

# Free France

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## LIBERATION OF PARIS

*"It is contrary to the interest of the State that there should arise castes that are too inbred, that have exclusive possession of certain positions, that are irrevocably narrow in outlook, that are governed by rules of their own which may override the rules of all. France needs but one élite — her people.*

*The problems of modern war go far beyond the limited horizons of a military caste, however well trained it be; they have become national problems. The experience of the Great War of 1914-1918 has shown that they can be solved only by the concerted effort of the entire nation."*—JEAN DE PIERREFEU, *Plutarque a menti*, Paris, 1923.

### I—A NATIONAL UPRISING

*Paris, mind and heart of France has been freed by the wrath of her people. Paris opens her prison doors, Paris tenderly buries the martyrs and soldiers of this national uprising. Paris salutes the armies of liberation, but knows that France is covered with ruins, and weighs the price of the Armistice of 1940, the price paid by all France for the benefit of a band of traitors. Paris faces the future with the faith and determination of a noble people. She knows that once the nation has been cleansed of deceit and treason, the people of France now united in the Resistance will remain united in the task of national reconstruction, that France may soon become a greater and a better nation.*

#### *The Battle of Paris*

*On Wednesday morning, August 23, it was announced over the air that Paris had been liberated by the FFI after four days of street fighting. The next day, August 24, broadcasts stated that fighting was still going on in Paris, that the FFI had been forced to call on the Allies for aid and that General Omar Bradley had sent in General Leclerc's Division to relieve the Patriots. After a series of reports which, if not contradictory, were at least confusing, the entry into Paris of Leclerc's Division was not officially announced until August 25, and the complete liberation of the city not until August 26. Below are the first texts covering the progress of the operations, but it must be borne in mind that an authoritative account of the battle cannot yet be written.*

*A Communiqué of the Paris Resistance* — (Broadcast by the French Information Services, London) — Saturday morning, August 18, the National Council of Resistance, the Paris Committee of Liberation and the National Delegate, member and representative of the Provisional Government of the French Republic, ordered a general uprising in Paris and surrounding districts.

The French Forces of the Interior, 50,000 armed men, supported by hundreds of thousands of unarmed members of the Resistance, went into action immediately. The Paris police who had already gone over to the Resistance, took possession of Police Headquarters and turned the Ile de la Cité into a fortress against which German attacks beat in vain.

Yesterday, August 22, after four days of fighting, the enemy was beaten in all sections. The Patriots were in possession of all public buildings. The representatives of Vichy had been arrested or had fled the city.

So it was that the people of Paris themselves accomplished the liberation of the capital.

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

*Official Communiqué Issued by General Koenig's Headquarters* — According to the most recent information, it appears that August 19 was the decisive day of the battle for Paris. Early in the morning, orders for a general uprising were issued by the Paris Committee of Liberation, and the National Resistance Council, in full agreement with the National Delegate. A general strike began and fierce fighting broke out in all parts of the city.



The Germans struck back by bringing up tanks, which fired into the crowds, killing many civilians. Particularly bitter fighting took place in the neighborhood of the Hôtel de Ville, Ile de la Cité, Place St. Michel, the Panthéon, Place Denfert-Rochereau, Place des Gobelins, Porte d'Orléans, the Cité Universitaire, Place de la République, Boulevard Barbès, and at the Gare de l'Est. All German attacks were repelled; ten heavy tanks and 60 machine guns were destroyed or captured. The French Forces of the Interior captured anti-tank guns, considerable materiel, and took 1,000 prisoners. All through the night the FFI continued to occupy public buildings. On the morning of the 20th, the Hôtel de Ville was taken, and M. Bouffet, Prefect of the Seine was arrested. Besides holding the Hôtel de Ville and the Préfecture de Police, the FFI were in possession of the Palais de Justice, the Elysée Palace, the Invalides, the Ministries of the Interior, Finance, Justice, Agriculture, and War, the Gare de l'Est, the Halles, and the Bourse du Travail, as well as many municipal buildings, telephone exchanges and newspaper offices. On Sunday the enemy was apparently withdrawing at several points. The German High Command entered into negotiations for an armistice, offering to recognize the FFI as belligerents.<sup>1</sup> Fighting continued at several places while the negotiations were going on. A group of 400 Patriots who were entrenched at Place St. Michel, and all along Boulevard St. Michel, distinguished themselves by heroic fighting throughout Sunday and Monday. They knocked out ten tanks, four half tracks, 21 trucks, 17 armored cars, and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy.

(French Information Services, London, August 24, 1944)

**General Leclerc's Troops in Paris** — Information reaching London from various sources indicates that the present battle within Paris is nothing less than a furious counter-rising on the part of the enraged Nazis and a mopping-up operation on the part of the FFI.

The French Second Armored Division under the command of General Leclerc has entered Paris according to a report broadcast by an American war correspondent from Paris itself:

"Advance patrols of the French Second Armored Division under General Leclerc entered Paris at the Porte d'Italie. They went into action with the FFI who were mopping-up remaining pockets of German resistance. The advance elements were made up of Sherman tanks, two sections of infantry and one of combat engineers. But the size of the force is of no importance; Allied troops are here.

"As Leclerc's men advanced from the Porte d'Italie to the Ile de la Cité they were greeted uproariously. Men, women and children literally clambered over the

tanks shouting hysterically. They had waited four years and two months for this moment.

"The Germans set fire to the Navy Ministry and the Hôtel Crillon. The sky was aflame in the direction of Neuilly and Vincennes. This is the last spasm of the trapped beast."

General Joinville, Chief of the General Staff of the FFI broadcast the following appeal over the FFI Radio in Paris.

"To the barricades. To battle everyone. Parisians arise!"

(French Information Services, London, August 26, 1944)

**Germans Surrender to General Leclerc** — Details of the battle waged by the Parisians, especially on August 25, are beginning to reach London. A broadcast by an American correspondent from General Eisenhower's Headquarters announced, at 5 p.m. on August 25, that the liberation of Paris had been completed. Below are the main events of the battle of that day.

7 a.m.: French armored cars moved along the highways into the southern suburbs of the city. At Pantin, the FFI relieved one of their units besieged in a Métro station.

Sherman tanks reached the Place d'Italie and sped down Boulevard St. Jacques.

8:30 a.m.: Units of the French Second Armored Division advanced along Boulevard St. Michel crossing the Seine at the Pont St. Michel. The FFI were ordered to wipe out pockets of German resistance.

8:45 a.m.: Crowds on Boulevard Port Royal wildly greeted the French soldiers and showered them with flowers. Allied flags were flying from all windows.

9:45 a.m.: Another column of the French Second Armored Division passed the Porte d'Orléans.

10:45 a.m.: Allied troops mopped up the Place de la Concorde and the street adjoining the Chamber of Deputies, where 600 Germans were besieged.

10:50 a.m.: Arriving from different sectors of the Ile-de-France, Allied reinforcements poured through the Porte d'Orléans and went into action. They quickly reached the Châtelet, and the Luxembourg, where a group of Germans were still resisting violently.

7 p.m.: General de Gaulle entered Paris.

9 p.m.: The General commanding the German garrison in Paris surrendered to General Leclerc in the Gare Montoarnasse. The terms provided that the commanders of the various German units immediately receive orders to cease fire and raise the white flag, stack arms and turn them over intact; disarmed prisoners were to assemble at specified places, destruction of public and private buildings was to cease at once; Germans who had not immediately turned over their arms were not to be covered by the laws of war.

10 p.m.: Prisoners began to file through the streets of the capital with hands raised, under the contemptuous eyes of the triumphant Parisians.

During these dramatic hours when Paris struggled to remain worthy of herself and of her glorious past, the

<sup>1</sup>The armistice terms have not been published. An article in the New York Herald Tribune of August 27 contains the following report: General von Scholtitz, who surrendered to General Leclerc on August 25 declared that he had not signed an armistice with the Patriots but a simple "arrangement whereby the Germans would move troops in and out of the city in return for permission for the French to bring food into the city."





*The Leclerc Division welcomed by the citizens of Clamart as they drive into Paris.*

*Press Association, Inc.*

center of German resistance was the Etoile, where anti-tank guns had been installed. Heavy engagements took place in Avenue Kléber and in the vicinity of the Hotel Majestic. But by mid-afternoon all these pockets of resistance had been eliminated.

The Ile de la Cité, made into a fortress by the FFI, where the leaders of the Resistance were stationed, held firm and fought off all German attacks. At Place de la République the Germans put up barricades, as did the FFI who, although poorly armed, resisted all enemy efforts. The Germans threw incendiary grenades into the Métro station at Place de la République.

*(French Information Services, London, August 25, 1944)*

**Last Hours of German Resistance** — During the last hours of German Resistance Paris lived through some strange moments. War with all its dangers continued while an atmosphere of Bastille Day celebration spread through the city. Here is a description by one of the first allied war correspondents to enter Paris:

"The Parisians gather along the Champs Elysées where Allied forces have begun action. Suddenly, from the Place de l'Etoile, a volley of shots sweeps the Avenue. The crowds disappear as if by magic. Only the Allied armored cars and tanks remain, their guns blazing away at the enemy position. Where a few moments ago joyous crowds were singing the Marseillaise, our soldiers are now charging the enemy entrenched in the Etoile neighborhood.

