soissons-Compiègne-Chateau Thierry area.

Within that area, again, the following focal points are clearly defined:

1. The areas along the Soissons-Chateau Thierry and Soissons-Villers Cotterets roads;

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

108 2. The area around Braisne to Rismes, on the extreme left. A third area of concentrated attacks was outside of the above principal area of main effort. This was in the area immediately around Beauvais, where units of the Third Air Fleet also attacked targets north and northeast of the town, so that Second and Third Air Fleet action overlapped in this area.

In the zone of the Third Air Fleet developments were similar to those in the zone of the Second Air Fleet, as described above. Here, also, attacks against "inert" targets, such as wooded sections and localities were less frequent than on the previous day. On 8 June most strikes were against live targets, such as troop concentrations and movements of all types.

In the left flank areas of the German offensive also the fronts had become fluid. An examination of the distribution of the targets attacked shows that hardly any attacks occurred on this day in the area so fiercely contested on the day before between the major area of main effort and the smaller one around Beauvais, the only exception being at Noyon and at St.Just-en-Chaussée.

Action against traffic installations on this day took the form of strikes against Meaux and the Paris suburban rail depots.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

109 C. SUMMARY OF COMBAT OPERATIONS.

Operations on the fourth day of the "preliminary offensive" by German forces on the right flank were to create the initial situation for the main offensive, which was to break all along the line on 9 June. The discussion which now follows of the ground situation as it existed at the close of the "preliminary offensive" will disclose whether the attack on the ground from the Somme River line and directed at the lower Seine River west of Paris and at the line Chantilly-southern fringes of Compiègne Forest-south of Soissons-Bourg en Gonain (15 miles east of Soissons, reached the assigned objectives of the attack.

In any case, the German Air Force on this day committed its entire force, which had been concentrated behind the attacking flank forces during the past four days, in ceaseless attacks and continued to support the ground forces in their advance from the Channel coast to Rheims.

The pressure areas developed by the Air Force have been disclosed in the previous discussion of operations by the Second and Third Air Fleets. The areas of main effort discussed there are shown in the outline map included as Appendix 87.

The overall impression gained from the reconnaissance and combat activities of the German Air Force can be sum

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

109 summarized in the statement that the flexible French defense had now given way to a flexible withdrawal, even if that withdrawal was not carried out according to plan in all areas.

The account given of the air operations directed at targets in the German line of advance needs supplementation on the subject of the concurrent attacks against airfields northeast of Paris. German units bombed the airfields at Meaux-Villenoy, Nitry-Mory, and Lagny-Le-Sec. These attacks were directly related to the operations on the ground.

Indirectly related were the night attacks against the ports of Cherbourg and Le Havre which, according to the report by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force, produced considerable results. It is clearly evident that units of the Second Air Fleet carried out these attacks.

Finally, it is necessary in summarizing the events of this day and the next few days, to mention the operations of the AAA Corps.

The bulk of the AAA forces had been kept far forward for support in ground combat. Some were committed with the armored and motorized infantry divisions to protect these divisions during their advance south and southwest, and were used in action against machine-gun pockets and

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

110 enemy tanks. Smaller elements were left behind to protect the Somme River bridges.

4. Air Situation. Early morning reconnaissance had shown strong French defense fighter forces at Rouen. During the day it was found that both fighter and antiaircraft artillery defenses were strong in the entire area in the line of advance on the ground up to the Seine River line, and particularly so at Rouen and Gaillon.

On 8 June French air units around midday and in the afternoon again carried out low-altitude attacks, some lasting for more than an hour, against the German bridge-
111 head and the bridges at Mizy (about six miles east of Soissons), and against German columns. Reports made no mention of the numbers and types of French aircraft attacking, the results of the attacks, or the number of French planes shot down.

Concerning French fighter tactics, reports stated that when German single- or twin-engine fighter units appeared they ceased their attacks. On the subject of antiaircraft fire,
aircraft fire, it was noticed repeatedly that the guns only opened fire when German dive-bombers were already diving to deliver their bombs or were already leaving the target area.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

111 This day brought another incident with Swiss fighters. Near the Swiss border German Me-110 planes became involved in combat against 15 Swiss planes (7 Bf-109 and 1-Cr-32), an action in which French Morane and Curtiss planes interfered. It was noticed quite unmistakably that the Swiss and the French planes, although acting separately, only attacked the German planes and not each other. The Swiss lost five planes (4 Bf-109 and 2 Cr-32).

Total aircraft losses on this day were as follows:

a. German losses, total 14 planes, namely,

2 Me-109 3 Me-110

2 Me-111 4 Ju-87

1 Me-123 1 Me-110

1 He-115

b. ~~XXXXXX~~ Enemy losses, total 53 planes (43 in air combat, 4 downed by antiaircraft artillery fire, 6 destroyed on the ground) namely,

4 Blenheim

4 Spitfire

1 Hurricane

2 Battle

4 Curtiss

3 Bloch-151

2 Potez-63

5 Morane

1 French biplane

7 unknown types

4 Bf-109 (Swiss)

1 Cr-32 (Swiss)

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

112 Shot down by anti-aircraft artillery:

1 Blenheim

2 Morane

1 Potez-63

Destroyed on the ground

6 single-engine models.

5. Situation on the Ground. The ground situation at the close of the fourth day of battle requires a more careful discussion than was the case with the previous days, since it was to provide the initial situation for the main offensive due to begin on the next day, 9 June. Here again a scritiny revealed discrepancies between the situation as interpreted by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force on the one hand and the Situation map prepared by the Army High Command onthe other hand. For this present study from the point of view of the Air Force, however, the picture must be accepted which the Commander in Chief of the Air Force was able to compile in the morning of 9 June of developments in the ground situation up to the close of combat on 8 June.

On the right flank (Fourth Army) the forces advancing from Abbeville were poised for the attack across the Bresle line between Senarpont and south of Aumale.

The breakthrough south of Formerie, farther south, had carried the forward elements of the motorized infantry

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

113 forces committed there into the region 4 miles northeast and 6 miles east of Rouen.

In the center the attacking forces east of Amiens had advanced southwards to the line from north of Grandvilliers-Conty-Ailly. Between Conty and Ailly motorized infantry units had broken through the enemy defenses on either side of Ancerieux; the bulk of them had reached St- Just-en-Chaussée and forward detachments were still advancing towards the Oise River.

On the left and in the center mobile forces had thus achieved two breakthroughs in diverging directions which might produce operational results.

In the zone of operations on the left, forward elements had crossed the Avre line north of Montdidier. South of the hitherto fiercely contested town of Roye German troops held the Beauvraignes hills. East of Roye spearhead elements had driven forward ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ to southwest as far as the region six miles south of Ham. Fierce fighting continued in the hills all around Noyon.

On the whole, enemy resistance had weakened on all fronts south of Amiens; in the line from Montdidier eastwards the enemy were still holding out tenaciously, had moved in fresh troops, and had launched counterattacks with tank support.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

114 West of Soissons the German advance from the line Attichy-Pommiers had crossed the line southwards and reached the hilly terrain east of Dommiers.

East of Soissons the bridgehead established south of Missy across the Aisne River had been expanded. Finally, German troops south of Vailly had occupied the south banks of the Aisne Canal at Pont-Arcy.

The overall situation as interpreted by the Commander in Chief of the German Air Force is shown in the outline map included as Appendix 88.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

115 F. EXPERIENCES GAINED AND LESSONS LEARNED IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE OFFENSIVE—5-8 June 1940.

For the first time in the short history of the German Air Force, both in the Eastern and Western Theaters of Operations, a concentration of all available forces had been achieved, combining the bulk of all Air Force units under two air fleet headquarters for action in support of the Army.

