

The King's Royal Rifle Corps Association



Escape to Freedom

Escape to Freedom



PoWs at 0700 hours Roll Call.

Editorial Comment:

In the interests of security certain details have been omitted from the original document. No other amendments have taken place, and every effort has been made to ensure that such exclusions do not detract from the overall account.

 ESCAPE TO FREEDOM

ACCOUNT OF ESCAPE BY

Major Ronald Bolton LITTLEDALE, D.S.O., 2 Bn. K.R.R.C., 30th Inf. Bde.

Captured: CALAIS, 26 May 40. Escaped: OFLAG IV C (COLDITZ)
15 Oct 42.

Left: LISBON, 24 May 43. Arrived: WHITCHURCH (Bristol)
24 May 43.

1940
26 May
Captured CALAIS

1. CAPTURE: On 25 May 40 I was Bde. Transport Officer of the 30th Inf. Bde. at CALAIS. I was with the Staff Captain and Bde. H.Q. details in the railway station, Bde. H.Q., being in the Citadel. At about 1300 hrs we received a W/T message instructing us to collect petrol and to deliver it to tanks in the area of 2/K.R.R.C. At the same time a message came instructing details of Bde. H.Q. to reinforce a Rifle Bde. Coy outside the station. The Staff Captain told me to see to the delivery of the petrol, which I collected and handed over to Bde. H.Q., 2/K.R.R.C., there being no tanks to be found in that area.

When I returned I could find no trace of Bde. H.Q. details, either at their former location or with the Rifle Bde. Coy referred to above. I moved over to the Fort at the harbour mouth and next morning, while trying to make contact with British troops, I was taken prisoner by a German patrol.

Mid Jun
OFLAG VII C
(LAUFEN)

With other officers taken in CALAIS I was marched across FRANCE for about 10 days. From a small station N.W. of LUXEMBOURG we went by train to TRIER, thence to MAINZ, where we stayed three days, and finally to OFLAG VII C and LAUFEN.

1941
Fort 8
Stalag XXI D
POSEN

Early in Mar 41 I was included in a party of about 400 officers sent to Fort 8, STALAG XXI D, at POSEN.

A description of these two camps is given in the report of 2/Lt. SHOLTO DOUGLAS.

/2. FIRST ESCAPE ...

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28 May
1st ESCAPE

2. FIRST ESCAPE.

On 28 May 41, Lt. A.M. SINCLAIR, K.R.R.C., 2/Lt. E.G.B. DAVIES-SCOURFIELD, K.R.R.C., and I escaped from the Fort.

We had noticed that each day two orderlies carried rubbish in a hand barrow from the Fort into a rubbish pit about 50 yds. outside the entrance. The barrow they normally used was too small to hold a man, but as there was a lot of spare wood available we had a larger one made. Capt. LAURIE (Regiment unknown) was in charge of the orderlies thus engaged, and gave us a good deal of assistance. SINCLAIR speaks German fluently, and I can speak a little, But DAVIES-SCOURFIELD could hardly speak German at all. We had managed to make contact with a young Pole in POSEN, and our plan was to be carried out of the camp separately in the hand barrow, and hide in the rubbish pit, later making our way to our Polish helper's house.

In the morning of 28 May SINCLAIR was carried out to the pit without incident. He was wearing an old French army coat which had been altered and dyed black, a pair of black trousers, and a civilian shirt. In the afternoon DAVIES-SCOURFIELD and I were similarly taken to the pit. DAVIES-SCOURFIELD was wearing a Dutch overcoat and a pair of trousers, both dyed black, while I was wearing an old mackintosh, a pair of flannel trousers, also dyed black. We both had civilian caps.

We had collected a small sum of money (about 180 Reich Marks between us) and had managed to obtain a compass each.

DAVIES-SCOURFIELD and I had arranged that SINCLAIR should proceed to the Polish helper's address and arrange for him to meet us at a tram terminus about three quarters of a mile from Fort

8, at 1630 hrs. We proceeded to this rendezvous, where our helper met us and took us to his house, where we found SINCLAIR. That evening we were each taken to different houses, and next morning we were taken to another address. For the next ten days we all hid in a very small room about the size of a railway carriage, which we left for no purpose whatsoever.

