

L.T. - SUNOCO. THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1942.

Curran

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

I'm on the Eastern Shore of Maryland tonight. Came down to take part in an Army-Navy affair - the presentation of an award to men who are making high explosive shells. I had intended to tell you a little about it. But I haven't time. A flood of important news has been pouring in over my special wire this afternoon and I'll go straight to that. Yes, and today's news includes one of the most exciting stories in all American history.

But first, ~~Here's~~ here's a War Department bulletin, just in stating that the French in North Africa have ceased resistance except in a few isolated places. The military forces that had paid allegiance

to Vichy France have obeyed the order to lay down their arms - with very few exceptions.

The War Department bulletin continues:

"In many places the local population and the United States troops joined in armistice ceremonies."

So we may consider the whole thing at an end. That is, so far as most of French North Africa is concerned. The focus of war tonight is confined to Tunis - by far the most strategic place of all.

American troops pushing eastward through Algeria, are making fast headway toward Tunis. A dispatch from Vichy locates them at a place only fifty miles from the Tunisian border; rolling on for their first clash with the Germans in North Africa.

It is probably that the Nazis will do something to defend Tunisia - that vital point of land thrust northward so near the coast of Sicily.

Nazi air borne troops are in Tunis, but they are said to be few, only about a thousand. You can't move huge forces by plane. Not yet. But the Germans must have military units in nearby Tripoli - these in addition to Rommel's battered army, which has fled from Egypt into Libya, and is being chased by the British as fast as they can go.

Rommel may elect to stand at the old Halfaya Pass positions, at the Libyan-Egyptian border. Or he may pull back further for a stand. In any case, the Nazi Field Marshal is between two jaws of a nutcracker, and he will have to use what forces he can to meet the advancing Americans. This will undoubtedly mean the moving of troops into Tunis - to contest the American control of that vital strip of land.

Our armored forces rolling along the ground are vigorously supported by our aerial squadrons winging

through the sky. Today's news tells how General Jimmy Doolittle's bombers have been smashing hard against the enemy - raiding vital points like the Port of Benghazi, the key harbor by which Rommel may be reinforced and supplies. The American bombers also ranged far out into the Mediterranean and hit the Nazis in Crete. That's one point from which they send reinforcements to Africa.

The Americans, in their swift conquest, have been establishing air bases just as swiftly. Flat North Africa is an easy place for laying out flying fields. As the troops advance, the men of the air take over localities nearer and nearer to the vital centers of Axis communications - thrusting their flying fields further forward for shorter range and more devastating air blows. American air power, in fact, threatens to disrupt the sea communications on which the enemy must

depend - either to reinforce the Axis in North Africa or possibly to evacuate Rommel's army.

The appointment of a Britisher, General Anderson, as United Nations Commander in Algiers, is accompanied by the news that the American forces in North Africa are accompanied by a powerful British contingent - hence the naming of a Britisher as Algerian Commander under American General Eisenhower, who is commanding for all North Africa.

The British force fighting along with our men is the First Army - which already has a famous record in this war. The British First Army fought as the expeditionary force in France, and was evacuated from Dunkirk. Since those dark days, the First Army has been reformed and completely re-equipped, and is a crack outfit.

FRENCH

Tonight we have a report that at Algiers Admiral Darlan is trying to form what they call - "a counter government." It has been rumored that Darlan, Vichy Commander captured by the Americans, might come over to the side of the United Nations. And now the Axis radio spreads the report that he has. The story adds that, in trying to form a counter-government, Admiral Darlan is joined with General Nogues the ace French army Commander in North Africa and with General Giraud - famous French officer who escaped from Nazi Germany and then escaped from Vichy to join our side.

The Petain government today issued a decree denouncing General Giraud. The Cabinet headed by Marshal Petain announced that the General broke his word when he went over to the side of the United Nations and Petain today put out a decree saying that no

Frenchman would be "allowed to collaborate with him."

Those were the words of the decree.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

The Nazis have changed their story about having torpedoed a British battleship of the QUEEN ELIZABETH class. Today they stated that it was not a battleship at all that was hit by a U-boat. They claim that the Queen Elizabeth torpedoed was the great British passenger liner - now used as a naval auxiliary. They don't say they sank the eighty-five thousand ton liner, the QUEEN ELIZABETH. A torpedo damaged the one-time British Queen of the seas, claim the Nazis.

FRANCE

The status of Toulon, the great French naval base, and of the French fleet stationed here seems to be as follows: The Nazis, pushing into the rest of France, have not taken over Toulon - and they don't intend to, we are told. They have decided not to occupy the naval base. This is because the officers of the French fleet at Toulon, threaten resistance. They announced that they would, in the words of the dispatch, "defend themselves against aggression."

