

July 30, 2020

WWII, 75 Years Ago, The Evening Gazette, Indiana, PA

WWII Weekly Front Pages

29 July - 4 August 1945

The Evening Gazette, Indiana, PA

"Evacuate these cities immediately."



PACIFIC

Task Force 38 of the US Third Fleet poured 1,000 tons of shells into the industrial and rail city of Hamamatsu, 120 miles south of Tokyo and three miles inland. Targets were left "burning fiercely" after a one hour assault on Monday. US staff officers had written off a groggy Japanese Navy after the huge strike on the Kure naval base on Saturday. Carrier aircraft roamed at will over a "deserted" Tokyo before hammering a large war plant in the southeast section of the capital. Not a single round of anti-aircraft fire was drawn. Raiding Allied carrier planes had also destroyed 207 Japanese vessels and 430 planes in two days, as daring US destroyers knifed deep into Suruga Gulf to bombard the country's largest aluminum plant. Japan had lost at least 1,546 ships and small craft in July.

Twelve Japanese cities, including four previously warned, were given notice that they were marked for destruction by American Superforts. "Evacuate these cities immediately," was the warning in 720,000 leaflets dropped on the doomed municipalities, where more than 1.3 million people lived. On 2 August, in the greatest air raid in history, 6,632 tons of bombs and mines were dropped on four Japanese cities by a great fleet of 820 B-29s, only one of which was lost.

Mine-laying Superforts had established a complete blockade of Japan. Every major harbor of that country and Korea had been sown with airborne mines, forcing Japan to dip heavily into home stockpiles. Japanese harbors had been so heavily mined that they had resorted to sending small suicide craft through the minefields to clear the way for larger ships. The channels opened up in this way were quickly reseeded by the B-29s.

Japanese Prime Minister Suzuki said of the ultimatum given at Potsdam, "There is no change whatsoever in the fundamental policy of our government to continue the prosecution of the war." As for the recent Allied air and sea attacks on the Japanese homeland, he said, "I leave this with absolute confidence in the hands of our strategists."

## EUROPE

At Potsdam, Prime Minister Attlee and Premier Stalin worked on the final language of tentative agreement reached in eleven days of deliberations as the Big Three Conference entered the home stretch on a keynote of harmony. There had been no noticeable break in the proceedings due to the replacement of Churchill, and prospects were for an early conclusion, although there was a delay in the work due to Stalin having a slight cold. Late in the week came the communique, which displayed a toughness with Germany sufficient to ensure the world that it would be a long time before that nation could again threaten world peace. In addition, plans had been perfected by the Allies for chopping up and destroying the Japanese military machine, but any Russian role had not been stated.

Top Nazis who had built and bossed the German war machine were going to pieces mentally as they awaited their trials behind barbed wire. Chief among them was Hermann Goering, who had never gotten over his abject fear of death he showed when first brought to the interrogation center. War trials were scheduled to start 1 September in Nuremburg.

Seven Germans, two of them women, would be hanged and three others faced long prison sentences for the killing of six captured American airmen that past August. Each of the group denied any connection to the mob which had beaten the airmen to death with sticks and stones. One condemned blamed the crime on Nazi Propaganda Minister Goebbels who had said civilians would not be held responsible for what happened to Allied fliers who bailed out.

Erwin Rommel's son declared in a sworn statement that his father had committed suicide by poison as an alternative to the death penalty because he was suspected of complicity in the July 1944 bombing attempt on Hitler's life. Hitler had informed the elder Rommel that if he committed suicide nothing would happen to his family.

The trial of Marshal Petain, premier of Vichy France, for treason continued in Paris. On 3 August his chief of government, Pierre Laval, admitted that Petain had pushed through acts to "overthrow the French Republic."

## HOME FRONT

An eight ton B-35 Mitchell Army bomber had struck the 79th floor of the Empire State Building on 28 July, killing 13 persons and smashing an 18-foot-wide gap in its north wall. The building reopened for business on Monday – only the observation tower would remain closed. Other than the three man crew, most of the victims were female stenographers working for the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

After 3 August, enlisted men would be allotted 30 gallons of gasoline at the time of their discharge, according to an order by the Office of Price Administration. Officers on terminal leave had already been provided the benefit.

The "Shooting Star," a jet-propelled fighter plane which had hurtled the 555 miles from Dayton Ohio to New York in 62 minutes, was hailed as the world's fastest plane. Travelling nearly the speed of sound, the bat-like super-streamlined aircraft hissed over La Guardia field on 2 August. No smoke or flame could be seen from the kerosene-powered plane's exhaust.

(Photo courtesy newspapers.com, Indiana Evening Gazette)