Comparisons with Air Force operations for example in the Battle of the Meuse River, in the action to subdue the Fortress of Verdun, or in the concentrated attack against the Charleville-Sedan sector of the Meuse River line during Operation "Gelb" would be fallacious, since the entire mass of the Air Force had not been committed in any one of these cases. Dunkirk must be excluded as a special case, particularly since only partial forces were actually committed there most of the time, while Operation Paula was an example of operational air warfare not related in any way with the mission of direct support for the Army.

Quite rightly, the Air Force Command had avoided any dispersion of its power and had committed both air fleets to support the three armies participating in the "preliminary offensive."

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

124

115 In spite of this fact operations on the ground failed to achieve the objective in this "preliminary offensive," as the initial situation for the overall offensive on the evening of 8 June as interpreted by the Commander in Chief

116 of the Air Force had shown. This fact will be found confirmed in the situation as interpreted by the Army High Command, which follows later in this study.

At first glance the outcome thus seems to have been a failure on the part of the Army, insofar as one can apply such a negative term in this case. In the final essence, however, the operations during the four days from 4 to 8 June had created the conditions necessary for the continued operations: the Somme defence were breached the French left flank armies were defeated and were retreating, and two operational breakthroughs were taking shape.

Whether and to what extent the German Air Force can be held co-responsible for the inadequate results achieved is a question it will be difficult to answer. Just as was the case with the German ground forces, the Air Force found itself face to face with a new situation created by the newly developed flexible defence tactics of the defending French forces in the zones of operations during those four days. It appears quite possible that the surprise caused by the new French tactics--and theydid cause surprise--may hav

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

116 made a proper understanding between the German Army and the German Air Force difficult and may have complicated communications, until such time as the German tactics of attack were adapted to the new French tactics of defense. The statements by the Commanding General, VIII Air Corps, quoted in Chapter 4 of this study might provide indications in this direction. No authentic records or other evidence are available concerning other interconnections of a similar nature. On the other hand, the new French defense tactics resulted in a badly serrated frontage featured by armored breakthroughs, tenaciously defended localities and wooded sections in their rear, and difficult attacks by the German infantry far in the rear of the targets reached by the tank forces, and these conditions may have made it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible at times, for the Air Force to give direct support on the field of battle. The fronts had become uncertain. Assumed targets in "localities" and "wooded sections" took the place of properly identified troop targets for attack. Operations under such circumstances necessarily must have resulted in a waste of effort by the units, wasted bombs, and wasted time in some areas and areas, and the results achieved remained problematical. Furthermore, the unclear situation which had developed made it necessary to direct air

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

117 strikes away from the not always discernible front and at targets farther in the enemy rear. During the fourth day it became evident repeatedly, and this fact is clearly illustrated in the enclosed outline map, that the areas of main effort in attack operations by the two air fleets were relatively far behind the foremost line and maintained this distance from the foremost line during the advance. Such tactics admittedly could not serve as direct support for the German infantry which had been spoilt in this respect in the past. The infantry could see no evident results. The results achieved only made themselves felt on the next day, frequently even two days later, when the heavily battered enemy reserves in the enemy rear, the ~~xxxxx xxxxxxxxx~~ disrupted march movements, rail transports, supply columns, and so forth, made it impossible to reinforce the heavily engaged front line troops or to support them when they fell back.

This disorganization in the enemy rearthus evolves as a decisive factor and as a tangible result achieved by the Air Force. Its tactical impact on the Army operations cannot be proved in the individual cases, but it was a fact. All air force operations were connected and related with and supplemented the operations of the Army.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

118 Thus, the Air Force Command quite rightly confined itself to "tactical" action in the combat area north of the lower Seine and Marne Rivers. The missions flown by air units between the 5 and 8 June had nothing to do with operational air warfare; the long-range bomber units of the Second and Third Air Fleets had become the "long-range artillery arm" of the Army.

Strangely enough, the situation reports by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force covering the previous few days contain no further mention of the close tactical support units under the VIII Air Corps. Apparently the missions flown by them are included in the areas of main effort of the two air fleets previously referred to.

If overlaid, a comparison of the two maps included as Appendices 87 and 88[12] reveals a remarkable and inexplicable fact. The two operationally important breakthroughs by tank forces towards the southwest ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ (in the direction of Rouen) and southeast (towards the Oise River in the Creil region), passed precisely between the areas of main effort in German air attacks by units of the Second ~~and~~ Third Air Fleets, penetrating deep into the enemy rear.

Whether these two tank drives, which led to the

12. Appendix 87: Areas of Main effort in Second and Third Air Fleet operations on 8 June 1940.
Appendix 88: The Ground Situation as Interpreted by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force on the evening of 8 June 1940.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

110 general breakthrough, were carried out completely without air support, whether they received support from units of the VIII Air Corps in missions which do not belong within the main effort areas, or whether they were a result of the attack further in the enemy rear on 7 June, these are all questions which appear to have been unclear to the Commander in Chief of the Air Force at the time.

However, a comparison with the presentation of operations of the VIII Air Corps in Chapter 4 will clarify this matter. It shows quite clearly from that presentation that the close range tactical support air units in this case opened the way for the tank forces. From an examination of the missions flown by units of the VIII Air Corps it is clearly obvious that

1. the tactical support air units prepared the way for and supported the breakthrough operation by Panzer Corps Roth, as part of the Fourth Army, in the general direction of Rouen;

2. the tactical support air units made possible t the breakthrough by Panzergruppe Kleist in a southwesterly direction towards the Oise River.

120 The picture which the Commander in Chief of the Air Force compiled of the situation on the evening of 3 June was thus false, at least in this respect. At least it was

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

120 incomplete, the interrelations were not clearly realized. The fact is that in this first phase of Operation "Rot" the experience gained and the methods developed and applied previously in Operation "Gelb" were again applied and proved proved sound for cooperation between close tactical support air units and armored forces.

This supplementation to and at the same time correction of the situation reports by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force was essential, since the armored units were the only Army elements which had reached or at least approached the assigned operational objectives. The infantry lagged far behind.

In addition to the surprise which the French achieved through their new defense tactics on the ground which resulted in a tenacity far exceeding that encountered in past French resistance, they also achieved a surprise in the air.

During Operation "Gelb" the German Air Force Command had gained the conviction that from about 14 Mai the German side had gained air superiority and from 20 May on complete air supremacy over the Western Theater of Operations.[13]

13. Part Three, Chapters 6 and 7.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

121 Meanwhile, however, Army operations in the areas from the Somme estuary northward to Calais and the air battle over Dunkirk had shown that the Royal Air Force, operating against targets on the Continent from its bases in Britain, was challenging the German air ~~superiority~~ supremacy at least within certain areas and time periods. The French air forces were considered demoralized and practically eliminated.

Operation "Rot" now produced a surprise in that French resistance stiffened not only on the ground but also in the air. Operation Paula had apparently produced no practical results, a fact which was realized on the first day of the offensive.

The French Command evidently had concentrated their entire defensive fighter forces within the areas around Paris, and in contrast with former experience, the French fighters now attacked. It was as though the hour of crisis for France had awakened their spirit of aggressiveness.

Simultaneously the French ground-attack or battle units for the first time went into action and, although at a heavy cost in losses, attacked the German spearheads at the Seine and Aisne Rivers. The French Command appeared to be placing everything it had on one card.

These unexpected attacks from the air naturally affected the German ground forces. For them it was custor

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

122 that their own air forces visibly and audibly replaced or at least supplemented the effects of their artillery. This obvious type of air support had to become less frequent when the opposing fronts became closely interlocked and the German air force found itself compelled to direct its attacks against targets farther in the enemy rear, so that the impact of this air action only became noticeable later, and then not so much to the individual infantryman on line as to the higher levels of Army command. It was thus unavoidable that a certain degree of dissatisfaction born of disappointment should spread in the army ranks. Attacks by an enemy air force are after all physical and psychological phenomena factually and personally experienced, whereas in a situation such as that discussed here the results achieved by ones own air forces can be neither seen, heard, nor personally felt.

