

When I could make out things on the ground, I thought I was low enough to open the parachute, but when I did, nothing happened. So, I unsnapped the cover and pulled out the pilot chute by hand which pulled out the main chute, but at an angle. I had a British-type harness and when the chute opened, it came up on an angle and the straps must have snapped me in the jaw because the next thing I knew, I was under my chute on a side hill.

I wadded my chute and headed for a small woods where I buried my parachute, helmet, etc. Then I covered them with leaves and branches in a berry thicket. I realized I was in Northern France near the English Channel.

Suddenly, I heard and saw the German troops coming, so I climbed in the thicket and buried myself as best as I could. This was about noontime so I stayed there most of the afternoon, climbing out when I thought no one was around. I could see an apple orchard with a barn in the distance and a farmer working around the barn.

When it was almost dark I was about to start for the barn when the farmer started towards me. I found out later he had seen me but was waiting until darkness to come to me. When he approached, he stopped and would not come close, but kept pointing at my "45" pistol under my arm. I said to him I was an American and took my gun and put it in a hole in the ground. Then he motioned for me to follow him.

We walked in the darkness to the barn and he hid me in the hayloft. This is where I spent my first cold night as there was snow in the air. The next morning before daylight, the farmer came and got me and took me inside of his house. There he put me in bed and kept pointing and saying something I could not understand. Soon a lady brought a mirror and showed me that I was covered with dried blood. They cleaned me up, but I was having trouble walking due to my knees and ankles being swollen. I pointed to a towel that was lying there and somehow made the couple understand I wanted to soak my knees in hot water.

The second day the couple moved me to another house because I now could walk better but very slowly. I spent my third day at that house, but after dark they had me leave by the window because the Germans were looking for me (I later heard the Germans shot the whole family for their involvement.)

We walked most of the night to another home where a couple lived with their middle aged daughter. Most all other moves were in the daylight. This family put me in a bedroom where I stayed about 8 days, only coming out to eat. I had a chamber pot for the bathroom facilities and they brought wash water and towels for me to use. I was allowed to move around the house only during the day when no one else was there because they left in the mornings and didn't arrive home until the evening.

One day, a German soldier came to the house and walked in and looked around. I was trapped behind the door which he left open. He looked around and left. I think the people got nervous then because they moved me early the next morning. A middle aged man came on a motorcycle.