

Livest Newspaper in The Carolinas ESTABLISHED 1888

THE PROGRESS OF THE WAR THROUGH THE COLMARS

30 Miles Of Rhine's Left Bank Cleared

By JAMES M. LONG PARIS—(AP)—American and French troops broke into the northern end of Colmar, provincial French capital 40 miles south of Strasbourg, at noon today after clearing 30 miles of the left bank of the Rhine and laying siege to the Neufbrisch bridge from a mile away.

(The Paris radio interrupted a broadcast early tonight to announce that French troops had captured Colmar.) At 6 P. M., Supreme Headquarters said the Allies had reached the center of Colmar and were fighting in the streets.

An announcement from Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers' Sixth Army group told of the victory below Strasbourg in an area manned until recently by 25,000 resolute German troops.

The threat to the Alsatian capital was all but dispelled, for gains also made in the north, pushing the Germans away from about fifteen miles away from Colmar.

The U. S. 3rd and 20th Divisions and French First Army troops fought to clear Bieichem, a suburb of Neufbrisch. There, one of the few standing trolley railroads bridges crosses the Rhine. The bridge is from 120 to 220 yards wide, twenty feet deep and steep banked.

On the central front where the American First and Third Armies were assaulting a 40-mile sector of the Siegfried Line, the Second Division advanced three miles eastward toward the village of Schoenau, ten miles from Germany, and twenty southwest of the important traffic center of Kuselheim. NAZI DEFENSE

German defenses however were stiffening. The heaviest crossed the German border south of Mousch and fought in the streets of Undersbach village on the Siegfried Line itself. Nearby Ramstein and Neuhof were captured. The Germans started fighting from some of the thick concrete pillboxes, many of which were abandoned.

The weather in ten days allowed hundreds of fighter bombers to batter German railroads from the Ruhr to the Black Forest opposite the Colmar pocket.

Bank Pincer Jaws Close In On Manila

Deadly American Trap Forged By RICHARD C. BERGHOLZ GENERAL MACARTHUR'S HEADQUARTERS, LUZON (AP)—Manila was in a deadly American trap today.

U. S. Eighth Army invasion troops fastened a pincer on the Philippines capital Wednesday morning by landing on the Batangas Province coast 67 road miles southwest of the city while Sixth Army spearheads drove within a bare twenty miles on the north.

The Eleventh Airborne Division swept ashore from landing craft, mainly unopposed along five miles of Batangas Beach near Pasig, and quickly moved eastward toward 2,000-foot Tagaytay Ridge which commands the high ground leading to Manila and the Cavite naval base in Manila Bay, 32 miles south.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur reported today that the Third United States Army had captured the town of Manila and the Japanese are being driven from the city.

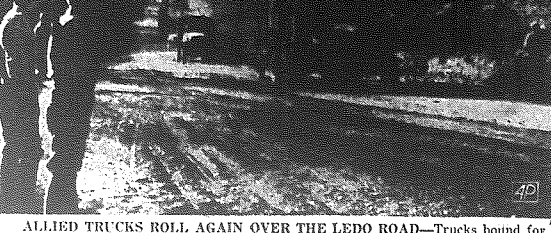
"We landed without loss," he announced, explaining that the landing was made without the possibility of the enemy troops south of Manila joining with those in the north, and definitely outflanks the enemy's defense line in southern Luzon.

The first wave of Maj. Gen. J. M. Swann's Eleventh Airborne troops hit the shore without incident at 6:30 A. M. and took the town of Nasugbu where Filipino policemen threw out the enemy and set fire to their trucks, cars and other vehicles.

It was a totally bloodless operation, he said, because the Japanese had evacuated the island before the landing.

The invasion, fashioning the jaws of a pincer north and south of Manila, came off in a last-minute American Sixth Army spearhead—still unopposed—reached the city and river 25 road miles north of the capital city.

