

Debate in Saarland Costs German Forces 100,000 Casualties

Japan's Hidden Fleet Blasted by Carrier Planes

17 Warships Crippled, 600 Planes Wrecked in Inland Sea by Task Force

Guam, March 21 (AP)—Dispatches from famed task force 58 today boasted the toll of two days of daring air attacks on the Japanese fleet in its home bases to at least 17 warships and 600 or more planes wrecked.

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz said the raids Sunday and Monday on Kure and other bases in Japan's inland sea had crippled the surviving remnants of the Japanese fleet at a time when it was rushing repairs to meet an anticipated invasion of Japan itself.

The carrier-borne fleet of 1000 to 1400 U. S. navy planes broke off its attack late Monday. A Japanese communiqué said the task force, including its escort from the Fifth fleet, was "fleeing southward" toward the Marianas with Japanese aircraft in "close pursuit."

Radio Tokyo said, however, that there were "plenty of possibilities" the task force might renew its attack.

Nimitz's Report

Nimitz's communiqué on the attack listed 15 to perhaps 17 warships as damaged, but late radio dispatches from task force 58 said at least 17 and possibly more warships were left smoking and bomb twisted.

The toll included a minimum of seven aircraft carriers, probably all that remained in the Japanese fleet, and two or more battleships, dispatches said. In addition, six freighters were sunk and seven damaged.

The number of Japanese planes destroyed or damaged was revised by late dispatches from 575 to at least 600.

Japs Resist Desperately

"Japan's hopes of rebuilding her crippled airforce and fleet were smashed," United Press War Correspondent Lloyd Topping reported from the flagship of Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, commander of task force 58.

The Japanese resisted the defiant American challenge to their fleet with the heaviest and most persistent air attacks on the task force and its planes since the air-sea battles off Formosa last September.

(Continued on page 9, column 8)

Trap 30,000 Japs in Burma

Calcutta, March 21 (AP)—British troops struck out from newly won Mandalay today to mop up Japanese forces squeezed in the area between the ancient city and Meiktila, 75 miles to the south.

British forces hold Meiktila, cutting the southern escape routes for some 30,000 Japanese troops in central Burma and leaving the invaders only minor mountain trails eastward into Thailand.

Fort Dufferin, the last Japanese stronghold in Mandalay, fell yesterday to the British after 400 fanatical enemy defenders escaped, through allied siege lines at night.

British and Burmese civilian hostages were left behind by the Japanese. The hostages sent a long messenger carrying a Union Jack to allied headquarters and notified the British the enemy has fled.

The civilian internees reported they suffered numerous casualties during the allied aerial and artillery bombardments of the port during the weeks the Japanese held out. They said the Japanese often forced them to stand out in the open during the attacks.

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Red Siege Guns Batter Stettin From Altdamm

Moscow, March 21 (AP)—The first White Russian army, now in possession of virtually the entire east bank of the Oder from the Baltic to its confluence with the Neisse, crowded siege artillery to the very edge of Stettin today after wiping out the enemy's Altdamm bridgehead.

The menace to Berlin grew hourly as Marshal Gregory K. Zhukov probed many places along the river, seeking springboards for his next big attack east and northeast of ruined Berlin.

Mopping Up Trapped Nazis

Marshal Ivan S. Konev still is engaged in liquidating trapped garrisons in Breslau and Glogau on the upper Oder, but has moved additional units of his first Ukrainian army group to the Neisse line southeast of Berlin.

In East Prussia, Marshal Alexander M. Vasilievsky, for two years chief of staff of the red army, was staging the final kill in a dwindling German pocket along the coast southwest of Königsberg.

Disclosure that Vasilievsky had taken over the third White Russian army front after the battle death of Gen. Ivan Cherniakhovskiy was made in Marshal Stalin's order of the day yesterday saluting the capture of Braunsberg, one of two German bastions in the pocket.

4,000 Prisoners Taken

Vasilievsky's seizure of Braunsberg gathered 4,000 prisoners into the bag. That figure is expected to be more than duplicated when the nest of resistance in nearby Heiligenbeil is crushed.

Khukov took Altdamm with one fierce lunge after a series of hard actions had reached this suburb, less than five miles from Stettin proper. Front dispatches said an aviation engine factory with more than 1,000 new engines intact, an airplane assembly plant and a torpedo factory were among the booty.

As in Kolberg last week, Russian storm units found German dead hanging from makeshift gallows in Altdamm. An Evzvestia dispatch said an order from Hitler had been found, saying that troops leaving positions voluntarily should be shot on the spot. On bodies in army uniform were signs reading: "Hanged Because I Fought Badly." The corpses of executed civilians had a sign saying, "I Was Hanged Because I Evacuated."

Drive On Austria

Several enemy divisions were routed in Altdamm, but the number of prisoners had not yet been given.

