

K113.107-152

Parts 1+2, Vol. 1

[1958]

RETURN TO  
Air Force  
Historical Research Center  
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6678

TR The GAF in France and the Low Countries 1938-40  
152 Parts I & II Gen. d. Fl. a. D. Wilhelm Speidel  
Trans. by Hefmann Ribbon Copy

MICROFILMED BY TM

8-1115-3

0468151

SCANNED BY ACD  
2005

K 613.102-152  
 Parts 1 & 2 Vol 1  
 1958  
 ASSIGNMENT NO.  
 THE  
 AIR FORCE  
 HISTORY  
 DIVISION  
 WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE CAMPAIGN IN WESTERN EUROPE

1939-1940

PART ONE

GENERAL DEPLOYMENT OF STRATEGIC AIR FORCES

PART TWO

THE WAR OF WAITING

By

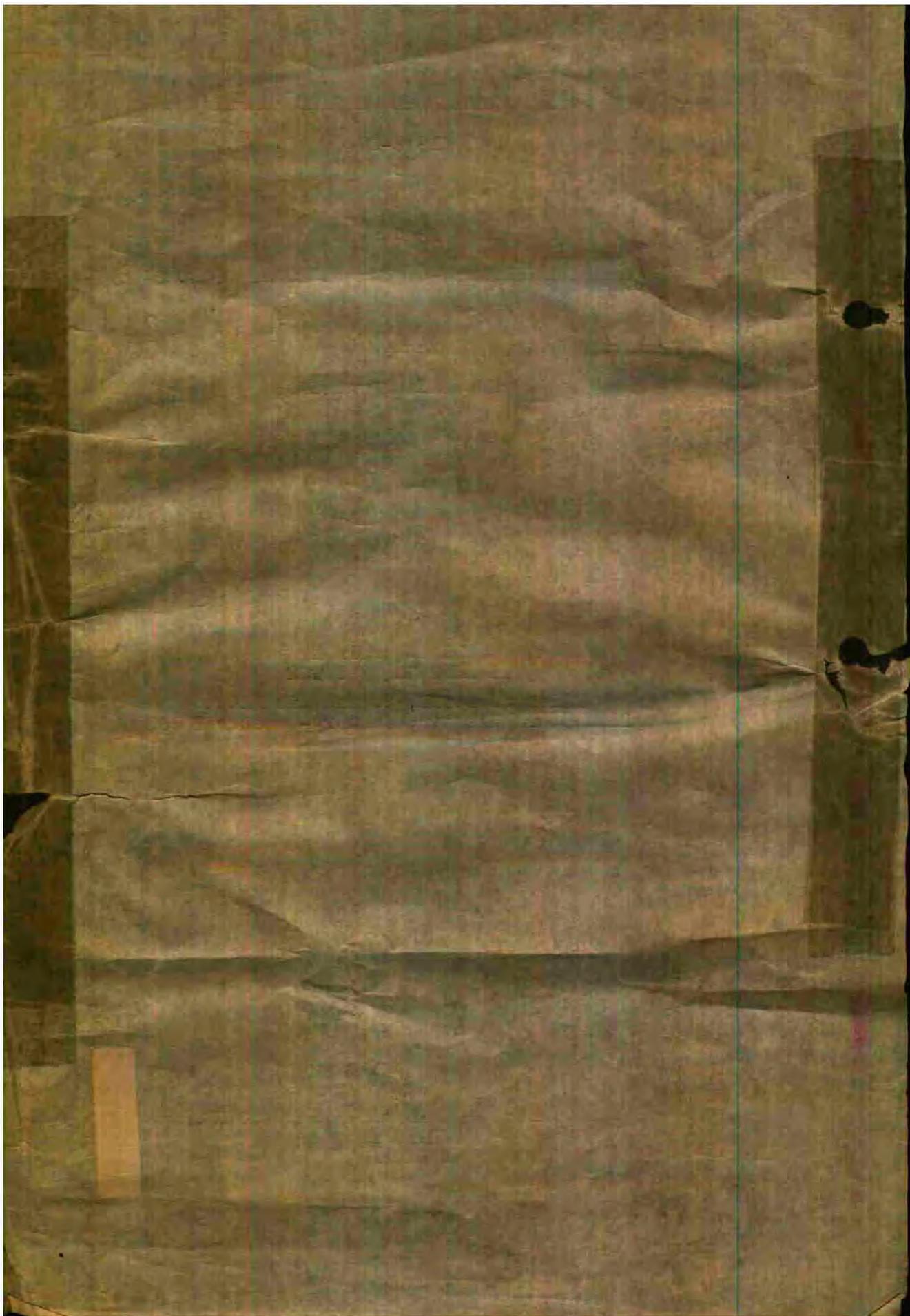
WILHELM SPEIDEL  
GENERAL DER FLIEGER

Chief of Staff, Second Air Fleet  
in Western Theater, January-October 1940

STUDIENGRUPPE GESCHICHTE DES LUFTKRIEGES  
KARLSRUHE  
GERMANY

0468151

8-1115-3



## CONTENTS

## PART ONE

	Page
CHAPTER 1. Operational Study 1939 The Initial Situation	1
1. The Intelligence Estimate	6a
a. Preamble	6a
b. French Air Power Capabilities	6a
c. Assumed Operational Plans of Western Powers	7
French Strategic Air Concentration	7
Probable Action by French Aggressive Air Forces	8
Probable Action by British Aggressive Air Forces	8
2. Command and Mission Assignment of German Air Force in the Western Theater	9
I. Commanding General West (Third Air Fleet) --In the Event of Operation Red	9
II. Commanding General North (Second Air Fleet--In the Event of Operation Blue	11
3. Planned Grouping of Operational Air Forces	13
I. General Headquarters Reserve	13
II. Third Air Fleet (West)	13
III. Second Air Fleet (North)	13
4. Air Defense Planning for the Western Theater	13
CHAPTER 2. Actual German Strategic Air Concentration in Western Theater at Outbreak of War, 1 September 1939	20
The German Army--Strategic Concentration and Plans	31
CHAPTER 3. German Operational Plans in the Western Theater and Their Execution in September 1939	33
Military Developments in September 1939	53
Summary Review of Combat Operations in September 1939--First Month of Warfare	61a
CHAPTER 4. German Regrouping During Polish Campaign and Shift of Emphasis to Western Theater	73
Activation of New Bomber Units	92

CHAPTER 5. Transition from Defensive to Offensive Planning--October 1939	94
I. Initial Measures by CINC, Air Force	99
II. Organizational Innovations	100
A. Air Corps	102
B. Antiaircraft Artillery Corps	107
III. Theories of CINC, Air Force, on Conduct of Operations	109
IV. Hitler Directive No. 6	109

## PART TWO

## THE WAR OF WAITING

CHAPTER 1. Phenomenon of the War of Waiting	114
CHAPTER 2. Changed Plan of Operations and Assembly of German Air Force	124a
I. Second Air Fleet Directive No. 5 For Battle of Defense	141
II. Third Air Fleet Instructions for Combat Operations in Battle of Defense	144
German Air Force at End of 1939	153
Text of Second Air Fleet Directive No. 5	160
Second Air Fleet Order of Battle	175
Joint Military High Command (OKW) Directive No. 9 For Conduct of War	177
CINC, Air Force Directive Governing Preparations for Campaign in West	180
Allocation of Units	187
Intelligence Annex	201
Special Supply Instructions	207
Instructions for Combat Operations in the Western Theater	209
Camouflage and Deception	217
Identification Services	219
Explanatory and Supplementary Information to Distribution of Forces, Directive No. 5, 5 December 1939	221
Second Air Fleet Directive No. 5 for the Defense Battle	224
Explanatory Material to Second Air Fleet Order of Battle	235
Special Instructions for Combat and Reconnaissance (Amended)	238
Rail and Road Interdiction Points	246
Third Air Fleet Directives (Amended, 23 December 1939)	249

Third Air Fleet Order of Battle	271
Second Air Fleet Directives for Operation Instant Action (Sofortfall)	275
Joint Military High Command (OKW) Order for Increased Naval and Air Warfare	277
CHAPTER 3. Developments in Planning for Airborne Operations during the War of Waiting	279
Second Air Fleet Directive for Operation II, 6 Jan 40	292
Second Air Fleet Orders for 7th Air Division Participation in Operation II	296
CHAPTER 4. Signal Service Organization in the West Status 1 November 1939	299
I. Allocation of Signal Units	301
II. Signal Services Mission in Broad Outline	302
III. Detail Measures	304
Allocation of Air Signal Units within Operational Air Area--Approximately 1 November 1939	306
Signal Abbreviations Used in German Text of Chapter 4, Appendix 1	308
Location of Air Command Posts	309
CHAPTER 5. The Conduct of Air Warfare during the War of Waiting in the Western Theater	310
First Phase October 1939--Early 1940	317
I. Second Air Fleet Against Britain and British Counteraction	317
II. Third Air Fleet Against France and French Counteraction	325
III. Air Operations in General in the Western Theater	329
Second Phase--Early 1940 to Opening of German Offensive	331
Second Air Fleet against Britain and British Counteraction	333
Third Air Fleet against France and French Counteraction	337
Overall German Air Operations in the Second Phase in the West	339
Joint Military High Command (OKW) Semi-Annual Report, 2 March 1940 (Excerpts)	343
Air Force General Staff/Intelligence Division Intelligence Estimate Early 1940	346
CHAPTER 6. Experience Gained and Lessons Learned from the War of Waiting	349
1. Daytime Bomber Operations	349
2. Night Bomber Operations	350
German Failure to Appreciate and Apply Experience	350
3. The French Command	
4. The Conduct of Air Warfare at Sea	352a

5. Fighter Operations	353
6. The Dependence of Operations on Weather Conditions	354
7. Psychological Influences of the War of Waiting	355
8. The German Air Force Command	357
9. Command Procedures in the German Air Force	362
10. Positive Results of the War of Waiting	366
Introduction	vi
Sources	xvi

## INTRODUCTION

I. Topic of the Entire Study. The study presented in the following pages deals with the commitments and operations of the German strategic or operational air forces in the Western Campaign of 1939-1940.

The overall topic will include

- a. The employment of flying forces in so-called strategic air warfare, for example, in operations against the enemy air forces and their ground service installations, against the enemy transportation and communications systems, and against the armament industries of the enemy;
- b. The employment of air units in operations directly or indirectly supporting the Army;
- c. The employment of airborne troops against Holland;
- d. The commitment and operations of anti-aircraft artillery corps within the tactical framework of the Army;
- e. The employment of land and naval air units in air warfare at sea against the enemy navies, against seaborne transportation, and against seaports.

It does not include

- a. The employment of the air and anti-aircraft artillery units tactically assigned under the Army (units under



the Air Force General Attached to the Commander in Chief of the Army).

b. The commitments and operations of the naval air units tactically assigned under the Navy (under the Air Force General attached to the Commander in Chief of the Navy), unless they were committed in closely integrated action at sea with the land air units (see Item a, above);

c. The commitments and operations of air, antiaircraft artillery, and aircraft reporting units allocated for home air defense in the western air district commands within Germany and later also in the occupied western territories;

d. The organization of the air signal communications services or the commitments and operations of the Air Signal Corps;

e. The organization and direction of the supply and replacement services.

Although these subjects in parts were highly important for the overall conduct of operational air warfare, it was necessary to omit them in order to confine the scope of the study to essentials.

2. Organization of the Entire Study. Strictly speaking, the actual execution of the German offensive in the West, and thus the period from 10 May, 1940 to 24 June 1940 constitutes

viii

the essential theme of the study. However, it would not be possible to examine and appraise the actual offensive itself without a discussion of the preceding period of the so-called War of Waiting, which lasted roughly eight months, from the beginning of the war on 1 September 1939 to commencement of the offensive on 10 May 1940.

Neither the preparatory planning for nor the execution of the offensive can be appreciated without a knowledge of the operational trains of thought as they developed up to the opening of the offensive, during the War of Waiting period.

This realization logically calls for a division of the study into two main periods, and a subdivision of these two periods into sub-periods according to the planning done and the events occurring in them.

Broadly speaking, the intention therefore is to organize the whole study as follows:

Part One, to cover the brief period during which Germany was engaged on two fronts, the East and the West, in September 1939, with the German armed forces basically on the defensive, including the German Air Force, in the West, while a decision was sought and forced in the East. Part One will also deal with the transition from basically defensive to

ix

aggressive planning for operations in the West.

Part Two will discuss the changing aggressive plans during the War of Waiting period and actual combat operations during that period.

Part Three will deal with execution of the first phase of the offensive in the 1940 campaign in the West, namely, with Operation Wielb, in which the movements were generally from east to west and led to the drive to the English Channel and to isolation of considerable elements of the Allied forces.

Part Four will describe the second phase of the offensive, namely, Operation Rot, in which the movements were generally from north to south and culminated in the final capitulation of France, the opponent in the West.

5. Essential Conditions for the Preparation and for a Proper Understanding of This Study. The 1940 campaign in the West was the third major action by the German military forces in World War II, the first being the campaign in Poland in September 1939, the second the joint Army-Navy-Air Force operations against Denmark and Norway in April 1940, prepared under the code designation of Weseruebung.

It was self-understood that the command concepts for operations in the West would be based on the experience

gained in the two preceding major actions. However, the events in these two campaigns do not provide an adequate basis for a appraisal of the campaign in the West.

An essential condition for a proper understanding of the operations to be described is a knowledge of the intellectual, organizational, and tactical-technical potential of the German Air Force as it existed at the beginning of World War II. These have been discussed in detail elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The subjects discussed there include such matters as the operational and tactical command concepts in the peacetime German Air Force; the top-level control and command organization of the German Air Force at the beginning of the war; the organizational separation of the Air Force into the operational air forces on the one hand and their territorial organization on the other hand; the training status of the flying units at the outbreak of the war; the aircraft types and models in use in the units and their technical capabilities, and all of these as well as the problems not enumerated here are dealt equally in this present study on the Western Theater.

These basic factors of personnel and material as they had existed at the beginning of the war had meanwhile been

<sup>1</sup> See Introduction to "Polenfeldzug, 1939," Karlsruhe Document Collection.

increased and improved, and experience in the Polish campaign had made it possible to remedy some of the weaknesses. These experiences from the Polish campaign, which were applied in the western campaign are enumerated in the previously mentioned study "Der Polenfeldzug, 1939". An analysis of Operation Weserübung, the invasion of Denmark and Norway, from the viewpoint of military history is not yet available.

4. The characteristic features of the source material available for the present study can be stated briefly in the following two points:

a. For the period of preparation for the 1940 campaign in the West, that is, for the eight months of the War of Waiting period, up to 10 May 1940, copious and authentic source material is available in the form of original documents from both the Air Force and the Army;

b. For the execution of the operation, that is, for the period from 10 May 1940 to the end of the campaign in the west, reliable and copious material in the form of original records is available from the Army, but very few original records from the Air Force are available. Above all the operational orders issued by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force and by the Second and Third Air Fleets are lacking, in marked contrast with the source material situation for

the study "Der Potenziel bzw. 1953".

This lack of source material made it difficult to prepare a completely reliable overall presentation, so that the study necessarily will appear incomplete in many parts. On the other hand, Army records available made it possible to fill in many of the gaps, although the information thus offered is naturally only a reconstruction and is not based on the original Air Force records.

5. Main Emphasis in the Present Study. The source material situation just described above would have made it possible to give a particularly detailed <sup>account</sup> and of the first phase of the history of the 1940 campaign in the West--the period of preparation during the War of Waiting, well documented in all details.

The crystallization of operational intentions in the West, the shift of emphasis for the whole theater in planning from the north to the center (Manstein Plan) and other developments were the governing factors for Army planning. However, all planning for Air Force operations from the beginning was based on Army planning, so that all changes in the operational concepts of the Supreme Command necessarily affected Air Force planning. It must be remembered here that the good

viii

results produced by Air Force operations directly and indirectly supporting the Army in the Polish campaign had remained the governing factor in the trend for commitment of the operational air forces in the West.

To have traced these patterns of planning with their frequent changes and the resultant sequence of newly arising command problems for the Air Force would in itself have been a challenging mission, which would have been greatly facilitated by the source materials available.

However, a study of this type, which would have been primarily an operational study, had to be postponed to some future date.

The inescapable result has been that the first, well-documented, phase of the campaign in the West, namely, the War of Waiting period, has had to be restricted in favor of the inadequately documented KEMEXI events of the actual operations.

