

## 1944: An Allied Team With the French Resistance

Robert R. Kehoe

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**Editor's Note:** *The terms resistant, partisan, maquis, and maquisard are used interchangeably in this article to identify members of the anti-German paramilitary Resistance in France during World War II. The term maquis refers to a piece of wild, bushy land found in Corsica. During the war, beginning in eastern France, it was used to refer to groups of irregulars who had organized themselves to fight the Germans. By 1944, this usage had become common throughout France.*

“You do not recognize me, do you?” asked the gentleman opposite. I had to admit I did not. He continued: “You knew me as ‘Emile’; it was I who met you the night you parachuted into France with the SAS. My men and I moved away from that spot in the Forêt de Duault as soon as possible. Security was abominable. I don’t know how any of you survived!”

Here we were, 40 years later, at the home of Simone Auffret in the Breton town of St. Nicolas du Pelem where, with other veterans of the wartime Resistance, we were celebrating that anniversary. My mind went back many years to the months of frantic activity as our team worked to help build an effective paramilitary force in the Departement of the Côtes-du-Nord. The success of the mission and our very survival were owed to a handful of persons such as Emile and Simone, together with the lessons of experience and considerable good luck.

These thoughts led me to write this personal history, drawing on memory, some old notes, and the recollections of conversations over the years with former associates from the French Resistance. I have a copy of the official team report, consisting largely of the end-of-mission debriefing of Maj. Adrian Wise, our team leader. In the few places where my recollection differs from the report, I rely on memory. This is seldom a problem because I concentrate on the day-to-day details of our work, whereas the report is concerned with the military operations and their impact. I have included excerpts from a number of the radio messages transmitted and received which are contained in the team report. They are invaluable for imparting the sense of excitement and danger that permeated the mission.

In December 1941, like so many of my generation, I was both shocked and excited by Pearl Harbor. War was expected but not in this manner. At 19, I was working as a lab boy at a chemical plant. I had completed two years of college but, uncertain of career interests, I went to work, expecting to return to college a year later. With the advent of war, I sought to enroll in Air Force flight training. Because I was somewhat nearsighted, however, I did not qualify.

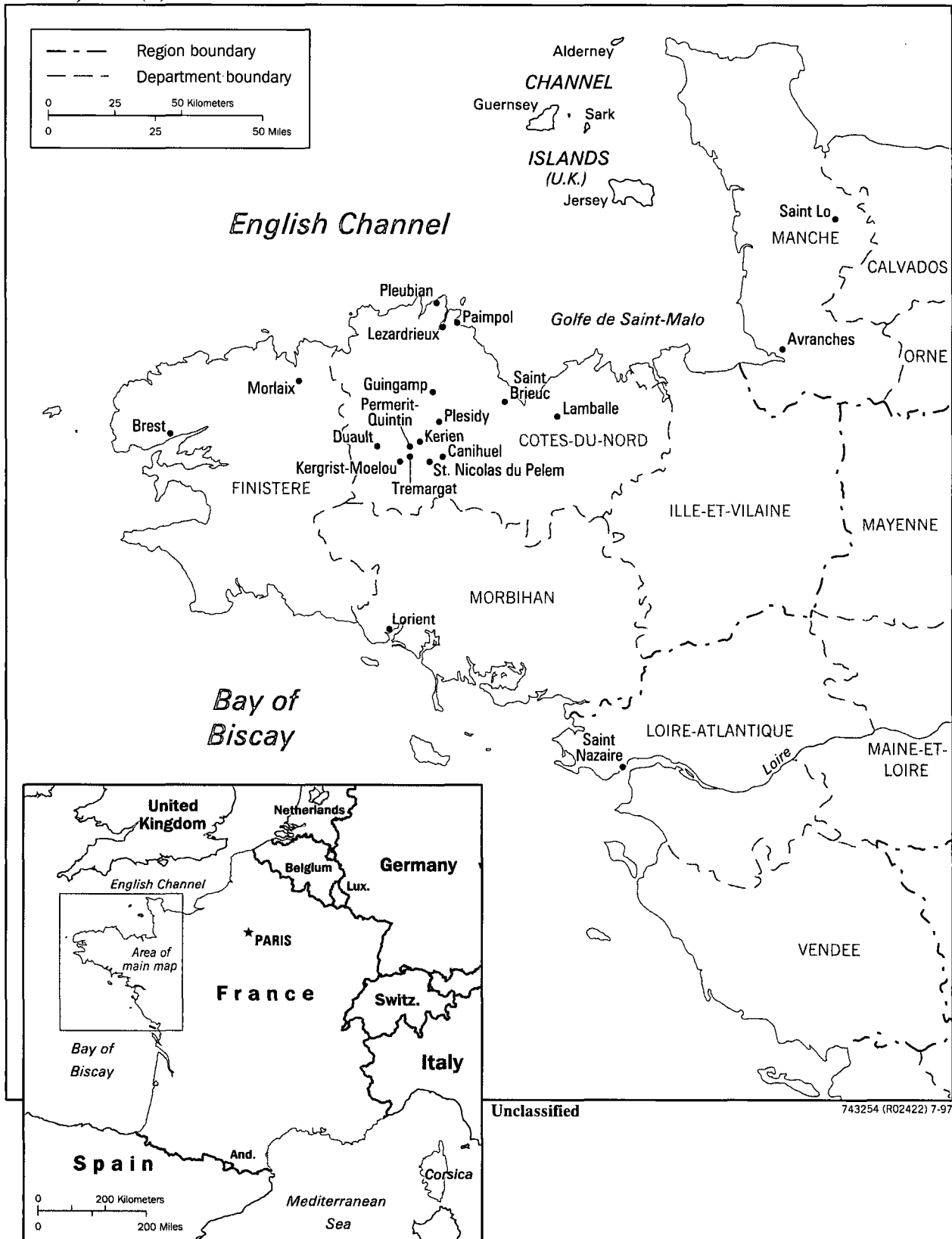
In September 1942 I enlisted in the Army Signal Corps, hoping to apply some of my training in science and mathematics. I was enrolled in a civilian class in radio mechanics scheduled for four months but stretched to eight. When called to

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In addition to his OSS service, **Robert R. Kehoe** worked for CIA's Office of Training and Education.

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active duty, I was sent to Camp Crowder, Missouri, for basic training and radio operator training (Morse code) along with miscellaneous programs such as truck driving (useful in China two years later). At this stage, however, the Signal Corps seemed pretty dull. I was anxious to get into an assignment closer to the war.

### Volunteering

One lunch hour an announcement came over the loudspeaker requesting qualified radio operators interested in volunteering for immediate overseas assignment. Many responded, but the numbers dwindled as details emerged; two years of college preferred; some training in French or another European language; willingness and ability to qualify as a parachutist; and the likelihood of a dangerous assignment. For those still interested, there was a personal interview. Some 25 of those who passed through this gauntlet were selected. Friends made during these months at Camp Crowder generally agreed I was a fool—but with some hint of envy. The haze of mystery surrounding the assignment provoked interest as well as annoyance. We soon found ourselves en route to Washington, where a few more people were added—from the Signal Corps, the Air Force, and even from the Navy—bringing the total to about 40 qualified radio operator volunteers. Twenty-eight continued on to complete the training program and become members of the Jedburgh teams. (See the section entitled “Milton Hall” on page 20 for the origins and meaning of the term “Jedburgh”.)

### General Donovan

In Washington, we found that we were members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which had evolved from the earlier office of the Coordinator of Information. OSS was barely known to us or to the public. What attention it had received was focused mostly on its director, Brig. Gen. William Donovan, a prominent New York lawyer and Republican Party figure who had received wide publicity for his exploits as “Wild Bill,” the colonel commanding the 69th New York Cavalry Regiment during World War I. He was one of the members of the opposition party who entered President Roosevelt’s circle of advisers with the deepening international crisis of the late 1930s.

Donovan was an imaginative and ambitious man. He had become convinced that the United States had to develop forces for unconventional warfare, including espionage, escape and evasion, propaganda, and paramilitary operations in enemy territory. Although independent of the regular military services, these operations were to rely on those services for personnel and support while striving to achieve military objec-

tives. With little enthusiasm, the military services (General MacArthur excepted) went along with Donovan’s appointment, most likely because he had the President’s ear. He put together an organization that probably exceeded his own expectations in its role and range of operations. This was accomplished in a short time, and it included not only the operating elements with which we are concerned but also a substantial analytic component in Washington, forerunner of the national intelligence complex of the postwar period.

Even before the formation of OSS, Donovan had been in contact with representatives of the British services—the Secret Intelligence Service (espionage) and the Special Operations Executive (paramilitary). Our European Jedburgh operations were to be dominated by British patterns of training, organization, planning, and logistics. This would seem reasonable in light of British experience in matters new to most of the American contingent. But we knew little of such policy matters.

### Getting Started

On arrival in Washington, we were escorted to the OSS offices in the old Navy hospital buildings, where we had another medical examination and filled in more forms. Before coming to Washington, we had each completed a Personal History Statement that was used as the information basis for a quick investigation by the credit rating firm, Dun and Bradstreet—an antecedent to the security investigations of the Cold War period. In 1943, the concern was affiliation with or sympathy for German or Japanese causes.

There was, among us, little to investigate, but the inquiries by the investigators evoked curiosity among family and friends. I believe we all enjoyed the implied prestige.

We then traveled to "Area F," our temporary base on the grounds of the Congressional Country Club just outside Washington. It was a beautiful spot, and the tents scattered about added a note of romantic intensity in the lovely fall weather. We lived in the tents, but activities and meals were centered in the former clubhouse. It was here that I became acquainted with the men who were to be my close comrades for many months. We lived, trained, and worked together but, because of the unique team nature of the Jedburgh mission, we did not fight together. We were but a small percentage of those in Area F, where there were representatives of all parts of OSS. They were a fascinating collection, possessing a wide range of language and specialized skills. There were, for example, members of the Operational Groups, whose training emphasized weapons and demolitions. They impressed us as being fierce people ready to throw the Germans out of occupied Europe on their own. They were not quite so forbidding on closer acquaintance; like most of us, they were big on talk but more cautious in action.

We remained for a short time at Area F. This included a weekend leave (a quick trip home to New Jersey for me), more testing (mostly psychological), and the beginning of our training, with emphasis on physical conditioning.

### **In the Mountains**

We spent the next six weeks at our main domestic training base, Area B-2. This base, in the Catoctin Mountains of northern Maryland, had been a private hunting lodge in prewar days. OSS had taken over the base for specialized training of groups such as ours. The facility was to attain fame in later years as Camp David, the Presidential retreat. With winter approaching, we were happy to be housed in cabins rather than tents. Here, we first met the officers (about 60), the remainder of the American contingent. Unlike the enlisted men, who had a common certification as radio operators, the officers had a variety of qualifications and ranged in rank from second lieutenant to major. Our commander was the one Marine in the contingent, Maj. Hod Fuller. An experienced officer, he initially presented a severe exterior but was less forbidding on closer acquaintance.

We were young and enthusiastic. At 21, I was among the younger but by no means the youngest; some radio operators were 20, and one was barely 19. The officers were not much older. One senior officer, John Olmstead, was affectionately called Pappy in recognition of his mature 32 years. All of us were eager to plunge into the training. For the radio operators, this included continuation of radio training. Officers and men all received instruction in small arms—contemporary American weapons and a vast potpourri of foreign arms we might encounter in enemy-held areas—plus range firing, compass and map work, French language, a broad range of physical conditioning, and, finally, some orientation on conditions in occupied Europe and our possible role. We

were to receive much more of this later in England. We practiced hand-to-hand combat using the famous Fairbairn knife under the guidance of the designer, British Colonel Fairbairn, one-time chief of police in the International Zone in Shanghai. At the least, this helped us develop a spirit of daring.

Considerable attention was paid to conditioning for parachute jumping, which seemed pretty dangerous to most of us. A few officers had qualified as parachutists but only one of the radio operators had done so. These men laced their experiences with tales of adventure and horror. It was great cabin talk, with the listener's ability to absorb tales of gore regarded as a sign of toughness.

The experience at area B-2 was a great morale builder, and, when we departed in mid-December, we were in top physical condition. Major Fuller assigned one airborne officer the responsibility for getting us into shape. The officer began by trying to impose the airborne semireligious dedication to the pushup as being the true mark of manhood. He soon learned that the imposed approach did not work: to challenge was the answer. We were all pretty much kids when it came to individual pride and, even after such a short time, to unit morale. It worked. I doubt that there were ever so many individual and group pushup records made or at least claimed as in those six weeks.

When we left the base, the radio operators went to Fort Hamilton, New York, where we remained for a few days. I had a chance for a quick visit to New Jersey. My father and family were now a bit anxious over the immediacy of all this. Two of my

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older brothers had been in service for over a year but were still in the United States. Why was I going abroad so soon? We were permitted to say only that we were about to go overseas and that this would be the last visit. My father thus had no idea of the true nature of our planned operations. This was evident in the shock he felt the following summer on receiving the equivalent of a “missing in action” letter from an officer in the OSS office in London.

#### At Sea

On 23 December, we boarded the Queen Mary for a rough but rapid journey across the North Atlantic. That ship and its crew were among the heroes of World War II. I do not know how many times it crossed the Atlantic without escort. With its stabilizer removed, it sailed at high speed on a zigzag course, thus reducing the chance of accurate U-boat targeting. Icebergs were another danger; we spotted a number of them. On this voyage, the ship carried about 15,000 men. In good weather, using bunks on deck, the total was more than 17,000—the manpower of an entire division!

It was a miserable trip, with virtually everyone seasick at one time or another and some the entire time. Being a small group, we were appointed military police (MPs) with rotating shifts at the doors to the mess hall. Meals were served twice daily, which meant continuously for those running the kitchen. As MPs, our chief function was to assist men entering the mess hall or moving shakily with a tray of food; the aim was to help them from being tossed across the deck, which was covered with several inches of seawater, food,

and vomit. Most of the men on board had never been far from their hometowns. They appreciated a helping hand in this cold and impersonal environment. There were large numbers of black troops belonging to Army Corps of Engineer battalions. This was the closest to integration experienced by either the black or white troops in this segregated Army.

On Christmas day, an effort was made to serve a special dinner, but I am not sure many could enjoy it. Religious services held in the mess hall were well attended; a combination of loneliness, fear, and general misery made men extra-conscious of traditional ties. Standing guard duty, I shared the feelings of fear and separation. The hymns, even at a distance, were reassuring.

#### Training in Britain

After five days, we sailed into the Firth of Clyde through a dense fog, unable to see anything of Glasgow until we were tied up at the dock. Our tiny group was escorted to a train bound for the south. Our destination was Henley-on-Thames, some 40 miles west of London, noted in peacetime for boat races. We were based at Fawley Court, one of the countless English country houses taken over by the military services. We were quartered in crowded

Nissan huts on the edge of the nearby city. These steel and fiber-board buildings were akin to the American Quonsets.

