

FIRST OUT OF DENMARK

R70152 SGT, D, V, SMITH D.F.M, CD,

NO, 7 PATHFINDER SQUADRON R.A.F.

I joined the R.C.A.F. in 1940, after completing an Aero-Engine Course at the Galt Aircraft School (Class 2). After completing documentation and receiving a uniform at No. 1 Manning Depot in Toronto, I was posted to No. 6 Repair Depot at Trenton and in 1941, volunteered for Active Service and was posted to No. 402 Fighter Squadron in England. At 402 Squadron I serviced Hurricanes and Spitfires, flown by P.O. L. S. Ford (AE-0). In the fall of 1942, I re-mustered to aircrew, took a Flight Engineer's Course at St. Athans in Wales, and graduated as a Flight Engineer on Stirling Bombers. At this time there was a shortage of flight engineers, due to heavy losses and the increase in numbers of four engine bombers replacing the old Wellingtons and Hamptons.

On completing the six-week course, we were sent: to an operational squadron. I was posted to No. 75 Sqn. R.N.Z.A.F. at - Newmarket. Here I met the crew I was to fly with:

Fit. Lt. Charles Woodbine Parish D.F.C. - Pilot - R.A.F.

P.O. E. R. (Bob) Vance – Navigator - R.C.A.F.

Flt. Sgt. J. S. (Jimmy) Marshall - Bomb Aimer - R.C.A.F.

Flt. Sgt. Louis Krulicki - Wireless Operator – R.C.A.F.

Sgt. Charles Farey - Mid Upper Gunner - R.A.F.

Sgt. Jack Lees - Rear Gunner - R.A.F.

This was our skipper's third crew. His first was lost when they had to bail out over the North Sea in September 1940. The following story appeared in the Daily Mail, September 21, 1940:

"PILOT JUMPS - SWIMS SEVEN MILES"

Here is one of the most amazing stories of the war. It was told to me yesterday by a young Pilot Officer, sole survivor of the crew of a heavy bomber that crashed into the Channel when returning from a raid on Germany last week. The machine was struck by lightning, one engine caught fire and the other failed. The pilot officer saved himself by swimming seven miles in darkness, in his 'Mae West' flying jacket, to the English coast. This is his story in his own words; "We were flying at 6,000 feet when we ran into a storm, thunder, and lightning. We went up to 9,000 feet and turned on the de-icers.

'Suddenly there was a terrific clap of thunder right over us, and for a few seconds we were completely out of control. The aircraft was badly iced up, and we began losing height at the rate of 2,000 feet a minute, though the nose was up. Because of the thickness of the ice on the windscreen we were flying blind, and just as we turned course to head for home the port engine packed up. We tried the de-icers, but without effect. The rear gunner then reported that the engine

was on fire, but this did not worry us much, and we went on until we saw searchlights, which meant the coast of England.

At this moment the other engine conked out. We were flying at 7,000 feet The Captain decided we'd get over the coast and then bail out. Soon, he asked the rear gunner if he thought we were over land and both the rear gunner and the navigator agreed we were, though we were still flying blind. The Captain then ordered the crew to abandon the aircraft.

The Captain and I went on. We were now down to 4,000 feet. The ice had gone, and I saw searchlights about five to ten miles away on the starboard side. The compass was quite hopeless and no earthly use. I thought we were flying south along the coast. The Captain ordered me to jump. We wished each other "Good Luck" and just before I jumped, I yelled to him, "Turn Right".

The parachute opened all right and going down I could see the searchlights about seven miles away. When I landed in the sea must have gone down a pretty good depth, and came up, with a terrific rush. In fact, I practically "took-off", as my parachute dragged me along at a terrific speed. I lay flat on my tummy and "planed" across the rough water, jettisoned the chute end flying boots and began to swim. The searchlights had gone out, so I tried to guide myself by the North Star, kept it on my right, and swam towards the coast. My "Mae West" was very useful.

After about: an hour the searchlights came on again, and I swam towards them. I swam for a long time. Twice I almost gave up but something kept me going. "When dawn came, I saw that I was about three-quarters of a mile from shore. took of my trousers and made a last effort, as I was about all in. I reached the shore opposite a pillbox. I was too weak to pull myself out of the water and was rolling about half in and half out of the sea. I shouted several times, and at last some soldiers rushed out of the pillbox and picked me up. The soldiers were very good to me. I am sorry to say my five colleagues were lost."

The above story gives you some idea of the type of skipper we had. After a very short leave, Charles was back flying with a new crew to bomb Berlin on the 23rd of September. On his thirtieth raid he was frostbitten in one foot and had to spend some time in the R.A.F. hospital at Ely. Having finished one tour, Charles was posted to an Operational Training Unit in Suffolk. In the Fall of 1942, Charles requested to be posted to an operational squadron. Here he picked up the crew listed and completed five more trips in Wellingtons before they were converted to Stirlings at Newmarket.

On October 21, 1942, we started some familiarization flying in the new Stirlings which had just been delivered. After eleven hours and fifteen minutes of daylight flying and four hours and five minutes of night flying, we made our first raid. This was a nine-hour trip to Turin in northern Italy. This was followed by 18 more to such targets as, Berlin, Stuttgart, St. Lorient, Hamburg, Wilhelmshaven, Cologne, Munich, Frankfurt, Mannheim and Stettin.

Our last trip was to Stettin, just north of Berlin, and this story is of my experience of what happened on that fateful night:

DATE APRIL 2.1943 TARGET STETTIN

MISSION

To mark target on first run, circle area, then remark target and drop some high explosive bombs. At our briefing, we were informed we would be taking an extra crew member with us. It was to be S/L. A. Blake, a Canadian in the R.A.F. This was his first operational trip. Quite often new pilots were sent with an experienced crew before they went on their own.

