



*A French Commando in Normandy*

*British Official photo*



# Free France

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## FRANCE AT WAR

### I—THE BATTLE OF FRANCE

*The French Army and the French Forces of the Interior have been participating in the battle of France, at the side of the Allies, or at their sabotage stations, "according to the pre-arranged plan". It is now possible to receive reports on the action of French troops in the landing, and on the most important help given by units of the Forces of the Interior in preparing for the invasion, and disrupting the German army's means of communication during the battle of Normandy. We are publishing below the official Allied communiqués and the French official reports, as well as the most significant accounts of the action of the French Forces of the exterior and the Interior in the battle of the beaches.*

#### *The Action of French Troops*

*It is now permitted to reveal the presence of Frenchmen in the battle of the beaches and in the bloody fighting which followed. Here is a report concerning the part played by French commandos on June 6.*

**178 French Commandos Have Landed on the Normandy Coast** — "Having claimed and been granted the honor of launching the attack, units of the 'Fusiliers Marins' and the French Commandos were in the vanguard of the invasion forces on June 6", says the newspaper *France*, which goes on to describe "their magnificent action" as it may now be revealed.

On June 6, at 7:21 a.m., French Commandos landed on the beach, west of Rivabella. From the instant of their arrival, this detachment of picked troops, 178 perfectly trained men, led by a lieutenant commander, were the target of enemy fire. Without any hesitation, the platoons rushed to the shore, and ran across the firing zone and mined beach. Some of them fell under a rain of shells from mortars set up on higher ground.

With a complete disregard for danger, the French commandos managed, although not without losses, to get near a machine-gun nest and reduce it to silence with a few well-aimed hand grenades. The breach was made, and the men rushed through. As soon as they showed themselves, the inhabitants came joyfully out of their shelters. Under fire from a destroyer which cruised so close to the shore that its propeller hit the bottom, the last advanced mortar post of the enemy was silenced. At 11:20 after a tank supported attack on a second objective, the terrain was cleared. Before moving up again, the Commandos took a few minutes' rest. During this time the wounded were evacuated. Three young men of the region, strong and resolute, volunteered to take some of the empty places in the ranks. For months they had been waiting for this moment; they became the three first volunteers from liberated France. They fought splendidly, as well as the old soldiers of Free France. Some day, very soon, we shall give their names. One of them was wounded in an engagement the next day: "I know that our mission was accomplished," he said simply, when someone in a hospital in England congratulated him on his fine conduct.

(FRANCE, June 22, 1944)

**British Officer's Tribute to French Fighters** — (From Pierre Jeannerat, A.F.I. correspondent, sent from Normandy on June 12) — "Today is the first time I have been allowed to reveal the presence of French soldiers in the battle on the Normandy beaches and the bloody fighting which followed. Let me tell you first about a British officer, a legendary figure, who might have stepped right out of a knighthood romance. I mean Lord Lovat, a Scottish peer, whose ancestors have often figured in history. He wears no badges to advertise his rank. He does not need to, for everyone knows him. In shirt sleeves, with a plain brown wool sweater over his husky shoulders, he was carrying a machine-gun in a cross-belt.



'I want you to meet these fine lads,' he said to me, 'I cannot speak highly enough of what they have done. I have only three of my 11 French officers left: two of these three were wounded, but they are staying on here. Immediately after the landing on Tuesday morning, the French went to clean up a little fort which was strongly defended. They quickly accomplished their mission, but unfortunately they suffered heavy losses. This did not stop them. They continued to fight beside their British comrades, almost uninterruptedly for four days.'

Some of these men are veterans from Bir Hacheim, the Dieppe raid, and other famous exploits. The ones I met were from Le Havre, Evreux in Normandy, Saint-Pol de Léon in Brittany, and the Ardèche. I asked them how they felt when they first set foot again on their native soil. . . . I will quote our host, who speaking in his quiet, even tones, related a fantastic story. 'My commandos,' he said, 'have accomplished much more than I asked of them. They are all volunteers coming from every corner of Great Britain, except for the handful of Frenchmen I told you about. They are in splendid physical shape, they have to be, and their courage is equal to every test. Their average age is from 23 to 25. Carrying all their equipment and food for 48 hours, they advanced on foot, often at a jog trot, covering 15 kilometers in one day, sweeping all resistance — some of it extremely savage — out of their way. And since then they have advanced still further.'

