

Guidance Notes for Commentary and Captions on

New Year's Day Air Operations

The Luftwaffe, which had not in any numbers crossed our battle-front ever since D-Day, made a big effort on New Year's Day.

The plan was to deliver a surprise attack on airfields in Holland and Belgium, flying at roof-top height and maintaining complete wireless silence.

They met with a certain amount of success. We had enjoyed air supremacy for many months. We were determined to give our Armies the maximum and continuous air support with the large Air Force we had, despite the limited number of airfields. We had, therefore to keep more fighters and fighter bombers on our forward airfields than we ideally liked. The enemy sought to gain by this. He knew he would find profitable targets at our airfields. He did, and he destroyed a number of aircraft, though not their pilots. But in doing so, he gave us the chance he had so long denied us, and we were able to destroy many more of his, in the air, with their trained pilots and crews of which the Luftwaffe is short.

Our aircraft losses were replaced within a matter of hours, and glad to tell only six of our pilots were lost in the fighting.

Of the enemy, more than 100 pilots, including formation leaders, are known to have been killed or taken prisoner in our territory by the Americans and ourselves. Certain losses of more than 100 trained aircrew and about 300 aircraft is a serious matter for him. X

The enemy had without doubt staged a major effort employing many hundred aircraft. His losses were clearly very heavy. Just over 100 were destroyed by Allied fighters. Over 200 were destroyed by the anti-aircraft gunners of the British and American Armies, the Royal Air Force Regiment and the Royal Navy.

The speed with which our forces took the chance they were given and the success which they obtained deserves the highest credit.

Owing to the size of the operation and of the area over which the battles were fought precise figures of enemy aircraft destroyed are not available, but the round figures are conservative.

In addition to these scores many enemy aircraft, with their proportion of killed, are known to have crashed behind his lines, especially north of the Scheldt.

The enemy losses in this major air victory were greater than on the peak day of the Battle of Britain or in the Dieppe raid.

The Luftwaffe's New Year greeting was returned with interest.

NOTE FOR NEWSREELS

NEW YEAR'S DAY AIR OPERATIONS.

The attached story is an amplification of the guidance notes handed to Newsreel Editors at the Air Ministry on Monday 15.1.45.

R. A. F. Film Unit material already issued includes the following shots:-

- Super*  
*Holland*
- (a) German fighters diving over house tops to attack our airfields.
  - (b) Burning and damaged R.A.F. aircraft.
  - (c) Wreckage of German aircraft.
  - (d) A 35mm combat film shot from a Tempest showing another Tempest following a G.A.F. fighter going down towards the ground on fire; just before the film finishes the camera aircraft comes within range and opens fire.

Further material has now been received and will be censored to-day, Thursday, 18.1.45. This material includes build-up shots of R.A.F. fighters and R.A.F. Regiment ground defences and a sound interview with a fighter pilot.

The air-to-air combat pictures (apart from (d) above) were taken by fighters of the American 8th Air Force, to whom credit should be given.

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MOVIE PICTURE CAPTION SHEETS  
FIGHTER OPERATIONS  
EIGHTH ARMY AIR FORCE.

Box 13176

PRODUCTION # F - 130.

PRODUCTION No. 21487

LT. BUTLER ~~435 SQ. 2148 FG.~~ 24 DECEMBER 1944  
( FW-190 destroyed in the air.)

PRODUCTION No. 21496

LT. R.C. HOWARD ~~338 SQ. 58 FG.~~ 24 DECEMBER 1944  
( ME-109 in air and two locomotives on ground destroyed.)

PRODUCTION No. 21498

LT. J.R. MC DONALD ~~388 SQ. 58 FG.~~ 24 DECEMBER 1944  
( ME-109 destroyed in the air)

PRODUCTION No. 21500

2/LT. C.D. HENRY ~~338 SQ. 58 FG.~~ 24 DECEMBER 1944  
( Air and Ground targets damaged and destroyed)

PRODUCTION No. 21517

LT. WILLRUTH ~~338 SQ. 58 FG.~~ 24 DECEMBER 1944  
( ME-109 destroyed in the air.)

PRODUCTION No. 21543

F/O SHARF ~~58 FG.~~ 25 DECEMBER 1944.  
(Enemy plane destroyed in the air)

PRODUCTION No. 21598

LT. TROGE ~~359 SQ. 58 FG.~~ 25 DECEMBER 1944.  
( FW-190 destroyed in the air)

PRODUCTION No. 21603.

CAPT. B.E. ELLINGTON ~~388 SQ. 356 FG.~~ 25 DECEMBER 1944  
( One FW-190 and one ME-109 destroyed in the air)

PRODUCTION No. 21618

LT. V.E. CHANDLER ~~338 SQ. 4 FG.~~ 23 DECEMBER 1944  
( Ground targets destroyed and damaged.)

PRODUCTION No. 21622

LT. SOWERBY ~~435 SQ. 478 FG.~~ 27 DECEMBER 1944  
( ME-109 destroyed in the air)

PRODUCTION No. 21638.

