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PART 4  
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RETURN TO:  
The Adjutant General  
The War Department  
Washington, D.C.

THE CAMPAIGN IN WESTERN EUROPE

1939-1940

PART FOUR

OPERATION "HOT."

or

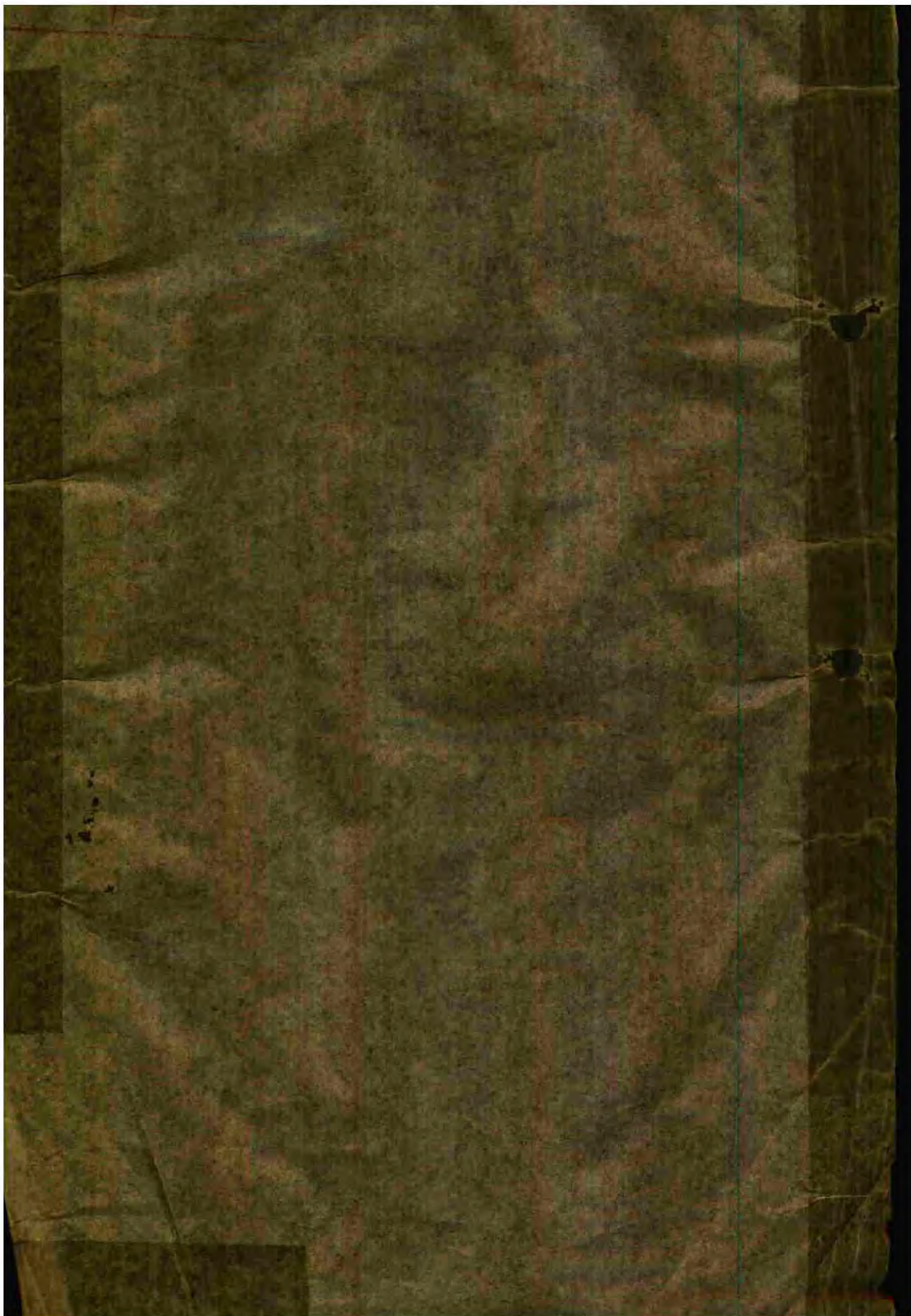
THE BATTLE FOR FRANCE

By

Wilhelm Speidel  
General der Flieger

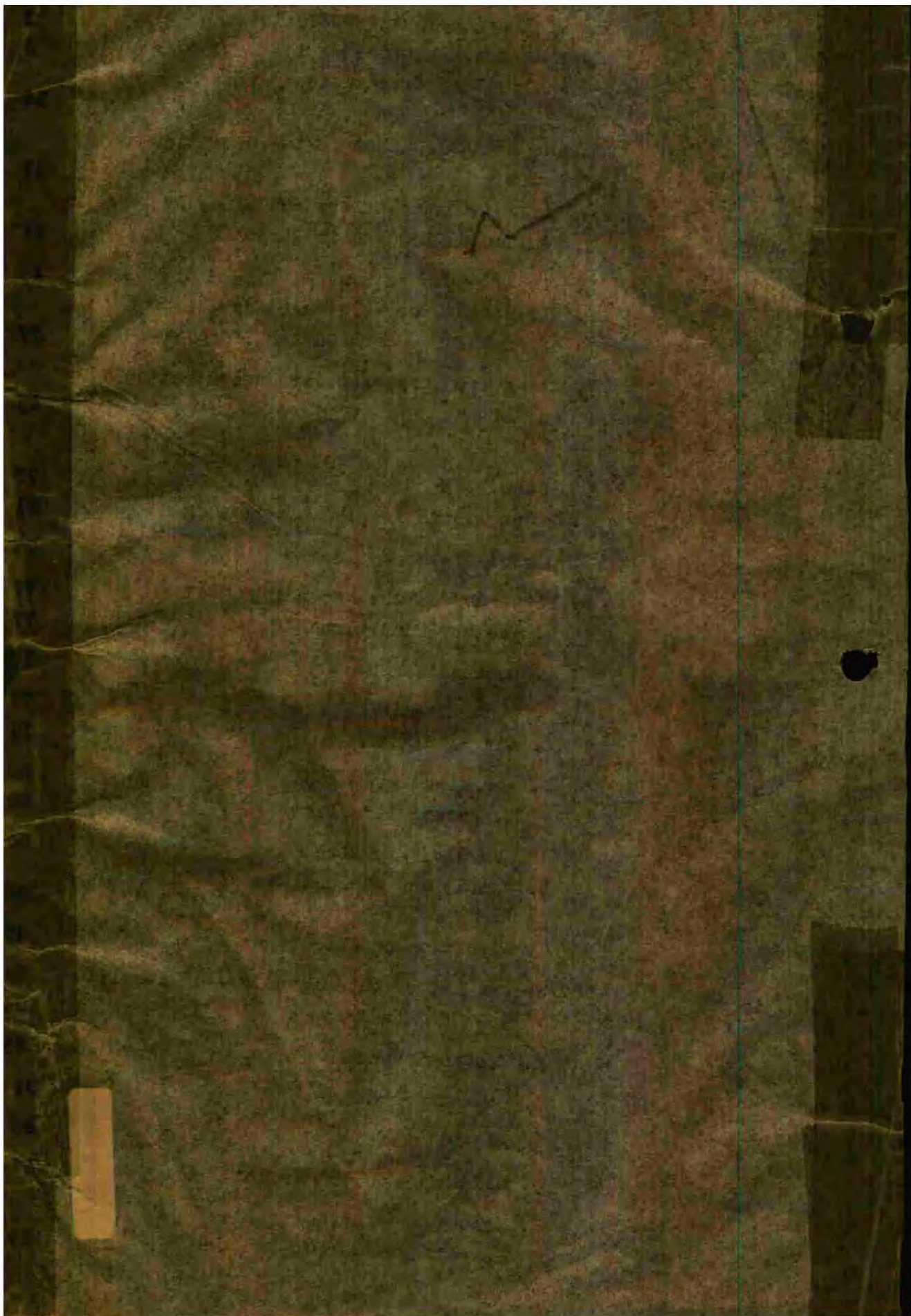
Chief of Staff, Second Air Fleet  
in Western Theater, January-October 1940

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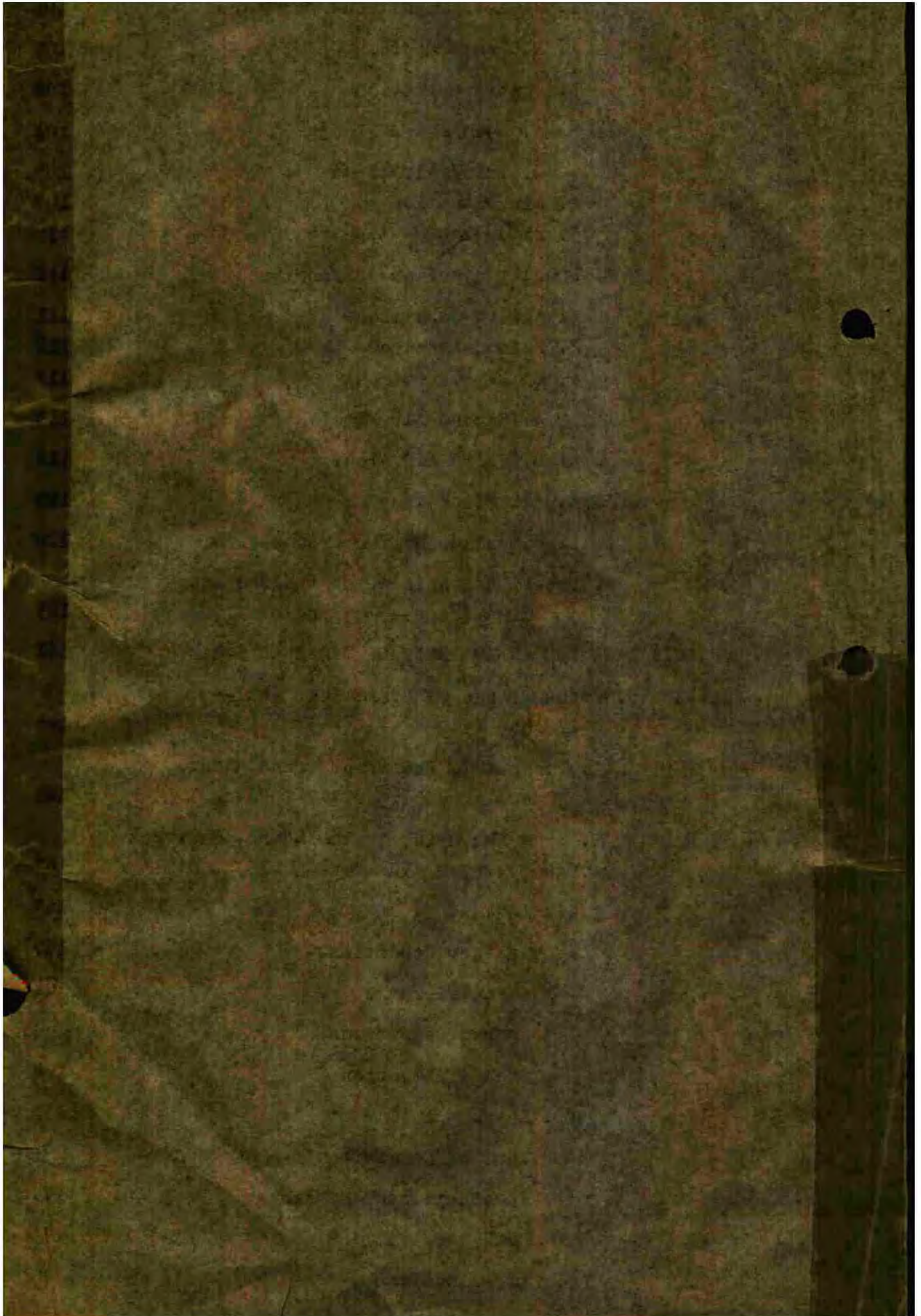
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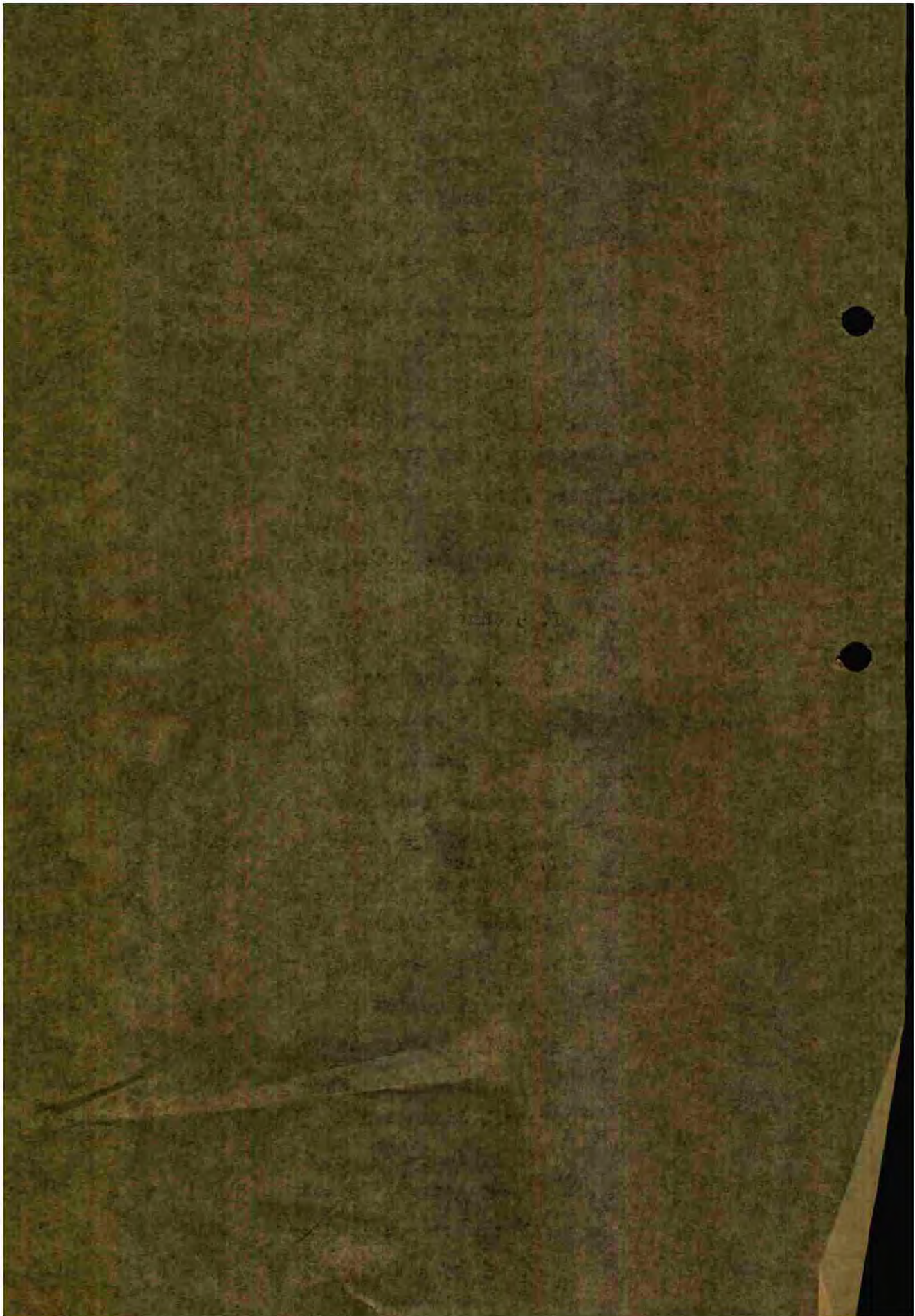
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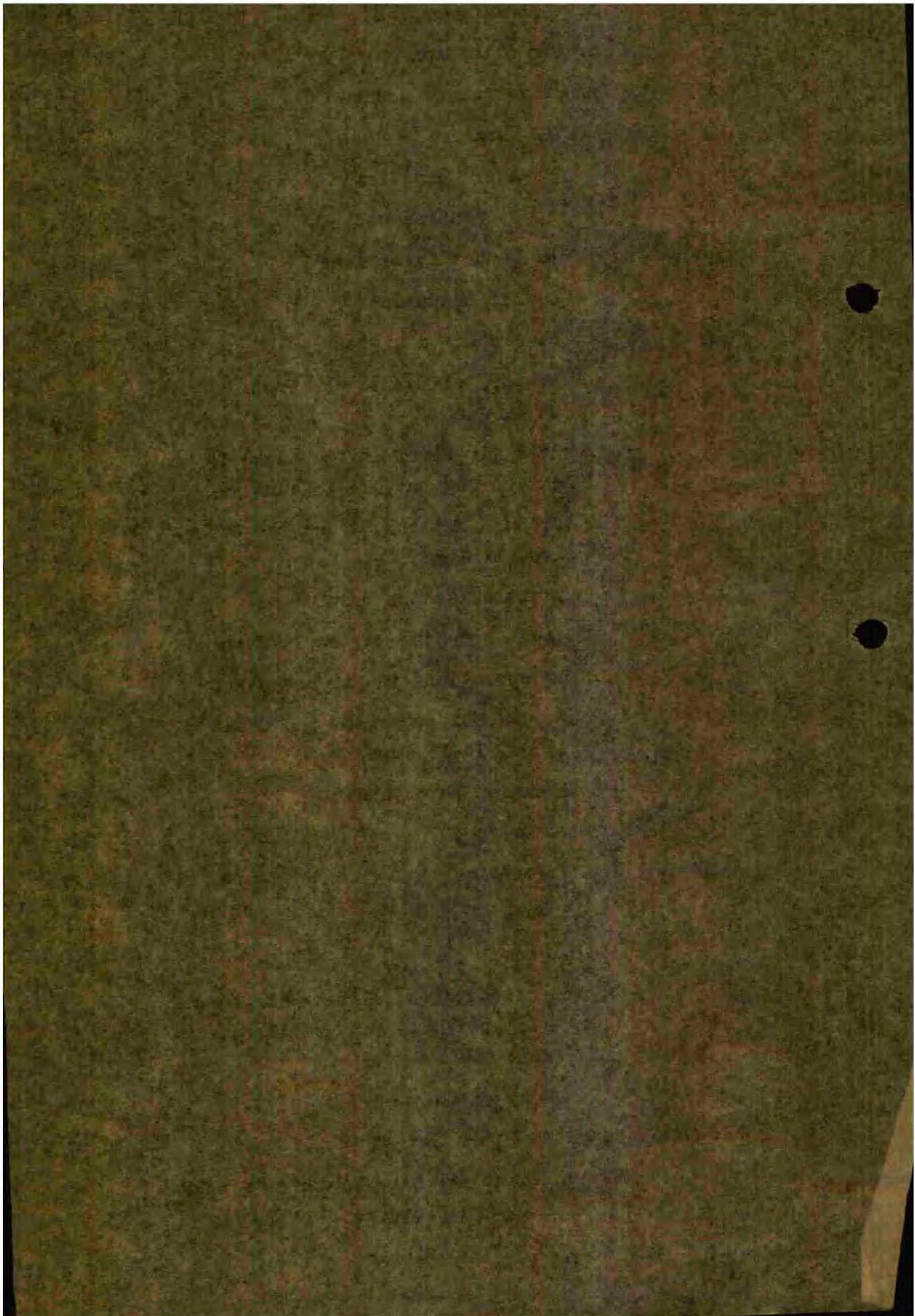
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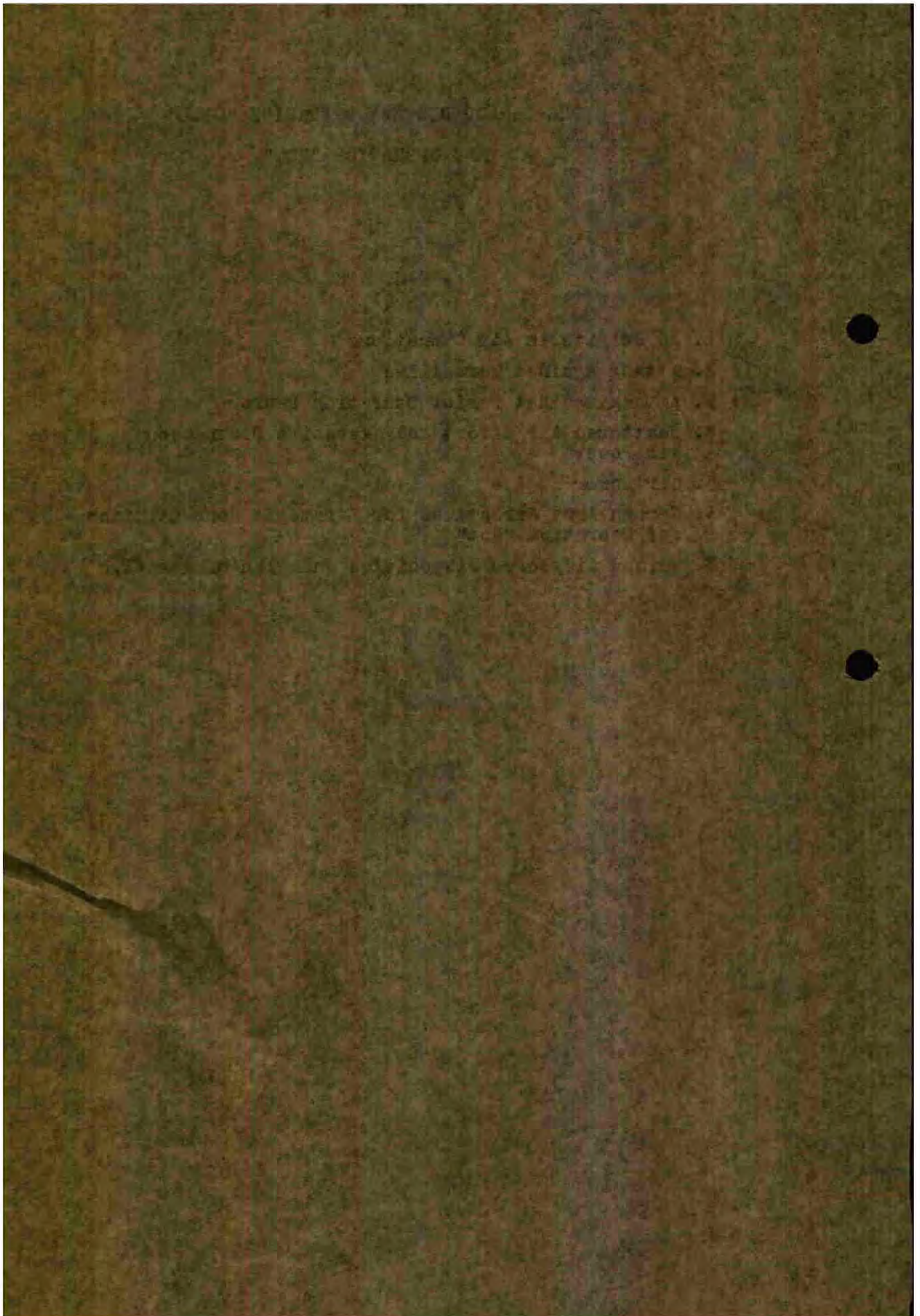


CHAPTER 1

THE PERIOD BETWEEN OPERATION "GELB"  
AND OPERATION "ROT"

CONTENTS

1. No Respite in Air Operations
2. Attack against Marseilles
3. Attack against Paris: Operation Paula
4. Scattered Air Effort and Excessive Demands on Air Power
5. Air Power Ratios
6. German Army Directives for Strategic Concentration for Operation "Rot"
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## CHAPTER 1

THE PERIOD BETWEEN OPERATION "GELB"  
AND OPERATION "ROT"

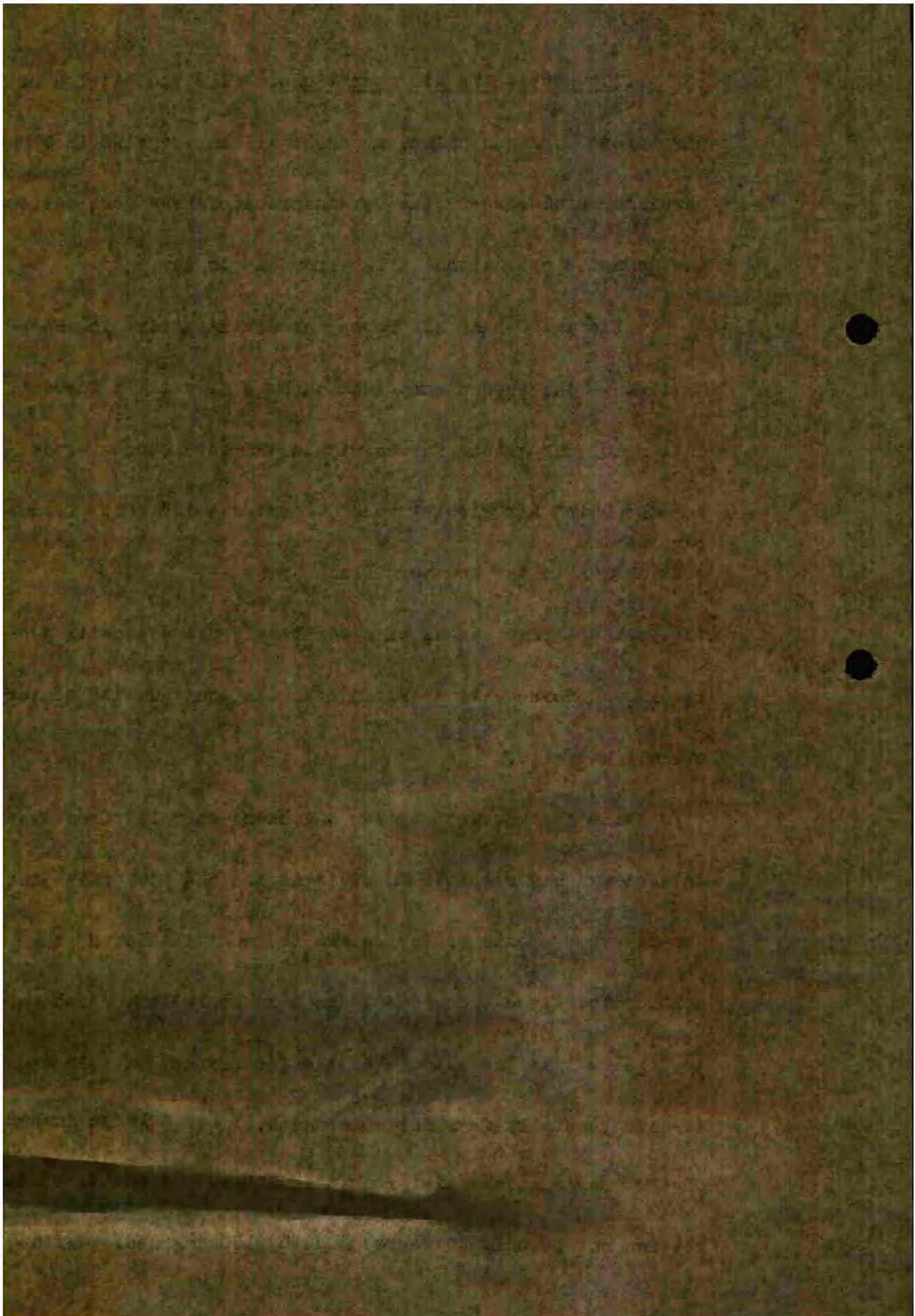
1. No Respite in Air Operations. While the battles of envelopment and annihilation were still in progress in Flanders and Artois, where the German ground forces were narrowing down the operational areas from day to day;

While the German Air Force was participating in these battles -- the Second Air Fleet through direct air support action for the ground forces within the envelopment areas and the Third Air Fleet through direct and indirect air support action in the southern flank areas --

the German Army by means of a completely new disposition of its ground forces was preparing for the continuation of the overall campaign.

While the movement so far had been generally from east to west and had resulted in dividing the enemy's armies into two separate groups of forces and the annihilation of the northern of these two groups, the next operation, which was to develop into the actual "Battle for France," was planned to move generally from north to south. For a large number of the Army's attack divisions this implied a change of direction not by only 90 degrees but by 180 degrees. While









3

support for the Army attack, to frustrate enemy efforts to establish forces capable of resistance, to prevent enemy troop movements, and to cover the western flank of the attack movement.<sup>1</sup>

After the establishment of German air supremacy on 20 May-- as set forth in Part Two of the present study--<sup>2</sup> there were only few missions left for the conduct of strategic air warfare.

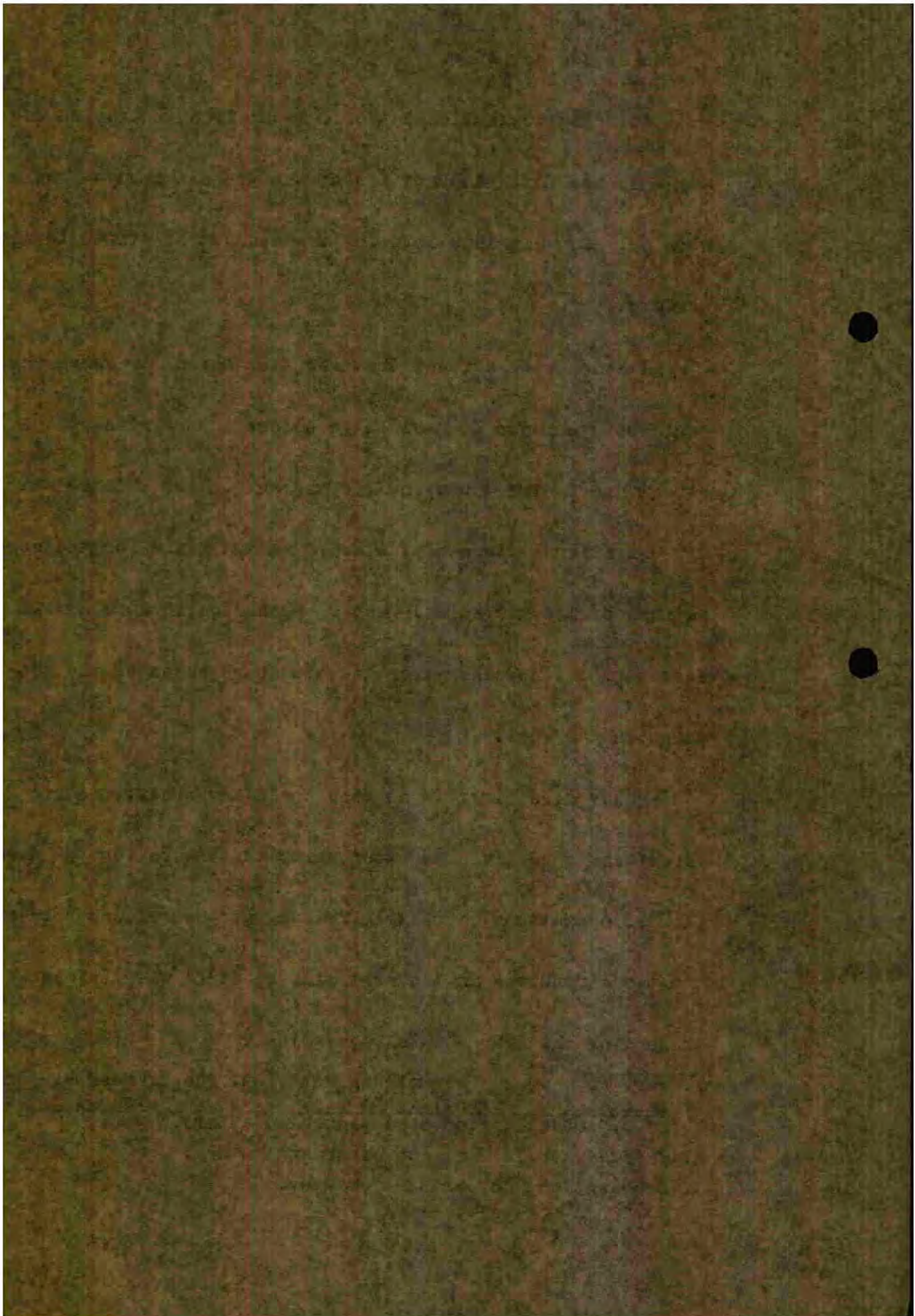
It was to be assumed that for the German Air Force there would be even more emphasis than before on the missions of direct and indirect support for the Army. For this reason the operational plans of the Army, as the basis for the operations of the Air Force, must be presented in more detail here than was necessary for the previous phases of the campaign in the West.<sup>3</sup>

However, desirable as this would have been, the Air Force was to be given no opportunity to prepare for the newly planned operations. For this reason, air operations between the two offensives in the west will be dealt with before presenting the Army plan of operations.

1. Par. 4, "Aufmarschanweisung Rot", Ob. Kdo d. Heeres, Generalstab des Heeres, O. Abt (Ia) Nr. 350/40 g.Kdos. 31. 5. 1940." (See Section 5 of present chapter).

2. See Chapter 7, Part Two of present study.

3. See Section 5 of present chapter.



4 To begin with, the concentrated air attacks against Dunkirk<sup>4</sup> were still in progress and were to continue until the evening of 2 June.

Simultaneously, two wing-size missions were flown against the Mediterranean port city of Marseilles on June 1 and June 2, a subject which will be dealt with later. These two wings were missing in the operations against Dunkirk.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the operations against Dunkirk were halted at such an early stage that considerable elements of the Anglo-French Army forces were able to escape across the English Channel without interference on 3 and 4 June.<sup>6</sup>

The reasons for the decision to forego annihilation of the remnants of the Allied forces still on the Continent have been mentioned previously: the entire German Air Force was to participate in a concentrated air operation against the French air base zone around Paris on 3 June.