Our helpers gave us each a better suit of clothes and some kind of identity card. One morning we were taken by a car, accompanied by a Pole and driven by a Volksdeutsch who was unaware of our identity, to LODZ. We arrived at LODZ that afternoon and were taken to a house, where we spent a week. There were two Polish evaders also hiding there.

On 20 Jun 41 we set out in three separate parties to attempt to reach RUSSIA. In order to do this we had to cross the Line of Demarcation between the WARTEGAU and the territory of the General Government of POLAND. I was accompanied of a young Pole, and we went by tram to the Eastern outskirts of LODZ, where we spent the night in a house. Next morning my companion and I travelled in a horse-drawn cart to a point north of BOROWA, and walked to GALKOW, where we breakfasted at a farmhouse. There were German frontier guards in the village, but in the course of the morning I was moved by stages from house to house till I reached the Eastern end. In a house here I met DAVIES-SCOURFIELD. While the German guards were enjoying their midday meal, DAVIES-SCOURFIELD and I were taken to a house on the railway, about two kilometres South of KALUSKI. Our helpers told us that the German control on the Demarcation Line in this district is considered very dangerous.

On 22 Jun we met SINCLAIR, who was accompanied by a Polish ex-soldier and a woman. We walked to LUBOCHNIA-GORKI.

/We stayed in a ...

 ESCAPE TO FREEDOM

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We stayed in a house here until 23 Jun while two of our helpers went to TOMAZOW MAZ to reconnoitre our route. When they came back they told us that the Germans had just invaded the U.S.S.R. Our helper said it would be impossible for us now to enter RUSSIA, but one of them agreed to go to WARSAW and to warn some friends of his there to expect us. He told us that we must make our way to them by ourselves, and by road.

5 Jun - 26 Aug
in hiding in
WARSAW

We were now informed that the Germans had heard of our hiding place. At 0300 hrs on 23 Jun 41 we set off on foot along the main road to WARSAW. We carried razors, and shaved when necessary. We arrived in WARSAW on 25 Jun and went to the address we had been given.

We stayed at various addresses in WARSAW until 25 Aug, when we joined a party of three Poles proceeding to BUDAPEST. We were given identification papers. As far as I can remember mine described me as a farmer, and had my photograph upon it, but SINCLAIR's had no photograph. It was not found possible to include all three of us in this party and DAVIES-SCOURFIELD therefore remained in WARSAW. He was recaptured by the Germans in Mar 42, and is now in OFLAG IV C.

26 Aug
KRAKOW

On the evening of 26 Aug SINCLAIR and I with the three Poles caught the night train to KRAKOW. We spent the night here, and about 1500 hrs on 27 Aug caught a train to ZAKOPANE near the border of SLOVAKIA.

27 Aug
ZAKOPANE

About 2100 hrs we got out at the station before ZAKOPANE were we met by another Pole. After a meal we then walked all night to a small village N.W. of ZAKOPANE, which I cannot identify. There were 25 German frontier guards in this village. After dark, on 29 Aug we were guided across the frontier into SLOVAKIA, where we were met by a car and driven to ROZNAVA, now in

29 Aug
Entered
SLOVAKIA

Crossed present HUNGARIAN frontier to ROZNAVA HUNGARY. We then walked some distance to another car in which we drove to the first railway station South of ROZNAVA. At 0900 hrs on 31 Aug we caught a train for BUDAPEST.

The Poles bought our tickets and paid for the cars. Throughout our journey we carried shaving kit and boot cleaning materials and took great pains to maintain a respectable appearance. The Poles carried a change of lower garments.

31 Aug
BUDAPEST

We arrived at BUDAPEST about 1600 hrs on 31 Aug and were taken to a house. Later, we were moved to a pension where we had all our meals in our bedroom.

We stayed here for a month. We were given passes representing us to be Polish internees on leave in BUDAPEST from a Hungarian interment camp. After a time the Hungarian Police began to make enquiries about these passes. We therefore were moved to another address and were given new passes made out in different names. Later SINCLAIR and I were separated for a time.

9 Nov
SZEGED

About 9 Nov SINCLAIR and I, with six other people, were sent by train into YUGOSLAVIA. Our identity cards showed us to be Volksdeutsch. We were sent by train to SZEGED, where we arrived about 2200 hrs. We then walked across the Hungarian-Yugoslavia frontier and boarded a train at a small station in YUGOSLAVIA. From here we travelled to PANCEVO, outside BELGRADE, where we arrived about 1300 hrs on 10 Nov.

