

THE STARS AND STRIPES

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Berlin Ahead

AS Yank ground troops pound through the inner defences of Cherbourg, with the valiant support of our air and naval forces—it appears timely to review the brilliant Allied progress on other fronts.

Down in Italy Gen. Mark Clark and his Fifth Army boys—18 days after the fall of Rome—continue their swift advance with their comrades of the Eighth Army. Slogging through thunderstorms in tepid heat, picking their way nimbly through minefields—past dangerous ambushes, they are blasting the heels of Kesselring's battered forces. Leaving captured Perugia and Elba in their wake, the Fifth Army is pushing northward beyond Grosseto near the west coast as the Eighth Army trudges down the road to Florence.

Kesselring, fighting one of those "masterly disengaging movements" is evidently resigned to a steady retreat which may continue until he reaches the Po Valley. That is, unless he stops at the partially prepared defenses before Florence. A Po line of defense would be longer than one on the Peninsula, but it would be immune from sea attacks and present obstacles of terrain to the armored attackers. But wherever Kesselring stops, the superiority of the Allies will gradually push him to eventual defeat.

On the Russian front the Red Army, with guns blazing, is pushing beyond newly-captured Viborg, the great Finnish port on the Karelian Isthmus. If the rapid march over rough terrain and the renovated Mannerheim line continues, observers predict that troops may be on the outskirts of Helsinki, the Finnish capital, in three weeks. As in the Italian campaign, the attackers are winning with superiority of men and materials.

From the Pacific come further reports of our mounting power as contrasted to the reclining reserves of the enemy. The London Times reports 60,000 Japs isolated around Wewak, in New Guinea; others marooned in New Britain and the garrison at Saipan Island in the Marianas hard-pressed by an AEF force. Under these conditions it is questionable how long the Japs can defend its island outposts which are being steadily outflanked by our fleets which are collectively superior. Added to the above are similar encouraging reports from Burma.

There is still a long hard pull ahead on every front, but the seeds which will bear the fruits of "full victory" envisioned by Gen. Eisenhower are too much in evidence not to take a most optimistic view of the advance down the road to Berlin.

Valorous MPs

IN the course of a GI's army career the military police gradually take on the appearance of Satan's busy boys; but tradition has been broken in Normandy. When the foot sloggin' doughboys hit the shores of France, thousands who followed the first wave found MPs there ahead of them.

The military police were directing traffic and aiding the wounded, for the beaches were busy—and unhealthy. German 88s supported by heavy mortar fire were making it as hot as the bright end of a blow torch for Allied traffic.

Now, when American soldiers talk about guts, the military police who worked the beaches are near the top of the list. For it was the MPs who suffered the highest casualties in the early assaults, numbers considered.

And when they speak of the army's cops they mention one name first. It's that of Lt. Charles M. Conover, who, wounded in the shoulder as he left his landing craft, carried on for three hours doing a first-class job of organizing traffic and refusing to quit until he collapsed from loss of blood.

So next time you feel inclined to wise crack about the MPs, pause first and salute those courageous few who are taking everything Jerry can throw their way and who are in there doing a tough job without complaint.

Deserved Tribute

GEN. H. H. Arnold, CG of the USAAF, has sent the following message to all Army Air Force units in the United Kingdom and northern France:

"Your sustained maximum efforts leading up to and during the operation against the European Continent have permitted our surface forces to operate unhampered from enemy air opposition and have paved the way for them to move forward with greater speed. This, together with direct blows against Germany itself, has shortened the remaining time for defeat of the enemy.

"I regret that I cannot visit every unit to commend you and your commanders personally for the energy, aggressiveness and teamwork you and they have displayed in accomplishing your missions.

"The job is not over. I wish you all good fortune in keeping the German Air Force subjugated and carrying on until the final collapse of the Axis."

Hash Marks

It doesn't pay to be a smart-aleck, moans T/Sgt. Wm. Tkachuck. A six-year-old kid gave him the old gum chum routine; so he says, "Got a sister, mister?" The kid smiles and says, "Yes." Then he runs into the house and comes out with his sister—a sweet young thing—four years old, to be exact. Price of making a smart retort: TWO sticks of gum.

* * * * * Paging Superman! We've got a new job for you. Come on over to the ETO, stand in the Channel, grab these robot



planes as they come over, turn them around and send them back toward Berlin!

* * * * * English Hospitality. During the recent flying bomb activities this sign appeared on the gate of a house for the benefit of passers by, "If gunfire is heavy, please do come in."

* * * * * A lieutenant we know was told by an RAF man that when the Royal Air Force was formed the Stationery Office was told to prepare a special edition of the King's Regulations by altering the word "soldier" to "airman" wherever "soldier" occurred in the book that was the basis of Army discipline. This was done—and even now, the RAF fellow claims, one paragraph of the RAF version reads: "No airman may sleep more than 100 yards away from his horse."

* * * * * Speaking of initials, you can shed a few tears in your beer for Capt. James A. Park and his wife, who have the same initials, JAP. They are not having any luggage or towels or other personal items monogrammed until hostilities cease, at least.