The above information is offered in explanation of the gaps evident in the study, which could only treat in broad outline the continuing development of the operational command concepts.

6. Army Operations. As previously mentioned, the Army plans of operations constituted the basis for Air Force

xiv

planning. For a proper understanding, the planning of both of these two military branches in their interrelations should be presented. This would presuppose that the planning and execution of Army operations should be given due consideration within the scope of the present study.

However, it seems safe to assume that the interested reader of this Air Force study will be adequately informed in advance on these subjects, since enough documentary material has already been published on the subject.

7. Concerning Part One of the Present Study. In Part One, which now follows, the author has confined himself to an examination and presentation of the evolution of those command concepts which had a fundamentally important bearing on the campaign in the West and of the resultant command and organizational measures.

In point of time, Part One more or less covers the first month of the war in the ~~WEST~~ West, where events were still closely interrelated with events in the East.

At the same time, however, Part One provides the initial basis and situation for the coming operational and tactical developments in the West. For this reason, and in spite of the fact that no important military events occurred



during the period involved, the treatment is in such detail that the development which followed evolve organically from it.

## SOURCES USED IN PART ONE

Only one really important and really reliable document was available at writing this part. It is quoted repeatedly in the text and in footnotes as "Der Luftkrieg gegen die Westmächte im Jahre 1939 (Air Warfare against the Western Opponents in 1939)"; a study prepared by Branch B of the German Air Force General Staff and available in the Karlsruhe Document Collection as Microfilm E/15.

Other sources used were as follows:

A contributory study prepared by General Schmidt, former Chief of the Intelligence Division, Air Force Operations Staff, Headquarters, CIGP Air Force, KHK dated 31 January 195

"Der Polenfeldzug 1939 (The Polish Campaign)," Volumes 1-3, by the present author.

Owing to the close interrelation of the two theaters of operations at the beginning of the war it has been impossible to avoid referring to these sources frequently.

Other sources used are quoted in appropriate footnotes.

THE CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST  
1939-1940

PART ONE  
GERMAN EMPLOYMENT OF STRATEGIC AIR FORCES

CHAPTER 1  
OPERATIONAL STUDY 1939  
THE INITIAL SITUATION

The version of Operational Study 1939 (Planstudie 1939) completed by the German Air Force General Staff at the beginning of February 1939 became effective on 1 March 1939. It contained the "Instructions for the Strategic Assembly and Combat Missions of the Air Force in 1939 (Aufmarsch- und Kampfweisungen der Luftwaffe 1939)" and provided the initial basis for "Operational Preparations for the 1939-1940 Mobilization Calendar (Einsatzvorbereitungen fuer das Mob. Jahr 1939/40)"

The organization and contents of the operational study have been treated in detail in the study "The Campaign in Poland--1939 (Der Polenfeldzug 1939)"<sup>2</sup> for which reason the reader is referred to the treatment given there.

The following is a recapitulation of those parts which have an important bearing on the events treated in the

2. "Der Polenfeldzug 1939," Volume 1, Chapter I: "Die operativen und taktischen Vorbereitungen der Luftwaffe." Operation Weiss (Fall Weiss) dealing with preparations for a campaign against Poland, formed the basis for the entire Operational Study 1939.

present study on operations in the Western Theater.

Operational Study 1939 was organized in three parts; or volumes:

Volume I contained general instructions or directives (Allgemeine Anordnungen), including the basic principles to be observed in all or any theaters of operations;

Volume II dealt exclusively and with main emphasis with Operation Weiss (meaning the employment of air power against Poland) in line with actual plans for the overall conduct of a war;

Volume III, in contrast, contained "Directives for Operations against the Western Powers (Weisungen fuer den Einsatz gegen Westen), namely, in the two events considered possible in the West. These two eventualities were treated as Operation Rot (Fall Rot)--war against France, and Operation Bleu (Fall Bleu)--war against Britain.

Only Volume III is of interest in the present study.

Before examining these principles governing operations by the Air Force for operations, it is important to establish that the highest Air Force field Commands responsible for operations against the eventuality of war, namely the Commanding Generals of the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Air Fleets, did not receive a complete copy of Operational Study 1939 as a complete set of directives. The Commanding

2 General of each air fleet instead received only that part of the volume applicable to his specific area of operations. In other words, the highest commanders responsible for air operations in east and west had no insight whatever into the plans and intentions of the Supreme Command for the overall conduct of a war or into the missions of the other highest levels of field command in other areas in the event of war on two fronts. This meant that they were unable to form a strategic concept of the implications involved in the overall conduct of the war. This strict application of the principle of secrecy thus from the very outset precluded any possibility for their participation in any appreciable scope in the intellectual and precautionary advance planning. This state of affairs was carried to the final extreme by Hitler's January 1940 directive, which required

5 that a commander responsible for one sector of a front was not even to be informed concerning the immediately adjacent sector of the same front. It appears essential for a proper understanding of the following study, to draw the reader's attention to these circumstances from the start.

Volume III of Operational Study 1939 on which the following study is based appears to have been the original version drafted in February 1939. However, changes were introduced continuously, and there are reasons to doubt

3 its completeness, although it can be assumed that the text of Volume III given in Appendix 1 to this study actually provided the basis for all preparations for the operations in the Western Theater, at least for the initial phases.<sup>3</sup>

Between the date on which the Operational Study 1939 was issued in February 1939 and the opening of the war on 1 September 1939, however, the allocation of forces between the Eastern and Western Theaters was changed drastically in favor of the Eastern Theater. The appreciation of the current situation and the objectives of the supreme Military command had changed radically in this time.

4 The available version of Volume III envisages the case of a war in the West, meaning against France (Operation Red) and against Britain (Operation Blue). These two cases combined were considered as factor which definitely had to be expected.

The directive applicable for the Western Theater in such case, however, contained no indication of any simultaneous crisis, and far less of any actual armed conflict, in the Eastern Theater, and made no reference whatever to political and military interrelations between east and west.

3. A few contradictions between the text of Volume III offered in Appendix 1 to the present study and that of Volume II included in "Der Polenfeldzug 1939" are explained by the fact that the latter is a copy of a complete revised edition of May 1939. No evidence is available on later alterations to Volumes II and III, which can only be inferred from the actual measures taken. This applies particularly to the changed allocation of forces to west and east.

4 The above facts permit two alternate conclusions: (1) The directive was based on the tacit premise that the campaign in the East (against Poland) would be over before the western opponents could receive reinforcements, or (2) the problem stated in Volume III was considered as a purely hypothetical "West" case viewed without any regard for the problems then existing in Europe in the political field.

The consequence of this basic concept was that the original version of Operational Study 1939, the version used here, provided for an almost equal division of operable air forces between east and west, as will be seen later. Only the closing passages of the operational study make mention of the possibility of Operation Weiss (Fall Weiss), meaning a campaign against Poland--the defensive measures in the West were to be taken regardless of this possibility. "The scope of the measures will depend on the political attitude of the Western Powers."<sup>4</sup>

The following passage from Volume III:

The commencement and scope of combat action against Red (Rot) and/or Blue (Blau) is subject to explicit orders from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force in accordance with the military-political situation

must also be read and understood in connection with what has been said above. Even if combat operations should have com-

XX

4. Appendix 12.

5 commenced on the ground in the Western Theater, any crossing of the western frontiers by aircraft of the Air Force remained explicitly prohibited.

Directives of this kind clearly emphasized the defensive basic tendency of the conduct of operations in the West.

A comparison between the originally planned measures on the one hand and the strategic concentration actually carried out on 1 September 1939 on the other hand clearly reveals that in the summer of 1939 the operational concept which had gradually gained in prominence was to commit the bulk of all air power against Poland and to consider merely safety measures necessary against the West. The military appropriateness or necessity for this concept appeared justified by the political view which, remarkably enough, were not stated in Volume III but in Volume II, and thereby brought to the knowledge of the commands operating in the East:

Operation White is not to be regarded as a prerequisite for armed conflict with the Western Powers. On the contrary, the political command will endeavor to restrict the war to Poland.<sup>5</sup>

This political optimism--so completely shattered on 3 September 1939, was the reason for the purely defensive measures taken in the West, which will become evident later

5. "Der Polenfeldzug 1939," Volume 1, Chapter 1.



6 a

6 in a discussion of the final distribution of forces and assignment of missions.

After this general discussion of the interacting and fluctuating relations between the expected plans for war in the East and West it is necessary to outline those important parts of the contents of Operational Study 1939 which were applicable to the Western Theater. This is particularly necessary because the ruling intelligence estimate of the time and the planned German distribution of forces will have to provide a basis for an understanding of the measures taken later and for what actually happened.

1. The Intelligence Appreciation.

The Intelligence Estimate is based on the premise that France will commence hostilities.

British participation in the war must be expected including action by British air forces operating from bases on the continent of Europe.

It appears doubtful that the Western Powers will respect Belgian neutrality.

b. The appraisal of French air forces is as follows:

7 Flying Forces: Aircraft in service in troop units only "conditionally suitable for combat operations." Training "in general on a high level." Little training in blind navigation. Large personnel reserves available.

7

Allocated for Army support operations: Approximately 400 reconnaissance and 200-300 bomber aircraft.<sup>6</sup>

Antiaircraft Artillery: Numerically strong, but on the whole outdated materiel. Training status accordingly.

Overall Appraisal: Air and antiaircraft artillery forces "in every respect inferior" to the German Air Force.

Operability: "...considerably lower" than in the case of the German Air Force.

Ground Service Organization: "...not modernly developed," but numerous airfields (particularly in Champagne, west of the Argennes, and in the Saone River basin) permit a flexible conduct of operations.

Supplies: Difficulties in the supply of aviation equipment anticipated already at an early stage (large variety of different aircraft models in service).

c. Assumed Operational Plans of Western Elements:

Strategic Concentration of French Air Forces:

The bulk of the offensive air forces will be based on a ground organization not used during peace but prepared for use in war; at some distance from Germany's western frontiers. It is assumed that only the air forces allocated for Army support operations will concentrate close to the frontier.

Strategic Concentration of British Air Forces:

6. The Operational Study gives no figures for the estimated number of operable French aircraft.

8 Presumably on airfields of the ground organization in the northern parts of France.

Operations by Offensive French Air Forces: It is considered unlikely that France will start the war with a sudden air attack. It is assumed that considerable strengths will initially be employed in operations integrated with those of the ground forces.

It is expected that air attacks will occur to disrupt German mobilization and concentration movements.

"Owing to their present inferiority, however, the French air forces from the outset of a war would have to concentrate on combat action against the German Air Force."

Planned offensives against the German armament industries are <sup>be</sup> throughout Germany in not/<sup>to</sup> expected; however, attacks are expected against industrial and communications installations in the Ruhr region, the Frankfurt basin area, and southern areas of Germany.

Operations of Offensive British Air Forces: From bases in France, attacks are expected against the German Air Force and against industries supporting the German military.

In the event of German counter-air action, a withdrawal of the French air forces is expected to the areas north and southeast of Paris.

2. Command and Mission Assignment of the Air Force

in the Western Theater. Directly responsible to the Commander in Chief of the Air Force, the following headquarters were assigned responsibility for preparations for Air Force operations in the West:

In the event of Operation Red (against France): Commanding General, Third Air Fleet (West), to direct all operations westward of Germany;

In the event of Operation Blue (against Britain): Commanding General, Second Air Fleet (North), to direct all northwestward operations.

In broad outline the mission of these two headquarters in the event of armed conflict in the West was "to protect German territories against air attack," with a clearly defined tendency of defensive action.

In more detail, the missions of the two headquarters committed in the West were as follows:

I. COMMANDING GENERAL WEST (THIRD AIR FLEET)-- IN THE EVENT OF OPERATION RED!<sup>7</sup>

The mission assignment stated two possibilities:

A. "Only limited offensive air forces are available for action against Red!"

In this case the mission of the Third Air Fleet was, by

7. From the outset the military-political situation assumed in the event of armed conflict in the West was that Operations Red and Blue could not be treated as two separate  
--Continued on p. 10.

9 means of delaying tactics, to deny Red complete air supremacy and to prevent Red air attacks against German territories. In addition, units of the Third Air Fleet were to support German Army operations by means of air attacks against Red assembly or supply movements.

10 The following air action was planned for the execution of this part of the mission:

a. Continuous air attacks against the Red ground organization, with fullest exploitation of the capabilities of the available units and of night and bad weather conditions;

b. The concentration of defensive forces at the most decisively important targets to repel attacks by Red offensive air forces;

c. Deceptive measures in the form of a wide distribution of the available forces and a widespread use of dummy airports and simulated air activities.

B. "Strong offensive air forces are available at the commencement of operations in the West or strong reinforcements arrive while operations are in progress."

In this case the main mission of the Third Air Fleet was:

To take action against the hostile air forces and their

Footnote 7,--Continued from p. 9: contingencies, but that both would arise simultaneously.

10 ground organization;

To prepare for attacks against Paris, the French fuel supply system (refineries and fuel storage installations), and against ships discharging cargoes and troops in French ports.

Reconnaissance operations were permitted with main emphasis against the French flying forces and their ground organization.

11

II. Commanding General North (Second Air Fleet)--In the event of Operation Blue:

In contrast with the mission assignment for the Third Air Fleet, which clearly stated the need for offensive action within the scope of the overall defensive mission, the mission assignment for the Second Air Fleet stated no general directives and no detailed objectives whatever. The overall tendency which becomes evident on study is that the Second Air Fleet was to maintain an attitude of strictest moderation. This is expressed in the passage "The commencement and scope of combat action against Blue is subject to explicit orders from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force."

The only case in which the mission assignment states any definite emphasis is that of the action to be taken if units of the Second Air Fleet were to participate in action against Red. In such case main emphasis was to be on

11 offensive action against the enemy air forces and their ground organization.

This obvious and significant gap in the directives for the Commanding General North may be due to one of two reasons:

Either the principles for combat action against Britain had not yet been developed at all or finalized by early 1939, so that it was not possible as yet to assign definitive operational missions, which might have been due to political or military considerations;

Or, the previously mentioned "security secrecy principle" was the cause: The Commanding General, North, had special instructions from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force for the conduct of operations against Britain, which were not to be included in Operational Study 1938.

With the records and source material available at the time of writing it is not possible to clarify this point satisfactorily, since the presumed special instructions are not available. However, Lieutenant General (General der Flieger) Felay, who at the time commanded the Second Air Fleet has given post-war information on the point,<sup>8</sup> and the findings will be given in the examination of the actual preparations for war against Britain in Chapter III of the present study.

8. In a detailed discussion between General Felay and the present author at Darmstadt on 10 July 1956.

5. The Tactical Grouping of Operational Air Forces Planned in Volume III of Operational Study 1939.

I. Commander in Chief of the Air Force. The units available to the Commander in Chief of the Air Force directly for commitment in the Polish campaign on 1 September constituted the entire force under direct control by his headquarters, so that they were all committed.<sup>9</sup>

II. Third Air Fleet (West).

1. Planned Initial Allocations.

Command Staffs: 5th and 6th Air Division Headquarters

Tactical Units: 2 Reconnaissance Squadrons  
5 Bomber Groups  
1 Dive-Bomber Group  
2 Twin-Engine Fighter Groups

2. Preparations to be made to receive following reinforcements:

Command Staffs: 1st and 2d Air Division Headquarters

Tactical Units: 1 Reconnaissance Squadron  
11 Bomber Groups  
4 Dive-Bomber Groups  
3 Twin-Engine Fighter Groups.

III. Second Air Fleet (North)

1. Planned initial Allocations:

Command Staffs: 3d and 4th <sup>Air</sup> Division Headquarters

Tactical Units: 2 Reconnaissance Squadrons  
12 Bomber Groups  
3 Twin-Engine Fighter Groups.

<sup>9</sup> For composition of the forces directly available to the Commander in Chief of the Air Force see Appendix 4.



2. Preparations to be made to receive following reinforcements:

Command Staffs: Headquarters, Air Force Training and Demonstration Division

Tactical Units: 1 Reconnaissance Squadron  
 2 Bomber Groups  
 4 Dive-Bomber Groups  
 1 Ground-Attack Group  
 2 Twin-Engine Fighter Groups.

An analysis of this distribution of air forces produces the following results:

1. For the conduct of the envisaged defensive air warfare in the Western Theater, plans provided for an initial allocation of

4 Divisional headquarters staffs  
 4 reconnaissance squadrons  
 17 bomber groups  
 1 dive-bomber group  
 5 twin-engine fighter groups.

