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AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH

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THE WESTERN FRONT
15 - 28 FEBRUARY, 1945

Daily situation reports issued by
OKL Operations Staff Ia

TRANSLATED BY
AIR MINISTRY, A.H.B.6.
APRIL, 1954.

G.403063/MKL/4/54/100

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

- 2 -

15 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

The British continued their heavy attacks, particularly in the Xanten area, and attempted to force a breakthrough. This was prevented by German counter-attacks and the enemy thrusts have so far been contained.

Army Group B:

Only local activity.

Army Group G:

The Americans launched a local attack in some strength in the Forbach area. Fluctuating fighting is in progress.

Air Situation

During the night of 14/15 February about 800 British heavy bombers heavily screened by jamming made a double attack on the city areas and transport and industrial targets at Chemnitz and Zwickau. Berlin and Dresden were attacked by fairly small formations of Mosquitoes. Another formation of heavy bombers carried out mine-laying in Mecklenburg Bay. Owing to intensive enemy jamming, German night fighter operations which were carried out on some scale against these incursions were only moderately successful. Luftwaffe H.Q. West carried out small-scale night ground attack operations in the Nijmegen area.

During the day there were heavy enemy fighter operations over the front and west of the Rhine, especially against transport targets. Attacks were made on Cottbus and Ruhland-Schwarzheide by about 600 American heavy bombers, on Dresden by about 50 American heavy bombers and on Magdeburg by about 300 American heavy bombers. Considerable damage was done, particularly to transport installations. Only small-scale German operations were carried out in the West.

Orders and Staff Reports:

1. As enemy airborne landing operations on some scale are to be expected in the West, directives on measures to be taken against such enemy operations are issued to Luftflotte Reich, Luftwaffe H.Q. West, II Jagdkorps, 3rd Jagddivision, 16th Fliegerdivision and KG 76. All reconnaissance forces will be employed in such a way that intended enemy airborne landing operations can be identified in good time. Warning orders will be issued and preparatory measures taken to ensure immediate counter-measures by all available bomber formations.
2. Owing to the critical fuel situation it is no longer possible to maintain the fighter reserve training system at its present scale and reorganisation is essential. OKL Operations Staff Ia submits a reorganised system for future fighter reserve training to A.O.C. Fighters and A.O.C. Flying Training for immediate decision. According to this plan only one reserve training Geschwader comprising six Gruppen will continue to operate.
3. Luftflotte Reich is directed that by order of the Reichsmarschall KG 51 and the operational elements of KG 76 will be formed into an operational unit under command of KG 76 Geschwader Headquarters.
4. A.O.C. Reconnaissance is directed to transfer 1(F)/43 and ground staff to Wittmundhaven immediately. The provision for the transfer to Norway of a Schwarm of 1(F)/33 contained in the directive of 1st January is cancelled. A Schwarm of 1(F)/5 will be provided for operations in Norway.

/5.

RESTRICTED

- 3 -

5. In view of the difficult fuel situation in the Reich, Q.M.G. suggested that 2,000 tons be withdrawn from the stocks held in Norway for "Dr.G.Nord". Ia Operations submits the survey on the present calculation of ranges for "Dr.G.Nord" ordered by the Chief of the Operations Staff. This calculation indicates that no more fuel must be withdrawn if a state of readiness for "Dr.G.Nord" is to be maintained and the forces provided for this purpose are to carry out the actual operation. Ia Operations therefore suggests that the state of readiness for "Dr.G.Nord" in its present form be cancelled, as the fuel situation in the Reich will no longer allow unused stocks to be held outside the frontiers of the Reich and, furthermore, the intended transfer of reinforcement formations to Norway will in itself require a large amount of fuel and in the actual event of an enemy landing these formations will in all probability not arrive until after the first few decisive days.

6. Luftflotte 6 and Luftflotte Reich are instructed that the two mixed Flak Abteilungen (motorised) from Norway and Denmark, elements of which have already arrived in the Army Group Vistula command area, will be moved up to 9th Paratroop Division immediately in accordance with the order issued by the Reichsmarschall.

16 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

British attacks were continued, but the intended breakthrough was prevented by using the final German reserves.

Army Group B:

Local fighting continues in the Echternach area.

Army Group G:

Only slight local activity.

Air Situation

There was only very slight enemy nuisance activity during the night of 15/16 February. Two formations each comprising about 50 heavy bombers carried out mine-laying in Oslo Fiord and at the western outlets of the Baltic.

During the day enemy fighter-bombers and twin-engined aircraft carried out large-scale operations over the front and the area west of the Rhine, especially against transport targets. About 900 American heavy bombers attacked transport and industrial targets at Rheine and Dortmund and several airfields in north-western Germany. Enemy twin-engined aircraft escorted by fighters made an unsuccessful attack on a German convoy on the Norwegian coast. German operations were on a small scale. The attack on the convoy was impeded by the German fighter escort, which shot down eight enemy fighters.

Orders and Staff Reports:

1. Luftflotte Reich is directed to carry out Operation "Gisela" as soon as possible. A report will be made on the intended zero hour and the forces allocated for the operation.

2. Supplementary to the instructions issued on 15 February regarding counter-measures against enemy airborne landings in the West it is ordered that following identification of enemy airborne landings all Luftwaffe forces in any way suitable for the task will suspend all other activity and operate exclusively against these landings.

RESTRICTED

- 4 -

3. Following a detailed discussion of the aircraft industry's emergency programme for the forthcoming production period between the Director of Technical Armament and Hauptdienstleiter Saur, Ia op/Ia(T) submits a report on the resultant effects on the Luftwaffe to the Chief of the Operations Section.

4. The state of flak defences at the most important hydrogenation plants was reported to the Reichsmarschall's Adjutant.

Points from Daily Conferences:

In view of an urgent signal from Gauleiter Hanke at Breslau, the Fuehrer ordered the air supply of Breslau to be commenced immediately during the night of 15/16 February, General Morzik reports to the Chief of the Operations Staff that only 13 Ju 52's took off during the night, as the Army was not able to assemble sufficient quantities of the types of ammunition requested at the forwarding airfields in the time available. Sixty He 111's have been assembled for the daylight run commencing at 1030 hours. Fifty-four Ju 52's are available for the night of 16/17 February. However, General Morzik points out that operations on this large scale cannot be maintained for long owing to the fuel situation. In a telephone conversation between Generaloberst Schoerner and the Chief of the Operations Staff the former stressed that in view of the fuel situation he considered bomber operations by Luftflotte 6 more important than large-scale supply runs to Breslau. The Chief of the Operations Staff informed General von Burgdorff to this effect so that the latter may advise the Fuehrer accordingly.

