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YANKS CROSS ELBE TO MENACE BERLIN

Soviets Breach Nazi Defenses Beyond Vienna

By RICHARD KASISCHKE

LONDON —(AP)— Marshal Feodor Tolbukhin's Third Ukrainian Army has punched a big hole in German defenses west of Vienna, Moscow dispatches said today, and Berlin reported Soviet armor had reached a point between Krems and Melk, 115 miles from Berchtesgaden.

Soviet troops virtually completed the occupation of Vienna, and dispatches from the Russian capital said "Moscow's guns may salute the freeing of the ancient Austrian capital tonight.

Northwest of Bratislava the Russians were fighting within sight at least of the Vienna-Bruenn Highway, last escape route for the Germans northward out of the capital.

Moscow dispatches said the encirclement had been completed. Berlin said Soviet gunboats were putting Tommygunners ashore in the rear of German troops still fighting on the nine-mile long island in Northern Vienna between the river and Danube Canal.

The German Commander on the Berlin Front was reported by the German radio to have issued an order of the day to his troops warning that the zero hour for the push by Marshal Gregory Zhukov's First White Russian Army from its bases along the Oder could be expected at any time.

Soviet Air Reconnaissance heralding such an assault already is "exceptionally brisk," a Berlin military spokesman said.

"In the Oder bend from north of Gueben (50 miles southeast of Berlin) as far as Kuestrin enemy motorized and rail movements continue and indicate a growing Russian readiness for the offensive," he said.

The German communique said Gen. Lasch, commander at Koenigsberg, had been courtmartialed for cowardice in surrendering the East Prussian capital and sentenced to death in absentia.

"Reprisals will be taken against his family," the official German war bulletin added.

Berlin said Tolbukhin's forces had reached the Danube bend 42 miles west of Vienna.

Britain To Discontinue Drafting Men Over 31

LONDON.—(AP)—Britain plans to discontinue conscription of men of 31 years and older for the armed forces after May 1 except where there is a need for specialists or other special factors, Labor Minister Ernest Bevin announced today.

With the same exceptions, conscription of men and women for war jobs under Britain's national service law also will be discontinued, Bevin told Commons.

Eighth Army Troops Push Over Barrier

Santerno River Crossing Made

ROME — (AP) — Eighth Army troops battling heavy opposition have pushed across a second barrier thrown up by the Germans at the Santerno River, while on the opposite end of the front American troops, assisted by Italian partisans, have captured Carrara, Allied Headquarters announced today.

The Santerno River runs parallel to and about five miles west of the Senio River line from which the Eighth launched its new offensive four days ago.

Carrara is four miles north of Massa, west coast hub whose capture by the Fifth Army was announced yesterday.

Meanwhile, in a message to Italian patriots behind German lines in Northern Italy, Gen. Mark W. Clark said the "final battles for the liberation of Italy have begun."

(He warned, however, that the moment for co-ordinated action had not yet arrived. The instructions were broadcast over the Rome radio and recorded by the Federal Communications Commission.)

36 Lost As Ship Burns

NEW YORK — (AP) — Thirty-six men were lost when the gasoline-laden American tanker St. Mihiel on her maiden voyage burst into flames after crashing into another vessel in an Allied convoy Monday, 700 miles at sea.

Some victims were trapped in the burning ship. Others were lost when they jumped into the flaming sea about the stricken vessel. Two are known to be dead, and 34 listed as missing.

The War Shipping Administration disclosed the accident today and said that both ships were able to return to New York.

The St. Mihiel, carrying 150,000 barrels of 60-octane gasoline, collided with the tanker Nashbulk in the dim twilight, the WSA said.

All except one of the dead and missing were crew members of the St. Mihiel, the WSA reported. Ten survivors were returned aboard the Nashbulk and have been hospitalized at the Marine hospital, Staten Island.

The St. Mihiel burst into flames immediately, and the blaze was not brought under control until abandon ship orders had been given.

The skipper of the St. Mihiel presumably perished in the fire, the WSA said.

Allied Map Takes In More Territory

PARIS—(AP)—Supreme Headquarters changed its huge wall battle map today in an effort to keep pace with its fast armies.

The huge one to 100,000th scale German map was shifted over and bent around the corner of the briefing room.

The new strip showed Berlin and Leipzig.

WEATHER

Partly cloudy and continued warm today, tonight and Friday.

Temperature at 2:30 Today 72
High and Low Last 24 Hours 74, 59
Sunset Today 7:53
Sunrise Tomorrow 6:33

JAGGED WEST FRONT—Rampaging armored columns of America and Britain are rip-sawing remnants of collapsed Hitlerite forces. Several Yank tank and motorized infantry are speeding 25 to 50 miles daily. Canadians are driving upon Emden, great German North Sea port. Britons, beseiging Bremen, surged across the Aller, menacing Hamburg. By-passing Brunswick, spectacular Yanks dashed across the Elbe, speeded onward, 50-odd miles from Berlin. Other Yank mechanized columns slashed from Nordhausen into Halle area, driving for Leipzig. From Erfurt area, famous American tank divisions also set speed record in push toward Leipzig, likewise aiming at junction with Russians. Along Furth-Stuttgart sector, another U. S. Army scored notable victories in swift mop-up. Historic Ruhr Nazi trap still is shrinking.