In long-range bombers, the Second Air Fleet (North) was to have twice the strength of the Third Air Fleet (West). Combat operations against Britain were thus obviously the prominent feature in planning and intentions.

2. After arrival of the planned reinforcements, for the receipt of which preparations were to be made, the comparative strengths of the two air fleets would have been as follows:

b. A "Tactical Air Support Command" similar to the

for the Western Theater.

activated prior to establishment of the final organization

from Eastern Prussia during the Polish campaign, was re-

actually, this headquarters, after conducting operations

Force Training and Demonstration Air Division to the West.

plans still provided for assignment of Headquarters, Air

3. Common Headquarters Staffs. At this juncture,

Fleet.

Fleet would have been somewhat weaker than the Third Air

merely almost twice as strong in this arm, the Second Air

the two air fleets in long-range bombers was concerned. For-

have reversed the position so far as the striking power of

However, the intended redistribution of units would

more or less equal in striking power.

force units, the Second and Third Air Fleets would have been

Overall analysis: After arrival of the planned rein-

Unit Types	1 <sup>st</sup> Third	2 <sup>nd</sup> Third	3 <sup>rd</sup> Third
Reinforcement Squads	3	3	3
Bomber Groups	16	16	14
Dive-Bomber Groups (including group-attack group)	5	5	5
Twin-engine fighter groups	5	5	5
Equal strength			
Three Air Fleet stronger by two groups			
Equal strength			
After arrival of the planned reinforcement			

1<sup>st</sup> Third  
2<sup>nd</sup> Third  
3<sup>rd</sup> Third  
Air Fleet Air Fleet Comparison

15 Special Purposes Air Command (Fliegerführer 2.5.V.) was not intended. The tactical air support units were to be equally divided between the two air fleets.

16 4. Air Defense Planning for the Western Theater. As emphasized in the Introduction, the intention in the present study is to deal with the topic of preparations for and the execution of operations by the operational air forces, meaning the offensive air units. In view of the fact, however, that in initial overall planning the strategic air concentration and air defense were treated as an integrated complex, a presentation of the German air defense organization, at least for the early stages under discussion here, now follows in broad outline:

air defense as such

In later developments in the Western Theater <sup>air defense as such</sup> became a subject of less significance. During the stage of preparations and waiting, however, and particularly during the "War of Waiting" period which then followed, air defense was a very prominent feature as a source of concern and in the measures taken. This was all the more so because of the intricate interaction between specific air defense planning and planning for the initial defense mission of the operational air forces. The concentration and combat areas of the offensive air forces and of the air defense forces <sup>more or less</sup> were identical at this stage, and the fundamentally

16 defensive mission was largely the same for all arms of the German Air Force.

The basic mission of air defense was defined as "Protection of all installations and establishments throughout German territories which were important for the conduct of the war."

Volume III of Operational Study 1939 in a section on Directives for the Air Defense Forces (Wesungen fuer die Luftverteidigungskraefte)<sup>10</sup> contains all important instructions for the missions and operations of the Home Air Defense System, which will not be repeated here.

The direction of air defense within the command zones of the Second and Third Air Fleets in the Western Theater was a responsibility of the Air District Commands assigned under the two air fleet headquarters,<sup>11</sup> which are shown in the map included with this study as Appendix 2. This map shows the status of the territorial organization prior to and at the beginning of the war in 1939 and reveals the organization in air fleet and air district command zones and areas.<sup>12</sup>

In detail, the missions of air defense were exceedingly comprehensive and diversified. Main emphasis was in the

10. Appendixes 4 and 5.

11. See Appendix 2--Map: Territorial Organization in 1939.

12. The map is supplemented by Appendix 6: a survey of the chains of command for the territorial organization in the Western Theater at the beginning of the war.

17 Ruhr region and thus within the command zone of Air District Command VI under the Second Air Fleet. The forces available to the two air fleets were relatively small in view of the multiplicity of defense missions for which they were responsible, for which purposes they had to rely primarily only on the defense units stationed under the peacetime organization within their zones and the defense units to be activated in the event of a mobilization. To offset this inadequacy of forces, it was therefore necessary to develop defense concentrations consonant with developments in the current air situation.

18 In Volume III of Operational Study 1939, the section on Directives for the Air Defense Forces introduces a new concept, that of an Air Defense Zone West (Luftverteidigungszone West).

At least during the period of preparations for the 1940 campaign in the West this zone continued to play a role, for which reason it is necessary to define it here as a zone determined by organizational and tactical considerations which, from a purely geographical viewpoint, forms a frontier belt covering all air district command areas under the Second and Third Air Fleets in the West.

The basic idea, the origin, and the establishment of this Air Defense Zone West, as well as an appraisal of its

18 suitability for its intended purposes and its effectiveness in actual fact have been treated in a special study prepared after the war by an expert on antiaircraft artillery matters. The attention of the reader is drawn particularly to this study.<sup>13</sup>

The following chapter, Chapter II of this study, will describe how the actual strategic concentration proceeded prior to and at the beginning of the war.

13. Appendix 13. The prewarviews are presented by Major General (Generalleutnant) Kitsinger, at that time Commanding General, Air Defense Zone West, in a study listed as Source No. 1.

## CHAPTER TWO

THE ACTUAL STRATEGIC CONCENTRATION OF GERMAN  
OPERATIONAL AIR FORCES IN THE WESTERN THEATER  
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR, 1 SEPTEMBER 1939

The strategic concentration of German operational air forces in the West must first be regarded in relation to the concentration of operational air forces in the East.

Both movements, as the assembly of the entire German Air Force, represent one integral strategic complex.

The basis for the strategic concentration and for the operations in September 1939 is presented in a condensed form ~~XXXXXXXX~~ in the following outlines and the pertinent numerical analyses, which at the same time will serve as a representation of the initial situation for the chapters which follow:

1. Chains of Command and Disposition of Forces for the entire German Air Force in September 1939.<sup>14</sup>

2. Chains of Command in the Western Theater in September 1939.<sup>15</sup>

3. The flying forces of the Operational Air Arm in the Western Theater.<sup>16</sup>

4. The effective strengths of the flying forces in the Western Theater are evident from the outlines, computations and explanations offered.<sup>17</sup>

14. Appendixes 4 and 5.

15. Appendix 6.

16. Appendix 7.

17. Appendixes 8 and 9.

20

The quoted annexes--numbered 4 to 9, contain the information providing the basis for the following analysis, and the processing of this basic information makes a final examination of the ratios of strengths committed in the Eastern and Western Theaters possible.

In the initial stages the strategic concentration of forces of the Second and Third Air Fleets in the West as it actually occurred and as revealed by the preceding findings and computations presents a picture differing widely, so far as the forces available are concerned, from the original provisions contained in Operational Study 1939. The shift of emphasis, ordered by the Air Force High Command, in the summer of 1939 from west to east was due to causes exclusively of a political nature which it is no longer possible to trace and prove, and which require no further explanation here.

The only point of interest in this study is the set of facts as they actually existed on 1 September 1939. From these it is possible to calculate the ratios of strength between the concentration in the West and that in the East.

On 1 September 1939 the following air forces were deployed under the Second and Third Air Fleets in the Western Theater and under the First and Fourth Air Fleets in the



20

Eastern Theater:<sup>13</sup>

Theater:	Bomber		Dive-	Twin-Engine		Fighter:	Recon	Total Air-
	:Wings:	Groups:	Bomber	:Wings	Groups:	:Groups	Squadrons:	:craft
			Groups					Strength
								:(Approx.)
West	3	9 1/3	-	1	5	9 1/3	4	880
East	11	21	8 1/3	-	5	2	8	1300

The figures given for the Western Theater above correspond to the figures arrived at by computation in the present study.<sup>19</sup>

The figures given for the Eastern Theater above are taken from "Der Polenfeldzug 1939" repeatedly quoted above.<sup>20</sup>

Further comparisons with the figures computed in the "Der Polenfeldzug 1939" are not easily possible, however, since the computations for the Western Theater are based on entirely different premises and, in part, on newly uncovered source material.<sup>21</sup>

18. The only KIVANBANK group available to the German Air Force is included with the dive-bomber groups.

19. Appendix 3.

20. "Der Polenfeldzug," Volume 1, Chapter III: "Der Aufbruch der Luftwaffe." Outline No. 6.

21. Reasons: In the "Der Polenfeldzug 1939" the overall strength computations (Outlines Nos. 8 and 9) Chapter III for example, and the strength computations for the entire German Air Force on 1 September 1939 (Outline No. 10 of the same chapter) are far more comprehensive. In contrast with the study for the West they contain among others:

- The units assigned directly under the Commander in Chief of the Air Force;
- The reconnaissance and other units allocated to the Commander in Chief of the Army;
- The fighter units assigned for Home Defense;
- The naval squadrons assigned under Air Commands East and West.

The figures thus obtained for the East are completely different and considerably higher and cannot unconditionally be compared with those arrived at for the West, since these latter do not include factors (a) ~~to~~ (d). ...  
Continued.

22

The figures given in the above comparative table include only units of what may be called the Operational Arm of the German Air Force which were assigned in the East and the West under the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Air Fleets.

However, even this comparative table does not provide a true and realistic comparison, since the figures computed for the Western Theater include the fighter units assigned in the West, and in the situation as it then existed these units must be considered as forming part of the Home Air Defense system. Just as in the case of the Home Air Defense Forces in the Eastern Theater, they must therefore be excluded from calculations, whereas the twin-engine fighter units can remain under the concept of the Operational Air Arm.

Then, however, the following genuinely comparable figures result:

Concentrated on 1 September 1939 were the following strengths:

West: approximately 545 aircraft, roughly 280 of them bombers;

East: approximately 1 300 aircraft, roughly 880 of them bombers.

Of the roughly 1 845 aircraft in the Operational Air Arm thus arrived at

22                    approximately 545, including roughly 280 bombers, were allocated in the Western Theater and

                      approximately 1 300, including 880 bombers (roughly), in the Eastern Theater,

                      or 29.5 percent in the Western and 70.5 percent in the Eastern Theater.

                      51.4 percent of the 545 aircraft in the Western Theater and 68 percent of the 1300 aircraft in the Eastern Theater were bombers.

                      It should be borne in mind, however, that the aircraft strengths computed here represent the theoretical maximum, and that the actually operable strengths were lower.<sup>22</sup>

23

                      It is now necessary to compare these computed strengths of the German Air Force in the Western Theater with the aircraft strengths of the western opponents.

                      Here, two sets of figures can be submitted from reliable sources, namely,<sup>23</sup>

a. The enemy strengths which the German Air Force High Command estimated for the initial stages;

b. The actual enemy strengths as taken from records of the French and British General Staff, which were seized and processed by the German side after the capture of Paris by German forces in 1940.

Ad (a), above:

23 Ad. (a), above. Estimated enemy air strengths at the beginning of the war:

France. 3-4 air divisions comprising approximately 1150 aircraft, of which number roughly 20 percent of the bombers and 35 percent of the fighters were modern types. A large percentage of the other aircraft were only conditionally suited for war conditions.

Britain.

Approximately 400 fighter aircraft Class 1  
 " 500 fighter aircraft Class 2  
 " 250 bomber aircraft

24 giving a total of approximately 1 150 operable British aircraft.

Ad (b), above. Actual Franco-British aircraft strengths, according to figures taken from captured records, at the beginning of the War:

<u>France :</u>	336 Bombers	466 Fighters
<u>Britain:</u>	<u>433 Bombers</u>	<u>496 Fighters</u>
<u>Totals</u>	824 Bombers	962 Fighters.

Respectively, Britain had 1 290 and France 1 450 aircraft altogether in Europe ready for commitment, of which a certain percentage were held in reserve for commitment against Italy.

All figures given here for enemy aircraft strengths include only the aircraft actually available in the theater

22. Appendix 9, Paragraph e.

23. All following information is taken from Qu. V, No. 1. Footnote 21--Continued from p. 22: Furthermore, the computations of strengths in the West in "Polenfeldzug 1939" have in part been superseded by IAFEX records uncovered since, on which this present study is based.

24 countries. The possibility existed, however, to move in reinforcements, although only on a limited scale, from dominions, colonies and other dependencies, since Britain had a system of air bases which permitted the transfer of large units at any time.

For a beginning, however, the German Air Force High Command reckoned only with the strengths given under (a) ~~XXX~~ ~~XXX~~ above.

25 An examination of the figures given under either (a) or (b), above, reveals that the Western Powers had a numerical superiority in aircraft over the strengths of the German Operational Arm of the German Air Force in the Western Theater. This applies to bomber and fighter strengths as well as to overall aircraft strengths.

In any comparison, however, it is important to bear in mind that it is not numerical strength alone, but primarily quality which counts, and here the German Air Force had an advantage. German bombers in those days indubitably were superior in performances to those of the French and the British, while German fighters were superior to the French and equal to their British counterparts.

Another important point is that the bulk of the British fighter forces would be tied down in home defense over the British Islands, and that Britain would need a large

25       percentage of her overall air power to keep her sea lanes of communications open or, in other words, to support her Navy.

          However, even when these points were taken into consideration the Western Powers still had an overable superiority in air power over the German air forces concentrated for defense purposes. It was to be expected that they would exploit this superiority for the conduct of offensive air warfare if they planned to force a decision while Germany remained on the defensive in the Western Theater because of her inferior air strengths committed there.

26       Owing to the lack of adequate accurate records, it is not possible at writing to establish in detail the assembly areas of the German operational air forces or the air bases on which they were stationed in September 1939. The only point which can be reliably established is the location of the command posts of the highest level field commands:

          The Second Air Fleet was at Muenster-Graefersfoerd and the Third Air Fleet was at Roth, near Nuremberg.

          The boundary line between the two air fleets at the time is unknown.

          The striking power and combat value of the operational air units has been computed from three factors: Personnel strength, aircraft strength, and technical performances.

26

The factor of numerical operable strength has been dealt with above.

The training status of the flying personnel and of the technical ground personnel was the factor which would determine the combat performances which the command expected and had to require of the units. A carefully computed average status of training throughout the German Air Force has been worked out, with detailed reasons given for the findings arrived at, in the repeatedly mentioned study on the campaign in Poland.<sup>25</sup> The scope of that examination included the entire German Air Force, so that it applies also to the flying units deployed in the Western Theater, and the formulation given in the study: "Quantity and quality were in <sup>apparently</sup> irreconcilable contrast (quantitaet und qualitaet standen in einem unvereinbar erscheinenden Widerspruch) must also be considered as applicable to the forces in the West.

It could even be said that the average of the German units committed in the Western Theater was lower than that of the units committed against Poland. This was not due to inferior training standards in the two air fleets stationed in the West, but to the fact that the above-average quality of two command units, namely, the Air Force Training and Demonstration Division and the Special Purposes Air Command

25. "Der Polenfeldzug," Volume 1, Chapter 4: "Die personelle und materielle Einsatzbereitschaft der Fliegenden Verbände am 1. 9. 1939."

27 (the Luftwaffe Lehr Division and the Fliegerführer z.b.V.), both assigned in the East, raised the general average for all units committed there.

The reasons for the above fact and for the inadequate status of training in all other units of the German Air Force and their consequent inadequate operability are given in detail in the chapter of the study on the campaign in Poland just referred to, and a recapitulation appears unnecessary here.

Even the arrival of the first units transferred from the Eastern Theater and assigned under the Second and Third Air Fleets brought no generally improved operability. These units admittedly now had combat experience from their commitment in Poland; at the same time, however, they had been so weakened in the Polish campaign, both in personnel and materiel, that they first urgently needed rehabilitation.

The subject of operable strengths in materiel has also received treatment in the previously mentioned chapter of the study on the campaign in Poland, and the facts established there apply equally to the German air units in the West.

All that is needed here on this point is therefore the roster of front line aircraft committed on 1 September 1939, which the author of the study on the campaign in Poland took from Air Force Field Manual L. Dv. 90/2, 1939.<sup>26</sup> The  
20. Appendix 10.



28

critical commentaries by the author of "Der Polenfeldzug--  
1939" on the performance capabilities stated in the roster naturally also apply in the present study on the Western Theater.

It has not been possible to establish reliably which of the aircraft types listed in the roster were in service in the units stationed in the West. All that is known on this point is that the 10th Air Division was at the time being reequipped with Ju-88 aircraft, and that the aircraft crews still had no experience in operations with this model.

## THE GERMAN ARMY

## STRATEGIC CONCENTRATION AND PLANS

To complete the overall picture a brief outline of the strategic concentration and plans of the German Army in the West is necessary for the period prior to and during the campaign in Poland.