We were chosen to be the lead aircraft as our pilot and navigator were the most experienced in the Pathfinder Force. Our mission was to go in and mark the target: with flares at 30 seconds before ETA; then circle target and make a second pass to remark the target and drop our load of high explosive bombs.

After the briefing was completed, we went to the mess hall and had a good meal of fried eggs, chips, bread and butter with jam and tea. Around 20.00 hours we walked out to our Stirling MB-M, affectionately known as M for Mother. Charles mentioned to me that he preferred walking, as it kept him in shape, and one never knew when he might have to bail out and do some walking. After checking out the aircraft, Charles got us together to go over what we should do in case something should happen. Due to the fact that we had an extra crew member in the front of the plane, he instructed me to use the rear escape hatch. This was the first time that he had made mention of something like this, prior to take off. Normally it was only mentioned when we practiced escape procedures.

By 21.00 hours we were on our way across the North Sea, heading for the Danish coast. Intelligence had told the pilots to fly low over Denmark, then gain altitude over the Baltic before reaching the German coast. As we crossed the west coast of Jutland, night fighters could be seen taking off to attack our force. Ground defences opened up and we saw two aircraft go down in flames on our starboard side. In all, 22 aircraft were lost over Denmark that night, two by fighters and twenty by ground fire. Most of the crews were killed because of the low altitude we were flying at.

Within a short time we had passed over Jutland and made a right turn as we approached the island of Fyn (Funen). From this point we climbed steadily up 11,000 feet, at which height we were to drop our markers. As I mentioned before, we were the lead aircraft and were instructed to drop the first markers at 30 seconds before bombing time. Our aircraft was a Mark 111 Stirling which was outfitted with radar (H2S). With this radar, the navigator could pick out the target even if there was cloud cover. This night there was no cloud and a full moon. The bomb aimer could have dropped the markers on his own. With the radar the navigator could pick out the marshalling yards and make sure we were on target. He would then give instructions to the pilot as to which way to turn, even though it meant going through heavy anti aircraft fire.

As we neared the target, about 50 search lights turned on and it was not long until they had us in a cone. Our skipper was skilful at getting out of such situations and was soon headed towards the target. We arrived slightly ahead of time, so we had to circle around to get on time. All the time the Germans were throwing up everything but the kitchen sink at us. Just as we were making a second approach at 11,000 feet, the starboard engine was hit. I informed the skipper, and he feathered the engine and turned away from the target. As he made another attempt, Jimmy, our bomb aimer, informed him that he was having trouble with the bomb sight and the bomb releases. The skipper once again turned away and aborted the drop, as dropping fares at random would only hinder the success of the raid. he left it up to our backup aircraft to drop the first markers.

We turned back towards the Baltic and headed far home on three engines. Just before passing over the coast to the north, Jimmy reported that there was an airfield below and asked the skipper if we could try once more to drop the bombs we were carrying. By this time we had lost altitude so the skipper thought it was a good idea as it would lighten the load. He made a sharp turn and flew over the field at a low altitude heading for the hanger area, Jimmy managed to drop the bombs and the two gunners strafed the field with their .303 Brownings. Immediately searchlights turned on and picked us out, along with accompanying ground fire. The skipper had to dive low out over the sea to get out of the cone of lights.

As we neared the island of Sjaelland (Sealand) the skipper managed to get the aircraft up to 6,500 feet on the remaining three engines, but no further. This was a perfect height for ground defences. It was almost like daylight now with the full moon and no clouds to hide in. Just as we were approaching "The Belt" between the island of Funen and Sjaelland, the skipper spotted a flak ship, so he turned east to get over land in case we were hit.

At that time, I was up with the Navigator, (Bob Vance), and he pointed out exactly where we were. It was just north of the town of Korsor on the west coast of Sjaelland. He informed the crew over the intercom. Since we had seen so much action on our way across Denmark on the way in, the skipper told all of us to keep a sharp lookout for fighters, as we were sitting ducks at this altitude on such a moonlit night. I went to my lookout in the Astrodome. No sooner had I looked out when I saw an ME 110 on our port side, not more than 50 feet from our wing tip. As the pilot turned to look at us, I could see him turn his head. I yelled to the skipper and he immediately took evasive action to get away from it. However, as I found out in 1978, we were against one of the Luftwaffe's best night fighter pilots. He was Unteroffizier Berg of 111/NJG 1. His first attack came from the port side followed by one on the starboard. Cannon and machine gun fire hit us each time. The second pass set the gas tanks on fire in both wings. Immediately the plane went out of control and a clear calm voice came over the intercom, "Sorry boys, you are going to have to jump, best of luck". That was at 02.00 hours April 21, 1943.

As I mentioned before, Charles had instructed me to use the rear escape hatch because of the extra crew member in the front. As the aircraft was going almost straight down nose first it was almost impossible to climb up over the bomb bay to get to the rear hatch. I managed to get part way back when the plane lurched again, and I was thrown up against the bulkhead formed by the wing spars. Just then we were hit again by the mid upper turret. Cannon fire came through the port side ripping up the floor over the bomb bay and just missing my face by a few inches. I believe the upper gunner and wireless operator were hit by this attack. For me this last attack was a blessing. With the floor ripped to shreds, I was able to use it as a ladder to get to the rear hatch. When I got there, I saw Louie crumpled up. He had managed to get to the escape hatch half open. I decided to try and open the hatch fully, then attach the static line to Louie and push him out. As I pushed at the hatch, my chest chute was pulled cut by the rush of air. The straps which went up over the shoulders also pulled but and I was pulled right out of the plane. I reached for the rip cord, but my chute was dangling above my head, out of reach. As I dropped, the chute fell into my arms. I pulled the rip cord, the chute opened, and I floated down. My chute had no sooner opened when the plane hit the ground and exploded. I must have been below a thousand feet when I left the plane as it was no time at all before, I landed in a freshly cultivated field.

