

# FRANCE AT WAR

## I—FRENCH ARMY IN BATTLE

*The brevity of Allied communiqués has not permitted a detailed account of the operations of French forces fighting in the battle of France under the command of General Delattre de Tassigny. The French troops of the Seventh Army have been fighting with an ardor increased tenfold by their impatience to complete the liberation of their country and to participate in the complete and total crushing of the Germany Army on German soil. Below is a brief resumé based on Allied communiqués of their operations during the first half of September.*

### Southern Front

Part of the French forces of the Seventh Army are mopping up remaining pockets of German resistance in southeastern and southwestern France; part advanced with the Seventh Army to join General Patton's Third Army in the Dijon sector and part are fighting in the region of Belfort.

After the liberation of Marseille, the French troops were divided: one part remained in the Southeast and Southwest to mop up remaining pockets of German resistance, the other advanced northward up the Rhône Valley.

Montpellier, Béziers and Narbonne were occupied by the French almost without any opposition from the Germans who had been disorganized and harassed by the FFI. The French reached the Spanish border at the beginning of September and cooperated with the FFI in preventing a German retreat across the Pyrénées. French and American forces continued their advance in the Southeast. The communiqué of September 8 states that the small German garrison holding the Principality of Monaco, on the Riviera, had fled.

Meanwhile the Seventh Army continued its advance up the Rhône Valley. On September 7, it was stated that French troops accompanied by Senegalese elements now held most of the southern Franco-Swiss frontier, extending the operations of the FFI in Savoie and Haute-Savoie to prevent the Germans from seeking refuge in neutral territory.

Once Grenoble and Lyon were liberated, the Seventh Army advanced with extraordinary speed toward Belfort and northward to effect a junction with the American Third Army. In this North sector French and American troops liberated Châlon-sur-Saône on September 7, and occupied the center of Dijon on the 12th. The French kept up the momentum of their drive and forward elements reached Is-sur-Tille, fourteen miles beyond Dijon. The town of Sombornon in this sector was occupied with little resistance. The junction of the Armies of the North and of the South has been accomplished.

Carrying forth their advance toward the North, French troops occupied Langres on September 14, and reached the outskirts of Chaumont, while south of Belfort other French units cleared stiffly defended Pont-de-Roide.

*(French Press and Information Service, New York, September 15, 1944)*

### French Air Force

*Activities of the French Air Force — A high French Air Force officer issued the following statement, after a three week inspection tour of the northwest front in France. (Broadcast by the news service of the French Air Force Headquarters in Great Britain):*

Traveling through Carentan, St. Lô, Bayeux, Cherbourg, Caen and many other cities, this Lieutenant Colonel spoke to civilians, retired officers, non-commissioned officers, and Army airmen. All had joined Resistance groups, whether they had been in the regular Army or the reserve.

Six student pilots, all from one small town, came to him to ask to be allowed to resume their training. In Bretteville-l'Orgueilleuse several young soldiers who were once under his command at Chartres, enlisted to serve under him. Forty-five percent of the volunteers for enlistment wanted to enter the Air Force; this was a magnificent showing.

Men from 36 to 40 years of age wished to serve for the duration of the war. One non-commissioned officer, a mechanic, came through the lines in uniform that he might rejoin the Army as quickly as possible. He said that a great many of his comrades were near by, working for the Allies, and were ready to join him. A technical specialist, official of the Air Ministry, who as a well known Resister had for a long time been sought by the enemy and who took refuge in Normandy, was fighting near Saint-Lô.

The personnel of the Air Forces could be rapidly reintegrated, in regular formations, with the exception, however, of some reservists who carry out functions of prime importance in freed municipal or public services.

The Lieutenant Colonel visited airfields and installations.

The airfields will soon be put in condition again. . . .

*(French Information Services, London, August 12, 1944)*

*Battlefield of North France — (From the news service of the French Air Force High Command in Great Britain) — On August 27, the Fighter Group Ile-de-France gained two victories over French soil. Master Sergeant Louis P. shot down one Messerschmitt 109 and damaged two others. Master Sergeant Claude R., who has already received several citations, shot down a Focke-Wulf 191.*

On August 28 as the Germans were attempting to cross the Seine near Rouen, Boston bombers flown by





*British Official Photo*

*Outside Arras — Field Marshal Montgomery questions a member of the FFI*



*British Official Photo*

*Normandy — French troops and members of the FFI salute as the Roll of Honor is read*



the Lorraine Group accompanied by Mitchells flown by Dutch crews, pounded German concentrations and transport. The first load of bombs scored a direct hit on a truck convoy; the Germans were all thrown either onto the quay or onto barges. Another blast hit a group of boats; the Germans were all thrown into the river. Long lines of trucks drawn up along the quays near the barges were also hit and all destroyed. Only one Mitchell bomber was lost. The Lorraine Group returned to its base intact.

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

**Normandie Group Scores Three Victories in the USSR** — The following article by a Pravda correspondent appeared in that paper on August 7. It is entitled "Aviators of the Normandie Group in Battle."

Two planes of the Normandie group, which is under the command of Pilot Officer Challes,<sup>1</sup> broke formation to cover our troops in a sector east of Suvalki. Shortly thereafter Officer Challes caught sight of nine Junkers 88's flying eastward at an altitude of 1,500 meters. The Normandie pilots turned on the enemy.

After a skillful and daring manoeuvre the YAK 9 patrol came up behind one of the German bombers on the left and attacked at a distance of 50 to 100 meters. The Junkers caught fire and plunged to the ground. Harassed by repeated YAK attacks the enemy planes, formed a defensive circle and jettisoning their bombs tried to draw the fighter planes toward the Suvalki air base. Officer Challes and his fellow pilots continued their attacks. Two more Junkers looking like flaming torches crashed to earth.

Having used up his ammunition Officer Challes was forced to give up the fight and return to his base. But his mission had been fulfilled: the German bombers had not succeeded in getting through to our troops.

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

**Chartres Aviators Return** — Chartres was an important Army air base in 1939, and became one of the most active German bases during the German occupation of France following the Armistice. After the liberation of Chartres, General Valin, Assistant Chief of Staff of the Air Force, inspected the French Air Force units which had fought in the battle of Normandy. Below are excerpts from a report by a member of the news service of the French Air Force in England who accompanied General Valin to Chartres.

