

E&E 375 - Jean B. Pitner
(See E&E 376)

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
P/W and X Detachment
Military Intelligence Service

E & E REPORT NO. 375
EVASION IN FRANCE

2-5-44
(Date)

Jean B. Pitner 2nd Lt. O-686490
(Name) (Rank) (ASN)

349th BOMB. 100th BOMB.
(Squadron) (Group)

AGE: 24
LENGTH OF SERVICE: 2 yrs 2 mos.
HOME ADDRESS: 201 WEST THIRD STREET
COFFEYVILLE, KANSAS

MI: 11-26-43
Arrived in Spain: 1-26-44
Arrived in Gibraltar: 1-31-44
Arrived in UK: 2-5-44

MEMBERS OF CREW: (This information checked with FWIB)

PILOT GEORGE FORD

CO-PILOT JEAN B. PITNER

NAVIGATOR ARNO E. PHISCHKE

BOMBARDIER H.G. BODEI

RADIO OPERATOR MAX NEWMAN

TOP TURRET GUNNER ANDREW HATHAWAY (fld to f-d chute) RD

BALL TURRET GUNNER GEORGE E. JONES

WAIST GUNNER DENTON KING

WAIST GUNNER LEO BIANCHI

TAIL GUNNER CARL GLASMEIER - buried by French in or near LORMENEAU?

Official Disposition	Narrators Disposition
	P/W
	RD narrator
	RD narrator
	DECEASED
	P/W - WOUNDED
	WOUNDED
	DECEASED
	P/W - WOUNDED
	AT LARGE IN FRANCE
	P/W
	DECEASED

Were you wounded? NO.

*one who broke leg is P/W
not an officer but not Bodei*

*French said
4 P/W - died in arms of Frenchman -*

*1 man chute (off from NY) died in hospital
Dr who told this man*

I had not noticed that there was another road ^{making a U-turn} turning at ~~180~~ degree angle from the highway I was watching, so that when the truck turned into this other road it ~~passed~~ ^{passed} my hiding place ~~at~~ on a higher level ~~which~~ putting me in complete sight of all the soldiers in the truck. I was afraid to move - for that ~~reason~~ ^{reason} ~~they~~ would ~~not~~ attract attention. They passed without glancing in my direction during those few seconds.

I waited another few minutes, listening for other cars; ~~and~~ then I dashed across the road, up another hill and did not stop to look behind me until I reached the timber-line. I ran on through these woods, stopping to rest only when I had to; ~~it~~ it must have been fully fifteen minutes before I realized that I was being followed. At the top of the hill I could ~~no~~ ^{go} further without resting. I grabbed ~~a~~ a club and hid behind a tree. ^{For} In a few seconds a very young boy came in sight, looking for me. When I showed myself, ~~he~~ he came over and spoke to me in French, at the same time making motions like flying aircraft. He pointed to my clothes and took off his jacket and coveralls. A man and woman ran up to us then and in their hurry practically undressed me. After I had put on the boys' clothes the man motioned me to go with the boy.

I followed him through the woods, keeping a distance of about fifty feet between us. At the bottom of the hill he hid me in some bushes, and ~~was~~ gone for a short time. When he came back he seemed very happy and pointed to a path, motioning that I should walk along it. When I hung back, he pushed me along in the direction I was to walk.

I had not gone far when I saw three men approaching. It was too late to hide so I ~~decided to~~ ^{decided to} ~~brave it out~~ brave it out. Upon meeting the three men I tried to ~~walk~~ ^{walk} around them but they stopped in front of me. One of them stepped up and said something in French with the English word 'friend' mixed into his sentence. He reached up ~~to~~ ^{to} my neck, and thinking he was going to grab me, I knocked his hand down. I was all set for a fight when ~~he~~ ^{he made it clear that} he was only after my dog-tags. I gave him one to look at and from there my journey was ^{Journey} ~~arranged~~ ^{ARRANGED} arranged. Later I joined Lt PLISCHKE.

①

IN PAISCHKE'S STORY BEFORE JOINING LT PIERER:
Escorted out after Lt FORD with Lt BODEI standing by the hatch ready to follow

Lt. Pinner.

