

I - Survey of activity in April

(a) NAVY -

Despite the rapid disintegration of German land forces, the enemy was still able to mount a vigorous U-boat offensive during the month. While most of the action occurred in British coastal waters the enemy showed increasing activity in mid-ocean and made several successful attacks against merchant shipping along the coast of the United States. Merchant casualties were about the same as last month and casualties to Naval anti-submarine ships were as follows: R.C.N. - 1 Bangor mine-sweeper sunk; R.N. - 1 frigate sunk, 2 frigates damaged; U.S.N. - 1 destroyer escort, 1 patrol craft sunk. More U-boats were sunk during the month than in many months previously but the actual figure has not yet been established.

(b) ARMY -

During April the German defences on the western front began to collapse into disorganized pockets of resistance. As the Allies swept forward the final Russian assault across the Oder river in front of and to the south of Berlin quickly isolated that city and on April 25th the U.S. First Army linked up with the Russian army at Torgau. From then on the western and eastern fronts disappeared, and there was formed for a short while a northern and southern front, until the process of disintegration broke these "fronts" down into pockets of resistance.

Resistance was more marked in the British - Canadian sectors. The 1st Canadian Corps made little progress in clearing western Holland after sealing it off by reaching the Zuider Zee on April 17th. Similarly the 2nd Canadian Corps met strong opposition in the Emden - Wilhelmshaven area.

Meanwhile, in Italy the final offensive was launched on April 9th. Initially this met with strong opposition, but once the Senio river line was breached and the German line outflanked by advances on the Adriatic sector, resistance along the whole front diminished rapidly. The collapse of the Italian front and the cutting off of the northern Italian industrial output from Germany effectively prevented any possibility of a last ditch stand by the enemy in the so-called "Southern Redoubt".

(c) AIR FORCE -

R.C.A.F. activity during April was mainly of a tactical nature. Continent based fighter and reconnaissance aircraft flew deep into Germany and, although opposition was light in the air many enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground. Weather limited bomber squadrons to a few offensive sorties. Towards the end of the month, they dropped supplies into Holland and evacuated ex-prisoners.

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