

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 193

28 June 1944

Target: Airdrome at Juvincourt, France

Crews Dispatched: 26

Crews Lost: Lt. Wardowski, 3 KIA, 4 POW, 2 EVD

Crew Members Lost or Wounded: 2 WIA

Length of Mission: 5 hours, 30 minutes

Bomb Load: 38 x 100 lb G.P. M30 bombs

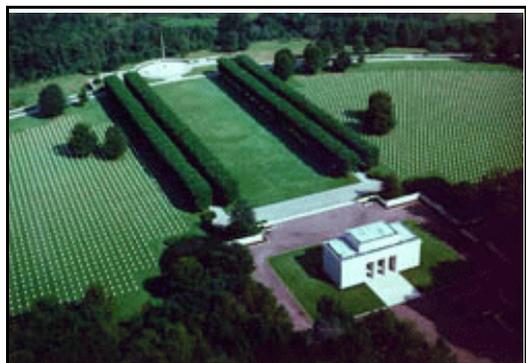
Bombing Altitudes: Group A - 26,000 ft; Group B - 24,400 ft

Ammo Fired: 0 rounds

Two small Group formations, each with thirteen B-17s, took off to bomb an airfield at Juvincourt, France. No aircraft returned early. Both of the Groups bombed the target with excellent results. The Fortresses dropped 984 100-lb. G.P. M30 bombs from 26,000 and 24,400 feet.

In the target area there were no clouds and visibility was excellent. Overcast and heavy contrails were experienced en route. Only two enemy aircraft were observed. There were no attacks on the 303rd BG(H) formations. Moderate and accurate flak was present at the target and at the Laon airdrome. Scattered flak was fired at the Group from other places. Six aircraft sustained major and fourteen minor battle damage from anti-aircraft fire. Chaff had little effect. Friendly fighter support was excellent.

Due to poor weather conditions at Molesworth, returning aircraft were diverted to other bases. One aircraft, #42-107099 *Old 99*, 427BS (Lt. **Lehmann**), returned with two wounded crewmen, landing at Downham Market. Lt. Gallagher managed to land #42-32027 *Betty Jane*, 427BS, at Molesworth.



Epinal American Cemetery near Vosges, France

One B-17 was missing. #42-31200 *Old Crow*, 427BS, piloted by 2Lt. Stanley **Wardowski**, was hit by flak between the fuselage and the No. 3 engine over Laon, France at 0836 hours. The wing caught fire and six parachutes were spotted. The aircraft made a 180E turn, nosed over, and started down in a dive. About 4,000 feet down, it disintegrated in the air. Lt. **Wardowski**, 2Lt. Warren G. **Birnbaum** and Sgt. Donald G. **Wagner** were killed. Lt. **Birnbaum** and Sgt. **Wagner** are buried in Epinal American Cemetery near Vosges, France. 2Lt. Neal E. **Hainlin**, Jr., 2Lt. Charles F.

Eisel, Sgt. Raymond J. **Kowatch** and Sgt. Benjamin L. **Hope** were captured and became Prisoners of War. S/Sgt. Albert **Willard** and Sgt. John I. **Sned**e were able to evade the enemy.

June 28, 1944, Reims, France Airdrome
from the book "25 Milk Runs" by Richard R. "Dick" Johnson

Today's mission was destined to be very rough on me. Our target was the Juvincourt airfield near Reims, France. My diary for that day tells it all on one little bomb tag: "Reims, France-airfield south (Juvincourt) CAVU. Caught every flak gun in France. Led high squadron. Lost our left wing man who went down in flames (Lt. Wardowski). Lost one other also. Weather so bad on return we had to land at coast at B-24 base. 5 hours - over enemy territory two hours. Carried 38 x 100 pound general purpose bombs."

