

CHAPTER 20

Life Saving Surgery

At the clinic, I learned from the Underground that a French doctor from Paris was to perform the surgery on my shrapnel mangled right arm. This heightened my spirits and gave me hope that the wounded arm problems were going to be corrected, or I would lose the arm. Dr. Levy, in fact, a Jew, married to a French nurse, owned the clinic. To avoid capture and shipment to a concentration camp, he concealed himself in the cellar of the clinic. Dr. Levy's identity and secret life was kept from me for many years, long after the war's end. As a Jew, he was ever alert to the German military occupying France and the Gestapo rounding up Jews for deportation. The operation on my hurting, busted and useless arm, with minimum anesthesia, caused great pain, which rendered me unconscious at times and also kept waking me.

It was a horrifying night, the gnawing pain kept me half asleep, half awake; and I prayed for the morning to come with the prospect of receiving requisitioned anesthesia (which did not come). Dawn arrived after a torturous night. I was wheeled into the operating room where Dr. Levy operated on my arm a second time and applied stitches to my wounded scalp. Upon awakening, I felt joy to discover my arm still attached, but that happiness was short-lived as the awareness of the intolerable pain from my many wounds and broken bones sparked my consciousness. The surgery was incomplete and Dr. Levy advised that gangrene had set in and the poor condition of the arm warranted amputation. A definite "NO" by the French Resistance, emphasized by a pistol to his head, alarmed Dr. Levy. The doctor and I both needed rest, so a third operation was scheduled for the next morning. Without pain medication, I experienced another terrible night, hoping against hope that morning would arrive quickly so that I could be given whatever anesthesia was available.

Morning finally arrived; Dr. Levy, with his nurse assisting, performed the third operation to save my arm. He removed the metal fragments and reset the fractured bones while I clenched my teeth for lack of anesthesia. Then, he sanitized the wounded areas on my arm, applied surgical dressing

and put a cast on the arm. My fractured left ankle and six cracked ribs were not considered life threatening or requiring immediate attention so were put off for another day. They wheeled me back to my room where sleep overtook me. Delirious with pain, a parched mouth and throat awakened me. It was early evening. I pressed the bell for the nurse and she came running with others and in her excitement told me that there was fear of discovery, as a night nurse, who had penetrated the French Resistance cell at Reims and a German collaborator, had tipped off the Gestapo. “*Allez, toute de suite.*” Quickly, they helped me into my tattered flight fatigues and carried me out to the street, to abandon me on a curbside. I had become persona non grata. I forgot about my pain and dry mouth.



The receptionists and the entrance to the Reims, France Clinic as it appeared in 1997.



Dr. Levy performed the life saving operations on John's gangrenous arm here.

CHAPTER 21

Loyalty Questioned

It was Saturday night and in my drunken-like stupor, I slipped into the gutter where even German soldiers out on the town with their dates passed me by with little notice of the drunk in tattered fatigues lying in the gutter. From nowhere, a young man (later identified as Robert), with his female companion came over to check me out. They looked me over and stood me up. I sensed that they wanted to help. They half dragged my limp body to a former French Calvary Training Center, called "The Circus", where they hauled me up two flights of stairs to a room secured with iron barred windows. Roberts's last words were, "*Ne fiez pas la fenetre et n'ouvrez pas la porte*". (Don't look out of the window and don't open the door). It was locked on the outside. One time I peeked out of the window from behind a curtain and saw German soldiers milling around in the courtyard with their dates. The room resembled a prison holding area, and any thoughts of escape in my poor physical condition were shattered. I was happy to be in out of the weather and off the streets where prying eyes would not stumble upon me.

The only guard was a Mr. Dumas, an elderly police officer, around seventy years old, who checked on me once every evening and occasionally spoke in French. I thought the old timer did not like the Germans because he kept repeating, "*Les Boche Kaput*", which to me meant in the German language, "Kill, destroy or finish the Germans." In fact, one evening he said, "*Moi kaput Les Boche soldier*." He led me to believe one evening he pushed a drunken soldier into the nearby river. I had no idea if this was truth, or whether he was bragging, so I just went along with his comments by shaking my head up and down.

It was at this time and this place that I learned upon my return to the States that my young brother, S. Charles 'Chuck' Katsaros was the first family member to learn that I was Missing In Action on 20 March 1944. He was handed the delivery of the Telegram, from the Secretary of War, dated 3 April 1944, that was addressed to my dad, Speros S. Katsaros, who was not at home from work. A great number of issues had evolved in my life at this time: my first capture by the Gestapo, the French Resistance's aid in my escape, three life-saving surgeries by Dr. Levy, becoming *persona non-grata* because of fear of exposure, picked up in the gutter

by a different cell member, and threatened with execution at the “Circus” at my refusal to establish a qualified identity. My health and recovery from injuries were my top priorities. My concerns were with the ever present Gestapo and their determination to locate me. They offered a \$10,000.00 reward for information on my location and re-capture. This information was verified by the French Resistance and by articles in the newspapers. I was removed from the “Circus” by Pierre Demarchez and taken to his home at Chaumuzy, where I became a danger to him and his wife Julienne. The booklet of French phrases in the escape packet tucked in the parachute, coupled with the senior high school year of French classes provided me with some communications capability with my rescuers. Also concealed in the packet were a small compass, a silk map of Europe, water purification capsules, hard chocolate, and some paper money in French francs . The Gestapo relieved me of the packet, returning only the phrase booklet.

Daily, around noon hour, an elderly woman came to my room to give me food and drink. One day, I understood her to say that she had a son who was being held prisoner of *Les Boche*. No doubt she was a frightened soul. The thought of getting caught aiding and feeding an American airman, and facing the consequences, put extreme pressure on her. Thankfully, she found comfort in tending to someone who was in similar circumstances as her own son!

Within this local group at “The Circus”, the decision was made to avoid the risk of exposure by thoroughly interrogating me and learning my true identity. Several days later a French Cavalry Colonel, dressed in jodhpurs and leather leggings, suitable for the Cavalry Training Center, appeared at my room and in a stern tone demanded that I tell him who I was and how I came to be in France. I felt to be a prisoner again, but of whom, the French or the Germans? I stuck to military code and gave only my name, rank and serial number. He insisted on more information of my activities, of which, I gave none. I didn’t bend to his insistence. He became exasperated and stomped out of the room.

The interrogator returned the next day dressed in mufti and demanded, “If you will not answer my questions to you, then we have no choice but to stand you against the wall and shoot you.” I did not trust this man and had decided that they would not actually kill me. So I gave the standard information: name, rank and serial number. This time he was thoroughly

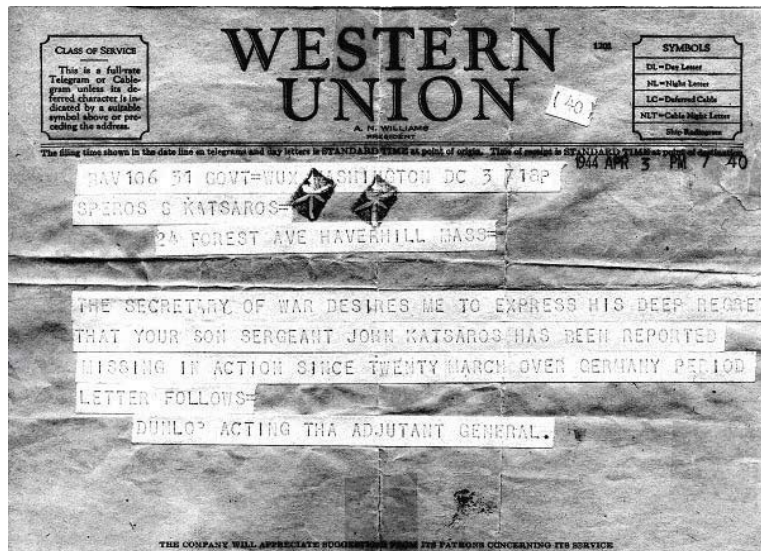
angry and stormed out of the room. Later, in the afternoon, Mademoiselle Ramoge, the English speaking woman who helped to muzzle my groaning at the home of René Felix, came to see me and said, "You must know that they are not playing games with you. They do not believe that you are telling the truth, and that you are hiding information from them. If you insist in not properly identifying yourself, tomorrow you will be shot". By telling me this I realized that my life was on the line, and trusting the words of Madame Ramoge, I gave them a full description of the location of the the 612th Squadron, 401st Bomb Group. "If you were to fly over my air base at Deenethorpe, England, the base looks like a pistol. At the end of the pistol are three little lakes, and it looks like they are bullets coming out of the pistol-shaped air base." Madame Ramoge said, "Now I have something of importance to tell them," and she let herself out of the room.

They seemed satisfied with this debriefing, and three days later Madame Ramoge told me that the information checked out. I can believe that my information to them was verified because the interrogator was not seen again, and I did not suffer additional inquiry. While they were acting on their own and deciding what to do with me, Pierre Demarchez, one of the rescuers from the Gestapo, learned of my maltreatment at the hands of his friends, stormed into my prison room and created a row, blasting anyone and everyone in sight. He calmed down somewhat and promised to take me to his home when it became workable.

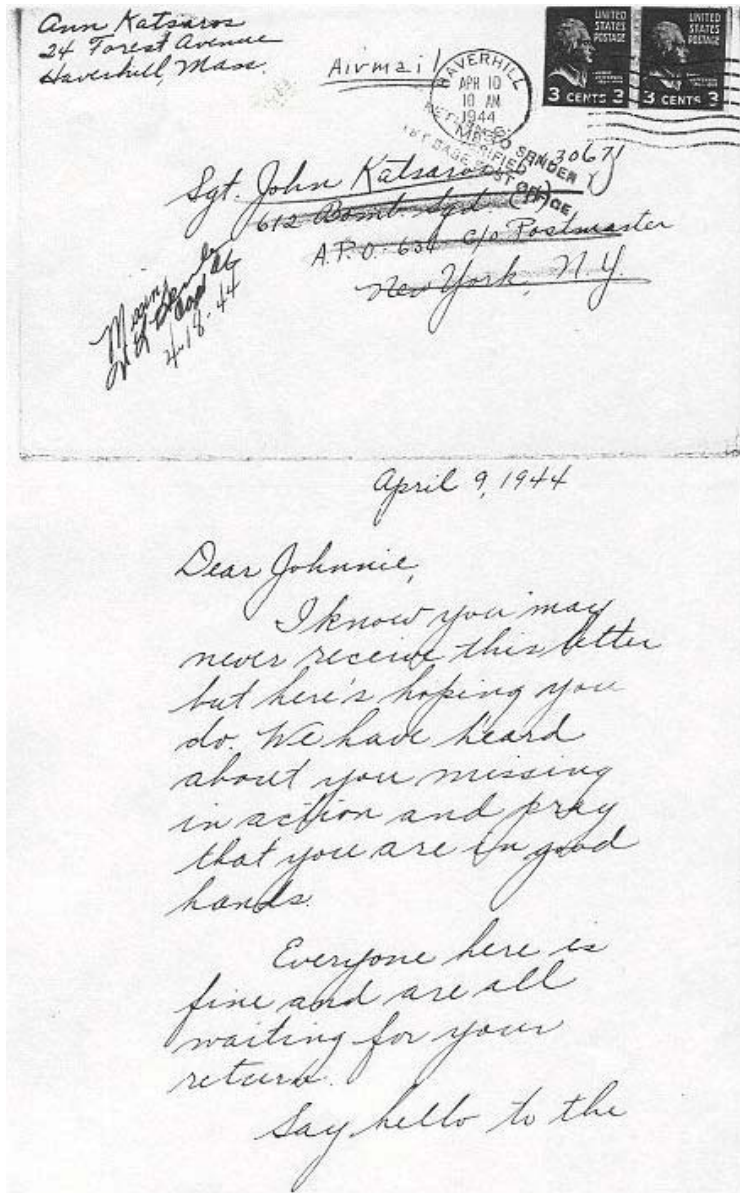
I reflected on my behavior while under inquisition and realized that the military code of "name, rank and serial number" can get one killed. Self-sacrifice is martyrdom, and it is also death. At the "Circus" I had continued refusing to give up my identity to my new rescuers. Finally, in fear of being shot to death, gave up my identity. This action not only saved my life from the firing squad, but the French Underground acquired the code name "Burgundy" as an I.D. to track my location and movements in their exchange of intelligence with S.O.E. (Special Operations Executive). In my travels from cell to underground cell my only identity was "Burgundy". The French Resistance knew my code name through the S.O.E. network of intelligence, which reached back to headquarters in London. They were aware of the special requirements in observation and tracking of my whereabouts, for purposes of reporting. Once S.O.E. was contacted, they became involved in my every move and probably were responsible for the direction of my path to exit France.



Jean Joly & John in front of the "Circus" 1997



S Charles 'Chuck' Katsaros received delivery of this telegram to his family that, John Katsaros was reported Missing In Action. It reads: "THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR SON SERGEANT JOHN KATSAROS HAS BEEN REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION SINCE TWENTY MARCH OVER GERMANY. LETTER FOLLOWS. DUNLOP ACTING THA ADJUTANT GENERAL."

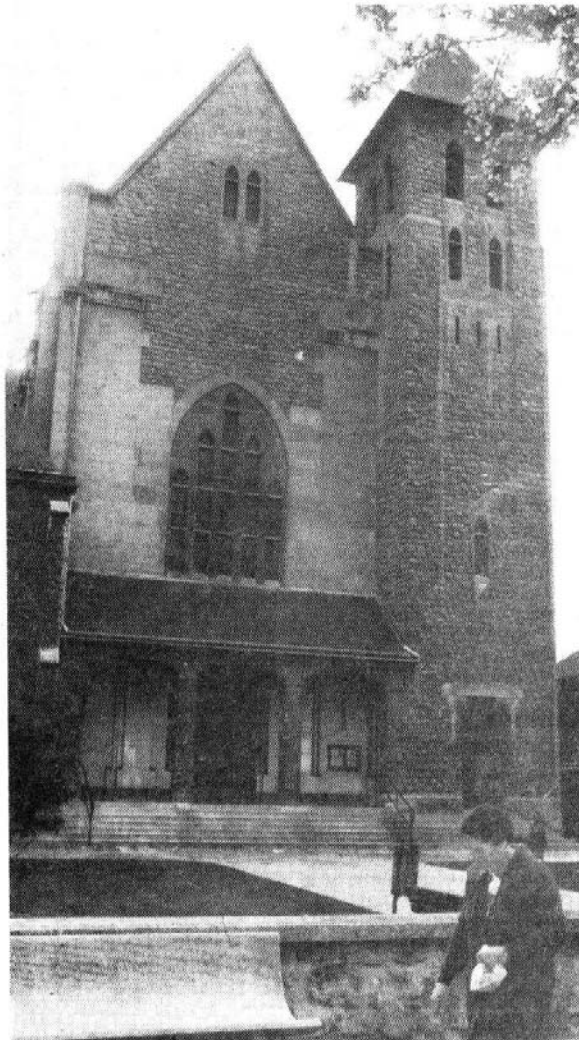


rest of the boys for me.
I shall keep right on
writing, even though it
may be a few words.

Johnnie please don't
worry about anything;
keep your chin and
courage up and pray
that things will soon
be all right.

Good luck Johnnie
and may God Be With
you. Your loving sister,
Ann

Ann Katsaros Ziehl, John's sister, wrote this letter in 1944. It was returned to sender.



L'église Saint-Jean-Baptiste reste fidèle aux messes du dimanche.

I received holy communion at this church, L'Eglise Saint-Jean-Baptiste, April 9 1944. Easter Sunday.

CHAPTER 22

Easter Sunday, 9 April 1944

On Easter Sunday Pierre Demarchez returned to “The Circus”, as promised, along with Jean Joly and René Felix, the other two members of the rescue team. This was like a reunion for me - I had not seen them all together for a fortnight. We climbed into Joly’s auto and I am taken to Communion at Saint Jean Le Baptist where a large number of parishioners are seated, among whom are many German soldiers. The attendees had not been previously checked out, so our entrance exposed us in plain sight to the whole congregation. Fortunately, the soldiers gave no recognition to my presence, so I escaped detection and apprehension. Going to church invited us to unnecessary risk, and I did not like taking these kinds of chances. Members of the French Resistance were very gallant, but for me that was a very close call. After church services, we motored to meet a wrestler (name unknown) who promised to act as my body guard. We met Polo, Julianne Demarchez and Suzanne Joly at the farmhouse of René Felix where his wife, Madaleine, hosted Easter Sunday dinner. We sat down at the dining table and before supper had special prayers on this holy day, the Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. After prayer, I was asked to open a bottle of champagne about three feet in height. It was the largest bottle I had ever seen, and with my right arm in a cast, my left arm weak as a kitten; I failed to uncork the bottle. Someone else had to perform that chore. René asked us to keep our voices down because German soldiers were quartered nearby. My health condition did not warrant champagne, but I drank my fill and, as it affected me, I began to feel ill. It was time for me to return to “The Circus”; and Polo, the taxi man with the horse and buggy, drove me back to my lodging. But the ride was not without a scare as dusk had already turned to darkness and it was past curfew hour set by the German military.

British bombers targeted the marshaling yards at Reims that evening and Polo chose a roundabout way to return to the shelter at “The Circus”, avoiding the strike area. A German patrol stopped Polo to ask questions of his comings and goings and why he was out after curfew. In my inebriated state, I was not too attentive to what they were talking about. I was just too

sick to care. Polo, a familiar face on the streets, was given a “Bye” by the patrol. “Whew!”

The next day I was sick as a dog - my stomach and my throat parched from thirst. I drank a lot of water until the nurse came to give me a shot on my tail end. She told me to stop drinking water because after a “buzz” on champagne, water made one increasingly sick. Then she proceeded to stab a large hypodermic syringe into my buttocks. While I howled in pain, she filled the hypodermic with fluid from a second needle, after taking the time to fill the second needle with fluid. The day following, the nurse returned to administer another shot to my butt, but not before I insisted that she first prepare the second needle with fluid. It went much better this time; she mocked my complaining, and called me “Baby”. So I told her, “Come over here and let me do that to you, see how you like it.” “*Navaire!*”, she said. Well, those shots to the buttocks, coupled with the restriction on fluids seemed to work, for in a couple of days, I was feeling better. I was especially thankful for the medication, mindful of its short supply. “*Merci*”, “thank you” was my only way to show appreciation and gratitude for my nurse, all the kind, generous people, the Free French Patriots, the people of God who took risks, and made sacrifices to care for me. They gave me all they had, asked nothing in return, and only wanted me to be safe and well to continue on with my journey.

CHAPTER 23
At the Safe-House of Pierre and Julienne
Demarchez

What went on in the hierarchy of the French Resistance or the communications between cells, I did not know, but Pierre Demarchez, through his negotiations with the Reims cell got me released to his custody and took me to his safe-house in Chaumuzy, several miles west of Reims, where I again met with his wife, Julienne. They had decided that, here, I should remain out of sight of the German military and Gestapo to enjoy a much needed rest period for recovery.

Pierre told me that the reason I was held prisoner by this Resistance cell, was that some of my statements contained the word “Yeah”, that sounded too much like the German word, “Ja”, (yes). This was a good lesson for me to be very careful in the future, as to the expressions and the words I use in conversation, even with my helpers. They could turn on you very quickly in order to protect themselves and the scores of other helpers in their Resistance cell. A flyer that was badly wounded and forced to parachute did not necessarily mean that he was an American or an Allied and not German. There was more than one occasion when a wounded German would volunteer to parachute into occupied German controlled France or Belgium with the sole purpose of exposing Resistance helpers.

The Demarchez home, a two-story building, housed a working bakery on the first floor with living quarters on the second floor. In the closed-in backyard was a chicken coop with many chickens. An undetectable door was built into the floor of the coop, which led down a ladder to a ten foot by ten-foot space with a dirt floor. Here, in this room, were many weapons cached for the local French Resistance. It included guns, ammunition, grenades, and time bombs - all for use against the German occupiers, now and when the Allied invasion took place.

Bravery was in the blood of the French Resistance fighters. They were fearless combatants especially against an enemy they have warred with over the years and would do everything they could for France and for the Allies who fought to free France from *Les Boche*. Had my hiding place been discovered, I was certain that the Gestapo would have administered a

torturous interrogation to squeeze out all that I knew of the Free French fighters and any military information that I would provide. I wondered if I could have weathered the torture.

My stay at the home of Pierre and Julienne Demarchez saw me enjoy two meals per day and a great rest for body and mind. They had no children of their own and treated me as a son, seeing to my every physical need. The aromas of the fresh baking bread from the bakery waft through the air tantalizing my nostrils and olfactory senses. How fortunate and smart the Germans were to allow Pierre to run his bakery for the whole community where they also could purchase their supply of the freshly baked bread.

Pierre had been a Lieutenant in the French Army and fought the German invaders in the early months of WWII, before America entered the war. He was captured and held prisoner, working as a baker. Pierre escaped from the German prison and returned to Chaumuzy, France where he started the bakery in the store. The Germans loved his products so much, especially his bread, that they permitted him to remain to run the bakery and where they could see his whereabouts and keep track of him.

When the British RAF dropped off supplies for the Resistance a short distance from the bakery, I was taken along with the cell members as a lookout for German patrols. A light machine-gun (Sten) was shoved into my hands.

