

Report by Flt Sgt Arthur G White RAF

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Tropics. There, the day would appear with a sudden burst of splendour, lighting the whole sky, but here the sky was cold, heavy and leaden with a tiny streak of lighter grey on the horizon which gradually widened until, almost without warning, we could see the deck of the ship and one another quite clearly. The change from a friendly velvety darkness of the night to a sullen cold grey was menacing and seemed to be a warning to us all.

Ahead a red light had been visible for some time and now we could just discern land. To avoid arousing the suspicion of German patrols on duty at the Harbour entrance, the Skipper told us to go down into the tiny cabin in the bows of the boat and to stay hidden there until he told us to come on deck. Sitting down there we could feel the boat slowly decreasing speed and when the engines were stopped there was only the slap, slap, of the water against the hull of the boat as we slid to our moorings. A slight bump followed by the slither of rope over the side, the sound of footsteps first on deck and then ringing on stone told us that at last we were moored and then the Skipper called down to us to come up on deck. The first thing I saw as I got on deck was a German sentry on duty on the shore only three or four yards away. There, right under the noses of the Germans we disembarked and, without a backward glance, walked off into the Town.

For some time we walked round the streets of Korsor trying to find an open Café and at the same time to avoid becoming too conspicuous by hanging round one particular spot so early in the morning. The Town was only just beginning to come to life and smoke was appearing from more and more chimneys but there were very few people about the streets, the only vehicle a farm cart with a load of milk. About 8.30 a.m. we found a Hotel Restaurant which had just opened but as our two friends, Peter Carlsen and A Willumsin, the Agents, who had crossed by the normal Ferry, were due to arrive at any moment, we had not time to wait for breakfast to be prepared and so ordered a couple of Gins and French – the first of many drinks that day.

We met the two "Agents" on time and waited with them a moment or two on the kerb outside the Police Station until our taxi arrived. Like all German occupied countries this one was short of petrol, consequently most of the vehicles were driven by producer gas engines. Our Taxi driver informed us that he would have to stop every 20 – 30 miles to refill with water and charcoal. As the journey to Copenhagen was some 60 miles we had to stop three times on the way there and every time we stopped, whilst the driver was attending to his engine, we found a small Hotel or Restaurant and had a drink. Whisky and soda at the first stop, Gin and French the second stop and also again at our last stop. On into the Capital, passing along the road the State Prison where the "Russian" was taking up a new post. The taxi was paid off in a busy part of the City so that the driver would not know our destination and after parting from the "Russian" we went to another street where there was a taxi phone and rang for a fresh taxi. Standing there the Senior "Agent" spotted a taxi coming and stepped out into the road to stop it but as it came up he leapt back onto the pavement, grinning ruefully, and as it passed us we saw four Nazi Officers sitting in it. When our cab arrived we got in and soon arrived at our destination in the suburbs – a large block of flats – many still unfinished. There we went to the "Agent's," Peter Carlsen, brother's flat and once again out came the Gin and French to celebrate our safe arrival – I seemed to be fated that day to drink Gin and French. Herr Y. (the owner of the Flat) showed me his visitor's book and pointed out the name of the Gestapo Chief for the country whom he had entertained recently to Dinner. He asked me to write something in his book – I wonder what the German would have thought had he seen the book later.

We decided to have our lunch at a Restaurant – their maid was an uncertain factor. Once again we had drinks before the meal and during the steak an egg stage a liqueur appeared. Lunch over, the "Agents" and Herr Y. and his wife discussed the best place to 'park' me until further

arrangements could be made for my transport and finally decided upon a Doctor friend, where I was to stay overnight. We took another taxi to his flat (it must have been a most profitable day for taxi-drivers) and whilst he was getting us a glass of Schnapps apiece (he wouldn't accept 'No' from me) we raided his medicine cabinet and took two "Wakey-Wakey" tablets each to wash down with our drinks. After explaining the position to the Doctor I was left with him when the others went off – he produced a few English books and I settled down to read one but, despite the tablets fell asleep within half an hour and didn't wake until the late afternoon. Dinner over I went to bed and had my first good night's sleep for many days.

