

44-60001

THE BATTLE OF THE RIVERS.

Elements of General Montgomery's powerful armoured and mobile forces assemble for the great thrust across the Orne. The pre-zero-hour-scene as famous regiments from the United Kingdom and Canada are poised for the Battle of the Rivers.

Hundreds of tanks are set into position for the double thrust between the Odon and the Orne. An ominous rumble of armour drowns the other sounds of war, seeming to announce the advent of the biggest offensive since we landed in France. Billowing clouds of dust rise from the clattering tank tracks - - dust which so soon was to be turned into a clinging morass of mud. THE weather since D Day has proved no friend.

Sherman flail tanks move in column to that particular map reference from which they will roll forward to beat the German minefields with their threshing chains.

Tonnage proves too much for a road bank which collapses under the weight.

"Operation Glabber" - - - the name given to the air bombardment by more than 2000 bombers which preceded the offensive. The RAF's first 1000 bomber day raid, when 5000 tons of high explosive was dropped in 41 minutes on the Germans dug in, in the industrial area of VAUCELLES.. Cascades of coloured markers define the target area for the squadrons of bombers queuing up to deliver their bombs, while other aircraft arrive with two thousand tons more.

A Lancaster which made its last operational flight.

To the thud of falling bombs is added the hard slamming of artillery. In the meadows, behind and upon each flank the guns begin to speak. Sharp jets of fire - - loud, menacing stabs of sound making the earth shake as if from an earthquake.

That engineering masterpiece, the BAILEY BRIDGE is put to splendid use in this operation. Over the fast running river and across the CAEN Canal the Engineers labour like TROJANS to get their bridges into place.

Sweeping down from the Eastern bank of the Orne, our troops penetrated into COLOMBELLES, the factory suburb of CAEN - - - an ugly sight with its gaunt and distorted buildings still smoking from its feast of bombs.

After an initial check, the Canadians made a frontal attack across the river - - a smash through into open country - - past the wrecked of glider planes and into the spaces beyond to establish that hard fought for bridgehead.

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A member of the crew beats out the flames burning the camouflage on their tank. The German 88 mm anti-tank guns make the going tough. Down from the North our armour battled its way towards TROAEN - - cleaving a path for the infantry. Where we had expected a break through we achieved a break into the German lines. **NEVERTHELESS**, we were adding plenty more Germans to the 20,000 killed in Normandy since we landed.

The PRIME Minister arrives in the Cherbourg area by Transport plane after a Channel crossing aboard H.M.S. ENTERPRISE - - His second visit to France since "D" DAY. Mr. Churchill saw those mammoth structures believed to be V2 sites built by the Germans on the Peninsular. "What stopped their construction" asked Mr. Churchill. "A bunch of invading foreigners" came the reply.

In three days the Prime Minister made a comprehensive tour of the battlefront. Some of his travel he made in a "flying X Jeep" piloted by Air Vice Marshal Broadhurst.

From the beaches to the front line and many conferences with Generals Montgomery and DEMPSEY. By Staff Car he sees the conditions prevailing in Caen today.

The boys were keen to have their pictures taken with the P.M. That was O.K. by him; "Come on lads, get in the group" he says. Now, they like to think that makes them members of the War Cabinet.

With typical Churchillian gestures he answers questions - - - - the low down on things in GERMANY. "They're shooting each other" was one reply. "I can't help that, but maybe the end will come earlier than we have the right to say".