

Moreover, the heavy daylight raids of the United States Eighth Air Force into Germany achieved a steady attrition of the German fighter forces.

Attrition of the G.A.F.

42. How crippling these blows were on German aircraft production is illustrated by information obtained from intelligence sources. A comprehensive picture of the effects of direct air attack in terms of enemy single-engine fighter production during the five months from 1st November, 1943 to 1st April, 1944 can be gained from the estimates below:—*

		<i>Planned</i>	<i>Achieved</i>
November	1,280	600
December	1,335	600
January	1,415	650
February	1,480	600
March	1,555	500
		<u>7,065</u>	<u>2,950</u>

43. The difference between the production planned and achieved totals 4,115 aircraft, an average loss to the enemy of more than 820 single-engined fighters per month.

44. These figures ignore the heavy losses sustained by German Air Force fighters in air attacks on their airfields and in combat; also the effective attacks on the factories producing twin-engined fighters must be taken into account.

45. Parallel with the attacks on production centres by the strategic air forces, a campaign of day and night intruding against enemy airfields, designed to hamper enemy training schedules as well as to destroy the enemy in the air, was carried out by aircraft of A.E.A.F. with very great success. In addition, many heavy attacks were made in the preliminary period on the enemy's airfields, which achieved considerable destruction of airfield facilities.

46. It became evident during this period (November, 1943, to May, 1944) that the High Command of the German Air Force was pursuing a policy of conserving its air forces for the defence of vital targets only. This policy made it extremely difficult to get the G.A.F. to fight. Even large scale fighter sweeps failed to produce any serious reaction. However, in the period from 15th November, 1943, the date

of the formation of A.E.A.F., to the 5th June, 1944, the eve of D-Day, the Allied forces accounted for the following enemy aircraft in air combat alone (see foot of page).

47. This enormous attrition of G.A.F. strength is based on claims of enemy aircraft destroyed in combat alone; no account is taken in these statistics of aircraft destroyed on the ground. Of the figures given above no less than 2,655 enemy aircraft were destroyed by Allied Air Forces operating out of the United Kingdom during what I have termed the preparatory period of the assault, namely 1st April to 5th June, 1944. I deal with the planned attacks on the G.A.F. and its bases in France during this preparatory period in para. 129 et seq.

(b) Preparatory Period.

Method of Presentation.

48. Since the war began all attacks against enemy targets have, in some measure, influenced the situation prevailing on the eve of the assault. The commencement of the preparatory phase for this Despatch I have, however, fixed at 1st April, 1944, except in so far as detailed co-ordinated plans for attacks on targets of specific importance within the framework of the "Neptune" plan were in operation earlier. In these cases, I have included all the attacks made in accordance with the complete plan.

49. For convenience of presentation, I have dealt with these preparatory operations under the headings set out below. These headings cover the various operations planned and carried out to fulfil the tasks laid on to the air forces (see paragraph 25):—

Dislocation of Enemy Lines of Communication, including Destruction of Bridges.

Neutralisation of Coastal Defences.

Disruption of Enemy Radar Cover and W/T facilities.

Attacks on Military facilities.

Harassing of Coastwise Shipping and Sea Mining.

Attacks on Airfields.

Air Reconnaissance.

Protection of the Assembling Assault Forces.

"Crossbow" Operations.

			<i>Probably Destroyed</i>	<i>Probably Destroyed</i>	<i>Damaged</i>
A.E.A.F.					
Aircraft on offensive operations	711	79	308	
Aircraft on defensive operations over the United Kingdom and Channel areas	167	23	39	
		<u>878</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>347</u>	
Guns of Anti-Aircraft Command	73	5	22	
Eighth Air Force—by Bombers	2,223	696	1,188	
—by Fighters	1,835	202	705	
R.A.F. Bomber Command	201	52	267	
R.A.F. Coastal Command	28	3	22	
Grand Totals	<u>5,238</u>	<u>1,060</u>	<u>2,551</u>	

* Subject to modification in the light of information subsequently received.