

NORMANDY BATTLEFRONT --- THE OPENING OF AN OFFENSIVE ON TWO SECTORS.

The great offensive on the west coast of the Cherbourg Peninsula had its beginnings ~~up in the north~~ at Periers, with the first thrust downwards towards Coutances; while the slogging battle raged away to the east between British and Canadians and the main German forces, the Americans broke out and began to pour men and armour down the coast roads

Some civilians inevitably fall victims to modern front-line battles; high praise is due to the medical units which work without rest or sleep for hours on end to alleviate their suffering

In other villages near Periers, refugees began to come back to their homes --- or what remained of them ~~It continues the dreadful story of a wandering, homeless community which began when Hitler came to power in the early thirties. The tide of numbers has increased every year, but we begin to approach the time, we believe, when we may begin to put some of these wrongs right again.~~

And now another camera goes up in a reconnaissance plane to survey the road of the advance. First above Lessay and Periers--- part of the vast battlefield that was soon to overflow into Brittany

On towards Coutances, which was the next objective. But though these pictures have come back from the war zone in record time, the battle ~~is~~ itself has already left them far behind; so fast do modern armies move, once they start going.

Back on the ground again, we come upon a new engine of German destruction. A new type of anti-personnel mine. The advance has been too fast to allow the Hun to sow many of these things in the later stages; but here they were plentiful.

Now to Caumont, almost midway between Coutances and Caen; the Americans are moving out and British units are taking over. Brilliant staff work and first class co-operation ^{have} ~~been~~ enabled the enormous armies of two great nations to work as one --- here, as in North Africa and Italy. That in itself is a major victory; something which Germany has tried hard to prevent. This co-operation between Britain and America, and Russia in the east, has set the final seal on German hopes of world conquest ~~so in~~ these fields which look so much like parts of England, the Battle of France takes shape.

~~British reinforcements are coming up in strength --- some famous regiments among them. When the story is fully told, we shall find that they will all be famous regiments.~~

~~Here some German prisoners are coming in --- the first of a great new flood.~~

So the Battle of France takes shape
Now ~~an~~ air attack is thrown into the scale. South and south east of Caumont heavy bombers of the Royal Air Force give their example of co-operation with a terrific hailstorm of anti-personnel bombing.

Now comes the British advance below Caumont; infantry, armour --- and rocket-firing Typhoons.

There are casualties, of course; But we have the past record of General Montgomery to assure us that he is ^a leader who is no butcher of his own soldiers. ~~Each offensive is prepared with meticulous care to keep casualties to the absolute minimum.~~

~~There were more prisoners here, too. And a number of wounded among them.~~

In this pause in the battle, the camera takes us behind the lines --- though not so very far behind. Naafi has arrived; a cheerful interlude in the welter of blood and sweat. Each incident like this increases your wonder at the stupendous organization required before these major actions. Not least among the many who are ^{paving} ~~making~~ our road to victory are the quartermasters; their administration has been little short of miraculous behind the scenes of all our big advances. Many of the men who serve in these canteens are veterans of battles in France in the last war. The men they are serving now have just come out of the line --- some of them from the taking of Hill 112.

And now to the seashore to welcome the first contingent of the A.T.S. to come to Normandy. As happy a crowd as you could wish to see; they will be followed by many thousands who will be doing the necessary routine work of a giant army, ~~in the field.~~

And Now the cameras take us back to the American sector at Coutances, the key town of the drive southward to Granville, Avranches --- and Brittany. ~~xxxxxxx~~ A whole army is on the move; tanks, reconnaissance, ambulance, and an endless stream of the indispensable infantry. The drive to turn the Battle of Normandy into the Battle of France --- is on. ~~We present this pictorial record as it comes out of the camera; a representation of all the many sides and sidelights of a great advance in the making.~~ Nearly two months have passed since the greatest gamble of the war began; the day when the Allies in the west staked their skill and the courage of their soldiers in a bid for swift and complete victory. The beach-head has been built into a great and growing front in Europe. The days of this summer are days of destiny: dreams of release from years of uncertain agony are growing into something very real.

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M. S.