On the second and third days the Boches shelled us heavily and launched powerful counter-attacks. In one village the enemy charged shoulder to shoulder without making the least effort to conceal themselves, and the slaughter was frightful. We repulsed tank attacks and seized a great deal of equipment which we are now using. We were hot on their heels many a time, and at one or two points we were compelled to withdraw. Once a German got quite close to my command post and my whole general staff and their orderlies, the chauffeurs and even the cooks were shooting. The battery of field artillery that was supporting us, fired 2000 shells and guns of heavier calibre helped us too. Finally the enemy had had enough. We have captured all the terrain that was momentarily lost, and we are now solidly established. One prisoner told us that his unit of 30 men had been reduced to four; one company had only 15 men left in it. That gives you an idea of the pasting they had received. My commandos are the toughest fighters you could find anywhere. I have complete confidence in them. They would take on the devil himself.'

(French Information Services, London, June 22, 1944)

**French Warships in Action**—(From Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu, commanding the French Naval Forces in Great Britain) — The guns of "La Combattante" whose ceaseless activity in the Channel was recently crowned with success, and which sank a number of E boats in one fortnight, also reduced to silence several enemy batteries in positions near the objectives assigned for

our Commandos' operations. "La Combattante" has certainly well earned the honor of carrying General de Gaulle over to France on his first visit to the liberated parts of Normandy.

The destroyer escorts, with their charming traditional names, "La Découverte," "La Surprise," "L'Escarmouche" were entrusted, like other Allied vessels of the same type, with the protection of the vast armada during the crossing, and while the first detachments were disembarking. We had to be prepared for attacks from destroyers, speed boats, submarines and enemy planes. Participating in the same mission were our corvettes: "Roselys," "Aconit," "Renoncule," "d'Estienne d'Orves," which have been mentioned several times in Free French Naval dispatches during the Battle of the Atlantic.

In the American sector on the right wing the cruisers "Montcalm" and "Georges Leygue," gave steady support to the efforts of the attacking troops, destroying first of all the pill-box batteries and other defense works of the Fortress Europe. They kept up a rapid and dense fire against the targets progressively signalled by observers who accompanied the expeditionary corps on land in its every movement forward. Still further to the west on the outskirts of the theatre of operations, torpedo boats, as fragile as they are speedy and audacious, were in position so as to harass and intercept enemy vessels as they had done so effectively every night during April and May, halting enemy convoys and coast patrols.

In the North our brave little anti-submarine craft attended to the routine tasks so necessary for the complete success of any operations, not without a feeling of sacrifice at being further away than the other French ships from the coasts of Normandy. Almost all these ships had belonged to the Free French Naval Forces, and had carried on an incessant naval warfare under our colors with the Cross of Lorraine. Now they saw the dawn of victory and liberation at last approaching.

(French Information Services, London, June 23, 1944)

**Part Played by the Typhoons** — (From French Air Forces in England) — The exploits of the Typhoons are gradually becoming known, and the other day we had the pleasure of reading a communiqué from the British Air Ministry in which not only the Typhoons were honored, but also one of the pilots, a French major who had already covered himself with glory in Africa.

The bombing objective was a Château somewhere in France which was used as German Military Headquarters. Rommel was expected there at 1:30 in the morning. The Typhoons arrived punctually at the rendezvous, and their bombs reduced to rubble the luxurious suites of rooms that had been re-arranged as offices where these gentlemen, monocle in eye, were racking their brains to guess when and where the invasion would take place. Our major was the last to fly over the Château as it fell in ruins. He dropped a bomb in the cellar for luck, and machine-gunned the German encampments scattered through the park. Unfortunately



the German Marshal was late for his appointment: he had narrowly escaped death, as he had once before escaped capture in the desert, when French parachutists made a bold raid on his quarters, bringing back important documents.

(French Information Services, London, June 14, 1944)

**French Squadrons in the Skies of Normandy** — From the war correspondent of the Independent French Agency (A.F.I.), London — "From the first day of the Allied landing, French squadrons have been taking part in the operations in the French skies. The four pursuit groups, "Ile de France," "Alsace," "Cigognes" and "Berry," composed of Spitfires, partly assured the protection of the glider formations bringing airborne troops to Normandy. The same pursuit groups patrolled the skies of Normandy on the day when Mr. Churchill landed, and it was a French captain who brought down a Junker 88 under the eyes of the Prime Minister and of Marshal Smuts.

