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Honours Dissertation

More than 'an enemy's name, rank and number': Information gained from *Luftwaffe* prisoners of war and its use for British intelligence during the Battle of Britain, July – October 1940

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Contents Page

Abbreviations

A.A.	Anti-Aircraft
A.I.	Air Intelligence [i.e. A.I.1.(k) is Air Intelligence section 1.(k)]
JG	*Jagdgeschwader* (*Luftwaffe* fighter group)
KG	*Kampfgeschwader* (*Luftwaffe* bomber group)
M.I.	Military Intelligence [i.e. M.I.9.(h) is Military Intelligence section 9.(h)]
POW	Prisoner of War
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAFVR	Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve
R/T	Radio-Telephony
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
S.R.A.	Special Report Air

The *Luftwaffe* Unit System

Luftwaffe aircraft have been denoted in some instances by their letter coding, i.e. F6+BK.

JG or KG refer to Fighter or Bomber Group respectively, i.e. JG26 (*Jagdgeschwader* 26, or 26th Fighter Group). This was led by a *Geschwaderkommodore*.

I., II. and III. (Roman numerals) refer to the *Gruppen* (Wing) within the Fighter or Bomber Group, i.e. III./JG3 (3rd *Gruppe* of *Jagdgeschwader* 3). This was led by a *Gruppenkommandeur*.

1., 2., 3. etc. (Arabic numerals) refer to the *Staffeln* (Squadron) within the *Geschwader*, i.e. 3./JG51 (3rd *Staffel* of *Jagdgeschwader* 51). This was led by a *Staffelkapitan*.

The number of the *Staffel* also states the *Gruppe* it sits within.

i.e. 1., 2., 3. = the first *Gruppe* (I.)

4., 5., 6. = the second *Gruppe* (II.)

7., 8., 9. = the third *Gruppe* (III.)

Introduction

As Brad Gladman has noted, the 'interrogation of captured enemy personnel is one of the oldest forms of intelligence'.[1] During the Battle of Britain, the aerial conflict waged between Great Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF) and Nazi Germany's *Luftwaffe* from July to October 1940, 967 *Luftwaffe* personnel entered British captivity, providing British intelligence services with a significant sample of airmen to interrogate.[2] The Battle was the first instance during World War Two that provided British intelligence with opportunities to interrogate Prisoners of War (POWs) *en masse*, paving the way for POW-derived intelligence to be considered 'among the more reliable sources of information' by 1942.[3]

The Battle began on 10 July, intensifying in early August following Adolf Hitler's Directive No. 17, which stipulated the intensification of the air war against Britain and to 'overcome the British air force' as a precondition for invasion – codenamed *Seelöwe*.[4] The *Luftwaffe* attacked London from 7 September, but after heavy losses on 15 September, an order from Hitler's Supreme Headquarters on 17 September indefinitely postponed the invasion.[5] Attacks of varying strength continued thereafter, but the official dates of the Battle indicate 31 October as its conclusion.[6] RAF Fighter Command, under Air Chief Marshall Sir Hugh Dowding's leadership, began the Battle with 903 single- and two-seater fighter aircraft, while *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Göring's *Luftwaffe* had 1,464 fighters and 1,808 bombers at its disposal; during the course of the Battle, Fighter Command lost 544 pilots and 1,023 aircraft, while the *Luftwaffe* lost 2,698 airmen and 1,887 aircraft.[7]

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[1] Brad Gladman, 'Air Power and Intelligence in the Western Desert Campaign', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Winter 1998), p. 149.
[2] Kevin Jones, 'From the Horse's Mouth: Luftwaffe POWs as Sources for Air Ministry Intelligence During the Battle of Britain', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Winter 2000), p. 63.
[3] Kent Fedorowich, 'Axis Prisoners of War as Sources for British Military Intelligence, 1939-42', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Summer 1999), p. 157.
[4] Stephen Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy: A History of the Battle of Britain* (London: Aurum Press, 2009), pp. 112, 114 and 150.
[5] Ibid, pp. 309, 334, 336 and 347.
[6] Ibid, p. 347.
[7] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, pp. 58, 107, 157, 368 and 373.

Intelligence in the Battle was vital, for strong intelligence acted as a 'force multiplier by facilitating a more focused and economical use of force', whereas poor intelligence could divide forces, thereby eroding strength.[8] Before and during the Second World War, Britain produced an interlinking and efficient intelligence system. In March 1939, War Office, Admiralty, Air Ministry and Home Office representatives agreed to create an intelligence section within each of the three services, and a 'combined services collecting and detailed interrogation centre', which was enacted on 2 September at the Tower of London and designated as Military Intelligence 1.(h), or M.I.1.(h).[9] On 26 October, M.I.1.(h) became known as Combined Services Detention Interrogation Centre (CSDIC), and in January 1940, M.I.1.(h) moved from the Tower to a specially constructed site at Trent Park, Cockfosters, known as CSDIC(UK), consisting of twelve bugged rooms for listening on POW conversations.[10] In early 1940, all M.I.1 units became M.I.9, with M.I.9.(h) responsible for monitoring secret recordings, producing the Special Report Air (S.R.A) files utilised in this dissertation.[11]

The Air Ministry intelligence section established at the end of October was known as Air Intelligence 1.(k), or A.I.1.(k), led by Flying Officer R.E.H. Pollock until December 1939, and replaced by Flight Lieutenant S.D. Felkin, who led the section for the War's duration.[12] Unlike the sections created for the British Army and Royal Navy, who retained their entire intelligence section within CSDIC(UK), the RAF dispersed fifteen RAF Volunteer Reserve (RAFVR) officers with personal drivers around the country as field interrogators, to immediately question enemy personnel baling out.[13]

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[8] Samir Puri, 'The Role of Intelligence in Deciding the Battle of Britain', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Autumn 2006), p. 417.

[9] The National Archives (hereafter: TNA), AIR 40/1177, Report by Group Captain S.D. Felkin, 'Intelligence from Interrogation: A Study of the Work of ADI(K) during the War of 1939-1945', 31 December 1945 (hereafter: TNA, AIR 40/1177), pp. 1-2; Falko Bell, '"One of Our Most Valuable Sources of Intelligence": British Intelligence and the Prisoner of War System in 1944', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Winter 2016), p. 561; Jones, 'From the Horse's Mouth', p. 65.

[10] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 2; Helen Fry, *The London Cage: The Secret History of Britain's World War II Interrogation Centre* (London: Yale University Press, 2017), p. 19; Bell, 'One of Our Most Valuable Sources of Intelligence', p. 562.

[11] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 2; Helen Fry, *The M Room: Secret Listeners Who Bugged the Nazis* (California: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), p. 43.

[12] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 2.

[13] Ibid, p. 2; Jones, 'From the Horse's Mouth', p. 65.

During 1940, A.I.1.(k)'s complement increased from 29 officers in March to 42 by September.[14] A.I.1.(k) were responsible for conducting the preliminary interrogations and producing the reports also examined in this dissertation, designated A.I.1.(k) Reports.

The interrogation process during the Battle was methodical and efficient. Preliminary interrogation aimed to ascertain basic facts using a questionnaire, for instance the POW's base, unit, objective and a combat account.[15] Documents on his person were also examined, and a decision was taken on whether to send the airman to CSDIC(UK) for further interrogation.[16] Details from the preliminary interrogation were also telephoned ahead for the production of the A.I.1.(k) Report, and any operational information was immediately communicated.[17] While at CSDIC(UK), numerous methods were used to rouse conversation and gain intelligence from POWs: newspapers were utilised to influence discussions; mail was censored; microphones were hidden for listening on conversations; 'stool pigeons', or actors who could act as 'agent provocateur', were adopted; and lastly, direct interrogations.[18] Consequently, 'long term interrogations' at CSDIC(UK) added to the preliminary questioning by forging an understanding of 'political, economic and social aspects in Germany and its warfare', and additionally provided information on topics that held no 'service value', for instance '[p]arty scandals, local colour, erotic stories and low-class jokes'.[19]

Little secondary literature on POW interrogations during the Battle of Britain exists. Kevin Jones' journal article on Air Ministry intelligence during the Battle is a useful text for the system of Air Ministry intelligence and intelligence methods; however, it provided limited information on the content of the A.I.1.(k) Reports, nor did it utilise the S.R.A. files as a source.[20] Kent Fedorowich's journal article on Axis POWs as sources of British intelligence provided a more encompassing analysis of POW intelligence, utilising both sources and suggesting uses of the information; however, his

[14] Jones, 'From the Horse's Mouth', p. 65.
[15] Ibid, p. 66.
[16] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 6.
[17] Ibid; Jones, 'From the Horse's Mouth', p. 66.
[18] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 11; TNA, AIR 40/3071, CSDIC(UK) S.R.A. Report No. 606, 24 September 1940 (hereafter: TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. [number], date); Bell, 'One of Our Most Valuable Sources of Intelligence', pp. 568-9.
[19] Bell, 'One of Our Most Valuable Sources of Intelligence', p. 574; Fry, *The M Room*, pp. 66-7.
[20] Jones, 'From the Horse's Mouth', pp. 60-80.

study covers from 1939 to 1942, and does not focus on the Battle of Britain.[21] Other journal articles and chapters from edited volumes, such as those by Samir Puri and Sebastien Cox, provided information on other forms of British intelligence, for instance Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) and Ultra, the codename for decrypted information from Enigma codes, but were sceptical of POW-derived intelligence's usefulness.[22]

Other useful secondary texts have been Stephen Bungay's and James Holland's histories on the Battle, which have been utilised to contextualise events; meanwhile, Helen Fry's publications on the clandestine activities conducted by British intelligence have been useful for understanding the formation and operation of the units involved.[23] Sönke Neitzel's and Harald Welzer's *Soldaten* provided an understanding of the significance of the S.R.A files throughout the war, and the information which this source divulged.[24]The dissertation has also utilised some popular histories – these were necessary to contextualise primary documents, due to the minimal material available to support this study; however, their academic shortcomings are acknowledged, and this dissertation has attempted to avoid relying on any conclusions which these works have constructed.