So far as the operations of the French fighter and ground-attack units in the first four days of Operation "Rot" are concerned, an unprejudiced historical appraisal must admit that the French air forces, which in the past had hardly put in an appearance against the German operations on the ground now sacrificed themselves in a hopeless situation in a last-stand defense of their country.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

122 There were so many potent factors which had made it seem extremely unlikely that the French air forces would once again take up the battle: The units were equipped with a confusing jumble of the most widely varying types of aircraft; the French types were inferior in technical performances to the German; they were numerically inferior to the unconcentrated power of the entire German Air Force; for weeks past their ground servicing installations had been destroyed time and again; in spite of all appeals their British ally failed to send the repeatedly promised aid. That the French air forces returned to give battle in defense of their country in spite of all these adverse factors merits the highest praise.

On the other hand the astonishing activity of the French air forces proves three facts:

1. The systematic operations carried out since 10 May to neutralize the French ground organization had not produced the expected results;

2. Operation Paula had less of a practical than a propagandistic impact;

3. The French air forces had understood how to escape the full impact of the German air attacks by means of dispersion and camouflage. Finally, they had learned from the experience of the past German campaigns.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

122 British air support for the French had remained limited to the one ground attack previously mentioned, which had failed at heavy cost. It was only in the coastal areas that the British fighter units of the Home Defense System still exercised some pressure without being able in any way to give the French air forces effective support. Presumably, the British command controlling the conduct of air warfare also had no intention in that direction, they were looking to the future.

124 The overall outcome of the first phase of Operation "Rot" can be summarized as follows:

(1) <u>In the Air</u>. The German side was unable to maintain the condition of German air supremacy. That condition had been only temporary, and was confined to the duration of the former Operation "Gelb." At too early a stage the German Air Force Command allowed itself to be misled concerning the powers of resistance of the French air forces. German air superiority, in point of numbers and technical performances, remained an established fact, but it had to be reestablished from day to day in battle. Developments in the air and on the ground had shown that the French armed forces were no longer willing to simply allow themselves to be rolled over.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

124 The figures for German and enemy losses during this period are clear evidence of what had happened, all the more so because they are taken from the official situation reports by the Intelligence Division, HQ, Commander in Chief of the Air Force and not from the Joint Military High Command (OKW) Bulletins, which were colored for propaganda purposes.

These figures show the following picture of aircraft losses on the two opposing sides:

Date	Enemy aircraft destroyed				German losses
5	In air Combat	By AAA Fire	On the Ground	Totals Daily	
June					
5	67	3	55	125	23
6	63	2	10	75	16
7	22	17	16	55	8
8	43	4	6	53	14
Total	195	26	87	303	51

125 The resulting ratio of 308:51 should not be taken too literally, since the figures given for "destroyed on the Ground" at least were estimated and therefore questionable. A different standard for appraisal is available in the analysis of the figure of 51 given as the total German loss, and experience shows that these must be considered as totally lost. The number included 26 fighters (23 Me-109 and 3 Me-110), making 50 percent of the overall German loss, which is proof of how tenacious the battle in the

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

125 was, and evidence of the aggressive spirit of the French fighter pilots who sought combat in the air.

(2) On the Ground. The decisively important question is whether the German Army operations achieved their assigned objective, and here the answer is No! The interpretation of the situation by the Commander in Chief of the German Air Force on the morning of 9 June in itself serves to show that decisively important break-throughs by the German panzer forces were admittedly taking shape, that the French front had commenced a retrograde movement, and that the French rear communications had been destroyed or at least badly disrupted by the German Air Force.

However, there could still be no talk of a general collapse of the French defenses. Above all, the ordered jump-off positions for the Army east of Paris had not been secured.

The above appraisal of the situation by the Commander in Chief of the German Air Force is confirmed by the Situation Map of the German ~~Joint Military High Command (OKW)~~ Army High Command (OKH) for the same period. However, this map shows by no means inconsiderable deviations from the picture presented by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force.

For the purposes of a comparison between the two

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

126 separate appraisals an outline map is offered in Appendix 89 which corresponds precisely to the Situation Map of the German Army High Command.

This situation map must be considered as authoritative, and will therefore be used as the initial situation in this study of the continued operations in the Western Theater from 9 June on. It also shows unmistakably that the assigned operational objective for the evening of 8 June had not been achieved by the Army.

The picture presented thus far of the tactical and operational activities of the German Air Force in the -- expanded--Western Theater of Operations requires supplementation in strategic respects.

Throughout all past developments in Operation "Rot" the attention of the Air Force High Command was directed towards the battle in the West which was to decide the issue and simultaneously towards events in the North, in the Norwegian theater, and finally towards Home Air Defense within Germany.

Although weather conditions just when Operation "Rot" commenced temporarily prevented air reconnaissance and air combat missions over Norway, the fact should not be forgotten that the tactical situation on the ground in Norway, particularly at the beginning of June, was extrem-

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

127 tense and called urgently for support by the Air Force (X Air Corps), whose resources were strained to their utmost capacity.

At the same time, the Royal Air Force had stepped up their nightly bombing attacks against targets within Germany, particularly in the Ruhr region, to such a pitch that the German defenses were barely able to cope with them. The increasing intensity of these operations and the results they produced already at that early stage gave some indication of what a problem an effective air defense would prove in the future.

Norway was what was called a "Joint Military High Command" theater of operations, and the Air Force command in the Western Theater was hardly affected by events there.

German Home Air Defense was an entirely different matter and it is necessary to remind the reader time and again that the Second and Third Air Fleets had to direct attention not only forwards but also towards the rear, towards the homeland. This was so because the Commanding Generals of the two air fleets, concurrently with their missions in the current offensive, were responsible for home air defense within their former and still unchanged command areas within Germany. The air district commands,

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

127 locally responsible for air defense, were still assigned under the air fleet headquarters.

This state of affairs necessarily resulted in severe and diversified demands on the headquarters directing the operational air forces in the West. This applied particularly in the case of the Second Air Fleet, whose forces were committed not only in the tactical areas of the Army, in the areas along the French Atlantic coastline, and against England, but at the same time far in the rear in missions of home air defense, particularly in the Ruhr region, which came most frequently under air attack.

Although this study is actually confined to a discussion of the Campaign in the West as such, it is not possible to avoid mention of these overall related circumstances.

At this early stage in the conduct of air warfare, the question also arises whether the demands made were excessive for example, when the Commanding General of the Second Air Fleet who necessarily had to consider his aggressive mission on the right flank of the offensive on the ground as his primary mission, at the same time was required to direct his attention to the French Atlantic coast, to England, and to the waters surrounding England--all closely interrelated

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

128 and inseparable parts of the overall strategic complex. And all this while he at the same time had to concern himself with and feel himself responsible for, air defense in northern France, Belgium, Holland, and, by no means the least important, the Ruhr region.

The logical consequences which must necessarily arise from such a duality in the conduct of operations was not realized early enough. The conduct of aggressive and defensive air warfare should have been separated already at that early stage. In the given circumstances it is easy to understand that the higher levels of field command naturally gave their attention primarily to the "Battle for France." The first thing to be done, it seemed, was to secure victory by means of attack on the battlefields of the Continent. This necessarily meant that too little attention was given to the problems of defense.

