

## FRANCE AT WAR



*French Press and Information Service*

*French machine gunner in no man's land.*



*French Press and Information Service*

*Supplies being moved up to French First Army front.*

### I—FRENCH TROOPS IN BATTLE

#### *The German Front*

*After having rapidly mopped up Lower Alsace, General Delattre de Tassigny's French First Army at the side of General Alexander Patch's American Seventh Army is fighting on German soil.*

#### *Operations of the French First Army*

**Raid Beyond the Rhine Near Basle** — March 19 — (Official communiqué from the French First Army) — On March 19, fraternally united with the American troops of General Devers' Sixth Army Group and operating in close cooperation with units of the American Seventh Army, French First Army troops penetrated into Germany. After breaking through enemy defense positions in the region of Oberhoffen on March 15, they crossed the Lauter west of Lauterbourg and seized the village of Scheibenhardt. The previous day they had forced the enemy to retreat and on March 18, they entered Lauterbourg thus completing the occupation of the banks of the Rhine up to the Palatinate frontier.

March 20 — (From Basle, UP) — The operation was launched on Sunday at 3:30 a.m. Following extremely violent artillery preparations, a French infantry battalion crossed the river in motor boats and landed on the right bank near Maerkt, four kilometers north of Basle. On the German bank, the French met only light resistance as all German installations had been

completely wiped out by artillery fire. Thus, they were able to advance rapidly up to Binzen and Kuemmingen on the Kander River, approximately six kilometers beyond the Rhine. The raid lasted four hours. The French then returned with more than 400 prisoners.

*(LE MONDE, Paris, March 21, 1945)*

**French Tanks in the Bienwald Forest** — March 21 — (French First Army General Headquarters) — Exploiting their successes of the previous day and operating in close unity with the American forces, the French forces made further gains on German territory. Following fierce fighting, tanks of the Infantry Regiment of General de Montsabert seized Erg to the north of Lauterbourg, and reached the Buchelberg clearing in the Bienwald Forest, thus advancing five kilometers beyond the frontier.

*(LE MONDE, Paris, March 22, 1945)*

**Beyond the Siegfried Line** — *A French First Army communiqué, as transmitted yesterday by the French Press Agency and reported by the Federal Communications Commission:*

On the whole of their zone of action, units of the French First Army under General Delattre's command went well beyond the Siegfried Line. Yesterday their left wing reached the River Erlen. Our armor and infantry overcame the last resistance on the bank of the Rhine before Karlsruhe. Enemy elements still on the left bank tried to cross by every means.

*(New York TIMES, March 26, 1945)*



*Planet News, copyright*

*American tank moving through steel and reinforced concrete dragons' teeth barrier of the Siegfried Line.*

**The Advance Continues** — *A French First Army communiqué, as transmitted overseas yesterday by the French Press Agency and recorded by the Federal Communications Commission:*

The French First Army has extended its zone of action along the whole border of the Rhine opposite Karlsruhe. After having taken possession of Rheinzabern, Jockgrim, Hagenbach and Neubourg on March 24, they took villages near Worth on the Rhine and Pfortz, and captured Maximiliansau, the last German bridgehead west of the Rhine, in a hard struggle.

Several thousand Russian and Polish prisoners were liberated by our troops. We took 1,100 prisoners and a considerable amount of matériel in addition to the eighty cannon of all calibers previously mentioned.

Our total losses in the course of eleven days' fighting since the attack of March 15 have amounted in killed and wounded to less than 4 per cent of the combatant forces engaged.

*(New York TIMES, March 27, 1945)*

**French Navy in Action** — *A later communiqué, as broadcast from Brazzaville and recorded by the Federal Communications Commission:*

Two of our destroyers, the Fortune and the Basque, patrolling enemy waters in the Gulf of Genoa, shelled the harbor of Savonna, causing several explosions. The cruiser Gloire successfully shelled the harbor of San Remo, where is situated a base of torpedo speedboats and of human torpedoes operating off the zone of operations.

Naval planes of the Atlantic front twice raided the German fortifications in the Royan sector. These attacks were successful in spite of intense anti-aircraft fire.

*(New York TIMES, March 31, 1945)*

**With the Americans in What Was Cologne** — (By Jacques Fano) — We walked toward the Cathedral spearing its two towers over the ravaged city. I advanced with difficulty, scaling walls, skirting craters. In that grayish mass of ruins, white bathtubs polished by the rain were gleaming.