In a modest little restaurant of the old quarter, without light, several men in battle dress have, for the last few days, been dining with General Valin. Each expressed his pleasure at again seeing General Valin, who had been away for seven years. The enthusiasm which greeted the humble representatives of the Air Force was not just for our aviators, it was the communion of a people with its army. What a consolation for us and how proud we were to hear from our comrades themselves, in France, from those of whom we never ceased to think when we were in Libya, in Abyssinia, at Kou-

fra, in Russia, . . . that all the blood that has been shed in the last few years has not been shed in vain.

At the Prefecture, the Prefect introduced to General Valin the head of the FFI, a tall blond lad with thick glasses, wearing an armband with four stripes (Major). He had just given the Prefect an account of the latest engagement in which his troops had participated: 60 Germans killed, 40 taken prisoner. He had also arranged with the French authorities details for funeral services for 30 FFI soldiers killed in action at Chartres.

It is this voluntary anonymity, this equally voluntary sacrifice with full knowledge of the risks and lack of personal glory, which gives an outstanding quality to the struggle of the FFI and of the first soldiers of Fighting France, now joined to fight together. . . .

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

**Note** — General Martial Valin, National Commissioner for Aviation in the French National Committee at London until the establishment of the French Committee of National Liberation, was born at Limoges in 1898. He is a specialist in night flying; of the 1,800 hours of flying to his credit, 500 were at night. Graduated from St. Cyr in 1918, he fought in the cavalry in the Champagne campaign in May, 1918, winning the Croix de Guerre. He entered the Air Force in 1926, and fought in the Riffian Campaign in Spanish Morocco. He was appointed Chief of Intelligence on the Near East General Staff. In March 1940, he was sent on a mission to Brazil; he was there at the time of the Armistice. He completed his task and joined General de Gaulle's forces in London.

## II—THE FFI IN BATTLE

As was stated in an order of the day issued by the Committee for Military Affairs of the Resistance after the liberation of Paris (See Free France, Vol. 6, No. 5-6, p. 166), the war will continue for France until Germany surrenders. The FFI, soldiers of the National Uprising, mobilized by the sole will of the nation left to its own responsibility by a government enslaved to the enemy, have fulfilled their first task: France is free though fighting still continues on her soil. Many of these soldiers in civilian dress will now be called to the tasks of reconstruction; others will follow the French Army<sup>2</sup> and will remain beside the Allies to continue the battle until the full surrender of Germany.

The account of the participation of the FFI in the battle of France before the invasion, during the landings and all through the operations which were to drive the Germans from French soil, has been written in the long series of communiqués issued by French Headquarters (General Koenig, Commander in Chief of the FFI and General Cochet, Military Delegate of the GPRF for the southern theater of operations). Without attempting to calculate the exact extent of the role played by the FFI, it can be said that they have written a long and glorious page in the story of the war for the freedom of the world in which France has paid

<sup>1</sup>In our August 1 issue (Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 88), Pilot Officer Challes' name was erroneously given as Charles.

<sup>2</sup>See p. 233 for article on the integration of the FFI into the French Army.



heavily.<sup>1</sup> The effectiveness of the action of the FFI during the second phase of the Franco-Allied operations in both the North and South of France was increased, on the one hand, by improved liaison between the Allied Commands and FFI Headquarters owing to partial liberation of territory and, on the other hand, by improved organization of the FFI. During this second phase of operations the task of the FFI was to prevent isolated enemy columns from breaking through to join the main German forces, to harass the retreating Germans in order to delay them or prevent them from organizing lines of defense, and finally to make maximum preparations for the Allied advance.

In this chapter we are publishing in the same simple wording as the official Headquarters communiqués some of the feats accomplished by the FFI up to September 15, 1944.<sup>2</sup>

### Southern Theater of Operations

Contact between the FFI and French troops who had crossed the Rhône moving in the direction of the Spanish border, was established in the southern region of the Massif Central at the beginning of September. The FFI will continue to operate in the southwestern region of the Rhône Valley and on the Swiss and Italian borders. Their activities proved so effective that one Maquis group was formed as an independent commando unit within a French division (official communiqué from General Koenig's Headquarters, September 5). Below is a resumé of FFI activities during the first half of September.

**In the Southwest** — The magnificent Pyrénées units attacked garrisons at Cahors, Montauban, Moissac and Castelsarrasin putting 500 men out of action within five days. In the Somport Valley the German garrison of Oloron tried to flee to Spain but on August 24 it was annihilated, the FFI taking 98 prisoners. On the whole FFI losses have been considerably lower than those of the enemy (August 26, 1944).

At Tarbes, a German garrison surrendered and the commanding General was taken prisoner. German troops in Basses-Pyrénées and Landes are retreating either toward the Spanish border or toward the North, relentlessly pursued by the FFI (August 29, 1944).

By the end of August the Departments of Aude and Pyrénées-Orientales had been almost completely cleared of Germans. In the other Departments bordering on Spain Maquis of every nationality are hunting down the last enemy elements trying to cross the frontier (August 29, 1944).

In the Midi a number of engagements took place near Béziers and Carcassonne. In Aveyron, losses in-

flicted on the enemy by the FFI were over 3,000 prisoners and 1,000 killed and wounded. Moreover, the FFI of Aveyron and Tarn pay tribute to the magnificent conduct of Polish Patriots who have constantly aided them and of the "Stalingrad" Maquis of the Mouvement Ouvrier International, a force of 60 men, 17 of whom were killed (August 30, 1944).

The FFI have occupied Bordeaux (August 31, 1944).

**In the Rhône Valley** — On both sides of the Rhône the FFI have fought major engagements against strong German columns retreating up the Valley. Some localities changed hands several times (August 28, 1944). In Drôme, the FFI have liberated Romans and the Chabreuil airport. Actions fought at Saint-Marcel-les-Valence cost the enemy over 100 killed (August 28, 1944). In Vaucluse, near Sault, an FFI attack on a German column resulted in the capture of arms, ammunition and trucks, and cost the Germans 110 dead, including 20 officers, and many wounded (August 30, 1944).

