

Vol. II, No. 32  
9 Aug. 1944



# ARMY TALKS



**What You Should Know About France**



RESTRICTED :: EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS :: UNITED STATES ARMY



*"It is desired that, consistent with operational requirements, group discussions, through the medium ARMY TALKS . . . be held in all units within this command, using one hour of training time each week . . . unit commanders will conduct an orientation program, using not less than one hour training time a week . . . presentation of this material is a command function. . . . A company officer will be present at each discussion, whether or not he is the discussion leader. . . ."*

**BY COMMAND OF GENERAL EISENHOWER.**

**(Extract from letter ETO, 30 April 1944, AG 352/2 OpGA, Subject; Education in Military and Current Affairs.)**

# ARMY TALKS



EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS

## What You Should Know About France

**B**EFORE the war, a tourist in France had a guide who ran him around in an old Renault and who knew all and told all. He'd show you the cathedral, cafés, museums, war memorials and all kinds of the unmentionable monkey business Americans used to fork over good money to see.

Everybody had a fine time. The tourist felt all pepped up with culture and cognac, and the guide went home filled with francs and tales about how dumb those Americans were—but *rich*, mais oui !

Well, French towns are starting to fill up again with Americans who, while not exactly tourists, like to look things over when they aren't lobbing grenades or pushing in the supplies. Only, as usual, any culture and vin rouge the GI gets he has to acquire himself. He's his own guide and interpreter, and anything he learns about la belle France he picks up by himself or not at all. (Belle, by the way, means beautiful—belle fille—bell fee-yuh—means beautiful gal.)

The result is that Normandy is packed with wide-eyed Joes trying to ask questions and understand the answers, wishing they spoke the lingo, trying to figure out the score and hungry for the answers.



Well, here are some of them, anyway—taken directly from the notes of ARMY TALKS' rambling reporter in Normandy, just about as he set them down. He isn't any more of an expert in France than you are, but what he learned, he learned the hard way (which is probably the way you will, too).

## YOUR FIRST FRENCH TOWN

In the first place, remember that Normandy is just one section of France. There are 86 departments in all, and conditions vary in each of them. Normandy, for instance, is a relatively rich cattle, orchard and truck garden country, and so the Normans have had more and better food than people in the industrial regions you'll reach later on. The stuff that follows is based on Normandy. Expect some changes as you move along. Some things, however, are common to all of France. Every French town, for example, has a church—*église*—*ay-gleez*.



The church usually is an architectural masterpiece. Before the war Americans used to pay \$4.50 for a round trip on the French line to look at French churches. They raved about them ever after. So give the village church the once over, inside and out; if you have the chance—that is, if it's still standing. The Germans like to set up their OPs in the steeples. OPs draw fire, which results in damage. But France is full of handsome churches. Most of them are Gothic in design, with wonderful fluted columns, fanned ceilings, stained glass windows and flying buttresses—stone supports that hold up the walls on the outside of the church. Near the church is a cemetery—*cimetière*—*see-met-yair*.

Another feature is the Hotel de Ville—*otel duh veal*—or town hall. It is sometimes called the Mairie—*Mayree*—and is where the mayor hangs his hat. It usually is near the main street, in or near the center of all the goings-on, if any.

## FOR MEN ONLY

Another fixture of the French landscape is the *pissoir*—*pee-swah*. The *pissoir* is an old Latin custom which our boys in Italy already know about. It is an open air latrine—a post surrounded by a curved metal wall reaching from a man's shoulders to his knees. It's for men only—don't be shy about using it.

Most French towns are built around a big square out of which fan the streets. A street is called a *rue*—*ru*. An avenue is called *avenue* (go hard on the *you*), the square is called the *place* (*plahss*), and if it's a big town with broad avenues, there's apt to be one called a *boulevard*—same as in English except go hard on the *vard*.

## FRENCH SHOPS

Around the *place*, and in the *rues*, are all kinds of shops. The French were great shopkeepers before the war. They still are, except now when they have so little to sell, they're really just going through the motions. One of the first things a GI runs into is a big collection of signs, and he wants to know what they mean, especially since there's so little stuff in the window to give him a clue. Here, therefore, is a sample list of the signs you see over French shops in any town where you happen to be, with a note or two on what you're apt to find in each.

**Epicerie** *ay-pees-eree* grocery.

(It used to sell flour, salt, sugar, coffee and stuff like that—but these things are practically all rationed and very, very scarce, so pass the grocery by.)

**Boulangerie** *boo-lange-eree* bakery.

(The greatest shortage hereabouts is bread. Reason: a serious lack of flour. The average ration is 100 grams of dark brown bread a day per person (100 grams is about a quarter of a pound). So stick to your GI bread and biscuits, Buddy, until flour starts coming in.)

**Pâtisserie** *pat-ees-eree* cake shop

(Maybe once a week there are cakes for sale. But they're rationed too. Satisfy your sweet tooth with gum, chum.)

**Boucherie** *boosh-eree* butcher

(Meat is rationed, but Normandy occasionally has a surplus, since it's a cattle country. With luck, you may be able to pick up a steak now and then.)

