

SECRET

M.I.9/S/P.G.(-) 1909.

EVADED CAPTURE IN FRANCE.

The information contained in this report is to be treated as
SECRET.

STATEMENT BY

162644 P/O William Edward WATKINS, 263 Squadron, A.D.G.B.

Left: GIBRALTAR, 5 May 44.

Arrived : WHITCHURCH, 6 May 44.

Date of Birth : 7 Apr 21.
R.A.F. Service : Since 11 Aug 41.
O.T.U. : No. 61 (PEDNAL).
Conversion Unit : Nil.
Post in crew : Pilot.

Peacetime Profession: Local Government Clerk.

Private Address: 4, The Oaks,
Cardiff Road,
NEWPORT,
Monmouthshire.

13 Feb 44.
Baled out
Near CHARTRES.

I took off from BEAULIEU in a Typhoon 1B about 1530 hrs on 13 Feb 44 on a long-range sweep to CHARTRES, PARIS, and back. Over an aerodrome, probably at CHARTRES (N.W. EUROPE, Sheet 7, R. 30) I was hit by Flak. I spoke to my C.O. by radio and he told me to bale out, which I did about two minutes later. It was then about 1430 hrs.

I came down about 30 miles N.W. of the place where I had been hit. I landed in a field adjoining a farmhouse about a quarter of a mile from a village (location unknown). There were people in the field. I dashed up to them, told them in French that I was English, and asked for help, but they were too excited to do anything for me. I asked them where the Germans were and they pointed to the village, indicating also that I should go South. I walked South across country for about an hour. I then passed two German soldiers in a field. They paid no attention to me, as I was walking slowly, but I thought it better to hide in a wood till just before dark. I then walked South again all night, sometimes on the road and sometimes across country.

14 Feb 44.

About 0430 hrs (14 Feb) I got into a haystack and remained there all day. I had intended to approach a farm at night, but I was so tired that I stayed in the haystack all night and all the next day (15 Feb). I ate some of the food from my aids box but did not feel
/particularly

INTERVIEWED BY: I.S.9(W), 6 May 44.
O.R.S., A.D.G.B., 6 May 44.
European Intelligence, B.B.C., 6 May 44.

APPENDIX A.
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APPENDIX D.
Distribution: M.I.9(d). I.S.9.
I.S.9(W). A.L.O.M.I.9.
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particularly hungry.

- 15 Feb 44. After dark on 15 Feb I approached a village which I had been watching from the haystack. Before I reached the village I met a labourer, told him I was an English pilot, and asked for help. He directed me to the first house in the village. Here I was given food and shelter for the night.
- 16 Feb 44. On the morning of 16 Feb I was given a jacket and a pair of overall trousers, which I put on over my uniform, and also a cap. I started walking about 0430 hrs and continued South all day on a secondary road. About 1700 hrs, after passing through a village, I hid in a haystack and went to sleep. It was snowing when I woke about 2000 hrs. I went to the first house in the village and was given some bread and meat, but was not taken in. I returned to the haystack and stayed there all night and all the next day (17 Feb). The previous day I had passed a large farmhouse at CHATNAY (FRANCE 1:250,000, Sheet 15, W 6790), to which I now returned in the evening. Here I was given food and shelter, and the farmer tried unsuccessfully to get in touch with a resistance group, who he thought might take me over.
- 17 Feb 44.
CHATNAY
- 18 Feb 44. On the morning of 18 Feb the farmer gave me a shirt, scarf, socks, and a pullover, and took me about five miles in his car in order to put me on the road South. I walked all day, and about 1700 hrs hid up and watched a large farmhouse somewhere between CHATNAY and CHEVILLY (W 6354). After dark I went to this farmhouse and found eight or nine labourers and a woman. They seemed sceptical about my identity and asked if I had any money. I had 2,000 francs from my escape purse, but as I did not trust the labourers, I said I had no money. They gave me food and shelter for the night in a barn, and in the morning (19 Feb) before I started out they gave me 100 francs. I crossed the main CHARTRES - ORLEANS road and went South on side roads, striking the main road to CHEVILLY. Here it began to snow again, and I walked West to a farm about five miles from the road. I was sheltered at this farm for two nights. This farmer also tried unsuccessfully to get help for me from a resistance group. I told him I wanted to get to SPAIN, and he advised me to travel part of the way by train. He said there would be a control of identity papers at VIERZON, on the former Line of Demarcation, and said he would get a ticket to a station North of VIERZON.
- 19 Feb 44.
ARTENAY
CHEVILLY
- 21 Feb 44. On the morning of 21 Feb the farmer took me by car to the station at CHEVILLY and gave me a ticket which he had bought with his own money the previous day. He left me before the train came in. I had to change trains at ORLEANS, with a wait of two hours, which I spent in the waiting room. By mistake I got into the train for BLOIS. MER (F 3801) the ticket collector, seeing my ticket was for a station near VIERZON, said I had better get off and return to ORLEANS. I had left the train at MER about 1030 hrs and discovered that the next train back to ORLEANS was not till 1700 hrs. I therefore decided walk, and took the main ORLEANS - BLOIS road in the direction of BLOIS. As I could not find a bridge across the LOIRE after walking some distance, I returned to MER and crossed the river there to MUIDES (L 3997). I walked all day through PARC DE CHAMBARD (L 39) and the Forest of BOULOGNE, going through BRACIEUX (L 4084) and reaching FONTAINE (L 4179) about dark. Here I got shelter at a farmhouse and was eventually put in touch with an organisation which arranged the rest of my journey.
- MER
MUIDES
FONTAINE
(Contact with
organisation)