

Nazis, Army Chiefs Split on Peace Move

See Column 3

Weather

Data for 24 hours ending at 7

Temperatures:
Maximum 66
Minimum 29
Forecast: Clearing tonight;
generally clear and cooler tomorrow.

La Grande Evening Observer

HUB OF NORTHEASTERN OREGON
Union and Wallowa Counties

ESTABLISHED 1896

LA GRANDE, OREGON, SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 31, 1945

FIVE CENTS



Five Yank Armies Race for Berlin

Soviets Cut Through Austrian Defenses

Nazi Line Cracked By Reds

LONDON, March 31 (UP)—Marshal Stalin announced tonight that Soviet forces have captured Nitra, 45 miles east of Bratislava, and driven forward across the river Vah, only 32 miles from Bratislava. The Russian forces also captured Galanta, 27 miles east of Bratislava and 57 miles east of Vienna.

LONDON, March 31 (UP)—The German fronts in western Hungary and southern Silesia tonight were cracking rapidly and the Red army was closing upon Vienna, Weiner Neustadt and the south Austrian center of Graz.

Marshal Stalin announced that troops of Marshal Fedor I. Tolbukhin's third Ukrainian army swept into the southwestern Hungarian border towns of Vasvár, Szentgotthard and Kormend, within 38 miles of Graz.

To the north Soviet forces were across the Austrian border and less than 40 miles from Vienna.

In southern Silesia Ratibor 18 miles north of Moravská Ostrava and Bieskau, 13 miles west of Ratibor, were captured.

One report placed some Soviet forces a little more than 20 miles from the industrial center of Wiener Neustadt, about 22 miles south of Vienna.

Silesian Line Cracks
In Silesia, German reports said, the Red army burst into Ratibor and Katscher in southern Silesia, 18 and 21 miles respectively from Moravská Ostrava. They also entered Glogau, 80 miles southeast of Frankfurt, Glogau has been encircled for some weeks.

The tank forces were racing toward Vienna under a security blackout after turning the frontal defense line anchored on Lake Neusiedler with a push across the Austrian border at Koeszeg, 50 miles south of the capital.

Another column of Marshal Fedor I. Tolbukhin's third Ukrainian army group, also moving under a security blackout, was less than 40 miles southeast of Vienna in a frontal advance toward the Lake Neusiedler line.

More Gasoline For Civilian When War Ends in Europe

LOS ANGELES, March 31 (UP)—The fall of Germany will mean a large increase, possibly 50 per cent, in civilian gasoline rations in the United States, said Ralph K. Davis, deputy petroleum administrator for war.

Continuance Of Coal Mine Wage Pact is Ordered

WASHINGTON, Mar. 31 (UP)—The war labor board today ordered an unlimited extension of the soft coal wage contract which expires at midnight with full retroactive pay to the miners for any wage increases finally agreed upon.

The board specified that "the parties shall continue the uninterrupted production of coal." The contract extension, the order said, shall run "until the differences that now separate the parties are peacefully and finally resolved."

Americans Freed From Fleeing Nazis

WITH THIRD ARMY, Germany, March 31 (UP)—More than 500 allied prisoners of war were free today because they were slow-footed.

They were part of a group of 2,000 captives the Germans set on the road for a forced march deeper into Germany as Sixth division armored columns raced into the area south of Giessen.

Reports Say Hitler Ready To Halt War

LONDON, March 31 (UP)—European reports said Adolf Hitler and the German high command agreed to a dramatic all-night meeting ending early today that Germany should seek an armistice, but apparently delayed action when the nazis refused to give up the government immediately.

The high command informed Hitler that it was prepared to negotiate for an armistice if the nazi government would quit, a Stockholm Tidningen quoted by the Exchange Telegraph agency said.

The staff officers were said to have contended that continuation of the war is impossible in view of the allied break-through in the west and the Soviet threat in the east.

Members of the council under Kesselring and Von Schoerner would be Hitler himself, Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering, Gestapo Chief Heinrich Himmler and Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz.

Hitler was said to have told the generals they could open negotiations with the allies while he and Himmler answered for internal order.

