SHOT DOWN.

On the 12th September 1944, we set course over Base, on our twentieth bombing operation. The target was Frankfurt, and as we flew low over the English Coast I had no premonition of what lay before us. Flying over liberated France at under one thousand feet gave us a sense of power and even security: civilians waved to us from fields, roads and numerous villages as we swept over onwards towards Germany.

The disadvantages of these tactics was to be our downfall. Climbing on the long leg before the target, I found great variations in the wind-speed and direction, which greatly affected our E.T.A. Frankfurt. Averaging a few of these out I made seconds for the difference of two or three minutes, and passed the new course onto the Skipper: shortly after turning, however, Johnny reported searchlights dead ahead. This was Mannheim, which should have been about five or six miles to Starboard of our track. I realised at once that we had overshot the prescribed turning point, and instructed the Pilot to weave to Port, while I computed the new course. We had scarcely turned when the Mid-upper gunner spotted a fighter coming into the attack: he yelled, 'Starboard Go!' and Norman threw the kite about to shake off the attacker. In time it was only seconds, but as we dived and turned in all directions, it seemed eternity. We had barely resumed Course, when simultaneously Brad gave another corkscrew and a loud 'bang' occured between Ash. the W/Op., and myself.

Flames leapt from the fuse-age behind me, and the fumes and smoke blotted my vision. The smell of cordite, as our Rear-gunner belted away with his four guns, mingled with the fumes of scorched metal and swirled around the fuselage. At first I did not appreciate the extent of the damage, but when Norman shouted over the intercom. 'Prepare to abandon aircraft,' the seriousness of the situation was fully apparent. Immediately and automatically I widened off my helmet and the telephonic and oxygen apparatus attached to it, and grabbed my 'chute from under my seat. Whether due to haste or not I cannot say, but I found extreme difficulty in attaching the rack to the right hook of my harness. Bob, having by now fixed his own, came to my assistance and eventually the ring and clip were firmly fixed as one.

hear the Skipper asking how it was. The bombs had been jettisoned, and the Bomb-aimer was fighting the flames in the bomb-bays from his position in the nose. I looked back down the aircraft and noticed that the flames in the fuselage had died down, and influenced Norman to this effect. Bob meanwhile attempted to reach the other extinguishers, but to no avail. I shouted in the Skipper's ear, 'No extinguishers!' and as flames were licking along the Port wing, and again swiping around in the body of the aircraft, he yelled back - 'BALE OUT.'

At this time we answered to be joined by a group of searchlights, presumably from the Mannheim defences, and by their brilliance I could see the instrument panel and noted that we were now at 13,000 feet, and Norman seemed to have her under perfect control. We had lost some five thousand feet during the evasive action taken during the attacks. Norman just sat there flying the damaged 'plane as he would have done on a cross-country over England. I rixed his 'chute on his chest and then moved forward to the B/A's compartment.

Barry, the engineer, was leaving through the front hatch as I descended into the nose; Johnny was sitting there still fixing his harness, and he yelled at me and motioned to get out. Arrarently his intercom. had been shot away by a bullet, and he had not heard the order to Abandon. Hand on rip-cord, and, I think, a prayer on my lips, I shot feet foremost out into darkness and space. There was a sudden roar as I fell between the four engines, then a silence which almost deafened one, and I pulled the handle of my 'chute. In less time than it takes to read these few words, I was swinging gently to and fro, still holding tightly onto the metal rip-cord, with some strange notion of keeping it as a souvenir. I felt no great jerk, nor did I have any sensation of descending: still I felt carefully all over my body just to check in on the harness, and possibly to see if I was still in one complete bit. I was.

