

**ILLUSTRATED**

# OPERATION FELIX



## Hitler's plan to capture Gibraltar

**by JOE GARCIA**

# OPERATION FELIX

**HITLER'S  
PLAN TO  
CAPTURE  
GIBRALTAR**

**by JOE GARCIA**



MEDITERRANEAN SUN PUBLISHING CO LTD - GIBRALTAR

FOREWORD .....	3
INTRODUCTION .....	4
PART 1: Prelude to Operation Felix .....	5
PART 2: The German Military Plan .....	15
PART 3: Wartime Gibraltar .....	25
PART 4: Felix - The End .....	33
APPENDIX: Hitler's Directive No.18 .....	37
SOURCES consulted .....	40

First Published 1979  
This reprint 1985

©Joseph Garcia 1979

Designed, produced and published by Mediterranean SUN Publishing Co. Ltd., 93-95 Irish Town, Gibraltar, and printed by Plaistow Press Magazines Ltd., London E15.

# FOREWORD

*I am delighted that Joe Garcia has written this booklet on Operation Felix. Military archives abound with plans for operations which never took place and in consequence have sunk into the dust of history. Operation Felix did not take place but it deserves to be remembered in Gibraltar because it not only changed the physical shape of Gibraltar internally and externally, but it also changed the lives of so many Gibraltar families, whose women and children were evacuated "to clear the decks" for the battle which never came.*

*Would Felix have succeeded? I doubt it. The formation nominated for the attack was the 3rd Panzer Division, several units of which joined Rommel's Afrika Korps in front of Tobruk in 1941. Rommel failed to take Tobruk using very similar tactics to those advocated for Felix, and Tobruk's defences were far less formidable than Gibraltar's. Rommel did take Tobruk much later in 1942 but this was because the 8th Army had been defeated south of the fortress in the great battles of the "Cauldron" and "Knights-bridge".*

*I can thoroughly commend this study to all those who are interested in the recent history of the Rock.*

GENERAL SIR WILLIAM JACKSON GBE KCB MC  
Governor and Commander-in-Chief Gibraltar

1979

## INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR

As a young newspaper correspondent in London some years ago, I would try to leave no stone unturned in my eager search for news items about Gibraltar. I remember once coming across a dictionary of politics which noted that during the Second World War there was a detailed plan to capture Gibraltar. It was code-named *Operation Felix*, and it has been a source of interest ever since. I knew that, sooner or later, I would have to find the time to delve deeper into it, and I thought recently that 1979 would be a good time for it, considering that 3 September 1979 marks the 40th anniversary of the declaration of war.

This publication highlights Hitler's *Operation Felix* but it also digresses into other aspects of the early years of the Second World War as they affected Gibraltar. What is surprising, and a real pity, is that so little has been written locally about wartime Gibraltar when there is so much information, of so much local interest, that could be recorded for posterity in book form.

The research for *Operation Felix* has been from primary and published sources emanating from Gibraltar, Britain, Spain, the United States and Germany. The author has consulted British War Cabinet minutes and has reproduced, with permission, extracts from a most detailed and elucidating work by American university professor Charles B. Burdick who interviewed surviving German military officers who had been involved in the Gibraltar invasion plan. Hitler's detailed directive on *Operation Felix*, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office, is published as an appendix. A list of sources is given at the back of the book, corresponding with numerical references in the text, and should be a useful bibliography. Photographs, except where otherwise stated, are reproduced, with permission, from the Imperial War Museum, London.

J.G., Gibraltar 1979.

COVER PICTURE: The airfield during World War II

## PART 1 - PRELUDE TO OPERATION FELIX

With the fall of France and the entry of Italy into the war, the summer of 1940 was an ominously critical period for the British people. The advance through Europe of Hitler's victorious armies seemed unstoppable: Denmark and Norway invaded and occupied in April 1940; Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and France in May. That summer Britain stood alone, she was Hitler's next objective in his World War II strategy.

In those dark days, hardly anyone expected Britain to pull through. Yet, despite this backcloth of pessimism, Britain managed to succeed in warding off the Luftwaffe's air attacks which had begun in August as a prelude to a cross-Channel invasion. The Battle of Britain made the Germans fully realise that without absolute air control and supremacy at sea an effective attack on Britain was not realisable. Indeed the surprise British bombardment of the French fleet in Oran on 3 July had already forced the German naval authorities to recognise that large-scale naval operations were impossible because Gibraltar was in British hands, and Hitler was urged to invade and capture Gibraltar.

Sir Samuel Hoare, appointed by Churchill as special ambassador to Spain in May that year, wrote in his memoirs: "For centuries, the naval command of the Mediterranean had been a fundamental principle of British policy. Indeed, without the unimpeded passage of British ships through the Mediterranean, the maintenance of the British Empire would have been impossible. Gibraltar, Malta and the Suez Canal had in the course of generations become the outward and visible signs of our control of the great inland sea. . . . . Suddenly, as a result of the French collapse, the Allied plan, so carefully worked out and so faithfully sustained in the first year of the war, had become worthless. What would now stop the Mediterranean from becoming the *Mare Nostrum* of Mussolini and Hitler? Was it not inevitable that our communications with the Far East would be completely severed, and an irreparable breach made in the British front? Could Malta and Suez hold out, and would the fortress of Gibraltar be of any value if the Naval and Air bases under the shadow of the Rock now become untenable? Would not Hitler seize this unique opportunity of pushing through Spain and North Africa and of creating for himself an impregnable base from which to dominate the African continent and threaten the Atlantic highway?" (1).

On 12 June, General Franco had ominously shifted from a position of neutrality to one of 'non-belligerency', just two days after Mussolini had thrown Italy on the side of the Axis and two days before Spanish troops had occupied the international zone

of Tangier. What was in Franco's mind? Ramon Serrano Suñer, then Franco's interior minister, recalls that after the downfall of France, Franco and virtually all his Generals had 'blind faith' in a German victory and were impatient to occupy the Rock and spill over the French protectorate in Morocco. (2). The thinking in London was that whilst Franco shared the universal belief that England would lose the war, he would not take sides unless he was sure of the imminent defeat of England. In *Their Finest Hour*, Winston Churchill observed: "We had been neutral in the sanguinary Spanish Civil War. General Franco owed little or nothing to us, but much - perhaps life itself - to the Axis Powers. Hitler and Mussolini had come to his aid." (3).

An attack on Gibraltar would have been "a destructive blow", as Churchill put it. It had become a deep anxiety after the French Armistice when, on 27 June 1940, the Germans reached the Spanish frontier in force and proposed fraternal ceremonial parades in San Sebastian and in towns beyond the Pyrenees.(4). In early July, Hitler spoke to Count Galeazzo Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, about an attack on Gibraltar.

Churchill had appointed his former Cabinet colleague Hoare as ambassador in Madrid with the special mission of helping to keep Spain out of the war. Serrano Suñer, Franco's brother-in-law, was identified with those in Spain favouring intervention in the war and was subsequently to replace the pro-British Foreign Minister Colonel Beigbeder who, in Hoare's view, was more interested in Morocco than in Gibraltar.

In *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, Sir Llewellyn Woodward points out that General Franco wanted a German victory, or at all events, did not want the defeat of the Fascist Powers and would also have welcomed a chance of increasing his domestic prestige by the recovery of Gibraltar and by gains in Morocco at the expense of France. On the other hand, he wished to maintain Spanish independence, and therefore had no particular interest in helping to bring about an overwhelming German victory, still less a victory in which Italy would also put forward claims in the Mediterranean. (5).

Indeed, this clash between Italian designs and Spanish requirements was one of the problems Hitler had to contend with. Franco was later to make it known that not only was he after territorial aggrandizement in N.W. Africa, but also that Gibraltar had to be captured with Spanish troops, which in itself clashed with German intentions. He also wanted adequate military supplies to face a possible British reaction against the Canary Islands. Wrote Churchill: " . . . . . for nearly two years we kept constantly at a few days' notice an expedition of over five thousand men and their ships, ready to seize the Canary Islands, by which we could maintain air and sea control over the U-boats, and contact with Australasia round the Cape, if ever the harbour of Gibraltar were denied to us by the Spaniards." (6).



*The harbour in wartime Gibraltar.*



*Searchlight practice in 1942*

The Germans went ahead meanwhile with preliminary preparations for an attack on Gibraltar. Such an attack, ordered Hitler, must be undertaken with Spanish acquiescence. In July, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris - head of the German secret service (the Abwehr) - arrived in Madrid heading a German reconnaissance party which included senior officers who had played a leading role in the capture of the Belgian fort of Eben Emael. They travelled to Madrid via different routes and in civilian clothes. Their final destination: Algeciras, to gather information about the Rock's defences and to view from across the bay the scenario for what was to become known as *Operation Felix*.

