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ARMY TALKS



Pattern for Air Victory



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EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES ARMY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Heavy Bomber Box-score	3
Foreword	4
Pattern for Air Victory	5
Preparation	14
Questions for the Discussion	15

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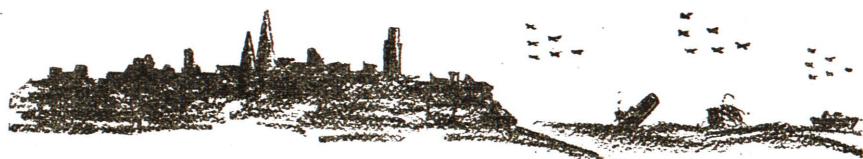
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U.S. Army 8th Air Force

HEAVY BOMBER BOX-SCORE

					
	TONS DROPPED	U.S. LOSSES	ENEMY AIRCRAFT		
			DESTROYED	PROBABLES	DAMAGED
AUG. '42	170	0	2	6	9
SEPT.	188.5	2	16	29	32
OCT.	294	7	34	36	21
NOV.	669.5	9	12	30	4
DEC.	381	13	38	65	22
JAN. '43	547.5	18	52	34	22
FEB.	641.25	20	70	27	11
MARCH	1666.25	19	141	43	55
APRIL	997.5	28	144	43	30
MAY	2865.5	67	340	108	167
JUNE	2458	85	304	69	121
JULY	3600	108	506	159	351
AUG.	3504	109	401	56	149
SEPT.	5400	85	262	43	115
TOTAL	23383	570	2322	748	1109



Foreword

THE primary mission of the Eighth Air Force is to destroy the enemy's air forces and his industrial capacity to make war. We are doing this today through daylight precision bombing, striking deep into the heart of Germany's industrial resources, crippling its weapons of war—hitting our targets in spite of enemy defenses and under all weather conditions.

The men of the Eighth Air Force are fighting the Battle of Germany—and fighting it *in* Germany, just as surely as our ground and air forces and our allies are today fighting the Battle of Italy. Our men know they are risking their lives to save the many thousands of other lives that would have been lost if an all out land attack had been launched prior to the destruction of the enemy's once powerful air force. This is the basis of our strategy.

Every man who contributes to these operations—no matter how remote or obscure his work may seem—is entitled to a feeling of personal participation in the task the Eighth Air Force has set out to accomplish.

IRA C. EAKER,
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
Commanding,
Eighth Air Force.

ARMY TALKS

EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS

PATTERN FOR AIR VICTORY

AS 1943 nears its end, the combined air teams of America, Great Britain and Soviet Russia are smashing with increasing might and fury at a retreating foe. Slowly but surely the perimeters of the German fortress are contracting before the co-ordinated hammerblows from the air and the ever-increasing forces moving forward on the ground.

In the heat of combat it is often difficult to evaluate long range tactics and stratagems. World statesmen, military leaders and the public often grasp at isolated incidents for a critical appraisal of an entire campaign. If 60 U.S. bombers are lost in a single raid on a German objective, there are some who would denounce the entire American air effort as a costly and ill-advised experiment.

The "All-out" Theory

There are others who would limit the Allied offensive to an all-out assault from the air on the theory that the enemy can be bombed into submission.

General Henry H. Arnold has enumerated three ways in which air power may be used. These are strategically, tactically and logistically.

"Strategic air

power," he said, "is a war winning weapon in its own right and is capable of striking decisive blows far behind the battle line, thereby destroying the enemy's capacity to wage war."

Cooperation Always Included

The American doctrine of total air power, while emphasizing the tremendous possibilities of strategic bombing, has always included the idea of close cooperation with ground forces as a team. In our development of attack aviation in the early '20s it was established that the air arm was not to be regarded as merely for support of ground actions.

