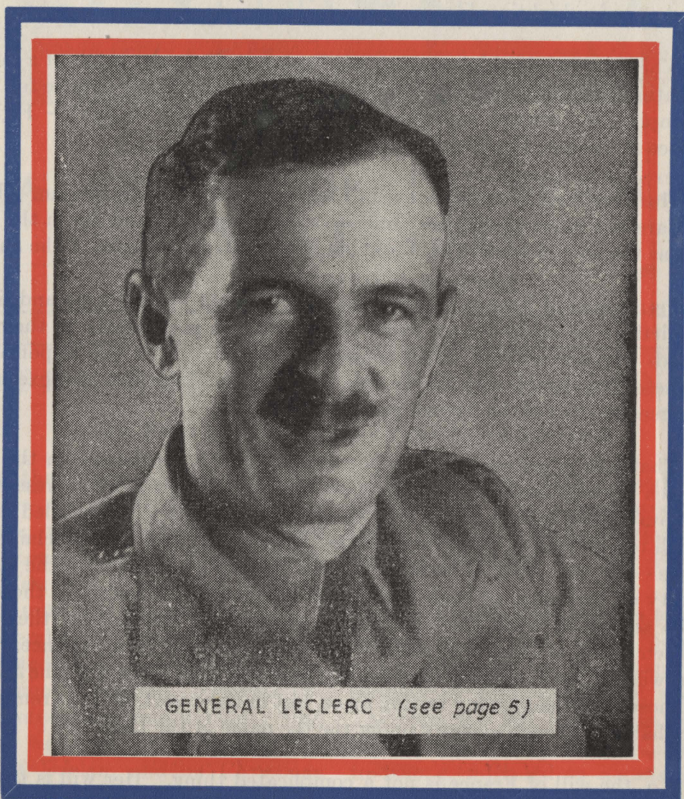


La Lettre de la France Combattante

NEWS OF FIGHTING FRANCE



GENERAL LECLERC (see page 5)

NUMBER TWENTY-SIX

JANUARY, 1943

THE enemy and his friends — past and present — combine to confuse the issue. They seek to create a French problem, and by pretending that black is white they endeavour to sabotage that union among Frenchmen which has been forged in two years of suffering and resistance.

Yet in France there is no confusion. The French people themselves can see no French problem. The issue to them is perfectly clear, and in their minds there exist no doubts.

Fernand Grenier, Deputy of Paris, arrives from Paris and says: "In France it is quite simple. You are either for the Germans or for Vichy — which is the same thing — or else you are for Fighting France. And the people are for Fighting France."

When the people think of Fighting France they do not think of a faction operating on foreign soil, nor of a political party. Fighting France for them is simply the outward expression of the nation's will to fight — Fighting France *is*, in fact, the people.

Most Fighting Frenchmen are in France, not in Africa or Britain. Those that are in France do not wear uniforms, but they fight and die in the same way as the men of Leclerc fight and die in the waterless wastes of the Sahara.

Frenchmen of France require that their straightforward view and limpid convictions be made known to all the world, and particularly to their own friends who are without direct contact with them. It is the responsibility of those Frenchmen who are on free Allied soil to interpret and execute at all times the will of the French people of France.

That will is neither complex nor divided. It is proclaimed in the great French underground newspapers (now read by millions), by representative and authoritative Frenchmen who escape to this country, by detailed reports which reach London by devious routes; more loudly still it is proclaimed by deeds — by the deeds of those who meet the firing squads with the song of liberty on their lips, of those who fell in battle at St. Nazaire, of those who weep and cheer when their homes are accidentally wrecked by the bombs of their allies, of those who suffer and resist with such grim patience. Also, that will is interpreted and executed by those who went down with the *Surcouf*, by those whose last, stony resting place, lost in the desert, will yet remain imperishable in French memory under the the name of Bir Hakeim.

No, the will of France is not a complicated thing. Her will is that her territory be freed of the enemy, that her liberties and traditions be regained.

La Lettre de la France Combattante



FRENCH FORCES IN NORTH AFRICA — "already these troops have obtained great successes" — General de Gaulle

LA LETTRE DE LA FRANCE COMBATTANTE

NEWS OF FIGHTING FRANCE

JANUARY, 1943

No. 26

THE STRUGGLE FOR UNION

A New Page in the History of the French Nation

On the afternoon of December 24th — Christmas Eve — Admiral Darlan, who had been appointed High Commissioner of French North and West Africa, was shot to death by an unnamed assassin.

General Henri Giraud was quickly appointed High Commissioner in succession to Darlan. General Giraud, of course, was a man whose record was entirely different from that of Darlan, and on Christmas Day General de Gaulle — esteeming the road open to moves likely to secure the unification of authentic French resistance — suggested to General Giraud an immediate meeting on French soil.

On December 28th General de Gaulle once again expressed his desire to obtain this unification in a stirring broadcast to the French people:—

"The French Republic has always wanted to win this war by the side of her Allies, for the liberty and the security of Europe and the world. Therefore the last Republican Government, to which I had the honour to belong, intended to maintain in the fight the resources which France still possessed after the military defeat in the home country — that is to say: her empire, her fleet, her merchant navy, her financial assets, her moral influence and, above all,

the soul of the invaded people, until the time came when the whole nation could rise again to chase and punish the enemy.

"Profiting by the disorder caused by the disaster and by the discipline of the armies and administrations, the defeatism of some leaders, the intrigues of treason, the conspiracies of those who opposed the sovereignty of the people may have succeeded temporarily in forcing upon France first the capitulation and then a regime of dictatorship and usurpation. But, frightful as it was, this was only a kind of episode which did not change the national will as it was expressed so long as it was free. It is to that will alone that Frenchmen owed and still owe allegiance.

National Committee: Provisional Representative of General French Interests

"Such is the reason and such is the inspiration for the attitude adopted as early as 18th June, 1940, by a great number of French citizens inside and outside the country. Today, the great mass of the nation is known to approve and uphold them. The National Committee, formed to assure the direction of the French effort and to represent provisionally the general interests of France, has been able to assemble little by little a great part of the Empire and important military forces, as well as gain the adhesion and take the direction of the resistance organisations on our territory.

"It has also been able to secure from a great number of foreign powers guarantees concerning the integrity, the independence and the greatness of France. Thus, France has never been out of the war, neither *de facto* nor *de jure*. Moreover, and this is a capital factor in

the present and future of French unity and greatness, a kind of mysticism of French liberation has come into being inside the nation and throughout the world.

