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AXIS OPERATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

13th - 20th APRIL, 1941

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LUFTWAFFE FUHRUNGSSTAB IO.

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AIR MINISTRY A.H.B.6
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LUFTWAFFE SITUATION REPORT NO. 583 (14 APRIL, 1941)

Operations on 13 April and during the Night of 13/14 April

Situation in Southern Theatre

X Fliegerkorps

(a) Air Situation - Libya

Reconnaissance was carried out over the North African coast in the Derna - Tobruk area.

Operations were directed against shipping in Tobruk harbour.

(b) Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance was carried out over airfields and the harbour at Malta.

Dombors attacked port installations at La Valetta and Luca airfield.

Total Losses - Libya and Mediterranean

German: Nil return

Enemy: 1 Hurricane in air battle

2 Hurricanes destroyed on the ground

3 aircraft

Situation in South-Eastern Theatre

I. Ground Situation on 13 April (2200 hours)

(a) German Operations in Jugoslavia and Greece

In the Second Army battle area elements of a Panzer Division advanced southwards from Karlovac and reached Bihac. These units are continuing their advance through Lipa in the direction of Kljuc. Other elements of this division advanced southwards from Zagreb to Kostajnica, where they are in action against Serbian units. Advanced detachments of Army formations have reached Vinica (25 km west of Karlovac), Maja (70 km south of Zagreb), Petrinja, Sisak and Dubica (25 km east of Kostajnica).

Other Panzer formations and fast-moving units are advancing south from the Vinkovci and Mitrovica - Ruma areas and are engaged in hard fighting with Serbian forces south of the Sava in the Sabac area and at Brcko (55 km south of Vinkovci).

Elements of these formations are advancing from Mitrovica in the direction of Loznica - Zvornik.

Army formations of Panzergruppe Kleist are moving up on the line Belgrade - Jagodina - Nis.

A Panzer division is located in the area around Belgrade, a fast-moving division in the area north-west of Nis, an infantry division in Nis and a mountain division is advancing through Knjazevac in a westerly direction.

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A Twelfth Army Panzer division was moved south from Fristina and its main force is located in the area around Skoplje.

After breaking down British resistance at Vevi, Panzer formations of XXXX Corps advanced south through Ptolemais and are engaging British armoured forces directly south-west of the town. SS units are in action against British troops in the Sklithron area (20 km south-east of Florina).

Elements of a mountain division have established a bridgehead across the Aliakmon river south-east of Verroia.

A Panzer division is continuing its advance through Gida in the direction of Katerini.

The main force of a mountain division is located in the area around Gephyra (25 km north-east of Salonika).

An infantry division advancing from the east has reached the Salonika - Dojran Lake railway line in the vicinity of Kilkis.

3 further infantry divisions are moving up from the area south of Sofia in the direction of Skoplje; advanced detachments of one of these divisions have reached Carevo Selo.

(b) Italian Operations

Fast-moving Italian units from Fiume advanced south-east along the coast and reached the town of Segna.

Armoured units routed Serbian troops at Koplík (north of Scutari).

On the morning of 13 April Army formations of Ninth Army moved forward, passed through Pogradec, and are advancing south in the direction of Koritsa.

(c) Hungarian Operations

Hungarian motorised units occupied the Serbian territory bounded by the Drava and Danube rivers north of Osijek. Paratroops were employed to secure the bridges over the Franzens Canal until fast-moving units arrived.

After crossing the Hungarian-Yugoslav frontier between the Danube and Tisza rivers, infantry formations reached the approximate line Backa Topola - Senta.

II. Air Situation on 13 April (2200 hours)

(A) German Operations

(1) Luftflotte 4

During the morning and afternoon of 13 April large formations of bombers dropped heavy bombs on military objectives in Sarajevo. Numerous hits were scored in the centre of the city, in out-lying districts, on barracks in the western part of the city and on railway installations. Extensive fires were observed.

Bombers and dive-bombers attacked Mostar airfield, a train on the Sarajevo - Mostar line and enemy concentrations in the Banjaluka - Sarajevo area. Two hangars and an aircraft were hit by bombs on Mostar airfield.

/Single-engined

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Single-engined and twin-engined fighter formations made low-level machine-gun attacks on airfields at Tuzla, Sarajevo and Bijeljina and on troop concentrations in the area Sabac - Umka-Cacak - Uzice (south-west of Belgrade). In some cases enemy columns were completely destroyed or routed, and a row of vehicles was also destroyed. 5 aircraft were set on fire on Tuzla airfield, and one each on Sarajevo and Bijeljina airfields.

Enemy defence was slight. No fighters were seen and heavy, medium and light AA fire was put up only at Sarajevo and to the north, and was sporadic and ineffective.

On 12 April 2 enemy aircraft bound for Russia made a forced landing on Rumanian territory.

(2) VIII Fliegerkorps

During the day bombers attacked 5 ships in Volos harbour and troop concentrations in the Ptolemais - Kozani area. 3 ships were hit by bombs.

Fighters operating in the Ptolemais - Kozani area did not make contact with the enemy.

(3) X Fliegerkorps

Owing to unfavourable weather conditions only limited activity was possible. 10 bombers attacked shipping concentrations in Eleusis Bay between 2152 and 2328 hours with the following results:

1 destroyer was hit by 2 250 Kg. bombs, one of which landed on the stern, the other close under the stern. The vessel turned through 180° and then stopped with the stern well under water.

1 merchant ship of 6,000 tons, probably a tanker, was attacked with 1 500 Kg. and 3 250 Kg. bombs. 2 hits were scored and a large area around the ship was covered with oil.

2 merchant ships, each of about 6,000 tons, were attacked with 8 250 Kg. bombs which fell short of the target.

24 250 Kg. bombs were dropped on harbour installations at Pireaus.

Total Losses

Enemy:

On the Ground: 1 aircraft, type unknown
 7 biplanes, type unknown
 8 aircraft

German: 1 Ju 88 (missing)

(B) Italian Air Operations

Reconnaissance

Aircraft carried out visual and photographic reconnaissance in the Zara area, over Kotor (Cattaro) Bay, and along the western coasts of Yugoslavia and Greece as far as Navarino. 1 cruiser, 2 destroyers, 2 auxiliary vessels, 1 torpedo boat, 1 submarine and 9 small craft were observed in the bays and channels in the Kotor area. There were 4 bombers on the southern part of Mostar airfield. 26 powered sailing vessels were observed in Argostoli Bay.

/Operations

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Operations

20 bombers made an effective attack on military objectives in Sebenico. 125 bombers attacked military objectives in and around Kotor with very good results. Explosions and fires were observed in the arsenal and in fuel dumps. The destroyer "Lubianka" was hit and a steamship set on fire. AA defence was strong.

13 bombers attacked Podgorica and various military installations south of Koritsa.

In an encounter with 8 Glosters, the formation shot down one for certain and probably two others.

53 fighters carried out escort operations and patrols over the battle area.

Libya and Mediterranean Area

Ground Situation - Libya

12 April: At 1240 hours reconnaissance aircraft confirmed that Tobruk was encircled by German and Italian forces.

At 2300 hours enemy warships bombarded Ain el Gazala. No damage was caused. Axis columns were attacked by enemy fighters.

13 April: Fighting is still in progress at Tobruk. German and Italian advanced detachments crossed the frontier at Fort Capuzzo (30 km south of Sollum) and pushed on in the direction of Sidi Barrani. Other units are in action at Sollum.

German Operations

Air Situation - Libya

Reconnaissance

12 April: Morning reconnaissance in the Tobruk area observed that the road east of the town was clear of enemy forces. There was a large ship 50 km off Tobruk.

Results of photographic reconnaissance carried out between 1100 and 1300 hours in the area EL Hammam (60 km west-south-west of Alexandria) - EL Daba (120 km east of Marsa Matruh) - Marsa Matruh - Sidi Barrani - Tobruk:

Owing to clouds and mist railway and road traffic between EL Hammam and Tobruk could be observed only in places. On the line between EL Hammam and Marsa Matruh there was one goods train with 29 trucks apparently travelling west and one passenger train with 20 carriages moving east.

25 tents were observed between the railway and road. Two fires, apparently burning vehicles, were observed 11 km south-east of Sollum.

There were no aircraft on Gasr el Arid airfield (south-west of Tobruk).

/Shipping

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Shipping at Tobruk:

- 2 destroyers,
- 3 minesweepers (?)
- 3 patrol boats (?)
- 1 merchant ship of about 2,000 tons,
- 2 small merchant ships together totalling about 800-1,000 tons.

A large pool of burning oil was observed in the harbour.

The following were on the airfields at Tobruk:

- 26 single-engined aircraft,
- 9 twin-engined aircraft, apparently Blenheims,
- 1 damaged single-engined aircraft.

There were 110 vehicles and 90 tents on or in the immediate vicinity of the Derna - Tobruk road. In the vicinity of Tobruk there were about 170 vehicles. 30 vehicles were observed moving between Bardia and Tobruk.

In addition to the hut and tent encampments already reported, newly constructed defence and artillery positions were observed. There were about 40 vehicles and a convoy of 11 vehicles moving west.

