

America At War

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Gen H H Arnold emphasized in a recent speech the major part played by Allied Air forces in breaking up German supply lines and causing their retreat. In the Ardennes push-back, nearly 7,000 enemy vehicles were destroyed by AAF and RAF flyers in two days. Meantime, the Russians continue their grand job of pushing Germany back into a condensed target.

The AAF chief said that Germany does not possess the air power to sustain an offensive. He added that in the Pacific we are setting the stage for full-scale strategic bombardment of Japanese industry. At the same time Lt Gen Harmon, commander of Army Air Forces in the Pacific, said that Japan will still be going strong in 1946. American operations during the next 12 months will be aimed at acquiring air bases closer to the enemy's homeland installations, he said.

Nearly all classes of military airplanes will be brought to bear on the heart of Japan when the bases are taken, with action featuring the new high-performance fighter, torpedo, and bomber craft of the Navy. Artemus L Gates, Navy assistant secretary, recently announced the air arm will soon put into action a jet-powered fighter or fighter-bomber.

Strategic bombing of Jap objectives with B-29s is highly profitable to the Allies, but air attack cannot appreciably weaken the enemy until bomb tonnage is several times multiplied. The Japs will disperse their production, as Germany did, and a high percentage of their airplane output will continue. Quality of Japanese aircraft, is improving beyond all expectation. "The fact is that our superiority in aircraft design is being seriously challenged," says Adm De Witt C. Ramsey, Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics. And the theory that enemy cities can be burned out has been disproved. Fully 34 fires in Kobe were put out in 24 hr.

Conquest in the Philippines has been helped immeasurably by aviation. The Japs had practically no air observation. American flyers beat them up wherever they showed. Gen MacArthur had special praise for the 11th Airborne troopers who hiked 35 mi into Manila from their landing. Air attacks on Britain's lost Singapore have been damaging. Destruction of Jap shipping by air, surface, and submarine attack is still the softest

spot in Japan's defense. But the Allies are laying complete plans to fight them on land.

In Germany, war production's success in dodging bombs makes the experts wonder just how much could be done by bombers to a nation that really set out to dig in and take it. But there is no doubt about the value of air superiority in stopping transportation — the Germans had everything they needed for defense and counter attack, but Allies went tactical and wouldn't let them deliver it.

The big air war story, now, is jet power. The Germans outclassed the world in putting JP in the sky; they alone at this writing, have jet-powered fighters active. But this time it was their turn to show up with too little, too late. An informed aircraft production official in Washington recently said the jet line might eventually be the biggest item in the U. S. air program. Presumably the British will soon put one or more jet planes into action, and it is assumed the Japs will meet the Allies with everything the Germans had in JP.

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