In the Lyons region, FFI came from surrounding Departments to reinforce their comrades of the Department of Rhône. Americans and Italian Maquis from the Alpine frontier region supported FFI action in the battle of Lyon (August 28, 1944). The FFI captured the center and other sections of Lyon; the Germans held out in small pockets of resistance (August 29, 1944). South of Lyon the FFI engaged a German column moving up from Valence: 500 Germans were killed, including a general and a colonel (September 2, 1944).

Montbrison was taken by the FFI, and the Department of Loire has been completely liberated (September 2, 1944). Action was heavy in Haute-Loire, the FFI taking 500 prisoners, including twelve officers (September 8, 1944).

In Saône-et-Loire Patriots are extremely active, and have carried out numerous attacks on convoys. A German general was killed on August 30 (September 2, 1944). There have been large mopping-up operations behind the lines of the Allied Armies, and several thousand prisoners have been taken by the FFI.

**In Savoie** — In Maurienne and Tarentaise the FFI are waging a heroic struggle against an adversary who is determined at all costs to reach the Italian slopes of the Alps (August 28, 1944). The FFI are cooperating with the Allies in all sectors of the Alps and along the frontier. Severe fighting continues everywhere against enemy efforts to retain control of the large Alpine passes (August 29, 1944). The FFI have advanced as far as Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne (September 2, 1944). They have liberated Saint-Michel-de-Maurienne and are pushing toward Modane (September 3, 1944).

In the Massif de Belledune enemy losses in one engagement were 200 killed and 400 taken prisoner (August 31, 1944). Chambéry, Montmélian, Saint-Pierre-d'Albigny, Bourg-Saint-Maurice have been liberated by Patriots. In the Saint-Pierre-d'Albigny sector important

<sup>1</sup>France lost 135,000 soldiers during the campaigns of 1939-1940. French prisoners of war number 1,180,000. 1,460,000 have been deported to Germany. Nearly 50,000 hostages have been executed by the Germans. 100,000 died in prisons and concentration camps. 1,000,000 children have died of hunger. Births have dropped from 700,000 to 450,000 annually. The number of cases of tuberculosis has increased 50 percent, owing to malnutrition.

(Commissioner of Information, Alger, September 7, 1944)  
<sup>2</sup>Since the liberation of France, the dates of dispatches from London are usually about one day later than the actual events.





*British Official Photo*

*Northern France — FFI clearing away German vehicles to facilitate the British advance*



*British Official Photo*

*Amiens — Members of the FFI taking their share of the guns captured from the Germans*



*British Official Photo*

*FFI going out on patrol*



harassing operations have been carried out. In this region particularly, the Germans have committed the vilest atrocities: several villages have been burnt down; in the village of Argentine the Germans chained 15 civilians to a bridge before blowing it up (August 31, 1944). In Haute-Savoie the FFI have taken 5,300 prisoners (September 9, 1944).

*(French Press and Information Service, New York, September 15, 1944)*

**Liberated Haute-Savoie Continues to Fight** — (From a French war correspondent) Annecy, August 29, 1944 — Haute-Savoie was completely liberated a week ago but is not withdrawing from the battle. During the last few days powerful German detachments have again attempted to force their way southward along roads leading to Maurienne in the hope of getting through to Italy.

Last Friday and Saturday an enemy column of 600 heavily armed men arrived in Saint-Pierre-d'Albigny and attempted to cut through to the Petit Saint-Bernard pass. The FFI of Haute-Savoie set out immediately to bring aid to the Savoie Patriots; after a hard fight every one of the enemy had either been killed or taken prisoner. At the decisive moment during the battle effective aid was given by Polish prisoners who had been drafted into the German Army by force.

Many such engagements may take place when the retreating German divisions surge into the Rhône Valley; numerous enemy barriers have been set up all along roads leading to the Alps, to delay the American penetration. Contrary to Swiss reports of last week, liaison has not yet been firmly established and it was not until Saturday that the first patrol consisting of two jeeps and ten men arrived in Haute-Savoie.

The region appears to be perfectly calm and is already getting organized. I myself drove through most of the Department. Although this is still a combat zone special police measures are not necessary. The population, disciplined and confident, is awaiting the decisions of the authorities who for them personify the determination and the spirit of sacred unity which has inspired all fighting men of the Resistance.

People have endured too much suffering to indulge now in noisy demonstrations; in their great joy they retain their dignity. During my entire trip I did not see a single drunken man or street fight.

The FFI are scouring the countryside at full speed and only at very infrequent moments enjoy the relaxation of complete freedom from duty. They are always ready to leave at the first summons and are proud to be regarded as volunteers who of their own accord took up arms for the liberation of their country rather than as soldiers in compulsory service. They constitute a people's army in the noblest sense of the term.

This state of mind is reflected in the character of their leader, Major Nizier, Departmental head of the FFI, who with the spontaneous assent of the population exercises supreme authority. He has won everyone's ad-

miration by his exceptional bravery. Recently, although he was overburdened with the details of administration, he left his command post to direct operations in the Saint-Pierre-d'Albigny sector, then, after exhausting hours of fighting, returned to his work without even taking time to sleep. He was the chief organizer of the FFI and he prepared the ground for a constructive policy with the cooperation of all active elements in the Resistance. His primary aim which he has instilled in his men, is to win the war as quickly as possible. "We await with perfect confidence the day when Haute-Savoie will at last be completely cleared," he said to me. "We only regret the lack of arms which has prevented our forces from proving their full worth."

He gave me the following message: "The FFI under my command have liberated Haute-Savoie. They have been constantly in action against the enemy and are now fighting beside the FFI in adjoining Departments. They send General Koenig a pledge of their devotion to our country and of their determination to conquer. I pay tribute to their heroism and salute in their name the memory of heroes of the Resistance fallen on the field of honor in an unequal but victorious fight. One day, when the world recovers the France it so greatly admires — the France which cannot fail in its mission, it will know of the heroism of the FFI and the generous magnanimity of their conduct toward a beaten enemy, who, even in defeat, has committed new crimes against the laws of war and the rights of men. (Signed) Major Nizier."

