

MOST SECRET.
M.I.9/S/P.G.(Poland)1570.

ESCAPED FROM JAWORZNO (ARBETTS-
KOMMANDO OF STALAG VIII B.)

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

ACCOUNT OF ESCAPE OF

782808 Sgt. BAKALARSKI, Piotr; 300 (Polish) Sqn., Bomber Command, R.A.F.

Captured: North of ELBE Estuary 27 Jul 42.
Left: GIERALTAR, 10 Nov 43.

Escaped: JAWORZNO (POLAND), 10 Jul 43
Arrived: WHITCHURCH, 11 Nov 43.

Date of Birth: 18 Apr 13.
Length of Service: Polish Air Force
since 1936. R.A.F.
since 1940.

Peacetime Profession: Polish Air Force

Private Address: 15 Granby Avenue,
BLACKPOOL.

O.T.U.: No. 18 O.T.U. (BRAMCOTE).
Post in crew: Pilot.

Other members of crew:-

F/O PALINSKI (Navigator) (wounded and P/W).
P/O BOGUSZEWSKI (air gunner) (killed).
Sgt. KOBIELA (wireless operator) (wounded and P/W).
Sgt. OLSZEWSKI (bomb aimer) (wounded and P/W).

1942

I was pilot of a Wellington aircraft which took off from an aerodrome near HEMSWELL on 27 Jul 42 about 2100 hrs. to bomb HAMBURG. On the return flight an ME 110 attacked us three times, wounding all the crew except myself in the first attack and rendering my instruments un-serviceable. As a result of bad petrol leakages, it was obviously impossible for me to reach ENGLAND. I tried to head for SWEDEN, but had to make a forced descent on the beach somewhere North of the ELBE Estuary, in a district which the Germans called WESTLAND. We came down about 0200 or 0300 hrs. (27 Jul).

27 Jul.
Forced descent
North of ELBE
Estuary.

We came down very near a German A.A. post, and within five minutes about 12 soldiers under an officer arrived, bringing medical assistance. BOGUSZEWSKI died as he was being taken out of the aircraft. The Germans gave first-aid to the other three wounded members of the crew, and while they were doing so I managed to press the switch of the I.F.F.

/I was..

INTERVIEWED BY: I.S.9(W), 11 and 12 Nov 43.
O.R.S. Bomber Command, R.A.F. }
P.W.2(a). } 12 Nov 43.
M.O.1(S.P.). }
M.I.5. }
P.I.D.(F.O.) } 13 Nov 43.

Distribution of this Report.

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P.W.2.
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APPENDIX A - List of Helpers.

Distribution: I.S.9. M.I.6(for I.S.9(d)).
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APPENDIX C - Escape Information.

Distribution: D.D.M.I.(P/W). I.S.9.
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APPENDIX D - Equipment and training.

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DULAG LUFT
(FRANKFURT)

I was then separated from the rest of the crew, whom I did not see again. I was taken to the German guardroom, where the only question asked me was whether I had been shot down by a fighter. In the morning I was taken by car to a fortress, from which I was despatched a few hours later with a Poldweber as escort to DULAG LUFT (FRANKFURT). We travelled via HAMBURG.

2. DULAG LUFT:

Interrogation
at DULAG LUFT.

On arrival in DULAG LUFT I was put into a room by myself and kept there for four and a half days. During this time German officers visited me with the "Red Cross" form. I filled in only my name, number, date of birth, and rank, and crossed out the other questions such as number of Squadron, name of Squadron-Leader, and name of Wing-Commander. The officers said they were "only trying to help me". They told me the numbers of past and present Polish Squadrons, and asked the names of people in the Squadron who were not then flying and questions about the type of bombs we had been carrying. I said I did not know, as I had been only two days with the Squadron; whereupon they asked how it came about that I was a first pilot. I said I had had previous flying experience elsewhere.

There were no other interrogators except the officers who brought the "Red Cross" form. They knew from the markings of the aircraft that I belonged to 300 Sqn. and that I was therefore a Pole, but they did not use any threats of discrimination because of my nationality or ask about my relatives in Poland. I said I had been born in CANADA, but had been living in POLAND up to the war, giving them a false address in WARSAW.

