

How Long Till Dawn: Memoirs of One of the Charter Members and Original Founders of the Resistance Movement in Algiers and a Member of the OSS¹ During World War II²

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Anyone who keeps updated on current events is bound to be confused as to what is going on at any given day in Algeria, let alone why. In fact, even for that part of the world, a similar observation is not new, as the history of Algeria is convoluted and nearly impossible to understand. This saga has simmered since the Punic Wars between Rome and city-state Carthage, during which time the Algerians took the opportunity to become independent of Carthage and establish the Algerian kingdoms.⁴

Many years later, the prevailing atmosphere had certainly not tempered much. Algerian nationalism developed out of the efforts of several groups which variously and mostly unsuccessfully addressed French colonialism into the predominantly Muslim country.⁵ Many Algerians felt that violence was the only alternative; the place was a hotbed of unrest including but certainly not solely as related to the French.⁶ As for all of North Africa, there were concurrent, myriad, immediate precursors of World War II.

The specific details of the late 1930's and early 1940 in Algeria are chronicled in any number of history texts, a few of which also focus on important players. One of the most important and fascinating of such books is that by Hal Vaughan on President Roosevelt's (hereinafter FDR) so-called Twelve Apostles.⁷ Vaughan's premise is that these twelve men made an extraordinary difference; together they worked miracles as "gifted amateurs, untrained in the clandestine arts, innocents to the world of dirty tricks" all before the advent of either General William J. Donovan's Office of the

¹ OSS was the WWII Office of Strategic Studies, the first organized effort by the United States to implement a centralized system of strategic intelligence and the predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the U.S. Special Operations Command. OSS was run by WWI Medal of Honor General William J. Donovan, who took leave from his Wall Street NYC law firm for the duration, bringing many of his firm and friends with him as OSS operatives. The OSS Society, an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, currently celebrates the historical accomplishments of the OSS. See Michael Warner, *The Office of Strategic Services-Foreword*, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/intelligence-history/oss/foreword.htm> (last updated June 28, 2008).

² DAPHNE JOAN FRY (TUYL) KNOX, *HOW LONG TILL DAWN: MEMOIRS OF ONE OF THE CHARTER MEMBERS AND ORIGINAL FOUNDERS OF THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN ALGIERS AND A MEMBER OF OSS DURING WORLD WAR II* (2014).

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⁴ See generally *The Punic Wars – A Retelling of the Struggle between Rome and Carthage*, HISTORIA, <http://www.dl.ket.org/latin2/historia/republic/Punic1.htm> (last visited Sept. 23, 2014). For additional background regarding the Punic Wars, see *Punic Wars*, PRINCETON.EDU, http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Punic_Wars.html (last visited Sept. 1, 2014).

⁵ *Algeria: Nationalist Movements*, ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/15001/Algeria/46535/The-Algerian-War-of-Independence> (last visited on September 23, 2014).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ HAL VAUGHAN, *FDR'S 12 APOSTLES: THE SPIES WHO PAVED THE WAY FOR THE INVASION OF NORTH AFRICA* (2006).

Coordinator of Information (hereinafter COI) or OSS operations.⁸ They were also the first organized U.S. spy team to operate under diplomatic cover, an avant-garde CIA (Central Intelligence Agency).⁹ Each man was a vice consul assigned under Robert Murphy to prepare for *Operation Torch*, the first joint American-British operation of the war.¹⁰

In describing the “fluid” situation in Algiers, another historian noted that the “Wehrmacht’s Afrika Korps, and Germany’s Italian allies were building up their forces in North Africa.”¹¹ Britain’s “SOE”¹² desert raiders were wreaking havoc on the enemy.¹³ “Since the defeat of the French the previous year and the formation of the collaborationist Vichy government . . . , the bulk of the French fleet lay bottled up in the French African ports of Algiers, Oran, Casablanca and in the Atlantic port of Dakar in French West Africa”, and “[a]lthough the French’s Navy allegiance was to Vichy, then under the political domination of Germany, the French fleet was a prize coveted by Berlin”, and if they could take possession, Germany “would gain immeasurable superiority over the British navy” and might even threaten the shores of the U.S.”¹⁴ Although not quite ready for the clandestine type of activities being entertained by the British, in the six weeks prior to Pearl Harbor, COI began to work with the first American agents who had been recently recruited overseas for service in North Africa, and initiated work with some anti-Vichy Frenchmen who had been recruited and armed.¹⁵