American university professor Charles B. Burdick gives a detailed account in "Germany's Military Strategy and Spain in World War II":

### GERMANY'S MILITARY STRATEGY

The officers used the two days, July 25-26, for rapid trips around the surrounding countryside. They observed Gibraltar's imposing northern face from the Spanish commander's office in La Linea and the western face from the Punta Carnero lighthouse. The bulky Mikosch, wearing the borrowed and ill-fitting uniform of the resident commander, made a thorough inspection of the neutral border zone and also flew with the Spanish airlines from Seville to Ceuta, the aircraft flying a bit closer to Gibraltar than required by its normal flight plan. The others traveled freely with Spanish vehicles and guides. Several of the participants climbed up on the roof of an official's house where they had an unsurpassed view of the British bastion. They noted immediately that the fortress presented difficulties confounding normal military rules. The precipitous slopes, irregular wind currents, and limited landing sites precluded glider or parachute operations. They also discovered that the narrow peninsula connecting Gibraltar with the mainland presented a formidable obstacle. The defenders had obviously mined the area, and their guns controlled it from several angles. Since the assaulting troops would be forced to traverse this zone, losses would be high and success problematical. As if these revelations were not serious enough, the camouflaged tourists found other problems. The Spanish railway system was beyond their comprehension. Not only was the rail gauge different from the French, which necessitated transshipment of everything at the Spanish frontier, but the lines moved through Madrid, precluding all hope for secrecy. The Spanish had limited resources for road maintenance, ordnance repair, communication requirements, and foodstuffs. In sum, the advance party was not the least sanguine about attacking Gibraltar. Following this hurried inspection, Canaris held a summary conference on July 27, where the participants combined their know-

ledge. It would be necessary for the Spanish to provide more information on Gibraltar, establish new observation posts with superior optical equipment in La Linea and Algeciras, prepare infantry assembly areas, and provide better maps for the Germans. In addition, the group estimated that surprise was out of the question, Spanish participation uncertain, and the best point for the attack was the strongly fortified northwest corner of the peninsula. After these final thoughts and considerations they returned via Madrid to Berlin. Canaris, Piekenbrock, and Mikosch then prepared a general attack plan.

They considered a minimum requirement for the assault force of two infantry regiments (including one mountain regiment), one engineer construction battalion and two combat engineer battalions with a company of remote-controlled, munition-carrying vehicles (the Goliath), and a special company of mine experts. The artillery would require eleven or twelve regiments with particular emphasis on 21 cm Morser and heavy anti-aircraft guns (the 8.8 cm) which could take the deeply emplaced British weapons under direct fire, as well as the embrasures along the steep north wall of Gibraltar. The Germans would need approximately 167 guns to give them a three to one advantage. Once this task force, with its supply, signal, and other support units reached southern Spain it would open the attack.

The artillery would begin the softening up process with a short thirty-minute barrage upon the British anti-aircraft positions and any fleet units which chose to remain within range. As the gunfire lifted, a heavy dive bomber assault would smash the northern segment of the town, seal up the known tunnel entrances, and destroy any naval vessels surviving the artillery bombardment. Those anti-aircraft guns brash enough to open up on the aerial bombers would be immediately taken under fire by specially designated German guns. As the aircraft departed, the German batteries would resume their full volume of fire against the defending galleries, field positions, and observation posts. In substance, the guns would seek to effectively tie down the defenders and obscure their vision. Shortly after the entire artillery force made its strength known, 4,000 to 5,000 rockets would be discharged on the British front with particular emphasis on the points selected for infantry penetration.

In the midst of this turmoil the combat engineers, closely followed by the assault companies of the mountain troops would spring forward to the main assault. These troops would debouch from La Linea where they could form up during the previous night from assembly positions in the Sierra Carbonera. (Earlier movement would not be possible because of superlative British observation.) Moving behind the drumfire laid down by the artillery, the assault elements would attempt a

rapid advance over the 1,500 meters of open ground, bypassing as many obstacles as they could and overwhelming those which they could not avoid. Once across this narrow death zone, the advance would drive along the southwest corner of the main prominence into the town itself since an attack up the perpendicular northern wall of the Rock was impossible. Those elements which did reach that area would take advantage of the dead ground at the base to slide along to the west and aid those troops already turning the shoulder at that point. Once past the narrow open corner, the attack should strike east and south to overwhelm the defenses on the northwest flank of the pinnacle.

As the firefight grew more critical, assault boats from La Linea, under cover of extensive smoke screens, would land on the Old Mole and disrupt the defender's cohesion. The first day's objective was the Moorish Castle and the planners estimated that three days of hard fighting would be sufficient to bring victory." (7).

The report which Canaris handed over on 2 August recommended that the attack on Gibraltar be under the control of the Germans who would march through Spain with Franco's consent. It also envisaged heavy air bombardments of the fortress and harbour to destroy or drive the British fleet out of the bay, and it recommended the use of the troops which had quickly and effectively captured Eben Emael.

Since early in 1940 the British had been suspicious about the extent of German activity within Spain. It was wondered then whether the Germans might apply to Spain the methods of infiltration and disguised entry which they had used in Norway. There were said to be 80,000 Germans in the country, 12,000 of them were believed to hold Spanish papers without having renounced German nationality. . . German intelligence agents were active throughout the country. But the Spanish Foreign Ministry contested the figures and maintained that the Spanish Government kept watch on all German activities and had taken precautionary measures against a *coup* at any one of the three danger points, the Balearic Islands, Morocco and the hinterland of Gibraltar. (8)

By mid-August, Hitler had already approved the Gibraltar attack plan as part of the overall strategy against Britain. At a top level meeting on 6 September, the attack on Gibraltar gained special emphasis, and Hitler ordered that preparations were to proceed without delay.

When Canaris rushed to Madrid to inform Franco, he found the Caudillo vacillating. Three days later Hitler sent General von Richthofen, Commander VII Air Corps, to meet Franco at his summer residence in San Sebastian, but the German concluded that Franco was interested but not decided.

With the view gaining ground that Serrano Suñer was on the verge of taking over as Spanish Foreign Minister, he travelled to Berlin for meetings with Hitler and the German Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop. Serrano spoke about Spain's military needs, the possibility of a British landing on the Spanish coast and the strength of Gibraltar itself. The Fuhrer stressed that the question of the capture of Gibraltar had already been studied exactly by the Germans . . . . they had come to the conclusion that Gibraltar would be conquered by a modern attack with relatively modest means. It was a matter of methods which Germany had already used so successfully in the west. Gibraltar was definitely less capable of resistance than the fortifications in the west. (9).

Ian Colvin, in his book *Chief of Intelligence*, observes: "It is interesting to divine from their talk, when they moved over to the map table, that Hitler was insistent that Stukas were far more devastating against fortifications. Obviously, he was anxious to establish the Luftwaffe staff on the airfields of Spain. Once he had given artillery to Spain he could no longer control its use; but even if Gibraltar could not be taken with Stukas, the aircraft would be able to attack British convoys in the Strait and would remain a German weapon. Suñer, who spoke for Franco, wanted the guns, but he was less enthusiastic of the aircraft." (10).

Meanwhile, on 19 September at a meeting in Rome, Mussolini told von Ribbentrop that the loss of Gibraltar would be a hard blow for the British Empire and would guarantee Italy free passage through the Strait. Secret documents found in files belonging to Count Ciano revealed that Ribbentrop had explained that Serrano Suñer had not decided on the date of Spain's entry into the war, but the German military took the view that all would be ready in four weeks, adding that 'the Spanish declaration of war on England should be marked by the first gun shot against Gibraltar.' (11).

On 22 September, Franco wrote to Hitler: "... I am likewise of the opinion that the first act in our attack must consist in the occupation of Gibraltar.....".

Ribbentrop, on return to Berlin after his meeting with Mussolini, was to find that Franco remained undecided on the crucial issue of entering the war, harbouring such fears as losing the Canaries against a reciprocal attack by the Royal Navy. When Hitler himself met Mussolini at the Brenner Pass on 4 October he complained about Franco's intransigence.

Apart from Spain's vacillating attitude, the Germans had also to keep in mind Italian designs in the Western Mediterranean area. At the same time there was also Hitler's hope of inducing the French to start active hostilities against England,

thus making it unwise to give the Spaniards written promises about French colonial possessions in Africa. If such an agreement were made and became known, the German fear was that the French colonial empire would probably go over bodily to de Gaulle. (12).

"These irrevocable differences," wrote Hoare, "showed themselves very clearly in the autumn of 1940. To us they were invaluable. They meant the immunity of Gibraltar and Northwest Africa from German attack at a time when we were in no position to resist it. The defences of Gibraltar were still in a very weak state . . . . we could have done nothing in the autumn of 1940 to stop a German move through Spain to Africa." (13).

On 17 October, the pro-British Colonel Beigbeder was replaced by Serrano Suñer as Spain's Foreign Minister. Two days later, Franco assured Hoare that the ministerial changes did not mean a change in policy.