*(FRANCE, London, August 30, 1944)*

### **Northeastern Theater of Operations**

*After the liberation of Paris the advance of the Northern armies toward Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany was facilitated by the FFI, especially in the rear of forward units moving rapidly in a strategic advance. The importance of FFI action in Departments in the region of the Allied advance to the North and East is made clear by the communiqués issued by General Koenig. Following is a brief report of FFI activities:*

**Toward the East** — At the end of August the FFI were successful in several important operations especially at Varennes, Dormans, Compiègne, Soissons, Reims, Laon, Saint-Quentin, Fère-en-Tardenois and Montcornet along the historic German invasion route (August 31, 1944).

As the Allies approached the hilly regions of the Argonne and the Ardennes, the FFI mopped up the area. Patriots liberated Aubérive and Arc-en-Barrois. On September 3 and 4, FFI forces were in action along the front between Champagne and Lorraine (September 5, 1944). During these operations 1,500 Germans were killed, 300 were taken prisoner and a considerable amount of materiel was captured (September 8, 1944). Large enemy troop movements begun in Vosges and Meurthe-et-Moselle were fiercely opposed by the Maquis (September 8, 1944).



**Capture of Nancy** — Yesterday, September 14, the FFI in Nancy launched an attack against the German garrison. By 8 a.m. this morning, September 15, 1944, the city had been completely liberated. General Koenig received the following telegram:

*General: I have the honor and pleasure of informing you of the liberation of the capital of Lorraine. The people of Nancy are awaiting the arrival of the Allied Armies in a calm and orderly spirit. At this wonderful moment, they are all thinking of the man who for four years has pointed out the path of honor and liberty. Vive de Gaulle! Vive la France Eternelle!" (Nancy, September 15).*

In Yonne, where Allied forces are operating, the FFI captured the towns of Joigny, Auxerre and Tonnerre (August 31, 1944). The Departments of Yonne and Aube have now been liberated after several weeks of very hard fighting (September 14, 1944). Five thousand prisoners have been taken in Aube (September 9, 1944).

On the Burgundy front the FFI recently cooperated with French forces in a number of actions particularly in the Châlon-sur-Saône and Sennecy-le-Grand regions (September 8, 1944). The town of Châtillon has been occupied by Patriots (September 11, 1944). The FFI took Semur and Montbard (September 13, 1944). Farther west at Saint-Pierre-le-Moutier in Nièvre, 3,000

Germans were taken prisoner. FFI are in action against the Militia which is withdrawing toward Dijon with the German Army. The whole Department is now controlled by the FFI (September 14, 1944).

In the Doubs sector, the town of Salins was liberated on September 4, while severe fighting took place between Besançon and Pontarlier (September 5, 1944). In the area between Besançon and Belfort, toward which German troops are pouring in an effort to escape through the gap, their convoys are under attack by the FFI. A high Gestapo officer was killed (September 8, 1944). The Maquis in Doubs is very active and neighboring Departments are sending in reinforcements (September 9, 1944). Patriot units took an active part in the engagements of Allied troops on September 11, particularly around Dijon and in the Ognon Valley (September 12, 1944). The FFI inflicted heavy losses on the enemy and forced him to take refuge on the right bank of the Doubs (September 14, 1944). The FFI in Epernay received congratulations from the American Army for having saved the bridges over the Marne (September 3, 1944).

**Toward the North** — Great destruction of communication lines and heavy attacks on convoys in Nord (August 31, 1944). Patriot action is developing in all sectors as Allied forces approach, and has been particularly severe in Pas-de-Calais and the zones between the two



British Official Photo

Arras — Collaborators are marched through the streets escorted by members of the FFI



Allied Armies striking North and East (September 2, 1944). The FFI in frontier districts are cooperating with Belgian Patriots (September 3, 1944).

In Somme the FFI were continually engaged from August 31 to September 4. At Amiens they secured the PTT relay station and seized the Post Office, Prefecture, Town Hall and Citadel, taking many prisoners. At Corbie they attacked German columns, with nothing but small arms and seized valuable materiel. At Doullens they took over 1,600 prisoners losing only three of their own men. At Montdidier, the Germans lost 1,200 men including 24 killed. All this was accomplished before the arrival of the Allies and with equipment inferior to that of the enemy (September 12, 1944).

*(French Press and Information Service, New York, September 15, 1944)*

### ***Pockets of German Resistance Eliminated***

The Germans retreated southward toward Spain and eastward toward Italy, Switzerland and Germany. Several German detachments were not able to catch up with the main armies and were taken prisoner. There are still scattered pockets of German resistance in central France which are now being mopped up by the FFI and in certain parts, especially at Brest, by Allied troops.

***On the Atlantic Coast*** — In the West, in Vendée, many enemy vehicles were destroyed and a German general killed in attacks from ambush (September 7, 1944). Areas liberated by the FFI send reinforcements into zones where fighting continues: for example, the FFI from Dordogne have moved into Charente and Charente-Inférieure (September 9, 1944). The southern portions of the Departments of Vienne, Charente and Charente-Inférieure have been rapidly liberated. In addition to Angoulême and Ruffec the FFI have now occupied Confolens, Civray, Saint-Jean-d'Angély, Saintes and Barbezieux (September 9, 1944). The FFI entered Poitiers on September 6 (September 9, 1944). La Rochelle, where large enemy forces have taken refuge, is besieged by the FFI (September 12, 1944).

***South of the Loire*** — On September 6 and 7 FFI patrols entered Issoudun, Vierzon and La Charité-sur-Loire (September 8, 1944). Two hundred German cyclists were killed in a clash near Issoudun (September 11, 1944). In the Issoudun Valley the FFI forced a column of 18,000 Germans to surrender. In accordance with the terms of an agreement these troops were sent to Orléans and handed over to the American Army (September 12, 1944).

In the loop of the Loire and in Nivernais the FFI were in action from August 31 to September 4, particularly against Militia forces operating in the rear of the Allied Armies (September 12, 1944). 1,200 prisoners were taken in Corrèze (September 9, 1944).