The focal effort, commencing three days after the combined forces landed on French North African shores in November 1942 (e.g., Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco), and the landings that followed, opened the Mediterranean from Rome to Berlin.¹⁶ In this endeavor, the Twelve Apostles “set the stage for a long string of espionage, sabotage and psychological warfare operations that the United States would carry out in World War II.”¹⁷ Vaughan describes the early WWII (1940 and forward) exotic operational Algerian venue as a “Cecil B. DeMille-like adventure film with a cast of colonial Englishmen, refugee Poles, French colonialists. . . Arabs, Berbers, and with the production values found only on Mediterranean shores and desert outposts.”¹⁸

Out of the awesome batch of folks working with them, a few stand out: specifically, one who operated her own network, then worked for Robert Murphy and his associates, and soon thereafter, married one of FDR’s Twelve Apostles, John Knox¹⁹, certainly making her an insider by any

⁸ *Id.* at XIV; EDWARD HYMOFF, *THE OSS IN WORLD WAR II* 52, 359 (1972).

⁹ VAUGHAN, *supra* note 7, at XIV.

¹⁰ *Id.* at IX-X, XIII-XIV.

¹¹ HYMOFF, *supra* note 8, at 52-3.

¹² SOE was the British counterpart of OSS. Tuyl introduced her friend Maurice Escoute, known as Curly, to them, and he immediately set up a training camp outside Algiers. *See* KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 154.

¹³ KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 154.

¹⁴ HYMOFF, *supra* note 8, at 53.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 54, 75.

¹⁶ VAUGHAN, *supra* note 7, at XIII.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ VAUGHAN, *supra* note 7, at XV.

¹⁹ John Crawford Knox, age 41, of a wealthy Boston family that traced its ancestry to the *Mayflower*, was a graduate of Groton, Harvard, at Oriel College, Oxford and St. Cyr, the French Military Academy. He had fought with the French Foreign Legion and been twice wounded in the Riff Mountains of Morocco. An acquaintance for a time of Ernest Hemingway and others of the “lost generation” crowd, he returned before WWII to the U.S., was commissioned as a captain in the U.S. Army and was recruited by President Roosevelt (FDR). They rushed him to Algiers where, according to Vaughan, he immediately fell in love with Murphy’s agent there, Daphne Joan Fry Tuyl. Murphy gave the bride and groom away at their wedding. *See* VAUGHAN, *supra* note 7, at 279 n.254; *see also* HYMOFF, *supra* note 8, at 62. For additional background on John Knox, *see generally* VAUGHAN, *supra* note 7, 47, 70, 81, 101-103, 106-107, 121, 194-96, 209-10, 213, 225, 242. For additional background regarding the relationship between Knox and Tuyl, *see* VAUGHAN, *supra* note 7, at 151-52.

definition. For some years, the work of this woman has been tangentially mentioned²⁰ in seminal texts on spies and the WWII era of North Africa, but not until now has her own long-acknowledged and occasionally quoted unpublished memoir been available for first-hand reading.

