

P E D R O - Story of Mission

On 20 Feb 1945, Pedro, in uniform of Obergefreiter of Infantry and supplied with Soldbuch and Sonderausweis of courier of Army C.P. (which Army not specified), was flown from Lyon, together with Carlos and Antonias. He was the second to drop, landing exactly at the chosen point, some 25 km south of Stuttgart. He landed in a tree, leaving him about six feet from the ground, but uninjured. Cutting the shrouds, he left the chute in the tree, buried his strip tease, American pistol, and spade, and took off for Stuttgart, about 12:30 A.M.

About 1 km before Stuttgart, he met Carlos; they went as far as the city together, and then separated, as directed for his mission. He went on toward Pforzheim, spending the night in a small village en route. Pforzheim having been bombed the preceding night, evacuation was taking place, and he continued to Karlsruhe, both by car and on foot. There, being unable to learn anything about the location of the 216th Inf. Div. from soldiers he questioned, he called the telephone central, who knew nothing about the unit and therefore assumed that it was not in the vicinity. He went on to Brucksal and Heidelberg, traveling at night, as he had to do most of the time throughout his mission, as air attacks prevented daytime travel. At Heidelberg, he learned that only convalescent troops were in the area.

While at the Heidelberg railroad station, where he drew rations as a courier, his papers were controlled by a patrol, who took him and a few others for further examination. The officer in charge questioned the Feldpost number shown in his papers, and on calling up about it, learned that it was the number of a Feldgendarmarie, and not of an Army C.P. The officer did not seem angry, indicating that perhaps there had been a mistake in the stamp used when his papers were issued, but nevertheless had to call for a truck to take him to the military jail. In the back of the truck were only the guard and Pedro, who was handcuffed. This was about 2:00 of 2:30 A.M. En route, he hit the guard on the head with the sharp points of the handcuffs, tripped him, and then jumped from the truck. He believes he knocked the guard out, but did not kill him. A short distance further, the truck had stopped for a railroad crossing, but Pedro dropped to the ground, waited, and was not missed. After trying to break the handcuffs on a rock, he remembered that they could be opened by inserting a knife blade between the teeth and closing them tighter. This he proceeded to do, with success.

Without any papers or his pistol, all of which had been taken by the patrol at the station, he went to Mannheim, and crossed the Rhine without being controlled at the bridge. ~~He proceeded to~~ In Ludwigshafen, he continued with his mission, though handicapped by not having any papers. He continued to Bad Durkheim, where he learned from S.S. men whom he questioned that the SS Division "Goetz v. Berlichingen" was being moved from Bitsch to Koln. Also, he learned that the staff of General Blaskowitz was located in Bad Durkheim and in Wachenheim. Proceeding to Frankenstein, he found a railhead, though aerial activity prevented it

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from being used in the daytime. He continued to Enkenbach, but because of the careful guard was unable to learn the nature of the supply dump there. In Alsenborn, he tried to get into the message center to get some information about the Lager there, but could not because of his lack of papers. From there, he went to Kaiserslautern.

In Kaiserslautern, he was controlled by two men who appeared to be ordinary soldiers but who identified themselves as secret field police, who were rounding up deserters, and who noticed him because he was carrying no rifle or helmet. Shortly, two more police came up. Pedro told them he was just looking for police headquarters, in order to turn himself in. He was taken there, and on being questioned said he had escaped from a French P.W. camp and come through the lines. Asked why he had come so far back before reporting, he said he had not wanted to report to just anyone, but wanted to find a police headquarters, where he could be given a furlough and sent home. ^{to Danau.} The police then took him to Wachenheim, where he was carefully questioned about conditions in France, the treatment he received in the camp, etc. Asked how he was able to circulate in France in German uniform, he said he had gotten a civilian suit. He said he had passed through the German lines without being detected because it was at night and everyone was asleep.

He believes that his story was doubted, and that he was suspected of espionage. He was sent to Bad Durkheim, where he was completely searched, and threatened, but not harmed. He was given a cigarette which put him to sleep for about ten hours, and on awakening, he found himself in a cell with a French prisoner, the cell being guarded by Russians in German uniform. He was there for eight days, being questioned several times, mostly about his early life, in answer to which he told the truth. Passing the time together, he and the Frenchman tried hypnotizing each other, and the Frenchman succeeded on him. When the Frenchman wanted to do it again the next day, Pedro refused, suspecting some sort of trick.

He was finally taken to Heidelberg by the police, to the same prison to which he was going when he made his previous escape. Five or six days later, he and forty others were marched to Manching-bei-Ingolstadt, not far from Munich. He and one other of the prisoners were handcuffed while en route. There, he was put in a prison-fortress, with about six hundred prisoners. Questioned by his fellow-prisoners, his story was that he had been picked up as A.W.O.L., as they wouldn't believe that he had left a French P.W. camp and come back to fight again. One day, a Lt. Col. addressed all the prisoners, assembled in the courtyard, and told them that the charges against them would be dropped and that they would be released to continue fighting for Germany. This was about the middle of April. Four or five days later, all the German military prisoners were taken to Dachau, where they were deloused, given showers, and clean uniforms. All were asked their specialties, and he said he was a medic ("Sanitaeter"). He was given an armband and a medical kit, but none of them were given any papers.

After a few days' training, they were released and marched ad a unit toward the north. The first place they bivouacked was a small

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village, where Pedro found that the priest had formerly been a prisoner in Dachau. From him, he learned that the people of the village wanted to surrender to the advancing Americans, rather than have their homes destroyed, which fact he relayed to the other men of his newly-formed unit. Together with the people of the village, they waved white flags at the first column of Americans which passed by, but were told to surrender to the next column to arrive. This they did. He told an officer of the American unit who he was, and, apparently without much questioning, was put to work helping to screen the inhabitants of the area. Altogether, they found about 150 soldiers who were disguised as civilians and trying to avoid capture. When the M.P.s came for these prisoners, Pedro went along to Munich with them, to Divisional M.P. headquarters. There he was picked up by an officer of Army M.P. headquarters, who took him to Augsburg, and finally turned him over to G-2 SSS.

Attached are two letters he brought back with him from the unit where he turned himself over.

May 2, 1945

45th Division M.P.^s

or

7th Army M.P.^s

Please send immediately
to this village (Grosingemoos) sufficient
transportation for 150 P.W.^s Have
had these men three days now and have
~~no~~ no food for them! Please get these men
at once!

Rfc. Kleinschmidt
157th Inf. M.P.

