



Henderson Daily Dispatch



THIRTY-FIRST YEAR

LEASED WIRE SERVICE OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HENDERSON, N. C., TUESDAY AFTERNOON, DECEMBER 26, 1944

PUBLISHED EVERY AFTERNOON EXCEPT SUNDAY

FIVE CENTS COPY

GERMAN WEDGE 40 MILES DEEP NEAR MEUSE

YANKS CAPTURED IN GERMAN COUNTER-OFFENSIVE



TAKEN FROM A ROLL OF FILMS found on a captured German, this photo dramatically tells the story of the turn in the tide of battle through which thousands of American soldiers are being taken prisoner. Here a long line marches to the rear in Belgium, passing one of the big Nazi Tiger tanks as it rolls past during the counter-offensive which the Germans have launched. Signal Corps Radiophoto. (International Soundphoto)

American Black Market In France Halts Drive

Paris, Dec. 26—(AP)—One white and one Negro soldier from North Carolina were among 14 soldiers convicted of black market operations in connection with the diversion of American supplies into the illicit French channels. Private Turner Harris, Negro, of 120 Pender street, Wilson, was sentenced to 30 years for allegedly going AWOL and supporting himself for two months in a Paris hotel on proceeds from black market operations. The white man, Private Homer B. Cardwell, 907 Pearl street, Durham, was given 25 years on charges of being AWOL, selling government property and impersonating a non-commissioned officer.

Paris, Dec. 26—(AP)—A high ranking American officer predicted today that many "slimy" details would be unfolded in February when the army brings to trial another batch of United States service men accused of selling cigarettes, gasoline and other military supplies to the French black market. "I know of tanks sitting empty without a drop of gasoline while soldiers behind the lines peddle it by the gallon," the officer said as he discussed thefts and hijacking activities for which scores of soldiers already have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from one year to life. His statement indicated that new light might be shed upon the extent of American soldiers' participation in the black market, although many officers have denied that the loss of supplies of gasoline, estimated at several hundred thousand gallons a week, has affected the current military situation. They pointed out that the losses have occurred for the most part many miles behind the battle line and that fuel supply levels in combat areas are high. Black market operations have been so extensive that they are said to have caused the recent breakdown of the cigarette supply for the Allied forces by funneling millions.

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Czechs Hoping To Avoid Confusions When Liberated

London, Dec. 26—(AP)—When ever the hour of liberation strikes for the Czechoslovak republic, President Edvard Benes and the Czechoslovak cabinet are ready to set in motion a machine which they hope will avoid the dualisms and conflicts besetting some other governments in exile and their sorely tried peoples. First and foremost, they feel resistance movements at home should have the principal say. The Czechoslovak cabinet in exile, therefore, will resign as a body the moment an independent Czechoslovak state can resume functioning. Only Benes himself, temporarily will retain his powers, functions and authority, but only for constitutional reasons. He will act as the legal link between the Czechoslovakia pre-Hitler protectorate and the future. As such, he will appoint a new cabinet composed almost exclusively of resistance movement representatives.

Six German Escapees In Custody Now

25 Gain Freedom In Celebration Of Western Victories

Phoenix, Ariz., Dec. 26—(AP)—A Nazi celebration of western front prisoners was broken up at Papago Park and prisoners swept here shortly before 7 A. M. today, reported Colonel William A. Holden, commandant, has arrested. Holden said army guards had to resort to force in ending a demonstration Saturday by a "complete hundred" prisoners in one of the camp's compounds. Only six of the escapees, all subordinate officers and men, have been apprehended. The ranking member of the group is Lt. Col. Jergen Wattenberg, 43. Many of these at large speak several languages. Preliminary investigation, Holden reported, treated the sailors' request by sealing an eight-foot double wire-barbed fence. "We hesitate to say exactly what happened until the investigating board of officers reports," Holden reported. The escape served to make public a war rumor long current in Phoenix that Guenther Prien, Germany's famed U-boat commander, was prisoner here. Prien, decorated by Hitler for sinking the British battleship Royal Oak at Scapa Flow in 1939, did not escape, said Major Eugene Tays, in answering a newspaper inquiry.

