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THE ACTIVITIES OF FLIEGERKORPS X IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1941

Based on a report of a visit by a technical
officer of the German Air Ministry dated
26th February, 1941.

TRANSLATED BY:

A.H.B. 6., AIR MINISTRY

15th NOVEMBER 1947

PRIMARY COMMITMENTS

The primary commitments were the cutting of the sea route between Sicily and Africa, the disruption of British naval traffic, attacks on the British Fleet in Alexandria, and mining of the Suez Canal and British ports.

ADDITIONAL TASKS

These included attacks on airfields in Malta and North Africa, and also on troop movements in Africa.

OPERATIONAL AERODROMES AND HOLDING BASES OF FLIEGERKORPS X

Catania:	H.Q. of X Fl. Korps, Stab/LG 1 (Ju 88 A 5) II/ " " " III/ " " " 1./F/121 (Ju 88 F) III/KG zbV 1 (Ju 52)
Palermo:	III./Z.G. 26
Trapani:	Stab/St.G.3. I./St.G.1. (Ju 87 R 1 u. 2.) II./St. G.2 " "
Gola:	7./J.G. 26 1./N.J.G.3
Comiso:	II./KG 26 (He 111) 2./KG 4

ARMAMENT

The following were available:-

Bombs: SD 50, SC 250 (J A, L, K) SD 250 II, SC 500 L 2,
SD 500, SC 1000, SD 1000, SC 1800

Fuzes: 15, 25, 25a, 28a, 28b, 35 and 17a, 38, 40, 50

The supply of bombs was adequate for the primary tasks, a certain number of SD 50 and SC and SD 250, as well as a larger amount of bombs of greater calibre, being available. There were difficulties in transporting bombs from Germany, due to congestion in the Brenner Pass. Consequently, it became necessary to use more and more SC and SD 500, as well as smaller calibre bombs, on live targets in Africa.

The type of fuzes and bombs to be used by the Squadrons was laid down by Fliegerkorps X, according to the type of target to be attacked. This frequently necessitated the changing of the fuzes in the bombs.

EXTRACT FROM THE OPERATIONAL ORDERS AND COMBAT RESULTS OF FLIEGERKORPS X

Attacks on the Aircraft Carrier "Illustrious" -

First attack - One direct hit by St.G.3. with SD 250 bomb with 28a fuze, and a possible hit by St.G.3 with one SD 1000 bomb with 35 fuze; also a possible hit by KG 26 with one SD 1000 bomb with 35 fuze. After this attack the carrier docked in La Valetta (Malta).

/Second

Editor's Note

SC (SPRENGCYLINDRISCH) = M.C. (Medium Capacity)
SD (SPRENGDICEKWARD) = S.A.P. (Semi Armour Piercing)

- Second attack - In La Valetta, St.G.3. scored hits with one
16.1.41. SD 1000 bomb (35 fuze) and three SC 500 bombs
with 28b fuzes, and LG 1 with 2 SC 1000 bombs
with 28b fuzes. It was estimated that these fell
between the Carrier and the quayside.
- Third attack - In La Valetta, St.G.3. attacked with 5 SC 500
19.1.41. bombs with 28b fuze and 5 SD 500 bombs with 28a
fuze. After this attack, thick columns of smoke
were observed. Subsequent photographic
reconnaissance showed severe damage on the upper
deck (landing deck) of the carrier, and the fact
that shadows cast were short indicated that she
was lying low in the water, and it was therefore
assumed that she was aground.

A few days later the Illustrious was sighted once more, this time in Alexandria, which she was thought to have reached under her own power. This failure caused great disappointment in Fliegerkorps X. These poor results were generally thought to be due to some special protection round the Carrier's engines and her main installations, rendering the blast of the bombs ineffective. The SC 1000 bombs which fell between the Carrier and the Quayside probably damaged the ship's hull, but as she was no doubt equipped with strong bulkheads, she could keep afloat in spite of being partly flooded and lying low in the water (as seen from the shorter shadow cast).

Results of attacks on airfields and troop concentrations -

- 13.2.41. - Attacks carried out by II/LG 1.
The first attack was carried out between 06.10 and 06.40 on Benina Airfield, near Benghazi. Hits were scored on hangars, dispersal points, huts and tents, with 12 - SC 250 delayed action bombs and 4 - SD 250 instantaneous bombs. The second attack by II/LG 1 of this date was carried out between 06.25 and 07.05 against Berha Airfield, also near Benghazi, with 8 - SD 250 instantaneous bombs and 12 - SC 250 delayed action bombs. Hits were scored on hangars and grounded aircraft. The reports on both these attacks did not disclose either the height from which the attack was made or the type of fuze used.
- 13.2.41. - II/KG 26.
An attack was made between 20.30 and 20.40 on airfields in Malta from a height of 5,700 metres with 2 - SC 500 and 8 - SC 250 bombs. Results were not observed and it was not known whether delayed action or instantaneous bombs were used.
- 14.2.41. - St.G.3.
Attacks were made on troop and vehicle concentrations in the El Agheila area with SC and SD 500 bombs with 28a and 28b fuzes. No details of height or time available.
- 15.2.41. - LG 1
Two attacks were made on Benghazi, from heights ranging between 1000 and 2000 metres. One attack was carried out between 06.35 and 06.45 with 2 - SD 1000, 3 - SC 1000, 4 - SC 500 and 8 - SC 250 bombs. Another attack was made between 05.55 and 06.55 with 4 - SD 1000, 4 - SC 500 and 9 - SC 250 bombs. Four fires were observed in the target area.

/Attacks

Attacks with LMA and LMB Parachute Mines

These attacks were made by 2/KG.4 based at Comiso. In the opinion of Fliegerkorps X, one Staffel was not sufficient to carry out the attacks single handed. Kptlt. Futh from SVK at Kiel was transferred to Fliegerkorps X to organise these attacks. The following places were mined:-

- (i) Suez Canal - with LMA Blue. This mining was accompanied by a nuisance bombing raid. Photographic reconnaissance carried out seven days later showed that one ship of 600 tons and one of 10,000 tons were sunk in the Canal. The Canal was closed to traffic for 2-3 weeks, so that approximately 1,000,000 tons of shipping were held up in the approaches to the Canal during that period.
- (ii) Sollum Harbour - with LMA Blue
- (iii) Bardia - with LMA Blue
- (iv) Tobruk - with LMA Blue
- (v) Benghazi - with LMA and LMB Blue
- (vi) La Valetta - with LMB Blue and Green

No results had been observed by the 16th February. LMA White (Land Mines) dropped on Benghazi from a height of 1800 metres with an unknown wind produced no results, because they probably fell into the sea.

A.H.B. 6. Distribution

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