

Warweek

Allies Return to France — Pulverize Nazi Europe in Drive to Rhine — First Phase Map of Assault from the West

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Here's How Our Half of the Iron Noose Was Tightened Around Adolf Hitler's Vaunted Fortress—Strangling His Festung Europa

A Play-by-Play Picture of Our Moves Since D-Day

Ringling the Reich!

WHEN the Allies hurdled the mighty Rhine this week, they closed one of the most difficult chapters of the war and set the stage for the final round in the battle to defeat Germany. American troops who swept across France after the St. Lô breakthrough reached the Siegfried Line on D plus 100. Yank First Army doughs entered the Rhineland's bastion city of Cologne on D plus 274 and hours later went on to spearhead the Rhine crossing.

The First Army's relentless thrust carried the ball to the river's west bank from which point Berlin lies some 290 miles away. While Allied forces prepare to broaden the breach over the great water barrier, it is a good time to take stock of the war on the Western Front.

In eight months the Allies have driven the Germans back from the sea walls of their crumbling European fortress into a steadily shrinking circle, in some points within the Third Reich's original borders. Here are the historic events which marked the Allied march from the beaches to the Rhine.

BATTLE OF THE BEACHES

The battle of the beaches actually began months before the troops poured ashore. The U.S. Eighth Air Force and the R.A.F. had been hammering relentlessly at the German fighter aircraft industry for almost a year to insure that the Luftwaffe would not be over the beaches on D-Day. For weeks before the landings, Kraut fortifications, communications and supply points also were pounded along the entire invasion coast.

The operation that began in the night and early morning of June 5 and 6, 1944, was undoubtedly the most complicated and difficult military accomplishment ever undertaken. It was carried out in spite of intense sea and land mines, submarines and E-boats, and a furious gale, which forced a one-day postponement of the jump-off.

The landing of airborne troops on the vastest scale ever attempted was the outstanding feature of that assault. About six hours before troops stormed Omaha and Utah beaches, the American 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions struck inland on the western flank of the beachhead zone, while the British 6th Airborne wave anchored the eastern flank.

The British 6th captured intact the vital bridges across the River Orne, northeast of Caen. It was their job to secure the eastern flank until sufficient forces were landed to prevent the Germans from pushing the vanguard of doughs back into the sea. The

The objective of the campaign that has brought the First Army over the Rhine, and the other Allied Armies to the Rhine's banks, is set by General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower. With reasonably good weather the Allies could expect to destroy, he said, "every German west of the Rhine and within the area in which we are attacking." The battle for the Rhine has carried the Allies into Germany's home ground. The enemy is steadily being forced back before the Allied ring of steel. Every advance into the Reich will be felt with increasing severity.

enemy threw heavy concentrations of artillery and tanks at them, but the Tommies held on.

The 82nd and the 101st dropped in the darkness near Sainte-Mere-Eglise and Caen and so completely crippled German communications that the Nazi High Command didn't know our forces were ashore until six hours after the landing. The 101st proceeded to its assignment, seizing causeways off Utah beach to allow the Fourth Division, landing at that point, to move in rapidly. The 82nd had the job of linking with the 101st to capture bridgeheads across the Merderet River so that infantry divisions landing later could travel fast across the Cherbourg Peninsula.

At H-Hour, parts of the First and 29th American divisions landed at Omaha Beach, and the Fourth Division came in on Utah beach. At the same time, parts of the British Second and Canadian First Armies hit the coast further east. General Montgomery, later to become a field marshal, declared in his pre-invasion instructions that the assault troops "must penetrate deeply and quickly into the enemy country." And that is exactly what they did.

By June 11 the fusion of the beachheads in Normandy was completed and a coastal strip some 60

miles long was held firmly in Allied hands. It was then possible to build up a force powerful enough to strike inland without the aid of supporting naval bombardment. Montgomery established his headquarters in Normandy on June 10 and was able to announce the next day that "we have won the battle of the beaches."

The landings cost us some 7,000 men, but about a quarter of a million reached the shore safely for further attack. Our surprise tactics were a complete success. The Allied forces gained numerical superiority while the Germans hesitated to commit their major forces, fearing these landings were not our major effort.

