

# AMERICANS PLUNGE WEST TO SPLIT NAZIS

S&amp;S Man Behind German Lines

## Dawn Contact... Battle... Break-Through

By Earl Mazo

Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

WITH AN ARMORED RECON UNIT, Behind the German Lines, July 27 (1300 hours)—Since before dawn this unit has been pushing forward, inching its way at first, then spurting, then inching again. We have been overcoming everything the enemy has—some of it mighty rough.

At this moment a unit of our tanks under 1/Lt. George Karl, of Ellenville, N. Y., is maneuvering to attack two Panthers backed by infantry. Split-second bombing by a couple of P47s plus tank busters accounted for the tanks. Pete's riflemen took care of the German foot troops.

This armored unit, reconnoitering far in advance of its heavy armor, made first contact at daybreak. Within minutes 1/Lt. Wallace Patton, of Philadelphia, had 13 German prisoners. Three were paratroopers who said they had not eaten in five days.

One of our peep patrols turned a bend in a by-road and ran smack into a Tiger tank. The Germans were too surprised to shoot their big gun,

but captured one of our scouts. They placed him on the front of their tank and headed down the road. A big bump threw the American from the tank and he ran for a hedgerow. That American is back in the fight with his unit.

The roads we have passed are littered with battered and burned German equipment, and there are German dead—American dead.

Capt. Jack Girard, of Sumter, S. C., the red-haired unit exec, is backing up with almost unbelievable speed every order issued by his CO. This morning there was trouble with our communications and for minutes—that dragged like years—things seemed (to me) to be in turmoil. In those minutes the CO, a schoolteacher from Boston, and Girard, who used to play saxophone in a dance band, got everything cleared and everything went off on schedule. Some of the maneuvers these men have pulled since then have been beautiful to see.

Perhaps the most disappointed man in the outfit is Cpl. Winston Boothe, of Tuscaloosa, Ala., dispatch rider. A German raced across his path and

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## Column Dashing for Sea Threatens to Trap Half Of Enemy on U. S. Front

By William Stringer

Reuter Correspondent

U. S. FIRST ARMY HQ., July 27—Scoring a complete breakthrough west of St. Lo, powerful tank-supported American columns suddenly wheeled westward today in a daring seaward drive behind the German lines that threatened to trap half of the Axis forces on the U. S. front.

Striking with hundreds of tanks and armored vehicles in the now 12-mile deep breakthrough funnel, American troops suddenly pivoted on fire-blackened Marigny and rolled toward the sea. By mid-afternoon motorized doughboy columns had raced over miles of bomb craters and through hundreds of hedgerows to reach and seize the village of Campran, only about five miles east of Coutances, near the coast.

Battling a desperate and fanatical rearguard, doughboys farther north had by-passed and seized both highway junctions of Lessay and Periers and continued the push southward.

The race toward Coutances seriously threatened to trap approximately half of the entire German force on the American front, including two of Hitler's crack divisions. Elements of some seven divisions were reported in the rapidly closing pocket north of Coutances, one the Second SS Panzer division and another the Seventeenth SS Motorized Panzer division.

Coutances, highway junction at the mouth of the trap, was in grave danger. It already was within artillery range and American guns are dumping explosives into it in an effort to make the town's highway untenable. An entire German army corps, threatened with encirclement was working frantically to evacuate the pocket before the noose closed.

Foe Operating by Day

For the first time since the Cherbourg debacle German troops and vehicles were out on roads in daylight, trying desperately to clear the pocket. Meanwhile, American planes and doughboys along the top arm of the nutcracker—along the Lessay-Periers axis—began the work of destroying the remnants of seven divisions.

The Air Forces, racing back and forth over the threatened Germans who were hurrying southward by every possible means of transport, had a field day. Fighters and fighter bombers attacked one column of 38 German tanks and another column of 75 or more trucks to add to their score of a claimed 78 tanks knocked out and damaged yesterday. At least

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## Infantry Clears Way for Tanks on Road to Marigny

By Andy Rooney

Stars and Stripes Staff Writer  
MARIGNY, July 27—An American armored column, miles long, yesterday uncoiled and struck straight down the road to Marigny just west of St. Lo, as the ponderous American push gathered momentum.

Infantrymen, which usually rely on armor for support, did an about-face on this drive and acted as a spearhead for the tanks' advance. For the first time in the "Hedgerow Campaign" the infantry left the armor behind as it fought its way through small pockets of enemy resistance on both sides of the road and cleared the flanks for the U. S. armored advance.

The road to Marigny was like other roads which felt the weight of armies in Normandy. It was in the area saturated Tuesday by Eighth Air Force bombs and was badly pock-marked with craters, littered with dead horses, cattle and French bicycles, which had been abandoned by Germans when the big push began two days ago.

Supported by dive-bombing fighters of the Ninth Air Force, the white-starred U. S. tanks took their toll of enemy armor. At least four German Mark IV and one Mark V tanks were knocked out by American Shermans. One U. S. tank was stopped by an 88 after destroying two German tanks.

A radio liaison officer reported that a message from a P51 pilot told of three German armored cars and two tanks waving the white flag of surrender at him after he had strafed their column.

Today and yesterday, prisoners captured by men of the Marigny spearhead were passed back along the road without escort. There were so many of them and the road was so jammed with American armor that prisoners walking alone with their hands clasped over their helmets were never more than a few yards from a lot of U. S. guns.

FLAK SUIT PROVES WORTH

WASHINGTON, July 27—A War Department analysis of the experiences of 133 airmen struck by flak while wearing body armor showed that two-thirds escaped injury of every kind. The breakdown reveals 83.5 per cent of the men were uninjured, 24 per cent were slightly wounded, 23 per cent were slightly hurt and 8.2 per cent were killed.