This error of omission was to bear bitter fruit and finally, but too late, it was destined to lead to a reorganization of the whole command system by means of a division of responsibility for aggressive and defensive missions.[14]

14. The present author recollects personally that first emphasis in all deliberations at headquarters was on operations at the front. For command-technical purposes, the former command post of the Second Air Fleet in Brussels was soon much too far in the rear. The

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

128

14.--Continued:field command of the Air Force had to remain mobile and adapt themselves to a flexible conduct of combat operations. "Advance command posts" were moved far forward, close to the front lines, in order to be able to follow up the advancing armies and troops. This meant that geographically and in point of signal communications the distances to the assigned air district commands in the zone of interior became steadily greater. In the same measure, practical interest in what was happening in the homeland decreased, a phenomenon which can be understood at least from the psychological viewpoint, since the decision in the campaign, and possibly for the whole war, would come here, at the fighting front.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

PART FOUR

INTRODUCTION TO

ORGANIZATION AND ARRANGEMENT OF CHAPTERS 3-5

These three chapters deal with the second phase of the Operation "Rot" Offensive. This was the main operation in the "Battle for France," and lasted from 9 to 25 June, namely, to the capitualtion by France, and thus to the end of the 1940 Campaign in the West.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

130 According to plan, the mass of the German armies in the West on 9 June 1940 jumped off to the attack in the main operation of the Battle for France.

The main attack by Army Groups B and A, directed generally southeast, was to be staged from the area between Paris and the Argonnes in order to create the conditions and the initial situation essential for the large-scale enveloping maneuver planned for later in eastern France.

The preliminary operation and its objectives planned for this purpose has been dealt with in detail and also presented in the form of maps.[1]

For Army Group B, on the right, the initial situation for the main operation had been created by the preliminary offensive on the right flank. The results achieved up to the evening of 8 June 1940 have been described in the preceeding two chapters, above.

The Fourth Army, west of Paris, and the Sixth and Ninth Armies, northeast of Paris, had admittedly not fully achieved the planned objectives. On 9 June, however, the nevertheless launched their attacks, as part of the overall operation, from the lines they had reached.

1. Part Four, Chapter 1, Section 6, and Appendixes 81-83, with particular attention drawn to Appendix 83.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

130 The remarkable feature already in the past operation but even more so in the continued direction of the attack from 9 June 1940 on is the fact that the movements by Army Group B split up into two separate operations, a development due to the plans to bypass Paris in the middle.

Two separate zones of operations thus resulted, separated from one another by the general area of Paris:

(1) The attack by the Fourth Army bypassed Paris on the west, the mission being to establish bridgeheads at the lower Seine River as an operational base for the continued advance south and southwest. Later, the Eighteenth Army also moved into these positions, passing through Paris and farther west.

(2) The main attack by Sixth and Ninth Armies of Army Group B and Second, Twelvth, and Sixteenth Armies of Army Group A, directed southeast at an angle from the direction of the above attack ~~mx~~ from the right flank

Within the scope of the Army operations thus planned, the air mission evolves naturally:

(1) The Second Air Fleet with its weak forces was to support the attack by the Fourth Army in its drive passing Paris on the West (and later also the Eighteenth Army), while at the same time continuing its operations against ports and seaborne targets at and off the Atlanti

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

131 coast.

(2) The Third Air Fleet, with its strong air forces was to support the main attack by Army Groups A and B.

For both air fleets main emphasis was on the mission of support for the Army.

132 A new situation was to evolve from the following operational developments: after the planned attack against the French lines of defense had led to the breakthrough and the pursuit phase had commenced all along the line, Army Group B was diverted from its originally ordered objective southeast of Paris [2] in order during the advance to reunite its four armies in the area of the major Loire River bend on either side of Orléans for the pursuit operations.

Army Group A alone continued on its southeastward movement in order to carry out the planned envelopment in Eastern France in action coordinated with that of Army Group C (First and Seventh Armies).

At the same time Panzergruppe Von Kleist and Panzergruppe Guderian had broken through the French center and deep in the French rear disrupted all French command movements and communications far ahead of the general German advance.

This course of Army operations, given here in broad

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

132 outline, governs the presentation of operations by the Air Force now to follow. Proceeding from direct tactical support for the Army on the field of battle, the air mission was to change to one of indirect support during the pursuit, and then to a resumption of the conduct of strategic air warfare.

Particularly in the western parts of the German front, this mission of strategic air warfare begand to take shape at a very early stage, with the Second Air Fleet steadily shifting emphasis to operations against ports and shipping at the Atlantic coast and, already during the closing stages of the Army operations, to oversea attacks against Britain.

It would therefore be simplifying matters too much and would not serve the purpose to give merely a schematic presentation of air operations, for example, ~~[illegible]~~

~~[illegible]~~
Army Group B plus Second Air Fleet and
Army Groups A and C plus Third Air Fleet.

Instead, the mission assignment and the actual operations of the Air Force led directly to the following organisation of the following chapters of this part, Part Four:

Chapter 3. Operations of the Second Air Fleet on the extreme right flank of the German offensive;

Operations supporting the Fourth and later also the Eighteenth Armies;

Shift of emphasis to Operations against ports on and shipping off the Atlantic coast;

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

133 Operations in the air campaign now opening against Britain.

Chapter 5. Operations of the VIII Air Corps in the Center of the front on the ground.

Such an organization of material, which singles out an individual air corps for separate treatment, may at first glance seem surprising, particularly since the VIII Air Corps was assigned tactically under the Third Air Fleet.

As events will prove, however, the VIII (Tactical Air Support) Air Corpsonce again lived its life apart, conducting its own separate air campaign in support of Panzergruppe von Kleist, separate from the other operations of the Third Air Fleet. Since the corps was not only tactically assigned but also areally placed between the areas of main effort of the Second and Third Air Fleets, an organization in this study seems justifiable in which the presentation of its operations falls between those of the two air fleets.

Chapter 5. Operations of the Third Air Fleet in the principal area of main effort for the overall offensive; its action supporting the left flank of Army Group B, plus Army Group A and finally also Army Group C.

The above "Introduction" to the arrangement of the following chapters of Part Four appeared necessary in

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

134 order to first give the reader a general pattern within which the operations of the entire German Air Force will be presented.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

CHAPTER 3

SECOND PHASE OF THE OPERATION "ROT" OFFENSIVE

9-25 June 1940

Second Air Fleet Support Operations all along the Line

CONTENTS

A. PURSUIT OPERATIONS TO THE LOWER SEINE RIVER
Direct Army Support, 9-13 June

B. FROM THE SEINE TO THE LOIRE RIVER
Indirect Army Support, 14-16 June

C. OPERATIONS AT THE ATLANTIC COAST AGAINST PORTS AND SHIPS; CONCURRENT OPERATIONS AGAINST BRITAIN
Operational Air Warfare over Land and Sea, 17-26 June.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

135

CHAPTER 3

A. PURSUIT TO THE LOWER SEINE RIVER, DIRECT ARMY SUPPORT? 9-13 June 1940.

With the opening of the main offensive all along the line on 9 June 1940, the Second Air Fleet continued its operations in support of the Fourth Army on the right flank. The offensive by this army was carried forward out of the current movement to and across the Seine River between Paris and Le Havre. The initial objective was to establish bridgeheads across the Seine River as an operating base for the continued advance in a general southwesterly direction.

To support this army operation the Second Air Fleet actually only had the I Air Corps and the II AAA Corps available, while its 9th Air Division remained committed primarily for its special missions of laying naval mines in the waters around England.[1]

In principle and in form the air support given remained the same as that which had proved so sound during the past two days. Again, emphasis was on missions against all detected march movements, other troop targets, and communication and traffic installations of all types.

