

Canadians in Holland Trap 110,000 Huns

By ROSS MUNRO

With the 1st Canadian Army, April 18 (CP).—German defenders of Fortress Holland, where perhaps 110,000 enemy troops are contained, resorted tonight to flooding to buttress the Grebbe Line, running south from the Zuider Zee to the Neder Rhine, in an effort to block Canadian and British advances.

The enemy took this step after Gen. Crerar's 1st Canadian Army troops administered a smashing defeat to German forces between Arnhem and the Zuider Zee and captured between 5,000 and 6,000 prisoners.

While other Canadians liberated Northeast Holland extended to nearly 1½ miles a bitterly contested bridgehead over the Kusten Canal in Northwest Germany, the enemy opened sluice gates north of Amersfoort, through which the 18-mile-long Grebbe Line passes. Flood waters from the great inland sea began to roll over the polder land (reclaimed from the sea) screening the northern end of the line.

Water for "Water Rats"

With Northeast Holland liberated the 200-mile Canadian front has been split into two sectors—one facing the Grebbe Line and the other in Northwest Germany. Overcoming the Grebbe Line and Fortress Holland may take some time and may involve amphibious operations over flooded country. That, however, would be nothing new to Canadians, who fought such a war in the drive over the Rhine flat lands east of Nijmegen, Holland, in February.

Coupled with flooding between Utrecht and Amsterdam, west of Amersfoort, a formidable water barrier was being created to further Canadian Army attacks.

Canadian infantry and tanks were five miles east of Amersfoort and an unconfirmed report said tanks had

reached the Zuider Zee six miles south of Harderijk.

Southeast of Amersfoort, infantry of the British 49th (West Riding) Division, which captured Arnhem Saturday and began a drive northwest, was closing in strength on the southern end of the Grebbe Line.

Grief for Germans

Between the Neder Rhine and the Waal, which flows roughly parallel to the Neder, Canadian tanks with Belgian infantry advanced from the western end of the Arnhem "island"—flat land between the two rivers—without making contact with the enemy.

The Germans were pulling every soldier possible back into the Grebbe Line. A Netherlands Nazi SS (Elite Guard) Division, which formerly manned the northern bank of the Neder Rhine, retreated to the north of a line between Amersfoort and the Neder Rhine.

Meanwhile defence of the northern part of the Grebbe Line is causing the Germans plenty of grief. They intended that forces from Apeldoorn should fall back into that

sector but the Apeldoorn garrison was cut off by the Canadians and smashed to pieces.

Leading Canadian troops were only 20 miles from Amsterdam but chances of break-through were not bright, in view of the flooding.

110,000 Huns Trapped

Estimates of total German strength in Fortress Holland now run as high as 110,000, with trained combat troops around 15,000. The prisoners taken between Arnhem and the Zuider Zee were all from fighting units.

The Germans were believed to have evacuated the district between Apeldoorn and the Zuider Zee and airmen reported seeing hundreds of Netherlands flags waving in scores of towns—a sure sign the Germans had left.

In Northwest Germany, the Canadian 4th Armored Division continued to have a hard time along the Kusten Canal, reached Sunday and crossed yesterday. The original 400-yard bridgehead has been strengthened, however, with Ontario infantry, and widened to nearly 1½ miles. There is still a lot of shelling, mortaring and machine-gunning.

This canal is the first line of German defenses for the North Sea Peninsula, where the ports of Emden and Wilhelmshaven are located and this has become another pocket for the Canadian Army to attack and clear.

The Germans probably will fight in this pocket with as much determination as in Fortress Holland. Thousands of German sailors from the two naval ports are going into the line as infantry.

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