Swinging gently in space, the sensation was one of extreme loneliness and helplessness: there was no sound, other than the soft swish of the silk above me, and the faint noise of a distant harness. Below me I could see B.U. and beyond on the ground fires were burning: searchlights and flashes lit the sky but dimly, and the only ground feature I could pick out was a broad river, the Maine, stretching out on my right. I hoped I wasn't going to land in the river, but the river, or possible

the pendulum motion I had acquired: it was more by luck than skill that I successfully shooked the swing the first time, but my second effort nearly put me higher than the white canopy of my parachute, so I thought it safer to leave well alone. By twisting my head I could see two more of the crew in the distance, and I got the impression of another 'chute beyond them. Of the Lancaster I could see no signs.

I decided to watch Barry, below me, and note where he landed, then I realised that I seemed to be getting no nearer the ground. Just as I brought my feet together, according to the drills we had received this is the way to land properly, I hit the ground with a resounding thud. Taken quite by surprise I let out a stifled 'Uph!' as the wind was knocked out of me.

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ESCAPE ?

'When you're lost in the wild,
and scared as a child!'
R.W.S.

Picking myself up, having successfully skilled the air from my 'chute, I undid the harness and looked around. I had landed in a field of tall cane-like crops and for the love of me couldn't get any sense of direction. Suddenly I smied a figure in a yellow Mae-West approaching along a rough cart-track. It was R.J., and I don't think I have ever before been so glad to see anyone.

'Hello, George!' he said, and considering our predicament I think that greeting ranks next to Stanley's 'Doctor Livingstone, I presume!'

We took cover in the tall crop and made our plans. To escape was of course our immediate decision, and we set about burying our parachutes. The ground was hard, but we eventually covered my rack and harness with loose earth and broken leaves, then we set about concealing Barry's from view, at a spot fifty yards from the other.

Meanwhile, to the North, we could see flashes and signs of gun-fire, while red and green Indicators cascaded down over the target area. The attack was on with a vengeance. How I envied the boys on there, who in a few more hours would be sitting down to bacon and eggs back at their bases.

Leaving our chutes securely hidden, we set out along the cart-track, heading in a Westerly direction. About one hundred yards along we slung our Mae-Wests in among the crops, covering them as best we could: we decided to retain the emergency floating torches which are attached to all life-jackets, and they were to prove extremely valuable to us at later dates. At this time we also removed the whistles from the nooks of our flying blouses - they seemed to rattle such a lot - and we then checked up on our worldly possessions.

Both of us were in regulation battle-dress, with flying boots of the issued pattern. We agreed, however, to keep the tops on our boots and this was a great help in keeping our feet warm and dry. In my pockets I had: Leather discarette case containing some

Navigation rule: rubber; Penguin mascot; Identity card; Language card; two handkerchiefs; money which amounted to only 1.4.6 d., and my Escape Kit, containing concentrated foods, compass etc. It was the most valuable possession we had: R.A.F.'s was still in the kite with his tool kit, so we would have to use it very sparingly. Now for a try at getting back to Blighty!

We carried on down the track, progressing cautiously, only to come to a sudden halt. In front of us lay a few scattered buildings, with a group of large wireless masts: shinks of light showed from what we assumed to be the radio buildings, so we beat a hasty retreat back along our trail. After getting our breath back we tried to travel Southwards: any direction now seemed welcome, just so long as we got away from this area. On our right lay a road, and about three hundred yards dead ahead a red light seemed to indicate a road block, or similar obstruction. We were rather wary about leaving the cover of the fields, but eventually crawled and slithered across the road, into the fields again and set out at a good pace, taking our direction from the stars.

Ploughing through tall crops, similar to those we had landed in, stumbling among cabbages, and potatoe shaws, picking our way slowly across open fields, we made our way to freedom - at least we hoped this would be the case. Naturally we were still a bit nervous, and bushes or roots in the fields always seemed to resemble human beings: roads we avoided like the plague, and we were especially careful when we were forced to cross one.