4. Chapter 9, Part Two of present Study.

5. Ibid

6. Ibid

7. Ibid



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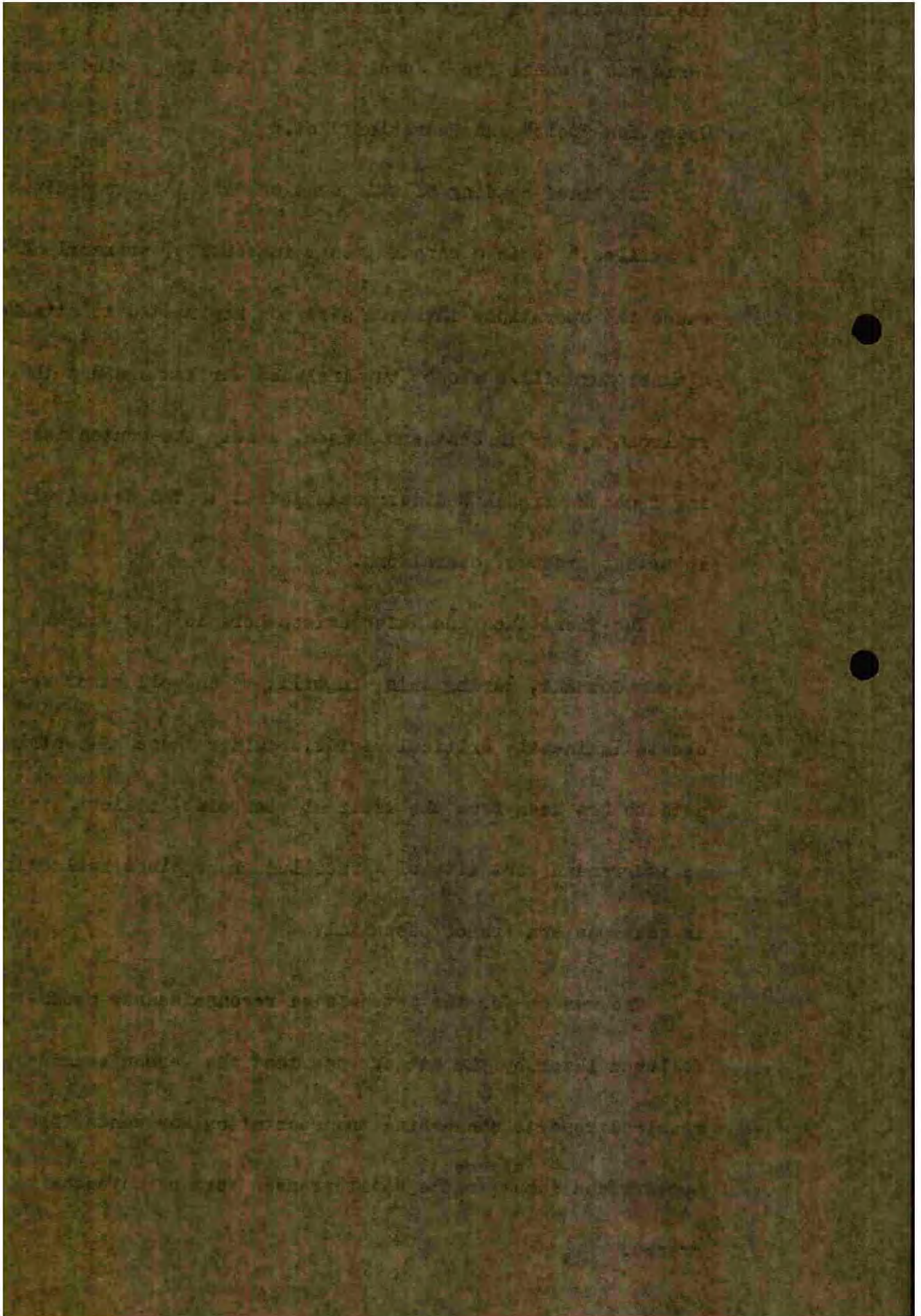
2. The Attack against Marseilles. The air attacks against Dunkirk and Marseilles were carried out at one and the same time: on 1 and 2 June 1940. The attack against Paris was planned for 5 June. This filled the period between Operation "Gelb" and Operation "Rot."

The brief heading of this section "The Attacks against Marseilles," is in a certain sense inaccurate, primarily because the operations involved were not restricted to attacks against Marseilles alone but included strikes against the railroad system in Southern France, namely the routes leading from the French Mediterranean ports to the decisively important areas of operations.

The first question which arises here is: Why did the German Command, during this in military and all other respects imminently critical period, consider these ex-centric attacks (as seen from the tactical viewpoint) against the Mediterranean port city of Marseilles and against railroads in southeastern France essential?

The reason for the intensified reconnaissance operations followed later by the attacks was that the German command had received reports concerning transportation movements from the African coast/ to the Mediterranean port of European France.





6

Intelligence activities had been directed systematically against the French airfields in the Marseilles region, and on 25 May it was known that a total of 306 aircraft were stationed on those airfields, comprising 157 single-engine and 121 twin-engine land-based aircraft plus 28 seaplanes.<sup>8</sup>

Concurrently, intelligence reports showed that 1 800 railcars were at the Nîmes rail depot and 1 800 at the Sète rail depots.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, the German Command had come to the conclusion that the French, as appeared from a number of reports received, had commenced a steady movement of additional French divisions from North Africa to France. Reports giving unit designations also showed that armored forces were also being embarked for shipment from Tunisia and Algeria to Europe.

Air reconnaissance against the Mediterranean coastal areas was now intensified.

On 26 May an admittedly unconfirmed report was received that two divisions had already left Algeria on their way to Marseilles.<sup>10</sup>

On 31 May<sup>11</sup> air reconnaissance over the port of Mar-

seilles showed a number of railway trains stationed at the

8. Air Intelligence Report No. 263, 26 May 1940

9. Both were rail depots on the rail route from the Spanish border to Avignon (northwest of Marseilles).

10. Air Intelligence Report No. 264, 27 May 1940.

11. " " " " 269, 1 June 1940.

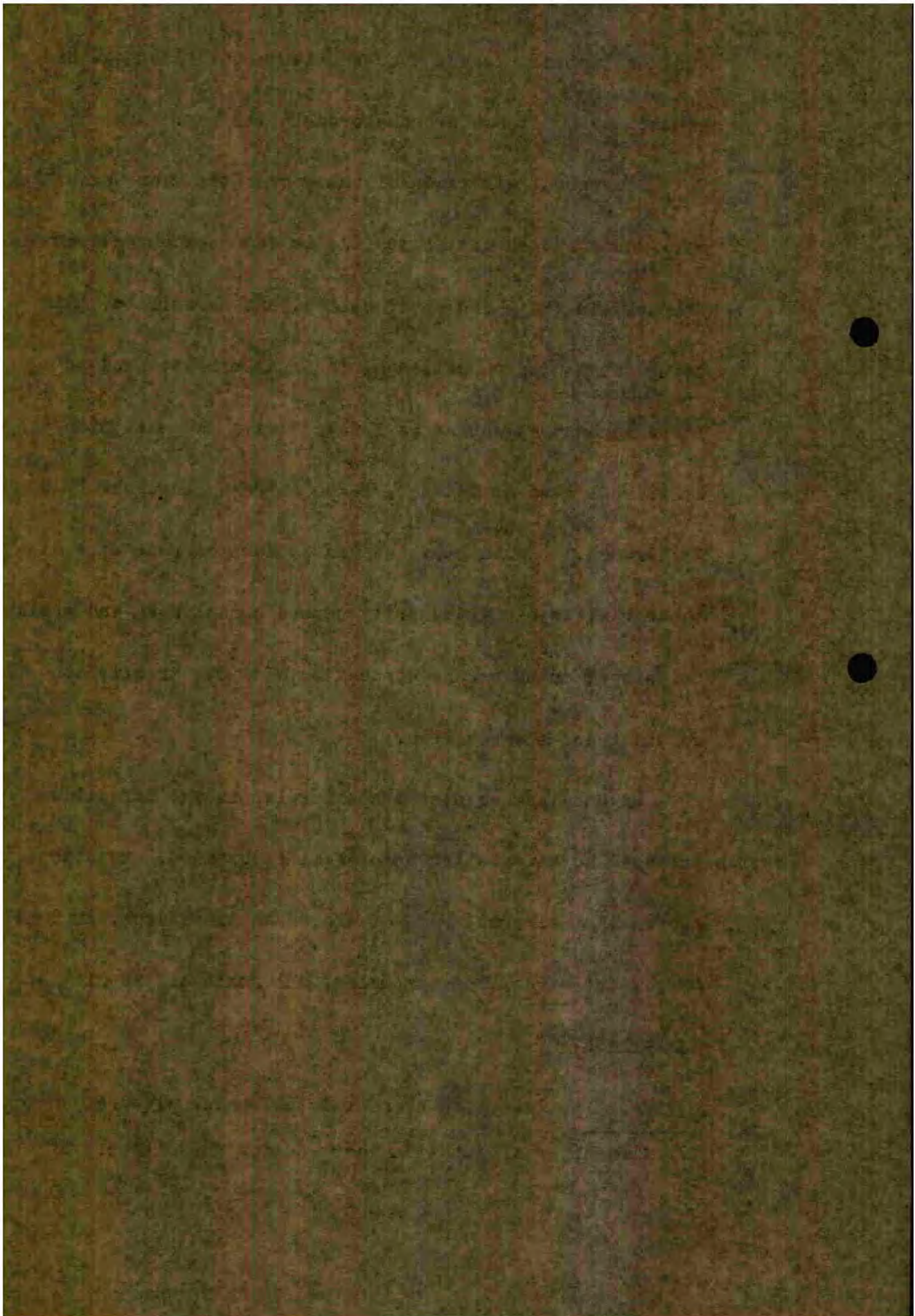


7 wharves and approximately sixty merchant vessels with a total tonnage of approximately 350 000 tons plus a battle cruiser and other naval units in that port. Approximately another twelve merchant vessels with a total tonnage of around 90 000 tons were anchored in the bay.

Concurrent air reconnaissance over the Lyon-Marseilles rail route showed little traffic in the section between Valence, in the Rhone River valley, and Marseilles, this being the southern section of the entire route, and no large concentrations at rail depots with the exception of 2 110 rail cars at Valence, 1 200 at Beauvalon, and 1 800 at Miramas.<sup>12</sup> Such heavy concentrations of rail cars at these rail depots necessarily seemed conspicuous and could be assumed to have some connection with the traffic concentrations at Marseilles.

Reconnaissance over the airfields in the Marseilles region produced no information of especial importance. Reports showed that aircraft were stationed on the Istres, Miramas, Berre, and Marseilles airfields, all north of the city of Marseilles.

Nonetheless, the overall intelligence picture, and  
 12. Miramas: Rail junction northwest of Marseilles.



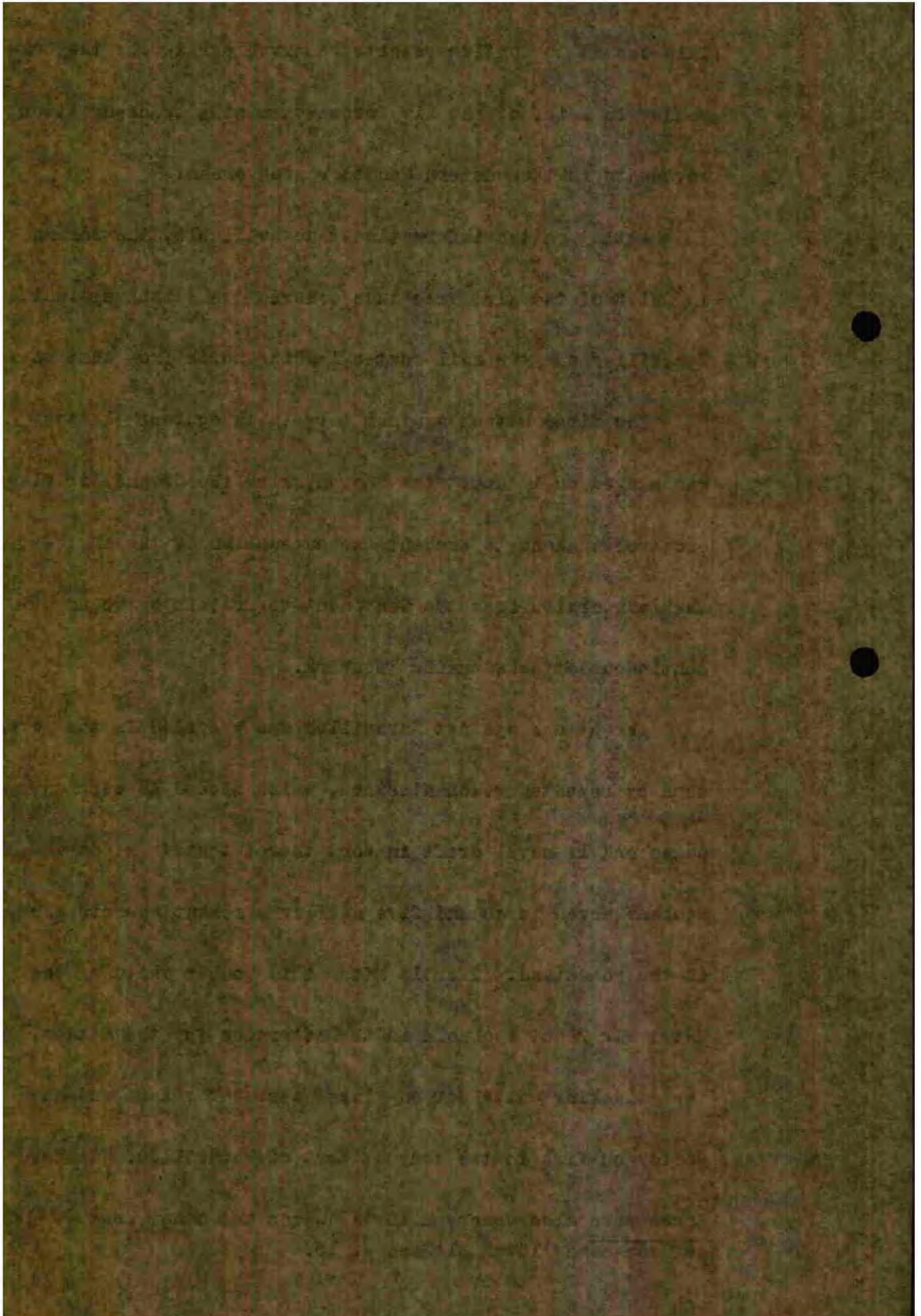
7 particularly the concentration of shipping in the port of Marseilles, created the impression that large troop debarkation movements were either in process or imminent. This seemed to confirm reports received earlier by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force concerning transportation movements in the western Mediterranean areas.

8 Acting on the information thus available, the Commander in Chief of the Air Force thus ordered the attack against Marseilles and the rail routes leading north from that city.

The first attack against targets in southern France was staged on 1 June,<sup>13</sup> the day on which the Second Air Fleet endeavored alone to prevent the evacuation of the Anglo-American armies from the Continent to Britain by means of continuous attacks against Dunkirk.

The attack against Marseilles was preceded in the forenoon by repeated reconnaissance, which showed <sup>43</sup> ~~42~~ merchant ships and 14 naval craft in port there; towards midday another seven large and five smaller merchant vessels were in the roadstead. Shortly after this bomber units of the Third Air Fleet took off in the afternoon for the attack.<sup>14</sup> The attacking units set one large merchant vessel and one coaler on fire in the congested port of Marseilles. Hits and fires were also observed in the sheds and other port

For footnotes 13 and 14 see p. 10.



8 installations.

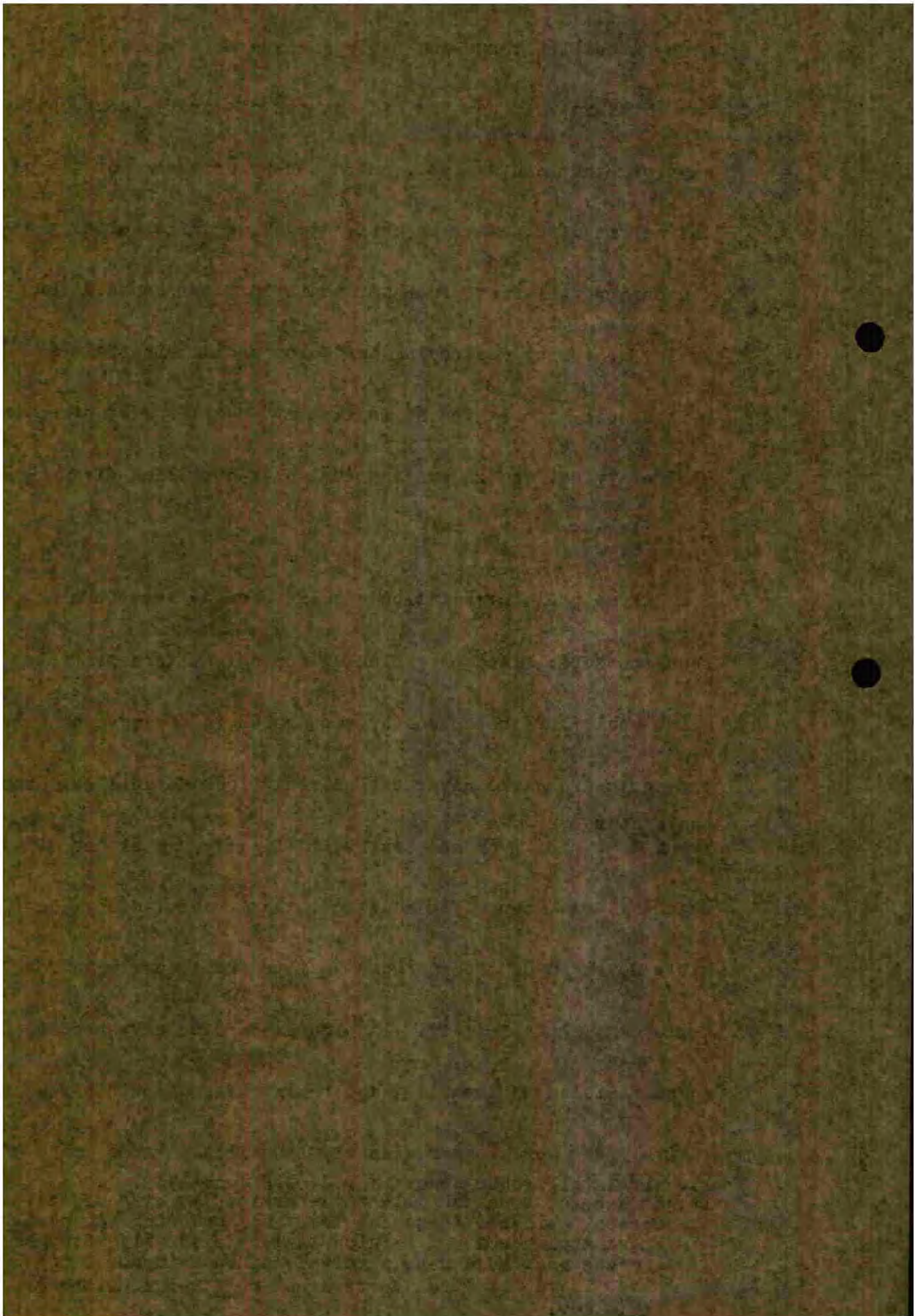
It appears that the attacks were directed primarily against the rail routes from Marseilles northward. The Lyon-Marseilles route was badly damaged at seven points in its northern section; the rail depots of Givors (south-southwest of Lyon) was damaged, and a cokery northwest of Givors was set on fire. Farther east, attacking units halted traffic on the rail route from Mt. Genis into the Rhone River valley region by destroying the Culoz and Aix-les-Bains rail depots, the latter approximately 48 miles east or southeast of Lyons, and in cutting the Culoz-Chatillon-Rives route.<sup>15</sup>

These rail interdiction attacks seem to have been a sound measure, since they blocked the only alternate route which could have been used by the French, in the case of the northward Rhone River valley route from Marseilles through ~~Lyon~~ <sup>being cut</sup> Lyon, to bypass Lyon and divert traffic through Grenoble, Chambéry, and Bourg. In addition, they prevented any possible movement of troops from the Alps front northward for deployment against Italy. It also appears to have been a sound decision to interdict the rail routes at points relatively far north, approximately 150 miles north by air

13. Air Intelligence Report No. 270, 2 June 1940.

14. It has not been possible to determine the size of the forces employed. According to Schmid one wing was used. Present author is of opinion that considerably stronger forces must have been involved, since evidence shows that Third Air Fleet carried out no other missions on this day.





9 free Marseilles, since no information was available concerning how far the assumed French rail transport movements might already have progressed.

Finally, two attacks were flown against the Ambérieu airfield, approximately 25 miles northeast of Lyon and on the previously mentioned alternate rail route.<sup>16</sup>

Heavy anti-aircraft defense fire was encountered in all Rhone River valley areas and at Marseilles; defense fighters were encountered over Lyon and Montélimar (between Valence and Avignon).

10 On 2 June units of the Third Air Fleet staged a second attack against targets in southeastern France.<sup>17</sup> Here again no information is available on the size of the units committed.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast with the previous day, reconnaissance preceding this operation showed no naval vessels in the port of Marseilles. Reconnaissance over rail routes in the Lyon-Valence region showed a picture of generally normal or light rail traffic. Defense fighters were discovered at Lyon and Valence.

15. Rives is in the Isère Valley, northwest of Grenoble.

16. The CINC, Air Force, estimated five aircraft destroyed and fifteen damaged.

17. Air Intelligence Report No. 271, 3 June 1940.

18. According to Schmid again only one wing.



10

Following the reconnaissance action the bomber units were dispatched on their missions against

1. the Lyon-Bron airfield, situated east of the city, and the aircraft park there. Here, bomb hits and explosions were observed, and at least fifteen aircraft were destroyed;

2. the Lyon-Marseilles rail route, which was interrupted at two points 12 miles south of Valence;

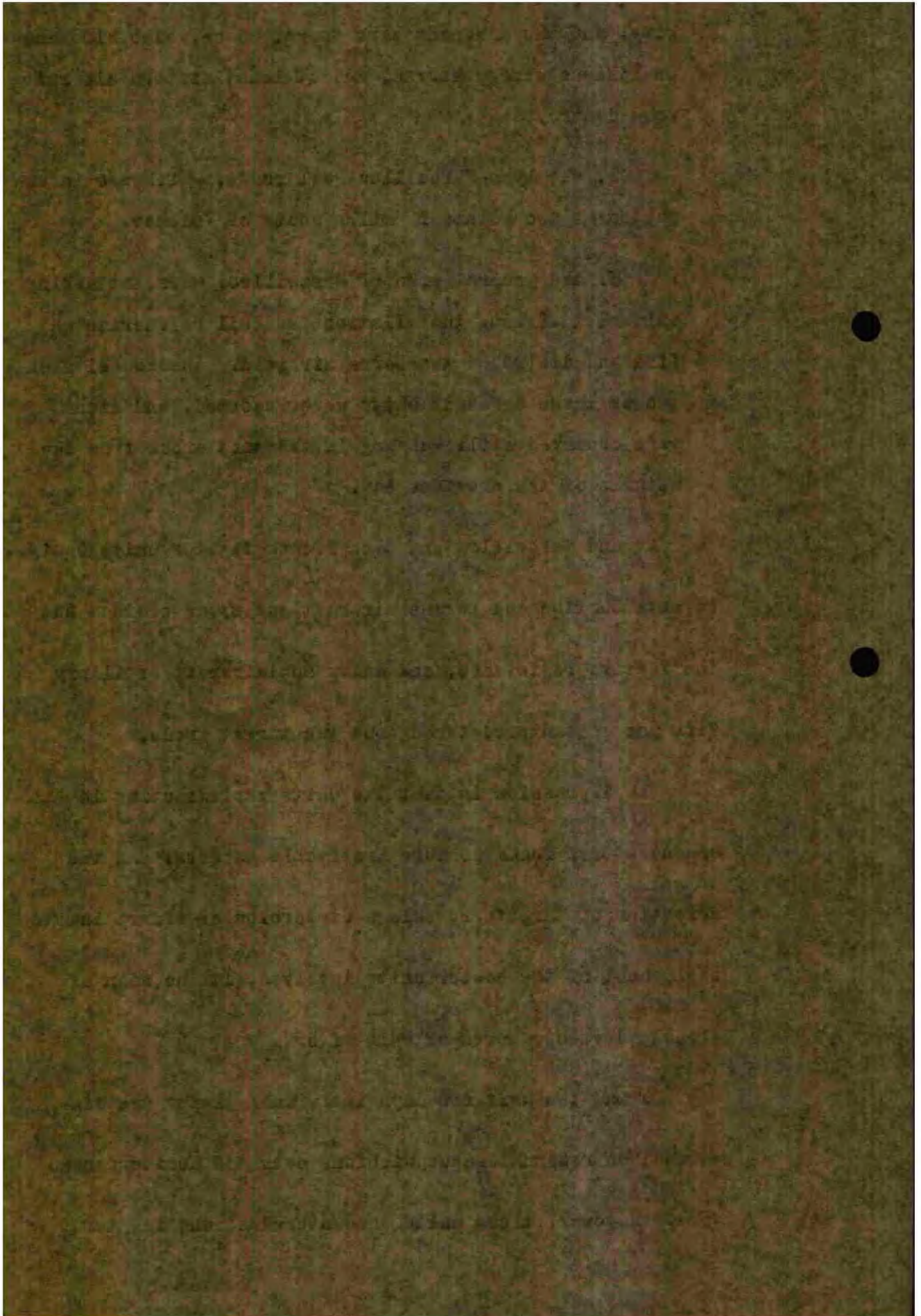
3. the general area of Marseilles, where attacking units set tanking installations and oil refineries on fire and destroyed the Berre airfield. Assumed hits on two or three merchant ships were reported, and fires were observed still burning in the port areas from the attacks of the previous day.

11

Around Marseilles and Lyon French fighter units equipped with Curtiss and Morane aircraft put up determined but ineffective resistance, and heavy antiaircraft artillery fire was encountered throughout the target areas.

The impression is that the units participating in this second attack found no more profitable targets, and the selection of targets reveals a dispersion of effort in the employment of the bomber units involved, with no sign of a clearly developed area of main effort.

During the next few days individual planes were dispatched on reconnaissance missions over the Mediterranean port. However, these units encountered strong fighter



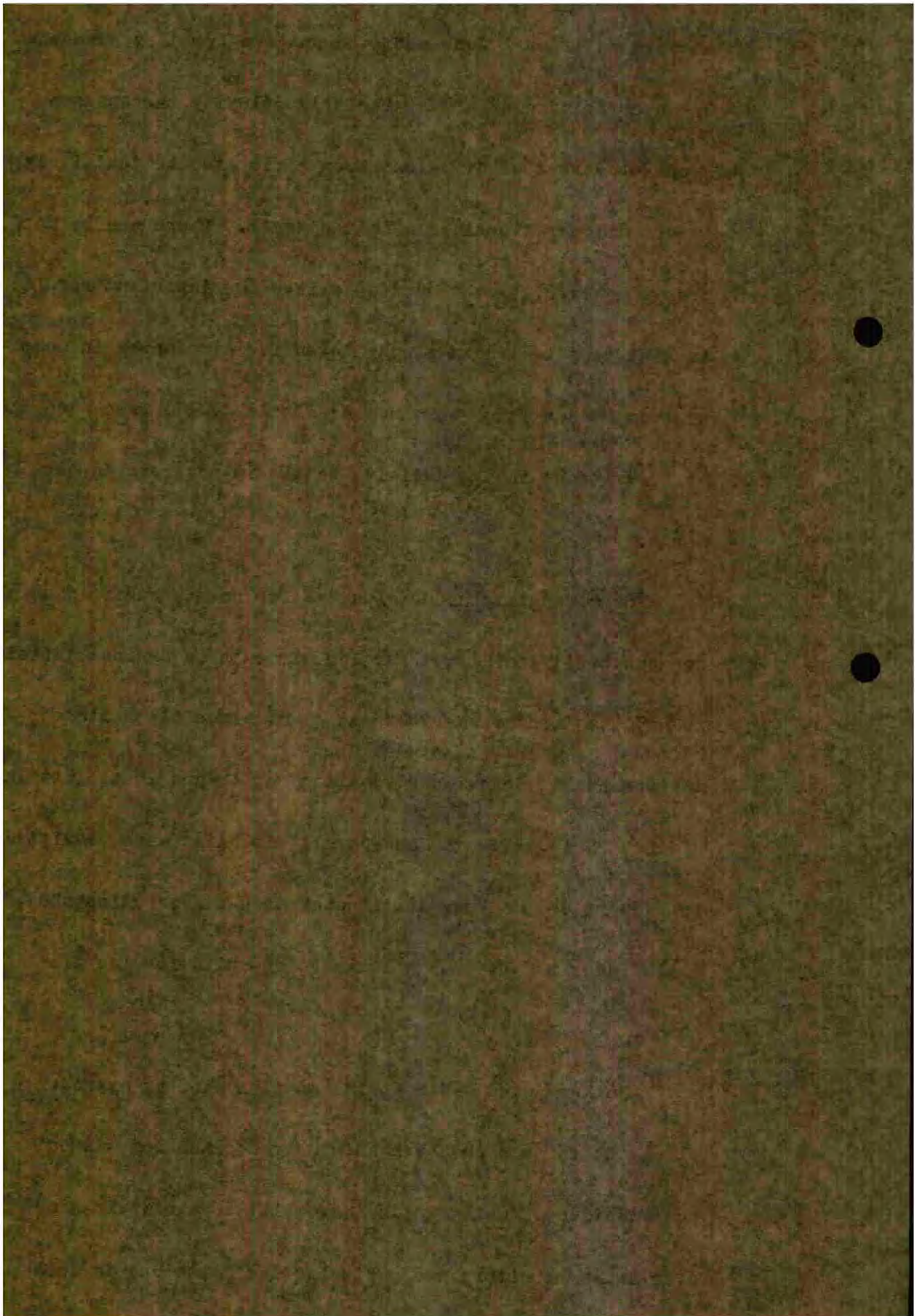
11 defenses and were unable to accomplish their reconnaissance missions.

It is not possible to ascertain what results these two attacks on 1 and 2 June achieved and whether they succeeded in interfering with and appreciably delaying the assumed French movement of divisions from Africa to the decisively important operational area in the north. There can be no doubt, however, that they did achieve one important result in that they tied down strong defensive air forces in southeastern France which were not available to the French Command for commitment in the decisive battle in progress in the north.

For strength reasons alone if for no other there was no possibility to direct further air attacks against targets in southeastern France for some time, since all units of the German Air Force were committed on 3 June in the attack against Paris. From 5 June on all air units were committed in support of the Army drive southwards in Operation "Rot," a mission which tied up all Air Force units for the time being.

12

Another point which merits mention was the approach flight to targets in southeastern France was not without complications. Owing to the necessity to avoid crossing over Swiss territory the participating units had to cover



12

exceedingly long distances to reach their target areas.<sup>19</sup>

According to German sources, the units participating in the first attack on 1 June came under attack by Swiss fighters, because of an alleged infringement of Swiss territory. It is an irony of military history that these Swiss fighter units had Me-109 aircraft purchased from Germany, with which they shot down two or three of the German bombers.<sup>21</sup>

In the case of the second attack, on 2 June, fighter units escorted the German bombers as far as the Swiss border. Once again Swiss fighters put in an appearance in a strength of ten to twelve aircraft, all of which were shot down by the German escort fighters.<sup>22</sup> No comments from Swiss sources are available concerning these incidents.

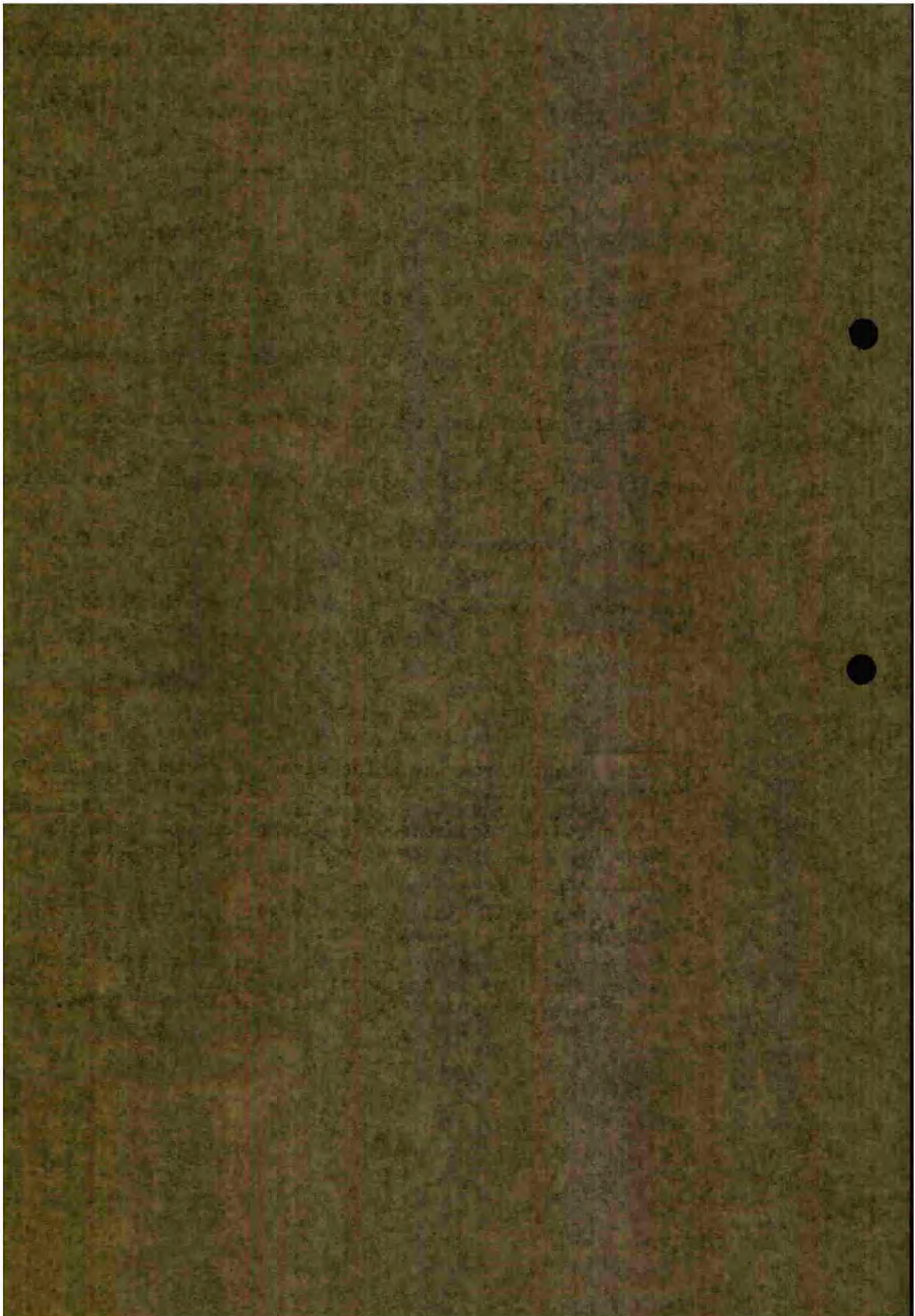
19. The distance from the Rhine River at Freiburg in Breisgau to Marseilles is roughly 360 miles, allowing for a westward detour to avoid Swiss territory. In addition the units had to cross German territory on their way from bases in southern Bavaria to the Rhine River.

20. According to Schmid.

21. According to Air Intelligence Report No. 270, 2 June, only one Me-111 was shot down.

22. According to Schmid. It seems significant that this second incident is not mentioned at all in the situation reports by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force.