Two new gun positions have been constructed on the eastern perimeter of Tobruk airfield. A road-block has been set up east of Tobruk on the road to Bardia.

13 April: The harbour and town of Tobruk appear to have been evacuated. 1 large and 1 small ship were approaching Tobruk.

Photographic reconnaissance was carried out over the Sollum area.

Operations (German and Italian)

12 April: The following additional details were issued regarding the dive-bomber attack on Tobruk mentioned in the previous report:

15 bombers and dive-bombers escorted by German and Italian fighters attacked Tobruk and sank an auxiliary cruiser of 2,000 tons. One Ju 87 crashed and another made a forced landing on enemy territory.

13 April: At 1015 hours 6 Italian and 6 German dive-bombers escorted by 10 Italian fighters attacked shipping off Tobruk. A hit was scored on the stern of a large merchant ship of over 4,000 tons.

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

12 April: Results of photographic reconnaissance over Malta at 1115 hours:

Warships at La Valetta:

- 7 destroyers, including one without bows and one in dock,
- 2 minesweepers (?),
- 6 submarines.

Changes since 7 April:

- 4 destroyers and 2 large submarines have arrived,
- 1 small submarine and 1 patrol or escort vessel have left.

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The amount of merchant shipping has not changed since 7 April.

Only part of Ta Venezia airfield was covered. 6 single-engined aircraft were identified.

In the early morning there were 4 ships south of Gozo on an easterly course, apparently approaching La Valetta.

No enemy shipping movements were observed by reconnaissance south of Sicily to the North African coast from Cape Bon to Sirte.

4 bombers carried out armed reconnaissance in the sea area Crete.

Operations

A bomber escorted an air-sea rescue aircraft.

No enemy aircraft were encountered in fighter sweeps over Malta and Pantelleria.

In an encounter with 3 Hurricanes, fighters escorting a reconnaissance aircraft over Malta shot down one of the enemy aircraft.

2 bombers returning from a convoy escort operation dropped 7 250 Kg bombs on Luca airfield and La Valetta harbour. Bombs hit the runway and the harbour area.

2 bombers on armed reconnaissance attacked La Valetta between 2235 and 2250 hours, dropping 8 250 Kg. bombs. Hits among harbour installations were observed.

Large formations of bombers and dive-bombers with fighter escort made repeated attacks on airfields and harbour installations on Malta on 13 April.

From 0030 to 0110 hours 10 dive-bombers attacked Ta Venezia airfield and searchlight positions, dropping 10 500 Kg. and 40 50 Kg. bombs. Hits were scored on the southern and south-eastern perimeters, in front of a hangar and among searchlight positions. No details were observed.

At about 0545 hours 9 dive-bombers attacked Luca and Ta Venezia airfields. On the ground 2 Hurricanes were destroyed and a twin-engined fighter damaged by a hit on the tail.

17 bombers attacked Ta Venezia airfield from 0005 to 0020 hours, dropping 17 500 Kg. and 268 50 Kg. bombs. The bombs hit the southern and south-eastern perimeters of the airfield. The target was clearly recognized.

11 dive-bombers attacked Luca airfield from 0035 to 0045 hours, dropping 11 500 Kg. and 44 50 Kg. bombs. Three hits were observed in front of hangars on the northern perimeter of the airfield, and there were further hits on a hut encampment and on the harbour area of Valetta peninsula.

Defence

Malta: 0005-0020 hours: One aircraft, presumably a night fighter, with navigation lights. No searchlights at first, then 30. Slight, mainly badly-aimed AA fire.

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0045 hours: Night fighters observed. Little light AA, heavy medium AA fire. About 25 - 30 searchlights.

0100 hours: 4 night fighters, slight AA fire, about 12 - 20 searchlights.

0545 hours: Searchlights, heavy and light AA fire.

0600 hours: Searchlights, heavy and light AA fire.

2250 hours: AA of all calibres, about 30 powerful searchlights.

Tobruk: 40 mm AA fire.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

7 reconnaissance aircraft
58 bombers
48 fighters
113 aircraft

Losses

German: 2 Ju 87's

Enemy: 1 Hurricane (air battle)
2 Hurricanes (destroyed on ground)

Italian Operations

Air Situation - Libya

Operations

See German report.

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

12 April: A reconnaissance aircraft carried out an unsuccessful search for a reported enemy convoy over the sea area south of Crete.

13 April: Reconnaissance in the Sicilian Channel observed 3 powered sailing ships and a powered fishing vessel 36 km north of Pantelleria at 0850 hours.

There were no enemy warships in the sea area Sciacca - Gozo - Lampedusa - Tripoli.

Operations

11 April: 36 fighters and 2 bombers escorted a convoy and carried out patrols over Tripoli.

13 April: Fighters and bombers escorted an Italian convoy.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

17 reconnaissance aircraft
26 bombers
about 41 fighters
about 84 aircraft

/ Enemy

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Enemy Operations

Mediterranean

During the night of 12/13 April enemy aircraft attacked Brindisi harbour. A tanker was hit.

Losses

Italian: None
Enemy: None reported

Situation at Sea - Mediterranean

On the morning of 12 April a 3,000 ton tanker in an Italian convoy bound for Tripoli was torpedoed by an enemy submarine.

LUFTWAFFE SITUATION REPORT NO. 584 (15 April, 1941)

Operations on 14 April and during the Night of 14/15 April, 1941.

Situation in South-Eastern Theatre

I. Ground Situation on 14 April (2000 hours)

(a) German Operations in Yugoslavia and Greece

Elements of Second Army Panzer formations which advanced south-east in the direction of Sarajevo from the Karlovac - Zagreb area moved through Kljuc and reached Jajce. Other elements advanced through Kostajnica and reached Obonik (100 km north-west of Sarajevo).

Other Army formations moved up to the line Krstinja - Kostajnica.

A fast-moving division advanced along the Drina to Loznica.

Other Panzer formations are still in action against Serbian units south of Sabac.

Panzer formations of Panzergruppe Kleist are in action against Serbian forces directly south of Belgrade.

A motorised division advanced north-west through Krusevac and reached Kraljevo.

An infantry division is in action against dispersed Serbian Army units directly north of Nis.

A mountain division advanced north from Knjazevac and reached Bor.

Panzer formations were moved south from the Skoplje area.

An infantry division was ordered to move from the Vardar Valley to Prilep. Advanced detachments have reached Prilep.

After successful actions against British forces, Panzer formations of Twelfth Army advanced south-west from Kozani through Servia and are continuing their advance in the direction of Larissa.

Other motorised formations are in pursuit of the enemy along the Kozani - Grevena road.

/SS units

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SS units have taken a pass north of Kastoria.

Elements of a mountain division are moving across the mountain range south-east of the Aliakmon river in the direction of Ellason.

After overcoming British resistance at Katerini, Panzer formations have reached Litokhoron (25 km south of Katerini) and are continuing their advance along the road to Larissa.

British units and motorised columns are withdrawing rapidly from northern Greece to the south and south-east in the direction of Larissa and Lamia.

On the evening of 14 April a spokesman of the Yugoslavian General Staff arrived at Panzergruppe Kleist with a request for an armistice.

(b) Italian Operations

Italian fast-moving units and armoured formations from the north advanced south-east and reached Gaspic and the area about 25 km west of Bihac.

Other Italian units advanced east from Zara and occupied Knin.

Italian Army formations on the Greek-Albanian front occupied Koritsa and are advancing south along the road to Ersek.

7 Greek divisions on the Italian Ninth Army front have begun to fall back through the mountains to the south.

II. Air Situation on 14 April (2000 hours)

(A) German Operations

(1) Luftflotte 4

During the day 46 bombers, 15 dive-bombers, 17 transport aircraft, 25 twin-engined fighters and 34 single-engined fighters were operational over Yugoslavia.

At midday 15 bombers attacked Mostar airfield, dropping 15 500 Kg., 26 250 Kg. H.E., 1 250 Kg. incendiary bomb and 30 50 Kg. bombs. All the bombs fell among aircraft parked in the dispersal area to the south of the airfield, destroying or damaging many of them.

17 bombers attacked Ilidza (west-south-west of Sarajevo and presumably the seat of the Serbian government) between 1720 and 1830 hours, dropping 2 500 Kg., 54 250 Kg. and 60 50 Kg. bombs. Hits were scored on public buildings and bombs fell near the castle.

During the afternoon 14 bombers and 4 dive-bombers attacked railway installations and troop concentrations in the Brod-Doboj - Zupanja area, dropping 1 500 Kg., 44 250 Kg. and 20 50 Kg. bombs. Enemy marching columns at Doboj, Derventa, Kotorsko, Buslecic, Modrica, Odzac and the railway station at Kotorsko were hit by bombs.

In the early afternoon a twin-engined fighter carried out a low-level bombing and machine-gun attack on an enemy headquarters at Mostar. 4 250 Kg. bombs were dropped.

/Formations

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Formations under the command of Fliegerfuehrer Arad made landings on Bijeljina airfield during the morning and afternoon, breaking enemy resistance and capturing 210 prisoners. Our losses amounted to 4 killed and 3 wounded.

The following aircraft took part in the operation:

1 twin-engined fighter carried out reconnaissance before the attack.

