

Partial translation from the book:

Air Force Participation in the Finnish War of Independence in Year 1918

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Chapter II. German Air Activity in Finland 1918 (pages 170-202)

Initial Phase of Getting Aid (page 170)

The greatest aid, that Finland received already in the preparatory stages and then during the war, came from Germany.

Already in autumn 1917 arms shipments came from there to arm the home defence. During the Independence War large amounts of arms and ammunition were further bought from Germany. In February 1918 Germany agreed to send the Königlicher Preussischer Jägerbataillon Nr. 27 (*of Finnish volunteers*) to Finland. When the red danger was continuously worsening in Southern Finland, made Councillor of State Hjelt, a Finn that had greatest influence in Germany, his best to get aid to Finland. (*Edvard Hjelt, 1855-1921, was an active and sometimes arbitrary representative of the Finnish Senate in Germany. He for instance issued a Finnish passport in false name to General Ludendorf after his resignation.*)

On February 11th the peace negotiations between Germany and Russia at Brest-Litovski were interrupted. By threatening St. Petersburg from Finland, Germany would force Russia swiftly for final conclusion of peace. For this Germany would not need large forces, just so much that the white Finland would win. German high command asked councillor of state Hjelt to send an urgent request for armed assistance.

Councillor of State Hjelt saw, that he could fulfil this request, as he had received a telegram from Councillor of State A. Gripenberg, where the situation in Southern Finland was described with most gloomy colours. In addition to this, he received on the 19th a letter from Senator Renval in Vasa, where he was entitled to enquiry, whether Germany could give armed assistance to Finland.

On February 21st General Ludendorf informed Councillor of State Hjelt and the military attaché of Finland, cavalry captain M. Gripenberg, that the German high command had decided to assist Finland with military force. Same time he asked Gripenberg, how much troops would be needed. Gripenberg answered that a division, composed of all arms with necessary special forces and backed by a naval detachment strong enough, would be sufficient.

Next day the information, that the Swedish armed forces had occupied the Åland Islands, came to Berlin. Germany did not want a conflict with Sweden and hesitated sending assistance to Finland before the Swedish standpoint was clear. The following day the information, that the Emperor had clarified the matter with Sweden, arrived.

In the mean time the peace negotiations at Brest-Litovski had been resumed, and peace with Russia could be closed any time. In that case Germany would have needed all troops on the west front, and sending aid to Finland could have failed. The Germans knew also that General Mannerheim was against German aid. At this time the information, that English troops would be sent to Murmansk, came. The danger, that their march from Murmansk to St. Petersburg would pose a threat to the closing of the German-Russo peace, and the possibility that Germany could prevent this march from the Finnish side and threaten Entente forces at Murmansk, speed up sending the expedition to Finland.

Generalmajor Graf Rüdiger von der Goltz was named as the commander of the expedition and Admiral (*Hugo*) Meurer as the commander of the naval detachment.

The attitude of Mannerheim has been explained in the book "Finnish Independence War 1918":
"He wanted that white Finland would alone fight its struggle for independence, because that deed would rise national spirit and the value of Finland in all countries. He was also afraid, that the arrival of German troops would harm the relations with the Entente countries. He thought that as the result of the World War was very unsure, it should be avoided that Finland would take stand for any of the fighting parties."

The German highest command agreed in the letter of March 10th to General Mannerheim's terms, that the German troops, after arriving Finnish soil, would be placed under the Finnish high command.

Operations of the Åland Islands Expedition (page 174)

First Germany planned that the expedition would land in one of the ports of Western Finland. The length of the sea voyage required first a halting base, Åland Islands was chosen for that purpose. On February 21st a naval task force, that was composed of three detachments, was formed by the order of the Emperor.

The first detachment should occupy Åland Islands. It consisted of the battle ships (Schlachtschiff or Linienschiff?) Westfalen (flagship of commander) and Rheinland, 3rd pathmaker group: pathmakers (Sperrbrecher) Steigerwald, Giffhorn and Franken, 9th minesweeper halfsquadron, pumpship Norder, buoy layer Wik, ice breaker Hindenburg and two liners.