Pierre took advantage of the cast I was wearing and introduced me to members of the resistance as his deaf and dumb nephew who suffered injury in an air raid on Paris, as he went out to pick up supplies that were air dropped. These supplies consisted of explosives, fire bombs, arms and ammunition for purposes of sabotage in blowing up trains, rail ties and bridges. These were quickly gathered up by the Resistance for distribution among the various geographical cells. Pierre's share was added to the secreted cache in the dugout below his chicken coop.

On each fly-by, I was told to be prepared to board the British plane in the event it landed to pick me up for return to England. I sensed that the S.O.E. was behind this operation. The British took risks but there was no need to compound the danger and blow the Resistance cell activity. I was ready and eager for flight but the opportunity to fly never presented itself as the drop off plane never touched down.

One day, Pierre returned to the bakery from making his daily rounds, in a state of excitement, to tell me of a downed American fighter pilot and an intact airplane. I asked for the make of the plane and Pierre shrugged his

shoulders indicating he had no idea. At my request Pierre made a sketch of an airplane which convinced me that it was one of those new model P-51 Mustangs recently flown into England to provide escort for our bombers on combat missions. "I would like to see the plane," I said. Pierre pointed out and from a distance we viewed the plane guarded by a German soldier. The plane definitely was a P-51. On returning to the house, I made a sign of explosion with both hands. I emphasized that the plane would be used against us by the Luftwaffe and must be destroyed, but Pierre had already decided to destroy the plane. Pierre wasted no time to go out to the munitions cache below the chicken coop to return with a time-bomb. He placed it on the kitchen table to examine the wiring and to check the timing device and together we returned to the site of the downed P-51 where the unsuspecting guard, previously befriended by Pierre, allowed close examination of the plane. Pierre introduced me as his nephew, wounded by British Bombers in a Paris air raid. We walked around the plane looking at it closely and on the opposite side of the plane, Pierre set the timer and placed the bomb under the pilot seat. "Have you seen enough?" Pierre asked. "Then let us be on our way", he winked. One hour later, the bomb blew, and so did the P-51 with the German guard. These men of the Resistance had such courage.



P-51 Mustang.



This is how I appeared in the forged German ID card created by the Reims French Resistance, April 1944.

Very rarely would a downed Allied airman stay for an extended period at a safe-house - a day or two, maximum, and the airman was passed on to another safe-house. I was allowed to remain for a longer period because my undernourishment left me frail, and my wounds and emaciated body needed to rest in order to heal. My heart was full of gratitude for Pierre and Julienne, who sacrificed all to care for me, putting their lives at such risk. A grateful son could not ask more of loving parents; I was treated as a member of the family and was as comfortable as any son might be. My body gained some health and strength, and fear of discovery left me.

The day before my departure to another safe-house, my time with the Demarchez family already overextended, Pierre introduced me to a deaf mute friend and together we three had a photograph.

Pierre also introduced me to a local priest and coincidentally, the next morning, the day of my departure, while Pierre was away from the bakery making his delivery rounds, the fearful Gestapo appeared at the bakery to arrest me with Julienne and her mother. Were they tipped off? I had been in plain sight; how did they suddenly raid the bakery? We were taken downtown Reims, to a Gestapo Substation where we were questioned individually. After a short questioning, Julienne's mother, an old woman, was soon released.

I was the next to be questioned. The interrogators were surprisingly civil asking only questions about activities at the bakery. "Where had Pierre gone?" Who were his friends and their addresses"? "What is my name, what caused my injuries?" "Who provided me with medical attention and where"? Trained to give only my name, rank and serial number, this was the only information I supplied. They missed the opportunity to catch me in a lie, and fortunately they never asked to see my dog-tags, or I would have been in serious trouble. They were well aware of who I was, and how I got there because they had me recorded since the lock-up and shoot-out at *La Bonne Maison*. For the time being they ignored my stubbornness, and they left the room.

I could hear the yelling from the room adjacent and I knew they were leaning on Julienne, and then there was the blood curdling screams. Julienne was being pressured to talk but she gave them nothing, so they continued with their barbarism. While I felt pain for Julienne, the thought never left my mind that they were not through with me, and I was going to be put through the test. I wondered how much I could take; and if I gave in,

how much could I tell them. The thoughts of giving up my friends of the Resistance gave me shivers. How in hell could I live with myself if I gave up my best friends and blew the cover of any cell and I knew a number of them? I decided that rather than “rat” that I would suffer the torture. These friends of the Resistance had proven their sacrifice, their honor to me. I could do no less. Perhaps, I would not get that far. As soon as they discover that I had no identification; dog tags which were taken away from me at *La Bonne Maison*, and was dressed in civilian clothes, I would be taken as an infiltrator and shot as a spy.

Pierre was warned by his friends of the local roundup at the bakery and went into hiding. His cache of military supplies hidden in the hole under the chicken coop floor was never discovered. He eluded the Gestapo for the remainder of the war.



Pierre Demarchez, his friend & John (Note: arm in cast.).

CHAPTER 24

Second Escape

Following my capture, two German soldiers were assigned as guards to transport me to another Gestapo prison for interrogation. On the way the German staff car was halted at a roadblock. Several official looking vehicles were in the vicinity, and I was mysteriously removed from the staff car and hustled into one of these vehicles. It soon became apparent that this car belonged to the Reims Chief of Police who had orchestrated this rescue in conjunction with the Resistance. No shots were fired. A deputy chief's jacket and cap were handed to me as we quickly drove away from the encounter. The drive ended at a Reims winery where a hideout several floors underground in a wine storage facility was revealed. I got my thoughts together, cleared my vision and realized that my only companions were a 30-watt bulb and thousands of bottles of wine. It was a typical wine storage cellar; cold, damp, resembling a dungeon, but a safe hideout.

I was at a loss as to how this had been arranged. The Resistance did not offer details. I never had occasion to meet the Police Chief again. After a period of time, the day still showing daylight, and arrangements solidified, I was taken from the wine cellar to board an inconspicuous looking auto and driven several miles north of Reims to a farmhouse, belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Bronis Korach. They had a very courteous three-year-old boy named Erhard, large for his age of three years old, which they addressed as, "Le Petite Gorilla". The farm was located next to a forest on a former WWI battlefield. Trenches were still visible with battle debris of that era, such as French helmets, guns, empty shell casings and other paraphernalia strewn about. These may have been great items for souvenir hunters, but my basic interest was survival and escape. Their home was a buried blockhouse, built by the French military during the First World War. Not having run into another Allied person did not seem strange, as my concern was about my own skin and I never thought about anybody else who arrived here under similar circumstances. Here at the Korach farm, I met with a British Lancaster bombardier, Jack Hoad, a night flyer who was shot down by enemy aircraft fire. He, too, was looking for an escape route.

Together we stayed at the farm several days during which time the embarrassed Gestapo were looking everywhere in the area for us, and had advertised in the local newspaper, offering a \$10,000.00 reward for information as to the whereabouts of any Allied airmen. The Patriotic French did not think of betraying their liberators or themselves. No doubt my health together with the many problems incurred by the Gestapo, had given many headaches to the wonderful French people, especially the Resistance; but to expose an Allied escapee- *Navaire*!

The Korach farmhouse sat about one hundred yards from the road, and was so positioned as to allow observance of any activity leading to the house. Bronis Korach showed us two water wells, one of which was dry, and in which we could hide should the Gestapo come. We could be let down on a bucket to the well bottom, twenty or thirty feet below, and a cover placed over the well.

True to our luck, the Gestapo showed up the next day to inquire about certain activity of downed Allied airmen in the vicinity. Jack Hoad and I were quickly lowered into the dry well and for an hour we could hear the questioning of our hosts by the Gestapo up above. Of course, the questioning took place in French and right over the dry well in which we were hidden. We exhaled a sigh of relief when the talk ended, and the Gestapo departed. After a short wait, Bronis lowered the bucket, and we were raised. Our location outside the city of Bourgogne was learned from Bronis as he prepared to leave on his motorcycle to do an errand, stated, "*Me parti a Bourgogne.*" Bronis had many animals on his farm. one was a ferret kept to catch rabbits in a hole. I never did see it make a successful hunt. In the forest, Bronis took us on a hunt for wild boar. The meat of the animal is delicious. I imagined tasting the succulent porker. However, the hunt was unfortunately not a success. Mrs. Korach served us escargot (snails) which I found unappetizing at first, but a little hunger changed my mind and then found them to be delicious. It did not bother the Korach family to have their animals, including goats, visit them in their kitchen during mealtimes. Jack and I also accepted the animals and dared not offend our protectors to whom we were greatly indebted. They took many risks to provide us safety and comfort.

CHAPTER 25

Café de Bourgogne

On the day Jack Hoad and I left the Korach home to go to another safe-house in Bourgogne, the Gestapo pulled a surprise, but anticipated raid just before curfew at the farmhouse. By then we were comfortable at our new safe-house with Mr. Gerhard Erhard and his wife who operated Café de Bourgogne, frequently visited by German airmen from the airbase located between Bourgogne and Reims.

Dog tags were a serious item for downed Allied airmen - for without them the enemy challenged one's identification. On 20 March, the day of my bailout, the Gestapo had taken one of my dog tags from me and I often wondered what happened to the other one. Here is where the mystery was uncovered. At the Café' Bourgogne, Mr. Erhard had a dog tag mounted on a large plate glass mirror back of the bar. He would brag that he knew the American flyer that was being hunted by the Gestapo. "Here is the dog tag," he would say. As I sat silently in the bar room, Mr. Erhard would introduce me as his partially deaf and dumb nephew from Paris who got injured in an Allied raid on Paris and had a cast on his arm. Try as I might to get my dog tag, Erhard had no mind to return it. If captured again, I would be in a serious predicament without this identification as proof of who I really am. I will forever remember when my loyalty was questioned at the Circus. That evening he introduced me to a German Colonel in the Luftwaffe, an ME110 fighter pilot, flying combat for seven years that also included combat flying in the Spanish Civil War. American aviators considered the ME-110 obsolete once the American P-51 Mustang was equipped with the British Merlin engine. In conversation, Gerhard mentioned, "Would the Colonel be interested in flying an American airman to England?" At the Café de Bourgogne the owner Gerhard Govin had befriended an unhappy, Luftwaffe Colonel who was flying combat for seven years. He knew the Allies would win the war and believed rightly that his "time was up". He was killed in combat two days after my helper Mr. Govin attempted to have the Colonel, fly me back to England, and he was somewhat receptive. Govin introduced me to him. We three had champagne together at the Café, to celebrate Govin's birthday. I don't really know if the Colonel knew it was me that would accompany him to England, as he never led us to believe he did. I was introduced as Govin's nephew, injured in a British air raid in Paris, who was deaf and dumb.



Photo of a German ME-110 fighter plane, similar to the one the German Colonel piloted.

The Colonel, a congenial guy, was much older and wiser than the younger German pilots and had stories to share of his flying exploits. He had seen much, and been through much; and perhaps "His time had come to hang it up," he said jokingly in conversation. Some remarks were made that the Colonel might want to fly to England and take along an American flyer "piggyback" in his ME-110. That kind of talk was scary for me as I listened, even though the German showed no suspicion of anyone's status. Shortly after meeting the Luftwaffe Colonel, he was shot down and killed by the American Air Force.

The German Military caught Gerhard along with an accomplice in the act of cutting enemy telephone lines. Gerhard was shot in escape and died of his wounds two days later.

The next day after the evening of small talk in the bar, Mrs. Levy, the doctor's wife, a nurse by profession, came from the clinic in Reims for dinner at the Erhard's upstairs over the Café de Bourgogne. While in conversation she tried without success to remove the cast on my arm. Mr. Erhard obtained a large pair of shears and with much difficulty, managed to cut off the cast.

Mrs. Levy told me that I would be transferred for one day, to the home of Mademoiselle Ramoge, the English speaking woman, and after a visit to a champagne factory, I will board a train to Paris. My dog tag remained in the back of the bar mounted on the large plate glass mirror.

The dinner was venison, meat that I had never seen, let alone eaten, and holding the knife in my right hand, now devoid of a cast, I was unable to cut the meat, as the knife blade kept snapping back. I did not understand. Was this a joke? No, it was a test. When I began to eat, the fork in the wounded right hand, Mrs. Levy whacked my fingers with the blade of a dinner knife, and told me that Europeans hold the fork in the left hand. Eating with the fork in the right hand is a dead-give-away that I was an American. I was embarrassed for the scolding, but became very careful at the dinner table; getting hit on the fingers hurt, but eating improperly was both foolish and dangerous. Being on the run required extreme caution in any of my activities. The next day I was taken on a tour through the champagne factory, which was interrupted by an air raid by the 8th Air Force on the marshaling yards at Reims. Several German soldiers entered the factory during the air raid and the tour group rushed me into the champagne cellar below ground to be safe from curious eyes. The thousands of champagne

bottles in the factory shook violently, but not a bottle was broken. Being closed in damp quarters under these conditions, I felt totally defenseless and experienced a sense of fear and claustrophobia.

Several months after the war's end Sgt. Anthony DeFazio, a friend from Haverhill, was handed two bottles of champagne by the owner while touring the champagne factory - one to keep and one to be delivered to me on his return to the U.S.A. Tony delivered the bottle.

After the factory visit, I spent the night at the home of Mlle. Ramoge. At bedtime, she decided that I should take a bath and insisted to help. I was embarrassed for her assistance. In my physical condition with my arm now stripped of the cast and needing care, in addition to not having had a bath in two months, her help was most welcomed. After the bath, I hit the sack and slept comfortably and soundly all night. In the morning a crowing rooster awakened me, and after breakfast goodbyes were said. As preplanned I headed for the train station. I will never forget that night.





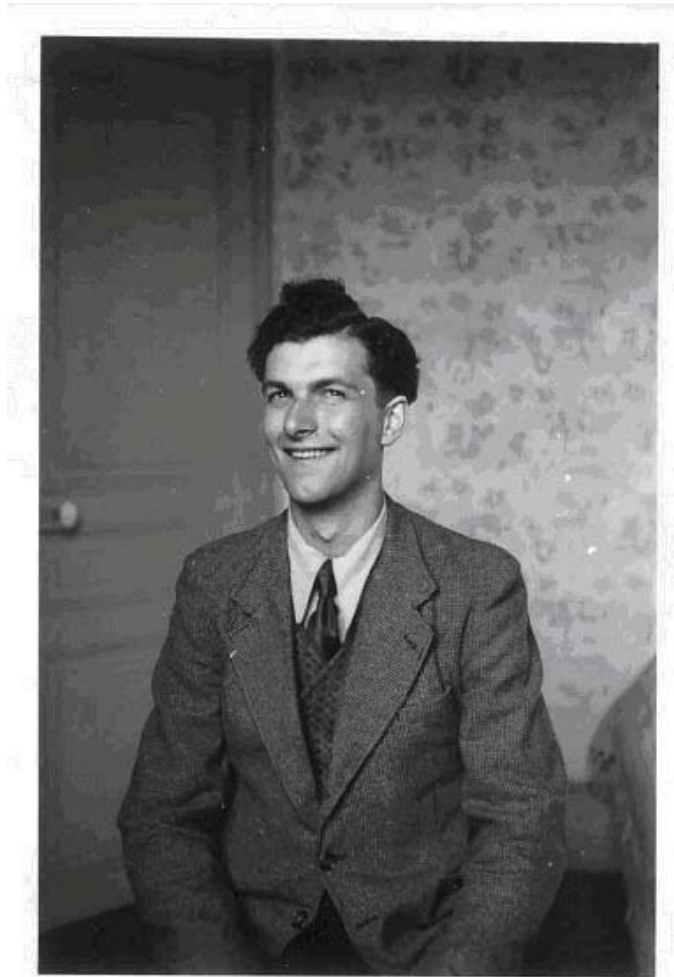
John in Gendarme uniform. Paris 1944



Marcellin Villemont Paris 1944



Marie Villemont - Paris 1944



John in civilian attire - Paris, France May/June 1944



John Katsaros with
Members & family of Paris underground.
Mr. Marcellin Villemont..Paris, France



The lady in the photo is my Reims, France helper, Madeliene Felix at age 33, circa 1944 and Mr. Marcellin Villemont's third floor neighbor, name unknown, resistance fighter. He advised me of German "roust".

CHAPTER 26

Time To Move On

I arrived at the railroad station where again I met up with Jack Hoad and a French guide. The guide gave us new picture identification cards with our new names. My new name was Jean Gouloise, like the name of the French cigarette. I tried that brand once to find it was not to my liking. A small pipe was also given to me that I still possess with the memorabilia of my fugitive life during the war.

Security was enforced here at Reims and at every railroad station as Gestapo agents, recognizable in their long black leather coats, are posted at every train stop. Other agents were always in the area, unassumingly looking for Allied escapees, members of the Resistance, Jews, spies and other wanted, so they were not looking specifically for Allied Airmen.

We were cautioned to remain calm and unpretentious while waiting for the train; fidgeting was bound to draw unwanted attention and inquiry from the Gestapo. The train arrived, the guide boards, Jack and I followed, and he separated himself in a distant compartment. The train make a stop at Epernay, some 15 miles south of Reims, to pick up passengers and continued west to Paris, another 40 miles, to off-load its travelers. The boarded Gestapo was busy looking out for out-of-place individuals but did not disturb the passengers in any way between stops on the trip, nor ask for I.D. cards.

Our instructions were to follow the guides, and we spotted a young woman, accompanied by two men who made hand gestures towards us. We followed for a short distance when the woman, a young brunette, and all business, stopped, looked directly at me and spoke in perfect English, "My name is Genèvieve, follow me." Following at a distance, I am led by Genèvieve to the home of Gendarme Marcellin Villemont and his wife, Marie, who lived on a second floor apartment at 151 Boulevard Davout. Genèvieve now departed. The Villemont's introduced me to the couple who lived on the floor above and the man told me that he could be of assistance in the event of a "roust" (a roundup by the Gestapo and military in a closed-off of a section of homes with a quick search of a number of apartments to look for Allied airmen, spies and especially Jews.)

On occasion, young, healthy male citizens were rounded up for shipment to Germany to bolster the labor force used in the war effort.

Learning of a roust informed me that the German military was picking up Jews to be sent to concentration camps for extermination. A large yellow Star of David placed on their clothing, by the Gestapo, was an easy identifier of a Jew.

Dressed in one of his uniforms Gendarme Villemont and I would walk his rounds daily on the Champs L'Elysee. On occasion, because we were in gendarme uniform, German soldiers would stop us, to ask for the location of a pisseoire, a light for a cigarette or request directions. I always deferred the questions to Marcellin to assist them. One day early evening, a German soldier, accompanied by his date, entered the pisseoire and while relieving himself and talking to his date across the opening in the wall of the pisseoire, turned to look at me and posed a question. It was the first time I was caught off guard and I answered, "Je ne sais pas", zipped up and made tracks to Marcellin. I made up my mind to think through my actions and movements to avoid danger. For me to be out on the town was to learn to be comfortable around people to avoid fear and to stay at Marcellin's elbow so he could respond to all inquiries.

Jean Moulars, the Paris Police Chief, and leader of the French Resistance, in Paris, was asked by Gendarme Villemont to check out my identification papers which the chief found to be flawed. He directed me to a photographer and expert forger of I.D. papers. The large yellow Star of David on her dress easily identified this woman as Jewish. She was the first person to confirm to me the details about the Holocaust and round up of Jews for torture and murder – men, women and children in the gas ovens of the extermination camps, in Eastern Europe and Poland.

The flawed I.D. papers I possessed, she informed me, would have been identified as forgeries had the Germans stopped me. She destroyed the old I.D., made new ones with a proper photo and handed them to Gaby, the new guide, who gave them to me.

New I.D. in hand, it was time to say "Good-bye" and many thanks to Gendarme Marcellin, Mrs. Villemont and the couple upstairs. I still think about the many times a roust took place in the area and consider myself fortunate that I was not involved in a roust.

Gaby and I walked to the railroad station where we met up with Jack Hoad and together we took the Metro (Paris subway) to the Electric building, which is a school building. It was good to see Genèvieve and several men of the Resistance there. Additional escapees and evaders were also there, making the count a total of seventeen in the group of Escape and Evaders of which seven were Americans, seven Jews, one British, one Polish and one Frenchman.

It became obvious to Jack Hoad and me, as it had to the Resistance that we had been together for an extended period of time, perhaps close to ten days. Our knowledge of names and places of the Underground posed too great a threat to them for us to remain together as travel companions. Our initial meeting was at the safe-house at the Korach farm where we hid out in a covered deep dry well and narrowly escaped detection by the hunting Gestapo who had a reward out for us. We had traveled together and were at the Café' de Bourgogne for three days after which we separated overnight, only to meet again in the morning at the Reims train station where we journeyed thru Epernay to Paris where we were split up again. I was taken to the home of Gendarme Villemont and several days later we are reunited at the Electric Building.

Sergeant Jack Stead, an American B-17 gunner, was my new travel companion. The threat posed by the Jack Hoad and John combination was at last broken up.

I met a Major Bufor Thacker, the highest-ranking officer, and there were Lieutenants Burgess, Ray Holtz and Charles McLain. A heavy-set humpback gentleman of the Resistance gave last minute instructions on comportment at the train station, in order not to foster attention to us. This train was to leave Paris destined for Toulouse, and hopefully good fortune would next take the group to the Pyrenees Mountains, the gateway to Spain and freedom.

