

#55 ENEMY AIR STRENGTH

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ISSUED BY THE INTELLIGENCE DIVISION
OFFICE OF CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
NAVY DEPARTMENT

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INTELLIGENCE REPORT

F-10-1

Serial **F-10-10-42**
(Start new series each year, i. e. 1-40, 2-40)

Monograph Index Guide No. **1004-100**
(To correspond with SUBJECT given below. See O. N. I. Index Guide. Make separate report for each main title.)

From **Div. of Naval Intelligence** at **Washington** Date **March 26**, 1942
(Ship, fleet, unit, district, office, station, or person)

Reference **Attache Reports, Statements, and Estimates** **RATING "A"**
(Directive, correspondence, previous related report, etc., if applicable)

Source **Compilation from References** Evaluation **Reliable**
(As official, personal observation, publications, press, conversation with—identify when practicable, etc.) (As reliable, doubtful, unverified, etc.)

Subject **WORLD AVIATION STRENGTH AND PRODUCTION**
(Nation reported on) (Main title as per index guide) (Subtitles) (Make separate report for each title)

BRIEF—(Here enter careful summary of report, containing substance succinctly stated; include important facts, names, places, dates, etc.)

BRIEF As of April 1st, 1942, it is estimated that total plane strength of the United Nations greatly exceeds that of the Axis powers. Trainers, however, account for most of the superiority, and it is only in the European theatre that the Axis has fewer first line bombers and fighters than the United Nations.

On the production front the United Nations are now well out in front **except in bomber manufacture**. Germany produces about twice as many bombers as the British Empire each month, and joint British and United States bomber production only just equals that of the Axis.

Contents:

1. AIR STRENGTH TABLE.
2. PLANE PRODUCTION TABLE.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (B)
OSD letter, May 3, 1972
By **RHP, NAB:RAC** **NOV 13 1973**

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War College	M. I. D.	H. O.	Nav.	Ord.	Y. & D.	Ships	S. & A.	M. & S.	Aero.	U. S. M. C.	C. in C. U. S.	C. in C. Land.	C. in C. Pac.	C. in C. A. F.				
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~~SECRET~~AIR STRENGTH

As of April 1, 1942

	First line Bombers & Fighters	Trainers	All other military	TOTAL
U.S. Navy	1,500	2,500	1,000	5,000
U.S. Army	<u>3,000</u>	<u>9,000</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>13,500</u>
UNITED STATES . . .	4,500	11,500	2,500	18,500
United Kingdom . .	10,000	7,500	1,000	18,500
Royal Navy	1,000	500	150	1,650
Overseas	<u>3,000</u>	<u>6,500</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>10,000</u>
BRITISH EMPIRE . .	14,000	14,500	1,650	30,150
GERMANY	7,500	5,000	3,500	16,000
JAPAN	3,500	1,000	1,000	5,500
ITALY	1,500	1,000	500	3,000

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(c) and 6(c) (2)
OSD letter, May 3, 1972
RHP, NASS Doc. NOV 13 1973

All of the above figures are ESTIMATES, as it is not possible under wartime conditions to make a precise statement even of United States air strength on any given date. Planes unreported from missions, planes which have suffered only minor damage but in locations where their effective repair is problematical, and rapid transfers of planes from one United Nations air force to another prevent the achievement of a numerically exact tabulation.

Under these conditions the most that can be hoped for in a comparative statement is (1) that figures shall in fact be comparable, - e.g. that "operational combat" planes of one nation shall not be compared with total plane strength of another, and (2) that estimates of enemy air strength shall be conservatively high and estimates of allied air strength conservatively low. It is believed that the above tabulation realizes these desiderata.

NOTE: It is thought that Germany can still place more bombers in the air at one time than can the United Kingdom, but the British are believed to possess more bombardment planes and vastly more fighters than the Germans. The German total of 7,500 bombers and fighters is derived from a British estimate but uses the assumption that a 100% reserve of combat planes exists. The British estimate of German strength is considerably lower and assumes only a 25% reserve at the present time.

Figures for the British Empire are also derived from British reports, and it is believed that they are an understatement. No reliable figures are available for Russia.

PLANE PRODUCTIONMonthly, estimated as of
March, 1942

	Bombers	Fighters	Bombers & Fighters	TOTAL MILITARY AIRCRAFT
United States	700	800	1,500	2,900
British Empire	450	600	1,050	2,200
Germany	1,000	800	1,800	2,600
Japan	125	150	275	450
Italy	?	?	?	300

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ISSUED BY THE INTELLIGENCE DIVISION
OFFICE OF CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
NAVY DEPARTMENT

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Serial **F-10: 9-42 (Revised)**
(Start new series each year, 1. a. 1-45, 2-46)

Monograph Index Guide No. **1004-100**
(To correspond with SUBJECT given below. See O. N. I. Index Guide. Make separate report for each main title.)