After four and a half days in solitary confinement I was put into the main camp. After two days there I was sent to STALAG VIII B (LAMS DORF), arriving about 7 Aug.

7 Aug.
STALAG VIII B
(LAMS DORF).

3. Attempted Escape from LAMS DORF:

7 Sep.
Escape from
LAMS DORF.

On 7 Sep I escaped from LAMS DORF with Sgt. Kenneth HYDE (?), R.C.A.F. (a navigator). We were members of a party of about nine. A soldier cut through the wire at dusk, when there was a storm blowing up, while the rest of us kept watch. After leaving the camp the Canadian and I went alone, heading towards POLAND. I wore a civilian jacket and hat which I had got from a Pole in the camp hospital who was awaiting repatriation to POLAND. I had ordinary R.A.F. trousers. The Canadian had railwayman's uniform made in the camp by dyeing a foreign military uniform. We also carried Red Cross food.

Recaptured
near GOGOLIN.

We walked for three days and two nights, mostly through woods till we reached the river ODER near KRAPPITZ, not far from the Polish frontier. After crossing the river we made the mistake of walking too early in the evening, and were soon going into a wood (probably near GOGOLIN) which happened to be a prohibited area. We were sent to a British working party at GOGOLIN, and shut up in the groom's room at a stable. I found a pair of clippers in the room and forced the hook which secured the door. The Canadian was shaving at the time, so I went out alone. I climbed on to the roof and dropped into a courtyard on the other side of the stable. I began to run towards the railway to hide in a pile of wood, but I was seen by the British P/W who stopped work to watch me. The Germans noticed this, and I was stopped and recaptured. I was sent back to LAMS DORF, where the Staff-offizier gave me two weeks' cells.

Sent back
to LAMS DORF.

4. "Reprisals" at LAMS DORF.

11 Nov.
"Reprisals" at
LAMS DORF.

On 11 Nov 42 "reprisals" began at LAMS DORF. For the first three months I was tied up with string, which in Jan 43 was changed for chains. From 11 Nov till about 15 Dec we had no individual Red Cross issues. In Mar 43 I was among the old P/W who were unchained and transferred to another compound.

1943.
Mr. Un-
chained.

5. Attempted Escape from JAWORZNO.

In this compound I found a chance of changing identities with

Exchange of identities. Moritz LEDER, a Palestinian Private in the A.M.P.C. I had some difficulty in taking his place, because photographs were scrutinised carefully, and I did not at all resemble LEDER. I volunteered, in my new role as a Private, to go out on a working party, and was sent to TARNOWITZ (EUROPE AIR, 1:250,000, Sheet 34/4). On this working party we were very strictly guarded and there was no opportunity of escaping. I then asked to be allowed to work in a coal mine, and was sent to the Dachsgrube in JAWORZNO, where I worked with another Polish airman, Sgt. Witold RAGINIS (S/P.G.(Poland)1589).

At the mine I got in touch with Polish civilians who were working in the mine. They were members of an organisation. I never spoke twice to the same man, and always met the next contact by signals. The organisation agreed to help us to escape and an appointment was made to meet one of the members outside the camp. (This was a special camp some distance from the mine).

10 Jun. Before 2200 hrs. on 9 Jun 43 I cut the camp wire. At 0100 hrs. Escape from Work Camp. on 10 Jun, when the night shift was returning from work and there was a good deal of movement in the camp, I got out through the gap in the wire. Unfortunately, the place the Polish civilian and I had chosen as a rendezvous had been selected that night by the Gestapo, who were on the look-out for Polish patriots. As the Pole and I met the Germans opened fire with machine guns, and the civilian was killed. I threw myself on the ground and lay until a goods train came along on an adjacent siding. Under cover of the noise of the train I managed to get to the railway. After falling three or four times in my attempts to board the train I got into the last wagon and travelled about 30 km. to SZCZAKOWA (Sheet 34/4). I then walked towards OLKUSZ.

