

Russian Eyewitness Tells Of Berlin Battle's Fury

(Continued From Page One)

on favorable terrain. Our tank units were compelled to build their own bridges and roads. Our advance was a continuous mass of material relentlessly sweeping ahead like an avalanche. Thousands of motorized vehicles were rolling on several lanes on a dozen parallel highways.

Luftwaffe Shuns Daylight
Around the clock hundreds of fighters, bombers and assault planes swept the skies. Fires blazed everywhere. The artillery cannonade did not cease for a single minute. Motors roared over our heads carrying tons of deadly gifts westward.

The Luftwaffe also was active, dropping parachute flares over our lines. But they dared to fly only at night, our air superiority being so overwhelming.

There was great enthusiasm among our soldiers as they drove within sight of their four years' goal. Their lips burned with one word, "Berlin."

Two days ago at 6 p. m. I stood on the eastern edge of Bernau, in the course of that night Bernau was destroyed and our tank forces were ordered to proceed.

Corpses Litter Road
The next morning was rainy and foggy. Aircraft were grounded, but the tanks smashed on without air support.

I rode a jeep right behind the tank column which entered the northwestern city limits of Berlin. The whole day panzers burned like torches and heaps of German corpses littered the roads.

At practically each halt there were heavy barricades, which tank-borne sappers demolished under murderous enemy fire. All the roads and fields were densely mined.

I inspected Col. Grekov's battery, which opened fire on Berlin at 12:30 p. m., shelling bridges spanning the Sprea and the Stettin northern railway stations.

At 12:40 I was told the vanguards had broken into the northeastern limits of Berlin in the Weissensee district. Tankmen reported by radio that practically every step of Berlin's central streets was barricaded. Germans were firing intensely from the houses.

On high buildings dominating the capital's skyline, tankmen unfurled the Red flag.

I saw the massive preparations which preceded the Berlin offensive. In the past few days, I witnessed great masses of military equipment streaming to the Oder river.

In the area of the projected blow were concentrated hundreds of giant Stalin and some Sherman tanks and an extraordinary quantity of artillery. Thousands of motors roared at the Oder crossings.

Heavy tanks and self-propelled guns blanketed the jumping off place on a small patch of land on the west bank of the Oder. The battle for this bridgehead raged furiously for many days.

Passionate to End War
At some points the width of the bridgehead did not exceed three kilometers. Facing us were

numerous rifle and tank divisions protecting the Nazi capital. Suddenly an unparalleled barrage loosened the enemy positions. Hundreds of planes simultaneously dropped their bomb loads. Guns of all calibers standing hub to hub covered the field as far as I could see.

I saw the first group of prisoners, all of whom told of the hysterical appeals of their commanders to fight to the last drop of blood and under no circumstances admit the Russians to Berlin.

The characteristic feature of this offensive has been the secret concentration of forces, the skillful establishment of overwhelming superiority, the seizure of initiative, and the development of progressively stronger massive blows from land and air.

All men and officers today smashing into Berlin know allied troops also are uninterruptedly marching eastward.

The more fiercely the enemy guns thunder, the more savage the opposition, the more passionate is their desire to end the war.

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GIVES 504 DECKS OF CARDS FOR SOLDIERS

The Veterans of Foreign Wars and The Indianapolis Times playing card collection received a man-sized shot in the arm yesterday with one contribution alone.

M. A. Morris of Morris Brothers Co., 447 E. Washington st., gave 504 decks in memory of his brother, Lt. Jack A. Morris, who gave his life for his country in Nov. 1943.

And delivery of the cards to nearby military hospitals was put into actual operation yesterday as 500 decks were presented the Red Cross at Billings general hospital.

The drive closes Saturday so drop that extra deck at the public library nearest your home.

GATES TO ADDRESS REAL ESTATE BOARD

Governor Gates will address the Indianapolis Real Estate board at the luncheon meeting at noon Thursday at the Hotel Washington.

Wendell M. Hicks, president, will be in charge of the meeting and Henry E. Ostrom will introduce the speaker. Carl G. Seytler is in charge of program arrangements.

SCHRICKER TO SPEAK AT CHURCH DINNER

Former Governor Schricker will address the congregational dinner tomorrow at 6:30 p. m. in the University Park Christian church.

The dinner is dedicated to the father-son relationship. Music and other entertainment are scheduled.

