

America At War

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The amount of devastation which strategic and tactical aviation is piling on enemy war works and operations is satisfactory, but the amount of it the enemy is taking while still going strong is a surprise and a disappointment to most military commanders. This deficit is more than offset, however, by the effectiveness of seaborne aviation, which now constitutes the major striking power of the Navy.

Prospects for airpower in new equipment, and new strategy and tactics, appear unlimited. Chiefly foreseen is future-war importance of air carrier craft expected to stem from such designs as the Fairchild C-82, and which will fly all of the weapons, equipment, and supplies that armies are using or plan to use, giving airborne forces new speeds and ranges. Another promising air weapon is the airborne rocket, which, when its accuracy is improved, will give aviation the hitting power of heavy artillery, with many times the speed and range. Not least is the field of concentrated fuels, now being developed, which may stretch the range and capacity of aircraft so that all war strategy and logistics can be revised to unheard-of levels.

On the German front, operations of Lt Gen L H Brereton's Allied Airborne Army are rated highly successful, indicating that more damaging inside jobs will be done on the Nazis by air troops. Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory asserts the *Luftwaffe* is using its full power, and has nothing in reserve. Gen H H Arnold, AAF Chief, believes that Allied bombing of German airplane factories has cut production to 800 units per mo. But so strong is the enemy's punch that the Allies recently lost 400 bombers and 89 fighters in one week — AAF lost 41 bombers and 28 fighters in one attack. The great AAF-RAF bombing invasions continue at 1,000-plane strength and greater, beating up war production and communications on a scale which many authorities would have judged the enemy could not endure so long.

Trend continues toward combining characteristics of dive-bomber, low level bomber, ground strafers, and fighter, in one airplane, with constant addition of striking power to such planes as the North American P-51, Lockheed P-38, Republic P-47, and

with the advent of the Northrop P-61 *Black Widow* night fighter, and of the Douglas A-26 *Invader*. The new P-75 has been taken out of production because these other airplanes are giving the desired results.

Britain's Hawker *Tempest* fighter, successor to the *Hurricane* and *Typhoon*, knocked down more than 600 V-1 flying bombs and is now after the Nazi jet Messerschmitt 262. Incidentally, German jet planes fly and climb fast, but they do not turn well. The press reports that a P-38 photo plane outmaneuvered an Me-262. RAF announces a new faster *Spitfire*, changed from *Merlin* power to the *Griffon 65*, with 23 percent more cylinder displacement, and two-stage supercharging. North American Aviation is working on bomber and fighter designs expected to give performance much superior to present standards, but production could not begin for several months. Jet assisted takeoff is making good progress. Flying bombs are being improved over German practice, probably will be used by the Allies in this war, and probably will be a major weapon in future.

Important on the Pacific front is Stalin's fighting reference to Japan as an "aggressor," the inference being that Russia will jump Nippon when the time comes, or at least give the Allies the bases from which to jump. The Japs played their sea power hand for the Philippines, and lost, which means that Allied navies and armies in the Philippines will soon isolate the entire Netherlands empire and Singapore.

The greatest air fleet ever massed in the Pacific, 1,000 planes of US forces, recently hit Formosa. American fleet victories at the Philippines, which dropped Japan to a third or fourth rate naval power, evidently used a preponderance of aviation to do the job, knocking off enemy battleships, lighter craft, and six airplane carriers — more than 60 ships in all.

The B-29s undoubtedly are working out of other than Chinese bases by now. Their strike on Singapore was the longest military air mission thus far. These airplanes are well beyond the reach of enemy AA fire and air attack, with resulting very light losses. They have been able to reconnoiter the Jap mainland at altitude without fighting.

Though the Japs have lost over 3,000 airplanes in four months, they probably are more than replacing losses, and the quality of their new designs approaches that of our own. As they pull their air forces out of lost positions, the resulting concentrations

in Japan and China will be stronger and tougher.

Accomplished and coming: A total of 46,000,000 lb of weapons and supplies were flown over the Hump to China by ATC in one recent month. Navy is turning over some airplane carriers to the Marines, who will use Vought F4Us on their decks.