Hitler had everything - the men, the armament, the power - to march through Spain and attack Gibraltar, yet he persisted in first obtaining Spanish approval. As Churchill wrote in *Their Finest Hour* the Spaniards, reeling and quivering under the self-inflicted mutilations of the civil war, did not wish to have foreign armies marching about their country. Even if they were Nazi and Fascist in their ideology, these morose people would rather have the foreigners' room than their company. Franco shared these feelings to the full, and in a most crafty manner he managed to give effect to them.

Indeed, in a move that was uncharacteristic of Hitler's dealings, the Fuhrer decided to meet Franco on the Spanish/French border. Before the meeting took place, Hoare telegraphed London that, according to Beigbeder, the anti-German party in Spain expected a German request for right of passage some time within the next few months. The Germans were unlikely to move before 1941, since road and railway communications in Spain needed a good deal of improvement before they could take large forces. It was uncertain whether Franco would accept the German demands. (14).

At the famous Hendaya encounter on 23 October, Hitler had indeed wanted to ensure the viability of *Operation Felix* by securing Franco's agreement to German forces traversing Spain. The German interpreter Dr Paul Schmidt, who was on the train, says that Hitler, there and then, offered Gibraltar to Spain and, somewhat more vaguely, colonial territories in Africa. Sitting huddled up in his chair, Franco took an evasive stance. He put forward a long list of Spanish requirements: "Several hundred thousand tons of wheat immediately. . . . Modern arma-

ments including heavy artillery for operations against Gibraltar . . He wanted protection of his long coastline against any attacks by the Royal Navy . . . . .He was short of anti-aircraft guns . . . . . How was Spain to insure against the loss, which would have to be expected, of the Canary Islands? Apart from this, it was not consistent with Spanish national pride to accept that Gibraltar be taken by foreign troops. The fortress could be taken only by Spaniards. (15).

Serrano Suñer, who was present at the meeting, recalls that Hitler assured Franco that the annihilation of England was a matter of very little time. Three issues worried the Fuhrer: Gibraltar, Morocco and the Canaries. And Spain had 'a very important' part to play. As regards Gibraltar, Hitler said it was a question of honour for the Spanish people to reintegrate 'that piece of soil which was still in foreign hands.' Gibraltar's privileged position in the Strait made it the most important point of support which the Allies had for navigating in the Mediterranean. Hitler saw the need to close the Strait, and with both Ceuta and Gibraltar in Spanish hands, this could be achieved. 'The time has come for Spain to take part in the war,' Hitler urged Franco.

The Caudillo, for his part, announced his gratitude 'most expressively' to what Hitler had said about Gibraltar and agreed with his thesis that the fall of Gibraltar would guarantee the Western Mediterranean to the Axis powers. But he felt it was also important to close the Suez Canal. Franco also insisted on his African claims and requested a formal undertaking on them prior to entering the war, but Hitler refused to give such an undertaking. Serrano Suñer takes the view that Franco's 'No' to entering the war was a consequence to Hitler's 'No' to Franco's request for French Morocco and Oran, 'not forgetting our old and eternal claim to Gibraltar.' (16). A secret protocol handed over to the Spaniards referred to the 'reincorporation of Gibraltar into Spain.'

Although the meeting proved inconclusive, Hitler was not to give up. On 4 November, the Fuhrer called a meeting with his senior officers during which he confirmed his plans to attack Gibraltar. 'With or without Franco,' he said, 'I will take Gibraltar.' (17).

Eight days later, on 12 November 1940, the Fuhrer issued his detailed 'Top Secret' Directive No. 18 *Operation Felix* - the capture of Gibraltar.



*General Hubert Lanz, commander of the Gibraltar invasion forces. (Courtesy General Lanz).*



*General Hans Mikosch, Engineering Officer for the Gibraltar invasion. (Courtesy General Mikosch).*



*General Ludwig Kuebler, XL Corps commander, in charge of training troops for the invasion. (Courtesy General Lanz).*



*General Fritz Brand, Artillery Officer responsible for planning the bombardment of Gibraltar. (Courtesy General Brand).*

## PART 2: THE GERMAN MILITARY PLAN OF ACTION

Hitler had issued his Felix directive almost exactly 4 months after the Canaris mission to Spain to prepare the Gibraltar invasion plan. Directive No. 18 (published in full as an Appendix) had four sections about Gibraltar. Special units of the German Foreign Intelligence Department, in disguised co-operation with the Spaniards, were to take over the protection of the Gibraltar area against the possibility of British attempts to extend the outpost area or prematurely to discover and disturb the preparations.

The units designated for the action were to assemble in readiness far back of the Franco-Spanish border. No premature explanation would be given to the troops - a preliminary alert for beginning the operation would be issued 3 weeks before the troops were due to cross the border into Spain.

Hitler wanted the Army units to be 'strong enough to take the Rock even without Spanish help', and he also ordered that a small group be made available to support the Spaniards 'in the unlikely event of an English attempt at a landing on another part of the coast.' Sufficient anti-aircraft artillery were to be allocated to the army units.

The crossing of the Spanish/French border, mainly by motorized units due to the limited capacity of the Spanish railway, would take place shortly after the Luftwaffe had conducted an aerial attack from French soil against the British fleet in Gibraltar harbour. The aircraft would land on Spanish airfields after the attack. For the aerial attack, said Hitler, forces are to be designated which will guarantee abundant success. Directed by observation near Algeciras, the Luftwaffe would attack 'at a favourable moment.'

For subsequent operations against naval objectives, and for support of the Rock attack, mainly dive bomber units were to be transferred to Spain.

After the air attack, the Germans expected the 'English Gibraltar squadron' to evacuate the harbour, and in this respect, Hitler ordered that U-boats be provided to combat the British naval units. After the seizure of the Rock, support would be given to the Spaniards in closing the Strait by the transfer of individual coastal batteries and by support, if necessary, from the Spanish-Moroccan side as well.

As detailed plans for the operation were being finalised, the Germans estimated that they would need 65,383 men, 1094 horses and 13,179 tons of ammunition. The invasion would be under the general command of Field Marshal Walter von Reichenau Commander of the 6th Army.

During the 24-hour period prior to the infantry attack, the Germans planned to fire 6,000 shells. Each gun emplacement on the Rock facing Spain would receive 100 shells and a total of over 20,000 shells were considered necessary to neutralise all defences. In four weeks, the Germans thought Gibraltar would have surrendered.

General Kuebler was responsible for troop training, and General Lanz for commanding the invasion forces. In readiness for the operation, specially selected troops had been training since early November in a mountain formation similar to Gibraltar which had been located in the French Jura. Defences, such as embrasures and galleries similar to those at Gibraltar, had been built to add realism to the practice exercises. The wind conditions at Gibraltar were simulated by special wind machines; and smoke-producing units played a leading role in the training as the use of smoke was imperative to obstruct the vision from look-out points up the Rock of the attacking forces. As the artillery bombardment and land invasion proceeded, a water-borne attack would be launched from Algeciras using assault boats. The initial air raid involved two Ju-88 units, with fighter escort. After they had destroyed or driven the British navy out to sea, their place would be taken by Stuka dive-bombers with additional fighters.

Hitler held his final briefing on the Gibraltar attack on 5 December, just 3 weeks after his detailed directive. Present at the 4-hour meeting were Field-marshal Brauchitsch, the Army's commander-in-chief; Field-marshal Keitel, Commander of the OKW (High Command); General Halder, Chief of the German Army General Staff and General Jodl, Chief of the Operations Staff in OKW. Professor Burdick reconstructs what went on at this important meeting:

Brauchitsch spoke first and stated that the initial reconnaissance group of fifteen officers dressed in civilian clothing would leave for Spain the next day. If the attack was to begin in February, the preliminary orders required Hitler's signature within ten days. The entire operation, under Field Marshal von Reichenau, should last approximately four weeks and release the troops concerned for use elsewhere by mid-May. Halder then entered the discussion and described the course of the operation in some detail, in the course of which he pointed out a basic dilemma confronting the undertaking. It

could begin within twenty-five days of the initial border crossing if the assault force was already positioned on the Franco-Spanish border. Such assembly would, however, obviously eliminate secrecy and provide advance warning to the enemy. If conspicuous troop movements in France could be avoided, the attack preparations would demand thirty-eight days. This question had been debated on November 25 and Hitler had, at that time, opted in favour of surprise. Despite this earlier decision the Fuehrer now reversed himself in favor of the shorter time. He pointed out that the troop adjustments might be camouflaged as preparations against unoccupied France. Even more to the point, the surprise element would be lost once the air assault on Gibraltar took place. Hitler went on to announce his desire to obtain Franco's formal consent to begin the operation on January 10 with the final assault opening on February 4 or 5. With reference to the general command, he agreed that von Reichenau would lead the attack and maintain liaison with Franco.

