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WAR CABINET

WEEKLY RÉSUMÉ

(No. 91)

of the

NAVAL, MILITARY AND AIR SITUATION

from 12 noon May 22nd, to

12 noon May 29th,

1941

[Circulated with the approval of
the Chiefs of Staff.]

The reports of operations in and around Crete are given on page 5.

NAVAL SITUATION.

General Review.

The Mediterranean Fleet continues to be engaged in the Cretan operations. The German battleship *Bismarck* has been sunk in the Atlantic. Shipping losses have been light.

Home Waters and North Atlantic.

2. Following reports received from air reconnaissance, the German battleship *Bismarck* and cruiser *Prinz Eugen* were sighted by H.M. Ships *Norfolk* and *Suffolk* late on the 23rd May in the Denmark Strait. They were shadowed until early on the 24th, when they were engaged by H.M. Ships *Hood* and *Prince of Wales*. H.M.S. *Hood* was hit and blew up, and the chase continued throughout the 24th. Torpedo aircraft from H.M.S. *Victorious* obtained one hit on *Bismarck* at 1220, but touch was then lost until 1030 on the 26th, when she was again sighted by a Catalina aircraft, and later by H.M.S. *Sheffield*. Successful torpedo attacks were made by torpedo-aircraft from H.M.S. *Ark Royal* the same day and by H.M. Destroyers *Cossack*, *Maori*, *Zulu* and *Sikh* during the night. *Bismarck* was engaged by H.M. Ships *King George V* (Flag of Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet), *Rodney* and *Norfolk* early on the 27th, and finally sunk at 1100 by torpedoes from H.M.S. *Dorsetshire* about 400 miles W.S.W. of Land's End; some hundred survivors were picked up. Some damage and casualties were suffered in H.M. Ships *Prince of Wales*, *Cossack* and *Zulu*. While returning from the action our ships were attacked off the west coast of Ireland, and H.M. Destroyer *Mashona* was hit and later abandoned. No report of the movements of *Prinz Eugen* has been received since the evening of the 24th, in spite of a search by 64 aircraft from Bomber Command.

3. H.M.S. *Edinburgh* intercepted the German s.s. *Lech* (3,290 tons) 400 miles north of the Azores on the 22nd. The ship scuttled herself by explosive charges.

H.M. Trawler *Cape Portland* intercepted the Finnish s.s. *Dagmar* (2,149 tons) 190 miles west of the Faroes and escorted her in.

The Dutch Cruiser *Van Kinsbergen* intercepted the French s.s. *Winnipeg* east of Martinique on the 26th, and is taking her into Trinidad.

H.M.S. *Registan* (Ocean Boarding Vessel) was bombed and set on fire off Land's End on the 27th. She is being towed into port.

The Dutch minelayer *Nautilus* sank off the Humber on the 22nd, as the result of a collision.

Four ex-U.S. coastguard-cutters have arrived in Great Britain.

During the period 6 French merchant ships (22,000 tons) have passed Gibraltar westbound, and 6 (upwards of 15,000 tons) eastbound. All were under escort.

Mediterranean.

(NOTE.—Operations in vicinity of Crete have been dealt with under "Military Situation.")

4. H.M. Submarine *Upholder* obtained a hit on a 4,000-ton laden tanker in the southern entrance to the Straits of Messina on the 20th, and torpedoed a 5,000-ton ship in the same vicinity on the 23rd. On the 24th she sighted three large liners escorted by destroyers, 30 miles south-east of Augusta; she hit with two torpedoes on one large ship which is thought to have sunk.

H.M. Sloop *Grimby* and the tanker she was escorting were sunk by air attack 40 miles north-east of Tobruk on the 25th.

H.M. Submarine *Usk* is overdue and must be considered lost.

Anti-Submarine Operations.

5. Only two attacks on U-boats have been carried out during the week; one by an aircraft off La Rochelle and another by gunfire from H.M. Submarine *Pandora* to the westward of Oporto, both without visible result.

Enemy Intelligence.

German.

6. The battleship *Tirpitz* together with the Pocket-Battleship *Admiral Scheer* and the Cruiser *Hipper* were photographed at Kiel on the 28th May. *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* remain at Brest, but the former was observed at 1930 on the 25th May to have moved one ship's length to the eastward. Unfortunately the quality of the photographs and cloud prevent it being definitely known whether a boom is in position round her or whether her camouflage has been removed. The Pocket-Battleship *Lutzow*, together with four destroyers and four torpedo boats, may have been at Swinemunde on the 12th May.

Italian.

7. No changes in the dispositions of Italian Naval forces have been received. Repairs to the battleship *Littorio* were completed the 7th May and the *Vittorio Veneto* is probably now in the dry dock at Taranto.