No existing works have examined the content of both the A.I.1.(k) Reports and the S.R.A. files during the Battle of Britain. Therefore, this dissertation aims to analyse over 1,300 A.I.1.(k) Reports and S.R.A files compiled during the period – rendering it a wider and more analytical investigation with regards to sources than Kevin Jones' journal article, but more focused on the Battle than Fedorowich's. This study recognises the pitfalls of POW-derived intelligence, due to the potential of prisoners providing faulty intelligence. This was acknowledged by Felkin in his post-war analysis on POW intelligence, who commented that 'great danger lies in their [recorded conversations]

[21] Fedorowich, 'Axis Prisoners of War', pp. 156-178.
[22] Puri, 'The Role of Intelligence', pp. 416-439; Sebastien Cox, 'The Sources and Organisation of RAF Intelligence and Its Influence on Operations', in Horst Boog (ed.), *The Conduct of the Air War in the Second World War* (Oxford: Berg, 1992), pp. 553-579; Sebastien Cox, 'A Comparative Analysis of RAF and Luftwaffe Intelligence in the Battle of Britain', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer 1990), pp. 425-443.
[23] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*; James Holland, *The Battle of Britain: Five Months that Changed History* (London: Corgi, 2011); Fry, *The M Room*; Fry, *The London Cage*.
[24] Sönke Neitzel and Harald Welzer, *Soldaten – On Fighting, Killing and Dying: The Secret Second World War Tapes of German POWs* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2013).

acceptance as unquestionable intelligence'; while every A.I.1.(k) Report had a header which warned the reader that intelligence was unverified until it appeared in 'Air Ministry Intelligence Summaries or special communications'.[25] It is also impossible to know if, and how much, the POWs had been exposed to political deconditioning, and if personal opinions on subjects regarding morale, the war, or politics had changed – thereby making their opinions uncharacteristic of the *Luftwaffe* they represented. However, by having both the A.I.1.(k) Reports and S.R.A files, POW intelligence can be cross-referenced, while the information's factual basis, primarily on technical or military related issues, can be provided through secondary literature. Felkin's report was also a valuable source, providing significant context on the formation of POW intelligence sections in Britain, interrogation methods, their results, and the characteristics of successful interrogators.[26] This source has been used extensively and significantly benefitted this dissertation, by understanding from the man who led A.I.1.(k) throughout the majority of the Second World War the positive aspects of POW intelligence.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation analyses the military uses of POW-derived information for British intelligence. This included details regarding *Luftwaffe* aircraft and technologies, to how British intelligence identified *Luftwaffe* units and airfields on the Channel Front from captured documentation and interrogations. Chapter 2 examines how the sources can be utilised to survey the morale and operational experience of *Luftwaffe* personnel throughout the Battle, as well as analysing the tensions and personal battles German airmen faced on a day-to-day basis, for instance battle fatigue. The final chapter assesses the political information gained from POWs, and how this was utilised for political warfare and propaganda purposes – discussing topics including views on Nazi Party politics, the *Luftwaffe*'s Italian allies, and personal predictions on the outcome of the War.

Overall, this dissertation has two objectives. Primarily, it intends to convey that POW interrogations during the Battle of Britain were valuable and useful as an intelligence source. The

[25] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 11; TNA, AIR 40/2398, Air Ministry A.I.1.(k) Prisoner of War Report No. 214/1940, 2 August 1940 (hereafter: TNA, AIR 40/2398, A.I.1.(k) [number]/1940, date).
[26] TNA, AIR 40/1177.

secondary objective is to provide an alternative understanding of the Battle of Britain, focusing on the *Luftwaffe*'s conduct and personal experiences of those involved. Consequently, this study will highlight why a Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee in February 1945 described CSDIC(UK)'s work as 'one of our most valuable sources of intelligence', and why Fedorowich stated that POW interrogations before 1942 were vastly more than 'simply finding out an enemy's name, rank and number'.[27]

[27] Bell, 'One of Our Most Valuable Sources of Intelligence', p. 577; Fedorowich, 'Axis Prisoners of War', p. 174.

Chapter 1: The military use of information obtained through *Luftwaffe* POWs and aircraft

During World War One, British commanders realised the potential of POWs providing information on 'technical and military subjects', and extracting this type of information consequently became a priority at the beginning of the Second World War.[28] During Summer 1940, interrogations of *Luftwaffe* POWs were an important supplement to captured documents and downed aircraft, and aided British intelligence's understanding of the *Luftwaffe*'s technologies and units.[29]

Luftwaffe aircraft and technology

In Felkin's post-war study, he described *Luftwaffe* prisoners as the most difficult to interrogate, due to their superior education and training, and the elite status they received within the German armed forces.[30] However, this was also identified as a weakness, 'for the scientific and technical interest of prisoners could be aroused in discussion' when representatives of relevant British institutions were involved in the questioning; while *Luftwaffe* airmen 'constantly boasted about their planes' superiority in… speed, range, and payload', providing interrogators with desired technical information.[31] Therefore, this sub-section will utilise examples of the Junkers Ju.88 and *Knickebein* to analyse how POW interrogations aided understanding on technical subjects.

Shot down *Luftwaffe* aircraft were important sources of information – they corroborated claims of destroyed aircraft made by RAF pilots, but also contained documents and technologies which could be investigated.[32] Such was their importance, that Air Ministry section A.I.1.(g) was formed to

[28] Fedorowich, 'Axis Prisoners of War', p. 158.
[29] Ibid, p. 168.
[30] TNA, AIR 40/1177, pp. 8-9.
[31] Ibid, p. 9; p. 17; Neitzel and Welzer, *Soldaten*, p. 177.
[32] TNA, AIR 8/315, letter from Air Ministry to Headquarters, Fighter Command, 31 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 6.

compile crash site reports.[33] This information, in addition to interrogations and recorded transcripts, provided British intelligence with knowledge of the *Luftwaffe*'s newest bomber, the Ju.88. It entered service in late-1939 and was designed to replace another *Luftwaffe* medium bomber, the Dornier Do.17, by Summer 1940; the Ju.88 had limited action in the French campaign, and was not widely delivered to *Luftwaffe* bomber units until the Battle of Britain's prelude.[34]

POWs went to great lengths to not provide British intelligence with information on the Ju.88; the Observer of F6+BK, shot down on 5 August, told interrogators he flew in a different aircraft, while the crew of 3Z+EL, who crashed on the Graveney Marshes on 28 September, attempted to set their aircraft alight and shot at their approaching captors.[35] It was also noted by interrogators that KG77's crews, also equipped with Ju.88s, were 'particularly silent' and gave little information away.[36] However, British intelligence still gained a significant understanding of the aircraft's characteristics through other POWs, due to the higher percentage of Ju.88 losses in comparison to its counterparts in the *Luftwaffe*'s bomber fleet.[37]

Supplementary to captured maintenance instructions and aircraft handbooks, POWs provided information on the aircraft such as its bomb-load, its straight-line and dive speed, and its climb rate.[38] This information was utilised by the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough, known as the 'aeronautical laboratory for the Air Ministry', who examined the airframe and tested the aircraft's equipment and engines to compile engineering appraisals.[39] However, POWs also provided

[33] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 6. Although Felkin's report referenced A.I.2.(g) as the section involved with Luftwaffe crash reports, A.I.2.(g) was not formed until 1942, with The National Archives listing crash site reports from May 1940-September 1941 under A.I.1.(g): TNA, AIR 20/2169.
[34] Christer Bergström, *The Battle of Britain: An Epic Conflict Revisited* (Oxford: Casemate UK, 2015), p. 62; Ferenc A. Vajda and Peter Dancey, *German Aircraft Industry and Production* (Warrendale: Society of Automotive Engineers, 1998), p. 40; TNA, AIR 40/2400, Air Ministry A.I.1.(k) Prisoner of War Report No. 589/1940, 21 September 1940 (hereafter: TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) [number]/1940, date).
[35] TNA, AIR 40/2398, A.I.1.(k) 220/1940, 5 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 632/1940, 28 September 1940.
[36] TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 637/1940, 28 September 1940.
[37] TNA, AIR 40/3070, CSDIC(UK) S.R.A. Report No. 286, 5 August 1940 (hereafter: TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. [number], date).
[38] TNA, AIR 40/2398, A.I.1.(k) 222/1940, 6 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 412, 28 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 202, 22 July 1940.
[39] Graham M. Simons, *Operation LUSTY: The Race for Hitler's Secret Technology* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books, 2016), pp. 18-19.

information which was useful for RAF pilots who faced this aircraft in dogfights. Blind spots on the aircraft – areas which were not protected by defensive weaponry – were disclosed in recorded conversations, as well as the aircraft's flying characteristics, which were described as 'difficult to hold [fly in a straight line] when flying high'.[40] This allowed RAF pilots to develop tactics to attack the aircraft's weakest position with a reduced risk of being shot at in return, harbouring the knowledge that it was a difficult aircraft to keep in formation, which made it easier to target if it could be isolated.[41]

