

Hamburg after the Operation Gomorrah Bombings (July 1943)

Abstract

This aerial footage captures the devastation wrought on the port city of Hamburg during the last week of July, 1943. The coordinated attack shared by the British RAF and USAAF carried the codename Operation Gomorrah. It was estimated that over 40,000 civilians died and tens of thousands more were injured. Large swathes of the city were completely destroyed by the firestorm that swept through both residential and industrial sectors. Many died in the basements of dwellings, suffocated as the oxygen was sucked out of the closed rooms to feed the fire above. The rubble continued to glow for days, with many too hot to explore for human remains. In addition to the physical damage the bombing caused in this important industrial and transportation hub, the attack came to symbolize the Allied advance. Other firestorms would follow, but Hamburg became emblematic of the costs of “total war.”

Source

Source: Bundesarchiv B 114282-1

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