

Invasion Begins As Allies Strike France

Allied planes and ships hurled into those defenses bargages which the Nazis admitted were terrific. The fleet included several battleships, which the Germans said set the whole Seine Bay area ablaze with their fire.

The Germans announced also that American reinforcements began landing at dawn, aided by artificial fog, and that in some places dummy parachutists were dropped to confuse the defense.

French patriots previously had been warned by Allied radio broadcasts to get out of areas within 35 kilometers (22 miles) of the coast to escape the shock of battle and the gigantic aerial bombardment.

The Germans said the bombers ranged as far north as Dunkerque, the unhappy port from which the beaten British Army escaped almost exactly four years ago.

All England resounded with the thunder of their coming and going.

An Associated Press correspondent flying over the French coast in a B-26 Marauder reported seeing the fields inland strewn with hundreds of parachutes and dotted with gliders, while great naval forces fired into the coast fortifications.

Berlin said the "center of gravity" of the fierce fighting was at Caen, 30 miles southwest of Le Havre and 65 miles southeast of Cherbourg.

Caen is 10 miles inland from the sea, at the base of the 75-mile wide Normandy Peninsula.

Heavy fighting also was reported between Caen and Trowville.

One of Berlin's first claims was that the First British Parachute Division was badly mauled.

No other Allied commanders were announced, for the thousands of battle-trained Allied troops, although Gen. Omar Bradley has been in command of American ground forces in England for several months.

Bradley participated in the Tunisian victory. Thousands of battle-trained American, British and Canadian troops huddled themselves at Hitler's western defenses after months of preparation.

Huge troopship armadas slipped out of English ports in the darkness and sped toward Europe where four battlegroups almost to the day Britain brought back the last battle-worn defenders of Dunkerque.

The Germans also declared that Calais and Dunkerque, immediately across the English Channel from Britain, were under heavy air attack.

The German radio gave the first reports of the invasion while correspondents were hurriedly summoned from bed to Supreme Press Headquarters and looked in a press conference room until the communique was released several hours after the landings were made.

It was made known at SHAEF that the Supreme Command felt it necessary to withhold the initiative in the way of words to the Germans in order to return the surprise on land and keep the German High Command in the dark as long as possible.

GREAT ARMADAS

The great Allied armada dwarfed anything yet seen on the seas.

Huge transport planes filled with paratroopers and pulling airborne troops in gliders roared over the German West Wall to drop their cargoes in the rear.

Berlin said that masses of Allied parachute troops bailed out over Normandy, trying to seize airfields.

Just before taking off in the darkness the paratroopers were wished good-bye by the lanky supreme commander, Gen. Eisenhower.

He was accompanied by several other of his commanders and his face was tense but confident as he strode down the long lines of fighting men.

All night long London and England resounded to the roar of thousands of airplanes, some carrying bombs, some carrying men. Returning RAF bombers met big fleets of Flying Fortresses on their way out.

The forces thrown into operation were by far the greatest ever used in an amphibious operation. They had to be. An estimated million German troops waited in their fortifications for the great onslaught under crack Nazi Field Marshals, Rommel and Rundsted.

It was reported earlier this week that Adolf Hitler himself had a special train ready to rush him to France to take over personal command as he did on the east front.

Despite these reports Allied military men expected Rommel to be the main factor in German defense but on the Allied side were the team of Eisenhower and Montgomery—the men who chased Rommel from Africa.

Although amphibious attacks are the most difficult in war, a quiet feeling of confidence characterized the Allied generals.

Just what element of surprise, if any, the landing troops achieved was not immediately announced by Supreme Headquarters. There was no chance to hide the great convoys with only about five hours darkness on the channel.

On several occasions thousands of troops, even with correspondents aboard, sailed out in great fleets to almost within short range of German defenses in Europe as though they were going to attack while Nazi reconnaissance planes closely checked convoys.

These convoys have been carried out on widely separated points.

The Supreme Command made no bones about its intention to attack but the surprise was that the Germans did not know where the main blow was coming.

In four previous big amphibious landings to date the Allies obtained tactical surprise three times—at Anzio, Sicily, and North Africa. At Salerno the Germans guessed the landing spot and were waiting.

During the 18 hours previous to the landings RAF and American bomber fleets dropped a stupendous tonnage of bombs on the West Wall's defenders.

A canopy of American and British bombers and fighters turned the Toli fortifications on which Hitler had

pinned his hopes into a jumping, jagged mass of flames. On the fringes of it attack big gray battlegroups of the sea slipped through the Channel waters, awaiting any challenge from the battered Nazi fleet.

The Western Front opening climaxed years of patient preparation by the top military minds of America and Britain, and hard work in factories and munitions plants by millions of Americans and Britons.

The plan of attack was the same which Gen. Eisenhower had when he came to England in June, 1942, but which was shelved during the improvised North African operation.

This morning the sweat and toil of the factory worker of America and Britain and the planning of the military men of both countries bore fruit.

Every weapon that has proved its worth since Pearl Harbor was in the hands of the fighting men of the United Nations.

What success they would meet no one could say with certainty.

No such attempt has been made in warfare before on such a huge scale—to storm a continent from the sea against fixed defenses.

NOTHING TO CHANCE

Eisenhower and the supreme Allied staff had left as little as possible to chance.

Several weeks ago all the air forces in the United Kingdom were placed under the strategic command of SHAEF to pave the way for the landings.

The strategic air forces under Lt. Gen. Carl A. Spaatz were assigned the task of smashing the German aerial reserves by bombing aircraft factories and everything from the air, but to cripple and hamper German troop movements.

This morning a shattering barrage such as reduced the defenders of the Mediterranean island of Pantelleria last Summer was laid down by the combined air forces.

Added to this barrage was the thunder of naval warships off the coast behind the advancing naval fleet. The Royal Navy had been waiting for months for this moment, while light and heavy units of the American Navy quietly gathered in British harbors for the same task.

The American Coast Guard was there, too, manning landing craft, transports and rescue ships. A small number of American Navy planes also took part.

In the landing craft were men who knew the beaches on which they were to land like the back of their hands. For months in English camps they had drilled down to the finest detail for their task. They had been formed into combat teams, some of a dozen men, some of several thousand.

War Dept. Machine Gunny

The War Department announced today that the machine gunny units of the United States Army are being organized into separate units for the invasion of Europe.

Gen. George C. Marshall, chief of staff, said the units will be organized into separate units for the invasion of Europe.

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Commander's Message

(Continued from Page One) command the gallant forces of France, fighting beside their Allied comrades in the liberation of their homeland. Because the initial assault is over, I shall issue to you with even greater emphasis my words of encouragement to all our men of other occupied countries in Western Europe. I repeat to you with even greater emphasis my words of encouragement to all our men of other occupied countries in Western Europe.

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Umberto Is Italy's Head Paratroopers Land Behind Nazi Lines

NAPLES—(AP)—Italy's 74-year-old King Vittorio Emanuele III has named Umberto, his 39-year-old son, as his successor to the throne of Italy.

Umberto, who is married to the 33-year-old Princess Giovanna, was named in a decree counter-signed by Premier Marshal Pietro Badoglio.

The decree, which was signed by the King at Rome, named Umberto as his successor to the throne of Italy.

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