THE WEATHER
Partly Cloudy; Rather Hot.
TEMPERATURES YESTERDAY.
Greensboro H., 91; L., 70. Greensboro Airport H., 88; L., 69.

GREENSBORO DAILY NEWS

RATION DEADLINES
FUEL OIL—4 and 5, Sept. 30.
GASOLINE—All, 3 gals., November 8.
MEATS—Red A8 through Z8, A5 through C5, book 4, good indefinitely.
FOODS—Blue A8 through Z8, A5 through F5, book 4, good indefinitely.
SUGAR—30, 31, 32, book 4, 5 lbs., indefinitely; 40, 5 lbs. (canning), Feb. 28, 1945.

VOL. LXVI, NO. 30. ★ UNITED PRESS ASSOCIATED PRESS GREENSBORO, N. C., WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 16, 1944. INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE HUNDREDS OF STATE CORRESPONDENTS PRICE: DAILY—FIVE CENTS SUNDAY—TEN CENTS

ALLIES WIDEN RIVIERA HOLD

Soviets Cross Biebrza River

Prussia's Peril Mounts; One Army Wipes Out 172,000 Nazis In Month

LONDON, Wednesday, Aug. 16.—(AP)—Soviet field dispatches said last night that red army troops had crossed the Biebrza river in northern Poland, striking through a 15-mile belt of axis defenses guarding imperilled East Prussia, while Moscow announced that Marshal Ivan S. Konev's Fourth Ukraine army had killed or captured 172,360 Germans.

Konev's troops attacking through southern Poland toward German Silesia killed 140,000 Germans between July 13 and August 12, the special announcement said.

On the basis of Moscow accounts six soviet armies have killed or captured a total of 781,886 Germans since the great summer offensive began June 23, and when three other armies presently engaged in shattering the reich forces are heard from, the total is likely to exceed 1,000,000.

Grajewo Sprayed.

Swarms of armored fighter-bombers covered the Russian surge toward East Prussia, spraying German positions at Grajewo, only two miles from the frontier in the attack along the Bialystok-Lyck railway.

The Russians already are endangering thousands of outflanked German troops fighting in the Suwalki triangle a short distance above the Biebrza river sector. The Suwalki triangle, annexed to East Prussia from Poland in 1939, recently was invaded by Gen. Ivan Cherniakhovsky's Third White Russian army.

When German reserves, flung into the battle in the Suwalki area and along the East Prussian-Lithuanian border farther north, slowed Cherniakhovsky, the Second White Russian army went over to the offensive now rolling dangerously close to the southern border of East Prussia on the fringe of the Masurian lakes—famous battleground in the first world war.

Early Invasion Predicted.

The soviet high command bulletin remained silent on this sector, where Associated Press Moscow correspondent Daniel De Luce said an invasion of Germany was likely in the next 72 hours.

One hundred miles to the southwest another red army, the First White Russian under Marshal Konstantin K. Rokossovsky, beat down German counterattacks east of Praga, industrial suburb of Warsaw. The Russians last were reported within 11 miles of the Polish capital.

Soviet troops fighting west of the Vistula river, 100 miles south of Poland, captured several localities during the day in their steady battle against reinforced German lines.

Drive Near Railway.

In Estonia Russian troops in a three-mile advance west of Antsla, seized the rail station of Anne, only 14 miles from the key junction of Valga, and within 11 miles of the Tallinn-Riga railway which runs through Valga. The Russians captured 80 localities in their drive toward the Baltic sea.

In the area of Raseiniai, Lithuanian town 53 miles northeast of Tilsit, German East Prussian rail city, the Russians repulsed strong enemy infantry and tank attacks and inflicted heavy losses in men and material, the soviet bulletin said.

A broadcast by the German news agency Transocean, however, declared that Raseiniai, which the Russians captured August 10, was reconquered by counterattacking Germans on Monday. The broadcast said that grenadiers of a Silesian infantry division and elite parachute troops killed or captured the entire soviet garrison there.

