



UNDERSTANDING
SACRIFICE

Activity: #Tweeting the Air War Against the Nazis



Guiding question:

How did the Allied air and ground campaigns in northern Europe help defeat Nazi Germany?

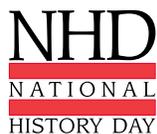
DEVELOPED BY KATHERINE LORIO

Grade Level(s): 9-12

Subject(s): Science, Social Studies, English / Language Arts

Cemetery Connection: Normandy American Cemetery

Fallen Hero Connection: First Lieutenant William Russell Simmons



Overview

This is a technology-dependent lesson that students can guide at their own pace of exploration and learning. Students share what they learn through the use of Twitter (or alternative classroom sharing medium like TodaysMeet). The use of a social sharing platform like Twitter gives students a place for sharing with a wider audience, for more effective means of communication with each other, for incorporating viewpoints from all students in the classroom, and a means to reference thinking and learning by the use of a hashtag at a later time. Students will understand the role the Allied air forces played in the Normandy Invasion. Teachers can use this as a stand-alone lesson or offer more structure by guiding students through each source, one by one. Teachers may learn more about the Eighth Air Force by accessing the ABMC's *Strategic Bombing Campaign Interactive*.

“My interest in creating this lesson began with researching Lieutenant Bill Simmons’ life and service in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a P-51 Mustang pilot. I wanted to help teachers facilitate student understanding of World War II using primary sources. For students, I wanted a lesson where all are expected to share their knowledge while modeling effective communication.”

—Katherine Lorio

Lorio is a teacher at Westfield High School in Chantilly, Va.

Historical Context

Military aviation advanced significantly after World War I. In World War II, Germany incorporated the *Luftwaffe*, another name for the German Air Force, into their ground and naval strategies across Europe. Strategic bombing, utilized by Allied Air Forces in World War II, attempted to destroy crucial infrastructure and weaken civilian morale. The British Royal Air Force began targeting German industrial cities when the war began in September 1939. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 weakened the Blitz over Great Britain, the British Royal Air Force refocused its air forces towards supporting a victory in the Battle for the Atlantic. When the United States entered the war, the Eighth Air Force deployed to the United Kingdom at over 126 bomber and fighter bases. In 1942, the Eighth Air Force began flying strategic bombing missions over Holland, France, and U-boat installations in Germany. With increasing numbers of planes and pilots arriving in the United Kingdom, the Eighth Air Force was ready to help wrest Europe from Nazi control during the 1944 invasion of Normandy. The fight to liberate France began on June 6, 1944, and many American airmen like First Lieutenant William Russell Simmons fought to destroy German resistance and make it safer for advancing American troops. He, along with thousands of other Americans, rests today at Normandy American Cemetery.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Identify the mission of the Eighth Air Force in Europe;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Allied Air Forces in Normandy; and
- Gather and use information to construct knowledge collaboratively.

Standards Connections

Connections to Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.B Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Connections to C3 Framework

D2.His.3.9-12. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.

D2.His.13.9-12. Critique the appropriateness of the historical sources used in a secondary interpretation.

Documents Used ★ indicates an ABMC source

Primary Sources

Daily Situation Maps, D-Day and Normandy, June 6 to August 25, 1944

National Archives and Records Administration

Photograph, *Aerial Bombardment of Pointe du Hoc by the US Army Air Force before D-Day, 1944*

Eisenhower National Historic Site, National Park Service

Photograph, *Overhead aerial of the gun battery at Pointe du Hoc, consisting of four medium casemates, after air bombardment...*, June 1944

Imperial War Museum (9309-08)

United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1945

U.S. War Department

<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000805851>

Secondary Sources

Eulogy for Lt. William Simmons, July 18, 2015 ★

American Battle Monuments Commission

<http://abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/soldier/william-simmons>

On Their Shoulders ★

American Battle Monuments Commission

<http://www.abmc.gov/multimedia/videos/their-shoulders>

Photograph, *Pointe du Hoc, 2005*

Creative Commons

<http://tinyurl.com/op82mmq>

The Strategic Bombing Campaign Interactive ★

American Battle Monuments Commission

http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/SBC_Web/index.html

Materials

- Laptop
- Projector
- #Tweeting the Air War Against the Nazis Rubric
- The Allied Air War Against the Nazis Handout
- Strategic Bombing Assessment
- Strategic Bombing Assessment PowerPoint
- Exit Ticket
- Student access to personal internet device

Lesson Preparation

- Print one copy of all student handouts for each student or pair of students.
- Setup laptop with internet access and projector for classroom display.
- Choose a short #hashtag for student and teacher use on Twitter (e.g.: #histB13 simply because that is your classroom number).
 - *Teacher Tip:* A different #hashtag may be preferred for each class of students exploring the subject.
- Review the ABMC *Strategic Bombing Campaign Interactive*.

