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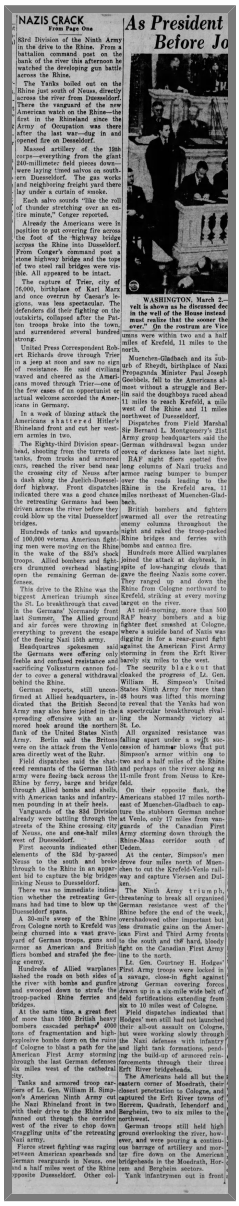

NAZIS CRACK

From Page One

83rd Division of the Ninth Army in the drive to the Rhine. From a battalion command post on the bank of the river this afternoon he watched the developing gun battle across the Rhine.

The Yanks boiled out on the Rhine just south of Neuss, directly across the river from Duesseldorf. There the vanguard of the new American watch on the Rhine—the first in the Rhineland since the Army of Occupation was there after the last war—dug in and opened fire on Dusseldorf.

Massed artillery of the 19th corps—everything from the giant 240-millimeter field pieces down—were laying timed salvos on southern Duesseldorf. The gas works and neighboring freight yard there lay under a curtain of smoke.

Each salvo sounds "like the roll of thunder stretching over an entire minute," Conger reported.

Already the Americans were in position to put covering fire across the foot of the highway bridge across the Rhine into Duesseldorf. From Conger's command post a stone highway bridge and the tops of two steel rail bridges were visible. All appeared to be intact.

The capture of Trier, city of 76,000, birthplace of Karl Marx and once overrun by Caesar's legions, was less spectacular. The defenders did their fighting on the outskirts, collapsed after the Pattion troops broke into the town, and surrendered several hundred strong.

United Press Correspondent Robert Richards drove through Trier in a jeep at noon and saw no sign of resistance. He said civilians waved and cheered as the Americans moved through Trier—one of the few cases of an opportunist or actual welcome accorded the Americans in Germany.

In a weak of blining attack the Americans shattered Hitler's Rhineland front and cut her western armies in two.

The Eighty-third Division spearhead, shooting from the turrets of tanks, from trucks and armored cars, reached the river bend near the crossing city of Neuss after a dash along the Juelich-Duesseldorf highway. Front dispatches indicated there was a good chance the retreating Germans had been driven across the river before they could blow up the vital Duesseldorf bridges.

Hundreds of tanks and upwards of 100,000 veteran American fighting men were moving on the Rhine in the wake of the SS's shock troops. Allied bombers and fighters drumped overhead blasting open the remaining German defenses.

This drive to the Rhine was the biggest American triumph since the St. Lo breakthrough that caved in the Germans' Normandy front last Summer. The Allied ground and air forces were throwing in everything to prevent the escape of the fleeing Nazi 15th army.

Headquarters spokesmen said the Germans were offering only feeble and confused resistance and sacrificing Volksturm cannon fodder to cover a general withdrawal behind the Rhine.

German reports, still unconfirmed at Allied headquarters, indicated that the British Second Army may also have joined in the spreading offensive with an armored hook around the northern flank of the United States Ninth Army. Berlin said the Britons were on the attack from the Venlo area directly west of the Ruhr.

Field dispatches said the shattered remnants of the German 15th army were fleeing back across the Rhine by ferry, barge and bridge through Allied bombs and shells, with American tanks and infantrymen pounding in at their heels.

Vanguards of the 83d Division already were battling through the streets of the Rhine crossing city of Neuss, one and one-half miles west of Duesseldorf.

First accounts indicated either elements of the 83d by-passed Neuss to the south and broke through to the Rhine in an apparent bid to capture the big bridges linking Neuss to Dusseldorf.

There was no immediate indication whether the retreating Germans had had time to blow up the Duesseldorf spans.

A 30-mile sweep of the Rhine from Cologne north to Krefeld was churned into a vast graveyard of German troops, guns and armor as American and British fliers bombed and strafed the fleeing enemy.