In the successful Tunisian campaign, Allied long range bombers isolated the Axis forces by blasting away at shipping, airfields, docks and supply depots. Strategic air power based in Britain, played an important, though indirect, part by crippling or destroying war plants in Germany and occupied

France. Production of war equipment and its flow to the African battlefront was reduced substantially. Allied fighter interception of huge Axis air transport fleets and light bomber attacks on tanks, trucks and troop

The material on which this issue of ARMY TALKS is based was derived from American and British aviation sources, official reports, statements of policy by United States military leaders, press dispatches and other published accounts of the Allied air offensive in the European Theater of Operations. The overall picture it presents should give every soldier in the ETO a better understanding of the part he plays in this great assault against the enemy.

concentrations further softened the enemy for the final "kill."

Deprived of the weapons of war, the Axis forces collapsed as soon as a terrific drive on the battlefield by coordinated ground and air forces got underway. Thousands of lives were saved, and weeks of time.

The pattern for victory in Tunisia was woven from the skilful employment of strategic, tactical and logistical air power. This same pattern is now being utilized in Europe.

The Air Offensive

Early in October, Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker, Commanding the Eighth Air Force, said:

"It is the task of the Eighth Air Force and the RAF to destroy factories and transport and weapons of the Germans so that our invasion casualties will be cut down."

Instead of invasion by land and sea, the Allies started the great offensive against Hitler's Europe by air.

The job of softening Hitler's European fortress for the knock-out punch is a joint effort of the Eighth Air Force and the RAF. Last May, the British Prime Minister told the American Congress:

"It is the settled policy of our two staffs and war making authorities to make it impossible for Germany to carry on any form of war industry on a large or concentrated scale, either in Germany, Italy or the occupied countries. Wherever those centers exist or are developed they will be destroyed and the munitions populations will be dispersed. This process will continue ceaselessly with ever-increasing weight and intensity."

The basic operational policy of the two forces has called for the American heavy bombers to attack during daylight and the British by night. The reasons for this division of the round-

the-clock offensive spring back to the inherent air doctrines of the two countries.

America, by reason of her separation from Europe and the Far East has expressed her air strategy for many years in terms of long-range bombardment. American war strategists reasoned that if a hostile force attempted to invade the United States, long range bombers would sweep far out to sea to bomb the approaching enemy. American bombers, therefore, were built to fly great distances. They were built to defend themselves against attack since no escort planes could accompany them on the longer missions.

Britain, on the other hand, is separated from the European continent by only a few minutes flying time.

The British concept of aerial bombing is one of shorter range. Her heavy bombers depend more on escort and carry less armor and armament.

America's Bombers

America's two heavy bombing weapons are the Boeing B17, known as the Flying Fortress, and the Consolidated B24, known as the Liberator.

The latest model of the Fortress mounts at least 12 guns and bombing operations, for the most part, are carried out from between 20,000 to 25,000 feet altitude. The normal combat crew numbers 10.

The other four-motored American bomber, the Liberator, is fortified with somewhat lighter armament than the B17. It is being used extensively in the Battle of the Atlantic to track down U boats and to provide an air umbrella over the convoys. The Liberator also has been serving as the principal heavy bomber in the Middle East and is in action in the Pacific.

Britain's four-motored bombers—the Avro-Lancaster, Handley-Page Halifax and Short Stirling have a bomb capacity considerably greater than the

American planes, but less armor and armament.

The Halifax, which has taken part in most of the night raids on Germany, has eight Brownings, and a normal crew of seven.

The Stirling carries 10 Browning machine guns and a crew of seven.

These are the chief weapons of our heavy bomber offensive.

How Effective Are They?

What is the record to date? How effectively have these giant flying machines of destruction been used against the enemy? How well is the combined Anglo-American bomber offensive working?

Until August 1942, the burden of bombing Germany and Nazi occupied territory was carried by the RAF.

