

Transcript of collection relating to Pilot Officer David Taylor Galt DFC.

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Transcript of the Australian War Memorial collection relating to the service of 400976 Pilot Officer David Taylor Galt DFC, 460 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force. This collection consists of a diary recounting his experiences as the pilot of an Avro Lancaster bomber from the period from 29/11/1942 – 18/03/1943

[The transcriber's notes are at the end.]

AUS 400976
P/O D. GALT
RAAF

Soy un aviador ingles, puede Ud. ayudar me para una noche

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On Sunday evening, 29th Nov. 1942 just after dusk, I set out on my 21st operational flight. It was my first op. in a Lancaster. I had a new plane – A. Apple. This was also the first op. with Lancaster of 460 Squadron. I had a crew of 7 including myself – F/Lt. Gordon Given navigator, Sgt. Tex Shuttleworth bombardier, Sgt. Graham Berry W.OP., Sgt. Tommy Handstock Flight Eng, and Sgt. Cliff Austin Mid. Upper Gunr & F/Sgt. Fred Hayman Rear Gunner. They were all my own crew and as good a lot of fellows it is possible to get together in one crew. The navigator and the Rear Gunr had been with me on every trip but one, when I had taken another new crew. We

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were fourth to take off and everything went according to schedule. We circled the aerodrome once and then set course. Here we found that the automatic pilot was U/S (No pressure showing on dial and consequently no effect on the controls) and also she was U/S. However these were not of major importance so we carried on. We reached the pin-point on the South coast of England very little off track. We flew over to and set course for France from the pulsating vertical searchlight. At this point we were just on 17,000ft. With 2600 R.P.M and +4 boost I put the nose down until the I.A.S read 270 M.P.H. Out over the sea there was a

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10/10ths layer of cloud below us. We continued to descend at the same I.A.S. to 7000ft. The layer of strato-cumulus was here about 1000ft below. There were two other planes ahead of us, which we had seen set course before us from the South coast of England. A little ahead of us and below the clouds was reflected the flashing of a great amount of light flak, while above the clouds and around about our height were several black puffs. I levelled out here to keep above the cloud until past the flak. As no more heavy flak was coming up I did not alter course, but naturally continued to

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weave up to 30° each side of course. The I.A.S had only dropped back to about 250 MPH. As soon as we were past the flak I put the nose down again and descended

through the layer of cloud. Everything was quiet below and we were over land so I put the nose down further and increased speed to 290 MPH and lost height to 600ft by the altimeter. We were past the cloud layer by this and bright moonlight lit up the ground clearly so I disregarded the altimeter and descended until I was very close to the ground and dared not come any lower. The navigator

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wanted me to stay at 100-1500ft so that he could navigate better but I decided against that on the grounds that it was just asking for trouble from the ack-ack. I continued at the +4boost & 2600RPM and the speed had dropped back to a steady 190 I/A/S/ I continued to weave from one side to the other of the course. As soon as I had levelled out the navigator gave me a slight alteration of course. We continued thus for about 4-5 minutes. The light was not good enough to attempt to avoid villages at that height. A searchlight started up on the port bow and picked us up almost immediately. The beam was almost horizontal. As soon as

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we were abeam of the light it flicked off again. During the time the light was on I had increased the violence of my jinking, but we were so close to the light that it had no effect. During the jinking my height had increased to about 600ft. When the light flicked off I realised this and opened the throttles fully and put the nose down. Two flak guns opened up immediately. One just a little astern of the port beam and a similar one on the starboard beam. They converged just ahead of the nose at our height, so I pulled the throttles back, selected flap down and levelled out. In spite of this they immediately

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followed us and the one on the port side began pumping into the port main plane. They were at practically point blank range. We were just about out of range without serious mishap when the port main plane burst into flames behind the port inner motor. The flames rapidly spread and streams of fire stretched back almost to the tail plane. We were at zero ft by the alt. and I could see nothing outside because of the glare and found it also impossible to read the instrument panel. Someone in the crew shouted out to gain some height and the flight engineer pushed my parachute at me but I realised that with a