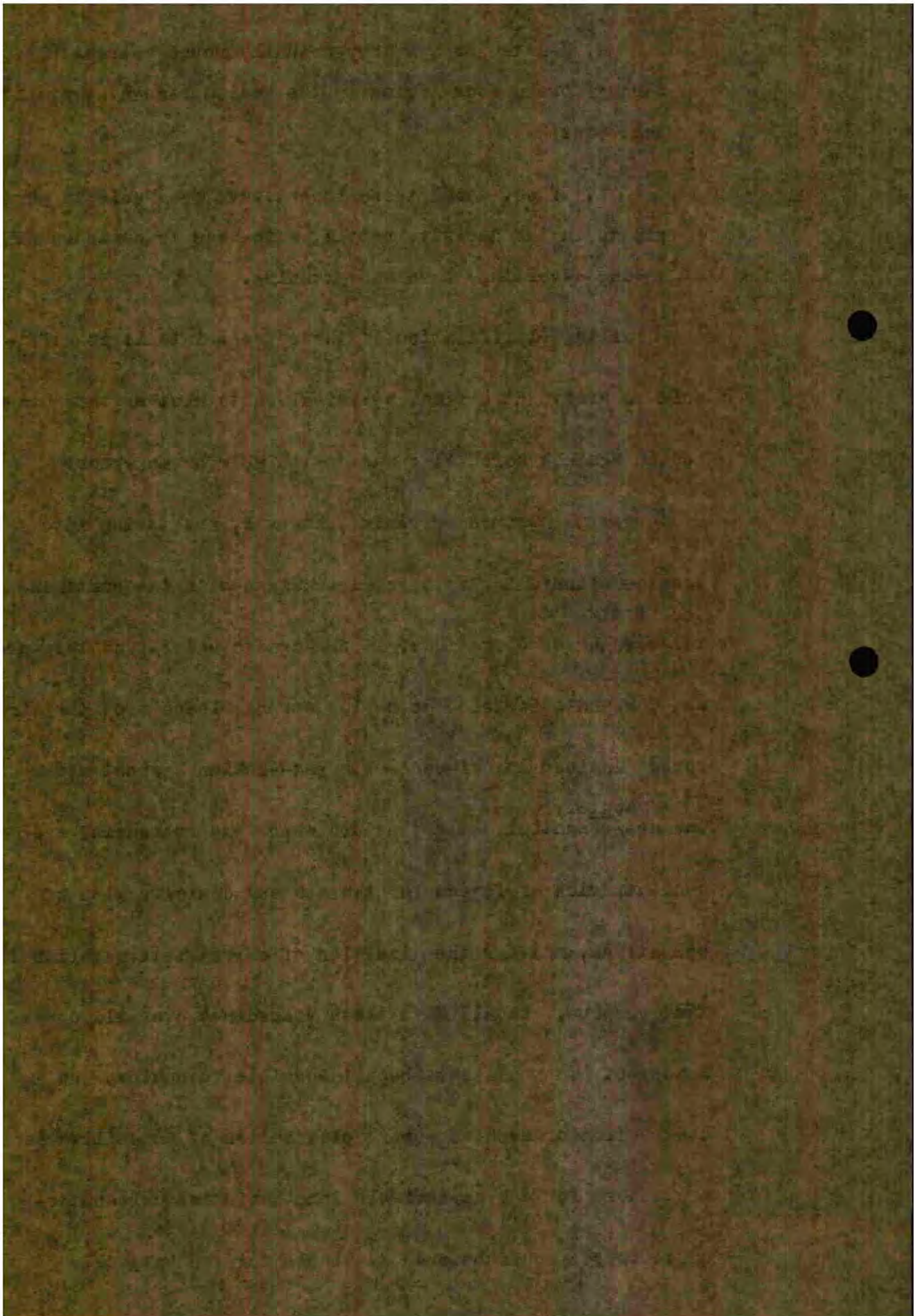
## ANALYSIS OF THE OPERATIONS AGAINST MARSEILLES

Two points of cardinal importance still require clarification:

1. Had the French Army actually moved appreciably strong forces from Africa to the Mediterranean ports at that time;
2. If so, would these forces have been able to participate in the decisive battle, which was to commence on <sup>at</sup> 5 June according to German planning.

Failing clarification of these two points it is difficult to arrive at a final appraisal as to whether the German action against Marseilles was justifiable or an error.

From the German viewpoint, however, and taking into consideration all strategic circumstances in the continental theater of operations, it is hard to understand the German Command's decision to employ strong elements of the Air Force against an off-center target--action against which <sup>acutely</sup> was not/essential, at a juncture when the regrouping and concentration of forces for the new and decisive plan of operations, and for the direction of appropriate supplies for that purpose, should have taken precedence over all other measures. It would have been impossible to achieve the destruction or even temporary elimination of Marseilles as a sea port for any appreciable length of time unless adequate forces could be made available for the purpose.



14

In view of the overall situation and overall planning the dispersion of effort involved must be considered an irresponsible act, since the forces thus employed against targets in southeastern France were lacking at Dunkirk, where in the meantime the Second Air Fleet was left alone to bleed white.

The question must remain open whether this off-center operation southwards was ordered by the highest military authority (Hitler, Wehrmacht High Command) and in such case presumably in response to Army requests, or whether the Commander in Chief of the Air Force himself believed that he could afford to spread his Air Force over the entire continent of Europe--from Narvik in the North to Marseilles in the South--in spite of his guarantee to Hitler that his Air Force would settle the matter of Dunkirk.

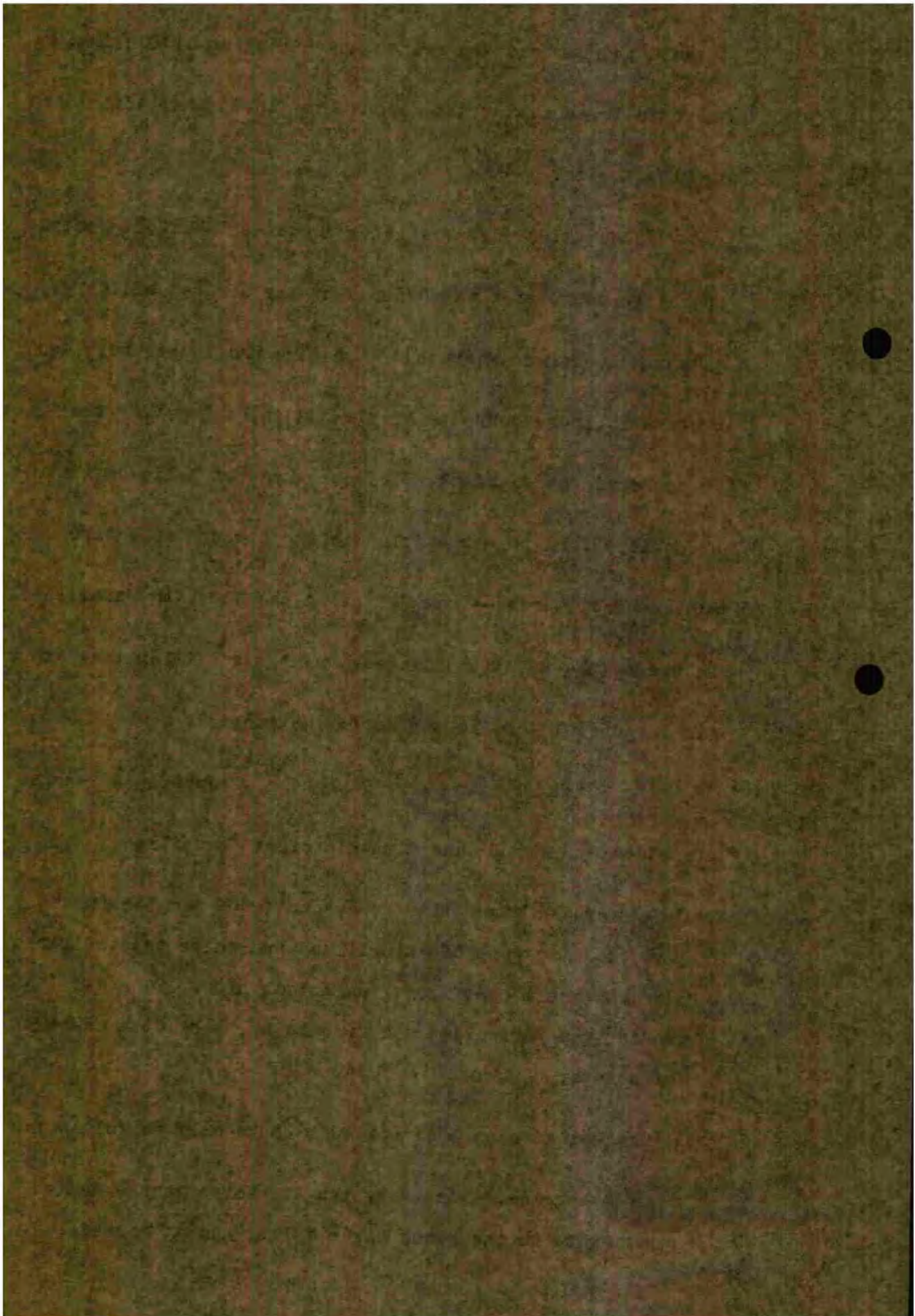
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The Joint Military High Command/<sup>bulletin</sup> of 2 June 1940 reports as follows on the 1 June attack against Marseilles:

For the first time bomber units of the Air Force attacked the port of Marseilles and there set two large merchant ships on fire through bomb hits. The rail route Lyon-Marseilles was damaged by bombs at a number of points.

The bulletin on 3 June 1940 remarks only as follows:

Otherwise, attacks by the Air Force were extended to targets in the Rhone River valley and at Marseilles.



3. TH- Air Attack against Paris--Operation Paula. At

writing it has not yet been possible to discover the reasons for this large scale operation by the entire German Air Force against Paris, carried out on 3 June under orders from the Supreme Command. They developed from a complex of political, morale, air tactical and air strategic considerations and the urge to put on a demonstration. Probably all of these considerations contributed equally towards the decision, for which it is not easy to find an inherent main motive. No directives or orders from the Joint Military High Command or from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force are known to exist from which it would be possible to deduce the motives for the attack.

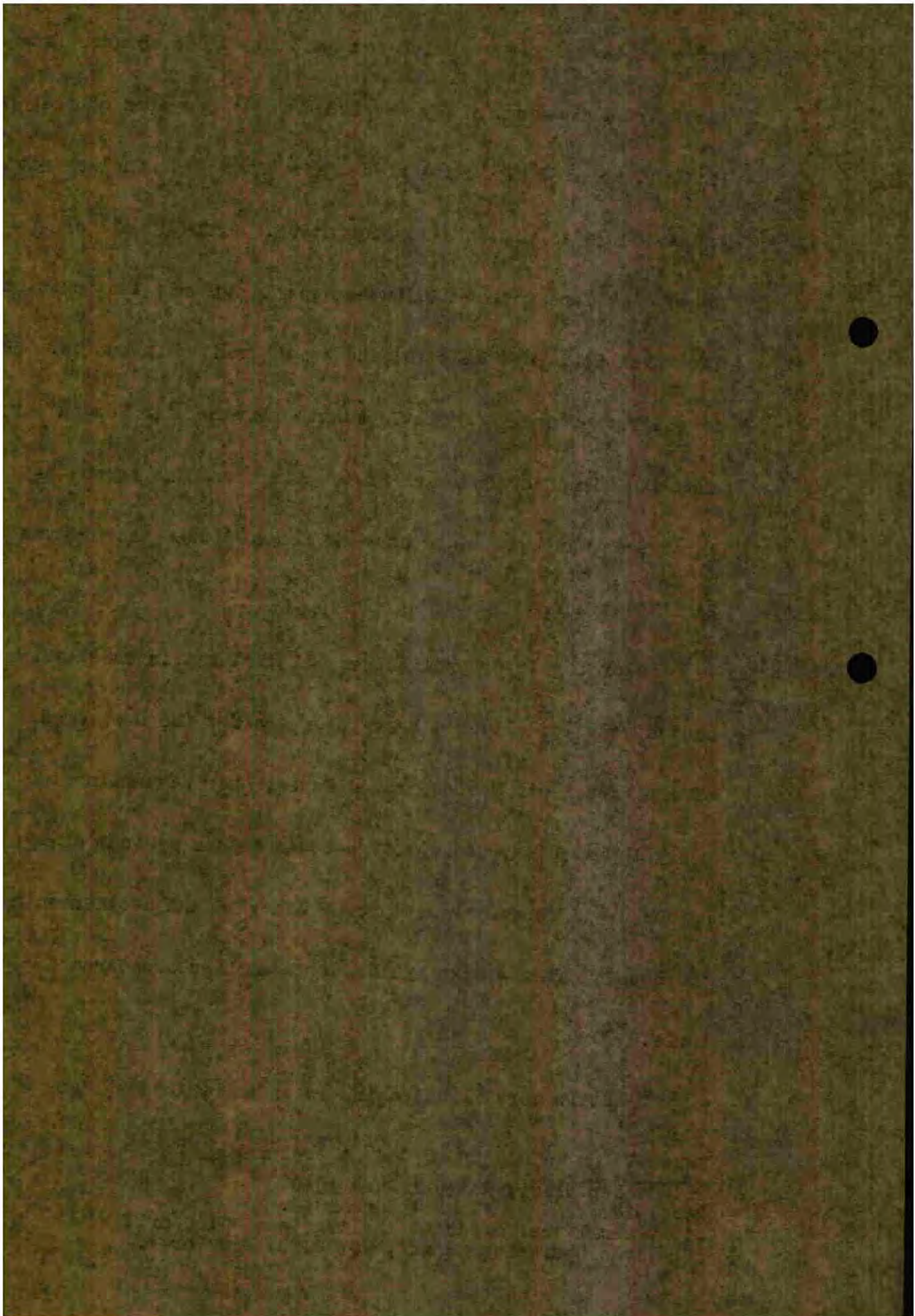
According to General Halder all that was intended was exclusively to deliver a heavy blow against the base area of the French air forces around Paris, and the pertinent entry in his diary reads "Large-scale attack against enemy (French) air forces planned for 4 June,"<sup>23</sup> and another entry "Successful air attacks against fighter base area around Paris."<sup>24</sup>

A little more illuminating is an entry in the diary of General von Waldau under 4 June,<sup>25</sup> reading

23. Halder Diary, Entry 1 June 1940

24. Ibid 4 June 1940.

25. General von Waldau at the time was Chief of the Air Force Operations Staff, HQ, CINC, Air Force.



15 A strike against the air ports around Paris, planned with loving care, was staged at 1436 on 3 June. Roughly 600 bombers together with 500 single- and twin-engine fighters attacked.

We expected from this action:

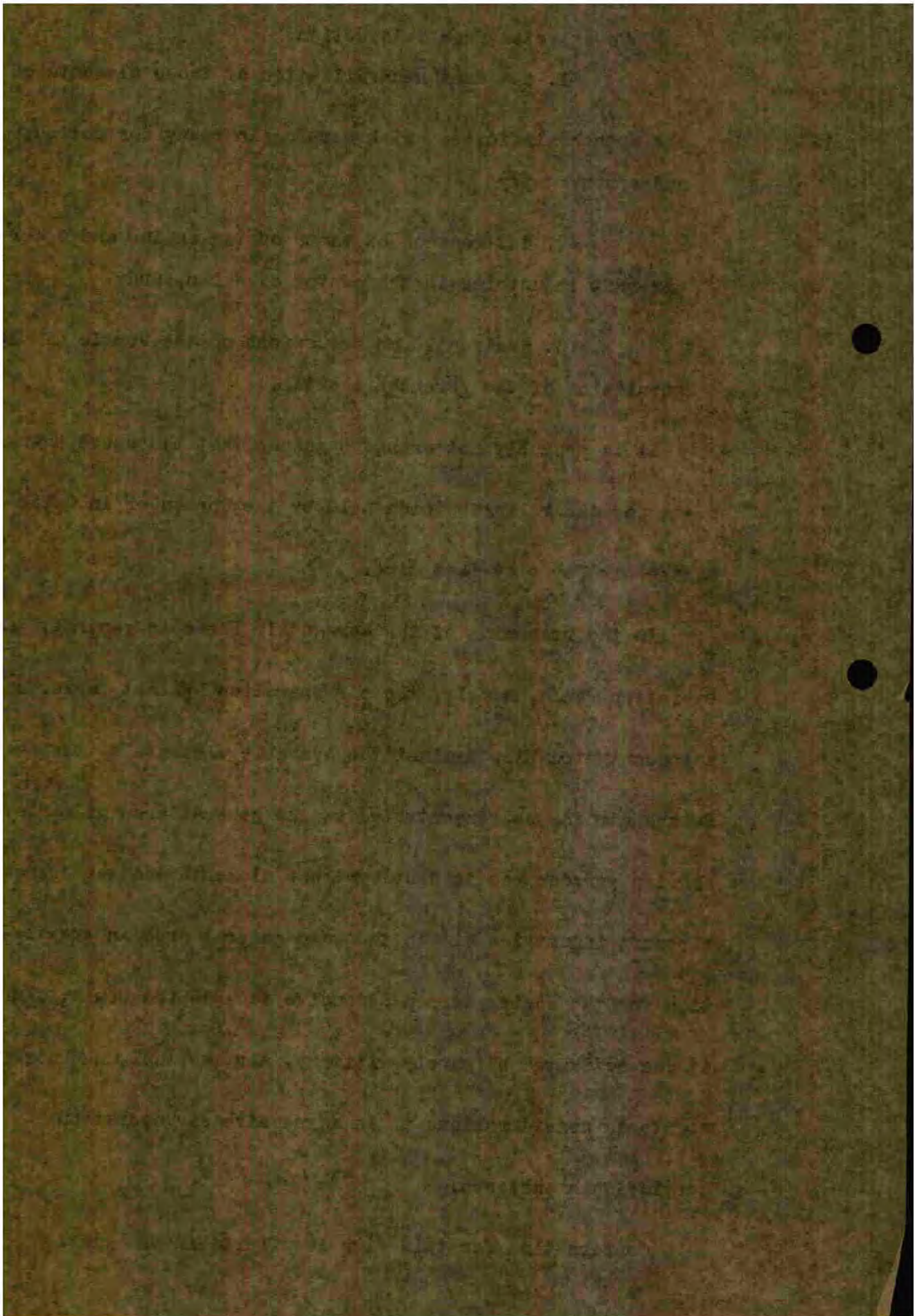
- 16
1. a marked neutralization of those elements of the French air forces which were again ready for action, and concurrently
  2. destruction of parts of the engine and other aircraft industries in the center of Paris, and
  3. desirable repercussions on the morale of the population of the French capital.

It is probably not wrong to assume that the above entry expresses the ruling opinion held by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force at that time.

In the reasoning of the German Air Force in general, Operation Paula, namely, the air operation against Paris, was a concentrated blow against the operable elements of the French air forces concentrated in the general area of Paris and its purpose was to destroy those elements and the French aircraft industries within the same general area in preparation for the coming German offensive towards the South. Thus, it was motivated by purely military, air tactical, and air strategic considerations as an aggressive air operation serving such purposes.

Confirmation for this view is offered in the Final



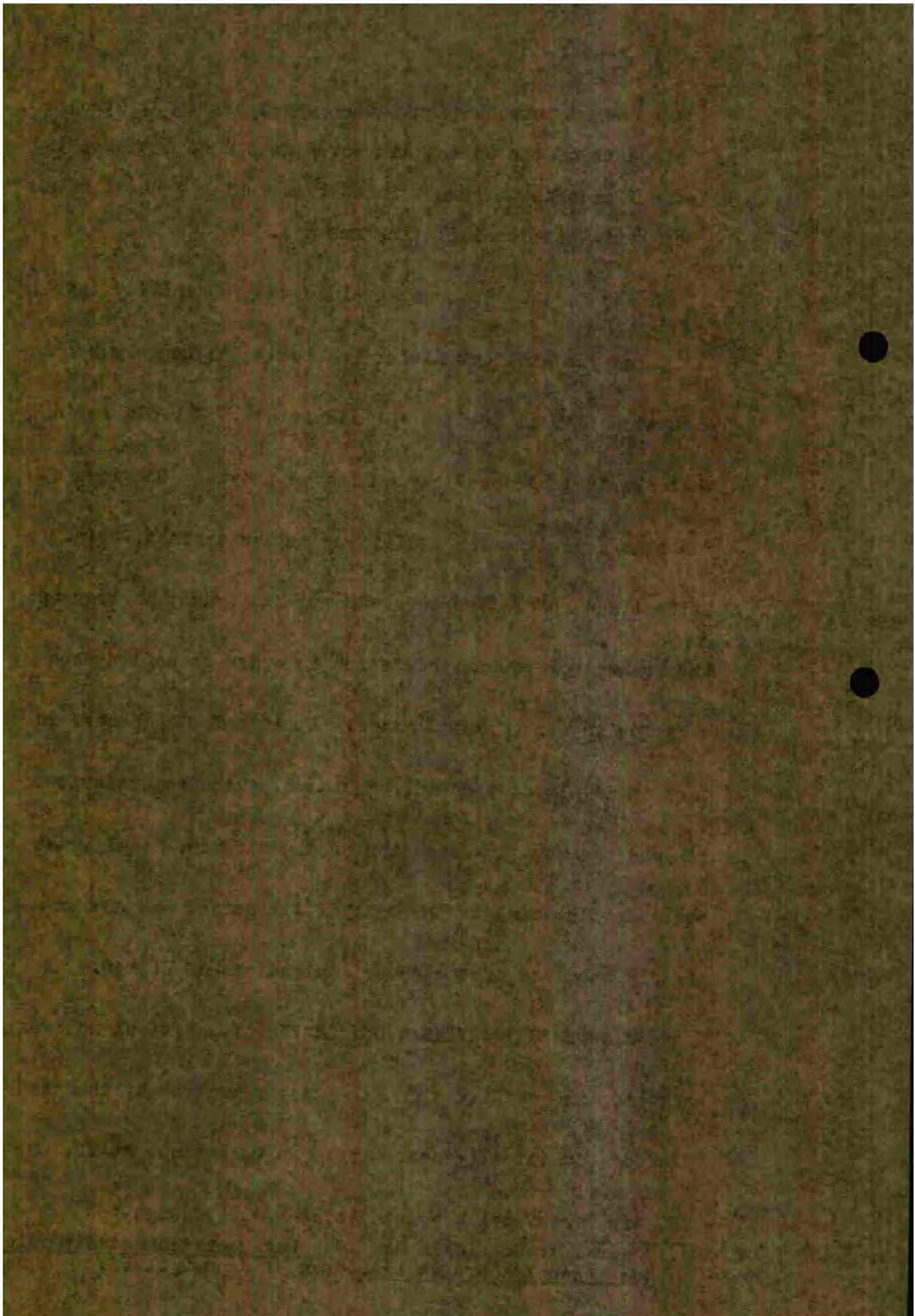


16 After-Action Report on the Campaign in the West issued by the German Joint Military High Command on 2 July 1940 (Schlussbericht des OKW ueber den Feldzug in Westen) in which a passage reads:

As an introduction to the new operations, strong elements of the German Air Force on 3 June attacked the air fields and aircraft industries in the general area of Paris with annihilating results.

17 However, this does not exclude the possibility that in assigning the mission Hitler was motivated largely by important political motives and viewpoints. The old saying that "Paris is France" may well have provided the impulse for this <sup>political</sup> decision for a military attack against Paris. Political and morale pressure were to be brought to bear on the French Government and Nation in order to soften them up for an early capitulation. It is safe to assume, in fact it is almost certainly the case, that the authority responsible for the execution of the mission, namely, the Commander in Chief of the ~~REIHE~~ Air Force, was not expressly apprised of the secret intentions of Hitler. This assertion ~~SEEMS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE~~ of political motives seems to find confirmation in a paper written by the then Chief of Air Intelligence, Air Force Operations Staff, HQ, CINC Air Force, which commences with the passage<sup>26</sup>

26. General J. Schmid in "Beitrag zur Operationsstudie Feldzug gegen Frankreich 1940," on 31 January 1953.



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The purpose of the attack was to prepare the French Capital city for capitulation by means of the impact of a demonstration of air power on the morale,

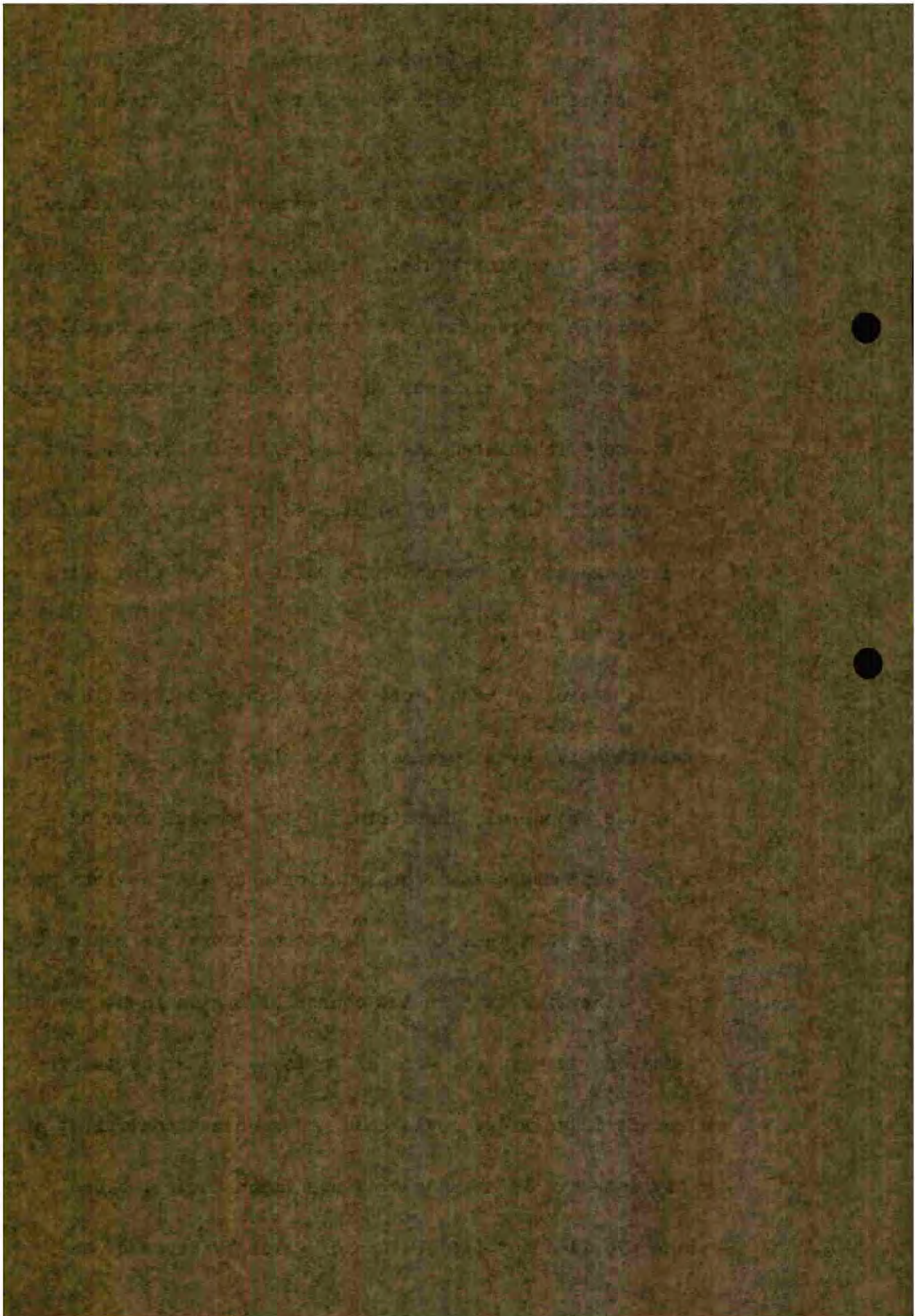
and closes on the note

The main result of the attack against Paris was that it contributed largely towards the capitulation of the city.

18

This appears to offer confirmation for the political motive for Operation Paula. However, the passages were written ten thirteen years after the event from personal recollections whereas the views expressed by von Waldau, previously quoted above, were formulated immediately after the event, so that they probably have to be accepted as the appraisal valid in circles around the Commander in Chief of the German Air Force at the time.

On the other hand, more farreaching considerations would seem to speak against a practical necessity to destroy the French air industries in the general area of Paris. What makes their destruction seem all the less necessary is the fact that is the fact that there was reason to hope at the time that in the course of the imminent ground operations the general area of Paris, and thereby the French aircraft industries, would come under German control at an early date and in an undamaged condition anyhow, since plans provided for the capture of Paris by means of an



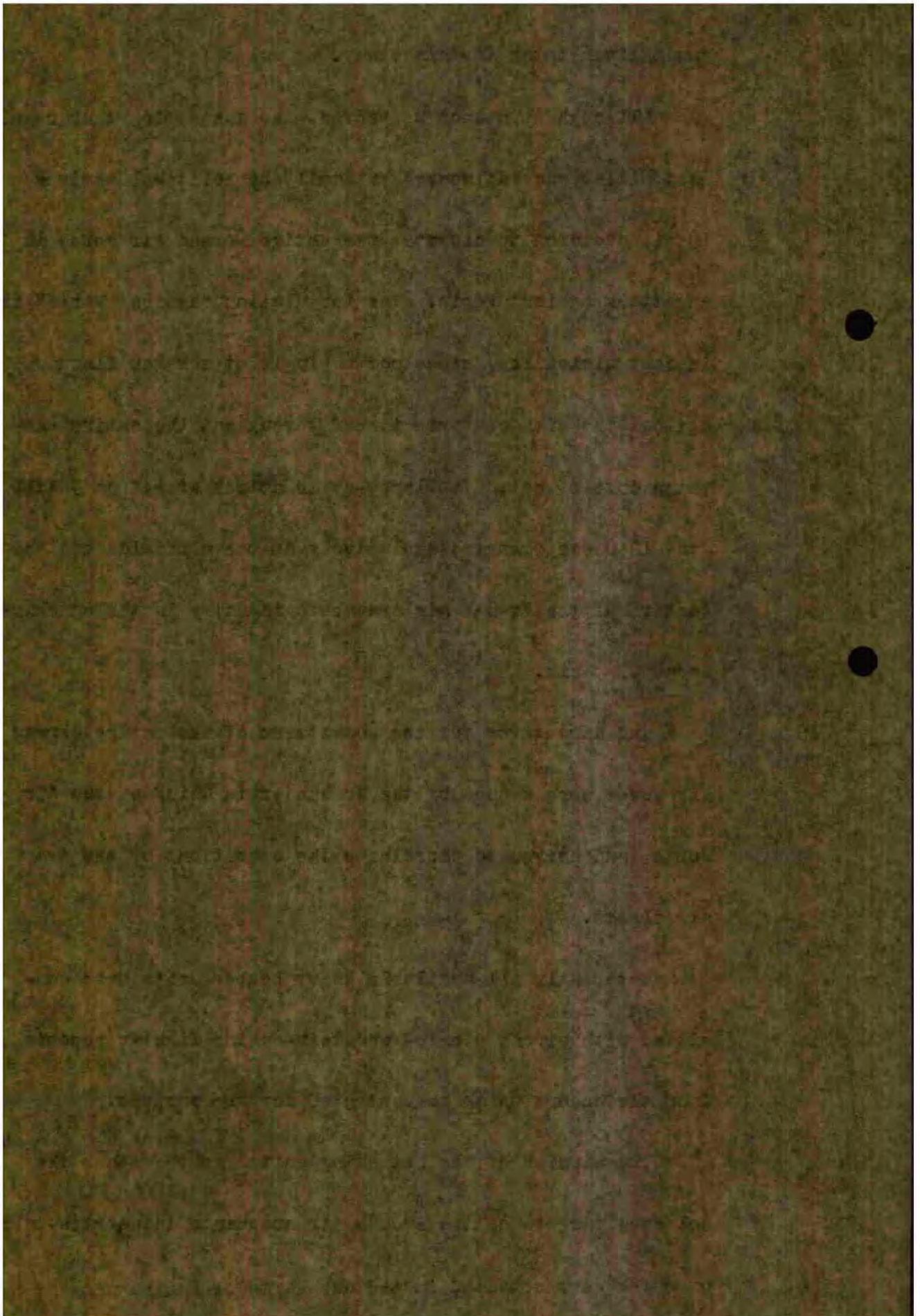
18 enveloping movement from both sides of the city and without any direct attacks against the city itself. This will become evident from the presentation of the plans for Operation Paula given later in this study.

Although it cannot be proved, the assumption thus remains that Hitler was influenced primarily by political motives in his decision to dispatch the entire German Air Force in an attack against Paris. The formulation "against Paris" is in fact misleading, since not a single attack was flown against the city of Paris itself throughout the entire campaign in the west. The large-scale attack staged on 5 JUNE June 1940 was directed exclusively at the airfields and the centers of the French air armaments industry in the outskirt areas of Paris.

19 The directives for the commitment of the entire German Air Force were issued by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force, and served to coordinate the operations of the two air fleets.

Apparently all available heavy bomber units were committed with strong single- and twin-engine fighter escorts from the escort units concentrated for the purpose.

The mission of the attacking units was to attack the selected targets of the French air armaments industries, all of which were situated in the outskirts of Paris. Each



19 was to be primarily on action against aircraft engine and fuselage factories, permanent installations, and aircraft stationed on the airfields around Paris--here primarily on fighter airfields--, and finally antiaircraft artillery positions and other air defense centers, all of which were to be taken under attack and destroyed.

Available sources agree on the subject of the strength of the forces committed in the attack. It appears that approximately 1,100 to 1,200 aircraft participated, of which number 2/3 were bombers. This figure of 1,200 aircraft is also confirmed by a report prepared by the Comodore of one of the fighter wings participating in the attack, a report apparently based on sound sources.<sup>27</sup> According to that report, however, the aggressive units from only three air corps participated. However, it is improbable that these three corps alone could have such a large number of operable aircraft available for the attack. It can be assumed with certainty that all long-range bomber units of the entire German Air Force were committed. Only the dive-bomber and ground attack units of the VIII (Tactical Air Support) Corps were not committed because of their inadequate range, but the corps' fighter units also participated.

20

27. Generalmajor Max Ibel: "Das Jagdgeschwader 27 des VIII Fl. Korps in Frankreichfeldzug 1940," 25 June 1953. Warburke Document Collection.





20

The report by Ibel gives such a graphic description of the operation from the viewpoint of the front line units that excerpts from it are being included with this study as Appendix 79.

Opinions differ on the subject of the effectiveness of the enemy defenses encountered. The Halder Diary contains the passage<sup>28</sup> "It was like a National Socialist Party air celebration over Paris (Es war ein Parteiflugtag ueber Paris) Resistance negligible."<sup>29</sup>

According to Sekaid<sup>30</sup> "Fighter resistance was weak; anti-aircraft artillery defense fire was considerably weaker than had been expected and had little effect." According to Ibel,<sup>31</sup> however, ".....enemy anti-aircraft artillery fire over the target area was heavy and in parts well placed." Since Ibel was the only one of the quoted authorities who was actually present over Paris, his appraisal seems the most acceptable.

Concerning the execution of Operation Paula, the present author personally remembers three facts:

21

1. The plan of operations provided a minutely calculated attack program according to targets, timing, areas, and altitudes. It is no longer possible to state reliably from memory whether the attacks by units from the Second and from the Third Air Fleets were coordinated by target areas or by attack sequences. It is certain,

<sup>28</sup>. Halder Diary, Entry 4 June 1940.

