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groups and both of the wings, the 100th and 303rd had been under the administrative control of the Command for months in the old IX Fighter Command days in England, so the basis for effective teamwork was firmly laid.

This was the day on which word was received of the GAF attack on an American supply column; it became apparent that enemy air power was becoming more aggressive. It was a day of hard fighting; when it was over, XIX TAC claims included destruction of 33 aircraft (14-1-3 in the air, 19-0-4 on the ground) for a loss of 10 planes and pilots. Sorties hit a new high, with a total of 601. Bomb tons on targets amounted to 62. Thirty-two tactical reconnaissance sorties were flown.

Armed reconnaissance missions now were reaching far beyond Paris as well as south of the Loire. Several trains and a power plant were successfully attacked as far east as Troyes and Soissons.

It was moving day, this time from the vicinity of Beauchamps to a point near St. James.

8 August To begin its second week of activity, XIX TAC struck another high peak by flying 717 sorties. Five enemy aircraft were destroyed and 11 XIX TAC planes were lost. Strafing and dropping 94.5 tons of bombs, the fighter bombers destroyed 29 locomotives, 137 freight cars, 195 motor vehicles, 10 fuel and ammunition vehicles, 16 horse drawn vehicles, 17 tanks or other armored vehicles, and 11 flak positions; damaged two locomotives, 57 freight cars, 28 motor transports and 26 armored vehicles; cut rail lines at 7 points; and attacked a troop concentration and 7 fuel dumps, 1 of which was completely destroyed. Reconnaissance planes flew 46 tactical, 1 photographic, and 6 artillery adjustment missions. The outstanding features of the day's operations were the large bag of enemy transport destroyed or damaged and the almost continuous air cover provided our ground forces. Improved communications with the 6th Reconnaissance Group facilitated the flow of information to the Army G-2 section, and in several instances information of enemy motor transport and tank concentrations was received in time to permit A-3 to order a mission.

9 August This was the busiest day since XIX TAC became operational. There were more missions (72) and more sorties (780) than on any previous day. Nineteen enemy planes were destroyed, claims being 13-2-0 in the air and 6-0-2 on the ground. Nine United States pilots and planes were lost.

All but two of the groups flew three missions. The three squadrons of the 363rd Group and the 405th and 406th Squadrons of the 371st Group flew five missions. These squadrons averaged 11 hours and 45 minutes in the air.

A rocket squadron, the 513th of the 406th Group, was now in action, and 16 five-inch rockets were launched against ground targets, in addition to 58.5 tons of general-purpose bombs and numerous rounds of .50-caliber ammunition.

Thirty-seven tactical and photographic reconnaissance sorties aided in keeping an eye on the enemy.

10 August Operations were somewhat reduced by low stratus clouds moving in from the Channel late in the afternoon. Nevertheless, 659 sorties comprising 54 missions were flown. Forty-six and one-quarter tons of high explosive were dropped on targets and four enemy planes were shot down. XIX TAC lost six aircraft and pilots. Thirty sorties were flown by tactical reconnaissance P-51's, flying chiefly over areas on the outer fringe of operations.

Targets ranged from motor transport, armored vehicles, and similar objectives to the flak-defended bastion of St. Malo, still defying Allied forces to drive them out, still responding to the

Fuehrer's express command to hold out to the last man.

One of the six casualties of this day was Col. Morton D. Magoffin, commanding the 362nd Group. Hit by flak while on a dive-bombing and strafing mission in cooperation with the XV Corps east of Le Mans, he continued to lead the squadron in its bombing run, hoping that the dive would blow out the fire in his engine. When it failed to do so, he pulled up and bailed out. The sequel to this episode did not come to light until weeks later. Colonel Magoffin fell into enemy hands and was taken to a hospital in Paris with a flak wound in his right thigh. When the enemy evacuated Paris, he hid in a closet and escaped notice. French surgeons performed a badly needed operation, and the colonel was subsequently evacuated by air to England.

11 August With the big push under way to the north and northeast to encircle German troops in the Mortain-Falaise-Argentan region, groups cooperating with the 5th Armored, 2nd French Armored, and 78th and 90th Infantry Divisions were especially busy. Combat sorties totaled 454.

One feature of the day's operations was the successful bombardment of an enemy railroad gun position which was holding up the progress of the 5th Infantry Division near Angers. Forty minutes after the request for air attack on this position was received at Combat operations, Fighter Control at 303rd Wing had vectored the 367th Squadron of the 358th Group to the target, and the position was destroyed by two direct bomb hits and four near misses.

For a loss of 4 planes, XIX TAC claimed a total of 10 locomotives, 243 railroad cars, 15 tank cars, 42 tanks and other armored vehicles, 119 motor vehicles, and 20 horse-drawn vehicles demolished or damaged. Successful attacks were made on 6 marshaling yards, 5 field gun positions, a troop concentration, a headquarters, an ammunition dump, a storage building, and an airfield, and 10 railroad lines were cut. Of 15 reconnaissance sorties flown, 10 were tactical, 3 photographic, and 2 for artillery adjustment.

12 August Despite the continued efforts of saboteurs, communications through the Avranches gap were sufficiently stable to permit the transfer of operational control to the forward echelon in the vicinity of St. James on this date. Forty-one missions, consisting of 481 sorties, were flown, and the day's toll in enemy transport and communications was gratifying. No planes were lost and there were no claims of enemy aircraft.

13 August The deadly squeeze on entrapped German forces was nearing a complete strangle. The biggest transport kill of the entire month, the 400 to 500 burned or blown-up enemy vehicles referred to earlier, occurred on this date. When P-51 pilots of the 363rd Group reported that they had flown to the edge of Paris without encountering flak, the fall of the capital, which occurred a week later, was foreshadowed. All of the day's bag in aerial combat fell to the 363rd Group which scored 12-2-1 for the loss of a single plane. Flying assault cover, 8 of these Mustangs scored 4-1-1 for 1 in an early morning fight with 12 ME-109's and FW-190's. On an evening mission, 8 pilots of the same squadron, the 382nd, sighted approximately 25 ME-109's and FW-190's strafing our troops. They destroyed 8, an average of 1 each. Another was probably destroyed and the rest were driven off. Combat sorties amounted to 718 and reconnaissance sorties to 38. Ten planes were lost, only one to enemy aircraft.

14 August With his airfields around Paris endangered and many in process of evacuation, the enemy appears to have flown fewer than 100 single engine fighter sorties on this date, chiefly in defense of ground troops. The only XIX TAC group to meet air