### On Other Fronts

## NAZIS REELING, REDS GAIN SPEED ON WHOLE FRONT

Marshal Stalin issued yesterday five Orders of the Day, an unprecedented number, announcing six great victories that everywhere along the 750-mile front had the Germans reeling unable to slow let alone halt the Russian sweeps westward.

While thousands of amphibious trucks poured Soviet infantry across the Vistula River south of Warsaw at two places, another force advancing along the east bank was only 30 miles from the Polish capital, still smoking from fires set Tuesday by Red Air Force bombers.

Stalin also announced the capture of Bialystok, one of the main bastions guarding East Prussia; Lwow, one-time chief German supply base in southeast Poland, Stanislawow, Carpathian rail junction southeast of Lwow, a key rail junction in Lithuania, and liberation of 11,620 villages.

The fall of Brest-Litovsk appeared imminent also with German admission of a retreat in that sector and Moscow reports of street fighting in the city.

### Allies in Italy Closing On Florence, Pisa

Two important Italian cities—Pisa and Florence—were developing yesterday into major battle-grounds as Allied troops tightened a ring around each in the face of strong Nazi counter thrusts.

Two British Eighth Army columns closed in on Florence from points eight miles away, while the Germans holding Pisa were erecting barricades in the main streets and setting up machine-gun posts against the approach of Fifth Army Americans.

### Yanks Gain on Guam, Take Tinian Airfield

American forces on Guam now control the southern half of the Orote Peninsula and a good share of the western coast, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz announced yesterday. The Japs lost 400 killed and 12 tanks in a bid to break out of Orote.

Other U. S. troops captured the northern quarter of Tinian, including a 4,500-foot-long airstrip, described by Nimitz as one of the finest in the Marianas.

### 'Woman Rode Robot To Test It'—Berlin

Berlin Radio related yesterday that a woman pilot, Mrs. Anne Reisch, "a biological phenomenon, virtually insensible to pressure" rode in a robot bomb during its experimental stages to perfect its development.

The bombs developed a tendency to lose their wings after short flights, so explosives were removed from one and Mrs. Reisch crawled in to take a ride and observe the wings through a periscope, the radio said.

After four days the trouble was cured, but Mrs. Reisch, who was awarded the Iron Cross, first class, was seriously injured.

## FORTS' LEAFLETS TELL OF REVOLT

Six Flying Fortresses of the U. S. Eighth Air Force dropped millions of leaflets over Germany Wednesday to tell the German people of the split between Hitler and the Nazi general staff, a USSTAF communique revealed yesterday.

The leaflets were showered on Kiel, Hamburg and Bremen, scenes of the first signs of German collapse in 1918.

Meanwhile, a Stockholm report said that Hjalmar Schacht, former president of the Reichsbank and recently Hitler's chief financial agent in foreign countries, had been shot by the Gestapo. Schacht previously had been reported arrested in connection with the anti-Nazi plot revolving around the attempt to assassinate Hitler.

Moscow radio reported that Baron Von Cherfenberg, son-in-law of Schacht, also had been shot for defeatist utterances and two other generals arrested.

German Overseas News Agency yesterday said that Col. Gen. Beck, former Nazi chief of staff was slated to head the government had the coup succeeded. Beck, according to the Germans, committed suicide.

### SABANG HARBOR BLASTED

An Allied fleet task force, in a 35-minute bombardment, destroyed harbor installations of Jap-controlled Sabang Island, off Sumatra. Southeast Asia HQ announced yesterday. The force included battleships and aircraft carriers

## GEN. L. J. McNAIR, EX-GROUND CHIEF, KILLED IN FRANCE

LONDON, July 27—The death of Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair in Normandy was announced at Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces, tonight. Gen. McNair was killed by enemy action in Normandy, SHAEF reported, but details of his death and the nature of his assignment were not disclosed.

Gen. McNair had been chief of the Army Ground Forces until recently. The War Department announced July 14 that he had been given "an important overseas assignment," and that Lt. Gen. Ben Lear, formerly commander of the Second Army, had succeeded him as ground forces commander.

McNair was wounded in Tunisia on a visit to the front there last year. He was born in Minnesota in 1883, graduated from West Point in 1900 and became a brigadier-general at the age of 35 a month before the end of the last war, in which he won the DSM.

### 207,283 U. S. CASUALTIES

WASHINGTON, July 27—Secretary of War Henry Stimson disclosed today that U. S. Army casualties in all theatres up to July 6 totaled 207,283. This figure included 37,237 killed, 89,949 wounded, 40,786 prisoners and 39,311 missing.

## 5 USO Troupes Arrive In Normandy To Sing, Dance, Gag For The Yanks

WITH U. S. FORCES IN NORMANDY, July 27—The USO-Camp Shows entertainers are here.

Five of the 18 troupes scheduled to provide music, songs and comedy for American troops in Normandy arrived in France Monday afternoon and three hours later they combined talents to present a preview to an audience of Engineers stationed in the beach area.

The five units—totalling 27 guys and gals—prepared for their first show on French soil immediately after pouring out a landing craft with their vehicles and equipment.

Soldiers assisted in setting up a stage after clearing trucks, cranes and Ducks from a motor

pool while the entertainers, still in battle dress they wore across the Channel, hastily applied make-up. Before the applause after the final act had died down, the troupes had entrusted to perform for forward units.

"It was the first time I'd done a show in battle dress," said Dancer Jane McKenna, of Teaneck, N. J. "It was great fun even though my morale was nearly shattered by these unflattering trousers."

"We came ashore in an LCA," Don Rice, of Waukon, Ia., one of the masters of ceremonies, explained "LCA means Landing Craft, Actors."

Special Service officers said the units would play every "troop stop" in Normandy.

