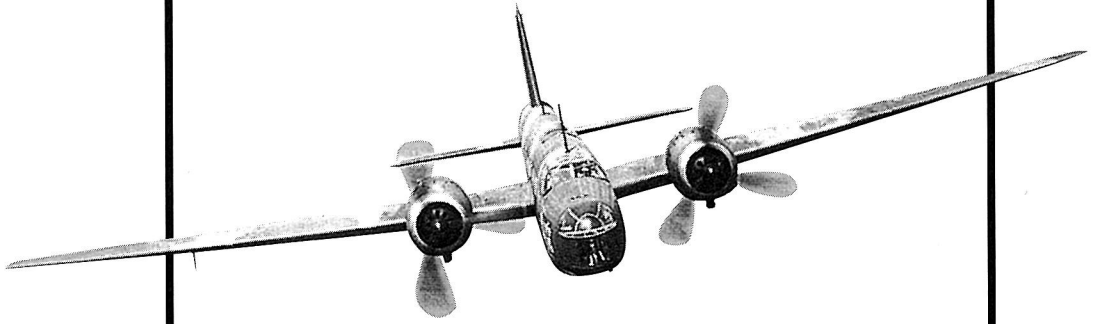


**Stepping Stones  
To Freedom**



# Stepping Stones To Freedom

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*Help to Allied Airmen in  
The Netherlands  
During World War II*

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Bob de Graaff

The original Dutch edition of this book, *Schakels naar de vrijheid*, was published in 1995 by SDU Publishers in The Hague.

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This book has been dedicated with deep respect and gratitude to His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of The Netherlands who, during the years of occupation in 1940-1945, was a source of inspiration for everyone who was working towards liberation of our country and who, as our patron, during the years thereafter showed continued interest in the well-being of those individuals involved in '*The Escape*' organization.



# AIR FORCES

## Escape & Evasion Society

5000 ALDEN DRIVE PITTSBURGH, PA 15220  
(412) 343-8570

RALPH K. PATTON  
Chairman of the Board

January 3, 1995

As the citizens of Holland celebrate the 50th anniversary of their liberation from Nazis tyranny members of the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society will be remembering their Heros, the courageous men and women of the Dutch underground who fought, and died, to give them freedom after they had been shot down over Nazis occupied Holland.

It was one thing to suffer the ordeals of the German occupation but when the Dutch saw an Allied airman in trouble they could not stand idly by and let the Germans capture him. At great risk to themselves and their families, the men and women of the Dutch underground rounded up downed airmen, fed them, clothed them, hid them and sent them on their way to freedom.

We are truly pleased that Bob De Graaff has made a significant effort to preserve the history of these dangerous times in his book "ESCAPE LINES FROM HOLLAND - WW II...STEPPING STONES TO FREEDOM". This book is proof that although the Dutch may have been occupied, they were never conquered.

We, the members of the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society, salute our Heros of the Dutch Resistance. More than fifty years have not dimmed our memory of the courageous men and women who suffered at the hands of a brutal enemy to fight for their freedom and ours. Please celebrate the anniversary of your freedom with the assurance that your friends from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean retain a fond memory of the courage of our Dutch friends who risked so much for us.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph K. Patton

### PART OF A LETTER OF TRIBUTE

"The loss of every Allied plane shot down over Europe was a tragedy — every member of a crew that was found and saved and sent back to us brought joy to all his comrades. To everyone who joined in this great work and to each member of his family and to all who shared, in those days, his risks and dangers I send assurances of my deep and lasting gratitude."

Sincerely,

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

## Foreword

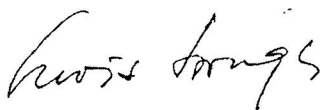
Throughout the Second World War, many Allied aircraft crashed in enemy occupied territory or the crews parachuted down from their crippled machines. Many bomber crews in particular came down in Holland, Belgium and France on their way to or returning from bombing missions in Germany.

Many airmen lost their lives but many also survived, and thanks to the great help they received from the Resistance workers and patriots in the occupied countries, were able to evade capture and 3000 RAF airmen made their way back to England via escape organisations.

The Royal Air Force Escaping Society was formed shortly after the war to maintain contact with the brave men and women in the Resistance groups who took very great risks to help our airmen and, as a result, many died in German concentration camps.

We recognise the splendid work our Dutch friends did to establish Escape Lines and we are forever grateful for the help they gave us during the dark days of the occupation.

This book gives a splendid account of the escape routes set up by the Dutch Resistance and will serve as a reminder to the younger generations of the great sacrifices made during the war years.



---

Air Chief Marshal Sir Lewis Hodges  
President Royal Air Forces Escaping Society London



## Foreword

'The Escape' is the Dutch association of people who helped stranded Allied pilots during World War II. Among its members around the early 1990's the idea arose to write a book about their experiences. The nature of the book would have to make it suitable as a significant asset in Dutch schools and similar institutions.