German navigational aids were developed prior to the Second World War as landing tools; however, the raid on Guernica during the Spanish Civil War by German bombers highlighted the difficulty of hitting targets during darkness.[42] In response, Germany poured investment into 'developing radio direction systems as a navigational aid', of which systems such as *Knickebein* emanated, and were utilised during the Battle of Britain by the *Luftwaffe*.[43] *Knickebein* was one of two radio-navigation systems available to Göring during the Battle; it transmitted two beams from masts in two separate locations at a pre-designated frequency and direction, and when heard in the Navigator's headset, one beam would be represented by a dot signal, the other a dash.[44] When the two beams overlapped over the target, the signals merged and bombing commenced.[45] Although *Knickebein* was discovered by British intelligence on the night of 21/22 June, its unearthing was due to references made by *Luftwaffe* POWs and documentation during Spring 1940.[46]

Although few prisoners mentioned the technical aspects of the radio-navigation systems, those that did provided insights into its operation. The crew of A1+CH described *Knickebein* as easy to learn compared to other navigation methods, and that the limit of the beam stretched to 1000km, and was

[40] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 305, 10 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 228, 27 July 1940.
[41] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 441, 2 September 1940.
[42] Brian Kendal, 'A Brief Description of the Major Second World War Navigational Aids', *Journal of Navigation*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (January 1992), p. 73; Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 40.
[43] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 40.
[44] Holland, *The Battle of Britain*, pp. 507-8.
[45] Ibid, p. 508.
[46] R.V. Jones, 'Navigation and War', *Journal of Navigation*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (January 1975), pp. 8-9; Kendal, 'Major Second World War Navigational Aids', p. 74.

used for bombing on cloudy days or at night.[47] Additionally, in a recorded transcript from 18 October, one pilot referenced a conversation he had with a crew member of KG3, who told him that they were aware the British tampered with the navigational aids to force bombers to drop their payload before the target.[48] This realisation was confirmed by the crew of A1+CH, who stated that they flew in zig-zags over the beams to avoid 'where they expected our fighters or A.A. (Anti-Aircraft) to be concentrated'.[49] Their suspicions were correct, for R.V Jones, a young scientist in Air Ministry Intelligence section A.I.1.(c) developed a countermeasure by late-August 1940 which broadcasted dashes to mimic the *Knickebein* transmissions, tricking *Luftwaffe* bombers into dropping their ordnance early.[50] Although the Germans developed *Wotan 1* and *2* as a countermeasure to British jamming of *Knickebein*, these were more complicated and only adopted by select bomber units.[51] Meanwhile, *Knickebein* was still used by the vast majority of bomber units in the *Luftwaffe* during the night campaign against Britain from September onwards, providing British intelligence with an understanding of the intended targets and the route of raiding forces, assisting their countermeasures and air defence.[52]

The Ju.88 and *Knickebein* are two examples which highlight the details British intelligence gained from POWs on German technologies, and how countermeasures were developed utilising information from interrogations on their characteristics and operation. However, these are two of many more examples. *Luftwaffe* POWs divulged information on the Messerschmitt Bf.109F, an update on the Bf.109E which flew in the Battle, as well as information on the performance and setbacks of new aircraft in production, for example the Focke-Wulf Fw-190.[53] Consequently, the RAF knew many of the characteristics of new *Luftwaffe* aircraft before they became operational.[54]

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[47] TNA, AIR 40/2401, Air Ministry A.I.1.(k) Prisoner of War Report No. 872/1940, 7 November 1940 (hereafter: TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) [number]/1940, date).
[48] TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 769, 21 October 1940.
[49] TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 872/1940, 7 November 1940.
[50] Holland, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 467; p. 668.
[51] Kendal, 'Major Second World War Navigational Aids', pp. 73-5.
[52] Jones, 'Navigation and War', p. 10.
[53] TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 750/1940, 14 October 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 616/1940, 27 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 474, 9 September 1940.
[54] Neitzel and Welzer, *Soldaten*, p. 180.

Luftwaffe unit identification and operations

Through the work of the local RAFVR officer in preliminary interrogations, British intelligence were often able to identify *Luftwaffe* units, their bases and their operations immediately – a vital step in the British winning the 'intelligence war' during the Battle of Britain.[55] This information, along with any which was deemed to hold 'immediate operational value', for instance Radio-Telephony (R/T) codes, were to be sent to the Air Ministry with utmost haste.[56] The subsequent A.I.1.(k) Reports were then disseminated to a range of British intelligence sections, for example A.I.3.(b), who constructed a record of the *Luftwaffe*'s order of battle, often within 24 hours of the crash.[57]

Unit identification could be achieved by several means, either voluntarily during preliminary interrogation, or through arrogant boasts made whilst at Cockfosters that they had lied about or not provided their unit to the Interrogation Officer (IO) – before they proceeded to state their true unit, and often its location.[58] However, in instances where the POW withheld his unit, which was acceptable under the Geneva Convention, there were methods by which A.I.1.(k) could deduce his origins.[59] Each A.I.1.(k) Report noted the airmen's Identity Disc, *Ausweis* and *Feldpostnummer* – forms of identification which in respect of the Identity Disc provided a colour and a code indicating the airmen's *Staffel*, or in the case of the *Feldpostnummer*, was a code provided for sending post to active units.[60] The maintenance of records was organised by A.I.3.(k), who matched similar codes to known units, a process which could be reversed for previously unidentified POWs.[61] Units and their bases could be obtained through other means, for instance pay books, railway and theatre tickets, hotel room keys, and most usefully Post Office Savings Bank books – used by *Luftwaffe* aircrew to deposit savings, and included a stamp of the branch which inferred the locality the airmen's unit

[55] Mark R. McNeilly, *Sun Tzu and the Art of Modern Warfare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 64; TNA, AIR 8/315, Report by Air Ministry to Major-General Sir Hastings Ismay on Air Ministry interrogations, 26 August 1940.
[56] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 6.
[57] Glenmore S. Trenear-Harvey, *Historical Dictionary of Air Intelligence* (Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2009), p. 6; TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 2.
[58] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 218, 25 July 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 450, 4 September 1940.
[59] Bell, 'One of Our Most Valuable Sources of Intelligence', p. 566.
[60] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 13.
[61] Ibid.

resided in, as well as producing a trail which highlighted the POW's previous military movements.[62] Finally, the interrogator occasionally asked the POW whether they would like to ask after any comrades, or if they could report on the names of any unconfirmed losses; this tactic caught certain POWs off-guard, and with an 'exceedingly good memory', the IO could pinpoint the unit the airman originated from based.[63] However, there were drawbacks to these methods, namely with the Identity Discs, which differed depending on the unit, with airmen not always in possession of an updated document, meaning his unit could be mistaken for a previous one – a problem which widely occurred during the Battle, but was occasionally overcome by A.I.1.(k) staff.

Identifying a POW's unit held several uses. Firstly, it aided the interrogations if known by the IO prior to questioning. Felkin stated that the most common method of inducing prisoners to talk was to have a profound knowledge of the *Luftwaffe*, and tailor knowledge specifically to their unit, for instance the 'nicknames and idiosyncrasies of officers and aircrew'.[64] Several POWs, particularly in the S.R.A files, expressed shock or surprise at the IO knowing their unit without providing it themselves, one commenting 'I can't think how they know all that', while another was convinced the British had spies at German airfields along the Channel Front.[65] Conversely, one example highlighted that some POWs were aware of how Air Ministry IOs were able to obtain the unit, possibly due to a higher level of security consciousness, and commented that they worked it out by comparing identification numbers with those from POWs who confessed their units.[66]

Unit confirmation, when combined with unit-specific codes used on R/T and other Medium- and High-Frequency systems, often found in notebooks on his person, were vital for RAF Home Defence Units, sections operated by German-speaking women in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force

[62] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 13.
[63] Ibid, p. 8; p. 13; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 496, 10 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 655, 2 October 1940.
[64] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 9.
[65] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 400, 26 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 445, 2 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 495, 10 September 1940.
[66] TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 571, 19 September 1940.

and Women's Royal Naval Service, who monitored low-grade *Luftwaffe* SIGINT.[67] Due to the poor radio discipline of *Luftwaffe* pilots, transmissions were intercepted which enabled the RAF to gain early notifications of the 'purpose, type and scale of the enemy's attacks' – enabling them to understand which *Luftwaffe* units were forming up outside of Radio Detection Finding's range, and at what altitude and strength to engage the raid.[68] This was also an example of operational information which necessitated quick communication – especially as POWs informed the IO how long their codes lasted for before they changed.[69] Although, as Hinsley wrote, it was difficult to put a value on the significance on this form of intelligence, he stated that there could be little doubt of its importance, especially during the 'crucial weeks of August and the first half of September', when the RAF was considerably stretched.[70]

If enough intelligence and evidence was gathered on individual units, an A.I.1.(k) Report was compiled about them utilising catalogued POW intelligence, for instance losses, personalities, and unit roles and tactics, information which was useful for future interrogations of airmen from these units. Having this knowledge benefitted interrogations, but understanding a unit's roles and tactics was vital to the air campaign; the best example out of the twelve unit reports created was JG51's, written on 13 September 1940. Within this report, significant information was gathered on Major Mölders, who became the unit's *Geschwaderkommodore* on 27 July, and was regarded by his *Geschwader* as the 'modern Richtofen', after the famous German ace of the First World War.[71]