* * * * * Navy lingo is right out of this world. On a Continent-bound LST loaded with Air Corps personnel, a sailor announced

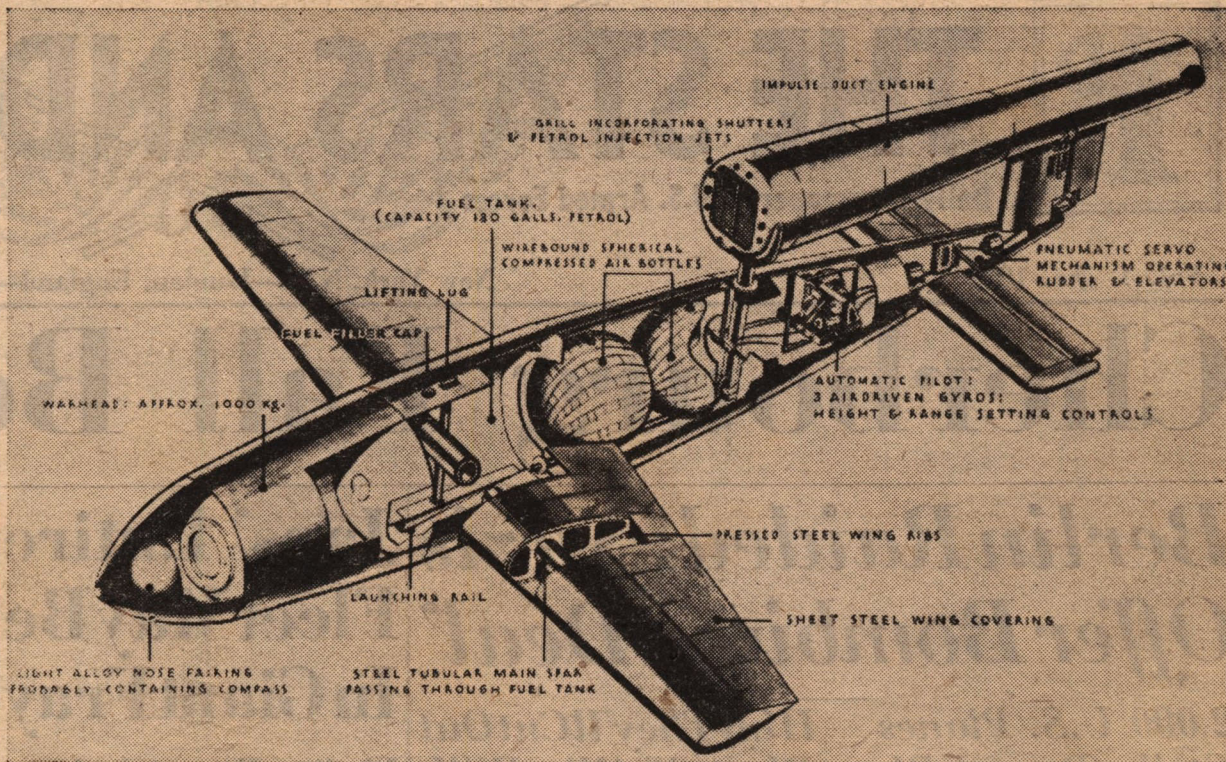


proudly, "Me, I got a brudder in duh air corps. He's a stern gunner on a Flying Fort!"

* * * * * Incidental Information. Sgt. Samuel Worley claims there's a town in Pennsylvania that every GI should visit after the war. It's Dry Run, Pa.

J. C. W.

Here's What Makes the Flying Bomb Tick



The composition of the flying bomb which Germany has been sending against southern England is pictured in the above drawing. The pilotless plane carries a bomb load of 2,200 pounds.

RAF's Fastest Plane Tackling Robots

By William Granger

United Press Correspondent

A FIGHTER BASE, June 21—This is what it is like to shoot down a robot plane. It was told to me by Wing Commander R. P. Beamont, commanding officer of a wing of Tempests, the RAF's latest machine and the fastest fighter in the world.

"The robot planes frequently fly between 2,500 and 3,000 feet during the day, but sometimes come in a little lower at night," Beamont said. "When we attack them in daylight we have to look for them against the sky and then make a climbing attack.

"At first we attacked from a range of 400 yards, but now we find it is quite safe to fire at them from even 100 yards. They usually blow up, but hits from the Tempest's cannon will often knock bits off them and upset the gyro, and then the robot crashes.

"Sometimes when the gyro has been damaged they will do the most wonderful aerobatics all over the sky before crashing. "When you make your attack, it is like firing at a large flame with wings sprouting from it. Your cannon scores hits and suddenly there is a big red flash and you find your plane covered with blazing oil. There is a terrific jerk and you often find yourself coming through upside down."

Beamont said there were two types of robot planes, the square-winged type and a new, faster one that has been used recently with swept-back wings. The

latest flying bomb is slightly larger than the other.

