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NE by BSR Date 10/5/70

SHAEF Main, 7 January - Seventeen days after the blow in the ARDENNES, where the opposing armies were still locked in a tortuous and conclusive grapple, the enemy struck again, this time in the SAAR, with smaller forces and less ambitious objectives: limited advances were made and the Allies were induced to make further withdrawals without pressure.

In the ARDENNES, the enemy made up his mind that BASTOGNE must be eliminated. At the end of several days spent in regrouping, ten divisions had been mustered for the attack - or defense, whichever is correct, as our own troops also were attacking. While this was taking place, our troops enlarged the salient and made some progress on the EAST and WEST of it, opening the neck, but by the end of the week the enemy was in a position to attack with considerable power and regain some of the ground lost.

Meantime the Northern flank of the salient was committed entirely to infantry, which was left to fight off our anticipated counter-offensive with only one panzer division in reserve. When the Allies did attack in force towards the end of the week, the enemy was pushed back over considerable distance and the main lateral road from LAROCHE to VIELSALM was threatened, however the Hun seemed unwilling to withdraw from BASTOGNE - instead he began to put in infantry from the BULLINGEN corner and beyond. Bad weather eased his problems considerably.

In the snout of the salient, very fierce fighting occurred at several key points, from which the enemy seemed surprisingly unwilling to withdraw, though in other places contact was light. Piecemeal, however, troops were drawn off to bolster up the two major battles, and an eventual withdrawal to the OURTHE River became a distinct possibility; supply problems too were naturally more acute in this sector.

In the SAAR, the enemy opened his offensive with preparatory attacks all along the line from West of SAARBRUECKEN to East of PIRMASENS, using six Volksgrenadier and two SS divisions. On the right he failed in several attempts, with considerable losses, to secure

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the necessary bridgeheads through which to push his armor (two or three divisions); but on the left he made fair progress through the HARDT Forest and gave evidence of preferring, after all, to commit his army in that direction where the Allies were showing themselves willing to withdraw.

Some minor sallies across the UPPER RHINE were apparently designed to work in with the SAAR offensive, but have not, so far, been on any great scale or involve troops of good quality. A more serious threat was mounted in Holland where at least three divisions were gathered on the "island" South of GORINCHEM, threatening an incursion across the MAAS. Later, however, the plan appears to have been called off, though preparations for a waterborne raid from the island of SCHOUWEN may still be continued.

During the past week 19th Army displayed its usual patrol activity. The main areas were KEMBS in the far South, THANN in the Southwestern corner of the bridgehead, and the habitually active area Northwest of COLMAR. On the morning of December 5th, however, a crossing of the RHINE in about battalion strength was effected by barge North of STRASBOURG, near GAMBSHEIM. Some initial successes were achieved as one or two RHINE side villages were surrounded and captured. It is too early, however, to estimate the scope of this sally.

In the SAAR-PALATINATE the three drives South did not achieve conclusive success. The Easterly one pushing down into the forest of HARDT came, on January 3rd, very close to WINGEN on the main HAGENAU-SAARGUEMINES road. However by January 5th our troops were controlling the situation and although they pushed the line back some way in the East to conform with the German salient, smaller inroads were made into the penetration. A second attack towards ROHRBACK by Seventeen SS Panzer Grenadier Division, intended originally to be the main thrust, met with less success, both initially and eventually, and from January 4th on this thrust began to contract while the HARDT offensive was reinforced. East of SAARBRUCKEN 19th and 36th Volksgrenadier Divisions incurred very heavy casualties in their crossing of the BLIES, eventually made on January 2nd. West and Southwest of SAARBRUCKEN

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another offensive was launched, largely by 347th Division. Its furthest advance was made by January 2nd about five miles from the starting line. From then on our counter-attacks made progress and by the end of the week almost half of the enemy's initial gains were lost. Throughout the week the two mobile divisions in reserve were in the background of the SAAR-PALATINATE, waiting for a break-through to be made before they could be put in to exploit the successes. At the time of writing they have not been committed.