The only other sector mentioned in the Moscow communique, recorded by the soviet monitor, was west of Sanok, near the Czech border in southern Poland. German tank-supported attacks were beaten off there, it said.

The first big objective of the Russians on the threshold of East Prussia was the rail junction of Lyck, only 5 miles beyond the shattered Biebrza river line.

Fliers Paste Kuriles And Halmahera

Nimitz, M'Arthur Report New Raids

PEARL HARBOR, Aug. 15.—(UP)—Land-based bombers and fighters from Adm. Chester W. Nimitz' command attacked Japanese-held targets from the Kuriles to the Marianas and Nauru during the week-end, including a new target in the north Pacific, it was announced today.

Search planes from the navy's air wing Four bombed defense installations for the first time at Araito, northernmost island of the Kurile chain, 1,323 miles north of Tokyo.

The planes sank a nearby patrol vessel during a strafing attack. Several enemy fighters intercepted, but they failed to press their attack. They damaged three Venturas.

One enemy plane was damaged.

Shumushu Hit.

A single Ventura plane bombed Shumushu Saturday while the previous day Liberators from the 11th AAF pounded Paramushiro, bombing shipping near the island and the airstrip at Suribachi. Fifteen to 20 enemy fighters intercepted. Three of these were shot down, five probably were shot down and two were damaged.

Two Liberators were damaged, but all the planes returned.

Seventh air force Liberators hit Iwo Jima in the Bonins Sunday with more than 35 tons of bombs. The airfield and adjacent installations were the targets.

Flak Light.

"Antiaircraft fire was meager," the communique said, "but an aggressive group of enemy fighters intercepted our forces. One Liberator was lost."

Seventh AAF Mitchells raided Pagan in the northern Marianas Sunday, encountering moderate antiaircraft. Rota was bombed and strafed the same day.

Navy Venturas from group One of fleet air wing Two bombed Nauru Sunday and marine Dauntlesses and Corsairs hit enemy holdout positions in the Marshalls.

Halmahera Again Target.

Billy Mitchell medium bombers, sweeping in at tree-top level over the west coast of Halmahera, Monday bombed and strafed installations on that Japanese island base on the road to the Philippines, Gen. Douglas MacArthur announced today from the southwest Pacific.

The attack, continuing a week of heavy aerial pounding, caused big explosions and fires in warehouses with smoke rising to 4,000 feet.

Liberator bombers hit targets in Wasile bay at Halmahera in daylight Monday with "good effect," the communique added.

In the Wewak area of Dutch New Guinea medium bombers dropped 49 tons of bombs on supply areas Monday.

In a Sunday raid on New Ireland dive bombers and fighters dropped 30 tons of bombs on enemy bivouac and supply areas, the communique said.

B-25 bombers sank eight Japanese sailboats off the northwest coast of Ceram during the day Monday. MacArthur's spokesman said the enemy use of sailboats possibly indicated the straits to which Japanese shipping has been reduced.

Formosa Raid Nets Three Jap Ships

CHUNGKING, Aug. 15.—(AP)—Three Japanese freighters were sunk by wide-ranging heavy bombers in a raid on Formosa, Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell's headquarters announced today. The freighters were caught in the Formosa strait by the bombers, which also struck the docks of Takao harbor, in southwestern Formosa.

The Weather

Data furnished by J. P. Molen, in charge of the United States Weather station at the Greensboro-High Point airport.

STATISTICS FOR YESTERDAY.

	8:30 a. m.	8:30 p. m.
Temperature	71	81

24 HOURS ENDING AT 8:30 P. M.

	Degrees	Time
Maximum temperature	88	4:00 p. m.
Minimum temperature	69	7:30 a. m.
Mean temperature	78	
Precipitation	None.	

TODAY.

Sun rises: 6:39 a. m., Sets: 8:09 p. m.
Moon rises: 4:27 a. m., Sets: 7:09 p. m.

FORECAST BY STATES

WASHINGTON, Aug. 15.—(AP)—North Carolina, South Carolina: Partly cloudy and rather hot Wednesday.