Beiser had just been promoted to First Lieutenant and we were in the "Buzz Blonde" again. We led the high squadron of the low, 41st "B" group of thirteen planes in the formation. Captain Packard of the 358th squadron was our leader for this mission. There were no aborts from either group on this raid. We assembled over base at four thousand feet and joined the other group after climbing to 17,000 feet while circling the base. We departed base at 6:23 AM in combat wing formation until just before the Initial Point where we started taking interval for group bombing since the weather was clear at the time. We followed the lead group as it cut slightly short of the IP, but we took aim at a dummy airdrome. When we discovered our error we made a 360 degree turn to the left and picked up the IP again and headed for the real airdrome. On our six minute bomb run the lead plane in our group experienced difficulties with the auto pilot and flew an erratic course. The bombardier was able to correct the problem and our bombs were away at 8:32 from 24,400 feet, right on target.

Four minutes later, a flak battery at Laon, France scored a direct hit near the right wing root of "Old Crow" flown by Lt Wardowski. The plane immediately became a ball of fire and rolled over in a 180 degree turn to the left. I soon lost sight of it, but Charlie Latta in the ball and Benny Gorchesky in the left waist counted six parachutes. After diving three or four thousand feet, the B-17 exceeded its limit and disintegrated into thousands of pieces. My recent friend, Stanley Wardowski was not able to get out. Neither was the navigator, Warren G. Birnbaum, or the tail gunner, Donald Wagner. This was their fifth or sixth mission.

Remarkably, the co-pilot, Neal E. Hainlin was able to team up with the two waist gunners, Sgt. A. Willard and Sgt. J.I. Snede, and they all evaded capture with the help of the French underground. The bombardier, 2nd. Lt. C.F. Eisel became a prisoner of war, as did the engineer, Sgt. R.J. Kowatch, and the ball turret gunner, Sgt. B.L. Hope. Of course, at that time, I didn't know who died and who survived.

Of our twenty-six B-17s, only six escaped damage. Six had major damage and fourteen had minor damage, one being lost. Since the German gunners were aiming visually, the chaff that we dropped to jam their radar did little good.

After all this action, the mission was still not over. The weather had turned sour over England while we were away, and as we started across the English channel we received word that we could land at alternate bases. Our group got under the clouds and headed for the nearest base, being driven below three hundred feet at times by the overcast. At times we flew over a rise in the ground, losing sight of our wing man

for a few moments in the cloud, but still able to see the ground. This happened three of four times until one time as we descended into the clear we met another B-17 going in the opposite direction at our altitude and only about three hundred feet to our left. A very close call.

When we found our destination of Debach, a B-24 base, we were flying so low to avoid clouds that we had to make shallow turns to avoid hitting trees with our left wing tip. Amazingly, all our group landed safely and after a little red tape for landing away from base, the weather improved and we all returned to Molesworth before dark. Nine of us landed at Debach, ten at Hardwick, two at Seething, one at Levenham, one at Downham Market and one made it to Bradwell Bay on three engines – literally. This B-17, flown by Lt. McConnell, had been hit by flak which destroyed an engine which fell from the plane. It is to his credit that he didn't bail his crew out over enemy territory.

When Lt. E.C. "Al" Lehmann landed at Downham Market in A/C number 42-107099 names "Old 99" after the tail number, he had two wounded crewmen aboard. He had been flying below and behind Lt. Wardowski.

Our old friend "Betty Jane" flown by Lt. Gallagher was the only one who managed to land at Molesworth this morning. It was a bad for day for, having lost several new friends who had slept in a nearby bunk in the 427th Officer's barracks.

