

Good.
Comment:

This remarkable performance illustrates virtually every important lesson in escape and evasion, as well as the value of good briefing. Lt Betolatti's comments can hardly be improved upon. Note particularly that he found it impossible to negotiate the ^{high} Pyrenees without a guide and without food, and got captured because he attempted it.

SECRET

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
P/W and X Detachment
Military Intelligence Service

13 June 1944

E & E REPORT NO. 709

~~ESCAPE~~ EVASION IN FRANCE

John (NMI) BETOLATTI, 2d Lt, O-682568
(23 Missions)
545 Bomb Squadron, 384 Bomb Group

TARGET: SCHWEINFURT

MIA: 13 April 1944

Arrived in UK:

8 June 1944

MEMBERS OF CREW: (This information checked with PWIB)

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| PILOT | 0-801747 | 1st Lt Farris O HEFFLEY | MIA |
| CO-PILOT | 0-740854 | 2d Lt Walter B MABE | MIA |
| NAVIGATOR | 0-809532 | 2d Lt Louis P CARINI | MIA |
| BOMBARDIER | 0-682568 | 2d Lt John (NMI) BETOLATTI | NARRATOR |
| RADIO OPERATOR | 33370908 | T/Sgt William J SHADE | P/W |
| TOP TURRET GUNNER | 6667757 | T/Sgt Samuel DEUTSCH | MIA |
| BALL TURRET GUNNER | 13096713 | S/Sgt Robert W BECHTEL | MIA |
| WAIST GUNNER | 18162376 | S/Sgt George W ALLEN | MIA |
| WAIST GUNNER | 18151686 | S/Sgt Ralph L GATZMAN | P/W |
| TAIL GUNNER | 16170253 | S/Sgt Glen E ALFTER | MIA |

CRASH We were over Germany on our way into the target when the fighters came in head on and we lost two engines in the first sweep. After target we lost the formation. We passed over a factory area in France at 5000 feet and the flak came up and hit us, but we kept on going. We were flying at 800 feet when machine gun fire caught us and we crashed a mile further on. As we hit the ground at 130 MPH I shot straight through the plexiglass nose.

broken 2rm signal Every one cleared the aircraft, and those who were able scattered and took off immediately. Three were badly wounded, and after going back to the ship to get them the first aid box, I had to leave them as they all needed serious medical attention. The French, who were plowing the field, never left their plows, but from them started to give the old broken arm signal. I went up to one man and clapped him on the back, but he took off immediately. Every one else motioned violently towards the woods. I started running hard as the peasants got "Partez" out of the corner of their mouths.

Shelter at nightfall When I reached the woods the brush was so thick I had to slow down. I stopped and took a benzadrine tablet. It had no visible effect, so I took another in two hours, in spite of the directions, and this time it helped. The woods were full of Senegalese and there were work camps scattered through the area. They seemed friendly, so I took out my language card to find out about the Germans. They motioned that they were to the west and then went on with their work. I walked five hours until I came to a woodcutter. I told him who I was, and he showed me where I was on my escape map. He took me home, and the older members of the family did not seem happy to see me. They fed me, however, and kept me for the night.

HELP OFFERED At dawn I was fed and given an old peaked hat. I was still wearing my heated suit, for warmth over OD trousers, and a green shirt. I tried to black my shoes, but they were too wet to take the small amount of polish that they had. I walked SW cross-country all day until I came to a lime kiln.

A woman who was working alone She immediately told every one who I was, and I was surrounded with a cheering mob which presented me with bread, eggs, sugar and cigarettes. A man, who could speak some English with the aid of a dictionary, drove them off, pointing out that they were bound to attract the attention of four German officers who lived across the road. He told me to get rid of my heated suit, which I did, and some one gave me an old jacket to wear. He told me he would take me to his chief. I said to myself, "In the organization" and told him I would meet him by a pole in the woods.

SENEGALESE
HATE
UNRELIABLE

He had other plans, however, and I went off with a Senegalese P/W and a Frenchman to sit in the woods. They were to take me to the rendezvous, but after a while the Frenchman drew a sketch of a trail through the woods, handed it to the Senegalese, and disappeared. We walked a bit and my companion pulled out a ten-franc note and remarked that it was all the money he had. I did not think much of it at the time and just kept walking. He soon handed me the sketch and vanished in his turn. I could not follow this little map, as the woods were full of trails, and I knew that in any event this was not the way I had been meant to meet the chief. I set off again in a southwesterly direction and walked until 2200 hours. I found a shed full of sprays and other equipment for an orchard, and went to sleep there.

HITCHES
TRUCK RIDE

On 15 April I hit the road at dawn. I still had the food given me the day before, and carried water in the rubber bottle from my aids box, and which ~~it~~ ^{was} splashed a bit. I was very glad to have it. I walked down a road and ~~soon~~ ^{being} ~~thumbed~~ a ride from a passing truck. This was reckless, I know, but I was pretty weary. Being careless when tired is one of the big hazards when evading. Once aboard I offered the driver a cigarette and told him I was an American. He said very little, but drove me into the nearest city and drove me to a home where I was joyfully received and well fed. ~~LATER~~ he took me to the RR station, and told the agent who I was, and asked him to give me a ticket to the south. The agent would have been glad enough to give me the ticket, but said their was no percentage in doing so. I had no identification papers and he said I would be sure to be picked up before I reached the border.

LEARNS TO
PASS GERMANS

My friend ^{then} drove me to another town and left me, saying that it would be easy to get a train here. The town was full of Germans, and I thought I had been led into a trap, as I did not know then that France is full of foreigners and the Germans are not apt to suspect people who go along minding their own business. I got to the station, but was afraid to go to the ticket window as there were so many Germans near it. I started to approach single persons for help and hoped to find some one who could speak English. No one seemed surprised or made a fuss, but I got nowhere. Two nuns pulled their shawls close and scampered off as though I were a cold breeze.

HELP

I went over to a corner, pulled out my good old language card and studied it. Then I ^{went} ~~marched~~ up to the window and asked firmly for a 3rd class ticket to a town I had picked in the south. The woman at the window could not understand me at all. She called a man over, but he could not get it either. He asked if I were Polish, Dutch or Italian. I just said no. He moved up close and whispered, "English?" I said, "Yes, American." A great smile came over his face and he immediately took me to a cafe where we had dinner. Then he bought ~~me~~ a ticket with my money and took me to a boarding house for the night. Every one here knew who I was and sat around, fascinated. They went through every thing I had and all wanted souvenirs; the women in particular wanted the escape maps ~~as~~ ^{for} head shawls. I had to be very firm, because I knew I would need all my aids.

RR
TRAVEL

On 16 April I caught the train after lunch. I had to make three changes, but my friend had written the names of these junctions out clearly. He had also given me a conductor's blue cap which he had acquired, and told me to sit in the back of the train on the seat next to the regular conductor. At the first change I was to walk up and down the aisle loudly calling the name of the town, but I never had the courage to do this.

The conductor asked me about my hat and I told him I was Polish, which made no sense, but kept him quiet for a while. The next time he asked I told him I was going south to work, after that he left me alone. ~~When~~ ^{on the platform} a German agent of some sort came back to talk to him several times, they paid no attention to me. At the first change, I asked a young man working around there, on which track I would find my train. I used sign language, and I think he realized who I was, for he came into the waiting room, looked at me, and announced the train when it came in.

When I tried to get in with the conductor this time he bawled me out so that I took off my cap and got into the next car. It was very crowded, but I got a seat next to a woman. She was most indignant, that such a dirty, ragged man should presume to sit next to her. After a while I went to sleep and fell on top of her. She gave me hell and I got mad and told her to shut up, in English.

Then I took out a stick of chewing gum and stuck it in my mouth. Every one turned to stare, but there was no further conversation. / Stencil 2

HOTELS
DO NOT ARE
FOR GERMANS

I changed trains and again rode as a passenger. A Frenchman started a conversation, and I decided to trust him as it was raining hard and I knew that my next train did not leave until the next day. He told me he was an aviator too and found out the time of the train next morning, but he offered no shelter. I tried to get a room in a hotel. I would take the clerk aside and tell them who I was, ^{for me} but as soon as they learned they would chase me out. Feeling in the south is ~~not so pleasant~~ and the hotels are for the Germans. As I wandered about in the rain I noticed a bus marked for the town I wanted and took it. When I arrived ~~it was more~~ ^{the weather} dismal than ever. I went to a church for help and was sent to a hotel. Here they would have nothing to do with me. I did finally find, however, shelter for the night.