Large Nazi Army Pinned In Budapest

Encirclement About Hungarian Capital All but Completed

Moscow, Dec. 26—(AP)—Eight to ten divisions of Germans and Hungarians were reported trapped in Budapest today, cut off from escape except by air, or possibly one road usable only by night—as the Red armies drove to the western city limits in a 15-mile advance. The encirclement of the Hungarian capital was virtually completed, and front dispatches said Soviet guns had begun a systematic shelling of two airports still held by the enemy, while Sturmoviks and medium bombers threw incendiary bombs over the stricken capital. The greatest strife was in full view of Russian units that yesterday drove to the Juty hills of Buda, occupying the city limits of Buda, western half of the Danube-straddling capital. The Germans were reported to have grabbed all available automobiles and buses and put them under strict military command, ordering the Hungarian drivers to stand by with their belts and all the warm clothing possible. This led to the speculation that large enemy units might try to make a break for it. The last narrow escape corridor that appeared still open to them, on the basis of front line dispatches, extended 19 miles northwest from the capital to Esztergom on the southern bank of the great Danube bend. The ring around the capital was completed in all other directions of dispersal ranging from two miles on the west to about nine miles on the east. Today's communique also disclosed a continuing Red army surge westward in southern Czechoslovakia in the vicinity of Leva, a drive along the route to Vienna and Bratislava, now less than 98 miles and 65 miles distant, respectively. But the war bulletin emphasized the squeeze on Budapest, declaring that in the last five days of fighting west and southwest of the capital the Russians had slain 14,000 German and Hungarian soldiers.

Air Forces Are Active On Germans

London, Dec. 26—(AP)—In strong support of American troops battling the German offensive, U. S. bombers and fighters for the fourth day attacked enemy communications and supply lines. Headquarters of the U. S. strategic air force announced that the targets included two railroad yards in the Coblenz area and bridges and rail lines between Coblenz and Bonn. The communique said 150 Liberators and Flying Fortresses, accompanied by Mustangs, attacked the targets.

Jap Plane Attacks Fail Against Yanks

Washington, Dec. 26—(AP)—Navy Secretary Forrestal said today Japanese air attacks have failed to disrupt American plans for continued heavy offensives. Acknowledging that naval forces in the Philippines area have suffered some damage, he said announcements are delayed because "we do not wish the Japanese to know what ships they have hit, or to what extent vessels have been injured, nor how soon they may be back in action." "This necessary silence," Forrestal continued, "has left the field clear for the Japanese to make fantastic claims, perhaps fishing for information." "Perhaps the best way to assess the result of Japanese air attack against our fleets since the second battle of the Philippines Sea is to ask whether those attacks have disrupted our plans for future action. They have not. The fall of Leyte and our landing on Mindoro are a concrete demonstration that they have not." Forrestal's statement, reviewing the course of the Pacific war, pointed also to carrier plane raids on Luzon, and amphibious attacks on Ormoc and "our troops' freedom from surface bombardment on Leyte and Mindoro as evidence the Japanese campaign has failed." "In spite of all the Japanese have been able to do with their navy and with their land-based aircraft," he continued, "we and not they are winning the campaign for the Philippines. We now dominate the water around these islands."

EX-SENATOR FROM MARYLAND IS DEAD

Washington, Dec. 26—(AP)—Former U. S. Senator Blaire Lee of Maryland, died last night at the age of 87. Lee served in the Senate from 1913 to 1917.