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flaming plane like that we would be just a sitting shot for any other flak batteries about. The flames were spreading still further and I pushed the fire extinguisher for the port inner, not expecting it to do much good, and it had no effect. The port aileron was flapping in the wind. Obviously the controls had been shot away. I could see the whole of the port wing in the glare and very little else, however, I could see that there were flat ploughed fields ahead of us as I put the undercarriage down waited a few seconds, and after bouncing once made a good landing. It was my intention to extinguish the fire with a hand fire-

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extinguisher and attempt to take off again. Examination showed that the under-surface of the port main plane between the inner motor and the fuselage had jagged pieces hanging down, that the fire had spread still further along to the bomb bay, and also that the starboard outer airscrew was broken off at the spinner. My crew were standing around so I called out "Is everyone out?" and someone answered "yes", so I gave the order to clear off as fast as they could, and I did not waste any time in following suit. We dispersed in a Southerly direction. I ran for about ½ mile and then stopped and

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discarded my flying kit. By this time the incendiaries were exploding rapidly and lighting up the whole of the landscape in brilliant flashes. The plane was also burning fiercely with a red glow.

I was expecting to run into German soldiers at any minute. I continued on, a few more minutes in a S direction and then the plane exploded with a loud noise. I threw myself flat but felt no effects from the explosion. A sheet of flame leapt a few hundred feet into the air and a large black cloud formed over the plane about 500ft up. Parts of the plane flew into the air and landed hundreds of

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yards ahead and astern. What was left of the plane collapsed and the intensity of the flames increased momentarily.

It was here that I realised that my last link with England had gone up with the plane and it was now up to me to try and put into practice my own ideas formed on what I had been told at several lectures and evade capture as long as possible with my goal as England. I did not think much of my chances but decided that would do all I possibly could as varying circumstances permitted. I decided that S.E. was as good a direction as any, so continued across fields in that direction. To my left

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I saw two men walking. They were also walking across the fields and I reckoned they must be two other of my crew. To be on the safe side, I let them get ahead of me and I followed in their direction a few hundred yards behind. Soon we came to a small winding valley which had reeds and water along most of the bottom. I made several attempts to cross this at different places, but unless I waded through the reeds, waist deep in water it was impossible. While walking along the bank I saw two figures dive into bushes at the side. From their furtive movements I realized they must have been

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the two of my crew whom I had seen before. When I was abreast of them I said "OK chaps I am not a German." It was my navigator and rear gunner. They were worrying over the same problem as I - viz how to cross the valley. It was my conviction that one alone could get much further than 2 or 3 so I wished them luck and retraced my steps to a small bridge which crossed the valley and led up to a large house. There were gates across the bridge and the moonlight was very bright. It was impossible to climb over or around the gates because of the barbed wire. To my surprise the gates were

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not locked, so I passed through and continued along the path past the house to another set of gates. These were locked but it was possible to climb around them. I walked along a track into a village. On a sign-board was the name 1 I estimate this village to be approx. 4 miles SE from where the plane landed. I walked a little distance along the road past the village and then set out across the fields again. I walked across fields always in a direction SE. I crossed a few small roads where occasionally I saw people, but on these occasions I made myself inconspicuous until they had passed. In the

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distance I could see what looked to me like a wood and indeed it was. The trees were very slender and close together. When I penetrated further I came to a track

passing through the center. There were double rails along the center of this track with branch lines. At frequent intervals there were small concrete huts about 12 ft square. Those I looked in were empty. They all had a sign outside them that have the letter V but a few had VII or VI. I thought this might be a good place to spend the next day, but I was too thirsty. I walked through to the other edge of the wood where I saw a village nearby. I walked

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in the direction of this and passed barbed wire entanglements in the course of construction. This pointed to the possibility of German troops in the village. I continued on to a farmyard where I filled my rubber water bag with water (note – Previous to entering the wood. I had crossed a disused aerodrome, with obstructions on the runways. I spent a few minutes looking over two hangars that I came across. One of them was not completed and work was either being done on it or had ceased a short while previously because the handles of a wheelbarrow were still very smooth and