NO GUIDE
IN
PYRENEES

At dawn I set out on the road south. As I neared the mountains the road petered out into a thin trail. There were little shacks now and then, and the people I came across were all so weird that they could have eaten grass without surprising me. I still had ^{some} the sugar, and I ate it now along with the candy from my escape kit. It took me a whole day to climb the first peak. There was no trail anymore, the snow was up to my chest, ^{and I'm telling you} it was rugged. When I got to the valley I thought I was in Spain, but the shepherds all pointed south. ^{with a Frenchman and another} I spent one night in a deserted cabin, and set out again the next morning. I wanted a benzadrine badly, but it had all disintegrated in my pocket. I got over another peak, but I was exhausted. Every few steps now I would collapse in a heap. I finally saw a road and decided to follow it east to the international highway, for I was so weak that I was afraid of dying of exposure if I tackled the last peak. ^{continued} Through the snow.

CAPTURED

I reached the road, and there, on a wall, sat three German officers. There was only one way to go, and besides I had passed many ^{of them} in north France, so I went on. I had forgotten that I was soaking wet now, as no peasant from the area would be. I got ^{passed} ~~passed~~ them, but then it dawned on them that I must be a refugee and they called me back. I went, there was no point in trying to run in my condition, ~~they~~ asked for my papers. I tried a trick I had heard of in an evader's lecture at base (Sgt Seniawaski, E&E Report No 239). I reached in my pocket, looked surprised and then set off again. It did not work, and I had to come back.

DOG TAGS
RECOGNIZED

I had a loaf of bread under my shirt. ^I They evidently thought it a gun, and I had to stand at attention while they investigated. They asked if I ^{was} were Polish, French or Italian, and as they questioned, they started through my pockets. I started to laugh, and could not stop, which irritated them. One asked if I ^{was} were Russian. This had a strange effect on another, and his expression grew hard and he came over and started to kick my legs apart. This made me mad and I told them I was an American officer and to be treated along the lines of the Geneva Convention. They asked for proof and I showed them my dog tags. They knew what these were immediately, and we moved off pleasantly enough to the village hotel at PT DE GALAU. Then I realized how near I was to my goal when I was captured.

SEARCHED

At the hotel they stripped me and went through my clothes carefully, feeling every seam. They had a fire lit to keep me warm, and gave me some bread to eat. They were ^{overwhelmed} when they found my escape file in a piece of rubber, and when they found my fountain pen, they behaved as though it contained a secret weapon. I demanded my dog tags and they gave them back, but they kept my watch. As they worked they asked how many had been in my party and where I had come down, but there was no direct interrogation.

A car came and I was driven to ST GIRON in the care of a German commissar. The driver gave me a cigarette. When we came to the jail an old Frenchman with a rifle ran out and said, "Heil Hitler."

FRENCH
JAIL

^{but} I spent the next two days in a small cell. I looked it over carefully, and it was impossible to escape without doing something desperate, which would have been foolish in my condition, as I got dizzy whenever I stood for long. ^{but} We were fed once a day a meal of 3 slices of bread, soup, potatoes and some meat. I slept in the middle of a pile of mattresses to keep warm. There were no sanitary facilities, but by yelling and kicking up a rumpus, I could get the guard to let me out. The situation looked pretty hopeless, so I started to ask when I would

be taken to Dulag Luft. I was told the next day.

BREAKS OUT
OF CELL

The next day a ^{GROUP} bunch of Frenchmen were brought in and put in my cell. I was transferred to one in which a Frenchman was already held. I found out that he was a pilot. The filth and smell in this place was beyond belief, for the lack of plumbing had not phased my cell mate. I knew I had to get out. I looked the room over carefully and noticed that the wall over the door seemed to be flaking. I pounded on this spot and finally loosened a few stones. Then I moved my bed over to the door and pounded and pulled until I had cleared out the space between two of the parallel supports. I dropped all the stones and concrete onto my bed to deaden the noise. The Frenchman just sat watching. I told him to follow me out, but he just laughed and thought I was crazy. I pulled myself up and dropped out into the corridor. There was no guard ^{HERE,} but the door was locked.

DIGGING
TAKES TIME

I found a staircase closed with an iron grill. The stairs curved, but the grill was straight, which left a small gap at the inner end. I crouched down and squeezed through, cutting my leg and tearing my trousers. The stairs led me into a courtyard. ~~I pulled up handfuls of onions and ate them.~~ Then I got a pick and shovel out of the tool shed and started to dig my way out under the garden wall. I soon realized that this could not be done quickly, and started to look for another way. I went back into the jail, but on the ground floor (see plan attached), and entered a room ~~off the main corridor~~ near the street entrance where seeds and plants were kept. ^{FROM IF I COULD SEE}

ESCAPES IN
CONFUSION
OF SEARCH

I waited here, eating lettuce seeds until the jailer went upstairs at 1700 hours with the prisoners' meal, which had been due at 1200 hours. My hope had been that he would leave the street door open when he did this. He did not, however, and was soon down again and very excited for he had discovered my break. ~~Then there was bedlam,~~ all his friends and the gendarmes, but no Germans, were called in. They ran around chattering and searching for a good hour. In the confusion some one left the door open and I slipped out, like greased lightning.

TRAVELS
NORTH

My first thought was to clear town, as seen as possible. South meant the Pyrenees, but I was too weak to try it again, so I headed due north hoping to find a farm at which I could rest until I was fit again. I followed the RR tracks until midnight when I stopped at a wooden shelter, but it was so cold I could hardly sleep. At dawn I set out again, soon leaving the tracks for the road. I reached a town without meeting anyone. Here a soccer game had just finished. I asked a man, on his way home, if I was on the right road to a ^{certain} town I had picked, and told him I was an American. He spread the word immediately and people flocked around. All I was given, however, was some bread and wine, and I had no escape aids left. They said I would never make the town, which was 48 km away. I went on until dark and spent a good night in a barn full of hay.

JOURNEY
ARRANGED

Next day I put on my reliable old GI shoes and walked to the outskirts of a small town. I went up to a farmhouse, told them I was an American and asked for something to eat. They would not believe me. I showed them my dog tags and the manufacturer's label in the back of my green shirt. I was taken in and fed. Here I met a person who took care of arranging the rest of my journey, even though I made him unhappy for a time by saying "Yeah" which always sounds German to the French.

^{by poor} During my second Pyrenees crossing we were badly delayed due to the ^{poor} ~~ha~~ exhaustion of one of the party. Then we were caught in a snow storm and the ^{BOULES} got lost. By the time we got back on the trail, we could not make the final pass before the arrival of the German patrol. At the top of a mountain, they told us to follow a river ^{below} we could see in the valley, and then deserted us. We reached the river and followed it to a highway. Here the party split, some of the ^{men} boys following the highway. I thought this much too dangerous, and set off, along the mountains paralleling the road with two Englishmen. It was hard going, as the mountains kept forcing us down to the road and it was torturous getting up again. It was with a great deal of relief that we finally stumbled past France's picture into Spain.

Compiled by

Dorothy A. Smith

DOROTHY A SMITH
Capt, WAC

Approved by

W S HOLT
Lt Col, AC
Commanding

APPENDIX "B" TO E AND E REPORT NO. 709

- a. Many ~~Seve~~galese work camps were observed in the woods around COMMERCY (Meuse) on 13 April. There were no guards or Germans about. The prisoners must have been on ~~the~~ parole ~~system~~ or too satisfied to escape.
- b. Hearsay that the RAF bombing of a TOULOUSE powder factory in late April was a good job.
- c. On 18 April 12 hangars were observed on the TOULOUSE airfield. The aircraft were twin-engine. They may have been training planes.