"The same thing occurs in the Place Pereire. Just as General de Gaulle and General Leclerc meet at the War Ministry, in the Rue St. Dominique, the tanks which had accompanied them begin firing at Germans

in a building less than 60 feet away from the Ministry. Shells begin crashing into the façade of the Ministry, and the fighting becomes so bitter that all the window panes in the Rue St. Dominique and the Rue de Bourgogne are blown out."

American paratroopers, who had been dropped over Paris during the month preceding its liberation, join the FFI who give them a rousing welcome. Russian prisoners hoist their flags over the Soviet Embassy, in the Rue de Grenelle, before continuing their fight in the ranks of the FFI.

*(French Information Services, London, August 25, 1944)*

**Proclamation by FFI Colonel of Paris Region** — A proclamation was issued by the Colonel commanding the FFI of the Paris region on August 25 after the Germans had surrendered, and was broadcast by an FFI transmitter in Paris:

"Fighting men of all ranks: after years of underground battle, of day by day gains in the struggle against the invader to preserve the honor of France, the day of the great battle has come. You have fought with the weapons fortune provided, inspired by a fierce will to conquer. You have conquered. The enthusiastic people, men, women, old folk and children have fought at your side, raised barricades, caught the Boche in traps from which he can escape alive only by laying down his arms unconditionally. The FFI of the liberated districts of Ile-de-France march under arms and reorganize while fighting, to form, with their comrades of other regions, of the glorious division of General Leclerc and of General Koenig's army, a new French Army, which shall



drive out the invader irrevocably, and enter his own country to wipe out all vestige of the régime of the oppressor. Keep up your courage, rally to your leaders. Guard zealously the flame that made you the pioneers of national liberty. *Vive de Gaulle! Vive les FFI! Vive la France!*"

(French Information Services, London, August 26, 1944)

### Paris Greets the Americans

(From Raymond Daniell) Paris, August 29 — Victorious American troops of the Fifth Corps rolled through Paris today in a triumphal procession while the people of the liberated capital quit working, fighting and rebuilding to cheer them.

Grim days are behind them and hard work lies ahead, but for a few brief hours the Parisians forgot their troubles to celebrate their release from German domination. The procession, which was a foretaste of the victory celebrations that will be held in New York and London when Berlin is in the Allies' hands, formed beyond the Arc de Triomphe and marched down the Champs-Élysées through huge crowds and past the reviewing stand in the Place de la Concorde, where it dispersed along the quai and over the bridges to re-form and resume its march.

There is no public transport in this city, which is short of food and of all the things that make life good. Yet the people swarmed into the regions around the streets through which the procession moved to shout and laugh and cry a little. They came on bicycles, in horse-drawn victorias and fiacres, in farm carts and on foot, from all parts of Paris. But the bicycles were most numerous.

The crowds divided Paris in two. From the Ile de la Cité to two or three miles beyond the Place de l'Etoile it was impossible to get from the right to the left bank of the Seine.

The tired but grinning Americans marched and rode down the historic avenue, clowning as they always do, and the Parisians loved it. There was one riding on top of a heavily armed truck who pointed east and made motions of cutting his throat. Another riding on a jeep waved two bottles of vin blanc and yelled "Vive la France!" over and over again. There was another with flowers stuck on the net of his helmet who blew kisses to the girls and tried to catch the flowers that they threw to him.

(New York TIMES, August 30, 1944)

Paris, August 29 (AP) — Past the Arc de Triomphe and down through the avenues where their fathers had walked a generation ago, the men of a great American infantry division marched today. There were cheers and laughter, but it was a solemn moment when Lieut. Gen. Omar N. Bradley and Lieut. Gen. Joseph-Pierre Koenig laid a wreath on the tomb of France's Unknown Soldier.

Hundreds of thousands of persons stood along the line of march along the Champs-Élysées, the Place Vendôme, at the Obelisk, the Place de la Concorde, in the Rue de Rivoli and all through these beloved avenues. At the Obelisk, General Bradley, Gen. Charles de Gaulle, Gen. Sir Bernard L. Montgomery and Brig. Gen. Jacques Leclerc reviewed the parade.

First came armored cars, four abreast, and then long files of foot soldiers slogging along with the beat of the drums, just as other soldiers did here at an hour of victory twenty-six years ago.

This division marched in battle array. It marched through Paris toward another rendezvous with action — out of this city and back into the line of attack.

(New York TIMES, August 30, 1944)

### Liberation of Vichy Symbol of the Liberation of France

The liberation of Vichy, seat of the collaborationist government, was announced by the commander of the

FFI at Vichy, on the day of the liberation of Paris. The last vestige of the Pétain-Laval government fell. The announcement contained the following message: "Citizens of Vichy! For you, too, the hour of liberation has come. Your town is free. The French Forces of the Interior are occupying Vichy; the population is calm, and order maintained. We are asking you to remain calm, even though you are excited by this long-awaited and joyful event, and to obey the orders of the civil and military authorities. Food will be distributed. No one is to release or distribute any food stocks whatsoever unless specific orders to do so have been received from competent authorities. Such orders shall be issued, please obey them. Everyone must cooperate for Victory. France will be reborn. *Vive la France!*"

(French Information Services, London, August 27, 1944)

*Note:* — The neutral press announced that Marshal Pétain and Pierre Laval had been taken by the Germans to Belfort where they are both kept under close watch. Before leaving, Laval secured a promise from the Germans to have Premier Edouard Herriot brought to Paris from Nancy where he was being held, that he might set up a government designed to save Vichy. (On August 28, the New York *Herald Tribune* published an exchange of letters between Edouard Herriot, Pierre Laval and Otto Abetz, etc.) The French Information Services at London have stated that "Premier Herriot explicitly refused to consider Laval's offer despite all efforts to intimidate him." The Germans took him to some point in the East of France. Before his departure he left a note in his own handwriting in which he said, "I have been arrested once again for having refused to yield to either the Germans or to Laval's blackmail."

## II—GENERAL DE GAULLE IN PARIS

*After having visited the liberated regions of Brittany General de Gaulle left Rennes on August 22 for Paris. On his way he stopped at Vitré, Laval, Le Mans, and Chartres. He was everywhere greeted with frenzied enthusiasm as the head of the Provisional Government of the French Republic.<sup>1</sup> He followed closely in the wake of General Leclerc's units which entered Paris on August 25 at 7 a.m. He went immediately to the Hôtel de Ville where he was greeted by the new Prefect of Paris, M. Charles Luizet, while the Marseillaise, played by the Paris Police band echoed through the square.<sup>2</sup> At the Hôtel de Ville General de Gaulle delivered an address to an enormous crowd, the people of Paris.*

*On August 26, General de Gaulle went to the Arc de Triomphe where he bowed reverently before the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He then marched down the Champs Élysées to Place de la Concorde where he listened to the United Nations national anthems and the*

<sup>1</sup>General de Gaulle was accompanied by Michel Jacquier, Commissioner of the Republic for the Region of Angers, General Juin, Chief of the General Staff for National Defense, Gaston Palewski, Director of the Cabinet, General Sicé, M. de Courcel, Regional Commissioner of the Republic, Colonel de Boislabert, chief of the Administrative Liaison Services.

<sup>2</sup>The Paris Police, known as *agents*, were incorporated into the National Police as it was organized by Vichy, so that government might have complete control. The Paris Police, according to an FFI communiqué joined the FFI on August 21, as did the police of Seine-et-Oise. Scattered elements only remained loyal to Vichy and carried out its orders to fight the Resistance. (See pp. 203 ff. on Vichy's organization of the Police and Joseph Darnand's orders in case of military operations in French territory.)



*Marseillaise* sung by thousands of grateful people. From Place de la Concorde de Gaulle went to Notre Dame Cathedral where he attended a Te Deum of thanksgiving. On August 29 there was a triumphal march of the American Fifth Corps which the Parisians applauded wildly in demonstration of their gratitude to the Allies. Generals Charles de Gaulle, Omar Bradley, Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, and Jacques Leclerc reviewed the Allied troops at Place de la Concorde.

French reports on the demonstrations accompanying General de Gaulle's entry into Paris have not yet reached us. Reports from Allied correspondents have covered some aspects of the celebrations. Broadcast reports from London by French journalists released by the French Information Services at London are still incomplete,<sup>1</sup> but we are publishing them nevertheless, by reason of their tremendous spiritual quality. Here is General de Gaulle's address at the Hôtel de Ville:

**General de Gaulle's Speech**—There is no point in hiding the fact that joy overwhelms us all, men and women, here in Paris as it rises to liberate itself and as it wins its freedom by its own efforts. No, we shall not conceal our deep and sacred feeling; there are moments, we know, that are ageless and beyond the scope of our mortal lives.

Paris! Paris ravaged! Paris crushed! Paris martyred. But Paris free!

Liberated by ourselves, liberated by her people with the help of the Armies of France, with the help and cooperation of all of France, and by that I mean the true France, fighting France, France eternal.

Now that Paris is free, now that the enemy has surrendered into our hands, France is returning home to Paris. She returns bleeding but well-determined; her return is lighted by the fires of destruction, but she is more certain than ever of her duties and of her rights.

I shall speak first of her duties, and I shall express all of them at one stroke in saying that this is war. The enemy is tottering, but the enemy is not yet defeated. He is still on our soil and it will not be enough that with the aid of our dear and courageous Allies, we drive him from our land. After what has happened we shall not be satisfied until, as is fitting, we shall have entered his territory as conquerors.