**Charcuterie** *shar-coot-eree* pork store

(Pork products are rationed. Maybe there's an extra sausage around, but if so, it's the exception, not the rule.)

**Chaussures** *show-sure* shoe store

(Leather is not to be had—people wear shoes four years old—or buy wooden shoes, which aren't too plentiful either.)

**Modes** *mode* dress shop

(Millinery and dresses for the ladies. This stuff is not rationed but it's costly as the dickens. Your sweetie won't think much of these wartime French duds, either. Silk stockings are mostly a rumor, and things like gloves, handbags, etc., all went with the Boche.)

**Banque** *bonk* bank

(These boys have a big headache—do your business with your finance officer.)

**Débit de tabac** *day-bee duh tab-ack* tobacco shop

(Today French cigarettes are mostly leaves and sawdust.)

**Pharmacie** *far-macee* drug-store

(Aspirin, made in Germany, aplenty—not much else—and no soda fountains.)

**Coiffeur** *coff-fur* barber

(A haircut, French style, with shampoo in hot water, costs about 20 francs—with beaucoup conversation. If you want your hair short, say *coort*, if long, say *long*—and don't hesitate to use sign language.)

**Horlogerie** *or-loge-eree* watch shop

(By this time the Nazis have the last watch on the Rhine.)

**Bijouterie** *bee-joot-eree* jewellery shop

(Nix.)

**Laiterie** *lay-tee* dairy

(Plenty of milk and butter and rather poor cheese—but the medics warn you to lay off it. Cows are not tuberculin tested, which means you may pick up anything from undulant fever on down the list if you take advantage of the local surplus. The natives pay about 30-50 francs for a pound of butter. Eggs are scarce.)

**Légumes** *lay-gume* vegetables

(You can sometimes get spuds, carrots, beets and other vegetables here—in season. Buy 'em, don't pick 'em. French fries are called *pommes frites*—*pom freet*.)

**Café** *caf-fay* pub

(Café means coffee—but the French serve only *Café Nationale*—a ground acorn drink you'll gag on. Besides, a café is the place for wine or cider. Wine is scarce. Cider flows freely in the Normandy orchard country. Ordinary price is 4 francs per liter of cider. Don't overpay and spoil things for everybody.)

**Vins spiritueux** *van-spee-rect-u-uh* wines and liquors

(Nobody home.)

**Blanchisserie** *blansh-ees-eree* laundry

(No soap—no washee. More about that later.)

**Papeterie** *pap-et-eree* stationery store

(You can still pick up writing paper, ink, and postcards—but no Watermans or Parkers.)



That about finishes the most common shops. In addition you see signs that say "Hotel" which means the same in French as in English. But generally there's a tag line that says "comfort moderne"—modern comfort. Take that with a grain of salt.

### THE WAR MEMORIAL

In the center of most squares or *Places* there's a war memorial to the dead of 1914-1918. The inscription generally reads something like this

De (name of town)

From (name of town)

aux Enfants

To its Children

Morts Pour la France

Who died for France

1914-1918

1914-1918

Salute that monument—it stands for over a million dead poilus who fought the Boche in the last war.

Two other signs you run into wherever you go in France—on the monuments, buildings and everywhere else—are “R F” and “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.” R F stands for République Française—France became a republic in 1792, and, with our own new little Republic, gave the rest of the world proof that the democratic idea of government really works. Nowhere on earth are there such hide bound republicans as in France.

### LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY

Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, mean what they sound like—liberty, equality, fraternity. Four years of German occupation failed to dim the power of these proud words. Even if they had been effaced from the buildings, they'd still be engraved in most Frenchmen's hearts.

When our boys arrived in one town, they found the natives digging. Up from its burial place of four long years came one of those World War I statues of a French poilu. The local folk cleaned it off and set it back on its pedestal. There they were: Honor to the dead of 1914-1918. République Française. Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité. The men cheered—the French wept.

### DON'T LOOT



Most French towns look shabby. They weren't like that before the war—French shopkeepers took pride in shining up the brass and repainting the premises. But there's been no paint or polish for a long time, and windows broken by blast and bullets can't be fixed except by planking and catch-as-catch-can repairs.

Some of the buildings (in many towns, all of the buildings) are completely wrecked. Others are intact but unoccupied. Doors may be flung open and windows out, or bomb or shell blasts may have scattered somebody's belongings all over the street.

The thing to remember in a French town, however dead it may seem, is that everything in it belongs to somebody. The owners may be out in the fields taking shelter from the fighting, or down in the cellars or caves (cahv) as they're called, or in the shelters—abris (ab-ree). If you see a tempting souvenir—a flute, or clock, a piece of silver—leave it alone. It isn't just a matter of booby-traps (although the Jerries don't pass up any bets). It has to do with basic decency—and this isn't the spot for a harangue on that. A guy is decent or he's not. In this case, if he's not, he might be shot.