Recaptured. I was recaptured by a Battalion of S.S., who were also searching for Polish patriots. I was in civilian clothes, which I had got at a village on the way, and was taken for a civilian - a pose which I kept up in the hope of being sent to GERMANY, whence I thought escape would be easier. The Germans slapped me on the face, and I eventually produced my Stalag identity disc to show I was a P/W. I was sent back to JAWORZNO, where I was sentenced to two months in the cells.

6. Escape from JAWORZNO.

10 Jul. While serving my sentence I was able to renew contact with the Polish organisation. On completion of my sentence, still retaining the identity of LEDER, I went to work in another coal mine in JAWORZNO (the Leopoldsgrube). In this mine I was working on the night shift. The shifts were changed every fortnight, and on 10 Jul 43, my last day on night shift, I escaped from the mine.

The organisation gave me a hat and arranged that I should meet two men with bicycles outside the mine. When the day shift was leaving the mine I came up in the cage with four of the P/W who were going off work. The cage normally held only four, and the guard at the top apparently did not reckon on the possibility of there being an extra man in the cage. The other P/W and I were wearing civilian clothes, issued to us for work in the mine, of a type worn by civilian workers. The guard took out the four others without noticing me, and I walked behind whistling Polish tunes and talking loudly in Polish to the other Poles. The four P/W were led to the shower room, while I walked through the gate with my miner's lamp in my hand just as though I were one of the civilian miners.

I walked down the road past the P/W camp to the spot where the two men were awaiting me with the bicycles. One of the men gave me his bicycle and the other led me to his home at JANOW, about 4 km. from JAWORZNO. I was four days here, hiding most of the time in a cornfield. For the next three days I was hidden in a hayloft in JELEN, another village in the district. The Germans were searching the district, but the Polish organisation had warning of the searches from Polish patriots in the police force. Seven days after my escape I was taken

JANOW

JELEN

JAWORZNO-
HUTA.

back to JAWORZNO and was hidden for three days in the HUTA district of the town.

22 Jul.
SZCZAKOWA
RUDAWA

I was then sent to SZCZAKOWA (22 Jul). I was given a railwayman's uniform and was put on the engine of a goods train bound for CRACOW. I travelled only as far as RUDAWA, a few miles East of KIEZESZOWICA (Sheet 34/4) where I was sheltered for four days. On my first night in RUDAWA, the Gestapo surrounded that village and an adjoining one. My host heard the Germans arriving and warned me, and I slipped out into a potato field. The Germans shot 27 men in RUDAWA that night after torturing them. One man was hung from a door lintel by the feet and his wife and child were shot under his head. All those who were killed had to dig their own graves. About 60 others were taken to prison. During the rest of my stay in POLAND I never slept at night.

25 or 26 Jul.
CRACOW.

On 25 or 26 Jul I was taken to CRACOW, where I remained till 18 Aug. Here I met my friend RAGINIS who had been at liberty since escaping on 10 Jun. He had been in Polish hands in JAWORZNO before being sent to CRACOW. RAGINIS spoke Polish, French, English and Spanish, and helped me in my subsequent journey which he shared.

7. Journey from POLAND to SARREBOURG:

The Polish organisation in CRACOW supplied RAGINIS and me with identity and work cards, and arranged with the Arbeitsamt (labour office) for us to be sent to work in GERMANY. RAGINIS was furnished with documents which gave his profession as clerk who had had a University education, while I was shown as a shopkeeper who had had a High school education. We both had false names. My story was that I had owned a shop in CRACOW which had been taken over by the Germans and that I preferred going as a voluntary worker to GERMANY to remaining as an assistant in what had been my own business.

18 Aug.
Left CRACOW.

On 18 Aug we left CRACOW with a party of Polish civilians who had been conscripted for work in GERMANY. As alleged volunteers we were the only members of the party to whom a definite destination and definite employment had been assigned. This had been arranged with the Arbeitsamt. We had been assigned to the Bahnmeister (station master) in SARREBOURG.

We travelled via BERLIN and SAARBRUCKEN. In SAARBRUCKEN we bought our own tickets in preference to going to the Arbeitsamt which might have diverted us from SARREBOURG.