In the past, the French tactics of defense had made it necessary to attack stationary targets, such as

1. Chapter 1, Section 7, above.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

136 localities, wooded sections, and field positions. Now, with reports coming in daily, and receiving daily confirmation, of retrograde enemy movements, action against moving targets of all types came into prominence. Ahead of the German right flank of the overall offensive also a withdrawal of the French forces had commenced, apparently directed according to prepared plans but not always executed according to schedule. The withdrawal was in a generally westward direction.

In spite of the fluidity of the enemy movements, the fact evolves f om the pattern of operations on 13 June that the Second Air Fleet was directing its strikes at targets very close to the infantry and armored forces' front lines, and directing hardly any of its units farther into the enemy rear. On the last day of this period, 13 June, for example the targets most distant were in a line approximately f om Trouville (on the coast)-Lisieux-Bernay-Dreux-Versailles.

This restriction to "direct support" for the Army was dictated primarily by current developments in the situation on the ground. The bridgeheads across the Seine River between Rouen and Vernon had to be captured in combat, expanded, and defended.[2] By 12 June the

2. By evening on 10 June only six small bridgeheads were established southeast of Rouen.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

137 German advance west of the Seine had only reached the Eure River in the Louviers-Autheuil-Pacy (6 miles west of Vernon) sector. The bridgehead there thus had a depth of between 6 and 9 miles on a frontage of 24 miles.

While this was happening in the center of the zone, the following events occurred in the flank areas: On the right flank strong enemy forces had been driven back to the coast between Dieppe and St. Valéry-en-Caux and enveloped there. These forces surrendered on 11 June. The way to Le Havre between the coast and Rouen was thus open and mobile forces pressed forward on Le Havre.

In the left flank area strong enemy columns were moving south between Paris and Mantes towards and across the lower Seine River, their movement carrying them very close to Paris on the west. These columns came from Beauvais which the French had continued to hold for a very long time and which had jutted like a wedge into the German fronts.[3]

From the ground situation outlined above the ~~following~~

---

3. The following personal experience of the present writer may serve to illustrate how difficult communications between the Army and the Air Force were, and how confusing the ground situation was to the Air Force during this period:

Communications between Second Air Fleet HQ and the Fourth Army being temporarily far from satisfactory, and since the Second Air Fleet lacked the necessary insight and, above all, did not know where its support was most urgently needed, the present author--at that time Chief of Staff, Second Air Fleet--flew from the airfleet command post to the command post of Fourth Army (according to the Army High Command situation mapfor 9 June 1940 at Foix). General von Reichenau, commanding the Fourth --Continued

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

138 missions evolved for air operations

In the execution of these missions the air forces were hampered in some cases and at certain times quite considerably by weather conditions.

On the first two days of this phase of operations (9 and 10 June) the continuing conditions of high atmospheric pressure over the whole of western Europe had favored air operations both in the target zones and in the base areas. 11 June brought the first worsening of weather over France, conditions which during the ensuing days spread to the German take-off areas in Belgium, Holland and western Germany. On 11 and 13 June, for example, only a few missions could be flown, and these only after midday. In spite of these weather conditions, with closed cloud covers in parts plus rain and haze, however, reconnaissance and combat missions were flown whenever possible.

3.—Continued: Army gave an outline of the current tactical situation. Above all, he was in no way oriented on the situation at Beauvais and the surrounding forest areas, and this situation was at the same time of extreme importance and completely confusing to both the army and the air commands. The air command could not provide support unless it was informed on the actual situation at and around Beauvais. The area was still being defended tenaciously by the French and a threat from there to the left flank of the advancing Fourth Army was quite possible.

From the Fourth Army command post, the author decided to personally reconnoiter the large forest area northwest of Beauvais, which was closed to observation from the air. On the way by car through the extensive forest between Marseille-enBeauvais and Beauvais he first of all had a surprise encounter with a disabled French tank, the crew members of which were arguing with a German patrol about who had captured whom. The author clarified this situation beyond doubt.—Continued.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

139 The governing factors in the air situation were thus, on the one hand, the weather conditions, on the other hand, the fact that the surprisingly strong commitments of French defensive fighter forces during the four days of the preliminary offensive soon decreased noticeably and gradually became weaker and weaker. Particularly strong fighter defense had, admittedly been encountered still on 9 June around Paris and along the Seine River, where strong British fighter units had suddenly put in an appearance. From then on, however, enemy fighter defense activities remained restricted in a steadily growing measure to the areas immediately west and southwest of Paris, until they ceased almost completely even there.

Apart from weather conditions, this fact can be explained by two causes:

(1) Once the French Command had decided to cease defending the area and had initiated the general withdrawal, the French base for air operations necessarily also had to be shifted to the south, all the more so because the decision had meanwhile been taken to abandon Paris. The air base area around Paris had to be evacuated, and the French air units were in process of displacing southwards.

(2) The main German offensive which had commenced on 9 June between Paris ans the Argonnes, shifted main

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

139 emphasis--also for air operations--for both the attacker and the defender from the general area of Paris to farther east.

The enemy had recognized the off-center drive by the Fourth Army to and across the Seine River as a secondary operation, and from this realization they also drew the logical conclusions for the distribution and commitment of their air power.

While the enemy fighter defenses had weakened, the French antiaircraft artillery defenses had at the same time become more effective, and had been encountered particularly south of the Seine River with well placed fire.

Simultaneously with the dec ease in French fighter defense activities, the low-altitude French attacks against the advancing German ground forces also weakened. On one more occasion enemy bomber units participated in battle on the ground. This was on the morning of 13 June, when apparently sizable units carried out a low-altitude attack against the Seine River bridges in the areas of the II and XXXVIII Panzer Corps of the Fourth Army, sinking ponton ferries and motor boats. This and preceding air attacks can undoubtedly be considered as part of the explanation for the relatively long time taken to establish German bridgeheads across the Seine River on its south

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

140 shores. From the significantly small overall number of enemy planes shot down on this day, it can be assumed that the French low-altitude attack just mentioned succeeded, in spite of the fact that elements of the II AAA Corps had already assumed responsibility for defense of the bridges across the Seine River.

The air situation as just described in the zone of the Second Air Fleet requires supplementation by the picture which the Commander in Chief of the Air Force developed in these days of the French air force ground organization, and thus of the distribution of the French air units. This discussion thus exceeds the scope of the Second Air Fleet in this respect, but at the same time will serve to establish a basis for the discussion of operations by the Third Air Fleet, and thus of the bulk of the German Air Force, which follows later in this chapter.

The picture ~~xxxx

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

141 organization evolving from reconnaissance reports was as follows:

Date	Airfields under Reconnaissance	Reported in Operation	Number of aircraft Detected
June 9	122	64	1 310
10	73	28	399
11	28	13	205
12	7	7	218
13	6	6	45 (at least)

From the above figures it evolves that German air reconnaissance covering the French ground organization during the first days of the main offensive receded completely into the background in favor of the currently more important mission of front line reconnaissance. The figures offered therefore do not allow deductions concerning the actual presence of French air units and their distribution.

A second comparative survey, again covering the entire frontage, is offered in the form of enemy and German aircraft losses to characterize the current air situation.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

142

Date June	Enemy Aircraft Destroyed In Air Combat	By AAA Fire	On the Ground	Total	German Aircraft Losses Aircraft	Types
9	59	12	15	86	10	7 Me-109 1 Ju-87 1 Ju-88 1 Do-17
10	17	2	-	19	7	4 Me-109 1 He-111 2 Do-17
11	18	12	17	47	3	2 Me-109 1 Do-17
12	13	6	4	23	7	4 He-111 2 Ju-87 1 Do-17
13	3	3	23	29	6	2 He-111 4 Me-110
	110	35	59	204	33	33

Enemy aircraft losses thus decreased steadily during the first five days, until they reached an astonishingly low figure on 13 June, particularly in respect to those shot down in air combat.

