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9th Jan 95.

Dear Margaret,

May I wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year. We spent our Christmas very quietly - usually we spend our Christmas Day working in the Salvation Army Goodwill Centre looking after lonely and elderly folk who would otherwise be quite alone. This year, though, the old Major in charge has retired and his duties have been taken over by two younger Captains and we heard nothing from them and had to assume that our help was no longer required.

Jean is now undergoing a further course of Acupuncture for her back and leg which thankfully appears to be responding to treatment as the paralyzing pain seems to have eased allowing her to walk again (with a supporting cane) albeit with great caution. Still it is improving, and for that we are truly grateful

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Today I received a letter from your Canadian friend Philip Clarke who asks some questions and requests - that I return both his letter and my reply to you.

As you will no doubt realise - detailed answers at this date are not always possible as time has passed (50 odd years!) and we did not, nor were we encouraged to question or explain while in the "cave" of the Resistance. We were in the hands of people whose lives were literally at stake and therefore the least that we knew was the safest course - so, to answer the questions as fully as I can without attempting to elaborate or "explain" what was going on.

Q. In August 1944 things were very "unsettled" in Switzerland for us allied combatants. The American invasion of Southern France had taken place and fierce fighting between German and allied forces was taking place in N. Italy and the French southern regions. There were three different types of allied Forces in Switzerland

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- a) Ms, RAF ³ evaders, who had civilian status and were financially cared for by the British Embassy.
- b) Hundreds of allied soldiers who had escaped from Italian POW. camps after the collapse of Italy - and then flooded into Switzerland across the Alps - mostly were two-time veterans of the 8th Army captured in N. Africa. These soldiers were accommodated in two large camps - one at Adleboden and the other at the Coeur/Palace Hotel which was higher up the Roches de Mey above us. They all wore army uniform and were subject to army discipline, - they resented our civilian status and privileges - intensely.
- c) The American 8th Air Force contingent made up of Flying Fortress crews who had force landed at Dübendorf (Zürich) when damaged in raids from UK. Technically they were interned, but "special arrangements" between Swiss/American governments enabled them to wear civilian clothing and draw full pay and allowances; they were by far the most affluent by far of all

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The allied forces in Switzerland. They occupied (and paid for) flats, had 'live-in' girl friends and so on. They were the idle rich of the allied forces. We very rarely mixed with them (we could not afford to!)

All this mix of allied forces were waiting for the fighting to clear from the Swiss Frontier and the local Swiss were concerned whether German troops would either cross or desert across the frontier. If they did would we allies become involved in any fighting?

Now the name of Restaurant Hungaria at this date rings ~~no~~ bells for me! so I think that Bob must have been picked up after curfew and "gated" at the request of the local police. This often happened if we missed the local funicular from Montreux to Gland (where we lived at the Hotel Bellevue/Belvedere).

Q.3. I don't know - but I expect that they would have been picked up by patrolling Swiss Police (heavy in mind)

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the measles in the Swiss population!)

Q4. I am sure that they were expert smugglers and I guess that the 'route' had been in existence since pre-war days. My guide knew all the tracks and the team had obviously done the run into Switzerland for some time. - I could never have done it by myself - the countryside reminds me of the Forest of Dean!

I am sure that both men and material were smuggled through the 'interdite' zone. As passes were required to enter this zone the German Guards shot first in areas away from major roads. It was very dangerous to go roaming in that area (Rural Remembers that only about 30 of us succeeded in crossing during the entire war - and of that number 3 of us were individual runs from one crew.)

The hollow haystack was I think built in two parts divided by a thick hay wall. The one illustrated was entered by a passage from the house end and was

for "goods". The other was entered by a
"door" made up of a truss of hay on a
sledge, and this was used as a 'sanctuary'
and was also a "working" haystack. As
hay was added and removed as with a normal
haystack. I stayed in the stack for 2 days
with a deserter from the German Army
who had been in Mannheim the night
we bombed it!

The actual frontier was a long strip
of cabbage field but was on a small
irregularity in the border line and hidden
in the forest. In effect it provided (for
those who knew) a small gateway across
the frontier unknown to both Swiss and
German guards. We crossed singly
at intervals of 2 minutes while "outposts"
kept watch along a nearby road for
cycling patrols and guard dog patrols. It
was similar to a ditch and hedge
surrounding a farmer's field. Having
crossed this we were led along a
winding path where other members
of the party gradually dispersed and

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vanished into the night with a brief
"Adieu, mon vieux" & never saw any of
them again.

The German soldier and I were the only
two eventually who were left and our
guide took us to a farm house on the
outskirts of a village. He asked us to
wait for "un demi-heure" before knocking
so that he could clear the area himself.
He instructed us to state that we had
crossed the frontier by ourselves without
any help, as both Swiss and German
authorities were concerned to discover
"the network."

Well now, Margaret, I hope that these
few crumbs of information will help you
to fill in more of your picture of the
events of Sept. 1943.

Affectionate Regards

from
Jean and Eric
Dickson