

Lowell Thomas' Broadcast from Paris

April 4, 1945

Good Evening, Everybody:

This time from France. And here the topic of the hour is the same as in England, which I left a few hours ago, and the same as in America where I was not so many hours ago: namely, When will this European war end -- how soon? I still can't give you the exact answer. But I can tell you that the word here is that there are no formidable German forces between Patton's Third Army and Berlin. You can draw your own conclusions from that.

Scattered German defense attempts there were, between Holland in the North and Baden and the Swiss border far to the South, but the onrushing tide of Allied armor just kept rolling on. That's the story. In fourteen days the Allied tidal wave engulfed two hundred and eighty thousand Germans. That many

prisoners taken, so far. Thirty thousand more than a quarter of a million of Hitler's supermen have been taken prisoner in the past fourteen days!

To go still further into details: the French over here are tonight celebrating the capture of the important German city of Karlsruhe, and then drive right on toward Stuttgart. At the same time the 80th Division of the Third Army went on to sweep the last German troops out of the city of Kassel, and the tanks of the Fabulous Fourth over-ran the city of Gotha. By the way, Patton's name is on everyone's lips over here. He's the idol of the British; and apparently the same is true here in France. The legendary Phil Cochran of North Africa and Burma fame was telling me of one of Patton's remarks, the sort that has added to his popularity. It was being said that some of Patton's men were surrounded. Another General had described the situation in those terms. "Surrounded?" snorted Georgie Patton, "they're not surrounded. They're just fighting on four sides! Why, one

of my men just came through from there. And I could go in to them in a jeep!" And now ^A ahead of Patton there seems to be nothing but the city of Leipzig, the Czech border, and a junction with the Russians.

That's the way things are going. They hardly could be better. But when will Berlin fall? And when will the German collapse come? Views over here vary. A few think, or maybe they just hope, that the end is in sight - within a matter of days. But all the military people I have encountered in the short time I have been on the continent - they are much more conservative. They say it will take time, even if the Allied armies are rolling irresistibly on and on into Germany -- less than a hundred and fifty miles from Berlin.

With the Russians only 28 miles from Berlin, on the other side, why don't they sweep right down on the Nazi capital and get that job out of the way? Well, the Germans have been putting up a stiff fight at Vienna, where the Russians are now. And both the Russians and the Germans have moved powerful forces to Austria. The fact

that the Germans gave the Russians a sound licking near Budapest quite recently is sometimes overlooked. And since then the Russians have been giving that front most of their attention. That may explain why the Russians are not in Berlin now. And then, this is the season of the big thaw in that region. The Russians may not want to move slowly and clumsily through that mud. When they strike they like to strike hard. How would you like to live in Berlin with that huge Russian army sitting there only a few miles away, apparently ready to strike at any moment?

So, from here it's evident there are exciting days just ahead; and I'm headed that way, for a nearer view. And now back to Hugh Gibson who will give you a view of what is going on in the rest of the world. Back to Radio City, in New York. And good night from Paris.

Today The sweeping advance into Germany continued without check, ~~and~~. Everywhere the armies of the Western Allies continued their armored surge. ^{forward} The day's news pictures a steady development of the strategies that were conspicuous yesterday - the push eastward toward Berlin and the Russians, and the British thrust northward to cut off Holland and north^{we}eastern Germany.

Once again Patton's armor takes the brightest beam of the spotlight, Third Army forces scoring advances up to twenty-two miles in one day. From the captured city of Gotha, Patton's tanks kept going - along the great super-highway from Frankfurt to Berlin. Their immediate goal is the city of Erfurt. That place is in Saxony, and is well known through the pages of history that recount European wars during the past ~~couple~~ ^{few} of centuries. Erfurt has been a great fortress of western Saxony, defending the approaches to Dresden, the Saxon capital. The latest

places Third Army troops within six miles of Erfurt.

They are the nearest to Berlin - a hundred and thirty-nine miles from the Nazi capital.

