

MR 000.7 (2) PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCES

1943

Section 1

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Editorial

in

THE EVENING STAR

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Enlightening Details

It is noteworthy that President Roosevelt's recent press conferences have been highly productive of interesting military information. One of the several items revealed by him Tuesday, for instance, had to do with last Friday's raids on Bremen and Vegesack in Germany. When first announced by the Eighth Air Force command, the operation was described merely as "powerful," with our losses placed at thirty bombers and three fighters, but with no specification of the total number involved and therefore with no authoritative measure of the percentage cost. The President's remarks, however, illuminated the whole picture. An armada of 853 American planes took part in the raids, he said, shooting down 142 enemy fighters, unloading 2,500,000 pounds of explosives, and consuming almost 1,000,000 gallons of gasoline and 25,000 gallons of oil.

Such information as this—serving to dramatize the importance of home-front programs like fuel rationing and placing battle losses in proper perspective—does much more than satisfy the country's curiosity; it educates the people as a whole and helps promote a sound national morale. If this is to be a continuing White House policy, it will be universally welcomed, not by newspapermen alone but by a general public hungry for those significant little details that put flesh on the bare bones of official communiques and make them meaningful.

12 October 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HASSETT

I submit the following information for the consideration of the President as a possible news item for use in the President's press conference this afternoon:

Some idea of the tremendous effort required to send 855 airplanes against the enemy as was done last Friday during the Bremen-Vegesack raids is given by the following statistics:

The planes were loaded with some 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds of bombs . . . 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ million rounds of ammunition . . . and perhaps 800 pounds of maps . . . The 855 planes flew a distance of at least 850,000 miles . . . traveled over 1,400 miles on the ground in takeoffs, landings, and taxiing . . . burned almost a million gallons of gasoline . . . and 25,000 gallons of oil . . . More than 5,000 crew members were over enemy territory for periods of from 2 to 6 hours.

The President might wish to use the tremendous expenditure of equipment, personnel, gasoline, etc., used in the raid mentioned above as an excellent reason for even greater support from the home front in such things as increased production, buying of war bonds, etc.

The release of the above mentioned statistics to the press has been authorized by the Army Air Forces.

CHESTER HAMMOND,
Lt. Colonel, General Staff.

President Tells

**855 U. S. Planes Dropped
1250 Bomb Tons on Bremen**

By Ben W. Gilbert
Post Staff Writer

President Roosevelt revealed yesterday that American Flying Fortresses dropped 1250 tons of bombs on Bremen and nearby Vegesack Friday—making the raid one of the biggest, if not the biggest, daylight raid of this war over Europe.

A total of 855 planes was sent out on the raid including Fortresses and escorting P-47 Thunderbolt fighters, the President revealed.

The disclosures were made by the Chief Executive at his regular press conference. He said he had some statistics which he felt the American people ought to know.

Figures provided by the President follow:

The planes flew at least 850,000 miles in the air total mileage.

Considering taxiing, landing and taking-off distance, the planes

rolled more than 1400 miles on the ground.

Almost one million gallons of gasoline were burned.

About 25,000 gallons of oil were consumed.

More than 5000 American crew

members took part, and spent from two to six hours each over enemy territory.

The planes carried 2,750,000 rounds of ammunition.

A total of 2,500,000 pounds of bombs was dropped. (Figuring 2000 pounds to a ton, this would total 1250 ton.)

The planes carried 800 pounds of maps in all.

There was some speculation that the President was providing the "news" about the Friday raid by way of answering criticism that the President and the American Press have been "scooped" by Prime Minister Churchill, who has larded news revelations into his recent public utterances.

5 October 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR ADMIRAL BROWN

In response to your request for suggestions of war news for the President to highlight in his press conference this afternoon, I have obtained the following from the War Department:

So far as current allied operations are concerned in Italy, they are not spectacular but are of vital importance. This is that very necessary period following recent rapid advances by the 5th Army into Naples and the 8th Army up the Eastern Italian coast, when all the supplies and other paraphernalia of armies must be brought forward in a highly organized and expeditious manner preparatory to the next thrust.

The importance of this unspectacular period is often overlooked by the public, who frequently consider it a slowing down of our military effort. For this reason the President might wish to take this opportunity to impress upon the public the importance of this phase of military operations. He might liken the present situation of the Anglo-American armies in Italy to that of a giant caterpillar which, having just made a rapid forward advance, is now gathering its tale up underneath it preparatory to a rapid forward thrust, which single thrust will then bring it into the city of Rome itself.

While there is no doubt as to the success of this final thrust it will be a difficult one because, although there is considerable flat land on our left flank between our present position and Rome, where our armies will in fact be rolling over the famous Appian Way, our armies in the center and on the right flank will have to traverse mountain ranges as high as 8 to 9 thousand feet before the Italian capital is in our hands.

CHESTER HAMMOND,
Lt. Colonel, General Staff.