"Meanwhile, the course of military events has brought first the Allied armies and then the enemy forces into French North Africa. A battle is engaged in Tunisia. A renowned French military leader, General Giraud — and I can testify that the Government of the Republic regretted at the worst moments of the battle of France that he could not be appointed generalissimo because he had been taken prisoner by the enemy — has begun to draw into combat a part of the troops of North Africa. Already these troops have obtained great successes which will increase. Their comrades, who, on land, on sea and in the air, have been able to resume the fight at different dates in different theatres of war, salute their help and their glory and hope that all those who bear the arms of France may merge, as is right and proper, into a single French army, a single French navy, a single French air force.

Usurping Regime Profoundly Shaken in North Africa

"Moreover, in the territories of French North and West Africa, the usurping regime and the spirit of Vichy have been profoundly shaken by events. It seems that, despite two and a half years of virulent propaganda and measures of repression so harshly applied, the purest patriotic spirit is regaining its rights there as elsewhere. It seems that the non union of the whole Empire in the war is no longer merely desired and desirable, but perhaps will soon be realisable in conditions consonant with the will and dignity of the French people.

"But what has already been done, what is being done to-day, and what will be done to-morrow by the French nation for the triumph of the cause common to all the United Nations, implies that the nation's total effort be united and directed, that the laws of France be applied, that the rights and interests of France be represented as her honour, her soul and her power are always represented by the blood and sufferings of the nation. An enlarged temporary power grouping all French forces inside and outside the country, and all French territories which are able to fight for liberation, is necessary to national independence and unity, until such time as the nation herself may be able to express her sovereign wishes.

"Frenchmen have only one country. It imports to act so that Frenchmen may fight only one fight.

"France is and will remain one and indivisible."

On the following day, André Philip, Fighting French National Commissioner for the Interior and Labour, expressed with even greater precision the attitude of Fighting France to the situation then developing in that part of the French Empire most recently liberated:—

"In a communiqué dated November 16th, the French National Committee announced that it took no part in, and assumed no responsibility for, negotiations engaged in North Africa with the delegates of Vichy. Since then you have not heard the Fighting French spokesman on the radio. In fact, the situation in North Africa left us with the alternative of abandoning the legal and moral principles which we considered essential, or of formulating criticisms which, being broadcast from a station in a country which



GENERAL GIRAUD — "a renowned French military leader" — General de Gaulle

is giving us her hospitality, might have appeared out of place.

"The situation has changed and is to-day modified. It is a fact that at present possibilities are opened for collaboration and eventually for union among all authentic elements of French resistance. We therefore resume our broadcasts and you will again hear every evening either the National Commissioners or the Fighting French spokesman on the air.

"I want to take this opportunity to indicate the essential principles which are guiding our action:

"1. The Allied landing in North Africa opens a new page in the history of our nation. For two years, under the inspiration and direction of General de Gaulle, we, Fighting Frenchmen of the exterior and the interior, have continued the fight. Colonial territories have rallied to us and have participated in the war effort. Roads have been opened, aerodromes built, a fleet has sailed the seas, an army has been raised which has covered itself with glory at Keren, Massawa, Bir Hakeim, El Alamein — a part of it is at present participating in the pursuit of Rommel, while the troops of General Leclerc are operating in the desert. To-day, North Africa joins this military effort. She brings enormous economic resources, fresh troops with a noble tradition of heroism and military glory. The French Empire *can* to-day be reconstituted, and thanks to the Empire France is able to play a primary role in the Mediterranean war. The door is open for us to resume our role in the world and we can proclaim proudly that nothing which went to make the grandeur of our nation has been lost.

Need for a Single Administration

"2. This participation in the inter-allied war effort is France's participation. General de Gaulle and General Giraud are not feudal chiefs bringing territories which belong to them, or troops which are personally faithful to them. They are, as we all are, the servants of the single French nation. It is not up to the nation to unite behind her army, but it is up to the army, the navy, the colonies, all the civil and military administrations, everywhere,

to place themselves at the service of the nation, of the Republic, one and indivisible. We are therefore seeking to achieve among the authentic elements of resistance not only an intimate collaboration, but a real unity. There must be a single French army, even if its parts are operating in different theatres. There must be a single administration shared by all the various metropolitan or colonial territories which have been liberated or have rallied. There must be a single organisation permitting — in great military and diplomatic problems — the provisional direction of French interests and allowing the voice of the nation to be heard at the conference tables of the United Nations.

Republican Principles must be Re-established

"3. This unity must be brought about on the only possible legal basis, that of republican legality. The French Republic voluntarily entered the war. The Vichy *coup d'état*, effected under enemy pressure, put the French people outside the Republic. It is a matter to-day of replacing France in both, of liberating territory and persons at the same time.

In the Free France of to-morrow constitutional changes will no doubt be brought about. They will be brought about by the government which the French people in its sovereignty will select. Meanwhile, it is necessary to save and retain the essential values of our civilisation. Republican principles must be solemnly reaffirmed and republican legislation and institutions must be re-established in all liberated territories.

"4. This unity must be made between resistant Frenchmen. That

(Continues on page 17)

THE GREAT TREK

General Leclerc's Daring Raid Across 1200 Miles of Mountain and Desert

In June of last year it was Bir Hakeim, and the world held its breath while General Koenig's Bretons and Parisians held out for sixteen days and nights against impossible odds.

In January of this year it was Leclerc's march to glory, twelve hundred miles of plain and rock and mountain and desert, never before crossed by an army, now covered by French troops in less than a month.

When General de Gaulle flew across Free French Africa last autumn, he met General Leclerc and discussed with him this audacious operation. On a smaller scale, it had been done thrice already; on each occasion the advance into Southern Libya had been undertaken with success at a time when the British VIIIth Army had been advancing along the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Leclerc's main Chad base was at Fort Lamy. Before even getting into enemy territory he had to cover well over 500 miles of desert under his own control and cross the bleak, craggy Tibesti mountains on the Libyan frontier.

100 per cent. motorised Force

His force, 100 per cent motorised, included the Tibesti Meharistes, Chad sharpshooters, and young Frenchmen who had completed their training in a Free French camp in England soon after the collapse of the metropolitan armies. The latter are all the more deserving of praise because they were not regular soldiers, and were without much experience of warfare of this description.