SARREBOURG

In SARREBOURG we reported to the Arbeitsamt and police and our employment was officially confirmed. There had already been some Poles working in the district for a long time, but, on account of its proximity to FRANCE, there had been no newcomers for some time. We were billeted in the Frauenlager (? B.M. Lager) where there were about 150 Polish and Russian women, who were employed laying new, and repairing old, tracks on the railway. We were the only men there, the other male Poles being at work on farms in the district.

RAGINIS and I were given light employment - in the garden of the Bahnmeister and in the fields. We were under supervision all the time. We were working with a native of LORRAINE, to whom, after two weeks, RAGINIS confided that we were escaped P/W, and asked his help, since we had passed out of the hands of the Polish organisation when we were despatched to SARREBOURG. The Lorrainer got in touch with a French organisation in LORRAINE which undertook to help us.

8. Journey to FRANCE:

14 Sep. Left
SARREBOURG

At 0600 hrs. on 14 Sep we left SARREBOURG with a railway worker who lived on the frontier, and travelled to a small station, probably HENTZING (EUROPE ROAD MAP, 1:250,000, Sheet 62). Here we were taken to a farm, whence we cycled to the village of FOULCREY, just before the frontier. The railwayman left us and we spent the day in FOULCREY. In the evening we were given directions as to how to cross the frontier, which we did while the German guard was changing. We crossed along

and walked to IGNEY, on the French side of the frontier, by road. We were told that we would be met outside IGNEY, but we saw no one corresponding to the description of the man we had been told to expect.

15 Sep.

LUNEVILLE

Failing to find our contact, we went to the farmhouse, where we were sheltered in a stable for the night by a farmer who had helped many French escapees from GERMANY. Next morning (15 Sep) we again waited for our contact, who was to have given us French identity cards. On the advice of the farmer we went to LUNEVILLE, near the frontier. Here we found help which eventually resulted in our being put in touch with an organisation which arranged our journey to SPAIN.

9. Crossing of PYRENEES.

25 Oct.

Left FRANCE.

I left FRANCE on the morning of 25 Oct with RAGNIS, a New Zealand soldier named "JEFF", Sgt. PHILO, S.J.V., 49 Sep. R.A.P. and a guide. It was raining in the valleys when we set out. We walked till midday, by which time the New Zealander was so exhausted that PHILO and RAGNIS had to carry him. I was sick and had pains in my legs and could not help then, though later I carried JEFF.

26 Oct.

About 1300 or 1400 hrs. on 26 Oct JEFF got so tired that he could not even walk downhill. We were all very tired and hungry, not having been provided with sufficient food. The guide advised us to leave JEFF in the mountains, but we were determined to carry him for as long as possible. At this stage the guide and RAGNIS went on ahead in the hope of being able to bring back help. We did not see them again. It was snowing heavily and the snow in the mountains was more than knee-deep. We carried on for five hours. At 1900 hrs. the New Zealander died. We left him in the mountains, probably somewhere North of the PIC DE BULL.

PHILO and I continued walking. It got dark, and we lost the footprints of RAGNIS and the guide which we had been following. The sky cleared and it froze hard. Our clothes, which were completely saturated, now froze on us. We reached a rocky mountainside, across which it took us about four hours to cover one kilometre. I was in front, and when we reached a level stretch of snow I waited for PHILO. When he reached me he lay down and fell asleep. I then discovered that he had taken off his shoes and had been walking with them under his arm. I cut off his socks, dried his legs with a towel from my pack, and put a dry pair of socks and his shoes on his feet. This was very difficult, as his legs were frozen stiff. His hands were also frost-bitten. I then smacked him all over till I had revived him, and covered one of his hands with a handkerchief and the other with a sponge-bag.

I forced him to continue walking and in this way we carried on all night. We had to go back about 3 km. as we had lost our way. By this time there was no trace of the foot prints of RAGNIS and the guide, but we took the general direction the guide had given us before leaving. It took us 12 hours to reach the top of the mountain, normally a climb of about half an hour or an hour. On the top of the mountain we looked at PHILO's escape map and managed to locate the South with his escape compass, although it had been broken in one of his falls. We could then see a lake on the top of the mountain, which the guide had told us to look for.

27 Oct.

Arrival in
ANDORRA.

