

RETIRED FILE

*ARMY Declass/Release
Instructions On File*

Approved For Release 2001/09/04 : CIA-RDP85-00671R000200090001-2

JOB 85-00671R

guerrilla

ST **33-153**

BOX 2 FOLDER 018

DESENSITIZED

U S ARMY SPECIAL WARFARE SCHOOL

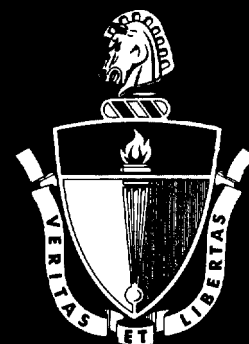
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

.....

English Translation
of
Mes Comrades Sont Morts

MY COMRADES ARE DEAD

Volume III



MY COMRADES - IN - ARMS
ARE DEAD

PIERRE NORD

Volume III
PREPARATION FOR D-DAY

FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
by the
US ARMY SPECIAL WARFARE SCHOOL
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

- OCTOBER 1963 -

This third volume of MY COMRADES ARE DEAD: Preparation for D-Day, was translated from the French original, MES COMRADES SONT MORTS, Tome III - La Preparation du Debarquement, by the United States Army Special Warfare School, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Translation and republication of this work is made with the express permission of EDITIONS ARTHEME FAYARD, 18 Rue de Saint Gothard, Paris, France.

This publication is for the express purpose of providing information and instruction to the staff of the United States Army Special Warfare School, the personnel attending courses at this installation, and the United States Department of the Army in general.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD for Volume III	3
FIRST CHAPTER. LIAISONS AND COMMUNICATIONS IN THE RESISTANCE. Importance and Difficulties. Internal liaisons within a net.....	13
I. Importance of Liaisons	13
II. Special Problems of Intelligence Liaison	21
III. The Infrastructure of a Network. Andalousie the "Hussar" Net	28
IV. A Liaison Agent Who Never Had Problems	65
V. Contacts of the Underground Leaders	85
CHAPTER II. LIAISONS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH LONDON AND ALGIERS. The Battle of the "Agence Immobilière" for its External Liaisons	102
I. The Constructive Period. The Agence Immobiliere Makes contact with London and Algiers.....	102
II. A Period of Efficient Liaison Operations (March to June 1943)	136
III. A Destructive Period. The Liaisons of the Agence Immobiliere Are Broken	150
IV. Young Teams to the Rescue	162
V. The Second Front of the Battle for the Liaisons.....	198
VI. Twenty-four Hours at the Nerve Center of the Agence Immobiliere in 1944	208
CHAPTER III. ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE LANDING IN PROVENCE. The Missions of Colonel Joseph, alias Faisceau	231
I. The Need for Direct Liaisons	231
II. One of the Components of the Army of the Interior. The First Failure	236
III. The First Liaison Mission of Colonel Joseph	245
IV. A Few Other Failures	267
V. The Launching of the Insurrection in the Alps	272
VI. The Second Liaison Mission of Colonel Faisceau	291
VII. Results of Mission Faisceau	299
CHAPTER IV. A FEW OF THE REASONS WHY THE NORMANDY LANDING WAS SUCCESSFUL	304
I. Reasons for the Success of the Normandy Landing According to the German Supreme High Command	304
II. Eleuthere Teams in Normandy. 1. A Lone Sedentary.....	319
III. Eleuthere Teams in Normandy. 2. The Fleurquin Group....	349

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont'd)

IV. The New Mysteries of Paris	349
APPENDIX I	364
APPENDIX II	380

FOREWORD

For Volume III

The public response to the first two volumes of this trilogy makes it possible for me to expose without reservation the reasons why I undertook this task. One of the reasons, and the main one, I dared not assert until now with all the strength and conviction that swelled in me. I feared the ridicule which follows the orator who begins promising: "You will see what you will see", then starts to talk through his hat, either due to personal inadequacy, or due to a partial, hostile or faithless audience. Everything is done in our country to destroy and tarnish the memory of the Resistance. Yet, I had intended to demonstrate once and for all, the military efficiency of the struggle in which most of my comrades lost their lives. Nothing less! Consequently, I felt very small and weak in facing my task.

One statement has made me see red for the last three years. That is: "What purpose has it served, your Resistance? It sure has caused the death of many brave men. But did it really advance the date of the Liberation by even one day?"

At first it was only a question ventured, insinuated, or whispered by the ... let's call them the passives, who felt the need for excuses after having gone to a warm bed every night during the five years of the war, and showed therefore a slight inclination toward kind, moderate or abstract sentiments. By questioning our behavior, they did seem a little sly. Of course they were hoping we would disavow our actions! Still, their voices remained like that of a man who tries to learn something. And so we answered them with amiability. What idiots! (We, of course!)

But soon the voices grew increasingly louder as others, collaborators or collaborationists, feeling that the winds of punishment had receded and ceased their stormy swirl to move in some other fixed directions, took up the dirty question with more or less provocative sneers. Resentment and hatred sometimes flared. We, embarrassed and surprised, remained silent. In complete faith and conscience, I swear I could not understand.

Months went by, and the disgusting question became a current subject of mondain conversations, of public controversies, and of anonymous pamphlets clandestinely distributed. A few years later, and it was the subject of jokes, free-thinking meetings, then of works which were acknowledged by authors and editors, and finally it found 5000 cradles: the show-

windows of all the bookshops of France. And I mean all of them!

I must admit that neither my surviving comrades nor myself had seen this tide spring up, flow and swell with mixed antiresistance ideology and interests, but mostly interests of course. We became slowly aware of it, individually, when we were being derided, insulted or threatened. For we had to work hard to rebuild our lives, usually starting from zero; a zero that we had inscribed under the line drawn over our past, on the day we had joined the resistance, with a certainty about our ultimate death, which equalled the conviction of someone entering the holy orders.

It is said that the underground fighters greedily put their hands in the till after the liberation. People have told me this, and for a long time I let them tell me. I suppose that there indeed took place what always happens after an upheaval, be it political or else, when individuals start killing each other within a human community. All men are not angels. And this did not rob me of my sleep. Actually, the new instead of the old was justified by my national feelings on the one hand and by the result of the Allied victory on the other. In addition, I belonged to underground units which did not participate in the handing out of appointments, if any did occur, and certainly did not aspire to such a thing.

To be frank, I think I did observe at the end of 1944, some young men holding high positions for which they displayed a limited competence. But what of it? Did they not owe it solely to politics, to membership in a political party; and if they were members of a secret organization, so what! It was one characterized by common risks rather than by mutual assistance. One would have to be quite childish or hypocritical to be indignant about this, and quite common and small to refuse to obey them, to help them and teach them their job in the national interest. This is what my comrades and myself did until Germany was completely knocked-out.

When this was done, we reunited our dispersed families, figured out the losses we suffered and the debts we incurred, and set out to build another life. But dammit! I challenge anyone to find in my whole intelligence net a single man who was able to change profession advantageously as a result of his position in 1945, or who was promoted by more than one grade, if he happened to work for the government. At most a few of the career officers with us - whatever their service record - gained one rank more than they would have between the two wars, twiddling their thumbs in some French barracks. I also know full well that for some, their military service started with the rank of Colonel instead of 2nd Lieutenant. This is not very important. It was pure courtesy. It was certain that no sooner had they taken a look at a regiment, even at rest in camp, which is the unit a Colonel usually commands, they would leave on their own accord.

So, faced with the task of rebuilding our lives, we became absorbed by our own work and our personal worries. Yes! we thought of ourselves. We must be forgiven. We were five years behind the others and therefore we were too busy or too indifferent to participate in public affairs.

Incidentally! I make an extensive use of the pronouns "I", "me", and "we" in this foreword. This will be only in the foreword, and is done in order to assume my own responsibilities, after a just appraisal.

No longer had I time to go out at night, to see my friends, to read the newspapers. I worked too much. Nevertheless one day, I accepted an invitation from a pre-war comrade. I had just helped him get out of jail by shouting everywhere: "He's a great guy and a good Frenchman;" which undoubtedly was true. I thought that the close presence of a friend would give him strength and help him make a new start in life. So I came; with that much less hesitation since, having remained by chance on metropolitan territory throughout the war, I didn't share all the prejudices - somewhat narrow, in my opinion - of our London comrades. I did not entirely agree with their vocabulary, labeling and political classifications. For example I was absolutely convinced that the faults were due in part to the senseless and unnatural political regrouping of post-war France, that General de Gaulle might have accepted some of those traditional patriots, if more than a dozen of them had put themselves at his disposal, and that, on the other hand, the unfair parable of the welcome of the Prodigal Son was applied a trifle too often in London.

In short, I am one of those men who lose neither appetite nor sleep over the spectacle of a small massacre of informers, traitors and enemy agents, but who open their arms to men who erred in good faith. My sole condition is that they recognize their wrong, or simply forget the whole thing. Grounds for future understanding are not lacking.

This is what I told the people present at the home of my host (with the exception of my required condition, because I am rather kind and because it seemed implied in my previous statement), and I quickly realized they had all been victims of the early purging winds. I told them what I did because actually they pressed me for it rather indiscreetly. I would have much preferred to have a good laugh on one of my few nights out. By a natural inclination in my disposition, which is that of a lamb until the moment one steps on my tender toes, I almost made apologies. For what reason, Good God? To the persons present, if ever I did anything, it was nothing but good. At most, they could blame me for being a full colonel when in peace time I would have only been lieutenant-colonel. Still I had not abused this "meteoric" advancement! I had just left the Army. What then?

Consequently, my conscience was clear.

"It is certain", said I to the most excited among them, "that one should take into account this and that.. of course!... naturally!... Don't tell me!... In your case for instance, returning to France from a "dump" in North Africa where you were "stuffed" with Vichy propaganda, you were ill informed"...

The person for whom my words were intended and whom I really liked, cast a deadly glance at me.

"Ill informed!.." he fulminated. "Ill informed! You're the one who is blind!"

Another person, of the cantankerous type, took it upon himself to enlighten me:

"We'll talk about it again in another year, when all your political trash will have been swept off."

Upon which I retorted that he too was badly informed, and counselled him to study the rules governing the possessive pronoun in a manual on good-breeding rather than in a grammar book. Then I got worked up, got a little mad and the ensuing scene was one of those you do not mention in good society.

At short time later, I let myself be dragged into social company for the second and last time in a year. I was getting bored in a corner of the room near the bar, because for some years now I find it hard to become amused. All of a sudden I heard a voice nearby uttering the very statement I loathe for its foul smell of skepticism, of cynicism, or of sneaky and shameful cowardice:

"... your Resistance, it killed many brave people and.."

And this time, believe me, no more question-like inflexion! By God! It was a peremptory, clear, sharp, and vindictive affirmation!

It was addressed to one of my friends who, for the first time in years, did not answer with his fists. Instead he started to argue. That ~~wasn't~~ to his advantage as he was a man of action rather than of words. I did not know the anti-resistance loud-mouth who opposed him, but he had the plump, and delicate appearance of a man with a steady job. He was now giving what he called good examples. Then I intervened, as far (or did I go beyond?) as one can go in a friendly house, especially when one has the excuse of being slightly dumb. So, I interrupted the orator with a smile meant to be disarmingly naive, but since I couldn't see myself in the mirror, I cannot be sure that this was the case; especially since I itched all over to hit him.

"Where have I met you, Sir?" I asked. "Which branch of the Resistance did you belong to?"

"But, Sir... to none! This is what I was just explaining..."

"Come now! "I insisted. "I've seen you somewhere. Could it have been in a Loiret maquis?"

He looked at me as if I were a grain of dust.

"No", he said visibly annoyed. "Once more! I was not in the underground".

"Forgive me" I answered, as candidly as I could in spite of a certain joyous vibrating reflex in my voice, "excuse-me, you seem so well informed! Were you out a lot this winter?"

That evening, I returned home not too late, quite dissatisfied, unrelaxed and nervous. I have never been able to calm down with mere words; and one certainly cannot silence the disparagers of the Resistance with nose-thumbing.

I asked myself: "What will the French youngsters of the next century find in the "Mallet and Isaac" of their time, - the history book which will teach them about France, - under the paragraph "Role of the Resistance" of the chapter entitled "The Second World War?"

At the rate we're going, perhaps nothing more than a brief tip of a hat out of mere courtesy. Indeed, as anxiously as they might try to discourage cowardice, what will the historians, scientists or scholars have at their disposal to affirm that the Resistance was something entirely different from a political position more or less free and disinterested? How will they be able to show that it had nothing in common with a 19th century levy of irregulars; and that it made an appreciable contribution to the allied victory? Finally, how will they be able to urge that its principles be studied, since the circumstances which brought it about could occur again?

Until now we haven't given the historians much to feed on, I thought. Fifteen to twenty lines of Eisenhower's final report on the 1944 campaign in two instances and they risk being regarded as somewhat shaded by diplomatic courtesy. A few pamphlets in limited editions of the Historical Service of the Army. Memoirs which bear witness to the birth of magnificent sentiments and a profusion of great individual feats, but never mention the results or the details. This will not have great weight against a public opinion at best hesitant, probably skeptical or ironical, and perhaps even hostile.

The most urgent thing, I thought, was to counteract this prevalent opinion. This, I can try to do; while history is way above me, and I don't know how it comes about.

That night, I went to get the records of my net "Eleuthere", which had been buried in the stacks of an old library. And the next day I asked my good friends of the "Agence Immobilière" (1) to make their own papers available to me.

I found the facts, figures, causes, effects, and a partial box-score of one of the battles that we fought and won, and which happens to be the one I know best, that of Intelligence. Something solid, overwhelming and irrefutable. I merely sorted out some of these papers and related them with some commentaries. The modesty of such a role permits me to say that I did not waste my time, if I am to believe only one small portion of the approvals and encouragements I received from unknown readers.

The readers who wanted to, found in my first two volumes a documentation which enabled them to answer to the skeptics or the defeatists: "Why don't you shut up, you don't even know what you're talking about." And as far as those who did not try to find the answer, they are of no importance and present no interest whatsoever. They are part of the mob; and they will always follow.

ooooo

It is quite futile for anyone to write to me: "Of course, your comrades were magnificent. What we are attacking is not them but the false Resistance, etc..."

Frankly, unless I knew my correspondent personally, I would examine his letter with suspicion and would be afraid to engage in some false dissociation manoeuvre. If there were black sheep within the Resistance, it should be up to the other members themselves to pass judgment on them. False underground fighters? Let the real ones eradicate them!

ooooo

(1) Agence Immobilière (Real Estate Agency). Code name of another World War II Intelligence net. Translator's note.

My work has taken me a little deeper than I had anticipated. In the course of it, I modified its proportions and even its construction. A new outlook on what follows is therefore necessary.

Initially, I planned to treat the clandestine liaisons and communications in two appendixes. But after thinking it over carefully, I decided to devote several chapters to them, which I have placed in the middle of the work itself, before approaching the crucial period of the landings in Normandy. To speak of these earlier would have served no purpose: First, one had to convince the reader that the tremendous sacrifices of the signal personnel were necessary, therefore prove that what they conveyed was precious. But, on the other hand, to do it at the end wouldn't have permitted a thorough understanding of the different activities of our intelligence nets in the period of open warfare which started in France in May 1944.

By this time, the intelligence did not refer any longer to a stationary, static, almost peacetime German Army. It did not interest only the Supreme Allied Headquarters who slowly meditated and prepared a plan to be implemented several months or years later. This was now battlefield information that the Commanding Officer of an Army, a Division, even a regiment or a company, had to receive immediately if failure or destruction was to be avoided. As of that moment, a small amount of intelligence and good liaison were much better than a heap of observations which could not be transmitted. "Delivery of information" was to be of the utmost importance and actually became the main and constant preoccupation of every agent in 1944. Therefore it was necessary for the reader to be familiarized with the problem before reading about the nets in the battle.

Furthermore, the importance of this dissemination problem struck me so much that I, who had spent a good part of my life thinking about it, emphasized it much more than I had at first anticipated. And this is not only because I was thinking instead of acting and forgetting in order to continue my work, but because I discovered a number of striking documents. Particularly the report of a German agent giving his superiors a complete and accurate plan of the landing of June 6. Had this piece of paper been delivered in time, its consequences would have been disastrous.

However anxious I may be to finish this work which weighs heavily on my mind and prolongs the bitterness of my war, and to find once more the light pleasure, the creative exhilaration and the sentiment of power that comes from even the most futile of imaginative works, I feel compelled to devote a fourth volume to the "Nets in the Battle", while ending this present book with the "Immediate Preparation for the Landing".

But I swear with all my heart that the fourth will be my last.

o o o o o

There are two secondary subjects to which I must come back, as the letters which I received from some readers prove that I did not make myself sufficiently clear in the first two books.

The subject of my work is intelligence, excluding sabotage, direct action, evasion and escape nets and the operations proper. This is not a complete historical account of the French Underground, for such a lengthy work is beyond my capabilities and would force me to ignore my role as an actual witness with which I wish to stamp these four volumes. I relate here only what I know for a fact. If at times, I treat operations rapidly, it is because my objective is to point out the contribution made by intelligence and the means used. I shall be compelled to do this somewhat more often in what follows, because I will be dealing with the battle, in which the exploitation of intelligence is direct and immediate. But my only purpose will be to help the reader understand my subject.

My undertaking is not a magnificent Golden Book on the Underground either. It is not even a Golden Book on my net. I hope others will write it some day, and will engrave it on stone.

Actually my subject is not even the Underground. I repeat: it is intelligence. Let me specify it again: The role of intelligence in the Underground.

The characters, even the most heroic among our dead, the only ones whose real names I mention (except for historical figures; you would not want me to write: General de G...) appear in my stories for the sole purpose of illustrating the concepts which I want to defend. I bring them into play, to the fore, merely to serve as an example for a theory. I am fully aware that some people, whom I do not even mention, have done much more and better and one should not attribute this omission to a lack of understanding or to an oversight on my part.

Conversely, I have been blamed for the indulgence that made me almost write the argument for the defense of a guilty individual. I must say that I did it unconsciously. One can treat this in the same light as the relative unimportance given to men in relation to their ideas. Good or bad, actors or spectators in this war, we all have already one foot in the grave. What will count, in one or two decades, will not be our persons, but what we will have succeeded in teaching our sons.

.....

That is precisely what gives me the courage to finish my work. And a lot of it is required, believe it or not, as our British friends love to say.

A little anger helps when one sets out to work. I can find plenty of it these days, glancing at the titles of what is being printed.

I have seen an idiotic parallel being drawn between Verdun, where several hundreds of thousand Frenchmen died to stop the invasion, and Montoire, where to my knowledge only one political death occurred. And there, what was stopped?

"Laval speaks". As if he hadn't spoken enough during the four years when he had absolute monopoly of speech. And to say what? "I hope for the victory of Germany". Do the ghosts of my comrades who awaited death in the special camps remember? And you, who were not among them, who criticized us and felt reassured because you managed to live, without understanding that in case of a German victory you were destined to the same fate, unless you resigned yourselves to be slaves for life, and prostitutes in a Parisian brothel, do you remember? But perhaps deep inside you understood it well.

Unable to introduce the notion of time in your "ephemeral insect" minds (if I may say so), having forgotten, if you had ever known, that the threat to France and liberty was coming from Germany in the years 1934 to 1944, you tell us now:

"Yes, Laval had foreseen the communist danger. He had thought of it!"

As if you needed other protectors than God, and yourselves against communism!

And then, there is the cute statement by I don't remember whom: "Four years of occupations", with an "S" at the end. By George! we weren't unaware of the fact that a certain number of our compatriots had different ideas than we did. We did not hold very high esteem for them, but they did not concern us. We thought: "it's a matter of guts". But we did believe that certain jokes would be excluded in a country that once had been the champion of good taste.

Well! Let us finish the story of these four years of occupations for my comrades.

They despised everything that resembled, in any way, a rhetorical or lyrical effect. So did I. But nevertheless this should not stop one from saying what he thinks. I believe they still can render us one service. The best way to honor their memory is to make sure that we don't fail to use this service; which is what they would have wanted.

One of the many resurrections of France is being prepared in its depths, and is represented by the birth-rate curve. What we have lacked for more than half a century is men. Now, it seems possible, even probable,

that sixty million Frenchmen will exist in only a few decades. Let's hold on until then... it will probably be difficult... but, after all, why not? "Let us spread", and this will suffice to prevent us from being the employees of the Yankees or the slaves of the Mongols.

Sixty million Frenchmen. A portion of them will reinforce the great French stock in Africa. From then on, the geomilitary advantage of space, which is potentially within our reach, will become a reality. This is essential. It is what makes Russia invincible because her enemy cannot swallow her or even hold on to her any more than a shark can swallow a whale.

Sixty million French people, together, will at last develop the undeveloped wealth of our country. For France is a new country. A recent book which one must read, "Paris and the French desert", by M.J.F. Gravier, tells us so. Pre-war Germany, with an area smaller than France and a soil much poorer, produced more wheat, more live-stock, more butter, more milk and more sugar than France simply because she had more mouths to feed and more bodies to work. Our vast energetic resources, at last liberated, will create a great French industry that will be nourished by iron and aluminum deposits among the richest in the world.

Indirectly, the mere numbers, by the demand they create, the prospects they offer, the essence of life, the self-confidence and drive they induce, will give us once again the desire to undertake, to dare, to risk. We will find new benefits even in fields which seem to be beyond any quantitative influence. I am certain that we will want to excel in areas other than decorating, perfumes, high fashion and hair-styling, where we will no longer find a motive for national pride. We will have less civil servants, less taxes, less obstacles, more fields, more factories and even laboratories where the destinies of men are increasingly being prepared and created.

I am convinced of this because a greater birth-rate means not only numbers, but youth, and life.

But this French mass, which will once more make France rise again, will need a spirit. I propose the spirit of my comrades who gave their lives to save the crumbling house, whose greatness will be revived by the young.

Paris, April 1948
P. N.

FIRST CHAPTER

LIAISONS AND COMMUNICATIONS IN THE RESISTANCE

Importance and difficulties.
Internal Liaisons within a net.

I

IMPORTANCE OF LIAISONS

It would be useless to gather intelligence if it couldn't be delivered on time to the leader who needs it. Mr. de la Palice, who was highly regarded as a soldier, must have said so in his time. But this is just another one of these basic truths whose consequences are not always recognized unless one illustrates it with some concrete examples.

In 1918, an excellent agent of the French Intelligence Service (SR) advised his superior with convincing details of the German offensive in Champagne, its date and its points of impact. The woman acting as his messenger, a foreigner, delivered the paper with a delay of ten days due to the fact that she was detained at home where her husband had come on furlough. It was too late. Actually, the offensive, which had been detected by other means, a successful raid in particular, was no surprise. But this paper would have been the first sound of alarm. It still exists; it is shown to new intelligence officers with the request that they be punctilious in selecting their agents. Had this foreign woman been single, it would not have

changed the outcome of the war, indeed, but it would have given us several days during which to ponder and prepare for one of the most crucial phases of the decisive battle of 1918.

Toward the end of 1939, a Dominican Priest, Father Edmond Amiable, author of successful escapes through electrified barbed wire at the Dutch-Belgian frontier in 1918, was an Army Chaplain. The "rotten" war gave him plenty of free time from his ministry. He took advantage of the situation to try patiently, to reactivate the old World War I Walloon patriotic organization, the "Dame Blanche of the Hohenzollerns". In this endeavor, he worked for his old friend, Captain Bardin, Chief of the Special Services of the IXth Army, who slowly vegetated at the Belgian frontier. There was quite a bit of friction there. The Walloons still loved France just as much, but the "Dame Blanche", almost immediately after its inception in 1916 or 1917, started to depend on the British Intelligence Service, for various and complex reasons, including the fact that the front was continuous, aviation and radio were still in their infancy, courier pigeons had been eliminated, and therefore practically all liaisons had to be over-land. They passed through the Netherlands, therefore through Great Britain. Having been well trained by the British, the survivors of the "Dame Blanche" had always nourished a nostalgia for the fabulous IS. However, they had to be convinced to link up with the French SR through Bardin.

One night, in a safe house lost in the middle of the Ardennes Forest, Father Amiable and Bardin were having a discussion with one of the old group leaders of the "Dame Blanche". This was a man who had to be convinced, one

who could, with only one word, assemble all who counted in his country. The meeting dragged on; much too long. "We'll see... think it over... yes, of course... the "Dame Blanche" should be revived, especially since the Belgian space hinders the French SR, but..."

Confused, Bardin became nervous, gloomy, obstinate. He thought that everything should have been settled in three sentences. He was still young, presumptuous; he had only known the victorious side of the war, and he thought that he needed only to say the word "France" for everything to be placed at his disposal.

There was silence. The red hot, wood stove, crackled gently in the shanty. A slice of snow slid from the roof with a muffled noise and crashed heavily but softly on the ground. Weariness set in. Outside, it was cold enough to chill one's bones. They would have to struggle through this inextricable forest for half an hour, or several hours, depending on their luck in finding their way, before reaching the car waiting for them near the border check-point. The Belgian gendarmes had been warned of the meeting and were patrolling purposely other areas. But it was now 2:30. Bardin got up.

"Well! let's think it over some more," said Bardin in a bad mood. "When shall we meet again?"

"One moment," said Father Amiable.

From his wallet, he took out a piece of paper so thin and transparent that it looked like the dried-up wing of a dragon-fly.

"You know", he went on, "that my father, who was a baker at Trelon, was the leader of the cell which became known as the "heroic platoon of the Dame Blanche". This is a document he left to me. It is the original of the

warning sent by the "Dame Blanche" two weeks before the German offensive in the Chemin des Dames..."

He read it. Actually, the whole German plan was there, or at least most of it, based either on direct observation of the German preparations, or on meticulous deductions from sure indications. For example, the area of attack was determined from the shifting of new units from the rear which required so much time to move that the Germans, in spite of their desire to achieve the element of surprise, had to deploy ahead of time the following: heavy medical installations, hospitals, ammunition dumps, etc. The assault combat troops were to come into play only at the last moment, but Bardin was of the opinion that a competent G-2 could have already estimated them approximately in view of the density of the rear elements and the recently detected CP's.

Father Amiable was still reading, and Bardin unaware of this document's existence, was astounded. This was one of the greatest performances he had ever witnessed in the course of his career. His memory failed him, but he somehow gathered all his historical recollections concerning the battle of the Chemin des Dames: the crushing surprise, the piercing of the front lines, the divisions of the best infantry in the world of that time pushed back with one thrust as far back as the artillery positions, driven back to the river, and lost. But actually, all this could have been prevented with this one document. This would have been the only information necessary. It was so objective and precise, that it would have compelled the interested parties to launch aerial reconnaissance missions, and over-land raids, as well

as to set up listening posts and surveying installations which would have confirmed it. What had happened?

Raising his voice, Father Amiable again commanded the attention of Bardin.

"It took 15 days for this paper to reach its destination. It was delivered all right, but the battle was already lost."

Bardin, feeling better, smiled. He now understood what the Father's shrewdness was driving at. One month spent together, filled with trust and fraternity, had enabled them to work for the good cause like two accomplices, when necessary. The officer picked up his cue from the priest and continued:

"Well! One thing is sure! This sort of thing must not be allowed to happen again. If we were responsible for such a mishap, how heavy would our conscience be with the thought that we could have prevented it! I represent here the French military commander whose troops will enter Belgium if possible just one second after the Germans. He must be the first one to be informed. A simple thing to do. A telephone relay is set-up on the border. All you have to do is to connect your set at the other end and call me every night. It seems to me that this simple matter of communications definitely resolves once and for all the problem you are faced with and which is, unless I am wrong: "In order to serve my country and my King best, to whom must I transmit the intelligence gathered by my friends." Of course, the only answer is to me."

"Naturally," said the Belgian, finally convinced.

"During the last war," remarked Father Amiable seriously, "we were in the habit of sealing our commitments by kneeling in prayer. Would you like tonight..."

Half an hour later, feeling too hot-blooded to be cold, happy in spite of the fact that half of his cassock had been torn away by a thorny bush, the Father, plump and jovial, struggled while mumbling; "Good work! A real good job!", and tapped Bardin, who was shivering, on the back. Bardin stopped while stamping the snow of the narrow path, which was probably an irrigation ditch.

"Stop boxing me, Father, you're going to give me a backache... We're lost".

"Good work" repeated the priest.

Could we then foresee that everything would be useless?

"You know, we're going to get caught by the gendarmes," said Bardin. "Father, do you think that if you told them: Let's kneel..."

"But of course! Good job!"

Wonderful Father Amiable, who could only be a priest or a soldier, was never so happy as when he could be both at the same time. And, after having taken so many risks in his brave life, he was to die in a freak accident, while on a special mission, but thank goodness it was after the Liberation which he was able to witness.

In this chapter dealing with efficiency, I don't want to finish with an example from 1939-40. Here is now a last case in point, even more striking I believe, not only because it affects our destiny in the last and most challenging of our trials, but also because of its objective value.

I have in my hands a report dated May 24, 1944, addressed to the German Intelligence Service by one of its agents. Here are some excerpts from the five-page report.

" ... It is the Bristol plan (allied), the second one mentioned in my report of May 19, which is being implemented... Forces of considerable importance are concentrated in the South-East of Great Britain. Concentrations of ships are taking place along the eastern coast of Great Britain, in the Saint George and Bristol canals... The Allied Supreme Headquarters, in charge of the implementation of plan No. 2, has about 35 to 36 Divisions at its disposal, out of which 8 are paratroops or airborne troops, 20 to 22 are American Divisions, 7 or 8 British Divisions, 2 or 3 Canadian Divisions and 2 Gaullist Divisions. I don't believe the Gaullist units, which are stationed in the southeastern part of Great Britain, will be engaged in the first two or three phases..."

" ... The plan is as follows. Immediate goal: establish beach-heads at the mouths of the Seine, the Orne and the Vire Rivers; encircle Cherbourg. Intermediate goals: capture the Cotentin Peninsula, designed to serve as a starting point and a stepping stone enabling a heavy concentration of troops;... secondly: extension of the Vire, Orne and Seine beach-heads, in order to bring small crafts and special flat motor-launches filled with troops. There is no certainty about a great effort to capture Le Havre. Longer term goals: push back the German defenses along the Avranches, Argentan, Dreux, and Normandy line; should this prove impossible, deceive the Germans and drive the main body along the eastern bank (sic) of the Seine, toward Lisieux, Bernay, Evreux. Strategic goal: Paris..."

The remainder of the document was just as accurate. Tragically accurate. Let me emphasize the date at which this report was dispatched: 24 May 1944. In retrospect, will it make the French or Allied reader shudder? There is reason to. Particularly if I add that the German High Command was already so completely intoxicated (1), as is described in my second volume, that they had come to rely almost blindly on a small number of agents they considered trustworthy, among which the author of this report held the foremost place. Thank God, it reached its destination on June 19, 1944! Too late.

(1) Misled because of deliberate Allied leaks.

Condensed, coded, radio-transmitted and received by May 24, this report was worth 15 to 20 Divisions. I am not giving this figure at random. It represents approximatively the reinforcements the Germans could have brought to Normandy. Let us recall the words of Eisenhower in his final report: "The XVth German Army could have undoubtedly beaten us by the simple factor of strength had it been engaged in the battle in June or July; instead it stood by waiting for orders..."

What does this mean? That this sorry piece of paper could have brought complete failure to the landing? Good Lord! Under some circumstances, had it been delivered on time, had it received proper credit (which, as I said, would have been the case), had it been double-checked (why not?)... My God! Yes!

I can hear some positive and realistic men grumbling: "Small cause and tremendous effect!" and "We're no fools!" I can understand their amazement and doubt. There is something frightening, revolting, almost infernal about it. But I urge that they read again and meditate the few preceding pages; I have only brought together the text of German Intelligence and the Allied Commander's report on the operations. My sole addition was to state that the Germans had the greatest confidence in their agent; a fact which has been proven to me over ten times.

Yes! Intelligence is a raw material of prime importance to any war. Only in the case where one is absolutely much stronger than the enemy, can intelligence be ignored; but in such a case, one could also do without strategy or tactics; striking would be all that is necessary. But if this is not true, then intelligence can be the key factor to success. Beware!

It has been known to give victory to the weaker side; this was undoubtedly the case in the unbelievable victories of the Hindenburg-Ludendorff team over the Russians in 1914.

But intelligence is a "perishable matter"; with an astonishing rapidity, it becomes obsolete, useless, lost. What is worth today 20 divisions, will be tomorrow nothing more than a nostalgic document lost in the archives; a slight echo impregnated with irony; an unbearable weight in the memories of lost opportunities; a remorse.

It is in these facts that the importance of intelligence liaison and communications reside; and that importance is capital.

II

SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF INTELLIGENCE LIAISON.

In all the phases and aspects of war, it is imperative that intelligence liaison (which is the goal) between the various echelons of the Army be conducted by rapid and safe communications (which are the means). An additional difficulty in intelligence warfare is the fact that information usually originates from enemy territory or enemy occupied areas. Consequently, they must be, like the soldiers themselves, of a clandestine nature.

First, let us examine the problem in general. It was not the easiest that the nets had to solve since November 12, 1942. I will say nothing that everyone does not already know. But have many of us ever contemplated the question as a whole?

The information to be exploited immediately, for example the loading of the S.S. Hohenstaufen Panzer Division (1), could only be transmitted by radio waves, and the transmitters were being tracked by the German motorized direction-finding teams. It was neither easier, nor less dangerous, to send through ordinary messengers the less urgent or voluminous reports, documents, and maps. The precious American diplomatic pouch no longer existed. The pouches of the neutrals accredited to Vichy (but were there still true neutrals?) were not safe. Only those of the Vichy Government itself remained. They were used; and were abused, to the point of catastrophe. In any case all of them put together could only hold an infinitesimal part of the mountain of papers to be forwarded. The dispatching of orders, of instructions and requests from the leaders in London and Algiers to the metropolitan field operators could be done simply by parachute drops. But the forwarding of answers and the lateral liaison, required a landing, or "pick up" (2) in a country where eighty gossip Frenchmen live per square kilometer, pretty well distributed throughout (temporarily augmented by a great number of dangerous intruders), and where practicable roads can always be found within a radius of one kilometer. Ships and sub-marines had to face coastal surveillance and defense which was the principal, if not the only mission of the German Armies stationed on the West coast. And, as far as the crossing of international borders was concerned, they became truly great adventures. So much for the material difficulties encountered, which were inevitable since they resulted from the very presence and existence of the enemy.

(1) See Chapter 2, Part II, Volume I

(2) Covert aircraft landing to bring or pick up clandestine passengers.

There were other problems, which were not so clearly anticipated, not so natural, both material and moral, and which must be mentioned whether one likes it or not. Almost all the means of communications, from the multi-engine aircraft to the small suitcase-radio were furnished by our Anglo-Saxon friends. They took advantage of the situation, especially the Americans, to try to completely control the activities of the French nets and even take them over. They justified such actions by mentioning technical reasons for the centralization of all work, and tactical reasons for the organization of command which were theoretically sound, even excellent, and worthy of a close study leading eventually to a compromise. I am not criticizing. Not yet. I feel that I would do the same thing in a reversed situation.

We tried to escape their tutelage. Was this to be considered as the proof of a chauvinistic nationalism? Proof of a separatism dangerous for the allied unity of action? Certainly not! A thousand times no! We were the ones who had the most to gain from a rapid and complete defeat of Germany. We also were the ones, who, in spite of our defeat, had the best military experience. There was no need to doubt that we would withhold any useful information, or that we would not be able to recognize it.

Could we, at the very least, be accused of narrow-mindedness and of being over-sensitive? We had to deal with the Leaders of Free France on purely French internal matters, some dirty linen not to be washed in public. Then, frankly, we were somewhat suspicious. Were we so wrong? Were the intentions of the Allied toward us so perfectly pure? We had at least the right to wonder about it. What did the long American flirt with Vichy mean, other than a longing for a docile and silent France, completely obedient to orders?

What was Great Britain plotting in Syria? Why were the Anglo-Saxon commitments to France expressed in eight or ten lines? That was too much. Only one was needed, and without reservations: "France and her Empire will be restored in their entirety." This would have been the least to expect. There was a certain alarming meaning in Churchill's words: "Restored in its greatness." Why was our wartime leader treated like a poor relative among the Allied leaders? It is true that in this second world-wide conflict, we were no longer the most useful participant. But even the Petain-favoring manpower experts could already anticipate that we would still be, after all, the ones to suffer the most. We accepted that idea, and did not "bitch" too much about it, dammit!

Under these circumstances, I believe that we have shown a true devotion to the common cause; actually we were very generous in accepting without much objection that the communications nets be monopolized by London-controlled specially equipped stations, especially since we did not know whether it was the BCRA (1) alone, an interallied organization, or the British who were at the receiving end. But our vigilance still did not relent. For example, the Eleuthere net forwarded a copy of all its reports to the French Army Resistance Organization (ORA) which utilized them, then sent them on to Algiers. A special mark of origin prevented the same item of information reaching one leader from different sources from being considered as two different items, cross-checking and confirming each other.

(1) Bureau Central de Renseignements et d'Action (Central Office of Intelligence and Action). A purely French organization controlled by General de Gaulle. Translator's note.

Especially as soon as the French government organization in Algiers grew past the embryonic stage, we did everything in our power to establish communications which were completely independent from the Allies. We had the right to. In addition however, I will prove that, because of the individualistic character of the French which escapes the comprehension of the conformist Anglo-Saxons, this was the best way for all concerned.

Such was the problem. In order to resolve it, not only had we to display a great amount of initiative and courage in the face of the Germans - this, everybody knows - but also much technical ingenuity, much improvisation and much trickery with regard to our Allies.

I am not yet in a position to figure the total score of this immense effort. But I can relate the highlights of the particular struggle sustained by the "Agence Immobiliere" in 1943 and 1944, in order to establish and keep contact with Algiers. On several occasions, it almost failed, but nevertheless it finally triumphed. This struggle faithfully illustrates all the ideas exposed in the preceding theoretical presentation, and has the rare advantage of forming an entity, in which all of the aspects of this struggle, all the means of communication, all the characters, from radio-operators to pilots, including parachutists, the sub-mariners, skippers and border crossing guides, are represented. This will be the subject of Chapter II. In order to get a general idea of the situation, the reader only has to multiply everything by a hundred, since about a hundred nets operated in Fighting France.

But, before gathering and before sealing the mails to be transmitted to London or Algiers, which represented weeks of hard work, risks, exploits,

and sacrifices of so many brave persons, some of whom, in many cases, had just been killed, each net had to do a daily and thorough house-keeping job. It had to provide the operation of its own organic liaisons on Metropolitan France, in the midst of the German Armies and through the Gestapo nets.

The ordinary agents for internal communications seemed quite humble and modest beside their comrades who crossed the seas and furrowed the skies. Their horizon was limited to the street corner; they furtively emptied letter-drops in order to bring papers, of which they never knew the contents, to a laconic and hurried chief; day after day, they made their rounds, automatically and untiringly.

Let us not be mistaken. When I finally had the time to ponder over the losses within my own net, I discovered that our ordinary liaison agents had suffered just as many losses, if not more than the others. I was not unduly surprised by this fact. I had taken notice that all the German investigations converged on a letter-drop even if they hadn't started there. In addition, I have hardly known a man or a woman who carried messages for a long time and was not faced, after months of uneventful routine, by a sudden situation which demanded as much initiative, and sometimes more self-control than the hardest of combats.

I shall begin by talking about them; for two reasons, one chronological, and the other, moral.

They were the pioneers of our mail activities. Without them, our messages would have been very thin and light indeed. Their value is not

measured according to weight of course, but it is only human that their size be a source of pride. Our mail was our whole life. With God's help, if peace or at least liberty comes to our successors, will they be able to understand what magical power this seemingly trite word held for us?

But, in addition, from a certain point of view... Yes! sentimental, all right! I am not at all sorry that, for once, I am giving a certain precedence to those who carried out the most obscure and unrewarding of missions, while undertaking as many risks as their superiors, but without the intellectual and moral support existing in any command position.

However, in order to appreciate the role they played, one must know first of all: between what posts did they circulate, and what men did they connect, that is, one must have an overall idea of the structure of a net. Let us examine an example.

This will enable us afterwards to follow the processing of any basic item of intelligence, from its collection to its delivery, after appropriate analysis, to the last metropolitan echelon entrusted with dispatching it to London or Algiers. We will then have a clear picture of the actual small army that was necessary to transmit information from the "Fighting French" to the leaders who made use of it. By a few accounts of their normal, current, and daily adventures, I will show that it was an Army of truly brave people.

III

THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF A NETWORK

ANDALOUSIE, THE HUSSAR NET

One day, after the liberation, Colonel Vauthier-Laforet crossed an office where five young men were working; he stopped for a moment and observed them with his usual heavy and dark look.

"If I had been Chief of the Toulouse Gestapo in 1944", said Col. Vauthier, "I would have arrested you the first time I saw you together. Just like that; just by looking at you."

Then, he went on his way. Colonel Bardin was later consulted on the meaning of this oracle by the five young men who honored him with their friendship; he declared:

"Come now, it's very simple! Actually the little man is making it easy for himself. Me, I would have picked you up separately, just by intuition.."

He turned to Commelor, the oldest, who was thirty years old.

"Colonel, Sir..."

For Bardin, who did not readily address as President, General or Sir a certain number of his superiors, even direct superiors, never omitted to call his young friend Commelor: "Colonel". I have noticed that he took real pleasure in doing it.

"Colonel, in a group or individually, in civies or naked, you are all Saumur-types just as there are "Saumur-type-boots" and "Saumur-type-breeches". (Note of the translator: Saumur is the French Military Cavalry and Armored Corps Academy). If we were still in 1914, I could even pinpoint the branch you belong to. In spite of your size, you would be in the "volaille" (1). Your petulance is incompatible with the wise slowness of the "big brothers" (2) of yesteryear with their huge "elephants." Maurice would be in an arrogant regiment of "tape-culs" (3). As for Patrice, Montaigu and Traversiere, their feet would have dragged on the ground in anything but an Armored Cavalry Regiment. In 1940 though, the Cavalry had become thoroughly mixed-up, and one could have only said of you: "they are cavalrymen". With even less doubt one could have said in France in 1944: "they are terrorists".

"Colonel", said Commelor, "it certainly isn't inscribed on our faces. In Toulouse, we could just as well have been taken for gangsters..."

"Not a chance", cut in Bardin. "You have only one of their stigmas. And it is common to all kinds of men who lead a dangerous life at decisive posts. You all have foxy looks. Besides that... I suppose that while shaving you have all sometimes been able to see your little aristocratic mugs in the mirror?"

"Just the same!" protested Patrice. "Marty, the Police Commissioner and Redseck, Chief of the Gestapo at Toulouse, were not children. And they were not able to stop us from operating our network till the end, right under their noses..."

-
- (1) Light Cavalry
 - (2) Heavy Cavalry
 - (3) Mounted Infantry.

Bardin sighed:

"That's just what stumps me, bothers me and makes me look for your company, you bunch of green-horns! I cannot find any explanation for your survival and your success except for one, but I reject it because it digs into my sense of superiority, which I attribute to the crusade of the Albigeois. I would then have to admit that the Cadets of Gascony are sometimes superior to the wise and gallant Flemish Knights..."

"A bunch of savages, of thick-headed drunks!" Shouted the chorus from Toulouse. "They stole, looted, raped..."

"Ah!" cried Bardin, delighted. "There it is, that's my explanation. It's because of your grand-mothers, the poor women..."

He started to leave under an avalanche of perfectly disrespectful insults, but at the door turned half-way around speaking over his shoulder:

"I must at least tell you what I think of you. You, Colonel, are Artagnan. Patrice is the noble and pure Athos. I like Traversiere as Aramis; he is cunning like him, if not pious. The one I cannot find among you is Porthos. Maurice and Montaigu together make the correct weight, but not the totality of his stupidity. What a shame! What a shame!"

It was then four years since the Liberation, and the events had still not succeeded in dissolving the tight-knit group formed during the Resistance by these five comrades and a sixth, Hardy who was absent that day. They had been the command element of the Andalousie network in France.

There are many reasons why we shall use Andalousie as an example in our study of a network infrastructure. First: out of one thousand agents

employed during 1944, Andalousie suffered only half a dozen dead and one dozen captured and deported; the organization was evidently well planned, it operated efficiently, and can serve as a model. Secondly: Andalousie is certainly one of the networks which obtained the best results during the battle of 1944, and I shall be brought to make a lengthy account of it in the last volume. Thirdly: operating in the Southwest, Andalousie will give us an idea of the particular atmosphere and environment of intelligence warfare in that area; it was quite different from the one in Paris, Normandy (where we have seen or will see Eleuthere at work), the Center of France, the Southeast (where we have followed the Agence Immobiliere), or the Alps (that we shall later examine at length); thus we will have a complete tour of France.

The tenth reason is that I like the people of Andalousie. They were young, handsome, and well bred. They gave to our sordid war something that resembled real class.

...
o

Son of an officer, Commelot was one of the Saumur graduates who distinguished themselves in the desperate battles of 19 and 20 June 1940 along the banks of the Loire. He belonged to the independent group of Captain Neucheze, whom we shall also find again in the Resistance. A motorcycle was "killed" right under him while he charged at Petit-Puy; he was left alone in the middle

of German troops, managed to get away by an expert use of his sub-machine gun, was finally taken prisoner at the farm of Aunis, and escaped the very same night.

In 1942 and 1943, as a 2nd Lieutenant on reduced pay, he commanded the Languedoc District of a network which was completely wiped out at the end of 1943. His own organization was intact, but he found himself all alone and cut off from all contacts with London. He decided to go himself and re-establish liaison, delegated his authority to Patrice and, in December, left for Spain with a companion whom we shall call Navarrenx, and a guide, who was crazy. Not crazy in the pleasant and familiar meaning of a friendly nickname. I mean crazy in its true sense. Insane.

The sad part of the story is that Commelor and Navarrenx were not aware of it until they realized that they had been circling the Peak of Ainciagu for a whole night - during which they fell in a 50-meter deep ravine, in three successive falls, two of them head first, and following paths which almost crossed that of a rock heavier than a ton which started its course at the same time they did, - and until they almost walked in a Spanish border guard-house where, according to the guide, they would be welcomed with open arms, and from which instead some guttural germanic shouts could be heard, stopping at once Commelor who was about to knock on the door, full of hope. Then they realized that they were still in France.

Fortunately, Commelor did not become panic-stricken. He took out his map, his compass, and his automatic pistol which he stuck in the guide's back to bring him back to reality, and with all this they were able to retrace their

steps to the farm, their point of departure. The three travellers spent the whole day in a hay-loft, and were entertained by the coming and going of customs officers and German patrols, accompanied by dogs, who even stopped at the farm now and then for a bowl of milk.

The following night, the farmer's son took all of them, the guide included, across the border into Spain, then a Spanish farmer led them beyond the restricted zone. The only incidents encountered were a number of forced stops in the lying position at the bottom of trenches, sometimes almost stepped on by the noisy boots of the Civil Guards, whose caps in the shape of typewriter covers could be seen high above against a background of moonlight. Thanks to the spontaneous complicity of the local people, Commelor, Navarrenx and their unwilling guest were able to last four days in this unhealthy area and make contact with the Allied authorities.

The latter had them picked up in an impressive limousine bearing diplomatic plates, which took Commelor to Sevilla, while the guide was enjoined to find his own way to his village. But this comfortable trip was followed shortly by relative misery. Commelor found himself thrown pell-mell among piles of blankets and heaps of nickel and cobalt ore in the hold of a ship going slowly down the Guadalquivir all the way to Gibraltar. There, new splendor! he climbed aboard a Hudson-I and was in London within six hours. Then new decline! the intelligence and counter-intelligence services started grilling him to ascertain that he was not a dangerous trouble-maker. Finally, his star began to shine again.

Commelor was initiated into the club of the chosen ones and started the course of instruction given to European agents at Wyndham House, where the Britishers of the Intelligence Service performed a miraculous feat of magic. They instructed at the same time in a very small area dozens of men who never knew each other, since they never saw each other. From time to time you were locked in a closet: a fellow-student was going by; then you were told to come out: the friend was gone. In a few days, you might be fighting side by side in the same town without knowing it. Who knows? Even suspecting each other? This was all for the best.

One day, Commelor was told: "You're the Chief of the Andalousie network. Here are radio-sets, crystals, codes, and money. Good-by old chap."

On the night of March 3, 1944, a Lysander plane landed Commelor near Chateauroux, in a ten-inch deep snow. He had reason to be feeling pretty high, for he had not made the umbrella jump like everybody else; they had conducted a "pick-up" just for him. Two planes departed that night for the same destination. Although the first one was carrying a VIP, it took a chance and landed first, thus "asking for it" in a way. It was only when they sent up the "All right" signal from the ground, that the second, carrying Commelor, landed. "Good grief! Could I have possibly become precious?" was Commelor's thought.

One small detail immediately brought him back to a more modest attitude. Behind him numerous bags containing 80 million francs for the Resistance were unloaded. It was to protect this small war treasury that all the precautions had been taken.

On March 5, 1944 in Toulouse, Commelor assembled his command team, composed exclusively of young cavalry officers, from the Saumur Academy which had been pulled back to Tarbes, or from the 2nd Hussar Regiment whose motto was: "Noblesse Oblige, Chamborant Autant". He resumed command of his network which Patrice had not kept inactive during his absence. There was no-one among the leaders over twenty-five years old. One very impressive detail: two generals and several colonels accepted secondary posts, under the command of these young "countryfied gallants", their nephews either by blood or in the tradition of St.Cyr, which requires that the sons of one's classmates be considered as such. Their participation gave Commelor a free entry to the unit succeeding the 17th Military Division (formerly 17th area). Through it, he was able to recruit the great majority of his strength, and in its offices part of the services of his network were able to operate.

°
° °

Andalousie included five sectors: Toulouse, Limoges, Lyon, Marseille and Vichy, covering all southern France. Its headquarters was in Toulouse.

The network base-station was known only to the three liaison-secretaries working there and to six officers: Commelor, of course; Traversiere, his immediate assistant; Hardy, chief of liaison; Montaigu, responsible for security; Patrice, chief of the Toulouse sector and Maurice, his assistant. No-one else ever entered it.

Ah! yes, come to think of it! The woman who owned the building, once.

It was located on the fourth and fifth floors, connected by an inside stairway, of No.X Place des Carmes. The cover was "Societe S.I.R.A.P.", and it was imperative that the six leaders remember what those initials stood for: "Societe Industrielle de Recuperation des Appareils Producteurs" (Industrial Corporation for the Recovery of Producing Machines). What producing machines? Traversiere alone still remembers it. Being the permanent member of the base he was always ready to give on this subject the most convincing of explanations. As I said before, he only had to do it once.

The owner, intrigued by the urbane attitude of her young tenants, driven by curiosity and perhaps anxiety, appeared one day in their quarters. Her intent in doing so, she confessed, was to find out what was going on under her roof. Perhaps the butcher on the first floor had confided in her his conviction, which he retained until the liberation, that these jokers were probably Gestapo agents.

She entered the anteroom which had been transformed into a Vichy sanctuary. A color photograph of Petain, surrounded by Laval and Darlan in black and white, and various articles and accessories of the cult, the battle-axe emblems, "I donate, etc.," engraved and framed, pictures of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class baths at the thermal capital, pamphlets from the Jewish Affairs Commissariat, etc. All this was quite convincing. A secretary, a harmless looking deaf, led the visitor already halfway reassured to the office where Traversiere was working. The latter greeted her with a religious courtesy.

"What brings the honor of your visit, etc.."

"Well, sir, you had told me that you were civil servants, and..."

Traversiere pointed to her some magnificent output charts which blanketed the walls. There couldn't have been more, or more impressive ones, in the office of the "Steel King" as shown by a motion picture decorator.

"To tell you the truth, Madam, yes and no. You will understand. The Society for the Recuperation of Producing Machines, of which we are the regional representatives, is a private enterprise, but it performs for the account of professional organizations and the government, and within the framework of a corporate organization, the commercial and legal dealings, which the administration cannot handle, and in addition... (five minutes of artificial verbiage which I shall spare the reader with). Our unfortunate country, Madam... the horrible destruction of the war and the heavy burden of the occupation... Work, Family, Country... (one minute of silence). Our function lies in recuperating, for the benefit of the new national economy, the equipment of the now silent factories. To this effect, we inform the Department of Recuperation of the Central Office of Distribution of Industrial Products, the appropriate branches of the Ministry of PI, and the chief distributor of the central section of the OCRPI. Naturally, in complete accord with the General Delegation of the Ministry of the PI where our correspondent is Mr. M..., whom I am sure you know, and the regional Prefecture, where we are in close contact with the excellent Mr. D..., of the Cabinet (one must end on that note). Do you understand Madam?"

"Oh! certainly, sir. Certainly. It is all very clear."

One may wonder for a while if the owner was not a humorist, but one will never know.

Of course, the building had two and even three exits if we include the front door. One was bad: a fire escape stairway winding down from the roof and ending, unfortunately, in an inside court. The other was excellent: from the fifth floor one could gain access, through wide windows, to the flat roofs of the block of houses between Place des Carmes, Rue du Languedoc, and Rue Pharaon. A whole company would be needed to search all the doorways in this block and two more to occupy the buildings at the same time. Andalousie's command group was never to need to use this security labyrinth, above which at night, cats and young lovers usually got together.

Actually this gave a good scare to Traversiere one evening, when for the first time he fell asleep in an armchair on the fourth floor after working late. He was awakened with a start by the noise of rattling tiles on the roof, and yelled to himself: "S..., the bastards have surrounded me"; he jumped on the roof anyway through a hinged skylight, and the only thing he could do after that was to excuse himself briefly for barging into an intimate party where he was one too many.

Until the day when he went into hiding, Commelot assembled his close collaborators every day, at 10 AM and 4 PM at the Base station, for what he called his pilot-briefing. At those meetings, he gave his orders and looked over the mail brought in by Hardy, his liaison chief.

Commelot handled directly the three services which provided his liaisons with London: radio, air operations and trans-Pyrenean channels. However the heads

of these services did not know the Base station. Commelor communicated with them through letter-drops and when he needed to see them, he summoned them somewhere else.

This happened preferably at a small delicatessen-cafe whose comestible odors would have inspired good old Vincent Hyspa (French humorist). The little shop was squashed and overwhelmed by two houses of the old narrow alley Rue Espinasse which appeared to lean toward each other above its roof under the heavy weight of many years. Supposing the Gestapo did decide to brave the sharp and pointed silex paving-stones covering the neighboring streets and managed to cross the smelly gutter of Rue de la Trille, they probably wouldn't even notice the little delicatessen.

The back-shop was the meeting-place of the network. It was pretty well chosen at a time when everybody would eat just about anything out of a leper's plate, and would raid the garbage cans for supplies. Commelor's visits there were well justified. Until the end and until he was to put on his Hussar uniform, he forced himself every other four days to put on an old leather jacket and transport hundreds of pounds of vegetables in a push-cart, between the Arnaud-Bernard market and the friendly delicatessen.

The heavy burden of insuring proper coordination between the Base station, on one hand, and the six general services of the net and five sector-commands for the gathering of intelligence (see photograph 1, page 381 of this book) on the other, rested on Hardy's shoulders, the liaison chief. He distributed the work and the orders between them; and he received their "contributions", intelligence reports or reports of completed missions.

To that effect, he installed himself in two villas on the "Cote Pavée", several hundred yards apart. . One where he worked with six communications agents; the other where he met people when a direct contact was necessary, and where he could shelter if need be, a sub-net envoy. Consequently, there was also a cut-out at his level. The sectors left their messages and picked up their instructions in Toulouse letter-drops which were emptied by some of Hardy's men every day; there were to be up to twenty-five of them in simultaneous service. The six general services did not know Hardy's bases of operations and were unaware of each other (compartmentalization).

The first one, the mail service, had two separate branches. The typing shop was simply constituted as a whole by the best among the employees of the succeeding organism to the 17th military Area. During the day, it functioned in the offices formerly used by the headquarters, at the "Palais du Marechal" at the Grand-Rond, and at night in the private homes of the devoted typists.

Marie-Therese, Simone, Marie-Jeanne, Baptistine, Yvonne, Marthe and Emilie (also called Suzanne), carried in their handbags, twice a day, enough to get themselves shot ten times over. At the office, where not everybody was a friend, George and Robert watched over them. There never was any incident.

Their section worked so well that not one of their superiors ever stuck his nose in their business. A warning system had "conditioned" the typists so well that, on a quick signal from George or Robert, all traces of activities other than those which were supposed to take place, disappeared instantly.

