

GERMAN AIR ATTACKS ON PQ CONVOYS

Extracts from war diaries of Luftflotte 5
dated May - September, 1942

TRANSLATED BY

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10TH JANUARY, 1948

178627

May 2, 1942

For attacks on PQ 15, Fliegerfuehrer Lofoten is subordinate to Fliegerfuehrer Nord(Ost). The retiring convoy was sighted twice, but it was not attacked, because all the forces were prepared for attacks on the approaching convoy. Because of bad weather, the convoy was first reconnoitred at 20.15 hrs. In a combined attack on this convoy, all torpedo aircraft which were ready to take off were used; owing to the low clouds over the target, only a few bombers operated as decoys.

May 3, 1942

The attack made by torpedo aircraft on the approaching convoy in the night of May 2 - 3, 1942 was carried out successfully in the face of strong defence. Conditions were not so favourable for those bombers which operated at the same time. This was because of low clouds. Contact was maintained with the convoy by day, and resumed after breaks caused by the weather. Those bombers which were prepared for attack could not operate because of thick clouds and extensive snow-showers in the convoy area. A night attack by all torpedo aircraft was ordered.

May 4, 1942

PQ 15 was observed to be moving in mass formation. This affords favourable opportunity for the use of torpedo 350 on these convoys, provided the weather is favourable. In the area of the convoy route and in the northern area there are extensive snow-showers and thick clouds; for this reason, contact with the approaching convoy was lost, and could not be renewed. Continuous reconnaissance is proceeding. Torpedo, bomber and Stuka aircraft are prepared for attack. It is to be expected that the convoy will enter Kola Bay after mid-day on May 5, 1942.

May 8, 1942

Attacks on Convoys. The remaining Stuka Staffel (2./St.G.5), 1./H)32 and F-Chain Lapland are directed to immediate cooperation with 4./J.G.5 to carry out these tasks. 4./J.G.5 provides fighter protection for bomber and reconnaissance operations.

May 10, 1942

The large number of ships in Murmansk harbour is a result of PQ 15's having entered the harbour.

May 14, 1942

Should aircraft carriers appear in future with the PQ Convoys, the following targets in particular are to be attacked by the Luftwaffe in cooperation with the Navy:

- a) Aircraft carriers.
- b) Transport-ships or freighters.

May 20, 1942

Orders for PQ 16. Fliegerfuehrer Nord(Ost) is carrying out reconnaissance in the sea area from the North Coast of Norway to the ice-barrier; main point of concentration is round Bear Island. The aim is to ascertain the whereabouts of PQ 16, which is supposed to be at sea already. In sea reconnaissance for PQ 16, there were no positive results.

May 25,

May 25, 1942

Preparation of reconnaissance and bomber aircraft for action against the enemy convoy spotted on May 25, 1942 at 08.23 hrs (17 West 124.7, course north east, speed 7 sea miles). This consisted of 35 merchant ships (totalling 200,000 tons) 1 cruiser, 5 destroyers, and 8 escorts.

May 26, 1942

Reconnaissance aircraft sighted an enemy warship force (2 heavy, 2 light cruisers, 3 destroyers) at 18.00 hrs. proceeding at high speed on an easterly course; it is probably the enemy warship force protecting PQ 16, which was spotted before.

May 27, 1942

The Fuehrer assumes that an immediate attack on Norway can be expected. Accordingly, as many ships as possible must be sent to the bottom, so as to forestall any intended landing.

Convoy PQ 16 In the area S.E. of Bear Island, this large convoy, which was proceeding eastwards, was subjected to attacks from bombers, Stukas, and torpedo aircraft. A total of 101 Ju 88's and 7 He 111's was used, and our own losses were small (3 Ju 88's). The convoy suffered very heavy losses. Reports so far claim that 9 merchant ships, totalling 62,000 tons and 1 large merchant ship (tonnage unknown) were sunk; 6 merchant ships, totalling 30,000 tons, and 1 destroyer were so badly damaged by bombs that they were probably sunk. A further 16 merchant ships, totalling 99,500 tons, were damaged, some so badly that further total losses can be assumed. The convoy sighted at 1935 hrs at 27 east 2449 consisted of 28 merchant ships; of these 7 were either burning or lagging behind the convoy. Thus supplies to Russia from Britain and America have been dealt a severe blow. Observers' reports that ships sank immediately after severe explosions led to the conclusion that the cargoes consisted of ammunition and high explosive.