For a fortnight Leclerc's flying column advanced practically unobserved. It had to take all supplies — water, petrol, food and munitions — for there were no bases en route, and no water between the Chad and the Central Fezzan. The column's only air protection came from the Fighting French Bretagne Squadron, operating on old-fashioned machines, but staffed by daring and experienced crews.

Column spotted on New Year's Day

On New Year's day the column has been definitely spotted by the enemy, and the first clash had occurred in the Fezzan, the vast plateau extending over southern, southwestern and central Libya. The first communiqué was radioed to Fighting French H. Q. in London: —

"General Leclerc's H. Q., Central Africa — To General de Gaulle, London: —

"Our advanced elements progressing northwards across the Fezzan have encountered and put to flight an enemy motorised column. Some equipment was captured and losses inflicted. Our casualties are negligible. Our bomber aircraft have attacked the enemy position of Murzuk (capital of the Fezzan), and our fighters strafed enemy troops on the ground in this area. None of our aircraft is missing."

Interest, faint at first, was awakened throughout the world. Next day's communiqué confirmed that things were going well. It was terse and to the point: —

"Our motorised forces have progressed several hundred miles from

the Chad-Libyan frontier and are advancing northwards. Our aircraft have raided enemy posts. — Leclerc.”

4th January—Oum-el-Araneb Captured

On January 4th came big news. Oum-el-Araneb, 65 miles east of Murzuk, one of the main Axis outposts and key to the heart of the Fezzan, was taken. The communiqué said: After three days of violent attacks by land and air, a column under the command of Colonel Ingold has captured the key outposts of Oum-el-Araneb. This position was strongly held by the enemy. Our forces took several hundred prisoners, ten guns, a large number of machine-guns and mortars, and much other booty.”

Colonel Ingold's son, who was a pilot in the Fighting French Air Force, had recently been killed on active service.

The next day's communiqué stated that fighting continued, but that operations were hampered by very bad weather. In this part of the world, the most usual form of bad weather is the sandstorm. Fighting in these conditions tests a man's skill and endurance to the limit.

At this point two tactical courses seemed open to Leclerc. He could continue north from Oum-el-Araneb, or he could turn west and strike at Murzuk itself. After four days of sandstorms, the Fighting French strategy was still undefined, but the next positive communiqué gave details of a daring swoop on El Gatrun, south of Oum-el-Araneb. A flying column of Meharistes (Camel Corps) under the command of Captain Sarazac, had detached itself, unobserved by the enemy, from the main body of Leclerc's force and

swooped on El Gatrun, carrying the position by storm and taking 177 prisoners as well as much booty. “The detachment,” said the communiqué, “covered a great distance at record speed and swept the enemy off his feet.”

9th January—Brach Captured

World interest, now thoroughly aroused, turned to excitement when late on Saturday, January 9th, the big news-agencies rushed this message to all newspaper offices:—

“FLASH — Leclerc's Fighting French Chad force has occupied BRACH, 350 miles S. E. of Tripoli. (Official).”

A few minutes later came a fuller message:—

“Advanced elements of General Leclerc's Fighting French forces moving north from the Chad have occupied the enemy outpost of Brach, 350 miles S. E. of Tripoli and more than a thousand miles from the main Fighting French base at Fort Lamy. Brach is 200 miles north of El Gatrun, the capture of which was announced in yesterday's communiqué.

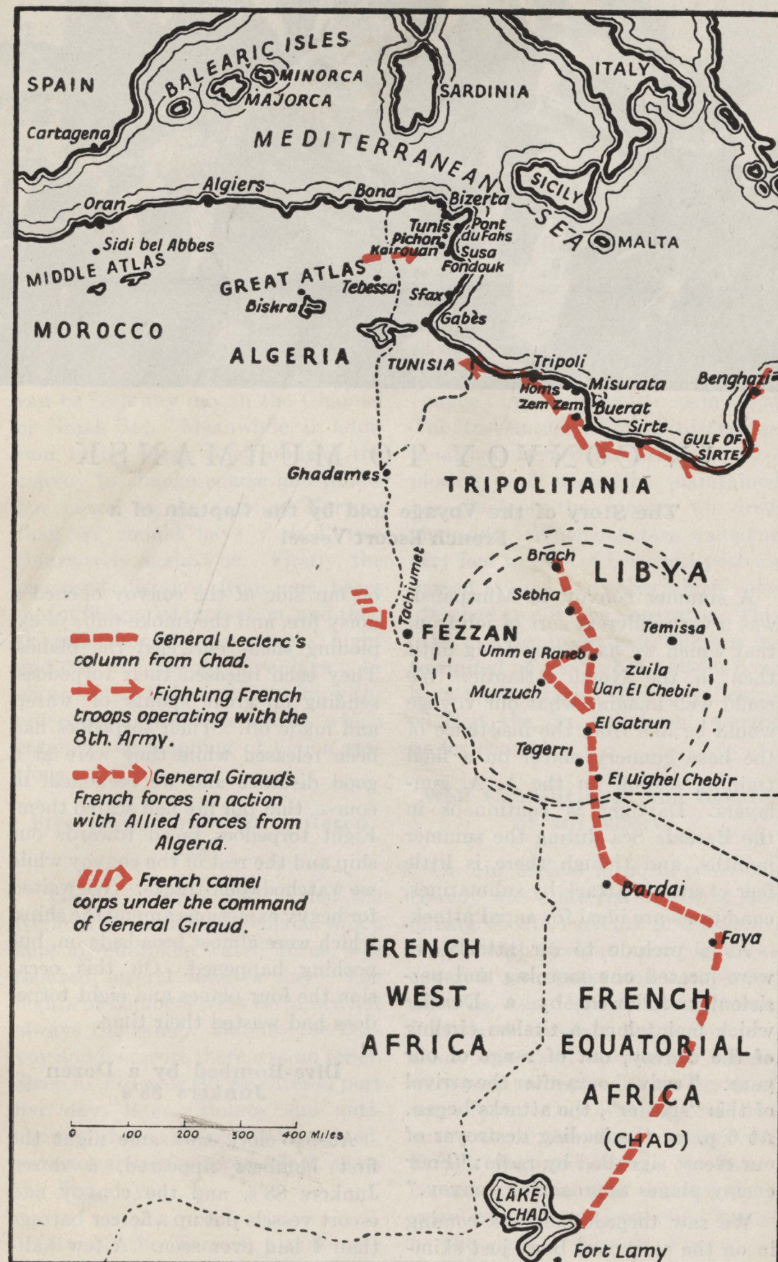
“The Fighting French have now penetrated to the borders of Tripolitania after one of the greatest treks in military history.