AIRCRAFT ON FIRE

Enemy fighters attacked our formation south of BEAUVAIS. Our number two and three engines were set on fire and all controls were damaged. After the order to bale out had been given several times, Lt FORD said, "I'm going."

I was flying the plane at the time, ~~and I was out in a few~~ ^{a few} seconds after Lt FORD left his seat I went into the nose hatch. I didn't see the bombardier but the navigator was still in the ~~plane~~ ^{plane.} Sgt HATHAWAY was floundering around looking for his parachute. Because the nose escape hatch door would not release I had to push through against the slip-stream ~~and was out around~~ ^{2000 feet.}

HAS TROUBLE WITH RIPCORD

I delayed my jump for a few thousand feet, fortunately no more than that because the ripcord did not work at first. I had to tug very hard several times before it opened. I looked for the aircraft and then at my watch which ~~was~~ read 1411 hours. There was a fighter circling around but it did not bother me.

Finally I saw the plane below me, still under fighter attack.

It took me a minute and a half to get down. I fell in a clearing about a hundred yards from the plane which had crashed and was burning. For just a second I thought of going toward the aircraft but realized how stupid that would be. I rolled up my chute after throwing the flying equipment in the silk,

HIDES CHUTE AND RUNS THROUGH WOODS

and carried it in the woods to bury under leaves and dirt. Then I started running, in the woods, and in ten minutes I came out on the top of a hill where I could see, off in the distance, a large town and, at the foot of the hill, a small village.

I stayed in the woods which eventually thinned out until I reached a clearing and a highway. Farmers were working in the fields and to look them over and to watch the highway traffic, I hid in a ditch. I chose a place where I

HIDES TO WATCH ROAD TRAFFIC

was hidden from the road, and got behind the bushes none too quickly because a truck appeared from around a curve. As it drew near I saw that it ~~was~~ full of German soldiers, ~~and~~ It was ~~not~~ at this moment that my evasion almost ended.

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LT FLISCHKE'S STORY BEFORE JOINING LT PITNER:

I bailed out, after Lt FORD, with Lt BOVEL standing by the hatch ready to follow. I was out around 3000 feet and ~~at~~ delayed my jump down to 2000 feet. I had forgotten to check ~~my~~ leg straps so that when ~~the~~ chute opened I received a severe jolt and had to fold my arms around the shroud lines to keep from falling out of the harness. An FW flew toward me but after wabbling its wings, flew away.

FORGETS TO FASTEN LEG STRAPS

I saw our aircraft in a spiral and when I had ~~dropped~~ ^{dropped} to about 500 feet, it crashed.

with ~~me~~ I hit the ground, my chute ~~was~~ draped over ~~the~~ the branches of tree.

LEAVES CHUTE WITH FRENCH

Four Frenchmen were running toward me. I pointed to the chute, ~~and~~ checked to see that I still had my Aids Box and Purse, tried to visualize the countryside as I had seen it from the air and ran towards the nearest wood, about two hundred yards away.

HIDES FLYING EQUIPMENT UNDER LEAVES

The trees were not thick enough to ~~ff~~ offer much of a hiding place so I ran on through a field to another wood about half a kilometer away, after hiding my flying boots, Mac West and flying suit under some leaves.

I had to cross a road to get into the second wood. ~~A~~ Frenchman ~~ran~~ ^{my chute} down the road toward ~~me~~ I let him go after resisting the temptation to see if he would help me. One reason I ~~did~~ ^{did not} ~~stop him~~ ^{was} ~~hearing~~ ^{of that area} cars in the distance, and, if they were Germans I wanted to get ~~out~~ ^{out} of that area.

7 The ~~second~~ ^{second} wood had no better hiding places ^{in it} than the first, so when it thinned out, I made a bee-line for ~~the~~ a third wood. ~~This one was carpeted with dense thickets.~~

SEEMS TO WOODCHOPPER GETS NO HELP

~~While~~ While resting long enough to smoke a cigarette I heard a woodchopper and sneaked up to the edge of a clearing to watch him. ~~He~~ I waited an hour before letting him know that I was there. He came over to me, and, with the French phrase-card, I asked, in French, if he could help me hide. He motioned that I should travel southwest but that meant I would have to cross open fields. I left him and went back into the wood.