The winter mist, combined with dust from the coal that heated and powered wartime Britain, made for a bleak January. We spent much of the month rebuilding radio skills and gaining a knowledge of codes and ciphers, which were to be vital in the coming mission. Most Americans in the group were down with colds and coughs, aggravated by the coal dust and by the heavy smoking all about. The British were even heavier smokers than the Americans. The food was plain and the menus monotonous, and it took time to get used to the ever-present tea, heavily sweetened with molasses and poured from large steel drums.

It was here that we made contact with the British troops who were to be part of our organization. Most British operators were at Henley-on-Thames for the same training as we. The French radio operators, many of whom had not yet arrived in Britain, joined us later. The British and American contingents both were a bit standoffish in the beginning, but barriers were quickly reduced with common work assignments and close daily interaction. We developed excellent personal and working relations in what was one of the most international of all the European operations outside the senior command level.

We Americans were justifiably accused of being boastful, but our British colleagues were not modest. There was competition, particularly in games. The British beat us at soccer; we also made a brave attempt at rugby. In individual sports such as

jumping and running, we held our own. These were emphasized as preparation for the coming parachute training.

A weekend leave in January provided a chance to visit London, where it was cold and damp, with the fog making it difficult to see the anti-aircraft balloons tethered above the city. The blackout was strictly enforced. The city was mobbed with soldiers of many nationalities, including British, American, French, and Polish. The pubs provided cheer, and the streets and bars were heavily populated by prostitutes and their intermediaries doing a brisk business. The cinemas were packed, but theater and concert tickets were sometimes available. I shall never forget the thrill of hearing the Emperor Concerto played under the baton of Sir Thomas Beecham. For us, London was pretty overwhelming, and we depended on the Red Cross clubs for accommodations and entertainment. They, too, were jammed.

### Milton Hall

At the beginning of February, our contingent moved north to what was to be our main training base at Milton Hall near Peterborough, in eastern England. This was a great English estate with a rambling old mansion from the 1700s. It could have been the setting for a Thackeray novel. One easily imagined supporters of the Stuart pretender roving secretly through the dark corridors within. The main house was used for administration, recreation rooms, and a lecture hall. The latter had been the mansion's grand hall; its walls were covered with portraits and paintings—family treasures from another era. The mansion was

surrounded by several hundred acres of fields, woods, and gardens. These were soon covered with our men, competing for space with the sheep who dotted the fields here as throughout Britain. A number of temporaries were erected near the main building as living quarters, classrooms, and eating facilities. They were spacious and well located in these pleasant surroundings.

At this time, the name Jedburgh was introduced: it is the name of a small town on the Scottish border. (In this area, Scots conducted guerrilla warfare against English invaders during the 12th century.) Traveling through the region many years later, I came across a plaque noting that men of Jedburgh were to be found on many battlefields, wielding the Jedburgh ax and staff to such purpose that their war cry struck terror. I suspect that this bit of medieval legend played a role in the selection.

We now began to learn more of the mission. We had British, French, and American components and a handful of Dutch and Belgians. The training of the radio operators in codes and ciphers and in the handling, in simulated field conditions, of the radio set (called the Jed set) was separate from that of the officers. The integrated-team nature of the mission was emphasized, however, by the requirement for officers to acquire a minimum capability in Morse code and in ciphers for emergency use. On most subjects, officers and men trained together. We received orientation in small arms similar to what we had undergone in Maryland. We did considerable work in demolitions, using prepared and homemade materials. A few female instructors, all native Frenchwomen, conducted the excellent French-language instruction.

They, plus a small number of the administrative staff, were the only women at Milton Hall. The language training was reinforced by the use of French in our teamwork.

It was made clear that our operations would be conducted in three-man teams parachuted into occupied France, Belgium, and Holland to work with the anti-German Resistance forces in those countries. Our leaders stressed that the teams should organize themselves rather than be assigned by the staff. This meant that officers and men had to mix and become acquainted, gaining information on one another's skills and knowledge and on interests, personality, and habits. The best way to accomplish these "marriages" was through participation in what the British called "schemes" (field exercises), which were a useful part of the training program. On such schemes, the staff designated two officers and one radio operator to work as a team. The teams then moved to spots within a 20-mile radius of Milton Hall for one or several days of simulated operations, which included establishing a secure base, opening radio contact with headquarters, arranging drops, and moving clandestinely from place to place. These exercises were quite realistic and were particularly valuable as a means of developing personal contacts.

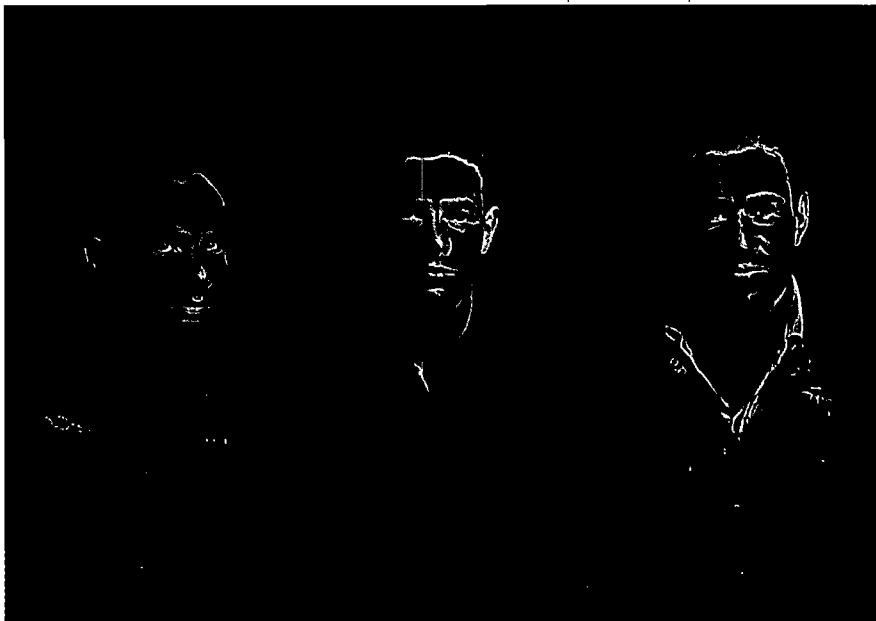
### Learning To Jump

In early March, we were off to Ringway, a base near Manchester, for accelerated jump training. The British unit handling this training was quick and efficient. The physical conditioning we had undergone was invaluable. The program at Ringway

included instruction in techniques, in parachute gear, and in the method of exiting the aircraft. Under the British system, we jumped from the underside of the plane (the bomb bay of converted bombers). Because our drops in occupied Europe were to be clandestine, they had to be at a low altitude, reducing the time in the air when the parachutist is vulnerable to ground fire. The practice jumps, therefore, were from 500 to 600 feet as opposed to the more common 1,200 feet of regular airborne units. We did not carry reserve parachutes for emergency use; they would have been useless at such a low altitude.

The training included balloon jumps and jumps from planes. Ideally, the balloon jumps were scheduled first as preparation for the airplane jumps but, given the pressure on the facilities, it was necessary to use what was available. Weather was a major factor at that time of year in central England because the planes could be grounded, whereas the balloons, tied in place, were usable day and night, rain or shine.

Our first jump was from a converted Lancaster bomber. For many of us, this was the first time in an airplane, let alone jumping from one. Some of our men chose to leave the program before jump school, and a few found the jumping itself too difficult. The school had an outstanding safety record, and I do not know of any serious injuries, but there were plenty of bruises. OSS honored the volunteer nature of this service. Those who did not continue with the training were transferred without prejudice. The radio men who separated during this training period were absorbed into the radio base station in England.



From left: Paul Bloch-Auroch, Robert Kehoe, and Adrian Wise. Photo courtesy of the author.

I had the same reaction as most trainees—fear mixed with a sense of terrific excitement. In my case, the excitement was extended when, shortly after clearing the plane, I was picked up by a stray gust of wind and carried across the field, well out of the drop zone, headed for a large oak tree. We had been instructed to steer by manipulating the shroud lines of the parachute, and I tried that without success. Meanwhile, the jumpmaster on the ground was shouting instructions which I could not hear. In this brief minute or so, I followed the basic rules—to keep feet and knees together and pull down hard on the lines to protect the face and body. I sailed right into the tree without injury. By the time I heard the jumpmaster's "don't worry, we'll get you," I had slipped to the ground, well before the rescue truck arrived. This somewhat comic episode made for good mess-hall chatter.

The nighttime balloon drops were eerie. On a moonless night, it was dark and silent as we stumbled from the parachute room through the blackout to mount the balloon carrier, four men at a time. The nighttime balloon jump conveyed most forcefully the feeling of parachuting into enemy territory. We returned to Milton Hall excited and confident, having crossed the first difficult bridge in our preparation.

### New Colleagues

On one of the exercises at Milton Hall, I was teamed with a British captain, Adrian Wise, and a French lieutenant, Paul Aguirec (true name, Bloch-Auroch). We got along well. A week later, they asked if I wanted to join their team. I was pleased because they impressed me as one of the most competent and companionable of the teams I had worked with. I did not regret this decision. We

found a certain appeal in the idea of a team composed of three nationalities; there were only a few of them among the Jedburghs.

My teammates were much more experienced than I. Captain Wise, after graduating from the British military academy at Sandhurst, served in the infantry and then with the commandos before joining us. Well educated and with broad interests, he was a friendly and informal person, Sandhurst notwithstanding. He was one of the few among the British or Americans in our outfit who had actually been in combat operations—two commando raids on the Norwegian coast. Lieutenant Aguirec, like so many of our French comrades, had spent years in the Army, having been called to duty with the reserves in the late 1930s. He had served in France and North Africa before volunteering for the Jedburghs and had only arrived in England in February, barely in time for jump school. He was experienced in military matters but was far more interested in the political aspects of our work. He was a man of great good humor, a fine person to be with and work with.

Both were older than I—Wise was 26 and Aguirec 32. Aguirec's English was weak, which was an incentive for me to work on my French. Wise had a better command of French than most of our group, having spent summers with his family on the Norman coast. One aspect of this team was the emphasis from the beginning on being a team. As the radio operator, my first responsibility was communications, but I was included in all aspects of the team's work—different from the typical military unit. It was satisfying.



Lecture on demolitions at Milton Hall. Photo courtesy of the author.

A memorable experience during these months was provided by the series of “Jed lectures” held in the Great Hall. They included talks by specialists on military tactics, demolitions and sabotage, and enemy order of battle. Some of the most interesting dealt with the situation in occupied Europe: economic conditions, the political scene, and what little was known about security and counterintelligence. Much attention was given to the French Resistance movement, but there were large gaps and much outdated information. It was later, in France, that we became aware of the strong political biases of many of the Resistance forces and the serious antagonisms within the *Forces Françaises De L'Intérieur* (FFI). The FFI was the overall umbrella organization designed to integrate the entire complex of Resistance forces. It was headed by General de Gaulle, who was widely identified among the French in our group as the legitimate leader of France. On

3 June, de Gaulle's Committee of National Liberation proclaimed itself the provisional government of France—a move not recognized by the American or British Governments until late October 1944 but hailed in France. In many discussions over the summer, I found myself defending the American position as a matter of principle—but without much impact.

Among the most interesting speakers were those who had clandestinely slipped out of occupied France by boat or via the Spanish mountains. We could only speculate on their mode of travel. An aura surrounded such persons. Late in our preparation period, we were addressed by General Koenig, the man assigned by de Gaulle to command the FFI. His lecture, expressing great expectations for the Jedburgh teams, was a strong morale booster.



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The emphasis in most of these lectures was on conditions in France, with minimal attention to Belgium or Holland, about which there was little accurate information. As it turned out, the units in Holland would face the most difficult conditions of any of the Jed teams and would suffer heavy casualties, but this was a result of military operations rather than of any particular deficiency in the briefings.

We continued training during these spring months, mostly as teams. One of our exercises was a “survival scheme,” in which we were to cover a considerable distance through the Yorkshire moors, carrying only weapons and living off the land. This was a tough endurance test through these deep bogs, but Captain Wise applied his years of experience to push us on. After covering twice the required distance on the first day, we decided to cheat a bit and inquired at a remote farmhouse about purchasing food and spending the night in the sheepfold. Instead, we had a hot meal and a warm bed. Much better than slaughtering a sheep! The farm family hoped its sons in service would fare as well. This exercise still provided a good test of our endurance and spirit.

### The Real Thing

We were getting anxious. Everyone knew an invasion was being planned but did not know when or where it would occur. The Jed teams were supposed to be dropped into France well before the landings. The teams were ready, but the problem of how to get them into France remained unsolved. During the spring months, the Germans had carried out a number of roundups of Resis-

tance units. Of particular concern for our operations, the Germans also had uncovered and destroyed many of the clandestine radio links that had maintained contact between France and England.

Our leadership had planned on the help of these radio contacts in arranging receptions for Jed teams. The alternative was to drop “blind,” which meant parachuting to a location with no guidance available to the pilot or to the team. This was dangerous for the pilot and for those making the drop. The pilot, lacking guidance from the ground, found it difficult to determine location and altitude, thus increasing the risk of injury for the parachutist. If the drop was successful, the parachutist had to rely on his speed, skill, and knowledge of the area. Accurate information on ground conditions was not current. There is no doubt that the German counterintelligence actions during the winter and spring of 1944 dealt a serious setback to early exploitation of the Resistance in support of the landings.

In late May, most of the Jed teams were dispersed around the countryside in a large-scale, two-week exercise. Our team was working at the simulated headquarters when we received instructions to report to Milton Hall. It was a Friday morning. On returning to Milton Hall that afternoon, we and the members of one other team were told to

gather our equipment and prepare to join in an exercise with the Special Air Service (SAS), a British paramilitary force. The exercise was planned to last about five days but could go on longer. We were to prepare ourselves and our equipment as if for a combat operation and be ready to leave for London on Sunday morning. We and our equipment were checked thoroughly on Saturday. Captain Wise and I both suspected that this was a cover story—it seemed too realistic to be another exercise. Agueric, having experienced so many false alarms over the years, was more skeptical.

We left Milton Hall by truck on Sunday, 4 June, with all our gear, arriving about 11 a.m. at a pleasant row house on Devonshire Close, not far from the Grosvenor Square area of central London. We soon found that our suspicions were justified. This was the real thing! We passed the next few days at Devonshire Close, except for evening meals at restaurants, always escorted by the briefing officers.

London seemed very different from the London we had seen on earlier visits. We noticed, when going out to dinner, how strangely silent it was. Even the restaurants, congested during earlier visits, were almost empty. Military forces were missing, except for those stationed there or a few with special permits. Our escort was responsible for clearing us with the military police, who were ubiquitous and who checked frequently.

We remained in London until Wednesday, during which time we heard the radio reports of the Normandy landings. The SAS advance party made its drop on 5 June while we were in London. We did not

receive confirmation of this event until we joined the SAS at the air-base near Oxford.