With my new partner, Jack Stead, I connected with our guides to Toulouse, a short, good looking brunette and a slender, sickly looking man, wearing horn-rimmed glasses, whose appearance resembles that of a bookworm. We were slated to go to Pau, at the foothills of the Pyrenees, but things fell into disorder, as the guides were not wearing proper identification. Two men approached and said that his GI boots easily gave up Jack as a stranger, and they advised us to stay clear of Pau. It appeared as though these two men were creating a difficult situation.

We thought they were Gestapo, and Jack and I played deaf and dumb. During this confrontation McLain, Burgess and Holtz came on the scene and convinced the men that we were legitimate. Could these men have been Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.) plants?

It is important to note that after WWII, the AFEES (Air Force Escape and Evasion Society), of which I am a member, told us that we were fortunate to have left Paris when we did because two weeks after our departure, the Resistance forces were exposed by an informant who advised the Gestapo that the Paris Chief of Police, Jean Moulars, was the leader of the Resistance. The Chief was apprehended, along with two hundred U.S. Army Air Force and Allied airmen who were discovered to be awaiting orders to evacuate Paris for the Pyrenees. The Gestapo executed all. This was typical of the brutality and inhumanity of the enemy, particularly the Gestapo. It was horrifying to learn this shocking news.

From the Electric building, paired off with new travel companions, we walked to the Paris train station nearby, following the replacement guide who soon gave us the “slip”. We had no tickets and no boarding information. None of the other members of the group were visible. Jack Stead became anxious and now he felt the situation was getting desperate. Jack was a few years older than I, and married with a child. In order to calm Jack, I reminded him that we are dressed in civilian clothes and looked like Frenchmen, so to be calm and remain unobtrusive.

Now, no words are passed between us, just eye, head and hand signals. I signaled with my hands to wait and to keep our eyes open. An English speaking man walked by Jack and said, “Follow me.” Eagerly we followed his lead that took us to the train, where he discreetly passed train tickets to us and urged us to be careful, for the first guide has been picked up by the Gestapo for questioning. Jack and I boarded the train, Paris to Toulouse, tickets in hand, to discover that no seats were available, and the aisle was jammed with travelers, so, we stood along with other passengers in the aisle. A seat became vacant and Jack plopped himself down on it. Now, there was no communication between us at all. Several hours passed on this long journey to Toulouse, and I had been standing on my painful legs and aching feet. A woman arises and left her seat. Exhausted, I grabbed it tout de suite. The woman returned within a few minutes to stand right before me. I played the deaf and dumb. Jack rose to the occasion and offered his seat to the woman. She was grateful to Jack but cast me a glaring eye.

Some passengers began eating the food they brought along for the trip while Jack and I, without rations, remembered the delicious taste of the bread slice we each had for breakfast. We chose to ignore our hunger pains and savor thoughts of the coming of sweet freedom, more precious than food and drink. We arrived at Toulouse with no added problems from the German military. The Germans were unable to check passenger identifications on the overcrowded train.



French I.D. picture of
John Katsaros taken by
Jewish woman with "star
of David" sewn to clothes.

CHAPTER 27

The Pyrenees

We traveled through Montauban to Toulouse, France where a new guide greeted us as we detrain. He directed us to the home of Mademoiselle Fernands Moulis, who was one of the leaders of the Resistance in the Toulouse area. Jack and I stayed one night.

The Resistance had outfitted me with a pair of dress shoes, at least two sizes too small, and Mademoiselle tried in vain to get me a decent pair of shoes in the proper size, suitable for mountain climbing. My other issued clothing consisted of a dress shirt, tie, trousers, short-sleeved sweater and a dress jacket. A hat or a pair of gloves essential to scale the mountains are not given to me. Early the next morning we reassembled at the train station and eventually boarded the train out of Toulouse and arrived at St. Girons, a small town at the foothills of the Pyrenees. A guide, presumably a Spanish Basque, was expected to meet the travelers at the station, and the trek up and over the Pyrenees was to begin at this point, but the guide did not appear. Without a guide the group was unsure about relying solely on the escape maps. We questioned our ability to venture through the thick forest without apprehension by the Germans. So, we decided to wait.

Finally, at dusk, after two days of nervous anxiety, the guide showed up to provide the leadership to enter the dark, unknown forest. Naturally, the group was elated, though nerve-spent; we had feared the Basque Guide would leave us to our own destiny. The group, in pairs, followed closely behind the Basque guide, possibly a prior WWII smuggler, and headed for the forest by a circuitous route. Our climb over the Pyrenees began by entering a narrow path, through thick brush and took the group into a descending valley heading to the base of the mountains. Suddenly, panic struck the group as the barking of dogs was heard up ahead and a search beam flooded the murkiness over our heads. God, we had already been discovered! The guide directed everyone to the ground to hide in the overgrowth. There were shouts directed through the dark to come forward; the guide put one finger across his lips, "Shh," to be silent and gestured with his hands to stay put. A German patrol had heard our trampling through the brush and fixed their spot beam in our direction no advance

movement was made to check out the noise. After a period of waiting, the lights went out and the patrol retreated with the dogs. The guide immediately recognized the peril in the continued travel along the valley floor and altered his direction to head for the mountains, to begin, sooner than planned, the arduous ascent up the mountainside, in single file.

After a quick, exhausting climb, the guide stopped for the group to rest and recuperate. Here he told us that the patrol offered no challenge because it figured the group to be a large, well-armed group of Resistance fighters and did not think it prudent for their little patrol to engage such a formidable force. Little did the Patrol know that the group had no weapons. After the quick breather, we added more distance between the patrol sighting and our group. The guide had us climbing half the night to make tracks, and to avoid possible detection by planes patrolling the area, looking for us. When daylight arrived, we stopped, exhausted, and fell asleep underbrush cover on the cold ground.

The Jewish men carried a heavy valise and after a day of exhaustive mountain climbing, were physically too tired to carry the bag and asked for assistance. The Major and one of the airmen volunteered to take on the chore of carrying the luggage. After several hours of exchange hauling between them, they, also, became tired, did not want to continue. Too weak to carry their own burden, the Jewish men pled for help with their precious possessions. The Major told them they must carry their own luggage, and the aged Jews continue to wept for assistance. The Major, tired of sharing the burden and mindful of the necessity to continue with our journey, tossed the valise, contents and all, into a ravine. The Jews were grievously pained by their loss and cried extensively. This was not a time for sympathy - life hung in the balance.

My feet were killing me from the tight dress shoes, and they gave me severe problems climbing the mountain rocks. I also needed help in climbing, having the use of only my left arm. Jack Stead, Charles McLain and the Major took turns, using a small tree branch to pull me up the mountains. To them, I am eternally grateful.

Feeling weak, sick and dispirited with my situation and not wanting to be a burden to the others, I requested to be left behind with a small compass in order for the group to continue moving forward without me. The group told me that I was one of them, and they would not leave me.

This gave me the encouragement I needed to continue, as they said, “We are getting closer to freedom and we are all going to make it.”

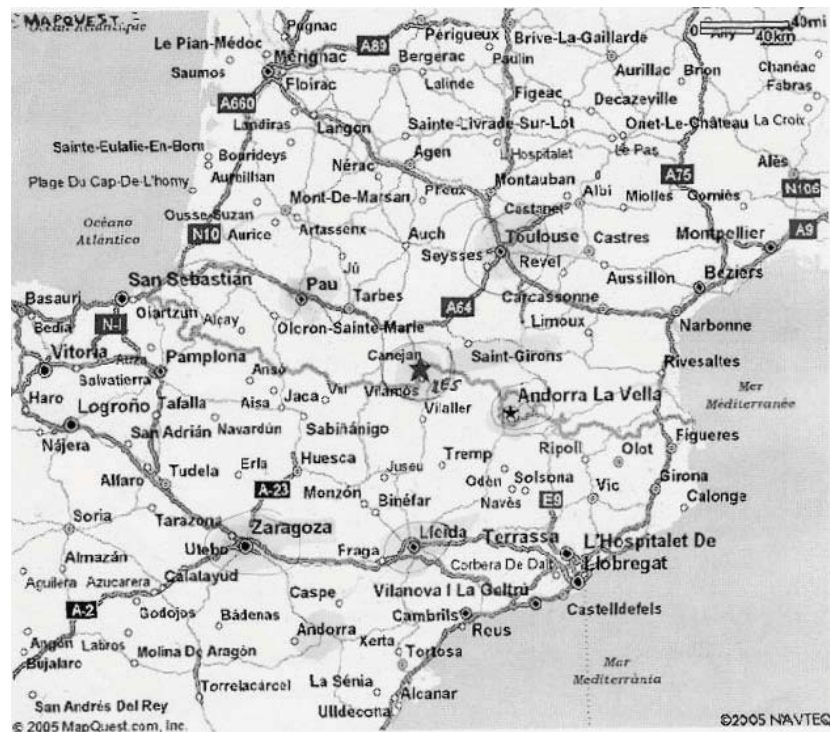
The second morning in the mountains, a German spotter plane, probably a “Stork”, flew close to our location and circled overhead in the manner of a hunter tracking deer; but we had taken cover under the trees and with dark clothing, we were not observed. The spotter hung around, circling, and seeing nothing of interest, flew away. Lady luck was holding out after having been spotted that once by a patrol on the first night in the mountains. The Basque guide, without whom we would not reach Spain and freedom, had packed a little food for himself. He ate from time to time and did not share with anyone. We did not consider him to be selfish or greedy, just looking out for himself. Freedom on an empty stomach would taste sweet. Freedom was a fleeting thing, especially in a nation like Spain, which remained neutral in WWII and owed allegiance to Germany for military aid to Generalissimo Franco during the Spanish Civil War, where Hitler tested his armament of planes, tanks and guns.

I had not eaten anything in two days and was extremely tired, as were the others, and I lacked the energy to continue the climb in this harsh environment. There were no roads or paths to follow and the high altitude made it difficult for me to breathe in my condition. Now and then we would come to a stream to cross and were able to refresh ourselves with clear, cool, fresh water. Not even wild berries were available to curb my hunger and on the third day in the mountains without a morsel of food and my stomach touching my backbone, some kind soul gave me two sugar cubes and told me to savor them slowly. This tasty tidbit and the kindness of the donor boosted my energy level enough to continue the challenge of the Pyrenees. Here we were scratching our way up a mountainside on our way to freedom, with no food, while back in France they were having their problems with the scarcity of food, and life’s difficulties evading the Gestapo, steering clear of rousts and in constant fear of informants in their midst.

By the third or fourth night with no food and weary from the punishing mountain slopes, we asked the guide if this was the last mountain.

We asked again and again and his answer always was, “One more mountain”. I was completely worn out and saw no end to our journey. I wondered if I could make it all the way to freedom. That magic word “freedom” gnawed on my empty stomach, yet, my great fellow travelers continued to bolster my weariness with encouraging words.

The guide knew our location and where we were going, and he headed to an empty barn. Exhausted, I lay down in the straw, out like a light within seconds, and had an uninterrupted night’s sleep. In the morning, I was full of welts from biting bugs and could stop scratching. At a nearby stream, fed by melting snow from the mountaintops, we all refreshed ourselves with clear cold drinking water before washing up. This was the first week in June and on our travels light snow had fallen, although at the tops of the mountain there had been heavy snowfall. Only a few climbers had proper climbing boots. My dress shoes had thin, smooth leather soles. They were too small for my feet and they got cramped and frozen. This gave me great discomfort. They also gave me great difficulty with the steep pitches on the icy slopes, the snow-covered rock areas, and on fording streams, and rivers with stone and gravel bottoms. Thankful for the rest under cover, the group left the barn and traveled for several hours when the absence of the P-51 pilot is noted. The guide refused to retrace our steps, as time would be lost and there was distance to travel. The Major, our senior officer, stated that in the future, a roll call would be taken, and added that the missing Captain, trained in navigation, had a compass with him and would find his way. After a short break, we continued to forge ahead when the guide gave the news, “Only one more mountain to climb”. Alleluia! We would soon arrive at the border separating Spain from France. We trudged along for several more hours of stressful ascent through snow-covered ground and rocks, up to a small rock formation with carved lettering and arrows pointing, one, south to Spain, the other, north to France. The arrow, pointing to Spain, pointed downhill and the transgression over the border and down the Pyrenees proved to be very arduous. Happiness echoed in the group in a loud voice, and the guide admonished the group to be quiet and to speak in whispers, as the German military patrolled the border, and, if captured, although on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees, they will take prisoners. The Basque guide said, “Goodbye, good luck,” and departed into the forest. Just like that.



The “Long Escape”, from Reims to Epernay, to Paris, Toulouse, St. Giron, France, over the Pyrenees Mountains to Les, Andorra, Lerida, Zaragoza, Madrid, La Linea Spain; to Gibraltar; to Bristol, London and Deenethorpe, England.

CHAPTER 28

From The Pyrenees to Gibraltar

We made our way down the mountainside with much difficulty and dragged ourselves towards the town of Les. The pace quickened to reach the thick underbrush where cover was taken for several minutes as the sound of a German spotter plane echoed across the canyon. The Major gave the "All clear." Arriving at the small town of Les, the Spanish Constabulary met us. They were sympathizers to the German cause and were not as friendly as first appeared. Escape and Evasion lectures had prepared each of us for just such a situation; the Major took charge, requested to meet with the mayor or town manager, and his request was honored.

From this meeting, the group was directed to comfortable rooms. Together with Jack Stead, as advised by our lectures, I checked out the room for listening devices, implanted to record conversations in hopes of obtaining valuable information, such as names, and meeting places of the Resistance. We found two tiny microphone devices (bugs) in the room behind two pictures on the wall, and did not disturb them but carefully monitored our conversation subjects. I remembered one instance regarding an Escape and Evasion lecture given to the 401st Bomb Group by a British General. He told us how they extracted some pertinent information from a ranking German fighter pilot who had been shot down near London. At the time of his capture, the German bomber aircraft had devastated London during the famous "Blitz" bombing. Many sections of London were reduced to shambles. In order for British Intelligence to obtain information from their prisoner they took him on a circuitous route around that part of London that had not been "blitzed" and to a famous restaurant where they had prime cuts of steak. The German pilot could not believe his eyes for he had heard that London was devastated by the German bombings and the people of England were living on meager rations. His information was correct, but he was led to believe otherwise. British Intelligence, in this devious manner, gathered a few secrets from this pilot.



Charles J. McLain, Lt. Colonel, (Ret.) - One escapee of several that climbed the Pyrenees into Spain with John Katsaros - June 1944.

Intelligence officers told the Luftwaffe pilot that the German bombers were actually bombing decoys in and around London and the British people were not on strict rations. Of course this was misinformation. The British General left the podium and an American officer was about to excuse us when the General/lecturer returned. However, his uniform was that of a British non-commissioned officer. He had tricked us. His final remark was, "If captured, give only your name, rank, and serial number because you will not know who is questioning you." Training and experience dictated your behavior.

Being forewarned by the hotel staff of unexpected companionship, we were not surprised at brunch to be accompanied by two Gestapo agents seated at a nearby table. And while at Les, it appeared that they were always in our company. We remained aloof yet cordial. In the evening, we strolled over to the Catholic Church, and looking up to the inside of the church dome, we were astounded to see the gold inlay. We looked at each other in disbelief and shook our heads. On return to the hotel from our stroll, we found the missing P-51 pilot left behind at the first barn stop on the mountaintop, there, to greet us, mad as a wet hen. The P-51 pilot was furious for our neglect and despite our embarrassment we were extremely happy that he made his way with the aid of his small compass to rejoin the group at Les. The Major was correct when he stated that the Captain had been trained in navigational aids. An escape kit holding money, maps and a small compass was installed on each parachute. The Gestapo on my first capture had taken my escape kit from me, or the distrusting Resistance group at "The Circus" in Reims confiscated the kit for its valuables. Only the French phrase booklet was returned to me.

The second night at Les, I got sick to my stomach, as did most of the others. In all probability, I did not know how to eat in this situation; not having eaten in five days, I ate and drank too much, too fast for my empty stomach. The chow was good, so barring food poisoning; it is unreasonable to put all the blame on the quality of the food and the water.

We stayed at Les for about forty-eight hours. In the morning of the third day, we were told that our next destination was Lerida via Andorra la Vella, and off we went, loaded on an old truck with a wooden bed. A ride down a mountainside in a rickety old truck was gratefully appreciated, especially when the stop was reached. At Andorra la Vella, we had a snack and visited the "horror" chambers in the mountain caves used during the period of the

Spanish Inquisition. Jews, Muslims and heretics were tortured, burned alive, and hung, garroted or otherwise executed for their religious beliefs. The morning after a night's sleep we mounted the truck to continue our journey to Lerida. The trip to Lerida was not a pleasant ride and immediately upon our expected arrival, the Spanish military greeted us and separated the group by national origin. The reception over, we were marched to prison and locked up. This is my fourth lock-up experience and it was becoming a bad habit.

The thoughts of the taste of the fresh air of Spain, that had kept me going on the hard climb over the Pyrenees, was hardly the savor of the freedom for which my expectations had prepared me. Not only was I frail, I was emaciated and having great difficulty with my weakness. The Major recognized the seriousness of my condition and requested a meeting with the prison commander, with whom it was agreed that I should be seen, under guard, by a doctor. I had no means or strength to escape, so the guard allowed me to enter the doctor's office by myself. The Spanish doctor's English was perfect, as he said to me, "You are an American?" "Yes sir," I replied. The doctor weighed me and began his examination. "You are in poor health and should be admitted to the prison dispensary." While held as a prisoner at the "Circus" my physical health took a turn for the worse and the exhaustive climb over the Pyrenees coupled with my deteriorating physical health through lack of nourishment accounted for my weight loss to eighty-seven pounds, weakening me considerably. A thought of comfort in a bright room in the dispensary was welcoming to me compared to being caged in a prison cell. Abruptly, the doctor continued to sputter, "The Allies invaded France and the shit will be kicked out of them."

"I feel better already – goodbye". Thinking to myself, "I've got to get away from this guy" and I headed straight outdoors to tell the Major of the invasion, which in all probability took place while we scaled the Pyrenees. When we returned to the prison, the Major asked for a meeting with the prison commander, and requested permission, in accordance with international law, to telephone the American Embassy in Madrid. The request was granted a couple of days later and the Major spoke to the American Ambassador who confirmed the Allied invasion of Europe at Normandy 6 June 1944. Our troops were preceding rapidly through France. The Ambassador asked us to remain calm, that he would send an official to Lerida to affect our release.

An Embassy Service Officer arrived the next day and had us released

from prison unto his custody. It felt good to see an American civil official exert his influence where we had none. From the Lerida prison, the American flyers were herded onto an open, very old, Italian Fiat truck and placed under armed guard. A Spanish soldier proceeded to drive on the narrow dirt road up and down steep mountain passes towards our next destination. Whenever our driver met with another approaching vehicle, one or the other had to back up a considerable distance to let the other proceed. The truck had no sideboards to protect us from falling out, nor were there fences or barriers to keep the truck on the road. Our legs hung out of the truck sides, and on some turns our bodies suspended dangerously over cliffs of several thousand feet. This was a wild roller-coaster ride as the truck swayed from side to side managing the rough mountain road of stones, roots and hard pack, pitching violently on the many hairpin turns, as the driver sped along oblivious to the safety concerns of his passengers.

I was curious as to why we had armed soldiers guarding us, and if we were to be taken to another prison? So I asked one of the guards, "Are we to be released at the next city?" "Si", he answered. Their rifles appeared to be of WWI vintage, and I asked to examine one of them, and to my surprise a soldier handed me his rifle. It was WWI German vintage, all right, similar to our 1903 Springfield.

The Spanish government had provided us with meager services enough to satisfy the needs of the American Embassy without causing a diplomatic flap, but it was obvious that they had little love for America. The Spanish people however, viewed us with affection.

At the foothills of the Pyrenees I saw the damage to the buildings, bridges and roads, caused by the Spanish Civil War of 1936/1937, a few years before WWII. What impressed me most is how the government has repaired holes created by the aerial bombardment on the bridge roadways. The holes were covered with wood planks and nailed down on the road. The rickety old truck crossed over these bridges while the shaking of the structures gave the riders grave concern for their stability. Without further mishap, the rickety old truck took me to our destination, the city of Zaragoza, where the seven American airmen were escorted to a nice hotel. We were two to a room, except for the Major who had a separate room. We bathed, freshened up, and assembled later in the lobby. An American Embassy Official greeted us in the lobby and escorted us to a nearby men's haberdashery where we were outfitted head to toe with brand new mufti

wearing apparel. Most important for me, besides the clean underwear and socks, was the selection of a civilian pair of shoes that fit my poor, tired, aching feet. The shoes were comfortable and to my amazement, smaller than my regular size, as my feet with my body had dropped in size and weight. That evening, dressed in new suits, shirts and ties, and all freshened up, we were guests of the American Embassy at dinner and we were now in American hands. This was a great day!

After this heartening experience, we were told that Madrid was our next destination. In the morning we were transported from Zaragoza to the American Embassy in Madrid where it was possible to catch a glimpse of Generalissimo Franco on his way to view the bullfights. Our request to attend the bullfights was denied - temporarily forgetting for a moment that the Spanish government owed allegiance to Germany for their assistance during the Civil War, we did not question the wisdom of our Embassy Service Office.

From the Embassy, we learned of a high ranking American fighter pilot who had been shot down, evaded capture by the Germans, and preceded us over the Pyrenees to freedom. This man was "Chuck" Yeager, the same American Test Pilot who became the first person to break the sound barrier. Chuck, after his career and retirement as a General from the USAF, spent many years as an aircraft engineer and government test pilot.