Hundreds of Allied warplanes lashed the roads on both sides of the river with bombs and gunfire and swooped down to strafe the troop-packed Rhine ferries and bridges.

At the same time, a great fleet of more than 1000 British heavy bombers cascaded perhaps 4000 tons of fragmentation and high-explosive bombs down on the ruins of Cologne to blast a path for the American First Army storming through the last German defenses six miles west of the cathedral city.

Tanks and armored troop carriers of Lt. Gen. William H. Simpson's American Ninth Army cut the Nazi Rhineland front in two with their drive to the Rhine and fanned out through the corridor west of the river to chop down straggling units of the retreating Nazi army.

Fierce street fighting was raging between American spearheads and German rearguards in Neuss, one and a half miles west of the Rhine opposite Duesseldorf. Other col-

As President Before Jo

WASHINGTON, March 2.—[illegible] veil is shown as he discussed dec[illegible] in the well of the House instead [illegible] must realize that the sooner the [illegible] over." On the rostrum are Vice [illegible]

umns were within two and a half miles of Krefeld, 11 miles to the north.

Muenchen-Gladbach and its suburb of Rheydt, birthplace of Nazi Propaganda Minister Paul Joseph Goebbels, fell to the Americans almost without a struggle and Berlin said the doughboys raced ahead 11 miles to reach Krefeld, a mile west of the Rhine and 11 miles northwest of Duesseldorf.

Dispatches from Field Marshal Sir Bernard L. Montgomery's 21st Army group headquarters said the German withdrawal began under cover of darkness late last night. RAF night fliers spotted five long columns of Nazi trucks and armor racing bumper to bumper over the roads leading to the Rhine in the Krefeld area, 11 miles northeast of Muenchen-Gladbach.

British bombers and fighters swarmed all over the retreating enemy columns throughout the night and raked the troop-packed Rhine bridges and ferries with bombs and cannon fire.

Hundreds more Allied warplanes joined the attack at daybreak, in spite of low-hanging clouds that gave the fleeing Nazis some cover. They ranged up and down the Rhine from Cologne northward to Krefeld, striking at every moving target on the river.

At mid-morning, more than 500 RAF heavy bombers and a big fighter fleet smashed at Cologne, where a suicide band of Nazis was digging in for a rear-guard fight against the American First Army storming in from the Erft River barely six miles to the west.

The security blackout that cloaked the progress of Lt. Gen. William H. Simpson's United States Ninth Army for more than 48 hours was lifted this morning to reveal that the Yanks had won a spectacular breakthrough rivaling the Normandy victory at St. Lo.

All organized resistance was falling apart under a swift succession of hammer blows that put Simpson's armor within one to two and a half miles of the Rhine and perhaps on the river along an 11-mile front from Neuss to Krefeld.

On their opposite flank, the Americans stabbed 17 miles northeast of Muenchen-Gladbach to capture the stubborn German anchor at Venlo, only 17 miles from vanguards of the Canadian First Army storming down through the Rhine-Maas corridor south of Cadem.

At the center, Simpson's men drove four miles north of Muenchen to cut the Krefeld-Venlo railway and capture Viersen and Dilken.

The Ninth Army triumph, threatening to break all organized German resistance west of the Rhine before the end of the week, overshadowed other important but less dramatic gains on the American First and Third Army fronts to the south and the hard, bloody fight on the Canadian First Army line to the north.

Lt. Gen. Courtney H. Hodges' First Army troops were locked in a savage, close-in fight against strong German covering forces drawn up in a six-mile wide belt of field fortifications extending from six to 10 miles west of Cologne.

Field dispatches indicated that Hodges' men still had not launched their all-out assault on Cologne, but were working slowly through the Nazi defenses with infantry and light tank formations, pending the build-up of armored reinforcements through their three Erft River bridgeheads.

The Americans held all but the eastern corner of Moedrath, their closest penetration to Cologne, and captured the Erft River towns of Horrem, Quadrath, Ichendorf and Berghaim, two to six miles to the northwest.

German troops still held high ground overlooking the river, however, and were pouring a continuous barrage of artillery and mortar fire down on the American bridgeheads in the Moedrath, Horrem and Berghaim sectors.

Yank infantrymen out in front

1945-03-02 Nazis crack PART TWO

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