The Fuehrer then expanded his views on the undertaking. Richthofen's aircraft should strike the British fleet units in or near Gibraltar as soon as possible. This mission would, in view of strong anti-aircraft fire, be unlikely to achieve decisive success. Further dive bomber attacks would be required from the fourth or fifth day after the original effort. These missions should drive the surviving fleet units away from the Rock and, in addition, silence the defensive guns facing toward Spain. The "Brandenburg" unit should also be prepared for immediate use - in conjunction with Spanish troops - to keep open the approach roads for the advancing German units as well as protecting the artillery positions against a British sortie. The artillery batteries, moving into position ahead of the infantry, should immediately open the bombardment. Using drumfire, the guns would blow up the peninsula connecting Spain and Gibraltar to detonate all mines and explosives. Thereafter, the defending casemates could be methodically destroyed through observed point fire.

Following this brief descriptive analysis General Brand, who had been ordered to stand by, came in to explain his views on the artillery commitment. He reported that the British had some 98 guns for ground use and 50 anti-aircraft pieces. The Germans intended to use some 210 heavy guns - an effective ratio of 1.5 to 1, which was made greater by the more effective German shells and the limited field of fire available to many guns in Gibraltar. Brand estimated that 9,360 rounds were required to silence the defender's guns and another 10,800 shells to neutralize his defences. Hitler brusquely interrupted with the observation that Brand's proposals were too low and he should take steps to increase the artillery allotments. Brand then went on to observe that eighteen batteries would fire 6,000 shells during the twenty-four hours preceding the infantry attack to create

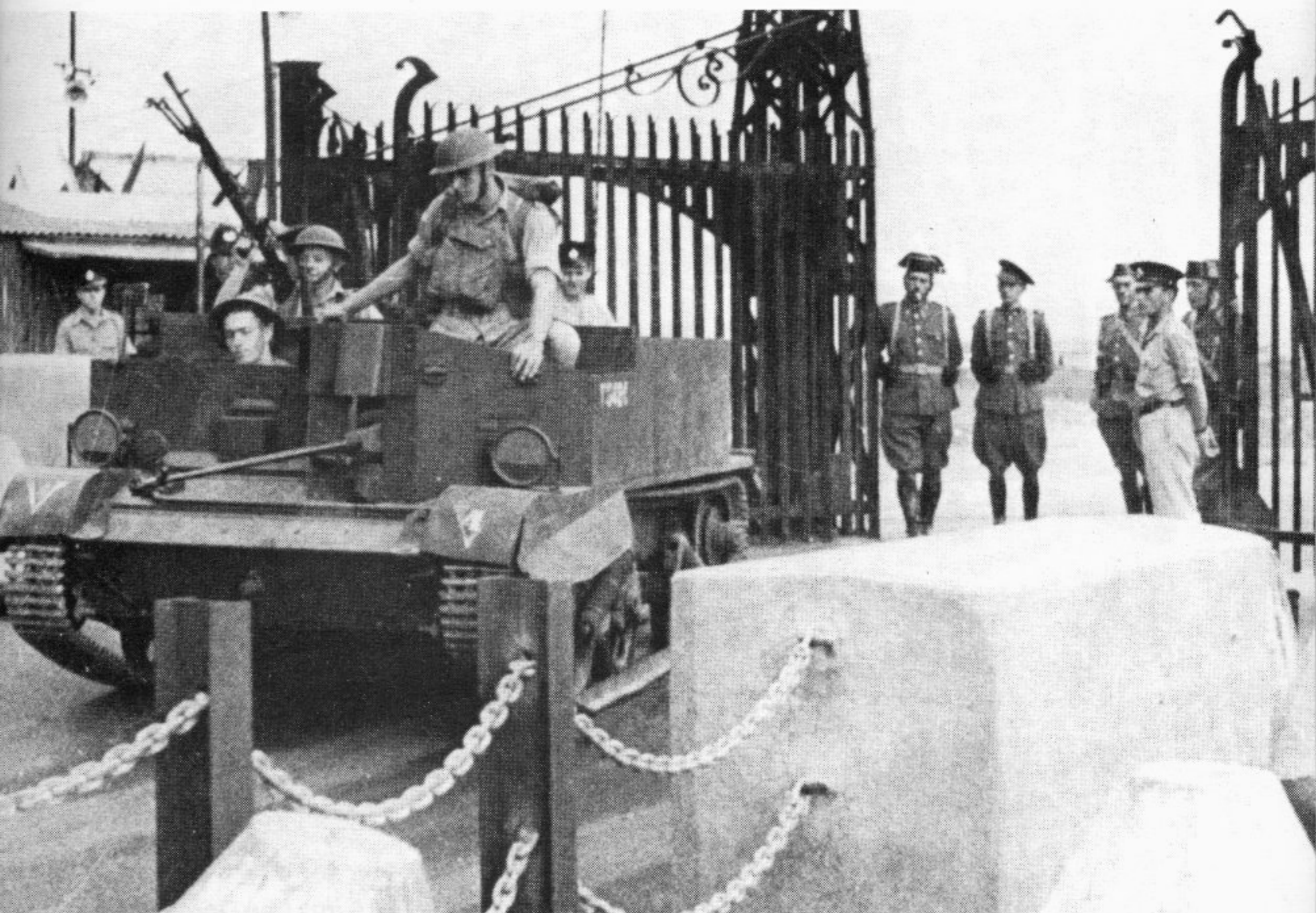
six lanes, each 25 meters wide, for the assaulting infantry. Careful reconnaissance over Gibraltar indicated that there were 27 casemates facing Spain. To combat them Brand planned to use 18 guns which would fire a hundred rounds at each casemate. Nine heavy howitzers in La Linea had nine unidentified bunkers in the northwest corner of the Rock as their fire mission while 18 batteries of like weapons were available for general targets of opportunity or unknown installations. In support of the infantry, Brand stated that there would be two batteries for each 100-meter sector north of the British defensive lines. More artillery could not be employed because there was no space to emplace the guns.

Hitler agreed to Brand's concept although he renewed his demands for expanded ammunition supplies. Beyond that he expressed interest in the prompt closing of the Straits through use of heavy batteries transferred to Ceuta and Tarifa. Following Gibraltar's capture the Fuehrer wanted one armoured and one motorized division moved to Africa. Subsequently, these units might be replaced by fortress troops. In view of his various demands and the pressing time problems, Hitler gave up all idea of occupying the Madeiras, Cape Verde, or Azores Islands. Even so, he insisted that his subordinates had to shore up the Canary Island defenses with four heavy German batteries (120 mm or 150 mm).

Two days later Hitler held the final discussion relative to "Felix." The late afternoon meeting also had Brauchitsch, Keitel, Jodl, Warlimont, Richthofen, Reichenau, and Kuebler in attendance. The assault commander, using a meticulously prepared model on a scale of 1:1,000, exhaustively went through each step of the operation. Kuebler enthusiastically demonstrated how the artillery would pulverize the area in front of the Rock and smash the defences. The following infantry troops could then move on the northern corner of the pinnacle and, after turning the shoulder, advance to the top. Richthofen discussed the choice of targets for the Air Force and the possibilities for laying mines from the air. There were no basic criticisms or questions, and the conference broke up with all agreed that the proposed assault plan was in good order." (18)



*The funeral of Polish General Sikorski, who died in Gibraltar in a plane crash in July 1943. Polish soldiers lined the area opposite the Cathedral of St Mary the Crowned.*



*This picture, issued in 1942, shows a Bren carrier on patrol at the frontier gates, watched by Spanish Civil Guards.*





*Hayes level entrance to the heart of the Rock.*



*Lt Gen F Mason MacFarlane, Gibraltar's Governor and Commander-in-Chief, riding with Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Chief of Combined Operations, during a commando exercise in Gibraltar.*



*The Rock seen from HMS Formidable.*

### PART 3: WARTIME GIBRALTAR

At Gibraltar, Britain was intent in fighting it out to the bitter end. An order issued to troops instructed them that should they run out of ammunition, to throw rocks at the attackers! And if the Rock had to be abandoned, *Operation Monkey* foresaw two officers remaining in a secret hideout deep inside the Rock so as not to completely sever the British presence. An underground, self-contained city had been created deep inside the Rock, following much blasting of solid rock by tunnellers. It had its own telephone exchanges, frozen meat stores, water distillers and an up-to-date bakery.

The possibility of Gibraltar being attacked from the landward side had been considered by the Chiefs of Staff in London who, in a secret memorandum issued on 24 August 1940, noted that the enemy's operations would be facilitated by the heavy covering fire at effective range which could be developed from the concrete pillboxes which had been recently constructed by the Spaniards 'in their half of the neutral zone' between La Linea and the British frontier. Some of these pillboxes were not more than 1,200 yards from Gibraltar's main line of resistance .