<sup>29</sup>. Under a "Partei-Flugtag" Halder, according to current usage at the time understood the peacetime parade-type of air demonstrations staged annually over the Wuezburg  
---Continued.



21

however, that the entire fighter escort service for all of the attacks flown against Paris was centrally controlled and uniformly organized. For this purpose Fighter Command 5 (Third Air Fleet), under General von Massow, was given command also over the single- and twin-engine fighter units of the Second Air Fleet.

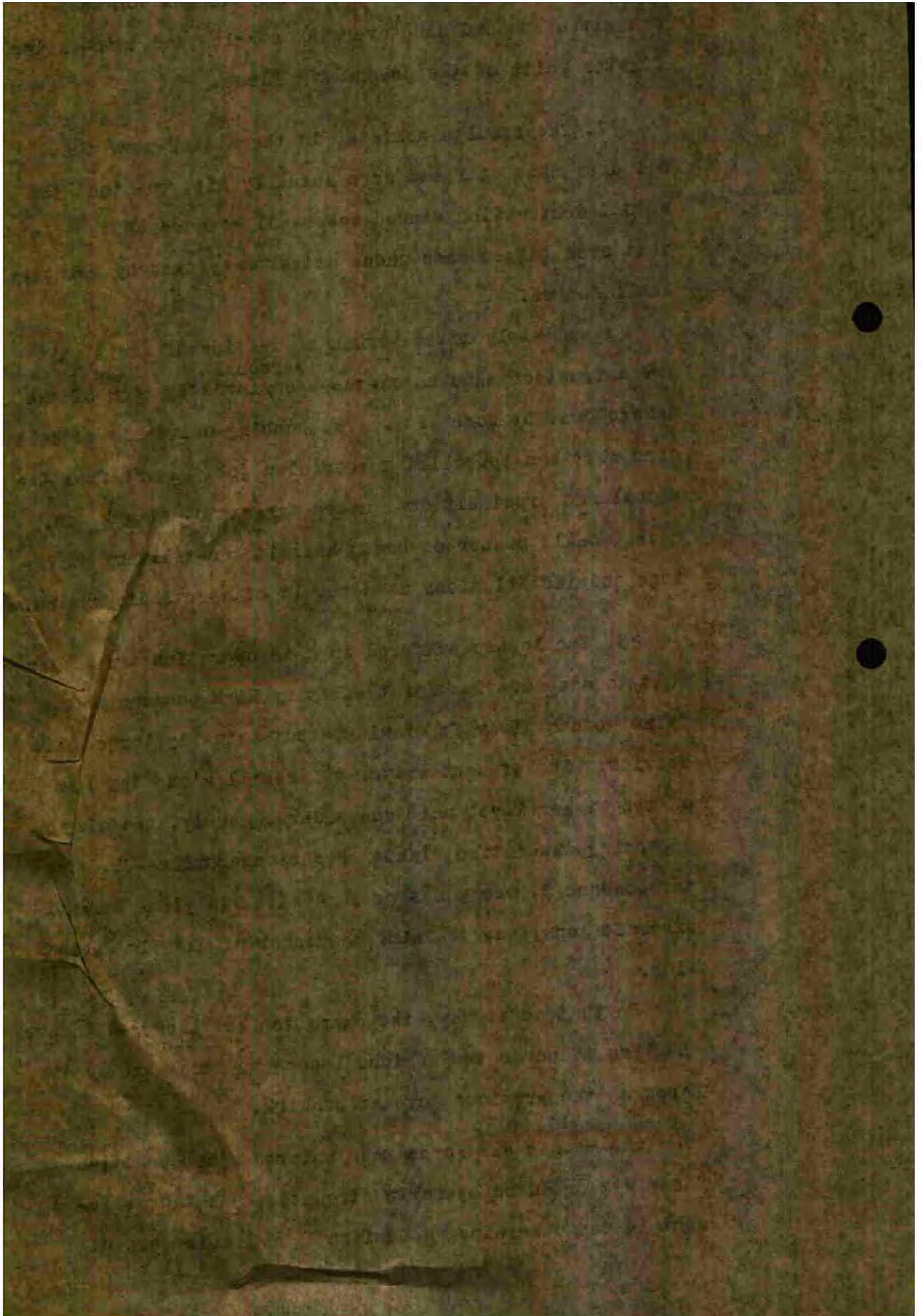
2. The results achieved in the attack were that all designated targets were actually hit, but that the actual destruction caused was small because of the fact that each target came under attack only once by relatively small forces.

Immediately after German occupation of Paris, the present author made an on-the-spot <sup>personal</sup> investigation of the damage done by bomb hits. The bombing units had actually done what can be called a precision job. Apart from the actual and precisely designated targets of attack, only a very small number of bombs had hit non-military buildings and installations as a result of normal dispersion.

3. The losses suffered in this operation are difficult to assess. The Joint military High Command admits "Nine German aircraft missing," but actually losses were heavier. The present writer can recall alone the loss of two higher level unit commanders, namely, the officer directing the entire fighter escort operation--CO, Fighter Command 5, who was shot down with his plane by anti-aircraft guns; and the wing commander of the 51st bomber wing.

Be that as it may, the operation had incurred losses and thus added to the serious losses suffered by the Air Force on the previous days at Dunkirk.

The German Air Force thus entered upon Operation "Rot" with reduced operable strengths, and the statement in the otherwise so eminently reliable work of



22 General von Tippelskirch that "....the German Air Force entered upon Operation 'Rot' with strengths not seriously depleted"<sup>32</sup> needs correction in this respect, although the weakened state of the Air Force for the time being produced no noticeable results while facing an inferior air opponent.

The overall results achieved by Operation "Paula" are hard to define. It is difficult to balance its effects in material damage caused, its impact on morale, and its influence on the political level one against the other. It can nevertheless be assumed with certainty that the opinion held by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force at the time is reflected in the previously mentioned diary of General von Waldau, where an entry reads<sup>33</sup>

The weather conditions, with a 4-10<sup>34</sup> cloud cover represented a favorable compromise between partial cover against antiaircraft artillery fire and the requirement for that degree of freedom of movement essential for the simultaneous presence of 1-100 very fast aircraft within a very small area.

and another entry<sup>35</sup>

The attack against Paris took the enemy by surprise  
Footnote 29--Continued: during the annual National Socialist Party rally there

30. See Footnote 26, above.

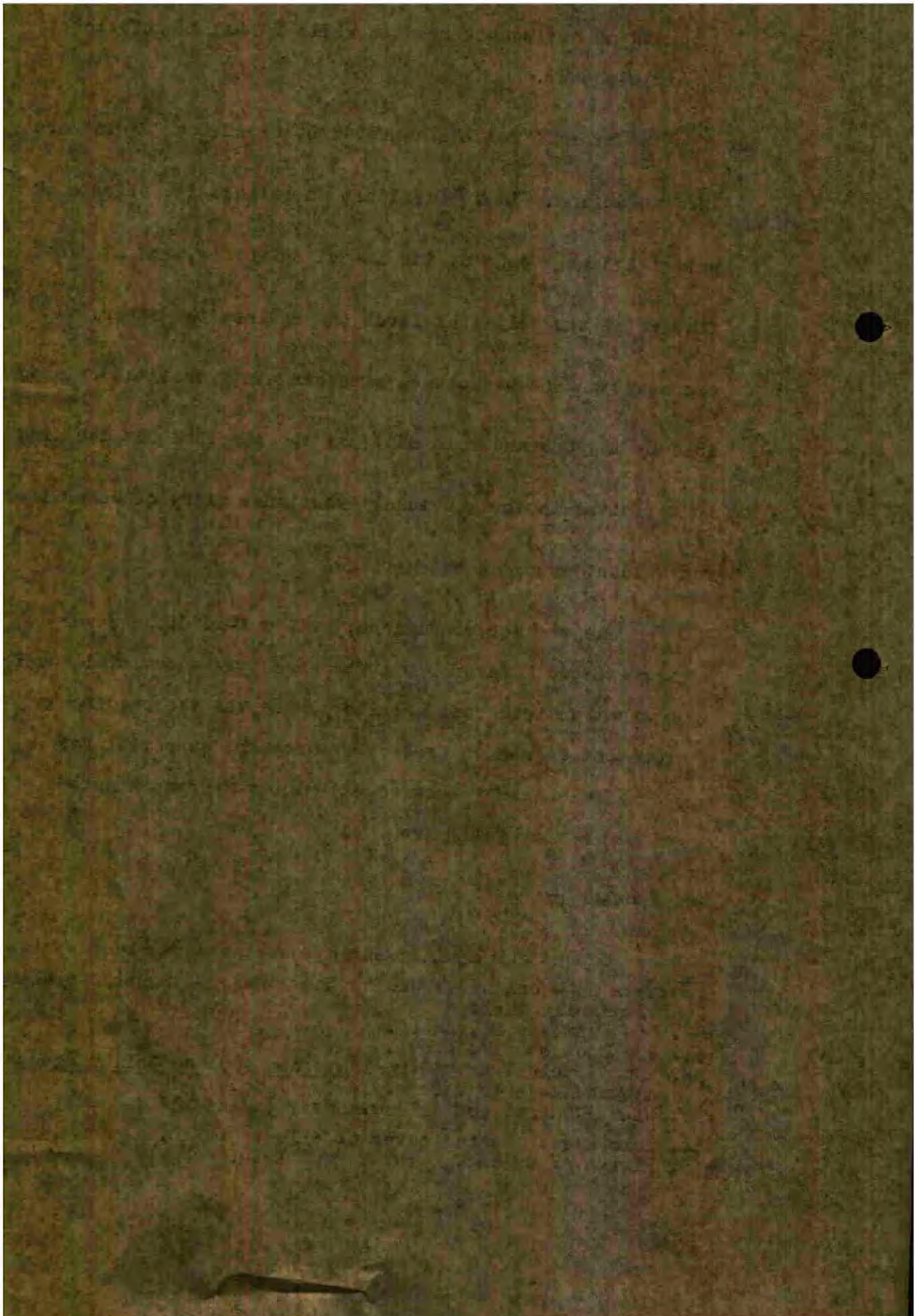
31. See Footnote 27, above.

32. Von Tippelskirch: "Geschichte des 4-weiten Weltkrieges," Athenaeum-Verlag, Bonn, 1954, p. 85.

33. Diary General von Waldau, Entry 4 June 1940.

34. This means a cloud cover of 4/10 to 10/10.

35. Diary von Waldau, Entry 5 June 1940.



23 and produced very good results. Fires in depots, the Citroen and Gnome-Rhone aircraft engine factory badly hit. The threatened reprisals practically failed to materialize.

The Joint Military High Command Bulletin on 4 June 1940 states inter alia:<sup>36</sup>

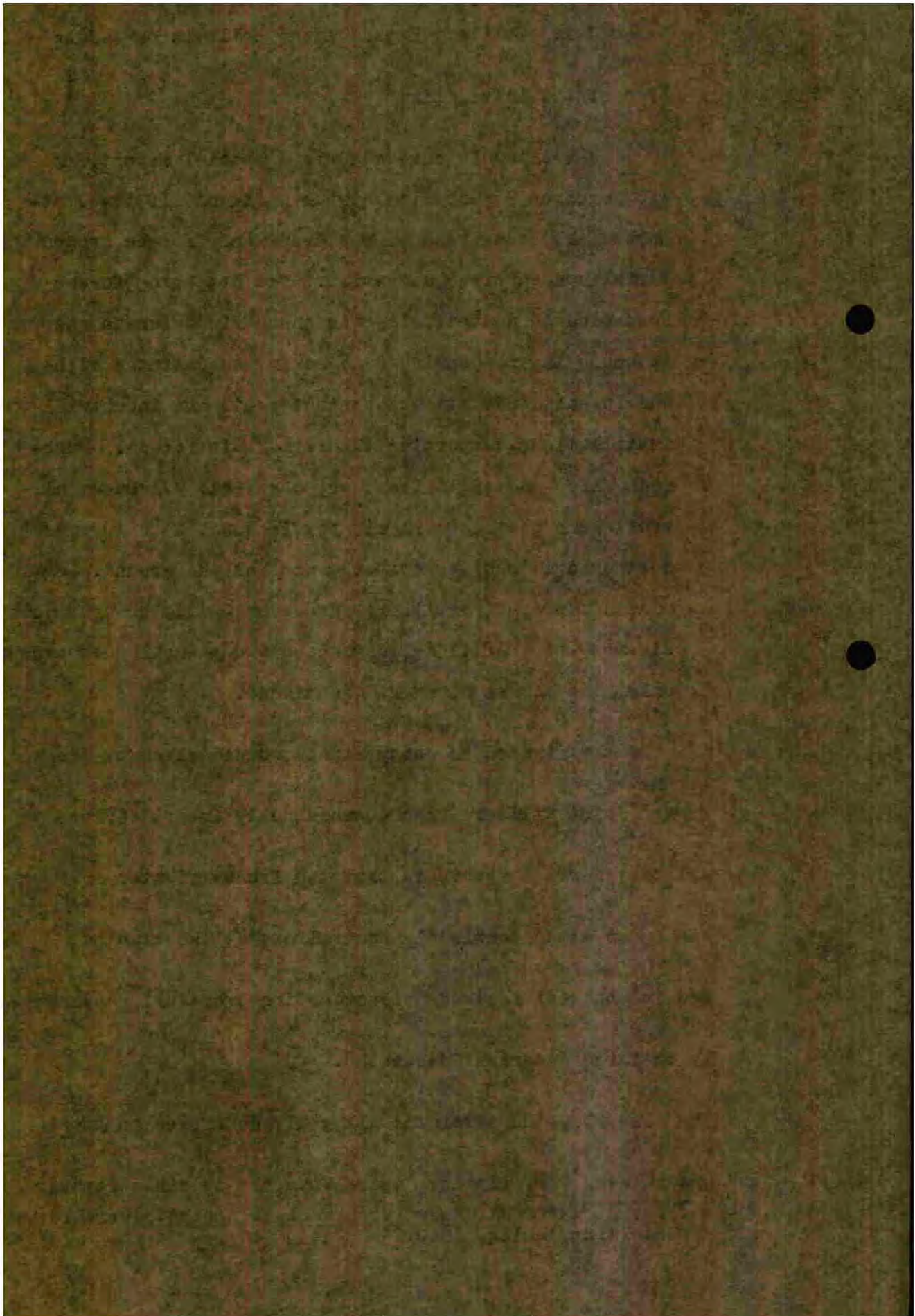
As previously announced in a special report, the Air Force on 3 June with strong units of all types attacked the base areas of the French air forces around Paris in a surprise operation. The attacking forces succeeded in neutralizing the enemy air defenses and in achieving resounding success in concentrated high- and low-altitude attacks against ports and industrial installations supporting the French air forces. Numerous fires and explosions were observed. 75 enemy aircraft were shot down in air battle and 300 to 400 were destroyed in hangars and otherwise on the ground. German antiaircraft artillery forces on 3 June brought down 21 enemy aircraft. Against these exceptional successes only nine German aircraft are missed.

If the figures on enemy planes downed given by the German Joint Military High Command Bulletin are correct all they serve to prove is that the French fighter arm was by no means completely neutralized at the time but had in contrast resumed defense action over Paris apparently in large numerical strengths.

The "300-400 aircraft" allegedly destroyed on the ground mean very little. Apart from the operable fighter

<sup>36</sup> Dr. E. Murawski: "Der Durchbruch in Westen," Gerard Stalling Verlag, 1940.





24 fighter aircraft, plus civilian planes of all types, stationed on the numerous airfields in the general area of Paris, there must have been also large numbers of inoperable front line aircraft as well, possibly, as dummies.

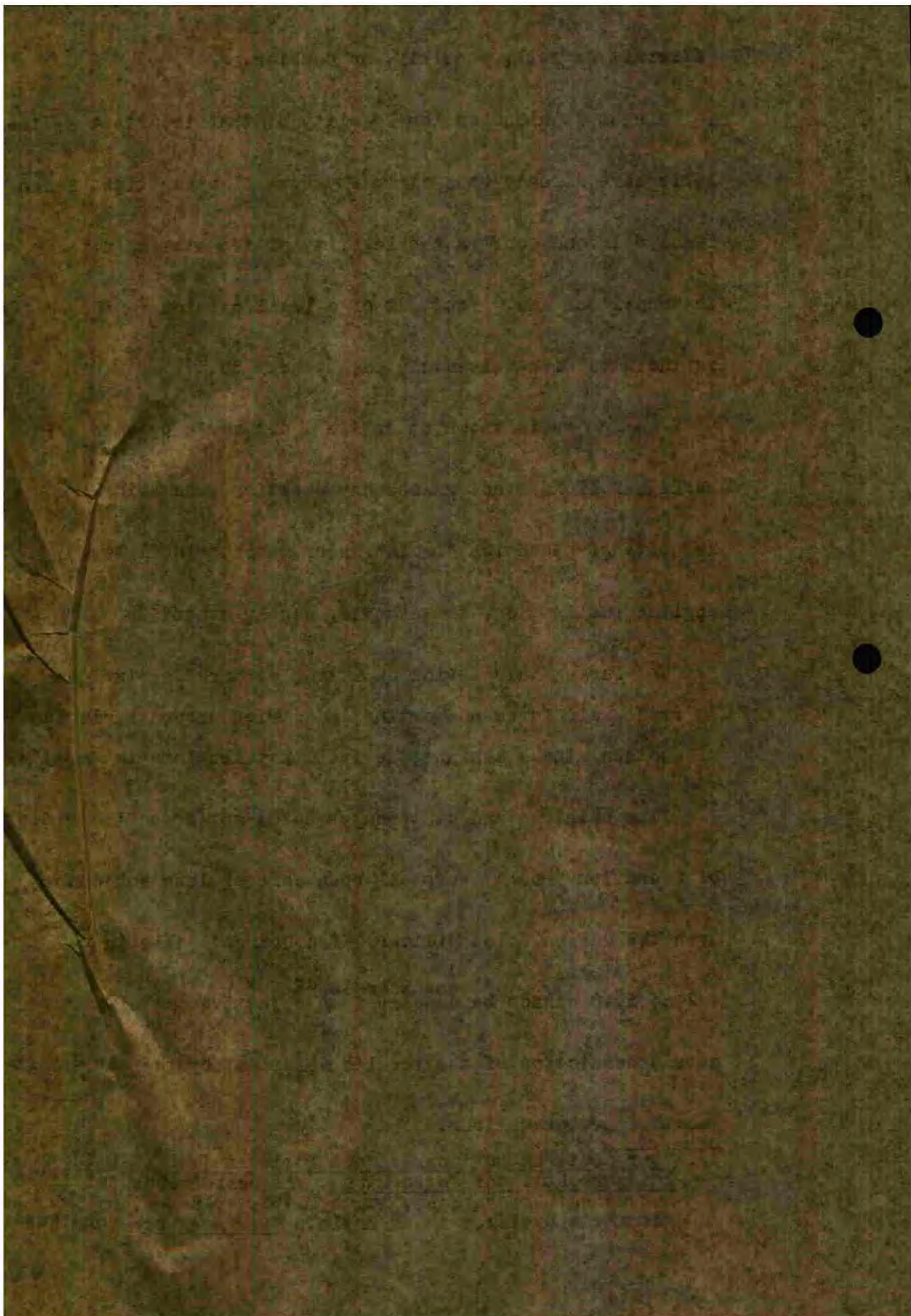
Legal opinions on the legality of the air attack against Paris have already been stated by German authorities. These legal opinions confirm the legality of the attack in terms of International Law. The text of a legal opinion on the matter is included with this study as Appendix 30.<sup>37</sup>

As far as is known at writing, Germany's opponents in World War II have not raised any question concerning the legality of Operation "Paula" under International Law. An English publication, for example, merely stated<sup>38</sup>

During this period an attack occurred against the French air force supporting industries around Paris, and another attack against the fuel installations in Marseilles.

The opinions and statements quoted so far on the subject of Operation "Paula" have all been more or less subjective. Even the German Joint Military High Command Bulletin of 4 June 1940 cannot be <sup>accepted as an</sup> described as objective and dispassionate presentation of the results achieved by the air attack and their repercussions.

37. "Der deutsche Luftangriff auf Paris im Juni 1940 in kriegsrechtlicher Betrachtung," in Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau, 6. Jahrgang, August 1956, Volume 8, by Dr. Eberhardt Spetzler in an article "Der Weg zur--Continued



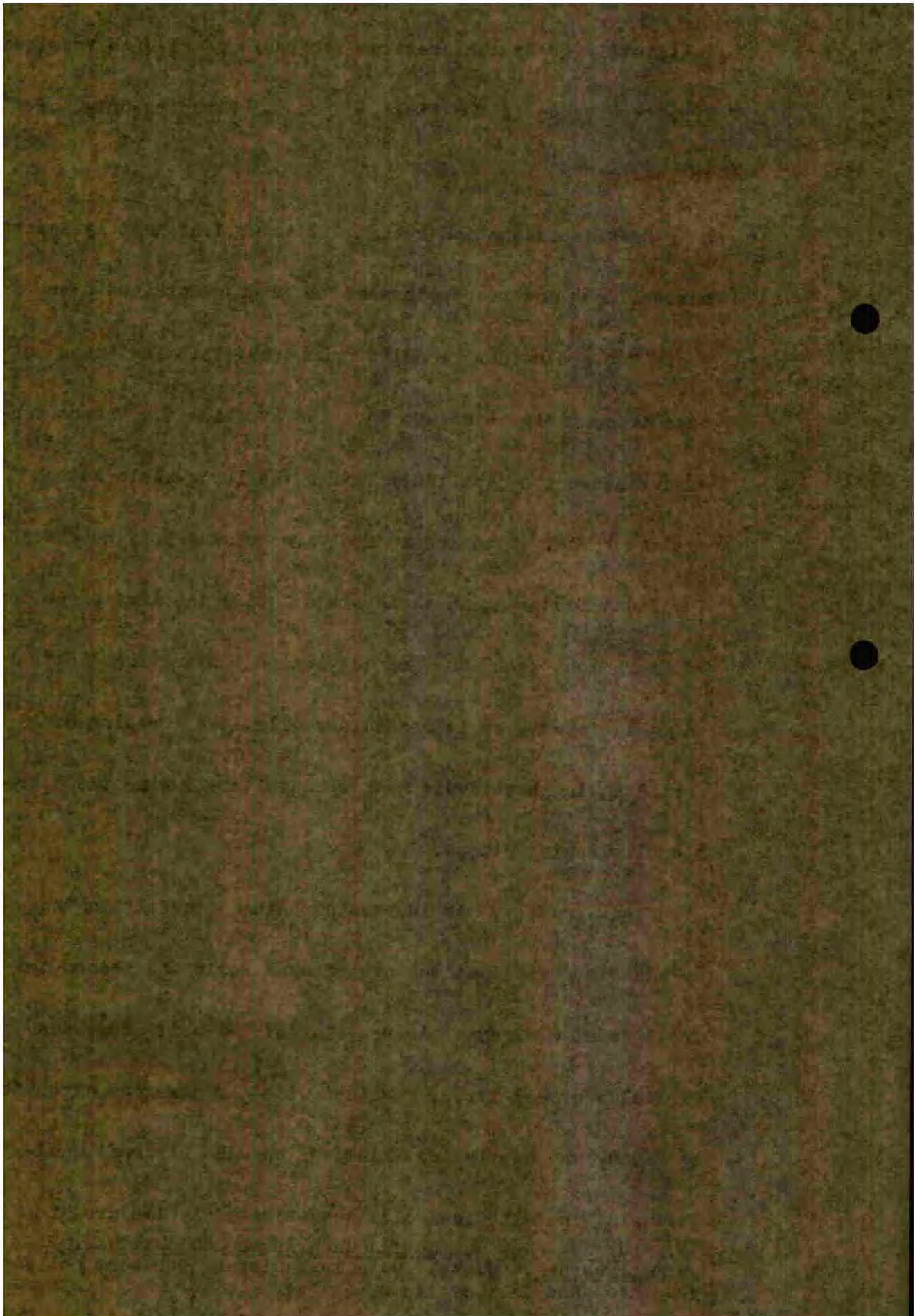
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The most reliable sources available on the subject seem to be the situation reports issued by the Intelligence Division, HQ, CINC, Air Force, at the time, which were compiled immediately after the event on the basis of reports received from the troops in the field. These situation reports now follow.

From the situation reports it is evident that systematic surveillance and reconnaissance had been maintained over Paris for a considerable time. However, this fact does not make it possible to deduce the time at which the German Command reached its decision to stage the large-scale attack against Paris, since the general area of the city became an important factor at an early stage during the Army execution of Operation "Gelb" and for the imminent Operation "Rot" and this importance increased steadily, the "Problem of Paris" having been dealt with exhaustively during the operational planning stages.

Concurrently, the impression gained steadily in the German Air Force that the area around Paris had become the focal point of French air resistance. With its numerous airfields of all types, combined with the numerous aircraft servicing and supply installations and the aircraft manufacturing installations also concentrated in the area, it

38. Luftschlacht um England in Kriegsgeschichtlicher Betrachtung, p. 451. Copy in Karlsruhe Document Collection.  
39. Rise and Fall of the German Air Force.



25 could have turned into a sort of National Redoubt for the French conduct of air warfare.

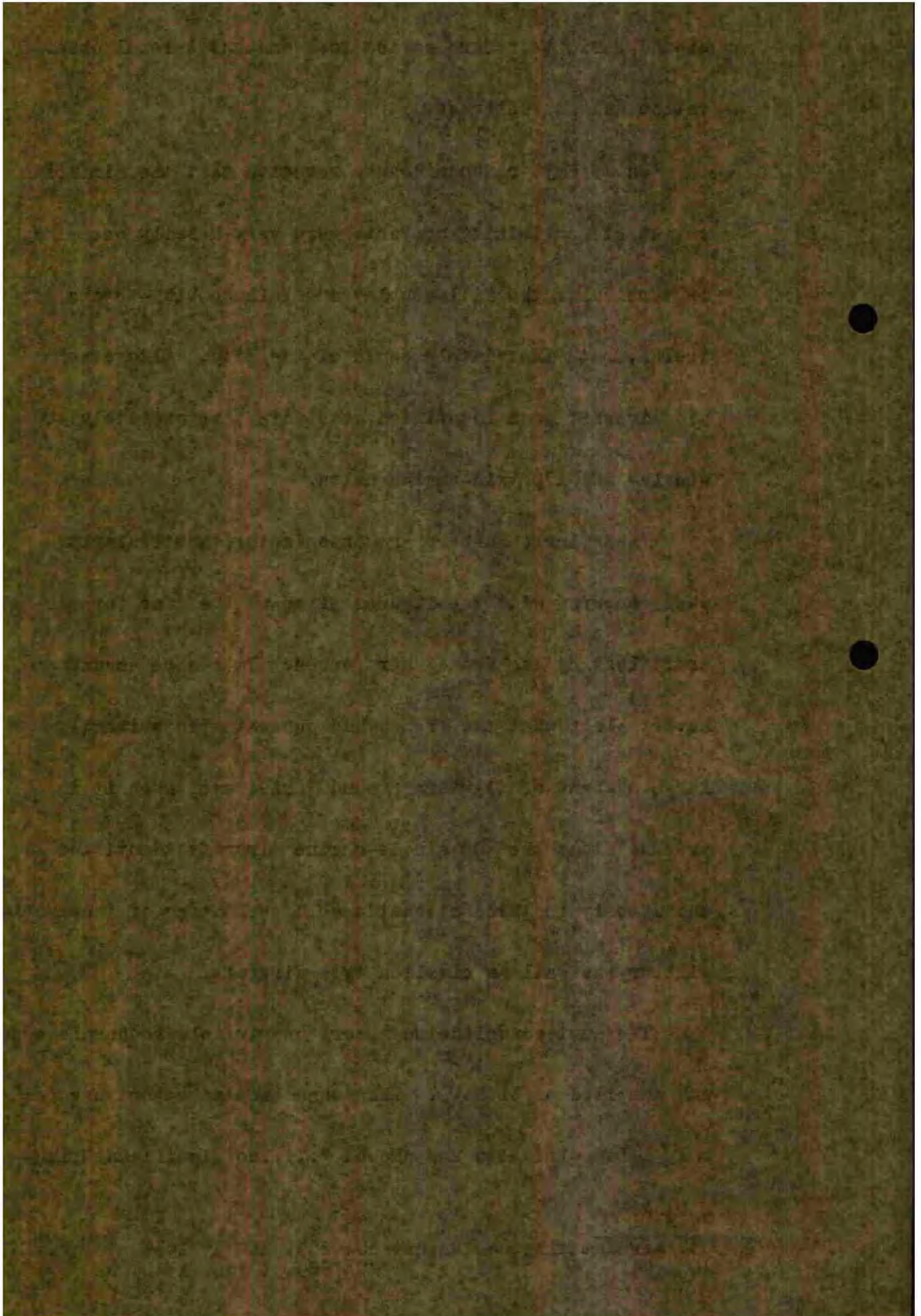
For operational reasons alone, developments in and around Paris therefore called for constant careful observation and surveillance.

26 On 25 May<sup>39</sup> reconnaissance revealed that the airfields in the close vicinity of Paris were very heavily occupied, in particular the Villacoublay and Villacoublay-Movane airfields, both immediately south of the city. Altogether 570 aircraft were identified, including approximately 400 single- and 170 twin-engine units.

These large numbers are astonishing, particularly when compared with the figures given at the time for aircraft lost by the French air forces. It can be assumed nevertheless that the French had concentrated primarily large numbers of fighters around Paris, even when it is presumed that the 400 single-engine aircraft identified undoubtedly included a considerable percentage of inoperable military as well as civilian type aircraft.

The next consolidated report on airfield reconnaissance was compiled on 31 May<sup>40</sup>. This consolidated report covered only a few airfields and showed ".....no significant findings."

<sup>39</sup> Air Intelligence Report No. 263, 26 May 1940  
<sup>40</sup> " " " " " 269, 1 June 1940.



27

On 1 June 1940<sup>41</sup> main emphasis in German airfield reconnaissance activities was on the general area of Paris. Visual observations showed particularly heavy concentrations at the Vélizy-Villacoublay airfield (1 000 single- and 26 twin-engine aircraft) and Vélizy-Villacoublay (41 single-engine aircraft) and Issy-Les-Moulineux airfield (92 twin-engine aircraft). This total was smaller than that of 25 May. However, it is not safe to assume that the number of aircraft had actually decreased, since visual observations, as experience shows, are not as reliable as photo reconnaissance.

27

Apparently, airfield reconnaissance over the Paris area was not stepped up on 2 June 1940, the day preceding the execution of Operation "Paula."<sup>42</sup> A report states "Random reconnaissance against airfields in northern and southern France showed no significant change in the distribution of aircraft." Actually, reconnaissance was flown over only a few airfields on the outer perimeter of the Paris area (such as the airfields at Chartres) and produced no important information.

Operation "Paula" was staged in the afternoon on 3

June 1940.<sup>43</sup>

41. Air Intelligence Report No. 270, 2 June 1940.

42. " " " " 271, 3 June 1940.

43. " " " " 272, 4 June 1940.





The actual attack was preceded in the forenoon by reconnaissance over the airfields, air parks, and aircraft industrial installations in the general area of Paris. The results showed a total of 260 aircraft in the area.

The situation report issued by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force covering the afternoon attack is quoted verbatim as follows:

In the afternoon the bulk of all bomber and fighter units were committed in a concentrated attack against the installations of the French air forces in and around Paris.

Soundly coordinated high- and low-altitude bombing action with the action by single- and twin-engine fighter escorts and proper exploitation of the advantage of surprise secured a resounding success at an exceptionally small cost in own losses.

The individual attacks were directed at sixteen airfields (six of the air bases), 3 air ordnance offices, and a number of factories of the air armament industries.

Well placed hits were observed with very effective fire and explosive results. In some cases the attacked targets ~~XXXXXXXX~~ were still burning on the following morning. It can be assumed with certainty that very large numbers of aircraft were destroyed on runways and in sheds.

According to reports not yet confirmed, the French Air Ministry, situated at the Issy-Les-Moulineaux air port, was hit.

Both fighter and antiaircraft defense were encountered in only remarkably small strength.



28

In some cases the units carrying out low-altitude attacks came into the target area too low for the heavy antiaircraft batteries. In many cases the enemy fighters showed a lack of aggressiveness.

One point which must be emphasized is that the French at Chartres committed obsolete fighter types (biplane and low-wing planes with fixed undercarriages).

On the whole the results achieved in the attack represent another considerable weakening of the striking power of the French air forces.