Night raiding of Germany by British aircraft had its inception as far back as the winter of 1941 but most of the attacks during this period were directed at German warships. By 1942, as more four-engined bombers became available, the RAF assaults gained momentum. On three occasions it was possible for the British to mass as many as 1,000 heavy aircraft over a single target.

Two considerations dominated the bombing policy of the British. The first was to give all possible help to Russia by striking at Germany's transport system, war factories and stocks of materials. The second was the Battle of the Atlantic. Well over half of RAF Bomber Command operations were directed against naval targets in Germany, Italy and the occupied countries.

On August 17, 1942, a small formation of Flying Fortresses swept across the French coast and attacked Rouen. This was the start of the American phase of the heavy bombardment over Europe. It was a modest raid in terms of aircraft used and

damage achieved. Nevertheless, it was the initial operation of an air force that within a year proved conclusively that it could strike any target of its choosing and that American combat crews could fight their way in and return home despite the fierce resistance of an ingenious enemy.

On the first anniversary of its operations over Europe, the Eighth Air Force had smashed at more than 80 vital points. American bombers had taken off from England, bombed their targets, and flown on to bases in Africa. There, they have reloaded, swung back over the Continent, dropped more bombs, and returned to their bases in Britain.

Bomb Shuttle Service

As Brig. General Frederick L. Anderson, commanding the Eighth Air Force Bomber Command, commented:

"We have taken up the shuttle service across Europe, a service which was started by the RAF, but which both air forces will now carry out while demonstrating beyond all doubt that the end of German power is but a matter of time."

While the RAF under the cover of darkness was laying waste to large industrial areas, American heavy bombers, taking off at dawn, moved over the European continent in an ever-widening arc. First came assaults on the submarine pens and bases of Brest, St. Nazaire, La Pallice and Lorient. Late in January, 1943, Fortresses for the first time roared into Germany proper to attack Wilhelmshaven. As time went on, as pilots, gunners and other combat crew members gained more and more experience, the tempo of American participation in the attack on Hitler's Festung Europa increased rapidly.

In March, aided by newly perfected instruments for precision bombing,

Flying Fortresses struck at the U-boat yards at Vegesack, near Bremen.

Aiming at the target from over five miles height, American bombardiers scored hits that disrupted the operations of the submarine yards for several months. In addition, at least seven U boats in varying stages of construction were severely damaged. The attack came at the height of the Battle of the Atlantic, at a time when every newly launched German submarine could potentially destroy some 400,000 tons of Allied shipping.

With mounting strength and increasing skill the American phase of the offensive was pressed home in the months that followed. In May, German armament works in Kiel, Antwerp and Courtrai, Emden and other cities felt the devastation of the B17s.

In June the Americans went to Huls. It was their first foray over the Ruhr, which up to that time had been strictly an RAF battleground. Unmindful of the intensive ground and air defenses, the Forts moved in, found their target, and put out of action one of Germany's principal synthetic rubber producing centers.

Long-range Bombing

As the air battle of Europe progressed, the American principle of precision bombing and long range operations was more than vindicated. American planes flew almost to the edge of the Arctic circle for a smashing assault at Trondheim and Heroya. By October, 1943, Fortresses and Liberators had penetrated as far eastward as East Prussia and Poland.

Every blow by American aircraft was helping to shorten the war. The industrial heart of the German war machine and its arteries of supply felt the tremendous punishment. The oil refineries at Ploesti, a major source of Nazi fuel, were a belching

inferno, following a visit of Eighth and Ninth Air Force Liberators. Two heavy assaults shattered the huge ball and roller bearing works at Schweinfurt. And there are many more.

But the value of American raids should not be reckoned only in terms of destruction to war potential.

Nazis Get No Rest

By taking off shortly after the British bombers return from their night assaults, American aircraft is giving the enemy no rest. The Luftwaffe has been forced to divert strong forces of its fighter planes along the Western Front. Authoritative estimates are that nearly 60 per cent. of the Nazi fighter strength is in the West.