Following a report by Q.M.G., the Chief of the Operations Staff orders the immediate subordination of the Fuchs Salvage Organisation to the Luftwaffe Chief Engineer. At the same time the organisation's vehicle and personnel strength will be reduced considerably. The vehicles will be made available to Q.M.G. to put flak formations in the East on a mobile basis, while the personnel will be released to the Army.

The Reichsmarschall has decided that Operation "Drachenhohle" cannot be carried out for the time being. However, the fuel held in Norway for this purpose will still be held in reserve.

17 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

The heavy British attacks continued. Ground was gained to the south-west and Goch was reached. Owing to the lack of effective German reserves, the situation at Goch is becoming difficult.

Army Group B:

Increased artillery fire and patrol activity. The two American airborne divisions hitherto at the front have been transferred to the rear area to rest and re-equip. As a British paratroop division and a further British airborne division are located in Britain, a major airborne operation must therefore be expected on the Western Front.

Army Group G:

The Americans gained ground in the Forbach area in a local surprise attack.

Air Situation

Owing to bad weather over Britain there was only insignificant nuisance activity during the night of 16/17 February.

G.403063/MKL/4/54/100

RESTRICTED

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RESTRICTED

- 5 -

During the day enemy fighter activity over the area west of the Rhine was on a rather limited scale, again due to weather conditions.

About 300 American heavy bombers attacked transport targets at Frankfurt on Main, Offenbach and Giessen.

Orders and Staff Reports:

1. Luftflotte 6 is directed to carry out photographic reconnaissance as soon as possible of the Warsaw - Kutno, Warsaw - Lodz, Warsaw - Czestochowa, Deblin - Skarzysko and Debica - Cracow railway lines which are of particular importance to enemy supply and to operate by day and night against movements of supplies and reinforcements identified on these lines, especially in the Army Group Vistula command area.
2. A.O.C. Fighters is directed that fighter pilot trainees allocated for service on the Western Front and in the defence of the Reich will be temporarily attached with immediate effect to Fighter Reserve Training Geschwader on the Eastern Front to accustom them to operational conditions. For this purpose II and IV/E.J.G. 1 will continue operational service with Luftflotte 6.
3. OKW/Armed Forces Operations Staff/(Defence) receives the flak organisation plans for the West from Luftwaffe Operations Staff Ia for information.
4. Of the 332 heavy and 110 medium and light Flak Batterien to be transferred to the Eastern Front, 182 heavy and 54 medium and light Batterien had arrived by midday today and a further 92 heavy and 32 medium and light Batterien are en route.

Points from Daily Conferences:

Luftflotte 6 reported that full preparations for the air supply of Breslau had been completed according to basic regulations (main and alternative landing grounds, dropping areas, gliders, the necessary communications etc.). The first major air supply operation during the night of 16/17 February could not be carried out on the scale planned, as it transpired that the necessary preparations had not been made in an appropriate manner. The Chief of the Operations Staff therefore orders Q.M.G. to investigate the matter and submit a written report.

Following several recent appearances by elements of R.A.F. Bomber Groups on special operations (attacks on dams etc.) in the vicinity of the Eder and Moehne dams, the Chief of the Operations Staff orders an investigation of flak defences in this area.

Luftflotte 6 evaluated all former ice-crossings over the Oder in its reconnaissance photographs as bridges or bridge construction and entered them as such on the appropriate maps. In fact there is still not a single bridge which has been built by the Russians. The Chief of the Operations Staff observes that Luftflotte 6 photographic evaluation is poor in this respect and is confused by over-annotation. It is instructed to rectify these matters. The Chief of the Operations Staff also stresses that such reports give Headquarters a completely false picture.

The transfer of about 3,000 men of the flak personnel without guns located in East Prussia to the Reich for reorganisation into new units is approved by the Fuehrer.

/18 February 1945

RESTRICTED

- 6 -

18 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

The British brought up reinforcements and continued their attacks, the main effort being made in the Goch area. The enemy succeeded in making gradual gains to the south-west. Intense fighting for the town of Goch is in progress.

Army Group B:

Artillery fire flared up east of Aachen. American attacks in some strength in the direction of Nord-Eifel and in the Echternach area achieved local successes. The enemy is attempting to eliminate the Eifel front salient by attacking from the north and south.

Army Group G:

Minor local activity, primarily in the Forbach area.

Air Situation

There was slight enemy nuisance activity during the night of 17/18 February. A fairly small formation of Mosquitoes attacked Bremen.

Enemy fighter-bomber activity was on a small scale during the day owing to continued fog. About 150 heavy bombers attacked transport targets at Wesel.

Orders and Staff Reports

1. Supplementing the order issued on 17 February regarding operations against movements of enemy reinforcements, Luftflotte 6 receives special instructions to attack large-scale movements of enemy rolling stock identified on railway routes leading west.
2. OKW ordered the withdrawal to the Reich for reorganisation into new units of 3,000 men of the flak personnel in East Prussia who have become surplus to requirements owing to loss of equipment.

Points from Daily Conferences:

The plenipotentiary for air transport (General Morzik) reports that Army Group North has requested air supply for about 10 - 14 days at the rate of 160 tons per day (including 50 tons of Otto fuel) owing to floe ice in the bay. This request cannot be carried out if the air supply of Breslau is to be continued on the present scale. The Chief of the Operations Staff rejects this request, as the Navy can ensure the movement of supplies across the bay by using suitable small craft.

Following a re-examination, Q.M.G. 9th Abteilung reports that it is no longer possible for the Reichsmarschall to withdraw 200,000 men for the Paratroop Army from the Luftwaffe. The Reichsmarschall's personnel requirements could be met by reorganisation in the aircraft industry which would result in the release of the Luftwaffe personnel which it still employs on a considerable scale.

/19 February 1945

RESTRICTED

- 7 -

19 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

The British continued their attacks and are attempting to wear down the German front by constantly bringing up reinforcements and sending in fresh reserves.

Army Group B:

Heavy American attacks are continuing on the Eifel front and have gained more ground. The situation is deteriorating in this area.

Army Group G:

The enemy launched attacks in the Remich and Saargemuend areas and achieved local successes.

Air Situation

Enemy nuisance activity was stepped up during the night of 18/19 February. Fairly small formations of Mosquitoes attacked Berlin, Bremen and Rheine. The R.A.F. continued mine-laying operations in Heligoland Bay and the Skagerrak.

As the improvement in the weather from the west continued there was intensive fighter-bomber activity over the front and against transport targets in the area west of the Rhine during the day. About 1,000 American heavy bombers attacked transport targets in Muenster province, in particular at Muenster, Osnabrueck, Siegen, Rheine, Meschede and Wesel. A further attack was made on Wesel by about 100 British heavy bombers. No German operations of any importance were carried out owing to the weather.

