

# Mount Pulaski Times-News

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MOUNT PULASKI, ILLINOIS, THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 1958

NUMBER 46

## EXPLOSION ROCKS PULASKI

### 2 Killed, 40 Injured When

### IC Tank Exploded Sunday

### DANGER OF SECOND TANKER EXPLODING CAUSES EVACUATION

#### Citizens Requested To Leave Homes; Guard Called Out

June 1, 1958, in Mount Pulaski, was just a quiet Sunday until 4:17 P.M., when the city was shaken so violently by a sudden explosion that some of the residents thought their homes had been struck by lightning, some thought of an earthquake and at least one party, that we know of, thought that the Russians had come with an A bomb.

In a short time it was learned that the blast was that of a tank car, containing nitro-paraffin, on the Illinois Central tracks about a mile southeast of the business district, near the Route 54 overpass.

Two railroad men from Mattoon were killed, and a third railroad man was seriously injured, with at least 40 local persons receiving less serious injuries.

The body of E. A. (Jack) Griffin, 32, Mattoon, was found at the scene about 7 P.M. and removed to the Schahl funeral home. The body of his companion Bob Glover, 57, also of Mattoon, has not been found at the time of this writing, although an inch-by-inch search of the surrounding area was made by the National Guard troops and others.

W. L. Grissmore, 25, Mattoon, another man at the scene of the blast, suffered serious wounds from flying metal which lodged in his body. He was removed to the ALM hospital, Lincoln, where pieces of metal were removed from his chest and legs. 1 piece of metal went through his arm.

#### Residents Asked to Evacuate

Within the hour, following the explosion, sound trucks cruising the town, were asking that all residents evacuate their homes, as there was grave danger of two more tank cars exploding at any moment, from the heat of the fire from the first inferno.

A thousand residents of the city soon were leaving the city on the highways and country roads, going to homes of friends in neighboring towns or to farm homes in the vicinity.

Through the media of radio station WPRC, Lincoln, people were notified of places of shelter for the night, and were also given all news as fast as it could be learned, of all phases of work, and all other happenings in the local vicinity.

We are all grateful, for the full coverage of WPRC, and for their staying on the air three hours beyond their usual broadcasting time to take care of this emergency.

#### Red Cross In Action

In a short time following the terrific blast Red Cross chairmen and Civil Defense directors were in action and within two hours Red Cross headquarters were set up in the Downing Insurance building, and hot coffee and lunch were being served to all the workers from our area and surrounding towns. The Red Cross also served breakfast and noon lunch on Monday to all workers and volunteer help.

Through the office of Governor Stratton, Mayor Elmer Schaffnacker was contacted, and help was offered. At 8:30 P.M. 100

National Guardsmen arrived in Mount Pulaski to patrol the streets, keeping order and preventing pilfering and looting of homes and stores. They remained in Mount Pulaski overnight until almost noon on Monday.

#### Much Damage

Damage from this terrific ordeal has been estimated at more than \$1,000,000, for it has been discovered by contractors and engineers that much unseen damage is being found.

#### CONDENSED PAPER

This issue of the Times-News has necessarily been abbreviated as the newspaper press was rendered temporarily inoperative by flying glass. Any inconvenience to our advertisers is sincerely regretted and we know that they will bear with us until next week when we should be back to normal.

The Times-News staff, along with Mr. Wible, who is convalescing at the St. John's hospital, Springfield, wishes to thank all those who helped in any way, to clean up the paper office and apartments.

#### CITY OFFICIALS EXTEND THANKS

The Mayor and City Council of Mt. Pulaski wish to thank the cities and towns; state and county Civilian Defense workers; the National Guardsmen; Salvation Army and Red Cross; state and county Police; volunteer Fire Departments of the surrounding area; Funeral Homes; Red Cross; Radio and TV Stations; American Legion; County Organizations; Doctors, Nurses, Hospitals; and the many, many local organizations and individuals who responded so nobly in helping the City of Mt. Pulaski, following the disaster which occurred on last Sunday afternoon.

Your splendid assistance and co-operation in helping with the fire and preventing further explosions; aiding with the dead and injured; providing shelter and food; maintaining law and order; and otherwise helping us meet this emergency, will long be remembered.

#### SPRINGFIELD MAYOR SENDS SYMPATHY

City of Springfield, Illinois  
June 2, 1958.

The Hon. Elmer Schaffnacker, Mayor, City of Mt. Pulaski, City Hall, Mount Pulaski, Ill.

Dear Mayor Schaffnacker:

On behalf of the people of the City of Springfield, we extend our sympathies to the people of Mt. Pulaski for the extensive damage and loss of life occasioned by the explosion yesterday.

I am informed that our Police Department, Auxiliary Police and other divisions of our municipal government have volunteered their aid, and have been able to give some help.

If there is anything else that we might do to help in your recovery from this disaster, do not hesitate to call on us.

Sincerely yours,

Nelson Howarth, Mayor.