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

CREW POSITIONS	TOG - Toggler	VI - Voice Interpreter	DOW - Died of wounds
CMP - Command Pilot	BT - Ball Turret Operator	OBS - Observer	EVD - Evaded the enemy
P - Pilot	TT - Top Turret Operator	PAS - Passenger	INT - Interned in neu cuntry
CP - Co-Pilot	TG - Tail Gunner	PHO - Photographer	REP - Repatriated
NAV - Navigator	NG - Nose Gunner		RES - Rescued
ANV - Ass't. Navigator	RG - Radio Gunner	RESULTS OF MISSION	ESC - Escaped
MNV - Mickey Navigator	WG - Waist Gunner	KIA - Killed in action	BO - Bailed out
ENG - Engineer	LWG - Left Waist Gunner	WIA - Wounded in action	DCH - Ditched
BOM - Bombardier	RWG - Right Waist Gunner	MIA - Missing in action	CR-L - Crashed on land
RO - Radio Operator	GUN - Gunner	POW - Prisoner of war	CR-S - Crashed at sea

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point - Group A

		<u>Stevens-Edwards</u> 058			
		<u>Callahan</u> 050		<u>Eldridge</u> 076	
	<u>Carpenter</u> 206			<u>Brown</u> 340	
<u>Moreman</u> 537		<u>Crozier</u> 405		<u>Wilson</u> 905	<u>Nafius</u> 841
	<u>Long</u> 187			<u>Walker</u> 830	
<u>Vitale</u> 861		<u>McMillan</u> 853	_____		_____
	_____			_____	

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point - Group B

		<u>Benham-Packard</u> 453			
		<u>Johnson</u> 949		<u>Stark</u> 006	
	<u>Watson</u> 086			<u>Beiser</u> 875	
<u>McConnell</u> 680		<u>Davis</u> 085		<u>Wardowski</u> 200	<u>Means</u> 391
	<u>Wallace</u> 569			<u>Stein</u> 298	
<u>Gallagher</u> 027		<u>Lehmann</u> 099	_____		_____
	_____			_____	

358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #44-6086 *My Blonde Baby*

P	Watson, John P., 1Lt
CP	Neely, Glenn H., 2Lt
NAV	Coe, Charles E., 2Lt
TOG	Borg, John E., 2Lt
ENG	Kapes, Paul J., S/Sgt
RO	White, John H., S/Sgt
TT	Hollifield, Robert G., Sgt
BT	Goldfarb, Wallace, Sgt
TG	Cummings, James E., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-97085 (No Name)

P	Davis, William C., 1Lt
CP	Graham, Edward, Jr., 2Lt
NAV	Alderson, Raleigh L., 2Lt
TT	Wright, Gene D., S/Sgt
ENG	Johnson, Walker K., S/Sgt
RO	Sandler, David L., S/Sgt
BT	Clarke, Kenneth, Sgt
TG	Hiland, Robert L., Sgt
WG	Rogers, Joseph S., Sgt

B-17G #42-97298 *The Floose*

P	Stein, Lawrence J., 2Lt
CP	Riseden, Jack W., 2Lt
NAV	Larkworthy, Bernard J., 2Lt
BOM	Carloss, Earl W., 2Lt
ENG	Card, Harry R., S/Sgt
WG	Grissom, Manley E., Sgt
RO	Meyer, Fred R., S/Sgt
BT	Truesdell, William P., Sgt
TG	Williams, Clarence J., Sgt

B-17G #42-102453 *Princess Pat*

P	Benham, Philip O., 1Lt
CP	Packard, Peter L.M., Capt
NAV	Contos, Spiros P., 2Lt
BOM	Ledbetter, Lamar E., 2Lt
ENG	Van Drunen, Cornelius, S/Sgt
RO	Downs, Reginald, S/Sgt
BT	Hill, Reginald, S/Sgt
TG	Dellinger, Lenoir E., Sgt
WG	Bonenberger, Robert E., Sgt

B-17G #42-102680 (No Name)

P	McConnell, John, 2Lt
CP	Hudson, Hendric S., 2Lt
NAV	Atwood, Thomas M., 2Lt
BOM	Bennett, Robert W., 2Lt
ENG	Johnson, Jack M., S/Sgt
WG	Schneider, Lawrence J., Sgt
RO	Rego, Charles J., S/Sgt
BT	Messerich, Jerome R., Sgt
WG	Krebs, Henry R., Sgt