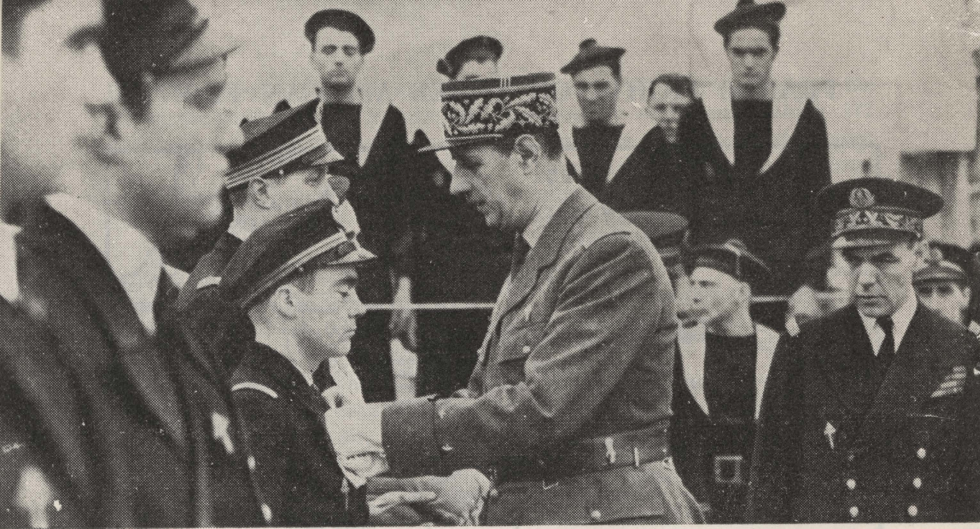
“Follows the next of to-night's communiqué from General Leclerc's H. Q. in the Fezzan: ‘The defeat of the enemy is becoming a rout. Our advanced elements have occupied Brach. Other enemy outposts are encircled by our troupes. Operations continue.’”

Meanwhile, 100 miles northeast of Murzuk, the Bretagne Squadron had razed to the ground the enemy's

(Continued on page 18)

FRANCE FIGHTS ON THREE AFRICAN FRONTS





IN CONVOY TO MURMANSK

The Story of the Voyage told by the Captain of a French Escort Vessel

A summer convoy to Murmansk was a very different sort of job from that which we had been doing until then in the North Atlantic. We could well imagine what our voyage would be like from the insistence of the base gunnery officer on a final training session for the A. A. gunlayers. Daylight is continuous in the Barents Sea during the summer months, and though there is little fear of surface attack by submarines, conditions are ideal for aerial attack.

As a prelude to air attack, we were located one morning and persistently followed by a Dornier which maintained a tireless circling of the convoy, out of range of our guns. Twelve hours after the arrival of this "spotter", the attacks began. At 6 p. m. the leading destroyer of our escort signalled by radio: "Four enemy planes approaching convoy."

We saw torpedo-bombers coming in on the starboard bow, just skimming the waves. Every escort vessel

on our side of the convoy opened a noisy fire, and the smoke-puffs of exploding shells encircled the planes. They each released their torpedoes, sending up great spouts of water, and made off. Their torpedoes had been released while they were at a good distance and we reckoned, of course, that our fire had scared them. Eight torpedoes raced towards our ship and the rest of the convoy while we watched their tracks. We waited for heavy explosions among the ships, which were almost broadside on, but nothing happened. On this occasion the four planes and eight torpedoes had wasted their time.

Dive-Bombed by a Dozen Junkers 88's

At 9 o'clock the same night the first bombers appeared, a dozen Junkers 88's, and the convoy and escort vessels put up a fiercer barrage than I had ever seen. A few half-hearted bombing dives followed,

but for all that, these precious Germans don't lack the instinct of self-preservation. The convoy suffered no loss, but one merchant ship which had developed a list was no longer under way and needed a tow. The next day, in a Vichy broadcast, we were to hear: "According to a despatch from Berlin, a strongly escorted convoy was attacked between Ireland and the North Cape, one ship being sunk and five others damaged."

Whether torpedo-bombers or ordinary bombers, every attack was like this, the standard type which can be seen any day in the Channel or North Sea. Meanwhile, in addition to ice-floes, which obliged the convoy to change course and follow one nearer to the coast of Norway than we should have wished, two things were against us. Firstly, the increased distance from our bases meant less aerial protection, and then the repetition of these attacks, night and day, for the next five days. In all we suffered nineteen attacks, without counting the false alarms which entailed the manning of action stations.

Five Days Later We Entered Port

"George", as we had named the German reconnaissance plane which kept an unbroken watch on us, was relieved several times a day. The flights of bombers were certainly not always the same. But for the convoy and its escort there was no relief. Sleep had to wait till we entered port five days later. Bombs and anti-aircraft shells, as can be imagined, were not always without effect, as on the first day.

One of the fiercest attacks we suffered was when two flights of

torpedo-bombers attacked at once, one coming in on the port side and the other on the starboard bow, with a dozen Junkers attacking astern. One vessel that was hit had to be abandoned with flames leaping higher than her masts. Another, a Russian ship, hit forward by a bomb, kept under way trailing a black plume of smoke. After the attack, "George" again took up his vigil. As one A. B. said on the Bridge: "It's thanks to that swine there that we're having all this trouble."

The firing of the A. A. guns having become a routine, we were given a chance to prove ourselves as firemen. The Russian ship's fire-fighting equipment had been destroyed in the explosion, and while she maintained her place in the convoy we drew alongside. When our stern was some fifty feet to port of her stern-post we passed aboard her hoses which were attached to our own apparatus. This little exercise in manœuvring was interrupted at the end of half-an-hour by a fresh attack. Later, we learned that the fire had been brought under control.

Well Content with the Result of our Efforts

On our arrival in port, when the convoy was mustered in a long line of cargo-boats, each low in the water, heavy with freight carried, decks covered with tanks and aeroplanes, all of us, Americans, British, French, Poles and Russians from the merchant ships and escorting warships, were well content with the result of our efforts. Our own ship was the only one of this fleet to carry the French flag, and it was doubtless because of this that an American vessel which drew ahead of us flashed us the signal: "Vive la France" — ever a proud moment.

