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Dear Mr.Collins -

I have just finished reading "Paris brule-t-il " and want to congratulate you and M.Dominique Lapiere for your splendid achievement. Le recit est tellement vivant that I have re-lived those glorious days all over again.

I was then chief of the Foreign Liaison on Gen.Bradley's staff, in Edie Sibert's section, G-2., and so present at the gare Montparnasse from the early morning. When they brought v.Choltitz I was sent in to ask him for the text of his order to cease all resistance in the various sections of the city where fighting was still going on, as I was the only person available who wrote German. I then typed 18 such orders (photographed in your book) on a very old and tottering typewriter in the station masters room, took it to v.Choltitz for signature.

The above is not important, as anyone could have doen if he knew German. There is a point which I would like you to know: I was a captain in the US Army but a Polish citizen, and as Warsaw was often on peoples minds in those days, and in connection with the situation in Paris, it was somewhat symbolic that a Pole would have to write v.Choltitz' order. If I am not mistaken Lt.Col.Robert Low, from G-2 V Corps who was also present, and called on me for the above purpose, told v.Choltitz "a Pole wrote your order".

During dinner at the Ritz with Sibert, Bruce, and Ernie Hemingway & his FFI we saw four ageless ladies at a table in the corner: the maitre d'hotel told me that they had lived in the hotel during the whole occupation, and one of them, and American, had not left her room once during the whole four years, and drank four or five bottles of Bordeaux every day - large gats and feathery boas - you can see the kind.

Again with warmest thanks for this wonderful book, to you and Lapiere, I am

sincerely

Paul Sapiaha

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Colonel Chet Hansen  
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Dear Chet -

I am a bit late in answering Bert's letter to us all Eagles; the reason is thta it was the end of the year and so extremely busy, and you will forgive.

I am sending you the copy of what some years ago I wrote to Collins (Is Paris burning) which is not very interesting ot exciting, however it may fill some gap in the souvenir of the liberation of Paris.

There is one amusing incident which I did not tell, and that is that when we, Gen. Sibert and I got to the Monparnasse station there was alot of shooting going on, and as shooting in town is rather different from elsewhere, ricochet bullets were flying around. I asked Gen. S to lie down as cover was a bit too far, and so we were ofcourse lying in the gutter - the General remarked that it was probably the first time that a captain tells a general to get down into a gutter. To appease him I gave him a piece of braad, rather stale.

When the 2nd Armoured (French) found an open car for Gen. de Gaulle, he drove away standing up in it, and looked like a wooden statue, as he never smiled at the cheering crowd - this was typical of his attitude toward the public, and to the very last he never changed. As de Gaulle was chief of state after Paris was cleared of Germans, he received Gen. Eisenhower standing in his office, and after the few moments they had together, did not accompy our General to the door.

When I was in Bruxelles in November 44 there was some national anniversary, and a ceremony in the Cathedral. General Erskine was then governor, and was present. After this ceremony I saw the foll. scene: Gen. Erskine came out of church, and got into his Rolls; a window on the left side of the Rolls was open, and I saw a fellow in an old bowler, and a mackintosh stick his head into the car saying to Erskine: a b d i c a t e.

That is about it. I am not sure you want to use any of it, but I thought I better send it to you. And now my most respectful regards to our General, and lots of good luck to you, as ever your

P.Sapiuha

Dear Mr. Collins -

As promised I have tried to reconstitute in my memory the happenings just before and during the Paris operation. I went to Eze sur mer to spend two days with Albert Le Bel (his name is spelled Le Bel - two words) who at the time was chief of the French Liaison mission to 12th A. Group, and whom you mention p.230 and on, to refresh my memory and discuss with him your questions.

To begin with, I would like to say, that there was never any question as to the liberation of Paris by French troops, and so Leclerc - the question only was when, at what stage of operations against the Germans. Neither Le Bel, nor myself - and we were in constant and daily contact with Gen. Sibert - were under the impression that he was "against any change of strategic plans" during the last days before the crucial decisions were taken. He was aware of his great responsibility as G-2 of Army Group, and as long as I knew him based his opinions on facts only. Col. Le Bel and myself, as chief of the Liaison section G-2 of Army Group, and the officers of (the French Mission assigned to most units from Army, Corps, Division, down to battalion, <sup>French liaison officers</sup>) collected as much information as possible, and channelled all to Gen Sibert personally, as well as to the G-2 of the different and pertinent commanders. All informants with whom we were in touch during those days agreed on the situation in Paris - i.e. that if left without our quick intervention all-out reprisals by the Germans were to be expected resulting <sup>probably</sup> in a battle for Paris which was to be avoided at all cost.

Major de Legge of the French Army, LeBel's assistant and deputy, came with us to Rambouillet (this must have been 22 Aug.) where he had been garrisoned before the war, and where he knew many residents; we therefore left him there to get as much information about Paris as possible. He returned during the ~~night~~ same night to Laval and reported having phoned to the Prefet de la Seine in Paris who gave him a very exact picture of the situation, and pointed out the most urgent need for intervention by

allied troops - this was one more confirmation on info which we already had.