May 28, 1942

In bomber operations against PQ 16, a merchant ship of 6,000 tons which had already been damaged was sunk.

The strength and losses of the approaching convoy are considered to be as follows:

At 06.45 hrs. on May 25, 1942, 200 km. east of Jan Mayen, 60 ships were sighted sailing eastwards. This included escorts. This convoy split up, and its position was

- a) at 08.23 hrs., north of the previous position with a formation of about 49 ships, and
- b) at 23.30 hrs., with a formation of some 14 ships, east of the first position. This part of the convoy sailed N.E. for about 9 hours, and then sailed back towards the south-west; then it turned round to N.E. and followed the general course of the ships mentioned under heading a). It is to be assumed that this was a fast part of the convoy, which left the main body for some unknown reason and then rejoined it.

After the escorts retired from the convoy, there were about 50 merchant ships left. The cruisers spotted on May 26 and May 27, 1942 are used to protect the flanks against our naval forces; they were not seen today and have probably retired to the west. Today, according to observers' reports from contact planes and reconnaissance planes, the convoy consisted of 28 merchant ships and some 11 escorts. The 22 missing ships give grounds for the supposition that the following were lost:

- a) 14 merchant ships of 99,000 tons have been sunk for certain.

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/b)

- b) 6 merchant ships, totalling 30,000 tons, which were formerly reported to be heavily damaged and probably sunk, can now be assumed to have been destroyed.

In the sea area concerned, reconnaissance saw no sign of these ships.

- c) Of the numerous ships reported damaged, 1 ship is supposed to have been sunk.

- d) 1 merchant ship of 8,000 tons was sunk by a U-boat.

May 29, 1942

PQ 16 The enemy tried to ward off our attacks on the approaching convoy by increased air activity with smaller formations and with single aircraft (main point of attack was Kirkenes) and by radio jamming on contact and tactical frequencies. Single Pe 2's appeared to cover the convoy. In our operations on May 29, 1942, torpedo aircraft sank 2 merchant ships totalling 12,000 tons, and damaged 1 merchant ship of 5,000 tons. Contact was broken for several hours by low clouds, and was re-established in the afternoon. In the evening PQ 16 reached the area some 200 km. N.E. of Kola Bay; here they sought refuge from bad weather by stopping or returning on their course; in this they were guided by radio from Murmansk.

In bomber operations on the night of May 29 - 30, 1942, which were carried out under unfavourable weather conditions, 2 merchant ships, totalling 15,000 tons, were damaged. The convoy split up; two thirds of the convoy is proceeding in the direction of Murmansk, and one third in the direction of Jokanga.

May 30, 1942

Attacks on PQ 16 have shown to our regret that the air sea rescue service available is inadequate for the vast sea area and for major operations. Col. General Stumpff asks Col. General Jeschonnek, Chief of Luftwaffe General Staff, to take into account the vast sea areas involved and the main task of attacking shipping which devolves on the He 59's, and to increase deliveries of Do 24's, posting in the full number of aircrews (i.e. 2 aircrews for Do 24's and 3 aircrews for He 59's).

PQ 16 In the afternoon, the majority of the surviving ships of PQ 16 (18 merchant ships) entered Kola Bay; in the last few days, a total of 50% of the ships in this convoy have been destroyed in air attacks. The smaller part, consisting of seven merchant ships, was about 50 km. north of Jokanga at 18.00 hrs. and will probably make for Jokanga Bay. In these parts of the convoy, 5 merchant ships were damaged today by bomber and Stuka attacks. Other operations which had been ordered could not be carried out because of deterioration of the weather over the target.

July 4, 1942

CONVOY PQ 17

The convoy was spotted during sea reconnaissance and was followed continually with only short interruptions caused by the weather. It consists of 38 merchant ships and some 10-15 escorts. In the vicinity of the convoy is a force of 1 battleship, 3 cruisers, and about 4 destroyers; this force is mostly north of the convoy or ahead of it. Since the Navy, having considered this heavy force, had reached no decision by mid-day, the Luftflotte decided to attack the convoy so as to prevent its passing out of our range. Because of the prevailing weather conditions, torpedo-carrying aircraft were used. Despite an hour's search, the He 115's did not attack, since the cloud-cover

/reported

reported at 80 metres had risen to 300-400 metres, and heavy defences prevented an attack being made. Ju 88 aircraft bombed and sank a merchant ship of about 6,000 tons. So far, reports made on an attack by a group of He 111's state that 3 merchant ships were sunk and 4 or 5 merchant ships damaged. Details and tonnage will be reported later. At present it cannot be ascertained whether the convoy will make for Murmansk or Archangel. Further attacks will be carried out according to the weather.

