

MORE FACTS FOR FIREPOWER CARAVAN COMMITTEE

1. General

Increased and increasing aerial bombardment over Europe and the increased use of heavy artillery in the European theatre, as well as newly expanded production of heavy artillery, have combined to necessitate the production of more and more heavy ammunition. As direct result, ordnance explosives manufacturing works and ammunition loading plants, sharply cut back last year, must be returned to near-peak production.

War Manpower Commissioner Paul V. McNutt stated again on 1 August that 50,000 additional workers must be found before the end of this year to keep the big guns of our invasion forces blasting at the enemy.

On 1 August Lieutenant General Somervell said:

"During the early part of 1944, battle experience proved that it was necessary to increase sharply the use of heavy and medium artillery. This decision, taken in connection with increasing combat expenditure rates called for in projected operations, required an increase in 1944 computed required production of six million rounds. In terms of production rates, the approved expenditure calls for increasing heavy and medium artillery ammunition loading rates from the May production of 500,000 rounds to a monthly rate of 2½ million rounds within a comparatively short period."

A number of explosives and shell-loading plants were cut-back last year for three reasons: 1) by the introduction of new methods plants were able to produce at 140 to 160 per cent of estimated capacity; 2) estimated requirements had been set when neither the full power of Russian arms nor Russia's production capacity was fully known; 3) both Russia and England reduced their lend-lease requirements for certain ordnance items.

Now our present offensives and our very successes make necessary greatly increased production from many of these plants that were cut back last year. In two years of operation, for instance, the 8th Air Force has dropped 300,000 tons -- 1,600 pounds a minute day and night -- of high explosive on Germany and occupied Europe. In our invasion of the South of France on 15 August the Navy laid down a barrage of 15,900 heavy-caliber shells.