Some German civilians were wandering through the debris. They were slowly and methodically scavenging the ruins. I passed a fur clad woman bending under the weight of a heavy bundle. An old man with a mousy face was rumaging with the help of a hook. He seemed to be searching for something he could not find. When he saw me he straightened, raised his hand to his hat, then disappeared.

Worried, I crossed a square in the middle of which a corpse was lying on a stretcher; it had undoubtedly been lying there for a few days waiting to be removed. Around it, soaked mattresses were stretched out like flabby cadavers. In that monstrous assortment of curios that is a destroyed city victims like tragic rag dolls were searching the ruins, tremendous garbage-cans where corpses were rotting.

These modern junk dealers were not interested in sewing machines; they would have exchanged 20 bath tubs and ten pianos for one liter of brandy or one

flashlight. At their flea market one baby carriage or one wheel barrow was worth some hundred mattresses.

Submissive to whatever fate might bring, caught in an inextricable net of habits, of familiar surroundings, prisoners too of their painstakingly accumulated food, unable to break away from their routine, like ants continuing to crawl around in their destroyed anthill, German civilians were scurrying amidst their ruins, stopping a second to stare at you, only abruptly to be swallowed in the night of some cellar. Cellars in which they had spent hours and months, which had become the attics of that roofless city and in which they now discover potatoes and hams under corpses.

Above that tremendous charnel where more than a hundred thousand dead were lying, a plane was slowly cruising in the sky. On a suburban avenue I noticed a deserted trolley car, useless and light like a child's toy. At the city limits I saw a refugee couple fleeing. On the highway, the woman was pushing a wheel barrow, the man was carrying a radio set under his arm. His household deities, six bulbs in a box. . . .

Attempting to reach the British sector to the north, we got lost in the forsaken countryside. "This map is a fake," said our officer guide, "it does not correspond to the country." But it was the country which no longer corresponded to the map. Blasted roads, crumbling bridges, destroyed villages where streets no more followed the same line, no sign posts. No one to direct us.

Silence, mud, jagged trees, barns vomiting their soaked straw. In the middle of the road, shivering in

the rain, a motionless horse more heartbreaking than death.

It was useless to attempt to go northward. We retraced our steps toward the south, toward the route of the invasion where we would reach the line of trucks and tanks. On that road, war was alive. War made itself heard.

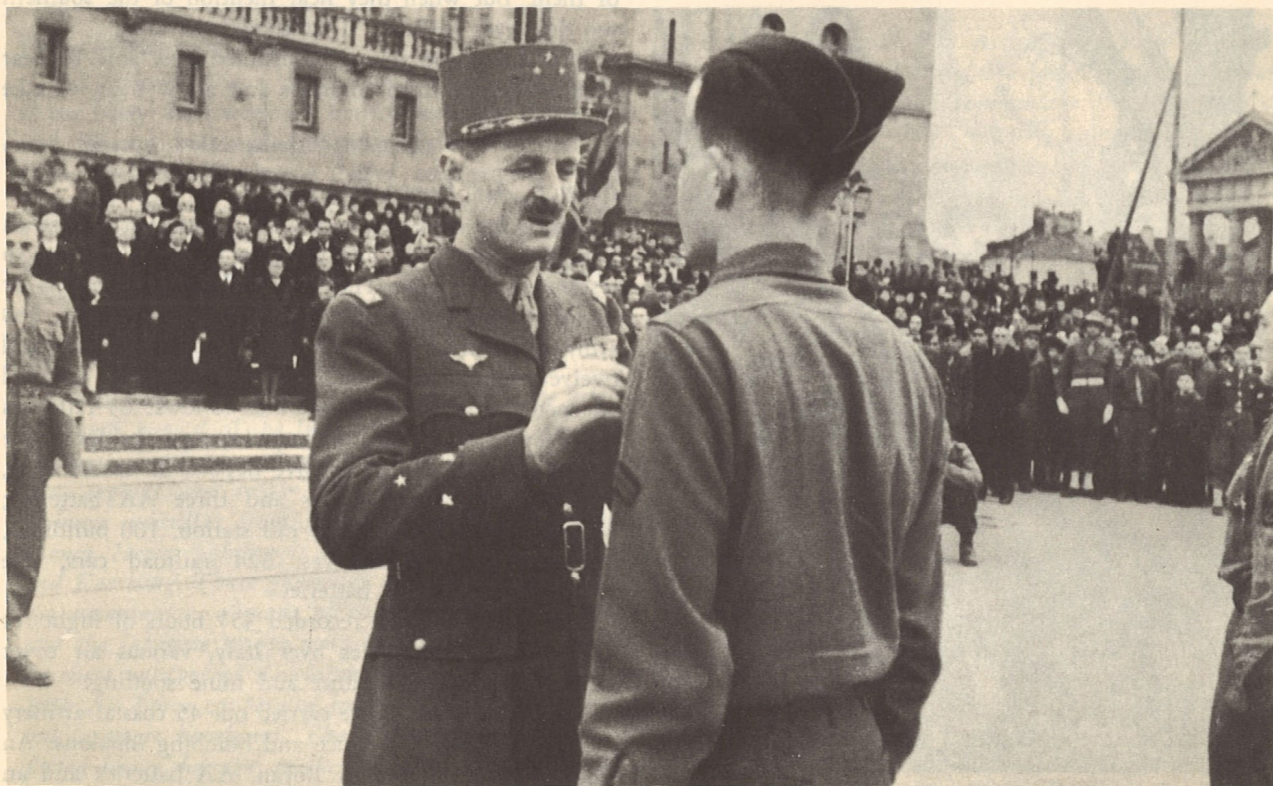
At nightfall we approached Duren. On the horizon a tremendous red glare, huge coal stocks which had been burning for several days. In the night, by the light of the fire, American soldiers were reading their newspaper and thus learned that the day before their comrades of the French First Army had crossed the Rhine.