The EIFEL salient has shrunk during the past week along almost the whole length of the line. The stretch between ECHTERNACH and the BASTOGNE salient was the quietest, though even here withdrawals were forced on the German divisions at several points, notably South of the WILTZ where on January 2nd our troops came within two miles of the town.

The BASTOGNE salient gradually ceased last week to be a salient and became a regular sector of the Allied line, the fiercest and most congested on the Western Front. On December 31st and January 1st two Allied forces pushed out to the West of BASTOGNE, and gradually linked up into one and extended slightly North until finally the line was forced back about three miles from the original BASTOGNE perimeter however, with the continual arrival of more enemy panzer divisions, this Allied encroachment was largely eliminated on January 5th. The North of the salient, though the fighting became heavier and heavier, saw no great change in the line. To the West of the salient, the line crept North for four or five miles until it roughly reached the level of BASTOGNE itself, against stiff opposition, chiefly from Panzer LEHR and 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division. The Allied force at LAVASELLE broke out on December 31st and expanded its area until on January 3rd it was able to form a single line with the Allied troops operating from the MOIRCY area. However, on January 5th the German forces were able to force some slight withdrawals.

Out to the West, the open flank was gradually being closed up by the Allies as they established a formal battle line except for a gap of about six miles to the West of St. HUBERT. A long sector, from ROCHEFORT to MIRWART stabilized on January 3rd, and BURE in the center

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of this line became the focal point of German activity. The ROCHEFORT-MARCHE area, the most Westerly sector of the German salient, was the scene of very heavy fighting in which a considerable amount of German armor was involved. ROCHEFORT was abandoned by the 9th Panzer Division on January 2nd when the whole of the MARCHE-ROCHEFORT road fell into Allied hands. To the West the Allies managed to make about 2,000 yards' progress against 116th Panzer Division on January 4th but were finally brought to a halt before the enemy's well dug-in defense positions. Again operations along the whole of this Northern flank of the ARDENNES were characterized by extremely bad weather, greatly favoring the defense, especially in the use of mines. Between HOTTON and GRANDMENIL the German divisions fell back as much as four miles on January 3rd, chiefly in the sector of GRANDMENIL itself. The Volksgreandier, thanks to the heavy snows, did not have so much to do in their defense of the approaches to VIELSALM and St. VITH, however when the weather was reasonable they were unable to prevent substantial Allied advances. The DUREN sector remained quiet, while in HOLLAND there was no combat activity except for some raids over the MAAS by the 712th Division.

At the present time there are no signs that the enemy has any intention but to continue his struggle in the ARDENNES bulge. Considerable regroupings have taken place but they have so far been directed mainly to one end, the reduction of the BASTOGNE pocket and fierce counter-attacks have been launched. On the North shoulder our attacks are largely being taken by infantry which he is always attempting to edge in Westwards. More infantry may also appear before BASTOGNE. The armor in the West of the bulge has so far remained and the stubbornness with which the Hun is holding ground there, is a sign at least that he still hopes to be able to regain the initiative and continue with his plan to reach the MEUSE. But BASTOGNE still remains the thorn, with his Northern lateral road threatened he must have BASTOGNE road net. As long as he is in a position to supply his forces adequately, we will see renewed efforts to take this vital center with possibly an attack in the ETTTELBRUCK-TRIER area. But it is a situation which may change rapidly, and in which weather plays a leading role.

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In the SAAR sector, the battle has not gone so well as the enemy might have hoped. He has been forced to readjust his plans, because of the initial failure to break-through West of the VOSGES. It remains to be seen whether he will renew the attempt but in the meantime, he is trying to debauch out of the forest area onto the INGWEILER lateral road and he is also pushing South from WISSEMBOURG. His first objective is the ZABERN Gap. According to all reports the offensive by the First Army was not a part of the original strategic plan but planned and mounted when the ARDENNES battle began to go wrong.