Orders and Staff Reports

1. Luftflotte Reich proposed the disbanding of KG 53 on 16 February. This proposal will be held over until a final decision has been reached concerning the entire subject of disbandment of Luftwaffe units which is now becoming necessary.
2. Luftflotte 4 is instructed to investigate the economy measures of Luftwaffe ground organisation units in the Zagreb area.
3. Of the 332 heavy and 110 medium and light Flak Batterien to be transferred to the Eastern Front, 204 heavy and 58 medium and light Batterien had arrived by midday today and a further 101 heavy and 38 medium and light Batterien are on route.
4. Following the restoration of Poelitz as an important hydrogenation plant - contrary to the original report - the dispersal of flak units ordered on 14 and 19 February will not be carried out on such a large scale. Poelitz will retain 256 guns.
5. 105th Barrage Balloon Abteilung hitherto serving with Luftflotte 4 will be transferred to Luftflotte Reich for employment at important bridges.

/20 February 1945

RESTRICTED

- 8 -

20 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

The heavy British attacks were continued. Intense fighting is in progress for Goch. In spite of stubborn German resistance the enemy, who is being reinforced, is succeeding in advancing gradually.

Army Group B:

The Americans continued their attacks on the Eifel front and made a deep penetration in the Echternach area, causing a considerable deterioration in the situation.

Army Group G:

The Americans also succeeded in making a deep penetration on the Orscholz switch-line and a local gain west of Saarbruecken.

Air Situation

During the night of 19/20 February there was intensive enemy nuisance activity with attacks on Wuerzburg, Erfurt, Hanover and Bremen by rather large Mosquito formations. About 200 British heavy bombers attacked the Boehlen hydrogenation plant. German night fighter operations were on a negligible scale. The Atlantic coast strongholds of La Rochelle and St. Nazaire were supplied by air.

During the day the American resumed their air offensive with another heavy terror attack on Nuremberg by about 1,000 heavy bombers. Escorting fighters carried out low-level attacks on airfields and transport targets in south-western Germany. There was also intensive activity by fighter-bombers and twin-engined aircraft over the front and the area west of the Rhine, particularly against transport targets. No German operations were carried out owing to weather conditions. Yesterday KG 26, assisted by the weather, made a very effective attack north of Tronsoe on the QP convoy which had been located by reconnaissance. Two light cruisers, two destroyers and eight merchant ships totalling about 57,000 tons were sunk and a further three merchant ships were badly damaged. Two German aircraft were lost.

Orders and Staff Reports:

1. Luftflotte Reich is instructed to carry out photographic reconnaissance of ports in south-eastern England and Antwerp harbour as soon as weather conditions permit.
2. Luftflotte 6 is instructed to carry out photographic reconnaissance of Memel to ascertain whether the Russians are using the port as a base for E-boats. In addition, Luftflotte 6 and Luftflotte 1 are ordered that all fighters engaged in escorting transport vessels will shoot up enemy E-boats.
3. The Luftwaffe Chief Engineer is instructed to provide adequate technical personnel and technical equipment for ground organisation for a special operation by KG 200.
4. OKH has issued appropriate orders for the construction of further defence installations in eastern Germany. Luftflotte Reich, Luftflotte 4 and Luftflotte 6 are thereupon instructed to organise the employment of flak artillery in co-operation with the Army authorities responsible for this construction work.

/Following

G.403063/MKL/4/54/100

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

- 9 -

Following a suggestion by OKL Operations Staff regarding the employment of flak artillery in the eastern theatre, OKW/Armed Forces Operations Staff issued orders on 17 February to the effect that most of the flak artillery transferred to the Eastern Front (about two-thirds) will be used as ground artillery. A mobile force of about divisional strength will be set aside for use in critical situations. The remainder of the Batterien which have been brought up will be deployed to a depth of about 80 - 100 km behind the front to defend transport and supply installations of major importance and Luftwaffe ground organisation. Efforts will be made to withdraw further flak units for these anti-aircraft defence duties. With reference to this OKW order, Luftflotte 6 is instructed to settle details regarding the disposition of forces in co-operation with the Army Groups. The strategy of the Anglo-American air forces, which is being co-ordinated to an increasing extent with Russian operations, must be given closer consideration than before when determining the allocation of forces for each protected locality.

6. Luftflotte 6 and Luftflotte Reich are instructed to report to OKL the whereabouts of the flak searchlight H.Qs. and units which were serving with II Flakkorps and Luftgaukommando VIII at the beginning of the winter offensive on the Eastern Front, so that they can be made available for re-assignment if occasion arises.

21 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

Enemy activity was on a smaller scale as the British are apparently regrouping for fresh attacks.

Army Group B:

There was a marked increase in activity by enemy raiding parties and artillery east of Aachen. The Americans continued their attacks in the Pruem and Echternach areas and achieved further successes. They also succeeded in making a deep penetration south-west of Trier, where a critical situation consequently developed.

Army Group G:

Only local activity on a rather small scale.

Air Situation

There was intensive enemy nuisance activity in the West. Berlin was attacked twice by two fairly large Mosquito formations. About 600 British heavy bombers made a heavy terror attack on Dortmund. German night fighters engaged this force in some strength and with good results. The R.A.F. continued mine-laying in Heligoland Bay.

During the day there was large-scale activity by enemy fighters and twin-engined aircraft over the entire area west of the Rhine, particularly against transport targets. There was intensive activity along the Norwegian coast by enemy twin-engined aircraft. About 1,000 American heavy bombers attacking through a solid overcast made the heaviest terror attack to date on Nuremberg. Only small-scale German operations were carried out.

Orders and Staff Reports:

1. Luftflotte 6 is instructed to employ a full-strength day fighter Gruppe exclusively in the defence of the fortress of Breslau.

/2.