A few days later I learned the remainder of the crew were all killed. They are buried in a lovely little churchyard at Svino on the Island of Sjaelland. In all we were hit four times. The attacks were so quick that at the time I thought we had been attacked by two fighters. However, Mr. J. Helme of Copenhagen confirmed that there was only one. It was he who traced the pilot responsible. I cannot explain why more of the crew did not get out. It could have been that one of the crew had been hit

and blocked the escape of the others. I do know that the rear gunner was still firing I when reached the rear hatch.

I landed a couple of fields south of the plane. A few feet away was a water hole surrounded by bushes. I took off my chute and ripped it up with a dagger that I always carried. I kept some of it for bandages for my hand which had been cut trying to climb up the bomb bay floor as the plane was going straight down. I then threw the remainder of the chute and my "Mae West" into the bushes and covered them up with some sticks.

Immediately I headed south away from the crash. Soon I was up to my knees in mud trying to get through a swampy area. When I cleared the swamp I came to an east-west roadway and was just about to cross it when two German scout cars came up the road. I threw myself face down in a ditch and they passed within a few feet of me. It appeared that they were on their way to the crash.

I kept up a steady boy scout run and walk until 5.00 a.m. By this time, I was dead tired and the sun was Coming up. Not far away, I saw another clump of trees by a water hole, so I made my way towards it. Here I covered myself up with some dead branches and slept for an hour. When I awoke, I looked up from my hiding place to see a farmer sowing grain by hand. I ducked down again and remained out of sight until noon hour. While passing away the time, I stripped my uniform of its Canada badges, stripes, and wings. I also cut off the epaulets from the jacket, so that it would not look like a uniform.

At noon when the farmers had gone for lunch, I made my way to a deserted farmhouse. From here I was able to hide while planning my escape. Around 5.30 p.m. while it was still light, I mustered up enough courage to chance it. As started out, a low flying aircraft swooped low over me. Of course, I thought he was looking for me. I continued to walk through fields and dry riverbeds until 3.30 p.m. By this time, I was at a loss as to which way to go. Seeing a solitary farmer walking through a field, I approached him. With sign language I tried to let him know what wanted. He did not seem to realize that I was an Allied airman.

Just then his young daughter came along with her brother. They knew right away and went and brought their mother. Although we could not converse with each other, it was quite evident that the farmer's wife knew what I wanted. While the young boy of perhaps nine kept an eye out for Germans, the mother took me into their small farmhouse. She cooked up three eggs and gave me some meat and black bread. This was topped off with black coffee made of roasted grain. The coffee and bread tasted strange but being without food for a day and having travelled so far I was thankful for it. Before I left, they brought out a telephone book, turned to a map and pointed out the route I should take. Their house was just south- east of Slagelse, about 150 kilometers from Copenhagen. After filling my collapsible water bottle I set out once more, using the railway line as a guide.

DATE APRIL 22, 1943

Around 1.00 a.m. on the 22nd, I was too tired to go any further. I unrolled the outer flying suit I was carrying and laid it down an a pile of grass to sleep on. It was a very broken sleep as field mice kept running over me. Around 4.00 a.m. I started out again. By this time my feet had started to blister from wearing the loose-fitting fleece lined flying boots and I was beginning to wonder whether it was worth while to keep going or give myself up.

Around 7.00 a.m. I came to a small stream and decided to wash up. In my escape kit I carried a razor, soap, a tin mirror, and a comb. These proved to be invaluable. When I looked at myself, I was surprised to see several cuts and caked blood on my face. I must have scared the farmer and his wife who had helped me last evening. After a cold spring wash and shave, I felt refreshed and started out again. I had wrapped my feet with the heavy outer flying socks and secured them with pieces of my parachute.

I walked in an easterly direction, through a bush until I came to the town of Sorb. Still keeping to the south, I circled the town, coming to a pile of sugar beets which had been covered with earth for the winter. I peeled one and along with some fresh dandelion leaves, had my breakfast. Around 8.30 a.m. I passed the southeast side of Sorb and came across a small farmhouse. After having found the last farmer friendly, I decided to try and see if I could get help here. I knocked on the door and a girl of about 15 answered. She said something in Danish which I did not understand. Then her brother came to the door, and I made some sign language indicating that I wanted to fill my water bottle. He looked up and down the roadway, then pulled me inside the house. It was a very small house which housed the family of five. They sat me down at a table and fetched some black bread and black coffee. Within half an hour I was on my way again with a fresh supply of water.

As I headed towards Ringsted under a very hot sun, my feet began to perspire and blister. I decided to cut down into a gully in a farm, only to find out that it was used by the Germans as a rifle range. Although my feet were sore, I ran out of the gully, crossed over a main roadway and into a pasture field. I hid beside a manure pile and in no time fell asleep for a while. After I left my nice, smelly bed and had walked for some time, before I realized that I had left my water bottle at the manure pile. Becoming very thirsty, as I bypassed Ringsted to the south, I approached a white farm and went into the yard where I saw a pump. A man came out of the barn and took me to a tap inside. After some more sign language, I think he realized that I was an Allied airman. He went into the house and brought out a bottle of beer and some carrots. I ate some and put the remainder in my pocket for later, thanked him and started out in a northeast direction, using the railway line as a guide. Once when I stopped for a rest, I sat down, and there within hands grasp was a small cottontail I was going to grab it so that I would have some meat to eat, however, after seeing it look up at me, I decided that it had just as much right to live as I had, so there went my roast rabbit. As I sat by my newfound friend, a German munition train went by loaded with guns and ammunition for the northern front. Every car was guarded with troops. I waved to them, and they waved back.

