

Record 208 Kills By U.S. Fighters Over Germany

TWO hundred and eight German fighters were destroyed by American Thunderbolts and Mustangs in a series of great battles over Germany yesterday in which at least 1,300 Allied and enemy fighters took part.

This nearly doubles the previous best "bag" of 117 by 8th Air Force fighters, and was made for a loss of 41 bombers and 28 fighters.

The battles developed when the American fighters escorted 1,100 Fortresses and Liberators to blast oil plants deep in Central Germany.

At the same time R.A.F. Lancasters carried out a concentrated assault on the plant at Homberg, one of the largest of the ten plants in the Ruhr. The target was blazing when the attack was completed.

The most furious fighting for the Americans developed over the vast Leuna synthetic oil refineries at Mersburg near Leipzig—the same target as on September 11, when the previous record was set up.

Anticipating fierce opposition, the Americans sent more than 900 escort fighters—the second largest force ever dispatched.

German Desperation

The "hunch" was right. The Germans hurled about 400 fighters into their defending action. This is believed to be the greatest force of interceptors they have ever put into the skies over the Reich.

It is a significant indication of the Germans' desperation in their bid to save their already heavily-battered oil plants.

American bombers also attacked marshalling yards at Bielefeld and Rheine and R.A.F. Mustangs were over North-West Germany.

And last night two large formations of R.A.F. heavy bombers crossed the East Coast towards the Continent.

900 Fortresses Rain Bombs, Incendiaries on Rail Center

Continuing their offensive against Nazi communications, 900 Fortresses of the 8th Air Force, attacking in two giant waves, thundered over Nuremberg yesterday to shower the city's huge railway yards and locomotive repair shops with more than 11,000 high explosive bombs and some 300,000 incendiaries.

The huge yards and repair shops, the later stretching out in a thin line for almost a mile, were ripe for the blow. Photo reconnaissance four days ago showed the yards teeming with activity, close to 3,000 cars jamming the rails. The city is a main switch-over for both fronts, north-south, and east-west lines intersecting.

Big Day Blow At Reich Again

For the second straight day more than 1,200 U.S. heavy bombers swarmed over Germany yesterday, battering rail and industrial targets in the Hanover, Munster and Bielefeld areas. They were followed up by RAF heavies in their second successive daylight attack on the Reich.

Upward of 600 Thunderbolt and Mustang fighters escorted the Fortresses and Liberators, which bombed through solid cloud. One bomber and one fighter were lost.

The RAF Lancasters, shepherded by Mustangs, attacked the I. G. Farben Industrie chemical works at Leverkusen.

All-Out Blitz On Troop Trains

TROOP and ammunition trains steaming to the aid of Hitler's hard-pressed armies in the East were yesterday the main targets for 1,300 American "heavies" and 850 fighters.

The attacking planes, bombing through the clouds with the aid of the "electronic eye," poured 3,000 tons of explosives on railway yards and industrial targets along a 100-mile front from Magdeburg through Leipzig to Chemnitz and the fighters swooped on every train they saw.

"WAR!"

Two hours before the three-pronged air offensive, which took place shortly after noon, a small force of heavies attacked a six-span road bridge across the Rhine at Wesel in the northwest corner of the Ruhr.

Nazi Rails Target For 1,400 Planes

After two days of operations limited by severe weather conditions heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force swung back into large-scale action over the weekend as they dropped crushing loads on Nazi lines of communications.

Over 900 Fortresses and Liberators were out yesterday with an escort of 500 Thunderbolts and Mustangs, hammering rail yards at Aschaffenburg, Heilbronn and Mannheim, while fighters, in the absence of Nazi air opposition, tore down to shoot up airfields and rail yards.

The attacks on Heilbronn, 25 miles north of Stuttgart, and Mannheim, key Rhine port, completed a one-two punch for the 8th, Saturday's force of 750 Fortresses and Liberators having numbered among its targets the Heilbronn yards and a road and railbridge at Mannheim. Third announced target for Saturday was a rail center at Rheine, just north of Munster.

The 8th's Fortresses and Liberators, operating under a cover of 200 Mustangs, took off in a snowstorm and stiff gales and had to battle more snow and sub-zero weather over the Continent. Solid clouds once more made bombing by instrument necessary.

The heavies' chief blow was thrown at marshalling yards in Frankfurt. Transport facilities in eastern Germany, just opposite the Nazi salient, and within the bulge at points in Luxemburg and Belgium, also took a pounding.

Specific targets in the attack on Saar supply lines were not divulged. The 8th's report stated that marshalling yards and communications centers handling traffic to the Saar sector were hit. It was the 8th's 16th attack on German supply lines in the last 17 days.

Nazi Tank Plant, Railroads Blasted By 1,150 Heavies

Renewed activities of the 8th Air Force grew in intensity yesterday as more than 1,850 planes—1,150 of them heavy bombers—knifed at railroads and a tank factory in the Reich. Six marshalling yards in West Germany and the Herschel and Sohn works, former locomotive and truck factory east of Cologne now turning out Tiger and Panther tanks, felt the weight of the 8th's bombs.

Biggest target of the day was the marshalling yard at Hamm, where it is usual for 10,000 railroad cars to be handled daily along the 30 miles of tracks. Rail lines serving the Ruhr at Kassel, where the Herschel and Sohn works are located, and at Coblentz were also hit.

The three other rail targets were marshalling yards at Neiderlahnstein, south of Coblentz, Siegen, northeast of Coblentz, and Munster, in northwest Germany.

Raid Sets Mark; 15th

AF Also Out

December, 1944
The largest force of heavy bombers ever dispatched in daylight on a single mission by the Eighth Air Force—1,600 Fortresses and Liberators, convoyed by more than 800 Mustangs and Thunderbolts—comprised the bulk of approximately 3,500 warplanes of the U.S. Strategic Air Forces hurled against German targets Monday.

Manned by 16,800 airmen, more than 2,400 heavies and pursuits of the Eighth flew across the Rhine to smash rail centers in western Germany, while upward of 1,000 heavy bombers and fighters of the 15th, based in Italy, blasted rail and industrial objectives in Vienna and Austria.

Early unofficial reports indicated the Eighth lost 12 bombers and two fighters. Unopposed by enemy fighter opposi-

Big Air Mission Means 622 Millions in Planes

EIGHTH AF HQ, England, Dec. 11—This is what is involved in an "ordinary" mission to Germany by 1,500 heavy bombers and 900 fighters:

Crews total 15,900 men; planes' value is more than \$622,700,000; aircraft form a column 100 miles long; engines pulling planes generate 7,518,000 horsepower, equal to output of four Boulder Dams; enough gas is consumed to take 15,200 passenger autos from New York to San Francisco; the 21,200 50-cal. machine-guns, if placed at 50-foot intervals, would form a line of fire 200 miles long.

tion Eighth heavies struck at Frankfurt and Giesse 35 miles to the north, and Hanau, just east of Frankfurt. All bombing was done through heavy clouds by means of instruments.

All three rail targets are links in the enemy communications lines in the supply and reinforcement of the Western Front, situated on main lines of supply between the principal industrial centers of north-west and central Germany and the German defenses in the sectors facing the U.S. First and Third Armies.

The Eighth's tremendous attack was carried out between 11 AM and noon. Flak was generally light.

Meanwhile, the 15th's Forts and Libs pounded the Mossbierbaum oil refinery, 22 miles northwest of Vienna, and rail yards at Graz in southern Austria. Ordnance depots in Vienna also were hit.