That's one thrust eastward, threatening Berlin and moving toward a junction with the Russians. And there's another - the push of the American Ninth Army under General Simpson. Ninth Army troops have driven to a point within thirty-six miles of Hanover. They have driven through the ^{area} ~~legend~~ Teutoburg Forest, and have pushed on six miles beyond. Berlin states that one column of the Ninth Army is driving on the town of Hamelin - famous for the Pied Piper. Everywhere in western Germany the armored forces of modern war ^{are} ~~stir~~ ^{ing} up legends of the times of old.

~~The Ninth Army stands along the Weser River where, it was thought, the Germans might make a stand. Perhaps they may elect to defend the line of the Weser, but that doesn't seem likely.~~ Tonight's news suggests that the ~~German~~

Germans are retiring to the Elbe, which river approaches as near to Berlin as forty-five miles. The Russians, on the other side being at the Oder, less than forty miles away. Allied air observation pictures the enemy armor pouring eastward as fast as they can - a wholesale retreat. This may mean a general retirement to the Elbe - or merely a hasty flight from Holland to northeastern Germany, ~~which is threatened with encirclement by the British armies of Field Marshal Montgomery.~~

Montgomery's advance is covered by a strict security blackout, which hides its exact position. ~~But the British and Canadians are mapping their way northward and northeastward - on the road to the great port of Bremen.~~

Officially, they ^{British} are less than forty miles ^{from} of the North Sea, and may be much nearer. Here's a possible indication of how far the security blackout may be covering Montgomery's advances. We are told officially that,

18 driving into Holland, ^{the} Canadian First Army is less than twenty-two miles from the Zuyder Zee, that great inland sea of Holland. The Berlin radio, however, ^{has} broadcast the statement that Montgomery's troops are within eight miles of the Zuyder Zee.

At the extreme southern end of the Western Front, General Patch's American Seventh Army has broken across the Main River and is within thirty-seven miles of the Nazi shrine city of Nuremberg. ~~The Seventh Army is~~ ~~now~~ ~~running into fierce Nazi resistance.~~ And Karlsruhe has been captured, the great city on the upper Rhine taken by troops of the First French Army. ~ news that will give great satisfaction to all Americans as to all Frenchmen.

FOLLOW WESTERN FRONT

The latest ~~twilight~~ tells of the capture of still another important German city -- Wuerzburg -- a stronghold on the River Main. ^{HP} Tonight weather conditions are bad for Transatlantic radio, and we are not able to have Lowell Thomas on this program. He ^{is} ~~was~~ in Paris today -- and, although conditions do not permit him to come in on this broadcast, he gets word through to us -- that sweeping advances into Germany continue everywhere. ^{He says} ~~and~~ the number of German prisoners captured during the past two weeks rises to two hundred and eighty thousand. ^{HP} That's almost twenty divisions -- made captive during fourteen historic days of the joint offensive. To these two hundred and eighty thousand we might as well add another hundred or hundred and fifty thousand German troops encircled in the Ruhr. Surrender is the certain fate of the vast majority of them. And then there are some hundred and fifty thousand enemy soldiers in Holland, caught in a trap that is closing quickly.

Lowell Thomas tells us that at Allied headquarters in Paris, as in London, the universal theme of talk is -- how much longer will it last? The guesses range from a few days to estimates that it may take some time to clear out the last band of die-hard Nazis.

The doom of the flaring downfall of Nazi power is accompanied by a wild swirl of ^{rumors.} ~~rumors.~~

The latest tonight is that Goering has been killed by the Gestapo. There is no explanation of why the Hitler Secret Police should want to do away with fat Goering, but rumors emanating from collapsing Germany are that Hitler's Number Two man has met the fate that the Gestapo has meted out to so many others.

And then there is another wild one about still one more plot of German Generals against Hitler. Stockholm says that the former German commander on the Western Front, Field Marshal von Rundstedt was implicated in this and has been executed by a Nazi firing squad.

