

Dear Warren -- Here it is -- feel free to edit whatever you want.

After the usual early morning briefing, we set out for Toulon France - the target being the submarine pens in the harbor. We were flying without a navigator, he had apparently quit after our first mission over Vienna. I never have seen him since. It was my seventeenth mission and was supposed to be a milk run - I had been there once before.

After we released the bombs we were hit in the left wing as we came off the target , another burst hit us in the bomb bay. The intercom was out and the nose gunner and I went out the nose wheel door. The bomb bay was like a furnace and the people on the flight deck had no chance for survival.

When I pulled the rip cord of my parachute, it did not open so I eventually tore it loose - tearing out about five or six panels. I guess this was to my advantage because I came down pretty fast and the Germans <sup>W</sup>eren't waiting for me. I landed in a farm yard and hit my head on a stone fence. I woke up in the farmers wine cellar. I had a minor flak wound on my left leg which they attended to and sent me on my way. They gave me a pair of tired pants, sandals, and a light shirt and sent me into the mountains.

I spent a few days by myself and the Free French finally found me and I helped them assemble weapons that were airlifted in. The German patrols were afraid to enter the mountains as the Free French were very strong in that area.

After a week or so a young man was sent to me and took me into Hyere - which was a suburb of Toulon. His name is Maurice Costa and I finally contacted him <sup>IN 1988</sup> through the Air Force Escape and Evasion Society that I belong too. We are communicating by mail and I hope to see him in the near future in France.

After a couple of weeks of moving from house to house with Maurice (he recently sent me a picture of one house) - I was moved to a farm outside of Hyere - as the French Underground had news of the southern France invasion was coming soon. They told Maurice to pass me off as an Italian deaf mute in case we were stopped by the gestapo of any of the military people.

The diet we lived on was very sparse and I swear the French could make soup out of the grass or weeds. The Germans had confiscated all the cattle in the area and wine was the only drink available. To this day I detest wine.

As I sat in the loft of a farm house, I watched the Germans retreating on everything including horses and bicycles. On occasion they would have to hit the ditches as they were being strafed by P-51's from the 15th. After the Free French under DE Gaulle liberated the town, the mayor contacted the American Forces and I was flown to Corsica and back to my Squadron - the 513th in San Pancrazio Italy.

My pilot, co-pilot, engineer and radio man did not survive and the others were captured and sent to Prison camp to wait out the war. I have just recently contacted one of the waist gunners <sup>J.R. Aycock</sup> who was wounded and is now retired and on pension. He had a really rough time of it with the Germans and is to this day with health problems.

After my return to the states - I spend time at Midland at Instructors school and redeployment at Selman Field Louisiana. We soon got bored with the Military Courtesy - most of the ground personnel were afraid we were taking their jobs and they would have to go overseas. A few of us put in for B-29's and I was on my way to Walla Walla Washington when the war ended. I was discharged in Ft. Lewis and spend four wonderful weeks trying to find my way home

to Chicago- Illinois.

The Air Force Escape and Evasion Society is for any airman shot down during the war and escaping capture or evading capture. They have meetings once a year and bring many of the helpers from Europe over during the reunion. It was through them that the man from France - Leslie Atchinson - found Maurice Costa for me.

Membership is available through Heyward Spinks -  
any one interested can contact him.

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Dear Warren:

Please excuse my typographical errors -  
The crew members we have been trying  
to find are - LE ROY W. CLARK JR -  
BEGGS OKLAHOMA

Tommy L. Scott  
BRIGHTON - COLORADO

there address in 1944 - maybe someone  
would know of them -

Sorry we took so long but I needed  
to give Russ a push - more than once -

Hope you are well - Take care -  
We care!!

Love - Francene