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Tuesday
6th June 1944.
9.00 P.M.

Here is the News read by Joseph Macleod.

All still goes well on the coast of Normandy.

Mr. Churchill, in a second statement to the Commons this evening, reported that in some places we've driven several miles into France.

Fighting is going on in the town of Caen between the Cherbourg Peninsula and Havre. Six-hundred-and-forty guns of the Allied

Navy's bombarded the German coast defences in support of our

troops.

~~landings.~~ Our great airborne landings - the biggest in history -

^{HAVE} ~~has~~ been carried out with very little loss. About four-thousand

ships with thousands of smaller craft crossed the Channel this

morning after the Allied assault had been postponed twenty-four

hours through bad weather. ~~All through the night and today air~~

~~support has been on a vast scale. Thirty-one thousand Allied~~

~~airmen have been over France during today.~~ On the beaches

opposition was less than expected but heavy fighting still lies

ahead. All through the night and today air support has been on

a vast scale. Thirty-one-thousand Allied airmen have been over

France during today alone.

The bulletin will end with the latest war report, including the voices of General Eisenhower, General Montgomery and General de Gaulle. It also has messages and recordings from correspondents in the field.

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The Prime Minister made a second statement on the situation in the House of Commons tonight. Mr. Churchill said: "I have been at centres where the latest information is received and I can state to the House that this operation is proceeding in a thoroughly satisfactory manner. Many dangers and difficulties which this time last night appeared extremely formidable are behind us. The passage of the sea has been made with far less loss than we apprehended. The resistance of the batteries has been greatly weakened by the bombing of the airforce, and the superior bombardment of our ships quickly reduced their fire to dimensions which did not affect the problem. The landings of Allied troops on ^{THE WHOLE} ~~a~~ front have been ^{EFFECTIVE} ~~successful~~ and the troops have penetrated, in some cases, several miles inland. Lodgements exist on a broad front.

"The outstanding feature" said the Prime Minister, "has been the landings of airborne troops on a scale far larger than anything ^{that} ~~has~~ been seen so far in the world. These landings took place with extremely little loss and with great accuracy. Particular anxiety attached to them because the conditions of ^{light} ~~dark~~ prevailing in the very limited period just before the dawn - the conditions of visibility - make all the difference. It might easily have been that something might have happened at the last minute which would have prevented the airborne troops playing

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 their part. A great degree of risk had to be taken but
 General Eisenhower's courage is equal to all the necessary
 decisions that had to be taken in these extremely difficult and
 uncontrollable matters. The airborne troops are well established;
 and the landings and follow-ups are all proceeding with much
 less loss than we expected - very much less loss. Fighting is
 proceeding at various points. We have captured various bridges
 which are important and which have not been blown up by the
 enemy. Fighting is proceeding inland in the town of Caen.

"But all this - although a very valuable first step,
 a vital and essential first step - gives no indication whatever
 of what may be the course of the battle in the next days and
 weeks, because the enemy will now probably endeavour to
 concentrate on this area, and, in that event, heavy fighting will
 soon begin and will continue without end, as fast as we can push
 troops in and he can bring other troops up. This is therefore
 a most serious time and we enter upon it with ^{our} ~~our~~ great Allies,
 all in good heart and good friendship.

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In his first statement to the Commons at midday to-day

Mr. Churchill called the attack: - "the first of a series of landings in force upon the European continent". An immense armada of upwards of four thousand ships, together with several thousand small craft, had crossed the Channel and about eleven-thousand first line aircraft could be drawn on for the battle. There were already hopes at midday that a tactical surprise had been achieved and the Allies hoped to be able to furnish the enemy with a succession of surprises during the fighting. But Mr. Churchill noted then, as he did tonight, that we must expect the battle to grow constantly in scale and intensity for many weeks to come.

