



ARMY
TALKS FOR THE

EIGHTH AIR FORCE



*History
was made
by Day —*

THESE PAGES NOT ONLY PAY TRIBUTE TO THE LIVING OF THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE —THEY ALSO GIVE PURPOSE AND MEANING TO THE IRREVOCABLE SACRIFICE MADE BY OUR DEAD. IT IS TO THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES BUT WHO LIVE ON IN OUR GRATEFUL MEMORY THAT THIS RECORD IS HUMBLY DEDICATED



HISTORY WAS MADE BY DAY



WE can leave to historians the task of deciding just how much each component of Allied military strength contributed to the defeat of our enemies in Europe. Whatever may be their conclusions, the outstanding fact will be the great measure of teamwork between all the Allies and between their air, naval and ground forces. So, if anyone starts shooting his mouth off about "how our outfit won the war," he's strictly off the beam. However, we all want to know how much of a job we have done, and although a great deal of the evidence is not yet available, it is possible to give a good idea of just what the Eighth Air Force has accomplished towards the winning of the war in Europe.

This issue focuses around the convictions of the Commanding General on the subject of our Air Force's mission and accomplishments. You will find them on the middle pages. Not only has General Doolittle been at the helm during the period of the Eighth's full scale operations, but the success of these operations has proved the soundness of the American doctrine of high altitude daylight precision bombing, for which he has fought for many years, along with Generals Arnold, Eaker, Spaatz, Fred Anderson and O. A. Anderson. He, it was, too, who led the first daring mission against our other enemy, Japan, when his bombers attacked their precision targets in Tokyo and other industrial cities. Whatever the tasks which may face the Eighth or its individual members and units in contributing to final victory on all fronts, he knows better than anyone that we have proved ourselves willing and able. In his words, together we have made this organization "one of the greatest military teams in history."



WHEN the first Flying Fortresses of the Eighth Air Force touched down on their British bases a new factor was added to warfare in Europe. The best thought of the experts on air power was in a confused state at this time, largely because of the seemingly contradictory results of its use in the European theater during the war. The German Air Force had startled the world by its successes in cooperation with the armored thrusts of the ground forces. Nothing had been able to stand in the way of the combined assaults, and within a few weeks the Nazis had overrun the Continent of Europe. On the other hand, the expected successes of the German bombing of Britain, in preparation for invasion, had been turned to defeat by the British use of air power in a defensive role. The fighters of the Royal Air Force, during the Battle of Britain, had first forced the German bombers to abandon daylight operations, and had then thwarted the German Air Force's attempts to carry out successful strategic night bombing.

Our first job in Europe was to sell the idea of our mission—high altitude daylight precision bombing—which few believed possible.

By the summer of 1942, when we flew our first missions, the RAF had re-established confidence in area bombardment by night as a valuable strategic weapon. It was certain that the RAF missions performed a far greater service than just as harassing operations. At the same time there was doubt as to whether air power could be developed into a decisive weapon, other than for defensive or tactical offensive purposes. The bold and uncompromising American doctrine of dealing strategic blows at the enemy's economic and industrial support of the war effort by means of daylight precision bombing seemed to run counter to experience of air warfare in Europe.

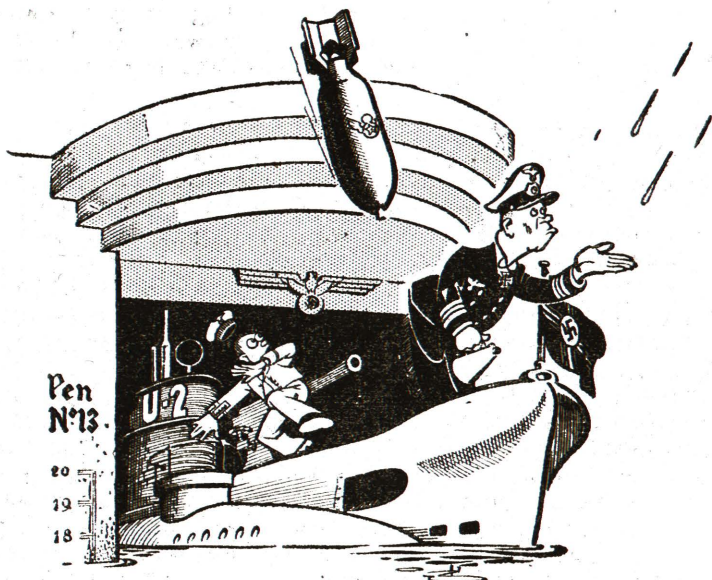
If the early missions of the Eighth had failed it is very possible that the American effort would have been switched to night operations. In that case, although it is impossible to estimate how much damage could have been done to the enemy, it is quite certain that the deadly double-edged weapon of round-the-clock bombing would not have been forged, and it is very doubtful whether the dramatic struggle for air supremacy over the German Air Force would have been won nearly as soon, or nearly as cheaply. But our bombers did not fail. Their early successes were not spectacular, but it is now evident that soon after the early missions during the fall of 1942 the German High Command foresaw the potential menace of our Flying Fortresses and Liberators and redirected the use of their own air power. The threat of the Eighth, more than any other factor, put the Nazis on the defensive in the air. They placed increasing emphasis on the production of fighters whose main role was to protect vital targets, and gave less and less attention to construction of long-range bombers. As the numbers of the US bombers increased, and the situation became graver for the Luftwaffe, they were also forced to sacrifice production of planes primarily designed for cooperation with the ground forces—the backbone of their original military successes.