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shiny. Anyway I decided it was not a good place to hang about. Shortly afterward I opened my aid box and stowed the contents in various pockets). While I was still in the farmyard, a Lancaster passed overhead on its return journey. I retraced my steps then to the wood and was looking for a suitable place to hide during the rest of the night and next day. Up one of the side tracks there was a camouflaged hut made of canvas etc. On examination this proved to contain 4 aerial bombs of a size corresponding to about 2000lbs. Because of this discovery I reckoned it best to clear off as there was sure to be

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German sentries in the vicinity. I was duly cautious and sure enough I saw two soldiers in German uniform talking at the end of the track I intended using. Shortly afterwards they began walking along the track in my direction, so I hid behind a hut until they had passed, then I continued on my way, avoiding tracks and roads and always keeping to fields. Incidentally nearly all of the fields were tilled but very few had things growing in them. After about 6 hours after my landing during which time I had been walking in a direction S W, E I came to a farm house. It was by itself and I would pass nearby so I thought it a

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good opportunity to see how the locals thought of the RAF. I knocked on the door for about 5 mins and then someone woke up inside and said something. I only knew about a dozen French words at the time so it was completely unintelligible to me. I continued knocking until a man poked his head out of a window. There had been a lot of talk going on up til now, but it meant no more to me than the dog barking. I said to the man Je suis un Anglais aviateur, aidez moi? After repeating this 3 or 4 times he must have understood for he said Anglais? Impossible! So I showed him my wings. The whole family

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were at the window by this time. After about 10 minutes of this and with him pointing along a track towards a village I realised I was getting nowhere here so I wished him Bon nuit and walked along the track. In the village I tried two more houses. No results at all from one, and only vague mutterings from the other. This village was 2 I walked along the road then until I came to a main road at right angles, I turned right and shortly came to the village of 3 I knocked on the door of the first house I came to, but although a man came to the door he was definitely unencouraging

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Up till this time I had picked the poorer looking houses, so it seemed time to change my tactics. Near the center of the village was a nice looking house with a well kept front garden so I walked in the gate and knocked on the front door. It was about 0400hrs by this time. A man came to the door. I said 'Je suis un Anglais aviateur, aidez moi?' After a little further short but difficult conversation he said entrez, so I entered, His wife and daughter got up then, His wife a motherly old soul and his daughter was very friendly. They made me some coffee. (In France, today the coffee

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is very much ersatz, but with the addition of milk it is not too bad. Unfortunately milk is rather scarce also. Another scarce commodity is leather boots and shoes. People in the country village wear clogs and make their own shoes of sheepskin. The daughter of this family was making a pair while I was there).

They dug out a very old English-French dictionary that was published during the last century and I told them where my plane had crashed and that my crew had all escaped injury but had dispersed in different direction. The old boy went out shortly and came back with his son. Not much

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help because he knew no words of English but we had some more coffee. Someone had a brilliant idea then because the old boy went out again and came back with another man. This man was much better dressed and carried with him a more recent dictionary. He could also speak a few words of English. We got on quite well after that. Shortly afterwards I was sent to bed with a hot water bottle. I had said when asked that I was not hungry. At about 7p.m they brought me in a meal and the daughter took my jacket to remove the wings and shoulder straps, etc and the buttons from the bottoms

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of my trousers. Shortly afterwards a round and jolly little man came in. He had evidently decided that my jacket was not quite suitable for he brought me a coat and also a beret and it was decided that next morning I would go by the auto bus to 4 railway station and from there to PARIS by train. I had a shave and went back to bed and to sleep. Next morning I was wakened at 0630 and after breakfast was given a parcel of food including two slabs of chocolate which is non existent in shops in France today, and also an overcoat. I went with this man, who is a carpenter

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through the village to the house of the man who had given me the coat the night before. He was the baker. His wife and mother-in-law were very kind to me, as was every one who helped me through the whole of the adventure. His mother-in-law took my flying boots and blackened them. The baker and I walked along to the bus stop where we met another man who was going to buy my train ticket and who was going part of the way in the same train as I was taking to PARIS (This baker had also taken my Belgian money and changed it for French Francs) There were several German soldiers travelling in the bus.