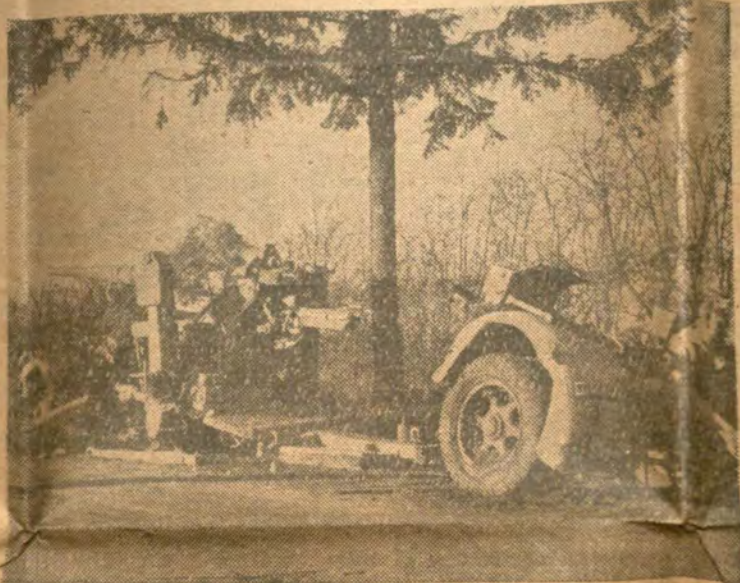
While British and Canadians continued to pin down large German armored and infantry forces on the left flank of the bridgehead, our First Army, under command of Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley, lashed westward from Carentan. By June 18 the First had knifed through the Cherbourg Peninsula, and the V, VIII and XIX Corps were proceeding with the job of mopping up the peninsula to the north. On the 25th, Cherbourg fell, providing the Allies with their first continental port.

In the meantime, the British and Canadian Armies had seized the Caumont-Caen road—one of the main German supply arteries—and, after bitter fighting, drove the Germans out of Caen on July 9. Caen was the hinge of the whole enemy line blocking our advance into Normandy.

HEDGEROW FIGHTING

The Americans, veering south from the Cherbourg Peninsula, were in the hedgerow country. The hedgerows in most parts of Normandy are so close together you can run from one to the other in four or five seconds—if nothing is in the way. There usually was; the dirt embankments and deep ditches at the bases of the hedges gave the Germans plenty of protection and a good field of fire. They were finally routed out, field by field, by mortars, machine-gun and BAR fire, as well as the famous hedgerow cutter that a GI designed during battle and Ordnance shops fashioned out of German beach obstacles.

The drive southward to St. Lô took most of July and was one



DEFEAT, destruction and death. That sums up the fate facing Hitler's troops; the way photos on this page symbolize body blows dealt Germans in campaigns from the Beaches to the Rhine. Shown are: (top) prisoners at St. Malo, (middle) wrecked SS mobile HQ, and former occupants.

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From Normandy Beaches...



D-DAY, 6-hour—and Allied troops make military history in the World's first successful landing against a manned, fortified and defended coast. Here, American infantrymen storm ashore under fire to take and hold the vital beachheads.



HEDGEROWS were the feature of bitter Normandy fighting which followed landings. This U.S. doughboy was snapped as he aimed at an enemy sniper from behind a hedge near Mortain, which was the scene of fierce infantry clashes.



PARIS greeted Allied deliverers on Aug. 25 when Second French Armored Division in victory parade down Champs-Élysées from Arc de Triomphe. Lurking East snipers fired on marchers and celebrating civilians, but city was soon quiet.



- A)** 6 to 11 June, landings effected, beachheads established and consolidated and a quarter of a million men with their supplies, arms and equipment poured into a coastal strip 60 miles long and up to ten miles deep.
- B)** 11 to 25 June, First Army, under Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley, breaks out of the beach area, attacks to the south, west of Carentan, then swings north to take Cherbourg, first major Continental port to fall into our hands. Bulk of reinforcements and supplies still coming in via the beaches.
- C)** 25 June to 19 July, The Hedgerows. St. Lô fell on 19 July and Avranches 22 days later.
- D)** 27 July to 8 Aug. The Breakthrough. Third Army gets loose and starts toward Paris. Rennes fell on 3 Aug. Laval and Le Mans occupied on 7 and 8 Aug.
- E)** 12 to 15 Aug. The Falaise Pocket. German troops who had counterattacked at Mortain and Avranches were cut off and German General Von Rundstedt ordered a general retreat from Normandy. American units, swinging around from the south, attacked the retreating Germans on their flank,

