

(Rough script: from  
NBC transcription)

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

The most ferocious battle of the Western front campaign is being fought along the Northern side of the German salient in Belgium. There American and British troops, commanded by British Field Marshal Montgomery are smashing forward in a violent assault along the twenty-five mile front and they are gaining ground. Today, they drove forward for a mile. The battle is being fought in bitter cold with dense fog - across a snow-covered terrain. The soldiers today can see hardly a hundred yards ahead because of the blinding white mist. Everywhere along that twenty-five mile front, the attacking forces of infantry and armor are driving against the most ferocious kind of German opposition. Their goal, the road junction of La Roche, which dominated the German lifeline in the salient - and at last reports they were within five miles of La Roche after making that one-mile advance. The gains at the north of the salient, however, were counter-

balanced by losses at the southern side of the bulge. There troops of General Patton's Third Army were driven back for two miles in the area of Bastogne. Earlier news today told how they had repelled twenty counter-attacks but later enemy assaults compelled a withdrawal. The strategy for the offensive against the salient calls for the northern and southern Allied forces to drive towards each other for a junction that would cut that salient in two. In the north, they gained ground today -- in the south, they lost ground, making it an indecisive day for the fury of battle. Farther to the South, the Germans in the Saar at Alsace are still battering in increasing offensives. Today's word tells of enemy advanced there. In the area of Viche (?) American troops were forced to withdraw and are now as far back as fifteen miles within the border of France. The loss of ground at this point threatens to isolate the American forces to the east of the Vesenburg (?) Gap and these may have to pull back. The two adjectives to describe the

fighting on the western front today are -- desperate and indecisive, the hope being that in the incessant maelstrom of the War, the strength of the enemy will be worn down. This as we have related word of a change in Allied Command. And here's the story behind that appointment of British Field Marshal Montgomery to the Command of the American First and Ninth Armies.

The change was made December 12th -- the day after the Germans launched their big offensive and broke through. Things were happening fast and going back. The first enemy rush cut communications between the northern and southern forces of the Allies and there were really two separate fronts, and they were not linked up. To the north were most of the American First Army, the American Ninth Army and the British Canadian Armies in Holland. To the south, Elements of the American First Army, General Patton's Third Army and the American Ninth Army in Alsace. Since there

were two separate battlefronts now with the Germans driving in between, one single officer was given command of the northern sector -- British Field Marshal, Montgomery. Monty took charge of the Allied forces on the north side of the German salient and that put him over most of the American First Army and all of the American Ninth Army -- also Montgomery hurried British troops down from Holland to help in holding the northern flank of the German wedge. This latter act was disclosed today. The first official word we have had that the British had come to the aid of the Americans at the Northern rim of that salient. American General Bradley, who had previously commanded the Americans turned over to Montgomery, was left in charge of forces at the southern side of the salients in command of the remnants of the First and Patton's third. That's how things have stood ever since the first day after the German breakthrough. And the change in command is an indication how desperate

things looked during the first days of that breakthrough. When the D-Day invasion began, Field Marshal Montgomery, serving under Supreme Commander, Eisenhower, had charge of all the Allied ground forces. But after days of fighting, the American General Omar Bradley was given the command of the American troops while Montgomery's authority was confined to the British and Canadians. Later when the American and French forces that had invaded Southern France came surging up to the western front, they were placed under the command of General Devers. Now, as we have noted, Montgomery has taken over the American Ninth and most ~~xxxx~~ of the first.

President Roosevelt stated today that the change in command does not mean that Montgomery would become Eisenhower's Deputy Commander and thereby assume the direction of all the Allied ground troops on the Western front. This has been suggested repeatedly in Britain, but the President said that no such things has happened. And the assurance is added that the

change of command because of the German breakthrough was no reflection on General Omar Bradley. It was just a military measure that became necessary when the German drive cut the Allied front in two, breaking communications and we had to have a commander on the northern side of the salient -- Montgomery there and another in charge of the Southern side, Bradley.

Today's disclosure of the change was accompanied by another of those uproars between the newsmen at the front and the censors. The war correspondents have known all along that Montgomery had been given the command of the American First and Ninth, but were not allowed to say a word about it, censorship clamped on. Today, they made a strenuous demand that they be permitted to glash the news that was now ~~known~~ three weeks old. The reason for their excitement was that the news actually had been broken here in the United States by Time Magazine -- the publications came out with the word of the change of command. In spite of this, Army censorship today kept saying "no." The

newsmen at the front were told that they still would not be permitted to flash that Montgomery story -- not until the Supreme Allied Headquarters itself had had time to prepare its own full account. And this was issued later in the day and then the story was out. The newsmen were irked -- all the more because of another thing concealed by censorship. The present allied assault against the northern flank of the German salient -- the new British-- American offensive launched by Montgomery. They weren't allowed to say a word about it although the story had already broken in London. The British Broadcasting Company had announced the new drive twenty-four hours previously. Well, the newsmen at the front felt that they had been scooped and they raised an uproar. But then ~~wh~~ I suppose that when you have censorship, you're sure to have some uproars.