The story of this plot is in the vein of
extravagant melodrama. ~~It~~ ^{The scheme} is said to have included plans
for an attack on Hitler's mountain retreat at
Berchtesgaden, a paratroop attack. Soldiers of the
sky were to have descended on that eagle's nest of the
Nazi Fuhrer and stormed it.

The story from Moscow, which sounds much more
credible, ~~credible~~ is that German soldiers have revolted in
Norway. They were ordered to Germany for the last-
ditch defense, and refused to go. Riots broke out, the
mutineers in battle with Hitler's Storm Troops.
Several were killed, after which the revolting German
soldiers fled into ^{the} Norwegian mountains.

And now let's hear from
Standard of California, &
then on to the news again.

DUTCH

(Note for Mr. Gibson: This piece is very flexible. You can drop it anywhere after the second paragraph).

The Allied reconquest of Holland is bringing to light a lot of melodrama played among the supposedly undramatic Dutch during the Nazi occupation. United Press Correspondent Leon Kay, who is with the Canadians, tells of stories related by members of the Dutch underground, who now have come out of hiding, after nearly five years of secret plotting against the Nazi.

One ~~small~~ slender girl tells how she stole three pistols from under the nose of a guard at a German supply depot, and then with the guns hidden, was questioned by a gestapo agent. She talked her way out of that, and the next night the weapons were used by other underground members to raid a German ration card bureau - where they stole hundreds of ration cards, to obtain supplies for hidden Dutch patriots.

A gray haired old man told a story of serving as a messenger between underground units, during which

time he kept an escaped British flyer in the attic of his house - the ground floor of his house was occupied by three German officers.

A youth of twenty had the job of maintaining radio communication between the Holland underground and Dutch leaders in England. All radio equipment was confiscated by the Germans, his own included, and he had nothing to work with. Then - a break of luck when a German signal corps unit was assigned to live in the house of his family. They brought in plenty of radio equipment and he stole enough parts to build a set of his own - with which he established wireless communication for the underground. He tapped the Nazi Signal Corps communication that ran through his house, and relayed it to the secret patriot forces. The Dutch are a phlegmatic people, not given to theatrical ideas, but Nazi oppression seems to have inspired them to melodrama worthy of ~~super-headed~~ fiction.

RUSSIA

The Russians are storming Vienna tonight. Red Army troops are in the outskirts of the great and legendary capital of Austria. They drove ~~their way~~ forward today, and reached suburban streets. Nazi defenders fought at street barricades, and the style of battle ^{so} ~~xxx~~ darkly familiar in this war, was begun - block by block fighting for a city.

The Nazis have repeatedly boasted that they would defend every inch of Vienna, even though that imperial Austrian city were reduced to wreckage. The Viennese themselves appear to have other ideas, because one report is that civil war has broken out between the Nazi diehards and Austrians ^{who feel} ~~with~~ less enthusiasm for the flame and havoc of war.

As one who knows Vienna, I can imagine the feelings of the typical Viennese, who have always been ~~the~~ ^{so} ~~excessively~~ proud of their magnificent capital on the ~~beautiful blue~~

~~Danube though the Danube is not blue.~~ Let's hope that those Austrians have their way, and that the fanatical Nazis do not succeed in bringing about the destruction of the city where the ~~Holy Roman Emperors~~ reigned through the ~~Middle Ages~~, and where the Austrian Emperors ruled among legends of laughter, waltzes and song. However, the news tonight is that Soviet heavy cannon in the outskirts, are bombarding Vienna.

The one other bit of Russian news is the capture of Bratislava, the capital of the puppet republic of Slovakia. Stalin announces the seizure of the city, and the Moscow news tells of Russian Cossacks leading the charge through the streets of Bratislava.

SUBSTITUTE OKINAWA

Late news from Okinawa states that the battle for that island has begun -- the violent clash that has been expected. Until now there has been strangely little fighting on that island, the invasion of which is like putting a foot on the front doorstep of Japan. But, all the while, it was known the Japs had some sixty thousand troops on Okinawa, and these had heavily fortified the narrow neck of land which connects the northern and southern ends of the island. They hold the southern part, with a line of defense just above the city of Naha.