Crossed YUGOSLAV frontier

10 Nov
PANCEVO
BELGRADE

From here it was necessary to take a ferry across the DANUBE to BELGRADE. This ferry was most carefully controlled by German troops. One of our party could speak Serb. There were many travellers trying to board the ferry boat, and in consequence I was not asked to show my pass, though SINCLAIR and the Poles were required to produce theirs. Luggage was also examined here

/by a German ...

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by a German official in uniform. The ferry crossing took three quarters of an hour. On landing at BELGRADE there was another control but not quite so rigorous. Here we all had our identity cards scrutinised.

One of our party then took us to a house where we had a meal and went to sleep.

11 Nov
JAGODINA

Next morning, 11 Nov 41, we caught a train to JAGODINA, where we arrived about 1600 hrs. Our guides left us here and returned to BUDAPEST. JAGODINA was garrisoned by about two companies of German soldiers, who were said to have come from RUSSIA, and who appeared to be of all arms.

16 Nov
BELA PALANKA

On 16 Nov SINCLAIR and I with two Polish women left by train for SOFIA. After about four hours we reached BELA PALANKA. Here one of the Polish women left us. The other was a young woman of about 22, far advanced in pregnancy, who could speak Serb. She was trying to join her husband in TURKEY.

17 Nov
Crossed present
YUGOSLAV-
BULGARIAN
frontier

About 0600 hrs on 17 Nov this woman, SINCLAIR and I were taken in a horse-drawn cart across the Yugoslav-Bulgarian frontier. We went by side roads and drove straight past some Yugoslav frontier guards (presumably Quislings?). We went to a farm, owned by a Serb, between the Yugoslav and Bulgarian frontier post to a village on the BULGARIAN side of the frontier. SINCLAIR and I were wearing the civilian clothes we had procured in WARSAW, and were each carrying a small suitcase.

It had been arranged that another cart was to meet us at this village and to take us to PIROT (now in BULGARIA). The owner of this cart was not at home, and the farmer who was guiding us got hold of a friend, and I presume must have told him to find another cart for us. While following

Arrested by
Bulgarian
Customs guards

this man along a country road, about midday on 17 Nov, we met a Bulgarian Customs official. He asked for our passes and demanded to see our baggage. As we possessed only YUGOSLAV passes he ordered us to follow him. The Polish girl told us it would be wiser to obey him, and that we should be able to bluff him without much difficulty.

Taken to
PIROT
(Now in
BULGARIA)

We were all taken into a cart, with an escort of Customs officials, to PIROT. Here the Commander of the Customs Guards interviewed us. The Polish girl and SINCLAIR spoke German to this officer, and told him that we were Germans. He replied civilly that in that case he would at once get in touch with Germans nearby who might be able to help us. We then told him that we were really Poles. On learning this, all but one of the officials present appeared very sympathetic. We were then taken to the Police H.Q. at PIROT, and handed over to the Bulgarian police. The Polish girl and SINCLAIR were questioned here in German. I was not questioned, possibly owing to lack of time. We were searched, and kept in separate cells in PIROT gaol for two days. The girl was quite reasonably treated.

Handed over to
Bulgarian Police.

19 Nov
Taken to SOFIA.

Early in the morning of 19 Nov we were all taken by train with a police escort to SOFIA, where we arrived about 0800 hrs that day. After breakfast we were taken to the SOFIA C.I.D. Here they took our fingerprints and asked us to write out statements in French. This did not work very well, and later they produced a Bulgarian woman who spoke French to act as an interpreter.

19-27 Nov
Imprisoned and
interrogated by
Bulgarian police.

About 1100 hrs we were taken to another prison in SOFIA, where SINCLAIR and I were put into a smallish cell with six other men, all Bulgarians. The place was filthy, and alive with vermin. The Polish girl was kept under similar conditions in the woman's part of the prison. We received no food other than bread and water. On 20 Nov we were removed to another prison at the

/Police H.Q ...

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Police H.Q., which was clean, and where conditions were much better. We were kept in separate cells. I had as a companion a Bulgarian lorry driver who managed to make me understand that he was accused by the Germans of being a "Communist". From him I also managed to gather that it was virtually impossible to cross the Bulgarian-Turkish frontier on foot.