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At 4 railway station there was also a German sentry patrolling the platform with a rifle slung over his shoulder. Everything passed off quite uneventfully and I was feeling very confident. Had also learned a few French phrases. Arrived at PARIS at the Gare du Nord I walked out with the crowd and wondered how I would get to the Gare d'Orleans as it had been decided that the best place for me to go

was to BORDEAUX. I walked around for a few minutes making up my mind. There were a few horse drawn carriages a few bicycle taxis. I went up to one of the bicycle owners and said Gare d'Orleans. He

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repeated it after me in an incredulous voice and I said "oui oui" and walked over to the first one in the row, which was his. Thinking it was probably a long distance and the cause for his surprise I said 'Combien je vous dois?' Apparently this was the right thing to say, because when I fisted out 2-100fr. notes he took them and gave me 10fr. change. I had no idea of the value of a Fr. then, but when I compare what other people have done for me for a fraction of that amount, it was sheer out and out robbery, to be slugged 190Fr. for an 8 minute journey in a bicycle taxi. However, I did

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not mind much about the money at the time. When I arrived at Le Gare d'Orleans I was the center of a fair amount of interest from the passers by as I got out of the taxi. Apparently it is most usual to walk in Paris these days. I went to the booking window and said "Allez Bordeaux" and the girl said 'Cinq cent Francs' so I handed over 500 Fr. I was not sure which entrance I had to go in so I held the ticket so that the name was plainly visible for the ticket-checker, but as it happened there was one general entrance for all platforms. My next problem was for find out from which platform the BORDEAUX train left, and at

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what time. This seemed to be rather difficult as there were many uniformed Germans about and the sign-boards were of no help. The Germans had some sort of reception office near the main platform. Eventually, during a quiet period I went up to a porter and managed to get the required information from him. He did not seem surprised that I could not speak French and got another porter to help explain to me. It seemed that I had 9 ¼ hours to wait for the BAYONNE train, which went through BORDEAUX. It was due to leave at 2130. This was rather a blow, but I could do nothing about it. So I found a quiet spot in

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the sun and ate some lunch. Several German officers and soldiers passed me, but in spite of the fact that I was still wearing my flying boots, none gave me a second look. The time passed very slowly till about ¼ hour before the train was due to leave I walked up and down the length of it to make up my mind which would be a suitable carriage. I entered a compartment in which were already 4 civilians in the 4 corners said "Pardon" as I stepped over the legs of one and made myself comfortable. I did not know how long it would take to reach BORDEAUX or how I could tell

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when we reached there but as I could do nothing further about that I did not worry about it. In spite of the fact that I had been told that identity papers were very rarely inspected on the trains, it was my chief cause of worry that I did not have one. However, as it happened my fears were unnecessary. A ticket checker came along during the journey to punch the tickets but that was all. More people came into the compartment during the journey but no one seemed particularly inclined for conversation, the light was switched off and we tried to sleep. At about 0615 we stopped at a large station. Two men in

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the compartment got up and put their coats on. One said something about BORDEAUX, so it seemed we had arrived. I got up and followed them out of the

station. There were two armed German soldiers at the ticket barrier but I passed through without mishap. It was necessary now that I find someone to help me, in the remaining 1 ½ hrs before daylight, and I would have to be careful because BORDEAUX was very much occupied by the German troops, there being a submarine refuelling base there and a large aerodrome. I had already been shown much kindness by French people and helped such a lot at great risk to themselves that I

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determined it would be extremely unfair to them if I did not make the most of my opportunities. To here I decided that I would see this adventure through to a successful finish if it were at all possible. I could not avoid taking many risks, but I determined that I would do my utmost with every opportunity.

It seemed to me at the time that the best place to seek for aid would be in a small shop, so I walked about a 1 ½ mile from the station and then saw a young woman dressed as a R.C. sister so thought it would be a good idea to see if she could help me. The language problem was again very difficult, but I managed to make her

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understand the position. She could not help me though, she was only a probationer at a nearby hospital. Next I tried a small paper shop. They would not believe me at first but afterwards offered me food which I did not need at the time, so I thanked them and left. A little further along there was a familiar sign outside another small shop "BAR" and a man was just taking down the shutters. I said "Bon jour" and walked inside. I was taking great risks here all the time, because any of these people may have been German sympathisers but I had no option. I got on quite well with this man. He gave me some good coffee and "cognac" and afterwards

