

America At War

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Allied strategic aviation now blankets all of German occupied Europe. This was accomplished by engineers designing longer range into both fighters and bombers, and by establishment of air bases in Russia permitting triangular shuttle runs over the enemy, with the other two terminals in England and Italy. Other bases will be set up, and the present triangle will become a crisscross pattern.

Tactical air support of the Allied invasion reduced losses to an impressive extent. Bombing and attack planes of AAF and RAF beat up enemy concentrations and transportation so badly that counter attacks were far weaker than expected. So depleted had the Luftwaffe become that it passed up the invading armada of ships.

Army's work of rehabilitation and new construction of airports is following closely as the enemy backs away in France and Italy. The time is approaching when Allied medium bombers and fighter planes can cover much of Germany, with bombs and heavy gunnery ranged on ground objectives. Fighters can carry up to 4,000 lb. of bombs, depending on the range. As the Luftwaffe weakens further, more and more Allied fighter planes will be free for direct attack on the enemy.

The Nazi's flying torpedoes are a hardship on England, but they will make little difference in the duration of the war. Flying missiles have been proposed for years, but the desperation of Germany brought the idea into practice. Probably it will become a major weapon in future. Accuracy of aim can be achieved electronically; or, in case of piloted-missiles, by airmen who would bail out close to the target.

Biggest attack on Nazi territory at this writing was a single-day smash of 3,000 heavies assembled by RAF and AAF, hitting Germany, France, and Italy, while thousands of tactical planes riddled transport and supplies in and around Normandy.

Allied bomber concentration was shifted from German aircraft plants enough to damage practically all of Hitler's oil production, which is variously reported to have been cut, to 40 percent of capacity. Highest Army authority says the Reich's war machine is at last in a serious fuel shortage, and that the payoff has begun to show up

in several other important deficiencies in enemy supplies and equipment.

In the Pacific, occupation by the Navy of Saipan and other bases in the Marianas brings into our line of fire the Jap-occupied Philippines, much of the Netherlands, and Japan itself. By the much-condemned island-hopping route, American and British forces have arrived at the main battleground.

The Jap Navy, vastly outweighed by Allied forces, is still wisely backing water, but the time draws near when it must stand to and slug. Navy Secretary Forrestal explains that the Marianas naval encounter, in which the Japs lost 30 ships sunk and damaged, and 141 planes, was not a show-down; the enemy simply retired.

Forrestal says that the United States Navy has added 100 carriers, 30,000 planes, and, eight battleships to its striking power since July, 1940. Rear Adm. Arthur W Radford, acting deputy chief of air operations, reveals that 22 regular fleet carriers have been commissioned since Pearl Harbor. Quick creation of the great carrier force now in action is generally regarded as one of the outstanding industrial achievements of modern times. In equal combat, equal distances from home base, Jap sea forces would be puny by comparison.

Navy reveals that its own and Marine Corps flyers have destroyed 6,259 Jap planes in the air and on the ground since the infamous Dec. 7. This compares with American losses of 1,277. Biggest of all Jap aircraft losses in a single engagement, was at the Marianas in latter June, total 353, against Allied losses of 21. Biggest previous Jap airplane loss was 275 at the battle of Midway.

Even more intriguing to news readers than these powerful blows at sea are the B-29 attacks on Japan proper, in which the enemy gets paid back, dramatically, for Pearl Harbor. As the Japs very well know, it is not lack of *Superfortresses* but lack of gasoline to fly them, on which Nippon is borrowing time. The Navy does not say whether enough fuel ever can be flown into China for the B-29s and other AAF operations there, or whether the main attack must wait upon a beachhead and break-through in China. B-29 operations at first are conservative, but maximum range will be used as command and crews get used to their equipment.

Establishment of the 20th Air Force, commanded directly by Gen Arnold, and its implementation with

Superfortresses, is perhaps the most significant military development in this war, so far. Any nation possessing such long-range air power can strike with bombs and guns and troops, any place in the world. Any country can be invaded, bombed, and shot up within two days after some militarist makes up his mind to that end. It remains to be seen whether and how this new force can be used to keep the peace.

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