

CHAPTER IV

NIGHT ACTIONS DURING FEBRUARY 1944

I. SURVEY

a. British Offensive Activity

The pattern of British nocturnal bombardment missions against the Reich was different during February than during January 1944. The RAF carried out only five large-scale attacks, four of which occurred immediately after the beginning of the Anglo-American air offensive. The average number of aircraft employed during one night reached a peak during this period, with 800 or 900 participating. There seemed to be no specific reason for this reduction in the number of British night actions. Weather conditions, though frequently adverse, could not, alone, have accounted for the decrease in activity.

Secondary air actions (i.e. actions other than large-scale attacks) were frequent and consisted chiefly of missions carried out by Mosquito aircraft. Included in these actions were sixteen harrassing raids carried out by a total of approximately 900 Mosquitos and directed chiefly against the industrial areas of Rhine-Westphalia. Mine-laying missions also increased in number, approximately ten such missions being observed over the waters of the western Baltic Sea, the Bay of Helgoland, and along the Dutch coast.

The first attack carried out by the RAF within the framework of the Anglo-American air offensive was the one on Leipzig during the night of 19/20 February, an action which resulted in heavy losses for the British. It was not until the attacks on Schweinfurt and Augsburg, carried out during the nights of 24/25 and 25/26 February respectively, that it became evident that the British and American air commanders were coordinating closely in their selection of attack targets and times.

The total effectiveness of the five British large-scale attacks was great; many residential areas were destroyed, and the installations of the German armaments industry suffered heavy damages. The fact that the British night attacks were preceded by American day attacks on the same targets greatly increased their effectiveness and hindered tremendously the clearing away of rubble and the accomplishment of urgent repair work. The many British harrassing raids, on the other hand, had little effect on the producing capacity of the German armaments industry.

There were seven nights during the reporting period during which no British aircraft whatsoever were observed over the Reich.

b. British Offensive Tactics and Radio Interference

In carrying out their large-scale attacks on the Reich, the RAF made extensive use of deception and diversionary maneuvers such as the following:

the scrambling of mine-laying aircraft belonging to the Coastal Command over the North Sea, hoping that we would think them a bomber stream and send up our fighters,

the employment of Mosquito units equipped with target locating devices, for the same purpose as above,

having the main bomber stream change its flight course a number of times, to camouflage the actual location of the intended target, and

the concurrent employment of small Mosquito formations in harrassing attacks to blur the air situation picture.

In an attempt to dissipate the German night fighter forces, the British Bomber Command began to follow the practice of sending up two bomber streams during the same night, starting at different times and following different flight courses to the same target. In addition, the RAF tried to prevent the employment of German night fighter units by

staging bomber raids on our night fighter airfields in Holland. Since these raids were carried out by very small units, they did not have any appreciable effect on our commitment of night fighter forces.

During the reporting period there was a substantial increase in the employment of British long-range night fighter aircraft. Their chief mission was to appear over illuminated German airfields and to harrass the take-off and landing maneuvers of the German night fighters.

There was no noticeable intensification of British radio and radar interference activity. The practice of dropping tinfoil strips from four-engine bombers as well as from Mosquitos was continued, and had an extremely detrimental effect on the functioning of our radar stations in France and southern Germany, rendering it very difficult to follow the flight course of enemy aircraft.

c. The Commitment of German Night Fighter Units

During February 1944, it became apparent that the German night fighter forces had established themselves as an effectively functioning defensive body in northern Germany. This was demonstrated by the fact that they succeeded in following British flight courses despite the extensive use by the enemy of harrassing and deceptive maneuvers and that the employment of night fighter units in both pursuit operations and in controlled combat against specific objectives was highly successful even under adverse weather conditions. The number of enemy aircraft brought down by units from the I Fighter Corps during the British attack on Leipzig (19/20 February) bore eloquent testimony to the effectiveness of German night air defense measures.

The weak points in the functioning of the night fighter defenses of the I Fighter Corps remained the employment of aircraft in controlled combat which, in the defense against British mine-laying operations, for

example, was almost a complete failure because of British radio interference measures, and the problem of a defense against the harrasing operations carried out by British Mosquito aircraft. Although efforts were continued during February to create an airplane capable of meeting the Mosquito by increasing the climbing ability and speed of some already extant aircraft model, none of these attempts was successful. During the month of February approximately 900 Mosquito aircraft penetrated into the area covered by the I Fighter Corps; only one of these was brought down. Nor was there any hope of alleviation of our helplessness. As yet there was no information available regarding the possible employment of jet-propelled aircraft within the night fighter units against the Mosquitos.

The British attacks on targets lying in southern Germany by bomber forces approaching over France brought additional difficulties in the employment of the German night fighter forces. On the whole these difficulties could be traced to the decentralized command organization of the Reichs air defense forces, and particularly to the preparation of air situation pictures and the command of such forces in southern Germany and in France, outside the area of jurisdiction of the I Fighter Corps. Both the radar stations and the direction-finding posts serving the areas covered by the 7th Fighter Division and the 4th Fighter Division, Third Air Fleet, were inferior in respect to personnel and equipment. Moreover the personnel manning these stations had had no experience in following the flight course of enemy aircraft and in guiding our own aircraft in combat from the ground in the face of British radar jamming activity. As a result the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, was often ~~was~~ forced to employ its night fighter units in the defense of southern German targets under British attack, and this in the total absence of a servicable air situation picture. Moreover, once these night fighter units had been passed on to

127

ground control stations of the 7th and 4th Fighter Divisions, guidance from the ground became very meager indeed; this was true for all types of night fighter activity, i.e. pursuit, controlled combat, etc. Because of the distance they had to travel and the confusion of the air situation picture, the units from the I Fighter Corps rarely managed to arrive at the target in time to be of any help. The Reichs air defense system ought to have a central command agency whose job it would be to standardize the personnel and equipment of all radar and ground control stations and to shift these personnel from time to time so that they might all gain experience in specialized techniques and functions.

The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, suspected that British commanders had developed a liking for the flight course over France and that the RAF would concentrate in the future on targets in southern Germany. Thus the suggestion was made to the Air Fleet Reich that the 7th Fighter Division, and especially the Frankfurt area, be supplied with experienced radio and radar personnel and with modern direction-finding equipment from the Holland area. This suggestion was put into effect at the end of February.

The three single-engine night fighter wings, under the direct command of the 30th Fighter Division, Air Fleet Reich, had been employed with complete independence since August 1943. During the winter of 1943/44 they had been committed in controlled combat against specific objectives, under their own command organization and independently from the activities of the I Fighter Corps. Their frequent failures, due to inadequate air situation information, and their heavy losses decided the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, to deactivate the headquarters of the 30th Fighter Division, effective 15 February 1944. Effective 16 February, the 300th and 302d Single-Engine Night Fighter Wings were assigned to the Headquarters, I Fighter ~~Corp~~ Corps.

128

Disregarding the problem, still unsolved, of an adequate defense against the Mosquitos, the situation of the night fighter forces within the Reichs air defense system was fairly favorable as of the end of February.

The night fighter crisis which had been brought on by British radio interference and the British bomber stream technique, had been practically overcome. The long period of adverse weather conditions was coming to an end. The majority of the night fighter crews had mastered the techniques of uncontrolled night combat. Roughly one-third of the night fighter crews were capable of employment in bad weather. The assignment of the two single-engine night fighter wings to the I Fighter Corps had increased the latter's total striking power considerably. With the improvement of the radar and ground control stations in southern Germany, there was every prospect of inflicting sufficiently heavy losses on the British units to persuade the latter to discontinue their bomber operations against the Reich. This last, of course, ~~was~~ was based on the presumption that the British would not come up with any vitally important innovations in radar jamming and that they would continue to employ the bomber stream technique.

d. Successes and Losses During ~~January 1944~~ February 1944

During February 1944, the average total number of night fighter aircraft available for employment by the I Fighter Corps was 225 twin-engine fighter aircraft and, after 16 February, 80 single-engine night fighter aircraft.

The total number of night fighter aircraft committed by the I Fighter Corps during February 1944 was 1,115 single and twin-engine night fighter aircraft.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the I Fighter Corps during Feb-

bruary 1944 amounted to 53 aircraft, or 4.8% of the total number of aircraft committed.

The total losses suffered by the enemy within the area covered by the I Fighter Corps during February 1944 amounted to 153 aircraft (excluding those brought down by antiaircraft artillery and by the single-engine night fighter aircraft during the period 1 through 15 February), or 3.2% of the estimated total number of aircraft (4,857) employed by the RAF against the Reich. These losses represented 3.8% of the total number of four-engine bombers committed by the RAF.

II. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON BERLIN AND KREFELD, 1/2 February 1944
(see Figure 115, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The raids were carried out as follows: Berlin was attacked by a force of twenty Mosquito bombers, which were sighted first at 1853 over IJmuiden headed towards the east. Their flight continued over Osnabrück and Hannover to the Dessau, Berlin and Neurippen areas. They began their return flights at 2000, flying in loose formation over northwestern Germany and reaching the coast at a point between Borkum and the mouth of the Schelde. The last aircraft was reported crossing the coast at 2151.

Beginning at 1938, Krefeld was subjected to attack by a group of six Mosquitos. Beginning at 1906 they had approached between The Hague and the island of Schouwen and proceeded into the Bocholt, Essen, Düsseldorf and Aix la Chapelle areas. They departed from the Continent between The Hague and Blankenberghe, the last aircraft leaving at 2041.

In addition to the above, during the time from 1819 until 0025, five aircraft were observed over the Skagerrak, two of them on their way to Sweden, and the other three returning to the British Isles.

During the night of 31 January/1 February, three British aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak towards Sweden between 1836 and 2308.

Two aircraft flew over The Hague, Rotterdam, and Tiel at approximately 1900.

At 1906 a single aircraft appeared over the island of Goeree, flew on over Gorinchen and Arnheim, and departed via Breda and the island of Zuid.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None

e. Weather Conditions

Closed cover of high-altitude clouds; visibility very poor; over northern Jutland: cover of multiple-strata clouds, fairly high.

III. THE BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACK ON THE RUHR DISTRICT AND THE MINING OF THE BAY OF KIEL, 2/3 February 1944

(see Figure 116, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the first half of the night, a force of twenty-five Mosquito bombers carried out harrassing raids on the northern and southern parts of the Ruhr District. No serious damage was caused.

During the second half of the night, some twenty to thirty aircraft appeared suddenly out of the North Sea along the western coast of Schleswig-Holstein, flying very low. They continued towards the east as far as the Bay of Kiel, where they dropped aerial mines. Their approach was erroneously interpreted by the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, as the approach

of a British bomber stream.

In addition to the above, the RAF carried out the following actions:

Eight aircraft, sighted at 0232 over the Frisian Islands, came in to carry out a raid on the coasts of the Bay of Helgoland. They returned towards the west, leaving the mouth of the Elbe at 0307 and the Kiel area at 0321. The position reports on these aircraft, in connection with the reported approach of the mine-laying aircraft, were responsible for the confusion of the air situation report.

Between 2041 and 2123, a single aircraft flew in over IJmuiden as far as Enschede.

During the time from 0408 to 0416, a single aircraft was observed over the islands of Terschelling and Vlieland.

From 2000 to 2018, one aircraft was reported crossing the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden, and from 0045 to 0106, three on their way from Sweden back to Great Britain.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed in defense against the mine-laying aircraft:

from Himmelbett areas over Schleswig-Holstein:

several night fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division.

in night pursuit activity:

small units from the 1st and 2d Fighter Divisions, assembling at radio beacon Eiehnörnehen; as soon as it was realized that the aircraft approaching over the Bay of Helgoland were not bombers but mine-layers, the night fighter aircraft were ordered to land.

A total of 50 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

Over Holland and northwestern Germany: overcast, with clouds at 100 meters; rain; visibility poor.

Over the western Baltic Sea: dispersing clouds between 400 and 600 meters; ground visibility four to six kilometers.

IV. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON THE RUHR DISTRICT, 3/4 and 4/5 February 1944

(see Figure 117, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

3/4 February 1944. Krefeld was raided by a force of twenty Mosquito bombers. They were sighted first at 1914 over the southern part of the Zuyder Zee and the mouth of the Schelde, and flew on over Münster, Wuppertal and Cologne to their target. They returned via Bergen and the island of Walcheren, the last aircraft crossing the coast at 2100.

Two Mosquito bombers raided the city of Mainz. The first one approached at 2032 over Ostende, Namur, and Trier and returned at 2313 by way of Luxemburg, Namur and Maldegem. The second aircraft was reported at 2139 over the island of Goeree, and continued on over Antwerp and Koblenz to its target. Its return flight led it back over Liège, Brussels, and Westerschelle, at which point it crossed the coast at 2341.

In addition to the above, the following actions were carried out by the RAF:

A single aircraft was observed returning from the Frankfurt/Main area via Mainz and Malmedy at 0453; it left the Continent at Heyst at 0545.

Two aircraft, reported approaching at 0655, flew over Brussels and St. Trond and flew off again at 0722.

133

4/5 February 1944. Between 1846 and 1922 a force of approximately twenty Mosquito bombers passed over the Channel coast between Etaples and the mouth of the Schelde on their way towards the southeast. Several of them entered the Ruhr District and the rest flew on into the Aschaffenburg and Frankfurt/Main areas. Düsseldorf and Frankfurt/Main were bombed and a few scattered bombs also dropped on Offenbach and Kaiserslautern.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

During both nights adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions (3/4 February)

Over the Ruhr District and Frankfurt/Main: 7/10 to 10/10 cover of cumulo-nimbus clouds between 500 and 4,500 meters; danger of icing above 1,800 meters.

4/5 February: 5/10 to 9/10 cover of moving cumulus clouds between 500 and 6,500 meters; widespread rain and snow flurries; danger of icing in the clouds above 500 meters.

V. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON BERLIN AND DUISBURG, 5/6 February 1944,
AND OTHER HARRASSING FLIGHTS, 6/7 February 1944

(see Figure 118, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

5/6 February 1944. The following actions were carried out by the RAF:

Between 1844 and 1944, three aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak on their way to Sweden.

134

A group of approximately twenty Mosquito bombers carried out a harrasing raid on the city of Berlin. The aircraft were first reported approaching from the North Sea at 1910. They crossed the coast between the island of Pellworm and Heide, and flew on over the Bays of Kiel and Mecklenburg to their target. South of Schwerin, two of the aircraft turned back; the rest of the group bombed Berlin and several rural communities in the vicinity of Schwerin between 2030 and 2115 and flew back towards the west and northwest. They crossed the coast between the island of Terschelling and Zandvoort, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2210.

Approaching over Bergen at 2056, two Mosquitos penetrated as far as Hannover and dropped several bombs on the area lying south of the city. Returning, they joined the aircraft flying back from Berlin over Minden.

A force of twenty Mosquito bombers, reported approaching at 1935 between The Hague and Bergen with course towards the southeast, flew on to carry out a harrasing raid on the city of Duisburg. They reached their target at 2030; after the raid they returned towards the west, crossing the mouth of the Schelde at 2133.

A group of approximately thirty aircraft, presumably engaged in laying mines in the Skaggerak and in dropping supplies to agents in northern Jutland, was observed beginning at 2000 over northern Jutland. The aircraft returned towards the west at 2324.

Between 2031 and 2046 several aircraft on a harrasing mission flew over Hoek van Holland on their way to Woensdrecht. They crossed the coast on their return flight at the mouth of the Schelde.

6/7 February 1944. The following actions were reported:

During the time from 1825 to 2356, four aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak, two on their way from Sweden and two on their way to Sweden.

135

Between 2056 and 2115 two aircraft circled over the waters north of the island of Terschelling.

A single aircraft, approaching at 1925 over Berck and Saarbrücken, flew on as far as Stuttgart, then turned back towards the west. Its return flight led over Mannheim, Trier, Liège and Heyst, and it left the Continent at 2306.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:

5/6 February 1944:

from Himmelbett areas over Jutland, against the British mine-laying aircraft: 30 twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division; against the harrassing attack on Duisburg: 2 He-219's belonging to the 3d Fighter Division.

6/7 February 1944:

from Himmelbett areas against the courier aircraft: 1 twin-engine fighter aircraft.

A total number of 33 aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps during the two nights indicated.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

5/6 February 1944: Over the areas assigned to the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions: 3/10 to 6/10 cover of cumulo-stratus clouds between 800 and 2,000 meters; visibility good; Over the area assigned to the 1st Fighter Division: 10/10 cover of multiple-strata clouds between 500 and 5,000 meters; widespread light snow flurries; danger of icing above 1,500 meters.

6/7 February 1944: 7/10 to 10/10 cloud cover beginning at 1,000 meters.

VI. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON WUPPERTAL AND FRANKFURT/MAIN, 7/8 February 1944, AND OTHER HARRASSING FLIGHTS, 8/9 February 1944

(see Figure 119, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

7/8 February 1944. The following actions were carried out by the RAF:

During the time from 1907 to 2032, several aircraft were reported circling over the waters north of the islands of Vlieland and Terschelling, apparently engaged in laying mines.

Beginning at 2250, a group of about twenty Mosquito bombers raided the city of Wuppertal. Their approach flight, lasting from 2208 until 2325, led them over the coast at a point between Amsterdam and Calais, and on over Stadtlohn and Cologne to their target. Their return flight followed the same course, and the last aircraft left the Continent at 0035.

Between 0044 and 0058, a single aircraft circled above the mouth of the Schelde.

Between 0231 and 0257, one courier aircraft on its way to Sweden was observed flying over the Skagerrak.

Reported approaching between 0306 and 0331 over the mouth of the Schelde, Cologne and Koblenz, a group of fifteen Mosquito bombers raided the city of Frankfurt/Main. They began their return flights at 0403 and followed a course leading them over Biessen, Duisburg, Trier and Lille. They crossed the coast between Rotterdam and Boulogne, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 0525. Two of the fifteen Mosquitoes continued on as far as the Nuremberg area, and returned by way of Rothenburg, Mannheim, Namur, and Dunkirk.

8/9 February 1944. At approximately 1900 German radar stations reported the assembling of a large force of British aircraft northeast of The Wash. Subsequent position-finding reports failed to confirm the take-off of such a large group. The following actions were carried out by the RAF:

Between 1930 and 1947, a single aircraft was reported circling above the islands of Vlieland and Terschelling.

At 1930 a single aircraft appeared over the island of Schouwen and flew on to the Breda area. It returned towards the west over the island of Goeree at 2004.

Beginning at 2008, a force of twenty Mosquitos raided Wuppertal. From 1930 on, twenty-five aircraft had come in between Den Helder and Noordwijk with course towards the southeast. Twenty aircraft flew on as far as the Ruhr District, raided Wuppertal, and returned towards the west. Fifteen aircraft continued on towards the east as far as Magdeburg, where they turned back at 2040. One of the group flew back via Rotenburg, Wesermünde, and the island of Borkum. The majority of them left the coast between the island of Vlieland and the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft crossing this point at 2152.

During the time from 0024 to 0050, one courier aircraft was observed crossing the Skagerrak on its way from Sweden.

Approaching at 0138 over Arnheim and Münster, two Mosquito aircraft penetrated into the Hannover area. They returned towards the west, over Frankfurt/Main and the mouth of the Somme, leaving the Continent at 0340.

Approaching at 0435 via Bergen and Osnabrück, a third Mosquito flew as far as Hannover. Its return course led it over the area north of Frankfurt/Main, Aix la Chapelle, and the mouth of the Somme; it crossed the coast at 0650.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

138

The following forces were committed:

7/8 February 1944:

from Himmelbett areas over the northern coast of Holland: 6 twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division (against the mine-laying aircraft),

8/9 February 1944:

aircraft ordered to stand by in Himmelbett areas over the coast of the Bay of Helgoland: 13 twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division,

employed with the Y-Method against the Mosquito bombers:

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

from the airfield at Stade 1 twin-engine fighter aircraft

from the airfield at Venlo 2 He-219's.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

7/8 February 1944: 5/10 to 9/10 cover of stratus clouds between 500 and 1,500 meters; visibility under the cloud level, 5 to 10 kilometers; southwest of the line Cologne-Paris: closed cloud cover beginning at 100 meters; rainstorms.