TO MURMANSK — AND BACK

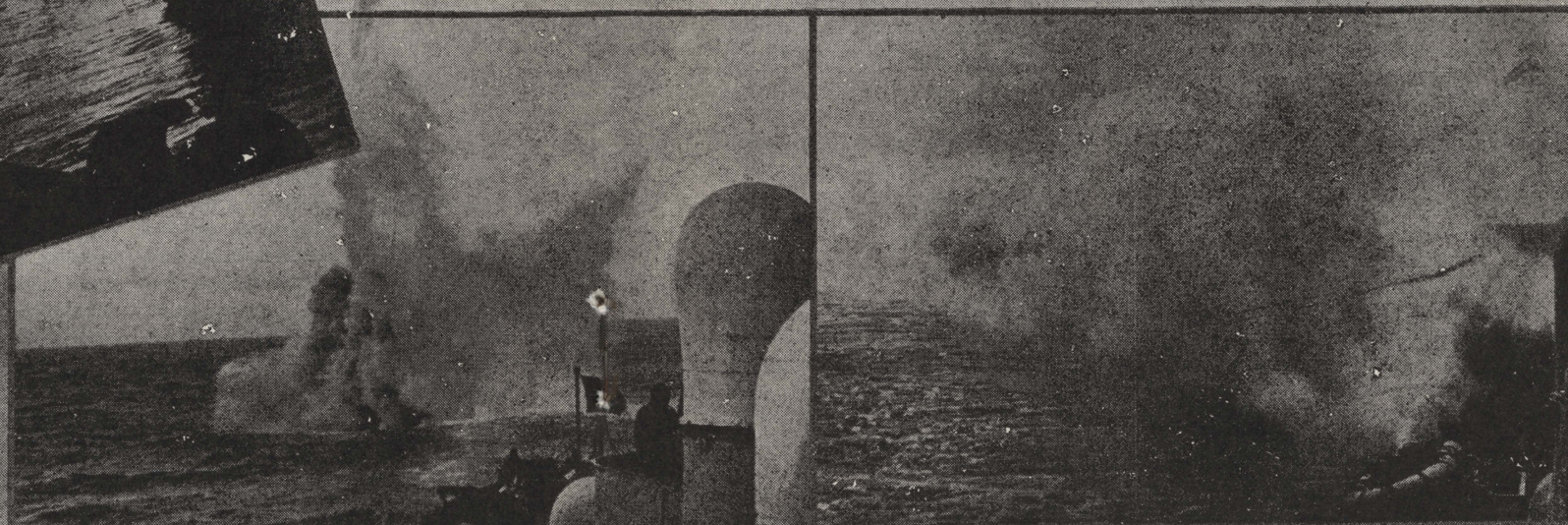
Pictures taken on board a Fighting French corvette serving as an escort vessel in an important Allied convoy bound for Russia.



The corvette flying the Cross of Lorraine, about to set out on her Northern voyage (ABOVE) (RIGHT) Dropping depth charges and laying a smoke screen.



"As a prelude to air attack we were located one morning and persistently followed by a Dornier. Twelve hours later we saw torpedo-carrying aircraft approaching. In all we suffered 19 attacks."



"On our arrival in port when the convoy was mustered in a long line of cargo-boats, their decks covered with tanks and aeroplanes, all of us were well content with the result of our efforts."

FIERCE RESISTANCE SWEEPS FRANCE

Germans Admit Failure of Collaboration

The spirit of resistance in France has reached new heights in the last two months. Much that has been real but dormant is stirring vigorously now, stimulated by news of Allied successes and by renewed hope of even stronger offensives by the United Nations.

Although the French people have undoubtedly, as General de Gaulle said recently, been "staggered" by some of the latest events, it seems that their unyielding resistance has reached such a point after two and a half years of occupation that even the Germans are beginning to despair of ever being able to shake it.

The truth of this assertion is best proved by simply quoting recent comment from the Axis and neutral press.

The failure of that most unreal of all hypocrisies — the policy of collaboration: on November 27th, nineteen days after the first landings in French North Africa, the diplomatic correspondent of D. N. B., the official German news agency, wrote sadly: "The occupation of Toulon and the disarmament of the French Fleet and Army are the inevitable result of a development characterised by Germany's constant readiness to cooperate with France and the sabotage of all attempts at co-operation by incorrigible French elements... Things could not, in the long run, go on as they have been doing."

While on the same day the Berlin correspondent of *Svenska Dagbladet* cabled: "The Axis was faced with potential enemies in France, in spite of its own readiness to collaborate. There has been a great increase in the

activity of certain French circles, particularly of late..."

Finally, the *Volkischer Beobachter* commented bitterly: "Never before has a victor made such honest attempts to heal the wounds of the conquered and help him up again as Germany has done in the case of France, and never before has the conquered more foolishly rebuffed the proffered hand."

Italy always sceptical of French collaboration

At the other end of the Axis, disappointment was no less keen. The Rome correspondent of the *Die Tat* said on November 29th: "Italy officially welcomed the Toulon incident, because it terminated two years of ambiguity and wrong treatment of France. Opinion in Rome is that defeated France was always trusted too much, and the Axis had too much patience with her. Italy was always sceptical about the readiness of France to arrive at an understanding and to collaborate with the Axis."

Hitler still finds Laval can usefully serve him, although a Nazi party newspaper published in western Germany, quoted by the *Svenska Dagbladet* on December 2nd, admitted that "practically the whole of France is against Laval."

On December 4th, the German-controlled *Action Française* sought an explanation of the obstructionist attitude of the French people: "By numerous symptoms one perceives the existence of an oppositional plot, the head of which is abroad and the ramifications of which stretch in a close network in our own country,

comprising the most diverse madmen. Too many Frenchmen are unwitting accomplices..."