29

According to the supplements to the above situation report by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force the individual strikes flown as part of the overall attack were as follows:

Second Air Fleet Units

Targets attacked

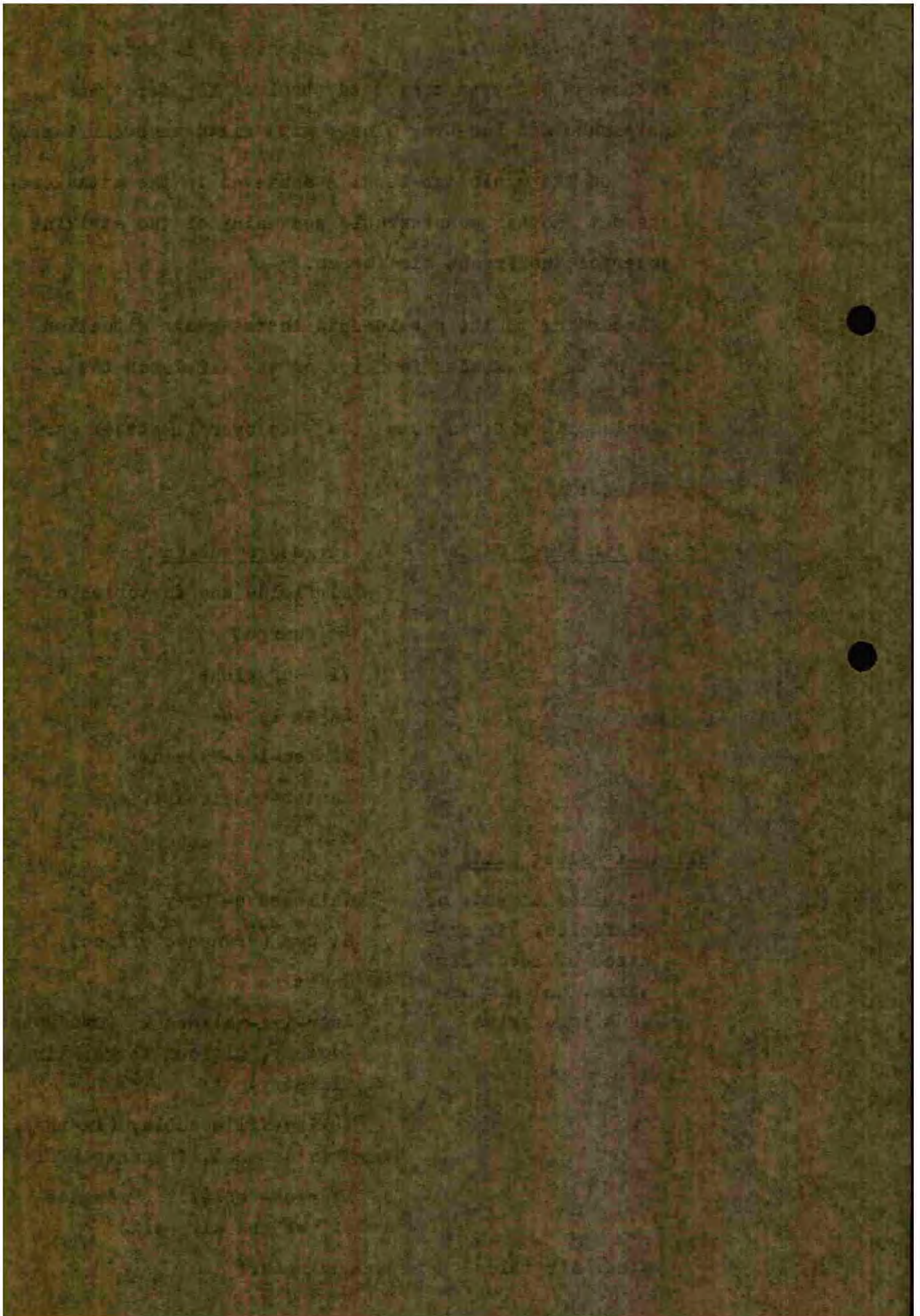
Airfields and factories at  
 Le Bourget  
 Vie sur Aisne  
 Lagny le Sec  
 Meulan-les-Mureaux  
 Mantec-Cassivcourt

Third Air Fleet Units

Combined targets of  
 airfields, air ord-  
 nance offices, air  
 parks, and air ar-  
 ment industries

Villeneuve- Orly  
 St Cyr (Ordnance Office)  
 Chartres " "  
 Issy-les-Molineaux (Caudron  
 Factory, Citroen Works; Air  
 Ministry)  
 Vélizy-Villacoublay (factory,  
 Main Arsenal, Ordnance Office)  
 Etampes-Mondésir (Ordnance  
 Office and Air Park)  
 Guyancourt

Other Airfields



Third Air Fleet Targets--Continued

29

Other Airfields--Continued

Mangis-Bailly-Carries  
 Le Ferté-Gaucher  
 Villaroche  
 Corbeil-Courcouronnes  
 Melun.

Without a map showing the French air forces ground organization in the Paris region it is not possible to present a graphic picture of the attacks. It is also not possible to reconstruct the boundaries delimiting the attack zones of the two German air fleets. Finally, the situation reports alone are insufficient evidence for an appraisal of the actual results achieved in the attack.

One point which appears significant, however, is that air reconnaissance on the following day, 4 June 1940,<sup>44</sup> showed that there were still large numbers of aircraft, particularly fighters, on the airfields in the Paris region. This fact is admitted in the next situation report by the Commander in Chief of the Air Force,<sup>45</sup> as follows

As on the previous day, the airfields around Paris, as well as the air bases southwest and south of the city were occupied by large numbers of aircraft.

The above statement was made on 5 June 1940. On the same day the German Army commenced its southward drive on the right flank. Operation "Rot" had commenced.

44. Air Intelligence Report No. 273, 5 June 1940.

45. " " " " 274, 6 June 1940.



31

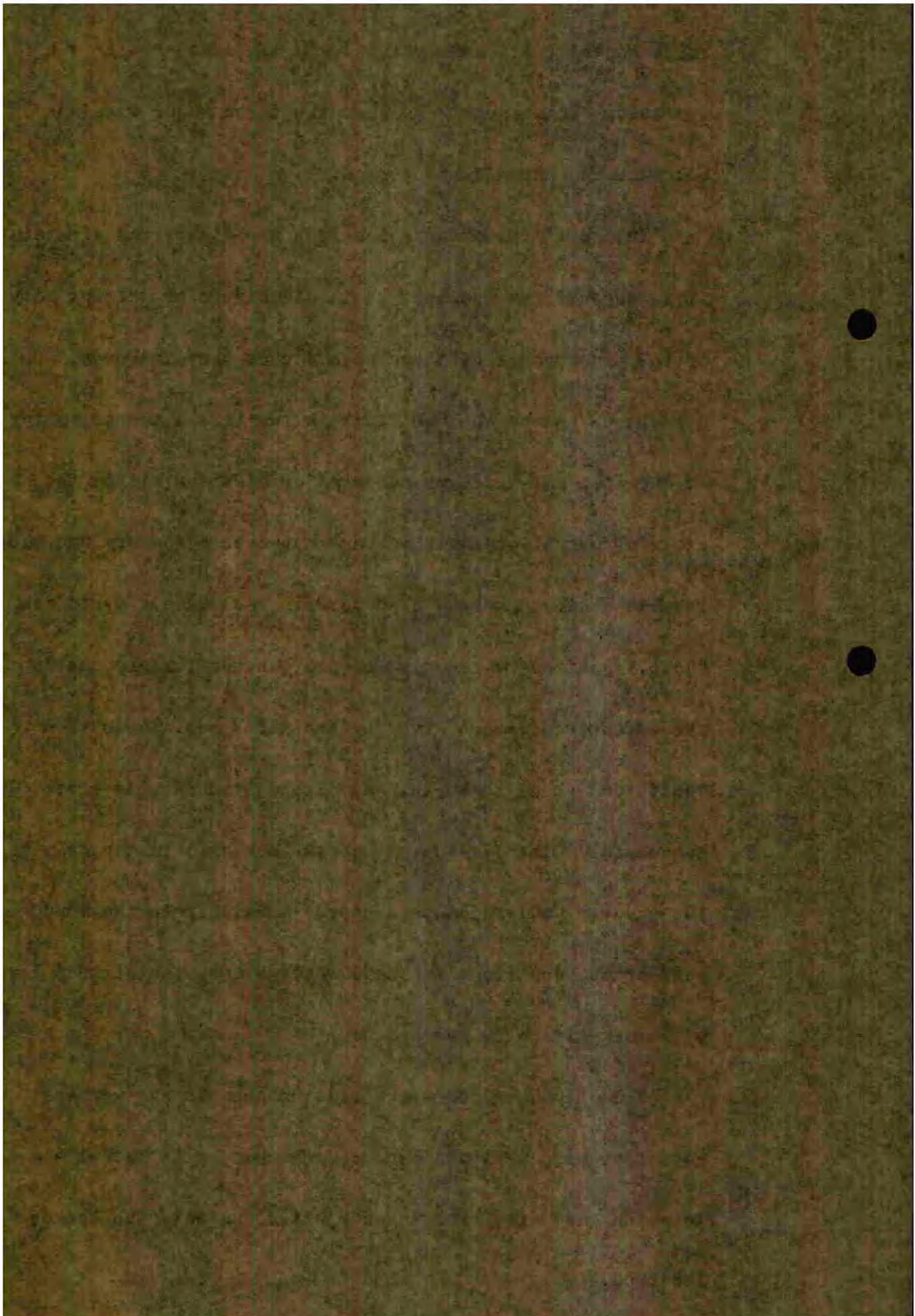
4. Dissipation of Effort and Excessive Demands on the German Air Force. Dunkirk, Marseilles, and Paris, these were the three large-scale missions assigned to the Air Force in the brief interval between Operation "Gelb" and Operation "Rot," and these were the three major missions accomplished during that period.

In a critical examination from the historical viewpoint it is essential to comment on the soundness or the futility of the concurrence of these missions of the Air Force.

There can be no doubt that in the circumstances ruling at the time all three of these major missions within the scope of operational air warfare appeared necessary and the results achieved seemed a success in each case. Operation "Gelb," just over, had also been a success largely due to the effective support given by the Air Force. Operation "Rot," just about to begin, was also destined to prove successful. The development of the campaign in the West and the success achieved thus appeared to vindicate the soundness of the decisions and measures taken by the highest level of German Air Force command.

The only question which remains open is whether the actual results achieved were so commensurate with the strain to which the Air Force was subjected and with the losses incurred.

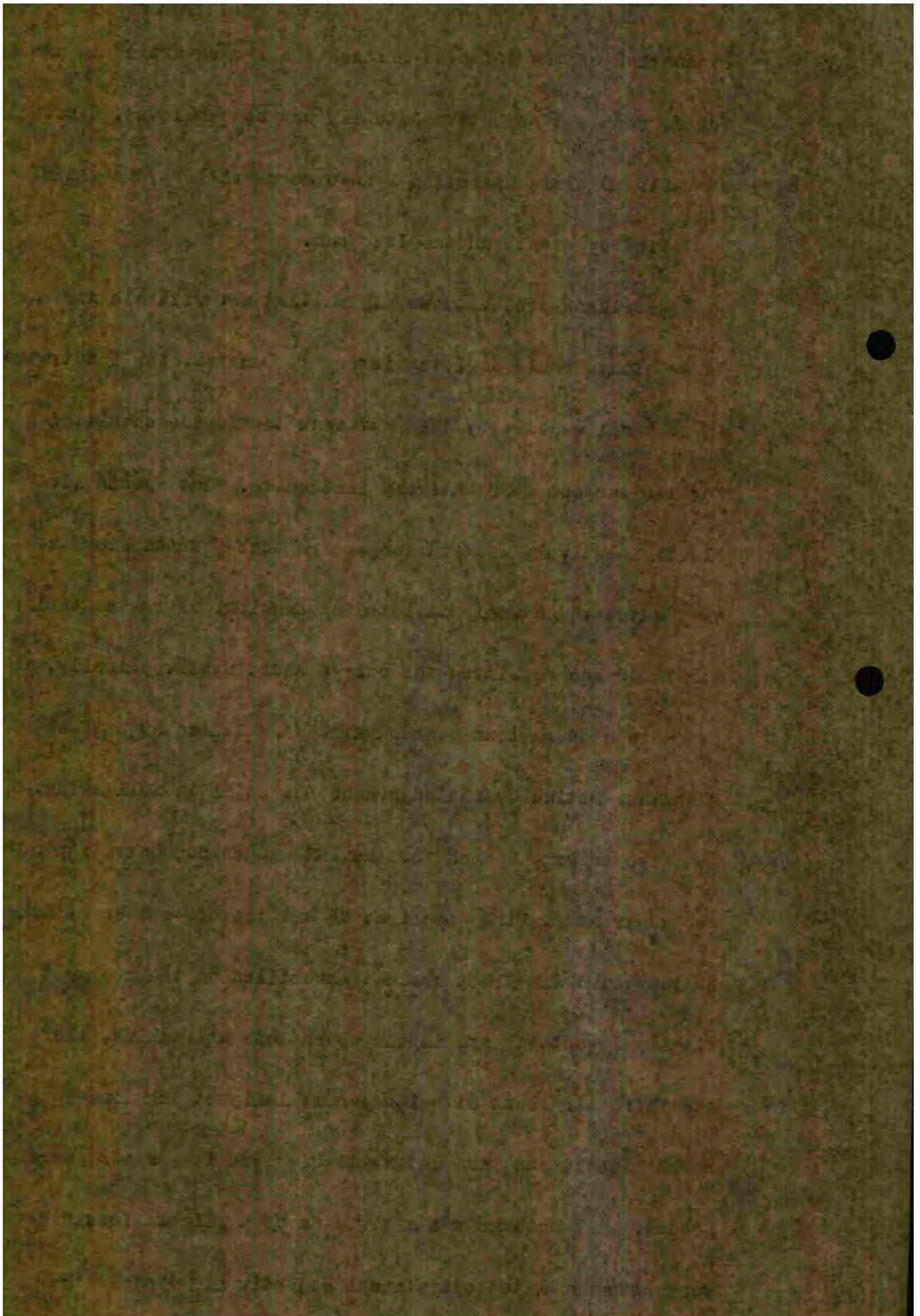




31 First of all there was the Dunkirk operation. Here,  
the tactical and strategic objective of the air mission was  
to destroy the British Expeditionary Corps and prevent the  
32 evacuation of the defeated British and French armies in the  
North, and that objective actually was not achieved. Churchill  
was able to claim Operation Dynamo as a "victory," a claim  
justified by events in the long run.

Goering's presumptuous claims that he, with his Air  
Forces alone, could achieve victory at Dunkirk, was frustrated  
in no small measure by the fact that the forces committed  
for the purpose were entirely inadequate. The Second Air  
Fleet, relatively weak in long-range bomber units from the  
very outset, was sadly depleted at Dunkirk, where the entire  
Air Force was committed for only a short spell. Finally,  
the German operations over Dunkirk were halted at a time  
when the British Operation Dynamo was still in full swing.

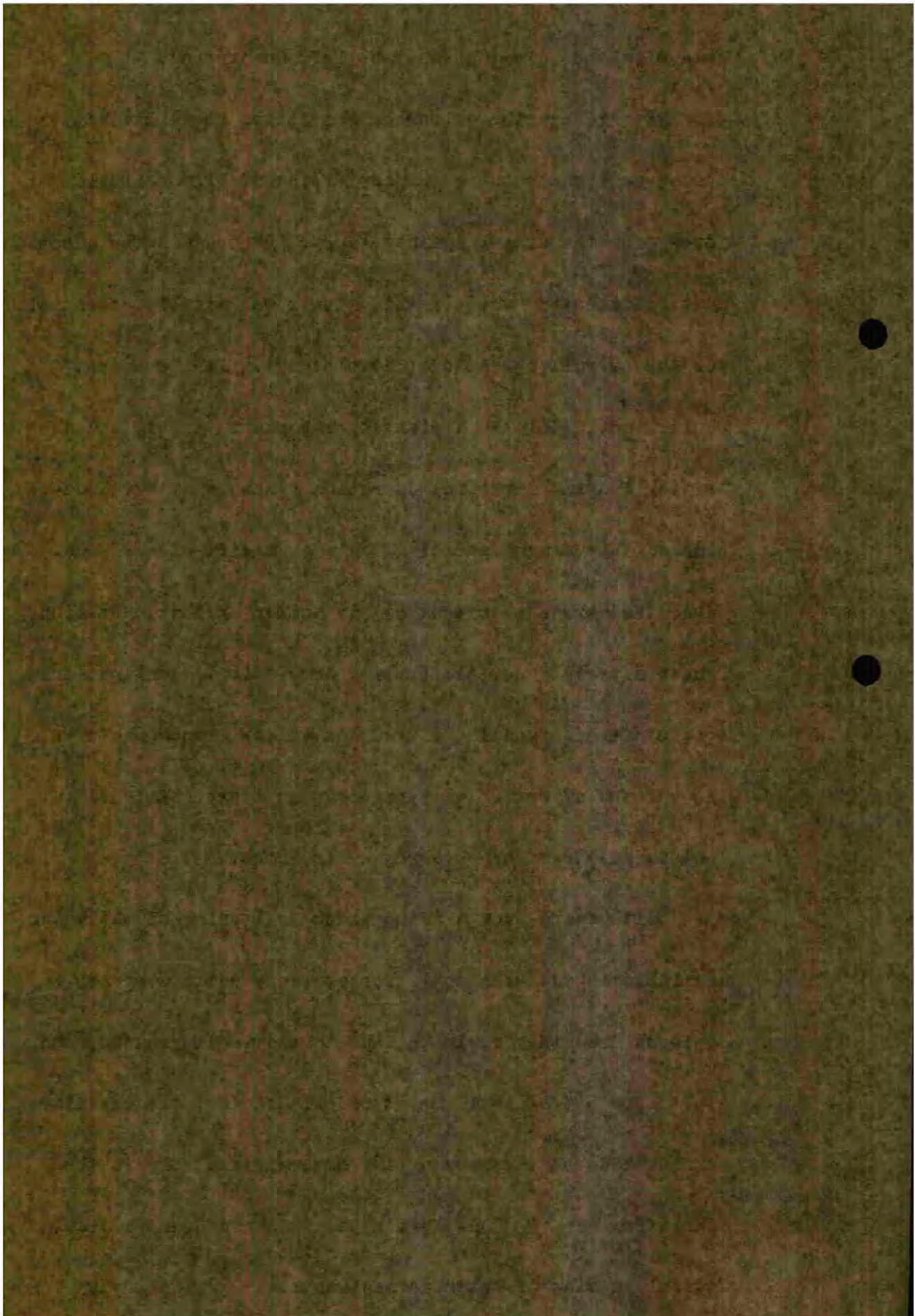
The primary reason for the inadequate concentration of  
air power at Dunkirk was first of all the off-center attack  
by the Third Air Fleet against Marseilles on the two most  
vital days in the operations at Dunkirk, where  
the Third Air Fleet with its particularly strong long-range  
bomber force was thus not available when it was most sorely  
needed. The outcome was a division of available forces be-  
tween two unrelated operational objectives. Whether the



32 operation against Marseilles was essential at that particular moment and whether the results achieved in the attack had any impact whatever on the then imminent Operation "Rot," both of these questions must be left unanswered.

The dissipation of forces criticized above led with abrupt suddenness to the concentration of all available forces for the attack against Paris. Here again the question must remain open whether this attack was vitally essential for the overall operational development. At the moment Dunkirk was still the decisively important target, and the British command directing Operation Dynamo must have considered the German Operation Paula as a gift of the Gods. Since the German side took no air action against Operation Dynamo after 2 June, the British were able to continue and complete that operation without any interference whatever. The success of Operation Dynamo was no longer hampered but instead supported by the German Air Force.

Quite apart from this complete scattering of the power available in the German Air Force, whose units were now deployed from the Arctic regions to the Mediterranean, and apart from operational impact of this factor, the excessive demands made on the German Air Force particularly in the first few days of June 1940 appear to have been particularly fateful in view of later developments.



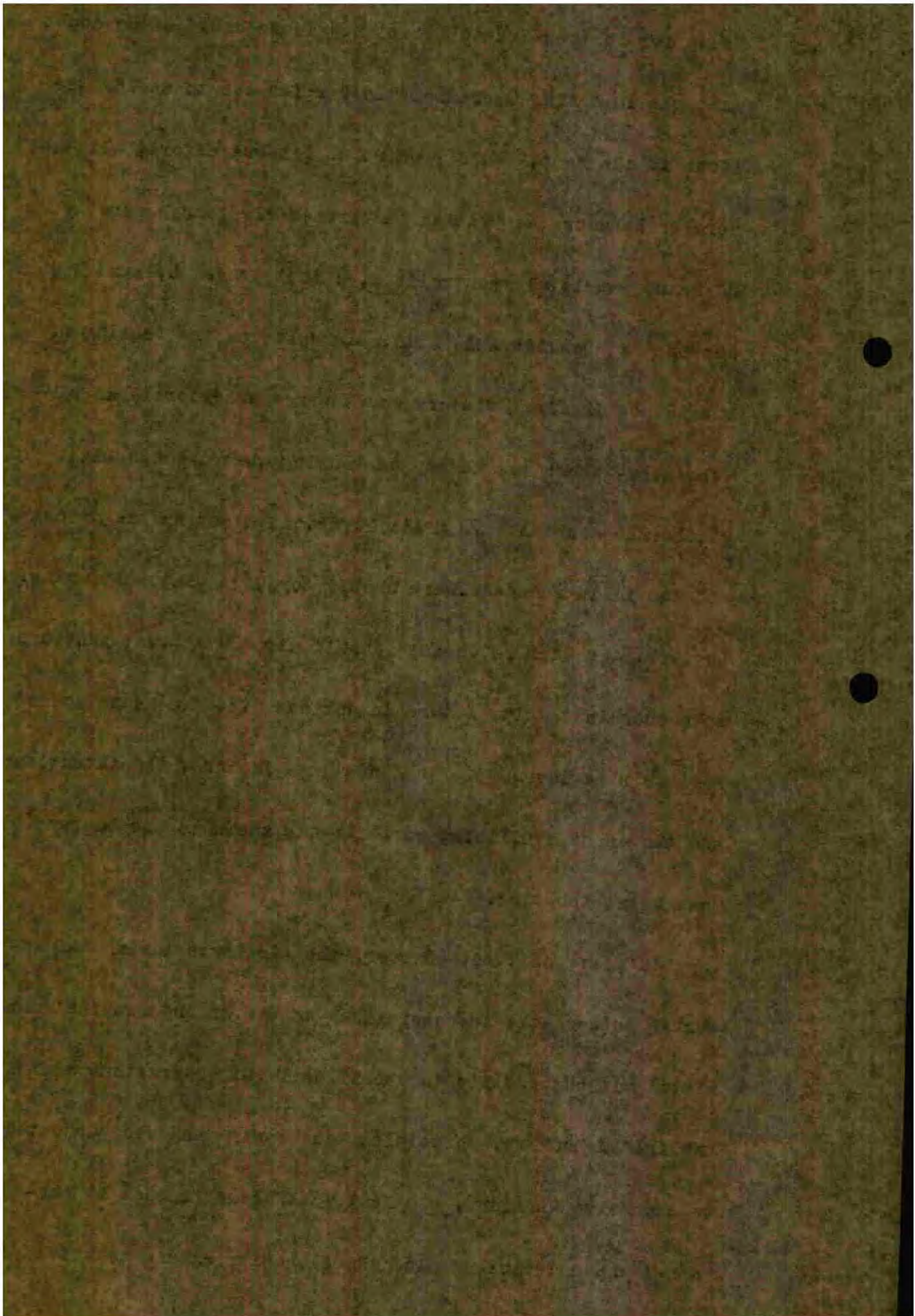
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37

Operation "Gelb," just completed, had taken its toll of the operable forces of the German Air Force. Personnel and materiel were suffering from the strain. Both required a pause for rest and rehabilitation. There could be no doubt that the impending Operation "Rot," which was to decide the issue in the West, would require an all-out effort, all the more so because the British and French air forces were by no means completely neutralized, a fact proved by what had happened at Dunkirk and Paris. In spite of the feeling of confidence in final victory and assured superiority in performance, there was no way of knowing what demands might yet be made on the German Air Force. At least the troops and the field commands were unable to judge what was coming. However, the Supreme Command should already at that juncture have coordinated its future intentions with the means needed for their achievement. Both of these factors, the intentions and the means available, were already known to the Supreme Command at the time.

34

In spite of this, however, the Air Force during the interval between the two operations on the ground remained committed without respite in specifically air operations against ~~UNKIRK~~ Dunkirk, Marseilles, and Paris and was subjected to excessive strains. Not only the actual losses in personnel and materiel but also the excessive strain to which



34 both personnel and material had been subjected almost without a break prior to the commencement of Operation "Rot" for almost four weeks necessarily produced the result that at the end of the overall campaign in the West the German Air Force was over exhausted, tired out, and "burnt out." With the forces available it had proved simply impossible to perform all assigned missions concurrently. What was lacking was a proper regard for the principles of power concentration.

Whether the Commander in Chief of the Air Force is to be blamed for this scattering and over strain of the Air Force; whether Hitler personally or the Joint Military High Command made practically impossible demands on the Air Force these are questions for which no answer can be found on the basis of source material presently available. What remains  
35 an indisputable fact is that German air power was scattered, that the demands made on the German Air Force were excessive. That these two factors did not make themselves felt in the execution of Operation "Rot" was due to the unexpected speed and smoothness with which the southward offensive progressed and to the inferiority of the French air forces, which were left to their own devices.

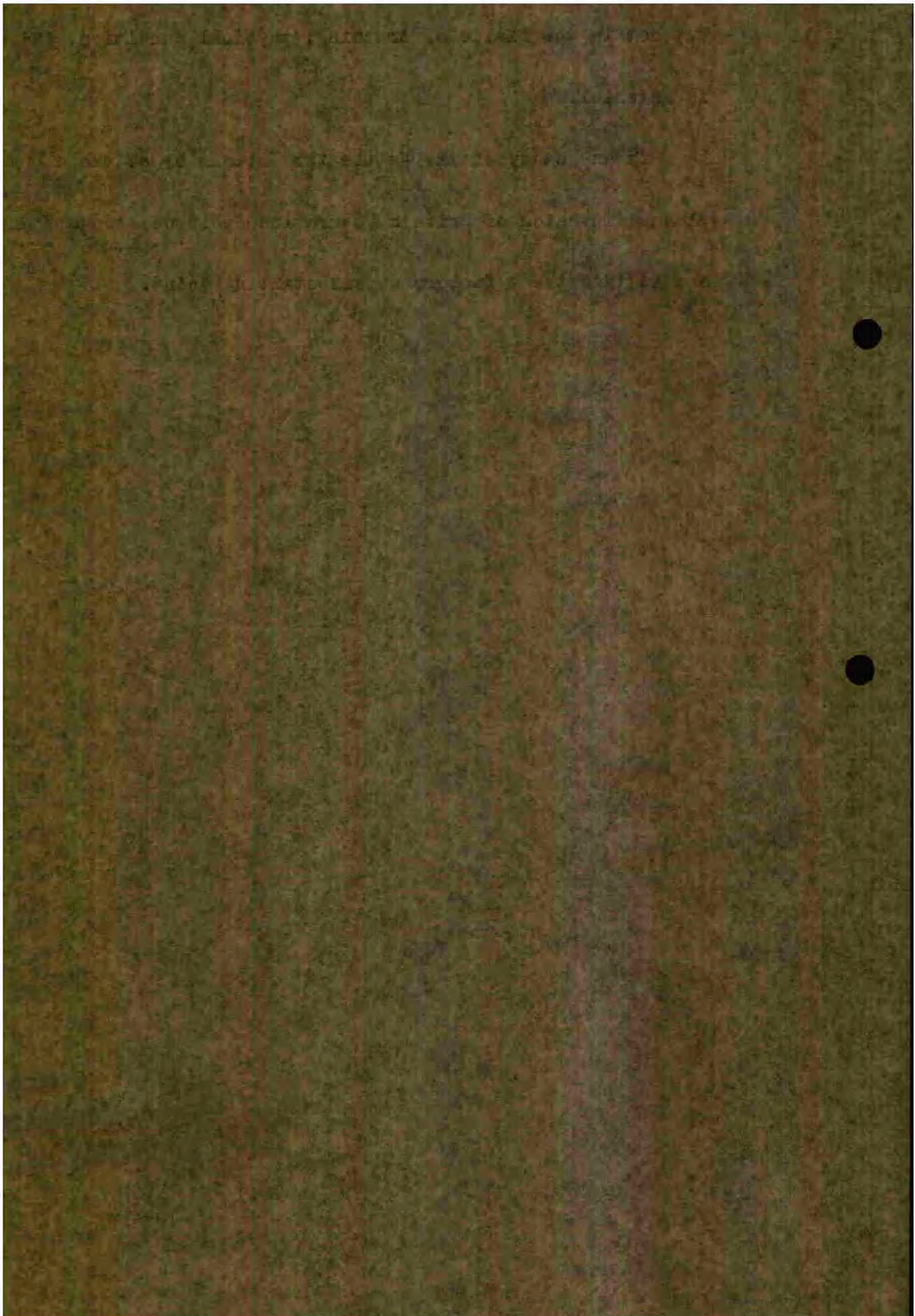
The consequences were to become evident later. The





35 Battle for Britain was waged by a German Air Force which, in the few weeks which had passed since conclusion of Operation "Rot," had recovered so far as morale was concerned, but not in the fields of training, physical condition, and in materiel.

In any study of the Battle for Britain or of the planned invasion of Britain (Operation Seelowe) the student should take these factors as his starting point.

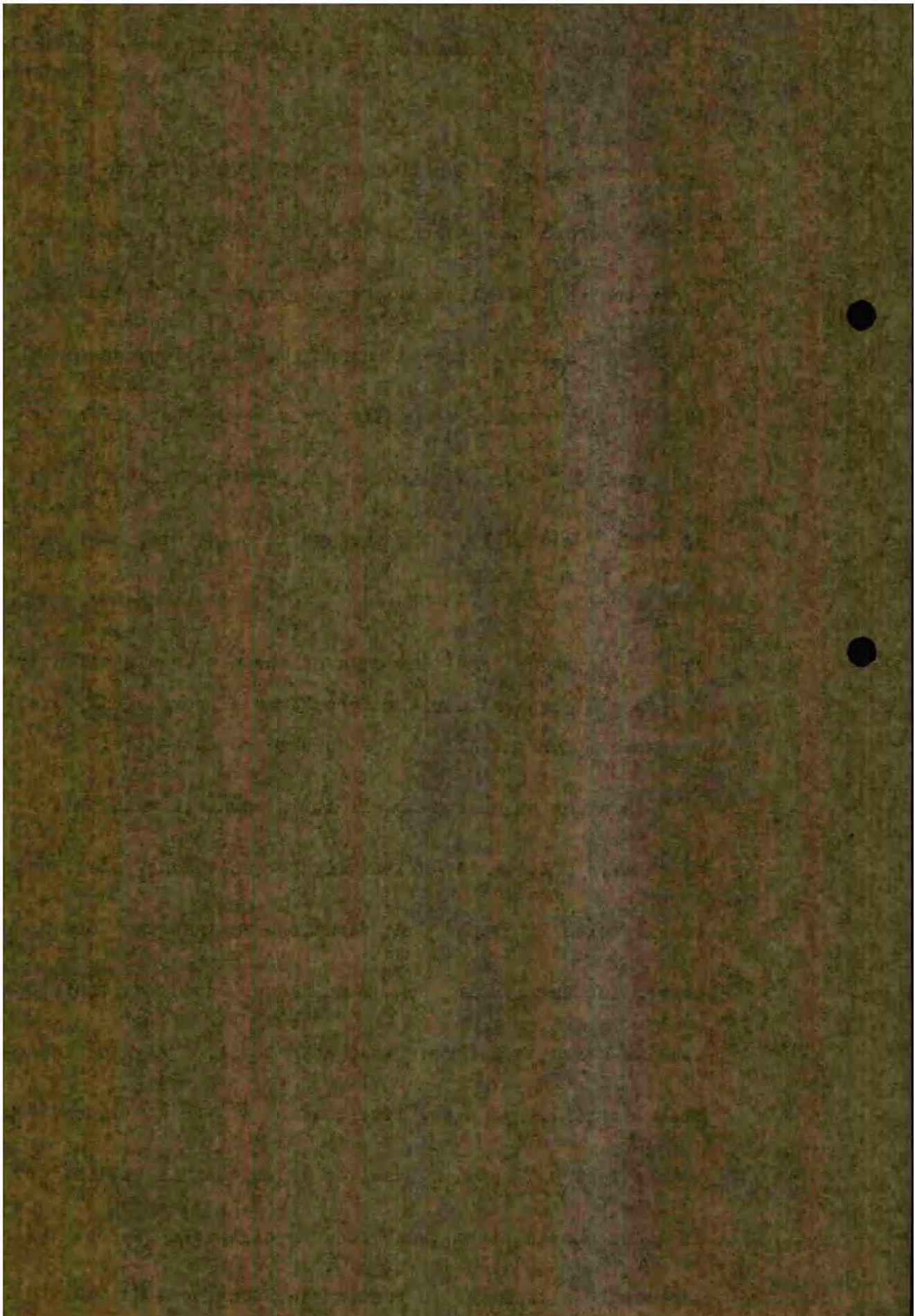


5. Air Strength Ratios. It is necessary to state as a first fact that it is hardly possible to develop a reliable picture of the strength ratio in air power between Germany on the one hand and the Western Allies on the other in early June 1940.

Practically all British air units had left the Continent of Europe and returned to bases on the British Isles. According to an English source only very weak British air units were still stationed in France,<sup>46</sup> where they were still in action. These were considered less as a decisively important combat factor than as a token force to allay the fears of their French ally. One passage in the quoted English source reads

On these first few days of the new German offensive (from 5 June on) our air forces could provide only small support for the Allied forces engaged in battle.

This can be understood if it is borne in mind that there were only three British fighter squadrons, stationed on airfields in France for operations against the German bomber forces in the area around Rouen, and that their effective strength had decreased to a total of eighteen operable aircraft. "And so," the British writer continues, "our weak forces exhausted themselves in an unequal battle." It is to be assumed that these reduced strengths represented the total British air support on the Continent at the t'



For the rest the British concentrated their efforts on the build up and training of their home air defense forces, the strength and effectiveness of which had been felt unpleasantly by the German Air Force for the first time in the struggle in the air over Dunkirk.

At the same time the British operational air forces continued their nightly attacks against industrial centers within Germany, without any serious measures being taken by the German side to prevent the systematic execution of this type of "strategic air warfare."

The French air forces could only be considered at the time as badly decimated and demoralized. The closing chapter of Part Three of the present study gives numerical details on the losses inflicted on the French. On the other hand, however, events during the German execution of Operation "Paula" had once again produced proof that the air supremacy achieved by the German Air Force was not a permanent condition which could be maintained without difficulty; the French fighters had once again offered resistance, and continued resistance was to be expected.

According to the only German source available on the subject,<sup>47</sup> the French at the time had ".....only 400

46. Translated excerpts from "History of the Second World War," United Kingdom Series, "The War in France and in Flanders 1939-1940, Chapter XXI, p. 273, in Karlsruhe Document Collection.

47. Von Tiggelskirch, 1954 Edition, p. 35.



37

qualitatively inferior fighter and 70 bomber aircraft available at the time to pit against the German onslaught.<sup>48</sup>

According to the same source the daily increase from French output was twelve aircraft, to which can be added five aircraft delivered daily from the United States of America.<sup>49</sup>

The intake thus available was naturally infinitesimally small and not nearly enough to replace daily losses.

Figures are also available from the situation reports of the Intelligence Division, Commander in Chief of the German Air Force to serve as a check, but these also give no clear picture, except insofar as they represent the picture of the opposing air strengths as the German Air Command at the time saw it or desired to see it.