The force of heavy warships reported in the north of the North Sea on July 3, 1942 could not be found again. As a result of the reconnaissance carried out it is surmised that it has either returned to Scapa or that it is protecting other convoys in the Iceland area.

July 5, 1942

With the agreement of Fliegerfuehrer Nord(Ost), Fliegerfuehrer Lofoten is sending III./K.G. to Banak for attacks against PQ 17. That is, as soon as weather permits.

Because of the presence of an enemy carrier-force in the Polar Sea and the present operations of our own naval forces, the following regrouping must be made:

- 1.) III./K.G. 30 remains in Bardufoss.
- 2.) One Staffel of K.G. 26 (Torpedo a/c) in Banak. After preliminary inspection of runway.
- 3.) 16 air-torpedoes are to be taken to Bardufoss from Banak by 8 aircraft of K.G. 26.
- 4.) The re-grouping is to give Fliegerfuehrer Lofoten and Fliegerfuehrer Nord(Ost) the opportunity of carrying out combined operations.

For the most part, the convoy is scattered in squares 37 east 5650-6650-6610-5610. It appears that fast vessels are heading for the severe weather area with greatest possible speed.

The convoy was reconnoitred and continual contact was maintained. Mean position in the evening 47 east 1600, general course 100 degrees. The convoy has deployed, probably because of air attacks, U-boat activity, ice conditions, and the weather. The main force is within an area of 60 sq. kilometres, and the maximum distance from North to South is 200 km. Single ships are on the edge of the northern ice-belt and fast vessels running for the severe weather area. In the afternoon, the convoy was attacked by bomber and torpedo-carrying aircraft. According to reports, 14 merchant ships were hit. Of these, 7 were sunk; average size 6,000 - 8,000 tons. According to statements made by prisoners, the convoy is bound for Archangel. Reconnaissance made so far shows that it will set course as far to the east as the ice-barrier will permit. The formation of the convoy and the number of ships cannot be ascertained because of the large dispersal area. The heavy warships accompanying the convoy yesterday were not found today.

July 6, 1942

The impression is that, of the convoy, 10-12 ships at the most are left; of these, some are making north-east on a line 45 degrees east, and other are making south-east and south. Today, 2 merchant ships totaling 13,000 tons were sunk. Armed reconnaissance continues, since only one ship was sighted. Heavy warships have not been seen in the north and north-east area.

July 7, 1942

Attacks carried out on the surviving vessels of PQ 17.

/July 8,

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July 8, 1942

During armed reconnaissance, the enemy was not sighted. According to prisoners' statements, part of the convoy was bound for Murmansk. During the voyage, in the vicinity of Bear Island, the convoy was ordered by radio to make for Archangel, because it could not be unloaded at Murmansk.

July 9, 1942

Reconnaissance on surviving ships of the enemy convoy had no result in the morning, as large tracts of the Barents Sea were under fog. In the evening 3 merchant ships with 5 escorts were found in the Barents Sea; contact was maintained, and operations against them are proceeding.

July 10, 1942

In the sea area north of Jokanga, Pe 3's and Hurricanes are protecting the surviving ships of PQ 17. Bombing operations in several waves took place against the remaining ships of PQ 17, which were trying to make for Jokanga. Of the 5 merchant ships observed in the night previous to July 10, 2 have been sunk by U-boats, and 3 merchant ships, 1 destroyer, and 1 escort have been sunk by the Luftwaffe; those not sunk have been so badly damaged that their destruction can be claimed for certain. According to the figures available, it is correct to assume that not one ship of PQ 17 reached a port. Details cannot be ascertained until after the return of the U-boats and examination of air photographs. One merchant coaster of 6,000 tons was sunk.

Complete report on the operations against PQ 17

A. Operations against PQ 17 from July 2 - 10, 1942 brought no change to the fundamental conception of bombing methods. The weather prevented any combined operations on the part of torpedo-aircraft and Ju 88's. Both forces operated independently.