Among other advantages, the system was economical. The former 17th Military Area constituted a fertile terrain for intelligence gathering and a thorough exploitation of this source merely required one more copy of each typed paper, which was done automatically.

The drafting shop was very comfortable in the second or third back-room of a picturesque and almost unbelievable curio shop on Place Lucas.

The second service, that of cryptography was headed by an Air Force Colonel on extended leave, with the help of his family and of a few colleagues. One must say in their honor that this service was the most disciplined of all. Regularly, twice a day, their special communications agent went to the apartment of a concierge of Rue Lafayette, which served as his letter-box and picked up at eleven AM the orders dispatched on the previous day at six PM, and at six PM those transmitted at eleven AM that same day.

The identification service (if one can call it that!) was perfected to an unusually high degree. It made use of the equipment and personnel from four printing plants in the city, including eighteen presses, a photo-laboratory, a photo-engraver shop, a dry seal and a rubber-stamping shop, and last but not least, a foundry which cast and enameled perfect duplicates of the National Police badges. The only piece that Andalousie did not produce was the inside sheet of monthly coupons of a ration card. It was more rapid and easier to secure them by raids against the town-halls of the Dordogne villages.

Everything was well compartmented. When later the managers and part of the personnel of one of the printing plants were arrested, no other part of the net not even of the identification service, was compromised.

The products of these different organizations were perfect. They never drew the least attention from the French and German authorities who were supposed to have issued them, made constant checks on them and always recognized the work as their own.

Commelor extended the advantage of this service beyond the realm of his net to all the fugitives whom he heard about and to the area's guerrilla bands. In addition, early in the game and before ever receiving any order to that effect, he got the idea of training units which would be able to gather intelligence while in actual combat, after the Allies had landed. He proceeded with his recruiting for the big day by furnishing false papers, ration cards and work-certificates to all the young men of certain areas, especially in the vicinity of Samatan. It was a farsighted effort which was not to be in vain.

The photographic service supplied and furnished the agents with the equipment they needed and reproduced all the documents passing through the net.

The fifth service, that of transportation, possessed several sedans and one van. Its expansion had been planned by taking a mortgage on the equipment of a cooperative dairy in the vicinity of Saint-Gaudens. Gasoline? Andalousie was never to lack any, being located so close to the oil-wells of Saint-Marcet or Peyrouzet. Thanks to the devotion of their management, Commelor was able to supply himself at will and gratis.

Lastly, the Security service had as many compartments as enemies, and an operational shock group. Our clever Traversiere had also infiltrated an

agent in the midst of the South-West Milice commanders, (1). Another one, operating as a "lone ranger", had the audacity of trying to get a German, the personal assistant to Major Redseck, the Chief of the Gestapo, to work for us. The best part of it was that he succeeded. As far as the French Police was concerned, it would be an understatement to say that it was infiltrated by our people. A truer statement would be more like: "Vichy has there a head and a few eyes".

We were warned in advance of most of the enemy's planned operations. This explains, partially, the success obtained by the courageous Taillandier, alias Morhange, of the "Agence Immobiliere", in the open battle against the Gestapo, which he was probably the first to wage in France. It is well known that before dying heroically, he wandered throughout Languedoc in an automobile, fighting for and sometimes occupying small areas, and purging entire sectors of the terrorized Gestapo and its decreasing force of agents. Commelor maintained close contact with him, but personally handled the matters relating directly to his net. He was assisted in this task by the brave Montaignu brothers, Lucas and Roland.

The two merry fellows traveled in Citroens with Gestapo-type yellow tires, ready to show identification papers describing them as controllers of the "Meat Distribution Bureau", as French Police officers, or even as Gestapo agents, or to display their automatic pistols depending on the circumstances. Or perhaps Commelor would even dash through a German roadblock yelling through the door "Heil!" with the appropriate arm gesture. It worked.

(1) Milice-Militia: Special paramilitary units working for the Germans to counter resistance activities.

From June 6 on, Commelor and his men were often the first ones to shoot, as we shall see. But before that time, they tried to extricate themselves from difficult positions with more finesse. Here is an example.

One day, during the "pilot-briefing", the news that the Matabiau railroad station was to be encircled by the Milice and the police early that afternoon was announced.

"Darn it!" exclaimed Hardy. An agent coming from Orleans with a batch of mail and weapons is scheduled to arrive on the 2 PM train.

"Go get him", said Commelor.

At 1:50, Hardy and two others, displaying all the paraphernalia by which policemen recognize each other, crossed the checkpoints which had been set up to stop all travellers. They picked up their comrade on the train's steps, handcuffed him, picked up his luggage and pushed him ahead. Everyone moved to let them pass, including the Milice members who for one minute lifted their eyes from the luggage they were minutely inspecting and encouraged their "colleagues" with a good word and gesture.

These hide-and-seek maneuvers became too frequent and were to end up tragically. At first, it was all very amusing. But one day, Hardy and Montaigu, accompanied by Popey and Guillaume, chief radio-men, had an automobile accident at Villefranche-de-Lauraguais. The latter two had deep cuts on their faces. While they bandaged themselves and Montaigu looked for food at the Maxim hotel, Hardy went to the railroad station to find out if they could get to Toulouse where their presence was urgently required. There were no other passenger trains leaving that evening, but a freight train was ready to depart.

Hardy found the station-master and told him that he and a colleague had just arrested two dangerous terrorists who were wounded. He produced his police pass, telling the man to read: "The civil and military authorities must assist, etc..." and then said:

"I'm requisitioning four spaces in a baggage car, any one of them. Delay the departure. I'm going to get the others."

A sharp discussion ensued, but Hardy's voice of authority was such that the station-master finally gave in.

"But hurry up", he said.

Hardy rushed to the hotel in one leap, informed his comrades of the situation, and the four of them dashed toward the station. It so happened that Hardy and Montaigu ran faster than the others, who limped along behind, holding their insecure bandages with both their hands. On the way they forgot who were the policemen and who were the prisoners. The astounded railroad-men then witnessed the most unexpected spectacle of two cops racing toward the railroad station, followed by their captives.

"Well! For terrorists, they aren't too smart" sighed in chorus the disappointed witnesses.

"Those bastards! they really beat them up!" shouted the signal-man when he saw the faces of Popey and Guillaume.

Then he explained:

"The poor guys, if they don't try to take off, it must be that they are really banged up."

One should remember that Toulouse only had 200,000 inhabitants, and that on the next day, and each day after that until June 6, 1944, Hardy, Montaigu and the other fake policemen were to roam, and work in this town. One can begin to understand why Bardin said one day to Commelor's "gang": "I search for but can't find any reasons for your survival and your success."

Each one of the five sectors and of the many sub-sectors of Andalousie, had a structure probably somewhat less diversified in its area or town, but followed the same principles of cut-outs and compartmentalization, and consequently made a maximum use of the technique of letter-boxes.

Let me say one more word about an organization theoretically separate from Andalousie, but which was to a great extent, one of its achievements: the Operational Cell Center; Erable.

Some time before the landing, in April 1944 I believe, London ordered the creation of several regional Operational Cell centers, seeking thereby to simplify, rationalize and adapt the radio-communications of the Resistance to the plan for the Campaign of France. Each of these served to centralize the communications of all the collection organisms within its own sector and they all adopted names of trees (1).

Andalousie, the main net of the Toulouse area, received the mission of assisting the radio teams dispatched from London in the organization of the Operational Cell Center of Toulouse, called Erable (maple). Commelor and Popey, chief radiomen, took the following steps: they spread their sixteen

(1) From then on, Eleuthere named all its regrouped sub-nets by the same names of trees.

transmitters around three points, Samatan, Saint-Gaudens and Villefranche-de-Lauraguais located on a circle at a radius of 40 kilometers from Toulouse, and at 120-degree-angles from each other. They were easily accessible thanks to the means of transportation available to Andalousie. Each day they distributed the outgoing messages among the sixteen sets, so that the required transmission time was reduced to a minimum. In addition, the German DF was to be completely thrown off the track by the multiplicity of transmitting sources. All in all, Erable was to function like one of the firecracker-fields which are set up for the training of aerial observers in spotting artillery batteries. One charge explodes at one point, but it has barely gone off, when a second one explodes at the other end of the field. It is a longer explosion and neither one has been exactly located. Then a third and a fourth go off simultaneously in divergent directions. A real Chinese puzzle.

Captain Popey had his base-station located at Rue de la Pomme in Toulouse. It was to be uncovered by the Milice which conducted a raid against it in August 1944, but only captured a liaison agent by the name of Nicole. Commelor, who was notified at the last minute, deployed his shock group in the neighborhood to alert the comrades on their way to the Rue de la Pomme, in particular Guillaume, Popey's assistant.

Erable started off rapidly and operated perfectly until the end of the war. The kind of "dispatching" required in order to distribute the work among the 16 transmitters (there were to be up to 150 telegrams per day) and the

complex liaisons between the base and them were always in operation. The German DF was never to detect any station; and the Gestapo never arrested a single operator.

°
° °

Such was the infrastructure of the network. Let us now explore the functioning of its liaisons in a very concrete case.

On April 10, 1944, Hardy arrived a little late at the morning pilot-briefing, at Place des Carmes, armed with a briefcase stuffed with the contents of the letter-boxes picked up on the previous evening and that very day in Toulouse. Only Montaigu and Traversiere were present and the latter immediately said:

"The boss hasn't returned from the delicatessen yet. We can begin to sort the mail without him."

"Always late," growled Hardy, in a very bad mood.

He spread his harvest out and extracted a telegram, a real one that time, in a blue folder from the P.T.T. (Post Office Telegraph and Telephone Administration), which he handed to Traversiere, with a savage sneer, as he sometimes did in private, when he was annoyed.

"Patrice must have gone mad," he grumbled. "He needs the Post Office now. I wonder what I'm around here for!"

Traviere and Montaigu read:

SIRAP Corporation, Toulouse:

"Confirm arrival in Montauban RR station of two metal cases of crackers good quality, trademark D.R., reference Sicard-Stella. Patrice."

Intrigued, the three companions looked at each other.

"If, fooling the Boches (note of the translator: disparaging name given to the Germans by the French) isn't enough and now we have to start fooling each other, what are we coming to?" shouted Hardy (1).

"Wait a minute!" said Traversiere.

The gleam of an idea flashed in his dark and cunning gaze. He pulled two respectable looking folders of the SIRAP from a file cabinet and spread their contents on the table, taking two onion-skin sheets of paper from them.

"Here are," he said, "two cables, the first from us to London, dated March 23. I read:"

"Source Quartermaster Toulouse, 17 March. Numerous requisitions and measures of all kinds indicate probable stationing within a week of at least one Armored Division between Toulouse and Montauban. Agent has been sent on the spot. Will send further details as soon as possible."

"The second is from London to us. Date: April 4. Text:"

"Congratulations for information on Armored Division Toulouse. Send all available details on same. Count on you, etc..."

(1) If the P.T.T. Administration keeps telegrams for more than four years, this particular one can be found in the files at Montauban (sender), and Toulouse (addressee). The curious reader desirous of finding it should however concentrate his investigations on April 7, 8, 9 and 10, 1944. The facts reported above are strictly correct, but the date could be ascertained only with an approximation of a few days.

(See photographs 2 and 3, pages 380 and 381 , in this book, for the original radiograms found in the archives of London, the first after decoding, the second before coding.)

"Well, well!" said Hardy. "This can give us a clue. There must have been an exceptional reason for Patrice's imprudence in using the telegraph system. Now, what is the great concern of the moment, if not the Panzer?"

"That's it!" shouted Traversiere. "Crackers. That means it's a good deal. That's good. Metal equals armored troops. Good quality means modern tanks, "Tiger" or some other type. D.R. Hum... D.R.?..."

"Das Reich? Das Reich Division?" proposed Hardy. "That's the one which already has some elements in Toulouse?"

"Obviously! And Sicard Stella means S.S.," continued Montaigu. "Two cases, that means two trains."

"No," said Commelor, who had just entered without being noticed by his three comrades, so deeply they were absorbed in their puzzle. "Two cases evidently means the elements of the two Armored Divisions regrouped under the name of "Das Reich". That's obvious. You're a bunch of idiots. If one has to count on you to help."

Everyone protested. Commelor, who was very happy that morning, finally confessed that his opinion was based on something other than just intuition.

Consequently let us take a few steps backward.

The information from Quartermaster with regard to the awaited Panzer Division had been confirmed by several sources. First by C..., who commanded a combat-intelligence unit in training near Montauban. Then by the Francistes (members of fascist party) of Montauban, who rejoiced over it: they hoped

that the German tanks were coming to repress the maquisards. And by others as well.

On April 9, Patrice on the way to Bordeaux, and preoccupied with the Panzer, stopped at Montauban, where he observed several armored trains passing through or stopped at the railroad station. An ideal bombing target. Was it too late? In the case of the moving convoys probably, but the transport operation might still not be over, and air reconnaissance should be launched. Patrice immediately sent a telegram to the SIRAP.

Then he contacted C... and the chief of the Montauban sub-sector. They gave him a series of details concerning the armored units which had recently arrived at the camp of Caylus, at Castanet and at other points. Patrice then made a substantial report on the situation. He knew that the next day was one of those when Commelor assumed the role of delivery man between the Arnaud-Bernard market and the delicatessen-cafe of the Rue Espinasse, alternate letter-drop for the command group in case of emergency.

Starting on the 10th at dawn, from Montauban, Simone X..., liaison agent, arrived at the delicatessen around ten o'clock and handed the report to one of the grocer's pretty daughters. The latter caught up with Commelor down the street as he was about to start his normal day's work after his delivery routine had ended. He read the document on his way to the Base-station, which explained his superior competence in deciphering the sibylline text.

"Very important", he concluded. "A message must be dispatched today".

"Too late for the normal pick up" replied Hardy. Let's get in touch with Popey who will request a supplementary contact with London in the evening (1).

"All right. Do it!"

A first agent was then sent to Rue de la Pomme. Oral message: "Hardy advises you to plan for the transmission to-night, of a message which will be in your box for the normal 3:00 PM pick-up".

Commelor thought for a minute, then wrote:

"Confirm arrival Montauban and Toulouse of two Armored Divisions as announced in TGSA 4 (radio message) of 20 March. They are the units indicated in TGSA 6 of April 5..."

He pinned a note on the paper with the mention: "To be coded and brought back immediately". The ink was barely dry when a second liaison agent, prancing about impatiently because he was a little behind schedule, grabbed the paper and stuck it in his pocket along with the others. He dashed to Rue Lafayette and delivered the whole batch at a concierge's apartment, where a middle-aged man, a retired officer type, was to pick it up a half hour later.

During that time Commelor, Traversiere, Montaigu and Hardy perused over the intelligence gathered in the morning. Eleven o'clock, noon, one o'clock.

(1) It is possible, give or take a few days, that the Erable Center was not yet installed on Rue de la Pomme on April 10. We will assume that it was however, in order to give a complete description of the entire liaison system of Andalousie.

"We're beginning to see the light about the deployment of these armored elements" said Commelcor.

This was true. At that time, some nets from the South-west, not as well set up as Andalousie, for example Eleuthere, reported to London an exaggerated and extravagant number of Panzer divisions in the area: the Gotz von Berlichingen, the der Fuhrer, the Adolf Hitler, the Deutschland, the das Reich, and even our old friend the Hohenstaufen. The presence of that last division had been reported after seeing only its flag in three or four villages. Had it been possible for them to evaluate the units actually there, it would have been discovered that the division flag represented only a small part of the unit: the remnants of the Hohenstaufen badly defeated in Russia and withdrawn from the front. Andalousie had begun to realize this and soon reported that the Germans were reorganizing several Panzer divisions into one: the "das Reich". By keeping the distinctive symbols of all of the old divisions, could the Germans be trying to maintain and cultivate their traditions, or were they attempting to deceive our agents in their estimates? If the latter was the case, they were not succeeding, but, we must admit, the role was well played in this little attempt of direct and general "intoxication" which one might be tempted to call the miracle of the multiplying Panzers.

Commelcor discussed the situation, while selecting a series of documents, among which the report from Montauban.

"All this is O.K. for transmission," he said. "Nothing to change, nothing to add. It should go with the first mail by air, and the first dispatch through Spain."

Thus, the basic intelligence data collected by Patrice was to take on several forms and several channels. It was to go:

1. by itself and condensed, via radio, in view of the assumed urgency.
2. in details and grouped with other information in a mail brief-case by air, and
3. via transpyrenean channels.

Let us follow its peregrinations.

First the radio.

Commelor's text, duly coded, was brought back before 1 PM to the concierge of Rue Lafayette by the gentleman with the military appearance. One of Hardy's agents then came to pick it up at 2 PM, slipped it in an envelope on which was written "absolute urgency", and then went on his way to his twice-a-day chat with a charming and pretty florist on the Boulevard Alsace-Lorraine. The whole neighborhood must have thought that she was his "girl friend". The shop was busy as usual, but the register drawer was opened. The man nonchalantly slipped his envelope in the drawer, as if it was a love letter, then went away.

At 3 PM he was followed by another boy-friend of the florist (too bad for her reputation! the matter can be settled after the war). The young man picked up the paper and brought it to his chief, Captain Popey, Rue de la Pomme. The latter was in the process of explaining to a woman liaison agent under pressure:

"It's Armand's turn. I telephoned him and, using our code, told him to ask them to listen at 7 PM for an urgent message from him. Ah! here he

goes now. Let me take it down... There. My poor girl, you are going to have to go back there. Will you have the time..."

"Oh yes, yes," said the young woman.

She knew what she had to do. Her specialty was to provide liaison with the Center of Samatan, of which Armand was one of the radio operators. She went hobbling along, (for this woman who was always on the go everywhere limped somewhat), to the Roguet RR Station, in the Saint-Cyprien section of town. She grabbed the 4:30 PM small train which was to take her to Samatan, arriving at 6:15 PM. She walked in the baker's shop and he said immediately:

"Let's go."

She climbed into the merchant's delivery truck and was taken somewhere in the country, to the isolated farm of P..., where three persons were living, one more than usual. The "boss," Mr. X..., a little dark man, calm, laconic, was still a bachelor at 45. His old mother was his whole family. Paralyzed, she was cloistered in the kitchen, where she moved about in a wheel chair, in the heart of a true arsenal. Mr. X... was responsible for the weapons of the civil resistance element in the town. And equipment there was plenty! Even bazookas. Usually, they were hidden elsewhere; but Mr. X..., who was also a harvesting entrepreneur and had always possessed a mechanical inclination, had suddenly discovered a tardy vocation as a gunsmith. He could not resist the pleasure of keeping a sample of each item of equipment within reach, tinkering with it, disassembling, reassembling, oiling and in his own words, repairing it. Repairing?

His old mother whom he loved so much, his only "companion", risked blowing herself up with the grenades mixed in with the apples, or with a pound of dynamite which she might mistake for squashed whole pepper. In the loft, a welcomed newcomer, radioman Armand, had spread his Mark XV transceiver right in front of him on a box and transmitted from there. "Where there is formality there is no pleasure".

The visitors were cordially greeted. Everybody drank, in unmatched former mustard glasses, a marvelous Armagnac at least 17 years old. Mr. X..., who had also become an ardent radio assistant exulted. His eyes were shining. He could not stand still.

"Well, shall we do it?" he questioned.

"Patience, boss, we still have ten minutes," replied Armand.

At 7 PM he made contact with London. The reception was good. Nothing unusual. If by any chance Mr. X..., reads this book, which would surprise me because he is not much of a "reading-type", I think he might be glad to see a reproduction of the decoded message, found in the London archives (see photograph 4 page 380).

That takes care of one of the ways.

On the evening of April 10, the batch of papers containing the detailed report of Patrice was picked up by Georges or Robert in one of the Toulouse letter-boxes and the separate sketch which was part of it was found by Y..., in another relay. The text was typed up in the morning of the 11th at the Palais du Marechal, at Grand-Rond, at Vichy's expense

by either Simone or Baptistine. The sketch was reproduced in several copies in the back of the curio shop, Place Lucas.

The two original documents and their copies were returned to the hiding-places where they had originated in the evening of the 11th or morning of the 12th. Picked up again by Hardy's agents, they reached the liaison-center, Cote Pavée, around the afternoon of the 12th. The secretaries pinned a certificate on each copy, carefully filed the stubs away, and inserted the two best copies in two file-folders inscribed "R.I.4.". This was the outgoing mail designation.

R.I.4. was to go first by air, a matter taken care of by one of the other nets, entrusted with the air dispatches of Andalousie, until such time as Commelot could get his own landing field and his own "pick-ups".

The original relay for Andalousie's weekly mail had been quite far, at Tours. As it was too close to an airfield, it seems it was included in a bombing raid and completely disrupted. Its personnel had been dispersed, but was finally located with difficulty the previous week. But in case the RAF and its formidable competitor, the USAF started pouring tons of bombs on the Saint-Pierre-des-Corps railroad station, which could happen any day, the liaison with Tours would then be at the mercy of a railway accident or a train's delay. In order to avoid becoming isolated, Commelot requested a new channel from London, and it was finally set up. It was the "Green box" in Chateauroux.

It was advisable to entrust the first mission in that town to an experienced agent, one capable of making split-second decisions in an unexpected situation. Traversiere was selected.

Around April 15, he left with the R.I.4 packed in a heavy suitcase. London had issued the following instructions:

"See Mr. V..., No. X. Rue de Strasbourg, Chateauroux. Ask: "Is Mr. V... still in the insurance business?" Answer: "Yes, but only during the meal hours."

The travel by night was without incidents. The next day, very early, at 7 AM to be exact, in the provincial calm so typical of a beautiful spring morning, Traversiere was watching cautiously the No. X of Rue de Strasbourg. The place appeared harmless with an open door leading to a deserted and quiet corridor. In spite of his phobia about open doors, Traversiere considered the whole picture satisfactory and entered.

In the back, to the left... darn it! another open door. It led into a kitchen where a housewife was bustling about a stove which smoked, but produced no heat. She was visibly in a wretched mood.

"Excuse me, Madam, I am looking for a gentleman who lives here."

The woman shook her pancake-shaped chignon.

"No man here."

Traversiere didn't dare pronounce "V...", which was undoubtedly only a pseudonym. And if she saw her neighbor fraternizing with a chap who called him by a false name, she might arouse the whole neighborhood in an hour's time.

"But..." began Traversiere, "the gentleman is in the insurance business. You know... insurance..."

No reaction.

"... I assure you, Madam, he lives here. I am certain of it."

That was a lie. Poor Traversiere was not sure of it any more. The nervous weariness which missed contacts bring about, suddenly took hold of him. A wave of confused bad memories overflowed in his mind.

"I should know," grumbled the woman. "I've lived here for fifty years."

It was discouraging. The floating sensation of an empty stomach on a breakfastless morning started to bother him. The young man grimaced, which is perhaps what coaxed the old woman into searching her memory.

"You mean perhaps the one who had rented the furnished apartment on the second floor? But he was no insurance man, and he has just moved out. It was yesterday. Wasn't very talkative."

"That's him" asserted Traversiere.

He could have sworn on it, intuitively. Or perhaps because it was simply his last hope.

"Where did he move to Madam?"

By George! They should know their neighbor's whereabouts in Chateauroux! Or else there is no more provincial life!

"It's 'Route de Lignerès'."

"Sure, that's right!" Traversiere smiled with heart-shaped lips.

"What number, please?"

"That, I don't know."

Too bad! Traversiere went on his way again, toward the Route de Lignerès, with R.I.4 in his suitcase which became heavier and heavier by

the minute. He thought the whole thing over. Very simple! It's only common sense! He would knock on the door of all the houses without any curtains. Mr. V..., probably had not had the time to put up curtains on his windows.

Shucks! At the first house which looked like Traversiere's idea of Mr. V... 's abode, a woman answered the door again. She was young, pleasant and ... Oh! Oh! she glanced at the suitcase with a funny little smile. Eureka! This time, full of confidence, Traversiere blurted out the sentence. The hostess interrupted him:

"Only during the meal hours."

Mr. V... appeared on the doorstep. He was in shirtsleeves, adjusting his suspenders. He had a pleasant face.

"Speaking of meal hours", he said, "you're going to have a snack with us."

Two minutes later, R.I.4 was put away in the pantry where there was plenty of room, and Traversiere found himself sitting at the kitchen table in front of some hot food, with the father, the mother, and the kids who devoured their oatmeal while asking who the visitor was.

"He is cousin Alfred", said Mr. V...

And so Traversiere was introduced right in these brave people's family life, as if he had always known them, and even as one of the family.

Actually! That's the way it was... very much so.

I have written that we remain oppressed, overwhelmed by these sinister years where the only comfort, every now and then, was to count our enemies

on the blackboard or to decipher a "Thank you" or a "very well" in the body of a message. I had forgotten the brief minutes of relaxation, once the mission was accomplished (before the next one), which was experienced in the atmosphere of warm intimacy among comrades unknown to each other.

I have indeed said "unknown to each other". If the picture of some happy moments emerges today in the clearer perspective of my memories, my everyday companions, my brothers are not part of them. The faces which come to my mind are those of some brave guys with whom I spent fifteen minutes and whom I never saw again.

Why them rather than the others? The distraction and the curiosity that everything new engenders, are not enough to explain such a strong and lasting impression. Then? Why does everything that was familiar to me stay gloomy and hazy while people and things that I only glimpsed at or guessed, are engraved forever in my memory where I still find them smiling?

During the intermissions of our sinister play, perhaps unconsciously, we felt a slight sense of security which was more or less justified. We were only passing, and would be gone an instant later. It was not there, not at that time, and not with these people that we would be arrested. We breathed...

But no, this is not it: it was definitely a feeling much deeper than that, I am certain of it.

The word "family", which I mentioned earlier, is what launched me on this deep meditation.

Yes. Among comrades of the same net, we dared not live too much together. We had told everything to each other once and for all. Everything, except, (and this is atrocious) where we spent our nights. We only saw each other to work together. We avoided our families as if we had been afflicted with the plague. And then... we were so ill-tempered that nobody missed anything. Compelled or resigned to long periods of loneliness, we escaped its depression only by contacts with brief acquaintances, in the course of our outside missions. We were just like the blind who are happy only with strangers.

That's it. Suddenly, during a chance meeting when we could lay down our weapons, we were in complete accord and at home with other Frenchmen. We thought: "Here are people who think as we do, who live as we do, who struggle as we do for the same thing everywhere, in every town and village!" We were no longer alone. These unknown people were necessary to make us realize the potent strength of our unanimity.

That was it... or perhaps it is even more simple. The ones who were close to me are dead, while I don't know what became of the comrades I only "half-met"... Perhaps that's the only answer.

But let us come back to Traversiere. He got up, thanked everyone. V... shook his hand.

"Go and don't worry", he said. "The only thing I do is to carry your papers to somebody else. I know very little and do not try to know more. But I think your mail will be flying away very soon."

R.I.4 was indeed to arrive in London by air, as was confirmed by a

cable from London to Andalousie, reproduced hereafter (see photograph 5, page 380).

Two down!

The dispatchings via Spain were more irregular. Navarrenx was the responsible agent for these. The operation of his Pyrenean channels, always delicate and threatened, condemned him to instability. He spent as much time in Spain as he did in France. It was difficult to foresee one day where he would be the next. Therefore, he was sole judge in the making of decisions as to the conditions and times of departure.

The copy of R.I.4 had been delivered by Hardy on about April 15, to a nice old gentleman who lived on a middle-class street in a quiet suburb of Toulouse. Let's call him Mr. Range. He immediately wrote to his cousin Alice, in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, to tell her that food was becoming scarcer by the day.

Navarrenx learned this news (if we can call it that) a few days later while travelling through Saint-Jean-de-Luz where he never failed to pay a visit to Miss Alice. The next day he went knocking at Mr. Range's door.

The latter immediately raised and moved aside the curtain which usually veiled his window. Having recognized his friend Navarrenx, he let the curtain down again, which he wouldn't have done if the visitor had not appealed to him. Mr. Range never liked strange meetings which were liable to turn into noisy arguments and, who knows what else? There was never to be any at his house.

A few days later, R.I.4 was...

You'll never guess where. I think it irresistibly humorous.

R.I.4 was, with official "brothers", in the back of one of the postal trucks which serve to fill the gap in case of delays or inefficiency of the postal trains. It was truly the last place where anybody would look for it, just like a wild duck hiding in a chicken coop.

The following day, it was safe at Miss Alice's, locked inside a box, buried in the little garden of the villa she occupied on the outskirts of Saint-Jean, until Navarrenx and his people would collect it. It was to reach its destination. The following delivery was the only one that would ever get lost.

One night in July or August 1944, Navarrenx followed by three "professional" smugglers, entered the small garden, crossed it and delicately pushed the door of the house. In a flash, he caught a glimpse of the end of a gun-barrel through the opening door. Navarrenx had an odd and striking reflex. . Instead of turning back, he forcefully pushed the door open, took a half-step forward and sprayed the gaping dark hole with the complete magazine of his automatic in the approximate direction of a body which had fallen noisily to the ground. Two of his companions, one on the right, one on the left, emulated his confidence, then the four of them fled under a hail of machine-gun bullets coming from the first floor windows.

Result: One dead German, with six bullets in his body; the seat of his pants left by Navarrenx in a hawthorne hedge; a batch of mail left to rot in the ground. The Germans didn't get it either: no-one talked at Miss Alice's house.

After the liberation, nobody even tried to unearth the R.I.4.

•
° °

One should not make a count of the agents who, according to my account, gathered, handled, transformed, evaluated, stored and carried the basic intelligence of Montauban. I have omitted and forgotten many of them.

I was simply interested in demonstrating that the interior communications people of Fighting France constituted a real small army.

So said, so done.

I have also said that they were brave people. Let us follow one of them on a mission.

IV

A LIAISON AGENT WHO NEVER HAD PROBLEMS

Pierre became a liaison agent for the Agence Immobiliere quite naturally and without any real transition period. All things considered, he

thought he had always been one. Much before the war, by some act of fate, he got a job as chauffeur for the Special Services and gained the full confidence of the officers by his extreme frankness, his neatness, and his devotion. Being very intelligent, he could have embraced a more lucrative profession and have been successful; but he had found there a mental climate which suited him. He was intellectually inclined, as others are materialists, so he stayed, and was satisfied.

What illustrates best his personality I think, is the story he told me one day as he was driving me somewhere. As usual I was seated next to him, because I wanted to. I liked Pierre very much and had more regard for him than I do for a certain number of so-called great men. Suddenly, he broke out with laughter for no reason at all, then explained:

"Colonel, you couldn't possibly imagine what I heard a short while ago in the subway. Two guys both with eyeglasses were shooting the breeze. The first one said: "Did you read the article about the fight among the people of the SR? Good Lord! What a filthy world we live in! They all killed their own mothers and fathers. Even the bigshots to whom they give military ranks; it is a disgrace! To join such an outfit is to fall lower than in the police." And the other joker to add: "Don't say any more. They're all rotten, the deadwood of the Army. I was told this by General X... who is the grand-father of the second cousin-in-law of my concierge's foster-sister."

"Didn't you raise hell about it?" I asked.

"No, Colonel! I'm too much a company-man to make a show myself. But I

was sure sore. I remembered all the bosses I drove around (and I've been driving them for the last 15 years) and I thought: What bastards those two? If they only knew what collection of brave and honest people they're attacking, they wouldn't dare look at their coward mugs in the mirror. It's true, Colonel! Take Colonel X... for example, that man was a saint..."

The preceding account dispenses me from explaining why, in November 1942, when the Agence Immobiliere went entirely underground, its chief, the kind Mr. Vauthier, believing it his duty to release all his officers (while knowing fully well that not one would accept it), simply said to Pierre:

"Say, old boy, there are piles of files to hide. Jump in that truck with Sergeant B... and take those things for me to such and such place."

The designated place was clear across France.

"Very well, Captain," answered Pierre.

I believe this doesn't need any additional comment either. However, I would like to point out that Pierre was one of these rare people more or less attached to the Service who could, without blushing, have answered: "I am only a civilian employee. My wife... my children... this kind of work is not exactly the war. As a proof, I'm not being mobilized. So... will you let me go...?"

He not only did not mention it, but I am dead certain that the thought never even crossed his mind.

Immediate consequence: on the night of November 13-14 or 14-15 1942, around midnight, Pierre found himself stuck with a 5-ton truck crammed with

the most secret archives of the French Secret Services, at 80 km from Marseille, on the highway where day and night, one right after the other, convoys of the German Army were travelling. They were on their way to occupy the mediterranean coast, including "Gross Toulonn", (Toulon) the last mirage of Vichy. Damned breakdown! The battery had gone dead all of a sudden. Not even the parking-lights worked. Luckily it had happened in the interval between two motorized German convoys. But ahead and behind, very close, motors were rumbling along.

"We're done for like two sitting ducks", said Sergeant B...

"Especially if they smash into us", specified Pierre. "We must try to avoid it. If we can hold on till morning without being wrecked, one of us could probably go get some help, perhaps telephone..."

"Call whom?"

"Hum"

Another column was closing in with a roar of thunder. "Black-out" lights were blinking. Pierre ran to the rear of his dead truck, trying to light his lighter faster than the wind could blow it out. It was the only way to avoid a collision. But for how long?

The first enemy vehicles slowed down and passed them at a funeral procession pace, discharging rivers of insults. Quite useless, B... and Pierre did not speak German. A sedan bore to the right and stopped behind the French truck.

"Donnerwetter! What are you doing here? Pull over to the shoulder. Los! Raus! Schnell!"

"I can't move," cried Pierre. "The battery is dead."

"Where are you going?"

"To Marseille."

It wasn't true, but it was safer.

The German got out, went around the "Renault", climbed into it and took a look at the cases. Twenty seconds of mortal fear. The two Frenchmen had not prepared themselves for an answer to the question: "What's in there?" By now they were much too nervous to think up a good one.

The German NCO got out without asking for an explanation.

"We're going to tow you for a while," he said. "Otherwise, you're going to mess up everything."

"Ah! thank you, Sir," muttered B ...

Two cables were hitched onto one of the Wehrmacht tractor-trailers. Pierre and B... climbed back into their seats, and they started with a jolt.

"Shall we take off?" asked B...

"No. Even though it's pitch black outside, we'd get mowed down. They're in front, behind, everywhere."

"You're right. And if we scam, they'll probably search the cases."

"Just pray they dump us in the first side-road!"

This hope was to be disappointed. They rolled on. The Germans seemed to have forgotten about the French truck welded to the center of their convoy. Dawn finally broke, and they were still rolling. Did the "Fridolins" (Germans) have something in the back of their minds? Could they have been

waiting until daylight to search the load? No. Why should they have any suspicions? There was no reason for it. Darn it! but of course! There might be one! Pierre and B... might have given themselves away by some sign of emotion!

"Say, Pierre, did I shake?"

"How can I know? It was dark."

"Yes, but... did my voice?"

"I don't know. And me?"

"Don't know either."

"You know, my greatest fear is that they might commandeer the truck."

"S..."

Pierre hadn't thought of that possibility. They did have batteries, so why did the German change his mind? Pierre remembered perfectly well what the Fritz had said: "we will tow you for a while." For a while. But now they were approaching the outskirts of Marseille. Things looked pretty bad.

The tractor and the sedan stopped. The NCO stepped down, followed by an armed soldier. There it was; the moment the Frenchmen feared most. Done for! But, one never knew, they had to hold on, look natural. Be pleasant, but not over-do it.

"So," said the NCO. "I am sorry but we have to leave you here for we are regrouping our convoy to go further. All right with you?"

He seemed very contented with himself and harbored the radiant smile of a benefactor.

"Very well", Pierre answered. "Very good, thank you very much. Wish we could return the favor."

"Cigarette?"

"No, thank you," said Pierre. "I don't smoke."

That was a lie. Not that Pierre made it a principle to refuse a German's tobacco, but he would have had to show his shaky hands.

This was how Pierre had his first bout with secret warfare. Still it did not discourage him.

Mr. Vauthier specialized him in liaisons between his mobile command post of Auvergne and the sub-nets of the South, Rose in Toulouse, Glaieul in Marseille, the tube (sub-marine) and a number of special units. In addition, he was entrusted with the special missions for the command element.

Pierre accomplished them all and came out with flying colors. He was as much of a scrapper and cautious as he was intelligent (I said it) and calm (I proved it). He was the perfect type of liaison agent who never had any problems. He made sure of it.

No problems. The following are the only three outstanding events of his life during the first half of 1943.

He had just made the friendly rounds in Clermont, Vichy and Roanne where the comrades (he never failed to call them loud and clear "Captain" or "Lieutenant", but deep down he meant buddy) while smiling, had filled a huge suitcase to the brim with papers neatly placed in beautiful

folders bearing poetic names. There was so much more than usual that Pierre was bold enough to ask a question, for once:

"Is it all good? I know it is none of my business; it isn't part of my job, but..."

"Yes! all of it is important, Pierre."

Later, he travelled from Lyon to Marseille, his destination, where a pal from the Submarine Evasion team (tube) and himself, exchanged two similar looking suitcases without being noticed. The contact technique had not yet reached the experience giving it the degree of perfection which I mentioned in volume I. At that time, we were still at the messenger stage where a lone operator had to operate as best he could and more or less follow his own intuition. Pierre went through several police check-points without hindrance. At Lyon, he had found an excellent place on the floor of the train's corridor, among a pile of baggage. He rested, sitting on his precious cargo, nursing the comforting idea that in about ten hours, the whole batch would be in the tube, and he would be in a warm bed; in addition, little Marchand was sure happy when he delivered the package! and the boss, even more! At least so he dreamt.

Pierre must have finally gone to sleep, because the uproar that startled him all of a sudden could not have been unleashed in one second. Guttural germanic voices were yelling orders. German policemen, sub-machine gun at the ready, were blocking the two ends of the passageway while three civilians with haggard faces gesticulated. Two of them summoned the travellers, checked their papers, and made them open their luggage. All the

suitcases got the treatment? The third civilian followed close on the other's heels, his hand deep in his coat pocket which seemed much larger than normal. Pierre shivered with a cold sweat.

What to do? Move away in the corridor and deny any ownership of the suitcase? We can safely suppose that the idea crossed Pierre's mind. But we also know that he was used to accepting the risks all the way for the Service, even when they didn't coincide with his own. He installed himself deeper on his seat, not too deep for that many papers were hard under his fanny. He took out his identity papers, his ration cards, work permit, everything. His turn came, inexorably, and the policemen had not until now neglected a single piece of luggage. "Papers!" The German merely glanced at the papers. "Luggage!" That was it. Pierre did not move, and smiled naively, with his very warm and magnetic face. He made a gesture as if he were taking some kind of succulent food to his mouth, winked, and rubbed his stomach. The German burst out with laughter. "Ach! Black market. All right. O.K." Then he moved to the next one.

It is after such encounters, when everything is over, that people like Pierre felt the nervous shock. But it didn't last. It couldn't, because the next day, whether they got any sleep or not, the show had to go on.

Two weeks later, on the same train, following the same rigorous schedule but a few hours earlier, Pierre arrived at Lyon at 10 PM, coming from Roanne. The train bound for Marseille was to be formed on a different platform, and there was an hour's wait. Pierre did not rush in the

underground passageway as he did not particularly want a seat. He had a slight case, oh really slight!, of claustrophobia. He just breathed a lot easier in the corridors of a train than in a closed compartment, that was all. An enormous crowd jammed the tunnel and trickled down very slowly. No one really knew what was going on. People inquired from back to front: "What's going on?" The answer travelled backwards, from mouth to mouth: "Our end of the platform is blocked by two barricades guarded by Germans. They're channelling the travellers who are forced to enter by small groups in some office."

Bad situation. One could try to turn back and extricate oneself from the crowd? But wouldn't erring on the deserted platforms draw their attention? It was too late anyway. Two armed soldiers were coming up to the rear.

The evil temptation of abandoning the suitcase was creeping in again. Theoretically, it was justified. Mr. Vauthier had always said: "When you see that you are cooked, drop the mail and try to escape. All of the papers you carry wouldn't give the Germans the slightest clue as to its origin. The intelligence can be put together again. A man can't. But did one ever know when one was done for? "As long as there is life, there is hope."

So Pierre followed the crowd. But without pushing! He went up the stairs step by step and finally came up to the platform. People were calling each other on each side of the guarded barricades, "What do they want?"

Those who were waiting at the office door, seated on their luggage, let out the answer: "They are searching everything."

Things were going from bad to worse. Pushed by the people around him, Pierre got to the platform among a group which a policeman ushered imperiously toward the small office which was located less than ten meters away from the tunnel's exit. Just a few seconds, a few steps separated Pierre from freedom. He tried. Just before reaching the door, he bent his knees without stopping and laid down his suitcase carefully on top of a pile of luggage which rested against the wall of a news-stand. Perhaps these had already (why not?) been searched?

Pierre took a deep breath and went in. He was forced to get in his birthday suit. His identification papers were checked. Shoes, socks, everything was searched. It would have been impossible to hide a postage stamp.

A quarter of an hour later, Pierre was cleared. "Raus!" But he was then channelled through a series of adjoining rooms and corridors, and through a different door. He found himself on the same platform, but, catastrophe!, at the other end and on the other side of the two guarded barricades which separated him from the news-stand, from the baggage pile, from his suitcase, and from his mail. Good show, and well organized on the part of the Germans.

Others would have considered that they'd had enough. The exit was two steps away. Then the big city where one could disappear! Freedom! Or at least some respite! Still, Pierre hesitated for a moment? The mail

was there... how many yards away? Twenty perhaps? Abandoned, lost. In the dim grey-blue halo formed by the civil defense lights, he could see his suitcase. It hypnotized him. He thought of Mr. Vauthier, little Marchand and all the comrades who had worked so hard for it! The boss would say: "Fine. You did all right, Pierre." But, deep down, what would he think? And the guys in Marseille who were waiting? Those of the tube, who came from so far for...

Pierre was suddenly drawn from his meditation by the noise of screeching brakes and muffled bumps, wobbling and swaying, and bouncing back and forth like an echo. It was a freight train he hadn't seen approaching and it was now stopped along the platform. Pierre always maintained that he absolutely did not think before embarking on the little adventure I am about to relate. This seems undisputable, because had he thought.... But read what follows!

He jumped in a wagon, left it through the opposite door, walked a distance of about thirty yards along the next track, crossed another car and came down again on the platform, but on the guarded side of the barricade, the "suitcase side" if I may say so, as opposed to the freedom side, smack in the middle of the last passengers still queuing to be led into the office.

By then it was past midnight and it wasn't very bright. The Germans were tired and their surveillance had slackened. Unnoticed by the distracted sentinels, he was in their midst, mingled in with them, right under their noses, Pierre coolly grabbed his suitcase. He backed away from the crowd, then sat

wearily on the steps of one of the freight-train's wagons, holding his precious cargo against his hip. Then he drew a breath of fresh air and made a quick survey of the theatre of operations while lighting a cigarette.

The hardest part remained to be done. To seize the moment when most of the Germans (All the Germans would be asking too much) would have their backs turned. He had two possibilities. On the sly, in several phases, slip the suitcase in the wagon, then hoist himself and sit on the floor assuming a perfectly natural air, and at last crawl in like a snake. No, not that way, idiot! That would only lengthen the period of danger and would necessitate superman capabilities. You might suddenly tremble, or collapse, paralyzed. The coup had to be pulled off in a flash. There, was the truth: One could always dominate one's nerves and muscles for a second.

Now was the time! The only German facing Pierre's side of the platform was stamping, moving, hopping from one foot to the other. He was about to turn. He started turning. Quick! for if he were to make a complete turn on himself...

A written account cannot give the true meaning of what went on in Pierre's mind. To hear him say it, to give an account of it, one might give the impression that Pierre had been pondering the situation. In such times, one does not think, one acts with reflexes. Those reflexes are either good or bad.

With one thrust of his legs, Pierre jumped in the air and swung backwards into the wagon, with his suitcase that he had grabbed at the same time. He got up and crossed over to emerge on the other track. Tough luck! The train was moving again. That was an unexpected surprise and his reflexes didn't work

any more. Pierre had more than plenty of time to jump but didn't. Could it have been an unconscious reaction of delayed fear? This is the only valid explanation because he had just accomplished much more than jump even if the devil himself had been there! Yes, this was the fact, he had completely let himself go.

He curled up in a corner of the car while the train moved forward, backed up, and went through never-ending maneuvers. It would really have been the last straw if the train had returned to its point of departure only to bring Pierre back in the enemy armed camp. This was the possibility that helped him regain his senses. He glanced through the opening, and saw that he was passing a platform, then another, and that a noisy throng was taking a passenger train by storm on the opposite track. He jumped off, climbed into the other train then sat in the corridor on his recovered suitcase. He could finally relax.

The train started and Pierre engaged in a conversation with a traveling companion. After a few artful preliminaries, he popped the question that was burning his tongue all along:

"Where are you going?"

"To Clermont-Ferrand," answered the other. "What about you?"

"Me?... Me too."

Tough luck! He would have to start all over again. Never mind! The mail was safe and Pierre was free. He shivered. Well well! A physical reaction! What was happening? Ah! his shirt was dripping wet, as if he had just stepped out of a pool. And in this stuffed suitcase, there was not a

single item of dry clothing. Darn it! This could give one pneumonia. But the main thing now was that a search wouldn't be greeting him at Clermont, or on the way. S... We'll see what we shall see. Pierre let a comfortable fatalism take over and went to sleep.

At Clermont everything went well and Pierre had the time to catch the train going to Nimes. He finally arrived at Marseille with a delay of thirty-six hours; there he met his colleague at an alternate meeting place.

"Everything's fine," said the latter. "It's covered by the security margin."

"What security margin?"

"Didn't you know that we were having you get here forty-eight hours in advance, just in case?"

No! That old fox Mr. Vauthier had never told Pierre. What a terrific guy! thought Pierre, with no ill feelings.

I can still hear him giving his own account:

"It went quite well. It was a stroke of luck that it happened at night. Had it been daylight at Lyon, I would have sure been caught."

The idea that even in daylight he could have left the station, empty-handed but free, had already been pushed out of his mind.

Six weeks later, Mr. Vauthier entrusted Pierre with picking up all messages from a new letter-box of the Air-Force Intelligence Service in the course of his travels through Marseille. It was in an old house in the center of town, at the corner of Rue Saint-Ferreol and Rue Pavillon, at the home of X..., an Air Force NCO. He lived on the third floor, with his wife, two children

and his old parents, all in four rooms. The first contact was very cordial. X... was a full-blood flier and his wife was a full-blood flier's wife. They'd get along fine.

For the second meeting, Pierre arrived at the agreed upon hour and was going up the stairs without paying too much attention at the shrieking sounds coming from above. After all this was Marseille, and the "Marseillais" make a lot of noise, he thought. Probably some customers of the second floor photographer who specialized in identification photographs, and whose studio was constantly full. By the way, this was an excellent front, he thought.

Suddenly, at the sound of German profanities, he stopped short. The stairway began to tremble as a pack of excited men who mauled another, appeared on the second floor's landing. They slid, rolled and tumbled down the stairs rather than walked down, in a tumult of boots, cuss words and blows. My God! Why? Why? The bastards were four against one; a poor fellow who was handcuffed and was none other than X... Pierre had to grab hold of the banister so as not to be taken along.

Now what? Personally, I would have gone to have my picture taken on the second floor, I confess. But Pierre was of a different school. One minute later he was knocking at X...'s door. Mrs X..., frantic, muttered:

"Get away!"

"I saw it all. But... have they set a trap?"

"No."

"All right. So we have still a few minutes. What did they take? The papers?"

"I don't know. We were separated. My husband denied everything to the end. I only saw them take our savings, our linen, our food. They were so busy with these that I managed to bring back our transmitter into the room they had already searched."

"Very good. Give it to me," said Pierre, "I'll take it."

"No. I'll take care of it. It is very well hidden now. They'll never look back in that spot."

"Huh..."

"Don't worry. Later on, I'll move it away myself. Right now is not the time for it," said Mrs. X...

This was a very fortunate inspiration. When Pierre left the building, two civilians were watching him closely; two civilians who would have looked very natural in SS uniforms with their pig's shaven necks and glassy eyes, raising their paw to yell: "Heil Hitler!". If Pierre had had a suitcase then, they probably would have wanted to inspect its contents.

Puzzled, Pierre went to report the events to the local chiefs, Philippe-Auguste and Mordant. At the sound of the word "transmitter," their hands trembled with envy.

"Pierre, we must recover it at all cost. They are too scarce."

"Very well. I'll go there tomorrow," answered Pierre.

The following day, he didn't feel that the house was being watched. He went up, knocked on X...'s door, but obtained no answer. He tried again the following day with no more success. Then, he walked back and forth indefinitely in front of the house. On the third day at last, he saw X...'s mother

come out. After making sure she wasn't followed, he went up to her. The poor woman, in utter distress, moaned:

"My daughter-in-law was manhandled by these brutes, and now she is having a miscarriage. She is in bed and cannot get out."

"Ah!" murmured Pierre. "Ah!"

Pierre said nothing else for a short interval, he always had warm sympathy in his heart; but this was war. Embarrassed and ashamed, he continued:

"Tell her anyway that I have met the woman who sells milk next door. I'll stop by there every day at ten. Perhaps your daughter-in-law might be able to come, just once,.,?"

She came the next day, but followed by two cops who were as discreet as a presidential escort. Acting as if he were buying some cheese, guaranteed to be without fats, Pierre slipped some money to the courageous young woman. But one of the Germans was sniffing around the shop-window and it was impossible to exchange a word.

All these difficulties served only to strengthen Pierre's will to succeed. Mr. Vauthier sent him to Glaieul for ten days, at the request of Philippe-Auguste. For nine days, Pierre played hide-and-seek with the Gestapo which was watching the building intermittently. A few times, he entered, went to the third floor, where Mrs. X... still refused to give the transmitter, then stopped at the second floor to have his picture taken. Later he went out in the street, contemplating with a naive satisfaction his little batch of

"instant photos." Three times, some plain-clothes men stopped him and asked him what he was doing in the building and he showed them his smiling profile. They grumbled and left. Fortunately until now, they were never the same, however the Gestapo's strength was not unlimited. Also, the stupefied photographer, no doubt sensing the game this too good client was playing, had said: "You again?". Of course, Pierre could have stopped going at the photographer's and shown the same prints every time; but what if the police suddenly decided to check whether this maniac really came from the studio?

So Pierre, judging the situation too dangerous, decided to rely on the visits to the dairy-shop. Upon his return, he concluded his oral report as follows:

"Nine contacts. Three at the X... 's, excluding the first one, and six at the dairy-shop. No results. Poor Mrs. X... was convinced that she could "dump" the radio a lot easier than I could. I was going crazy and I would have quit sooner if I hadn't succeeded, one day, in evacuating their kids. This, Mrs. X... consented to let me do, because if anyone had seen them with her, it would have obviously been assumed that they were hers; whereas with me, no sweat. I was happy to see them safe; that gave me a boost, you know. Then, on the ninth day, at the dairy-shop, Mrs. X... told me: I've done it! the radio is at so and so's. I would have preferred to be the one responsible for it. After nine days I looked like hell! But the essential is that it isn't lost; not for everyone I mean, because I suspect that our pals from Marseille don't have it yet. That will be a job; everybody wants it. I wonder even if Mrs. X... didn't do it out of esprit de corps...

Well! I'm not sure... Besides that, Captain, nothing to report."

Our courageous X... was later shot by the Germans, as well as his group leader.

The second half of the year was to be without a hitch for Pierre. He had acquired a tremendous experience, which contributed greatly to the perfection of the messenger system of the Agence Immobiliere. In volume I, I have tried to demonstrate their excellence ad absurdum, and gave an example of what happened when the rules were not adhered to. In general, they were, and thanks to them the losses were kept to a minimum.

In the end, I repeat, Pierre was the perfect type of liaison agent with no problems. I told you I liked him, that I was always happy to sit next to him, shoulder to shoulder, in his jalopy. I gave you a few reasons for the way I felt. One of them though, I was keeping for the end, because you will understand it better; and it is that Pierre was a very interesting fellow.

One day, as we were talking up a storm, I embarked on one of these stories that only Edgar Allen Poe's Knight Dupin would have been able to make any sense out of. My ideas stopped on an Academician, a fashionable professor in his day. One day he came to the War College, where I was dejectedly wearing out the seat of my pants, to lecture us on the profound and essential characteristics of the eternal French soldier, wearing glasses which isolated him from the rest of the world. This man, actually talked to us about that! This was to be one of the most fantastic personal jokes of our school years, in spite of the fact that it gave us a few annoying pangs. There is always

something exasperating about a lifelong intellectual engaging in subjects beyond his competence.

At least Pierre had and still has a lot of important things that he could teach me.

V

CONTACTS OF THE UNDERGROUND LEADERS

One night, during one of the darkest periods of 1943, I had a curious dream. It left me convinced, in spite of everything I have heard, that Freud is not just a literary genius.

I was the Supreme Leader of the Resistance. I had thousands of motorized liaison agents, even winged ones, at my disposal. Some of them, expressing themselves in radio waves instead of articulated words, translated and broadcasted my brilliant ideas. Others, perfectly invisible, made fun of the Gestapo. And I, powerful and solitary, quietly seated in a leather chair in an impregnable stronghold, was commanding whole armies which had sprung from the ground.

However, I was unhappy because I knew that my organization was not functioning properly.

The irritating little man inside of me whom I haven't been able to get rid of since the distant day my mother cried as she surprised me with my

finger in the chocolate pudding, that nuisance, that bore, was sneering within me:

"What more do you want? Helpless creature! You're good for nothing."

Furious, I retorted:

"How can these Generals with whom I cannot talk understand me, and these soldiers who do not see me, how can they obey me?"

On that, I woke up and resumed my routine occupation which, at that time, consisted of early morning letter-box pick-ups, just like a country mailman.

I'm not joking. I really had such a dream. If I mention it, it is because it isn't stupid at all.

Intellectually speaking, before any open combat operations begin, down to the smallest company raid, the responsible leaders must have a private discussion, continued if possible until complete agreement is reached, or at least until mutual understanding prevails. Without this, there will be nothing but waste and confusion. In my opinion, this is so vital that I shall devote the third chapter to this subject.

I should like to dispose of another question right away. In the preceding passage, I let myself go emotionally, for the first time I think, and I hope the last. But you know what a safety-valve does when it hasn't been closed and locked. I find myself carried away by the stream of my memories.. I shall attempt to be brief and allow myself three pages. The reader who rejects moral considerations and matters of conscience will only have to skip them and resume the sequence of my comrade's adventures.

But before doing so, I personally feel the need to describe, in my own way, the moral strength which prevailed in the Resistance units.

Those I served in were disciplined (believe it or not) if discipline means the carrying out of orders. I attribute it in a large part to the absolute equality of risks faced by everyone at all levels. This is what transformed little by little an initially good moral link into a lasting bond, and also insured in a superior and mystical way, the presence of the leader.

Let me explain. Certainly, the old tanker that I was had seen sharper units than our clandestine organizations, especially when considering all of our services. Of course. Although... although on two occasions I witnessed the following unbelievable situation: Hubert de Lagarde, chief of a network, was handing out very seriously "restrictions to quarters" to some of his young comrades from the base station, among whom at least one had never been in the army and asked me, on the side, what these "restrictions" meant exactly. The first time, I was seized with uncontrollable laughter but it immediately stopped dead in my throat as I realized that I was the only one who found this funny. The second time, having been forewarned, I put on a severe and sanctimonious air of a Lt. Colonel in complete accord with the Colonel; what a joke! Yet, deep down inside I was moved.

Was this an exception? Perhaps.

But I have also witnessed other exceptional and opposite cases. Some regular units where obedience was not so complete or so total. Where, if one felt lazy or scared, one could get away with it much more easily if the appearances were saved.

I repeat: the voluntary discipline of the Resistance was quite satisfactory.

Let no one come and tell me that it was natural, after all there was the invasion, the country in danger, freedom threatened, etc... Noble ideas give an impetus. But for it to last day after day during years of hardship, there must be something else, something... my God! yes, something which had to happen everyday.

Still, the fact that without any obligation, constraint, and sanction, so many men performed so well their dangerous secret missions for so many years, is not that simple. If they had wanted to quit their post, it was only a resignation, not a desertion, and they were not executed for that, at least not in my net. Even so, I have known of only two cases of quitting. The missions were for the most part on an individual basis, and it was impossible to control their execution. It would have been easy to get away with a mountain of excuses and pretexts. But it was to be very rare.