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gave me a note and a woman took me part of the way around to the house of a friend of his. There a man came to the door and I handed him the note. After he read it he beckoned me inside. He explained afterwards that he thought I was dumb because I handed him the note and did not speak. Inside, his wife and daughter appeared. His daughter was very pretty and could speak a little English. After talking for a while explaining things, a little more intelligibly this time, I had some more coffee and milk and went to bed. In the afternoon I was awakened and after eating a good meal

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I was introduced to a young Frenchman who could also speak a little English. I stayed with these people for 8 days and it would have been impossible for them to treat me better. I was just one of the family and Marguerite was a sister to me. She taught me to speak quite a lot more French, we wrestled on the floor, went for walks at night around to our friend's bar, and everyone did everything possible to make my stay there enjoyable. I was able to listen to the BBC news every evening. They were definite De Gaulists although some of their neighbors were axis sympathisers. I was there

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For such a long time because there were trying to find a way of getting me to Spain. I had thought that was the best place to try. The young Frenchman and his cousin had tried to get to England before, but unsuccessfully and had been imprisoned for 6 weeks for their efforts. He asked me if I would let he and his cousin come with me, and as I had much to gain from that and little to lose, I agreed. While I was there

over 2 dozen people came to the house while I was there. Possibly out of curiosity, but they were all very much for the allies. They tried to get me an identity card
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but without success. It was impossible to get the official rubber stamp on it. I had my photograph taken and put on an identity card of last year and I am rather good with a drawing pen so I did a little bit of forgery, and I was rather proud of the effort when I had finished.

On the morning of 4 10th Dec. before daylight, after saying farewell to a very happy incident in my adventure, I set out for the railway station. There I met the two Frenchmen, and as I had already had a ticket bought for me we went onto the platform for the BAYONNE

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train. At BAYONNE we changed trains. This train was a very slow train and shunted trucks backwards and forwards at nearly every station, but we did not mind particularly as we were not in a hurry. It was while in this train, very close to the border of France and Spain that two German officials came into the compartment to check identity papers. They scrutinised mine for about two minutes while I was trying to gaze unconcernedly out of the window, and, then handed it back without comment. (I think I shall try my hand at forging cheques now). We arrived at the village of 5

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which was our destination and alighted from the train while the German officials were leaning out of the windows. There were also a few German troops on this train. We cleared off quickly and remained away from the village until the train had finished shunting.

We had a large scale map of the locality and we reckoned we would have to follow the valley of a river that ran through the village. We found a small mountain track going in our direction which we decided to keep to. The only traffic possible on this track was either by foot or pack-mules. We followed this track for an hour or so and passed quite a few

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peasants, some with mules. We stopped at a few isolated cottages and drank some wine. As my two companions were French this was no effort. Towards evening we came to a cottage where we had a meal from our kit bags. There was a man here who was very helpful. He was half French and half Spanish and had fought much in the recent war in Spain. He changed some of our French francs for Spanish pesetas and it was arranged that he would guide us across the frontier into Spain. He would do all this for 100 fr. less than the price

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of a bottle of cheap wine. We walked far into the night up and down mountains and across rivers and valleys until we came to another lonely cottage. We drank some more wine here and ate some bread and then went to sleep for a few hours on a haystack inside the cottage. In Spain the people keep all their animals in the house on the ground floor and store all the fodder etc in a room on the 1st floor. It seemed only a few minutes before we woke up and started off again and it seemed that we were climbing the steepest mountain in the world. It

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was very dark and the going was extremely rough. We had to have frequent rests. After a few hours dawn broke and we were nearly at the top of the ridge. The sheep grazing on these mountains are very white and clean looking and all have bells tied

around their necks. Shortly afterwards we reached the top and stood gazing down into a valley where we could see many villages of houses that were all white. This was Spain. We said adios to our guide here and continued down into the valley. Soon we came across a man who was herding his sheep.

