

WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY FOR OUTPOSTS

This is airgram No. 58 of the intelligence summaries prepared by R. A. Washington. The period covered is 23 - 23 October 1944. THIS IS THE LAST AIRGRAM OF THE SERIES.

Unless otherwise indicated, all items are considered reliable. Since the sources of some information are outside OSS, the contents of these summaries should under no circumstances be disseminated beyond OSS personnel.

DUE TO PERSONNEL LIMITATIONS AND PRESSURE TO REDUCE NON-ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES, THE WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY FOR OUTPOSTS IS SCHEDULED TO BE DISCONTINUED AS OF 1 NOVEMBER. OUTPOST COMMENT ON THE VALUE OF THE SUMMARIES IS REQUESTED.

WESTERN FRONT

The Anglo-Canadian offensive to open Antwerp port to Allied shipping has made marked progress this week. Breskens has been captured. The Germans now hold only a very small pocket south of Schelde which will presumably be liquidated in short order. A successful allied amphibious landing on the south shore of South Beveland Island and a rapid Canadian advance across the causeway joining the island with the mainland have almost effected a junction. Since the German defenses of Beveland appear to be collapsing rather rapidly and since the enemy reportedly only has one workable coastal battery left on southern Walcheren Island, Allied cargo ships soon should be free to enter the port of Antwerp.

East of the Schelde Estuary, general progress has been achieved along the Bergen-op-Zoom--Roosendaal--Tilburg-- 'sHertogenbosch line. Bergen op Zoom, Tilburg and 'sHertogenbosch now are in Allied hands; the fall of Roosendaal appears imminent. German forces in this region are facing entrapment, unless they can make good a precarious escape northward across the three bridges open to them: at Moerdijk, Geertruidenberg and Hedel.

On the east face of the Nijmegen salient, some further Allied advances have been made towards Venlo, south of Overloon. The Germans are now standing on the line of the Venlo-Nijmegen railway embankment which runs parallel to the Meas River. A general, slow enemy withdrawal to the line of the Meas appears to be in progress in this sector. The enemy, sensitive to this Allied threat to the Arnheim-Stolberg area has brought in further armored reinforcements.

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On the balance of the western front from captured Aachen to the Swiss border the line has undergone only very minor changes during the past week. A new major offensive against northern part of the West Wall appears to be awaiting the opening of sea-traffic to Antwerp, without which such an operation cannot be adequately supplied or sustained.

Eastern Front. In northern Finland Soviet forces have captured the Petsamo mine district and have pushed across the Norwegian border to take the naval and submarine base of Kirkenes. In central Finland, Finnish troops have driven north of Kolari on the Swedish border. Other Finnish forces continuing northward along the Arctic highway have occupied Sodankylae. The Soviet offensive against east Prussia launched from the area between Schirwindt and Augustow has penetrated as far as Walterkehmen in the north and to the Goldap-Gumbinnen highway immediately south of the Kaunas-Insterburg-Koenigsberg railroad. German resistance in this area is intense and little Soviet progress was reported during the last three days of the week.

North of Warsaw the Soviets have renewed their drive to oust German forces from the pocket in the confluence of the Vistula and Narew Rivers, where the Germans are now confined to an area of some 75 square miles. In Subcarpathian Russia, Soviet troops driving south along the Lwow-Budapest railroad have captured the communications center of Mukacevo, thus threatening a junction with the Soviet salient north of Debreczen. In anticipation of this threat the Germans have carried out a swift evacuation of northern Transylvania, which was completed by the end of the week. Southwest of Debreczen the situation remains confused, though Berlin reports mention at least two Soviet bridgeheads across the Tisza, one north and one south of Szolnok. Southwest of Szolnok Soviet forces have reached the Danube along a broad front from north of Baja to south of Bonyor.

In Yugoslavia occupation of Belgrade has been completed by Soviet and Partisan troops and west of the city a bridgehead has been established across the Sava River. Of the 21 German divisions remaining in Yugoslavia, Albania, and Greece, five are reported to be opposing the Soviets and Partisans in the Belgrade area and immediately to the south. Additional German forces are said to be moving toward this combat area from central and southern Yugoslavia. Although German troops remaining in the southern Balkans are more or less cut off, the blocking forces are largely Yugoslav Partisans, who will probably be unable to prevent the passage of well organized German fighting units. In the Uzice area the Germans appear temporarily to have reopened a stretch of the Skoplje-Novi-Pazar-Sarajevo railroad which had been held by the Partisans.

Italian Front. During the past week slight advances south of Bologna have brought American troops to within five miles of the Bologna-Imola stretch of Highway #9. In the Adriatic sector Cesena has been captured and Allied troops driving along the Bologna-Rimini highway have driven past Forlimpopoli to within two miles of Forli. On the Adriatic coast Cervia has fallen to other Allied units which have advanced as far north as the mouth of the Bevano River.