U-boats.

8. The average number of enemy submarines which have been operating in the North-Western Approaches during the past week has been about eighteen or nineteen, of which only three or four were Italian. No concerted attack has been made since the 20th May by German submarines and they have not been much in evidence, sightings having been very rare. Their dispositions were probably greatly affected by the adventures of the *Bismarck* and it is safe to presume that they were moved considerable distances in an attempt to provide assistance. The present situation is accordingly obscure. Four German submarines have been operating in the Freetown area.

Enemy Attack on Seaborne Trade.

9. Shipping losses during the period have been exceptionally light.

Aircraft have unsuccessfully attacked an English Channel convoy and have inflicted some casualties on a Bristol Channel convoy and shipping off Milford Haven and off Sunderland.

Protection of Seaborne Trade.

10. During the week ending the 28th May, 948 ships, of which 155 were Allied and 15 Neutral, were convoyed. One battleship, two cruisers, eleven armed merchant cruisers, four submarines, 55 destroyers and 68 sloops and corvettes have been employed on escort duties.

Imports into Great Britain by ships in convoy during the week ending the 24th May totalled 664,736 tons, compared with 1,062,626 tons during the previous week and an average of 575,940 tons for the past ten weeks. Oil imports in 14 tankers, amounted to 133,559 tons, compared with 306,636 tons in 28 tankers during the week ending the 17th May. Mineral imports were 223,492 tons, of which 154,453 tons were steel, pig iron, scrap iron and iron ore. Timber imports were 39,443 tons, and cereal imports 149,305 tons, 19 ships being fully laden with grain. Other food imports were 56,686 tons, of which 20,188 tons were sugar, 5,319 tons were fresh, dried and tinned fruit (including a shipload of 1,139 tons of oranges), 4,000 tons were cocoa, 4,745 tons were meat and 964 tons were tea. There were 200 tons of rum from Demerara and 334 tons of tobacco. The *Svend Foyn*, 14,795 tons, brought 103,859 barrels of whale oil from South Georgia. There were the usual imports of machinery, aircraft, ammunition and war stores.

British Minelaying.

11. On the 21st May H.M.S. *Rorqual* laid 50 mines in the Gulf of Salonika, and on the same day H.M.S. *Abdiel* laid 154 mines off Cape Dakato on the west coast of Greece.

On the 22nd May, and again on the 27th, H.M.S. *Teviot Bank* laid 270 mines in the East Coast Barrier.

Minelaying has been carried out by aircraft off the Channel and Bay of Biscay ports throughout the week.

Enemy Minelaying, British Minesweeping.

12. Minelaying by enemy aircraft round the British Isles has been on a considerably reduced scale and there has been only one ship damaged by mine during the week. Ten magnetic mines have been dealt with in Home Waters and seventeen acoustic. No contact mines have been swept. Including a few belated reports and mines dealt with in Foreign Waters, the totals now are: magnetic 1,166 (of which LL sweeps have accounted for 941), acoustic 627 and contact 872.

Suez Canal.

Traffic was resumed on the 22nd May, but the Canal was raided by about 8 aircraft on the 24th, and the northern section was closed to navigation. Traffic was again resumed on the 27th May, ships being swept through the dangerous area. Five mines have been dealt with in the Canal during the week.

Enemy Merchant Shipping.

German.

13. It is reported that all German and Italian ships in refuge in Japan are to be given covering Japanese nationality and used locally. The *Salzburg*, 1,756 tons, passed Istanbul on the 21st May for the Ægean half-loaded. This is the last of the eight German ships which have been trading in the Black Sea, all of them being now in the Ægean. There are, however, eighteen Roumanian merchant ships, totalling some 70,000 tons, in the Black Sea. The Hungarian *Kassa*, 1,022 tons, has been reported to be making for the Ægean from the Black Sea with five German officers on board and a cargo of searchlights, A/A guns, machine guns and grenades. The Hungarian *Tisza*, 961 tons, is said to be loading a similar cargo at Constanza and was expected to pass Istanbul for the Ægean on the 28th May.

The *Monserate*, 5,578 tons, which was set on fire by her crew at Callao at the beginning of April and was gutted, has now been brought into dock.

On the 22nd May, the *Windhuk*, 16,662 tons, which is at Santos, Brazil, received 250 drums of oil fuel and the next day she was taking water on board. Customs officials are said to have received permission from Rio de Janeiro to grant her a clearance permit if she asks for it. At Rio de Janeiro the *Hermes* (ex-*Karnak*), 7,209 tons, is loading rapidly and is reported to be likely to sail at the end of the month.