On 24 Nov 41 we were questioned separately by the Bulgarian police with the aid of a male interpreter who spoke French. The Polish girl was interviewed first, then SINCLAIR, and lastly myself.

SINCLAIR and I decided that we should still pose as Poles. He could speak a certain amount of Polish and maintained that he was a Polish student attempting to leave POLAND. I, who can speak only a few Polish phrases, said that I was a Pole who had been living in AMERICA and had visited some of my relatives in POLAND just before the war and had then gone to HUNGARY.

27 Nov
Handed over
to German
authorities in
SOFIA

Following lengthy interrogations SINCLAIR and I were then handed over to a German N.C.O. who took us by car to the city gaol in SOFIA. Here we were lodged in a special wing under German control. On the way to the gaol I asked a Bulgarian police official who came with us, and who spoke English well, whether he would inform the U.S. Consul of our fate. He said that he doubted whether he could.

On 30 Nov I was taken before two Bulgarian police in plain clothes. One of the spoke English well. He told me that I could write a short letter to my father, but that I must not say where I was.

I protested most emphatically at our treatment by the Bulgarians, and demanded to see the Chief of Police myself. I also said that we were particularly anxious to prevent the Polish

girl from falling into German hands. He immediately said, "She is not an agent, is she? She has not done anything against the Germans?" I replied that all she had done was use to her knowledge of Balkan languages to help SINCLAIR and myself to reach BULGARIA.

2 Dec
Taken to VIENNA
Military Prison

On 2 Dec the Polish girl, SINCLAIR and I were taken by train with an escort to BELGRADE. Here the girl was handed over to a German soldier. SINCLAIR and I were then taken to the Military Prison in VIENNA. We remained here from early Dec 41 until 17 Jan 42.

In the Military Prison at VIENNA our treatment was good. There were a number of Austrian military prisoners and also Austrian guards. Some of both categories were sympathetic to us, and expressed their dislike of the Germans.

1942

2nd ESCAPE

Escaped from
train at
ROUDNICE
(CZECHO-
SLOVAKIA)

3. SECOND ESCAPE

About 0900 hrs in 17 Jan 42 SINCLAIR and I, escorted by a Feldwebel (An Austrian) and one soldier, were taken by train from the Franz Josef Bahnhof. When the soldier was out of our compartment the Feldwebel told us that he disliked the Germans, and complained of the manner in which they ill treated RUSSIAN P/W. Later he told us that he was taking us to a place near DRESDEN.

SINCLAIR and I agreed to escape from the train if possible. We reconnoitred the window of a lavatory and without detection contrived to break the supports which held it in place. We were still in plain clothes, and had our shaving kit with us, and soft hats in our pockets. We had no money, and no food beyond portions saved from our lunch ration that day. Between PRAGUE and ROUDNICE the train began to slow down. SINCLAIR, on the plea of visiting the lavatory, left the compartment with the Feldwebel, who remained in the corridor.

/I followed a ...

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I followed a few moments afterwards, having asked permission of the private soldier to stand in the corridor beside the Feldwebel "to get some air". I had arranged that if SINCLAIR left through the window of the lavatory, he should leave the latch of the lavatory door in a certain position. When I got into the corridor I saw that the latch was in this position. I walked past the Feldwebel, entered the lavatory, locked the door and got out of the window, feet first. In the meantime the train began to gain speed. While I was hanging on the near side of the train I felt a touch on my leg and saw SINCLAIR below on the step of the train. We then made our way to the buffers between two coaches. As the train approached ROUDNICE station it slackened speed, and SINCLAIR dropped off. As he did so a door in the carriage opened and the Feldwebel looked out and saw him. I was crouching out of his sight and was not noticed. Almost immediately afterwards the train stopped. The Feldwebel leaped out and chased SINCLAIR, while I remained in hiding on the buffers. Apparently SINCLAIR had hurt his head in falling, and was slightly dazed, for he was soon caught. Two black-uniformed railway police came and stood just below me and flashed their torches about. I heard them discussing SINCLAIR's escape. A timely escape of steam from a pipe fortunately obscured me from their view.

