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EXHIBIT # 12- APRIL 1944

HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES STRATEGIC AIR FORCES IN EUROPE  
Office of the Commanding General

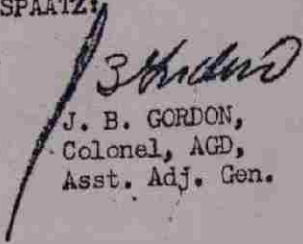
APO 633, U.S. Army,  
23 April 1944.

SUBJECT: Progress in the Air War.

TO : See Distribution.

The attached letter, this Headquarters, 20 April 1944, subject: Progress in the Air War, will be read to all troops at the first formation after receipt.

By command of Lieutenant General SPAATZ:

  
J. B. GORDON,  
Colonel, AGD,  
Asst. Adj. Gen.

1 Incl: As above

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HEADQUARTERS  
 UNITED STATES STRATEGIC AIR FORCES IN EUROPE  
 Office of the Commanding General  
 APO 633

20 April 1944.

SUBJECT: Progress in the Air War.

TO : Commanding General, Eighth Air Force, APO 634, U.S.Army.  
 Commanding General, Ninth Air Force, APO 696, U.S.Army.  
 Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, APO 520, U.S.Army.

The assault upon the German aircraft industry is now reaching its climactic phase almost a year to the day from the inception of the campaign with the U.S. Eighth Air Force attack upon the Focke Wulf factory at Bremen on April 17, 1943.

It is no accident that the first quarter of this year has seen the severest air fighting of the war. Nor is there any doubt that this scale of fighting will continue, at least sporadically, until the Luftwaffe is entirely cut off from replacement in its factories and reduced to impotence in the remainder of its declining first line strength. For this battle to the finish was the result of a joint Anglo American plan to destroy German air opposition as the preliminary step toward unleashing the full bomb lift of both air forces against the Reich.

The plan dates back over the last fifteen months and every step toward its present status has been a deliberate and at times a desperate fight toward its fulfillment. For the Luftwaffe had a plan, too.

By early 1942 the rising scale of R.A.F. night bombing and the threat of U.S. bombing was already worrying the German High Command. Goering had boasted that the Reich would never be bombed. But it had already been bombed by night and the Americans were coming with an announced technique of daylight precision bombing.

And yet in the Germans' own experience there was a known remedy for this threat. For the Germans had tried daytime bombing over England, tried it thoroughly and expensively and been chased out of the English skies in the Battle of Britain, by the R.A.F. Fighter planes were the answer to bombing and with Teutonic logic the Germans set about providing themselves with an ever increasing flow of them from new and enlarged factories. The plan in fact called for a quadrupling of the monthly output of Single Engine Fighter planes.

The expansion was to be cumulative, throughout the two years and was to level off at the quadruple figure in April of 1944. And to protect the plan itself against interruption by bombing the new and increased facilities were to take every possible geographical advantage of distance and dispersal. Components and assembly were separated so that damage to one plant would merely require longer working hours at another to produce the same result.

This then was the counter plan that confronted the Anglo American determination to win air mastery over Europe. It should be noted that the German plan had

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a head start. For the dispersal of the aircraft industry into small and remote centers practically precluded the possibility of destroying it with night bombing and the limitations in size and range of the early American Eighth Air Force gave the Germans many months of productive advantage before we could make the initial attack on aircraft production in April of 1943.

The problem had however been carefully studied and it was agreed in Anglo American conferences that destruction of the German aircraft industry be assigned the Eighth Air Force as first priority as soon as its strength and experience with precision bombing warranted beginning what everyone knew would be a costly and bitter campaign.

The R.A.F. bomber force was in the meantime to keep up its steadily increasing pressure on the denser concentrations of German heavy industry. It was also preparing in technique and experience for the time to come when night area bombing attacks upon industrial centers directly connected with aircraft manufacture would supplement the direct assault of daylight precision bombing on vital individual factories.

These were the conflicting intentions, Allied and German, that first met in broad daylight when less than a hundred and fifty American bombers, without fighter protection, flew four-hundred miles over the sea to train their bomb-sights on the Focke Wulf factory at Bremen. On that day sixteen bombers were lost.

A year and a day later five times as many bombers, escorted the entire way by long range fighters of the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces, flew the twelve-hundred odd mile round trip through enemy territory in broad daylight straight to Berlin, bombed two more of the aircraft factories on the diminishing list and returned with the loss of 19 bombers and six fighters.

This time they were not using the sea as a refuge from the German fighter menace. The long range fighters scoured the path in the hope of provoking combat but only one of three divisions encountered formidable opposition.

In this inability of the German fighter force to match the scale of our attack deep within its own territory is the truest measure of the present condition of the German fighter force. It is not that they cannot fight. On favorable occasions they can and will still fight savagely. But now they must wait for favorable occasions. For their reserves are a mere trickle in the pipeline between factory and operating units, their front line strength is weary, its serviceability sags, and the replacement flow it so critically needs has been cut far below the danger mark by the methodical destruction of the factories that were to have provided a quadrupled flow of new planes.