By now I had a little more confidence that I could make my way to Sweden. I started walking down some secondary roads and was soon passing through the small village of HOM. As I walked through, still in my uniform, I had the feeling that the town folk were staring at me; maybe it was because the seat of my pants was ripped, and I had not noticed it. There were a lot of people on the streets. I found out that it was one of their Easter holidays and many were going to church. At one church I saw quite a few bicycles and was tempted to steal one, but my conscience got the better of me.

Again, I headed for the bush and here came across some tall pine trees and decided to sit down and rest my feet. I had no sooner sat down when it started to rain so I decided to get into some of the thicker bush for protection. As I was approaching a small white farmhouse, a deer jumped out in front of me and disappeared into the thicket. I continued up to the door and knocked. A middle-aged woman answered but she could not understand English, so, she called her husband. He seemed to realize my predicament and hurried me inside and noticing the problem I was having with my feet, she fetched a basin of warm water and a towel. This relieved my feet a bit. By now there was one large blister on each foot, reaching from my toes to part way up my heel. We then sat down at the table and had some cheese sandwiches and liver roll. The latter was not too tasty, but it helped to fill an empty stomach. This was followed by a couple of glasses of Danish Beer. Before I left, she

made me some more sandwiches and gave me a bottle of beer to take with me. When I started off again, I found it almost impossible to walk, so decided to look for a place to sleep that was dry. Around 7.00 p.m. I noticed a small horse stable all by itself beside a peat bog. After looking over my hotel for the night, I went down to the pond for a wash and shave I decided to cut the uppers off my flying boots to make a pair of shoes out of them. As I was doing this a man, two women and two children came walking up the path beside the peat bog. The man noticed me and immediately sent the women and children away. I could plainly see that he, (Mr. George Rasmusen) recognized me as an Allied airman. After trying to make him understand where I wanted to go, he shook his head, pointing at my clothes. he then made the sign of a swastika on his arm and indicated to me that there were a lot of Gestapo in the area. He led me into the stable and with some sign language, made it clear that I was to stay there until 9.00 p.m. At five past nine, I heard someone approaching, so I hid behind the door. Twenty-five years later when I had the pleasure of meeting him again, he told me that as he entered the door, I grabbed him by the neck and had my dagger at his throat. When I realized who it was, and that he was alone, I let go and he stood back shaking. He said he was never so frightened in his life. In his arm he carried a roll of clothing consisting of an old pair of blue trousers, a civilian sweater, a knife, a glass mirror, and some other useful articles. He then took off his own coat and rubber boots. He gathered up my flying suit and heavy white sweater and rolled them up. When I visited him in 1968, he told me through our interpreter, Mr. G. Helme, that his wife made clothes for the children out of the battle dress, and she unwound the sweater and made sweaters out of it.

Having made the exchange of clothing, he pointed to his watch and indicated to me that I should not leave until 5.00 a.m. I later found out that there was a curfew on around Borup and anyone out during curfew time would be shot on sight. When he left, I climbed into the horse's feed trough and went to sleep. I awoke at 4.30, April 23, I went down to the pond and washed, shaved and combed my hair. As I had no food there was no point waiting around for breakfast. As I started up the road I was once again met by Mr. Rasmusen, he took me to his home where his wife had breakfast ready. They did not have very much but were willing to share what they had. During the war he was forced to dig peat for the Germans and was not paid too well. While eating breakfast he brought out a Shell road map and pointed out the route I should take. He marked swastikas on the map to show me which areas were heavily guarded.

As I was leaving, his wife gave me a package of sandwiches. He reached into his pocket and gave me all the money he had, (20.80 kr). In my escape kit I had 40,000 French francs, which were of no use to me in Denmark (a mistake on the part of our Intelligence personnel). Even the maps in my kit were of no use. One was of France and the other one was a general map of Europe. I gave him the francs, hoping that he would be able to reclaim his money after the war. I found out on my visit to their place in 1968, that after the war, all Danes who had helped Allied airmen were invited to a dinner in Copenhagen. While there they were asked if anyone had received foreign money. If so, they could hand it in and get Danish kroners for it. He handed in the 40,000 francs and got a receipt for it. That was the last he heard about it.

As I started out once more, Mr. Rasmusen accompanied me down the road until we came to the main road that I was to follow. It was much easier travelling in civilian clothes, such as they were. The rubber boots played hell with the blisters on my feet. By 10.00 a.m. I had travelled quite a distance but the road seemed to be running in a southeast direction in relation to the sun. I headed towards a small Farmhouse where a man was raking leaves. Once again, using sign language, I indicated to him that I needed water. He showed me the pump and went into the house. His wife appeared at the door and beckoned me in, where I met their son and daughter. While looking over my map, she gave me some milk and coffee. They pointed out the route I should take which would lead me to the road leading to Tasstrup. When I reached the main road, I saw a small cafe but was afraid to try and buy something with the money Mr. Rasmusen had given me. As I walked northward towards Tasstrup, I

decided to look for a place to sleep while I was still in the country. The day had been very hot, and my feet were so swollen that I could not take my boots off.

