Figure 6

Excerpts from The United States Strategic Bombing Survey Summary Report, 30 September 1945

The United States Strategic Bombing Survey was established by the Secretary of War on November 3, 1944, pursuant to a directive from the late President Roosevelt…[1]

Commencing in the autumn of 1944, the tonnage dropped on city areas, plus spill-overs from attacks on transportation and other specific targets, mounted greatly. In the course of these raids, Germany's steel industry was knocked out, its electric power industry was substantially impaired and industry generally in the areas attacked was disorganized…

Before the war, the U.S. Army Air Forces had advanced bombing techniques to their highest level of development and had trained a limited number of crews to a high degree of precision in bombing under target range conditions, thus leading to the expressions "pin point" and "pickle barrel" bombing. However, it was not possible to approach such standards of accuracy under battle conditions imposed over Europe. Many limiting factors intervened; target obscuration by clouds, fog, smoke screens and industrial haze, enemy fighter opposition which necessitated defensive bombing formations, thus restricting freedom of maneuver, antiaircraft artillery defenses, demanding minimum time exposure of the attacking force in order to keep losses down, and finally, time limitations imposed on combat crew training after the war began…

The culminating attacks on the German aircraft industry began in the last week of February 1944. With the protection of long-range fighter escort, 3,636 tons of bombs were dropped on German aircraft plants…In that and succeeding weeks every known aircraft plant in Germany was hit.

Detailed production data for this period…were taken by the Survey, and German air generals, production officials, and leading manufacturers…[German] Production was not knocked out for long. On the contrary, during the whole year of 1944 the German air force is reported to have accepted a total of 39,807 aircraft of all types – compared with 8,295 in 1939, or 15,596 in 1942 before the plants suffered any attack…

The seeming paradox of the attack on the aircraft plants is that, although production recovered quickly, the German air force after the attacks was not again a serious threat to Allied air

1 President Roosevelt commissioned the SBS in 1944, but by the time it was published in September 1945, he was the late president.

superiority… [T]he Survey has no clear answer as to what happened to [the newly produced] planes…Certainly only a minority of the planes appeared in combat. Possibly the remainder were lost in transit from factory to combat bases, destroyed on the fields, or grounded because of a shortage of gasoline or pilots…

The German oil supply was tight throughout the war, and was a controlling factor in military operations. The chief source of supply, and the only source for aviation gasoline, was 13 synthetic plants together with a small production from three additional ones that started operations in 1944… Production from the synthetic plants declined steadily and by July 1944 every major plant had been hit… The Germans viewed the attacks as catastrophic…

Plants producing tanks and armored vehicles were attacked occasionaly [sic] in 1943 and early 1944. They were attacked more strongly in August, September and October 1944 in an effort to provide direct support to ground operations… Production dropped from 1,616 in August to 1,552 in September. However, it rose to 1,612 in October and to 1,770 in November…

The attack on transportation was the decisive blow that completely disorganized the German economy. It reduced war production in all categories and made it difficult to move what was produced to the front. The attack also limited the tactical mobility of the German army…

Source: http://www.anesi.com/ussbs02.htm