

Just before landing I had seen a farmhouse quite close – possibly the place with the barking dog. I appeared to have landed in a field just beside a large area of waste land which was rather marshy. When I was looking for a spot to hide my Mae West I had found a river running roughly E-W and so had at least one thing to help me pinpoint my position when it got light in the morning. Unfortunately, I appeared to be hemmed in, in a triangle form by the river on one side, the farmhouse on another, with the marshy land forming the third side. As I was a non-swimmer the river was out of the question, the explosion and the barking of the dog, I felt sure, would have disturbed the people in the farm, so it was not possible to go that way and this left only the marshland. As I went stumbling forward towards this I heard the sound of two men who appeared to be marching along a road at right angles to the river, talking as they went along their voices and footsteps gradually died down in the distance – whilst I stood there listening I could hear very faintly the sound of another dog barking and peoples voices on the far side of the marshy land. Feeling rather hemmed in I decided that it would be a good thing to stay where I was and to find a small hollow in the open. Wooded areas are always searched carefully because they provide so much shelter but by staying in an area which apparently provided no cover I felt there was less likelihood of being spotted if anyone came along to such a place. I soon found a suitable spot, lay down, looked at my watch and saw the time was only about 4.00 a.m., less than half an hour after we had been hit, closed my eyes and fell asleep instantly.

About 7.30 a.m. I was roused by men singing – I soon realized that they must be Germans and as I lay on the ground I could hear the sound of their feet as they marched along. It was rather misty so waiting until the sound of voices had gone I raised myself to have a look round – as I had suspected early in the morning, I was on waste land which seemed to stretch for quite a considerable distance, on one side of this was a small stream which ran into a fairly large river a couple of hundred yards away – I certainly would have my work cut out if I tried to cross that in the dark – there seemed to be quite a lot of ditches, quite deep and wide some of them, in between these two rivers. The farmhouse wasn't visible, but across the river I could see another house and the windows commanded a really excellent view of the land where I was sheltering. In my battle dress blouse I had escape and emergency food packs together with a considerable quantity of nylon parachute cords and three triangular pieces of nylon from the "chute – all this made my blouse bulge so much that I felt like a Prima Donna.

When I tried to crawl out of my little hollow on my stomach to reconnoitre, it just wasn't possible – I had to go on hands and knees feeling thoroughly ridiculous like a silly schoolboy playing "Cowboys and Indians." I really needn't have worried for it had now started to rain and I couldn't see the house through the rain so it was hardly likely that anyone there could see me in the R.A.F. blue which blended so well with the landscape on the dull grey morning. Reaching the river bank I found it very steep, about eight to ten feet high, with one or two very small fir trees growing on the slope. Finding the largest of these I did my best to curl around it to get some shelter from the rain, whilst I worked out a plan of action. Although feeling slightly hungry I decided that it would be wiser to go without food for at least twenty-four hours by which time I would have become more used to that hungry feeling and so would, I thought, derive more benefit from my tablets. To make up for food I decided to smoke a cigarette and felt really sorry for myself when I realised how very few I had – there was no fear of the smoke being seen or smelt in the rain.

The most important thing was to get away as soon as possible from that area which was much too near the crashed plane – but this couldn't be attempted until dusk. I had found that I could only move from this particular spot by passing the farmhouse seen when I was descending, therefore, it was advisable to see what this place looked like and to try and find a way round it where I would be out of sight. Whilst it was raining the Farmer and his family were not likely to go to far afield and there was little

fear of being seen providing reasonable precautions were taken. The river bank provided quite good shelter from observation and after some minutes walking by its side, some bushes and trees extending from the river bank up the side of a hill and out of sight on its far side, provided not only a little shelter from the rain but also quite an excellent viewpoint to scan the surrounding land. Scrambling through the bushes on the crest of this hillock the farm appeared to be some distance away from the river and quite easy to pass that side but there was no cover on its far side for the land was perfectly flat as far as could be seen through the rain. Here the land sloped more gently down to the water with a fair sprinkling of bushes on the slope. On the other side of the river there were some low-lying fields cut by drainage ditches, another branch of the river, then another wooded slope but no houses or signs of habitation and there appeared to be little chance of being seen from there. Moving through the bushes I came presently to a small plantation of trees – going through this I nearly walked into the yard of a small farm at its far end. But this was a farm I had not seen before and leading from it was a track to a road some distance ahead. Having seen the lay of the land I went back and settled down in a sheltered spot to wait for dusk.

