

SECRET - AMERICAN
MOST SECRET - BRITISH

HQ, ETOUSA
PW and X Detachment
Military Intelligence Service

21 September 1943

E & E REPORT NO. 90
EVASION IN FRANCE

John L. DUNBAR, 2d Lt, O-730774
351 Bomb Squadron, 100 Bomb Group

MIA: 4 July 1943
Arrived in Spain:
27 July 1943
Arrived in Gibraltar:
4 September 1943
Arrived UK:
8 September 1943

AGE: 28 years
LENGTH OF SERVICE: 1 9/12 years
HOME ADDRESS: 256 Fifth Avenue
HUNTINGTON, W. Virginia

MEMBERS OF CREW: (This information checked with PWIB)

PILOT	O-1699229	1st Lt Robert C. PEARSON	MIA
CO-PILOT	O-797960	2d Lt Melville G. BOYD, JR	MIA
NAVIGATOR	O-660906	1st Lt Bruce T. HUNGER	MIA
BO-BOOMER	NAVRATOR		
RADIO OPERATOR	36185414	T/Sgt Randall G. VILLA	MIA
TOP TURBINE GUNNER	13049923	T/Sgt Jack M. GOES	MIA
BALL TURBINE GUNNER	31161034	Sgt Everett J. MOORE	MIA
WAIIST GUNNER	13083317	S/Sgt John T. WESTWOOD	MIA
WAIIST GUNNER	15082189	S/Sgt Lorrie B. RUTLEDGE	MIA
TAIL GUNNER	18004281	S/Sgt Albert N. PUNCHER	MIA

4 July 1943
THORPE-ABBOTS

We left THORPE-ABBOTS at 0745 hours 4 July 1943 to bomb LA PALMICE. Although most of the flight was above heavy overcast the weather cleared as we approached the target. During our climb to bombing altitude the pilot called over the inter-phone that oil pressure on number one engine was dangerously high and that he would have to nurse the plane along. The lead element of our squadron pulled away from us but as soon as we had climbed to 27000 feet we closed in to catch the lead element. Just as I opened the bomb-bay doors the plane dropped out of position. The propellers lost their synchronization and we lost altitude rapidly. The two aircraft in our element followed us down as far as 18000 feet but left us to rejoin the squadron. We continued to lose altitude and when the pilot called to prepare to ditch the ship, all crew members were ready.

OUT OF POSITION
NO. 10 TECHNICAL
DIFFICULTIES

I jettisoned the bomb-load into the sea. The pilot said he would try to reach the small island to our left (Ile d'Oléron). Our altitude then was 5000 feet.

ONE BOMB OUT
ON J. ILE
D'OLERON

The wheels were let down and as we flew over the island German anti-aircraft guns opened up. I went to my gun and was charging it when a machine gun bullet or a 20 mm fragment caught me in the wrist. After the navigator had pulled me back under the pilot's compartment the pilot gave the order to bale out. The navigator jumped and I followed about

30 seconds later. I pulled the ripcord almost at once. The chute jerked open and, looking down, I saw that the leg straps and chest hook opened. I was being held up by the shoulder straps. I grabbed the shroud line and held on until I hit the ground.

During the descent I could see large fires burning in the direction of LA PALME. A mile away an ME 109 was circling but it came no closer. A breeze was carrying me toward a road so I dumped the chute and dropped into a cornfield. A Frenchman with two companions was standing about 50 feet away waving his arms. In one hand he carried a bottle of wine.

GIVEN FIRST AID

After getting out of my chute I dragged it over to the Frenchman. He put a tourniquet on my arm and bandaged my wrist, using the first-aid kit which was strapped to my belt. I gave him the chute.

AVOIDS GERMAN SEARCH

After drinking some of the wine I ran northeast through a wooded section. Eventually I crawled into a thick bramble patch and remained there for three days. During that time I could hear the Germans looking for me. The organized search never came nearer to me than 100 yards, although one day a Nazi patrolman passed within twenty feet of my hiding place. I had some sulfanilamide tablets with me and found the escape kit invaluable since I had to get along for three days without food.

7 JULY 1943

Two hours before daylight on 7 July 1943 I left my hiding place and walked two kilometers in a northeasterly direction before seeing a farmhouse. I climbed into a haystack about 20 yards from the house to look the place over before approaching, but a dog barked so much a man came out to see what was wrong. I speak very little French but could tell him I was thirsty. He took me into a shed and returned later with a Frenchman who spoke some English. I was told nine members of my crew were prisoners of war and that the Germans knew ten men had parachuted. Before leaving this man said he would return later but he was a different helper who returned with a note, in English, stating I would be picked up after dark.

8 JULY 1943

It was late and very dark when two Frenchmen led us by the hand about four kilometers to a barn. I was given a complete peasant's outfit and moved to still another barn where a bed had been fixed for me. The next day I was given a bicycle and, guided by three Frenchmen, rode to a shack on the coast. There was a lot of argument and discussion before the Frenchman, from whom we expected help, said that nothing could be done for me. Before leaving, however, another Frenchman arrived and told all of us to get on our bicycles. We rode across a marshland, through a network of canals, to a small fishing shack where I was turned over to another group of Frenchmen. A few minutes later we walked down to a small fishing boat and sailed, without incident, to the mainland about three miles away. As soon as we touched shore I was shown a main road and motioned to go on as quickly as possible. I walked through ROCHEFORT and slept that night in bushes about five kilometers beyond ROCHEFORT. Although my peasant costume was very much like all others, I didn't have much confidence in it. The next morning I started walking south. By evening, feeling very hungry, I stopped at a farmhouse to ask for food. In very bad French I explained I was an American but the man I spoke to shook his head and motioned me to leave. I showed him that I had American clothes beneath my peasant costume and also produced my insignia. Finally he gave me some wine but I could tell that he was not convinced of my identity. After leaving I walked as far as

HELPER TO MAINLAND BY FRENCH FISHERMEN

I could that night in case the Frenchman had reported me. Because of this reception I gave up the idea of getting help along the way and thought that since I had not been able to get organized help in the vicinity of my parachute jump, I had better try to make the journey on my own as much as possible.