APPENDIX "D"

1. AIDS BOX: I used the Horlicks all along the route to help fill out my meals. I used the peanut bars and chewing gum in the Pyrenees as well as the hard ~~boiled~~ squadron candy. The benzadrine helped me shortly after landing, ~~but they are badly packed. Each one should be separate, as they are now they get all crushed together and once wet vanish into one's clothing.~~ I needed ~~more~~ ^{benzadrine} badly in the Pyrenees. ~~The matches were used for cigarettes and fires, they should be waterproofed.~~ The water bottle was very useful. I found the compass very useful when I had no guide in the Pyrenees. **I ALSO CARRIED MY GROUP'S SPECIAL LANGUAGE CARD, AND IT WAS INVALUABLE.**
2. PURSE: I carried a yellow purse and used 600 French francs for a RR ticket. I used the map ~~to pick my route, and to travel by, both in France and the Pyrenees.~~
3. PHOTOGRAPHS: I carried 6 photographs but did not use them as I traveled without papers.
4. LECTURES: I was lectured on evasion at Group by S-2 and evaders. ~~W~~/Sgt SENIAWSKI was one. ~~From this~~ I learned to keep my escape aids handy and to use them; to approach only solitary Frenchmen; to travel alone rather than in groups; not to ask for the organization, but to let it find me.
5. SUGGESTIONS: ^{which still} I wore GI shoes, and ~~they~~ were good for another 100 miles after my second Pyrenees crossing. Other men ~~had~~ French shoes which wore out in one crossing. ^{a man out} Lack of outdoor exercise and good food can knock ~~all~~ the stuffings out of a man. ~~The~~ Men should be made to realize how important it is for them to do set-ups on their own while ~~they are~~ in French hands. Their lives, and those of others in their party may depend on it, ~~in the mountains.~~ ^{their condition.}

1435
SECRET

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
P/W and X Detachment
Military Intelligence Service

E & E REPORT NO 709
EVASION IN

JUNE 8 1944

(Date)

TARGET

Schweinfurt

Date Missing in Action: APRIL 13

Date Arrived in UK: JUNE 8

JOHN (NM) BETOLARTI 2 LT. 0682568

(Name)

(Rank)

(ASN)

23

(No of Missions)

545TH

(Squadron)

384TH

(Group)

MEMBERS OF CREW: (This information checked with PWLB)

Indicate what happened to
each man
and how you know

MIA PILOT LT. F.O. HEFFLEY - SHOT IN LEG. I SAW HIM WAIT FOR DOCTOR
MIA CO-PILOT LT. W. MABE - HE WAS OK. AS FAR AS I KNOW *to go off*
MIA NAVIGATOR LT. L.P. CARINI - SHOT IN FACE, HAND, LEG. WAITED FOR DOCTOR
RTD BOMBARDIER LT. J. BETOLARTI - O.K.
P/W RADIO OPERATOR SGT. SHADESE - I DID NOT SEE HIM
MIA TOP TURRET GUNNER SGT. S. DEDTSCHE - WOUNDED IN HEAD MADE FOR WOODS
MIA EARL TURRET GUNNER SGT. BECHLAM - O.K. AND MADE FOR WOODS
P/W WAIST GUNNER SGT. ALLEN - O.K. AND TOOK OFF
P/W WAIST GUNNER SGT. GATZMAN - I DID NOT SEE HIM
MIA TAIL GUNNER SGT. ALFTER - SHOT IN HEAD, SHOULDER. HE WAITED
FOR DOCTOR

Crash landing

Were you wounded?

NO. BUT HAND WAS CUT ON THE CRASH.

See Robert Marler for those
caught
Campbell caught, English
3 US,

TOP SECRET

E & E CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

JOHN (NM) BETOLATT, 2nd LT. 0682568

(Name)

(Rank)

(ASN)

JUNE 8 1944

(Date)

38474 GRP 54550D

(Unit)

Date, time and approximate location of plane crash or landing.

APRIL 13 - 1600 - CORNVILLE NEAR COMMERCY

Nature and extent of damage to plane when source bailed out.

Was it on fire, etc?

WE CRASHED. IT WAS SMOKING

At approximately what altitude did source bail out?

Were any of the crew injured or killed before the plane crashed?

YES AS FAR AS I KNOW THE PILOT - NAVIGATOR - TAIL GUNNER WERE WOUNDED

What members of the crew bailed out? Did their parachutes open?

Did the plane explode on striking the ground?

Did source see any other members of the crew dead or alive after reaching the ground?

YES

Did he receive any information from others as to whether any other members of the crew were dead or alive? If so give detailed furnished by his informant and whether the other crew members were identified by name or otherwise.

Did source examine the wreckage of the plane? If so, what was its conditions?

ITS CHIN TURRET WAS WRECKED AND PLEXIGLASS WAS SMASHED
UNDER SIDE OF PLANE WAS DAMAGED EXTENSIVELY

If the plane crashed in water how far was the plane from land and what means was source rescued and what life rafts, wreckage, etc., remained on the surface that would have assisted other personnel to keep afloat.

What is source's opinion as to the fate of the other crew members and his reason for his opinion?

AFTER WE LEFT PLANE WE SEPARATED AND I NEVER
HAVE HEARD OF ANYTHING ABOUT THEM. THE WOUNDED
MEN REMAINED. SO PERHAPS THEY WERE CAPTURED

We were over Germany on our way into the target when the fighters came in lead-on and we lost two engines in these first sweeps. After target we lost the formation. We passed over a factory area in France at 5000 ft and the flak came up and hit us, but we kept on going. We were flying at 800 ft when ~~a battery~~ machine gun fire caught us and we crashed a mile further on. As we hit the ground at 130 MPH, I shot straight through the plexiglass nose.

Everyone cleared the aircraft and those who were able set off individually immediately. There were badly wounded, and after going back into the ship to get them the first aid box, I had to leave them as they all needed serious medical attention.

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 wearing my heated suit for
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 all day until I came to
 a line of hills.

A woman was working
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 immediately told everyone who
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 P/W and a Frenchman
 out into woods. They were to

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6

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soon ^{thumped} a riddle from a ^{careless} ^{passing} ^{truck}. ^{his was reckless I know, but I was pretty weary, being} Once aboard I
offered the driver a cigarette and
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He said very little, but drove
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was ^{asked him to} ~~asked him to~~ give me a
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in doing so, I had no identification
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France is full of foreigners and
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people who go about ^{50%} mending their
own business. ~~There is a~~
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 to find someone who could
 speak English. No one seemed
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 scampered off as though
 a cold breeze. I went over to
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 old language card and studied
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 to the window and asked firmly
 for a 3rd class ticket for a
 train I had picked in the South.
 The woman at the window
 couldn't understand me at all.
 She called a man over and ~~still~~
 he couldn't get it either.
 He asked if I was Polish, Dutch
 or Italian. I just said "No." He
 moved up close and whispered,
 "English." I said "Yes, I mean"

a great smile came over his face and he ^{immediately} took me to a cafe where we had dinner. Then he bought me a ticket with my money and took me to a boarding house for the night. Everyone here knew who I was and sat around fascinated. They went through everything I had and all wanted souvenirs, the women in particular wanted the escape maps as head shawls. That I be very firm, because I knew I would need all my aids.

~~The~~ On 16 April I caught the train after lunch. I had to make three changes, but my friend had written the names of these junctions out clearly for me. He ~~had~~ also given me a conductor's blue cap which he had acquired, and told me to sit in the back of the

train on the seat next to the regular conductor. At the first change I was to walk up and down the aisle loudly calling the name of the town, but I never had the courage to do this.

The conductor asked me about my lat and I told him I was Polish which made no sense, but kept him quiet for a while. The next time he asked I told him I was going south to work. After that he left me alone, and when a German agent of some sort came back to talk to him several times, they made ~~no~~ paid no attention to me. At the first change, I asked a young man working around there, on which track I would

find my train. I used sign
language, and I think he
~~he realized~~ realized who
was for she came into the
waiting room, looked at
me and announced the train
when it came in.

When I tried to get in with
the conductor his time ~~he bawled~~
me ~~out~~ ^{took off my cap} and gave
me ~~out~~ ^{so that} I got into the next
~~car~~ car. It was very crowded,
but I got a seat next to a
woman who was most indignant
that such a dirty ragged man
should presume to sit next to
her. After a while I went to sleep
and fell on top of her. She gave
me hell and I got mad and
told her to shut-up in English.
Then I took out a stick of
chewing gum and stuck it
in my mouth. Everyone turned
to stare, but there was no
further conversation.

I changed trains and
 then rode as a passenger. A
 Frenchman started a conversation
 and I decided to trust him as
 it was raining hard and I knew
 that my next train did not leave
 until the next day. He told me
 he was an aviator and
 found out the time of the train
 next morning, but he offered me
 nothing. I tried to get a room
 in a hotel, but I would take the
 clerk aside and tell him who
 I was. As soon as they learnt
 they would chase me out. Feeling
 in the south is quite different, and
 the hotels are for the Germans as
 I wandered about in the rain I noticed
 a bus marked for the town I wanted,
 and took it.

When I arrived it was
 more desolate than ever. I went
 to a church for help and was

sent to a hotel. Here they
would have nothing to do with
me. I did finally find ~~shelter~~
however find shelter for the
night

At ~~that~~ dawn I set out
on the road south. As I neared
the mountains the road petered
out into a thin trail. There
were little shacks now
and then and the people I
came across were all
so weird that they could have
eaten grass without surprising
me. I did have to suffer, and
fate it snow all along with
as candy from my escape. I
took me a whole day
to climb the first peak. There
was no trail any more, the
snow was up to my chest
and I'm telling you it was

14
muzzed. When I got to the
valley I thought I was in
Spain, but the shepherds
all pointed south. I spent the
night in a deserted cabin,
and set out after the next morning.
I wanted benzadrine badly
but it had all disintegrated
in my pocket. I got over another
peak, but I was exhausted.
Then, few steps more I would
collapse in a heap. I finally
saw a road and decided
to follow it east of the international
boundary ~~cause~~ for I was so
weak that I was afraid of
losing my exposure if I tackled
the last peak.