We proved our worth during the U-boat campaign—and helped
reduce their menace to the Allied lifelines.

Before the Eighth became involved in the bitter struggle with the German Air Force for survival the first of our major campaigns was put into operation. 1942 was the grimmest year for Allied shipping. The U-boat fleets were threatening the Allied merchant shipping routes and causing the most serious losses of lives, supplies and vessels. RAF Coastal Command engaged fully in attacks on the subs at sea and the RAF bombers went after the German bases. We were called on to attack the great U-boat bases on the Atlantic Coast and, later, the building yards. The missions to the bases, of which Lorient, St. Nazaire and La Pallice were the largest, gave valuable experience to our crews as well as having a marked effect on the sub campaign. The growing accuracy of the attacks caused sufficient confusion, casualties and damage to lengthen the sub's normal stay of one week in port to three weeks.

During the first year of operations we flew 22 missions against the bases and 19 against the U-boat building yards. The latter, situated around Kiel, Hamburg, Vegesack, suffered severe damage and gave a small foretaste of what Germany might expect.

The campaign against the U-boats was only a preliminary to our basic job, although it served to convince most of the doubters who had predicted that daylight precision bombing would have to be abandoned. The

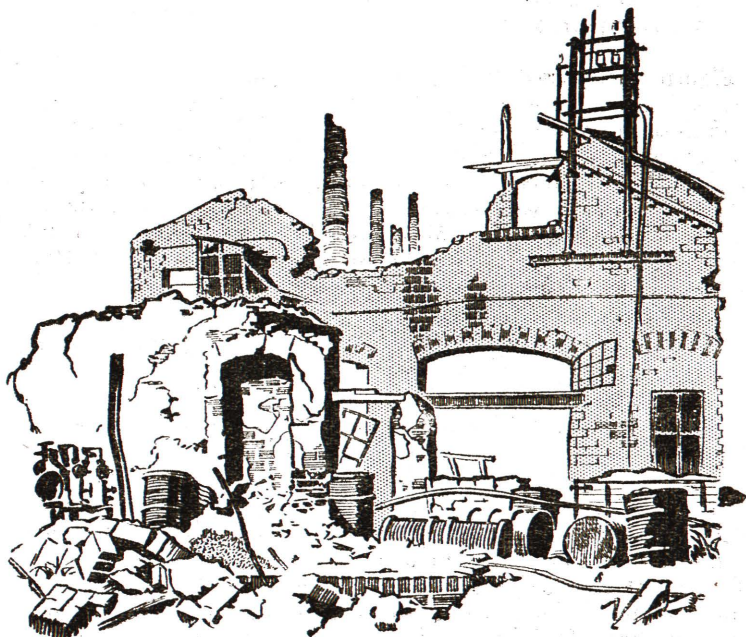


"Growing accuracy . . . caused sufficient confusion."

next great task which confronted the Eighth was still not the one for which it was ultimately designed—the disruption of the industrial and economic strength of the enemy. Before that could be accomplished the Forts and Libs had a stern test to pass. While the numbers of our heavies were growing only very slowly, during the North African campaign, the fighter strength of the German Air Force was being stepped up to meet the menace of the daylight attacks. Soon it became apparent that it would be a race to the death between the two forces. From April, 1943, for more than a year, we hammered away, when occasions offered, at the German aircraft assembly and component plants, and airfields and repair facilities.

The pounding we gave the German planes and aircraft industry put them on the defense in the air and made D-Day possible.

Late in 1943 an important decision had to be made. Increased German fighter strength was at least keeping pace with our mounting numbers of bombers. Two issues were involved. First, unless we could reduce the strength of the air opposition we could not successfully carry through the program of strategic bombardment of German industrial targets. Second, unless we could greatly reduce the effectiveness of the German fighter strength the success of the invasion of the Continent would be gravely in doubt. The answer lay in the use of our fighters. Towards the end of 1943 we had begun to build up our forces of long range fighters. Their prime purpose



"The aircraft campaign made D-Day possible."

was the defense of our bombers. Because of the greatly superior numbers of the enemy fighters over their own territory our policy had naturally been to evade the Messerschmitts and Focke-Wulfs, whenever possible. Now it was decided to throw in the full weight of the bombers at the aircraft industry and at the same time to lure the enemy fighters into combat against all the reserves of our fighters and bombers. The policy involved a considerable risk, and had the campaign not succeeded it would have been the Germans and not the Allies who gained air supremacy during 1944.

