

America At War

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Weakening steadily, able to fly less than one-tenth as many sorties daily as the Allies, the Luftwaffe fights on. Probably some Nazi guerrilla airmen will be aloft to the last day. Germany's ability to take 34,000 tons of fire and explosive bombs in a week, dropped by warplane fleets of 5,000, and still produce while resisting the world's three great powers, continues to impress aviation commands.

Particularly interesting to all Army branches are current demonstrations of the ability of airborne infantry and artillery to go overhead of front-line resistance and take and hold ground back of the enemy. Here, failure of a British troop outfit to hold on till reinforcements could break through is a mere incident in the long-range picture of airborne power. Encirclement on the ground may one day lose its terrors, and belligerents may expect an army to drop on them, any hour, any place. Air supply of armies is second in importance only to the flying of soldiers themselves.

Concerning types of aircraft to be used by AAF after production cutbacks, Lt Gen Barney M Giles, Deputy Commanding General and Chief of Air Staff, said recently that standardization would be on three basic fighters, four heavy and very heavy bomber types, and two medium bomber types. Over-all cutbacks will be about 40 percent when Germany quits.

American airmen in all theaters are using an armor-piercing incendiary .50-cal bullet that sets fire to enemy gasoline tanks, rendering self-sealing obsolete. Rocket missiles, now used by all belligerents — fired from ground, ship, and plane, also plane to plane — have great possibilities. Advantage is that the launching device is light as compared with a gun throwing equivalent demolition power. Rocket, accuracy, so far, is not good. Army announces the new *Thunderbolt* XP-47N, with a longer range for attacking Japan, is in production, with regular P-47s tapering off. *Thunderbolts* have been packing the rockets, with little impairment to their performance.

Navy Uses "Jato"

Due to short takeoff runs on carrier decks, Navy is leading off with Jato — jet-assisted takeoff. Success seems inevitable; bomb, ammunition, and

supply loads are greatly increased. Smoke interferes with following takeoff, but that will be licked. Jato has important commercial implications.

Navy announces the Vought F4U-1D has doubled its capacity, now carrying two 1,000-lb bombs. The Banana River Naval Air Station, Florida, has perfected a beaching gear that doesn't need large handling crews. Seekers of knowledge on the war against Japan should read Office of War Information's report. It says the Japs are building about 1,500 airplanes per month. Our airmen are still beyond effective bombing range, except with the B-29s. To hit effectively, OWI says, we shall have to base within 500 to 600 mi of objectives. The contrast between present bombing of Japan, and round-the-clock operations against Germany, are extreme — and still Germany fights. We're now in the Philippines, and as the Nips back toward home they can concentrate their air power withdrawn from outposts, and they probably can increase their aircraft production.

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