We had dinner with an American officer and talked by the light of our flashlights. We learned that every day a great many German civilians were arriving from the surrounding country. By nature and by habit submissive and respectful of force, they are ready to collaborate with the Allies and are amazed at being treated as vanquished enemies. They do not understand.

One young German girl said quite frankly, "I stayed to wait for the Americans. I would like to marry a soldier and leave for the United States."

Orders against fraternization are strict and penalties severe. The 55 dollar fine has been increased to prison sentences of up to five years. But military authorities have only had to act on two or three occasions. The American soldier knows full well why he is fighting.

(CARREFOUR, Paris, March 17, 1945)



*French Press and Information Service*

*General Leclerc decorating a soldier of the Second Armored Division.*

*With the Senegalese Troops* — First soldiers of the Free French Army, these men were torn from their families, from their serene oases, and have been fighting relentlessly since 1940. They come from the Tchad. They formed at Brazzaville and with all their matériel they carried out a thousand kilometer raid across the Sudanese desert; when they were thought to be lost, they made their triumphant entry into Cairo, crossed the Cyrenaican desert, passed through Tripoli, pursued Rommel in Tunisia, landed in Naples, participated in the liberation of Rome, seized Montefiascone, entered Toulon and carried their incredible cavalcade all the way into Franche-Comté. And today, they have been stopped at the foot of that wall of pines and mist, which to them means the beginning of winter; they now will probably be relieved from their posts and sent to Mediterranean regions where the climate is milder.

Standing before them, motionless, the General spoke a few stirring words and promised them a choice place in the V-day parade. Then he called the roll of the dead.

Colorful and savage like the equatorial bush, names too numerous followed one another and the company commanders marked the rhythm of that infinite litany of "dead on the field of honor."

Many of these men have fallen, their great, tall bodies now lie stretched beneath the earth all along the triumphant route leading to the Vosges forests. An officer read the posthumous citations which were but



*French Press and Information Service*

*Goumiers parading through Niedernai, Alsace.*

narratives of the epics of Africa and Europe. The bugles sounded and some of these braves were awarded the Croix de Guerre.

Were those tears in the eyes of the Senegalese? These warriors who blazed a trail through half the world are strangely emotional. And when I congratulated them after the ceremony they trembled with a childlike shyness, stiffening in a flawless salute. But they managed to answer:

"I am happy to have helped liberate France, for I have never seen or loved any other white people and I hate those who wish to do them harm."

As for us, we too often include all African peoples under the name of "Black," while they distinguish the essential differences between the white groups; that is the lesson they teach us.

Evidently, the Senegalese are awakening to a sort of patriotism, a mixture of naïveté and pride. A lieutenant told me that during the advance on Belfort he ordered one of the Senegalese to lead 50 prisoners to the neighboring town. The tall tirailleur, proud to play the part of a conqueror, led the Germans into a field where they were forced to drill until they could obey his orders and all shout with a strange Germano-Senegalese accent, *Vive la France*. . . . Then he made his triumphant entry.