The extraordinarily favorable weather conditions in mid-February 1944 gave the Eighth, the Fifteenth and the RAF the opportunity to launch the great offensive of February 20-25, from which the German Air Force and the aircraft industry did not recover for many months. The campaign continued through March and into April, causing tremendous devastation to airfields and installations as well as to the major plants. The Nazis struggled desperately to bolster their fighter production by dispersing their construction and assembly facilities to small disguised plants and underground factories, but the latter did not swing into large scale production until July, and by that time our ground forces had their hold on the Continent. The new type planes which the Germans had relied on for air opposition to the landings were not there, thanks to the work of the Allied strategic air forces. The extent of our air supremacy on D-Day is most dramatically summed up in the now famous statement of General Eisenhower to his forces on the eve of D-Day, that they need not be concerned about any planes they saw over the beaches, because they would be ours.

The Eighth had passed two great crises which threatened to end its existence as the pioneer of large scale strategic precision daylight bombardment, and in so doing it made distinctive contributions to ultimate victory: the submarine campaign helped save the Allied supply lifelines as well as insure the continuance of its own mission; the aircraft campaign made D-Day possible as well as save the American planes from destruction over Germany. Now we were called on for an urgent task of a different kind, which was no less of a test of the efficiency of our planes and the skill and determination of our men.

We prepared the way for the Invasion, protected the landings and kept the enemy strength from the beach heads.

From May until August the greater part of our efforts was devoted to tactical operations in preparation for invasion of the Continent and later in co-operation with the assault forces. From the first the heavy bombers proved the great flexibility of which they are capable. They demonstrated that, although there is an important distinction between strategic and tactical use of air power, the men and machines employed principally in the former role can be used with great success in the latter.

The immediate mission assigned to the Eighth, together with the RAF, was the disruption of the railroad facilities across Northern France and Belgium. During the month the two Air Forces succeeded in paralyzing

marshalling yards and servicing depots over a great area stretching back to the Rhine. Our bombers smashed 18 rail centers and did considerable damage to a further eight, while our fighters made low level attacks on hundreds of locomotives. When the landings were made the mobility of the German forces and their supplies was most severely handicapped by the chaotic state of the railroad bottlenecks. During May the strategic and tactical Air Forces divided up the German airfields between them and went to work to make them unusable at the critical moment. The Eighth went after the fighter fields further back from the landing beaches. Our bombers attacked airfields in a great arc from Holland and Belgium, through France to the Bordeaux area, where the bases of the anti-shipping planes were centered.

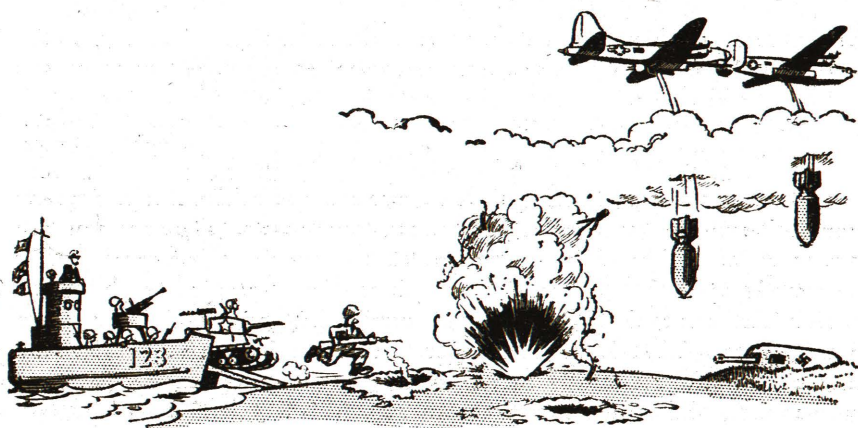
This tactical campaign completed the earlier strategic blows against the German Air Force in giving the Allies complete air supremacy on D-Day. The Nazis made every effort to concentrate their remaining fighter forces in France, as well as to repair the battered fields. But the work of destruction had been too thorough. They had to resort largely to inadequate grass landing strips, where their fighters suffered a heavy rate of damage. During the two weeks of attacks the German fighters estimated available for service fell from the normal rate of around 60 percent to as low as 15 percent.

The story of the Eighth's operations on D-Day is well known. Our heavies performed their most delicate task up to that time, in dropping their bombs through overcast on coastal fortifications only a thousand yards ahead of the landing barges of our assault troops. The bombers returned three times to France during the day, while the fighters kept the skies clear of the enemy planes. By the end of the day we had flown a total of more than 4,000 sorties and had dropped close to 5,000 tons of bombs. During the next few critical days the Eighth played its full part in the continued sealing off of the bridgeheads and the partitioning of the enemy's ground forces at the right moment by the severing of the bridges across the Loire, while the tactical air forces broke the Seine communications. The operations were excellently timed and carried out, so that when the Allied forces were able to break through the enemy lines around the bridgeheads they found considerable concentrations of the German ground forces trapped between the rivers, but not in sufficient strength to menace the Allied forces.