FIVE DAYS WITHOUT FOOD

During the next eighteen days I walked through PONS-JUMIAC-DUTHIEN-GAUFRES-PIERRE-BOTTECAUX-LANGON-S LOS-ROQUEFORT-MONT DE MARSSAN-T.ETAS-DAY-BAIGNE-USEARITZ and arrived 21 July in CAMBO. For a period of five days I was without any food and on other days picked up apples and vegetables which had fallen from carts. I carried my water bottle and used the halasone tablets. Occasionally I drank from streams along the way. I could not get food in cafes though I tried often. In every instance I was asked for ration tickets but never was given the food first. I could buy beer without any trouble and am convinced that the food value in the beer kept me from getting too weak. By the time I reached SPAIN I had lost 25 pounds.

Not once did I experience difficulty getting through a town. I was dirty, unshaven and my peasant costume had lost all shape. By the second and third days I felt very confident in my disguise though I tried to be aware all the time of the appearance I should present. I watched the peasants I saw on the road and tried to act as they did even to adopting their shuffling walk. In ~~BARCELONA~~ a Frenchman asked some directions of me but I spoke to him in French and Spanish. He gave up after a few questions and I believe he thought I was a Spaniard since I can speak better Spanish than French.

North of CAMBO one evening I stopped at a farmhouse and asked for food. There was an elderly couple eating supper when I knocked and though they gave me pears and cheese I was not allowed in the house. After this I was more determined than ever not to ask for help.

I didn't look for barns or haystacks to sleep in because the one night I had spent in a haystack was more uncomfortable than finding a fern bed or thick grass.

CAMBO
21 JULY 1943

On 21 July after leaving CAMBO I walked about five kilometers beyond the town before leaving the road for the mountains. I was not far from the first range and after getting out my compass and escape map waited until I was sure I was not observed before starting up the slope. The ferns were so slippery and thick that I had to crawl and could not have been observed if any one had been watching. I slept at the top of the range that night and the next day followed a railroad that led to the next range. During the afternoon I crawled into a sheep pen and slept through the rest of the day, that night and the following day. I watched carefully for patrols. On the fifth day after leaving CAMBO, I went to an isolated house which I could see at the bottom of a mountain. Approaching it cautiously, I knocked and an old woman came to the door. She seemed to grasp what I wanted immediately and took me into the house. There was another woman in the house who seemed very excited at my presence and I learned that a German patrol had passed about three minutes before I arrived. I was given food and a razor. The Spanish border was only two kilometers from the house and

CROSSES PIERRES
UNHAIR
27 JULY 1943

in my eagerness to get across I would not stop to rest as they suggested.

PAMPLONA

IN PRISON

While I was shaving the man of the house came in and when I told him my story he was friendly and insisted upon showing me how to get across the frontier. I followed his advice about the route to follow and later in the day spoke to a Spaniard to get further directions. The next morning, after sleeping in a sheep-pen, I was given food by a Spanish woman who also told me how to get to PAMPLONA. She warned me against the Guardia Civil but soon after I left her two of these patrolmen surprised me as I walked across a bridge and I was taken to ELIZONDO. I spent a night in prison there before being moved to PAMPLONA. I was put through very little interrogation but gave only my nationality, name, rank and serial number after stating that I had escaped from German hands. Through a representative of the International Red Cross I got in touch with proper authorities who arranged my repatriation.

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E&E 90 - John L. Dunbar - Appendix B

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MOST SECRET - BRITISH

Hq, AFMUSA
PW and X Detachment
Military Intelligence Service

21 September 1943

APPENDIX "B" TO E AND E REPORT NO. 90

1. The following information has been obtained after an interview with an Officer who evaded capture by the enemy, after being in enemy-occupied territory.
2. Further circulation of this information may be made, when doing so, no information as to the source may be divulged.

Statement of information covering period from 4 July 1943
to 27 July 1943

1. There are 2000 Germans on the ILE D'OLERON. (hearsay) There are light anti-aircraft guns on the inland coast. The French live on this side of the island. There are many small canals leading inland on the east coast. There is an airport on the island. (hearsay) The heavy German guns are located on the seaboard side of the island. (hearsay)
2. Germans are quartered in large hotels and chateaux on the southeasterly hillside of ROCHEFORT.
3. There are many youthful German soldiers in GENDZAC, ST GENIS, JONZAC, MIRAMBEAU, COUSTRAS, LIBOURNE, BORDEAUX, BAZAS, MONT-DE-MARSAN, DAX and BAYONNE. (Personal observation)
4. A new airport was observed under construction at ROCHEFORT (north-east of MONT-DE-MARSAN). From ROCHEFORT to MONT-DE-MARSAN most planes observed were ME 109's. South of MONT-DE-MARSAN several FW 190's were observed in flight.
5. Commercial ^{truck} traffic is heavy on all main roads between ROCHEFORT and MONT-DE-MARSAN. Heavy guns being hauled by trucks were constantly observed on the roads in this area.