B-17G #44-6006 (No Name)

P	Stark, Donald D., 2Lt
CP	Conley, George L., 2Lt
NAV	Hamm, Willard A., 2Lt
NG	Nelson, Richard G., 2Lt
ENG	Batten, Delmer G., S/Sgt
RO	Steinhagen, Joseph R., S/Sgt
TG	Morrow, James C., Sgt
BT	Richkind, Max, Sgt
WG	Eggink, James H., Sgt

B-17G #42-97949 (No Name)

P	Johnson, Harlan J., 1Lt
CP	Wright, Charles E., 2Lt
NAV	Hamilton, Bruce B., 2Lt
BOM	Morris, Warren B., 2Lt
ENG	Braun, Duane M., S/Sgt
RO	Jennings, Archie H., S/Sgt
TG	Buddingh, Frederick, Sgt
BT	George, William R., Sgt
WG	Ciglar, Joseph, Sgt

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #44-6076 *Liberty Run*

P	Eldridge, Truman K., 2Lt
CP	Sheehan, Daniel J., Jr., 2Lt
NAV	Durkin, James A., 2Lt
BOM	Campbell, Sanders H., 2Lt
ENG	Barnes, Frederick E., S/Sgt
RO	Rowlett, Samuel A., S/Sgt
BT	Strong, Ralph T., Cpl
TG	Panos, Andrew T., Cpl
WG	Wesley, LaFon, Sgt

B-17G #42-31830 *Marie*

P	Walker, Lewis M., 1Lt
CP	Doyle, Joseph J., 2Lt
NAV	Smith, Gordon F., 2Lt
BOM	Beers, Donald B., 2Lt
ENG	Sublett, James W., Sgt
RO	Lunday, Albert J., S/Sgt
BT	Hundley, Walter L., Sgt
TG	Reckert, Arthur C., Sgt
WG	Mathis, Henry C., Sgt

B-17G #42-107206 *Old Black Magic*

P	Carpenter, Arthur G., 1Lt
CP	Whitaker, Joseph C., 2Lt
NAV	Bates, Robert L., 1Lt
BOM	Rawlings, Loren F., 2Lt
ENG	Pordham, Jack F., S/Sgt
RO	Bortolotti, Barney J., S/Sgt
BT	Welch, John R., S/Sgt
TG	Nichols, Dalbee, Sgt
WG	Vanlandingham, John C., Sgt

B-17G #43-37537 *Queen of Hearts*

P	Moreman, Robert, 2Lt
CP	Quiggle, Robert D., 2Lt
NAV	Nielsen, Carl V., 2Lt
TOG	Cappucci, Joseph R., Sht
ENG	Genovese, Elic V., S/Sgt
RO	Barnts, Warren E., S/Sgt
WG	Alexander, Ray, Sgt
TG	Smith, Richard L., Sgt
BT	Leonard, Joseph P., Sgt

B-17G #42-31405 *Wallaroo MK II*

P	Crozier, Harry J., 2Lt
CP	Mowrey, Paul M., 2Lt
NAV	Kennedy, Clyde R., 2Lt
BOM	McCoy, Charles W., 2Lt
ENG	Passenant, Robert J., S/Sgt
RO	Hoyt, Robert B., S/Sgt
BT	Jara, Felix M., Sgt
TG	Stumpff, George W., Sgt
RWG	Butcher, Robert C., Sgt

B-17G #42-97058 *Scorchy II*

P	Stevens, Kermit D., Col
P	Edwards, Kenneth C., 1Lt
NAV	Hogan, Paul C., 1Lt
BOM	Hoover, William L., 1Lt
ENG	Johnson, Kenneth V., T/Sgt
RO	Kennedy, Herbert W., T/Sgt
BT	Guzman, Abel G., S/Sgt
TG	Moyer, William C., 2Lt
WG	Abernathy, Fay S., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-38050 *Thunderbird*