That is why the vanguard of the French Army has entered Paris, with guns blazing, that is why the French Army of Italy that landed in the Midi is advancing so rapidly northward in the Rhône Valley. And that is why our brave and loyal Forces of the Interior want to be modern and regular units. To be revenged, and for that vengeance and at the same time justice, we shall fight to the last hour, to the hour of complete and total victory. Every man here, every man throughout France who is listening to us, well knows that this duty to fight carries with it other duties and that the supreme duty is to maintain our national unity.

The Nation in her present plight cannot countenance destruction of her unity. The Nation well knows that to conquer, to flourish, to be great she must have the cooperation of all her children. The Nation well knows that her sons and her daughters, all her sons and all her daughters, save those miserable traitors who joined the enemy and have handed others over to the enemy and who know and shall know the severity of the law, save

these, all sons, all daughters of France are marching and shall march together hand in hand toward victory.

This is the great and noble conduct the Government demands of all her citizens. But this great and noble national unity does not blind the nation to the awareness of her rights. I say this now for after what happened in 1940, after France relinquished her sovereignty, after her Government was hatefully usurped, there is no other practical and acceptable way for the people to be heard than by free and universal suffrage for all French men and women. As soon as conditions permit the people shall be sovereign.

As to the rights of France, I mean her internal rights, those which concern all her children, and which therefore vitally concern her, we shall never again as long as it lies within our power, allow any man or any woman to fear hunger or the misery of a tomorrow. We want French men and French women to be worthy of themselves and of the Nation. We want, for every person in France, living conditions of such quality as every man and woman has a right to demand.

Moreover, France has rights abroad. France is a great nation. She has proved it at the time when there was but the sea about us. We were aware of this, and now we stand, our forces joined, beside the victors. But that is not all. France, this great nation, shall command respect for herself and her rights. She has a right to insist she never again be invaded by an enemy who so often invaded her. She has a right to be in the first line among the great nations who are going to organize the peace and the life of the world. She has a right to be heard in all four corners of the world.

France is a world power. She knows it and will act so that others may know it because this is of supreme interest—that is the interest of mankind.

This is what we must achieve, standing by the government: war, unity, grandeur. This is our program. I have only to look at you to know that your determination to fulfill this task is shared by all Frenchmen. Onward everyone.

We shall be faced with many difficulties, especially in Paris.

It is not overnight that we shall restore yesterday's wealth, abundance, ease of living to Paris and to France. And it is not today that we shall restore to the face of our nation the peaceful look that was hers for centuries.

We shall have to surmount many an obstacle, we shall have to overcome many a difficulty. The Government shall fulfill its duty. The entire Nation will require that it do so. Thus we shall look toward happier days. . . .

(The last words of the address were not audible on account of transmission difficulties.)

(French Information Services, London, August 26, 1944)

## With the Parisians

**Triumph of the French Nation** — (From French war correspondent Jean Marin) — This morning Paris arose in all her splendor to greet the units of General Leclerc's Division. Along every street, on every doorstep there she was, laughing, singing, crying, tossing flowers to those who passed. Above fluttered the most magnificent, the most unusual display of tricolor flags.

Paris liberated by Patriots, Paris who had fought on the barricades and who in some sections was still fighting, but Paris free, cheered the soldiers of the French Nation. In Paris, France of the Resistance joined fighting France from abroad. I recall what an elderly Finistère peasant said to me not long ago. I was telling him how much I admired all that I had just seen in Brittany, and he replied, "Had the Germans remained here a hundred years you would have found us unchanged."

The Breton's remark can be repeated by each of us for it is the very language of France. Despite disaster, despite the crimes of a few the enemy never had any chance of securing the servile submission he sought and needed to win his gangster war. France answered his poisonous promises, his threats, his horrible persecution with her faith, her courage, her resistance. All her people

<sup>1</sup>During the early hours of August 25 and 26 French war correspondents spoke from FFI stations in Paris, the Germans having destroyed the big French stations. The inadequate equipment of these stations made it impossible to pick up all of these reports in their entirety. The FFI stations broadcasting under the name, Radiodiffusion de la Nation Française, operate on the following wave lengths: 206 m., 244 m., 235.10 m., 312.8 m., 386.6 m., 873 m., 31 m., 19.8 m., 41 m.



have proved that in truth, if France had lost a battle, she had not lost the war. The people have triumphed, the French nation has triumphed.

I had striking evidence of this triumph in Paris, when General de Gaulle said to me "The German General commanding the Greater Paris region has just surrendered in the city." I had striking evidence of this triumph when I saw an automobile going through the streets of Paris, from action station to action station, with a French officer and, seated beside him a German officer carrying a white flag, giving the order to surrender.

(French Information Services, London, August 26, 1944)

**At the Arc de Triomphe** — (From Maurice Schumann of the London radio station "Honneur et Patrie") — To reach Paris we had to fight a bitter action before the Fresnes prison. In entering Paris we hugged the wall of the Santé. Soon, after relighting the flame at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, we shall decorate . . . (short passage not audible) . . . There is victory in Paris, but not in Strasbourg, it has mounted the towers of Notre Dame, but has not yet reached the Rhine and beyond. As we have learned throughout this day the enemy can and does still kill. Our first duty remains to know how to die in our own land . . .

A tricolor bouquet was thrown into our armored car, and we thought we had earned the right to bring it to the Arc de Triomphe. We were wrong. We still had to earn our way to that sacred tomb. To cross Place de la Concorde we had to storm the Navy Ministry, to see a Boche ensconced there shoot point blank and kill a young nurse who had run, waving a Red Cross flag, to aid one of the wounded, and to see a corporal who had come all the way from the Chad fall in the reconquered street beside one of his victorious comrades in arms of the FFI, before he could see his mother again. That mixture of powder and rejoicing, blood and sunshine! We had to enter Notre Dame gun in hand because the German was still shooting. . . . This brilliant and savage poetry of liberation, this has made us free, this had made us proud, this has made us strong.

It was fitting that we should lay at the tomb of the Arc de Triomphe those fresh morning flowers, become bloody by night-fall, and suddenly we felt at last that the dead were there beside the living. (French Information Services, London, August 26, 1944)

**Wrath, Heroism, Undying Generosity — Paris!** — (From Pierre Bourdan of "Les Français parlent aux Français," BBC, London) — Paris was never what it is today. This is a Paris of fire, frenzy, of deliverance, wrath, heroism, undying generosity, a Paris which in a single stroke, in a single burst joins all its revolutionary traditions and all its national traditions. A Paris regaining its treasures of liberty and popular vigor; at the same time it gives them to the world. A Paris whose unarmed 16-year-olds held for days behind barricades or attacked enemy tanks in the open. A Paris which shouted with joy and sparkled with flags while it was still swept by German machine gun fire. A Paris which laughs and cries . . . a Paris whose revolutionary soul has reawakened, but whose revolution is against the enemy. . . . Paris drawn up behind the barricades and redoubts where only yesterday evening French Patriots were fighting. They fought street battles with an enemy entrenched down to the Métro line to Grenelle, firing his last salvos, hurling his last grenades. . . . This day, its last day of barricades, is offered to history as a magnificent gift from France, which tomorrow will be free from Marseille to Dunkerque, from Brest to the Vosges.

(French Information Services, London, August 26, 1944)

### **Fascist Attempt to Assassinate General de Gaulle**

Snipers concealed on roofs and in buildings nearby fired into the crowds killing and wounding several people at the moment when General de Gaulle was driving along the rue de Rivoli to the Place de la Concorde. The FFI and police immediately searched and cleared the houses from which shots had come.

A band of armed Fascists took advantage of the general excitement and made their way into the Cathedral where they shot at

General de Gaulle during the Thanksgiving service on August 26. The following eye witness account of the firing in Notre Dame was broadcast by Robert Reid of the BBC and printed in the New York Herald Tribune on August 27:

**Firing in Notre Dame Cathedral** — This is Robert Reid speaking to you from the square in front of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Almost 40,000 Parisians are packed into this square, waiting for the final scene in a day which has been memorable in the history of France. Immediately behind me, through the great doors of this thirteenth-century cathedral, I can see, in the dim half-light, a mass of faces turned toward the door, waiting for the arrival of General de Gaulle. And, when the General arrives, this huge concourse of people, both inside and outside the Cathedral — they will be joining in the celebration of the solemn "Te Deum" in the mother church of France.

From where I am standing in the square this is really a remarkable scene. Away to the bottom end of the square is the Prefecture of Police, showing the shell marks on the walls from when the German tanks attacked the building. Inside the building were French police and soldiers, yet they managed to hold out and the Germans were eventually driven off. [General de Gaulle arrives.]

The General has now turned to face the square, and this huge crowd of Parisians — he is being presented to the people. He is being received. \* \* \*

[Noise of shots, shouts and screams.] Even while the General is marching into the Cathedral. [Shot, followed by loud yell: "They have opened fire!" Then silence. Mr. Reid continues.]

That was one of the most dramatic scenes I have ever seen. Just as General de Gaulle was about to enter the Cathedral of Notre Dame, firing started all over the place. I was overwhelmed by a rush of people who were trying to seek shelter, and my cable parted from my microphone. I fell just near General de Gaulle, and I managed to pick myself up. General de Gaulle was trying to control the crowds rushing into the Cathedral.

He walked straight ahead into what appeared to me to be a hail of fire from somewhere inside the Cathedral, somewhere from the galleries up near the vaulted roof. But he went straight ahead without hesitation, his shoulders flung back, and walked right down the central aisle, even while the bullets were pouring around him. It was the most extraordinary example of courage I have ever seen.

