

LOWELL THOMAS' BROADCAST FROM LONDON

April 2, 1945

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GOOD EVENING, EVERYBODY:

Good Evening from London. Less than twenty-four hours ago I was on the other side of the Atlantic, and here I am tonight within a couple of hours by air from the Rhine and Central Germany, where the Second World War is moving to a swift conclusion. Flying the Atlantic, of course, is now done so casually that one has no excuse for even mentioning that, much as I'd like to talk about it because it still isn't so commonplace for the passenger. But with the war over here in Europe at its climax, let's talk about that. Although I have only just arrived, in the few hours I have been on this side of the ocean I find the main topic of discussion is the same as the topic we were all discussing when I left America. How long will it last? Will

it end right away soon? Can the Germans hold out? And what are they going to do? From the standpoint of the war in the air, England is still right at the battlefront. And in saying that I am not referring to the V bombing, which looks as though it may be over. I'm thinking of the thousands of airmen, tens of thousands I should say, who takeoff from here daily to fight in the battle that is now drawing to a conclusion in Central Europe, and then fly back here. And I find the opinion of those with whom I have come in contact so far is that Germany may go down within the next few days. Our famous former Ambassador, Hugh Gibson, has been giving you the news as it has been coming in today from the various sectors of the front. He no doubt has told you about how near the Russians are to Vienna. He may have even told you that the Russians are in Vienna. And you have heard from him where our armies are tonight, deep in Germany. Well, the impression I get here is that the Germans still have a chance to

establish a new line, and if they succeed, then the war may last a few weeks or months, or even a little longer. But there's a strong likelihood that it will be over almost any day.

Well, all this is not a prophecy; it's just what people are saying who are right here within a few miles of the Germans. Nor has this anything to do with the last-ditch fight that some of the Nazis may put up in the Alps. It may take some time to round up those who flee to the mountains.

Now to go back for a moment to that trip across the ocean. Yesterday morning in New York I was talking with a woman famous in the world of aviation -- Jo Doolittle. And now, tonight, after flying the Atlantic, I have been dining with her husband, Lieutenant General Jimmy Doolittle, just before he talked to his fliers of the 8th Air Force, about what they might or might not have to do during this night.

Incidentally, here's a contrast. Last night

we were in snowy Labrador at Goose Bay, with great snowbanks on either side of the runway; a dinner of caribou steak with lusty Colonel Fish Hassel; then across the stormy North Atlantic and over Ireland, Scotland and England, and tonight I was strolling in a beautiful flower garden -- Spring in England, than which nothing could be more lovely.

Tomorrow? I don't know; not having gotten my bearings. But I hope to pick up something interesting with which to break in again and talk to you for a moment or two. By the way, when I came over here to the BBC Underground Studios through the midnight blackout a moment ago, I told the young lady who was driving me that I needed a guide too. I told her how grand I thought it was that the robot bombing of London is over. Whereupon she crossed her fingers, for the broadcasting offices where she worked came tumbling down around her ears. And now goodnight, and back to North America.

Hugh Gibson Standard, Monday, April 2, 1945.
Sunoco.

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

Thrilling news from Okinawa tonight!

The American infantrymen of the twenty-fourth Army Corps have cut all the way across the island. They are at the East coast now on Nakagusuki Bay, the most advantageous point on the island. They have a beachhead there, and before long American ships will be anchoring in that bay. They have cut the Japanese forces in two, isolated all of them who are in the south.

The progress has been ~~xxx~~ little short of amazing. Everybody expected that an invasion of Okinawa would be deadly from the first. On the contrary, it has been so easy that all day today, our planes have been taking off from two of the

airdromes on the island. Usually it takes days, sometimes weeks, to recondition an air strip after it has been captured.

However, the situation is still tense on Okinawa, because officers and men are waiting for the first big shock of the Japanese counter attack which is sure to come. Only at one point have the soldiers of the Mikado shown any fight, and that was before the town of Naha, the principal place on the island. One of our columns is approaching Naha which already is in flames.

Admiral Nimitz reports that his fleet has been able to unload supplies ~~xi~~ without difficulty.

Lead 3

Airplanes are also taking off from landing strips in the Keramas, where our men of the Seventy-Seventh Division landed six days before the invasion of Okinawa. Our men took the Keramas with astonishing ease, every operation working as smoothly as clockwork.

Tokyo tonight reported another invasion, a landing on the island of Kume, beyond the Keramas, fifty miles west of Okinawa.