8/9 February 1944: 5/10 to 9/10 cover of nimbus clouds with snow flurries; cloud cover reaching to 3,000 meters, with scattered peaks as high as 5,000 meters; high-altitude visibility excellent.

VII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON WUPPERTAL AND KREFELD, 9/10 February 1944, AND ON BERLIN AND AIX LA CHAPELLE, 10/11 February 1944

(see Figure 120, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

9/10 February 1944. The RAF carried out the following actions:

Between 1910 and 1912, a single aircraft was reported over the island of Vlieland.

During the time from 2000 and 2050, several aircraft were engaged in mining the waters west of Den Helder and IJmuiden.

Harrassing raids on the cities of Wuppertal and Krefeld were carried out by a total force of approximately thirty Mosquito bombers. The aircraft approached at about 0257 over the Zuyder Zee and flew on due east as far as the German border, at which point they altered their course towards the Ruhr District. One or two aircraft turned back over Zwolle and Meppel; the rest returned to the west via the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 0520.

Between 2144 and 2213, a single courier aircraft was reported over the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden.

10/11 February 1944.

During the first half of the night, a British aircraft was observed circling over the mouth of the Schelde for a few minutes.

During the second half of the night, German Rotterdam instruments revealed a large number of aircraft over the southern part of the North Sea, with course towards the east. The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, interpreted them first as the first aircraft of a bomber stream, and later as a mine-laying expedition. It was not until they crossed the coast of Jutland that it became clear that the group of twenty Mosquito bombers was on its way, ~~via~~ via Rostock, to bombard Berlin. The aircraft returned towards the west, flying across northwestern Germany.

At the same time, four Mosquito bombers, having approached over the mouth of the Schelde, carried out a harrassing raid on the city of Aix la

Chapelle. Their return flight led them over southern Holland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

9/10 February 1944: adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of night fighter aircraft.

10/11 February 1944: the following forces were ordered to stand by: against the supposed approach of a British bomber stream over the southern North Sea: from Himmelbett areas over the coasts of the Bay of Helgoland and for night pursuit activity over Hamburg and Kiel: 31 twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division.

c. Allied Losses

9/10 February 1944: one Mosquito bomber crashed over the Ruhr District.

d. German Losses

two Me-110's were damaged when they collided while taxiing at the airfield at Wittmundhafen.

e. Weather Conditions

9/10 February 1944: Over Holland: impenetrable cloud cover beginning at 100 meters; rain; over the Ruhr District: 7/10 to 10/10 cover of nimbus clouds with very high peaks; rain; Over northern Jutland: clear.

10/11 February 1944: Over Holland: 6/10 to 10/10 cover of cumulus clouds between 500 and 2,000 meters; scattered snow flurries; over Berlin: unbroken cover of stratus clouds between 100 and 1,500 meters; snowfall.

VIII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON WUPPERTAL AND DUISBURG, 11/12 and 12/13 February 1944

(see Figure 121, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

11/12 February 1944. Beginning at 1925, a group of about thirty

Mosquito bombers were reported approaching between the island of Vlieland and the mouth of the Schelde with course towards the east and southeast. They flew on as far as the border of the Reich, at which point a few of them turned around and flew back. Approximately fifteen aircraft headed for the Ruhr District, where they dropped a few bombs on Aix la Chapelle, Wuppertal, Duisburg, and Solingen. One Mosquito penetrated as far as the city of Kassel. They began their return flight at 2101, towards the west. Ten aircraft flew between Papenburg and Rheine into the Hannover area, Magdeburg and Hildesheim, where they bombed the area lying east of the last-named city. These Mosquitos headed for the west at 2118, and crossed the coast between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde. The last aircraft was reported leaving the coast behind at 2240.

At 1925 German radar stations reported the approach of a large force from the Norwih area, with course towards the east. According to the readings of our Rotterdam instruments, the bomber stream (if it was one) flew on with course towards the south southeast as far as the mouth of the Schelde, where it turned around and headed for home.

During the time from 1942 to 2303, two courier aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak on theyr way to Sweden, and one on its way from Sweden to Great Britain.

12/13 February 1944. The following actions were carried out by the RAF:

A group of thirty aircraft carried out a mine-laying mission in the waters off the East Frisian Islands. The aircraft were reported at 1920 at a point 160 kilometers west of the island of Terschelling, with course towards the east. They flew along north of the West Frisian Islands as far as the waters lying to the north of the islands of Borkum and Norderney. They completed their return flights towards the northwest at 2037.

142

A harrassing raid on the Ruhr District was carried out, with scattered bombs being released over the city of Duisburg.

At 1928 a group of fifteen Mosquito bombers appeared over the coast between Ostende and Calais. They flew on as far as Malmedy, Aix la Chapelle, and Cologne, and turned back towards the west and northwest at 2030.

Crossing the coast between IJmuiden and Noordwijk at 2008, a force of ten Mosquito bombers continued on into the areas of Bocholt, Duisburg, and Wuppertal. They began their return flights towards the west at 2030.

During the time from 2014 until 0219, four courier aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak, two on their way from, and two on their way to Sweden.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

11/12 February 1944: the following forces were ordered to stand by in case of a large-scale attack: several units from the 3d Fighter Division, to be employed in night pursuit activity; against the Mosquito raids: several night fighter aircraft from the 1st and 3d Fighter Divisions, to be employed by means of the Y-Method.

A total of 45 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft were placed on an alert status.

12/13 February 1944: the following forces were employed:

from Himmelbett areas over the coasts of the Bay of Helgoland, against the enemy mine-laying aircraft: small units from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions;

from Himmelbett areas over northern Jutland, against the courier aircraft: one night fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division;

against the Mosquito raiders: several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, to be guided by the Y-Method.

A total number of 14 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

One Mosquito bomber, brought down by an Me-410 during the night of 12/13 February.

d. German Losses

One Me-109, crashed while taking off on the night of 11/12 February.

e. Weather Conditions

11/12 February 1944: 3/10 to 6/10 cover of rapidly shifting stratus clouds between 800 and 2,000 meters; scattered clouds at 4,000 meters; visibility, both above and under the clouds, very good.

12/13 February 1944: 3/10 to 6/10 cover of loosely scattered stratus clouds between 800 and 1,000 meters; visibility very good.

IX. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON BERLIN, 15/16 February 1944

(see Figure 122, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

After their assembling had already been reported, at 1830 a group of some 500 British bombers was reported taking off from the Norwich area, with course towards the northeast. The bomber stream moved over the North Sea, crossed southern Jutland, and altered course towards the southeast over the island of Fünen. The attack on Berlin lasted from 2105 to 2145. The returning bombers flew, with course towards the west and northwest, over northwestern Germany and Holland.

During the period from 1938 to 2150, a total of seventy-five Mosquito bombers crossed the Dutch coast between Den Helder and the island of Goeree. The majority of them flew on over the Zuyder Zee to join in the attack on Berlin. Forty of them, flying at altitudes varying from 1,800 to 3,000 meters, attacked German-occupied night fighter airfields in Holland, causing slight damage at Deelen and Venlo. The attack on Berlin, on the other hand,

inflicted severe damage on both industrial plants and private property in the sectors of Spandau and Siemensstadt.

At 2029 a British courier aircraft on its way to Sweden was reported crossing the Skagerrak.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Despite adverse weather conditions, which rendered the take-off extremely difficult, the following forces were employed:

in night pursuit activity:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Hahn, directed on to radio beacon Eichhörnchen and into the bomber stream over the Rostock area;

units from the 2d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Quelle from the airfields at Wittmundhafen, Vechta and Stade, and directed into the bomber stream over southern Jutland; assembling over the airfields at Westerland and Schleswig and directed into the bomber stream over Jutland;

units from the 3d Fighter Division; those night fighter aircraft from northern Holland were guided via Helgoland to Jutland, where they were sent into the bomber stream; the remainder assembled at radio beacon Quelle together with the forces from the 2d Fighter Division, and were employed with the latter.

All night fighter aircraft were ordered to leave the bomber stream at radio beacon Neunauge and not to fly on into Berlin, in order that the anti-aircraft artillery might have a completely free hand at all altitudes. By aiming for radio beacon Berta, the night fighters could pick up the returning bomber stream and resume pursuit.

from Himmelbett areas over northwestern Germany and Holland: units from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions.

Weather conditions were too bad to risk the employment of single-engine

fighter aircraft.

A total number of 143 twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

39 bombers brought down

4 bombers brought down over Berlin by antiaircraft artillery

d. German Losses

11 aircraft

personnel: 11 dead

4 wounded

9 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Impenetrable cover of high-altitude fog beginning at 200 to 400 meters and extending as high as 1,100 meters; danger of icing in the cloud cover; visibility two to five kilometers.

X. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON LEIPZIG, 19/20 February 1944

(see Figure 123, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The RAF opened the February offensive of the Anglo-American air forces with a large-scale attack on the city of Leipzig. According to estimates made by German sources, 600 bombers, 50 Mosquitos, and approximately 30 long-range night fighters participated in this action. Leipzig suffered severe property damage through the British attack.

The British night action was carried out in the following stages:

1) Between 2314 and 2345, a total of twenty long-range night fighter aircraft flew in over the Dutch coast. At altitudes varying from 6,000 to 9,500 meters, they flew over the German night fighter airfields in Holland, and at 0036, departed from the area.

2) At the same time, a force of approximately 100 aircraft at-

bombarded the airfields at Leeuwarden, Deelen, Venlo, and Gilze-Rijen, causing severe damage and greatly hindering the commitment of the night fighter units.

3) Shortly after midnight approximately 500 bombers took off from Norwich, with course for the northeast. Our Rotterdam instruments were able to follow their flight course as far as the vicinity of the island of Sylt. As the lead aircraft flew over the coast of Jutland at a low altitude, they were recognized as mine-layers. They penetrated as far as the western Baltic Sea, dropped their mines, and returned over Schleswig-Holstein towards the west. The British mining maneuver did not succeed in confusing us, for the flight course of the main bomber stream had already been picked up.

4) As the mine-laying aircraft flew off towards the western Baltic, the main stream appeared north of the island of Terschelling, with its course clearly towards the southeast. It proceeded over the Frisian Islands, the Bremen area, and Hannover as far as the western edge of Berlin. Southwest and west of Berlin the bombers altered their course ^{towards} ~~for~~ the south for the approach to Leipzig. A group of about fifty Mosquitos, having approached over the Zuyder Zee, tried to confuse the air situation picture and camouflage the actual attack target by activity in the Berlin and Dresden areas. Their attack completed, the bombers left Leipzig and headed for the west as far as Kassel. Here a northern group split off and returned by way of Gütersloh, Osnabrück, and the Zuyder Zee, and a southern group followed a course leading over Cologne, Koblenz, and southern Belgium to the English Channel.

5) Because of the intense activity over the Reich, it was impossible to follow the flight course of another group of Mosquitos, presumably long-range fighters.

In addition to the above, the following actions were reported:

147

At 0030, three to five long-range night fighter aircraft were reported north of Helgoland. They flew on over the mouth of the Elbe as far as Hamburg, and flew back out to sea with course towards the northwest at 0125.

At 0024 a single long-range night fighter aircraft flew over Dunkirk, and continued on over Charleroi and the area north of Giessen. Its course was lost to view at 0147, somewhere north of Erfurt.

At 0045 a single long-range fighter aircraft was observed over Bocholt. From here it proceeded to the area south of Münster and Bielefeld as far as Hannover. Here it circled from 0123 until 0150 and then departed. Its position was reported at 0206 over Soltau.

At 0320 three long-range night fighters flew over Bergen and the Zuyder Zee on their way into the Hannover area. The last position report was received at 0359.

At 0238 a single long-range night fighter aircraft was reported over the mouth of the Schelde. From here it moved on over Charleville and Koblenz. Its position at 0358 was somewhere north of Giessen.

At 0425 a single long-range night fighter aircraft flew over Katwijk and on into the Hertogenbosch area. It flew back over the mouth of the Schelde at 0500.

6) Flights over the Skagerrak:

16/17 February: four aircraft on their way to Sweden;

17/18 February: one aircraft on its way to Sweden and three coming from Sweden, during the time from 1933 to 0120;

18/19 February: one aircraft on its way to Sweden and two coming from Sweden, during the time from 1915 to 0532; and

19/20 February: one aircraft coming from Sweden, between 1925 and 1958.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed in defense against the attack on Leipzig:

from Himmelbett areas over Holland, during the approach and departure flights of the enemy bombers: units from the 3d Fighter Division;

from Himmelbett areas over northwestern Germany, during the return flight of the enemy bombers: parts of units from the 2d Fighter Division;

in night pursuit activity:

twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Hahn and directed into the bomber stream south-east of Bremen;

twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions and several units from the 4th Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacons Hammer and Quelle and directed into the bomber stream over Emden and Bremen;

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

single-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st, 2d, and 3d Fighter Divisions, scrambling over Berlin and directed on to Leipzig;

in the illumination of target areas:

the Target Illumination Group from the airfield at Münster, assembling at radio beacon Marie, and guided on to radio beacon Berta and to Berlin.

A great many of the twin-engine fighters assigned to pursuit activity in the bomber stream remained with the stream on its return flight as far as Kassel. The majority of the single-engine fighters arrived too late over Leipzig for effective action. Despite the deceptive and diversionary maneuvers carried out by the British, the night fighter units of the I Fighter Corps operated with considerable success.

A total number of 294 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was em-

ployed.

c. Allied Losses

74 bombers brought down (on the morning of 20 February, British transmitters indicated the loss of 79 bombers).

d. German Losses

17 aircraft, including one Me-110 which crashed over Brandenburg/Havel, one FW-190 which crashed while taking off from the airfield at Oldenburg, and one Me-109 which crashed during the take-off from the airfield at Wiesbaden-Erbenheim

personnel: 4 dead

16 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Cover of stratus clouds varying from 3/10 to 10/10 between 600 and 1,200 meters; visibility good both on the ground and at higher altitudes; slight danger of icing in the clouds.

XI. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON STUTTGART, 20/21 February 1944

(see Figure 124, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

British operations during the night of 20/21 February began with a series of attacks on German night fighter airfields in Holland, during which the following ~~xxx~~ were raided:

The airfield at Leeuwarden, by two Mosquito bombers which had been reported approaching at 2346 over the island of Texel. They returned the same way at 0006.

The airfield at Gilze-Rijen, by three Mosquito bombers. The raid began at 2348, and the aircraft flew back over the mouth of the Schelde at 0023.

The airfields at Deelen and Twente, by a total force of five Mos-

quito bombers. They were reported first at 0013 over IJmuiden; after carrying out their attack, they returned towards the west, flying over Gilze-Rijen at 0059 and the mouth of the Schelde at 0104.

The airfields at Venlo and Twente, by several Mosquito bombers whose approach was reported at 0002 over the mouth of the Schelde. They returned via the same course, the last aircraft crossing the coast at 0210.

The airfield at St. Trond, by several Mosquito bombers which had approached via Ghent, crossing the coast between Calais and Dunkirk. Several bombs were also dropped in the vicinity of Ghent.

At 0041 our radar stations picked up the track of a large aircraft force over the ocean northeast of Norwich with course towards the east. This force, presumed to be a bomber stream, could be followed to a point some ninety kilometers north of the island of Vlieland, where it turned back towards the west at 0111. It was assumed that this was an attempted deceptive maneuver on the part of the British.

In the meantime it had been reported that a bomber stream consisting of 400 to 500 aircraft had taken off from the Norwich area and was moving towards the south; the lead aircraft were picked up at 0100 over the mouth of the Somme. Here the bombers altered their course towards the southeast and continued their flight over St. Quentin, Reims, and Strassburg into southwestern Germany, where they bombed the city of Stuttgart. Severe damages were sustained. Flying in broad front formation, the bombers left the attack area and returned towards the northwest, crossing the Rhine Palatinate, Lorraine, Belgium, and northern France.

In addition to the above, the following actions were carried out by the RAF:

Between 2037 and 2042, several aircraft circled above the waters lying north of the island of Borkum.

151

At 0420 a single long-range night fighter flew over the ~~areas~~ of Vechta and Quackenbrück ~~and succeeded in damaged~~ ^{areas and} two hangars and several aircraft illuminated ^{by aircraft search fire returned} at the airfield at Vechta. The enemy aircraft ~~then~~ ^{low distance fights} ~~back~~ via Meppen at 0450. Two ~~aircraft~~ ^{aircraft} on their way to Sweden, and one on its way from Sweden, were observed crossing the Skagerrak.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed in defense against the attack on Stuttgart:

in night pursuit activity:

twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division; ~~XXXXXX~~ ~~being~~ the Ju-88 units assembled at radio beacon Quelle, were directed on to radio beacons Phillip and Otte, where they joined forces from the 7th Fighter Division; the Me-110 units were assembled at radio beacon 12 and ordered to stand by in case the bomber stream should head towards northern Germany;

twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division; the Ju-88 units were guided by the Y-Method from their airfields to the Metz area, where they were to be directed into the bomber stream; the Me-110 units were assembled at radio beacon Ida, directed on to radio beacon Otte, and there joined units from the 7th Fighter Division.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

single-engine night fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over Frankfurt/Main and Mannheim.

from Himmelbett areas over southern Holland, against the departing bomber stream:

several night fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division.

The Target Illumination Group was directed from the airfield at Münster to radio beacon Otte, where it joined units from the 7th Fighter Division.

A total number of 103 aircraft was employed, including single and twin-engine fighter aircraft and members of the target illumination unit.

During the operations of 20/21 February, the ground control stations of the 4th Fighter Division at Metz were unsuccessful in directing the Ju-88's into the bomber stream. Moreover, due to their lack of experience, the personnel manning the ground control stations of the 7th Fighter Division were incapable of directing those night fighters of the I Fighter Corps which had assembled at radio beacon Otto into the bomber stream.

There is no information contained in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps regarding the commitment of units from the 7th Fighter Division or the Third Air Fleet.

c. Allied Losses

4 bombers brought down

d. German Losses

2 aircraft

personnel: 4 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Unbroken cover of stratus clouds beginning at 400 to 700 meters and extending as high as 1,300 meters; Over Belgium and Frankfurt: cloudless; Over Stuttgart: 10/10 cloud cover extending as high as 1,800 meters; in general, ground visibility was from four to eight kilometers and high-altitude visibility poor because of haze.

f. Remarks

The effectiveness of the British attacks on our airfields in Holland may be seen from the following:

Deelen: hit by several demolition bombs; damage very slight.

Twente: runways hit by five demolition bombs and one dud; landing strip hit by three demolition bombs.

Leeuwarden: hit by four demolition bombs; one runway and one landing strip slightly damaged.

St. Trond: runways hit by four demolition bombs and landing strips by three bombs.

Venlo: hit by seven demolition bombs; the taxiing area was damaged by two bomb craters; the other five were duds.

None of these airfields was too badly damaged to be fully utilized in take-off and landing maneuvers.

XII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON DUISBURG, 21/22 and 22/23 February 1944

(see Figure 125, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

21/22 February 1944. At the beginning of the first half of the night, approximately twenty mine-laying aircraft appeared over the waters northwest of the island of Vlieland. They circled above the East Frisian Islands and the Bay of Helgoland, and then flew back towards the west.

At the same time a force consisting of twenty Mosquito bombers flew in over Amsterdam to attack the city of Duisburg. Their return flight course led over the mouth of the Schelde.

Several Mosquito aircraft, approaching via northern France and Liège, penetrated as far as Stuttgart, and returned the same way they had come.

Two Mosquito bombers crossed the Zuyder Zee and penetrated as far as the Braunschweig area. Their return course led over Frankfurt/Main, Koblenz and Belgium.

In addition to the above, the following actions were noted:

Approaching at 2013, a single Mosquito aircraft flew over the Bay of Helgoland as far as a point south of the island of Pellworm, the Bay of Jade, and Emden. It returned via Groningen, Leeuwarden, and the island of Texel, crossing the latter point at 2109.

During the time from 2020 to 2035, a single aircraft flew along the Dutch coast from the island of Texel to a point south of Den Helder.

At 2035, a group of five aircraft appeared over the island of Schouwen and flew on into the areas of Eindhoven and Dordrecht. Four of these aircraft returned over the mouth of the Schelde and the other crossed the coast at a point south of Bergen. The last aircraft left the Continent at 2210.