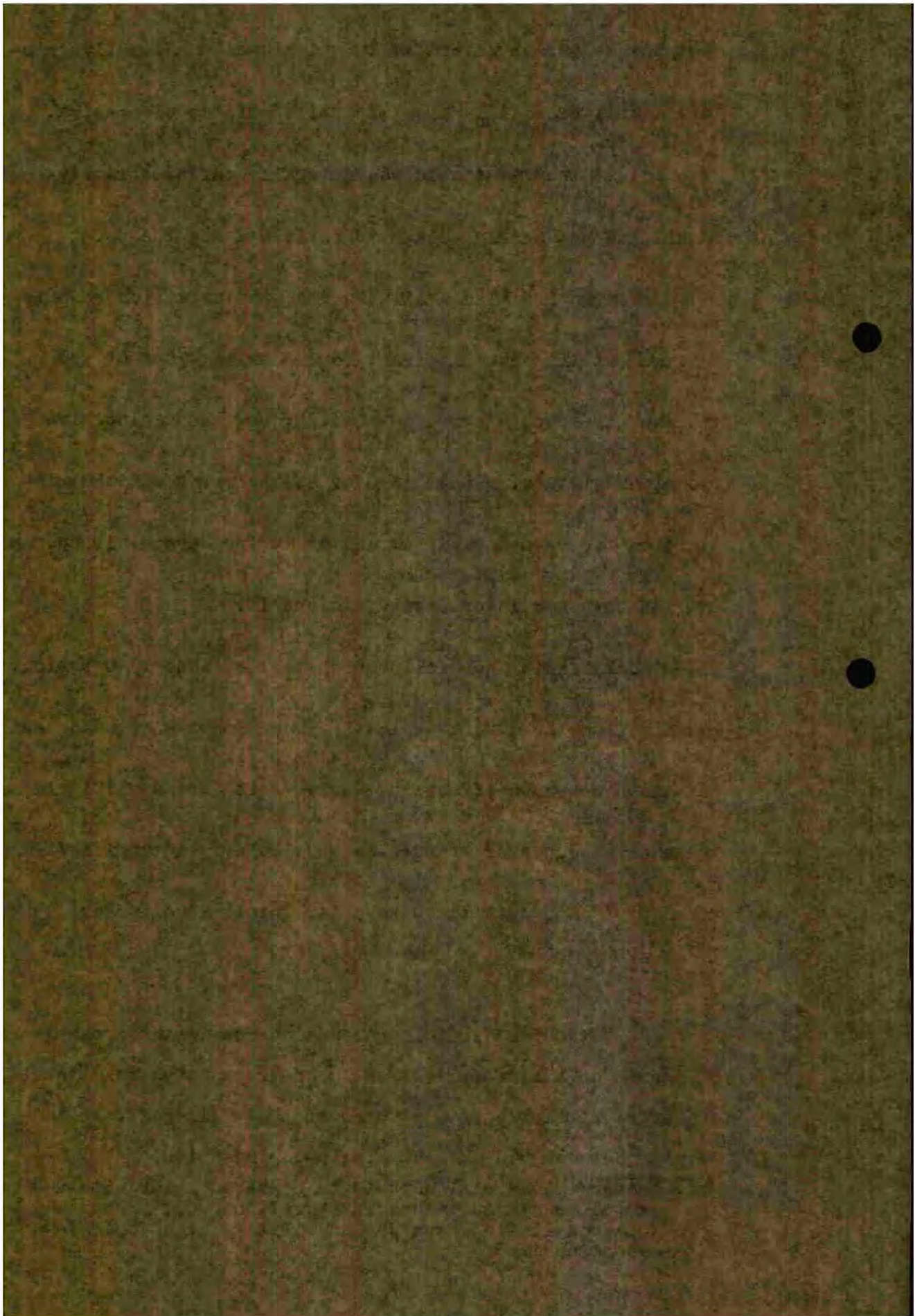
Four findings now follow from the 4-7 June 1940 period, namely from the days immediately preceding the commencement of the new German offensive, during which German airfield reconnaissance over France was particularly intensified.

On 4 June 1940 the German Air Intelligence Report reads<sup>50</sup>

Extensive airfield reconnaissance in the areas north of a line Epinal-Montlucon-Brest detected a total of 84 airfields with a total of 1,244 aircraft, including between 550 and 650 single-engine units.

48. These figures will have to be compared later with reported German successes in Operation "Rot." According to a compilation from German Military High Command--  
--Continued.





38

These figures are thus from reconnaissance covering the areas including northern France, Northwestern France (the Atlantic coastline), and central France (as far as south of the Loire River). The southwest Atlantic coastal area and southern France are thus not included.

Reconnaissance findings on 5 June 1940 were as follows:

Airfield reconnaissance in the areas Rouen-Caen-Rennes-Clermont/Ferrand-Lyon-Swiss border at Geneva-front lines registered 122 airfields, of which only 64 were detected in operation with a total of 1 362 aircraft (553 of them single-engine).

As on the previous day the airfields in the general area of Paris as well as the air force bases southwest and south of Paris had large number of aircraft.

In this case the reconnaissance area extended farther west, to the Atlantic coast, and farther south, to as far as Lyon, than on the previous day.

On 6 June 1940 the air intelligence report states<sup>52</sup>

Airfield reconnaissance in the areas north of a line Rochefort-Lyon registered a total of 131 airfields of which 78 were in operation with a total of 1 063 aircraft. No aircraft detected on 53 airfields.

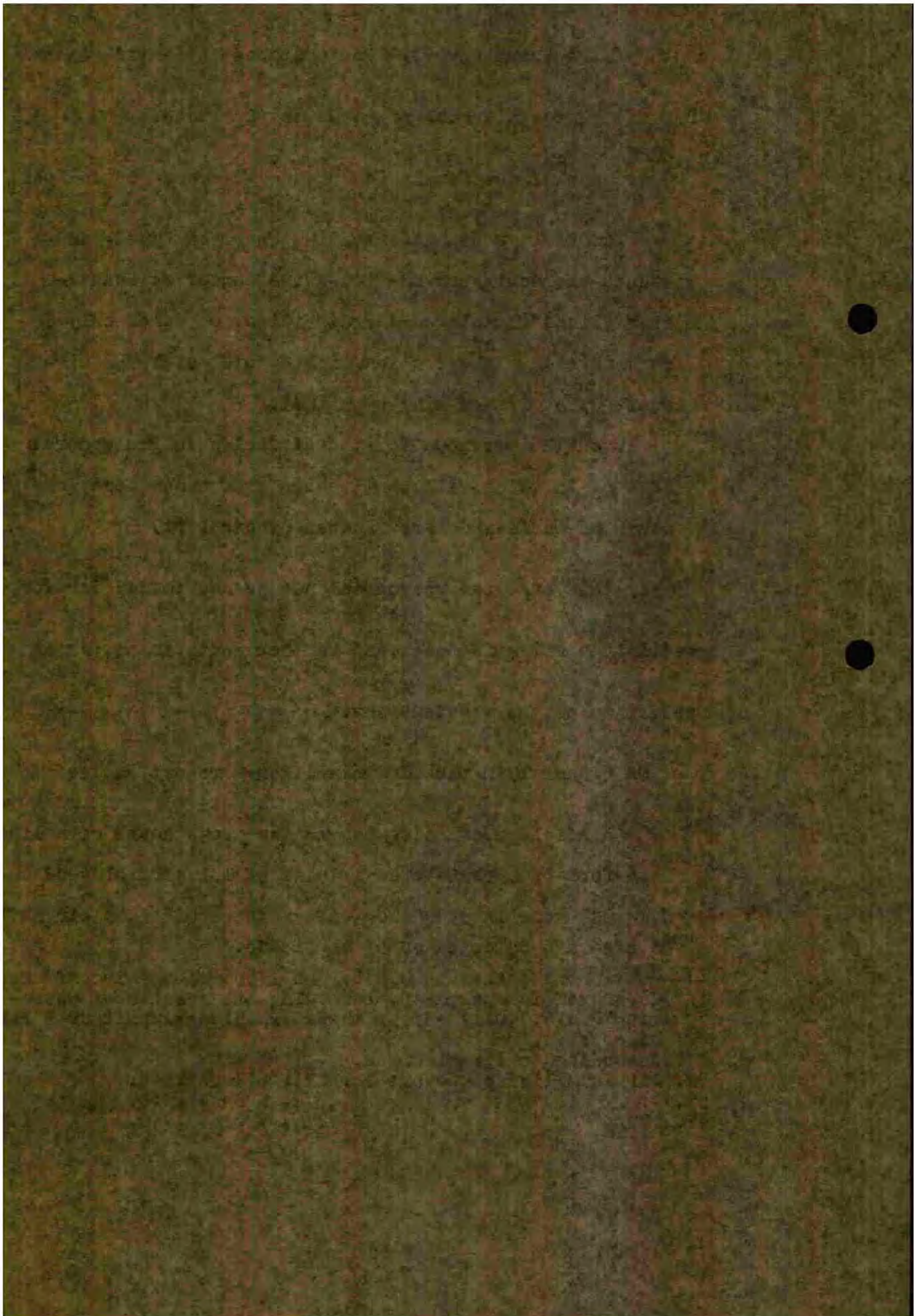
48--Continued: Bulletin a total of 1 336 enemy aircraft were destroyed in June 1940, including the results of Operation "Paula." Only one of these two diverging figures can be correct.

49. According to Fisselskirch.

50. Air Intelligence Report No. 273, 5 June 1940.

51. " " " " 274, 6 June 1940.

52. " " " " 275, 7 June 1940.



The 7 June 1940 report stated<sup>53</sup>

Of 80 airfields detected north of a line Poitiers-Nevers 57 reported in operation with a total of 1 044 aircraft.

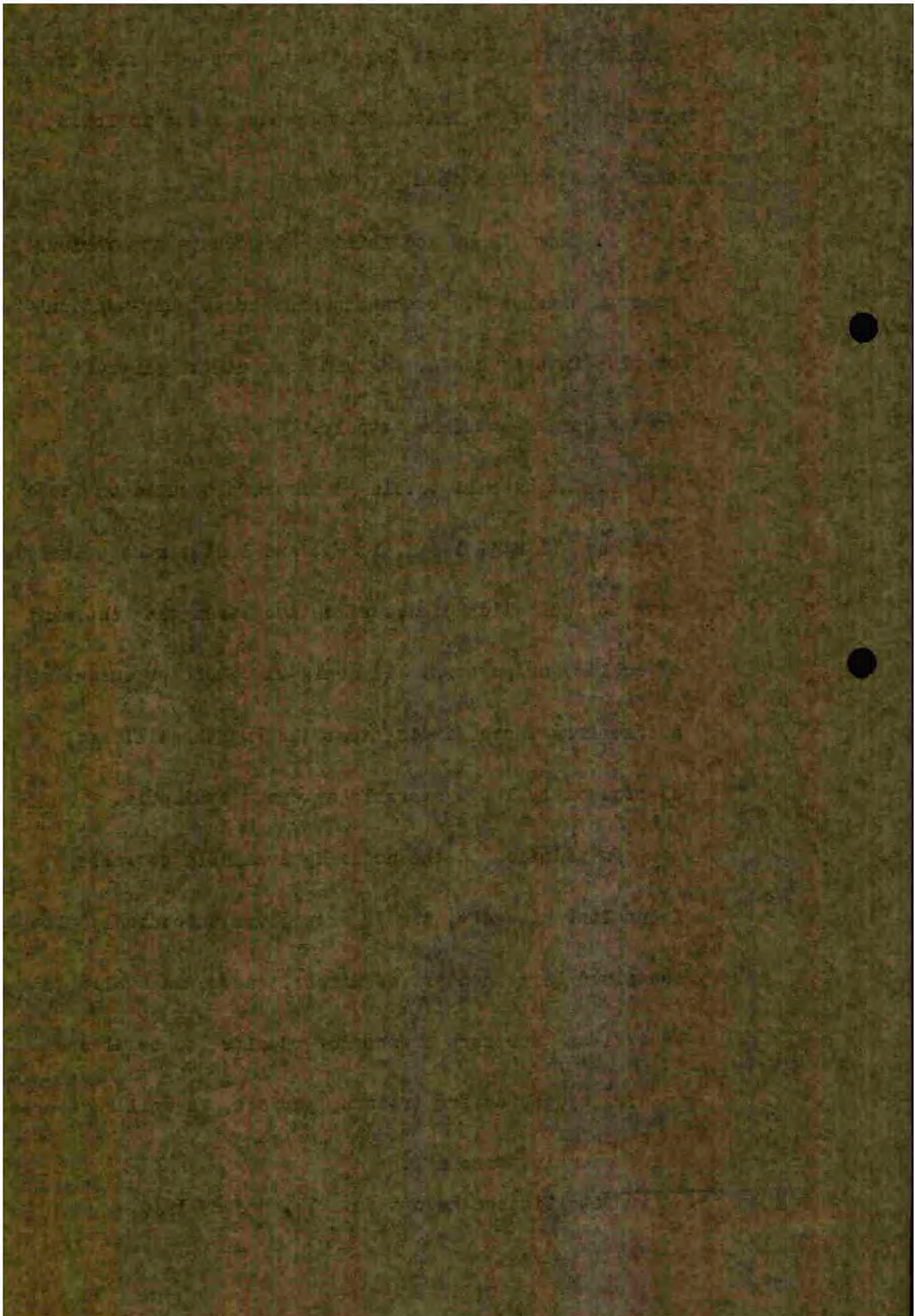
An analysis of these few situation reports from the first first few days of Operation "Hot" produces the following findings and realisations:

1. There is no possibility to compare the various reports because the reconnaissance areas they mention overlap in some cases, so that some of the aircraft reported were counted repeatedly.

2. The overall totals of aircraft counted on these four days (1 244, 1 363, 1 063, and 1 044, respectively) give no indication of the effective strengths in point of quality or numbers. It would have been erroneous to assume from these findings that the French still had approximately 1 000 operable aircraft available.

In addition to the actually available operable front line aircraft, the figures given undcountedly also contained large numbers of aircraft moved meanwhile to central and southern France for repairs, to be placed in air depots, or for training purpose, as well as sports and commercial aircraft.

<sup>53</sup>. Air Intelligence Report No. 276, 8 June 1940.



40

The plain figures appear so high that they must undoubtedly have included everything capable of taking to the air.

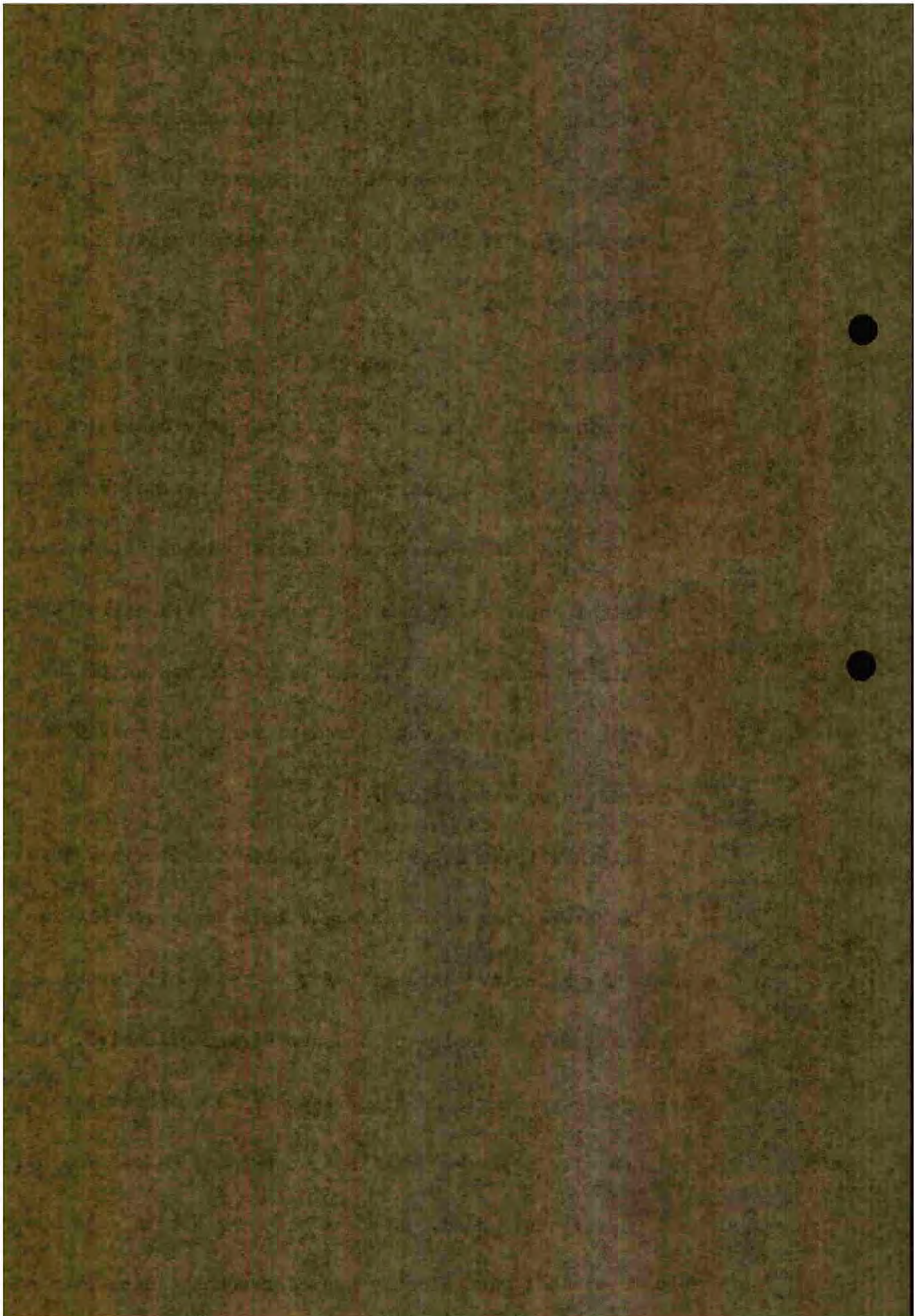
3. The figures given for single-engine aircraft (55-650 on 4 June and 553 on 5 June) provide no basis for the assumption that these were exclusively fighter units. Probably large numbers of them were training or sporting planes.

41

4. The reconnaissance findings from the general area of Paris would appear to confirm the previously mentioned assumption that the large-scale attack against Paris on 3 June had not produced a decisively important success, and that Paris still remained what had been called the "National Redoubt" of the French air forces until the French military command abandoned Paris because of strategic considerations.

All in all the reported reconnaissance findings provided no basis from which it would have been possible to deduce the effective strength of the French air forces at and after the opening of the new German offensive. Whether the Commander in Chief of the Air Force arrived at this fundamentally important realization remains an open question.

On the other hand, the fact that the German side was able to conduct such closely meshed reconnaissance over



41 widely extended areas allows the assumption that German reconnaissance operations were no longer seriously hampered. The small number of German aircraft reported lost at the same time seem to indicate that the French air defenses were weak and disorganized, an assumption which also tends to confirm that too much importance was attached to the numbers of French air craft detected.

For all of the above reasons it is not possible to develop a reliable picture, from available German sources, of the French capabilities for air warfare at the time under discussion here.

This stage of the present study, at which the period between the two German offensives in the West are being examined, seems the proper juncture for an investigation of French air armaments in broad outline during this so critical phase for France, with particular emphasis on the role of the United States as the source of replacements and reinforcements in air materiel.

Authentic material is available from French sources for such an investigation, particularly for this period, in the form of the documents of French Prime Minister Reynaud, which were taken into custody by German troops in 1940 and were processed by the Military Science Division (Branch B) of the German Air Force General Staff. These documents are

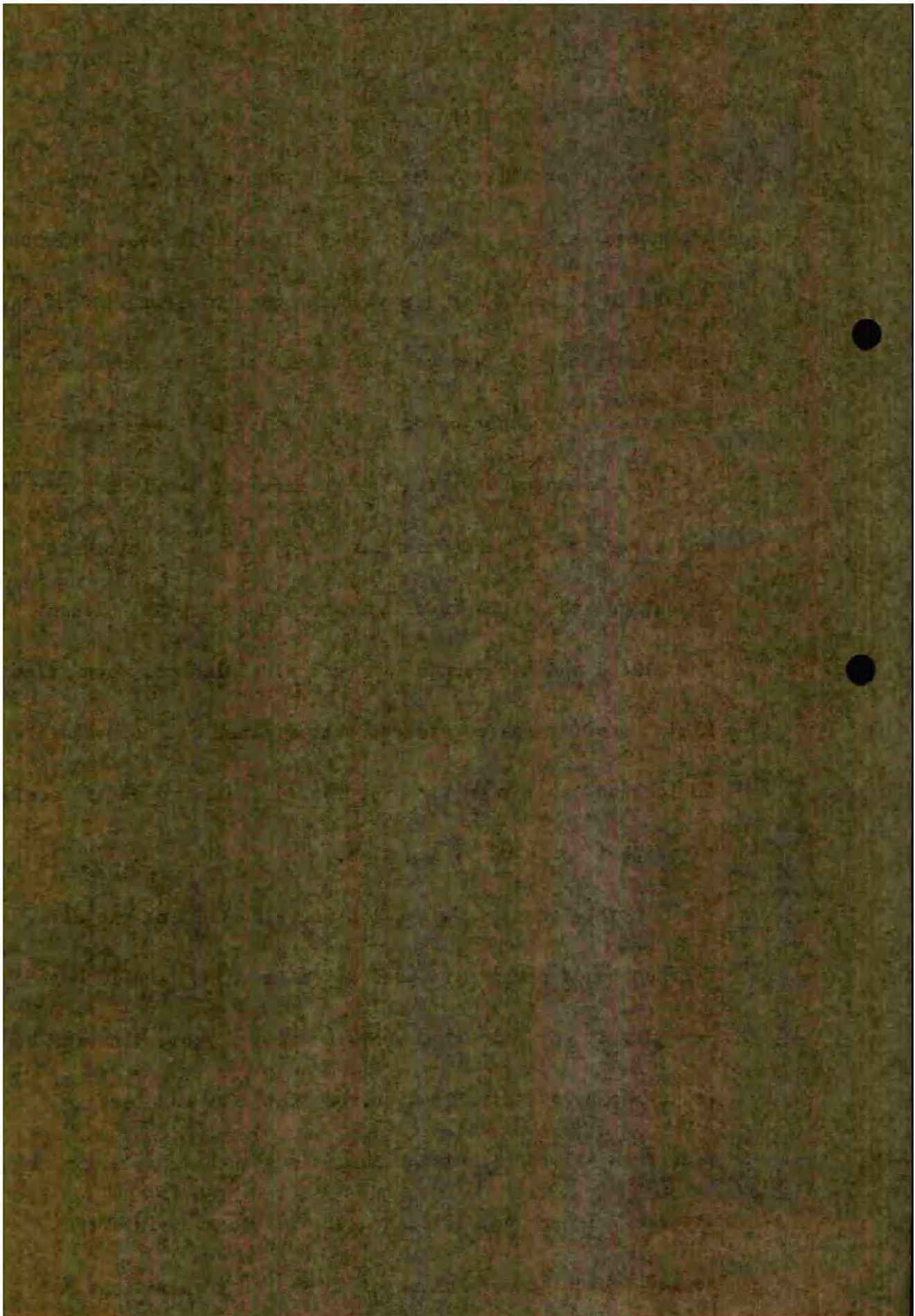




42 suitable to round out the picture, view thus far only from the German standpoint, of the situation in France at the time.

It will first of all be necessary to go back some time. As early as on 5 February 1940 it was stated at a meeting of the Supreme Allied Council that the German Air Force was numerically superior to the Allied air forces. This resulted in a demand for the purchase of new aircraft from the United States. It was assumed on the basis of assurances received by a committee of experts which had been sent to the United States that deliveries from the American aircraft and aircraft engine industries would make it possible to cancel out the difference in numerical strengths between the Allied and the German air forces. Daladier, then Prime Minister of France considered that victory was not possible as long as the German air superiority continued on the scale at which it existed at the time.

In this connection mention was also made of the difference between aircraft production in France and in Germany. Germany, it was said, had provided better protection for her factories by decentralization, so that they had less to fear from Allied air attack than the French from German air attacks. In France, in contrast, the two most important engine factories were situated in Paris; preparations had



43 been made for their movement to provincial sites, but the move would still take some time.

In the opinion of the French Government, the only possible remedy was therefore to accept American support. In reply to objections by the French Minister of Finance, Reynaud stated in this connection:

It would be better, however, to sell out the entire national estate of France than to deprive the nation of the essential air forces, even if the purchase of these air forces must be purchased at the cost of terrible sacrifices.

He went on to say that haste was necessary, however, because "what is placed on order now can be delivered in the spring of 1941."

The French Government continued its efforts in the United States.

44 On 16 May 1940, and thus at a time when German air superiority over France was already taking clear shape, the President of the United States, Mr. Roosevelt, read in the United States Congress a message in which he called for the immediate provision of gigantic credits for the purpose of national defense. He spoke with special emphasis about the air force, which in the United States he said must have available 50 000 aircraft. He continued literally

I demand of Congress that it pass no decisions



44

which could prevent or delay deliveries of aircraft from American production to foreign nations which have ordered such aircraft or endeavor to purchase other aircraft.

From the viewpoint of our national defense that would be an very short-sighted policy.<sup>54</sup>

These statements by the president of a country still "neutral" in 1940 must be especially emphasized, since "democratic" statesmen have rarely used such "dictatorial" forms of address.

In the meanwhile it had become quite clear in France that French efforts in the field of aircraft manufacture were inadequate to rebuild and rehabilitate the daily decreasing stocks of fighter and bomber aircraft.<sup>YBX</sup> "The war costs more than 30-40 air-raft daily."<sup>55</sup>

On 27 May 1940, at a time when the "battle in Flanders and Artois" was still in full spring swing, the French Ambassador in Washington received instructions to investigate the possibility of having orders placed by the US Army and currently under production to France. The contracts involved the following aircraft

200 Curtiss P-40  
150 Glen Martin  
200 Douglas,

quite apart from the contracts currently being processed for Sweden and Norway, which also could be transferred



45

wholly or in part to France.<sup>56</sup>

The President of the United States replied two days later expressing his "deepest sympathy" and his "admiration in view of the danger threatening France."

However, such expressions of friendship were no real help alone for France, which by means of representations through the French Ambassador continued to press for more material support.

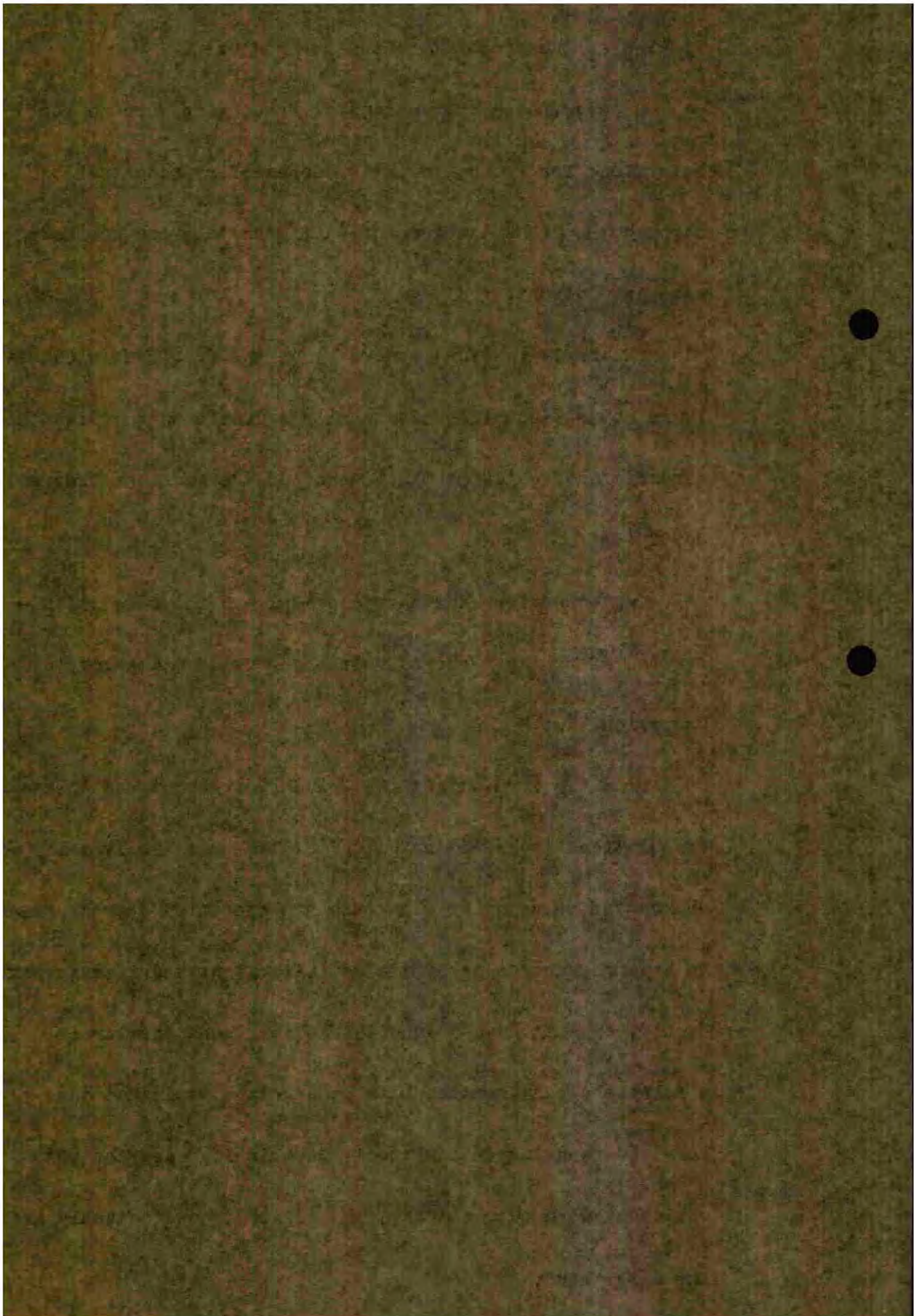
The reply remained however that the President sincerely regretted that the Government was unable to expedite the aircraft deliveries at the expense of the American Army and Navy.<sup>57</sup>

That describes the psychological and the material situation after the close of Operation "Uelb" and prior to Operation "Rot."

46

From the very outset the French Government had in its calculations included the United States as a passive Ally and on the very day on which the new operation opened appears to have regained some of its optimism.~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Namely, on that day--5 June 1940--the French Premier in a telephone conversation with Roosevelt stated that the enemy (Germany) were admittedly numerically superior but obviously worn out, and that the Allied troops actually had the upper hand.





What an erroneous interpretation of circumstances!  
 What a false assessment of the situation!

The French Premier continued that the French Government nevertheless needed support from the United States "Can you reach out a hand across the Ocean to us, to help us save civilization? .....Can you .....sell us completely equipped aircraft ready for action?"<sup>58</sup>

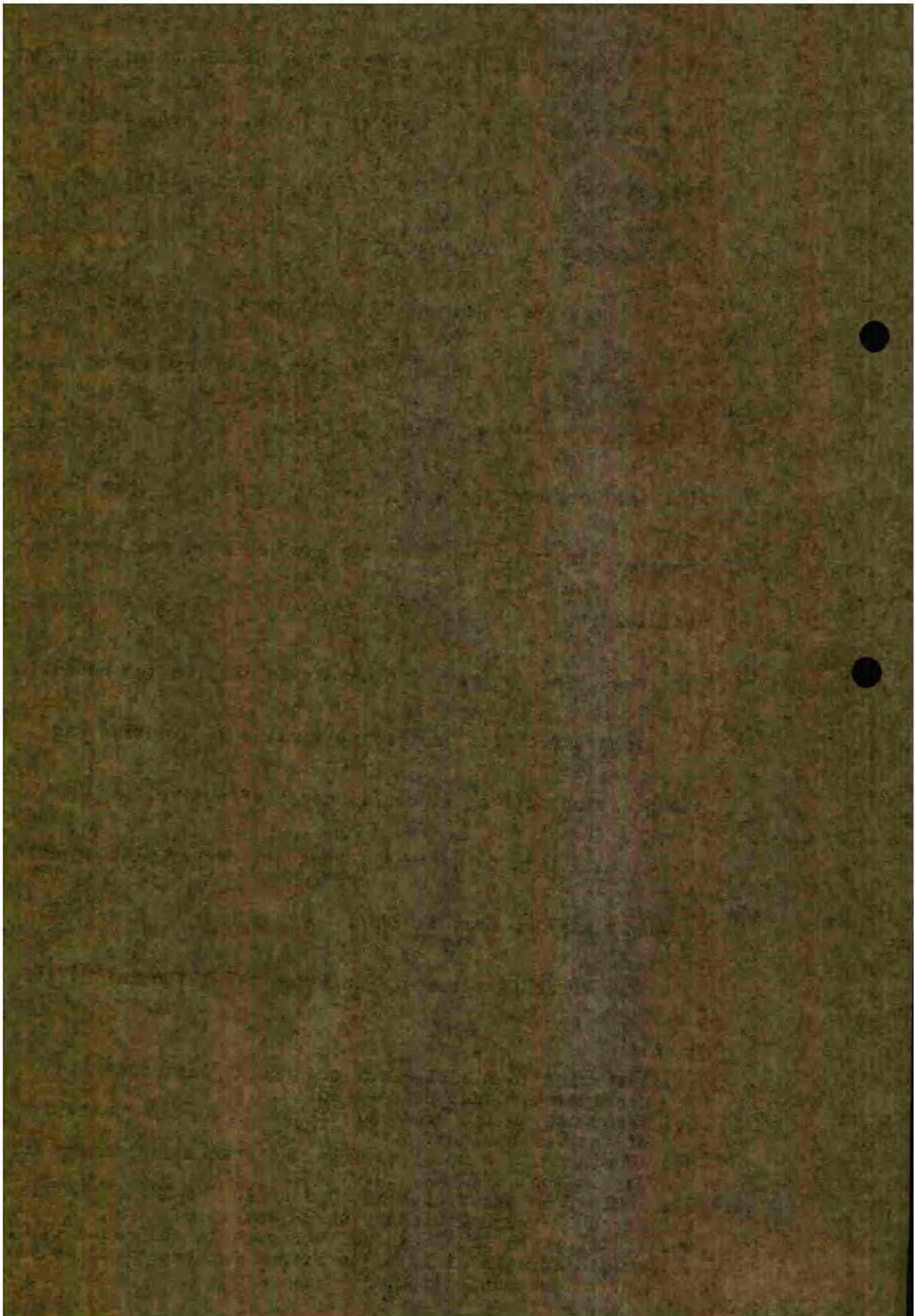
Roosevelt's reply was "I shall go to the limit of what is legally permissible." And the practical outcome of this telephone conversation was: The United States Minister of Finance, Morgenthau, on the same day sent a message that ".....50 bomber aircraft of the Navy will be available immediately."

Such aid, however, was merely "a drop in the ocean," quite apart from its questionable value in practice and the question of when it would become effective.

In addition to material, however, France also expected manpower support from the USA.

The French Government submitted the following suggestion:<sup>59</sup>

54. According to a cable from the French Ambassador in Washington, Count Saint-Quentin.
55. According to the protocol of the 25 May 1940 sitting of the War Cabinet.
56. According to a telegram from the French Ambassador in Washington on 27 May 1940.
57. Cable from the French Ambassador in Washington to the French Foreign Ministry on 29 May 1940.
58. By telephone from Reynaud to Roosevelt on 5 June 1940.
59. French Foreign Minister to French Ambassador to Canada by telecommunication.



47

Since the French air training schools were overcrowded, a considerable number of "....civilian aviators from the United States ~~were~~ be admitted to Canada and given training with modern American aircraft types." The plan, the suggestion continued, provided for approximately 1 000 air pilots and 1 000 aircraft mechanics. An interesting point in this suggestion, which is described explicitly as "a delicate matter," is the passage that "....the French Command places importance on recruiting more bomber personnel than fighter pilots." They had thus at a very late stage learned the obvious lesson from the German successes.