After we were half-way down the mountain we could see ANDORRAN mountain guards watching us through glasses. Avoiding the guards, we crossed the next mountain and followed the guards' footprints till we reached a road and eventually a cottage. We were directed to a second cottage, where we were given hot milk and allowed to sleep in a hayloft. It was then 27 Oct, the crossing having taken us two days and a night. We arrived in ANDORRA on the second night.

27 Oct.

Next day 27 Oct a man arrived who put us in touch with helpers. Our journey from ANDORRA to SPAIN was arranged for us.

The following information was obtained from BRITISH personnel who have been repatriated.

If further circulation of this information is made, it is important that its source should not be divulged.

ESCAPER'S NAME, etc: 782808. Sgt. BAKALARSKI, P.,
300 (Polish) Sqn., Bomber Command, R.A.F.

DATE OF INTERVIEW : 11-12 Oct 43.

At the farm at IGNEY, where we were sheltered for the night of 14-15 Sep 43, we were advised to go to the gendarmerie at LUNEVILLE and ask the Captain there for help. We went to the gendarmerie, asked for help, and were put in a cell while the gendarmes identified us. This they did by sending a telegram to the gendarmerie at the home of the parents of RAGNIS, who live in FRANCE, probably at MONTLUÇON. After two days a favourable reply was received, and we were sent to the house of one of the gendarmes. We were then despatched with two French workers, who had escaped from GERMANY, to NANCY. We travelled under arrest with an escort so that we would not be arrested by the Germans on the journey, there being many identity controls on the trains. We arrived in NANCY on 21 Sep.

In NANCY we were provided with French identity and work cards and food coupons, the gendarmes leaving us at the office where these documents were supplied. We stayed in a hotel in NANCY for one night.

On 22 Sep a woman working in a French organisation sent RAGNIS and me to LYONS. On 23 Sep we went to a hotel in LYONS to meet Mme. LAROCHE, to whom we had been sent. She handed us over to MAURICE, the son of MARIE CLAIRE. The latter was then in SWITZERLAND, and her organisation was short of money. RAGNIS and I stayed for the next two weeks with a man named MICHEL. (The Frenchmen with whom we travelled from LUNEVILLE to NANCY had been sent to MARSEILLES).

We were then sent on to RUFFEC (arrived 4 Oct), where we stayed one day in the hotel in which MARIE CLAIRE was living. Till 23 Oct we stayed with Pierre COTTY, also in RUFFEC.

On 22 Oct RAGNIS was despatched to a place near FOIX, probably PAMiers. As he knew French it was considered safe to send him through the frontier zone to TOULOUSE. I was taken on 23 Oct via LIMOGES and TOULOUSE to LUZENAC. My guide on the latter part of the journey was JOSEPH. With me was Sgt. PHILO, S.J.V., R.A.F., whom I later left in MADRID and whom I had met for the first time in RUFFEC on 23 Oct.

The crossing of the PYRENEES from LUZENAC is described in my report.

On the morning of 28 Oct we were visited, in the cottage in ANDORRA where we had found shelter, by a man who spoke French. I asked him to tell the police of our presence. He fetched the Chief of Police and a young doctor from the town of ANDORRA. We were taken by car to ANDORRA, where PHILO was sent to hospital. I was put into a hotel, as there was no room for me in the hospital.

Through Miss PLA, the owner of one of the other hotels in ANDORRA, who speaks English, we were put in touch with a man who works for the British Consulate-General in BARCELONA. He is a Spaniard. After six days in ANDORRA the Spaniard took us by bus to SEO DE URGEL (SPAIN). We had no difficulty at the frontier. In SEO DE URGEL we were put into the hands of the Civil Guard, and were later taken by car to the Consulate in BARCELONA, (arrived 3 Nov). After one day in BARCELONA I was sent to MADRID (two days) and GIBRALTAR, which I reached on 8 Nov.

E. A. Hughes s/o

for Major, I.O.

I.S. 9(W),
13 Dec 43.

Distribution:
D.D.M.I. (P/W).
I.S. 9.
M.I. 6. (for I.S. 9(D)).
M.I. 5. (Major White).
I.S. 9(W) (File).
MIS-X E.T.O.U.S.A.

Added 15 P 11
u. 8
16/4/07

BAKALARSKI