At 0656 a single aircraft appeared above Westerschelde, ~~flying~~ and flew on as far as Rotterdam. Its flight altitude varied from 1,500 to 3,000 meters. At 0717 it flew over Hoek van Holland on its way back towards the west.

Two aircraft were reported flying over the Skagerrak, one on its way to Sweden and the other on its way back.

22/23 February 1944. At the beginning of the first half of the night, a large British bomber force took off from the Norwich area and flew as far as a point northwest of the island of Terschelling. Here they turned around and returned home. Presumably they had been recalled to their bases because of unfavorable weather conditions.

The city of Duisburg was subjected to a harrassing raid carried out by a group of twenty Mosquito bombers. They approached by way of Den Helder and returned over the mouth of the Schelde.

The Stuttgart area was subjected to attack by several Mosquito aircraft. The course used for both their approach and departure flights led over northern France and Mannheim.

Several aircraft carried out a mine-laying mission over the waters near Den Helder.

In addition to the above, the following actions were noted:

Two long-range night fighters carried out an observation flight over

The Hague, Rotterdam, Arnheim and Venlo. They approached at 2238 over The Hague and returned over the mouth of the Schelde at 2358.

At 0150 a single night fighter aircraft appeared over Brussels and flew on to St. Trond, apparently engaged in an observation mission. It returned via Antwerp and Bruges at 0244.

Approaching over the mouth of the Schelde at 0217, a single long-range night fighter on an observation mission flew over Gilze-Rijen and Volkel. It flew back over the island of Schouwen at 0327.

A single Mosquito bomber carried out a harrassing raid on the city of Frankfurt/Main. Its approach flight led over Arnheim, where it was reported at 0238, Dortmund, Marburg, and Giessen, and its return course over Mannheim, Saarbrücken, Verdun, and Chauny. It began the return flight at 0322.

One courier aircraft coming from Sweden was reported over the Skagerrak.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

21/22 February 1944:

from Himmelflett areas in northern Holland, against the mine-laying aircraft: 1 twin-engine fighter aircraft;

against the Mosquito bombers, one twin-engine fighter aircraft from the airfield at Venlo (guided by the Y-Method).

22/23 February 1944:

against the Mosquito bombers, two twin-engine fighter aircraft from the airfield at Venlo.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

21/22 February 1944: Over northern Holland, northwestern Germany, and the North Sea: clear; elsewhere: 8/10 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds beginning at 800 and extending as high as 1,000 to 1,500 meters; visibility five to ten kilometers.

22/23 February 1944: Over northern Germany: predominantly clear; Over southern Germany: 7/10 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds between 800 and 1,500 meters; scattered light snowfalls; ground and high-altitude visibility good.

XIII. THE BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACK ON DÜSSELDORF, 23/24 February 1944, AND OTHER HARRASSING FLIGHTS, 28/29 February 1944

(see Figure 126, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

23/24 February 1944. During the first half of the night, a force of twenty Mosquito bombers carried out a harrassing attack on the city of Düsseldorf. They approached over the mouth of the Schelde and northern France, and returned via the mouth of the Schelde.

Approaching at 2009 over Den Helder, three long-range night fighters carried out an observation flight over Leeuwarden, and returned at 2118, again over Den Helder.

A single Mosquito bomber, approaching at 0242 over Nieupoort, Brussels, Liège, Koblenz, Giessen and Magdeburg, harrassed the city of Perleberg. Its return flight, begun at 0426, led it over Uelzen, Vechta, Papenburg, and Emden. It flew over the coast at Den Helder at 0515.

One courier aircraft was reported over the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden.

27/28 February 1944. The only actions noted were two flights over the Skagerrak by courier aircraft, one on its way to, and one returning from

Sweden.

28/29 February 1944. At 0400 several Mosquito aircraft were reported over Helgoland. They moved forward over Kiel and Rostock and into the areas of Neustrelitz and Neurippen. Their return course led over Uelzen, Wesermünde and the West Frisian Islands.

One courier aircraft flew over the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed against the Mosquito bombers:

23/24 February 1944: one He-219 from the airfield at Venlo;

28/29 February 1944: one Me-109 from the airfield at Oldenburg.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

23/24 February: cloudless but hazy; Over the Skagerrak: high-altitude fog between 150 and 1,000 meters.

28/29 February 1944: Over Holland and the northern German coast: clear, with good visibility; elsewhere: very hazy, sometimes foggy; loosely scattered stratus clouds from 400 to 1,200 meters; high-altitude visibility good.

XIV. BRITISH ATTACKS ON SCHWEINFURT, 24/25 February 1944

(see Figures ~~126, Annex~~ 127 and 128, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At about 1830, German radar instruments picked up the track of enemy aircraft over the ocean northeast of Norwich, with their course towards the east. Later it was realized that these were a group of about thirty mine-laying aircraft which crossed the southern part of the North

Sea, Westerland and Schleswig-Holstein and dropped their mines over the waters of the western Baltic Sea. Their mission completed, they followed the same course on their return flight.

While the mine-laying operation was still in progress, a British bomber stream took off at 1900 from the area south of London and flew, on course towards the south, as far as the mouth of the Somme. Here it altered its course towards the southeast. The group, consisting of some 500 British bombers, flew over Amiens, Metz, and Karlsruhe and attacked the city of Schweinfurt from the south. Flying in very loose formation, the enemy aircraft returned via the Rhine and Main river areas, Belgium, and northern France.

Beginning at 1930 a group of fifty Mosquito bombers made their way across Holland, bombarding German-occupied airfields as they went, and carried out harrassing raids in the Ruhr District. Their chief target was the city of Düsseldorf. The airfield bombardments had no effect on the employment of the German night fighter forces.

As the first bombers began their return flights from Schweinfurt, at about 2100, a second bomber stream, consisting of some 300 aircraft, appeared over the mouth of the Somme. Following the same approach and return flight courses as the first group, this stream, too, moved on to attack Schweinfurt. The industrial installations in the Schweinfurt area had already been the target of an American day attack on 24 February and had suffered severe damages at that time. The British night attacks caused additional damage to factories and private property.

In addition to the actions described above, the RAF carried out the following operations:

During the first half of the night, British bombers based in Italy carried out an attack on Salzburg. Since bombardment was widely scatter-

ed, little damage was caused.

Approaching at 1920 over Helgoland and Rendsburg, several enemy aircraft participated in a harrassing raid on Lübeck. Their return flight, beginning at 2016, led them over Hamburg and Cuxhaven. The last position report received indicated that they were over the island of Spiekeroog at 2045.

Five long-range night fighter aircraft carried out observation flights over the Vechta area. Their approach was not picked up by our instruments. Returning towards the west, they flew from Vechta over Rheine at 0206, and crossed the coast between the island of Texel and Zandvoort. The last aircraft departed from the Continent at 0307.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed against the enemy mine-laying aircraft:

from Himmelbett areas over Schleswig-Holstein: several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division.

The following forces were employed in defense against the first attack on Schweinfurt:

in pursuit activity:

smaller units from the 2d Fighter Division, which had been transferred during the afternoon of 24 February to the airfield at Rhein-Main; and twin-engine fighter units from the 3d Fighter Division. All these aircraft were assembled at radio beacon Kuli and directed into the bomber stream over the Metz area.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

those units from the 2d Fighter Division which had not been transferred to Rhein-Main; assembly at radio beacon Philipp, transfer to radio beacon Otto and assignment to the 7th Fighter Division for employment over

Schweinfurt;

single-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions; assembly at radio beacon Fritz and transfer to Schweinfurt.

The ~~T~~arget ~~I~~llumination ~~G~~roup from the airfield at Münster was assembled at radio beacon Philipp, transferred to radio beacon Otto, and assigned to the 7th Fighter Division for employment.

The following forces were employed in defense against the second attack on Schweinfurt:

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

a small force from the 3d Fighter Division, assembling at radio beacon Fritz;

one group of single-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st Fighter Division.

in pursuit activity during the return flight of the bombers:

several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Schweinfurt and Mannheim areas;

several single-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Mannheim and Karlsruhe areas.

A total number of 209 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft as well as aircraft from the target illumination group was employed.

The twin-engine fighter aircraft forces from the 1st Fighter Division were placed in alert status in case they might be needed to defend targets in northern Germany.

The War Diary of the I Fighter Corps gives no indication of any action by the 7th Fighter Division or the Third Air Fleet.

c. Allied Losses

24 bombers certainly brought down

2 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses

4 aircraft

personnel: 7 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Cloudless but hazy; visibility five to ten kilometers; north-east of the Elbe River: 8/10 to 10/10 cloud cover at 400 meters.

f. Remarks

The effectiveness of the British attacks on our airfields in Holland may be seen from the following:

Twente: six demolition bombs dropped; one runway damaged.

Leeuwarden: seven demolition bombs dropped, but outside the limits of the airfield.

St. Trond: five demolition bombs dropped on ~~XXXX~~ taxiing areas and runways; very slight damage.

Venlo: six demolition bombs dropped; slight property damage.

Deelen: twelve demolition bombs dropped; slight property damage.

XV. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON AUGSBURG, 25/26 February 1944

(see Figure 129, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The attack on Augsburg was carried out by two separate bomber streams. At the same time a mine-laying action in the western Baltic Sea was carried out as a diversionary maneuver. During the same night, German-occupied airfields in Holland were subjected to bombardment. The night's operations were carried out as follows:

1. The first bomber stream, about 400 strong, took off from the area south of London and, by 1930, had reached the mouth of the Somme. Flying towards the southeast, the aircraft moved on over Metz, Strassburg, and Freiburg/Breisgau to the northern shore of Lake Constance. Here they turned

towards the north to attack the city of Augsburg. Their return flight began at 2140, their course leading them over southwestern Germany and northern France back to Great Britain.

2. As the first bomber stream, on its way home, passed over the Verdun area at about 2035, a second bomber force was reported taking off from the Norwich area, with course towards the east. The second group continued on over the southern waters of the North Sea and when they reached the western coast of Jutland they were recognized as a mine-laying group, consisting of about fifty aircraft. The majority of them dropped their mines over the waters of the western Baltic Sea, a few of them flying on as far as the island of Rügen and Rostock. Their mission accomplished, the mine-laying aircraft returned towards the west.

3. At 2200 a third bomber stream, consisting of about 200 aircraft, took off from the British Isles with course towards the east. Flying over the mouth of the Schelde, they penetrated into Holland, where they veered towards the southeast and flew on over the Rhine valley and the Frankfurt area towards Augsburg. At 0005, after completing their attack on the city of Augsburg, the bombers flew back over southwestern Germany and northern France, their course towards the northwest.

4. In addition to the three main actions described above, the RAF also carried out the following secondary operations:

Crossing the coast between Ostende and Dunkirk at 2100, five long-range night fighter aircraft penetrated as far as the Juvincourt area (radio beacon Kuli) on an observation mission. They returned via the mouth of the Somme, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2239.

A force of five Mosquito bombers raided the airfields at Gilze-Rijen and St. Trond. Their approach flight, from 2140 to 2158, led over the mouth of the Schelde, and their return flight followed the same course towards the

163

west. The last aircraft departed from the Continent at 2215.

A single long-range night fighter aircraft carried out an observation flight as far as the Mainz and Wertheim areas. Its approach over the mouth of the Schelde and Liège was reported at 2110; our instruments lost the aircraft at 2203 over the Wertheim area.

Approaching between 0040 and 0100 over Bergen and the Zuyder Zee, a force of six Mosquito bombers ~~attacked~~ attacked the airfields at Twente and Deelen, flying at altitudes varying from 200 to 700 meters. Two of these aircraft flew on over Münster into the Hannover area. Their return flight course followed the same route as the approach flight. The last aircraft flew over Bergen at 0237.

A single long-range night fighter carried out an observation mission over the Bonn area. Its approach was reported at 0107 over the Westerschelde, Brussels, and Liège, and its return flight at 0240 over the island of Walcheren.

Several long-range night fighters penetrated into southern Germany on an observation mission. They approached beginning at 0056 over Ostende, Luxemburg and Strassburg, and returned towards the west, following the same route.

During the time from 2018 to 2036, three aircraft were reported crossing the Skagerrak on their way to Sweden.

Effectiveness of the British attacks: The Messerschmitt aircraft works at the southern edge of the city of Augsburg had already been heavily damaged by the American day attack of 25 February. The British night attacks caused serious damage, both to private property and to industrial installations, in the city itself. The British attacks on our airfields in Holland caused very little damage, none of it serious enough to impair operations.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Bomber Corps

164

The following forces were employed in defense against the first attack on Augsburg:

in pursuit activity:

twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 2d and 7th Fighter Divisions (3d and 6th Night Fighter Wings) which had been transferred during the afternoon of 25 February to the airfields at Rhein-Main and Mainz-Finthen; they assembled at radio beacon Kalt and were directed into the bomber stream over the Metz area;

most of the twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division; assembling at radio beacon Ida, they were guided on to radio beacon Kalt and directed into the bomber stream.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

those units from the 2d Fighter Division which had not been moved to Rhein-Main and Mainz-Finthen and the Do-217 group from the 1st Fighter Division; they assembled at radio beacon Otte, and were guided on to Augsburg by the 7th Fighter Division;

single-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division; they assembled at light beacon Fritz and were guided on to Augsburg by the 7th Fighter Division.

The Target Illumination Group from the airfield at Münster was guided to radio beacon Otte and turned over to the 7th Fighter Division for further employment.

The following forces were employed in defense against the second attack on Augsburg:

in pursuit activity:

night fighter aircraft from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions, sent into the bomber stream in the vicinity of radio beacon Ida; these aircraft had been employed from Himmelbett areas against the mine-laying aircraft (see below)

had landed, and were ready for renewed commitment.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

several night fighter aircraft from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions; these aircraft had also already been up once, had landed in the area assigned to the 7th Fighter Division, and were ready for renewed commitment.

The following forces were employed against the enemy mine-laying aircraft:

from Himmelbett areas over Schleswig-Holstein and the northern coast of Holland:

smaller units from the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions, assembling at radio beacon 10;

most of the twin-engine fighter aircraft of the 1st Fighter Division.

A total number of 165 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft and aircraft from the target illumination group was employed.

Although the RAF had begun on 24 February to select for night attack the same targets which the American bombers had attacked during the day, the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, was not prepared for a British attack on the city of Augsburg, and allowed itself to be led astray by the British mine-laying mission. As a result, the majority of aircraft belonging to the 1st Fighter Division were held in abeyance for possible action in northern Germany and were unavailable to participate in the defense of Augsburg.

After 2300 on the night of 25/26 February, heavy high-altitude haze and occasional fogs impaired the effectiveness of German night fighter operations.

c. Allied Losses

16 bombers brought down

d. German Losses

10 aircraft, one of which (a Ju-88) was hit by fire from an enemy

166

long-range fighter aircraft after it had landed at Munich-Riem, and burst into flames;

personnel: 4 dead

5 wounded

8 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over northern Germany: 7/10 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds between 500 and 1,000 meters; south of the line Cologne - Erfurt - Dresden: cloudless; heavy haze and fog after 2300.

f. Remarks

During the early morning hours of 26 February, Master Sergeant Vinke, from the 11th Squadron, 1st Night Fighter Wing, was killed in action. He had a record of fifty-four enemy aircraft brought down in night combat, and had been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

CHAPTER V

DAY ACTIONS DURING MARCH 1944

I. SURVEY

a. American Offensive Activity

During the month of March, American air operations against the Reich were characterized by a strong increase in the strength of the fighter escorts accompanying the bombers. The total number of single and twin-engine fighter aircraft employed in escort duty reached the number of bombers. In contrast to the effects of American losses on 14 October 1943 (during the attack on Schweinfurt), the losses suffered during the "Big Week" seemed to have no effect whatsoever on American air operations. Thanks to the striking power and the increased flight range of their fighter aircraft, the American forces captured air supremacy over almost the entire Reich and its territories. The only exception remained the German provinces in the east. The American bombers were able to extend their operations to include Berlin and Munich, and this meant the complete collapse of Germany's position as an air power.

No systematic plan could be discerned in the American conduct of air operations. The systematic destruction of German air armaments plants, which had begun with such great success during February, was discontinued, and German observers could find no concentrated purpose in the American selection of attack targets during March 1944. There was also no sign of close coordination between the operations of the American forces stationed in Italy and those in Great Britain, nor was the practice of American day attacks and RAF night attacks on the same target continued.

A total of fifteen large-scale attacks were carried out during March by the American forces in Great Britain, and three by the forces in Italy. Adverse weather conditions during the month made target location difficult.

Visual bombardment was possible on only three occasions; limited visual bombardment could be carried out on four occasions; and instrument bombardment was necessary during four of the attacks. The total effectiveness of the American attacks during March was limited to widespread property damage; damage to industrial installations was less heavy than during the preceding month. The attack on Berlin on 8 March was the only one which resulted in heavy damage to industrial plants. The effectiveness of the attacks on targets in Austria was very slight. There were very few American attacks (either by bomb or by airborne weapons) on German-occupied airfields in Holland, Belgium, and northern France, and these had no effect on the operations of the German air defense forces. The approach and attack tactics employed by the American air forces were, on the whole, simple and straightforward and created no particular problems for the German defense forces. During the reporting period, the American fighter escorts were so organized that the bombers were afforded continuous protection during both the approach and return flights.

American activity, apart from the large-scale attacks, was limited to target reconnaissance and observation flights to determine the effectiveness of previous attacks. These flights gave no indication of any systematic plan in the selection of targets. There were only two days during the month when there were no American aircraft whatever reported in the area assigned to the I Fighter Corps.

b. The Commitment of the I Fighter Corps

Despite the growing numerical superiority of the American forces, there had been no change in the organization or operation of the Reich's air defense forces. There could be no increase in the strength of our daytime fighter units since the production of fighter aircraft had fallen far behind schedule as a result of the successful enemy attacks on our aircraft

factories. For the same reason, no units could be activated. There seemed to be no chance of withdrawing fighter aircraft from other fronts. The command organization of the Reichs air defense forces had not been altered in any way, and thus no effective concentration of fighter aircraft forces could be achieved.

During March 1944 weather conditions played a tremendous role in the commitment of daytime fighter units. Poor weather, fogs, and high-altitude atmospheric disturbances all had a detrimental effect on the employment of German fighter units. On five days during the reporting period, weather conditions were so bad that all single and twin-engine fighter aircraft were grounded.

The striking power of the few remaining daytime fighter units assigned to the Reichs air defense system remained unbroken. Whenever weather conditions permitted the concentrated employment of all available forces in close combat formation in a single area, noteworthy success was achieved in bringing down enemy aircraft and in keeping our own losses down to a reasonable limit. The success of our defensive operations over Berlin on 6 and 8 March gave ample evidence of the fighting morale of our fighter crews and of their ability to carry on effective combat despite the technical inferiority of their aircraft, but such successes were not frequent enough to represent any threat to the American offensive forces. These successes, however, gave an indication of the effectiveness which might be attained by the Reichs air defense system if the forces in the Frankfurt area, in southern Germany, and in Austria could be made as strong as the force assigned to northern Germany. If the Reichs air defense system had had 1,000 to 1,200 fighter aircraft available, it would doubtless ~~have~~ have been in a position to alter the air situation, at least by day, in Germany's favor within a very short time, assuming, of course, that there were no

appreciable increase in the American fighter aircraft force.

During March 1944, air operations over the Reich proved conclusively that Germany's comparatively helpless position in the air was caused, first by the numerical inferiority of the daytime fighter aircraft employed by the Reichs air defense system, and second by the inferiority of their technical performance and by tactical errors. The strength ratio obtaining between the American and German aircraft may be seen from the following:

Total American strength (bombers and fighters)	:	German strength (single and twin-engine fighters)
7.5	:	1
American strength (fighters)	:	German strength (single and twin-engine fighters)
4	:	1

In those instances in which the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, committed only portions of full units, smaller units, or single aircraft (either because of adverse weather conditions or because of the difficulties involved in transferring units to distant areas for employment), the American fighters, attacking from above, had an easy time of it in bringing these down. Moreover, due to the increased flight range of the American fighters, it had become impossible to send twin-engine fighter units up against the enemy bombers without an adequate protective screen of single-engine fighters to hold off the American fighter aircraft.