On nearing Tasstrup, I went into a farmyard in hopes of getting some food and a place to sleep. The house and barns were surrounded by a high brick fence. I entered the courtyard, went up to the house and knocked on the kitchen door. This was on Good Friday, April 23, and I travelled over 100 kilometers in the two days since being shot down. When the farmer opened the door, I saw about 12 people seated at a long table. It appeared that his whole family was there for an Easter dinner. He (Mr. Thorvald Sorensen), invited me in and seated me down in the middle of all his guests. I felt a bit uncomfortable, as my clothes were getting pretty high from perspiration. After a hearty meal, I was asked many questions in broken English and French, such as, "When will the war end? 'Where will the Allies strike next?" These I could not answer but I assured them that the day was getting nearer. Because there were so many at the farm, they could not risk me staying there overnight. On leaving they, wished me luck and I headed north towards Tasstrup. (in 1968, when I revisited them, Mr. Sorensen told my guide, Mr. Helme, that just that very morning his wife had said to him, I wonder what happened to that Canadian we helped in 1943?" When Mr. Helme knocked on their door that day and asked them if they had helped an airman in 1943, they were reluctant to answer and said, why do you ask?" Mr. Helme told them that I was out in the car. At that, they both came running out and hugged me with tears in their eyes.

It was at Tasstrup that I had my first daylight encounter with the Germans. They were everywhere on the streets and in transports headed towards Copenhagen. Some of them looked at me suspiciously, so I hit for the fields again. It was not long until I came to a small shelter beside a stream. With some pain I managed to get the rubber boots off and washed my feet in the cool water. After resting for a couple of hours, decided to look for a better place to sleep. Soon came to a farmhouse beside a woods, and two elderly gentlemen came towards me. I tried to make them understand the: I was looking for a place to sleep. They pointed out on my map a route I should take and accompanied me down the road for half an hour. After passing through the town of Hersted, I headed up a small country road. Darkness was almost upon me, so I made my way towards a large haystack in a field next to a farmyard. As I approached it I decided to go right up to the house. A middle-aged woman opened the door but she could not speak English. She called her husband, (Mr. L. C. Pedersen) and with the aid of an English-Danish dictionary, they informed me that there were children in the house and I must not be seen by them, as children have the habit of talking to their friends at school. Mr. Pedersen went to the phone. As he spoke 70 English, I did not know whether he was phoning a friend or the Germans. In 1968, I found out that if I had picked the next farm, I would have been handed over to the Germans, as they were Nazi sympathizers). As it turned out, he called a local schoolteacher who was in the Resistance movement in that area, (Mr. Marborg). It was not long until he was at the farm. he could speak fluent English and put me at ease. Mrs. Pedersen made some sandwiches and black coffee, which went down well.

I made plans for the next part of my journey, then I was given a couple of blankets and was shown to a hayloft where I was to stay until morning. Mr. Marborg had given me instructions to meet him in the morning at the railway station in Glostrup, about eight kilometers away. On our visit in 1968, my wife and I were invited to dinner at Marborg's. The Pedersens were also invited. Mrs. Pedersen mentioned the fact that just the day before they were wondering what happened to me.

My sleep that night was interrupted by field mice that kept running over my blankets, so I finally got up at 4.30 to find Mr. Pedersen there. With the aid of a flashlight he was holding, I washed and shaved. He helped me to bandage up my feet then gave me some sandwiches to eat and some to take with me. Next, he reached into his pocket and gave me all the change he had. I thanked him for his help and started out towards Glostrup to meet Mr. Marborg. The instructions he had given me were very detailed and after walking for a little over an hour, I arrived at the station where he was waiting for me.

DATE APRIL 24, 1943

As I entered Glostrup I passed several Gestapo who eyed me up and down but did not stop me for identification. Mr. Marborg had already bought the tickets to Helsingor. We boarded the train and within a few minutes pulled into the main station [in Copenhagen. The station was filled with German troops, so we went outside to do a bit of sightseeing until our next train was ready to head north. Many of the troops were young boys on their way to the Northern front. They certainly did not have that look of benevolent protectors they tried to tell the Danes they were.

We finally boarded the train for our trip up the east coast to Helsingor. People stared at me but said nothing to the German guards and Hipos (Danish men in the German forces). Every bridge along the way was well guarded to try and prevent the Resistance men from blowing them up, which was a daily performance. On arrival at Helsingor, we headed for the ferry dock. Every half hour a ferry would leave for Sweden, carrying troops and munitions. It was hopeless trying to get on one of them as they were guarded every inch of the way. We decided to walk up the coast to Hellebaek, hoping to get a rowboat. We soon found out that all boats were under control of the Germans. The oars had all been taken out of the boats we did see, and the boats were either locked up or protected by a machine gun post. By this time it was almost noon hour, so we decided to sit down by the beach and eat a sandwich. At this point Sweden was only two miles across the Sound. • So near yet so far. The water in the Sound is very rough and cold. During the last three days I had lost about 25 pounds and was in no physical shape to try such a swim.

At 12.30, Mr. Marborg had to leave me and get back to Glostrup before someone reported him. Once again was on my own. I started to walk through a park with some apartment buildings along the edge of it, only to find out that they were German barracks. I headed back towards the coast where I noticed some boats and as I approached them, I saw a German soldier with an automatic rifle guarding them. I continued up the road until I came to the town of Hornbaek. It started to rain again as I made my way back to the ferry docks at Helsingor. Again I found it impossible to get on one of the ferries so I headed north once more in hope of getting help.

As darkness closed in I started looking for some type of shelter for the night: to escape the rain. As I walked along the beach, I came across a small beach house. The door was not locked so I went in. It had two small rooms furnished with a couple of chairs, a couch, and a table. After eating my last sandwich and a Horlicks tablet from my escape kit, I laid down and went to sleep. In the early hours of the morning, I was awakened when the door was opened, and a guard looked inside. However, he did not see me, or looked the other way. He could have been a Danish beach guard or a policeman, which could have accounted for his action.