After spending a day in Madrid in the luxury of the fine Embassy Quarters, a bath with hot water, brand new wearing apparel and a banquet dinner, arrangements were made for the group to travel by train to La Linea at the base of the British Gibraltar on the Mediterranean Sea. Upon arrival at the La Linea train station, the British military met the group and gave escort to a military supply building on Gibraltar where our civilian attire was replaced by RAF military clothing consisting of a field cap, stockings, jumpsuit, jacket and RAF boots. Our visit on the Rock of Gibraltar was a pleasurable experience as we were well received and provided for as guests of the Commonwealth of Great Britain, eating and resting concerned only with our newfound luxuries. Forty-eight hours were spent touring the area and exploring numerous caves in the rocks inhabited by monkeys. Much of the area was cordoned off as "OFF LIMITS", where I assumed that arms, ammunition and military equipment were stored for defensive purposes. It was interesting and colorful to view the impressive British in "Changing of the Guard." Very impressive.



Gibraltar

The American Embassy in Gibraltar provided each of us with spending money in American dollars. I used a portion of the money at Gibraltar to purchase wristwatches, as I was told they could be sold for a handsome profit when I reached England. On the third day the group and I were provided transportation from Gibraltar to Bristol, England in an unarmed RAF C-47 cargo plane. I believed that the German Luftwaffe still patrolled the English Channel, so I had reservations about flying that great distance to England without machine-gun protection. I would have preferred escort by British or American fighter aircraft; however thankfully, our plane flew without incident to Bristol.

Soon after our landing and parking the aircraft, the ground crew rushed us looking for wristwatches. I had purchased four watches supposedly manufactured by Omega but did not carry the label. One was all I needed for a keepsake to replace my Air Force navigator watch, taken by the Gestapo, so I sold the other three for profit.



C-47 Transport - Gibraltar to England

Escape Lines Memorial Society Calendar 2006

*For information on any of these Commemorative Walks, contact the
ELMS Secretary, Roger Stanton, at 5 Tansy Road, Harrogate,
North Yorkshire, HG3 2UJ, U.K.; Phone 01423 508667*

25 April – 02 May	ELMS Reunion week	Social/Visits	York/Malton
28 April – 30 April	ELMS Memorial W/E	Paunde/Dianer	York/Malton
07 May	Nidderdale Walk	Moderate	North Yorkshire
19 – 21 May	Aircrew Evaders	Meeting/Dinner	Stratford Upon Avon
23 – 30 May	Cretan Freedom Trail	Difficult/Severe	Crete
May*	Italian Freedom Trail	Moderate	Barrea Italy
June 19 – 23	Dutch Freedom Trail	Moderate	Arnhem Holland
June 19 – 23	French Freedom Trail	Difficult/Severe	St Girons France
June*	Rossano Freedom Trail	Difficult/Severe	Rossano, Italy
July*	The Frankton Trail	Moderate	Bordeaux/ Ruffec
6 – 9 July	French Freedom Trail	Difficult/Severe	St Girons France
August*	Danish Freedom Trail	Moderate	Seaby Denmark
August*	Shelburn Freedom Trail	Moderate	Brittany France
7 – 12 September	Belgian Freedom Trail	Moderate	Pays Basque
20 – 22 October	ELMS/Comete Memorial W/E		Brussels Belgium

NOTE: The Burgundy/French Freedom Trail we climbed, from St. Girons, France over the Pyrenees Mountains to Spain was rated, Difficult/Severe. (Each year the majority who attempt the Burgundy/French Freedom Trail, even with assistance, food, water, and proper clothing, fails the arduous climb. More moderate escape lines are generally chosen).



Jack Stead Relives His Journey

"I write this, not as a tribute to any personal courage or glory, but at the insistence of my family, who for many years have urged me to set this down before it is lost either by a loss of memory or my demise.

Before I begin, I wish you to understand that for many years it was not possible to relate these events due to orders from the U.S. Army, that nothing be revealed until officially released. This was done to protect those brave people that aided in the hour of greatest need. Had they been discovered helping me, a B17 Flying Fortress gunner to evade capture, they would have forfeited their lives. The Germans would have seen to that.

About ten days passed, after my bailout and hiding in the Guyon family safe house, with no word on the progress to evade capture being made. Then we received word that I would be leaving the next morning and to be prepared to follow instructions to the letter. That night the Guyon family and I made our goodbye. I thanked them for all they had done for me to which they responded that it was nothing. Imagine that, they risked their lives, shared their meager food supply, searched out help when their cell was isolated and regarded it as nothing. I asked if there was anything they wanted from me and Paulette said she would like to have a ring I had that was a cameo and had been in my family for about eighty years or so. I immediately gave it to her and pleased to do so. We all hugged, kissed and Paulette cried a little. She then gave me two small religious mementos to take with me as a remembrance and wished me Godspeed and to please write after the war. Now, I could not carry their address with me for fear of being captured and the Germans finding it on me, so I left mine with them so they could hide it until after the war. They could write me, and I could reply.

The next morning Marcel and I left early and walked for about three

miles in town to a church. We entered and found a man standing and about thirteen people sitting in pews. Marcel spoke to the man, came back to me and said in French, "I leave you now, and have a good journey", gave me a handclasp and departed. I sat with the others and the man began to speak to us in French first then in English. He explained the procedure to be used for the journey south. We were to travel in pairs from the church, always keeping the pair ahead of us in sight but we were not to stay too close as to make it noticeable we were together. We, above all, must never appear as a group.

The "Conveyors" were to be a young man and a young woman traveling as man and wife. They would arrive shortly, be introduced so we might recognize them, and then we would be on our way. They did arrive, and we then left the church together. We waited several minutes and then the first pair of us left, repeating this procedure until all were gone each pair keeping the pair ahead in view and the first pair following the guides. We had been given the train tickets prior to leaving and were instructed to surrender them only to the conductor on the train. We proceeded a short distance to the station and the train being there, we proceeded to board. To say it was crowded would be the understatement of the year. It was so jammed to the gills, as they say, with absolutely no place to sit and hardly a place to stand.

Now I had been paired with a young American flier about nineteen years old who had been seriously injured when he was shot down. His one arm was almost useless and he did not understand a word of French. We found a place to stand in the corridor not far from the bathroom and stood quietly casting an occasional glance down the line to keep the pair ahead of us in view. If they moved then we must do likewise. The train was so jammed that people were even in the bathroom, one sitting, and two standing with the door open. We were all mixed together, men and women, not many talking just keeping to our own thoughts. I could not talk to my partner, whose name I neglected was John Katsaros, because if we spoke we would give ourselves away, and who could be trusted?

Our group consisted of men from nineteen to seventy-five years of age, so we looked rather commonplace and this could only help... I later learned that half were Jewish and the rest of us were officers and enlisted men and French, English, American and, I believe, a Canadian. We had a real mixture.

The train finally started and we were on our way, packed like sardines lacking only the oil. After about two hours a man came struggling down the aisle, squeezing by person after person. Believe me there was a lot of complaining but he just said he had to get to the restroom. He finally gets there and finds three in it, and he had a fit. He carried on so much that the three in there decided they had to come out so he might get in. Now, let me tell you, there was hardly room for one extra person in the aisle let alone four. One was behind the door so the two had to come out so he could close the door; get around it and out of the room. They shuffled about and the desperate man finally got in and had his day. You will not believe this but that guy, and only that guy, came back three times on the first leg of the journey to use the room. Finally, on his last trip someone spoke up asking what his problem was and another voice from somewhere said in a loud voice that he must have taken a suppository. As grim as things were, believe me, this brought down the house. The corridor was not disturbed again. It was a long ride until we reached a few stations that relieved the crowding, as more got off than got on. John and I were by now standing near a compartment and at a stop, a seat became available. We only had to watch for the two ahead of us when the train stopped I sat down and figured I could relieve John shortly. Soon a woman got up and left (it turned out she was going to the rest room) so John came into the compartment and sat down, happy to have a seat. Lo and behold she reappears, marches up to John and says, in French, "Sir, you have taken my place." He gives her a big grin and sits there. I knew the woman was not going to give up easy and John had no idea what she wanted, so I got up and gave her my seat and that made her happy.

We proceeded south on the train not certain just what to expect, or just exactly where we were going. We knew we had to cross the mountains, but we had no idea how far south we could ride or even just how we could get into Spain. The people helping us escape could not risk the entire operation by some of us getting caught, and being forced to reveal how the operation was run. We were all aware how the Nazis could obtain any information they desired, it was simply a matter of would you die before you talked, and they were experts at their job.

The route we were taking, seemed to be in good repair, indicating that the Allies were not concentrating on this rail system, because we did not stop once for repairs to the rails. We made quite good time and now that we

could sit down the journey was endurable. The only thing was, we had nothing to eat, and we had left very early that morning. But, all in all, an empty stomach is worth freedom anytime. Very late that day, we went through a town called Montauban. It was good-sized town, and after a short stop, we continued on south for about another thirty-five miles to Toulouse. This was a much larger town and proved to be the end of the journey. The two people ahead of us got off the train and John and I followed. We were inside a huge station with about four tracks across for servicing various routes to and from the area. As we had been instructed, we stayed together in twos but this time we could see our Conveyors. We all stood near the shops and along the wall of the station, keeping our eyes on the man and woman. They had taken up a position adjacent to the nearest tracks, upended their suitcases, and sat on them.

We had been advised, in our briefing, that someone would walk up to them engage them in conversation and that they would give us the all clear signal and then they would simply leave the station while we waited for the next act. We stood and they sat for hour after hour but nothing happened. We, John and I, felt in our bones that we were in deep trouble. This feeling got worse when the man and the woman got up and simply left with no signal to us. There were German soldiers all over the place, some on leave, I presume, as well as, Gestapo men because they were everywhere all the time and watched everything.

Again, we could not talk because of the fear of being overheard, so we communicated by eye contact and head nods. We moved inside a small coffee shop for a while to change our positions so as not to be quite so obvious. We could not stay there for long because no one could contact us those circumstances, so we moved back to the station proper. John was great, even though he was hurting, he never let on anything was wrong through the whole trip. Mind you, both of us were scared to death by the uncertainty of the situation. The two of us stood there, watching and waiting and finally a man came by, looked at me right in the eye, and said in English, "Follow the man with the pipe." He said this and quickly moved on. John and I looked at one another with a question in our eyes. Was this a contact that could be trusted? Was this the Gestapo trying us on for size? Should we move out or stay put? Now, none of the other people had made a move nor had anyone contacted them and we could not figure out why we had been spoken to but they were ignored. All of us around the station were

keeping an eye on the others. We had to, we were all in this together, and what happened to one happened to all. We decided that moving and following the strange order the man had given us was much too risky so we waited some more. After about one half hour, the same man came by and again looked me in the eye and said the same thing but this time he was mad as hell and said it through clenched teeth as well as slightly louder. I looked at John, shrugged my shoulders, and nodded my head in the direction of the exit tunnel. We had to do something so let's go for broke. But believe me, I was scared to death. We strolled toward the tunnel trying to be nonchalant so as not to attract attention. A glance over my shoulder told me the others were now moving also. Was I condemning all of us to capture once we left the station? As we arrived at the tunnel, there stood a man of average height, smoking the largest pipe I had ever seen. He was leaning against the wall with a casual air, but as we approached, he turned and walked ahead of us, through the tunnel and outside. We followed for about two blocks when he then stopped, and allowed us to catch up to him. We stood there and he finally said, in English, "Are you people the shipment from Paris?" We told him that we were and asked about the other people with us. He said that they were being taken by twos by other men, and would be safe and that we would be together tomorrow if all went well. We asked why we had been left there so long and he said that his people knew a shipment was coming through that week but the men that handled that had been captured the week before and were either dead or in prison. He said that they had been going to the station everyday to meet the train from Paris but had no way to tell who was who or what was what. Today, he said, they had gone again and without much luck. They had seen the couple sitting at the tracks but it meant nothing to them so they were about to give up when one of their men indicated he wanted a meeting. They left the station and had a conference.

The man said he had spotted a young man with American Army shoes that had been dyed black and he felt it worth the risk to try and make contact. In fact he was so sure he was right he insisted they try. They were my shoes that I had bailed out with and had been wearing right along. We airmen had been advised in lectures regarding escape and evasion that shoes were the hardest item to get in Europe and that it would be wise to take ours with us as I had done. So, a pair of shoes, it turns out, moved us to the next part of our escape.

The man with the pipe took us to his house, (I never knew or asked his name) fed us, let us clean up and stay the night. He told us we would be leaving the next afternoon if things could be arranged. They were working on rebuilding the local organization to replace the operation lost by the capture of the other men. It was not so simple because they had to arrange connections all the way back to Paris and be sure those connections were safe. It felt good to have a decent meal under our belts as well as a place to sleep after the long train ride and the episode at the station. By checking a map now I can see where we had traveled some three hundred and fifty miles, as the crow flies, and by land more than that. I can see now why we had left so early in the morning. Chances are the trip we took might only go once a day or because of the war perhaps once a week. The impression that remains with me to this day about this house we were taken to is that it was a multiple dwelling with I think four floors. The building was very old looking from the outside, but when we entered the apartment itself, it was very modern and furnished well. There was no woman to be seen, the man did everything for us and did it as though he knew what he were doing. I often wondered if he was alone because he was single, or if he had sent his wife away because of the nature of his business. John and I were so exhausted and so hungry that the many things I think about now never occurred to either of us. We seemed to live from minute to minute and at the hands of other people. The best way to describe the feeling is to say; it was like a dream or a nightmare. We bathed and shaved and fell into bed to sleep the sleep of the dead. I thought I would never be that tired ever again, anytime in my life. Little did I know!

The next day we woke up very late, having been allowed to get all the rest we seemed to require. The man fixed us breakfast, even though it was afternoon, and when we had finished, he announced he was going out and see just what plans had been made. He told us they had a man to guide us over the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain and that everything had to be coordinated. We were left alone for several hours as he went about his business. Our only fear was that someone would come to the door looking for him because we sure did not know what to do. Not answer the door was what we probably decided but at this point I can't recall. He returned and advised us that everything was in order and we were to leave right away. He had train tickets, which he gave us, and then led us back to the station to join the others. Our instructions now were to pay no attention to our

former companions but just ride the train to the end of the line and get off. We were to be met by someone and told what to do. Off we went, onto the train, found a seat, and waited. Soon the train started to move and once we were under way the conductor came through and collected the tickets. We either looked like natives or he just did not care but either way we attracted no attention and went on our way. There were not many people on this train and we were not sure if this was the best condition. Either way it made no difference because there was nothing we could do about it. We were not going as fast as the other train, and stopped at every little burg along the way. It was obvious it was a local line servicing all the little places in the south.

Eventually we reached the end of the line and got off, standing alongside the train by the tracks. The station was not much to speak of and we could see no life. A few people got off with us but they went their way without a backward glance. Here we were again, not knowing what to expect, when along comes a man walking quickly to the bunch of us. He never stops but motions us all to follow and goes by taking the lead he walks toward the front of the train and from there he branches off into the countryside. It was slightly hilly but not too bad so we had no trouble keeping up. After about twenty minutes he stopped in a small clearing in the woods and had us gather around. He then told us we had made it unscathed so far and also undetected by the Germans. We were, he said, to remain there until someone came for us. Under no circumstances were we to move or to do anything that might bring attention to ourselves such as lighting a fire or making any loud noise. He could not say exactly when our help would arrive, only repeating we must stay there. The man we had stayed with had given John and me some sandwiches so at least we had something to eat. Our fellow travelers also had been provided with something, not much, but something. Don't forget, food was short for the people and anything they gave us was less for them. So, not knowing how long we were to wait we settled down on the grass in small knots of people, those knowing one another together, the rest of us in random fashion. I am certain we all felt our savior would be along before nightfall and we would start the next phase of the escape. The sun went down, dusk came, the moon came out, and night was upon us in full force. I tried to sleep on the ground but, the dampness permeated my clothes and I was uncomfortable, as were all the others. There was much whispering, such as, "Is he coming? Did he get

caught? Have we been set up? Should we strike out on our own?" We had only questions, no answers. This, I think, was the longest night of my entire life.

By morning I was so cold I thought I was going to freeze to death, it was June, and we were in the foothills of the mountains. I remember standing at the top of a small rise waiting for the sun to come up. A young Frenchman was standing alongside me he was in the underground and had made this trip before. He claimed he had information he wanted to get to England so the trip was necessary. I was famished and so was he. He asked if I had any food and I said no that what little I had had gone last night. He opened a knapsack and extracted a can of Pet Milk, poked a couple of holes in the end, tilted his head back, and poured some in his mouth. He offered me a swig and I gratefully accepted, getting it the same way he had. I had never tasted this canned milk before, but I can tell you, it was so high in sugar content; it was like a shot in the arm. I thanked him, returned the can, and he stowed it in his pack carefully so it would not spill. We both soaked up the warmth of the sun as it got higher and eventually warmed up and dried off... I had no idea what the others did to keep going, all I knew was, at last daylight had come, and now our man would be there any minute to care for us. Life was looking good again. Time, as such, is relative as I am sure you all know. Sometimes a minute can seem like an hour, another time the same minute does so quickly it seems never to have existed at all. Even days can follow this pattern of fast or slow flow. We all know the old saying, "The watched pot never boils," and it is so true to those involved in the time span in question. All we had to do was have patience and our troubles would be resolved in short order.

Spirits were up, life was good, and the next part of the adventure would certainly be less complicated than what had gone on before. The day wore on slowly and the sun got higher until we were at noon. Still no one approached us in our spot in the woods. We were not that far from the little town, so why didn't someone come for us? Oh, well, maybe one hour and we would be on our way because we certainly couldn't just sit here all day and risk getting caught. Someone said that perhaps the Germans had also broken the contact we were waiting for and we would be here forever. We discussed this possibility, agreeing that there might have been a problem, and that is someone did not show up by nightfall, we would strike out on our own, using our escape maps and head for the Spanish border. Having

arrived at this decision we all tried to settle down and make the best of the situation.

The afternoon dragged along, each minutes like an hour, each hour like a lifetime. Mix this with a dose of scared, and you know how we felt. Hungry? Oh yes, but there wasn't anything to eat so we just endured, but not like hero's, no sir, we complained to whomever would listen. It sure didn't do any good, but we felt better just getting it off our chests. Had we known that it would be four more days before we had anything to eat, I am sure we would have given up on the spot. Finally, everyone got tired of complaining so we just sat and passed the time. We could not speak with the Jewish people very well, so they kept to themselves, talking among them. We did find out, through the French fellow that the old man with his group was seventy-five years old, and we assumed that the Underground was charging them all a lot of money to get them out. Right here, before I forget, I want to mention that this old man made the entire trip under his own power and I never once heard him complain. What happened to them all, once we got to Spain, I have no idea, but I hope they lived to tell of their ordeal?

This is how the afternoon passed, just waiting, until at last the sun started to go down. We were quickly reaching our hour of decision as to whether to wait some more or proceed on our own. All through the day, as odd as it might seem, we had been quite quiet, always speaking softly so as not to attract any attention should someone pass near. At last we heard some footsteps on the trail leading to our lair and our pulses quickened as we watched to see who it might be. It was our man. Finally he had arrived. He explained to the French fellow that he had never had any intention of coming to us in daylight and that we should have been told. Who cares? He's here. We are going at long last. "Did he have any food for us?" someone asked. He merely said that he did not, even though he had a knapsack on his back. He carried his own food and we must shift for ourselves, as he did not have enough for everyone. I have since thought that this man must have been a Basque since he obviously was a mountain man and knew his way around the Pyrenees Mountains. He wasted no time, getting us all on our feet and under way. By now it was quite dark and the guide led us down to the valley and along a road that led deeper into the mountains. We were told to form a single line, keep the person ahead in sight, and above all, not to talk. The guide set a rather fast pace and it quickly became obvious that the civilians could not keep up the pace as

they were carrying suitcases. The guide stopped and instructed us younger people to carry the luggage. We did this and started off again. Although we were younger, it was not an easy task to carry this stuff, so, when we came to a small bridge some time later we all threw their things in the river. I have always wondered what was in those suitcases. Was it money, jewels, or just clothes? Later on when they found out what we had done, they could have killed us, they were so mad. But as it turned out, we would have lost them anyway, or at least had to abandon them because of events that followed.

We were really making good time down the valley and things seemed to be at their best, until all at once a huge search light came on down the road, and a car started up, pulling out of a side road onto our road, and headed towards us. There was a short road to our right leading to the foot of a hill; it was about a quarter of a mile long, dead- ending at the hill with a field on both sides of the road. The guide ran back down the line of people, headed up this short road and ducked into the tall growth and threw himself on the ground. Needless to say, we all did likewise, lying as still as dead men. The car turned up this road and stopped almost opposite us. They never left the car, just sat there with the motor running for maybe three or four minutes. Finally they backed down the road, never having flashed a light into the fields, and went back where they started. We laid there for about five more minutes to be sure everything was safe, then followed the guide as he abandoned the road and the valley and started to climb the hill at the road's end. It was tough work since the hill was about a 45-degree incline and grassy so the shoes slipped as we worked our way up. We would climb a little and rest a little and after a few hours of this we were all exhausted so that every time we rested we would fall asleep for a few minutes. We would be so hot from the work of climbing but after a few minutes of sleep we would wake up shivering from the damp and cold. It was miserable. Our easy journey through the valleys was all over. From now on, it is, climb up and slide down, and climb up again. We were among the trees, so that helped some as it gave us something to grab on to if one was in our path.