The tanker *Germania*, 9,851 tons, with 13,000 tons of petrol on board, left Las Palmas at 0300/27 and arrived at Teneriffe at 0900/27. The *Madrid*, 8,777 tons, which left Las Palmas on the 11th December last, is reported to have arrived in a German-occupied port.

Italian.

14. The tanker *Gianna M*, 5,719 tons, which was intercepted after sailing from the Canary Islands by H.M.S. *Hilary*, arrived at Belfast in prize on the 20th May.

The *Zeffiro*, 5,165 tons, was reported on the 20th May to have been sunk near Cap Bon probably by a mine. Of the five Italian merchant ships and three tankers which were, until recently, in the Black Sea, three ships, including one tanker, have gone through the Bosphorus to the Ægean.

The tankers *Todaro*, 5,162 tons, and *Arcola*, 6,349 tons, at Teneriffe, were reported early in the week to be loading, and the *Todaro* sailed at 0200/27.

MILITARY SITUATION.

Crete.

15. Fighting in Crete has continued with intensity throughout the week. Once detected our positions have been relentlessly and continuously bombed by day. In spite of heavy losses, the enemy has succeeded in reinforcing and in maintaining his concentrations by air. No major seaborne landings have been reported. Various enemy convoys tried to reach the Island but were driven off by H.M. Ships, several caiques full of German soldiers being sunk. Maleme was bombarded by H.M. Ships on the 21st May and again on the 23rd May. Enemy dive-bombers made repeated attacks on H.M. Ships, causing severe casualties, as set out below. In the Retimo and Heraklion areas our troops have succeeded in denying the aerodromes to the enemy, but in the Suda area the enemy, having captured Maleme Aerodrome and the area west of it, launched successive air and ground attacks on our positions covering Canea and Suda and eventually on the 28th May compelled our troops to fall back to the east of Suda Bay. H.M.S. *Abdiel* (Minelayer) and H.M. Destroyers *Hero* and *Nizam* successfully transported troops and stores to Suda Bay during the night of the 26th/27th and returned with 700 personnel.

16. During the week the Royal Air Force, operating from Egyptian bases, assisted the defence by making repeated daylight attacks on Maleme Aerodrome and enemy landing grounds. At least thirty-eight enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground and many others damaged. In addition, our fighters shot down at least eleven enemy aircraft, including five loaded troop-carriers. The capacity of these troop-carrying aircraft is estimated at 10 men with equipment. Gliders were also used, and on the 23rd May one Ju.52 is reported to have been observed towing six gliders. Wellingtons operating at night dropped stores and medical supplies in the Heraklion and Retimo areas, and attacked Maleme on four occasions, causing fires on the aerodrome and beaches. Our losses during the week were six Wellingtons, eleven Blenheims and nine Hurricanes.

17. The total scale of the German effort to date is difficult to estimate accurately, but it is thought that at least 14,000 troops were landed by air and by parachute in the Maleme area alone, together with mortars, infantry guns, field guns and motor cycles. The effort in the Retimo and Heraklion areas was very much less, and it is probable that the Germans, carrying out their usual policy of reinforcing success, diverted troops from these two objectives in order to throw them into the fight at Maleme and Canea.

18. The King of the Hellenes and suite were taken off from the western end of Crete on the night of the 22nd May by H.M. Destroyers *Hero* and *Decoy*.

Naval Casualties.

19. During the above operations the following casualties were inflicted by enemy aircraft on H.M. Ships of the Mediterranean Fleet due to insufficient aircraft cover so close to enemy air bases and to the dearth of anti-aircraft ammunition:—

Sunk.—Cruisers, *Gloucester* and *Fiji*; Destroyers, *Greyhound*, *Kelly* and *Kashmir*.

Damaged.—Battleships, *Warspite*, *Valiant* and *Barham*; Aircraft-Carrier *Formidable*; Cruisers *Naiad*, *Perth*, *Ajax* and *Dido*; and Destroyers *Nubian* and *Hereward*. Cruiser *York*, damaged repeatedly in Suda Bay, is now considered a total loss.

Egypt and Libya.

20. Since the 19th May there have been severe sand storms in the Western Desert and operations have been chiefly confined to patrol activity in the Tobruk area and in the vicinity of Sollum and the Egyptian frontier. The enemy seems to be concentrating upon strengthening his defensive positions facing Tobruk. His aircraft have carried out numerous bombing and machine-gun attacks, but the damage done has been slight.

21. On the evening of the 25th May four enemy armoured cars and one aircraft attacked the Egyptian frontier post at Bir Shegga, driving in the Egyptian Frontier Force patrol and occupying their position. There has been no further advance and the patrol is still in touch.

