

26 November 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF AIR STAFF

Subject: A-26 Conversion Program.

I. Discussion

1. There will be a substantial surplus of B-25 and A-26 aircraft unless a decision is forthcoming as to the extent of conversion to A-26 aircraft.
2. A firm basis is required upon which to formulate future production plans for the A-26 and B-25 aircraft.
3. Present plans convert all European A-20 groups and all but three B-26 groups (occupational Air Force) to A-26 aircraft by the end of July 1945. This will result in eleven A-26 groups.
4. The FEAF frequently reiterated their non-requirement for A-26 aircraft. It is not felt that their extreme prejudice against the A-26 is justified when the nature of the four A-26B aircraft that were furnished them for operational test is considered. These were four of the first production aircraft and incorporated a number of undesirable features which have since been corrected. It is possible to furnish the FEAF at the proper time A-26 aircraft modified to include an improved vision cockpit and canopy, an eight-gun nose with six internal wing guns, and engines having increased power.
5. Plans are progressing to convert all B-25 groups in other theaters based on the availability of A-26 aircraft.
6. On present allocation and production schedules there will be a surplus of approximately six hundred B-25's as of 1 September 1945, if the war with Germany continues. This surplus will start to accrue in December 1944, unless immediate action is taken to curtail production. There will commence to be a surplus of A-26 aircraft in the latter part of 1945, if the FEAF does not convert to the A-26.
7. It is considered most desirable that the conversion to A-26's be accomplished without exceptions. The A-26 is not only the best medium or light bomber in sight, but the conversion will permit standardization of crew training and a simplification of supply problems.

II. Action recommended:

1. That all light and medium bombardment units be converted to A-26 aircraft as rapidly as availabilities permit, in the following priority, and that B-25 production be adjusted accordingly.

- (1) ETO
- (2) MTO
- (3) CBI
- (4) AAFPOA
- (5) FEAF
- (6) North Pacific (maintain B-25's as long as possible)

/s/ DONALD WILSON
Brig.General, U.S. Army
AC/AS, OCR

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL GROSS:

Subject: Surplus B-25 Production

1. According to the latest tactical availability estimates of AFRAL, surplus production B-25s in storage will reach a total of 925 airplanes by July 1945. It is understood that Training is reducing their TB-25 requirement to 900 airplanes from their former requirement of 1200, and that there is a good possibility of a further reduction to 500 airplanes approximately June 1945. This would, of course, mean that surplus "in storage" B-25s would total 1000 or even perhaps more.

2. Unless a large percentage of these surplus aircraft are to be utilized in equipping new additional medium groups in the FEAF theatre, it is believed that action should be taken which would result in either curtailing B-25 production or making available to other nations some of this surplus which will start accumulating this December. If FEAF continues to receive B-25 airplanes in the same number as they are now receiving their replacements, a surplus of only 300 "in storage" B-25s would be necessary to provide FEAF with replacements until October 1946, i.e. at the present rate of 25 per month.

3. After all AAF requirements are allocated, the amount of B-25 production that will have to be put in storage is scheduled as follows:

| <u>Month</u> | <u>Monthly Production Going into Storage</u> | <u>Total Airplanes in Storage</u> |
|--------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| December '44 | 104 | |
| January '45 | 172 | 104 |
| February | 153 | 276 |
| March | 133 | 429 |
| April | 129 | 562 |
| May | 147 | 691 |
| June | 87 | 838 |
| July | None | 925 |
| August | None | 925 |
| September | Take 41 out | 925 |
| October | Take 82 out | 884 |

(Availabilities cease in October 1945)

4. It is suggested that the surplus aircraft be equipped as outlined in the attached R&R as it appears now that FEAF will be the principal recipient of any surplus B-25s.

Incl - R&R
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
AFRAL _____
A/C Sec _____
EO&T SEC _____

James H. WALLACE
Colonel, AG,
Chief, Mr. Req. Div .
Office AC/AS, OCR.

Subject: A-26 Conversion Program

TO: AC/AS, Operations, Commitments and Requirements

DATE: 28 Nov 1944

FROM: Chief of the Air Staff

COMMENT NO. 1

FHS:mr:JT 6371

1. The indicated surplus of B-25's accruing through the first half of 1945, and a predicted surplus of A-26's in the latter part of 1945 are considered by the Chief of Air Staff to constitute a reserve well worth having.

2. It is desired that current production programs of B-25 and A-26 aircraft be followed until such time as there are definite indications toward the creation of unuseable surplus. The inference is that the Far East Air Force will continue to be supplied with B-25 aircraft until the Commander indicates his preference for A-26's.

F. H. SMITH, JR.
Brig. General, U.S. Army,
Deputy C/AS

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Memo 11-26-44