Collaterally, through the constant threat of round-the-clock bombing the German defenses are being kept in a permanent state of alert. Gunners who have spent the night vainly trying to smash a concentration of RAF heavy bombers may have to deal with clouds of Fortresses a few hours later. Germany's air-raid precaution personnel, indeed, is having its hands full.

The dual offensive of the American-British bombers is aptly described by the publication, Royal Air Force Quarterly:

"In recent months we have had two clear illustrations of how the two forces work together in the execution of the strategic policy.

"As is well known the U-boat construction yards on the Baltic coast and the bases on the French Atlantic coast have always ranked high in the list of priority targets of the RAF, the Baltic ports being among the most heavily raided places in Germany. These attacks had to go on if the Battle of the Atlantic was to be won, but at the same time the RAF had another battle on hand—the Battle of the Ruhr. It was then that the value of the

American effort was most strongly emphasized; they undertook to attend to the U-boat yards and bases."

The publication cites a second example of this team work—namely, the widespread assault on transport and communications.

This assault takes a number of forms—heavy night raids on centers of communication in Germany, raids on locomotive factories, railroad yards, power stations, and the familiar train-busting exploits of the Fighter Command. It is in the attacks on the factories and yards that the Americans play a big part.

The primary mission of the heavy bomber is to deal the solar-plexus punches—blows that bring about the enemy's deterioration by paralyzing his industry, communications and supplies. However devastating its effect on both the enemy's material and morale, the employment of heavy bombers alone may not be sufficient to bring a military campaign to a successful conclusion.

Supporting Aircraft

A well-rounded air force has many other weapons in its hangars. It has the fighter, the medium, light, dive and fighter bomber, the observation plane, the transport, the liaison plane, the photo reconnaissance plane and others of varying size and purpose. It is their function to prosecute the tactical phase of air war. They are the weapons of air support. They are also the weapons of air defense.

In Africa, Sicily, Italy and in the island warfare of the South Pacific, medium and light bombers smashed at enemy concentrations beyond the range of our own artillery. Skip-bombing attack planes and fighters riddled the enemy's armored columns and blasted and strafed infantry concentrations along the forward battle-lines. Transports and gliders brought up

troops and supplies. And when the break-through came the whole weight of the air was used to disorganize the enemy's retreat.

The American and British air forces operating in the European theater are well-equipped to hurl varied tactical aircraft into any invasion front.

Marauders Hit Airfields

For its medium bombardment tactics, the Eighth Air Force has relied on the high-speed two-engined Martin Marauder (B.26). This plane has been used extensively since the midsummer of 1943 to bomb airfields, marshalling yards, factories and other important targets along Western Europe.

Serving as an aerial partner to the Marauders is the British de Havilland Mosquito, an all-wood, two-engined bomber. Its manufacturers claim the Mosquito is the fastest airplane in the world. Three other formidable two-engined bombers used by the RAF are the Wellington, the North American Mitchell (B.25) and the Douglas Boston (A.20). Mitchells were used in the American raid on Tokyo.

In the field of fighter aircraft, the Allied air forces have been able to match and surpass the best that has been built by the enemy.

The fighter plane has varied missions. In defensive operations the fighter's duty is to intercept the enemy and shoot him out of the skies. The classic demonstration of fighter defense was the Battle of Britain during which the heroic squadrons of RAF Spitfires and Hurricanes turned the tide against the seemingly overpowering swarms of German bombers and thereby saved a nation.

The fighter plane also is employed as an escort for the bomber. This again is a defensive role, since the fighter enters combat only when the

enemy presses an attack on the bomber formation.

Fighters Look for Trouble

Offensively, the fighter may be used on a sweep—a tactic primarily designed to eliminate any type of hostile aircraft from a specific area. On such a mission the fighter usually seeks combat over enemy territory. Another offensive operation of the fighter is along frontal combat areas where it may be used as a bomber against targets normally considered wasteful for heavier bombing craft. Strafing of troops and armored columns also are important duties.

