

142 raids. Fifty-seven of these raids were made in Germany, and included night and day attacks on Cologne, Stuttgart, Mannheim, Mainz, and Coblenz. Long-distance raids had also been carried out against Namur, Charleroi and Liege, in order to help in attacking the enemy's communications to the Western Front.

It should be remembered that No. 216 Squadron (at that time R.N.A.S.) was hastily formed, and was not equipped until October, 1917. No. 100 Squadron was only equipped with short-distance machines, and No. 99 Squadron only joined in May, 1918.

No. 55 Squadron was equipped solely with short-distance machines, which had an air endurance of 3½ hours only. But the squadron itself rectified this to the best of its ability by adding extra petrol tanks to the machines, which gave them an air endurance of 5½ hours.

The work during last winter called for exceptional efforts of endurance and perseverance on the part of the commanders, pilots and observers.

Preparatory work on the construction of aerodromes, with a view to accommodating a larger force, had been undertaken before my arrival, and had been handled with zeal and tact by the General Officer Commanding the 8th Brigade. The work accomplished by General Newall formed a foundation upon which I was at once able to build in making arrangements to accommodate an increased number of squadrons.

In aviation it is essential that the technical and administrative controls should be under one command, as the work to be carried out nearly always entirely depends on the administration of the Force. As it had been decided to separate the tactical control of this Force from the British Armies operating in France, it was therefore necessary to separate the administrative control as well; and, in my opinion, it became likewise necessary to constitute all the administrative services on an independent basis, in order to make the Air Force completely independent.

This involved the formation of a large staff to deal with the multifarious matters connected with the formation and the maintenance in the field of an aerial force.

In addition to this, the Anti-Aircraft Defence and Searchlights came under my command.

By the 26th June the staff for the above-mentioned services had been assembled and organised and were capable of maintaining the Independent Air Force.

I take this opportunity of mentioning that the Independent Force was operating throughout in the zone of the group of the French Armies of the East under the command of General de Castlenau, to whom I am indebted for the very valuable assistance which he and his staff gave me and for advice which helped me over the many difficulties inseparable from an organisation of such a kind. In fact, without his assistance it would have been almost impossible to have made an efficient organisation.

I should also like to mention that the whole of the administrative services were provided by Field-Marshal Sir D. Glas Haig from the British Armies in the field. The British Armies in the north provided me with all the personnel and material that was necessary to maintain and organise and operate the Inde-

pendent Force, apart from technical aeroplane supplies.

My first work was to at once push on and arrange for the accommodation of a Force in the neighbourhood of sixty squadrons. This was a much larger task than may appear at first sight.

The country is throughout hilly and woody, and where there are any level places they consist of deep ridge and furrow, there being as much as three feet six inches between furrow and ridge.

The aerodromes had to carry heavy machines and heavy bomb loads; in order to enable this to be done, draining work on a large scale had to be very carefully carried out, and arrangements had to be made for a large installation of electrical power for workshops and lighting and petrol in order to save transport.

This work was practically completed by the 1st November, 1918.

It will be within your recollection that in the past I had referred to the necessity for equipping the British Expeditionary Force on the Western Front with sufficient aircraft to hold and beat the German aerial forces on the Western Front; that the bombing of Germany was a luxury till this had been accomplished, but that, once this had been accomplished, it became a necessity. That is to say, it became necessary to attack what I may call the German Army in Germany, and to strike at its most vital point—its sources of supply; and the Independent Force was formed with this object.

The question I had to decide was how to use this Force in order to achieve the object, *i.e.*, the breakdown of the German Army in Germany, its Government, and the crippling of its sources of supply.

The two main alternative schemes were:—

1. A sustained and continuous attack on one large centre after another until each centre was destroyed, and the industrial population largely dispersed to other towns, or
2. To attack as many of the large industrial centres as it was possible to reach with the machines at my disposal.

I decided on the latter plan, for the following reasons:—

(i.) It was not possible with the forces at my disposal to do sufficient material damage so as to completely destroy the industrial centres in question.

(ii.) It must be remembered that, even had the Force been still larger, it would not have been practical to carry this out unless the war had lasted for at least another four or five years, owing to the limitations imposed on long-range bombing by the weather.

The weather during June, July and August was extremely favourable for long-distance bombing, but during September, October and the first ten days of November it could have hardly been worse for this particular work. Day after day attempts were made to try to reach the long-distance targets, but the wind was generally too strong; or, if there was no wind, heavy rain and fog prevailed by day and dense mist by night, which lasted often until ten or eleven o'clock the next morning. Often the nights were perfect, but dense white mist completely obliterated the ground, making it impossible for machines to ascend.

Besides this, there are always a large number of technical difficulties to overcome which