LT. E.M. FIERY Jr. ~~388 SQ. 58 FG.~~ 27 DECEMBER 1944  
( FW-190 destroyed in the air)

PRODUCTION No. 21650.

CAPT. E.E. BANKEY ~~388 SQ. 384 FG.~~ 27 DECEMBER 1944  
( FOUR FW-190s destroyed in the air)

PLEASE CREDIT 8th AIR FORCE

PRODUCTION # Z - 106. " COLOGNE, GERMANY " ~~6-11-1944~~

PHOTOGRAPHED BY: ~~91st BOMB GROUP, 1st AIR DIVISION~~

PHOTOGRAPHER : S/SGT. LIEBERMAN.

SCENES SHOW ..... Fort going down afire and six crew members bail out.  
MEXY END.

## NEW YEAR'S DAY AIR OPERATIONS.

On the morning of New Year's Day, the Luftwaffe tried to win back some of its lost prestige.

Since D Day, German aircraft have never crossed our lines in any numbers. Because of our overwhelming power in the air they have had to content themselves with a few sneak raids and some photographic reconnaissance by their new and fast jet propelled aircraft.

The Luftwaffe and its commanders have been out of the picture for a long time and they planned to get a bit of their own back with a surprise attack on our airfields in Holland and Belgium.

We know that experienced pilots were called in from all over Germany for this effort and the greatest secrecy was maintained. The pilots themselves didn't know where they were going until a few hours before they took off. And when they got into the air, they were told to fly at roof-top height and keep absolute wireless silence to baffle our defences and catch us unawares.

It was a mission carefully planned by the best brains of the Luftwaffe and they put into it several hundred of their best pilots and aircraft.

Naturally, they met with a certain amount of success. We had enjoyed air supremacy for many months. We were determined to give our Armies the maximum and continuous air support with the large Air Force we have, despite the limited number of airfields. We had, therefore, to keep more fighters and fighter bombers on our forward fields than we ideally liked. The enemy sought to gain by this. He knew he would find profitable targets on our airfields. He did and he destroyed a number of aircraft though not their pilots.

But in doing so, he gave us the chance we had been so long denied - we were able to destroy many more of his in the air than we lost on the ground. More important was the fact that he lost many trained pilots and crews of which the Luftwaffe is short. More than 100 pilots including formation leaders are known to have been killed or taken prisoner in our territory by the Americans and ourselves.

When the Luftwaffe strafe began, many of our aircraft were already in the air. Some were on their way to targets in Germany. Others were coming back.

These fighters and fighter bombers - Spitfires, Tempests and Typhoons of our 2nd Tactical Air Force - were diverted to the more urgent job. In the air they were told by radio of what was happening and they turned to meet the Luftwaffe in straight battle - the first real crack they had had at it almost since the days of the Battle of Britain. And the result was similar.

In these combats, we lost 8 aircraft and only 6 pilots. The Germans lost aircraft and pilots by the score and those who were not killed are now safely in prison camps.

A Polish Spitfire Wing was almost back home after a bombing mission when they heard the news. They waded in at 50 FW 190s and Me 109s over their own base and shot down 18 for the loss of one. Canadian Spitfires diverted in the air from a sweep over Germany, knocked down 24 and damaged 10 for the loss of two pilots. Tempests switched from the Ardennes battle front, destroyed 10 and damaged 5 for the loss of one. A formation of 4 Spitfires tackled big odds and shot down five.

As in the days of the Battle of Britain, our pilots clearly demonstrated their greater skill.

It was in the main a R.A.F. battle, because the attacks were on R.A.F. forward airfields. But American fighter squadrons also joined in the battle and were responsible for a substantial number of "kills".

On the morning of New Year's Day, the Luftwaffe tried to win back some of its lost prestige.

The general feeling of our pilots was that German pilots are not what they used to be. Their flying was poor - there were instances of German aircraft crashing into each other in mid air - and their shooting wasn't any better. With targets such as they had that day, they should have done much better. Our ground defences too took heavy toll. The R.A.F. Regiment and the ack- ack gunners of the British and American Armies and of the Royal Navy destroyed scores of enemy fighters and their wreckage is strewn all over Belgium and Holland. Many crashed into marshes, into rivers and the sea. All have not yet been found. Some went down with their proportion of killed behind enemy lines especially north of the Scheldt. It was a major effort which cost the enemy dearly. Just over 100 aircraft were destroyed by our fighters; over 200 were shot down by ground defences.

His losses were greater than on the peak day of the Battle of Britain or in the Dieppe raids - a very serious matter for him.

Our losses could be - and were - easily and speedily replaced. For instance, one Spitfire squadron lost nearly all its aircraft in the strafing of the airfield. But by two o'clock that afternoon, the losses had been replaced and an hour later that squadron was over Germany.

It wasn't so happy a New Year for the Luftwaffe.

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