We asked the Frenchman why the people in the car didn't come into the field after us and he said the guide told him he was surprised also but felt that they may have been afraid that the people in the field were the French Underground and heavily armed and were afraid they might get hurt.

Little did they know how close they were to collecting a group of unarmed, frightened people?

We continued in this fashion all through the night. Poor John Katsaros, my partner from Paris, was having a terrible time trying to climb with only one arm; the other as I said before, was badly shot up and of no use to him. I broke a branch from a small tree and used it to help pull him up. Of course, the only time we had to do this was when it was very steep. He never complained, but I knew it was very painful for him to twist and turn in attempting to climb the hills. As daylight approached, the guide located a barn and we spent the day there sleeping in the straw. At nightfall he roused us and we went at the mountain again. Everyone was so hungry but there was no food. We were able to get water from the many streams we crossed, but after taking a drink and climbing awhile one got thirsty quickly and we had no way to carry water with us. How do you keep going like this? I don't know, but go we did. If it was tough on us, imagine the older people; imagine the old man, how did he do it? I don't know but by God he did. The will to live is powerful.

As I look back on this, I am amazed at the lack of conversation that went on during this trip. It must have been because it took all our strength just to keep going. But I'll tell you one thing, our guide never once faltered and walked as easily at the end as he did in the morning. We later felt he had made this trip many times and that as a matter of fact, he probably was a smuggler in peacetime and made his living carrying contraband over the borders. This was conjecturing but quite believable and it at least seemed like a good guess.

I could belabor the journey, but suffice to say, it took four days and four nights to get over to Spain. One day was quite like the preceding, a lot of hard climbing by day and luckily sleeping in barns at night. It might help to mention here that although there were barns to be found, there were no farmhouses. It seems that the natives, in the summer take their livestock up into the mountains for grazing but do not stay there with them all the time. The barns are not large and are used to store hay, straw, feed and other incidentals they do not want left out in the weather. So there was no one to bother us and moreover it was early in the season so nothing had been brought up as yet. Our next worry would be when we approached the border we might be seen by German guards with dogs because they were on continual patrol looking for anything amiss.

The third day out we had a catastrophe in that when we got up in the morning in the barn we had slept in, we thought we had roused everyone from the straw before we set out on that day's climb. Around noon, as we rested, we discovered we had left one of our men behind. There was nothing we could do for him at this point, only agreeing that in the future to make a good head count before leaving for the day. We could only hope that poor fellow could find his own way into Spain. Rested, we continued climbing and that day we climbed above the tree line as well as the usual mountain streams we used for drinking. By the end of the day we were all parched with thirst. We continued up until finally the guide called us together and pointed to a huge pile of rocks banded together with chicken wire. When you stood by one and looked off into the distance, you could just make out another one. These were the markers for the boundary between France and Spain.

He indicated that we must be very careful of planes flying the border as well as soldiers on foot patrolling. The planes, if they spotted us, could notify the soldiers by radio of our position. He also indicated that they would come into Spain after us if we were seen. He waved us to go on and turned and walked away from us down the mountain to our right. He obviously was finished with his job and now we were on our own. Even though it was late enough in the season, there was snow for us to deal with, but there was a large depression in the ground, maybe fifty feet around and it was full of water. We didn't even stop to think whether it might be poisoned or at the very least dirty. I guess it was good water since no one got sick.

We gathered ourselves together and proceeded to climb past the rock markers so as to be in Spain as quickly as possible. We continued up for several hours, made the top, and proceeded down to Spain. We had made it. We kept walking down the hills but couldn't see any signs of life. We walked until it started to get dark and as luck was with us we found another barn, the first we had seen that day. We spent the night there as we had in others. When morning came we would have to devise a plan of action since we were now without a guide. The barn provided the shelter we needed from the chill and the dew of the mountain. Sleep was no problem, because we were worn out from the day's activities. When you think about it, it is odd that being in the situation we were in, one might wonder how anyone could sleep. There is no doubt we were all frightened, unsure of what was

going to happen next, yet our bodies need for rest apparently superseded our mind's need to worry. The night passed without event, so everyone got a good night's rest. We did discuss the man we lost, wondering where he might be, and if he might catch up with us. Our hearts and minds were with him and we all wished him luck. I, myself, thanked God that it wasn't me who was wandering out there somewhere lost and alone. Frankly, I had enough problems as it was, I sure didn't need another batch of them to carry.

Now it was daylight, and decisions had to be made. We had no set leader to make decisions, so it became a general discussion meeting, and those of us that could communicate did so. There were not a whole lot of options for us to consider but we knew we must press on until we found some help in Spain. Here we were in another country and we had entered it illegally by crossing the border where there were no border guards. It was a moot question because we doubted the guards would have admitted us if we did confront them. It became obvious there was only one real course of action to take, and this was to strike out in small groups, going down the mountain and let nature take its course. So off we went sliding and walking when it was possible, the grade was very steep, until we came to the road. No sooner had we reached the road than the local police were upon us. There were no pleasant greetings and smiles, just some orders we could not understand. The language was not to be understood, but the gestures certainly were not in doubt. They all had pistols at their waists and I am sure if we had given them any trouble, they would have used them. They kept us there as other policemen rounded up the others as they appeared at the side of the road at various points. We were all more or less in the same area so they had us all in short order. No one tried to escape, rather we were happy to be found because we felt that now the authorities had us and the proper steps would be taken to get us on our way to England. WRONG!

They marched us all to a good-sized barn along the side of the road, lined us up and one by one had us turn out our pockets, taking everything we had of value. As each one was relieved of their valuables they were ordered into the barn. They took all our watches; wallets, maps, coins and rings, if a person had one. Soon everyone was inside, the doors closed, secured and a guard was posted outside. Why they took everything we could not understand, but after a little discussion we decided the police

were going to keep this stuff for themselves. Why not? There was nothing we could do one way or the other. Again, it would have to be a wait-and-see game.

We were locked in the prison for quite some time, just sitting on the floor, letting our minds process the possibilities of the next chapter in the unfolding dramas. Suddenly the door was flung open; an officer strode in, followed by two policemen. One man had a small table and chair, and the officer sat down. The policemen looked a little unhappy, the officer looked mad. He spoke some English, telling us to come up one at a time and reclaim our property. He did not apologize, but sat by the box as each person found their stuff. Now, although I have not mentioned it, we were all starving to death, and by the time everyone's goods were reclaimed, it was noon or a little after. Remember now, it had been four days and four nights since we had eaten. We had been expending energy like a ditch digger, and had about reached the end of our rope. How the old man suffered all this and kept going, I'll never know.

Once everything had been returned, the officer motioned for all of us to follow him. We went out the door, across the road, up a flight of steps and into a hotel building. A long room was already set up with a table and the number of settings to accommodate all of us. We had been expected! Quickly sitting down, we waited for some food. Before eating, they came, poured some clear liquid into a glass for each of us, and then filled the glass with water. The liquid turned cloudy and it tasted like licorice. We drank it but it really knocked us for a loop. We were in no shape for drinking. Finally we got some food, just what I cannot recall, and when we finished we were shown to some rooms with nice clean bedclothes. That ended the day for the whole group. A real bed, clean sheets, a full stomach and, at least it seemed nothing more to worry about. We were on our way home.

The next morning we were able to clean up, and it felt good to be washed even though there was nothing we could do about our clothes. They were dirty and had to stay that way. We were not about to ask for a washing machine or give anyone any trouble. We were fed and then taken down the road a mile or two. It seems to me we walked because I don't recall riding in or on any type of conveyance. I recently checked with my companion, Jack Katsaros, and he recalled that the town they took us to was Les. We had been apprehended down the road from this town, held in that immediate area, and transferred to Les. When we arrived there we were

given a room in an inn and there were two of us to each room. We were then called together and a man that spoke English advised us that we were free to move about the small town during the day.

We were not to leave the town proper and were to be in the inn by nightfall. At this point, an officer that was with us requested permission to try and contact the American Embassy in Barcelona. The man was not very friendly, but he also was not cruel. He gave his permission, told us how we could contact him if we needed him, and left the inn. The officer set about trying to contact the Embassy and after some little while he succeeded in getting through. The Embassy told him they could not help us from Barcelona because the area was too mountainous and the way the mountains were situated it would take days for them to get to us. They told us that the main Embassy was in Madrid and that they would contact them for us and arrange to try and get us out of there. Now all we could do is wait.

We all walked the town to take in the sights, such as they were. It consisted of one main road with most of the buildings along this on both sides of the road. I recall a bridge built of stone over a rather small run of water. We sat on the bridge and soaked up the sun, enjoying the first real relaxation for many a day. We returned to the inn for lunch and dinner and as I recall, the food was not too bad. But then, four days and four nights without food can make anything seem good. We had learned not to be too fussy. We never could figure out who was paying for our keep. It is true that in our case perhaps the Spanish government had been assured by the United States that they would pay for our keep, but what about the civilians that were with us? We had no money to speak of, and I am fairly certain the others also were in the same position. That night we went to bed early because we were still exhausted as well as the fact that there was nothing to do to amuse ourselves. The next morning we awoke, John and I, in the same bed. I took one look at him and had a fit. He was a mass of red welts all over. I thought he had caught something so I told him about his condition. He just looked at me and said I didn't look any better. It turned out that the place was alive with bed bugs so from then on we slept with the lights on.

The second day we heard someone shouting outside and we rushed out to find some of our people walking with the man we had left behind in the barn. Believe me, he was a mess. The poor fellow was tired beyond belief

and looked like the devil. Unshaven, gaunt, wide-eyed and also very mad, he was a sight to behold. We really thought we would never see him again. He felt we had abandoned him and indeed he was right. We did not follow proper procedure prior to leaving the barn that morning, but then consider that we had never been through anything like this before and we had never been briefed on how to handle the situation. We admitted we were wrong; that it was not intentional, and he could see for himself the concern we had for his well-being. So when he calmed down, he forgave us and said he now understood. I sometimes think he kept going because all he wanted to do was get to all of us and perhaps kill us. The amazing thing about his arrival was the fact that being alone and not knowing the area, he merely proceeded straight ahead uphill and down, trying to maintain a straight line to the south. Our guide knew the best way and I am sure saved us a lot of hard climbing. Our journey was not easy, but we were appalled at what our comrade must have gone through. Another odd thing about this is that he arrived so close to our final destination. It makes you think that perhaps someone was watching over him, at least I like to think that this was the case.

Later, we were all called together and informed that arrangements had been made for us to be transported to another place and that we should be ready to move out early the next morning. We had nothing to pack so we could move at a moment's notice. We had been able to bathe but we had not been able to wash any clothing, including our underwear so we were a little ripe.

The next morning, after breakfast, we were told to go to the road and wait. We did. After a short time, a truck came along with a load of logs. They were piled high and tied down with ropes to keep them in place. This was our ride out of here. Not first class, but better than walking, so we climbed aboard and off we went. We had two more to our group at this point, a young couple, but who they were or why they came out with us I never knew and since they were Spanish, we were not able to talk to them. The ride was not the most pleasant trip I have ever taken, but in that rugged terrain it sure beat walking.

We rode most of the day, passing men at work in the fields, and sighting quite a few wrecked vehicles, tanks and trucks, just abandoned in the ravines. These were left from the Spanish Civil war, left to rot and rust as a monument to man's inability to get along, even with his own people. The

truck was old, very slow, and the road was quite steep both up and down. The day was most pleasant and not too hot, even though we were right out in the sun. We proceeded in this fashion until late in the afternoon finally arriving at a place with a wall around it. Some people came out, ordered us down and into the walled area. We sat on the ground or walked around to stretch our legs, waiting for the next episode to unfold. Each time things seemed certain, we were faced with a new situation, and our nerves would begin to get raw again.

It wasn't long until a man appeared and ushered one of our people into the building. In about five minutes our man reappeared and another person was taken inside. We were all crowded around the first man, asking what was going on in there. He said he had been questioned as to his identity and why he was in Spain. He had explained that he was an American airman and was escaping the Germans and wanted to rejoin his unit in England. This presented no problem, he said, until they had him turn out his pockets and discovered his French Identity book. This, of course, had his picture but another name, place of birth and occupation. They did not seem happy with this but kept the book and told him to go back into the yard. His advice to us was, get rid of the book, and fast. We all, that are military people, got out our books and heaved them over the wall. I really hated to do this because it would have been a beautiful souvenir to keep for remembrance. Soon enough, my turn came, and I was taken before a man at a table in the house. He spoke very good English, questioning me as the first man had said as to why I was in the country in an illegal fashion. I also explained why I was there and having nothing in my pockets to contradict my story, I was quickly returned to the yard.

When everyone had been interrogated, the military personnel was directed to the gate and we left the walled area to find a bus waiting, along with a small dark haired man that proved to be a Spanish fellow that worked for the American Council in Madrid. Our Jewish companions were left behind to their fate, and until today, I often wonder what happened to them. It would be painful to even for a moment consider the possibility that they were turned back into the hands of the Germans. We were all aware that Spain had leaned toward Germany all through the war because of aid Franco had received from Hitler during Spain's Civil War.

The bus started up and off we went, in style this time. We were taken a short distance to a town by the name of Zaragoza. The bus went to the

center of town, stopping in front of a large store of many floors. It was, in fact, a department store. Our man from the Embassy told us we were to get new clothes and because it was so late in the day, all the clerks were gone but the store was being held open for us. Unbelievable! We all went in the store and up to the men's department. We were all instructed to pick out a suit, new shoes, and two pairs of socks, two sets of underwear, two shirts and one tie. A man in the store listed our selection, and we were ushered back to the bus for another short ride.

We were taken to a spa-type resort that had springs baths with high sulfur and the odor to go along with it. We were given nice clean, albeit small rooms and the view of the surrounding area was beautiful. We could come and go as we pleased but again, had to be in at dark and stay within the confines of the spa. How we forget the small pleasures of life. What a treat to take a bath and get into fresh clothes. My shoes, which were G.I. issue but dyed black, were held on by a series of small rayon pieces of shoelace. The only laces we could get to replace the brown laces were made of rayon. Now, rayon, when wet, gets weak and breaks so I wound up with small pieces to hold the shoes on. You think this was a problem? John Katsaros was walking in shoes a couple of sizes too small for him. He had big feet and the people that helped him did the best they could. Imagine walking for weeks in shoes a couple sizes too small. At last he had a pair that fit. I must tell you here that at no time during the entire trip, from Paris to the spa, did John ever complain that his feet were killing him. I guess the poor guy was so shot up he hurt worse elsewhere. The food was good, and there was plenty of it, the only problem was, they used oil for all their cooking. Have you ever seen fried eggs, beautiful to look at, sliding around on the serving plate in a sea of oil? We tried to get them to cook the eggs and other stuff with butter, but they acted as though they didn't understand what we wanted. I'll tell you this, between the oil and the beautiful, big, ripe cherries and other fruit we could get, we were in a bad way. Our systems could not handle all this and we more than paid the price.

Things were starting to move fast now because we were not at the spa very long, perhaps a day or two and left Zaragoza by train and off we went to Madrid. Upon arrival in Madrid, Spain we were taken directly to the American Embassy and one at a time, again questioned. This time our people wanted to hear about any information we might have regarding troop movements, German emplacements, tank deployment, and other

related information. When this was finished, we were told that we would be moved right along, the next day, to the British in Gibraltar. Consequently, we never were able to see anything of the city of Madrid.

The next morning we were again put on a train, which proceeded, to Granada and on to La Linea de la Concepcion, or as it is generally called, La Linea. This little town is right near the entrance to the Gibraltar fortifications held by the British, even to this day. We actually walked from the town to the gates of Gibraltar and were passed through with no delay. This indicated to us that we were expected. At last we were safe and again among our own people.

The records I have obtained from the government show that we arrived at Gibraltar on the 13th of June. I thought we might have a chance to see some of this famous Rock, the monkeys, the gun emplacements the caves, and whatever else might be of interest but that was not to be the case. We were ushered into a room and told to get out of the civilian clothes we were wearing. We were to turn in the clothes we had received at Zaragoza in the store and we were issued G.I. underwear, shoes, socks, pants, a shirt and a fatigue jacket. We were allowed to spend the rest of the day as we pleased as long as we did not venture into any areas marked "OFF LIMITS".

As I wandered about looking at the rocks and the sea, I came across a sailor, and he was carrying a brown bag full of watches. He said that he had come from Africa where he had been able to get these watches for a song, and did I want to buy one? Now I had given my watch to the French people that helped me, so I was in need of one. I asked him the price and he said twelve dollars. I looked at the watches and did not recognize the name and thinking he was a fast dealer, I decided not to buy. The name on the watches was OMEGA. I later learned this is one of the finest watches made. Such is life.

It was getting dark so I returned to the area we had been assigned only to learn we were to fly out the next day, if the weather permitted. We had dinner in the mess hall and went to bed.

The next day was bright and clear, real flying weather, so we were driven to the airfield, put on a plane and told we were bound for England. The flight was uneventful, and we landed at Bristol where we were put on a bus, under guard, and taken to London. We were installed in a large manor house that was used by the American Military Intelligence Service.

We were held and interrogated in detail. They wanted to get as much

information as they could from what we could remember and also our individual stories of escape or evasion for their future use. We were not allowed to leave the building until someone that actually knew us and could identify us arrived. For me this was a two-day wait and fortunately for me our tail gunner on our crew was still at the base. The rest of my crew had been shot down while I was in France trying to get back. The man's name was Chuck Pryne, and was I glad to see him. He vouched for me and signed some papers to indicate he was telling the truth. We were allowed to leave the building for an afternoon of relaxation and we did just that. As a matter of fact, we hit several bars and got stiff as a billy goat. Chuck went back to the Group the next day, and I was sent to Eighth Air Corps headquarters to get my records, and then I went to my group to have the records brought up to date and to be paid. My instructions were to return to London and prepare to try and find a seat on a plane home."

CHAPTER 29

Air Intelligence

During my escape and evasion through German occupied France, the Resistance had given me the code name “Burgundy” which proved to be very interesting and informative to Allied Intelligence. On landing at Bristol, we mounted staff cars and were immediately driven to London where American Air Intelligence at ETOUSA Headquarters was waiting to interrogate us. An Intelligence officer introduced himself to the group and spoke candidly on our heroics and stated that each airman was to be debriefed by an Air Force officer of the Intelligence Staff, that intelligence wanted to get a complete picture from each airman of everything that transpired from what happened to him on his last mission and his travels through the Underground to include names, locations, times, dates, and places, up to the landing here at Bristol, England. The call goes out, “Who is Burgundy?” I raised my hand. ETOUSA Intelligence was amazed to learn that this young skinny, 20 year old Sergeant was the individual code named “Burgundy,” who had such harrowing experiences, escaping and evading the enemy with the aid of the French Resistance. They were well acquainted with the Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.), a clandestine warfare and sabotage group founded by Prime Minister Churchill in the summer of 1940. Their secret agents parachuted behind enemy lines, trained and shared intelligence with the French Resistance. John’s travels thru France, his encounters and the daring and ingenuity of his rescuers in his escapes from the Gestapo, were well known to Headquarters. He endured through an amazing story something of a movie epic - Unbelieving, yet this one is real, a jaw dropper. John’s return to his home base at Deenethorpe was not as welcoming and he soon learned that Intelligence at Headquarters ETOUSA had not passed down any intelligence information to Division intelligence - where he was raked over the coals for the “truth” of the fate of “Man-O’ War” and its crew.

In August, Lt. Ted Krol, the bombardier, returned to England to provide verification of John’s story as to the fate of “Man-O’ War” and its crew. Division intelligence was now satisfied with John’s Story.

An Intelligence Officer escorted each of the seven airmen to a private room to be interviewed. I was asked to give an account of every step of my ordeal to include the nature of my crew's mission, the mission date, number of mission flight hours, names of crew members, type of aircraft that shot us down, KIA's and wounded, parachute out or crash land, where captured, how escaped, names of helpers, names of Resistance fighters, location of safe-houses and medical treatment received. The questioning went on for hours and hours until I was now drained mentally as well as physically. Intelligence asked for any information that could aid the invasion forces, including types of German troops and locations of installations. I told them all that my memory brought forth about my travels through France and Spain and especially intelligence that could be of military value. A formal request for the information I provided Intelligence was recently granted. The surprise was that the secret document was partially declassified without my knowledge, 11/31/81 and reads as follows: 11/31/81: Declassified per Executive Order 12356 Section 3.3 by RLB/LLB, NARA Date APPENDIX "B" to E and E Report No. 755

- a. Hearsay that there is an airfield at Juvincourt (N of Reims) where as many as 125 A/C of all types can be seen on the ground at a time.
- b. The results of Allied bombing at Courcy and Juvincourt (NW of Reims) in early May 1944 were good. On 23 May 15 new JU88's were observed on the field at Courcy, while up to 43 FW 190's were flying formation over the field earlier in the week. Many ME 109's, with belly tanks were observed at Courcy.
- c. Early in May a gun emplacement 1 mile E of Courcy was destroyed by a P-47. The gun is since replaced.
- d. When the RR station at Reims was bombed on 1 May a trainload of Germans was hit and many killed. However many bombs missed the target by 1 mile. The station was in operation 3 days later. There is usually an ammunition train on the siding, but 1 May was an exception. The Fortress bombing of 23 May had much better results.
- e. At intervals of a few miles, light AA guns, with very little camouflage,

is stationed along the left side of the RR tracks from Epernay to Paris.

f. Hearsay that Red Cross RR cars in Paris are equipped with AA guns, which have been used against the USAAF.

g. The RAF bombing of the Toulouse munitions plant and bridges south of Toulouse was a thorough job. The plant is believed to have been permanently, knocked out.