22. On the afternoon of the 26th May enemy forces, including tanks and supported by artillery, attacked our troops in the Halfaya district, and we were obliged to withdraw. Two counter-attacks were unsuccessful, and 5 Infantry tanks were reported out of action. South of the escarpment two enemy columns of all arms engaged our forces, which were forced back, and are now covering Bir Habata, 50 miles south-east of Halfaya. Latest reports state that the enemy force is halted in an area some 30 miles from Bir Habata.

23. It is hard to assess the possible scope of these enemy operations, for maintenance problems are still believed to be serious in Cyrenaica. Supplies appear, however, to be reaching Benghazi by sea, for a reconnaissance on the 23rd May revealed three ships of about 10,000, 5,000 and 1,000 tons respectively in the harbour, which a day or two earlier had been empty. As far as can be judged from air reconnaissance, airborne supplies and reinforcements have been on a small scale, and this may be due either to the heavy demands on aircraft in the operations in Crete, or possibly to insufficient fuel in Libya to provide for the return journey. It is possible that enemy pressure in Cyrenaica may have been applied in order to coincide with the operations in Crete.

Abyssinia.

24. With the surrender of the Duke of Aosta and the Amba Alagi garrison on the 19th and 20th May the main centres of enemy resistance remaining were Gondar, Gimma and the Lakes lying to the south of Addis Ababa. The last of these three has largely been disposed of during the week, which has seen the junction of our troops operating southwards from Adama with those coming northwards from Neghelli and Yavello. These operations resulted in the capture of several thousand enemy with much equipment. Heavy rains are making conditions very difficult, but operations continue.

25. In the north-west the attack on Chelga, covering the western road into Gondar, is being pushed home, and we have captured a strategic position on the Chelga Ridge.

26. The large force which escaped from Debra Marcos and which has since been leading an uncomfortable existence in the mountainous districts of central Abyssinia to the north of Addis Ababa, surrendered at Agibar on the 23rd May, with quantities of equipment.

27. Work is proceeding on clearing up demolitions and repairing the damaged bridge on the Soddu-Gimma road, while our troops continue to round up the enemy in Lake Margharita district.

28. Mopping-up continues in the north-eastern corner of Italian Somaliland, where practically no resistance is being experienced.

Iraq.

Basra.

29. Ashar and Basra remain quiet. The newly formed administrative council has issued a declaration asking for public support.

30. On the 21st/22nd May the enemy made an attempt, frustrated by our patrols, to breach the bunds protecting Ashar and Shuaiba aerodrome. An operation on the 25th May by one battalion with Royal Navy and Royal Air Force co-operation against enemy troops 6 miles up the Tigris from Basra was successful.

Habbaniya.

31. The Regent and his party are in Habbaniya, which has been raided by German aircraft on several occasions.

32. The advance of our troops towards Bagdad was delayed by the enemy breaching the bund of the Euphrates, but Khan Nuqta, 20 miles from Bagdad, was reached on the 28th May.

33. Many German "tourists" are reported to have passed through Iran to Iraq and war materials are said to have been sent through Turkey, but the most recent report says that Germany has declared she can give the Iraqis no more help at present. There is little doubt that the latter are disappointed with the amount of help given so far.

34. The Germans in Bagdad are reported to be leaving for Mosul, where they are building up an air base.

Intelligence.

Invasion of the United Kingdom.

35. The movement of shipping, carrying troops and stores from German Baltic ports northwards up the Norwegian coast, continues, and it must therefore be concluded that the German forces in Northern Norway are still being reinforced. One unconfirmed report states that the German authorities are also studying billeting facilities in South Norway.

36. A combined operations exercise on a considerable scale was recently carried out on the Island of Rugen. This confirms previous reports that the island is one of the main centres for "invasion practice." The building of small craft with special landing contrivances is reported from the Rhine and Ruhr areas, where embarkation practices have also been taking place.

37. Further reports have been received of "special training" involving the use of British uniforms and the study of British methods.

38. While these reports show that long-term invasion preparations continue without cessation, there is little likelihood of any attempt being made until some of Germany's present commitments elsewhere have been liquidated.

Spain and Portugal.

39. There is a report that the Vichy authorities gave the Germans certain supervisory rights over movements of troops and war material by sea or air along the Mediterranean coast of France from Marseilles to the Pyrenees as from the end of April. This would seem to indicate that such movements are contemplated, though their exact object is at present obscure. It is also reported that several German commissions have been studying roads and billeting and supply facilities in Spain. Italian troops are said to be standing by to take over the Bordeaux area when the Germans advance southwards.

40. On the other hand, there are several suggestions that the Germans will take no action against Spain until July; and there are grounds for believing that Hitler wishes to be certain of Spanish consent before entering Spain.

Bulgaria.

