The Royal Air Force, Combined Operations Doctrine and the Raid on Dieppe, 19 August 1942

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to examine the use of air power during Operation JUBILEE. In recent revisionist accounts, the role of the Royal Air Force has come in for criticism. Therefore, this thesis seeks to examine why the RAF fought the battle in the manner that it did. It examines both the doctrinal and operational context of the forces involved in JUBILEE and in doing so examines their effectiveness.

It contends that Combined Operations doctrine argued that the key role for air power was to maintain air superiority in order to protect attacking forces. It then examines the development of the offensive use of RAF Fighter Command in the battle for air superiority 1940-1942. In understanding these twin pillars of doctrine and operations this thesis challenges the perceived failure of the RAF during the raid by arguing that in seeking to battle the Luftwaffe during JUBILEE it provided the most appropriate protection that it could for the assaulting force.

The thesis then examines the impact that JUBILEE had upon Fighter Command strategy and various aspects of Combined Operations development in 1943 in order to assess its effectiveness. This thesis argues that while there may not be a direct link to Operation OVERLORD, the operations at Dieppe had an impact during 1943 and needs to be considered as one line of development parallel with those from other theatres of war.
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