

LOWELL THOMAS' BROADCAST FROM PARIS

April 19, 1945

GOOD EVENING, EVERYBODY:

I am in Paris tonight. I flew back here, getting in only a few minutes ago, because for the last three nights up near the Front, in Germany, I have tried to get through to you from one of the mobile transmitters, and failed. Each night, from a radio truck, far over on the other side of Germany, I have gone right ahead broadcasting away, only to get the report afterwards that nothing got through. One night I gave an account of a long talk I had just had with General Eisenhower. Another night it was the story of the first meeting of the Americans and the Russians, our two great army fronts joining, that is, in the sky above Germany. Only to find out

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First of all, along the Front our fighting men have the impression that you folks at home think the war over here is all over. From privates on up to commanding generals, they want me and my radio colleagues over here to assure you that such is not the case. The Germans still have a lot of fight left. Even if they are disorganized. Furthermore, no one over here seems to know <sup>just</sup> when the Russians are going to throw their full weight against the Germans -- or whether the Russians may already have started their

all-out effort. Although the Russians are not many miles away from our own armed spearheads, most of us, if not all of us, here in Europe, are in the dark so far as Stalin's military moves are concerned.

On my way back to Paris, after a long talk with General Patton today, I drove by thousands of German prisoners, packed in American Army trucks, being driven to western Germany. To look at their faces you would think the war was over sure enough. At one stockade, where twenty thousand of them were being looked after by fifteen American soldiers, the Germans stood like sheep. They seemed to be in a daze. Of course, they easily could have swept aside their guards, and disappeared into the nearby forest. But they seemed too dejected and broken for that. I talked to some of the Luftwaffe officers, and asked them why Hitler's airmen were no longer coming up to fight our boys. Their reply was: "No gasoline." Which shows how successful our strategic bombing has been.

ADD RUSSIA

The latest is that Soviet forces have launched a drive to the south of Berlin, with gains that have placed them within forty-seven miles of the American First Army. That's in the sector in which the promise of a quick American-Russian junction has been the most favorable. (Soviet forces are now due south of Berlin, and are pushing on <sup>toward</sup> ~~xxxxxx~~ the Americans.)

BERLIN ENTRY

One report tonight is that the date for the Allied entry into Berlin is Thursday, tomorrow. This comes from the German side, with the Berlin radio stating: "Churchill has told intimates that Thursday is to be the day."

We don't <sup>quite</sup> know how a Nazi broadcaster would learn about information that the British Prime Minister has given to intimates - but, <sup>perhaps</sup> Thursday might ~~well~~ be the day.

## ATROCITIES

There was justice indeed in General Patton's order compelling German civilians to make a sightseeing tour of the Nazi prison camp near the city of Weimar. There have been endless rumors about the horrors of Hitler prison camps, rumors that now become reality - as those ~~places~~ <sup>places</sup> of Nazi ferocity are captured by American forces. ~~and~~ One of the worst was at Weimar, the city so famous in the annals of <sup>German</sup> liberal <sup>ism and</sup> enlightenment - Weimar with its shrines dedicated to the poets Goethe and Schiller. After World War Number One, the German Republic was founded at Weimar, an apt choice - and it is typical of the Nazis that they selected the place for one of their most brutal ~~concentration~~ concentration camps. There is no need of trying to describe the ghastly scenes, but there was justice in compelling the citizens of Weimar to behold them. That gave them first hand evidence of the true

character of the Hitler regime, which they supported - they the people of the city dedicated to Goethe and Schiller.

PHILIPPINES

American troops have made another landing -- on the last big island ~~now~~ held by the Japs in the Philippines -- Mindanao. This is announced by General MacArthur, who states that his forces have secured a ~~an~~ thirty-five mile stretch along the coast, <sup>They</sup> ~~and~~ are pushing toward Davao, which, before the war, was the center of Japanese Fifth Column activities -- a large Japanese colony being situated at Davao.

PACIFIC

We have an accounting of American losses in the naval, sea, and land campaign of the Ryukyu Islands. The casualties number seven thousand, eight hundred and ninety-five -- nine hundred and eighty-nine killed, two thousand two hundred and twenty wounded, and one thousand, four hundred and ninety-one missing. These figures include losses incurred not only in the land invasions, but also in the aerial attacks launched by the fleet.



## OKINAWA

On Okinawa, bitter fighting raged today, with the Japs hurling counter-attacks to break out of a pocket on the Motobu Peninsula. The Japs launched four assaults, which in the end proved to be futile, although a dominating hill changed hands twice. ~~At last reports,~~ the ~~marines had captured the hill,~~ and the line ~~encircling the Japs was as firm as ever.~~

On the island of Ie, off the west coast of Okinawa, there is still some fighting - though two-thirds of the small bit of land is now under American control. The battle for that island has been of no great consequence in a military sense, but the conquest of Ie has cost one prominent casualty - the loss of the most headlined newspaper correspondent of this war.

