

AERONAUTICS

Super Bomber Coming

Giant plane is already in production and scheduled to enter combat next spring; details of its size, cruising range, etc., are still secret.

➤ A BIGGER, better, blasting bomber is being born which will smash at the Axis and Japanese Empire with more deadly power than the Boeing Flying Fortress B-17 and the Consolidated Liberator B-24. An unspecified number of these new "super-bombers," carrying more explosives, heavier firepower and having a greater range than any existing warplane, have already been delivered to the Army within the last several weeks.

Details are still military secrets. Future reports will tell its size, cruising range, how high it flies, number of these planes scheduled for production, how long it takes to build and get into combat, if any are as yet in actual combat, number of men required for each crew, what guns and how many engines.

The deadly new air giant has been identified as the B-29. However, the War Department has no official word to offer on the new super-bomber and does not even acknowledge its designation as the B-29.

This much is official from the Office of War Information: "Already in production and scheduled for entry into combat by the spring of 1944 is a considerably larger and more potent bomber which will eventually take over the job of super

long-range bombing."

The same OWI report points out that the big B-17's and B-24's are now sometimes referred to in the Air Forces as "the last of the small heavies."

The super-bombers are powered by Cyclone 18 engines, built by a plant of Wright Aeronautical Corporation.

The first hint the public had of the giant bomber came some months ago from Gen. H. H. Arnold, commanding general of the Army Air Forces, who spoke of "a secret weapon or two up our aerial sleeves that will deal paralyzing blows to our enemies" and predicted that entirely new "battle-wagons" are on the way. (See SNL, Sept. 11)

According to a recent report, the Flying Fortress also is undergoing changes to increase its bomb load to ten tons, making it the heaviest in the world—until, presumably, the new super dreadnaught of the sky gets into the fighting.

The box score by plane types issued by OWI shows that among Army planes the heavy bombers have the best record. Aircraft production figures for the past several months indicate an increase of heavy bombers over other type aircraft being built.

Science News Letter, October 30, 1943



U. S. ARMY FIELD JACKET—Exhaustive field tests and suggestions from the fighting fronts have led to the development of this new jacket. Its advantages over the present jacket include buttons covered with flaps to prevent their catching on objects or brush and a cord that can be drawn tight at the waist to shut out the cold.

the probable depth of the pit is 6,000 feet.

Mayor Bernabe Rios of Tasco, the nearby town, has decided to close the entrance to Hell's Mouth by dynamiting it or by otherwise barring access to the entrance. In this way he feels that he can remove from Tasco the notoriety connected with the pit.

Ordonez and Mongez will survey Hell's Mouth with the assistance of American miners working in Tasco. If it is found that it is not of geological interest, the pit will be sealed; if, however, the survey shows the pit may have geological value, further exploration will probably be made.

It is expected that the survey will also answer the question of whether or not Hell's Mouth is an entrance to the famous Cacahuamilpa Caves, located in the same region. Mineral formations clearly indicate that this pit has an origin similar to or common with the caves.

Science News Letter, October 30, 1943

GEOLOGY

Hell's Mouth in Mexico

Mexican scientists to explore huge pit over a mile deep for possible geological interest before threat to dynamite its entrance is carried out.

By AGUSTIN ARAGON LEIVA

Science Service Mexican Correspondent

➤ EZEQUIEL ORDONEZ, dean of Mexican geologists, and Ricardo Mongez Lopez, geophysicist and dean of the faculty of sciences of the National University of Mexico, will soon explore a mineral-lined pit, believed to be over a mile deep, which is located 80 miles south of Mexico City.

Many legends surround this enormous pit, called Hell's Mouth or Devil's Pit.

Tradition says that Indians used the pit to kill enemies and punish criminals. Spaniards threw prisoners into its depths. During Mexico's Independence War and the civil wars which followed, men and women were entombed in the pit.

The rumors are that gangster murders have recently been committed in Hell's Mouth. In hunting for the body of a victim, searchers descended 1,500 feet into the pit. Cold, wind, and lack of air prevented a lower descent. From various measurements taken, it is estimated that