The total losses sustained by the German daytime fighter units were comparatively high during March. The steadily increasing number of aircraft damaged by enemy fire placed an additional burden on repair installations and increased the problem of aircraft supply.

By the end of March the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, was less worried about the development of the air situation over the Reich than he had been during February, probably because of the decrease in American attacks on

German armaments works. It was evident that the success of our defense operations during the enemy attacks on Berlin also contributed to this feeling on his part.

By taking part himself in the action over central Germany, General-major Galland, General of the Fighter Aircraft Forces, had convinced himself of the tremendous difficulties of fighting against the numerically superior American fighter aircraft forces. Giving due consideration to the reduced capacity of our air armaments plants and to the critical gasoline and oil situation, which made the attainment of numerical parity impossible, he undertook to see that the Reichs air defense forces should be supplied as soon as possible with a fighter aircraft model whose technical performance should be superior to that of the American fighters. To this end he did everything in his power to speed up production on the jet fighter, Me-262, and on the rocket-propelled Me-163.

c. Successes and Losses during March 1944

During March 1944, the average total number of daytime fighter aircraft available for employment by the I Fighter Corps was:

300 single-engine fighter aircraft,

60 twin-engine fighter aircraft, and

50 night fighter aircraft suitable for daytime employment.

The total number of daytime fighter aircraft committed by the I Fighter Corps during March 1944 was: 2,226 aircraft.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the I Fighter Corps during March 1944 amounted to: 240 aircraft, or 10.9% of the total number of aircraft committed.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the enemy within the area covered by the I Fighter Corps amounted to: 302 aircraft (excluding those brought down by antiaircraft artillery). This number represented 1.6%

172

of the total estimated number of aircraft (16,612) and 3.8% of the estimated total number of bombers (8,000) employed by the American air forces against the Reich. The aircraft committed from American bases located in Italy ^{have} ~~has~~ been included in these estimates.

172a

Generalmajor Galland, General of the Fighter Aircraft, Forces,

Returning from a Sortie

II. ACTIONS ON 1 March 1944

(see Figure 130, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The following American reconnaissance activity was reported:

At 1114 a single reconnaissance aircraft was reported over the mouth of the Schelde. It continued its flight over Cologne and Siegen as far as the Giessen area. At 1153 it reversed course and headed for home, crossing the coast at 1242 over the mouth of the Schelde.

At 1128 another reconnaissance aircraft was sighted over the mouth of the Schelde. It moved on over Hertogenbosch, Duisburg, and Dortmund into the Kassel area. At 1210 it departed from Kassel and flew back over Dortmund, Tilburg, and the area north of Ghent. It departed from the Continent at 1311, crossing the coast at Dunkirk.

Between 1141 and 1212 two reconnaissance aircraft were reported over the mouth of the Schelde and the Brussels area.

At 1249 a single reconnaissance aircraft was sighted over the mouth of the Schelde. Its flight continued over Cleve and the area west of Hamm. Its course was lost to observers at 1319 in the vicinity of Hamm.

Between 1206 and 1214 several Spitfire fighters flew over the coast near Bergen.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

III. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN AND MANNHEIM, 2 March 1944

(see Figure 131, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 0925, German observers reported the assembly of an American attacking force over the British Isles. The first bombers flew over the mouth of the Somme at 1050 and, accompanied by a strong fighter escort, streamed on towards the east over southern Belgium and Luxemburg into the Frankfurt/Main and Mannheim areas. One small bomber unit flew on as far as Amberg and Bayreuth. At 1224 the bombers began their return flight towards the west and northwest, flying over Giessen, Dortmund, Liège, and Antwerp. They crossed the coast between Bergen and Dunkirk, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 1502.

At 1100 American fighter units began to pour in over Dunkirk, St. Trond, and Liège as far as the Koblenz area. Returning fighters were sighted at 1140 over the mouth of the Somme and over Liège, and at 1155 over Koblenz. Relief fighter units, whose duty it was to pick up the returning bombers, crossed the mouth of the Schelde between 1210 and 1355 and flew on to meet their charges over Liège, Aix la Chapelle, Koblenz, and Kaiserslautern.

Although the chief target of the American attack was Frankfurt/Main, scattered bombs were also dropped on Mannheim, Koblenz, the area west of Limburg, and in the vicinity of Bad Kreuznach. All bombardment was by instrument. Frankfurt suffered fairly heavy damage to private property and some slight damage to industrial installations; the damage caused by the other bombs was negligible.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Because of bad weather, only a few fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division were sent up over the Cologne area, where they became involved in combat with American fighters. Fifteen aircraft were committed.

c. Allied Losses

175

1 Thunderbolt certainly brought down

d. German Losses

1 aircraft totally destroyed

1 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 1 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

7/10 to 10/10 cover of nimbus clouds between 300 and 5,000 meters;

heavy snow flurries.

IV. THE ATTEMPTED AMERICAN ATTACK ON BERLIN, 3 March 1944

(see Figure 132, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Although their assemblies began at 0823, it was not until 1028 that the first aircraft of an American bomber force appeared about 120 kilometers northwest of the island of Texel. Accompanied by a fighter escort, the bombers flew towards the east, across the southern part of the North Sea, and on to the western coast of Jutland. Here, between Esbjerg and the mouth of the Elbe River, the majority of the bombers reversed their course and headed back towards Great Britain, presumably turned back by heavy cloud banks ahead. Their return course led over the East Frisian Islands, where the last bombers were plotted (north of the island of Schiermonnikoog) at 1235. The rest of the bombers had continued on towards the southeast between Neumünster and Hamburg, over Schwerin and Waren, and into the Neubrandenburg area. Here, at 1213, they turned towards the southwest and flew as far as Magdeburg before setting course for the west and making for the Dutch coast. The last aircraft passed over the coast ~~xx~~ at 1356. The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, was of the opinion that the American force had been heading for Berlin, but had turned back because of bad weather.

The American fighter units maneuvered as follows:

At 1028, several fighter aircraft units flew over the coast between the island of Terschelling and Hoek van Holland and headed east. They flew on as far as Hannover, Braunschweig and Magdeburg. Approximately forty Lightning fighters penetrated to a point southwest of Berlin.

At 1130, fighter aircraft were reported returning from Osnabrück and Münster, and at 1207, from Magdeburg. The fighter units left the Continent between the East Frisian Islands and the mouth of the Schelde.

Beginning at 1257, several fighter units flew in between the mouth of the Schelde and Den Helder and penetrated, their course towards the east, as far as Münster, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Giessen and Frankfurt/Main. Returning towards the west and northwest, they began their flight at 1400 and crossed the coast between Den Helder and Calais at 1540.

The total strength of the American force was estimated at 400 bombers and 300 fighter aircraft.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:
units from the 1st Fighter Division, over Lübeck,
units from the 2d Fighter Division; over Stade and Itzehoe, and
units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Emden.

Weather conditions were too bad to permit assembly in closed combat formations, and only a few aircraft, flying singly, were able to participate in combat.

A total number of 213 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

9 bombers certainly brought down

2 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 1000, 4 March 1944)

4 twin-engine fighter aircraft completely destroyed,

10 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 11 dead

3 wounded

5 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

6/10 to 10/10 cover of nimbus clouds extending as high as 6,500 meters; heavy snow flurries; high-altitude visibility good.

V. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON NORTHERN GERMANY, 4 March 1944

(see Figure 133, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 1026, a force consisting of approximately 300 American bombers and a strong fighter escort crossed the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Calais and penetrated into Belgium. Their attack was carried out in two separate groups, as follows:

The larger group, flying farther towards the north, moved along the Rhine River to attack the cities of Bonn, Cologne and Düsseldorf. Its mission accomplished, the group split into several small formations and departed from the attack area at 1140. They crossed the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Calais and returned towards the west.

The smaller group, towards the south, made a wide detour over Trier, Frankfurt/Main, Giessen and Kassel and bombarded Braunschweig and Hannover. Its return flight course led over Diepholz and the northern tip of the Zuyder Zee.

At 1130 still another bomber group appeared over the Dutch coast between Bergen and The Hague. This group, approximately 100 strong and accompanied by a large fighter escort, flew over Meppen and Münster and on to the Hannover, Braunschweig, and Halberstadt area. Here the group split into three smaller

groups, the first of which flew on to Stendal, the second to Berlin and Perleberg, and the third to Brandenburg/Havel. Bombs were released over the areas north and west of the city of Berlin. For their return flight, the aircraft regrouped themselves once more, following the routes indicated below:

1st group - with course towards the west via Uelzen,

2nd group - with course towards the west via Dessau,

3rd group - with course towards the south as far as Chemnitz and Greiz, then towards the west via Eisenach, and

4th group - with course towards the east via Berlin and Küstrin, which it reached at 1338, then towards the south as far as Frankfurt/Oder, and towards the southwest via Gera.

All four groups passed over the Dutch coast between the island of Texel and the mouth of the Schelde.

At 1343 a group of fifty Marauder bombers were observed over the coast between the Westerschelde and Ostende. They flew on towards the southeast over Antwerp and ~~Salmag~~ Koblenz as far as Giessen. Their return flight was completed together with the four-engine bombers.

The American fighter escort units maneuvered as follows:

At 1102 one fighter aircraft group flew over the mouth of the Schelde, Düsseldorf, and Paderborn as far as the Hannover area. Here the fighters picked up the returning bombers at 1320 and returned towards the west.

During the time from 1423 to 1611, several fighter formations flew over the coast between The Hague and Ostende and on to Emmerich, Cologne, Liège, and Charleroi. After they had picked up the returning bombers, the entire group, flying in broad front formation, crossed the coast towards the west between the island of Texel and the mouth of the Schelde. The last aircraft left the Continent at 1720.

The total number of fighter aircraft participating in escort duty was estimated at 500.

The bombardment, by instrument, of Bonn and Düsseldorf resulted in fairly heavy damage to private property, industrial plants, and traffic installations.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:
units from the 1st Fighter Division, over the Braunschweig area,
units from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Kassel area, and
units from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Cologne area.

Snow flurries, the danger of icing, and low-hanging clouds combined to render impossible the systematic employment of our daytime fighter units. Only a few fighter ~~xx~~ squadrons were able to join combat with the American fighter aircraft.

A total number of 149 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

7 bombers certainly brought down

2 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 1100, 5 March 1944)

4 aircraft totally destroyed

4 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 1 dead

4 wounded

4 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

8/10 to 10/10 cover of multiple-strata clouds beginning at 200 to 300 meters and extending as high as 4,000 to 5,000 meters; snow flurries;

danger of icing in the clouds.

VI. DAY ACTIONS, 5 March 1944

(see Figure 130, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

A single reconnaissance aircraft was reported approaching at 0930 over the island of Vlieland. It flew on along the West Frisian Islands, then turned towards the southeast and penetrated as far as the area lying north of Osnabrück. It returned over Zwolle and Katwijk, leaving the coast behind at 1110.

Between 1052 and 1101, a single aircraft flew along the Dutch coast from Bergen as far as Amsterdam.

From 1104 until 1126 a single aircraft flew along the coast from the mouth of the Schelde as far as the Breda area.

Between 1109 and 1129 a single aircraft flew along the coast from Westerschelde as far as Antwerp.

At 1102 a reconnaissance aircraft was observed over Esbjerg. Its mission carried it on over Odense, the island of Falster, and Stralsund as far as Swinemünde. At 1219 it began its return flight, moving north of the city of Rostock, across the Bays of Mecklenburg and Kiel, over Flensburg, Apenrade, and the island of Fanö, where it was lost to observers at 1316.

At 1120 three enemy aircraft were reported over the island of Goeree. All three flew on as far as Hertogenbosch, where one of them turned back at 1131 and flew off towards the west, passing over the island of Goeree at 1138. The second of the three aircraft continued on over Rheine, Osnabrück and Hildesheim into the Braunschweig area. Leaving Braunschweig at 1240, it returned via Hannover, Lingen, Zwolle, Haderwijk, and Amsterdam, and left the Continent at Katwijk at 1325. The third airplane of the group moved on over Bielefeld, Nienburg, and Lüneburg as far as the Schwerin area.

At 1240 it began its return flight over Lübeck, Neumünster and the island of Pellworm, which it passed at 1326.

Approaching at 1125 over the island of Vlieland, a single reconnaissance aircraft moved on over the West Frisian Islands and Helgoland. Its course was lost to observers at 1215, slightly west of Husum.

Approaching at 1142 north of Ringkøbing, a single aircraft, obviously on a reconnaissance mission, flew on over Viborg as far as the Bay of Aalborg. Its flight course was lost ~~from~~ ^{to} observers at 1208, southeast of Aalborg.

A single reconnaissance aircraft was observed at 1157 over Ijmuiden. It continued its flight over Meppel into the Bremen area. Leaving Bremen at ~~12~~ 1236, it returned via Oldenburg and the island of Borkum, flying over the island at 1247.

A single reconnaissance aircraft was reported approaching over Schleswig at 1315. Moving on over the Bays of Kiel and Mecklenburg and the city of Warnemünde, it penetrated as far as the area southwest of Greifswald. Here its course was lost to observers at 1348.

Approaching at 1418 over the island of Walcheren, two reconnaissance aircraft moved on over Antwerp, Aix la Chapelle, Koblenz and Limburg into the Schweinfurt area. Leaving this area at 1550, they flew back over the area north of Frankfurt, Wetzlar, Andernach, and Malmedy. Their last reported position was south of Namur at 1640.

At 1540 two reconnaissance aircraft were observed approaching over the island of Walcheren. Flying on over Antwerp and Maastricht, they reached the Koblenz area. Their return flight, begun at 1620, led them back over Malmedy, Charleroi, and Mons. Their last reported position was south of Tournai at 1648.

During the time from 1738 and 1740, four aircraft flew along the coast in the vicinity of Den Helder.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

No aircraft were committed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

VII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BERLIN, 6 March 1944

(see Figure 134, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1022, an American force consisting of 600 bombers, 250 single-engine fighters, and 150 twin-engine fighters took off from Great Britain to attack the city of Berlin. The bombers, with their large fighter escort, crossed the Dutch coast between Hoek van Holland and Den Helder, and, with their course towards the east, moved along the lines Münster - Meppen, Goslar - Uelzen, and Halle - Rathenow to attack Berlin from the west and south. The bombardment of Berlin lasted from 1245 until 1400. The return flight of the bombers was accomplished in loose formation towards the northwest and the west. The stream of bombers moving across the coast between the island of Terschelling and the mouth of the Schelde was unbroken until the last aircraft had left the Continent at 1550. Part of the original fighter escort had already left the bombers at 1140 and had turned back towards the west over Enschede, Vechta, and Osnabrück. At 1111 a group of fifty Lightning fighters flew in over the mouth of the Schelde, Tilburg, and Paderborn, and joined the bombers over the Nordhausen area. Between 1145 and 1515, several fighter formations appeared over Holland, waiting to pick up the returning bombers.

It can be assumed that the American attack on Berlin was seriously hindered by the effectiveness of the German air defense forces, for the

damage caused by the bombers was comparatively slight. Although some of the American fighter aircraft penetrated as far as Berlin, the Americans did not succeed in providing adequate fighter coverage for their bombers at all times during the attack.

In addition to the attack on Berlin, the following actions were carried out by the American Air Force:

Between 0902 and 0908, three aircraft flew along the coast between Ijmuiden and Amsterdam.

Approaching at 0942 over Heyst, a single reconnaissance aircraft flew north of Brussels, and over St. Troad as far as the Venlo area. It returned via the Zuyder Zee and Bergen, leaving the coast behind at 1050.

From 0907 to 0909, a single aircraft was observed flying over the island of Terschelling.

Between 1106 and 1114, a single aircraft circled above the coast near the mouth of the Schelde and Breda.

Approaching at 1121, two reconnaissance aircraft carried out a flight over the Bay of Kiel, the island of Laaland, and Stralsund. At 1201, observers lost track of the aircraft over the Bay of Pomerania.

Approaching at 1325 over Husum, a single reconnaissance aircraft flew on over the island of Fehmarn, and Neubrandenburg as far as the area of Stettin. Here its flight course was lost to observers at 1438.

Appearing at 1430 over Dieppe, a single aircraft carried out a reconnaissance mission over the area from Reims to Metz. Its return flight led over ~~Metz~~ Reims and Paris, the aircraft flying over the French capital at 1610.

At 1750 two Spitfire fighter aircraft were observed circling over the area of Hoek van Holland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed against the bombers during their approach flight:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, over the Oschersleben area,

units from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Halberstadt and Uelzen areas, and

units from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Diepholz area.

The following forces were employed against the bombers during their return flight:

smaller units from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Goslar and Paderborn areas.

The units from all three fighter divisions were able to participate in the action, and heavy air combat ensued over Magdeburg, Halle, and Halberstadt. A single formation from the 2d Fighter Division managed to down forty-five enemy bombers. This formation was led by the commanding officer of the I Group, 26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing, who added considerably to his record of enemy aircraft brought down.

A total of 3 328 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was committed.

c. Allied Losses

95 bombers and 15 fighter aircraft certainly brought down

10 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 1200, 7 March 1944)

18 aircraft totally destroyed

39 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 14 dead

18 wounded

18 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over the Harz Mountain area, the Ruhr District, and southern Holland:

widespread fogs at all altitudes, which, in the Ruhr District, had not lifted by 1400; fighter aircraft had to take off with visibility of one to two kilometers; over Berlin: 2/10 to 4/10 cover of cumulus clouds between 600 and 900 meters; over the rest of ~~Germany~~ northern Germany: loosely scattered clouds at 1,000 meters; visibility good above 1,500 meters; high-altitude winds from 30 to 50° between 5,000 and 7,000 meters, velocity 60 to 80 kilometers per hour.

f. Remarks

On 6 March 1944 1st Lieutenant Loos, captain of the 8th Squadron, 54th Single-Engine Fighter Wing, was killed in action. He had a record of eighty-five enemy aircraft brought down and had been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

185a

The Commanding General Expresses his Appreciation

to Members of the 26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing,

7 March 1944

VIII. DAY ACTIONS, 7 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the time from 1435 to 1439, two aircraft flew along the coast from Bergen as far as Ijmuiden.

Between 1509 and 1523, a group of five aircraft circled over the island of Texel and the Den Helder area.

At 1544 a single aircraft was observed circling over the island of Goeree.

From 1544 to 1611, five aircraft flew along the coast from the island of Walcheren to the Ijmuiden area.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the 1 Fighter Corps

Several single-engine fighter aircraft belonging to the 3d Fighter Division were employed.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

IX. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BERLIN, 8 March 1944

(see Figure 136, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1126, the approach of some 500 American bombers approximately eighty kilometers west of Den Helder and Haarlem was reported. The bombers crossed the Dutch coast between Den Helder and Katwijk and flew towards the east, following three lines, Bielefeld - Goppenburg, Goslar - Verden, and Magdeburg - Salzwedel, advanced towards the Reich's capital. At 1335 they began their return flight from Berlin, moving towards the west in the direction of the Dutch coast. The last bomber passed over the coast at 1640.

The bombers were protected by an escort of approximately 500 fighter aircraft, some of which had accompanied them all the way to Berlin.

A supplementary fighter escort of some forty aircraft flew over the mouth of the Schelde at 1200 and continued on over Arnheim into the areas of Bocholt and Emmerich.

Fighter aircraft formations were observed returning from the Arnheim and Zwolle areas at 1230, from Osnabrück at 1235, and from Braunschweig at 1330.

Fighter aircraft formations on their way to pick up the returning bombers were observed over Holland during the time from 1310 to 1600.

In addition to the attack on Berlin, the American Air Force carried out the following ~~attacks~~ attacks on German-occupied airfields in Holland:

A group of sixty Marauder bombers, approaching at 1018 between Katwijk and The Hague, attacked the airfield at Soesterberg. Their return flight began at 1110, and the aircraft crossed the coast on their way towards the west at a point between IJmuiden and The Hague. The last aircraft left the Continent at 1125. Their altitude during the attack was 3,500 meters.

The airfield at Gilze-Rijen was raided by a force of eighty Marauder bombers, which had penetrated the Continent at 1028, flying in between the Westerschelde and the island of Schouwen. Their flight altitude varying between 3,000 and 5,000 meters, the aircraft left their target at 1056 and had crossed the coast at the mouth of the Schelde by 1141.