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He could speak a few words of English and when we said we were hungry he invited us to come to his house nearby, which we did. We had to walk through the pig-sty on the ground floor to reach the stairs. We had quite a good meal and afterwards had a wash and shave at a nearby stream. These houses are very primitive. They cook at an open fire and lavatories are things often never heard of. Our guide of the night before had told us of a Frenchman in the village of 6 which was quite close. He told us not to walk along the road but to take a track which joined the road

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further along. This precaution was to avoid the Carabineros. We had hopes that this man would take us or get someone to take us to this village at night, but his wife would not let him, she was afraid of the Carabineros or something. He directed us to another house where he said was a man who could speak French. After an hour's hard going we reached this house but found the man could only speak about two words of French, but he directed us to another house where we had the same result. After this had happened 5 times we gave up and decided to wait until dusk when we

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Would try and find our own way. We walked until about an hour before dark when my companions were very anxious that we should start, so we set off along the track. We were going very well and were turning the corner into the main road when we ran slap bang into 2 Carabineros who of course stopped us. I was completely in the dark for the next few hours because I knew not a single word of Spanish, but apparently they knew a few words of French, because my companions were able to talk a little with them, but with difficulty. They seemed very friendly towards us and by this time it seemed the place was alive with

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Carabineros. They escorted us up to the village where the whole populace turned out to have a look at us. Shortly afterwards a sergeant arrived. He sent the population away and searched us for firearms. Afterwards we were taken to another house where there was a Frenchman who acted as interpreter. The sergeant took down full particulars and I had great difficulty in explaining, through my companion, my French identity paper. They did not know much English. We had a very good meal there and were escorted to another village where another sergeant was woken up and had a long

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talk with the first sergeant that lasted about an hour. We were just about dropping with fatigue by this. Part of the time they decided they would escort us back the way we came and next that they would hand us over to the Germans and next that my companions would be escorted back to the frontier and I would be interned, but they did not seem to worry about sticking to one idea for very long. At long last we were escorted back to the first village and went to bed in very comfortable beds with 6 guards with rifles sitting outside the door. At about 1130 next morning we were

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told to get up and had some coffee and toast. In spite of our protests we were escorted to still another village where there were a lot more Carabineros. After a hell of a lot more discussion between themselves it seemed they were going to let us go

and advised us to try to reach SAN SEBASTIAN across the mountains, as if we kept to the roads other Carabineros would be sure to stop us and ask for our papers, which we did not have. We did not believe this to be true, but two of them came with us along the road until we came to a small track. They wished us "Good luck for the Victory", and off we went.

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We walked a few miles and crossed a river and up the side of a mountain where we found a stone shed that was open. There are many of these about. We decided to spend the night here. At dark we lit a fire, but as we could not keep it going all night it was bloody cold. Next morning there was a thick fog enveloping everything. It showed signs of clearing about mid-day so we set out and very soon afterwards it was a sunny and cloudless day. There was a white mist covering the village in the valley, which suited us well because that decreased the possibility of our being seen from there. At about

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two o'clock we were feeling rather hungry so we called at a farm house where after a little preliminary explanation we were given a very good meal. Afterwards we continued on our way until dark when we tried our luck at another farm house, but without success, the people would have nothing to do with us and waved us away. This was rather disappointing as it was by now dark, but we continued on until we came to a man walking along with a basket on his shoulder. He was not very helpful but we followed him to his house where we made out better with his wife. Most of these people had never even heard

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of the R.A.F. We had a good meal and they fixed us up a bed in the hay. None of these people would accept any money for their keep although they were all very poor. We started out fairly early next morning, intending to go around the top of the mountain range to by pass the village of [blank space]. After walking all morning we found ourselves just on the outskirts of the village, so I decided to change our tactics. We had lunch from our kit bags and rested along the road till we came to the railway line and then walked along that until we came to the town of SANTESTEBAN

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This procedure was only possible because we had a very good large scale map of the locality. At the town of SANTESTEBAN we left the railway line and took to the road. It was my intention to walk at night and rest in the day time. Because by doing so we would not need to come in contact with any people, but my companions felt they could not sleep on the mountain in the sun, and so after walking all night we tried our luck at a house adjoining a hydro-electric power station. They would not help us so we continued for another town. It was daylight by this and we came to a workman's settlement