The second detachment should form and maintain a base. It consisted of 1 mine layer, 1 transport ship, 2 torpedo boats, a hospital ship and 3 coal ships.

All the ships were ordered to have coal and provisions for four weeks. The pathmaker group was also equipped with two sea- and one landplane, fuel for them should be reserved for four weeks. The seaplane number 1698 (*FF49C*) was piloted by Lt.n.z.S. Droege, who was located on the pathmaker Steigerwald. He was also the commander of the pilots. The pilots of the seaplane number 1541 (*FF49B*) and the landplane (*DFW CV*) were non-commissioned officers, the former was located on the pathmaker Giffhorn and the latter on Franken. The Mecklenburger Jägerbataillon Nr. 14 and a pioneer detachment were sailing on Westfalen and Rheinland for the occupation of Åland Islands.

The third detachment, that transported the Ostsee-Division, was formed only later.

The first detachment was ready in Kiel on February 23rd. In the evening of the same day it was ordered to call first at Danzig. The German government was negotiating with Sweden of the expedition and only after the matter was clarified, an order for the departure was given. Due to weather the departure from Danzig took place not until February 28th. The voyage was made between northwards Öland and Gotland Islands, so that on the morning of March 2nd the detachment was in the area between the German mine fields north of Gotska Sandön. At noon one of the seaplanes was sent to survey ice conditions in Åland Sea and it came back with favourable information. Later Admiral Meurer gave an order for the aircraft to survey next day ice conditions on routes to Åland Islands.

In general the pilots made a lot of surveillance of ice conditions during this trip. During the occupation of Åland Islands and after that, reconnaissance flights were made eastwards.

After their task was done, Admiral Meurer started on March 10th the return to Germany with the battle ship Westfalen, in order to plan the main expedition in detail.

Arrival of Ostsee-Division to Finland (page 175)

Admiral Meurer proposed that the route Danzig-Hangö would be used by the main expedition.

The troops left Danzig on March 30th at 16.00 hours, before that a passage was cleared of mines, which cost 2 mine sweepers and 17 men. (*The fleet sailed in the following order: first the mine sweepers, 1 pathmaker and the icebreaker Sampo, after that followed the main force, consisting of the battle ships Westfalen and Posen and a couple of torpedo boats. 5 seamiles after the main force followed the first group of the transport fleet, consisting of 5 ships led by the light cruiser Kolberg. At 15 seamiles distance followed the second group of 3 ships led by the minelayer Nautilus and right after that the third group of 3 ships led by the gun boat Möwe. Last followed a group of tugboats. A battalion was formed of the 400 Finnish home defence men, who had earlier escaped to Estonia, and they followed the fleet on the transport ship Equity.*) The fleet arrived to Hangö on April 3rd at 4.30 hours.

The navy task force squadron (Geschwader des Sonderverbands?) and the Ostsee-Division (9000 men) were together called "Baltic Sea task force" (Sonderverband Ostsee?) by the Germans. The field flying units (Fl.-Abt.) 16, 37 and (A) 214 of the 8th Army were attached to the task force, but they were still under

the command of the main headquarters of the 8th Army. The commander of flyers of 8th Army (Kommandeur der Flieger der 8. Armée?) was Hptm. Georg Liebermann von Sonnenberg.

In the beginning of April the main headquarters at Tallinn shipped another expedition, the Brandenstein Brigade (Detachement Brandenstein), that should have landed at Kotka, but due to the difficult ice conditions it landed at Valkom near Lovisa on April 7th. The Brigade was attached to the Ostsee-Division during its activities in Finland.

Flight Activity before the Landing at Hangö (page 177)

On February 25th at 10.00 hours Tallinn was occupied by German troops. Same day it was noted during aerial reconnaissance, how the Russian fleet left Tallinn for Helsinki. Several photographs were taken of the ships. Ten bombs were dropped, with partial success according to prisoners. Aircraft were shot from the war ships with fairly well aimed anti aircraft artillery fire.

After the invasion of Tallinn, the flying unit 16 was located there. The flying unit 37 was in Riga and 214 in Mitau.

In the beginning of March the flying units 16 and 37 were ordered to help the mine sweeper squadron by observing ice conditions and mines.