P	Callahan, Edward F., 1Lt
CP	Paton, Wallace L., 2Lt
NAV	Andreason, Rolf W., 1Lt
BOM	Campbell, Frank P., 2Lt
ENG	Schlottman, Jerome D., T/Sgt
RO	McLaughlin, William C., T/Sgt
BT	McIntyre, Harold W., S/Sgt
TG	Bohlman, Wilbert P., S/Sgt
WG	Brewer, Ray, S/Sgt

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #42-97861 *Iza Vailable III*

P	Vitale, Hector F., 2Lt
CP	Boyle, Leo J., F/O
NAV	Hardwick, Jack C., 2Lt
BOM	Cassidy, Charles F., 2Lt
ENG	Reale, Joseph C., Sgt
RO	Miller, Hilary C., S/Sgt
BT	Thomas, Hal B., Sgt
TG	Younger, Andrew H., Sgt
WG	Nordberg, Francis E., Sgt

B-17G #42-97905 (No Name)

P	Wilson, William M., 2Lt
CP	Howard, Victor L., 2Lt
NAV	Blumenthal, Robert, 2Lt
BOM	Benford, Jack H., 2Lt
ENG	Kuczewski, William J., T/Sgt
RO	Means, Robert D., S/Sgt
BT	Case, Donald G., Sgt
TG	Sauer, George N., Sgt
WG	Sabuda, Emil S., Sgt

B-17G #42-97853 *Lucky Linda*

P	McMillan, Murdock B., 1Lt
CP	Carlman, Harold L., Jr., 2Lt
NAV	Shaw, Marvin E., 2Lt
BOM	Rice, Charles G., Jr., Sgt
ENG	Herr, Allen H., Sgt
RO	Tibbetts, Arthur P., T/Sgt
BT	Karp, Harold, S/Sgt
TG	Cain, Leroy H., S/Sgt
WG	Cox, James D., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-31340 *Miss Liberty*

P	Brown, Leonard M., 2Lt
CP	Caldwell, Frederick J., 2Lt
NAV	Roche, William J., 2Lt
BOM	Blythe, Robert W., Jr., 2Lt
ENG	Jamison, Charles A., S/Sgt
RO	Libert, Irving, S/Sgt
BT	LaFranchi, Alfred D., Sgt
TG	Johnson, Francis D., Sgt
WG	Enget, Obert L., Sgt

B-17G #42-97187 *Miss Umbriago*

P	Long, Paul H., 2Lt
CP	Doughty, Gordon R., 2Lt
NAV	Vell, Ona L., 2Lt
BOM	Weaver, Thomas E., S/Sgt
ENG	Mours, John D., S/Sgt
RO	Habich, Arthur L., S/Sgt
BT	Flammia, Joseph E., S/Sgt
TG	Olson, Keith R., Sgt
WG	Abbott, Wesley C., Sgt

B-17G #42-37841 *Banshee*

P	Nafius, Verner H., 1Lt
CP	Tellinghuisen, Oscar A., 2Lt
NAV	George, Sidney L., 2Lt
BOM	Cummins, James E., 2Lt
ENG	Ellis, Richard R., S/Sgt
RO	Uhl, Willard H., T/Sgt
WG	McGinley, James E., Sgt
TG	Jinkens, Billy B., Sgt
BT	Davies, Charles G., Sgt

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #42-107099 *Old 99*

P	Lehmann, Elroy C., 2Lt
CP	Heil, Lee C., 2Lt
NAV	Rafferty, Henry E., Jr., 2Lt
BOM	Harper, Kenneth L., 2Lt
TT	Sydor, Joseph, S/Sgt
BT	Koon, Bennie, Sgt
RO	Kelley, James D., S/Sgt
TG	Ruhge, Wayne L., Sgt
WG	Garlick, Darrell L., Sgt