Far to the south at the lower end of the eastern front, two or more Russian army groups were reported by Berlin to be driving toward the mountainous area of southern Germany and Austria where the Nazis, according to some reports, may make a final stand after defeat on the Reich's northern plains.

Telbin said Marshal Feodor I. Tolbukhin has hurled 200,000 of his third Ukrainian army troops and supporting armor into an offensive through northwestern Hungary, with advance forces already plunging beyond Tata, 10 miles southeast of the big Danube river stronghold of Komorom. This is the direct route toward Vienna.

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Yanks Storm Burning Iloilo Panay Capital

Manila, March 21 (AP)—American troops linked with strong Filipino guerrilla forces on Panay today in an offensive that burst into the suburbs of burning Iloilo swept through more than 250 square miles of the island.

The lightning strikes of Maj. Gen. Rapp Brush's 40th division, which threw the Japanese into disorder on Panay's south central plains, ripped through three key road towns and tumbled Mandurriao airdrome, with its big 4,500-foot runway.

The rapidly developing campaign on Panay, sixth largest of the Philippines, was disclosed in Gen. Douglas MacArthur's communiqué which also revealed new important gains on Luzon and continuation of neutralizing air attacks on Formosa and Japan's shipping lanes in the China Sea.

Brush's seasoned troops overran Japanese machine-gun points and small arms resistance in a two-pronged offensive that carved out a beachhead 18 miles deep and 14 miles wide on Panay's southern coast.

One column raced seven miles in one day along the hard-surfaced coastal road, captured the seven-span Carpenters bridge across the Iloilo river and stormed into the suburbs of the capital, already aflame from large fires.

Japs Destroy Capital

The extent of the blitz indicated the Japanese were attempting the same destruction of Iloilo and its 90,000 inhabitants as they did at Manila.

At the same time, Brush's second force spearheaded inland to seize Janiway, 18 miles north northeast of Iloilo. From there it made a sharp turn to the east, raced seven miles to the big road junction of Pototan and continued another eight miles eastward to capture Barotac Nuevo, 16½ miles northeast of Iloilo.

The drive inland enabled the American troops to join with Panay's strong guerrilla forces, said to be the best organized in the entire Philippines.

Patrol Activity On Italian Front

Rome, March 21 (AP)—Eighty army troops in the Adriatic sector improved their positions northeast of Ravenna with local advance in the Mezzano area yesterday. Otherwise activity along the Italian front was limited to patrol operations, allied headquarters said today.

Increased activity of Italian patriots in German-held northern Italy was reported and a 15th army group communiqué quoted a captured enemy officer as saying the Nazis often were forced to use a whole regiment to combat partisan attacks on supply dumps and troop movements.

Some enemy prisoners were taken in the action in the Mezzano area. A strong German patrol forced eight army troops to withdraw from a strongpoint northeast of Cuffiano.

On the fifth army front only scattered contact with the enemy was reported. Eight German tanks were killed in a clash in the central area south of Bologna while a number of prisoners were taken by another allied patrol.

One patrol penetrated into the vicinity of Monte Rumici but was forced to withdraw under a smoke screen when it encountered heavy enemy mortar and small-arms fire.

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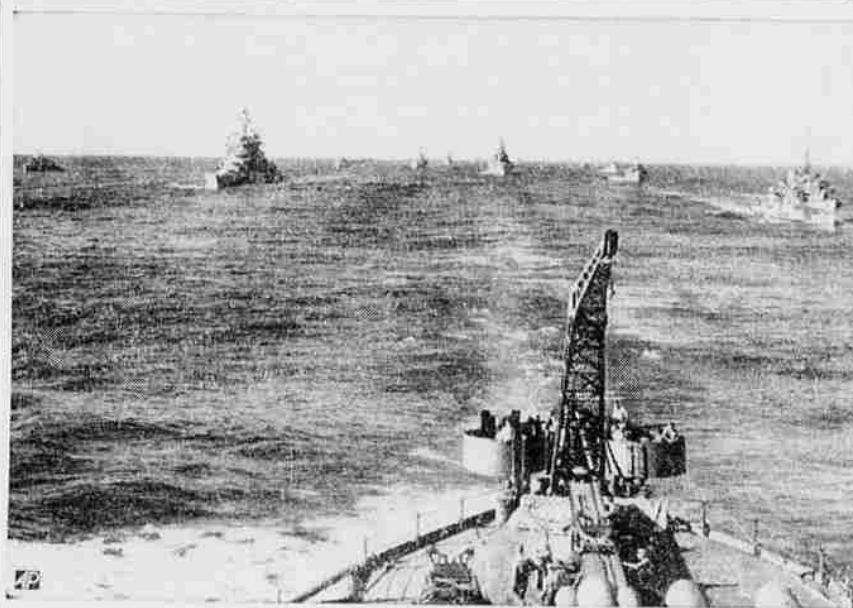
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Task Force on the Prowl—A mighty U. S. navy task force steams out to deal another lethal blow against the Japanese in the Pacific ocean area.