In the dawn of June 6th, it was the medium bombers of the "Lorraine" group which were hugging the beaches of Normandy, spreading a protective smoke screen for the landing of troops. And it is the part played by the two heavy bomber groups that we are not as yet at liberty to reveal.

I spent yesterday on a small grassy plot in the south of England — half an hour from the French coast — among the pilots of the "Cigognes" group. For the "Cigognes," the famous squadron of Guynemer, Fonck and Rolland Garros, has recovered its place in the struggle for liberation. Its pilots, many wearing service stripes, at the side of the groups wearing the Lorraine Cross — of the "Alsace" and "Ile de France" — represent one of the oldest and purest traditions of the French Air Force. All of its pilots are on active duty, with the exception of two men, who are the survivors of a desperate battle fought from the Ardennes skies to the Loire skies, exactly four years ago. One of them, a captain, was the last French aviator to have downed a German in a battle over France, on the very day of the Bordeaux Armistice.

During the dark years of 1940, 1941, 1942, the "Cigogne" group had remained in France, united, doing what they thought to be their duty. Assigned to Châteauroux, they continued their training there, thinking incessantly of retaliation. I have seen the pages of the Golden Book of the squadron, written during that painful period of uncertainty. I have read the sentences written in 1941-1942, all of them asking the same question: "When are we leaving?" or "How much longer shall we have to wait?"

On November 8, the day of the liberation of North Africa, the Germans invaded the unoccupied zone. The "Cigognes" realized that this was the time for action. With arms and equipment, the squadron commanders at the head of the formations, the group flew to North Africa to resume battle.

Today, they are in England, under the command of

a lieutenant-colonel, who was chief of a French acrobatic flying group before the war. They have been given Spitfires — the best planes in existence. They have painted their emblem, the little Alsatian stork, on the cockpits of their planes, and set off again to face the Jerries, shoulder to shoulder with their comrades in arms, the Fighting French flyers. There has never been any misunderstanding or bickering among them. All these Frenchmen have effortlessly and calmly accepted each other as brothers in the common struggle for their country.

In the tent which serves as headquarters of the group, I have seen again, with emotion, the old red and white pennant of the "Cigognes." I have seen again the stuffed mascot-stork, saved under the very noses of the Germans. At the tent pole — a portrait — the grave and austere face of Guynemer. . . . And all these young men, who carry out three to four missions a day, and return at nightfall exhausted but happy, are trying to resemble their great chief, to wear the same "combat mask," the same stigmata of passion and fever.

Their faces, like his, are marked by action, emaciated by the same fatigue. And their battlefield, like his, is this "sky full of glory" in which he disappeared on a November day in 1917: the French sky.

(FRANCE, London, June 16, 1944)

"Ile de France," "Alsace," and "Lorraine" were formed during 1940, 1941, 1942. "Ile de France" has been fighting in England, "Alsace" and "Lorraine" participated in the operations in Libya with the British, also in the Tchad and the Middle East and lately in England. There are few, original survivors of these campaigns. The "Cigognes" and "Berry" were formed after the liberation of North Africa.

### **Activities of the French Forces of the Interior**

*The French Forces of the Interior, consisting of the Secret Army (fighting units of Resistance movements, and after November, 1942 members of the armistice army), Guerrillas and Partisans (fighting units of the National Front), are led by regular French Army officers. Since June 10, their status is equivalent to that of the regular Army.<sup>1</sup>*

**Special Communique No. 1 — Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, June 17** — "Since June 6 the Army of French Forces of the Interior has increased both in size and the scope of its activities. This army has undertaken a large plan of sabotage which includes in part the paralyzing of rail and road traffic and the interruption of telegraph and telephone communications.

In the majority of these cases their objectives have been attained.

(1) We are quoting the text of the decree of June 10, establishing the status of the French Forces of the Interior:

Article 1. The French Forces of the Interior represent the total of the combat units or their auxiliaries which participate in the struggle against the enemy on Metropolitan territory, whose existence is recognized by the Government, and who are serving under military chiefs recognized by, and responsible to, the Government.

These armed forces are an integral part of the French Army and enjoy all rights and privileges accorded to soldiers by the regulations in force. The general conditions established by the regulation appended to the Hague Convention, of October 18, 1907, relative to the laws and conventions of warfare on land, apply to them.