From the relatively high overall figure for enemy aircraft shot down in air combat, however, it can be assumed that the enemy air pilots accepted battle. For this reason German losses in single- and twin-engine fighters show the highest percentage in the figures for German aircraft losses.

143 After having outlined the air situation, both within the zone of the Second Air Fleet alone and in general, as it affected the entire German Air Force, it now remains to treat the combat activities of the Second Air Fleet, in doing which it will not be possible to go into details.

The main areas for air combat missions were determine

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

143 the areas of main effort in attacks by Army forces. Enemy troop concentrations and movements, vehicle columns, traffic installations, including rail depots, railway lines, bridges road intersections, were the targets attacked time and again by bombers operating under fighter escort. In some cases units flew night missions to follow up the attacks carried out during daylight.

Principal areas of main effort developed in the following areas:

On the right flank at the coast, where units again heavily attacked the port and rail depot of Dieppe on 12 June, shortly before the French forces enveloped in the St Valéry en Caux-Dieppe region capitulated, in order to prevent their evacuation by sea.

In the center, units attacked all targets detected on roads and rail routes ahead of the German bridgehead.

A third focal area developed, particularly on 13 June, when units flew continuous missions to attack and destroy the French forces withdrawing in masses southward, across the Seine River, in the direction of Rambouillet-Chartres from the Beauvais area west of a line Pontoise-St. Germain-Versailles. Here,

144 attacks with bombs and weapons fire caused panics and serious traffic jams.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

144 In the immediate vicinity of the French Capital the Air Force thus prepared and expedited the dissolution of the retreating French armies independently of the action by the pursuing German ground forces.

Main emphasis in reconnaissance during these days was on target reconnaissance for attack. Time and again reconnaissance reports confirmed the French retrograde movements all along the line.

Long-range reconnaissance produced no indications of any change in the plans of the French Command. In the first few days units had detected lively traffic in both directions on the Cherbourg-Caen-Lisieux route. Lively rail traffic from southwest to northeast and vice versa was also noticed in the zone of the Second Air Fleet on the Versailles-Argentan (48 miles southsouthwest of Le Havre)-~~XXXXXXX~~ Laval (54 miles southwest of Argentan)-Saumur (36 miles west of Tours)-Paris route. Confirmed reports also showed heavy traffic in coastal rail depots and in depots southwest of Paris. However, no through transports were reported.

Off-shore air reconnaissance all along the Atlantic coast produced valuable information supplementing the reports from the reconnaissance units covering the land areas.

Already on 10 June it was clearly realized at

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

145 Headquarters of the Commander in Chief of the Air Force that lively shipping was in progress on the lower Seine River and in the Le Havre area; reports showed particularly numerous troop transport and merchant ships along the coast. The assumption seemed justified that the enemy were preparing already for a seaborne evacuation. Reports on the following day served to confirm this assumption: lively shipping was reported all along the Atlantic coast and numerous ships were in port at Le Havre, Fécamp, and Dieppe. There was no longer any room for doubt that the enemy were already evacuating from this coastal strip. Furthermore, reports now showed French warships in port at Le Havre and Cherbourg; fighter and AAA defenses at Cherbourg were particularly strong, and the port was protected by dense balloon barrages.

For the above reasons it was quite logical now that the ports on the Atlantic coast and shipping along the coast were taken under attack. Units first attacked Le Havre, which was at this time more and more becoming part of the zone of operations on the ground since the surrender of the St. Valéry en Caux had opened the way for German mobile units of the Fourth Army to Le Havre. Each night units of the Second Air Fleet now attacked the naval port, and on each of the nights of 10-11 and 11-12 June repeated their attacks five times.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

145 Fécamp also came under air attack on 11 June after units had already taken Dieppe under attack as an evacuation port. On the night of 9-10 June units bombed Cherbourg with heavy and superheavy bombers,[4] encountering French night fighters here for the first time.

In pace with the advance on the ground, air attacks by long-range units shifted farther south to Atlantic ports such as St Nazaire and Nantes, which came under night attacks, for the first time on 12 June.

The air fleet did not restrict its action to attacks against the ports considered likely to be used by the French for em- and debarkation operations, but also attempted to bring shipping along the Atlantic coast to a halt.

Already on 9 June air units sank river craft on the Seine River, set 3-7 troop transports on fire or badly damaged them, set another troop transport on fire between Rouen and Le Havre, and scored hits on a number of smaller ships. On the following day another transport ship in the mouth of the Seine River came under attack.

Reconnaissance reports on 11 June resulted in further

4. Units delivered 29 SC-250, 15 SD-500, and 1 SC-100 bombs over Cherbourg. From these figures, which happen to be available it is possible to infer how many aircraft participated in this night attack. At least 17 bombers must have been involved.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

146 attacks against shipping. Outside Fécamp alone numerous transport ships were attacked and set on fire, while the

147 destroyers escorting them were sunk or badly damaged.

Experience shows that reports of successful attacks against ships must be regarded with skepticism. Nevertheless, the overall picture evolving from the attack operations described serve to show that the Second Air Fleet, or more precisely that air fleet's I Air Corps, was constantly in action, in spite of the worsening weather conditions, to execute three missions concurrently, namely,

(1) to support the Army on the ground;

(2) to disrupt the retrograde movements of the French armies through action far in their rear;

(3) to prevent the seaborne evacuation of enemy forces.

The question must remain unanswered as to whether the 9th Air Division was also required to participate in the operations against ports and ships. Records covering the period under discussion here mention only one commitment of 9th ~~DIVISION~~ Air Division units in a special mission (the laying of naval mines) on 11 June.[5] It is thus quite possible that the 9th Air Division also participated in the night attacks against the Atlantic ports and shipping, action of which it was capable in view of the size of its forces and their training and experience.

5.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

148 Theoretically, it is therefore possible to envisage a division of missions , in which in which the units of the I Air Corps were committed primarily against targets ashore, while the 9th Air Division directed its action against the port and targets at sea.

From the above overall account of the combat missions accomplished by units of the Second Air Fleet it evolves that during the first few days of the main German offensive emphasis had shifted to action against ports and shipping. All of these missions were still within the scope of direct and indirect support of ground operations on the right flank, the purposes of which operations they served. At the same time, however, the Second Air Fleet at this stage in operations necessarily also began to turn its attention to the conduct of air warfare across the sea, a mission which in the not too distant future was to require an even more intensive commitment of all land-type air units of the air fleet.

In spite of the conduct of operations against ports and ships, the direct support missions flown on the field of battle, and the missions flown in pursuit of the retreating French armies in the far rear areas of the operational zone, the Second Air Fleet during this period

5. In the Thames River mouth, at the Downs, Dover, Portsmouth, Poole, and Portland.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

148 also directed a number of strikes against installations of the French ground organization insofar as these could service units which might operate against the German operations on the ground.[6] In particular, twin-engine fighter units in low-altitude attacks destroyed numerous enemy aircraft on the ground.