17 transport aircraft escorted by 12 fighters were used to occupy the airfield and to transport troops and weapons.

11 dive-bombers, 23 twin-engined fighters and 18 single-engined fighters were available to deal with possible enemy resistance.

Defence

Heavy AA fire at Sarajevo, moderate AA fire at Zenica, Travnik and Doboje. Heavy AA batteries at Derвента, Maglaj and south-east of Doboje.

(2) VIII Fliegerkorps

Bombers attacked enemy shipping concentrations in Pireaus harbour. 4 ships each of 8 - 10,000 tons were sunk and a further 8 of the same tonnage were damaged. In addition, bombers, dive-bombers, twin-engined fighters and single-engined fighters attacked enemy troop concentrations and columns in the Servia - Diskata - Ellasen area.

Fighters shot down 6 Blenheims over Prespa Lake.

(3) X Fliegerkorps

During the night of 13/14 April 5 bombers laid mines in Volos harbour.

Between 0050 and 0210 hours 8 bombers attacked shipping concentrations in Eleusis Bay and Pireaus harbour from heights ranging from 1,300 to 6,500 and 2,000 feet. 7 500 Kg. and 25 250 Kg. bombs were dropped.

The following results were observed:

1 freighter of 6,000 tons: 1 hit on stern, 1 near miss. Ship damaged.

1 freighter of 5,000 tons: 3 near misses. Ship damaged.

1 freighter of 6,000 tons at Pireaus: near miss by bows, effect not observed.

Hits were scored on quay and harbour installations at Pireaus and a large fire was observed.

Defence

Strong AA fire and searchlight activity.

2 bombers on armed reconnaissance over the Aegean attacked the airfield at Eleusis as a secondary target between 0212 and 0250 hours, dropping 2 500 Kg. and 8 250 Kg. bombs. Hits were scored on the north and south-west perimeter and across the airfield. An explosion was observed after some minutes.

Defence

2 night fighters which did not attack. Slight AA fire.

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Total Losses

Enemy:

In the Air: 6 Blenheims on 13 April (late report)

On the Ground: Several aircraft on Mostar airfield.

German: 1 Ju 88 (forced landing in enemy territory)

(B) Italian Air Operations on 14 April

12 aircraft carried out armed reconnaissance over Knin (about 60 km north-west of Split) and shot up enemy troop columns.

Other aircraft carried out photographic and visual reconnaissance in the Yugoslav - Greek - Albanian battle area.

71 bombers attacked harbour installations at Prevesa and Joanina, Podgorica railway station, the cross-roads at Kalibaki and enemy troop and transport columns in Albania.

125 fighters escorted bomber formations and carried out patrols over the battle area. In air combats with 13 Glosters, 2 enemy aircraft were shot down.

Libya and Mediterranean Area

Ground Situation - Libya

13 April: After fighting lasting several hours, Fort Capuzzo (30 km south of Sollum) on the eastern frontier of Cyrenaica was taken in the afternoon and Sollum occupied. Fighting is still in progress at Tobruk.

14 April: At 1030 hours strong Axis formations were advancing towards Fort Marcuce (?). The attack on Tobruk is continuing. The enemy has put a large number of guns in the old Italian reinforced concrete positions and casemates.

German Operations

Air Situation - Libya

Reconnaissance

14 April: A reconnaissance aircraft carried out photographic reconnaissance along the road from Sollum to a point 50 km west of Alexandria. The following visual observations were made:

1045 hours: a camp with a number of tents at El Daba (120 km east of Marsa Matruh).

1100 hours: a goods train travelling west east of Fuka (65 km east of Marsa Matruh).

1105 hours: (no place names) a camp and several vehicles.
2 airfields with 3 multiple-engined aircraft and about 20 single-engined aircraft.

1130 hours: a train comprising 30 goods wagons in the sidings at Abyar Keramiz airfield (35 km east-south-east of Marsa Matruh).

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1145 hours: Marsa Matruh: 30 - 45 goods trucks at the station;
1 medium and 1 small merchant ship in the harbour;
1 multiple-engined aircraft on the airfield.

1250 hours: 6 aircraft on Sidi Barrani airfield.

Operations (German and Italian)

14 April: At 0600 hours 38 dive-bombers, 8 twin-engined fighters and 10 German and Italian single-engined fighters attacked British positions in and around Tobruk in support of the attacking ground forces. Escorting Italian fighters shot down 3 Hurricanes for certain and probably destroyed another.

At 1540 hours 11 dive bombers escorted by German and Italian fighters attacked shipping reported off Tobruk. A direct hit and a near miss were scored on a merchant ship of 8,000 tons. 2 Hurricanes were shot down. 1 Ju 87 is missing.

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

14 April: Armed reconnaissance over the sea area Crete was broken off west of Kythera Island owing to technical difficulties. No enemy shipping movements were observed.

Results of photographic reconnaissance over Malta at 1000 hours:

Warships at La Valetta:

8 destroyers, including one without bows,
2 minesweepers (?)
6 submarines, including one arriving and one in dock,
1 escort vessel (?).

Changes since 13 April:

Arrivals: 1 large submarine,
1 small submarine,
1 small submarine putting into port.

Departures: 2 large submarines,
1 small submarine.

The amount of merchant shipping has not changed since 13 April.

Airfields:

Halfar 1 single-engined aircraft, apparently a Hurricane,
1 single-engined aircraft, apparently a biplane.

Luca 11 multiple-engined aircraft, apparently Wellingtons,
3 multiple-engined aircraft, apparently Blenheims,
3 single-engined aircraft with folded-back wings.

Since 22 March (last air photograph) 2 hangars have been damaged by bomb hits and one already damaged hangar has been demolished.

Ta Venezia 17 single-engined aircraft, probably Hurricanes,
3 single-engined aircraft, apparently biplanes,
2 single-engined aircraft, type not known,
1 aircraft, apparently damaged.

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There were no aircraft on airfields at Scirocco and Calafra.

Photographic reconnaissance was carried out over the Suez area, with the exception of the northern section. The following visual observations were made:

At 1200 hours there were 102 large and medium merchant ships, 30 small merchant ships and 2 destroyers in the Suez Canal, including Port Said and Suez. At 1146 hours there were 4 medium and about 15 small merchant ships and a warship, apparently a cruiser, at anchor in Ismailia harbour. There were 2 merchant ships moving south 8 km north of Ismailia.

There were 23 aircraft on the two airfields at Suez. The number of aircraft on the airfields west of the Small and Great Bitter Lakes could not be observed.

At 1405 hours a destroyer on course 300° was observed 150 km north of Sidi Barrani.

Operations

14 April: 5 bombers and 7 fighters escorted convoys and transport aircraft

Fighters escorted a reconnaissance aircraft on photographic reconnaissance over Malta. No enemy aircraft were encountered on this operation or on fighter sweeps over Malta.

At 1045 hours 2 bombers on armed reconnaissance over the sea area Crete observed an enemy convoy comprising 1 cruiser, 3 destroyers and 4 merchant ships together totalling 25 - 30,000 tons 30 km west of the western tip of Crete. The aircraft dropped 4 250 Kg. bombs in an unsuccessful attack.

During the night two attacks were made on airfields and harbour installations and AA and searchlight positions on Malta.

From 0020 - 0040 hours 9 dive-bombers attacked Luca airfield, dropping 9 500 Kg. and 37 50 Kg. bombs. Hits were scored in front of the hangars on the northern perimeter, between blast bays, on the water-works, on an AA position, on Luca village and on the royal dockyard at La Valetta. Intense searchlight activity prevented observation of effects.

From 0105 - 0145 hours 14 bombers operating between 11,500 and 16,000 feet attacked Ta Venezia airfield, dropping 13 500 Kg and 203 50 Kg. bombs. Hits were scored on the northern and southern sections of the airfield. On the north-eastern perimeter explosions with a great deal of smoke and two fires were observed. Owing to visibility being reduced, 1 bomber attacked an AA position east of the airfield. One aircraft was forced to jettison its bombs over the sea.

Defence

14 April: 1 single-engined monoplane and 1 twin-engined aircraft over the convoy 30 km west of the western tip of Crete. Well aimed medium AA fire from the warships.

2 fighters observed taking off at Suez.

Malta: 0020-0040 hours: 1 night fighter, a little light AA fire and moderate heavy AA and ships' AA fire, About 30 powerful searchlights.

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0105-0145 hours: slight heavy and light AA fire:
20 - 30 searchlights.

1000 hours: Well aimed heavy AA fire and about
15 light AA batteries. Barrages
over Luca and La Valetta.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

5 reconnaissance aircraft
84 bombers
44 fighters
133 aircraft

Enemy Operations

Libya

14 April: During the night the enemy made an unsuccessful attack on Derna airfield and supported ground forces defending Tobruk by bombing attacks on German positions and fighter defence against German dive-bomber attacks.

In the attack on Derna 2 Wellingtons were brought down by AA.

Losses

German: 2 Ju 87's

Enemy 2 Hurricanes (air battle)
2 Wellingtons

Italian Operations

Air Situation - Libya

Reconnaissance

12 April: Reconnaissance over Tunmo (230 km south of Zuila) and Gebel Afafi (1040 km south of Sirte) was uneventful.

13 April: Nothing of importance was observed in the area EL Uigh el Chebir (240 km south of Zuila) and EL Namus (700 km south of Sirte).