'The Escape' member Albert Postma contacted historian Bob de Graaff who took on the task of studying and sifting through existing literature as well as printed documentation and resources provided by the association members and of compiling this into a useful reference book.

The result of this work, which was completed in 1995, was judged with great satisfaction by the initiators. Six years later, contacts between members of 'The Escape' and AFEES showed an interest in a translation geared towards the English speaking public.

And so, *Schakels naar de Vrijheid* is now presented as *Stepping Stones to Freedom*. We consider ourselves fortunate with the cooperation of Dee Wessels Boer-Stallman, who translated this book with great dedication and professionalism.

May this book serve as a guideline for those who are showing today's young people the road to peace and freedom for all men and women of good will.

Wim Wolterink  
Chairman 'The Escape'

## Note from the author

During the summer of 1994, I was approached by Albert Postma and other members of 'The Escape', the Dutch Association of Pilot Helpers from World War II, requesting that I write a concise review about the 'pilot-help' work carried out in The Netherlands during 1940-1945. This publication was scheduled to appear on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the country's liberation. There was thus little time available for such a study which had to be completed in my spare time.

Therefore a framework for the book was chosen which fit within the limitations of what was possible. It was decided that I would present a description of the nature of the activities that were closely related to 'pilot help', that would be recognizable to anyone who had indeed participated, and that would permit future generations both to understand and to empathize with the situation at that time in our history. In addition, I would attempt to make a broad inventory of the most important groups that had been involved with 'pilot help' during the occupation of The Netherlands.

My study would be based upon existing publications, printed sources and documentation which was provided by members of 'The Escape' organization. In particular, I have made use of the numerous histories that have been related from a local or regional perspective and that have especially come to light within the past 10 years. Frequently descriptions of air battles and of the fate of Allied airmen whose aircraft had crashed on Dutch territory played a prominent role in these works. Such a format naturally has its limitations. The historiography of the war years has not been documented identically by all communities and regions, in particular the larger cities are in want of such publications.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore I am especially pleased to have been able, and never in vain, to enlist the help of W.J.M. Willemsen who has a large collection of documentation about 'pilot help' as well as extensive knowledge about the subject due to his active interest over many years. I am also indebted to A.J. Postma, the leading spirit of the project; to W.J.C. Tensen who helped to break ground; to W. Wolterink, secretary of 'The Escape' organization who made documentation available; to M. Davidzon from the Resistance Museum in Amsterdam; and to S. Plantinga, head of the reading room of the *Algemeen Rijksarchief* [General State Archives] with whom I could share my interest for escape lines. Under the pressure of time in which this book had to be written, it was particularly pleasant to experience anew the cooperation and efficiency shown by the director and colleagues at the RIOD, as well as M. Schillings and the personnel of the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* [Royal Library], who were ready and able to assist me at every beck and call depending on the progress of my research. My wife Lidwien continually provided her valued and positive criticism on the manuscript. It was also a special experience for me that my eldest son Reinier could this time lend his support as the book took form.

## List of Abbreviations

<i>Abwehrstelle</i>	The <i>Abwehr</i> was the counterintelligence and security organization of the German Armed Forces. It had several regional offices, so-called <i>Stelle</i> , some of which had The Netherlands as their domain. One was <i>Abwehrstelle Wilhelmshafen</i> .
April-May Strike	When the German authorities were about to intern Dutch military officers in April 1943, a strike took place, especially in the eastern part of The Netherlands. The Western part of the country did not follow suit because, in February 1941, they had experienced how a strike protesting the ill treatment of Jews had been fiercely brought to an end by the Germans.
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BI	( <i>Bureau Inlichtingen</i> ) Dutch Intelligence Office of The Netherlands government-in-exile in London, which tried to collect information from occupied Holland
BS	( <i>Binnenlandse Strijdkrachten</i> ) an armed national resistance group.
CCD	( <i>Crisis Controle Dienst</i> ) Service for Crisis Control which was a government service investigating and prosecuting black-market and black-slaughter activities so that there would be no interference with the rationing policies of the legal authorities.
De Zwarte Plak	An area in northern Limburg where black turf had formerly been harvested. The small obstinate community living there made the area into a hiding and transit shelter for fugitives during the German occupation of The Netherlands.
<i>Deuxième Bureau</i>	French intelligence amongst others office which, before the German occupation of The Netherlands, had led intelligence operations conducted by Dutchmen from Dutch soil against Nazi Germany.
<i>Dolle Dinsdag</i>	'Crazy Tuesday', 5 September 1944, when many Germans and their Dutch collaborators fled The Netherlands because they expected that the Allied troops would arrive at any moment.
<i>Engelandvaarders</i>	Fugitives from The Netherlands who tried to escape from the German occupied territories either by boat across the North Sea or over land through Belgium, France, Spain and Portugal to England.
<i>Engandspiel</i>	An intelligence game or ' <i>spiel</i> ' that the German counterintelligence authorities in The Netherlands played with Dutch agents who were being dropped by air from England in order to contact and activate Dutch resistance groups. By forcing arrested agents to make radio transmissions

to their instructors in England, the German authorities knew where and when new agents would be dropped. In this way they were able to arrest them as soon as they touched ground. Between 1942 and 1944, over fifty agents came under German arrest. Almost all of them died while in custody.