Reich Blasted from Dawn To Dark by 7000 Aircraft

London, March 21 (AP)—Allied air forces ripped Germany from dawn to dusk today with explosives from 7000 warplanes, including 2000 heavy bombers which unleashed one of the greatest coordinated attacks of the war. The four-engine bombers from Britain attacked the Reich in relays.

Soviet Discards Turkish Treaty

Moscow, March 21 (AP)—Soviet Russia last night denounced her 1925 treaty of friendship and neutrality with Turkey and declared "serious improvements" were needed in the pact.

"Admitting the value of the Soviet-Turkish treaty for the purpose of upholding friendly relations, the Soviet union nevertheless considers it necessary to state that as a result of deep changes occurring, especially during the second World War, this treaty does not correspond any longer with the new situation and it is necessary to make serious improvements," said an announcement from the Soviet commissariat of foreign affairs.

The 20-year pact would have been automatically renewed on November 7 this year unless denounced six months beforehand. An Izvestia editorial said that "in the present war there have been individual moments when relations between the Soviet union and Turkey could desirably have been better."

The newspaper made no reference to Turkey's recent declaration of war on the axis. The previous diplomatic rupture between Turkey and Germany in 1944 was cooled at by Russian newspapers at the time. They held that it was a disguise behind which close connections were maintained between Ankara and Berlin.

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Yanks Finish Off 2 Nazi Armies Patton's Troops in Ludwigshafen Army in New Thrust on Ruhr

Mopping Up Stage Reached in Saar and Palatinat Pockets—Remagen Bridgehead Extended Over 3 Miles in Drive Toward North

Paris, March 21 (AP)—The Third army, continuing its spectacular race which has turned the German stand in the Saar and Palatinat into a disastrous debacle at a cost that may amount to 100,000 Nazi casualties, smashed into the city of Ludwigshafen today.

The same armored division which has played an anonymous role in the current drive from the Moselle, dashed into Mannheim's twin city which is one of the greatest chemical producing centers of Germany.

Mannheim, just across the Rhine from Ludwigshafen, is 160 miles from Munich in the heart of southern Germany and 75 miles from the starting point of the offensive.

But as elsewhere Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's men found the Rhine bridge there had been demolished. The structure which connected much-bombed Ludwigshafen and Mannheim was one of the most imposing along the Rhine.

Two German armies, the First and Seventh, either were wiped out or doomed except for scattered elements.

At supreme headquarters, it was estimated that the swift Third army of Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., alone had herded an estimated 30,000 Nazis into prison pens in 48 hours and Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch's Seventh army closed new traps which might boost the overall total of captured in the whirlwind campaign to 75,000.

The Seventh army, driving up from the southern bases of the Saarland and Palatinat, did not even tabulate its prisoners beyond the first 6000.

The U. S. 78th division drove north of Bonn in the Rhine bridgehead today, and seized more than seven miles of the southern bank of the Sieg river extending from the Rhine to the town of Niederpleis.

Cities such as Saarbrücken, Kaiserslautern, Worms, Voelkingen, Zweibrücken, Homburg and St. Ingbert toppled like ten-pins. The hard hitting Americans—27 divisions in all or nearly 400,000 men—were advancing steadily.

33-Mile Escape Gap

The German hold on the west bank of the upper Rhine was narrowed to a 33-mile escape gap between the Karlsruhe and Ludwigshafen areas and it appeared doubtful whether the wounded Wehrmacht could scrape together enough men from the defeat to man properly the Valtalla line east of the river.

The Germans blew their last remaining bridges on the Rhine leaving stragglers west of the river to death or capture.

Except for a 30-mile stretch between Pirmasens and Lauterbourg where the Germans clung to fragments of the Siegfried line, the enemy was in complete rout. Nazi forces were surrounded in three places and threatened with imminent encirclement elsewhere.

The large Saarland city of Neunkirchen (40,500), where steel and iron works and coal pits around, was believed to have fallen, although there was no specific word.

Bridgehead Lengthened

The first army fighting east of the Rhine lengthened its bridgehead to 25 miles in a push along flat country leading 12 miles to the southern limits of the Ruhr—Germany's greatest arsenal area.

The U. S. ninth, British second and Canadian first were massed in mighty strength on the lower Rhine opposite the Ruhr, where Gen. Eisenhower said last night "will become a deathtrap." The U. S. 13th and the allied first airborne armies were in reserve, so far as was known.

At least four racing columns of Patton's third army curled in a tightening arc before Ludwigshafen—Mannheim, twin industrial cities on the Rhine with a total population of 427,900.

Patton's artillery already was shelling German troops in some places in the Valtalla line beyond the Rhine.

More than 7,000 allied warplanes raked the Reich and concentrated on targets in and around the threatened Ruhr as if isolating it for capture or a seal-off.

2000 Planes Used

(Continued on page 2, column 6)

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