WHY NAZIS GAMBLE IN DRIVE



MILITARY OBSERVERS ABROAD are of the opinion that the explanation of the present German counter-offensive lies in the east. Russian railway construction and concentration of supplies have reached tremendous proportions now that the ground has hardened. General Von Rundstedt, fearful of being caught between grand scale offensives on two fronts, appears to have started his present drive in the west to destroy the huge amount of Allied supplies there before the Soviet forces are able to attack him in the east. Achievement of this aim would give him time to swing his forces to the east while Allied armies would be stalled by heavy losses of men and equipment. Arrows show the direction of the Nazi attack and probable route of Red drives. (International)

Germans Put Everything They Had Into Campaign

Norway's Premier Asks The Allies To Attack His Land

London, Dec. 26—(AP)—Johan Nygaardsvold, prime minister of Norway, disclosed tonight that his government had urged the Allies to launch an immediate invasion of Norway from the west. In a broadcast to his homeland, the prime minister called upon every Norwegian to hamper the Germans in any way possible by sabotaging Nazi transports or sabotaging communications. He warned that every German soldier who escapes to the south will help lengthen the war. "In time to come, when the fighting will become still more intense, and may affect the whole of our people more directly, we must be prepared to accept all sacrifices which the situation will demand," he said.

Drive Slowed Down But Objective Was To Shatter Allies

Paris, Dec. 26—(AP)—At least two German armies have been thrown into the now slowed German offensive—believed at supreme headquarters to have been planned by Hitler himself. The best information available here is that the Germans launched their counterattack with two armies, and probably three, in an effort to shatter the Allied forces in the west. According to the information available, the offensive was designed to burst through the Meuse all the way between Liege and the French frontier, and by so doing virtually to test out the Allies in the Aachen sector. The counter attack got off to a flying start. Whatever the certainty intended by the tough doughboy defense and by Allied counter-attacks, it has succeeded already in throwing General Eisenhower's winter offensive off schedule and momentarily out of gear. But the steady slowing of its pace over the crucial Christmas week, suggests now that the drive, which Von Rundstedt is directing brilliantly, already has begun to go wrong and require readjustment on the field. It was a shakedown venture, Von Rundstedt threw in almost from the outset everything he had in mobile reserves. The old seventh army, rebuilt after the Normandy debacle, and commanded by artillery General Eric Brandenburger, the strong fifth panzer army, and possibly one other full panzer army, were hurled into the breach. Admittedly the attack caught the Allies at a thin spot and German armor raced at first through the snow piled Ardennes country toward the Meuse river, virtually unchecked. While the onrush has been slowed, there is no inclination at supreme headquarters to suppose it yet has been brought to a full stop or that it might not even reach the Meuse on a limited front. After that it remains to be seen what Von Rundstedt will try to improvise.

Jap Emperor In Warnings Of War Peril

(By The Associated Press) Japanese emperor Hirohito's report read at the formal opening of the 50th regular session of the Japanese diet warned "the war situation is becoming more critical." The broadcast of his message, recorded by the Federal Communications Commission, urged his subjects to "truly devote their total effort to repel the enemy." The emperor praised the Japanese navy and army for "destroying the powerful enemy," and was quoted: "While the war situation in greater East Asia progresses daily, the alliances with our friendly nations are also being further solidified. We expect to see an early accomplishment of the objectives of this sacred war." The emperor called upon his ministers to "submit the budget draft plans for the fiscal year 1945 and for extraordinary military expenditures."

Leyte Drive Is Ended In U. S. Victory

General MacArthur's Headquarters, Philippines, Dec. 26—(AP)—A Christmas morning surprise for Japan in the form of an amphibious invasion of Palompon harbor brought the bloody, 67-day Leyte-Samar campaign to an end, except for mopping up operations, and General MacArthur today hailed it "perhaps the greatest defeat in the military annals of the Japanese army." The United States 77th division, moving up from Ormoc into Palompon, the enemy's last remaining port on Leyte, stormed ashore under covering fire from patrol-torpedo boats and artillery. The Japanese were

U. S. Force Surrounded By Germans

Enemy Bulge Is Now 35 Miles Wide, With Fresh Gains Shown

Paris, Dec. 26—(AP)—Powerful twin German drives have squeezed out the American wedge near St. Vith and merged into a single bulge forty miles deep that still is hammering toward the Meuse only thirteen miles away, supreme headquarters disclosed today. The German bulge is 35 miles wide, and by Sunday had enveloped Rochefort for the closest approach to the Meuse river. In the heart of this bulge a surrounded American force several thousand strong fought doggedly to hold the important Belgian road hub of Bastogne after rejecting a surrender ultimatum. It is under incessant Nazi armor and infantry attack.

