

America At War

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If the full potentials of aerial bombardment, incendiary wallops, and shooting are not conclusively realized as a result of the air war on Germany, the new and different demonstration being slung at Japan may do the trick. Germany's durability under Allied air attack, which has reached a maximum of about 8,000 airplanes in one day, has been disappointing to air power enthusiasts, also to many more conservative persons who merely hoped for more curtailment of manufacturing than has been realized.

But the enthusiasts will say that not enough airplanes were used in the European theater to attain the required destruction of life and installations. In Japan they will see greater air power used — if the war lasts long enough. Prominent contributor to this greater force, the Boeing B-29s have already made strikes in flocks of over 300. Boeing-Wichita alone has delivered more than 1,000 *Superfortresses*. Anyone can guess that total production is headed toward 500-odd per month. Jap objectives can be hit by formations of 1,000, 2,000 B-29s, depending on the duration. From near bases which will be captured, these airplanes can drop a wallop that Germany has never felt.

In addition, aviation hitting Japan may include forces of heavies, attack planes and fighters, equal or greater than those that have been working Europe. They can base on islands closer than England is to Germany, and they can pack more destruction. Then, there is the United States Navy, which can put up several-thousand-plane attacks, as recently demonstrated. It is believed that the size of Japan will permit deck-based attack planes to reach every objective in that country. And presumably when the mines are cleared from entrances, Navy can go into the Sea of Japan and easily reach neighboring installations on the Asiatic mainland.

Still to be added will be the sea and land air forces of the British. If the Russians come in, that will be so much velvet. Thus Japan faces the possibility of being hammered by ten to twenty thousand airplanes all on the same day; or even more. Its area is 150,000 sq mi, compared with Germany's 225,000 sq mi, and its factory concentrations are more pronounced. It looks like pretty rough treatment in store for Japan, and it promises a new

yardstick for the air power experts to use in their arguments.

Opposite side of the world, the Germans are not only taking the beating of as many as 8,000 AAF-RAF planes in a day, but also the air blows from the Russians on the other side.

Possibly postwar surveys will show approximately what the air attack prevented the Germans from manufacturing, what it prevented them from delivering to their army, and how much it damaged their will to live and fight. Though, some observers are disappointed, no authority has suggested that lives and material and energy put into aviation has not paid off better than any other war investment.

Gen H H Arnold, chief of the Army Air Forces, in his second annual report, says that air power has replaced naval power as America's first line of defense. He says that future aggression will use air power first, hence we must be prepared to meet it. The General advocated intensive air research, maintenance of airplane productive capacity and bases, and a continuous, fully-equipped, air training program for peacetime.

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