Reviewing the military record of American aircraft, the Office of War Information recently reported that U.S. losses have been one to every four of the enemy in aerial combat. American fighters over Europe have made substantial contribution to this over-all combat record.

The world's heaviest fighter plane, the Republic Thunderbolt (P.47), has been used extensively over the Continent, escorting bombers and operating on sweeps. Armed with eight machine guns, the Thunderbolt can fly over 400 miles an hour and attain an altitude of 40,000 feet. The Bell Airacobra (P.39), the Lockheed Lightning (P.38) and North American Mustang (P.51) are other American-built fighters that have seen extensive service in the European skies.

The Mustang, which is being redesigned into a powerful fighter-bomber, was the first of the single-engined planes based in Britain to penetrate Germany.

The twin-engined Lightning has been in service on all the world's battle-fronts, operating at all altitudes and compiling an impressive record of enemy "kills."

British fighters also have kept pace with the ever-increasing demands of

speed and firepower. One of the fastest and most powerful fighters in operational service is the Hawker Typhoon, whose speed of more than 400 miles an hour and heavy armament of four cannon or 12 machine guns make it a more than formidable adversary to the Luftwaffe. The Supermarine Spitfire and Hawker Hurricane, two of the RAF mainstays, are still going strong.

Russia, whose air power was greatly underrated several years ago, has developed a number of front-rank fighters and bombers. The three leading fighters of Soviet design are the MIG-3, the LAGG-3 and the YAK-1. Perhaps the best known of the Russian planes is the Stormovik, a slightly inaccurate translation of the Russian word for assault airplane. The particular type covered by this title is normally the IL-2, a single seat, low-level bomber.

Men of the Ground

A few months before Pearl Harbor the United States Army Air Forces was a skeleton organization composed of some 10,000 officers, 9,000 aviation cadets and 126,000 enlisted men. Today its strength has passed 2,000,000.

Whenever a heavy bomber takes off against an enemy target many men, exclusive of the combat crew, are directly involved. Each is an expert in maintenance of combat planes. Hundreds of others—the air base troops, the operations staffs, the supply men, the engineers, the ordnance crews—contribute directly and indirectly to the success of the mission.

On the basis of a 2,000,000-man air force this means the training of some 185,000 pilots and hundreds of thousands of bombardiers, navigators, ground officers, radio men and mechanics. Today's Army Air Forces require 450 different technical and occupational skills. They require the assistance of specialized units drawn

from the ranks of other components of the American armed forces.

Ground Crews Important

It is unfortunate that the role of the men on the ground has been eclipsed by the achievements of those who perform in the skies. Like the pilots and the combat crews, ground forces of the AAF have more than proved themselves under fire.

In the festering jungles of Bataan, a few valiant men kept battered P40s flying to the end with little more than baling wire, determination and the application of Yankee ingenuity. At other remote outposts they had no lathes at first, no pneumatic riveting machines, no skins for patches, no bearings, no motor parts. Yet they kept the planes in the air. They rebuilt bombers between dusk and daylight with improvised tools and materials salvaged from wrecks. And most of them had never seen the inside of a machine shop until they joined the Air Forces. The courage, skill and perseverance of ground Forces have enabled American aircraft to assume the offensive in every theater of war.

In England, the successful American air assault of Europe has been made possible largely through the efficiency of Eighth Air Force Service Command.

Service Command performs a job that on the one hand is fantastic in its size, diversity and scope and on the other monotonous and drab in many respects.

Service Command is a combination state university, mail-order house, railway express, corner drug store, hotel resort, universal repair shop, gunsmith, gas station, armory, warehouse, commercial airline, personnel placement bureau.