B. At the beginning of June, PQ 17 was reported by agents. The convoy assembled from the beginning of June in the shelter of the west coast of Iceland. On June 30 at 16.40 hrs., when it was seen that QP 13 had made for the sea area 180 sea miles north of Nordkyn, it had to be assumed that, following the precedent of PQ 16, PQ 17 must be already in the area west of Jan Mayen. Weather conditions at the end of June and the beginning of July did not allow of a reconnaissance of Murmansk-Kola Bay, nor could the sea area Iceland-Jan Mayen be observed. After this, extra heavy reconnaissance in the Jan Mayen sea area on July 2 showed, at 14.01 hrs., PQ 17 with 38 merchant ships and 10 destroyers on a northern course. To protect the convoy and defend it against attacks from our naval forces, the enemy had brought into the sea-area from Iceland-Spitzbergen a group of 1-2 aircraft carriers, 2-3 battleships, 4 heavy cruisers, and 8-10 destroyers (July 1-6). Contact was kept with the convoy until July 10, with the exception of a few short breaks caused by the weather.

C. 1.) Operating against PQ 17 were:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| (a) <u>Reconnaissance:</u> | I./K.G. 40, 1.(F)/22, 1.(F)124, 2./406, 3./406, 3./906, 1./125, Westa Nord. |
| (b) <u>Bomber formations:</u> | K.G. 30, I./K.G. 26(Torpedo), 1./406, (Torpedo), 1./906(Torpedo). |
| (c) <u>Air-sea rescue:</u> | Air-sea rescue planes of A.S.R. Command IX, Kirkenes. |

2.) The formations were under the command of Fliegerfuehrer Nord(Ost), Fliegerfuehrer Lofoten, and Fliegerfuehrer Nord(West).

3.) The over-all operations were conducted by Luftflottenkommando 5 from the front line in Kemi and from Oslo.

/Considerable

Considerable difficulties had to be overcome, which arose from the fact that wireless messages could be intercepted in Sweden. Personal messages had to be replaced by time-wasting teleprinter messages. Despite the 1500 km. communication distance, however, control of the Fliegerfuhrer was possible. The Fliegerfuhrer succeeded under difficult weather conditions in reaching the maximum operational activity.

4.) The operations carried out by these formations were praiseworthy beyond all measure. Especially brave were the operations of I./K.G. 26 against the convoy in close formation on July 4, 1942. This attack had the effect of making the heavy escort units begin to retire; then, too, the first signs were seen of the convoy's beginning to break up. According to prisoners' statements, the commodore of the convoy ordered dispersal after the aerial torpedo attack. After the torpedo attack made by I./K.G. 26, an attack was made on July 5 by K.G. 30 with 3 Gruppen. After this, the convoy was completely scattered. On July 6, the contact forces observed only single vessels and a small force of 4 merchant ships. The failure of the second torpedo attack by I./K.G. 26 is explained by the dispersal of the convoy over an area of 300 by 60 km. Aircraft attempted an attack on the small convoy in the area off the north-west coast of Novaya Semlya, but the target could not be found in the adverse weather. However, the ships which were intended to complete the destruction were not useless, since the blockading position taken up by U-boats far to the south of the fastest single vessel led to the sinking of several ships.

On July 7, the remainder of the convoy was spotted off the north-west coast of Novaya Semlya. But because of fog on July 8 and July 9, north of 72 deg. latitude, the reconnaissance did not spot the rest of the convoy (5 merchant ships) until July 9 (position 47 east 1151). The attack which followed was carried out by 2 Gruppen of K.G. 30 from Banak, with a total of 38 planes; this led to the destruction of a large American freighter of 7000 tons and to the damage of another 8,000 ton ship. As a result of bad weather (fog at Banak) I./K.G. 30 had to be diverted to Petsamo. II./K.G. 30 succeeded in reaching Banak.

On July 10 there was another attack by 16 Ju 88 of I./K.G. 30 and the experimental Staffel on the convoy of 2 merchant ships and 4 escorts which had been reported in the area north of Jokanga. In this operation a 5,000 ton freighter was so badly hit that it sank within a few hours; and an 8,000 ton freighter was so badly damaged by two direct hits from 500 kg. bombs that it can be counted as destroyed (according to U-boat report, the steamer "El Capitane", 5,216 tons, was sunk by the Luftwaffe); one escort was sunk. Thus, the surviving ships of the convoy which were trying to make for Jokanga were destroyed. The badly hit 8,000 ton freighter was attacked again by 18 Ju 88's of II./K.G. 30 from Banak, but the effect could not be observed because of fighter defence; one destroyer was set on fire. North-west of Jokanga, a 6,000 ton freighter (not part of PQ 17) was sunk. The rest of the convoy was protected by Pe 2's and Hurricanes after passing 100 km. north of the coast.