Procedure

#Tweeting the Air War (90 minutes)

- Share and discuss the #Tweeting the Air War Against the Nazis Rubric with students.
 - *Teacher Tip:* Ensure students know what the classroom #hashtag will be for sharing what they know in the learning activity. Students are asked to offer succinct facts, impressions and analysis in 140 or fewer characters. A hashtag is an effective label that all students add to their tweets so that anyone - student, teacher or interested Twitter user - can reference.

- Distribute The Allied Air War Against the Nazis handout to each student or pair. Student will complete the following:
 - Tweet Activity 1 after watching *On Their Shoulders*;
 - Tweet Activity 2 after analyzing three photographs;
 - Tweet Activity 3 after watching *Eulogy for William Simmons*; and
 - Tweet Activity 4 after watching *D-Day Daily Situation Maps*.
- Monitor student progress in the classroom and on Twitter. Teachers may want to display ongoing tweets using the classroom designated hashtag. Alternatively, wait for class discussion to display or project students' tweets for everyone to view.
- Distribute Strategic Bombing Assessments Handout to each student or pair. Students will evaluate the effectiveness of Allied strategic bombing in this learning activity.
 - *Teacher Tip:* If preferred, project this PowerPoint file to project, analyze, or discuss the charts with the class.
 - Tweet Activity 5 follows student evaluation of primary sources contained in the handout.
- Project classroom tweets by doing a search for the teacher designated Twitter hashtag used by students in this activity or with a projection tool like Twitterfall.
- Discuss as a class the results of their learning activity. See questions on Student Handouts as a guide for class discussion.
 - What is student understanding of the Allied effort to free Europe from Nazi occupation?
 - If one had only the pictures of Pointe du Hoc to estimate the role of Allied air forces, what would students expect?
 - What do students know about American aviator Lt. Simmons and his participation in the Normandy Invasion?
 - How did the Normandy Invasion progress and how did air forces support ground troops? Were they effective?
- Tweet conclusions about the Allied air war against Nazi Germany.
 - Tweet Activity 6: *Suppose you could change history. What could the Allied planners have done differently with their air and ground forces in Normandy? What orders would you give pilots that would make their efforts more effective? How might that change the way the Allies planned the war (i.e.: supplies, personnel, funding, etc.)?*
- Distribute and ask students to complete the Exit Ticket.

Assessment

- Through collaboration with their classmates, students will offer a series of microblogs that identify the mission of the Eighth Air Force in Europe, and evaluate the effectiveness of Allied Air Forces in Normandy.
- Using the #Tweeting the Air War Against the Nazis Rubric, assess each student or pair in their participation and content of microblogs. Students are expected to respectfully participate, adding value to a classwide conversation using Twitter. Their social media identities should reflect positively on themselves and their school, with excellent grammar and useful content in their writing.

Methods for Extension

- Students or teachers can create a Storify of the tweets authored in class and/or tweets related to #DDay, #Normandy, or #WWII.
- Students can interact with the ABMC *Strategic Bombing Campaign Interactive* to learn more about the role and sacrifices of the Eighth Air Force.
- Students can design a video that summarizes the effectiveness of strategic bombing in the Normandy Campaign and their knowledge of the Allied war against Nazi Germany.
- Students can Skype with a historian, museum educator, or veteran on the subject of World War II, D-Day, strategic bombing, or the Normandy Invasion.
- Students can research the role the Battle for the Atlantic played in allowing for the success of the Normandy Invasion.
- Students can research the comparative Allied success in the Pacific during World War II.
- Students can explore websites for the National World War II Museum, National D-Day Memorial, or National World War II Memorial.
- Students can also find recorded oral histories of veterans of World War II, D-Day or the Normandy Invasion at the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project.
- Students can find pen pals in the countries impacted by the Normandy Invasion or a pen pal in a country of their native language to discuss the events of World War II, Normandy or military aviation. Consider pen pal suggestions from Edutopia.
- The American Battle Monuments Commission maintains U.S. military cemeteries overseas. These cemeteries are permanent memorials to the fallen, but it is important that students know the stories of those who rest there. To learn more about the stories of some of the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice, visit www.abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/abmc-sites.