Moscow today recognized the Soviet-sponsored Lubin Committee as the official government of Poland, and this causes a split between the United States and Britain on one side and Russia on the other. How definite the split is may be judged from the events that lie in the background-events related in a dispatch from London today. Shortly before Christmas, the Polish situation flared into new headlines when Prime Minister Winston Churchill issued that strong statement in support of the Moscow claims on Poland; Churchill, telling Parliament bluntly that his Cabinet agreed that Soviet Russian should acquire the Polish territory that it demanded, about half of pre-war Poland. The exiled Polish government in London was opposed to this and Churchill gave the Poles in London a warning that they had better concede the point and concede the former Polish territory. Then later we had the news that the Polish Committee at Lubin, which is backed by Moscow, proclaimed itself the government of Poland. The committee had



previously agreed to the Soviet demand for that Polish territory. All this was disclosed at the time and now London gives us an account of things hitherto kept secret. Moscow communicated with the British Government and stated that it intended to recognize the Lubin Committee as the Government of Poland. Great Britain and the United States were asked to do likewise and toss overboard that exiled Polish regime in London. Which put Churchill on the spot gave him the hardest kind of decision to make. His previous strong statement supporting the Soviet claim had stirred up a lot of angry criticism, both in Great Britain and here in the United States. There was protests that the Atlantic Charter was being violated, that Poland was not being given the benefit of the four freedoms -- so if Churchill agreed to that new Soviet suggestion, tossing overboard the exiled Polish Government he ran the danger of still further alienating public opinion, both in his own country and in the United States. On the other hand, if he

said "no" to Moscow, that would cause a split with Britain's powerful Ally. Well, Churchill made his decision. The London government announced that it would not recognize the Lubin Government as the government of Poland. Would not change its attitude towards the exiled Polish regime. And Washington said the same thing with Secretary of State Stettinius making the declaration. At the time hope was expressed that the whole thing -- the question of recognizing the Lubin Committee as the government of Poland -- would be left over to be discussed at a meeting of the big Three -- Churchill, Stalin, Roosevelt. The Soviets however decided otherwise and today they recognized that Lubin group. Moscow adds further the Ambassadors are being exchanged as is the custom in the relations between two sovereign governments. Well, the London comment is that Moscow might have waited until the conference of the Big Three had a ~~chance~~ chance to talk things over and might have delayed for that brief length of time before

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taking independent action and recognizing Lubin.

Unilateral action, says the London dispatch, employing a favorite term of diplomatic parlance. All of which causes acute British disappointment. What about the exiled Polish government in London? You would think that they would be deeply dejected by the Moscow recognition of the rival regime at Lubin. However, we are told that the reaction of the exiled Poles is nothing of the sort. They are said to be rather pleased at the new development, arguing that today's Moscow recognition will further emphasize the Polish claim that the Lubin outfit is a creation of the Soviets, more or less of a puppet.

A late dispatch from across the world from General MacArthur's Headquarters. It tells us that our troops have occupied Marinduque Island in the Philippines, twenty miles east of Mindanao and one-hundred miles southeast of Manila. One more island in the Philippines taken.

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In Southern Asia, when the British captured the port of Akyab, just announced today, they were all set for thundering action and nothing happened except a landing operation in peace and quiet on the coast of Burma. Last year they put up a ferocious defense as the British tried to drive to that same port of Akyab, the Japs beat off the assault in what was a most unsuccessful campaign for the British. This time the drive against Akyab was launched by sea -- amphibious -- a great British naval squadron was ready to hurl a giant bombardment supported by a deluge of bombs from fleets of planes. The warships were ready to open fire, the planes were ready to take off, when the word came that the Japs had evacuated Akyab. Not an enemy soldier left at that Burmese port. All of which was an anti-climax, a sudden let-down. The landing boats carrying troops ashore without a shot being fired.

I suppose that some people might find amusement in promoting a fight between a blonde and a brunette, human nature being what it is. Anyway, there has been a lot of talk about the rivalry between two of our lady lawmakers, Clare Luce the blonde from Connecticut, and Helen Gahagan Douglas, the brunette from Hollywood. Among the other high jinks of the Presidential election campaign Congresswoman Luce was played up as a sort of glamour girl of the Republicans. And the Democrats countered with their own candidate for a crown of loveliness. Movie actress, Helen Gahagan Douglas -- they also made her a candidate for Congress and she was elected. The assumption has been that a blonde and a brunette would regard each other in a way that you might call "catty" or in fact "tigerish" especially in the case of a Republican blonde and a Democratic brunette. And this was expected to provide some interesting ruckions from both the blonde and the brunette and the brunette in Congress. Would there be hair pulling? We have an