

by rocket planes intermittently during the day. Although our air cover in the area was tripled, no rocket-firing planes were seen. Flying armed reconnaissance ahead of our columns thrusting east past Sens and Troyes, P-47's had just dropped eight 500 pound bombs on a gun position east of Joigny when Combat Command "A" of the 4th Armored Division reported it was being strafed 12 miles northeast of Sens. The remaining bombs were jettisoned, and the Thunderbolts, from 9,000 feet, bounced five ME-109's at 6,500 feet, shooting down two and probably another for no loss. In all, 463 combat and 70 reconnaissance sorties were flown, in spite of poor visibility, cloud, and showers over bases and targets during a part of the day. Claims against enemy aircraft totaled 5-4-7 for loss of two, one of which was to flak. Word was received that Paris had fallen. Another phase had come to an end.

24 August Foul weather continued to plague XIX TAC pilots, low ceilings and poor visibility over the target areas in the vicinity of Paris restricting combat activity to 12 missions of 164 sorties. The enemy also was handicapped; no German planes were seen. Rocket-firing P-47's launched 12 projectiles at 105 millimeter guns near Nantes and claimed 4 destroyed and 2 damaged. Five 88 millimeter guns also were attacked. Forty carts of an ammunition convoy were blown up, and other aircraft did a little "working on the railroad." No high explosive bombs were carried, but rockets and strafing destroyed or damaged 55 railroad cars, 2 locomotives, 68 motor vehicles, 3 tanks and armored vehicles, and 40 ammunition cars; 12 field-gun positions were attacked and 2 headquarters left burning. Twenty-nine reconnaissance sorties were flown.

25 August As was set forth in the preceding narrative section, this was a fateful day for the Luftwaffe, with both the Ninth and the Eighth Air Forces knocking German aircraft out of the sky. XIX TAC's share of the kill was 36-1-8 in the air and 18-4-0 on the ground, or 54-5-8 all told, against a loss of 8 planes and 7 pilots.

There were renewed evidences that the Luftwaffe was finding its bases in the Paris area too hot to hold, as demonstrated by the GAF fighters seen streaking eastward with belly tanks. The Germans were destroying facilities as fast as they could, in the face of the steady advance of armored forces. Flying 632 combat sorties, XIX TAC claimed the following results against ground targets, in addition to the haul in the air: 266 motor vehicles, 4 tanks, 44 locomotives, and 164 cars destroyed or damaged; 5 marshaling yards attacked and 5 lines cut; 3 field-gun positions, 4 troop concentrations, an ammunition dump, and 8 military buildings destroyed; 5 airfields attacked and 2 hangars wrecked. In anti shipping operations off Brest, 2 naval vessels were claimed as destroyed, and 3 naval and 9 merchant vessels damaged. Four P-51's flew artillery-adjustment sorties for corps artillery at Brest, noting many hits on enemy gun positions and shipping. Reconnaissance sorties totaled 64.

26 August After his heavy air losses of the previous day, the enemy avoided combat with our fighters, and the day's cash register rang up only 2 enemy aircraft destroyed and 1 damaged, all 3 on the ground. Our groups on armed reconnaissance, patrols, and armored-column cooperation flew 528 sorties. Four planes were lost. Indications were seen that if the enemy could muster sufficient numbers, he might bring jet-propelled fighters into action against XIX TAC soon. A probable Me-262 twinjet-propelled fighter was sighted on 25 August, and on the 26th contrails at 20,000 feet, traveling at an estimated speed of 500 miles per hour, were reported.

27 August With American forces now across the Marne at two points near Meaux and advancing rapidly, German fighter bases

along that historic river quickly became untenable and the remnants of the Luftwaffe in eastern France were forced to pull out.

Enemy fighters were again conspicuously absent. The only aerial combat claims were by two tactical reconnaissance P-51's, which were bounced by 12 ME-109's, one ME-109 was destroyed, one probably destroyed. Three of the Command's total losses of 8 planes for the day were suffered by the 10th Reconnaissance Group. One was shot down by small-arms fire while directing artillery at Brest, and 2 others failed to return from a mission in the Dijon region. Cooperating with ground forces at Brest, XIX TAC fighter-bombers scored at least 9 direct bomb hits on 2 gun positions, put several Napalm bombs in a target area marked by smoke, and damaged 3 merchant vessels. Considerable execution against enemy troops and transport was wrought, and railroad tracks were cut at 5 places. In all, 650 fighter-bomber and 63 reconnaissance sorties were flown.

28 August Low cloud during much of the day held operations to 196 combat and 88 reconnaissance missions. During brief periods of flyable weather, telling attacks were made on enemy units trying to escape northeastward into Germany from the Dijon-Besancon locality. In the course of these operations, 11 enemy aircraft were destroyed by bombing and strafing an airfield near Neufchateau. Claims for the day were 3-0-0 in the air and 11-0-0 on the ground, with 3 losses.

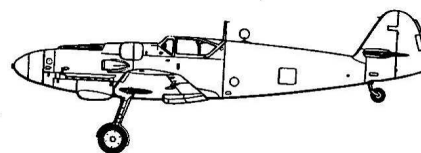
29 August Weather, completely unflyable. Only one combat mission was undertaken and no targets were attacked, the pilots being forced to return to base 30 minutes after takeoff.

30 August A cold front was sweeping over western Europe, and the resultant low ceilings and rain continued to blot out our bases and target areas. All XIX TAC operations were "scrubbed" except for two weather reconnaissance sorties. Control of XIX TAC operations now shifted far eastward from the vicinity of Lavel to a new advanced headquarters site in the Foret de Marchenoir, between Orleans on the Loire and the airfield at Chateaudun.

31 August In cooperating with the Third Army, XIX TAC flew 18 missions consisting of 313 sorties, dropping 60.75 tons of general-purpose bombs, 39 tanks of Napalm, and 16 leaflet bombs. Twenty rockets were discharged and considerable strafing was done. There were no claims against enemy aircraft and no losses.

Recapitulation During August, aircraft of XIX TAC flew a total of 12,292 fighter bomber sorties. In all, 114 aircraft were lost, but many of the pilots bailed out safely over friendly territory, or found their way back through enemy lines. Our pilots claimed 163 enemy aircraft destroyed in aerial combat and on the ground.

Ground target destroyed: 4,059 motor vehicles, 466 tanks and other armored vehicles, 598 horse-drawn vehicles, 246 locomotives, 2956 railroad cars, 155 barges and other river craft, 18 merchant vessels, 8 naval vessels. 22 gun positions, 39 marshaling yards, 11 ammunition dumps, 13 fuel supply dumps, 3 radar installations, 17 airfields, 7 headquarters, 44 troop concentrations and bivouac areas, 58 barracks and other enemy buildings, 122 rail lines. The End.



Me-109