I reached the road and
then, on a wall, sat three
German officers. There was
only one way to go, and besides

I had passed many in north
+ race, so I went on. I had
feared that I was soaking wet
now as no peasants from the
area would be. I got passed
them, but then it dawned
on them that I must be a
refugee. They called me back.
I went, there was no point in
trying to run in my condition.

They asked for my papers.
I tried a trick I had heard
of in a readers lecture
at base. I said "Saniawski ETERP".

I reached in my pocket, looked
surprised and then set off
again. It did not ~~me~~ work, and
I had to come back.

I had a loaf of bread
under my shirt. They suddenly
thought it a gun, and I had
to stand at attention while they

investigated. They asked if I
were Polish, French, or Italian
and as they questioned they started
through my pockets. I started
to laugh, and could not
stop, and this irritated them.

~~Finally~~ They asked if I were Russian.
~~and this~~ had a strange effect
on another ~~his~~ expression
grew hard and he came
~~forward~~ over and started to kick
my legs apart. This made me
mad. I told them I was an American
Officer and to be treated along
the lines of the Geneva Convention.
They asked for proof and
dropped them my dog tags. They
knew what these were
immediately, and we moved
off pleasantly enough to the
Bellage Hotel at St. de Salaz.
Then I realized how near I was to my

goal when I was captured.

At the hotel they striped me and went through my clothes carefully, feeling every seam. They had a fore bot of keep me warm, and gave me some bread to eat. They were overwhelmed when he found my escape file in the piece of rubber, and ~~when~~ when they found my fountain they behaved as though it contained a secret weapon. I demanded my dog tags and they gave them back, but they kept my watch. As they worked they asked how many had been in my party and where I had to come down, but there was no direct ~~dis~~ interrogation.

A car came and I was driven to St Jirons in the care of a German commissar. The driver

6358
4/1/1945

gave me a cigarette. When
he came to the jail and did
I reached with a rifle ran
out and said "Heil Hitler"

I spent the next two
days in a small cell. I looked
it over carefully and it was
impossible to escape without
doing something desperate, which
would have been foolish in
my condition, as I got dizzy
whenever I stood for long. We
were fed once a day a meal
of 3 slices of bread, soup, potatoes
and some meat. I slept in the middle
of a pile of mattresses to keep
warm. There were no sanitary
facilities but by yelling and
kicking up a rumpus, I could
~~get a card~~ ~~of let me out~~
The situation looked pretty
hopeless so I started to write

When I would be taken
of Dulles Luft. I was told the
next day.

The next day a bunch
of Frenchman were brought in and
put in my cell. I was transferred
to one in which a Frenchman
was already held. I found out
that he was a pilot. The filth
and smell in this place was
beyond belief, for the lack of
plumbing had not pleased most
all inmates. ~~and~~ I knew I had
to get out. I looked the room over
carefully and noticed that
the wall over the door seemed
to be flaking. ~~I decided that~~
~~the spot~~ and finally loosened a
few stones. Then I moved
my bed over to the door and
pounded and pulled until
I had cleared out the space

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between two of the parallel
supports. I dropped all the
stones and covered only my
bed to deaden the noise. The
Frenchman just sat watching.
He told him to follow me out, but
he just laughed and thought
I was crazy. I pulled myself
up and dropped out into the
corridor. There was no guard,
but the door was locked.

I found a staircase
closed with an iron grill. The
stairs curved, but the grill was
straight which left a small
gap at the inner end. I crouched
down and squeezed through
cutting my leg and tearing
my trousers. The stairs
led me into a courtyard. I
pulled up handfuls of onions
and ate them ravenously.

21

Then I got a pick and shovel
out of the tool shed and started
digging my way out under the
garden wall. I soon realized
that this could not be done
quickly and started to look
for another way. I went back
into the jail, but on the ground
floor (see plan attached) and
entered a room of the main
corridor ^{near the street entrance} where seeds and
plants were kept.

I waited here eating
lettuce seeds until the
jailer went upstairs at 11 o'clock
with the prisoners meal which
had been due at 1200 hrs.
My hope had been that he
would leave the street
door open when he did
this. He did not, however,
and was soon shown again

and very excited for he
 had discovered my break.
 Then there was bedlam, all
 his friends and the Gladiators
 but no Germans, were called
 in. They ran around chattering
 and searching for a ^{good} hour. In the
 confusion someone left the door
 open and I slipped out like greased
 lightning.

My first thought was to
 clear down as soon as
 possible. South meant to Pyrenees
 and I was too weak to try.
 It a fair, so I headed due
 north hoping to find a farm
 at which I could rest until
 I was fit again. ^{I followed the old trade} until mid night
 when I stopped at a ~~small~~ wooden
 shelter but it was so
 cold I could hardly sleep.

At dawn I set out again
 noon leaving the tracks for
 the road. I reached a town
 without seeing anyone. Here
 a soccer game had just finished.
 I asked a man, on his way
 home, if I were on the
 right road to a town I had
 picked, and told him I was
 an American. He spread the
 word immediately and people
 flocked around. I had ^{escape} bread and
 wine. I had no ^{escape} and left. They
 said I would never make
 the town which was 45 km
 away. I went on until dark
 and ~~slept~~ spent a good night
 in a barn full of hay.

Next day I put on
 my reliable old G. I. shoes
 and walked to the outskirts of

a small town. I went up to a farmhouse, told them I was an American and asked for something to eat. They would not believe. I showed them my dog tag and the manufacturer label in the back of my green shirt. I was taken in and fed. Here I met a person who took care of arranging the rest of my journey even though I made him unhappy for a time by saying "neat" which always sounds German to French.

~~After we had been in~~
 During my second journey crossing we were badly delayed due to the exhaustion of one of the party. Then we were caught in a snow storm in the

got lost. By the time ~~that~~ we
 got back on the trail, we could
 not make the final pass before
 the arrival of the German patrol,
 at the top of ~~the~~ a mountain, they
 told us to follow a river
 we could see in the valley and
 then deserted us. We ~~followed~~
 We reached the river and followed
 it to a highway. Here the party
 split some of the boys followed the
 highway. I thought this much
 too dangerous and set off
 along the mountains paralleling
 the ~~road~~ with two Englishmen.
 It was hard going as the mountains
 kept forcing us down to the road
 and it was tedious getting
 up again. I ~~was~~ was with
 a great deal of relief
 that we finally stumbled
 past Francisco's picture
 into Spain.

B.

~~There~~ many Senegalese
work camps were observed in the
woods around Commercy (Meuse) on 13 April
There were no guards or Germans
about. The prisoners must have
been on the parole system or be
satisfied to escape.

Hearsey that the R.A.F.
bomber ~~of the~~ a Toulouse powder
factory ^{in late April} was a good job.

On 18 April 12 bombers were
observed on the Toulouse airfield.
The A/C were twin engine. They
may have been training planes.

D

1. Kids. Boy. I used to Horshies all along the route & help fell out my ~~extra~~ meals. I used to peanut bars and chewing gum in the Pyrenees as well as the hard boiled squadron candies. The beignardine helped me stork after landing, but are badly packed. Each one should be separate, as they are now they get all crushed together and once wet ^{badly} run into one clothing. I needed more ^{badly} in the Pyrenees. The matches were used for cigarettes and fires, they should be waterproof. The water bottle was very useful. ~~for~~ found the compass very valuable when I had no guide in the Pyrenees.

2. Purse I carried a yellow purse and used 600 French francs for a RR ticket. I used the map & pick my route and to travel by both in France and to Pyrenees.

3. Pictures I carried 6 photographs but did not use them as I travelled without paper.

4. Lectures. I was lectured on evasion
at group by S2 and readers
~~1st~~ ^{1st} Senevish was one. Frontiers
I learnt to keep my escape aids
handy and to use them; to approach
only solitary Frenchmen; to travel
alone rather than in groups; not
to ask for ~~the~~ ^{the} negation, but to
let it find me.

5. Suggestions. I wore G.I. shoes and
they were good for another 100 miles
after my second Pyrenees crossing.
Other men wore French shoes which
wore out in one crossing.

Lack of outdoor exercise
and good food can knock all
the stuffing out of a man. The
men ~~know~~ ^{be made to} realize ~~that~~ how
important it is for them to set
set-ups on their own while they
are in French lands. Their lives
and those of ^{others in the party} may depend on it in the mountains.
and those of ^{others in the party} ~~may~~ ^{will} depend on it in the mountains.

