

V-E Day Is Not V-Day

Victory in Europe: The Half-way Mark

(The following is a reprint in its entirety of a Washington dispatch written March 10 by a staff member of The Associated Press in simple terms, it expressed the realism necessary on the part of all—citizens and soldiers alike—if we are to win World War II conclusively and with the least possible cost).

Surprised and cheered though they are by the unexpected crossing of the Rhine, American military leaders are approaching the end of the war in Europe with an attitude of apprehension.

For weeks they have been searching for some way to get these truths across to the American people:

There will be relatively few discharges, how many remains to be determined. There will be some furloughs for men en route from Europe to the Pacific, but here again the number is uncertain. And for untold hundreds of thousands there will be the swiftest possible direct transfer from the battlefields of Germany to the island approaches to Japan.

In general, it is planned as far as possible to give actual combat troops a few weeks at home before they go after Japan.

The dread of the military leaders lies in their assumption that a kind of war weariness may set in after the first outburst of joy over victory in Europe. It probably will take half a year to get those millions of men from Europe to the Pacific with adequate arms and supplies. There may be a period of relative quiet, although the commanders will prevent that if they can, in which people may begin to clamor for the return of troops to the United States.

In this would lie Japan's greatest hope of moderating the effects of gaining a compromise.

The enemy in the Pacific and Asia remains in a militarily powerful position. American military leaders have been hammering this home for months. What they have had trouble telling is the price which America will have to pay for victory.

The first payment will be continued fighting by the armies now striding long toward victory in Europe. Next, but of equal importance, will be the problem of maintaining war production at little if any below present levels.

Best estimates at the War Department are that the Japanese have 5,000,000 men in China. In time the Chinese could muster a very effective force against them equipped with American arms and given modern training. But the impression here now is that so much time would be required that it would not be the most effective way to fight the Japanese.