Operations (see German report)

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

13 April: No enemy shipping was observed in the sea areas Tripoli - Lampedusa - Linosa and between the Nile Delta and Crete. At 1535 hours 1 aircraft-carrier, 4 battleships and a number of cruisers were observed in Alexandria harbour.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

3 reconnaissance aircraft
about 15 fighters
about 18 aircraft

/ Enemy

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Enemy Operations

Libya

In an enemy air attack on Tripoli during the night of 13/14 April an Italian ship was hit and slight damage caused. 1 officer and 7 civilians were killed and a number of civilians were injured.

Mediterranean

Bombers made an unsuccessful attack on Brindisi during the night of 13/14 April.

Losses

Italian: None

Enemy: 3 Hurricanes (air battle)

1 Hurricane probably destroyed

LUFTWAFFE SITUATION REPORT NO. 585 (16 April, 1941)

Operations on 15 April and during the Night of 15/16 April, 1941.

Situation in South-Eastern Theatre

I. Ground Situation on 15 April (2000 hours)

(a) German Operations in Yugoslavia and Greece

Army formations subordinated to Second Army are continuing their advance in the direction of Sarajevo. Occasional fighting with isolated Serbian units is still taking place.

Panzer formations from the area Zagreb - Karlovac are approaching Sarajevo through Zenica.

Elements of a Panzer division have broken enemy resistance at Dobož. Several thousand prisoners were taken and war material was captured. Continuing their advance south-east, these units reached Tuzla where they are in action against enemy remnants.

Advanced detachments of a motorised division which advanced south through Loznica occupied Sarajevo at 1400 hours. The main force of this division is located at Zvornik.

Panzer forces have broken enemy resistance at Savac and advanced south through Valjevo to Uzice.

Other Panzer formations which were in action in the Belgrade area during the last few days are regrouping south of Belgrade.

A mountain division has reached Bor (90 km north-east of Niš) and is mopping up isolated pockets of enemy resistance in the vicinity of the town.

In the recent fighting 2 generals, 3 colonels, 51 other officers and several thousand men have been taken prisoner and a large amount of war material captured.

/Twelfth

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Twelfth Army Panzer formations advancing over the Olympus mountains encountered strong British rearguards in the Servia area. They are engaged in hard fighting against British units at Ay. Dhimitrios (30 km south-west of Katerini) and at Pandelejmon (17 km south of Litokhoron).

Elements of motorised formations are advancing south-west of Kozani in the direction of Grevena.

SS units have encountered stubborn enemy resistance at the pass north of Kastoria.

An advanced detachment of an infantry division is in action against Greek units west of Florina.

Other Army formations are moving up from the north and east in the Florina - Verroia - Kozani area.

British forces are falling back all along the front. Rearguards are attempting to delay pursuing German forces by extensive demolitions. Troops are being embarked in the Piniós estuary, at Volos and at Piraeus.

(b) Italian Operations in Albania

Italian forces have occupied Sebenico and Split and are continuing their advance in the direction of Dubrovnik.

A fresh enemy attack north of Scutari was repulsed.

Naval units from Zara occupied the islands of Uljan, Iz, Sestrunj, Molat and Dugi.

The Italian Eleventh Army in Albania moved forward and encountered strong resistance. In the Ossum Valley 5th Alpine Division took Corovode.

II. Air Situation on 15 April (2000 hours)

(A) German Operations

(1) Luftflotte 4

During the morning and afternoon 8 bombers and 11 dive-bombers attacked the following ships in the Fort Opus - Dubrovnik - Kotor area:

1 armed cargo ship of 8 - 10,000 tons was attacked at Osojnik (north of Dubrovnik) with 3 500 Kg. and 3 250 Kg. bombs. 3 direct hits were scored.

1 merchant ship was attacked off S. Vito (Brazza Island) with 2 500 Kg. and 3 250 Kg. bombs, which fell near the starboard side. The ship was beached after the attack.

1 merchant ship of 3,000 tons was attacked between Fort Opus and Dubrovnik with 1 500 Kg., 24 250 Kg. and 30 50 Kg. bombs. Bombs fell near the ship, which did not change its position (presumably aground).

12 other bombers attacked the following secondary targets: 45 250 Kg. and 4 50 Kg. bombs were dropped on buildings, harbour installations and fortifications on the north side of Dubrovnik. Bombs were seen to explode, but further results were not observed.

2 250 Kg. and 10 50 Kg. bombs were dropped on quays north-east of Fort Opus. Results are not known.

/4

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4 250 Kg. bombs were dropped on Mostar. Results are not known.

4 250 Kg. bombs were dropped on the railway station at Metkovic (south of Mostar). Results are not known.

Defence

Barrage balloons and one fighter at Fort Opus. AA fire at Fort Opus, Osojnik, north coast of Brazza Island and Dubrovnik.

Enemy Operations

Single enemy aircraft attacked the city and airfield of Sofia during the night of 13/14 April. 20 H.A. bombs and incendiaries were dropped. Slight damage was done to trains and fuel stocks.

VIII Fliegerkorps

Bombers, dive-bombers and ground attack aircraft carried out continuous operations against retreating enemy forces south-east of Grevena, south of Servia and in the Ellason - Trikkala - Larissa area. Ships at Pireaus and Volos harbours were also attacked by bomber formations. 9 ships totalling 60 - 70,000 tons were hit in Pireaus harbour.

Fighter formations made low-level attacks on Larissa and Trikkala airfields and left 5 aircraft burning on the ground. In a further attack on two Greek airfields 17 aircraft were destroyed on the ground. 9 enemy fighters were shot down in air combats.

Enemy Operations

Single enemy aircraft attacked Skoplje airfield during the night of 14/15 April. No damage was done.

Total Losses

Enemy:

In the Air:	3 Hurricanes 3 Glosters 2 PZL's 1 Lysander <u>9 aircraft</u>
On the Ground	13 Blenheims 6 Hurricanes 3 aircraft, type not known
At Seaplane Base:	1 seaplane, type not known <u>32 aircraft</u>

German: 1 Hs 126 of Luftwaffe General with C-in-C Army

(B) Italian Air Operations

Reconnaissance

Aircraft carried out visual and photographic reconnaissance over the areas Zara - Knin, Kotor and Argyrokastron - Perati - Ersek. A number of warships and training ships were observed at Kotor as well as 6 aircraft. There were 3 destroyers, 1 light cruiser and 3 merchant ships at Missolonghi and 1 tanker and 5 merchant ships at Preveza.

/Operations

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Operations

77 Bombers made effective attacks on troop movements on the road south of Argyrokastron and on the Ersek - Perati road.

9 bombers attacked barracks at Kuce.

14 bombers attacked important military objectives in the Iermet - Perati and Perati - Yannina areas. 1 bomber is missing.

24 aircraft shot up Yannina airfield, leaving 3 aircraft burning on the ground.

In air combats 4 enemy aircraft were shot down for certain and 3 others probably destroyed.

16 aircraft attacked Paramythia airfield. 6 bombers and 1 Hurricane were destroyed.

62 fighters carried out escort and patrol operations over the battle area.

Enemy Operations

An enemy torpedo aircraft attacked shipping in Valona harbour and was destroyed by blast when an ammunition ship exploded.

Libya and Mediterranean Area

German Operations

(1) Ground Situation - Libya

14 April: At Sollum an enemy counter-attack supported by warships was repulsed by a German Panzer division. At Tobruk sizeable enemy forces supported by aircraft and warships offered stubborn resistance.

(2) Air Situation - Libya

Reconnaissance

Late report on photographic reconnaissance carried out at 1200 hours on 14 April along the road and railway from El Imayid (94 km west of Alexandria) to Sidi Barrani. Owing to clouds only part of this area was covered. However, large-scale railway traffic was identified. There was practically no observation of road transport movements. A convoy, the size of which was not established, was observed between El Qasaba (km 105, i.e. 105 km from Alexandria) and El Alamein (km 118).

Ghazal railway station (km 158): 1 locomotive and about 60 trucks moving west and slowing down. In addition, 23 tents.

A locomotive and about 45 trucks moving west stopped west of Ghazal railway station.

Only occasional vehicles observed on the road between Ghazal and El Daba.

El Daba railway station (Km 173): 2 locomotives and 97 trucks.

/The

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The number of aircraft on El Daba airfield could not be identified. There were about 250 tents on both sides of the railway line and west of El Daba.

There were no aircraft on the Sanyet Turbiya landing strip (located at north fork in road), but barrack buildings were identified.

8 km east of El Galal (km 192): 2 locomotives and 18 trucks moving east. A Lysander was observed at El Galal. There were small groups of tents in the vicinity of the village.

Fuka railway station (km 217): 1 locomotive and 61 trucks, a tent encampment and an equipment depot. The following aircraft were observed on Fuka airfield:

2 Blenheim IV's
11 Blenheims or Oxfords,
1 Valentia,
2 single-engined aircraft,
1 airborne Valentia flying west.

There was a message dropping point at km 220 and huts have been built on both sides of the railway line.

Abu Haggag railway station (km 230): 1 locomotive, 6 carriages and 12 goods trucks moving west.

