

YANKS OCCUPY ST. LO IN BITTER FIGHTING

FDR Backs Wallace, But Won't Dictate

CHICAGO, July 18—President Roosevelt told the Democratic National Convention today he would vote to renominate Vice-President Henry A. Wallace if he were a delegate but that he did not "wish to appear in any way as dictating to the convention."

"Obviously the convention must do the deciding and it should," said Mr. Roosevelt, "and I am sure it will give great consideration to the pros and cons of its choice."

The President gave the convention "my own personal thought in regards to the selection of a candidate for Vice-President" in a letter to Sen. Samuel D. Jackson, of Indiana, permanent convention chairman.

"My Personal Friend"

"I have been associated with Henry Wallace," it said, "during his past four years as Vice-President, for eight years earlier while he was Secretary of Agriculture and well before that, I like him and I respect him and he is my personal friend. For these reasons I personally would vote for his renomination if I were a delegate."

With Wallace the principal issue before the convention, his supporters were quick to seize on the President's expression of liking and respect for their candidate, but opponents of Wallace were just as quick to emphasize Mr. Roosevelt's assertion that "the convention must do the deciding."

Stop-Wallace Activity

The effect of the letter was to spur stop-Wallace activity especially among followers of Senate Majority Leader Alben W. Barkley of Kentucky, and War Mobilization Director James F. Byrnes, of South Carolina.

Iowa State Chairman Jake Moore, leader of the delegation from Wallace's home state, nevertheless forecast Wallace's renomination on the second ballot. A first-ballot nomination would be unlikely, he said, because of votes for favorite sons.

Meanwhile the party's platform subcommittee with convention opening a day away waded knee-deep through proposals for more aid to agriculture and through the delicately-explosive question of racial equality for the Negro.

KNUDSEN IN NEW JOB

WASHINGTON, July 18—Material and Service Commands of the Army Air Force will be merged into a single organization headed by Lt. Gen. William S. Knudsen, former head of General Motors, the War Department announced today. The new unit will be designated as Army Air Force Material and Service with headquarters at Patterson Field, Ohio.

Knudsen has been serving as production director in the office of Sec. of War Henry L. Stimson. Maj. Gen. Bennet Meyers, who has been acting head of Material Command, will be deputy commander of the new setup.

NO LOSS IN 40 CONVOYS

SOUTH AFRICA, July 18 (Reuters)—Forty big convoys—some of them with Americans—which used South African waters reached their destinations without loss of a single ship. Two million troops transported in the convoys were carried safely to their destinations.

Negro Rights Up Before Conclave

CHICAGO, July 18. Spokesmen for Negro organizations claiming 6,500,000 members went before the Democratic platform committee here yesterday with demands for "the right to vote in every state, unrestricted by poll taxes, white primaries or lily-white party conventions."

Their appearance put the racial issue, sore spot among many Southern delegates at the Democratic National Convention, squarely before the party's conclave.

The statement, presented by Walter White of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, also called for the perpetuation of the Fair Employment Practice Committee and "to secure and protect the right to work without racial or religious discrimination."

Naval Base Blast Kills 650, Injures 1,000 in California

MARTINEZ, Cal., July 18—More than 650 persons were estimated killed and nearly 1,000 injured in an explosion last night in the naval ammunition dump at Port Chicago, 35 miles northeast of San Francisco. The disaster—one of the worst in U.S. history—developed when an ammunition vessel in the naval supply depot blew up.

Most of the dead and injured were believed to be naval personnel housed in near-by barracks, which were shattered by the blast. Two divisions of Negro sailors—each division consisting of 150 to 170 men—were loading ammunition on the docks when the blast occurred.

Port Chicago was virtually leveled by the blast, which was felt in San Jose 50 miles away. Windows within a radius of 20 miles were shattered. Inhabitants of San Francisco thought at first it was an earthquake.

The port town resembled a battlefield after the explosion. Fires and a power failure made rescue work extremely hazardous.

HUGE NEW GASOLINE PLANT

CLEVELAND, July 18—The Standard Oil Company of Ohio's new \$10,000,000 100-cane gasoline plant was dedicated here. The plant is built on the site where John D. Rockefeller erected his first oil refinery 75 years ago.

Foe Retreats Before Reds' Lwow Thrust

Russian spearheads pushed within 20 miles of Brest-Litovsk and 35 miles of Lwow yesterday while Soviet armies to the north struck straight west from Grodno toward the bloodied Masurian Lakes battleground of World War I, inside the pre-war border of East Prussia.

Although the Germans were reported in Moscow dispatches to be bringing out armor "more rashly" and the Luftwaffe rising "in considerable force," the enemy now here seemed able to stem the Red Army advance and the German News Agency admitted still another withdrawal east of Lwow after fierce battles.

Newsmen in Moscow were able to clear up for the first time that the Russians had not yet actually set foot in Reich territory, though they had been within a dozen miles of it since the capture of Grodno Sunday.

A Reuter dispatch from the Soviet capital explained that the Red Army had crossed the Niemien River west of Grodno, advancing "straight toward the East Prussian border south of the Suwalki area" thus the Russians were bypassing the disputed Polish province that Adolf Hitler annexed to the Reich in 1939—a tiny 40-mile wide triangular wedge between Prussia and Lithuania.

On the Baltic front, Gen. Andrei Yeremenko's offensive aimed at Riga captured the rail junction of Sebezh linking the Moscow-Riga and Pskov-Polish lines, routed units of two divisions, captured more than 2,000 Nazis and drove on across the Latvian border.

GIS ON FURLOUGH TAKE JOBS

WASHINGTON, July 18—Thousands of soldiers home on furlough are taking jobs on trucks, in steel mills and stockyards, the War Manpower Commission disclosed. In the last month over 4,000 servicemen held jobs in Chicago plants while in Southern California the U. S. Employment Service placed 6,100 sailors and soldiers in important war jobs in May and June.

