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Major Raoul Lufbery Predicts Big Battles Between Air Fleets

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MAJOR RAOUL LUFBERY PREDICTS BIG BATTLES BETWEEN AIR FLEETS

Systematic Air Raiding of Germany Munition Centers

THE END OF THE WAR

Will Be Brought About By Heavy Guns and Hosts of Trained Men

With the French Armies in the Field, Jan. 29.—Airplanes capable of a speed of two and a half miles a minute, pitched battles between air fleets and systematic air raiding of Germany's munition making centers are some of the things Raoul Lufbery of Wallingford, Conn., celebrated French flier, now an American major, predicts for this year.

He does not believe, however, that aircraft will finish the war.

"Heavy guns and trained men will put the finishing touch to it," he declared. "But aviation in all its branches will undoubtedly play its big role and certainly a larger role than ever before during the coming year.

"Personally, I don't look for any startling inventions. We will have a steady and rapid improvement of existing material. The final outcome is, of course, difficult to forecast, though it is certain that the next few months will see much faster and more powerful airplanes on both sides.

"It would not surprise me if we were able to fly at least 145 miles an hour by spring, and 155 miles before

MAJOR LUFBERY MAKES PREDICTION

(Continued From First Page.)

the end of the year. And I mean average flying at those speeds and not occasional spurts."

In predicting a speed of more than two miles per minute in the future, Lufbery reveals that the aviators' latest equipment is a mask neutralizing the tremendous strain which high speed in the air places on the heart and lungs.

Big Clashes Expected.

"Few land battles in the future will be without important aerial co-operation on both sides: the larger the battle the more machines engaged above it," the flier continued. "This means big clashes in the air—more machines.

"Generally, as air effectiveness increase, and they are increasing feverishly on both sides, the fighting over the lines will not only be far more intense than last year, and between speedier and more powerful machines, but between increasingly greater numbers and larger groups.

"Constant night bombardments by large fleets of allied machines on enemy munition making centers are not only now possible, but promise to have an important effect on the outcome of the war. Groups of heavily armed bombing planes, each carrying more than a ton of high explosives, can raid the most important German munitions towns and be practically immune from attack in the air. In the darkness they can steer by compass, launch their bombs and turn back homeward.

Smaller Machines Helpless.

"Smaller and faster airplanes are practically helpless in the darkness against big heavily armed raiders.

The latter have a fixed object; that of dropping bombs as they pass over their targets. The former are on the 'hunt' and it is no secret they are at an extreme disadvantage with their light armament against the more numerous guns of the larger machines.

"It is common knowledge that most German munition centers are systematically laid out in enormous blocks covering hundreds of acres. They present targets not easy to miss, even from a high altitude.

"Of course, the Germans will make similar raids, but they will not have the advantage of finding allied munitions works built in the form of vast aerial targets. They would have to swoop low, where anti-aircraft guns can get them.

"Unless the Germans find some new way of protecting their shell factories, they are due for a very uncomfortable time."