- encircling the greater part of the German 7th Army in an area of about 300 square miles.
- F)** 15 to 25 Aug. Southern landing, Paris falls. With the Germans in trouble in the west, new danger was provided by landings on the Mediterranean Coast from Cannes to a point west of Marseilles. Striking north, up the Rhone Valley, the Seventh Army took Lyons and Dijon.
- G)** 15 to 25 Aug. While the Southern Armies advanced, American and French troops reached and liberated Paris. Troops of the FFI had already cleaned out most of the Germans still in the city and the Second French Armored and Fourth American Infantry Divisions had no major fight in Paris.
- H)** 25 Aug to 15 Sept. Allied troops pushed on past Paris to reach the Siegfried Line on D plus 100. American Third and Seventh Armies lined up near Dijon, on 12 Sept.
- I)** 15 to 18 Sept. Brest falls. Troops of the Ninth Army, aided by FFI men, captured the Channel port of Brest on 18 Sept. Germans still hold Lorient and St. Nazaire as

- well as a coastal strip near Bordeaux.
- J)** 17 Sept to 21 Oct. Battle for Holland. While troops on the central sector regrouped and outfit up supplies and reinforcements, American and British troops attacked in the north, cutting in behind and capturing the great Belgian port of Antwerp and reaching Arnhem and Nijmegen, Holland.
- K)** 21 Oct. to 23 Dec. Metz and Strasbourg were taken and, in the north, the Ninth and First Armies pushed toward, then across, the Roer. A German counter-attack the Belgian Bulge, threatened Liege but was finally stemmed west of Bastogne where surrounded paratroopers and other elements fought an epic action.
- L)** 23 Dec. to 9 March. Through the Siegfried Line and across the Roer and Ertf Rivers, troops of the American First Army swept across the Cologne Plain, took the historic city and began cleaning up German troops left west of the River Rhine. The formal announcement that our forces had crossed the Rhine in strength was made from Lt. Gen. Courtney H. Hodges' headquarters on the night of March 8,

...To the Rhine and Across



AACHEN, first major German city to fall to U.S. troops, provided the blue-print for future assaults. Here, cautious doughboys work down shell-swept street, alert for "last-stand" resistance. City was battered into submission.



WINTER warfare tried stamina of Allies, proved troops of the "decadent democracies" could take it—and keep dishing it out. This Third Army patrol is shown moving into Belgian village of Lutrebois. Mud replaces snow now.



RIVERS didn't stop advance as United Nations Armies closed in for the kill. American doughboys crossed Moselle (shown above) in assault boats. Batis Plus bridges, were used at the Roer and the Ertf. Broad Rhine was next.



MUD is still an enemy, a quiet, dirty fighter who slows down armor, bogs trucks and jeeps and generally raises hell when our Army is on the move. Like the Kraut he aids, Gen. Mud can be beaten—but it takes brains and elbow grease to do it.

The two pictures shown above illustrate the RIGHT and the WRONG way to turn off a highway into a parking area. In the first picture, the work of an outfit with good MUD DISCIPLINE is shown. These boys knew that:

1. Water will run off in a ditch but collects in a pool if given a chance to do so;
2. Traffic, moving over soft shoulders and through

water, churns up mud which can slow up the operation of getting off the road and under cover.

Their answer—the answer of an outfit which is on the ball—was a few minutes work with pick and shovel, axe, saw and drift-pin maul. Their vehicles were able to roll off the road, across the log bridge and into the parking area without making a mud-pie big enough to satisfy a six-year-old.

The second picture indicates an outfit with an "Aw t'hell with it" attitude. OK for a couple of jeeps or maybe even a weapons carrier or a command car—but a Grade A headache for the driver of a 6 x 6 loaded down with rations or ammo. Hungry men, men with only one bandolier left, don't say "Aw t'hell with it." Ordnance

men, trying to doctor up a mudded-out truck, so she'll be fit to roll, don't say that. They have much stronger, much more picturesque and much more personally-pointed remarks to make.

This rustic bridge job is only one of the many ways in which the MUD ENEMY can be licked. Some others are:

Stay on hard shoulders if possible, don't take short cuts, don't track mud onto highways, keep vehicles clean, ditch stagnant water so it will drain off, fill in soft spots, mark bad spots to warn the man behind you, use four-wheel drive and don't dig in by spinning.

Here's a tip: Use the highest gear ratio, and the lowest motor speed you can without stalling, if you do get stuck.

Ring the Reich!

(Continued from page 3)

of the most stubbornly-fought periods of the war for the First Army. All of it was close fighting. While the infantry was struggling forward and taking heavy losses, the Army was being regrouped for the breakthrough to Avranches, at the hinge of the Normandy and Brittany coasts.

St. Lô, scene of bitter fighting by the 29th Division, fell on July 19. A week later the First Army broke through west of St. Lô and, on July 31, took Avranches. Then, turning east in the direction of Paris, it drove on toward Argentan, where it later became the southern flank of the Falaise pocket.

