

Americans Give Ground Before Armored Blows

British Advance in North; First, Third Armies Near St. Vith

By JAMES M. LONG

PARIS — AP — Three powerful German armored attacks have driven U. S. Seventh Army troops back about five miles to Weyersehem, 8½ miles north of Nazi-enslaved Strasbourg.

The Germans, reinforced with tanks, charged from the center of their newly-consolidated cross-Rhine bridgehead northeast of Strasbourg.

The fate of the Alsatian capital was apparently at stake as doughboys battled the furious punches, powered by up to 10,000 enemy troops. The Germans held a solid corridor on the Rhine's west bank to within seven miles of Strasbourg, and are 10 miles from the city on the south.

Hold Halton Line

Weyersehem is on the railway highway between Strasbourg and Haguenau. The new attacks appeared intended to undercut the American stand north of Haguenau forest, where Seventh Army men still hold their Halton line despite repeated assaults.

It was evident that the Germans had availing considerable armored reinforcements into striking positions on the new battlefield.

At the northern end of the Western front, British assault troops crossed the Maas (Meuse) river in Holland below Roermond unopposed Friday night, expanding the Second Army's push which is rolling German back on the Roer river line, 28 miles west of Düsseldorf.

British Take Town

Other British Second Army units fought 1½ miles deeper today into Germany's western panhandle, seizing Breberen, eight miles from the Roer river. A half-mile advance above Hoengen overran the village of Saefelien, late front dispatches said.

The German push above Strasbourg carried over the Zorn canal, which links with the Zorn river. A German bridgehead on the Zorn river was wiped out earlier by counterattacking Americans.

The first German attack, led by 10 tanks, opened late Friday, but was stopped cold with six tanks knocked out. In the deepening dusk, the enemy lashed out twice more with stronger attacks led by 17 to 18 tanks. The armor and infantry thrust five miles to the outskirts of Weyersehem. The battle continued today.

Close on St. Vith

Above the Seventh Army front, U. S. First and Third Army troops drove in upon St. Vith, highway stronghold in the dimming Belgian bulge, and advanced north of captured Diekirch, 20 miles to the south of Luxembourg.

British assault troops crossing the Maas by boat seized Stevensweert, seven miles southwest of Roermond, without opposition.

The crossing added about two miles to the seven-mile assault arc of white-camouflaged tanks and troops bulging into German lines within eight to 10 miles of the Roer river.

Although Stevensweert had been abandoned, it was still too early to tell whether the enemy was beginning a general withdrawal from the tip of his salient between Roermond and Grellekirchen in Germany, a front dispatch said.

Paratroops Take Town

Farther north, German parachute troops in a sudden assault seized Zetten, 2½ miles north of Nimwegen and four miles below Arnhem, but Allied counterattacks drove them back in night street fighting.

The German armor was strengthening, armored forces poured into the Rhine bridgehead above Strasbourg.

At least six pontoon bridges have been thrown over the river. Field Marshal Karl von Rundstedt had pulled virtually his whole tank force out of the Western front battalions except for his northwestern corner of France. Snowstorms arrested the movement.

Whether he was pulling the tanks back for repair, or racing to hurl them into a battle for Strasbourg, Alsatian capital, was a question.

German attempts to edge closer to Strasbourg's northern outskirts were broken up, although patrols

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