### Briefings Begin

Our briefings started that afternoon. First were the discussions of the SAS and our relationship to them. The SAS had been organized by the British Army during the North African campaign for behind-the-lines operations, particularly sabotage, reconnaissance, and work with indigenous forces opposed to the occupying forces. SAS personnel were typically used in bands of 10 to 20 men, relying on their skill, speed, and daring. In Britain, an SAS detachment had been formed from French military volunteers. We were to be attached to this French unit.

This operation was much larger than we had envisioned. The SAS hoped to establish two secure bases on the Breton Peninsula in northwestern France. The larger base (codename Dingson) would be set up in the Departement of Morbihan in southern Brittany. The other base (codename Samwest) would be in the Departement of the Côtes-du-Nord in the north. A Jed team was assigned to each zone. Ours, named Team Frederick, was to be with Samwest. In both regions a small SAS contingent would drop blind on 5 June.

Many of the men in these advance parties were native Bretons familiar with the countryside and the people, even if not with the specific drop zone. If successful, they were to arrange for the main drop on 9 June. In the Côtes-du-Nord, some 45 men, including our team, would

drop along with weapons and supplies. Another SAS contingent was scheduled to join us on the night of 10 June.

We were under the command of the SAS leader, Captain Le Blond, but would have our own radio link to London. There was some edginess over the relationship between the SAS and the Jed teams, but we knew that the arrangement, if successful, would provide a means of getting into a key region of occupied France.

Our briefings in London included details on communications. The officers joined us in some of these sessions. The security of our communications depended on the cipher system we used, known as the one-time pad. I had to spend extra time memorizing certain codes that I was to use along with the ciphers as an additional guarantee of message security. These codes consisted of certain words or letters to indicate safety or danger—by inclusion or by omission. This information was in the head of the operator and in headquarters files. It could be a means of informing headquarters of serious trouble such as capture by the enemy of cipher books or of the operator himself. The communications officer spent considerable time drilling and testing me on these items.

Briefings on the area and the mission were vague. We received data on enemy order of battle; some of this material was accurate, but some was outdated or conjectural. The basic geography was well covered, and we received excellent maps, the most useful being the Michelin maps, which we used for guidance on the ground and subsequently for identifying drop zones to London. We carried silk maps of France that had been pre-

pared for Air Force escape kits. They were good for emergencies because they stuffed easily into a shirt pocket, but they lacked the regional detail we required for daily use.

### German Organizations

The briefings included discussion of the general pattern of the Germans' organization and operations within occupied France and their security and counterintelligence mechanisms. It was known that they made wide use of indigenous forces of collaborators such as the "milice," hated and feared in France. These forces consisted of sizable groups (typically 50 to 200) of Frenchmen organized and trained by the Germans to do much of the dirty work of the occupation, particularly against the emerging Resistance. Many members of the milice were alleged to be convicted criminals who were given a reprieve and were assured a fairly good lifestyle, providing they served the occupation.

The German command utilized many different elements. There was, of course, the German Army, which was large, well armed and well fortified in Brittany, where an Allied landing was expected. There also were organized military units, usually of company or battalion strength, composed of recruits from areas of Russia and Eastern Europe conquered by the Germans. The Germans did not trust these foreign elements and generally used them in conjunction with a German contingent. Within the milice and the German forces, there were components responsible for counterintelligence and counterterrorism, loosely referred to in London and France as Gestapo. Little information was available on the specific situation

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 unconventional warfare.**  
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in Brittany. A French officer, dispatched in 1943, had organized an intelligence network within the *Departement* of the Côtés-du-Nord, but he was arrested within a few months and his network scattered.

In previous years the Germans had made a great effort to implement the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (STO). This was the forced draft of Frenchmen between the ages of 17 and 60 for labor in German factories. It was a reasonable conjecture that the intensification of this draft had led many to join the organized Resistance.

Brittany was ideal for unconventional warfare. It was largely rural, with small, privately owned farms and tiny villages dominating the countryside. Large areas were forested or covered by a heavy growth of gorse, which provided excellent physical cover. Cultivated fields, typically small in size, were almost universally divided by hedgerows that rose 6 to 8 feet above the level of the field. The generally hilly terrain was crisscrossed by back roads and trails that were difficult for the occupying power to surveil. The main roads were of good quality and were important for the German forces suffering from damage inflicted on rail lines by internal sabotage and Allied bombings. The people, predominantly farmers and fishermen, had a long tradition of independence. Many still spoke Breton, a Celtic language, as their native tongue. German attempts to exploit this tradition of independence had been largely unsuccessful but not entirely so. It was only later that we learned anything at all of collaboration in Brittany; it was not discussed in London at the time.

### Team Mission

Our mission had many aspects. We were to join with the SAS in setting up a secure command post; establish our own radio communications with London as soon as possible; contact local Resistance forces and determine numbers, organization, location and needs, particularly for airdrops of weapons and demolitions; arrange for such airdrops; assist in weapons training of maquisards; and, finally, when the time came, coordinate the efforts of the partisans with those of the invading Allied armies. The Jed teams, like the SAS, were to drop in uniform so that we could more easily identify ourselves to the Resistance as the legitimate representatives of Allied headquarters. I do not recall any discussions of what to do in the event of capture. Some Jed teams were told that they could expect to be treated as POWs, if captured. Any illusion we may have had on this account was destroyed when, after arrival in France, we saw notices on buildings and along roads stating that parachutists were spies and would be treated as such.

The briefings clearly indicated that Allied landings were expected in Brittany similar to those in Normandy. This was our understanding and, apparently, that of the Allied Supreme Command. General Eisenhower stated that it was only after the extreme difficulties of the Normandy landings that he abandoned the idea of additional landings in northern France.

### Final Preparations

On 7 June, our team, together with Team George and our escort, drove by truck to an airbase outside Oxford. We stopped en route to stroll through the quiet grounds of Oxford University. Walking among the medieval buildings and gardens, one felt distant from the war that had completely dominated our thoughts for many days. We then proceeded to the airbase to meet with our SAS colleagues. They seemed to be a wild lot, anxious to get into action. They were not quite sure of us and just what our role and relationship was to be, and we felt similarly uncertain.

Efforts were made to clarify these matters in discussion that evening with Commandant Bourgoin, the commander of the entire SAS operation. Bourgoin, a professional military officer with a distinguished career, was impressive. He was about 45, tall, and had a shock of wavy blond/gray hair. He had lost an arm in combat and, consequently, needed special arrangements for parachuting. Four men jumped with him to assist in his landing. They were hooked up by ropes to guide him and break his fall. This was an amazing feat, particularly at a low altitude, but he had done it before. On our first meeting, Bourgoin remarked on my youth. Having just passed my 22nd birthday, I was as old as many of the men in his contingent but I looked young. I had to get used to the comment, “so young,” which I was to hear frequently over the next few months. It was usually intended as a personal compliment.

It was here that I came into contact with the military class system, which was more rigid in the French and

British Armies than in the US Army. The Jed teams were to remain together while at this base. We had received our cipher materials, communications gear, and weapons. Bourgoïn ordered all members of the team to attend the discussions he planned to conduct during and after evening mess. The problem was that I, the only enlisted man in either team, was not eligible to eat or sleep in the officers' facilities. This concern over protocol among people soon to depend on one another for their lives was ridiculous. Captain Wise was annoyed, and he must have worked something out, because I did participate fully in the discussions in the officers' mess. The French radio operator on Team George was spared this nuisance because the French operators were commissioned shortly before departure. At this time, Wise was promoted to major and I to technical sergeant. Agueric was soon promoted to full lieutenant.

The advance party had landed successfully on 5 June, and it had radioed directions for a drop zone for our group in the Forêt de Duault, southwest of Guingamp. Similar instructions were given for the larger group going to Morbihan. In addition to the briefings and discussions, we once more had to check equipment to make sure that all was in working condition. Each man carried a rucksack of equipment and supplies. We had .45-caliber pistols and extra ammunition strapped to our belts. Wise and Agueric each carried a light American carbine with the rucksack. My carbine was packed in a container because I was already carrying extra weight, including eight cipher books, each measuring about 8 inches by 6 inches by 1 inch; a box about the same size containing the transmission crystals; and extra

dry-cell batteries for the receiver. The two radios, some 40 pounds each, were packed in a separate container with other goods destined for the drop zone.

As in any such operation, it was only at the last minute that we were certain of departing. Delays could be caused by weather, by changes in orders from SAS or Special Forces, or by problems encountered by the advance party which was setting up the ground reception. As it turned out, all was on schedule.

### Going In

On the evening of 9 June, we lined up, parachutes attached, ready to board one of the converted Stirling bombers for the flight to our secret destination in France. The large bomb bay of the Stirling reduced the risk of hitting one's head while exiting the plane; this occasionally occurred with the circular opening of the Lancaster bomber. Three planes were designated for our area and each was packed with the crew, a dispatcher, some 15 parachutists, and a number of heavy steel containers bulging with weapons and equipment. The departure was at a late hour because the June days were long and the distance not great. There was some cloud cover; if it increased, it could reduce the moonlight available and possibly abort the mission. We were nearing the end of the moon phase suitable for such drops, making delay very undesirable.

The pilot followed a prescribed route out of southern England, which was one vast airbase with thousands of planes coming and going in support of the operations in Normandy as well as the continual bombing of

targets across the Continent. Once over the Channel, the pilot had to dodge anti-aircraft fire by using different routes and altitude changes. He then had to locate the drop zone from map readings and by observation of ground reception, hopefully lighted by fires and with a prearranged flashlight signal in Morse code. He had to fly low, a dangerous move with these heavy planes over the rough and irregular terrain. Nearing the drop zone, he throttled down the plane to about 110 mph. This improved the chance of locating the drop zone and reduced the likelihood of physical injury to the parachutists, but it also made the plane and the men more vulnerable to enemy ground fire.

The success rate of these flights was impressive, but there were exceptions. Planes sometimes had to turn back, which was hard on the morale of those planning to drop as well as those on the ground. There were cases of discharge of men and cargo into enemy hands, such as a series of drops in Holland in 1942 that severely damaged the Dutch Resistance. These, however, were not the result of pilot error but of effective German counterintelligence aided by mistakes in London.

Once in the air, we heard only the sound of the motors and the passing wind. It was a pleasant night, with the half moon low in the sky. Suddenly, the quiet within our plane was broken by the moans and mumblyings of one of our SAS colleagues who had probably had too much to drink. We had been flying for not much over an hour when the dispatcher gave the alert signal. The plane circled the drop zone and then, on a second pass, we were ready to go. By this time, any fear of jumping

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**By this time, any fear of jumping had disappeared because my fear was concentrated on what was below. Would it be rifle or machinegun fire?**

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had disappeared because my fear was concentrated on what was below. Would it be rifle or machinegun fire? Or silence? If silence, did it mean the enemy was waiting to pick us up? Here we were, armed, in uniform, with bundles of valuable equipment. Our orders were to avoid capture at all cost, and I now wondered just how to do this. To come up shooting might injure those venturing to help us. There was, of course, a chance that things might just go as planned. All this was not a careful analysis but rather a series of flashes rushing through my head faster than we were flying. What remnants of religion still with me came forward, with repetition of the 23rd Psalm taking precedence over any rational thoughts about the present and future.

Action soon displaced contemplation and pushed fear into the background. We readied ourselves for the jump, with all senses attuned to the dispatcher and the actions of our comrades. I was the fourth to jump. The discharge was without incident; the chute opened properly, but the ground appeared very quickly. I believe we dropped from lower than 500 feet, which made for a fast ride and a severe jolt on landing. Although concentrating on landing safely, I was alarmed on hearing some strange sounds—sort of “put-puts”—while I was still in the air. I wondered if it might be pistol fire but, completely immersed in the task at hand, I paid little attention. After landing, I found that the man in our plane who had been mumbling had wrapped primer cord around his legs. The primer cord, a starter for plastic explosive, somehow ignited. He was dead on landing, making a rather ominous beginning for the operation. Otherwise, there were only some

bruised joints and severe damage to one of the supply containers. These containers were heavy and the parachutes supporting them less secure than those used for personnel, resulting in occasional failures.

### Warm Reception

I quickly checked my pack and weapons and looked about in the faint remaining moonlight. Fires were burning a short distance away, but I saw nothing of the men who had jumped with me. I was rolling up the parachute when two figures emerged from the woods. They greeted me and told me to follow them; they would handle the parachute. As they had approached suddenly, I reached for my pistol. But I was quickly persuaded, by their friendliness and knowledge of what to do, that they were members of the reception committee. I left the chute to them and followed as directed. They were a part of the large number of Breton farmers and maquisards who had assembled to assist the SAS advance party that had arranged the drop. We moved to one of the fires, where our comrades were assembling; Wise and Agueric arrived at the same time. We were warmly welcomed and handed cups of bitter Breton cider, along with chunks of country bread covered with butter and cheese—rarities in Britain.

The local men, women, and children were excited. Many thought we were the advance party for a major Allied landing. We were deluged with questions about ourselves and our plan of action. The people asked French members of the SAS about their homes and how they got to Britain and into the SAS. They were curious about me; Americans were little known in this part of France. Also, my uniform was different. The French wore British uniforms set off only by insignia. My foreign accent was not as conspicuous as might be expected because many of the local Bretons themselves did not speak good French.

The scene was chaotic, with the local people, the SAS advance party, and the new arrivals mixed together. Our team was appalled by the large, bright fires of the reception committee, which had made the pilot's task easier but also advertised the entire operation. We recalled the final briefing at the airfield near Oxford, when a major German headquarters base a few kilometers to the southwest of the Forêt de Duault was mentioned.

My carbine was lost in the damaged container, leaving me with a Sten gun as a principal weapon. This gun, with only one machined part, had been mass-produced in Britain since the early days of the war. It did not have the range or accuracy of a rifle, but it was rapid-firing and useful in close encounters. Sten guns were an important part of the weapons supplied to the Resistance. Our two radio sets were undamaged.

Our team took the radios and the rucksacks to a spot about a mile into the Forêt de Duault, where the SAS had established a temporary headquarters in a heavily wooded area on



Countryside near Canihuel; terrain is similar to the Forêt de Duault at the time of the team's drop. Photo courtesy of the author.

the upper side of a steep hill covered with boulders and a thick growth of trees. It was well hidden and difficult for an enemy to identify from the air or from the ground. We were tired but too tense and preoccupied to sleep. We wanted to get on with the radio schedule as soon as possible.