ERNIE\_PYLE

The story of the death of Ernie Pyle, killed by a Japanese bullet, shows that he ~~lost~~<sup>lost</sup> his life in the line of duty - duty specifically as Ernie Pyle saw it. He was the poet laureate of the common soldier in the foxhole, and he ~~made~~ met his end with the infantry.

After his extraordinary career across the Atlantic - as war correspondent assigned to the G.I.'s, he went to the Pacific - and saw the sea ~~in~~ and air war. ~~As an aircraft carrier, he went through encounters with the Japanese fleet and air force.~~ But Ernie Pyle wanted to be with the infantry. In this case - the Marines.

He was with them in the invasion of Okinawa, and then accompanied them <sup>in</sup> ~~on~~ landings on the nearby island of Ie. Today he was standing with the regimental commander, when a hidden Jap machine gunner got in a surprise burst of fire. And immediately the word flashed, "Ernie Pyle killed in action."

POPE

A plea for a peace organization, based on justice, was made today by Pope Pius the Twelfth. The views of the Pontiff are conveyed in an encyclical addressed to the Catholic Bishops, an encyclical which calls upon people everywhere to pray for a post-war peace organization based on fairness.

The Pontiff takes note of difficulties founded in wartime emotions. "Unfortunately," says the encyclical, "it is not easy - while the world is so upset, while the souls of many people still are stirred by vengeful sentiments - to reach a peace based on equity and justice. ~~A peace - suitable to meet, in a spirit of fraternal charity, the aspirations of all peoples, and capable of eliminating the latent seeds of feuds and rivalries."~~

The <sup>papal</sup> ~~paper~~ view emphasizes the difficulty in arriving at a rational settlement while we are still aflame with the spirit of war.

and now - Hugh James

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Later, in the air, talking to one of our top men in the reconnaissance end of the Air Force, I learned that in one area, two days ago, the P-38 and P-51 pilots spotted some two hundred German trains moving about. But since then our Mustangs and Thunderbolts have taken care of that, with the result that today only two trains could be found moving in the same region. Nearly all German transportation, in most areas, is at a standstill. Nevertheless the Germans fight on, and show every intention to keep it up for weeks, if not for months to come. There can be little doubt now but what they are trying to move vast quantities of material south, into the National Redoubt -- doing it at night. But there still may be time enough to check them before they mass large numbers of troops there. This will depend to a great extent on the Russians. To cut the Germans off from that National Redoubt we would have to drive across into the Russian operational zone.

Going back to the subject of prisoners again for a moment, at least six more German generals were captured today. One, with his staff, in his own car, was -- and I wouldn't blame you if you decided not to believe this -- picked up driving along a road in the Magdeburg area, in the midst of an American convoy!

But the most sensational story of a prisoner captured is the one about Count Felix von Luckner; remember the German "Sea Devil," the picturesque raider of World War One? Well, the old Count was picked up today by the 104th Division of the First Army, Terry Allen's Timberwolves. It was at the city of Halle, von Luckner's home town, which is now entirely in our hands. There are no details. But the Sea Devil is an old man now, and apparently has played no part in this war. According to the word I received from one of Terry Allen's officers, von Luckner has been released, allowed to stay at his home, for the present, at any rate. I hope to get



more on this before I return to New York. When American newspapermen came out of Germany, in 1943, after we became involved in the war, they told me that von Luckner had never gotten along with the Nazis, and that whenever he moved about he had two guards of the Gestapo with him.

And one word about Ernie Pyle. The news that Ernie had been shot down by the Japs, on a small island near Okinawa, was just getting around among the troops at the Front, and near the Front, today. I happened to be with General Patton when he heard it, and the General as well as every soldier I talked to, look it as a personal loss. They all regard<sup>ed</sup> Ernie Pyle as a friend, as well as the greatest war reporter of this or any other war.

And now, so long, and back to Hugh Gibson in New York.

HUGH GIBSON -- STANDARD. THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 1945  
SUNOCO

(L.T. on from Paris 6 minutes.)

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

Tonight we have inside information about the Allied progress on the Western Front from none other than General Omar Bradley himself. The Allies in the west, he said, have now reached a line of objectives upon which the high command had agreed. There will now be a temporary pause while we get ready for the next phase of the invasion of Germany. Since the Americans crossed the Rhine they have taken almost eight hundred and fifty thousand German prisoners. Virtually every German Soldier who faced us on the Siegfried line on February Twenty-Third is now either ~~dead~~ killed, wounded or captured.