They are launched in France by catapult. The engine is a simple jet and has only one sparkplug, and it is this that makes it sound like a two-stroke engine. When the motor starts to peter out the robot covers about five miles before hitting the ground.

There is a clock apparatus aboard most of them which may be intended to make them blow up after a short interval if they land without exploding.

When the robot planes were first used against this country Tempests were given the job of helping to intercept them and shoot them down.

The flying bombs are too fast for any but the fastest aircraft to overtake, and it was decided that the Tempest was one of the best machines for the job.

This strategy has been so successful that today a good proportion of the number of pilotless aircraft being sent over is shot down.

Valognes Is 'Captured' By Two Yanks in a Jeep

By William Springer

Reuter Correspondent

WITH AMERICAN FORCES IN NORMANDY, June 21—A jeep driver and a lieutenant with a rose dangling from his mouth calmly captured Valognes—the largest town the Americans have taken in France—without unslinging their carbines.

There was not a shot or a sign of life except two old women, a cat and an empty canary cage when Valognes fell to a two-man American patrol—Lt. David L. Rooks, from Zion, Illinois, and his jeep driver from Akron, Ohio, Pvt. John J. Szejek.

It was as eerie as a tomb when I entered Valognes, a few hundred yards behind them.

Rooks and Szejek did not fire a single shot. They also grabbed 40 German workers who were sent out by a French farmer to meet the Americans and to surrender.

Szejek started them to work building a bridge to replace a knocked-out span.

Rooks walked into the town at 10 AM yesterday chewing the stem of a rose given to him by a farm woman in the outskirts.

He and Szejek walked to the middle of the town without seeing a person, and suddenly Rooks stopped and shouted his loudest, but there was no answer except a ringing echo.

The town is a sea of wreckage—easily the worst-mauled town the Americans have yet captured in France, even worse than Montebourg, St. Sauvaire and Trevières.

There is no building unhit, and most are now mere gaping holes where American blockbusters landed.

There is one portion of the Rue Carnot, one of the principal streets, where there is no street any more—just a series of great bomb craters, some as much as 15 feet deep and 30 feet wide.

As we walked down the streets there was no sound except the heavy tread of

our field shoes and an eerie banging from an occasional wind-blown shutter.

The only life was a cat I saw sitting on a fully-set table in a shattered home, and two aged women as I left the town, who shouted with tears in their eyes, "Merci, m'sieu, merci."

Finds Town of Tilly Dead—a War Casualty

By Marshall Yarrow

Reuter Correspondent

TILLY-SUR-SEULLES, France, June 21—This little village southeast of Bayeux on the Seulles River is dead, literally killed in the war.

It is of strategic importance because it is the center of a fine road network, and there is a bridge leading eastward across the Seulles River into territory the Germans now hold.

It will be useful in the Allied plan of attack in the days to come, but as the center of civilian life in this fruitful region of Normandy it is no more.

Tilly is shattered. Nothing moves except an occasional sapper removing mines, and he goes about his work silently. All the buildings have been unroofed and the walls are blown out. Debris litters the streets, and has not been moved because of the danger of booby traps.

I talked to the colonel of a British regiment which took Tilly Monday. He was nesting deep in his muddy slit trench, for the enemy are only half a mile south of Tilly on the crest of a hill. Frequent mortar shells are noisy reminders of his nearness.

"We had been in the outskirts of Tilly for some time," he said, "but we couldn't quite stick. Then we started infiltrating from both sides. They didn't seem to like this and left in a hurry. This time they have not come back."

At the main corner I met a civil-affairs officer looking dolefully about.

"I'm here to administer to the civilians, but I can't find any to administer to," he complained.

Air Force Briefs

WHEN it comes to leading a charmed life, 2/Lt. Albert A. Saleeby, of Brooklyn, doesn't have to take a back seat for anybody. A Fortress navigator, Saleeby has narrowly escaped serious injury twice in as many missions. Over Leipzig, flak knocked off the propeller of his No. 3 engine and the severed blade knifed a three-foot gash in the fuselage, barely missing Saleeby. Then over Dessau, a 20-mm. shell from an attacking fighter rammed through the nose of Saleeby's plane and neatly sheared off a heel from his flying boot. Except for the boot casualty, Saleeby came back intact.

* * * * * Drinks were on the house for members of a high-scoring squadron in Col. Donald W. Graham's P51 Mustang

group, visiting a pub near the fighter base. Footing the beer bill was S/Sgt. John W. Brady, of Pittsburgh, now a tail gunner on a Marauder. He met his former pals by coincidence on a recent liberty run. He was formerly an armorer in the outfit.

The crack Mustang squadron has bagged 103 enemy aircraft in less than four months, bringing the group score to 253½ planes destroyed in the same period.

* * * * * TWO trips to Berlin have sent the Fortress group commanded by Col. George L. Robinson past the 150-mission mark.

One of the veteran B17 groups in Britain, Robinson's outfit has dropped thousands of tons of bombs on German targets. Several thousand plane sorties have been flown from its base.



"But I can't help it, honey! We gotta take 'em along now, wherever we go!"