Article 2. As French territory is being liberated, members of the French Forces of the Interior will receive recognition from the delegated authorities.

Article 3. The details of the execution of the present ordinance will be fixed by decrees.





British Official photo

*French Commandos being greeted by Norman villagers*



The destruction of railways has been most effective. Bridges have been destroyed, derailments effected, and at least seventy locomotives sabotaged.

It is reported that both road and rail traffic is completely stopped in the valley of the Rhone.

Canals have not been spared. One has been damaged and one cut and another has been put out of action. Four consecutive locks of another have been destroyed.

Many acts of sabotage have been carried out against transformer stations.

It is neither possible nor desirable to enumerate all the many effective acts of destruction that have been carried out.

However, these multiple and simultaneous cases of sabotage coordinated with the Allied effort have delayed considerably the movement of German reserves to the combat zone.

Direct action also has been taken against the enemy. Maquis are reported to have taken 300 prisoners. German garrisons have been attacked. In some areas villages have been occupied. Street fighting has occurred elsewhere. Enemy detachments have been destroyed.

Guerrilla operations against the enemy are in full swing, and in some areas the Army of French Forces of the Interior is in full control.

At the end of the first week of operations on the shores of France, the Army of French Forces of the Interior has with its British and American comrades played its assigned role in the battle of liberation."

(NEW YORK TIMES, June 18, 1944)

**Special Communique No. 2 — Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, June 23** — "Since June 6, 1944, French Forces of the Interior, in accordance with Allied pleas, have continued to harass the Germans by increasing acts of resistance and sabotage in the rear of German lines.

In many regions fighting has reached such proportions that the enemy has been forced to send considerable forces against the Maquis without succeeding in overcoming them.

The enemy has attacked Maquis of the Vercours and the Ain with armored forces, artillery and aircraft. Resistance forces have been compelled to withdraw at various points after inflicting losses on the enemy.

In addition, numerous engagements are reported from the Pyrenees, the Vosges, Marne, Ardennes, Aisne and Creuse. Elements of several German divisions and a large number of local defense troops are estimated to have been contained inside France by the action of resistance forces.

Many cuts on railways and numerous obstacles on roads have effectively hindered the passage of German reinforcements to the beachhead. In this way two armored divisions have been seriously delayed in southwest France. In the Bordeaux region, the Bordeaux-La Rochelle, La Reole-Perigueux and Bayonne-Angouleme railway lines have been sabotaged. A large number of small bridges on the Route Nationale Bordeaux-Poitiers also were destroyed.

Railway cuts also were reported throughout the Rhone valley and in Brittany, the Loiret, Aisne and the area north of Paris. The railway depot at Amberieux was sabotaged for a second time. Strong resistance groups have occupied several localities in the Departments of Jura, Ain and Haute Savoie and have taken over administration and supply of the civil population.

After four days hard fighting, the forces of resistance were compelled to evacuate one of these towns after blowing up railway bridges, locomotives and telephone lines. German losses were heavy.

In many regions enemy tele-communication installations, both underground and overhead, have been cut.

Many canals, in particular the Canal du Nivernais, lateral canal of the Marne, have been made unusable.

Systematic disorganization of enemy transport by the F.F.I. has contributed directly to the success of Allied operations in Normandy."

(NEW YORK TIMES, June 24, 1944)

**General Eisenhower Congratulates the French Forces of the Interior** — General Koenig, Commander-in-Chief of the French Forces in Great Britain, military delegate of the Provisional Government of the French Republic for the Northern Theatre of operations, and, by virtue of this function, Commander of the French Forces of the Interior, received congratulations from General Eisenhower, Commander-in-Chief of the Inter-Allied Forces on the action of the French Forces of the Interior. General Koenig, using all the broadcasting facilities at his disposal, communicated the congratulations of the Commander-in-Chief of the Inter-Allied Forces to the F.F.I. troops. Here is the text of General Koenig's message:

"General Eisenhower wishes me to convey to you his warmest congratulations on the courage you have shown in assisting the Allied Expeditionary Forces. He asks me to tell you that your efforts have directly contributed to the success of Allied operations. I have given him the assurance that the French Forces of the Interior will play an ever greater part in the defeat of the German armies and the liberation of our country."