That morning, 10 June, I set up the radio but failed to get a response from London. This worried us because the weather was satisfactory, and we knew that the base station was listening. It was difficult to pick up our signal because of the low power of our transmitters. On 11 June, we did make contact after moving the transmission site a few hundred yards uphill. We quickly learned the importance of site location in these transmissions. This first contact was exciting, and our outgoing message was confident and enthusiastic:

*Arrived safely with all containers and equipment. Have contacted local groups. Great possibilities Côtes-du-Nord area. Send Jed team and arms....*

This was a period of intense concentration on the situation and our mission. The SAS contingent was strengthened with the drop, as planned, of an additional 50 men, leaving a total in the Forêt de Duault of more than 115, including our team. These landings attracted representatives of the maquis in the region, and there was much discussion of organization, supply, and potential activity. We were optimistic and heady, though unclear as to the next move. A priority for both the SAS and the Jed team was to arrange airdrops of weapons and supplies for the FFI; discussions focused on how to do this.

### Under Attack

Our confidence was premature. Shortly after transmitting our first message, we heard rifle fire coming from the western and northern parts of the forest. As the afternoon and evening of 11 June progressed, automatic rifle and machinegun fire were added, steadily getting closer and increasing in intensity. It was hardly surprising that we came under attack. Much about the landing had been reckless—the large fires, the numbers on the ground, and the movement of people in and out of the area.

In addition, some of the local maquis who had been given weapons following the drop became engaged in a nasty incident. They were visiting at a farmhouse on the north side of the Forêt de Duault when two German soldiers stopped to ask directions. The soldier who entered the farmhouse was greeted with a barrage of gunfire; he struggled to get to his car and retreated after tossing a grenade into the house.

Revenge came the next morning, when more than 40 German soldiers of the 2nd Paratroop Division descended on the farm, shot the occupants, and burned the buildings. This led to an exchange of gunfire with a nearby SAS outpost. The Germans called for reinforcements. By afternoon, there were an estimated 400 enemy troops in the area, gradually fanning out and moving slowly into the forest in the direction of our base. I was concerned that our SAS comrades were thinking in terms of an imminent mass uprising, which was definitely not feasible at this time. The maquis of the area were anxious to get into action. Though brave and daring, they were

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sometimes trigger-happy, unfamiliar with the weapons provided, and often not sufficiently respectful of the enemy's substantial military skills.

The Forêt de Duault was close to good roads, and it was only a few kilometers from a major German command post. The Germans may have spotted the planes and the fires. The maquis and the SAS imprisoned three persons whom they accused of informing the Germans about our location. The punishment was quick and harsh. One of the three was exhibited to the public and beaten before he was shot. I could not pass judgment on the charges, but I regretted not protesting against the abusive treatment. We were, however, overwhelmed by the immediacy of danger and the need for our own action. I suspect we did not want to appear “soft” toward those accused of such serious crimes. Major Wise later said there was speculation that the harsh treatment of SAS men subsequently captured by the enemy may have been related to this incident.

By the night of 11 June, we had received reports from many sources that the Germans were about to launch an assault on the base, which would include a cordon of troops to move in from the roads around the Forêt de Duault. The immediate attack was from the west, moving in the general direction of our command post. The Germans knew the approximate location, even though they could not be exact in that difficult terrain. Our forces included 115 men in uniform, more than 30 organized maquis, and some local people assisting in various ways. The number of local persons diminished as the situation became more threatening. I believe the Germans

overestimated our numbers, but they considered the presence of any forces of this nature intolerable and aimed to eliminate us swiftly.

It was evident that it would be suicidal to remain in place, facing unknown numbers of well-placed, armed Germans who controlled the roads and the cities. The SAS plan to establish a base in the area had failed. Captain Le Blond decided to break up the SAS personnel into small groups that would exfiltrate the forest and subsequently move on foot to join the larger group under Commandant Bourgoin at the Dingson SAS base 150 km to the south. We later learned that the Dingson base was attacked a few days after ours, with heavy casualties. There, too, the SAS contingent was forced to divide into small groups that could blend into the environment.

### **Moving Out**

With the German scouts getting closer, our team made plans to move, carrying as little as possible—personal weapons and ammunition, a medical aid kit, a small amount of food, and, most important, communications equipment, including crystals, cipher pads, and radio. We decided to take one radio while caching the other, hoping to be able to recover it in the event of loss or failure of the set we carried.

As operator, it was my responsibility to hide the second set, informing no one of the location. Surmising that the enemy, moving over this boulder-strewn hill, would concentrate on the command post near the summit, I descended that hill in the direction of enemy fire. Some shots went overhead, but most of the fire was directed at the SAS outposts near the edge of the forest. When out of sight, I hid the set under a large boulder, noting trees and rocks to mark the location. Only a close inspection would have shown disturbed earth at the site.

The pressure was intense. The SAS were departing in small groups. The men in the forward posts were doing an excellent but dangerous job of distracting the Germans from their advance toward the base, but they had to move soon or be destroyed. The Jed team decided to go it alone. We were unsure about the SAS plan of traveling over a long distance toward an uncertain destination. We still hoped to work with the Resistance in the Côtes-du-Nord, despite the debacle. It was fortunate that we followed this course. A substantial number of the SAS personnel who moved south were killed en route or after joining in action at the Dingson base. Fortunately, several of the SAS people remained in the Côtes-du-Nord, where they became absorbed into the work of the local maquis.

Squadron Leader (the Royal Air Force equivalent of Major) Smith went with us. Smith had come with the second SAS group on 10 June. I had a vague recollection of having seen him at the airbase near Oxford, but we had received no briefing on his coming to France. I do not believe that Major Wise knew any more about him than I did. In

London, Smith had been involved in some manner in the planning and monitoring of the escape and evasion routes which had saved and evacuated so many Allied airmen shot down over France. He had, somehow, attached himself to the SAS. He was a tall, gaunt man in his forties who stood out in his bright blue RAF uniform (ours were better camouflaged). He did not want to accompany any of the SAS groups at this stage.

Major Wise felt that he had no choice but to have Smith join us. Smith made things difficult. Clumsy and conspicuous, he was untrained in the ways of ground combat, let alone partisan warfare. I still recall a silhouette of him walking along the top of a hedgerow, instead of creeping through it or moving to one side or the other. His behavior knocked out some of the natural advantage provided by the hedgerows. He was determined and showed endurance, but he was not in shape for this sort of activity. Fortunately, he remained with us for only a few days, but he kept popping up time and again with requests to forward messages via our radio link, which was already overburdened. Smith survived, somewhat to my surprise.

### On the Run

On the morning of 12 June, we opened radio contact with London but were forced to cut the transmission after giving the signal for imminent danger. We quickly departed the Samwest base. Accompanied by Smith, we followed an old forest road northward but soon, reacting to the proximity and intensity of enemy fire from the west, we turned eastward into the brush; we

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feared being overrun any minute. We expected mortars to be added to the rifle and machinegun fire, but the Germans did not use them. On turning from the forest road, we made what could have been a disastrous decision—namely, to hide the one radio set we carried. We placed the entire set behind a large boulder, close to the forest road and not well hidden. There was an element of panic in these actions; we hoped to move more quickly through the rough vegetation and hedgerows to our east without the burden of the radio.

We moved speedily through the dense growth until reaching cultivated fields. We kept under cover of woods or brush as much as possible. Smith was frightened enough to move fast—the sound of gunfire was an excellent accelerator. The Germans may have had as many as 400 men in this attack, scattered over a fairly large area. They posted patrols on some of the nearby roads. It was several days, however, before the Germans moved in forces adequate for a thorough attack on the Forêt de Duault. On this day of our fight, we learned a key element of guerrilla warfare: conventional military forces prefer to work in units and fear being isolated or surrounded. The

guerrilla, therefore, has an important asset to exploit. By working in small numbers, he can move secretly and rapidly while diverting the conventional forces. We did not know the region well, but we were trained in the techniques and had studied the maps. This was our first real-life session.

Our objective was to cross the hard-surface road paralleling the forest on the east and then to place as much distance as possible between ourselves and the Forêt de Duault. Daylight permitted quick movement through this difficult terrain but also made for easy detection. Suddenly, as we approached the road, we received an unexpected assist from the air when an RAF Beaufighter buzzed along at a low altitude, letting off blasts of fire at an unseen target. At first we were terrified, fearing it was a German plane chasing us. (We did not realize how weak the Germans were in tactical airpower.) We quickly identified the plane after it made a couple of passes. The Beaufighter was pursuing a German motorcycle patrol moving north on the road we were about to cross. The patrol apparently was frightened enough to reverse course. Had we been spotted by the motorcyclists, even if not immediately pinned down, we would have been trailed and caught before long. I assume the fighter was dispatched after we—or the SAS—gave the danger signal that morning. It was daring for a single plane to assist us in this manner, and it reassured us of the close coordination between London and the field.

The lesson was obvious: keep off the roads! We continued our trek through field and forest. We were doubtless observed, but the people in the fields, knowing there had been



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serious trouble, ignored us. They would, therefore, have no information about us in the event of subsequent interrogation. As darkness approached, we found a well-concealed drainage ditch that appeared to be a distance from any road or place of habitation. Our aim was to keep away from villages or independent farmhouses which would be targets of German searches. From early in the occupation, the Germans had published warnings against assisting parachutists or persons making forced landings. Men would be shot, and women would be sent to concentration camps in Germany. Rewards were offered to those who provided information on such matters or assisted in tracking down offenders.

### A Schoolteacher Savior

Weary from the trek and a lack of sleep, we consumed our crusts of bread and collapsed, not bothering to post lookouts. We awoke at dawn to discover that our hiding place was less remote than we had thought. The location in the ditch was well concealed, but we were only 50 yards from a small farmhouse. It was, fortunately, an isolated farm rather than a village. There was no sign of life, but we needed food. We assumed that most of the Breton farmers would be helpful or, at least, not harmful.

Lieutenant Agueric made the approach, returning in a few minutes. He had been a bit shaken when the farm woman replied to his greeting in a foreign tongue. Was it German? He quickly recalled that many of the local people spoke Breton, with little or no French. She summoned a young woman who spoke French. This woman was well

aware of the disaster in Duault. She told Agueric to return to the ditch, saying that she would shortly bring food and instructions. In a half hour, she brought a wonderful meal of potatoes in gravy, bread, and boiled milk for us to consume there in the ditch. This was more than the usual French breakfast. It was 24 hours since we had eaten in the Forêt de Duault, but it seemed like days, and we were famished. This was one of the memorable meals of my life.

The younger woman was Simone Le Goeffic, schoolteacher in the nearby village of Tremargat. She was, indeed, the team's savior. Like so many of the female schoolteachers, she was closely linked to the Resistance network. We were to learn much about this network of command, communication, and action in the coming days and weeks. The network was held together by the female members, who were usually able to move about on foot or by bicycle from one village to another without challenge. If challenged, they were generally allowed to pass after questioning—provided their documents were in order. There was much fear and tension, but these women were strong and courageous. They were the lifeblood of the Resistance, furnishing information, passing instructions, and arranging for food and supplies.

With the invasion in Normandy, schools closed, leaving teachers free for other activities. Many worked on farms that were short of labor. Hay was being cut, and potatoes, a major crop in Brittany, required much hand labor. The important wheat harvest was expected within a few weeks. Needing the Breton production, the Germans did not discourage farm labor. With such work as an excuse, the teachers were able to move from one place to another. I do not believe the German security services or the milice ever realized what an extensive network existed. If so, they would have exerted tighter control.

Movement for men was difficult because men from 17 to 60, as previously noted, were subject to labor conscription. Women were not usually conscripted, but they were under threat of being imprisoned and sent to labor camps in Germany if caught in subversive activities.

Simone was a warm and charming person of medium height. She had an attractive spontaneity and freshness in action and conversation. She had a good figure, and her light brown hair was cut about neck length, the style in the area. She did not hesitate to take charge when necessary. She instructed us to remain in place while she went for assistance and instructions. She would go by bicycle and return that evening with food and a guide. We followed her directions, although the possibility of our being set up for attack entered our minds. Our choices, however, were limited and, after only four days in France, we had concluded that we were with people who were on our side. Simone was obviously Bretonne, and she probably could be trusted. She knew the area intimately

and was aware of what had happened to us and to the SAS. We awaited her return, distracted only by an occasional cow straying into the ditch.

That evening, Simone brought another meal and a guide, Marcel Queinnec, to conduct us on the next step of our journey. Marcel was to become, like Simone, a permanent member of our enlarged team. Although still anxious, we had gained confidence in our new friends and listened carefully to their words of caution. They stressed that the area was tense and that enemy patrols had been combing the roads throughout the day. We had to wait until dark to travel to avoid even casual observation. We then followed Marcel to a spot near the village of Kergrist-Moelou. We were still unsure whether to go south to the base of Commandant Bourgoïn or to try to reorganize in the Côtes-du-Nord. As it happened, no guide appeared at Kergrist. Instead, Simone came in the dark by bicycle to tell us of three wounded SAS men who had been removed from the Forêt de Duault on stretchers before the Germans arrived. They had been taken to an old farmhouse located on a winding pathway outside the village of Peumerit Quintin. We headed there with Simone and Marcel to see what we could do.

### The French Patients

The three men were gravely wounded. They were being cared for by two local women, Mme. Le Moigne and Mme. Louise Queinnec, the wife of Marcel. The rescue had been directed by Sergeant Jean Robert of the SAS, who also was present. A physician had secretly traveled from

Guingamp by bicycle. His surgery, carried out under difficult conditions, probably saved the lives of two of the men. The third was not in as bad condition, but none of the three was able to move.

Mme. Queinnec and Mme. Le Moigne performed heroically, constantly worried that German patrols, seeking farm products or hunting local maquis, might discover their patients. The farm was only 500 yards from a hard-surface road, but it appeared abandoned, with the fields untilled and the buildings poorly maintained. The residents remained anxious but unmolested throughout the summer.

### New Friends

I met Mme. Le Moigne several times that summer. I did not get to know her well, but I admired her courage and quiet self-assurance. I later discovered that her husband was in a conscript labor camp in Germany, from which he was not released until after the surrender in mid-1945.

I became a close friend of Louise and Marcel Queinnec at that time and remain so to this day. We have corresponded and visited with them and with family members in France and in the United States for more than 50 years. Louise was from the north coast of Brittany, near L'Armor Pleubian, where her family had lived for centuries. She was a handsome woman of medium height. Her smooth complexion was light but not ruddy, and her beautiful long hair was darker than the typical Bretonne. Louise was kind and friendly, but she was keenly aware of the problems facing us and of the job to be done. She and Marcel were the teach-

ers at the school in the village of Peumerit Quintin. Their two children were cared for by friends during the summer, when Louise was tied down looking after the wounded men and Marcel was completely involved with the work of Team Frederick.

Marcel became a mainstay of our team, ready and able to do any job needed. He was a friend of Marceau, the chief of the FFI for the Département of the Côtes-du-Nord, whom we would soon get to know well. Marcel was a strongly built man—about my height but more muscular—with light hair and ruddy complexion. His family home was on the south Breton coast. As a young child, he spoke Breton at home, learning French when he began school. Marcel was a man of patience and good humor. He gave everyone his due, but he was not overwhelmed by rank or position. He was cautious but completely dependable, never missing an appointment or failing to keep a commitment unless there was a serious reason for doing so; that in itself would be a warning to any of us.