APPENDIX "D" to E and E REPORT NO. 755

1.1 AIDS BOX: My aids box was taken while I was unconscious.

1.2 PURSE: My purse was taken while I was unconscious.

1.3 PHOTOGRAPHS: I carried 8 photographs, I used one and gave the rest as souvenirs, which meant that I had to be re-photographed later.

1.4 LECTURES: I was lectured by S-2 at squadron and by evaders. I was given help before I had time to use anything they taught me.

1.5 SUGGESTIONS: I carried my GI shoes on my parachute harness and I think this is a good arrangement. Mine were taken while I was unconscious and I often wished for them later. The seriousness of my wounds or my ill health seems to be of no concern to anyone but me, and I am in need of medical attention.



Major Wilfred B. "Pop" Fry,

Luckily, the name, Major Wilfred B. "Pop" Fry, the Bomb Group 401st Intelligence Officer whom I had previously met came to mind. Major Fry was summoned from Deenethorpe to my hearing at ETOUSA Headquarters in London to confirm my identity and when "Pop" saw my physical condition and heard my story, he was astounded that I was able to escape. When I attempted to salute him, he said that it was not necessary and in the future he would salute me. It was admirable of Major Fry to make this statement. Years later; Major Fry wrote a letter to me restating the above quote. I could not believe that he remembered. Major Wilfred B. "Pop" Fry, a WWI "retread" and no youngster, deserved special mention. After completing Intelligence School in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, "Pop," volunteered for overseas duty. He went on bombing missions over Germany with the 401st Bomb Group whenever he was able to obtain permission. "How can I brief our crews on flak, targets, enemy fighters and other intelligence matters if I don't join them in their experiences over enemy territory?" he argued. He was a class act.

The interrogation completed, I am required, as is each of us, to sign a document of secrecy, dated 15 June 1944, stating I will never divulge the details of my escape and evasion to anyone, including family members.

I now belong to the Air Force Escape and Evasion Society (AFEES) as do many of the others of my escape group.

Because of the signed oath, my family has not learned the details of my story. I requested a copy of my debriefing in the Intelligence Report (IO) of 17 June 1944 from the government and my request was honored with a short unclear document, which touched on my travails. The facts of my interrogation not having been confirmed by Intelligence remained classified until July 2005.

I was promised by the government to be released from the signed oath decades ago, and in response to my latest inquiry in August 2004 a copy of Headquarters ETOUSA memo AG383.6 dated 15 June 1944, declaring my oath of secrecy to the U. S. Government, was returned to me date stamped declassified per Executive Order 12356, Section 3.3 NND 745001, dated 10/31/89.

At Intelligence Headquarters, I ran into Ken Terroux, a hometown friend. We exchanged greetings and I learned that he, also, was a B-17 gunner and got shot down by enemy flak. Ken was fortunate to have been downed without wounds and was immediately picked up by the Belgium Resistance who arranged for his return to England by an English gunboat within forty-eight hours.

RESTRICTED

WAR DEPARTMENT
The Adjutant General's Office
Washington

AG 383.6 (11 Jul 43) ODS-B-M

KLS/c-2B-320 Pentagon

6 August 1943

SUBJECT: Amended Instructions Concerning Publicity in Connection with Escaped Prisoners of War, to Include Evaders of Capture in Enemy or Enemy-Occupied Territory and Internees in Neutral Countries.

TO: The Commanding General,
Army Ground;
Army Air Forces;
The Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area;
The Commanding General,
Theaters of Operations;
Defense Commands;
Departments;
Base Commands;
The Commanding Officers,
Base Commands;
Director, Bureau of Public Relations.

1. Publication or communication to any unauthorized persons of experiences of escape or evasion from enemy-occupied territory, internment in a neutral country, or release from internment not only furnishes useful information to the enemy but also jeopardizes future escapes, evasions and releases.

2. Personnel will not, unless authorized by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, War Department General Staff, publish in any form whatsoever or communicate either directly, or indirectly, to the press, radio or an unauthorized person any account of escape or evasion of capture from enemy or enemy-occupied territory, or internment in a neutral country either before or after repatriation. They will be held strictly responsible for all statements contained in communications to friends which may subsequently be published in the press or otherwise.

3. Evaders, escapees, or internees shall not be interrogated on the circumstances of their experiences in escape, evasion or internment except by the agency designated by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, War Department General Staff, or the corresponding organization in overseas theaters of operations. In allied or neutral countries, American Military Attaches are authorized to interrogate on escape, evasion and internment matters.

4. Should the services of escaped prisoners of war, evaders, or internees be deemed necessary for lecturing and briefing, such services will be under the direct supervision of the agency designated by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, War Department General Staff, or the corresponding organization in overseas theaters of operations.

5. Commanding Officers will be responsible for instructing all evaders, escapees, and internees in the provisions of this directive which supersedes letter, AG 383.6 (1 Nov 42) ODS-B-M, 7 November 1942, subject: Instructions Concerning Publicity in Connection with Escaped Prisoners of War and other previous instructions on this subject.

By order of the Secretary of War:

/s/ J. A. ULJO
J. A. ULJO
Major General,
The Adjutant General.

1. Information about your escape or your evasion from capture should be useful to the enemy and a danger to your friends. It is therefore **SECRET**.

2. You must therefore not disclose, except to the first Military Attache to whom you report, or to an officer designated by the Commanding General of the Theater of Operations, or by A. C. of S., G-2, W. D.

- (1) The names of those who helped you.
- (2) The method by which you escaped or evaded.
- (3) The route you followed.
- (4) Any other facts concerning your experience.

3. You must be particularly on your guard with persons representing the press.

- a. You must give no account of your experience in books, newspapers, periodicals or in broadcasts or in lectures.
- b. You must give no information to anyone, irrespective of nationality, in letters or in conversation, except as specifically directed in Para. 4.
- c. No letters or reports are to be given to any unit without the permission of A. C. of S., G-2, W. D., or corresponding organization in the theater.

CERTIFICATE

I have read the above and certify that I will comply with it.

I understand that any information concerning my escape or evasion from capture is **SECRET** and must not be disclosed to anyone other than the agency designated by A. C. of S., G-2, War Department, the corresponding organization in overseas theaters of operations, or to the Military Attache in a neutral country to whom I first report. I understand that disclosure to anyone else will make me liable to disciplinary action.

Name (Print) John Katsaros

Signed John Katsaros

Rank Sgt. A. S. N. 11130621

Dated June 15, 1944

Title 612 Bomb Sqdn 401 Bomb Gr (H) Witness Barry C. Smith Capt Hqs

AG F BR HQ 105 2-41/24/22472

RESTRICTED

Secrecy document signed by John Katsaros

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NND 745001
 By RLB/LLB NARA, Date 10/31/91

AG 383,6 Hq ETOUSA 19 October 1942

SUBJECT: Safeguarding of P/W Information.

TO : Personnel concerned.

1. It is the duty of all Americans to safeguard information which might, either directly or indirectly, be useful to the enemy.
2. It is an offense, carrying heavy penalties, to publish or to communicate to any unauthorized person any information which might be useful to the enemy.
3. Information about your escape or your evasion from capture would be useful to the enemy and a danger to your friends. It is therefore SECRET.
4. a. You must therefore not disclose, except to the first Military Attache to whom you report, or to an officer designated by the Commanding General of the Theater of Operations:
 - (1) The names of those who helped you.
 - (2) The method by which you escaped or evaded.
 - (3) The route you followed.
 - (4) Any other facts concerning your experience.
5. You must be particularly on your guard with persons representing the press. You must give no account of your experiences in books, newspapers, periodicals or in broadcasts or in lectures.
6. a. You must give no information to anyone, irrespective of nationality, in letters or in conversation, except as specifically directed in Par. 4a.
 b. No lectures or reports are to be given to any unit without the permission of the War or Navy Department.

By command of Lieutenant General EISENHOWER,
 (signed) RALPH PULSIFER,
 Colonel, AGC, Asst. Adj. Gen.

CERTIFICATE

I have read the above and certify that I will comply with it.

I understand that any information concerning my escape or evasion from capture is SECRET and must not be disclosed to anyone other than the American Military Attache to whom I first report, or an officer designated by the Commanding General of the Theater of Operations. I understand that disclosure to anyone else will make me liable to disciplinary action.

Name (Print) JOHN KATSAROS Signed John Katsaros
 Rank Sgt A.S.N. 11130671 Date 10/19/1944
 Unit 401 Bomb GP. Witness Horace W. Forsyer

HORACE W. FORSYER,
 Colonel, A.S.N. 11130671
 U. S. Military Department

The secrecy document was signed under sworn oath that mentioned heavy penalties if details of my story are revealed.

FORM, Date 11/31/51

CONFIDENTIAL

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY
OFFICE OF THE A. C. CP S., G-2

755

DATE: 15 June 1944

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I, W. B. FRY, Major, AC, O-477426

hereby certify that I have known and have been associated with


JOHN KATSAROS, Sgt., AC, 11130671

prior to his being reported missing in action over enemy territory.

The person whose signature and right thumb print appear hereon is the individual referred to above.

John Katsaros

RIGHT THUMB PRINT:



=====

The individual whose signature and right thumb print appear hereon has been identified to the satisfaction of this office as JOHN KATSAROS,

Sgt., 11130671 (612 Bomb Squadron - 401 Bomb Group)

previously reported missing in action over enemy territory.

W. B. Fry

W. J. MARANDA SPECIAL AGENT, C.I.C.

CONFIDENTIAL

Major "Pop" Fry, 401st Bomb Group Intelligence Officer was contacted to verify my identity and sign the above document appearing with my right thumb print.

CHAPTER 30

Return to Home Base

After Major “Pop” Fry confirmed my identity, he and I drove back to base at Deenethorpe where we met with Colonel Bowman, the Group Commander. Our meeting lasted a few minutes when he asked me to go on a speaking tour to several air bases to address Escape and Evasion issues. He said that my experience would be helpful to any airman shot down in enemy territory. I agreed to help my fellow airmen. Then Colonel Bowman asked me to wait, as he stepped out of the room. A high-ranking officer entered the room and began to grill me. I had no idea who this officer was or that I was going to be interrogated again. For some reason, my story of our getting shot down was not only not believable but pure fiction to him, so he put pressure on me, becoming hostile; similar to the arrogance displayed by the Gestapo in their trying to break me. He practically accused me of a counterfeit story and wanted to know the truth, the real story of what happened on our mission to Frankfurt. So, that was the reason for his hammering, to get the answers he wanted to hear. I learned that there were reports that there were bomber crews, after participating on a mission that did land in a neutral country to be interred for the duration of the war. This officer must have come from Division, to get the truth. Somewhere up the line of organization, there was serious doubt that this one aircraft out of the Division solely took on the target at Frankfurt. There is doubt in my mind on knowledge, if anything, was learned by this officer from Intelligence Headquarters 8th Air Force in London.

I reminded the interrogating officer of the bad weather conditions from the start before we left England that the mission was held up because of foul weather when finally the word came to “Go”. I related how our bomber crew’s predicament began when a bomb loaded aircraft, out of control; fell from the formation above, endangering our aircraft. Our pilot, Lt. Jack Dunaway, exhibiting outstanding professionalism to avert collision with the falling aircraft and other aircraft adjacent and below, put our plane in a sharp dive and pull to the left. This maneuver put the plane in a rough, turbulent downdraft and the plane dropped over a thousand feet

before the pilot recovered control. The lost altitude was regained to return the ship to formation; it was nowhere to be found. Unaware of the group recall, because of radio silence, due to bad weather conditions, the pilot decided to continue to target, expecting to meet up with the Group.

1st Division Headquarters did not believe this strange story and they sent a bully to get the real facts. The story of the action of the plane must have been passed to them as told to Air Force Headquarters in London. Where did the bully believe you got shot up? Why did not Intelligence confirm the bombing of Frankfurt on 20 March 1944?

Major "Pop" Fry, although outranked by the interrogating officer, interceded, coming to my defense, to vouch for my honesty, training and veracity. His mediation got me released from the brutal grilling.

After being raked over the coals by the Division Intelligence Officer, I ran into Lt. "Bid" Fitchett and his crew who were preparing to depart for the U.S.A. They were one of the "lucky" crews who survived the completion of their thirty-five hazardous missions over Europe without having been shot down. We reunited on base and off base and they were to learn of the many surviving members of my crew who were being held as POW's at undisclosed German camps. We relaxed, recounting stories of our exploits from the beginning in the U.S. to the present.

The next day I was assigned to the lecture tour and spent a few days visiting various groups in the 8th Air Force in England, lecturing on Escape and Evasion to the air crews, giving helpful hints injected with bits of humor on behavior, table manners and guttural speech. The G.I.'s were receptive and they asked a lot of questions.

PRISONERS OF WAR		757
Haverhill Prisoners of War		
The following Haverhill Prisoner of War Honor Roll is presented through the courtesy of the local chapter of the American Red Cross, and the <i>Haverhill Evening Gazette</i> , (September 6, 1945 issue) from which two sources the following names were compiled.		
DECEASED PRISONERS OF WAR		
Pfc. Thomas E. Dennehy, 22 So. New St.	Germany	
Capt. Lester I. Fox, 47 Highland Ave.	Philippine Islands	
S/Sgt. Norman C. Goodwin, 57 Lovejoy St.	Germany	
Pvt. Henry H. Gove, 30 Groveland St.	Stalag 4 B, Germany	
Sgt. Richard T. Hart, 51 So. Prospect St.	Stalag 3 C, Germany	
T/Sgt. George W. Hartford, 56 Blossom St.	Germany	
S/Sgt. John S. Katsaros, 24 Forest Ave.	Germany	
S/Sgt. Pierre J. Kennedy, 29 Victory Ave.	Stalag Luft 4, Germany	
Pfc. Stanley J. Klodenski, 417 Washington St.	Stalag 7 A, Germany	
2nd Lt. Edward P. Laskey, 48 Highland Ave.	Stalag Luft 3, Germany	
Capt. William Lee, 133 Oxford St.	Shanghai	
2nd Lt. Joseph L. Mangarpan, Jr., 8 Fay Ave.	Stalag Luft 3, Germany	

Haverhill Gazette article erroneously listing John Katsaros as deceased.

GENERAL ORDERS)		<u>RESTRICTED</u>	Hq 1st Bombardment Division,
No. 132)	<u>EXTRACT</u>	AFO 557, 29 June 1944.

Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, 22 September 1943, and pursuant to authority contained in Section I, Circular I, Hq ETUSA, 3 January 1944, the PURPLE HEART is awarded to the following-named _____ *

JOHN (NMI) KATSAROS, 11130671, Staff Sergeant, 612th Bombardment Squadron, 401st Bombardment Group (H), Army Air Forces, United States Army. For wound received in action on a bombardment mission in the European area, 20 March 1944. Home address: 24 Forrest Avenue, Haverhill, Massachusetts.

* * Major * *

By command of General WILLIAMS: BARTLETT HEAMAN,

Brigadier General, U. S. A.,
Chief of Staff.

WAR DEPARTMENT

OFFICIAL:
ROBERT P. JOHNSON, JR.,
Lt. Col., A.G.D.,
Adjutant General.

RESTRICTED

A TRUE COPY

John M. Weidner
JOHN M. WEIDNER
Captain, MAC
Registrar

Purple Heart Award



SGT. JOHN KATSAROS
... reported safe

Sgt. Katsaros Reported Safe

Interned In Neutral Country After Raid

(Special to The Gazette)

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Security reasons were given by the War department today for its firm policy of denying any information, other than to members of a soldier's family, as to his internment in a neutral country.

This was the explanation made today in connection with the case of Sgt. John Katsaros, of Haverhill, Mass., reported now in a neu-

(Continued on page three)

The text of the article reads as follows: "Washington, D.C. - Security reasons were given by the War department today for its firm policy of denying any information, other than to members of a soldier's family, as to his internment in a neutral country. This was the explanation made today with the case of Sgt. John Katsaros, of Haverhill Mass., reported now in a neutral country after having been reported missing March 20 in a raid over Germany. The International Red Cross and the U.S. military attaché in the neutral country have authority under international law to care for such interned soldiers. Reports from time to time indicate that they actually enjoy a very pleasant status and are acclaimed as heroes by natives of these countries. All mail from or to such internees is rigidly censored by the neutral country. Details of such forced landing for military reasons are held secret by the War department. The department did report that 39 U.S. planes have been forced down in Sweden, and the planes and personnel are required to remain there so long as the country is neutral. Sergeant Katsaros, son of Mr. And Mrs. Speros Katsaros, 24 Forest Ave., was an aerial mechanic attached to the USAAF. He was graduated from Haverhill High School in 1942 and before his enlistment he was employed at the Portsmouth Navy yard. He enlisted Dec. 7, 1942. The War department, in a telegram to his parents, April 6, reported that he had been missing in action over Germany since March 20."

Several years after WWII, the 612th Squadron, 401st Bomb Group, wrote a history on the life of the Squadron. It tells of its beginning in the U.S., its assignment of air crews and their development in training together as individual crews, to grow into a combat-ready Squadron team punctuated with the ability to fly precision formation with the other Squadrons in the makeup of a Group Combat Machine. The history continues as the Squadron ships overseas to the combat base at Deenethorpe, England and relates how the training is picked up for mastery of flying the combat formation with many groups of B-17 aircraft.

Every combat mission is summarized, and my crew's last mission on 20 March 1944 to Frankfurt, Germany is spotlighted in the squadron history: "Finally, after wondering since 20 March 1944 just why Lt. Dunaway and his crew had not returned from the mission to Frankfurt, Germany when they stalled out of the Group formation, the story came to light on the 17th June when Sgt. John Katsaros returned to Group. He was flying as Left Waist Gunner on the ill-fated aircraft and sustained wounds from 20mm cannon fire from enemy aircraft, which had attacked after it had become separated from the Group formation. This was the cause of the aircraft not returning as enemy aircraft fighters knocked it down. Sgt. Katsaros parachuted to safety with a badly mangled right arm. Fortunately, he was able to get assistance from the Underground and was spirited away for safekeeping from prowling German soldiers. Here begins the most amazing story about the magnificent work of the French Underground. It was necessary for them to furnish a skilled surgeon, and they did, to perform three separate operations before Sgt. Katsaros was well enough to make the hazardous escape to Spain and eventually to England. A copy of his complete escape and evasion story that is pertinent to the details will be appended in a subsequent month's history.

Another story came to light during the month of August 1944 when Lt. T.J. Krol, who was a member of Lt. Dunaway's crew which was lost 20 March 1944 returned from France to tell a remarkable story of practically five months in enemy occupied territory. His story confirmed one by Sgt. John Katsaros, a member of the same crew who managed to evade from France earlier. Reaching the ground by parachute, after leaving the aircraft at a remarkably low (800 to 1,000 feet) altitude, Lt. Krol took a free fall, similar to that of Sgt. Katsaros and "popping" his chute at low altitude enabled him to hide from the searching German Patrols.

Later he contacted some friendly Frenchmen after painfully crawling with a broken foot away from the scene of his hiding place. The French took him in and provided excellent medical attention for his broken foot, which remained in a cast for thirty days. During this time they put him in contact with the Underground Organization, which clothed and fed him competently. Later he was moved to Paris where he spent several weeks in an elaborate apartment right under the noses of the Boche. During his stay Lt. Krol manages to see most of Paris and learned a lot about French activities. Finally he moved out of Paris with the Marquis and remained with one of their units in the field for another good while doing various works that proved to be extremely troublesome for the Germans. Here again the story within a story, which can't be repeated, about living conditions, supplies, etc., and the other things he dealt with. Finally he and the others were able to contact some advance American patrols from the Invasion Area and their return to England was arranged. Unfortunately the details of such an experience are restricted for publication of any kind. However his experience has already proven of great value for lecturing to other crews who might be in a similar position sometime. Besides the wealth of intelligence he was able to provide to our Higher Command.

After completion of the Escape and Evasion lecture tour, I was summoned by Lt. General Robert B. Williams Commanding General of the 1st Air Division to Bushy Park an underground facility in London, code named, "Wide-Wing". The 401st Bomb Group was part of the 1st Air Division. This was the European Theater of Operations (E.T.O.) of the 8th Air Force, Headquarters of the Commanding Lt. General Ira Eaker and later Lt. General James H. Doolittle and their staffs.

Upon meeting General Williams, he asked to tell my story and especially the helpful experience given me by the various cells of the French Resistance, I was taken by surprise, as he handed me a special pass to any and all U.S. Army Air Forces facilities and English cities in the United Kingdom (U.K.), which he personally signed, and I used exclusively and often. I spent a few days at "Wide-Wing" in a room next to General William's office where I met and had conversations with many of the General Officers on my visit there.

During the London Blitz all military ran to the nearest Underground (Subway) to pass the time with the English people deep in the tunnels, singing patriotic songs. Later, during a blitz, American soldiers and

aircrews spent their time in the local pub, as an act of foolish bravado.

