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opposition was the 405th, giving close cooperation to the 7th Armored Division. Five P-47's and pilots were lost against claims of 4-2-1. Four of the five losses were incurred when four P-47's, pulling up from reconnaissance about 20 miles east of Dreux, were bounced from above at 3000 feet by 16 FW-190'S which came in below the four P-47's flying top cover. Three of the attackers were claimed as destroyed, plus one probable and one damaged. Seventy-nine combat missions, including 665 sorties, were flown, together with 18 reconnaissance missions involving 36 sorties.

15 August With enemy fighter activity rising sharply to a total of about 350 sorties, XIX TAC claims were 13-0-3 in the air and 2-0-7 on the ground. Five U. S. planes were lost. North of Dreux, the 406th Group's Tigertaming 513th Squadron got 4 heavy tanks and 1 light one with its 5-inch rocket projectiles. Total combat sorties were 659, and 40 tactical reconnaissance and artillery adjustment sorties were flown. An advance element of XIX TAC had leapt forward to a wooded section north of Laval.

16 August After several days of intensive operations, activity was curtailed by low stratus clouds which covered airfields in the Cherbourg peninsula from approximately 1000 to 1500 hours. Many pilots returning from early morning missions were unable to land at their own bases.

The weather definitely favored the enemy; while our bases were "socked in," his were clear. Hourly attacks by three strafing Me-109's were reported by Combat Command "A" of the 4th Armored Division at Orleans. These strafers successfully eluded our fighters, but a probable attack on our ground forces southwest of Paris was apparently prevented at 1545 when 70 plus FW-190's many carrying bombs, were engaged by eight P-51's of the 354th Group over Rambouillet Forest, 10 miles west of the capital. Two German planes were shot down and two P-51's were lost, but the enemy forces were dispersed toward the south.

Half an hour later, another patrol of 8 P-51's sighted 20 plus ME-109's south of Dreux at 11,000 feet. Orbiting in elements of 2, the squadron climbed to 14,000 feet and attacked from above. At the same instant, 60 or more ME-109's joined the combat, emerging from cloud cover to the north. In the next 15 minutes the 8 Mustangs, outnumbered 10 to 1, were busily embattled from 11,000 feet to the deck. The enemy was aggressive and apparently experienced, but he tried to turn with our aircraft. When it was all over, our pilots had destroyed 11 and damaged 2 against losses of 2 planes.

Because of the weather, only 280 combat sorties and 36 reconnaissance sorties were flown. Thirteen enemy planes were destroyed and 4 damaged. Five of ours were lost. Five tanks, 25 motor vehicles, and 55 railroad cars were demolished or damaged, 2 airfields and 2 gun positions attacked, and 3 railroad lines cut.

17 August Air opposition to XIX TAC fighters was virtually nil, despite clear weather over enemy bases and clouds over ours. St. Malo's garrison surrendered, yielding a total of 12,600 prisoners from the time the siege began.

The Third Army reported Chateaudun clear of the enemy, and immediate steps were taken to make this good airfield available to our groups, already laboring under heavy handicaps of range. Because of the speed of the American advance, the Germans had not had the opportunity to carry out such extensive demolitions as at other fields. On this day 331 combat and 56 reconnaissance sorties were flown. Two enemy planes were destroyed in combat, with no losses.

18 August Harvest time had come to the Argentan Trun pocket,

with Allied aircraft enjoying one of their biggest days of the war. The lion's share of the spoils, however, went to RAF aircraft, since the concentration of enemy vehicles was in British-assigned territory. Although denied a chance at the jackpot, XIX TAC groups accounted for 17 tanks 206 motor transport, 30 horse-drawn vehicles, 7 locomotives, and 218 railroad cars. Two troop concentrations, 1 motor transport park, 5 gun positions, and 3 marshaling yards were attacked. Combat sorties totaled 679; claims were 5-0-2 (air) and losses were 7.

19 August A cold front, moving across our bases and target areas from west to east, sharply curtailed air operations. Several successful missions were flown in the morning, but the front closed down our bases in the afternoon, then moved into the target areas. Results included destruction of 20 Seine River barges and damage to 91 more; other ground targets smashed or damaged were 18 motor vehicles, an armored vehicle, 2 locomotives, 9 railroad cars, and 2 power launches. Two gun positions were attacked and a rail line cut. There were 212 combat and 34 reconnaissance sorties.

Sharp aerial combat occurred, with 9 enemy aircraft destroyed (8 in the air) against loss of 5 planes and pilots. While strafing FW-190's on the ground near Pontoise, the 406th Group's 513th Squadron was bounced by a number of enemy fighters. When the 512th Squadron tried to help, it in turn was attacked by 30 to 40 aircraft at 8,000 feet. The enemy kept some of his aircraft above the overcast, sending them down in twos and fours to take part in the fight. Final claims were 5-0-3 in the air and 1 on the ground for loss of 5.

20 August Shortly before dark, 406th Group pilots reported the main highway from Paris to Sezanne loaded with dispersed enemy motor vehicles headed east. Marshaling yards at Joigny and Sezanne were likewise loaded. Obviously the Germans were pulling out of Paris.

Rain and low ceilings limited combat sorties to 388 and reconnaissance sorties to 36. Claims in aerial combat were 6-0-1 and losses were 3.

Eight P-47's were bounced by 12 Me-109's and 20 FW 190's at 3,000 feet about 12 miles southwest of Paris at 1545. Despite the odds of 4 to 1, the Thunderbolts destroyed 6 and damaged 1 for a loss of 2 planes. A third P-47 was lost on a later mission.

21 August All XIX TAC combat aircraft were grounded throughout the day by the worst weather of the month. A warm wave in conjunction with a cold front caused low ceilings and rain over the entire northern portion of France, restricting air operations to a single uneventful reconnaissance sortie flown along the Loire in the Angers area.

22 August Increasing vulnerability of the GAF, driven from some of its best fields to landing grounds north and northeast of Paris, was demonstrated when XIX TAC fighters destroyed 20 enemy fighters for the loss of 1. Complete claims were 16-3-1 in the air and 4-0-4 on the ground. Feature of the day was provided by the P-51's of the 354th Group. Fifteen of them, on a fighter sweep, destroyed 12 ME-109'S without loss, 8 in the air as they were taking off from a grass field 5 miles east of Epernay, and 4 on the ground by strafing. Flying 333 combat sorties, our aircraft dropped 16.75 tons of GP bombs and 26 fragmentation clusters, plus 18 leaflet bombs. Reconnaissance sorties totaled 60.

23 August With the enemy endeavoring to give increased air cooperation to his hard-pressed ground forces, especially along the Seine west of Paris, the Third Army reported that the 78th Infantry Division bridgehead in the Mantes Gassicourt sector was attacked