In the beginning of February, the home defence troops of the area east of Helsinki, had withdrawn to the Pellinge Islands after several battles with the Reds. On February 10th red troops tried to invade the islands. The battle lasted until dawn. As the home defence had used all their ammunition, they scattered over the ice in the night to different parts of the archipelago.

When the Germans heard about this, Fl.-Abt. 16 was given the duty to keep contact with the home defence troops in south of Finland and to survey ice conditions in the Gulf of Finland. These duties were always carried out with two aircraft flying together, the other as an escort.

The first reconnaissance and liaison flight was made by Hptm. von Liebermann on March 3rd. He landed at Timmerholm south of Pellinge, where he met some members of the home defence. He informed them, that the Gulf of Finland was at Suursaari completely in ice, and that way they could get to Estonia.

Further flights were made on 8th, 10th, 13th and 15th. They brought information and orders for the Whites and left or fetched Finnish agents.

On the afternoon of March 15th the pilots brought a Finn to Pellinge. Even this time there were two aircraft. The pilot of the other aircraft was Uffz. Šopkowski (*Schopkowski?*) and the Finn as a passenger. The pilot of the escorting aircraft was Sergt. Brämer and as observer Lt. Haehner. When Šopkowski landed, he broke the other ski of his aircraft so badly, that he could not start. Therefore the escorting aircraft landed also. Instruments and compass were removed from the broken aircraft and loaded into the other. After this the broken aircraft was burned. The remaining aircraft caught a carburettor fire at start and had to make a forced landing on ice. The fire could not be put out and the aircraft burned completely. The aircraft were of D.F.W. type. The pilots returned with the help of local fishermen to Tallinn, where they arrived not until March 21st and 22nd.

Photo on page 179: An aerial photo taken by the pilots of flying unit 16 on 10 March 1918 of a Russian navy detachment in Kruunuvuori bay at Helsinki. The photo is taken at 1000 m height.

On March 8th the Fl.-Abt. 16 was ordered to reconnaissance the number and armament of enemy ships in Helsinki. Dropping of bombs was prohibited. It was stressed to get the best possible photographs of the Russian fleet. The aerial photographs taken on March 9th and 10th gave accurate information on the composition of the enemy fleet at harbours of Helsinki. Especially successful in photographic reconnaissance were Uffz. Šopkowski and Uffz. Rippich as pilots and Lt. Hosmann and Lt.d.Res. Lehmann as observers, they often descended to 70 meters height to take large number of photos revealing all details.

On March 15th the flying units received the following order: (page 182)

8th Army General Staff.

Army Headquarters, March 15th, 1918.

Regards: Aerial reconnaissance.

Army order.

- 1) To prepare ship traffic from Danzig to Finland, ice conditions must be surveyed in the Gulf of Finland and west of the Baltic islands.
 - 2) The division and tasks of flying units:
 - a) Fl.-Abt. 16 will still be attached to 68th Army group (Generalkommando zur besonderen Verwendung Nr. 68?).
Area to reconnaissance (map 1:800000)
East border: Line Tallinn - Porvoo/Borgå (48 km NE from Helsinki).
South border: Tallinn - Tahkona (North tip of Hiiumaa/Dagö).
West border: Tahkona - Gullkronafjärd (40 km W of Hangö)
Possible reconnaissance northwards inland Finland will be arranged by 68th Army group.
 - b) Fl.-Abt. 37 will be moved from Riga to Haapsalu and attached to 8th Army with the reconnaissance area: Area Haapsalu - Gullkronafjärd to open sea until Zerel height (SW peak of Saaremaa/Ösel). Reconnaissance should be extended 65 km west of the archipelago of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa.
 - c) Fl.-Abt.(A) 214 will be moved from Mitau to Windau and remain directly under army with the reconnaissance area that attach to the area of Fl.-Abt. 37, in South until Libau height, in open sea 100 km off the west coast.
 - d) Fl.-Abt. 22 remains at Kurtenhof for the use of army.
 - 3) Flying units 16, 37 and 214 inform their results daily to 8th air commander, who gives compiled results to army general staff.
 - 4) It is intended to give flying units naval officer observers for special duties (*spotting of ship fire*).
 - 5) As mean of communication pigeon houses 501 and 502 will be given to Fl.-Abt. 16, 503 and 505 to Fl.-Abt. 37. Details will 8th air commander agree with communications officer of 8th Army general staff, who will also take care of telephone line to Haapsalu.
 - 6) Transport of flying units 37 and 214 to Haapsalu and Windau will be carried out by air commander of 8th Army together with Bba.
 - 7) Flight reports must be sent urgently and must be delivered with high priority.
 - 8) In maintenance Fl.-Abt. 37 is attached to 68th Army group and Fl.-Abt.(A) 214 to 8th Army.
- On behalf of Army general staff, Chief of staff, Signed Franz.