Marcel was in the Army in northeastern France at the time of the collapse in 1940. As his division headed west, it lost leadership and direction. Supplies eroded. One morning, while their unit was waiting around, Marcel and some friends went to search for food from local farmers. On return, they found that parts of their division were preparing to surrender. Marcel headed toward his home in Brittany. His friend, Paul Auffret (later the husband of Simone), remained with the division; he became a POW and then a conscript laborer in Germany. Marcel's move was doubtless partly luck, but I believe he also had a certain intuitive

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**As I had hidden the first radio, it was my job to recover it.**

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feel for the situation that helped him to know when discretion had to take precedence over the rule book.

Following discussions with Sergeant Robert, who was well informed about the plans and capabilities of the SAS, we decided to remain in the Côtes-du-Nord, hoping to pursue our original mission, which required a radio set. On 16 June, we moved north to the village of Kerien. That evening in Kerien, we had a wonderful dinner served behind blackout shutters in the village café of M. and Mme. Le Moël, with whom we met frequently over the next few months. It was here that we worked out a scheme to recover the radios cached in the Forêt de Duault.

As I had hidden the first radio, it was my job to recover it. Sergeant Robert wished to find out if any SAS personnel remained, alive or dead, as well as to check on weapons. Most of the weapons dropped with us and with the SAS had been moved to safe hiding outside the Forêt de Duault by local people on 11 and 12 June, but no one knew how much had been moved, how much captured by the enemy, and how much remained in the forest. In fact, nothing was known about the situation in the Forêt.

### Vintage Auto

This was to be a dramatic night. My French was improving rapidly under the total-immersion treatment, but I was still slow in catching details, particularly in multiperson conversations. One reason I had difficulty following the conversations this evening, however, was that the stated plans called for us to move with what seemed impossible speed. I was astounded, therefore, when a 1934

automobile was rolled out of a closed shed. It had been set up on timbers with its wheels removed. Tires, hidden for years, were old but usable. The owner was a skilled mechanic who worked in a factory in St. Brieuc. Over several years, he had smuggled from that factory, a cup at a time, what eventually amounted to several gallons of gasoline, which he carefully stored away for just such an occasion as this. By gasoline I mean fuel, synthetic or petroleum based, which this man could make work. The car had to be cranked to start, but we had plenty of muscle available.

By this time, we had discussed things so much that we were full of bravado and ready to make the assault. Two youths of 16 or 17 would drive and guard the car while Sergeant Robert and I went into the forest. Robert was a professional noncom in his early thirties who had seen many assignments with the French Army. He was a natural leader and had taken over responsibility for the remnants of the SAS following the departure of the commander and most of the detachment. Tall and slim, he carried himself with attention to posture and appearance, contributing to his command presence. He was taciturn and a bit arrogant. He felt that I was a kid, although, by the next morning, he showed more respect. Even then, he insisted I had to have falsified my age when I enlisted. From him, this was a friendly jibe.

The car took off, motor loud but smooth. Our destination was 15 to 20 km distant via an irregular series

of country roads. These roads passed through villages that were completely dark because of the blackout. We drove without lights, rather frightening in itself. As we approached each village, the driver accelerated and Robert and I rolled down the adjacent windows and pushed out our weapons, ready to fire. We feared that a patrol of Germans or a detachment of milice might have moved along this route and stopped for the night at one of the villages because they also had to observe the blackout. We moved rapidly and without incident. Turning onto a side road, we drove a short distance and parked the car where it would be hidden in the gorse. Robert and I left the two young maquisards to watch the car. We had only a few hours to do our job—dawn comes early in mid-June.

### Recovering a Radio

Following a footpath through the trees and brush, we reached the old forest road in less than an hour and from there turned toward our former encampment. We were worried about enemy patrols and the risk of tripping landmines on the trail or on the site of the old encampment. Extreme caution was necessary because we had only the dim light of a receding moon to help us. We carried flashlights for emergency but avoided using them so as not to attract attention.

We soon came to the boulder next to the forest road where my teammates and I had cached the second radio during our flight. It was missing, presumably seized by enemy patrols. I was disappointed but not surprised. This development made me aware of the immediacy of our enemy.

Robert and I now separated after agreeing on a rendezvous time and place. He went on with his search, while I proceeded directly to the encampment where I had hidden the first radio. The former encampment had been irregularly spread out over an area about 500 yards long by 200 yards deep. My aim was to find the boulder from which I had taken the sightings. I eventually did so, but, as I descended the hill from that point, it seemed that every boulder was identical with its neighbor, leaving me with countless false starts.

I was getting desperate but kept up the search. After another hour or more, just as the first predawn rays came over the eastern horizon, I finally dug into the right spot. There it was, safe and untouched, the entire set. I was exhilarated at the recovery. This was to be the rebirth of Team Frederick.

I packed up the radio. As I scrambled through the brush and boulders, while trying to keep everything secure, its 40 pounds seemed more like 80. Sergeant Robert was at the rendezvous point. Although anxious over the delay, he shared my enthusiasm. We moved quickly through the forest to where the car was hidden. Our young friends also were anxious, fearing that they might be forced to remain in place with the car for the day if we were delayed much longer. For them, discovery would mean conscription, at the least. Our return trip to Kerien was less tense. Our optimism may not have been warranted, but we were lucky and nothing happened. The driving was easier with a bit more light and with dogs and chickens being the only obstacles of note. We actually reached Kerien only about an hour

later than planned, but it seemed much longer.

### Just in Time

Why such haste? Why risk driving the car in these circumstances? The team wanted to set up as soon as possible, but travel on foot would have required only an extra day or two and would have been much less risky. The pent-up emotional drive of our maquisard friends was doubtless a factor. They had been waiting for years to do exactly this sort of thing in the face of the *boche*, and here was the opportunity. We acted, however, primarily from a sense of urgency prompted by information available to the Resistance. I had missed some of the details in the fast-moving discussions of the previous evening, but the local maquis had sufficient information to know that a major German move was imminent. We were fortunate to have acted when we did, on the night of 16 June.

On 18 June, the Germans massed an estimated 4,000 men to attack the Forêt de Duault. Using motor and foot patrols, they formed a cordon based on the roads surrounding the area. They raided farms, burned homesteads, and took prisoners for interrogation and punishment. They then moved into the forest itself with a variety of weapons, including flamethrowers, which were used with devastating effect. The hidden radio would probably have been destroyed. At best, it would have been weeks before we could have returned to Duault to search. Thus, what may have seemed like impatience and daring was based on a sound assessment

of the fairly desperate situation facing us and the needs of the mission.

### A New Base

After recovering the radio, we set up camp at a more secure site some 15 km to the southwest, near the village of Peumerit Quintin. Our campsite was in a rough field covered with high gorse and serviced by a narrow path used by farmers tending the cows pastured there. The nearest hard-surfaced road was about 2 km away. Men in uniform being a natural subject of gossip, we tried to remain inconspicuous. We were about 1 km from the old farmhouse where the three wounded SAS men were being cared for. This made it easier for Marcel, Simone, and others to carry food from the village to the farmhouse and to us on a single trip.

Contacts were restricted to a small number of our French comrades, who helped with logistics and turning the generator for the radio. Communication with the maquis was largely through the network of female schoolteachers. We did not build fires or a shelter of any kind in order to avoid attracting attention. We were still on the alert for German air surveillance. There were frequent reports of enemy patrols on the roads or in nearby villages, and we occasionally heard rifle fire, but no patrols ventured up our out-of-the-way country road. We slept in the ditch adjacent to the pasture, warmed by our dirty clothes and by blankets provided by our French associates. We were cold and wet but well hidden.

We set up the radio as soon as possible. The hillside was a good site. Since departing from Britain, I carried key items, including the transmission and broadcast schedules along with the cipher books. On 18 June, we came on the air at our scheduled time and were recognized by headquarters, which had been scanning the airwaves since our last transmission on 12 June. We were not aware of it at the time, but this was a dangerous day to begin transmissions. It was the day of the massive 4,000-man attack on the Forêt de Duault. We were only about 3 km outside the roadblocks around the Forêt but were not detected by enemy patrols scouting widely throughout the area. Because there were no reports of anything resembling direction-finding equipment, the Germans may have assumed that we had no radio capability following the retreat from Duault.

It was exciting to come on the air and receive a response. Our message was, again, a bit heady in light of the experiences of the previous week. It read:

*18 June from Frederick: SAS attacked Monday and dispersed. Guarding 3 of their wounded here. Jeds okay. Have contacted guerrilla leaders. Paris-Brest underground cable cut by us.... (meaning elements of the FFI).*

I used certain memorized safety tricks, such as inserting or omitting blocks of letters, to assure London of our transmission security. London was quickly satisfied, and we began regular and frequent exchanges. On 19 June, we received a reply to a message we had sent 18 June:

*19 June—From SFHQ (Special Forces Headquarters) to Frederick: Confirm grounds you give. Congratulations Pesata on promotion to 1st Sgt.*

My codename was Pesata, and I was naturally pleased. More significant, we were already making arrangements for airdrops of weapons so badly needed to make the maquis in the area into an effective paramilitary force.

### Commo Drill

The communications plans called for headquarters to send as much as possible of its traffic on the late-night, one-way broadcasts, reserving the regularly scheduled exchanges for messages from the field and thereby reducing the team's time on the air and the opportunities for enemy monitoring or direction-finding. The broadcasts were transmitted rapidly in Morse code. The first schedule was from midnight to about 3 a.m., followed by a repeat of the entire series. The first 10 to 15 minutes of the transmission consisted of a list of those for whom there were messages that night. If not listed, I signed off for the night; otherwise, I listened until I received the transmission and often would have to await the repeat series to check on omissions.

The system was efficient and secure. The only equipment needed was the receiver, powered by dry cells. All traffic was enciphered. There were, of course, problems: the signal was strong but bad weather could interfere; copying text by the light of a weak flashlight, perhaps in the rain, was not easy; and enemy jamming was heavy, with the entire radio spec-

trum sometimes resembling a mass of screeching cowbirds. Receiving was less dangerous than transmitting, but it was a fatiguing part of my task and one I had to perform alone. Staying awake most of the night was not easy.

Upon receiving a broadcast, I quickly deciphered enough to find out if there was anything requiring immediate action and then waited until dawn to decipher the main body and to clarify the message. Our cipher system was the one-time pad, considered foolproof in that precomputer age. It required accurate copying of the enciphered message on a pad containing groups of five letters, randomly selected. The sender and receiver each had identical pads, with the deciphering tied to a transposition system on paper or memorized. The exact location on the pad was indicated by a coded message at the start of the transmission, and we burned each portion immediately after use. We had to treasure these cipher books along with the dozen crystals used to set our transmission frequencies. Messages, whether from the scheduled two-way transmission or the one-way night broadcast, frequently had to be repeated or corrected to adjust for the many changes required by either side. Accuracy in detail was essential, particularly in arranging airdrops.

### Helpful Weather

The success of the Normandy landings was threatened by the unusually bad weather in June 1944. In the Breton hinterland, we had a heavy dose of this weather, the worst June in memory. There was mist, cloud cover, and heavy rain, all of which

impeded movement. Airdrops were difficult to arrange, and some had to be canceled or rescheduled. Living conditions at our camp, which was in the open, were pretty miserable. Nevertheless, we kept to our plans of remaining hidden in this obscure spot, accessible only to trusted individuals. We were careful to dismantle and pack the radio and antenna after each transmission, even though we might be coming on again within a few hours.

I remember only one occasion during this three-week period when, completely soaked, we broke down and retreated to the old farmhouse sheltering the wounded men. After drying out and eating a warm meal, we spent a luxurious night in the adjacent barn, warmed by a year's supply of hay and fermenting manure—a perfect cure for the cold I was developing. We carried the radio with us but never risked a transmission from that vulnerable site.

The unpleasant weather may have been instrumental in the success of our mission. With the advent of the heavy rains and sloppy roads, reports of enemy patrols became less frequent. I suspect that the Germans would have used direction-finding equipment and searched the back country more thoroughly had the weather not been so miserable. They doubtless monitored our transmissions, even if they could not decipher them. The FFI and ourselves exploited the bad weather advantage, as suggested by this message of 24 June:

*From Frederick: Region humming with enemy activity. Successfully carried out attack on communications. Boche commu-*

“

**It was thrilling to receive the coded signal and to have this first drop a success, with four planes carrying substantial supplies.**

”

*nications in Brittany in chaos....  
Our morale terrific.*

### Avoiding Politics

We were now in regular contact with the FFI's commander for the Côtes-du-Nord, Yves Le Hégat, codename Marceau. He was soon to join us at our campsite, but at this stage he remained separate, communicating daily and visiting frequently. Through Marceau, the team gained an idea of the Resistance possibilities in the Côtes-du-Nord and met with a number of the commanders of organized maquis groups. The FFI in the Département was not as unified as it appeared. On paper, it was organized along military lines, with Marceau as “commandant.” His duties, however, were as much diplomatic and political as they were military. The various components were quite independent, with members loyal to their own leaders and to the political forces behind them.

As the representatives of Allied headquarters, we provided advice, direction, and, most important, arms and supplies. Our position as soldiers not involved in the politics of France or of the French Resistance made for a delicate but important working relationship. Agueric was French, but he had no commitments to the politics of this

region. He became deeply involved in political discussions—too much so, thought Major Wise—but I never identified any particular political leaning on his part. I believe this was simply the French style. Wise and I, being foreigners, were out of this; we were, in fact, more ignorant of the real situation than we should have been, but we learned rapidly. From the standpoint of our operations, we accepted and worked with the paper organization and relied on Marceau and his network to assist in our mission, which was theoretically above politics.

### Successful Airdrops

We arranged our first airdrop within a few days. We had to instruct the maquis in the requirements of a good drop zone and the pattern of placing the fires and flashlights on the field. The maquis of the region lacked weapons and supplies. They were also short of money, needing more than the modest amounts we carried. In arranging the airdrop, we identified to headquarters the items needed, provided the information on planned use, and gave specifics on the proposed drop zone and reception arrangements. We had to be accurate on such matters as map coordinates, which were essential to the pilot in searching for the drop zone.

Headquarters, after coordinating with the Royal Air Force, then sent information on date, time, code signals, and contents of the drop. Our requests were usually met, although there were occasional adjustments in types of weapons sent and frequent changes in time or locations of drops. Before the airdrop,

Headquarters sent us a French-language coded message which we passed to the reception committee. The BBC morning and evening French-language newsbroadcasts were preceded by a series of what were called *messages personnels*. These were in voice on the full-power BBC, which could be received on home radios. The message for airdrops indicated the number of planes. For example, the signal for our first drop was:

*Frederick etait roi de Prusse;  
nous disons quatre fois....*

This confirmed the drop and told us to watch for four airplanes. A failure to receive this signal even as late as the evening news program indicated that the drop had to be rescheduled. It was thrilling to receive the coded signal and to have this first drop a success, with four planes carrying substantial supplies.