Adaptations

- Students can interact with the class via TodaysMeet instead of Twitter by teacher preference. The advantage is that TodaysMeet is a communication board that does not require a unique account login, photo, or biography for students to post using a wifi device. TodaysMeet is an in-class alternative to the public forum of Twitter.
- Students write their tweets on paper or Post-It notes and turn in as an alternative to WiFi device interaction.
- Teachers can provide a list of defined key terms.
- Teachers can add guiding questions for analysis of photographs and charts.
- Students can be paired to encourage discussion and understanding of learning materials.
- Teachers can project the entirety of the lesson and guide class discussion while observing the videos, interactives, and primary sources together.

#Tweeting the Air War Against the Nazis Rubric

	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Emerging
Content	Original tweets consistently provide ideas that add value to the discussion	Most tweets provide ideas that add value to the discussion	A few tweets provide ideas that add value to the discussion	Tweets add little value to the discussion
Engagement	Exceeds the required number of tweets for the assignment	Meets the required number of tweets	Just short of the required number of tweets	Does not meet the required number of tweets
Mechanics	Writes without errors in grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation	Writes with few errors in grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation	Writes with errors in grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation (3 or fewer per tweet)	Writes with many errors in grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation (5 or more per tweet)
Responses	Responses are consistently positive, respectful; may offer a hyperlink or pose a question to further the discussion	Responses are positive and respectful with meaningful addition to the discussion	Most responses are positive and respectful with meaningful addition to the discussion	Responses are negative and/or disrespectful and offer no value to the discussion
Digital Citizenship	Clear profile picture, respectful Twitter handle, and biography that describes student and activities with positivity and thoroughness	Clear profile picture, respectful Twitter handle, and biography reflect well on student and school	Clear profile picture and respectful Twitter handle reflect well on student and school. Biography may be simple.	One or more items on Twitter may not reflect positively on student and school: profile picture, twitter handle or biography.

