Regensburg boys lost 25, making a total of 60".

"The things that went right with the mission were that we did hit the target, air discipline was good (I don't believe that many of us would have got through that fighter opposition if it wasn't good) and navigation was perfect".

"I think the conclusion which can be drawn from that mission is that without fighter escort all the way to the target and all the way back, heavy bombardment can't operate in daylight against that type of opposition without excessive losses. Look what happened a month or so later when they sent a second force to Schweinfurt. They lost 60 bombers again, which, added to the 35 they lost on the first mission without destroying the target, makes a total of 95".

"The other conclusion is that heavy bombers cannot be stopped from getting to a target and destroying it. I don't believe we will ever run into greater opposition than we did on the Regensburg mission. Our success there showed that we are training the best damn crews in the world".

Such were the problems, and such was the fighting spirit that prevailed in 1943. Early in 1944 as the 8th Air Force grew stronger, more battle-wise, and as the Luftwaffe itself grew weaker, the picture changed. The lesson at Regensburg had been well learned, particularly in regard to fighter escort. First the P-47s were equipped with larger tanks, then came the P-38s, and then the P-51s. By 11 January 1944, a 200 mile string of 720 heavy bombers flew over heavily defended territory, 300 of them revisited Oschersleben—and fighter escort was provided all the way.

The winter offensive hit its peak in the Big Week of 19-26 February. Combined USSTAF-RAF Bomber Command figures for this week are:

Bombers dispatched	8,148
Bombers lost	400
Fighters dispatched	4,454
Fighters lost	39
Tons of bombs dropped.	19,177
Enemy fighters lost (in air only	642

During this same week the 8th AF, joined by the 15th AF, paid a return call on Regensburg. Since the August attack, strenuous repair work had been done, and a nearby glider factory at Ober Traubling was converted to Me-109 manufacture. Hit by 613 heavies, both factories were practically wiped out—one of them for the second time. By now some aircraft complexes were being hammered out of existence. Disperse or die was the order of the day, and disperse they did. The campaign continued until September 1944. Thereafter, it tapered off, with only a few policing missions, and new attacks on jet factories in the winter and spring of 1945. But what had actually happened to aircraft production inside Germany? A few statistics will point up the story.

In the second half of 1943 only 400 tons were dropped monthly by USSTAF on German plants, while in 1944 an average of 6,500 tons a month was dropped. In 1943. 58, a/c plants were damaged as against 146 in 1944. Single engine fighter a/c bore the brunt of our attacks. It is estimated that by 30 September 1944 the GAF was deprived of 10, 000 new planes which would have been produced.

When we started the campaign in July 1943, German production of operational types had jumped to about 1,740 monthly, including 910 single-engine fighters. And the GAF planned to produce 3,000 a month late in 1944. But our bombs reduced output 1,320 planes in March, less than half of planned production. From March 1944 onward, however, the GAF production rose sharply. It reached 1,950 in September, of which 1,400 were single engine planes. This, of course, reflected the dispersal policy. Production was spread out into countless small plants, including unused textile mills. GAF airfields were used for assembly. Underground. Bomber plants were converted to fighter production.

But all this effort came too late. The reduced output of defensive fighter planes due to Allied bombing, forced upon the GAF a policy of conservation simply to retain an air force in being. Lack of adequate resistance in turn made possible the successful bombing of Axis industries producing oil, bearings, and other vital war materials. The whole interlocking structure of German industry began to topple and one disaster seemed automatically to start another.

The loss of aircraft production at bombed factories, estimated at 10,000 planes between 1 August 1943 and 30 September 1944, was roughly half of the somewhat more than 20,000 lost in combat during the same period. Rut, in one way or another, the bomber offensive accounted for a large part of these losses. Bombing of GAF airfields and repair depots accounted for many more, and lowered serviceability. The remainder of GAF wastage resulted largely from aerial combat with tactical air forces, and strafing and capture of airfields cluttered with immobilized aircraft.

While the dispersed GAF succeeded in increasing its aircraft production despite our campaign, it did not succeed in getting these planes in the air in numbers sufficient to fend off the rapidly growing AAF. The GAF was the victim of superior numbers, and overall fresher pilots because of the AAF's rotation policy. In its opening campaign USSTAF gave the first big push against industrial Germany's house of cards, and, during the process, came of age as the most formidable weapon of modern warfare.

Bombing Of Fuel Immobilized The Wehrmacht And The GAF If in waging war you can deny to the enemy something he must have in order to maintain his effort on a scale to match your own, you've got him. It is this simple fact which focused the attention of Allied air leaders on the German liquid fuel industry. Modern nations cannot fight without oil. They cannot even fight with a little oil. They must have it in large quantities readily available at all times. In a highly integrated war economy, oil was the chink in German armor. Her fuel position was traditionally unsound.

Such dependence on foreign sources is naturally unacceptable to a country dedicated to expansion and self-sufficiency. For expansion leads to war, and wars make it difficult for a continental power with a small navy to insure that her imports will not be cut off particularly since 60 % of the crude oil refined in Hamburg came from the United States. Germany's reaction to this situation was twofold. First she determined to put to use her large stores of low-grade coal. Coal and oil are closely related atomically.

Both are hydrocarbons. Her admittedly superior chemical know-how had already evolved two processes for extracting all kinds of synthetic oils from this coal. These processes Fischer-Trolesch, and Bergius are efficient but expensive. With world oil prices as low as they were before the war, only a controlled economy preparing for war could have justified their developments. All together three major Synthetic districts grew up in the neighborhood of three coal deposits, one in the Ruhr, one in Silesia, and one in the Leipzig area.

Germany's second effort to improve her oil position was in the political and military field. When the smoke cleared away from her European conquests, Germany had access to all the oil in Europe.