British aid was also requested, the demand being primarily that "British fighter forces be committed but also that British bomber action should be resumed. In place of comments the following cable from Reynaud to Churchill is offered verbatim, the text of which speaks for itself:

Not only the fate of France, but also that of Great Britain is in the balance in the battle now raging at the Somme and Oise rivers.

It would be wrong not to throw all military forces of both countries into this battle in their entirety.

If the game is lost the armament efforts of the United Kingdom would no longer have any meaning. In these circumstances I cannot understand why you are <sup>still</sup> withholding the major part of your air forces in England for the protection of your industries.

I urgently request you to dispatch 500 fighter



fighter aircraft to France. The French airfields are ready to accommodate these aircraft.

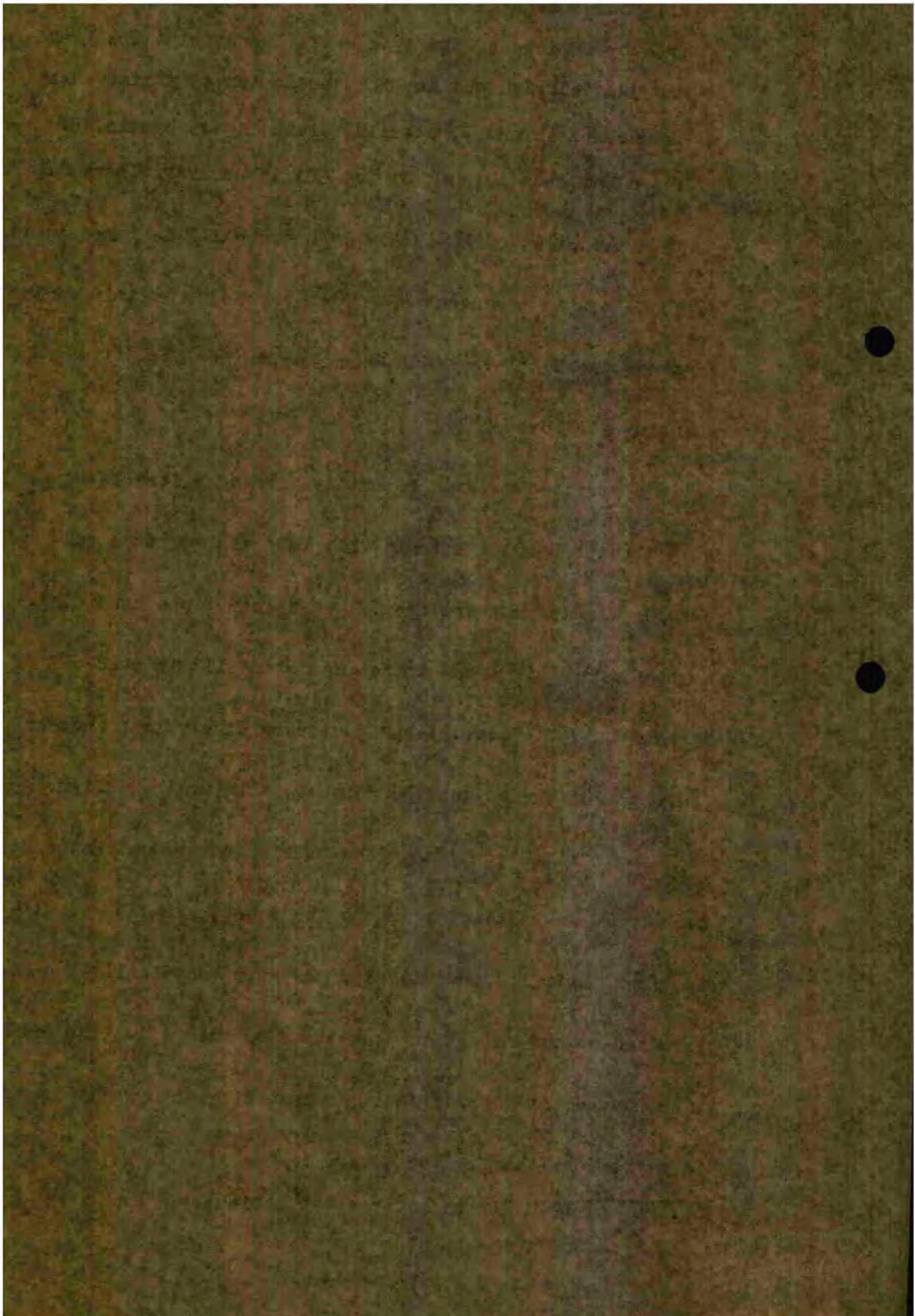
I furthermore express the request that you throw all your bomber aircraft into the battle and refrain from operations of the type which the Royal Air Force has just carried out in the Ruhr region at a time when the French infantry, standing alone in the battle, are dependent upon support by the British bomber aircraft.

In the night of 16-17 May 1940 Churchill declared to Reynaud that in the event of a French defeat, Britain would continue the battle against Germany with her steadily mounting air forces.<sup>60</sup>

He promised Reynaud immediate and considerable support through bombing attacks, but left the question concerning fighter support open. The negotiations continued, Reynaud indicating that France was primarily in need of fighter support ".....since it appears likely that another [German] offensive must be expected at the Aisne River."

The initial reply from the British Government was that they could do nothing; owing to the disorganization resulting from their enormous losses, they were practically neutralized at the moment in the matter of aircraft. The British Government considered it an imperative necessity to first re-form the fighter wings.

<sup>60</sup>. 25 May 1940 Sitting of the War Cabinet.



49

On 1 June 1940 Churchill at long last promised the dispatch of fighter units and also gave hopes of the dispatch of bombers. Reynaud also did not consider this adequate aid.<sup>61</sup> A French parliament member wrote to Churchill

It would be most regrettable if public opinion in France should come to the conclusion that their Ally was withdrawing to her island.<sup>62</sup>

On 3 June 1940 Reynaud suddenly made the statement that Churchill had fulfilled the requests made by France, among other things in the matter of the commitment of British bomber and fighter units in France.

In practice, however, almost nothing had happened in the matter. It appears, however, that the British promises had not failed to produce some effect on the French morale, since the minutes of the 7 June 1940 sitting of the Army Commission of the French Senate, just two days prior to commencement of the second German offensive, contains the following passage

Economically and in point of morale the German Nation is in a bad position. In particular, the German Nation is strongly impressed by the massed bombing attacks continuously carried out by the British Air Force.

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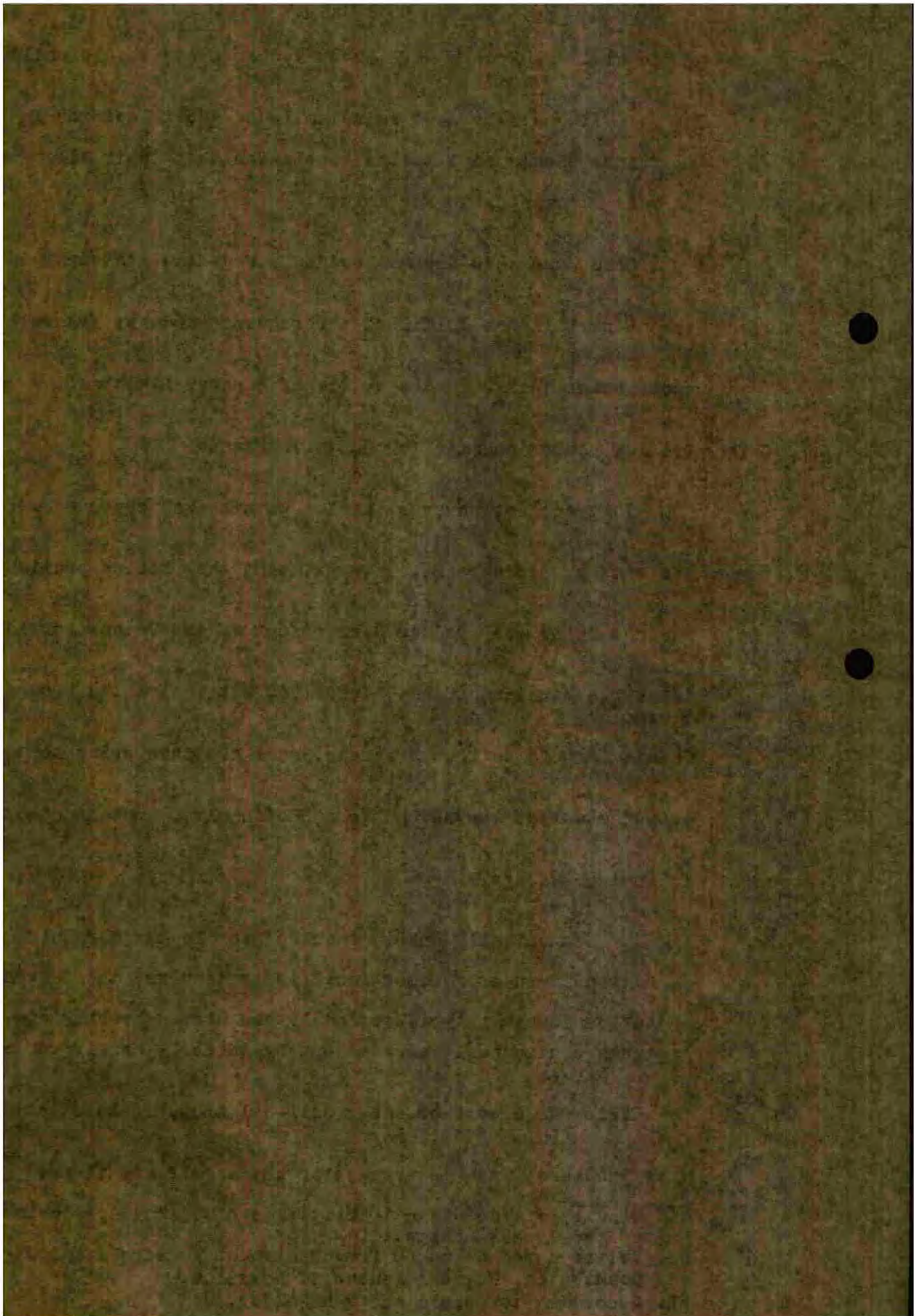
This was a case of sheer self-delusion, at least at that juncture, when the French front was already pierced

61. Minutes of the 6 Jun 40 Sitting of the Army Commission of the French Senate.

62. Letter dated 6 Jun 40 from Chairman, Foreign Affairs Commission, French Chamber of Deputies.

63. According to Seamid and von Waldau.





50

and the British bombing offensive was as yet producing no real results. It was the expression of the hope for help from outside sources, help which either failed to arrive at all or arrived too late to make itself felt.

While France in her precarious position was thus haggling with her present and future Allies for aid, the German Air Force was assembling its units for a devastating blow.

It is not possible to give the actual strength of the German Air Force at that time expressed in reliable figures on the number of units or aircraft available. Basing calculations on the previously mentioned strengths committed in the attack against Paris (Operation "Paula")<sup>63</sup> roughly 800 bomber and 400 fighter aircraft were available for participation in Operation "Rot." Added to these came the units of the VIII (Tactical Support) Air Corps, which had not been committed in Operation "Paula."

Taken together this gave the German side an enormous superiority in air power. It appears, however, that a far more important factor on the German side was the superiority of the troops in point of morale, the consciousness of their superior capability. With their morale strengthened in the past three weeks by victory after victory, the units of the German Air Force, although weakened in numbers, entered battle from the outset in the conviction that in this sec-



51 and final phase of the campaign in France they would again be able to accomplish their mission speedily and completely.

Although the air operations against Dunkirk, Marseilles and Paris had allowed the German Air Force, in contrast with the German Army, no pause in combat activities;

although, again in contrast with the Army, this ceaseless commitment in action left practically no time for a systematic regrouping of forces for the new mission;

and although the units were using up their current supplies as fast as they received them,

the German Air Force with its air bases on 5 June 1940 was ready for its new mission striking southward.

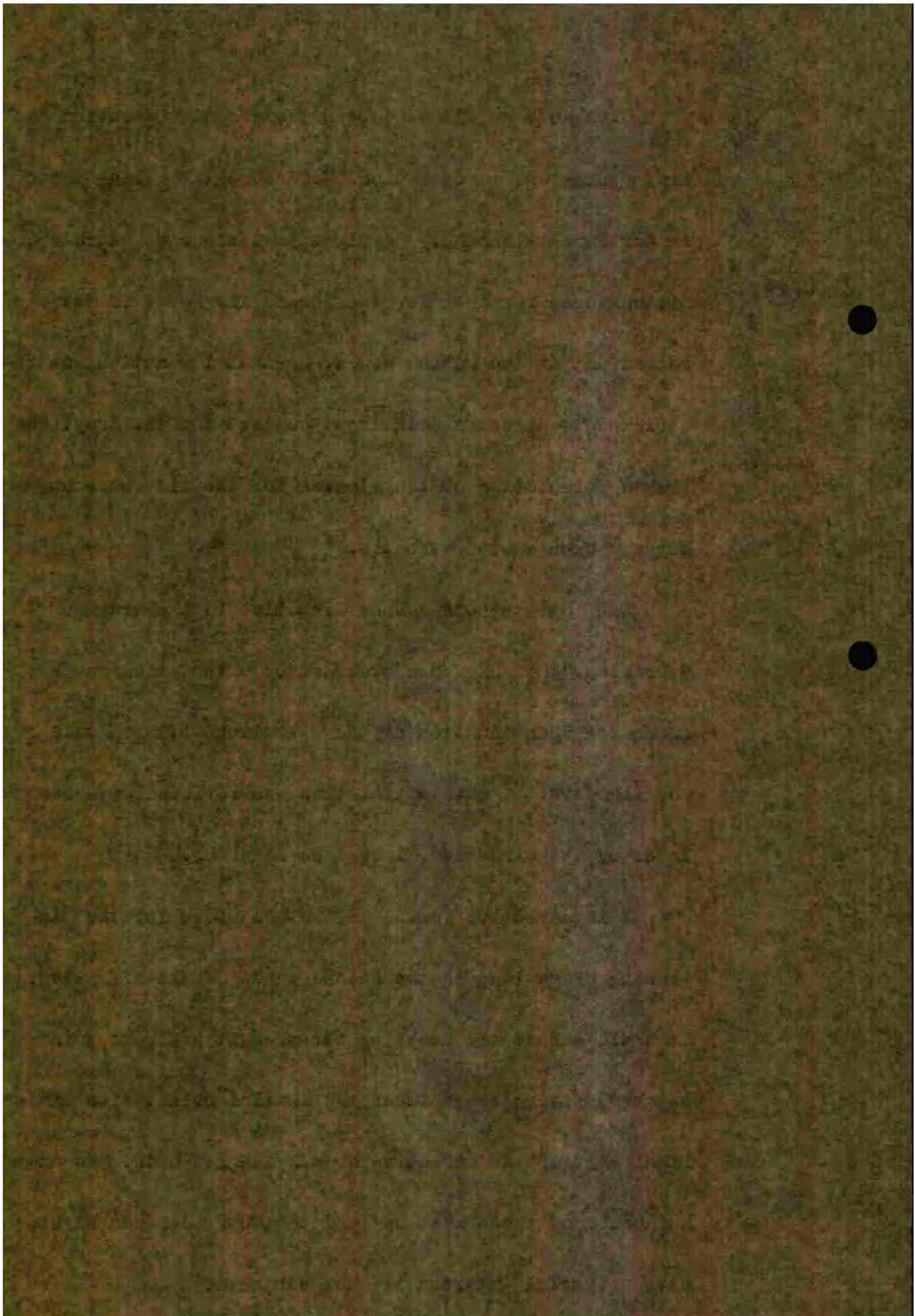


5. Directive for the Strategic Assembly of the Army for Operation "Rot." The assembly directive for the Army provided the basis for the commitment of the German Air Force.

Even more so than had been the case in Operation "Gelb" Army operations in Operation "Rot" were the ruling factor in Air Force planning. Hardly any missions of "strategic air warfare" remained for the German Air Force in the second act of the French drama, so that its action was restricted to direct and indirect support for the Army. The Army's formulation of the mission for the Air Force has already been quoted verbatim.<sup>64</sup>

The Strategic Assembly Directive to the Army for Operation "Rot" had been preceded by orientation on the plans for "Continuation of the operations after Artois and Flanders."<sup>65</sup> This orientation was followed up a few days later by the directive, issued as an order.<sup>66</sup>

This directive formed the actual basis for the impending operations in the second phase of the offensive. It would exceed the scope of the present study to point out the differences between the initial orientation and the final text of the directive or the changes made. An examination of these must be left to the reader who might have a special interest in such subjects.<sup>67</sup>



53

From the plans prepared after receipt of the final directive for the ground operations the following essential trains of thought can be discerned:

I. The overall objective in Operation "Rot" was, as expeditiously as possible after conclusion of the battles in Mlanders and Irreie to first break through the hastily established French line of resistance in a southward drive, then, by means of a quick breakthrough into the far rear areas to deny the enemy any chance to continue the struggle through an organized withdrawal and establishment of rearward defense lines. Finally, through a far-flung enveloping maneuver, the remaining French forces were to be annihilated in a pocket in the rear of the French Maginot Line.

II. In timing, the plans provided for three phases:

First Phase: Army Group B, on the west flank of the German assembly, was to advance from the Somme River line and from farther east on 5 June to gain jump-off positions on either side of Paris for the second phase.

Second Phase: On 9 June the advance was to continue all along the line, meaning that Army Group A, east of Army Group B, was now also to advance.

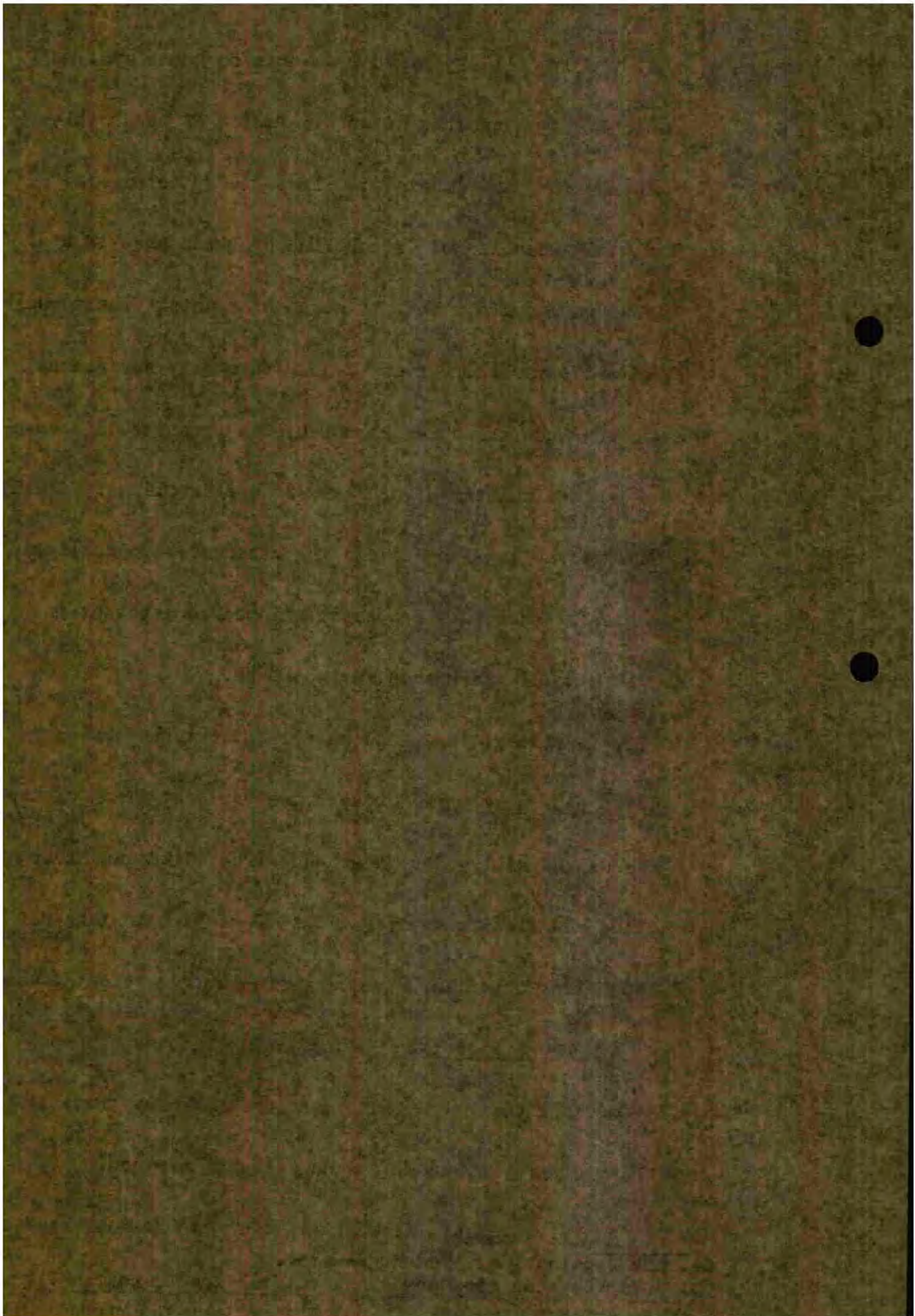
Third Phase: The main drive in the Second Phase

64. See Section 1 of present chapter.

65. "Oberkommando des Heeres, Generalstab des Heeres, Op. Abt."

--Continued





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was to be supported, at a time still to be determined,  
 b. secondary operations in German territory, in which  
 forces would break through the Maginot Line in a frontal  
 attack from northeast and east.

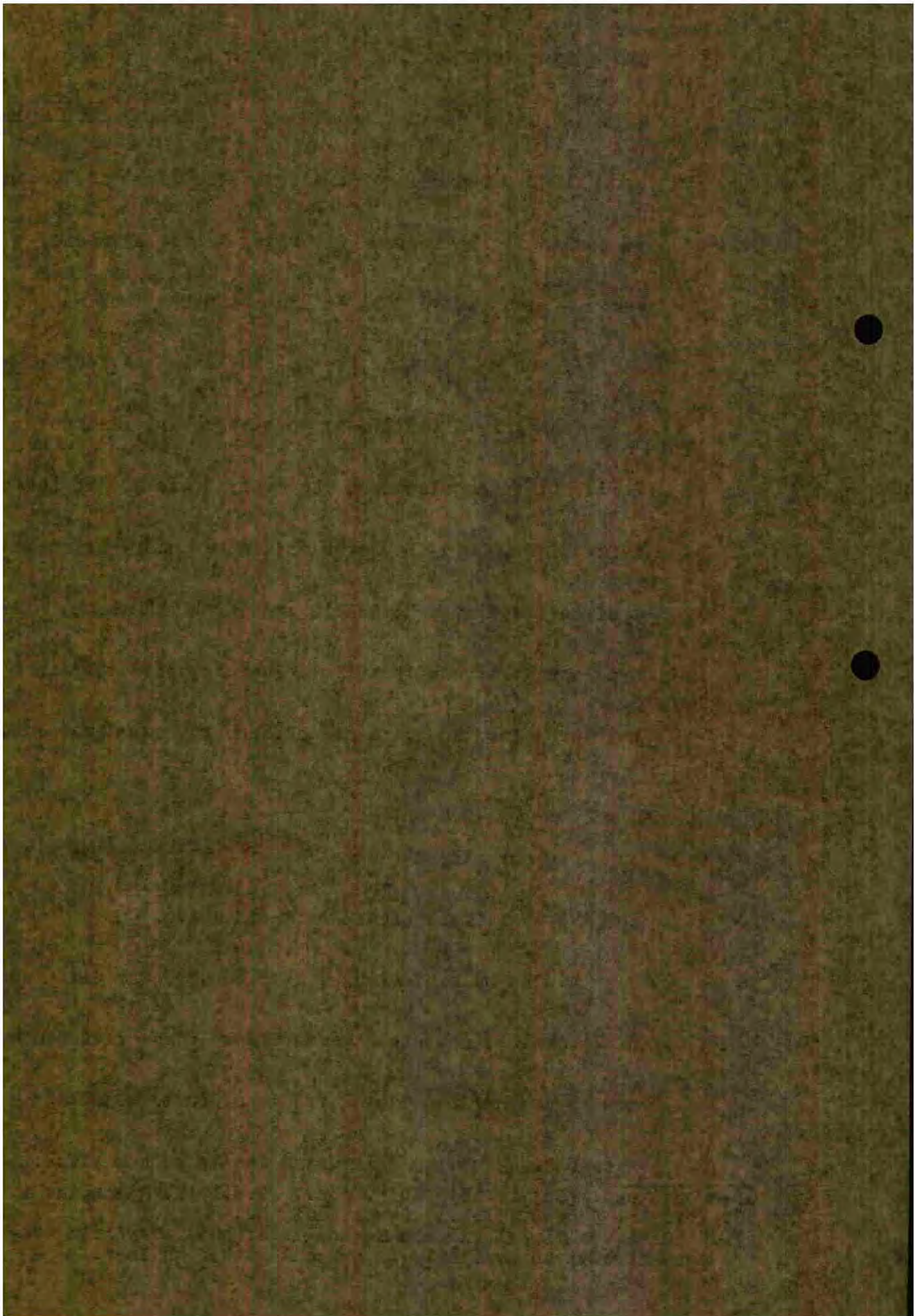
III. Execution of the plan of operations was envisaged  
 as follows: The main offensive in the first and second  
 phases was to be in two diverging drives bypassing  
 Paris, which was to fall without direct attack:

a. The right flank, comprising only the Fourth  
 Army from Army Group B, was to bypass Paris in the  
 northwest in a drive from the lower Somme to the lower  
 Seine River, bring Le Havre and Rouen under German con-  
 trol as speedily as possible and establish three  
 bridgeheads across the Seine River in order to gain a  
 base area for the continued advance to south and south-  
 west.

Concurrently the Fourth Army was to provide cover  
 for the west flank of the main offensive.

b. The bulk of Army Group B forces, the Sixth and  
 Ninth Armies, were to advance in the first phase into  
 the region northeast of Paris in order to establish  
 a base area for the main drive in the second phase.

65--Continued: (Ia) Nr. 343/40 g.Kdos., 27.5.1940."Appendix 31  
 66. Ibid Nr. 350/40, 31.5.1940, Appendix 32.  
 67. General von Rippelkirch made copies of both Army High Com-  
 mand directives available to present author on loan.



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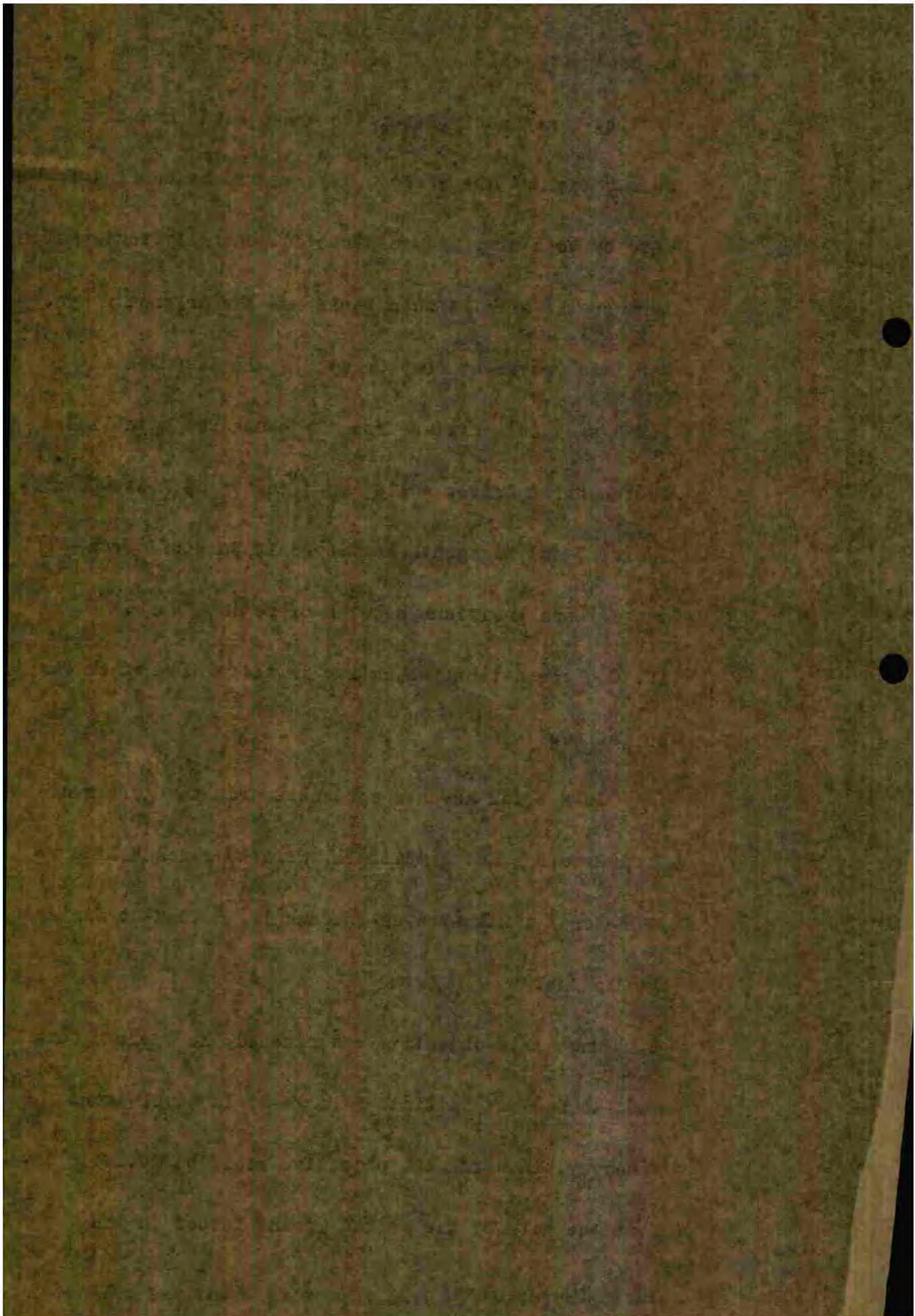
The line to be thus reached in the initial drive extended from Chantilly (5 miles south of Creil)-southern fringes of Compiègne Forest-south of Soissons-Bourg et Comin (14 miles east of Soissons).

a. Immediately after the above movements the main attack of the second phase was to be carried forward by both army groups directed generally southeast through the area between Paris and the Argonne range. For this movement Army Group B would dispatch its Sixth and Ninth Armies from the base area established in the first drive, while from Army Group A the Second, Twelfth, and Sixteenth Armies would jump off from the defense positions held in Operation "Galb."

IV. The operational objective in this main attack was as follows:

In a brisk advance southeastwards the forces of Army Groups B and A initially were to reach a line Sens-Forêt d'Othe-Troyes-drienne le Château-St Dizier-Bar le Duc.

Once this objective was reached the Supreme Command planned to initiate a large-scale envelopment maneuver, in which the objective would be ".....to defeat the bulk of the French ground forces in the Paris-Belfort-Metz area and bring about the collapse



55

Maginot Line (Paragraph 1 of the Directive)."

V. The above main attack was to be supported during the third phase, at a time still to be determined, by the previously mentioned secondary operations, namely, by a frontal attack from German territory, in which

a. The First Army (Army Group C), operating from the Saarbrücken area would break through the Maginot Line and advance on Lunéville;

b. the Seventh Army (also Army Group C) would fight its way across the Rhine River on either side of Colmar and advance in the direction of Reims and Vesoul.

The plan of operations outlined above is presented in the map attached as Appendix 33.

Orders provided for the following distribution of

forces:<sup>68</sup>

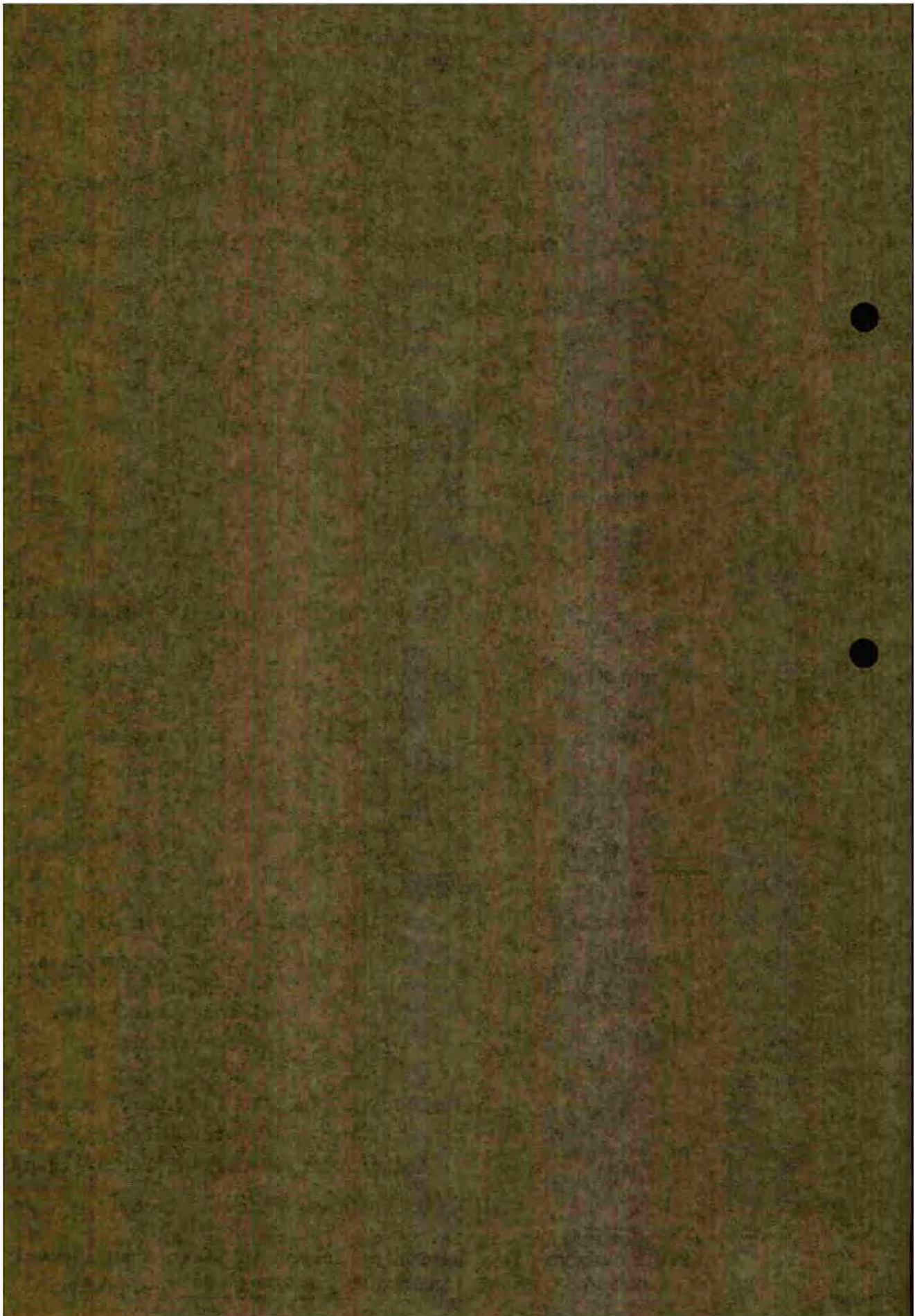
Army Group B

Fourth Army with 10 divisions and one brigade (6 Infantry, 2 Panzer, 1 Mts. Infantry, 1 cavalry, divisions plus 1 Mts. rifle brigade.