Mölders pioneered *Luftwaffe* fighter tactics during the Spanish Civil War, namely the 'finger four' formation – known as a *Schwarm* – and tailored these tactics during the Battle.[72] The report on JG51 stated that Mölders flew on the left side of the *Schwarm*, which flew in line-abreast, rather than

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[67] F.H. Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War: Volume 1 – Its Influence on Strategy and Operations* (London: HMSO, 1979), pp. 180-1.
[68] Ibid, p. 182. Radio Direction, or RDF, is what is now known as Radar.
[69] TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 563/1940, 18 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 582/1940, 20 September 1940.
[70] Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence*, p. 182.
[71] TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 516/1940, 13 September 1940; Armand Van Ishoven, *The Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain* (Shepperton: Ian Allan, 1980), p. 25.
[72] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, pp. 158 and 362.

a 'finger four', with 200 yards between each aircraft; a *Rotte*, the name for a pair of fighters, would fly above and 500 yards behind the *Schwarm*, and when an enemy was sighted, Mölders gained altitude and used his formation as bait for an attack – then dived onto the enemy aircraft to gain the kill.[73] This detailed information of JG51's formation and air fighting tactics was distributed to Fighter Command Headquarters, and when Mölders' brother was interrogated on 7 October, he was 'dismayed' at the knowledge the RAF had of his brother's tactics, which he confirmed were correct, and he feared for his brother's safety.[74]

Mölders' brother's reaction highlighted how disastrous leaked intelligence was for the *Luftwaffe*. On 9 September 1940, British intelligence obtained lecture notes from POWs regarding security lectures delivered across numerous units that were organised by the *Luftwaffe*'s hierarchy.[75] The lecture informed personnel to take nothing more than their Identity Discs and *Ausweis* on flights, and also told them to never ask after colleagues if captured, for it gave away their unit – although the persistence of these instances, as noted in A.I.1.(k) Reports, highlighted that this order was not heeded by all.[76] British intelligence utilised this information to produce a series of security lectures and information films, particularly for RAF Bomber Command crews, informing them on six points if captured: maintain silence under questioning; do not provide information on 'training, units, personalities, tactics, equipment, airfields, A.A. defences [and] new projects'; behavioural conduct; 'turning out their pockets before going on operations'; do not view a German interrogator as a friend; and lastly, what interrogation methods to expect.[77] Evidence from Germany after the War commented that British aircrew were difficult to interrogate, and highlighted that the lectures,

[73] TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 516/1940, 13 September 1940.
[74] Ibid; TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 712/1940, 7 October 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 749/1940, 14 October 1940.
[75] TNA, AIR 40/2399, Air Ministry A.I.1.(k) Prisoner of War Report No. 480/1940, 9 September 1940 (hereafter: TNA, AIR 40/2399, A.I.1.(k) [number]/1940, date).
[76] Ibid; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 465, 7 September 1940.
[77] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 40.

constructed from the experiences provided by the *Luftwaffe* during the Battle of Britain, held significance.[78]

[78] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 40.

Chapter 2: POWs as sources of insight into frontline *Luftwaffe* personnel and morale

A report from 20 October 1940 referenced how continual checks were maintained by British interrogators at CSDIC(UK) on *Luftwaffe* 'training, morale, fatigue, replacement of aircraft and crews'.[79] While this was stated near the end of the Battle of Britain, POW reports and recorded conversations between German aircrew throughout the Battle highlight that these subjects continuously arose, enabling British intelligence to monitor the battle of attrition's affect on *Luftwaffe* units and aircrew.

Training and operational experience

By July 1940, the *Luftwaffe* had only been in official existence for five years, but was the world's most battle-hardened and experienced air force, a result of its exploits in the Spanish Civil War from September 1936, and events since the invasion of Poland.[80] British intelligence gained knowledge on the service experience and training of German aircrew for three main purposes. It allowed IOs to understand the calibre of the *Luftwaffe*'s airmen, and provided an insight into activities which occurred at *Luftwaffe* bases in occupied territories. Lastly, it highlighted the flow of replacements that the *Luftwaffe* received and how their training was impacted by the War and the Battle itself. These three factors have received little historiographical attention; however, it contributed to the records kept by British intelligence on 'the German scene', providing information for interrogators which furthered their understanding of the *Luftwaffe* and could therefore be utilised to impress POWs in general conversation.[81]

[79] TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 773/1940, 20 October 1940.
[80] Bergström, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 51; Christopher C. Locksley, 'Condor over Spain: The Civil War, Combat Experience, and the Development of Luftwaffe Airpower Doctrine', *Civil Wars*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 1999), p. 77.
[81] Fry, *The M Room*, p. 69; TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 8.

British interrogators obtained information on this subject through a variety of means. Supplementary to direct questioning and recorded conversations, medals and campaign decorations highlighted past service experience in other campaigns, for instance the Sudeten Medal.[82] Pay books provided details of the units, dates and areas of operations of airmen, including the location of the training schools they attended.[83] Personal diaries and log books also offered similar types of information, charting individual sorties conducted by aircrew, as well as the forms of training they experienced.[84]

Interrogations uncovered that lectures and training still occurred at frontline airfields.[85] Field security lectures occurred as mentioned in the previous chapter, as well as first aid lectures which occurred at KG26, instructed by the unit's Medical Officer, so crews could utilise the three new first aid satchels provided for each aircraft.[86] The Medical Officer observed that several aircraft returned with seriously injured crew inside, and the previous first aid resources were inadequate for rectifying inflight conditions; therefore, it was hoped that more highly-experienced bomber crews would be saved through the delivery of life-saving instructions.[87]

British intelligence also discovered flaws in the training of *Luftwaffe* aircrew in the latter stages of the Battle, predominantly regarding fighter pilots. Kurt Müller, of 3./JG51, described how the day before he was shot down, a new recruit to the *Staffel* was taken up by three comrades to provide him with patrol experience, 'show him the English coast', and conduct target practice on barrage balloons.[88] A similar occurrence was reported by Ulrich Steinhilper, of JG52, who received a new pilot in September that had 'minimal flying time', and did not know how to fly using oxygen or utilise his radio.[89] Consequently, this pilot received 'ten hours of extra "tuition"', and was escorted

[82] TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 776/1940, 21 October 1940.
[83] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 13.
[84] TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 606/1940, 25 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 618/1940, 27 September 1940.
[85] TNA, AIR 40/2399, A.I.1.(k) 328/1940, 30 August 1940.
[86] TNA, AIR 40/2399, A.I.1.(k) 480/1940, 9 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 598/1940, 23 September 1940.
[87] TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 598/1940, 23 September 1940.
[88] TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 787/1940, 23 October 1940.
[89] Holland, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 789.

across the English Channel with a number of other new pilots by Steinhilper to practise their gunnery skills.[90] Whereas the RAF had a system for new pilots to gain operational experience in safer sectors such as 13 Group through the Operational Training Units, the *Luftwaffe* did not have a consistent system for pilot training once they were posted to a unit.[91] Dowding remarked that it was 'one thing to be a trained pilot, and quite another to be a combat-ready fighter pilot', but British intelligence discovered that the *Luftwaffe* placed newly trained pilots directly into frontline units, particularly in the latter stages of the Battle, and the unit was responsible for bridging the gap between a trained and a combat-ready fighter pilot.[92]

Furthermore, *Studie Blau*, a German intelligence report compiled by *Oberst* Beppo Schmid in July 1939, stated that the *Luftwaffe* was better trained than the RAF, and was therefore overwhelmingly superior in 'both numbers and quality'.[93] Whilst British intelligence acknowledged throughout the Battle that the *Luftwaffe* remained a highly trained organisation, consistent with Schmid's study, interrogations revealed that the operational experience and quality of its crews declined to varying degrees as the Battle progressed. A crew member of KG55, shot down on 25 August, mentioned that experienced crews were returned to Germany, with inexperienced crews filling their place and immediately being sent on operational flights.[94] Observers and Gunners were also identified as the worst-trained recruits within bomber crews, for the Observer training course was reduced from nine to six months, while Gunners were often the youngest members of the crew, that is if the position was not filled by ground mechanics who had minimal training in this role.[95]

The decline in the quality of crews was a consequence of the substantial losses the *Luftwaffe* suffered, for instance between 8 and 23 August, 623 aircrew were killed, while 254 were captured in

[90] Holland, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 789.
[91] Ibid, p. 714.
[92] Ibid, p. 713.
[93] Wing Commander M. P. Barley, 'Contributing to its Own Defeat: The Luftwaffe and the Battle of Britain', *Defence Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Autumn 2004), p. 406; Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 189.
[94] TNA, AIR 40/2398, A.I.1.(k) 287/1940, 25 August 1940.
[95] TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 786/1940, 22 October 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 568/1940, 18 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2398, A.I.1.(k) 293/1940, 26 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 687/1940, 3 October 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 681, 5 October 1940.

the period from 11 to 26 August – losses that could only be met by aircrew in reserve pools or training schools.[96] On 18 September, a captured fighter pilot commented that 'every old pilot is an irreplaceable loss until the youngsters have got so far', while at the end of September, Steinhilper remarked that the quality of replacements was more problematic than losses.[97] Due to the amount of money spent on training fighter pilots, some recruits were prematurely sent to frontline units to 'make or break them'.[98] Furthermore, losses of officers became so vast that in September 1940, Göring ordered that only one crew member of officer rank was allowed in an aircraft, while many Non-Commissioned Officers were undeservedly offered officer commissions to replace losses.[99]