There were 9 Blenheims and 1 single-engined aircraft on Bir Abu Smeit airfield south of the railway line and 3 single-engined aircraft on Zarwyet Harun airfield north of the railway line.

At Sidi Haneish railway station (km 250) there was one stationary locomotive and 14 carriages on the eastbound track; in addition there were 60 goods trucks, equipment dumps and 120 tents on both sides of the tracks. The railway bridge 7 km west of Sidi Haneish has been protected by field defences and tank obstacles.

A locomotive and about 25 trucks were moving east at Sanyet el Qasaba. In addition, there were 16 other goods trucks. Roads and huts are under construction.

Fortifications have been set up at Marsa Matruh. The road leading south-east is covered by a number of tank obstacles and road blocks. There were about 164 trucks and 2 locomotives in the station and on a siding to the west. On the airfield there were 3 single-engined and 1 multiple-engined aircraft. A patrol boat and a coastal vessel were observed in the harbour. Occasional vehicles on the El Daba - Marsa Matruh road. Most of the Marsa Matruh - Sidi Barrani road was covered by cloud.

There was an aircraft on the road 4 km east of Sidi Barrani and 2 single-engined aircraft and 1 damaged multiple-engined machine on the airfield. There were 29 vehicles on and near the road west of Sidi Barrani.

(3) Air Situation - Mediterranean

(a) Reconnaissance

14 April: The following additional details concerning the photographic reconnaissance carried out over the Suez Canal were made known (see previous report):

/Owing

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Owing to cloud the area was not completely covered.

In Suez harbour and on the outer roadstead there were 48 merchant ships and transports together totalling 211,000 tons and a vessel believed to be a patrol boat.

On the Great Bitter Lake (only partly covered): the aircraft-carrier "Eagle" and 4 merchant ships together totalling about 19,000 tons.

In Ismailia harbour: 1 large and 1 small steamship, 1 merchant ship of about 1,500 tons, 1 merchant ship without a stern (presumably the freighter which was sunk in the Suez Canal) and 1 dredger.

In Port Said harbour (not completely covered): 5 tankers together totalling about 28,000 tons, about 20 merchant ships together totalling about 95,000 tons, 1 submarine in floating dock and 1 floating crane.

There were 5 merchant ships together totalling about 21,000 tons moving north in the canal between Suez and the Bitter Lakes. Owing to clouds large sections of the canal could not be covered.

Altogether a total shipping tonnage of 375,000 tons was identified.

Airfields

El Kubrit (east of Suez - only partly covered):

12 twin-engined aircraft, apparently Wellingtons,
1 single-engined aircraft.

Shallufa (north-east of Suez - only partly covered):

3 multiple-engined aircraft.

El Kabrit (north of Suez):

22 multiple-engined aircraft,
1 single-engined aircraft.

The airfield has been enlarged since 29 March (last air photograph).

Ismailia (north of Suez):

19 single and multiple-engined aircraft.

El Kantara (south of Port Said - no observation owing to cloud)

Miscellaneous:

The ship which was sunk in the Suez Canal has been raised and towed away. Since the last photographic reconnaissance over Muna (5 km north-east of Ismailia) the number of tents has increased and the equipment depot has been enlarged. The approach road to the pontoon bridge at Ismailia is ready for use.

15 April: No enemy shipping was observed by morning reconnaissance south of Sicily in the Marettimo area to the North African coast.

Operations

15 April: Between 0905 and 0915 hours 2 bombers on armed reconnaissance made an unsuccessful attack on a merchant ship of 4,000 tons in the sea area Crete. 8 250 Kg. bombs were dropped. Owing to a fighter attack 2 bombers jettisoned their bombs into the sea.

/Owing

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Owing to weather conditions convoy escort operations by 2 bombers and 2 fighters were broken off.

Defence

Light and heavy AA fire by destroyers and cruisers and 2 Hurricanes in the attack on the merchant ship in the sea area Crete.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

1 reconnaissance aircraft
6 bombers
2 fighters
9 aircraft

Italian Operations

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Operations

16 April: 3 torpedo bombers attacked and sunk a transport of 15000 tons escorted by 2 destroyers 120 km north-east of Sidi Barrani.

LUFTWAFFE SITUATION REPORT NO. 586 (17 April, 1941)

Operations on 16 April and during the Night of 16/17 April, 1941.

Situation in Southern Theatre

I. X Fliegerkorps

(a) Libya

Owing to a sandstorm there were no operations over Libya on 16 April.

(b) Air Situation - Mediterranean

No enemy warships or merchant vessels were observed during reconnaissance over the sea area south of Sicily on the morning of 16 April.

Operations were limited to convoy escort flights by bombers and fighters.

Total Losses - Libya and Mediterranean

German: Nil return

Enemy: None reported

Situation in South-Eastern Theatre

I. Ground Situation on 16 April (2000 hours)

(a) German Operations in Yugoslavia and Greece

The main infantry force of Army formations under command of Second Army have reached the Banjaluka - Gradiska Bosanska area. Advanced detachments have reached the Vrbas river.

/After

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After neutralising enemy resistance at Doboij and south of Brcko, Panzer formations and fast-moving units advanced south; their main force being located in the Sarajevo area. About 100,000 prisoners, including 8 generals, were taken in the fighting.

A Panzer division moved south from Belgrade and had reached Novi Pazar by 1330 hours.

Elements of another Panzer division advanced from Uzice through Rudo to the south-west and reached Niksic at 1805 hours.

Fast-moving units which were brought up from Kruševac through Kuršumlija to Pristina are continuing their advance to the west in the direction of Podgorica.

Army formations of Twelfth Army are continuing to move up in northern Greece.

A Panzer division was brought up to Kozani and its advanced detachments are moving in the direction of Grevena.

Other Panzer formations are in action against strong British rearguards directly south-east of Grevena and at the pass west of Olympus between the villages of Mon Petras and Ay Dhimitrios. German forces advancing along the Servia - Larissa road encountered strong enemy resistance south-west of Servia.

Elements of a Panzer division attempting to by-pass Olympus to the south are still engaged in hard fighting at Egani (10 km north-east of Rapsani).

A mountain division was brought up through Katerini to Litokhoron and is moving south-west in the Ziliana Valley area.

SS and Army formations broke enemy resistance north-west of Kastoria, took 5,000 prisoners, and are moving south in the direction of Grevena.

A Panzer division crossed the Aliakmon river and is advancing on Katerini.

Italian Operations

Formations of the Italian Second Army have almost reached Dubrovnik.

Italian forces have attacked on both sides of Lake Scutari, crossing the frontier at some points and taking a large number of prisoners.

Italian units which advanced south from Koritsa have occupied Erseke.

On the Eleventh Army front Greek troops are offering very stubborn resistance between the sea and the Vojussa Valley.

In the Desnice Valley Podgoran and Kuqar were occupied.

II. Air Situation on 16 April (2000 hours)

(A) German Operations

Luftflotte 4

(Late report) On 15 April 30 bombers carried out two sorties from a Serbian airfield to make effective attacks on Volos and Larissa.

/VIII

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VIII Fliegerkorps

Several ships totalling 19,000 tons were sunk by bombers in the harbours at Volos and Khalkis on 16 April. Bombers also attacked Larissa.

Total Losses

Enemy: None reported

German: None reported

Late report
from 15 April: 2 Ju 88's

(B) Italian Air Operations

Owing to unfavourable weather conditions only limited operations were carried out by the Italian Air Force.

A few fighters carried out patrols over the airfield and harbour at Valona.

In an encounter with 2 Blenheims over Sazan Island (off Valona) one Blenheim was shot down for certain and the other probably destroyed.

Libya and Mediterranean Area

Ground Situation - Libya

During the night of 14/15 April an enemy cruiser made an unsuccessful landing attempt.

15 April: The attack on Tobruk made further progress. Supported by warships, the enemy ground forces are offering stubborn resistance.

16 April: During the night and in the morning the enemy made repeated attacks on Derna. At Sollum another attack supported by aircraft and warships was repulsed. A British flying officer from Egypt was taken prisoner after making a forced landing. His aircraft (Hurricane) was undamaged.

Air Situation - Libya

16 April: No operations owing to sandstorm.

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

16 April: No enemy warships or merchant vessels were observed by morning reconnaissance south of Sicily.

Operations

16 April: 8 bombers and 2 fighters escorted a convoy. Owing to the weather conditions some of the aircraft had to break off.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

1 reconnaissance aircraft
11 bombers
2 fighters
14 aircraft

/Losses

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Losses

German: None

Enemy: None reported

Italian Operations

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

16 April: No enemy shipping was observed in the western part of the Sicilian Channel.

An air-sea rescue flying boat and a reconnaissance aircraft carried out an unsuccessful search for the crew of a missing bomber.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

4 reconnaissance aircraft

Losses

Italian: None

Enemy: None reported.

LUFTWAFFE SITUATION REPORT NO. 587 (18 April, 1941)

Operations on 17 April and during the Night of 17/18 April, 1941.

Situation in Southern Theatre

I. X Fliegerkorps

(a) Air Situation - Libya

In the morning reconnaissance was carried out along the coast between Tobruk and Bardia.