What is even less simple, if we assume that we all were not loud-mouth rangers and perhaps our adversaries might be willing to concede this point to us now that the territory is liberated, is the fact that our leaders were men whose authority rested only in themselves, it was not covered by any official order, any superior, any chain of command, who were not even always sure of their efforts' usefulness, and yet who found in themselves enough justification to demand the ultimate sacrifices from their men.

Where did so much assurance come from?

As a rule, they did not draw it from the cool, abstract and peremptory

reasoning which goes as follows: "Since I am a leader, I control a small part of the national interests." Opinion was too divided, our thinking world too disrupted, and the reserves of discipline which had been accumulated in the peacetime military service, too much wasted for anyone to avail oneself of such reasons.

They did not find it entirely in their conviction that the Resistance effort was a considerable contribution to the future victory. If I may judge for myself, they only discovered it afterwards; they were not too sure of it at the time; and, if they believed it, they did not dare advertise it.

Simply stated, the clandestine chiefs took as many risks as their lowest agents by virtue of the sole necessity of their contacts; for, while they did not go out every day, they could be spotted much more easily. This equality in danger gave them some rights.

It was the result of a recent and rapid evolution in the moral conditions of combat command. One of these days, the professional thinkers will have to get busy and dissect it for us. Not being qualified however, I shall limit myself to a presentation of the essential elements and to giving them some meaning.

During the first World War, from 1915 on, the trenches, the telephone and the necessary remoteness at the main command posts had created a vacuum between the fighting man and the leaders. There wasn't much understanding any more because the feeling of closeness was lacking. Beyond a certain rank, around that of General, no one got killed but accidentally. Of course the Generals had been brave Colonels and had not ceased to be brave when receiving their stars. It was the evolution of warfare alone that was responsible for

their relative safety; nevertheless, solidarity did not exist any more at all levels of the Army. Some think this was the fundamental cause for the 1917 mutinies. I don't know; I wasn't there.

But what I do know is that this vacuum did not shrink between the two conflicts, and that it contributed to the collapse of the French fighting spirit. The soldier only knew his Captain, and him, not even always: only when the latter was not attending one of these numerous courses where the junior officers were being stuffed with science. The soldier saw his Major only once a month, at the monthly parade; his Colonel, who shuffled papers with the personnel officer, the finance officer and the exec, he glimpsed at them once a year, at the Regiment Holiday; and finally his General, only in pictures. On the other hand naturally, those various officers knew only imperfectly the tool (let no one wince, this word has a certain sense of nobility) which they would be called upon to manipulate one day.

The months of rotten war did not improve things.

Then mobile warfare suddenly erupted. A striking change. Now even the Army staffs, those former olympians, had to fight it out with automatic rifles. From the headquarters, where I was assigned, only six of us came back, plus two escapees from the Germans who joined us. I was the remaining senior officer, a Captain, with most time in grade. The Germans also suffered a similar massacre of Generals in Russia which, we only knew too well, meant eventual collapse.

So? The Generals were no longer just thinkers, abstract individuals, strangers? Sometimes they had to shoot along with their secretaries, their chauffeurs, their orderlies and the remaining pieces of their troops? But calamity is sometimes turned into something good. They would have to lead at closer range, feet on the ground, in the reality of life and death. The healthy and total combat fellowship was to spring up again, and the fighting spirit to rise again. We would fight again like lions, as soon as we could recover. In 1944, when I rediscovered the French regular Army, I was not too surprised to find in Mulhouse, an Army Corps CP and two Divisions CP's set up a few hundreds of yards away from the enemy lines, within range of a successful battalion raid, and it remained there for weeks, until the resumption of the advance. Since the physical make-up of a man is only a projection of his mental attitude, the whole attitude of our leaders changed. Has anyone noticed how much General Leclerc resembled a General of the time of the conquest of Algeria?... to such an extent that, had he not been a man known to dislike affectation, one could have wondered if he hadn't crushed his cap on purpose; how Patton, with his Colt on his hip, was a new Buffalo-Bill; and how the Russian Generals with their heavy peasant heads over strong bodies, broader than tall, appeared as Cossack band leaders? And can we not believe that this would suffice to explain the behavior of their men and the common task they achieved together: the odyssey of the 2nd DB, the armored assaults of the Americans, and Stalingrad?

In our clandestine war, the vacuum was completely filled. Incidentally, one could still feel under one's feet, the soft ground of that filled ditch and it was better to say that the void never existed. The enemy struck at the

head as well as at the limbs. The everyday life and the dangers were the same, exactly the same for all. That is why certain organizations which are dispersed and nonsensical in essence and construction reveal themselves to be morally more indestructible than certain armies which are perfectly well organized. That is why "bands" can be commanded as easily as infantry battalions, even though they do not respect, and sometimes do not know any of the apparent forms of discipline, and their chiefs never pronounce that word, or even think of it. May my masters forgive me? I am not denying the necessity of discipline; it makes everything so easy. I do say however that in the underground we did not have these means and tools at our disposal, and that thank goodness, we didn't need them.

Everyday, Vauthier asked Pierre to run on some errands which could have brought about his death and torture, exactly on the same tone of voice as he used to ask him, a few months earlier, for the car at a particular time. Pierre, a civilian employee, would always answer: "very well, Major", and would go about his work.

For the realistic mind, this calls for some enlightenment. Let us look for it as usual, in the concrete. Following are two events which Pierre witnessed directly, approximately at the same time he was accomplishing the personal missions I have related, and which might explain this.

Mr. Vauthier sent Pierre on a mission in Paris (sub-net Pavot) to Captain Maire, whom we shall find later, looking very different and in another environment.

In Paris, Maire spent most of his time at the cafes. It was not due to

any intemperance or affinity of his; but he became a bar hopper because crap games proved to be the most discreet command procedure of one of his groups. It was composed of waiters who understood him in half-spoken words and whose presence in a bar could not excite anybody's curiosity. In fact, one would be surprised to see them elsewhere. Maire came to feel at ease in those places as much as they did. It was said that his hat tipped itself on his ear automatically when he went from a nice little pub on the Batignolles to one of the doubtful joints around Place Clichy.

One day Maire and Pierre were strolling together in the tenth arrondissement, when, Rue du Faubourg Saint-Martin, the first said to the second:

"It'll take me two minutes. Do some window-shopping while waiting for me."

He went into the "Armagnac", a little cafe which was also a letter-box for Eleuthere. It was to be an unfortunate coincidence of which there have been thousands in real life, because it was difficult to make everybody understand the necessity of working for only one chief in the underground. To my knowledge a single agent who gave out information to all comers, attracted the contacts of three networks to the Armagnac.

Maire was to meet four of his men, Lt. D..., and three huskies who weren't exactly angels, including "Riri les Grandes-Feuilles" (Riri Big-Ears). They were standing among fifteen or so customers which was enough to crowd the narrow space between the bar and the four or five adjoining small tables, all of them occupied. The Captain only had two words to say, in order to set a meeting. He stole towards them and offered them a drink.

Riri les Grandes Feuilles answered: "All right," and suddenly broke off. His prying glance had stopped on a part of the large mirror behind the counter. Without removing his eyes from the mirror, he whispered:

"S... It's getting too hot around here. The gal sitting behind us is Odette, Lerat's wife. I think we're done for. Try to..."

One will never know what was in his mind. Four of the customers suddenly produced pistols aimed at the ceiling, probably because they were too pressed to be able to thrust their arms forward. One of them yelled:

"German police. Do not move. You're all under arrest."

That was presumptuous on his part. Lt. D... was already outside. Being young, brisk and determined, he had pushed and knocked over those surrounding him, like a lucky bowling ball knocking down all the pins. He fled like a rabbit toward the Gare de l'Est (railroad station), pursued by the pistol shots of the policemen who had gone after him. But they were too late and they missed him.

Inside, the confusion was indescribable. Odette, green with fright, a handkerchief over her mouth to keep from throwing up no doubt, got up, succeeded in making her way to the door, and left. Then, very calmly, Maire extricated himself, took two steps sideways (and I'm not saying two for style but as an exact figure), and sat at a table where three strangers, - peaceful working men of the neighborhood - were playing cards. He picked up the deck, shuffled it and dealt.

"I'll bid," he proclaimed. "Run of three in trumps. Alfred, you're really too thick. You don't understand anything. I had given a signal for

hearts by finessing a diamond. You didn't understand a damn thing; you're playing like a dunce."

The three friends, until then livid and trembling, pulled themselves together and gave a reply, while the Germans, who by this time had returned, surrounded the standing customers. Among the latter, Riri les Grandes-Feuilles and his two buddies didn't make a peep, didn't seem to know each other any longer and completely ignored Maire whom their eyes, staring in the empty space, didn't even brush. They were smart guys, regular and shrewd. Two of the policemen lingered on to observe the seated customers. They must have had the impression that Maire was elsewhere a few moments earlier, but things happened so quickly that they were not sure at all, and it was impossible to recall everybody's position. No doubt, they also missed Odette at that moment.

"Twenty for trumps and ten for the last trick", announced Maire. "Alfred, I'm fed up! When I bid heart, lead with hearts."

"I didn't have any," protested his partner.

"Of course you did. You had the seven. See, here it is."

Maire spread the cards, recapitulated the play and continued to argue. It really seemed that the fact that he hadn't made all the tricks was his only worry in life. He was more of a backroom card-shark than his partners, this Maire, who only three minutes earlier had been a resistance leader.

Would the Germans suspect this small game which was not disturbed nor brought to a stop by even a volley of shots? Was Maire going too far? No! They raised their shoulders and left.

Five minutes later, on the sidewalk, Maire joined Pierre, who looked wan. Pierre had seen the whole thing through the windows of the cafe's longest side, which bordered an alley. Hypnotized, he had stayed on and had witnessed the flight of D...

"You know, old man," said Maire, "at my age and with my size, I preferred the card-shark role to that of a sprinter, like D... You're going to have to give me a hand; certain measures are in order."

"Well, Captain," said Pierre. "Brother! You sure have guts!"

And he knew what guts meant, so he could appreciate it as a connoisseur. A personal link stronger than a communion of the most respectable ideas had just joined the two men. Facing each other, they were no longer the chief of a sub-net and a liaison agent, they were friends closely bound together.

As early as the middle of 1943, the simplest of meetings between Resistance chiefs could turn into dangerous adventures. The Gestapo not only gave heaps of money to the riff-raff and tortured the honest people, but was organizing itself on scientific lines, to the point of having teams of "physionomists" in public places. Each of them had engraved in his memory the photographs of a certain number of wanted patriots from that sector, at the rate of five, ten, and even fifteen for the most talented ones. Furthermore, they were used to work by the glance, that is they followed and pointed out any stranger seeming to go about furtively, nervously, or whose whole attitude seemed suspicious. All this resembles a slightly ~~exaggerated~~ novel, but it is true.

Just as a need creates a necessity, the chiefs of the Agence Immobiliere,

well known for some time, described and photographed in the wanted bulletins, had to employ mimicry. Mr. Vauthier gave the following example.

One day, he arrived by train at the station of LePuy, where he was to meet with Philippe-Auguste coming on liaison from Marseille, with Captain X... of the young Agence Immobiliere (1) who was bringing from some unknown location (that was his business) a number of radio transmitters, and Lt. Rambaud who had been sent from Saint-Etienne to receive the sets. Pierre, faithful as usual, was following Mr. Vauthier discreetly, but within earshot and seeing distance of his chief. A mail delivery was ready to leave, and the boss wanted to include in it a last minute report on this important meeting.

In front of the station, Mr. Vauthier agreed on a meeting place with Pierre, then left him and entered the lobby. He could see Philippe-Auguste carrying his eternal umbrella, on his way to the baggage counter. It was not crowded for a change; about forty to fifty travellers at the most, who had just alighted from a train or were waiting for the next one. Looking over his shoulder, Mr. Vauthier got a glimpse of Rambaud pacing the floor. But Captain X..., who was supposed to arrive first, was not there.

Mr. Vauthier went up to Philippe-Auguste who was checking his luggage.

"Things look bad," said Philippe-Auguste. "Untel was picked up in Marseille."

(1) New organization created to continue the job of the "old" Agence Immobiliere if the latter became compromised. It is described in details in Section IV, Chapter II. Note of Translator.

"Dammit!" grumbled Mr. Vauthier. "Was not X... in constant contact with him lately?"

"Yes. He might have been caught too. The Boches might possibly be aware of our meeting. I came anyway to warn you, but I have absolutely no documents on me."

"For once, I'm loaded with them. And what documents! All the orders of P..., in Algiers, and Noel, in France, for the reactivation of the Military Security. I wanted to talk to you about it."

"Well! perhaps nothing will happen," said Philippe-Auguste. "Let's go to the cafe across the street, Rambaud will join us there."

They went out, and their fears were abruptly confirmed as they came to the front of the station. Three plain-clothes men with shaven heads and half-belted overcoats were surrounding Rambaud, who assumed an indifferent air, looking vaguely into space. Other policemen were inspecting, with ferocious looking faces, the small crowd coming out into the street. They verified all the men's identification papers; Vauthier and Philippe-Auguste, taken by surprise, could not turn back. They showed their cards, Mr. Philippe, professor and Mr. Vallon, Comptroller of Revenues.

"S'gut," said the Germans. "Weg."

Unbelievable, but true. They succeeded in crossing this check-point, which had obviously been put up at their intention, while most of the peaceful passengers were being detained. Pierre, who had remained on the right side of the barrier observed the scene closely, evidently waiting for some order. Mr. Vauthier ordered him away with an imperative head motion. Pierre left slowly, with obvious regret.

Fifteen minutes later, in the little cafe by the station, three German policemen emerged from a Citroen, came in and observed the customers, one by one. Mr. Vauthier and Philippe-Auguste attracted their attention less than anybody else.

An hour later, the two Frenchmen had taken refuge in the back-room of another cafe on the main street, one of these respectable establishments run by two old maids and a cat. Two other old maids, sitting at a table, were sipping a carbonated lemonade. The show began once more. A Citroen stopped in the street, but not the same one. Three different policemen alighted and erupted into the cafe. Obviously, the Germans had gone through their suspects, noticing that the wanted leaders were missing, and were conducting thorough searches to find them. The deployment of their forces was exceptionally large, and the second team was more suspicious than the first one. Standing in the doorway separating the two rooms, the Germans looked fixedly at the two seated Frenchmen, exchanged some inaudible remarks, stepped aside, then came back in.

"Looks like things are turning sour," whispered Vauthier.

Taking advantage of a second of distraction on the part of the enemy, Vauthier unobtrusively slipped his papers behind a radiator.

"Wow!" he sighed.

Then he poured himself a glass of water.

"What's your name?" asked Philippe-Auguste.

His superior looked at him with misgivings. Was the impassive Philippe-Auguste becoming disturbed? Would he be losing his head?

"I mean: What's your name today?"

"Ah! good. Vallon. Retired Comptroller of Revenues. Tax consultant. Very good profession! By a special decree, the departmental Director can give you a partial deduction on your taxes, even total; I shall write a draft for you."

Vauthier took out his pen and a notebook, and started to draft the sample petition to the tax collector. One of the Germans approached, brutally grabbed the paper, read it or feigned to do so, grumbled and put it back on the table. He gestured to the others and they left.

Their cars rushed through the streets of the little town until dawn and really disturbed its peace. Finally, the two men ended up on a bench, at the foot of the Virgin of LePuy, where Vauthier, while watching the winding steps leading to the statue, gave Philippe-Auguste the orders and instructions he had brought along. (note of the translator: The famous Romanesque church and statue of the Virgin of LePuy were built on the top of a high volcanic rock).

It was after this close call that Mr. Vauthier decided to employ the classic trick used by the patriots who had been spotted too often or who were wanted too much. The BBC therefore gave all conceivable publicity, broadcasts, newscasts, to the item: "Vauthier has arrived safely." This of course did not resolve the security problem, and if it did no particular good, it certainly did not do any harm.

In the meantime, they had to leave LePuy. Mr. Vauthier got on a train at night; everything went well and his faithful friend Pierre joined him in the compartment's corridor. Mr. Vauthier was very upset by the arrest of Rambaud whom he regarded very highly. But this was no time for sentiment.

"This could have cost us much more," he said.

"Major," said Pierre, why do you carry papers with you? It's madness, well known as you are. After you were lucky enough to go through the station barrage you should have given them all to me. I was waiting for that. That's my job! Furthermore, if I end up in the hole, it's not that bad. But you, you have no right to get caught.

We are not concerned with the sublime. Naturally, our characters belong to a certain moral elite. Consequently, these little anecdotes are only the daily, logical, even compulsory realities of the life of these military formations, where the senior commander, the "boss", is at the same time the best friend, and the most exposed of all.

CHAPTER II

LIAISONS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH LONDON AND ALGIERS

THE BATTLE OF THE "AGENCE IMMOBILIERE" FOR ITS EXTERNAL LIAISONS

In the preceding chapter, we have seen what is more or less the internal traffic of a network. What remains to be seen now, is how the communications of such an organization were provided with the outside.)

I

THE CONSTRUCTIVE PERIOD

THE AGENCE IMMOBILIERE "MAKES CONTACT" WITH LONDON AND ALGIERS

The readers will undoubtedly remember (1) about the Agence Immobiliere, the most important and secret branch of the Special Services. We recall that it remained in its entirety in Metropolitan France after the total occupation of November 12, 1942, and that none of its members accepted the freedom which their leader, Captain Vauthier, alias Laforet, offered them.

For a few weeks, they could wonder if they wouldn't have done better to get to Algiers. France was like a sort of closed bottle; the French

(1) See Chapter I of first part Volume I.

intelligence officer like a June bug trapped in it; his work, an indeterminate humming; his future... no doubt asphyxiation. This was a horribly discouraging period, especially for the young ones who could not understand that "don't move until further orders" was a mission like any other. Experience alone can teach this to a man.

The transmitters left on the spot proved to be absolutely useless in trying to make contact with Algiers. Rose, the Toulouse sub-net, had created and was using for quite some time now, several evasion channels through Spain, but none was absolutely safe and would become less and less so; actually one became hesitant about passing important intelligence, secret documents, orders and instructions that could boomerang through the meshes of the Spanish-German police net. In short, rapid liaisons were nil; while the dispatches were risky or limited to the uncertain memory of a number of hunted and very mortal individuals.

This state of affairs had to change. It seemed forever before one could see a glimmer, an opening in the dead-end street. Now, as we look back, and especially in view of the contrast offered by the progressive bureaucratization (red-tape) of France, it seems almost unbelievable that a handful of Frenchmen could have accomplished so much in so little time.

I. THE FIRST PARACHUTIST OF THE AGENCE IMMOBILIERE

One day, at the beginning of January 1943, a peaceful forty-year-old man, in whom the most meticulous civil servant would search in vain for any

distinctive sign, (except perhaps an easy-going and fixed smile, but this is not part of an identification card) walked into the Auvergne Flying Club at Clermont-Ferrand, his home away from home. With a confidential glance, the secretary pointed to him a young man in his twenties who was standing in a corner of the lobby, shivering, embarrassed, ill-at-ease among the crowd of unemployed civilian and military aviators coming and going and talking in the offices and corridors.

"He's asking for you."

"Under what name?"

"Maire."

"What does he want?"

"He won't say. About the Service I'm sure. He looks all right."

It was true that the young newcomer inspired more confidence than he seemed to have himself; such an appearance being sufficient to explain his inner feelings in times when the riff-raff still reigned. He had clear eyes in a good round and stubborn Breton face. Nevertheless, the club's regular frequenter took a seat in an armchair, hid behind an opened newspaper in order to observe the newcomer inconspicuously. It is almost inconceivable what a change in someone's look can reveal. When he observed without being seen, the insignificant bourgeois from Auvergne was completely transformed. Simply because he had ceased to smile, one could detect in him some characteristics unsuspected before. Those of the professional pilot, the infantryman of the air, with a plump but stocky silhouette,

strong, wide-shouldered; with the ruddy complexion of warm-blooded individuals; but with the composure, the economy of gestures of the quiet ones and finally with the permanent frown above piercing eyes which is brought on by the long periods of attention and responsibilities.

Nothing happened for a few minutes. Naturally the man from Clermont did not like new faces. At last he sighed, folded his newspaper, got up with an almost mechanic smile and advanced toward the young man. In spite of everything, he did not look very amiable, no matter how we describe him.

"What are you waiting for?" he asked, with the grumpy air of an exclusive club president, which, in contrast with his fixed grin, might have led one to believe he suffered from hemiplegia.

"I'm looking for Captain Maire," answered the intruder, shyly.

"Why?"

"I have some information for him."

"From whom?"

"From Mr. Pere."

The man from Clermont could not help frowning, thus admitting that he knew the pseudonym P..., the counter-espionage chief who had left for Algiers via Spain that previous December. His organization in France, the Agence Immobiliere, was without news from him since his departure near Puigcerda.

The two men were looking at each other, wondering probably who would

take the first step? Who would utter the first word? This word, this step which had already cost the lives of so many patriots. Naturally it was to be the youngest one.

"I was parachuted this morning," he said. "My name is Michel."

"I am Maire. Good to see you. Have you had anything to eat?"

The die was cast. These short phrases had created between the two men closer bonds than would have years of life together. What kind of bonds? No-one knew as yet, but certainly fraternal ones. However, if one had lied, one or the other or both were in danger. In any case the bonds were to be close; this was the only thing that could be said at that particular time.

This time it was true: Captain Maire was really one of Captain Vauthier's assistants; and Michel T..., alias Michel, was really the first emissary whom Captain P... had entrusted with re-establishing the failing liaison between himself and the Agence Immobiliere as soon as he had arrived in London via Gibraltar, and before leaving for Algiers. It was true, it was evident. Still, Maire, like an old fox, did not leave Michel alone for one instant until he was absolutely and positively certain of his identity.

It seemed that Michel possessed this precious personal gift called luck, and like all the lucky ones, he found it very simple and natural. He had jumped at dawn at Issoire, without a reception committee, between a camp from which some sorrowful Germanic bugles sounded a premature reveille,

and a factory operating day and night and whose management was completely German. One gust of wind, and he would have landed in the heart of the field where the enemy troops were assembling for their morning PT. One can picture the situation; a good cartoon for "Punch". He carefully buried at the foot of a tree the two radio sets, the crystals, the codes, the SOI's as well as the orders and funds he had brought along. The very same evening, he unearthed them, under the Germans' noses, and under the watchful eye of Maire whom Dr. R... had accompanied.

Michel's first mission had been to find Captain Vauthier, somewhere in France, probably in the vicinity of Issoire, which he was particularly fond of. So, at eight o'clock in the morning, after having checked his rural cyclist attire, Michel went to the Issoire Police Station and asked for the Captain's address. It was very simple; one only had to think of it.

With a smile of complicity, the gendarmes told him:

"Mr. Vauthier? We don't know him. Anyway, he is no longer at Issoire. Why don't you pay a visit to Captain Maire at the Flying Club of Auvergne? It would be very surprising if he did not lead you straight to Mr. Vauthier."

Waging secret warfare on one's national territory is atrocious, but it offers a few worthwhile compensations in the course of its conduct. Let us note that neither Vauthier, nor Maire, had affiliated the "Gendarmerie" of Issoire to the Agence Immobiliere. Those Gendarmes of Auvergne were just decent fellows infinitely more discerning than Jules Romains imagined

when he wrote "Les Copains!" (The buddies).

The reason why I have dwelled on this seemingly ordinary meeting, is because it illustrates how much of a step into the unknown was any new liaison, and not only the parachute jump part. Most of all, it points out, more than any theoretical explanation, the total isolation of the Agence Immobiliere which was cut off from its chiefs at the beginning of 1943, contrary to all expectations and in spite of all the preventive measures. Therefore, all had to be done, on the matter of liaison, before anything else could be accomplished.

P.... had been well inspired in losing no time. The very next day after Michel's landing, one of his transmitters, which had been named "Polka", was put into operation in the vicinity of Clermont. Contact with London was successful; this was the first thread. Polka and an automobile were entrusted to Simonin, a brave man whose tragic end in June 1943 has already been related. The car was to be driven by the Gendarmerie Warrant-officer H..., who was an Alsatian, spoke German fluently, was a cool-headed individual, had a lot of confidence, and possessed false Gestapo Plenipotentiary agent's identification papers. This latter detail enabled him many times to order loudly some Wehrmacht patrols who had shown a desire to look into the car, to stand at attention while he went on.

From then on, contacts were made with London every night and the latter relayed the messages to P..., who had gone to Algiers. The transmissions were of short duration, fifteen minutes, twenty at the most, and never originated from the same place, in order to baffle the German DF; they were made

from individual homes, at Thiers, at Issoire, at Beaumont, etc..., in the middle of a block of houses as much as possible, and sometimes in the open countryside. At first, the people who sheltered Polka were told: "We are conducting checks", but most of them were not duped. Little by little, the most trustworthy were chosen, and they knew perfectly well what risks they were taking. There were no defections, but many of them eventually fell in June, as I have related in Chapter IV of the second part of volume I.

Michel's second mission was to help the Agence Immobiliere in planning for air operations. Little Marchand, duly authorized by Vichy and the occupation authorities (at least by papers issued by them) to drive around in an automobile under pretenses which he could not even remember himself, drove Michel around. Mrs. Marchand, whose presence could contribute to lull the police's suspicions, took part in all the trips. The first reconnaissance drives were quite disappointing. The Puy de Dome area was quite hilly. The small private airport near Lons-le-Saunier, from where General d'Astier de la Vigerie had taken off, was full of half buried stakes and strewn with stones. After an ill-advised message of a London radio, the Germans had spotted it and arrested fifty persons. The swampy Saone valley was flooded, and numerous airfields were being systematically plowed with the sole aim of making them unusable by the underground.

In a somber mood, the three companions were driving back toward Auvergne with many stops, when one day, on the road between Feurs and Boen-sur-Lignon, after a small bridge, Mrs. Marchand exclaimed:

"Well! A sign indicating an airport. Why don't we go take a look at it?"

"You're crazy!" grumbled Marchand.

A short corrosive lecture ensued, on the subject of how women will never understand the meaning of the word "secret". Why not Le Bourget or Villacoublay? Mrs. Marchand was perhaps imagining that the operation consisted in laying the foundations for a large international touristic enterprise?

"But," said Michel, "it isn't on the map. If we took the sign down, perhaps everybody would forget it? Let's take a look at it."

It was intact. The lone civilian guard had now become a shepherd and had transformed the airfield into a pasture for his sheep. However, there was a German garrison about two kilometers away.

"Darn it!" cried Michel. "Something's got to give. For a single operation it should work. I propose that we use it."

The field of Feurs was flown over, photographed and studied by the Royal Air Force. Meanwhile, Marchand was exploring very minutely the Massif Central until he finally discovered more adequate spots. But Feurs being the only one approved by London at the date set for the first operation, it was used, and we shall see that it served its purpose beautifully.

The moral behind this story is that, if one wishes to act, there comes a time when one must stop worrying about all the uncertainties.

2. THE FIRST "TUBE"

However, as soon as he had arrived in Algiers, P... had recruited other volunteers who were busy establishing new access routes to France. Everybody knows about the submarine "Casabianca" and its heroic commander, Captain L... Judging that the most glorious destiny was not to scuttle his ship in front of the Cafe de la Rade, our courageous and original officer had left Toulon in order to reach Algiers with his submarine in November 1942.

On February 1st, at 7:00 PM, with the new moon, he took off again discreetly. The ship was only a line, an imperceptible wake in the large bay, which was as dark as the sea can be at night, i.e. with still a faint luminosity (see photo 6, page 380). No matter. The city could have been crawling with spies (which was not the case, as we know), they probably would not have informed their employers of the ship's departure. They would not have known about it, they would have been gritting their teeth in the depth of some basement.

For, at that very instant, Algiers was undergoing a violent aerial attack. Seen from the conning tower, the so-called "cigarette den", a few miles offshore, the show was stupendous. The parachute-flares caused the appearance of a slow, majestic mirage out of the darkness, only to let it fade away like a sudden eclipse and reappear again. Algiers was just a tremendous white, pink and red palace surrounded by hills that an earthquake was shaking. A pyramid of terraces, of gardens and ramparts

which lit up, sparkled and went out, while another part of the unreal decor was set ablaze from the top. The sprays of tracer bullets were crossing each other vertiginously in the sky with angry outbursts of "Rocket guns" projectiles. It was just like a battle of shooting stars; and the landing of the bombs and departure of the anti-aircraft shells intermingled on the ground like a shower of sparks.

Captain L... hoisted himself on the conning tower, with the aid of a seaman. L... suffered already from the disease which, alas! was to cost him both legs. Anybody other than this hot-head would have been in the hospital. Two navy officers and two civilians were around him. They were all contemplating silently what no-one else dared to call aloud a fairy-like spectacle. One of the civilians coughed to clear his throat. He was a guy with a strong build whose mischievous schoolboy eyes, hidden behind big intellectual-looking glasses, surprised everyone around him. With the greatest calm, he said:

"Well! Well! What's this wake coming toward us on broadside?"

"A torpedo?" asked the second civilian, without any more emotion than if he were saying: "It is raining slightly."

"No," answered an officer, laughing heartily. "It's only a porpoise. Well you're not easily shaken, you two!"

It is necessary to specify that the two civilians were "elephants", as the sailors called those confirmed landlubbers they were transporting. But they were first-class elephants. One could not doubt of Captain Carne's self-control, nor for that matter, of his companion, Lieutenant Georges.

This quality, even more than all their technical knowledge as intelligence officers and as communications engineers, had led P... to chose them to improve his liaisons with the Agence Immobiliere.

"What's really funny," said Georges, "is that we could have been getting killed in an Algiers shelter tonight..."

"And everything in France will be going fine," retorted Carne.

That was real optimism. First, this implied that Carne and Georges would arrive in France. However, whether their comrades would be waiting for them was not certain at all. Since January 20, P... requested the Agence Immobiliere to cover the landing at the mouth of the Loup, near Cagnes-sur-Mer, where General Giraud had been able to leave clandestinely aboard a British submarine. But the Agence had not yet answered. "Never mind!" had said Carne. "God willing! I prefer to land alone in the dark than among the comrades in moonlight. We would have to wait for another month."

But, once this particular difficulty was overcome, there would be others. The False Papers Department in Algiers was still at the experimental stage. The only thing it was able to give Carne to cross the German coastal frontlines was an imaginary identity (when the most elementary precaution dictates the use of someone very much alive and well known as an honorable citizen, such as the mayor or the police chief of his neighborhood,) and an address, 13 Rue de la Gare at Miramas; it was a good bet that there would be a Rue de la Gare at Miramas, like in any

other town, but it was not certain. And they had no ration cards for food, tobacco and textile of course. Nothing.

Carne took along with him two field radios, the address of only one chief which would probably be outdated and whose name was only a pseudonym which might be obsolete, many recommendations, and all the hopes of the Service. The latter had only received scant news from Michel pertaining only to his state of health.

The night of February 1 - 2 was quiet. The submarine was advancing on the surface at a good speed of sixteen to seventeen knots. But Carne, who had received the privilege of having a hammock under the conning tower, was also privileged with being splashed by sea water coming through the open hatch. He could only sleep during the day, while the ship was under-sea. On the other hand, Georges, quartered in the lower auxiliary room, could shut his eyes only while surfacing, for the pump-room, very close by, was resounding all day long with the infernal racket of the machines and continuous shouts of: "Transfer two hundred liters from the after-trimming to the fore-trimming tank...One hundred liters from the fore to the after-trimming tank." Yet, the charming comradeship of the sailors made one forget the inconveniences and all this would have been unimportant if some trying and tough physical efforts were not in store at the arrival.

On February 2, at seven o'clock, the Captain of the ship decided to dive, for the Mediterranean was infested with enemy submarines on the lookout⁴ for allied convoys. On his command, the vents were opened and the

ship dove slowly. As soon as it was under water, no movement could be felt any longer. But suddenly, the needle of the depth gauge in the main control room hit and remained at zero and one could obviously believe that the descent had been interrupted. Consequently, L...., gave the order: "Flood negative tank". The needle still did not move when, suddenly, from the ship's aft an anguished voice yelled:

"Stop! Stop! We're at ninety-five meters."

Carne laughed to himself and touched Georges' elbow.

"They're trying the old trick of ship out of control, those little jokers. Don't say a word, we're going to laugh."

Then, with a serene smile on his lips, a mocking wink in his eye, he witnessed what he thought was the best imitation of hasty maneuvers to close the vents and start the pumps in order to go up. He heard, with no more reaction than a deaf-mute, the sinister groaning sounds of the plates moving around the rivets.

A few instants later:

"Congratulations," said L... "You two are no problem at all! We have undoubtedly gone well beyond the safe limits, you know."

"Come now!" sneered Carne. "I know your trick."

Only then did L... realize the misunderstanding. He dispelled it with a few words:

"No kidding. We almost stayed at the bottom. The sea valve of the depth gauge at the main control room was closed. Only by a stroke of luck did a sailor glance on the aft gauge. Otherwise... Anyway, look..."

It was true. The pressure must have reached ten kilograms per square centimeter on the outside surface of the hull and it had wrinkled. Since that time, it became impossible to close one of the inner submarine doors because it overlapped the trim by more than two centimeters.

"Well! Captain, hurry up and throw me out on dry land. I still prefer that," said Carne, by now convinced.

The same day, around nine o'clock, the two "missionaries" were refreshing themselves in the wardroom when they smelled something smoldering and saw a layer of smoke on the floor. It was coming from a compartment called the spare magazine. They asked each other what was stored in there.

"Wow!" cried the Captain. "Weapons, munitions and explosives to be delivered to Corsica on the way back."

Everybody rushed. The hatch of the magazine was opened and two chains of men carried the contents to the other end of the ship as quickly as possible. Some cases were so hot that the men dropped them cussing. At last, everything was cleared and the cause was discovered: a short-circuit in the relay-box. It had heated up and could have set the explosives afire.

"Hum!" went Carne. "Say, Captain, isn't there an island, even a deserted one, around here? Because....."

However, the rest of the voyage went without a hitch.

On February 3, between "Scylla and Charybdis", at exactly seven AM, the Casabianca came in view of the coast of France, straight off the mouth

of the Loup, which could barely be distinguished from the conning tower, a few miles at sea.

It had been agreed at the time of departure that if P.... in Algiers, received an answer to his request for a reception committee, a message could be sent to the sub by the transmitter of the Algiers Admiralty. Until now the Admiralty had been silent. Furthermore, a submarine can only receive radio messages while on the surface and the Casabianca was about to disappear below until evening, when it would have to drop its two "parcels." It would have to launch them haphazardly in the unknown, perhaps straight into an enemy post. There was no longer any hope of avoiding this risk. On the horizon, to the east, a strip of sky had already changed to a variety of pastel colors. Since one could see the land, very soon the shore installations would also be able to detect the foreign body floating on the sea. Not a chance now, daylight was breaking.

L... shrugged his shoulders and uttered his first words in fifteen minutes:

"Let's go! My poor friends!!!"

He slipped down the ladder, at the foot of which stood a sailor to catch him in case his legs failed him; Carne and Georges followed with a sickly smile on their faces. A great day to come! Because, this unknown danger, they would have to live with it, and with the burden, the mystery, the waiting minute by minute for the next fifteen or sixteen hours; they would have actually to deny it and act as if they were unaware of it.

"Well!" said Carne. "After all, I wasn't really counting on their message."

"Neither did I", added Georges.

"Open the vents", ordered L...

One might think I am using the novelist's pen to enliven this story, but such is not the case. Truly, it was at the very moment when the ship was beginning to tip slowly that a scream was heard:

"Captain! Algiers is calling!"

The radio operator who had come out of his booth, rushed back in like a "Jack in the Box". L... did not hesitate for one instant:

"Close the vents! We'll surface for a few minutes more. We'll see."

Outside, the day was setting in; the sea surface was changing from grey to blue; the coast was taking shape. Within a few minutes, a few seconds, a torpedo could hit the hull and nobody else could even be blamed. Carne and Georges rushed to the radio-compartment. The coded pages were flying through their fingers.

"If this did not concern us," said Georges, "that would really beat everything".

"Have some hope," countered Carne. "O P E R A T I O N..."

The two men had stopped breathing.

"S...! yelled Carne.. "I M P O S S I B L E..."

"What's next?" continued Georges.

It was for them all right. But the remainder of the text brought only one more disappointment:

"Operation impossible anticipated spot. Coast heavily guarded area mouth Loup. You are free to act according best judgement. Do best you can. P...."

"Very well. Open the vents", repeated L...

Carne and Georges felt chills running down their backs. If Algiers had called only thirty seconds later, they would have thrown themselves to the wolf, (no pun intended) (note of the translator: Loup, which is the name of the river also means "wolf") that very night. But, would they not find this danger anywhere else, immutable and constant? They stood alone facing these responsibilities. Sure, they were permitted to go back to Algiers, but...

To a question nobody asked, Carne answered: "We would really look like two jerks."

"We'll just pick another port," said Georges.

"Good," said L...

His worried eagle-like profile contracted somewhat, bringing his chin up toward his nose.

"Where?"

In the ward-room, everyone pondered the situation over a map. The Second-in-command, whose father had been one of the first submariners in the world and had gone down with his ship, the "Pierre-Curie", during World War I, suggested the Saint-Tropez peninsula. The project was immediately and unanimously approved. Theoretically, if they forgot about the factor which did not warrant wasting time to consider, since it would remain unknown: i.e. the enemy, the spot was the best one. There was no

coastal road. The coast was abrupt, inaccessible, with a no man's land of forests and brush behind it.

"That suits me fine," said Carne. "Let's use this point half way between the capes Camarat and Taillat, which is the wildest spot. Now, Georges, we should catch a little sleep to be in good form tonight."

It must be a relief to have taken a decision, one way or another, for everyone could certify that Carne and Georges slept the greater part of the day on February 3. May the reader allow the writer to say that this detail is what struck him most in the whole story.

The Casabianca was traveling below the surface, slowly for the electric engines could only give a speed of a few miles an hour. Luckily, the tides were favorable and by night-fall the submarine was able to reach the proximity of the chosen point of landing. Between two naps, Carne and Georges had studied their terrain with the vague Michelin road-map they had, and the Navy map which only showed the countours of the coast. They only had these two because in February 1943, the Special Services of Algiers did not have any official military maps of the Southeastern part of France.

At ten PM the Casabianca surfaced and continued its course toward the coast, using its electric engines to avoid making too much noise. There were not as many rocks as on the Brittany coastline, but still enough to sink a row-boat. It was necessary to use the electro-magnetic depth finder which measured the time it took for a transmitted sound wave to be reflected. For after all, there was still the chance of a failure

within reach of a German sling-shot.

A last meeting was held in the wardroom. The Second-in-command came down from the conning tower and pointed with his finger the exact spot where the lifeboat would hit shore, God willing. One last look at the poor maps and Carne and Georges prepared themselves and climbed on the outside bridge.

The sea was very calm and the submarine was gliding slowly, silently. The greatest noise came from the lifeboat moored on the side of the hull. Two sailors were aboard, two shadows in a night as dark as anyone could wish at sea.

Carne and Georges glanced at the coast and one could imagine how much faster their hearts would start to beat and how they would indulge in a grin under cover of the darkness. They had imagined the Saint-Tropez peninsula empty, deserted and dead while they tried to make their maps speak to them, but now they found it full of life and in the throes of a night alert. To their right, a few thousand meters away, stood an enormous barrack-type building, the windows of which were brightly lit. A little farther out, the Cape Camarat lighthouse was out, according to wartime regulations, but the enemy could have just as well left it turned on. Didn't they think that their crazy adversary ever used the sea? Because he would see that the lights from the neighboring houses, or those attached to the lighthouse outlined its tower just like by daylight.

To the left of the submarine, very close, at approximately 500 meters, two houses close to each other were illuminated "a giorno" (Italian expres-

sion meaning: bright as daylight). It was later learned that one of them was the scene of some very special clandestine activities: a shady dance-hall for German sailors and Italian Soldiers. They reached it via a wayward trail along the coast which the Michelin map had not deigned to show. A chain of intermittent lights, undoubtedly flashlights, meandered along the darkened littoral strip. Carne and Georges thought they were probably patrols.

"Well!" exclaimed Carne who had recovered from his surprise. "There was no use selecting a particular spot. The Boches are everywhere. So... anywhere you want is all right. At the darkest point; but the lights are always moving. So.... any place is fine."

One last handshake with the officers of the ship and they got in the small boat, which two seamen started rowing vigorously. A terrible dejectedness, a distressing feeling of loneliness took hold of them as they left what had been for the last three days their haven, their hideout. Naturally, the ship's 105 gun was aimed at the coast in case of a scuffle. But Carne and Georges, like two blind men, counted a lot more on the sub-machinegun they were squeezing under their arms and the knife they felt for every once in a while.

They weren't to be spared of any emotion. Suddenly some automatic weapons bursts were fired. After their first surprise, they realized that it was happening in the distance. At that time, the sailors on that part of the Provence coast were German, and the land troops were Italian. The latter usually provided the surveillance patrols and they were particularly

noisy in the dark, just like children.

No incident during the landing. Their personal baggage and suitcase-radios were put ashore and a last handshake given to the seamen. One of them got off the boat, took a few steps on the dry land, picked a couple of sickly grass roots and held them close to his heart. Only after that did he get back in and pick up his oars.

Then a tough road, or rather an abrupt climb along the rocky peninsula, began for the two overloaded (65 pounds each) pilgrims. Nevertheless they had to hurry. Around one o'clock in the morning, the engines of the submarine started again with a seemingly terrifying noise. The enemy could probably have heard it. They progressed slowly with the aid of a compass, through brush, ravines, undergrowth and woods, until four o'clock. Exhausted, the two men had to stop several times and were not longer sure of their direction.

"I could be offered a thousand francs a minute, I swear I wouldn't do it again," grumbled Georges.

He had sprained his ankle one hour after their landing. But he only told about it much later.

At five in the morning, Carne and Georges were nearing the decisive point of any adventure demanding a tremendous physical effort: the moment where fatigue prevails over the sense of danger, the moment when one doesn't give a damn. They came to a hard surface road and some dogs started barking.

"Stop. Let's take a nap," said Carne.

He did well. They took refuge with their cargo in the thickest bush. It was already ten o'clock when they woke up; everything was quiet. Sticking their noses outside of their shelter they proceeded to orient themselves. They were only two kilometers from the coast by air. As a matter of fact, they had crossed the coastal patrolled area but did not know it then, and actually estimated that their margin of security was insufficient. In front of them, the village of Ramatuelle stood in tiers on a hillside obstructing the horizon. They hid their baggage rolled in two shelter-halves in the middle of a bush and left empty-handed in the direction of Saint-Tropez. The first human beings they came upon were some Italian soldiers lying on the side of the road; they opened one eye to greet them pleasantly. Good morning, good morning! Wow!

The rest was nothing but a stroll, interspersed with a few stomach cramps, for in 1943, on the Cote d'Azur, one could not relieve one's hunger without any food-ration coupons. On February 5, at night, in Marseille, the two companions were greeted by Philippe-Auguste. On the 6th, their equipment was retrieved. On the 7th, a new transmitter was operating: "Arrived O.K., etc..."

On February 9th, an officer of Glaieul, the section from Marseille, took Carne to Langeac in order to introduce him to Captain Vauthier. In the afternoon the two travellers were drinking some artificially sweetened soft-drink in one of the hotel's dining rooms facing the railroad station of the little town. The Marseillais was watching the goings-on in the public

square through a slight opening in the curtains.

"Ah! Here comes the boss," he said.

"No kidding?" replied Carne.

Could the boss be this character who had just alighted from the car of a fully uniformed Gendarmerie Major? Carne could have sworn he was one of the most peaceful merchants from Charolles or Nevers having, as one would say, "feathered his nest." Carne would have bet that this folksy type had consented to trade his smock for a business suit only in honor of the officer who had given him a ride.

Vauthier came in.

"Ah! Ah! There you are," he said to Carne, whom he was seeing for the first time. "Did you have a good trip? All right."

That was all. Vauthier was much more interested in the suitcase sitting under the table in which he smelled a radio transmitter, than he was in the man. He stretched out his hand to touch it.

"Watch out," said Carne. "Above all don't touch it. It would explode."

Just in case, he had actually set an explosive charge inside, which would be touched off by opening the suitcase without any prior precautions. It would kill the most curious and the most anxious of the Germans who might arrest him, which would give him perhaps enough time to escape.

"I like you," said Vauthier, who was observing Carne more attentively.

That same evening, another transmitter was operating. We shall see Carne later on again.

3. PERFECTING OF LIAISONS VIA SPAIN

Around that time an operational cell of the Agence Immobiliere was clandestinely set up in Spain based on the preparations that P... had made at the time of his escape from France. This was what the Pyrenean channels needed most: assistance and a safe refuge on the other side of the mountains.

The courageous work of the guides, of which I shall speak one of these days, became most efficient. It was perfected by the Spanish section of the Agence Immobiliere, whose liaisons with Algiers were provided by submarine and other clandestine means.

By the first part of February 1943, five or six transmitters of the Agence were operating in the center of France; two in the South-east, several in Lyon. As far as the mail was concerned, the routes were now open for it; they only remained to be exploited.

4. FIRST AIR OPERATIONS

On February 12, 1943, the first pick-up of the Agence Immobiliere was performed at the Feurs field. There were two passengers: Michel,

taking with him a detailed air operations plan, and an officer of the Special Services capable of establishing a complete list of capabilities and needs of the Agence Immobiliere and of the Resistance Organization of the Army, in London as well as in Algiers. At that time, their activities were inseparable. The officer was to stay in London to centralize the radio and messenger activities of Metropolitan France and forward the orders and directives to France until P.... in Algiers, had the necessary technical facilities. This was a very important mission which had to be entrusted to a man having lived in totally occupied France for several months, with comrades who remained there and whose living conditions, risks, means and even individual qualities and faults he knew. This man had to be able to avoid clashes between the chiefs who lived in relative security and the performers constantly in danger; and to avoid erroneous interpretations of intelligence hastily written down by agents in a rush and hunted down.

Thus, on February 12, Michel and his companion flew out of Feurs. Have you noted how, in general, one wins a pari-mutual bet the first time one goes to the races, one kills the first rabbit aimed at, and one plays in a higher league the first football game of the season?

The operation was scheduled for 11 PM. It was atrociously cold and one could smell snow; luckily it wasn't snowing yet. Since the vicinity of Feurs was certainly no desert, the ground personnel had been kept to a minimum in order to limit casualties. There were only three men: Captain Hantz, Little Marchand and Chief Warrant Officer H..., with his Gestapo pass. One couldn't have been more economical.

Such an operation would never be repeated again; never! At 11 PM; on the nose, a Lysander, which had not even circled once, had not performed any "stunts", had shown no hesitation whatsoever, hummed over for not one second more than was strictly necessary, and landed in the triangle -- 150 meters long by 50 meters at the base indicated by three permanent lights. He was straight on the line of descent marked by a fourth light, manipulated by little Marchand. He turned against the wind, stopped, discharged a bag and loaded his two passengers and the mail pouch..

"No parachute?" questioned Michel's companion.

"Unnecessary," answered the pilot in French. "I'll fly at 100 meters altitude all the way back. This is best."

At exactly eleven hours, two minutes, 20 seconds PM, the Lysander took off. It was like a dream.

However before leaving, Michel managed to have the time to whisper in Marchand's ear:

"Lieutenant, listen. I wanted to tell you frankly... when I left England, I accepted a mission from British Intelligence... to see what the remains of your organization could produce."

And Marchand had the time to answer:

"And I wanted to let you know that I suspected it. But it was good of you to admit it. So... one mission cancels the other: tell the Intelligence Service they can't do without us, and tell us whether we can count on them."

And Michel still had time to conclude:

"Agreed! You see things right. See you soon. I'll be coming back to be with you."

Hantz, Marchand and H... got back into the car. This was the critical moment for those who were staying behind. The thundering noise of the engines must have surely been heard by the German garrison nearby. Dogs were barking in all the farms. The only thing they could count on, to cross the road-blocks the enemy might have erected, was H...'s nerve. The car, a Citroen 15 CV, sped across the 18-kilometer stretch between Feurs and Boen-sur-Lignon at top speed, more than 140 after/souping up the engine.

Nothing happened. It was only between Noiretable and Thiers that the three companions, chilled to the bones, exchanged a few remarks.

"The British Intelligence must be a little naive sometimes," mumbled Marchand. "To ask a full-blooded Frenchman like Michel to watch and pass judgment on other Frenchmen! They should have foreseen that after twenty-four hours spent with us, he would be one of us, of our network."

"He is," said Hantz.

He was so much so, that in the month of March, at the worst time of their obscure battle, he parachuted once more to join his comrades whom England had not succeeded in making him forget. This time, he was greeted, half-way between Clermont-Ferrand and the Mont-Dore, at the pass of Ventouse, near the high depopulated pastures of impoverished Auvergne where life is concentrated in the deep lost valleys. This former natural citadel of the Gauls and old France could have served as a paradise for

the weapons depots and dissidents, had the starving Vichy civil servants, not developed a "tourism of the table."⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless, one could still go about more or less freely and the Resistance Organization of the Army was pondering the idea of establishing a national stronghold there.

A four-engine Lancaster dropped Michel and Captain de Peich, alias Laprune, but from too low an altitude. Hantz and Marchand, who were watching for them, found Laprune one kilometer from the pass, with a sprained ankle but a blind masseur of the Rue Blatin, at Clermont, took care of it. Before his death, Laprune had the time to lay down the foundations for the two great compartments of the Special Services which the reader knows well: the Young Agence Immobiliere and the Military Security Agency.

The job was done! Thanks to a handful of men, the Carnes, the Georges, the Michels, the Laprunes and a few others, the Special Services of Metropolitan France and through them, the Resistance Organization of the Army which they cajoled, became solidly linked with the allied leaders of London and Algiers.

It was from that point, and as a consequence of it, that these organs began developing, recruited, spread out, created annexes and drove cells (at Eleuthere, for example, among hundreds of others) throughout France, which mingled and overlapped each other without getting mixed-up. Here was a phenomenon of a moral order, about which there is nothing mysterious.

So be it! They had declared: "We shall remain." They had made the

(1) Note of translator: Reference to French custom of driving long distances to go to a good restaurant.

sacrifice to remain. They worked. They kept on guiding their comrades, manipulating their double agents and looking for others within the enemy ranks. They took their own risks. Sometimes, they came up with some rather interesting reports, but never knew whether or not they would reach their destination. There was no chief to say: "O.K. Thank you," or even: "This won't do. What in H... are you doing?", which is better than nothing. They were so afraid of going around in circles needlessly, that their work lacked the drive, the initiative, the creative inspiration without which they became only one more bureaucracy. They were becoming mere intelligence civil servants.

The moment they received transmitters and were able to send regular dispatches, they launched the intelligence warfare anew firing it with a spirit of victory. This is what allowed us to win it.

5. DEFENSE AGAINST THE GERMAN

DIRECTION FINDING OPERATIONS

For similar reasons, this period was also the one during which the Agence Immobiliere established an efficient system of defense against the German DF.

We owe this to Captain Carne, our first leader who, while awaiting his repatriation to Algiers once his mission accomplished, shared intimately the life of his companions of the Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence

Services. He was to become their Algerian correspondent as chief of the Communications Service. He wanted to know everything about them: their personalities, their way of life, their dangers and their problems. He had to have their full confidence.

While on an information gathering trip to an SR post at Lyon, he was stopped in front of the Perrache station by a German officer who bestowed on him showers of friendly remarks, and whom he did not recognize at first. He confessed it:

"Come, Carne! The uniform can't change me that much. I am Funk, your old classmate of the Institut Electrotechnique in this great town."

"Good gracious!" cried Carne, annoyed for more than one reason. "Of course! Funk. But... I thought you were Austrian? Ah! it's true that... but things happened so fast that we're not used to... yet."

"Oh! I've always been a national-socialist!" asserted Funk, rigid and on the defensive.

A slight chill fell over them.

"I fought for Europe on the Eastern Front", continued the Nazi. "I have just been recalled here to run the DF operations."

"Well! congratulations," said Carne, retreating slightly.

"But you? What are you doing?" inquired the Volksdeutch.

"Oh! Nothing. Nothing at all. I am just going through Lyon, looking for a job. But I haven't had any luck, so I'm leaving."

"What?" exclaimed Funk, full of indignation. "You? But you were the

honor graduate of our class, the best of us. It's incredible! Listen, I have a proposition for you."

"No, thank you," answered Carne. "You know..."

But, on a sudden impulse, he questioned:

"What is that proposition of yours?"

The quick mental debate that took place in his mind might not have been what the reader imagines it to be; actually the case of conscience was: 'Being expected in Algiers, having to assume functions for which I am the only one prepared due to my stay in France, do I have the right to throw myself in such an independent adventure regardless of the benefits and prospects?' In all probability, before going any further, Funk would conduct an investigation on Carne that very evening. However, the latter had no identity papers in his name any more, he was no longer Carne. Therefore, his relations with the German had to turn sour as a matter of course. But the die was cast already as Funk answered:

"A fascinating job for a technician of your caliber. We will discuss the subject over dinner at Morateur. Say! Who would have guessed, when we were just famished students, when we considered the 15-franc fixed-price meals of the bistrots of the Rue de la Charite like real treats... Ach! and you'll sleep at my hotel."

"Where is that?"

"The Terminus Hotel."

Carne's heart started beating a bit faster. The Terminus was the lair

of the Lyon Gestapo. Naturally, the DF was attached to it. The lion's mouth... a trap...

Anyway, Carne had the courage to carry on a relationship with Funk as long as he could learn something regarding the equipment, the techniques and the operating procedures of the German DF. In reality, this didn't take too long for Carne, an exceptionally talented technician, who was soon to know more about it than the German himself.

One morning, before breakfast, Carne slipped unnoticed into a train on the way to Clermont where he arrived safely. He devoted his last moments in France to the drafting of a masterly study on the steps to be taken against the German DF. It was widely disseminated to the interested parties, first by the Agence Immobiliere (and if I can't analyze it, it is because the archives of Eleuthere dating from before December 1943 have been destroyed), then by the BCRA, to whom Carne had delivered it while in London, and which had not changed a word of it.

It was to be a precious document. The Agence Immobiliere is probably partially indebted to it (a certain amount of luck was needed too), for not one of its radio operators was caught redhanded while transmitting, nor, as far as we know, arrested as a direct and immediate consequence of a DF monitoring.

For his part, little Marchand had organized, as early as January, an extremely efficient system of practical defense. He had secured the services of the Engineer Officer in charge of the Vichy DF, Major Roumon, and the latter's assistant, Lt. R... It was very simple, but one only had to think

of it. Roumon hadn't even let Marchand finish his introductory cautious phrase. He interrupted him.

"So!" he had retorted. "Anything you want, naturally."

The Major and R..., in their command post of Hauterive, and their collaborators in the bases of Chateauroux, Bourg and Marseille, monitored clandestine broadcasts for the sole purpose of reporting the risks taken and the spotted radio locations. If the set was one of the Agence Immobiliere's, Marchand took the necessary steps to correct the deficiencies. If the monitored transmission was unknown, but presumably friendly..., they scared the operator without being detected, without talking, by launching a noisy but harmless caravan of official cars around its base of operation. This is why many radio-operators of the Resistance thought they had escaped a pursuit which was really nothing but a friendly warning, and cursed "those bastards of Vichy" who, in practice, were their most helpful friends.

In addition, Roumon was in charge of recruiting radio-operators for the Agence Immobiliere. He picked them among his own men, initiated better than anybody else on the dangers of the DF. He was to pay for it with his life. He was arrested, deported, and never came back. Very few Frenchmen were aware of his precious patriotic activities before his arrest, and many probably labelled him as a dangerous collaborator. In passing, let us salute this double aspect of courage. Much of it was needed against the Gestapo; as well as against public opinion.

II

A PERIOD OF EFFICIENT LIAISON OPERATIONS

(March to June 1943.)

The period which earned the qualification of "efficient liaison operations" was not exempt of the vicissitudes, the failures, the problems and constant efforts of other periods.

Their mission accomplished, Captain Carne and Lieutenant Georges were to leave via the tube in the night of 3 March, 1943, together with Colonel Bonoteau and Captain B..., whose missions were to establish contact with Algiers (the first for General Frere, commanding the Resistance Organization of the Army, the second for the Agence Immobiliere). The boarding was scheduled for 10 PM GMT (11 PM official time in France) at the exact point where Carne and Georges had touched shore on 3 February. One month of daily reconnaissance[^] and observations had revealed it was one of the most propitious spots of the coast. The risks were great! or perhaps it was the instinct of the men who lived dangerously.