At the same time, the new U.S. Third Army, under Gen. Patton, was seen in on its right to exploit the breakthrough. Moving along with its right shoulder brushing the entrance to the Brittany Peninsula, the Third Army took Rennes on August 3. Third Army's VIII Corps advanced into the Brittany Peninsula while XX and XV Corps turned east to take Laval on August 7 and Le Mans on August 10. Then they swung north to Alençon.

Just before the breakthrough, Gen. Montgomery threw into the offensive the British Second Army and the newly-formed Canadian First Army under Lt. Gen. Crerar. The British Second Army attacked on July 31 from the Caumont sector and reached the river Vire on August 2. South of Caen, the First Canadian Army launched a very heavy attack in the direction of Falaise on the night of August 7-8. Meanwhile, the Germans launched a strong counter-attack at Mortain. Their aim was to cut Gen. Patton's army off from supplies. But the VIIth Corps stopped them cold in their tracks, with the 30th Division bearing the brunt of the attack.

THE FALAISE POCKET

The First Army was putting the heat on the Germans near Argentan. Patton's XV and XX Corps columns turned north from Alençon to help them. British and Canadian forces continued to push down from Caumont and Caen. The enemy was given no chance to disengage or regroup. His lines of communication were threatened and the forces that had counter-

attacked at Mortain and Avranches were cut off from further supplies. To raise the pressure, First Army's V and XIX Corps—which had finished cleaning up Cherbourg and the rest of the peninsula—were added to the enveloping movement.

On August 12, the Germans began a general retreat from Normandy. In a stirring order of the day addressed to all Allied soldiers, sailors and airmen, Gen. Eisenhower called upon them for a supreme effort to turn the opportunity they had created into a major Allied victory.

Lieut. Gen. Dittmar, the spokesman of the German High Command, later gave a frank summary of what happened: "While the German troops on the front sealing off the enemy lodgment area in northern Normandy were still locked in heavy fighting against the British and Canadians, the obvious thing happened. The Americans, further to the south, after effecting a breach, swung round with strong forces to the north against the rear of the German front so as to link up via Argentan with the Allies attacking from Caen."

The greater part of the German Seventh Army was encircled in a "pocket" some 300 square miles in area. The main escape routes for the Germans were the roads through Falaise and Trun to Lisieux. "The fleeting but definite opportunity for a major Allied victory" was seized by all the Allied forces who exerted increasing pressure on the enemy from all sides, narrowing the escape gap at Falaise and raining blow after blow from the air upon the formations who attempted to escape. On August 19, the gap was finally closed when the Polish Division of the Canadian First Army joined up with our forces in Chambois. Argentan had been captured on August 15, thus effectively sealing off the enemy escape routes. Only a small part of the German Seventh Army got away—and practically all of its equipment was destroyed.

SOUTHERN INVASION

Just at the point when the German situation in western France was most serious, on August 15, the Allies made a new landing along the Riviera, in southern France, from over 800 ships. French divisions with the Seventh Army liberated Toulon and Marseilles. The Army almost succeeded in cutting off the Germans in the Rhône Valley at Montélimar. After that, it pushed for Lyons and the Moselle River.

PARIS LIBERATED

While the Germans were busy trying to save what they could from the Falaise gap, another wing of the U.S. Third Army swung east to take Chartres, Orleans and Dreux. This great advance, combined with that of the British, eastward to Lisieux, once more outflanked the German forces escaping from the "Falaise Pocket," setting yet another trap for them. They now had no way of retreat other than across the bridgeless Seine River at its widest stretch nearest the sea.

The Second French Arm'd. Div. and the U.S. Fourth Inf. Div. headed for Paris and entered the city on August 25. The FFI had already cleaned up most of the city and the Germans surrendered the same day.

For all of our forces this was a period of vigorous pursuit and wide-open warfare, and many of our divisions were acting largely on their own. The enemy was running and we were going after him as fast as we could. The Transportation Corps and all the other supply services did a swell job of keeping supplies moving forward. They had to rebuild the roads and railroads as they went along, and they managed to do in about one month the supply job which they had expected to spread over three months. And they had terrific loads to carry. Everything in this war seems to be heavy. In fact, up to the end of the year, the supply services brought more than 61 million tons of material to our Army in this theater alone, in addition to providing quite a few millions of tons for our Allies.