In Gibraltar, the Governor and Commander-in-Chief had prepared a plan to destroy these pillboxes. The success of this operation depends upon obtaining complete surprise, noted the Chiefs of Staff, and this can only be achieved if the operation is carried out before the enemy (Spanish or German) can concentrate in force in the La Linea area. The authority to carry out the operation would be a code word which the War

Office would transmit to the Governor as soon as the Foreign Office were satisfied that either (a) Spain was undoubtedly about to declare war, or (b) the Germans had invaded Spanish territory and that the Spaniards had offered no resistance. (19)

The war indeed led to the compulsory evacuation from Gibraltar of women, children and non-essential men. In April 1940, the War Cabinet in London heard about plans for the evacuation of 1,400 Service families and 'about 13,000 old men, women and children.' The War Office had been considering the question of the withdrawal of British Service families from the Mediterranean, including Gibraltar, and the Oversea Defence Committee had been considering the case of the surplus civilian population at Gibraltar. It would be very desirable, on military grounds, to evacuate these before an attack develops, reported the Foreign Secretary. French Morocco was seen as the most suitable destination. The War Cabinet agreed that the Governor be given compulsory powers to evacuate the surplus civilian population, on the understanding that the scheme would not be put into operation without a decision by the War Cabinet. (20).

On 19 May, the War Secretary recalled the scheme for evacuating civilians from Gibraltar and went on to say that a telegram had been received from the Governor stating that he was unwilling to carry out the scheme, the main reason being that the evacuation of civilians would create 'a most unfavourable impression on Spanish opinion and that it should not therefore be carried out unless we were certain that Spain would be hostile.' The Foreign Office had taken the view that the effect of evacuation on Spanish opinion ought not to be serious. The Foreign Secretary said that, unless there was a revolution, he saw no reason to think that Spain would enter the war. He doubted whether the evacuation of certain civilians from Gibraltar would alter Spanish policy.

The War Cabinet was to agree that the Governor be instructed to put the scheme into effect. Care should be taken to explain this was a precautionary measure taken in view of the disturbed situation in the Mediterranean generally, and that it was not due to anxiety as to Spain's intentions. (21).

Two days later, the Spanish Foreign Minister made it known to the British Embassy in Madrid that he was already aware of the British decision to evacuate civilians from Gibraltar which 'had been unhealthily crowded for some time', and offered to give any assistance that might be useful, such as the granting of collective visas.

When on 8 July 1940 the First Lord of the Admiralty spoke about the Gibraltar evacuees who had gone to Morocco, saying

that the French authorities might wish to ship them to Britain, the War Cabinet agreed - on the instigation of the Home Secretary - that 'it was most undesirable that these refugees should be brought to this country.' It was stated that there was no means of dealing with them except in internment camps. (22).

The following day, Churchill revealed that a message had been received from the French authorities to the effect that they would not allow British ships which were approaching Casablanca harbour, with French troops on board, to be victualled unless Britain agreed that the ships should take away the Gibraltarian refugees. He further announced that he had agreed that an undertaking should be given that these refugees would be removed from Morocco. (23).

By October, the 10,600 Gibraltarians evacuated from Gibraltar and temporarily accommodated in London 'were in a difficult mood', to quote the Colonial Secretary and the Minister for Health. Some 500 were now prepared to go overseas voluntarily, the War Cabinet was told, but compulsion might be necessary to get the whole party to go . . . At this point, the Prime Minister thought that the evacuees ought to go overseas and that they should be made to understand 'that we were determined that they should go. Their attitude could be altered by propaganda.'

In reply to a question by the Minister of Labour, the Colonial Secretary admitted that the conditions on the ships in which the evacuees had been brought to England had been bad. This was because it had been necessary to use the cargo-liners used to repatriate French troops from Britain. At the end of the discussions, the Cabinet agreed that arrangements be made forthwith for the shipment of the 500 volunteers and that suitable arrangements be made to induce the other evacuees to proceed to the West Indies as and when suitable shipping arrangements could be made. (24).

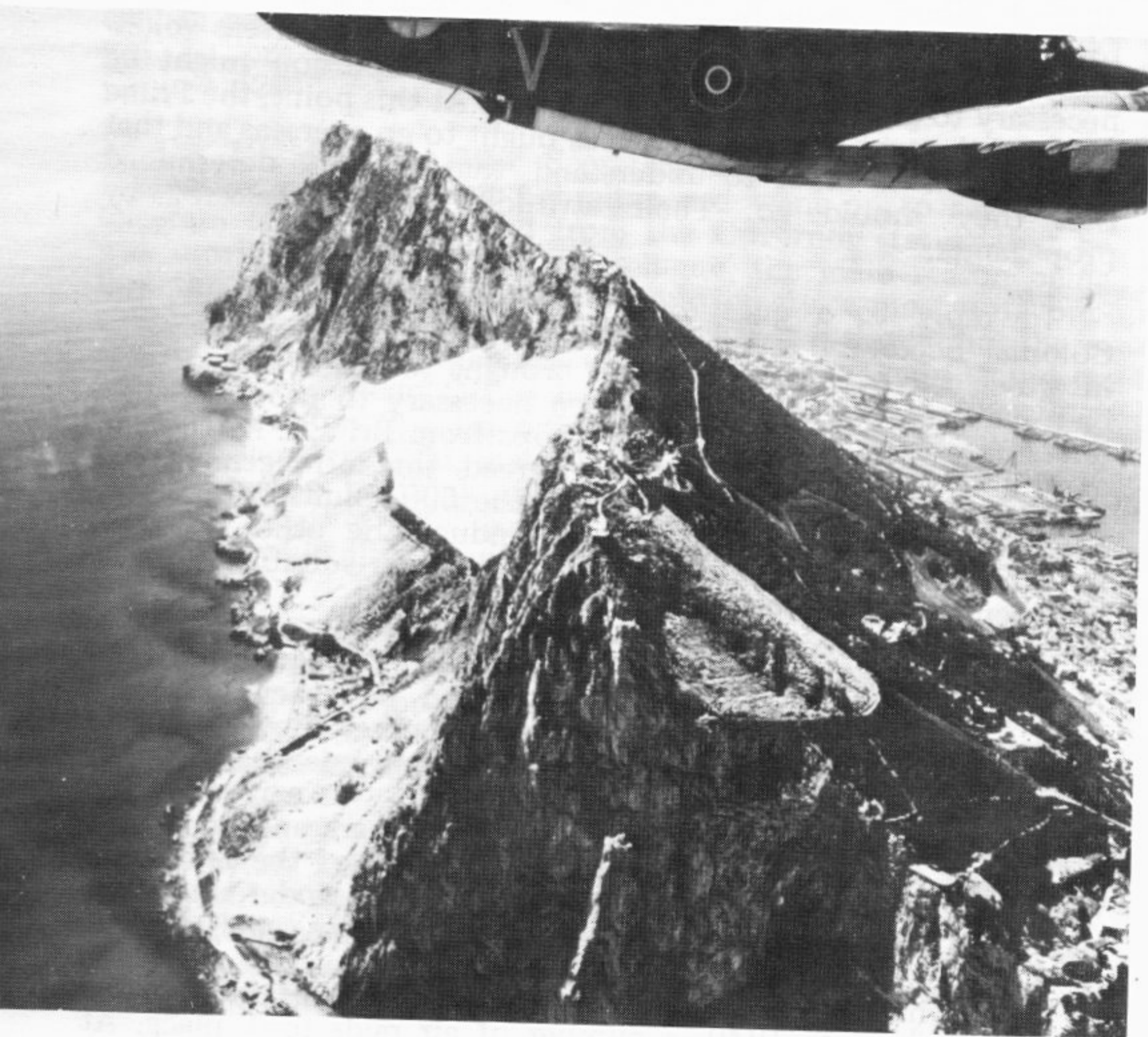
In May the following year, when considering a recommendation that 4,000 further civilians should be evacuated from Gibraltar, the main point at issue was whether they should be taken to Britain, 'notwithstanding the inconveniences to which this would give rise', or sent to Jamaica. It was agreed by the War Cabinet that 2,200 were dockyard workers and could not be spared immediately. As many as possible of the remaining 1,800 should be taken to Britain and the remainder should be evacuated as they could be spared, probably in small parties.

Meanwhile in Gibraltar itself, the sour taste of war became manifest when, in 1940, a number of air raids took place. At 3am on 18 July, bombs were dropped mainly on the water catchment and the Europa Road area. There were a few casualties

but very little material damage. There was a similar raid a few days later.

Anti-aircraft fire would turn the attacking planes away, but on 20 August there was another bombing raid at night. The first plane was picked up by searchlights at the moment of bomb release onto the harbour, and another plane was brought down in the Strait.

But the first heavy raid did not come until 24 September when it was estimated that about 60 bombers raided the Rock for 2½ hours. And the next day, formations of 4 or 5 planes approached and attacked the Rock for 2 hours in the afternoon. A total of 33 raids were recorded, and about 500 bombs were dropped, most of them into the sea. The planes were believed to be French.



