

SECRET

I.S.9/WEA/2/202/369

ESCAPED FROM FRANCE.

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

ACCOUNT OF ESCAPE OF

158700 F/Lieut. J.B. PURKIS, D.F.C., 263 Sqn., 84 Group, A.D.G.B.

Date of Birth	: 29 Apr 21.	Peacetime Profession:	Articled clerk
R.A.F. Service	: 3 years.		
O.T.U.	: No. 55 (ANNAN).	Private Address:	41 King's Keep,
Conversion Unit	: Nil.		Beaufort Road,
Post in crew	: Pilot.		Kingston-on-Thames.

Type of aircraft, place, date, time of departure.

Typhoon. "B3". 16 Aug 44. 1415 hrs.

Where and when did you come down?

Area North of LE CHAMPEAUX (FRANCE, 1:50,000, Sheet 7F/6,
sq 4261). 16 Aug 44. 1415 hrs.

How did you dispose of your parachute, harness and
mae west?

In possession of Germans.

Were all secret papers and equipment destroyed?

Left in aircraft.

Maps used: FRANCE, 1:50,000, Sheets 7F/6; 8F/3; 8F/4 & 8F/5.

Mission

I was pilot of a Typhoon aircraft which was detailed to execute an
arranged recce of the area VIRMOUTIERS (Sheet 8F/5, sq 4864); LIUAROT
(Sheet 8F/3, Sq.4673) and ORBEC (6573) area. Whilst attacking transport
on the TRUN (Sheet 7F/6, 3055) VIRMOUTIERS road, I was hit by light
flak. My main tails were holed. I succeeded in climbing to approximately
3000 feet when my port wing burst into flames.

Bales out

I had advised my S/Ldr. that I was trying to return to base - but
had no time to tell him I was baling out, which I did at about 1500
feet.

/I landed

INTERVIEWED BY: I.S.9(W.E.A.), 25 Aug 44.

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APPENDIX B.

Distribution: M.I.14.

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P/W & X Det. MIS, ETOUSA

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File.

Captured I landed, spraining my ankle, in an orchard. I was covered by a German N.C.O. who was followed shortly after by four soldiers with automatics.

Interrogated They took my 1250R and 667B forms off me and marched me about three miles to an officer where I had a very cursory interrogation. I gave my name, rank and number and refused to reply to the type of aircraft I was flying. The officer seemed satisfied saying "Oh yes you are an officer and must not answer questions like that". This was the only interrogation I had.

Unit moves That evening the whole unit including myself were moved to the vicinity of ST MARDS DE FRESNE (Sheet 8F/3 - 7075). I was the only P/W in an Italian bus containing five soldiers, a lot of French cheeses and a large Alsatian dog.

Civil prison I was at ST MARDS the rest of that night until approximately 1600 hrs on 17 Aug 44, when I was taken to BERNAY (Sheet 8F/4 - 8079) where I was taken before a Field Kommandatur.

More Ps/W I was now moved to the civil prison in BERNAY where I was handed over to the Chef. I was at this prison for the next seven days. During this time I was well treated by the French and allowed the freedom of the prison. They appeared to be very frightened of air raids and shelling so that every night everyone, including the prisoners, descended to the cellars for the night. Several Allied Ps/W were brought in during the week; five Poles, three French and one American. The latter's name was Pfc Arthur ROTH of 90th Div (?).

Rescued On the afternoon of 24 Aug a British patrol of Household Cavalry entered the town. I was rushed out and eventually met the officer in charge who took me back to the British lines, where I was taken to 30 Corps H.Q.