G.403063/MKL/4/54/100

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

- 10 -

2. To prevent German troops being shot up by their own aircraft, Luftflotte 6 is issued with detailed instructions regarding the employment of flying formations without experience of operations on the Eastern Front, and, in particular, of ground-support operations.
3. The commander of FAG 1 (long-range reconnaissance) and 2/FAG 5 will be subordinated to KG 200 for a special operation.
4. Following an enemy air attack on Oertrablung airfield in which several Me 262's were destroyed, the Reichsmarschall contested that the Q.M.G./Luftwaffe Ground Organisation had allegedly ordered the suspension of blast-bay construction on 2nd and 18th February. After receiving a report from Oberstleutnant Mueller (G.S.O. - Q.M.G. Luftwaffe Ground Organisation), the Chief of Staff made a detailed statement in reply to this reprimand.
5. Of the 332 heavy and 110 medium and light Flak Batterien to be transferred to the Eastern Front, 261 heavy and 72 medium and light Batterien had arrived by midday today and a further 51 heavy and 24 medium and light Batterien are still en route.
6. OKH/Army General Staff/Organisation Department is informed that the "Berlin" Infantry Division had received the two heavy Flak Abteilungen (partly motorised) which had been requested by 17 February. However, it was particularly stressed that the Abteilungen are very inadequately equipped with transport.
7. The Central Reich Operations Department of the SS proposed that the heavy flak Abteilungen released to SS divisions be incorporated into the SS and renamed as artillery Abteilungen. OKL rejected this proposal. The flak Abteilungen detached to Army and SS divisions will remain with the Luftwaffe, having been subordinated to the divisions solely for operational purposes, in order that they may later be re-assigned to their proper task, that is anti-aircraft defence.
8. The Reich Labour Service Directorate ordered the removal of two gun detachments from all Reich Labour Service Flak Batterien, as 7 Reich Labour Service Flak Batterien which had had to be released to an Army division had each been reduced to 4 guns per Batterie. OKL cannot agree to this arbitrary action on principle and the cancellation of the order in question is proposed.
9. Luftflotte Reich and Luftflotte 6 are directed that the Poelitz searchlight force which was wound up by Luftflotte Reich will be built up again as quickly as possible with 11 searchlight Batterien manned by servicemen, in order that the AA defences at Poelitz may be made more effective. Luftflotte Reich and Luftflotte 6 are also instructed to ensure that crossings over the Elbe and the most important marshalling and goods yards in the vicinity of the front are provided with adequate AA protection. For this purpose, 20 of the 90 heavy flak Batterien which Luftflotte Reich was ordered to transfer to Luftflotte 6 on 3 February, will be returned to the former.

Points from Daily Conferences:

OKW ordered a battalion of 9th Paratroop Division to be flown to Breslau. Orders to this effect are issued to the plenipotentiary for air transport.

By order of the Reichsmarschall the Fuehrer was informed today of the present aviation fuel situation and future distribution by the Chief of the Operations Staff Ia, who had been briefed by the Chief of Staff. To date about two thirds of the Luftwaffe quota has been used for training and industrial purposes and one third for operations. In future only about 40% of the quota will be allocated for training and industrial purposes, while 60% will be used for operations.

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G.403063/MKL/4/54/100

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

- 11 -

Following a report by Chef Ia (Director of Operations), the Chief of Staff agreed to the formation of a third fighter Gruppe from the fourth Staffeln of the two fighter Gruppen in Norway, while the twin-engined fighter Gruppe in Norway which has not been operating recently owing to lack of fuel will be disbanded.

OKH again requested the release of a heavy flak Abteilung (motorised) for each of the two Panzer divisions which are soon to be established. OKW issued orders for the release of these units. These two flak Abteilungen cannot be made available by Luftflotte Reich in addition to the 332 flak Batterien withdrawn for the Eastern Front. They must be formed from Batterien already located on the Eastern Front. It was proposed and agreed that the Army provide the necessary vehicles as this too is now beyond the resources of the Luftwaffe.

Supplement:

10. After it had been noted by the Reichsmarschall, the report on Reichsminister Speer's tour in the West from 15th to 31st December 1944 was forwarded to the Chief of Staff and the Chief of the Operations Staff for information and retention.

22 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

Only local attacks were carried out by the British.

Army Group B:

There was increased enemy artillery fire east of Aachen. The situation on the Eifel front deteriorated considerably as a result of further gains made by heavy enemy attacks. The Americans also succeeded in making a deep penetration south of Trier.

Army Group G:

Local enemy attacks continued, particularly in the Forbach area.

Air Situation

During the night of 21/22 February large formations of British heavy bombers were operational again, making a heavy terror attack on Duisburg in two waves and an especially heavy attack on Worms. Good results were obtained by German night fighters operating in some strength in moonlight. Berlin was attacked twice by Mosquito formations.

Altogether 117 enemy aircraft were shot down for certain by fighters and flak in the Luftflotte Reich area on 21 February and during the night of 21/22 February.

During the day there were large-scale operations by enemy fighter-bombers and twin-engined aircraft over the front and the area west of the Rhine, where the main objective was transport targets.

Today the tactics used over southern Germany were also employed over north-western and central Germany, when about 1,400 American heavy bombers operating in small and very small groups attacked transport targets of little importance and small towns which had so far not been touched. The large fighter escort also made low-level attacks on these targets and on airfields.

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G.403063/MKL/4/54/100

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

- 12 -

Thirty-four Me 262's of JG 7 took off, but were not able to engage the heavy bombers as they were immediately involved in intensive actions with enemy fighters. Only five enemy aircraft were shot down.

A fairly large formation of British heavy bombers attacked the hydrogenation plant at Scholven and the Altenbeeken railway viaduct.

Luftwaffe H.Q. West carried out fighter operations in some strength against enemy fighter-bombers.

Orders and Staff Reports:

1. The difficult aviation fuel situation necessitates amendment of the Reichsmarschall's appeal for volunteers for the defence of the Reich issued on 1 June 1944. The Luftflotten, the G.A.F. Generals in Italy and Norway and the Air Officers commanding branches of the Luftwaffe are therefore directed that only personnel requiring not more than four weeks' training to reach operational standards will be submitted for the defence of the Reich.
2. Luftflotte Reich is ordered to reinforce the flak defences at each of the four airfields at which pickaback aircraft are to be parked for the operation by KG 200 to a total strength of 80 light guns.
3. The Reichsmarschall is informed that smoke units are already standing by at bridges over the Elbe at Wittenberge, Haemerten, Dessau-Rosslau and Wittenberg and that a unit is being formed for employment at Torgau.

Points from Daily Conferences:

It reports that according to information received to date, former German airfields with runways in Silesia and in the Warthe district, some of which were not destroyed, are very heavily occupied by the enemy. The Chief of Staff points out the possibility of destroying an appreciable proportion of the enemy formations by a surprise attack. Luftflotte 6 will examine the possibilities of such an operation.

An aerial photograph shows that the actual effect of the V-weapon bombardment on Antwerp, and especially on the port, is insufficient to bring enemy supply movements to a permanent standstill.

23 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

Local British attacks were continued.