The outline now included with this study shows the command organization of the German Army in the West, the divisions available there for ground operations,<sup>27</sup> and the air units assigned under Army Group C, the headquarters responsible for the conduct of operations in the Western Theater at the time.<sup>28</sup>

It has not been possible to determine the distribution of the available Army and Air Force units between the three Army command headquarters committees, but this is of little interest in the present study.

For the sake of completeness, however, it is necessary to mention Provisional Army A (Armeekorps A) committed in the northern area under General (Generaloberst) Freiherr von Hammerstein with forces of an unknown strength to protect the German-Dutch frontier.

The mission of Army Group C was to defend the Rhine

27. Appendix 11.

28. Brigadier General (Generalmajor) Bieneck was assigned as Air Force Commander under Army Group C.

29 River Line in the southern sectors and the Westwall fortifications from Karlsruhe northward in the event of any attack by enemy forces.

As was the case with air operations, the opening of hostilities was to depend on the behavior of the French Army. Under no circumstances was the first shot to be fired by the German side. Action was to be taken only in the case of obvious infringements of the German borders.

For this reason air reconnaissance across the border by the air units allocated to the Army was prohibited. Future reconnaissance areas had been demarcated as far as a line extending through Chalons and Toul-Epinal, southwest of which line the Army Group was to conduct its own reconnaissance. Main emphasis in reconnaissance operations was to be on the French rail and road systems to detect French concentration movements.

## CHAPTER THREE

31

GERMAN OPERATIONAL PLANS IN THE WESTERN THEATER  
AND THEIR EXECUTION IN SEPTEMBER 1939

The examination of Operational Study 1939 has already revealed the basically defensive tendency of the operational plans for the Second and Third Air Fleets in the Western Theater, although the units assigned under the two air fleets comprised practically one half of the entire operable strength available to the German Air Force.<sup>29</sup>

It was in the nature of things that the defensive concept was stated with added emphasis in the directives issued in the late summer of 1939 after current developments had changed the face of the overall situation and consequently necessitated modifications in overall planning: Hitler had in the meantime decided definitely on execution of Operation Weiss, so that in time considerations and the allocation of forces preparations for the campaign against Poland had priority over all other projects.

This meant that Operations Red and Blue necessarily had to take second place, all the more so since the German Government still assumed that intervention by the Western Powers and the war on two fronts which such intervention would bring about could be averted by diplomatic measures.<sup>30</sup>

29. Chapter I, above.

30. Part I, Chapter I, above.

32

The relatively weak air forces which remained assigned in the West under the new directives thus had no other mission but that of strictly defensive action in the event of any intervention by the Western Powers, a mission they were to execute at the least possible cost in own strengths and the execution of which was to create the conditions essential for speedy and complete success of the operations against Poland.

This plan of operations was also clearly evident from Directive No. 1 for the conduct of operations in the Western Theater, which took into consideration the completely changed military and political situation as it existed immediately prior to the opening of the war in the East, and thus differed considerably from the preparations previously prescribed under the original version of Operational Study 1939.

On the evening of 31 August 1939 the Commander in Chief of the Air Force issued "Directive No. 1 for the Third and Second Air Fleets." 31

The moderate phraseology used in formulating this first directive speaks for itself:

.....responsibility for the opening of hostilities will be left clearly to the Western Powers;

.....the neutrality of neutral states west of Germany will be meticulously respected;

the measures taken will be restricted specifically to the repulsion of enemy air attacks;

31. Appendix 12.

32

.....No matter what happens, Hitler, as Supreme Commander of the military forces, has reserved to himself the authority to decide on the commencement of German hostile action, even if the Western Powers should have taken the initiative.

The positive missions contained in the directive for the Second Air Fleet were as follows:

1. To protect the Ruhr region, as its most important task;
2. To prepare for combat operations against Britain, primarily against the British Navy and British troops transports across the English Channel, and against specified targets in England;
3. To prepare the ground organization for reception of the bulk of all German bomber forces after completion of the operations in the East.<sup>32</sup>

The Third Air Fleet received instructions

.....to take action against operations by the French and British air forces from bases within France against the German Army and the territories of Germany if the enemy commenced hostile action.

The two air fleets thus received directives which differed basically one from the other:

The Third Air Fleet was authorized to counterattack France if the enemy should have commenced hostile action;

The Second Air Fleet remained withheld for defense against Britain, and remained dependent in its actions on further decisions to be taken by the Supreme Command.

<sup>32</sup>. In reference to Item 5, above: The 27th Bomber Wing was assigned to the First Air Fleet, in the East, on 1 September, and on the same day already was dispatched from its peacetime bases to attack targets in Poland.

34

The mission assigned to the Second Air Fleet, that of preparing for combat operations against Britain, made cooperation with the German Navy indispensable. Paragraph 4 of the directives states categorically: "The Second Air Fleet will maintain very close contact with Naval Headquarters West. (Marinebefehlshaber West)."

In this situation for combat operations against Britain the question of cooperation between the Navy and the Air Force in areas over the sea became an acute problem for the first time in military history, if one disregard the circumscribed case of integrated action by the Army, Navy, and Air Force in the "Wasserraubung" operation against Denmark and Norway, which a few months later was <sup>to</sup> increase the importance of the problem.

The future areas for combat action against Britain and her territorial waters had to be considered as one homogeneous whole, regardless of whether the operations were to be conducted in the air, on the sea, or in a combination of air and naval actions. The only possible solutions were to place either the Navy or the Air Force in command, or to establish a Joint Military Command Theater, as was done repeatedly later in the war. However, in the case of operations against Britain a uniform command within the whole area involved was lacking. This lack was to be compensated

34 for by "close contact" between the responsible local commanders of the Air Force and the Navy.

In this connection it appears essential here to give a brief outline of the command organization and chains of command for the Air Force and Navy units in the probable future areas of operations in warfare against Britain. This will afford the reader an insight into the prerequisites for cooperation between the forces of the Air Force Operational Arm under the Second Fleet and the naval air units under Naval Air Command West as well as with naval surface forces.

The outline is provided in the sketch "Air Force-Navy Cooperation in September 1939--Command Organization and Chains of Command (Das Zusammenwirken von Luftwaffe und Marine im September 1939--Befehlslieferung und Unterstellungsverhältnisse)."<sup>32</sup>

The arrangement shown in the sketch was arrived at after an almost interminable struggle between the Commander in Chief of the Air Force and the Commander in Chief of the Navy over who was to take precedence, a struggle which had taken up practically the entire period of pre-war preparations and finally ended in favor of the Air Force.

No Air Force records have been uncovered on this subject but a ~~XXXXX~~ post-war study by Colonel Gaul, GSC, Bonn, based

32. Appendix 13.



35 on original documents of the Navy Operations Staff (Seekriegs-  
leitung) is available.<sup>33</sup> The individual chapters of that  
 study are being appended to this present study in accordance  
 with their contents and the periods they cover.

36 For an understanding of the presentation which follows  
 in this present study of the development of the concepts of  
 air warfare against Britain Part I (Planning and Establish-  
 ment of the Naval Air Units--up to the Outbreak of World  
 War II) ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~<sup>34</sup> of the study by Gaul is offered.<sup>34</sup>

For a proper appreciation of the Study by Gaul, it is  
 necessary to emphasize here that the whole study is excep-  
 tionally well documented.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, however, it  
 appears to have been written rather from the side of the  
 Navy than from the Air Force point of view, which can be  
 considered due to factual and psychological causes. As pre-  
 viously stated, however, no documentary sources from the  
 Office of the Commander in Chief of the Air Force are avail-  
 able on the subject, and particularly not on the internal  
 reasoning and operational planning by the Air Force Opera-  
 tions Staff, so that what Gaul writes must for the time be-  
 ing, serve as a starting point.

All that can be done from the side of the Air Force is

33. Oberst i.G. a.D. Gaul, Bonn (1954-55): "Die Geschichte  
des F.d.Luft, der 9. Fl. Division und des IX Fl.Korps  
von der Aufstellung dieser Kommandostellen bis zur Wende  
der Kriegsjahre 1940/41."

34. Appendix 14.

35. See p. 39.

36 to supplement Gaul's presentation by information obtained in personal discussions with General H. Felay, in command of the Second Air Fleet at the time under discussion.<sup>36</sup>

Using these two sources of information it is possible to trace briefly the reasoning behind development of the concepts for air warfare against Britain before entering on a presentation on the actual events.

To begin with, Gaul's study reveals, on the basis of authentic documents, that there were two distinct phases:

1. A period of general preliminary exploration commencing on 18 February 1938 and

2. A period of more concrete planning resulting from the more critical overall political situation prior to and during the Suceutenlan crisis.

The development of these two phases is visible from the following:

18 February 1938: "Preliminary Orientation" by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force to Commanding General, Second Air Fleet, concerning the ".....intentions of the Commander in Chief of the Air Force concerning preparations for the conduct of combat operations in the West." The Second Air Fleet was to assume responsibility for the "preparation of data" for air operations against Britain. However, preparations were to be restricted to the requirements of  
35 and 36, see p. 40.

38 "operational air warfare against port and armament installations;" reconnaissance was only mentioned incidentally; no mention was made of operations against seaborne targets.

23 August 1938: The Commander in Chief of the Air Force drew the attention of the Second Air Fleet (then still the Second Air Force Group--Luftfliegergruppe 2) to the necessity for preparations to receive between two and three bomber wings against the eventuality of air operations against Britain.

22 September 1938: The Second Air Fleet reported to the Commander in Chief of the Air Force on its views concerning possible action and the prerequisites for such action.

The air fleet for the first time broached the subject of the necessity for action against the British Navy. The closing passages of the report appear to be the most essential parts:

"With the means hitherto available the achievement of only harassing results can be expected....." and finally "with the means hitherto available a war of destruction against Britain appears impossible."<sup>37</sup>

Up to this point the interest of the German Air Force in the problem of Britain, which commenced early in 1938, seems to have remained restricted to theoretical consideration

<sup>37</sup>. Appendix 14: Air Force Penetration Range.

Footnote 35, p. 38: Based primarily on original documents of the Naval Operations Staff, such as War Journals.

Footnote 36, p. 39: Detailed oral discussion between General Felay and present author at Darmstadt on 10 July 1956.

39 vague deliberations, recommendations, and discussions. The continuing controversy between the highest naval and Air Force levels, which took the course of conferences, protocols, and tactical-technical armaments specifications, is clearly presented in Appendix 14.

The growing tension of the overall political situation in which Germany found herself prior to and during the period known as the Sudetenland crisis in the autumn of 1938 appears to have influenced the Commander in Chief of the Air Force to consider air warfare against Britain as a more concrete problem and to expedite studies to find solutions.

According to information from General relay, commanding the Second Air Fleet at the time,<sup>38</sup> he was ordered to report personally to Goering, Commander in Chief of the Air Force, late in September, when the Sudetenland crisis was at a peak. At this conference, Goering ordered him to submit "Recommendations for the conduct of air warfare against Britain," including action against the British Isles and against the British naval forces. Goering ordered that the study was to be based on the assumed availability of "100 wings."

The whole matter was to be treated as strictly confidential, and the Commanding General, Second Air Fleet personally without any assistance from members of his staff!

<sup>38</sup>. See Footnote 36, p. 40.

39 wrote out two papers on the subject, in which he described the whole idea as preposterous under existing circumstances.

In view of the small technical capabilities of the available aircraft he above all considered base area from which they would have to operate, in Eastern Prussia and the off-shore islands there, as totally unsuitable, and insisted that an indispensable condition for implementation of the plans involved was to have Belgium and Holland as a base area for the type of air warfare which the Commander in Chief of the Air Force required.

This brought political conditions into the problem which even Goering was unable to fulfill, and the whole matter was allowed to rest.

In early 1939 General Jeschonnek, who meanwhile had been assigned as Chief of the Air Force General Staff suggested to Goering that an air war game should be conducted to help in the elucidation of the problem of the conduct of warfare against Britain.

The outcome was a war maneuver by the Second Air Fleet in May 1939, the results of which provided the first basic information and conditions for planning. The new Chief of the Air Force General Staff participated in the war maneuver, but Goering failed to attend, although he had stated that he would do so. <sup>39</sup>

39. See p. 43.

40

In June 1939 the Commanding General, Second Air Fleet reported orally to Goering on the findings arrived at in the map maneuver, which in no way influenced Operational Study 1939, which in the meanwhile had been completed. What influence the map maneuver and its findings may have had on detailed orders issued later is unknown.

The ruling view at the time was that the whole matter was still in the "experimental stage"; that only "theoretical preparations" were involved.

The final critique on the map maneuver happens to be available and is most enlightening on the subject of the views current and the possibilities existing at the time.<sup>40</sup>

---

40. Appendix 14.

Footnote 39, p. 42: It can be noted as an irony of fate that the date of the first day of attack in the map maneuver happened to be 10 May. The German offensive in the West commenced precisely one year later.

40

13

The purpose of the war maneuver was ".....to explore and ~~XXXXXX~~ ascertain the command-technical, supply-technical, and signal-technical feasibilities for the conduct of combat operations against the British Isles and against targets in British territorial waters." The basic information gained in this way was to be used for the first considerations on the subject of the direction and execution of such operations.

The final critique on the war maneuver was extremely concise and logical. From it only a few but very important points will be quoted here, since they have a bearing on the subjects discussed in the present study and were soon to produce practical results in the event of war.

1. Two complexes of missions evolved for the conduct of air warfare against Britain:

a. Freedom of action for the German Navy had to be gained and maintained throughout the North Sea areas, and particularly in the North Passage area, by means of action by the Air Force against British naval forces and their supply and operational bases;

b. It was essential to attack the island itself, namely, the British armament industries, British ports, and British shipping lanes.

2. The war maneuver was premised on the operable strengths and technical performances of German air units as projected for 1942, meaning at the end of the current "armament phase (Rüstungsperiode). In practice, the

41

In practice, the whole map maneuver thus had to be based on theoretical factors stated or stipulated by the the Commander in Chief of the Air Force as the rules for the maneuver.

From the fact that the conditions as they existed at the time were not used as factors in the maneuver it can be assumed with a certain degree of certainty that even in the few months immediately prior to the war none in the higher and highest levels of Air Force command counted on any possibility of armed conflict with Britain within the foreseeable future. On the contrary: From passages in the Second Air Fleet's final critique on the map maneuver it is clearly evident under conditions as they existed in May 1939 practically none of the conditions existed which would have been essential for air operations against Britain.

3. This fact is emphasized by the treatment given to the subject of the command of major units. This was an entirely new feature, and the following passage from the critique says all that need be said on the subject: "At present the art of command in the air within units has probably not progressed beyond group-sized units." This realization is supplemented by the resigned statement: "We also must.... for the time being place tactics before operations."



42

4. New organizational concepts evolved in the course of the new maneuver which require a brief explanation here, since they are essential not only for an understanding of the critique itself but, what is more important, because they shed light on planning ideas of the highest Air Force command levels at the time and also on the lack of clarification on the most important requirements of command.

Solely for the purpose of possible air operations against Britain, the German Air Force at that time differentiated between the following types of tactical units of the Operational Air Arm:

- a. Naval Air Divisions, also called Naval Combat Units;
- b. Land ~~(=xxxxx)~~ Air Divisions.

The naval air divisions were intended for military air operations over sea areas in cooperation with the Navy, meaning the use of specifically land-based types of units against sea-borne targets. They had nothing in common with the naval air forces under the Navy's Naval Air Commander.

The units described as land divisions were intended for military operations against land targets involving cross-sea flight, in this case attacks against the British Isles, British ports, and British armament industries.

Both categories of divisions were under existing conditions a utopian concept. Neither of them actually

43 materialized, and they can only be regarded as as a theoretical stage of development. Their "establishment in theory" was linked closely with serious considerations in the Air Force Operations Staff at the turn of the year 1938-39 to establish strictly monotype divisions (reinrassige Divisionen) such as bomber or fighter divisions. It is also in the light of this complex of ideas that the thought must be understood to provide monotype divisions for the conduct of war against Britain, namely one type of division for operations against seaborne targets, one for operations against land targets.

5. The training status of the flying units and the technical capabilities of their aircraft are also mentioned repeatedly. The realization is clearly evident that neither the training status achieved by the personnel nor the technical capabilities of their equipment would within the foreseeable future be adequate for the conduct of air warfare against Britain.<sup>41</sup>

44 6. Coordinated action with the Navy is not mentioned at all in the critique. Whereas the critique discusses the problems of airdrop mining operations and considers these as a mission of the Operational Air Arm, mention is made incidentally only of the possibility that the Air Force missions

41. Concerning the available He-111 aircraft available, for example, the critique states: "Their preparation for these attacks is still completely inadequate." According to the critique the He-111-H and P had a penetration range of 560 miles, the He-111-H, with a flight weight of 11 tons, a penetration range of 600 miles.