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The old city of Caen where - as the Prime Minister says - fighting is taking place, is some ten miles ^{INLAND} from ^{THE} stretch of the Channel coast of France between Havre and Cherbourg, roughly due south of our coastline between Portsmouth and Brighton. It's an ancient place - Caen, with churches founded by William the Conqueror, . Normally, more than sixty thousand people live there, for the place is a busy commercial and industrial centre; but evacuation has been going on for a year. Steamers used to go up the ^{Canal} to it in peacetime, from Newhaven and Dieppe. Caen has an airfield that's been often bombed and is important as a road and rail junction.

Vast numbers of Allied airborne troops formed the advance guard of the attack. General Eisenhower spent some hours last night going the rounds of American parachute units, seeing last-minute preparations and watching the take-off after the light had faded. Some of our own men had been told by their Commander at the briefing: "I want you to raise all the Hell you can. You will be dropped on the back of the Boche." Everyone of the big fleet of American transport planes which carried the first troops and equipment to the continent was painted - a few hours before - with broad blue-and-white stripes, so that friendly forces would know them. They carried coloured lights to help the pilots keep in formation. This brightly-lit armada, stretching more

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than two hundred miles across the sky, and travelling only a few hundred feet up, took more than an hour to pass. Yet on the other ~~side~~ ^{side} no flak came up. No fighters came up. There was only small arms fire. / Then, there were all our own airborne forces going out - gliders and parachute troops in great numbers, with their own umbrella of night fighters. Cloud five thousand feet thick blanketed the sky and the airborne forces ~~went~~ ^{WENT} down through it to the first battlefield. The Germans say we also dropped many life-sized dummies by parachute. They looked like men but exploded when they hit the ground. It's learned at Headquarters that the aircraft which took the airborne troops got back without very heavy casualties. / From shortly before ~~midnight~~ ^{MIDNIGHT} ~~RAF bombers~~ ^{RAF bombers} ~~LANCASTERS AND HALIFAXES WERE SENT~~ ^{LANCASTERS AND HALIFAXES WERE SENT} they had many missions and hundreds of targets. Some of them had to block the roads and slow down German reinforcements. Well over a thousand heavies ^{- LANCASTERS AND HALIFAXES -} had put down considerably more than five thousand tons by sunrise on ten German coastal batteries. Cloud had completely covered most of the targets, but markers and target indicators ensured efficient bombing, just the same. The crews didn't know beforehand that their attack was the immediate prelude ^{To} of the grand assault. The first crews came back still without knowing it. But the later ones, returning in the first light saw far below them white specks. They were too big to be wave tops.

They were ships, ploughing across the Channel, and still more ships. Now and then there was a vivid gunflash in the distance. Then they saw Fortresses going out. The day bombing had begun ^{:-H By} More than a thousand American heavies, Thousands of other bombers and fighter bombers ~~had~~ have been out in waves ever since. The first ten waves of American fighter bombers reported no serious opposition from the Luftwaffe anywhere. It's been the heaviest day for fighter pilots from half past four onwards, but up to noon, enemy air opposition remained slight. There were no reports of enemy activity over this country, though at one time German guns on the other side of the Channel sent a few shells over towards Dover. One of our pilots says: "I never saw so much action in such a small area. You could hardly see the sky for our planes. The water below looked like a solid bridge of ships."

~~The Germans say it was two hours after the airborne landings that amphibious operations began on a large scale. The communique from Hitler's headquarters (now reported to be somewhere in the West) says that heavy fighting was in progress.~~

This morning, it was still officially called "the naval phase" of the massive operation. British, American, Canadian, Norwegians, Polish, Dutch, French and Greek navies, including battleships, were out in two great assault forces. With hundreds of minesweepers clearing a way for them, and with a great air

cover, they were not only guarding the ~~strategic~~ streams of landing craft against German surface or underwater attack; ~~but~~ at dawn, ^{THEY} began a shattering bombardment at long and short range. Over six hundred and forty naval guns bombarded the beaches and German strongpoints, to ease the job of the armies going ashore. General Montgomery's British, Canadian and American troops took many secret weapons ashore with them. An observer who saw the first assault forces land had already ~~watched~~ ^{watched} the naval guns pound their targets out of existence - "a magnificent sight". Wave upon wave of troops were soon surging up the beaches. Transport lorries, guns equipment of all sorts was trundling ashore.