Having crossed a single track railway, roads, farm-tracks, and countless fields, we eventually came up against a first class road, bounded on the South by high barbed-wire, and sturdy concrete posts. Behind us the only cover was a small clump of trees and undergrowth, too near the road for safety: nothing for it but to hop the wire and carry on. After a few more kilometres we came to a narrow river, bordered on either side by short steep banks and reeds. It was too deep to ford, and we did not feel like swimming it, especially as it was now after 08.00 hrs. and getting lighter as the minutes went by. After exploring the banks for some distance, in search of a bridge, we settled down among the reeds, and made ourselves as comfortable as the

far across this barrier large woods offered us comparative safety during day-light hours. Still we had to make the best of where we were, and after showing a couple of Horlick's tablets we did our best to get some sleep.

Here we were deep in the heart of Germany - or as deep as one could want to be at such a moment - and we were lying by a small river, covered with reeds, trying to sleep. It seemed impossible, yet I actually dozed off for a couple of hours, and when I awoke shortly before 09.00 hrs. it took some minutes before I quite realised where I was. It was by now quite light and the rustle of birds and other life in the woods helped to cover the noise of our movements. We discussed our plans all over again, then again, just to pass the time: we studied a map, which Barry produced, but it was of Switzerland, France and only a small portion of Germany. We were off the map! I tried to visualise our position, and having decided approximately where we were I estimated the distance to the Swiss frontier. That seemed the most advisable place to head for: we were not too sure of how the French/German border would be, as the invading armies were constantly advancing, and we did not want to land up in the middle of a retreating army.

The sound of childrens voices came to our ears. We peered from our hide-out, and bang in front of our eyes, not two hundred yards distant, lay a group of farm buildings, while in the yard a number of youngsters ran about playing games as any child would do! From our position we could take in the whole scene, with no risk of being observed. The farm seemed quite modern, the buildings and out-houses being half-timbered: beyond, with only a few fields separating, lay a larger cluster of buildings - probably a small village. In the nearby farm the days work had commenced, and as we lay there, a farm hand could be heard yelling orders to a team of horses, working a couple of fields distant. There were times when we held our breaths: the children, in playing, would sometimes venture up to the top of the yard, and they were then only forty or fifty yards away. Too bad if they decided to play on the river banks.

As we would have to remain hidden till darkness fell, we tried to sleep again, but I found it no mean task, to even lie still for long. It certainly tried our patience. A break came, however, when, shortly

gave a target to the North all they had: two plumes of smoke seemed to indicate a couple of aircraft going down. The hours dragged painfully by: when I looked at my watch it seemed almost as if the second hand had stopped. Work carried on in the farm and surrounding fields, while to the East we could occasionally hear heavy traffic passing to and fro - obviously there must be a bridge down there, and we decided to head in that direction when we could move in safety.

At long last dusk fell: we had munched some concentrated vitamin food-bar, and now could wait no longer. Despite the fact that we could still make out the buildings, we ventured out of hiding and made our way along the river bank, crouching down to avoid detection. Soon we came to a large concrete bridge which crossed the river: some traffic still passed along it, but in between we managed to climb up the bank onto the road, run across the bridge and jump down to the fields, where we could take cover. Here we decided to supplement the tablets we had taken with some more solid food: we had little choice so grabbed a cabbage out of a field, and munched the leaves. It was a bit strong and burned the throat, but that did them matter. We then retreated to the river once more, and by sliding down the bank I was able to fill the folding water bag: we added a tablet to purify it, then set out for the woods we had seen during the day. This meant we had to again cross the autobahn, but this was accomplished without mishap, and we dived into the cover of the trees. No sooner were we under cover when the very heavens seemed to open and down came the rain: there was nothing for it but to stay where we were. To move through the dense undergrowth was impossible in the dark, and the road was still too busy.

Once more, then, we had to find cover. We crawled under some bushes, getting drenched from the drops we dislodged off the branches. When the spot we were lying in decided to become a small stream we had to evacuate and seek another spot. It was hopeless trying to get a dry spot to stop in so we found a good sized tree, after a process of trial and error, and stood there watching the rain sheeting down.