*(French Press and Information Service, New York, September 15, 1944)*

### ***How Military Liaison Was Established Between the Allies and the FFI***

*The effectiveness of the aid rendered the Allied Armies by the Resistance depended upon supplying the FFI with arms and ammunition and upon the maintenance of liaison among the FFI Headquarters of the different Departments. Following is the statement of Wing Commander L. V. Fraser of the RAF on the extensive cooperation between the Allies and the FFI prior to the campaign now liberating all France:*

(INS) — At first only single aircraft flew to the continent, kept a rendezvous, and dropped supplies and sometimes agents, men or women. The latter were left to carry out special liaison tasks with the FFI. As the war continued operations were expanded. The "underground air service" worked under cover of night, taking desperate risks on every assignment. The flying was done by the RAF Bomber Command, acting in close liaison with a special, highly trained organization. Later the task was taken up by American airmen flying from RAF bases. Between the beginning of operations in January 1941 and D-day, some 30,000 containers were dropped. During the last three months before the invasion 10,000 containers were dropped. Tens of thousands of rifles, anti-tank guns, hand grenades, revolvers, machine guns and other light weapons were delivered. In one month the total weight of food, supplies and weapons dropped reached nearly 1,000 tons. Medical supplies were also included in the containers. They were used for treating men wounded in clashes with the Gestapo and stored against the day when casualties would occur in full scale battles.

The comings and goings of agents enabled both sides to keep informed of developments and requirements. The whole project was one of the best kept secrets of the war. The pilots were well aware that the lives of thousands of men and women of the FFI depended upon their ability to remain silent, and no hint of their task leaked out to the general public.

Although moonlit nights were most favorable, the urgent need forced many flights on dark nights. Training for these flights was carried on in Britain. Pilots learned to recognize the drop area instantly and to make accurate drops in a very confined space which was guarded by FFI reception details. It was a trial of skill and daring on both sides as enemy patrols and the Gestapo became increasingly vigilant. Weather always played an important part; shifting winds and fog were difficult to overcome, but the Maquis never gave up a container without a fight. Once they worked 72 hours to recover a single container. When the presence of the enemy prevented the Maquis from keeping a rendezvous, the pilots flew home again with their freight.

This is how the French received supplies with which to fight for their own liberation.

*(International News Service, London, September 1, 1944)*



## NEWS FROM PARIS

### I—REPORTS ON THE LIBERATION OF PARIS

*Below are reports from two French war correspondents on various phases of the battle of Paris.*

**Surrender of General von Choltitz** — (From war correspondent Charles Dydewalle) Paris, Friday, August 25 (Delayed) — The battle of Paris is over. It can be said to have lasted exactly 24 hours. From Longjumeau to la Croix de Berny the Germans had organized no defenses other than road blocks of antitank and 88-mm. guns. When barely outflanked they rapidly withdrew toward the East, their infantry surrendering docilely under the fire of Leclerc's tanks. The vast majority of the victorious troops did not enter Paris before early Friday morning, and were moving along the quays on the banks of the Seine between noon and 2 p.m.

From then on three armies participated in the mop-up operations in the capital: the FFI, meagerly supplied with rifles and automatics, the police, and one single armored division with ultra-modern equipment. For six days now, an extraordinary fact in the history of France, armed citizens alone have policed Paris.

At 2 p.m., Leclerc's Division, which had established an advanced command post at Gare Montparnasse, had moved along the quays. With façades grazed and the walls of her historic buildings pocked by bullets, Paris had the sinister and glorious air of the greatest days of her history.

At 2:30 p.m. three American fighter planes hastily reconnoitered Place de la Concorde and were greeted by German batteries placed on the roof of the Automobile Club. These were the last white puffs, the very last to be seen in the Paris sky, after four long years. General von Choltitz, an extremely corpulent man of about fifty, a typical Silesian squire, asked and was permitted to keep his cook and his secretary. He was thereupon taken to the Prefecture, followed by a truck load of German officers. General Leclerc had brought him in a tank to advance Headquarters.

After entering Paris, Colonel Billotte, commanding the advance column of the French troops, sought out points of German resistance all over the city. He sent his Chief of Staff, Major de la Horie, to the Swedish Legation at 68 Rue d'Anjou. The Major there found a German official with the rank of Captain who had been sent to the Legation to handle all negotiations with the Allies. This Captain Brenner immediately stressed his excellent intentions with regard to Paris, and stated that General Baron von Choltitz, who had succeeded General Broeneburg, was similarly disposed. De la Horie at once sent the German official to the Hotel Meurice. The German returned ten minutes later stating that General von Choltitz wished first of all, for the sake of honor, to conduct a skirmish, which would promptly be followed by a general surrender. De la

Horie immediately moved with a tank squadron supported by a half company of infantry, and marched on the Tuileries where he was attacked with grenades and fire from armored cars. He had taken with him in his jeep a fearless French girl volunteer who offered to show him the road.

Throwing grenades, our men, preceded by this woman who yesterday was unknown, and by their leader whose energetic personality was known to all, stormed the big luxurious hotel and entered the lobby. They had soon thrown smoke-bombs which threatened to suffocate all the occupants in their den, while our tanks remained in the street under heavy fire.

Dashing up the stairs, a French officer managed to reach the General's room, where he found him standing at his desk. A heated discussion ensued between victor and vanquished, the latter offering apologies for the violence of his resistance.

The weather was magnificent. All afternoon trucks loaded with German prisoners rolled by. Armed civilian guards wove through columns of heavy tanks. Jeeps raced toward points of action. All the shops were closed, and out in the sun groups standing around women whose heads had been shaved, carried a striking note of the anger of the people. On several occasions, Leclerc's officers had to protect German prisoners from the people's fury. Ambulances filled with wounded accompanied by barelegged nurses drove past, going through volleys of machine gun fire.

The Hôtel de Ville was the meeting place for all people of the Resistance, where troops in the spirit of the Carmagnole mingled with priests in black cassocks. This morning the army of Paris had been largely made up of women and 18-year-old lads. This evening it was a French Division with American equipment that had put the enemy to flight. . . .