(French Information Services, London, June 25, 1944)

**F.F.I. Put under General Koenig's Command: Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, June 25** — The French Forces of the Interior received today a status in the Allies' operations comparable to that of the invasion forces.

Supreme Headquarters, which had already been moved to compliment the resistance forces on the positive contribution that their disruptive activities against the Germans had made to the battle of the beachhead, accepted them into partnership in the campaign for the liberation of their country. It announced tonight that Brig. Gen. Joseph-Pierre Koenig, commander of the French forces in Britain, chief of the French military mission at headquarters and military delegate for liberated French territory, had been appointed commander of the French Forces of the Interior. "General Koenig is acting under and by the authority of the Supreme Commander [Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower] in directing the operations of the resistance forces in France," the announcement said.

The first message that the hero of Bir Hacheim had to deliver to his new command was one of the "warmest commendation" from General Eisenhower. General Koenig predicted that the underground would play an "ever-increasing" part in the liberation campaign. . . .

(NEW YORK TIMES, June 26, 1944)

**Communique from the "Committee for Action in France"**<sup>1</sup> — The French Forces of the Interior, carrying out plans established in advance, have cut the enemy's communication lines in designated areas. The resulting delay in the movement of troops has been, in most cases, greater than was expected. These operations have contributed to the success of the first phases of the invasion. In several sectors, particularly in the Alps, the Vosges, the Jura, the Pyrenees and Brittany, units of patriots have attacked enemy army formations. These encounters have taken the form of harassing actions

(1) The department of "Action in France" is an organization belonging to the Office of the Commissioner of the Interior, which is in contact with the Resistance groups. The latter are represented by a "Committee for Action in France" for all matters relating, as its name indicates, to the action of French Forces of the Interior.



against convoys, attacks upon and the destruction of small garrisons, the capture of arms and munition dumps, and sabotage of electrical installations. The following observations can be made in regard to the actions undertaken:

1. Harassing attacks have a very powerful destructive effect on the enemy's morale. They must be rapid and decisive. After every blow, the groups of patriots must slip out of the enemy's clutches and prepare to attack at another vulnerable spot.

2. Guerrilla raids should be aimed at wiping out small enemy detachments and capturing materiel which can be used at once for the equipment of new groups of patriots.

3. In a number of places, gendarmes and groups of reserve mobile guards, refusing to carry out the traitors' orders, have joined patriot formations.

4. In several cases, men belonging to the Militia have disobeyed the Gestapo and the SS, and have deserted. The Provisional Government of the French Republic is proud of the deeds of patriots, and is determined to give them every support it can during a struggle which will be long and perilous and which must result in a national uprising, prelude to the total liberation of the mother country.

(Commissioner of Information, Alger, June 15, 1944)

**Arms for the French Forces of the Interior** — We are quoting below the text of an appeal broadcast in London, coming from representatives of French Resistance, and signed by Louis Marin, former Minister (Republican Federation); Waldeck Rochet (Communist Party); delegates of the Resistance to the Provisional Consultative Assembly, who are at present in London, and delegates of the Resistance who reside in London. For reasons of security, their names cannot be revealed.

London, June 14 — "Responding to the appeals broadcast by the Inter-Allied High Command, the French people, from the day of the landing of Allied forces have executed the instructions received on the radio. A series of acts of sabotage considerably retarded the arrival of German reinforcements to the Normandy bridgehead, thus contributing to the success of the landing.

"At present, French Resistance has disorganized enemy supply lines and communications, at the risk of exhausting its means for the continuation of acts of sabotage and other operations in support of the Allies' fight on the soil of France.

"In order that the enthusiasm created by the Allied landing remain unshaken in the hearts of the French; in order that the participation of French patriots demanded by the Allied High Command should not risk becoming a massacre of the élite of the French race by the Germans; in order that the French people preserve its confidence in the Allies' desire to help it recover its national liberties; in order that at a propitious moment, the French Forces of the Interior may make the Allied victory more rapid and less costly in

human lives, it is imperative that arms, munitions and medical supplies be rushed to the Interior front of France."

(French Information Services, London, June 16, 1944)

**The French Forces of the Interior before Cherbourg** (From the *News Chronicle* war correspondent) — With the Americans in sight of Cherbourg — Tuesday night is falling upon the bluish hills surrounding Cherbourg. American troops are laying down a mortar barrage upon a small wood situated approximately three miles from the city.