Our ability to initiate these drops assured the French resistants of our role and effectiveness. As June progressed into July, the news from the Normandy battlefield improved and Resistance activity in Brittany increased. There was a firming of command organization within FFI. Personal contact with the maquis by our team was valuable for gaining information about the strength and quality of the Resistance and for building mutual confidence. I participated in some of the visits, but security and work requirements prevented me from joining Wise and Augeric on many of them.

### Effective Support

Because our operations were on a larger scale than we had anticipated, it was impractical for the members of our team to provide personal tactical and weapons instruction to the maquis. We did assist in demolition planning because the maquis were not familiar with the devices and material we carried. Fortunately, several of the SAS men remained in the area. They, together with some FFI members possessing military experience, were able to handle the tactical and weapons training.

The maquis, meanwhile, were carrying out raids on German storage facilities and truck convoys. These were not always coordinated with Marceau and with Team Frederick, and some were risky and premature, leading to severe counterattacks. They did, however, make the German regional commanders uneasy and certainly had a strong impact on the morale of Resistance members. It was evident, from intelligence gathered and transmitted to London, that the German forces in the area were being pressed to move more of their resources eastward toward Normandy. This made transportation a priority target. It was our job to strengthen the organization and discipline of the maquis and provide the link to headquarters for supplies and command as well as general guidance on targets.

A message from London at this time gave us an insight into how much had been going on clandestinely during these years of occupation. We were asked if we could arrange exfiltration by boat for a French captain who was needed back in England. Our French contacts did so, and the man was escorted to a network on

the north coast which got him to the proper spot.

This was the first time we were aware of the existence of this system of moving downed Allied fliers to Britain by boat from the heavily armed north coast of France. It is well described by the late Gilbert Renault—known as “Remy”—in his book, *La Maison d'Alphonse*. Only careful security on the part of those involved permitted the system to operate for so long in a vital area under the noses of the enemy.

As of early July, things were going well. The weather had improved, making airdrops easier. We arranged for the reception of two Jed teams, Team Giles to the westernmost Département of Finistère and Team Felix to the eastern part of the Côtes-du-Nord. These arrangements were difficult, requiring much negotiation and many changes in time and place. This was particularly so with the Finistère team, which was going to a sensitive area. Both teams would render crucial assistance to us in the near future.

An important message now came from London:

*2 July—from SFHQ to Frederick: developments in your area now matter of utmost urgency....*

The message added that weapons would be dispatched as fast as we could receive them and instructed us to look into possibilities for additional Jed teams in Brittany.

### **Another Move**

At this time, we moved from our well-hidden campsite near Peumerit Quintin to a location about 15 km distant, adjacent to the village of Canihuel and 6 km from the larger town of St. Nicholas du Pelem. This more accessible location was close to major roads of vital importance to the German forces, which were a priority target. We moved into an abandoned one-room cottage on a rough country road, used mostly for horsedrawn wagons and livestock. It was an excellent transmission site. We had sentinels assigned by the local FFI to watch traffic in the area. And it was sheer luxury to have a dry place to work and to sleep!

These advantages were balanced by obvious disadvantages. We were in an identifiable building on a regularly used country road, and our transmission antenna was conspicuous to anyone passing. But we were confident. This spot was to become a true command post (CP) for the FFI in the Côtes-du-Nord. It became known to representatives of many of the maquis groups in the Département, as well as to our couriers.

### **Marceau and Company**

It was here that my teammates and I became better acquainted with many of those who made up the expanded Team Frederick. Marceau, commander of the FFI in the Côtes-du-Nord, remained with us at the CP. This made for excellent coordination and gave him a status that helped him in his efforts to bring the various Resistance groups under a central command in spite of differences in ideology, leadership, and

strength. He pushed for improvement in security and organization among the various groups. Emile, who commanded more than 2,500 men in this area, stated many years later that Marceau did a good job in imposing discipline and order on a mix of persons and groups.

Marceau, like so many in the Resistance, was a career educator and was closely associated with the FTP (*Francs Tireurs et Partisans*—"Irregulars and Partisans"). The FTP was the paramilitary arm of the Communist-dominated FN (*Front National*). The core of the FTP was generally regarded as being Communist, and most of the members identified themselves as "leftist" on the French political spectrum. There were some, however, particularly among new recruits, who had no particular political leaning but joined a group because of the leadership or because of friends or acquaintances. Anti-Communist resisters were suspicious of the FTP but had to accept it because it was strong throughout France and very strong in Brittany.

Marceau had been active in Resistance work as a longtime member of the FTP. He had somehow gained documentation permitting him to move about more easily than most. He even had some knowledge of German, which he used for casual conversation when checked by German guards (the Fritz, as he called them). His strong and outgoing personality enabled him to do that sort of thing successfully. He was ambitious and distrustful of competitors, as well as of those whom he felt to be politically opposed to the FTP. He was open and cooperative in dealing with our team. Some criticized him for not being sufficiently commanding, but I defend him on this score. I

believe he adjusted well to what was often a squabbling conglomerate of organizations.

Marceau's wife was also involved in the Resistance, and she spent some time with us over the next two months. She was active in the communications network. She seemed less relaxed and more formal than most of our associates. Meeting her many years later, we found her to be an energetic and friendly person.

Others closely associated with Team Frederick from this time were Simone Le Goëffic, Aimée Pouhaër, Aïde Richard, Marie Le Penee, Eugénie Le Guyader ("Chika"), Marcel Queinnec, and Josef Forestier. There were also two very helpful *gendarmes* from the north coast town of Lezardrieux. It was amusing to see them bicycling up our little country road in their conspicuous blue and black uniforms.

I personally was on good terms with all and, by this time, I was able to converse easily in my improved French. I always needed assistance with the hand generator which powered the transmitter. This, as well as our living arrangements, encouraged conversation. As a young American, presumably unbiased, I believe it was easier for me to become a part of the day-to-day conversation than for either of my teammates.

It was Simone (see the earlier section entitled "A Schoolteacher Savior") who found us and brought us into contact with the network. She was now concentrating on logistics. She and Aimée handled most of the food procurement and preparation. They both had that great French talent for making gourmet meals from ordinary materials. Potatoes and milk



were used in countless ways. Eggs were turned into excellent omelets. The French members bemoaned the lack of good white bread, but I liked the Breton country bread. Working day and night, I had a voracious appetite, perhaps a psychological reaction to the pressure.

A bottle of wine occasionally turned up, but our usual drink was Breton cider, boiled milk, or plain boiled water. On one of the drops, our team received a package containing powdered coffee and chocolate, a real treat. The package also contained mail for the three of us, which was a welcome surprise. I was lucky with mail because family and friends, particularly the girl I had been dating back home, were good correspondents.

Aimée, who shared with Simone the task of taking care of the members of the CP, was a small, quiet woman of about 25, trim looking and less ruddy than the typical Bretonne. While others among us engaged in countless discussions about what to do and how to do it, Aimée would already be doing it. She was a delightful conversationalist who enjoyed telling me something of life and schoolteaching in Brittany under more normal conditions. She was a great asset to our work. I saw Marie and Chika frequently, but I did not become as well acquainted with them because they concentrated on courier work and stayed with us for only brief periods.

### **Rewarding Work**

The immediate task at Canihuel was to establish a functioning CP for the Côtes-du-Nord. The frequency of

radio transmissions increased, mostly to meet the need for airdrops but also for sending intelligence information on German facilities and convoys. We sent considerable operational data for the use of other teams destined for Brittany.

We were visited by many Resistance members, who now clearly accepted Team Frederick as the link to London. It was fascinating to hear the stories of exciting adventures by men and women from throughout the region. An exhilarant spirit pervaded the entire movement, and we were in the center of it. For me, it was an extremely busy time, often requiring several transmissions daily. I also had to listen carefully to the night broadcasts. Increased traffic meant an increase in cipher work, leaving little time for sleep. But, at 22, one adjusts easily. I slept when I got the chance.

### **Communal Living**

Our living conditions were much improved. The tiny cottage was crowded but dry and warm, with a smoky old fireplace adequate for cooking. We had warm days in Brittany, but it was never hot. One day, Josef Forestier, our supply officer, brought us a collection of women's underwear, made of a synthetic silk-like material, probably rayon, which was impossible to find on the market. Wise, Agueric, and I were elated to put these on because we had been wearing the same dirty clothes for a month and had had little opportunity to wash.

We lived in a communal style in this little cottage—the men sleeping in a row with the women adjacent—too communal to permit much intimacy.

The fact that the broadcasts required me to get up once or twice during the night and sit at the table opposite the sleepers with my flashlight added a certain comic element to the whole arrangement.

I believe there was considerable fondness developing between some of the men and women present, but anything closer had to be postponed. Sex was a low priority at this stage. I do, however, recall an amusing example of national prejudice displayed by Major Wise. One evening, Agueric, who had gone to visit a maquis group, was several hours late returning. I suggested to Wise that there may have been some trouble. He said no, Agueric must have found a woman. Wise asserted that a Frenchman could not survive so long without intimate female contact. Apparently the needs of Frenchmen were different from those of Englishmen or Americans! And so goes the Anglo/French relationship, back to Joan of Arc.

### **A Distressing Development**

One evening during dinner there was a knock at the door. We were alarmed. It was nearly dark, and sentinels should have alerted us. A young woman entered, ready to collapse from fatigue. She was immediately recognized as Aïde Richard, an important link in the communication network. Aïde had bicycled many miles to report a disaster some distance to our east. A group of men had been eating dinner in a farmhouse, before preparing for an airdrop we had arranged for that night. The door swung open, and they were greeted by a volley of gunfire. All were killed, and the house

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**As the bullets came raining in, there was bedlam. We all moved fast, but the radio was left standing.**

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was burned by the platoon of raiding German soldiers.

Aïde, posted nearby, had planned to carry any messages following the airdrop, but when she received the details on this tragic raid, she set out immediately to bring us the report. She was forced to bicycle in the dark and frequently had to hide in woods or fields to avoid patrols and checkpoints. She was distressed, having been personally well acquainted with some of those killed. Only after delivering her report did she break down. Exhausted as she was, she insisted on returning the next morning to carry information and directives for the resistants in the area who were terrified by the night's events.

I became well acquainted with Aïde over the next two months. She was dynamic, a bit high-strung, of strong character, and completely devoted to the cause. At the end of the war, she volunteered to go to Germany to assist in locating and rehabilitating French people in forced-labor situations scattered throughout the country. She married a man she met while on this mission.

### Under Attack

Aïde's report should have alerted us about our own security. The raid she reported was attributed to informers. This may have been the case, but overconfidence and carelessness also played a part. At Canihuel, we continued our routine with what appeared to be excellent results. One morning, a sentry came to report a small truck moving slowly in an easterly direction from St. Nicolas du Pelem, following the main road just

south of us. Scattered reports came in from farmers about an unusual amount of movement along the nearby roads. Despite these warnings, we proceeded with our regularly scheduled transmissions.

Maquis throughout the area were pressing us to arrange airdrops, and we were struggling to meet the demand. This meant that I had to ask London for extra transmission time and stay on the air much longer than either the rules or good sense recommended. Nearing the end of a transmission, we suddenly heard several bursts of rifle fire coming toward us, apparently from only a few hundred yards away, quickly followed by machinegun fire. I seized what I hoped were most of the enciphered messages, the radio crystals, and as many of the cipher books as I could reach. As the bullets came raining in, there was bedlam. We all moved fast, but the radio was left standing. It is difficult to comprehend our failure to plan for this type of emergency. But we had not done so, and now we were all on the run, only seconds ahead of our pursuers.

Our group of six split up, seeking to get out of the area. The French civilians merged into the local farms. The three of us, being in uniform, could not do that; instead, we ran downhill into a wooded area along a small stream. The volume and proximity of gunfire were ominous. We feared running into another patrol coming from the opposite direction, which

would have happened a few minutes later.

Fortunately, the German soldiers, though numerous, were distributed over a broad area. Their intelligence on the general situation was good, but it was not precise. Otherwise, they would have taken us at the cottage. Also, as usual, they were cautious about surprises from the woods or from behind the hedgerows. In addition, they undoubtedly were diverted by the discovery of the radio. Dreadful as this loss was to our operations, it may have saved us because the enemy stopped to search the cottage and surroundings, picking up our radio equipment and possibly one or two cipher books. Also forgotten in the panic to get away was a map posted on the wall containing information on drop sites and on some of the maquis, identified by a simple code that German counterintelligence could easily work out. We were able to warn headquarters about these losses through another network and thus prevent London from using contaminated information.

When the first volley of rifle fire came at us, we grabbed our weapons. I was wearing a .45-caliber pistol on my belt, which I regularly did during transmissions. Wise and Agueric each had carbines as well as .45s. We also had a bundle of handgrenades; this time, we feared we might really need them. Judging from gunfire and shouting, it was evident that we were soon to be surrounded by enemy patrols coming from all directions, along the trails and across open fields. We could not possibly outrun them or move out of the area. Our only choice was to hide, hoping that we might be able to move at nightfall. We crawled into a

thick briar patch immediately adjacent to the trail we had followed from the cabin. The trail was regularly used by people and livestock, thus making visual detection of our tracks difficult. A major fear was dogs. Trained search dogs, or even ordinary farm dogs, could easily give away our location. (During such episodes, the local farmers made it a practice to confine their dogs.)

### A Very Close Call

Throughout this long afternoon, we remained motionless in the briar patch. People passed frequently on the adjacent dirt road; most wore cleated boots, which identified them as enemy soldiers. Frequent rifle shots rang out from all directions, some from patrols passing directly in front of us. Surprisingly, none fired into our briar patch, aiming instead at locations all around us. It apparently did not occur to them that we could be so close. A favorite tactic of such search missions was to skim over the hedgerows with rifle or machinegun fire on the assumption, often correct, that this would cause the partisans to make a run for it.

Our most frightening moment occurred when a patrol of perhaps a dozen men moved slowly down the trail and halted directly in front of us. We were only a few feet away, and it was easy to hear them speaking. Had they remained silent, they would have heard us breathing. They were speaking in German, but we did not know enough of the language to understand what was said. We were overwhelmed with fright but remained still, and the patrol finally moved on. It searched the area and let loose several volleys of rifle fire, but the Germans did not fire into our hideaway or poke into it

with bayonets, another technique commonly used to flush partisans out of their hiding places. We stayed quiet, while keeping weapons ready to fire. If discovered, we planned to fire at the attackers and then run. In our desperate situation, our only advantages would be the element of surprise and our knowledge of the area. Had such action been necessary, we probably would have been annihilated. We had all agreed not to be taken prisoner.