D. 1.) The following planes operated:

130 Ju 88.
43 He 111 (20 broke off.)
29 He 115 (6 broke off.).

2.) Successes were as follows:

/I.

I. Sunk:

II. Damaged:

Ju 88	{ 1 destroyer 2 escorts	= 4,000	
He 111	{ 16 merchant ships = 95,216 1 cruiser		8 merchant ships = 52,000
He 115	{ 6 merchant ships = 44,000		{ 9 merchant ships = 46,000 1 merchant ship = 6,000

The ships in column II were eventually sunk by the Luftwaffe or by U-boats. (Already provided for in column I.).

3.) Total weight of H.E. dropped:

Ju 88	212.500 kg.
He 111	46 aerial torpedoes
He 115	15 aerial torpedoes

4.) Losses:

BV 138	1 totally
He 111	2 totally and two aircraft with 2 men killed.
He 115	1 without crew
HW 200	1 totally

E. Because of the arrival of PQ 17, the torpedo position in Luftflotte 5 area, and the unfavourable weather conditions, QP 13 was not attacked.

F. Special mentioned should be made of the U-boats' activities, which clarified the situation by confirming the sinkings caused by the Luftwaffe. Special mention must also be made of the sinking of a heavy American cruiser on July 4, 1942. This was not reported by the Luftwaffe, as both the crews which attacked this cruiser failed to return. U-boats sank those ships which were damaged by the Luftwaffe and gave valuable information on the cargo, name and size of the ships.

G. Air-sea rescue planes of Seenotbereichskommando IX(Kirkenes) brought back a total of 36 prisoners along with the aircraft of 1./906 returning from bombing operations. Interrogation confirmed the success of the attacks made by Luftflotte 5 on Murmansk harbour installations. Amongst other information, they said that part of PQ 17 was destined for Murmansk from the start, but that it was to be diverted by radio to Archangel, "because of the unserviceability of unloading installations at Murmansk". This is proof of the effect of the attacks on Murmansk. An American mate who was captured described the sinking of the heavy American cruiser.

H. Operations against PQ 17 were closed on July 10, 1942 as there were no more targets available. According to the reconnaissance carried out by Luftflotte 5, which had covered the sea area as far as 150 km. north of Murmansk from July 7, 1942, no ship could have reached a Russian port.

Col. General Stumpff reported to the Reichsmarschall by teleprinter on July 12, 1942: "Herr Reichsmarschall! I beg to report the destruction of Convoy PQ 17. During reconnaissance made on July 10, 1942 in the White Sea, the western passage, the Kola coast, and the sea area north of the coast, not a single merchant ship was observed. Photographic reconnaissance of Jokanga showed that no ship belonging to PQ 17 has reached that harbour.

I report the sinking by Luftflotte 5 of:

1	cruiser
1	destroyer
2	escorts, totalling 4,000 tons
22	merchant ships, totalling 142,216 tons."

/September 7,

September 7, 1942

CONVOYS PQ 18 and QP 14

Since it is definitely known that PQ 18 has assembled near Iceland, after further reconnaissance by Fliegerfuehrer Nord(West), the reconnaissance of the sea area near Spitzbergen previously carried out by Fliegerfuehrer Lofoten can cease.

In order to spot QP 14 early as a basis for naval operations against it, and as a check on PQ 18's putting to sea, Fliegerfuehrer Nord(Ost) is to increase reconnaissance after September 8, 1942, on Archangel, Murmansk, and the sea lane through Gorlo Strait to the north (west of Novaya Semlya).

The results of reconnaissance show that a large new convoy will certainly be leaving Iceland for Russia. As with former convoys, increased enemy air activity can be expected, especially in operations against our own airfields. For this, British aircraft from the Murmansk area (Hampdens) and aircraft-carriers will probably be brought up. Other British aircraft formations are also expected to be brought over Northern Sweden into the Kandalakscha-Murmansk area. Fighters, anti-aircraft units, and Spotter Service are to be informed of this.

September 14, 1942

The eastern sea reconnaissance as far as Novaya Semlya showed only slight traffic in the western sea lanes but no sign of QP 14. The reconnaissance of the warship formation spotted at Iceland on September 12, 1942 was unsuccessful. On September 14, 1942, at 0315 hrs., Convoy PQ 18 was again spotted 25 sea miles S.W. of the southern tip of Spitzbergen. Contact was maintained with it until 1800 hrs. The last position of the convoy was 110 sea miles E.S.E. of the southern tip of Spitzbergen. Attacks followed on the convoy with strong forces of torpedo-carrying and bomber forces. Concentration was on the aircraft-carrier, and there were considerable losses amongst our torpedo-carrying planes. At least 7 merchant ships were sunk, with a total of 49,000 tons (including one tanker), and one destroyer was sunk. It is possible that the aircraft-carrier suffered some damage but so far this has not been confirmed.