There was little to do to keep myself occupied and by now I was thoroughly soaked, even my feet were wet for the damp had penetrated right through my flying boots – if the soft leather hardened as it dried walking was going to be extremely uncomfortable. The mile or so I had walked during the morning had been rather painful for my flying boots were not comfortable enough for a lot of walking and the sooner a proper pair of shoes could be acquired the better chance I had of getting away. Until now I hadn't realised that I was quite beyond the pale – the country I was in if not enemy country was most certainly enemy occupied and by this time a very considerable hue and cry must be up. I wanted a pair of shoes for walking – how they were obtained would depend upon the circumstances at the time, but the fact remained that the less trace I left of my passage through the country the less likelihood there was of being captured – a theft would probably arouse suspicion but to approach some house and to try and buy a pair would be even more risky – somehow I didn't feel very happy about my future life of crime. Food was another worry. Could I risk calling at farms or houses to ask for food – the odds were definitely against me for I was on foot and not sufficiently mobile to compete with the mechanised enemy troops. Chicken houses would perhaps, provide some eggs and milk might be obtainable from outside some of the farms but there was no chance of finding any root crops or other vegetables at this time of the year.

Definite planning was right out of the question until I had pinpointed myself – having “fixed” my position I would then be able to decide in which direction to travel but at the moment I had the choice of going North East or West – North East seemed the wisest. Once my position was known I could estimate my time of travel to reach my objective but one thing was certain – my plans would have to be flexible for there were too many unknown factors – German troops, food, my ability to walk any distance in flying boots and lack of toilet articles. An unshaven man is always an object of suspicion particularly when he is very dirty and untidy – I was rapidly becoming a very suspicious person. As that long dreary damp miserable day slowly passed so my thoughts and ideas gradually fell into place according to their importance. Never arouse suspicion – always act as though my behaviour was perfectly normal. The beard was a snag so I would have to keep out of sight as much as possible. Keep fit – food and feet to be cared for. Never be caught unawares – this would mean traveling at night and avoiding towns and villages but most important of all – do not be captured.

Twilight at last – moving beside the river I successfully passed the farmhouses without being observed and reached the road I had seen in the morning and turned North. Crossing over the river I kept a good watch for sight and sound of other wayfarers and then saw a newspaper just by the roadside. This was quite a recent copy and gave the name of the town (Brande) where it was printed –

I was at last able to place myself somewhere on the map but only vaguely still. It was not until two years later that I was able to find just where I had landed by parachute (at Blahoj) and was surprised then to find how accurately I had pinpointed myself with the meagre information available. After some time a concrete surfaced road appeared which went in the right direction and I turned down this with no fear of detection for it was too dark for me to be seen in detail.

A bus came along and stopped a few hundred yards ahead to allow a family to alight – the bus started again and the family crossed the fields to a small pink and white farmhouse – just a peaceful country scene. Turning a bend in the road I saw some houses ahead on the sky line with a number of what appeared to be men, patrolling the road – it was difficult at a distance to tell whether they were troops or not – so taking to the fields I went round the village in a half circle until I reached another road heading in the right direction. Nearby was Blahoj Church and as the Pastor usually lives near his Church it seemed the right place to try and contact him to obtain information. There was one or two houses and a small school, all of which appeared to be empty, but nothing large enough for the Vicarage. Entering the Church I was disappointed not finding a Notice Board giving details of Services, Church officials addresses etc. The Church was very peaceful, quiet and warm – brightly polished brass, well scrubbed floor, the painted walls of dove grey with a painted frieze round the Altar with its fresh flowers – the loving care and attention bestowed upon it visible everywhere.

Waiting for some time I reluctantly started off again for it seemed unlikely that the Pastor would be coming. As it became darker and colder, the road too became less friendly – it was narrower now and less well kept, the farmhouses laying back on either side were further apart and smaller and there were no telephone poles with which to measure the distance I walked. The whole character of the country seemed to change with the coming of darkness and now seemed very flat, bare and desolate, and just a little sinister. For some time now my feet had been getting more and more sore – the sheepskin socks in my flying boots had become great granite boulders torturing my feet at every step and the calves of my legs were also sore from the continual rubbing caused by tucking the tops of my boots into my trouser legs. I wasn't enjoying myself and became rather annoyed with the Germans. Those places we speak of as delightful spots are always associated in our minds with pleasant memories and none of us like those places where we have been unhappy and have, perhaps suffered some physical discomfort or grief. I was feeling very sorry for the penitents of old who walked barefoot.