SIEGFRIED LINE

The capture of Paris, the French capital, did not stop the Allied troops. They continued to press their assault against the fleeing enemy, with the British Second and the American First, Third and Seventh Armies sweeping across Belgium and France along a 500-mile front, and the Canadian First Army holding down the left flank on the Channel ports.

On September 12, the American Third linked forces with the Seventh, thus uniting the forces invading from the south and the west. The union took place near Dijon, about 80 miles from Belfort. On D plus 100, American troops hit the Siegfried Line. Shortly afterward, following the sealing off of the Channel ports, the British and Canadian forces chased the Germans across the Dutch border

Apparently, the German strategy was based on the teachings of Karl von Clausewitz, a long-since-dead Prussian general, who had maintained that Europe could be defended successfully against any invader as long as the defender held the ports. Consequently, the Germans attempted to hold, and, in fact, still are holding, some of these ports (St. Nazaire, Lorient, etc.).

HOLLAND INVASION

On September 17, the Allies attempted to turn the left flank of the whole German position by an advance through Holland. The idea was to get loose on the wide, open plain which runs to Hanover, Brunswick and Berlin. Three airborne divisions, one British and our 82nd and 101st, came down near Eindhoven, Nijmegen and Arnhem.

The main purpose of these airborne assaults was to secure the bridges crossing the various branches of the Rhine River and open up the way for an armored attack on the flat German plain. The Germans were surprised, but soon managed to reorganize, throwing heavy forces against the British armored column at the border and stopping it from getting through the corridor in time. The British airborne fought one of the heaviest and most bitter actions of the war, but finally had to withdraw. We held on to Eindhoven and Nijmegen, however, and cleared a large part of southern Holland.

By November 4, the Germans had been driven out of all of Belgium. The situation then saw the Canadian First Army and the Second British Army on the left flank driving the Germans northward into Holland. The new U.S. Ninth Army took up its position between the British and the U.S. First, facing the Roer River, 21 miles from Cologne. The U.S. First Army was in front of Coblenz, while the U.S. Third and Seventh Armies and the French First had pushed into the Saar basin and occupied Alsace. The accomplishments of the Allied troops since D-Day are rated as one of the outstanding feats of all time.

GERMAN BREAKTHROUGH

The Ninth and First Armies pushed on toward the Roer River. Metz, the mighty fortress of Central Europe, fell by direct assault for the first time since the days of knights in armor to the Third Army, which continued to advance from the Moselle River to the German frontier. The U.S. Seventh and the French First Armies broke

through at Saverne, seized Strasbourg and pushed northeast to the German border, entering Germany on December 7.

Then we took a terrific sock on the chin. On December 16, south of Liege and north and east of Bastogne, the Wehrmacht, under the leadership of Von Rundstedt, hit back. By December 23, it had achieved a breakthrough on the First Army front extending from just south of Monschau, in Germany to the area of Wiltz, in Luxembourg. Enemy forces, refreshed and vicious enough to shoot American prisoners without mercy, were all through the Ardennes Forest and were threatening the general line of the Meuse River.

Hardest hit was the front of the VIII Corps, which had been in position to the east and north of Bastogne. The front was dissolved and three American divisions were badly battered, but the enemy's apparent plan of piercing through to seize Liege and Antwerp did not succeed.

Gen. Eisenhower quickly regrouped our forces to squeeze the top and bottom of the bulge. The northern flank was placed under Montgomery and the southern was covered by Patton's Third Army.

In this situation, particularly along the First Army sector, "spec" numbers were forgotten, and MPs, QM troops and engineers threw down their shovels and brassards, grabbed rifles, and did a fine job of shooting Germans. These pick-up teams were of outstanding assistance to the regular infantry divisions who were holding off the assault.

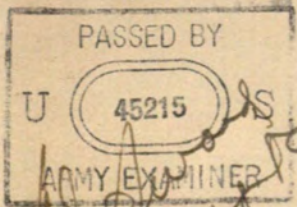
On December 19, the 101st Div. took up a position in Bastogne, supported by elements of the Ninth and Tenth Arm'd. Divs., and were soon surrounded by five German divisions. They resisted all German offers to surrender and heroically withstood a siege until they were relieved by the Fourth Arm'd. Div., which came up from the south on December 26.

The breaking of this siege marked the end of the high tide of the German attack, and the enemy proceeded to withdraw from the Ardennes under Allied pressure. By mid-January, the lost territory had been regained and Allied units were again punching all along the line. The big Russian offensive in January forced the Germans to pull some of their divisions out of our front to defend Berlin. The time for a knock-out blow from our side of the battle line was at hand. It came with the drive to the Rhine and the capture of Cologne.

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