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RUSSIA

The news from Moscow tonight indicates that two Red armies are close to the zero hour for the final push on Berlin. The forces under Marshals Zhukov and Rx Rokossovsky are poised for a new advance. Huge arrays are concentrated between Kuestrin and Stettin, which ^{on the capital} points to an assault by the Soviet steam-roller. ~~on~~
~~the capital is that area.~~

In the south, the tanks and cavalry of the Third Army of the Ukraine, are less than fifteen miles from Vienna. One column is only a hundred and thirty-two miles away from Adolf Hitler's hideout at Berchtesgaden. Stalin, in an order-of-the-day, announced the capture of Nagykanizsa, the big Hungarian oil center, the last remaining field from which the Nazis could obtain natural petroleum. One column of ~~Zhukov's~~ Tolbukhin's army has driven thirteen miles through the eastern Alps and is now at the Semmering Pass. ~~The German lines~~

defending Hitler's last citadel in the Bavarian Alps appear to be crumbling, falling to pieces on a three hundred mile front, all the way from Slovakia to the Drava River.

The Battle of Vienna is about to begin. Already there are the usual reports of disorders in the Austrian capital. *T* Other Red columns are aimed towards Graz, the second most important city in Austria.

WESTERN FRONT

Tonight we have a clearer picture of what is going on ^{or} at the Western Front, chiefly because Field Marshal Montgomery has partially lifted his blackout on the news, a blackout which he has been maintaining for six days. In rough outline, The British Second Army has by-passed Muenster, and completed the sealing off of the Germans in the Ruhr. Ten of the columns of ^{Montgomery's} ~~his~~ command are tearing across the flat Westphalian plains, some of them obviously aiming for the north German ports of Bremen and Hamburg. In so doing they are also entrapping the Nazis in North Holland who have been trying to evacuate, according to British reports, for a couple of days.

Muenster is surrounded, completely. A short time ago it was one of the most picturesque of European cities, a living monument to the dignity

and beauty of medieval Germany. Tonight it is in flames, a burning rubble heap.

Montgomery has four armored and two airborne divisions, divided up into ten columns, tearing across northwest Germany at a pace almost terrific. Westphalia is an ideal hunting ground for tanks. One unit under Montgomery's command is a part of the armor of General Simpson's U. S. Ninth Army. So close is Montgomery, to striking ~~the~~ at Bremen and Hamburg, that some of his vanguards are already near Osnabrück.

The Germans in the Ruhr, tonight, estimated at a possible one hundred and fifty thousand men are trying to break out. In their counter attack, they got almost as far East as Paderborn in Westphalia. Patton's army has fought as far as Kassel and Fulda, two of Germany's big railroad centers. The men of the

Third are in the outskirts of Kassel and are besieging the town. The Germans entire line along the Fulda River has collapsed. The Twelfth armored division of the U.S. Seventh has penetrated Bavaria and established a bridghead on the other side of the River Main below Würtzburg.

~~And now Lowell Thomas himself with a transcribed report from across the Atlantic, just two hours flying time from the front lines in Germany,~~

In just a moment we will hear Lowell Thomas speaking from London, but first a message from Standard of California.

(1 min)

Here's a message to everybody from Washington.

The government urges all people who can to use their vacation by taking a summer job on a farm. If the farmers are to produce the quantity of food the nation needs, they will need four million workers, which would include a million and a half youngsters and seven hundred and fifty thousand women.

Next in importance is to keep your car in order, ~~lubricate it frequently~~ lubricate it frequently, check your tires and all parts regularly, and drive slowly. In fact, as Hugh James tells you so frequently, it is necessary for the good of all that your car last until the automobile companies can go back to peace time production, and that will not be until some time after V-E Day.

The government also asks you to go on saving kitchen fats. Every gram of waste fat is needed.

In addition to taking care of your car, you are asked

~~to~~ to keep all your home machinery and appliances in order.

BYRNES

The big sensation on the home front today was of course the resignation of Jimmy Byrnes. This comes as a real surprise. ^{Byrnes} ~~Jimmy~~ had resigned twice before, and the last time he promised to stay ^{on} ~~with the job~~ until the end of the war in Europe. The President's acceptance of his resignation and the appointment of Fred Vinson to succeed him, is an indication that Washington expects the collapse of Germany before long.

In a "Dear Jimmy" letter, the President asked Byrnes to ^{stay on} ~~stick around~~ until Vinson can become familiar with ^{his new duties.} ~~the technicalities and needs of the job~~. If Vinson is permitted to ^{Retain} ~~hold onto~~ his present job as Federal Loan Administrator, this will make him the second most powerful man in the country.

Byrnes in his letter of resignation said explicitly that he thought V-E Day was not far distant.
~~He intends to go back home to Spartanburg,~~

PEACE

The prospects for ~~peace at~~ the San Francisco ~~Peace~~ Conference became no better today. After Stalin's demand that the Lublin group of Communist Poles be invited, there was talk that the conference might be postponed. The British make no bones about resenting Stalin's action in ~~sending a member of~~ ^{delegating a} diplomat to represent the Soviet, instead of attending himself or at least sending Molotov, his Foreign Commissar. A spokesman for the British Foreign Office put it mildly when he said the British Government regretted that Molotov would not go to San Francisco.