When SINCLAIR had been caught the hue and cry in the immediate vicinity of the train died down. I slipped off the buffers and walked down the line Southwards. It was bitterly cold and I had no greatcoat. I felt, therefore, that my only hope was to find a helper very soon.

I walked into ROUNICE, As I knew I was in CZECHOSLOVAKIA I decided to speak in German to any potential helpers whom I met, and ask them the time. If they replied in Czech or in bad German I would then declare myself to them. If, on the other hand, they replied in good German I

would approach some other person.

This plan worked well. The first man to whom I declared myself as an English escaper said that he would have to report me to the police, but took no further action. The second man said that he lived some distance away and could not help. The third man I approached was a boy of about 17. He took me to his house, and fetched a relative who had lived in AMERICA and spoke English. I stayed in this relative's house for two nights. He gave me a big jacket to wear in lieu of an overcoat, and a pair of boots. He also collected some money (I think about 30 crowns) from some of his friends and gave it to me. I wanted to obtain the address of a possible helper in PRAGUE but was unsuccessful in this. Later I was given an address in KRABCICE.

19 Jan
KRABCICE

On 19 Jan I visited this address, and obtained an address in PRAGUE. My informant gave me a little more money and told me not to attempt to travel by rail, but to walk. He added that it might be safe for me to ask for a lift upon a coal lorry. I walked by side roads and at one place stopped at an inn and had a hot drink.

ZDIBY

Eventually I arrived at ZDIBY. Here I declared myself to a man who directed me to a farm, where I met two farm workers. One of them was very inquisitive about my identity, but I felt I was safe in telling the truth. He immediately replied by saying "I am a German". He seemed so stupid as to be almost an idiot, and contended himself by telling me to go away. I immediately walked away quickly towards PRAGUE and caught a tram which took me to the middle of the city, where I arrived about 1900 hrs. The person whom I hoped to see at the address I had been given was away. I was very tired and lame, and it was bitterly cold. I tried to obtain shelter at various places, but unsuccessfully. I then sat in a railway station until 0100 hrs on

1900 hrs
arrived PRAGUE
19 Jan - 18 May
in hiding in
PRAGUE

/20 Jan ...

 ESCAPE TO FREEDOM

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20 Jan. Then I noticed that the police were checking passes, so I went into the street. After a time I accosted a man and told him who I was. He took me to a restaurant which was open all night. Next morning, 20 Jan, I again visited the address I had been given. This time I met the person I wished to see. He made me give him a sample of my handwriting on a bit of paper, and told me to call again that afternoon. When I did so I told him that my plan was to reach SWITZERLAND, when the snow on the mountains had melted, which would be in about two months. He told me he would try to help me and took me to a flat. Later I moved to various addresses in PRAGUE, where I stayed till 18 May.

18 May
HUSINEC

On 18 May a helper took me by train to HUSINEC.

20 May
LINZ

On 20 May another helper took me to LINZ by train. I stayed that night in a house and next morning travelled alone to INNSBUCK. I travelled by slow trains and third class and bought my tickets in stages. At SALZBURG I had to change trains. I arrived at INNSBRUCK at 0800 hrs on 22 May and went to a certain address there. A potential helper here was ill in bed and could neither help nor advise me. At 1000 hrs I took a slow train to BLUDENZ.

22 May
INNSBRUCK

BLUDENZ

I arrived here about here about 1400 hrs and walked about the town. I found an old man working in the garden, told him my story, and asked him whether it would be possible for me to cross into SWITZERLAND. He replied that the snow was impassable and that the frontier was very strongly guarded. I then went to the Lion Hotel, where I had a drink, and that night I spent in a barn.

23 May
SCHRUNS

About 0730 hrs on 23 May I went by train to SCHRUNS. Here I met an old priest who had been in INDIA and spoke English. I asked his advice

and he told me it would be quite impossible for me to cross to SWITZERLAND. Another man to whom I spoke confirmed this view.

At this time I imagined LIECHTENSTEIN to be occupied by Germans, I therefore decided to retrace my steps and to make another attempt in June when the snows had melted.

23 - 25 May
LINZ-
PRACHATICE
HUSINEC

I returned via LINZ and PRACHATICE to HUSINEC, where I spent two days in bed with fever.