SECRET - AMERICAN
MOST SECRET - BRITISH
MIS (X)

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
P/W and X Detachment
Military Intelligence Service

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL
EVADING FROM ENEMY OCCUPIED COUNTRIES

1. Full Name, Rank, and Serial No.
JOHN BETOLATTI 2nd LT 0682568
2. Decorations.
AIR MEDAL 3 CLUSTERS PURPLE HEART
3. Unit or Squadron.
384TH GRP
4. Division (Army) or Group.
384TH U.S. 8TH AF
5. Date of Birth.
FEB 1ST 1923
6. Length of Service.
2 YEARS 1MO
7. Private Address.
47 LIBERTY AVE DANBURY CONN
8. Job as civilian.
HATTER
9. From what field did you take off?
STATION 106
10. Take off time.
ABOUT 0800
11. Date and target.
APRIL 13 - SWEINFORT
12. Where did you land?
COMMERCIAL WNW NANCY
13. Were all secret papers and equipment destroyed?
PERHAPS - PLANE BURNED
14. What was your position in aircraft?
BOMBARDIER
15. Were you wounded?
NO - INJURED IN CRASH
16. Did you pay your guides? If so how much?
NO
17. Do you speak French? Spanish?
NO
18. Did you have Identity Papers?
NO
19. Have you been questioned before to-day on your escape or evasion? If so, where and by whom? Have you given anyone a written report on your experiences. Where and when?
YES IN LERITA, SPAIN. BRITISH INTELLIGENCE - GIBRALTER. BRITISH INTELLIGENCE
NO WRITTEN REPORT
20. Did you report on your operations? If so, where and to whom?
NO
21. Did you sign a security certificate warning you against talking about your escape or evasion? If so, where and when?
YES
22. Date of arrival in Spain.
ALHAMA SPAIN MAY - GIB - JUNE 5TH
23. Date of arrival at Gibraltar.
JUNE 5TH
24. Place and date of departure for U.K. By sea or air.
JUNE 7TH
25. Place and date of arrival in U.K.
JUNE 8TH RAF BASE

SECRET - AMERICAN
MOST SECRET - BRITISH

APPENDIX "D" TO E AND E REPORT NO. 709

List all military information which you observed or were told while evading. Give fullest possible details. (Airfields, troop encampments, coastal and interior defenses, AA batteries, radar installations, troop movements, results of allied bombing, location of enemy factories and ammunition dumps, enemy and civilian morale, etc., etc.,.....)

We were shot down near the city of Commeny. They brought us down by what I believe was machine gun fire. There appeared to be no camp, post or bivouac area below. So perhaps it was a defense line or strategic outpost.

In and around the same area were many negroes who were prisoners of the Germans. They had been captured in the fighting in Africa and I believe were French soldiers. They were in work camps under no ~~guard~~ guard. Apparently they were satisfied and never intended to escape.

The German soldier I believe is a little afraid of the French. At least in Tolouse they appeared to be. While in Tolouse the British

bombed a powder factory. The
French said the results were
good and that the Germans were very
frightened. I believe the French take
the raids better than the Germans

12 engines up in Toulouse airfield
15 April twin engine A/C not
fighters must have been trainers
biggest field I ever saw

ATS

SECRET - AMERICAN
MOST SECRET - BRITISH

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
P/W and X Detachment
Military Intelligence Service

E & E REPORT NO.
EVASION IN

(Date)

Samuel DEUTSCH, T/SGT, 6667757

(Name)

(Rank)

(ASN)

Number of missions

545 Bomb Squadron,

(Squadron)

384 Bomb Group

(Group)

TARGET:

MIA: 15 April 1944

Arrived in UK:

MEMBERS OF CREW: (This information checked with PWIB)

| | | | | Official Disposition | Narrators Disposition |
|--------------------|----------|--------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| PILOT | 0-801747 | 1st Lt | Farris O HEFFLEY | | MIA P/W |
| CO-PILOT | 0-740854 | 2d Lt | Walter B MAER | | MIA #843 R+D |
| NAVIGATOR | 0-809532 | 2d Lt | Louis P CARINI | | MIA P/W |
| BOMBARDIER | 0-682568 | 2d Lt | John (NMI) BETOLATTI | | EAE #709 |
| RADIO OPERATOR | 33370908 | T/Sgt | William J SHADE | | P/W |
| TOP TURRET GUNNER | 6667757 | T/Sgt | Samuel DEUTSCH | | R+D MIA #843 |
| BALL TURRET GUNNER | 13096713 | S/Sgt | Robert W BECHTEL | | EAE # R+D 844 |
| WAIST GUNNER | 18162376 | S/Sgt | George W ALLEN | | MIA |
| WAIST GUNNER | 18151686 | S/Sgt | Ralph L GATZMAN | | P/W |
| TAIL GUNNER | 16170253 | S/Sgt | Glen E ALPETER | | MIA P/W |

Were you wounded?

Check P/W KIA
& Survivors

Bottom Floor

COURTYARD

14 FT WALL

STORE ROOM

(PRISON STORES)

STAIRWAY

CORRIDOR TO
WALLED COURTYARD

ANTE ROOM

?

STAIRWAY
UP TO 2ND
FLOOR

POSSIBLY PART
OF
KEEPERS
HOME

GROUND STAIRS
TO ENTRANCE

MAIN
DOOR

KEEPERS HOME

TOP FLOOR (CELLS)

1400 WALL

COURT YARD
(GARDEN)



KEEPERS HOME

AG 383.6

Hq ETOUSA

19 October 1942

SUBJECT: Safeguarding of P/W Information.

TO : Personnel concerned.

1. It is the duty of all Americans to safeguard information which might, either directly or indirectly, be useful to the enemy.
2. It is an offense, carrying heavy penalties, to publish or to communicate to any unauthorized person any information which might be useful to the enemy.
3. Information about your escape or your evasion from capture would be useful to the enemy and a danger to your friends. It is therefore SECRET.
4. a. You must therefore not disclose, except to the first Military Attache to whom you report, or to an officer designated by the Commanding General of the Theater of Operations:
 - (1) The names of those who helped you.
 - (2) The method by which you escaped or evaded.
 - (3) The route you followed.
 - (4) Any other facts concerning your experience.b. You must be particularly on your guard with persons representing the press.
c. You must give no account of your experiences in books, newspapers, periodicals or in broadcasts or in lectures.
d. You must give no information to anyone, irrespective of nationality, in letters or in conversation, except as specifically directed in Par. 4a.
e. No lectures or reports are to be given to any unit without the permission of the War or Navy Department.

By command of Lieutenant General EISENHOWER:

(signed) RALPH PULSIFER,
Colonel, AGD, Ass't. Adj. Gen.

CERTIFICATE

I have read the above and certify that I will comply with it.

I understand that any information concerning my escape or evasion from capture is SECRET and must not be disclosed to anyone other than the American Military Attache to whom I first report, or an officer designated by the Commanding General of the Theater of Operations. I understand that disclosure to anyone else will make me liable to disciplinary action.

Name(Print) JOHN BETOLATTI

Signed John Betolatti

Rank 2/Lt A.S.N. 0682568

Date JUNE 5, 1944

Unit 384TH GRD 545TH SQD.

Witness Horace W. Forster

HORACE W. FORSTER,
Colonel, G.S.C.,
U. S. Mil. Lia. Off.

SECRET

APPENDIX "D" TO E AND F REPORT NO. 709

No., Rank, Name:- 21LT. JOHN BETOLATZ, 0652568

Unit:- 384TH GRP 545TH SGP

Suggestions for improvement of escape equipment and training come largely from those who make use of them. Your report and comments will help others to evade capture or to escape.

1. AIDS BOX

a. Did you use your aids box? YES

b. If not, why?

c. If you used it, state briefly the circumstances in which you used each item, for example, "While hiding in woods for two nights".

ALL ALONG ROUTE WHEN I HAD NOT EATEN REGULAR FOOD
Horlicks tablets.

Chocolate or Peanut Bar. IN MOUNTAINS AND SOUTHERN FRANCE
WHERE I COULD NOT OBTAIN FOOD.

Milk (tube).

Benzadrine tablets (fatigue).

AFTER CRASH

Halazone tablets (water purifier).

Matches.

FOR CIGARETTES
Adhesive tape.

Chewing gum.

IN PYRENEAN MOUNTAINS

Water bottle.

WALKING IN WOODS CLOSE TO HABITATION

Compass.

IN MOUNTAINS

Sewing kit.

d. Did any of the above items prove unsatisfactory?

MATCHES SHOULD BE WATER PROOF

e. How did you finally dispose of the box?