As a consequence of POW-derived intelligence, IOs gained an understanding of how the *Luftwaffe*'s large volume of losses affected the quality of new recruits who were delivered to bomber and fighter units on the Channel Front. Although the *Luftwaffe* maintained a core group of highly experienced and battle-hardened aircrew, POWs highlighted that training courses were reduced due to the attrition of the Battle, there were inconsistencies in the abilities of recruits sent to operational units, and the aptitude difference between old and new combatants widened as the conflict progressed and the *Luftwaffe* High Command attempted to stem losses.[100] So important was this information that summaries of the experience of aircrew were provided each month, highlighting how British intelligence desired to monitor the *Luftwaffe*'s rate of attrition.[101]

Morale and tension within the *Luftwaffe*

The morale of *Luftwaffe* personnel on the Channel Front between July and October 1940 remained reasonably consistent, according to monthly intelligence reports on the *Luftwaffe*'s training and

[96] TNA, AIR 8/315, letter from Major-General Sir Hastings Ismay to Air Chief Marshall Sir Cyril L.N. Newall, 29 August 1940; Holland, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 658.
[97] TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 553, 18 September 1940; Holland, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 789.
[98] TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 808/1940, 27 October 1940.
[99] TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 687/1940, 3 October 1940.
[100] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 45.
[101] TNA, AIR 40/2399, A.I.1.(k) 410/1940, 4 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 687/1940, 3 October 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 862/1940, 5 November 1940.

morale.[102] For the most part it was high, or at least deemed as good, but it was interspersed with varying degrees of poorer morale.[103] The morale of *Luftwaffe* aircrew varied greatly and hinged on several factors: confidence in leadership, tactics, and lastly, rest and battle fatigue. Each of these factors varied depending on the airman's unit, suggesting that conclusions on morale are best summarised for individual units and not on the *Luftwaffe* more generally.

Understanding the prisoner's morale held important intelligence-gathering significance. RAFVR officers were posted around the country to question POWs immediately, preferably while he was in shock and more likely to provide information.[104] Each preliminary report included an assessment of the POW's morale, which had vital use if the prisoner was sent for further questioning at CSDIC(UK). Interrogation methods were altered and adapted based on the POW's preliminary morale assessment, with a tailored approach to questioning designed to provide fruitful intelligence from POWs who were prone to 'moments of courage, revolt and weakness'.[105] For instance, those who had a higher morale and were more security conscious may have needed a 'sterner tone', verbal threats of worse treatment, or were provoked into arguments; meanwhile, those with a lower morale could be influenced through kind treatment such as outings into London, or 'small favours such as chocolate, cigarettes or strong drink'.[106] The morale of POWs was also a useful indicator to the RAF about the *Luftwaffe*'s determination and resolve, especially as little intelligence from France, the Netherlands and Belgium made its way to Britain in 1940; meanwhile M.I.14 commented on a questionnaire that they found information on POW morale useful for their propaganda broadcasts to the German Army in occupied territories.[107]

[102] TNA, AIR 40/2399, A.I.1.(k) 410/1940, 4 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 687/1940, 3 October 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 862/1940, 5 November 1940.
[103] Ibid.
[104] TNA, AIR 8/315, Report from Air Ministry on system of POW interrogation, 26 August 1940, pp. 1-2.
[105] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 8.
[106] Ibid, pp. 7-9.
[107] Garry Campion, *Good Fight: Battle of Britain Propaganda and the Few* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 72; Fry, *The M Room*, p. 69. M.I.14 was the German Department within the Directorate of Military Intelligence. Information can be found at: Bell, ''One of Our Most Valuable Sources of Intelligence'', p. 574.

POW's lack of confidence in the *Luftwaffe*'s leadership also undermined their morale. Incorrect intelligence and British intelligence's debunking of propaganda myths left many POWs feeling frustrated and demoralised. *Luftwaffe* aircrew were astonished at the level of resistance they faced, especially from 7 September when the *Luftwaffe* changed their tactics to targeting London.[108] The last week of August and the first week of September had seen the *Luftwaffe* encounter '[w]eak fighter defence', while their intelligence reports suggested that on 16 August the RAF had only 300 serviceable aircraft, and had sustained 1,115 total losses between 8 August to 1 September.[109] However, the perceived weak RAF fighter defence in this period was largely due to bad weather and poor directing from RAF ground staff, with RAF formations often unable to locate and engage *Luftwaffe* formations.[110] Consequently, one *Oberleutnant* stated that the fighting was now 'senseless', due to the 'new lot' of Spitfires and Hurricanes the RAF had sent into the air.[111] The demoralising effect of *Luftwaffe* aircrew witnessing massed RAF formations, such as the Duxford Wing, in a period of the Battle when they regarded fighter defence to be severely depleted, was therefore a deep psychological blow.[112]

Following the onset of raids on London, aircrew were also 'underwhelmed' by the lack of damage that occurred in London considering the losses experienced.[113] German propaganda stated that *Luftwaffe* raids were 'having a tremendous effect on this country' and that London was 'laid in ruins'; unsurprisingly, there was widespread shock from POWs at the number of 'omnibuses… well-filled shops… and private motor cars', highlighting that Britain was short of neither food nor petrol.[114] In some instances where POWs were convinced that damage to London was widespread, interrogators took their captives into central London to be 'shown the sights', aiming to demoralise POWs due to their first-hand discovery that German propaganda was incorrect, providing evidence

[108] Bergström, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 196.
[109] Ibid, p. 194; Holland, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 644.
[110] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 335.
[111] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 479, 11 September 1940.
[112] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 335.
[113] TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 862/1940, 5 November 1940.
[114] TNA, AIR 8/315, Analysis of G.A.F. Personnel Losses, July-October 1940 Inclusive, 7 November 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2429, A.I.1.(k) 974/1940, p. 2; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 338, 16 August 1940.

that shops were in fact well-stocked and contained goods which POWs could not buy in Germany.[115] This experience occasionally drained the resistance of silent POWs, as they realised they had been betrayed by their intelligence, and that withholding information from their interrogators was futile.[116]

Orders from the *Luftwaffe* hierarchy, which predominantly affected the tactics of the *Luftwaffe*'s fighter arm, also impacted upon aircrew morale. The issue of close fighter protection for bombers throughout the Battle is well documented, but the tensions between bomber and fighter pilots that existed as a result is less so. For bomber pilots, the protection they received from escorting fighters was of paramount importance, due to the RAF's policy of targeting their formations during attacks.[117] Göring required his bomber fleets to remain intact for the forthcoming invasion of Britain, stipulating on 15 and 19 August that bombers were to receive closer support from fighter escorts, and that *Stuka* formations were to be escorted by a fighter force three times their size.[118] In early September, further complaints by bomber crews forced Göring into demanding greater resources for close escort from fighters.[119] Grievances from captured bomber aircrew in September highlighted that despite these measures, their attitudes still remained hostile towards 'those damnable fighters', who they believed were not doing enough to protect formations – especially on flights to London, when one POW complained that fighters disappeared before the mission was completed.[120]

However, fighter pilots, particularly of Bf.109s, were stuck in a quandary. The fighter was designed to 'bounce' on enemy aircraft, with pilots upholding the image that they were hunters, scouting for prey.[121] Close escort missions limited the Bf.109's performance capabilities, with pilots irritated at being asked to 'wet nurse' bomber and reconnaissance aircraft, while they also

[115] TNA, AIR 40/1177, p. 10.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 218.
[118] Ibid; pp. 232-3.
[119] Ibid, p. 304.
[120] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 449, 3 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 605, 24 September 1940.
[121] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 304; p. 165.

complained about situations in which bomber squadrons would ring airfields 'whining for fighter protection'.[122] One *Stuka* pilot, who became a POW, also berated fighters for not protecting them when they went into dives, even though fighters were not fitted with dive brakes and could not protect them in this scenario.[123] Additionally, fighter pilots were limited by the range of their aircraft. One POW, responding to an accusation that fighters left bombers before their mission had been achieved, stated that the fighters often became short of petrol, due to only having a margin of ten minutes of fighting time once over England, and therefore had to leave.[124] Through interrogations, tensions between the bomber and fighter arms were exposed to British intelligence, highlighting the success which the policy of targeting bomber formations was having on the morale of both bomber and fighter crews.[125]

Interrogations also highlighted instances of battle fatigue within the *Luftwaffe*, although the minimal attention it received suggested that it occurred only in isolated cases. Battle fatigue was a consequence of several factors, most notably through a lack of rest and leave, and consistent exposure to stress through war flights. Rest days between sorties were sporadic for *Luftwaffe* personnel and depended on the individual unit and their operational requirements; for instance some POWs received one or two days off a week, whereas others in units such as JG53 only received rest days when the weather was too poor for flying.[126] Leave to return to Germany was even rarer, as one POW commented on 30 September that he had no leave since June, while another complained that since August 1939 he had received only twelve days' leave.[127] However, these were not isolated examples, for it was common for *Luftwaffe* airmen to receive leave only after several months in the