LUNCHEON SET FRIDAY

The Ladies' Auxiliary of the Order of Railway Conductors, Division 103, will hold a covered dish luncheon Friday at the home of Mrs. George Dienhart, 32 N. Arlington st.

JOHN COSSELL STRICKEN

John Cossell, after whom Cossell rd. was named, suffered a stroke on a W. Washington street, today. He is 72 and was taken to his home at 4936 Rockville rd.

44 DECATUR SENIORS WILL GET DIPLOMAS

Forty-four graduates at Decatur Central high school will receive diplomas in commencement exercises at 8 p. m. today in the school gymnasium.

President W. G. Spencer of Franklin college will give the principal address and Hollis Adams, principal, will present the diplomas. The Rev. Alfred Backus will give the invocation and benediction.

Graduates are: Rhea Bailey, June Bailey, Margaret Barnett, Barbara Bray, Cecil Bray, Barbara Brown, Clara Butcher, Pat Carr, Margaret Cochran, Rosemary Cook, Margie Cass, Carol Cox, Louise Davis, Virgil Dunn, Robert Dorrell, Roland Dyer, Doris Frazier, Margaret Frasier, Ralph Fry, Helen Hamilton, Glen Hied, Emma Jean Holman, Evelyn Horne, Nuthand Kappel, Marjorie McCoy, June McDale, Robert McGraw, Morris Mills, Virginia Moore, Robert Moore.

Mary Pate, Joan Peck, Margaret Rosner, Joan Sample, Robert Saperfield, Marvin Shafelin, Charles Toms, Wallace Underwood, Martha Ware, Viola Westcott, Ruby Whitaker, Beatrice Wiatt, Robert Warren and Doane Woliver.

Sense, Not Politics, Dictated Leaving Berlin to the Reds

By DAVID M. NICHOL, Times Foreign Service Writer.

Russian entry into Berlin ahead of the western allies probably reflects less high politics than common sense on the part of commanders. Their main aim is to end the war in Europe as quickly as possible and with as little sacrifice as is necessary.

Even through censorship, correspondents have been able to make plain that U. S. 9th army forces could have crossed the Elbe river. Perhaps they could have made progress in the drive on the reich capital.

Correspondents have also pointed out that the initial bridgehead over the Elbe river near Magdeburg was a smashing by a German counter-attack.

The second—near Barby a little farther south—has expanded only slightly in ten days.

Behind the apparent delay is the

blunt fact that the central portion of the allied line has been extended far in its drive into Germany. Both to the north and south the Nazis have powerful and well-armed forces.

For the Americans to have advanced on Berlin would have been a spectacular gamble. Its results could have been horribly costly had it failed.

Allied commanders have shown they were aware of this situation by their reluctance to press across the Elbe. This also is indicated by the decisions to turn Field Marshal Montgomery's armies north to the great port areas of Bremen and Hamburg, and the 3d army of Gen.

Patton south towards Regensburg and the Danube.

The Red army faced a similar problem when it reached the Oder opposite Berlin late in January. Presumably it too could have plunged on and, perhaps, have reached Berlin.

But its leaders have learned the hard way that the Nazis are tough customers. They took no chances. They secured their flanks north to Stettin and south almost to the Moravian gap into Czechoslovakia.

And for two and a half months they massed men and equipment for the big push.

Russian preparations tied down large portions of what remained of the German army and made it impossible for the Nazis to transfer sizeable units to the defense of the west.

The allied advance from the Rhine made it equally difficult for the Nazis to re-inforce the Oder.

Seldom have two independent campaigns been so integrated.

Capture of Berlin itself has symbolic more than military value—particularly since the punishing raids of early February which seem to have destroyed those portions of central administration machinery which had survived five and a half years of war.

The position of the Red army was better at the moment than ours and it got the go sign.

The juncture between the western allies and the Russians at best will be ticklish, delicate business. It will be much easier achieved if one force is holding relatively stable positions.

To have stormed Berlin simultaneously from both sides would have been suicidal.

Another practical consideration is that Berlin falls entirely within the zone of Russian occupation as outlined at the Big Three conferences. Allied commanders may have de-

RAILROAD EMPLOYEE KILLED UNDER TRAIN

A veteran of 33 years with the New York Central railroad, Claude N. Ferguson, 57, of 1445 King ave., was dead today from injuries received while switching freight cars in the N. Y. C. West side yards.