### THE SIGNS YOU SEE

Here and there, on walls of buildings, on pissiros and on fences, are signs left behind from the German occupation. These fascinate most Yanks. The posters printed in black on white usually deal with special sales of cattle, or regulations having to do with the land, agriculture, and taxes. But if you see a big sign printed both in German and French, it's orders



from the local German Commander telling the French what to do about such matters as the blackout, travel, aid to the allies, curfew and other *verbotens*. The last regulation generally reads : "The troops have been ordered to shoot anyone who disobeys these orders."

You may run into big posters printed in bright colors with the French flag and other patriotic symbols. One shows a Frenchman holding up a tottering wall, with red flames trying to lick their way in. The slogan says : "Each hour you work in Germany is a stone carried to the ramparts that protect France !"



Another shows a town in flames, and a mourning figure in the foreground. It says : "The assassins (that's us) return to the scene of their crimes." Another common poster shows a map of Italy with a snail creeping up from the boot. The snail carries a British and American flag on its two feelers. The idea is to show how slowly we're progressing—the caption on it, surprisingly enough in English—says : "It's a long way to Rome."

One handsome poster with a big head of a soldier in a German helmet posed against the flag of France reads : "Under the folds of the flag the Voluntary French Legion fights for Europe." Another LVP (Legion Volontaire Française) poster shows a volunteer in a white snow suit. It reads : "For three winters the French Legion has covered itself with glory for France and for Europe." Not for the Nazis, notice, but for Europe.

### GENERAL EISENHOWER'S PROCLAMATION

Since our arrival new posters have gone up. One, printed in French, is General Eisenhower's Proclamation which reads :

"Citizens of France. The day of liberation has dawned. Your comrades-in-arms are on French soil. I am proud to have under my command the gallant forces of France who have so long trained and waited for this day when they can take part in the liberation of their home country.

"United we come to settle on the battlefield the war you have continued heroically through years of stubborn resistance. We shall destroy the Nazi tyranny root and branch, so that the peoples of Europe may have a new birth of freedom.

"As Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, there is imposed on me the duty and responsibility of taking all measures essential to the prosecution of the war. Prompt obedience to such orders as I may issue is necessary.

### **Removal Of Quislings**

"All persons must continue in the performance of their present duties unless otherwise instructed. Those who have made common cause with the enemy and so betrayed their country will be removed.

"It will be for the French people to provide their own civil administration, and to safeguard my troops by the effective maintenance of law and order. Members of the French Military Mission attached to me will furnish assistance to this end.

"The valor and extreme sacrifice of the millions who have fought under the banner of resistance have helped, and will continue to help, the success of our arms.

"The presence of the enemy among you has made tragically necessary the aerial bombardment and military and naval operations which have caused you loss and suffering.

"This you have accepted courageously in the heroic tradition of France as part of the inevitable price we all must pay to attain our goal, which is our freedom.

### **Every Resource**

"Every resource will be required for the expulsion of the enemy from your country. Battle may inflict on you further deprivation.

"You will realize that munitions of war must come first, but every endeavour will be made to bring to you assistance that you need so sorely.

"I rely on your assistance in the final crushing of Hitlerite Germany and the re-establishment of the historic French liberties.

"When victory is won and France is liberated from her oppressors the French people will be free to choose at the earliest possible moment, under democratic methods and conditions, the Government under which they wish to live.



### **Nazi Courage Of Despair**

"The enemy will fight with the courage of despair. He will neglect no measure, however ruthless, which he thinks may delay our progress.

"But our cause is just, our armies are strong. With our valiant Russian Allies from the East, we shall march to certain victory."

### CALL TO THE COLORS

Another poster leads off with the word "Appel." That means "Call." It announces that enlistments for the duration are being accepted in the reorganized French Armed Forces, and asks recruits to report to the nearest commandant. There are also home-made signs like the one outside Issigny that reads "God you protège"—which is French-American for "God protect you."

And a brand new poster put up by our side says: "Salute the resistance—and forward!"

### FRENCH ADVERTISEMENTS

There are a few French advertisements painted on the walls of buildings and hoardings that hit you wherever you go. They are relics of the piping days of peace—but the boys keep asking what they mean, so here goes. Most of them read Dubonnet, Suze, Pernod Fils or Byrrh. The liquor people in France were big advertisers, especially the firms who made what



the French call apéritifs. An apéritif (ap-pay-reet-eef) is something the French used to sip one or two of before meal times, to pick up their appetites. The Dubonnet signs say "vin tonique," tonic wine, but tonic or no tonic, few Frenchmen ever took more than two at a time. If that's true of Dubonnet it's even truer of Pernod (Pair-no), a French peacetime favorite which the Germans didn't manage to drink up completely. If you ever get a bottle of it treat it like a booby trap—it's dynamite. The French pour a few drops of it into a glass of water, just to turn the water milky, and sip it slowly as an apéritif. Americans sometimes tend to swig it down like coca cola—the licorice flavor gives it a soft-drink taste—and then wake up wondering if they've been belted by an 88.

One of the most common signs of all is Vichy. It's not an advertisement for Pétain and Laval—but the name of a popular French fizz water, like White Rock. It flows from the ground in the town of Vichy, where the Laval clique hangs out.

