

# America At War

## Aviation's Communique No 34

Allied aviation carried a heavy part in the task of backing the German army into its homeland. Attack planes and bombers extensively hindered the Nazi rush of troops to invasion points. Even more effectively it broke up their organization in retreat. A third result of the air attack is reduction of the enemy's strength in his border stand.

Allied destruction of enemy roads, waterways, bridges, and airfields has, of course, also obstructed the progress of the Allies own ground forces, or the enemy could have been thrust back even faster than he was.

Creation by Gen Eisenhower of a full-size airborne Army stands as an assurance against an impasse at any German defense line. The flying Army, fully equipped with field guns, tanks, tools, and supplies, can take the overhead route to its objectives in Germany — at the risk of proportionate loss of course.

While tactical air support of Allied ground operations becomes more intense increasing air strength enables the bomber commands to continue their strategic attacks on Nazi installations at pre-invasion levels. Forces of 3,000 and more bombers are still hitting enemy oil works, aircraft plants and chemical production. It would be possible for AAF and RAF to throw perhaps 10,000 combat craft, including some long-range attack planes, at a given objective in Germany.

### Far East

The Pacific theater is ready to utilize the same vast land and air forces that have been putting the knockout on the Nazis. These reinforcements, which will include also the considerable British aircraft carriers and many warships, will more than double the power now facing Japan.

Adm Nimitz recently told the press he did not know exactly how Japan would be beaten, and he probably meant it. This enemy is much weaker in steel production than Germany was, and the 20th Air Force attacks may mortally hurt its steel supply for ships and weapons. But the Allied submarine and air attack on shipping could do the trick, too. Several officials have expressed opinion that a land invasion will be necessary.

Boeing B-29 operations against Japan are increasingly satisfactory. Some changes have been made in the

ships. Most gratifying is the low rate of loss of the *Superfortresses*, due to armor, gun power, speed, and altitude. Meanwhile, the Japs have developed some high quality combat planes which will be ready for the showdown battle. Indeed, all fighting characteristics of the Nip planes have been improved, especially the horsepower and performance of the engines. This equipment will give the Allies some trouble. But whether it can tackle the B-29s effectively remains to be seen.

The Allied air forces in China are now superior to those of Japan, and our control of the air has crept North to include part of the Philippines, and Westward to include islands within 600 mi of Tokyo. Bombardment of Japan from bases which can receive gasoline from tankers — instead of from cans flown over the Burma hump — may start any time. The B-17s and B-24s, as well as the B-29s and B-32s, can be brought into this action.

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