Basically, Service Command performs two functions: (1) Supplying the Air Force and (2) Maintaining and repairing airplanes and other equipment. This sounds simple, but

supply means providing everything from a tiny screw to a complete B17 and all such special equipment and ordnance items necessary to make the matter of flying an airplane profitable to the war effort.

The repair function is just as varied. Repair keeps the blood stream of an Air Force flowing. There actually are two groups of service men—those stationed at the base (usually termed the ground crew) and those men at big repair depots.

One Out of Two

Ordinarily, a minor overhaul is performed at the bomber station. The tough job goes to the depot.

At one advanced air depot mechanics made one good Fortress out of two wrecks. They managed to get the nose and front section from one wreck and the rear section from the other. They put these two sections together and the plane is back flying again with the name "Odds and Ends" painted on its nose.

The two basic functions of Service Command—supply and maintenance—involve a bewildering assortment of collateral jobs, ranging from special schools to train mechanics to the establishment of an airline in the United Kingdom to move supplies and personnel with the utmost dispatch. In addition Service Command operates rest homes—really resort hotels—for combat men; vast trucking lines to haul supplies and bombs to any spot in England; a courier service to rush important messages from point to point; and many other functions.

Actually for every Eighth Air Force plane that flies there are 22 Service Command men needed on the ground, and these 22 men represent the most unsung, unbemedalled, almost unknown, behind-the-scenes outfit in the world.

Service Command has the biggest

air force installations. It hires thousands of American civilians for specialised work; it has thousands more British civilians, and at one camp there are 400 RAF personnel working side by side with U.S. supply men just to speed up the flow of material. Here, the RAF and USAAF have pooled their supplies, and each can call upon the other for items not in stock.

Another example of how Service Command functions is seen at one huge depot. This sprawling establishment is equipped to do anything, even to building a complete B17, or B24, from the stock of parts on hand. Planes are brought here for extensive repair. Nearly every engine in a plane goes through here at some time.

Repair Depots

The motors come in at one end and are torn down, cleaned and each part is placed on a dolly. The dolly moves from inspector to inspector, who makes notes as to what is to be done to the engine. Nothing gets by these inspectors, who use magnaflux equipment and many other checking devices. Worn parts are machined and damaged parts are replaced. The dolly, meanwhile, is moving down the line and the building of the sub-assemblies starts, each mechanic fitting, re-grinding and testing the parts. By the time the dolly has gone three-fourths of the length of the building, the parts have been boiled down to 20 or 30 major sub-assemblies. A few hours later these are assembled, and the motor is block-tested. If it passes the rigid inspection it goes back to the front lines.

Many are the ways to repair battle-damaged aircraft. The bomber station itself can do most of the minor repair. If it is more serious, and necessitates a week's labor, the plane likely will end up at an advanced air depot, where virtually everything can be done.

Another successful repair method

is found in the work of the mobile repair unit. This unit, usually consisting of two huge trailers on wheels, can go anywhere in England to do repairs. One Fortress landed in an oats field and a mobile unit moved in, replaced the four motors, made other repairs and otherwise rendered the ship ready to fly.

Decline of the Luftwaffe

The scientific utilization of air-power by America and Britain may be seen in sharper relief when placed against the background of German Luftwaffe operations. When the Germans entered the war they possessed the world's greatest air force. As late as 1940 victory through air power was still within Hitler's reach. Yet something went amiss.

In the measured judgment of history, the Luftwaffe's failure in the Battle of Britain resulted from an entire misconception of both the potentialities and limitations of aerial warfare.

German blitz technique in Poland, Norway, Holland and France, the coordination of ground and air forces, had proved successful hastening the conquest of those nations. German strategists reasoned that the same type of air warfare would work in Britain. Their technique of strategic bombing of England was the same type of helter-skelter bombardment and front line strafing employed by the Luftwaffe on the Continent.

This mistake in strategy and tactics, combined with the magnificent defense of the Royal Air Force, lost the Battle of Britain for the Germans. German bombers dropped their explosives over wide areas on the theory that if enough bombs were released some would strike vital military objectives. Not only did they fail in this purpose, but their failure was written off in a staggering cost of aircraft and trained flying personnel.