### BEWARE OF NAZI SET UPS

This isn't a temperance lecture, but in captured German pillboxes, barracks and hideouts, all kinds of liquid loot is being uncovered—cognac,

champagne, wines and liqueurs of all kinds. The Germans apparently were lapping it up and it didn't do them good. When you run into that stuff, go easy. The Krauts are notorious counter-attackers. If they catch you likkered up after you've taken one of their strong points, you'll never sober up. To repeat, no sermon needed—just a little military horse sense. Don't let it happen to you.



### ROAD SIGNS

Then, of course, there are road signs. The Germans often move out without pulling these down so they're at your service travelling from town to town. The roads have little stone markers along the way. Remember they're not milestones, but kilometer markers. A kilometer is a little more than half-a-mile—the rule is 8 kilometers equals 5 miles. At most cross roads there are the sign posts put up by the department, forged of metal and painted blue with silver letters. The names of towns are accompanied by arrows and the distance in kilometers. The Germans had signs of their own. "Nach Carentan" for instance, means "To Carentan"; "Achtung minen" or "Attention aux Mines" "Beware of Mines." American signs reading "Mines cleared to hedges" point out safety zones for our traffic.

### TRAFFIC

The cross roads in French towns are narrow and jammed with military traffic. The French use bicycles, horses, carts and even wheelbarrows to tote their produce and belongings between their homes and the fields. The MPs have a real job on their hands keeping it all moving. Don't congregate at these cross roads. If you're in a vehicle, and want directions, pull over to the side beyond the cross roads and call the MP over. Don't block traffic. Keep to the right, same as in the U.S.A.

The country is as strange to the MPs as it is to you, however, so better travel with a map. If you ask an MP better go easy on your fancy French pronunciation. "Ees-eeen-yeec" is Iss-igg-nee to him. But if you ask a Frenchman, ask "Oo ay Ees-eeen-yeec, seel voo play?" That means "Where is Issigny, please?" To be sure, point to it on the map. The Frenchman will talk a lot and point in the right direction. Then he'll say "voo nuh poovay pah voo trompay." That means, "You can't miss it."

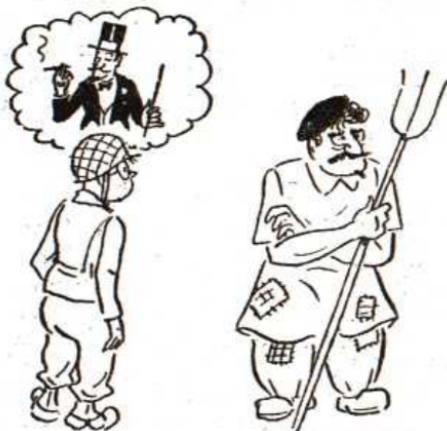
### THE FRENCH PEOPLE

You've seen pictures in the papers showing French mayors kissing the first Allied soldiers to enter their town, and the local pippins showering them with daisies, and the red carpet rolled out in front of the Mairie. Well, don't expect anything like that to happen to you. A royal reception is the exception, not the rule, in most French towns.

The French by and large seem glad to see us. But usually they're a little dazed by it all. They don't know how we're going to behave. They're still afraid of German counter-attacks and bombardments. They've been under the Nazi heel for four years and have learned that the best way to get along is to keep quiet and mind their own business. They don't talk English, anyway, and haven't any convenient way of expressing their welcome. Besides, they can't go around kissing every GI they see, which shouldn't break your heart. On top of all that, over a million of their friends and relatives are Prisoners of War in Germany, and more than a million more have been exported to work in German factories. The local folk may be liberated, but their friends and relatives are not. So don't be offended if some of the French look glum and the champagne doesn't flow. Give them a chance to know you—they'll warm up in time.

### FRENCH FASHIONS

If your idea of France was born from a mating of *Harper's Bazaar* with *Esquire*, and you expect to see the streets aflame with the latest fashions,



worn by chic mannekins (chic—sheek—means snazzy)—you'd better start again from scratch. The French you see in these little towns are wearing clothes at least four years old. The only new additions to their wardrobes are green scarves made from the parachutes that covered their fields on D-Day.

The men wear caps or little round blue beanies called casquettes. Their coats, pants and shirts are patched enough to turn *Esquire* gray. Their shoes are big, heavy, work boots of leather, if they're lucky, or wooden shoes called sabots (sab-o)—the kind you'd expect to see in Holland. The farmers wear smocks or dresses over their suits—called blousons—bloozons. The idea of men wearing dresses may seem strange to you, but don't kid yourself that a French farmer is a sissy. They work from dawn 'til dusk in the fields and never know when they may be blown up by a Jerry mine. They're tough lads.

## THE WOMEN

The women you meet in little towns are not unlike farm women in England or Northern Ireland.

These Normandy women are red checked and horny handed. There isn't one lipstick or powder puff among a score of them and the last time they invested in fancy millinery was in the spring of 1937. They haven't all had dental care, and oftentimes some teeth are missing.