March 17th the aircraft of Fl.-Abt. 16 dropped 1500 leaflets in Helsinki.

March 19th Admiral Meurer sent a communication on arrangement of co-operation between the army flying units and the task force: (starts on page 183, translated only if different to order of March 15th)

- III. The morning, when landing at Hangö will take place, must flying units 16 and 37, with as many bombs as possible, be ready for attacks on batteries on Russarö Island and fortifications further inland.
Bomb attack should take place without special order in case the fortifications will open fire against our approaching ships. (It seems appropriate to strengthen the flying units 16 and 37 with the flying unit 214 one day before landing.)
- IV. Just before the landing must, above all, railway traffic from Hangö peninsula in the direction of Karis and removal of troops, be observed.

Attachment 2 (page 187). Call signs of ships, that come in question for immediate radio contact:

S.M.S. "Westfalen" i m r battle ship - admiralty flag in front mast

S.M.S. "Posen" f n a battle ship

S.M.S. "Nautilus" a g q mine ship - very clear clipper stem(?)

S.M.S. "Beowulf" q x j coastal armoured ship(?)

S.M.S. "Kolberg" l ö n light cruiser

War ship in sight: f f f (all war ships in sight).

Flight activity was also in the latter half of March lively and was carried out according to orders.

March 31st one of the aircraft of Fl.-Abt. 16 landed a pioneer non-commissioned officer on Suursaari Island, his duty was to free the icebreaker Tarmo from ice by blasting ice.

Flight Activity during War Operations in South of Finland (page 188)

March 24th Admiral Meurer gave the following attachment to the operational order no. 4.

Baltic Sea task force S.M.S. "Westfalen" 24 March 1918

Attachment VI to task force operational order no. 4, regarding use of aircraft.

- 1) Headquarters of 8th Army has assigned to task force for reconnaissance, observation and attack purposes, the flying units 16 (Tallinn), 37 (Haapsal) and 214 (Windau) [commander of flyers in Riga].
- 2) The units remain under 8th Army headquarters, that will take the requests of task force into consideration as far as possible.
- 3) Task: As agreed with commander of flyers in Riga: Half an hour before sunrise on the day of landing, the army aircraft are, if weather conditions allow, over Russarõ ready for bomb attack and artillery spotting. The latter is valid also for Hangö.
- 4) Attack should be commenced not before ships of task force or coastal fortresses open fire, but after that immediately without special order.
- 5) "Westfalen" and "Posen" get one artillery spotting aircraft each. Results of spotting must be informed directly to ships with wireless machines.
- 6) "Westfalen" has as sign a white well visible ring in foremost and rearmost turrets, "Posen" has a white cross on same turrets.
- 7) On the use of seaplanes on "Steigerwald" and "Gifhorn" will be informed later. The aircraft must be ready with their engines testrun an hour and half before sunrise, provided weather allow that.
- 8) Requests concerning aircraft must be directed to task force.
- 9) Sign of land planes: A flare, where a white star divides into two red ones.

In a communication of March 27th Hptm. Liebermann added the following supplementary information to the communication of March 15th by Admiral Meurer: (page 189, only partly translated)

- 6) During the landing must the artillery observer of 1st artillery aircraft from Fl.-Abt. 16, spotting for S.M.S. "Westfalen", and the observer of 2nd artillery aircraft from Fl.-Abt. 37, spotting for "Posen", vigorously reconnaissance enemy countermeasures. The aircraft must be at place when the fleet approaches to 30 km from the coast. The units must prepare a well timed change of aircraft, so that the continuous observation of the opponent is guaranteed.
- 7) Two aircraft from Fl.-Abt.(A) 214 will be assigned to Fl.-Abt. 16 and 37 during the landing. Date of assignment will be ordered separately.