41. On the 19th May the Danube was reported open to transport between Bulgaria and Budapest. The Bulgarian Government reports that the Danube is open to freight boats from Bulgaria to the Black Sea. It is likely, however, that considerable congestion at the Danube ports still makes traffic in either direction difficult. The Bulgarian road and railway services are being hampered by the northward movement of German troops and materials.

Yugoslavia.

42. Considerable progress has been made in the reconstruction of railways in Yugoslavia, but neither the Belgrade-Pancevo (King Peter) Bridge over the Danube nor the railway bridge at Belgrade over the Save seems to have been repaired. Through railway traffic between northern and southern Yugoslavia is hence probably still impeded.

French North Africa.

43. There are said to be at least 300 German "tourists" in French North Africa, and one report states that there has been an increase during May in the movement of Germans of military age through Spain to Spanish Morocco and thence to the French Zone, and another that German A.A. officers are staying in Mogador and have visited Agadir and Ifni.

Syria.

44. The Vichy French are reported to have evacuated the Aleppo district and to have handed over the nearby Merab aerodrome to the Germans. Some units of the French garrison have been moved southwards and there seems to be something of a concentration near the southern frontier and in the neighbourhood of Suneida and Kuneitra.

India.

45. The situation in North Waziristan is still unsatisfactory. A large gang about 1,300 strong, reported between Razmak and Datta Khel, is said to be preparing an attack. Air reconnaissance has not, however, observed any abnormal movement.

AIR SITUATION.**General Review.**

46. Operations by Bomber Command were restricted by unsuitable weather conditions, and enemy activity against this country was also on a reduced scale. Many effective attacks were made on enemy shipping both in Home Waters and in the Central Mediterranean.

Bombers and Fighters from Egypt have supported our operations in Crete. Operational aircraft battle casualties and extracts from recent Raid Assessment Reports are given in Appendices VI and VII.

Germany and Occupied Territory*General.*

47. Daylight operations by Bomber Command showed an increase over those of the previous week, 191 sorties being flown. Night operations, consisting of 148 sorties, showed a decrease, which was attributable to the unfavourable weather.

Day.

48. On the 27th May Blenheims of Bomber Command made a surprise attack on Lannion Aerodrome near Brest, and registered direct hits on two hangars, one of which was demolished. Seven Me. 109's were certainly hit and it is possible that others were damaged. Two large explosions occurred and the whole area was covered by a pall of smoke. The reason for this attack was that it had been previously reported that forty to fifty long range bombers had moved to Lannion early that morning, possibly to support German naval operations.

49. Offensive fighter sweeps, one of which comprised five squadrons, were carried out each day over North-East France. During these operations we destroyed, without loss to ourselves, two enemy aircraft and probably three more.

50. The remainder of our effort was entirely directed against shipping and is reported under Coastal Operations.

Night.

51. The weather was again unfavourable for our night bombers. Projected operations were cancelled on four nights and considerably curtailed during the rest of the week.

52. Cologne was attacked on two nights, during which 105 tons of high explosive bombs and 16,000 incendiary bombs were dropped. On the first occasion results in the main were unobserved. On the second occasion, many bursts were seen in the target area, and a particularly large fire was started near the Deutz railway station. Other attacks were carried out against Boulogne, St. Nazaire and an aerodrome near Caen. Bombers were despatched on two nights to attack Kiel, but on both occasions bad weather prevented accurate attacks. From all these operations one aircraft is missing.

United Kingdom.

53. Fighter Command flew 1,038 patrols involving 2,511 sorties by day, and 180 patrols involving 334 sorties by night, a reduction in the scale of effort as compared with last week. German Air Force operations have also been on a lighter scale both by day and night. About 250 long-range bombers operated at night, but only a negligible proportion of them was directed against land targets.

54. By day, enemy sea and weather reconnaissances were normal, except on the 27th and 28th, when up to 50 long-range bombers from the Brest Peninsula operated over the Atlantic. On the 28th, offensive reconnaissances were flown over Kent by a total of about 50 aircraft, but on other days enemy fighter activity was limited to defensive patrols over the Straits and French coast. The routine reconnaissance flights were made overland by single aircraft.

55. During daylight five enemy aircraft, including two bombers, were destroyed during the week by our fighters operating over this country. No interceptions have been reported by our night fighters.

Coastal Operations.

56. Coastal Command flew 221 patrols and provided escorts for 82 convoys, involving a total of 673 sorties. Shipping protection patrols carried out by Fighter Command totalled 605 and involved 1,268 sorties.

57. Daily searches for coastal shipping were carried out off enemy occupied territory and a number of ships were bombed. Bomber Command claimed direct hits on seven merchant vessels, totalling about 28,000 tons; on an 800-ton trawler and a 50-ton motor boat. Six Blenheims were lost in the course of these operations. Coastal Command reported successful attacks on an 8,000-ton Altmark-class tanker, an 8,000-ton merchant vessel and two 1,000-ton coastal steamers.