But for all of that, if you go to mass some Sunday morning you'll notice some of that good old French chic crop out in spite of war, boches, and lack of new stockings. The older women wear neat black dresses or coats, and black stockings and shoes—black is the traditional color in all catholic countries where the dead are mourned for many months. In France, black has always been a fashionable color anyway—the younger girls wear a bright colored ribbon, hat, handbag or collar, and black combines well with them all.

You may have trouble telling young boys and girls apart in France. The boys wear knee length dresses that button down the front—called blouses—blooz. The girls do too.

## EASY WOMEN

If you have a Don Juan attitude towards French women, don't be a fool. You've already been told—and you'll be told again—that French women are respectable, and that young unmarried women are kept at home and closely chaperoned. Believe that—it's true. But there are whores in France, just as there are in most places—only in France they've gotten one of the biggest build-ups in the world. Whores look like whores—they're over-dressed, over-powdered and over-perfumed. They smoke in public, and they don't hide their intentions. They're on the streets—and they're in houses known as "bordels." Smart soldiers will leave them alone. The others had better remember that these easy women have been consorting with the Germans for four years. They're V.D. cesspools, so don't be a fool.

## FOOD AND DRINK

The people in Normandy strike most GIs as well nourished. There's a reason for that. With the havoc the Air Forces dealt the local railroads and other transport, the Boches weren't able to export all the beef, butter and cheese they wanted to. That doesn't mean these people lived off the fat of the land. They had to sell most of their stuff to the Germans and live on the rest, and there are serious shortages of flour and sugar. Bread is at a premium—and bread is the mainstay of the French diet. And here's something that you ought to know.

Present surpluses of food are being put away for the day when you liberate the





industrial areas of France. In Paris, for instance, they're going to need that chow badly. If we eat it ourselves it means we'll have to give over transport space needed for ammo to chow for French kids. That won't be good for you—or the kids. So lay off the local grub.

If, however, you find a farm or shop where there's food and drink lawfully for sale, don't bid up prices and ruin things for the guys that follow. One MP summed it up this way: "Get up to the front, buddy, that's where you can still get things cheap. Back here prices are sky high because some of these GIs don't know the value of a franc."

Wine is scarce in some places and fairly plentiful in others, but cider is a handy Normandy substitute. Normandy is apple country that makes a New Englander's eyes blur with home-sickness. The apple cider has occasionally been known to turn sour and become a fluid explosive called Calvados. Calvados is the name of a French department where this liquid dynamite is made. Alcoholic content? Pour a few drops on your mess kit and light it with a match. It burns like 100 percent pure alcohol.

Drink only water from the water points. Drop halazone tablets in the local water. There are pumps everywhere, in cities, towns and countryside. When you're the first to use a pump, beware of booby traps.

### PRICES

Here's a rough rule of thumb price list for certain items you may be able to buy legally from the farmers. Some of these things, to repeat, are so scarce there isn't enough for the French—so for Pete's sake, have a heart and stick to your rations. The local Civil Affairs Officer can tell you what's in supply and what you can buy. He may suggest changes in this list. (Note: one franc is worth two cents American.)

Butter, per pound	..	..	..	..	..	25-35 francs
Eggs, per dozen	..	..	..	..	..	20 francs
Cider (medium grade per liter)	..	..	..	..	..	3-4 francs
Cider (top grade per liter)	..	..	..	..	..	6 francs
Beef, per joint	..	..	..	..	..	300 francs
Cheese, camembert, per box	..	..	..	..	..	8 francs

In towns, expect to pay about twice as much, and remember that prices vary. Pay a little more or less, as your judgment dictates, but don't pull the rich American act or you'll pay through the nose. And remember: we're asking the French to live within their rations and play ball according to our rules. Don't break the rules yourself by grabbing off their chow, or bidding up the prices.



## BEER AND WINE

BEER—There isn't any. If you find a town that has some, the name is bière—bec-air. The Boches must have put it all away, and the malt and hops hereabouts are being put to other uses. Besides, France is famous for her vin ordinaire—van ordecnair. There are two kinds—vin rouge (red wine) and vin blanc (white wine). You pay your money and take your choice. Prices run from about 40 francs per bottle for a good quality wine. If you pay more, you've got a real old wine—or you're paying through the nose.

Don't object if the bottle is grimy and covered with cobwebs. That's a sign of age, and the older the wine, the better it is. Wine is one commodity on which the Yanks always have and always will take a rooking. Books have been written about the subject—and only real connoisseurs (add that to your French vocabulary) can tell what a bottle of wine is really worth.

One wise GI points to what some French people are drinking at the next table. It is probably wine from a barrel, and served in a jug called a carafe—car-aff. That's what most of the French drink—good wine and fairly cheap.

## NEWSPAPERS

Free French papers are starting to circulate, but in newly captured towns the news is typewritten and posted on doors and windows of the Mairie and other public places. Another method, however, is for a town crier and drummer to walk through the streets. The drummer beats a brief tattoo. A crowd gathers. Then the crier reads the news to the assemblage, and marches off to the next street. Watch the faces of the people as they listen. If they smile and talk, the news is good. If they look glum, the Boche has scored.