149 Finally, the operations of the Second Air Fleet's II AAA Corps merit brief mention. The AAA corps was attached to the Fourth Army. During the whole period from the breakthrough at the Somme River line to the drive to and across the Seine River its units had accompanied the infantry and panzer divisions in the foremost lines. These operations of the II AAA Corps, which at the time had a reduced strength of only two regiments, have been treated previously in a separate study on the entire operation known as Operation "Gelb."[7]

Only the most important mission accomplished and results achieved by the II AAA Corps during the 9-13 June period will be summarized here, as follows:

(1) The AAA regiments and battalions moved forward together with the divisions and corps of the Fourth Army, opening the way for them and, in particular, supporting them in antitank action;;

(2) After the German troops had fought their we

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

149 across the the Seine River, the AAA units assumed responsibility for antitank defense in the outer perimeter of the bridgeheads and antiaircraft defense at the bridges and the approach roads.[8]

150 (3) An entire AAA regiment had advanced together with the XV Panzer Corps in its drive on the right flank and participated in the battle of envelopment in a decisively important measure around St. Valéry en Caux-Dieppe. For the first time in military history complete AAA units here attacked troop embarkation operations and ships at sea (on 12 and 13 June), sinking and damaging a number of the ships taken under fire.[9]

(4) Elements of the II AAA Corps dispatched forward prepared the way for and then supported the attack by the XV Panzer Corps against the naval fortress of Le Havre.[10]

The final situation report on the evening of 13 June 1940 showed the following picture in the zone of the Second Air Fleet or of the Fourth Army:

On the right flank German troops had taken Le Havre; ~~ENEMY~~ residual enemy elements were still resisting east of the town;

6. Among other the Chartres, Dreux, and Coudray airfields.
7. Part Three, Chapter 10. In this present chapter, Section B deals with operations of the II AAA Corps in---Continued

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

150 In the center German troops had firm control of a bridgehead across the Seine River adequately wide and deep (between Lauviere and Pacy) for the continued advance, which took off from here on 13 June.

151 On the left flank the first German spearheads had entered Paris, evacuated by the French Command and French combat troops, which surrendered on 14 June and was occupied by units of the Eighteenth Army.

The newly created Eighteenth Army had meanwhile been inserted between the Fourth and Sixth Armies. Its first appearance on situation maps of the German Army High Command was on 11 June. On 13 June the boundary between the Fourth and Eighteenth Armies was a line from west of Amiens to west of Beauvais to Mantes/Seine to Houdan (9 miles east of Dreux). The arrival of the Eighteenth Army changed nothing in the disposition of Fourth Army forces.

While the above was happening, the main German advance, supported by the Third Air Fleet, east of Paris, had been carried forward across the Marne. Tank drives had penetrated far into the enemy rear, the XVI Panzer Corps reaching Esternay (northwest of Romilly s.S.), while farther e east the XXXIX Panzer Corps, operating from the zone of the Twelvth Army, drove forward to the Rhine-Marne Canal at Vitry le Francois.[11]

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

151 Finally, operating from Saarbruecken, the First Army had launched an attack against the Maginot line with very strong support from the Air Force.[12]

B. FROM THE SEINE TO THE LOIRE.--INDIRECT SUPPORT FOR THE ARMY, 14-16 JUNE 1940.

I. 14 JUNE 1940.

The first day of the next phase of the German offensive and the situation on that day at and ahead of the right flank of the overall operation introduced a basic change in operations by the Second Air Fleet, so that a more detailed discussion of event on this day appears necessary.

Weather Conditions. In western France the cloud cover was opening up, with frequent clear patches; over north and central France early morning fog, hazy, medium visibility.

Over the take-off base areas in Holland and Belgium there was a closed cloud cover, frequently rising during the morning. Widespread rain and drizzle, visibility medium to poor. Clouds beginning to clear over southwest Belgium.

7.--Continued: Operation "Rot." Attention is drawn particularly to the map in Appendix to Chapter 10.
8. AAA units of the newly established Air District Command Belgium had been moved to the area to release the II AAA Corps units protecting the Seine bridges for another assignment with the advancing Army forces.
9. According to Part III, Chapter 10, AAA units alone "sank 6 transport ships, damaged others and 2 destroyers, besides numerous smaller ships.
10. According to Army High Command Situation--Continued

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

152 In the take-off base areas od western Germany most parts had a closed cloud cover, regional rain, medium visibility.

On the whole weather conditions were thus not too good in parts for air operations.

Reconnaissance, with main emphasis on troop movements and troop assemblies, detected large retrograde movements by road and rail all along the line south of a line from Dreux-Versailles-southern outskirts of Paris.

153 The withdrawal of enemy forces from the Paris area in assouthwestward and southern direction continued, resulting in very heavy rail and road traffic in the Conches-Gace-Alencon-Le Mans-Tours-Orléans-Paris area. Units reported numerous traffic interruptions, particularly on the Paris-Etampes-Orléans route and in the Chartres-Orléans area (trains observed halted and closely spaced; on roads several columns abreast without spacing).

Airfield reconnaissance west of a line Cherbourg-Nantes had revealed considerable numbers of fighter aircraft present, particularly on the Cherbourg, Brest, and St. Nazaire airfields.

10. Alone at Le Havre AAA units sank 6 ships and set 3 on fire, besides forcing one British destroyer to leave the area.
11. According to Army High Command Situation Map for 16 June 1940.
12. According to CINC, Air Force, Situation Report No. 282, 14 June 1940.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

153 Port Reconnaissance showed heavy traffic in Cherbourg and Brest, including large and small merchant vessels together with naval units.

The air situation report showed no recognizable French air activity on this day, far less any any development of main effort. Apparently, the enemy were maintaining a fighter defense barrier between Orléans and Le Mans.

Antiaircraft artillery fire was heavy and well placed over the Chartres-Tours-Le Mans-Alencon areas.

Both of these air defense measures by the French can be considered as related to the French retrograde movements by rail and road.

154 Combat activities be the Second Air Fleet on this day reveal fundamentally different features from the previous days.

Since the offensive on the ground had started on 5 Juneall air combat operations had been closely related to operations on the ground. Air combat missions were confined to ~~among~~ targets in the immediate front areas, and only during the last days had they penetrated a short distance into the enemy rear, as reflected by the final situation report of 13 June. Furthermore, main emphasis had shifted steadily to action against ports and seaborne targets.

At the same time the final situation report on 13

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

155 June showed already that the retrograde movements by the French armies were continuing. Here, a new area of main effort had developed in the region immediately west of Paris, through which the masses of French troops still north of the Seine River were attempting to find a way south. Another factor was that the French Command had already ordered the military evacuation of Paris, so that the units hitherto committed there for defense now also had to try to escape by a rapid withdrawal to the south. The resultant concentration in the general withdrawal, particularly of troops converging in the area south and southwest of Paris, had been confirmed by reconnaissance reports on the morning of 14 June.

The commitments of bomber units on 14 June were based on the above circumstances and the missions were to attack targets in the general area of Evreaux-Gacé-Alencon-Le Mans-Chateaudun-Orléans-Etampes-southern outskirts of Paris.

Within the above area a principal main area is defined within a line from Versailles-Dreux-Nogent le Rotrou-Chartres-Versailles.

Within these areas, and thus for the first time again in the far enemy rear, the bomber units ceaselessly attacked enemy movements on rail and road. The attacks included even rail routes not in use, such as the Chartres-Tours, Chart-

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

155 Le Mans, and Laigle-Bourdon-Le Mans areas.

The boundary line between the Fourth and Eighteenth Armies was no longer of any significance.[13] The air units in the line of advance of both armies, attacked targets at times with main emphasis in the zone of Eighteenth Army, with particular concentration on Chartres.

156 Another significant feature here is that the air fleet apparently flew no more missions which could be described as direct air support ahead of the attack frontage of the Fourth Army, which was advancing southward from its Seine River bridgehead. It appears that direct air support here was no longer needed.

From its mission of tactical support, the Second Air thus within twentyfour hours had switched to operational air warfare, which it seems still had an effect as indirect support for the Army, but at the same extended far into the enemy rear areas.

This sudden change from one set of operational principles and targets to another, which was to be followed by another change within a few days, reveals how extremely flexible was the conduct of air warfare by the German Air Force, which although restricted to tactical action at the opening of Operation "Rot" had not lost sight of the real, strategic purpose of air power.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

156 The map included, together with an explanatory legend, as Appendix 90 gives an overall picture of combat missions executed on this day.

