

FIGHT IN ST. VITH

PARIS—(AP)—The First Army fought house to house today in St. Vith, delivering the knockout to the Ardennes salient, while the disorganized and broken remnants of three routed German armies reeled back eastward under the most savage air onslaught of the war.

The Seventh Armored Division entered St. Vith at dawn. Its fall was imminent. Soon after sunup, American planes started their second straight day of relentless attack on the town.

The air force was giving ground troops close support and ranging far behind the lines all the way to the Rhine. Initial tabulations indicated an even greater toll of destruction than yesterday when 4,158 pieces of heavy German equipment were destroyed or disabled.

Figures for the Ninth Air Force attack force alone by 2:30 p. m. totalled 461 trucks destroyed and 947 damaged; 14 armored vehicles destroyed and 18 damaged; 62 railcars destroyed and 123 damaged. These figures did not include exploits of the 19th and 29th attack forces.

The air-ground teamwork was perfect, with the planes plunging their bombs into some enemy positions scarcely 500 yards from First Army tanks.

Northeast of St. Vith, Maj. Gen. Matthew Ridgeway's 18th Airborne Corps was having trouble keeping up with the fast pace of the enemy retreat. West of the town, the 30th Division neared Mandage and Braunland. The 84th Division driving up from the southwest pushed a mile and a half east of Belp.

The British Second Army to the north moved to within less than two miles of the Roer and the road junction of Heimbach, capturing nine towns within 22 miles of Dueseldorf.

Lt. Gen. George Patton's U. S. Third Army closed a wide flanking against the remnants of the Siegfried line opposite the Our river bounding Germany and Luxembourg. Twenty-one or more towns fell to the Americans, British and French—the latter moving up through deep snow into the Colmar pocket south of Strasbourg.

The Seventh Army front from Bitch to north of Strasbourg remained the one tender spot in the Allied front, and supreme headquarters touched on it gingerly when at all. (German broadcasts asserted that most of the Haguenau forest had been overrun and that the Seventh Army front had "collapsed.")

A First Army staff officer estimated the Germans had suffered at least 150,000 casualties and lost from 800 to 850 tanks since their offensive started in mid-December. Prisoners alone passed the 50,000 mark today.

Men of the 7th Armored Division, commanded by Brig. Gen. Robert Husbrach, entered the communications center just a month and two days after Field Marshal Von Rundstedt captured the place and thousands of Americans.

St. Vith is the hub of seven highways and two railroads. It is the Germans' last stronghold of any consequence in the last five to six mile strip of the bulge.

On the northern flank of the Ardennes, Third Army troops pulled to within a mile of Vianden and the German border.

Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch disclosed that elements of the French First Army were operating with his 7th Army in the nine mile area north of Strasbourg to Gembeheim. The Germans attacked twice Sunday night near Kilstet, six miles north of the city, and were beaten back with the loss of 300 prisoners.

French Poliss attacking the southern rim of the Colmar pocket cleared out the main suburbs of Mulhouse and reached Cernay. (Berlin broadcasts expressed concern that Gen. Eisenhower "appears to be doing everything to start a new western offensive" to synchronize with the Russian offensive.)

German Generals, Nazi Chieftains Meet About Crisis

AT THE GERMAN FRONTIER — Field Marshal Von Rundstedt, German generals from every front, and high Nazi party chieftains met at supreme German headquarters Saturday and decided to make every effort to defend the Oder line on the Russian front, private reports from Berlin said today.

The high command was said to have agreed if possible to try to save the Silesian industrial area even if Poland and eastern Pomerania must be abandoned.

It was not known whether Hitler attended the meeting.

The generals were said to have taken important decisions on the use of reserves from other fronts.

Details were unknown, but a report was received that withdrawal from northern Italy was under consideration again.

It was reported that two divisions recently in Norway appeared in the area east of Frankfurt on the Oder river. Transfer of other divisions from Norway was rumored.

In the Breslau area Silesian miners were drafted into the Volksturm. Some, it was said, refused to enter battle, and 400 of their relatives were arrested and about 100 hostages were shot.

The conscripts were reported protesting that they lacked ammunition.

Parachutists Deal Another Blow To Nazis In Norway

LONDON — (AP) — Norwegian guerrilla parachute troops have dynamited the railway bridge north of Trondheim in another blow to prevent the Germans from evacuating northern Norway, a message to the Norwegian government in London said today.

The white-clad fighters attacked the Roros railway north of Trondheim 24 hours after the Germans had repaired the bridge which had been blown up 15 days earlier.

The bridge was blown out the second time just as a German troop train was crossing and the engine and 17 coaches crashed into the ravine. Upwards of 100 Germans were reported killed and about 300 injured.

Berlin Says Hitler Sent Himmler, Best Generals To East

LONDON — (AP) — Adolf Hitler has sent Heinrich Himmler and "his best army commanders" to the eastern front with "full powers to make drastic decisions and to guarantee their execution," the Berlin radio announced today.

Himmler, Gestapo chieftain

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Fri, Dec 1, 2017