Our airpower has helped change the course of ground campaigns by blasting the enemy to break deadlocks, strangling his counter-attacks and helping exploit our major advances.

Air power provided an important factor in the break-through in Normandy, and we did our full share. At Caen and Saint-Lo the heavy bombers laid down an unprecedentedly large "carpet" of anti-personnel bombs which smothered effective resistance without breaking up the ground sufficiently to interfere with the advance of the Allied armor and infantry. In the next few days we performed another type of tactical service by assisting in the fullest exploitation of the Allied armored advance. Our

Liberators kept General Patton's tanks racing through France, just as they did again during the armored penetration of the Reich, by ferrying vital supplies as the mechanized thrusts moved far ahead of the ground support facilities. They performed a similar service, too, a few weeks later when they followed on the heels of the airborne landings in Holland, dropping supplies to the paratroops and glider troops deep in enemy territory, and again at the massive airborne crossings of the Rhine this March.



"Only a thousand yards ahead of the landing barges"

There is still one further phase of direct cooperation with the ground forces in which we have played a prominent part. In mid-December of last year Von Rundstedt launched his counter-attack in the Ardennes. His effort coincided with some of the worst fog conditions for many months. Not only the battlefields, but our bases in England were blanketed on many of the succeeding days. Following accepted policy, the Eighth was swung into the battle which looked as if it might result in a major set-back for the Allies. Despite weather conditions which normally would have prevented operations, our bombers and fighters took off on the most thorough and deadly series of missions ever designed to break up rail and road communications behind the enemy's lines. On several occasions the bombers and fighters were invisible from the control towers as they left the icy runways. Much of the bombing of marshalling yards and other choke points was through overcast. Often our planes returned to England to find most of the bases weathered in, and had to land wherever conditions permitted. During this period the Eighth flew the largest single bombing operation in history, on Christmas Eve.

The Allied Air Forces together denied the Germans the essential supplies and reinforcements which would have made the difference between success

(Continued on page 12.)

PATTERN FOR VICTORY

I HAVE always considered that my solemn obligation as the Commanding General of the Eighth Air Force was three-fold. My primary responsibility has been to see that this command was so employed as to make the greatest contribution of which it was capable—or could be made capable—toward the achievement of a prompt and conclusive victory. I have been equally resolved that that contribution should be made with the smallest possible loss of American and Allied lives. Thirdly, to see that activities were so directed and personnel so employed as to ensure that every member of the command not lost in combat would return to their homes in the best possible physical, mental and spiritual condition in order that they might successfully resume their lives as useful citizens.

“The basic policy of the Eighth Air Force and of the USAAF has always been the precision bombing of selected military targets. The successes this command has achieved have done much to bring about recognition of the soundness of that policy. As members of a Strategic Air Force, our mission has been to deny the enemy the equipment and supplies he requires to wage war. That is why our operations have been characterized by sustained attacks on enemy manufacturing capacity, on their equipment and supplies, and on their transportation.

“We do not yet know the full results of our assaults on Germany’s oil and aircraft production, on other basic war industries and on communications, but we can be certain that the aerial bombardment carried out by the Eighth and the other Allied Strategic Air Forces has been a major factor in preparing the way for victory in Europe.”

“In making these attacks, however, the over-riding necessity of achieving and maintaining the continuity of our air effort has been paramount. To guarantee this continuity, it has been periodically necessary to carry out another type of operation in addition to our principal job—counter-air attacks against the German Air Force, which had to be kept sufficiently weak to prevent it from successfully interfering with our operations. Our fighters spearheaded these counter-air attacks, their primary objective being the destruction of the German Air Force in being. For a short period, we accepted an increase in hazard to the bombers so that we might, by immediate offensive means, assure long-range reductions in losses and the eventual comparative impotence of the German Air Force. Success was soon proved by our ability to penetrate to any part of the Reich and by the reduction of casualty rates in spite of ever-deepening penetrations.

“An important requirement of the Strategic Air Forces is operation in cooperation with the Allied ground forces and the Navy in the accom-



plishment of their missions. This necessity arises primarily in the breaking of a stalemate, the averting of a catastrophe or the exploiting of a major victory. Examples were the path-clearing attacks at St. Lo and Caen, the remendous blows at Von Rundstedt's attackers and the destruction of their essential supply lines during the crucial battles in the Ardennes sector.

“ Combined operations in this theater, under the inspired guidance of General Eisenhower, have proved that it is not the individual service, but the team that counts, and have further indicated that a sound national defense organization for the future must have a strong air component.

“ I want to take this occasion to congratulate each and every member of the Eighth Air Force for his part in making this organization one of the greatest military teams in history. Whether an individual is a combat crew member, ground crew member, planner, or administrator, as long as he does his job to the best of his ability, he is an equally important member of the team and shares equally in speeding final victory.”