BRAZILIAN TROOPS IN ITALY

WASHINGTON, July 18—The War Department announced today the arrival in Naples of a Brazilian Expeditionary Force to participate in Allied operations in Italy.

Lovett Sees Luftwaffe Rebuilding For Comeback, Assails Optimists

From Stars and Stripes U. S. Bureau
WASHINGTON, July 18—The German air force has been driven to a kind of desperate guerrilla warfare, Assistant War Secretary Lovett said yesterday, but may yet be able to return to full-scale action as a first-class machine.

Stressing the recuperative power of German industry, Lovett told a press conference he was unable to understand "the amazing wave of reasonless optimism of some quarters back home."

He said: "Some people ask me whether the war will be long or short. I haven't the faintest idea, but I am convinced it is

going to be a darned sight longer than anybody back home except the military command thinks it is.

"I don't see anything breaking apart. I don't see a non-existent German air force, but an air force working constantly to rebuild itself for a terrific fight."

Lovett attributed the absence of the Luftwaffe over the invasion beachhead to the cumulative effect of strategic bombing plus superb timing in the shift of the strategic air force's heavy bombers and fighters to assist the tactical air force in invasion preparation attacks.

Only 20 States OK War Ballot

WASHINGTON, July 18. With Election Day less than four months away, governors of only 20 states have certified that the laws of their states authorize the use of Federal ballots by servicemen and women overseas, the U. S. War Ballot Commission announced.

Governors of other states said that Federal ballots were not authorized by their laws but that state absentee ballots will be mailed on application.

The 20 states authorizing Federal ballots are California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Vermont and Washington.

Tojo Is Removed As Army Chief; Still Jap Leader

Premier Hideki Tojo has been removed as chief of the Japanese Army general staff and has been succeeded by Gen. Yosikijiro Umezumi, long one of the most powerful Jap militarists, Tokyo radio announced yesterday. It was the second drastic shakeup in top Japanese military circles in 24 hours.

The announcement followed one by Tojo himself which admitted for the first time that Saipan Island had been lost and that the entire garrison of the Marianas bastion, including the army and Navy commanders, had been killed.

Tojo apparently retained his post as Premier and War Minister however. The change appeared to be equivalent to Adolf Hitler's giving up of his command of the German army in favor of one of his generals, but remaining as a Fuehrer.

Umezumi, who is 62, has been commander-in-chief of Japan's Kwantung army stationed in Manchuria since 1939 and also Ambassador to Manchuria.

Meanwhile U. S. battleships joined cruisers and destroyers for the first time Saturday in bombarding Guam, where a U. S. landing appeared in prospect. The next day carrier-based aircraft also attacked Guam, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz announced. The Japs reported, incidentally, that the U. S. had 17 battleships operating in the Pacific.

The battle situation on British New Guinea where the trapped Japanese 16th Army has attempted to break through the American encirclement east of Aitape remains unchanged, Gen. Douglas MacArthur reported. He said three strong Jap attacks were smashed.

BIG BATTLE FOR HENGYANG

CHUNGKING, July 18—Battles are in progress all around Hengyang important city on the Canton-Hankow railway where the Chinese are holding out against repeated Japanese assaults. The Chinese communique said today. New Allied advances also were reported in the northern sector of Myitkyina in northern Burma, with local gains in other parts. Chindits continued their advance

British Gain In Big Drive In Caen Area

United States troops occupied St. Lo, eastern anchor of the German defense line on the 80-mile American front yesterday after some of the most bitter fighting of the Normandy campaign.

Remnants of the German forces who had stubbornly withstood a three-week siege withdrew from the town and the enemy line fell back along the left half of the American sector.

Identification of the American units engaged in the action was withheld by censors.

As the Americans occupied the key power and communications center in the central sector, the British and Canadians launched a savage offensive in the Caen area which resulted in a breakthrough across the Orne River in the flat land beyond.

The offensive was preceded by one of the greatest aerial softening-up poundings since D-Day. Well over 2,000 Allied warplanes heaped tons of explosives on the German defenses; and not one enemy plane rose to challenge them. Only nine of the 2,000—which included British Lancasters and Halifaxes and American Liberators, Marauders and Havocs; plus fighters—were lost.

Yanks Hurl Back Twice

Occupation of St. Lo followed 24 hours of the most bitter house-to-house fighting, in which the Yanks twice were hurled back out of the city's eastern limits by German counter-attacks.

After the second successful German thrust, the Americans struck from three new directions—the northeast, north and northwest—in a sudden advance, and the defending troops, including top-notch paratroop units, began to crack. By yesterday morning the Germans had withdrawn approximately four kilometers. An officer at First Army headquarters said there was a general withdrawal, local in depth, along the entire left flank.

German forces were observed digging in on high ground four miles below the city.

In the area directly south and southwest of Caen the enemy's withdrawal has thus far amounted to about three kilometers.

An Army spokesman, quoted by
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Heavies Hit Reich From Britain, Italy

LONDON, July 17—Nearly 750 Forts smashed at the flying-bomb and long-range rocket experimental stations at Peenemunde and near-by Zimmowitz in Germany today.

Italian-based heavies of the 15th Air Force at the same time flew to southwest Germany to hit an aircraft factory at Friederichshafen and an airdrome at Memmingen.

In other attacks, German front-line positions were plastered by more than 1,000 Halifaxes and Lancasters, some 600 Liberators, 500 Marauders and Havocs and hundreds of fighter-bombers.

Losses were six RAF heavies, one Ninth Air Force aircraft and one Liberator.