The details of the operation had been worked out scrupulously by way of radio between Algiers and the station of the Agence Immobiliere at Marseille. However, on the first night, the four passengers and a number of companions who were their guides and escorts, waited in vain. True, a strong wind was blowing with heavy gusts. The sea was completely wild, and it would have been impossible to launch a lifeboat. Perhaps the submarine

was there, submerged, and venturing from time to time its periscope above the waves.

Puzzled, but not at all discouraged, the men spent the day of March 4 in scraggy bushes on the edge of the woods that cover the Saint-Tropez peninsula. They could see the German sailors and Italian soldiers who came and went around the lighthouse of Cape Camarat. Our zealous Bonoteau had taken along with him in his tyrolian pack, his colonel's uniform, for he had sworn to wear it to step aboard the submarine, first parcel, floating but oh! so real, of free French soil, for which he had waited so long. His companions were not aware of it; had they been, they probably would have asked him, in spite of his rank, to dispose of this dead giveaway. "He would only be getting what was coming to him". The day went by slowly, but without any incident. Long live the Italian "dolce farniente" (sweet idleness). Soon the second night spread its reassuring and protective wings over them.

At precisely 11 PM, on a calm sea, the outline of the Casabianca emerged suddenly from the darkness, about 200 meters from the shoreline. There were quick goodbyes, brief thank you's to the escorting party, then the passengers started prancing with impatience, their feet in the water. They saw clearly the lifeboat moving away from the hull of the submarine on the sea.

Then, with the unpredictable suddenness of the Mediterranean Sea, a squall broke loose, giving way to a close, vertical rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning. Worse, a strong wind began to blow with violent gusts

and without any perceivable respite. Carne was literally thrown in the water and had to be helped to regain his footing. The heavy sea slammed the seven men against the rocks or flattened them on the ground. They drew back, then couldn't see the boat any more. Had it sunk? It had not, for after a few minutes the landlubbers, raging inside, saw the conning tower of the Casabianca going away, getting smaller and thinner, then disappearing completely behind the curtain of the horizon which seemed very near.

The squall had turned into a storm. Darkness on land was total; the rain was heavy and freezing cold. Though he was strong as an oak, Carne's teeth were shattering in the true sense of the word. The most urgent problem became to take precautions against this meteorological phenomenon. The next day, the hide-and-seek game they played with the enemy would start all over again, and to enter into it feeling under-par, or looking like a bunch of castaways would endanger the most important thing, which was the embarkation. The seven men took refuge in the farm of X..., where a family of honest and true French people opened their home to them and made them feel better. The only positive result of this operation that had failed was that, from then on, the farm X... was going to be used as a safe refuge and, more or less as a harbour-station for the passengers en route to Algiers. Our four companions combed the coast again and again during the following few nights with an imperturbable patience, interspersed with fits of rage, and the phase of the moon favorable to their operation was to pass before the sea became practicable again.

Meanwhile, Algiers and the Agence Immobiliere had prepared plans for alternate air operations, but they had to wait for the April moon before they could be carried out. The first one took place on April 17, for Colonel Bonoteau and Lieutenant Georges. It was an operation of the dangerously acrobatic type.

At first glance, the field seemed much better selected than Feurs. It was located in the center of a square 5 kilometers wide, where there was not one single hamlet, between Pardines to the west, Sauvagnat to the north, Issoire to the east and the Perier caves to the south; a vast high plateau, with no vegetation other than a short grass and overlooked by the Puy-Neraud, an excellent landmark. Nobody would ever bother them there; however, all this had to be paid by a few inconveniences which, on the strength of Michel's reports, the British had accepted: the strip was a bit short, stony and cratered with holes which would be signaled by some men with red lights.

The part of the strip which could be used safely was only 50 meters wide. The marking system for the landing zone reflected this fact: four white lights were placed on the long west side, as close as possible to which the plane had to land, in the axis of flight indicated by a stronger flood light.

At the scheduled hour by a dark night, the plane approached purring, then came near and dove down with an infernal noise; the giddy glimpse of its shadow could only be perceived for a second before it would have landed, much too far away and catastrophically at the end of the runway. Its massive

silhouette covered for an instant the red lamp which Captain Hantz was holding, crouched in a small ditch where, inevitably, there would have been a butchery of men and material if... If, at the critical second, the Lysander aircraft, with its landing gear, precariously oscillating and hesitating between firm ground and space at the edge of the ravine, had not regained control and altitude. Hantz kept from this experience a lifelong conviction that he knew exactly how it felt to be crushed like a fly.

Everything had to be done over.

It is quite possible that Marchand saved the day in this particular instance, by his swift decision to move the lights back one hundred meters, despite a few cavities, concrete blocks and mole-hills. A few minutes later, the Lysander made a second try. This time, it landed with all its landing lights on. Was this wise or unwise? Only later could this be known. The left wing grazed the line of beacons, then cut across it, barely missing Colonel Bonoteau who was lying flat on his belly behind the second light. The pilot slammed on his brakes, then an explosion resounded. Everyone thought it was a gunshot from an enemy patrol. Well! That was to be expected! All these lights were folly!

A few moments of anguish followed, then everyone was reassured. The noise had been nothing but a tire of the plane which had blown out on a sharp rock. Haltingly, hopping and bumping about, the aircraft continued its course, turned against the wind, then stopped at the minimum distance to take off. All rushed towards it when, suddenly, with the reflex

of seasoned soldiers, they took cover. Some more raging, rapid explosions went off. This time, there was no doubt, they were gunfire.

"Look out! the Boches" yelled Bonoteau straightening up with his sten-gun aimed in front of him.

Fortunately, it was only the British pilot, who had promptly gotten out of the aircraft, and had blown out the other tire with pistol shots. Everybody breathed again, but not for long. The noise of someone running was heard; then shouts, stifled and frantic. A silhouette emerged from the darkness two feet away from Bonoteau who, fortunately, had the coolness of an old trooper. The apparition was astonishing: it was a man, dressed in the uniform of a French soldier, except for his shoes, which he carried in his hands; he must have had to dress quickly. The security team, through which he had run, was pursuing him and surrounded him with threatening looks.

"Who are you?"

The answer was even more astonishing than the vision:

"I am a member of a Vichy Territorial Air Defense team. My watchpost is there, very close by (its existence had been unknown). I have a telephone line to give an immediate alert in case of a clandestine landing (a cold sweat enveloped everyone belatedly.) But I am Alsacian and I've been waiting for months for the opportunity to leave; that's why I joined the DAT. (How logical!) I insist on getting on the plane to join de Gaulle (then a general relaxation, hearty laughter, and backslaps to the great guy followed).

"This time, it's impossible," said Marchand. "We're full. But, not a word. We'll do it again in two weeks. Be ready".

Reassured by this false promise, which was to remain a remorse for our scrupulous Marchand, the Vichy watchman put his shoes on and, prodigiously interested, excited, enthusiastic, saluted the taking off of his game with cries of joy (there was no need to feel embarrassed any more). So! Now we can decide in retrospect that the action taken by the pilot to turn on his lights had been guided by caution. Naturally, there remained the ground team, which had to get back to Clermont. But, after all, things did not look any worse than usual. Anyway, the mission was accomplished.

Let us now follow the aviators this time. While in flight, the pilot radioed his airfield, that his two tires had blown. At their arrival in Great Britain, the passengers were to have the very unpleasant feeling of seeing, in the middle of a field blazing with lights as if prepared for a night festival, an ambulance, a firetruck and rescue teams ready to take care of them with solicitude. In spite of all these pessimistic preparations, the landing went smoothly. However, upon inspecting his landing gear, the pilot discovered better than three meters of high tension electric wire wound around the strut. The take-off must have been frighteningly slow and difficult.

But Bonoteau's last hour had not come yet. We know that he was to come back to take his place in the underground fight and was to be killed there at a later date.

Two days later, on April 19, Carne's turn to leave had come; he and seven companions, friendly officers of the Territory Surveillance who had been compromised liaison officers, and one French radioman from the IS, took off in a two-engine Hudson-type Lockheed, from an airfield abandoned since the war and which did not appear on any map. It was located in the center of the Causse Mejean, between Florac and Sainte-Enimie. The radioman's wife had been arrested and executed a week earlier and the poor guy did not even know about it; the instructions were to keep it from him. He was to learn about it only when they had reached England.

All his friends knew of the tragedy which, on that particular night, weighed on the prevailing atmosphere with an infinitely heavier weight than the danger and anxiety.

Equipment-wise, the operation started off smoothly. The aircraft stopped within three hundred meters, unloaded and loaded in record time, and took off in a straight line. It went through the land-based and floating flak barrages at Le Havre, the worst experience being that it gave the passengers the impression that they were heading straight for the sparkling sprays. After a flight of two hours and a half, it landed at Tangmeer.

But it had left marks on the damp ground. An officer of the Vichy Gendarmerie notified the Prefect of Lozere, about it, and a short while later the field was partially ploughed. It was so vast that it was still serviceable. But, was it not being watched? Vauthier was wondering about it with a bit of anxiety for it was the best strip of all and they were

contemplating to have the fourth and most important pick-up there, on the personal request of Churchill.

In March, the Agence Immobiliere had received a message from the British Prime Minister, requesting that General Georges come to London. Little Marchand had one of the General's trusted aids probe him as to his attitude on the matter. His reaction was readily favorable; but he requested a delay of one month to clarify the situation regarding the "African Relations" project which he supported and which Vichy assailed. The departure, first anticipated for the beginning of April, had to be postponed to May, due to the General's state of health, and much to his disappointment. With the plane of April 19, he sent Lt.Col. G... of his staff, as an emissary. Finally, the necessary steps were taken to carry out the operation from May 10 on, at the Causse Mejean, which as had been finally ascertained, was not being watched.

On May 10, they left in three cars. Captain Hantz and the security team in the first car; radiomen Simonin and X... along with their transmitters and their "guardian angel" H... in the second one; and in the third, driven by Marchand, were the General, his Chief of Staff, a Colonel, Captain de Felch who had accomplished his mission, and Air Force Captain B...

It was the beginning of a strenuous and dreadful excursion which was to last a week and should have normally ended in prison. In the evening, stop-over at Mende, where it was impossible to have dinner as the only open restaurant in town was packed with Germans, and the French caravan was

really too conspicuous. The message confirming the operation had not been received by Simonin who made contact with his colleagues remaining at Clermont and who were also listening in. They hadn't heard anything either, so everyone retired for the night in one of the inns of the village.

On the second day, the weather was terrible and still no message. They moved on to another village; in a bistrot near Florac, some Polish dissidents took interest with a little too much indiscretion in the motorized convoy, especially in the General's face.

At last, on the third day, London called and confirmed. They went to the field and spent a night waiting fruitlessly. They learned later that the plane, damaged during the flight, had had to turn back. Nobody had seen so many cars one behind the other for years in this lost part of the country. Things were going to turn sour, so they moved away, as far as Millau. The weather remained atrocious. The General showed relentless patience and an imperturbable calmness in the face of all difficulties. But his example was not followed by all. One of the men kept looking for barometers in the most rustic of cottages, and, if by chance, found one, stood hypnotized in his contemplation to the great surprise and curiosity of the peasants. Another would criticize sharply the attitude of London, the carelessness of Algiers and the imperfection of the world. Tension was rising. Everybody was getting nervous, until Marchand gave them a hearty laugh, declaring: "We are all privileged

here! Think that the rules usually are that, up to the rank of Colonel, one has the right to cross the Pyrenees only on foot! Do you know the Pyrenees?..."

It was still raining; the sky hung low over the ground. The fourth, and the fifth day dragged on minute by minute. They moved to different quarters every night, and it was really extraordinary that not one bystander had exclaimed yet: "Well, well! Here is General Georges!". Marchand fought against idleness, which breeds arguments and meditations, and organized some excursions in the countryside. They visited the cheese cellars of Roquefort. "Very interesting!", said the General, who, playing the game to the end, had everything explained to him, starting with the goat's udder to the final delectable product. Another day gained... Sixth night, nothing. Seventh night, overnight stay at the Hotel des Caves at Roquefort. Still nothing.

On the eighth day, even Marchand was losing hope:

"General Sir, if we haven't heard a word by tonight, we will give up. Anyway, it's the last day of the favorable moon and the weather is not improving."

"All right, all right," answered the big chief.

That was the nicest thing someone of his rank could have said.

Then, at 2:30 PM the sky cleared up for the first time in a week, but it was only a brief interlude; still a ray of hope emerged, a theoretical hope, almost a tacit gentleman's agreement on good breeding.

It was so much so that nobody could believe their ears when they heard Simonin say that afternoon, at coffee time: "I've got it! I received the order. It's for tonight."

At night, the three cars climbed the Causse once again, lights off, each following a different itinerary: three narrow paths barely wide enough for only one small sedan. A fog as dense as pea soup hung at about thirty or forty meters above the ground. It was impenetrable and it appeared definitely impossible for a plane to cut through without crashing to the ground instantaneously. They groped their way to the field.

"Never mind," said Marchand. "Let's turn on all the lights right away, immediately, without waiting for the noise of the plane. We shall see."

No doubt, Marchand, once more, had the right inspiration.

At the appointed hour, the engines of an invisible plane began to purr in the sky. It came, went, circled for twenty minutes. No one believed that it would attempt a landing. It was pure folly. Only later did they learn that the commander of the aircraft, Lt. Colonel X... who was the King's personal pilot, had received strict orders from Churchill to carry out his mission at all costs, and to take nothing into account on that last night of favorable moon. He was to report that before the first try, he could only see one of the six lights, therefore touched down absolutely haphazardly, thought he had felt the ground, then, finding himself into space again, he accelerated at full speed to gain altitude. In reality, he had not touched ground at all, but he had flown

over Marchand's head, at some thirty meters.

He started again his never-ending round. Another wait of twenty-five minutes. Had this taken place anywhere other than above the Causses, he would have already been detected by the Germans who would have been on their way to mar the celebration, if one can call it that.

Le pilot dove again and this time touched the ground brutally, approaching the ground-beacon sideways, at an angle of about 15 degrees. He told later how he suddenly saw the other ground lights all at once as he was already rolling on the ground. He swung sharply pushing the engines full speed, and one could see the aircraft tilt dangerously, to the point of turning over on the right wing, and practically hitting the ground. He stopped only at the last limit of the six hundred meters beacon line with a frightening noise. Providentially, the Causse was spacious. On any other field, the only thing they could have done would have been to set the remains of the aircraft afire and disperse in the countryside.

In any case, it was there! From it came out a fresh team of the young Agence Immobilière, Captain Lheureux, alias Joye, and Warrant Officer Bellet, both of whom were to die a few months later, as well as one radio-man who carried a real treasure, six late model transmitters.

The plane was loaded and it immediately departed. The weather was so bad that the pilot decided, while in flight, to go to Algiers rather than London, a probability which had been foreseen. Meanwhile, the three automobiles with their lights off, sped down the trails of the

Causse, submachine guns at the ready through the windows, with the occupants exhausted and anxious, determined to shoot first at anything that stood in their way. Nothing happened, in spite of the infernal racket which the plane had made for an hour.

So it went, and General Georges was never to reach London, nor to visit Churchill. One may rightly wonder if another crisis in the history of Free France was not averted by this storm over the Causse; it probably would not have been a very serious one for General Georges was a man favoring unity. But the extraordinary insistence and obstinacy of the British Prime Minister in this affair, which at first glance appears very simple compared to his well known unpleasant dealings with our uncompromising wartime leader, lead and almost force one to believe in an ulterior political motive on the part of the British. Could it have been just a whim of the moment to create a French opposition to de Gaulle?

The Agence Immobilière had no business wondering about such things: its officers were fighting a war, and only the war. In retrospect, let us emulate their self-control.

Meanwhile, several parachute drops of personnel and material, especially radio equipment, had taken place in Auvergne. The tube accomplished almost regularly one mission per month. Caravans crossed the Pyrenees. Nightly conversations were carried on from numerous parts of the occupied territory with Algiers and London. But above all, we had accomplished what the longest writings and the most rapid of electrical devices will

never replace, personal relations between chiefs at all echelons, all dedicated to the same cause.

In June 1943, the Agence Immobilière could very well believe it had won the battle of the communications.

III

A DESTRUCTIVE PERIOD

THE LIAISONS OF THE AGENCE IMMOBILIERE ARE BROKEN

(JUNE TO NOVEMBER, 1943)

To epitomize a good clandestine communications network in a country occupied by a large and modern enemy army, one can do no better than to transpose Dr. Knock's definition of health: "A precarious state which promises nothing good."

This is not a mere quip. Good communications are both the result of great efforts which have probably attracted the enemy's attention, and an irresistible drive to double activities, hence to show oneself. They lead inevitably to a variable degree of neglect of security for the sake of output. This is a dilemma from which one can emerge only at the price of some "lost feathers."

Personally, I feel it is just as useless to think the matter over and over as it is to search for a pin in a haystack. Instead, while strictly applying the security rules, it is better to accept the spontaneous ideas of those who have gone through it and survived. For - at least I believe so - the role played by Lady Luck in clandestine warfare

(and I don't mean conventional warfare) creates such a deep state of uncertainty that human planning cannot even determine its limitation. I shall give a flagrant example of this later on.

So, let us go on.

I. CATASTROPHE IN AUVERGNE
THE BASE RADIO NETWORK ANNIHILATED AND
THE AIR OPERATIONS COMPROMISED

I have pointed out that the great internal expansion of the Agence Immobilière coincided with that of its external liaisons. On the other hand, I have treated at length the great crisis of this network which started in June 1943 at Clermont, in the fourth chapter of the second part of Volume I, and I have given its immediate cause: namely a treason.

I shall go back to it merely to expose another complementary reason, which goes deeper. I am not in a position to prove irrevocably that it is well founded. I can only present some hypotheses. Here are the most serious ones. It is in Auvergne that catastrophe struck, for at that time all the air operations and half of all radio activities of the Agence Immobilière were concentrated there. Numerous cells of this well compartmented organization managed to come out unscathed, but the entire radio network, the operators, the patriots who sheltered them and the equipment were captured. Coincidence? I don't believe so. Most likely a convergence of investigations on the part of the Germans, previously alerted, watching the incessant comings and goings of the radio operators and the

air operations teams.

Intelligence can be gathered and even recorded without too much exposure; a good memory and a safe hideout are the only necessary ingredients. It can be passed on to the collector surreptitiously, under cover of a protective throng; and the condensing and coding of the gathered intelligence can be done in relative security. But when the matter involves the transportation of bundles of dispatches from one town to another, or the sending of messages by radio waves, in successive bits and originating from points as far away as possible from each other, the risks suddenly increase considerably. Communications will always remain the weak point of clandestine undertakings. Our experience led us to separate them almost completely from the collections organizations. This however required a degree of organization which had not been attained in June 1943 when Mr. Vauthier suddenly found himself deprived of his radio operators in Auvergne. From then on, assisted by Marchand, he tried to reorganize and even expand his collection network, to cover the territory with more substantial and more closely knit sections named after flowers rather than numbers as were the old ones, but his work was to be in vain in the entire Central France, where the smoke-filled back-rooms of Vichy remained the most precious source of information.

Algiers was summoned for help. Finally, they helped themselves by discovering a Communication Officer as eager as he was qualified, Lieutenant Rambaud, who reorganized radio teams with improvised equipment. In the meantime, a set of the S.R. was utilized by the shrewd Lt C., without

a hitch until the Liberation, but it took half a day to reach him. This eliminated all exploitation of intelligence of the same type as the embarkation of the SS Hohenstaufen Panzerdivision for example. The sections of the old Agence Immobilière which remained intact were located at Périgueux, Limoges, Marseille and Lyon, and those of the young Agence at Lille, Besançon, Marseille, etc...

Without radio facilities, air operations were impossible. They took advantage of their comrades' operations, but the latter did not disseminate their intentions everywhere, and if intelligence had to be gathered on them too, where was it all leading to?

The tube remained for the dispatches. It was operating with the regularity of a great touristic line in July, August, September and October 1943. The young chaps of the Agence of Marseille were specialists in the overland transportation of passengers, both ways, and the embarking. They were doing a fine job. They hoped it would last.

2. SURPRISE AT A TUBE EMBARKATION

A submarine operation was scheduled for November 26, 1943. Although the men in charge were not, or at least were no longer sentimentalists, they brought to their work a shade of sensitivity which had nothing in common with the emotion that goes with a mission to be accomplished, the apprehension of the risks, and the legitimate state of agitation brought about by the waiting for some result. These types of worries were common place, they were daily companions. They were nothing. In the end we usually said: "That's nothing...". Then after saying it over and over...

This time, it was not the same thing at all. One of their responsibilities was a young girl, almost a child. Monique (I hope she will let one who took part in the adventure call her that), Monique was only sixteen. She was one of the daughters of a great military French leader whom the Germans pursued with a dedicated and profound hatred. They made relentless attempts against his family. It was thought that she would be safer by taking the tube than by hiding in France, which was quite probable if one considered the perfect operation of the "line" for so many months. But never were so many prayers and wishes made for the success of this operation which had come to be regarded as assured, "all wrapped up". All of a sudden they found themselves reckoning with the risks.

Failure would really be unexpected bad luck! Still, Mr. Vauthier came in person to Marseille to greet Monique, who was accompanied by her paternal grand mother to this first meeting which took place at the sidewalk cafe of the St Charles Station.

Strange life! In former times, in better days, the best thing which could happen was to leave the mist and the excited and sad crowds of Paris, some evening in winter, and to take the train at the Gare de Lyon. The excitement of the trip kept one awake. Sometimes, at dawn, near Orange, in a clear and bare setting almost African-like, one could glimpse at the red spahis prancing about in the glory of a dazzling sunrise. But this lasted only for an instant. The first, the real contact with the South, was at the ordinary little cafe terrace separated from the noisy

Station by six potted plants, in front of a cup of hot chocolate at a table with an imitation marble-top bronzed by the sun, with a sweet torpor flowing through one's veins. And the future looked bright because there were two weeks may be one month of wonderful vacation to come. You had to start spending this vacation by getting up, moving around, creating free time and counting the remaining days. It was truly the best moment in one's life, the time for hope, the last second of the dream before reality, a state of suspended time. Who has not lingered on in this state of mind at the terrace of the Saint Charles Station cafe? And today what a queer life!

On that day November 25, 1943, Mrs. X... and her grand-daughter looked over Mr. Vauthier gravely. He seemed a nice man, very serious, but he certainly was not talkative. Nobody had touched the saccharine-sweetened coffee substitute which was getting cold in the cups. As expected, the sun was shining. Only this time it was only one more accessory to the setting, a meteorological phenomenon favoring or upsetting the warriors and their plans, the mothers and daughters of the warriors and their hopes.

"Well now, Mr. Vauthier," said Mrs. X..., "can you guarantee success in this undertaking?"

The Chief of the Agence Immobilière , an honest man, was terribly embarrassed.

"But yes, of course Madam. Yes, sure!"

Too many affirmations. Mrs. X... shook her head pensively. And the

number one specialist of the French unconventional warfare began to blush like a shy young girl. That is he turned purple, for he had not lost his flowering complexion which had made Carne believe that he was a merchant from the Nivernais or Charolais. Monique came to his rescue. She had a particular way of expressing herself, that of the well-bred:

"Come now, Grand-mother! It is an order!"

The hard, heavy gaze of Vauthier met with the clear, frank look of Monique. They smiled at each other like two accomplices. That was enough for Vauthier to overcome his emotion.

"Yes, we will succeed, as usual. Two of my best men, Captain Patrice and Chief Warrant Officer Morel will look after your grand-daughter. I hold myself responsible for her."

Mrs. X... was slightly hard of hearing. Vauthier had to repeat a little louder. Not too much however, for nearby some indifferent and flegmatic Germans were stretching in straw chairs.

"When is it for?" questioned Monique impatiently.

"Tonight. First meeting point, Rue Paradis, such & such number. Eleven PM."

"Very well."

Mrs. Vauthier sighed. Vauthier forgot himself to the point of doing the same. Let's hope everything goes right!

Things started off well. The following day, November 26, the seven passengers and the security team coming from various directions and without incident, assembled at farm X... which, as I said before, had

become the regular maritime station. There were no less than fifteen persons in all, which was a crowd for the peninsula. In addition, it was as varied as it was large. Along with Monique and her bodyguards were Leon G..., hatchet-man for the Service, some Army officers, sailors, civilians, among whom a jurist requested in Algiers; some local "maquisards" under the orders of Captain Avallard, alias Jean-Marie, the officer in charge.

They suffered their first disappointment on the evening of November 26 as they learned by radio that the operation would be postponed for 24 hours. On the surface, the good spirits prevailed. Only Leon G..., a tough guy among the tough, became gloomy. He confided in two companions that he had an inauspicious premonition. "But don't let the others worry about it. It only concerns me."

The 27th went by relatively quickly. They ate, played bridge, tried to sleep which they managed to do. They were so young! At 9 PM, Avallard assembled the group, ready to go, formed a column, sent his Maquisards ahead as scouts, and gave his last instructions. The objective was to reach the seashore across the path of an enemy patrol, the rounds of which were at regular intervals and well-known. The embarking was set for 11:30 PM. The column started with Monique at the rear, between Patrice and Morel who carried the dispatches. The night was dark, therefore favorable. They walked silently on a goat-path through sparse bushes. It was hard to distinguish the man in front and they stayed close to each other.

Avallard had said that they would not have to walk much more than one

kilometer and they were all under the impression that the beach was near, in fact it was not more than 100 yards when, suddenly, a harsh voice shouted:

"Halt!"

The H was much too hard to give any illusion as to the speaker. Moreover, they could hear the metallic noise of weapons being manipulated, then the spitting of a burst of machinegun fire, and another.

Coolly, Avallard instructed:

"Get back. Disperse. Each on his own."

The enemy was now firing continuously... A flare burst into the sky, came down slowly, and everyone had the impression of being a perfect target in the middle of a spreading cone of pale illumination. They threw themselves in the bushes. Once the flare died, they started again. Patrice and Morel, now in front, covered Monique. But Morel tripped, fell and cracked his head, nearly losing consciousness. In his fall he had cut his superciliary arch. When he overcame his dizziness, he found himself alone, folded up in a bush.

Patrice and Monique ran down the path. As they were approaching the farm, a voice boomed again directly in front of them:

"Halt!"

Surrounded? Could this have been a regular ambush? If the men of this second patrol cutting off the retreat had remained crouched and silent in the shadows, they would only have had to stretch their legs to trip Patrice and seize him as well as his companion, for at the very instant

the voice stopped Patrice, he could clearly see the outline of his enemies. Were they bent on taking the fugitives alive? Were their weapons jammed? In any case, they did not shoot and that was providential, for the first volley fired in the center of the narrow path would surely have caught at least Patrice. The latter pushed Monique into a bush and followed. The two young people crept to the limit of their strength. When they thought they had reached the thickest part of the undergrowth, they stopped and waited.

The damp and cold night slowly went by. From time to time, an isolated gunshot could be heard in the stillness of the night.

"Let's wait," said Patrice.

"All right," answered Monique.

Patrice concealed his mail pouch in a ditch, the location of which he carefully noted at dawn. It was already ^{at} noon when he ventured to reconnoiter the surroundings. It was unbelievable, but the greatest calm now reigned in the area.

"Let's go," said Patrice, "we must get going. The coastal road leading to Saint-Tropez doesn't look very promising to me. So, general direction: Ramatuelle, with a detour to avoid the farm. All right?"

"Fine," replied Monique.

This was a very good idea for German checkpoints on the coastal road arrested two members of the expedition on the 28th. In the vicinity of Ramatuelle, a trucker loaded with a shipment of wood agreed to take on the two young people and dropped them safe and sound in Toulon.

They found Morel, also safe, at the drugstore of a friend, Mr. L... Two good old gendarmes, attracted by the noise of the scuffle, had arrested him around noon, but upon hearing the word "Resistance", turned him over to a group of patriots, Doctor R..., of Saint-Tropez, Mr. M..., landowner at Gassin, and Mr. X..., of la Croix-Valmer. Before Morel knew what was happening, they had taken him to Toulon.

The moment Monique was safe in Marseille, Patrice's only thought was to recover his mail bag. He put on the uniform of a cadet-gendarme and, with the assistance of the Gendarmerie Brigade of Saint-Tropez, ventured out to the scene of the incident. He promptly found his bag and was told that the friends at the farm had not been disturbed. But Leon G..., who had been obsessed by his personal premonition, was killed immediately. He was interred at Ramatuelle under a false name which will have to be corrected one day. Two sailors and one maquisard were also taken prisoners.

These losses were great; but if one could consider the operation in all objectivity, one would have to admit that it could have been much worse. Above all, Monique was safe. Had it not been for this fact alone, these tough men who were in the habit of thinking only in terms of efficiency and results, wouldn't have gotten over this deplorable failure for a long time. This helped them forget.

Fortunately, at that time, they were not aware as yet that the submarine did not come on the 26th or the 27th of November. If they had, their sigh of relief would have quickly been transformed into a frightening volley of insults.

What had happened?

On the nights immediately preceding the operation, the radio of the Agence Immobilière at Marseille, directing agent for the tube, had upset his Algerian counterpart with some wise cracks and odd procedures. We all know that two radio operators who are used to work together recognize each other by sound and by "touch". Those of the Agence Immobilière were perfectly harmonized. Captain Carne, Chief of communications of the Algiers Agency, who knew all his radiomen as if he had moulded them himself, was alerted and he listened in. Without a doubt, something abnormal was going on. The Marseillais did not give the agreed-upon signal which meant: "I am operating under German control." Yet, it was still possible that he was caught and was trying to convey the message by other means, for one reason or another; for example because the Germans had discovered the agreed system of alert. As a matter of fact, his particular rythm and his touch were not the same. Ordinarily very meticulous, he was sending poorly formed letters and mutilated words. He was even using separating dashes which had been discarded for a long time.

Worried, Carne reported it to Major P..., who set up an emergency meeting. Carne presented the facts and clearly assumed his responsibilities:

"I would cancel the operation."

They reluctantly agreed, but it was too late to put a stop to the preparations on land.

Only a few days later did they learn the reason behind the incident. Marseille had simply changed their radio-operator without informing Algiers.

But this incident, at first glance disastrous, was perhaps the instrument which permitted to avoid a worse catastrophe. Since they were alerted, the German coastal defence could have easily lobbed a shell on the submarine once she emerged close to shore.

This example is one of numerous others which lead me to believe that one must not ponder too much in clandestine warfare.

IV

YOUNG TEAMS TO THE RESCUE

Just like in the fiction stories where everything eventually turns out for the best, this was the time when the teams of the new Agence Immobilière came into play. But, this was an actual experience and everything did turn out for the best...yes...somehow, as would have said the French writer Capus. What was going to happen may not have been what the leaders had anticipated, prepared, wanted. But, since they had anticipated far ahead, prepared carefully and wanted intensely, something of their efforts was to remain. So much for intellectual considerations. I shall explain, starting by recalling some facts which the readers of the first two volumes of this work have probably forgotten.

Major P..., immediate superior of Mr. Vauthier, and justly considering the latter and his organization seriously threatened, wanted to set up a "Young Agence Immobilière" capable of replacing them. He did. The rapid evolution of the war and the elements of chance and luck perhaps did not permit the Young Agence to accomplish fully its fundamental mission, which

was to bring in as much intelligence as their precursors . But, contrary to all expectations, the old ones held on to the end. The young ones, making the ultimate sacrifice in an epic environment, had the time before they died to fulfill beyond all hopes a task initially meant as a secondary one, which revealed itself vital for the organization. They re-established closer, more frequent and more rapid liaisons than ever between Metropolitan France and the free countries. Thanks to them, a great part of the Resistance which was threatening to fall into stagnation and to fade away by consumption due to the lack of exchange with the outside, of directives, of orders, of reinforcements and even more of faith in its usefulness, was fed again, given new blood and launched once more. In my personal opinion, they were one of the most efficient group of patriots in the field of intelligence through the old Agence Immobilière, and in the field of direct action through the Resistance Organization of the Army.

Most of the young ones paid for these results with their lives. I have already paid homage to their holocaust. What is necessary here, is to demonstrate the usefulness of their work.

Major P..., was the founder of the Young Agence Immobilière. In the public opinion, it is conceivable that the concept of a "counter-espionage chief" immediately gives the idea of a shrewd, machiavellian and gloomy fifty-year-old individual, physically marked by some visible diabolical sign, and produces a reflex to back up or keep at a certain distance which overcomes any curiosity. In retrospect, I realize that certain theoretical developments of Volume II might favor such a chain of thoughts. No

doubt the statement in a recent book that P... was a "technician of counter-espionage and a fanatic of the twilight", was the result of an unconscious progress of thoughts on the part of a man of great intelligence and great honesty.

Actually it would be extremely difficult to find someone sharper in appearance than P... He was a tall, well built, well balanced, very neat and virile young man. He looked like one of these young moguls of the American movie industry about whom the French audiences used to wonder what they could have done to attain at such a young age, such high positions.

Everything must be explained, one way or another, is it not true? With regards to the rising of P..., it is very simple. First, he got the best of training as personal assistant to Colonel S..., who was the brilliant chief of our pre-war counter-espionage system. Second, he possessed the quality of lucidity of mind which makes for good organizers, so necessary in the hierarchy of any enterprise above a certain echelon, even more in shady affairs. Therefore, this would apply to the chief of counter-espionage. It explains the apparent inconsistency of a young leading man holding a position where the director would insist on a Charles Dullin (James Cagney-type) to cast for his most acid parts.

P... had completely adjusted to his mission. His only thought was for his job. By concentrating his qualities of foresight on one single objective, these became fully developed. And, as everyone knows, in order to lead one must be able to foresee.

At the time of the total invasion of our country, he decided to leave,

which was an excellent decision. To foresee, you have to hold on. His place was in Algiers or London. But he did not rush, although he was one of the public enemies ("Bêtes noires") of the German police, which his Service had depleted of agents for the previous two years. First, he wanted to be sure that he was leaving behind him a solid organization, therefore he designated Captain Vauthier to represent him in the heart of the battle area. This was a very judicious choice, for Vauthier was undoubtedly the best man for it. In November and December 1942, P... had observed Vauthier as he counted and dispersed his group, just like a wild boar would have done with his horde at the scent of hunters. Facing the realities of total occupation by the enemy, he made an estimate of Vauthier's needs. First of all, the means of communications. They had to be secured from the outside. Then, only when he was sure that things were in good hands did P... leave. At each stopping place, he recruited, rounded up, and prepared the ground for the future... Everywhere he went, he started something going. At Toulouse, he "oriented" the active, energetic and adventurous Gilbert Getten toward the creation of new Pyrenean channels. In Spain, he left behind one of his fellow-travellers who was to set up a net right under the noses of the Spanish and German police forces. From London, he brought about the sending of parachutist Michel. He was in Algiers only a short time when the first tube crossed the Mediterranean Sea and the large air operations started.

Having thus provided for the immediate essential elements, P... then considered his overall mission. It was then that he conceived the creation

of a well compartmented young Agence Immobilière, in a wise insight on things to come. He recruited agents right away, assistants first. There again he displayed very good judgment. He was one of those who always seemed to find the right man for the right job.

Not only was this a dangerous undertaking, it was also a very complicated enterprise. The setting of teams in France presented problems of a physical nature which the entire personnel of the Cook & Sons Travel Agency would have resolved only with difficulty even if they had been underground for some time. In addition, in view of the anticipated losses, their command was going to resemble that of a commando group. Therefore, some excellent organizers who were at the same time indisputable band leaders were needed at the top. But a manager of a travel agency must be a stable man, while a combat leader must be bold and tough. P... managed to reconcile these conflicting traits. He chose Captain B... as his executive officer in Algiers and Captain de L... to assist the latter, and completed his command structure with an exceptional leader, Captain Vellaud, alias "Toto".

B..., a parachutist and partisan of the first hour, was the brother of a Colonel who was already regrouping quite successfully the elements of his regiment which had been dissolved in France. One could easily expect to hear about him again in the battle for the liberation. Was P... already guessing that he would have a hard time keeping the boiling Captain B... in Algiers, that one day would come when he would have to let him go on an inspection tour in occupied France, and that the latter would probably not resist the temptation to go and visit his brother's maquis? A little later,

P... found Captain de L..., another soldier of the high and ancient tradition in a hospital : his face had been pierced through by a German bullet while he was commanding a Legion company in Tunisia.

"You're coming with me," said P... "I need you to organize young men".

L... pointed to his jaw, with great distress. For he had become completely mute on account of his wound.

"You won't need to talk for that", continued P..., after getting over the first moment of surprise and embarrassment.

"And it will come back", he added.

Fortunately, he did regain use of his speech a couple of months later.

B... and L... were smart, strong, and did not need to waste their beautiful energy to acquire prestige, which they already had. One could build around them.

As far as the ranks were concerned, P... was not advertising his recruitment on the principle that those looking for adventure would eventually find their way to his office. The recruiting was done by cooptation. For the dangerous missions, the section chiefs of the Special Services selected the most qualified among the volunteers. They flocked in from all backgrounds, whether it was from solid French stock of North Africa or from the masses of young men who, after crossing the Pyrenees and being imprisoned, had finally been extracted from Spanish jails. This first sorting out constituted a security guarantee; and the availability of volunteers was such that other guarantees could be required, even psychological and physiological ones.

P... established a training program for his "toughies", in cooperation

with the British who were great specialists on the subject. They were sent to the Airborne Training and Sabotage School which the British, with the infallible instinct for comfort of their race, had magnificently installed in the "Touquet Algerois", at the Club des Pins, between Algiers and Sidi-Ferruch. If they overcame the multiple difficulties of this training without too much physical pains and without too many moral conflicts, the cadets were then attached to the Center of El Biar, where their intelligence agent or radio technician training was perfected. With due consideration being given to preferences and additional capabilities, teams were formed to fill the meshes of the net devised by P... to cover the entire metropolitan territory. At times, sixty or more young men were assembled in this nursery, restless and uncontrollable, their only common traits being youth and the will to start working in France as soon as possible.

Men from all walks of life were among them; even former antimilitarists; city kids as well as young men whose names appeared in all military rosters; physical training coaches and holders of doctor's degrees in philosophy; technicians and poets. And not only males but females, in considerable numbers. From a conservative point of view, this could be regrettable; but the female sex had already proven itself in this dirty war. They told you with so much conviction: "What matters now!..", or with such a mischievous air: "Who would suspect me?", and all this made it impossible for you to stop their invasion. The trouble was that no one knew where all this would lead. Had things lasted much longer, they would have succeeded in reaching the positions of commanders-in-chief.

Their spirit? It can be represented in its entirety by these short, unassuming and mocking verses, which resemble strangely those of the "Triumphes" reviews of Saint-Cyr. Before leaving the old School to start their lives as men of action, future officers were authorized, for once, to spill everything they had been holding back, providing it was done with gallantry. They could even gently manipulate irony at the expense of their chiefs, for patriotic harangues were considered totally superfluous.

THE GUYS OF THE UNDERGROUND

It is rather strange for people to think
That we succeed with some pretty schemes.
No, we must admit. Alas, it is quite certain
That we have a hard time to change destiny.
We can change our eyes, moustaches, eyelashes.
But all this is nothing, for the most difficult
Is not the mission, but to be successful
On leaving El Biar on the appointed day.
A problem tougher, there is not, we are sure.
At the bare thought of it, all the chiefs turn ghastly.
For example, if you want, ask Vellaud
Who, without a flutter, will tell you readily:
"This time, it's settled. The comrades expect you.
You'll be there to-morrow!" May God hear his words!

Ask also the ardent Captain
Who, through his radio, controls all his cells:
"Radio sets?... I have no more. But be sure...
I will send some... very soon... perhaps twenty.
For the moment at least, it isn't necessary
For, if your umbrella for some futile reason
Should not open, or would partly fail,
What I'd given you would be superfluous."
And now appearing, is Major P...
Who smiling, alights from the only Jalopy
Which, in the whole house, is in working order.
(The others, I've been told, are being repaired.)
"Don't worry," says he, his face imperturbable,
"Don't rush for you could regret it,
Wait for your turn... I know the business."
Colonel Serot, glimpsing at us as we're passing by
Distributes a few rods: "It would be wiser,"
He tells us amiably, "that you carry weapons.
They are not recent, but, with expert handling,
They may fire (for they are like you)
No one knows when or how, this I must admit."
And thus, each passing day nurses our hope.
Everyone is kind. No one lets us down.

Not even the machine which, oh! intense hope!

Will dump us one day on the sweet soil of France!

Nevertheless, one after the other they reached their destination: by the submarine which took them to the coast of Provence or Spain; on foot across the Pyrenees; by small fishing boats which picked them up at sea; or by airplanes which dropped them, hanging on their "umbrellas", above fields where, sometimes, reception committees greeted them. But being greeted by no one was better than landing among a "Gestapo reception committee", as it happened alas! to a few of them.

Except in a few cases, all of them reached their combat posts thanks to B... and to L...

The teams of newly trained young men were preceded by those who were to provide liaisons for all of them, usually under the command of regular officers, just as young, but who had been battle-tested. Captain Avallard, alias Jean-Marie, went to Marseille where he directed the regular maritime links between the Mediterranean coast and North Africa. Navy Lieutenants Le Henaff, alias Fanfan, and Lavallée, settled themselves in Brittany and Vendée where they organized a service of small boats between France and Great Britain. We know that the three of them lost their lives. Lieutenant B..., who had left at about the same time and was especially entrusted with air operations, was the sole survivor.

I wrote about them rather briefly in the first two volumes. Since then I have gathered some new information which allows me to make one

correction and to give further details on two points which I had been unable to clarify.

The correction: Lieutenant Lavallée was a regular Naval Officer and not a reservist.

Particulars. First: I wrote in volume II: "We are still wondering - and some day we shall know - the identity of the double agent using the name "Lieutenant André", who was responsible for the death of Lavallée and his friends. The possibility that it might have been De Vos... is not excluded." Well, now I can say it was not him. De Vos has been confronted with surviving relatives of Lieutenant Chaigneau, the assistant of Lavallée. They had seen the said André and they did not recognize De Vos as being the man in question.

Second: I wrote in volume I: "Driven aground on the coast by the weather....according to some, or caught in a trap according to others... the "Jouet des Flots" could only have been under the command of Lavallée... or of Le Henaff. From the investigation I conducted on the matter, it appeared that it was Lavallée who was its captain.."

Well, this is wrong. It was Le Henaff who commanded the "Jouet des Flots."

After his parachute drop on June 15, 1943, near Spézet, in Brittany, with Lieutenant Bon-Vent, a Canadian signal officer, Le Henaff spotted several landing fields and had them approved. On November 9, 1943, he successfully arranged, as far as he was concerned, a pick-up by three Lysander aircrafts in the vicinity of Haims (Vienne). Unfortunately, the main objective

of the operation which was to take General de Lattre de Tassigny, was not successful since the General was unable to reach the field in time.

On October 2, 1943, after several unsuccessful attempts, he had succeeded in sending off from Treboul, the fishing boat "Lapérouse" with eight crewmen, five French officers, two French non-commissioned officers, the political boss of harbour X..., and two American pilots.

In November, he launched from Lézardieux, a motor boat of the Public Works Dept. It was to have on board twelve French officers and fourteen pilots of the RAF. Victim of a machine-gun attack while still in port, by a mistaken friendly aircraft, then engulfed in a thick fog, the small ship was able to take on board only a small part of the passengers. To compensate for this, it took two German prisoners caught at the time of departure.

During the night of February 2 - 3, 1944, the "Jouet des Flots", which had been armed by Le Henaff, left from Tudy Island at the mouth of the Quimper river, with thirty-seven passengers among whom Le Henaff and Bon-Vent, a number of French officers, some pilots of the RAF, and a few political figures including Mr. B..., and the amazing Brossolette (see German report analyzed in Volume II). However, the sea was choppy, and a storm broke out. The ship lost its sails, was damaged on the rocks of Pierres-Vertes near the Island of Sein and, with its engine underwater, reached the coast of the Pointe du Raz with great difficulty and in broad daylight, only to run aground near Plogoff. Alerted, the German customs and police officers arrested a part of the crew and passengers on the spot.

Le Henaff and about ten of his comrades escaped miraculously. Le Henaff reached Quimper, then left again with a delivery van to attempt regrouping his dispersed comrades. He was recognized and arrested by the Germans on February 5th, along with other survivors among them Brossolette.

He was tortured, but he did not talk. In April, J..., Chief of the Blavet network (whom Le Henaff had helped in reaching England and who had just come back), and Mrs. R..., attempted to have Le Henaff escape but failed. Le Henaff died of asphyxiation in a train while being transported from Compiègne to Germany.

The cells directing the intelligence collection followed right behind the more specialized teams in charge of liaisons, and set up shop in Lyon, Lille, Limoges, Bordeaux and Belfort.

Captain Vellaud, galvanizing them by his own example, moved indefatigably among them. The last citation for bravery awarded to him read: "With admirable courage and energy, surmounting all dangers and difficulties, he methodically organized a complicated section and liaisons which were essential to the Command. Under the most tragic circumstances, he never failed to show the greatest imperturbability and the highest military qualities." If one bears in mind that he was still alive at the time, and that, before the end of any war it is extremely difficult to confirm the text of a proposal containing so many adjectives, but no precise details as to dates and places, one can certainly consider this to be one of the most beautiful citations of the years 1940-1944. The words had been measured quite accurately, as distant as possible from what could be taken for a piece of

romantic literature if one did not know the man or his work.

What was most striking in Vellaud, even more than the swiftness of an infantryman and his Roman mask, was the keenness, the concentration and sometimes the hardness fringing on violence of his stare. A stare which hit you like a stab. It was only the outward sign of this surge of will-power which makes good leaders. (See picture 7, page 380). Only this quality had allowed him to lead a commando group during the winter 1939-40 all the way to the confines of the Sarre, when the fight was on equal footing. But at La Bassée in May 1940, it was no longer sufficient to overcome the enemy, and his company of footsluggers was crushed by planes and tanks. After embarking at Dunkerque with a handful of survivors on May 30, he rejoined the battle of France as early as the beginning of June. Taken prisoner at Couternes, he escaped and resumed service in the Army of the Armistice. In October 1941, he received the mission of repressing the activities of the German and Italian agents in Lyon. He had adapted himself beautifully to clandestine warfare, whether he liked it or not, but I suspect it did not satisfy him. Still he never mentioned it, perhaps because he had convinced himself of his usefulness. His box-score, scrupulously kept up to date by Lieutenant Martial, who served him to the end with the faithfulness of a squire for his knight, numbered as of November 1942, one hundred and twenty-nine spies put out of action.

The words "with the faithfulness of a squire for his knight" came out of my pen naturally. It might appear strange, (I am surprised myself) to apply them to the characters of a secret war, so different from those of

our legends. But after all, I am merely using the same formula, since what deserves to be fabled is not how the blows are given. If only blows were involved, the important thing would be rather how to take them, how to accept the risks involved, and how to endure them. But, is not sacrifice the essence of the supernatural? Furthermore, since in the past two thousand years or so we have practically ceased to behead all the members of vanquished tribes regardless of age and sex, I don't think that military history has often recorded casualty ratios comparable to those of the young Agence Immobilière. I wouldn't be surprised if, in the coming centuries, when today's surprising small submachine guns will not be displayed very far from the spear and quartz chip in the museums of the Army, and when the robots will be tormented by the ancestral yearning of purity in strength, Vellaud's battle against the Gestapo would lie at the root of their own legendary traditions, along with Siegfried's struggle against the Dragon.

On November 24, 1942, Vellaud left for London by plane, having told Martial that he would be back within three months, and having left instructions with regard to the preparation of air-drops in the Central part of France. While in Algiers, Vellaud ran across Major P... who "grabbed" him for the job of roving inspector of the new Agence Immobilière for the High Command. Toto's return to France was delayed by the intricate task of organizing teams.

It was only at the beginning of June 1943 that he was air-dropped "blind" (without a reception committee) in the vicinity of Paris, with one of the Heusch brothers, both of whom were to be killed a little later.

Vellaud landed in a tree and was half-stunned, while Heusch found himself much farther away in a wheat field. He had a heck of a time finding Toto, then reviving him and with his help they recovered the containers which had been dropped at the same time. They contained in particular ten million francs badly needed by the Army Resistance Organization, which was very hard up.

Vellaud then began his tour of France, through the meshes of the Gestapo net, constantly accompanied by Martial. At his first stop, Lyon, a telephone call whose originator is still unknown, enabled him to narrowly escape a trap laid by the German police at Martial's temporary quarters (1). Then, he went to Marseille, Paris, Lille and Nantes, where his sections were set in motion. He made a stop at Brioude where he met Mr. Vauthier, and returned literally enraptured by the unselfishness of the older ones; then, at Mâcon, where he planned and carried out very successfully a parachute drop of men and radio equipment in a nearby area, only three kilometers away from a German battalion on unexpected field manoeuvres. Later he went to Limoges where he left Martial as section chief; to Charolles, where he supervised a second parachute drop of radio teams and transmitters; and finally in the Haute-Vienne, Indre and Franche-Comté areas where he made a reconnaissance of the infrastructure of what was to become a true airline permitting multiple pick-up operations.

- (1) The investigation for this book has led to the discovery of the fellow prisoner from Fresnes who helped little Marchand save the Agence Immobilière. The author also hopes that the friend who warned Martial of the danger hanging over his refuge on the Avenue Sidoine-Apollinaire will come forward and identify himself.

With Lieutenant B..., he returned to Paris and, in his spare time, made plans for the kidnapping of Philippe Henriot. The project to kidnap the "collaboration propagandist" Henriot was dropped only on account of a last minute backing-out by the owner of the first stopover point. Henriot obviously could not be kept in a hotel room. Vellaud came back to Limoges, Roanne, to mention only a few of the places he visited. Some I am passing over, others I have forgotten. In Paris, he collected the intelligence data on the preparation of the German "Carthage" mission (2), and I am pretty sure that it was he who warned Algiers first.

Major P... asked him to get back to Algiers via the tube at the end of September, to which he agreed. Everywhere he went, that is all over the metropolitan territory, his own sections were functioning properly. Thanks to the high level contacts he made with the old Agence Immobilière and the Army Resistance Organization, these latter had re-established or tightened their contacts with Algiers. Mr. Vauthier's men, and especially the radio chief he had recruited, Captain Christian Rambaud, had received or were about to receive at last, the transmitters which would not only ensure the normal traffic, but also lead to air operations for the dispatching of mail. Rambaud re-established the communications net of the Old Agence, actually to a more compact and stronger degree than ever. Even his arrest did not hamper its operation for one day. His wife, mother of three children and awaiting a fourth, bullied, threatened and kept under surveillance by the Germans, had the self-control and the courage to initiate the first alert system. She

(2) See Volume II, Chapter IV, Section 5.

was never to see her husband again, who was executed at Buchenwald; and his companions of misfortune lucky enough to get back, speak of him with an exceptional tinge of respect. What they have related to me lead me to believe that while in a concentration camp Rambaud elevated himself above the hero's rank in the scale of human values. (See photo 8, page 380).

Once he made his report in Algiers, Vellaud requested to go back. Thanks to his own efforts, he had left behind him hundreds of young men and women with only one thing in their minds: to leave. They neither bragged nor blustered. Nothing could have been less morbid than their somber, desperate, feverish determination. Toto had given them an example of simplicity and a distrust of too great an imagination. Yet, as far as adventure and danger are concerned, if good humor prevails, everything else goes right.

Let us read together a letter which projects into the execution of the missions, the spirit born at the El Biar School. It is a sort of Pyrenean echo ringing in lighthearted verses, of which I have already given an example, and where emotion was perceived merely by a final and discreet touch.

Three of Vellaud's disciples going through Spain on their way to France, sent a report to their chief. In the middle of the team was Andrée B..., called I wonder why "Papillon" (Butterfly), perhaps on account of her fragile, spring-like and almost unreal girlish charm. She was so intelligent and so well educated that one would have thought her devoted to libraries and laboratories rather than to the high roads of adventure. But a courageous soul inhabited this delicate frame. After such a war, this should not surprise anyone. Flanking her on each side to protect her were two men, E... and

Jacques C... who kept the daily journal.

To pay homage to Miss Papillon and as a mocking memory of the El Biar School at the same time, our trio went by the name of: "The three alumni of the Lycee Papillon." They were en route to Limoges, to assist Martial, and had left Algiers on December 26, 1943, by the submarine Orphee, with another team scheduled to go to Bordeaux. C... wrote to Vellaud, in Algiers at the time, from somewhere in the Iberian Peninsula. Why did his message move me so deeply? Certainly because a difficult personal adventure cannot be told in a more natural and smiling manner. Perhaps because Jacques C... completely neglected to give details as to his difficulties, his perils, his worries which were over when he wrote. The heavy veil he threw over them in a manly modesty let appear only the essential, his feverish determination to reach one goal alone: to cross into France. Just like a tree which prevents to see the forest. No doubt, I was also moved because, beyond the humoristic cloud with which C... surrounded himself, I can distinguish an exceptional potential of energy of the first order: that is the calmest type of energy. And finally because I am aware that two of the three "Butterflies" who were honoring their chief destined to die, were not to live much longer themselves.

The letter was as follows:

Wednesday January 12, 1944

Three Alumni of the "Lycee Papillon"
(Butterfly High School)

to

Captain Vellaud

We had asked our good friend M... not to forget to give you our regards and tell you of our faith and hopes. But it is written that the "Butterflies" will never succeed in flying on their first try, and to live up to the tradition, we have just brilliantly accomplished our umpteenth false start. This was the most successful of them all, to be sure, since it took us very near the "dolce tierra" so longed for. Before giving you the story bit by bit and providing you can escape Section B.. for a few minutes let us go back to:

Sunday, December 26, when you so happily entrusted us to the "Orphee".

4:30 PM - Embarking ... We had to get used not to stretch our arms, raise our heads any more, and to move around with great care.

First meal. Slight waves due to surface navigation, but which took nothing away from the comfort of our

hard bunks.

Monday, December 27 - Nothing new. We are closed in. No scenery. The Miss seems to prefer underwater navigation, which is not as choppy.

Tuesday, December 28 - Nothing to report during the day. 10 PM: Preparations. 10:35 PM: everybody on the deck. 10:45 PM: going aboard the X... thoroughly tossed about and drenched, while Albert, in a lousy mood, counted and sorted the luggage. (See picture 9, page 380).

The X... was the fishing boat which picked up the submarine's passengers off the coast of Spain. The comrade designated as Albert was the man Major P... had left in Spain, in charge of setting up the foundations for a net. We can see that he was successful above and beyond all hopes. Endowed with an unusual nerve, a rare gift of gab and cunning, he won the sympathies of the Spanish people in his area, while avoiding at the same time (this was a miracle), to worry the Army, to be hunted by the Police or excommunicated by the Church. He was on good terms with everybody. Did anyone suspect what he was doing? Probably, but who? No one among those who could have hampered his work, since he accomplished his mission to the end without any mishap.

The Spanish base-station was put under the command of an officer whom we shall call, with your permission, Escamillo.

"Wednesday, December 29 - 00:15 AM: in one leap, we

jumped on solid ground and tried to act as civilized persons. L... disappeared in the darkness with Albert. X... guided three of us on foot in the direction of the town. A taxicab was waiting for Miss and me at a pre-arranged spot. But we still had to cross the whole length of the pier under the eyes of the border patrols and customs officers.

To put them at ease, I tenderly put my arms around Miss. We crossed the check point in an atmosphere of general understanding and complicity.

6:00 PM: General meeting at the base-station where we get acquainted with Mr. Escamillo, who promises us an early departure. Well-known tune and understanding smiles. We are used to that.

Thursday and Friday, December 30 and 31 - Endless waiting in our respective quarters.

Saturday, January 1: Mr. Escamillo provoked a lively general laugh with the serious announcement of a pending departure!... "perhaps to-morrow!..."

Monday, January 3 - As the base-station's cars are suffering from the same disease as all those of the organization, we shall be leaving in two groups ... but not today.

Tuesday, January 4 - Nor today.

Wednesday, January 5 - Mail from France bringing very little comforting news about Martial.

Thursday, January 6 - Course of action established with the comrades of Bordeaux, for if we can't find Martial, we'll be out in the open and their cooperation might be useful until your orders are received.

Perhaps for to-morrow?

Friday, January 7 - ...but this time, it's true. At noon, the three "butterflies" huddled together with their meager belongings in a microscopic Ford, after many handshakes and emotional farewells from those remaining.

6:15 PM: We are at the pre-arranged rendez-vous.

6:45 PM: We meet with the "Middleman". Mr. Escamillo leaves us under the mocking stare of a brilliant moonlight.

