

120. In the period 1st May to 5th June, 1944, the following effort was made on these targets.

<i>Force</i>	<i>Sorties</i>	<i>R.Ps. Fired</i>	<i>Bombs dropped</i>
A.E.A.F.	423	282 × 60-lb.	152 tons
R.A.F. Bomber Command	1,139	—	5,218 tons
	<hr/> 1,562 <hr/>	<hr/> 282 × 60-lb. <hr/>	<hr/> 5,370 tons <hr/>

121. The following details of some of these attacks indicate the very great damage done to the enemy supply dumps, and the attacks must also have had considerable moral effect on enemy personnel in addition to the actual casualties inflicted.

122. On the night of 3rd/4th May, R.A.F. Bomber Command attacked in force the tank depot at Mailly-le-Camp. 1,924 tons of bombs were dropped and assessment photographs show the whole target to have been severely damaged. In the mechanical transport section and barracks, 34 out of 47 buildings were totally destroyed. Even more remarkable results were obtained by an attack on an ammunition dump at Chateaudun carried out on the same night. Eight Mosquitoes of R.A.F. Bomber Command attacked with approximately 13 tons of bombs. The bombs were dropped very accurately and caused sympathetic detonation throughout the dump. In the resulting explosion, the entire western wing of the depot, containing 90 buildings, was completely destroyed.

123. The Bourg Leopold military camp in Belgium was heavily attacked on two occasions. On 11th/12th May, aircraft of R.A.F. Bomber Command dropped 585 tons of bombs on this depot. On the night of 27th/28th May, a force of 324 aircraft, also from that Command, dropped 1,348 tons of bombs, and photographic reconnaissance revealed very heavy damage throughout the whole area of the camp. Six large buildings and at least 150 personnel huts received direct hits.

124. Smaller in scale, but very effective, were the attacks made by A.E.A.F. aircraft on other targets of this type. On 2nd June, a force of 50 Thunderbolts of the United States Ninth Air Force attacked a fuel dump at Domfront. 54 × 500-lb incendiaries and 63 × 1,000-lb. G.P. bombs were dropped and severe damage was caused to this dump.

Harassing of Coastwise Shipping and Sea Mining.

125. As a result of the successful attacks on the overland communications of the enemy, his coastal shipping became increasingly important. The task of dealing with this shipping was very largely the work of R.A.F. Coastal Command, but Typhoons of A.E.A.F. also operated on occasions in an anti-shipping role under the operational control of Coastal Command, and Spitfires of A.E.A.F. provided when needed fighter escort to the strike aircraft of Coastal Command. The sea mining programme was carried out by R.A.F. Bomber Command in direct consultation with the British Admiralty.

126. During the period 1st April to 5th June, 1944, R.A.F. Coastal Command flew 4,340 sorties on the anti-shipping and anti-U-Boat patrols in the Bay of Biscay, along the Dutch Coast and in the Channel. During these sorties, 103 attacks were made on shipping and 22 on U-Boats.

127. The minelaying had as its objectives not only the interruption of enemy coastal shipping, but also in the closing stages of preparation for the assault, the laying of minebelts, to afford protection to the Allied assault and naval bombardment forces from attacks by E and R boats, especially those operating from Le Havre and Cherbourg.

128. In the period 1st April to 5th June, R.A.F. Bomber Command flew 990 sorties and laid 3,099 mines in the areas east of Texel and along the Dutch, Belgian and French coasts. Other mines were also sown in German home waters, including many in the Baltic Sea.

Attacks on Airfields.

129. I have already dealt (see paragraphs 42 to 47) with the preliminary operations designed to wear down the G.A.F. and render it powerless seriously to interfere with the assault. As D-Day approached however, it became necessary to ensure that our measure of air superiority was fully adequate to our needs. Plans had accordingly been made for direct attacks upon the enemy air force, particularly in France and the Low Countries. The effect of these plans was to deny the German Air Force the advantage of disposition which its fighter squadrons would otherwise enjoy as compared with our own in the initial stages of the assault. It was, therefore, necessary to neutralise a considerable number of airfields within a radius of 150 miles of Caen. The primary object of these attacks was to destroy the aircraft repair, maintenance and servicing facilities and thereby cause the maximum interference with the operational ability of the German Air Force.

130. I planned that these attacks should start at least three weeks before D-Day, and they actually began on 11th May, 1944. It was necessary to bear in mind in the planning of these attacks that no indication should be given as to the selected area for the Allied landings.

131. *Allocation of Targets.*—Forty main operational airfields were selected for attack. Twelve were assigned to R.A.F. Bomber Command and the remaining twenty-eight to A.E.A.F. and the United States Eighth Air Force.

132. Fifty-nine other operational bomber bases with important facilities located in France, Belgium, Holland and Western Germany within range of the assault area and ports of embarkation in the United Kingdom were also selected for attack, as opportunity permitted, by aircraft of the United States Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces, the latter based in the Mediterranean area.

133. From 11th May, 1944 to D-Day, thirty-four of the most important airfields were attacked by 3,915 aircraft dropping 6,717 tons of bombs with the result that four airfields were placed in Category "A" and fifteen in