29 May
Arrested at
HUSINEC

On the evening of 27 May my helpers told me that HEYDRICH had been murdered that day, that police activities were widespread, and that my position and theirs were very precarious. I therefore decided to try to reach PRAGUE and hide there. While trying to board a train at HUSINEC at 0800 hrs on 29 May a Czech gendarme asked me for my pass. I possessed none but spoke to him in German and told him I had lost it. He then arrested me. Knowing him to be a Czech (not a Sudetenlander) I told him true identity and asked him to help me. He replied "On no account", and thereafter took the greatest care to see that I did not give him the slip.

Taken to
BUDWEIS

A few hours later I was handed over to the German Criminal Police in BUDWEIS. My fingerprints and photograph were taken and I was interrogated as to my previous camps, routes and helpers. I was shown a list of missing persons wanted by the police which contained my name. I do not remember any other names upon this list. I told my interrogator the camps I had been in but I invented false routes and helpers. I spent the night in prison in BUDWEIS. Next day, 30 May, I was handcuffed, and taken to PRAGUE, to the Gestapo H.Q. On the following day, 31 May, I was questioned by the Gestapo. My interrogation lasted for three days. My interrogator was very

30 May
Taken to
PRAGUE

31 May - 2 Jun
Interrogated by
Gestapo

/correct in his ...

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correct in his manner and was attempting to obtain information about my real routes and helpers. The interrogation lasted from about 0900hrs to 1600 hrs each day, with a break for lunch, which was brought up for me from a canteen. At night I was accommodated in a building outside the Gestapo offices.

6 weeks solitary
confinement

For six weeks I remained here in solitary confinement, on starvation diet. Drinking water was provided at mealtimes, but at other times could be obtained only from the lavatory bowl in my cell.

15 Jul
Removed to
Military Prison
in PRAGUE

During this time I was twice again called out for questioning. On 15 Jul I was removed to a military prison in PRAGUE and two days later, on 17 Jul, I was taken by train with an escort of a Feldwebel and a soldier to OFLAG IV C (COLDITZ), where I arrived that evening. During the journey I was not allowed to make use of the lavatory.

4. THIRD ESCAPE (OFLAG IV C (COLDITZ)).

This escape was arranged with the approval of the escape committee. Lt.-Cdr. W.L. STEPHENS, R.N.V.R. and I broached the idea to the Committee of passing across a sentry's beat, even though in bright reflector light, while his back was turned.

We asked for two other volunteers to form a second pair, one of whom should have some skill in lock picking. The inclusion of the lock-picker would enable the whole party to pass out of the camp through a part of the Kommandantur building after passing a sentry. Capt. P.R. REID (R.A.S.C.) and F/Lt. H.D. WARDLE were chosen for this second pair.

SITE OF THE ESCAPE.

The camp is an old Schloss, consisting of an inner and outer courtyard completely enclosed by

high buildings, with exits through archways and gates, all guarded. The P/W were in the building surrounding the inner courtyard. The kitchen gave on to some flat roofs over a boiler-house in the outer courtyard, by means of a window barred on the outer courtyard side. This window was in full view of the windows of the outer courtyard buildings, in bright reflector light, and in view of the sentry for part of his beat. The main Kommandantur entrance was by steps to a dimly lit terrace. The plan of escape necessitated passing this to the door of a carpenter's store in the buildings opposite the boiler-house. It was hoped to unlock this door, pass through the store, and find an exit on the outer side of the outer courtyard. Thence, by descending three terraces of an old moat also in reflector light and near the dog kennels, it was possible to reach the road leading out of the camp. This road ran past the married quarters blocks and had at the end iron gates in a high wall, with a small amount of barbed wire on top.

The Action.

The kitchen was entered at night through a window. The attention of the sentries in the inner courtyard was distracted on the four previous nights, which enabled the rivet head of the transverse bar of this window to be cut. The rivet was found to be hot sweated, and the loosening of the bars was only accomplished by means of a screw press manufactured in the camp. This was designed by Capt. REID and made by E.R.A. HAMMOND, R.N. and E.R.A. LISTER, R.N. It was constructed from a fire bar, a square thread screw, and soft iron bed slats. The other tools used were a hacksaw and file. The screw pins applied very heavy pressure, forcing the rivet out of the bar. This work had to be done very silently, and without trace, through a window which normally was kept locked by the Germans, and which had to be opened to enable the work to be

/carried out ...