J. H. DOOLITTLE.

and failure in this counter-offensive. When the campaign began, the enemy already had a great quantity of rolling stock backed up in marshalling yards some 200 miles behind their front lines. The Eighth was able to disorganize the rail system to such an extent that very little of that rolling stock reached a destination anywhere near the fighting. Not only rail centers, but almost every little rail and road crossing over hundreds of square miles was blasted by 50,000 tons of bombs during the two weeks of operations. The troop detraining points were pushed back 50 and 60 miles, forcing divisions to bicycle and march many weary miles; food supplies were drastically cut, and considerable numbers of armored vehicles and self-propelled guns were immobilized and later captured intact, because the gas supplies never got through to them.

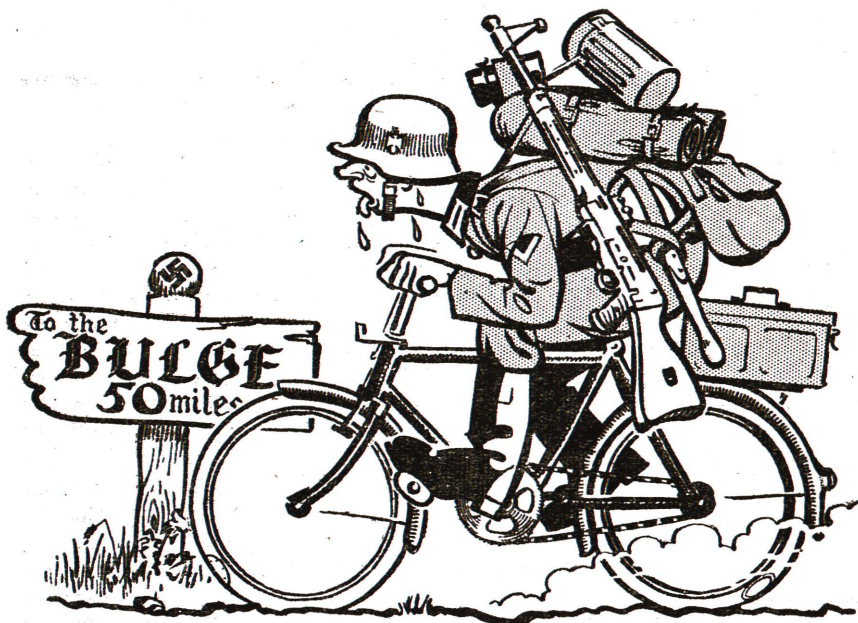
Our biggest job—the unrelenting assault on oil—which has starved every branch of German industry and the armed forces.

All these tactical campaigns, effective and necessary though they were, might be called “fire department” jobs for the Eighth. They did not come within the scope of our basic mission as a strategic air force. But shortly before D-Day, and again in June, we started in on our first big scale assault on a major industrial system. It was the first sustained test of whether the strategic bombing could reduce such a system to insignificance. The oil industry in all its branches—refineries, synthetic plants and storage depots—was the target. There had been earlier attacks on oil, but in May 1944 the Combined Chiefs of Staff accepted the argument that oil was a possible priority target. All agreed on its strategic value, but the question was whether such a far-flung and large scale system could be crippled.

The long term oil campaign is perhaps the best example of joint effort by the three great Allied strategic air forces in Europe—the Eighth, Fifteenth and RAF. The three have shared just about equally in the honors, and together have achieved what many believe to be the greatest single contribution which strategic air power has made to Allied victory in Europe. Despite the most concentrated defenses, in the form of flak, fighters and smoke screens, with which the Germans attempted to protect any type of target, and despite the most prodigious repair and rebuilding program, the strategic bombing forces succeeded in bringing the industry to the verge of obliteration. The task became progressively less difficult as, one after another, important production centers were overrun by the Allied ground forces, although some of these had been previously rendered almost unproductive. By September 1944 it was estimated that enemy production of gas stood at 20 percent of pre-attack level, and all types of oil at about one quarter. By March 1945, as the Allied armies plunged across the Rhine, the level of gas production was believed to be down to one-tenth, and of all oil, down to 20 percent.

At the start of the campaign we were entrusted with the responsibility of attacking the refineries and great synthetic plants of Central Germany, while the Fifteenth dealt with the refineries in Roumania, Austria,

Hungary and Czechoslovakia and the Silesian synthetic plants, and the RAF concentrated on the synthetic plants of the Ruhr. Since the beginning of winter there has been no such definite distinction, as each of the three air forces could penetrate to any point. From May 1944, for the first nine months of the assault, the Air Forces made more than 400 separate attacks on 112 different oil targets, in addition to the dumps and depots. During that time every known plant in German-held territory had been attacked, and every one of any significance had been put out of action at one time or another.

