Combat airplanes—wicked, swift, deadly. These are the lean, indi-
steam engines of war—the latest type pursuit planes built for the army
air corps. The two machines in the foreground in the picture above are
Seversky P-35 single-seaters. As depicted here they are part of the
fighter section accompanying the heavy Martin bombers flying on a war
mission 500 feet below. It is the duty of pilots flying pursuit airplanes
to protect their own observation, attack, transport, and bombardment
squadrons and to intercept and shoot down hostile aircraft. Crack
pilots of the air corps aspire to be members of the single-seat fighter
squadrons, for here airmen find themselves pitted alone against enemy
planes. Individual skill and marksmanship are counted higher in the
pursuit squadrons than in any other branch of the flying army. Only
one of the type P-35 fighters as yet has been delivered to the air corps,
but 77 of them, with spares for 13 more, are being turned out in the
Seversky plant at Farmingdale, Long Island, N. Y. These machines
are probably the fastest fighting airplanes in the world and among the
most deadly aircraft of their type ever constructed. The army’s entire
order of the fighters will be placed in service during 1937 with the pilots
of the First pursuit group, Selfridge Field, Michigan, which now is one of
the important bases of the general headquarters air force. The First
pursuit group has the most glorious record of any air force squadron of
the American army in the World war, and the decision to place these
marvelous new fighters with the group is considered a signal honor to
the pilots who have maintained the traditions of the past. The Seversky
fighters have a top speed said to be in the neighborhood of 300 miles an
hour, and land, with the aid of efficient flaps, at 70 miles an hour. Their
range is said to be 1,500 miles at the best cruising throttle setting.

Predatory war birds: A low-flying attack squadron with Northrop A-17 airplanes. These military machines have been specially designed to attack troops, transport trains, strong points, artillery emplacements, and similar
concentrated targets on the ground. Their technique is to fly as low as possible, making their objective with machine gun fire, bombs, and guns as they sweep over it at 250 miles an hour. They arrive so suddenly and depart so
swiftly after striking that there can be no reprieve. The planes each carry pilot and gunner.