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carried out. S/Ldr. McCOLL removed all traces of our work upon this window after we had left.

On 14 Oct at 2100 hrs REID and WARDLE proceeded on to the flat roof, thence dropped to the ground (10 feet), and waited for two hours in a convenient door entrance in shadows owing to the failure of a signalling system by accordion music. Finally they went ahead and crossed the sentry's beat when his back was turned, and thence along the foot of the Kommendantur terrace. At one point a German soldier passed within a yard of REID who was lying flat on a grass border in the open, but who was not noticed.

At the end of the terrace, near the carpenter's store, REID and WARDLE found a cellar, in which they rested; in the meantime STEPHENS and I followed their route and joined them. The door of the carpenter's store could not be unlocked, but an exit was found through an extremely narrow flue running at ground level from the cellar, to the outer, or moat, side of the outer courtyard buildings. This flue was barred, but one bar was successfully loosened. The process of getting through this flue took an hour, during which time no concealment against a patrol was possible. Three stages of terraces each about four metres high (a moat in former times), were then descended by aid of a sheet.

The top terrace was within a few yards of sleeping Germans, and the bottom some ten yards from the dog kennels. Twice during the descent an Alsation dog was roused and barked furiously, but no action was taken.

Each of the four members of our party carried attache cases which were muffled with shirts and sheets during the process of exit. Though a great hindrance at the time, their content of civilian clothes, etc. were invaluable later. Arriving at the bottom of the terraces, we proceeded along the

road between married quarters, and then scaled the gate in the wall surmounted by barbed wire. At this point, as arranged previously, our party split; REID and WARDLE, forming one pair and STEPHENS and I the other. We parted at 0400 hrs, on Thursday 15 Oct.

The subsequent stages of my escape with STEPHENS are as under:-

15 Oct	<u>15 Oct</u>	
ROCHLITZ	0400 hrs	Separated from REID and WARDLE, and walked to ROCHLITZ.
	0730 hrs	Arrived ROCHLITZ.
CHEMNITZ	0805 hrs	Departed by train for CHEMNITZ.
	0920 hrs	Arrived CHEMNITZ. Booked through to STUTTGART. Questioned by railway police - papers satisfactory.
	0940 hrs	Departed CHEMNITZ.
HOF	1500 hrs	Arrived HOF, and changed. Walked around the town and drank beer in a station restaurant until.
NURNBERG	1930 hrs	Departed by "D Zug" to NURNBERG.
	2300 hrs	Arrived NURNBERG.
16 Oct	<u>16 Oct</u>	Drank beer and slept in restaurant until
	0530 hrs	Departed by Schnellzug for STUTTGART.
STUTTGART	1015 hrs	Arrived STUTTGART. Went by train to the suburb ESSLINGEN. Took electric train to PLOCKINGEN, REUTLINGEN and TUBINGEN.

/Arrived TUBINGEN ...

 ESCAPE TO FREEDOM

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TUBINGEN	1500 hrs	Arrived TUBINGEN. (The object of this round journey was to avoid booking towards the frontier from STUTTGART main station, which we had told by a Polish officer in the camp was strictly controlled.)
	1839 hrs	Departed TUBINGEN for TUTTLINGEN.
	2230 hrs	Arrived TUTTLINGEN. Owing to a mistake we took the wrong road out of TUTTLINGEN, and were compelled to spend the night six kms. S.E. of the town in a wood.
17 Oct	<u>17 Oct</u>	In the light we made out our position by aid of a small scale map and a home made compass, and went on foot across country to the railway just South of IMMENDINGEN, and rested till dark.
IMMENDINGEN		
ENGEN	1915 hrs	Moved on down valley, in which the railway ran, to a wood above ENGEN.
18 Oct SINGEN	<u>18 Oct</u>	We lay up in the wood until dark, about 1915 hrs. The day was eventful except that a man was shooting rooks in the wood with a rifle, and later a terrier came to look at us, but made no sign. We walked in the fields parallel to the railway and came into sight of SINGEN shunting yard about midnight. We retraced our steps and in crossing over the main line by a bridge were stopped by a sentry. We showed him our papers and satisfied him that we had lost our way to SINGEN station. After crossing the railway further North, we found the point where the main HELSINGEN -

SINGEN road meets the wood, shown to us as leading to the frontier.