BURIED IT
f. Can you suggest any way in which the contents of the aids box might be changed to make it of greater use, bearing in mind that the size of it cannot be larger?

NO

2. PURSE

a. Did you carry a purse? YES
State color of stripes and letters.
If NOT, State why not.

YELLOW
b. Did you use the purse?

YES

(over)

c. If so, which of the following items in the purse did you use?

Maps. Which ones? *FRENCH*

Compass.

File (hacksaw). *YES*

Foreign currency. State countries and amounts. *NO*

How did you spend the money? *FRENCH 850 FRANCES*
Dutch & Belgian

d. How did you dispose of:-

Maps.

Compass.

File (hacksaw).

Surplus currency.

3. Were you issued any extra compasses or further aids to evasion?

1 EXTRA COMPASS

4. PASSPORT SIZE PHOTOGRAPHS

a. Did you carry passport-size photographs? *YES*

If so, how many? *6*

b. Did you use them? *NO no papers*

5. LECTURES

a. Were you lectured on evasion and escape? *YES*

State WHERE, WHEN and by WHOM.

384th GRP IN FEB AND MARCH - P.W. OFFICER AND EVADERS

b. Did you find the lectures of value?

YES approach only solo for

c. Do you have any suggestions to make which, from your experience, you feel will help other evaders and escapees?

GIVE MORE MONEY (I HAD ONLY 800 FRENCH FRANCES) GIVE

FORGED IDENTITY CARDS BEFORE OPERATIONS. THUS A MAN CAN

START SOUTH RIGHT AWAY WHILE HE IS STILL IN GOOD CONDITION,

RATHER THAN GET HELD UP BY FRENCH FOR MONTHS WHERE

FOOD AND LACK OF OUT DOOR EXERCISE CAN KNOCK HELL OUT OF YOU

More G.I. shoes and gear were

good for another 100 mi before he

gave up the gun for the shoes

and were out on the crossing

~~Home~~ 45
Ad 615 & 4
401 GA
Benefield 231

Francisco

Asyke introduced \$20- called
British Intelligence Officer
of long at Herida asked
name of or those caught
a boy Sullivan
to see not see certificate
before they go down

6 June Stockholm
Order of MA to report
Office of MA to R
to to 4 \$
C3 Brooke

E&E # _____

INTERROGATOR _____

(Name)

(Grade)

(ASN)

(Squadron)

(Group)

(Missing in action)

(returned to duty)

Message to be broadcast over BBC:

Language _____

Time: _____

Person requesting message _____

Date of contact with this person _____

Description of this person:

Services rendered:

St Belabatty C.F. 709 ^{typed}
Pt of Landing ~~to~~ near Commercy

The railroad people
who helped me were at Vitry

The farmhouse at
which I received help, while
traveling. After my ~~first~~ prison
break, I was near Caysses
(Hte Garonne). At this place

I met a man from Toulouse
named Jacques. He is well
dressed and has his own car.
He is 5'7" tall, weighs about 210 lbs, and
has thin sandy hair. He gave
me 10 francs and told me to take
the bus to Toulouse and wait
there for him. He picked me up
as planned, and I lived with

his family for 10 days. A friend
of theirs M. Chevalier gave me
a suit of black clothes, a hat
shirt and necktie. He was
going to make me an I Card
for Venezuela. When I got
impatient, Jacques worked hard
and found an organization.

Two men took me to a house
where I met ~~Lt L.D. Campbell, Lt~~
~~Lt Martin P & E Rpt II 724, Sgt~~
~~G. Davis, Sgt Hays and Sgt Harry.~~
~~The four last named were~~
~~caught when we crossed~~
~~the Pyrenees, and four other~~
~~Americans caught later in~~
~~the Pyrenees (see Lt Martin)~~

The next day ~~a guide~~
we all set out, going by truck
to a ~~spot~~ ^{barn} near St. Gaudens. The
Pyrenees crossing given by Lt Martin

(1)

We were over Germany on the way
to target the fighters came
in land on and we lost two
motors in the first wave of attack
We jettisoned our bombs and followed
the Group over the target as close as
possible for the added protection
On the way back we couldn't
keep up so we headed SW in
an effort to get clear of enemy
fighters. We hit a cloud bank
at 12,000 ft. When we lost cover
we went to 5,000 ft as off
water came for navigators shot out
so lost him in the process
a factory area in France
The flak opened up & hit us
but we got away with evasive
action of going down to 800 ft
as we flew along a ground
battery of machine guns and

we crashed a mi further on.
We hit the ground at 130 mi per hr
and ~~I was~~ pilot was knocked
through the propellers nose
he walked out through my hole to
bounced. French were plowing
their fields & did not leave the
ploughs out from them. There too
old broken army signal. Everyone
dear to A/C to the best of my
knowledge to the co-pilot wanted
see the Bill. Three bounded stage
by the A/C walking for the Dr. T. E.
started & come but had cut artery
in head & hole in back so made
him remain. The A/C was
mouldering ~~in the ground~~ ~~my~~ ~~and~~
I didn't have to get rid
of my equipment as I had
ready to be would crash and
happily piled it in nose as a
break in case of a sudden crash
when we were so low. In the
crash it was strewn everywhere
after was no time to collect it.
I went back into the A/C for
a 1st aid kit for the boy and
then took off towards the woods
as the 1st aid kit panted about
5 min after the crash.

21

I went on pulled a ~~German~~ ^{man} on the back
but he ran away ~~cause~~ ^{it was} all
obvious ~~every one would~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the corner of their mouth~~
~~I reached the wood~~ ^{running}
hard but for the ~~best~~ ^{last} was 50
leaving but I couldn't sleep it up
so I stopped I took a band-aid
tablet & then kept on as it didn't
work so well I took another in
2 hrs and it was a bit better.
The woods were full of Negroes
who were captured with the
for army. Work camps all around
They were friendly & told me
the Germans were in their camp
but west of us. Did this with
camp card & gestures
Then went on with the work as
nothing unusual up. I just
wanted to clear the area & felt
that up to me & that they couldn't
help me just kept going
Walked fine but I came
on 20 m. I saw a chap in wood
told him I was American & asked

where the Germans where the
pen pointed me on my map. N of
Bourca. Took June to his
house for the night. Parents
didn't seem happy about it at
all but was fed anyway. Bab didn't
bother to hide me when negro
1/20 knocked & came in & said
he. at 0500 next morning
& awakened. He gave me
an old peaked cap & breakfast
kept heated mint as walking
in woods. under it OD browser &
green shirt. Tried to black ^{my}
shoes but were too wet & taste
malament of polish they had
however brown can be worn
in France & later found.

Walked all day ^{SW} till reached
an ~~old~~ lime kiln at Sory
I was afraid to walk on road
at that time for fear of meeting
to all ten fields & woods
Here met a Tr & a who spoke
a little Eng and had a dictionary
He saw me trying to talk to
a woman from whom I was trying
to find out if the G were on
the road or not. He
joined us, everyone came running

and cheering I got bread, eggs
muffins & cigarettes. One woman
wanted me to go live with her
but I wanted to push on. The
art classed them off as 45
officers were living in the house on
the scene, he told me he
would take me to his chief I said
ok he organized & told him
I would wait by a pole in the
woods that he wanted me to go
with the other men to a diff rendezvous
I went with them into the woods
& sat down as told, listened to
an raid alarm but saw no A/C
Then they mind marched so I did
with one of them a negro P/W while
the other disappeared but before leaving
drew negro route to follow in woods
We went on he stopped looked at
the paper gave it to me and
said follow this piece of paper

and you will come to the chief
I knew this was wrong & not what
he set and. I think he had
wanted money and was mad when
he didn't get it. So ~~to~~ I couldn't
follow the stretch & gave it all
up & set off S.W. until 22 hrs
when I got into a barn for fruit sprays
& orchard supplies & slept here

On the 15th of April got up &
but the road had lots of food
from Keln I carried water by hand in
bag & asked but glad to have it.
Had been given an old jacket at Keln
& had gotten rid of heated suit
on the 8th of advice. So was now
walking down roads. Thumbed a
truck & told him \$5 & gave him
a cigarette. He never said
anything but drove me to
Bar & Dae. Here he took me
into a house where I was
fed well. Austrian lived in this
house & I saw ~~me~~ ^{me}
then he took me to ~~the~~ ^a
by RR station. He told the ticket
agent I was American but and

underground ^{carried by electric} cable in back
of tracks (clear coal)
got a little reckless once
when one gets tired

but no papers they were afraid
to give me a ticket to ride the
train as I would pick me up,
So he drove me on to Vitry. Here
he dropped me & I was on my own
again & said easy to get train
here. The place was full of G
and at first I thought it a trap
soon discovered they don't notice
you half the time. I went to the
station but was afraid to buy
a ticket as so many G were,
So looked for someone who could
speak my - going up to people who
were alone - but all said no &
none seemed surprised. The
nuns were scared pulled their heads
close & wouldn't help a damn, So
gave up took out good old
language card & tried to say
I was class to St Gerons &
at the ticket window & said it

she couldn't understand me &
nearby man tried to help he
couldn't catch it etc asked if
Polish Dutch or Italian I said
No he moved close & whispered
English I said yes American. He
immediately looked pleased and
took me around in back.