While the congregation was trying to take shelter, lying flat on the ground under the chairs and behind the pillars, the firing continued at intervals. The police, the military and the Resistance movement — all these people, they came in and were trying to pick off the snipers. Some of the snipers had actually got onto the roof of the Cathedral.

There was an awful din going on the whole time. Just by me one man was hit in the neck, but I will say this for the Parisian crowd: there was no real panic inside the Cathedral at all. Paris had come to celebrate the solemn "Te Deum" mass, and it did. Even while the firing was going on, the people rose to their feet and stood there and sang the mass, with General de Gaulle at the head of them.

When the service was over, the General turned toward the great doors. I saw him marching down the aisle, this very tall, upright figure, with his chin well up in the air, his shoulders flung back, and his exit was the scene for another attempt.

There were bangs, flashes, all around him, yet he seemed to have an absolutely charmed life as he walked down the aisle to the door, because nothing touched him. When he got to the door, it was a signal for another burst of firing from outside.

I don't know how many people have been hit. I doubt whether very many have. As I say, I saw only one casualty myself. Even now the firing is still going on. But there are people still about the square, so I think the firing, which is apparently coming from surrounding roofs, must be rather erratic, because I can't see anybody being carted away.

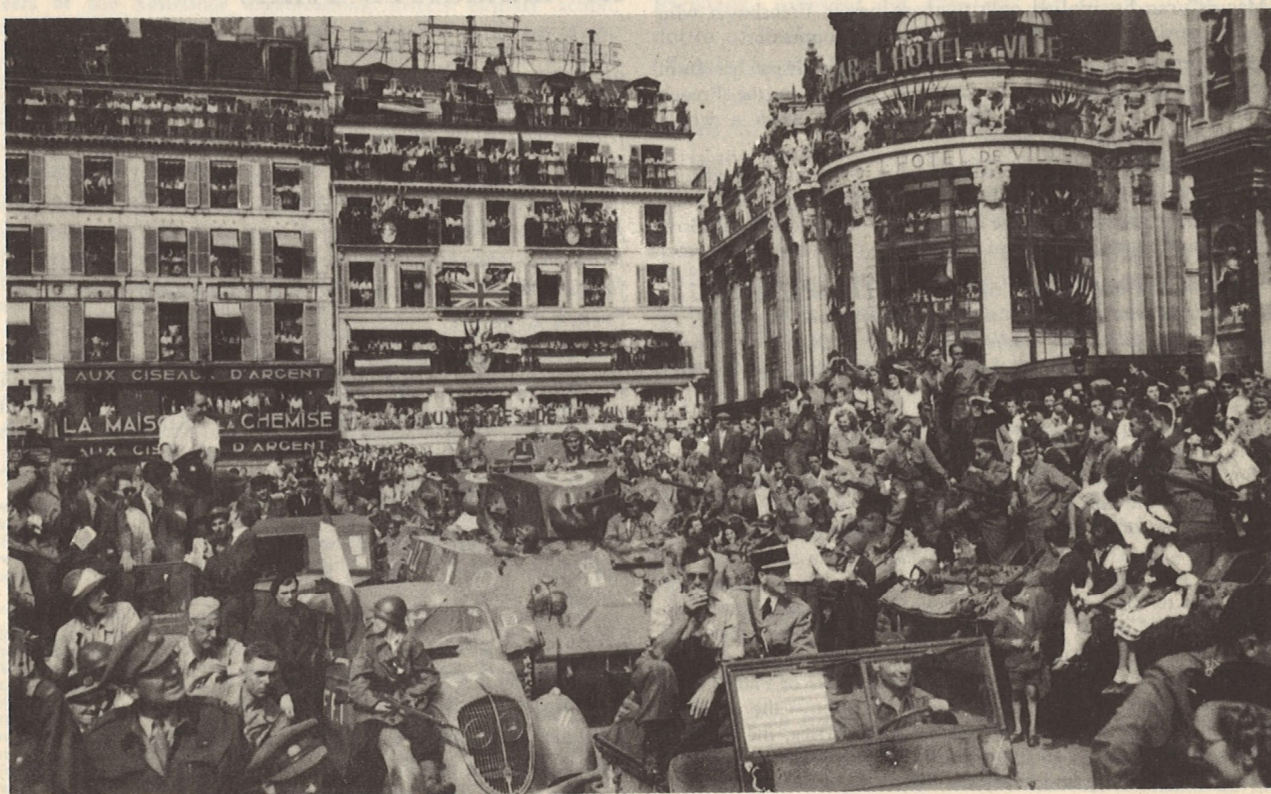
(New York TIMES, August 27, 1944)





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*General Charles de Gaulle leaves Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris after a thanksgiving service on August 26th. German snipers opened fire as he arrived, in an attempt on his life.*



*Parisian crowds in the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville watching the parade for General de Gaulle.*

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**Note:**—A Paris dispatch by William Randolph Hearst, Jr., published in the New York *Journal-American* of August 29, 1944, creates the impression that the shooting in and around Notre Dame de Paris on August 26 was caused by the "jittery state of the young men of the Maquis." The shooting has been generally described as an attempt on the life of General de Gaulle.

The French Press and Information Service wishes to point out that:

1. The Maquis should not be confused with the French Forces of the Interior (FFI). Originally the word "Maquis" was applied to scattered groups of Frenchmen throughout France conducting resistance against the Germans and the Vichy regime. The organization of these groups into a single army now known as the French Forces of the Interior, which received directives and arms from the French Provisional Government with the help of the Allies was started in February 1944. Due to the difficulty of coordinating all these groups into a single army in a country occupied by the enemy, certain Maquis groups continued to operate independently, although they never ceased to combat the Germans. As the liberation has been taking place, these independent groups have been progressively merged into the FFI under General Koenig's single command.

2. Throughout France, however, and especially in a large city like Paris, there are also groups of armed Frenchmen—collaborators and former members of the Vichy Militia—who have kept the arms which were given them to fight the French Resistance, as well as disreputable individuals who have been taking advantage of the state of lawlessness created by the German occupation to commit acts of banditry. It is an insult to apply the word "Maquis" to these professional gunmen who are trying their best to create unrest in the liberated territory. These bandits will be ruthlessly rounded up and disarmed. The only Frenchmen who will be allowed to keep their arms are the FFI and the authentic members of the Maquis who will be speedily organized into regular units of the FFI. At any rate the term "Maquis" can be applied only to those heroic Frenchmen who spontaneously took up the fight against the oppressor.

3. A certain anxiety is apparent in the Paris dispatches from some correspondents over the "state of unrest" in the French capital. Such a situation is hardly surprising when a whole nation rises against the enemy.

It is expected that the French people who have fought so bravely for their own liberation will speedily remedy the situation with the assistance of the delegates of the Provisional Government and representatives of the FFI.

**General de Gaulle Pays Tribute to the Liberators of Paris**—Below is the text of a short address delivered on August 29, by General de Gaulle over Radiodiffusion de la Nation Française in Paris after the parade of American troops down the Champs-Élysées:

Four days ago the Germans holding Paris surrendered to the French. Four days ago Paris was liberated.

Boundless joy and tremendous pride swept the Nation. But beyond that, the entire world thrilled at the thought that Paris had arisen out of the shadows and would shine once again in all her glory.

France pays tribute to all of those who shared in the victory of Paris; first to the people of Paris who in their hearts never, no never, accepted defeat and humiliation, to those brave men and women here who so vigorously and for so long resisted the oppressor before assisting in his rout, to the soldiers of France who have beaten and crushed the enemy on the spot—the warriors of a hundred heroic battles who came from Africa, the fighting men organized secretly in the units of the Forces of the Interior, but above everything and everyone else, to those who gave their lives for our country on the battlefield or at the stake.

France also pays tribute to the brave and worthy Allied Armies and to their leaders whose irresistible offensive made possible the

liberation of Paris and made certain the liberation of all of France, by crushing with us, German might.

As the loathsome tide recedes the Nation breathes with delight the air of victory and liberty. A wonderful unity has arisen from the depths. The Nation knows that the future offers not only hope but the certainty of being a victorious nation, an outlook toward a vigorous renaissance, and the possibility of resuming the place she always held in the world, one among the great nations. But the Nation also knows how far she must travel from her present position to that which she wants to, and can attain. She knows, therefore, that the enemy must be completely and irreparably defeated and that France must participate in the final victory to her utmost. She is weighing the damage she has suffered in her soil and in her flesh. She is weighing the tremendous difficulties of food supply, transportation, armament and equipment which face her and which thwart both the war and production efforts of her liberated territory.

If the certainty of the triumph of our cause, which is the cause of man, justifies our joy and our pride, it does not bring us, however, any sense of facility. Quite to the contrary, we know how much hard work and what painful sacrifices stand between us and our goal.

The French are determined to do this work and to make these sacrifices, for it is the price that they will have to pay, after so many trials for their salvation, liberty and greatness. The French people taught by two thousand years of history, have decided by instinct and by reason to meet two conditions without which nothing great can be accomplished: they are order and fervor. Republican order under a single valid authority, that of the State; fervor which will help us to build legally and jointly a reborn edifice. This is the meaning of the vigorous acclamations of our towns and villages purged at last of the enemy. This is what the great voice of the citizens of liberated Paris is saying.