7:15 PM: First contact with our Spanish guides who don't seem very eager to take charge of us and calmly roll their cigarettes.

7:25 PM: Last meeting with our guides who promptly run away at the appearance of two armed men. We are apprehended but without violence. Brief discussion with the civil guards who appear to be satisfied with our story that we are French refugees and... let us go free without any difficulty. What can we do? Only hope for the return of our guides at the rendez-vous place, the only logical

point for a second try.

8:00, 9:00, 10:00 PM: Nothing - save a temperature obviously below the freezing point.

At 11:00 PM, we conceal our luggage and find a sort of underground cave for shelter, where two of us can try to rest taking turns, while the third one watches for the problematic return of our "toughies".

Saturday, January 8 - At 6 AM still nothing, and we have to decide on a course of action for the day, the problem being as follows:

Three "butterflies" not speaking a word of Spanish, without any contacts in a strange area, a military zone where circulation is frequently checked, in the vicinity of two well-known Spanish jails, and carrying a war treasure, are filled with an ardent desire to carry out successfully the mission assigned to them...

Solution: To avoid being caught at all costs and hope for the return of the guides, assumed to be trustworthy. We carefully hide our personal luggage and especially the funds, keeping with us only a small amount of money to avoid a considerable "borrowing" by the Spanish authorities in case the plan fails.

Since the safest among all the refuges in the area seems to be the vault where we had elected to take shelter at night, we settle there and remain crouched with our

knees under our chins, from seven AM to seven PM without being able to make a single movement, for there are constant comings and goings all day long, above our heads, in this redoubt which, after a more thorough reconnaissance, is found to be the cesspool - by a stroke of luck unused - of a house formerly occupied by the railroad gate-keeper.

What a pleasure, in the darkness of the night, to stretch and cough without restraint! The cramps in our bodies can be somewhat alleviated, but not those in our stomachs.

At 9:00 PM, our crackpots still have not showed up.

We have to reach the town...

Thanks to the complicity of some good peasants with whom they could only communicate through desperate sign language, they managed to reach it.

Tuesday, January 11 - At night, brother Escamillo comes with his Ford. We rush to the caches and find, with a sigh of relief, that everything : money and luggage, are still there.

This is about the extent of our activities for the past two weeks. Not very profitable, as you probably will agree with us. You can be assured that we are truly

sorry for it. We can at least draw a few conclusions and underline...

There followed an interesting study on the technical and geographical conditions for clandestine passage from Spain to France, but these still cannot be printed at this time.

...But don't worry, we will solve these problems, and others which will undoubtedly show up, in the best interest of the "House" since we are trusted. The only shade of bitterness we feel is the deep regret of not having been able to come in via the "umbrellas" so as to be in the swing of things much more quickly. Confusion prevails, for the channels are starting to crack, but we are consulting with Escamillo to establish others in an area he knows well.

Thursday, January 13 - Our comrades B... and R..., coming from France, have not been as lucky as us. They are in jail, nevertheless they very successfully managed to pass the mail batch that was put under their care. It is now safe.

I hope we can see them before we leave and benefit from their experience...

Friday, January 14 - New escape channels are taking shape. P... will leave to-morrow for the center of

the mountain range to study the possibility of our passage. Since it will take several days on foot, too much for Miss, she will leave with V... and, if everything goes well, should be in Paris by the 22nd. R... is working on the completion of two channels for two courriers...

.....

Tuesday, January 18 - Departure of Miss scheduled for Thursday...

Wednesday, January 19 - No. Departure of Miss delayed once more. The Butterflies never fail the tradition... what bad luck!

.....

Monday, January 24 - ... Visited B... and R... in jail. Happy to find them in good health and spirits. A lot of information concerning ... Will have someone take food to them, for the jail's diet is rather strict and meager. Hard to carry on conversation through wire screens, in a common parlor, two meters away from one another. Hoping they'll be freed by the end of the week...

The travelling journal kept by C... ended with the following notes, hurriedly written in pencil:

25- Excuse my finishing in pencil, but the mail is

leaving to-night and I don't want to miss it. The Butterflies are leaving, let us hope anyway, to-morrow without fail, hopped up and full of courage.

In the names of all of us, I request that you ask Major P... to accept the expression of our most respectful devotion and that you believe in our sincere dedication to our duty.

Jacques C...

This time, it was true. They left.

Jacques C... died in a train while being deported to Germany. The charming Miss Papillon died also at a later date.

oo
oo oo

Vellaud's return to France was delayed by a series of unbelievable material incidents. It seemed as if the value of this great man had, for once, struck and drawn the mysterious forces of destiny from their usual callousness. The positive minds will probably only see a series of coincidences and there is here some food for quite useless arguments. Still here are the facts.

In Algiers, Captain de L... had a premonition that Vellaud should not leave. He was searching for a way to prevent his departure without hampering the good operation of the Service. But his views clashed with the stubborn Toto who insisted:

"You know very well that I just have to go!"

Despite the fact that this group of men took a plane to France as easily as one normally use the subway, Vellaud's friends advised him several times to be very careful, which was exactly the opposite of the way they normally conducted their lives.

Three times Vellaud's plane was delayed on account of the bad weather. One night, it reached the Balearic Islands but then, an extremely rare accident happened: one of the wheels burst while in flight, damaging the wing spread. The pilot had to turn back.

Meanwhile, since his area had been selected for the dropping of his chief and friend, Martial, chief of the Munich station in Limoges, prepared three drop zones, one near Jouac in the Haute-Vienne, the second between Belves and Cadouin, and the last one at 12 kilometers north of Limoges. All the jumps scheduled above his zones had been successful, except in the case of Vellaud. He waited for him for six months, at every change of moon. The messages were to change six times: "From Albertine to Paul, the betrothal will take place on...", "From Paul to Virginia, the Viscount's car is early", "The welcome at Ajaccio was tremendous." (This one gave you a sickly smile during the endless nights of waiting, feet in the snow or icy mud.) "Toto loves goose-liver", "Beware of the black smoke", and at last one of which no one seems to have a recollection.

In France too, they worried over Vellaud. In a letter written to him by Martial on January 7, 1944, the following passage can be noted:

"...Two days ago, I had lunch with Mrs. T.T. (Mrs. Vellaud), who

gave me the enclosed letter for you. She is quite worried about your possible return, as well as your parents-in-law.."

And this post-scriptum:

"As far as your return is concerned, G... will tell you in person about the dangers you will face when you are back."

On January 25, 1944, Martial insisted:

"...I hope we will have the good fortune of seeing you here before D-Day, but do not come back too soon, it would be dangerous for you..."

During the night of April 5-6, 1944, a family of good people, the L's.. who not only made the "Jouac" drop zone, one of their fields, available to Martial, but provided also the reception committee (made up of the male members of three generations), and the vehicles necessary for the transport of the containers, was to finally be rewarded for its obstinacy. At 1:30 AM, they heard the humming of a plane. A short while later, a Halifax aircraft dropped three sticks of parachutes: five in the first, then five more, and finally six.

In the Haute-Vienne, the story was to be told for a long time to come, how the old and dignified Mr. L..., the patriarch of the family, was seized by surprise. Rushing toward the first chute, he saw, just like a child brought by a stork, a young girl who planted without reserve two healthy kisses on his cheeks. Then, from two other gigantic mushrooms suddenly pushed aside, two more young girls emerged, just as fresh and smiling, who kissed him also. Everyone's attention was on the young girls that

night. Pierrette, Marie-Louise and Suzy, poor children, so courageous and so gay, who were soon to be arrested by the Germans.

The operation itself was a complete success. Everybody was happy... after so long... one should see something like this at least once in one's life... Everybody, perhaps even Martial who was waiting for Vellaud whose absence filled him with a swarm of contradictory sentiments.

Martial made his report. First the results, and this was brief.

Munich,

April 7, 1944

After-action Report on parachute drop.

(April moon)

During the night of 5-6 April, at 1:30 AM the Munich cell met on DZ J, 16 parachutes. Transport was effected by a Halifax-type aircraft from London. The operation was carried out for the best and without the slightest incident. At daybreak, everything was over. (People and equipment had reached a safe shelter).

The personnel included:

1st Team Toto: Two specialized officers :

1 communications specialist,

1 air operations specialist,

And one young girl radio operator (Suzy).

2nd Team S.M.: Two young girls, radio operators.

The equipment consisted of:

15 radio sets, tobacco and emergency rations...

Martial, then, treated at greater length the preparations for the following operations.

Actually, the interested parties were not aware of the real difficulties, otherwise... For curiosity's sake, let us note that the Germans, who had secured the Agence Immobilière's code through a double agent, had deciphered one of the messages announcing the drop of the night of April 5-6. Reading "Jouac Field", they believed an error of transmission had occurred and substituted "Joie Field", Joie being the cover name of the chief of the Lille cell, Captain Lheureux. On April 5 therefore, they had set up an ambush around the drop zone which the latter had previously utilized, somewhere in the Somme, and both he and his assistant, 2nd Lt Charles Bellet were caught redhanded and died together.

Where was Vellaud? He had finally given up on the airplane and left for Spain, hoping to arrive even sooner. However, he was delayed once more. It was only on April 7 that he was able to cross the Spanish frontier, around Saillagousse, in the Pyrénées Orientales, with a team which included another little sister-in-arms doomed to be arrested by the Gestapo. They brought more transmitters and funds which Martial recovered from their first hideout on this southern side of the Pyrénées, while Vellaud undertook his second tour of inspection without wasting one minute.

Between April 10 and 25, he managed to visit all of his nets which were still in operation. Those of Lavallée, Lheureux and, I think, Le Hénaff had already been wiped out. Had the baneful premonition also

caught up with Vellaud himself. Judging from the way he went about and spoke publicly, it was not apparent. But one evening, he said to Martial with whom he had become very familiar, and for whom he had no more secrets:

"You know, things have changed. I realize this more every day. One can feel the meshes of the net getting tighter. We'll all get it. I wonder if... Well, anyway I will make the essential contacts, distribute the funds, the radio equipment and the orders, and as soon as our liaisons are well established, perhaps I'll retire to the country."

Astounded, Martial did not say a word. Vellaud burst out laughing, in one of those sudden noisy explosions of relaxation which usually followed his deep concentration on the job.

"Don't make such a face. In any case, I'm prepared."

He pointed to his right ear which was closed by a small cotton wad practically invisible.

"I have a capsule under this thing", he said.

"But..." replied Martial, "would you do this in spite of... in spite of your beliefs?"

Vellaud frowned. He was a profoundly religious man, and when life permitted it, he practiced his religion very strictly. Martial recalled one day when Toto, having just escaped a booby-trap, rushed into a church, took communion... then suddenly remembered he had had breakfast that morning. This worried him for a long time. However, I am sure God forgave him.

"Yes," said Vellaud, "yes, I would do it. Who knows how we would

endure the torture."

On April 26, 1944, Vellaud was arrested by the Germans along with Captain Heusch (the comrade from his first parachute jump in France), between the exit of the Montparnasse subway station where Martial was checking one by one the comrades who had come to see the chief, and the "Closerie des Lilas", where other friends awaited him. On that morning, for the first time since his return to France, Vellaud who had awoken with a start and had only had time to wash very quickly, had forgotten his cotton wad and the capsule. It was just as well, for of course, he never talked and this was the only thing he feared.

Martial committed some most foolish acts to come to his aid. Under the disguise of a sewer-man of the city of Paris, he tried to gain admittance to the fortified citadel and inextricable maze of alleys which is called Fresnes. He wanted to notify Vellaud of a plan he had made to kidnap him between the jail and the East Railroad Station, where it was believed numerous prisoners of the Service would very soon be taken for immediate deportation to Germany. He had contacted another resistance organization which had several of its members in the same fix, and which was ready to go all the way. The transfer was carried out as anticipated, but the security was provided by a battalion-size unit. Seething inwardly, the volunteers had to keep their hands in their pockets. They couldn't do anything.

Vellaud was executed at Buchenwald with a group of officers of the Agence Immobiliere and of the British Intelligence Service. According to a testimony which I have recently gathered, they were smiling when the

Germans fired, a fact which exasperated those gentlemen. I haven't been able to crosscheck this. All I can say is that, if I know how to judge men, this attitude is very likely, as far as these or the others are concerned. In any case, we all know that compliments usually go to those who deserve it. But... I wanted to talk about efficiency. Perhaps I have forgotten it somewhat on the way. So let us summarize.

Vellaud and the young Agence Immobiliere created twenty-nine channels through the Pyrenees, out of which fifteen were at times used simultaneously. Thanks to him and his men, the bottlenecks in the mail dispatching which prevailed at the end of 1943 and had discouraged even some of the optimists, never occurred again. In general, the Agence Immobiliere and the reorganized Military Security Agency were sufficiently equipped with radios, which permitted an intensification of air operations. The Provence tube operated regularly until 26 November 1943, and the one from Spain till the end.

But, most important, it was proven that one could easily go from France to Africa and vice versa in a few hours at night.

It's obvious, some will say? Well, this is not true. It was not at all obvious, but it is difficult to explain it.

To understand, one must refer to one of the great books of Saint-Exupery. As a matter of fact, Saint-Exupery does not explain it either (and I shall not be the one to try after him), but through his stories, he makes one feel with an irresistible force that in order to create an airline, a final effort and a series of sacrifices are needed of men, even when all the material conditions have been met.

Let us say we have airplanes which can easily cover, in a single flight, the distance between the cities we want to join - ideal airfields and perfected technical installations - faultless meteorological services - pilots and crews experienced on the equipment in use. On paper, on the ground and in the sky, everything is ready. It seems that the only thing left to do is to open our doors and sell tickets to the public.

This is however not the case. Not at all! For months to come, some courageous and obstinate young men will have to try out the equipment over the route - to discover humanly invisible obstacles, the imponderable and the unknown - and to have to get into the habit of overcoming them. The security conditions must be obtained not by a few lucky and perhaps deceiving missions, but by many experiences with various degrees of success - and a few of the men will have to pay for it with their lives. Only then can it be concluded that the percentage of risks is acceptable for the others, and the line is finally put into operation.

This is exactly what we owe, above all, to Vellaud and his men, as well as to the Anglo-Saxons and the B.C.R.A. teams engaged in the same type of activities, at the same moment, between Great Britain and France. Thanks to them, things reached rapidly the point where one could go to Algiers or London without thinking or hesitating any more than in peace time. Not only the intelligence and sabotage teams, but also the military chiefs of the Resistance travelled constantly between the major Headquarters of the Free World and the resistance Command Posts in occupied territories. Thus, those on the front-lines could supply what might have been missing in the slowly

thought-out plans of their superiors. That is, a perfect adaptation to the realities of a continent isolated like a fortress, and an exact measure of the considerable support which the Secret Army rising behind the concrete Atlantic Wall, would give the liberators.

That this was one of the main conditions for our salvation, I am now sure; and in Chapter III of this volume, I shall give what I believe is the most striking example of it.

V

THE SECOND FRONT OF THE BATTLE FOR THE LIAISONS

Thus, little by little, the liaison agents of the Agence Immobiliere got the upper hand on the enemies. What remained was for them to defend themselves against their friends, which, as everyone knows, requires not only God's favor but His active intervention.

Captain Carne, Chief of communications of the Agence, had returned to Algiers from England with a few gripes. The British had kept him, in his opinion, much too long in London - 1 month. They hadn't even troubled their imagination to justify it - there were no means of transportation. Baloney! Obviously, they were comfortably taking their time to exploit exclusively the documents brought by the mission, which they had demanded in their entirety. To save the code of the French Intelligence Service of which he had a sample, Carne had been obliged to get in the gas-meter of his hotel room, breaking the lead seal with a red hot razor blade. It was really unpleasant to have to resort to clandestinity in Great Britain in order to maintain

the possibility of speaking freely among Frenchmen. The two-pound-four-shilling-per diem allowance, the clothing coupons and the cordial and flattering hospitality of the indigenous colleagues, did not change anything. Something of course was not functioning properly in the relations between the French and British governmental services; there existed a certain shade of mistrust, even a touch of antagonism. The duty of all Frenchmen was therefore to hold back their sentiments and keep their eyes and their ears open. Without national temperament, we had nine chances out of ten of being duped by an official cordial phraseology and excellent private relations which concealed more complex realities, on a plane higher than that of the individuals concerned.

In Algiers, Carne found that the Americans were running things their own way, that is through economics. Compared to a military occupation, this had the enormous advantage of not being offending. Absolutely not. Somehow, it was an unavoidable material consequence about which individual Americans would readily and sincerely apologize whenever they were aware of it, which however was not very often. In a few cases, they were even capable of personal generosity, a fact which confused the French who are quite a bit more thrifty. Be that as it may, as far as Carne was concerned, Algiers was worse than London.

The French Special Services had no equipment, or almost none: a base station barely sufficient for Interafrican liaisons, no portable transmitters, no spare parts, no equipped quarters and no antenna masts. Nothing. So we had to do business with the Americans.

Particularly as far as communications were concerned, Carne was our best ambassador. From the beginning of 1942, until the 8th of November inclusive, although he was officially radio instructor at the Cavalry School of Algiers, he had taken charge of the clandestine liaisons between the American Consulate, the "Trojan Horse" of the landing, and Tangiers, Gibraltar and London. From November 9, 1942, until the end of January 1943, before his departure on his mission to France, he and all the Frenchmen he had recruited provided good radio-transmissions for the Office of Strategic Services that was still without its technical personnel. All in all, Colonel X..., local Chief of the Office of Strategic Services, could not refuse him anything. Especially since the American resources in material were practically unlimited in 1943.

Colonel X... gave Carne a magnificent RCA transmitter of 350-watt output, the latest model of the American industry, and a new multi-channel receiver which enabled him to begin equipping a fixed station. It was completed with equipment salvaged and "fixed-up" by the French Army Signal Corps, or loaned by an old British friend, Major T..., W... (may I thank him by these words).

"But I'm doing it in the name of friendship and gratitude," would say the true gentleman, Colonel X... "I most certainly will be disavowed and reprimanded by my superiors. So be a good boy and don't ask me for a portable. This would be a virtual demand for my resignation."

It was perfectly clear. Carne had the picture. The American policy was and would remain as follows: "Now that we are installed, we will be

able to rationalize and centralize all the clandestine communications, which is a good technical rule for efficient operation. The French will be able to transmit, providing we are the one to receive."

Carne was smart. He did not make any noise, but he considered himself released from the conventions regulating relations between friends. He used blackmail, furnishing valuable intelligence (which would have been given in any case, that goes without saying) in exchange for broadcasting equipment. However, this did not last very long. Washington quickly put a stop to these practices with a stern order.

"Sorry," said one of X... 's assistants to Carne. "We'll manage anyway. I have a little proposition for you. It does not apply to your organizations already at work in France. But every time you'll have formed a team here ready to go to France, I shall give you all the equipment. Naturally the codes will be placed in our care."

These were the exact words spoken.

"In other words", yelled Carne, "I will be an American recruiting agent in the French services. The French will furnish three men to be killed, caught and tortured, and the Americans a few dollars' worth of equipment, for which they will get in return the monopoly of the harvest, i.e., the intelligence. What a sordid business!"

The advantage of these outbursts of frankness was that their very excess forced one to calm down. This left probably less scars than constant bickering. Carne took hold of himself and changed his attack.

"It's actually stupid and contrary to your interests. Can't you

understand that between us and our men in France, there is more than just intelligence to receive and orders to be given, there is a moral climate which has to be created and maintained? Don't you realize that without a complete faith between the sacrificed soldiers and their chiefs, without a combat comradeship, the work will not be possible? You couldn't understand them, they would explode in your hands. But to us, to me, who have shared their existence, they will give everything."

The American shrugged his shoulders, sincerely sorry. A mutual understanding was impossible. The only thing left to do was to manage as best they could. Here are a few examples of the methods used.

The Office of Strategic Services recruited a Belgian officer who was too old to be parachuted. He asked the Agence Immobiliere to take him to the coast of Spain via the tube, and from there he would reach France through the Pyrenees. Very well. After having boarded the tube, our Belgian friend accepted the crystal (1), the code, and the work plan which would allow him to communicate directly with the French Base Station in Algiers.

The radio equipment of some German and Italian spies in North Africa was captured and was being exploited on the spot to intoxicate the enemy with false information. With this equipment, Carne organized a real exhibition for one lonely visitor, the chief of communications of the Office of Strategic

(1) Small quartz crystal, perfectly calibrated, which determines the wave length for transmissions.

Services. The latter was filled with wonder and amazement, even more than a kid going for the first time to the Ringling Bros. Circus.

"You must give me all that", he said with typical charming Yankee spontaneity. "I'll send it to Washington. There are remarkable improvements which will make it possible for us to perfect our sets."

"Wait a minute", replied Carne. "This will cost you two portables for each one of my sets. Business is business!"

Gain: about ten transmitters which went to the young Agence Immobiliere. Ten times more were needed, for the men were falling like flies.

Couldn't they manufacture some? Carne and Major O..., Chief of the Scientific Section of the General Staff, had already agreed on the plans for a simple and old-fashioned model, but they lacked a number of parts to be able to reach the "manufacturing stage". An investigation revealed that these were available on the free market, in Spain. They were of German or... (I'm sorry to say, but so it was) American origin. The orders were sent by telegram to the comrades of the "Spanish" Agence Immobiliere, who secured them, concealed them in gasoline cans with false bottoms, and sent them via the tube or small boats.

Gain: thirty portable sets. But there were still no crystals.

Fortunately, a few piles of them were stocked at the American Signal Corps Depot in Oran, and it was possible to get anything one wanted through the Italian prisoners working there. In a show of basic decency, one of the lowest subordinate of the Service was given the mission of getting in touch with them. He was warned that he would be disavowed if he was foolish enough

to get caught. At the first try he brought back fifty crystals, and proposed to work full time and move the whole works.

A short time later, some of the new portables had to be dropped into France. The Americans took charge of the air operation and requested that the equipment be brought to them for packing. By coincidence, the chief of communications of the Office of Strategic Services was present.

"Say!" he exclaimed, spitting out his chewing gum in a stupefied reflex. "This French radio equipment built in 1944 has American and German parts with production dates of 1944 also. Funny!"

"Camouflage," answered Carne, grimacing with a terrible urge to laugh in his face.

In the end, in spite of the Americans, the needs of the Agence Immobiliere were satisfied. But, despite the brilliant work of Carne, it was often with considerable delays and the least that can be said is that they were quite detrimental to the Allied cause. I am not bringing this out merely to gripe about the past, but in the hope that some lessons can be drawn from it for the future.

In the American attitude, it is difficult to determine the exact share of valid trust and that of technical conviction. As in all American wars, interest and ideology are inseparable. But this is something else again.

So let us assume that the Americans had no second thoughts when they applied the following principles:

1. There must be only one Base Station in one location for reasons of economy.

2. The base station operators must not know their clandestine counterparts, thus eliminating the risk of committing indiscretions.
3. The Code chief must never be at the same time the radio chief. In this way, no message which does not come from higher authorities will be transmitted.

Theoretically, all this is correct. But these ideas originate from an engineer of a peace-time Telephone and Telegraph Company. In times of clandestine war, they are profound psychological mistakes. To follow these principles, one must ignore all the characteristics of the life of the hunted, the search for shelters, the deadly hide-and-seek games with the DF, the difficulties and slowness of communications, the length of the delay required to hand-carry a message from one place to another, the risks presented by the checkpoints, the road-blocks, the raids, the anguish and demoralization caused by missed contacts, and the overwhelming daily effort on the part of the resisters to push aside all the excuses and the few good reasons for inaction.

If you had experienced all this, even for only one month, you would understand why the directing radio-station of the net, i.e., the one which determines the opening and closing of message traffic, the priorities in the exchange of telegrams, etc., should not have been in Algiers, but actually one of the underground radios. You would understand that only the chief of the latter was capable of judging whether or not the security of the moment might allow him to increase his operating time; that all his requests concerning the frequency of the length of the transmissions had to be immediately

approved without any question; and that all rendez-vous solicited by him had to be accepted, even if a minister was momentarily ignored. The ministers had all the time they needed. If not, it meant that they didn't know how to organize themselves and then, they should have disappeared.

In other words, one had to be at the full disposal of the underground twenty-four hours a day.

Carne as well as the team he had formed and animated, defended the autonomy and the independence of the radio net of the Agence Immobiliere with a fierce stubbornness. Carne was right. The number of calls from the operators in France was still limited, the maximum being about a dozen simultaneously, thus he was able to command the overall network according to the principles of team-work, while the chief of large base station would have produced routine, mechanical work, no matter how conscientious he was.

In the case of Carne, behind the numbers and pseudonyms, there were faces: Simonin and his chief, little Marchand, G...and the big boss Vauthier, real people, whom he knew and loved. What he exchanged with them was not merely a series of dits and dahs. To each word, each phrase, he could attribute a factor of urgency, and one of importance. If, for example, Mr. Vauthier himself came to request a favor, one could be sure that the house was on fire, and one had to "take care" of him, dropping everything else.

Against all the best principles, Carne ran the code shops himself, with the fortunate results that, very often, a telegram received during the night was the object of an answer which was acknowledged by the first party only two hours after his original call. It would have taken days, perhaps eternity,

for a large base station to handle such service.

All the underground operators have bad memory about some lost telegrams. Of course, they had been delivered all right, but then they had gone astray; who knows where? It was the same as a lost file in an administration. One could never tell whether so-and-so was really sent by London or if he was an "agent-provocateur", whether or not they should take the opportunity to disrupt such-and- such factory, and whether or not it was useful to take a plane on a particular night. Well! During the entire war, there never was a request from one of the Agence Immobiliere's radios which remained unanswered. Carne, code chief and radio chief at the same time, aware of all texts in clear going out and coming in, would not have given one instant of respite or sleep to the officer in charge before he had answered all communications.

This was a human system, and its output was far superior to that of any "mass production" complex. Was this done at the price of indiscretions and gossip? No, it wasn't the case. Assuredly, the Agence Immobiliere lost too many radio-operators, but not more than any other net.

To conclude, let us spend one full day with Carne at his Algiers Base-Station, in 1944. Twenty-four of the most ordinary and unimportant hours, twenty-four average hours. It would be too easy to incorporate into it a dramatic touch which would make Andre de Lorde's (1) horror sketch, "Au Telephone", appear merely as a tingling sensation. The only thing necessary would be to bring together in terms of time some events that really took place. It is much more difficult to express the picture of one day when

(1) Translator's note: Dramatic French author who brought tragic horror to its highest degree of intensity.

nothing grave happened, nothing noticeable, because it is essentially dull, erased and quickly forgotten. However, I shall try to do just that. As far as those years are concerned, the truth is more interesting for us contemporaries, and more important for those who will succeed us than the most thrilling of semi-fiction presentations.

In 1944, the great crisis of the Agence Immobiliere' communications system seemed to have been overcome. Its chiefs thought the battle was won. Was it really?

The one observation post from which this can be best evaluated is the radio base station, through which everything passed, both ways: the leaders' orders, the intelligence from the operators and their exchange of views before any land, sea or air operations. It can be compared to the single nerve center of a simpler and less sophisticated system than the human mechanism, which would be the compulsory intermediary between the senses which register, the brain which controls, and the limbs which respond.

If not too many perturbations can be detected, it means that everything is going well.

VI

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AT THE NERVE CENTER OF THE AGENCE IMMOBILIERE IN 1944

Seven o'clock in the morning. The poor man's hour. An alarm-clock rang in a poor man's room of some wretched little hotel in Algiers. It was Carne's home; he was only a Captain in a city crowded with one Government's (or perhaps two? - quite a problem but not the kind to disturb our

officer) countless Public Services as well as International Headquarters. Carne sighed, stretched; qualitatively, he had slept very well. Ever since his service started operating just about normally, his imagination was no longer exacerbated by the apparently unsurmountable difficulties of the beginning. He was no longer kept awake for hours, meditating, compiling, calculating, raging, and planning in the dark. His nerves became progressively dull, or were hardened as if covered by a protective gangue. The waiting for the results of the operation under way at the time he went to bed no longer made him toss about in his noisy bed. The emotion caused by a transmission which had suddenly stopped in the middle of a message no longer roused him with a jolt. In short, Carne had adjusted and therefore, he had slept like a log. But, quantitatively, it was not enough, only five hours. In his opinion, this was the maximum to be allowed to keep the house in good running order in view of the prevalent situation.

He closed his eyes again. By not shaving until noon in the men's room at El Biar, he could gain another fifteen minutes of sleep.

But this time nothing doing. He sat up with a start. He grumbled. Suddenly, all his preoccupations of the previous day overwhelmed him. He was now awake, as if he had walked through a cold shower. How successful had the equipment drop been? The one that, on the previous evening, he had loaded at Blida in a Halifax heading for the old Agence Immobiliere. It was a heavy load. Fourteen suitcase-radios, spare parts, plans, codes and to keep them happy, a can of pipe tobacco and a case of cigarettes.

Tulipe, the sub-net which was involved, had acknowledged the receipt of his instructions, but had it been able to get its men to the DZ? Had the British pilot found the DZ? This area which Carne knew like his own pocket. He could see it in his mind with photographic accuracy. It was a plateau to the east of the Gorges of the Loire between Monistrol and Firminy. An old medieval castle dominated the area. Enough of its ruins remained for it to serve as a landmark for the pilots if, for one reason or another, the reception party did not light the drop zone beacons.

Carne had known all of them more or less intimately during his stay in France. He had prepared the operation with them, from Algiers. He was living the action with them. The furtive approach, the anxious waiting, the night which made everything more exciting or harder to bear, depending upon one's disposition, a fact which cannot be anticipated nor explained. The ardent Rambaud, the new radio chief of the Agence Immobiliere in France was undoubtedly there, flanked by a few of his faithful "pianists" (operators), L..., G..., and A..., the pessimist of the group who grumbled: "I'm sure they won't come!". They had taken advantage of the special equipment drop to abandon their keys for a while, and took a short vacation to participate in what they called an active operation, as if their daily work could have been considered passive. Great guys! I would have liked to have seen their faces upon opening the suitcases! a real treasure! Carne could almost hear them laugh. He was actually laughing with them. Rambaud probably said: "Say A..., are you beginning to believe in Santa Claus?". Let us hope that...

Carne, who had begun to smear his face with shaving soap couldn't stand

it any longer. He picked up the telephone receiver. This really was a luxury in such a dump, but an essential instrument for the officer's work. Carne called the Blida Air Force Base. Immediate connection.

"Hello! Ah! Carne? Well, well... Sorry, old man."

It was the voice of the officer in charge of the drops, S...! If he said SORRY, it meant that something went wrong.

"I spent all night on the field. I was ready to go to sleep. Yes they came back, thank you. They located the exact spot, thanks to the ruins of your castle and the ghosts. Thank you for the detail. It was very good. They flew very low. Sure. Yes. Sure. But there was no trace of a reception committee... They did not insist very long. No. They circled around so much that the Firminy flak finally greeted them. No damage. But the night fighters could have been on the way, you know..."

"S...!!" yelled Carne in French. "Hum... excuse me. That means sorry."

"I know", replied the Britisher. "I've learned it."

"We start again tonight?"

"All right with me. But be a good boy and don't call me before noon. Good night."

Pensively, his gaze and spirits elsewhere, Carne ran his razor on his cheeks, cut himself, and swore. So there had been a snag. Could it be that one of the comrades had been arrested since the receipt of Tulipe's last message? That was possible. It was two days old, and a lot happened in France in that time, even in one day! Or, could it be that they had not heard the confirming message of the previous night over the B.B.C.? Unlikely.

Impossible.

So Carne was again plunged in the throes of his work, and not in the best of moods. As a matter of fact, it was in a somber mood that he dressed rather perfunctorily, wondering what sort of catastrophe he would be called on to announce. In a flash, he saw the good Mr. Vauthier whom he had seen one day in Auvergne, looking ten years older than his age, wearily bent over a paper he hesitated to fill out because it would serve to announce more arrests and because, as he said: "It will completely demoralize Algiers, and they'll think we're done for." No one, not even Mr. Vauthier, had immediately realized the unconscious humor of that statement.

So much for the reflexions. It was time to go to the El Biar Base Station. The watch must have been eventless since no one had called Carne. That was a good sign. Now, he wasn't being awoken more than once every three nights, on the average. The Captain took his car out of the garage and drove at breakneck speed up to the hills of Algiers, in the heart of the indescribable traffic congestion of the time, which left the American MPs somewhat helpless and skeptical, and reduced them to the passive role of scoffed at law enforcement monuments.

As he drove by the Bus Station of El Biar, Carne saw one of the night shift radio-operators yawning while waiting for a car to take him to downtown Algiers. Carne stopped next to him.

"Anything new, buddy?"

The other fellow blinked with owlsh eyes. He was already half-asleep.

"No Sir. Ah! yes, in fact. Important too. At six o'clock, two

telegrams from Glaieul. Very bad reception. After twenty minutes, it wasn't over yet. But I remembered your advice: "Think about the security of our little comrades in France; don't let them take risks with too long a broadcast, etc... So too bad if X... who was at the other end is now angry. I cut off and suggested another contact at 11 PM to finish the message."

"All right" said Carne. "You did the right thing. Those idiots are liable to get caught for the love of their art. When they start to squeal..."

He started off, feeling happy that he hadn't been talking to a blank wall when he told his teams in Algiers: "...Fellowship... your responsibilities... watch over your comrades in France." But he wondered at the same time with apprehension what could have disturbed Glaieul, normally a quiet and methodical radio, with whom contacts were usually models of regularity.

His first visit in the Base was to the code-room.

"Those two telegrams? Absolutely undecipherable!" exclaimed one of the best specialists who had been bent over them for more than two hours.

Carne displayed nervous impatience.

"General meeting" he ordered.

When all the code specialists were assembled around him, he cleared his voice, letting out a volley of curses, then continued:

"For the umpteenth time, I'm telling you that you are privileged, and your privileges can only be justified by the services you render. I want you to decipher those two messages. To have them sent again by Glaieul's operator might mean his death. That little guy is not anonymous to me.

I spent several weeks with him in France. He's a real nice guy. If anything happened to him on account of you, I would never forgive you. He's going to contact us at 11 PM, but we'll only pick up what follows normally. Remember: Here, the customer is always right."

The dead silence, the beaten look on the faces of his colleagues, none of whom would have thought of arguing for one minute, suddenly calmed Carne down. They knew all of this, they scrupulously went by the rules. Let's admit it! He was talking through his hat. He had been unfair!

"Let's see" he started, with a lowered voice. "There is only one possible hypothesis: He mustn't have used his cipher-key properly. Nothing surprising about it when you're working clandestinely, between a raid and a sweep by the Boches. Let's think. Let's put ourselves in our buddy's shoes. Perhaps the Gestapo visited his hideout last night. Maybe he just barely escaped, jumping over the back-yard fence. I saw the place. It leads to a working class community which is too vast to be surrounded, but full of little gardens through which it is pretty hard to get away. He probably went to report to his section chief. I saw him too. He's not a bad guy, but a little rough. He might have said: "All right. You're here, that's the main thing. But you're late. Why don't you help me encipher this message that just came in. It has to go tonight at all costs." Assuming all this, what could have been their error? Work your brains up, my little friends, because I bet you he's not going to repeat his two telegrams. Your brains are not as important as his skin. I'm going..."

"O.K. Captain," said the chief cipher specialist. "It's a

systematical error. I shall prepare a list of erroneous code-keys as could happen when one is in a hurry, and we'll use them methodically."

"That's right. Let's get going. Systematically and methodically. Perfect!"

8:30 AM. An upset radio operator trampled at the door of Carne's office.

As soon as he saw him:

"Captain, Sir, I was looking for you," he exclaimed. "Come quickly and listen to the touch of ...(let's say) Rhododendron. It sounds funny today. Hurry up. It has been going on for six minutes already."

Carne rushed down the stairs to the monitoring room and put on the earphones. His face lit up.

"Don't worry," he said to the operators gathered around him like a group of relatives. No. It's fat Y... all right, who's fingering the key. Note how he separates the dahs from the dits in his separation signs and his fraction lines. Especially the fractions. He hates those. They are a mystery to him. It's him all right. And he's working without a Boche in his back. To start with, he would have sent the signal of "working under control", without a doubt. He didn't do it, did he?

"No."

"O.K. Let me tell you what is going on. Even though it's only 8:30 AM, our little friend Y... has already had one too many. With the dog's life they're living over there, one has to find support as best one can according to preferences, and any one of us who would laugh about

it, would be a dirty draft-dodger. Under such circumstances, Y... sometimes loses a bit of his legendary calm and fumbles his key. Any one of you guys would be shaking so much that you would establish new speed records on the set, but could only send out dahs. All right now. Carry on."

Carne went back up to the code room. Alas! some of the men had had to abandon Glaieul's telegrams to encode and decode the outgoing and incoming messages which were increasing in number, especially the incoming ones. However, Carne was comforted by one glance at them. There was no catastrophe, or he would have seen it on their faces. He was the one who had moulded them. He grabbed a bundle of telegrams which the chief operator was handing to him and went over the texts rapidly.

Larva, the young section of Marseille, was giving the co-ordinates of a new parachute drop zone which was being proposed for the approval of the Allied Air Force.

Camelia had finally seen the light in the terrifying mix-up of large Armored Units which swarmed in Southern France and had puzzled all the intelligence gathering organizations for so long. It was only the regrouping into one unit of several Panzer Divisions, the Gotz von Berlichingen, the Adolf Hitler, the Grossdeutschland, etc..., which had been severely beaten in Russia.

From Soleil, there was precise information on the manufacture of the V-1s which was being done in Mulhouse. Now Mulhouse would have to go. Too bad. This was a city which every one would wish to see spared from

bombings!

Pivoine was informing of an imminent operation against the maquis of Cantal. This was urgent.

The remainder wasn't so urgent, except perhaps... funny, this message from ... (let's say) Lotus. What could this be concealing? Disturbing. Will have to talk to the boss about it.

Here! This is from Dahlia, that good Mr. Vauthier, "notre petit père à tous" (our little daddy) as Carne called him since he had lived in France with him; Dahlia, who took the trouble of adding at the end of a short radiogram:

"Very happy with results of new contact. Thank you for your patience."

Carne smiled for the first time that day. Well! the ones who lived dangerously appreciated what was being done behind the scenes to support them. That was mighty good of them, for they could very well think that those in Algiers were only there to serve them and receive their observations. Great guys!

9:30 AM. Carne walked into the office of P..., the big boss, handed the papers over to him, then drafted and presented the following message for his approval:

"P... to Tulipe. Plane circled over field last night. Did not drop anything as could find no sign of reception committee. Same operation scheduled again for next night, same time, same plan."

This message, after being coded, was to be broadcast at 3:00 PM. Thus, even if Tulipe didn't hear the agreed upon phrase over the B.B.C.,

it would be forewarned.

"It is very strange," said P..., "that they haven't explained their absence yet. Perhaps their set is out of order."

"Well... hum... I almost hope it is", answered Carne.

The two men were preoccupied with the same thoughts.

"As for the rest, everything is all right", reported Carne. "With the exception of Lotus, who had been playing dead for a whole week, and woke up to tell of a shady story about some collaborator policeman. That puzzles me. I wonder..."

P... was laughing wholeheartedly.

"No. Don't worry" he said. "I know Lotus like the back of my hand. He has great qualities and, like everybody, some faults too. He is a former policeman, and a counter-intelligence one. So, even if his hometown were completely wiped out by the "Fritz" and half the population arrested, he couldn't consider the matter important unless some informers, or even better, a policeman, were mixed up in it."

"Ah! well, O.K." replied Carne.

He felt better. P... knew all his section leaders as well as Carne knew his own personnel.

"By the way," said P..., since we have finally a few minutes of respite, have you thought about the problem I mentioned to you?"

"Hum... Which one?" asked Carne.

"To avoid completely the DF detection."

"Yes. I have a plan. It's being drafted and typed. You'll have it

tonight. It's practically impossible with the present front line conditions. But, let us just advance to the pass of X..., and I take it upon myself to install some extra short-wave transmitters capable of communicating between X... on one side, and the coast, in the Y... region, on the other.

"Sure?"

"Absolutely. The sets are there. I could go to France and get it started."

"No. You'll stay here. I need you here. Train a man to do the job, but hurry. I have a hunch it won't be too long before we go beyond the pass of X... Secret."

"O.K."

The telephone rang. P... picked up the receiver and handed it immediately to Carne.

"It's for you, from the Admiralty."

While listening to his caller without interrupting him, not even with an exclamation, Carne was becoming more and more intensely jubilant.

"Swell! All right. I'm coming," he said.

Then he hung up.

"Great news," Major Sir... "The submarine from Spain has arrived and I was just advised that there are two hundred kilos of merchandise for me."

"Take off."

Two hours later, Carne erupted again in his chief's office, this time without even knocking on the door.

"Hurrah! Major. I guarantee you'll have about fifteen suitcase radios within a very short time. They only have to be assembled. It is the American spare parts and equipment I had requested for purchase in Spain all right. Nothing is missing. Everything in good condition."

The ensuing lunch was affected by this success. They had it at the mess hall, to tighten the bonds of friendship within the team. Nothing like it. Especially when all the rites and hierarchical formalities were momentarily set aside to obey, for fun, the youngest or the oddest one of the band, designated as "General of the day." It was Carne who had all the absolute authority of this temporary dictatorial individual, and even when he felt sad, he saw to it that every one was gay at the tables. But today, he didn't have to feign happiness. Nothing stood in the way of the natural exuberance of his wholesome temperament. He unleashed his emotions and broke a few plates, one of them over the head of some undisciplined character, who had the tact of finding the whole thing quite funny.

2:00 PM. Every one was now relaxed and had buckled down again to the common task. The Code and Radio rooms were like two well-ordered and methodically busy bee-hives. Carne went by, and nobody saw him.

He walked into his office, realizing all of a sudden that it was the first time he had been able to do it that day. A fresh bunch of telegrams was on his desk.

At his regular contact of 11 AM G.M.T. (noon, local time), Glaieul announced, without any error in the transmission this time, (why had he stammered about earlier, why?) :

"Toulon base sent torpedo boat to Corsica to pick up two S.R.A. (German Intelligence Service) agents who had been left there previously. Launch returned damaged with wounded on board."

Thus was the conclusion of an adventure which Carne followed up closely and observed from afar. The Germans had dropped two spies in Corsica whom we had intercepted. Their radio set, under our control, had continued to operate sending intoxication intelligence. But the military situation had evolved to such a point that they could have normally gathered only unimportant information. To make them say anything else would have been hard to believe. So the affair was brought to a rapid conclusion. It was better to end things beautifully.

On our orders, the two prisoners requested a launch to be repatriated. It had come to the pre-arranged rendez-vous all right, but its crew wasn't born just the day before; they weren't timid either. Its captain, named Berger, had himself thrown alone, like a lost child, on the shore. He fell into our hands. Good catch. But, during the brief exchange of burning courtesies which followed their initial surprise, the men who had remained on board were only wounded and, unfortunately, managed to put out to sea. Too bad! It was hoped they would perish at sea!

Anyway, congratulations Glaieul! Nothing much of what went on along the coast of Provence escaped them.

Now the station in Spain was announcing the reception of a voluminous batch of mail from France and advised that it was forwarding it via a special route.

Then Lys requesting that Algiers inform the Spanish base station that the route across the Pyrenees taken by Jojo to come from France, was no longer safe, and that the first link of the channel in France must be urgently alerted. "Details follow."

Strange coincidence. One lost channel, two newly found ones. Baden-Savoie triumphantly announced that it had created, tried out successfully, and broken in a new evasion channel ready to be used again, and that it was perfecting another one.

B... suggested two air operations.

A..., representing the chief of the "Combat" Resistance Movement in France, was requesting from P... the permission for him and an aviation ace to use the Christian channel.

Not the shade of a catastrophe in the other five telegrams.

There was a knock on the door and the coding chief appeared, radiating joy.

"Sir, we have just deciphered the first of the two puzzles from Glaieul and the other one is on the way. You were right. There was a systematic error and we've gotten down to the root of the problem."

"Stop fidgeting" said Carne. "Pass the merchandise."

He read:

"In order to provide reference concerning me to important information source, request you broadcast over the B.B.C. for three consecutive days the following message: -- Charles le Temeraire died in 1447! --"

"O.K." said Carne.

But the visitor still was not leaving. He had something to say which was not coming out any easier than the Glaieul telegrams.

"Come on," said Carne.

"Captain, I would like... Well, the other guys and I could have thought about this this morning... so... everybody is rather embarrassed..."

"Why? Because I blew my top?"

"No. Not that. We're used to it. But... because you seemed to think that..."

"I didn't think anything at all," Carne retorted. "I was mad, that's all. I know that you, the others, and I are on one team, sharing the same kind of life, that the joys and sorrows of one are those of all and... and that's enough. Don't bother me. Bring me the second telegram."

Through the door left ajar by the decoder who had rushed out, a nose and one eye were peering in, hesitated, immobilizing themselves.

"Come in" Carne said.

It was Z..., one of the oldest radio operators of the house, a tall and thin guy, about thirty, originally from Oran, half-Spanish, excellent technician, serious and not very talkative. Of a somber appearance, he seemed embarrassed that day. He made a gesture that started like a Vaude-villian military salute and ended like a civilian tip of the hat. He stood there in front of Carne's desk, his cap in his hand, and rocking from one foot to the other.

"What's wrong, Z...?"

"Nothing. I'd like to go to France," Z... blurted out.

"Ah!" replied Carne.

He got up.

"Why?"

"Well... you always talk about it, Captain. So, little by little, you put that idea into my head."

"Ah," Carne repeated.

The two men looked at each other fixedly. Carne was a little moved, Z... was on the defensive, stiff, ready to step back.

"Are you married Z...?"

"Oh! It's been so long!" answered Z... as an excuse. "And then, my wife runs a little shop. She's doing all right. So, you know, it's the one and unique opportunity for me to see France on a free trip. After the war, I'll have to start working again..."

Z..., now wound up, explained his views garrulously. Carne understood quite well what Z... did not want to say, and this was the only thing that counted: The young man had self-respect. What happened was that, after a while, he was irritated to hear constantly about the virtues and sacrifices of the radiomen in France. Such a motive was not a bad one, providing it wasn't just a whim.

"After the war... after the war... you make me laugh," said Carne.

"The pianists on the other side, not many of them will see the end of the war. They are dropping like flies."

Z... made some kind of disgustful gesture.

"That I know. You've told us often enough."

"It's a dirty dog's life!", boomed Carne, furious. "Nothing to eat. Getting slugged from all sides. Never a minute of quiet..."

"So what! They're guys just like the others after all! They've never been able to break three legs on a duck?"

"No. But they're not trying to be smart."

Z... blushed and finally began shouting as loud as his chief:

"I don't either, if that's what you mean. I wouldn't do such a thing. But...but..."

So it was a real feeling. He didn't know how, did not dare, and did not want to let out certain words. Carne interrupted the test.

"You're a nice guy Z... Think it over until to-morrow."

"My mind is made up. And it didn't happen yesterday."

"All right," said Carne, "come with me." It just so happens that I'm having a technical training session for a batch of three guys who are standing by to go to France."

For an hour and a half, Carne talked to his brood of four volunteers without reservation. It sure didn't look at all like any regular course. These people were already excellent operators. It was rather a series of stories in which the theme and the main thread could have been entitled: "Caution is the fundamental virtue." After that, he let his "action addicts" tinker with suit-case type equipment to practice stop-gap repairs.

He made a quick trip to his office. Two new telegrams were waiting for him. Would he ever stop some day feeling this stupid little nervous sensation which caused a cold sweat to run down his back every time he

glanced at the "incoming" forms duly filled out. What was it? Nothing serious? Quite the contrary. Carne started laughing to himself.

The first message was from his radio man in Morocco, who operated the set that Captain Gahrken, of the Amt Ausland from Munster (German Overseas Spying Agency), had officially given to the Belair mission, air-dropped in that North African territory, to drive out the American invader (1). All these knights-crusaders had been jailed now for quite some time and we were using their transmitters with the intention of intoxicating the German Services. To make things more credible, along with the intelligence we sometimes sent in requests, of the type that Belair and associates would have made, had they really been in the course of disrupting the entire Maghreb. At the same time, this enabled us to measure the German faith. It was complete.

The Germans were requested on the day before to drop on a well indicated field, funds, equipment, and tires which were terribly scarce in North Africa at the time. Gahrken had just answered: "O.K. At the next moon. Congratulations and thanks." Good old Gahrken! Nice Gahrken!

The second telegram, from Tunisia, was about a much more important intoxication mission, due to the position of the person involved in the game with the enemy for our benefit. It was also, it seemed, in a very good posture.

Carne took both documents to P...; held another short conference with him, and left with a batch of "Outgoing" telegrams to be coded and forwarded. It was a series of instructions from the Command to the stations in

(1) See Vol II, Chapter IV.

France. These were never imperative: "Try...", "See about...", Could you?..."

Carne distributed the work among the teams, had dinner in a flash, jumped in a car and sped to Blida to make sure that all his merchandise due to be parachuted near Firminy was going to be on the plane, for a second try. Very nice these Englishmen! For it was never very wise to conduct unsuccessful operations all over again.

How happy would Carne would have been to board the plane, had our Allies permitted a Frenchman to get on and supervise the work. It would have been fun to fly over the heads of Rambaud and his men! Alas, it could not be! Unthinkable!

At last the aircraft took off. Carne had done everything he could. He remained a while on the strip, dreaming, then his British friend tapped him on the shoulder.

"Well, well, we'll try to take you along next time. Go catch some sleep, you're tired."

Sleep? That was impossible. Carne had firmly established the principle that no one was to leave El Biar before all telegrams received during the day were decoded, and all texts in clear were encoded. Nevertheless, the brains of the House, those half-wits!, persisted in delivering their "salad" at the end of the day. It seemed that it could not be otherwise. Of course, the work could have been done without Carne. But he wouldn't have been content and satisfied with himself if he hadn't been able to say his daily: "All right day shift, get to bed."

He went back at breakneck speed to El Biar, where he arrived at 10:00 PM, the uneventful hour before the last shot is fired, and headed for his office. While opening the door of the hall leading to the code room, he saw a civilian standing there, reading with visible curiosity the office bulletins affixed to the wall. Automatically, Carne took out his pistol which never left him, for it was not unusual in those days for one to find oneself naked on a public thoroughfare, as a result of a nocturnal attack by a band of Arabs.

"Hands up!"

The civilian complied without trouble . Even without the least visible emotion.

"What are you doing here? Who are you?"

"I am the Algiers Committee's Commissioner for Prisoners of War and Deported."

What? This slender blond young man would be practically a minister? a civil-servant minister? The ebullient Carne did not like to be taken for a fool.

"And I am tall Charles, my friend. Step ahead, we'll talk about it. Keep your hands up, young man. Higher please."

The young man Carne was addressing burst out laughing.

"I assure you..."

From the hallway erupted Major P... and Captain Letranger, who were momentarily stuck to the ground at the spectacle.

"Hey!," shouted P... at last. "So this is how you treat my guest,"

Carne? I can't have someone over for dinner at the mess-hall and leave him one moment without..."

"Ah!," started Carne. "Because ... the gentleman is? My goodness, Mr. Minister, you must admit... forgive my..."

"Can I let my hands down?" questioned humbly the leader of the "Combat" Movement.

General laughter ensued.

"And now, old boy, don't call me Mr. Minister. We're among friends!"

Because in those days, everybody was a comrade, right up to that echelon.

The four officers went to Carne's office. A new pile of telegrams was on the table. There was that little sensation again. Carne went through the papers rapidly and mechanically like an old bank-cashier. It was enough for him to say:

"No catastrophe today, Major."

Then he proceeded to examine them more closely.

"Pavot... Eglantine... Camelia... Bratislava... Hambourg... Clotilde... Linz... Camelia again... and a whole batch from the young ones. This is full of good stuff, Sir. Not a bad day. Thirty-seven telegrams received, with no bad news, twenty-four sent out. We've contacted a good third of the comrades. Let us hope it lasts."

"It's been going on for some time already," said Letranger.

"Say," started the Government Commissioner, "you sure have won your case! When I think of our beginnings, when I was struggling with a

handful of guys in the fog of Lyon! What a time! and what a change!"

P... 's bright eyes darkened slightly.

"Yes, I think so," he said. "We start all over each day. But everything is all right! Everything is fine! They aren't under the impression of working for nothing any more. They are no longer alone."

"If only we could have equipment," mumbled Letranger. "We have men, but the equipment..."

"Still haven't heard from Tulipe?" asked P...

"Nothing," answered Carne. "I hope that..."

He shrugged his shoulders and continued, angrily:

"When I think that not once can we go to bed with a completely rested mind. What could have happened?"

And then, for several minutes, not a word was spoken; the four men did not even look at each other. It was P... who was the first to return his thoughts to North Africa.

"In short, no news, good news, as the good people say. Let's hope. Let's go have a cup of coffee. It will keep you awake, Carne. Your day isn't over yet."

CHAPTER III

ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE LANDING IN PROVENCE

THE MISSIONS OF COLONEL JOSEPH, ALIAS FAISCEAU

o o o

I

THE NEED FOR DIRECT LIAISONS

The two preceding chapters concern themselves with communications, i.e., the means to insure liaison, in clandestine warfare. The presented facts have led me to state, several times, that there are cases where a personal relationship between the chief and his subordinates avers itself necessary. This will always remain a truism, no matter how perfect the long distance communications, made available by the technicians' scientific know-how, the agents' brains and the courage displayed by such and such individuals.

This can be explained very easily; and a few simple theoretical considerations would be sufficient to settle the matter.

War is not an administrative machine. To conduct it successfully, the leader must obtain, at all echelons, not only the work and physical, as well as mental discipline of his men, but (and here lies the whole difference with other human enterprises), their sacrifice, and their willingness to offer their own skin. To realize this, the leader's voice,

his look, his "presence", in the almost mystical sense of this word which is more and more commonly used, will accomplish far more than the most rousing of daily citations. I met in the underground two comrades who had spent five minutes with General de Gaulle in a private interview, in his office on Duke Street in London. They had derived from it a self-confidence and an authority which struck me and gave them an unquestionable superiority over the others in terms of action. So much for the morale.

From the intellectual viewpoint, it is even more evident and clearer, that a relationship between men entrusted with the same combat mission is indispensable in all circumstances. And especially in the most difficult of situations, when the matter involves a convergence of efforts between an occupying Army and the insurgents inside a fortified place. The latter, by their position alone, can greatly contribute to the final success, but they are weak and at the mercy of a well-aimed strike. Their work, their life are very complex. Their missions, assigned by too distant a chief who is not quite aware of their ever-changing capabilities, are necessarily very vague and leave a lot to the initiative and interpretation of the actual participants. The problems they face are such that delays in execution can be neither anticipated nor set. The circumstances are so varied that an assigned operation sometimes becomes useless, and the communications so unpredictable that the performers may not always be advised. In such a case, they will sacrifice themselves in vain.

They constitute a very meager lever, but the only one with which one

can act against certain vital centers of the enemy. Let one determine the appropriate focus of their main effort, and the least of their pressure could be decisive. But let one make a mistake on that, and they will be somewhere else, useless, or dead, when the crucial moment of the attack comes.

All the written reports, orders, directives and plans won't be able to change anything. Neither will telephone and radio facilities. What is imperative is a face to face meeting where one can interrupt, question and discuss. Where one can even argue instead of letting a newly born or fugitive idea pass unnoticed, instead of remembering too late after the ordeal some serious objection, instead of avoiding to say what one thinks because it would be too long, too difficult, too delicate, and perhaps one might be misunderstood or misjudged, and finally instead of committing oneself reluctantly. Without an intellectual meeting of minds between the leader and his subordinates, especially among Frenchmen, an adequate leadership is precluded, therefore inefficient action results. People still get killed, but then it might be useless.

The violins must be tuned before a concert, just as the minds and desires before a battle. The true story I am about to relate will prove this much better than the most clever of fiction which could be built around this subject.

But I discovered, after gathering all these remembrances, that they comprise another capital lesson. They demonstrate that the untiring efforts of men of good will are seldom in vain. The precise goal initially set

is not always reached, but something useful can always be drawn from it. I have already stated this as far as the Young Agence Immobiliere is concerned. The war of General Z..., who had been simultaneously or successively Mr. Menard, Colonel Joseph, and Colonel Faisceau, illustrates this even better.