Because of the prevailing weather conditions, the bomber forces operating had a relatively small chance of making an effective attack. On the basis of today's experience it appears to be more profitable to cease concentrated attacks on aircraft-carriers in favour of attacks on merchant ships, since even the fighter defences from this small carrier scarcely had any disturbing effect. Because the carrier is proceeding with the convoy east of Spitzbergen, it can be assumed that it is accompanying PQ 18 as far as the protective range of Russian fighters (that is, some 300 km. north of the western sea lane) and here takes over QP14. Accordingly, QP 14 would have to cross the White Sea and the western sea lane on September 15, 1942.

September 15, 1942

QP 14, which was expected, was spotted this morning on a N.E. course 100 km. north of Cape Kanin Nos. It consisted of 18-20 merchant ships and 10-14 escorts.

In bomber operations against PQ 18 with strong forces of K.G. 30 (with parts of III./K.G. 26 with aerial torpedoes), there was only slight success because at the time of the attack the convoy was under an extensive cloud-bank, and because the D/F signals from the contact plane could not be heard because of atmospheric disturbance and therefore some of the aircraft did not find the target. One escort was sunk, 1 merchant ship of 8,000 tons was severely damaged and probably sunk, and two merchant ships of 4,000 and 6,000 tons respectively were damaged. The two convoys may cross each other's

/course

course on the evening of September 16, 1942 in the sea area west of Matotschkin Strait. In bomber operations against a concentration of motor-boats in Pummanki Bay, one motor-boat was damaged, and three others were probably damaged by blast. Fighter escorts shot down 17 enemy planes (12 Hurricanes and 5 Tomahawks); two of our planes were lost.

September 16, 1942.

The weather on September 16, 1942 held up bomber and torpedo operations against PQ 18 and QP 14. The convoys are at the limit of our range. In the intensely severe weather area, half of the flying must be done where reconnaissance has shown heavy icing to occur at almost all altitudes. Until 15.00 hrs. today, contact was maintained with both convoys, then it was abandoned because of the weather (clouds). The two convoys have probably crossed each other's course this evening, in the area N.W. of the Matotschkin Strait. Today, because of the weather, attacks on the convoys were not carried out by bombers or torpedo-carrying aircraft, and barrage balloons were seen for the first time over the ships of PQ 18. The weather will probably make attacks on both convoys difficult.

September 17, 1942.

The Reichsmarschall has ordered that all forces are to attack PQ 18 until it reaches port. The destruction of the ships in this convoy is of decisive importance.

It is to be expected that the attacks on convoys will have to be carried on throughout the winter. Fliegerfuehrer are asked to examine torpedo operations and to set out the necessary requirements which can be expected to be fulfilled.

PQ 18 This morning, the convoy was spotted by a reconnaissance aircraft, but contact could not be maintained because of the very bad weather after mid-day. In the afternoon an aircraft equipped with radar equipment succeeded in sighting the convoy for a short time, after having kept in touch with the ships' position for 5 hours, by radar. The attack planned for the available torpedo-carrying planes had to be given up because of the weather.

According to a photograph taken at 10.00 hrs. on September 15, 1942, the convoy consists of 28 ships moving in column, some of which, according to a U-boat report, may be anti-submarine craft disguised as merchant ships in the centre of the convoy. It is extremely difficult to ascertain the exact strength of the convoy's merchant ships, because of the great distance the contacts have to keep from the convoy and because of the constantly changing strength and position of the escorting vessels.

QP 14 This convoy was not seen by reconnaissance forces today; in the afternoon, U-boats reported destroyers and carrier aircraft in the area. From this, it may be concluded that the aircraft-carrier is returning with the western convoy; the other aircraft-carrier with the PQ 18 convoy was not seen again.

September 18, 1942

Attacks on QP 14

After September 19, 1942 the following are to be made subordinate to Fliegerfuehrer Lofoten for operations against QP 14:

- 1.) a) K.G. 30 with I. and III./K.G. 30, Experimental Staffell K.G. 30.
b) Parts of I./F 22 which were formerly subordinate to Fliegerfuehrer Lofoten at Bardufoss.
- 2.) II/K.G. 30, I./K.G. 30, and III./K.G. 26 remain under Fliegerfuehrer Nord(Ost). Orders for operations against QP 14 and operational subordination under Fliegerfuehrer Lofoten will come through the Gefechtsstab of Luftflotte 5.