<i>GS</i>	( <i>Generale Staf</i> ) General Staff
IS9 (WEA)	Intelligence School No. 9 (Western European Area)
KLM	( <i>Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij</i> ) Royal Dutch Airlines
KNIL	( <i>Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger</i> ) Royal Dutch-East Indies Army
<i>KP</i>	<i>Knokploeg</i> or armed group, see <i>LO</i> .
<i>Küstenverordnung</i>	German regulation establishing <i>Sperrgebiete</i>
<i>LKP</i>	( <i>Landelijke Knokploegen</i> ) National Strong-Armed Resistance
<i>LO</i>	( <i>Landelijke Organisatie voor Hulp aan Onderduikers</i> ) National Organization for Underground Help, the national organization for aiding people in hiding (not only Jews but foremost young men who were trying to escape forced labor in Germany). It had an armed branch which was called the <i>Landelijke Knokploegen (LKP)</i> . It consisted of several <i>knokploegen (KP)</i> , armed groups) which were used mainly to liquidate traitors and henchmen of the Germans and to rob offices where ration cards were kept. The stolen ration cards were used to supply families who sheltered people in hiding.
Marechaussee	Dutch Military Police, with the special task of patrolling and controlling the border.
MI	Military Intelligence
MIS	Military Intelligence Service
MP	Military Police
<i>Nacht und Nebel</i>	Literally 'Night and Fog'. So-called <i>Nacht-und-Nebel</i> prisoners were individuals awaiting their death sentence who were administered as if they were already dead; the outside world should not know of their existence.
Noordoostpolder	Land reclaimed from the IJsselmeer. This polder area became completely dry by 1942.
<i>NSB</i>	( <i>Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging</i> ), the Dutch National-Socialist Movement led by Antoon Mussert
<i>Opbouwdienst</i>	A service established in 1940 which was used to employ Dutch military personnel after the capitulation of the Dutch armed forces. The German authorities hoped it would be the nucleus for a National Socialist Labor Service.
<i>Ordendienst</i>	Order Service
Office for Special Assignments	( <i>Bureau Bijzondere Opdrachten</i> ) Agency of the Dutch government-in-exile in London established in March 1944 to conduct covert operations in The Netherlands meant to assist the Allied war effort.
OSS	Office for Strategic Services
<i>PAN</i>	( <i>Partisanen Actie Nederland</i> ) Dutch Partisan Action
<i>Passeurs</i>	The resistance workers who helped airmen and refugees to cross the Dutch-Belgian border.
Quisling	Vidkun Lauritz Abraham Quisling, leader of the <i>Nasjonal Samling</i> , the Norwegian National-Socialist Movement. During the German occupa-

	tion he became Prime Minister. His name became synonymous for collaboration with the German occupier in general.
<i>Raad van Verzet</i>	Council for Resistance. A resistance group that attracted mainly left-wing individuals in contrast to the <i>LO</i> which consisted especially of right-wing confessional resistance workers.
RAF	Royal Air Force
<i>Rijksduitser</i>	Citizen of the German Reich
SAS	Special Air Service
<i>Schutzhaft</i>	Protective custody, an euphemistic label used by the Nazis to keep people away from society without due legal process as they considered them to be dangerous.
<i>SD</i>	<i>Sicherheitsdienst</i> , the German Security Service
<i>Sipo</i>	( <i>Sicherheitspolizei</i> ) German security police, the security police, the executive branch of the German Security Service
SOE	Special Operations Executive
<i>Sperrgebiete</i>	Areas closed to the public, especially due to the German coastal defense.
USAAF	United States Army Air Force
<i>V-Mann</i>	German word for agent of a (counter)intelligence service
Voerstreek	Predominantly Dutch-speaking area in Belgium bordering on The Netherlands
<i>Wadloper</i>	The Wadden or Dutch Shallows lies between the northern part of The Netherlands and the small isles in the Wadden Sea. When the tide is low, it is possible to walk from the northern provinces to the islands. However, only experienced 'wadlopers' or shallows walkers know which routes to take.
<i>Waterliniefort</i>	For a long time the <i>Waterlinie</i> was considered to be the main line of defense in the western part of The Netherlands. The idea behind this defense organization was that the central part of The Netherlands would be flooded to stop an advance by the enemy. In the 19th century, several fortresses (forts) were built to re-enforce this line of defense. However, by the time the fortresses were ready, they had become obsolete because of the invention of high explosive shells. Nevertheless, the Dutch army continued to use these fortresses until World War II.
<i>Zwitserse/Swiss Weg B</i>	Swiss Connection B, one of the illegal routes between The Netherlands and neutral Switzerland, which was used mainly to send intelligence on micro-films which were hidden in the back of books.