In Paris itself, feeling was vividly described in *Le Démocrate* (Delémont) on December 11th: "Here the troops of occupation and Axis supporters are constantly taking fresh precautions. Hotels, beginning with the Majestic, police-stations and guard-houses, are protected by barbed wire. In the middle of Paris one can see on some pavements piles of barbed wire as tall as a man. Although Paris is blacked out, the Place de l'Etoile is brightly lit, so that even at night the police can easily detect any suspicious individual trying to approach large houses placed at the disposal of German army staffs. The Parisians have no relations with the occupiers, whom they ignore. If a German soldier gives up his seat, it is politely refused. Attempts to start conversations are ignored. Parisians are only interested in news circulating underground. ... 90 per cent. of the population have remained very French. Dignified, calm, aware that any inopportune demonstration would cost them dearly, this 90 per cent. await, without any exaggerated impatience, for better days."

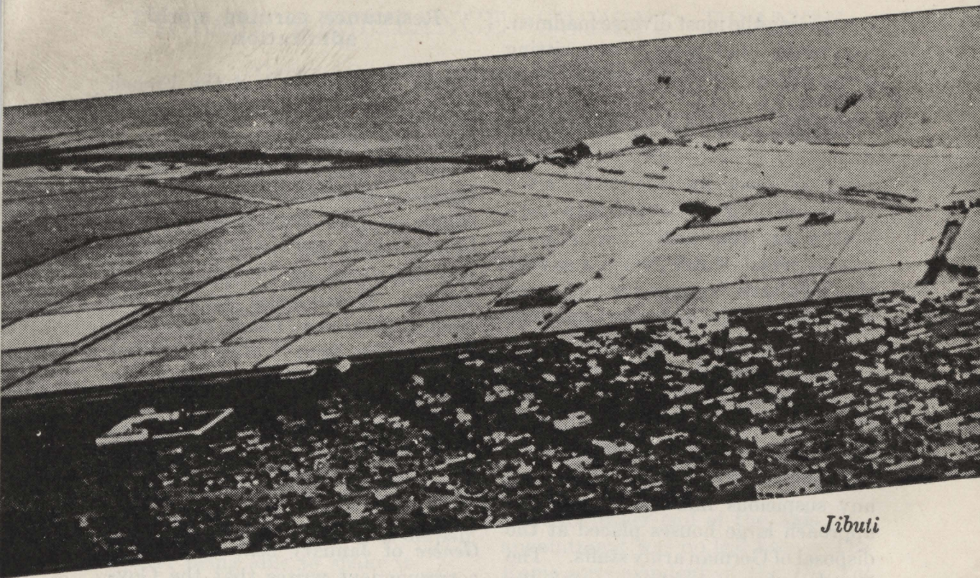
Berlin's impotent rage in the face of this resistance was referred to in the *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* of December 11th: "German irritation about France is obviously unceasing, but it is difficult to see what the Germans can do. The whole of France is now occupied, a Quisling regime is in power, and further violence would scarcely lead to other than increased 'resignation' — i.e., to increased passive resistance to the 'New Order.'"

Resistance earning world admiration

This "resignation" of the French people provoked an outburst on the same day from the *Volkischer Beobachter*: "When a new and better Europe was being built in the campaigns at the beginning of 1941, France's eyes seemed to be closed, and she acted as though she saw nothing. Occasionally we hear the name of Pétain and Laval, and Déat's voice is also loud... we hear, but we seek the reactions to them in vain."

The increase of a popular resistance which was already earning the admiration of the world was implicitly underlined in the neutral *Tribune de Genève* of January 5th: "Our Paris correspondent writes that the Government is to start a real crusade against Gaullism, Communism and terrorism. The authorities have observed that the occupation of the former free zone led to an intensification of terrorist activities. There has been a general movement to regroup the various tendencies, with the object of unifying the terrorist activity..."

The final word may appropriately be left to the *Démocrate* (Delémont), which stated badly on January 6th: "The Vichy correspondent writes that public opinion pays little attention to the Government's efforts to establish a *modus vivendi* between France and the Axis, everyone realising that the present situation cannot last. The total occupation of France left the average Frenchman as anti-collaborationist as before. He does not intend to help the troops which have just occupied Lyons, Toulouse and Marseille. Although silent, he shares the mentality of those of his compatriots who still fight..."



Jibuti



—UNDER FIGHTING FRENCH CONTROL

General Legentilhomme takes over as High Commissioner

General Legentilhomme's arrival in Tananarive, Madagascar, as High Commissioner for French possessions in the Indian Ocean, brings to a satisfactory conclusion the negotiations between the French National Committee and H. M. Government on the subject of Madagascar. An agreement covering the administration of the colony was signed in London on the 14th December, by Mr. Anthony Eden and General de Gaulle, in which French sovereignty was re-established under the authority of the High Commissioner appointed by the French National Committee. By the terms of this agreement "the provisional military administration set up by the British authorities after the occupation of the island of Madagascar will come to an end upon the arrival of General Legentilhomme in this French possession, and the necessary provisions are made for the re-establishment of the exercise of French sovereignty over Madagascar and its dependencies under the authority

of the High Commissioner appointed by the French National Committee.

"The High Commissioner will proceed as rapidly as possible with the reorganisation of the French military forces in the territories under his authority in order that they may take as large a share as possible in their defence and, if required, play their part in operations in external theatres of war against the common enemy.

"For the present the General Officer Commanding British Troops in Madagascar will be assigned the duty of ensuring the defence of the territory against an external attack, and the agreement defines in detail the powers conferred for this purpose upon the General Officer Commanding.

"It is laid down that all questions which cannot be settled on the spot by the High Commissioner and the

General Officer Commanding British Troops will be decided by agreement between H. M. Government in the United Kingdom and the French National Committee."

General de Gaulle Expresses France's Satisfaction

In comment upon the agreement, General de Gaulle issued a statement in which he stressed one more the fact that it had always been the will of France to carry on the war in her colonies, and he emphasized the satisfaction to the French people of the way in which the British Government fulfilled its engagements.

"It is common knowledge that Madagascar, and the whole French Empire, would whole-heartedly have continued the war in June 1940, after the defeat in Metropolitan France," said General de Gaulle, "had it not been for the criminal policy which

prevented her from fighting against the enemy and which — on the contrary — ordered her to fight her allies.

"In Madagascar, as elsewhere, Fighting France will make amends for this and will at the same time restore the laws of the Republic, which cement the union of our Empire.

"On the occasion of this agreement, I would like to emphasize the complete loyalty of which Great Britain, our old and trusty friend, has just given yet another proof. The French people, in its present ordeals, will observe with satisfaction that the British Government — despite currents, wind and tide — respects French sovereignty in the Empire and fulfils engagements most nobly and scrupulously. . . .

