

1st Army--
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13 deep and in effect clamped the great arsenal which is the Ruhr Basin into a vise with the 21st Army Group to the north.

First and Third Army elements were barely six miles apart in the Coblenz area. Much of Patton's maneuvers were shielded in a security blackout which kept the reeling Germans confused. Darmstadt, industrial rail center of 115,000, was the largest city captured by the Third yesterday. The fabled old university city of Heitelberg was outflanked and ripe for capture.

A light rain splattered the front this morning but it was neither base enough to interfere seriously with the armored onslaught nor to cancel out the aerial battering of Goemen flying through blazing villages and cities behind the lines.

At least six armies and, of them, 10 divisions had been identified as fighting beyond the Rhine.

Front dispatches gave this view of the various fronts beyond the Rhine:

Canadians on the Lower Rhine captured Bienen.

The British cleared the old walled town of Rees and took Speldrop to the north. A spearhead of Scottish troops gouged across the super-highway five miles east of Wesel and fought in places a good ten miles beyond the river.

The whole Lower Rhine bridgehead was expanded in all directions. The British 15th Army crossed the Rees-Hamminkeln military highway. Resistance suffered a bit from German reserves. The Esel River was bridged in at least six places. Traffic was crossing the Rhine in volumes exceeding schedules. Groen fell after a savage battle. So did Haffen and Mehr.

10 Miles in Ruhr

The 30th (Old Hickory) Division of the Ninth Army made a 10-mile penetration of the Ruhr, capturing Bruckhausen and Hunze.

The Ninth Army, commanded by Lt. Gen. William H. Simpson, also cut the Berlin superhighway. The 79th Division, on the right of the 30th, pushed three miles forward, took Heisfeld and then went two and a half beyond the town. The 79th also was fighting bitterly with German defenders in Wehoven, northeast suburb of Duisburg, a vast inland port of 431,000 roughly as large as Cincinnati. That was the only place where German tanks opposed the Ninth Army.

Hodge's First Army on the southern approaches of the Ruhr smashed down the only real Nazi counterattack in force yet mustered east of the Rhine and burst out to the east in the rolling, green hills with two forces of armor.

One armored column lanced southeastward and reached Vallerder, three miles northeast of Coblenz.

Patton's army, flanking the First to the south, entered Langen, six miles from Frankfurt, and reached the Waldorf vicinity, also six miles from that great industrial and traffic center.

The main bridge captured intact at Aschaffenburg is 17 miles southwest of Frankfurt.

The Fourth Armored (breakthrough) Division took the bridge shortly after its Texas commander, Maj. Gen. Hugh J. Gaffey, was promoted to a corps commander. Brig. Gen. William M. Hoge, late of the Ninth Armored Division, succeeded him.

The 68th Division advanced four miles to near Agolsbach, six miles north of Darmstadt, capturing Arheilgen, Wixhausen and Erzhuisen. Only 40 prisoners were taken in Darmstadt, the rest of its garrison had fled.

1945-03-26 30th breaks out PART TWO

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