Newsprint Price Boost Authorized

WASHINGTON, March 31 (UP)—The office of price administration has authorized an increase of \$3 a ton in the manufacturers' ceiling price for newsprint, effective immediately. It was the third ceiling price increase for newsprint since the commodity came under price control in March, 1942.

La Grande Bomber Gunner Wounded

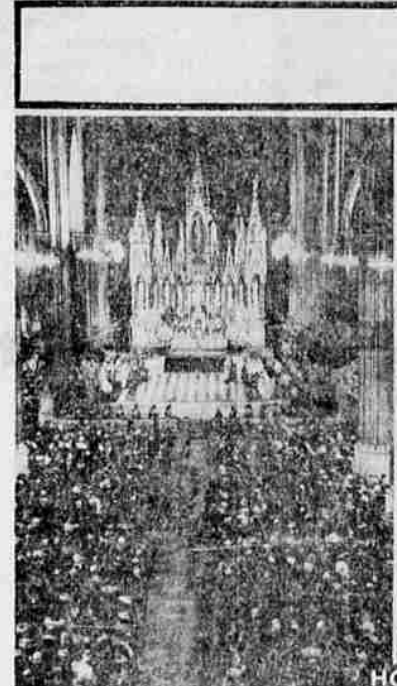
Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Ainsworth of 1910 Adams avenue were advised by the war department yesterday that their son, Sgt. Donald J. Ainsworth, was wounded in action.

GO TO CHURCH EASTER SUNDAY

PACIFIC FRONT



EUROPEAN FRONT



GO TO CHURCH EASTER SUNDAY — In the hot holes of the Pacific and muddy trenches of the European fronts, in the magnificence of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, the spaciousness of Hollywood's famed Bowl, and the little claspboard country church, prayers for our fighting men go Heavenward to Him whose resurrection is celebrated tomorrow — Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace. Join your supplications to those of millions by attending some church Easter Sunday.

Japs Put Up Weak Resistance to New Island Invasions

MANILA, March 31 (UP)—Japanese defense throughout the central Philippines were collapsing rapidly today before American forces which seized control of all but one of the major islands in the archipelago.

The mounting campaign sent U. S. assault troops swarming over two more islands—Negros, the fourth largest island in the Philippines, and Little Cebu in Manila bay.

Governor Urges Support of Relief Clothing Campaign

SALEM, Ore., March 31 (UP)—Full support of the people of Oregon for the collection of clothing for war relief was urged by Gov. Earl Snell today.

County's Contribution to Red Cross War Fund Hits \$17,500

Union county's effort to aid the American Red Cross war fund continued to grow today as campaign leaders indicated that total contributions from all sources approximated \$17,500 or \$1,300 over the quota of \$16,200 set for the area.

Latest checks were received from Union, when G. I. Hess, chairman for that area, turned in to headquarters \$2,405.25, nearly 25 per cent over that community's quota of \$2,000, and from the La Grande Aerie of Eagles, amounting to \$150.

Hess said further donations are expected and that donors would be listed as contributions are received. He paid high tribute to his corps of workers, saying: "I want to thank sincerely all who contributed so generously and the fine group of people who aided to make our drive so successful."

Appeal is Filed In Ward Seizure

CHICAGO, March 31 (UP)—The government filed an appeal in federal court today in which it contended that army seizure of certain Montgomery Ward & company properties was legal.

Isolation of Ruhr Is Near Complete as Push Gains Speed

PARIS, March 31 (UP)—Eight allied armies crashed into the wilting nazis on the western front tonight driving within 170 miles southwest of Berlin and within 38 miles of closing an iron vise on the vital Ruhr industrial area.

PARIS, March 31 (UP)—The American 15th army today joined seven other allied armies for the final assault on Germany in the west which already had overrun the western quarters of the reich and driven into position for an advance upon Berlin from the western river line 165 miles from the capital.

The 15th army has gone into action with the American first and third armies as part of Gen. Omar Bradley's 12th army group and now holds a front line position, it was announced.

It takes its place beside four other American armies—the first, third, seventh, and ninth—the British second army, the Canadian first army, and the French army now in action against the Germans.