For me, that afternoon provided an interesting personal experience. We three lay on our bellies on the ground in the briar thicket, weapons loaded and cocked. I had only the .45-caliber pistol. I held it in my hand outstretched toward the trail a few feet away. I was unable to prevent my hand from shaking constantly. Curiously, however, whenever a threat approached, the shaking stopped as my whole body became tense and alert. The body hormones apparently knew their job and did it well. We tried to maintain absolute stillness. I waited an interminable time before turning slightly to the side to urinate—the noise sounded like a cataract.

### Escape

As evening approached, the sound of shooting, which had come from every direction, decreased and eventually stopped. We backed out of our hiding place and soon spotted a farmboy driving some cows. He knew little, except that the whole area had been saturated with enemy patrols throughout the day. He had not seen any in the last half hour, however. We speculated that the Germans were leaving the contested area before dark, and we decided to move

without delay. We moved slowly and cautiously, keeping under cover of brush or woods wherever possible and watching the hedgerows carefully to observe any movement. Our short-term objective was to move eastward, crossing the road which ran north-south through Canihuel and which had been one of the access routes for the enemy attack.

The few people we met were agitated, fearing reprisals against themselves and their farms. From their reports, it appeared that most of the patrols had withdrawn. This encouraged us to move speedily. We did so, crossing the road without difficulty. We did not return to the cottage to search for the radio because we assumed that everything had been seized and that it might be guarded. After dark, we stopped for supper and information at the home of a farmer who had worked with us. We then departed for a wooded spot a few miles away, where we bedded down in the brush for the night, hoping to regain contact with our colleagues in the morning.

### Motive for the Attack

We learned later that this attack on us in Canihuel was part of a large-scale German attempt to clean out the French paramilitary groups in central Brittany, which were posing an increasing threat to the east-west highways. Heavy movement of German forces from Brittany to the Normandy front was under way, most of it by highway. The road convoys were open to Allied air attack by day but were fairly safe at night—until the French partisans came into the action. The partisans by now had acquired a substantial supply of arms and some training in using them.

Their organization was improving daily. The Jed teams—three in northern Brittany and others in the south—were able to procure supplies and were accepted as a means of transmission of instructions and orders from London. Ours was the only northern team hit in this sweep.

There were about 800 enemy soldiers, including a small contingent of horse cavalry, concentrating on that small Canihuel triangle and unknown numbers working in nearby areas. The German command had to have had information on our location and activity—from observation or from informers, or both. The slow-moving vehicle reported on the morning of the attack was undoubtedly engaged in direction-finding of our radio signals. The direction-finding should have given them a fairly accurate idea of our location, and it may have been a key reason for the concentration on the Canihuel triangle.

### Limited Losses

Several men from nearby maquis groups were killed in this German cleanup operation near Canihuel, but no members of our immediate working group were injured. The French civilians dispersed, hiding with local farmers until nightfall. The women had departed earlier in the day following the early-warning signals and had moved outside the threatened area before the attack. I continued to be amazed at the ability of these men and women to avoid the enemy by disappearing into farms or fields of gorse. In retrospect, I believe the members of our team should have changed into civilian clothes. We no longer needed the uniforms to be accepted by the FFI, and we well realized from posted

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**By this time (mid-July), the Germans were becoming fearful, and they did not follow up this attack with an intensive search-and-destroy operation like the one they had mounted in June.**

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notices that our uniforms would not gain us recognition as POWs in the event of capture.

Marceau went down to the main road by bicycle. He said he was stopped by a German sentry who accepted his cover story and documentation, permitting him to proceed. This action showed great courage but not necessarily good judgment; his capture and interrogation could have damaged the entire mission. Such daring, however, is an essential ingredient of a successful partisan movement.

Had this raid occurred a month earlier, we—and the movement in this region—would have been decimated. But by this time (mid-July) the Germans were becoming fearful, and they did not follow up this attack with an intensive search-and-destroy operation like the one they had mounted in June following the crisis in the Forêt de Duault.

### Replacing the Radio

After the raid and losses at Canihuel, we avoided abandoned farmhouses and other easily targeted spots. We stuck to the fields and ditches, which were more hospitable now that we were blessed with good weather. We rapidly renewed contact with Marceau

and our other associates. Our first priority was to acquire a replacement radio. We sent a message to Team Giles, which passed it to London.

London quickly dispatched a radio for us through Team Felix, located 60 km to the east. But the container with the radio was completely smashed because of a faulty parachute. The result was further delay until Felix could arrange another drop and forward the radio to us by bicycle courier. This was frustrating, but, given the distances and obstructions, it was amazingly fast; we were without a radio for less than 10 days.

For transport by bicycle, the radio was divided into three parts, each carried by a different courier. If detected, the courier probably would have been summarily shot. These couriers were daring but cautious. They were frightened when passing through a village or around a check-point, but their personal commitment was unwavering.

During this time we were quite tense, fearing that the enemy, having identified us, would make a concerted effort to hunt us down. Three Allied soldiers in uniform were all too easy to spot and follow. We moved from one campsite to another, keeping off any hard-surface roads. There were many enemy patrols searching in the area; on several occasions, we were fired on but not pursued once we moved into the brush, where we were more at home.

As in June, we kept our group small, and our schoolteacher couriers delivered us food—a greater task than earlier because of our moves and the considerable enemy activity nearby. We obtained some canvas to use for easy-to-hide tents in the thick gorse.

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Even when no rain was falling, the Breton countryside was often damp with fog or mist. For a period after the disaster, we may have felt discouraged—but not for long. Morale was good. Early one evening, after a close call with a German search party, we were walking along a dirt road on the way to another campsite. I suddenly had a feeling of exhilaration, thinking to myself: “We beat them again.” This kind of feeling, shared with our comrades, kept us going.

### Josef

I became well acquainted with Josef Forestier, who was responsible for supplies and overall assistance. In his early forties, Josef was older than most of our associates. He was a typical Breton in appearance. Though a bit stout, he was fast and nimble. Josef spoke Breton, but he preferred French and was attentive to maintaining the quality of the French language. Josef was a businessman, a distributor of mineral waters; he was married, with one young daughter. His opinions on political affairs were different from those of most members of the group, whom he considered leftist or even Communist. A strict Catholic, he identified with the conservative trends within the FFI. He was opposed to the FTP.

The fact that Josef and the others managed to work together was a tribute to the power of de Gaulle’s call for unity. Josef felt it his duty to be aware of what was going on and to stand up for those opposed to the FTP. He and Marceau, although holding different political views, had cooperated in the past. They once had worked together to escape from a prison in St. Brieuç, to which both had been committed pending investi-

gation of suspected subversive activities. I presume such an investigation would have led to deportation to a labor camp in Germany. Josef recognized Marceau’s contribution to the Resistance movement, but he also was critical of what he claimed was Marceau’s lack of concern for the people who worked for the cause.

### More German Attacks

At the end of July, a larger enemy operation unfolded. With the replacement radio, we were near the village of Plesidy. We remained attentive to security, but we were only about 7 km from the village of Etang-Neuf, near which three large groups of well-organized and well-armed maquis were located. One of the groups was commanded by my comrade from the Forêt de Duault, Lieutenant (formerly Sergeant) Robert. These groups had been active and had been identified by the Germans, who launched an attack against them using several hundred men.

The Germans did considerable damage, but they also suffered serious casualties from effective counteraction by the maquis. That same afternoon, an enemy patrol opened fire with a machinegun that had been set up in a field close to our campsite. Sentries had warned us and had delayed the German patrol with counterfire from the flanks, giving us time to pack our radio and

gear. The action by the sentries, who were able to escape by separate routes, undoubtedly made us seem more numerous than we were (seven, plus the sentries).

The Germans had definitely targeted us and had brought a considerable amount of weaponry into the field. We were under fire as we were getting over the hedgerow with our equipment. Those of us who reached the hedgerow first were preparing to return fire as the rest of our group struggled to join us. The Germans did not follow, however, nor did they try to cut us off by using another route. The remained close to their gun positions, which gave us a chance to move out.

By now, we had learned to plan for such attacks and to have escape routes and clear responsibilities laid out for everyone. We had no idea whether the information leading to these attacks was from informers, from observation of traffic, or from the map we lost at Canihuel. Our team had visited the three maquis groups a day or so before the attack. We had even considered joining them for safety but luckily did not do so, inasmuch as they suffered significant casualties themselves. The thick gorse provided better security for radio transmissions than for a large paramilitary unit, even if we might yearn for the comradeship and mutual encouragement of such a group. The small size of our group facilitated merging into the environment.

### Improving Conditions

We were about to see a significant change in the relationship between hunter and hunted in rural Brittany.

The German forces continued to pose a serious threat. They always were better armed and more skilled than the resistants at conventional military operations. They were, however, becoming increasingly strained by the war to the east and by the growing impact of the Resistance. They hesitated to leave the main roads. Further search-and-destroy operations were becoming less likely, but we could never ignore the possibility of major attacks, as was demonstrated at Plesidy. We also had to consider the possibility of reckless actions resulting from German desperation. The changing situation made it easier for us and for the French maquis to move and to operate. Nevertheless, we remained attentive to good security and kept ourselves ready to take off on a moment's notice.

After renewal of contact with London, events moved rapidly. We arranged a number of airdrops within a short time. Movement of men and supplies became easier. We were able to adjust quickly to requests for changes in scheduled airdrops. If a change was sought by London, we had a replacement time or place available. If we requested the cancellation, we were able to notify London quickly. Special Forces headquarters was accommodating, and we responded with daily reports of actions taken against German supplies, sentries, and outposts and, most important, against convoys headed east. London warned against premature action. We passed these warnings on to the resistants, who sometimes accepted and sometimes rejected them or "interpreted" them. We and headquarters might talk of "command and control," but our role was better described as "convince and induce." Many of these resistants, often with bitter memo-

ries, had been waiting years for these opportunities. It was our task to limit losses while preparing for bigger things to come.

### The Big Picture

At this point, I will briefly discuss the war from a broader perspective in order to explain the local situation. In late June, at St. Lo, the Allied forces in Normandy made the first major crack in the massive German line that faced them after the landings. This breakthrough was followed by an immense buildup of armor and infantry leading to the next major break in German lines at Avranches in mid-July. At this point, the Third Army, under the command of General Patton, began its famous 90-degree swing to the east. The story was widely told that, reviewing plans for this gigantic move, Patton's commander, Gen. Omar Bradley, asked, in some agitation: "...but what of your right flank?" Patton responded: "The French resistants are my right flank." Whether apocryphal or not, the story is indicative.

The Third Army did move east, sparing small numbers of troops to secure the right flank; south toward the submarine bases at Lorient and St. Nazaire; and west to Brest, which was also a submarine base and was the French port closest to the North Atlantic sea lanes. The capture of Brest as a usable entry point was an important military objective, but it was not realized until the end of September, by which time the port was so heavily damaged it could play only a secondary role as a supply route. The resistants did their job, but the Allied command underestimated the power of the German defense. The bases at Lorient and St.

Nazaire held out until the war ended in 1945.

We now found ourselves in the middle of these major military operations. Numerous armed resistants were impatient to get into the fray. Even after the movement of considerable numbers to the east, thousands of German troops remained throughout the peninsula, many in strongly defended positions. Our operational objectives were now changed, as indicated by the following message from London:

*2 August—from SFHQ to Frederick: Allied advance will probably be rapid in your direction. Task is now preservation not destruction. Greatest importance...road Morlaix, Sant Briec, Lamballe. You will prevent enemy...demolition...on this and secondary roads....*

Our response:

*2 August—from Frederick: have 2,000 men now concentrated on and near route Morlaix...further 2,000 available for secondary tasks.*

All this required constant scouting of the roads and the stationing of substantial FFI forces to watch and defend key points. At times, the resistants tried to tempt the Germans to move from secure positions to chase after elusive maquisards. This tended to be dangerous but, if successful, rewarding. We frequently had to warn the maquisards about the Germans' military skill and ruthlessness. The Allied forces moving toward Brest were exclusively armored units. They were traveling rapidly, relying on the resistants to keep the roads clear.

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**But things were now moving rapidly and we were about to see a significant change in our role and in that of the partisans.**

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### Mission Aloes

Headquarters had long ago alerted us to the importance of our target area and had provided all the small arms we could receive. Additional Jed teams had been dispatched. London now decided to coordinate all resistance in outer Brittany under a single commander on the ground. In early August, we were ordered to arrange an airdrop for Mission Aloes, to be headed by a senior French professional officer, Colonel Eon. Several associates would come with Eon, including Colonel Passy (true name: Andre Dewavrin). Passy was chief of the Free French secret service in London. He was a legendary figure because of his exploits in and outside France since 1940. Colonel Eon was designated the personal representative of General Koenig, Chief of Resistance in de Gaulle's provisional government,

Our team and associates looked toward this event with both anticipation and apprehension. It was exciting to have such an indication of the importance of our work. But we wondered if it was the right time for this type of formalized structure. I suppose we were also a bit chagrined at becoming a junior partner in the link to London. Regardless, it was our task to prepare for the airdrop. We went to the Kerien area, where good drop zones were accessible. All members of our team and a number of resistants were on the ground the night of the drop of Mission Aloes. I handled the flashlight signals to the pilots, while others tended the fires—much bigger than needed. We had a good moon, and the landings went well. Among those landing near me, to whom I gave instructions, was a man identified later as the famous Colonel Passy. He told me next day he thought I was a Breton because of my accent in speaking French.

Passy and Eon were very different from one another. Passy had a well-earned feel for underground work. A quiet man, he projected confidence and knowledge. He was sympathetic to our concern about the need for caution. Eon, whom I met only briefly, fitted all too well the common image of the senior French officer—imperious and distant, hardly the kind of person to pull together the left-leaning maquis groups in Brittany. Colonel Eon immediately wanted to set up a CP for all of northern Brittany. We found a farmhouse where the members of his mission could reside, and we obtained the use of the Kerien village schoolhouse for his headquarters. This conspicuous style increased our anxiety. It was only a few days since the fights near Plesidy, just 8 km away. Eon had brought supplies and senior aides with him but no additional soldiers, leaving the order of battle unchanged. We warned Eon and headquarters that undetermined numbers of German troops were moving around the countryside and continued to pose a great danger, but Eon thought we were just worriers. We remained at our campsite while Eon established his CP, which remained undisturbed, regardless of our worries.

Jed Team Daniel was dropped with Mission Aloes, although some 12 km from the proper drop zone. The team was frustrated as it sought a

role to play within the Aloes setup. It joined us for a few days while trying to work out its mission. The team's report included the following amusing description of our little beehive:

*Frederick's headquarters...Major Wise, Captain Aqueric, Sergeant Kehoe, M. Marceau (departmental chef du region). There were also six convoys...a maquisard...Josef in charge of provisions...two gendarmes on bicycles who were liaison agents and a small floating population of chauffeurs and maquisards undertaking various duties. This collection...seemed to work admirably.*

### Changing Role

But things were now moving rapidly and we were about to see a significant change in our role and in that of the partisans. Orders from London reiterated the 2 August request for the maquis to concentrate on protecting roads, bridges, and causeways—quite different from the earlier missions. The Allied tank columns were counting on considerable help from the Resistance.

