

Rise of American Air Power Led to Reverse War's Trend

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Washington—(U.P.)—Growing allied air power was a dominant factor in the almost complete reversal of allied and axis fortunes which occurred during the second year of United States participation in the war.

Generally speaking the first year of the war for the United States saw the axis on the offensive everywhere, the allies on the defensive. With the exception of the skies over Britain, axis air power was superior in every combat theater when the United States entered the war.

Thanks mainly to American airplane production, by the end of 1942 the allies were challenging the axis in the air on every front and during the second year of American combat, the allies won aerial superiority in every theater, including over Germany itself, save for the inner defenses of Japan beyond the reach of American heavy bombers.

This transition in the air enabled the allies to take the offensive a year ago. The English-speaking allies moved into North Africa Nov. 7, 1942, setting off a chain of events that led to the clearing of the axis from Africa and the Mediterranean.

Before each step in the Mediterranean the allies first achieved aerial domination over the areas concerned.

The allies first carried out systematic strategic bombing of enemy supplies, communications and defenses throughout the Mediterranean. When the time was ripe these attacks were brought to a tactical focus and the enemy was helpless to resist invasion. In the case of Pantelleria the enemy capitulated to aerial attack only—the first time in history an island was captured from the air alone.

Japanese aggression in the Pacific proceeded unhampered until the series of successful American naval actions—Coral Sea, Midway, Bismarck Sea and others—in which air power again played a dominant role. Air power held the Japanese back after they had nearly reached Australia.

Meanwhile the strategic bombing of German industry, communications and defenses proceeded from Britain with the object of reducing the enemy's ability to resist to the minimum before a landing of ground forces was attempted. Lately the allies have begun similar strategic bombing of German industry, communications and defenses proceeded from Britain with the object of reducing the enemy's ability to resist to the minimum before a landing of ground forces was attempted. Lately the allies have begun similar strategic bombing of Germany from new bases in Italy, exerting a gigantic aerial pincer on the Nazi stronghold.

Some allied strategists would not be surprised if Germany capitulates to the aerial hammering from the west and the crushing blows of the Russian armies in the east before a western front can be opened by ground forces thrown across the English channel, though they have not been counting on that.

Growth in importance, actually and relatively, of air power is shown by the fact the army air forces today number close to 2,800,000 officers and men, while pilots are trained at the rate of 75,000 yearly. This compares to the total army strength of around 7,500,000 men. In 1918 the air force numbered 1800 officers and 20,000 men.

At the start of the first World War the army had only two flying fields and 55 planes, of which 51 were classified as obsolete and the other four obsolescent, while the air service numbered only 1200 officers and men.

In the interval between the two wars army airmen constantly battled for greater recognition. It was asserted that army "brass hats" were not air-minded, and viewed air power as an auxiliary. The same struggle proceeded in the navy.

The war in the Pacific—notably such events as Pearl Harbor, the sinking of the British capital ship Prince of Wales and Repulse off Malaya, and the battle of Midway—revolutionized

the attitude of both the army and navy on air power.

Army thinking on this matter evolved so far that the current army field service regulations, on command and employment of air power, issued July 21, 1943, assert, "Land Power and Air Power are co-equal and interdependent forces; neither is an auxiliary of the other."

The army air force is now approaching its maximum top projected strength in personnel, and is rapidly expanding in number of planes and facilities. Last year Gen. Henry H. Arnold commanding general of the army air forces, said the ultimate goal was to keep 185,000 planes flying and fighting. The navy's air arm now possesses close to 20,000 planes.

Air plane production, a prime factor in America's air power, has steadily increased. October production was 8,362 planes. American planes are equal or superior to the enemy's in every category. An entirely new and unnamed army fighter is on the way, while it was recently disclosed the giant new B-2 bomber, dwarfing the Flying Fortress and Liberator, will shortly be in combat.

Superiority of American planes—and personnel—is reflected by combat scores. From Dec. 7, 1941, to Sept. 1, 1943, American army combat planes flew a total of 233,758 sorties, dropping 105,649 tons of bombs. On those missions army planes destroyed 7312 enemy planes, probably destroyed 2198 and damaged an additional 2535, for the loss of only 1867 planes. Comparable figures for the navy have not been published, but cross-sections show that navy planes are bringing down the enemy in about the same ratio as the army.

ROGUE RIVER MAN OFFERS PLAN FOR RETURN OF GOLD

A monetary plan, which he believes would pay off the national debt, pay for the war and insure returning soldiers an adequate income, has been worked out by H. H. McClung, Box 131, Rogue River. Mr. McClung has submitted his plan to both Senator Charles L. McNary and Senator Rufus Holman and has received replies to the effect that it would be turned over to the secretary of the treasury and the senate finance committee.

Mr. McClung would have the country return to a complete gold standard, raise the price of gold to \$100 an ounce and put the gold coins into circulation, retiring all currency. Mr. McClung states that this nation now owns 80 per cent of the world's gold and that at \$100 an ounce, anyone, a returning soldier or even women and children, could mine gold and make a living.

The author of the plan operates a small mine near Rogue River in spare time off from his work as a saw filer for a logging outfit in the Grave Creek district and points out that working full time at the mine he could make a very comfortable wage with gold at \$35 an ounce. Most of the gold which he mines is of a purity to bring from \$27 to \$30 an ounce and much of it he disposes of to dentists of the valley.

Mr. McClung stated that he believes the plan would work and he is interested in receiving comments and questions from readers. Mr. McClung was in Medford last week for medical care and was at the home of his son, George McClung, 512 Boardman St.

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Today, of course, 85% of United's business is of a military nature. But we are looking to the peacetime days to come when United, as before the war, will again not only meet but anticipate the business and pleasure travel requirements of this community and the many cities it serves on the Pacific Seaboard and from coast to coast.

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And so the people of United, like all of us here on the Pacific Coast, are looking ahead to the great new economic era of the West. Each is contributing his part, striving to make the coming peacetime days an age of worthwhile, full living. Each, like United Air Lines itself, feels a deep responsibility in being a partner in the progress of the Pacific Coast.

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