From **Div. of Naval Intelligence** at **Washington** Date **March 22, 1942**
(Ship, fleet, unit, district, office, station, or person)

Reference **Report from U.S. Naval Attache, London**
(Directive, correspondence, previous related report, etc., if applicable)

Source **Official** Evaluation **Rating "A"**
(As official, personal observation, publications, press, conversation with—identify when practicable, etc.) (As reliable, doubtful, unverified, etc.)

Subject **UNITED KINGDOM - GERMAN - AVIATION STRENGTH**
(Nation reported on) (Main title as per index guide) (Substitution) (Make separate report for each title)

BRIEF—(Here enter careful summary of report, containing substance succinctly stated; include important facts, names, places, dates, etc.)

BRIEF The United Kingdom now possesses great superiority over Germany in combat aircraft. The following figures are entirely derived from official British statements, and include all land-based combat planes thought to be available, - whether in front line units or in reserve storage depots.

	Germany	United Kingdom	British Strength expressed as percent of German
Heavy and Medium Bombers	2,245	2,930	130.51 %
Light Bombers	375	1,705	454.67 %
TOTAL BOMBERS	2,620	4,635	176.91 %
TOTAL FIGHTERS	1,832	5,403	294.98 %
TOTAL COMBAT PLANES	4,452	10,038	225.47 %
Coastal and Reconnaissance	713	667	93.13 %
GRAND TOTAL	5,165	10,645	206.10 %

The above figures, indicating a two-to-one superiority over Germany, deserve detailed comment and explanation. This is provided on the following page.

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (H)

OSD letter, May 8, 1972

by RHP, NARS Date **NOV 13 1973**

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War College	M. I. D.	H. O.	Nav.	Ord.	Y. & D.	Ships	S. & A.	M. I. S.	Aer.	U. S. M. C.	C. in C. U. S.	C. in C. Land.	C. in C. Pac.	C. in C. A. F.				
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German Air strength on January 12th, 1942, as estimated by the British, consisted of 3,290 combat and observation planes assigned to operational squadrons, plus 690 planes believed on hand in those squadrons which were in Central Germany for rest and re-equipment. The British believe that actual strength of the operational squadrons was some 5% lower than the 3,290 assigned, but it is the higher figure which is used in the present study.

The British believe that on the same date some 190 planes in Reserve Training Units were also being used in operations.

Reserve strength of the Germans, - total strength in depots and reserve units, - is estimated by the British at 25% of the "Initial Establishment" or assigned figures. This works out to 852 planes, and these have been projected by IRI to the several combat categories in the same ratio as the assigned figures. The grand total of German land-based military planes, - excluding only trainers and transports, - thus comes to 5,165.

British Air strength in the United Kingdom, as reported by the British for February 1st, 1942, was 10,645 planes exclusive of trainers and transports. It is stated that only 2,902 planes were assigned to combat squadrons, and it may consequently be concluded that the balance, - 7,743, - consists of combat planes in reserve storage and in training units.

Germany's Germany is generally believed to have entered on belligerent operations in 1939, with a tremendous number of combat planes in reserve storage. Total German air strength has been estimated, at various times since and by various sources, as high as 36,000 planes. There is now every reason to believe that attrition has cut deeply into the stored reserves, but it is probably optimistic to estimate, as do the British, that the reserves are at present only 25% of the number of planes required by the German Air Force organizational set-up. However, even if 100% be used instead of 25%, the German air strength still falls far short of the British 10,645.

Just as they probably underestimate the German reserves, so the British appear to underestimate their own reserves. Total number of land-based military planes (excluding trainers and transports) was reported as 10,029 on June 27th, 1941. If this figure is compared with 10,645 for February 1st, 1942, it appears that there has been a net gain of only 616 planes in seven months, during this period the United Kingdom has produced and received from the United States between 12,000 and 16,000 planes. Losses sustained in combat and from crashes, as reported, account for only a fraction of this number and the discrepancy cannot be explained by shipments to other British or to Russian fronts. (Statements of overall British Imperial air strength for the two dates show the same discrepancy, and it has never been claimed that transfers to Russia were to be numbered in thousands.)

