

'One engine was damaged by flak on the way to the target but after dropping their bombs two more engines gave out and the fourth began to fire irregularly. Ordered to bale out they landed close to each other buried their parachutes and set off in a south westerly direction. Two hours later they were taken prisoner by two German soldiers who took them to a guard house where they were handed over to two young soldiers (17 or 18 years old) and told to go with them by the corporal in charge. The two guards were very casual and after 10 minutes or so near a ditch, Parkinson asked if he and Horton could smoke. They gave permission and Bob asked for a light. At this time Bob hit one of them whilst Syd knocked the other one over. They then pushed the guards into the swampy ditch and ran for the woods.

After many hours walking through woodland having only seen and dodged two woodmen collecting logs they emerged from the wood on to a road signposted Sampigny-Rupt St.Mihiel. They were south west of St Mihiel and very exhausted. After resting they struck out for Rupt-St. Mihiel. Soon they heard and saw mechanics repairing a car and lay low until they had finished, during which time a gendarme cycled by but did not see them. Continuing on their way, but keeping just off the road they encountered an elderly farmer who after giving them bread and water soon made off apparently not wanting to be seen with them. On reaching Rupt-St. Mihiel they came across a French lad walking with a horse and cart and beckoned to him. Being still in battle dress and flying boots he obviously recognised them as RAF and told them to lie low as there was a working party nearby whose supervisor would give them away if he saw them. The boy with the horse and cart left and they eventually heard the supervisor leave on his motorcycle but stayed where they were for a while.

Soon a young French couple with two children appeared apparently having learned about them from the lad with the horse and cart. Using signs the couple asked if they were hungry then told them to stay where they were until dark. The young man and an older man returned after dark with food and took them to a house where they received a cooked meal and beer. They were given civilian clothes and a haversack containing hard boiled eggs, bread, butter, sugar and milk in their own water bottle.

About midnight on the 6th September Bob and Syd set out alone towards Bar-le-Duc. About 02.00hrs on the 7th they stopped at Villotte-Sur-Aire where they slept on top of a haystack that night and much of the following day the 8th September. At 21.00hrs on the 8th they decided to move on and walked to Bar-le-Duc . They did not see anybody along the way and lay low until daylight (the 9th) when they went into the town intending to catch a train to Paris. Seeing a German guard at the station they withdrew to their hiding place just outside the town.

Safely back at their hiding place they later saw a cyclist who when beckoned stopped and after enquiring if they were 'Engleesch' agreed to get them tickets to Paris for which they gave him French francs from their purses. An hour later he was back with not just tickets but shaving kit, fruit and wine. He came back again later in a car driven by a well dressed man and brought them civilian shoes into which they changed before being driven to the station in Bar-Le-Duc.

At the station they were introduced to the station master, ticket collector and signalman as being English. The train was not due until 02.20 hrs the following morning so they were hidden in the control room of the signal box where they slept until 01.20 hrs. With their

haversacks having been filled with fruit they were taken by a porter to a carriage in which there were some French civilians to whom he seemed to explain their identities.

The train went straight through to Paris which they reached at 09.00hrs on 10th September. They left the station with no difficulty and, as taught in their lectures, attempted to reach the suburbs. They walked, lost the streets of Paris, until finally at about 06.00hrs in an area near a large race course, saw and approached a Roman Catholic priest. Luck was certainly with them as the priest took them to what seemed like a sort of school and after fetching another priest who could speak English inspected their identity discs and verified they were indeed British.'