(FRANCE, London, August 28, 1944)

**Battle of the Rooftops Follows the Battle of the Streets** — (From war correspondent Pierre Gosset) Paris, August 27 — The battle of the rooftops followed the battle of the streets in Paris. Today we found instructions issued by Darnand before his hasty departure. In a circular addressed to his shock troops, Darnand said: "Hold the roofs of Paris. A few well aimed bursts of sub-machine gun fire will suffice to cool the enthusiasm of any crowd."

This statement was strikingly disproved today. On two occasions shots were fired during the march of General de Gaulle's party, first in Rue de Rivoli, and a second time when the party reached the parvis of Notre Dame and at the moment the General entered the Cathedral.

Both times I was but a few yards from the General. The only effect of the incident on Rue de Rivoli was to step up the pace of the march. At Notre Dame,



shots were fired, it seemed, from the roof of the Hôtel-Dieu and perhaps from that of a neighboring building; they caused the beginnings of panic in the crowd. I was in the midst of this crowd that was cursing the Militia. There was but one cry on all lips: *Les salauds*. Everyone asked the same question, "Is the General hurt?" He was not. Very erect, smiling, he continued on his way and entered Notre Dame, where his calm manner helped to reassure the worshipers.

On the parvis the defensive fire opened by the FFI was crackling. It was almost harder to stop this gunfire than to overcome the attackers, six of whom were seized right in the Church. I saw General Leclerc disarm an American soldier beside me who was bent on shooting police officers on guard in the towers of Notre Dame.

Even that night, in Paris, a shot was fired from a rooftop from time to time. The crowd had already become accustomed to this, and no one believed this battle of rooftops could last more than 24 hours.

In the Evening Radio-Paris Broadcast the following Communiqué from the Prefecture of Police — The Prefect of Police thanks the people of Paris for replying enthusiastically to his appeal and for taking General de Gaulle under their protection. For more than a half-hour the General marched afoot down the Champs-Élysées, from Place de l'Etoile to Place de la Concorde, in the midst of a tremendous crowd, such as Paris has not seen since that other victory parade [of 1918]. In normal times it is customary to provide for the protection of a high official. But today, in liberated Paris, the entire population has assumed responsibility for this protection. A pointless and unimportant incident occurred late this afternoon, at the moment General de Gaulle reached Notre Dame. The incident led to gunfire which did not prevent the crowd gathered before the Cathedral from singing the *Te Deum* with the General himself.

Once again the Paris police express their thanks to the people of the liberated capital.

(FRANCE, London, August 29, 1944)

**The Jews of Paris Breathe Freely Again** — (From war correspondent Raymond Daniell) Paris, September 2 (Delayed) — Not far from the Paris city hall lies a section of old Paris where there is a very special reason for thanksgiving tonight. It is that little quarter including the Third, Fourth and Fifth arrondissements where most of the capital's Jews reside. They who have known the depths of sorrow are now enjoying the heights of happiness.

There are not many of them left. Probably 100,000 lived in the quarter before the Germans came. But, according to those who remain there today, some 90,000 were deported by the Germans. Those who were still there today have been in hiding for the better part of the past two years.

Life has been hard for these people in the past four years. Life has been very cruel. It has left its mark upon their faces. Nowhere else in Paris is the mark of Nazism so indelibly printed as it is on the faces of these folk.

I talked to many this morning whose coats and dresses bore the marks of stitches where they had worn the yellow Star of David until a few days ago. But the seams in their coats were less noticeable than the lines in their faces.

The reader must come with me in imagination to the Rue St. Croix de la Bretonnerie. It is a narrow street of small buildings and small shops. Our command car halts and two uniformed and helmeted war correspondents jump to the pavement—the people scatter. They have seen cars and uniformed figures jump out of them before.

But two little kids come out from doorways to beg chewing gum—pronounced *schwing gum*—and then grownups come, their curiosity overcoming their conditioned reflex of fear. They realize at least that we mean no harm and the street swarms with people talking in Yiddish, in German and in French.

This is the ghetto the Germans created in Paris.

The aggregate of the stories these unfortunates told would fill a book. They recounted incidents so horrible that pending confirmation by responsible investigating committees they cannot be reported. Some of them are too horrible for belief.

These were things that were told in the same tones that were used to describe shortages of food that existed under Nazi occupation and still exist. The people in the Jewish quarter have become inured to suffering. They have lost capacity for self pity or dramatization.

The gist of the stories told in the streets, in cafés and in homes by the Jews of Paris was that German occupation brought with it a new diaspora. The Gestapo, it seems, took sadistic delight in separating families. A wife would be sent to Poland, the husband somewhere else and the children to still a different place. The community that was left is a community of broken families and broken hearts.

During the German occupation the people of the ghetto created by the Nazis with Vichy connivance theoretically had the same rations as the rest of the population of Paris. But here is where the cynical cruelty of the Nazis comes into the picture. Jews were forbidden to leave their homes except between the hours of eleven and twelve in the morning and shops were open only in the afternoon. Thus, unless they could get Frenchmen to do their shopping for them the Jews were effectively barred from shops and went hungry. Nor could they work.