He sold me a ticket for 600 francs
& took me to dinner at a cafe.
Then put me up for the night in a
boarding house. Here every wine
& listened to. All fascinated by
escape but I went souvenir.
I said oh no.

Next day went to another cafe
for lunch train came in at 3 P. M.
all wondering how to get me out with
out papers resorted to. Giving me
a S.N.C.F. cap (dark blue cap like
conductor tellers in blue)

Stamps
taped out

Rode to Foix without trouble on
express changing at ^{Lez Aubray} on
local to Foix. Ticket punched over at
Sat with the conductor in the back of the
last car. Told him I was Polish.
I had been told by my helpers
to go down the aisle, yelling
Lez Aubray but I didn't dare.
Conductor on train asked why but I said

4.

oh Polish

Polish again asked about hat said
gone to Foix & work. Saw no
checking papers but may have
GRR man looked in but thought we
RR talked several times & read
conducted. I just sat there.
Halt & written list of changes, & Et
Les Catech asked young man which
track to Toulouse (Angus) & time
then went to waiting room though he
caught on when train came & came
into waiting room & called it.
On this stage ticket punched
was ~~with~~ sitting with archers without
cup cause thought too crowded to
deck & didn't. Didn't want to
sit in back as last breeze ^{& get in last}
& RR man had given me bell
& sent me to crowded one.
Nowan next to me unsalted & moved
away when raged I sat down
next to her fell asleep & fell on top

of her so she gave me ^{half}
of I said that up in Eng, Then
I pulled out a piece of gum &
started chewing all stared her
but no further conversation.

At Toulouse ~~_____~~ saw no clerk
on platform left completely alone
Went up to schedule & got time of
train to Foix & saw boy for track
he didn't suspect who I was so
many foreigners. Again as
passenger, ticket punched,
a man started conversation decided
I was ^{young} as raining hard
& burst him as raining hard
& no St Jorons train & left
day. He was also an aviator
but offered no help except to get
time of my morning train for me,
Tried to get room in hotel.

But feeling in So. not as friendly in N.
would get clerk alone & declare
self they would throw me out fast
color to 6, So walked around in
rain & noticed bus marked St
Jorons. Got on it gave money
said down & got change
has jammed. Had picked town from
map as close to border.

When got off bus ^{was leaning} ~~covered in cross~~
 rain & I went to a house next to
 a church thought surely left
 here. Asked for room & they put
 me to hotel. At Hotel wouldn't
 admit me. Saw another church tried
 after at what thought priest house
 asked for Padre he wasn't here
 but a man who spoke my way.
 Said peoples attitude due to
 speculation of 10 men for taking others
 over border. Said he would take
 me to barn I said why not
 here he said one bed. I said I sit
 in chair OK. Slept there all night
 before dawn woke me & said I had
 headed due S on the road
 which petered out as I reached the
 into. Kely food gone but given
 more at Vitry & some bread
 was left & some sugar
 also escape kit. People would
 live in shacks & could have
 sold cross without surprising
 me. that he into. Not in fact

of box 91m - telling me it was
muffled now up to my chest
& no trail just snow. Did one
peak & said ah spaur. Saw
people in valley (shepherds) they said
no so I kept on due south
Took whole day to climb peak
Spent night in deserted hut with big fire.
Next day Climbed another tried to take
benzadrine but none left and
I packing. Got really tired
was eating candy (hard from sg)
& but alt he was (saved but still)
Got wet in rain & had to spit
paper all the time. Tired as
hell & collapsed every few
steps saw a road & was
going to follow it E & international
highway & try to follow it.
Got close to road E & then
saw 3 G. officers sitting on a
wall ~~no~~ no other way to go
so tried to walk past a
N & France but forgot
I was soaking wet from
rain. Got past them & then
I staggered on then that I was

not a local peasant. They called me back. I went & asked for my papers. I tried to ~~get~~ truck I had heard of in Srean's lecture and fumbled in my pocket for it couldn't find it looked surprised & started toward the village as if to go home. It didn't work however & they called me back. In my condition there was no pt in running so back I came. They asked if I was Polish I said Italian I just kept laughing I don't know & they bridled. Then, when they asked if I was Russian another picked up his gear and started to look mean. I had a bag of bread under my shirt which they evidently thought a gun. Made me stand at attention while he investigated left it when found it was bread. It came around and started to kick my feet apart.

After questioned me to be allowed
through my passport to the island to get me

This made me mad & I
felt that I was an American
officer & be treated properly & some
more along the lines of the Geneva
Convention. Wanted proof should
do that & they knew what they
were immediately. ~~He got on board~~
We all moved off pleasantly
enough to the village hotel
H de Salas 1 mi from
border

Here striped me and went through
clothes in detail feeling every seam.
Had fire lit to keep me warm &
gave me some bread. Behaved
as tho there was a secret
weapon in my fountain pen
were overwhelmed by escape file
in rubber. Took my watch, as
finished with la piece. ^{fighting} Gave it back
demanded dog tags & gave them
back. ^{curiosity} Asked many
questions how many in party
where came down etc but not
direct interrogation. Car came
bus driven to St Jovins ^{into German lines} &
my car & driver gave me
Kilgrette. At local jail

old German with rifle came out
 & said Heil Hitler (this is
 the last I heard of) I was put
 in a small cell no plumbing
 for two days. Slept bet pile of
 mattresses fed once a day
 bread soup potatoes & some
 meat. Whenever I got up I felt
 so dizzy I had to ~~lie~~ sit
 down again but looked
 place over & much to solid
 to escape so asked when
 of Dulag Luft. Was to go Fri
 but Fri morning brought in
 batch of French put me in
 another cell with a German
 & other 4 or in my cell.

New cell beyond belief
 due to no plumbing. Old man
 a pilot too. Knew I had to get
 out looked whole cell over
 found weak place in wall
 pulled bed over got on it
 and waked top of wall loose
 throwing cement on bed so no noise
 so kept it up

all this was done
 in 1940
 I was in
 the cell
 for 20 days
 and kept it up

Whole jail just ran for 2 ^{months} ~~days~~
with guns who lived here with family
the why no service but also
why no guard in hall to stop me
I finally cleared all out between
two wall supports & there was just
enough room to get out told
pilot to follow but he just
laughed. Got into corridor
but corridor entrance & stairway
I found another stairway closed
with a iron grill but the stairs
curved & the grill was straight
so that there was a space above
and I cut my leg & tore my
trousers but got through went
on down to courtyard & gored
self on onions then went into shed
& got pitch & shovel & tried
to dig way under garden wall
but soon saw they would
take more time than I had
went into prison but on the
ground floor this time and
got into a room near the
main entrance. Here
he stored his reads etc
& at all the little odds
I waited hoping he would leave

supposed to feed
at 12:00 but didn't
fed at 17:00 or
stayed about 20
while searched.