On the early morning of April 3rd the fleet arrived outside Russarõ, a negotiator was sent on shore to demand the surrender of the fortress, the commander of the fortress agreed that without hesitating. When the way was thus free, the fleet arrived outside Hangö at 04.30 hours.

Due to the early morning and the swift surrender of the fortress, the army aircraft made no flights when the fleet arrived to Hangö. After 5 o'clock the seaplanes on pathmakers made reconnaissance flights to the town and inland.

Same day the Brandenstein Brigade, that had been shipped from Tallinn, received a detail to establish an airbase at Kotka or Lovisa.

April 4th the following telegram arrived to the flying units from the task force:

- 1) Task force has arrived to Hangö harbour at morning of April 4th.
- 2) Good visibility, weak wind from south east.
- 3) If possible, daily aerial reconnaissance over Helsinki is desirable and ice conditions Tallinn-Hangö.

April 7th the aircraft no. 1698 on "Steigerwald" was ordered to observe the Russian gun boat "Bobr" around Korpo and Nagu. At 14.00 hours the Leutnants Droege and Reinhard started that flight, but nothing was heard of them for many days. Therefore the gun boat "Möwe" was ordered to search for the missing in the archipelagos of Åland and Turku. Finally on April 13th they were found on Jurmo Island and the aircraft was in the hangar there (*former Russian air base*). They were forced to land as the engine came out of order.

Photo on page 191: Aerial photo taken by the pilots of Fl.-Abt. 16 on 3 April 1918 of a Russian battle ship at Helsinki; the photo is taken at 100 m height.

April 9th Fl.-Abt. 16 sent the following reconnaissance report:

Tammisaari/Ekenäs April 9th 1.45 am(?)

To Ostsee-Division and army liaison officer Scheufeld.

An aircraft has made a reconnaissance flight in the morning from 5 to 8.30 hours.

Ice conditions: The overflown area has packed ice, open channels have weak ice.

Ship traffic at 6.30 am 10-20 seamiles west of Suursaari: 2 Russian lineships(?) with two funnels, 1 cruiser with four funnels, 2 cruisers with three funnels, 2 U-boats (large, painted dark) and a large ice breaker. All lineships have anchored, cruisers breaking way, U-boats were at 7 am at Lovisa harbour. Three transport ships at wharfing of harbour.

An ice breaker on way eastwards at 087a.

Signed Fl.-Abt. 16

On April 10th and 11th the Fl.-Abt. 16 made reconnaissance flights to observe Russian fleet. (*April 11th Rheinland runs aground.*)

During the invasion of Helsinki the Fl.-Abt. 16 made several flights and among others dropped leaflets.

After April 12th the Fl.-Abt. 16 observed in the area Lovisa-Borgå-Tuusula-Hyvinkää-Riihimäki-Hämeenlinna-Lahti-Lapträsk-Lovisa and Fl.-Abt. 37 in the area Koivisto-Viipuri-Kotka-Kouvola-Lappeenranta-Viipuri-Koivisto.

Photo on page 193: Aerial photo taken by the pilots of Fl.-Abt. 16 on 7 April 1918 of a Russian navy detachment at Sveaborg, height 250 m.

On April 13th the first messages and orders were dropped for the first time to the Brandenstein Brigade. After that day the aircraft landed often at Lovisa to get information of the Brandenstein Brigade and to leave intelligence information etc.

April 21st strong red positions were observed 2 km SW of Riihimäki. Aircraft were fired with rifles and machine guns while flying over the positions and the aircraft answered the fire with machine guns.

Photo on page 194: Aerial photo of Viipuri taken by the pilots of the Fl.-Abt. 37 on 24 April 1918, height 450 m.

That day (21st) Fl.-Abt. 37 was moved from Windau to Järwen area (45 km west of Narva) and was attached to 68th Army group. It also received orders from the commander of Fl.-Abt. 16. Same time Fl.-Abt. 214 was detached from Army group, thus the task force had only the flying units 16 and 37.