44 might overlap with those of the specific naval combat air units, namely, the units under the Naval Air Command. However no solution is suggested or sought.

7. The critique finally mentions as "experience hitherto developed from the sea maneuver:"

a. The necessity to create consolidated wings and divisions for combat action at sea, and to create them under peacetime conditions;

b. During war to employ these units separately or in part mixed with other units according to the requirements of current conditions.

The above are a few points taken from the final critique which serve to show how the German Air Force Command had only just begun to feel and seek its way in explorations of the theoretical possibilities for the conduct of air warfare against Britain, and how it used "assumed factors," years ahead of actually existing conditions, at the time of the sea maneuver, as a basis in stating the problem.

45 Only four months later the matter of the conduct of air warfare against Britain became a currently acute problem, and this disparity between what was desired and what was possible between illusions and actual fact was to make its appearance time and again in later events.

The actual conditions as they existed at the outbreak of the war will now be presented by way of comparison with the above theories. The following presentation of these

conditions also is based on information from the former Commanding General of the Second Air Fleet:

1. Prior to the map maneuver dealt with above, and thus prior to May 1939, no training was given in the subject of air operations at sea. By the outbreak of the war one-third of the bomber crews of the Second Air Fleet were capable of such operations;

2. To verify the conclusions drawn from the map maneuver, the Second Air Fleet in August 1939 conducted another, small-scale, maneuver. The problem was tried out 180 degrees farther east. The bomber units crossed the Baltic Sea in a flight to Koenigsberg, in Eastern Prussia, and back, a distance approximately equal to the distance from the tactical bases in the west to the Wash. This was the only practical exercise carried out with troops;

3. Even during the so-called War of Waiting of the following eight months, there was no possibility to carry out training activities at sea on any considerable scale, since any provocation of Britain was to be avoided for political reasons;<sup>42</sup>

4. With the available aircraft at the time (initially only He-111 aircraft were in service, and a number of Ju-38 aircraft were received later) it was just possible to reach central England, but not to reach such points as Liverpool.<sup>43</sup>

5. Only small supplies of 1 100-pound (500 kilogram) bombs were available for action against ships. The heaviest caliber hitherto in use had been the 550-pound (250 kilogram) bomb;

<sup>42</sup>. Systematic long-view training was also, and particularly, not possible because the units had to be constantly ready for combat commitment and were kept in a constant state of uncertainty by the continuous postponements of the deadlines for attack,

<sup>43</sup>. See p. 50.

46

6. The problem of an air-sea rescue service, long since called for by the Second Air Fleet, was still in the initial stages of study.

These were the actual conditions under which the German Air Force entered the war at sea against Britain.

Now to the question of how cooperation functioned in practice between the Second Air Fleet and the Navy:

After issue of the initial directives by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force for the conduct of operations against Britain, the first personal contacts were established and the first discussions took place between the responsible commanders.<sup>44</sup> Then followed cooperation in certain matters. For example, aircraft crews were taken on cruises at sea aboard naval ships, and the Training Wing was assigned for practical tests in integrated Air Force-naval defensive and offensive combat action. No exchange of liaison officers took place for the time being, and provisions were only made for such an exchange in the event of mobilization.<sup>45</sup>

47

Contrary to what might have been expected, nothing

44. General Felmy from the Air Force, and Admiral Boehm, Commanding General, Naval Headquarters West, for the Navy.

45. It was only after mobilization that a naval liaison officer was attached to the Second Air Fleet, but apparently no Air Force Liaison Officer was attached to the corresponding naval command.

Footnote 43, p. 49: See Appendix 14: Penetration Range Map.

47 such was done after the outbreak of the war to intensify such cooperation. The Commanding General of the Second Air Fleet describes the cooperation which did take place as "loose but harmonious, serving to synchronize efforts."

The system of "cooperation between the Air Force and the Navy" as described in Appendix 13 and the contact lines, thus remained more or less a matter of theory.

However, cooperation does seem to have been closer at the field unit level than at the command level, since ~~that~~ later events ~~following~~ ~~the~~ ~~outbreak~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~war~~ ~~will~~ serve to show that a practicable delimitation of missions and tactical cooperation did materialize between the reconnaissance units under the Naval Air Commander and those of the 10th Air Division: Reconnaissance by the naval units and attack by the Air Force units supported by naval contact planes.

The above is what the former Commanding General of the Second Air Fleet has to say on the subject.

The astonishing fact evolving from any review of this nature is that the subject of air warfare against Britain was only given serious theoretical consideration one year before the actual outbreak of war, and that practical preparations against such an eventuality had barely begun to take shape by the outbreak of war.

48

This view is emphasized and confirmed by the final passages in Gaul's study (see Footnote 33):

The mutual target of the German Air Force and Navy to have effective air units available before a war broke out with Britain was not achieved.

and further

With the exception of mutual good intentions, practically all conditions essential for effective command cooperation in air-naval warfare were lacking.

and finally

The mutual mission of the Navy and the Air Force in their mutual areas of operations of the North Sea in the initial stages had to be handled with improvisations.

## MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN SEPTEMBER 1939

In the early morning on 1 September 1939 German ground and air forces crossed the Polish border, the war had commenced.

German political leaders still hoped that the conflict in the East could be localized. Threats were used to increase the probability that these hopes could materialize: the first reports by the German Joint Military High Command (OKW) on the current status in the military situation were so formulated as to make use of the German Air Force as a means of coercion. This is so since the passages in these reports, addressed to Western diplomats, could not be understood otherwise than as a threat, particularly in view of the fact that they do not correspond to actual facts. The passage involved reads as follows:

The German Air Force has unchallenged air supremacy over the entire Polish area and is now available for other missions in defense of the Reich.<sup>46</sup>

Even as late as on 3 September another attempt was made to use the German Air Force as a means of political intimidation:

The divisions of the two air fleets committed against Poland are back again at the tactical bases ready

46. OKW Bulletin 2 September 1939.



49

ready for action.<sup>47</sup>

However, it was precisely on 3 September that further developments in the military-political situation in Europe had brought France and Britain into the war.

The resultant situation found expression in the wording of Directive No. 2 issued by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force to the Second and Third Air Fleets on 3 September 1939 immediately after the declaration of war by France and Britain.<sup>48</sup>

The dreaded war on two fronts, which fundamentally had been expected, had become an actual fact.

The new directive commenced with a reiteration of the German objective in conduct of the war: "A speedy and victorious conclusion of the operations against Poland." Reinforcement of the defensive forces in the Western Theater remained subject to decisions to be taken by Hitler. In other words: For the time being, the Second and Third Air Fleets for the time being had to rely on the forces currently available to them in taking up their defensive battle in the West and had to hold out.

While retaining the principles governing the conduct of operations previously stated in Directive No. 1, the

47. OKW. Bulletin 3 September 1939.  
48. Appendix 16.

50

new instructions for the Second Air Fleet contained certain basically new features:

The Navy was authorized to take offensive action but not so the Air Force.

The tendency thus remained one of reserve, as will be seen from the following important instructions to the Second Air Fleet:

1. Attacks against targets in England and against merchant vessels remain prohibited;

2. Attacks against British naval units and troop transport ships are authorized only if the British had attacked similar German targets;

3. Even in such case reconnaissance (!) and attack operations were subject to decision by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force.

The restrictions thus imposed on the Second Air Fleet applied also to the Third Air Fleet, although here they were subject to certain conditions: Any commencement of German attack action was contingent upon:

a. Commencement of hostilities by the French Air Force;

b. Orders from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force even if the condition stated under (a) above existed.

This over-sized reserve can only be explained by political causes and considerations. The hope existed that an early peace could be achieved with Britain (and France).

51            However, there was also a purely military background  
to the passage: "German measures which might provoke a com-  
mencement of air warfare by the enemy will be avoided." Al-  
though the German Supreme Command was anxious, no matter  
what happened, to avoid the development of air warfare, or  
52            at least to leave the commencement of such warfare to enemy  
initiative, the attitude was also influenced by factors  
resulting from the capabilities of the German air forces  
stationed in the West at the beginning of the war, and above  
all from the capabilities of those units available for of-  
fensive action against Britain.

49

          At the beginning of the War the Second Air Fleet had  
available for offensive action between sixty and eighty  
bombers which were suitable for cross-sea operations. In  
practice, however, only between 30 and 40 He-111 were ope-  
rable, plus a small number of Ju-88 bombers in the 1st Group,  
25th Bomber Wing, which could be considered unconditionally  
suitable and ready for such operations.

          The escort fighter units (twin-engine aircraft) were  
currently receiving new Me-109 and Me110 aircraft and had  
not received adequate training, nor had they adequate ex-  
perience for their new mission. Furthermore, they could not  
be committed in operations beyond a range of 180 to 240  
miles (300-400 kilometers).

49. The figures given here are taken from a study--Continued

52

And finally, apart from the Do-18 planes ~~XXXX~~ in units under the Naval Air Command West, the only aircraft available for long-range reconnaissance were a few He-111, Ju-90, and FW-200 planes.

For these reasons resulting purely from numerical strength and technical capabilities considerations, the German Air Force at this juncture was compelled to act with great reserve and maintain an attitude of almost extreme defense. The instructions governing the conduct of air operations were adapted to this position of constraint.

The restrictions imposed by the Air Force High Command remained in force throughout September, and already on 10 September, the following teletype message was dispatched at 1025 hours to both the Second and Third Air Fleets:

By order of the Fuehrer and Supreme Commander (Hitler) all flight across the western borders is prohibited unless necessary to repel large-scale air attacks.<sup>50</sup>

Commander in Chief of the Air Force  
Operations Staff, Operations Section  
No. 4603/39, Secret.

To the surprise of the German Command, however, the "large-scale air attacks" which had been expected with certainty, did not occur. "To the (German) Air Force Command the absence of air attack by the Western Powers, particularly during the campaign in Poland was completely inexplicable."<sup>51</sup>

53 The British Air Force admittedly was active from the first day after Britain's declaration of war on, or to be more precise, from the first night on: British Hampden, Wellington, and Whitley bomber aircraft, between twenty and thirty in numbers, flew over German territory whenever the weather was favorable and dropped pamphlets. Taking off from bases in England they penetrated as far as a line from Luebeck through Berlin, Leipzig, Wureburg, and Munich at

54 altitudes between 15 000 and 20 000 feet. These operations continued beyond September right through the winter of 1939-1940.

That the British should begin the war with propaganda naturally seemed strange, but the type of propaganda involved simply could not produce psychologically successful results. However, the penetrations did produce one result--at least at the beginning of the war: they caused unrest among the civilian population and reduced industrial production. As time passed, however, the population became accustomed to frequent alerts without any bombings.

"The German Air Force Command interpreted these penetrations as the intention of the British Royal Air Force

Footnote 50, p. 58: Underlined by present author.  
Footnote 51, p. 58: General Schmitz: "Der Ic-Dienst der Luftwaffe und der Falang in Westen (1945). Karlsruhe Document Collection.  
Footnote 49, p. 56--Continued: by Branch 3 of the Air Force General Staff. Microfilm E-5. Karlsruhe Document Collection.

54 to train its aircraft crews in night operations and blind navigation supported by various systems of radio control.<sup>52</sup>

However, the question remains open whether the German Air Force High Command actually recognized from the start the system of training and orientation flights of the Royal Air Force units, or whether the ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ statement quoted above was due to a later realization of what had been happening.

One obvious fact is, however, that in the report by Branch 8 of the Air Force General Staff on the first events of the war in the West, which was based on all source material available to the Office of the Commander in Chief of the Air Force,<sup>53</sup> the British penetrations are described throughout solely as "propaganda" and "reconnaissance" flights. If the real purpose of the flights had been correctly recognized at the time, that purpose would at least have been described or mentioned as a possibility in this first start at writing the history of the war.

55

German defense against these systematic British penetrations, which soon became a matter of habit, remained restricted to antiaircraft artillery fire. However, this action seems to have achieved little success:<sup>54</sup>

Their (the antiaircraft artillery) complete failure-- since they failed to prevent the penetrations or to achieve appreciable results in enemy aircraft downed,

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 52, 53, 54 and a. 6.

54

resulted in drastically severe criticism from the Supreme Command.<sup>55</sup>

Neither the German ground organization nor installations of the German armament industries came under attack--and attacks against both of these categories of targets had been expected with certainty.

In contrast, British units in September, during the campaign in Poland, attacked naval shore and seaborne targets.

As early as on 4 September units of the Royal Air Force flew an attack against the Wilhelmshaven naval base. This attack was repelled by the German defenses at heavy cost and was not repeated before December of the same year.<sup>56</sup>

No British escort fighter units made any appearance.

55. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Source No. 1, p. 27.  
Footnote 52, p. 59: General Schmitt: Contribution to the study "Fallangriff gegen Frankreich 1940" 31 January 1953.  
Footnote 55, p. 59: Source No. 1, p. 27.

Footnote 51, p. 59: The activation of night fighter units had just started. One night fighter squadron, activated by Air District Command XI, was committed during the first few days of the war in the region between the mouth of the Ems River and that of the Elbe River, particularly in the Wilhelmshaven area. A "Night-Fighter" zone was established in the command zone of the Third Air Fleet in the "Eilbromm-Wimpfen" area.

56. According to Source No. 1 three units of the Royal Air Force (Vickers, Wellington, Blenheim, and Hampden--herefor planes) attacked Wilhelmshaven and achieved insignificant hits on the Admiral Scheer (a pocket battleship) and the cruiser Emden, both of which were slightly damaged. German fighters and anti-aircraft artillery fire brought down eight of the attacking planes. The Commander in Chief of the Air Force ordered a retaliatory attack against a British aircraft carrier in port at Sherness, but the attack was not launched.

56 The British defense fighters stationed in the British assembly areas in Northern France were exceedingly active and seriously hampered German long-range reconnaissance, even at the highest altitudes.

On 29 September Royal Air Force units attacked German destroyers in the Bight of Helligoland, but without success. Of the eleven planes participating in the attack, German fighters shot down five in flames during their departure from the target area.<sup>57</sup>

The French air forces showed even far less activity than the modest display by the British Royal Air Force. Contrary to definite German expectations, the entire French Air Force, and particularly the Bomber Arm remained completely passive. No bombing attacks at all occurred. Systematic reconnaissance was carried out only over the frontier areas, but no French planes penetrated over the German interior.

57 The only action by French fighters was in occasional efforts to prevent German air reconnaissance along the Rhine river front. In general they avoided air combat with German fighters. Fighter units rarely penetrated over German territory, and then only to a depth of a few miles behind the German front lines. In fighter-fighter combat the French

<sup>57</sup> The attacking force consisted of two half squadrons or flights of Blenheim bombers. According to statements by prisoners they were in search of seaborne German targets within the inner reaches of the Bight of Helligoland.



57 Morane 406 fighter model already proved inferior.

Finally, German air activities, in line with the directives issued, remained confined throughout September to

1. Systematic reconnaissance to gather information on the France-British ground organization and the fortifications in the eastern areas of France. Initially these operations were conducted with extreme caution by special high-altitude units directly under the Commander in Chief of the Air Force. Later, the air fleets carried out such reconnaissance action with their own units. Time and again the air fleets insisted on a relaxation of the reconnaissance prohibition initially in force.

Thus, close-range reconnaissance beyond the German frontier was only permitted from 10 September on, and then only on a limited scale, after the enemy reconnaissance activities had increased.

On 13 September the Third Air Fleet obtained approval from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force to conduct "unobtrusive long-range reconnaissance at extreme altitudes," but only by Third Air Fleet Headquarters units, not by units of the assigned divisions, bomber forces, or the Army air forces. Fighters remained restricted to action over German territory.

The practical execution of such reconnaissance

58

was usually frustrated, however, by weather conditions (rain and low-hanging clouds).

2. Systematic nightly flights over France to drop pamphlets for propaganda purposes, to undermine the morale of the French Army. These flights were carried out by bomber units of the Third Air Fleet.

No indications are evident that these first flights into the enemy interior were designed as training, orientation, and navigation exercises within the scope of the radio control system then in force, and if so, whether such opportunities were exploited as logically and systematically as was done at the same time by the Royal Air Force farther north.