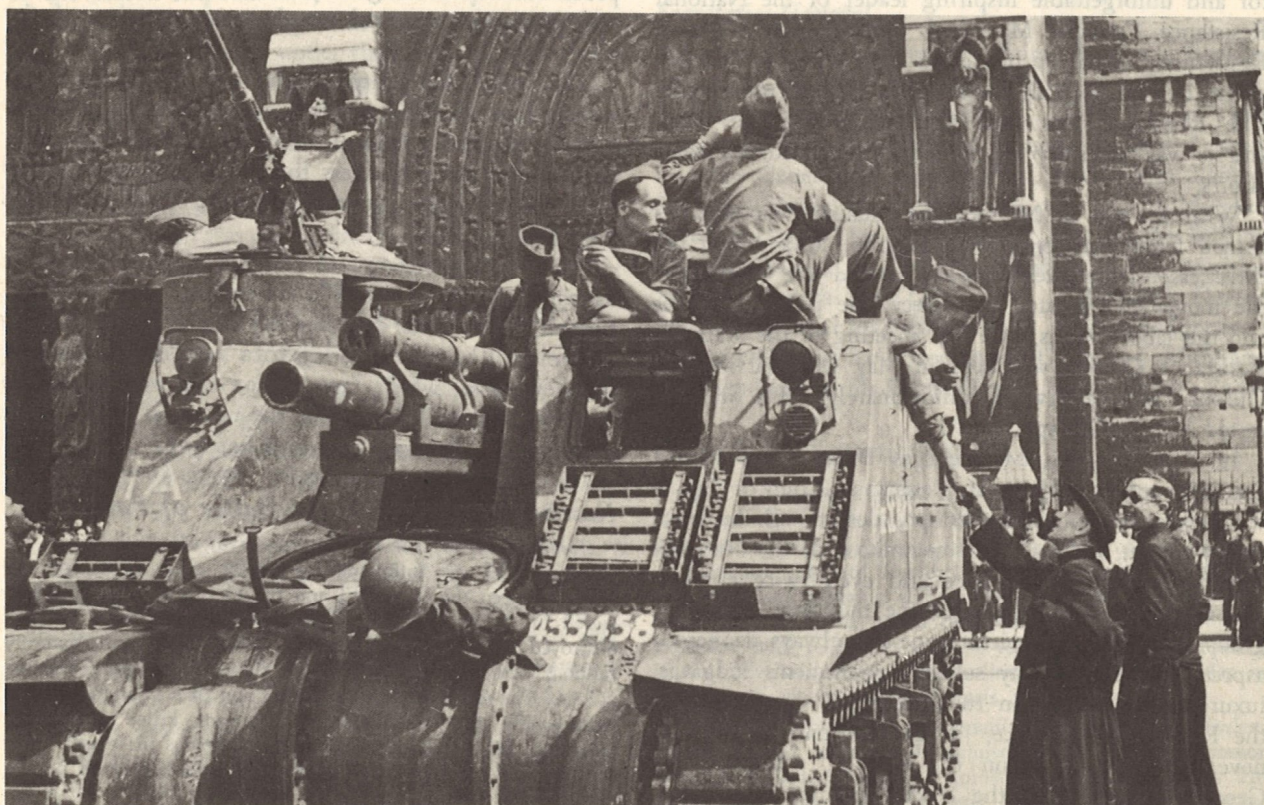
Here in this quarter where sons and husbands stayed in hiding for two or three years hopes began to rise





British Official Photo

Paris — Meeting at the Gare Montparnasse. General de Gaulle, General Leclerc and General Juin



British Official Photo

Paris — In front of Notre Dame. Two priests greet the crew of a French tank



and the throb of freedom began to beat in the breasts of the outcasts when the French rose up against the Germans. But there were no easy breaths until last Tuesday when American troops marched into Paris. Then the yellow stars began to come off. Then these sad ones began to raise their voices. They sang the Marseillaise and they sang their own Jewish songs. They, too, were free. Terror had passed them by.

What this correspondent will not forget is the story of one wife and mother in that troubled part of Paris who told how her husband had been deported and her child killed. She asked after she had told her story: "*Est-il permis de vous embrasser?*"

I explained that I had not contributed anything to the liberation of Paris but had just followed the Army into the city, but she said: "But you are an American and I want to kiss you."

(*New York TIMES*, September 4, 1944)

### *The National Resistance Council, Heart of the Resurrection of France*

Georges Bidault, President of the National Resistance Council, related in an interview with a reporter of the French Press Agency (which is to replace the Havas Agency), the history of the organization over which he has presided since August 1943. He did not discuss the composition and operation of the National Resistance Council,<sup>1</sup> but rather stated its present and future role.

Georges Bidault first paid tribute to Max, the creator and unforgettable inspiring leader of the National Resistance Council. Max had founded the National Resistance Council on his return from a trip to London, where he had been in contact with General de Gaulle. The Resistance was then fighting in separate units, and it was necessary to combine and coordinate their efforts.

With the aid of M. Georges Bidault, who had returned from a prisoner of war camp, Max united the three essential elements which formed the Resistance: the movements created in secrecy, the political parties and the labor unions. The first meeting of the National Resistance Council was held in May 1943, at 48 Rue Dufour. Soon afterward, unfortunately, Max was arrested by the Gestapo.

In August 1943, M. Georges Bidault was named President of the National Resistance Council. For a whole year, despite the Gestapo, despite all the traps that were set, the executive committee of the National Resistance Council met once and even twice a week. These meetings, like those of the humblest Resistance groups, had an often picturesque but always dangerous aspect. Out of the way suburbs, workmen's lodgings, luxurious apartments in turn sheltered the leaders of the Resistance in France. "If the German police were never able to fall upon the Council," declared M. Georges Bidault, "all the credit belongs to our col-

leagues, the Liaison Officers and Secretaries, who did the most dangerous work. Their daily task was to carry messages, warn members of the Council, bring them to meeting places never known in advance."

Thanks to them, thanks to their devotion, the National Resistance Council was able to give form to the Resistance, establish its unity and organize it. This was dangerous work for everyone, and about fifty members of the National Resistance Council were arrested and deported, among them Lenormand of the *Ceux de la Libération* movement and Aubin of the *Combat* movement.

Members of the National Resistance Council held important posts at Alger: André Le Troquer, Commissioner for Liberated Territories, Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigerie, Commissioner of the Interior, André Mercier, Delegate to the Consultative Assembly.

The results of the efforts of the National Resistance Council were published on March 15, 1944, in the Resistance program which, in addition to instructions for immediate operations, included a general program. The latter indicated in broad outline, the governmental policies the Resistance wished to see followed.<sup>2</sup> M. Bidault sent the Resistance program to General de Gaulle, who acknowledged its receipt and is giving it the consideration it deserves.

M. Bidault remarked that the unanimous support this program has received in the Resistance augurs well for agreement in the future. He sees in this proof that men of greatly differing points of view have the same approach to the reconstruction of the country.

This effort for unity, emphasized M. Bidault, has cost each of us many sacrifices, and more will be necessary to preserve national unity. It is therefore valuable, at this time, to stress the promise of future unity to be found in the unanimous support of the Resistance program.