(French Information Services, London, August 30, 1944)

### III—LIBERATED PARIS

*The conditions under which the civil administration of Paris and liberated France are being organized are still too confused for us to consider information received from French or foreign correspondents as conclusive. We shall therefore publish in this issue only documents of an official nature. The names of officials newly appointed to take the place of Vichy men will also not be published except when they are given out by the information service of the Provisional Government of the French Republic.*

**The National Resistance Council Issues an Appeal to the Nation**—The National Resistance Council met in plenary session on the night of August 24 in a public building in Paris. Members of the Paris Committee of Liberation were also present. At the end of the meeting, an appeal was sent out to the nation and to the people of Paris. It was read by Georges Bidault, President of the National Resistance Council.

"To the French nation, to the people of Paris: The first French troops have made their entrance into a Paris liberated by a national uprising. This is a day for which thousands of valiant Frenchmen have given their lives. The day of combat, the day of victory dawns gloriously above the barricades. However, this great victory does not put an end to the war. After years of treason, the enemy still clings to some of his positions. Hitler's Germany is not yet beaten. There is still a part of



# THE BATTLE OF FRANCE—BATTLE OF LIBERATION

*The first phase of the battle of France is ended. The Allies smashed through Brittany to the Loire and encircled Paris whose liberation took place on August 26 owing to the patriotic uprising of the FFI. Allied troops have completed mopping-up operations begun by the FFI in 15 Departments in the Southwest and Central regions by occupying strategic and important points.<sup>1</sup>*

*The second phase opened with the American, British and French Army landings on the Mediterranean coast on August 15, General Delattre de Tassigny is in command of the French invasion forces. The groundwork for the invasion itself had been carefully laid by the FFI who received their orders from the Allied High Command and the advances of the invasion armies was carried forth with extraordinary speed. On the coast Cannes, Toulon, Marseille, and Nice, fell to the Allies who also pushed to the North as far as Lyon on the Rhône. Meanwhile the FFI liberated Grenoble and mopped up the region of Lyon. Part of the French Army under General Delattre de Tassigny is pushing southwest to the Spanish border, thereby hastening the complete liberation of South and Central France.*

*The armies of the South moved toward a junction with the armies of the North. General Bradley's Armies form two arms of a pincers, the one moving into Belgium, after having liberated Soissons, Château-Thierry, Reims and Sedan, the other toward the eastern frontier. Allied Armies under Field Marshal Montgomery are mopping-up the Channel coast; the Canadian First Army was advancing on Le Havre after liberating Rouen.*

*(French Press and Information Service, New York, August 31, 1944)*

## I—NORTHERN FRONT

*General de Gaulle's Message to the French — On August 7, General de Gaulle launched an appeal to the people of France. He called upon them to exert all their efforts and to support the offensive launched on the Normandy front. His address was also made in anticipation of the Allied landings on the Mediterranean coast.*

*"The battle of France is growing and its tempo accelerating. In Normandy the enemy is falling back step by step before the British and American Armies; in Brittany his defenses are crumbling. Moreover, American armored divisions, moving eastward, have crossed the Mayenne River. I wish to announce that*

<sup>1</sup>The General Staff for National Defense issued the following communiqué on August 29, concerning the activities of the French Forces of the Interior for the week of August 20 to 27, 1944:

During the week of August 20 to 27, the FFI liberated 15 Departments and 44 towns and cities.

The Departments of Seine, Pyrénées-Orientales, Ariège, Haute-Loire, Dordogne, Gard, Hautes-Pyrénées, Basses-Pyrénées, Ardèche, Lozère, Aveyron, Savoie, Haute-Savoie, Ain, and Cher.

The principal towns and cities liberated during the same period are Paris; and in the Southeast region, Pertuis, Fayence, Aix-les-Bains, Perpignan, Culoz, Grenoble, Mont Dauphin, Chambéry, Voreppe, Aix-en-Provence, Nice, Montpellier, Carcassonne; in the Southwest and Central region, Foix, Luchon, Mont de Marsan, Agen, Toulouse, Montauban, Albi, Cahors, Moissac, Bergerac, Périgueux, Biarritz, Bayonne, Rodez, Mazamet, Limoges, Saint Etienne, Alès, Saint Hilaire, Tulle, Le Puy, Castres, Roanne, Bédarieux, Carmaux, Brommat, Blois, Loches, Châteauroux.

During the course of these operations the FFI inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. From reports we have received thus far the German casualties are 2,800 killed, 300 wounded and 9,000 prisoners. They are undoubtedly far greater than these figures indicate.

*(Commissioner of Information, Alger, August 30, 1944)*

soon, very soon, a powerful French Army, supplied with modern equipment and experienced in battle, will engage on the inter-Allied front of France. On the Eastern front, the Russians are on the borders of German territory.

"The hour of great revenge is at hand! While the liberators advance on many sectors, numerous brave French troops are waging a relentless battle, which is effectively aiding the advance. Operations of our Forces of the Interior taking place at this very moment in the Massif Central, in the Southwest, in the Alps, in the Jura, in Franche-Comté, in the Vosges, in the Ardennes, and in other regions, are an integral part of the battle.

"Does the world know, for example, that within two months in a single region east of the Rhône River Valley, 10,000 Germans fell before our troops? Does the world know that in an attempt to destroy the Resistance two German divisions have been in action since the middle of July in the Massif du Vercors alone? Other divisions, which are today badly needed elsewhere by the enemy are kept behind his own lines by our Forces. Still other divisions which the enemy is attempting to transport and which are needed to fill gaps on his front are irretrievably delayed along lines of communication which our Forces constantly cut.

"In Brittany the French troops of the Interior, supported by French paratrooper units, have been holding the countryside since June 6, bottling up the enemy in his garrisons, attacking his detachments and destroying his convoys. And now, side by side with the American troops, they are engaged in what is known as mopping-up operations.

"From June 6 to this evening, the number of Germans killed in Brittany by French troops has exceeded several thousands. It is also by thousands that we count those who have surrendered to us. Actually the battle of France is not only a linear progression of a front, it is also, and it must be, a destruction of the invader's country to an extent equal to the size of France.

"There is not a single Frenchman who does not feel and know that his simple and sacred duty is to engage immediately in this supreme war effort of his country. Everyone can fight, everyone must fight; those who are fit must enter the Forces of the Interior. All the others, no matter where they may be, are capable of helping our fighting men.

"In fields, in factories, in workshops, in offices, at home, in the streets, everyone, whether a prisoner, a deportee, or a prisoner of war, can sabotage the enemy's efforts or prepare the means for the enemy's destruction. The organizations of the French Resistance are active everywhere. It only remains to join them and to carry out their orders.

"As for those who are liberated, either in the Empire or in France, they must redouble their efforts and increase their self-sacrifice. Later on we shall draw up the balance sheet of what this struggle for life and for glory, under the conditions in which we are placed, has held in glory, has cost in human life, has imposed in sacrifice.

"Later on we shall consider the errors made by others and by ourselves as well, errors which led us to the brink of destruction. When the time comes we shall take, in our renewed strength, all the measures necessary to prevent a recurrence of any such errors. Today, dominating all else, is the vital necessity of destroying the enemy on our territory, and then entering his territory as victors. Courage! Unity! Discipline!

"The day of decision is at hand. It depends upon us to see that all we have accomplished in this war, even though we suffered, shall have had a purpose. It depends upon us to see that each effort made since September 3, 1939 shall have weight and worth. It depends upon us to see that each tear shed by French men and women, that the death of each French soldier, his injury or his imprisonment, that each suffering endured by the French, as an offering to hope, shall have been for the salvation and glory of our country. Frenchmen, arise and fight!"

*(Broadcast from Alger, August 7, 1944)*





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*Brigadier General Jacques Leclerc, Commander of the French Second Armored Division,  
chats with an Allied tank crew.*



**General Leclerc's Message to French People** — It is officially announced that the French Second Armored Division commanded by General Leclerc is fighting in the Norman theatre of operations. As he left for the front, General Leclerc told the French people in the liberated territories:

"It is impossible to describe our feeling when a few days ago we set foot, once again, on our native soil. Four years ago we left a France that was under the enemy's heel, and we were forced to leave behind everything that France meant to us. Today we are returning as fighting men, after having carried on the battle for four years under the leadership of General de Gaulle. Our countrymen are enthusiastically greeting us amid their ruined homes and villages. We know that they have suffered. Speaking for my officers, non-commissioned officers and men, my first duty is to hail the French people who never despaired, who helped our Allies, and made victory possible. I admire them and wish to congratulate them. As for ourselves we are achieving our aim. We have finally come to help them, to release them from bondage, and to wage the great struggle for liberation, by their side. *Vive la France!*"

(French Information Services, London, August 15, 1944)

**General Leclerc's Division** — (From Jean Oberlé) — I have seen those Regiments which for the last four years have lived an epic: The Colonial Regiment of the Chad, the only one in June 1940 to rally completely, officers, men, and flag, to General de Gaulle. The tank Regiment made up almost entirely of young Bretons who escaped to England in 1940, which carried on a ceaseless fight in Africa for four years. The Spahis wearing the striking red tarboosh, who advanced with the British Eighth Army, and who were that Army's famous flying column from El Alamein to Tunis. Side by side with these units, famous in the history of the Free French Forces, are two Regiments of *Chasseurs d'Afrique* and *Cuirassiers* which formed part of the African Army and of the old French Army, and many other Colonial units, line infantry, engineers and a special technical company. All these units are using American equipment. They are at full strength; not skeleton forces like the present German divisions. This is the steel spearhead of the French Army of Liberation.