Americans On Homestretch To Nazi City

Hell On Wheels Division Of Ninth Army Forces Last River Barrier

PARIS —(AP) — A report attributed to French sources and without immediate confirmation said tonight that Allied parachute troops had been dropped at Brandenburg, barely 20 miles west of Berlin.

By JAMES M. LONG

PARIS — (AP) — American Ninth Army tanks crossed the Elbe River today and debouched onto the flat, unbroken plain leading 57 miles toward Berlin and 115 miles from Russian siege lines.

A front dispatch said Lt. Gen. William H. Simpson's men could reach the Brandenburg gate in Berlin by tomorrow night or Saturday, provided the Germans switched no tank forces from the east. One report, however, said the Germans indeed were shifting their battered Sixth Panzer Division from the Eastern Front.

The last river before the German capital was forced by the Hell on Wheels (Second) Armored Division which blazed more than 50 miles to Magdeburg in a 12-hour dash yesterday. The precise site of the crossing was not announced.

LEIPZIG APPROACHED

The First Army approached Leipzig in Saxony over the old battlefields of Frederick The Great. One unconfirmed report placed American tanks near Halle, 15 miles from Leipzig. Planes destroyed or disabled 120 German tanks near Halle.

Cities fell like tenpins: Weimar, Heilbronn, Essen, Coburg, Nordhausen, Schweinfurt, Halberstadt, Emmen, Neustadt and—by German account—Bochum.

Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's Eleventh Armored Division was less than 40 miles from the border of Czechoslovakia tonight. Patton's forces swept across the Saale River south of Jena.

The day's gains brought Patton's men to a point south of Naumburg, which is 128 miles from Russian lines.

The Saale River crossings were made at points along a 30-mile stretch by the Fourth and Sixth Armored Divisions.

BRITISH SHELL BREMEN

The British thrust within less than 50 miles of Hamburg, Germany's greatest port and second largest city, capturing Celle (25,000) and Rethen, crossing the Aller River. They were shelling Bremen, second German port.

All along the Western Front, it was a hound and hare chase of disorganized and shattered German armies who had lost their last water barrier before Berlin, the Elbe.

Traps containing up to 100,000 Germans in the Ruhr and 200,000 in Holland were under vigorous assault.

One report placed American tanks near Halle, 15 miles from Leipzig. Infantry following the swift tanks of the Third Army beat to within 40 miles of Leipzig and 95 of

See NINTH CROSSES on Page 6

Two-Minute

News Roundup

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Western Front

The Allied victory chorus is swelling to a new climax in Germany. The American Ninth Army is across the Elbe River on the last lap to Berlin. Fifty-seven miles stand between it and the German capital, and it's only 115 miles to the Russian siege lines east of Berlin but that was many hours ago, and it is possible that the distances now are much less. There are unconfirmed accounts that Allied paratroops have been thrown into action in support of the Ninth Army's drive. Information reaching Paris says that soldiers from the sky have been showered down at Brandenburg, hardly twenty miles west of Berlin. Should the runaway Ninth Army continue its pace of recent days, the Americans may be hammering at the gates of Berlin by this week-end—if not sooner.

Allied tankmen are running wild all across Germany. The First Army is racing toward Leipzig. The Third Army farther south has rushed to within 42 miles of Czechoslovakia. The British Second Army has closed to within 50 miles of the great German port of Hamburg. And behind these spearheads, German cities and towns are surrendering in wholesale lots. The latest historic spot to be taken by the Americans is Weimar, where the short-lived German republic was formed after the last war.

Russian Front

There is no sign yet from Moscow that the Russians have launched their expected offensive on the Berlin front. But the gap between the Soviet and American lines in the south are closing fast. The Russian Third Ukrainian Army has broken through the Nazi lines west of Vienna and now is said to be nearing a point 115 miles from Berchtesgaden.

Italy

On the southern front, in Italy, Gen. Mark Clark has sent a message to Italian Patriots in the northern areas still held by the Germans. He told the Partisans that the final battles for the liberation of Italy have begun. On the east side of the front, British Eighth Army troops have broken down a second line of defenses at the Santerno River while on the western end, American troops seized Carrara, site of the famous marble quarry. This represents a four-mile advance for the American Fifth Army. RAF planes supported these pushes during the night.

The Pacific

In the war against Japan, the enemy homeland has been bombed again by American bombers and fighters. Two industrial cities—Tokyo and Koriyama—came under the bombsights of our B-29s, escorted for the second time by Mustangs based on Iwo Island. The Japs estimate that 150 of the big planes flew the mission. The attack on Koriyama was the longest trip yet made by our Marianas based planes—3,600 miles.

No confirmation has come in for two enemy assertions. One, that carrier planes raided three major cities on northern Formosa today and two, that a British task force shelled Sumatra. The enemy said the French battleship Richelieu took part in this attack.

Another Japanese statement which comes by way of Berlin, speaks of a new naval attack on American ships off Okinawa. The ground campaign for Okinawa is at a stalemate because of strong Japanese resistance.

General MacArthur has announced that he will carry the battle to Tokyo with the same staff which has worked with him throughout the entire campaign back to the Philippines.

Japs Lose, 11-1

Grim Big-Gun War Rages On Okinawa

By LEIF ERICKSON

GUAM — (AP) — Southern Okinawa's grim, no-quarter artillery battle went into its eighth day today as the Navy announced American casualties of 2,695 for the first nine days of the campaign. The Yanks were killing eleven Japanese for every American.

Japanese in the bitterly-contested southern sector hurled four determined and well-prepared counter-attacks against Maj. Gen. John R. Hodge's 24th Corps doughboys yesterday after firing 4,000 rounds of mortar and artillery fire.

"The Japanese were calling for supporting mortar fire even though some of it was falling into their own lines. Artillery shells and small arms fire poured into the American positions in increasing amounts along the 'Little Siegfried Line' about four miles north of Naha, the capital.

Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz again reported "no substantial changes in the lines in the southern sector."

Maj. Gen. Roy S. Geiger's Marines in the north ran into organized resistance for the first time as they pressed toward the end of the tip of the Motobu Peninsula. Other Marines advanced into the mainland of Northern Okinawa against only slight opposition.

Carrier and land-based planes as well as naval guns gave close support to the ground operations. Fighters wrecked fourteen Japanese amphibious tanks and fifteen camouflaged boats along the southern shore. A shore battery was silenced.

SUSPECT TRICKERY

Associated Press Correspondent Vern Haugland reported that the Japanese were suspected of using a small observation plane with U. S. markings. The tiny craft was believed observing American positions and directing Japanese mortar fire.

Adm. Nimitz announced the 2,695 American casualties included 432 dead, 2,103 wounded and 160 missing. This count was up to midnight on Monday.

The last report of Japanese dead showed 5,069 by midnight Sunday, but much heavy fighting has been under way since then.

Further details were disclosed of an attempted suicide boat attack on American shipping off Naha last Monday by a dozen small enemy craft. Five were destroyed and one damaged. At least fifteen swimmers, some of them carrying hand grenades, were killed. Some took their own lives when threatened with capture.

Mecklenburg Casualties

(Stories Inside)

WOUNDED IN ACTION

Lt.-Col. Ellis W. Williamson.

MISSING IN ACTION

Lt. Henry Yates Edgerton Jr.
Lt. Roy R. English Jr.

Nazi Plane Loss At 989

LONDON — (AP) — German plane losses in the last six days mounted to 989 today when eleven American Thunderbolt pilots strafed two airfields near Leipzig where 350 gas-less aircraft were parked.

The Thunderbolt pilots attacked until their ammunition was exhausted and at the end counted 74 planes destroyed and eighteen others damaged.

Allied planes raked Berlin with bombs last night, dealt punishing blows to German shipping and pressed their methodical program of reducing the enemy's aerial defenses.

Three times RAF Mosquitos visited the belabored German capital and unloaded 2,000-pound blockbusters running up the total there to six raids in two nights and 56 in the last 48 days.

Five German merchant vessels were set afire late yesterday by Beaufighters and Mosquitos of the RAF Coastal Command, continuing their stepped up attacks on enemy shipping off Norway.

RAF Typhoons combing Holland blew up what they believed to be a big flying bomb supply, the pilots reporting a tremendous explosion and numerous fires followed their bombing.

British Halifaxes, escorted by Mustangs and Spitfires and U. S. fighters of the First Tactical Air Force, made concentrated attacks on Nuernberg and Hayreuth, causing large fires.

The British Air Ministry said a bomber, three coastal planes and a fighter were missing after these operations.

U. S. Submarine Scamp Lost

WASHINGTON — (AP)—The submarine Scamp and a large support landing craft have been lost in the Pacific, the Navy announced today.

Across The Elbe

Tanks On Plains Leading To Berlin

By ROBERT EUNSON

NEAR MAGDEBURG, Germany — (AP) — Ninth Army tanks crossed the Elbe River today, forcing that last stream before Berlin for the first time since Napoleon did it more than a century ago.

The Hell on Wheels (Second) Armored Division was a bare 57 miles from Greater Berlin — the closest reported unit on the Western Front.

A bridgehead was established at an undisclosed point and tanks crossed the 450-foot river by means which censorship would not permit us to be divulged.

Maj. Gen. Isaac D. White of Peterborough, N. H., and Des Moines ordered his Sherman tanks across onto the open plains leading to Berlin.

At the crossing, the Ninth Army was within 115 miles of Berlin, projected within 38 miles east of the capital, the city of 4,332,249 sprawling over some 8 miles from east to west.

The tank veterans of campaigns in Africa, Sicily, Normandy and

See TANKS ROLL on Page 6