3. Air patrols over the North Sea and the English Channel, including attacks against ships if the opportunity offered. The first opportunity presented itself on 21 September. Reconnaissance units of the Naval Air Command on that day reported strong British naval forces approximately 250 nautical miles west of Westerland. The Commanding General, Second Air Fleet thereupon ordered the 10th Division to dispatch its units stationed on forward airfields on Westerland<sup>58</sup>, which consisted of <sup>less than</sup> two squadrons, to attack the British force. The aircraft took off:

58. 1st Squadron, 28th Fighter Wing (9 He-111 planes) and 1st Group, 30th Bomber Wing (4 Ju-88 planes).

58

attack the British naval force, and allegedly achieved a full hit on an aircraft carrier, and two hits on a battle ship. The fighters steered by compass and radio navigation, using their own direction finder equipment and guided by the contact planes of the Naval Air Command West.

The attacks continued on 27 September, again in close cooperation with Naval Air Command West, and two cruisers were again reported hit.<sup>59</sup>

The special study by Gaul contains a detailed report on this first Air Force operation against the British Navy in Part 2 of the study.<sup>60</sup>

One important point evolving from the first operation appears to be the fact that, in spite of all the controversial opinions formerly held and in spite of the struggle for precedence caused thereby, both the Commander in Chief of the Air Force and the Naval Operations Staff were satisfied with the results obtained and with the evident smooth cooperation between the two branches of the military.

59. For details see Source No. 1.

60. Appendix 17.

64a

60

SUMMARY REVIEW OF COMBAT OPERATIONS  
SEPTEMBER 1939--FIRST MONTH OF THE WAR

In the first month of the war, developments in the Western Theater has brought a surprise for both sides: the expected war in the air has failed to materialize.

Both sides had avoided air attacks against land targets. The operations of bomber forces remained restricted to propaganda purposes and training activities, with the Royal Air Force, which was far less restricted in its action than the German Air Force, proceeding far more systematically than the German Air Force. In the German bulletins issued by the Joint Military High Command the air situation throughout September was described time and again by the stereotyped sentence: "Air attacks against German territories did not occur."

Both sides with a show of hesitation attacked naval targets ashore and afloat, and both sides achieved only negligible results. Both sides were "feeling" their way towards methods for air warfare. The small results achieved, and on the German side also the complete inadequacy of the forces available, compelled both sides to proceed with even more caution than before.

The initiative shown by the British is contrasted by the German attitude of reserve resulting from the orders

60 prohibiting air attacks against targets on the British Isles.

Air Warfare in the Western Theater in the month of September closed with the following figures:

61 37 French and 15 British, or a total of 52 enemy planes shot down

if the information given in the German Joint Military High Command Bulletins in the 5-30 September series <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ considered reliable.

As will be seen, the reasons for this unexpected quiet in air warfare in the Western Theater during the Polish campaign was due initially to

1. The markedly defensive mission assigned to the German Air Force, which ~~consisted of~~ <sup>was reflected by</sup> the forces allocated to the Second and Third Air Fleets;

2. The fact that the offensive combat activity which the German side had expected from the enemy did not materialize.

All that now remains to be explained is the reason for the withholding attitude of the western air forces in the existing situation, since it would have been an easy matter for them, with their numerical superiority, to wear down the relatively weak German air forces in the theater and seriously reduce their combat efficiency and operability if not to completely destroy them.

First of all it is necessary to dispose of the purely <sup>of fear</sup> psychological factor, since there is no evidence for or

61 against it: Were the Western Powers afraid of the opposing German Air Force? Did they overestimate its strength, or were they precisely informed concerning the bluff of the two air fleets? Had they a clear picture of the German distribution of forces which could have made a destructive attack as a preventive measure seem worth while? Or were political reasons the factor--as was the case on the German side, which made it seem advisable to maintain a reserved attitude?

Probably, the primary causes were to be sought in the considered military anxiety about the inadequacy of their own air armaments at the time.

The French in their strategic planning were definitely against any air attack against targets within Germany for fear of retaliatory German attacks, to which their own defenses appeared inadequate. Air defense in France had in the past been considered as of secondary importance, and at the beginning of the war the French air defense system was poorly equipped and badly organized. The antiaircraft artillery arm was admittedly numerically strong, but largely equipped with obsolete materiel.<sup>61</sup> Defense fighters, in contrast, were numerically inadequate for the diversified and manifold missions of defense in the wide expanses of France. Furthermore, most of the aircraft in service were

61. According to Source 1, p. 4, France at the time had more than 3 638 heavy and 1 512 light AA guns, and more than 500 AA searchlights.

62 outdated models.<sup>62</sup>

63 In the event of German air attacks against targets in France, the most important French weakness was the lack of bombers for effective retaliatory action.<sup>63</sup>

Another factor was the "tactical" concept ruling in French command circles on the use of air power, which provided only for air action directly supporting the Army within the the immediate area of operations in contrast with the concept of "operational" air power held by the German Air Force command.

France thus maintained an attitude of reserve because of a feeling of weakness and complete inferiority in air power and only at this juncture commenced reorganizing and reinforcing its air forces, for which purpose the French requested fighter aircraft from Britain. At the same time, however, the French even went a step farther and expected Britain to commit her bomber forces in air warfare against targets in Germany, which she herself was unable to attack.

Britain, however, rejected the initiation of air warfare at this juncture, since the British Command considered their own air forces and their own air defenses were not yet capable of countering German operational air warfare.

62. United Kingdom Military Series "History of the Second World War--The War in France and Flanders 1939-1940;" Chapter II: There it is stated that France in October 1939 had 549 fighter aircraft.--Continued.

63 The British therefore commenced a systematic build-up of their own air armaments and, above all, a training program for their offensive air forces. As so often in the past Britain allowed "time to work her own purposes."

64 In actual operations, the British restricted themselves to a "policy of pinpricks"--the attack against Wilhelmshaven cannot be considered more than that, and to reconnaissance and training flights.

The German side at the time ascribed the failure of the Western Powers to take action which could relieve German pressure on Poland to the weakness of their air armaments. Far manifold and obvious reasons not only the German Air Force, but also the Army Command were relieved by this inactivity of the Western Powers. 64

Fundamentally, the following can be said in retrospect concerning the behavior of the German Air Force during the series of this war on two fronts:

The attitude of reserve was a sound policy. In this "secondary theater of operations," which the West was at the time, no plans existed to seek a decision, so that a struggle for air supremacy there could and has to be avoided. The 64. What is known as the Halder Diary contain an entry under 10 September 1939 which is revealing in connection with the situation in the Western Theater: "Avoid precipitating air warfare. Another entry under 29 September indicates that even after the complete shift of German military emphasis to the Western Theater, anxiety was



65

Footnote 61--Continued: still felt--at least in Army circles, over the possibility of operational air warfare: "If an attack develops in the West, the German Air Force will of necessity be throttled."

Footnote 62, p. 67--Continued: 131 of them obsolete. Compare also the figures given in Part I, Chapter II from German sources.

Footnote 63, p. 67-- Ibid. According to the same source, France had only 136 bomber aircraft available. With the exception of eleven, all of these were obsolete models. Compare also the figures given from German sources in Part I, Chapter II.

64 small forces available in the theater could not have achieved any decisive results, and their operability would have been weakened. At the same time the western opponents would have been able to gather tactical and technical experience to narrow down the war in of disadvantage otherwise resulting from the fact that the German side would have seasoned troops in the theater after the Polish campaign was over.

Thus, the policy of "strategic resistance" was a sound policy not only on the ground but also in the air, in which connection it should be borne in mind that in air warfare a basic policy of strategic defense is quite compatible with one of tactical offense in operations. For purely political reasons, however, such a policy of tactical offense could not be applied in the existing situation. The moment the bulk of German air power became available for commitment in the Western Theater, however, the question would necessarily again arise whether to seek the battle for air supremacy or at least air superiority in the form of a "separate operational air warfare," or whether the offensives by Air Forces forces and by Army forces should take the form of action integrated in the operational sense and in timing. This is a question which will be dealt with later in this study.

Towards the end of this first (September 1939) phase of World War II the Commander in Chief of the German Air

65 Air Force issued new instructions for the conduct of air warfare. These instructions were contained in Directive No. 4 dated 23 September 1939. According to this new directive, the basic principles were to remain unchanged:

the German Air Force was to continue restricting itself to purely defensive action;

Attacks against targets in France and in England, as well as against merchant shipping remained prohibited.

Directive No. 4 will be examined in detail in the next chapter of this study, since it introduced a new phase in operational planning.

The new phase of operational planning was a logical outcome of developments and events in the East.

As a final illustration of the interaction between the two theaters of operations, the reader is reminded that by this time ground and air operations <sup>against Poland</sup> had already just about been concluded. All that remained for the German forces in Poland was to reduce and occupy the Warsaw-Medlin fortifications system. Small German air and ground purposes had to remain in Poland for this purpose until they also were released for transfer to the West by the fall of the two fortifications of Warsaw and Medlin on 27 September 1939.

In the secure certainty of an early victory in Poland, the Commander in Chief of the Air Force has issued Directive

72

No. 4 a few days previously.

## CHAPTER FOUR

REGROUPING OF THE GERMAN OPERATIONAL AIR FORCES  
DURING THE POLISH CAMPAIGN AND THE SHIFT OF MAIN  
EMPHASIS TO THE WESTERN THEATER

At an early stage already, the Commander in Chief of the German Air Force decided to shift main emphasis for the Operational Air Arm from East to West.

The outcome of this decision was an order dated 22 September 1939 calling for the transfer and redistribution of units. This order was issued just after the end of the major battle of encirclement at the Bzura River (generally referred to in German Air Force circles as the "Battle of Kutno"), and while the forces of the Operational Air Arm still available in Poland were preparing for the commitment of the bulk of their units in the attack against the fortresses of Warsaw and Modlin to decide the final outcome of the whole Polish campaign.

Only parts of the instructions contained in the new order were really new. On the whole it was merely a consolidation of already issued detailed orders, since the withdrawal of units from action in Poland (primarily bomber units) and their transfer to the Zone of Interior for the purpose of commitment in the West had commenced already on 12 September, at a time when the offensive operations in

Plans, both on the ground and in the air, were only approaching their culmination point.

68

The contents of the order dated 22 September, and attached to this study as Appendix B8, must be appraised on the basis of a knowledge of the developments just described.

The order regulated the new distribution of command staffs and tactical units between the Second and Third Air Fleets in the Western Theater, but not in the sense that these units were to be transferred to their new assembly and tactical airports for immediate commitment in the West. The order transferred them to command by the Second and Third Air Fleets, but first moved them to their peacetime air bases. There they were to be rehabilitated and brought up to full strength in personnel and materiel, while some of them were to be reequipped with new aircraft types, such as Ju-88, Do-17-Z, and Me-110 aircraft. Only after restoration to full operability in personnel and materiel were they to be transferred by the Second and Third Air Fleets to the tactical air bases these headquarters had planned and prepared for them. However, even these "assembly movements" were to take place only with prior approval from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force.

From these and other instructions contained in the order two facts become evident:

68

1. The ~~XXXX~~ basis for the whole shift of emphasis from East to West was a long-term rehabilitation program;

2. The bulk of the forces of the Operational Air Arm would not be ready for commitment against the Western Powers for a period the length of which could not be precisely predicted.

This fact remained unchanged even by the establishment of what was called a system of "operability grades" against the eventuality that unexpected air activities by the Western Powers might create the necessity to commit the units sooner than was expected and desired. The establishment of the "operability grades" was thus a logical precautionary measure.

Only inadequate source material is available concerning the time schedule for the rehabilitation program, so that it cannot be reconstructed, or to establish by what time the Commander in Chief of the Air Force expected once again to have a fully operable air force available. However, it is a definite fact that the rehabilitation program commenced step by step already in mid-September, and that the bulk of the Air Force--the large majority of all units, were in their home bases prior to the capture of Warsaw on 27 September, with the exception of the units in the ~~XXXX~~ reinforced close support group under the Special Purposes Command. More details will be given at the close of this chapter on

69 the reequipping of the units with new types of aircraft, which went hand in hand with the general measures of rehabilitation.

It is probable that the optimistic appraisal of the chances of victory in the East was not the direct cause for this shift of main emphasis from East to West, which was planned with a view to the future and initiated at an early stage. It is more likely that the real direct cause was the latent fear of the German Supreme Command that the inexorable and ominous inactivity of the Western Powers since the entry of Britain and France into the war might be followed by unpleasant surprises, such as air attacks against the extremely sensitive Ruhr region, Germany's North Sea ports, or by British naval operations, or/and similar action, to prevent which the German air forces left in the West would be unable to take <sup>decisive</sup> defensive or offensive action because of their weakness.

70

For the above reasons it is to be assumed, although no proofs can be adduced, that the German Supreme Command at a very early juncture had given the Commander in Chief of the Air Force binding instructions to expedite the preparation and initiation of measures for commitment of the Operational Air Arm in the Western Theater regardless of actual developments in the East. This must be assumed since at this time the defensive tenancy of planning by the





71 not yet predictable at the time when the order was issued and which would depend on the arrival ~~of~~ in the West of the last forces then still committed in Poland.

Whether the ordered transfers were actually carried out precisely in accordance with the instructions contained in the annexes to the order mentioned above, or what modifications occurred, if any, is a question which must remain open for the present because of the lack of adequate reliable records. It is also not known how the Second and Third Air Fleets organized the units allocated to them in Paragraph 10 of the Order. Authentic records on these subjects are only available for a later series for the Second Air Fleet and will be dealt with in connection with other subjects.

Nevertheless, the order of 22 September contained a units distribution chart which allows inferences concerning the operational intentions. To what extent this is so will be seen from the following discussion of Directive No. 4. In any case, and without regard for any possible later modifications, the order is considered as a basis from which a departure can be made in discussing what happened from 1 October 1939 on.

72 The influence of the allocation of forces in the West is shown in the table included with this study, tabulated according to unit types, command staffs, units, and tac-

tactical strengths.<sup>66</sup>

A few explanations now follow to this table:

1. The staffs and units tabulated, for example (4th Gp, 1st Air Wing), were still committed in Poland at the time when the order was issued, but were intended for transfer to the Second and Third Air Fleets as soon as operations in the East ceased.

2. The Special Purposes Air Command specified in the order for transfer to the Third Air Fleet is identical with the Special Purposes Air Command Staff currently operating under Generalmajor Freiherr von Richthofen in Poland.

3. The strengths of the bomber wings in groups as they actually existed for the campaign in Poland are given.

4. The heading "Fighter Groups" also includes some of the twin-engine fighter groups, namely, those which had not yet been reequipped with Me-110 aircraft and were still operating with the old Me-109's.

An interpretation of the allocation of forces shows the following important points:

1. Main emphasis, so far as bomber units are concerned was unmistakable with the Second Air Fleet, primarily due to that headquarters' mission of offensive warfare at sea against Britain.

2. Main emphasis in the case of close-support units was just as clearly with the Third Air Fleet, which was to receive nine dive-bomber groups (including the ground-attack group) against only one for the Second Air Fleet.

<sup>66</sup>. Appendix 19.

73

This is due to the mission of counter-air action against the French in the near frontier areas and that of close support for the Army in the event of defensive battles on the ground.

3. A comparison of the bomber allocations shows that the two air fleets each had roughly the same strength, one having 21, the other 20 groups.

4. A shift of main emphasis to the Second Air Fleet was provided for by preparations for the reception of an additional 5 dive-bomber and 5 bomber groups.

5. Single- and twin-engine fighter allocations were approximately equal.

As a final item in this analysis an attempt will be made to compare the strengths allocated in order to arrive at an approximate figure for the probable strengths available for action in the Western Theater on about 1 October 1939. The value of such a simulation, however, will to a large extent be only theoretical, since measures to replace the losses in personnel and material incurred by the units in Poland were still in process as was the equipment of some of them with new types of aircraft; finally, the units of the Special Purpose Air Command were still in process of movement from the East.

74

The total arrived at in these computations is 2 734 aircraft, of which 1 230 or 45 percent were bombers.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>67</sup>. Appendix 20.

74

A basis for comparison to determine the reliability of these computations is available in a compilation prepared in the Office of the Commander in Chief of the Air Force under the title "Operable Strength of the Units--Excerpts from Supply Service Reports (Einsatzbereitschaft der Verbände--Auszüge aus Quartiermeister-Berichten)," in which the figures arrived at were tabulated separately for three fixed dates:

1. 2 September 1939--Beginning of the Polish campaign
2. 30 September 1939--End of the Polish campaign.  
before
3. 30 March 1940--Six weeks ~~after~~ commencement of the campaign in the West.