Three major blunders may be seen as the root cause of the Luftwaffe's failure to complete the victory it so nearly won. The first of these blunders was the German conception of air units as an auxiliary of the Army. Because of that, production was concentrated on lightly-armed day bombers of comparatively short range. They were effective and devastating when used in conjunction with ground troops against weak defences. When they had to fight independently they proved inadequate.

Germany's Second Blunder

Second of Germany's blunders in the use of air power was the continuation of the daylight air attack on England after poor tactics and unsuitable equipment had revealed the Luftwaffe's inferiority to R.A.F. Fighter Command in the Battle of Britain. Had the enemy switched over to night bombing against England in July, 1940, before more than 2,000 aircraft and 5,000 experienced aircrews had been lost, the War might have run a very different course.

Finally, the third factor which reduced the Luftwaffe from the World's most powerful Air Force to an "also ran" was the invasion of Russia and the enormous losses inflicted by the Red Air Fleet and the Russian winters of 1941-2.

The result of all this was that although Germany began the war with an operational strength of some 4,800 aircraft, with little short of 4,000 more as immediate reserves, by the middle of 1943, although the first line strength had been maintained by prodigious efforts, this had been done only by reducing the reserve to less than 1,000 aircraft. Production is therefore not meeting the losses, Germany has not enough aircraft to go round, and the available forces are declining as surely

as those of the Allies are increasing in strength.

Nazis Turn to Defense

The most outstanding fact is that whereas in 1939 the emphasis was on attack aircraft, now it is on the defensive machine. The most notable absentee from both lists is the heavy bomber of either the Fortress or Lancaster class. These war-winning airplanes have never been part of the Luftwaffe's production policy, and although relatively few He 177 heavy bombers are now being turned out they appear to fill no important group of the German Air Force's strength.

What was at one time vaunted as the strongest weapon of air attack—the dive-bomber—may perhaps be symbolic of the Luftwaffe's failure. The dive-bomber, as represented in the German Air Force, was a low-performance, highly vulnerable airplane, useful for only one purpose—cooperation with ground troops, or naval units under the cover of air superiority. The rigid and narrow functions of the dive-bomber epitomize the whole outlook of the German Staff on the use of air power. Lack of versatility has proved the enemy's undoing in this war as in the last. That same lack of flexibility is certain to prove a final and overwhelming handicap now that the Luftwaffe is driven on the defensive and faced with superior and growing forces.

With the emphasis on defensive aircraft, the Germans are still providing powerful opposition to the Allied aerial invaders. In the opinion of Major General William E. Kepner, commanding the Eighth Air Force Fighter Command, there is no evidence of any marked deterioration in either the planes or pilots sent up by the Luftwaffe to beat back our bombers. He expressed the belief, however, that when the Luftwaffe cracks it will disintegrate rapidly.

Preparation

Reasons for the Topic: It is the purpose of this issue of ARMY TALKS to make available the documented facts of the war in the air in this Theater. This Topic should also stir the imagination and stimulate thinking of all who participate in the discussion. Thousands of men will owe their lives to the success of air warfare, and at the close of the war thousands will earn their living by helping to develop air power for the future.

How decisive will be the effect of air power in the present War? Can the Air Force break the backbone of enemy morale and opposition before the Field Forces enter for the final assaults? Furthermore, is the cost in planes and air crews offset by the saving of life in attacking infantry and mechanized units? The air forces operating in this Theater have already achieved spectacular success and will proceed to greater accomplishments in the future offensives. In a Theater that must bide its time and train for what is to come our Air Forces are the only forces engaged in active combat at this time. It is believed that every man in the army is eager to learn all that he can of their activities, of their hazards, and of their triumphs. The current issue of ARMY TALKS is authoritatively written to give an overall picture of the problems, and the strategy of air power today.

