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1,500 Japs Drowned, 5 Ships Sunk

5th Air Force Wipe Out Entire Convoy on Way To New Guinea

About 1,500 Japanese soldiers were drowned in the Bismarck Sea Sunday when a Fifth Air Force air fleet pounced on a Jap convoy of five vessels trying to sneak through the Allied blockade to bomb-battered Wewak, New Guinea, and sank every ship, Gen. MacArthur's communique said yesterday.

Late Saturday night a naval reconnaissance plane spotted the Jap fleet steaming toward the New Guinea coast from the direction of the Philippines and by Sunday noon 200 aircraft—including Liberators, Mitchells, Bostons and fighters—had sunk two troop-packed transports of about 6,000 tons each and three destroyer-corvette escorts.

Pilots returning from the attack reported that the sea was strewn with debris and Jap troops struggling to keep afloat with life-jackets.

Fired Back With Pistols

One pilot said: "We were the last to leave the scene and saw no lifeboats, only Japs feebly firing at us with pistols."

This loss in personnel is believed to be larger than any single enemy loss in a sea engagement in the Pacific since the first battle of the Bismarck sea last March when 18,000 Japs were killed.

For the ninth consecutive day, Allied bombers have pounded Wewak. This time 113 tons of bombs rained down on shore targets there, bringing the total

Nazi Grab of All of Balkans Looms; Germans Stiffen in Dniester Battle

400 Planes Hurlled Into Fray; Reds 7 Mi. From Balti

German resistance stiffened beyond the Dniester yesterday and Berlin reported that the Luftwaffe had thrown in 400 tank-buster battle planes to stem the Soviet onrush toward the Bessarabian rail junction of Balti.

From Berlin also came word that the Russians were now engaged in house-to-house fighting for the Polish railway city of Kovel, most westerly point of the Red Army advance.

A high command spokesman quoted by German Overseas News Agency claimed that a Soviet column which entered the town had been wiped out. Kovel stands 72 miles southeast of Brest-Litovsk, through which the Russo-German partition line was drawn in 1939.

While Marshal Gregory Zhukov's troops fought their way to the approaches of Brody, 58 miles northeast of the German base at Lwow, Marshal Ivan Koniev's armored spearheads 200 miles to the south pressed within seven miles of Balti, from which a rail line runs to Jassy, where Marshal Fritz von Manstein until recently had his headquarters, and thence to the Danube port of Galatz.

In spite of Von Manstein's use of Luftwaffe reserves to attack the Dniester crossings and hold back the main body of Koniev's armies, Moscow reported that more and more Soviet troops were pouring across the river into Bessarabia, where they held a 50-mile stretch

Hungary Victim of Old Squeeze Play



Daily Express Map

Spotlight on the war's big events covered this general area of southeastern Europe last night. Hitler took drastic steps to seal the doorway into Hungary by occupying that rich Balkan country with troops. Russian armies from the Ukraine continued their swift westward advance, reaching the foothills of the Carpathian mountains which separate Transylvania (Hungary) and Rumania.

Libs, Mustangs Strike France From the Pyrenees to Calais

Liberator bombers and Mustang fighters teamed up yesterday to give the Nazis in occupied France a trouncing from the Pas de Calais to the Pyrenees.

The Liberators struck once again at the Pas de Calais, now becoming one of the most bomb-battered areas in the world. Escorted by P47s, the B24s

Hungary Occupied, Move in Bulgaria Is Reported

An atmosphere of rising military crisis pervaded the world last night as Adolf Hitler, in a desperate thrust to bolster his southeastern flank against the onrushing Soviet armies, commenced the occupation of the Balkans, where Germany's collapse in 1918 began.

One hundred thousand German troops occupied Hungary, and a quisling government was installed. Reports that the Germans also had taken over all telephone, telegraph and radio communications in Bulgaria began to trickle last night from neutral sources.

There still was no news of German occupation of Rumania, but with the Russian armies already in Bessarabia and only 40 miles from the border of Rumania proper, such a move was expected hourly. Bolstering such expectations was the announcement by Germany's own Foreign Office spokesman that Germany was "striving to co-ordinate all resources and forces in southeastern Europe against the common Russian threat." The developments in the Balkans, he said last night, were not yet completed.

"A Great Turning"

Germany's strategic position was regarded in London as turning steadily from one of seriousness to one of great gravity. William Smith White, Associated Press correspondent here, wrote: "It is far too early to begin to recall