Fellow employees said Mr. Ferguson apparently slipped to the rails under a moving car he had uncoupled.

A lifelong resident here, Mr. Ferguson was a member of the Trainman's union. The body is at the Conkle funeral home, 1934 W. Michigan st.

Survivors include his wife, Hazel; two sons, Ernest of Indianapolis and Carl, a serviceman in the Philippines; and a sister, Mrs. Gertrude Besson.

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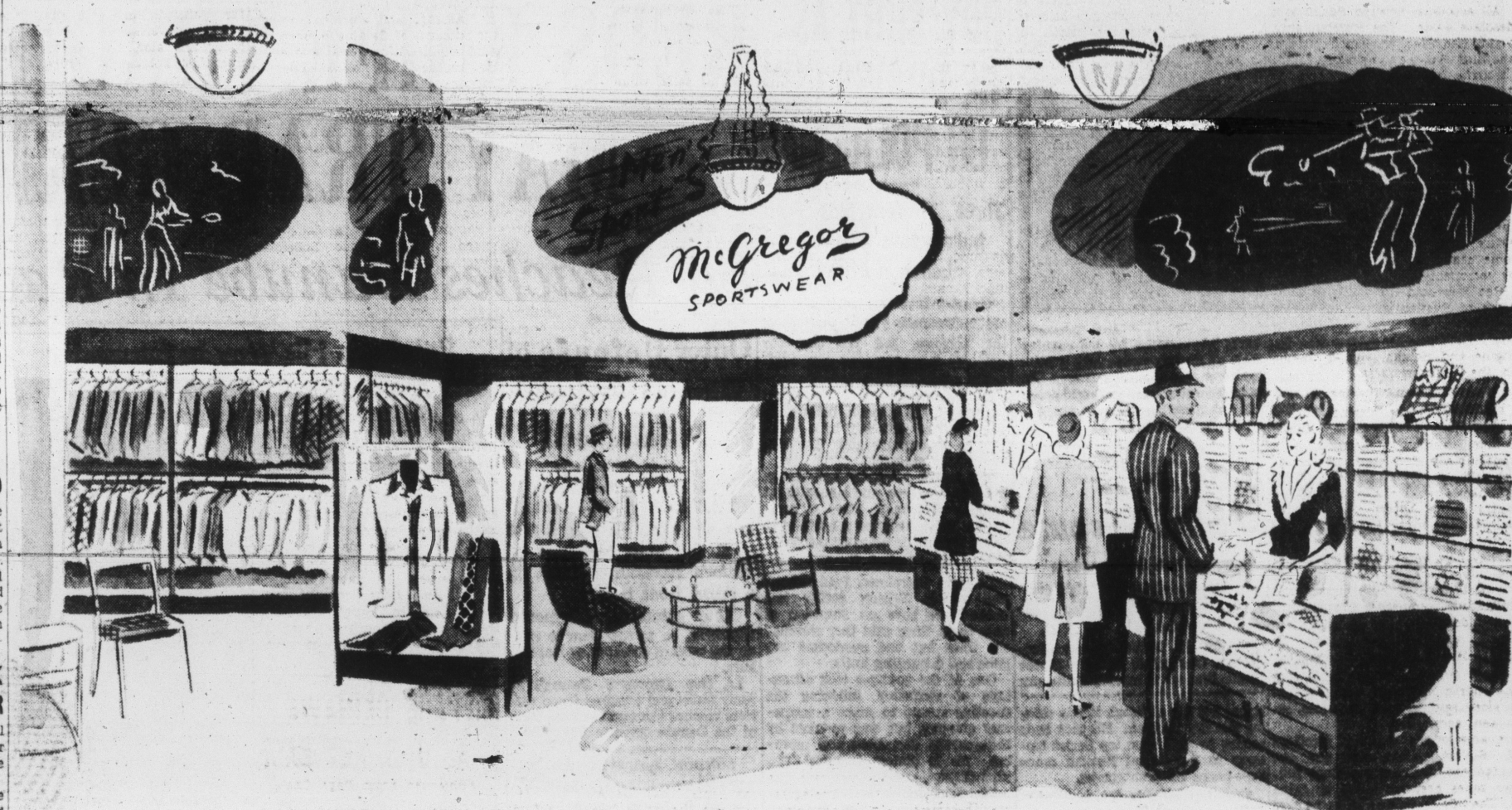
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