ALLIED TRUCKS ROLL AGAIN OVER THE LEDO ROAD—Trucks bound for China roll along the Ledo Road in the first convoy to pass over the road in two and a half years.



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Watching the convoy are Chinese infantrymen who helped drive the trucks over the road. The convoy is bound for China to clear the way for re-opening of the road.

Divorce Bill Lending Agency Separation Due

WASHINGTON—(AP)—The House Banking Committee indicated today it will approve, virtually unanimously, the Senate-approved bill divorcing Federal lending agencies.

Order Hits Fun Spots

WASHINGTON—(AP)—Amusement places in the ten Eastern States were ordered to close at 10 P. M. Eastern War Time today by the War Relocation Authority.

Army Losses At 650,420

WASHINGTON—(AP)—United States combat casualties since Pearl Harbor reached the three-quarter million mark today, with disclosure that Army losses have reached 650,420.

Soviet Patrols May Already Have Crossed

Strong Soviet Forces Along Oder On Both Sides Of Frankfurt By JAMES F. KING LONDON—(AP)—Russian forces have made one attempt to storm across the Oder in their onslaught toward Berlin, a German broadcast said today, and other Berlin reports indicated Soviet patrols might already have crossed.

The German High Command claimed a blackout on news from the sector as one military commentator told of the attempted crossing in the area of Kustrin, 40 miles east of Berlin.

Berlin radio accounts said Marshal Gregory Zhukov had brought strong forces along the Oder on both sides of Frankfurt and that assaults to reduce the fortress of Kustrin were under way.

The German command, however, completely omitting mention of the sector, said the Russians everywhere else except in East Prussia had been checked after hard fighting and Moscow dispatched said Zhukov had run into tank units and a heavy force of German armor along the 90-mile front threatening the German capital.

Zhukov's tanks have sliced between German strongpoints to within sight of the Oder and have reached highly important operational areas in the region of Frankfurt and Kustrin, Moscow dispatches said.

FRANKFURT SHELED Frankfurt, here, where the Wehrmacht to its knees, may stop short of Berlin, but if it does it may well be because of this logistical problem.

The weather and the Polish mud are keys to that. The Russians have now reached the great supply line trails across 250 miles or more of the Polish plain.

That plain now is frozen and snow covered, making it possible for vehicles and sleds to run without difficulty. But from late March through April the roads become virtually useless with thaw and spring mud.

Supplies Big Red Problem

By JAMES M. LONG PARIS—(AP)—The military science of getting supplies into the battle line—rather than a reinforced German defense, may decide whether or not the Russian offensive carries across the Oder River and the last 40 miles to Berlin.

That is the opinion of the best available unofficial military intelligence—here, although the full capabilities of the Russian Red Army are not known here of the Soviet Command.

It is quite possible the Red Army will be able to get supplies into the battle line, but it will be because of this logistical problem.

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That plain now is frozen and snow covered, making it possible for vehicles and sleds to run without difficulty. But from late March through April the roads become virtually useless with thaw and spring mud.

There are rail lines, but these take some time to change to the Russian way of rail—and this would mean widening tunnels and underpasses and cutting away station landings all along the routes.

By all normal procedure of logistics the Russians would be necessary to stop their onslaught before the thaw. They could then establish a strong line for the week jump off and get supplies up to strengthen and maintain that line before the thaw bog down.

Two-Minute News Roundup

Russian Front Berlin rumors has it that some Russian patrols are operating on the west side of the Oder River. And one German broadcast claims that the Red Army has tried to break into the Colmar pocket in four. The Nazis say that Marshal Zhukov has massed large forces along the Oder in preparation for coming all-out smash toward the German capital.

Germany army newspapers are expected to send troops to stand firm before the Russian onslaught. And a London broadcast says the Red Army plans to continue the fight with fanatical.

Western Front American and French troops fighting near the lower end of the front were engaged in street fighting at the center of Colmar, about 20 miles from Strasbourg. The Paris radio declares that Colmar already has been captured. The Paris radio also confirmed.

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