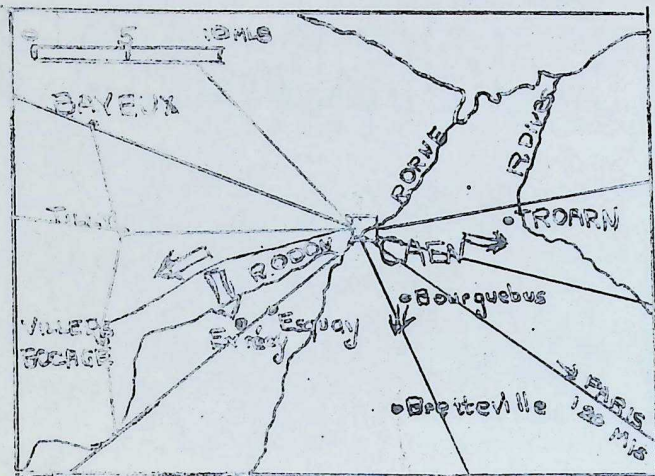


SECOND ARMY TROOPS NEWS

No. 38

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0600 hrs



BOMBER COMMAND PAVES WAY FOR ADVANCE

Tanks in Open Country South of Caen

A communique from General Montgomery's Headquarters last night announced the opening of another British-Canadian thrust East of Caen, between the Rivers Orne and Dives.

The attack was preceded by a terrific artillery barrage, which was followed by a paralysing attack by 1,200 planes of Bomber Command. This aerial assault began at 5.45 a.m. and lasted until 6.26 a.m., during which time some 5,000 tons of bombs were dropped.

The plan of attack was to hinder the Germans as much as possible without blocking the roads and lines by which the advance was to be made. The bombing, therefore, had to be aimed at enemy strongpoints such as Colombelles, Demonville, and the wood at Mondeville where the enemy had concentrated powerful forces of mortars, anti-tank guns and anti-aircraft defences.

The very large force of bombers was divided into smaller units, which pounded their targets with bombs of a calibre suited to the objective. In each case the concentration was terrific. Bombs with direct and delayed impact fuses were used.

Guns were blown from their emplacements; woods became raging fires. During the whole attack not a single enemy fighter was seen. And on the return journey, large forces of American bombers were met on their way to add to the extensive devastation.

THE FOLLOW UP BY BRITISH ARMOUR

Powerful tank formations, backed by mobile infantry of the British Second Army, pushed forward from the neighbourhood of Escoville and Honorine, North-East of Caen. They quickly overran the forward German positions. The main highway leading from Caen to Troarn was cut, and rapid progress made in the open country to the South.

Following the occupation of Demonville, 3 miles East of Caen, our armour virtually com-

pleted the encirclement of this city by penetrating as far South as Bourguebus, an advance of 7 miles from their starting-point. At the same time, our infantry, driving along the Eastern bank of the Orne, captured Colombelles, where a strong German defence-point was eliminated, and entered the North-Eastern suburbs of Faubourg de Vaucelles and the village of Mondeville.

Whilst this left hook was in progress, the enemy forces facing the Second Army on the Southern tip of the Odon bridge-head were pinned down throughout the day. Along the Caen-Villers-Bocage road, heavy fighting continues around the village of Noyers.

From Demonville strong patrols of British tanks are exerting strong pressure on Troarn, and to the South are within 2 miles of Vimont.

This latest attack is a good example of a combined operation, perfectly timed, and masterly in execution. Fighters and fighter-bombers of the Tactical Air Force, dominating the skies in fine, clear weather, gave strong support to our land forces during the whole day's fighting.

ST. LO FALLS TO AMERICANS

The Americans have taken the important route centre of St. Lo. After bitter fighting, an American Task Force entered the town yesterday afternoon.

Earlier reports stated that our Allies were closing in on St. Lo from all directions. East of the town, the drive was held up by stiff enemy resistance, after the Americans had occupied the village of Martinville. A slight withdrawal was made so that supporting aircraft could bomb German positions. The arc around St. Lo was tightened until the enemy were at last forced to evacuate the town.

The capture of St. Lo is an important strategic gain for the Allies. Nine main roads radiate from it, as well as the railways across the base of the Cherbourg Peninsula.

American tanks and infantry have made new advances towards Periers, and threaten the important lateral road from St. Lo to Lessay. At one point they are only 200 yards from the road, which they are already spraying with machine-gun fire.

Latest reports reveal that the Germans have now been driven almost three miles to the South of St. Lo, into heavily-wooded country. This has further straightened the American St. Lo-Caumont line.

EIGHTH ARMY DRIVE ON FLORENCE

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The Eighth Army are exploiting their success in capturing Arezzo and crossing the River Arno. They have smashed through the German defences four and a half miles beyond Arezzo, and pushed on 13 miles along the two parallel roads leading down the Arno valley to Florence and Pisa.

Enemy counter-attacks at the Allied bridgehead across the Arno have all been repulsed. So swift was the Eighth Army's advance that a party of German engineers was taken prisoner just as they were about to demolish a bridge across the river.

The Fifth Army continue to make good progress in their outflanking move towards Leghorn. The capture of Montenero, dominating Leghorn from the South, has brought the Americans within a few kilometres of the centre of the city. Inland, they have advanced four miles towards the River Arno on a six-mile front.

On the Adriatic sector, Polish and Italian troops of the Eighth Army are now less than three miles from the port of Ancona.

A special communique has been issued by General Alexander, praising the courage and efficiency of the Italian Corps in the fighting South of Ancona.

AIR OFFENSIVE EXTENDED IN GOOD WEATHER

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When the morning mist lifted on Monday, Allied aircraft took up the attack in greater strength than for some time past. In all, 3,000 sorties were flown, and 24 German planes were shot down.

Fighters and medium bombers bombed and strafed enemy positions, road and railway transport, and three enemy airfields--all with good results. Our bombers directed their attacks on similar targets, ranging from the Somme to the Loire.

Flying-bomb bases received much attention from a mixed force of Halifaxes, Stirrings, Fortresses and Liberators, which gave them a concentrated bombing. Mosquitos shot up German transport, and pounded barges on and bridges over the Seine.

Mosquitos were again out during the night, when they dropped 4,000-lb. bombs on Berlin. Other aircraft went on their nightly mine-laying expeditions.

Yesterday morning, our planes in great strength supported our ground troops. Their attacks ranged from one end of the battlefield to the other.

A large force of 500 American bombers flew to Peenemunde, and plastered the German experimental station there once again. Other Fortresses and Liberators bombed objectives in North-West Germany.

In Northern Italy, lighter aircraft struck at communication centres. Three railway yards in Southern France were attacked. Great damage was done in the 1,700 sorties to railway yards and rolling-stock.

NEW SOVIET OFFENSIVE TOWARDS LWOV

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The opening of another offensive, on the Ukrainian front towards Lwow, was announced by Moscow. Following three days of heavy fighting, during which massed forces of infantry and artillery, supported by tanks, have broken through, powerfully defended German positions on a front of 125 miles, this Polish stronghold is now only 50 miles away.

Advances of up to 30 miles have in places been made from the direction of Tarnopol. This First Ukrainian Army, under Marshal Koniiev, has also reached and crossed the upper reaches of the River Bug, tributary of the Vistula. This places the Northern flank of the Russian offensive only 15 miles from the railway junction of Brody, with a wide wedge being driven between Lwow and Kowel.

In Central Poland, Brest Litovsk is now gravely threatened by a rapid advance North of this stronghold, towards the railway leading North to Bialystok. The Russians are here within 15 miles of Brest Litovsk.

Despite violent German counter-attacks, the Soviet army has extended its bridgehead across the Niemen, and continues to advance towards East Prussia, at points between Grodno and Kaunas.

In the extreme North, the Second Baltic Army has crossed the Latvian border at a number of points. During yesterday's fighting, 2,000 German prisoners were taken in this sector alone.

"UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER"

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There was a lively debate yesterday in the House of Commons on the subject of "unconditional surrender" as it applied to the Germans.

Mr Stokes (Labour) said that the term, "unconditional surrender", made the Germans more fanatical and stubborn in their resistance; and Mr Aneurin Bevan added that there was no statesman with sufficient courage or vision to tell the German people what the future held for them.

Mr Beverley Baxter remarked that Mr Stokes and Mr Bevan had some of the characteristics of the "midnight hags" in "Macbeth": he said that they were always trying to stir up trouble for the Prime Minister. In his opinion, Germany must be made to drink the cup of defeat to the last drop, even at the expense of becoming a second-rate Power.

Mr Pickthorne said that there must be some distinction between the terms of the Armistice and the final Peace terms. Sir John Anderson, for the Government, said that much thought had been given to the terms of the decisive settlement. Later, at a suitable moment, a further statement would be made.

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THE EDUCATION BILL has been passed in the House of Lords. Lord Cranbourne said that it had been much improved by amendments. It now goes back to Parliament for final ratification before being placed on the Statute Book.

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