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6. LIBERATION of PARIS

Announcing that Hitler's forces were ousted from Paris, De Gaulle said: "Paris violated ... Paris martyred ... but Paris liberated." This photo depicts jubilant residents of the city, celebrating its return to the French people. The [Bibliothèque nationale de France](#), which maintains [this picture](#), gives it this description: "26 August 1944 - Paris, France. Thousands turn out in the Place de la Concorde in the heart of Paris to cheer General Charles de Gaulle, the day after the French capital was liberated from the Nazi occupation."

After D-Day, and the Allied landings on the northern French coast, General Eisenhower did not plan a trip to Paris ... at least, not immediately. His objective was Germany. But something happened, along the way, to change his mind.

As [Allied soldiers advanced](#) through France, people in Paris learned about [another Allied landing](#) on the French coast ... this time in the south. While the French rejoiced, the occupying Germans worried. Perhaps they should leave the city?

As German troops began to evacuate, Parisians went on strike. Metro workers, police officers, postal workers and others refused to work. In four days, their collective actions caused a spontaneous uprising.

Led by the FFI (the underground French Resistance), [Parisians attacked](#) their German oppressors. [Barricading streets](#), and shooting back, they created disruption everywhere. It was time to contact Eisenhower for assistance.

General de Gaulle, still in charge of the Free French Forces, told the Supreme Allied Commander he would attack Paris himself - without Eisenhower's approval - if Allied troops weren't dispatched. They were needed to help de Gaulle free Paris from Nazi control.

Agreeing things had changed, Eisenhower granted de Gaulle's request. Not only would the French general have a chance to help liberate his capital, he would have [American forces](#) fighting at his side.

Hitler, meanwhile, heard the news. If he couldn't have Paris, he wanted it destroyed, so he ordered his military commander in the occupied city - General Dietrich von Choltitz - to demolish whatever he could.

Despite misgivings, von Choltitz ordered his troops to mine Parisian bridges and prepare to implement Hitler's directive. But ... on the 20th of August ... he agreed to a cease-fire with the Resistance. Sporadic fighting continued, however, until a momentous event happened on the 24th.

General Jacques Leclerc, leading some of de Gaulle's forces, [reached the city](#). By the next day, more Free French soldiers had arrived. Despite areas of intense German fighting, the [liberators of Paris](#) reached von Choltitz's headquarters. Without resisting, the erstwhile commander of Paris signed a surrender document.

Although some German troops refused to give up, leading to pockets of continued fighting, General de Gaulle entered the city on the 26th of August. After four years, [Paris was free](#).

The war, in Europe, would continue for another eight months - until Hitler (by then [an ill man](#)) killed himself on the 30th of April, 1945. Like Goebbels, he'd order his body to be completely burned so no one could desecrate it.

But ... also like Goebbels ... there wasn't enough fuel in the bunker to carry out the Fuhrer's wishes. His partially burned body was discovered and, what was left, was removed by the Soviet Army.

Years later, after the fall of the Soviet Union, an extraordinary item was produced by the Russian Archives. Although Hitler's scalp had long since deteriorated, his [skull reportedly remained](#) for all the world to see.

Immediately after the war was over, films were made about Nazis on the loose. One of the most famous was "[The Stranger](#)," starring Orson Welles. As a former Nazi killer, prepared to kill again - to protect his new

identity - the lead character presaged the actions of real-life escaped Nazis.
Efforts to bring such killers to justice continued throughout the rest of the 20th century.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/LIBERATION-of-PARIS-Inglourious-Basterds>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/LIBERATION-of-PARIS-Inglourious-Basterds>

Questions 2 Ponder

Can Public Uprisings Change the Course of Events?

What was Hitler trying to achieve by occupying France? Was it inevitable that he (and his objectives) would be defeated?

How did the uprisings, by the people of Paris, lead to Hitler's ultimate defeat in France?

Without those Parisian uprisings, do you think General Eisenhower would have sent Allied troops to help General de Gaulle recapture the French capital?

After the Germans were ousted from Paris, de Gaulle made this announcement (translated into English): "Paris violated ... Paris martyred ... but Paris liberated." What does the picture at the top of this chapter tell you about the liberation of Paris?

Is Hitler's dream of a "Thousand Year Reich" similar, or not similar, to the idea of a "Global Caliphate?" Explain your answer.

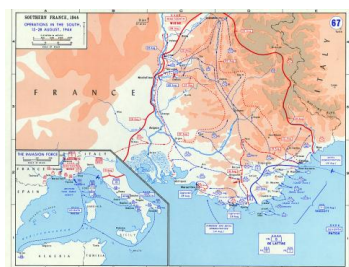
Media Stream



Liberation of France - Chartres

Photo by Robert Capa, online courtesy U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Liberation-of-France-Chartres>



Operation Dragoon - Invasion Force Lands in France

Operation Dragoon map, prepared by the U.S. Military Academy and online, courtesy the [USMA web site](#).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Operation-Dragoon-Invasion-Force-Lands-in-France>



Paris Uprising - August, 1944

Vintage postcard of the French Resistance at work in Paris, August 1944. Image online, courtesy [Anglo German Historical Trust](#).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Paris-Uprising-August-1944>



Barricades - Paris Uprising, August 1944

Screen shot, from "La Liberation de Paris," online courtesy [Archives.org](#).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Barricades-Paris-Uprising-August-1944>



Liberation of Paris - 28th Infantry Division

Photo online, courtesy National Archives and Records Administration, image NA 111-SC-193197.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Liberation-of-Paris-28th-Infantry-Division>



Liberating Paris - Gen. Jacques Leclerc's Troops Arrive

Photo online, courtesy Library of Congress - digital image fsac.1a55001

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Liberating-Paris-Gen.-Jacques-Leclerc-s-Troops-Arrive>



Paris - A Liberated City, August of 1944

Photo online, courtesy [Fondation de la Résistance](#).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Paris-A-Liberated-City-August-of-1944>



LIBERATION of PARIS

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>



Liberation of Paris - WWII

Clip from a documentary on the liberation of Paris, aired by the History Channel, online via YouTube.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Liberation-of-Paris-WWII>



Hitler - Last Known Film Footage

Historical film footage of Adolf Hitler included in this clip from *The Secret Life of Adolf Hitler*. Online, courtesy Archive.org.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hitler-Last-Known-Film-Footage>

The Stranger - Orson Welles

"The Stranger," a 1946 film by Orson Welles, is online - in its entirety - courtesy Archive.org.

Director:

Orson Welles

Producer:

Sam Spiegel (as S. P. Eagle)

Screenplay Writers:

Anthony Veiller

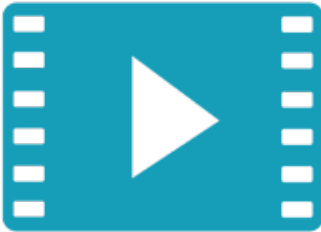
Victor Trivas

Decla Dunning

Uncredited Writers:

John Huston

Orson Welles



Starring:

Orson Welles - Franz Kindler / Professor Charles Rankin

Loretta Young - Mary Longstreet Rankin

Edward G. Robinson - Mr. Wilson

Philip Merivale - Judge Adam Longstreet (Mary's father)

Richard Long - Noah Longstreet (Mary's brother)

Konstantin Shayne - Konrad Meinike

Byron Keith - Dr. Jeffrey Lawrence

Billy House - Mr. Potter

Martha Wentworth - Sara

Cinematography:

Russell Metty

Studio:

International Pictures

Distributor:

RKO Radio Pictures

Release Date:

May 25, 1946

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/The-Stranger-Orson-Welles>