Tomorrow these men may leave the front although they have not requested to do so nor have they weakened. Meanwhile, they will keep on fighting in the snow and in the cold if this further sacrifice is expected of them. But when they hear mention of the southern sun their eyes sparkle: "That good," they say.

It is up to the young Frenchmen now able to bear arms to relieve these colonials and allow them to take their first rest.

*(Ministry of Information, Paris, March 1, 1945)*

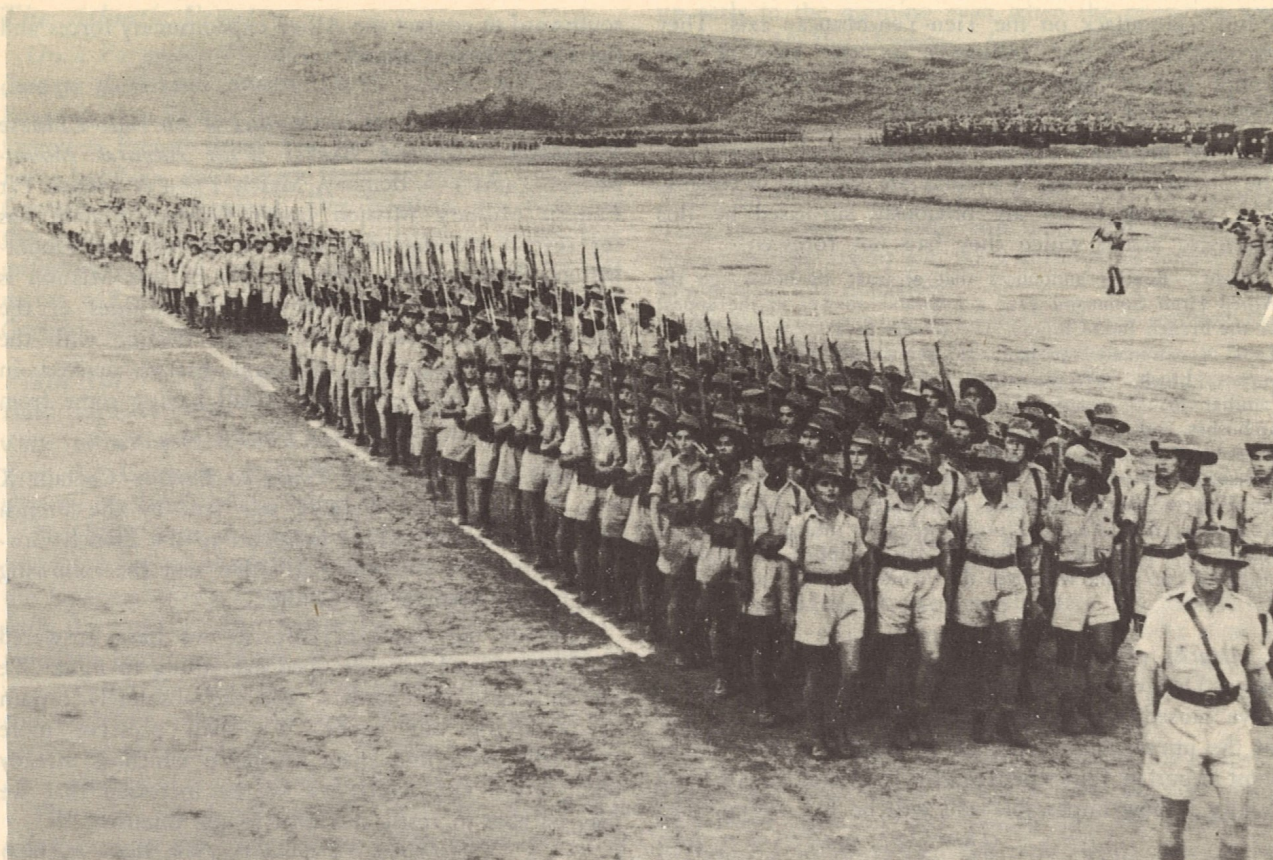
### *French Air Force in Action*

During the week of March 9-15, the units of the French First Air Corps took advantage of the clear weather to resume full activity. They carried out 84 missions or 231 dive-bombing sorties, 16 bomber escort sorties, 280 army reconnaissance sorties, 353 bombing sorties and twelve strafing sorties; 280 tons of bombs were dropped on enemy targets. Results were as follows: 63 railroads cut, eleven roads cut; destroyed: seven bridges, one rail station, 322 buildings, five depots, 32 locomotives, 304 rail cars, four vehicles and three AA batteries; damaged: nine bridges, one rail station, 100 buildings, one depot, 15 locomotives, 324 railroad cars, one vehicle and eight AA batteries.