Preparation for Discussion: Study the pamphlet with care, making necessary notes and marginal jottings. Then make a brief outline of the three or four main points you intend to stress, under which you can list the subordinate points or facts you plan to present.

Choice of Topics: There is entirely too much in this pamphlet for one discussion period. Select carefully the topics you desire to emphasize and subordinate the others unless they come up naturally in the course of the discussion. One of the aspects of air power that may be raised in the course of the discussion is its future application, and its conversion from war methods and purposes to post-war civil aviation. What scope will civil aviation hold for army flyers, and how will army experiments and techniques be best utilized to advance aviation in peace time?

Divisions for Discussion: The discussion material may be broken into some such divisions as the plan for air victory by the United Nations; the role of the Eighth Air Force in that plan; the method of co-operation in this Theater between the American Army Air Force and the R.A.F., types of planes and their use in the offensive; the collaboration of service and ground crews with flying personnel; the reasons for the failure of the Luftwaffe; the part in future operations to be played by air power.

The discussion leader should maintain an objective, factual and unprejudiced attitude towards the topic. None of us can be too well informed on the tactics and strategy used in the greatest air battle of this war, a battle which is continuing day and night, and one which is growing in momentum and intensity with every passing hour.

QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION

Q. : How essential is the SOS ETO to the Theater Air Forces ? How important is the SOS in supplying ammunition, gasoline, sea and rail transport facilities and other goods and services ?

Q. : Can air power alone defeat Germany ? In other words, given sufficient time, can we bomb the enemy into submission and save the lives of thousands of our soldiers ?

Q. : What was the reason for the failure of Germany's blitz on England ? Was it due to the courage of the besieged, the superior skill and strategy of the RAF, or was it due to faulty strategy on the part of the German High Command ?

Q. : Does the Nazi regime produce a more skilful fighting man and a more daring flyer than the USAAF or RAF ? What would available figures tend to indicate ?

Q. : Is there a steady and growing deterioration in the German Air Force ? Are the pilots, navigators and bombardiers less well trained and less effective today than they were a year ago ? Two years ago ? Is there any noticeable deterioration in German airplanes ? Are new types of bombers and fighters being produced by the enemy ?

Q. : Can Germany defend her territory and overcome bombardment by USAAF and RAF through the tactics and air strategy of her fighter commands ?

Let us keep constantly in mind that free, hard-hitting and provocative discussion is one of the essential parts of the way of life we are fighting to defend and maintain. The topic of this issue of ARMY TALKS gives us material on one of the most powerful single weapons we have to maintain that right and that way of life.

The discussion leader's initial talk should be concise, illuminating, and provocative of the discussion to follow. It should be calculated to stimulate and draw out the interest of the group. Good discussion is a social function in which all may participate ; it can be steered and guided without being dominated.

Vol. 1, No. 1 of ARMY TALKS should be referred to as the guide and "Handbook for Discussion Leaders." It will take several sessions to assimilate and put into practice the suggestions made.

Whatever you do, do not READ this pamphlet to the men.

Requests for additional copies of future or past issues of ARMY TALKS should be made to your Special Service Officer.

DISCUSSION WITH THE DISTRICT

Q: How essential is the 502 HTO to the Theater Air Forces?
How important is the 502 in supplying ammunition, gasoline, etc.
and all transport facilities and other goods and services?

Q: Can the power lines below Germany? In other words, given
sufficient time, can we bring the enemy into submission and save
thousands of thousands of our soldiers?

What was the reason for the failure of Germany's blitz on
England? Was it due to the courage of the British, the superior
skill and strategy of the RAF, or was it due to faulty strategy on the
part of the German High Command?

Q: Does this air victory produce a more stable fabric than
what a ship during the USARP or RAF? What would
be the result of a similar?

Q: How do you estimate the morale of the troops?
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