Of course, the most spectacular news of the day was the capture of Leipzig. As the First Army paraded through the center of the historic old place, thousands of Leipzigers lined the sidewalks waving their handkerchiefs and smiling. They were happy

that for Leipzig the war is over.

It took one day and a night of wild street fighting for the First Army to capture Leipzig. The Germans had fortified it so as to make a keystone fortress of the place, the pivot on which the entire western battle line depended. So the happy ending came much quicker than expected.

Another item of interest from the Western Front is that the French are succeeding in the process of clearing the Germans out of their pockets in the Bordeaux sector, at the mouth of the River Gironde.

From further north, there is a bit of news not so favorable; the Germans have thrown a strong counter-attack ~~xxx~~ against the Ninth Army, the strongest since they crossed the Rhine. It succeeded to the extent of pushing a hole fifteen miles deep in the Ninth Army's front.

ADD LEAD

Hodges captured not only Leipzig, but also Halle,

*one of the great university towns,*

~~a principal center of glass manufacturing in Germany.~~

One after another of the great cities of the Reich has fallen into our hands. Patch's Seventh has conquered most of Nuremberg, the northern gateway to the part of Bavaria that Hitler is supposed to have picked for his last stand. Only a small party of defenders is left in the old city. General Patch set a spearhead of his armor rolling southeast, and it got to within thirty-one miles of the headwaters of the Danube. *at Donaueschinger* ~~It is also only a hundred and thirty four miles away from Hitler's hideout at Berchtesgaden.~~

General Patton's Third has consolidated its positions inside Czechoslovakia and is now hammering away at the approaches to Chemnitz, one of the most important centers of communications.

In the north, the British Second has reached the lower Elbe River on a broad front, and is only thirty-four miles away from the Baltic, less than six miles from Hamburg. The advance guard of Sir Miles Dempsey's army is already in the outskirts of Bremen. The British Second thus is in a fair way to cut the Nazis in Denmark off from Germany itself.

The Canadian First has cleared almost the entire coastline of northern Holland as far as the estuary of the River Ems.

~~The Allies have taken a sizeable bag of German generals. Inside the Ruhr American intelligence officers are ransacking the country for Field Marshal 56 von Modell, the Nazi commander-in-chief.~~

A large force of British Lancasters today bombed German defenses on Helgoland with their great twelve thousand pound volcano shells. German military

The Yanks have captured

15

~~On this case subject [redacted] has just come in~~

~~of the camp~~ the Nazi officer who ordered the shooting and burning of political prisoners at the Mieste concentration camp.

--o--

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

A thirty-five year old arrogant Nazi, he was captured before the Americans took the camp, and his part in the atrocities committed there came out in routine questioning.

He was a Nazi party Kreisleiter or District Leader, but was dressed in an army officer's uniform. Under questioning he attempted to continue the pose of an army officer. But ~~it~~ finally <sup>it</sup> was brought out that he was the camp commander and the man who gave the order for the slaughter of political prisoners.

He was sent back "through channels" considerably faster than the routine pace after the discovery of his identity.

~~Get him good night~~

PACIFIC

On Okinawa the Commanding General of the U. S. Tenth Army today began the big drive to put an end to the stubborn resistance of the Japanese which has held up the <sup>Yanks</sup> ~~Tenth Army~~ ~~for~~ for two weeks. ~~It began with~~ <sup>started at dawn</sup> A powerful bombardment from the warships standing out at sea and from the air, one of the heaviest bombardments of the entire Pacific War. Army and Marine artillery on land added to the force of the shelling from the ships at sea. The heavy guns set to work in the early hours of the morning and by one ~~two~~ three divisions captured one of the villages on the island. Every yard they gain ~~is~~ is costly. The Japanese have a strong defense line organized and are obviously prepared to <sup>sell</sup> ~~XXXXX~~ out only at great cost.

The Yanks on Okinawa are now beginning the final stage of <sup>that</sup> ~~the~~ battle since the ~~XXXXXX~~ northern sector of the island is already cleared of enemy forces. Meanwhile the troops on the small island of Ie Shima are going ahead.

PHILIPPINES

7 General MacArthur reports tonight that his troops have seized the island of Balabac, south of Palawan only forty five miles from the northern tip of Borneo. That creates a new threat to the Japanese installation on Borneo.

8 Other units of MacArthur's forces already have another island on the southern ~~end~~ end of the Sulu archipelago less than thirty miles from Borneo.

*which*  
[ On Mindanao, MacArthur invaded only recently, the Twenty-Fourth Division, with plenty of help from the air, advanced fifteen miles along the coast capturing several places on the way.

In Luzon we may soon expect ~~to~~ to hear of the surrender of Baguio the summer capital of the Philippines.

8 1/2 And now Hugh James.