/PQ 18

PQ 18 This convoy was again sighted early this morning off Kanin Nos, and was attacked, in spite of bad weather, by 2 torpedo and two bomber Gruppen. Only one Gruppe was successful because of further deterioration of the weather at mid-day and because a large number of the torpedoes failed to explode. The third bomber Gruppe to go into action failed to find the target because of further deterioration in the weather. Six merchant ships (46,000 tons) and 1 escort were sunk, 2 merchant ships totalling 15,000 tons were probably sunk, 5 merchant ships totalling 35,000 tons damaged and 1 destroyer set on fire. According to reports made by the contacts, the convoy had 49-53 ships before the attack. After today's attacks, there were 40-43 ships; bad visibility prevented our distinguishing merchant ships from escorts, but it must be expected that there are still at least 20 merchant ships in the convoy. Tomorrow, attacks will be made in the Gorlo Strait and in the White Sea by those torpedo aircraft which can still operate.

QP 14 On the expected course S.E. of Spitzbergen, QP 14 was sighted again; the aircraft-carrier was damaged. Because of the weather, contact could only be maintained until early afternoon. The weather makes the chances of attack tomorrow doubtful.

September 19, 1942

This morning, the convoy PQ18 was sighted by reconnaissance in the area of the Mesen Bay; it was spotted again in the afternoon south of Gorlo Strait. Contact was abandoned at 15.30 hrs. because of the weather. The number and types of ships could again not be ascertained because of bad visibility. The weather caused the attacks to be switched over to the ports. PQ 18 will probably enter Archangel today, and, because of the difficult channel, parts of the convoy will possibly remain outside the Dvina Bar; there, because of the depth of water, torpedo attacks are impossible.

September 20, 1942

This morning, PQ 18 was sighted in the area of Cape Kerez; the ships were strung out, and apparently in the act of dispersing. Bomber attacks against the surviving vessels of PQ 18 were made by two bomber Gruppen. The weather prevented one bomber Gruppe from finding the convoy, and it attacked Archangel as a secondary target; results were not observed. Despite unfavourable weather, the other bomber Gruppe inflicted heavy damage on 3 steamers (totalling 19,000 tons) with heavy and medium bombs; there were heavy flak and fighter defences. One Pe 2 was shot down, and one Junkers is missing.

QP 14 was sighted at mid-day 180 sea miles south west of Ice Fiord (Spitzbergen) and its course was ascertained to be 230 degrees. It was impossible to attack it, as it was out of range.

The two destroyers and two merchant ships seen at mid-day in Glocksensund (Spitzbergen) were seen west of Spitzbergen in the afternoon, heading west. The merchant ships were of about 5,000 - 10,000 tons each. Probably they are supply ships for the light escorts of PQ 18 and QP 14, which are returning after having fulfilled their task.

Summary from September 11 - 20, 1942

At the time covered by the report, enemy air activity against our airfields increased, especially at night; this was connected with the approach of PQ 18 and QP 14. Single bombs caused no great damage. In the hours of dusk and dawn, 8 enemy aircraft were shot down by our fighters, and 3 by flak. Increased enemy activity in the air and on land made us conclude that he was trying to divert us from PQ 18 and QP 14.

/In

In the operations against PQ 18, the following moves were made:

On September 13, 1942, I./K.G. 26 from Bardufoss to Banak
 III./K.G. 30 from Bardufoss to Banak
 1/2 1./F 22 from Bardufoss to Banak

On September 16, 1942, Torpedo train 7 from Sørreisa to Petsamo,

On September 20, 1942, K.G. 30 with I., II., III./K.G. 30 and
 experimental Staffel K.G. 30 from
 Banak to Kemi.
 2 Works trains of 4 F.B.K./K.G. 30 from
 Banak to Kemi.

Operational subordination of formations operating against PQ 18 and
 QP 14 was altered as follows:

- a) From September 15, 1942, III./K.G. 30 and I./K.G. 26 to Fliegerfuehrer Nord(Ost).
- b) From September 19, 1942, I./K.G. 30, III./K.G. 30, Experimental Staffel/K.G. 30,
 1/2 1./F to Fliegerfuehrer Lofoten.
 II./K.G. 30, I. and III./K.G. 26 remain under
 Fliegerfuehrer Nord(OST).
- c) For attacks on shipping in the Archangel area,
 From September 20, 1942, K.G. 30 with I., II., III./K.G. 30 and
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September 21, 1942

Attacks on surviving vessels from PQ 18 in the Dvina Estuary were carried
 out by single bombers only, and had no result; some of the attacks had to be
 broken off early because of strong fighter defences.