Virginia: Hot again Wednesday.

DAILY WEATHER TABLE.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 15.—(AP)—Weather bureau report of temperature for the 24 hours ending 8 p. m., in the principal cotton growing areas and elsewhere:

Station	H	L	Station	H	L
Asheville	83	66	Louisville	92	70
Atlanta	[illegible]	69	Memphis	93	76
Birmingham	[illegible]	72	Meridian	93	72
Boston	[illegible]	74	Miami	85	[illegible]
Chicago	[illegible]	72	New York	91	[illegible]
Cleveland	[illegible]	69	Raleigh	89	[illegible]
Detroit	[illegible]	73	Richmond	90	[illegible]
Ft. Worth	[illegible]	78	St. Louis	98	71
Kansas City	96	78	Washington	90	73

AIRMEN WRECK GERMAN RAIL YARD IN FRANCE.

Wreckage of rolling stock blocks the railway yard in the German-held town of Vire, France, after an allied bombing attack. Later the allies liberated Vire. This is a British official photo. (AP wirephoto via Signal corps radio.)

8,000 Tons Bombs Gut Nazi Air Bases

Britain-Based Sky Armada Batters Luftwaffe; South Wing Aids Landings

LONDON, Aug. 15.—(AP)—Three thousand American and British planes, two-thirds of them bombers, cast 8,000 tons of explosives on a score of enemy air bases and airdromes in Belgium, Holland and Germany today, while another powerful force of Italy-based heavyweights hopped the Mediterranean to southern France and blasted a wide path for the new ground invasion there.

A force of 1,100 RAF Lancasters and Halifaxes and nearly 1,000 United States Flying Fortresses and Liberators churned up enemy air strips, wrecked buildings, and left flaming wrecks of 180 to 270 nazi planes caught parked on the fields.

Fighters escorting the American bombers also destroyed a number of planes on the ground, disabled 62 locomotives, and destroyed or damaged 188 railway cars.

Moderate enemy opposition in the air was encountered, the bombers knocking down 13 planes and the fighters bagging 14 for a total of 27. Sixteen bombers and five fighters failed to return.

Berlin Pasted.

Last night RAF Mosquitos again struck Berlin, hurling blockbusters on the battered reich capital. None of the Mosquitos, which also laid mines in enemy water, were lost.

The fresh daylight attacks were aimed at squelching any attempts by the Germans to gather their depleted sky strength for support of their desperate ground forces backtracking before victorious allied troops in France.

The big American bombers pounded seven air bases and five airdromes. These bases are situated in the suburbs of Cologne, at Wiesbaden, Frankfurt, Wittmund, and in Bad Zwischenahn, Vechta and Handorf. The first three lie along the Rhine river, the others in northwest Germany.

The airdromes included two at Twente-Enschede in Holland, one at Florennes, Belgium, and others at Venlo and Plantlunne in northwest Germany.

Aircraft maintained their stepped-up operations in support of ground forces in western France today, flying an inceasing vigil over the Falaise-Argentan "coffin corridor" and beyond its outlet.

Hit Everything Moving.

Everything moving was pounced upon and every likely hiding place was sprayed. But the pilots brought back word that the Germans were not moving much, at least in daylight.

United States Marauders and Havocs of the Ninth air force, without aerial opposition or loss, bombed railway yards at Serqueux, 25 miles north of Rouen, and two bridges over the Oise river at Auvers sur Oise and l'Isle Adam, both north of Paris, in order to block the movement of German troops and supplies.

RAF coastal command Beaufighters and Mosquitos, on watch for enemy ships forced to flee French ports, caught 13 vessels on the Gironde off St. Vivien and Le Verdon and scored numerous hits on all of them.

Fourt coastal aircraft were missing.

American Marauders—the only USAAF bombers attacking the enemy both day and night—exploded a big ammunition dump northwest of Paris in a post-midnight assault.