During the afternoon of 17 April and the night of 17/18 April bombers and dive-bombers made partially successful attacks on enemy batteries, searchlight positions and other targets in and around Tobruk.

An enemy attack on Derna airfield was unsuccessful.

(b) Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

Photographic reconnaissance carried out over Malta on 17 April gave details of shipping at La Valetta and of aircraft on airfields.

In the afternoon an enemy convoy was observed south-west of Crete.

Operations

In the afternoon and evening attacks were made on a torpedo boat and a convoy in the sea area Crete and on searchlight positions on Malta and La Valetta harbour as secondary targets.

/Aircraft

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Aircraft on sweeps over Malta encountered enemy aircraft, but there were no losses on either side.

A few German bombers escorted convoys.

Total Losses - Libya and Mediterranean

German: 1 Ju 88 (missing)

Enemy: None reported

Situation in South-Eastern Theatre

I. Ground Situation on 17 April. (2000 hours)

(a) German Operations in Yugoslavia and Greece

Elements of Second Army Panzer formations advanced south-west through Novi Pazar and reached Dubrovnik.

Fast-moving units have taken Pec and are continuing their advance in the direction of Podgorica.

In the last few days Second Army has taken prisoner 17 generals, 1,400 officers and 34,000 men.

The Yugoslavian Armed Forces surrendered unconditionally at 2100 hours on 17 April. The capitulation becomes effective at 1200 hours on 18 April.

On the Greek front SS units advanced in the direction of Grevena after breaking enemy resistance at Kastoria and established contact with the Panzer forces located in the Grevena area.

20,000 prisoners (Greeks) were taken and a large number of guns captured on the Kastoria sector.

After repairing the bridge south-east of Grevena, a Panzer division advanced in the direction of Kalabaka - Trikkala. Other Panzer units are still in action against stubbornly resisting enemy forces south of Servia.

A mountain division has crossed the Olympos mountains at Ay Dhimitrios and in the Zeltana Valley area. Its advanced detachments are on the south-western edge of the Olympos mountains along the line Selos - Gonos.

Panzer formations have advanced from the north-east through Egani into the Tempi Valley.

The main force of another mountain division is located at Katerini.

An infantry division has been brought up from Florina to Kastoria.

(b) Italian Operations

Italian forces have occupied Mostar. Mobile units are advancing on Dubrovnik.

On the Albanian-Greek front Army formations of Eleventh Army advanced in the direction of Argyrokastron and took Kelcyre. They are continuing their advance on Permet. Other Army formations from the north which reached Erseke are advancing south.

/II.

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II. Air Situation on 17 April (2000 hours)

(A) German Operations

(1) Luftflotte 4

No operations.

VIII Fliegerkorps

In the attacks carried out on 16 April two further ships together totalling 5 - 6,000 tons were damaged. In addition, effective attacks were made on columns and transport installations in the Larissa area.

Owing to unfavourable weather conditions there were no operations on 17 April.

(2) X Fliegerkorps

(Late report) Between 0215 and 0320 hours on 12 April 8 bombers laid mines in the Salamis Straits. 3 bombers laid mines in Volos harbour between 2253 and 2320 hours on 14 April.

Total Losses

Enemy: None reported

German: None reported

Note: Delete the 2 Ju 88's shown as lost in the previous report.

(B) Italian Air Operations

There was little activity owing to bad weather. Reconnaissance was carried out along the Yugoslavian and Greek coasts, but nothing of importance was observed. No operations were carried out.

Libya and Mediterranean Area

Ground Situation - Libya

17 April: On the Sollum front a British attack on Fort Capuzzo (30 km south of Sollum) was repulsed. 4 enemy tanks were destroyed. A raiding force which attacked on the extreme north-eastern flank of the Tobruk front encountered strong enemy resistance in the hedgehog-type field positions.

Two enemy torpedo boats approaching Tobruk came under the fire of German AA guns. Enemy warships in the bays at Sollum and Tobruk repeatedly participated in the ground fighting.

German troops made successful attack on Fort Mdaunar, reaching the outer defence works of the fortress. Thus the threat to the rear communications of the forces besieging Tobruk, which pass through Acroma (25 km west of Tobruk), was finally removed.

Enemy bombers participated in the ground fighting during the day and at night.

/German

R E S T R I C T E D

German Operations

Air Situation - Libya

Reconnaissance

17 April: No changes in the situation at sea or on land were observed by morning reconnaissance along the coast from Tobruk to Bardia.

Operations

17 April: Aircraft which took off on interception sorties did not contact the enemy.

German and Italian Operations

17 April: In the afternoon 41 German and Italian dive-bombers escorted by German and Italian fighters made very effective attacks on batteries and other targets in and around Tobruk. In the positions west of Tobruk large explosions and several burning fuel dumps were observed. Three direct hits were scored on the fort south of Tobruk. Smoke and fires could be seen from Bomba Bay.

18 April: Between 0300 and 0340 hours 24 bombers attacked the town of Tobruk and searchlight positions, dropping 13 500 Kg. and 52 250 Kg. bombs. Effect could not be observed. Bombs hit the harbour and the adjoining district. A number of bombs fell near searchlights which were immediately extinguished. Owing to technical difficulties, 2 aircraft had to break off before completing the operation.

A vessel, believed to be a warship, was observed 5 km east of the harbour entrance.

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

17 April: As the area was partly covered by cloud, results of photographic reconnaissance over Malta were incomplete. 2 destroyers, 4 submarines (one of them in dock) and one ship believed to be a minesweeper were identified.

The number of merchant ships appears to have decreased by one.

Airfields

Luca: 19 twin-engined aircraft, apparently wellingtons,
1 twin-engined aircraft, apparently a Blenheim,
1 single-engined aircraft,
1 single-engined aircraft with folded-back wings.

Ta Venezia: 25 single-engined aircraft, mostly Hurricanes,
1 twin-engined aircraft

Halfar: (only partly covered)
1 twin-engined aircraft,
1 single-engined aircraft with folded-back wings.

There were no aircraft at Marsa Scirocco and Calafra.

At 1820 hours a convoy comprising 1 light cruiser, 2 destroyers and 9 apparently empty merchant ships on course 10° was observed 120 km west-south-west of Gavdos Island.

R E S T R I C T E D

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At 2000 hours 3 destroyers on course 150° were sighted 50 km east-north-east of Djerba. At 1938 hours a rescue craft 40 km east of Kerkena sent up a green smoke signal.

A search for shipping reported by Italian reconnaissance aircraft was fruitless.

Operations

2 fighters were sent up to intercept British ferry aircraft in the Malta area. In an encounter west of Malta an effective attack was made on a Wellington, which withdrew into the clouds.

2 bombers escorted a convoy.

At 1545 hours a bomber on armed reconnaissance attacked a torpedo boat in the north-western bay of Antikythere Island, dropping 2 250 Kg. bombs. Weather conditions prevented observation of effect.

An attack with 3 250 Kg. bombs was made on a merchant ship of 3,000 tons in a convoy comprising 1 AA cruiser, 1 destroyer and 8 merchant ships moving on course 300 - 350° 65 km south-south-west of Gavdos Island at 1210 hours. Effect not observed owing to weather.

10 bombers attacked the same convoy between 1820 and 1840 hours. Owing to defence the effect of the 20 250 Kg. bombs dropped could not be observed.

5 bombers attacked searchlight positions on Malta as a secondary target. 5 1,000 Kg. bombs were dropped. Effect not observed. 3 bombers jettisoned their loads over the sea.

8 bombers which did not locate the reported shipping attacked La Valetta harbour between 2055 and 2115 hours, dropping 1 500 kg. and 5 1,000 Kg. bombs. One aircraft is missing.

Defence

Tobruk: Heavy AA fire from 3 batteries, moderately accurate. 7 large and 5 medium searchlights.

Malta: 2200 hours: intense AA and searchlight activity.
1600 hours: accurate heavy AA fire.

S. of Crete: Slight heavy AA fire from an AA cruiser.

W. of Gavdos Is: A Hurricane attacked 2 bombers at 1800 hours. Moderate light and heavy AA fire from the convoy.

La Valetta: 2100 hours: intense light and medium AA fire; about 30 searchlights.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

1 reconnaissance aircraft
82 bombers
13 fighters
96 aircraft

/Enemy

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Enemy Operations

Libya

17 April: 2 Wellingtons made ineffective attacks on Derna airfield between 0830 and 0930 hours.

Losses

German: 1 Ju 88

Enemy: None reported

Italian Operations

Air Situation - Libya

Reconnaissance

16 April: No enemy shipping was observed by coastal reconnaissance in the area Tripoli - Lampedusa - Misurata - Benghazi.

Nothing of importance was observed by reconnaissance over the area south-east of Sebha (1,000 km south-south-east of Tripoli).

Operations

Italian fighters shot down a Blenheim (see also German report)

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

17 April: No enemy shipping was observed in the sea area south of Sicily to the Tripolitanian coast.

Operations

16 April: 42 fighters escorted a convoy.

3 fighters carried out patrols over Rhodes.