The coastal aviation recorded 357 hours of flight for 37 dive bombing sorties over Italy, various air cover sorties, army reconnaissance and mine spotting.

The Atlantic Air Force carried out 45 coastal artillery spotting and reconnaissance and bombing missions. An airfield in the vicinity of Royan, AA batteries and an enemy ship received direct hits.

*(Ministry of Information, Paris, March 20, 1945)*



*French Press and Information Service*

*French Far Eastern Brigade, wearing the Australian uniform. These troops will shortly be sent to Indo-China.*

### **French Navy in Action**

The following is a communiqué from the Ministry of the Navy: Last week the French destroyers *Le Basque* and *Simoun* bombarded military installations on the Italian Riviera. During a heavy engagement on the night of March 15, off San Remo the escort ship *Lansquenet*, supported by the escort ship *Voltigeur* sank an enemy torpedo boat and took a number of prisoners.

*(Ministry of Information, Paris, March 20, 1945)*

### **The Indo-Chinese Front**

On March 12, after three days' resistance the citadel of Hanoi, capital of the Indo-Chinese Union, fell under Japanese bombardment. In Tonkin and North Laos, vast regions are under the control of our troops. Chinese guerrillas from Kwang-Tung closed with the enemy. Heavy fighting is in progress around Ha-jiang and Kao-bang. These guerrillas are scattered throughout the mountainous regions of the North and Northwest and the Japanese troops were obviously taken unawares by these unexpected developments. General Chennault's 14th Air Force cooperated with our troops by carrying out strategic bombings. The Annam-Laos Brigade inflicted heavy damage on the Me-kong coastal highway, putting it out of use for some time to come. Our forces in the Moncai region, Tien-yen, are still holding out but are under very heavy attack.

Before the Consultative Assembly in Paris on March 20, General de Gaulle read the following telegram sent by the Moncai garrison commander: "Lieutenant Colonel Lecoy, until just recently commander of the Moncai garrison, was killed by the enemy during the attack on Hanoi. Our infantry is conducting itself admirably. There has been not one case of defection. I insist that arms and ammunition be parachuted to us. As long as we have arms and ammunition we shall hold. Help us as much as possible. Morale is excellent. Vive la France" The entire Assembly rose in tribute to the defenders of Indo-China.

Below are the texts of the communiqués sent from Paris or China on the operations in Indo-China:

**American Aid to Indo-Chinese Resistance**—Chungking, China, March 21 — (AP) — An American communiqué said today that fighter planes of the Fourteenth Air Force strafed and bombed enemy troop columns in the Black River area west of Hanoi, in French Indo-China, where French guerrillas are battling the Japanese.

*(New York TIMES, March 22, 1945)*

**Guerrillas Against Japanese Troops** — National Defense Communiqué: March 24, Resolved to eliminate the threat to their troops in Tonkin by French military occupation of the Moncai region, the Japanese launched

a full scale attack on the Tien-Yen-Moncaj axis. They encountered violent resistance on the part of our troops mostly composed of Tho infantry of famous fighting spirit and loyalty to France.

In the mountain regions of Tonkin and Upper-Laos, the operations of our guerrillas are steadily increasing. The Japanese forces are obviously surprised by this defensive action which they had not foreseen.

*Note* — Reuters announces that at least 48 hours ago the Allied High Command gave a favorable answer to the appeal of the French Indo-Chinese. The terrain in Tonkin and Upper-Laos is extremely favorable to guerrilla warfare. Mountain forests, brush, narrow valleys whose winding courses are familiar to the people of Thaos, Mos and Laos, all favor ambushes and present safe hide-outs for the armed groups. Moreover, pressing demands from the French Indo-Chinese Resistance for parachuted arms and supplies, to help the regular Franco-Annamese troops, were received in France some time ago. According to further reliable information Allied planes for parachute operations, are equipped and loaded, ready to take flight whenever the Allies issue the order.

(LE MONDE, Paris, March 24, 1945)

*Attacks Against Japanese Communications* — National Defense Communiqué: In Indo-China, our troops have caused major destruction to communication lines of the utmost importance to the Japanese. One of the most important routes between the coast and the Me-kong Valley is now impassable and will be for a long time.