Within a few days, Passy assigned Wise and Agueric responsibility for liaison between the American forces and the maquis guarding the roads in the northern region. I was to assist while continuing radio contact with London. Headquarters had indicated considerable concern over risks in the initial contact between Allied columns and the resistants and had sent detailed instructions that we passed on to the maquis. We, too, wondered. We had no more desire to be shelled by Allied than by German

guns. Early contact was essential, and it was necessary to concentrate the liaison so as to reduce risks and develop maximum cooperation.

To our surprise, the linkup with Allied forces was easily accomplished. In fact, before our team reached the highway leading westward to Guingamp and Morlaix, advance parties of American tanks had arrived and were in contact with the elated local people. We were quickly accepted by the soldiers and directed to the commander of the US tank column. He did not have our names, but he knew there were detachments such as ours working with the FFI and was expecting us. He immediately accepted our bonafides and set us to work.

The Resistance forces moved quickly and in a well-organized manner to carry out the orders on guarding roads and protecting lines of communication. From this point on, our team's chief mission was this liaison. The American tank columns were moving rapidly, and the commander relied on our judgment regarding the discipline and reliability of the resistants.

### **Appeal for Help**

Over the next couple of weeks, most of our efforts were devoted to mobilizing resources against the German positions in the Paimpol peninsula on the north coast. Large numbers of German troops had retreated to the shelter of these strongly defended positions, a part of the anti-invasion defense line. The maquis, as directed, had moved into the area, but we feared the Germans might move out of their fortified positions to strike south at the American tank

columns headed west toward Morlaix. The resistants had only small arms, while the Germans had a complete armory of weapons. Two messages we sent at this time convey the sense of concern about this situation.

*10 August—from Frederick: Boche activity in Paimpol and Pleubian serious. Essential [that] American help is given quickly. Boche committing atrocities in Pleubian. Maquis strong enough to contain enemy but not to attack at moment... (Pleubian is north and west of Paimpol)*

*11 August—from Frederick: Situation at Pleubian grave. Whole village will be burned by tonight by Boche if materials for them are not provided by populace. Boche in strength... artillery and strong defense position... impossible task for maquis attack. German atrocities in region appalling.*

A reply the same day:

*11 August—from SFHQ to Frederick: have requested urgently air support for FFI area Paimpol.*

The general commanding the advance tank column was persuaded of the need to divert resources to our assistance. This was too dangerous a threat to have to his rear. He turned a large number of tanks northeast from Morlaix toward Paimpol. Now, perhaps for the first time in this war, US tanks serving as artillery were joined by French resistants as infantry, with the entire operation supported by Allied air action.

### **Mission Accomplished**

This was an extremely busy time, and our team members moved around as required. I remember serving for a time as an aide and jeep driver to one of the FFI commanders. The American forces had provided the FFI several jeeps for coordinating this action. We drove around among the various maquis groups, gathering tactical details and passing along instructions. This was being done at night, using heavily shaded lights on the jeep, because we were not certain of the location or range of the German weaponry. We moved widely throughout the Paimpol peninsula.

The coordinated attack on the German forces in the Paimpol peninsula was successful. I had seen the first German POWs a few days earlier in one of the local towns, where 30 had surrendered to the FFI. At this stage, crestfallen and fearful of what the resistants might do to them, they were a dreary looking lot. It was hard to imagine that these were the same men who had held Europe in a state of terror for so many years. FFI discipline was proper as far as I know. The FFI sent the captives to an American prison camp near St. Brieuc. However, women alleged to have consorted with German soldiers were treated roughly. They were paraded through the streets with heads shaved, and they were subjected to much verbal abuse. The ugly aspects of war do not stop with the fighting.

Our team had been ordered to return to London some two weeks earlier, but we had been unable to do so because of the activity in the Paimpol peninsula. It now appeared that our mission was completed. A large party was held at a hotel in St. Brieuc.





Sgt. Robert Kehoe receiving the Distinguished Service Cross in November 1945 from Gen. John Magruder. Photo courtesy of the author.

Marceau, wearing his uniform as a commandant in the French Army reserves, was the master of ceremonies. (Marceau was later to give up both his educational and political careers and became a full-time military officer in the postwar French Army.)

The next day we bid farewell to our comrades with whom we had shared so much. We set off in an old automobile, headed east toward the Cherbourg peninsula. Headquarters was anxious for our report and had arranged for easy passage through Allied checkpoints to an airfield north of St. Lo where, after a short wait, we boarded a flight to England. We went through a complete debriefing on the mission and our experiences and then went on to Milton Hall, where we shared some of these experiences with Jed colleagues awaiting assignment.

Actually, only two members of our team returned to England—Wise and myself. Paul Agueric went directly to Paris. It was my impression for many years that he wanted to share in the excitement of entering Paris with the French forces that liberated the city near the end of August. It was only some 40 years later, in conversing with an old friend of his, that I found out what had been a well-kept secret. Paul's father, who was Jewish, had managed to live in Paris throughout the occupation. His Jewish identity had been concealed by all who knew him, permitting him to continue with the routine of life during the entire occupation. Paul wanted to determine his father's situation before rejoining us in England a few weeks later.

After its debriefing, Team Frederick remained on call at Milton Hall. We were summoned to London on two

occasions for possible assignments. One called for us to drop into the mountains of western Austria, where there were reported to be a number of Frenchmen who had escaped from factories where they had worked as conscript laborers. They were in serious need of supplies, direction, and organization. There was, however, no way of contacting them and arranging for a parachute drop. A blind drop, dangerous enough in France, would probably have been suicidal in Austria. The project was abandoned. A second operation, destined for the Haute Savoie region of eastern France, was quite feasible, but it was canceled because of the rapid movement of Allied forces into that region following the landings in southern France.

A few Jed teams, such as those caught in the dreadful winter campaign in Holland, remained in operation, but the majority of those returning from France were dissolved by mid-October and members were assigned to sponsoring units. This unique international operation was ended.

We, the members of Team Frederick, were recognized for our work. I was awarded the American Distinguished Service Cross, the French Croix de Guerre, and the British Mention in Dispatches. I believe my teammates were similarly honored.

### **Reflections, Reunions, and Recognition**

Adrian Wise and Paul Agueric (Bloch-Auroch) are both deceased. This article is a personal memoir, and I have presented things as I saw and experienced them. In doing so, I have given little attention to Wise



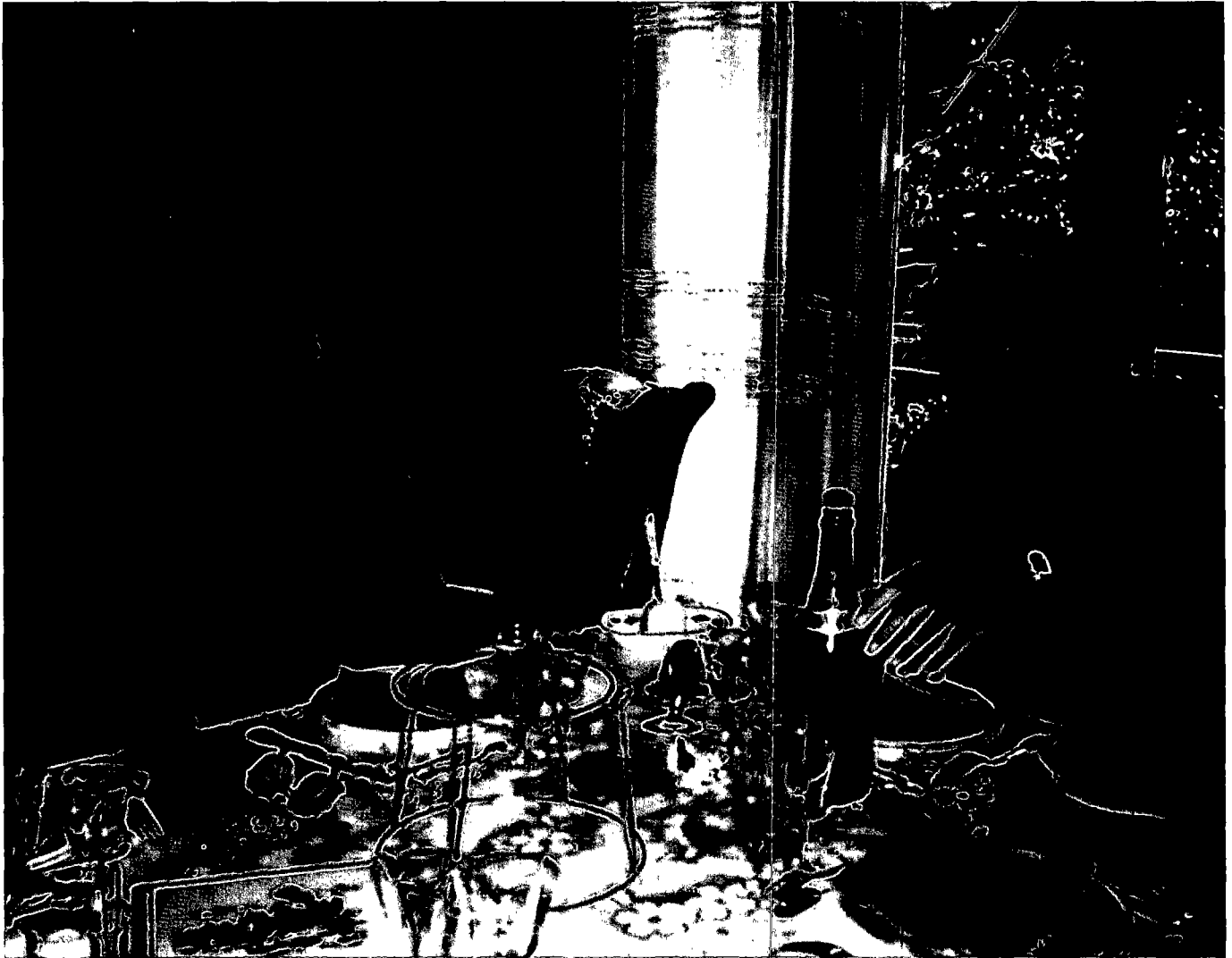
Reunion in 1984. Left to right: Marcel Quéinnec, Robert Kehoe, Simone Auffret, and M. and Mme. Le Moel, former innkeepers in Kerien. It was in this room that the plans were made for recovering the radio hidden in the Forêt de Duault. Photo courtesy of the author.

and Agueric and to their accomplishments, which were impressive. They adjusted quickly to the requirements of our mission, which turned out to be quite different from what we had anticipated. While training in England, we had a vision of our team working with a particular group of partisans (perhaps 100 or 200 men), for whom we would procure weapons and supplies and provide

training and direction in the use of these weapons and in demolition work against enemy installations.

As it turned out, our operations were on a much larger scale, with over 4,000 men armed through our efforts and operating more or less under our direction. The work involved much planning and guidance to the many associated groups.

Constant discussion, frequent argument, and much diplomatic pressure were involved. It was also necessary to listen and try to understand the views of the varied participants in the complex political situation that underlay all of our military operations. I was a part of these discussions but was too busy with communications work to contribute much to them. I believe that Wise



Fifty-year reunion--1994: Marcel Queinnec and Jean Le Jeune ("Emile"). Photo courtesy of the author.

and Agueric provided the leadership needed to gain the confidence of the FFI leadership in the Côtes-du-Nord. For me, working with them on Team Frederick was one of the special privileges of my life.

Wise remained a professional military officer until his retirement as a brigadier in the early 1970s. We corresponded in the years after the war but, regrettably, lost contact by the 1950s. I learned later of his death in 1980. The last note I

received from Paul Agueric was dated December 1945. The next year, 1946, he became one of the early victims of the long and exhausting conflict in what was then French Indochina, when he was shot by a Vietnamese sniper. I did not hear the details of this until told by an old friend of his at our 40th Jedburgh reunion in Paris in 1984.

I have been more fortunate in maintaining contact by mail and through personal visits with a number of the

French people with whom we worked. These include Simone Auffret (nee Le Goëffic), Louise and Marcel Queinnec, and others now deceased: Josef Forestier, Yves Le Hegarat (Marceau), and M. and Mme. Albert Le Moël of Kerien. Mme. Le Hegarat is still living. While visiting in France, we have met people such as Jean Le Jeune (Emile) and others whom I did not know well but who were a part of that great struggle and with whom I have shared remembrances.

The Resistance was a dramatic episode for all the members of our team, but for many of the French people involved, it was the overwhelming experience of their lives--based not on a few months but on several years of persistent struggle. The feelings run deep; to my continuing surprise, the divisions among our French friends remain wide. These are rarely discussed, but they come up indirectly. Some are political, such as the traditional adversarial relationship between left and right in French politics. Some are, understandably, the results of personal antagonisms or suspicions that are not easily erased by time.

An example occurred during a visit my wife and I made in 1978. In St. Brieuc, we were the guests of Josef Forestier. After a few days, we were to go to the home of Marcel and Louise Queinnec about 30 miles away on the north coast. After much discussion by telephone, it was agreed that Josef would drive us part way to a meeting place, where we would join Marcel. This seemed odd because both had automobiles and the distance was not great. I then realized that Josef and Marcel had barely met since the war and that there were unspoken grievances.

We drove to the meeting place where Marcel was waiting. At this point, he and Josef got into a long discussion about how we were to go to Simone's home, to which we had all been invited for dinner a few days later. I thought, at first, that there was simply a misunderstanding about the time and date of the get-together. After more than a half hour, I realized that the discussion involved much more than the mechanics of our transport; both were using this sort of doubletalk as a means of expressing continuing distrust. I felt naïve in my ignorance of these differences and chagrined at my inability to bridge the gap. In response to later questioning, neither man was forthcoming as to the true nature of the dispute. I realized that my good relations with both had been maintained by not meddling, and that this was probably the best approach.

The value of the Resistance has been and will continue to be debated. The historian John Keegan, in his excellent work, *The Second World War*, plays down the military contribution, suggesting that the entire French Resistance was equal only to one division. Others, including Eisenhower and Churchill, place a much higher

premium on that contribution. The experience of our team illustrates some of the results which could come from fairly modest input. For example, most of the weapons supplied were no longer in use by armies in the field.

But our mission and others like it were more valuable for their political and social impact than their military aspects. We helped France rebuild its self-image after the dreadful debacle of 1940 and the long years of occupation. We did not make people love one another, but, on a small scale, we helped Frenchmen realize that they had to work together. It was, of course, de Gaulle's ability to do this on a grand scale that made him the leader of postwar France.

### **An Acknowledgement**

*The completion of this memoir would not have been possible without the careful editing, constant encouragement, and unwavering confidence of my wife, Ann.*