"In those facts lies a fresh proof of alliance which France will not overlook."

The new French High Commissioner is by no means unknown to

this theatre of war. As far back as 1926, General Legentilhomme, then a Major, was Chief of Staff to the General in Command in Madagascar. Later, in 1939, he was sent on an urgent mission to Jibuti to put the defences of French Somaliland in order, and on the declaration of war was placed in command of French and British Somaliland. It was he who was the first Commander of French Imperial forces to declare his intention of continuing the war at the side of the Allies. As a result of this act, the Vichy Government relieved him of his command, and, refusing to return to France, he placed himself at the disposal of General de Gaulle.

How Jibuti Joined the Allies

After long talks recently between a secret British Mission, consisting of Major-General Fowkes, who commands the British forces in Abyssinia, and Mr. H. L. Hopkinson, diplomatic assistant to Mr. Casey, Minister of State in the Middle East, and General Dupont, French Acting-Governor, this last remaining Vichy French possession in Africa came over to the Allies on the 28th December, 1942. The British mission was sent to Jibuti following Lt.-Col. Raynal's act, when, with 1,800 troops from French Somaliland, he crossed the frontier into British Somaliland and joined the Allies. Previously he had asked the Acting-Governor, M. Truffert, to declare for the Allied cause. M. Truffert declined; but, after lending transport to Lt.-Col. Raynal for his troops, he resigned from his position and entered a monastery. General Dupont was then appointed in his stead. He is now in command in French forces in

the région, and M. André Bayardelle, a colonial administrator, formerly in Equatorial Africa, has been appointed Governor of French Somaliland. His first act on taking up his Governorship was to release all de Gaulist sympathisers imprisoned under the Vichy regime, and his second act was to return all confiscated radios.

It is the intention of Fighting France to maintain a strong garrison in Somaliland to ensure the defence of this strategically important territory at the mouth of the Red Sea. The capital of the colony, Jibuti, is also the terminus of Abyssinia's only railway.

First-Line of Defence against Japan

General Legentilhomme thus takes up a position of vital importance in ensuring the French first-line of defence against the Japanese menace. Fighting France has been at war with Japan, in common with the other Allied nations, since the 7th December, 1941, the date of the Japanese attack on Honolulu and Manila. And Japan now holds one of France's most valuable colonies in the Orient, Indo-China, which the Vichy Government signed away to Japan on the 29th July, 1941. Previously, General de Gaulle and the Council of Defence of the French Empire declared that any cession of French territory by the Vichy Government would be considered null and void by them. Fighting France's armed might will now, therefore, be immediately directed against Nippon forces on two fronts. Their outposts of New Caledonia, New Hebrides and Tahiti have already been brought into prominence in the Pacific War.

THE STRUGGLE FOR UNION (Continued from page 4)

means that there cannot be admitted into this union — without causing the most cruel disillusionment in the nation and thereby weakening the allied war effort — the men who have collaborated with the enemy, who have adopted the enemy's ideology and who seek today, or will seek to-morrow, to save their jobs by flying without risk to the side of victory.

“Unity must be achieved among real patriots, among all those who, whatever their political or social origin, had and have only one anxiety, only one preoccupation — that of assuring the return of France into the was, of liberating the territory and of restoring lost liberties.”

Allied Sympathisers Were Not Liberated

It cannot be said that these speeches by General de Gaulle and M. Philip brought the immediate results for which many Frenchmen must have hoped. Mysterious arrests were made in North Africa, and anxiety was not allayed by the stories received from American correspondents to the effect that Frenchmen who had been arrested by the Vichy authorities in North Africa for the practical help which they had given to the Allies had still not been liberated. It was in this atmosphere of increasing mystification that (on January 2nd) General de Gaulle made the following lucid and outspoken public statement: —

“Internal confusion is steadily increasing in French North and West Africa.

“The reason for this confusion is that French authority has no basic point, following the collapse of Vichy,

since the great force of national fervour, coherence and experience which constitutes Fighting France and which has already returned to the war and to the Republic a large part of the Empire is not officially represented in these French territories.

French Opinion Staggered

“The results of this confusion are: — Firstly, a situation which is and will be embarrassing for the operations of the Allied Armies; secondly, the fact that France, at the decisive moment, is deprived of that powerful trump card which would be represented by the union for the pursuit of the war of her vast Empire in liaison with the movement of resistance in France itself; finally, and perhaps most important of all — the amazement of the French people, staggered in their misery by the strange fate of that part of the Empire most recently liberated.

Remedy for the Situation

“The remedy for this situation is the establishment in French North and West Africa, as in all other French territories overseas, of a temporary and enlarged central power, founded on national union, inspired by the spirit of war and of liberation, with laws which are the laws of the Republic, to last until such time as the nation has made known her will. Such is the tradition of French democracy. It was thus that in 1870, after the fall of the Empire, the men of the National Defence provisionally took power in the name of the Republic in order to direct the war effort of the nation.”

General de Gaulle added that he believed the situation of France and the general situation admitted of no delay.

hangars and workshops at Sebha, main military base in the Fezzan. A munition dump in this area was also destroyed.

12th January—Conquest of The Fezzan

Murzuk was then completely cut off, and three days after the capture of Brach this telegram was received in London:—

“The conquest of the Fezzan is now achieved. Troops under the command of Colonel Ingold have occupied Murzuk, the capital, and Sebha, main military base. Both garrisons were taken prisoner almost to a man. Further to the north, our advanced elements have made considerable progress. They have met and engaged an enemy motorised force. After a lively battle the enemy withdrew, leaving in our hands one armoured car and much booty.”

Further messages from General Leclerc announced the appointment of Lt.-Col. Delange as Military Governor of the Fezzan — the first large territory to be conquered entirely by Fighting French troops. Colonel Delange, who, said General Leclerc, was “going ahead rapidly with the military and administrative organisation of the occupied territory,” was a man eminently fitted by his experience for his new task. He had spent most of his career in Africa and the Near East. He spoke a number of African tongues. He had distinguished himself in the Syrian campaign of 1941, and before that had played a big part in rallying Equatorial Africa to the Free French.