On April 22nd a detail was formed to establish an airbase at Helsinki. Same day the Germans made reconnaissance flights, among others, to Hämeenlinna.

On April 23rd medical supplies were transported from Tallinn to Lovisa by air.

On April 24th flights were made to Viipuri with surroundings and to the Hämeenlinna area. The Reds shot fierly at a plane that flew at 400 meters over Viipuri, but without result. Also at Hämeenlinna planes were shot at.

On April 25th large fires were seen at Lappeenranta, Lahti, Turenki and northern part of Viipuri, which still went on the following day. A reconnaissance flight was also made to Kotka, of which Lt. Lehman made the following report: (page 195)

Flight report.

Observer: Lt. Lehman Flight time 11.35 - 12.40 25 April 1918

Pilot: Uffz. Rippich

Flight route: Lovisa - Kotka - Lovisa

Task: To reconnaissance Kotka direction for the detachment of Graf Hamilton.

No defensive works in the woods east of the river and east of Ahvenkoski, but the woods is heavily occupied. 8 harnessed carriages and 30 men at Iso-Ahvenkoski farm.

The machine gun fire directed from aircraft to Ahvenkoski farm, woods and buildings was vividly answered from ground (25 hits in aircraft). Not even from 400 m height could any enemy guns be observed at Iso-Ahvenkoski.

7 carriages were on the road Pyhtää - Iso-Ahvenkoski in the Iso-Ahvenkoski direction.

Only few men at Pyhtää.
No positions at Pyhtää.
At ports of Kotka: 1 merchant ship.
At Kotka railway station: 1 engine, 100 carriages standing still.
Otherwise nothing special. Enemy positions on the east bank of the river Kymijoki between Kurittula and Kaukola.
9 photos were taken.

Signed Leutnant Lehman

The aircraft made both ways an intermediate landing at Lovisa. The photos taken were developed at Lovisa for first time and given directly to own forces.

On April 26th reconnaissance flights were made to Hämeenlinna, aircraft were shot by the Reds, but without result.

On April 27th flights were made over the whole South of Finland. The Ostsee-Division was reported to be on march to Hämeenlinna. At Viipuri the Reds shot fierly at a German plane, that answered with machine gun fire. A house near railway station was set on fire by three flare shells shot by the observer. Of a reconnaissance flight to Lahti, Kouvola and Kotka made Lt.n.d.Res. Haehner the following report:

Arrived April 27th at 7 pm.

To Ostsee-Division.

Flight report.

Flight time 1.20 - 3.45 hours

Pilot: Vzfw. Margoll

Observer: Lt.n.d.Res. Haehner

Route: Lovisa-Lahti-Kouvola-Kotka-Lovisa

Lahti railway station: 2 sheds on fire

Railway traffic: Station Nastola - empty

Station Uusikylä ca. 120 carriages

" At Kirkkojärvi (means Mankala) - empty

" Kausala 25 carriages

" Yrjölä (means Viitamäki) - empty

" Naphti (means Korja) ca. 20 carriages

" Kouvola ca. 500 carriages

partly loaded carriages

3 bombs dropped at Kouvola railway station, of which 2 did not explode. 1st bomb fell east of station very near the railway yard.

Station Viiala (means Myllykoski) 6 carriages

" Mämmälä (means Inkeroinen) 8 carriages

" Ylänummi (means Juurikorpi) empty

" Sackiala (means Tavastila) "

At 2.50 an engine and 10 carriages on way from Sackiala to Ylänummi.

Station Kymi 12 carriages

" Kotka 50 carriages

Movements of columns on streets was not observed, only minor street traffic. Photos taken of Lahti, Uusikylä, Kausala, Kouvola, Mämmälä, Kotka.

Signed Leutnant Haehner.

Same day made another aircraft a flight to Kouvola and shot with machine guns the railway station and the barracks.

Photo on page 197: Aerial photo taken by Lt.n. Lehman on 23 (25?) April 1918 of red trenches on the east bank of river Kymijoki, between Kerittula and Kaukola near Kotka, height 1000 m.