*An RAF Ventura flying over the Rock.*

On Christmas Day 1940, an unidentified plane, believed to be French, approached the Rock from the East, flying very low. After circling the Rock, it crashed into the sea off La Atunara in La Linea. At 7.30pm that day, the anti-aircraft section of the Gibraltar Defence Force settled for Christmas dinner: Turkey, sausages, pork and ham, roast potatoes, vegetables, wine, beer, coffee and fruit.

In early 1941, reconnaissance planes and others with French markings were spotted, and there was also the occasional raid. On 30 March, eight French planes attacked units of the Western Mediterranean Fleet just off Gibraltar.

Spanish aircraft flew close to the Rock more than once but were not fired upon. On one occasion, on 5 June, a Spanish plane fell into the sea on the East side and the crew was brought to Gibraltar by a patrolling destroyer. (25).

In September that year, action shifted from the air to the sea when explosions were heard in the harbour and bay. It was about 7.40 am on 20 September when vessels were attacked in what was the start of Italian underwater operations, by manned torpedoes, operating from the Algeciras area. There were 14 attempts to sink Allied ships at Gibraltar in the period up to August 1943. Two vessels were in fact sunk and others were damaged.

The construction of the airfield was another important feature of wartime Gibraltar. The risk of British aircraft being intercepted on their way to the Middle East forced the journey to be made with an intermediate stop at Gibraltar and hence the extension of the runway became of paramount importance. It had been extended to 1,550 yards for *Operation Torch* in 1942, and subsequently to 1,800 yards.

With *Operation Felix* in their minds, German intelligence reports in August 1940 estimated that the Gibraltar garrison had 10,000 men including 5 infantry battalions. The reports spoke of the British having excavated a large number of tunnels, galleries and shelters inside the Rock where underground installations could accommodate at least 16,000 persons with sufficient food for 18 months.

From a German viewpoint, the impressive anti-aircraft defences were an important factor but they noted that the main defensive positions along the foot of the Rock were not particularly strong, as the defensive batteries could not depress sufficiently to offer real support against an aggressive foe. Once the attackers crossed the narrow neck of land linking Gibraltar to Spain, the Germans estimated that no more than 20 pieces could be brought into play against them. Another report, in



*Churchill and the Governor on the North Front tarmac.*



*Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Governor MacFarlane inspecting the defences.*

October that year, listed 101 guns ranging from 7.5 to 30.5cm, and about 86 anti-aircraft guns of all calibers, as forming part of Gibraltar's defences. And yet another report, in December, noted continuous British efforts to reinforce the northern face of Gibraltar which had been neglected prior to the fall of France. (26).

In Britain, the War Cabinet had ordered in April 1940 that defences be manned in Gibraltar and other Mediterranean bases, and in June, Churchill thought that to keep valuable ships in Gibraltar harbour within range of Spanish artillery presented too great a temptation to Spain. Surplus shipping had to be cleared from the bay as quickly as possible.

In September, the British were informed that following the attack on the French at Dakar, there had been a request to the Spanish Government to allow French aircraft over Spain and Moroccan territory for an attack on Gibraltar, but according to the Spanish Foreign Minister, Spain had refused. The following month Churchill told the War Cabinet that the French should be made aware of, 'first, that while we made no complaint of the action already taken by them against Gibraltar, which was in retaliation for the Dakar episode, we wished the Vichy Government to know that, if they bombed Gibraltar again, we should retaliate by attacking Casablanca and sinking the ships there.' At the same time, the Admiralty were asked to take steps to reconstitute an adequate Fleet at Gibraltar.

A report by the War Secretary a month later said that the defences of Gibraltar had been greatly strengthened in recent months. There were 4 infantry battalions, and possibly one might be replaced by sappers. Another tunnelling company was badly needed and would be arriving soon. Gibraltar was strong in artillery though not in mobile artillery. The chief improvement required was to put underground more of the essential services, particularly hospitals. The War Secretary added that the Governor was anxious for early information 'in the event of the War Cabinet considering that we were on the eve of (a) Spain's entry into the war against us, or (b) a German push through Spain. He would then propose to take time by the forelock, first by certain sabotage measures, secondly by scuppering the positions which the Spaniards had prepared in La Linea. Our people in Gibraltar took a gloomy view of conditions in Spain and did not believe that the Spaniards would resist a German attempt to advance through their country.' (27).

The importance of the base was highlighted by the Chiefs of Staff in a report dated 23 November 1940. They said that the retention of Gibraltar as a naval base was vital to Britain for the rapid prosecution of the campaign against Italy since, without

the use of this base, it would not be possible for Britain to maintain the blockade, or to pass reinforcements through the Mediterranean.

At the time, it had been feared that Portugal would follow Spain if the Germans pushed into the Iberian peninsula, acquiring in Lisbon a naval base which could accommodate all classes of ships, and from which they could directly threaten the Western Patrol. It is clear, said the Chiefs of Staff, that from the strategic point of view everything should be done to prevent Spain entering the war against us.



*North Front as seen from an aircraft*



*General Charles de Gaulle with Lt Gen F Mason MacFarlane, Governor of Gibraltar, in The Convent, Gibraltar.*

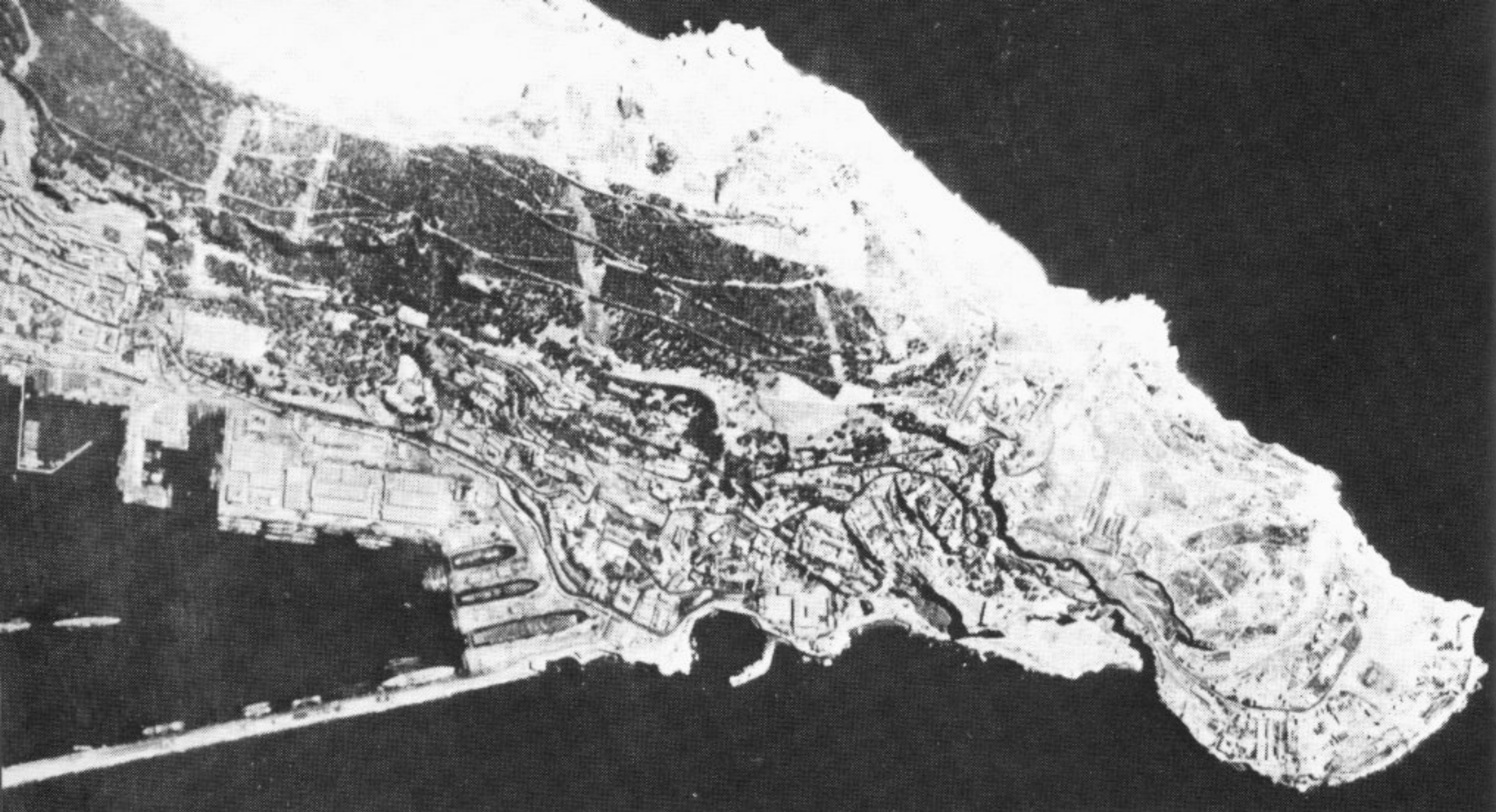
#### PART 4: FELIX — THE END

The Germans were clearly interested in pushing into Spain and storming the Rock, yet Hitler would not shift from his position of first getting Franco on his side rather than push through the Pyrenees unilaterally and face the prospect of guerrilla warfare in the long and arduous trek across a divided Spain.