It is concluded that the British now have great superiority over Germany in numbers of planes, and also that the British either (1) have a much greater reserve of combat planes than they have stated to United States Attaches, or (2) that they have been suffering staggering and undisclosed plane losses from crashes and crashes.

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(D) and 3(D) or (B)

OSD letter, May 4, 1978

By RHP, SAAS Date NOV 19 1973

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Air Section, G-3
JCH/ebb
Feb. 12, 1943

BRITISH EMPIRE AIRPLANE STRENGTH
Operational Airplanes in Squadrons

B.A.F.

United Kingdom (Including Northern Ireland) as of 11/7/41:

FIGHTERS	1439	
BOMBERS	731	
RECONNAISSANCE	534	Total... 2694

Middle East (Egypt, Sudan, Palestine) as of 1/29/42:

FIGHTERS	360	
BOMBERS	195	
RECONNAISSANCE	74	Total... 609

Iraq as of 1/15/42:

FIGHTERS	11	
BOMBERS	22	Total... 33

Burma as of 2/4/42:

FIGHTERS	19	
BOMBERS	19	Total... 38

India (Including Indian Air Force) as of 1/18/42:

FIGHTERS	24	
BOMBERS	22	
RECONNAISSANCE	17	Total... 63

Singapore (Including Netherlands East Indies) as of 2/4/42:

FIGHTERS	93	
BOMBERS	97	
PATROL	6	Total... 196

RELEASED
A.O. 11662, Sec. 8(b) and 8(D) of (S)
OSD letter, May 3, 1972
by RHP, NARS Date NOV 13 1973

B.A.A.F.

Australia and Mandated Islands as of 2/10/42:

TOTAL (Estimated) 110

B.N.Z.A.F.

New Zealand and Mandated Islands as of 1/17/42:

BOMBERS	75	
RECONNAISSANCE	19	Total... 94

B.C.A.F.

Malaya Command as of 12/17/41:

FIGHTERS	31	
*BOMBERS	21	
RECONNAISSANCE	5	Total... 57

Eastern Command as of 12/17/41:

FIGHTERS	15	
*BOMBERS	35	
RECONNAISSANCE	24	Total... 74

*Bomber-Reconnaissance Type

~~SECRET~~

GERMAN AIR FORCE DISPOSITION

As of 2/28/42

Source: British Air Ministry

WESTERN FRONT

L. R. Bombers	282
Bomber Reconnaissance	93
Dive Bombers	9
Single-Engine Fighters	366
Twin-Engine Fighters	207
Army Co-op.	27
Coastal	<u>84</u>

TOTAL..... 1068

Transport 150

RUSSIAN FRONT

L. R. Bombers	648
Bomber Reconnaissance	237
Dive Bombers	222
Single-Engine Fighters	366
Twin-Engine Fighters	99
Army Co-op.	288
Coastal	<u>15</u>

TOTAL..... 1875

Transport 450

MEDITERRANEAN

L. R. Bombers	261
Bomber Reconnaissance	63
Dive Bombers	60
Single-Engine Fighters	228
Twin-Engine Fighters	75
Army Co-op.	9
Coastal	<u>36</u>

TOTAL..... 732

Transport 250

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NO. 11694, Sec. 3(2) and 3(3) of (R)
OSD Letter, May 2, 1973
By RHP, NAAS Date NOV 13 1973

*note - When porting - be sure and indicate
source as British Air Ministry*

S.M. Ong.

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

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FROM <u>COM 14</u>	FOR ACTION	ALL TASKFOR COMDRS PACFLT COMANZAC	PRIORITY
RELEASED BY _____			ROUTINE
DATE <u>6 MARCH 1942</u>	INFORMATION	COMINCH CINCPAC	DEFERRED
TOR CODEROOM <u>0850/4901</u>			PRIORITY
DECODED BY <u>FINKELDEY/GLUNT</u>			ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY _____			DEFERRED

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SAME DAY X THIS SUPPLEMENT TO BULLETIN NUMBER FIFTY X CINC
FIFTH FLEET REPORTS THAT AT DAYLIGHT FOURTH MARCUS WAS
ATTACKED BY ENTERPRISE AND TWO OTHER VESSELS X THESE
VESSELS ESCAPED AND PRESENT WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN X
APPARENTLY SOME PORTION OF INSTALLATIONS ASHORE ARE NOT
USABLE X

ACTION

F-1.

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 3(D) or (2)

OSD letter, May 3, 1972

By RHP, NAMS Date NOV 13 1973~~SECRET~~

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