This has made me change my mind radically about William of Orange's famous maxim. Do you know it? "One need not be hopeful to undertake, nor successful to persevere." I had always felt some doubt as to its contents which seem too beautiful, too superhuman, and even too inhuman. In short, I thought it was a bit too literary, created in retrospect for the benefit of the heroes; and too heavy to bear and too pretentious for the ordinary men or the ones still alive; finally very difficult to be applied in the course of one's life.

Well! With the addition of: "Something useful will always remain," I now believe it becomes a guiding rule, a solemn oath, a principle within reach of the common mortals.

In the course of a command meeting, Colonel Faisceau exercised one day a very auspicious and perhaps decisive influence over one of the most important field operations of 1944. I am afraid he might hold it against me to write about it, for he is one of these men who are most sincerely and more purely humble. Anyway, I shall tell of it. We will always be reconcilable, for too much has happened between us; he will know for sure that if I "exploit his case", it will not be in his nor in my interest.

However, before this effective intervention, Colonel Faisceau had

gone through one failure after another in everything he had undertaken in the preceding five years, as every one of us did. His failures as well as his triumphs are worth being told, even if it means running the risk of confusing at times the two trains of thought and the two morals taken from this long story which are so simple and so strong: "get together before fighting and never give up."

II
ONE OF THE COMPONENTS OF
THE ARMY OF THE INTERIOR - THE FIRST
FAILURES

There is one constituent part of the French Forces of the Interior about which we have not elaborated much since the Liberation, and when we did, it was in such a manner that silence would have been better. It is the Army itself, the professional soldiers. Many who fought much longer and more efficiently than others have become irritated, disgusted, and sickened by our words. This is especially regrettable since if we undertake one day to reorganize an Army in France (I mean a real one), we will have to call on their sons. The heroes who revealed themselves, or the ones who were "fabricated" have for a long time become civilians again. All of them. Even those who jumped five ranks in a single promotion! They have ceased to serve, sometimes to help themselves. We are too much inclined to forget that the vocation for an Army career is often hereditary. Any person can teach a child how to earn money. But the influence of a father is more than necessary to convince the child that one can be happy while starving.

Z... came from an old and large Alsatian family, of military background. In spite of the fact that he had to fear the worst from the Germans, his father, a retired general, stayed after the invasion in his home located in the Haut-Rhin, in order to maintain there by his own presence and for as long a time as it was possible, the French tradition.

As could be expected, it did not take long for the Germans to find him and to expulse him. If, in victory, they never respected much of their adversary, in 1914-1918 their ruling classes still feigned some regards for the leaders and the military honor of the vanquished. The Nazis had less manners. With them, the enemy officers had to bend, to dishonor themselves or disappear. General Z... knew this more than anyone else. And in his country, he represented a symbol of resistance to the Germans. He had no illusion: if he tried to resist them, they would seize the slightest pretext to assassinate him one way or the other. But not caring for his personal safety, when soldiers forced his door and ordered him to leave immediately, he answered them with cold dignity:

"Obviously, you can arrest me. If you do not arrest me, I will leave because you are forcing me to do so, but only when I am ready and by my own means."

The ruffians were still of the first generation of Nazis. Surprised, they saluted and retreated.

Henry Z..., the eldest son of the general, was an artillery major who had graduated from the Staff College in 1939.

After the 1940 defeat, he was appointed chief of the G-1 section of the Army of the Armistice. I have already mentioned the spirit which animated this headquarters. (1) . His superior, General Verneau, died in deportation. The G-2, Colonel Baril, was to fight incessantly until

(1) See Chapter I, Vol. I

his death, a few weeks after the landing in Algeria, of which he was one of the architects; while the G-3 was to command an armored Division in 1944 and covered himself with glory in Alsace.

As for Z..., G-1, his job was not only to maintain the combat effectiveness of the Army of Africa, which did not seem an impossible task at first glance, but the High Command had a more ambitious intention: to deliver to the Allies, when they would be ready, a large part of our Atlantic coast including a port with deep waters. It was Z... assisted by another Alsatian as obstinate as he was, Infantry Colonel P..., also a graduate from Staff College, who for two years had the enormous responsibility of setting up the appropriate organization in the midst of material difficulties and overwhelming anxieties. It was necessary to extirpate from this skeleton of a disarmed Army, eight mobile groups with sufficient weapons, then secretly organize eight more, and another eight. They also had to anticipate the distant future, which meant the salvage by concealment of the various Services necessary for the revival and the life of a great Army: from the Recruiting section - of which the Germans required the suppression, but which was clandestinely reorganized by the Inspector General of the Army, Carmille, before his death in a deportation camp - to the fabrication of armaments, the Medical Service, the Quartermaster, and a dozen other services.

Z... and P... performed their task successfully. At what price one can imagine! But the Allies, by landing first in North Africa only, rendered useless this forged tool, rudimentary but real. It was not even used

in a "baroud d'honneur" (fight for glory) which as I have said before and will repeat now, I personally do not regret for I have learned the "price of blood" in this war.

For fifteen days prior to the dissolution of the Army of the Armistice on November 27, 1942, a feverish and vain agitation similar to the burst of activity in a disturbed beehive, was reigning at the Hotel des Bains in Vichy, the location of the High Command. Having missed his departure for Algiers, Major Bardin came one day to say goodbye to his friends before entering into total clandestinity. The officers, some excited, some discouraged - there was no middle way - were discussing endlessly in the hallways. The offices were deserted. The only thing left there was a small number of files. Actually, too few of them. The Germans were to ask for the rest of the papers. It was too obvious for them to miss it. In the G-3 section, absolutely no one. In the G-4 offices, only one officer who was emptying the drawers.

"What are you going to do?" inquired Bardin.

"Me? I am going to become a secretary for a farmers' association."

"No kidding! You are incapable of distinguishing a carrot from a raw cabbage. But... where?"

"Hum... in the Pau area... somewhere in the south... Can you see it from here?"

"Ah! what a joke!" exclaimed Bardin. "Is your channel a sure thing?"

"We have yet to create it. Are you interested?"

"Sure I am."

"Then you can find me at X... I am going to be there for some time."

Against all expectation, the G-2 was the only office presenting some kind of life. People were going in and out, stopping for a moment to contemplate the new wall maps. In the G-1 office, Z... was alone, sitting in front of a table on which was laid a single sheet of paper. He had a pencil in his hand. He was thinking. His affable face lit up at the sight of Bardin.

"What are you doing here, colonel?" asked the latter. "All the others have hardly a foot on the ground. Of their heads, we shall not even speak. And you, you are sitting down, strong as a rock. What's your game?"

"I am working," replied Z...

"That's a good one!"

"Seriously," added Z...

Surprised, Bardin looked at him. There was no doubt, Z... was not joking.

"Of anyone else, said Bardin, I would think: the poor old chap can't live without it. But you are far from being a beast of burden. You must be tired of the work. If one has the right to be persuaded of his own uselessness in the Army (I mean uselessness of effort) it is you..."

The major's face darkened.

"The worst one of the BAR men can do more work in one day in Tunisia than all of us in two years. Everything that we tried to save... lost..."

in one second."

"Certainly not, not at all," affirmed Z... "Not at all".

He smiled. He used to smile often during these years, and while it was an unnatural and devoid of joy smile, it was still good to see it. But he always bent his head at first, in a curious defensive gesture, which probably had become instinctive. I never understood the reasons for this! May be it was his way to meditate in privacy, and the short-lived spark one could see then in his eyes could have been the reflection of his inner confidence. Maybe he was trying to avoid anything which could resemble, in our situation, a boasting attitude? Maybe in order to encourage others, he was getting ready to show more optimism than he felt himself, and in this case, this case only, his short-lived spark was really an escape from reality? Maybe after all, it was only the reflex of a stubborn man? I do not know.

"Not at all," he continued. "Everything is going to become more and more difficult, but nothing is lost."

"It is evident," replied Bardin, turning red, "that we must continue our intelligence work. Obviously, the Germans have lost the war. Obviously there will be a French Army participating in the victory. What I mean though is that we will not be part of it unless we disappear now and quickly. I just saw L... He is getting ready to go, through Spain. I believe it's what we must do, is it not?"

"It is an honorable solution," answered Z... "but some must stay. There will be much work to do here. First, we must organize the sabotage

of the German war machine, and for this task we are in a good position. We do not need a great number of personnel. There will always be enough when the time comes. The ammunition dumps will hold out, and if not we will always find the way to have parachute drops bring us what we need. I hope also that we will do much more. You know, my friend, I have no idea how many Airborne Divisions and parachutists the Allies have. It is quite costly to organize such units, and it is a long and difficult task! You cannot imagine it because you were never trained in G-1 and G-4 work. In your opinion, how many divisions?"

"Of course," replied Bardin, "I could answer you as far as the Germans are concerned. The contrary would be the last straw. But the Allies are not my field. Let's see. How many? Five?"

"Assuming this is true," said Z..., "How many men would this represent?"

"Sixty thousand men?"

"Approximately yes. Good. And qualitatively, don't you think this would be sufficient to win the decision in the first battle after the landing, the one battle that must be won at all costs?"

Bardin meditated.

"All this is quite enticing," he said, "but can we keep secret and for a long time such a large number of personnel amidst the Wehrmacht and the Gestapo?"

"I believe so. I am working on it presently, believe it or not. Because it will be necessary to do some recruiting in order to fill the

holes. Hear me well, we must recruit. Obviously, for the plan to be effective, the war should not last ten years. But even if it should last twenty years, one day or the other something will rise in this country that will resemble more or less : a revolt, an insurrection, a riot... a strike. And on that day, it will become necessary to organize it and to lead it."

"Ah," said Bardin. "Good. It is really an honorable second solution."

Z... smiled, happy. A moment passed.

"But, in this case," resumed Bardin, "don't you think that we would be much better somewhere else to work on this... brainstorm of yours? One of these days, they're going to come and put all of us away. I am so sure of it that I want to go into hiding as soon as I can get a false identity. I do not have one yet. You know the saying: -- The shoemaker's wife is always the worst shod --."

"Just go next door," said Z... "To the Cartographic Bureau. They have a nice enough collection of stamps. However, be careful. They have a tendency to use Africa too many times as the place of birth, and I just found out that they fabricated identity cards from Algeria bearing a tax stamp from France. Tell them."

"OK. And you Colonel? What are you waiting for here?"

"You mean whom, don't you? For you and the others, naturally! Everyone goes through here, either by politeness, by habit, or by need to make up one's mind. So it's good to find someone to exchange ideas with."

"And above all someone to help you hang on, yes," affirmed Bardin convinced. "It is excellent."

"Oh! I have no intention of getting arrested by a 'Gefreiter' and two men, while sitting at my table. So before leaving I would like to have seen as many comrades as possible. No. I was not joking when I was telling you: I am working."

From these shapeless hopes of few men, the Army Resistance Organization was born. Their hopes were, however, somewhat more consistent and concrete than the dreams of other comrades just as courageous, who were also trying to assemble a Secret Army, without even a core of military trained men ready to answer the call of officers they knew well, and who possessed a few salvaged weapons.

The Colonels Z... and P... took command of the Army Resistance Organization in the southern area, while a small group of young officers commanded by Major C... left for the northern area where nothing was set up, and where everything still had to be done.

For a while they caressed the hope that the Resistance Movements would accept to have their para-military units obey the orders of the O.R.A. (Army Resistance Organization) chiefs, who were obviously the more experienced. Brief illusion. It was the first of a long and painful series of failures. At that time the Resistance units leaders were only interested in organizing their own bands.

In June 1943, General Frere, then his assistants, General O... and General G... were arrested. It was another hard blow. Nevertheless, in

September 1943, the Army Resistance Organization was implanted throughout the metropolitan territory, and it numbered forty thousand men who were either armed and led by officers, or who would be so in time. Contact was also made with London who assigned an officer to the Central Command Post. To complete this liaison, it was decided later to send Colonel Z... in a similar assignment with the Allied leaders and Headquarters.

After having escaped a first arrest attempt by the Gestapo in June 1943, and after having changed his hide-outs many times, Colonel Z... had set up shop close to Mr. Vauthier, in Roanne, under the name of Mr. Menard. He impersonated a landowner from Bayonne, which justified his frequent absences and numerous trips to the South of France. His subordinates knew him only under the name of Colonel Joseph.

Before discussing further the results of his first mission in free lands, let us examine for an instant the details of his trip. It deserves a mention for its own sake, and after having told the readers about the failure of an embarkation attempt on the Provence tube, I owe them the story of an uneventful voyage, all the more so as it was the rule.

III

THE FIRST LIAISON MISSION OF COLONEL JOSEPH

One day, around September 15, 1943, a discreet messenger of the Agence Immobiliere came to Roanne, identified himself to Mr. Menard, presented the apologies of the Service for the failure that marked the first projected excursion by small boat toward the coast of Great Britain, and added:

"But your place is reserved aboard the next submarine to Algiers. You will take the train for Marseille at 9PM on September 21. On the 22nd, at 11 AM, you will be at the Bar des Danaïdes, near the Reformed (Protestant) Church. You will order an aperitif and wait."

"For what?"

"You'll find out, Colonel. While going through Lyon, at midnight, you will find a fellow-traveller on the platform at the Gare de Perrache."

"How shall I identify him?"

"You'll find out."

So, on the appointed day, Mr. Menard, with all the appearances of a peaceful bourgeois, round hat (the derby is always the least aggressive-looking headgear), conservative blue suit, low shoes and carrying a fiber suitcase, took the train. When the train pulled in Lyon, he marked his seat as well as the neighboring one which someone had just vacated, and jumped on the platform, feeling very skeptical about the chances that two persons unknown to each other - and even if they were old friends - might have to find one another in this indescribable throng which was typical of railroad stations at the time. However, he had barely alighted from his compartment when Miss R..., liaison agent of Major Bayard, Chief of the Lyon Resistance Organization of the Army, buttonholed him, saying: "here is our friend," and disappeared.

Joseph stretched out his hand to a tall man with a pale, even emaciated but extremely energetic face, and bearing a "warlike look" to the highest degree (as one would have said during the XVIIth Century). He wore

a fur-lined jacket, hiking boots and a tyrolian pack on his back. He introduced himself;

"Captain de Neucheze, Colonel."

He had hardly lowered his voice.

"Sh, Sh," said Joseph, with a little defensive smile. "I am Mr. Menard, a merchant. I am going south to see if I can find some charcoal. And you?"

"Me? Hum..., didn't have time to think about it. I've just escaped from Compiègne. Just had the time to stop by at my home, in the Gers, to get our Regimental standard, the 2nd Dragons. I have it wrapped around me. The streamers and spearhead are in my bag."

"Bravo," said Joseph.

So much contained ardour, so much joy and hope were visible on the Neucheze's features, and so much drive in his tense body, that Joseph was conquered and postponed until later the petty business of a prudent cover for his comrade.

"Neucheze? Was it you who was commanding the reserve unit of the Saumur Cadets in June 1940?"

"Yes, colonel..."

"... Mr. Menard for you too, dear friend."

The two companions got back on the train. Joseph placed his suitcase above Neucheze's head.

"Put your pack on my side," he said. "If the Germans pick a guy in this compartment to search him, I'm afraid it might be you, for you have

the smell of battle all over. If that happens, you leave with my suitcase which contains nothing incriminating. All right?"

The train started. It was horribly hot in the compartment. Nobody was asleep. Neucheze was very nervous, folding and unfolding his endless legs. He was panting, sighing, and choking. At three o'clock in the morning, he whispered in Joseph's ear:

"I can't stand it any more. I've got to take off the flag or I'm going to pass out. It's unbelievable. I would have never thought it could be so uncomfortable."

Joseph handed him a bundle of newspapers.

"Go ahead! Try to hide it."

Neucheze went to the rest room and came out a few minutes later, a bundle under his arm, walked by some Wehrmacht soldiers in the hallway, while Joseph looked on, casually guarding the compartment door. They put the standard away in the Tyrolian sack.

The night went by without any identification check, which was very rare. What luck!

In the early morning, the two travellers walked out of the Saint-Charles Station in Marseille, greeted by a brilliant sun. Wow! They killed time visiting all the barber shops. They went through shaves, haircuts, shampoos, head-rubbings, and more rubbings, and, may Mars forgive them, manicures! At eleven o'clock, they were sitting at the Bar des Danaïdes. At 11:05, a stranger who had crossed the street in front of the cafe, sat at the table next to them, asked Joseph for a light, and while laboriously

lighting his cigarette from Joseph's, mumbled:

"Take to-morrow's train for Saint-Raphael where you will spend the night. Day after tomorrow, at eight AM, be in front of the ticket counter of the railroad station, Toulon line."

"And then?"

"You'll find out. Thanks for the light. Good-bye."

Very bad night in Marseille. Joseph and Neucheze did not stay at a luxury palace. The latter were full anyway. Instead, the two friends landed in a hotel that was rather questionable on many accounts, and where columns of bed bugs reigned after sunset. They spent some time separating the fringes of the flag which had caked together, and wrapped them with cigarette paper to avoid their sticking to each other again.

Their trip to Saint-Raphael was uneventful. The little town had been evacuated by four-fifths of its population and a considerable German garrison occupied it. There was no choice possible as to the hotel; only one was open, across from the railroad station. The manager was no more curious about his clients' identity than he might have been in peace time. "Two rooms? All right, there you are, gentlemen. Numbers 5 and 7." And yet the port was under military occupation, as they were able to ascertain when they took a walk around the block. Many streets were blocked by concertina, and covered with anti-tank spikes and obstacles. Block-houses guarded the railway bridges, the beach, and the road to the airport. Airforce personnel swarmed all around. On the boardwalk, the two French Officers passed by a magnificent General of the Luftwaffe, wearing a

great overcoat with white lapels, and surrounded by an imposing staff. They respectfully yielded the way to this "colleague." This was either a dream or a joke. Joseph smirked. Could he possibly believe, in this quasi-fantastic, impossible and extravagant instant, that in a few days he would be transplanted from the center of a German Army to that of the French Army of Africa?

The fantasmagoria became even more apparent during the dinner. In the hotel restaurant, where Joseph and Neucheze dined without complaint some horrible boiled octopus in the middle of predominantly German customers, Joseph observed his comrade Colonel G..., of the Lyon Army Resistance Organization, walking in completely at ease, flanked by a companion who looked definitely like an officer in spite of his small coat. They probably would take part in the trip.

"What a joke," said Joseph.

And this was quite a circumlocution. Without any visible sign of acknowledgement, his gaze crossed that of his friend who also did not show any sign of recognition or surprise.

"If this succeeds," mumbled Joseph, "I'll be laughing about it until I retire."

The night was quiet. The next day, at eight o'clock, in the Littoral railroad station, a third "guardian angel", just as unknown to them as the first two, approached Joseph and Neucheze who were waiting confidently.

"Buy a ticket for La Foux."

This time, Joseph wasn't asking any more: "And after?". He understood the rules of the game by then. He knew the answer: "You'll find out." It was the guide, a little more loquacious than the other, no doubt on account of the climate, who added:

"All pertinent information will be given to you en route."

"I wonder," said Neuchezé, "how they recognize us."

Joseph could not help laughing.

"No hard feelings, buddy," he said, "but with your equipment, they're not likely to believe you're on the way to a party. What stumps me is that the German patrols are not picking on you like flies on sugar."

There followed two hours of a very slow journey, in a tiny noisy train, jolting along like a street-car, and crowded with farmers, refugees, Wehrmacht personnel, and nostalgic Italians who were virtual prisoners, as Italy's surrender had taken place only two weeks earlier. The train rambled past the airfield, went through mine fields and along barbed wire obstacles. The officers were meanwhile taking mental pictures of the terrain. South of Saint-Raphael, the "Sudwall" (Mediterranean coastal defenses) was then just an indefinite small wall. Station after station, the compartment emptied itself little by little, and the stranger of that early morning came to sit down next to Joseph.

"At La Foux, in the station courtyard," he said, "you will see a man in a navy blue suit carrying a suitcase, and another one dressed in brown, with a bicycle. Follow them at 100 yards behind."

The program was executed like a well-rehearsed ballet. Around

ten o'clock, on a bright main road, Joseph and Neucheze fell into step with the two guides; they were followed themselves by two other men. After about two kilometers, they took a narrower path. Another ten kilometers without any unfortunate encounter. After a three hour walk, a man on a bicycle passed Joseph and said as he went by:

"Get closer to the first two. We're going to follow some footpaths in the vineyards."

They went through Ramatuelle where two peaceful-looking gendarmes observed the procession going by without the least sign of curiosity. For half an hour, they progressed over varied terrain. Then the guides went into a farm, followed immediately by Joseph and Neucheze. Five minutes later, thirteen men were sitting around a table on top of which a soup tureen was steaming.

"There isn't much to eat, but it's offered with open heart," said the host cordially.

The two guides, the stranger from the Bar des Danaïdes, the one from Saint-Raphael and the cyclist were all there. No one revealed his name. There were seven persons scheduled to leave: Colonel Joseph, Captain de Neucheze, Colonel C..., Colonel Z..., Major R..., Captain Vellaud, and a last one unknown to everybody. We were to learn later that he was a Navy Lt. Commander. The thirteenth guest was Lieutenant Martial who came to "take charge" of some of the new arrivals.

They spent the afternoon playing cards to kill time. To kill the desire to talk as well. The food-ration coupons were taken from everyone

with the exception of Joseph, since he had to return a few days later. He was the only one to do so, and the others were looking at him pensively.

At 9PM, when it was dark, Captain Avallard, alias Jean-Marie, belonging to the Young Agence Immobiliere and in charge of the tube operations, arrived at the farm, assembled everybody in the family room and gave his instructions. They would leave the farm in a tight indian file. Three individuals carrying the bags of mail and armed with submachine guns would be at the head of the column, with two more sub-machine gunners bringing up the rear. It was absolutely forbidden to smoke or talk. In the event they met a German patrol and gunfire, they were to let the security system take care of things. As far as the travellers were concerned, they would disperse, each on his own, taking a northwestern course. "To the left of the north star," had specified Jean-Marie, smiling. "We'll get back together later, somehow."

Everything went smoothly, save for a few falls and one emotion-packed minute. After a while, which seemed somewhat long but which no one thought of measuring, Jean-Marie stopped the column with a sign that was relayed down the line. A moment later, some soldiers passed along a lateral path, with their weapons rattling, and only a few yards from the first of the Frenchmen. They were Germans, talking and laughing noisily.

They started off again. In the night dark as ink, through pine and cork-oak woods, they advanced slowly (one hour and a half it seemed). They came to the edge of a large rocky scree at the bottom of which the sea lapped and glistened. The slight glimmer it produced enabled them to see

the dials of their watches. It was 10:45 PM.

They went down on their behinds. Stones started rolling down. Colonel G... tore his pants from the hip to the ankle. They landed on the edge of a small inlet and Jean-Marie placed his seven "customers" behind a large rock.

"I guarantee you something will happen by midnight. But remain silent. There is a German post only three hundred yards away."

Let us leave the "young ones" with their secret thoughts for an instant, while we note that, had they been arrested then, with their feet in the sea, and had the Germans succeeded in loosening the tongue of one of them, he could not have revealed any name, any address, or any information directly threatening the organization's personnel. Should such an unfortunate circumstance have happened sooner, at one of the many stops which were also "cut-outs", not one of them could have said where he was going.

At midnight on the dot, Jean-Marie surged from the darkness where he had disappeared earlier and murmured:

"It's here."

No one had seen it, but everybody caught sight of it at once, at the same time. It was only a black spot between two pointed rocks. The only difference between the submarine and the two landmarks was that the former was smaller. It seemed just as immobile. Was it far? It did not appear to be more than a hundred yards away, but they knew that it is extremely difficult to measure distances in the night. Jean-Marie gave out a luminous signal. All their nerves grew tenser as every one remembered the

German post three hundred yards away. But, perhaps Jean-Marie had only pretended it was there in order to obtain an absolute silence? The black shape grew larger without apparently getting closer. The submarine was decidedly farther than one could have imagined. A muffled noise was heard. It was learned later that the ship's stem had rather violently hit some stone.

Five minutes later, a lifeboat with a rubber dinghy in tow touched land. An ensign and a few sailors jumped ashore. Some civilians followed, who were being directed towards the end of the inlet from which our travellers were filing out. The two columns passed each other. Would those who were leaving ever know the names of the comrades brushing them by? Those nuts who were coming back to France! Perhaps a dear friend who would never be seen again was among them?

Let us follow their first steps on their native land. There were five of them: Captain X... of the Military Security, two agents of the B.C.R.A., and Captain K... and his radioman, of the Young Agence Immobiliere. Martial was responsible for the security of the latter two, and for setting them up at their new posts. Before taking them in charge, he helped get the mail bags aboard the boat. While trying to hug Vellaud, who was already inside the dinghy, Martial fell into the sea up to his waist with a splash that fortunately was overwhelmed by the noise of the surf. Vellaud pulled him out, laughing.

The lifeboats departed with vigorous rowing. The newly arrived could hear the noise of the submarine's engines for a few minutes as they walked

away. They all feared that the Germans would be alerted by all this racket. Ah! to be safe again in the midst of the big cities' protective throngs!

During the second half of the night, no incident marred the crossing of the Saint-Tropez peninsula. The group separated at dawn. Martial left with his two proteges to take a bus for Saint-Tropez. It was late, and there was a long wait in a small cafe, where the bus was to stop. The dangerous period seemed to be over. Every one was breathing again freely. The sun was shining already, and the day promised to be beautiful. Captain K... revealed himself to be endowed with a rare capability for adapting to circumstances and with a high sense of humour. He assumed the part of his new character and took it all very seriously. His identity card mentioned his profession as: Cash Register Representative. Well! it was all very simple; he engaged the cafe owner in a conversation and, within fifteen minutes, had sold him a cash register to be delivered and paid for later of course. The envious ones were to pretend, later, that only by offering an outrageously low price did he succeed in dumping his ware.

There was no time to joke about it. Upon hearing the thumping of boots outside, Martial glanced quickly out the window. He could see "coming into focus" as a film producer would say, one German officer and five armed men. They looked as if they were "hunting". There was no doubt about it. They stopped at the door of the cafe to exchange some remarks. Seeking to avoid too much excitement for the "new ones", Martial motioned them to the back rooms of the house. The Germans had now finished their conversation. At the precise moment when the first one was about

to enter, the thundering noise of a motorcycle made them turn around all at once toward the road. The officer raised his arm; the machine appeared and came to a screeching¹ and acrobatic stop right smack in the middle of the patrol.

Curse it! It was D... of the Marseille Agence Immobiliere, who was driving it, with a comrade on the back seat. They were probably coming for news. So, assembled within a perimeter of about thirty or forty square yards, were six Germans who apparently took themselves seriously, five members of the Agence Immobiliere at work, and, to be absolutely accurate, one neutral, the owner of the cafe. By all odds, things should have turned for the worst.

From the inside, Martial surveyed the situation with visible anxiety. He could not hear what was being said, but the first round was going off apparently very badly, with a confused conversation followed by a few shouts from the Germans who were obviously dissatisfied. D... was tremendous. With a considerable amount of gesticulation, he protested energetically, like a peaceful man unjustly suspected and quite indignant about it. It did not work, for the Lieutenant motioned him to follow. D... then took out a card from his wallet and handed it to the officer, who glanced at it with obvious hostility. There ensued the most spectacular show to be compared only to the extravagance and incomprehensiveness of the first silent films. The Lieutenant came to attention, politely saluted, handed the card back and left, followed by his men. They had even forgotten to go into the cafe! General relaxation ensued among the Frenchmen. The sun was

shining again.

The five comrades got together and discussed the matter over.

"What is your talisman?" questioned Martial.

"My card identifying me as a Regional Chief of the Milice," answered D..., bursting in laughter. "Do you want one? It's a good luck charm..."

But suddenly he jumped and stopped laughing. He was staring at Martial below the belt. For the first time, he looked afraid.

"My God, buddy!" he shouted. "My God!"

"What's wrong?" asked Martial.

"Don't you realize you're wet up to lower back? It's written all over that you've been in the water."

"Good Gracious! I had completely forgotten it!"

All of them believed the Germans were sweeping the peninsula because they had heard the submarine and were looking for a landed commando group. So it was thought that if they had seen traces of Martial's seat bath, he would never have been able to extricate himself. A few well-chosen curse words followed.

"Let's disperse until tonight," said Martial.

D... and his assistant left on their motorcycle. Martial and his companions spent the day concealed in a jungle of tall reeds. The area was indeed searched by numerous patrols until nightfall. But it was to be learned later that they were only looking for some Italian officers who had broken off with the Axis.

Let us now go back to the submarine.

Even though he was the last one to board the lifeboat, Joseph arrived first. A sailor guided his hesitant steps up the ladder leading to the conning tower, then helped him down in a hole darker than night, where the air was heavy and suffocating. He bumped into people he could not see. Never before had he the feeling that he was only a package, and a cumbersome one at that. People were being pushed around, some in berths, some in hammocks. They huddled together.

The sub seemed to float weightlessly and dived very slowly. The lights came on.

A quarter of an hour later, there was a general meeting in the officers' wardroom. If all of them didn't tap each other's backs with happiness, it was only because there was no room for it. The introductions took place, and it really felt good to say once again aloud one's good old true name. Everyone was radiant. The worst was over. The sailors had prepared some snacks and every one was hungry and grateful.

"This is not what you should thank me for," said the Captain of the Arethuse (that was the name of the ship). "But last night, before heading for the inlet, I looked once into the periscope and saw a magnificent freighter flying the German flag, within torpedo range. Couldn't have missed it. Well, I closed my eyes. But you couldn't really understand."

"Oh! yes I could, my poor friend," replied Joseph. "I am an artillery man myself."

The Arethuse was a 600-ton ship. The extra seven passengers really complicated the living conditions. After a few hours, the atmosphere was

unbearable, not so much because of all the concentrated breaths but rather because of the mixed odor of cooking, hot diesel oil and batteries. It was hard to sleep, but it was still a little more comforting than some of the nights spent in the underground. For his part, Joseph hung his hammock in the narrow main passageway. He had the choice of having his feet in the kitchen and his head in the latrine or vice versa. Today he still has not decided which was best. Furthermore, every man walking usually knocked his head against his back.

Yet, he felt strangely, unbelievably happy. Infinitely happier than he had ever been or could have even been on the most idle and carefree luxury cruise in the enchanting South seas. Everything is relative. It all depends on the starting point; and there was a lot more difference between the hunted life and this submarine than there is between peacetime and a sumptuous yacht. This is an abrupt, illogical and inconsistent comparison perhaps, but it is how it comes to my mind.

To escape enemy detection, they navigated undersea for twenty hours, at a reduced speed of two to five knots. The following day, at 8:30 PM, they surfaced. The passengers rushed to the "tower". In the darkness, they could still distinguish the French coast. It seemed as though they should have been much farther away. No matter; the intoxicating phenomenon of the sea was at work and the time element was suspended. It was good to breathe, smoke and stretch out. But many changed their tune quickly as the wind started blowing and bad weather came upon them. The narrow submarine began to roll from side to side. Still, there is something good in every misfortune.

In this unleashed storm, all enemy planes were grounded, and they travelled on surface until they reached Algiers.

There were no incidents. A British P.T. boat came out to meet the submarine two hours from port, and escorted it in the radiating African sun and the brilliant sea. When he came within sight of the land, Neuchezé took out his regimental flag while the crew rendered full honors. The scene was a simple one, yet fairy-like. (See photo 10, page 380).

The harbor, which had been lifeless in 1941, was now rumbling with a feverish and well-organized activity. The streets were full of young, vigorous, fit, well dressed, and merry sailors and soldiers. The sun was bright, cheerfulness abounded and spirits were high. The contrast with the crushing prison atmosphere of Nazi Europe was striking. Everything, even the most ordinary gestures of people, vivacious or nonchalant, old or young, white-haired or grayish, civilians or military on duty, everything reflected freedom, and this was intoxicating to see after the sinister, jerky, and uniform gesticulation of the master-robots operating in a world of hatred and concealed fright, where no one dared to look at his neighbor anymore. Youth, strength, power. They were bursting out everywhere, in these men's bodies, under their car hoods, in their ships' towers, and in the tame thunder of their parallel aircrafts.

According to a news reporter, in the darkest days of the next to last phase preceding the end of the First World War, a great French military leader, after having silently observed for a long time the landing of an American contingent at one of our ports, remarked:

"Well! Now the war is won!"

This time, all of us, big and small, had much more serious reasons to doubt it. We had seen much more, so much more! The pessimists among us had plenty to argue about. Yet! the instinct of a soldier worthy of his name could not be fooled in Algiers in 1943. Yes, the war was won. And it was here in Algiers that all the human chances and hopes rested. To find oneself in this environment all of a sudden was as if one had abruptly shaken off unbearable chains. If they could have done it, they would have cried.

Personally, the thing which seems to me most praiseworthy, is that a French officer after having succeeded in reaching this heaven in 1943, could volunteer to return and take back his place in the obscure mixture of insurgent slaves, of fugitives eternally hunted down, and of bodies destined, not to the regular brutal death of a real war, but to the torture, to starvation and to a slow, degrading decay. I say this without false humility. Would I not have used any excuse possible to stay myself? God knows there were to be many, and quite honorable ones! Naturally, if my mission had officially ordered my return, I would have come back of course. But when, and in what circumstances?

Colonel Joseph did not waste any time on free soil. He spent ten days in Algeria, four in Morocco, one in Scotland, and three in London. That was all.

The Allied plans had not been definitely decided or at least it was prohibited to lift the veil which covered them. The French Resistance

was undergoing growing pains, and it was too early to speak of its use other than potentially. What was paramount, was to give the planning staffs the most accurate, truest, and best evaluation of its military capabilities to reach an agreement with them as to their orientation, and to make a survey of all the lacking means.

Joseph sought to be very objective in his dealings with French leaders and comrades and with the British. This was a necessity. Had not the French Resistants and even himself sometimes thrived on dreams and presumptuous hopes in order to find themselves a solid moral base? Did they not give their organizations more importance than they really had so as to "inflate" the reluctant ones, and finally ended up by believing it? But what had to be said here had to be devoid of any kind of illusions, because it might be taken into account in the future realities of the action.

On the other hand, it was imperative that London and Algiers be made to share the profound conviction that Metropolitan France had a considerable combat potential; this was a reasoned conviction and it was that of the Army Resistance Organization.

All was theoretically simple. But in practice? What could be said? There couldn't be too many if's and but's which leave the other party doubtful and perplexed. Otherwise, nothing would be accomplished. But there shouldn't be either too many of those inconsiderate promises which would provoke holocausts. It was both indispensable and difficult to reach a proper balance of reason between the positive mind of the technician and the inspiration of the visionary. But this was war. This was how to conduct

a war well.

In essence, the following is what Joseph said:

"First there is what we positively will accomplish. Sabotage of the critical points in the German war economy, which would cost too many French human lives if it were left to the Air Force, and the destruction of their lines and means of communications just before the landing. It is up to us to keep you informed, so that you may draw the plans which we will definitely carry out (1)."

"The trouble starts in deciding what part we can play in the battle itself. It can be considerable if you send us plenty of arms and signal equipment. The strength of the Army Resistance Organization alone exceeds 40,000 trained men; and it can be doubled if necessary."

"As to the focus of our efforts? This is up to you to decide. There is one idea we haven't abandoned for two years. Can we take it up again? Here it is, as a matter of consideration. Between the refuges of the Pyrenees and the Massif Central, the southwestern plains intermittently open and wooded, make a favorable terrain for guerrillas. This is also the area with

- (1) These were to be the "plan Vert" (Green Plan), the execution of which was decentralized and distributed among the overall French Interior Forces upon the initiative of the Army Resistance Organization, and the "plan Tortue" (Turtle plan), the accomplishment of which was entrusted to an officer of the O.R.A. The latter was to obtain results far superior to his given mission, particularly in the delaying of the German reinforcements on their way to Normandy.

the weakest density of German occupation troops. We believe we can liberate the Toulouse area ourselves, then spread and open a breach for you on the Atlantic. Reinforced, we would then become one additional Army in the battle of France, well located to drive toward the Loire, then Paris (1). Quite a few other undertakings can be realized. It's up to you to make the decision, while integrating us in the overall framework."

"However, to set the insurrection into motion prematurely would be an error which would entail grave consequences: the annihilation of our forces and reprisals against the population. We must seize the proper moment, and make no mistake about it. But it is too early to talk about it. Moreover, we will never be able to set a general rule which would be applicable anywhere at any time. We will have to treat this concretely. In order to orient our ideas, let us say that a general guerrilla uprising cannot be sustained for more than two weeks without the intervention of allied troops, without additional manpower, and without weapons, ammunition,

-
- (1) This old and permanent idea of the leaders of the French Forces of the Interior, particularly of General Revers, was to be the subject of a careful and thorough study in Algiers under the name of "plan Caiman." The Interallied Command gave it up, either for strategic reasons on which the author cannot pass an accurate judgment, or perhaps because of a certain lack of confidence in the capabilities of the Resistance. The ensuing events proved that this mistrust would have been unjustified. Actually, the "plan Caiman" was carried out by some Frenchmen alone, in the same manner as in Molière's comedy "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," Mr. Jourdain wrote prose, without realizing it. This Toulouse region was transformed very early into a no man's land by Marcel Taillandier of the Agence Immobilière, and his disciples, who were chasing the Gestapo as much as the latter was hunting them. The area was liberated by itself. Volunteer Group P... of the Army Resistance Organization, swelled by 12,000 men, eventually crossed Metropolitan France from one end to the other, liberated Autun and linked up with the troops which had landed in the South.

clothes and food supplies. Everything is necessary at once."

"Finally, while compartmentalization is a pre-requisite for security and must remain the guiding principle during the preparation phase, one central command will have to direct the combat action. Therefore, an effort toward a united leadership is imperative within the French Resistance movements."

Colonel Joseph stopped there. This was enough to bring about the birth of the idea of a real Insurgent Army rising behind the enemy's back, in the minds of his military colleagues, if the idea wasn't there already. No doubt, all of them did not believe that so much could be hoped nor asked for. But, with his background and his military experience, we can be certain that Colonel Joseph exerted a great influence on the thinking of the leaders responsible for the tactical and strategic use of the Resistance.

Having accomplished his task carefully, but as rapidly as possible, Joseph boarded a plane once again on a cold and dark October English night to come back among us. In what state of mind? I suppose quite complex. But this concerned him alone and he did not confide in anyone on the subject. We know, however, that two hours later he was found in the middle of a field, near Angers, full of spirits and overflowing with a communicative and contagious faith. He transmitted it like a breath of life as far away as the most remote command posts of the Army Resistance Organization. Bardin remembers clearly that Joseph's return coincided with one of the high points of this nerve-racking life made of ups and downs that we led at the time. We knew from a reliable source, that everything was going for the best in the

worst of worlds, and that we would shine in our work if the Command could have confirmed our reasons to hope. A few privileged ones learned that there was at last a first rate French Army. It was soon to comprise twelve modern divisions, four of them armored. Everybody was envious. Then we forgot our problems and fortified, we set down to work again.

IV

A FEW OTHER FAILURES

Faith? We needed a lot of it! The best men were falling. Colonel M..., top organizer of the underground rearmament, was arrested in the South-east. Colonel Bouvet, one of the most ardent chiefs of the Center of France, was savagely assassinated. How many more, it would take pages to name them all! Two days after Joseph's return, the second leader of the Army Resistance Organization, General Verneau, and the most important members of his Staff in the North zone, including the irreplaceable Major C..., were captured also.

The life of mystery novels continued. It was to start all over for Joseph.

General Revers assumed command. He and his officers were faced with the task of devoting part of their forces and spending them in the pressing effort for unification. But other did not see things that way. Some, among whom the neophytes of patriotism and war, withheld from the Regular

Army Officers the right to command, using the excuse that many of them had been members of the Armistice Army. We then began to hear the words which were to do so much harm later and compromise the restoration of political union: "So and so is unacceptable politically." The professional competence of the officers was questioned under the pretense that the French Army had been beaten in 1940. As if France herself had not been beaten! As if we still lived in the days when the Army, as an independent body within the Nation, could win a war without the unanimous and firm backing of the country. As if the Army in our times, did not represent the pure and simple transposition of the country in a state of war.

It was at the peak of this moral dilemma that Joseph was to undergo the worse personal and family calamities.

The Lipp Brasserie (beer-hall), on the Boulevard Saint-Germain, was one of the favorite meeting spots of the members of the Army Resistance Organization in 1943 and 1944. On their way out of there, one day in January 1944, Colonel Joseph and Major Bardin met on the sidewalk and talked, walking back and forth. Bardin, confined in the obscure duties of his net, was thirsty for news of a general nature which, no doubt, one knew about at the higher echelons. He was passionately questioning Joseph and actually all his questions could be summarized into one:

"When is it for? This year, at least?"

"Certainly," certified Joseph.

As usual, he smiled with a bowed head. Yes, today at least, it was the interior smile of a man who was concentrating in order to find within

himself the thoughts which guided and sustained him.

"Certainly," he repeated.

He raised his head and uncovered his smile, which was not always very cheerful, but (explain it as you want to) which beamed with affability, kindness, hope and faith all at once. Having probably realized that Bardin, isolated, cut off from everything, and living as if in a corridor, needed help, Joseph gave him a masterful account of the war with precise numbers, accurate facts and overall viewpoints which, to qualified officers, can be translated into the certainty that an end is foreseeable. Bardin literally drank Joseph's words. He was carried away with joy. But he also felt a bitter disappointment at being kept so far from the leadership or liaison assignments where one learned and knew so much. Joseph looked so happy! He radiated with a quiet assurance in his gestures, a certain flash in the eye, and so much serenity!

"Thank you, Colonel," said Bardin. "It makes me feel better."

After many turns and detours, the two friends came back again in front of the Saint-Germain-des-Pres parvis. They shook hands and, at the precise moment of walking away:

"How is your family?" asked Bardin.

Joseph looked away.

"My wife is safe," he answered.

"What?" exclaimed Bardin with stupefaction. "But... excuse me, I didn't know anything had happened to her. What did happen?"

"Oh! the same thing that's in store for all of us," replied Joseph, as

if making excuses for talking about himself. "You know she had remained in Vichy; one has to live somewhere. They came the other morning looking for me. They weren't too badly informed. I had had just made contact with some friends in Vichy the previous evening. Of course, I wasn't home, I was gone. They were furious and took it out on my wife. They barbarously tortured her. She nearly died in Paris, where they brought her. She probably would be dead, had she not been transported to the Hospital de la Pitié at Fresnes for an emergency operation. This was due, I'm told, to the intervention of the (listen well) German General commanding the Armistice Commission Delegation in Vichy. Who had told him about it? God only knows! One must believe that a few of them after all are at times ashamed of their Nazis, and dare prove it from time to time. Yes. According to the latest news, she is saved."

"And your children?" asked Bardin.

"They're all right, all right," murmured Joseph.

The two men looked at each other and Joseph no longer smiled. But his face was calm. The tone of his voice had remained even and simple. He had not once raised his voice. He had not even uttered the word "boches". Bardin could not find a word to say. Not one. He bent down slightly and left.

Joseph and his comrades had to go on under such conditions so often!

The units of the Army Resistance Organization looked for quality in their recruiting; by June 1944, they had assembled 60,000 men. Their commander, General Revers, was appointed in March 1944, technical advisor to

the Command Council of the French Forces of the Interior, and to the Military Action Committee (COMAC). Finally, they had recognized his worth. His subordinates worked everywhere for unity of action, in a similar spirit of self abnegation and subordination to the general interest. There was no system, no formula. Every one served as best he could, wherever he was.

As much as possible, the conventional units were subjected to strict military discipline, officered by active and reserve officers, and commanded directly. This was the case of Major P... and his 12,000 Gascogne cadets. Let the author express here his personal and quite original opinion on the subject, which is that this is the best solution. The facts bore this out: the successes of P..., of which we are aware, those of Company C..., in the Indre et Loire and of the Auvergne Brigade, which overcame an enemy still present in large strength, those of Colonel B...'s troops (the elder brother of Captain B..., of the Agence Immobiliere) who was responsible for the constant harassing action which led to the surrender in Sologne of German General Elster along with his 18,000 men.

When the local situation did not permit it, command was indirectly implemented, and the activities of the units coming from various sources were "federated" and coordinated. This is what Colonel Bayard, of the Army Resistance Organization, military leader of the resistance in the Lyon area, accomplished successfully.

When even this proved to be impossible, groups or individuals coalesced in the Sector French Forces of the Interior. One stayed simply a chief of

staff, or a lowly private, when one had not succeeded in overcoming one's pride. They lead, they guided, they advised.

Only the result was counting in the end.

At the end of April 1944, the Military Action Committee entrusted Colonel Joseph with the coordination of all operations of the French Forces of the Interior in Areas R1 and R2, that is around Lyon and Marseille. Joseph adopted then the meaningful pseudonym of Faisceau (Sheaf) in his relations with the outside, and such a name presented quite a program. Faisceau: quantity of certain things bound together: i.e., grouping of guns supporting each other.

V

LAUNCHING OF THE INSURRECTION IN THE ALPS

The main objective of the instructions of General Koenig, Commander-in-chief of the French Forces of the Interior, was, it seems to me, to avoid that the activities of the FFI be diluted into independent efforts, too incoherent to grow and too dispersed to help the landing forces. It was the latter which would either win or lose the decisive battle, and all had to be subordinated to them. The FFI therefore, had to work for them within the overall framework.

To this effect, a theoretical general concept of insurrection was drawn. It was approximately as follows:

The French Forces of the Interior would attempt to be in complete control of several "guerrilla operational areas" on D-Day. At the appropriate

time, and after receipt of orders, they would come out of these areas to conduct guerrilla warfare further away in "guerrilla influenced areas." These latter areas were to coincide generally with the rears of the German Armies. The guerrilla operational areas would serve as refuge to the partisans in case they had to retreat. It was there that the command posts would be set up, and that the actual mobilization centers of the Resistance Army would operate, while being supplied in weapons and equipment by parachute drops.

In the third type of areas called "Allied Operational Areas," where the main battle would be taking place, small bands, armed only with light weapons, would not be able to openly attack concentrated German Forces or even to survive. Consequently, in such places, the French Forces of the Interior were only to conduct sabotage, intelligence operations for allied columns, act as guides for the parachutists, and if necessary cooperate with airborne operations.

In the vast alpine and coastal sector, which Faisceau took over at the end of April 1944, the "guerrilla operational area" included the mountains of Savoie, of the Dauphiné, and the southern reaches of the Alps in Provence. This G.W.O.A. had already been for a long time the theatre of a protracted war, conducted by mountain troops which had remained under the control of their own leaders in November 1942, by the Secret Army of the Unified Resistance Movements, and by bands of Francs-Tireurs Partisans. Personnel who had escaped being drafted in Compulsory Work Organizations had also come to reinforce them. In March 1944,

large-size German forces - many divisions - were engaged and immobilized there. They terrorized the Haute-Savoie region and dispersed the heroic garrison of the Plateau des Glières. The overall result was nil however. The Maquis reappeared from the ashes and swarmed everywhere. The most important part, in terms of military strategy, was the Vercors in Dauphiné; and it remained a free land, a kind of small republican bastion.

Faisceau's "Guerrilla influenced area" was the Rhône-Saône corridor, from north of Pont Saint-Esprit to the edge of the Jura Mountains. The south of the Rhône Valley and the coast, all the way to the foothills of the Alps made up the "Allied Operational area" or "sabotage zone."

During the first days of May 1944, Faisceau went to Aix en Provence in order to exercise his command more efficiently. He travelled throughout his domain and met with Didier and Levallois, FFI leaders of R1 and R2 (both would be killed later), with Major Bayard and Captain Sapin, military leaders at Lyon and on the Mediterranean coast respectively. Everywhere the anxious expectation of the big day was translated into small raids, sporadic sabotage actions, and surprise attacks of small and isolated enemy groups.

They knew nothing of the Allied plans. All they could guess, was that the landing was imminent; and no one knew where it would take place.

The action of the French Forces of the Interior was to be initiated by the receipt of messages called "generalized guerrilla orders" broadcast by the BBC, and if required, preceded by warning messages on the first and the fifteenth of each month. Twenty series of these messages

corresponding to the twenty regions of France had already been prepared; and this reassured Faisceau. It certainly meant that they had followed the cautious advice he had given to London and to Algiers, and that he had repeated many times to certain personalities of the Military Action Committee in France. The aim was to limit the insurrection in terms of space and time, so as not to order it too soon in areas where the allies could not support it. This was wise, estimated Faisceau.

Let us concretize his thought by an example: "Let us assume that the landing had taken place only in the North of France. This would have been enough to bring about the automatic implementation of the Green Plan (destruction of all means of communications) throughout the metropolitan territory. But this was not sufficient to serve as a spark everywhere and simultaneously for open warfare. It should be ordered in successive areas as the allied forces progressed, or when the guerrilla intervention capabilities could be of direct benefit to the Allies."

Faisceau was particularly convinced that the French Forces of the Interior of the South-east, i.e., his own, would not be ordered against the enemy as long as a landing on the Mediterranean coast was not imminent, or before a breach was accomplished by the Allies in the North. In any case, not before the immediate enemy, the German Army of the South-east, was formally engaged and attacked, or at least partially or totally on the move to reinforce the Armies of the North.

On May 15, the warning messages for only the Northern part of France were broadcast, which confirmed Faisceau's personal opinion.

On June 1st, all warning messages, for the South as well as the North zones, were transmitted. On June 6, all messages were "generalized guerrilla orders". Consequently, the French Forces of the Interior in the Southeast unleashed their fury, without any kind of restriction, and driven by a magnificent national rising on the part of all the population of the countryside and the little towns. But in the mind of the leaders and the participants, lingered the reasonable and reasoned hope for imminent support from the allied troops which should be landing on the Mediterranean coast in the very near future.

Another two months and ten days were to go by before they came, and it was necessary to hold on during that time in a merciless and uneven struggle.

Military history will probably say that this sacrifice was necessary so as to place all the assets on our side in a battle on whose issue depended the fate of all mankind. It might even establish positively, for example by discounting the immobilized German Forces, that this had been all for the best. And history will probably be right, in its placidity and impersonality.

But then, it is only fair that one of its most beautiful passages should be devoted to the fighting men of the Alps in 1944. The risks they took, as soldiers without questions, were enormous. Almost everywhere, they threw themselves in the battle blindly and wholly because it was the order of the day. Realizing, day after day, that the generally agreed upon condition for success of their enterprise - the allied help - was still not coming, they would have had more than excuses to feel like saying: "We're going to be

crushed successively, piecemeal, before the time ever comes when we would be the most useful." Others might have gone back home; or at least might have given up the constant aggressive attitude of the beginning. The fighters of the Alps undoubtedly uttered the words of the deceived. But they did not draw from them the conclusion of the weak. They continued to attack.

It remains to be noted that they held for two and a half months alone, then accomplished beyond all hopes the final offensive missions assigned to them. Naturally as I said before, history which doesn't concern itself with sensitivity and retains only the main lines, will probably say that everything went very well. Let us therefore accept that. And most of all, let us not find arguments for political battles in this strictly military affair. This would be both stupid and low.

On June 6, in Lyon, Faisceau had met with Bayard, who was about to establish his command post in the Vercors. On the 7th, in Marseille, he saw Sapin who was on his way to Barcelonnette. On the 9th, Faisceau, together with his faithful aid Florent, reached also Barcelonnette by makeshift means.

It could be estimated that the plan to paralyze the German transportation system was already carried out. There were practically no trains. Soon there were to be no more of them. All along the way, Faisceau noted the state of demoralization, even of panic, of the Germans. Bodies of killed soldiers were lying on the roads, outside the villages. In several little towns, such as Manosque and Forcalquier, the Resistance had installed new

officials. Joseph thought that this was rather premature, although he still believed in the imminence of a landing in the South. But even if it should occur on the next day, he felt that the security was still not adequate enough for the personnel (civilians included) to uncover themselves.

Not one single German, not one enemy roadblock could be seen on the way from Digne to Barcelonnette, going through La Javie and Seyne-les-Alpes. The local inhabitants armed with rifles or shotguns, had openly joined the Resistance. Faisceau put on his uniform, never to leave it again.

He arrived in Barcelonnette on June 10, to witness a real mass uprising in the Ubaye area, in a magnificent atmosphere of sacred unity, under the command of Mr. A..., an engineer, whose chief of staff was Captain B..., and the brothers C... The men were tough mountaineers, and excellent shots, who were led by their natural social leaders, the school inspector, the inspector of land and water supply, and the local officials. They fought magnificently. But they all believed in a short-term action and did not have much in the way of weapons. It was only upon Faisceau's personal intervention by radio, that seven planes dropped by parachute a large supply of arms in the night of June 12-13.

Still, they had not waited for these. From the 6th to the 10th of June, the F.F.I. annihilated the customs posts (five soldiers killed, thirty prisoners, including one officer) and repulsed the first German attempts to penetrate in the Ubaye, either through Le Lauzet, where thirty of the enemies were killed, or through Saint-André and the Allos pass, where the enemy losses certainly reached more than fifty men, or finally through the

Cayolle pass, where a reconnaissance patrol left one dead and a few slightly wounded. The morale, which was already very high, went sky high.

Sapin was preparing for the attack of the border garrison at Larche, in the East, with the help of Italian guerrillas he had contacted, then he planned to extend the liberated areas from the Ubaye in the West, toward the direction of Seyne-les-Alpes. Suddenly, on June 11, one of his outposts reported by telephone that a considerable-size column of German trucks, preceded by armored vehicles, had crossed the Vars pass, twenty kilometers to the North of Barcelonnette. Armored vehicles! In a few hours, they could reach the command post of the Ubaye!

The surprise was complete. We can very well suppose that confusion reigned for a while. The Germans were taking a nonchalant ride on a country road which came out of the main highway, fifty kilometers to the north of Barcelonnette, at Guillestre. Sapin had counted on its being interdicted to the enemy, or at least defended and watched by a group from the Guillestre vicinity, commanded by British Major Roger, of the S.O.E. (1), and amply supplied with weapons and explosives. Why had he done nothing, not even warned us?

They finally got in touch with Roger who rushed immediately to Barcelonnette. He was given a run-down on the situation. This man, a true gentleman, as was amply proven by his previous and later actions, was literally thunderstruck. He took out of his pocket a radiogram from his superiors in London, ordering him not to bring his groups into action on June 6.

This fact, and a few others as well, gave credit to the opinion that a simple error in radio-transmission was responsible for triggering open warfare in the Southeast too early (1). This seems to me a very simple explanation for facts which bear such heavy consequences.

In any case, on the evening of June 11, the Germans entered Saint-Paul, fifteen kilometers northeast of Barcelonnette. Fortunately, they set up camp there which gave time to Sapin to organize the defence of his area.

He was dealing with extremely well-trained and well-led mountain troops. For three days, he resisted inch by inch at the Pas de la Reysolle, at la Condamine, at the dam of Pas de Gregoire, where the British Major Hay, alias Edgard, paid the ultimate price. A German scout car having forced its way into the valley, Major Hay and three young French 2nd Lieutenants of the last graduating class of Saint-Cyr rushed toward it within range of their Piat mortar. This was all taking place in open terrain as there was no other around. One single burst struck the four of them down in one glorious hit. Actually, they all fell one on top of the other. Hay, at the bottom, lay dead, with a Frenchman on top of him, who came out of it miraculously unscathed, perhaps because his comrades full of bullets covered him up.

In the end, pure strength got the upper hand. On June 15, the Germans entered in Barcelonnette. Sapin had managed to evacuate troops and equipment. He had cautiously conducted the battles away from any populated areas, and the reprisals on the civilian population were not quite as savage as in other areas. Still, nine civilians were executed and six

(1) See German Report on "Fall Katilina," Vol II, Chap V.

< houses burned down. Alas! the heroic valley, at the time relatively spared, was only so temporarily. When the Kesserling troops conducted an offensive return, they sacked it and put it to the torch. Larche, Jauziers, La Condamine and Maisons-Meane were completely destroyed.

This was a warning, a small scale preview of what the situation would be like if a blind offensive were launched against a very powerful enemy, infinitely stronger than we were, not "engaged", entirely free in his movements and in full control of how to utilize the ten or so divisions of his South-Eastern Army.

Faisceau had always believed it and made his point known. It was only with the close cooperation of allied troops taking a foot-hold in the South that the liberated areas of the alpine mountain mass could be extended. If the landing was delayed too long, they might fall one after the other, as the Germans could put into action against each of them, one after the other, artillery, mortars, armored elements, and air force, all of which the FFI needed so direly.