DATE APRIL 25, 1943

The weather was lovely when I woke up, but heavy clouds were gathering in the west and it was not long until it started to rain again. As I had no food, there was no choice but to start out once more looking for help. That day I walked between Aalsgaarde and Helsingor least three times looking for a boat. It was all in vain. Late in the afternoon I noticed a Danish flag flying in the backyard of one of the houses on the beach and surmised that they were true Danes. I walked up to the side door and knocked. A young lady opened the door and to my delight she could speak English. She informed me that they did not have a boat and could not help me. As I left, a young man came running out and invited me into the house. They cooked up a meal which was really appreciated, after living on

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a few sandwiches for the last couple of days and having walked over 150 miles. After dinner we listened to the BBC news. I then thanked them and returned to my beach house.

DATE APRIL 26, 1943

This was a much nicer day as I headed once more for Aalsgaarde. As I walked up the road I saw an old gentleman who looked like a fisherman. I tried to converse him, but he could not speak English. However, he seemed to know what I was after. With sign language he indicated that the Germans had taken his boat. By this time I had almost given any hope of getting out of Denmark. I was beginning to feel the effects of losing so much weight and became very frustrated. In despair I walked up to a house and had decided to give up if help was not forthcoming.

I rang the doorbell, but no one answered. As I turned away, I looked across the street and saw a man reading a newspaper in a small sunporch. I went to the side door and knocked and was met by a Middle-aged woman who spoke fluent English, Mr. and Mrs Folmer Dalsborg of 206 Stranddvejen at Aalsgaarde). I told her my predicament and she called her husband, who took me inside and immediately locked all the doors. She told me that she had spent four years in England. They had three small children staying with them and it was very risky for them to have me in the house. Mrs. Dalsborg cooked up a meal of meat and eggs along with some cakes and coffee. After dinner they offered me the use of their bath which I really needed. I smelled like a pole cat. I was then shown into a bedroom and told to rest. Although I was completely fatigued, I could not sleep. As I laid in bed, the door suddenly opened and the very excited Mr. Dalsborg came in shouting, "You will go to Sweden. he disappeared just as fast without telling me how I was to get there. I laid in bed and thanked God for the help.

A while later a very distinguished gentleman came into the room. He spoke fluent English and I learned that he was married to the daughter of a Major Barson who lived near London. (They went by her maiden name, Barson). He asked me for some identification. I had lost my identification book when I was shot down. It was later found and handed over to the Resistance Movement. I did carry some of the things I had cut off my uniform and was still wearing the long winter underwear which we used when flying. It had a "Made in England" label on it. I was sure that I had convinced him that I really was an Allied airman. He told me to stay where I was, and he would be back later. Around 6.00 p.m- he came back into the room and told me to get dressed, after which we went to a house down the street. Later that evening another gentleman came to interrogate me. He informed me that he would try and get in touch with Intelligence In London, by radio, to confirm my story. At this point he pulled a snub-nosed revolver out of his side pocket and said, "You know what we will have to do if we are unable to raise London. There are a lot of lives at stake." The remainder of the evening was spent very quietly listening to,

(1) Gert Baumgarten (code name "The Pilot") Banker

(2.) Major Flemming Muus (chief of sabotage and underground)

on the radio and prayed that they would be successful. Before retiring for the night, we had a nice meal.

DATE APRIL 27,1943

After a very sleepless night, I got up to a breakfast of bacon and eggs. I was then given a change of clothing that consisted of a pair of plus fours, shoes and clean socks. It was not long until I was informed that they were able to contact London and confirm my story. At this point, I gave a sigh of relief. After dinner Mr. Barson came to take me to his home. We drove by Taxi to the next town. After making sure that we were not being followed we boarded a train and went a short distance. From here we hailed another taxi and we drove to within a few blocks of his home, then walked the rest of the way. Their house was at 40C Jejtveg in Charlottenlund. Here I met his English wife and was shown to a sunroom on the third floor where I was to stay.

Next day Mrs. Barson took me out shopping for groceries and taught me a few Danish words which she thought I should know. I stayed with the Barsons for a couple of days. One evening we were invited out to dinner. Our host owned a diesel engine plant which he burned down one night so that the Germans would be deprived of his product.

DATE- APRIL 29, 1943

In the evening when Mr. Barson came home, he informed me that I would leave for Sweden that night, but did not tell me how. Once again, we went by taxi and train to Skodsborg, which is just north and about eight miles from the Swedish coastline. We went into a large white house where I was introduced to some young men and women of the Resistance Movement. When I emptied my pockets of unnecessary articles, a couple of the girls asked if they could have the silk maps cut of my escape kit. When I revisited one of them, Mrs. Tjorn, 13 Fristedet, (Hellerup) in 1977, she pointed to the map on the wall of their living room. She recognized me right although it had been 34 years since we last met.

As it turned out they were unable to get a boat that day, so I went home with Mrs. Tjorn and stayed with them for the night. I did not realize until 1977, that their home was used as a headquarters for the Resistance Movement and it was underneath their steps where they hid the radio transmitter which was used to contact London.

DATE APRIL 30, 1943

In the morning Mrs. Tjorn took me for a sightseeing trip of Copenhagen. While riding a streetcar, a German Officer sat down in the seat just ahead of us. At this point- Mrs. Tjorn got up and said in a strong English accent, "Let's move, I am not going to sit next to a German". At that she moved to the back of the car. After having a lunch in one of the better restaurants where I saw women smoking

(1.Went by code name "Gertha")

cigars for the first time in my life, we went back to Skodsborg to the big white house.

