

PLUNGING FORWARD ON PLAINS OF SICILY

Nazis Seek To Expand Slim Wedge In Red Lines

Locked In Series Of Bitter Battles

By WILLIAM MCGAFFIN
MOSCOW—(AP)—German and Russian troops remained locked in a series of bitter battles last night on the Belgorod front as attacking Nazi forces fought frantically to expand the slim wedge which they had driven into the Red Army lines two days ago.

Dispatches from the front said today that in the past 24 hours some positions in the sector at the foot of the 200-mile Belgorod-Kach-Grel bulge had changed hands several times in the course of heavy fighting. In some sections, the Russians said, separate Red Army detachments were forced to withdraw only to launch vigorous counter-attacks on the arrival of fresh reserves.

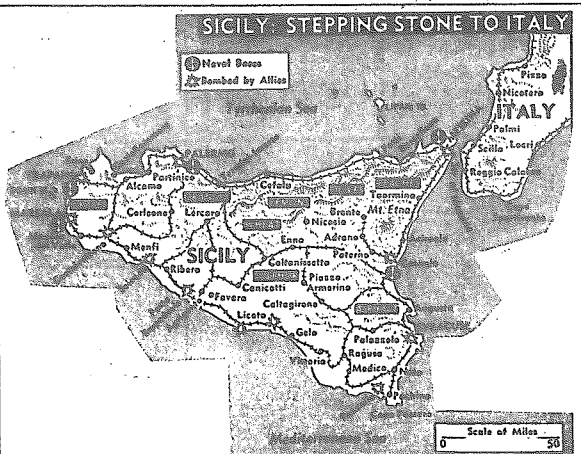
The attacking Germans were paying for their latest frenzied effort with the same reckless expenditure of armored strength and manpower as in past major offensives, the Russians said. Grenadier tanks dug into the Russian tanks, according to reports to have knocked out 49 German tanks, including the new Tiger tanks in one sector as Field Marshal Guenther von Kluge pushed his all-out assault to its sixth day.

The Red Army reversed usual battle tactics to smash back the latest German attacks, converting its armored divisions into rock-like strong points and hitching its tanks to machine gun emplacements that it could be speeded from point to point when the German defenses threatened. Soviet anti-air attacks said.

AMBUCH CREATED

The Russian "fire bag" technique—nothing more than an ambush which has trapped advancing Nazi tank columns—was said to have been extremely successful on the Caucasus. At one point an ambush was created to head off a German flanking movement and several Nazi tanks were set afire in the first few minutes after they plunged into the bar.

The Russians said that everywhere along the front the battle was continuing on a large scale. They said the German had been rebuffed as firmly as on the first day, but declared the Nazis were pressing the attacks with "great stubbornness." The Russian defense was said to be characterized by "high activity and maneuverability."



Gen. Eisenhower's Allied forces struck today at the Italian island of Sicily in what was generally conceded to be the first step in the invasion of continental Europe. Sicily is only two miles from the Italian mainland at the narrowest point.

Mighty Air Blows Struck

American Liberators Hurlled At Sicily

CAIRO—(AP)—Stirling at Sicily and Crete in waves nearly 100 strong, American Liberator bombers yesterday smashed the general headquarters and "nerve center" of Axis Sicilian defense forces at Taormina in a mighty pre-invasion blow, a U. S. communiqué said today.

In unusual description of bomb damage, the bulletin from the U. S. Ninth Airforce declared that the target area in Taormina on the East Coast of Sicily was "reduced to rubble and left in smokes and flames."

VERY BUSY DAY

In the busiest day they have had, the Liberators based in the Middle East rained more than 250,000 pounds of high explosives on the Axis defenses in Sicily, and also visited the Messine airbase in Crete.

OTHER FORCES

In addition, these reports said, there were parachute troops of the invasion force, two Polish and assorted Czech, Yugoslav and Greek units.

Berlin, according to these advances, believed the Allies would use half of their available troops for invasion while the others must be left for strong occupation forces in North Africa and the near east.

FR Foresees End Of Nazi Empire

Calls Attack on Sicily "The Beginning Of The End" of Hitler's Europe

WASHINGTON—(AP)—President Roosevelt considers the Allied invasion of Sicily as virtually "the beginning of the end" of Hitler's Europe, the White House disclosed today.

The Chief Executive expressed his reaction to the invasion at a formal dinner at the White House last night for General Henri Giraud. He predicted confidently the liberation of France, referring to it in a manner which suggested the possibility that military operations designed to drive the enemy from French soil will develop eventually from England as well as Sicily.

POINTS TO FRANCE

General Giraud, said the President, "can rest assured that the ultimate objective—we will do it in the best way—will be to liberate the people of France, not merely those in the southern part of France but the people in northern France—Paris."

President Roosevelt strongly indicated that the major moves had been well planned, for he continued:

"And in this whole operation, I should say rightly that in the enormous planning we have had, the complete co-ordination of French military and naval forces, in North Africa."

