

SECRET - AMERICAN
MOST SECRET - BRITISH

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

26 November 1943

E & E REPORT NO. 167
EVASION IN FRANCE

Michael F. DARCY, S/Sgt, 32443852
349 Bomb Squadron, 100 Bomb Group

MIA: 3 September 1943
Arrived in Spain:
8 October 1943
Arrived in Gibraltar;
28 October 1943
Arrived in UK:
29 October 1943

AGE: 26 years
LENGTH OF SERVICE: 1 2/12 years
HOME ADDRESS: 346 E. 146th St.,
New York, N. Y.

MEMBERS OF CREW: (This information checked with PWIB)

PILOT	0-738320	2d Lt	Charles B. WINKLEMAN	MIA 468
CO-PILOT	0-801345	2d Lt	Ralph C. SMITH	MIA 271
NAVIGATOR	0-000093	2d Lt	William H. BOOTH	MIA 272
BOMBARDIER	0-676325	2d Lt	Howard M. HARMIS	MIA 258
RADIO OPERATOR	37425256	T/Sgt	Jean RAY	MIA ✓
TOP TURRET GUNNER	14134640	T/Sgt	Thomas E. COOMBS	MIA 303
BALL TURRET GUNNER	32437605	S/Sgt	Thomas L. CUCCARO	MIA P/W
WAIST GUNNER	31042853	S/Sgt	Alfred J. ZEOLI	MIA 258
WAIST GUNNER	32443852	S/Sgt	Michael F. DARCY	NARRATOR,
TAIL GUNNER	38202710	S/Sgt	Ennis M. BANKHEAD	MIA P/W

3 SEPTEMBER 1943
PARIS

At 0600 hours, 3 September 1943, we took off to bomb a PARIS target. We had just left the target and were under fighter attack when the pilot called over the inter-phone to ask if everything was all right. There was a large hole in the left wing caused by flak or a 20 mm shell. Fire had broken out in the fabric and when I tried to call the pilot I found a dead inter-phone. The right waist gunner motioned that his inter-phone was out. We noticed the radio operator putting on his parachute and the ball turret gunner was climbing out of his turret. While I was putting on my chute, the radio operator was trying to open the waist door. I went over to help him and as soon as it fell away Sgt RAY baled out. Sgt ZEOLI was standing beside him. Before I could jump the aircraft lurched and I thought the wing had crumbled. I was stuck in the door after getting one foot out because the plane was in a steep dive. Finally I got through the door but my foot was hung up on something and I was hanging head down. By wriggling and jerking, my foot came out of my boot and I fell away from the aircraft. This was at 7000 feet and I pulled my ripcord immediately. On the way down I was

FOOT CATCHES
IN WAIST DOOR
WHILE BAILING
OUT

swinging back and forth so violently I got sick. There were no other chutes in the air and before I hit the ground I heard and felt a terrific explosion near me but could not see what it was.

IMMEDIATE HELP

On the way down I saw that I would land in open country and tried to work my chute toward a clump of trees. I noticed a very large house near the trees but saw no activity. As soon as I landed I fell on my back and lay there unable to move for a few minutes. As I struggled to my feet, a large group of people came running up to me shouting, 'Comrade'. They all had to shake my hand and then asked if I were American or English. While they were helping me unbuckle my chute and take off my flying equipment a two-motored plane swooped down at us and we all ran into the clump of trees which I had seen from the air. Several of them took my flying clothes, leaving me dressed in khaki's and a sweater. I had lost my other shoe, during the parachute jump. With a group of these Frenchmen, I started toward a road when a German staff car pulled up about 100 yards from us. Almost within sight of the car, I was thrown into a haystack by one of the Frenchmen and covered with hay. The Frenchman sat on me. I don't know what happened, but in a few minutes I was taken out of the hay and led to a deserted farmhouse. About eight Frenchmen were all trying to question me at once. I couldn't understand any of them until they finally brought an English-speaking man to talk with me.

HIDDEN FROM
GERMANS

QUESTIONED FOR
IDENTITY

He asked me if I were an American and why I had to parachute and a few other similar questions. He didn't go into any details and, in fact, did not seem to doubt for a moment that I was an American. I was taken upstairs then and for an hour rested on a mattress which had been brought for that purpose. For a time I was alone but soon I had various visitors. Some of them came out of curiosity but one told me that a companion of mine had been killed. I could not learn who it was or how he had been killed, except that he was shot in the face and it was not known when it happened.

300 GERMANS
SEARCHING

After I had been in the house for several hours, my English-speaking friend came in to tell me that 300 Germans were searching in the neighborhood and we would have to leave immediately. He led me, running at top speed to another farmhouse where I was hustled into the attic. I was given a civilian shirt to wear and after drinking a glass of wine, we ran another quarter of a mile through the fields. While we were running through the fields, we passed several farmers, each of whom seemed to be pointing the direction we should take to avoid the Germans. Once or twice it became confusing because one farmer would point in one direction and another farmer would point in another. However, we reached a swamp and my friend motioned me to go in. I stopped to look back to see why he was not following me, but he motioned me to go on alone.

HIDES IN
SWAMP

I waded and swam through the swamp to the other side. There I crawled into a thick bramble patch and lay there hoping my friend would find me later. At least an hour passed before I heard someone whistling. I reised up from my hiding place and whistled back at a young boy who was searching about 50 yards away. He motioned me to follow him and I joined the friend who had brought me to the swamp. The two of them led me up the slope of a large hill and halfway up told me to look back into the field.

I could see a parachutist sitting on the ground surrounded by Germans. Smoke was rising where the plane had crashed. My friend said the parachutist was dead, although he still appeared to me to be sitting up. When we got to the top of the hill they led me to a hidden lean-to and told me to stay there until they returned with food. One of them came back within the hour. I followed him to a third deserted house and waited alone while my friend went off to make some arrangements. He told me I could walk around but to be careful and keep out of sight. I didn't stay in the house but hid a short distance away to watch for my friend's return. I was there alone all afternoon and about 2000 hours I heard yelling and gun-fire. My friend appeared 30 minutes later, laughing, and said he had been challenged by a German with a gun.

JOURNEY
ARRANGED

He led me to a village and I spent the night in a home where one of my crew members was being sheltered. The next morning a Frenchman came to take me away and from there my journey was arranged.

Compiled By:

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Commanding

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APPENDIX "B" TO E AND E REPORT NO. 167

1. The following information has been obtained after an interview with a sergeant who evaded capture by the enemy after having been in enemy-occupied territory.

2. Further circulation of this information may be made, but when doing so no information as to the source may be divulged.

Statement of information covering period from 3 September 1943
to 8 October 1943

- a. French source stated that until a few months ago, Germans were making artillery shells at SALBRIS, France, at a French plant taken over by the Germans at the time of occupation. Then a few months ago, the Germans moved most of the equipment into Germany and installed equipment in the French plant for making gas shells. Source stated that any French artillery officer in ENGLAND would know the exact location of the SALBRIS plant as of June 1940.
- b. Heard that Germans were using, in PARIS, mobile anti-aircraft guns which followed the path of flight of raiding planes.
- c. A French source claimed and ~~stated~~ that they know of raids one-two-three days before they took place.
- d. Saw fighter aircraft practicing formation flying and fighter tactics at an airfield in the outskirts of TOULOUSE. October 1943.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 495001
B:CC NARA Date 5/8/00

GROUP 1 EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC DOWNGRADING AND DECLASSIFICATION