The statistical data given for the second key date is all that is of interest here and is of particular significance since it gives

1. The overall number of aircraft available and the number of those which were operable, which is the decisive important point;

2. The same separate information on the aircraft crews, thus showing the ratio of available crews to available aircraft in operable condition.

So far as the various bomber types are concerned (conventional bomber, dive-bomber, and ground-attack units) the strengths given are almost precisely the same as those arrived at in the theoretical computations arrived at previously in this study, minus the bomber units still in the East.

53. The figures given for the third key date will be discussed later in this study. See Appendix 21.

75

In the case of single- and twin-engine fighters only conditional comparisons are possible, since the figures given from the supply services reports include the home air defense units committed in home defense (Berlin and Central Germany), whereas the computation of strengths in the West offered previously in this study includes only the single- and twin-engine fighters in units assigned under the Second and Third Air Fleets in the West.

Another factor which makes accurate comparisons difficult is that the supply services reports probably included the materiel reserves held by the units themselves, while the theoretical computations in the present study are based exclusively on the actually available and operable tactical strengths in aircraft plus crews.<sup>69</sup>

The new allocation of forces ordered by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force for the Western Theater naturally was based on an operational concept, which found expression in Directive No. 4 issued on the following day, 23 September.<sup>70</sup>

69. A careful interpretation of Appendix 21 provides other interesting comparisons of a most varied nature, for example:

1. The rise (due to industrial output and supply) and fall (due to losses) of operable strengths during the campaign in Poland;
2. The necessity and scale of materiel and personnel rehabilitation after the campaign in Poland;
3. The differing rate of losses in personnel and materiel for the individual air arms (particularly noticeable in the twin-engine fighter arm);
4. Discrepancies in the available operable strengths in crews on the one hand and aircraft on the other;
5. The differences between authorized and actual strengths even at the beginning of the war.

70. Appendix 22.

76

According to the version available at writing, this directive was to become effective "only after express approval by the Commander in Chief" but it can be assumed that this approval, which was merely a formality, was obtained very shortly after. The available text of the directive is therefore considered as the final version in further considerations in the present study.

Directives Nos. 1 and 2 had stated the principles governing the conduct of combat operations in the West in the past.<sup>71</sup> Their purely defensive tendency has already been discussed. This tendency, which called for an attitude of reserve, had once again been emphasized by the teletype message from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force dated 10 September 1939, which again prohibited all flights across the western frontiers.

The new ~~instruction~~ Directive No. 4 contained "Instructions for the Continued Conduct of Combat Operations and Preparations for Operations against the Western Opponent" as expressed already in its introductory passages.

77

The "general" directives for the conduct of operations for the time being were to remain unchanged; the Air Force was to restrict itself exclusively to action to repel enemy

<sup>71</sup> The text of Directive No. 5 is not available. Its loss is not considered serious, since its contents are hardly likely to have been of fundamental importance, since it was only with the regrouping of the operational air forces for commitment in the West that a new situation developed, which is treated by Directive No. 4.

air attacks. In action to repel such attacks the crossing of neutral territory was authorized if sizeable enemy forces were detected attacking across such areas. However, German attacks against targets within France and Britain as well as against merchant ships still remained prohibited.

Although Part B of the body of the orders ~~XXXXXXXX~~ <sup>states</sup> under the heading "Air Attack" the future missions of the Second and Third Air Fleets, it would be wrong to read from these instructions any preparations for offensive action resulting from the concentration of air power which had by this time been brought about in the Western Theater. What was actually involved was merely the resumption of the preparations for operations to be carried out by the air fleets as already stated in Volume III of Operational Study 1939, which could now be properly planned, and more precisely planned, on the more realistic basis of actually available strengths in offensive air units.

Two main missions evolve here:

For Second Air Fleet: Combat action against units of the British Navy and against British troop transports, although even such action remained restricted to the Bight of Helligeland, as delimited in the map attached

as Appendix 23,<sup>72</sup> and preparations for retaliatory action

72. Appendix 23: In particular the map reveals that offensive air action was authorized in only small areas of the Bight of Helligeland, so that the air mission was only

--Continued.



78

t. be taken in the event of British air attacks.

For Third Air Fleet: Preparations for action against the French Air Force and its supporting services and industries, plus preparations for action in support of Army operations in the event of any defensive battles for the western fortifications.

Two new points evolve in Directive No. 4:

1. Preparations were to be made for a concentrated attack against an as yet undefined area in Britain to be launched as retaliatory action in the event of any mass attack by the enemy against the Ruhr region.<sup>73</sup> The available tactical units now for the first time made it possible to envisage the launching of massed retaliatory attacks.

2. Reconnaissance over French territory, more or less prohibited for both air fleets in the east, was now authorized for the Third Air Fleet within a prescribed scope.

In summary: The overall tendency of Directive No. 4 was still defensive. Main emphasis in the missions for both air fleets remained those of air defense, with particular stress  
<sup>73.</sup> According to other sources, plans provided for attacks against London and Liverpool(?)  
 Footnote 72, p. 84--Continued: one of air defense, namely action to protect the German North Sea coastline.



79 On the other hand, it has been possible to reconstruct the actual assembly plans of the Second Air Fleet with a relatively high degree of accuracy.<sup>74</sup> On 13 October 1939 that air fleet provided Army Group B with a map showing the distribution of its units.<sup>75</sup> Although slightly damaged by fire, 30 this map has been reconstructed and an outline map prepared from it.<sup>76</sup> On the whole, the information contained in the map corresponds to that given in Appendix 19 to this study. One point is remarkable: the map does not show the 27th and 55th Bomber Wings. These apparently had in the meanwhile been transferred to the Third Air Fleet command zone, where they actually appear in a later consolidation.

No information is given in the map on the consolidation of the various units under command headquarters. For the first time the term "Air Corps" appears in place of "Air Division, and "AAA Corps" in place of "AAA Division."<sup>77</sup>

Particularly enlightening is the remark on the original map: "The assembly will be completed by 16 October." This proves that the assembly of the Operational Air Arm in the Western Theater for strictly defensive action in the sense of Directive No. 4 could only be completed at a time when the orders for an offensive in the West were already being prepared at headquarters of the Commander in Chief of the Air Force pursuant to Hitler's Directive No. 6 of 9 October.<sup>78</sup>  
 For footnotes see p. 88.

81

It was due exclusively to the completely passive attitude of the Western Powers in the matter of air warfare that it had been possible to allow the German aggressive and defensive air forces a rest period of between two and three weeks. During this period they were brought up to full strength in personnel and material at their respective home bases, and some units were completely and others partially reequipped with new types of aircraft.

This partial changeover to new types of aircraft, particularly in the case of bomber units, requires special consideration. In view of the anticipated operations, however, not only this reequipping of units but also the establishment of new units is of interest; the following two plans existed in this field:

1. Plans to reequip bomber units with Ju-88 aircraft or /and to activate new Ju-88 units;

2. Plans to activate new bomber units within the framework of existing bomber wings.

Re 1, above: The Reequipping of Bomber Units with Ju-88 Aircraft. The only bomber unit equipped with Ju-88 aircraft at the time when war broke out was the 1st Group, 25th Bomber Wing, of the 10th Air Division under Second Air Fleet.

To be more precise: this group at the time was in process of

74. Document from the Potsdam Archives: "Ordnungsbefehl Nr. 1000/32  
B, Ia, Akte XI, Heft 2 zum KTB 2, Luftflotten 2 und 3  
(Ostfront) Nr. 2061/32." Historical Division, USARPUR.

75. "Lfl. KTB 2, Führungsbdt. Ia Nr. 7175---Continued

79

activation and under training, and had available only squadron-size units equipped with the new aircraft type. Before the end of September 1939 this "group" was redesignated as 1st Group, 30th Bomber Wing.<sup>79</sup>

Shortly thereafter the Commander in Chief of the Air Force ordered "immediate activation" of the 1st Ju-88 Training Group. Initially this group was to have only one squadron, but was to be brought up to full group strength later.<sup>80</sup>

The mission of the new group was stated as follows:

The mission of the 1st Ju-88 Training Group (I Lehrgruppe Ju-88) is to give flying and ground personnel training with the Ju-88 model aircraft."

The Air Force Training and Demonstration Division provided the necessary instructors, and at a start the 2d, 3d, and 77th Bomber Wings were to assign personnel for training.

A few days later the Commander in Chief of the Air Force ordered activation of the 2d Group, 30 Bomber Wing as a Ju-88 unit, the order to become effective on 1 December.<sup>81</sup>

79. "Der Reichsminister der Luftfahrt und Oberbefehlshaber der Lw., Genst. Gen. Nr. 2, Abt. Nr. 2691/39 g.Kes. (II A) vom 7. September 39, betr. Aufstellung der I/K.G. 30."

80. Ibid. "Z. IIb 1a, 1- Nr. 2769/39 g.Kes. (III) vom 21. September 1939."

81. Ibid. "2. Abt. Nr. 7241/39 g.Kes. (IIIB) vom 23.9.1939." Footnote 75, p. 87--Continued: "g.Kes.-Chefsache- vom 13.10. 1939."

Footnote 76, p. 87+- Annex ix 24.

Footnote 77, p. 87: Detailed treatment of activation and missions of air and AAA corps in Chapter V, below.

Footnote 78, p. 87: Chapter V, below, will describe the changeover from defensive to offensive planning initiated by Hitler Directive (Führerweisung) No. 6.

80

Crew personnel were to be assigned from throughout the Air Force.<sup>82</sup>

Finally, in an order in late September, the Commander temporary in Chief ordered establishment of an overall program, including the instructions hitherto issued, for "the activation of those units which were to be equipped with Ju-88 aircraft," as follows:<sup>83</sup>

Unit	Deadline	Activation Area
<u>30th Bomber Wing</u>		
Command HQ	15 Nov 1939	Greifswald, later Barth
1st Group	in process of activation	Greifswald
2d "	1 Dec 1939	Barth
3d "	1 Jan 1940	Barth (tentative area)
1st Ju-88 Training Group	in process of activation	Greifswald
2d Ju-88 Training Group	1 Dec 1939	to be specified later

Once again the entire Air Force was to participate in the activation of new units, the arrangement being that "each and each dive-bomber bomber group to designate one suitable squadron to be held, available from 1 October 1939 on, on call for training with Ju-88 aircraft.

Plans provided that the personnel thus released were to first receive orientation and training in the 1st Ju-88 Training Group, activation of which had already been ordered, and were then to <sup>form</sup> the two (2d and 3d) Ju-88 Bomber Groups.<sup>82</sup> Each bomber group was to release for the purpose one crew considered particularly well qualified.  
83. See Footnote 79: "Mr 7270/32 G.Kaes. (IIA) 23.9.1939."

The current, widely experienced, Commanding Officer of the Luftwaffe Training and Demonstration Division was appointed to the newly established post of "General Officer for Special Missions" attached to the State Secretary for Aviation and Inspector General of the Air Force within the Reich Air Ministry to direct the entire program of activation and training, so that the various command headquarters of the operational air forces had nothing to do with these activities.

The above shows that plans provided for only one bomber ~~XXXXX~~ wing (the 30th) of three groups was to complete its reequipment and retraining by the end of 1939. It has not been possible as yet to establish whether the program was actually effectuated according to schedule--whether the aircraft arrived from the industry in time, and whether the units of the 30th Bomber Wing at the end of 1939 were not merely "trained" but actually also ready for commitment.

The fact remains, however, that reequipment of the units with the new model of aircraft, from which decisive results were expected in air warfare at sea, in other words against Britain, commenced only at a very late juncture and at a very slow pace. Furthermore, the new units were activated at the expense of the existing bomber and dive-bomber units, which had to release for the purpose their best

84 crew personnel, so that they were at least reduced in quality.

The newly activate units thus did not represent an effective increase in the striking power but rather merely a shift in emphasis within the Air Force. Furthermore, in practice really effective aggressive operations against Britain and the British Navy could not be possible before early 1940.

So far the Commander in Chief of the Air Force had assigned missions for operations at sea which it was simply impossible to execute with the means available at the beginning of the war.

2. The Activation of New Bomber Units. Also in September 1939 the Commander in Chief of the Air Force had ordered the activation of other new bomber units.<sup>34</sup> Planning provided that the existing bomber wings were to be brought up to their full strength of three groups, so far as this had not already been done.

The table at the end of this present chapter<sup>35</sup> is a compilation of the bomber units available on 1 October 1939, and of the new units to be established. It also reveals the final target to be achieved roughly by 1 July 1940 so far as the activation of new units was concerned, and the status of the units previously available.

34. Decree by Minister for Aviation and Commander in Chief of the Air Force: "R.L. und Ob d. L., Gen. Qu. 2. Abt. Nr. 2780/39 s. Kres., 19.9.1939--Neutruck 22.11.1939."

35. Appendix 25.



85 An examination of the figures given in Appendix 5 reveals as follows:

	<u>Wing HQ Staffs</u>	<u>Controlling Bomber Groups</u>
86 In existence on 1 September 1939	13	31
Target for 1 July 1940	15	45.

This meant an increase by two wing command headquarters and fourteen bomber groups by 1 July 1940.

## CHAPTER FIVE

THE TRANSITION FROM DEFENSIVE TO OFFENSIVE  
PLANNING

October 1939

While in the Eastern Theater the last bombs were still falling on Warsaw;

While the bulk of the Air Force units hitherto committed in Poland had already displaced or were in process of displacing to the command zones of the Second and Third Air Fleets;

While the two air fleets in the Western Theater were preparing for the deployment ~~XXXXXXXX~~ and commitment of their newly assigned units for defensive battle and issuing their orders consonant with Directive No. 4 from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force<sup>86</sup>--the defensive tendency of which confirmed the ~~XXXXXXXX~~ basic policy of the past and ordered its continuation;

While this shift of emphasis from East to West was taking place, strategic planning at the overall level had changed radically unknown to the intermediate and lower levels of field command.

On the very day, 27 September 1939, that the unconditional surrender of Warsaw brought the complete end of the campaign in Poland within sight, Hitler informed the

86. See Chapter IV, above.

94 a

87 Commanders in Chief of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force,  
 assembled at his headquarters for the purpose, of his deci-  
 88 sion "to proceed to the attack on the West Front before the  
 end of the year, and as soon as possible."<sup>87</sup>

The reasons causing Hitler to take this decision were  
 of a political and military nature, and they have been dealt  
 with exhaustively in post-war literature.<sup>88</sup>

Most of the post-war studies and interpretations, how-  
 ever, do not bring out clearly enough that considerations of  
 air strategy exercised at least an incisively important  
 influence on his decision in favor of an early offensive  
 directed westwards.

One reason was the inspiring realization that the strik-  
 ing power and campaign-deciding weight of the German Air  
 Force, which had proved so superior in the Polish campaign--  
 and Air Force furthermore which had the most up-to-date equip-  
 ment and the latest experience in actual warfare--must be  
 committed as early as possible in action to force a decision  
 against an enemy obviously not yet ready for the ordeal. It  
 was known that the air armament programs of the Western Po-  
 wers were still in their initial stages, and every day wast-  
 ed would make them stronger.

87. "Die Oberste Wehrmachtfuehrung 1939-1945;" Helmuth Grei-  
 ner. Limes Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1951, p. 55.

88. Ibid. Also in other works on the subject.

83

Added to the above came the fears and concern over threats which might become acute if the policy of waiting continued and in a war of long duration, and this applied to both offensive and defensive air warfare.

First in the order of importance was the problem of the Ruhr region. The situation here necessarily appeared even more precarious than ever before, since British air forces were able to operate without interference over the area and also over other wide areas of Germany with any effective German counteraction, and without any possibility to even hamper their systematic nightly penetrations over Germany. It was certain that one night they would drop bombs instead of propaganda pamphlets. This threat would necessarily increase if the France-British base area for air operations were to be moved forward, possibly into the territory of Belgium, Holland, and Northern France, an eventuality which had to be taken, and which had been taken, into account.

The only possibility to improve protection for the Ruhr region was to create an out-post area in front of it extending as far westward as possible.

Really effective protection for the irreplaceable and extremely sensitive Ruhr region, but at the same time for all German territories, could only be achieved if the British air bases within Britain herself could be brought under

89 control and eliminated, in other words: if air warfare could be carried to Britain.

Because of the limited striking range of the bulk of the aggressive air forces available, this was not possible from the German bases east of the Rhine River.