B-17G #42-32027 *Betty Jane*

P	Gallagher, John W., Jr., 1Lt
CP	Bitel, Peter, 2Lt
NAV	Hibbard, Troy W., 2Lt
BOM	Tow, Weyman J., 2Lt
TT	Lynn, William V., S/Sgt
BT	Kail, Nicholas F., S/Sgt
RO	Glass, David, S/Sgt
TG	Jacques, Warren, S/Sgt
WG	Soltero, John, S/Sgt

B-17G #42-39875 *Buzz Blonde*

P	Beiser, Theodore R., 2Lt
CP	Johnson, Richard R., 2Lt
NAV	Gepner, Isadore, 2Lt
BOM	Cooper, Edward G., 2Lt
TT	Buchanan, Lonnie J., T/Sgt
BT	Latta, Charles W., Sgt
RO	Gorchesky, Benny J., S/Sgt
TG	Brackey, Carroll H., Sgt
LWG	Haines, James W., Sgt

B-17G #42-102569 *Miss Lace*

P	Wallace, Walstein W., 2Lt
CP	Hamilton, Max B., 2Lt
NAV	Pero, Aloyius R., 2Lt
BOM	Isaac, Kenneth W., 2Lt
TT	Duerr, William P., Sgt
BT	Calnon, Frederick N., Sgt
RO	Kosher, Albert J., Sgt
TG	Thompson, Frederick A., S/Sgt
WG	Dimowitz, Morris, S/Sgt

B-17G #42-97391 (*No Name*)

P	Means, Wilford T., 2Lt
CP	Luther, Joseph P., 2Lt
NAV	Parker, Joseph B., 2Lt
BOM	Keese, Thomas R., 2Lt
TT	Payne, Joseph E., S/Sgt
BT	Miller, Robert L., Sgt
RO	May, J.H., S/Sgt
TG	Turner, James W., Sgt
WG	Sileo, J.J., Sgt

B-17G #42-31200 *Old Crow CR-L*

P	Wardowski, Stanley, 2Lt	KIA
CP	Hainlin, Neal E., Jr., 2Lt	POW
NAV	Birnbaum, Warren G., Jr., 2Lt	KIA
BOM	Eisel, Charles F., 2Lt	POW
ENG	Kowatch, Raymond J., Sgt	POW
BT	Hope, Benjamin L., Sgt	POW
RO	Willard, Albert, S/Sgt	EVD
TG	Wagner, Donald G., Sgt	KIA
WG	Snedde, John I., Sgt	EVD



*Woodcarving by
William F. "Bill" Adams*

THE LONG WALK OUT OF DANGER Evading the Enemy in Occupied France by John Snede

This is the story of my escape from France and how the people sheltered and protected me from capture by the German occupation forces during World War II. I didn't know their names or where they lived at the time, but learned them when I returned a half-century later.



STANLEY WARDOWSKI CREW - 427th BS
(crew assigned 427BS: 11 June 1944 - photo: 02 Jan 1944)
(Back L-R) 2Lt Stanley Wardowski (P), 2Lt Neil E. Hainlin, Jr. (CP),
2Lt Warren G. Birnbaum, Jr. (N), 2Lt Charles F. Eisel (B) - (Front L-R)
Sgt George Murphy (WG), S/Sgt Raymond J. Kowatch (E), S/Sgt Albert Willard (R),
Sgt John I. Snede (WG), Sgt Benjamin L. Hope (BT), Sgt Donald G. Wagner (TG)

I had celebrated my 19th birthday at Molesworth on June 3, 1944 as a waist gunner in the 427th Squadron. On June 28, flying in Old Crow piloted by Stan Wardowski, our mission was to attack a German air base at Juvencourt, France. Shortly after releasing our bombs, a flak burst ripped into our number three engine, engulfing the whole wing in flames. Seconds later, the plane exploded.

Some of us managed to bail out, others were blown out. I delayed opening my chute until I could distinguish objects on the ground. My boots flew off when the chute opened. I landed in a plowed field near a hedgerow dense with growth and thorns. Several small children appeared, gathered up my parachute and ran off.