(FRANCE, London, August 15, 1944)

**Note:** — Brigadier General Jacques Leclerc commands these French troops, whose personnel is centered around the remnants of the famous Leclerc Column which marched across 1,200 miles of the Libyan Desert and over 9,000-foot Tibesti Mountains to drive the Axis from the Italian Fezzan. The Column entered Tripoli with the Allies and then joined forces with General Freyberg and his New Zealanders as part of General Montgomery's Eighth Army.

Born in the North of France in 1902, General Leclerc was graduated from the military academy of St. Cyr. He served as Second Lieutenant in a garrison in the South of France, then as First Lieutenant in Morocco. In 1934 he became a Captain and was a Major in 1940 when France fell.

Wounded during the campaign, he was taken prisoner at the Ailette River by the Germans. Before his captors could transfer him to an Oflag, he managed to escape and was sheltered and

cared for by a French peasant family. One evening while listening to the forbidden BBC broadcast, he heard the Marseillaise and after the last notes died away General de Gaulle's voice came on the air: "France has lost a battle, but France has not lost the war."

Instantly, Leclerc made his decision. His place was beside this great leader, fighting for his country. Before leaving France for England he went for a last visit to his home in Burgundy, which he found filled with Germans. As he was leaving he saw a German riding Mme. Leclerc's bicycle. Furious, he stepped out of the shadows and in his best military tone said, "What are you doing? Don't you know that these bicycles are for officers only?" The startled soldier, obedient to the voice of authority, quickly dismounted and saluted, "Ja, mein herr." Leclerc ordered him to go on about his business, then mounted the bicycle and started on the first lap of his dangerous journey through Nazi-infested France to England.

After eight days in London, Leclerc went to Africa, where he landed in the Cameroons which like all the French colonies had rallied to Free France. On March 1, 1941, Colonel Leclerc whose forces had marched up from Fort Lamy wrested Kufra from the Italians. On August 10, 1941, Leclerc became a General. During 1942 he conducted raids into central Italian Libya and in January 1943, after a 39-day campaign, he had captured Tripolitania from North to South.

After the conquest of the Fezzan, Leclerc and the veterans of his brilliant African Column marched into Tripoli on January 25, 1943, and entered the Tunisian campaign. Some time at the beginning of 1944 Leclerc and his remaining forces went to Great Britain for final training before the invasion of Normandy.

A devout Catholic and member of an old French family, Leclerc is a writer as well as a great military strategist. He has written many articles on social movements which have appeared in the *Revue Catholique*.

**General Leclerc's Troops in Alençon** — (From war correspondent Pierre Gosset) — General Leclerc's Division remained for a short time in the joyous city of Alençon, one of the first French cities to be liberated solely by French troops.

Some of the details of their entry into Alençon are now known. Despite strong German armored resistance in this sector, French tanks moved along the road from Le Mans. On the outskirts of Alençon General Leclerc himself took command of two companies; revolver in hand, alone at the head of his men he advanced to the heart of the city.

After taking Alençon, the French Second Armored Division was active in the Allied advance in the region of the Sarthe, and then participated brilliantly in the encirclement of the German Seventh Army.

(Commissioner of Information, Alger, August 16, 1944)

**Armored Detachment of FFI in Brittany** — Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force — A French Forces of the Interior communiqué, August 16 (AP) — For the first time an armored detachment of the FFI has taken part in the battle. This detachment operating in Brittany, has occupied Erdeven, in the Department of Morbihan, killing 65 Germans and taking 140 prisoners.

The Rochcorbon munition dump, in Indre-et-Loire, has been completely destroyed by a group of sabotage specialists.

Throughout the whole of France, in accordance with orders they received, the FFI are giving the enemy no rest.

(New York TIMES, August 17, 1944)





*The Leclerc Division, equipped with American tanks, lands in France.*

*Press Association, Inc.*

**French Parachute Troops** — Heavy anti-tank guns, bazookas, land mines, explosives and air-borne infantry were parachuted into Brittany where an army of the FFI awaited them. Two Regiments operated in Brittany, one under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Bourgoïn, an extremely capable officer who lost an arm in the Tunisian campaign, the other under Major Conan (a pseudonym), a small, stubborn Breton officer.

These Regiments, divided into battalions which were themselves divided into companies, carried out many hard, intricate and necessary operations which can now be revealed.

A young 20-year-old Second Lieutenant received orders to have his section, with the aid of the FFI, prevent the enemy from blowing up a viaduct near Morlaix. He himself knew Morlaix well; he understood the importance of preserving the viaduct and also the enormous difficulties that a small force would have to face in guarding this tremendous work of art. This task was accomplished, nevertheless.

A similar mission was assigned to another unit which with the aid of the FFI accomplished the miraculous feat of holding open for the Allies a bridge of at least 1000 meters in length.

A report has been released concerning the activities of an air-borne company which landed on the outskirts of a small town with orders to carry out a reconnaissance mission. After carefully combing the area their first message was sent to the General Staff. It read, "If the town is to be seized intact rush arms by parachute to such and such a point." Several hours later armed Patriots had mopped up the town and opened it to the Allies.

*(French Information Services, London, August 22, 1944)*

## II—SOUTHERN FRONT

**Invasion of the Mediterranean Coast** — Allied Headquarters, Rome, *Special Communiqué*, August 15, 1944 —

Today American, British and French troops strongly supported by Allied air forces, are being landed by American, British and French fleets on the southern coast of France.

*Rome, Aug. 15 (UP) — A Headquarters announcement accompanying the special communiqué:*

The assault, which was in strong force, was led by specially trained Allied troops, many of them veterans of previous invasions and campaigns in the Mediterranean theater. Air-borne troops were among those participating. Ground troops went ashore from the invasion fleet at several points along a wide front.



The planning and execution of this operation had the advantage of experience gained in the successful North African, Sicilian, Salerno and Anzio landings.

The invasion troops underwent several weeks of intensive training in amphibious operations in preparation for this latest blow against the enemy, who in less than two years has been driven from North Africa, Sicily and most of Italy through the combined force of the Allies in the Mediterranean.

*A special Navy communiqué:*

Various beaches over which ships of the United States, British and French Navies are landing American and French troops in southern France extended over a considerable part of the coast between Nice and Marseilles. More than 800 ships of all types, with many mixed vessels, are taking part in the operations, which are widespread.

Warships of the Royal Canadian Navy are participating, and vessels flying the ensigns of the Netherlands, Poland, Greece and Belgium also are present.

The assault craft started to move in toward the coast and landed exactly on time this morning in calm, clear weather. They were preceded close inshore by minesweepers, and the attack was supported by a heavy covering of gun fire from battleships, cruisers, destroyers and other ships and craft of the Allied Navy.

Aircraft of the Royal and United States Navies are cooperating with the Allied Air Forces. Responsibility for landing and establishing the army on shore is naval and the naval commander has ordered the assault pressed home with relentless force. The operations continue.

*A later special communiqué:*

By mid-morning all landings were proceeding successfully according to schedule against only light ground opposition and no air opposition. The supporting air-borne operation was also successfully executed.

*A later Headquarters announcement:*

Substantial numbers of Allied troops, together with guns, munitions and supplies, had been landed across the beaches of southern France by dark this evening. The beachhead has been extended and widened during the day's operations.

Enemy opposition remains sporadic and no enemy air attacks have yet been reported.

Some of the high ground back of the beaches is in our hands. The islands of Port Gros and Levant in the Hyères group and Cap Nègre on the mainland of southern France were captured before dawn this morning by American and French troops landed from ships of the United States and of the Royal and Royal Canadian Navies.

During the operation two small enemy ships were sunk and prisoners were taken. On the beaches of the mainland where landings were successful against light opposition the operation is proceeding satisfactorily. It is reported that the naval gunfire was very effective.

The Navy's task in landing troops with their stores and equipment continues without interruption. Return convoys already are leaving the assault area and new convoys are arriving.

(New York TIMES, August 16, 1944)

**The French Air Force** — Communiqué from the Office of the Air Commissioner — Our bombers have participated in the Mediterranean coast invasion operations. German coastal batteries at Cap Camarat near Saint Tropez, at la Madrague, and on the Ile du Levant, have been heavily attacked. A rail bridge at Sisteron in the Department of Basses-Alpes has been destroyed.

(Commissioner of Information, Alger, August 23, 1944)

**The French Naval Forces** — A large French naval force under the command of Rear Admiral Lemonnier, commander of French Naval Forces and Naval Air Forces, in conjunction with the Allied Naval Invasion

Forces under the command of American Vice Admiral Hewett, participated in the Mediterranean coastal operations.

The French naval forces are made up of the battleship Lorraine, the cruisers Montcalm, Georges Leygues, La Gloire, Emile Bertin, Duguay Trouin, Jeanne d'Arc, and the light cruisers Terrible, Fantasque, and Malin. They were accompanied by numerous light naval ships and auxiliary cruisers.

12,000 French sailors participated in the operations.

(Commissioner of Information, Alger, August 18, 1944)

**General Wilson's Proclamation** — Rome, Aug. 15 (AP) — *The text of General Maitland Wilson's message:*

"The armies of the United Nations have landed in the south of France. Their objective is to drive out the Germans and join up with the Allied armies advancing from Normandy.

"French troops are participating in these operations side by side with their comrades in arms, by sea, land and air. The Army of France is in being again, fighting on its own soil for the liberation of its country with all its traditions of victory behind it. Remember 1918!

"All Frenchmen — civilians as well as military — have their part to play in the campaign in the south. Your duty will be made clear to you. Listen to the Allied radio, read notices and leaflets, pass on all instructions from one man and woman to another.

