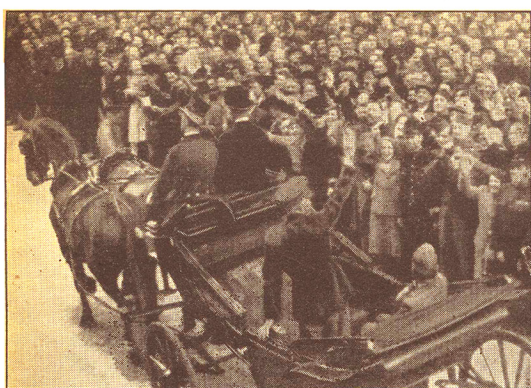


Newsweek

JUNE 25, 1945

Ike's Back!

Tumultuous American Welcomes
Climax Adulation in London, Paris



In London, General Eisenhower waves to cheering crowds from an open carriage;

The Skymaster winging into Washington this Monday had flown many a distinguished passenger since it was commissioned last July: notably, to Yalta, President Roosevelt (for whom it had been specially built and luxuriously appointed). Now, settling to earth at the National Airport, the big four-engined transport ended the latest of its stirring missions—one on which President Truman himself had sent it: the homecoming of General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower.

'Good Old Ike': The supreme commander at whose brilliant direction Allied armies had fought through to victory in Europe came back with the frenzied plaudits of London and Paris still ringing in his ears. Except possibly to Woodrow Wilson in 1919, never before had Europe paid such tribute to an American.

The British capital had its turn on June 12. Londoners heaped upon Eisenhower almost every conceivable honor they could give a foreigner. In ancient pageantry at the bomb-marked Guildhall, gold-and-scarlet robed dignitaries led by the Lord Mayor presented him with the honorary freedom of the City of London and a gold-encrusted sword carried by the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo (a token gift—promptly returned to its museum resting place—pending completion of a special blade with the general's name on it forged by the maker of the Stalingrad victory sword). At Buckingham Palace King George conferred upon him the exclusive Order of Merit, never before granted an American.



in Paris, he rides with General de Gaulle .



. . . at the Washington airport his wife gazes adoringly;

From Temple Bar, along Fleet Street, up Ludgate Hill, past St. Paul's and into Cheapside, Eisenhower drove in an open landau drawn by two spanking bays. Bronzed, grinning modestly, he waved as Londoners cheered "Good Old Ike." From a balcony outside the Mansion House, the Allied commander-in-chief joked with the throng below: "I have as much right to be down in the crowd yelling as you have." In more serious vein, he captivated the British at the Guildhall by declaring that neither London nor his home town of Abilene, Kans., "which are sisters under the skin, will sell her birthright for physical safety, her liberty for mere existence."

'Vive Eek': In Paris on June 14 the warm pattern of popular acclaim recurred. Just five years to the day Nazi conquerors goose-stepped into the French capital, Eisenhower drove in triumphant motorcade down the Champs Elysées. Crowding its curbs, perched atop trees, lamp-posts, and roofs, Frenchmen shouted their special greeting: "Vive, Eek!" (Ike).

At the Arc de Triomphe General de Gaulle pinned on Eisenhower's jacket the French Cross of Liberation. Later the French leader gave him the gold-hilted sword Napoleon wore as First Consul and also a personal gift: a sapphire-studded gold cigarette case. At the Hôtel de Ville, where the municipal council prepared to make him an honorary citizen of Paris, Eisenhower asserted amid loud applause: "Berlin is destroyed. To me that's a comfort, and I hope it is the same to you."

Two days later, at Orly Airfield, four transports warmed up for the journey to America. With Eisenhower was a party of 54 selected officers (including his son, John) and enlisted men (including a private first class). Two of the party were Negroes; fully nineteen were from Kansas. The general commented: "I must say that when I face my first five-day schedule in the United States, I do it with fear and trembling."

Hail the Conquering Hero: That schedule hit a new high in a nation noted for lavish ovations. In a blaze of feverish excitement, preparations had gone on for weeks: a mad scramble of official committees readying parades, speeches, luncheons, and other receptions for which demand for tickets far exceeded the supply.

The program included five separate welcomes: on Monday, Washington; Tuesday and largest, New York (featuring a ball game between the New York Giants and Boston Braves, a miles-long motorcade past an estimated 2,000,000 spectators, a formal dinner, and a "surprise party" at Central Park); on Wed-



—in his home town of Abilene his 83-year-old mother waits

nesday, the United States Military Academy, at West Point; Thursday and briefest, a three-hour stopover in Kansas City, Mo.; also on Thursday, smallest and folksiest, the general's home town of Abilene, climaxed by a family reunion at the home of his mother, 83-year-old Mrs. Ida Eisenhower.

The general's first stop, U.S.A., provided a magnificent sampling of his hold over the hearts of his countrymen. Rugged and handsome in a summer uniform (which, on a few hours' notice, Saks Fifth Avenue tailors flew to Paris to fit when the Army suddenly remembered the June heat), Eisenhower strode smiling from his plane. Overhead a 100-plane fighter and bomber escort which had rendezvoused with the homecomers 50 miles offshore swooped low in the brilliant sunlight. The general's face broke into a grin. "Hello, Mamie!" he called to his wife (they had last met in January 1944, when he returned for a brief, unpublicized rest), threw his arms around her, and gave her a long kiss—which they refused to reenact for the cameras. "Oh, God, it's swell to be back!" the general murmured.

Next Eisenhower took his place in the No. 1 car of a lengthy cavalcade of command and reconnaissance cars, their canvas tops down. (The No. 2 car carried Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, his chief of staff, and Master Sgt. Michael J. McKeogh, his chauffeur.) Tumultuously an unprecedented crowd of more than 500,000 roared a welcome. Many were government workers excused from work (with no charge against annual leave). Down Pennsylvania Avenue the procession rolled—under two 100-foot-high fire ladders forming a triumphal V-arch.

At the general's request, his entire entourage, from top to lowest rank, was included in the festivities. Eisenhower Day in the capital whirled along: the keys to the city; a joint session of Congress; a Hotel Statler luncheon (after a frantic search, the menu included chicken); a press conference; a quiet call at the White House so arranged because the President did not want to hog the general's show (meeting Eisenhower for the first time, Truman gave him his third Distinguished Service Medal); finally, in the evening, a dinner at the executive mansion.

In Pershing's Place: The returning hero struck the day's most solemn note in his address on Capitol Hill. On the same spot in the House chamber nearly

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26 years ago his counterpart in the last war had spoken—General of the Armies John J. Pershing, now 84 and too feeble to leave his suite at Walter Reed Hospital. In a grave voice devoid of oratorical flourish, Eisenhower gave the chamber this message from his fighting men:

“The soldier knows how grim and black was the outlook for the Allies in 1941 and '42 . . . To his mind the problems of peace can be no more difficult . . . He knows that in war the threat of separate annihilation tends to hold Allies together; he hopes we can find in peace a nobler incentive to produce the same unity.”



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