TOP SECRET TOP SECRET

SHAEF
STAFF MESSAGE CONTROL
INCOMING MESSAGE

EYES ONLY

AGWAR SHAEF 1102/29

Filed April 291457Z TOR April 291815B

~~SECRET~~

PRIORITY

Personal secret file - Patton case.

FROM : GENERAL MARSHALL.

TO : GENERAL EISENHOWER FOR HIS EYES ONLY.

REF NO : W-29722, 29 April 1944.

Reference your S-50908 regarding PATTON: His remarks as quoted have created a stir throughout the UNITED STATES. I quote excerpts from an editorial this morning in the Washington Post: "General PATTON has progressed from simple assault on individuals to collective assault on entire nationalities. As Congressman MUNDT observed, he has now 'succeeded in slapping the face of every one of the UNITED NATIONS except GREAT BRITAIN'. The General insists that he excepted the SOVIET UNION too. But the distinction does not seem to us to be vital". The editorial then refers to his remarks on welcoming the Germans and Italians into hell and also his reference to the "English ladies" and "American dames", with this comment "this was intended no doubt as gallantry and perhaps as a rough sort of military humor. The truth is however that it is neither gracious nor amusing. We do not mean to be prissy about the matter but we think that Lieutenant Generals even temporary ones ought to talk with rather more dignity than this. When they do not they run the danger of losing the respect of the men they command and the confidence of the public they serve. We think that this has happened to General PATTON. Whatever his merits as a strategist or tactician he has revealed glaring defects as a leader of men. It is more than fortunate that these have become apparent before the Senate takes action to pass upon his recommended promotion in permanent rank from Colonel to Major General. All thought of such promotion should now be abandoned. That the War Department recommended it is one more evidence of the tendency of on the part of members of the military to act as a clique or club. His brother officers must have had some awareness of General PATTON's lack of balance, etc, etc. We confess to some perplexity as to the entire practice of permanent promotions in the midst of war. Why cannot all of these wait until the war is over and we can judge the records of our military men with some perspective?. General PATTON's case affords an object lesson".

DECLASSIFIED
DOD DIR. 5200.9, ~~Sep~~ June 27, ~~1958~~ 1960

NE by WGL Date 7/21/66

(continued)

COPY NO 1
SUPREME COMMANDER

TOP SECRET

SHAEF
STAFF MESSAGE CONTROL
INCOMING MESSAGE

EYES ONLY

SECRET

REF NO : W-29722

Like you I have been considering the matter on a purely business basis. Its effect on you and the troops and on the confidence of the public in the War Department and in you is opposed to the unmistakable fact that PATTON is the only available Army Commander for his present assignment who has had actual experience in fighting ROMMEL and in extensive landing operations followed by a rapid campaign of exploitation. Whether or not we can forego the latter advantage because of the unfavorable effects referred to I leave entirely to your decision. You carry the burden of responsibility as to the success of OVERLORD. If you feel that that operation can be carried out with the same assurance of success with HODGES in command, for example, instead of PATTON all well and good. If you doubt it then between us we can bear the burden of the present unfortunate reaction. I fear the harm has already been fatal to the confirmation of the permanent list.

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

S-50908, 29 April, originated by SUPREME COMMANDER.

DISTRIBUTION:

1. SUPREME COMMANDER
2. CHIEF OF STAFF
3. SGS
4. Destroyed
5. Destroyed

COPY NO 1
SUPREME COMMANDER