AXIS COUNTER-ATTACKING

"Axis armed forces are decisively counter-attacking the enemy action. Fighting is in progress along the coastal southern and eastern strips."

WARSHIPS AGAIN BOMBARD KISKA

WASHINGTON—(AP)—For the second time in three days, the Navy reported today, American surface units have bombarded Japanese positions on Kiska Island in the Aleutians.

Strong Sea & Air Units Assist In Big Attack

Initial Details Given In Berlin

LONDON—(AP)—Military circles in Berlin presented initial details of the Allied invasion of Sicily to the German people at noon today in a broadcast which said the operation was launched with "considerable forces" and that it began with "the support of strong naval and air force formations."

By now Allied forces have landed in the southeastern part of Sicily, said the broadcast, recorded by the Associated Press. It added that fighting was proceeding but said it could not be stated whether attempts to land at other points on the island had been made.

"The invasion forces were immediately engaged in heavy fighting which proved extraordinarily costly for them," one Berlin broadcast said, "but a disaster of international information Bureau, German propaganda agency. The parachutists were encircled and rendered harmless."

Invasion Highlights

Glider-Borne Troops Believed Being Used

LONDON—(AP)—A Reuters dispatch from Washington said today that "all indications here support the belief that Gen. Eisenhower is making the first extensive use of glider-borne troops to overcome bitter resistance in Sicily."

Attack on Sicily Announced by Berlin

LONDON—(AP)—The German overseas radio announced this morning the Axis invasion of Sicily at 7:30 A. M. (1:30 A. M. New York Time).

Broad Hint Given In London That Other Operations Are Impending

LONDON—(AP)—The invasion of Europe now under way is regarded as "the only landing, not even as the landing" planned by the Allies, a British observer told, correspondents today.

It also warned that "hard and prolonged fighting must be expected" against the Italian mainland forces, estimated at 400,000.

Battle Of Europe Is Now Underway

Grandest Amphibian Operation in History Made With America's Eisenhower Directing Attack

By DANIEL DeLUCE

ALLIED HEADQUARTERS IN NORTH AFRICA—(AP)—The armies of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower—American, British and Canadian—beat and cut at the Germans and Italians tonight across the ancient plains of Sicily, plunging forward under cover of screaming air squadrons and with great British and U. S. warships at their flank, in the first campaign of the Battle of Europe.

They landed in the early hours before the dawn—landed on what is politically and actually Italy itself—in the grandest amphibious attack in history, springing from shallow vessels that had been cast out from the convoys lying just off shore, struggling with heavy packs up the harsh and rocky coastline and fighting then through the sharp and bloody jungles of enemy barbed wire and gun pits toward the inland objectives.

Among the first of these objectives were Sicily's ten major airfields—bases for the Nazis, as well as the Italians—at the throat of the Mediterranean.

It was an operation in many respects without precedent in all the story of martial men—an operation of many a red and blue and varied banner; covered over by airmen from every part of the English-speaking world, carried forward under the thin, proud and glistening guns of English and American ships of the fleet, thrust home by dogged and sweating infantry marshaled here from across half the circle of the world.

General Eisenhower sent them forward—the forces of liberation now assaulting the corridor to what the Nazis call "the Fortress of Europe"—after immense and detailed planning and after one last and crushing smash from the air at Sicily's sources of air and other military strength by Allied bombers, fighter bombers and fighters alike.

General Eisenhower's first communique today made no direct mention of the great assault, telling instead of the crushing attacks on Sicilian airdromes and other points in the island's arc of defense, one of which bashed what was called by the co-operating Cairo Headquarters the very "nerve center of Axis Sicilian defense forces" at Taormina. There, at a point on the Messina Strait separating Sicily from the Italian mainland in a band of water in some places no more than two miles wide, Axis military headquarters was blasted to splinters and the whole of the target area torn apart and left in fire and smoke.

In the last series of air attacks before the ultimate blow fell upon Sicily itself, twenty Axis planes went down in flames while eleven Allied craft were being lost.

War Bulletins

"ACCORDING TO PLAN"

LONDON—(AP)—A radio broadcast from the British Empire P. M. (12 noon, Eastern War Time) today said that "everything is going according to plan" in the Allied invasion of Sicily. The broadcast was recorded by Reuters.

SOME REPORTS FIGHTING

LONDON—(AP)—The news radio in a broadcast tonight said that very violent fighting still was going on in Sicily. It gave no details. The broadcast was recorded by the Associated Press.

WEATHER

Little change in temperatures.

What Sicily Faces: Perhaps 450,000 Men And 2,000 Planes Thrown Into Struggle

By LEWIS HAWKINS
LONDON—(AP)—Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower has thrown into the invasion of Sicily a formidable force evenly divided between battle-tested American and British units with a hard-hitting Canadian force moved in since the Battle of North Africa ended.

There were no Allied estimates of the number but London sources estimated the Axis forces on Sicily as totalling up to 400,000.