There are a few radios about. The Germans took few chances of the French listening in on the BBC. They bought up all the radios in town at their own prices and stored them or shipped them to Germany. The French are starved for news. Okay to share your Stars and Stripes or Yank with them. They enjoy the pictures—and they love to puzzle out the words.

## A TALK WITH THE MAYOR

The lad who knows all the answers about any French town is its mayor. If GIs could talk French, or if the mayor could talk English, much of the mystery about what's what and who's who in town would be cleared up. Your reporter paid a visit to one mayor a few hours after the town had been deloused of Heinies. Here's what he said, just about as he said it.

"We are mostly small farmers here. Our families have lived in this village for over 200 years. We love our country. France has always been kind to visitors. We desire to keep this reputation of being hospitable to visitors.

"If American soldiers come here and act as they would in their own homes, they will like us and we will like them. You are liberators and we are grateful. But please do not walk in our gardens or rip down our fences and gates. Don't take the locks off the doors and break down buildings to make fires. Don't take things without asking us. My wife put hot bread in the barn and someone took it. If you want something, ask for it and we will be only too happy to help you if we can. But don't take things without asking—such as eggs and vegetables.

"If you want to go to Church or the parish hall, there is always the pastor there. See him. Mass is held every morning at seven o'clock and on Sundays it is at 10.15. You are very welcome.

"Any homes you may desire to visit will be glad to have you in for a chat, but be sure you make your motives clear before you go in. The people here do not have much to offer—perhaps a little meat, vegetables, cider or wine. We have no tea or coffee. But if you wish to be friends and talk, you will be welcome, I am sure of that.

### ***How To Treat The Mayor's Daughter***

"Do not ask the girl in the house to take a walk with you. The young lady's place is at home with her parents. The fellow who goes out with the girl must be well known to her family. There was much trouble about these matters in the last war, and we wish to avoid such trouble now.

"You may, if you wish, bring a gift to the girl's family. There is no harm in it. But already we think Americans have brought us the finest gift of all—liberty.

"Cigarettes, candy, sugar, soap—these are things we haven't had so long it is like gold to get them. We expect nothing in return for our hospitality—it is done for patriotism.



"We like you to talk our language. If you do, we can make you understand many things about our country. We will be patient with you and try to teach you. It isn't your fault that you can't speak French.

"It will be better for you to forget our politics. Even the French people have a difficult time figuring out our own politics. It will be even more difficult for you.

"We still believe in liberty, equality and fraternity. But we want it to be more than words this time. Before the war they were words, that's all. Now we want these things to have a real meaning for the man in the street.

"We don't want our prices to go sky high. We don't want you to overpay for the things you buy. When the Boches were here, we had to bring all our products to a central market. Most of it was taken by the Boches as rations for their army. For this they paid certain fixed prices in their own money. They then set special prices for all the food left over and these prices were high, such as 150 francs for a kilo of butter. It made no difference to the Boches how high the prices were—they printed as much money as they needed and it had no value. But it drove the French people

to the black-market. Prices were without reason. Now things are coming down in price and we have more food than when the Boches were here. But don't pay more than the correct price or you will make it hard for us all.

"The Boches in general were not well liked, but they did not harm anyone. Some of them were vandals and drunks, but discipline in the German Army is hard and the most were well behaved. When they left, however, they took what they wanted and paid for it with their valueless money. We had no liberty while they were here—we could say nothing or do nothing except at the risk of our lives. In four years we have had to put up with much. We learned during these years the true meaning of liberty.



"Hitler and Nazism is a system of tyranny. It has brought great disaster and hardship and even slavery to people for many years. A democracy well educated and run by proper representatives is the only good way to live.

"Having tasted Nazi slavery for four years, we are very happy to have liberty again and to enjoy the freedom the French people were used to."

#### **NOTE ON HOW TO LOSE THE WAR**

The Mayor has the right idea. You see plenty of chickens, ducks and geese on the farms—and the vegetable patches look well cared for. The Germans didn't get drunk and beat up the local folk. As individuals, they behaved pretty well.

If you get likkered up and snitch people's property, the French may think the Germans are right guys and we're not. That's putting a permanent peace behind the eight-ball.

#### **CIVIL AFFAIRS**

One of our Civil Affairs officers is already at work in most French towns we've liberated. His job is to help make things easier for the French people and for us. He looks for ways of putting the local manpower to work, and he seeks to get local industries on their feet and producing the stuff the people and the army need. If the army needs manpower—laborers, for instance—he can help find the needed men. In large measure, the way the people and the army get along depends on him.



Here is the advice of a Civil Affairs officer with an American outfit on the Normandy front :

"Our soldiers have heard so much about collaborators that some of them are suspicious of all the French. Also, there are sometimes spies and snipers in French towns who have made things rough on our men, and so their wind is up about the natives.

"What they ought to do is put themselves in the Frenchman's shoes.

Nearly all the French had to collaborate to some extent with the Germans. In four years of occupation, they had to get along in some way, and they did. But the actual Nazi lovers are very few. When you really get down and investigate each case, you find that they almost all hate the Boches, and are happy to be delivered from them. They shouldn't forget the French Resistance either—they may never see it, but it's raising hell behind the German lines.