58. Air operations in connection with the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* are included in the Naval section headed "Home Waters and North Atlantic."

59. One hundred and fifty minelaying sorties were flown by Bomber Command and twenty-six by Coastal Command. Enemy minelayers were active on two nights of the week, twenty aircraft being employed.

60. German bomber reconnaissance aircraft operated from Norway towards Iceland (C) and East Scotland, and from France over coastal areas of England from the north-east to the Irish Sea. Anti-shipping raids, though not numerous, formed the greater part of the enemy's effort at night, and shipping attacks were also made in daylight and at dusk. Aircraft of the Condor unit carried out attacks on naval units and merchant shipping during the period under review.

61. On the 27th May, the date on which the German battleship *Bismarck* was sunk, fifty long-range bombers from the Brest area operated over the Atlantic in search of our naval forces. The following day about forty aircraft attacked naval units, one of the attackers being shot down by our escorting aircraft and others driven off after jettisoning their bombs.

Mediterranean and Malta.

62. Successful attacks have been made on enemy shipping between Sicily and the African coast, with the following results:—

- 3,000-ton ship—4 direct hits. On fire and apparently abandoned.
- 4/5,000-ton ship, escorted by a destroyer—two direct hits.
- 8/10,000-ton ship, in convoy, loaded with M.T.—five direct hits.
- 8/10,000-ton ship, in the same convoy, left down by the stern after two direct hits.

63. Two Blenheims, after failing to locate a damaged Italian M.V. off Sfax Harbour, attacked a similar M.V. (4/5,000 tons) in the Harbour. Eight direct hits were obtained, resulting in a tremendous explosion and a large column of black smoke, from which it was evident that the ship was loaded with ammunition. No flag or markings were observed on the ship attacked, but our aircraft were fired on by an Italian destroyer and M.Vs. in Sfax Road.

64. In addition to the reconnaissance flights which led to the location of these ships, the Sicilian and Eastern Tunisian coasts have been constantly patrolled. Mines were laid during one night off the island of Lampedusa, near Malta.

65. Enemy activity against Malta was on a less intensive scale. Small formations of fighters operated near the Island, possibly in order to screen transport aircraft in transit from Sicily to Benghazi, and one machine-gun attack was made on Takali Aerodrome, during which two Hurricanes were destroyed. An ineffective night attack was made by nine Italian aircraft, of which only two succeeded in locating the Island and dropping their bombs.

Egypt and Libya.

66. Day operations by our aircraft over Libya have not been heavy. Persistent night attacks were made by Wellingtons on Benghazi. Hits were made on the Cathedral Mole and telephone exchange, and fires were started in railway sidings and near the wireless station. The enemy attacked Tobruk on several occasions with dive-bombers, two of which were shot down. On the night of the 23rd/24th May enemy aircraft dropped 14 mines and 9 bombs in the Suez Canal area.

Iraq and Syria.

67. Operations have continued against enemy positions and aerodromes in Iraq and against German aircraft on Syrian aerodromes.

68. A petrol dump near Baghdad, believed to contain a million gallons, was completely demolished, and three enemy aircraft and a number of buildings were destroyed at Baquba and at Mosul. On the 24th May bombing operations were commenced against the enemy in the Ramadi area, where leaflets were also dropped. Standing patrols were maintained over the Baghdad area and messages were dropped on the Embassy.

69. In Syria dispersed German aircraft at Palmyra aerodrome were attacked by two Blenheims, and during attacks on Aleppo, hangars and at least one enemy aircraft were destroyed. Leaflets were dropped over Damascus and Syrian frontier posts.

70. The Iraqi Air Force was little in evidence, and though Habbaniya was attacked three times by German aircraft, no serious damage or casualties resulted. One of our reconnaissance aircraft was forced to land by three Italian fighters, one of which was shot down by Gladiators.

Abyssinia.

71. Aircraft of the South African Air Force and Blenheims of the Free French Air Force have supported land operations in the Gimma and Gondar areas. An attack on enemy positions near Soddu by thirteen aircraft on the 24th May resulted in direct hits on a ferry, camps and motor transport.

General Air Intelligence.*Iraq.*

72. It is estimated that there are in Iraq about 40 German aircraft, mostly based on Mosul. They are reported to be ill-supplied and the Germans have informed Rashid Ali that they cannot produce any appreciably greater air assistance under two months.

Syria.

73. The French Air Force are reported to have vacated Aleppo, and it is probable that this aerodrome and Palmyra have both been taken over by the Axis for their own exclusive use.