The airfield at Soesterberg was subjected to a second attack by a force of 100 Marauder bombers. Their approach, beginning at 1638, had been via the mouth of the Schelde, and their return flight led back over the Zuyder Zee, which they had crossed by 1732. Their flight altitude varied between 3,000 and 5,000 meters.

In each case, the Marauder bombers were accompanied by a large fighter

escort.

The attack on Berlin had left in its wake serious damage to both private properties and industrial plants in the eastern suburbs of the city. The attacks on the airfields, on the other hand, caused very little damage.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, over the Goslar area,

units from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Uelzen and Hamelin areas,

and units from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Paderborn and Bielefeld areas.

After the first attacks by the German fighter formations, heavy fighting developed over Magdeburg and Braunschweig.

In comparison with the number of aircraft committed during the attack of 6 March, the number committed on this occasion was smaller due to the fact that not all the aircraft put out of action by the operations on 6 March had been repaired.

A total number of 282 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

50 bombers and 14 fighter aircraft certainly brought down

7 bombers and 4 fighter aircraft probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 1000, 9 March 1944)

21 aircraft totally destroyed

20 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 2 dead

8 wounded

21 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over the southern part of the area covered by the 1st Fighter Division and over the area covered by the 2d Fighter Division: both ground and high-altitude fogs, which hindered considerably the effective commitment of our fighter aircraft; in most areas, fogs began lifting during the forenoon; over Holland and the Berlin area: almost cloudless; high-altitude winds at 8,000 meters from 70°, velocity 70 kilometers per hour.

X. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BERLIN, 9 March 1944

(see Figure 137, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Despite a dense cloud cover, a force of 450 American bombers, accompanied by 500 fighter aircraft, attacked Berlin and Hannover on 9 March. At 1030 the approaching force was reported approximately eighty kilometers west of the Dutch coast. Following the lines Hengelo - Assen, Osnabrück - Oldenburg, Hannover - Lüneburg, and Rathenow - Prenzlau, the American bombers moved on to attack Berlin from the north and the west. A smaller group broke away from the main stream ~~xxxx~~ between Osnabrück and Magdeburg, and veered back to attack the city of Hannover. All the bombers returned with course towards the west, the last aircraft leaving the Continent between the islands of Texel and Walcheren by 1600. The first of the fighter escort units left the bomber stream over Zwolle and Osnabrück, but beginning at 1057, additional fighter formations began to stream in over Leeuwarden, Groningen, Hamburg and Parchim to provide a protective screen for the bombers along their northern flank. At the same time, still other fighter units flew in over southern Holland into the Paderborn area.

Although bombardment was by instrument, it was extremely effective and caused quite a bit of damage in the southern sectors of Berlin.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions prevented the employment of aircraft.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XI. DAY ACTIONS, 10 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Flying at a very high altitude, a single Mosquito aircraft appeared over the mouth of the Somme at 1145, and flew on over Reims, Toul, and north of Mülhausen, presumably on its way to Switzerland. Its last position reading was north of Constance at 1307.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

No commitment.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON MÜNSTER, 11 March 1944

(see Figure 138, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 0842 German long-range search instruments revealed the approach of an American bomber force approximately 160 kilometers west of the Dutch coast. The group, composed of 200 bombers and 150 fighter aircraft, crossed the coast between Bergen and Zandvoort and flew on towards the east as far as ~~the~~ the Ems River, at which point the aircraft altered course towards Münster. Their mission accomplished, the bombers left their target at 0955, and headed back to their bases. They crossed the coast between Leyden and Blankenberghe, the last aircraft departing from the Continent at 1103. The

damage caused by the American attack was negligible, and only a few buildings and industrial areas in Münster were hurt.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Owing to adverse weather conditions, no commitment was possible.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XIII. DAY ACTIONS, 14 March 1944

Several Mosquito aircraft were observed over the Reich, presumably engaged in reconnaissance missions. A few German fighter aircraft were sent up, but without success.

XIV. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BRAUNSCHWEIG, 15 March 1944

(see Figure , Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the forenoon a group of 400 American bombers and 700 fighter aircraft carried out an attack on Braunschweig. Bombardment was very heavy, accomplished by instrument through a closed cover of clouds, and destroyed much private property as well as causing medium heavy damage in industrial areas.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Because of weather conditions, only the single-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division and a few small formations from the 2d Fighter Division could be employed. Low-hanging clouds, the danger of icing in the clouds, and scattered snow flurries combined to render the assembly of our fighter aircraft extremely difficult.

A total of 161 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft were employed, and 115 of these managed to participate in action against the enemy.

c. Allied Losses

8 bombers certainly brought down

d. German Losses

12 aircraft totally destroyed

5 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 2 dead

3 wounded

12 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over the area covered by the 1st Fighter Division: heavy fogs at all altitudes; over the areas covered by the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions: varying cover of nimbus clouds between 200 and 5,000 meters; snow flurries; danger of icing in the clouds; over the Braunschweig area: 6/10 to 10/10 cloud cover extending as high as 1,500 to 3,000 meters; high-altitude visibility good.

XV. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON AUGSBURG, 16 March 1944

(see Figure 139, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 0944 a group of American bombers were reported advancing over the Channel coast between Ostende and Dieppe towards the southeast. The bombers flew on over France, Belgium, and the central Rhine valley between the lines Namur - Wiesbaden - Würzburg - Nürnberg in the north, and Beauvais - St. Dizier - Colmar - Friedrichshafen in the south. Most of the bombers followed the course mouth of the Somme - Reims - Nancy - Strassburg - south of Stuttgart - Memmingen, and attacked the city of Augsburg. Bombardment was by instrument. Ulm and the vicinity of Ravensburg were also the victims of scattered bombardment, and a small bomber formation also hit the city of Friedrichshafen. Leaving their targets at 1225, the bombers headed back

towards the northwest and the west. They crossed the Channel coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Le Havre at about 1507. The bombers which had participated in the attack on Friedrichshafen flew back over Switzerland.

The damage caused in Augsburg was relatively slight. The attacking force was composed of approximately 500 bombers and 600 fighter aircraft.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed:

units from the 2d Fighter Division, over Frankfurt/Main; none of these aircraft participated in combat;

units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Koblenz.

Take-off, assembly, and approach maneuvers were rendered very difficult by the impenetrable cloud cover. Ground visibility was so poor that the units from the 1st Fighter Division and those stationed in the northern part of the area covered by the 2d Fighter Division were unable to take off. One of the formations from the 2d Fighter Division was forced to return to base, its mission uncompleted, by poor visibility conditions and icing in the clouds; it was impossible to penetrate through the layers of cloud to the cloud-free area above. Of the aircraft sent up by the 3d Fighter Division over Koblenz, only thirty-seven made contact with the enemy.

A total number of 111 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

The War Diary of the I Fighter Corps contains no information regarding the commitment of aircraft by the 7th Fighter Division and the Third Air ~~XXX~~ Fleet.

c. Allied Losses

2 bombers and 1 fighter aircraft certainly brought down

1 bomber probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 2100, 16 March 1944)

3 aircraft totally destroyed

4 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 2 wounded

3 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over the areas assigned to the 2d and 3d Fighter Divisions: 6/10 to 9/10 cover of multiple-strata clouds between 500 and 3,500 meters; Over Hamburg: dense cover of multiple-strata clouds between 500 and 6,000 meters; over southern Germany: 8/10 to 10/10 cloud cover beginning at 400 to 500 meters and extending as high as 2,800 meters.

XVI. DAY ACTIONS, 17 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

A group of twenty-five Thunderbolts raided the airfield at Soesterberg, Holland, in an attack which was not particularly successful. The aircraft were reported approaching over The Hague at 1548, flying at an altitude of 5,000 meters. Their return flight led them back over Arnheim and Rotterdam, at which point they were observed at 1648.

During the forenoon, a group consisting of 250 bombers and a fairly large fighter escort from Allied air bases in Italy attacked the city of Vienna. There was some damage to buildings.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

No aircraft were committed by the I Fighter Corps. Several aircraft were sent up over Vienna by the 7th Fighter Division, despite the bad weather, but without conspicuous success.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XVII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON MUNICH, 18 March 1944

(see Figure 140, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The American Air Forces in Great Britain carried out their first large-scale daytime attack on the city of Munich with a force of 800 bombers and 1,100 fighter aircraft acting as escort. The bombers approached via France, the lead aircraft appearing over the Channel coast at 1140 between Calais and St. Valery en Caux. Their flight course was bounded by the following lines: Cambrai - Bar le Duc - Strassburg - Reutlingen in the east and north, and Meaux - Chaumont - Colmar - Friedrichshafen in the west and south.

After bombarding Munich, the bombers began their return flight towards the northwest and west, flying in loose formation, and crossed southwestern Germany, the Frankfurt/Main area, the Rhine and Moselle Rivers, Belgium, and France. Some of the bombers also flew over northern Switzerland. Our instruments were able to follow their course as far as the line mouth of the Schelde - Paris. The last aircraft crossed the Channel coast at 1730.

The eastern penetration depth attained by the enemy aircraft was the line Bamberg - Regensburg - Landshut.

During the approach flight of the bombers, large fighter formations made their way over Antwerp and Koblenz into the Würzburg and Heilbronn areas.

Beginning at 1400, many formations of fighter aircraft also flew in via the Belgian coast and the mouth of the Somme and continued on as far as Stuttgart and Freiburg.

The American attack destroyed many buildings in the center of Munich, and also caused considerable damage to industrial installations. Scattered

196

bombs also fell on Augsburg, Ulm, and Friedrichshafen.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed:

units from the 2d Fighter Division, over the Stuttgart area, and
units from the 3d Fighter Division, over the Mainz area.

Dense ground fogs prevented the employment of the units of the 1st
Fighter Division and those of the 2d Fighter Division stationed in the nor-
thern part of the area assigned to that Division. Because of the long dis-
tance between their home airfields and the target, few of our fighter aircraft
managed to participate in the fray. Only sixty fighters made contact with
the enemy.

A total number of 133 ~~fighter~~ single-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

The War Diary of the I Fighter Corps contains no information regarding
the commitment of aircraft by the 7th Fighter Division and the Third Air
Fleet.

c. Allied Losses

22 bombers and 4 fighter aircraft brought down

d. German Losses

12 aircraft totally destroyed

5 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 2 wounded

12 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

3/10 to 8/10 cover of loosely scattered stratus clouds at about
1,000 meters; morning fogs; high-altitude winds from 340°, velocity 60
kilometers per hour.

XVIII. DAY ACTIONS, 19 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the forenoon a force of 250 American bombers, accompanied by a fighter escort, took off from the Allied bases in Italy. They attacked the cities of Klagenfurt and Graz, causing relatively little damage.

At 1726 the airfield at Gilze-Rijen in Holland was subjected to attack by a group of forty Marauder bombers. Approaching at 1700 over the mouth of the Schelde and Hoek van Holland, they flew on to Gilze-Rijen, Volkel, and St. Trond. On their return flight, they crossed the Channel coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Ostende, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 1758.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

No aircraft were committed by the I Fighter Corps. The 7th Fighter Division, however, sent up forces in defense of the attack on Klagenfurt and Graz, and with considerable success.

c. Allied Losses

20 aircraft certainly brought down

2 aircraft probably brought down

d. German Losses

No information available.

XIX. AMERICAN ATTACKS ON MANNHEIM AND FRANKFURT/MAIN, 20 March 1944

(see Figure 141, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Choosing northern France and Belgium as their approach route, 700 American bombers, accompanied by an escort of 400 single-engine and 100 twin-engine fighter aircraft, carried out an attack on Frankfurt/Main and Mannheim. Appearing at 1018 between Blankenberghe and Dieppe, they moved on towards the southeast over the routes Brussels - Reims and Malmedy - Metz into the areas of Koblenz, Frankfurt/Main, Würzburg, Crailsheim, Mannheim, and Saarbrücken.

Two small bomber formations turned back before reaching the target areas, one over Lille at 1125, and the other over the Charleville and Sedan area at ~~1145~~¹¹³³. For their return flight, the main force split into smaller formations, leaving the Mannheim area at 1145 and the Heilbronn area at about 1200. Flying towards the west and northwest, the bombers flew back towards the Channel coast and crossed it between Blankenberghe and Le Havre. The last aircraft were reported leaving the Continent at 1500.

In addition to the fighter escort which flew in with the bombers, the following fighter formations were observed:

At 1207 several formations flew over Heyst, on over Brussels and into the St. Vith and Schnee-Eifel areas;

At 1235 several formations flew over Ostende and on to the Ghent area.

In addition to the above, several fighter aircraft formations carried out raids on German-occupied airfields in northern France and Holland, using their airborne weapons.

Although the bombs were dropped by instrument on Mannheim and Frankfurt, they caused a great deal of property damage in both cities. Industrial installations escaped with little damage.

b. Commitment of Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XX. DAY ACTIONS, 21 March 1944

A few American aircraft were observed over the Reich, apparently engaged in reconnaissance activity. A number of German fighter aircraft were sent up

against them, but to no avail.

XI. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BERLIN, 22 March 1944

(see Figure 142, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Between 1310 and 1340, a group of 400 American bombers, accompanied by a fighter escort of 300 single-engine and 100 twin-engine aircraft, laid several bombing panels across the city of Berlin. The bombs, released by instrument, fell on the sectors Weissensee, Moabit, and Gesundbrunnen, but caused relatively slight damage to industrial installations. The aircraft appeared at 1019 over the water approximately 130 kilometers west of the island of Texel, and flew along north of the Frisian Islands over the Bay of Helgoland. Moving on to their target, they followed the lines Husum - mouth of the Elbe, Kiel - Hamburg, Lübeck - Lauenburg, Wismar - Salzwedel, and Neubrandenburg - Rathenow. During their return flight, their course was bounded by the line Neurippen - Lüneburg - East Frisian Islands - north of the island of Terschelling in the north, and Jüterbog - Hildesheim - Bocholt - Hoek van Holland in the south. The last bombers left the Continent at 1537.

From 1050 until 1440, fighter formations flew over the coast continually between the island of Texel and Zandvoort. They flew on towards the east, some of them as far as the areas of Schwerin, Salzwedel, Berlin, and Magdeburg.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XXII. AMERICAN ATTACKS ON BRAUNSCHWEIG AND MÜNSTER, 23 March 1944

(see Figure 143, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 0840, the first aircraft of an American bomber force were reported about 120 kilometers west of Den Helder and Ijmuiden. The aircraft, some 400 bombers with a large fighter aircraft escort, crossed the Dutch coast between the island of Texel and Katwijk and flew on towards the east. Following the lines Assel - ~~Stappenburg~~ Hengelo - Cloppenburg - Osnabrück and Uelzen - Hannover, they reached the Uelzen and Salzwedel area and carried out their attack on Braunschweig from the north and west. Leaving their target at 1045, the bombers flew back towards the northwest and southwest over the area north of Hannover and over Paderborn.

Reported approaching at 0902, a force of 300 bombers accompanied by a fighter escort flew over the Channel coast between Westerschelde and Calais and on towards the east and southeast. They followed the lines Antwerp - Charleroi and Cologne - Koblenz until they were over Mainz, Giessen, and Siegen. Here they altered their course towards the north, part of them making a detour over Paderborn, and flew on to attack the cities of Münster and Hamm. On their return flight, the bombers joined the aircraft flying back from the attack on Braunschweig, and the group flew back out over the coast between Den Helder and Dunkirk. The last aircraft left the Continent at 1308.

At 0958, several formations of fighter aircraft turned back when they had reached Liège and Koblenz and headed for the mouth of the Somme.

Between 0950 and 1148, numerous fighter formations were observed crossing the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Den Helder. Moving on into the Reich, they followed the following routes:

Den Helder - Oldenburg - Soltau,

Amsterdam - Osnabrück - Braunschweig,
 Westerschelde - Cologne - Siegen, and
 Antwerp - Dortmund - Münster - Vechta.

It was estimated that the total number of fighter aircraft committed by the enemy amounted to 900.

The American attacks varied in their effectiveness, causing slight damage in Braunschweig, a great deal of damage in Münster, and destroying quite a few buildings in Hamm.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed:

units from the 1st and 2d Fighter Divisions, over the Braunschweig area,
 units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Dortmund and Siegen.

While engaged in assembly maneuvers, our fighters were attacked by the American fighter aircraft. Heavy air combat developed over Braunschweig and Hannover.

A total of 259 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft were employed.

c. Allied Losses

20 bombers and 13 fighter aircraft certainly brought down

7 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses (as of 1100, 24 March 1944)

11 aircraft totally destroyed

15 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 4 dead

3 wounded

11 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

6/10 to 10/10 cloud cover between 800 and 1,500 meters; along the northern edge of the mountains of central Germany the clouds hung as low as

300 and 500 meters in some areas; scattered snow flurries.

f. Remarks

On 23 March 1944, Colonel Wilke, Commanding Officer of the 3d Single-Engine Fighter Wing, was killed in action. He had brought down a total of 161 enemy aircraft and had been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords.

XXIII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN, 24 March 1944

(see Figure 144, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 0746 an American bomber force totalling some 250 aircraft appeared on the Channel coast between Dunkirk and Ostende, moving towards the southeast. Flying on along the lines Brussels - Nivelles and Bonn - Wittlich, they reached Frankfurt/Main.

Some of the bombers flew on to Saalfeld, Coburg, Bamberg, and Würzburg. The bombers began their return flight at 0950, moving back towards the west and northwest. They crossed the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Calais, and the last bombers to leave the Continent were sighted over Dunkirk at 1205. A total of 300 fighter aircraft were assigned to escort the bomber force. The following maneuvers by fighter formations were noted:

At 0835, a large number of fighters flew over the mouth of the Schelde, Venlo, and Aix la Chapelle on their way to join the bombers over the Koblenz area.

At 0930, several fighter formations were observed returning from the areas of Koblenz and Bonn.

At 1032, several fighter formations flew over the mouth of the Schelde and on to Löwen.

At 1102, a single fighter formation flew over Dunkirk on its way to Valenciennes.

The attack caused fairly serious property damage and some slight damage to industrial installations in Frankfurt/Main. A few bombs also fell on the Schweinfurt area.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Adverse weather conditions precluded the commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XXIV. DAY ACTIONS, 25 March 1944

Several American Mosquitos were observed on reconnaissance missions over the Reich. A few single-engine fighter aircraft were sent up against them, but to no avail.

XXV. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON KLAGENFURT, 26 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

A force of 250 bombers, accompanied by a fighter aircraft escort, carried out an attack on the city of Klagenfurt from Allied bases in Italy. The attack caused relatively little damage.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Units from the 7th Fighter Division were sent up from airfields at Munich and Vienna, but arrived over Klagenfurt too late to participate in any action.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Remarks

On 26 March 1944 Captain Hermichen, of the I Group, 11th Single-Engine Fighter Wing, was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

XVI. DAY ACTIONS, 27 March 1944

(see Figure 135, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1012 a single Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft flew over Hoek van Holland and on over Rotterdam, Duisburg, and Wuppertal as far as the Cologne area. Its return flight led over München-Gladbach and Antwerp and out over the mouth of the Schelde, which it crossed at 1123.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

No aircraft were committed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

XXVII. DAY ACTIONS, 28 March 1944

Several American aircraft entered the Reich on reconnaissance activity during the day. A few single-engine fighter aircraft were sent up against them, but without success.

XXVIII. THE AMERICAN ATTACK ON BRAUNSCHWEIG, 29 March 1944

(see Figure 145, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1215, a force consisting of 250 bombers and a large escort of fighter aircraft flew over the Zuyder Zee with course towards the east. They continued on, following the lines Cloppenburg - Osnabrück and Soltau - Hildesheim, and bombarded the city of Braunschweig. A few of the bomber formations made a detour over Stendal and Magdeburg to the target area. At 1340 the

bombers began their return flights from the Magdeburg and Braunschweig area, flying towards the west and northwest along the lines Uelzen - Goslar, Bremen - Paderborn, and Emden - Dortmund. They crossed the coast between the island of Borkum and the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 1550. The bomber force was protected by an escort of some 400 fighter aircraft .

The following fighter maneuvers were observed:

At 1300 fighter aircraft were observed leaving the Cloppenburg area.