#### Notes Of Concern From Former Residents of City

Telegram received by Times-News Monday morning, for all residents of this community, from former Pulaskians, Mr. and Mrs. "Mike" Kautz, now of Port Huene, Calif.

We are profoundly shocked to hear of your great misfortune. Accept our deepest sympathy.

Mike and Elsie Kautz.

Detroit, Mich.

Dear Mr. Wible:

Just received the news about the explosion. We are sorry for all the Mount Pulaski people. It reminded us of the bombing we had when we lived on the farm, and I think we know how you all feel.

The Detroit Times had quite an account about it all.

Hubert Buckles and Wife.

Dundee, Ill.

Dear Mr. Wible:

I was surely shocked to hear the news of the big explosion in Mount Pulaski over TV Sunday night.

Surely hope you didn't suffer too greatly in property damage.

Very truly yours,

Helena M. Luther.

(Miss Luther was a former teacher in the local high school.)

Galesburg, Ill.

Dear Mr. Wible:

We were horrified to hear about Mt. Pulaski having a disaster. If the Pastor and I can help in any way, feel free to ask.

Hope you are feeling better, too.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Walter J. Hintz.

(Rev. and Mrs. Hintz formerly resided in Chestnut.)

#### Thank You, Folks

We thank all those who have been patient in getting adjustments made on their losses. If you have a loss which is not reported, please report immediately so that it can be taken care of while there is a staff of adjusters working.

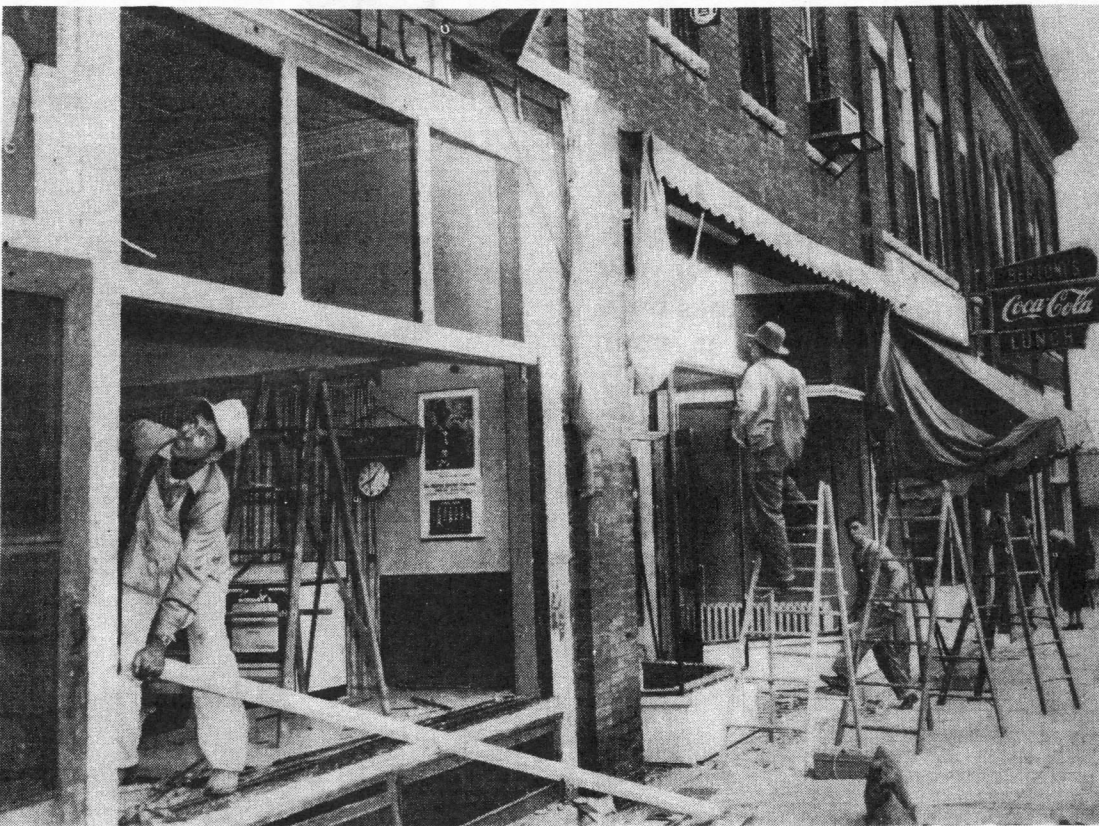
If you have reported and an adjuster has not seen you, contact your agent again. It's possible your report may have been lost in the confusion and we don't want to miss anyone.

The general procedure for handling claims, is for the insured to make the necessary emergency repairs to protect his property, and then get an estimate of the cost of permanent repairs. If everyone will do this before the adjuster arrives, and if his estimate is reasonable, he will get his O.K. to go ahead.

Insurance Agents  
of Mount Pulaski.



SECTION OF EXPLODED TANK CAR, that evacuated Mount Pulaski Sunday afternoon, and caused damage in excess of one million dollars. —Times-News Photo.



WORKERS REPAIRING DAMAGE on west side of public square. —Times-News Photo.