A few hours ago I stopped at the Headquarters of one unit fighting on this front. I looked at a large scale map hanging outside a camouflaged tent where the hourly course of the battle is indicated in grease chalk on a cellophane sheet which covers the map.

Usually the colors are blue for the Allies and red for the enemy, but today for the first time I saw a circle round an area — in green. And in the circle were these words:

"Armed French patriots are fighting in this area. Their exact location is not known. Reports are awaited. All troops are instructed to make contact and to co-ordinate their operations with the patriots."

Two hours later I followed the American patrol into a small village. Cautiously the soldiers walked in, sheltering behind the walls. Suddenly from one farm a Frenchwoman came out, shouting: "It is all right, come in, the patriots are already here." Thus for the first time French patriots armed with tommy-guns and wearing a tricolor armlet with the Cross of Lorraine on it had preceded the Allied troops, mopping up the last German stragglers, seeking out mines and booby traps, in short, acting as advance patrols.

In this sector, however, the movement of French civilians is two-way. As we moved towards the patriot patrols, we saw a stream of men carrying bundles of clothing slung across their shoulders. These men had escaped individually and had gone into hiding. Now they were coming out toward the Allied troops.

I spoke with many of them. I cannot quote their stories for obvious reasons. I can, however, report their unanimous wish, whether young or middle-aged or even whitehaired. It is "Where can I be mobilized? I have waited four long years to shoot some of these Germans".

(French Information Services, London, June 22, 1944)

### **The French People in Normandy**

**Entire French Village Is Guerrilla Detachment** — In one French village alone, 520 of the 538 inhabitants are guerrillas, fighting against the Germans. Leonard Mosley, London war correspondent, who accompanied Allied forces to Normandy, tells the story.

"Two nights after our arrival, a young girl cycled into one of our battalion posts with a man riding on the back of her tandem. He was one of our stray troops whom she had rescued, fed, and then smuggled through the German lines.

"I come from a village," she told us, "which returns this soldier to you and asks for orders."

"What kind of orders?" asked the Colonel.





European

### *The battle for Cherbourg — St. Sauveur after the bombardment*

"Orders for our guerrillas," answered the girl. "We organized ourselves into a guerrilla army 18 months ago. Naturally, we haven't been able to do anything very spectacular, but we have hindered the Germans in some small way. Now that you are here, we want to do bigger things. Give us arms and explosives, Monsieur, and I swear to you that we will do everything you ask."

"How many of these guerrillas are there?" asked the Colonel.

"We are 520," replied the girl.

"And how many people are there in your village?" asked the Colonel.

"There are 538, Monsieur."

The Colonel grinned. "And 520 are guerrillas, eh? What about the other 18?"

The girl did not smile. "We do not take them, Monsieur," she told him, "unless they are over 10 or under 70."

(*French Information Services, London, June 21, 1944*)

**French and Americans Dying for the Same Cause** — (From the London spokesman of the Provisional Government of the French Republic) — "Now that the battle of the beaches is won, we have the right to ask the question that has been haunting us since Tuesday morning: 'How many French civilians have given their lives during this first phase of the liberation?'"

In order to be sure of getting an impartial and truthful answer, I wanted to go to the worst sector of the front, the same place where, as General Montgomery told us yesterday, the initial attack had been repulsed, obliging the Allies to bring more powerful means into action. I am just back from the little town of T....., which was caught for three days between cross fire from American and German artillery. While there, I attended, with the rest of the inhabitants, the funeral of 16 victims of war. Sixteen dead out of 850 inhabitants: that is not an exceptional proportion, but it is unique in the Bayeux zone, the chief town of the district having been miraculously preserved, not one life lost, not one stone damaged.

The mayor had not expected me. A group of peasants standing with him echoed his first words: 'A French uniform!' As there are still some German snipers in the woods, the funeral procession was guarded by American soldiers, and escorted to the cemetery by young resisters who had only emerged yesterday from their hiding places with the Maquis. There was not one of them who did not mourn a relative or a close friend. Yet, each time that I would offer my condolences, saying, 'You had to pay heavily,' the reply would come instantly and sharply, 'Not too heavily.'

