

effort was very largely made up of the attacks laid on for the reduction of besieged garrisons.

Attacks on Coastal Garrisons during September, 1944.

| <i>Force.</i> | <i>Sorties.</i> | <i>Tons of Bombs.</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| A.E.A.F. ... | 5,567 | 4,406 |
| U.S. Eighth A.F. ... | 1,327 | 4,501 |
| R.A.F. Bomber Command | 4,510 | 25,811 |
| | <hr/> 11,404 | <hr/> 34,718 |

Fighter Cover to the Assault and the Shipping areas.

308. In the foregoing paragraphs I have tried to describe the support both direct and indirect

| | | U.S. <i>Ninth</i> A.F. | U.S. <i>Eighth</i> A.F. | <i>2nd</i> T.A.F. | 85 Group | A.D.G.B. | Total |
|-------------------------|--------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------|----------|-------|
| <i>Day Fighters—</i> | | | | | | | |
| Mustang III | ... | 6 | 12 | 6 | — | — | 24 |
| Thunderbolt | ... | 39 | 21 | — | — | — | 60 |
| Lightning | | 9 | 12 | — | — | — | 21 |
| Spitfire | | — | — | 27 | 4 | 15 | 46 |
| Tempest | | — | — | — | — | 2 | 2 |
| | | | | | | | — 153 |
| <i>Fighter Bombers—</i> | | | | | | | |
| Typhoon | | — | — | 18 | — | — | 18 |
| | | | | | | | — 171 |

309. In addition, A.D.G.B. retained 9 Spitfire, 1 Mustang and 2 Typhoon squadrons for the air defence, by day, of the United Kingdom.

310. The night fighter forces available for the protection by night of the assault area and shipping lanes consisted of 6 Mosquito squadrons. (The defence of the United Kingdom by night was undertaken by A.D.G.B. which had 8 Mosquito and 1 Beaufighter squadrons and a further 2 Mosquito Intruder squadrons.) This force allowed me to operate 30 to 40 night fighters over the assault area and shipping lanes during the night.

311. In order to achieve the most economical and effective use of resources these fighter forces were pooled and placed under the control of a Combined Control Centre. This Control Centre was situated at Uxbridge, where it was able to make full use of the tried and proven static control organisation built-up by No. 11 Group, Royal Air Force, which had previously handled the very large air cover given to the Dieppe operation, in August, 1942. This unified control ensured the necessary flexibility to cover the principal tasks allotted to these day fighter forces. The principal tasks were:—

(a) continuous cover of the beach-head areas.

(b) continuous cover of the main naval approach.

(c) direct air support of the ground forces, including close support.

(d) escort to day bomber and troop carrier formations.

which the air forces gave to ground forces after the assault was launched. I come now to the equally important task undertaken by the air forces, the task, namely of protecting the beach-head area and our shipping from attacks by the G.A.F. I have already explained (see para. 32) my reasons for retaining a large fighter force to ensure that the air superiority we had won was maintained on D-Day and afterwards, and in addition, in para. 201 have briefly mentioned the fighter protection given to the cross channel movement of assault forces. There were, in fact, 171 squadrons of day fighters and fighter bombers available for all the tasks that they were called upon to undertake in support of the invasion. These forces were made up as follows:

(e) withdrawal cover for night bombers leaving the assault area after first light.

(f) to provide a striking force for employment as the air situation required.

312. Initially, the following allocation of squadrons was made for employment in these specific tasks.

| | | |
|--|-----|---------------------|
| Beach Cover... | ... | 54 squadrons |
| Shipping Cover ... | ... | 15 squadrons |
| Direct Air Support ... | ... | 36 squadrons |
| Offensive Fighter and Bomber Support... | ... | 33 squadrons |
| Strike Force and Escort to Airborne operations ... | ... | 33 squadrons |
| | | <hr/> 171 squadrons |

313. These squadrons were prepared to operate up to a maximum of 4 sorties per day on D-Day, 3 sorties per day on D+1, and thereafter 2 sorties per day. In fact, because of the lack of G.A.F. reaction, this scale of effort was not necessary. On D-Day, A.E.A.F. fighter and fighter bomber squadrons, including night fighter squadrons, flew 1.44 sorties per aircraft available and on D+1, 2.28 sorties per aircraft available. Owing to the lack of enemy activity and the serious deterioration of the weather, the average sorties per fighter aircraft available during June fell to 1.00 per day. However, in the first three weeks of the operation, more than 30,000 sorties were flown on beach-head and shipping cover. Detailed figures are set out below.