

TEXAS CITY EXPLOSION

Under a smoke-blackened sky Texas City was ablaze. Nine uncontrollable oil fires roared destruction at the same time. It began when a cargo ship laden with nitrate blew up in the harbour. In a short time the holocaust resembled a German city saturation-raided by Bomber Command. Outside war, there has been no parallel disaster in this generation. Vast quantities of oil fed the insatiable inferno.

(3 out)

(LV) Almost in a matter of minutes a town of fifteen thousand people was a mass of ruin. Hundreds were burnt to death; the cries of the injured rose above the pandemonium; poison fumes from a blazing chemical plant choked the life out of half-crazed people fleeing from the fires. With military discipline, Red Cross and hospital workers stayed where they were, cheating the grasping hand of death ~~from~~ otherwise certain victims. Inside an hour the original nine fires spread ^{to} more than fifty. The whole waterfront was a mass of flames.

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Red Cross reinforcements were rushed to the city.

As the day went on more than two thousand men, women and children had their injuries treated. By this time they were counting the dead, identifying them where possible. Outside the morgue men and women read the fatal list. ~~Hope faded as the hours passed.~~ Seven hundred people died in those terrifying flames. Then came yet more explosions.

The sympathy of Great Britain goes out to Texas City in this hour of shattering disaster.

Kees
Abbott
Non #68

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1. TITLE: PARAMOUNT NEWS SPECIAL -- FIRST PICTURES! BLASTS RECK TEXAS CITY!
PARAMOUNT NEWS CAMERAMEN, FLOWN INTO EXPLOSION AREA, RUSH TO THIS
SCREEN A GRAPHIC RECORD OF ONE OF AMERICA'S WORST DISASTERS
2. The on-the-spot camera story of the disaster that shocked America. Texas City, Texas -- a terror-stricken ghost town under a sky blackened by smoke and the withering heat of nine separate fires. Below is the blazing and gutted Monsanto Chemical Company plant. It began in Texas City's harbor as a nitrate-laden freighter blew up -- a disaster recalling the demolition of warships crammed with explosives.
7. The terrifying blast sinks another steamship. Poisonous gas from exploding chemicals begins to filter through the area. Clocks, stopped at 9:18. Pandemonium breaks loose in this industrial boom town where only a few moments before, 15,000 people lived and worked like people anywhere.
15. Oil refineries and 50 oil tanks lining the waterfront are ablaze. Steel fragments were hurled for four and five miles in every direction, sending flaming splinters into the huge Monsanto plant and into the nearby tanks and refineries. Now the fires are spreading rapidly!
20. Wires are down. Over the lone telephone line goes a call for help. Automobiles of workers are demolished. Early estimates of damage ran to over 100-million dollars.
23. And still the fires spread in this disaster that General Jonathan Wainwright, hero of Bataan, described as the greatest tragedy in his experience. Scenes like these have not been filmed since those made in the war-bombed cities of Europe.
27. Trained disaster workers of the Red Cross are rushed to Texas City as the dead and wounded are brought out. Early reports indicated that the total of known dead was in the neighborhood of 400, but the final figure may reach over 600. At least 2,000 are injured. Navy men help out as the toll of injured grows.
36. Still more fires break out, as plans move ahead to partially evacuate the stricken city. Smoke billowing up to 3,000 feet spreads over the town.
40. Everywhere is suffering, terror, agony. Men and women dazed by the indescribable chaos, worn out by lack of sleep, continue to care for the dead and dying. Many have already been sped to nearby cities.
49. Outside the town's hastily-converted morgue, haggard human beings wait to identify the dead and see their names recorded.

- 54. Fear of new explosions begins to mount. Then, it happens....
- 58. Today, in the wake of one of the most terrifying disasters in this country's history President Truman promises the relief facilities of all federal agencies to the stricken people of the Texas community. In devastation like that spread across a Europe ravaged by war, an American town endures its most terrible hour.