QP 14 was sighted in the afternoon 150 sea miles north of Jan Mayen. It
 is now out of our range.

September 22, 1942

Reconnaissance showed that 7 ships remained in PQ 18; they were making
 for the Dvina Estuary. Archangel could not be seen because of the bad weather.
 There were 7 freighters with a total tonnage of 50,000 tons in Molotovsk
 harbour. Whether these belong to PQ 18 or not can only be ascertained after
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PQ 18 This convoy was again sighted early this morning off Kanin Nos, and was attacked, in spite of bad weather, by 2 torpedo and two bomber Gruppen. Only one Gruppe was successful because of further deterioration of the weather at mid-day and because a large number of the torpedoes failed to explode. The third bomber Gruppe to go into action failed to find the target because of further deterioration in the weather. Six merchant ships (46,000 tons) and 1 escort were sunk, 2 merchant ships totalling 15,000 tons were probably sunk, 5 merchant ships totalling 35,000 tons damaged and 1 destroyer set on fire. According to reports made by the contacts, the convoy had 49-53 ships before the attack. After today's attacks, there were 40-43 ships; bad visibility prevented our distinguishing merchant ships from escorts, but it must be expected that there are still at least 20 merchant ships in the convoy. Tomorrow, attacks will be made in the Gorlo Strait and in the White Sea by those torpedo aircraft which can still operate.

QP 14 On the expected course S.E. of Spitzbergen, QP 14 was sighted again; the aircraft-carrier was damaged. Because of the weather, contact could only be maintained until early afternoon. The weather makes the chances of attack tomorrow doubtful.

September 19, 1942

This morning, the convoy PQ18 was sighted by reconnaissance in the area of the Mesen Bay; it was spotted again in the afternoon south of Gorlo Strait. Contact was abandoned at 15.30 hrs. because of the weather. The number and types of ships could again not be ascertained because of bad visibility. The weather caused the attacks to be switched over to the ports. PQ 18 will probably enter Archangel today, and, because of the difficult channel, parts of the convoy will possibly remain outside the Dvina Bar; there, because of the depth of water, torpedo attacks are impossible.

September 20, 1942

This morning, PQ 18 was sighted in the area of Cape Kerez; the ships were strung out, and apparently in the act of dispersing. Bomber attacks against the surviving vessels of PQ 18 were made by two bomber Gruppen. The weather prevented one bomber Gruppe from finding the convoy, and it attacked Archangel as a secondary target; results were not observed. Despite unfavourable weather, the other bomber Gruppe inflicted heavy damage on 3 steamers (totalling 19,000 tons) with heavy and medium bombs; there were heavy flak and fighter defences. One Pe 2 was shot down, and one Junkers is missing.

QP 14 was sighted at mid-day 180 sea miles south west of Ice Fiord (Spitzbergen) and its course was ascertained to be 230 degrees. It was impossible to attack it, as it was out of range.

The two destroyers and two merchant ships seen at mid-day in Glocksund (Spitzbergen) were seen west of Spitzbergen in the afternoon, heading west. The merchant ships were of about 5,000 - 10,000 tons each. Probably they are supply ships for the light escorts of PQ 18 and QP 14, which are returning after having fulfilled their task.

Summary from September 11 - 20, 1942

At the time covered by the report, enemy air activity against our airfields increased, especially at night; this was connected with the approach of PQ 18 and QP 14. Single bombs caused no great damage. In the hours of dusk and dawn, 8 enemy aircraft were shot down by our fighters, and 3 by flak. Increased enemy activity in the air and on land made us conclude that he was trying to divert us from PQ 18 and QP 14.

/In

In the operations against PQ 18, the following moves were made:

On September 13, 1942, I./K.G. 26 from Bardufoss to Banak
 III./K.G. 30 from Bardufoss to Banak
 1/2 1./(F) 22 from Bardufoss to Banak

On September 16, 1942, Torpedo train 7 from Sörreisa to Petsamo,

On September 20, 1942, K.G. 30 with I., II., III./K.G. 30 and
 experimental Staffel K.G. 30 from
 Banak to Kemi.
 2 Works trains of 4 F.B.K./K.G. 30 from
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