Today, the British themselves ~~are exhibiting~~ ^{appear to be} ~~cold shouldering~~ ^{cooling toward} the conference. A Downing Street official announced that Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee may be unable to remain for the whole ~~of~~ ^{conference} because of urgent business in London.

The London correspondent of the Yorkshire Post, which is owned by members of Mrs. Eden's family, ~~xxx~~ said it would be "scarcely surprising" if the conference were put off.

"The war in Europe may well end before the meeting is due to begin," he wrote. "In such circumstances it might be decided that the absence of the Foreign Secretary and the Deputy Leader of the House of Commons would impose considerable difficulties."

A British newspaperman, who is also a member of Parliament, suggested ~~tht~~ that the Big Three should meet again before the World Conference, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, with China and France also invited. In fact, a spokesman for the Foreign Office admitted that such a plan was under discussion.

taken from Apr. 2/45.

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GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

Field Marshal Montgomery tells us something tonight, lifting his blackout on the news for the first time in six days. The British Second Army has by-passed Muenster, completely surrounded it. Reporters describe the place tonight as an inferno of flames. A short ^{time} ~~while~~ ago, it was one of the most picturesque of European cities, recalling the dignity and beauty of medieval Germany. Tonight it is a burning rubble heap.

By official report, ~~the~~ British are now one hundred miles east of the Rhine, ~~and~~ tearing ahead at a pace literally terrific. Montgomery revealed that he has four armored ~~divisions~~ ^{divisions} and two airborne. They are split up into ten columns, and striking across the Westphalian plain.

Westphalia makes ^{an} ideal hunting ground for tanks.

One unit of the armor of General Simpson's Ninth Army

7 is in the British vanguard. Evidently one of Montgomery's columns is aiming north towards Bremen and Hamburg.

- Our Allies are already at the approaches ~~toward~~ to Osnabruck. Besides having sealed off the German divisions in the Ruhr, which may number anywhere from fifty to a hundred thousand men, Montgomery's columns promise to surround and trap some fifty thousand Germans in north Holland, although we have already heard that the Nazis were withdrawing from Holland as fast as they could. They ~~Nazis~~ are putting up a stiffer resistance at some points, but all the Allied armies are advancing. There are three columns of American armor of the Ninth and Third Armies rolling on the highway to Berlin. One unit of Patton's armor is not far from Eisenach, a hundred and fifty-two miles from the capital.

Further south, Patton's infantry has fought its way into Kassel and Fulda, two of Germany's big railroad

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centers. The first has captured Warburg and is fighting its way into Siegen. That completes the encirclement of the Nazis in the Ruhr. They began today their first attempt to break out of that pocket. They counter-attacked, and got east to a point not far from Paderborn. Tonight's estimates of those Nazis in the Ruhr trap have risen to a possible hundred and fifty thousand.

There is a news blackout over the exact position of certain American tank divisions. But headquarters ^{permitted} ~~admitted~~ ~~disclosed~~ ^{to say} ₁ that they are almost a hundred miles beyond the Rhine and cutting through the ^{Ten to} ~~Tue~~ ~~burger~~ Forest, and ~~what a wealth of history the name of that forest recalls, particularly the ancient battle where Roman General Varus lost three entire legions to the undying grief of the Emperor Augustus.~~

The Yanks have made several breaches in the German defense line in the forest southeast of Bielefeld.

Patton's army is besieging Kassel, his Eightieth Division already in the outskirts of the town. A small number of Germans, headed by fanatical S.S. men, are getting ready for a resistance to the death.

Dispatches from the front report the Germans' entire line along the Fulda River has collapsed. Headquarters tells us that in the month of March, the Allies captured on the Western Front three hundred and fifty thousand Germans.

The Twelfth Armored Division with the United States Seventh, has penetrated Bavaria as far as a bridge over the Main, below Wurtzburg. The Yanks have captured that bridge intact, and also taken another one only ten miles from Wurtzburg, which has been damaged but can be quickly repaired.

PACIFIC

we hear
The best ~~news~~ from the war in the Pacific tonight is that our planes are already using the newly captured air strips on Okinawa. That is really astonishing, because it usually takes days to get airfields into shape after they've been captured.

However, ~~the~~ the situation on Okinawa is exceedingly tense, because everybody still is waiting for the ~~force~~.

~~of the~~ big Japanese counter-attack. Hitherto, the

Mikado's men have put up ~~not much~~ ^{little} more than a token

resistance. The foot soldiers of the Twenty-Fourth Army

Corps, according to one report, are only two or three

miles away from the east coast of Okinawa, and we might

hear at any moment that they have reached the shores of

NAKAGUSUKI BAY

[^]
Nak[^]gusuki Bay. The infantrymen are spearheaded by tanks.

Another column, led by tanks, is going closer to Naha,

the principal city of the island, which already is in

flames. In front of Naha, the Nipponese put up their first show of resistance.