In the morning when I was called, my Hosts told me that there was a man on his way to fetch me and he arrived just as I was finishing my breakfast. By now I was used to being passed from one person to another and with changing my quarters that I hardly bothered to ask where we were going. We called in at his Flat near the center of Copenhagen and he told me that he had had to go underground and leave his own home and for this reason was unable to look after me himself. He decided to ring some friends living on the outskirts of the City and asked them if they could put me up for a few days – as he was unable to get in touch with them over the telephone, he decided we could go to their house and see them. We walked down to a large Square in the City and I sat down opposite the big Hotel, the Angleterre, then used as the Headquarters for the German Forces there, and watched the sentries on duty and the many German uniforms as the people hurried to and fro. I didn't see any German speak to, or be spoken to, by the people – they just ignored them completely and never seemed to see that there were any Germans present. My friend, who said he was a publisher, came back and said he had obtained a taxi, the driver of which was a good friend of his. Throughout all my travels I had been carrying a small boot box wrapped up in rather shabby brown paper and in this I carried all my belongings (a rather dangerous incriminating parcel of things). There were my chevrons and crown, my brevet, small escape kits containing foreign currency and silk maps, compasses etc. as well as small packets of food such as barley sugar, Horlicks tablets, together with a rubber water bottle and matches. My companion asked me what I was carrying and when I told him he took the parcel away and put it on the seat beside the driver – he said that if we were stopped the driver would say that a previous passenger had left it, whilst we would try and make our getaway. We drove out to Bagsvaerd on the fringe of the City, to a large lake with a very large Mansion standing beside it. We went up and rang the bell and as we were waiting for the door to open a very fine large Great Dane came round the corner and barked at us.

The door opened and in we went and waited a few minutes before Herr Duelund and his wife, Alma, appeared. After a long talk my fellow taxi companion got up to leave and told me that I was to stay here until he called for me again. There I spent an ideal holiday getting up in the morning and breakfasting in solitary sate, wandering round the house, reading, playing the piano and walking in the grounds, usually having lunch with Mrs. Duelund and then in the evening we would have a real pre-War meal. The servants hardly ever appeared but did everything to make my stay happy when I was by myself. After Dinner we would go and sit before the fire in the lounge, sipping our coffee and our drinks. Herr Duelund finished up the last of his whisky whilst I was there but I hadn't the heart to help him out and contented myself with Gin and Soda. On Sunday his nephews and a niece came over and in the afternoon we all went for a walk round the roads and I was glad of the opportunity of being able to get a little exercise again. In the evening we played billiards with his nephew and after Dinner saw them off home again. They came in once or twice later and we had a very pleasant time together.

This quiet pleasant existence had been going on for nearly a week when, one evening during Dinner, Mrs. Duelund was called to the telephone. On her return she told me that she had been asked

to have the Account books ready for collection later in the evening – I was the “Account Books.” Shortly after, the man who had brought me here came and we went off back to the City to a tiny flat beside one of the many strips of water that penetrate the City from the sea. The balcony of the flat overlooked the large shipbuilding factory of Burmeister and Wain which had been badly damaged by our Mosquito’s earlier in the War and my new Hosts, Herr Petersen were full of praise for the skill of the Pilots and Navigators for their precision bombing of this rather difficult target. At this flat I found two young American Air Force Officers, Flt Lt’s Gill and Markowitz, who were to cross the sea to Sweden with me in the early hours of the morning. We all sat up talking during the evening and at one time, my Hosts heard a car draw up outside and produced revolvers and went to the balcony to see who it might be. They had a varied collection of pistols, some of which had been taken off of Germans – I didn’t ask how. The father of one of my Hosts told me that he was the Editor of a newspaper and showed me a small duplicated booklet which had been produced for circulation among people in the Underground Movement – the profit being used to help War victims.

As it would be an early call in the morning, I followed the example of the Americans and tried to get some sleep. The Resistance men sat up talking throughout the night until it was time to wake us. Whilst we washed they prepared a breakfast and over the meal told us of some of the exploits of the local men of the Resistance. One of their more daring deeds was to park a large lorry, filled with Allied Airmen, in front of one of the Gestapo buildings whilst they searched the City for cars to take these men to the various hide-outs arranged. When the cars arrived, these airmen, who had been cooped up in the lorry for several hours without making a noise, climbed out of the lorry and entered the cars and were driven off right under the noses of the enemy. No wonder these people said the Germans were “dim.”

There was a soft knock on the door and the caller said he had a car to take we three to the boat. His car was one of the most luxurious saloon cars I have ever seen and he must have been well “in” with the Germans to get sufficient petrol and to avoid confiscation of the car. It was quite a short trip to the boat yard and on arrival we were hurried out of the car, one by one, into a piece of waste land surrounded by a high wooden fence. We were left in the shadow and told not to speak or make a noise. We also saw three other people arrive and be put into the shadows a little apart from us. Then a man came up and off one of the Americans, again warning us not to make a noise or to smoke. He soon returned and this time took away one of the other group and in this way he took us one by one to a tiny boat laying alongside the waste land. All aboard, the covers were fixed and we six had to sit there crouched over our knees as there was insufficient room to sit upright.