Army Group B:

The Americans launched an offensive on a broad front east of Aachen and made gains of up to 2 kilometres at the main points of attack. At first only enemy infantry was sent in. The entire American reserve force (six armoured divisions, five infantry divisions and the airborne divisions) are still standing by. On the Eifel front the Americans made further appreciable gains. The situation in this area is becoming critical.

Army Group G:

Local fighting continued at Forbach and Saargemuend.

/Air Situation

RESTRICTED

- 13 -

Air Situation

During the night of 22/23 February there was intensive enemy long-range night fighter activity. About 80 Mosquitoes attacked Berlin. The enemy again carried out mine-laying in Oslo fiord.

During the day there were very heavy operations by enemy fighter-bombers and twin-engined aircraft, particularly over the American sector of attack and the area west of the Rhine.

About 1,200 strongly-escorted American heavy bombers again carried out the tactics commenced yesterday with operations against small transport targets over a wide area in central Germany and Franconia. At the same time the escorting fighters attacked a large number of trains. Four hundred British heavy bombers attacked industrial targets in the Ruhr, especially Essen.

Luftwaffe H.Q. West carried out small-scale ground attack activity and fighter operations against enemy fighter-bombers. Aircraft of KG 26 operating from Norwegian bases made a further attack on the enemy QP convoy and sank a steamship of 7,000 tons.

Orders and Staff Reports:

1. As the Russians have been bringing up the bulk of their supplies by rail in the eastern areas which they have occupied, the orders issued to Luftflotte 4 and Luftflotte 6 on 17 February regarding operations against enemy supply movements are supplemented by instructions to step up attacks on trains and locomotives in particular.
2. In accordance with the decision reached by the Fuehrer on 19 February, the Luftwaffe will in future also be responsible for dispersal, measures against fragmentation, camouflage and flak defence at factory airfields. The Reichsmarschall issues a directive to this effect and instructs the plenipotentiary for aircraft ferrying and testing (Generalleutnant Kleinrath) to supervise the necessary measures at factory airfields.
3. In view of the low aviation fuel stocks in Italy, Ia op suggests that the reinforcement formations hitherto held in readiness for transfer into the Adria area in case of an enemy landing, should no longer be committed to employment in this area.
4. Following a recent increase in attacks on Bremen by Oboe-controlled Mosquito formations, the Navy requests increased fighter protection of submarine construction at Bremen. In a detailed report Ia/Air suggests the transfer to the Bremen area of two Me 109 Staffeln at present employed in the defence of Watenstedt. This depends on the release of the two fighter Staffeln by the Reichsmarschall.
5. Luftflotte Reich, Luftflotte 6 and AA Artillery Operational H.Q. - Eastern Front are ordered to form one heavy flak Abteilung (partly-motorised) each for "Jueterbog" and "Schlesien" Panzer divisions. The Army will provide the necessary vehicles.
6. With reference to the order issued on 20 February regarding the rapid reinforcement of flak defences at bridges over the Elbe, eight railway flak Batterien from the Western Front are released to Luftflotte Reich in view of developments in the air situation. However, flak Batterien (semi-mobile) will relieve these railway Batterien at Elbe bridges as soon as possible so that the latter may be re-assigned to the Western Front.

Points from Daily Conferences:

Field Marshal Model condemned the inadequate standard of training of young paratroop officers in the West and proposed that future training be /controlled

RESTRICTED

- 14 -

controlled by the Army. The Chief of Staff ordered an examination of this matter and the submission of a report to the Reichsmarschall.

The G.O.C. in Luftgau III (General Hoffmann) offered Luftwaffe alarm units (Oschatz OCTU) to Army Group Centre (Generaloberst Schoerner) on his own initiative. It is observed that this unit is in no way subordinate to Luftgau III Headquarters. The Chief of Staff rejects this proposal as the G.O.C. in Luftgau III has absolutely no authority to do this.

24 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

British attacks in some strength were resumed, particularly in the Goch area. The attempted enemy breakthrough was prevented.

Army Group B:

The American offensive east of Aachen developed into a battle of material of maximum proportions. In the course of the fighting Juelich was lost and a serious threat to Dueren developed. Even so the enemy was prevented from breaking through, but the German front was forced back up to 5 kilometres. The enemy's large armoured reserves have still not been sent into action. The enemy also continued his attacks in the Schnee Eifel and succeeded in gaining an appreciable amount of ground.

Army Group G:

The enemy achieved further successes south of Trier. Fluctuating fighting continues in the Saarbruecken area.

Air Situation

During the night of 23/24 February the British continued their air offensive with a heavy terror attack on Pforzheim by about 250 heavy bombers, a nuisance attack on Berlin by about 80 Mosquitoes, mine-laying in Oslo fiord and an attack on the U-boat yard at Horten. Six German night fighters shot down 14 enemy aircraft in the Pforzheim area.

The enemy air offensive was also continued during the day by about 1,200 American heavy bombers with attacks on the hydrogenation plant at Miesburg, oil production installations at Hamburg, on Bremen and on small towns and transport targets in north-western Germany. Four hundred British heavy bombers attacked targets in the Ruhr. Enemy fighter-bombers and twin-engined aircraft carried out operations on a very large scale over the front and the area west of the Rhine. Luftwaffe H.Q. West was able to employ only a moderate number of German fighters against these operations.

Orders and Staff Reports:

1. In view of the changed situation the subordination of 1st Jagddivision to Luftflotte 6 ordered on 6 February is cancelled. Luftflotte Reich will thus resume operations against Soviet aircraft which are ranging deeper into the Reich. Special orders from OKL will still be necessary for the employment of JG 300, JG 301 and the night fighter Gruppen of 1st Jagddivision in ground-support operations on the Eastern Front.

2. In view of the increasing seriousness of the situation in the West, Luftflotte Reich is ordered to carry out with immediate effect the complete demolition of all but a few of the airfields located west of the Rhine.

RESTRICTED

- 15 -

3. The A.O.C. Flak is instructed to dispatch a training detachment to the Bautzen area with immediate effect to expedite the conversion of a light flak Batterie of 17th Flakdivision (motorised) from the 2 cm gun to the twin-barrelled 3.7 cm gun mark 43.

Points from Daily Conferences:

Although no difficulties regarding personnel for Operation "Eisenhammer" have arisen so far, KG 200 now requests the immediate provision of 35 experienced Ju 88 pilots. These pilots will have to be provided by LG 1 (18) and Fliegerkorps IX (Fighter) (17). The Chief of Staff gives instructions for an order to this effect to be issued, as the best pilots available are necessary for the operation if it is to be at all successful.