It has not been a cheap success and is not yet a complete one. It has taken a year of the most savage air fighting in history and the most steadfast patience in waiting for the indispensable factor of suitable weather for the pin pointing of remote, concealed and heavily defended precision targets. Every crew member who went down in the fighting that has broken the German aerial west-wall has contributed as surely as those who got through and steadied their ships for the deliberate bomb run through the target flak itself.

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For the job was always a two fold one: first to cut off replacement and then to fight the existing force out of the sky. Every combat was a part of this two fold task.

The two parts of the job were, in fact, inseparable. For the German plan had given the Luftwaffe a headstart. From August of 1942 to July of 1943 the Luftwaffe in the West had almost doubled its fighter force. What was more important still, they had more than doubled their monthly productive capacity for replacement and accretion. By the end of last July they were half way to the completion of their own plan for quadrupling their fighter output by April 1944.

Yet that halfway mark was to be the high point from which their fortunes began to recede. For in the last week of July 1943 the Eighth Air Force attacked the German aircraft industry on six out of seven successive days and in mid-August compounded the damage with the shuttle raid across Regensburg for a body blow at the Messerschmidt production which the Germans had considered inaccessible to us.

From that time the rising curve of German fighter production turned downward. Expansion was halted, halfway short of its goal, and the autumn attacks on Marienburg, Anklam and Wiener Neustadt kept it limping along below the September level despite a winter's feverish activity to restore it.

Bad weather through the early winter did give the Luftwaffe an illusory respite from steady decline by permitting them to conserve combat wastage and so retain the facade of their front line strength. But even to do this they had to bite deeply into reserves they could no longer replace.

Before the resumption of heavy scale fighting in January the German front line units were probably close to the peak of their 1943 summer strength once more. But the return of open weather at that time put an end to any hope of the prolonged respite they so desperately needed. For while they had maintained a shallow front line strength American bombers had multiplied.

On the 11th of January the daylight bombers struck single engine fighter manufacture at Oschersleben and, as an illustration of their new strength, put a simultaneous and equally effective raid on Twin Engine manufacture at Brunswick.

Then, late in February, came the weather for which the U.S. Forces had been preparing. On five of six successive days the U.S. Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces struck savagely again and again, bombing in that brief span factories that were producing over sixty per cent. of known Single Engine manufacture and over eighty per cent of known Twin Engine manufacture.

It was this week which frustrated the German plan. Even after last summer's reverses they had put their faith in a winter of frantic rebuilding and had still dreamed of a fighter force that could close the skies over the Reich. Yet by the end of this week their fighter production had been forced back below the monthly rate from which they began their plan in 1942, and immediately after this date there appeared a new phenomenon. On many of the March raids deep into Germany both bombers and fighters were practically unopposed. The time had come

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when the Luftwaffe could no longer meet intensive operations with its former scale of automatic full strength resistance.

Since then the pressure has been steadily maintained and increased. For three successive months the German fighter force has lost more planes than its plants could manufacture. In March their production was below the rate of August 1942 and for April, instead of being quadrupled, it will be lower still.

Throughout this long struggle the R.A.F. bomber command, in accordance with its part of the Anglo American plan has played its part in addition to its own main purpose of destroying heavy industrial concentrations.

Its summer bombing of the Ruhr crippled whole segments of the heavy industry that would have been invaluable to rebuilding destroyed fighter factories. Its widespread devastation in Leipzig, Augsburg, Brunswick and Kassel, to say nothing of Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich and Stuttgart, caused profound dislocation both directly and indirectly through the whole structure of economic integration on which the precision targets of the aircraft industry rest.

What is more, its own increasing scale of effort absorbed the attentions of the bulk of the Twin Engine Fighter Force. Indeed, the German need for night fighters became so acute as to absorb a substantial portion of the Twin Engine planes originally intended for offensive bombing.

This then is the history to date of the two plans. It is still an unfinished history but the end draws steadily nearer for the steps of our plan are cumulative. The welding of the Fifteenth and Eighth Air Forces into the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, with one command, was a step to assure the integration of the two forces to the common purpose. There are now more than ten times the number of American bombers that made the first attack on Bremen; they can reach any point in Germany, and the friendly fighter cover that has steadily extended its range has already been to Berlin. The purpose they are methodically achieving remains the same purpose that was assigned to them in the Anglo American conference that first planned their use. That purpose is the destruction of the German Air Force as a preliminary to the destruction of the German ability and will to continue armed resistance.

The above is the true picture of the progress made against the German Air Force to date. It is a splendid achievement made possible by the officers and men, both combat crews and supporting ground personnel, of the Air Forces participating.

It is my desire, in presenting you with this report of progress, to commend each of you and to point out that the expansion of the major arm of the German forces has been thwarted, and the direct result of your efforts will be complete victory over the Axis powers.

*Carl Spatz*  
 CARL SPATZ  
 Lieutenant General, U.S.A.  
 Commanding

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