Reinforcements for the French Air Force are expected to arrive in the country in the near future to increase French resistance against British intervention.

HOME SECURITY SITUATION.**General.**

74. Only light bombing was experienced throughout the week.

By Day.

75. On the 24th May, houses were damaged at Yarmouth and Eastbourne, and an oil tank was hit at Lowestoft. On the 26th May, Lowestoft was attacked again and 10 people killed. On the 27th May, there was a single attack on Montrose, causing a few casualties.

By Night.

76. On the 23rd/24th May, aerodromes were ineffectively bombed in Oxfordshire and Sussex, and bombs were dropped at Peterborough and Brixham; on the 24th/25th May and the 25th/26th May, bombing was very light; on the 26th/27th bombing was rather more widespread in Hampshire, Surrey and Kent; on the 27th/28th in a slightly wider area from Cornwall to Essex, and on the 28th/29th in S.E. England and Merseyside. In Folkestone, 11 people were killed, including the Mayor and Mayoress, and there was superficial house damage over a large area of the town.

There was no damage during the week of special importance.

Repairs.

77. *London.*—Considerable improvements were made on the L.P.T. railways and on traffic routes through the City. Railway termini are now nearly all normal.

Casualties.

78. Casualties, for the week ending 0600 28th May, are estimated at 26 killed and 42 seriously injured. There were no casualties in London.

APPENDICES I, II and III
will be published monthly.

APPENDIX IV.

Enemy Merchant Ship Losses up to Wednesday, 28th May, 1941.

	German.		Italian.		Together.	
	No.	Gross Tons.	No.	Gross Tons.	No.	Gross Tons.
Captured or seized ...	61	274,000	40	189,000	101	463,000
Scuttled or sunk ...	105	597,000	85	428,000	190	1,025,000
Unidentified ships reported by S/M, A/C, &c., as sunk or destroyed (tonnage estimated) ...	187	935,000	113	565,000	300	1,500,000
	353	1,806,000	238	1,182,000	591	2,988,000

In addition, 42 ships of 72,000 gross tons under enemy control or useful to the enemy have been sunk.

Also some 53 ships, totalling 320,000 gross tons, have been placed under protective custody in United States and South American ports to prevent sabotage by their crews.

APPENDIX V.

Casualties to H.M. Auxiliary Vessels and to Naval Personnel.

The following casualties have occurred to H.M. Auxiliary vessels during the period under review:—

May 27.—Auxiliary Patrol Vessel *Evesham* sunk by near-miss off Yarmouth.

The following casualties to naval personnel have been reported:—

Officers: Killed 113, missing 19, wounded 7.

Ratings: Killed 297, missing 115, wounded 189.

APPENDIX VI.

Operational Aircraft Battle Casualties.

0600 hours, Thursday, 22nd May, 1941, to 0600 hours, Thursday, 29th May, 1941.

Metropolitan Area.

British		<i>In the Air.</i>	<i>On the Ground.</i>
Bombers ...	...	9	...
Fighters ...	...	...	...
Coastal ...	...	4	...
Total ...	...	13	...

German.		<i>Destroyed.</i>	<i>Probably Destroyed.</i>	<i>Damaged.</i>
Bombers ...	...	5	...	6
Fighters ...	...	4	2	2
Miscellaneous ...	...	...	1	1
Total ...	...	9	3	9

No account is taken of aircraft destroyed on the ground.

Middle East.

British		<i>In the Air.</i>	<i>On the Ground.</i>
Bombers...	...	14	...
Fighters ...	...	10	3
Coastal ...	...	2	...
Total ...	...	26	3

German.		<i>Destroyed.</i>	<i>Probably Destroyed.</i>	<i>Damaged.</i>
Bombers ...	...	8	1	2
Fighters ...	...	2	1	...
Miscellaneous ...	...	65	6	...
Total ...	...	75	8	2

Of the above totals, 17 miscellaneous aircraft were destroyed, and 1 fighter was probably destroyed by A.A. fire.

NOTE.—In addition to the above totals, many aircraft were destroyed on Maleme aerodrome on May 27, 1941. The number is unknown.

Italian Aircraft Losses: Nil.

APPENDIX VII.

Air Attacks on Enemy Territory in Europe.

Extracts from Recent Raid Assessment Reports.

The following reports of damage have been received during the past week from Air Reconnaissance and Intelligence sources:—

Germany.

Hamburg.—The N.D.L. Line motor vessel *Ulm*, of 3,071 tons, has been burnt out in the harbour, and an informant present on the 10th/11th May observed four direct hits on Deutsche Werft and two further hits on cranes on the North-East side of the quay between Moldau and Segelschiff. He counted 15 different fires on the South, South-East and North of the harbour area.