Lumber Ruling Violators Get Heavy Fines

State Firms Among Those Involved

ELIZABETH CITY, Aug. 15.—(AP)—Six individuals operating and controlling lumber companies in the south were ordered to pay fines totaling $39,000 by Judge I. M. Meekins in federal court here today when they pleaded nolo contendere to office of price administration (OPA) charges of criminal violation of price ceilings set for southern pine and hardwood lumber.

The criminal charges were lodged against J. W. Wells, of Montgomery, Ala., B. H. Oates, of Kenansville, N. C.; W. A. Gooch, of Hallsboro, N. C., J. P. Jamieson and L. L. Shertzer, both of Montgomery, and L. A. King, of Belhaven.

The OPA charged that they individually and as associates sold and delivered to "numerous persons, firms, and corporations large quantities of southern pine and hardwood lumber at prices in excess of ceilings."

The indictments further charged the defendants with "causing lumber shipments to be misrepresented, upgraded, falsely invoiced and illegal commissions added, resulting in sales being made at wholesale in violation of ceiling prices."

Each individual was fined $6,500. At the same time, Judge Meekins took into consideration a treble-damage settlement of a claim made by the OPA at Montgomery, Ala., in the sum of $6,000 and paid by one of the companies. Total fines and penalties to the defendants totaled $45,000.

Norman C. Shephard, district OPA enforcement attorney, said the charges grew out of a long-term investigation of sales by the J. W. Wells Lumber company and its associated companies and partners by OPA investigators.

Shephard said the J. W. Wells company, of Montgomery, with branches at Lumber City, Ga., Milligan, Fla., and Hallsboro, N. C.,

(Continued On Page 3, Col. 3)

Polio Hospital May Be Put To Permanent Use

(Special to Daily News)

HICKORY, Aug. 15.—Plans are in the making here to convert the emergency polio hospital plant, three miles from the city, into a permanent and useful institution at the end of the current epidemic.

Interests, for which Dr. H. C. Whims, health officer for Catawba, Lincoln and Iredell county, serves as spokesman have three suggestions that will be placed before the Hickory city council, the Catawba county commissioners, and the Catawba county Tuberculosis association, owners and sponsors of the fresh air camp that was converted into a hospital.

These three proposals for a continued use of the emergency hospital plant (rather than to let it stand in wasteful idleness after the current epidemic) are:

1. Make the hospital into an orthopedic convalescing home.

2. Convert it into a place that can be used to nurse children with chronic heart conditions.

3. Establish in the hospital plant a place to nurse cases constantly dug up over the state by various mental hygiene clinics.

Soon the emergency hospital will represent a total physical investment of $75,000. Soon—everyone concerned hopes—polio will subside. A plant that started out as a $5,000 fresh air camp will be there and available for some use. The medical men of the Catawba county area think it would be wasteful to close out such a plant, and that it should be converted into some 12-month, year-round usefulness. With any of the three proposals, the site could still be used as a summer fresh air camp, just as before, as long as persons with contagious diseases are not hospitalized there.

The Proposals.

Dr. Whims, in discussing the three possible plans for future use of the hospital, said that the matter would be placed before the three agencies of government and health that own the property and sponsor the fresh

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 3.)

Defenses Check More Robot Bombs

LONDON, Aug. 15.—(UP)—Coastal defenses took a heavy toll of Adolf Hitler's dwindling supply of robot bombs today, but several of the airless missiles slipped through to spread death and destruction in London and southern England.

The assault continued at intervals throughout the day, the air ministry said in a 7 p. m. communique.

At least 10 persons were reported killed by the few lethal craft which slipped by fighter pilots and antiaircraft batteries hampered by the rising sun in their faces.

Six bodies were recovered by rescue squads who dug through debris of a house which was struck Tuesday morning. A garage, in use as a shelter, was hit and four persons were killed

Invasion Between Marseille, Nice Only Lightly Opposed

Nazi Seventh Eliminated As An Army

Rain Gives Kluge Only Escape Hope

ALLIED HEADQUARTERS, London, Wednesday, Aug. 16.—(AP)—The Germans caught in the Normandy death trap were being hammered mercilessly today in the climactic battle for northwestern France and an American officer declared the enemy forces "have ceased to exist as an army."