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of road workers. They offered us food but would not let us sleep there. Further along we came to another hydro electric station. These are numerous along this road. We went in here and had a meal. The boss was going to get a truck driver to take us into SAN SEBASTIAN, but when the truck arrived, the driver told us that the Guards 6 mile along the road had already asked him had he seen three men of our description walking along the road so that idea was out of the question. Evidently one of the men from the workers settlement had split on us. The boss seemed pretty sure that

the power station would be searched, so it looked as though we had better clear off quickly, and take to the mountains again. One of the men would guide us across the mountains right into SAN SEBASTIAN. We were just about dead with fatigue but as the only alternative was capture we set off again. The guide seemed to think that speed was essential and he was quite frisk so we scaled an almost perpendicular mountain side in record time. My feet were blistered and it was an effort to keep my eyes open but still we kept on. We kept going all day. The scenery here is really beautiful as it was

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through the whole of the Pyrenees. Sheep grazing on the mountain sides have bells around their necks. When they move the bells tinkle and they are all of different notes so that it sounds like soft music made by water rippling over pebbles. At dusk we came to a stone shed where we slept for 2 hours while the guide went down to the village. When he came back we followed him for another 3 hours to his house in the village. After a while we had a meal and went to bed at 2300hrs. Next morning at 0400hrs we started off again. Further along the road this man collected a friend of his who knew

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SAN SEBASTIAN fairly well and could take us to the address that one of my companions had. We walked until nearly daylight when we had reached the outskirts of SAN SEBASTIAN. Here we took an auto bus ride into the city and after a short search found the address of our friend, a Frenchman. The two men who had brought us here would only accept 25 pesettas for their trouble. At this Frenchman's house we had a very good meal and then went to bed for a while. This Frenchman was quite a well to-do business man so he had a very nice home. He sent one of his daughters around to the [blank space].

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for me during the afternoon and in the evening a man came round with instructions. Here I learned with regret that I would have to bid farewell to my two companions as the [blank space] could do no more for them than give them [blank space] and give them [blank space] as to how they could [blank space]. Where, if they managed to arrive they would be able to get help from the [blank space] to get to England. I was taken around to another house by this man where, after having another very good meal went to bed again. I would have to wait here for several days until it was possible to take me to [blank space]. My sojourn

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here was without incident and apart from having nothing to do was quite pleasant. I was taken to the Cinema one night and went for a walk right around the boulevard one afternoon and went on the funicular railway up to the amusement park, which is not in operation these days, but there is a wonderful view of the city of SAN SEBASTIAN from here. We watched the lights come on as darkness came, and after being used to a complete blackout for many months it was quite a wonderful sight. I arrived at this place on the evening of 10th Dec. and left 7 days later on 17th Dec. A

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messenger from the [blank space] at SAN SEBASTIAN came around in the morning and conveyed to me that I was to leave with him immediately. He took me around to the house of the [blank space] where I met two other men who were going to MADRID by car and they took me with them.

We stopped and had a really excellent lunch at a hotel in VITTORIA, and afterwards, at about 1900hrs a cup of coffee at a [blank space].

After leaving there we ran into a patch of low cloud which made visibility impossible so we had to crawl along at walking pace for 3-4kms.

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After we came through it we did not strike any more but it made us very late at MADRID. We arrived at the British Embassy at 2315hrs and after a few minutes I was taken to the house of W/Cmdr [blank space]. He said he had expected me the night before. This evening he had a small dinner party. I was feeling particularly scruffy but naturally I could do nothing about that at the time. Anyway everyone was very charming and I had quite a pleasant evening and afterwards a very comfortable bed. The next morning I was taken around to the [blank space] where I met

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a few more RAF lads. They left a few days later and I was on my own for 5 days until some more came.