On 18 November 1940, Serrano Suñer travelled to Berchtesgaden for an urgent political meeting with the Fuhrer who wanted to talk things over with the Spaniards. In the presence of Ribbentrop, Hitler complained about Mussolini's foolish and untimely invasion of Greece, the weather over Britain and the passage of time without compensatory success. Serrano seized the opportunity to ask for immediate technical assistance and for German understanding of Spanish difficulties. Hitler, for his part, informed Serrano that the simplest answer to everything was to get into the war and grant passage to German troops who could accomplish their ends before March 1941. (28).

Another account of the meeting is given by Serrano himself in his memoirs. He recalls that Hitler had organised the meeting so that the Spaniards could fix the date for their entry into the war, because it was now 'absolutely necessary to attack Gibraltar.' Serrano tried to gain time by again expounding on Spain's critical supply problems, and said that Franco was right when he complained that Germany did not send Spain food or military supplies. He took the Franco line by reiterating that in taking Gibraltar only, the Mediterranean was not closed as the Suez end remained open. Furthermore, the Spanish people were tired of wars. Hitler then invited Serrano to a nearby room where Jodl gave a detailed exposition of the project to capture the Rock. But Serrano said that Spain was not ready for active participation in the war, nor could she agree to Germans passing through Spain. (29).

Hitler, for his part, refused to clearly put down on paper an acceptance of Franco's territorial demands; the Fuhrer's view was that Spain would be amply rewarded for joining the Axis. When Serrano met Ribbentrop the next day for further discussions, the Spaniard did not shift from his position. Serrano said in 1977 that when the German invasion of Britain failed, Franco - while still a fervent believer in a German victory - felt that it would be a long war and thus began his policy of 'friendship and resistance' with the Germans.



*An enemy reconnaissance photograph of Gibraltar on 21 August 1942. Naval units - including the aircraft carrier Indomitable or Victorious, and the cruisers Phoebe or Sirius and Kenya or Nigeria - are in dock. A depot ship of the Maidstone class is moored near the carrier.*

In London, the position early in November 1940 was that, for the time being, there appeared to be little danger of a German military advance into Spain, but that Spanish resistance might be weakened by the Germans. In these circumstances, the Foreign Office considered the prospect of Britain being fairly generous in supplies to Spain and also of going ahead with a credit offer. As Hoare told the Foreign Office, Britain already had assurances that there would be no change in the policy of non-belligerency. On the night of 23/24 November, Churchill telegraphed President Roosevelt that an American offer to dole out food on a monthly basis might be decisive. Churchill pointed out the danger of both sides of the Strait falling to the Germans. "The Rock of Gibraltar," he said, "will stand a long siege, but what is the good of that if we cannot use the harbour or pass the Strait?" (30.) The Americans eventually agreed.

As Canaris was to find out in early December, Franco remained adamant about not entering the war and listed a number of negative elements, such as the British Navy's control of the seas. When Hitler heard about it, he urged that Franco be approached once again with the same question: To give a precise date for Spain's entry into the war. But the Caudillo's position

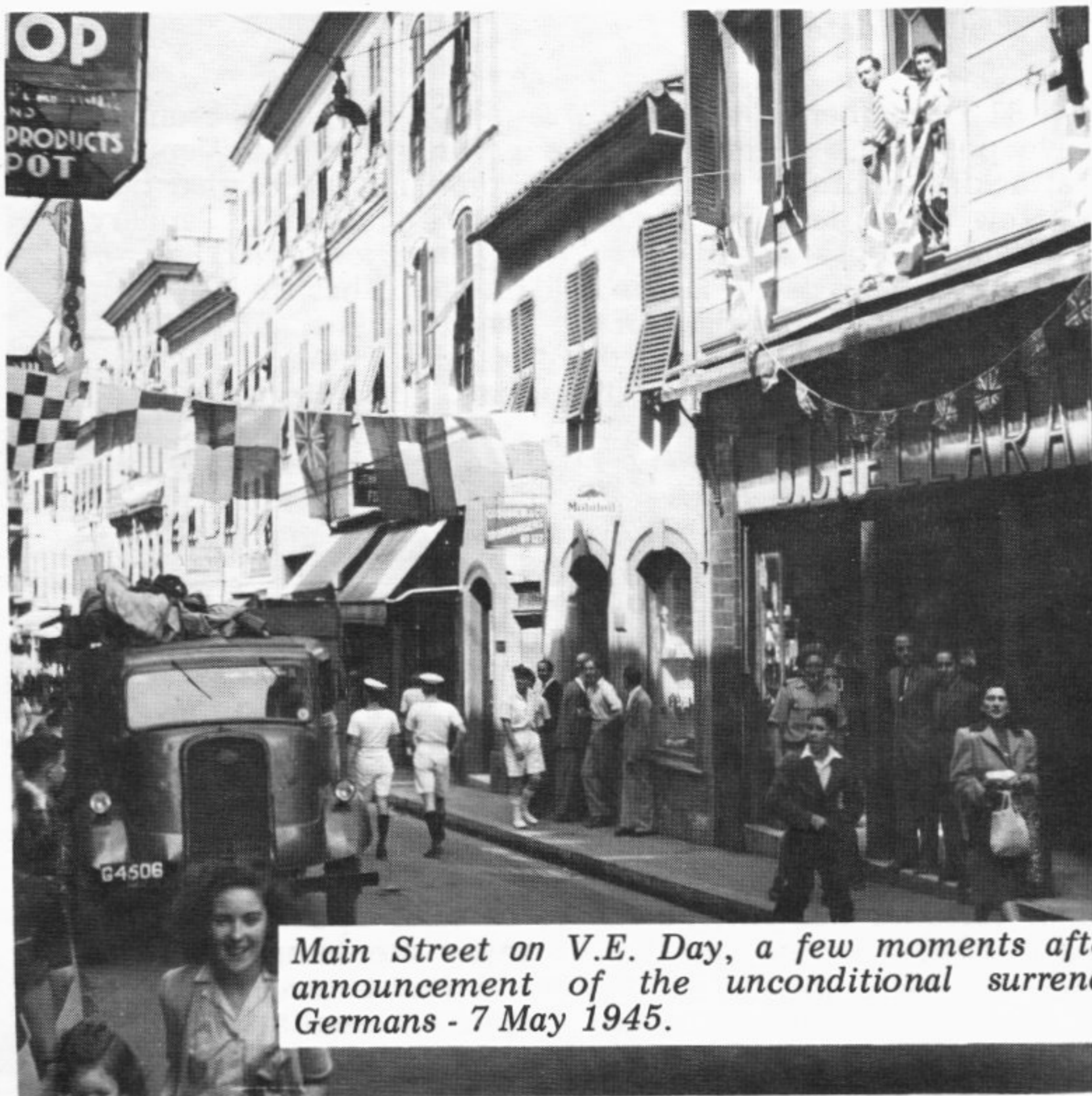
remained unchanged, much to Hitler's annoyance. This was the last straw. Hitler ordered the cessation of all preparations for Felix, although he did not abandon the prospect of it being revived at a later date.

On 31 December, Hitler told Mussolini that due to Franco's negative posture, the Axis plan for entering Spain in January and attacking Gibraltar in February could not be carried out. Yet, a few weeks later he tried to revive Felix. On 18 January 1941, Halder wrote in his diary that *Operation Felix* had returned, and 5 days later, Hoare told London that the Germans had again requested the right of passage through Spain. In fact, on 28 January, Jodl had raised *Felix* with Hitler, but troop requirements clashed with requirements for *Barbarossa*, the offensive against the Russians. Hitler again shelved *Felix*, but by the end of February, he went on to order that the plan be brought up to date. This was ready on 10 March under the new code-name *Operation Felix-Heinrich*, with 15 October seen as a possible attack date. But the Russian adventure kept the *Felix* plan inactive. Hitler would not be drawn into it, as he told Raeder on the eastern headquarters. In May 1943 the Germans had thought of launching a surprise attack on Gibraltar with flying bombs, but it was discarded.

For one reason or another, *Operation Felix* did not materialise. Speaking in Nuremberg Prison to British diplomat Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, Hermann Goering spoke of Hitler's mistakes. Of these, he said, the gravest and the one most damaging to German fortunes was Hitler's failure to seize Spain and North Africa in 1940. Goering said that Germany should have resolved immediately after the fall of France to march through Spain, with or without Franco's assent, capture Gibraltar and spill into Africa. This could very easily have been done and it would have altered the whole course of the war. (31).