At 1335 several fighter formations left the Hannover area on their way home.

Beginning at 1340, fighter aircraft were observed departing from the Magdeburg and Gardelegen areas.

Between 1410 and 1430, fighter formations streamed in over the Dutch coast between Bergen and Katwijk and moved on to the areas of Meppen and Lingen.

Bombardment was by instrument, and caused medium heavy damage to property and industrial installations in Braunschweig.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:

units from the 1st Fighter Division, over Braunschweig,

units from the 2d Fighter Division, over Hannover, and

units from the 3d Fighter Division, over Minden.

Because of the stormy weather, assembly maneuvers proved very difficult. Only a small percentage of the aircraft sent up against the enemy was actually able to make contact with the American aircraft. The 26th Twin-Engine Fighter Wing ran into heavy fighting over the Magdeburg area.

A total number of 258 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft was employed.

c. Allied Losses

7 bombers and 10 fighter aircraft certainly brought down

4 bombers and 2 fighter aircraft probably brought down.

d. German Losses (as of 1200, 30 March 1944)

12 aircraft totally destroyed

21 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 10 dead

5 wounded

12 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Weather conditions were fair, but favored the attacker rather than the defender.

f. Remarks

On 29 March the military post area of Braunschweig-Querum was caught in several American bombing panels. Several bombs fell on the headquarters buildings of the I Fighter Corps, causing considerable damage.

206a

Bombs Fall on the Command Headquarters, I Fighter Corps,

29 March 1944

XXIX. DAY ACTIONS, 30 and 31 March 1944

a. Enemy Activity

During both days, several American aircraft, identified as Mosquitos, carried out reconnaissance activity over the Reich.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Several fighter aircraft, provisionally equipped to face the enemy Mosquito aircraft, were employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

One Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft was brought down on 30 March.

d. German Losses

None.

CHAPTER VI

NIGHT ACTIONS DURING MARCH 1944

I. SURVEY

a. British Offensive Activity

During March 1944, British night operations were characterized by two new factors. In the first place, the effectiveness of the British attacks was heightened by the increase in the tactical ability of the path-finder units in ~~illuminating~~ marking targets for the four-engine bombers. All the British attacks on German cities during March were characterized by a more intense concentration of bombs. In the second place, there was a marked increase in the harrassing activity carried out by Mosquito bombers.

A total of seven large-scale attacks were directed against targets in the Reich, six of these occurring during the second half of the month. During the first half of the month (when the full-moon period occurred), the RAF concentrated its attention on targets in France. As far as target selection was concerned, there was no indication of any coordination among Allied air commanders. The British attack during the night of 26/27 March was robbed of its potential effectiveness by adverse weather conditions, and the attack on Nuremberg, on 30/31 March, was effectively met by German fighter defenses. In addition to large-scale night attacks, the RAF carried out twenty-two harrassing raids on targets in the Reich, employing a total of 1,400 Mosquito aircraft. Thus March 1944 represented the peak of British harrassing activity. As before, these harrassing raids were directed chiefly against targets in the industrial regions of Rhine-~~Westfalen~~ Westphalia. Although the total effectiveness of the harrassing raids was less than the cumulative effectiveness of the large-scale bomber attacks, there was an appreciable decrease in industrial production due, first, to the actual damage caused by the raids and, second, to the many air-raid alarms, which, of course, took the workers away from their posts

temporarily.

The British Coastal Command continued its mining of the waters along the German and Dutch coasts. A total of seven mine-laying operations were carried out, and it seems probable that there were still other operations of this sort which were not noted by German observers.

Nearly all the large-scale bomber attacks were preceded by Mosquito raids on our night fighter airfields in Holland. German night fighter commanders came to rely on these attacks as a certain indication that a large-scale bomber attack might be expected during the same night.

Since the RAF employed Mosquito aircraft on harrassing raids during bad weather and during the full-moon period, there were only two nights in the month of March when no enemy aircraft whatsoever were observed over the Reich.

b. British Offensive Tactics and Radio Interference

By means of diversionary maneuvers during the approach flight of their bomber streams, the British air commanders tried to prevent the effective commitment of the German night fighter forces. Frequent attempts were made to camouflage the course alterations of the bomber streams by sending up Mosquito formations at the same time and having the latter remain on the course initially selected by the bombers. In order to confuse and dissipate the German fighter defense forces, the RAF carried out secondary raids timed to coincide with the beginning of a large-scale attack. German ground radar stations were effectively confused by the continuing British practice of dropping multitudes of tinfoil strips from both the four-engine bombers and the Mosquitos. By committing four-engine bombers and Mosquitos together, the RAF made early warning on the basis of motor noise impossible. Despite the variety of tactical diversionary measures employed by the British, these were by and large unsuccessful. The British bombers tuned in their target location devices as soon as they took off from Great Britain or as soon as they crossed the border into

the Reich. In this way, by getting position bearings for the enemy's target location instruments, our radar equipment was able to follow the flight course of the bombers without difficulty, and a consolidation of the individual reports from our Rotterdam stations gave an accurate picture of the enemy's ~~position~~ position. By comparing a series of such radar pictures, it was possible to distinguish between the four-engine bombers and the Mosquitos, since there was a considerable difference in their flight speeds. It was assumed that the chief purpose of the British diversionary measures was to render ineffective the operations of the German night fighter aircraft which were sent up in controlled combat against specific objectives, and to a great extent this purpose was achieved, at least so far as the German single-engine fighters were concerned. The measures employed by the enemy in an attempt to jam the airborne search instruments built into our twin-engine fighter aircraft were not successful, and therefore the prospects of success in pursuit activity by these aircraft continued to be good. During March, the British Bomber Command discontinued the practice, begun towards the end of February, of sending up several bomber streams at different times and on different approach courses to the same target, a practice which could easily have resulted in the dissipation of the German night fighter forces.

c. The Commitment of German Night Fighter Units

At the beginning of March, the Air Fleet Reich had ~~again~~ assigned the defense of the Frankfurt area to the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, and had placed the ground control stations in that area under the command of the I Fighter Corps. Since 1 October 1943 they had been under the command of the 7th Fighter Division. In view of the British attacks on targets in the southern part of Germany, the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, speeded up the measures which had been introduced during late February to reinforce the

ground organization in the Frankfurt area, in respect to both personnel and materiel. In addition, five twin-engine fighter groups (night) were transferred in mid-March to the Frankfurt area and to Lorraine, under the command of the 4th Fighter Division.

On the occasion of three of the large-scale enemy attacks, German defensive measures were seriously hindered by adverse weather conditions, particularly by very poor high-altitude visibility. The improved command organization in the Frankfurt area, however, soon demonstrated its worth, as is indicated by the fact that the British lost a total of sixty-eight bombers to the German night fighter forces during the attacks on Stuttgart, during the night of 15/16 March, and on Frankfurt/Main, during the night of 22/23 March. Towards the end of the month, the striking power of the German night fighter forces reached its peak. During their attacks on Berlin and Nuremberg, the British lost more than 10% of the total number of bombers committed. The noteworthy record chalked up by the German night fighter forces was due chiefly to the success of night pursuit operations carried out by our twin-engine fighters equipped with the SN-2 airborne search devices. Our single-engine fighters, employed in controlled combat against specific objectives, contributed very little to the over-all success of operations.

The struggle to find an aircraft capable of meeting the British Mosquito bombers effectively continued without success. The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, experimented with the twin-engine He-219 and Me-410 and with the single-engine Me-109, all of them provisionally equipped with devices to increase their speed and their performance at high altitudes, but none of these experiments was successful. In the face of the steadily increasing employment of Mosquitos by the RAF, the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, renewed its request to the Luftwaffe High Command that jet-propelled aircraft capable of combatting the Mosquito be assigned as soon as possible to

the Reichs air defense forces. At the time there were two aircraft types being tested, the Arado 234 and the Me-262, which could have fulfilled this requirement.

d. Successes and Losses During March 1944

During March 1944 the average total number of night fighter aircraft available for employment by the I Fighter Corps was 240 twin-engine fighter aircraft and 100 single-engine fighter aircraft.

The total number of night fighter aircraft committed by the I Fighter Corps during March 1944 was 1,334 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft.

The total aircraft losses suffered by the I Fighter Corps during March 1944 amounted to eighty-seven aircraft, or 6.7% of the total number of aircraft committed.

The total losses suffered by the enemy within the area covered by the I Fighter Corps during March 1944 amounted to 256 aircraft (excluding those brought down by antiaircraft artillery), or 4.8% of the estimated total number of aircraft (5,325) employed by the RAF against the Reich. The number of aircraft brought down represented 6.0% of the total number of four-engine bombers committed by the RAF.

II. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON DÜSSELDORF AND DUISBURG, 29 February/1 March 1944

(see Figure 146, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

Beginning at 1949 a group of forty Mosquito bombers crossed the mouth of the Schelde, and flew on towards the east southeast along the Channel coast between Ostende and Dunkirk to raid the cities of Düsseldorf and Duisburg. In both cities, damage was relatively slight. Returning to their bases, the Mosquitos flew out over the Dutch coast between Katwijk and Ostende, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2103.

During the time from 2259 to 2322, a single British aircraft was observed circling above the coast near the islands of Schouwen and Goeree.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

There was no commitment of aircraft by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

8/10 to 10/10 cloud cover beginning at 200 to 500 meters and extending as high as 2,000 meters.

III. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON STUTTGART, 1/2 March 1944

(see Figure 147, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The main operation of the night was preceded by the bombardment of the German-occupied airfields at Leeuwarden, Deelen, Venlo, Volkel and St. Trong. These attacks were carried out by a total force of fifty Mosquito bombers, whose approach between the island of Ameland and the mouth of the Schelde was observed between 2244 and 0051.

At 0056 a bomber stream of some 700 aircraft was reported over the French coast between Le Havre and Valery en Caux. Flying towards the south-east, the bombers moved on as far as the Troyes and Bourges area. Here they altered course towards the east and flew on along the lines Neufchateau - Dijon and Strassburg - Basel into the Stuttgart area. A few smaller formations, presumably Mosquito aircraft, flew on as far as Munich. At 0255 the bombers began their return flights towards the west and northwest, flying over Luxemburg and northern France. They reached the Channel coast between Calais and Le Havre at about 0600. The majority of the bombers attacked

Stuttgart, where their concentrated bombardment resulted in fairly serious damage both to private property and to industrial installations. Scattered bombs also fell on Constance and Munich.

In addition to the operations described above, the RAF carried out the following actions:

During the time from 2229 to 2241, a single aircraft was observed circling above the islands of Schouwen and Walcheren.

At 0054 a single long-range night fighter aircraft flew in over the mouth of the Schelde and on into the Steenbergen area, where it circled about until 0113. This aircraft was presumed to be on reconnaissance duty.

Between 0222 and 0248, a group of five long-range night fighters reconnoitered the Roermond and Zwolle areas. They approached over the island of Schouwen and departed via Bergen.

From 0256 until 0330, three long-range night fighter aircraft were observed on a reconnaissance mission over the island of Goeree and Tilburg.

A single long-range night fighter carried out a reconnaissance mission over The Hague and Venlo during the time from 0335 to 0403.

Approaching at 0307 over Luxemburg, a group of twenty Mosquito aircraft raided the area east of Pirmasens. They joined the four-engine bombers on their return flight.

Between 0637 and 0655 a single aircraft flew along the coast between The Hague and Katwijk.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:

in controlled combat against specific objectives over the Stuttgart area: fifty-three twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division. They were controlled through radio beacon Kuli.

Because of bad weather, the forces belonging to the 1st and 2d Fighter

Divisions were not sent up. Fighter aircraft actions over the target area were rendered extremely difficult by poor high-altitude visibility.

There is nothing in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps pertaining to the commitment of forces by the 7th Fighter Division.

c. Allied Losses

3 bombers certainly brought down

d. German Losses

2 aircraft

personnel: 5 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over Holland, Belgium, northern France and northwestern Germany: cloud masses gradually dispersing towards the south; over the rest of Germany: 10/10 cloud cover beginning at 200 to 300 meters along the mountain ranges and at 500 to 800 meters elsewhere, and extending as high as 4,000 to 4,500 meters; high-altitude visibility two to four kilometers; over southern Germany: snowfall; danger of icing in the clouds.

f. Remarks

On 2 March 1944, Captain Frank, former commanding officer of the I Group, 1st Night Fighter Wing, and Captain Geiger, former commanding officer of the 7th Squadron, 1st Night Fighter Wing, were posthumously awarded the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

IV. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS ON AIX LA CHAPELLE AND MÜNCHEN-GLADBACH,

2/3 March 1944, AND ON BERLIN AND DUISBURG, 3/4 March 1944

(see Figure 146, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

2/3 March 1944. During the night of 2/3 March, a group of twenty-five Mosquito bombers carried out harrassing raids on Aix la Chapelle and München-Gladbach. Their approach, over Bergen and The Hague, lasted from

2004 until 2143. Their return flight led them back over the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2258.

At the same time, several British aircraft circled at low altitude over Holland.

One courier aircraft was observed crossing the Skagerrak on its way from Sweden to Great Britain.

3/4 March 1944. During the night of 3/4 March, British Mosquito bombers carried out harrassing raids on Berlin and Duisburg. These actions were carried out as follows:

During the time from 0210 to 0304, a force of forty Mosquito aircraft crossed the coast between the island of Vlieland and Katwijk and flew on into the Osnabrück area. At 0255, ten Mosquitos turned back towards the northwest and flew over Bremen and on out to sea. At 0338, fifteen aircraft departed from Osnabrück and headed towards the west. Fifteen Mosquitos flew on over Hannover and Braunschweig to Berlin. After bombarding the city, they departed towards the west and northwest at 0414, and left the Continent behind at 0531, crossing the coast between the Bay of Helgoland and Katwijk. At 0300 fifteen more Mosquitos were reported approaching over the mouth of the Schelde. They flew on to Duisburg, bombarded the city, and returned at 0407. Their departure flight over the ~~mouth~~ mouth of the Schelde lasted until 0457. The attacks caused slight damage in residential sections of both cities.

During the first half of the night, a few low-flying aircraft were reported over the mouth of the Schelde and the Gilze-Rijen area.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

2/3 March 1944. A single twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division was committed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

2/3 March 1944: cloudless; 3/4 March 1944: 7/10 to 10/10 cover of nimbus clouds between 200 and 7,000 meters.

V. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 4 March through 7 March 1944

(see Figure 148, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

4/5 March 1944. During the night of 4/5 March, the RAF carried out harrassing raids on the cities of Duisburg and Berlin. Duisburg was raided by a force of fifteen Mosquito bombers which approached over the mouth of the Schelde beginning at 0259, and continued on towards the east to their target, the Duisburg and Düsseldorf area. Their return flight led back over the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft crossing this point at 0425.

Berlin was raided by a group consisting of twenty bombers. Reported approaching at 0240 over the Zuyder Zee, they flew on over Osnabrück and Braunschweig into the areas of Magdeburg, Stendal, and Berlin. Their return course led back towards the west, and the aircraft crossed the coast between IJmuiden and the mouth of the Schelde, leaving the Continent behind by 0425.

5/6 March 1944. The cities of Aix la Chapelle and Duisburg were subjected to attack by a force of twenty-five Mosquito bombers. Approaching between Bergen and the mouth of the Schelde from 2108 until 2133, the bombers flew on towards the east to the areas of Duisburg, Aix la Chapelle, and Antwerp. Departing from the target area at 2134, they flew back towards the west and left the Continent via the mouth of the Schelde at 2228. One Mosquito aircraft flew on from Enschede to Osnabrück and Uelzen; its po-

sition at 2247 was north of Salzwedel. Flying back from the Stendal area at 0015, it moved on over Salzwedel, Soltau, Vechta, and Zwolle and crossed the coast over Bergen at 0127.

In addition to the above actions, the following operations were noted:

Between ~~215~~ 2150 and 2232, several enemy aircraft were observed circling north of the islands of Schiermonnikoog and Borkum at an altitude of 400 meters. These aircraft were presumably engaged in an attack on a German ship convoy.

Approaching at 0236 over the area south of Den Helder, a single enemy aircraft flew on over Meppel and Meppen into the area lying east of Nienburg. The aircraft left its target at 0320 and, following the same course back, flew out over Den Helder at 0348.

6/7 March 1944. During the night of 6/7 March, the cities of Braunschweig and Krefeld were subjected to attack by a force of some fifty Mosquito bombers. Their approach flight, between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde, lasted from 2000 until 2134. Fifteen of the aircraft flew on as far as Hengelo, Nymwegen, and Krefeld, attacked the latter city, and began their return flight at 2035. Fifteen other Mosquitos made their way to the areas of Münster and Osnabrück, and returned towards the west at 2045. The remaining twenty aircraft raided the Braunschweig and Oschersleben area, and returned to the west at 2110. The last aircraft crossed the coast between the island of Terschelling and Hoek van Holland at 2247.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:

4/5 March 1944: five twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over Holland;

5/6 March 1944: eight single-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st Fighter Division, over the Berlin area; and

6/7 March 1944: seven twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over Holland.

A total of twenty single and twin-engine fighter aircraft were committed by the I Fighter Corps during the three nights in the reporting period.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

5/6 March 1944: one single-engine fighter aircraft
 personnel: 1 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

4/5 March 1944: 3/10 to 8/10 cover of stratus clouds; fog in some localities;

5/6 March 1944: cloudless; local fogs;

6/7 March 1944: cloudless.

VI. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 7 March through 12 March 1944

(see Figure 149, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

7/8 March 1944. During this night Duisburg and Krefeld were raided by a force consisting of twenty-five Mosquito bombers. Approaching at 2016 over the Zuyder Zee, the force split up over Holland. Several aircraft circled over Holland for a time and then turned around and headed for home. One aircraft, its flight altitude varying between 400 and 1,500 meters, flew on into the Münster area. The rest of the Mosquitos moved on to the areas of Düsseldorf and Oberhausen. By 2345 the last aircraft had flown back over the mouth of the Schelde on their way back to Great Britain.

8/9 March 1944. During the time from 2019 to 2053, a single British courier aircraft was reported crossing the Skagerrak on its way from England to Sweden.

9/10 March 1944. During the night of 9/10 March, Düsseldorf and Aix la Chapelle were attacked by fifteen Mosquito bombers. Crossing the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and Calais at 1950, the aircraft flew on towards the east into the areas of Aix la Chapelle, Düsseldorf, and Solingen. Departing from their targets at 2010, they flew back over the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2120.

10/11 March 1944. During this night, Duisburg and Aix la Chapelle were raided by a total of twenty Mosquito bombers. Approaching at 2222 between Den Helder and The Hague, they flew on towards the east as far as the German border. Here they altered course for the south and proceeded as far as the areas of Düsseldorf, Essen, and Aix la Chapelle. After completing their mission, they flew back towards the west and northwest, and crossed over the coast between The Hague and Blankenberghe. The last of the Mosquitos left the Continent at 2345.

In addition to the above, the following enemy actions were noted during the night of 10/11 March:

Several aircraft were observed flying along the coast between the mouth of the Schelde and the Gilze-Rijen area.

A single aircraft penetrated as far as the Emden area, and then flew back over the Zuyder Zee.

One British courier aircraft was reported crossing the Skagerrak on its way from Sweden to Great Britain.

11/12 March 1944. During this night Krefeld and Duisburg were the victims of an attack by a group of forty Mosquito bombers. Approaching at 2014 between Bergen and the mouth of the Schelde, they followed a southeast course into the Ruhr District. Their return flight course led over The Hague back towards the west, at 2044.

In addition, the city of Osnabrück was raided by twelve Mosquito

aircraft. The Mosquitos were reported approaching at 2039 over the island of Sylt, Hamburg, and Lüneburg. They flew on over Nienburg as far as the Osnabrück and Minden area. Their mission completed, the Mosquitos flew back over the mouth of the Schelde, the last of them leaving the Continent at 2302. Scattered bombs were also dropped over the area south of Hamburg.

In addition to the above, several mine-laying aircraft were observed over the Bay of Helgoland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:

7/8 March 1944: four twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over Holland;

11/12 March 1944: two twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over Holland, and two single-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st Fighter Division, over the Berlin area.