The sole hope of this isolated force faced to the south, where General Eisenhower's counter assault had beaten back up the Arlon road, within five miles of Bastogne, and still was gaining ground. The American wedge west of St. Vith had kept Field Marshal Von Rundstedt's assault prongs from merging. German stabs had veered north of Laroche through two Grandmenil and Lieureux, threatening to cut off Americans dug in on ridges west of St. Vith and keep Von Rundstedt's assault prongs from merging. Those forces had to be pulled out in rear guard fighting the last two or three days, supreme headquarters said, and the German junction had formed by Christmas morning. There were reports whether this withdrawal was completely successful, or if some armor and infantry that had held the pocket for almost a week had been left behind. The northern line of the German bulge runs from north of Rochefort, 15 miles from the Meuse, northeast through Marthe, Holton and Grandmenil, then northwest to Lieureux to near Stavelot, then 14 miles east to Battice, and on to Monsinon in Germany. A field dispatch declared Von Rundstedt apparently was now seeking a breakthrough toward Manau, rather than Liege, 34 miles northeast of Namur. Besides pounding into Rochefort, German armor and infantry farther southeast also had taken Libramont, only 23 miles from Sedan and 16 miles from the French border. Prisoners said the German timetable called for Paris by January 17. For the first time the main German pressure in Belgium appeared to be turning from the west, where there still were slight gains, to the northwest or north. A field dispatch dated Monday, however, and the time seemed to be turning against the Germans in the Stavelot sector along the northern rim of the German breakthrough. Further east, the Germans lost bloodily in a vicious Christmas Eve assault on the doughboy line near Vullingen, but failed to gain.

WEATHER FOR NORTH CAROLINA

Rain and colder tonight; Wednesday cloudy and foggy; lowest temperatures tonight 25 to 32.

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS AT SEA



THE USE OF A MOP as the substitute for the traditional evergreen tree does not dampen the enthusiasm shown at this Christmas party aboard a Coast Guard craft in the Pacific. Smiles as cheerful as gay Xmas bulbs light up the faces of the boys as they open their packages from home. Enjoying the informal party are (l. to r.): Hubert M. Gray, Americus, Kan.; Wayne Wagner, Washington, Iowa; Walter Wachler, Fond du Lac, Wis.; and Ray Boller, Chicago. Coast Guard photo. (International)

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Find Dynamite In Athens On Arrival Of Churchill

Athens, Dec. 26—(AP)—Prime Minister Churchill sought to end the bloody Greek civil war today as a British patrol reported discovering a ton of dynamite under street car lines opposite the main doors of the hotel in which officials of the Greek government and Lt. Gen. Ronald Scobie live. (The dispatch from Athens did not say whether Churchill was staying at the hotel.) The dynamite, which the patrol said was in boxes bearing German markings, apparently was laid during the night as the area had been carefully searched yesterday evening. Churchill's arrival here yesterday, accompanied by British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden, echoed to the sound of street fighting between the left wing ELAS partisans and Greek government forces supported by British troops. The prime minister went into action immediately, communicated with Field Marshal Sir Harold Alexander, Allied Mediterranean commander, Harold MacMillan, British resident minister for the central Mediterranean, and the Greek Premier George Papandreu. Shortly thereafter, British headquarters announced plans to convene at 4 p. m. today a conference representative so far as possible of Greek political opinion, with the object of "ending fratricidal strife and enabling Greece to resume her place among the United Nations." Archbishop Demaskinos of Athens was named to preside over the conference and ELAS representatives were guaranteed safe conduct.