[122] Chris Goss, *The Luftwaffe Fighters' Battle of Britain* (Manchester: Crécy, 2010), p. 31; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 376, 21 August 1940.
[123] TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 524, 12 September 1940; Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 233.
[124] TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 605, 24 September 1940; Holland, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 744.
[125] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, pp. 303-4.
[126] TNA, AIR 40/2399, A.I.1.(k) 456/1940, 8 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 639/1940, 28 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 716/1940, 8 October 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 732/1940, 10 October 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 746/1940, 14 October 1940.
[127] TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 670/1940, 1 October 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 463, 7 September 1940.

frontline.[128] Additionally, pilots had to contend with disturbances at night, as a consequence of RAF raids on *Luftwaffe* airfields. Between July and October 1940, 17 per cent of Bomber Command's sorties targeted airfields, while Steinhilper referred to the noise of anti-aircraft defences keeping him up at night.[129] Missions were also an exercise in endurance; checking dial readings within the aircraft and hunting for enemy fighters, while being in a situation which posed a danger to one's life placed great mental and physical strain on *Luftwaffe* airmen – especially as some POWs recorded completing three or four flights daily and being forced to sit in their aircraft before dawn wrapped in blankets waiting for a signal to take off.[130] The number of sorties airmen were asked to perform, especially fighter pilots, was a constant source of complaint, while the stress of operations could not be alleviated once they returned, as it was customary to talk tactics each evening.[131]

In these circumstances, it is clear why battle fatigue became so prominent, especially towards the latter stages of the Battle. This manifested itself into a condition known as *Kanalkrankheit*, or Channel sickness – a condition that in the minds of *Luftwaffe* personnel turned the sea between Britain and Europe into a mental barrier, as well as a physical one.[132] Being shot down into the Channel was an experience no airman desired, especially in a Bf.109, which one POW described as 'absolute suicide' if an attempt was made to land it in water.[133] If they did not immediately drown or die from the impact of crashing, the pain induced by salt water made inflicted wounds worse, while a person could also only remain submerged for four hours before succumbing to hypothermia, and chance of a successful rescue was very slim, especially as the RAF were under

[128] Holland, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 787.
[129] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 91; Ulrich Steinhilper and Peter Osborne, *Spitfire on my Tail: A View from the Other Side*, 2nd ed. (Bromley: Independent Books, 1990), p. 312.
[130] TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 523/1940, 15 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 745/1940, 13 October 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 605, 24 September 1940; Adolf Galland, *The First and the Last* (New Delhi: Stellar Editions, 2014), p. 16.
[131] Campion, *Good Fight*, p. 72; Holland, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 788.
[132] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 303.
[133] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 495, 7 October 1940.

instruction to shoot down Red Cross-emblazoned *Seenotdienst* rescue craft, due to their concealed reconnaissance work which they illegally conducted alongside humanitarian actions.[134]

Battle fatigue can be placed into two categories: behavioural changes, and physical ailments.[135] Behavioural changes represented increased levels of smoking, drinking and irritability, frantically calling out non-existent Spitfires during missions, aircraft defects such as 'hot engines, drops in oil pressure and instrument failure', or minor battle damage, as one POW implied a colleague was a coward for returning home after receiving a small hit by an anti-aircraft shell.[136] Physical defects also betrayed an airmen's fear. Stomach ulcers, or 'tummy trouble' as it was referred to in an interrogation report about a *Gruppenkommandeur* of III./JG3 were widespread, and vomiting cases increased, so much so that in JG53 mission briefings were held in toilets.[137] Additionally, cases of appendicitis were common and were an easy way to receive time away from flying – so common were they that *Luftwaffe* veterans asked to see each other's appendectomy scars in the aftermath of the Battle.[138]

These manifestations of fatigue can also be contextualised by utilising historiography on the topics of masculinity and the history of emotions, especially as these areas have rarely touched on German history, and specifically the *Luftwaffe* during the Battle of Britain.[139] POW reports and recorded conversations as sources, with their wealth of personal information on *Luftwaffe* aircrew morale, provided a glimpse into their emotions and therefore contribute to this field of study.[140] 'Emotionology', a term coined by Peter and Carol Stearns in the 1980s, represented the attitudes and standards which a society placed upon a person, and how institutions encourage these attitudes.[141]

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[134] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 178; Campion, *Good Fight*, p. 72.
[135] Martin Francis, *The Flyer: British Culture and the Royal Air Force, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 115.
[136] Ibid; Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 303; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 520, 12 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 561, 19 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 687, 6 October 1940.
[137] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 303.
[138] Francis, *The Flyer*, p. 115; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 862/1940, 5 November 1940.
[139] Frank Biess et al., 'History of Emotions', *German History*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (March 2010), p. 67.
[140] Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 33.
[141] Barbara H. Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 3 (June 2002), p. 824; Barbara H. Rosenwein and Riccardo Cristiani, *What is the History of Emotions?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), p. 3.

This reflects on the *Luftwaffe* and the image it portrayed of itself, as newly trained pilots realised after their first instances of dogfighting that the romanticised and chivalrous 'Knights of the Air' aura which influenced their entrance into the service was simply propaganda.[142]

Furthermore, contemporary masculine standards were more vigorously applied to airmen, who were subject to harsher emotional standards and felt unable to speak of their fears, being left to torment between their self-preservation by staying alive, and upholding the 'social code of a fighting unit', where accusations of cowardice were feared greater than death, leaving airmen little option but to express their anxieties through behavioural and physical changes.[143] This explanation lends support to another field of the history of emotions known as 'emotional communities', where groups of people share similar emotions and forms of expression.[144] A form of this thinking prevailed in military circles during the Battle, as fear was seen as a 'virus, insidious and infectious' due to the damage it could inflict upon unit morale; consequently, those so consumed by fear were removed, such as one airman in a Bf.110 who lost his nerve and was taken to a sanatorium.[145] However, an emotional community outlook could have positive attributes, through the championing of *esprit de corps* to 'secure the mental attitude of bravery'.[146] For example, *Erprobungsgruppe* 210 received heavy losses during the Battle, losing three group commanders in the month after 15 September, but maintained their morale due to their high *esprit de corps*.[147]

[142] Francis, *The Flyer*, p. 110; Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 165.
[143] Francis, *The Flyer*, p. 109; p. 120.
[144] Rosenwein and Cristiani, *What is the History of Emotions?*, pp. 3-4.
[145] Joanna Bourke, 'The Emotions in War: Fear and the British and American Military', *Historical Research*, Vol. 74, No. 185 (August 2001), p. 315; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 687, 6 October 1940.
[146] Tom A. Williams, 'The Emotions and their Mechanism in Warfare', *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, Vol. 14, Nos. 1-2 (April-June 1919), p. 20.
[147] TNA, AIR 40/2398, A.I.1.(k) 273/1940, 21 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/2400, A.I.1.(k) 686/1940, 3 October 1940.

Chapter 3: Politics and war attitudes within the *Luftwaffe*

The interrogations and secret recordings of *Luftwaffe* POWs also produced intelligence on 'war, family [and] politics', providing evidence behind Fedorowich's statement that one of the 'most constant users of CSDIC(UK) interrogations were… the Allies' political… warfare branches'.[148] Therefore, this chapter intends to highlight how the information from the sources was used, and its subsequent importance.

Political attitudes in the *Luftwaffe*

The *Luftwaffe*'s rise as an independent service is of stark difference to that of the German Army or Navy. The 1919 Treaty of Versailles forbade Germany from having her own air force; however, the *Luftwaffe* of 1940 could trace its roots back to a small group of German officers working within the German Defence Ministry from 1920, who were aided by the 1926 Paris Air Agreement which removed limitations on developments in civil aviation.[149] The establishment of the *Luftwaffe* hastened with Adolf Hitler's leadership of Germany from 1933, as he appointed long-term friend and associate, and ex-First World War pilot, Hermann Göring to several positions in government, including Special Commissioner for Aviation, a post which became known as Air Minister from April 1933.[150]

Thereafter, Germany's air arm became closely entwined with the Nazi Party owing to Göring's influence, for instance through the use of the Party's salute until the announcement of the *Luftwaffe*'s existence on 1 March 1935.[151] On 1 June 1935, the *Luftwaffe* was officially ordained as the third arm of the *Reichswehr* (later *Wehrmacht*), after two years of arguments and resistance from the German Army and Navy regarding the 'nature and extent of Göring's military authority',

[148] Falko Bell, ''Die deutsche Spionage ist auf Zack.' German Soldiers speak about Intelligence Services (1939-1945)', *Journal of Intelligence History*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (January 2013), p. 50; Fedorowich, 'Axis Prisoners of War', pp. 173-4.
[149] Air Ministry, *The Rise and Fall of the German Air Force* (London: The National Archives, 2008), p. 1.
[150] Ibid, p. 4.
[151] E.R. Hooton, *The Luftwaffe: A Complete History, 1933-45* (Hersham: Classic Publications, 2010), p. 25.

believing that no service should come under direct authority of a political party.[152] Furthermore, Göring's deputy in the Air Ministry and head of the *Lufthansa*, Erhard Milch, who became '*de facto* Air Minister' until autumn 1937, was also a member of the Nazi Party from 1933 after being provided the status of a '*kosher* Aryan' on Göring's insistence, cementing the *Luftwaffe*'s political links with the Nazi Party.[153]

