

NOT TO BE BROADCAST BEFORE 0030
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1943

"ON THE RUN"

By NOEL MONKS, representing the Combined Press.

With the Fifth Army, Italy.
Wednesday.

The Germans are well and truly on the run along the whole Fifth Army front. Relentless pressure exerted by the Fifth Army in all sectors within the last five days has forced the enemy out of his mountain strongholds and it can be said that the final phase of the Battle of Naples is fast approaching. Today I was in a town in the British sector that had held out against our troops for nearly two weeks, but early today Italians came running down to our lines to tell us that the Germans had fled. I entered with the first patrols and pushed right on through the town but failed to make any contact with Germans as far as ten miles from the town. The townspeople told us the Germans had stolen every item of food in the place before they left. Two truckloads of British army rations were handed to the semi-starved people in the town square. The place was a shambles due to constant shelling, but the Italians cheered and clapped the Tommies as they entered the town.

The Germans had quit so hurriedly that they did not wait to blow the charge fixed on the main bridge out of the town. Reports from all sectors of our front today indicated that the Germans have taken all the punishment that they can stand and are abandoning their ready-made mountain defensive positions and are falling back on Naples. If they intend to defend the city from the south zero hour is approaching for a mammoth tank battle on Naples Plain. The betting is, however, that the tank battle won't come off.