Leclerc's success electrified French

Africa. The Governor of the Chad cabled his admiration and gratitude for “your magnificent feat of arms.” The Governor of Gabon telegraphed similar congratulations. And in London General de Gaulle broadcast to the French nation:—

“France's glory is great enough for us to avoid superlatives in referring to these events. Of the military epic of General Leclerc and his companions, we will just say that it constitutes an exploit not inferior to the finest in our history.

“By the victory of our Chad troops, the enemy has seen once more flare up the war-flame of France — that flame which he believed extinguished by disaster and treason, but which has not for one day ceased to burn and to grow under the inspiration of those who refused to despair.”

Italian Force Routed in Tripolitania

While Leclerc was making his dramatic push, developments were taking place on other African fronts. In Tunisia and southern Algeria, French troops under General Giraud were constantly harrying the enemy. Their glorious feats were not few, and one band of Meharistes penetrated into Tripolitania, routing an Italian force and reaching a point some 250 miles west of Leclerc's spearhead.

To the north, General Montgomery's VIIIth Army continued its relentless advance on Tripoli, final goal of Allied Middle East armies for over two years. With Montgomery, of course, was a substantial force of Fighting Frenchmen under General de Larminat which included Koenig's men of Bir Hakeim.



FIGHTING FRANCE AND THE U.S.A.
General de Gaulle greeting the two U.S. envoys to the National Committee — 9th July 1942

FRENCH COMMEMORATIVE DATES JANUARY—DECEMBER, 1942

January	13th	Third Inter-Allied Conference held at St. James's Palace.
	17th	Free French troops and <i>Lorraine</i> bomber squadron took part in the capture of Halfaya.
	30th	Corvette <i>Roselys</i> rammed a U-boat.
February	15th	M. Louis Bonvin, Governor of the Free French Establishments in India, appointed Member of the French Council of Defence of the Empire.
	22nd	Corvette <i>Alysse</i> sunk on convoy duty in the Atlantic.
	28th	United States Government recognised the French National Committee's authority over French possessions in the Pacific.
March	12th	Free French forces from Chad raided Libya: Italian outposts of Teggerri, El Gatrun, Um El Raneb, Hun Sebha Brach, Zuila, Temissa, Uan El Chebir, and El Ouighel Chebir fell to French raiding troops.
March	16th	Free French Mission arrived in Moscow.
	18th	H. M. Government and the French National Committee signed Commercial Agreements relating to French Equatorial Africa and the Cameroons.
	27th—31st	French population fought alongside the British commandos at St. Nazaire.
April	2nd	Rear-Admiral Auboyneau appointed National Commissioner for the Navy.
	5th	American Consul-General appointed to Brazzaville.
	19th	Submarine <i>Surcouf</i> reported overdue and presumed lost.
May	26th	1st Free French Brigade held out at Bir Hakeim against the Italian onslaught.
June	11th	
June	16th	Corvette <i>Mimosa</i> lost on active service.



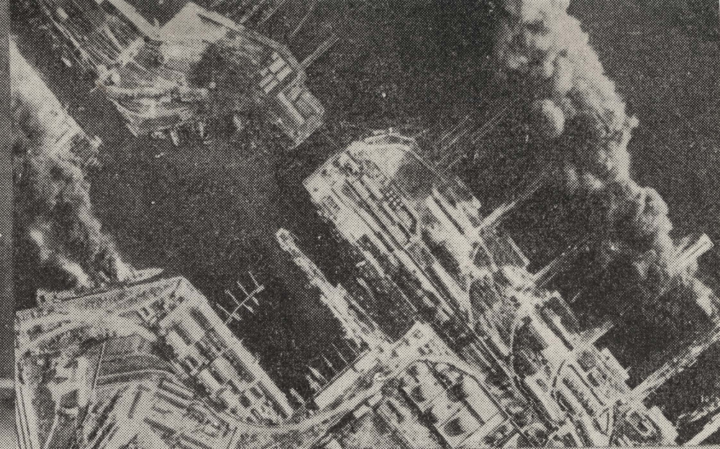
LIBYA
Halfaya Pass - January 17th, 1942.



DIEPPE - August 19th, 1942.
awarded the B.M.M. by L.



1942. French commando
Lord Louis Mountbatten



TOULON - November 27th, 1942
Scuttled and flaming French warships in the harbour.

- June 24th Publication of the French Charter, the Agreement between General de Gaulle and the representatives of the underground organisations of French resistance.
- July 9th United States Government recognised General de Gaulle and the French National Committee as the symbol of France's resistance and the custodian of her traditions. Rear-Admiral Harold Stark and Brigadier-General Bolte appointed to consult with the French National Committee.
- 10th Appointment of Fighting French Mission to America.
- 13th Submarine-chaser *Rennes* lost in an engagement with the enemy.
- 14th *Quatorze Juillet*. Free French Movement became known as Fighting France — *La France Combattante*. Formation of Fighting French Commando Unit.
- 15th General de Gaulle visited the House of Commons and made a private address to members of both Houses of Parliament.
- 28th M. André Philip appointed National Commissioner for the Interior and for Labour, two days after his arrival from France. M. Soustelle appointed National Commissioner for Information.
- August 11th General de Gaulle visited Syria for consultations.
- 19th French commandos took part in Allied raid on Dieppe.
- September 3rd New Zealand recognised the French National Committee. Notes exchanged between Government of U. S. A. and French National Committee relative to reciprocal aid.
- 14th General de Gaulle arrived at Fort Lamy from Syria for an inspection of French Equatorial Africa.
- 28th U. S. S. R. defined their recognition of Fighting France
- 29th French National Committee and Czechoslovak Government declared Munich Agreements void.

- October 23rd Fighting French troops in action in the Allied offensive launched in the Western Desert.
- November 1st Submarine *Junon* torpedoed German supply ships in Norwegian waters.
- 8th General de Gaulle's broadcast to North African troops urging co-operation with the Allied forces.
- 11th Armistice Day. Total occupation of France. General Legentilhomme appointed High Commissioner for Madagascar.
- 27th French Fleet scuttled in Toulon harbour.
- 30th Reunion Island rallied to Fighting France.
- December 7th General Catroux addressed allied press representatives on arrival in London for consultations.
- 14th H. M. Government and French National Committee signed an agreement re-establishing the exercise of French sovereignty over Madagascar and its dependencies under the authority of the Fighting French High Commissioner.
- 15th Air-Marshal d'Astier de la Vigerie appointed Second-in-Command to General de Gaulle.
- 30th French Somaliland rallied to Fighting France.

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