Elsewhere the front remains ominously quiet, but the probing across the RHINE, North of STRASBOURG, designed according to prisoners to find out if Allied strength is significant and may well presage an offensive undertaking somewhere in the area of the Upper RHINE. North of the bulge, the enemy has spare divisions and attacks are always possible.

Whatever the enemy's intentions may be, however, one plain fact sticks out. This all-out offensive by Hitler is not going to peter out after three weeks' fighting. The enemy has put everything he has into the fight. His troops are fighting with fanaticism and fury. His replacements of men and material are arriving at the front with regularity, and while the main Russian front is quiet, he can devote the great bulk of production and mobilization of manpower to the West. We must, therefore, be prepared for every eventuality, and face up to a hard and bitter struggle into which Hitler will pour his maximum effort.

For two months the GAF Tactical single-engine fighter force on the Western Front was steadily built up to a strength of approximately 1,000 aircraft. On a few occasions it has operated all-out, noticeably for the few days immediately before and after Christmas, when as many as 800 to 1,000 sorties were flown daily. This air effort had no great influence on the battle. Certainly no serious interference was caused to the Allied fighter-bomber offensive. The Germans sought out an alternative method of attack and this was put into practice on New Years Day. It coincided with the German land offensive in the South.

Shortly after dawn exceptionally heavy ground strafing attacks were made against Allied airfields, mainly in the BRUSSELS EINDHOVEN areas. The attack was well planned and security excellent. Radio silence was kept throughout and all formations approached enough to avoid radar detection. To facilitate this, Ju 88 night-fighters were employed in numbers to act as pilot aircraft on which the single-seaters could form and rely on navigation to the target. The enemy used groups from every part of the LUFTWAFFE, including instructors. In all perhaps as many as 700 to 800 took part another indication of the enemy's desire to secure enough experienced pilots is shown by the transfer from sections as remote as PRAGUE and VIENNA only two or three days before the attack.



Over the target the organization broke down to some extent. Shooting and flying was reported as erratic in some respects and one head-on collision occurred. While Allied losses were considerable they were no way comparable to those the enemy suffered. Some 127 Allied operational aircraft were destroyed and 133 damaged. Only eleven pilots were lost. By comparison the enemy losses were enormous. 160 aircraft were claimed shot down in the air and nearly 300 were claimed by AA. In nearly every case an aircraft destroyed entailed the loss of a pilot. At the usual rate of one prisoner to two killed, the German Air Force must have lost at least 180 to 200 pilots. At this stage the enemy cannot afford to trade aircraft for aircraft and cannot afford to lose pilots at all. A loss of two or three to one with the addition of pilots at 20 to 40 to one represents disaster.

The Germans have long bragged of their secret weapons and an interesting report from a Prisoner of War and other intelligence sources have for a long time referred to the supposed German interest in missiles designed to produce extreme cold over a considerable area, resulting in the destruction of all animal and vegetable life in that area.

However, consideration of these reports and their connection with a new "secret weapon" leads to the supposition that they may have mistakenly arisen through (a) The supposed

capability of liquid oxygen as a composition of high explosives to give much more violent and devastating explosions than the more usual solid high explosives. (b) The known low temperature of liquid oxygen coupled with the knowledge that liquid oxygen is one of the fuels of the V-2, but without the knowledge that it is used as a propellant fuel only.

It was deemed advisable, in view of the persistence of these reports, to examine photographic cover of an area Northeast of HANOVER reported by an alleged factual source to be an experimental ground for the freezing bomb. Although there were in this area three small irregular areas from which vegetation appeared to have been removed, they did not suggest devastation on the scale described by this source. Further, much vehicular and track activity was seen which, together with their proximity to important military training areas, could well have been, and probably were, the cause of the three barren areas.

From the technical point of view, it is considered that attacks with the object of producing areas of low temperature sufficient to destroy life are not practicable because (a) There is no known material capable of producing the results suggested in some of the intelligence reports. (b) The concentration required, if known materials were used, would be far greater than is at present possible and normal high explosive fillings would do far more damage than the corresponding amount of known cold producing materials.