When dawn came it was still raining and we were still standing there under the same tree. From our

see us, so that every time we heard approaching cars we had to duck down, and take cover in the damp under-growth. This was all very well, but there were times when we had no warning, as for example when civilians walked by. Then we had not even time to crouch down, and just stood there hoping we would not be spotted. The rain did not abate much, and consequently we remained under our leaky shelter: we improved it, but only a little, by hanging an old basin above our heads, then by standing back to back we contrived to keep from getting wetter. When the rain did stop for any short period we removed the basin, turned it upside down and sat on it, discussing our prospects.

How many times we consulted the useless map, I wouldn't even like to guess. I had drawn a rough map of our position in relation to the frontiers, as near as I could remember, but that did not really help us much. We still had some cabbage leaves left, and we munched these around noon: water didn't bother us much; there was enough coming down to satisfy any man! In the afternoon we moved about more freely, and collected a few handfulls of berries, which served as our dessert for the day. By now we were completely disgusted with the Third Reich's waether, and like their Fuhrer, our patience was exhausted.

We decided therefore, to move through the woods before it was really dark, and at least cover some ground. At about eight o'clock, we had a couple of Horlick's tablets each, and set out through the woods. The going was comparatively easy, and apart from having to cross a number of wide clearings, (No doubt to counteract fires), we made good progress. The road was still in sight, and only about one hundred yards to our right: traffic was still fairly heavy, and by the time we reached the limit of the trees, it was still not safe to venture onto the road. The trip through the wood, had warmed us up, and we felt much better and perhaps more confident. Only once had we had a close call, and that was when Barry pulled me away from springing a trap, which I had not noticed.

On surveying the land ahead, we decided to carry straight on: we could follow the road, by keeping to the fields, and as, at this point the road rose about twenty feet above our heads we were screened from any passers-

were ready at a moments notice to dive for cover. This proved a much easier and quicker way of travel than we had anticipated: traffic could be seen almost a mile away, thanks to the straightness of the Dutch's autobahns, and as pedestrians rarely used such routes, we were fairly safe from being spotted. Once or twice in the hour we would have to dive into shelter of the woods, which ran for miles alongthe road-side.

The pace we set was moderate: I estimated three miles an hour as our normal walking pace, thus allowing for occasional rests, and the necessity of taking shelter. We were able to confirm this by sign posts, converting the metric system to suit our own purposes. Eventually, however we adopted the metric system for our own use, and became quite adept at estimating distances by the kilometre. So long as we kept moving we were warm, but when we would halt for a brief spell the tendency was to get cold and shivery, and listless. As the days passed this feeling of wanting to sleep more became stronger, and we had to force ourselves to keep going, and not sit down when we stopped.

The hours of darkness did not seem to last long and by five o'clock we were both ready to stop, and the increasing light made it imperative that we seek shelter. That was a relatively easy task: the woods were still around us, and we selected a spot that offered concealment and relative comfort. The ground was still wet, and we gathered branches of small birch trees, which we spread out to form a bed, covering ourselves with a few more, just in case someone should venture through the woods.

Sleep came and went in two or three hours, and once again we were faced with the problem of passing the hours of daylight. We breakfasted of some turnips and parsnip, which we had extracted from some farmers field during the night. I won't say it was satisfying but at least it served the useful purpose of stalling our hunger for some little time: with a couple of concentrated tablets to follow we rolled over and went to sleep again. But not for long! Awake again, we discussed our plans once more, and passed the time talking about nothing of particular importance, but using a lot of words to describe it.

When darkness again cast a protecting cloak around the movements of such people as ourselves, we set out again

compass I had in my escape kit: search as I could I could not find it, and we went back to our 'hole' hoping to find it: we scouted around using our 'Mae-West' lamps, but it was liking looking for the proverbial needle that got lost in a haystack! However, the R.A.F. must have made allowance for Navigators who loose compasses, and I produced a spare, which although not so good as the lost 'Home-finder' proved useful in its own little way.