Just before dawn the man returned with a companion and we set off – the journey promised to be uncomfortable for the motor was only a couple of feet away from us and there was little air. As it got light I saw that the other three were civilians – two men and a woman. The woman had only recently been released from prison by the Germans who had tortured her, one the men was her husband and he was just a bundle of nerves. The second man was even taller than I and was a very well known figure both before the War and later as a leader of the Resistance Movement. The Germans had made things so hot for him that his friends had eventually been able to persuade him to flee for safety. Leaving the sheltered water the boat was soon rolling and heaving about and I felt very sorry for the three civilians who were soon ill – they were surprised that none of us were affected by the movement of the boat and the only explanation we had to offer was that we had become inured to bumpy passages through constant flying in all weathers.

The passage took about two hours and we were all very thankful when the covers were thrown back and we could once more sit comfortably with our heads just above the deck, about a foot above water level. There were some soldiers on duty at the entrance to Malmo Harbour (Sweden) but

their appearance was indescribably different from that of the Germans I had seen only a couple of days before. It wasn't their uniform but their whole manner. We moored near their post and were helped ashore by a couple of Harbour Police who took us into their comfortably furnished post. They telephoned the Police Station in the Town to tell of our arrival and we were told that we would be fetched in about half an hour. Whilst we were waiting it was pitiful to see how happy and relieved the woman and her husband were – they kept offering us some of their sandwiches and telling us how very happy they were to be in a free country again.

Two very tall plain clothed Policemen arrived and conducted the two Americans and I to a car and we set off for the Police Station. On arrival there we were put into a room adjoining the cells and shown where we could have a wash and shave and generally tidy ourselves up. We were told that we would have to wait there for the arrival of a Doctor who was to examine us to see whether we were free from infection (one can never get away from F.F.I's in the Forces) and whilst we waited for him amused ourselves wandering along the corridor between the cells and having a look at the prisoners. After our medical we were taken up to another floor for interrogation. During this we were given some coffee and cakes and, when the questioning was over, were given a permit each, permitting us to travel to our respective Embassies in Stockholm, some three hundred miles further north. The policeman kept us waiting for a few minutes then for the arrival of an Air Force Officer who was expected and who was taking us to lunch. Over a very good lunch in the Police Station Restaurant, we avoided any mention of Air Force matters with the Officer who said he was partially trained in England with the R.A.F. He returned us to the Policeman from whom we collected food and cigarette ration cards and were then put into taxis and sent off to our Consulates.

At the Consul's Office I was taken straight in to see him and was presented with a packet of "Camels" and also managed to get some money – about 50s.0d for which I had to sign – in triplicate. After questioning me and obtaining my Number, Rank and Name, he rang the Legation and passed on this information so that they might check with the R.A.F. records. Accommodation was arranged in a nearby Hotel – the Hotel Temperance in Engelbrektsgatan and I was told how to reach it and also to report again in the morning and then I was free to do what I liked for the rest of the day. Not knowing a word of the language Cinemas and Theatres were out of the question, so I went on a sightseeing tour, returning in the evening to the Hotel for Dinner and then to bed with a box of chocolates I had managed to buy in my wanderings.

Rising early, I found the two Americans were staying in the same Hotel and were just finishing their breakfast – they said that they had ordered Eggs and Bacon and then had just looked blank when the Waitress asked for their Egg coupons (we had not been given Egg coupons by the Police). I had already ordered the same meal so professed complete ignorance about Egg coupons when I was asked for one and pointed out that the Police had given me my coupons only the preceding afternoon and, as the Waitress's command of English was about equal to my command of her language, we both decided that nothing further should be said. These two were catching an early train and traveling throughout the day in order to see as much of the country as possible on their way to the Capital and they suggested that I ask our Consul to make arrangements for me to travel with them

I put this to the Consul when I called at his office< but he said that as it meant arriving in Stockholm at night it would be difficult for arrangements to be made for me, at such short notice, and said he was booking a sleeping berth on the night train due in at the Capital about 8.00 a.m. He told me to call back in the afternoon and then had my ticket together with a ticket for a second class berth in the sleeper. I was given the address of the Legation and told to reach it and once again was left to my own devices for the remainder of the afternoon which I spent continuing my sightseeing tour of

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the Town. After Dinner, I made my way to the Station – probably one of the most pleasant I have seen with the exception of Johannesburg Station – there I soon found my train and had no difficulty in finding the appropriate coach and compartment. The corridors of these trains, as in the country, had just left – Denmark, were provided with seats which sprung flush with the side of the train when one stands up – I sat on one of these as we started and managed to see a little of the countryside before it was too dark. These seats provided a very comfortable position for sightseeing out of the long corridor windows – ones view is not interrupted by post and doors as in the compartment.