Rain, which fell in sheets across the battlefield and sent the swarms of warplanes back to bases, was the only hope of Field Marshal Gen. Guenther von Kluge, trying to extricate his forces through a shell-fraught gap below Falaise now narrowed to nine miles.

As Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's troops in Normandy tightened their grip on the entrapped nazis a new allied invasion on the southern coast of France tore another breach in the crumbling walls of Hitler's European fortress.

Close For Kill.

British and Canadians on the north and Americans on the west and south closed in on the pocket for the kill which will mean the greatest victory for allied arms in the west in this war.

Even should the bulk of the 50,000 or more Germans believed still in the trap manage to elude the allied armies, they will be in no condition to stand and fight before Paris for an officer declared the Seventh army had lost most of its equipment and material.

Americans advancing four miles or more were seizing great stores of ammunition and equipment, and hundreds of prisoners were streaming back through the American lines.

The roof of the German corridor in Normandy's hills and hedgerows was caving in, with Canadians storming to within a mile of pivotal Falaise, nine miles above where the Third American army is pounding north against fierce resistance in an attempt to close the trap.

Advance Four Miles.

American forces at the west end of the corridor drove forward two to four miles, while British troops pressing down from the north stormed the German citadel of Vassy, and were threatening Conde sur Noireau.

Squeezed on all sides, the Germans were probing the south limits of the trap for a weak spot through which their thousands of confused soldiers might escape.

Some of them braved the hail of shells and bombs sealing off the escape hatch and fled during the night, and unofficial estimates were that 50,000 or more of the 100,000 to 200,000 in the Seventh army still were inside.

The coffin corridor was narrowed now to a 10-by-30-mile area, hardly the size it was a few days ago, and allied gains of as much as seven miles were squeezing the Germans hourly.

Inside the trap food was growing short, and among 1,822 captives counted today were some who had been subsisting on moldy bread for four days. Others angrily denounced the officers who had brought them to this debacle.

Third Drives 250 Miles.

Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's Third American army fought to within eight miles of Falaise on the south without regard to the action still raging in Argentan, five miles behind it. This hard-hitting force had driven 250 miles in three weeks.

Americans on the offensive at the western end of the corridor solidified their hold on Ger and fought on eastward to within a mile of the highway junction of Tinchebray. American capture of Domfront; the enemy's southern stronghold on this sector, was confirmed.

Other American forces put the stopper in a sector where German armor was reported probing allied lines by capturing La Ferte-Mace, between Domfront and Argentan.

Yanks, French Lead Assaults Establishing Firm Beachheads On 125-Mile Coastal Front

ROME, Aug. 15.—(AP)—Thousands of allied troops, mainly Americans and French, swarmed onto the south coast of France on a broad front between Marseille and Nice today, seized and extended firm beachheads against inconsequential German opposition, and drove northward with the avowed intention of joining the allies in northwestern France.

An allied communique at 10:40 p. m., said American and French troops before dawn took the Sentinel islands of Port Cros and Levant, 10 miles off the coast, and seized Cap Negre, on the mainland due north of the islands and 28 miles east of Toulon.

Other specific locations were not given, the beaches being placed merely in the 125-mile strip of coast between Marseille and Nice.

The Germans said the focal point of the allied invasion was at St. Raphael, 30 miles northeast up the coast from Cap Negre, and also said there were landings west of Toulon and at Bormes, 25 miles east of that one-time naval base.

Run All Over Countryside.

American airmen who flew over the beaches late in the day said there was no sign of any concerted enemy opposition and that American vehicles were "running all over the countryside."

The official night statement said, "on the beaches of the mainland, where landings were successful against light opposition, the operation is proceeding satisfactorily," adding that, "substantial numbers of allied troops, together with guns, munitions and supplies, had been landed across the beaches of southern France by dark this evening."

"The beachhead has been extended and widened during the day's operation.

"Enemy opposition remains sporadic, and no enemy air attacks have yet been reported."