This was the 10th of September, with yet two hours to go to the to-morrow. We covered the ground at our pre-determined pace, and apart from dodging cars and trucks, we met no obstructions to set us back. The night was clear, and mild: indeed we sweated a bit as we strolled through Germany. It was probably around this period that we contracted the disease prevalent to air-men, when flying, but also equally dangerous on the ground. I mean over-confidence. The whole situation seemed so outrageously funny, and simple, that we never thought for one minute but what we would be back home in two or three weeks at the latest. Even if we did not get to blighty, we could be assured of spending a pleasant vacation in Switzerland, surrounded by enchanting scenery, beautiful girls, and appetising food-stuffs. That's what we thought!

Added to all this, was the privilege of touring Germany, when for the most part, all tourist agencies had closed down: it cost us nothing, and we were still being paid back home - so, why worry. Naturally, though we did think occasionally of home, but as worrying about our folks certainly did not alleviate the position, we gave that up as a bad job, and concentrated on getting back.

At one point during the night, we had to lie up actually on the road-side, under one miserable little bush, which sadly lacked any protective foliage. The reason for this was due to the proximity of a railway siding, one nefarious Nazi (?), whistling nothing less than 'Roll Out the Barrel,' and the danger of the said musician attempting conversation with us. We were not at all proficient at the German language: I had unearthed a card of stock phrases in many languages, but as the only useful one was to the effect that 'We were in a hurry,' our intelligence decried conversation as taboo.

A description of the autobahns, for which Germany is famed, would not, I think, be out of place. As I [illegible]

before, they are designed primarily for long distance road travel, and not for roadstrian use. Normally they are divided by a broad strip of grass verge, at the sides, and again divided in the centre to separate oncoming traffic. In some cases the roads are even sub-divided again for slow and fast traffic. The surfaces were exceptionally good, and most cars which we observed were travelling, apparently without effort, at well into the forty-fifty m.p.h. region. Moreover, too, maintained a fair speed. Except when, as we frequently noticed, they included towed vehicles. This was a common feature on the roads in Germany. Private cars would be hitched to army trucks, and all lorries, and even small cars, were fitted, front and rear, with tow-hooks. The number of gas producer units was also great, though in the case of private cars, these were usually included in the body and well concealed. It was amusing to watch a car draw in by the road-side, and watch the gentleman, (of Nazi standards), potting out equipped with a small shovel to shove fuel into the dying fire. Then he would drive off surrounded effectively by his own smoke, which issued from every crack and crevice in the bonnet.

Spanning the roads at odd intervals, were bridges which carried secondary roads, perhaps linking villages, or farming localities. It was rare indeed, to come across an actual junction of roads, such as we have at crossings in this country. Alongside, these overlays, it was also customary to find a small hut, which was no doubt intended as a shelter for roadmen, or long distance drivers.

To one of these huts we directed our attention, as dawn once again streaked the horizon with light patches. We had covered approximately twenty miles, and felt ready for a rest. Actually it would have been safe to continue for a few more miles, but the tempting security of four walls and a roof were too much for weak wills. So, without any reluctance we broke into the hut, wedging the door with a lump of wood. On examining our premises, we discovered that an ample supply of dry wood was available to light the stove, so we voted for a fire and had it. To adopt the phraseology of a western line-shooter, there we were miles from anywhere, squatting in the hut kindly provided by a near-by hangar, with a roaring fire, which belched forth flame and smoke, to the broken chimney. Less than three yards from our front door was the main road, and we could hear the swish of the tyres as trucks passed our sanctuary.

Being great hoisgvers in all home comforts, we took off our flying boots, and socks, arranging them around the stove to dry. The aroma of sweat, mud and smoke brought tears to our eyes, and despite the fact that we could hardly see the distant wall of the hut, (barely eight foot distant), we were comfortable and happy. Bloom was certainly more pleasant that night, or what was left of it. We ate what vegetables we had left, and a couple more tablets, then having dined our fill, we decided to explore the countryside while it was light, and perhaps make some distance, through the woods.