In other words, if the Nazis tried to grab Toulon, the French naval forces there would fight. The sea base is a powerful stronghold, and would not be easy to capture against any kind of determined resistance - and the French, if they started fighting the Germans, might display more will to win than they have against the Americans. In consequence of the French threat to resist, the Germans will content themselves with

surrendering the city, keeping their forces on guard.

That is the word we have. They can take such positions as would prevent the French fleet from leaving the harbor.

All of which would make it appear that the French fleet, the theme of so many rumors, is still at Toulon. British navy men remark that the force of the French warships cannot be so very formidable. A couple of big battleships are known to be in drydock and the whole fleet has been lying in port for a long time -- and that causes a ship to deteriorate. Navy men doubt whether the French vessels could be made into an effective fighting outfit in any brief length of time.

PARATROOPS

It turns out that American paratroops winging to battle in North Africa set a long distance record. From what base did they fly to the African coast all the way from Britain? The big transport planes carrying the parachutists flew from the British coast all the way across the continent of Europe and across the Mediterranean. It was a fifteen hundred mile flight, the longest ever undertaken by a parachute force. The previous record was made by the Germans in their invasion of Norway, when they flew paratroops five or six hundred miles.

From Allied headquarters in North Africa, we have the story of how the question was put before Colonel Raff, Commander of paratroopers. His superior officer asked him whether he thought it would be possible to fly a force from Britain to North Africa. The Colonel asked for two hours to consider the problem. When he

returned to make his report, he found his superior had gone to lunch. The Colonel left a note saying he could do the job - and shortly thereafter the job was done.

On the record-breaking flight, none of our parachute soldiers knew where they were going or why - only their Commander knew, Colonel Raff. Then when they got to North Africa they found out what it was all about, and went into quick action, floating down to seize positions.

ADVENTURE

(Who sent Message to Garcia?)

And now for that epic story I spoke about,
just off the wire -- an adventure story of war and
high politics that deserves to be told in full.

~~Our North African Commander, General Eisenhower,~~

~~tells us that it is like a new version of that famous~~

They know General Clark's adventure to that point

~~"Message to Garcia," the tale of an American officer in~~

(about Hubbard)

~~the Spanish-American War, who went on a mission to a~~

~~Cuban insurrecto named Garcia. The story is said to~~

~~have sold a hundred million copies. Yet, I'd say that~~

But

~~the message to Garcia ^{was} is tame besides ^{General Mark W. Clark's} today's story of~~

~~the secret mission, ^{that} to North Africa.~~

~~Some weeks ago, While the ^{Algeria North African} American offensive~~

~~was in process of secret preparation, a group of high~~

~~French officers in North Africa made a pretty good guess~~

~~of what was coming. Though in the service of the~~

~~Vichy Government, they were anti-Nazi and secretly~~

~~avored the cause of the United Nations. Among them~~

*who had made his escape from
Germany, ~~was~~ in the former World War
and again in the conflict against Hitler.*

were representatives of General Giraud, the ~~famous~~
French ~~Commander~~ ^{officer} who ~~escaped from Nazi Germany~~. Giraud,
in Vichy-controlled France, wanted to join in some
action against the Nazis, and through representatives in
Africa ~~he~~ was inquiring about the possibilities.

^A
The group of patriotic Frenchmen got in touch
with American representatives, and suggested that an
American general be sent secretly to meet them at
Algiers - an undercover mission. This word was
transmitted to the War Department in Washington where
it was okayed.

As the General to lead the undercover mission,
the War Department selected Major General Mark W. Clark -
forty-six years old, slim and sharp eyed, an able
soldier and an astute diplomat. ^{He got into} In underground contact
with the French officers ^{with whom negotiations were to be} whom they were to meet, General
^{contacted, and} Clark arranged a trip that would make the thrills of a

mystery novel seem pale. Much of the story of how they went ^{was kept} ~~is~~ a military secret. Today, in North Africa, General Clark said: "I used planes, trains, ships, submarines, canoes, automobiles -- and everything but mules."

The melodramatic high spot came when ^{the Clark mission} ~~they~~ finally made ^{its} ~~their~~ way to Algiers - and here we are reminded of the immortal Paul Revere, who caught the signal of a light from a church tower. It had been arranged that when they got to a certain point along the Algerian coast, they would get a signal in the form of a light in the window of a house.

