

SECRET

M.I. 9/S/P.G. (-) 2933.

EVASION CAPTURE IN POLAND AND
REACHED RUSSIAN LINES.

The information contained in this report is to be treated as
SECRET

STATEMENT BY

P.1961 F/O. Wladyslaw SCHOFFER, 301 Sqn. M.A.A.F., R.A.F.

Left : CAIRO, 22 Mar 45.

Arrived: U.K., 23 Mar 45.

Date of Birth : 24 Jul 10.
R.A.F. Service : Since 26 Jul 41.
Post in crew : Captain of Crew.

Private Address:
c/o Polish Embassy,
LONDON, England.

Other members of crew:

P/O. LOFUSZANSKI	(navigator) (on way to U.K.)
P/O. BERNHARDT	(bomb aimer) (on way to U.K.)
W.O. DENISENKO	(engineer) (on way to U.K.)
F/Sgt. LUCK	(rear gunner) (on way to U.K.)
Sgt. KRETOWICZ	(2nd pilot) (on way to U.K.)
W.O. OWSIANY	(1st pilot) (P/W)
W.O. BOCHANES	(wireless operator) (killed whilst descending after baling out).

On 17 Aug 44, at about 1900 hrs, we left BRINDISI in a Halifax Mk III aircraft to drop supplies to the Polish army fighting in WARSAW.

18 Aug 44,

Baled out
LAKTA DOLNA.

We had dropped our supplies and were on our return journey when we were attacked by three Ju 88s at about 0215 hrs on 18 Aug. We were flying at an altitude of approx. 9,000 ft. The aircraft burst into flames at once and we baled out.

Whilst descending I noticed one of the Ju 88s was attacking a member of my crew, later identified as the wireless operator. His body was found riddled with machine gun bullets. All his identity documents and /escape kit

INTERVIEWED BY: I.S.9(W).)
O.R.S., Bomber Command, R.A.F.) 24 Mar 45.
M.I.3(c). P.W.5.)
Polish Air Force H.Q. ... 26 Mar 45.

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escape kit were removed by members of the partisan army and he was buried in ZEJOCINA, near LAKPA (GERMAN 1:250,000, Sheet R 50, Y 87).

I landed at about 0220 hrs on 13 Aug a few kms. N. of LAKPA DOLNA (Y 87). After a short rest I gathered my parachute, harness and mac west together and tried to find my bearings. The compass in my escape kit was not serviceable and I found that the maps of POLAND were practically useless except for a very general orientation.

I walked about 6 kms. in a Southerly direction and reached the outskirts of LAKPA DOLNA. Here I approached a lonely house and woke up the people (names unknown). I told them who I was and asked to be put in touch with the partisans. They were very afraid and refused all information.

They took me into the house and gave me food. After about half an hour a lady (name unknown) arrived who spoke English. She told me to remain at the house and said that she would put me in touch with the Underground organisation.

About 0800 hrs two Polish officers arrived. I told them about the other members of my crew and suggested that they should search for them.

I slept all day at the farmhouse until the evening, when one of the two officers (name unknown) returned and informed me that three members of my crew, the navigator, the engineer and the body of the wireless operator, had been found.

LAKPA GORNA.

That night I was taken by the Polish officer to LAKPA GORNA (Y 87) where I met my navigator. We slept in a stable and in the morning (19 Aug) we were joined by the engineer.

On the evening of the same day the three of us were taken by four Polish officers (names unknown) to KIERLIKAWKA (Y 77). We had to be moved very quickly as the Gestapo was hunting for us. I heard later that the people with whom I had stayed on the first day had all been killed by the Gestapo.

23 Aug 44,
KIERLIKAWKA.

We remained in KIERLIKAWKA until about 23 Aug. On 20 Aug we were joined by my second pilot. In this village we all received civilian clothing.

I did not meet any other members of my crew until 29 Aug, when I saw the rear gunner for about half an hour. He was at a place further North, near BOCHNIA (Y 88) and had heard of our whereabouts. He told me that the first pilot had been wounded and was captured by the Gestapo in BOCHNIA and later moved to KRAKOW (Sheet Q 51, Z 25). The rear gunner returned again to BOCHNIA and I did not see him until I reached ODESSA.

On 29 Aug I met one of the local leaders of the Underground movement to whom I suggested that our party be split up, as it was too dangerous for us to stay together. He agreed with me. I did not see them again until we were in ODESSA, but for a considerable time we kept in touch with each other /indirectly

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indirectly.

Owing to my past military experience and as I had previously been an officer in the Polish army I was attached to the district partisan staff. My job was chiefly to train young Polish officers, but on several occasions I took part in action against the Gestapo, German S.S., Ukrainian S.S. and Russian S.S. police.

WARSAW and
KRAKOW.

I made several journeys to WARSAW and KRAKOW, as liaison officer. I remained with this district staff until 22 Dec 44. During this period our H.Q. had to be moved to many different places for security reasons, often two or three times a week.

Dec 44.

In Dec I was sent to another Staff in the Carpathian mountains. Here we had large stores of arms, which had been dropped to us by the British. These weapons were usually distributed to the partisans at once. There was a great shortage of suitable winter clothing for the partisan army.

During the first week of Jan 45 I returned to the district South of BOCHNIA. By this time there were about 40 Allied airmen in the vicinity who were all billeted on different farms and put under my charge. I had with me W.O. BROOKS (S/P.G.(G) 2950) and Sgt. DUNCAN (S/PG.(G) 2951) whom I detailed to keep in touch with all Allied personnel.

17 Jan 45,
Contact with
Russian troops.

On 17 Jan I was staying in SZLIK (Sheet Q 50, Y 76) where I had hidden 13 American airmen, one South African Army private, and a Belgian Army sergeant. When the Russians arrived that day I told the above party to wait a few days until the first line troops had passed, but they would not listen and departed on their own. I found out later that they had had a very difficult time before reaching ODESSA.

Mar 45,
Reached ODESSA.

On 22 Jan W.O. BROOKS and Sgt. DUNCAN returned from a special mission on which I had sent them and they remained with me until we reached ODESSA at the beginning of Mar. The remainder of my experiences are the same as told by W.O. BROOKS in Appendix C to his report (S/P.G.(G) 2950).

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