"Let us end the struggle as quickly as possible so that all France may resume again her free life under conditions of peace and security. Victory is certain. Long live the spirit of France and all that it stands for."

(New York TIMES, August 15, 1944)

**Message to Workers (Reuters)** — *The Allied Command in the Mediterranean broadcast the following radio message to transport workers in France:*

"Transport workers in the South of France, you can and you should play an active part in the attack on enemy communications. Not one highway, not one railroad, not one canal can now be considered of secondary importance since every line of communication has become vitally necessary to the enemy. You are responsible for seeing that they are rendered useless.

"The Allied Air Forces are heavily bombing all highways and railroads. It is your duty to do everything possible to help them. Further instructions will be broadcast to you by the Supreme Allied Command as operations progress. Listen in for them!"

(FRANCE, London, August 16, 1944)

**Communiqué from General Cochet to the FFI** — On August 18, General Cochet, Military Delegate for the Southern theater of operations,<sup>1</sup> issued the following communiqué:

<sup>1</sup>General Cochet has the same rank in the command of forces in the Southern zone as General Koenig in the North, but General Koenig is the sole Commander in Chief of the FFI.



"Attention! All FFI units stationed in the following Departments: Isère, Savoie, Haute-Savoie, Drôme, Hautes-Alpes, Basses-Alpes, Vaucluse, Bouches-du-Rhône, Alpes-Maritimes, should go into immediate and total action. They are to harass all enemy movements — ambush his detachments, seize his supplies, destroy his convoys. Everywhere in these zones the Germans must be rendered powerless and unable to oppose the Allies' advance, or find refuge outside France.

The hour has come to avenge our dead and to win the victory."

(Commissioner of Information, Alger, August 19, 1944)

### III—THE FRENCH FORCES OF THE INTERIOR

*The FFI, wherever they were stationed received and carried out orders from General Pierre Koenig, in accordance with the request of the Allied High Command, to proceed to specific points. They were able to take up their positions immediately for they had for many months awaited orders to do so. The FFI prepared the ground for the final invasion assault; they sabotaged enemy communications throughout all of France and preserved Allied communications; their intermittent attacks disorganized the disposition of German covering forces; they prevented or seriously delayed reinforcement of imperiled enemy positions. The terse official communiqués released since June 6th last, covering the participation of the FFI in the Battle of France cannot express the real magnitude of the sacrifices made and the tasks accomplished for our country by these soldiers in civilian dress who were mobilized by faith and not by law.*

*The enthusiasm and gratitude shown Allied troops in every French town and village they entered is sufficient proof of the close unity of France with the nations of liberty. But the one thing France will never forget is the tribute paid by the Allies on the field of battle itself to officers, soldiers, war correspondents and to all the people of France who in the common struggle have become a fighting people — the Resistance.*

#### How the FFI Army Was Formed

*The following interview with Colonel Drumont of the FFI appeared in the newspaper France, published in London. Colonel Drumont, a young man with a handsome sunburnt face, five gold stripes and a blue, white and red armband on the sleeve of his uniform, is an officer in the FFI. This is the amazing army of which Mr. Eden recently said "When its deeds can be told they will make one of the most brilliant chapters in the history of France."*

Colonel Drumont knows his subject. He was a member of the Resistance from the very beginning, an officer in the first units of the FFI, and is now inspector of these Forces in 17 Departments, (the whole of Brit-

tany and part of Normandy). When he speaks, it is with an enthusiasm that breaks down his Breton reserve:

Our region was magnificent. It contributed 80,000 volunteers for the FFI, one single Department furnishing 10,000 of them.

The FFI were really formed in 1942 when the fighting groups belonging to different Resistance movements joined forces.<sup>1</sup> It was very difficult to get organized, not for want of volunteers but because the German police continually seized our men, particularly the leaders. In fact we lost many very able and badly needed officers. Each time we had, so to speak, to start afresh. Yet there was never any weakening or discouragement; we would clench our teeth and without a word, fill the gaps and resume our daily struggle.

*Who are your volunteers?*

There are all types among us. Generals from the regular Army rub shoulders with 20-year-old heads of subdivisions, students and their teachers take orders from some simple Breton peasant who happens to be in command of a region. The FFI are a melting pot. In my opinion they will have a strong influence on the unity of France when the country is reorganized after victory.

*What is your equipment?*

That has been for a long time a very difficult question. Until quite recently we received practically nothing from the outside and had to manage with what we ourselves could get. This is what we did — nothing very complicated: you take some kind of club and knock a German sentry on the head, then you bring back his rifle; or if you have luck, a tommy-gun. After doing this a few times you have enough arms for a small group, and you can prepare to raid an arms and ammunition dump. Of course this was risky, and often very slow, but it was the only way out.

*And now?*

Things are better. The Allies furnish us with rifles, and the American command in liberated regions allows us to keep the rifles we take from the Germans.

But this is very little, and makeshift. Our chief concern still is to obtain arms. Even now, to carry out a sabotage operation successfully we have all too often to use home-made explosives, for we have nothing better.

*The Supreme Allied Command has itself stated that your sabotage operations contributed substantially to the success of the invasion. How were they organized? Did you receive your instructions from London and Alger?*

We were in contact with London, and through London with Alger. But the general plan of operations was drawn up by the FFI General Staff. This plan proved effective.

*Were the FFI and the population on good terms before your region was liberated?*

<sup>1</sup>See *Free France*, Vol. 6, No. 1, page 22.



With very rare exceptions all the people: landowners, business men, workers and peasants were wonderful. We always found them ready to give us maximum assistance.

*What are your relations with the Allied Armies?*

Perfect. With the Americans — for in our region we have to deal with them — it is exactly as if we were two allied armies — the American command put things on this footing right away.

I think that when the invasion began, the Allies expected to find that we had very good intentions but were a chaotic mass of no military value. They were surprised to see that this was not so. We had for a long time impatiently awaited and prepared for this moment. We knew that if we wanted to win the Allies' respect it would not be enough to make speeches and eloquent protestations of friendship, or issue high sounding proclamations; action alone would count. So we acted, and we are continuing to act. Evidently what we have done is appreciated, for General Eisenhower recently sent us his official congratulations with a personal message of thanks from General Patton on behalf of the American Third Army.

*Can you tell us something about your role in the actual fighting without revealing military secrets?*

It is a varied role. From the very beginning we furnished the Allies with guides, and the capture of Nantes, for example, was greatly facilitated by our efforts. We provided the Americans with scouts who conducted them through the German defenses and mine fields. Moreover, by the very character of blitz warfare it is inevitable that some more or less important pockets or nests of enemy resistance will often be left behind a column making a lightning advance. We took charge of mopping them up, or at least, prevented any movement of Germans remaining in the rear until Allied troops could be brought up to wipe them out. Very often these isolated German detachments had heavy guns and it was impracticable to make a direct attack on them. Those were occasions when the need for arms from which we still suffer was bitterly felt.

*What is to be your status, speaking from the administrative point of view, in relation to the French Army reorganized by the Provisional Government?*

Everything is now being arranged; the appointment of General Koenig has already established centralization.

In my opinion the FFI are destined to form the nucleus of the new French Army. The FFI are the embodiment of Resistance and its unity. They have won their independence and a right to respect by virtue of their unceasing fight. Nothing could be more revealing than the Allies' change of attitude. They were mistrustful before the invasion but they have now understood what we stand for.

*How do you think your Forces will be employed during future operations?*

We would like to be able to act in conjunction with FFI units, operating on the borders of liberated territory and the still occupied regions. Action there would be particularly effective and we would be glad to help those of our comrades who are still carrying on a vigorous struggle behind the enemy lines.

Just give us arms and trust us. That is all we ask. No one will ever regret it.

(FRANCE, London, August 18, 1944)

*Note:* — (AP) After the invasion the American Air Force parachuted thousands of tons of arms and munitions to the FFI. For reasons of military security this information could not be released before now. On several occasions large quantities of materiel were parachuted from heavy bombers.

**FFI in Paris Area** — As Allied troops neared Paris, the French Forces of the Interior, no longer obliged to work stealthily and in secret, were rising throughout France. In the entire Paris area, which includes the Departments of Seine-Inférieure, Somme, Eure, Eure-et-Loir, Loir-et-Cher, Loiret, Yvonne, Aube, Seine-et-Marne, Aisne, Oise, and Seine-et-Oise, the Resistance has been at work cutting communication lines, sabotaging the railway system, and interrupting war production designed for the Germans. Enemy convoys are blocked by destroyed bridges, and by Resistance action. Nazi troops are engaged in skirmishes which cost them valuable time as well as men and materiel.

Systematic disruption of rail communications is an important part of Resistance action. In the Paris area between June 6 and the middle of August, the FFI sabotaged all the railway lines entering the terminal at Tergnier, in Aisne. Between June 14 and 24, numerous derailments on the Paris-Strasbourg line blocked traffic each time for from two to six hours. This line was blocked again in July. Traffic was interrupted on the Bordeaux-Paris line for several days in July. Trains en route to Normandy from Germany have been delayed by FFI activity. One trainload of cannon and munitions, stopped by the Patriots, was telescoped by another train carrying automotive vehicles. The resultant tie-up lasted for three days. Between June 8 and July 26, at least 1800 derailments had delayed German supplies destined for the Normandy front.