Prisoners Demoralized.

Word from the beaches indicated that German prisoners taken in sporadic, light fighting showed almost total demoralization, primarily as a result of the American breakthrough in northwestern France, which they realized meant that the fatherland's downfall was near.

One dispatch from a correspondent in the field said that by afternoon the invaders were well into southern France and going ahead fast against Germans who were caught entirely by surprise. Allied casualties were reported to have been slight.

Thousands of allied parachutists and airborne troopers landed well inland at 4:30 a. m., also against scanty opposition, following the important opening blow against the offshore islands. A picked force had neutralized the islands' big guns silently to pave the way for the tactical surprise of the main seaborne landings which followed.

Record Naval Backing.

Backed by more than 800 warships of all sorts—the greatest naval force ever assembled in the Mediterranean—the first seaborne troops went ashore in broad daylight at 7:30 a. m. (1:30 a. m., E.W.T.), at several unidentified points between Marseille and Nice—a 125-mile stretch of rocky coast.

"The army of France is in being again, fighting on its own soil," said a proclamation by Gen. Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, the allied commander in chief. Distributed by plane, his proclamation told the French the primary aim of the new invasion was "to drive out the Germans and join up with the allied armies advancing from Normandy," to form a solid front across France.

Heavy aerial Bombardment preceded the invasion in a final instalment of the aerial softening-up process that had been in progress for three days.

The air forces announced that more than 14,000 pilots and air crews participated in the day's operations. This was exclusive of airborne troops and parachutists who landed in France and whose numbers were not disclosed but were described as great.

One allied pilot, acting as a naval artillery observer, said he had flown 60 miles inland without seeing any big concentration of German troops.

Nazis Pulled Northward.

The Germans apparently already had been forced to pull a large part of their troops northward to meet the threat of General Eisenhower, even though they themselves had been predicting the Mediterranean landings for more than a week.

(The German-controlled Paris radio early Wednesday said there was heavy fighting between Cannes and Nice and between St. Raphael and Cap Camarat, with General Wilson personally directing the latter operations. An NBC reporter, however, said American Liberty ships already were being unloaded in Cannes harbor.)

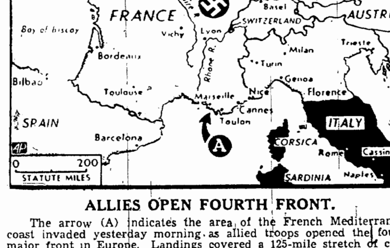
American Liberators this morning bombed the road leading from the beach to Frejus, near the mouth of the Argens river, two miles from St. Raphael. Marauder medium bombers struck heavily during the morning at beach and gun installations in a 30-mile sector from west of Cannes to east of Toulon, the great naval base where much of the scuttled French fleet lies rusting.

Other Liberators bombed five highway bridges over the great Rhone river between Valence and Avignon, along the natural pathway toward northern France.

In the last coastal bombings, the planes used small bombs designed to destroy whatever German troops and guns remained to impede the landing.

That it was not impeded was

(Continued On Page 2, Col. 4)



ALLIES OPEN FOURTH FRONT.

The arrow (A) indicates the area of the French Mediterranean coast invaded yesterday morning as allied troops opened the fourth major front in Europe. Landings covered a 125-mile stretch of coast between Nice and Marseille, and lightly opposed American and French forces quickly pressed inland. Blackened areas on the map show allied-held territory in northern France, Italy and the Mediterranean area.

French Patriots Smash Nazi Communications

LONDON, Aug. 15.—(AP)—Complete disorganization of Germany's communications throughout France was claimed by authoritative French sources today as patriot forces struck with new intensity to assist the allied invasion in the south and the sledge-hammer blows in the west.

The Independent French news agency reported from Bern that 10,000 French patriots were "advancing toward Vichy" and that hundreds more were joining them as they pushed ahead. The agency said six other detachments of French Forces of the Interior were moving on Bordeaux.