In accordance with an order issued by the Fuehrer, the flak Batterien and searchlights employed in the A.A. defence of Berlin and located in the outer defence ring will be incorporated into the ground defences and moved back into the inner defence ring. Luftflotte Reich has already used some guns belonging to these Batterien (about 50 in all) for anti-tank operations. The Chief of Staff does not agree with this action. Luftflotte Reich will be instructed to deploy flak formations in such a way that all the guns can be used for AA defence. Whole Batterien will be employed at the most important arterial roads for both anti-tank and anti-aircraft defence.

As a reduction in aircrew training is necessitated by the fuel situation, it will not be possible to train the volunteers supplied by the Hitler Youth for the "Oesau" fighter Geschwader. With the exception of 34 men who have reached an advanced stage, it will also be necessary to terminate the training of the volunteers who reported to KG 200. The Chief of Staff gives orders for the Reichsmarschall to be informed accordingly and suggests that, subject to the Reichsmarschall's approval, these volunteers be released to the Paratroop Army so that they can be returned to flying training immediately in the event of an improvement in the fuel situation. OKH Organisation Department cannot now fulfil its agreement to provide all the vehicles for the two heavy flak Abteilungen being formed by AA Artillery Operational H.Q. for the "Schlesien" and "Doeberitz" Panzer divisions. Following a discussion between the Chief of Staff and General Thomale (OKH), the Army agrees to provide at least part of the vehicles. In this respect it is noted that the Luftwaffe provided vehicles from its own resources for seven heavy flak Abteilungen which had to be detached to an Army. However, the large number of flak Batterien located on the Oder front are completely immobile and will be lost as soon as the Russians launch an offensive.

25 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

The British continued local attacks in the Goch area, but these were repulsed.

Army Group B:

By contrast, the heavy American assault on a broad front succeeded in forcing deep penetrations and the enemy has even broken through in places. The situation on the Fifteenth Army front is described as very serious as it is practically impossible to bring up reserves and supplies owing to large-scale enemy fighter-bomber operations. The enemy also achieved a deep penetration on the severely weakened German front in the Bitburg area.

RESTRICTED

- 16 -

Army Group G:

The Americans also succeeded in extending their former penetration south of Trier.

Air Situation

The enemy carried out intensive night fighter operations during the night of 24/25 February. A small formation of British heavy bombers attacked industrial targets in the Ruhr. About 80 Mosquitoes made a nuisance attack on Berlin. The enemy continued mine-laying operations in the Kattegat and Heligoland Bay. Luftwaffe H.Q. West carried out night ground attack and night fighter operations on a moderate scale.

During the day enemy fighter-bombers and twin-engined aircraft carried out large-scale operations over the front and the area west of the Rhine in co-ordination with the American offensive.

About 150 British heavy bombers attacked Dortmund. Altogether some 1,200 American heavy bombers continued the air offensive against transport targets and airfields in southern Germany with very heavy attacks on Munich, Ulm, Aschaffenburg and Friedrichshafen and airfields at Giebelstadt, Schwaebisch Hall, Memmingen, Lechfeld and Erding. Fighter operations by Luftflotte Reich (JG 300 and JG 301) were ineffective as the enemy incursion was expected over central Germany.

Orders and Staff Reports:

1. The four airfields provided so far for parking pickaback aircraft for the KG 200 special operation are not sufficient. As dispersal and camouflage will also afford greater security against enemy air attacks, Ia suggests that the pickaback aircraft be distributed over nine airfields.
2. Following an agreement between the Chief of OKW/Army Staff and the Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff the heavy flak Abteilungen detached to Army division will retain their Luftwaffe identity and will be subordinate to the Army for operational purposes only. However, OKH is requested to return these flak Abteilungen to the Flak Division for employment at critical points after Army artillery has been brought up.
3. On 22 February Luftflotte Reich reported its plans for supporting the Operations Commandant of Berlin in ground fighting in the Berlin area. These are approved in principle by the Chief of Staff and are supplemented by various orders. In particular, permission was refused for the withdrawal at the present time of a large number of individual guns for employment as anti-tank sections. Whole Batterien will be provided for this purpose, and these will remain in AA defence until employed in a ground role.
4. Luftflotte 3 will release a further three railway flak Abteilungen from other employment to reinforce the build-up of flak defences at Elbe crossings ordered on 20 and 23 February.

Points from Daily Conferences:

The meteorological service Ia submits to the Chief of Staff a survey of statements made by captured British and American aircrew regarding meteorological information held by the enemy air forces. This states that aircraft take off in Britain even in the worst weather conditions if good weather is assured for their return to base. Heavy bomber formations operate irrespective of fighter escort. These facts indicate the high standard of training and the long flying experience of enemy aircrews. Moreover, they are evidence of good electrical navigation equipment (altimeters etc.).

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RESTRICTED

- 17 -

In view of the succession of Oboe-controlled Mosquito attacks now being made on Bremen and apparently directed against submarine construction, the Chief of Staff instructs A.O.C. Night Fighters to move Oboe jamming transmitters into the area and demands daily reports on their activity.

Luftwaffe motor transport fuel stocks are not sufficient to enable the airfield construction programme to be carried out in full. Following a suggestion by the Chief of Staff to General Meisel, the Navy agrees to supply 2,000 tons of fuel oil per month for six months from its own resources. This fuel can be mixed with "Otto" fuel, thus allowing the construction programme to be carried out in its entirety.

26 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

The British continued local attacks, particularly in the Goch area, and gained ground. However, a breakthrough was prevented.

Army Group B:

The American offensive is continuing with an intensified armoured effort and the employment of fresh forces. The enemy succeeded in gaining ground to the east and north-east. However, he has so far been prevented from achieving the strategic breakthrough to the Rhine which he is attempting. Enemy pressure was also maintained in the Echternach area.

Army Group G:

The Americans also extended and deepened their penetration east of Saarburg.

Air Situation

During the night of 25/26 February Mosquito attacks, some of them Oboe-controlled, were made on Berlin, Erfurt, Bremen (submarine construction) and Mainz.

Owing to weather conditions there was reduced enemy fighter-bomber activity over the front and the area west of the Rhine during the day. About 150 British heavy bombers attacked Dortmund.

About 1,000 American heavy bombers operating in unbroken cloud made a heavy terror attack on Berlin. Factories producing radio equipment and cables were particularly heavily hit.

Orders and Staff Reports:

1. Luftflotte 6 is ordered to set up the headquarters "Jafü Ost" which it proposed for the expected resumption of the Soviet offensive against Berlin. This headquarters is intended for the control and concentration of day fighter formations in the Berlin area. It will be subordinate to Luftflotte 6 in all respects.
2. As the fighter Geschwader in the West are short of pilots and those in the East have a surplus, A.O.C. Fighters is instructed to transfer personnel.
3. As there is still a considerable number of Me 163's available (about 300), A.O.C. Fighters proposed that II/JG 400 be transferred to the Wittmundhaven - Nordholz - Zwischenahn so that the Gruppe can carry out operations more frequently.