8 torpedo bombers sent out to attack a convoy comprising 13 merchant ships together totalling 10 - 20,000 tons and 2 cruisers moving on a north-westerly course 108 km north of Sidi Barrani could not locate the objective.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

23 reconnaissance aircraft

27 bombers

79 fighters

129 aircraft

Enemy Operations

Libya

16 April: Enemy aircraft attacked Derna airfield, destroying 1 fighter and 1 bomber and damaging 4 fighters.

/Mediterranean

R E S T R I C T E D

RESTRICTED

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Mediterranean

During the night of 16/17 April enemy aircraft flew over Sardinia at a great height.

Losses

Italian: 1 Cr 42, 1 Ju 87

Enemy: 1 Blenheim

LUFTWAFFE SITUATION REPORT NO. 588 (19 April, 1941)

Operations on 18 April and during the Night of 18/19 April, 1941.

Situation in Southern Theatre

I. X Fliegerkorps

(a) Air Situation - Libya

In the morning escorted German dive-bombers made an effective attack on shipping at Sollum.

During the night of 18/19 April another attack was made on Tobruk harbour. Some of the effects of the attack on the town and the immediate vicinity were observed.

(b) Air Situation - Mediterranean

In the morning reconnaissance observed a surfaced submarine north-east of Benghazi. No other enemy warships were observed.

A reconnaissance flight over Malta provided details of shipping at La Valetta and aircraft at Halfar, Luca and Ta Venezia.

During the day bombers and fighters escorted shipping and aircraft.

During the night of 18/19 April an attack was made on Luca airfield. Effects were not observed.

Total Losses - Libya and Mediterranean

German: 1 Ju 87 (over Malta)

Enemy: 1 Blenheim (over Malta)

Situation in South-Eastern Theatre

I. Ground Situation on 18 April (2000 hours)

(a) German Operations in Yugoslavia and Greece

Second Army formations continued the occupation of Yugoslavia according to plan. The only resistance encountered was offered by partisan groups in the area around Bor, and this was broken by troops of a mountain division.

On the Greek front a mountain division south of the Olympos mountains advanced in the direction of Iarissa. Advanced detachments reached the area directly north of the town.

/Panzer

RESTRICTED

Panzer formations continued their advance southwards from Grevena through Kalabaka in the direction of Trikkala.

(b) Italian Operations

Italian forces broke Greek resistance in the coastal sector and reached Porto Palermo.

Permet and Argyrokastron were also occupied by the Italians.

II. Air Situation on 18 April (2000 hours)

(A) German Operations

(1) Luftflotte 4 and VIII Fliegerkorps

On 17 April bombers of VIII Fliegerkorps made effective attacks on enemy columns and transport in the Trikkala - Larissa area. 5 aircraft were shot up and left burning on Akitsi airfield. A steamship was badly damaged by a direct hit in Volos Bay.

During 18 April bomber and dive-bomber formations attacked retreating enemy forces in and south of Larissa, concentrating on routes leading out of Larissa and Pharsala.

Other bomber formations carried out operations against shipping on the east coast of Greece, and attacks were made to block the Yannina - Arta road. In Khalkis harbour several ships totalling 29,000 tons were sunk and a further vessel of 8,000 tons was damaged. The Yannina - Arta road was badly damaged by bombs.

Fighter formations escorted bombers and dive-bombers and carried out free-lance patrols.

(2) X Fliegerkorps

4 bombers carried out armed reconnaissance over the sea area Crete. An unsuccessful attack was made on a freighter of 5,000 tons.

Defence

4 enemy fighters made unsuccessful attacks in the sea area Crete. Light and heavy AA fire from ships in Suda Bay.

Total Losses

Enemy: None reported

German: None reported

Late Report:

17 April:

On the Ground: 5 enemy aircraft (type not known)

Libya and Mediterranean Area

German Operations

Ground Situation - Libya

18 April: Following an attack supported by warships and aircraft, enemy tanks took the ridge south of Sollum and temporarily cut

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the road to Fort Capuzzo. There was brisk artillery activity on both sides at Tobruk.

The area south of Tobruk to the Egyptian frontier is clear of the enemy.

Air Situation - Libya

Reconnaissance

During the night of 18/19 April there were 3 warships (?) north-north-east of Tobruk and 3 - 4 merchant ships about 10 km east of the harbour.

Operations

At 0945 hours 13 dive-bombers and 4 twin-engined fighters attacked shipping at Sollum. A heavily armed auxiliary cruiser of 7 - 8,000 tons sank after receiving several hits. A Blenheim was shot down.

During the night of 18/19 April 10 bombers attacked shipping and harbour installations at Tobruk, dropping 9 500 Kg. 28 250 Kg. and 32 50 Kg. bombs. Owing to clouds accurate observation was not possible. Small fires broke out after explosions on the northern edge of the town. About 2,000 yards north-east of Tobruk a violent explosion, presumably an ammunition dump, was observed after a 500 Kg. bomb had detonated.

During the same night 10 bombers laid mines at Tobruk.

One of the bombers sent out to attack Tobruk dropped 1,500 Kg. and 4 250 Kg. bombs on Malta at 0125 hours. Results not observed.

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

18 April: At 1046 a surfaced submarine, believed to be British, was observed 130 km north-east of Benghazi. No other warships were sighted.

Results of photographic reconnaissance carried out over Malta at 0830 hours:

Warships at La Valetta:

6 destroyers, including one without bows,
2 minesweepers,
2 patrol boats (?)
1 patrol boat,
6 submarines.

Changes since 14 April:

2 patrol boats have arrived.
1 destroyer has left.

Merchant Shipping:

1 cargo and passenger ship of 12,000 tons in dock,
8 merchant ships together totalling about 52,700 tons.

The total tonnage amounts to about 67,700 tons.

Changes since 14 April:

1 merchant ship of 8,000 tons has arrived.
1 merchant ship of 6,000 tons has left.

/Airfields

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Airfields:

Halfar: 5 single-engined aircraft with folded-back wings,
1 multiple-engined aircraft, probably a Wellington,
2 single-engined aircraft, apparently damaged or dummies,
1 biplane.

Luca: 14 twin-engined aircraft, probably Wellingtons,
2 twin-engined aircraft, probably Blenheims,
1 single-engined aircraft.

Ta Venezia: 1 twin-engined aircraft, probably a Wellington,
1 biplane,
20 single-engined aircraft, probably Hurricanes.

There were no aircraft at Marsa Scirocco and Calafra.

Operations

18 April: 6 fighters escorted a reconnaissance aircraft over Malta.
There was no contact with the enemy.

2 bombers escorted a convoy and 3 fighters escorted a rescue aircraft.

During the night of 18/19 April 6 bombers dropped 24 250 Kg. and 30 50 Kg. bombs on Luca airfield. Bad visibility prevented observation of results.

18 dive-bombers attacked La Valetta harbour, destroyers and merchant ships between 0450 and 0505 hours. A near miss was scored on a merchant ship of about 8,000 tons, and other bombs fell in an oil storage installation, French Creek, searchlight positions and the royal dockyard. A large fire broke out south of Ras Hanzir.

One dive-bomber is missing.

Defence

Malta: 18 April, 0830 hours: Heavy, accurate AA fire by about 15 - 20 batteries. A Hurricane pursued a German aircraft for 4 minutes over Ta Venezia. 19 April, 0300 hours: Accurate AA ranging fire, about 40 searchlights, one night fighter. 0500 hours: Intense, accurate light AA fire and moderate heavy AA fire. Intense searchlight activity over the whole island.

Tobruk: AA fire, 2 Hurricanes which did not intercept.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

5 reconnaissance aircraft
60 bombers
13 fighters
78 aircraft

Losses

German: 1 Ju 87

Enemy: 1 Blenheim

/Italian

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Italian Operations

Ground Situation - Libya

17 April: Units of an Italian division which attacked the eastern British positions at Tobruk achieved only initial successes. Enemy counter-attacks with strong artillery support caused heavy Italian losses.

Air Situation - Libya

Reconnaissance

17 April: At 0730 hours a destroyer on an easterly course was observed 36 km off Tobruk. At 0810 hours a cruiser on an easterly course was sighted 36 km north-east of Marsa Matruh. A large merchant ship was observed at Marsa Matruh. Defences are under construction in the vicinity of the town.

There were about 300 vehicles between Marsa Haula (?) and the railway line. Defences are under construction. South of Marsa Bagush (40 km east of Marsa Matruh) defences and what appear to be AA positions are under construction between the coast and the railway line.

There were 2 ships on the Tobruk roadstead.

Italian troops on the march were observed in the Gialo area.

Operations

17 April: 12 transport aircraft flew equipment to troops at Derna.

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

17 April: At 1615 hours reconnaissance over Alexandria and Crete observed a formation comprising 1 battleship, 1 aircraft-carrier, 3 cruisers, 3 destroyers and a large number of merchant ships on course 90 - 120° 90 km south-west of Gavdos Island.

18 April: A French merchant ship and 3 Italian minesweepers were observed at Cape Bon.

In the sea area Tripoli - Kerkena - Pantelleria an Italian rescue aircraft, 2 tugs and a hospital ship were observed searching for men adrift at sea.

6 merchant ships and a destroyer were observed at La Valetta.

