

30th Division Breaks Into Open Country— First Batters Out Of Bridgehead Lines— British Second Punches Out Big Gains

PARIS, Monday, Mar. 26.—(AP)—Three U. S. armies surged toward Berlin in break-throughs yesterday, with Third army tanks setting the pace in a 27-mile sweep that carried 40 miles beyond the Rhine and across a captured bridge over the river Main possibly 235 miles from the enemy capital.

The U. S. Ninth army broke out into the open through the enemy's Rhine line, crashed eight miles or more beyond the Rhine, was within reaching distance of a Berlin superhighway, and was but 10 miles from Essen, industrial heart of the Reich.

The U. S. First army burst the bonds of its Remagen-Epfel bridgehead between these two fronts in a general assault on a 33-mile front that ground nine miles east in a massive attack on the road to Berlin and was roaring on unchecked.

The Third army sprang at least two new crossings of the Rhine south of Coblenz and was nearing a junction with the First army forces beyond the river. They last were reported only 11 miles apart.

The British Second army heightened the power of the grand western front offensive by pushing eight miles north of the Rhine onto the German plain, hurdling one river barrier on the Berlin route and slashing across a super highway running to northern Holland.

The British cleaned out the stronghold of Rees.

While the Germans still were unable to deal a counterblow here, they made their first big blow at the First army's bridgehead in heavy force and were smashed back just before the Americans kicked off in their own drive.

With four firm lodgments along 200 miles of the Rhine's east bank from Rees to Worms, German resistance was disintegrating almost everywhere in this spectacular day of gains.

PATTON'S MEN CAPTURE MAIN RIVER BRIDGE

It was Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's famed Fourth Armored division which spearheaded the break-through along Germany's waist, and cut across the formidable river Main by capturing a bridge intact somewhere southeast of Frankfurt-On-The-Main.

(This might have been the bridge at Aschaffenburg, which is 20 miles southeast of Frankfurt and is about 38 miles west of the Rhine).

The Fourth was divided into two lightning-fast combat commands, and at last reports it still was going strong under a security blackout to keep its movements from the bewildered enemy.

A front dispatch said the surge beyond the Rhine was going even faster than Patton's drive up to the Rhine, and it was sweeping up German soldiers by the thousands.

Frankfurt itself was only 10 miles in front of the Fifth infantry division, which made the Third army's original Rhine crossing, and the industrial city was reported being evacuated tonight of its 546,649 population.

The Paris radio reported a high Nazi official had announced over the German radio that all civilians in the Ruhr between Dusseldorf and Dortmund would have to be evacuated immediately. That might include Essen, since the Dusseldorf-Dortmund sector embraces most of the Ruhr industrial valley.

The Third army from its Mainz bridgehead seized the German industrial city of Darmstadt.

The Third army's new Rhine crossings were made at several points between Coblenz and Boppard, which are seven miles apart.

One force had pushed two and a half miles inland, but a second struck a hard core of resistance and was held to a foothold little more than a mile deep.

All resistance crumbled in the face of the Fourth Armored division, the hard-hitting outfit that began the rout of German forces west of the Rhine with its crossing of the Moselle river.

Location of the bridge captured intact across the Main river was not disclosed, but it was a great military prize, for the Main was a major barrier.

Frankfurt-On-Main, a city of 546,000 population, evidently had been bypassed, as positions 40 miles beyond the Rhine would put the Fourth Armored division nearly 20 miles southeast of the city.

NINTH ARMY BREAKS OUT INTO OPEN COUNTRY

The Ninth was "out in the open" in what looked like a decisive breakthrough in the northern Ruhr, was almost within sight of a super highway to Berlin, and northward British Second army forces were racing eight miles inland across the Issel river—first barrier on the high road to Berlin.

Southward, the U. S. First army beyond the Rhine went over to the assault all along its 33-mile front, and with three-mile gains hammered as far as 13 miles east of the Rhine in a drive bursting out of the bridgehead.

The German high command declared the U. S. Third army had forced a new crossing of the Rhine on a 10-mile front six miles south of Coblenz and only 11 miles from a junction with the First army beyond the river.

The Third army, brushing past scattered resistance, expanded its Mainz-Worms bridgehead to a width of 12 miles. Knitting nine miles inland, it swept up 11 more towns—(Continued On Page 8, Column 1)

Allied Fliers Keep Raking Hun Targets

LONDON, Monday, Mar. 26.—(AP)

Mosquitos and American night-prowling planes joined in hammering Germany last night after German strong points and reinforcement centers in front of Field Marshal Montgomery's drive north of the Ruhr were pulverized in daylight by thousands of Allied planes.

The Mosquitoes hit Berlin for the 34th consecutive night. Striking from bases in England and the continent, American and British planes flew more than 4,500 sorties from dawn to dusk yesterday in support of the ground offensive and knocked out 6,000 enemy vehicles of all types.

PRAGUE FIELDS HIT

Flying Fortresses and Liberators of the Italy-based U. S. 15th air force struck German air fields near Prague from which the Germans have been operating against Russian troops.

British planes also ranged against enemy shipping yesterday and Friday night, the air ministry announcing effective attacks. Friday night on six U-boats, 12 freighters and three armed escorts in the western Baltic and in Dutch and Norwegian waters. Eight of the ships received direct hits.

Approximately 800 Britain-based RAF planes smashed Hannover, Osnabruck and Munster with well over 3,000 tons of bombs. Pilots reported all three cities were left in flames.

Two hundred and fifty U. S. Eighth air force Liberators escorted by an equal number of fighters attacked three underground oil storage depots at P. B. m. n., 12 miles northeast of Brunswick. Buchen, 25 miles east of Hamburg, and Hitzacker, 30 miles southeast of Hamburg.

Upwards of 1,500 other Eighth air force heavies blasted 16 scattered enemy air fields climaxing a four-day campaign during which at least 25 different German airdromes have been attacked.

SUPPLY ROUTES STRAFED

Continent-based Ninth air force medium bombers and fighter bombers were out with the dawn attacking German defenses and supply routes and by noon had made 1,100 trips with a loss of four planes.

Yesterday, with more than 10,000 Allied planes darkening the skies over northwestern Germany, total Allied losses were 35 planes including 28 heavy bombers.

S. C.-Led Troops Are In Crossfire

1945-03-26 30th Division breaks into open country PART ONE

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