



# THE STARS AND STRIPES

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## Berlin Cries for Revenge as Fires Rage

### These Weapons Did Their Stuff on New Britain



### Weak Air Raids Only Jap Reply To Sixth Army

#### Tanks, Infantry Heading For Gasmata: Texans Led the Assault

SIXTH ARMY HQ, New Guinea, Dec. 17—A strong U.S. air armada yesterday fought off several weak Jap air attacks on Sixth Army tanks and infantry fanning out along the jungle-studded coast of New Britain in the direction of Gasmata—first main goal in the conquest of the prized South Pacific island.

The second communique on the operations said the entire Arawe area was in U.S. hands, and that men and armored equipment were pouring ashore to support the units from Texas who formed the spearhead for the initial assault.

The communique also disclosed that Brig. Gen. Julian Cunningham led the landing force and that casualties were "extremely light."

Strong U.S. patrols were roaming the countryside, driving out enemy pockets of resistance and defense posts.

One of the first objectives of the force is the establishment of airfields. This would facilitate the task of bombing Rabaul and would soften up resistance against the advance on the ground.

#### U.S. Controls Sea Lane

The assault on the island is a heavy blow against the enemy sea supply routes in the area. The Allies now control the Vitiaz Straits—the only gateway from the Bismarck Sea to southern New Guinea.

Repeated Allied air attacks in the Cape Gloucester area, on the northwest tip of New Britain, may indicate that new landings may be imminent in this area.

The southern promontory of Cape Gloucester is less than 90 miles from Finschafen, the former Jap base on New Guinea, across the Vitiaz Strait.

The invasion was accomplished without the loss of an Allied plane or ship. A small army unit making a gallant assault from landing boats suffered most casualties. The number of killed and wounded was not announced.

#### Libs Again Raid Marshalls

PEARL HARBOR, Dec. 17 (AP)—Another 40-ton bombardment of the Marshall Islands by U.S. Army Liberators was announced today. Buildings and storage spaces were damaged at Tarao, while fires were observed after the blasting of Wotje. Two of 30 intercepting Jap fighters were shot down, with eight probably destroyed. One Liberator was lost.

### Eisenhower Now Seen As Invasion Commander

NEW YORK, Dec. 17—Gen. Dwight Eisenhower "is more likely than Gen. George C. Marshall to become supreme commander in the European theater," a Washington dispatch to the New York Times said today, reporting "an apparent change of plan."

The paper said the chief of staff probably would remain in Washington in his present post.

"Other changes in the high command abroad and in the U.S. are probable," it added.

#### Churchill Improves

Prime Minister Churchill's physicians reported yesterday in a bulletin issued at 10 Downing Street that "there has been no spread in the pneumonia and the improvement in the Prime Minister's general condition has been maintained."



AMPHIBIOUS TANKS like the one in the picture on top were credited with blasting away weak Jap defense in the invasion of New Britain yesterday. Mounting two .50 cal. machine-guns, and other secret guns, the tank is at home either in water or on land and it is tough to stop.

WATER BUFFALOES—officially in the Navy's book as landing vehicle-tracked (2)—made their first appearance in carrying troops ashore in the dawn-attack. Above are two scenes taken during tests in the States recently.

### French Back In Firing Line

#### Tunisia Vets Win Heights, Capture Nazis in Central Italy

ALLIED HQ, North Africa, Dec. 17 (AP)—French troops thrown into the fighting in Europe for the first time since 1940 immediately reported an outstanding success against the Germans in mountain fighting in Central Italy, taking several heights and capturing prisoners, Allied headquarters announced.

The French have been in the line with the British and American soldiers for some time, but their presence was disclosed officially only this morning. They include troops which fought in Tunisia and have been re-equipped with American uniforms and war material under arrangements made at the Casablanca conference last Jan.

#### Brazilians Train With French

ALLIED HQ, Africa, Dec. 17 (AP)—The advance reconnaissance party of the Brazilian expeditionary force, including its generals, have taken part in exercises with French troops in training near Oran.

### Louis to End U.S. Tour Soon, Then Go Overseas

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 (AP)—Joe Louis will end his exhibition tour of U.S. Army posts Jan. 20, and then will go overseas to visit camps in various theaters of operations, according to a War Department announcement.

No itinerary has been planned, it was added, and one official, queried on the possibility, said there was no assurance that "when he goes overseas he'll ever go to England."

### Hitler Purging High Officers

#### Even Major Generals Out As Result of 'Revolt,' Underground Hears

By the Associated Press  
Adolf Hitler has started sacking a number of high-ranking officers—including major generals—as part of a purge stemming from the so-called "generals' revolt," it was reported yesterday by an informant with close underground connections in Germany.

Officers accused of such charges as "insubordination" and "negligence" were said to have been dismissed wholesale along the eastern front and in virtually every occupied country.

The reports reached London close upon those telling of von Rundstedt's replacement by Rommel and of an order relieving Falkenhayn in Belgium.

### President's Yule Eve Message May Include Teheran Report

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17—President Roosevelt, looking tan and fit, resumed his White House duties today—possibly preparing his Christmas Eve speech in which a report on the details of the Teheran conference may be disclosed.

Rep. Sam Rayburn, speaker of the House, said the President would incorporate both in his Christmas Eve message and his annual message to Congress whatever he cared to say about his journey and talks. Rayburn was the first to see Roosevelt on his return yesterday.

Congress will take a holiday recess next week, and it was believed it would not hear from the President until the new session begins next year.

