

Captured Documents Illustrate GAF Fuel Shortage

DIRECT evidence of the official attitude necessitated by the shortage of aviation gasoline in the Reich is embodied in a series of captured orders regulating the issue of aircraft fuel to the Luftwaffe during the latter half of 1944. It is reasonable to assume that the situation became even more critical by mid-winter.

The first of these documents was dated 24 July, 1944, and was issued by Luftflotte Kommando VII at Munich. It concerned all flying personnel of the command, and stated that except at their home bases aircraft were to refuel only at certain designated fields within four specified Luftgaue. In order to get gasoline at any other airfield in the Reich it was directed that a special permit would be necessary, accompanied by a fuel coupon issued by Luftwaffe headquarters. Units employed in Defense of the Reich were exempted, at that time, from the rulings.

The order included the requirement of a detailed report from each field, to be prepared six times a month, stating the quantity of fuel issued to visiting aircraft.

Next order in the sequence was dated 7 August, was issued by the same command, rescinded the one of 24 July, and substituted several more stringent restrictions.

With a few exceptions, including operational planes, personal units assigned to serve Hitler and Göring, and courier Staffeln of the High Command, no aircraft was to be refuelled at any airfield other than its home base. Unless pilots could show their fuel coupons and prove that their flights were of operational importance, their aircraft were to be grounded where they were. These regulations were required, the order stated, "in order that the Reich Defense operations may be assured."

By 16 August, nine days after that decree, the complete stoppage of all non-operational flights, including liaison missions, was ordered by Luftflotte Kommando VII. This third order put further

restrictions on the method of clearance for takeoffs, stating that no plane could depart from any base unless its mission were fully in accordance with existing regulations. Priority in fuel rationing was given only to aircraft engaged in Defense of the Reich, and to fields used as fighter-rendezvous points.

Such missions as camouflage-checking, photo reconnaissance, and the like could only be undertaken, according to the order of 16 August, with special permission through channels. By this time supply of aircraft gasoline must have been in a critical state.

On 2 November, the last of the four captured orders was issued. This document was of a different nature than the three preceding ones, being a Top Secret personal order from Generaloberst Stumpf, Supreme Commander Luftflotte Kommando Reich. Only four copies appear to have been issued, the captured one being addressed to Airfield Regional Command 4/XII, Oberrhein (Upper Rhine area). This paper is quoted in full, and amply demonstrates the critical nature of the aviation fuel situation as viewed by the GAF High Command at the time:

"The fuel situation makes further restriction and supervision of flying operations essential. I therefore issue the following orders:

"1. A sortie is justifiable only if weather reports and the available tactical information promise success. Those responsible for operations must bear this in mind when issuing operational orders.

"2. Training flights within units are prohibited until further notice, unless special quotas are issued for the purpose. My approval is required for exceptions to this rule.

"3. No night flights may be undertaken except for operational, transfer, test and transport purposes.

"4. I expect all those under my command continually to bear the present fuel situation in mind and to act accordingly. "Stumpf."

ENEMY OPPOSITION

(Continued from page 5)

bounced by 30 Me-109s which made a 180° turn and made no attempt to fire; another group destroyed two and damaged one of five FW-190s taking off from an airfield near Dolle and another FW-190 southwest of Salzwedel.

Six P-51s of the same group ran into 30 Me-109s in Dümmer Lake area on withdrawal. Claims were 4-0-1 for no losses. An early-returning P-51 pilot, after destroying an Me-109 on the ground near Münster, pulled up to about 6,000 feet, and found himself in the midst of 20 Me-109s. He destroyed one, found them very aggressive, and evaded into

the clouds. Five or more A-234s preparing to land on an airfield southwest of Steinhuder Lake were engaged by a P-51 squadron from 300 feet to the deck, and one was destroyed.

Fifteenth Air Force heavies flew 494 effective sorties against targets in Austria. Nine bombers and three fighters were missing from the operations, but reports do not indicate whether losses were due to enemy opposition.

26 February: Communications targets in Berlin were the objective for 1,112 effective sorties by Eighth Air Force heavy bombers. The bombers reported no enemy fighter opposition, and only claims against enemy aircraft by the escorting fighters were made during ground strafing.

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UNITED STATES
STRATEGIC AIR FORCES
IN EUROPE

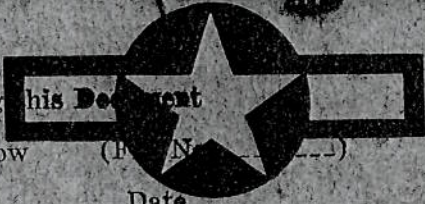
TO BE RETURNED TO
HISTORICAL DIVISION
A. U. L.

4 MAR 1945

519.607A-69

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EO 11652

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AIR INTELLIGENCE
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For Week Ending 4 March, 1945

COPY NO. 1260

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4555-42

16 MAR 1945

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PO 1626299

IRIS Public Record

Key Information

Main: UNITED STATES STRATEGIC AIR FORCES IN EUROPE

Document Type:

Call Number: 519.607A-69

IRIS Number: 00217334

Accessions Notes:

Old Accession Nbr: 4555-42

Title:

Beginning Date:

End Date:

Publication Date: 1945/03/04

Classification UNCLAS

Media Roll #: 6752 First Frame: 520 Last Frame: 551 Linear Feet: 0
Old MFlm Roll # A5724 Audio Rec:

NUMPAGE 0

Title Extensions:

Abstract

Descriptive
Notes:

Title AIR INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 69

Added

Entries

Author:

Subject:

Major Command:

Doc Link:

Rcvd:	Rel	1987/08/11
Indexer ID: 35	Entered Date:	
QC ID:	QC'd Date::	
Scanner ID:	Scanned Date:	
Acc ID	Acc Date:	

Administrative Markings

No Administrative Markings Listed

Security Review Information: