

Hodges Opens New Attack on Nazi Salient

Exploits Enemy Weakness Caused from Pressure by Patton

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PARIS, Jan. 13.—(UP)—Lt. Gen. H. Hodges' First Army smashed into the northeastern shoulder of the Ardennes salient in a new attack along a nine-mile front between Stavelot and Malmédy today, driving a spearhead 1,500 yards into the German defenses.

Maj. Gen. L. S. Hobbs' 30th "Old Hickory" division led the American drive southeastward into the network of roads through the neck of the menaced salient from which the Germans were withdrawing under the impact of a converging attack by three Allied armies.

An hour and a half after the Stavelot-Malmédy attack at 6:30 a. m., the 84th Infantry and Second Armored divisions struck east of La Roche, and 30 minutes later the 83rd Infantry and Third Armored divisions joined the concerted drive.

Exploits Enemy Weakness

American and British forces now were hammering the perimeter of the salient on an 80-mile front deriving from Malmédy around to the southwest and back to Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army sector on the right wing southeast of Bastogne.

Front dispatches said the new First Army attack was launched at 6 a. m. today. Patrol activity in the last three days showed that the Germans had weakened the shoulder of the bulge because of the mounting pressure by the First Army on the south, and Hodges was quick to exploit the enemy weakness.

His strategy, field reports said, was to keep hitting the Germans while they were reeling and off-balance from the pressure on three sides of their hard-won pocket in Belgium and Luxembourg.

Three-Fourths Mile Gain

First Army tanks and troops struck out from the Stavelot-Malmédy line in a drive which carried the possibility of slicing entirely across the base of the dwindling salient and cutting off the Germans fighting a rear guard action to the west.

The gains of about three-quarters of a mile along the nine-mile front were scored in the first few hours before the weakened German defenses recovered from the first impact of the push.

The enemy was caught by surprise apparently because recent efforts had been concentrated on withdrawing from the salient to escape the closing jaws of the multiplier set up by the First and Third armies.

Planes Support Drive

The best weather since the Allies regained the initiative in Belgium favored the new push. Allied planes in some force swarmed through the sunshine and pounded German concentrations and transport in the salient, and were supporting Hodges' drive.

The 30th Division halted the German winter drive last month and blasted through the enemy lines in the same sector where it now was attacking, crippling the Nazi push toward Liege.

German infantry and artillery went into action against the 30th Division after the surprise element wore off, and there were indications that resistance had stiffened considerably as the enemy rushed to bolster the defenses of the base of the salient.

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