### 1,500 Tons of Bombs Cascaded Onto City In 6th Big RAF Raid

#### American Claims Bed of Madame DuBarry

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 (UP)—A claim to the ownership of "the original autographed bed of Madame DuBarry," the mistress of Louis XV, was brought forth by a Treasury Department census of American-owned property in foreign nations.

Claims ranged from an island in the Pacific to a cow and two bulls in Greece.

About 70,000 claims have been made and the department estimates there are about 330,000 still to come. The largest holdings are in Canada and Germany.

### 5th Storms Nazi Defenses North Of Rome Road

#### Germans Rushing Troops From Russia to Halt Allied Advance

The Fifth Army stormed German defenses yesterday in the San Pietro area north of the main road to Rome as the Germans frantically rushed reinforcements to stem the increasing momentum of the Allied drive.

Bloody hand-to-hand fighting raged on the outskirts of Sannucro after an assault by Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark's forces to occupy the German bastion eight miles southeast of Cassino and one mile north of the Rome road.

In the face of stubborn Nazi resistance and numerous counter-attacks, the Fifth Army's American and British troops took two more important hills in the mountains north of Venafro.

An indication of the German high command's alarm at the new Allied thrust toward Rome was given by an Associated Press dispatch which said German troops have been rushed from Russia to bolster the Nazi defenses.

The reinforcements were identified as mountain troops which were last heard of at Leningrad in November. In addition, the Germans were reported to have moved up to the front a battle group composed of infantry and artillery to reinforce the sector held by the 15th Panzer Grenadiers, who were heavily hit by the American troops in Sicily.

On the Eighth Army front, dispatches revealed the Germans had suffered heavy losses in the Allied drive to tighten its hold on the vital Orsogna-Ortona road.

On one stretch alone the Germans were said to have lost 3,000 out of 4,000 infantrymen.

New Zealanders, yesterday's communique said, carried out a successful advance and repulsed two strong German counter-attacks.

Furiously fighting Canadians pressed their offensive in spite of the efforts of the Germans to halt them by using two fresh parachute regiments.

The 15th Air Force, striking for the third successive day, bombed the railroad yards at Padua and a bridge and tunnel at Dogna, in the Alps.

#### Reich Admits Heavy Damage to Bremen In USAAF Blow

RAF Bomber Command's sixth heavy attack on Berlin in four weeks—a 1,500-ton cascade of high explosive and incendiaries dumped at the rate of a ton a second—left huge fires raging in the world's most bombed capital last night and evoked a fresh wave of reprisal threats from frenzied Nazi broadcasters.

The new hammering of Berlin—the British bombers' first large-scale operation since the Leipzig raid of Dec. 3—broke a lull of nearly two weeks in the night air offensive from Britain. It cost the RAF 30 bombers, compared with 41 lost on the previous Berlin raid Dec. 2.

The attack, purposely staged early Thursday night to avoid moonlight, was launched as American Fortresses and Liberators returned to darkening English bases to land by the light of flares and landing lights after their sixth major mission of the month—a long penetration through intense flak to attack some of the enemy's most heavily guarded targets in northwest Germany.

Bremen Hit, Germans Say  
Eighth Air Force, in a communique announcing the loss of 11 bombers and one fighter for the destruction of 18 enemy interceptors, withheld the name of the bombers' objective, but yesterday's German communique said one of the targets was Bremen, the much-pounded shipbuilding center 50 miles up the Weser from the North Sea. The Germans conceded that "heavy damage" was done to the port.

Returning crews said only a few Nazi fighters challenged the great formations of B17s and B24s, with their escorts of Thunderbolts and Lightnings. The communique disclosed that the fighter escort downed two of the Germans shot down—bomber gunners got the others.

The bombers' late return posed knotty problems for ground staffs. At one base planes were stacked up in the air for an hour and a half before the last of the group was landed safely. One by one the bombers dropped slowly out of the half-darkness to roll along the runways with their landing lights on as a warning to other ships to stay away.

Nazis See Yuletide Offensive  
The RAF's return to Berlin suggested to some Berliners, according to the Stockholm Aftonbladet, that the Allied bombers were launching a Christmas air offensive. The capital's sixth heavy attack—the others were on Nov. 18, 22, 23, 26 and Dec. 2—though carried out by a large force of Lancasters, was not on the scale of November's largest raid, in which 2,300 long tons of bombs were dropped.

One Stockholm report said Berlin's defenders were taken by surprise, believing that the weather and the danger of icing made a raid unlikely. Pilots said they flew over thick cloud practically all the way.

The center of the city was badly battered, according to reports which filtered through to the Swedish capital despite a German Propaganda Ministry ban forbidding foreign newsmen to describe the attack. Water, gas and electric facilities were knocked out at least temporarily, transport was paralyzed, with streets blocked by ruins, and Berlin radio claimed that several theaters were among "cultural monuments" hit.

German ministerial quarters were hit, Swiss radio said, and Swedish reports asserted damage was concentrated in (Continued on page 4)

#### Germans Say No Holiday Respite in War Expected

STOCKHOLM, Dec. 17 (AP)—German military circles said they expect no holiday respite in Europe's land or aerial warfare and will ask for none, a Berlin dispatch reported.

A military spokesman made the observation in commenting on rumors that there will be an undeclared armistice during the Christmas weekend.

Arnold, Somervell Home  
WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 (UP)—Gen. H. H. Arnold and Lt. Gen. Brenton B. Somervell have returned to the U.S. after the Middle East conferences.