I was up shortly after day break and spent the last couple of hours watching the changing scenery – here and there in the more sheltered spots ice and snow still lay but was already disappearing as the warmer weather approached. At the terminus I just followed the people out of the Station and then feeling it was a little too early to go to the Legation, wandered round the City for about an hour, doing a little window shopping. It was quite a treat to see these pre-War displays in every shop window and in one shop they had a complete windowful of oranges – they must have been brought by train from Spain and to my mind showed that our attempts to completely dislocate the German's rail system was not quite as successful as we hoped. About 9.00 a.m. I returned to the Station taxi queue and going to the first taxi presented the driver with the Embassy address before clambering into the cab. We drove along the water front – with its huge Opera House and magnificent buildings one side and with the numerous islands with their Castles and Palaces linked to the shore and on another by bridges, I couldn't help thinking of those famous men of arms who had lived here and fought over nearly the whole of the Continent in their time.

At the Embassy, a pleasant red brick building close by the English Church, I had to wait for half an hour before I was sent up to see the Air Attache who congratulated me on my escape to neutral territory before explaining the arrangements he was making for my return home. For once I found was a V.I.P with almost top priority for an air passage home – in the bomb bay of a Mosquito. Within a fortnight I was flown home at night reaching London the following day.

The Attache introduced me to a member of the Diplomatic Staff and I was taken off to his home for lunch with his family and then on to Hotel where I was to stay. There I was introduced to another escaper – 'Jim,' a member of the R.A.F. – he had been taken prisoner in the Eastern Mediterranean (Crete?) finally reaching Germany as a P.O.W. As he was a Jew, he had given the Germans a false name for his own safety and had eventually managed to escape. He had reached a Port, found a ship, with a crew member who had hidden him in the bilge – where the Germans dogs were unable to sniff him out during their search of the vessel – and he had reached Sweden a couple of days before me.

As we only had to report to the Embassy every other day we had a lot of time to spare and Jim suggested he 'phone the Chief Rabbi and ask him for introductions. The Rabbi's Secretary put him in touch with a French Jewish refugee family who invited us out to lunch, Jim said they would assume I too was Jewish because of my very dark hair and so it proved. We were invited to another families home and had a very enjoyable evening. A small group of young Jewish refugees invited us to their Club having asked Jim to talk to them about Israel (to which they all hoped to emigrate after the War). We also met another two Englishmen who had been in Finland during the Russian invasion just prior to the 1939-1946 War and had managed to evade capture by the Russians.

That Sunday another member of the Diplomatic Staff invited us to tea where we met a number of other English girls awaiting repatriation. One of them told me that she had escaped from Denmark in the Winter when the sea was frozen over. She had taken a white sheet, draped it over her and crawled across the ice to Sweden.

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By now three other R.A.F. escapees were staying in the same Hotel with us – they were, I believe all members of the same crew and had reached Sweden within three or four days after being shot down.

On one visit to the Embassy we were told to take our belongings to the Air Line offices as we would be leaving for home that evening. Unfortunately this flight was cancelled and we did not leave until the following evening – May 7th, airborne at 1.44 a.m. from Bromma Airport reaching Leuchars 2 ¾ hours later – each in the bomb bay of a Mosquito airplane. A rather scaring trip as I found the weight of my feet tended to slightly open the bomb bay doors and 30,000 feet is a long way up.

There is little else to tell – in London M.I.9 took me over and after interrogation by numerous people, I was photographed for a new 1250R (Identity Card) and was pleased to see that its number was only 000257 instead of the usual awkward seven figure number. A complete Air Crew Medical followed and I was just a little surprised to find that, after feeding off the fat of the neutral land for nearly a fortnight, I was still suffering from malnutrition and exposure but said nothing as I was told that I would get an extra three weeks sick leave on double rations for this, together with my three weeks survivors leave. Then a visit to the Air House to collect my ration cards and warrant with a visit to most of the A.V.M's and A.M's in the R.A.F. and then home for six weeks.