Much later, having found shelter in a barn in an isolated area, in Vorskunde, in the early hours of the morning I was awakened by the barking of a dog which had found my hiding place – at the same time I heard voices so lay quietly hoping that the dog and the owners of the voices would go away and get on with their business and enable me to disappear rapidly elsewhere. But it wasn't to be – I thought I heard the men depart so pulled on my boots and getting up found a man (Herr Jacob Jorgensen) waiting at the bottom of the hay. He was smiling all over his face and was so friendly that I felt able to relax a little – he kept shaking me by the hand and telling me he was a "comrade" and friendly, then linking his arm with mine took me to the farmhouse telling me that I must have some breakfast before continuing my travels. He also told me his neighbour had gone off to telephone for the police but that he would show me the best way to go to avoid them. That porridge, eggs and bacon and hot milky coffee were more than welcome and I was sorry that I had to eat it so rapidly. Before I had scarcely finished, the farmer took me out to a side road telling me to go down this and at the same time pointed out the direction the Police were expected to come.

Two years later I met the Police Officer – Quitzal Dreyer – a great fat jolly fellow, and heard his story. He was in bed when the telephone call came and got up to answer it telling the caller he

could not come at once as he was not dressed nor had he had his breakfast. He then went back to bed getting up rather later than usual for his breakfast. After breakfast he went to his garage to see to his car and told me he found quite a lot of things needed attention before he could take it out. Some five hours after receipt of the telephone call he set out to look for me taking with him Ivan Sahlertz of Give, a member of the Underground movement – they told me that if they had found me that day they would have assisted me as much as possible and then gone “underground.”

On arrival at the farmhouse the Farmer told them that I had left some hours before so they started to look for me – carefully going in the wrong direction. In the evening when they arrived back home the Police Officer had to report to the Germans – he could not avoid this – and told them he believed that I was traveling in a certain direction knowing that this would cause the Germans to search the wrong area and thus giving me a better chance to evade capture. It was a bad start to the day for I was compelled to walk in broad daylight instead of by night.

As the sun rose I started off on my hike once more. By now my beard was very noticeable and I was very dirty and untidy and felt that I had covered a fair distance. I had seen no one as I passed down the road during the previous night, but as I started off it appeared as though the whole population of the surrounding countryside started to travel about – up and down on the road in their carts and on their cycles. Late in the day some workmen who cycled passed me stopped at a small side road some fifty to sixty yards ahead just as a German armoured motor cycle and sidecar patrol approached me from in front, fortunately it turned down a side road near where these men stood chatting. I think they had realised there was something wrong with my appearance when they passed me and had got off their cycles to provide some form of screen when the patrol was seen coming along the road. As I came up to them they called to me and we shook hands all round whilst they told me that they were my “comrades” despite the Germans whom they said were in the wood just beside the spot where we were standing. They gave me some money which I am sure they could ill spare and warned me to get away from that spot as quickly as possible, then cycled off.

Another cyclist was coming up the road so sitting down on the edge of the road I lit a cigarette as he approached hoping this would screen my face. He cycled right up to me, pulled out a cigarette and asked for a light and as I was lighting his cigarette we heard the motor cycle approaching again. Pushing me into the bushes bordering the road he cycled off down the road whilst I ran deeper into woods and waited there to see if the cyclist would come and follow me – he was trying to tell me something when the Germans were heard coming back. He came round through the woods and found me as soon as the Germans had gone and told me that he would try to help me but that I would have to hide in the woods until late at night when he would come back again. As he turned away he asked me if I would like something to eat and drink – we decided upon milk and sandwiches, then off he went but first asked for a cigarette – I should have been warned by this and parked some of my precious few cigarettes away for later he was to smoke all of them for me. In a couple of hours he was back with some sandwiches but I could only eat one of them as I was so very dry and found it most difficult to swallow. He went off again immediately and I lay down and fell asleep – by this time I felt that I was quite used to sleeping out in the open without any shelter overhead and found it most pleasant although the ground was apt to become hard at times.

Midnight came, and went and I was becoming anxious about my new found friend, Soren Pedersen, when I heard him whistle gently from a few yards away. He had brought a great quart size bottle of milk and I just sat and guzzled this for a few minutes before we set out on a long tiring cross country walk. Before setting out the remainder of the milk was poured into a small rubber water bottle and I tucked it into my battle dress blouse with all the other stuff I had there. With only two stops we did several miles that night mostly across and alongside ploughed fields and across rough