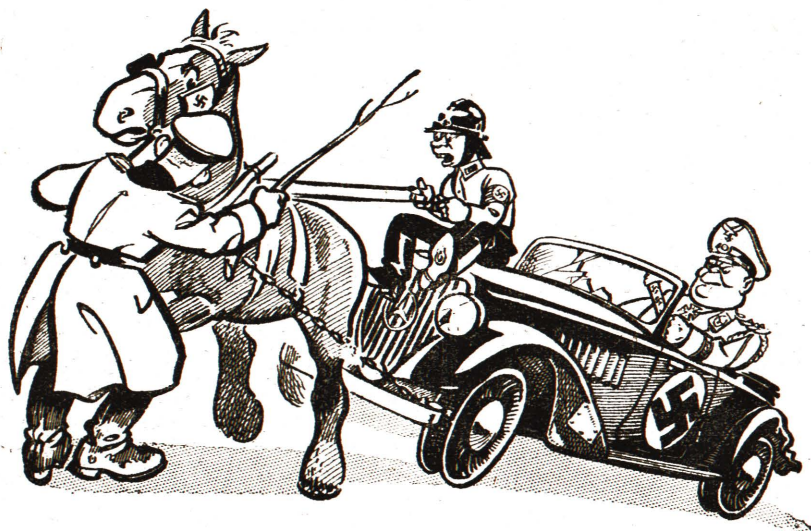


"Forced divisions to bicycle many weary miles."

The oil campaign accomplished just what the planners had hoped. It drained away the life-blood of the German industrial system and war effort. While it is too early to weigh all the evidence, there is ample proof that the reduction of gas and lubricants drastically curtailed the operations of the German Air Force, cut down to an ineffective period—less than half the previously considered minimum—the training time of its pilots, immobilized great quantities of armored vehicles when most needed in combat, prevented the transportation by road of much urgently required army and industrial supplies, cut down U-boat operations and caused fuel and power shortages and failures in many other fields. Every branch of industry felt the pinch and all the Allied fighting fronts received direct aid through the curtailment of Nazi military efficiency.

*How we crippled the Nazi war machine by hitting the railroad system
at its tenderest points.*

In the grand strategy of the air assault on the industrial strength of the Reich the next most important target system to oil has been communications. It was argued that just as oil is a basic factor in so many phases of economic life, the denial of communications facilities, particularly railroad transportation, to the enemy would be a cause of widespread disorganization. Moreover, the two campaigns would naturally be complementary.



"Lack of oil would strain motorized transportation."

to each other; lack of oil would strain motorized transportation, and severing of railroad and waterways communications would immobilize the remaining channels available for the flow of men and material. The disposition of the industrial centers of Germany and of the fighting fronts reveals the strategic pattern of the long term assault on communications which the Eighth carried on concurrently with the oil campaign. More than half the bomb tonnage dropped by us in the six months before the crossing of the Rhine was expended on attacks on communications, designed to isolate the Ruhr. Before ever Allied ground forces completed the encirclement of that huge industrial concentration we, together with the RAF, had reduced the once mighty flow of war supplies to a tiny trickle.

We know that in some months only 25 tons of finished steel were shipped out of the area. One hundred thousand tons of steel were found by the

ground forces in one section, piled up and awaiting rail transportation which was never available, while many steel mills had been forced to close down because of lack of coke, for the same reason. With the loss of the Silesian coalfields in the Russian advance, the Ruhr coalfields became even more important to Germany, and our air assault on the railroads carrying the fuel out of the area were so much the more deadly. Our attacks on communications denied the Nazis some of the advantages which they hoped to gain from dispersal of their plants. Although dispersal made it much more difficult for us to bomb the factories, our disruption of the railroads cut off their supplies of fuel, raw materials and component parts. We know, for example, of plants assembling tanks and guns where production broke down because of the failure of some component to arrive.

The German communications system is so closely woven and the repair of railroad facilities was effected with such comparative speed that we and the RAF were forced to expend a very heavy tonnage on the various targets. In 15 consecutive days during February and March we attacked 185 targets with 44,000 tons of bombs, a total three times as great as we dropped during our first year of operations. But our assault was carried out as scientifically as our attacks on the oil targets. We systematically plastered the rail marshalling yards, since they are the choke points. The bombs aimed at these points destroyed not only tracks and rolling stock, but repair facilities and rail signal centers. The situation was made all the worse for the enemy by the attacks of our fighters on locomotives. These became a top priority for repair and production many months ago, and have continued that way. In fact, in some places the shortage became so serious that horses and mules had to be used instead.

Enough tanks—backbone of the Nazi blitz—were not rolling when they were most needed—thanks to us.

The tactical air forces have become justly renowned among the Allied ground troops for their successful attacks on enemy tanks and other sources of trouble to the infantrymen. They see the fighters in action as they track down a couple of tanks, attack them and destroy or cripple them. The men on the ground advance with gratitude. What they do not know is that for these two tanks there were perhaps two more which never came off the assembly lines because the Eighth put a plant out of commission for several weeks, and another one which sits stranded back of the lines because it has no gas.

The campaign against tank and ordnance plants has long been one of the favorite jobs of the Eighth. On many occasions we have sandwiched a mission in between high priority jobs, and almost every known enemy tank plant has been attacked. It is impossible to state the results in terms of percentages of tanks destroyed or production denied to the enemy, but when the final reckoning is made our campaign against the tank industry may prove to be second in effectiveness only to oil, among the precision targets.

