

America At War

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The air war in Europe came to a victorious close in two steps: First, strategic bombing was stopped, having mortally slowed German industrial production, particularly that of aircraft and fuel, and having opened the way for the Normandy invasion by severely crippling enemy communications.

Second, both tactical and strategic air forces of AAF and RAF concentrated their work as a tactical force, finished knocking out the Luftwaffe in a final one-day take of nearly 1,000 planes, hit the enemy everywhere at low levels. The cost in aircraft and crewmen was high, but the over-all saving of life and equipment was a bargain.

Von R.'s Viewpoint

Field Marshal Karl von Rundstedt said, when captured, that Allied air power was the biggest factor in the defeat of Germany. Bombs blew the brains out of German armament when they smashed laboratories and drafting offices of the steel industry at Dusseldorf, contributing at least 50 percent to final collapse of the Nazi war machine, according to British Information Services.

Though air war officials have been disappointed with apparent results of some air attacks on Germany, investigations on the ground now reveal that reports of demolition were conservative. Much credit goes to the enemy's tenacity. Dispersed and underground production was not as extensive as generally supposed.

With V-E Day by the boards, Army Air Forces and RAF in Europe are now moving toward Japan. Gen. H H Arnold, AAF chief, recently said every available plane would go to the Pacific. It is estimated AAF now has in combat about 75,000 planes, near 40,000 of the combat types, besides the thousands in process and in the pipe-lines. It is probable that the US and British air forces which will move against Japan will far more than double those of Army and Navy already there.

Gen Carl A Spaatz, commander of U. S. strategic air force in Europe, says a medium sized air contingent will be left in Europe, together with air forces of England and Russia, to cooperate with ground forces in keeping the peace. AAF bombers in peace time Europe probably will see little action and will double as troop and cargo carriers.

Summary and Forecast

As U. S. military aviation moves out of Europe, it leaves about 30,000 enemy planes "killed," about 5,000 probables, and over 12,000 damaged. It moves out with the satisfaction of a clean victory, but with a respectful memory of the enormous problems with which it grappled to generate such tremendous power in such a small place, (Britain), also awareness of those elements with which Germany offered formidable opposition — i.e., glider war, jet propulsion, and powered and guided missiles. In future one sees aerial attack with explosives, fire and gas, at long range with accuracy, without risk of a pilot's life.

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