

# America At War

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Continuous and steadily mounting air attacks through late spring in preparation for the actual land invasion meant that the Allies had finally built up their long-sought air power margin. Magnitude of the production phase of this task, already accomplished, is implied in the Army-Navy production program for the rest of this year, in which 36 percent of the total is aircraft.

In Sept 1940, the *Luftwaffe* loosed nearly 10,000 tons of bombs on England. Never again did it reach that rate of delivery. In the one month of Apr 1944, British and American air forces dropped nearly 100,000 tons of incendiaries and explosives on Hitler's targets. This is more than Goering's total of missiles unloaded on England in this war to date.

About 45,000 tons of the April deliveries on Europe were by American forces based in England and Italy. American losses were 537 bombers, less than 3 percent of participants, and 191 fighters, just above 1 percent.

The power of both RAF and AAF is such that each can send out forces of 1,000 heavies day after day, American daylight attacks being supported by about 1,000 fighters. Greater forces are feasible on occasion. In two days, the AAF sent 4,000 bombing sorties over Europe and shot down 112 Nazi planes in the bargain. Largest RAF force, according to press reports, was 1,100 heavies up to this writing. In one recent 30-hr period, 6,500 Allied planes unloaded bombs on Nazi-held Europe.

American planes used in greatest numbers against the Germans are the Boeing B-17 *Flying Fortress*, the Consolidated B-24 *Liberator*, Republic P-47 *Thunderbolt*, North American P-51 *Mustang*, Lockheed P-38 *Lightning*, and the Martin B-26 *Marauder*, this latter reported attacking in "swarms." The British de Havilland *Mosquito*, depending on speed for defense, seems to be an institution in itself.

In the Pacific, the Navy's sphere of air control is expanding from captured islands and new air bases, closer and closer to Japan. Naval forces, with carriers so numerous that twelve of them recently showed in a picture of one harbor, are so great that the Jap fleet has been entirely withdrawn. As the Japs back closer to their home grounds their supply lines shorten, to

their advantage. The Allies, with vastly greater strength, are following them in to practical bombing bases. Some day the air attack will begin from the Kurile Islands (which Secretary Knox said, a few days before he died, that we would take) from islands southward, from the shores of China, or from our carriers — or all four. But Japan is moving war production into Korea and Manchuria, and war commanders are preparing for land action in the Orient, as in Europe.

Consolidated *Liberators* recently flew a 2,000-mi round trip to an effective attack on an island called Satawan; such trips are rapidly becoming commonplace. Adding to the Jap's woes, the Navy is using new rocket throwers. And a new version of the Grumman F4F, the FM-2 built by Eastern Aircraft, has more power, less weight, more speed, and improved performance.

The impressive showing made by airpower in this war, though it has not met the expectations of optimists, has finally won enough converts so that the Congressional Woodrum Committee on Postwar Military Policy is giving most of its attention to the air phase of national defense. This committee will blueprint the size of military forces to be maintained in peacetime, depending upon the, kind and extent of peace.

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