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WE CROSS THE RHINE

Under cover of a colossal smoke screen, British and Canadian troops of Field Marshal Montgomery's 21st Army Group prepare for the war's most momentous victory, the crossing of the Rhine on the Wesel sector. The mighty blow from the west was not unexpected. Nor was it hard to guess where the crossing would be attempted. The enemy had plenty of time to prepare his defences. He was beaten by brilliant Allied team work which has given the people of Britain their biggest thrill since D day. It was a Three services victory. The Navy was there. Landing craft and specially designed vessels pull into Antwerp harbour en route for the Rhine.

Royal Marines are here. They will see the White ensign flying along the Rhine, symbol of the sea-power operating today many miles from the sea. Cumbersome and ungainly out of water, the story of their undetected transit overland and through narrow village streets is one more epic of the war.

R.A.F. rocket-firing typhoons paralyse enemy resistance in the vital Wesel area. One lonely farmhouse had been converted into a German H.Q. Wesel, where the Coldstream Guards added imperishable glory to their battle honours.

The few who won the Battle of Britain have today become the many for the Battle of Germany.

To the cascade of bombs is added the fury of artillery fire.

Paratroops of the U.S. 17th Airborne Division buckle on their harness. Part of Field Marshal Montgomery's Command, they're in at the big push.

The massed wings of the British 6th Airborne Division depict the power behind this greatest airborne operation of the war. Experts say that the swift success of the Rhine crossing was mainly due to the bold and imaginative use of airborne troops. Their job this time was not to gain the first bridgeheads but to extend existing ones at enormous speed by seizing objectives beyond them.

Each Dakota has a towing load of seven tons; hundreds of them, and some two hundred others packed with paratroopers begin to build up in layers for the mass drop on Germany.

The White Cliffs of England pass below. The Red Devils are going out again to give battle.

The Rhine, most formidable of all natural obstacles to the Central Plane of Germany is leapfrogged.

As eyes turn skywards they fix on the corkscrew trail of a V.2 rocket on its way to England.

The sky blossoms with multi-coloured parachutes dropped from the 150 mile long stream of aircraft.

Divisions of men and their weapons glide into the Reich. Air chief Marshal Tedder had sent them on their mission with these words "This is the opening of the final round."

That breath taking moment of the release.

The steep angle of descent of Hamilcars and WACO's. There are moments when tragedy strikes swiftly - inevitable tragedy. Here is the death dive of a Dakota.

Only 50 feet up, a glider hit by flak tips into the ground and breaks its back.

Men and their arms spill from their craft. Scotsmen, Londoners, Yorkshiremen. Men from Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, and their kinsmen from the United States. And what of the men who made the assault in Amphibious vehicles across that river which has been Germany's shield for Generations. All services are writing illustrious names in the last page of this war.

To the East bank with reinforcements, to the West with prisoners.

And then with that characteristic love of seeing things for himself, Mr. Churchill landed on the scene. With General Eisenhower he watches Monty's crusaders storm Berlinwards. Perhaps the gesture that captured our imagination most, was the report of ~~XXX~~ his cruising up and down the Rhine...it used to be Hitler's River.

In this part of the globe V2 departure trails are no novelty. The path of a weapon delivered by a Nation in despair. Collapse of organised resistance is in sight...Senior designer stands with master craftsmen.