For Göring, the *Luftwaffe* served several political purposes. Personally, it helped consolidate his power base within the Party, and provide him with greater favour in the eyes of Adolf Hitler, who allowed Göring a great degree of autonomy in his leadership of the *Luftwaffe*.[154] Göring's decision to increase the *Luftwaffe*'s share of the defence budget to 38 percent in 1936 from ten percent in 1933, as orchestrator of Germany's second economic Four Year Plan, was justified on the premise that air power would be vital in any future war.[155] However, it was also a statement of intent from Göring, who boasted to the Army and Navy that a future war could be won by air power alone, and used the injection of money to create an air force which was the most modern of the three services – providing a propaganda opportunity which closely identified the Luftwaffe and the 'glamour of aviation' with the Nazi image, and gave Germany a new diplomatic weapon to wield.[156]

Considering the *Luftwaffe*'s political background, it would be expected that pro-Nazi sentiment would exist within its ranks, especially as proven Party supporters Albert Kesselring and Hugo Sperrle, commanded *Luftflotte 2* and *Luftflotte 3* respectively during the Battle of Britain.[157] This thought is given further credence due to the naming of certain *Geschwader* after Nazi political heroes. JG26 for instance were designated as the Schlageter *Geschwader* after Albert Leo Schlageter, who was executed by the French in May 1923 for sabotage during the French occupation of the

[152] Hooton, *The Luftwaffe*, p. 33; Richard Overy, *Goering: The 'Iron Man'* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 33.
[153] Hooton, *The Luftwaffe*, pp. 25-6; Air Ministry, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 4
[154] Air Ministry, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 2.
[155] Overy, *Goering*, p. 47.
[156] Ibid, p. 33; Hooton, *The Luftwaffe*, p. 25.
[157] Air Ministry, *The Rise and Fall*, pp. 1-2.

Rhineland; meanwhile, ZG26 were known as the Horst Wessel *Geschwader*, after a member of the Berlin *Sturmabteilung* who was murdered by alleged Communists in January 1930.[158]

The *Luftwaffe* also had welfare officers accountable to Intelligence Section VIII, within *Abteilung 5* of the German General Staff.[159] Intelligence Departments at the *Luftflotte* level were responsible for directing welfare policy for units under their jurisdiction, with the commanding officer of the individual units conducting the procedures in the field, including 'political education and propaganda'.[160] However, this policy was sometimes unpopular with commanders, especially those who resented the level of Party involvement within the *Luftwaffe* and felt uneasy at having a 'political commissar' operating with a large degree of freedom within their unit.[161]

However, interrogations highlighted that captured aircrew were not overtly Nazi, although this could be a product of the drawbacks of interrogations. Political attitudes were noted little in direct questioning – so few times are they mentioned that it seems more of a preliminary character assessment of the prisoner on behalf of the interrogator, for instance when one officer is described as a 'very bad Nazi type'.[162] The secret recordings, which were designed to provide 'further insight into a prisoner's mind', produced more material than the A.I.1.(k) Reports, although Fedorowich's assertion that grievances during the Battle 'were directed primarily at the Nazi Party and its leadership' was an overly exaggerated argument.[163]

The S.R.A. files provide opinions that Germany would suffer without National Socialism; Catholics, Freemasons and Jews were attacked in one instance due to their incompatibility with the Nazis and their majority support base of the Protestant middle classes – while there was also a substantial amount of faith in Hitler's military prowess, expressing the belief that 'if the Führer has

[158] Donald L. Caldwell, *JG26: Top Guns of the Luftwaffe* (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2013), p. 7; Daniel Siemens, *The Making of a Nazi Hero: The Murder and Myth of Horst Wessel* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2013), p. 3.
[159] Norman W. Caldwell, 'Welfare Organization in the Luftwaffe', *Social Forces*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (October 1946), p. 54.
[160] Ibid, p. 55.
[161] Ibid.
[162] TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 740/1940, 12 October 1940.
[163] Fedorowich, 'Axis Prisoners of War', p. 170 and 172.

said it, you can rely on it'.[164] Understanding the extent of individual prisoners' Nazism, if it was there at all, was important for the British government in deciding who to send to Canada, for they believed from Spring 1940 that the most fervent Nazis were too dangerous to detain in Britain as a POW, a policy which continued until 1944.[165]

The treatment of JG53 during the Battle, also uncovered through interrogations, also provides a case study for understanding the political standards expected in the *Luftwaffe* from its leadership. A report compiled on the unit on 14 October 1940 labelled it as the 'Red Ring Geschwader', who had their special uniform and 'Ace of Spades' insignia supressed by Göring; a recorded transcript with information from 23 September suggested these actions were a consequence of an 'appalling row' with General Klein, who was the *Geschwaderkommodore* of JG53.[166] However, the argument actually originated with Klein's successor, Hans-Jürgen von Cramon-Taubadel, who married into a family of non-Aryan origin.[167] Göring ordered the unit's insignia on the fuselage of individual aircraft to be painted out in July, which was met with retaliation by the unit through the painting of a red band on the aircraft's cowling, then, later in August, the painting over of the aircraft's swastika emblem on the tailfin, ordered by Wolf-Dietrich Wilcke of III./JG53 in solidarity with his leader, a symbol that Göring's political intervention in the unit's affairs was not desired.[168]

Interrogations also illustrated the attitudes of *Luftwaffe* aircrew towards their Italian allies, who joined the war in June 1940 and sent a token fleet of aircraft to the Channel Front in mid-September, known as the *Corpo Aereo Italiano*, even though the aircraft, especially the bombers,

[164] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 178, 17 July 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 393, 25 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 395, 26 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 443, 2 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 495, 10 September 1940; Heinrich August Winkler, 'German Society, Hitler and the Illusion of Restoration, 1930-3', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (October 1976), p. 2.
[165] Bob Moore, 'Turning Liabilities into Assets: British Government Policy towards German and Italian Prisoners of War during the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (January 1997), p. 134.
[166] TNA, AIR 40/2401, A.I.1.(k) 746/1940, 14 October 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 608, 25 September 1940.
[167] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 120.
[168] Ibid.

were vastly inferior to their British and German rivals and counterparts respectively.[169] Despite German propaganda celebrating the arrival of the Italians to the Channel Front through publications such as the *Luftwaffe* magazine *Der Adler*, distributed by the German Air Ministry, Italians were held in low regard by their German comrades.[170] To Germany, Italy was 'no more than a catspaw', while prisoners commented that they were an inferior nation who sought 'only to reap, not sow', and 'had no success at all'.[171] Subjected to the sharp end of their humour, POWs mockingly stated that Italy contributed significantly to the war by bombing Malta, and that if they were to be sent abroad to Australia, the Italians would probably sink their ship![172]

This information held several purposes for Allied propaganda. The intelligence collated from *Luftwaffe* POWs, when applied to Italian POWs, who were the most numerous source of prisoners until 1943, provided British propaganda and psychological warfare experts with their first chances to hone their skills in political warfare techniques, enabling the 'amateurish' propaganda of late 1940 to turn into 'a genuine weapon of psychological warfare' by mid-1941.[173] The ultimate ambition was to use a large corps of Italian POWs, who were receptive to the political warfare raged upon them, to create a Free Italy combat unit which could be used in future campaigns to win over hearts and minds, particularly in theatres that Italian forces fought in, and was dreamt up by SO1, a secret propaganda branch of the Special Operations Executive, in August 1940.[174] This information was also utilised for the process of 'de-Fascisation' of Italian POWs, a system of political re-education which

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[169] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 347; Bob Moore and Kent Fedorowich, *The British Empire and its Italian Prisoners of War, 1940-1947* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 105; MacGregor Knox*, Hitler's Italian Allies: Royal Armed Forces, Fascist Regime, and the War of 1940-43* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 64.

[170] S. L. Mayer and Masami Tokoi, 'Introduction', in S. L. Mayer and Masami Tokoi (eds.), *Der Adler: The Luftwaffe Magazine* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1977), p. 1; Anon., 'The Lictor's Fasces now over England also', in S. L. Mayer and Masami Tokoi (eds.), *Der Adler: The Luftwaffe Magazine* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1977), pp. 26-7.

[171] Fedorowich, 'Axis Prisoners of War', p. 172; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 183, 18 July 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 243, 29 July 1940.

[172] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 185, 19 July 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 365, 20 August 1940.

[173] Moore and Fedorowich, *The British Empire and its Italian Prisoners of War*, p. 93; Ellic Howe, *The Black Game: British Subversive Operations Against the Germans during the Second World War* (London: Queen Anne Press, 1988), p. 44.