RESTRICTED

- 18 -

frequently. I and II/400 are to be re-equipped with 162's (jet fighters) at a later date. The Luftwaffe Operations Staff forwarded the proposal to the Reichsmarschall with its recommendation.

4. By order of the Fuehrer a further battalion will be detached from 9th Paratroop Division, equipped with light and heavy weapons and flown to the fortress of Breslau.

5. An Ar 234 of Goetz reconnaissance unit now in transit to Italy has already arrived at its destination, while another Ar 234 of Einstatzkommando 1/(F) 5 has arrived at Stavanger. Thus, modern jet reconnaissance aircraft are available in Italy and Norway.

Points from Daily Conferences:

The flak ammunition situation in the defence of the Reich is becoming so critical owing to inroads into production and the priority of the Eastern and Western fronts that it will soon be possible to provide only the most important defended localities with limited supplies. The Chief of Staff observes that the ammunition held at idle hydrogenation plants, which are in any case attacked again and put out of action immediately after returning to production in spite of maximum concentration of flak defences, should be called in so that other defended localities can be supplied with ammunition. A proposal to this effect for submission to the Fuehrer will be worked out for discussion with the Reichsmarschall.

General Peltz, Fliegerkorps IX(J) suggests that the rapidly retrained KG 6 and KG 27 (J) be employed in the East until they have become completely accustomed to operations. The Chief of Staff agrees in principle, but believes that the units should be assigned to Luftflotte 4 instead of to Luftflotte 6 as the fuel situation of the former is more favourable. As soon as the standard of training permits, operations against heavy bomber incursions from Italy may also be carried out from Luftflotte 4 bases. The Chief of Staff believes that success will be achieved through surprise as the Americans have encountered no fighter defence in this area for more than a year.

At present the Reichsmarschall is primarily concerned with the problem of separating the day and night fighter arms as the A.O.C. Fighters supports his views. Generaloberst Stumpff requested the Chief of Staff to give his opinion on this problem. The Chief of Staff instructs the Luftwaffe Operations Staff to ask Luftflotte Reich for its views. The Chief of Staff agrees with the Chief of the Operations Staff in flatly rejecting the proposed separation and demands that in future the A.O.C. Fighters discuss such proposals for changes in organisation with him or with the Luftwaffe Operations Staff before submitting them to the Reichsmarschall. All such proposals which have not been thought out in every detail and which A.O.C. Fighters, Fliegerkorps IX (J) and A.O.C. Bombers, for example, have hitherto put directly to the Reichsmarschall, only produce uneasiness and uncertainty in the Luftwaffe and create unnecessary difficulties.

27th FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

The British continued local attacks in the Goch and Kalcar areas and achieved minor successes. However, a breakthrough was again prevented.

Army Group B:

The American offensive east of Aachen continued unabated. Owing to his superiority and, in particular, to his intensified armoured effort, the enemy
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RESTRICTED

- 19 -

succeeded in advancing to the east and north-east as far as Reydt. However, the intended strategic breakthrough to the Rhine was contained on the Erft sector. The enemy also maintained heavy pressure on the Eifel front and gained ground.

Army Group G:

The Americans continued their attacks east of Saarburg and also gained ground in this area as a result of an intensified armoured effort.

Air Situation

There was intensive enemy long-range night fighter activity during the night of 26/27 February. Nuisance attacks were made on Berlin by about 80 Mosquitoes and on Nuernberg by about 30 Mosquitoes. Mine-laying was continued in the Kattegat and Oslo fiord.

Following an improvement in the weather there were large-scale operations commencing at midday by enemy fighter-bombers and twin-engined aircraft, the main effort being made over the American sector of attack. The Anglo-American air forces operating in maximum strength and in unbroken cloud continued their air offensive against transport and industrial targets in the Reich. Kassel was attacked by about 600 and Halle by about 300 American heavy bombers. Minor transport targets in central Germany were attacked by a further 100 - 200 American heavy bombers. Some 300 British heavy bombers made a heavy terror attack on Mainz. Attacks were made on transport targets in the Ruhr by a further 150 British heavy bombers.

In so far as weather conditions permitted, Luftwaffe H.Q. West supported defensive operations by the Army in the area west of Cologne.

Orders and Staff Reports

1. Luftflotten 1, 4 and 6 and Luftflotte Reich are informed of all airfields which are to be consolidated as strong-points and pockets of resistance and held at all costs as a result of ground fighting so that a survey may be obtained and the allocation of flak artillery planned in advance.
2. The night fighter protection requested by the Navy for the important submarine yards at Bremen against Oboe-controlled Mosquito attacks will be supplied by the transfer to the Bremen area of two single-engined fighter Staffeln following the Reichsmarschall's approval.
3. To begin with one Staffel of KG 4 (He 111's) will be equipped with FuG 200 and "Biene" radar installations to enable supplies to be dropped blind to encircled units even in bad weather with some prospect of success. Provision has been made to equip further elements of KG 4 as production permits.
4. As the oil wells and refining plant in the Vienna area are now acquiring decisive importance in connection with the production of J2 fuel for jet aircraft, the Chief of Staff suggests to the Reichsmarschall that I/KG(J) 54, which is now ready for operations after about eight days of flying, be transferred to the Vienna area for employment against enemy incursions from the south. On completion of training with Me 109 and FW 190 aircraft, KG (J) 6 - less III/6 - and KG (J) 27 will be assigned at the same time to a short operational tour with Luftflotte 4 and will then be employed in collaboration with I/KG (J) 54 in the Vienna area against incursions from the south.
5. The order issued to Luftflotte Reich on 22 February referring to the reinforcement with light AA guns of flak defences at airfields where pickaback aircraft are to be parked, is cancelled owing to the lack of sufficient light AA guns. Protection of the pickaback aircraft will be ensured primarily by means of effective camouflage and dispersal.

RESTRICTED

- 20 -

6. The three flak regiments (motorised) transferred from the West (III Flak-korps) to the East have arrived at full strength, as have the two flak Abteilungen transferred from Italy. From Norway the whole of a light flak Abteilung and almost all of a heavy flak Abteilung have arrived. Two complete flak Abteilungen and elements of another have arrived from Courland. A further Abteilung is still in Courland awaiting transportation.

28 FEBRUARY 1945

Ground Situation

Army Group H:

Continued attacks by strong British forces resulted in another deep penetration in the area south of Goch.