I crawled into the hedgerow. I had just hidden myself when a German soldier came down the path next to the bushes. He was so close I could have grabbed him by the foot. A little later, another German soldier walked right by me.

It was later in the morning when Rene Baillie found me lying in the bushes. He reached in and put his hand on my shoulder and spoke to me in French, but I did not understand what he was saying. I did not know if he was with the free French or the Gestapo but felt that I had to take a chance with him.

I had an escape kit in my pocket that included translated phrases. We looked at this together, and from this I understood that I should stay where I was that he would be back. A short time later he returned with food and a bottle of cider. We looked at the translation phrase booklet again and from this I understood that I should stay at this spot and that he would return at dusk to get me. I ate breakfast at 4 AM and now it was getting to be late morning so the food and cider tasted really good. The only problem

was that I developed a case of diarrhea, which could have been from the food or from nerves. I spent the afternoon with my pants down, thinking it was a good thing I was on a sloping bank.

At dusk, Rene Baillie came back and got me and took me to his home in the village of Ebouleau. He also brought me a pair of knee high rubber boots to walk in. At this time I did not know his name or the name of the village.

We entered his place from the back road. The house was a large two story structure with an attic. His wife, Leone, had dinner ready when we arrived. It was a wonderful meal. After dinner I was taken up to the attic over the garage. There was a large very comfortable bed for me and I slept well.

I remember hearing a clock chime. It turned out that it was in the church across the circle from where they lived. The church was built in 1743. The bells chimed the hours on the hour and one chime on the half-hour. It worked on the same principle as the cuckoo clock. They would pull up the weights once a week.

The Baillies had a baby named Bernard, who was one year old. They were nervous about me being there. I'm sure that they felt the Germans would kill the baby as well as themselves if I were caught in their house. I could understand their feelings. They woke me early in the morning and gave me a wonderful breakfast.

The yard was surrounded by a large concrete wall that was about 10 feet tall and two feet wide. There was a place in the wall, hidden by a lilac bush, that had a hole in it large enough for me to crawl through. After breakfast I was told (using the translated phrase booklet) that I would spend the day at the wall, behind the bush. If the Germans came, I was to get out through the hole as quickly as possible and flee the area.

The weather was beautiful and at noon Leone brought me a tray with a delicious lunch. We ate the evening meal together in the house. After dinner Rene showed me a picture and asked if I could identify it. I said it was Albert Willard, our crew's radioman. I had given Rene some of my escape pictures, so I am sure Al was asked the same question. The pictures were given to us to be used for fake passports if it was necessary. After looking at the pictures, Rene and I left and walked on the path next to the road over to the Jean LaBrousse farm. It was there that Al Willard and I met up with each other for the first time since we had bailed out of Old Crow. We stayed together the rest of time we were in France.

We remained with the LaBrousse's about a week and then moved to Pierre and Odette Maujean's home in Tavaux. We lived with them for about a month. Their children slept across a bed so that Al and I would have a bed to sleep on.

While we were living with Pierre and Odette a neighbor of theirs sent a letter to the Gestapo saying that we were in the Maujean house, but the underground intercepted the letter at the Post Office. The reward would have been the equivalent of \$20,000 for each airman turned in.

Odette gave me a picture of herself with three sons (Christian , Alain, and Pierre) and one daughter (Maryse). They did have another infant daughter (Alette). She gave me the picture the day we left their home to live in the woods.

I learned later with a heavy heart that the day before the American troops arrived to liberate Tavaux, the Gestapo and Hitler's Elite SS troops tied Odette Maujean to a table and mutilated and burned her in front of her children. They then locked the children in the basement of their house and set fire to it. Neighbors rescued the children. The Germans used flame throwers and torched the whole town of Tavaux. Altogether, I was told 22 people were killed and 22 homes destroyed.