### BE FRIENDLY

"The thing for the troops to do is to be friendly. One of the big shortages here is tobacco. A cigarette goes far. The kids here don't ask for bon-bons or chewing gum. What they say is 'cigarette pour papa.' They want cigarettes for papa. (Editorial note : gum doesn't hurt either.)

"Don't buy stuff the people here need—and that includes almost everything. Tobacco, soap, sugar, bread, coffee, tea are very short.

"Stay out of civilian houses unless military necessity requires it. The people are law abiding—they expect us to be too. Our men are behaving magnificently—but now and then some of them come across an empty house, make themselves at home in it and help themselves. One family returned—11 kids, papa and mama, with number 12 on the way—and found GIs in possession. Lay off civilian property—that's the main thing."

### GERMAN OCCUPATION

A French cop is a gendarme (jon darm) to you. He wears a black jacket with Sam Browne belt, and blue breeches with leather leggings. His cap resembles that of a French officer, with a grenade insignia like that worn by our ordnance. They're good men and out to help our soldiers every way they can. They're paid between 2500 and 4000 francs a month—\$80 is top base pay plus allowances for their families. Men you see in shiny brass helmets are probably pompiers—(pomp-yay) firemen. Others who look like veterans of the war of 1870 with little caps and broad red sashes are the air raid wardens.

### YOU TOO CAN TALK FRENCH

The toughest nut the GI has to crack in France is the language. It stops him at every turn. He can't give a girl a line. He can't ask questions.



He can't buy a potato. He feels handicapped and tongue tied—all because the French can't understand English even though he shouts it at the top of his lungs.

To talk grammatically correct French takes years of study. To talk idiomatic French—that is, French the way the French talk it—is a matter of living with the French for years. But the French are a lively people. They talk with their hands a lot—and if a smart Yank uses his hands and knows a few words, he can get along. Here's all the French you need for some of the most common fixes a soldier gets into in France.

### LAUNDRY

Go up to a woman in the farm house, point to your clothes and say "lavez" (lah-vay). That means wash. Then point to a piece of soap. Say "savon" (sav-von). She needs the soap to do the washing. Then say "combien?" (com-bee-an). That means how much. You may have



to work out the answer with your fingers, or with pencil and paper. Have her write the price down—that serves two purposes. It fixes the price and seals the bargain. Other words you should know are oui (wee), meaning yes, or non (nawn) meaning no—but a nod or a shake of the head does as well. If you want to get the stuff washed fast say "bientôt" (bee-an-tow). That means soon.

### SHOPPING

If you see what you want, point to it and ask, "combien?" and settle the price in writing. French numbers, in case you're serious about it, are:

<b>un</b>	<i>unn</i>	one
<b>deux</b>	<i>duh</i>	two
<b>trois</b>	<i>trwah</i>	three
<b>quatre</b>	<i>catruh</i>	four
<b>cing</b>	<i>sank</i>	five
<b>six</b>	<i>sees</i>	six
<b>sept</b>	<i>set</i>	seven
<b>huit</b>	<i>weet</i>	eight
<b>neuf</b>	<i>muff</i>	nine
<b>dix</b>	<i>dees</i>	ten

<b>onze</b>	<i>unz</i>	eleven
<b>douze</b>	<i>dooz</i>	twelve
<b>treize</b>	<i>trays</i>	thirteen
<b>quatorze</b>	<i>catorz</i>	fourteen
<b>quinze</b>	<i>canz</i>	fifteen
<b>seize</b>	<i>says</i>	sixteen
<b>dix sept</b>	<i>dees set</i>	seventeen
<b>dix huit</b>	<i>dees weet</i>	eighteen
<b>dix neuf</b>	<i>dees nuff</i>	nineteen
<b>vingt</b>	<i>vangt</i>	twenty

### EATING

The words you need in a restaurant are :

Manger (manjay) eat. Soupe is soup. Viande (vec-ond) is meat. Bœuf (buff) is beef. Porc is pork. Pain (pan) is bread. Beurre (burr) is butter. Conserve (con-sairv) is jam. Oeufs (uhf) are eggs. Café is coffee. Eau chaud (o shode) is hot water. If you want anything else draw a picture or put on an act. They don't have it so you're wasting your time, anyway.

When you're finished say "merci" (mair-see) — thanks — and "l'addition" (lad-dis-yon)—the bill. Leave about 10 percent of the bill for a tip—15 percent if the service is really good.

### HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

If you meet a girl, or want to make a hit with her old man, just keep these words on tap. Point to him or her and ask "votre nom?" (votra nom). If you use the right tone of voice and sound friendly, it means "What's your name?" Better tell your own—"moi (mwa) John Jones" (me—John Jones). Then pull a few cracks like these, and you are in with the old man. "France est joli"—Frahns ay johlee. That means France is beautiful. "J'aime France"—Jame Frahns—I like France. "Je suis Americain"—Juh swee Sam-ay-ree-can—I am American. "Finit le Boche"—Fee-nee-luh Bosh—The German is finished. "Cigarette?"—See-gar-ett?—or better, offer him your pack. Throw in a few ouis (wee) every once in a while, and bein (bee-an), meaning good; and you'll do all right. If you can't remember any of this just slip him the cigarette, and you're a tin god.