The sector taken over by the 15th army, under command of Lt. Gen. Leonard Gerow, was not specified.

The 15th went into action as the Third army drove into the area of Kassel, key to the German defense of the Weser river line.

WITH U. S. SEVENTH ARMY, Germany, March 30—(Delayed)—(UP)—American troops encountered the first organized civilian resistance in Germany today from fanatic men, women, and young girls along the eastern bank of the Main river.

Scores of residents of Schweinfurt and Aschaffenburg sniped from hidden vantage points at 45th division troops crossing the river. Sixteen-year-old girls dropped grenades from second-story windows.

One 15-year-old girl was shot while attempting to fire a bazooka at passing tanks.

The third army was advancing at a rate which was expected to bring it to the city by nightfall.

In the north, Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery's 21st army group scored a fresh advance of at least 15 miles today but the location of its forward spearheads, driving to a junction with the U. S. First army which would seal off the Ruhr from central Germany, was not revealed.

However, it was known that armored forces on both sides were eating up the remaining distance toward a juncture rapidly.

A Paris radio report said the forces had been linked in the Paderborn area but this was not confirmed.

The American First army and Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery's Anglo-American armies virtually sealed off the arsenal cities of the Ruhr with converging drives from the south and north that may already have linked up on the 50-mile stretch between Paderborn and Muenster.

Tank Drive Unchecked
Almost 3,000 American and See RUHR... Page 7

German Industries Bomber Targets

LONDON, March 31 (UP)—A huge aerial armada of at least 2,500 American and British planes rocked some of Germany's biggest industrial cities today in a shattering blow on the faltering reich.

The heavy assaults by the U. S. eighth air force and the RAF bomber command lashed prime industrial targets as close as 30 miles to Berlin and ripped through the nazi submarine yards at Hamburg for the second straight day.

Lt. Gen. James H. Doolittle sent more than 1,300 Flying Fortress and Liberator, with an escort of 850 Mustangs and Thunderbolts, into the attack, while the RAF mounted strong forces of Lancasters and Halifaxes with Mustang fighter support.

Local fire apparatus was augmented by coast guard equipment and a coast guard fire boat.

U. S. Ships, Planes Continue to Blast Jap Home Islands

GUAM, March 31 (UP)—Pacific fleet carrier task forces and more than 100 superforts raked the Japanese from Okinawa to the home island of Kyushu, 330 miles to the northeast, today in smashing blows which Tokyo said were preparations for imminent invasion.

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz reported the fleet sank 18 Japanese ships, probably sank 14 and damaged 15 in two days near Okinawa and then closed for a devastating close-range bombardment of the island's defenses.

The attack still was in progress and Tokyo anticipated U. S. invasion forces would go ashore at any moment.

The B-29 task force struck in support of the Okinawa operation, hitting Kyushu heavily in an effort to neutralize it.

Tokyo said American minesweepers were now clearing the approaches to Okinawa and that a powerful transport armada is heading for the scene.

Battleships and light units of the Pacific fleet meanwhile blasted at shore installations on Okinawa as carrier planes hit the main island of the Ryukus again today, Nimitz said.

Fleet surface units on March 27 and 28 also bombarded tiny Minami Daito island, 300 miles east of Okinawa, and outside the Ryukyu chain, which guards the approaches to Japan, Formosa and the China coast.

Nimitz reported that a carrier task force of the British Pacific fleet struck at targets in the Sakashima group of the southern Ryukus, less than 300 miles east of Formosa.

Meanwhile, a strong force of B-29s blasted targets and airfields on Kyushu, Japan's southernmost island.

Enemy Rail Lines In Italy Are Cut

ROME, March 31 (UP)—All enemy rail lines in central and northeastern Italy in front of the Eighth army were closed today.

Mitchell media reported that in back of the German line to attack rail lines in the south end of the area near Milan.

The ground campaign, however, continued relatively quiet with activity limited to scattered patrol operations.

Coos Bay Is Hit By Costly Blaze

COOS BAY, Ore., March 31 (UP)—An early morning fire of undetermined origin that for an hour threatened the heart of the business district caused thousands of dollars damage here today. Two firemen were overcome.