[174] Kent Fedorowich, 'Toughs and Thugs: The Mazzini Society and Political Warfare against Italian POWs in India, 1941-43', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (March 2005), pp. 147-8.

was more developed than the reconditioning of German POWs at this stage of the war, and was the blueprint for the post-war policy of 'de-Nazification'.[175] This reconditioning was a politically complex operation, which aimed to highlight the dangers of Italy's alliance with Germany, but could not criticise fascism in such a way that would appear to Italian POWs that their country was being personally attacked.[176] The Joint Intelligence Committee took particular interest in this '"moral education" and instruction of POWs' in February 1941, and created the Political Warfare Executive in July 1941 as the agency 'solely responsible for waging the propaganda war against the Axis' powers.[177]

War attitudes in the *Luftwaffe*

The interrogation reports and bugged transcripts are also useful sources for understanding the *Luftwaffe*'s perceived success of the Battle of Britain. Kevin Jones described attitudes towards Britain's subjugation as an initial 'confidence in the Führer and ultimate victory', to a diminishing belief in an early victory by the end of August 1940, to 'confidence and expectancy in the coming invasion' in September, to a war-weariness in October – although it was still anticipated that 'a further great air assault on Britain followed by a swift and successful invasion' would occur in the near future.[178] However, Jones' description was founded only on the A.I.1.(k) Reports, and the addition of the S.R.A. files provides a more varied picture of POW's outlook on the prospects of the Battle and the wider war – files which were noted by the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office as useful for the content concerned 'the state of mind of the clients for our propaganda'.[179]

To complement Jones' argument, many positive opinions were expressed on the outcome of the war against Britain, particularly regarding the success of an invasion. From late-July, POWs spoke

[175] Moore and Fedorowich, *The British Empire and its Italian Prisoners of War*, p. 93.
[176] Ibid, p. 117.
[177] Ibid, p. 110; p. 113.
[178] Jones, 'From the Horse's Mouth', pp. 69-70.
[179] Fry, *The M Room*, p. 70.

of attacks finishing by September, with the British defences crumbling quicker than those encountered in France, while one POW in late-September commented that the British campaign would be easier than that conducted in Norway.[180] Estimates for the length of the land war in Britain once the invasion began also varied between prisoners, ranging from 48 hours to a maximum of a fortnight, before they believed that Britain would sue for peace, or tanks would roll into London.[181] Even on 14 October, one POW was convinced he would be returning home before Christmas.[182] However, the majority of viewpoints portray a negative vision of the war's future success for Germany. Many opinions stated that Germany had left it too late to start an invasion; the first instance occurred on 15 August, but similar viewpoints recurred suggesting that the invasion should have started immediately after the evacuation of Dunkirk, before the fogs of August and autumn set in, and that time was wasted on that 'damnable parade in Paris'.[183] Similar pessimism on Germany's chances suggested that leaving an offensive until Spring 1941 would result in failure as Britain strengthened militarily relative to Germany.[184]

The dichotomy between these opinions could be influenced by numerous reasons, for instance the difficulties of utilising POW-derived material, outlined in the introduction. Another possibility relates to the *Luftwaffe*'s purpose during the Battle, set out by Hitler on 1 August in Directive No. 17, which stipulated that air supremacy was a pre-requisite to an invasion of Britain.[185] This argument is given credence due to the *Luftwaffe*'s morale being linked to the invasion; as discussed in the previous chapter, many pilots received little rest during the Spring and Summer of 1940 and a successful invasion could provide them with such an opportunity. The sources highlight that the invasion filled prisoners with hope that they could return home and not be subject to years

[180] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 193, 20 July 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 650, 30 September 1940.
[181] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 247, 30 July 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 448, 3 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 484, 13 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 499, 11 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 660, 2 October 1940.
[182] TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 755, 17 October 1940.
[183] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 333, 15 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 459, 6 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 475, 9 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 495, 10 September 1940.
[184] TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 523, 12 September 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 535, 14 September 1940.
[185] Bungay, *The Most Dangerous Enemy*, p. 114.

of captivity; in one transcript from 19 September, a side note was added stating that a POW reassured himself that 'Adolf would not go into a war which he could not win'.[186] A successful invasion would have signified that the *Luftwaffe*'s job over Britain outlined in Directive No. 17 was complete, whereas no invasion contributed to the war-weariness which set in during October 1940, as highlighted by Jones. Nevertheless, the information gained from POWs on these subjects gave clues about if and when the invasion of the British mainland was coming, and additionally served as a useful tool for the purposes of political reconditioning and psychological warfare.[187]

Some *Luftwaffe* aircrew also provided their opinions on why Britain was fighting the war, and were bewildered that Britain had not sued for peace in their apparently hopeless position.[188] One POW on 20 August stated that the British population 'feels no hostility towards us', and that if Churchill had been disposed of as Prime Minister and Edward, the Duke of Windsor who was forced to abdicate in 1936, had been put on the throne then England would be at peace with Germany.[189] Thoughts such as these occurred with other prisoners, who believed that the English were against the war – or at least the lower and middle classes – while the upper classes wanted war, and the regular officers within the British armed services dare not publicly admit that they desired peace.[190] This information served little operational benefit to the British intelligence services, but it did allow them an insight into German attitudes towards those they felt were driving the British war effort and towards the Duke of Windsor, who was regarded as a key figurehead in any German occupation of Britain; so much so that Hitler regretted not apprehending him when he was in France.[191]

[186] TNA, AIR 40/3071, S.R.A. 579, 21 September 1940.
[187] Jones, 'From the Horse's Mouth', p. 75.
[188] TNA, AIR 40/2398, A.I.1.(k) 246/1940, 13 August 1940; TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 495, 10 September 1940.
[189] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 361, 20 August 1940; M. M. Knappen, 'The Abdication of Edward VIII', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (June 1938), p, 248.
[190] TNA, AIR 40/3070, S.R.A. 462, 6 September 1940; Richard Overy, *The Battle of Britain: Myth and Reality* (London: Penguin, 2010), p. 18.
[191] Holland, *The Battle of Britain*, p. 532; Leo McKinstry, *Operation Sealion: How Britain Crushed the German War Machine's Dreams of Invasion in 1940* (London: John Murray, 2014), p. 279.

Conclusion

Until the S.R.A. files at the Public Records Office (now The National Archives) were declassified in 1996, British intelligence histories of World War Two focused on SIGINT and the activities at Bletchley Park on the Ultra project, after its revelation in 1974 with Group Captain F.W. Winterbotham's *The Ultra Secret* that Britain had broken and read Germany's Enigma transcripts.[192] Consequently, other vital components of the intelligence 'jigsaw', such as POW interrogations, were neglected.[193] The declassification of the secret recordings roused a new interest in the activities surrounding POW interrogations, with Kevin Jones' and Kent Fedorowich's articles on POWs as sources of British military intelligence published in 2000 and 1999 respectively.[194] However, despite this new interest on the topic, no works had utilised both the A.I.1.(k) Reports and the S.R.A. files to provide a distinct focus on the content of POW-derived intelligence during the Battle of Britain.

This dissertation has highlighted the significance and use of intelligence which emanated from *Luftwaffe* POWs during the Battle, as the first opportunity Britain had to interrogate swathes of prisoners, beginning the process which led POW intelligence to be considered by various British military intelligence branches as one of the most reliable forms of intelligence by 1942.[195] The A.I.1.(k) Reports predominantly held information which were directly related to the fighting during the Battle, and aided the RAF's understanding of *Luftwaffe* operations. On the other hand, S.R.A. files were a useful source to understand issues regarding the wider German effort, as well as rumours and personal attitudes which the POWs held on the Battle, the war and issues which affected their lives before they were captured. Consequently, this dissertation was split into three sections to make the best use of these two complementary sources, analysing the military uses, the *Luftwaffe*'s morale, and political attitudes of airmen to convey the information which POWs divulged through direct and indirect means during the Battle.

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[192] Neitzel and Welzer, *Soldaten*, p. viii; David Kahn, 'How the Allies Supressed the Second Greatest Secret of World War II', *Journal of Military History*, Vol. 74, No. 4 (October 2010), p. 1229.
[193] Jones, 'From the Horse's Mouth', p. 61.
[194] Ibid, pp. 60-80; Fedorowich, 'Axis Prisoners of War', pp. 156-178.
[195] Fedorowich, 'Axis Prisoners of War', p. 157.

This dissertation also had the secondary objective of contributing to the history of the Battle of Britain, and particularly of the *Luftwaffe*'s experience during the conflict. The sources represent first-hand accounts, and provide an insight into the feelings, beliefs and backgrounds of the thousands of airmen who fought in the *Luftwaffe* during the Summer and Autumn of 1940. From a British perspective, the sources reveal the efforts made to produce fruitful POW intelligence, and emphasise that this was a Battle that was not just fought in the air, but also on the ground. The detail in which this dissertation has examined the sources in, which has been more extensive than previous journal articles such as that written by Kevin Jones, has therefore added to the knowledge on the subject of the Battle and the *Luftwaffe*.

There are areas which this dissertation has not covered, or examined in little detail, and could therefore be areas available for further study. As Kevin Jones listed in his journal article, a study could be conducted of the ways in which materials from POW interrogations were utilised by RAF Fighter Command, by consulting Fighter Command Weekly Summaries and Operations Records – an area which would influence a study on the tactical and operational intelligence obtained from POWs.[196] Another potential avenue for study would be conducting an examination of *Luftwaffe* culture during the Battle of Britain, similar to Martin Francis' work on the RAF.[197] This would delve deeper into the morale and mentalities of *Luftwaffe* airmen, exploring battle fatigue and masculinities in greater depth – for which the sources utilised in this study would undoubtedly provide a use, due to the attitudes they conveyed and the personal nature of the opinions shared.

Overall, this study has intended to prove that POW-derived intelligence during the Battle of Britain merits its own limelight, and produced such a vast quantity of information on a range of subjects that it was a significantly important activity conducted by British military intelligence. Although its importance is difficult to quantify, due to the jigsaw-like structure that intelligence gathering follows, it provided forms of information, such as those linked to morale and political beliefs, which would not have been gained through other means. Therefore, it can be concluded that

[196] Jones, 'From the Horse's Mouth', p. 74.
[197] Francis, *The Flyer.*

POW interrogations during the Battle of Britain represented and were utilised for far more than simply providing 'an enemy's name, rank and number'.[198]

[198] Fedorowich, 'Axis Prisoners of War', p. 174.

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