Consequently, during the waiting period, combat had to be broken off in any free area heavily threatened, and everyone had to disperse to regroup elsewhere. What could be done immediately now, was to harass the enemy with small and very mobile detachments, "nibble" at him in all his movements along all the roads of the mountain mass, decimate him and create a climate of constant insecurity and terror. They had to abandon any idea of fixed road-blocks, of prepared strong points, of fixed posts which could be encircled, in other words of everything that was tied to the ground. Instead, they were

to set up ambushes, launch surprise raids, retreat suddenly as soon as the stronger enemy has regained his balance, and start all over at the next turn. In short, conduct an irregular war, with the only difference being that only the unpopulated country-side could be used so as to take into account the savagery of the enemy, and deprive him of pretexts for reprisals.

Such were Faisceau's principles, which he attempted to instill in the greatest possible number of fighting men whom he met in his incessant travels throughout the alpine zone. He was perfectly understood.

Orders which came from General Koenig, beginning June 10 if my memory serves me right, directed a more circumspect attitude which was adapted to the local situation. (1).

This type of warfare attained very quickly the desired results by its generalization and intensification. At the end of July, not a single isolated automobile or messenger circulated, and not one enemy road-block existed along the alpine roads. The Germans were practically prisoners in their own installations where they fearfully huddled. They could only go out in force to get food supplies. Their punitive expeditions were generally without rhyme or reason and completely aimless. The only wide-scale operation they attempted forced them to assemble large bodies of troops, thus depleting the neighboring sectors. Their objective was the Vercors. They submerged it. But everywhere else, and even in the valleys bordering the Vercors, one out of two of their columns was attacked while on the move. Bewilderment and demoralization overcame

(1) See German Report on "Fall Katilina", Vol II, Chap V.

them very quickly.

At the beginning of 1944, the Germans were in the Alps in the same situation as we were ourselves in the Rif in the Spring of 1925, with the aggravated fact that they were not used to the colonial insecurity and that time was not in their favor. As to us, we were "making" like the Arabs, and that wasn't bad at all!

The war in the Alps reached a balanced stage. The opponents confronting each other were incapable of destroying each other. But the least intervention from the outside would tilt the scales one way or another.

A study of this difficult campaign would go beyond the realm of this work which does not pretend to treat this subject. But we can rapidly condense its evolution until the end of July in order to evaluate the situation at the beginning of August. Such an evaluation will bring to light the event which is the true object of this chapter, devoted (I remind the reader of this because I might have let him forget it) to the absolute necessity of close relationship between the responsible leaders.

Two words only on the Savoie region, although it was there that the torch of the armed rebellion was lighted by the 27th Alpine Troop Battalion, and that the flame was kept alive. In the end, the Savoyards were to liberate themselves all alone, and... from an enemy which was very much real and quite present in the area. The Germans were present to such a degree that their leader had to sign on August 19, at Annecy, an unconditional surrender which was to become a model for the remainder of the war. Obviously, in the state the operations were in at the beginning of

August, it was evident that the Germans were not going to attack Switzerland for the sole purpose of opening a passage for their retreat, so the Savoie became a dead-end road.

In the Hautes-Alpes, it was only on July 20 that the guerrilla operations which had begun somewhat later than in other areas, obtained their first success. On that day, an enemy motorized convoy was destroyed at Saint-Bonnet, fifteen kilometers from Gap. The fight then became continuous. The thousand men from the Gap garrison acted as if they were totally besieged.

In the Basses-Alpes Department, the uprising of the Ubaye and the attempt to create another liberated area in the desert-like region of Valensole had ignited a savage war as early as the beginning of June. Noel, the regional chief of the Guerrilla and Partisan Organization (FTP), and Captain Sapin, kept on waging it courageously. The latter defended yard by yard the high valleys of the Verdon and the Var rivers, where the Germans were progressing. But their success was ephemeral. They could not occupy all the area. They could not turn their back for one minute without everything going wrong. The great alpine road from Nice to Grenoble, the famous Napoleon road, was almost a dangerous no man's land. Between Castellane and Digne, a number of impregnable maquis were multiplying their raids against the Germans. In Sisteron one day, some French Gendarmes led a column of prisoners to the citadel; no doubt terrorists. The German guards opened the doors wide. "Gut". Almost immediately, handcuffs dropped from the hands and weapons came out of the pockets. The Gendarmes were just

as authentically terrorists as their presumed victims. They took along with them the hundred and fifty political prisoners and the German garrison. They were beginning to feel at home again.

Until then, a sort of military inactivity had reigned over the Vaucluse. The Maquis were in complete control of the mountainous region in the northeast of the Department. Well supplied in arms for some time now, they started descending from Sault and Apt in the direction of Carpentras and Cavaillon.

In the Isere, there had always been and remained a very brisk activity. In the Grande Chartreuse region, which was too easily accessible to the invader, a lack of weapons hampered the extension of operations by magnificent troops fighting like lions. But the mountains of Belledune and Oisans constituted a real free zone, from which the Maquis came out to exert their influence over the northern part of the Napoleon road. Their infiltrations extended to the outskirts of Grenoble, where they did not hesitate to conduct open battles, as for example, at Uriage.

Finally, and most important, there was the Drome region with its citadel, the Vercors. It was one of the earliest and the strongest free zone in France. Not only did it comprise the mountain mass of the Vercors shaped like a medieval castle and with a perimeter of more than 150 kilometers, but also some protruding areas and foothills to the South. Its very existence constituted a direct and considerable threat to the enemy. Not only did it dominated the large "knot" formed by the alpine roads to Grenoble, itself lying in a valley five kilometers from its wall, but its

garrison was also within range of the German communications system.

Colonel Faisceau inspected the Vercors for the first time starting June 13. He found five or six thousand armed men, whose origins, the A.S. (Secret Army), the M.U.R. (United Resistance Movements) and the O.R.A., were just a distant memory, so successful had been the merger thanks to some excellent leaders. Relations were excellent with the F.T.P., who were in great numbers in the Southern part of the department. Their weapons which until then had been insufficient, were improved by two large parachute drops, in June and on July 14 (72 planes with 1000 containers, see photos 11 and 12, pages 380 & 381). The Vercors progressively supplied the Grande-Chartreuse, the Oisans, the Thrieve, and the Devoluy. Unfortunately, not one of the mortars which had been requested so often was received; these curved trajectory weapons which, in any open action in mountainous terrain, constitute a necessary item be it offensive or defensive. The installation of a landing field was also undertaken in the center of the mountain mass, near Vassieux.

It was inevitable that the Germans would one day attempt to annihilate the insolent and redoubtable Vercors.

Everyone has read the epic story of its defenders. I summarize it here briefly, looking at it from the objective point of view (I repeat) of the overall military situation as it might have been presented to the High Command at the beginning of August.

In the beginning, everything that was going on in Grenoble was visible to the naked eye of the people of the Vercors, perched some eight hundred

meters above the city. Around mid-June, perhaps to get a little fresh air in the valley, the Germans drove a wedge in the mountain mass from Grenoble to the Villard-de-Lans plateau, after which a relative calm reigned for a month.

In the South, the F.T.P.s of the Drome waged incessant and brilliant battles against the Germans. They forced the Germans to organize full-scale expeditions in order to go down from the Alps towards the Rhone, near Valence, Privas and Bollene. Still they didn't always get through. Once, at the gorge of Montclus, five kilometers to the west of Serres, one of these columns left two 37-mm guns, a few trucks and fifteen prisoners in the hands of the F.T.P.s before going back to its post.

Those of the Vercors, coming down from their "watch-tower", took over control of the winter road of the Alps. Among many armed actions, we can note that on July 10, an ambush set up at the pass of the Croix-Haute by a commando group of sixteen Americans parachuted a few days before, and twenty-four Frenchmen, resulted in sixty Germans killed and six trucks destroyed, at a price of two dead Frenchmen.

But, around mid-July, the enemy assembled considerable number of troops, the 157th Division stationed until then at Chambéry, some elements of a Mongolian Division brought from Saone-et-Loire, some regular and S.S. units previously engaged against the maquis of Ardèche, and finally a few detachments of the 9th Panzerdivision. The enemy completely invested the mountain mass and little by little, tightened its grip. A large air force, stationed at the field of Chabeuil, East of Valence, (the bombing

of which had been requested since the end of June,) shelled villages and camps with 1000-lb explosive bombs and thousands of incendiary bombs.

After heroic battles by our outposts, the final assault began on July 19, and the enemy succeeded in opening several breaches and pushing toward the center of the mass.

Faisceau, who had rushed to this threatened point, witnessed powerless, the ultimate and decisive episode (see photo 13, page 380). He was at Bayard's command post, in the forester's lodge of the Rang des Pourrets. From there, the Vassieux plateau with its airfield then under construction, could not be seen. It was five or six kilometers away on the other side of the deep valley of the Vernaison. A crest was barely hiding it, but everybody knew its direction because, I repeat, it was the geographical and tactical center of the free area.

At nine in the morning, seven planes towing twenty-one gliders, coming from the south, suddenly came out of the clouds and rushed toward the terrain where the teams of workers had resumed work after an air-raid alert. Could it be that the Allies had decided to attempt a landing before the construction work was over so as to assist the Vercors? In this case, nothing was lost.

It was to be a short-lived hope, followed by a terrible disappointment. Even before anyone was able to distinguish the swastikas on the fuselages, the planes began strafing the field. The gliders were set free and landed, one of them crashing to the ground like an egg. But from the others came

out hundreds of men who, in a flash, took control of Vassieux and the surrounding hamlets, the heart of the Vercors.

All this happened with the rythm of a nightmare. The battle of the Vercors was lost. Could there be anything more poignant than this withering replica of the Frenchmen's illusion at Waterloo, with the dizzy rapidity of modern war?

During the day, enemy columns from the periphery converged on Vassieux, from which, for lack of mortars, the Germans could not be dislodged; they were well protected from our pitiful weapons by mere walls of houses.

In the night of July 21-22, at Saint-Martin-en-Vercors, smack in the middle of the enemy hordes, a war council was held. They had to envisage the breaking-through by the Germans of the last lines of defense. In that case, the troops would either have to try to worm their way through the meshes of the net to reach the Devoluy or the Grande Chartreuse mountains, or take refuge in the Lente forest and from there wage a guerrilla war until the enemy evacuated the region. The ebullient major Hervieux, a man of boldness and of sacrifice, was to assume command.

On the 22nd, at six o'clock in the morning, Colonel Faisceau, still wearing his uniform, accompanied by Major Roger, the latter's secretary, Miss Pauline X..., and a radio assistant, left the Vercors by car through the pass of the Rousset, the only free exit through which an automobile could go through. A F.F.I. detachment provided a safe passage. At Dié, the car was machine-gunned by enemy planes and threatened by their columns,

so the five travellers abandoned their auto and plunged into the mountains south of the Drome. After walking for about forty kilometers, they arrived in the evening at the little village of Saint-Nazaire-le-Desert, where they were warmly welcomed by the FTP's.

On the 23rd, they reached the Valley of the Durance after going through Serres, in a captured German ambulance. There, in the vicinity of Monetier-Allemon, a Captain of the Army Resistance Organization was patiently preparing an ambush on the Napoleon road, where a German supply convoy was expected. It did pass, but left twenty-eight dead and even seventeen wounded behind.

So, while the Vercors was temporarily cleaned up by the Germans, the war was raging even more fiercely on its perimeter.

But what road, what a long road for the last five years! After so many failures, nothing yet could let Joseph foresee the first success. It was an endless tunnel without the slightest light ahead.

VI

THE SECOND LIAISON MISSION OF COLONEL FAISCEAU

While in Seyne-les-Alpes, Faisceau received a radiogram calling him urgently to Algiers. During the night of August 1-2, at 1 AM, he left by plane from a field located between Apt and Sault. Stops in Calvi, Ajaccio, and Cagliari. Arrival in Algiers August 3rd.

This was like a stupendous dream, or like one of the first incoherent impressionistic films where contradictory images appeared without rhyme or reason, and finally blurred each other. Night flight... solitude... the immense peace of the blue Mediterranean and of its sky, mingling... The deep black and the bright blue had not yet erased completely the double exposure made by the dishevelled pictures of a wolves' war, in dark mountain forest, that other scenes started to emerge: this time offices appeared, where a methodical and well regulated activity prevailed, the calm of peace time! -- It was unbelievable! Men were calmly studying some maps. Others meditated. They were talking without yelling. Their movements seemed extraordinary slow...

Algiers. Colonel Faisceau was first received by M. Soustelle, Director of the B.C.R.A. He gave him the overall picture on the situation in the Alps. Soustelle took off his thick glasses, rubbed his eyes, tired and reddened by many sleepless nights, and listened attentively without interrupting.

"It is serious," concluded Faisceau. "I must see the general."

How many times did Jacques Soustelle hear this phrase? Always desirous to save the great chief's time, he had an evasive gesture:

"He will not receive you," he said. "He has too much work."

But his fast brain was working on the information brought by Faisceau. After a short time, he corrected himself:

"I do not think that he will receive you. However, I am going to see him. Wait here, in my office. I will call you on the phone."

Fifteen minutes later, Soustelle called:

"The general is expecting you right away."

The unbelievable film continued to unroll. (See pictures 14 and 15, pages 380 and 381).

Faisceau was standing up in front of the desk behind which the Man of the Liberation was working, with papers spread out in front of him, and a cigarette in his hand. This was not a post-card, this was real. It is unbelievable but there are some circumstances where it is extremely difficult to stand at attention.

"Good morning, Faisceau. Sit down."

The curt voice, almost blunt, as well as the firm and strong handshake helped Faisceau recover his senses.

"What brings you here?"

There it was! Total trust was established as by a trigger-click. Miracle of a true leader. He did not need to smile, to be amiable, or even to speak. He was the chief. The situation was cleared from all the secondary aspects, emotional as well as the sentimental and personal ones.

Everything was clear. One entered here only to work. Face to face, there was only a superior who had to know in order to make the decision, and a subordinate who had to give all the information he knew in order to inform. It was simple. Nothing to be amazed about. With a minimum of words, because time was an important factor in the action, but with a few details here and there to describe the local atmosphere, Faisceau reported:

"General, it is extremely hard in the Alps. The FFI operations have started prematurely. We could have been crushed. We are not, but it could happen any day if an outside intervention does not bring direct help. The indirect assistance is not enough. Our requests for arms and equipment are filled only tardily and incompletely. Thirty per cent of all parachute drops are lost because of poor packing, broken ropes, and smashed containers. We have received no mortars. We are fighting with a rudimentary individual armament against an enemy who possesses artillery, tanks and planes. I have personally requested several times that havoc be brought to the airfield at Chabeuil - from where all the German planes are leaving when they come to bomb us. But up to this date, this airfield has been entirely spared. Practically, we have received no reinforcement. The Germans have assembled a powerful force. I just saw it clean the Vercors of all the Maquisards. We have received no help in this battle. If we allow this enemy force to move from one area to another, undisturbed, it can successively submerge our best resistance areas. When the landing in the south of France takes place -

if it ever takes place - we will not be there anymore to help. Really, we have received nothing!

The general had not uttered a single word. His face showed no emotion. His eyes did not leave for one minute those of Faisceau. The latter had a sigh of relief. The most difficult task (and only God knew how hard it was), was done. It had to be said; not because he wanted to get it off his chest, that would be sentimentalizing; but because it was the real material situation. This, and nothing more. It was enough, for a military leader, to understand all the moral aspects of the problem to be solved. The danger was that after such a speech, some may think that you were a defeatist, and suspect some exaggeration. But such a belief was not to be feared here. The general nodded. Perhaps it was not an approval. But it was an invitation to continue. All was well. Faisceau resumed:

"But while our situation is bad, the Germans are in a worse one. It is impossible for them to circulate in small groups. Completely impossible. They are not able to maintain any security system, or any road-block on the roads. For their supplies, they have to assemble large convoys well armed and protected, which we chase and harass endlessly and which do not always go through. Sometimes, they go as far as tying down hostages in front of their trucks, such cruelty showing the degree of their fear. Their garrisons are hiding in cities virtually under siege by our elements. Their old fear of the guerrilla and of unconventional warfare keeps them terrorized. I am sure that the garrisons

in the towns of Gap, Digne, Larche, Castellane, Embrun, Briançon, Barcelonnette - to speak only of the ones I saw - will surrender eagerly to the first regular force summoning them to do so. Yes, they are in worse trouble than we are. Both sides are now about even. And the first to get reinforcements will win the battle of the Alps."

"Interesting," said the General.

He was thoughtful for a few seconds, and frowned. Then he took one of the documents which were laying on his desk and gave it to Faisceau.

"Here. Scan it rapidly. You have twenty minutes to do so, while I sign my correspondence."

Faisceau felt excitement. At first glance, he could see that the document was the Interallied Staff plan for a landing in Provence, and that the date was set for the 15th of August. In ten days! He started to study it feverishly.

"What do you think, Faisceau?"

Twenty minutes could be so short sometimes!

Faisceau smiled.

"Well, General, I do not agree."

Lightning did not strike the impudent Colonel.

"Why?" questioned the General very simply, without showing any kind of surprise.

"In general, because the planned maneuver is too timid, first in the preliminaries, then in the exploitation phase, for there our help has not been given enough consideration, and this offsets it.

"The preliminaries..." I read: "Manosque: D+60." Two months to advance sixty or seventy kilometers inland! This is much too long. One kilometer per day is not enough. It's missing the opportunity. The coastal defences are only a thin crust, except for the two bastions: Marseille and Toulon. Everywhere else it will be easy to break through despite the fact that the FFI will not be able to have a determinative influence during this first phase. They will serve as guides, informers, and will be able to take part only in local actions. But everything will go well."

"Now, the exploitation. Once the beach-head widened, the plan consists of a main effort directed toward the Rhone Valley. As to the Alps, only secondary forces are considered, and these are to regulate their movements according to the movements of the forces in the valley, whose right flank they will cover and support. It's exactly the opposite that must be done: go through the Alps and have forces in the corridor to protect the left flank. The Germans are the strongest in the Rhone valley. Its narrowness enables them to conduct a low cost defense. On the other hand, the Alpine range is entirely under our control, us, that is the FFI. Once the coast is occupied at a depth of 30 kilometers, which will be rapidly done, the Allies must show plenty of guts, i.e., they will have to throw light armored columns, armed with mortars, on all the alpine south-north roads. Their numbers do not need to be considerable. Fifteen hundred men would be enough, because the FFI would join them, and then they would have only to pick the German garrisons like flowers."

Faisceau stopped talking for a while, so as to measure the extraordinary

responsibility he was going to assume. Then, everything well considered, he continued:

"It is simple, General. Once they have reached the parallel of Aix-en-Provence, the Allies should be in Grenoble two days later. Six days later they must be in Lyon. Then, using all the liberated roads, we must fall back in force into the Rhone Valley, right in the rear of the Germans who will be trapped in a snare just like rats."

Faisceau smiled again.

"And if things do not turn out as I just explained, you can always have me shot General!"

"Interesting," repeated the General.

Then came his first complete sentence since the beginning of the interview. It was to end the discussion.

"But it is to General Patch, commanding the VIIth US Army, and to General de Lattre de Tassigny, commanding the Army B, that you must explain all this. And right away. They are in Naples. Go there. Come back here to report to me. Good bye, Faisceau."

The film continued to roll.

On August 6, Faisceau was in Naples. General Patch listened to his remarks. It seemed that he was as scarce with his words as the leader of the Free French. All he said, or about all, was:

"Well, well."

And after Faisceau had finished:

"See you in Brignoles !"

General de Lattre de Tassigny was highly interested. Faisceau had the impression that he was convinced. The General invited him to lunch. Faisceau saw again with emotion the companion of his first mission, Lt Colonel de Neucheze. This was the last time he was to meet the latter. Neucheze got killed gloriously one month later, before Autun.

On August 8, Faisceau was back in Algiers. August 9, he was reporting to General de Gaulle.

"What did they say, Faisceau?"

"Nothing, General. I think they agreed with me but they did not tell me."

"Good."

"General, my mission is accomplished. I have time to return home and be at my post by August 15. I request your permission to leave."

The General became animated.

"Faisceau, I'm sorry for you because I understand your desire to go back. But a General has just been appointed commander-in-chief of the FFI of Southern France, and his role in the Provence landing will correspond to that of General Koenig in the North. Your place is here, by his side. He needs you. Go to him."

It was with much bitterness that Faisceau observed the first landing operations from Algiers. Others than himself would be leading the FFI of the Alps to their victory. He had prepared it more than anyone else. Without his work, it would not have been complete. But he was no part of it.

He was able to return to France only on August 19, as Liaison officer attached to the VIIth US Army. In the evening, at Brignoles, he learned that some US staff-officers were clamouring for him to all echos of the mountain. One of them, Colonel Head, accompanied by the British Colonel Bartlett, found him and asked:

"Did you forget your rendez-vous at Brignoles with General Patch?"

"I believed he was just joking."

"No. He was serious. The General also asked me to tell you something, and to confirm it by this document. He has just organized an armored detachment, the Butler Task Force, which is going to swoop upon Grenoble. It is the first operation in the plan, which we are starting to carry out tonight at 24:00 hours. I am authorized to tell you the name of the plan. Can you guess?"

"Well, no."

"Read this. It says: 'Plan Faisceau.'"

The word and the gesture were as much a credit to America as to France.

VII

RESULTS OF MISSION FAISCEAU

We can read the following in the final operations report of General Sir Mailland Wilson, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Theater of Operations:

"...During the last days preceding the assault,

while examining the orders to be given to the senior commanders, I made an addition to the strategic plan they contained. The initial front of the advance was directed toward the West in order to take Toulon and Marseille, and from there turned North toward the Rhone Valley. Outside of that axis of advance, it seemed opportune to take advantage of the enemy's weakness by sending light units directly north, to Sisteron, through the Durance Valley, both in order to link up with the Vaucluse Maquis, and to protect the right flank of General de Lattre de Tassigny's Army... I specified that the natural corridor toward Toulouse would not be exploited, and I requested the commander of the VIIth Army to modify the general orders so as to include in it this new axis of advance..."

The American General Reuben Jenkins described in a more explicit manner this last minute change in the strategic plan of the High Command. Unfortunately, I have been able to find only an incomplete translation of this report. (Figaro newspaper dated 14 and 15 August 1946).

"The Headquarters had... planned that the advance north of the Durance river could be started on October 15: but many people thought that this evaluation was too optimistic. It seemed reasonable to assume

that our forces would be able to secure the Rhone Valley in the South of Lyon by November 15..."

This confirmed the timidity of the initial plan. General Reuben Jenkins then spoke of the intervention of Colonel Faisceau, sent by the Resistance, bringing the assurance that the Alps Maquis were preparing an "uprising" (which would be improper at that time) and requesting that we push toward the Grenoble area in order to bring them support as fast as possible (this was not Faisceau's exact idea; we can even say that what he proposed was the opposite). But this part of the report, the most interesting one for us Frenchmen, was unfortunately only summarized by the Figaro. It was not very clear. It is possible that the text itself was more explicit.

To my knowledge, General Patch's report has not been published.

It was therefore essential that the missions of Joseph and Faisceau did not fall into oblivion. This aim is accomplished.

Their results?

Regarding the whole South-East campaign, General Reuben Jenkins wrote:

"Our history does not include another military operation having had such a decisive success, such a swift and dramatic conclusion and so many consequences - with so little loss."

It is a well established fact.

While General de Lattre de Tassigny and his Army were taking Toulon and Marseille without undue delay, despite a desperate resistance on the enemy's part, the Alps freed themselves, thus allowing Butler Task Force to dash

toward Grenoble using the opened Napoleon road. Everything went exactly as Faisceau had anticipated and advised. The only difference was a slight variation resulting from a decision of the US High Command. It was at Montelimar and as early as August 21st, that the Americans turned toward the Rhone Valley to cut the Germans' retreat. A violent battle began. It lasted six days. The allied air force played the decisive part in winning the victory by "plastering" all that was remaining of the German XIXth Army. It was to take many months and an enormous number of bull-dozers to clear this indescribable "demolition range", spread over 30 kilometers in length, and sometimes with wreckage tiered up in several layers, one on top of the other. I believe this exceeded everything of the kind that was witnessed elsewhere.

General Reuben Jenkins listed the following reasons for the Allied success:

1. A complete strategic surprise as far as the German High Command was concerned, for they had concentrated all their means in the Genoa area.
2. A local tactical surprise for the local defenders.
3. The capture of the German Army Corps Headquarters in command of the defense.
4. The terrifying destruction by the aviation of all lines of communications and bridges on the enemy's rear.

5. The air supremacy which forbade all enemy transportation in the battle area, either by road or railway.

All this is quite true.

But we take the liberty of adding:

6. The support from the French Forces of the Interior.

For two and a half months, they carried all the weight of the struggle. We owe to their leader, Colonel Faisceau, a plan perfectly well adapted to the prevalent circumstances because it was taking full advantage of the enormous support of the Resistance. If Faisceau was able, in extremis, to have the initial plan modified, it was due to a direct contact with the high responsible leaders. This was possible because the anonymous mass of the French fighters had won with a high hand the battle for their liaisons. During five years, they had needed an obstinacy so deeply entrenched in their souls that no failure could have altered it, truly an animal stubbornness. And this is worth being well underlined, for it has never been considered as one of the French national virtues. Perhaps because this would not flatter our personality, and I can say that we sure are wrong.

CHAPTER IV

A FEW OF THE REASONS WHY THE NORMANDY LANDING WAS SUCCESSFUL

I

REASONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE NORMANDY LANDING
ACCORDING TO THE GERMAN SUPREME HIGH COMMAND

Thanks to the total collapse of Germany, a great part of the archives of the enemy Command fell into our hands. History can only gain by it.

In Volume II, I exposed some documents which, had we spared Germany as we did in 1919, would have never left the vaults of the Historical Branch of her Army, except in some camouflaged form, for the sole edification and instruction of her General Staffs and the commanders of a future Reichswehr or Wehrmacht or whatever its name would be. Some of these documents constitute the most formal and official German admission as to the surprise element obtained by the Allies during the Normandy landing, due to the intoxication of their Intelligence Service. (See Volume II, Chapter IV, 1st and 4th parts).

We will not return to this proven point. But intoxication was not the only cause for surprise. In addition, surprise was only one of the reasons for the success of the landing. Among these, some are specifically material in nature (superiority of means), some purely technical (new weapons,) or simply tactical (ability of the High Command). The other ones

bring us back to the field of intelligence warfare. One example, the simplest and most evident one, is that while the Germans were powerless to break through the veil of secrecy with which the Allies concealed their preparations, the Allies knew the Atlantic Wall "as the back of their hand."

Volume II then, has treated only one of the contributions of intelligence to the success of June 1944. The object of this chapter is to partially fill this gap: recognize the part played by Frenchmen in the German surprise in Normandy, excluding intoxication (subject already treated) and the air-tight maintenance of secrecy (Anglo-Saxon masterpiece.)

In my opinion, the Frenchmen's part was quite considerable.

Torn between the desire to back up solidly this opinion and that of not boring the reader with too professional a study, I must compromise. I shall group all technical considerations in this first sub-chapter. I shall analyze a document which should be fascinating to the reader avid of military facts; the synthesis of the opinions of the German Supreme Headquarters, in March 1945, on the causes of the "invasion of the continent." We shall see, indented, the causes which can be attributed to intelligence, and according to this document, they are numerous and of prime importance.

The reader who is in a hurry can "jump" to the second sub-chapter which will start with a summary of the first one; this will be sufficient to comprehend the subject. After this I shall bring into play some Frenchmen from one of the hundred nets of Fighting France, in the course of their work as intelligence agents in Normandy. We shall analyze together the precise and concrete result of their efforts. We shall compare it to the

sum of information available to the Allies concerning the Atlantic Wall in the sector in question. And finally, we will realize that it was not insignificant.

One only has to think that there were hundreds of groups in the same area similar to the one whose output we are evaluating. Then we can understand clearly what the allied cause owed to the French Resistance, in connection with the total success of the first landing in France.

In March 1945, searching for the reasons of its defeat of June 1944, the German Supreme Headquarters classified them in seven different categories: 1. Faultless preparation on the part of the Allies. 2. Unorthodox landing plans. 3.& 4. Strategic and tactical causes. 5. Detections and deceptions. 6.& 7. Weaknesses and bad methods on the part of the Germans.

Let us now consider them.

1. THE PREPARATION.

- a) Reconnaissance operations were pushed to the extreme limit of perfection, thanks to the air force, to espionage and the local Resistance Movements. The results obtained by these various sources were so complete that the landing troops possessed maps indicating all defensive installations, strong points, obstacles and real mine fields, while the dummy ones were omitted. It is not known whether this distinction was made solely through espionage, or both by espionage and magnetic detection.

- b) The landing crafts and equipment had been well developed and improved. At this point, the Germans deal at length on the constructions of auxiliary ports capable of handling heavy material - of 3,000 ton LST-type transport barges capable of carrying, in addition to more than twenty tanks and four hundred men, either several landing crafts, or two to four artillery-observation aircrafts. They noted the efficiency of the marine bazooka and the rocket launchers, etc...
- c) All units had been rigorously trained, each in its own specialty and all together in close cooperation, in an environment as realistic as possible. In particular, frequent exercises were conducted on simulated terrain to resemble certain sectors in Normandy, while general rehearsals of the entire landing operation were staged on the English coast, etc.
- d) Secrecy was strictly maintained and surprise was assured during the preparatory phase as well as the landing itself. Although a report on certain field maneuvers conducted in England gave the German Supreme Headquarters precise indications on some progress in landing techniques, the place and the time of the attack on Normandy were a complete surprise to the defenders.

Other reports indicated the construction of 300-ton concrete-filled ships; it was thought they were meant to obstruct entry into the ports.

- e) The German communications net was profoundly disrupted by the Allied bombings.

2. UNORTHODOX LANDING PLAN

Theoretically, the Germans admitted that no coast was unassailable.

But, in practice, they believed the following conditions had to be met:

- a) As far as the site of the landing was concerned:
- proximity of at least one large port,
 - no cliff without at least a wide beach in front of it,
 - deep water, no rocks,
 - no violent coastal currents.
- b) As far as the time was concerned:
- fair and calm weather ,
 - rising tide,
 - new moon.

Actually, the Allies landed under a full moon, - far from any large port - in some spots facing sheer cliffs - in waters which had been judged non-navigable by the experts of the German Navy - with violent winds - under a very low ceiling and on an agitated sea - . The first assault waves arrived at low tide.

The difficult passages were crossed with great naval expertness, probably with the help of local pilots.

The cliffs were scaled with rope ladders launched by guns, fixed to the cliffs and rolled down.

Landing at low tide, the Allies advanced beyond the well-known beach-obstacles without any casualties, or very little. The shining moon rendered easier the dropping of parachutists and airborne troops on fields that had been considered unfavorable by the Germans and, consequently, were not covered with obstacles. The alarm concerning the parachutists was not sounded because their landing was deemed impossible, and the first ones were mistaken for shot-down airmen.

Forces occupying the coastal defenses were attacked with just as complete a surprise. In the 716th Infantry Division's sector, the order to take arms was not even given as the first waves arrived. The local division reserves were still working on fortifications when they found themselves suddenly thrown into the battle. Evacuation of civilians and labor teams became impossible.

3. CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS.

a) Preparatory operations.

The total destruction of lines of communications as far as a hundred or a hundred fifty kilometers to the rear resulted in cutting off the supply of ammunitions to the strong-points and the encircled resistance-centers as early as the second day.

The majority of the mine fields, which had been accurately spotted were blown sky-high and all the observation-posts

were destroyed or put out of commission. At the same time, there was an increase in sabotage activities by the Resistance, concentrated in terrorist groups and largely supplied in weapons and rations by allied parachute drops.

b) Airborne operations and parachutists.

The Germans emphasize the successful element of surprise. For example, they mistook the colored flares seen on June 6 at one A.M. in the direction of Bonneville-Melville, for the marking of bombing targets, when actually a landing was taking place.

But they consider that, on the whole, they beat the Allies as far as the airborne troops are concerned. The latter's double mission was to protect the flanks of the invasion front as well as force a breach in the coastal defenses in order to open the way for the units coming from the sea. According to the German Supreme Headquarters, the American 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions did not accomplish their mission, which was to create in conjunction with four shore-landed divisions, a beach-head ten miles deep, from which the attack cutting off the Cotentin peninsula was to originate on the second day. The British Sixth Airborne Division remained practically inactive for a while, no doubt, the Germans believe, because their reinforcements arrived only twenty hours later.

c) Preliminary Naval shelling.

The first Allied Naval ships were spotted between three and four o'clock, at a distance of twelve to sixteen miles north of the mouth of the Orne. At daybreak (June 6, 5:21 AM) a fierce shelling by long range

naval guns began, coupled with a heavy aerial attack.

All German reports are in agreement on the fact that the precision and the efficiency of these bombings were far superior to what had been sustained in Italy, which can be partly explained by the precise pin-pointing of targets.

The number of navy guns employed is estimated to be between four hundred and five hundred forty-five pieces (420 had been used in the Salerno Operation). With successive concentrations, the action lasted thirty minutes and was followed by the firing of smoke shells after 5:45 AM.

The results of the aerial and naval bombings were as follows:

- All the mine-fields near the coast were destroyed or rendered useless, the barbed wire was cut off and easily crushed by the tanks landing thereafter.
- All the field fortifications were destroyed and the trenches' sides caved in; only a few concrete elements were partly spared; even the machine-guns on 360° turrets were lifted and jammed.
- All flame throwers, not only the portable ones, but the "Abwehrflammenwerfer" (fixed flame-thrower), were put out of commission and the majority of their crews killed.
- The "Goliath" tanks (radio-controlled) which were ready for action, were destroyed or buried under the ruins, their circuits completely broken and the ground so overturned that clear lanes of fire were impossible.

- All communications, projector cables and detection equipment were put out of order.

The demoralizing effect on the morale was even worse than the material one on the recruits who lacked experience and who showed weaknesses. Even when the advancing barrage was not supported by air operations, its accuracy and rapidity inspired in the defenders a sentiment of complete helplessness.

d) The Landing proper.

It took place along a wide front, at low tide, which had left the beach and its defenses dry on a depth of seven hundred meters. The first wave landed between 5:30 and 7:00 AM, depending on the place. It was composed of commando groups.

Their mission was to take the remaining mines away and to open breaches, indicated by pennants, through the forward obstacles. In spite of heavy losses, they accomplished it well thanks to their accurate knowledge of the defenses and of their location. This is attributed mainly to the espionage carried on by the population which had not evacuated. The paths taken by the commandos through the defensive disposition led directly to the roads which had been left open to civilian traffic, or prohibited in spots only.

Fifteen minutes after the commandos came the landing crafts, filled with the infantry supported by one company of tanks per each battalion. The ships were protected by special boats equipped with mortars firing five-inch rockets. Losses suffered by the first two waves were extremely severe. In

general, it was the third one that broke through.

The naval guns concentrated all their fire on the rear areas.

The landing crafts' artillery was able to put all the crenelled pill-boxes out of action.

Six hours later, at high tide, reinforcements arrived in transport-barges and were transferred into landing crafts a short distance from the shore. The unloading of four American divisions took only six hours and was carried out in twenty-seven waves. The bulk of the field artillery was put ashore in two hours and a half. The first armored divisions were in place the very evening of D-Day.

From past experiences, the Germans had thought that the whole affair would be over in a few hours. They hoped that in this brief crisis, the troops thrown ashore with limited support from light tanks would be wiped out by their local forces and reserves, - while their long range coastal artillery, playing the main role, would prevent all reinforcement.

But most of their coastal batteries were eliminated by a naval gunfire with a relentless and unexpected precision; while the remainder were paralyzed by screens of smoke.

4. COMBAT ON THE GROUND.

The Germans claim that, after a very bold initial progression by-passing the encircled strong-points to destroy them later, the Allies started advancing waveringly, often to fall back behind a screen formed by their own tanks.

... But the German counter-attacks did not have the anticipated

successful results. This half-failure can be attributed to the following facts:

1. The naval support fire, regulated by numerous reconnaissance aircrafts, was so precise that any movement of the reserves within the guns' range, that is twenty miles inland, was rendered impossible.
2. In some cases, the Germans were stopped by their own mine fields for lack of guides, while the Allies had excellent ones.
3. Finally, the allied air superiority was crushing. The German soldier felt completely abandoned and wondered where the Luftwaffe had disappeared.

5. DETECTION AND DECEPTION.

The Anglo-Saxons proved to be masters in the field of camouflage. While their parachutists came down, the rears of the drop zones were heavily bombed to force the observers and local reserves to take cover. Dummies stuffed with explosives were also dropped to spread confusion among the defenders.

One parachute drop occurred right in the middle of a Panzerdivision which was successfully counter-attacking and this stopped its advance.

The mine fields were cleaned up by mine-flail-equipped tanks and were sometimes detected by cattle herds.

The German command posts were detected by radio-monitoring, and attempts to pass along false orders pertaining to the utilization of artillery

tanks, etc., were made.

6. GERMAN WEAKNESSES.

a. Personnel.

The German troops were harassed by field fortifications work which had been continuous for months, to such a point that sentries fell asleep from fatigue. The German personnel was partially made up of "recalled invalids" and recruits with only four weeks of training. The cadres were insufficiently trained, etc...

b. Equipment.

One hundred armored units engaged in combat in Normandy were equipped solely with old French tanks.

c. Tactical errors.

For lack of regulated fire, the coastal artillery showed itself incapable of intervening effectively through the allied smoke barrages. For example, the 715th Infantry Division reported that on the 9th or 10th of June, a large naval allied formation was able to carry out its landing operations four to five miles from heavy coastal batteries without getting hit by one single shell.

The beach obstacles revealed themselves useless at low tide, etc...

The defensive organizations lacked depth, etc.. The anti-aircraft defense was too dispersed, the Luftwaffe conspicuously absent, etc.

7. UNSATISFACTORY METHODS.

Let us not consider in details the lessons which the German leaders

expected to draw from their failure. They are not identical in every case; in fact they are sometimes in contradiction with one another or with the preceding chapter. Their effect on French veterans of 1940 was overwhelming. They found in them, word for word, our own useless debates and our vain disputes of the immediate post-defeat period. And what a delightful surprise that in this case the words were German!!

The remarks gathered under the euphemistic title of "Unsatisfactory Methods", were a waste of time. The authors could not or did not dare get to the bottom of the problem; they did not want to accuse anyone or themselves. They did not ask the simple fundamental question: "Why and through whose fault are we on the weak side?" They neglected the essential point by presenting only excuses instead of reasons, criticizing the practices rather than assailing the principles, looking for subordinate scapegoats rather than the responsible commanders. I must add and admit regretfully that, at least in this document, they kept a little more dignity than we did, by avoiding to give out proper names prematurely or inconsiderately. By the way, let us talk a little bit about this laborious study.

Some German experts considered that a good defense was provided by the use of fortified strongpoints holding to the last man in case of encirclement, thus permitting the organization of a continuous line of defense. Let us note here that they did not invent this remedy in Russia. We knew it ourselves and it was one of the solutions to which the pre-war French military minds clung readily in the "War Games" and defensive

tactical exercises, being perhaps unconsciously influenced by the premonition of our future inferiority. We called this type of defensive works "closed strong-point," and it had become the key-word of all our tacticians. In June 1940, this simple and eternal combat method was offered to us as the strategic solution to all our ills. Well! No! This was no more sufficient to the French of 1940 than it was to the Germans of 1944. It was already obsolete. When the material forces have become too unbalanced it is too late to rely on tactics.

Others criticize the notion of "Schwerpunkt," (main effort point), which was relied on without rhyme or reason like a universal magic formula; by men incapable of distinguishing its relative value according to its various areas of application. Let us take a very exaggerated example, in order to make you understand the scope of this observation: if we may focus, in the offensive, almost all of our means at the site where we conduct the main effort, because we are the one to pick its location, It would be ill-advised in the defensive to concentrate most of our forces at a main effort point which we have chosen because the enemy may not attack there. True, no one will make that big an error. But it does seem that the local German Command overstressed the use of main points of effort; that it used this tactic even in the disposition of mine-fields and anti-aircraft defense, thus creating breaches in its rampart (we can note that this criticism is in conflict with one of the preceding chapter). We too, know this so dangerous abstract way of thinking, that of the bigoted intellectual. It is extremely dangerous. But in March 1945,

it was futile for the Germans to try to bring it to trial. It was either too early or too late. Too early to prepare for the next war. Too late to philosophize when the avalanche is overcoming you.

Some tacticians believed that the reserves should have been more to the front, while others thought that they were too much so, etc... Among the worries of the High Command, we can distinguish the comparison between the "narrow and deep individual foxhole" and the continuous trench with the advantage going to the former. This brings to mind Bazaine, the French commander-in-chief during the Franco-Prussian war, adjusting the line of fire of a gun in Metz. But to us, it brings back remembrances which are much more disturbing than this anecdote, because... because they belong to our past. When the Army is in retreat, the supreme commander has other things to worry about besides the individual training of the troops.

To sum up, nothing new can be drawn from the defeated armies.

Not even the realization (and I request permission to point this out although it is not my topic) that the German coastal troops, inadequately trained, "showed weakness because they had a feeling of complete helplessness when faced by the superiority of the enemy's means, and that they were asking where the Luftwaffe was."

Familiar echos. That they might take their source in this other old military nation whose men are... what they are, but in any case brave in battle (we have paid to find this out); is this not comforting? Does this not alleviate somewhat a certain weight in our mind?

To terminate this gossip, which is perhaps a useless dissertation (but surely not more so than the analysis found at the end of the German document), let us say that the Germans having lost, found in their defeat one hundred futile tactical reasons. Futile because they were tactical. Tactics are nothing but a set of various methods to attain a goal in the most economical way possible, with the means at one's disposal. They are not sufficient to accomplish everything. They do not suffice if one does not possess the means proportionate to the goal. I know of only one war which was won by tactics alone. Even then, it is only a legend, and quite an old one at that. It is the one of Horace and the Curiaces.

What count, after all, are the means. It is the strength of the Army, now merged with the Nation. It is built up patiently and slowly as early as during peace time. And it is during the pre-war peace time that the war is won. Once the instrument is forged, it only has to be entrusted to men with common sense who will not ruin it unnecessarily, and all will be well.

II

ELEUTHERE TEAMS IN NORMANDY

1. A Lone Sedentary

In short, the Germans were defeated in June 1944 because they were the weaker force. Still, secondary causes rendered their defeat more rapid, more costly, and more irreparable. Some of these causes were of a tactical nature, while others resulted from the intelligence effort.

But both are often closely related. The German Supreme Headquarters enumerated them in a study made in March 1945. I shall condense it for the reader who has only skimmed through the ten preceding pages.

In open contradiction with the public statements of some high German leaders, the German High Command wrote in this secret document for internal use only, that the German Army was totally taken by surprise in June 1944. The Army had not foreseen the site or the time of the landings. It had not evaluated adequately the superiority of its enemy's strength, and it was not cognizant of the Anglo-Saxon technical innovations.

Although the Germans were on a terrain they had occupied for a long time and had fortified at leisure, the Allies fought there as if they were at home, thanks to their intelligence, while the Germans operated as if they had just landed, due to the element of surprise. Their High Command gave ten proofs of this. The most striking, if not the most important one, was the significant relation between these two details:

1. The Germans blew up their own mines;
2. The Allies made the distinction between the real and the fake mine fields and traced their way straight through the first ones to the free and open roads.

This was extremely important. Those little facts imply a knowledge of the battlefield on the part of the Allies, a knowledge so thorough that the great accomplishments can be explained, or at least do not surprise any more.

The main events can be condensed into one brief formula: "The

Allied action was conducted with a relentless precision."

Unrelenting precision of the air and naval bombings. For the first time, perhaps, in military history, the naval guns prevailed over the land artillery. The fleet and the air force annihilated the fire power of the Atlantic Wall. Thus, they obliterated all German hopes that the battle would be quickly won within a few hours, thanks to the isolation of the first landing elements and the destruction or pinning down of the Allied Armada which would become incapable of reinforcing the advance-guard.

Unrelenting precision of demolitions and sabotage, preventing any action by the German reserves and even an efficient exercise of command.

Unrelenting precision of the land, air and sea maneuvers, combining their efforts to strike always where necessary, because they knew exactly where the nerve center of the enemy forces was located.

How did the Allies gain this intimate knowledge of the enemy, of its means and its terrain, if not its exact intentions? To get an idea, let us tackle the problem by its small end, also the simplest and the most elementary, as well as the most logical: the beginning. Let us look at the activities of the men of one of the hundred nets of Fighting France.

°
° °

Up to about the last minute, the Allies kept us ignorant as to the date of the landing, and up to the ultimate second as to its site. They

were right in this. But this necessary obscurity had inevitable drawbacks for the nets. It complicated their detection work of the German coastal defenses.

If the recruiting potential had been quantitatively unlimited and if all the agents had been qualitatively excellent, there would not have been any problem. In the dark about the Allied intentions, we could have worked just as much everywhere and without regrets, from Dunkirk to Bayonne and from Port-Vendres to Menton.

Eleuthere tried this. Let me take one of its reports "Coastal Defense Intelligence," which were a part of practically all of its weekly dispatches. This report is No. 407 (Mailing Slip of April 1944). It is certainly not the least interesting of all of them, but I know that there have been at least ten others which were more voluminous and useful, my choice being only limited by photographic reproduction capabilities.

Report No. 407 contains an extremely detailed study of the fortifications from Le Havre to Le Treport, of the inundations planned in the area and of the field constructions in the vicinity of Rouen. It included a list of the measures planned by the Interministerial Commission for the protection against war activities in case of an Allied landing, sketches of fortification works in the Calais, Granville, Bayonne, Trouville, Dieppe, Caen, Marseille, Toulon, Saint-Tropez, Sete, Les Sables-d'Olonne, La Rochelle, the Gulf of Giens and Leucate areas. There were only seven pages of actual text, and I had the next to the last page reproduced with its corresponding sketches in order to point out the density of these dispatches and

to prove that it was well understood that "a picture is worth more than a thousand words." (See photos 16 and 17, pages 380 and 381).

For curiosity's sake, I added a few other documents taken from various reports.

1. A sketch of Saint-Gilles-de-Vie, to prove that the agents went to examine their objective on the spot and did not let the numerous German tricks dupe them, be they simulated mine fields or dummy pill-boxes. (See photo 18 page 380).

2. An old report on the fortifications north of Le Havre, because it is a model of conciseness and clarity, while omitting nothing of any importance, particularly the signal and communication facilities whose destruction would bring chaos in the enemy camp. (See photos 19 and 20, pages 380 and 381).

3. The sketch of a peculiarly designed device to underline the fact that the German coastal defense techniques were closely watched, and any new devices detected. (See photo 21, page 380). This document is the last one chronologically in our files, written by the hands of Maurice Delhinger, alias Fleurquin, about whom I shall speak later.

Thus, Eleuthere had succeeded in planting agents just about everywhere along our coast lines. However, not enough of them. One day, as he was making a map-overlay showing all the areas they covered, i.e., all the areas explored, Bardin noted that there were quite a few blank spots. He told Hubert de Lagarde about it. Their conversation happened shortly after the reprimand received from the G-2 of the Army Resistance

Organization concerning the lack of unit identification (1). Lagarde, nervous, took offense.

"Get me additional men," he retorted coldly, with his head lowered.

"You know as well as I do," replied Bardin with the effrontery of a picador, "that this is no time for complaints. It's a vicious circle as a matter of fact..."

"So! you admit it! Then don't bother me, you old son of a gun. I'm going to end up dropping the whole thing..."

"...Vicious circle from which I would like to get out as much as you, and you're not going to drop anything. You'll have to do the best you can with what you have, that's all. Which will be, if you don't mind, you old son of a gun yourself, the subject of this conversation. For you are one yourself, Mister, 'You too! You too!,' as I used to say as a kid when I ran out of arguments, and no doubt these words have never been more justified than right now. You make me laugh with your habit of playing soldier with civilians and playing civilian with the military. I find it very amusing myself. It has already cost me enough delay in my promotions to make me still do it with a satanic pleasure... all the more so as I don't give a hoot about my career. But with me, old buddy, try something else."

"O.K., O.K.," retorted Lagarde, visibly amused, therefore won over. "It's not to please your bosses that I'm working, so..."

(1) See Volume I, Part II, Chapter I, Section IV.

"Well, this is a good start. Still, you have to admit that every one is playing his right part. Them, by being demanding, you, by hollering like a bleeding pig at the first reprimand and I, by going from one side to the other, trying to allay the tempers. I do it, because the production of your net can be improved (this is what I tell them), and that one day it will be tremendous (that's what I'm telling you). So let's get going."

"O.K., let's get going" approved Lagarde. "It is sure that if we could know where the landing will take place, we could direct there our best agents. Some of them could even be implanted in the area. We would compartmentalize them even more than usually so that at least, a few of them would remain till the end. But, it looks like we'll only be informed about the event after it has taken place. So we have to decide among ourselves where it will occur. I've thought quite a bit about this matter..."

"Then why did you chew me out? All I was doing was politely asking you..."

"Shut up. Let me go on. I suggest on the one hand Normandy, and on the other Provence where everything has to be prepared (by the Germans as well as by the net)."

"Why not the North? That would be the shortest way and..."

"Because the Flemish coast can be turned into a swamp in no time at all. From Calais to the Seine river there are cliffs all along except in the Marquenterre area which is much too narrow. On the other hand, to the

south of the Seine River... Do you remember? One evening while I was attending the General Staff Reserve Officers Course, you showed me your notes concerning the Joint War College field exercise of 1934. You were supposedly landing to liberate France. Your first goal..."

"Good grief!" exclaimed Bardin. "That's true! I had forgotten about that. It seems strange to think about it. I was a Captain. On paper, I commanded the Army Corps making up the right wing. Objective: Montebourg-Saint-Mere-Eglise. Well, well, old chap! Then it won't happen there..."

"Don't be funny. Your first main objective was Cherbourg, which you took from the rear and from a considerable distance. The reasons behind this choice had really impressed you at the time..."

But Bardin was not listening to his friend. He was reminiscing about old times:

"Genin too had a theoretical command in this 1934 war-game. Two years ago, he was a Colonel in the Free French Army. By now he must be a general. (Bardin was not aware that Genin had been killed). It would really be a strange coincidence..."

"We should have also gone with them," mumbled Lagarde, also carried away by his dreams.

Bardin was the first to snap out of the blues which were beginning to invade, agitate, and spread gloom over them.

"O.K. for Normandy. You can have it" he said softly.

Lagarde followed his lead:

"Thank you. As far as the South is concerned, I was told that the Langue-doc area is covered with lagoons, the sea too shallow, and the current very strong."

"O.K. for Provence."

"And to hell with it if it happens elsewhere. They should have informed us. We'll have done all we could. And after all, we're only one out of countless organizations..."

It was under these conditions, which were akin to a game of chance, that the nets had to orient their efforts. Eleuthere won this part of the gamble, by increasing its collection activities as early as 1943 on, from Le Havre to Cherbourg, and in 1944, from Marseille to Nice. I have related at length the conversation which determined this choice, in order to point out that it was not due to any particular foresightedness.

Therefore, several compartmentalized teams of this net were assigned to work in Normandy. The most important was the one led by Maurice Dehlinger, alias Fleurquin, R.A.E. 219, to whom important responsibilities were entrusted in spite of his young age of twenty-four years. He was a man of the sea, from Le Havre, who became a navigator upon his graduation from High School. Despite this demanding vocation, he had joined the Infantry in 1939, because it was the shortest and surest way to get into the battle. In 1943, he had gathered around him a group of very eager young men. The risks they were taking by continuously circulating in the restricted zone strengthened Lagarde's intention to have in Normandy several independent cells completely unaware of each other.

It is impossible to mention all the cells in a study which is not meant to be eulogistic. I shall only talk about the biggest team, that of Fleurquin, and about the smallest one, smallest without a doubt because it contained only one individual, X... alias Ademai, R.A.E. 193. Knowing the two extremes, the reader will be able to get a good idea of intermediate size cells.

When he went through the draft examining board in 1928, X... was in splendid health, as vigorous as a lean cat, but only weighed approximately 90 lbs. Although he wanted very much to be a soldier, he was considered unqualified. His family had produced numerous graduates of the Polytechnique Institute, at a time when that school still had in its curriculum "gun-firing" and "expedient crossing of waterways." It also produced therefore quite a few generals. X... was not following in their foot-steps.

In 1939, at thirty-one years of age, the little and stubborn fellow had not yet gotten over it. At the time of the mobilization, he started waging a silent war against military medical authorities to be accepted, succeeded by using tricks worthy of a Sioux, was classified "fit for combat," was thrown back into an auxiliary service at his first cold, persevered, went from doctor to doctor until he found one who was willing to look beyond the outer shell, and with the latter's complicity, joined the elite tank corps, triumphantly, but surreptitiously, or if I may say so, through the sighting slit. Alas! The government had won in its own way, which was through attrition. It was only on June 7, 1940, that X...

proudly put on the beret with the crossed cannons insignia. By then, there were no more tanks in France.

It would do no harm to recall that there were many Dehlingers, alias Fleurquin, and X's... alias Ademai, in France in 1939, and that it is precisely these people who found themselves in the Resistance.

In October 1940, X... unenthusiastically resumed his duties as senior bank clerk with a promising future at Bank V... at Pluieville, in Normandy. As far as I can judge, he was an outstanding banker. But in 1940, he had something else on his mind besides his accounts. In 1941-1943, he took his vacation at Easter time for very personal reasons. Indeed, opportunities to go over to England had presented themselves to him. He failed twice. After his second failure, the nostalgia he had been experiencing for the previous three-year period turned into a neurosis. He had gotten in touch with the local resistance group, but it was lacking military leadership and did not suit his aspirations.

About mid-November 1943, he received a telegram from one of his cousins asking him to come urgently to Paris the following Sunday, but without giving any details. He had a strong premonition that some Resistance business was in question. Was anything else urgent in 1943? So he went.

On November 21, 1943, in Paris, his cousin introduced him to a stranger who was supposed from then on, except for a few slips, to answer to the pseudonym of "Raton" (small rat), which had no descriptive relation to the man. Indeed, he was a cousin of Hubert de Lagarde and came also

from a very old military family. An atmosphere of complete trust and friendliness prevailed immediately.

At 1:30 PM, at the Cafe de la Regence, Raton introduced X... to Lagarde (Mr. Breteuil for that occasion), in front of some sad looking black concoctions, which were to remain untouched. Lagarde, well informed on the ancestors of X... by his cousin, went straight to the point:

"I head a net working for the French General Staff. How would you like to gather intelligence for me, particularly on the coastal defenses of your area?"

X's face brightened up. He echoed:

"French General Staff?"

Lagarde was watching X... from the corner of his eyes. His appraisal was based on mental factors rather than physical, and he had interviewed, weighed, evaluated and screened so many men in the past few years, that he did not stop at what had caught the eyes of doctors. Where the latter only examined a pack of skin and bones, he discovered the nerves and the will-power that make a tough fighting cock. Even when sitting, X... had this tense, vigilant, and straight appearance which reflects more muscle and physical resistance than some wide-shouldered colossus. He always seemed to be ready for anything. This could have been construed as a more or less instinctive or forced attitude on the part of a little man in front of big ones. But no. It came from within him; it was part of his nature. The direct look, the stubborn forehead, the salient and aggressive nose and chin, the assurance in his voice, everything meant

and showed energy.

Lagarde made X... talk. Not a word was uttered which was not of interest or of importance; this was good for he had one main preoccupation: the fear of loose-tongues and braggarts. X... was intelligent; very intelligent; probably a born leader. One shouldn't put a fence around him, stick him haphazardly at some job in a chain of command which would stifle him or would have to be reorganized to suit his talents. On the contrary, let him manage by himself, then he will show what he is capable of.

"Listen," said Lagarde, "you're going to work directly for the Base Station, under me. That doesn't mean that you'll be seeing me. This is probably the last time we'll see each other."

X... reacted perfectly:

"Thank you for taking me."

"You will come to Paris to see Raton on the first Sunday of each month. Work out the details together. On the 15th of each month, I'll send you a liaison agent to Pluieville. How shall we call you?"

"Ademai, if you don't mind."

"That doesn't fit you at all."

"Perhaps," replied X... "but I am sure you are aware of the fact that this theatrical character's naivety was only feigned. Actually, he was quite sly. I can easily look stupid which, coupled with my puny appearance allows me to go anywhere unchallenged."

This is how Ademai embarked on the treacherous road of clandestine

war. He revealed himself quite talented for it. He was a model of the sedentary agent. But, most of all, he remains in my mind as the only solitary type who managed to accomplish alone the work of an entire team with the help of a few occasional assistants, most of the time unaware of it. These qualities became so quickly evident, that, until June 6, 1944, Lagarde worked directly with him, considering him, all by himself, as an integral compartment of the Normandy subnet Frêne (Ash-tree).