About the middle of the afternoon I walked to the edge of the wood and sat in ~~the~~ bushes to wait for someone to pass. Before long, a Frenchman, pushing a wheelbarrow, came in sight along a path, and, I saw at once that he was the same

Frenchman I had almost spoken to ^{on the road,} just after parachuting. This time I motioned him into the wood and asked for help and clothing. He told me that he would come back at dusk with a friend. He could not help me ^{just} then because the Germans were searching the area and were all over the place. I was ~~not~~ dressed in summer khakis which were the most conspicuous uniform I could have been wearing.

Told to go into nearest village

At dusk my helper came back alone and told me to go through the woods and meet him on the other side. This worked out all right but the only help he gave me was directions into the nearest village. I thought perhaps he knew what he was doing and, since it was almost dark, I started out. He had warned me that it was about five kilometers but I almost missed it because ~~of over-caution~~. Half of the ^{distance} I crawled along a stone fence, and, just as I was about to give up I looked over a stone wall ~~to find~~ that I had crawled ~~in~~ up to the edge of the village.

Cold reaction at first house

I waited until complete darkness, ^{and} went up to the first ~~house~~ house and knocked. There was no answer but I saw a light shining through a crack in the door. Going around to the side door I knocked again and someone called out to me. I whispered, "Je suis Americain," and waited. There was no answer so I left.

Chased away by angry French woman

At the next house, a woman came to the door and, hearing who I was, she motioned me to go to the house across the street. I got half-way over there when a dog ~~barked~~ in the yard started barking furiously. A woman came out of the house with a flashlight, shined it in my face, and called me all sorts of things in French. I couldn't tell what she was saying but I knew she was angry. (Later I learned that she had not recognised me and had thought that I was a young French evader trying to steal some food)

Foot steps

I took the road leading south out of the village and walked about seven kilometers without meeting anyone. I was hesitating between the choice of two roads when I heard footsteps approaching. Ducking into the bushes, I let the people pass and followed them far enough to be sure they were Frenchman before stopping them. They were not surprised when I told them I was an American airman

Journey arranged

because they ^{had known} about the plane crash. I was told to follow them and my journey was arranged.

W. Hitt

W.K. Hoet

APPENDIX B:

~~all~~ ~~stating~~ ~~the~~ ~~morale~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~German~~ ~~troops~~ ~~has~~ ~~been~~ ~~and~~ ~~is~~ ~~getting~~
a. French stated that the morale of the German troops has been, and is getting lower all the time. The troops in PARIS are furlough troops, before being sent to the Russian front. Some of the SS troops had been in PARIS and the French

stated that they were still the best Germany had and were as good as they had been. Troops stationed around PARIS are either young or middle-aged and are well

outfitted. *December 43*

b. French stated that there was much sabotage in the area around LYONS. They anticipate the invasion and say that around LYONS 30000 Frenchmen are armed and ready. *January 44*

c. At LYONS evaders saw 'Stukas' flying in formation. There were also some bombers there which looked like DO217's. They were told that there is a large training school for JU88's in LYONS and often evaders saw ME110's flying into LYONS from the southeast. Bombers leaving LYONS always flew north from a southeast direction. They saw yellow and black markings on all bombers.

d. Five to ~~ten~~ ^{ten} miles east of PARIS evaders passed an FW190 airfield. It seemed well-established but there were ^{only} few aircraft on the field. They saw ^{counted} about twelve in front of one large hangar and altogether ~~xxx~~ ^{xxx} three large hangars. The French referred to this field as a German village, ~~but~~ The evaders thought it was poorly camouflaged. One large hangar was about 100 yards from the main road which ~~was~~ ^{runs} between AMBIL and PARIS.

e. French stated that in November and December large numbers of German troops ~~had~~ been moved into the coastal area at the Channel and also around BREST. ~~That~~
~~xx~~