The cost in American lives, heavy as it has been, has been tremendously reduced by our "Care of Flyer" program.

These triumphs were not accomplished without a heavy cost, both in American lives and equipment. All air warfare necessarily involves great hazards for the combat crews and in this theater we had to operate in unusually difficult conditions. In addition to the fierce opposition put up by the Nazis, the very high altitude, the extremely low temperatures and the bitterly cold water of the North Sea and English Channel all presented tough problems to lick. The Commanding Generals of the Eighth have always shown the greatest concern for the protection of the combat flyers in every possible manner, and, from the first, energetic measures were taken to protect their lives, health and safety.

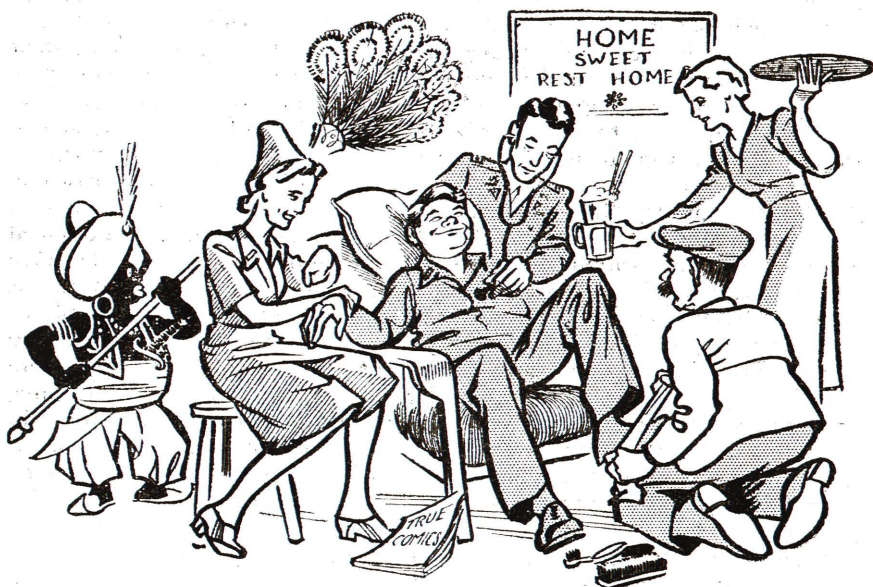
An organization was set up—the Central Medical Establishment—with the job of research and recommendation on the problems encountered by the crews of the bombers and the fighter pilots. Working together with the Surgeon's Office they have achieved many successes which have saved lives, casualties and prevented sickness and accidents. They have also accumulated a fund of information which has already proved of great value in other theaters and to the whole development of high altitude flying. When our B-17s and B-24s began their operations in Europe a great deal of the high altitude equipment and procedures met their first large scale testing under actual combat conditions. All manner of defects soon became apparent. Many modifications had to be made and new equipment had to be devised. Some of this work was conducted in the States, but a great deal was undertaken within our own Air Force.

One of the first and most urgent problems to be tackled was frostbite. In the very cold weather of February, 1943, the frostbite figures rose to a serious rate, and it was found that the after-effects were often both prolonged and serious, if not crippling. The causes were studied—wind blast, defective equipment, lack of equipment and personnel failures. The problem was then tackled from all angles—modifications greatly reduced wind blast; better flying suits and heating equipment were produced; personnel were trained in preventive procedures; personal equipment personnel were trained to take care of all personal flying equipment. At the same time, the medical treatment of frostbite was steadily improved. As a result of all these measures our rate of frostbite in comparable flying conditions is less than one tenth of the earlier months, and treatment has virtually eliminated the serious consequences of the few casualties sustained.

Long hours spent at high altitude have been characteristic of our missions, and much research, invention and training have gone into the improvement of the use of oxygen. The standard mask with which our first bomber crews were provided was found unsuitable for very cold weather, and the Eighth made its own modifications. New pieces of equipment, such as quick-disconnect locks for the masks, were designed to prevent accidents and add to the efficiency and comfort of the combat crews. A most thorough system of training was developed, together with improved equipment, which has eliminated most of the causes of oxygen accidents in the earlier days. We have our own high altitude training

program to supplement the training received back in the States, as we found that the latter was not fully adequate to meet the specialized conditions in this theater.

This is only one phase of our very extensive system of training schools which has been developed by this Air Force to protect and aid our flying men. Many a life has been saved through the first aid classes which all flyers must attend. There they are taught how to treat flak and other casualties until regular medical care is available. Regular and constant instruction is given in the use of all vital equipment—parachutes, oxygen apparatus, electrical heating equipment, life-saving apparatus. A number of schools have been held for those taking care of the flyers rather than for the flyers themselves. The lack of unified responsibility for the supply and maintenance of personal flying equipment led to the establishment of a school for Personal Equipment Officers. They, and later, their enlisted assistants, were trained in all aspects of the subject, and in a very short time a marked improvement was noticed all over the command in the serviceability and efficiency of the equipment. Clothes were properly checked, dried, stored, promptly repaired, and the supply of many of the critically short items of equipment was thus eased.



