

B E A C H H E A D

From John Redfern representing the Combined British Press.

With the Fifth Army in Italy,  
Allied Beachhead Forces,  
April 7.

Guns are mounted on rail wagons to hit the port area of the Fifth Army Beachhead and landing strip we are using. They are not using many of these guns but they have the range of 54,000 yards - more than thirty miles. It is probable during daytime that the guns are kept back in Rome railway areas and then moved a few miles south at night. Each night they put over a heavy shoot for perhaps an hour or more. Then it stops.

Evidently the Germans like to move them back before there is a chance of attack being turned on them.

These guns fire heavy shells of a naval type. Mainly they are used to put down a harassing fire on the port. By night and day, we used smoke to screen the port from observation from high buildings in Littoria fourteen miles to the east. This gives protection to ships which would be visible in these brilliant moonlit nights. It is easier for the enemy to hit land objects because their location is known to him.

At present this beachhead fighting is mainly a series of artillery exchanges. The enemy artillery port area is increasing in intensity. This may be due to the failure of his attempts to cause serious damage by air attacks. Or it may be that the enemy's ammunition supplies, previously believed to be limited, have been increased.

Although we hear shells crumping somewhere every hour in twenty four there are certain short periods, thirty or forty minutes at most, when the shells come in heavily. I think it is a good guess that the Germans are also using selfpropelled guns on shoot-and-run lines: a short concentration of fire and then a quick getaway to lessen risks of damage from our counterbattery activities which are considerable every day. Apart from this artillery slogging, the beachhead is quiet.

On the eastern flank of the Fifth Army beachhead forces, five crewless "Goliaths" (which are a combination of controlled bomb and skill tank, five feet long, two feet wide) have been seen in the last fortyeight hours. One was used against a house in No-mans-land. After a high explosive charge in the crewless "tank" had exploded damaging the house, our men tried to get hold of parts of the "Goliath" for examination, but were held off by fierce machine-gun fire from the enemy nests. In the half-light men in the front line saw four "Goliaths" twenty five yards away from their slit-trenches. Three of the "Goliaths" had exploded their charges. The fourth "Goliath" had not properly exploded. There was a full size crewdriven tank about five hundred yards behind these "Goliaths" or "Minidogs" as the Germans call them.

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