Which brings us to the truth about the life and times of Daphne Joan Fry Tuyl, known as Joan, (hereinafter Joan).²¹ Born in Alexandria, Egypt on 15 May 1909, she was the eldest daughter of the late Rev. Lucius George Pownall Fry, Church of England Clergyman who had been Church of England Rector in Algiers (M.A. Cambridge University) and Elsie Grace Newth, both native British citizens.²² In 1933, Joan married Gerald A. Tuyl, a Dutch agricultural engineer and reserve lieutenant who was among the first WWII resistance leaders captured, imprisoned and later executed by the Nazis in Holland; they had two sons, Denis Anthony (Tony) and Arie Dirk (Derek).²³ Joan had been mainly educated in French schools (the Lycee in Algiers) and was bilingual.²⁴ By June 1940, she was on her own, with her two sons (ages 4 and 2 years) and her widowed artist mother.²⁵

She commences her memoir, *How Long Till Dawn*, with what is described as “the darkness falls - Algiers May 1940.”²⁶ At that time, from her viewpoint, it had become simply a question of survival. Since the Dutch had been overrun by the Germans, she had heard nothing from her husband and was cut off from funds now that he was back in his homeland.²⁷ While lunching with the British Consul General she was asked if she might care to join the Military Mission.²⁸ Quickly agreeing, her responsibilities included receiving people in the office and related office work, but primarily was to remain *au courant* and share information learned eternally how many spies have started in a manner, thus, she would be able to financially care for her family with this job as long as the British Mission stayed in North Africa.²⁹

After June 17, 1940, when the French Government fell, and a military dictatorship was set up with Marshal Henri Philippe Petain as Chief of State of the collaborating Vichy Government, her job became to report on the reactions of the French.³⁰ This quickly evolved into winding up the office and saving persons from the impending German occupation, e.g., Polish pilots and others of whom she was credited with getting 600 out of Gibraltar.³¹ She was asked if she wanted to leave with the Mission, but declined and went to work on cracking code and a quick turn into otherwise preparing for the breaking off of French-British relations.³²

²⁰ See generally, KNOX, *supra* note 2.

²¹ KNOX, *supra* note 2, at back cover.

²² *Id.* at back cover, 1, 21.

²³ *Id.* at 1.

²⁴ *Id.* at back cover.

²⁵ *Id.* After May 1940, she would hear from her first husband, Gerry Tuyl, who had been working as a food controller, in only one 25 censored words message transmitted by the Red Cross, and later, two letters smuggled through Switzerland. She would learn that he had joined the Dutch underground, was imprisoned by the Germans on March 18, 1942, and executed in a mass shooting on July 20, 1942, his body thrown in a common grave along with 300 others; they later were exhumed in December 1945 and given a Dutch National Ceremony. He had died with one snapshot of their son Tony in his pocket. KNOX, *supra* note 2, 1, 18-19, 75.

²⁶ See generally KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 1-9.

²⁷ KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 1-2.

²⁸ *Id.* at 2.

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.* at 3.

³¹ *Id.* at 5-6.

³² *Id.* at 6.

How Long Till Dawn is immediately immersed into the author's personal situation as it related to the politics of her locale, and a reader will be captivated by the details of the operations and the important and pivotal historical persons involved. However, even if the book is a bit sparse in overall worldwide context, others such as Vaughan set the stage from the historical viewpoint: in the 18 or so months prior to *Operation Torch* and the landings executed by General Eisenhower, FDR agents under Murphy had secretly worked among French colonials and Arab and Berber peoples to defeat Vichy and Axis agents in Algiers, Casablanca, Oran, Rabat, Safi and Tunis.³³ Everywhere there were German and Italian agents, security police, smugglers, thieves, backstabbers, pirates, thugs and other sundry criminals, and the natives themselves who (if not part of one of these groups) were not thrilled at any of the above.³⁴ But if historical context is sometimes more implied than described, *How Long Till Dawn* brings extraordinary and intimate insights into some of the pivotal players in Algiers at the time, including French Admiral and Vichy leader Jean Louis Darlan and his ultimate assassination.³⁵

Joan sought out the unhelpful Dutch Consul, and needing funds, got a job in a school.³⁶ She also returned to teaching English through which she met Maurice Escoute, known as Curly (hereinafter Curly), who along with some of his associates, shared a desire to fight the intruders as best they could and from October 1940, they laid down their plans for the extraordinary underground group they succeeded in forming.³⁷