On Christmas Day I was invited around to the house of Mr & Mrs [blank space] who are both Australians and from VICTORIA. It was a very pleasant party that we had there. When I arrived back at the [blank space] some of the lads there had had a little too much to drink and had made a bit of a mess. As I was senior in rank I was considered to be in charge and so I asked those responsible to clean up the mess, which they did and I thought that would be the finish of the matter, but afterwards I learned

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that the picture show and buffet supper arranged for us for Boxing Day had been cancelled and the next day Brigadier [Torr?] sent for me and made a few objectionable remarks about the lads there and threatened to send them to MIRANDA or somewhere if he got the slightest excuse. I took an instant dislike to him. He is the personification of all I dislike in the English Army Officer. That was my worst and most unpleasant experience of the whole show. On 30th Dec Sgt. Mc[blank] and I were taken in a car with a Polish Colonel to [blank space]. When we arrived there I was taken up to the [blank space] while the Sgt and the Colonel waited

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in the car. While waiting, the Colonel was very foolish and indiscreet. He insisted on getting out of the car and inspecting the interior of a nearby cathedral, to the annoyance of the [blank space]. However, we were fortunate and the affair passed over without any complications. Sgt. Mc[blank] and I were taken around to the house of an Englishman where after a very good dinner we had an interesting conversation and then went to bed. Next morning, after having a breakfast in bed a man came in a taxi and took us near the docks. We got out of the taxi here and walked thru the gates with another man, a

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Spaniard. We went aboard the S.S. RAVENSPORT and remained in the chart room until early next morning when the five of us were taken down to the engine-room. We had to hide in the [blank space] while the ship was being searched by the customs official (a real greasy lot) and then we remained in the engine room for another [blank space] hours, when we were able to go anywhere on the ship. It was not a very big ship only 1500 tons.

On the morning of 2nd Jan. we moved down the river at an aggravatingly slow pace and reached Gibraltar the next morning. An RAF launch came

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alongside and after being interviewed by an army sergeant we were taken ashore where we had more interviews. Incidentally Captain [blank space] of the SS [blank space] is a real decent scout and did his best for us. I was issued with an RAF battle dress at New Camp and slept there that night (3rd Jan). The next night I went out to a Catalina with the crew to fly to M.B. but this was cancelled before we got off. After standing by each of the other nights we eventually got off on 6th Jan and arrived at M.B. at 1100hrs on 7th Jan

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after an uneventful flight.

Early in February I learned that [?] Gordon Given was at Stallag luft and afterwards that Fred, Graham and Cliff had been captured also.

Early in March I received a note from Air Ministry telling me that Tex and Tommy were interned in Spain and a few days later I received a cable telling me they were at Gibraltar and would soon be back in this country.

Also on Mar 18th I had a letter from Guy and Rene. They are interned in Spain at Miranda.

Observations

1. I was successful in my adventure because a I had a tremendous amount of good luck & b I seized upon & made the most of every available opportunity.
2. That the dark blue of the R.A.A.F. battle dress is a more suitable colour than the R.A.F. for mixing with civilians in France
3. Spanish pesettas ~~are~~ should also ~~to~~ be included in the issue packets of money for ops.
4. That it be recommended that the form 1250 be carried to establish identity in neutral countries viz. Spain.
5. That more "intelligence lectures" be given on methods of evading capture & making contact with the organisation (if any) in France
6. That more opportunities be provided for aircrews to learn a few useful French phrases, e.g. There is already an excellent publication (R.A.F) for this purpose, but it ~~made~~ may not be taken out of the 'intelligence room', for no apparent reason
7. That it be recommended that a shirt and collar and tie be worn under the usual whit guernsey
8. The brown soft leather flying boots in general are absolutely lousy for walking, but are however not too bad for mountaineering
9. That the packets of tablets in the escape outfit be put in something stronger than paper envelopes. The paper tears in the pocket very quickly and the tablets soon break up.

Transcriber's Notes

Inside front cover

Translation from Spanish: I am an English aviator, can you help me for one night.

Page 1

Operational flight crew details

Tex Shuttleworth = R/68135 Jack Caddy Shuttleworth DFC, RCAF

404624 Frederick Gordon Given, 460 Squadron, RAAF

Tommy Handstock = T H Hanstock, RAFVR

407281 Graham Royston Berry, 460 Squadron, RAAF

408617 Clifton Edward Austin, 460 Squadron, RAAF

401036 Frederick William Hayman, 460 Squadron, RAAF

Observations

These were started from the back page of the notebook and went backwards towards the middle of the notebook. I have put them in numerical order, as they were made.

P/O	Pilot Officer
W.OP	Wireless Operator
IAS	Indicated Air Speed