90 The only remaining possibility, therefore, was to move the operating base area for air action against Britain as far westward as possible, and this meant that the Dutch-Belgian NorthFrench area had to be taken.

The concept of operational air warfare against Britain, whether it was to be defensive or offensive, thus ~~XXXXXXXX~~ engendered the compelling necessity for an operation which would first create the essential conditions for effective and decisive air action. This compulsion was to become evident time and again in the directives and orders of the next few months. This was not only the case with the Air Force, but the compulsion became almost more urgently evident in the considerations and orders of the Army.

The essential conditions required for the conduct of air warfare were thus a determining factor, if not the only determining factor, for the decision in favor of an overall operation and for the objectives aimed at in it. At the same time, however, these conditions also became the factor which determined the choice of the time for the overall

90

operation.

In the Western Theater the weather factor was of far greater importance than had been the case in the Polish campaign. There the unfavorable weather at the time when operations commenced had played no significant role in the battle for air supremacy. Against an opponent inferior in every respect in air power, the superiority of the German Air Force in effective strengths had enabled it at one and the same time to conduct warfare against the enemy air forces and operations in support of the Army, whose forces the enemy air forces in no situation were able to threaten seriously.

91

In the West, however, Germany was opposed by enemies with air forces whose numerical strength at least was considered by the German Air Command to be equal to its own. In point of quality the feeling was that the German Air Force was superior. In any case it was obvious that the battle for air superiority would have to be fought out before the Air Force could give any effective direct support to the Army forces operating on the ground. This made a few days of reliable flying weather an indispensable condition.

In the West, however, there was one technical complication which made it extremely difficult to compile a weather chart covering a few days in advance on which to base

92 weather predictions with any appreciable degree of reliability

Weather reconnaissance in the West had to operate under conditions far more difficult than had been the case in the East, since the normal radio weather reports from the Western Hemisphere practically ceased altogether at the outbreak of the war. For this reason, weather predictions had to be based on air weather reconnaissance reports from units operating within restricted areas over the sea under constant threat of enemy action, plus irregular weather reports from a small number of submarines operating in the Atlantic Ocean. It was thus exceedingly difficult to forecast weather developments with any appreciable degree of reliability in the future areas of operations, where the weather was determined exclusively by Atlantic factors.

92

This necessarily produced conditions in which the weather became the sole determining factor in timing the commencement not only of air warfare but of the whole complex of intended operations. The continuous postponements of the deadline for attack, <sup>in the West</sup> due exclusively to weather factors, will offer proof of this fact in the following presentation of events in the next seven months.

The above are only some of the considerations involved, and they should be borne in <sup>mind</sup> /by any student of the following developments. Their impact on the first decisions

92 on the first decision to take aggressive action in the West will serve to illustrate the decisive extent to which the considerations of the conduct of air warfare necessarily influenced the decision concerning the overall operation and its later execution.

#### I. INITIAL MEASURES BY THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE!

The oral orientation on the latest decisions by Hitler on 27 September was <sup>to be</sup> followed on 9 October 1939 by Hitler Directive No. 6, a directive of fundamental importance containing the basic instructions for the Army, Navy and the Air Force, and through their High Commands, for the troops. This directive will be examined later in this study.

93 Before issue of the new Hitler Directive, however, the Commander in Chief of the Air Force in a conference attended by command personnel down to the level of division commanders issued the first oral instructions.

According to the sources available at writing<sup>89</sup> the plans for the assembly of air forces in the west was made known in broad outline without disclosure of any details at this juncture on the plan of operations. All the Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe did was to give instructions "to begin with the preparations for the battle of defense."<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup>Per footnotes 89 and 90 see p. 100.



93

The planned disposition of forces, the Air Force chain of command, and the command controls as they were evidently disclosed on 30 September for orientation purposes and were later actually carried out, all of these basic factors are shown in the Organizational and Distribution Chart for Command Posts in the Air Force Assembly in October 1939. 91

One surprising point in the table of organization is the use of the terms "Air Corps (Flieger-Korps)" and "AAA Corps (Flak-Korps), hitherto not used in the German Air Force. Before entering on the operational intentions in the new plans for the "defensive battle," it is necessary to examine the organizational innovations thereby involved.

### III. THE ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATIONS.

A. The Air Corps. No evidence is available on the reasons for the decision by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force to form air corps instead of the air divisions which had proved so sound an organization in the past operations in the East. The reason given by him in the conference on 30 September XXX ".....to improve the striking force of the German Air Force lacks logical conviction.

In retrospect it appears that the decision was due to a combination of reasons:

1. The sudden appearance of German air corps in the Western Theater was to give the enemy an impression of

94 stronger German forces than were actually there. Hence:  
a deceptive motive.

2. In relations with the Army the Air Force commands were to receive a higher status than they had, in the view of the Army, had in the past. Hence: Prestige motives.

3. Within the Air Force itself, the commands of the Operational air forces were to be given equal status with the headquarters of the territorial organization, in which the air district command headquarters already had corps status. Hence: Coordination of the internal organization.

95 4. Finally, the consideration that in the Western assembly the divisions of the past would control larger forces than had been the case in the Polish campaign, so that the status and authority of a corps headquarters appeared justified. Hence: Logical command principles.

In practice, however, everything remained as it had always been. In the final essence all that happened was a change of terminology: the majority of the existing divisions were merely redesignated corps.<sup>92</sup> Neither the concept of a "Division" nor that of a "Corps" in the Air Force were equivalent with the concepts going by the same name in the Army. In the case of the Army, the division in its composition and striking power was a clearly defined command unit, the composite arms of which in their composition and striking power were in a precisely balanced ratio. Operations in the Polish campaign had shown the Air Force Division, in contrast

92. The 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, and 10th Air Divisions were redesignated as the I, II, IV, V, and IX Air Corps. The units of the 3d and 6th Air Divisions were incorporated in the newly established corps.

95 to be a force of varying strength and varying composition consonant with its varying missions. It was a tactical but not an organizational command headquarters. This flexibility had proved sound in the eastern campaign.

96 The same principles were to be applied in the future to the newly formed air corps, the composition of which, from case to case, was to be in accordance with their current missions. A general rule was established that the I, II, IV, V, and X Corps were primarily to direct operational air warfare, for which purpose they were assigned the long-range bomber units.

The exceptional case was that of the VIII Air Corps, organized from the seasoned units which had served under the Special Purposes Air Command in the Polish campaign. Its mission remained that of close-range combat action on the field of battle in direct support of Army operations. Consonant with this mission, the VIII Air Corps controlled the close-range arms, namely, the dive-bomber, ground-attack, and fighter (single-engine) units.

B. THE AAA CORPS. The establishment of two AAA Corps <sup>th</sup> was an entirely new departure, both organizationally and in the tactical-operational sense.

The idea of consolidating ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
~~XXXXXX~~ AAA units under a large and independently operating

96 command headquarters had evolved during the Polish campaign, where the AAA units assigned under Army commands to protect the troops against air attack had been compelled during critical situations to participate in ground combat and serve in the foremost lines as infantry and ground artillery. The decisive results achieved by these units in defensive

97 action against enemy ground forces<sup>93</sup> had influenced the Commander in Chief of the Air Force to plan large AAA units for commitment in ground combat.

The final impulse came, however, after Hitler had decided to attack in the West. During planning he expressed grave fears that the Army antitank defenses would not be adequately effective. This resulted in the order to activate two AAA corps organic to the Air Force.<sup>94</sup>

The AAA corps were to have a dual mission:

1. To bring about heavily concentrated, and above all operationally flexible, antiaircraft fire over areas of main effort, such as assembly and advance march route areas for Army forces, Air defense zones and areas, installations of the Air Force ground service, and to reinforce the air defenses at particularly important targets such as industrial areas and similar objectives.

93. "Der Polenfeldzug-1939," Volume 3, Chapter IX: "Das Einreifen der Flakartillerie in den Erdkampf," where the action and success of the AAA units are given in detail.

94. Statement by General (Generaloberst) Dessloch, then CG, II AAA Corps, in verbal discussion with present author in Munich on 18 July 1956.

97

In such situations action by the regularly assigned air defense units of the Army, or the locally assigned antiaircraft units of the Air Force, was to be supported

98

by the concentrated and uniformly directed fire of a complete antiaircraft artillery corps.

2. To support Army ground forces in ground combat during critical situations and in areas of main effort. In such cases the massed units of the large antiaircraft artillery forces were to serve the Army as assault artillery and open the way for the infantry; in critical situations they were to serve as ~~antitank~~ antitank forces, a purpose for which the antiaircraft guns had proved particularly effective because of their high muzzle velocity and great penetrating power.

It was clearly obvious that the first mission, above, was intended primarily for the period of assembly movements, preparation for action on the ground, and reserve in German conduct of air warfare. It would be more or less overtaken by events the moment German operations on the ground and thereby also German air operations commenced.

At that moment the second mission, above, would come more into prominence, and this was the mission for which the Air Force High Command had primarily intended the new organization.

98

It is only natural that the Air Force and the Army for a long time held widely divergent views on the purpose and mission of the new antiaircraft artillery corps. The resultant controversies continued throughout the period of the "War of Waiting," since the Army time and again insisted, probably with justification, that an arm of the Air Force intended specifically for ground missions should be tactically assigned under army commands.

99

Even shortly before the beginning of the offensive in May 1940 some of the field armies apparently were not clear on this point, as evidenced by records on arguments between the II AAA Corps and the Sixth Army. In this case the Second Air Fleet made a clear cut decision, a copy of which is attached to this study.<sup>95</sup> Although the incident involved was local and temporary, the whole matter serves to illustrate the contradicting views still held at the time. Another reason why the comments by the Second Air Fleet are included as an appendix is that they state clearly and unmistakably the current views of the Commander in Chief of the Air Force.

Right from the start of the organization of antiaircraft artillery corps the Commander in Chief of the Air Force had obtained a decision that the antiaircraft corps

95. Appendix 27.

99 even when committed with the Army, were to remain under his direct command or that of the appropriate air fleets. The determining factor in his reasoning here was that "his" antiaircraft artillery, under "his" command was to take action which would decide the outcome of battles also in ground operations. In this roundabout way he succeeded in regaining control over very strong antiaircraft artillery forces which he had, very much against his will, been compelled in the past to allocate to the Army for direct protection of the troops against air attack. Besides the practical and logical considerations, prestige considerations undoubtedly also played a role in the decision to establish the corps, and the only explanation for these considerations is the rivalry at the time between the Army and Air Force High Commands and the thirst for self-aggrandizement of the Commander in Chief of the Air Force.

The establishment of the antiaircraft artillery corps naturally took longer than that of the air corps, which could be organized from the existing division headquarters and their assigned units. For the antiaircraft artillery corps, in contrast, an entirely new organization had to be developed and established, and the tactical antiaircraft units had to be taken from the Army, from the air defense systems of the various air districts, and from the assembly areas.

100 In spite of these difficulties, the I and II AAA Corps were ready for commitment at the end of October.

The organization provided for the air corps in the original planing is unknown. However, the organization as it existed in February 1940 is available. The question must remain open whether this was the final form, or whether modifications occurred prior to or after commencement of the offensive in the West. However, the Table of Organization--  
96  
of the II AAA Corps attached to the present study provides an adequate basis for an appraisal of the measure taken during the "War of Waiting" period in the few months which were to follow.

The actual tactical strength of an AAA Corps according to the table of organization was not more than eight AAA battalions comprising a total of eighteen heavy and seventeen light gun batteries. Whether a tactical force of this size justified the existence of the giant organization involved and whether it justified the designation as a corps is an open question.

### III. IDEAS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE ON THE CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS.

The ideas expounded by the Commander in Chief on 30

September probably represent only the very first trains of  
96. Appendix 23. Originally the AAA corps was to have, organically assigned: 1 Fighter group or squadron and 1 motorized reconnaissance battalion (a ground unit); but these units were not activated or assigned.



107 a

101 thought, the modified version of which was to appear much later in written directives. However, they appear suitable as a temporary basis from which to understand the overall planning.

The Commander in Chief of the Air Force gave the following basic instructions:<sup>97</sup>

Second Air Fleet. The X and IV Air Corps were to be so stationed that their units could whenever required attack suitable targets afloat in the North Sea.<sup>98</sup>

102 If the "defensive battle" developed, the IV Air Corps was to participate in action in the operational zone of the I Air Corps committed farther south.

The I Air Corps was to operate against enemy air forces stationed in its zone of operations. The dive-bomber wing, initially assigned to it were to support Army operations within this zone. (At the end of October the I Air Corps was transferred to the Third Air Fleet in exchange for the VIII Air Corps).

Operating initially from the Muenster area, the II

AAA Corps was to repel enemy air forces penetrating from

97. Appendix 24.

98. Attacks against port installations and other targets in England remained subject to prior decision by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force.

102

west or across the sea. The corps was to prepare for forward displacement into the area around and southeast of Aachen. There its mission would be to provide artillery defense for the I Air Corps and the Army elements in the area.

The 7th Air Division was to remain under direct control by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force and the Second Air Fleet was to prepare its ground organization in the Guetersloh area.

Third Air Fleet. The II Air Corps, with its forces deployed in the Frankfurt-Mannheim area, had the mission of attacking the enemy air forces and their supply and service installations within its zone of operations.

After the first sudden attack, elements of the corps were to be released for action in support of the Army.

The VIII Air Corps, with its units deployed in the areas east and southeast of Mannheim was to remain on the alert for combat action in direct support of the Army.<sup>99</sup>

The V Air Corps, in the Bavarian air district command area had the mission of counterair action against the France-British air forces.

99. On 23 October the VIII Air Corps came under command of the Second Air Fleet in exchange for the I Air Corps.

103

The II and V Air Corps were to prepare for heavily concentrated surprise attacks against the enemy air forces.

The I AAA Corps was to deploy its units in the area around Giessen. If the "defensive battle" developed, its mission was to be: To protect the Army forces against air attack, with main emphasis on the area at and north of Trier.

104

Important details are missing in the record of the oral instructions thus received by the Second and Third Fleets. For example, nothing is said concerning the units allocated, the boundaries, the zones of operations projected into enemy territory, and so forth. All of these details were to be established in later directives.

#### IV. HITLER DIRECTIVE NO. 6.

The oral instructions on preparations to be made and for orientation purposes from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force on 30 September were followed on 9 October by written basic orders contained in Directive No. 6, which is attached to this study.<sup>100</sup>

From then on this directive provided the basis for directives from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force, and for the Commanders in Chief of the Army and Navy. The coordination, processing, and issue of these directives was  
100. Appendix 29.

to take a number of weeks.

Apart from the fact that the whole defensive policy, rendered necessary by political and military considerations in the West, has now changed and that a decision was to be forced there, as had been the case in the East, which was possible only by means of aggressive action, the following four points evolve from Directive 4:

1. The offensive was to be launched in the northern area of the West Front: the neutrality of Belgium and Holland, so meticulously respected in the past, is disregarded for strategic reasons.

This main emphasis in the north as the first concept must be borne in mind in view of the vacillations and changes introduced in overall operational planning during the following months, which finally resulted in a shift of main emphasis to the center.

2. What has been said at the beginning of the present chapter concerning the compelling urge of considerations of air strategy for aggressive action is confirmed by the causes given for the choice of the north flank area and for the disregard of Belgian and Dutch neutrality, namely, that it was necessary ".....to gain a base area for profitable air and naval operations against Britain and as an extended outpost area for the vitally important Ruhr

Region."

3. The timing of the attack is made contingent upon ".....the existing and expected weather conditions," so that the possibilities for the Air Force to operate determined the deadline.

4. Apart from their "systematic" preparations for the offensive in the West, the Army and the Air Force were to be ready at any moment to counter any enemy attack in Belgium by action in enemy territory. This was the first time that this additional requirement was stated. Later it resulted in the "Immediate Operation Plan-(Suffertlan)" which, for the Air Force as well as for the Army, resulted in two separate sets of operational plans.

Another feature which merits attention is the mission assigned to the Air Force gave precedence to counter-air operations; action in support of the Army is treated as a matter of secondary importance--to be taken ".....so far as necessary." In spite of the experience gained in Poland, ~~this~~ this restored the mission of establishing air superiority to first place in the whole concept of operational air warfare. In view of the dangerous opponents involved, this was only right.

This point appears important in view of later developments, when a return to the principles of air warfare

112

106

which had been applied in the Polish campaign --where main emphasis had been on direct support for the Army, again came into prominence in the West.