The initial adventures addressed a request by the American Consul Orray Taft to help two British Officers who had escaped the Germans at Dunkirk; while this effort had ups and downs, it initiated a working relationship with Achiary, the Chief of Secret Police who had been working against the Germans.³⁸

In addition to Ms. Knox's book itself, and history tomes referencing her, such as that by Vaughan, there are now collateral references to her espionage work which confirms and clarifies some of her own entries. For instance, Ian Dear, a historian with experience in covert warfare, has catalogued her extraordinary activities and accomplishments, and quotes her memoirs repeatedly in his new work.³⁹

Specifically, Murphy and Vice Consuls John Knox and John Boyd were busy forming their own intelligence network for the OSS, and from a time soon after her husband's death in 1942, began to use Joan to provide data.⁴⁰ Someone taking English lessons from her knew she was a friend of John Knox, and "casually" told her that a Polish network was building in Algiers, hoping she would pass it on, which she did.⁴¹ At the time, she was already working for the British consulate in Tangiers, and belonged to the resistance cell formed by Curly (before others arrived in Algiers).⁴² According to Dear, at the time, she was probably the only British agent on French North African soil.⁴³ Her

³³ VAUGHAN, *supra* note 7, at XIII-XV.

³⁴ *Id.* at XV.

³⁵ See generally KNOX, *supra* note 2.

³⁶ KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 22.

³⁷ *Id.* at 24-28.

³⁸ KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 29-30.

³⁹ IAN DEAR, *The Spy Who Made Porridge*, in *SPY AND THE COUNTERSPY: SECRET AGENTS AND DOUBLE AGENTS FROM THE SECOND WORLD WAR TO THE COLD WAR* 146, 164 (2013).

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 165.

⁴¹ *Id.* at 164.

⁴² *Id.* at 165.

⁴³ *Id.*

specialty was helping British service personnel and others to escape arrest.⁴⁴ This she did with remarkable efficiency. The larger picture may be left for others, but the glorious operational details are chronicled in *How Long Till Dawn*.

Personally, she and John Knox had developed a sound working relationship, and he and an eccentric assortment of others helped with the practical household needs as possible, e.g. putting meals on the table which at one time involved buying a cow.⁴⁵ The more personal relationship with John Knox, one of the many Americans who were *persona non grata* with the French, developed concurrently. All of this time, the frantic and often desperate comings and goings of those running from one or another of the adversaries continued marking her and her household for potential destruction.⁴⁶ Her memoirs graciously detail the relationship with John Knox, primarily from a working relationship although clearly acknowledging their more personal concerns. In the context of history, the memoir also delves with great clarity into the relationships among all the parties, including the myriad French adversaries.

In analyzing her own experiences, she describes earlier efforts as having been somehow simpler. “As a British agent, I had helped the Poles, the British and the Americans, and the fighting French. I had been conscious of disapproval from certain British sources when I had worked for the Americans after the landings. OSS was not a popular outfit with the Allied Force Headquarters.”⁴⁷ After the landings, she still worked for the Americans in OSS⁴⁸ but noted that she had neither political nor long-term spy career ambitions.⁴⁹

In March 1943, Joan was offered a position with the experimental Joint Intelligence Collecting Agency (JICA), an American unit, commanded by Col. Frederick Dent Sharp, where she filled numerous assignments ranging from charting French Government to investigating the use of Atabrine and Quinine as a malaria preventative.⁵⁰ She and Knox received permission to marry, on April 28, 1943.⁵¹ Soon thereafter, she received a change in assignment to work in a psychological warfare branch, continuing on the OSS payroll, which permitted her to buy some American exchange items,⁵² and also work in the French section while operating from home, to include social occasions for an easier exchange of data and in which her husband’s position was an asset.⁵³ Throughout, the couple individually and collectively worked their dangerous respective jobs, her husband’s being what she described as “precarious hedgehopping”.⁵⁴ She continued her own efforts with the OSS, working directly for Colonel “Bill” Eddy⁵⁵ and as a second to the other Vice Consul Boyd.⁵⁶ Joan’s pregnancy, which was not entirely

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ See generally KNOX, *supra* note 2.