"Restoring nerve-tired men."

The combat conditions faced by our flying men are different from those encountered in any other form of warfare. The actual duration of combat and exposure to enemy action may total only a few seconds in a period of long hours, yet waiting with every faculty on the alert throws

a great strain on the toughest physical and mental constitution. For this reason we have paid a great deal of attention to the need for maintaining personnel in first class mental, as well as physical condition. There have, of course, been special facilities developed for psychiatric treatment, but of even greater importance has been the preventive treatment which has eased the natural strain on all our combat men. A program of leaves and use of rest homes has done much to relax and recondition them in the course of their tour of missions. We have learned much through experience and research about the swift detection of symptoms of strain and the means of restoring nerve-tired men to full efficiency in a short period. Perhaps the greatest single factor in the maintaining of a healthy condition among our flyers has been the tireless work of the flight surgeons and their assistants. They have gone far beyond providing medical care of the men. They have had a very large part in procuring the small yet important improvements in living conditions and the like, which contribute to the morale of individuals and units. They, above anyone, handle the gripes and troubles which can loom out of proportion if not well handled. In the more specifically medical aspect of their work, the Eighth's "medics" have steadily raised the health standards, particularly in the realm of flying occupational diseases. Aero-otitis, the most serious of such diseases, for example, has been reduced by 70 percent. Their close association with the men in all phases of their work and life has made it far easier to gain their full confidence and so to prevent disease and ill health.

Our contribution has been more than to help win the war in Europe
—it is world-wide and will last in history.

Most of the advances which have been made by our Air Force in the realm of the care of the flyer have not only benefited our own personnel, but have made a valuable contribution to high altitude aviation in other theaters. The same is true of much of the Eighth's pioneering of daylight high altitude precision bombardment. The Super-Fortresses which are now mounting their long-range attacks on vital Japanese targets have been the direct heirs of our B-17s and B-24s in this theater. They have incorporated numberless features which were first suggested by, or tried out in, our missions over the Reich. Indeed, we can claim the honor of establishing beyond question the value of the American concept of precision bombing. As the war in the Pacific moves to its climax, the role of strategic bombing, as pioneered in Europe, will play an ever more important part, and the Eighth, in addition to the contributions that our men and planes will still make in the Pacific, has already performed a service to air warfare in that theater which will not be forgotten.

The main techniques of precision bombing which we have developed are already well known—formation flying to give the best defense against all forms of enemy attack; concentrated and synchronized dropping to give the most effective strike pattern, bombing through overcast, with all the intricate battery of radar equipment, much of which was developed by

our own technicians. Equally important has been the growth of the long range escort fighter, first used in great numbers by this Air Force, and sometimes called America's most potent "secret weapon" of the air. Our Mustangs and Thunderbolts gradually lengthened their effective range until they were able to give cover far beyond what the Germans had believed possible. Their work has been as significant as that of our bombers in the development of strategic bombardment.

General Doolittle has emphasized the teamwork between the components of the Allied military machine, as a factor of major importance in securing victory in this theater. The foundation of the Eighth's contribution to that teamwork was laid within its own sphere of operations. In the gruelling conditions which have often accompanied our intensive bombing campaigns there has never been any lowering of our standards of cooperation between air and ground echelons. Each came to respect the abilities of the other and to understand its problems. As the numbers of the Eighth grew to giant proportions our early sense of intimacy was partly lost, but the high traditions inherited from the pioneers of the tough early days have helped to maintain our Air Force as a determined hard-striking unit. With such a close-knit organization and a clear mission, it has not been difficult to work with the Fifteenth and the RAF to make the impact of strategic bombing count for most in this theater. The combined operations of the Invasion days are but one example of the brilliant teamwork between the strategic air forces and the tactical air forces and ground and naval forces. If the lessons learned from these successful operations in Europe lead to a realistic use of strategic air power for the maintenance of peace after total victory is won, then the sacrifices and achievements of our Air Force will indeed have received suitable recognition.

WHAT'S YOUR G-I-Q?

1. What big decision had to be made about the use of our planes during the winter of 1943-44?
2. Who are the Commanding Generals of the Eighth, past and present? What positions do they now hold?
3. What advances have we made in the use of fighter-escort?
4. Why have we spent so much effort in attacking the enemy's railroad system?
5. Has the Eighth made any valuable contributions to our war effort in the Pacific? If so, what?
6. Why was General Eisenhower able to assure his troops on D-Day that any planes they saw would be friendly?
7. How have we protected our flyers from the specially tough conditions in this theater?
8. In which operations of direct assistance to the Ground Forces has your Group taken part?
9. What technical contributions to strategic bombing have been made by ground personnel in the Eighth? By ground personnel of your base?
10. What evidence do we have that our attacks on oil have been a major factor in reducing German military strength?
11. What do you think is the biggest single job which this Air Force has accomplished?
12. What lessons in the use of air power have we learned through our operations in this theater which will be of value in maintaining national security in the future?