A communique issued through the French press service reported that French Forces of the Interior killed 800 Germans, wounded 300 and took 100 prisoners during the past 24 hours while seizing the towns of Breton, Serignac, Lannion and La Clarte, in Brittany.

The report said the delivery of equipment from factories working on German production had been halted by sabotage. It listed the Englebert works near Compiegne and the liquid air factory at Rheims as among the "many" whose output had been stopped.

The French were officially silent on F. F. I. activity in the area of the southern invasion but a spokesman said the Maquis had undoubtedly joined up with the allies in large numbers at the beachhead, while ripping up roads, demolishing bridges and clearing minefields in the rear.

Gen. Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, allied commander in the Mediterranean, issued instructions to civilians in the south, warning them not to block roads, not to try to cross combat lines, to report on German movements and to maintain discipline.

Meanwhile, French radio reports reflected higher tension in both Paris and Vichy.

Parisians Fear Famine.

One Paris broadcast, heard by Associated Press monitors, said the battle might reach Paris "any moment," and revealed, "we are threatened with famine. Sabotage under the pretense of patriotism is increasing our plight."

Another broadcast appealed to the people to "remain calm" and quoted the city's German commander as saying, "The population ought to know that the German authorities will do all in their power to guarantee the people's food supply."

Heavily-armed guards in the streets and hotels of Vichy were keeping watch over the restless knots of people discussing the situation and their plight, according to a message reaching the French frontier.

In an interview in London Mme. Emilienne Moreau, heroine of two wars and a delegate to the French liberation committee's consultative assembly, maintained 90 per cent of the French people were against Vichy.

Riviera Shore Defenses Neutralized

By KENNETH L. DIXON.

WITH ALLIED FORCES ATTACKING SOUTHERN FRANCE, Aug. 15.—(AP)—Until a few hours before troops stormed ashore today in southern France, the coastal defenses of the underbelly of Hitler's Europe appeared about twice as tough as those encountered in Normandy. But the expected resistance failed to materialize.

I watched the landings from a B-25 Mitchell bomber 1,000 feet above the beaches.

As far as 20 miles inland there was a consistent lack of any sign of struggle to mark the entire landscape. From my vantage point, it appeared that the new allied blows to liberate France were meeting almost no resistance in the first stages.

Preliminary reconnaissance indicated, shore defenses would form a hard shell, not too well supported from behind. Twice during recent days I have flown over those defenses in reconnaissance planes. They were bristling with guns behind heavy emplacements. However, I saw few indications of strong defenses farther inland.

It still seems incredible that we were not fired upon as we flew in with the gliders and parachute troops. It is also strange that the naval ships and landing craft unloading their cargoes of men and equipment should not be showered with enemy fire.

Apparently both the air forces and navy did a powerful job of neutralizing those shore defenses during the thundering three-hour bombardment before the landing assault.

Along the entire coastal sector antiaircraft batteries were so densely packed a few days ago that planes officially recorded flak as "intense." Yet no one aboard the plane from which I watched the assault saw a single shot fired or any sign of activity as the gliders landed.

Pilots who carried parachute troops over also reported they encountered no fire and all planes apparently returned safely.

Cracking of the outer shell was impossible until a few hours before the actual landings started. Otherwise, the bombardment would have telegraphed the punch.

Similarly, although many bombing missions were flown over the assault area during the preliminary air stages, they were matched by other missions flown over other areas all along the entire southern French coast to confuse the Germans.

But the time came during the final pre-invasion hours when the blow had to be struck. Then all available airpower poured high explosives on gun emplacements and all visible targets. The air attack was supported by naval fire of magnitude never before unleashed in this theater.

Behind the beach defenses lies higher ground to which the nazi defenders might flee. Getting to those heights and cutting the enemy off was the main job of the airborne boys who dropped from the sky to help put pressure on the defense shell from the inside. There was unquestionably one of the toughest jobs of the entire operation.

But even if the hard outer line of German defenses was cracked without a ground fight, another one may be just inside. It was not visible from the skies, but the Germans have long since proved through Italy that they are pretty handy about hiding what they don't want seen.