During the reporting period, the I Fighter Corps employed a total of eight single and twin-engine fighter aircraft.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

7/8 March 1944: over northwestern Germany: clear; over the Ruhr District and southern Germany: closed cloud cover extending as high as 2,000 to 6,000 meters;

9/10 March 1944: cover of fog-like clouds between 200 and 600 meters; full moon;

10/11 March 1944: ground fogs;

11/12 March 1944: conditions varying from clear to cloudy; cloud cover

beginning at 500 meters and extending as high as 2,000 meters.

f. Remarks

On 11 March 1944, Lt Col Streib, Commanding Officer of the 1st Night Fighter Wing, became the fifty-fourth officer in the German Armed Forces to receive the Oak Leaves and Swords to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

On 12 March 1944, Major zu Lippe-Weissenfeld, Commanding Officer of the III Group, 1st Night Fighter Wing, and acting Commanding Officer, 5th Night Fighter Wing, was killed during a practice flight. He had a record of forty-eight enemy aircraft downed in night combat, and had been awarded the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

222a

Lieutenant Colonel Streib (third from right),
with Night Fighter Commanders

VII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 12 March through 15 March 1944

(see Figure 150, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

12/13 March 1944. During the night of 12/13 March, the cities of Duisburg and Aix la Chapelle were attacked by a force totalling twenty Mosquito aircraft. During the first half of the night, the enemy aircraft approached over the Zuyder Zee. Their return flight course led them back over the mouth of the Schelde.

13/14 March 1944. During this night a force of thirty Mosquito bombers raided Frankfurt/Main. Their approach course led over the mouth of the Schelde, and their return course over Dunkirk.

14/15 March 1944. During the night of 14/15 March, a force consisting of forty Mosquito aircraft raided the cities of Cologne and Krefeld. The approach of the enemy, between Calais and the mouth of the Schelde, lasted from 2020 until 2050, and led him towards the south. Flying as far as the areas of Düsseldorf, Remscheid, Siegburg, and Koblenz, the aircraft accomplished their mission and, at 2050, began their return flights towards the west. The last aircraft left the Continent behind, flying out between the mouth of the Schelde and Berck sur Mer, at 2205. A single aircraft detached itself from the main force over Koblenz and flew on into the Paderborn area. At 2152 it left Paderborn and flew back over Lippstadt, Hamm, and Cleves, leaving the coast behind south of Rotterdam at 2232.

In addition to the above, the following enemy actions were noted during the night of 14/15 March:

Approaching at 0224 over Bergen, a single enemy aircraft continued on to raid the city of Göttingen. Its approach course led it north of Zwolle, north of Osnabrück, and south of Hannover to its target. At 0302 it departed from the target area and flew back towards the northwest over Osna-

brück and Assen. At 0346, it was reported over the island of Vlieland on its way back to Great Britain.

During the second half of the night, four four-engine bombers were observed over southern Norway, presumably on their way from Great Britain to Sweden. One British courier headed for Sweden, and one coming from Sweden were also reported over the Skagerrak.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:

13/14 March 1944: two twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, from Himmelbett areas over Holland.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

12/13 March 1944: 10/10 cover of stratus clouds between 150 and 6,500 meters; danger of icing in the clouds;

13/14 March 1944: varying cloud cover; snow and hail flurries; nimbus peaks reaching as high as 6,000 meters;

14/15 March 1944: 8/10 cover of cumulus clouds between 300 and 5,000 meters.

VIII. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON STUTTGART, 15/16 March 1944

(see Figure 151, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

A bomber stream consisting of 500 aircraft took off from the London area with courses towards the south and southeast. A smaller formation detached itself from the main stream and penetrated into the Amiens and St. Quentin areas. After bombarding the area, these aircraft returned towards the

225

west. The main stream crossed the Channel coast between Caen and Le Havre at about 2000 and, heading towards the southeast, moved on to the areas of Orleans and Chartres. Moving on, they followed the lines Montargis - Melun, Chaumont - Bar le Duc, south of Epinal - Nancy, and Basel - Freudenstadt, and altered course for the north over Constance and Donaueschingen, to approach their target from the south. Several singly-flying aircraft, probably Mosquito bombers, flew on towards the east as far as the Munich area, where they dropped several bombs in an attempt to mask the real target of the attack. At 2312 the aircraft began their return flights towards the west, southwest, and northwest. Their return course was bounded in the north by the line Mannheim - Bingen - St. Vith - Dunkirk, and in the south by the line Freiburg - Chaumont - Paris - Fecamp. The last bombers left the Channel coast behind at 0205. The bombardment of Stuttgart was very concentrated and caused serious damage to both private properties and to industrial areas.

In addition to the attack described above, the RAF carried out the following actions:

A force totalling thirty Mosquito aircraft raided the German-occupied airfields at Deelen and St. Trond as well as targets in the Ruhr District. The enemy aircraft approached at 2005 between Westerschelde and Bergen, and flew on to the areas of Zwolle, Enschede, Dortmund, Bochum, Düsseldorf, Aix la Chapelle, Koblenz, and Liège. Their return flight towards the northwest lasted until 2350.

During the second half of the night, several Mosquito aircraft, presumed to be long-range night fighters, flew over the island of Texel and on as far as Uelzen and Braunschweig. Their return course led over Wesermünde.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:

226

in night pursuit activity:

1st Fighter Division: the Me-110 Group (Erfurt), assembling at radio beacon Otto; these aircraft were guided by the Y-Method in pursuit of the returning enemy bombers over the Mannheim and Kaiserslautern areas;

2d Fighter Division: several Ju-88 units, assembling at radio beacon Phillip; these aircraft were directed on to radio beacon Christa and into the enemy bomber stream over Freiburg and Donaueschingen; and

3d Fighter Division: several Ju-88 units, assembling at radio beacon Karl; these aircraft were directed on to radio beacon Christa and into the bomber stream over Freiburg and Donaueschingen; several Me-110 units were assembled over their airfields in Belgium and France and were guided into the enemy bomber force by radar station Muffel.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

3d Fighter Division: the single-engine fighter groups from Bonn and Wiesbaden-Erbenheim were

from Himmelbett areas against the Mosquito bombers over Hannover, Braunschweig, and northern Holland:

several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 1st and 3d Fighter Divisions.

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of ninety-three single and twin-engine fighter aircraft.

There is no information in the War Diary of the I Fighter Corps pertaining to the commitment of aircraft by the 7th Fighter Division and the Third Air Fleet.

c. Allied Losses

30 bombers certainly brought down

d. German Losses

9 aircraft

227

personnel: 1 wounded

13 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

6/10 to 10/10 cloud cover between 800 and 2,500 meters.

IX. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 16 March through 18 March 1944

(see Figure 152, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

16/17 March 1944. During this night the cities of Cologne and Bonn were subjected to attack by a force of forty-five Mosquito bombers. Approaching at 2050, the enemy aircraft flew over the mouth of the Schelde and over Calais into the Cologne and Koblenz area. Their return flight led them back over the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2220.

Several British aircraft dropped aerial mines into the waters around Helgoland and Sylt.

A single British courier aircraft was observed crossing the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden; two courier aircraft returning to Great Britain were also reported.

17/18 March 1944. A force totalling fifty Mosquito bombers attacked the cities of Cologne, Aix la Chapelle, and Krefeld. They approached between Hoek van Holland and Calais from 1957 to 2055, and flew on to the areas of Düsseldorf, Cologne, Koblenz, and Aix la Chapelle. At 2052 they began their return flight, following approximately the same course as during the approach flight. The last aircraft flew over The Hague on their way back towards the west at 2137.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:

16/17 March 1944: two aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, over

Holland; and

17/18 March 1944: two fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, also over Holland.

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of four single and twin-engine fighter aircraft during the reporting period.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

During both nights there was a cloud cover of loosely dispersed stratus clouds.

X. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN, 18/19 March 1944

(see Figure 153, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

An enemy bomber stream consisting of approximately 600 aircraft took off from the area northeast of London, and by 2000 had reached the Channel coast between Heyst and Dunkirk, flying towards the southeast. The bombers flew on, following the lines Luxemburg - Liège and Trier - Giessen, into the areas of Frankfurt/Main, Aschaffenburg, Würzburg, and Mannheim. Frankfurt was subjected to concentrated bombardment, which left in its wake very heavy damages to both private properties and to industrial plants. A formation of approximately thirty bombers had left the main stream over the area south of Aix la Chapelle and, by attacking the city of Kassel, attempted to camouflage the actual target of the main force. At 2200 the bombers left the Frankfurt area with course towards the northwest. By 0023, the last aircraft had left the Continent, crossing the coast between Blankenberghe and Calais. After completing its mission, the formation which had

attacked Kassel flew back towards the northwest, and by 2325 had left the Continent behind, crossing the coast between Den Helder and Katwijk.

In addition to the attack described above, the RAF carried out the following actions:

A total of forty Mosquito aircraft participated in harrassing raids on German night fighter airfields in Twente, Venlo, and St. Trond as well as in observation flights over that area. Approaching at 2009 between Bergen and the mouth of the Schelde, the Mosquitos flew on into Holland and into the areas of Hannover, Braunschweig and Goslar, and Göttingen. Their return course led towards the west, the aircraft passing over the coast between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde until 2256.

During the time from 2032 to 2123, a force of fifty aircraft was engaged in mine-laying operations in the Bay of Helgoland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

Prior to the attack on Frankfurt/Main during the night of 18/19 March, the following transfers of forces were carried out: the 1st Night Fighter Wing was moved to France and assigned to the 4th Fighter Division; units from the 3d and 6th Night Fighter Wings were transferred into the Frankfurt area and to the airfield at St. Trond; and one more group from the 5th Night Fighter Wing was moved to the airfield at Erfurt.

The following forces were committed in defensive measures during the attack on Frankfurt/Main:

in night pursuit activity:

3d Fighter Division: the 1st Night Fighter Wing was assembled over its assigned airfields and was directed into the bomber stream at^a/radio beacon sent out by radar station Bulle; the twin-engine fighter group (St. Trond) was directed into the bomber stream southwest of its airfield; the 2d Night Fighter Wing was ordered from its assigned airfields (Twente, Quaken-

brück, and Langensalza) to radio beacon Kett, directed on to radio beacon Ida, and from the latter into the bomber stream; the twin-engine fighter groups from the Frankfurt area were guided by the Y-Method into the Koblenz area and directed into the bomber stream.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

1st Fighter Division: two Me-110 groups from Erfurt were assembled over radio beacon Otto and directed into combat;

3d Fighter Division: the single-engine fighter groups from Rheine, Bonn, and Wiesbaden-Erbenheim were employed in controlled combat over the Frankfurt area.

from Himmelbett areas:

a few twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division were employed from areas over southern Holland and Belgium during the return flight of the enemy bombers.

The I Target Illumination Group from the airfield at Münster was guided to radio beacon Otto and employed from there over Frankfurt.

In order to be prepared for a possible deviation of the bomber stream towards the east, the twin-engine fighter units from the 2d Fighter Division were provisionally assembled at radio beacon 10, leaving the remaining twin-engine fighter forces from the 1st Fighter Division for commitment over Frankfurt. After the British attack on Frankfurt had started, the units from the 2d Fighter Division were ordered to land.

A total of 168 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft as well as aircraft from the Target Illumination Group were employed.

Fighter operations were rendered difficult by poor high-altitude visibility.

c. Allied Losses

11 bombers certainly brought down

231

d. German Losses

6 aircraft

personnel: 3 dead

7 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

4/10 to 10/10 cover of stratus clouds above 4,000 meters; below this altitude there ~~xxx~~ were layers of haze; visibility very poor; over northwestern Germany: under the high-altitude cloud cover there was an additional cloud cover of 5/10 to 10/10 at about 500 meters; scattered high-altitude fogs; ground visibility three to six kilometers.

f. Remarks

The effectiveness of the British raids on our airfields in Holland is summarized by the following:

Twente: at 2048 two demolition bombs hit the taxiing area and two fell into the open field; no damage caused

Venlo: several bombs were dropped on the taxiing area; no damage caused

St. Trond: at 2042 one demolition bomb hit the runway and four were dropped in the open field; one dud also landed on the runway; no damage caused.

XI. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 19 March through 22 March 1944

(see Figure 154, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

19/20 March 1944: Aix la Chapelle and Düsseldorf were raided by a force of twenty-five Mosquito bombers. Approaching at 2000 between Dunkirk and Boulogne, they flew on towards the southeast as far as the areas of Aix la Chapelle, Cologne, Duisburg, and Düsseldorf. They flew back towards the west over the island of Goeree and Calais, the last aircraft fly-

ing over Calais at 2215.

Fifteen Mosquito aircraft raided the city of Berlin. They approached at 2120 over the Zuyder Zee and continued on over Hannover, Magdeburg, and Stendal. Their return course led towards the west and northwest, the bombers leaving the coast between the island of Texel and Rotterdam until 0030.

In addition to the above, the following actions were noted:

Several long-range night fighter aircraft were reported circling over Holland.

A single long-range fighter aircraft dropped two bombs on the airfield at Venlo. It had approached over the mouth of the Schelde and flown on as far as Koblenz and Paderborn. Its return flight course led over Osnabrück and the Zuyder Zee.

20/21 March 1944. Approaching at 2040 over Bergen, a force of twenty Mosquito bombers raided the city of Aix la Chapelle. They returned via the mouth of the Schelde, crossing this point at 2154.

A group of twenty Mosquito bombers, approaching at 2040 between Westerschelde and Dunkirk, carried out an attack on Munich and Innsbruck. Fifteen of the aircraft flew over Namur, Trier, Karlsruhe, and Stuttgart into the Munich area, and the other five over Charleville, Metz, Strassburg, and Sigmaringen into Innsbruck. They began their return flights at 2209 and flew back over the Channel coast by 2350.

Cologne was raided by ten Mosquito aircraft which had approached at 2110 between Calais and the mouth of the Somme and moved on as far as Cologne and Koblenz. The enemy aircraft left their target at 2153 and had departed from the Continent by 2241.

21/22 March 1944. A total of forty Mosquito bombers carried out raids on the cities of Cologne and Oberhausen. The aircraft were reported approaching over Hoek van Holland between 2020 and 2115. Their return flights

began at 2054 towards the west. The last aircraft crossed over the coast at Ostende at 2229.

Several long-range night fighter aircraft were reported over northern Holland as far as the Oldenburg and Vechta areas. Presumably they were engaged in an observation mission.

A single Mosquito aircraft flew over Helgoland, southern Schleswig and Rostock into the Neubrandenburg area. Returning towards the west, it followed a course over Neurippen, Stendal, Münster, and the mouth of the Schelde.

One British courier aircraft on its way to Sweden and two on their way back to Great Britain were observed over the Skagerrak.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by means of the I-Method over Holland:

19/20 March 1944: three twin-engine fighter aircraft

21/22 March 1944: two twin-engine fighter aircraft

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of five twin-engine fighter aircraft during the reporting period.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

19/20 March 1944: cover of loosely dispersed clouds between 600 and 2,000 meters;

20/21 March 1944: 10/10 cloud cover between 300 and 7,000 meters; rain;

21/22 March 1944: 6/10 to 10/10 cover of nimbus clouds beginning at 800 meters.

XII. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON FRANKFURT/MAIN, 22/23 March 1944

(see Figure 155, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

During the first half of the night, the RAF opened its operations with a force of 100 Mosquito bombers which approached over the Dutch coast and flew on to raid the airfields at Leeuwarden, Twente, Deelen and Venlo in Holland, as well as targets in the Ruhr District and the city of Frankfurt/Main. During the Mosquito attacks, a British bomber stream consisting of some 600 aircraft took off from the Norwich area and, flying towards the northeast, moved on over the southern part of the North Sea.

A mine-laying formation detached itself from the main force and flew on over the island of Sylt and Jutland to mine the waters of the western Baltic. After completing their mining mission, the aircraft returned to their bases in Great Britain. The main bomber force altered its course towards the south over the waters north of Ameland, and continued on into the Osnabrück area. At this point a unit of Mosquitos left the main stream and headed for Berlin. They bombarded Berlin in an attempt to camouflage the target assigned to the large bombers. The large bombers, in the meantime, had proceeded in a tightly closed formation from Osnabrück to their target, Frankfurt/Main. After bombarding the city, the attackers headed back towards the west and northwest, flying over Belgium and northern France and leaving the Continent between Ostende and Dieppe. Whereas the Mosquito attacks were hardly effective, the large-scale attack on Frankfurt wrought considerable havoc on industrial

installations. The enemy mine-laying action in the western Baltic Sea resulted in the dissipation of the German night fighter forces, and thus must be chalked up as a success for British diversionary tactics.

In addition to the attack described above, the RAF carried out the following actions during the second half of the night:

Several long-range night fighter aircraft, engaged in reconnaissance activity over northwestern Germany and Frankfurt, raided the airfields at Stade and Langendiebach with their airborne armaments.

A single Mosquito aircraft flew in over the Zuyder Zee, Quakenbrück and Vechta into the Hannover area. It flew back over Bremen, Wesermünde, and the East Frisian Islands.

Three courier aircraft were observed crossing the Skagerrak on their way from Great Britain to Sweden.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:

in night pursuit operations:

3d Fighter Division: the Me-110 units, together with reinforcements from the 4th Fighter Division, were assembled at radio beacon Ludwig and directed into the bomber stream over Lippstadt and Paderborn; the Ju-88 units were directed from their airfields (Twente, Quakenbrück, Langensalza, and St. Trond) to radio beacon Quelle, and on to radio beacon Ludwig; from the latter they were guided into the bomber stream; the twin-engine fighter aircraft group from Mainz-Finthen was sent up in the direction of Kassel, guided on to radio beacons Marie and Ludwig, and directed into the bomber stream.

2d Fighter Division: the twin-engine fighter aircraft group from Vechta was assembled at radio beacon Quelle, directed on to Hannover and radio

beacon Ludwig, and directed into the bomber stream; the twin-engine fighter aircraft group from Westerland was assembled at radio beacon Hammer, guided on towards Bremen, and directed into the bomber stream west of Quakenbrück.

1st Fighter Division: the twin-engine fighter aircraft groups from Werneuchen and Erfurt were sent up towards radio beacon Hahn; before reaching it, they were directed to report ~~to~~ ^{at} radio beacon Ludwig instead, and were directed into the bomber stream east of Münster; the twin-engine fighter aircraft groups from Parchim and Stendal assembled at radio beacon Marie; after the British attack on Frankfurt had started, these aircraft were ordered to land again.

in controlled combat against specific objectives:

3d Fighter Division: the single-engine fighter aircraft groups from Rheine and Wiesbaden-Erbenheim were assembled at the light beacon at Braunschweig; the group from Rheine was called back again because its flight range was too limited to enable it to reach the target in time; the group from Wiesbaden was employed in controlled combat over Frankfurt/Main.

2d Fighter Division: the single-engine fighter aircraft group from Oldenburg was assembled over Bremen and directed on over Soltau ~~intoxic~~ in the ~~Frankfurt~~ direction of Frankfurt; because their flight range was too limited, they had to land before reaching Frankfurt.

from Himmelbett areas over Holland, against the Mosquito raiders and the returning bomber stream:

several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division.

The Target Illumination Group from the airfield at Münster-Handorf was assembled at radio beacon Marie and directed on over Hannover to Frankfurt. Weather conditions precluded its participating in action by dropping light

flares.

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of 243 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft as well as aircraft from the Target Illumination Group.

The double course alteration by the bomber stream and the British diversionary maneuvers carried out by the mine-laying aircraft and the Mosquito bombers resulted in a complicated pattern of employment for the German night fighter forces, with many last-minute changes. This accounted for the fact that German successes were not particularly noteworthy despite the excellent defense weather.

c. Allied Losses

38 bombers certainly brought down

d. German Losses

8 aircraft

personnel: 2 dead

6 wounded

12 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Scattered nimbus cloud areas beginning at 600 to 800 meters and extending as high as 2,000 meters; over the target area: clear; good high-altitude visibility.

f. Remarks

The damage caused by the airborne weapon attack carried out by the British long-range night fighters is summarized below:

Stade: 1 Me-110 destroyed

1 Me-110 damaged

personnel: 4 wounded

Langendiebach: 1 Me-110 damaged

1 aircraft crew slightly injured.

One of our fighters was shot down over Frankfurt by our own antiaircraft artillery. The pilot was able to escape by parachute.