3 nights
2 days 1 stall
1 day 2nd cell
1 day 6 in mats

to entrance door open when
he went to feed to after P/W
but he didn't & when he came
down he knew I was gone.
Then there was great excitement
he got a lot of F & friends &
gendarmes, but no G and
they started searching, I in
to excitement (once nearly caught
when stuck head out) someone
left door open & I walked
out.

approx
1946

Now felt heading S not
important getting clear of St
group was most important
headed north as S was & I
was in no shape for ~~mats~~
did a ~~or~~ track. (not much
traffic) & walked up it
till midnight. Went to sleep
in an open sort of shed
own well. ~~had~~ no aids
now of any sort. Barely
could sleep much
up at dawn & on up the

from 1946
to 1948

to our tracks. Soon left
him as road caiser. Followed
by road. Saw no one.
Wanted to get to Toulouse as
thought might be an H.Q. here or
at least many to ~~cause~~
of it. In Toulouse better than
the St. C. If no help wanted
to get further north to go to Fr
rest up & try again in lower
spot. Walked to a town
where saw a soccer game.
Saw man alone on way home
old man American & asked
right way to Toulouse in no
time at all. He had spread
the word of the whole town
~~that~~ an old man gave me
some bread. He had map of E
front showing most recent R.
advances. Two glasses of wine
in his house & 5 km of T
he said I could not make
it from there. I would do next
night if I did, set out
after on the highway stopped
at dark to sleep. Burned

7

~~to~~
 of day. Good night. Next
 day went on my reliable G. I. shoes
 again & set out. Got as
 far as Susses & went to a
 farmhouse & asked for something
 to eat & told American
 they might believe me. Showed
 him label on my green shirt
 manufacturer's name & dog tags
 told me to give me bread
 & cigarettes. There were
 well dressed lot of family
 but from Toulouse. One of his
 men spoke me. Gave me 10 francs
 & told me to take bus to Toulouse
 & stop & wait when I got to
 station he would come by
 bike & pick me up. I followed
 him as planned. Took me to
 his home took me to meet
 son. Here for 10 days
 in my own room good food.
 Relative staying there who was
 to contact by but never did
 & friend came M. Chevalier

Bill of exchange
 100 francs
 2-10-45
 100 francs
 2-10-45
 100 francs
 2-10-45

he wanted to make me papers
as a ~~regular~~ Nequeleu tool
my picture gave me suit of black
clothes & hat shirt & necktie
I got impatient as they turned me
over to an org. He was on found
up by working hard but I don't
know how. (The mason originates

One day he
 had a long
 walk to the
 house. He
 followed
 toward
 as planned and went on
 passed the two men they passed
 he & then I followed them. I took
 me to a house where met
 other U.S. now all caught (A who
 here with Campbell some there I was)
 We were to take a truck to
 Andorra but it never came so
 next day took a train from
 St. Simon. Martin came to
 house all set out with
 in a pack. Got off at Estelle
 rode in bus light down near St. Gallen
 Got off & got in a bus special
 dropped us in country & said
 to be low. Came back on
 foot & then 2 others

went to a barn & set off
 that night. By party see Martin
 also woman refugee. Walked a
 few hrs came to a house (desert)
 put up here no fire. In house
 all day next night took
 off. Changing guides, kept on
 started out before night over
 trouble with woman caught
~~came off~~ & guides helped
 her & other men but not
 americans. She was slower
 & down. Walked all night &
 were to be over to into bet 2400
 & 1600 next day. But because
 of her were late. Patrol
 on duty so guides would only
 cross bet 2 & 4. Got caught
 in snow storm & guides got lost
 then found way again woman now
 2 mi behind then hurt & had
 to be taken to cabin made it
 by later with Dulak & French.
 But as no late wouldn't
 go thru original pass

Left us pds to two cabins
in valley & said follow river
down & follow it when cats
route & so cross into Spain.
Spent night in cabins having
place up. Next day Dutch &
2 women went back for the women
but was into a Dutchman
U.S. & he took off. Dutch dr
handed letters. Allowed
river of highway. We were
careless that couldn't take
chance of looking for a pass
like Dutch in good condition
with supplies. I decided
we should go back into the mts
some didn't like mts & tired
& thought unnecessary &
went down right. Said OK
at a lone & Briton said
would come with me. Ray Huddle
& Franklin Went for mts &
waited for dark. Got off
& walked & climbed along
into // road. Always the
passed nearer it. By the time
across border almost on
road. Knew border cause
met by 7 navos picture.
Walked till 4 AM Ray
asked if SP police safe

11

just yes tried to turn
address but police asleep
couldn't get wgt told us
to go to the hotel 'and'
I'll be here Boost
much better than W. J. Jeller
much cleaner better food.
Left my car at the hotel
where I go to sleep (see Mark)

Hotel
Masses

OUTLINE FOR TALKS

1. Complete description of everything that happened in plane before jump.
2. Description of jump and landing.
3. Description of what you did with your equipment.
4. Tell story of experiences up to time you met the person who put you in contact with organization.

DO NOT GIVE THE NAMES OF PEOPLE WHO HELPED YOU
AT ANY TIME.
DO NOT GIVE THE NAMES OF TOWNS.
DO NOT GIVE ANY ADDRESSES.

5. How you crossed Pyrenees (General Location)
6. Your experiences in Spain.

Suggestions for others.

If there is some helpful incident that happened after you were picked up, do not mention it until it has been discussed with H. I. S. Interrogator.



RICHARD R. NELSON
Major, AC

RESTRICTED

WAR DEPARTMENT The Adjutant General's Office Washington

AG 383.6 (31 Jul 43) OB-S-B-M

KLS/el-2B-939 Pentagon

6 August 1943

SUBJECT: Amended Instructions Concerning Publicity in Connection with Escaped Prisoners of War, to Include Evaders of Capture in Enemy or Enemy-Occupied Territory and Internees in Neutral Countries.

TO: The Commanding Generals,
Army Ground;
Army Air Forces;
The Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area;
The Commanding Generals,
Theaters of Operations;
Defense Commands;
Departments;
Base Commands;
The Commanding Officers,
Base Commands;
Director, Bureau of Public Relations.

1. Publication or communication to any unauthorized persons of experiences of escape or evasion from enemy-occupied territory, internment in a neutral country, or release from internment not only furnishes useful information to the enemy but also jeopardizes future escapes, evasions and releases.

2. Personnel will not, unless authorized by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, War Department General Staff, publish in any form whatever or communicate either directly, or indirectly, to the press, radio or an unauthorized person any account of escape or evasion of capture from enemy or enemy-occupied territory, or internment in a neutral country either before or after repatriation. They will be held strictly responsible for all statements contained in communications to friends which may subsequently be published in the press or otherwise.

3. Evaders, escapees, or internees shall not be interrogated on the circumstances of their experiences in escape, evasion or internment except by the agency designated by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, War Department General Staff, or the corresponding organization in overseas theaters of operations. In allied or neutral countries, American Military Attaches are authorized to interrogate on escape, evasion and internment matters.

4. Should the services of escaped prisoners of war, evaders, or internees be deemed necessary for lecturing and briefing, such services will be under the direct supervision of the agency designated by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, War Department General Staff, or the corresponding organization in overseas theaters of operations.

5. Commanding Officers will be responsible for instructing all evaders, escapees, and internees in the provisions of this directive which supersedes letter, AG 383.6 (5 Nov 42) OB-S-B-M, 7 November 1942, subject: Instructions concerning Publicity in Connection with Escaped Prisoners of War and other previous instructions on this subject.

By order of the Secretary of War:

/s/ J. A. ULIO
J. A. ULIO
Major General,
The Adjutant General.

1. Information about your escape or your evasion from capture *would be useful to the enemy* and a danger to your friends. It is therefore **SECRET**.

2. a You must therefore not disclose, except to the first Military Attache to whom you report, or to an officer designated by the Commanding General of the Theater of Operations, or by A. C. of S., G-2, W. D.

- (1) The names of those who helped you.
- (2) The method by which you escaped or evaded.
- (3) The route you followed.
- (4) Any other facts concerning your experience.

b You must be particularly on your guard with persons representing the press.

c You must give no account of your experiences in books, newspapers, periodicals or in broadcasts or in lectures.

d You must give no information to anyone, irrespective of nationality, in letters or in conversation, except as specifically directed in Par. 4.

e No lectures or reports are to be given to any unit without the permission of A. C. of S., G-2, W. D., or corresponding organization in the theater.

GERTIFICATE

I have read the above and certify that I will comply with it.

I understand that any information concerning my *escape or evasion* from capture is **SECRET** and must not be disclosed to anyone other than the agency designated by A. C. of S., G-2, War Department, the corresponding organization in overseas theaters of operations, or to the Military Attache in a neutral country to whom I first report. I understand that disclosure to anyone else will make me liable to disciplinary action.

Name (Print) JOHN (WMI) BETOLATTI

Rank 2nd LT A. S. N. 0-682568

Unit 384th GRRP 545th SQ

Signed

Dated

Witness

AG P BR HQ SOS 2-44/2M/22472

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HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY
OFFICE OF THE A. C. OF S., G-2

709

DATE: 9 June 1944

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I, EUGENE T. WILSON, Capt., AC, O-795327

hereby certify that I have known and have been associated with

JOHN BETOLATTI, 2nd Lt., AC, O-682568

prior to his being reported missing in action over enemy territory.

The person whose signature and right thumb print appear hereon is the individual referred to above.

John Betolatti

RIGHT THUMB PRINT:



Eugene T. Wilson

The individual whose signature and right thumb print appear hereon
has been identified to the satisfaction of this office as JOHN BETOLATTI,
2nd Lt., AC, O-682568 (545 Bomb Squadron - 384 Bomb Group)
previously reported missing in action over enemy territory.

W. F. Maranda
W. F. MARANDA, SPECIAL AGENT, C.I.C.

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