Our journey started after having an early evening meal with the Maujeans. We walked through fields and back roads all night except for an hour when we took a nap in the hayloft of a barn.

We had many different guides who walked with us. At pre-arranged meeting places, our guide would signal by whistling, a new guide would respond with a whistle and then come out and lead us on our way.

We walked until the next evening, over 60 miles as the crow flies, over fences and through fields, paths and side roads with me in my oversized knee high boots. When we arrived at the camp where we were going to live, the only thing I can remember is laying down on the ground and falling asleep and not waking up until the next morning.

The camp, in Rumigny Forest, was made up of men who had escaped from German labor camps or were wanted by the Germans for other reasons. The forest was not far from Blanche-fosse-et-bay in an area called Caillaux.

There was a farm at the edge of the woods owned and operated by a couple named Monsieur and Madam Blain, and they provided our drinking and cooking water as well as other supplies. The farm was located a little over 60 miles east and north of Tavaux.

In the evening just as it was starting to get dark, we would walk to the farm for water and whatever supplies they could give us. If the upstairs window was not covered, it was safe to come in. If the window was covered, we should stay away.

While living in the woods, I got an infection in my right ring finger and it hurt all the way up to my armpit. The Blains contacted a French doctor who met me at the farmhouse in the evening. He cleaned out the infected area, put some medication on it and bandaged it. It healed very nicely with no more problems.

Al and I stood guard duty at night. The ground sloped up away from us and on moonlit nights we could see the wild pigs (boars) running through the fields. There was a young fellow in our group whose parents were in a German prison camp for helping airmen. His favorite past time was cutting down telephone lines. He came back with large coils of wire.

Our sleeping quarters were huts made from tree branches that we tied together with the telephone wire. We had bunk beds also made of tree branches wired together, built onto the side of the huts. The huts were wide enough to hold two people. Our latrine was a thick branch tied horizontally in place between two trees, with a hole dug behind it. The leaves on the branches served as toilet paper. We washed in a stream that ran near by. It was a gently flowing stream that was clear and shallow.

The leader of our group was a lawyer with code name of George. His real name was Henri Lallement. Another man who lived with us had been a sports writer with a newspaper in Paris. His code name was Julien. His real name was Jean Boeler. Julien spoke very good English and wanted to talk with us most of the time to improve his English.

The man who wrote the letter to the Gestapo about Al and me staying in the Maujean home was brought to this camp. He was married and the father of two children. He was given a trial, found guilty and disposed of.

We were at the camp in the forest about a month. We left the camp with a group of young men who had a radio. They were led by Raymond Hantoaux, and we traveled north to Hurtebise to the farm of Raymond's parents. We stayed overnight sleeping in the hayloft of the barn.

After leaving the farm, we traveled south and east towards Reims. Whenever a radio message was sent we would have to be on the move immediately or the Germans could track us down.

We traveled constantly, moving closer to the American lines as the Germans retreated and the battle front moved closer to us. It got to the point that as we moved forward we would sleep in a farm house one night and the retreating Germans slept in it the next night or we slept in a barn and the next night the Germans slept in it.

Raymond and his group received a radio message to join up with French marksmen, 12 miles from where we were. They said goodbye and told us we would be okay. Al and I were alone and we did not know at the time that this would be our last night of evading the enemy.

We found another wooded area and bedded down with a raincoat to cover both of us against the pelting of a light drizzle. We could hear the German equipment moving by not too far away. How and why we slept, I do not know. When I woke up in the morning the sun was shining and it was a beautiful day. Two men from the French underground and a American platoon leader were standing over us. The platoon leader was T/Sgt Paul Malorana with the 3rd Armored Division Service Co. His men were camouflaged in the bushes all around us. After we identified ourselves, the platoon leader called his squad together to meet us. One of the Frenchmen had a bottle of liquor and we all had a toast.

It wasn't much longer before Al Willard and I were on our way to Paris, London, Molesworth and home.