Air War. During the week ending 24 October strategic operations of the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces were severely hampered by poor weather. On 19 October, however, the Eighth Air Force dropped over 2,200 tons of bombs on marshalling yards at Mainz and armored vehicle and other factories at Mannheim. Stuttgart and Nuremberg were attacked by the RAF during the night of 19-20 October with over 3,600 tons. On 22 October heavy tonnages were dropped on a motor transport works at Braunschweig, locomotive and tank works at Hanover, marshalling yards at Muenster and Hamm, and on the industrial area of Neuss in the Ruhr. Essen was heavily raided by the RAF on the night of 23-24 October. All of the above bombings were accomplished through heavy cloud cover and with unobserved results.

The Fifteenth Air Force was able to undertake only two major strategic missions during the week. On 20 October nearly 1,000 tons were dropped on a synthetic oil plant at Bruex, oil storage installations at Regensburg, marshalling yards at Rosenheim and Innsbruck, and armament works at Milan. On 23 October raids totalling over 1,000 tons were carried out against the Skoda works at Pilsen, oil storage at Regensburg, a Diesel engine factory at Augsburg, the Bayrische Motorwerke at Munich, marshalling yards at Rosenheim, rail targets along the Brenner pass route, and the harbor at Trieste.

FAR EAST THEATER

XX Bomber Command. In its 13th operation the 20th Bomber Command on 25 October attacked air craft factories at Omura (Kyushu, Japan). Of 70 B-29's bombing the principal targets and targets of opportunity 26 B-29's dropped 150 tons of bombs on Omura with excellent results. Fighter opposition was moderate to strong and 9 enemy air craft were destroyed. One B-29 was lost in the operation.

Pacific. Allied operations in the Philippines proceeded favorably with a rapid expansion of holdings on Leyte Island, and the virtual occupation of Samar Island. By 25 October the U.S. Forces held the northeast coast line of Leyte extending from Dulag to Babatngon.

Japanese resistance disintegrated rapidly in the coastal region. On the southern sector, U.S. troops moved inland from Dulag to Burauan and Buri and moved northward through Leyte Valley, the only communication channel in the interior of the island. Six airfields are now in U. S. possession and the Dulag and Tacloban airfields are in use. Japanese casualties on Leyte were announced on 14 October to be 14,045. American casualties were 518 killed, 139 missing and 1,503 wounded.

Protected by amphibious operations which gained the north coast of Leyte from Tacloban to Babatngon, U.S. forces moved across the narrow channel to occupy the whole of Samar Island by 27 October. The Japanese defenders of Samar were estimated to have been only 3,000 troops.

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Allied positions gained in the Philippines threatened the Japanese Empire sufficiently to force the Japanese Fleet out of hiding. Three Japanese task forces, comprising the major units of the entire Japanese fleet, attacked U.S. naval forces protecting Leyte Gulf on 23 October. The primary target presumably was Allied supply and fuel ships unloading on Leyte Island. Land based air craft were flown in to the islands to support the Japanese naval attacks on the Allied shipping and on U.S. fleet units. However, the 7th U.S. Fleet and the 3rd U.S. Fleet together decisively defeated the attacking forces and inflicted heavy losses on them.

The Japanese naval offenses on 23 October consisted of three task forces. One, made up of two battle ships, two heavy cruisers and four destroyers, attempted to pass through the Surigao to attack Leyte Gulf from the South. The 7th U.S. Fleet attacked this force and succeeded in sinking both battle ships, one cruiser and four destroyers. A second force, comprising 4 battleships and eight cruisers, plus destroyers, passed through San Bernardino Strait and engaged another part of the 7th U.S. Fleet off Samar Island, north of Leyte Gulf. This force was repulsed with heavy damage to all units primarily by air craft launched from carrier escorts (CVE) of the 7th Fleet. At least two U.S. carrier escorts were lost, but this engagement prevented the Japanese task forces from attacking the vulnerable shipping in Leyte Gulf.

A third Japanese force of four battleships and three carriers approached the battle area from Formosa and was engaged by the 3rd U.S. Fleet about 200 miles northeast of Luzon. Two of the carriers were sunk and considerable damage inflicted on the rest of the task force by air craft of the 3rd fleet. Japanese land-based air craft launched many attacks on the 3rd Fleet, losing 150 planes. Units of the 3rd Fleet then moved south to attack the force retreating through San Bernadino Strait, but was unable to prevent the withdrawal.

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Final reports on the results of battle have not been received, and pursuit of Japanese stragglers by air craft and submarines will undoubtedly continue for some time. It is certain, however, that the Japanese Fleet suffered a decisive defeat without inflicting comparable losses on the U.S. Fleet. The U.S. naval superiority demonstrated on this battle has guaranteed the success of the landings in the Philippines.

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