In Loiret, on June 16, a railway bridge on the Montargis-Melun-Paris line was blown up. By the end of July, traffic had not been reestablished. On the Paris-Brest line, between La Loupe and Bretoncelles, a bridge was destroyed. In July, three carloads of robot bombs were destroyed in Aube and 30 carloads of war materiel in Loiret. Early in August, 12 trainloads of heavy tanks were held up at Mailly-le-Camp, in Aube, by breaks in the railway line.

The highway bridge at Romorantin in Loir-et-Cher has been put out of use. Another highway bridge at Brou and three arches of the Cherisy Viaduct, both in Eure-et-Loir, have been blown up.

Breaks in telephone, telegraph, and cable lines have been so widespread that, on June 10, telephone and telegraph communication was suspended in the Occupied Zone of France north of the line running from the Swiss frontier to the Nevers district and along the Loire. Electric power lines have also been cut. In June, the Amiens-Rouen telephone lines were cut north of Paris. In July, the subterranean cable connecting Paris and Berlin was cut near Nancy, and, since the Germans could not immediately locate the break, it was useless for several weeks. Later that same month, the Lyon-Paris telephone line was cut.

In Seine-et-Oise, at Persan-Beaumont, the electrical system of an airport was sabotaged and all landing operations were stopped for an entire month. The high tension line between Chartres and Orleans was cut.

Patriots scaled the guarded walls of an aviation factory in the suburbs of Paris during the night, and placed time bombs in the machinery. The operation, which took only 15 minutes, was



completely successful; the factory was out of use for several months. The Englebert factory at Choisy-au-Bac, near Compiègne in Oise, and a liquid air plant at Reims have been sabotaged.

Numerous skirmishes between Patriots and Germans in the Paris area have resulted in heavy enemy losses. In July, the FFI attacked a German detachment in Loiret and put it to flight without losing a single man, while the Germans lost 15. In Loir-et-Cher, southwest of Paris, near Orleans, the FFI harassed the Germans for a two-week period, inflicting losses of 80 dead and 50 wounded. The French lost only 12 men, but three of them, before dying, were abominably tortured by the enemy. In the Loire region, the FFI attacked a German column of 250 men. The Germans lost 30 men; the FFI five. In August, north of the Loire, the FFI captured 80 machine guns, 13 trucks, 2 cannon, one anti-tank gun, and large quantities of munitions, and killed 30 Germans.

Inside Paris, the Resistance exists and it is powerful, but little of its activity has been revealed. Ever since February 25, the Germans have been intensifying a policy of mass arrests to speed eradication of the Underground. Between 7 and 10 thousand persons were deported to Germany during the first week of this policy.

Members of the French Militia who have worked as French assistants to the Gestapo have been deserting to the Resistance in such numbers that, on June 16, a law was passed instituting special tribunals to "judge desertions, crimes of negligence of duty and military discipline" committed by them. Persons taken before this court are tried without prior charge of the crime supposedly committed, are not permitted to choose a lawyer, but are forced to depend on an attorney named by the court. Judgments are carried out immediately and are not subject to appeal. Penalties are imprisonment or death.

First shown in jokes, in scrawled messages on walls and sidewalks, in icy snubbing of the Germans, the resistance, feeding on German brutality, such as the Armistice Day shooting and arrest of Parisian students, began to assume a form of violence and fury. German soldiers began to disappear; by the spring of 1944, they no longer went on the streets alone, but only in groups. Pamphlets and papers were distributed, sometimes under the very noses of the Germans.

(*French Press and Information Service, New York, August 17, 1944*)

**FFI in Southern Zone** — In the South of France as Allied forces drive northward up the Valley of the Rhône, the French Forces of the Interior in support of Anglo-American columns, are moving sharply and decisively against German garrisons. Risking their lives for months preceding the invasion, the FFI have amassed volumes of intelligence on German strength, placements and weaknesses. Americans were landed by parachute in the mountains to work with members of the Maquis and to bring them arms. Together, they laid the groundwork which has served to speed Allied progress almost unbelievably.

The Underground in Marseille has long been well-organized and shown daring. Early in 1941, French Patriots burned and sabotaged supplies destined for Rommel in Africa. Although the Gestapo was constantly on the alert in the harbor of Marseille, Resistance members succeeded in setting such large fires that the entire port was alight with the flames and bursting munitions. This was at least the sixth case of shipping sabotage, but no full reports were available on the others.

In October, 1941, to show their scorn and defiance of the Germans, a company of *Chasseurs Alpins* paraded down the Cannebière, the main street of Marseille, singing "Vous n'aurez pas l'Alsace-Lorraine."

March, 1943, in Marseille, was a month of bombing. Five bombs in the railway station seriously damaged several locomotives; the newspaper offices of the collaborationist Militia were blown up; the anti-Jewish, anti-Freemason exhibit was bombed; explosions damaged the apartment of a woman too friendly with German

officers and a German bakery on the Boulevard Chaves; trucks were destroyed by grenades on the Boulevard Baille.

Railway lines around Marseille were constantly blocked by derailments, cuts, bombed bridges. Highway bridges were blown up, German convoys were attacked, collaborationists were executed.

Communiqués from the Underground were quiet and laconic: January 15, 1944: St. Auban, electric current cut off. Sabotage effected on the Pertuis power line.

January 4, 1944: Jean Phialy, collaborator, condemned to death on December 27, 1943, executed.

February 9, 1944: Electric power plant for workshops and factories cut off. Out of order for three to six months. One Patriot killed.

Of course there were German reprisals. Typical was the mass execution of 54 Frenchmen, shot in the market square of Marseille. Bodies of 12 German officers, apparently killed by French Partisans and dropped into the sea, were washed ashore there, and hostages had to be punished to teach a lesson to the population.

But before the end of July, 1944, nervousness among the German troops in Marseille had reached such a pitch that extra measures were being taken to control the French. Both French and Germans expected invasion at any moment, and the former were becoming even bolder than before. To counter increasing sabotage, the Gestapo increased the number of arrests and deportations to Germany for compulsory labor.

Despite redoubled efforts by the Gestapo to prevent sabotage of transportation lines, Patriots succeeded in cutting the Lyon-Marseille railway and preventing its repair. German convoys moved through the Valley of the Rhône only at risk of heavy losses in men and equipment. Patriots celebrated July 14th, French Independence Day, by blowing up 17 railroad cars standing at a station in the Marseille area. In August, Patriots intercepted a convoy of tanks, six troop trucks and a combat car. One hundred and forty Germans were killed and all equipment was destroyed or confiscated. Telephone and telegraph communication between Marseille and Lyon was interrupted.

Patriot activity in the city and vicinity of Nice followed a similar pattern: a bridge on the Nice-Breil line blown up, a troop train bombed, collaborators executed, highways blocked. Reprisal here was as violent as that in Marseille. In March, 1944, the Feld Kommandatur in Nice ordered the execution of 17 young men held in the Nice prison. The Germans forced them to enter long trenches, which were to be their graves, and shot them in the head. After the execution, they covered the bodies with earth and left guards to prevent the parents of the victims from taking away the bodies.

At Toulon, Patriots destroyed the power house which supplied the naval arsenal, and sabotaged surrounding railroad tracks. A group of 15 Frenchmen broke into the Château d'Ollioules which was being used as a German military post, disarmed the guards and carried off stocks of guns and ammunition.

So widespread and destructive was the work of the Resistance, that in February, 1944, the Germans issued a Decree to "safeguard the German Army in the Mediterranean zone," including the Departments of Pyrénées-Orientales, Aude, Hérault, Gard, Bouches-du-Rhône, Var, and Alpes-Maritimes. This Decree specifically named as crimes punishable by German penal law: possession of firearms; assistance given to spies, enemy agents, or members of enemy armies, and all help given to the enemy; listening to enemy broadcasts; anti-German demonstrations; public meetings; communication with prisoners; failure to report appearance of airplanes or material sent down by parachute, especially arms and enemy propaganda; abuse of German certificates; pillage in evacuated regions and buildings; failure to obey German orders; showing lights during hours of darkness.

This Decree was followed by a requisition of automobiles, by assumption of the management of railroad stations, and by a census of bicycles and motorcycles.



Unperturbed by official publication of lists of punishable crimes, the Patriots continued their work with increasing zeal after the Allied landings in the North. Long distance cables between Narbonne and Montpellier were so badly cut in so many places, that repairs could not be made. The network of high tension wires supplying power to the railway lines of the Midi was completely destroyed. In the Departments of Ariège and Aude, a 12-hour fight burst out between the FFI and the Germans, and eight German bombers were sent to aid the Nazi ground forces. Despite German air support, Patriot losses were only four men, while 40 Germans were killed and four armored cars were destroyed. One German bomber was shot down and another damaged.

In Hérault, the railroads have been repeatedly attacked.

Numerous derailments have been effected and a munitions train bombed. Traffic has been interrupted for periods ranging from 18 to 36 hours. In the Basses-Alpes, the town of Sisteron was raided by a mobile unit of the FFI. The unit freed 50 political prisoners and captured 11 Germans. South of Sisteron, the FFI attacked a German convoy. Seventeen Germans were killed and seven trucks destroyed.

In a recent engagement in the Rhône Valley, the Maquis was attacked for three days by a German division. At the end of that time the Germans had lost 200 dead and 100 prisoners. Another German column of 400 men was attacked by the FFI. One hundred Germans were killed and the rest put to flight. The Patriots captured one tank and six cars.

(French Press and Information Service, New York, August 23, 1944)



VALOGNES. An American soldier inspects the war-ravaged church.

Pix-Roy Pinney