Army Group B:

The situation at the critical points of the major defensive battle east of Aachen deteriorated as a result of deep penetrations which brought the enemy to the outskirts of Reydt, the Muenchen-Gladbach area, into the town of Grevenbroich and the area immediately west of Cologne. Superior enemy forces also achieved a deep penetration in the Zuelpich area. A serious situation has developed in the Bitburg area as a result of further deep advances to the south by enemy spear-heads. Essential movements of reserves and supplies are being made almost impossible by continuous patrolling over the battlefield and German rear by large formations of enemy fighter-bombers.

Army Group G:

American armour in some strength succeeded in advancing to a point directly south of Trier. As a result of this and the pressure from the north of Trier, and thus the entrance to the Moselle valley, is directly threatened. Apart from this there was no activity of any importance on the Army Group front.

Air Situation

There was intensive enemy nuisance activity during the night of 27/28 February. Berlin was attacked twice by two fairly large Mosquito formations. A rather small enemy formation laid mines in Heligoland Bay.

During the day there were large-scale operations by enemy fighter-bombers and twin-engined aircraft over the focal points of the defensive battle in the West and over the entire area west of the Rhine, the main objective being transport targets.

Large elements of the Anglo-American air forces continued the air offensive against the transport network in western and north-western Germany and also attacked industrial centres. Operating in almost unbroken cloud, some 1,100 American heavy bombers attacked Kassel (about 650 aircraft), Soest, Hagen, Meschede and Bielefeld. Buer was attacked by about 120 British heavy bombers. The large formations of escorting fighters attacked airfields in north-western Germany and Franconia, particularly Giebelstadt.

As it was expected that this incursion would reach deeper into central Germany the 217 fighters of 1st Jagddivision (JG 300 and JG 301) which took off did not make contact with the enemy for the following reasons:-

1. Orders for take-off were issued too late.
2. The Germany aircraft were obliged to assemble a considerable distance to the east owing to the enemy fighter screen being far ahead of the main force.

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RESTRICTED

- 21 -

Luftwaffe H.Q. West employed German fighter formations in some strength on operations against enemy fighter-bombers.

Orders and Staff Reports:

1. In view of the deterioration in the ground situation, Luftwaffe H.Q. West is ordered to employ all available flying formations in bombing and strafing attacks as well as all available flak units in the battle area against the enemy forces which broke through to the north-west and north of Erkelenz. The Army must be given time to prepare counter-measures by this means.

In the event of further advances being made by the enemy, Luftwaffe H.Q. West is empowered to destroy all the airfields west of the Rhine for which demolition orders have not yet been issued, by arrangement with the Army controlling this area.

2. According to statements by Russian prisoners, the FW 190 equipped with "Panzerschreck" and "Panzerblitz" is much feared by the enemy owing to its excellent effect. By order of the Reichsmarschall, Luftflotte 6 and A.O.C. Ground Attack Formations are instructed to carry out the immediate re-equipment with "Panzerblitz" of all FW 190 Staffeln employed in the Luftflotte 6 command area so that the greatest possible number of aircraft are available for anti-tank operations in view of a renewal of the Russian offensive and an armoured breakthrough. The Director of Technical Armament is instructed to effect a maximum increase in the production of "Panzerblitz" equipment and ammunition.

3. III/JG 3 will transfer one Staffel each to Brandenburg-Briest, Parchim and Oranienburg for permanent airfield defence duty and to relieve III/JG 7 (Me 262's). The latter will thus be completely freed for operations.

4. By order of the Fuehrer another paratroop battalion (II/F.S.Jg.Rgt.25) will be flown to Breslau. OKH will increase the armament of this battalion and of the one already flown to Breslau (III/F.S.Jg.Rgt.26) with assault rifles, light machine-guns and mortars following a report from Gauleiter Hanke to the Fuehrer stating that III/F.S.Jg.Rgt.26 was inadequately equipped with arms.

5. Ia submits a survey of flak units transferred to the Eastern Front to the Chief of the Operations Staff. According to this, the majority of the flak Batterien (about 50%) are employed in the Army Group Vistula area and about one quarter in the Army Group Centre area.

Of the 332 heavy and 110 medium and light Batterien to be transferred to the Eastern Front, 300 heavy and 96 medium and light Batterien had arrived by today and a further 32 heavy and 12 medium and light Batterien are in transit.

Points from Daily Conferences:

Following the Fuehrer's decision on the basis of yesterday's situation that with immediate effect no further troops will be withdrawn from East Prussia, General Winter (OKW) informed the Chief of the Operations Staff upon the latter's inquiry that this does not affect the withdrawal of the 3,000 flak personnel which has already been approved and ordered.

The Director General of Signals informed the Chief of Staff that two jamming transmitters to be used against enemy Oboe-control would arrive in the Bremen area today.

Oberst von Below informs the Chief of Staff of the Fuehrer's order that all available aircraft in the West will be used in bombing and strafing operations against the American offensive in the Reyd - Cologne area. Orders to this effect are issued immediately to Luftwaffe H.Q. West. The additional employment of III/JG 7 and I/LG(J) 54 on bombing operations and the replenishment of LG 1 with pilots as a precautionary measure is being considered. The Chief
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RESTRICTED

- 22 -

of Staff expresses serious misgivings at the employment of the two fighter Gruppen as fighter-bombers, as a build-up of the Me 262 fighter Geschwader for the defence of the Reich will thus be delayed and undermined. The Reichsmarschall must be informed and come to a decision.

As the previously planned transfer of formations in the event of an enemy landing in Istria is no longer possible owing to developments in the situation and, in particular, to the reduced fuel stocks in Italy, the Chief of the Operations Staff suggests the cancellation of the order issued to this effect. The Chief of Staff agrees.

In view of increased enemy high and low-level attacks on the crowded airfields in the Reich, the Reichsmarschall demands heavy flak guns for jet airfields (four heavy flak Batterien each). Following a request from the Reichsfuehrer of SS Troops, the Reichsmarschall also demands reinforcement of flak defences at Prague, Brno and Pilsen. As no heavy flak Batterien are available at present, the units required would have to be withdrawn from other defended localities. For this purpose the Chief of Staff intends dispersing the flak defences at hydrogenation plants which are inactive at present. This matter will have to be referred to the Reichsmarschall as it will require the Fuehrer's decision.

Hauptdienstleiter Saur objected to the dispersal of Me 262 factory flights ordered by the Reichsmarschall following a proposal by OKL Operations Staff. OKL still maintains that the employment of factory flights, even against single enemy reconnaissance aircraft, will not afford factories any protection. Industry can be most effectively protected, if the factories produce more Me 262's so that the jet fighter arm can be built up more quickly.