About six of the Resistance were assembling a two-seat kayak. I was then taken back downtown to police headquarters where I met a young Danish Officer Cadet who was to accompany me in the kayak. His name was Lars Troen and he had just escaped from the Gestapo after being accused of sabotage. By pretending he was sick, he managed to get sent to the hospital from where he escaped. At police headquarters we met Captain Basse and Police Sergeant Malling. They gave us instructions on what to do if a patrol boat sighted us. We were given a flashlight with a blue lens which was the colour for the day. Then they brought out some photographs of Copenhagen. One picture was of the Shellhset which the Gestapo was using as a headquarters and where they kept and tortured members of the Resistance Movement. The captain said that if I got back to England, I should tell the Intelligence people that they would like it bombed. He mentioned that the prisoners were locked up on

the top floor and they should try and hit the bottom floor only. In order to do this the planes would have to come in at roof top level. (It was finally bombed on March 2, 1945, with the loss of over 200 Germans and traitors. The jailed Resistance workers on the top floor managed to escape with very few casualties) After leaving police headquarters, we toured Copenhagen and saw the Little Mermaid after which we went back to Skodsborg where I met another member of the Resistance. He was Chris Hanson who spent the whole time of the occupation as a full time Resistance worker.

He used the disguise of a Danish policeman. Although he was taken in by the Gestapo twice, he managed to get out some way or another. We remained close friends until his death the spring of 1978. As we had time to pass, Chris, Lars, and another young man and myself, went for a stroll along the beach to look at the route we were to take. The afternoon soon passed as we sat under the shade of a tree in an outdoor cafe, drinking a few Tuborg Beers. Chris took pictures of Lars and myself looking over to Sweden with a big smile on our faces.

We returned to the house to find the kayak ready and waiting. They asked me if I had ever paddled one and I said no. Lars said, "Do not worry, I know how." Around 11.00 p.m. they took the kayak across the road to the beach. Meanwhile, a member of the Resistance, Mrs. A. Duss Hansen, approached the Danish beach guards. She started talking to them, then lit up a cigarette, holding the match right in front of their eyes. This blinded them temporarily and it was at this time we jumped into the kayak and were pushed into the water by Mr.L.A. Duss Hansen.

Lars was an expert paddler and knew how to handle the kayak. I had quite a time trying to keep in rhythm with Lars. When we were about a mile out, Lars stopped paddling and turned around. In his hand he held a bottle and said, "Take a good swig of this," which I did. It was Akvavit and I almost choked as it went right down to the pit of my stomach.

The water in the Sound between Denmark and Sweden is very cold with a fast current and fairly heavy swells. This proved a blessing to us when a patrol boat headed in our direction, with its search light sweeping over the surface of the water. We stopped paddling and laid our heads flat on the gunwale. At the right moment the kayak dropped between two waves and the searchlight went over our heads. In a few minutes it passed us, and we continued on our way.

By this time, I was getting the feel of the paddle and was of some help to Lars. After paddling for three hours, we passed the Swedish Island of Ven and out of Danish territorial waters. Rather than land on the island, Lars decided to go up the coast a way to a point on the beach where the Swedes had left a stretch of beach without barb wire. We finally landed around 3 a.m. on May 1st. After beaching the kayak, I took out my dagger and slit it below the water line and pushed it out into the Sound but it did not sink. Next day one of the policemen from Helsingborg went and retrieved it for his own use. Afraid to walk up the main road, we circled inland and approached Helsingborg from the east only to find out the next day that it was unnecessary as the police knew we were coming. We made our way to the British Legation, where we were to meet a Mr. Crew. He had been informed by the Resistance that we were on our way and arrived within a short time after we got there. He took us to his home in a charcoal-burning car, which could only go about 10 miles per hour. Here we met his Danish wife who made breakfast for us. I was given a pair of socks and a pair of shoes to replace the ones which were soaking wet. After a short briefing by Mr. Crew to explain what we should do, he took us back downtown to the police station..

As I was wearing civilian clothes, I was charged with entering the country illegally and put in jail. The police treated us royally and made sure we were comfortable. They even went and got some English books for me to read. After two days in jail, I was given an identification card and allowed to go free with instructions that I must report to the police each day at 11 a.m. Mr. Crew was there to meet me

and took me to a clothing store where I got a new shirt, some underwear, and socks. We then went to the Savoy Hotel where I got a room.

In the afternoon I was told that the Crown Prince and Princess were staying at the Grand Hotel. (Crown Prince Gustav Adolf - later King of Sweden). He had been informed of our escape from Denmark and he requested that I come up to their suite and have a talk. I entered the room to see two gracious people sitting in chairs, side by side, just like the pictures we used to see of our King and Queen. I proceeded to within a few feet of them, bowed and waited for him to speak first. Both the Prince and Princess put out their hands for me to shake. He welcomed me to Sweden and hoped my stay would be a happy one. He asked me to sit down, and we talked for about half an hour. He was very interested in how we had managed to escape out of Denmark, as I was the first airman to have ever escaped from there, I found out in 1978, that only a month before Commander James Brian Buckley of the Fleet Air Arm and Pilot Officer-Jorgen Thalbitzer, a Danish volunteer in the R.A.F. had tried the same thing but were drowned in the rough water of the Sound. Although he was a Crown Prince, I could not give him any details, other than we came by kayak.

After visiting the Crown Prince, I was at a loss as to what to do. I did not feel comfortable in a country that allowed German troops to use their railways and walk about the town. However, Mr. Crew came to my rescue and introduced me to a Lt. Jacobi of the Royal Swedish Air Force and told me that it was OK to accept his invitation to dinner. We went to the Savoy for dinner and had a long talk. He was interested in what type of aircraft we had, etc. I am afraid he was not much the wiser when we parted.