April 29th two aircraft from Fl.-Abt. 16 were located at Lovisa and attached to the Ostsee-Division. Same day the first flight accident causing a fatal casualty took place. At Sundarö (20 km SW of Lovisa) an aircraft of Fl.-Abt. 16 on way from Tallinn to Lovisa crashed of unknown reason. The pilot Uffz. Rippich died and the observer Lt.n.d.Res. Haehner was seriously injured.

During the flights the Germans observed also the railway traffic on rail sections: (listing on pages 197-198). According to flyers' reports the railway traffic on rail sections mentioned was fairly calm. Also the

number of rolling stock at stations was little. Larger numbers of carriages were only at Helsinki, Riihimäki, Uusikylä, Kotka, Kouvola and Viipuri.

As the ice conditions had eased so much, that the actions of Russian navy should be taken into account, the flying units were given also the task to secure and cover the transports of German troops from Estonia to Finland over the Gulf of Finland against unexpected surprises. These flights continued some time after the war operations ceased.

Results and Experiences of Flight Activity during Operation in Finland (page 199)

The co-operation of army flying units with the Baltic Sea task force was regulated with special orders. The tasks given to flying units were:

- 1) Survey of ice conditions in Baltic Sea and Gulf of Finland, until the landing of task force.
- 2) Observation of Russian fleet in the ports of Helsinki and observation of ship traffic in Gulf of Finland.
- 3) Dropping bombs and artillery spotting during the landing at Hangö, if resistance would be met.
- 4) Control of railway traffic, railway stations and river crossings in South of Finland, in the area Hangö-Tampere-Lappeenranta-Viipuri.
- 5) Reconnaissance of concentrations of red troops, infantry and artillery positions and lines.
- 6) Carrying out army and connection flights etc.

Of the 47 days of operation could be flown on 29, during which 70 reconnaissance flights were made.

322 aerial photographs were taken, partly from a very low height, namely of ice conditions, Russian fleet, own fleet, ports, towns, railway stations and bridges in South of Finland, red infantry positions in Riihimäki, Ahvenkoski and east bank of river Kymijoki between Kurittula and Kaukola. Copies of the photos were given until April 12th to the navy intelligence officer at the naval general staff in Tallinn. Usually the photographs were developed and copied at each flying unit, but on April 25th it was made during an intermediate landing at Lovisa and copies were given immediately to the Brandenstein Brigade.

Wireless connections from aircraft to ships and vice versa may have been tried only once, namely on April 3rd to S.M.S. "Posen", but without success. Later there may not have been more opportunities for that. There were also no (wireless?) connections to land troops.

The commander of 8th Army air force mentions on the red anti aircraft fire, that only in the latter part they started to shoot the German aircraft with machine guns. The German pilots flying boldly at low height were often under fierce red machine gun fire, but in spite of that, none of the planes were shot down, even if they were hit over twenty times, as for instance is mentioned in Lt. Lehman' s flight report of April 25th.

As the flying units were located in Estonia, the aircraft had to make very long flights when they observed for instance the line Hämeenlinna-Lahti-Kouvola-Lappeenranta-Viipuri. When also the operation of the aircraft at reconnaissance area is taken into account, the German aircraft flew in such flights up to 600-700 km distance. It was not possible for contemporary aircraft to make such a long trip without intermediate landing and refuelling. Therefore the Germans built additional tanks for fuel, which increased their flight time to ca. 5 hours. As mentioned earlier, only after April 16th intermediate landings were made now and then at Lovisa.

The commander of 8th Army air force Hptm. G. v. Liebermann made a report on their operation in Finland to army headquarters (attachment no. 12), it is dated 15 May 1918. Of the experiences gained he mentions the following:

- 1) Building the additional tanks for increasing operating radius proved to be useful
- 2) To order navy observers to flying units was favourable, they taught other observers navigation and making reports after nautical charts and control of naval artillery and wireless traffic with navy.
- 3) Transmission of flight results with wireless slowed considerable the resending of messages, because the encryption of longer messages and deciphering took several hours.
- 4) Due to slow mail delivery it could happen, that an operational order given for April 3rd came to one unit not until April 5th.
- 5) Carrier pigeons were not used, as there was not time and opportunity to train them properly.
- 6) On wireless connections between navy and Danzig is referrer to the enclosed report of the communications officer to 68th Army group of 15 April 1918 (attachment IV). Footnote 1: The report does not handle wireless connections from aircraft, but between land stations and navy.
- 7) Of co-operation between army air force and navy must be said the following: Efforts were made to keep the task force always informed on activities of flying units by sending results of reconnaissance

swiftly directly from flying units and through air commander as compiled reports. On the other hand the task force has only once, directly after the landing at Hangö, send air commander and flying units information on situation. It can not be spoken of co-operation between army air force and appropriate navy staff, but only of reports that these staffs received from army air force by wireless.

There are no experiences of co-operation between flyers and navy (task force). Army flying units have made reconnaissance independently in Gulf of Finland and in Finland. In similar cases in the future it would be appropriate, that a liaison officer of flyers would work hand in hand with the navy staff officer at admiralty ship.

German Air Bases in Finland y. 1918 (page 201)

During both the spring and the summer, the Germans established in Finland some small air bases for the need of their own troops. After the invasion of Helsinki they placed a flying unit of 4 Friedrichshafen seaplanes to Hermanni airbase. Flight activity was vivid: they flew almost every day to Tallinn and back. The pilot was usually a non-commissioned officer or a seaman.

As we remember, a detail was sent on April 22nd from Tallinn to Helsinki, its duty was to establish an airfield there. In the grounds of Tali mansion near Munkkiniemi (*5 km NW of Helsinki*) the Germans placed a small field flying unit consisting of ca. 2-3 aircraft, that operated there the whole summer. In addition to this, they had in Munkkiniemi at Laajalahti bay a couple of Friedrichshafen seaplanes.

Earlier was mentioned, among others, that on April 29th a flying unit of two aircraft was located at Lovisa, it made reconnaissance flights in the South of Finland.

In the summer of 1918 part of the German fleet was located at Koivisto, there was also a small flying unit of two Friedrichshafen seaplanes, that made flights for the navy.

Further a German air base was on Suursaari Island, where aircraft visited twice a day to refuel.

Withdrawal of German Troops from Finland (page 202)

Due to the revolution that took place in Germany in the beginning of November and according to the armistice concluded on the 10th of the same month, 1918, Germany had to withdraw immediately all troops from the occupied areas. Therefore also the German troops in Finland in 1918 received the order to withdraw from the country. Due to this they left Finland in December 1918 and took the aircraft, that were here, with them.

For verification and *additional information* the following sources have been used:

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Finlands frihetskrig år 1918 (Finnish Independence War 1918, in Swedish), Söderström, Part III (1923) pages 308, 438-459, Part V (1924) pages 305-408.

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R. Arimo, Saksalaisten sotilaallinen toiminta Suomessa 1918, 1991, 212 p.

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Bastian, Tyska flottans ingripande - Åland besättes, vägen till Hangö öppnas, Finlands frihetskrig, part III, Schildts, 1921, pages 211-260, attachments I and II.

Bastian, Tyska flottans ingripande - huvudoperationen i april 1918, Finlands frihetskrig, part VII, Schildts, 1922, pages 57-101.

Henke Carl, De Tyska arméflygarnas medverkan i Finland-företaget, Finlands frihetskrig, part VII, Schildts, 1922, pages 271-285.

Abbreviations of German military ranks and terms:

Hptm.	Hauptmann	Captain	Kapteeni
Ltn.	Leutnant	Lieutenant	Lutnantti
Ltn.z.S.	Leutnant zur See	Naval Lieutenant	Laivaston luutnantti
Ltn.d.Res.	Leutnant der Reserve	Lieutenant of Reserve	Reservin luutnantti
Vzfw. / Sergt.	Vizefeldwebel / Sergeant	Sergeant	Kersantti
Uffz.	Unteroffizier	Corporal	Aliupseeri (alikersantti)
Fl.-Abt.	Flieger-Abteilung	Flying unit for long range reconnaissance	
Fl.-Abt.(A)	Artillerie-Flieger-Abteilung	Flying unit for artillery spotting and reconnaissance	