⁴⁷ KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 166.

⁴⁸ See Warner, *supra* text accompanying note 1.

⁴⁹ KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 166-67.

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 166-69.

⁵¹ *Id.* at 170.

⁵² *Id.* at 171.

⁵³ *Id.* at 171-72.

⁵⁴ KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 172.

⁵⁵ William A. Eddy, a former college president and WWI hero, was sent by Gen. Donovan to represent COI in dealing with the State Department’s North African intelligence project. Born in Syria of missionary parents, he spoke fluent Arabic and knew the territory intimately. A month after Pearl Harbor, Eddy was on his way to North Africa by way of Vichy France, wearing the uniform of a colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps; his official title, Naval Attaché. HYMOFF, *supra* note 8, at 63.

⁵⁶ KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 151.

smooth, was concurrent with the trial of Pucheu, ex-Minister of the (Vichy) Interior; she attended with a press card and catering to French gallantry, managed to get a seat in the packed courtroom.⁵⁷ Daughter Sandra (Alexandra Curly) was born in August 1944 at the U.S. Army 29th General Hospital, Algiers, assisted by the steady hands of American former combat nurses.⁵⁸ Husband John was transferred to Paris and attached to the Supreme Headquarters Allied European Forces (SHAEF) Mission to France in Paris, and she joined him after some additional terrifying hassles.⁵⁹

The Epilogue notes that the years slipped by and few of her old friends remained. She took comfort in the fact that “[if] every man valued his own liberty to believe or disbelieved as he pleased, to remain an individual and refute the ready-made doctrine of a party line, there could be no war.”⁶⁰ She and John Knox retired to England where she spent her final years; she died on June 29, 1987.⁶¹ *How Long Till Dawn* is a remarkably detailed and well written memoir of an extraordinary woman, whose personal efforts in a period of fewer than five years saved hundreds of others, and whose bravery is remarkable still. The memoir is prepared in a decidedly British hand, and requires some minor supplemental research to bring things into context, but makes up for any small deficiencies in technique with rollicking and insightful raw data. As one of many incredible female spies of WWII, one can only wish that she had written more.⁶² Vaughan suggests that additional information about this fascinating woman is perhaps available in an unpublished memoir written by her son Derek and daughter Sandra.⁶³

⁵⁷ *Id.* at 189-90.

⁵⁸ *Id.* at 196-99.

⁵⁹ See generally KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 201-207.

⁶⁰ KNOX, *supra* note 2, at 210.

⁶¹ *Id.* at back cover.

⁶² There are many memorable books written by other women WWII spies. See MARY BANCROFT, *AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SPY* (1983); HELENE DESCHAMPS, *SPYGLASS: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY* (Karyn Monget ed., 1995); JANE FOSTER, *AN UNAMERICAN LADY* (1st ed., 1980); GERTRUDE S. LEGENDRE, *THE SANDS CEASED TO RUN* (1947); MARY S. LOVELL, *CAST NO SHADOW: THE LIFE OF THE AMERICAN SPY WHO CHANGED THE COURSE OF WWII* (1992); BETTY LUSSIER, *INTREPID WOMAN: BETTY LUSSIER'S SECRET WAR, 1942-1945* (2010); ELIZABETH P. MACDONALD, *UNDERCOVER GIRL* (1947); ALINE GRIFFITH, *COUNTESS OF ROMANONES, THE SPY WORE RED: MY ADVENTURES AS AN UNDERCOVER AGENT IN WORLD WAR II* (1987); and numerous books about Julia McWilliams Child who went on from her OSS spying days in China to become the world renowned chef. A few books discuss a myriad of women spies. See MARGARET L. ROSSITER, *WOMEN IN THE RESISTANCE* (1986); ELIZABETH P. MCINTOSH, *SISTERHOOD OF SPIES* (1998).

⁶³ VAUGHAN, *supra* note 7, at 276 n.254.