Chart 1: Total Bomb Tonnage Dropped

Source: *United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1945*

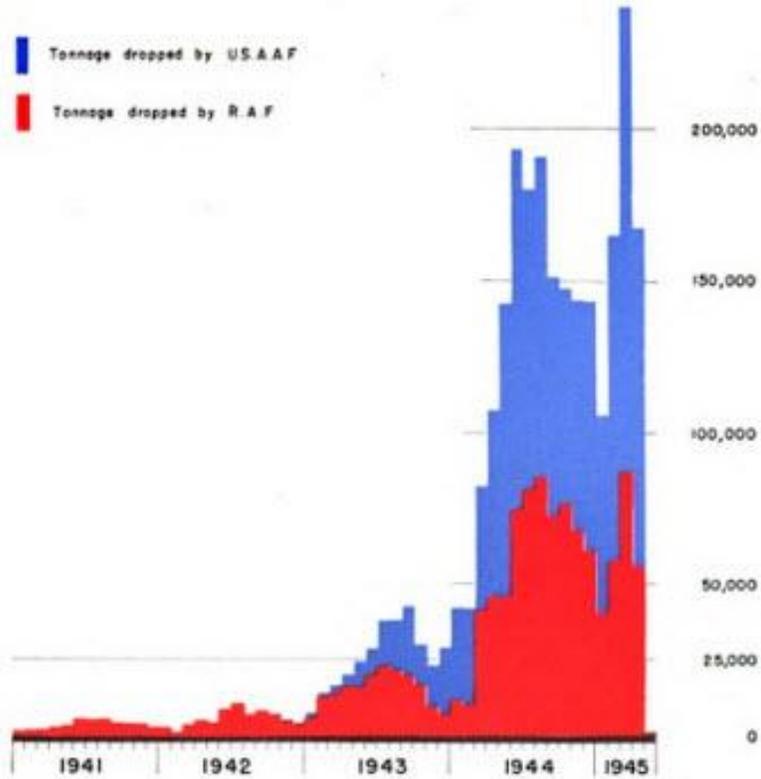


Chart 2: German Air Force Training

Source: *United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1945*

GERMAN AIR FORCE TRAINING

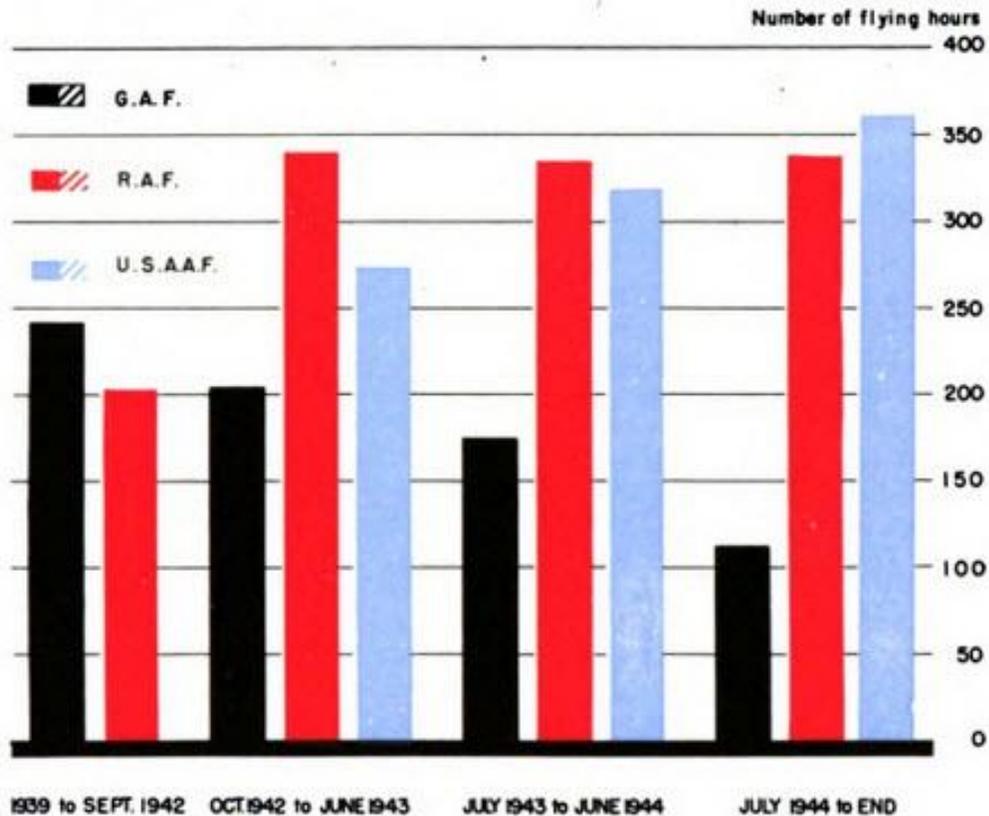


Chart 3: Total Bomb Tonnage Dropped

Source: *United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1945*

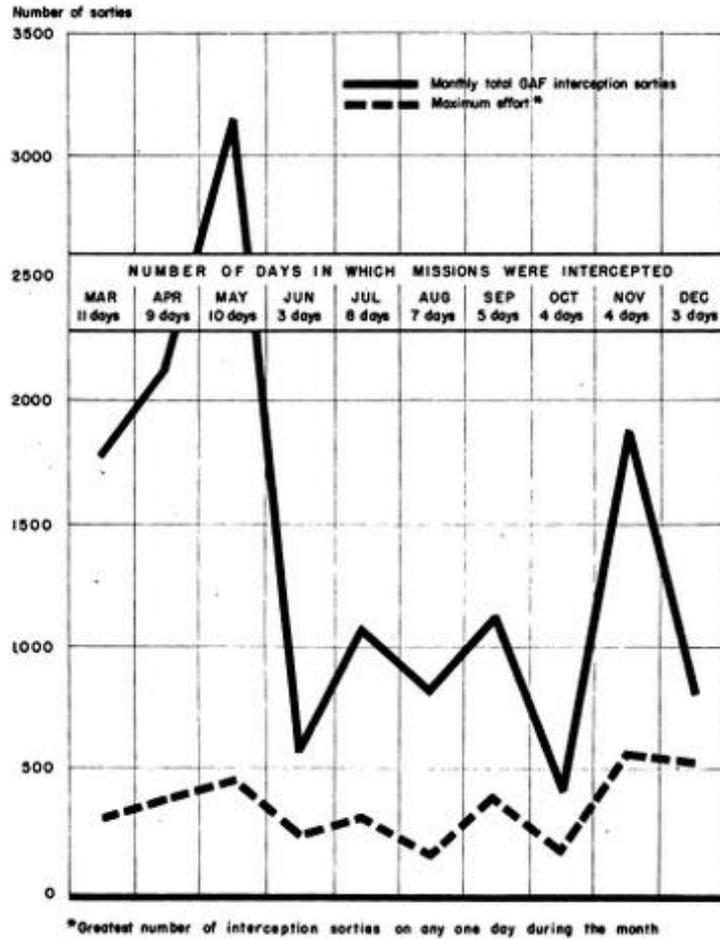
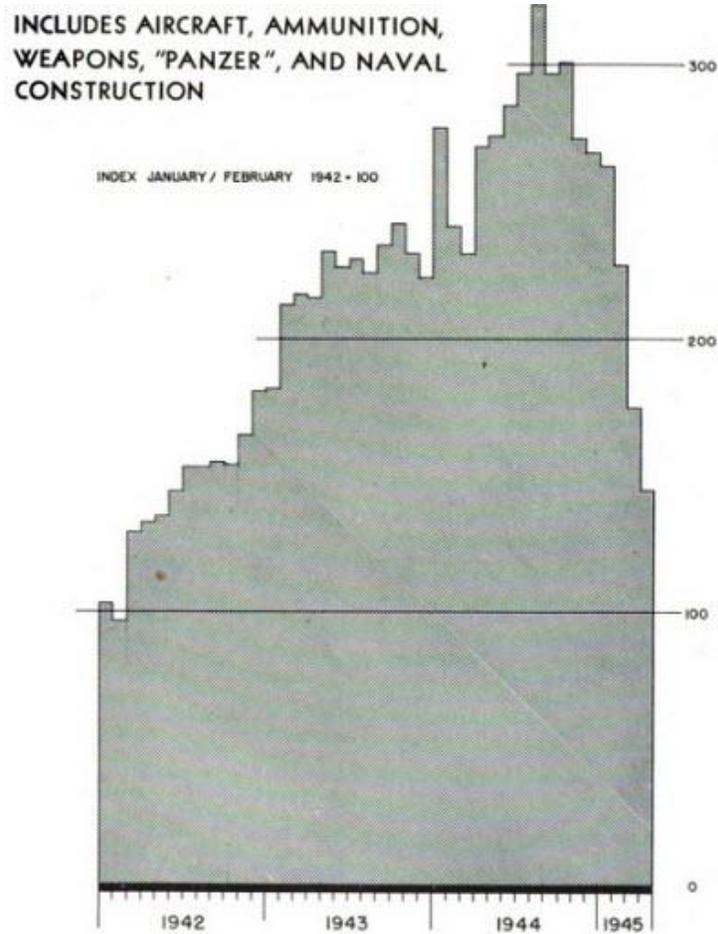


Chart 4: German Combat Munitions

Source: *United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1945*



Letter excerpt from Minister of Armaments Albert Speer to Adolf Hitler, June 30, 1944

Source: United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1945

may lead to the most tragic consequences. I think it is my duty to call your attention again to the following:

a. The strictest orders will have to be issued to start limited flying. Every flight which is not absolutely necessary either for defensive action or for training has to be stopped.

b. The strictest measures in the consumption of motor and Diesel fuel on the part of the Army will have to be taken.

c. Fighter protection at the plants will have to be increased. The Luftwaffe should realize that with continued successful enemy air attacks only a small percentage of our fighter planes will be able to fly on account of the aviation gasoline shortage.

d. A greatly increased use of smoke screens is necessary, using smoke screens over dummy plants in addition to over the real plants.

e. More flak protection is necessary, even at the expense of protection of German cities.

I regret having to inform my Fuehrer of these tragic developments and I beg you to issue all the necessary orders for this additional protection of these plants.