The 16 wooden coffins were placed in rows in the cemetery. The Germans had burnt down the church. The curé and three parishioners chanted the requiem. After that came a deep silence, in which each communed with his dead, who lie now in their native ground under masses of red, white, and blue flowers. Standing at the foot of a marble cross, the curé spoke first: 'May their sacrifice,' he said, 'hasten the liberation for which they lived, and for which they have died.' An American captain answered, 'Sixteen of your people here, and thousands of ours have fallen for the same cause since dawn on June 6. Together we are going to see that their blood was not shed in vain. Vive la France!'

With solemn earnestness the mayor also spoke, and these were his exact words, pronounced over the coffins, before the bereaved families: 'From the depths of my heart, on behalf of all the inhabitants of this martyred town, I say: Thank you! Our thanks to our liberators!' No one dared applaud, but all heads, the women with their black veils first, were slowly nodded in approval. I also said a few words: 'A little while ago, we passed before a war memorial which had been raised to the dead of the last World War. Only the base was left with the plaque on which I could still read dozens of names. When we restore it, we shall add to that glorious list the names of the sixteen men, women and children whom we have buried today in this dear soil of France. All died in the same fight for liberty, honor, and their mother country.'

(*French Information Services, London, June 20, 1944*)





*French and British troops landing on the island of Elba*

*European*

**A Civilian's Story** (Account given by a French doctor in a village on the Normandy coast) — "We had taken refuge in a pit at the bottom of the vegetable garden. At four o'clock in the morning we had been driven out of a makeshift shelter, and we were lying huddled close to each other (there were six of us, three men and three women), hoping that things would soon calm down, for the night had been particularly awful. Suddenly, one of our neighbors, who had not been able to leave because of his crippled wife, came over to us, with the sick woman, and shouted: The Americans are here. I saw two of them last night, and when I called to them, they said: 'Vive la France!'"

I can't describe our feelings. We couldn't believe it was true. It all sounded so fantastic. That Americans could land at the Pointe-de-Hoc (a steep, high cliff, which had been transformed into a formidable fortress by two years of labor on defense works) seemed impossible. We were afraid this might be another of the Boches' tricks. However, our neighbor kept insisting that he was right, and we began to feel more hopeful. But we could not stand uncertainty any longer. Cost what it might, we had to know. So, we crept out of our temporary shelter, and set out to see whether we could get in touch with any of the Allied soldiers. That was an exciting moment. How would they treat us? Were our Allies really there? Could we be sure that it was they who were attacking the Boches, and were they still holding out? Perhaps the bullets that we heard whizzing past came from their rifles. We just did not know what to think.

Our first two attempts to contact someone were not successful. The third time we caught sight of four German soldiers hiding in the ditch at the side of the road. They seemed to be retreating. One of them fired at us, a dozen shots at less than 50 yards, but no one was hit. The fourth time we came out, they had put a white rag on the end of a stick, but the firing hadn't stopped. We were so anxious to know how things were going, that we went on for another 30 yards or so along the road. At first, we couldn't tell who they might be, but soon the dim shapes which were advancing behind the hedgerows revealed themselves more clearly, and we knew they were Americans. They had really come! We went mad with joy.

After the first wild excitement, a relative calm gave us time to realize what it all meant. We were filled with quiet happiness; now we were free again. The fetters which had bound us each day more tightly, were now broken. This comforting assurance dominated every other feeling."

(French Information Services, London, June 23, 1944)

## II—THE ITALIAN FRONT

*The advance of the American Fifth Army on the Livorno road is being slowed down at the approaches to the first peaks of the Apennines; Mount Amiata, the highest peak in this region, is in the hands of the Allies. The occupation of the Isle of Elba, completed in 53 hours by French troops under General Delattre de Tassigny, menaces the retreating German troops with a new landing on their right flank. Along the highway from Rome to Florence, the Fifth Army has got as far as the Lake Trasimeno, and the French troops engaged in this sector are to the north of Castiglione Dorria. North of Perouse, which was occupied on June 20, the British Eighth Army is pushing up the Tiber region, through a mountainous terrain where there are no good roads. The French engaged in this sector are south-east of Lake Trasimeno.*

### *The Liberation of the Isle of Elba*

**Communique from the National Defense Headquarters** — After having played an important part in the successes in Italy, French troops gave another proof of their valor by seizing the Isle of Elba in 53 hours.

The Isle of Elba, which dominates the Piombino canal, represented an airport for the enemy's coastal navigation in the direction of the Italian front, and a