(LE MONDE, Paris, March 25, 1945)

*Sino-French Military Collaboration* — From a Chinese Military spokesman: An Allied landing on the Indo-Chinese coast is planned in order to support the French resistance. Moreover, as soon as preparations are completed, the Chinese forces concentrated in the southern section of Yunnan Province will advance

southward to contact the Allied expeditionary forces and the French Indo-Chinese forces.

(LE MONDE, Paris, March 24, 1945)

*French Government in Contact With Indo-Chinese Resistance* — General Blaizot With Admiral Mountbatten — (AP) — Bombay, March 15 — A French Far Eastern Military Mission under General Blaizot has for several months been attached to Admiral Mountbatten's Headquarters. The purpose of this Mission is to work with the Anglo-American authorities of the Southeast Asia theater on questions dealing with the situation in Indo-China. General Blaizot arrived in Ceylon at the beginning of last fall having come from Paris by way of Alger.

(LE MONDE, Paris, March 17, 1945)

*Resistance Officer en Route to Paris* — Captain X who has just reached India was sent by the French authorities in Indo-China to report to the French Government on the situation there. He sent the following telegram to General de Gaulle:

"Despite the shock of surprise, we have answered your appeal and have dropped everything to fight. We are following your orders. We are absolutely certain of preserving our honor. We shall preserve more materially with immediate assistance which is already being given and which we ask be increased that we may be able to resist and turn to the offensive."

(Ministry of Information, Paris, March 29, 1945)

*After Twenty Days' Resistance* — A communiqué, as transmitted by the French Press Agency and reported yesterday by the Federal Communications Commission:

In Indo-China on the 20th day of hostilities French troops continued to resist especially in the Black River region.

(New York TIMES, March 31, 1945)



French Press and Information Service

Motorized troops of the French Far Eastern Brigade.

## *The Atlantic Front*

*On a Forgotten Front* — (By Jean Eparvier) — On January 4, several hundred RAF planes bombed the Royan pocket. It was the first Allied air attack on that forgotten French front. But French planes, Navy Air Force bombers, daily attack these pockets in which the Germans are entrenched. Our bombers are few, but their work is increasing, slowly bearing results but, unfortunately, the risk is great. We cannot yet say which will hold out the longest, our squadrons or the German defense installations.

*The SBD's* — We have very few planes. On the one hand, we have a few heavy bombers and a few pursuits, some of which are of American make, others taken from the Germans, and lastly the SBD's (Dauntless torpedo bombers) of the Navy Air Force.

The SBD is an American carrier-based Navy plane, which has proved successful in the Pacific theater against the Japanese. It is a 1,200 horse power torpedo bomber, with the most modern equipment. It is not very fast in either horizontal flight nor in diving but thanks to its powerful air brakes it is extremely easy to handle and, therefore, extremely precise. It carries a load of one 500 kilogram bomb or two 250 kilogram bombs. Its crew consists of a pilot-bombardier and a radio-gunner.

The crews have been trained in North Africa and a few even in the United States. They are made up of commissioned and non-commissioned Naval officers, all of them experienced. Most of them embarked aboard the Béarn and fought courageously and desperately in the battle of France. At the time of the Armistice, some of them joined General de Gaulle in London and enlisted either in the Royal Air Force or the Fleet Air Arm. Later they were all sent to North Africa where they were trained for operations in France. To their great despair they were not ready in time to participate in the August 15 landing operations but in compensation for this a few officers were parachuted into French soil and participated in the liberation of Toulon which they knew better than anyone.

The SBD's and their crews arrived in France six weeks ago. Assigned to the Atlantic front, they were based at a field from which they daily carried out various missions; either to attack defense positions, or to interfere when the Germans are too active in any one of their entrenched lines.

*Over A Battery* — Thanks to the permission of Admiral Nomy, the distinguished Naval Air Force Commander in Chief, I was allowed to participate for several days in the adventures and risks of the squadrons' personnel.

For these airmen who in North Africa had for so long awaited the moment to go into action on French soil, a day of low visibility is a day of mourning. But as soon as the weather permits, what joy and what activity on the field.

As it was very cold, the engines had to be warmed

up early in the morning even when the operation was scheduled for the afternoon. An hour before the attack, the crews were summoned to the operations command post. Their entire flight was outlined there, the route of attack, the objective, the return flight.

At the appointed time, the planes took their assigned places on the runways and took off every 15 seconds. They rose above the field and then went into formation, generally six by six. At five thousand meters they flew toward the objective.

Aboard, the gunner faced the tail and scanned the sky, for the Germans are believed to have two or three Messerschmitts based at La Rochelle, though they have not as yet appeared.