This special consideration resulted from Ademaï's natural caution which his first experiences transformed into distrust. Once, as he was questioning a worker on a military construction yard near Saint-Julien-le-Faucon, the latter yelled for all to hear: "You're working for the English! Help me get over the other side," then called two of his comrades: "Come here! Here's a guy who is in cahoots with the British." All this took place within earshot of half a dozen Germans. Several incidents of this type, normal in a country used to freedom, but too frequent in the prevailing conditions, convinced Ademaï to stick to his policy of individualism.

Under such circumstances, I still wonder how he was able to obtain the exceptional results that I shall enumerate later. He could only devote to his investigation the leisure time his duties as bank clerk allowed him, and his only means of transport was his own bicycle. He spent all his spare time ripping his pants against the barbed-wire fences, patiently and innocently extricating bits of information from the Todt workers, and getting lost with the disarming air of an idiot in the forbidden zones from where the sentries chased him with an amused contempt. At night, he transposed

his observations of the day on precise overlays, the importance of which will be seen later.

"Didn't you ever have any trouble?" I asked him after the war as he looked over copies of his work which had been kept in our files.

"Never," he answered.

"Come on," I insisted, "some excited sentry must have on occasions aimed at you?"

"Often," he replied. "But I never really had the feeling that they would shoot. My only thought in these moments was to avoid being searched."

"And this document?" I inquired. "How did you get it? It really puzzled us and we did not forward it."

The paper in question was a sketch of the defensive deployment of German troops between Villers and Blonville, which included not only the permanent fortifications, but also the combat emplacements of units which were certainly not stationed there permanently. It included everything down to the smallest echelon, i.e., the equivalent of the machine-gun sections and the infantry squads of the French Army.

"You see," I continued apologetically, "we told ourselves: 'such a plan can only have been prepared by the Germans themselves, and in that case it is the stolen original that we should have received. Or else, the agent is elaborating around a few given known facts, and he might be in error. Unless, and this would be surprising, he had been invited by the Germans to witness a rehearsal, a field exercise...'"

"An alert exercise," retorted Ademai. "An alert exercise. This is

precisely what happened, except for the fact that I invited myself."

"Wow!" I exclaimed. "Why didn't you say so; how did it go?"

"Very well. It was Sunday; I had had lunch at the "Petit Bequet" in Deauville, where you still could eat like a horse for one hundred francs. I set out for Villers via the beach road, a strongly fortified sector since the beach is very accessible. Stopping at an intersection with another road leading inland, I struck a conversation with a young man who happened to be there. He was a Dutchman who had been requisitioned by the Germans. All of a sudden, a helmeted Boche, armed to the teeth, and riding a bicycle, came pedaling like mad toward us. He yelled a few words to four fellow-soldiers standing nearby ; of his words I could understand only one: "Alert!". The Dutchman said to me: "It's nothing really. Only an alert exercise at sea. The area Commander is a fanatic about this kind of entertainment. But it is best that we leave, for in such occasions they usually take themselves quite seriously." I held him back for a minute. The Boche units were coming from all directions, rushing at full speed, with the NCO's bellowing loud enough to send the "Home Fleet" scurrying back home. The coast became green with uniforms in an instant. A young woman who seemed a bit worried came toward us and asked what was going on. I explained it to her. "It's too bad," she said, "I wanted to go to Deauville where my husband is a 'Decauville' (narrow gauge railway) locomotive engineer. They'll never let me through." I had an idea. I shook hands with the Dutchman and said to her: "I'm going there too. Let's go together, we'll see. They can't eat us alive!"

We walked along the concrete trenches and the fox-holes filled with Boches at their combat-stations who looked at my companion with hungry eyes and jeered at us. We had covered at least one kilometer before one of them decided to stop us. My companion told her little story with an honest face, and I supported it with a number of stupid "ya ya." The Boche consulted with a NCO who shrugged his shoulders and motioned us to go through. One kilometer further, we came to a barbed-wire road-block guarded by a sentry who looked like a brute and observed us closely as we approached. There, I thought that things would turn sour. A small truck carrying a military band passed us. A NCO alighted from it, spoke to the sentry and both of them started to move the barricade aside. As unobtrusively as possible, I attempted to go through, pushing the woman in front of me, but the sentry, who had forgotten about us, suddenly woke up. This was one of the cases when I had a sub-machine gun shoved directly under my nose. On my nose to be exact; and it even bled. We had to turn back. Very painful return. Have you ever seen a couple of rabbits going through a whole regiment on maneuvers?"

"Yes," I said. "It's a very comical spectacle."

"Well! this is exactly what we did until we got to Villers. Then, at the first quiet place we came to, and immediately so as not to forget anything, I noted down on a piece of paper what I had just seen. I couldn't have omitted very much for I had gotten to know that road like the back of my hand. I did the right thing, for a short time later, it was completely restricted, which complicated matters on one hand, while making them easier

on the other."

"How do you figure that?"

"Very simple. The advantage of these signs "Streng verboten" (strictly forbidden) across the roads was that they immediately told us where we should look. It was on their account that I constantly roamed around Mount Canisy and Mount des Aubets. On Sundays, those gentlemen were having a good time and the surveillance was relaxed. Do you remember the eleven new heavy artillery emplacements that I gave you all at once?"

"Here they are," I replied "the eleven overlays, and even a torn piece of the original paper giving your description of the positions (see photo 22, page 380). They were dispatched with report No. 533, dated 10 May 1944. They undoubtedly reached their destination on time."

"This was one of my best Sundays," said Ademaï. "I had observed in the area an extraordinary collection of signs prohibiting access to numerous roads. I successively followed eleven of them, which led me to eleven fortified positions still under construction, but just about completed. They were all deserted until the following Monday morning. In one of them, a whole family, grand-parents, parents and children were picnicking. What a joke!"

This is the way Ademaï worked, the simplest way in the whole world, as one can see.

From November 1943 until June 1944, he practically kept up to date, all by himself, the German order of battle from Honfleur to Caen. He pinpointed with great precision the ammunition depots of the Livarot Forest,

of Trouville, of Tourny, of Mesnil-Brout, of Neuilly-le-Bisson, of Saint-Benoit-d'Herbetot, of Saint-Gratien and a few others. I have a feeling that we owe the destruction of the Sainte-Marguerite-des-Loges depot, east of Livarot, to him. I do not know the individual responsible for the fatal error which had led to the bombing of Sainte-Marguerite-de-Viette, to the west of Livarot, where, as far as we know, there was no military objective. This error was corrected shortly after Ademai pointed out the probable mistake.

In May 1944, Ademai obtained the complete list and meaning of the conventional signs the Germans were using on the concrete posts designed to indicate clear paths in the mine-fields, from Mr. X..., a building contractor requisitioned to do the job. They were letters of the alphabet, flanked by Roman and Arab numbers, the grouping of which indicated to the ones in the know the direction and the width of the sure channels. Those posts were very small indeed. They protuded from the ground by only about twenty centimeters. But there was no reason to fear that the Allies would not see them. The capability of decoding their hieroglyphs is sufficient to explain, for one sector anyway, why the Germans sometimes blew up on their own minefields while the British went through them as if in their own gardens.

The precious little overlays meticulously marked and commented by Ademai, much the same as the one included in this volume, arrived in London by the hundreds (see photos 23 and 24, pages 380 and 381).

Unfortunately, I did not save them all. However, there were enough

of them left to try an experiment. I had all the ones pertaining to the German coastal defenses between Honfleur and Houlgate transposed on one single map, using the British conventional signs (see photos 26 and 27, pages 380 and 381). To permit an immediate comparison between the work of Ademaï and the sum total of what all the Allied reconnaissance means, including the Air Force, were able to observe, I also had the corresponding section of the map used by the landing troops reproduced (see photos 28 and 29, pages 380 and 381).

Let us remember that Ademaï was only one of the agents of one of the hundred nets of Fighting France, and we shall understand far better than with lengthy discourses why the Allies, in June 1944, fought as if they were at home from their first steps on the soil of German Europe.

We will find Ademaï again during the Allied battle through France. But, to close this particular chapter of his life, which ended on the night of June 5-6, 1944, here is an excerpt from a letter he wrote to me:

"... My admittance to the Eleuthère net changed the environment in which I lived. From one day to the next, I was transformed from a prisoner undermined by the fixed idea of an escape always doomed to failure, to a soldier in charge of informing the General Staff. My heart, my whole self, was rid of the unbearable weight which overpowered me since June 1940. One day, I will be in uniform again...

"... May 1944. I am convinced the day of the landing is drawing close. Three heavy artillery positions in my sector, which I had

studied thoroughly, have been annihilated by the Allied Air Force. At the Houlgate Mound, only one gun can be repaired. At Mound Canisy, the position is completely out of service. One bomb fell on the air vents of the underground galleries and caused considerable damage. The ammunition packed in the underground tunnels exploded. At Les Aubets, the position was hit just as badly, but I cannot obtain any details on the damages...

"... At the beginning of June, June 1 or June 2, the date of the landing was confirmed to me by M... of S... net."

Here was a happy man, And Good Lord! For once, a man who deserved his happiness!

III

ELEUTHERE TEAMS IN NORMANDY

2. The Fleurquin Group

Maurice Dehlinger, alias Fleurquin, operated throughout five departments which had been grouped and designated as the sub-net Frêne(ash-tree): they included the Seine-Inférieure, Eure, Calvados, Orne and Manche departments. He filled them with permanently settled agents, between whom liaison agents were circulating. The latter, an elite in their own field, worked also at gathering information during their various trips, in superimposition to the sedentary agents. In emulation with each other, it was very seldom that they returned without having personally unearthed

some valuable "truffl ."

One of the best was Rousseaux, R.A.E. 228, a young Belgian who had become a naturalized French citizen in order to fight the war, and who had been a student officer at the Saint-Maixent Military Academy. I mentioned his role in the destruction of the Panzer division SS Hohenstaufen (1) but I did not speak of his background.

Having fallen into a trap at the Spanish border on August 21, 1943, he was sent to the sinister camp of Royallieu; he left it on October 28, when he was deported to Germany.

The guards who accompanied the prisoners took their clothes, leaving them only with their underwear, and locked them in cattle wagons. Inadequate precaution. Eight young men, including Rousseaux, forced a side-panel open and, at about twenty-one hundred hours, jumped from the train just before the Onville railroad station (Meurthe-et-Moselle). Rousseaux swam across the Rupt de Mad, then probably beat the world record for the 2000-meter steeplechase and, finally breathless, wounded in the foot, he arrived at the village of Waville. Exhausted, he knocked on the first door he saw. He burst into the home of two honest people, a Spaniard married to a Lorrain woman, who did not get shocked at the sight of his nude body covered actually by a thick layer of mud. They gave him shelter, fed him, took care of his wound, and - I was almost going to forget - nursed him through his pleurisy. And during that time, the German police was incessantly searching for him in Waville and in the neighboring villages.

There are burnt cats which still are unafraid of fire. Rousseaux

was of this kind. On December 15, having just recovered, he was recruited by Captain Chenal, alias Lebrun, a leader I will talk about later, and entered the Eleuthere network. Because of his successful initiatives, less than five months later he was designated as the new chief in charge of reorganizing the beheaded Breton sub-net.

Never did Rousseaux come back from one of his trips with empty pockets. An example of this is one of the sketches he brought back from his last mission for Fleurquin, in Normandy. (See photo 25 page 380). One will note that this liaison agent was intelligently working on the destruction of the enemy liaisons.

Another one among the best agents was my friend X... alias Pinto, R.A.E. 71, a tall fellow from the Ardennes, built like a heavy-weight fighter, but who was at the same time as fast and resourceful as Ademaï, the fly-weight of our sector. A big hound and a ferret. They would have made a good hunting team, but, unfortunately, we were never able to bring them together.

Pinto was gay, spry, enterprising, and trustworthy. By the way, he was another one who enlisted in 1939 as Fleurquin, Ademaï and Rousseaux had done. He was then nineteen years old and had chosen the Infantry.

Demobilized, he took refuge in Mortagne. He got married, and had two children, but this did not lull his desire to fight. With his friends, Pierre Mulot, and Pierre Keraen, he organized a Resistance group. In 1943, he left them in charge of this group to devote himself entirely to the Eleuthere net which was taking all his time.

The other day, with a small emotion-filled smile, he brought back

to me the Intelligence Request from the net base station, dated 15 May 1944. (See picture 30, page 380).

"We didn't do too bad a job in the shop, no?"

"Yes, you did," I grumbled. "To keep papers like this one was not a good job."

"You couldn't expect me to remember all this by heart," he protested. "And I never had any trouble because of it."

"What more did you need!" I exclaimed.

I was remembering the adventures of Pinto during the combats for the liberation, and I will tell about them later. But Pinto was thinking of his trips prior to June 6.

"Incidentally," I said, "your liaison during the second fortnight of May was the last one. Weren't the Germans already very nervous by that time? "

"Not too much. To the north of the Seine River, everything went fine. I had more difficulties to the south, where I had lost my contacts and where the new regulations and strict control of movements surprised me."

"Tell me about it."

"Oh! it's not really interesting. Nothing happened."

"Precisely . That's what has me interested. A typical liaison, standard, ready made, like the others, a cinch, in Normandy!"

"All right! I will start from Rouen. There I am, looking for a way to enter undetected the restricted coastal area. I cannot find one.

Then, with the same purpose in mind, and relying on my lucky star, I take the train for Honfleur. Until Pont-Audemer, nothing happens. We stop there long enough for me to have a drink at the station refreshment bar. The proprietress looks honest. Me too, so it seems. Therefore, gathering all my nerve, I ask "the" question. "To enter the forbidden area," she replies, "go see the locomotive engineer." I go to see him at once. The railroader explains: "In Quetteville, the Fritz check the I.D. papers and get everyone off the train. The travellers then move into another train where they are "sifted" again during the trip Quetteville-Honfleur. My train waits a while in Quetteville, then departs empty for Honfleur. So it's very simple. In Quetteville, get out on the wrong side of the train, then go into the car reserved for the occupation troops where they never have the idea to check. Hide in there so they cannot see you from the platform, and wait quietly. In Honfleur, just before entering the station, I will slow the train down and then you will jump. From then on you're on your own." I say: "O.K. Thank you. But be sure to slow down a good deal." He answers: "Do not worry, pal! I am used to it. I have had quite a few customers, sometimes small ones." I split my sides with laughter. He asks me why. And when I tell him, he believes that I am making fun of him and scowls at me (1). In

(1) The author begs the reader's forgiveness. This is a joke which can be understood only by a few of his comrades from the net. One must excuse this private remark, which is the only one of the kind in this book.

Quetteville, everything goes as planned. With the exception that I should have stretched across one of the Wehrmacht car seats rather than hide in the toilets as I did. Outside, on the platform, a group of chattering Fritz waits for the other train to leave. They are not budging from their spot. They stand so close that I can hear them gibber. I say to myself: "If one of them feels a... need, he will come back in here to relieve it and..." Finally, the other train lets out a loud whistle and departs. I am happy. But I do not make a move because a patrol is searching carefully my own train, except as I was told, the car I am in. What stupidity on their part! Lucky for me though! At last, I get going. When I say "I", you shouldn't have any objections -- I know how fussy you are with grammatical mistakes -- for "I" was the only passenger. I had my own special train, just like the President of the Republic. When all is clear, I come out to get a little fresh air. We stop everywhere to load supplies but nobody gets on the train. The bay of the Seine River appears. We are getting close. But time goes by slowly. I am getting so impatient that I almost jump one station too soon, at the Riviere Saint-Sauveur. The engineer sees me and signals me to wait. It is well organized. When the buildings of the Honfleur railroad station come into sight, the train slows down, I hear a long whistle, and I understand that it is my clue, so I step down (it is the right word) to the road which runs beside the tracks. I walk to the station where -- I forgot to mention it earlier -- I hope to find my cousin X... who is expecting me. I say to myself: "Resourceful as he is, he surely knows about the scheme, and he will come

at the second train's arrival to meet me." Well, he is not at the station. So I go to his home, Rue Brulée, find him, and teasingly I say: "All the same, you could have guessed..." He replies: "You don't think I was going to attract the attention of the Germans by waiting in the station outside the regular train hours? It's you who should have been smart enough not to come straight here." "All right! But I still have a problem," I say annoyed. "I have no Ausweis." He replies: "Here is one. Take it." The pass reads: "Berechtigt zur Einreise in die Küstensperrzone der Départements Calvados, Manche, Eure und Seine Inférieure." It was good, wasn't it?

"In any case, it was promising." I answered. "But it would have to be examined more closely. Actually, it is not important anymore."

"Anyway, my cousin had already done a very good job concerning the Vasouy mine fields in Hannequeville, the harbor itself - concrete shelters, light artillery, anti-submarine nets - etc., and on locating a new C.P. belonging probably to a new unit he had identified. The following day, we both went arm-in-arm to take the bearings of the anti-aircraft artillery positions all along the coast of Grâce and in the Pennedepie and Vasouy woods. There had been reinforcements since the last check. Soon, my suitcase was filled with papers. I decided to leave them in Honfleur where I was to return, and went to Caen by bus. There I met R... for the first time. He recognized me by matching his piece of a five francs note torn by Fleurquin with a second piece of the same note I had in my possession. I gave him the intelligence request and also something else which pleased him very much: our nice identification guide, you know, the one in color.

He told me what he had found out. A true Russian salad! Mongols were swarming all over the coast. R... was managing all right in their midst. He had finally succeeded in distinguishing one from the other, and called them by their villages' names. A tremendous performance! He said to me: "Come with me to see a C.P. in Verson, on Highway 175. I am afraid I made an error with their unit sign." We left, riding on bicycles.

Under the pretense of repairing a gearshift, we were able to identify in a flash a tank unit which had its maintenance shop at the Citroen garage of Caen. At Verson, we took Highway 147, and went around the Carpiquet military airfield. While examining an anti-aircraft defense installation from a little too close, we were challenged by a sentry. R..., who spoke his language somewhat, managed to soften him up to the point of letting us go through the fields towards the village of Marcelet. We didn't go in a straight line and were able to locate exactly the German fighters. They were not on the airfield proper, but scattered along Highway No. 9, under the trees, or camouflaged under nets. We barely missed an incident with a patrol. Fortunately, R... was the bearer of fabulous papers introducing him as a railroad official of the Caen Station. The matter was straightened out, as the Fritz have a high regard for civil servants. We spent the night making a written account of our observations. The next day, I pushed on to Ouistreham, where a buddy handed me the results of a good job on the mine fields and anti-glider posts, on the defense of the mouth of the Orne River, and on the Riva-Bella position, the key of the defensive system...

"The key of the Defensive System," I exclaimed. "I've always told you that this does not make any more sense than "the key of a field of fire."

"Excuse me," resumed Pinto, "it's been so long, you know... There, they had strict surveillance. So I made myself as inconspicuous as possible. Return to Caen the same evening. Next day, destination Deauville, where I intended to contact a new guy recommended by my cousin from Honfleur. Maybe this will surprise you, but I never liked very much this type of approach with someone. I don't know how to beat around the bush in order to work things out to the point where the man acts on his own and begs you to get him into the Resistance if by chance you know someone in it and all that. Anyway, the guy and I came to an understanding. I wandered through the streets of Deauville the first day, Trouville and vicinity the next, giving him a general background orientation as we would say in school. I think he was already qualified to be employed when I left two days later with quite a few tips myself. I came back to Honfleur. The cousin had heard about a big display of armored stuff at Beuzeville, Pont-l'Eveque and Lisieux. I let him take care of Beuzeville and left for Pont-l'Eveque. We were to meet in Lisieux later on. I succeeded in identifying an armored unit at Pont-l'Eveque, then the next day, a Panzer and a new infantry Command Post in Lisieux. At noon, I had lunch at the Restaurant des Normands, facing the Avenue de la Basilique, while waiting for the cousin who was late. I was half way through my meal when a Feldgendarm and a civilian came in. "Papier!"

The plain-clothesman looked at my papers and at my face with a little too much curiosity. Planning to leave for Paris directly from Lisieux, I had the mail in my suitcase which was under the table, against my foot. Quite a critical moment. I must have succeeded in controlling myself for he finally grumbled something and they both left. I don't know what was going on in Lisieux that day, but believe me or not, I was stopped five more times in the afternoon. I had been too late for the 2:30 PM train, but since it had been cancelled anyway, there were no regrets. The next one was at 7:30 PM. I couldn't go on dragging my heels around the streets (you know, Lisieux isn't that big, it is spread out, but small). But you know something happened which may be the only interesting thing in this whole affair... Although probably not... But you aren't going to tell all this?"

"Hum..."

"You aren't, huh? Well, I had a vision, like a dream except that I was awake: my suitcase was being searched at the railroad station. That really bothered me. I got a room in a hotel and spread out all my documents on the bed. Very discouraging. There were too many. But I'm rather clever with my hands. I fabricated a whole lot of hiding places in my clothes for my papers. I finally managed to make them all stay in place without making me look too much like a balloon. Crazy idea, eh?"

"No," I said. "I never could resist those impulses myself, and I always, or nearly always, felt better after it. And then?"

"The first thing I was asked to do at the Station was to open my

suitcase for these gentlemen. It contained only my pajamas, my toilet case and some gadgets. "Gut." They didn't search me. I wanted to go back to Paris, as I had previously decided, but I was worried about the cousin. So I returned to Honfleur. Nothing had happened to that joker. But look how things can be silly! During my last night in Honfleur, the anti-aircraft defense of the coast of Grâce was seriously hit (between you and me, it had been useless for us to pin-point it a few days earlier to the millimeter), and four bombs fell near the house. On my return trip, the train was machine-gunned before Pont-l'Eveque, the four-barrel gun at the rear of the convoy was heavily sprayed, the locomotive transformed into a strainer and the line interdicted ahead of us at Mantes. In short, it seemed as if everything was going wrong to punish me for coming back to Honfleur. At last, I found Fleurquin, Rue d'Amsterdam, in Paris, and I gave him the whole bundle!"

"What did he say?"

"He said: "It took you too long. Next time...."."

IV

THE NEW MYSTERIES OF PARIS

We shall meet again Pinto, Ademaï and the others in the battles of the liberation. But the Normand sub-net of Eleuthère, unlike the Champagne sub-net Willow, or the Parisian group of Captain Chenal, was not able to intervene into the battle in a unified and directed manner. This is due to the particular characteristic of the Normandy battles, and also to the

fact that Fleurquin fell into German hands when the activities in his sector were at their peak. Contrary to all anticipations, it was in Paris, through a silent and sneaky trap, that he fell, and not in the clamor of the battlefield which he knew and had "fixed" better than anyone else, and on the doorstep of a success for which he had worked well considering the part he played and his rank.

At the beginning of this volume, I wrote that it was often around the un conspicuous letter-drops that our crises were conceived and brought to an end. Here is a sad example of this.

But to bring it into life again, I must first of all say a word or two about the liaison organization of Eleuthere in the city of Paris. For two years they operated without a hitch and, outside of the two raids by the Gestapo on the original and succeeding base-stations, there was only one catastrophe. Those who can consider it in all objectivity will say that it wasn't much. That the losses were limited due to the efforts of everyone certainly, but first of all due to those of the small headquarters surrounding Hubert de Lagarde.

Most of its members came just like him from the "Mouvement de Resistance Libération-Nord," (Northern Resistance Movement), which had put them at his disposal with the well-developed feeling for action and efficiency that marked its leader, Brossolette, his successor R... and the military chiefs, General Zarapoff and Colonel D... The staff included Hillard, alias Sydney, arrested by the Germans and whose whereabouts are still unknown, and G..., alias Raymond; they were both young active Air Force officers. There was also

Chenal, an engineer who was a Reserve Cavalry officer, and Lartiste, a first class police officer who was an Air Force Reserve officer.

Thanks to them, Eleuthere was provided with all the essential and necessary services for clandestine life. No one ever asked how Sydney was able to mass-produce his "real-fake" papers at the rate of an industrial outfit. It was Eleuthere that furnished just about all of the identity cards of the General Staff of the Army Resistance Organization, including that of Mr. Tenard, professor, official of the Public Education Ministry, which concealed General Revers so well that his own subordinate Bardin, making a record of it, did not recognize his chief on the picture.

Eleuthere had enough letter-boxes and refuges in Paris as well as in the rest of the country, so only eight members of the net at most had to know the whereabouts of the second base-station, which was located at the "Chez Swan" antique shop, rue Gambon. Every sub-net had relays and shelters at its disposal for its contacts with the latter. They were usually grouped around the Paris railroad station serving that subnet's province, but were sufficiently separated from each other. They were all carefully chosen and quite safe. Make no mistake about it, if the enumeration I am about to give you gives an impression of carelessness, it is because life itself is full of contrasts. To the one who might have the urge to write "The Mysteries of Paris in the XXth Century," (1) I offer these few

(1) Reference is made by the author to Eugène Sue's 19th Century novel "The Mysteries of Paris." (Translator's note).

notes on the environment of underground life. (I have lived them too much to still have any desire to do so).

The favorite hideout of the members of the Base-Station was located at No. X.. Rue d'Agout. Today it is a very quiet house. As a matter of fact, it was pretty quiet at the time, and very well kept, but... how can I explain? If the police were still tolerant about it, on the other hand morality condemned it. No doubt the Police did not know that, in defiance of the regulations affecting such establishments, ours had a second exit, which was the only reason for our choice, and "evil to him who thinks evil!". But one really had to know about it. On the fourth floor landing, at the left, was the proprietor's bedroom. If one looked around carefully, one could find behind the bed head-panel an unsuspected door. That door led to another room reserved for Eleuthere, from where, by passing through a third door and a labyrinth of stairs and corridors, one came to Rue Montmartre, quite a distance from the house. The proprietor was a friend, a true, and sincere friend. I could never understand by what mysterious telepathy the extraordinary prestige he enjoyed among his residents reflected upon us. Or were we, in spite of ourselves, marked by some sign? But which one? Was it diabolical, hungry-like, or saintly? Or was reserved the specialty of the house? In any case, not one of these ladies, ever, and under any circumstances, made the slightest pass at us.

This could be a chapter "a la Tolstoy" in the New Mysteries of Paris.

The favorite abode of the comrades from Central France was a hotel close to the Saint-Lazare Station, run by a good old guy, a Jewish fellow

to whom one of us gave a delightful medieval Angevine name with corresponding identity papers. He was the most incomprehensible mixture of exaggerated caution and catastrophic naivety. He had the deplorable habit of confiding his secrets as well as ours to his hotel staff. Sometimes, in his absence, a brand new maid would say to a liaison agent: "The boss is not here but I know where the papers are." They were simply between the telephone directories available for public use, under the telephone in a small office near the entrance hall. After all, our friend might have read "The Stolen Letter" of Edgar Allen Poe. On the other hand, the minute a comrade informed him that he would spend the night at the hotel, our host ordered a good little diner for him, disappeared immediately after, and did not return to run the hotel until he had made sure, by telephone, that his dangerous guest had departed without any incident.

Well! With an atrocious accent and a very marked Israelite physique, he lived through the war without any trouble from the Germans, while his hotel swarmed on certain days with notorious traitors in female company. During the Liberation battle, he ended up getting arrested by the F.F.I. who mistook him for a German in civilian clothes, thought he had been shooting from a roof-top and threw him out the window. One of us, alerted, rushed to save him but arrived too late. The poor devil was dead. He was wearing brand new raffia shoes, which were very scarce. This detail, added to the fact that the hotel clientele included many collaborators, had undoubtedly contributed in great part to the fatal mistake.

This is my sad chapter "a la Zola".

The most important letter-drop of the sub-sectors from Central France was seven minutes walk from there, on Rue Y..., at the place of our old friend Mr. X..., art photographer, a fanatical infantry soldier of 1914-18 and a super-patriot. His physical appearance, still as trim as ever in 1944, his strong legs, his sharp eye and his curled-up mustache, evoked in me, irresistibly and touchingly, all the pageantry of Walter Scott, which by the way probably had something to do with my military vocation. One reached his work-shop through a maze of dark corridors where one could have easily gotten lost. On the other hand, one could get out in a straight line and end up two hundred fifty meters away (I measured it with my best regulated steps) on Rue Z..., after jumping over the fence of a back yard and passing through a large building where all the "concierges" were in cahoots with us. Until 1943, I would never have believed that in the twentieth century there could still be in Paris as many buildings with double exits as were discovered by Lartiste and Chenal.

In his studio, our old friend, eternally bent over his work and with his smock covered with acid spots, enlarged our microfilms, or microprinted our snapshots. This was a real sacrifice on his part, for he was a true artist in his own specialty, and it left him no time left for beautiful things. His best productions, among which some superb nudes (and once again, evil to the imbecile who evil thinks!), appeared in a gallery alongside more questionable works. Was this due to a mistake of eclecticism on our friend's part? Not at all. The visitors took a panoramic view of the mediocrities, in whose frames our mail was concealed, and lingered in front

of the masterpieces, behind which there was nothing. Our old friend thought of everything and took a special care in the details.

Here, it is good old Victor Hugo, that we would need don't you think? With his great orchestration of alexandrine verses! One will easily understand why I shall not linger on this any longer.

A few of us made it a game to hesitate when walking into the tiny coal shop of Grosdur, under the pretense that we could have easily been blown up to pieces. There was more explosive than fuel in his place. You walked in and your right elbow brushed with a heap of charcoal bags, just a front to cover up an equal quantity of plastic explosive. Two steps inside and you came to the counter where Mrs. Grosdur served you an old brandy "loaded with dynamite." After the rules of good hospitality had been observed, you walked three steps further -- exactly three and not one more -- and you found yourself in the tiny back-shop. To the right, sitting on two coffee tables one on top of the other were the telephone and the directories. Behind the latter, a few automatic pistols. I do not recall where the machine gun was.

Grosdur had such an arsenal because in the struggle against the German invader, he trusted nothing but weapons. Firearms as much as possible. But if necessity required it, he could use his two fists. We shall see later how he proved that he could use both kinds of weapons with terrifying efficiency. He consented nevertheless -- just to please Chenal -- to save a small space in his arsenal for our papers. But it was only to please him.

This would be a typically Eugene Sue chapter.

The sub-sectors from the North and the East of France catered to the little cafes in the vicinity of the Nord Station, Rue de Compiègne for example. They went no further than the Armagnac, Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Martin; and even in that case, they had had to be begged before they accepted. As far as I know, they had only one sure permanent letter-drop, located Rue des Vinaigriers, in a building with a second exit leading to a blind-alley. As a rule, they came and left the same day so that they did not need any hideout .

The comrades from Lyon and the Southeast managed by themselves in Paris. Their contacts with the Base Station were done at their own convenience, usually in the streets, and no one ever knew where they slept at night. The letter-drop they used most was Rue de la Dorane at a short distance from the Place de la Republique. Traffic was heavy there and it was easy to get lost in the crowd. It was evident that the Northerners looked for the quiet atmosphere of taverns, the sober conversation between four walls where one feels at home, and the precise and thorough thrashing out of problems as much as the Southerners chose the open air, the strolls in the middle of throngs and the rapid exchanges.

The refuge of the comrades from the West was a hotel, Rue de la Convention. The proprietress had personally witnessed the killing of her son and her daughter-in-law by a murderous bombing. She had carefully measured all the risks she was taking by offering shelter to our men, and she accepted them with indifference. She reserved the best rooms for them,

the ones on the ground floor which opened into a vast uncultivated field where the Public Highway Department stored its equipment. The ones in a hurry stayed at the Hotel Edouard VII. Fleurquin himself had a private abode, Place Adolphe-Chirieux.

In his dealings in Paris with the agents of his own sub-net, Fleurquin made use of numerous letter-drops, Boulevard de Port-Royal, Rue de Castagnary and Rue Maison-Dieu, usually in the concierges flats. They were quite patriotic and, after all, not more gossipy than any other persons.

For his exchanges with the Base Station, Fleurquin had at his disposal the letter-drop which was considered the safest. Yet, it was the only one where a catastrophe occurred.

It was a small book shop on Rue d'Antin, managed by an intelligent and courageous young girl whom we shall call Catherine. She ran the shop much more for the Eleuthere net than for its absentee-owners or the manager who was too busy with other affairs. Thus Catherine was in no way looking for new customers. Rather she discouraged them with the most boring window displays. Actually, nobody would ever have entered the place if Catherine had not been so ravishing herself. But, she was also a very serious girl and, little by little, she had completely isolated herself. Only two or three dreaming admirers and two perfect realists, Fleurquin and his liaison agent, Janine Cats, a very young, promising, and talented Belgian journalist, crossed her doorstep any more. We will find hereafter (see photos 31 and 32, pages 380 and 381) two bad photographs of them,

but they are the only ones I have. They will suffice, I trust, to make anyone love instantly those intense eyes, both serious and filled with precocious and somewhat bitter experience, of the handsome face of Fleurquin, already fully mature and with clear features; and the deep, kind and a little dreamy gaze of Janine, who in 1944, had lost her plump and still adolescent cheeks.

A more thorough study of Fleurquin's picture will give an understanding of why I consider it a crying injustice of fate, that such a young man was the victim of a traitor, who was also a poor imbecile. Life did not wait long to set off his essential features, a high forehead and tabular chin, between which a short and straight nose was a sure sign of quick clear thinking leading to persevering and swift action. A magnificent young man, don't you agree? And is it not deplorable to see him fall in such ordinary circumstances?

A short while before D-Day, Fleurquin was introduced by one of his best agents to a volunteer for any kind of missions, who was highly recommended and whom we shall call Putois. Although he lacked personnel, Fleurquin was reluctant to take him in. So far as we can discern the thought of Fleurquin by his actions, it appears that he was on his guard about the newcomer. On several occasions, he picked someone else over Putois, but without discouraging him completely. No doubt he had him under surveillance before reaching a decision. Putois was only contacted in the streets, far from any refuge or letter-drop of the net.

In any case, one day, shortly after the landing, while waiting for

the Paris Base-Station to transmit the London directive amplifying his role, Fleurquin was coming out of the Rue d'Antin book shop, glancing suspiciously all around as usual when he noticed Putois seemingly absorbed by the window display of the Theatre Agence, at the corner of the Avenue de l'Opera. He rushed toward him.

"You," he said, "you're shadowing me."

Putois denied it. He wasn't the type. Anyway, why would he be following Fleurquin? There was no reason for it.

"No speech," said Fleurquin. "Be frank or you'll regret it."

How pitiful that the "nobody" did not understand all the implications of the warning and that, even as he broke down, he continued to lie.

"It's true, I admit it. I followed you because I wanted to make sure I wouldn't lose contact with you. You only give me rendez-vous and they're all without any results. Nothing comes out of them. I still haven't enlisted in the F.F.I. You see, I told myself: "If I miss him just once, it's over, I'll never find him again and I'll never get in with the Resistance..."

None of us ever found out whether Fleurquin tried to gain time by compromising with the traitor he had detected or whether he kicked him in the rear. The only sure thing is, that in the hours that followed, while taking the proper steps for alerting and dispersing his personnel, he was arrested near the Parmentier subway station, and then confronted by the Gestapo with Putois who told him in front of the Germans:

"Yes, I am one of them. No use your denying that you're a terrorist."

This, Fleurquin had the time to confide to several individuals before he died.

Putois had compromised the book-shop. The next day, three Gestapo cops walked in with drawn revolvers and threw under Catherine's nose a number of letters that Janine Cats had picked up on the previous day.

"She has been arrested. We know she was here. No use denying it!", yelled one of the cops.

Catherine denied everything anyway. Her composure was perfect.

"You'll talk in the end," sneered one of the Germans.

At that precise moment, an innocent woman walked into the shop which did not even sell thirty books a month. Calmly, Catherine inquired what she wanted.

"If those gentlemen are in a hurry, I can wait," mumbled the frightened newcomer.

"It's the Gestapo and they came here to arrest me," replied Catherine simply.

This was not completely naive on her part for, at the same moment she was trying to slip into her hands a piece of cardboard where she had scribbled her sister's telephone number. But the customer, overcome with panic, ran out of the store.

One of the policemen entered the tiny back-shop which was completely dark for lack of electricity. Way in the back, he saw the shadowy silhouette of an armed man, and started shooting first... pulverizing a large mirror in which his own reflection had frightened him. Catherine took advantage

of the situation to get rid of her small address book.

They drove her to Rue des Saussaies. There, Catherine found Janine who, to mislead the policemen and gain some time, pretended that she was expected at a clandestine rendez-vous in the Tuileries Gardens, on or after nine o'clock. She was immediately taken there and waited until 4:30 PM when her bodyguards, famished and furious, caught onto her game and brought her back. Incensed with rage, they gave her the bathtub treatment four successive times.

Then started the slow martyrdom which has already been told a thousand times. Neither Fleurquin, Catherine, nor Janine ever talked. There were no further arrests in the net.

Lartiste, probably uncovered by the German agent, barely missed being caught in a badly laid trap the same day. Two policemen came to his residence, Rue de la Procession, in the 15th Arrondissement. Upon being informed by the concierge that Mr. Lartiste was absent, they hesitated for a moment then left announcing they would return shortly. Lartiste, who in the meantime had been warned of his comrades' arrest, had decided to move out and take with him the few papers he had from the net as well as the radio transmitter. He had two well-armed huskies accompany him: Grandve, the biggest "muscle-man" of the Parisian Police, and Houzeau, who had set aside a brilliant career in engineering until the invader's departure. Lartiste placed the latter at the corner of Necker Square across the street from the entrance of the building, and the first one in the alley Felicite, facing the rear exit of his refuge. For, naturally, his refuge had

two ways out; the apartment was in the back of the building's courtyard, on the ground floor, and its windows opened into a dead-end alley perpendicular to the street. One had to know about this small detail before trying to arrest Lartiste.

Having thus made his plans for a cautious retreat, Lartiste walked into his house. The concierge told him that "two gentlemen had inquired about him, that they were to return, but that they did not look very friendly." That was enough. In a flash, Lartiste stuffed the radio in a bag and his documents in a suitcase and went out the window, into the Felicity Alley, at the precise moment when the "two gentlemen", having finished what they had to do, were walking in the door Rue de la Procession. At the probable instant when they stuck their noses out the open window, Lartiste, Houzeau and Grandve must have been pretty close to getting lost in the throngs of the Rue de Vaugirard.

Lartiste is still very much alive. Catherine had returned from deportation. But Janine died March 25, 1945, at Ravensbruck.

Fleurquin left Compiègne for Germany a short time before August 15, in one of the last convoys. In the cattle-car, one of his companions, lifted at arm's length by the others, managed to cut the barbed wire which blocked one of the air vents. About ten prisoners, including Fleurquin, were able to jump out, under the guards' fire while the train was going around a bend. One of them was killed. Fleurquin was out of range before the train stopped. Wounded though, he was picked up by the French Red Cross, given proper medical treatment in recently liberated Dijon and

soon his wound was healed. He enlisted immediately after that... perhaps even a little sooner... and was assigned to the Military Security Organization.

He was killed while on a special mission, and I hope I shall be excused for not having the courage to speak at length about this great companion's last moments.

°
° °

Shortly after the Liberation of Paris, an unidentified individual was found dead hanging from one of the street light-poles at the Parmentier subway station, near the spot where Fleurquin had been apprehended by the Germans. I would not be surprised if this suicide were Putois.

°
° °

The sequence of these stories had led us to the eve of the D-Day landing and the Liberation battles.

The role of the intelligence nets was now to change from top to bottom. The job would no longer be to bring information to a Command planning at years' or months' date, but to supply accurate day-to-day data to commanders of combat units for whom success or failure, as well

as the annihilation of the enemy or of their own troops depended on immediate intelligence. The terrain where one operated was no longer a France occupied by a large Army which, except for the Gestapo, was somewhat static and dull like a peacetime training-camp. On the contrary, it was now the battlefield itself and its immediate rear where one was submerged by a multitude of nervous enemies who saw terrorists everywhere.

A very difficult adapting was imperative. The nets accomplished it successfully.

After the break-through at Avranches, the armored columns of Patton conducted on all fronts the deepest and most daring wedges of these five years of war. The Commando group P... of the Army Resistance Organization crossed France from Toulouse to Autun, all alone. Everywhere the Allies entered the German defense dispositions as "a knife in butter." There were losses of course. This was war. But nowhere did the deep probes of these units cause them to be cut off, encircled, forced to contract and close up -- as happened to the Germans so many times in Russia -- and thus doomed to destruction unless reinforcements or the main body were brought up to save them.

I would like to explain, with very concrete examples, that this was due for the most part to the men of the nets of Fighting France. I would also like to show them in actual and open battle, for which they had waited so anxiously for such a long time, because they had been intelligence agents only for want of something better.

Then I can bring my work to a conclusion.

° END OF VOLUME III °

A P P E N D I X I

It seemed quite interesting to reproduce in their entirety some documents from the files, for the benefit of the readers who are interested in precise details, in the true picture, the faithful colors, and for those who want to know the exact nature of the intelligence nets' work; in addition to their documentary interest, they are a testimonial of rare human values.

Beneath the military coldness of the first document, pertaining to a current parachute drop program, one can feel all the hidden agony the Resistance chiefs were going through as they were compelled, at all levels, to take grave decisions in the dark.

The second one is a complete reproduction of the intelligence requirement questionnaire I have mentioned on page 342 , sent to its agents by a Normand network. It proves that the Fighting France intelligence nets knew their jobs.

The third one is the beginning of report No. 407 of the Eleuthere net, concerning the German coastal defenses, discussed on page 322 . Together with photographs 16 and 17, it gives a clear indication of the minuteness, the conscientiousness and the competency of the agents.

DOCUMENT No. I

MUNICH

April 7, 1944.

PARACHUTE DROP RECEPTION AFTER-ACTION REPORT

(April moon)

MUNICH Section received on DZ J in the night of April 5-6, at 1:30 AM, sixteen parachutes.

Transport was effected by "HALIFAX" aircraft coming from LONDON. The operation was carried out for the best and without any incident. At daybreak everything was over. (Personnel and supplies had reached a safe place).

The personnel included:

First team TOTO: Two Specialized Officers: one communications specialist and one "air operations" specialist. Plus one radio operator, a young woman (Suzy).

Second Team S.M.: Two young women radio-operators.

After a rest period of twenty-four hours, the latter were dispatched towards "NOEL". The three others took care of their personal affairs (cover) while awaiting TOTO's arrival. Several meeting points were indicated to them.

Supplies included the following:

15 radio sets, tobacco and food supplies.

The radio and food supplies were taken out of the vicinity of the field and concealed about fifty kilometers away in several different spots.

To be noted that the martial law, the road-blocks and other measures of control in effect for several days after the arrival

did not make things any easier.

In short, the operation has been a success and a second operation can be carried out on the same field at the next moon providing only that the reprisal measures taken by the occupying force (martial law and operations against the Maquis) do not increase, but decrease.

The Dordogne field could not be used this month since the Department by the same name has become a restricted zone and that, in addition, it is presently the scene of actual combat operations against compulsory labor dodgers.

IMPORTANT REMARK

The section chief reports the following facts:

a) At the arrival, the pilot saw the signals, answered and proceeded directly toward the DZ. Later on, the lights forming the triangle were, so it seems, lost from sight.

The plane circled over for a quarter of an hour before the drops. Then it dropped its "parcels" more or less in all directions. In some cases they landed several kilometers apart from each other. By chance, the terrain was very appropriate to large operations; except for a little extra work, there were no difficulties in this respect.

In addition, the prolonged presence of the aircraft over the field did not create any serious drawbacks. But, after an investigation a few days later, it appeared that the plane

had been spotted.

The section chief insists on the following point. When the signals are seen, it is perfectly useless, and even not recommended for the aircraft to answer several times to the reception signals. It will prevent possible detection by the enemy. This elementary rule of caution was not followed by the "HALIFAX" crew, who repeated the letter about ten times. This incident must be brought to the attention of the interested parties so as to avoid a recurrence of same.

Important Supplement to report of 7 April

- (1) 18 April - Some local inhabitants, whose attention was caught by the prolonged presence of the aircraft, saw the parachutes, and claimed that it had come to bring supplies for the Maquis. Without a doubt, these rumors will reach the ears of the Milice operating in the area against work dodgers. The section chief therefore requests that the operation scheduled for the next month be postponed to the following month. Subsequent details will be given on the matter as soon as Toto has made radio contact.
- (2) The parachuted officers claimed that one of the containers filled with food supplies for the reception committee was missing. Therefore, it is imperative to find out whether or not this container was actually dropped. All searches made within the drop area and its surroundings were fruitless.

DOCUMENT N°2

FLEURQUIN

May 15, 1944

INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Recapitulatory Information

- "Are the following still present at:

LA HAIE-DU-PUITS (Manche): one infantry division? Which one?
Identifying characteristics?

SAINT-LO: Army Corps Command Post? Which divisions does it
consist of?

VIRE: Fortified Sector Command Post?

CAEN: One infantry division? Which one? Identifying
characteristics?

ALENCON: One Armored Army Corps command post? Which divisions
does it consist of?

LE NEUBOURG: Tanks and other heavy equipment from the "Adolf
Hitler" Division? Location of its Command Post?

ELBOEUF: One Armored Division? Which one? Identifying cha-
racteristics?

IVETOT: Fortified Sector Command Post?

DIEPPE: One Infantry Division? Which one? Identifying charac-
teristics?

ROUEN: One Infantry Division? Which one? Identifying charac-
teristics? Army Corps Command Post? Which divisions does it
consist of? "

II - NEW REQUIREMENTS

- Locate the 24,000 men of the Coastal Defense, pin-pointing the location of the command posts.
- Are there in your area important Air Force Staffs comparable to the size of an Army Division, or an Army Corps?
- All information regarding the hydro-electric plants and important dams in Brittany and Normandy (name and location, output, size of security personnel, security methods, measures taken by the enemy to sabotage the installations).
- Do the Germans have methods or apparatus to reduce the possibility of sound-detection? Do they take certain precautions against noise and vibrations in their engines (spring or rubber suspension)? Is there a coating rubber-type , compressed cork, asbestos, wood), one to two centimeters thick, even in spots only, on the hull of the German submarines?
- Exact location of itinerary followed by road O, intersecting route T at Grace, and passing through Livarot or the vicinity of Rouen?
- Exact location of itinerary followed by Route P (BONDY-PONTOISE-DIEPPE) which joins route V. Exact location of junction of these two roads.
- Damage done to the fuel and ammunitions dumps by the Allied bombings and repercussions of these attacks? Indicate, if need be, the new locations of these dumps and describe their installation

and the method by which they are supplied.

250-ton coastal submarines have been based in the ports along the English Channel as a measure against an invasion. Notify us immediately on their arrival or of any movement indicating arrival, such as: stockpiling of supplies, presence of sea-going or land-based navy personnel, technicians, etc...

- State of morale of the German Navy, especially that of the submarine crews. Do not bother with rumors, but pay special attention to acts of insubordination, sabotage attempts, refusal to go at sea.

- German submarines that can be equipped with new underwater engines operating partially or completely independently from the normal battery-powered engine.

- Old submarines, more especially those displacing 500 tons, which could be equipped for military use in French yards.

All technical data would be most useful.

- Preparations to block the harbors, mine the piers, destroy all port installations.

- Preparations or modifications in the harbors' defensive systems by laying mines or anti-torpedo nets, submarines and PT Boats.

- The light-ships ready to go into operation and the measures taken to spread inflammable liquids on the sea in certain areas.

- Exact location of the JAFUE Fighter Squadron Headquarters

which should be either in Normandy or at DEAUVILLE or vicinity.

DOCUMENT N° 3

COASTAL DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE

ROUEN - 6 Feb 44 - V190 - At the beginning of January 1944, in the north of Rouen, surveys were made in order to create a zone of resistance from MONT-SAINT-OIGNAN to the GUILLAUME forest, i.e., on the hill overlooking ROUEN from the north. This line was to comprise the German underground blockhouses, but it appears that the Germans found pockets of water at a depth of five to ten meters and, in fact, all constructions seem to have been abandoned.

LE HAVRE - 6 Feb 44 - V105 - The defense system established by the Germans from LE HAVRE to Le TREPORT consists essentially of a forward line following the coast and an interior line located to the north of the strategic highway which goes from LE HAVRE to ABBEVILLE, passing through BOLBEC, YVETOT, SAINT-SAENS, NEUF-CHATEAU, FOURCAINOUT, etc...

The information given below concerns only the stretch of road going from YVETOT to BLANCY-SUR-BRESLE.

A) "Coastal Line" (see sketch and photographs) - It consists of a continuous line of defense with its main fortified points located in all ports, especially: LE TREPORT, CREIL-SUR-MER, DIEPPE, VEUILLE-LES-ROSES, SAINT-VALERY-EN-CAUX, VEULETTE and FECAMP. Aside from these strong points, the line of defense

consists, on top of the cliffs, of a few underground block-houses, and tanks, imbedded in concrete with only the turrets being free. Between these blockhouses quite distant from each other, there are mine-fields and concertina networks. Since the Germans consider that a landing is impossible along all areas bordered with cliffs, their efforts are concentrated on the above-mentioned ports.

Description of the DIEPPE fortified line:

The shingles have been taken out of the beach and instead a slimy layer of mud deep enough to bog the tanks, was brought. Behind it, is an anti-tank ditch at the site of the old sea-wall which had previously been destroyed.

This ditch has a rather gentle slope facing the sea, and a vertical wall ten meters high on the inland side. It is made up of strong material such as railroad track sections, etc... Behind this ditch, on the site of the former promenade along the sea-wall, is a field of large mines. Most of the houses bordering this promenade are still standing and serve as billets and offices; they do not appear to be fortified, except the cellars which have been transformed into shelters.

All routes of access to the promenade have been blocked by concrete walls, railroad ties and tracks. These walls are eight meters high and six meters wide.

All the blockhouses on the beaches and cliffs are armed. Some

of these constructions are equipped with 37mm guns.

In the city itself, aside from small machine-gun pill-boxes, there are no other fortifications.

The inner harbor in front of the railroad has been filled and replaced by a platform under which a large concrete shelter has been built with an entrance for automobiles, and a portion of which is reserved for the installation of a large hospital.

The fortifications in the towns of LE TREPORT, SAINT-VALERY-EN-CAUX and FECAMP are similar to those of DIEPPE.

In the other ports mentioned above, the fortifications are not as extensive but always comprise anti-tank walls and mine fields.

On the high land, every road is blocked with barbed wire. On the whole, there is very little artillery, but reinforcements seem probable within a short delay.

Between this first line of defense and the interior line called "AUFFAY line", the roads are blocked by two-meter-deep anti-tank ditches. According to certain informations, these are a part of an unfinished line of defense which was meant to be perpendicular to the coast line so as to transform the whole defensive network into a criss-crossed fortified system.

B) "Interior line or "AUFFAY line" (see sketch and photographs).

- It is essentially composed of large buried blockhouses, some

of which are connected together by underground tunnels so as to form an independent defensive system in the most critical points. Some of these tunnels include a narrow-track railroad. The RAF bombings of this area did not hit the fortifications located between CREPUS and NOTRE-DAME-DU-PARC or those located North-West of TQTES.

Most of the fortifications between DOUDEVILLE and BELLE COMBRE are built well outside the villages, whereas between BELLE-COMBRE and BLANGY, they are found in the immediate vicinity of the villages, and sometimes in the villages proper.

Most of the villages which constitute this interior line, as well as the more important villages located between the two lines are organized in such a way that they can be completely closed upon an order from the High Command. To that effect, barbed wire and anti-tank "doors" have been brought in.

C) "BUCHY line" (see sketch) - Behind the AUFFAY line, the Germans have established what they call the "BUCHY line". It consists of approximately one meter-deep trenches which enclose two pipes, one big and one medium size, similar to water pipes. We have been unable to gather any information on their purpose. It appears that this line is connected to the artillery battery positions (secret weapons?).

ROUEN - 12 Feb 44 - V190 - All Captains of ships and barges anchored in the port of ROUEN must, on a pre-arranged signal

given by the German authorities, leave their ships within ten minutes and turn them over to the Germans. The German authorities have taken steps to blow up all boats and ships in front of the harbor of ROUEN so as to block the access to the port in case of a landing. Similarly, all types of cranes along the piers are booby-trapped and will explode at a pre-arranged time. This will bring about the destruction of the piers along a long stretch.

PARIS - 10 Feb 44 - V 38 - "Planned steps to be taken in case of an Allied landing in France". These measures are the responsibility of the Interministry Commission for Protection Against War Damages, and comprise namely the following:

- 1) The evacuation plan to be implemented in case of an Allied landing covers:
 - The whole Mediterranean coast (evacuation operation already announced);
 - The Departments of Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Somme, Seine Inférieure, i.e., the whole area between the Belgian frontier and the mouth of the Seine;
- 2) The population has been divided into four classes:
 - a) The Useless (women, children, men without a trade);
 - b) The Useful (professions);
 - c) The Necessary (public services and banks);
 - d) The Indispensable (Rustung enterprises and the Todt

Organization - war material and compulsory labor).

- 3) The program currently deals only with the evacuation of the useless (four hundred thousand individuals for the two above-mentioned zones). Efforts are being made to use persuasion and avoid any panic. The operation is to stretch over a period of four months; and the evacuated people can choose their destination.

For the moment, access to the zones to be evacuated remains open for business trips, but such trips are being discouraged.

- 4) Should evacuation become compulsory and affect other categories of the population, "corresponding" departments have been set-up (the population from one department would be relocated in another department).
- 5) In anticipation of war activities other than a landing, bombings for example, efforts are being made to decentralize the large towns.
- 6) On the German side, it appears that only the following measures have been planned in case of war events:
 - a) Transportation by railroad: Prohibited except with transport orders and for a particular mission.
 - b) Road transportation: Traffic prohibited on all roads reserved for the Wehrmacht.

CALAIS - 29 Feb 44 - V 493 (see sketch for details) - General information on the coastal defense system of the CALAIS area:

Blockhouses have been built partially with sand and gravel from the sea-shore (river sand and gravel being scarce), with the result that these blockhouses are of a very poor quality. The bombs employed by the British and Americans quickly overcome these defenses: It has been noted in particular that a five-meter thick blockhouse was breached by one single bomb, leaving a large enough hole to allow a man to enter, standing up.

Following the inspection by Marshall Rommel, who was quite dissatisfied with the state of the construction works, all available manpower was rounded up and, justices-of-the-peace, pharmacists, lawyers, as well as others started to handle the pick-axe.

The fields in the vicinity of the coast are all mined with pancake-type mines. They are announced by sign posts with a skull and crossed bones connected together, so that the removal of one post entails the simultaneous removal of all the others. The Germans had to abandon the idea of mining the dunes permanently as the sand is constantly moving; therefore, only the ground other than dunes is mined permanently.

Evacuation of persons whose presence is not indispensable to the occupation forces has been ordered, the whole Calais region has thus been relocated to the NIEVRE Department. The evacuation began on 15 February.

The Germans have opened the dykes holding back the sea water.

A great number of fields are flooded and, in most others the water is almost at ground level, so that it would not take very much to bring about total flooding as far as the SAINT-OMER area.

The Germans had brought to the Calais beaches the mobile anti-tank obstacles from the Albert canal, but at the present time, this effort is of no value to them because, due to the movement of the dunes, they are for the most part buried in sand and do not...

APPENDIX II

In the original French version of this volume, a number of documents appeared in this section. They included original copies of messages received and sent (on official message form or in handwriting of originator), which are already translated in the text, of examples of sketches which accompanied the messages, of intelligence reports which already have been translated in appendix I, and finally photographs of some of the principal members of the nets as well as of a few operations.

However, due to the poor quality of the reproductions as well as the fact that most of these documents are not indispensable to an understanding and to the continuity of the story, all these enclosures have been eliminated from this translated version. Only one exception has been made in regards to the diagram of the "Internal Liaisons of the Andalousie Network" which gives a good example of the utilization of "compartmentalization" and "cut-outs." A translated version of this originally handwritten document appears on page 381.

Document N°1

Internal Liaisons of Andalousie
(Cut-Out's and Compartmentalization)

Liaisons (Simple arrow → : one-way liaison from leader to subordinate
(
(Double arrow ↔ : two-way liaison between leader and subordinate
(

Cut-Out's and Compartmentalization (- There are two important cut-out's: one isolating the base-station from the net, and one isolating the liaison services from the operational services and collection agencies.
(- Complete compartmentalization separates the operational services from the collection agencies.
(- Each circle (x) represents a basic compartmentalization in various degrees of perfection.
(