"We have overcome all the difficulties which beset us under the oppressor. We are certain," concluded M. Bidault, "that under the free sky of the liberated capital we shall be able to bring to a successful conclusion the new tasks which face us for the welfare of the country. We shall thus serve the universal causes from which France does not dissociate her own."

(*French Information Services*, London, September 2, 1944)

### *Record of the FFI in the Battle of Paris*

*Communiqué of the French Forces of the Interior* — On September 12 the following facts were made public on the battle between the Paris FFI and the Germans, a battle which ended in the liberation of Paris. During the actions the FFI destroyed or captured 60 German tanks, took more than 30 cannon, and a great number of sub-machine guns and revolvers. The Germans lost 283 killed and 687 wounded. French losses were 1,500 soldiers and civilians killed and 7,500 wounded. Before giving up Paris the Germans massacred many civilians, police and soldiers of the FFI, and carried off several hundred prisoners.

(*French Information Services*, London, September 13, 1944)

<sup>1</sup>See *Free France*, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 23 and No. 5 & 6, p. 165 for the composition of the National Resistance Council, and its operation as the directing agency of the Resistance.

<sup>2</sup>See *Free France*, Vol. 5, No. 12, p. 437 for the program mentioned by M. Bidault.



## General Eisenhower Commemorates the Liberation of Paris

Paris, September 7 — General Dwight D. Eisenhower stood today beneath the Arc de Triomphe, and presented a plaque commemorating the liberation of Paris to the people of France. With General Eisenhower were Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur W. Tedder, Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley, Lieutenant General Carl Spaatz, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur T. Harris, Air Chief Marshal Trafford L. Leigh-Mallory. Addressing the people of Paris, General Eisenhower paid tribute to the courage and patriotism of the FFI. Below is General Eisenhower's speech as broadcast by the Radio Française:

We came to deliver the *coup de grâce* to the last remaining elements of the enemy, here in Paris. But the liberation of Paris had already been largely completed. The week before our entry men of the FFI who, for four long years, inspired by General de Gaulle, had carried on the relentless struggle against the enemy, had risen in their wrath and gone into the streets to drive out the hated invader.

We shared your joy when Paris was returned to its people and to France. Liberty has returned to its traditional home, and the glory of having freed the capital belongs to Frenchmen. All members of the Allied forces alike send their fraternal admiration to the people of Paris. On their behalf, I present to the city a shield. It is the shield of the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces. It symbolizes the sword of liberation setting aside the blackness of German tyranny and rising under the colors of the United Nations to blue skies of freedom and of peace.

The plaque which I present today is a temporary one, soon to be replaced by one of durable metal which we hope will be placed in an appropriate and permanent setting. We hope this simple object will forever recall the day of the liberation of Paris.

(French Press and Information Service, New York, September 10, 1944)

## II—THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT AT PARIS

The Provisional Government of the French Republic, reshaped by General de Gaulle to give the Resistance of the Interior the representation to which it is entitled, is carrying out its duties in the French capital. The essential task of this Government, whose provisional character was once again stressed by General de Gaulle, is to organize the country to continue the war, and to make sure that France receives the place that is rightfully hers in the international negotiations which will determine the future of Europe. The present membership of the Government has not been officially published by French authorities in Paris or London. Names of the members have been reported by American news agencies and by the Radiodiffusion de la Nation Française. Below is a list of the members of the Government, but we cannot as yet guarantee its accuracy:

## Membership of the Provisional Government

President of the Government. General Charles de Gaulle  
Commissioner of State without Portfolio. Jules Jeanneney  
Commissioner of State for Moslem Affairs

General Georges Catroux  
Commissioner of Justice..... François de Menthon  
Commissioner of Foreign Affairs..... Georges Bidault  
Commissioner of the Interior..... Adrien Tixier  
Commissioner of War..... André Diethelm  
Commissioner of the Navy..... Louis Jacquinot  
Commissioner for Air..... Louis Tillon  
Commissioner for National Economy

Pierre Mendès-France  
Commissioner of Finance..... Legercq  
Commissioner of Industrial Production..... Robert Lacoste  
Commissioner of Agriculture..... Pierre Tanguy-Prigent  
Commissioner of Supply..... Paul Giacobbi  
Commissioner for Colonies..... René Pleven  
Commissioner for National Education..... René Capitant  
Commissioner for Labor and Social Affairs

Alexandre Parodi  
Commissioner of Public Works and Transport

René Mayer  
Commissioner for Communications and PTT

Augustin Laurent  
Commissioner of Information..... Henri Teitgen  
Commissioner for Prisoners, Deportees and Refugees

Henri Frenay  
Commissioner for Public Health..... François Billoux

## Secretaries-General

Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs..... Raymond Brugère  
Secretary-General for National Defense..... Gen. Fortin  
Secretary-General for Air (temp.)..... Gen. Martial Valin  
Secretary-General for National Economy..... René Courtin  
Secretary-General for Agriculture..... Jean Lefèvre  
Secretary-General for Supply..... Milhaud  
Secretary-General for Education..... Henri Wallon  
Secretary-General for Communications..... Mathieu  
Secretary-General for PTT..... Edmond Quenot  
Secretary-General for Information..... Jean Guignebert<sup>1</sup>  
Secretary-General for Prisoners and Deportees..... Mitterand  
Secretary-General for Public Health..... Dr. L. Valléry-Radot

## Notes on the Commissioners

Jules Jeanneney, Commissioner of State without Portfolio, was President of the Senate. He was a member of the Left Democratic Party. Together with the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Edouard Herriot, he wrote a letter to Marshal Pétain protesting against the suppression of the Bureaus of the Chamber and Senate, which completed the destruction of the Republic. Jules Jeanneney, now 80 years old, a great republican leader, universally respected in political circles, lived hidden in France until the liberation of Paris.

General Georges Catroux, Commissioner of State for Moslem Affairs, refused to accept the Armistice when he was Governor General of Indo-China, and joined General de Gaulle. He represented Free France in Syria, and proclaimed the inde-

<sup>1</sup>Jean Guignebert has been appointed Director of Radio Broadcasting.