The German-held zone was rapidly reached. As soon as the planes approached both heavy and light AA fire started. The experienced German gunners were very accurate in measuring altitude, but fortunately their aim was less so; however, the barrage was thick.

Ten kilometers from the objective the formations descended in order to increase their speed. As soon as the pilot of the lead plane spotted the objective between his cockpit and his wing he went into a dive. Almost simultaneously the other bombers followed.

Not too reassured, I had tensely awaited this moment. I had been told that a dive is a great physical strain and I was agreeably surprised to have the impression of riding a roller-coaster. We were diving straight for the ground at a speed of 500 kilometers per hour. I had forgotten to swallow and a sharp pain shot through my ears. In the meantime flak tracer bullets were rising toward us like fireworks. At 800 meters, pushing on the red button on his rudder, the pilot loosed his bomb without even shaking the plane and we continued strafing. At two hundred meters we pulled out of our dive, and then we were most vulnerable. Fired upon like clay pigeons by all the batteries we flew over, we were flying at an altitude of five meters, barely topping the houses, trees and power lines.

Finally, we reached the French lines over which we gained altitude to complete our mission with some acrobatics. That day, all the planes returned to the field. Only two were damaged.

The previous day one had been shot down. On the morrow they started off again, and thus it will be so long as one pillbox or one plane remains.

(FRANCE, London, February 9, 1945)

*Before Royan* — (By Paul Bodin) — February 11: When the Germans entrenched themselves in the Royan pocket they found 12,000 head of cattle. They could consume 35 calves per day, or 3,500 kilograms of meat, and were daily supplied with 80,000 liters of milk. If we add to that the considerable stocks accumulated by their army, and the innumerable requisitions of wheat and other commodities, why should anyone wonder at the Nazis' withstanding such a long siege?

*Barter with Franco Spain* — But that is not all.



*French Press and Information Service*

*French soldier mounting guard before the ancient fort of Chapus on the Atlantic.*

The Germans at Royan, as those at La Rochelle, can rely on still further resources: Spanish goods. For boats from France carry on a regular traffic along the Atlantic coast which is under Nazi control. If French civilians lack oranges and lemons Admiral Schirlitz' and Admiral Michaelles' men do not.

At first we did not understand too clearly why the Nazis showed such good grace in the evacuation of civilians. But it is really very simple. Once the civilians left, carrying only 50 kilograms of baggage, pillage was easy. Furniture, radio sets, sewing machines, are then shipped to Spain in exchange for commodities.

*Arming the Pockets* — The Germans' military situation at Royan is good. Facing the ocean, defending first rate coastal installations, the élite troops of the Atlantic wall, like good far-sighted Germans, had accumulated

vast quantities of men and matériel. Attacked from the rear, they merely had to turn their batteries around in order to face the FFI. Hundreds of cannon, from 20-mm. to 240-mm., automatic arms in quantities, tanks, flame-throwers, PT boats, mines, this was sufficient to withstand determined men who unfortunately had but their bare chests with which to oppose the enemy and who, not so long ago, were fighting in shorts and sandals. Furthermore, the Germans of Royan communicate with Berlin by radio.

*Waiting for the Armistice* — However, the Atlantic pockets are now but vast prison camps and according to a soldier's description the Nazis there are virtually experiencing captivity. In the face of the former FFI now all incorporated in the regular forces and in infantry uniforms, Hitler's savage warriors have become



strangely conciliatory. Lieutenant Schade, chief of the Royan Gestapo, recently stated to a French negotiating officer, "I would willingly surrender, because I do not see any use in this resistance, but I am myself a prisoner of my men."

Lacking gasoline, forced to economize on ammunition, deprived of means of transport, the 90,000 Germans of the Atlantic pockets are thus awaiting the Armistice. Their methods of warfare have also changed.

The hostages are not mistreated. In Royan, they are only employed for cemetery duty. Civilians are no longer tortured, or shot. As in the Middle Ages, truces are observed from time to time and civilians leave the dangerous zones, while French supply trains enter the enemy lines and the Germans do not take a thing from them.

*Staggering Prices*—Thus, on February 13, a train carrying 400 tons of supplies including 200 tons of coal, was able to reach La Rochelle where French and Swedish Red Cross personnel supervised the distribution of commodities. Evidently, this does not prevent the Germans, prisoners on suspended sentence from appropriating any edible thing within the pockets. And the unfortunate inhabitants of the Royan pockets, as those of Saint-Nazaire and La Rochelle, lack everything, especially flour, sugar, fats and tobacco.