Operations

18 April: 2 bombers attacked La Valetta harbour.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

13 reconnaissance aircraft
14 bombers
16 fighters
43 aircraft

/Enemy

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Enemy Operations

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During the night of 16/17 April several waves of enemy aircraft attacked Tripoli. A fire which broke out aboard a merchant ship was brought under control immediately.

17 April: 3 Blenheims bombed Derna airfield. No damage was caused. Italian fighters forced down one Blenheim on Italian territory.

Losses

Italian: None

Enemy: 1 Blenheim

LUFTWAFFE SITUATION REPORT NO. 589 (20 April, 1941)

Operations on 19 April and during the Night of 19/20 April, 1941.

Situation in Southern Theatre

X Fliegerkorps

1. Air Situation - Libya

(a) Reconnaissance

Reconnaissance over Tobruk on the morning of 19 April observed 3 auxiliary cruisers, 12 freighters and 2 small craft in the harbour. The number of vehicles in and around the town and the deployment of AA positions remained unchanged. Shipping movements on some scale were observed north and east of the town from time to time.

(b) Operations

In the afternoon German bombers attacked merchant ships in Tobruk harbour without noticeable effect. A hut encampment and harbour installations were attacked with good effect.

2. Air Situation - Mediterranean

No enemy warships or merchant ships were observed by afternoon reconnaissance over the sea areas south of Sicily and south of Crete.

An enemy submarine north-east of Tripoli was attacked without noticeable effect. In the evening a nuisance raid was made on Luca airfield. Results were not observed.

No enemy aircraft were encountered by German fighters on free-lance patrols over Malta.

Total Losses - Libya and Mediterranean

German: 2 Ju 88's

Enemy: None reported

/Situation

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Situation in South-Eastern Theatre

I. Ground Situation on 19 April (2000 hours)

(a) German Operations in Greece

Panzer forces of Twelfth Army advanced through the Tempe Valley and occupied Larissa. They are continuing their advance in the direction of Pharsala.

Advanced detachments of a Panzer division crossed the mountains south-east of Servia and occupied Tirmavos (25 km north-west of Larissa).

Mountain troops south of the Olympos mountains are continuing their advance on Larissa.

A Panzer division advanced south-east from Grevena, passed through Kalabaka and reached Trikkala.

SS units advanced south-west from the Kastoria - Grevena area, occupied the village of Metsovon in the northern part of the Pindus mountains and are continuing their advance in the direction of Yannina.

German forces occupied Samothraki Island.

Italian Operations

Italian Army formations under command of Eleventh Army are advancing all along the front. Ponte Perati on the Greek-Albanian frontier was reached. The Greeks continued to offer strong resistance in some places, particularly in the Vojussa Valley and south of Erseke.

II. Air Situation on 19 April (2000 hours)

(A) German Operations

(1) Luftflotte 4 and VIII Fliegerkorps

Bomber and dive-bomber formations made continuous attacks on retreating enemy forces on the Yannina - Arta, Larissa - Lamia and Lamia - Thermopylae - Athens roads, and also supported Army units in the capture of Larissa and Trikkala. Other attacks were directed against shipping at Volos, Khalkis and Pireaus.

One enemy fighter was shot down in air combat.

Fighters attacked an enemy airfield and destroyed 10 aircraft on the ground.

2 enemy bombers were shot down on 18 April.

(2) Formations under Command of General of the Luftwaffe with C-in-C Army

During the morning patrols were carried out in preparation for the landing of German troops on Samothraki Island. At midday transport aircraft landed on Larissa airfield and supplied Army units with fuel, ammunition and provisions.

Total Losses

Enemy:

In the Air: 1 Spitfire
On the Ground: 10 Glosters
 11 aircraft

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Late Report from 18 April:

In the Air: 2 Blenheims
German: None reported

(B) Italian Air Operations

Reconnaissance

Aircraft carried out reconnaissance over the battle area, the Dhrino Valley, the Erseke - Perati - Argyrokastron - Santi Quaranta area and along the western coast of Greece.

Operations

132 bombers made effective attacks on retreating Greek forces in and south of the areas of Perati - Kalabaki - Doljana and Delvinaki - Kakavia - Yannina. Billets, roads, troop concentrations and artillery positions were hit. Hundreds of vehicles loaded with troops and equipment were destroyed. A fuel dump and an ammunition dump were blown up and a bridge destroyed.

5 bombers made an effective attack on Prevesa.

Enemy columns, troops and artillery positions in the Ersek - Metsovon area were effectively attacked by 66 bombers.

198 fighters escorted bombers and attacked retreating troops with light bombs and machine-gun fire.

4 Glosters and a bomber were destroyed on Yannina airfield.

Libya and Mediterranean Area

Ground Situation - Libya

18 April: An Italian detachment occupied Gialo oasis. Hard fighting is in progress in the Tobruk area. There were large-scale movements in both directions on the Alexandria - Marsa Matruh railway line and the assembly of a large number of empty trucks was observed at some stations. The enemy is apparently in the act of moving up troops and material on an appreciable scale to the Marsa Matruh sector. There have also been reports of troops being brought up from Palestine and Italian E. Africa.

German Operations

Air Situation - Libya

Reconnaissance

19 April: The following were identified in Tobruk harbour by photographic reconnaissance carried out between 0700 and 0840 hours:

3 auxiliary cruisers,
1 patrol boat,
1 escort vessel,
12 freighters totalling about 18,400 tons
1 freighter of about 100 tons apparently sunk,
and sunken Italian ships.

There is a double boom outside the harbour.

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The number of vehicles and the deployment of AA positions in and around Tobruk remains unchanged.

Shipping movements on an appreciable scale north and east of Tobruk indicate that the enemy intends to attack.

Operations

19 April: 15 bombers were sent out to attack Tobruk. 7 bombers made an ineffective attack on merchant ships in the harbour between 1409 and 1411 hours, dropping 7,100 Kg. bombs. Another 7 bombers dropped 7,100 Kg. bombs on hut encampments, harbour installations and warehouses, scoring a direct hit on a large group of buildings in the harbour area and two hits on a hut encampment. One aircraft jettisoned its 1,000 Kg. bomb over the sea.

2 aircraft did not return from the operation. A Hurricane was probably shot down by a W/Op.

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

19 April: No enemy shipping was observed by afternoon reconnaissance over the sea areas south of Sicily to Derna and south of Crete.

Operations

19 April: Sizeable Italian convoys escorted by fighters and flying boats were observed moving between the western tip of Sicily and the Tunisian coast. One aircraft attacked an enemy submarine about 180 km north-north-west of Tripoli, dropping 1 500 Kg. and 2 250 Kg. bombs. Effect not observed. At 2025 hours an aircraft returning from convoy escort dropped 1 500 Kg. and 1 250 Kg. bombs over Luca airfield. The bomb-strikes could not be observed owing to intense AA and searchlight activity.

Fighters on free-lance patrols over Malta did not encounter any enemy aircraft.

Defence

19 April: Tobruk: Medium ships' AA, intense heavy and medium AA fire some of it accurate. 4 - 8 Hurricanes made repeated attacks.

Total Number of Aircraft Operations

5 reconnaissance aircraft
23 bombers
18 fighters
46 aircraft

Losses

German: 2 Ju 88's
Enemy: 1 Hurricane probably shot down

/Italian

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Italian Operations

Air Situation - Libya

Reconnaissance

17 April: An unsuccessful search for enemy warships and merchant vessels was carried out in the vicinity of Kerkena Island (eastern coast of Tripolitania).

18 April: An aircraft was sent out to reconnoitre over Gialo and maintain contact with Axis ground forces.

Operations

17 April: Together with German fighters and bombers, Italian fighters participated successfully in the ground fighting west and south-west of Tobruk.

3 bombers dropped incendiary and high explosive bombs over Tobruk harbour. A small ship was hit.

Air Situation - Mediterranean

Reconnaissance

18 April: At 0915 hours reconnaissance over the sea area Crete - Cerigo - Gavdos - Alexandria sighted a convoy comprising 9 merchant ships each of 3 - 10,000 tons and 4 cruisers each of 7,000 tons moving on a north-north-easterly course about 50 km north of Cape Spatha. At 1225 hours another convoy comprising 6 merchant ships each of 10 - 20,000 tons and 2 cruisers was sighted moving on a south-easterly course about 170 km north-north-west of Tobruk.

At 1515 hours reconnaissance over the sea area between Gavdos and Tobruk and along the Egyptian coast sighted a battleship and several cruisers on a west-north-westerly course about 150 km north of Tobruk.

Operations

18 April: At 0915 hours 5 torpedo bombers attacked a convoy sighted about 60 km east of Cerigo and sank a large tanker. A Blenheim was shot down.

In a further attack on the same convoy at 1430 hours a torpedo hit was scored on a large loaded tanker which broke in two and sank immediately.

2 torpedo bombers sent out to attack the convoy reported north-north-west of Tobruk observed 1 aircraft-carrier, 2 battleships, 5 cruisers and 15 destroyers on a west-north-westerly course in this area at 1710 hours. An attack could not be made owing to strong fighter defence. The original objective was not located.

Total Number of Aircraft Operational

12 reconnaissance aircraft
30 bombers
25 fighters
67 aircraft

Losses

Italian: None
Enemy: 1 Blenheim

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