As for the girl, remember joli and jame. Point to her hair and say "Johlee." Point to her eyes and say "Johlee." After that you say "Jame Frahns"; say "Juh voo zame"—that means "I like you"—and you're on the beam.

A few cracks about the weather help to fill in time. Il fait beau—Il fay bow—means the weather's nice. Mal is bad. Je viens de Chicago—Juh vee an duh Chicago—I come from Chicago, explains your background. Je n'ai pas femme—Juh nay pah fem—means you're not married. After that it's up to you. But keep it clean and take it easy. You're a novelty to the girls—they'll appreciate it if you go slow.

### ASKING DIRECTIONS

Where is Paris, is Oo ay Paree? Voila (vwah la) is there. Ici (eese) is here. The toilet is la toilette (twa-lett). The railroad is gare (gahr). The road is chemin (shem-man). Where can I sleep is Oo dormeer?

### VIVE LA FRANCE

One Joe who may be our Ambassador to France some day has found the answer to French-American relations. In a café or with any group of Frenchmen he's with he lifts his glass and says: "Veev la France." That means long live France. Then they say: "Veev Amereek," and then he says: "Victoire"—Veek-twa—Victory. He also says words like merci—mairsee—thanks; au revoir—oh ruh-vwah—good-bye; mon ami—mon amee—my friend; bonjour—bon joor—hello; and bon soir—bon swa—good evening.

Then he shakes hands with everybody—the French are great hand shakers.

PS.—If your French is a big success you may be kissed.



## *How to prepare this Army Talk*

**M**OST of us know that we need to understand France and the French people just as we have been helped in understanding England and the British people. We are going to be in France and many of us will live there for quite some time.



The present issue of ARMY TALKS is written for all of us by one of us. Our roving reporter spent three weeks in Normandy just after D-Day and renewed his acquaintance with a country and people he had visited before. He saw the places, the problems and the people that all of us want to get near to—and he put down on paper as many answers as he could.



The France we are seeing or will see is not at its best. It has been despoiled and disheartened for four years. But the people and the customs are still there. They are the core to understanding any country. They are what will make the country interesting and liveable for us.



Much of the text of this issue is readable : All of it is worth reading. The discussion leader can make choices and take from the text what best applies to his outfit. Discussion will range from gripes to questions. The answers will sometimes be simple and ready ; often they will need to be sifted out.



To quote from a previous volume : “ As you are undoubtedly aware, France is being systematically bled by Germany. Every year 600,000 tons of corn, 10,000 tons of cheese, 650 tons of fodder, 1,100,000 tons of

hay, 225 tons of meat, 250,000 tons of potatoes and 4,400,000 gallons of wine are sent to Germany, not to mention the financial tax. The wonder is not that the French should be broken in spirit, but that they should not be. And the evidence indicates that their old dauntless courage still carries on despite a cruel master and traitors among their own family."



Countless bull sessions have already taken place on this subject. Make this one an outstanding one. Use the earlier issues of ARMY TALKS : "What We'll Find in Europe," Volume I, No. 11, "France," Volume II, No. 8, and "France Underground," Volume II, No. 24, for background material.



There is no need to feel that this topic only applies to some of the Army. It applies to all of us whether we are Air Force, SOS, Infantry or Tanks. It offers an opportunity to the discussion leader to go to town.



Here are a few questions which may help you begin the discussion :—

1. How can loose spending do damage to both the native French and ourselves? (pp. 6, 14-15.)
2. Why is it necessary to "go slow" on food supplies even if there is a local surplus? (pp. 13-14.)
3. What function does the Civil Affairs Officer perform? How can he help you? (pp. 14, 17-18.)
4. Why are special VD precautions necessary? (p. 13.)
5. What are some instances of Franco-American friendship in the past? (a) Financial and military aid given by France during the American Revolution. (b) The presentation of the Statue of Liberty to the United States. (c) Cooperation in the first World War. What can you add?



Introduce the topic with a talk of not more than ten minutes. Summarize the discussion five minutes before the close of the period. Link your discussion if you can with the American Forces Network program, Saturdays at 1430 hours.

## **TIP TO UNIT COMMANDERS**

### **ARMY TALKS ON THE AIR**

**Tune in on your American Forces Network station for a dramatized presentation of the week's Army Talk.**



**TIME:** Saturday, 19 August 1944  
at 1430-1500 hours.

**PLACE:** Any convenient spot  
where you have a radio  
and a room for your  
platoon to listen in  
and discuss the subject.

**STATION:**  
American Forces Network.

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**T**HE subject matter in this week's ARMY TALKS will appear in an illustrated GI digest in the Warweek supplement of Stars and Stripes for August 17, 1944. Purpose: to enable the soldier to enter the discussion with prior knowledge of the subject. ARMYTALKS, Warweek and American Forces Network are striving to make the American soldier in this Theater the best informed soldier in the world. ARE YOU DOING YOUR SHARE?