One night around 15 January 1944, during the London blitz our left waist gunner, Jack Crowley and I, on pass before starting our combat missions, were trapped nearby #10 Downing Street, the residence of the Prime Minister Winston Churchill. While the German Luftwaffe was bombing the city, we could not locate a shelter, forcing us to body press against a brick building. The bombs and fragments of British flak fell near us. This was the first of many experiences we had during the London Blitz. Although neither one of us was injured, it was most memorable. We learned to avoid such occurrences by passing liberty time indoors. There were times when we assisted the London Fire Department in fighting fires after a bombing and it was not unusual to see Prime Minister Winston Churchill pitching in with the firemen.

London was a frightened city in the spring and summer of 1944. For more than a month the pilotless, jet-propelled V-1 bombs dropped in urban areas had killed thousands of Londoners. For the second time since 1939, schoolchildren were evacuated into the countryside away from danger. A million children were on the move to safety. The rest of the capital's population waited in dread for the now familiar drone of the rocket engine overhead and the awesome silence as the motor cut out - and those in the homes and shelters below counted out fifteen seconds to elapse before the "doodlebug" hit the ground and exploded. There was just enough time to pray that the bomb did not fall in this vicinity.

It was always of concerned interest to watch the RAF airplanes attacking the German V-1 unmanned bombs from above and to the rear of the bomb. If the attack were successful, the bomb would explode in the flight path of the RAF airplane. The RAF pilot would fly through the explosion, praying that the explosion would not destroy their aircraft. Whenever the V-1 bomb penetrated the Allied defense, one would listen for its engine. When it ran out of fuel, the bomb descended rapidly. Within a few seconds it would crash with a devastating explosion killing or wounding the inhabitants and doing great damage to buildings.

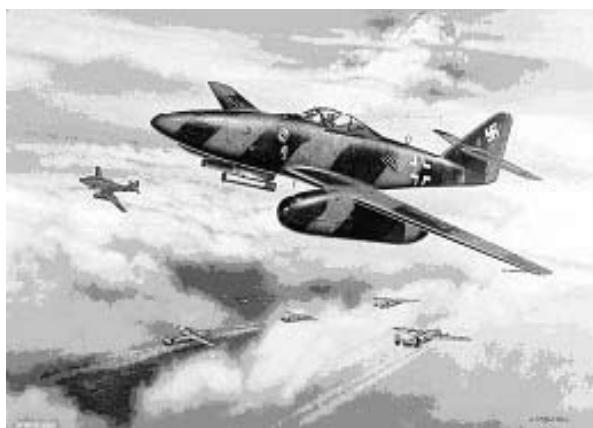
The V-1 rocket attacks were relentless. Prime Minister Churchill stated that the flying bombs were coming in at a rate of 100 to 150 per day; yet in public he was full of enthusiasm, bolstering the spirit of the British people. In private he showed great concern for his people, knowing that Allied victory required not only air superiority but also elimination of the rockets,

which were devastating the English cities. More than 2,750 buzz bombs launched from Luftwaffe bases in northern France laid waste to major cities, especially London, killing about 3,000 and injuring 800 people.

The object of the use of the non-guided bombs was to create death and destruction, to demoralize the people and to take away their will to fight.

The V-2 bomb flew at an altitude too high for our fighters to reach much like the present day rockets. The V-2 would drop quickly and without a sound. It also carried a much larger bomb load than the V-1. These were two of Hitler's secret weapons that were aimed directly at London and other large British cities, creating death and devastation to the inhabitants and property. However, the V-1 and V-2 bombs along with the Luftwaffe's new jet fighters and bombers were introduced too late in the war to change the outcome of WWII.

Had Hitler's top secret weapon, the Jet bomber, and especially had the ME-262 Jet Fighter been mass produced earlier during WWII, the Allies would not have had anything in the air to compete with the faster flying German jets. Even the American P-51 Mustang fighter was no match for the speed of these jets. Whenever our fighters shot one down, it invariably took place as the jet was on landing approach, almost out of fuel.



German ME-262



German V-1 unmanned bomb-striking London July 1944.



The V-2 Bomb

Hitler's Stealth Bomber

By Marcus Dunk, Mail Online, last updated July 8, 2009

With its smooth and elegant lines, this could be a prototype for some future successor to the stealth bomber. But this flying wing was actually designed by the Nazis 30 years before the Americans successfully developed radar-invisible technology. Now an engineering team has reconstructed the Horten Ho 2-29 from blueprints, with startling results.



Blast from the past: The full-scale replica of the Ho 2-29 bomber was made with materials available in the 40s.

The stealth plane design was years ahead of its time. It was faster and more efficient than any other plane of the period and its stealth powers did work against radar. Experts are now convinced that given a little bit more time, the mass deployment of this aircraft could have changed the course of the war.



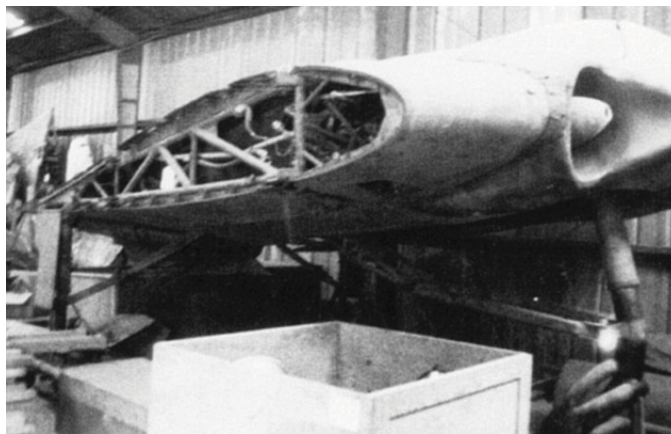


The plane could have helped Adolf Hitler win the war

First built and tested in the air in March 1944, it was designed with a greater range and speed than any plane previously built, and was the first aircraft to use the stealth technology now deployed by the U.S. in its B-2 bombers. Thankfully Hitler's engineers only made three prototypes, tested by being dragged behind a glider, and were not able to build them on an industrial scale before the Allied forces invaded. From Panzer tanks through to the V-2 rocket, it has long been recognized that Germany's technological expertise during the war was years ahead of the Allies. But by 1943, Nazi high command feared that the war was beginning to turn against them, and were desperate to develop new weapons to help turn the tide. Nazi bombers were suffering badly when faced with the speed and maneuverability of the Spitfire and other Allied fighters. Hitler was also desperate to develop a bomber with the range and capacity to reach the United States. In 1943 Luftwaffe chief Hermann Goering demanded that designers come up with a bomber that would meet his '1,000, 1,000, 1,000' requirements – one that could carry 1,000kg over 1,000km flying at 1,000km/h.



A full scale replica of the Ho 2-29 bomber made with materials available in the 1940s at preflight.

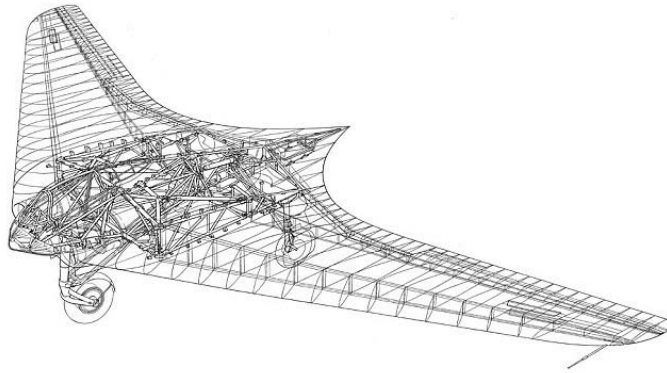


A wing section of the stealth bomber. The jet intakes were years ahead of their time.

Two pilot brothers in their thirties, Reimar and Walter Horten, suggested a 'flying wing' design they had been working on for years. They were convinced that with its drag and lack of wind resistance such a plane would meet Goering's requirements. Construction on a prototype was begun in Goettingen in Germany in 1944. The centre pod was made from a welded steel tube, and was designed to be powered by a BMW 003 engine. The most important innovation was Reimar Horten's idea to coat it in a mix of charcoal dust and wood glue.

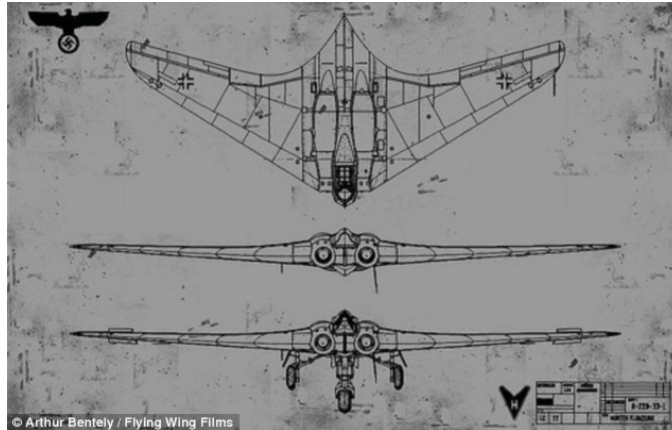


Vengeful: Inventors Reimar and Walter Horten were inspired to build the Ho 2-29 by the deaths of thousands of Luftwaffe pilots in the Battle of Britain.



The 142-foot wingspan bomber was submitted for approval in 1944, and it would have been able to fly from Berlin to NYC and back without refueling, thanks to the same blended wing design and six BMW 003A or eight Junker Jumo 004B turbojets.

He thought the electromagnetic waves of radar would be absorbed, and in conjunction with the aircraft's sculpted surfaces the craft would be rendered almost invisible to radar detectors. This was the same method eventually used by the U.S. in its first stealth aircraft in the early 1980s, the F-117A Nighthawk. The plane was covered in radar absorbent paint with a high graphite content, which has a similar chemical make-up to charcoal. After the war the Americans captured the prototype Ho 229s along with the blueprints and used some of their technological advances to aid their own designs. But experts always doubted claims that the Horten could actually function as a stealth aircraft. Now using the blueprints and the only remaining prototype craft, Northrop-Grumman (the defense firm behind the B-2) built a full-size replica of a Horten Ho 229.



Luckily for Britain the Horten flying wing fighter-bomber
never got much further than the blueprint stage, above.

Thanks to the use of wood and carbon, jet engines integrated into the fuselage, and its blended surfaces, the plane could have been in London eight minutes after the radar system detected it. It took them 2,500 man-hours and \$250,000 to construct, and although their replica cannot fly, it was radar-tested by placing it on a 50ft articulating pole and exposing it to electromagnetic waves. The team demonstrated that although the aircraft is not completely invisible to the type of radar used in the war, it would have been stealthy enough and fast enough to ensure that it could reach London before Spitfires could be scrambled to intercept it. 'If the Germans had had time to develop these aircraft, they could well have had an impact,' says Peter Murton, aviation expert from the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, in Cambridgeshire. 'In theory the flying wing was a very efficient aircraft design which minimized drag. It is one of the reasons that it could reach very high speeds in dive and glide and had such an incredibly long range.' The research was filmed for a forthcoming documentary on the National Geographic Channel.

By Marcus Dunk, Mail Online, last updated July 8, 2009

HEADQUARTERS 1ST BOMBARDMENT DIVISION APO 557 Office of the Commanding General	A-A-1
---	-------


11 July 1944.

MEMORANDUM:

TO : All Combat Wing and Group Commanders, 1st Bombardment Division.

I am in receipt of a letter from a senior member of the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff concerning the operations of this Division on D Day. The following is a quotation from this letter and will be brought to the attention of the personnel under your command.

"An outstanding impression of my entire trip to the European Theater was the remarkable show on D Day, wherein your entire very large force moved with excellent timing and bombed objectives on instruments which they had never seen, without so much as scratching the paint on a rowboat in the squirming Channel below. That amazing display of scientific and training achievement was most impressive. I have described it to the Commanding General of Second Air Force in glowing terms as an end result of the training effort in that organization."


 ROBERT E. WILLIAMS,
 Major General, USA,
 Commanding.

D-Day MEMORANDUM To: 1st Bombardment Division, 94th Wing 401st Group

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 127)

R E S T R I C T E E

E X T R A C T

Hq., 1st Bombardment Division.
APO 557, 27 June 1944.

III. Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended and pursuant to authority contained in letter, Hq Eighth Air Force, File 200.6, 1 June 1944, subject, "Awards and Decorations," an OAK LEAF CLUSTER is awarded to the following-named Enlisted Man for wear with AIR MEDAL previously awarded.

JOHN KATSAROS, 11130671, Staff Sergeant, Air Corps, United States Army. For meritorious achievement while serving as left Waist Gunner of a B-17 airplane on a heavy bombardment mission over Germany, 20 March 1944. On this date the aircraft in which Sergeant Katsaros was flying was intercepted by hostile fighters enroute to the target. Numerous attacks were driven home. During one of these a .20mm shell exploded near him causing a painful arm wound. Another burst damaged the ball turret and the gunner was trapped inside. The order to bail out was given but Sergeant Katsaros, despite being wounded and suffering pain, remained. Completely disregarding his own safety, he was instrumental in freeing the gunner from his turret before abandoning the airplane. The courage, coolness and devotion to duty displayed by Sergeant Katsaros reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Entered military service from Massachusetts.

By command of Major General WILLIAMS:

BARTLETT BEAMAY,
Brigadier General, U.S. Army,
Chief of Staff.

WAR DEPARTMENT

OFFICIAL:
ROBERTS P. JOHNSON, JR.,
Lieut. Colonel, A.G.D.,
Adjutant General

R E S T R I C T E D

A TRUE COPY

John M. Weidner
JOHN M. WEIDNER
Captain, MAC
Registrar

Two commendations were awarded to John: one for saving the life of Marvin Benz, the tail gunner, and the second, together with Frank Mastronardi, the radio operator, for extricating Walter Rusch, the ball-turret gunner who was trapped in his damaged turret by expended shell casings jammed in the gear track, making him a prisoner.



TECH. SGT. EDMUND S. SALAS
... veteran of 29 bomb raids

Salas Modest About Feats

River St. Youth
Silent On Experiences

A 19-year-old River st. boy, who came home this week for the first time in 14 months as a veteran of 29 daylight bombing raids over Germany, France, Belgium and Holland, wearing the air medal, three oak leaf clusters, distinguished flying cross and two battle stars, minimized those experiences with the remark: "No, I didn't even have any experiences."

Tech. Sgt. Edward S. Salas, U. S. A. F., radioman-gunner in B-17 Flying Fortresses, is the young man who "can't single out any one of the raids as especially dangerous or thrilling." He's the son of Mr. and Mrs. William Salas, 279 River st.

He spent nine months overseas and took part in the pre-invasion, invasion and post invasion bombings of enemy held territory on the European continent.

The youthful sergeant flew in the Fortress, "Galyon's Stallion," in important operations of the Eighth Air Force's 388th bombardment group in shuttle missions to Russia, when oil refineries near Berlin were bombed. He took part in attacks on military targets in Berlin, on oil supplies in Leipzig, Merseburg, Madgeburg, Brux and Zeitz, chemical plants at Freidrichshaven and Munich, a ball bearing plant at Schweinfurt, marshalling yards at Cologne and Osnabruk and military targets in Rostock and Brunswick, in addition to D-day action. All this is a matter of war department record, but the modest youth shrugs it off.

Sergeant Salas is now at home on a delayed en route leave until Jan. 2. He is a graduate of Haverhill High school, class of 1942. He was a shoe worker before entering the air forces.

Article reads as follows:

A 19-year-old River St. boy, who came home this week for the first time in 14 months as a veteran of 29 daylight bombing raids over Germany, France, Belgium and Holland, wearing the air medal, three oak leaf clusters and two battle stars, minimized these experiences with the remark: "No, I didn't even have any experiences."

Tech Sgt. Edward S. Salas, USAAF radioman-gunner in B-17 Flying Fortresses, is the young man who "can't single out any one of the raids as especially dangerous or thrilling." He's the son of Mr. And Mrs. William Salas, 279 River St.

He spent nine months overseas and took part in the pre-invasion bombings of enemy held territory on the European continent.

The youthful sergeant flew in the fortress, "Galyon's Stallion," in the important operations of the Eighth Air Force's 388th bombardment group in the shuttle missions to Russia, when oil refineries near Berlin were bombed. He took part in attacks on military targets in Berlin, on oil supplies in Leipzig, Merseburg, Madgeburg, Brux and Zeitz, chemical plants at Freidrichshaven and Munich, a ball bearing plant at Schweinfurt, marshalling yards at Cologne and Osnabruk, and military targets in Rostock and Brunswick, in addition to D-Day action. All this is a matter of war department record, but the modest youth shrugs it off.

Sergeant Salas is now at home on a delayed en route leave until Jan. 2. He is a graduate of Haverhill High School, class of 1942. He was a shoe worker before entering the air forces.



Photo June 1941: My best friend, Tech. Sergeant, Eddie Salas, arrives home after flying twenty-nine hazardous bombing missions, as a crew member on a B-17 in the E.T.O. Eddie got through the ordeal unscathed but sensed a premonition, having gone through hell that "his time was up." He had experienced many close calls in flying combat and felt that his luck cannot go on forever, and one day it will run out. Eddie and I chum out together while on furlough, and we both get stung with bad cases of poison ivy. His furlough is about to run out and he is scheduled to continue with his flying duties at Tampa, Florida. I pled with Eddie to let me speak to my doctor to get an infection report and extend his furlough that he might heal properly, but Eddie insists on adhering to his military pocket orders to travel on time to his next station. Within a week of his departure, Eddie was reported to have crashed and is killed in a Lockheed AT-18, an old type training aircraft. That knowledge puts the damper on my furlough, and as his best friend, I am asked to be a pallbearer at the funeral of my good friend, Eddie Salas, not quite twenty-one years of age.

CHAPTER 31

Homeward Bound

My last night in England, prior to departure for Scotland and on to Stateside, was spent at the London Red Cross sleeping facility. I signed the register, and there on the line above, was the name Arthur Papachriston. We were friends and schoolmates in my hometown of Haverhill, MA. I asked the Red Cross clerk at the counter for Arthur's room number. And she said, "He did not sign in last night and he just left minutes before you arrived." Dumbfounded, I muttered, "I missed Arthur by minutes."

The time had come for me to say "goodbye" to all the guys at the 401st Bomb Group, and to my new friends at London Headquarters. Major General Robert B. Williams befriended me and, issued the access pass, which gave me entry to any American Facility in the E.T.O. Later, he provided me with first-class transportation on the overnight sleeper train from London to Prestwick, Scotland, from which President Roosevelt's constellation, the "Sacred Cow", was to fly many dignitaries and me back to America. I had no idea as to who the civilians or officers were and had no conversation with any of them. I was going home, Happy! The plane took off from Prestwick, made a quick re-fueling stop in Greenland, and flew then non-stop to Mitchell Air Field at New York City. I felt like a free bird but with all the hustle and bustle and the excitement to see my family, my jaw dropped when I was held up from my plans, to submit to a necessary stateside physical examination. Now, a 30-day furlough in hand, I could finally head for Massachusetts. I phoned my parents from Mitchell Air Field. In disbelief upon receiving my phone call, I was asked, "What neutral country are you being held in?" I replied, "New York City." They were ecstatic, full of surprise and joy, to hear my voice, alive, and back in the U.S. and not in the E.T.O. war zone. They had read the second War Department notification, my youngest brother 'Chuck' had received on 15 June 1944, that John Katsaros was in a neutral country. Little did they know the state of my injuries, but then, they could overlook injuries when they saw the life in me. My folks did not receive my cablegrams from Gibraltar or from England, so my live personal contact, here in America, took them completely by surprise. My folks couldn't wait for me to get home and I was dancing on a cloud.

My folks told me that my younger brother, "Chuck", was visiting in Hoboken, New Jersey, where an aunt and uncle ran a restaurant down by the shipyards.

I bused into Hoboken and spent a happy day with Chuck and our New York City Aunt and Uncles the Kyriazes and Harbilas families, then take the train to Haverhill.

By the time I arrived night has already fallen and being the only person on my coach when the train stopped, I let myself off in the dark; a single bulb shines at the distant station. It was pouring rain and the fog was heavy (pea soup) so I braced myself and proceed, with collar upturned, to walk through the wet and the fog towards the light at the station, a man in a naval uniform emerged out of the fog to directly approach me, and he appeared somewhat startled as he looks me in the face. It was a former high school teacher, Jackson George, now a Navy Lt., who knew that I was listed as "missing-in-action", and thought he was seeing my ghost. His shock, near over, I gave him knowledge of my return to the living. Our chance meeting had been a subject of remembrance and conversation over the years.

My "Long Escape" finally ended at home, happily with my family, relatives and friends. Joseph Azzarito was discharged while recovering from a broken back, after a crash landing somewhere in Brazil. Eddie Salas returned from flying combat raids as a radio operator and gunner on a B-17, with the 8th Air Force, in England. My attempts to contact the families of my crew met with no success. My intent had been to reassure the families of my crew that had survived, but the Air Force Headquarters had not contacted me with new addresses or phone numbers.

My furlough time up, I traveled, on orders, to Atlantic City, New Jersey for a breather, called rest and recuperation. While at "R&R", I tried again by telephone and the postal service to contact the families of my crew members reaching only the families of the Pilot and Co-Pilot to tell them what happened to their loved ones.

All rested up in sunny Atlantic City, my week of R&R over, I was transferred to the Air Force Recruiting Center on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston where I did recruiting officer duty for several months.

Sgt. Katsaros Missed Death

Got 'Chute Open As
Plummeted Earthward

Five short seconds were the margin between life and death for a young Haverhill airman when he plummeted 25,000 feet from his Fortress, with shrapnel wounds in his right arm, and five broken ribs to a land spot in Nazi-held Europe.

