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MONTY'S NEW OFFENSIVE

British and Canadian Tank Borne Infantry form the spearhead of Field Marshal Montgomery's offensive on the Western Front. This new drive (a "finish-the-war offensive" some commentators have named it) is what Monty calls "a tidy operation", carefully prepared and massively supported by every kind of weapon. The amphibious craft are Alligators. Their job is to beat the German plan to drown the Allied armies in millions of tons of flood water from the Roer dams.

This scheme to bolster up the threatened Siegfried Line misfired. Full preparations had already been made by the Allies to deal with this sort of fighting.

A swift American move to the South of Monty's front snatched control of all but one of the seven great Roer dams before German sappers could breach them.

Here is a secret weapon that went off half-cooked. Mud and floods certainly stiffened the enemy's resistance, but they failed to upset the schedule of our advance. On the morning of the attack, fourteen hundred guns opened up on the German positions - heaviest barrage since the Normandy days. A classic Montgomery overture.

Smashing a path into the Siegfried concrete, these guns tell Hitler that he has the vital Ruhr to defend as well as Berlin.

Befors, firing over open sights are fed on an endless belt system.

Under cover of the day-long barrage, tanks move up into position. This attack is going forward into the toughest of the German defence zones. Planned at leisure in time of peace, the Siegfried line has been the scene of feverish activity since D Day. Nobody here is under-estimating the enemy. These concentrations of mechanised might are the answer to the best schemes of Germany's engineers.

The cautious progress of the flails underlines the atmosphere of keyed nerves and resolution at H hour.

For these men, the Rhine is a not too far distant objective. Symbol of everything German, the River is, in a sense, the Berlin of the Western Front.

Infantry, the backbone of any army, no matter how fully mechanised, go into battle.

Now we know why we all love our Sergeant.

The drive is not many hours old before the familiar trail of German prisoners begins. The prelude to still more powerful blows, these first stages of the British and Canadian offensive picture another nightmare for the Wehrmacht. Germany has two choices: Unconditional surrender - or else.

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