

The information contained in this report is to be treated as

STATEMENT BY

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Captured: 12 Apr 43, PARIS.

Liberated: MUNSTER, Apr 45.

Date of Birth : 5 Feb 21.

Peacetime Profession: Student.

R.A.F. Service : Since 14 Aug 40.

1. EVASION & CAPTURE.

I was on an operation and was shot down by German fighters in South BEVELAND, Holland, on 10 Feb 43. I came down by parachute in SOUTH BEVELAND and about 20 minutes afterwards the first civilian I met, a middle-aged sailor passing by an orchard on a bicycle, hailed me in English. He told me to wait for him in a small hut in the orchard.

Incidentally, the Germans had seen me come down, and seen me on the ground also; and I did not have any time to hide my parachute.

I was fired upon and escaped by running over a dike (an earthen wall about 10 feet high with sloping sides).

In the meantime a peasant and his son discovered me in the orchard, independently of the sailor, and they brought me food and my flying map, which he had picked up, and also a large-scale map of the island torn from a school atlas. He was a very intelligent person. He could not speak a word of English and we got along by signs.

That evening the sailor came back and brought food and a raincoat. He told me that it was pretty hopeless to get away, as all the little ports leading to the mainland and also the causeway were guarded and about 300 Germans with dogs were scouring the place for me.

The sailor could not do any more for me and left, wishing me the best of luck.

At about 0700 hrs the next morning I made off in an Easterly direction for the causeway to the mainland, but my compass was inaccurate and I landed at a place called HOODERGENSKAGE, a small port for TERNEUZEN.

I was accosted by a young lad on a bicycle who told me his name was PIETER. He took me to a hut and told me to stay there which I did for the whole day.

/In the meantime.....

INTERVIEWED BY: I.S.9(7) 6 Jul 45.

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APPENDIX A.

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In the meantime this lad and his friends had been going round the village collecting civilian clothing for me. That night he took me home and I dressed in civilian clothes. I was taken on the rear carrier of a push-bike to a farm at GRAVENPOLDER, where I stayed that night and the following day.

Word went round that the Germans were searching all farms, so I was taken into the village itself to an old lady who lived by herself. I do not know her name. I stayed with her until 25 Feb 43.

When German vigilance subsided to normal I was helped over to the mainland and an English-speaking steward on the ferry boat took care of me. I was taken to the chief steward's home where I stayed three days. I cannot remember his name.

I was introduced to a smuggler who took me by bus to the Belgian frontier at SAS VAN GHENT. He took me through some barbed wire across the frontier and we got on the train for GHENT. He bought me a ticket for COURTRAI and then he left me and I gave him the remainder of my Dutch and Belgian money. From COURTRAI I started to walk across the frontier. I was challenged by a German sentry who searched me for arms but who made no comment whatsoever about my escape equipment.

I walked to within 9 kms. of LILLE, where I was so exhausted that I entered a barn and fell asleep.

Next morning I called at the farmhouse and asked for some food. The people were very frightened but asked me in and fed me. I was only there about half an hour. I do not know their names.

I was beginning to suffer from sore feet and when I got to LILLE I boarded a tram to take me to the other side of the town. I thumbed a lorry and got a lift to the South side of LILLE aerodrome. I called at a cottage to get my feet dressed and stayed about half an hour (names not known).

I then went to DOUAI by bus and walked for 7 kms. to CANTIN, where I stayed with peasants for the night. I have heard from them since.

They took me to the station and bought me a ticket to ST. QUENTIN. The wife introduced me to a young Frenchman who accompanied me to CAMBRAI. I have also heard from him. I walked from ST. QUENTIN to LA PERE and stayed the night with a peasant and family whose name I do not know.

I proceeded by foot, bus and rail via REIMS, CHALONS-SUR-MARNE, TROYES, to the village of MALAY-LE-PETIT about 3 kms. East of SEVRES where I was sheltered for six days on account of my badly blistered feet, by some people whose son-in-law got in touch with the organisation.

About 21 Mar 43 a lady took me in a car to SEVRES where I stayed the night and a man took me to his home in PARIS.

That evening I went to another house in PARIS. I stayed there until 12 Apr 43. Various other R.A.F., American, and military bodies passed through this house during the time I was there but the family did not seem in a hurry to send me on to a different lodging.

On 5 Apr (a week previous) an American, Gilbert WRIGHT of one of the Eagle Squadrons, was being taken to SPAIN. He was betrayed and caught by the Gestapo at the Gare Austerlitz. His identity card was of the same type as mine. Then on 12 Apr I was being taken to SPAIN. The Gestapo had received information that a pilot of the R.A.F. was to be passed and were able to pick me up because of my identity card. I do not think that it was due to any description of me but purely from the identity card. At the same time that I

/left.....

left, a Free French pilot with his guide got through because they had identification papers different to mine. My own guide too was not taken, because his identity card was different to mine. What happened was that the train, on leaving, was stopped before it had fully left the platform and the Gestapo searched the train and directly they perused my identity card they whipped me off.

2. CAMPS IN WHICH IMPRISONED.

FRESNES Prison, PARIS	12 Apr - 3 Jul 43.
Dilag Luft (FRANKFURT ON MAIN)	3 - 10 Jul 43.
Stalag Luft VI (MESEL)	14 Jul 43 - 25 Jul 44.
Stalag 357 (THORN)	27 Jul - 20 Aug 44.
Stalag 357 (FALLINGBOSTEL)	22 Aug 44 - 7 Apr 45.
French Kommando (SOLTAU)	12 - 13 Apr 45. (After recapture, first escape).
Mixed Italian & Polish Camp, MUNSTER, N. of OELBE.	Apr 45.

3. ATTEMPTED ESCAPE.

The majority of Stalag 357 started to march on 6 Apr 45 towards LUNEBERG. On 11 Apr I escaped when we were told to sleep the night in a wood near WLEPZENDORF. The next morning I ran into a cordon of Volksturm and was caught near SOLTAU, about 20 kms. from where I started.

4. ESCAPE & LIBERATION.

In common with various other persons, I climbed over the wire of the MUNSTER Italian and Polish camp on 18 Apr 45. The electric current was out and there were no lights. Most of the guard had deserted and the same morning I saw a British D.R.