DATE MAY 4, 1943

When I went down for breakfast, I was met by Lars who had just been released from jail. We were later introduced to a Mr. Ware who had been an oriental rug dealer in Denmark and had managed to escape in a fishing boat to Sweden. He was having a dinner, for

some of the dignitaries of Heisingborg, and asked Lars and myself to attend. Once again, I was embarrassed to go in the clothes I was wearing but he insisted. When we arrived at the Grand Hotel for dinner, there were about 30 people all dressed in dinner jackets or military uniforms. I was seated across from a high-ranking German officer with Lars at my side as an interpreter. The dinner lasted from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Liquor flowed like water and Lars and myself wondered how we were going to make it back to the hotel. The manager of the Grand offered us free room and meals but we had to decline his generous offer. We thanked Mr. Ware and staggered back to the Savoy.

DATE MAY 5, 1943

We reported to the police station at 11 a.m. and were informed that we were to be sent to Stockholm on the night train. That evening the policemen took us out for dinner. We were each given a gold cufflink as a memento of our stay in Heisingborg. They then wished us luck and saw us off at the station. While at the station we met another crew who had ditched on the Swedish coast and were being sent to an internment camp, where they spent the remainder of the war.

DATE MAY 6, 1943

We arrived in Stockholm early in the morning and were taken to the Esplanade Hotel. Most of the guests here spoke English so I felt more at ease. That day we wandered about the city sightseeing. It was a beautiful city with all its waterways and tree-lined boulevards. The boulevards are now used for parking and Stockholm has lost its grandeur.

DATE MAY 7, 1943

We visited the British Consulate and received some money to pay for our hotel and buy some souvenirs. While in Stockholm we did not have to report to the police and were free to go where we wished. That evening we went to see "You 'were Never Lovelier." The film was in English with Swedish subtitles.

DATE – MAY 8, 1943

Lars introduced me to a Danish Count who was living out the war in Sweden. We spent the day eating, having a few drinks and visited the Casino. The Swedish authorities had been generous with ration coupons so we had no problem getting anything we wanted in a restaurant.

DATE MAY 9, 1943

We went back to the Consulate and met Squadron Leader Fleet. Seeing the condition of my clothes, he went and got me a suit. He also informed me that I would have to get out of Sweden soon or be interned, if I had arrived in Sweden in uniform I would have been interned right away like the crew we had met. Lars and I declared ourselves as refugees from Denmark.

DATE MAY 10, 1943

We met Mary O'Connor, who worked at the British Consulate. The three of us went to the show to see "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Again, it was in English.

DATE MAY 11TH, 1943

I was told that I must be ready to get a plane for England but at the last minute it was cancelled, so the whole day was wasted.

DATE MAY 12, 1943

I was on standby for a plane. I waited around the hotel until a member of the Consulate picked me up and took me to the airport. At 22.00 hours we boarded a DC 3 G-AGGA for Scotland. There were several young men waiting for this flight. Most of them were Danes or Norwegians who had escaped from the Germans and were on their way to join their friends in England and Canada. During the war there were scheduled flights from Sweden to Scotland. A few of them were shot down but as a rule, the Germans let them through. The route was straight west, flying between the north end of Jutland and the south tip of Norway. As we reached this spot we could see anti-aircraft fire to the starboard side but it was too far away to do us any harm.

DATE MAY 13, 1943

We touched down at Leuchers on the east coast of Scotland. After being free to do what I wanted in Sweden for over a week, I did not expect the reception received here. As I had no identification I was assigned a guard, who went everywhere with me. In the afternoon, while waiting for the train, we went to a show to pass away the time. The meals we had were nothing compared to what I had been having in Sweden. At 20.00 hours we boarded a train for London; changed trains at Edinburgh and headed south.

DATE MAY 14, 1943

I arrived in London and was escorted to the R.A.F. Intelligence Headquarters. The interrogation lasted all day. I informed them of the request, by the Chief of Police in Copenhagen, to bomb the Gestapo Headquarters in the Shell Building. They brought out photographs of Copenhagen and I was able to point out the building in question. I still do not know why it took another two years before they bombed it. After the Interrogation, I was issued with a new Identification and allowed to go on my own. I wandered over to the Beaver Club and surprised some of the boys from 402 Squadron (Sansoucy-Grear-Rang). They had heard that I was missing and did not expect to see me in civilian clothes. In the evening a few of us went to Covent Gardens and visited my favourite pub (Kings Arms) just around the corner. The pub owner almost fainted when she saw me. That night the drinks were on the house.

DATE MAY 15, 1943

I had to return to intelligence again for further questioning. In the afternoon I went to R.C.A.F. Headquarters to get some money. I was politely told that Sgt. D. V. Smith was missing, and I had a hard time convincing them that I was still alive and in London. They advanced me some money but would not issue me with a new uniform because I had one on issue. I do not think they believed me when I told them that I had left in Denmark. It was not until a few days later that I managed to scrounge one from the R.A.F. I had been told that I was to go to Liverpool] to get a boat back to Canada for a month's leave. When they saw me in civies they told me that I must have a uniform while being transported by boat.

I boarded the Empress of Scotland at Liverpool and seven days later arrived back in Canada. From Halifax I took the train to Toronto and arrived at Main Street Station. I thought that I should phone home first rather than completely surprise them. My mother was not at home when I phoned so by the time she arrived, I was sitting in the living room. She just about fainted when she saw me. My father turned to my mother and said, "I told you he would be alright."

The following verse s taken from a book written by Charles' father after his son's death in 1943:

PATHFINDERS

To Flight Lieutenant C W. Parish, DFC, reported
missing in April 1943, now known to have been killed, and his crew.

Through the dark night they flew, the flares they sowed

Lit up the targets for the rest to find.

They are lost, but shall we falter with our load,

Searching our targets? Though the night be blind

Still their bright memory lights us on the road.

ARUNDELL ESDAILE

The story of Charles's swim is also taken from the same book.