19 Oct
SWISS Frontier

19 Oct

We followed the wood, but it eventually became clear that we were wrong. We therefore lay up until dawn and then reconnoitred to fix our position. Having done this we lay up till dark, and then, following a more easterly branch of the wood, arrived on the frontier road at 2100 hrs. We were challenged by a frontier sentry, but owing to his credulity we were able to move away. We remained hidden until the moon went down, and crossed the wood North of

RAMSEN
(SWITZERLAND)

20 Oct

0300 hrs

RAMSEN, where we arrived about 0300 hrs on 20 Oct. We remained hidden until dawn and then reported to the SWISS police in RAMSEN.

SCHAFFHAUSEN

Later that day the Swiss police took us to SCHAFFHAUSEN, where we stayed for the night in a hotel. Here a self-styled "journalist" asked us (I think in English) for details of our crossing of the frontier. The patronne of the hotel called me out into the passage and warned me to be very careful how I answered this individual's questions, adding that his reputation with the police was not good.

21 Oct
BERNE

On 21 Oct we were taken to a Military Barracks in BERNE. Here a member of the Swiss General Staff asked us some questions on military activities in GERMANY. We were then taken to the British Legation.

1943

I stayed for about 10 days with the Military Attache and later went to a hotel.

25 Jan
Left
SWITZERLAND

On 25 Jan 43, with F/Lt. FOWLER, I left

/SWITZERLAND for SPAIN ...

 ESCAPE TO FREEDOM

- 11 -

for SPAIN SWITZERLAND for SPAIN, as described in his report.

30 Jan After our arrest at LA JUNQUERA on 30 Jan
 Crossed FRANCO- 43 we were not confined in cells, but in a room
 SPANISH frontier. which appeared to be part of the police office. Our
 Arrested Spanish guide was bullied by the police and his
 LA JUNQUERA face slapped, but I do not think he was otherwise
 maltreated while we were there.

30 Jan - 22 Feb On 22 Feb 43, after my release from prison
 Imprisoned in FIGUERAS, I went to BARCELONA, where I
 FIGUERAS stayed in a hotel. On May 43 two Civil Guard
 Released officers took me by train to an officers internment
 22 Feb - 1 May camp at JARABA.

JARABA On 12 May I left by car for MADRID, where I
 MADRID reported to the British Embassy. I stayed with a
 16 May member of the M.A.'s staff till 15 May when I left
 GIBRALTAR by train for GIBRALTAR, where I arrived at 1400
 hrs next day.

23 May On the morning of 23 May I left by air for
 LISBON LISBON.

Lieut.-Colonel Ronald Bolton Littledale, D.S.O.

Killed in Action, August 1944.



The death in action of Lieut Colonel Littledale deprived the 2nd Battalion of a most gallant commander and the Regiment of one of its most distinguished Officers of his rank.

He was killed at the town of Airaines in Normandy when

directing an attack, which ended in complete success. The following letter, published in *The Times*, gives some account of his remarkable character and exploits:-

“Lieut Colonel Ronald Bolton Littledale, D.S.O., The King’s Royal Rifle Corps, whose death in action in North-West Europe, was reported this week, was the only son of Mrs Littledale and the late Captain J.B. Littledale, of Bunbury House, Bunbury, Cheshire.

Born in 1902, he was educated at St Aubyn’s, Rottingdean, and at Eton (Well’s House), where he was elected to “Pop.” On leaving Sandhurst, he was gazetted to the 60th Rifles. He served with his Battalion in the British Army of Occupation on the Rhine, in India, Palestine, and Northern Ireland.

At the outbreak of the present war, he was stationed in England, and went with his Regiment to the defence of Calais. When Calais fell, he was taken prisoner. From that time on, he never ceased his efforts to escape. Four times, he got away, and four times, he was recaptured. Of his three years as a prisoner of war, he spent approximately half that time at large in enemy territory. On his fifth attempt he succeeded, and reached England almost three years to the day after Calais. For that achievement and for “gallantry in the field” he was awarded the D.S.O.

His one wish was to rejoin his old Regiment, and he was posted as Second in Command of the 2nd Battalion and went with them to France in the early days of June this year.

He was given command of his Battalion during the Battle of Normandy, and was killed in action in August.”

□