As Hook would have it the woods proved most unsuitable for this, owing to the sparseness of the vegetation, and we were forced to cut across a ploughed field; half way, found us at least fifty yards from the nearest shelter, with a farmer working at one end of the field and a main road skirting the Northern boundary. Adopting military technique we withdrew according to plan, and from the security of the shrubbery we decided our next best move. It was apparent that should any Hun spot us lurking in the undergrowth he would naturally become suspicious, so we headed for the open road, and proceeded along it heedless of two other farmers ploughing their allotted area of the Third Reich. Then the fun started: we found ourselves faced with one of those fiendishly clever systems which can baffle even the most adept Navigator. Roads served all over the place, or so it seemed to our discerning eyes. Estimating the compass bearing of each road, we found to our amazement that not one route led in the direction of Switzerland; at least they certainly proved misleading, and we hastened to find the nearest direction post, with instructions to all passers-on how to reach Basle by the most direct route. This entailed retracing our footsteps, and following the road we had traversed the previous night. On the approach of a motor-cycle we dropped over the side and slithered down the embankment, finding shelter in a narrow cut-away which was crammed full of timber. Something crashed through the trees behind us, and we crouched at any minute to be hailed in the harsh Deutsche tongue, enquiring as to what we were doing playing hide and seek. However it was only a couple of young deer startled no doubt by our intrusion into their own haven of refuge. When the road was clear of traffic we studied the large direction boarding, and noted the road we would have to follow, but decided against doing so until it was dark.

On the return trip to our chateau we spotted a truck standing on the bridge which crossed the main autobahn, and as it appeared to be deserted we agreed to investigate: it turned out to be a converted truck of well known American manufacture, and apart from having no tyres, and half the engine missing it was quite serviceable. In the back was a wicker basket containing some ancient bread, now green with old age, but in the driver's compartment we found what must have been his own rations: this consisted only of bread, hard I admit, but otherwise quite edible. From our vantage point we could see the surrounding country for a good mile at least, and on a level road we saw yet another truck, also apparently deserted. This was too good to be true: if one lorry revvided dead, then surely something could be scrounged from the other. So we walked along the road, down the bridge, and on the incline to the second vehicle: we had approached it from the opposite side of the road, and imagine our surprise when we were directly level with it, and the driver got out to have a better look at us.

There was no immediate cover, so we casually returned his vacant stare, and strolled on for about a hundred yards. Never heeding to look back we sat down on the grass verge, and discreetly glanced back at the truck: Jerry was perched on the back watching us, but when he saw us looking at him he got back into the cabin. Well, one could hardly walk past him again, so we sat on for a bit, then decided to walk further up the road. This proved most entertaining, for less than three hundred yards up this road we came across a village, straggling along a still smaller road, which passed beneath our own cobbled way. There were a number of the locals gossiping at the doorways, and a few kids of tender years playing nothing in particular in the streets: (Probably, 'Catch the Englishmen!). Around the corner our road curved over a high viaduct, three or four hundred yards long. Once on this bridge we would be free for all to gaze upon, so we dived into an orchard to plan our next best move. Thinking on an empty stomach is not much fun, at the best of times, and when you are liable to be 'mated' at the next move it is even worse, so we paused till we dined off the apples which abounded in this little plum of gnarled trees. To complete the scene, a chap was working in the neighbouring field, but we carried on with our lawful business of rinsing the fruits of the enemy. Having eaten a fair number we

Well, we held a pow-wow, and it was decided by a majority to carry on over the bridge. We may as well go the full hog, and if we were to be caught, there was no sense in not having a good time before that event took place. However, Lady Luck, co-operated whole heartedly with our scheme and we duly crossed the bridge without being molested in any way. A sign post proclaimed that we were heading for Stuttgart: the last time we had been there was with a load of fire-bombs, and as it was too far off our route to visit, we hopped over the wall and slid down the embankment, once more. This continual slidding wasn't doing the seats of our pants any good, but it did get one around much quicker. Maybe we went down fast, but we came up very much faster, when we found a fellow traveller pushing a bike along on the lower road: once he was out of sight we dashed across the road, and down another slippery slope to the side of a genuine murmuring brook. It rippled over rocks, sparkling in the rays of sunshine which filtered through the overhanging trees. Sampling the stream we decided that it did not need to be purified any more and we drank our fill, having munched some more apples. Then we filled our water bag.