In February 1945, with his war dream turning into a nightmare, Hitler admitted: "...we ought to have attacked Gibraltar in the summer of 1940 ....."

Fortunately for the Allies, the attack never came and Gibraltar was able to play a leading role in November 1942 when General Eisenhower installed his headquarters in Gibraltar for *Operation Torch*, the North African campaign - the first large-scale Anglo-American operation in the struggle against Adolf Hitler.



**THE END**

## APPENDIX

### *Führer's Directive*

CHEFSACHE

FÜHRER'S HEADQUARTERS, November 12, 1940.

TOP SECRET MILITARY

The Führer and Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht

WFSt/Abt. L(I) No. 33 356/40 g. K. Chefs

By officer only

### DIRECTIVE No. 18

The measures of the High Commands which are being prepared for the conduct of the war in the near future are to be in accordance with the following guiding principles:

#### 1. *Relations with France*

The aim of my policy toward France is to cooperate with this country in the most effective way for the future prosecution of the war against England. For the time being France will have the role of a "nonbelligerent power" which will have to tolerate German military measures on her territory, in the African colonies especially, and to give support, as far as possible, even by using her own means of defense. The most pressing task of the French is the defensive and offensive protection of their African possessions (West and Equatorial Africa) against England and the de Gaulle movement. From this task the participation of France in the war against England can develop in full force.

Except for the current work of the Armistice Commission, the discussions with France which tie in with my meeting with Marshal Pétain will initially be conducted exclusively by the Foreign Ministry in cooperation with the High Command of the Wehrmacht.

More detailed directives will follow after the conclusion of these discussions.

#### 2. *Spain and Portugal*

Political measures to induce the prompt entry of Spain into the war have been initiated. The aim of *German* intervention in the Iberian Peninsula (code name *Felix*) will be to drive the English out of the Western Mediterranean.

For this purpose:

- a) Gibraltar should be taken and the Straits closed;
- b) The English should be prevented from gaining a foothold at another point of the Iberian Peninsula or of the Atlantic islands.

For the preparation and execution of the undertaking the following is intended:

#### Section I:

a) Reconnaissance parties (officers in civilian clothes) will conclude the requisite preparations for the operation against Gibraltar and for the taking over of airfields. As regards camouflage and cooperation with the Spaniards they are bound by the security measures of the Chief of the Foreign Intelligence Department.

b) Special units of the Foreign Intelligence Department in disguised cooperation with the Spaniards are to take over the protection of the Gibraltar area against English attempts to extend the outpost area or prematurely to discover and disturb the preparations.

c) The units designated for the action will assemble in readiness far back of the Franco-Spanish border and without premature explanation being given to the troops. A preliminary alert for beginning the operation will be issued 3 weeks before the troops cross the Franco-Spanish border (but only after conclusion of the preparations regarding the Atlantic islands).

In view of the limited capacity of the Spanish railroads the Army will mainly designate motorized units for the operation so that the railways remain available for supply.

#### Section II:

a) Directed by observation near Algeciras, Luftwaffe units at a favorable moment will conduct an aerial attack from French soil against the units of the English fleet lying in the harbor of Gibraltar and after the attack they will land on Spanish airports.

b) Shortly thereafter the units designated for commitment in Spain will cross the Franco-Spanish border by land or by air.

#### Section III:

a) The attack for the seizure of Gibraltar is to be by German troops.

b) Troops are to be assembled to march into Portugal in case the English should gain a foothold there. The units designated for this will march into Spain immediately after the forces designated for Gibraltar.

#### Section IV:

Support of the Spaniards in closing the Strait after seizure of the Rock, if necessary, from the Spanish-Moroccan side as well.

The following will apply regarding the *strength* of the units to be committed for Operation *Felix*:

*Army:*

The units designated for Gibraltar must be strong enough to take the Rock even without Spanish help.

Along with this a smaller group must be available to support the Spaniards in the unlikely event of an English attempt at a landing on another part of the coast.

For the possible march into Portugal mobile units are mainly to be designated.

*Luftwaffe:*

For the aerial attack on the harbor of Gibraltar forces are to be designated which will guarantee abundant success.

For the subsequent operations against naval objectives and for support of the attack on the Rock mainly dive bomber units are to be transferred to Spain.

Sufficient antiaircraft artillery is to be allocated to the army units including its use against ground targets.

*Navy:*

U-boats are to be provided for combating the English Gibraltar squadron, and particularly in its evacuation of the harbor which is to be expected after the aerial attack.

For support of the Spaniards in closing the Strait the transfer of *individual* coastal batteries is to be prepared in cooperation with the Army.

Italian participation is not envisaged.

The *Atlantic islands* (particularly the Canaries and the Cape Verde Islands) will, as a result of the Gibraltar operation, gain increased importance for the English conduct of the war at sea as well as for our own naval operations. The Commanders in Chief of the Navy and of the Luftwaffe are to study how the Spanish defense of the Canaries can be supported and how the Cape Verde Islands can be occupied.

I likewise request examination of the question of occupation of Madeira and of the Azores as well as of the question of the advantages and disadvantages which would ensue for the naval and for the aerial conduct of the war. The results of this examination are to be presented to me as soon as possible.

ADOLF HITLER

(32)

## SOURCES CONSULTED

Listed in numerical order as they appear in text:

- (1) Ambassador on Special Mission, Sir Samuel Hoare, Collins, London, 1946, p.27.
- (2) Gibraltar Decidio la Guerra, David Jato, Acervo, Barcelona, 1978 Foreword by Ramon Serrano Suner.
- (3) Their Finest Hour, Winston Churchill, Cassell, London, and Houghton Mifflin, New York, p.518.
- (4) op. cit. (3), p.520.
- (5) British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, Sir Llewellyn Woodward HMSO, 1970, Vo.1, p.433.
- (6) op. cit. (3), p.519.
- (7) Germany's Military Strategy and Spain in World War II, Charles B. Burdick, Syracuse University Press, New York, 1968, pp.26-28.
- (8) op. cit. (5), p.434.
- (9) op. cit. (1), pp.310-311.
- (10) Chief of Intelligence, Ian Colvin, Gollancz, London, 1951, p.126
- (11) Mundo, Madrid, 20 September 1975, p.74.
- (12) Hitler's Interpreter, Dr Paul Schmidt, Heinemann, London, 1951. p.194.
- (13) op. cit. (1), p.93.
- (14) op. cit. (5), p.439-440.
- (15) op. cit. (12), p.195.
- (16) Memorias, Ramon Serrano Suner, Planeta, Barcelona, 1977. p.294 etc.
- (17) op. cit. (2), p.55.
- (18) op. cit. (7), pp.99-102.
- (19) WM 234 (40).
- (20) WM 108 (40).
- (21) WM 19 May 1940.
- (22) WM 197 (40).
- (23) WM 198 (40).
- (24) WM 277 (40).
- (25) GDF Diary 1939-
- (26) op. cit. (7), p.40 etc.
- (27) WM 287 (40).
- (28) op. cit. (7), p.65.
- (29) op. cit. (16), p.306 etc.
- (30) op. cit. (5), p.441.
- (31) The Inner Circle, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, Macmillan, London, 1959, pp.195-6.
- (32) Hitler's Directive No. 18, Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol.XI, Item 323.

Other MedSUN publications:

**GIBRALTAR YEAR BOOK**

(Editor Joe Garcia)

*Directory and reference book. Packed with facts and figures, addresses etc.*

**GIBRALTAR WHO'S WHO**

(Editor Joe Garcia)

*Biographical details of people in high places 1978 edition available. Under revision.*

**THE FAMOUS ROCK APES (Joe Garcia)**

*The story of the only apes living wild in Europe, including A - Z ape guide.*

**DICCIONARIO YANITO**

(Manuel Cavilla OBE)

*Typical words and phrases, their meaning and origins in Spanish.*

**MEDIEVAL GIBRALTAR (J.J. Alcantara)**

*Gibraltar in medieval times from the start of its recorded history in 711. Illustrated.*

**GIBRALTAR TAX HAVEN**

*Guide to Gibraltar's tax-exempt company legislation, and other fiscal matters.*

**OPERATION FELIX (Joe Garcia)**

*Hitler's wartime plan to capture the Rock. Foreward by General Sir William Jackson GBE KCB MC.*

**HISTORY OF THE GIBRALTAR POLICE**

*The second oldest police force in the Commonwealth. Interesting historical highlights. Illustrated*

**PANORAMA -**

*The Gibraltar newsweekly.*

**GIBSCENE**

*The tourist magazine.*

**THE GIBRALTARIAN (Dr. H.W. Howes)**

*The origin and development of the population of Gibraltar from 1704.*



£ 3.50p



Mediterranean SUN Publishing Co Ltd —  
93-7 Irish Town Gibraltar.