

Seversky: Victory Through Air Power

Continued from Page One

visional strategic consideration. In 1938-1939 not only rejected the idea of interchangeable engines for all types of pursuits, but went so far as to chain all pursuits to one type—and an engine of highly experimental character at that.

It seemed to me incredible at the time that our national defense should be subjected to such a reckless and headstrong gamble.

BOTH HAD MERITS

This was the more strange when, most accurately, engineers agreed with me that both liquid-cooled and air-cooled engines had their own merits and their own special drawbacks.

I made exhaustive studies of the liquid-cooled engine. The air-cooled type, demonstrating that it could be quite as effective as the liquid-cooled.

Besides, it was a proved type of engine and had been used twice as much horsepower as the liquid-cooled engine which had mysteriously become the court favorite.

June 4, 1938, I proposed the construction of a plane equipped with an air-cooled Pratt & Whitney engine, known as P-2800, of 2,800 horsepower. Its performance was 422 miles per hour at 10,000 feet. Its performance at 20,000 feet was 380 miles per hour. Its performance at 30,000 feet was 340 miles per hour. Its performance at 40,000 feet was 300 miles per hour. Its performance at 50,000 feet was 260 miles per hour. Its performance at 60,000 feet was 220 miles per hour. Its performance at 70,000 feet was 180 miles per hour. Its performance at 80,000 feet was 140 miles per hour. Its performance at 90,000 feet was 100 miles per hour. Its performance at 100,000 feet was 60 miles per hour.

My plan was to equip this craft with a turbo-supercharger placed in the rear portion of the fuselage. I could thus preserve the compactness and the tactical desirability of the liquid-cooled engine.

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After mentioning the Bell Air-cobra and Lockheed P-38, he said that "folding both of these, however, is the new single-engine Bell P-47B." The public interest in this was something new in the way of pursuing the subject out of the official magician's hat.

The truth is that this plane was conceived in 1937, presented for consideration to the Army in 1938, only to be denied a hearing because it did not use the pet engine.

Its production was thus postponed until 1941. No amount of self-congratulation by the policy of which prevented the construction of this plane until three years too late can wipe out their responsibility for the delay.

According to the Truman committee, the P-47 cannot be delivered in appreciable quantities until the end of 1942, and production will not be in full swing until some time the following year. Yet this plane could have been in action on all fronts years earlier.

HINDERED

The, in essence, we have the development of American air power, its development, for all that high-powered publicity could do, has been in large measure stopped.

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high-altitude pursuit craft new in mass production. Its ceiling of performance was raised to more than 40,000 feet by replacing the Allison liquid-cooled motor with the Rolls Royce Merlin which has a turbo-supercharger.

Enthusiastic publicity stories released by the manufacturer have boasted speeds of existing planes to over 500 miles an hour. Terrific diving speeds were claimed off as speeds on the level.

Furthermore, these stories evoked visions of planes bristling with imaginary guns and cannon. The P-40-F was described as having 600 per cent superiority—a mighty impressive figure, until we learn that it is in comparison with the obsolete P-35.

Had the comparison been made with the original Curtiss JN-6 of 1914 vintage, the percentage would have been even more phenomenal. The P-47 is a promising plane that has no need of such fanciful promotion.

"SHEER NONSENSE"

Yet a columnist described it as possessing twelve machine guns, a 37-mm. cannon, and a 2,800-horsepower engine. He also mentioned that it was "the most powerful plane in the world's fastest airplanes, the Airacobra, is now in production in the United States. This remarkable plane is worthy of its name."

"In this day and age our fighting planes with their keen, sharp blades must be able to climb rapidly high into the air to escape the hostile bombers above."

That our Airacobra can do."

Six months later, on Nov. 29, he declared: "In the pursuit category, we have reached the large production stage on our single-engine Bell P-47, Airacobra, a type that has demonstrated it is a match for the Spitfire and the Messerschmitt up to 10,000 feet."

In other words, the pursuit which was to "climb rapidly high into the air—far above the hostile bombers"—was to be a 10,000 feet. Even the layman knows that all important fighting and bombing must take place at altitudes above 10,000. Since anti-aircraft fire is pretty thick there.

Despite the boasts, therefore, the Airacobra would seem to be unequal to the Messerschmitts and Spitfires. Equally at low altitudes is no consolation.

The general might just as well have compared the Messerschmitt with the Airacobra on the ground, with even more flattering results. From the point of view of design and workmanship the Airacobra is a plane of which American engineers can be proud.

As performance, however, is cut down by a pitifully underpowered engine—a fact that can be traced to our procurement policy.

BRITISH ENGINE

The engine situation could have been corrected, once the Allison engine had failed to serve as expected, by frankly adopting the best available foreign substitute. The British Napier Sabre, a 2,000-horsepower engine, eminently successful in the Spitfire and Hurricane, was at hand for immediate use.

Unfortunately the Army adopted instead the Rolls Royce Merlin with horsepower similar to the Allison's. Thus bad judgment in official policy in the past was perpetuated.

"COULD HAVE COMPETED"

If we had been able to deliver 2,000-horsepower Napiers instead of Allison's, our fighters could really have competed with the models of other nations. It is, after all, through the use of that superior engine that the British pursuits are now able to fight at high altitudes with speed in excess of 400 miles, carrying their four 20-mm. cannon or twelve machine guns.

Since publication of Major Seversky's book, the newest version of the P-47 has been developed. Called the "Sever," it is the Army's sole

aid to continue to produce it merely for training purposes. The rock-bottom fact is that the same men responsible for the woeful backwardness of military aviation are still in control. They would be more than human if they did not yield to the temptation to avoid candid admission of past errors.

There are too many skeletons in the official closets. As long as the men and the system responsible for our weakness in the air remain, there can be little hope for world leadership in military aviation.

In tomorrow's News, Seversky tells of "The Emancipation of Air Power."

Truckers Meet Oct. 5

HIGH POINT—(AP)—The annual meeting of the North Carolina Truck Owners Association will be held here Oct. 5, Frances Johnson, secretary-treasurer, announced.

Gardner-Webb Opens

BOILING SPRINGS—(AP)—The Gardner-Webb Junior College opened its 1942-43 session. Approximately 200 students are enrolled.

550 Signed in Theater Drive

1,000 Is Quota for Campaign Ending Mon.

L. V. Wells, chairman of the membership campaign for the Little Theater, said today that 550 new members already have been obtained since the drive began last Wednesday and that at least 1,000 are expected to be added when the drive reaches a conclusion next Monday night.

Special credit was given to the women's group of workers directed by Mrs. Allison Darrin. This section of the special Membership Committee has so far exceeded the goal of 1,000.

Final reports will be submitted at the meeting at the Playhouse on Queens Road next Monday. Mr. Wells is being assisted by Mrs. John James.

The first play of the season, "Arsenic and Old Lace," will be presented about the middle of October, according to Director Tom Humble.

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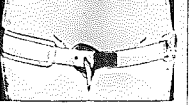
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It is the only method of treatment that has been found to be effective in the treatment of hernia...

Commission is for that rubber process of this moment, circumstances grant...

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