And they included, too, his chance to escape from the yoke of Nazism for if he had not regained consciousness long enough to pull the rip cord of his parachute, he would never have lived to find his way out of German-held country back to his base in England.

It's not hard to understand, after talking to Staff Sgt. John Katsaros, age 21, U. S. A. F., engineer and gunner on a B-17 Fortress, why he considers himself "just plain lucky"—and, also, why "it's great to be home."

He's one of 10 men who came back. The other nine, all close friends, survived the crash but, for all the staff sergeant knows, may now be confined to some German prison camp.

It happened after the first of the year. Dates and places and some facts have to be omitted in Katsaros' current story for reasons of military necessity. There's too much at stake and too many individuals involved.

The Haverhill soldier's big bomber was on a mission deep into Germany. It was the ninth since his unit went into action with the Eighth Air Force of England to continue the aerial assault on Hitler's roofless fortress and to pave the way for D-day, June 6.

Katsaros and his mates made the target run. They dropped their load squarely on their target and headed back for the base in England.

The sergeant recalled they hadn't gone far on the return trip when Messerschmitts picked out their fortress. Machine gun fire terrific, coming from all sides.

Finally, the ship was no longer able to stay aloft. The orders came to abandon it. But before they were sounded, Katsaros had been hit by shrapnel. His right arm was badly injured, fractured in two places, and his ribs were smashed.

"We attended to those fellows we could," he said, "and prepared to bail out. Five of us went down by the way of parachutes, the other five crash-landed."

Katsaros, himself, is not conscious of leaving the ship. It was miles in the air when he must have jumped but he doesn't remember it.

"I don't remember anything," he said, "until I got down to about 15,000 feet. Then I came to for about five seconds and managed to get my 'chute open. I went out again and the next thing I remember was being on the ground and seeing a couple of German planes dropping earthward in my direction."

"I figured they were going to strafe, but they didn't."

Those five seconds proved time enough for the Haverhill staff sergeant to realize his position. He had already dropped more than three miles and if he didn't get the 'chute open, he would never make it for the ground was coming up extremely fast. The shock of the opening of the 'chute is believed to have rendered him unconscious again.

But he made it and that was "what counted" and it's the reason he is back home today.

From then on Sergeant Katsaros could tell a story thriller. Censorship, however, requires him to remain silent. All he can say is that he landed in Europe and made his way back to England eventually. He can't tell about anything, at least not until this war is over.

He did get back to England and underwent long weeks of treatment. And finally he returned to this country. And Thursday, his 21st birthday anniversary, he came back to Haverhill—back to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Speros Katsaros, 24 Forest ave.

"I'm telling you," he said, with a broad smile on his face, "there's no place like Haverhill."

He's happy to be home—a trip that seemed unlikely not many months ago.

The young airman, who worked as a Gazette newsboy for nine years, is recovering from his arm and rib injuries. He looks to be in good condition and said he's feeling a lot better. He'll remain in Haverhill long enough for a good rest and will then report back to Atlantic City, N. J., for assignment.

He's through flying with the Eighth Air Force. They don't send fellows who get out of Nazi-held Europe back. Sergeant Katsaros will probably become an instructor.

for. He went into air forces in December, 1942, and went across in December, 1943. He has two brothers in the Air Forces—Lt. Sotiris Katsaros, now in Ohio, and Pvt. George Katsaros, Camp Crowder, Mo.

This Haverhill Gazette newspaper article was published after my return to home in July 1944.



(Gazette Staff Photo)

WAR BOND SALEMEN—Three Haverhill residents, just back from the fighting fronts, were salesmen at the War bond rally last night in St. Apostles Greek church. The rally was sponsored by Acropolis chapter, Order of Ahepa. Left to right: Pfc. James Georgian, U. S. Marine Corps, veteran of the Marshall Islands campaign; Staff Sgt. John Katsaros, U. S. A. A. F., who was shot down and wounded over German occupied Europe and made his way back to England, and Aviation Chief Radioman Michael Capetanelis, veteran of the sea battles in both oceans.

John, Past President of the local AHEPA Chapter & Sts. Apostles Church, with military friends, speakers at the sponsored \$4,000,000 Haverhill, MA War Bond Rally July 1944.

CLASS OF SERVICE		WESTERN UNION		SYMBOLS	
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless in deferred characters is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.		A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT		NEWEDIR CARLTON CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD	
		J. C. WILLIAMS FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT		DL - Day Letter NL - Night Letter LC - Deferred Cable NLT - Cable Night Letter R - Radiogram	

The filing time shown in the date line of telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.

BAH31 INTL=CD SANSORIGINE VIA WU CABLES 25 JUN 18 711A

LC MR AND MRS SPEROS KATSAROS= 1944 JUN 25 PM 12 03

25 FORESTAVE HAVERHILL (MASS)

=DEAR FOLKS AM SAFE CABLE ANSWER TO APO 559 IN BEST OF HEALTH LOVE=

JOHN KATSAROS.

25 559 (

2091-7

128710

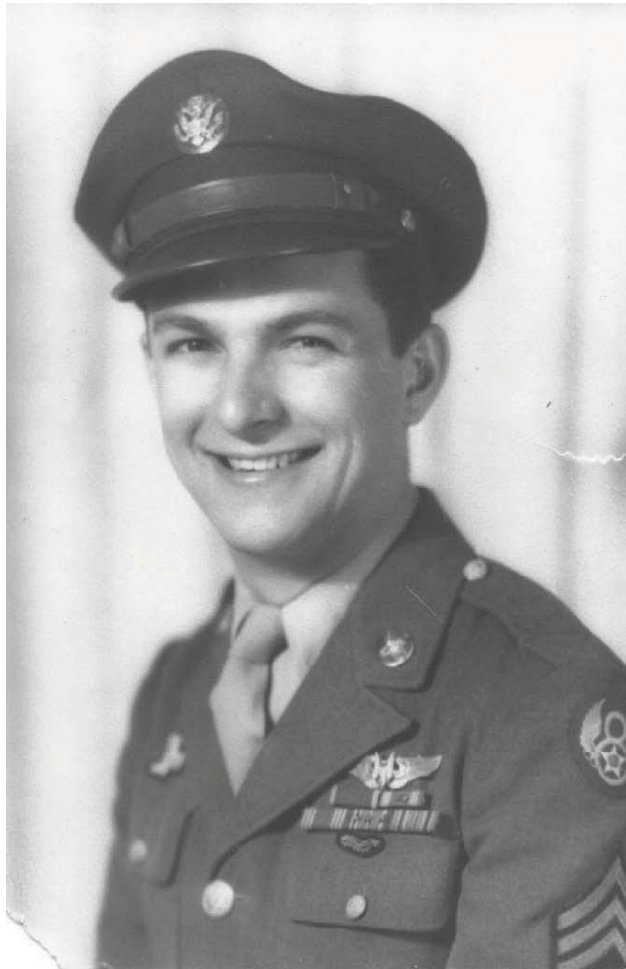
fla

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

The 25 June 1944 telegram sent to parents that I was safe. My arrival home July 6, 1944 came before the telegram. It reads: "Dear folks am safe cable answer to APO 559 in best of health love John Katsaros."



John (L) with the Boston USAF Recruiting Team in New Bedford, Ma.



S/Sgt. John Katsaros circa. Dec. 1944.



John and Spiros (father) 1944

My need for medical attention takes me to the Waltham Regional Hospital/Murphy General for removal of several pieces of shrapnel still imbedded in my arm, leg, and body. At the hospital, a surgeon decides that my tonsils need removal and he proceeded to remove them with a local anesthetic. I told the doctor that I was allergic to anesthesia, and he said, "You are frozen down to your toes." During the operation I felt the knife cut me, like raw meat, giving me great pain; the local anesthetic did not successfully numb the tonsils. Several days later, Mother and her friend came to see me. They visited a while and I called the nurse to tell my visitors that visiting hours were over. Shortly after they left, I have a blood hemorrhage that spewed blood over several beds in the ward. My routine tonsillectomy turned into an emergency - requiring the head surgeon to perform a second operation. This procedure went smoothly. The head surgeon who relieved him of his duty at the hospital learns the name of the first doctor, who botched the operation. That doctor had been the source of many complaints regarding his surgical procedures and his indifferent attitude as reported by many patients and hospital staff.

Prior to receiving my separation from the Army Air Force, I was asked to come to Boston for a physical examination, and to bring along my father. I kept the appointment, taking along dad, and several doctors performed the examination. When they had completed the exam, they showed grave concern for my emaciated physical condition, especially the healing of my right arm. My 201 file (Army records) shows engagement in sports activities prior to enlistment, and the doctors advised dad to encourage me to continue with sports activities, which would help me physically, in that my present condition would not make any progress without effort.

Believing to be a candidate qualified to apply for admission to West Point or the Naval Academy, I told the doctors about my wishes and they reminded me that I could not pass the physical examination. My many shrapnel wounds, and near frozen extremities, suffered during missions at high altitude cold and bone chilling climb over the Pyrenees with scant clothing and shoes too small were too severe for entry into a military academy. My application was denied!

Furthermore the doctors informed me that I would not be reassigned to any branch of the Air Force, disappointing me as my desire was to become a career military officer. I was advised this was not possible and was promptly discharged.

My final interview with the doctors was not a complete wash-out. They advised me of the new G.I. Bill of Rights Program that would pay for my college education and encouraged me to take advantage of the program to further my education.

Attending college was not an easy task, either, for a deaf man, as I began to realize that I had more personal problems to overcome. I was only twenty-one years old and my hearing had become impaired, apparently from the constant cacophony generated by the deafening roar caused by the four huge B-17 Flying Fortress engines and the constant ear-piercing explosions of the many .50 caliber machine guns firing in unison to repel the attacking enemy fighters. A deaf man would be rejected by a flight physical examination, and the wearing of ear protectors in combat was prohibited as the airmen needed the ability to listen and to communicate over the intercom at all times. At times like these, there was a lot of chatter going on, and it was all business. Other than that the communication lines were left open and clear.

My first semester at Boston University was a disaster, due to my hearing problems. Fortunately for me, my professors understood my problem, and permitted me to sit in the first row in all classes to be able to hear the lectures. My hearing got increasingly worse until the Veterans Administration provided me with hearing aids for both ears and from that time to this day a hearing aid in each ear is necessary for me to communicate. The Veterans Administration tests my hearing regularly and updates my hearing aids as improved models become available.

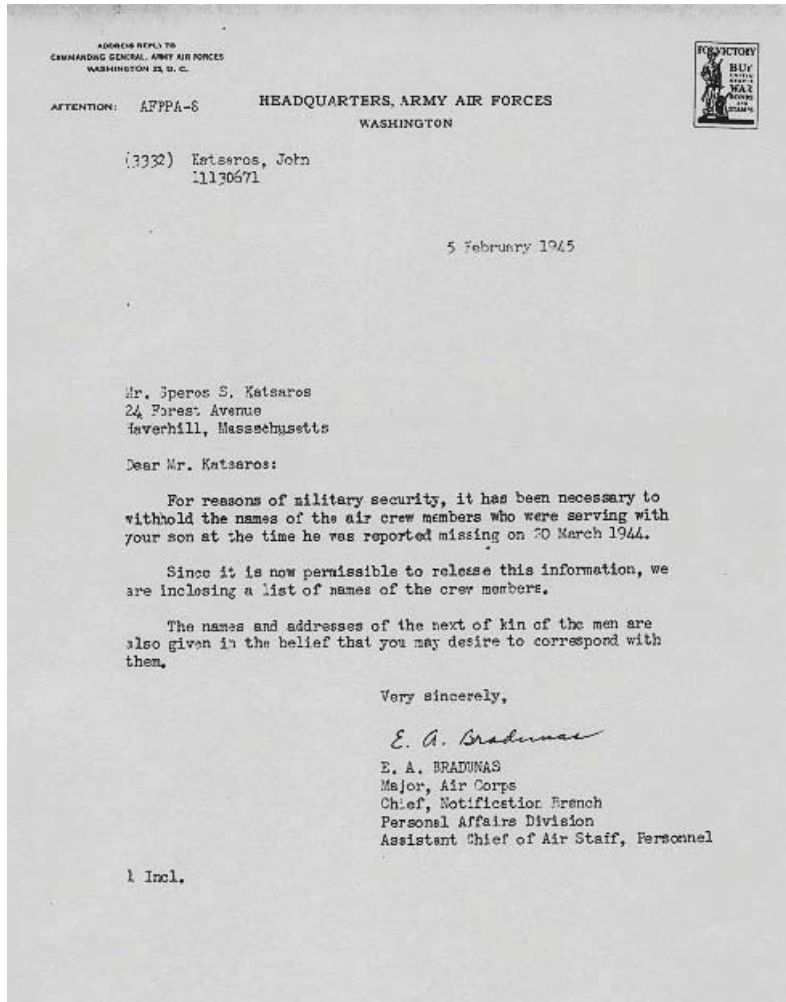
Nightmares were and still remain a constant problem with combat aircrew men. Dad observed me in a sleepwalking trance one night and he became ever watchful to check on me during the night, for fear of hurting myself. His vigilance to do this kept me from sitting on a hot stove and on another occasion, from bailing out of a second story window. The nightmares persisted, but the sleepwalking ceased a couple of years after discharge from the U.S.A.A.F.

Recently my youngest brother, S. Charles 'Chuck' Katsaros informed me that upon my discharge from the US Army Air Force, he remembered me speaking while sleeping and having nightmares. We shared the same room, and I would keep him awake. Chuck said, he never spoke to anyone about what he heard. However, on reading the 1st edition of 'CB-TLE', Chuck remembered those nightmares and dreams and related to many of the stories that appeared in the book.

As a youngster, heights or close quarters were not a problem for me. Today, I dare not look down from a high building or take an elevator without feeling a sense fear that got to me in the cellar of the champagne factory during bombing of the marshaling yards at Reims. What amazes me is that despite all my phobias I am able to fly on commercial airliners provided it is an aisle seat up front.


In March 1944, the month of my fatal mission, brother George, out on business to New Hampshire, had a strange premonition of my plane being shot down, he abruptly ended his trip to rush home where he finds a telegram on the kitchen table, delivered that very day, stating "The U.S. Government regrets to inform you that Sgt. John Katsaros 11130671 has been reported missing in action."

My folks received another unpleasant U.S. Government telegram that their son, my brother, Lt. Sotiris "Sot" Katsaros, while attached to the Nuremberg, Germany War Crimes Trials of the "Nazi" German accusers, was reported missing in action. A few weeks later my parents were advised that his crippled airplane was forced to land in a Russian Zone. The Russians considered him a spy and held him prisoner. Fortunately, the U.S. Army Air Force proved otherwise and secured his release.



Upon receiving the March 1944 MIA telegram; my folks had requested the names and addresses of my crew members. Because of security measures the assistant Chief of Air Staff Headquarters Army Air Forces could not release this information for almost one year later.

Army of the United States



Honorable Discharge

This is to certify that

JOHN KATSAROS

Staff Sergeant, 11 130 671, Headquarters, Army Air Force Redistribution Station,
Atlantic City, New Jersey.

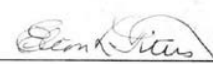
Army of the United States

*is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military service of the
United States of America.*

*This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful
Service to his country.*

Given at Waltham Regional Hospital, Waltham 54, Massachusetts.

Date 14 December 1944.



ELTON L. TITUS
Colonel, MC

166 ✓

W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 55
January 25, 1943

11995

ENLISTED RECORD OF

KATSAROS **JOHN** **11 130 671** **S/Sgt.**
(Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Army serial number) (Grade)

Born in **Beverly**, in the State of **Massachusetts**
Enlisted ~~October~~ **7 December**, 19 **42** at **Boston, Massachusetts**
When enlisted ~~October~~ he was **Nineteen and five-twelfths (19-5/12)** years of age and by occupation a **Student**
He had **Brown** eyes, **Brown** hair, **Medium** complexion,
and was **Five** feet **Ten** inches in height.
Completed **Two** years, **No** months, **Eight** days service for longevity pay.
Prior service: **None**

FINANCE OFFICE, WALTHAM, MASS. Dec. 14, 1944
Final Statement Paid in the amount of \$ **154.69**
A. C. MAYBARD, Captain, F. D. Agent, Officer.

Noncommissioned officer **Sgt., 3/6/43 - S/Sgt., 3/23/44.** Carbine, Feb. 1944
Military qualifications: **Sharpshooter, 8/26/43 - .45 Cal. Pistol, 1st, March 1943 - '03 Rifle, 1st, Feb. 1944**
Army specialty **AM (B-17 Type) Gunner (B-17)**
Attendance at **None**

(Name of noncommissioned officers' or special service school)

Battles, engagements, skirmishes, expeditions **Missions over Germany, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Frankfurt, (5) Wilhelmshaven, Erkner, Augsburg, Landsburg, Frankfurt. D. J. J. BERLIN, BERLIN**
Decorations, service medals, citations **European African Middle East Theater Ribbon, 10/29/43, One**
Wounds received in service **Wounded in B-17 over Germany. Aviation Badge, 12/14/43**
Date and result of smallpox vaccination **7 December 1942, Immune** FINANCE OFFICE, WALTHAM, MASS.
Date of completion of all typhoid-paratyphoid vaccinations **14 January 1943** LAPEL BUTTON ISSUED BY:
Date and result of diphtheria immunity test (Schick) **None** **A. C. Maynard, Capt. F.D.**
Date of other vaccinations (specify vaccine used) **Tetanus, 5/3/43 - Yellow Fever, 9/25/43 - Typhus, 10/11/43**
Physical condition when discharged **Poor** Married or single **Single**
Honorably discharged by reason of **CDD, AR 615-361.**
Character **Excellent (me)** Periods of active duty*
Remarks: **Entitled to Travel Pay. No time lost under AW 107.**

***** Air Medal and one Oak Leaf Cluster - Purple Heart.**

Certification made for Mustering-out
Payment in amount of \$ **3,000.00**
H. S. BUTTS, Colonel, F. D.
BY: **A. C. Maynard, Capt. F.D.** Signature of soldier **John Katsaros**
John M. Weidner
JOHN M. WEIDNER
Captain, MAC
Registrar

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ENLISTED RECORD

* Enter date of induction only in cases of men inducted under Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 (Hull 25, W. D., 1940); in all other cases enter date of enlistment. Eliminate word not applicable.
† For each enlistment give company, regiment, or arm or service with inclusive dates of service, grade, cause of discharge, number of days lost under AW 107 (if none, so state), and number of days retained and cause of retention in service for convenience of the Government, if any.
‡ Enter qualifications in arms, horsemanship, etc. Show the qualification, date thereof, and number, date, and source of order announcing same.
§ See paragraph 12, AR 40-210.
¶ If discharged prior to expiration of service, give number, date, and source of order or full description of authority therefor.
|| Enter periods of active duty of enlisted men of the Regular Army Reserve and the Enlisted Reserve Corps and dates of induction into Federal Service in the cases of members of the National Guard.
⌘ In all cases of men who are entitled to receive Certificates of Service under AR 345-500, enter here appointments and ratings held and all other items of special proficiency or merit other than those shown above.

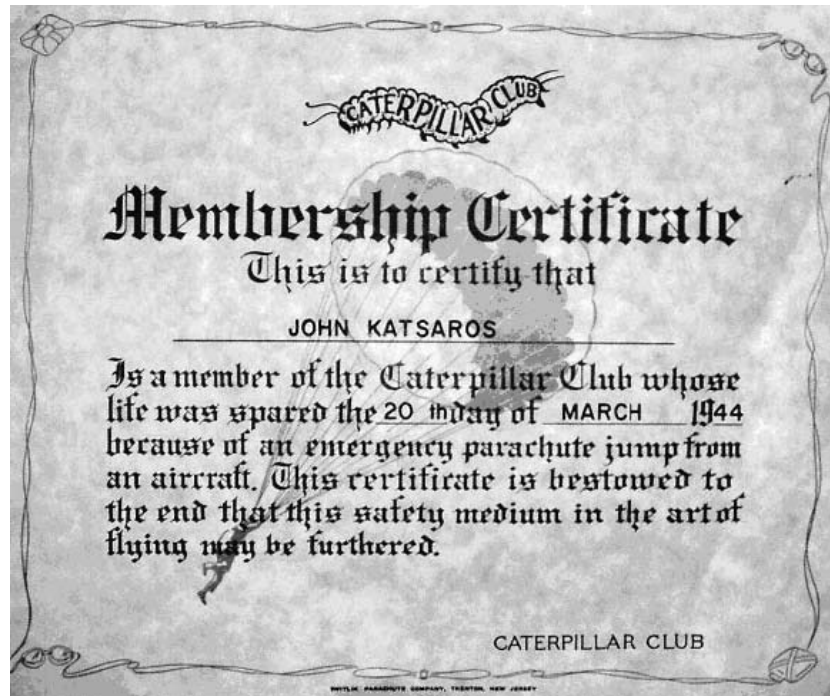
INSTRUCTIONS FOR CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE

AR 345-47n.
Insert name as, "John J. Doe," in center of form.
Insert Army serial number, grade, company, regiment, or arm or service, as "162032"; "Corporal, Company A, 1st Infantry"; "Sergeant, Quartermaster Corps."
The name and grade of the officer signing the certificate will be typewritten or printed below the signature.

166✓

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1942 O - 150051

Note: Physical condition on December 14, 1944 reported as **"POOR."**



Caterpillar Club Membership