XIII. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 23/24 March and 25/26 March 1944

(see Figure 156, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

23/24 March 1944. During this night the city of Dortmund was attacked by an enemy force consisting of thirty Mosquito bombers. Their approach course led them in between the Zuyder Zee and the mouth of the Schelde. Several aircraft, presumably long-range night fighters, flew on as far as Hannover and Ludwigslust. Most of them, however, flew into the Ruhr District. Their return course led them back out over the mouths of the Schelde and the Elbe.

A single Mosquito flew in over the Zuyder Zee and raided the city of Stendal.

25/26 March 1944. During the night of 25/26 March, Berlin was subjected to attack by a group of twenty-five Mosquito bombers. They were reported approaching over the Zuyder Zee at 2019. The aircraft flew on, following the lines Bremen - Hannover and Neurippen - Brandenburg/Havel, as far as Landsberg/Warthe, Frankfurt/Oder, and Küstrin. Some of the aircraft flew back from the Hannover area over the territory south of Emden. Most of them, however, flew back over the island of Texel and Rotterdam, the last Mosquitos leaving the Continent at 2350.

At 2019 an additional force of twenty-five Mosquitos penetrated into the Ruhr District. The course selected for their approach and return led over the

mouth of the Schelde.

Several British aircraft dropped aerial mines into the waters of the Bay of Helgoland.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed against the enemy Mosquito bombers:

23/24 March 1944: one single-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division, and

25/26 March 1944: three single-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division.

A total of four single-engine fighter aircraft were employed by the I Fighter Corps.

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

25/26 March 1944: one Me-109 developed motor trouble and crashed; the pilot was able to parachute to safety.

e. Weather Conditions

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ 23/24 March 1944: over western Germany: dispersing cloud cover above 4,000 meters; over northern Germany: closed cloud cover of multiple-strata clouds; high-altitude winds from 300°, velocity fifty kilometers per hour;

25/26 March 1944: high-altitude cover of stratus clouds beginning at 2,500 meters and extending as high as 10,000 meters.

XIV. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON BERLIN, 24/25 March 1944

(see Figure 157, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At 1900 a British bomber stream consisting of 600 aircraft was reported approximately 120 kilometers northwest of the island of Vlieland. The aircraft flew on over the southern portion of the North Sea, crossed the western coast of Jutland between the island of Röm and Husum, and altered its course over the Bay of Kiel towards the southeast and Berlin. The bomber stream made a detour over Neubrandenburg and Königsberg/Neumark. Over the Bay of Helgoland a group of fifty Mosquito bombers left the main stream and flew on to attack Hamburg. A few of the four-engine bombers bombarded the city of Rostock, but the majority continued on to attack Berlin. Their attack lasted from 2200 until 2240, and caused a great deal of damage to industrial installations. A small bomber formation passed over Berlin and flew on to the east to drop its bombs on Dessau and Leipzig. The attackers left the Berlin area beginning at 2230, and the return flight towards the west and northwest was accomplished in broad front formation, the aircraft following the lines Wittenberge - Greiz and Bremen - Giessen. The returning bombers crossed the coast between the island of Vlieland and Ostende, the last aircraft leaving the Continent by 0130. Several aircraft were reported returning via the mouth of the Elbe. Those bombers which had raided Rostock had left their target at 2225.

In addition to the above, the RAF carried out the following actions:

Between 1950 and 2140, a force of some 100 Mosquito bombers flew into Holland between the island of Terschelling and Ostende. Some of them penetrated as far as Münster and the Ruhr District, where they attacked the German airfields at Leeuwarden, Twente, Venlo, and St. Trond as well as the cities of Münster and Duisburg.

The Mosquitos had completed their return flights over the Dutch coast

by 2235. One runway at the airfield at Leeuwarden was damaged; otherwise these attacks were ineffective.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were committed by the I Fighter Corps:

in night pursuit operations (twin-engine fighter aircraft units):

3d Fighter Division: the group from Quakenbrück was assembled at radio beacon Hummel, directed on to radio beacon Marie, and guided into the bomber stream over Flensburg; the groups from St. Trond, Twente, and Langendiebach were assembled at radio beacon Marie and directed into the bomber stream over the Bay of Kiel; the group from Mainz-Finthen was assembled at radio beacon Gertrud and directed into the bomber stream over the area north of Berlin; the group from Langensalza was late in taking off because of radio trouble, but was guided by radio towards radio beacon Berta and directed into the returning bomber stream west of Berlin; the 1st Night Fighter Wing was ordered from France to the airfields at St. Trond and Venlo and committed at radio beacon Ludwig against the returning bomber stream.

2d Fighter Division: the group from Westerland was assembled at radio beacon Hummel and directed into the bomber stream over the Flensburg area; the group from Stade was guided by means of the Y-Method into the direction of Flensburg, where it was directed into the bomber stream; the group from Vechta was assembled at radio beacon Marie and directed into the bomber stream over the Bay of Kiel.

1st Fighter Division: the groups from Parchim, Erfurt, and Stendal were assembled at radio beacon Hein and directed into the bomber stream over Fehmarn; the group from Werneuchen was assembled at radio beacon Marie and

242

directed into the bomber stream over the Wismar area.

in controlled combat against specific objectives (single-engine fighter aircraft units):

1st Fighter Division: the groups from Rheine, Bonn, and Wiesbaden-Erbenheim were scrambled over the light beacon at Braunschweig and directed on into combat over Berlin.

2d Fighter Division: the group from Oldenburg was committed over Berlin.

1st Fighter Division: the groups from Ludwigslust, Zerbst, and Jüterbog were committed over Berlin.

The I Fighter Corps committed a total of 279 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft during the night of 24/25 March 1944.

c. Allied Losses

80 bombers certainly brought down

8 bombers probably brought down

d. German Losses

14 aircraft, including one (an Me-109) which was hit by our own anti-aircraft artillery fire, and one (an FW-190) which crashed because of motor trouble.

personnel: 3 dead

9 wounded

14 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over northern Germany: cloudless; visibility good; over Berlin: 5/10 to 8/10 cloud cover between 1,000 and 2,500 meters; high-altitude visi-

bility good; high-altitude winds from 360° , velocity 120 to 150 kilometers per hour.

f. Remarks

One Ju-88 was rammed by a British bomber in the air. The pilot, Captain Kröger, was able to land the airplane safely, but his radioman was thrown from the plane by the force of the collision.

XV. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON THE RUHR DISTRICT, 26/27 March 1944

(see Figure 158, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

The RAF opened operations during the night of 26/27 March with a diversionary attack on Courtrai in Belgium, carried out by a small bomber formation. The bombers were reported taking off from the Norwich area at 2000. They followed a southeast course over the mouth of the Schelde and into the St. Nicolas area, where they altered course towards the southwest to attack Courtrai. A few of the bombers flew on as far as St. Quentin.

The main bomber force also took off from the Norwich area and, by 2042, the lead aircraft were already crossing the Dutch coast between Den Helder and Katwijk. Over the Zuyder Zee and the Zwolle area, the stream altered its course towards the southeast and southwest, and over the area bounded by Münster, Dortmund, Koblenz, Krefeld, and Wesel, the stream broke up into several smaller formations. Several bombers strayed into the Paderborn and Kassel area. Over Zwolle, a group of some thirty Mosquito bombers left the bomber stream and headed towards the east into the Braunschweig area in an attempt to camouflage the course alteration of the bombers. It was assumed that the high-altitude cloud cover prevented the RAF from carrying out its attack as

planned. The bombardment of the Ruhr District was widely scattered, bombs falling on the following cities: Wesel, Duisburg, Düsseldorf, Essen, Mülheim, Bochum, Wuppertal, Oberhausen, Ahrweiler, and Neuwied. Some property damage was caused by the attacks. At 2200 the first bombers began their return flights from the Ruhr District, most of them moving out over Brussels and Charleroi. They passed over the coast between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde, the last aircraft leaving the Continent at 2313. A few of the bomber formations crossed the coast over the mouth of the Somme, the last aircraft passing this point at 0009. A total of 400 bomber aircraft participated in the operation.

b. Commitment of ~~the~~ Aircraft By the I Fighter Corps

Due to the very unfavorable weather conditions, only carefully selected night fighter crews could be employed. The following twin-engine fighter units were employed in night pursuit activity:

1st Fighter Division: the group from Erfurt was assembled at radio beacon Ida and directed on to radio beacon Ludwig; the groups from Parchim, Stendal, and Werneuchen were assembled at radio beacon 12 and directed on to radio beacon Ludwig.

3d Fighter Division: the groups from Langensalza, Twente, and Langendiebach were assembled at radio beacon Ida and directed on to radio beacon Ludwig; the groups from St. Trond and Mainz-Finthen were assembled over their assigned airfields and directed on to radio beacon Ludwig.

7th Fighter Division: two groups, temporarily assigned to the I Fighter Corps, were assembled at radio beacon Ida and directed on to radio beacon Ludwig.

245

Several twin-engine fighter aircraft from the 3d Fighter Division were committed from ~~Himmelfett~~ areas over southern Holland during the return flight of the bombers.

Only a small percentage of the aircraft directed to radio beacon Ludwig actually got into action over Twente, Münster, and Dortmund. The majority of the fighter aircraft employed by the 1st and 7th Fighter Divisions arrived in the Ruhr District too late for effective participation in operations. Weather conditions favored the attackers rather than the defenders, and the employment of our night fighter forces was made particularly difficult by the danger of icing in the clouds. This factor also contributed to the very heavy German losses.

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of 105 twin-engine fighter aircraft.

c. Allied Losses

8 bombers certainly brought down

d. German Losses

20 aircraft, including two which were brought down by our own anti-aircraft artillery fire (one Me-110 west of Disseldorf, and one Me-110 fifteen kilometers south of Umm)

personnel: 6 dead

4 wounded

35 missing in action.

e. Weather Conditions

Impenetrable cloud cover beginning at 50 to 300 meters and extending as high as 4,000 to 6,000 meters; danger of icing in the clouds; aircraft were able to land safely only in the Frankfurt area, in Belgium, and in northern France.

XVI. BRITISH HARRASSING ATTACKS, 27/28 March and 29/30 March 1944

(see Figure 159, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

27/28 March 1944. During the night of 27/28 March a force of twenty-five Mosquito bombers raided the city of Duisburg. During the time from 2046 to 2125, five aircraft flew in over Den Helder, Meppel, and Bocholt, and twenty over the mouth of the Schelde. Return flights towards the west began at 2118. The returning aircraft crossed over the coast between The Hague and the mouth of the Schelde, the last ones leaving the Continent behind at 2205.

One British courier aircraft crossed the Skagerrak on its way to Sweden.

During the first part of the night of 29/30 March, a single Mosquito aircraft approaching the mouth of the Schelde from the northern Channel, turned back before reaching its goal.

29/30 March 1944. During this night Cologne was raided by a force of twenty-five aircraft. Approaching at 0017 between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde, the initial force of twenty aircraft flew on over Zwolle and Duisburg. At 0235, five more aircraft flew in over Calais and Brussels. The aircraft began their return flight towards the west and northwest at 0045, and the last of them passed over the coast between Den Helder and the mouth of the Schelde by 0323.

During the same night a group of fifteen Mosquito bombers attacked the city of Kiel. Approaching at 0121 from the North Sea, they flew on over Westerland and Flensburg to their target. At 0204 they began their return flight towards the west, passing over the island of Helgoland at 0231.

One British courier aircraft crossed the Skagerrak on its way from Sweden to Great Britain.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following aircraft were committed by the 3d Fighter Division against the enemy Mosquitos:

27/28 March 1944: three single-engine fighter aircraft

29/30 March 1944: two single-engine fighter aircraft

c. Allied Losses

Could not be determined.

d. German Losses

None.

e. Weather Conditions

27/28 March 1944: cover of stratus clouds between 800 and 1,500 meters;

29/30 March: 4/10 to 7/10 cover of nimbus clouds beginning at 1,000 meters;

over the Cologne area: an additional cover of thinly dispersed clouds at 5,000 to 7,000 meters.

XVII. THE BRITISH ATTACK ON NUREMBERG, 30/31 March 1944

(see Figure 160, Annex)

a. Enemy Activity

At approximately 2230 the RAF opened its operations for the night with a force of approximately 100 Mosquito bombers. Approaching over the Dutch coast, the bombers raided the night fighter airfields at Leeuwarden, Twente, Declen, and Venlo, as well as industrial targets in the Ruhr District. At the same time, a small aircraft formation appeared over the southern waters of the North Sea, presumably engaged in a mine-laying operation.

The main British force, consisting of approximately 700 bombers, took off from the Norwich area, with course towards the east. Over the northern waters of the Channel, they altered course for the southeast and flew in over the coast

between the mouth of the Schelde and Ostende. It took the large force from 2310 until 2350 to pass ~~over~~ the coast. Flying on over Antwerp and Brussels, they reached the area of Liège and Florennes, where they altered course once more for the east. The bomber stream crossed the Rhine River between Bingen and Bonn and flew on to Fulda and Hanau, where they again turned towards the southeast and continued on over the Main River area to attack Nuremberg. A group of Mosquito bombers, which had broken away from the main stream in an attempt to camouflage its flight course, separated into small formations, which then flew on to the following areas: Bonn, Cologne - Marburg, Kassel - Plauen, Zwickau, Nordhausen, and Frankfurt/Main - Mannheim. At 0120 the first bombers began to leave the Nuremberg area, flying first towards the west and then altering course towards the northwest. During their return flights, the bombers followed the lines Frankfurt - Stuttgart and Brussels - Reims, and left the coast behind between the mouth of the Schelde and St. Valery en Caux. The last returning bombers passed over the mouth of the Somme at 0454. A large number of four-engine bombers had left the main stream before it reached Nuremberg, and were observed on their return flights over Cologne and Kassel. The large-scale British attack was prevented from attaining its full potential effectiveness by the rapid initiation of German night fighter operations. Although many buildings in Nuremberg were destroyed, industrial areas suffered only slight damage.

b. Commitment of Aircraft by the I Fighter Corps

The following forces were employed by the I Fighter Corps:

in night pursuit activity (twin-engine fighter aircraft units):

3d Fighter Division: the Ju-88 groups from Twente, Quakenbrück, Langen-

salza, and Langendiebach were assembled at radio beacon Ida and directed from there into the bomber stream; the Me-110 groups from Venlo and Mainz-Finthen, the I Group, 6th Night Fighter Wing (borrowed from the 7th Fighter Division), and several units temporarily assigned from the 4th Fighter Division were also assembled at radio beacon Ida and directed from there into the bomber stream; the II Group, 6th Night Fighter Wing (borrowed from the 7th Fighter Division) was directed to radio beacon Otto and from there into the bomber stream; the group from St. Trond was assembled over radar station Bazi, guided on to radar station Marmeltier and directed into the bomber stream south of Aix la Chapelle.

2d Fighter Division: the groups from Westerland, Stade and Vechta were assembled at radio beacon Otto and directed into the bomber stream over the area northeast of Giessen.

1st Fighter Division: the groups from Erfurt, Parchim, Stendal, and Werneuchen were assembled over radio beacon Otto and directed into the bomber stream over the area between radio beacons Otto and Ida.

in controlled combat against specific objectives (single-engine fighter aircraft units):

3d Fighter Division: the groups from Rheine and Bonn were assembled light at ~~radio~~ beacon Otto and directed on to Frankfurt/Main, where they landed; the group from Wiesbaden-Erbenheim was assembled at light beacon Noräpol and given instructions to land in central Germany after accomplishing their mission.

2d Fighter Division: the group from Oldenburg was assembled at light beacon Otto, but was soon forced to land because the flight range of the aircraft was too limited.

1st Fighter Division: the groups from Ludwigslust, Zerbst, and Jüter-

bog were assembled at light beacon Nordpol, but were ordered to land again after the attack on Nuremberg had begun.

The I Fighter Corps employed a total of 246 single and twin-engine fighter aircraft during the night of 30/31 March.

The night fighter units from the I Fighter Corps were able to attain noteworthy success in their defensive operations, due to the following factors:

The bomber stream was recognized as such as soon as it had taken off from England, and its probable course was identified.

As soon as the bombers had left Great Britain, all participating twin-engine fighter units were assigned to the central sector of the western border of the Reich.

The bomber stream flew directly over the Rhine and Main River areas, which, of course, was the main headquarters of the German night fighter forces. Thus, the time factor as well as the attainable flight range of our aircraft permitted full utilization of the forces available.

Conditions permitted the majority of the German fighter aircraft to be assigned to night pursuit activity. Thus, they could take full advantage of their airborne search instruments (SN-2), which were not liable to British radar jamming.

The night was quite bright, and high-altitude visibility was good. Thus, the bombers were fully visible to our fighters at a distance of 1,000 meters.

The first bombers were brought down over Liège, Bonn, and Koblenz, and the flaming enemy aircraft served as flares, illuminating the bomber stream for the approaching German fighters.

Since pursuit activity began while the bomber stream was still left of the

Rhine, our fighter aircraft were able to stick with the stream for most of its approach flight, thus increasing their chances of bringing down the enemy.

Due to a fortunate coincidence, the radio beacons Ida and Otto, serving as assembly points for the twin-engine fighters, were also crossed by the approach course of the bomber stream.

The single-engine fighters played no part in the over-all success. They were unable to enter combat over Nuremberg because of their limited flight range, and were unable to participate in pursuit activity because they were not equipped with airborne search instruments.

The single-engine fighter units were ordered up so that they might be prepared to defend Frankfurt/Main if necessary, or in case the British bombers should decide to attack targets in central Germany or the city of Berlin. The whole operation served to demonstrate once more that effective controlled combat against specific objectives depends on the following conditions:

Participating fighter aircraft must have a sufficiently long flight range to permit them complete independence in the selection of the best place to make their attack.

The probable targets selected for attack by the enemy must be identified fairly early during operations and with some degree of certainty.

These two conditions did not obtain during the night of 30/31 March. The frequent course alterations of the bomber stream and the diversionary maneuvers carried out by the Mosquitos effectively prevented our identifying the target to be attacked in time. The Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, did not become aware until fairly late that Nuremberg was to be the enemy target. The enemy

bomber stream, thrown into confusion by the German fighter aircraft encountered during its approach flight, arrived piecemeal over Nuremberg and did not begin its attack immediately. This led the Headquarters, I Fighter Corps, to assume that the attack was actually destined for some other target. By the time the air situation became clear, the single-engine fighter units had already landed.

c. Allied Losses

107 bombers certainly brought down (on 31 March 1944, British radio reports indicated a loss of ninety-four bombers)

d. German Losses

5 aircraft totally destroyed

5 aircraft more than 60% damaged

personnel: 3 dead

1 wounded

8 missing in action

e. Weather Conditions

Over Holland, the Ruhr District, and Frankfurt/Main: cloudless;
over southern Germany: 10/10 cloud cover between 500 and 3,500 meters; high-altitude visibility good; moon at half-full.

f. Remarks

During the night 30/31 March 1944, 1st Lt Becker, a squadron captain from the 1st Night Fighter Wing, brought down seven British bombers.

GLOSSARY

<u>Page</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
13	Piggy-back groups	Because of their limited radius of action, single-engine fighters (usually of the Me-109 type), were sometimes carried by more powerful aircraft as far as their targets, so that they might remain in action longer before having to return for refueling.
40 etc.	Rotterdam	A type of radar instrument
40 etc.	Himmelbett	"Four-poster bed" - a technique employed by German night fighter aircraft. The total area to be covered was divided into squares, or "four-poster beds", and fighter aircraft were stationed in these squares to lie in wait for enemy aircraft. Ground radar stations, known as fighter aircraft control stations, remained in constant radio contact with the fighters, in order to keep them advised of the positions of the enemy aircraft.
42	Wismar	Name assigned to a certain type of aircraft observation station.
42 etc.	flame reports	(?) No information available. Perhaps a code name assigned to a particular type of radar data.
42 etc.	Gerhard reports	(?) No information available. Perhaps a code name assigned to a particular type of radar data.
45 etc.	Berta, Ponto, Quelle, etc.	Code names assigned to the various radio beacons and light beacons. Some of them were given number designations instead of names.
54 etc.	Y-Method	A method employed to control fighter aircraft from the ground, guiding them towards their assigned targets.