6 Today American troops pushed to within five miles of Naha, and ran into violent Jap resistance. The Americans smashed forward with lines of flaming flame-throwing tanks, and front-line dispatches tell of savage fighting.

The American ground troops have blazing support from sea and air. Large units of the fleet are standing off the coast, and their shells rake every square foot of the area the Japs hold. They can do that,

the southern tip of the island being so small, and the line of Japanese defense being so short. While the warships hurl their ~~xx~~ shells, bombing planes drop their own charges of high explosive -- the plan being to smother the enemy with shells and bombs -- as the troops on the ground drive against the Japanese fortifications across Okinawa.

SUBSTITUTE LEAD PHILIPPINES

General MacArthur announces that the seizure of the Tawitawi Islands ~~as announced previously~~ has cut the Japanese lifeline in the East Indies. The Tawitawi group is at the southwestern tip of the Philippines, and only thirty miles from Borneo.

MacArthur announces that American planes will soon be based on Tawitawi -- for an air drive aimed over in the

PHILIPPINES

Tonight we are given the meaning of MacArthur's latest conquest ~~in the Philippines - the occupation of~~ the island of Tawi-Tawi - ~~which is at the southwestern~~ tip of the Philippines, ~~and only thirty miles from Borneo.~~ Manila ~~tells us that American planes will soon be placed~~ on Tawi-Tawi ~~for an air drive aimed over in the~~ direction of Borneo. That is - along the line of the Dutch East Indies. Borneo, itself, is a source of great amounts of oil, which the Japs have been using, and the reconquest of the Borneo oilfields is an immediate objective. And from there, the road of reconquest leads to Celebes, Java, Sumatra.

The news of American air power to be based on the newly conquered island of Tawi-Tawi ~~by~~ is augmented by word that the British are ~~massing~~ massing forces for invasions of the islands of the Dutch East Indies - also the Malay Peninsula, Singapore, lower Burma, Siam.

While American power is striking straight at Japan, the enemy heart, the logical ^{purpose} ~~job~~ of the British is to sweep the Japs from their outlying possessions and retake the remainder of the vast empire that they conquered. Hence the news of the massing of the vast British fleet in the Indian Ocean.

Tokyo is aware of this - the Japs having ways of getting news. A Tokyo broadcast today stated: "The number of British heavy and light naval units that have recently passed through the Suez Canal is unbelievable. Scores of British warcraft in European waters are heading for the Indian Ocean via the Red Sea." So precise is the Japanese information, that Tokyo gives the names of seven great British aircraft carriers that have joined the British fleet in the Indian Ocean.

~~And now, Hugh James.~~
And now Hugh James

WESTERN FRONT PREDICTION

Here's a prediction, not about the end of the European war exactly - but something pretty close to it. White House Advisor Samuel Rosenman is over in Europe as a special presidential envoy, and has been visiting the Western Front. Today he gives the opinion that the Western Allies, driving so deeply into Germany, will form a junction with the Russians / in a week or ten days. A junction with the Russians may not mean the end of the European war, with all the t's crossed and the i's dotted, but it will be so near to the end, that it may be hard to tell the difference.

Here's something new - the Japs are frowning on hari-kari. Not apparently that enemy soldiers and sailors are shrinking from the suicidal tradition. It's just the reverse. Tokyo intimates that too many Japs have been committing hari-kari, and that only increases the manpower shortage. The Japanese Navy, for example, has suffered such heavy losses that it needs every sailor it has. And that's the background for a report, which says: "The willingness of Japanese to commit hari-kari is no longer considered a virtue, because so many of the Navy's best sailors have done away with themselves."

We have this information from Washington, based on a report concerning the state of affairs in the enemy fleet.

8 1/2 And now, ~~Hugh James~~