

PATCH SNAPS UP PRIZE SOUGHT BY PATTON'S ARMY

Saarbruecken Taken by Flanking Thrust.

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WITH U. S. 7TH ARMY IN GER-
MANY, 2019-1945
MANA 1945
W. J. ...
Saarbruecken and Zweibruecken in the Saar fell today to Lt. Gen. Patch's 7th army on the sixth day of its offensive. Saarbruecken had long resisted the Americans' efforts. The coal mining and industrial center of the people of the reich connotes the whole of the Saar area.

The prize of Saarbruecken had been sought by Lt. Gen. Patton's 3d army last November and December. Patton's forces shelled the city but were not in position for a ground assault on it before the 3d army was swung north to counter-attack Field Marshal von Rundstedt in the Belgian bulge.

Patch's army had been closing in on Saarbruecken for weeks and the assignment of taking the city was given to the 70th infantry division, a unit comparatively new to combat and commanded by Maj. Gen. Allison J. Barnett.

Exploits Saar Crossing.

The 70th made some attempt at a frontal assault and took losses from Siegfried line fire south of the city. Then the division swung its weight to the west. It crossed the Saar river at two points, exploited the operation, and today advanced into Voelklingen and then moved eastward to enter and capture Saarbruecken in a flanking movement. The final resistance was not heavy, as the Germans' position had become untenable and they had moved out most of their forces.

To the east of Saarbruecken, the 63d infantry division was moving north and east after having slashed thru the Siegfried line.

Zweibruecken, a town with a peace time population of 28,000, was captured by the 3d infantry division, veterans of Sicily, southern Italy, Anzio, and whole southern and eastern France campaign. The 3d, commanded by Maj. Gen. John W. O'Daniel, had been given the task of cracking the toughest Siegfried defenses in the Saar, and after that the taking of the city was anti-climactic. The 3d encountered no opposition in Zweibruecken.

45th Again 3d's Partner.

O'Daniel's men were moving on beyond Zweibruecken, which is a communications and marketing center.

On the 3d's left, its companion in all campaigns, the 45th infantry division, found opposition increasingly disorganized and captured many pillboxes and bunkers of the Siegfried fortifications.

The 157th regiment of the 45th on Monday night listened in on an enemy telephone switchboard in a pillbox and overheard an elite guard captain directing his company to withdraw. Not all of the Germans had time to retreat, for the divisional artillery gave the position a heavy pounding.

In the Hardt mountains [Lower

Vosges] sector, the 42d Rainbow and 103d infantry divisions were cutting thru other Siegfried defenses in dense woods. Kapsweyer in the Rhine valley, two miles northeast of Wissembourg, was taken by the 36th infantry division.

The Germans were still defending fiercely in that portion of the Siegfried line in the Palatinate north of Alsace.

The Germans' principal escape routes were jammed with eastbound traffic. It was bumper to bumper, tread to tread, several vehicles abreast as the enemy fled.

P-47 Thunderbolts of the 12th tactical air command dive bombed and strafed continually, taking a large toll.