When they arrived on a pre-arranged night, however, the light was not there. What was wrong? General Clark and his companions were afraid they had been led into a trap. But ~~they~~ waited until the next

night, kept in hiding, subsisting on the food they had brought with them. Late the next night, as they kept their eyes glued on the house -- a flash suddenly pierced the darkness, a light in a window. They went to the place, which was in almost complete darkness except for the signal. A man greeted them, the owner of the house. He told them that to preserve secrecy he had sent his wife away -- also his Arab servants, giving them a few days off.

The Americans were led inside. "The house," General Clark related, today, "was filled with French military officers in uniform -- although they had come to the place in civilian clothes." ~~Meaning~~ they had journeyed to the rendezvous in civilian clothes for secrecy, but wore their uniforms during the conference to give it a more official status.

"We conferred all day and all night, until

we had gathered all the information we wanted," says General Clark. They gathered plenty. The French officers agreed to collaborate with the forthcoming American offensive. They gave to the Americans complete plans of all French military installations in North Africa, the disposition of troops, the type of equipment and garrisons, and data on what French leaders could be counted on as friendly. They even made an arrangement to have the airfields outside Algiers delivered over to General Jimmy Doolittle's air force, when the offensive began. An agreement was made with representatives of General Giraud. ~~Today, at the War Department in Washington, the following was stated:~~ "In this conference, Clark opened negotiations which brought about the collaboration of Giraud with the United Nations," *states the War Department in Washington.*

Adding it all up -- the secret mission headed by General Clark laid all the important ground work for

the invasion of French North Africa.

The conference a complete success, ^{and then} there was a break of bad luck that ^{almost} nearly resulted in the ruin of everything. The secret meeting was nearly discovered -- the Americans were within a hair's breadth of being detected and arrested by the Vichy authorities.

The Arab servants who had been given several days off, grew suspicious. They went to the Vichy police and gave them the tip. The conference was just being completed, when word came -- the police were on their way. Luckily, there were Anti-Nazi elements among the police -- and they sent the warning.

"I never saw such excitement in my life,"

^{laughs} General Clark. ~~laughed~~ today. "Maps disappeared like lightning. A French General in military uniform changed into civilian clothes in one minute flat. I last saw him going out of a window. They were going in all

directions."

General Clark and his group of Americans gathered their papers and equipment -- the vital information that had been given to them. ~~And~~ ^{They} they ducked down into an empty wine cellar. Hiding there, they could hear the arrival of the police, and the talk between the Vichy henchmen and the owner of the house.

As they crouched in the darkness, one of the officers was seized with an almost uncontrollable desire to cough. "I am afraid," he whispered, "that if I hold this cough back any longer, I am going to choke to death."

They expected that at any minute the police would come down into the cellar. General Clark crouched with his revolver in his hand. "If the police came down", he relates, "I was undecided to shoot them or bribe them. I had fifteen thousand francs in my pocket." ^H But

the Vichy police did not think about the cellar, and after hanging around for an hour, they left. ~~So now~~

^Lthe Americans were able to be on their way, They had accomplished their mission, had got the goods. They

^{and} went down to the shore where boats awaited them -- got

aboard and started away from the shore. ~~But~~ the boats

upset, and ^{the Clark mission was} ~~they were~~ thrown into the water. General

Clark lost his pants, ~~and~~ the others lost their clothes,

but that wasn't all. "I lost some eighteen thousand

dollars in gold", ^{said} the General ^{afterward, and} ~~said today.~~ And he

laughed: "I wonder if Morgenthau will get after me for that."

But they managed to save their papers --

the invaluable data for the great offensive. They got

ashore and, in their under-clothing, hid all day in a

patch of woods, cold and shivering. At length, anti-

Nazi agents got in touch with them, and they were taken

out of North Africa -- to report what they had accomplished.

Later, after the operations had been launched with great success, American Command

Lieutenant-General Eisenhower ~~stated~~ today:-

Summarized as follows:

"The fact that land resistance was not terrifically great anywhere and that we did not have to land any

place where opposition was great -- testifies to the

success of the Clark mission." And General ^{the} Eisenhower

added: "It was a modern message to Garcia." Today

~~General Clark is Deputy-Commander-in-Chief~~ under

General Eisenhower. When Algiers was taken so quickly, largely because of the arrangements he had made,

General Clark conferred with Admiral Darlan -- the Vichy Commander who had been captured. As a result of this

conference, Darlan issued the orders directing the Vichy

French forces in North Africa to stop resisting the

Americans.

Next General Giraud appeared in Algiers. In

accordance with the agreement that his representatives had made with General Clark, Giraud had escaped secretly from Vichy France, and got to North Africa -- to take command of the French forces fighting beside the Americans.

And today President Roosevelt promoted Major-General Clark to the rank of Lieutenant-General!

And now back to Hugh in New York.