It is worth mentioning, entre parenthese, that when we arrived at the hotel Le Grand Veneur in Rambouillet during the afternoon of that 22 Aug., we found Ernie Hemmigway in GI dress, with no insignia whatsoever with a rather motley entourage of FFI's. Ernie asked me immediately what if any decisions had been taken on the Paris operation, being very adamant himself that Paris must be taken immediately, and was evidently quite au courant of the situation ~~the situation~~ there. He also told me that he would be one of the first in Paris. This last remark, I think, was prompted by the difficulties he had to face having "trespassed" as an accredited journalist because of ~~making~~ carrying ~~xxxx~~ weapons.

Before ~~we~~ going to Rambouillet we had been in Chartres. Here a French captain and a doctor (names have escaped us) who both had just come out of Paris, informed us in detail on the situation later confirmed by the Prefet de La Seine to de Legge. We took the captain to HQ. XX Corps, and saw Gen. Walton H. Walker, commanding. Gen Walker decided to send the captain to Gen. Patton, 3rd. Army. Whether this captain was Gallois or not, I cannot recall - both Le Bel and myself think it was not.

Personally I do not remember having had any contact with Gallois - I knew about his presence at 12 A.Gr.HQ and that Le Bel had spoken to him, also that he was advised by the latter to go as soon as possible to Leclerc's HQ as that would be his best chance to get back to Paris quickly. As far as I remember, this is also what happened.

I remember Leclerc's arrival at HQ in Laval on the day of the Grandvill SHAEF meeting, and his impatient waiting at the airstrip for Gen Bradley's and Siberts return from that meeting, which took place late in the afternoon. Sibert arrived first, and informed Leclerc that he would have to march on Paris, Gen. Bradley then landed, confirmed this, and ~~added~~

told him to get his marching orders from his Corps commander, Gen. Leonhard Gerow, Vth Corps - adding the phrases mentioned by you in the book. Gallois was definitely not present during this scene at the airstrip, nor was he at HQ 12 A.Gr. anymore.

We were aware of Hitler's orders to make Paris into a bastion to be defended street by street, and of the mining of the bridges. I did not know about <sup>what</sup> was going on in Warsaw at this point - I was too busy with our own war - and only learnt scraps of news about the rising from friends in Paris.

After v.Choltitz had been brought to the Gare Montparnasse, Lt. Col Low of G-2 Vth Corps, an old friend of mine, came in to the ~~office~~ where I was, and asked if I spoke and wrote German fluently; having confirmed, he told me to follow him, <sup>adding</sup> and that I must ask von Choltitz for the wording of his order to all still resisting German units to ~~cease~~ <sup>cease</sup> fire. Low and I entered the station master's offices, where von Choltitz was sitting at a desk. Having saluted him, I asked him in German for his order which he dictated to me. He looked grim and thoroughly <sup>beat in</sup> at the end. I wrote his order with 18 copies on an old and rather unwieldy typewriter and having finished called Low; we went in to Choltitz' office together. Low then asked him to sign the 18 copies - and added, pointing at me in English: Polish - I translated Low's request, v.Choltitz having had a good look at me, picked up a pen and signed 18 times - he said nothing however. The order was then distributed among Leclerc's officers.

I do not remember any comments from either Low or any officer of the Vth Corps on Leclerc's acceptance of the surrender. It all happened so fast that we could only watch from a distance, and as for me, I felt it to be quite normal, as Leclerc's orders were to take Paris, and his officers captured v.Choltitz.

I saw de Gaulle after his arrival at the Montparnasse station and watched his departure in the open car in which he was standing - what struck me

and others, and we all commented on it, was his stiff and unsmiling figure passing through crowds of enthusiastically cheering people. At about 6 pm. General Sibert decided we should go into town - I suggested the Ritz to be our goal for this occasion. We started out in our jeep, and it took us a good  $3/4$  hour ~~to~~ to make our way there. When we arrived, the management received us with all signs of the greatest joy - as we went to our rooms, the maids hugged and kissed us - we already had heads and faces full of lipstick from our slow progress through the boulevards and especially the place de la Concorde. Having washed, we met in the restaurant where we were joined by Col. David Bruce of the OSS and sat down to a meal of powdered egg omelet, with canned peas and a pear compote - food was scarce and not good, but of course the champagne was excellent. As I wrote you, in each corner there was one be-hatted and be-boad lady. The maitre d'hotel told me three were English and one was American. The latter had spent all the years of the occupation in her room seeing no-one, and drank 4 bottles of red wine a day with food served in her room.

At a long table in the middle of the restaurant was Ernie, with his armed escort of seven. They had all been drinking for some time and were too merry for any comments. Ernie came over to our table saying "I made it" and we all drank to Paris, to France and to ourselves - I then joined him at his table and again toasts were exchanged with his seven men. The evening ended in a very high mood, and the lack of hot water <sup>in the bathrooms</sup> was a saving - we slept soundly with the feeling of greatest elation and gratitude for the way things had gone.