The weather early today was described as "not too bad, though it could have been a bit better". This afternoon, the sun broke through high cloud over the Straits of Dover. The sea was smooth with a light wind from the north-west.

It's learned from Shaeff headquarters that the beginning of the assault was actually put off for twenty four hours because of the weather. There are also these other official facts from headquarters tonight. ~~The airborne attacks were on a very large scale. Allied forces have cleared several of their ~~the~~ toughest hurdles, but many more remain.~~ Opposition on the beaches was less than expected. The Luftwaffe has not come up in strength though the Germans have between fifteen hundred and two thousand

fighters in Germany and the West. The coastal defence guns of the enemy ^{ALSO,} gave less opposition than expected. The Allied Air Forces have so far done the job they'd been called upon to do. Mine-sweeping operations have gone according to plan, but the hardest task for the minesweepers may still lie ahead. ~~Naval~~ Naval losses are described as "very, very small" ~~but the loss of one battleship~~ though one battleship moved ~~very~~ close inshore to silence a group of land positions. Over ten thousand tons of high explosives were dropped on the enemy's coastal positions between midnight and eight this morning. In the same time over seven thousand five hundred flights were made by Allied aircraft. At least thirty-one thousand Allied airmen were in the air over France between midnight and breakfast time. Losses in aircraft were extremely small. In general, Allied losses have been much less than expected. That is the information which correspondents have sent tonight from Schaef.

We hope that communique number two from headquarters may be available in time for the midnight news.

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In Italy, Fifth Army troops had by yesterday afternoon crossed or reached the river Tiber along practically the entire twenty-mile stretch between the city and the sea. At some places they were already five miles beyond the river; at present they are only meeting weak enemy resistance here.

We found eleven of the fourteen main bridges in Rome intact, and secured other bridges south of the city. In the coastal sector many Germans found themselves cut off, because the crossings behind them had been blown; British troops have taken over two-thousand prisoners here, and the figure is still mounting.

The Germans are also falling back in some disorder north of Rome. French troops on the Fifth Army's right flank are now in Tivoli, fifteen miles to the east along Highway 5. Further inland, in the hills north of Highway 6, the Germans are fighting hard to cover their withdrawal, as the Eighth Army presses steadily on up the spine of Italy.

All units of the Mediterranean Air Forces concentrated ^{again} yesterday on German troops and lorries on the roads and railways of Central and Northern Italy. Another four-hundred lorries were knocked out.

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In the Commons this morning Mr. Churchill spoke ~~of~~
~~of the Allied liberation of Rome.~~ In reviewing
the campaign since the original landing at Anzio, he said the
German attack on the beach-head in February cost the enemy
twenty-five-thousand men; our losses were twenty-thousand. When
they fell on the retreating enemy's right flank, the beach-head
forces numbered about a-hundred-and-fifty-thousand. Mr. Churchill
ended with a warm tribute to General Alexander's leadership, and
praised the work of the Allied Commanders serving under him.

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To-morrow morning the B.B.C. will begin broadcasting the Allied Expeditionary Force's programme, which it has undertaken in agreement with the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force.

The new programme will be broadcast daily from 5.55 a.m. until 11.p.m. Double British Summer Time on a wavelength of two-hundred-and-eighty-five metres, that is a frequency of one-thousand-and-fifty (One-0-five-0) kilocycles per second, for all ~~types of~~ the A.E.F.

It ~~will include contributions from~~ the existing programmes of the B.B.C., the American Forces network, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and programmes ~~originally originated for~~ the A.E.F.

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