Photographs taken on the 21st May covered five major attacks made since the city was last reported on on the 30th April. Unfortunately, only part of the city is covered, and some of the important dock areas have not been photographed. It is estimated that little more than half the town and dock area is included.

Ten days elapsed since the last heavy attack before it was possible to photograph; consequently, it is to be expected that some of the damage will have been repaired. On the other hand, areas where buildings have been demolished after being damaged show up more clearly. A brief summary of the damage is as follows:—

(a) Large industrial buildings and dockside warehouses completely gutted by fire or otherwise destroyed, or seriously damaged	36
Similar buildings less seriously damaged	20
Minor damage, including roof repairs, and items listed as "probable," but not including "possible" items	9
(b) Sites completely cleared, whether damage has been previously reported or not	8
(c) Other buildings, the description of which is not known for certain—	
Completely gutted by fire, or otherwise destroyed or seriously damaged	21
Less seriously damaged	14
Minor damage	3
(d) Other buildings (probably dwelling-houses, blocks of dwelling-houses, or flats)—	
Completely gutted by fire, or otherwise destroyed or seriously damaged	19
Less seriously damaged, including minor damage, and roof repairs	26
(e) Miscellaneous items—	
Hits on railways	1
Hits on railways (probable)	1
Barrack buildings gutted	1
Barrack buildings (roof damage)	1
Hospital buildings damaged	1
Merchant vessel—probable hit	1

In addition there are the following two items of major damage which are considered to be the direct result of the 4,000-lb. bombs dropped in the area covered by the photographs:—

- (1) East of Steinwerder Canal an area which, entirely consisted of industrial buildings 450 × 380 ft. has been completely demolished and only parts of a few walls remain. The further effects of blast which caused this destruction can be seen within an area which measures 900 × 750 ft. The blast is clearly seen on the coal dump along the Reiherstieg and buildings alongside the railway line. The distance between the two points being 1,107 ft.
- (2) A warehouse on the Sudwest Hafen measuring approximately 360 × 220 ft. completely destroyed. The end of a smaller warehouse behind has been blown in or drawn out by blast, which would indicate that the destruction of the first warehouse was probably the result of a 4,000-lb. bomb. A warehouse adjoining has had one bay almost entirely wrecked and its remaining two bays severely damaged.

Berlin.—In the raid on the 9th/10th April the Lufthansa Offices in the Friedrichstrasse were fired. It is reported that, owing to R.A.F. raids on the capital, the Diplomatic Corps are becoming increasingly anxious and there is talk of an impending move to Dresden.

Kiel.—Recent raids have been described in Berlin as most effective, and U-boat construction has been greatly hampered. The Germania works are now concentrating their attention to increasing their production at Gdynia on account of the severe damage they have suffered at Kiel.

Mannheim.—Photographs taken on the 17th May show the success of the attacks on the 29th/30th April and the 5th/6th, 9th/10th and 12th/13th May; the damage is widespread and extensive and the principal features are:—

- (i) The destruction of the Autobahn Bridge over the Rhine. The East part has been completely destroyed and fallen into the river. Another part is out of alignment.

(No specific claim to have attacked this bridge has been received, but on the night of the 5th/6th a Wellington dropped a 4,000-lb. bomb on what was thought to be a junction in the Autobahn. A blue light was seen. The blue light may well have been caused by the disturbance of the water consequent upon the collapse of the bridge and the destruction of possible electric cables thereon.)

- (ii) The destruction of an area in the dock district comprising warehouses and sheds on each side of the Verbindungs-Kanal covering a combined space of about $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres.
- (iii) Heavy damage to domestic property in another part of the dock district covering approximately 200 by 130 yards (believed to have been caused by one large bomb).
- (iv) Considerable destruction of property in the Schwetzingen Strasse, one of the main streets in the new town.
- (v) A triangular block of buildings about 160 by 140 by 120 yards to the West of the Rhine Bridge has been completely demolished; and
- (vi) The destruction of a large building by fire in the Badische and Anilin Works.

Persons connected with railways have described recent raids as "frightful." Direct hits were obtained on the lines to Weinheim, Heidelberg and Schwetzingen. The railway viaduct between Ladenburg and Friedrichsfeld was hit and has collapsed.

General.—That recent heavy attacks have been successful can be gauged from the fact that during the past week General Milch addressed A.R.P. workers, stating: "We cannot look on while great damage is done by fire to our factories. I beg you to continue to work for the A.R.P.," and that an official reception was given in Berlin to A.R.P. workers from all districts in the Reich, at which Goebbels himself made an address to encourage them.

France.

Brest.—Photographs taken on the 20th May show a floating crane to be still alongside the *Scharnhorst* and a salvage vessel is alongside the quay.

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