In view of the trip back to the hut being through the village again we sought shelter elsewhere till opportunity presented itself. Eventually we slected another hut, once more on the road-side, but not quite so elaborate in construction: in fact you could put your eye to any wall and see daylight through it - definately 'jerry constructed.' Inside, too, was a large pot of paint, no doubt to paint white lines on the roads; we fixed the door to this so that it would not swing open, there being no lock on it, and settled down to wait. Traffic passed at regular intervals, and once a large truck stopped twenty yards up from our hidey-hole: the soldier got out, looked thoughtfully at the hut, then disappeared into the wood, returning in about five minutes and driving off.

Another critical moment was when a cyclist halted outside to light his pipe. The time passed, nevertheless, and by sleeping and eating turn about it was not long till we could safely venture out. The way back was not without a little excitement: crossing the bridge by day had occupied approximately three minutes, but by night it took almost half-an-hour, due to an army convoy which we encountered.

As we had to pass the orchard once more, we again stocked up with provisions, and on Barry's suggestion we explored another garden for some potatoes. These we intended baking in the hut, before continuing with our journey, as a hot meal would no doubt prove beneficial to our constitution. We found the hut, and once more got the stove blazing: not quite so good this time, however, as the wood was getting low, and what was available was damp. I went outside to scout around for more, and noted that although only smoke filled the hut, a good two-feet of flame spewed forth from our battered chimney. It took some experimenting before a compromise was reached between smoke and flame, then we stuck the spuds in the fire, and settled back to wait.

Having satisfied the inner man, we were reluctant to move from our abode, and decided that a snooze would be just the thing before starting out. Ofcourse it was the worst possible thing we could have done and when we finally left at about 02.00 hours we had that morning after feeling, and definately dozed off as we tried to follow the road. It too something like an hour before we had our road-sense, and were able to proceed at a decent pace.

Sometime during the night we stopped for water and I climbed down some steps to the small stream: when I stooped to fill the bag I was puzzled by the nearness of the surface of the water, then I found I was standing on a step completely submerged by the stream, and had not noticed this with having flying boots on. I squelched along the rest of the night, and what with having burned a hole in my sock at the fire, the night before, I did not feel too happy about the whole affair.

Once again we found ourselves scrambling up and down embankments, this time in an endeavour to hide from a car, then in an effort to avoid two civilians who were on the lower road, which we had landed on. That warmed me up considerably!

The problem of finding cover for the hours of daylight once again cropped up, and the outlook was not so rosey as on previous occasions. The only available wood was full of prickly, dense, undergrowth, and I fear we argued a good bit as to whether we should carry on or lie low. By the time we had reached a decision

conforming to the shape of our bodies, and we got pretty well scratched before we were in any way comfortable. Sleep was not so easy in coming, and we lay there generally fed up with the World and the Germans in particular.

To provide amusement the Huns sent along a road gang who started tampering with the perfectly good surface already there, immediately in front of our lodgings - typical of any road gang! This got a bit boring after a couple of hours and we ambled around a bit, like Old Mill, looking for a better bed. We found that our bed had consisted of bramble bushes, so we decided that a change of diet was called for, and we spent a profitable hour or so scoffing brambles.

Now the rest of the day was spent matters little: it bored us, and would probably bore the reader, so we shall skip the details.

When dusk fell, we once more gathered our faculties, arms, water-bag etc., and set out to cover some more ground.