

Otto Skorzeny, Seen in France, Leaves for Italy

Mussolini's Rescuer, Freed
by U. S. Army Tribunal,
Escaped German Prison

By William J. Humphreys

From the Herald Tribune Service

PARIS, Feb. 13.—Otto Skorzeny, the former S. S. (Nazi Elite Guard) lieutenant colonel who directed the rescue of Benito Mussolini from pro-Allied Italian hands in 1943 and who escaped five years later from a prison camp in Germany, has been in France for the last two months, it was learned reliably today.

The pro-Communist Paris newspaper "Ce Soir" published today a photograph of a man it said was Skorzeny walking along the Avenue des Champs-Élysées with a girl. Later it was learned that he had been stopping at a boarding house in suburban St. Germain-en-Laye, and that he left there before lunch today, saying he was going to Italy "for a week or two."

Skorzeny, six feet five inches in stature and considered generally one of the most daring German soldiers of the war, escaped from prison at Darmstadt while awaiting trial by a German de-Nazification court. He has since been reported at various times in southern Germany, Austria, Italy and Argentina.

The French Ministry of the Interior issued a statement which neither confirmed nor denied Skorzeny's presence in this country and said only that he was not wanted by France as a war criminal.

Skorzeny was acquitted by an American military tribunal in 1947 on war crimes charges. He maintained successfully that the German troops whom he commanded during the Battle of the Bulge and who wore American uniforms were spies, and that the laws of war permitted such a ruse.

His escape at Darmstadt in July, 1948, was believed to have been effected by four Germans who wore the uniforms of American Army officers. Last May he was listed as a contributing writer by the German-language monthly "Der West," published in Argentina.

Skorzeny led the German parachute troops who rescued Mussolini from a hotel on a mountain top where he was being held under guard following his fall from power. As a reward, Adolf Hitler promoted Skorzeny and conferred upon him the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

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