Sixth Army with 10 divisions (10 Infantry, 4 Panzer, 2 Mts. Infantry)<sup>+</sup>  
 Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler Regiment<sup>+</sup>  
 Gross Deutschland Regiment<sup>+</sup>

<sup>+</sup> Temporarily assigned.

68. The above distribution of forces is taken from Assembly Directive "Rot" (Aufmarschanweisung Rot)--Continued



Army Group B--Continued

Ninth Army with 8 infantry divisions

Army Group A

Second Army with 8 infantry divisions

Twelfth Army with 12 infantry divisions

Sixteenth Army w/ 12 infantry divisions

Army Group C

First Army with

Seventh Army.

It remains to be added that the Eighteenth Army, controlled directly by the Army High Command, was to assume command over the units remaining in Flanders and Artois with the primary mission of coastal defense along the Franco-Belgian coastline as far as Etaples to prevent enemy sea-borne operations against the coast.

The higher level armored commands are not mentioned in the directive for the assembly for Operation "Rot."

From a different source,<sup>69</sup> however, it evolves that they were deployed in the rear of the armies on line, as follows:

In the rear of Army Group B in the Somme River Sector

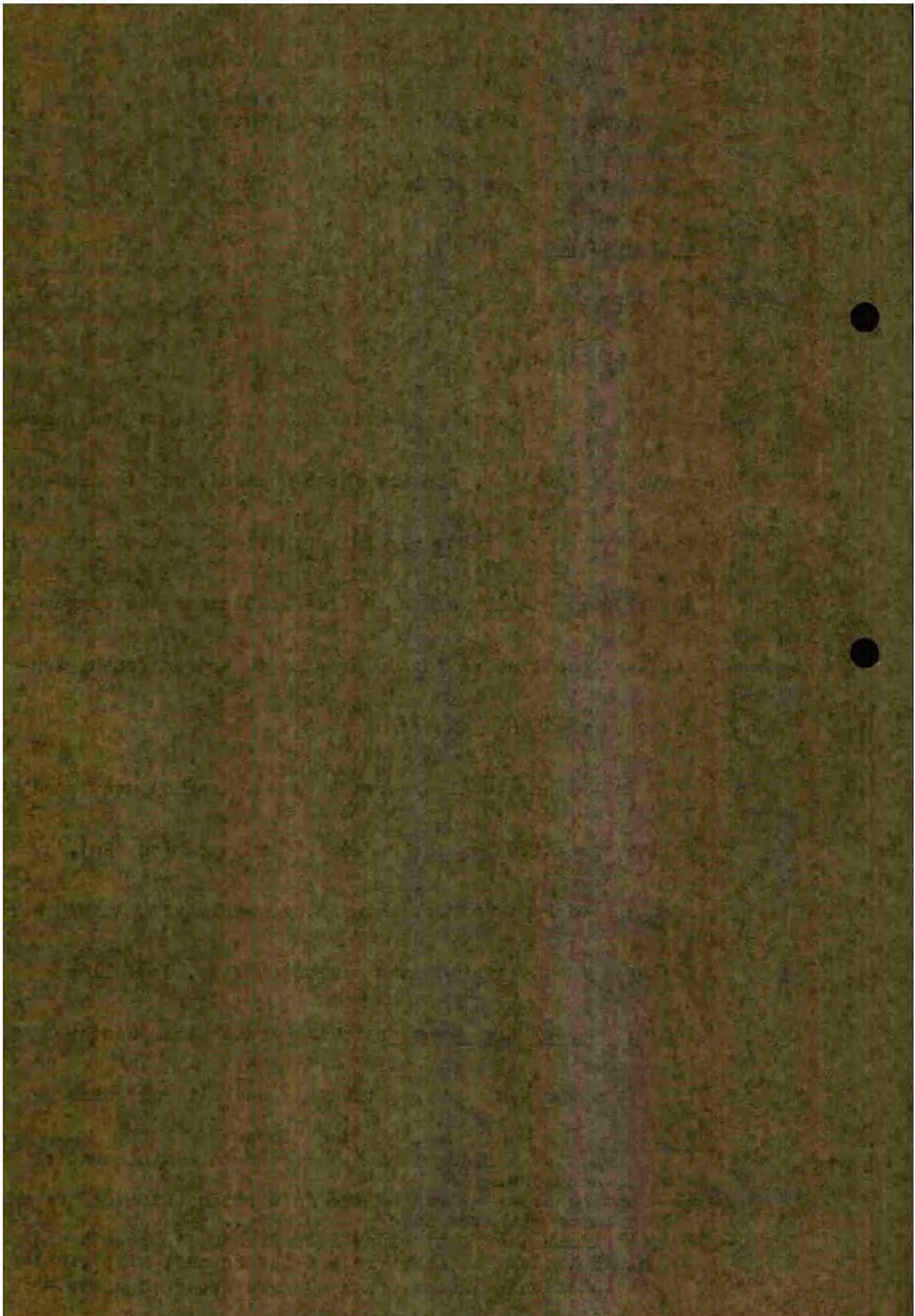
Panzergruppe von Kleist<sup>+</sup> (newly established) with 2  
tank corps

+ An army type headquarters minus certain administrative staff sections.

68--Continued: Some parts of the information offered are at variance with the information on pp. 35-36 of von Trepelkirch that Army Group B comprised the Fourth and Sixth Armies and Army Group A the Second, Ninth, Twelfth and Sixteenth Armies. That changes occurred after -

Continued





In the Rear of Army Group A (Twelfth Army)

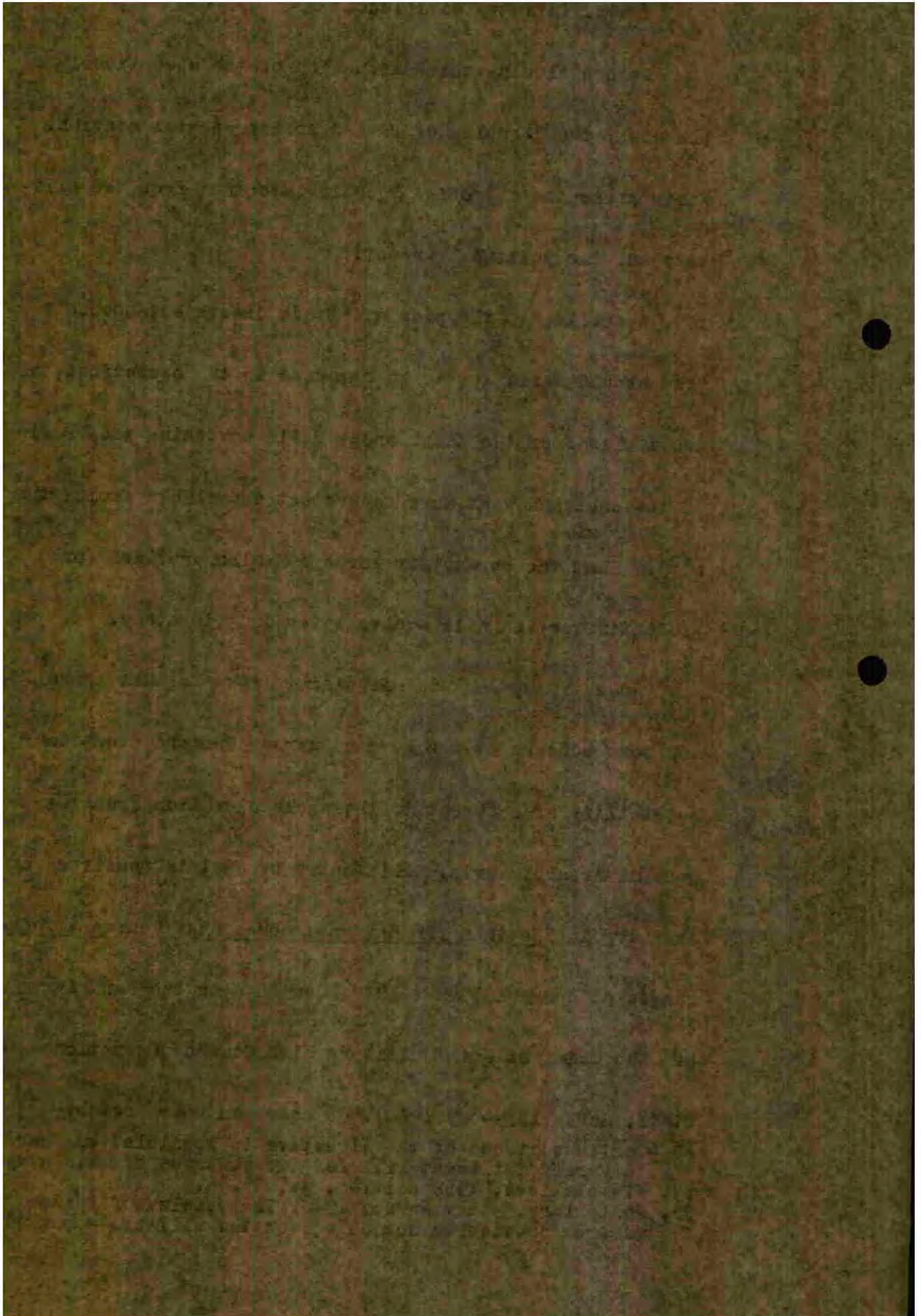
Panzergruppe Guderian (newly established) with  
4 panzer divisions and  
2 mtz. infantry divisions.

Before closing this discussion of the operational planning, the "Problem of Paris" merits special mention. Paris presented a problem equally important from the military and the political aspect.

According to the plan of attack discussed above, the area around Paris was to be bypassed in the operations; the two armies from the flank area while advancing past Paris on the east and west were to protect the flanks facing the city. That the German Air Force had also provided for protective action will evolve later in this study.

An entry by Jodl in his diary<sup>70</sup> reveals that there was some concern at the German Supreme Command about the possibility of a threat to the whole operation from the general area of Paris. This entry by Jodl is confirmed by an entry in "Notizen zum Kriegstagebuch Chef Wehrmachtführungsstab März 1939-Mai 1940 (Comments on the War Diary of the Chief of Joint Military High Command Operations

71  
Staff, March 1939-May 1940)."<sup>68</sup> where an entry reads:  
68--Continued: issue of the directive is possible, but hard to verify and immaterial for the purposes of this study  
69. Tippleskirch, 1954 Edition, pp. 33-36.  
70. Jodl Diary, Entry 26 May 1940: The problem of Paris must be considered not only from the military--continue



58 under May 1940 reads:

Occupation of Paris. Hitler's intention to make occupation largely contingent upon political development of the situation within the city.

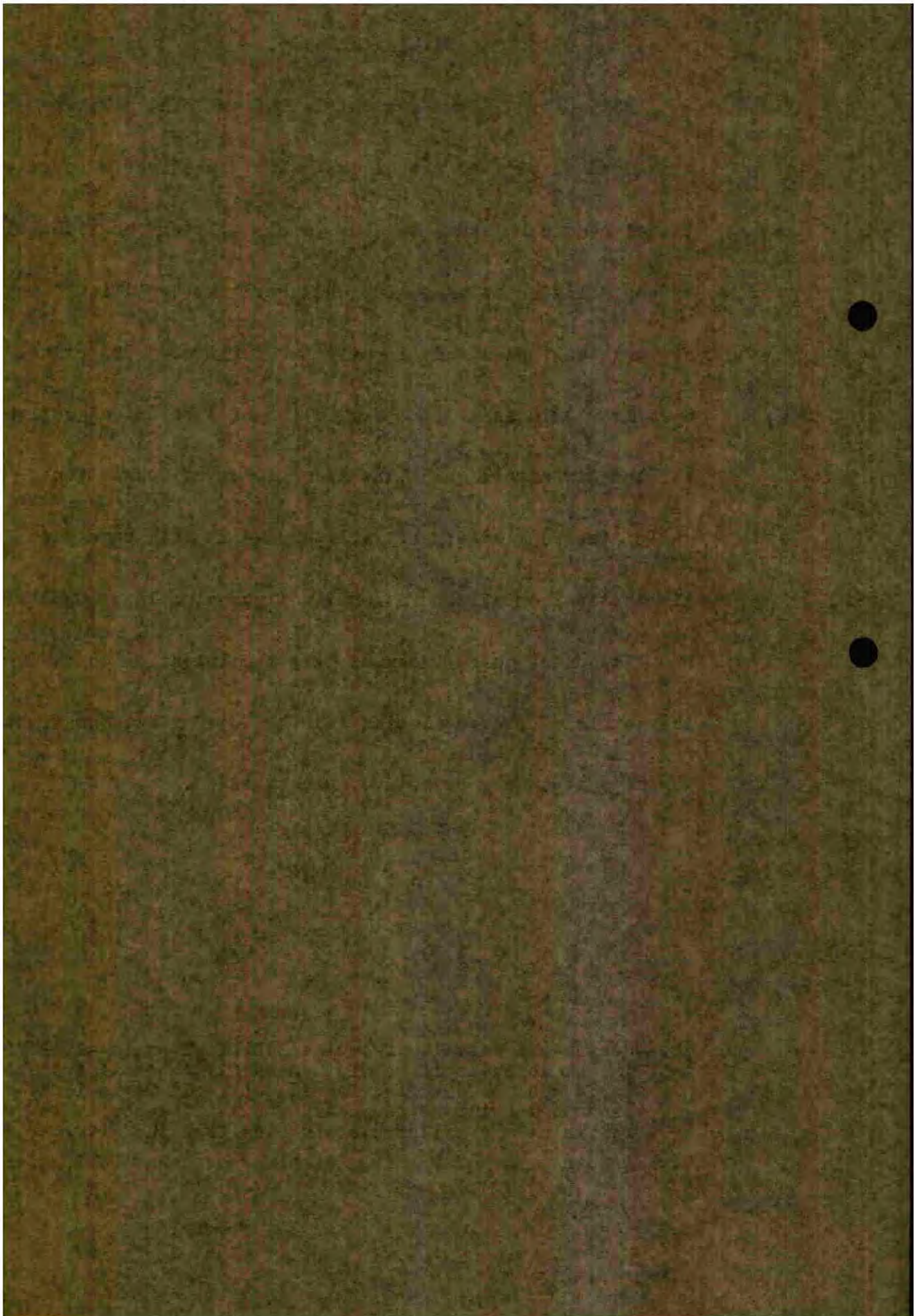
Both of the above two entries from Joint Military High Command circles reveal that the precedence of operational considerations, meaning purely military consideration was established at an early juncture. The "political" factor of Paris was not simultaneously the "military" objective. Seen from this angle the suggestion of a political motive for the air attack on 3 June loses force of conviction, while the possibility of "military"--- in this case the air tactical or air operational motives gains in probability.

59

It can be safely assumed that the intention to shake the morale of the population and the Government, one might say as a secondary objective, also existed.

70.---Continued: but also from the political angle---If Paris is abandoned or if revolutionary signs become evident, Paris must be occupied immediately. If Paris is defended, it will be necessary for the time being to remain at a considerable distance from the city.

71. Annotator Major Deyale, Karlsruhe Document Collection.



7. Plans for the Air Force Strategic Concentration

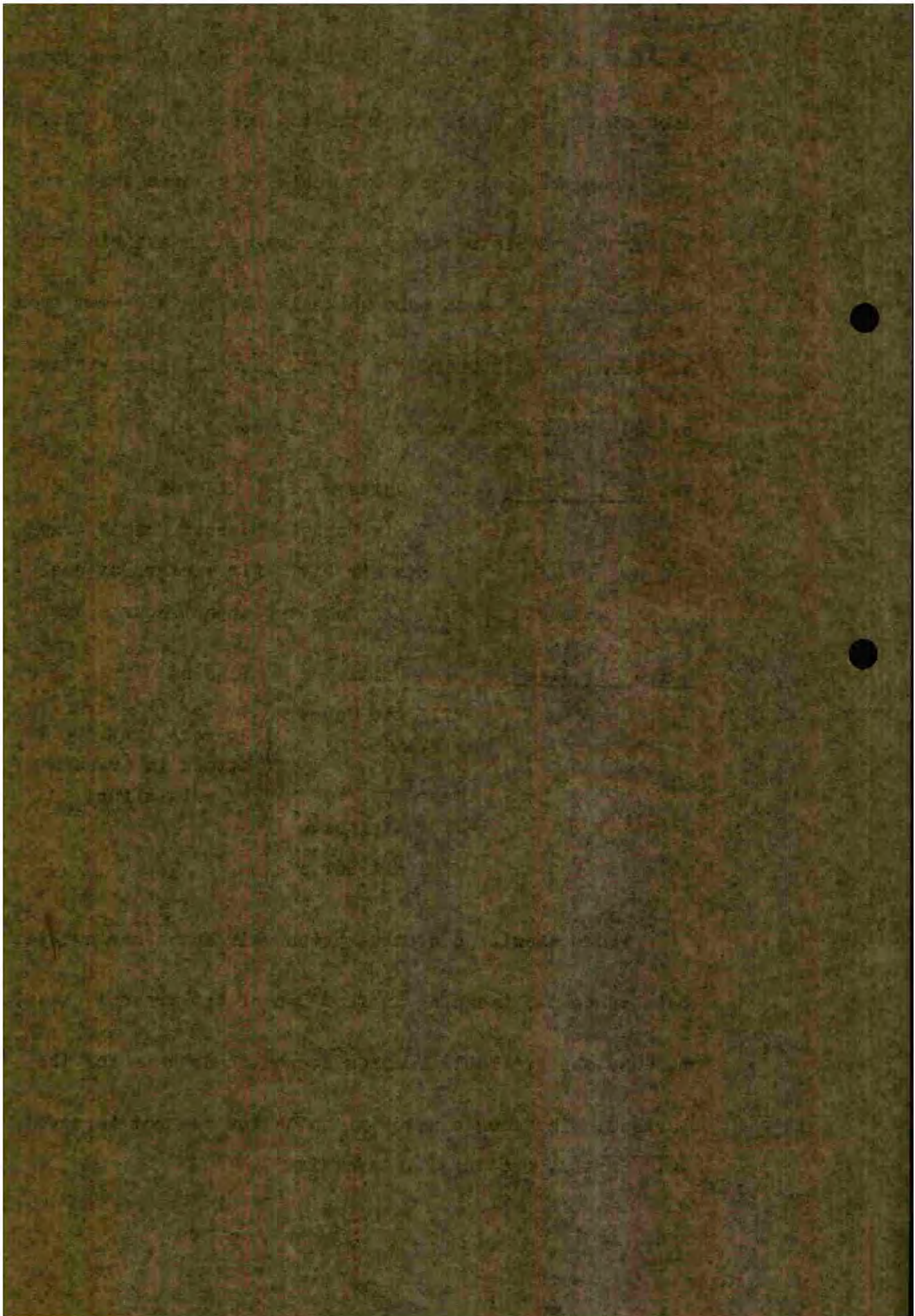
and Attack. In contrast with the relatively lucid picture of the Air Force concentration for Operation "Gelb,"<sup>72</sup> it has not yet been possible to prepare a reliable reconstruction of the Air Force concentration for Operation "Bot."

From the few sources available it appears that emphasis in the distribution of forces and in the mission assignment unified even more markedly than in the past from the Second to the Third Air Fleet. The following picture of the distribution of forces evolves:

<u>Second Air Fleet</u>	Units	Mission
	I Air Corps	Support Fourth Army
	9th Air Div	Air warfare at sea
	II AAA Corps	Support Fourth Army
<u>Third Air Fleet</u>	Units	Mission
	VIII Air Corps	} Support Army attack in areas of main effort
	IV " "	
	II Air Corps	
	V Air Corps	
	I AAA Corps	

The composition of the various air corps has not yet been presented (meaning in Part Two of the present study) because the available records seemed inadequate for the purpose. The source material situation has not improved

72. Part 2, Chapter II, Appendix 37.



61 since completion of Part Two, for which reason an effort is being made here to establish the composition of the corps at least as far as documentation is available.

The following picture evolves for Operation "Roy:"

#### THIRD AIR FLEET

II Air Corps, controlling

53d, 3d, and 2d Bomber Wings

IV Air Corps, controlling

27th, 27th, and 54th Bomber Wings

V Air Corps, controlling

51st and one unidentified Bomber Wings

VIII (Tactical Support) Air Corps, controlling

2d and 77th Dive-Bomber Wings; 2d and 27th Fighter Wings; 11 Group/2d Training Wing

#### SECOND AIR FLEET

I Air Corps

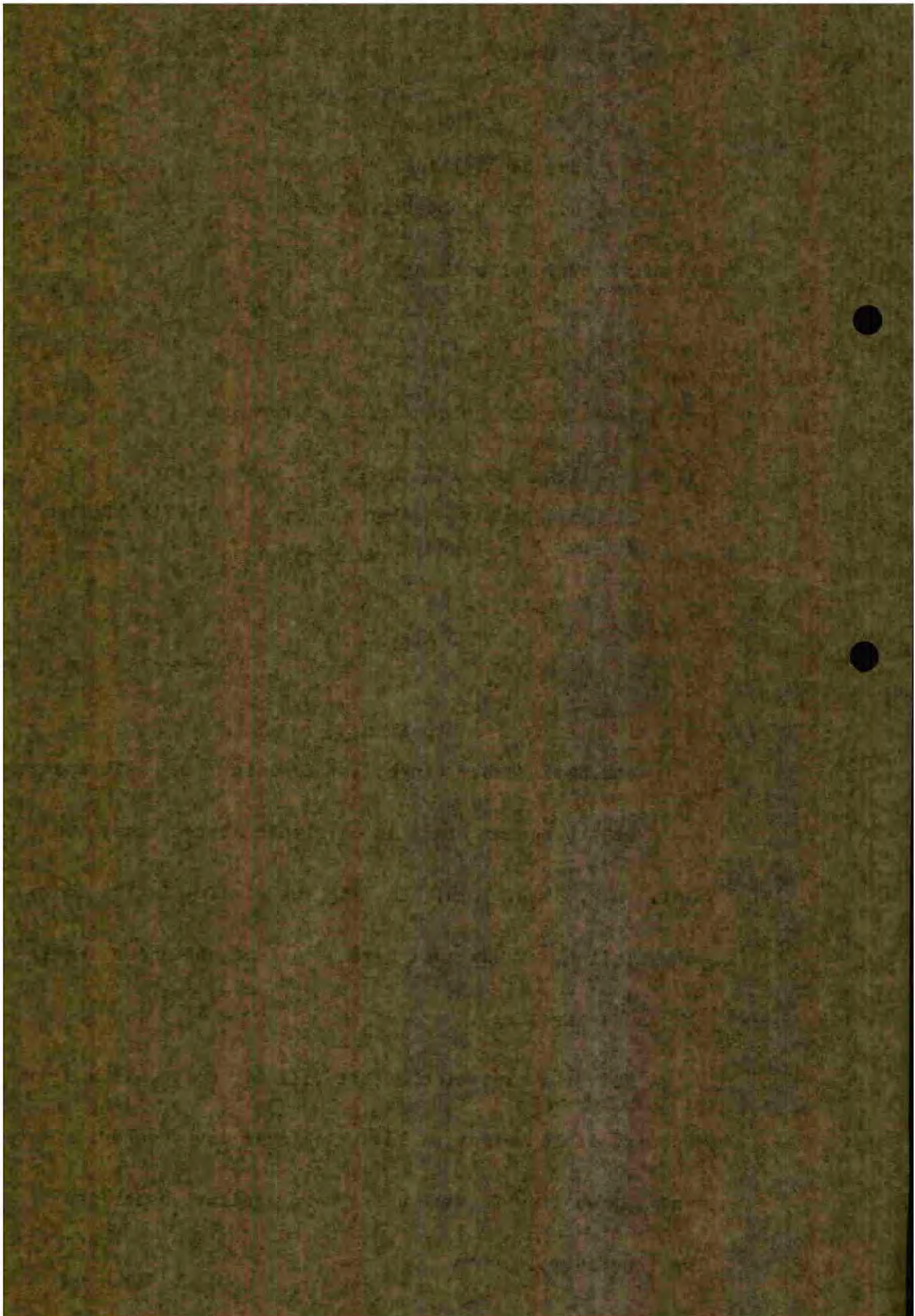
9th Air Division, controlling

4th, 50th Bomber Wings; 1st Training Wing (all uncertain)

Of the bomber wings in existence at the time, the 1st, 40th, 55th, 76th, and 77th are missing in the above compilation. These must have been assigned under the I, V, and X Air Corps.

With the exception of the VIII Air Corps, it has not been possible as yet to establish what dive-bomber, fighter and twin-engine fighter units were assigned under the various corps.



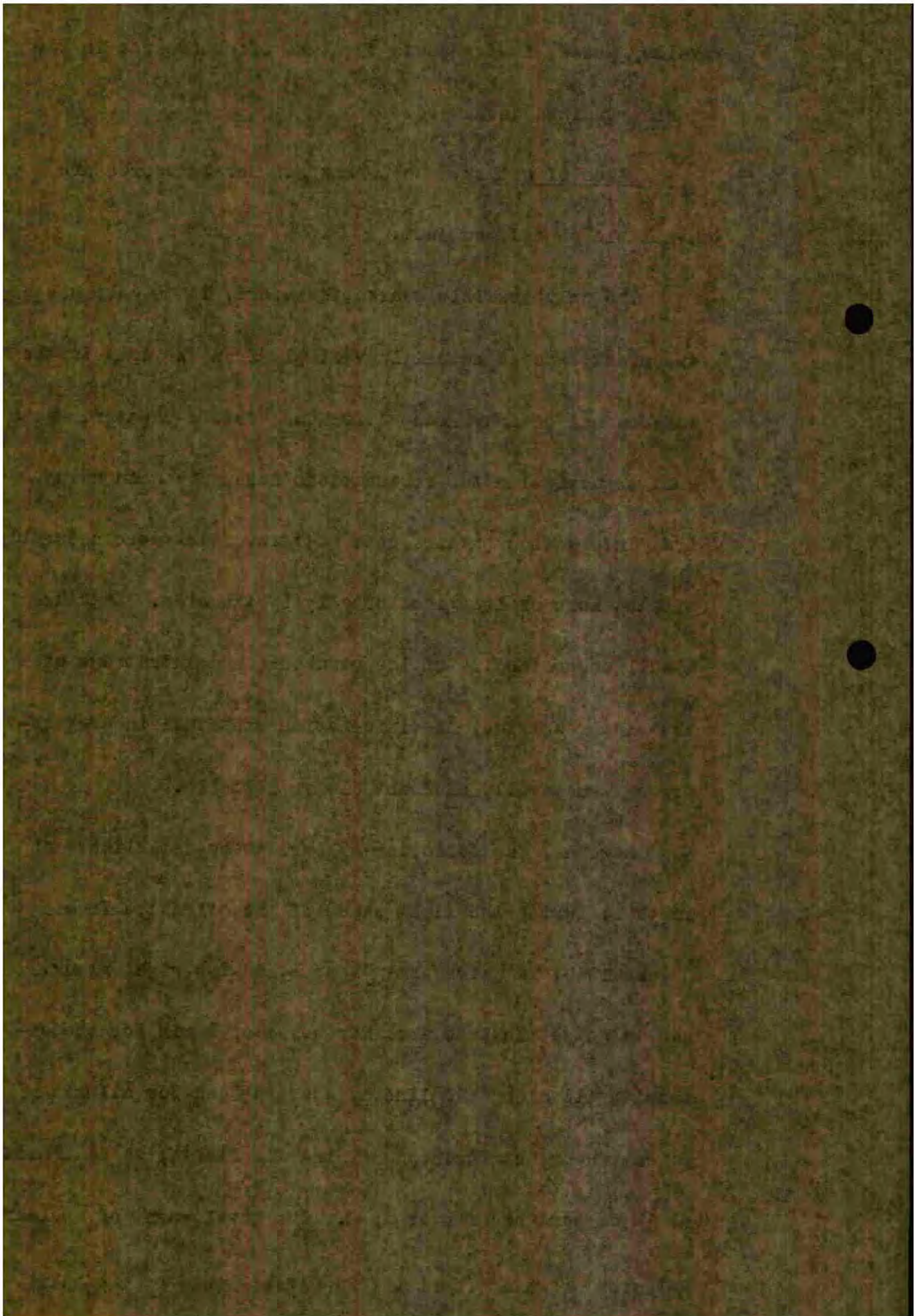


The assembly areas of the various air corps: it has not been possible as yet to reconstruct these accurately. They extended from western Belgium eastward to the Rhine valley areas; in the south the take off base area in Bavaria remained unchanged.

Plans of attack. No German Air Force records are available on this subject.

The only possible source, therefore, is to make use of the scanty source material available from the Army in the War Journal of Army Group A for the Western Theater. These must be used with the reservations necessary when using Army information on Air Force matters, which were naturally treated more or less incidentally by the Army. Lacking a full understanding of the structure and intentions of the sister service, the information <sup>given</sup> ~~mentioned~~ in Army records is naturally also not always reliable.

However, the following appears to be established as factual: During the first phase of the offensive from 5 to 8 June 1940, in which Army Group B, on the right flank, was to seize the base area northeast of Paris for the offensive all along the line, plans provided for all air power, under the Second and Third Air Fleets, to be committed in support of Army Group B. The development of a clear-cut area of main effort is thus discernible at the open



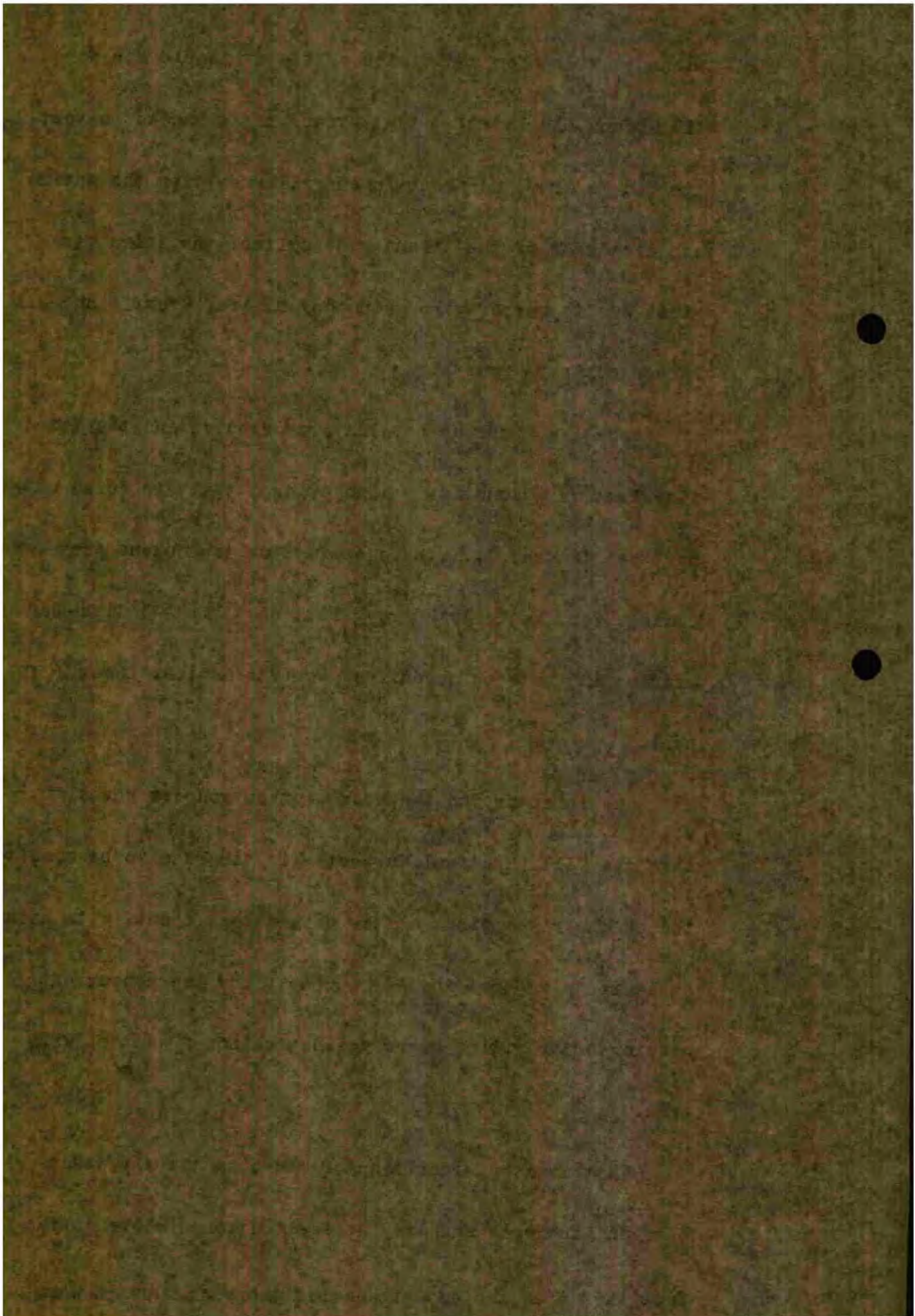
62 of the offensive, and, according to the sources quoted,  
was maintained throughout the first phase.

63 For the second phase of the offensive, from 9 June on,  
plans provided for a division of the available air forces:  
the Second Air Fleet on the extreme right was to support  
the Fourth Army and maintain surveillance over the entire  
sea area west of the Atlantic coastline; the Third Air  
Fleet was to support the main body of Army Group B and all  
forces of Army Group A.

From a conference between Army Group A and the Third  
Air Fleet on 6 June it is also evident that Air Force sup-  
port was insured ".....by one wing for the Second Army and  
3 wings for the Twelfth Army, with possibly 2-3 dive-bombers  
overlapping between Second and Twelfth Armies." (War Jour-  
nal).

Supplementary to the above, other sources reveal<sup>73</sup>  
that the VIII (Tactical Support) Air Wing was to be commit-  
ted on the right flank of the main attack front, with main  
emphasis on support for Army Group B and the concurrent  
mission of providing cover against action from the Paris  
area.

What seems a significant feature in the agreements  
between Air Force and Army Staffs mentioned above is the  
fact that from the outset some of the bomber wings were



69

63 split up from the very beginning and earmarked to support  
specific areas, hence, to render direct support to the  
ground forces, although the air units in question were  
64 quite specifically strategic bomber units.

It is to be assumed that those strategic bomber  
units of the Third Air Fleet which were not thus split  
up and assigned were intended for missions of indirect  
Army support in the far rear or were to be withheld for  
anti-air action against French air forces if that should  
prove necessary.