Commodities are sold at staggeringly high prices. An ox costs 100,000 francs at Guérande. At Royan, a box of matches is sold at 170 francs. Deprived of coal, gas and electricity, often supplied with polluted water, in the face of an increasing danger of epidemics, (diphtheria, typhus) owing to the numerous cadavers, the 200,000 French people of the pockets, feverishly await their liberation.

*A Ton of Coal for One FFI*—Up until this very day, the French authorities have been doing their utmost to evacuate the greatest possible number of civilians. No one is left in Royan, completely razed by the unfortunate bombing of January 3 and 4. But in the territory of the pocket, especially in the communes

of Mathes, Arvers, Etaules and La Tremblade there still are 4,000 civilians, at Pointe de Grave 5,000 to 6,000. 60,000 people still live in the La Rochelle pocket.

These unfortunate French people, the last to be liberated from the Nazis, receive the latest news and seeing the end of the war approach, do not want to leave their homes.

As for the Germans, enclosed in their pillboxes, they are taken with the barter craze. As their economic sorties are not always successful, they have been known to make strange propositions to the French. A ton of coal and 10 kilograms of wood for one FFI. In certain cases, a bottle of cognac can buy an enemy conscience.

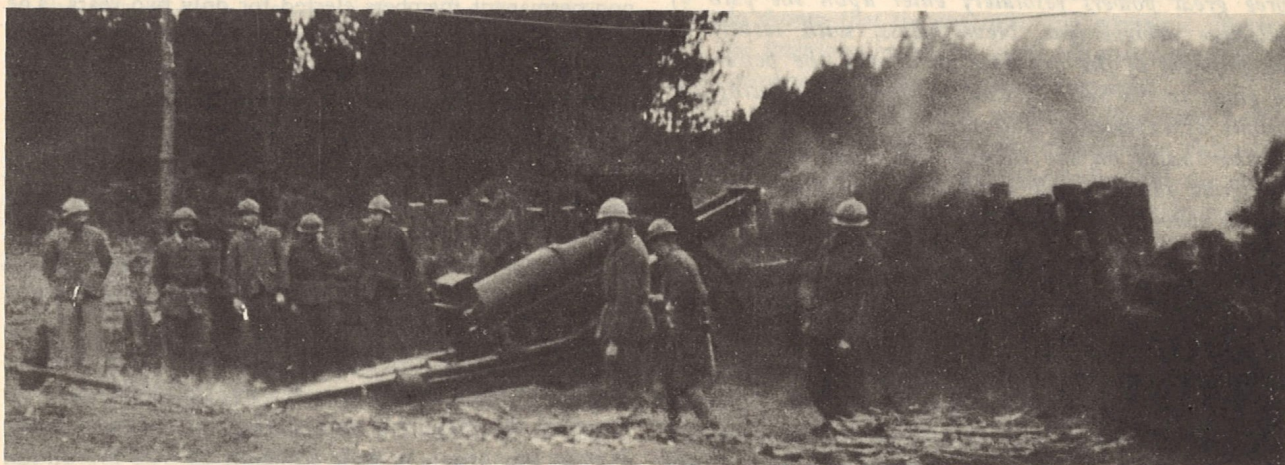
All this indicates that the Germans' situation in the famous Atlantic pockets is not entirely satisfactory, a fact confirmed by reports from prisoners. If there are still some fanatical Nazis, the majority are weary of the siege and it seems that one energetic operation would overcome their resistance.

*If the Allies Helped*—Certainly the German pockets are merely virtual prison camps, but the French population suffers too. Ports such as Bordeaux, La Palice, where our large transatlantic ships could dock are useless. The enemy is in full control of our western coasts and holds dangerous submarine bases. While La Rochelle is only slightly damaged, Lorient, Saint-Nazaire, Marennes, Royan are ravaged by bombs and shells. The time has come for the calvary to cease. As things are going Berlin may fall before Royan and La Rochelle.

For the French infantry cannot alone overcome the German resistance. It is essential that the Allies assist them immediately and pour onto the Western front tanks and artillery which would overcome the enemy casemates and complete the liberation of France.

As an officer of the French Forces of the West remarked, the Nazis are awaiting only the arrival of a considerable Allied force to grant themselves the right to surrender.

(COMBAT, Paris, February 18, 1945)



French Press and Information Service

French artillery firing on German positions on the Atlantic front.