While the Second Air Fleet was committing its entire power in concentration against the withdrawal movements and routes of the French armies, the current main emphasis on action against ports and ships receded completely into the background: only one attack was flown against ships between Le Havre and Caen, apparently without tangible results. In contrast, units carried out four attacks against air fields directly related with the operations on the ground.[14]

Ground Situation. In the entire offensive, the area of main effort on this day was in the east flank region, where the First Army, operating from the general area of Saarbruecken was attacking the Maginot Line in support of which the Air Force launched an all-out large scale concentrated attack. Also on the east flank, the Seventh Army was to attack across the Rhine River on the next day.

Within the overall pattern, the area between the lower Seine River and the Atlantic coast had now become a secondary area of operations.

13. Boundary between Fourth and Eighteenth Army: From 14-16 June a line from Beauvais-east of Gisore-East of Mantes-Houdon-Chartres (Eighteenth). From 17 June on the line was projected from Chartres-Neuillé- Pont Pierre (12 miles northwest of Tours), and from 19 June on still farther across the Loire River west of Samur to the Atlantic coast north of La Rochelle. The combat and pursuit zone for the Fourth Army remained unclear between the Eighteenth Army and the Atlantic coast

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

157 As previously mentioned, the Fourth Army had advanced from its wide bridgehead across the Seine River as early as on 13 June. By evening on the next day its forces had reached a line Le Neubourg-a point southwest of Evreux-Ivry le Bataille-Mantes (see outline map, Appendix 90).

The Eighteenth Army had continued its southward advance according to schedule and by evening its forward elements reached a line Versailles-southern outskirts of Paris.

158 By morning on 15 June the entire western front, extending from the Atlantic coast to the Swiss border had become fluid.

II.15 JUNE 1940

This second day of the pursuit also calls for special treatment, since the mission of the Second Air Fleet again placed it within the pattern of the overall operation.

Weather Conditions. Still clearing over France, with frequent clear and sunny intervals.

Over the take-off base area in Belgium-Holland, the day started with a closed cloud cover, rain, and fog. Later the clouds lightened and visibility improved. Thunder showers in isolated areas.

Reconnaissance Missions: Unchanged, movements on roads and rail routes.

In the general area south of Paris the picture was the

14. The Chartres, Tours, Tours-Parcay, and Songe airfiel

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

158 much the same as on the previous day, one of retrograde movements all along the line. Heavy march movements and vehicular traffic on the roads, together with columns of refugees, moving towards the Loire River.

159 Rail reconnaissance reported heavy traffic on the routes in the Chartres-Tours-Etampes area.

In the northwestern reconnaissance area, Cherbourg-Granville-St. Brieue-Vannes-Nantes-Lisieux units reported no significant movements on roads or rail routes.

Reconnaissance over the Atlantic ports of Brest, St. Nazaire, and Biarits observed medium traffic. The only exception was Bordeaux, where units reported the presence of 50 transport ships in port at Le Vernon.

The combat operations of the Second Air Fleet on 15 June show commitments in a conspicuously different area from the day before. The target areas had shifted not only southward, consonant with the tactical developments, but more to the east.

The large area of main effort bordered on 14 June by a line from Gacé-Surdon-Alencon-Le Mans did not come under attack at all on this day. Apparently, also, no missions were flown in front of the Fourth Army, driving southwest from the area farther northwest. By evening on 15 June the advance on the ground, apparently without air support

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

159 had reached the line approximately from Orbec (9 miles southwest of Bernay)-Vespières-Beaucapil (7 miles southeast of Bernay)-Champignolles. Farther east, advance elements drove forward as far as a line Conches-Tillieres (15 miles southeast of Conches)-St.Lubin-Dreux-Cornay la Ville (11 miles southwest of Versailles)-Chalo St. Marc(5 miles west

160 of Etampes)-Etampes, the latter reached by elements of the Eighteenth Army.

Numerous individual reports reflect the following focal points in attack missions by units of the Second Air Fleet:

(1) Chartres-La Loupe-Nogent le Rotrou-La Ferté Bernard-Vendome-Chateaudun-Chartres.

(2) The rail and road route from Etampes to Orléans, both through Angerville and through Pithiviers (21 miles northeast of Orléans).

(3) Orléans itself (city, bridges, rail depots, and roads; roads and rail routes leading south from Orléans to as far as a line La Motte-Beuvron; above all the bridges over the Loire River southeast of Orléans at Jorgeau, Sully, and Gien.

(4) The area around Montargis (36 miles east of Orléans)-Ferrières (northeast of Montargis).

These various focal points can be consolidated in

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

160 two principal areas of main effort, namely those under (1) above as the one area, and those under (2), (3), and (4) above as the other, the latter, more westerly area being in the left flank area of the Fourth Army, the other, more easterly in front of the Eighteenth Army. However, the easterly area of main effort was also already related to operations by the Sixth Army.

161 On this day units of the Eighteenth Army had also crossed the Seine River east of Paris in the sector between Paris and Corbeil. The adjacent Sixth Army had reached the river in the section from Melun-Fontainebleau-Montereau, and in parts had crossed westwards to then wheel southwest in its continued advance.

In practice, the Second Air Fleet was thus operating ahead of three armies, with the Fourth Army, which it had been the air fleet's original main mission to give direct support, remaining without any direct air support.

The outline map included as Appendix 91 shows the areas of main effort in Second Air Fleet operations on 15 June and the directions in which the Fourth, Eighteenth, and Sixth Armies were advancing (marked with arrows).

As the map very clearly reveals, the Second Air Fleet through this eastward shift of its main effort had again joined the overall operation. The changing missions of

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

161 air power in the past few days shows with what flexibility the German Air Force was able, without regard for space or time, to develop its area of main effort wherever the interests of the overall operation required.

In doing so, the command gave the mission of support for individual armies second place far behind the imminently

162 important mission of annihilating the retreating enemy and expediting their complete collapse. Operational warfare once again had taken priority over the tactical missions of the recent past.

It is hardly necessary to go any further into the matter of the effects produced by the unceasing high- and low-altitude air attacks against targets on roads and rail. Continuing the attacks of the previous day the air fleet's units annihilated the enemy troops in the withdrawal movements wherever they were found. Attacks against marching columns with bombs and weapons fire time and again caused exceedingly heavy losses and panics. Explosions and fires destroyed fully loaded troop transport trains. Traffic jams and congestions at rail depots and bottlenecks increased in frequency and scope. The planned evacuation transports of the enemy were halted in some cases and delayed in others. The attacks against the bridges over the Loire River at and east of Orléans not only destroyed the withdrawal routes

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958

163 but also wrought havoc among the densely packed columns converging on both sides of the river. Here again panics were one result.

THE AIR SITUATION

Not much information was available on the air situation on this day over the zone of the Second Air Fleet. All along the line the French fighter defenses had become still weaker, and defense fighters were encountered only at Tours and Brest. The only place still with strong AAA defenses was Brest, as reported by reconnaissance units. No attacks against the ports occurred on this day.

In contrast, units carried out high- and low-altitude attacks against the enemy ground organization within striking distance of the operational zones. Thus, units attacked the six airfields at Chartre; La Loupe (21 miles west of Chartres; Chateaudun (attacked twice); Montoire (6 miles southwest of Vendome); west of Vendome, and Tours, destroying fighter and ground-attack planes on the ground.

On the whole, the impression is that these attacks by the bombing units were carried out almost without enemy interference, so that the escort fighters were able to participate in the attacks, using their cannons and machine-guns at low altitudes against all visible targets on the ground.

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED IAW EO12958