Chart 5: German Production, Consumption, and Stocks

Source: *United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1945*

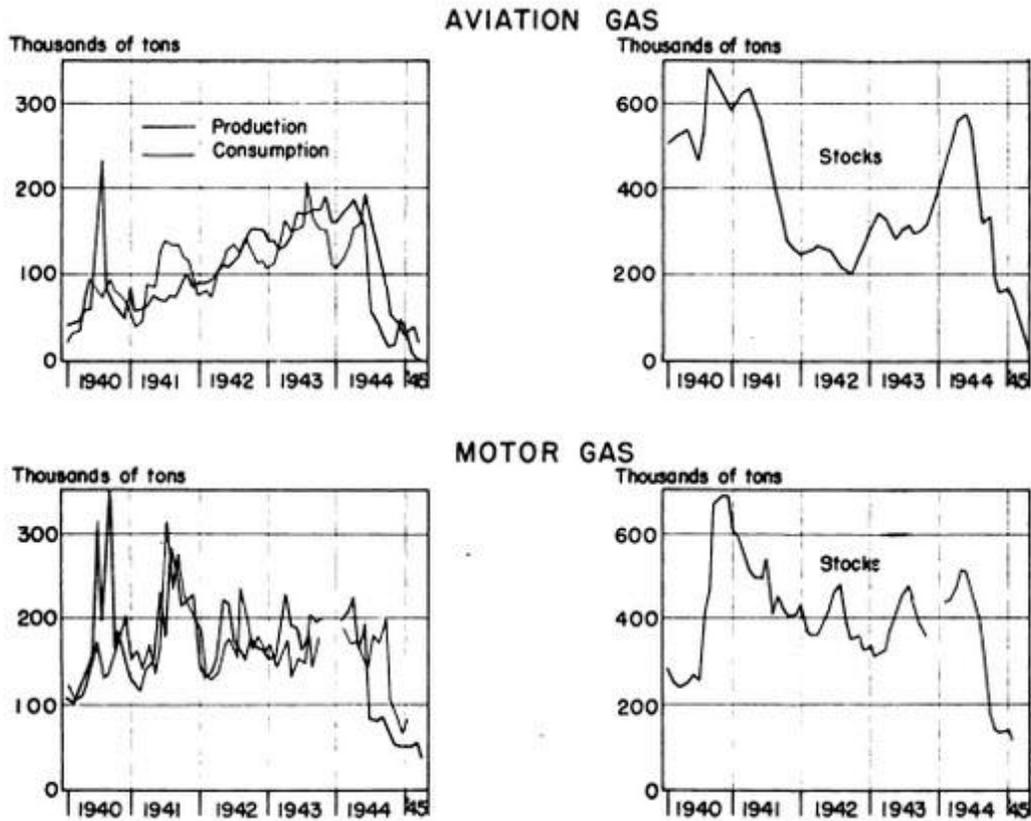


Chart 6: German Rail Traffic

Source: *United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1945*

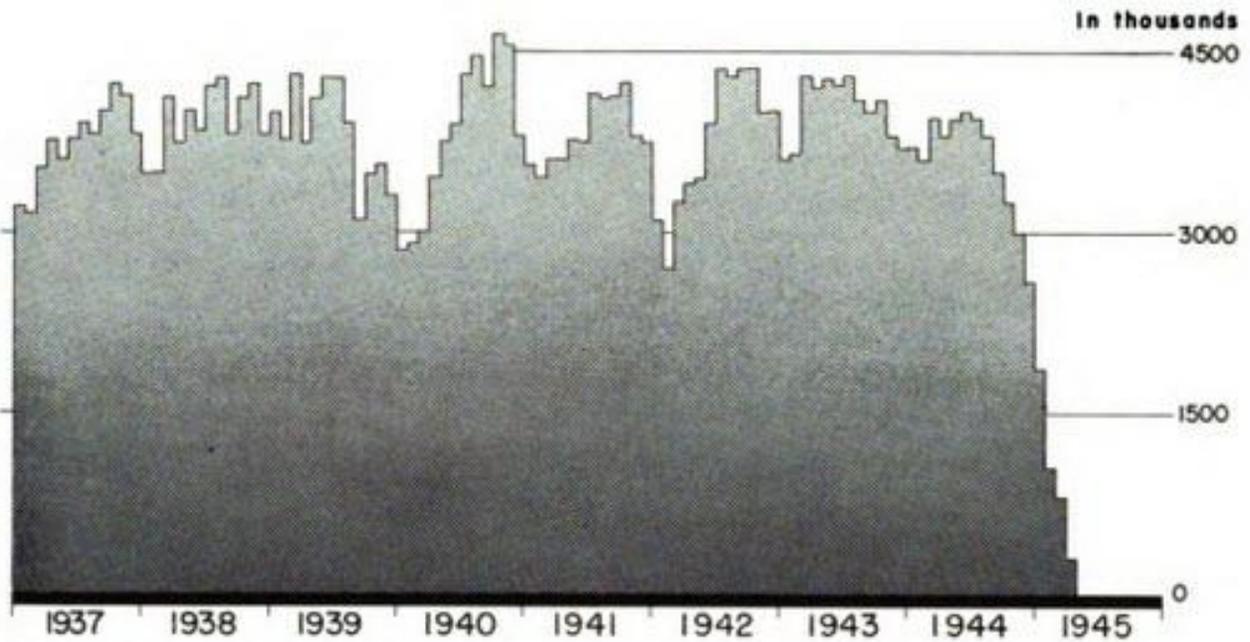


Chart 7: Panzer Production

Source: *United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1945*

