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February 21. Wednesday. 1945.

This trip was to be our 35th operation as a crew and we were looking forward to leave which was to commence Feb'22nd, we had hoped we wouldn't be on the battle order but owing to there having being an operation the previous night we found ourselves on the programme.

The target was the Dortmund Ems Canal, we set out in the twilight, by the time we had reached the target it was brilliant moonlight practically full moon. Johnnie (Bomb-aimer) had already bombed and Rae (Pilot) had set course for England, when all of a sudden Joe (Rear-gunner) began to fire, I remember seeing flames coming from the Strbd' Inner engine; then Rae said over i/c "Put on parachutes, Jump, jump. jump." The last words I heard on the i/c were from Joe @ "I can't get out skipper".

Automatically I took off my helmet and reached for my parachute which was immediately behind me, then getting up off my seat I got one of chute clasps fixed to my harness the other end was rather difficult to put onto the holder, so I pushed on as I walked up to the cockpit. (Really my jumping station is from rear door but something made me go forward I believe there was a fire in the middle of a/c.)

On reaching the cockpit I noticed the engine in flames and that Rae was attempting to get a/c out of dive but he appeared also ready to jump, I saw Hank leaving so I followed him rolling through escape hatch, John and Ernie (engineer-) had already gone. This had all happened so quickly that I had had no time to be frightened or to realise exactly what I was doing.

From leaving a/c to touching ground I have only one hazy recollection of seeing a chute below me, otherwise I remember nothing about pulling the rip-cord the descent or landing. Either my sub-conscious mind or my instinct of self-preservation had watched over me but my landing must have been a good one as when my mind did commence to function normally I felt perfectly fit nothing hurt either externally or internally and my feet felt fine.

The first I saw was Hank in adjoining field, what a relief to see a fellow crew member and not a German, went over fence to Hank then recrossed again to hide chute in drainage ditch, we then started to crawl along a deep drainage ditch my Mae West pocket light kept going off and on so hid it in the ditch forgetting to take out a packet of gum from small pocket, Hank did same, it was now I realised I had the same wad of gum in my mouth that I had been chewing in the a/c. The time was 21830 and we started to cut across the fields, we had only gone a little way when we heard voices in the distance so we ducked into a deep drainage ditch it was a German voice shouting "Halte". A woman appeared to be speaking to this German, I could see the a/c burning in front of us about two miles away, the Ack Ack guns were firing behind us. We crawled along the ditch a little way and then proceeded to continue on crossing over the fields heading in a north westerly direction, our main obstacles were barbed wire fences some fields had one fence at the beginning of field and one at each side of a ditch another at the end of field, I tore my hands rather badly, Hank was luckier than I having his gloves inside his battle-dress blouse mine being in the a/c also the fields were very soggy and wet my escape boots immediately started to take water which did not help things. Came to a single track railway here I hid my watch in the soil because of the inscription on the back! On occasion of bar mitzvah? If I was captured I meant my religion to be Conf. crossed railway and kept to the fields tearing my hands and uniform more and more on the barbed fences, eventually we could see we were approaching a village so we walked beside a small stream suddenly a dog began to bark from a nearby house we layed down and Hank (Navigator) tried to remember our last position when in a/c, then took map out of escape case, he believed we were about

from the German-Netherlands frontier. We could still hear the other bombers of our group returning to England, the lucky stiff. A Mosquito began to circle the area at about a thousand feet and the German ack ack defence posts began to fire at it so it flew away. It must have been investigating the scene of the burning aircraft. When the sound of it died away, we could hear the all clear being sounded somewhat similar to an English siren.

Up to now Hank had been guided by the north star but now a slight haze blotted out the stars so we got out a small luminous compass from our escape kit. Coming to a thick woods which blocked our path we decided to go through it. We made a lot of noise in the wood, treading on dead leaves and twigs, so we walked along a cart track which ran roughly in the direction in which we were going. As we left the woods we saw a single track railroad directly ahead of us, this railroad ran by a large brick building. We saw a large notice board but it was too high to read by moonlight. Just then we heard an approaching train so we lay in a little hollow about ten yards from the tracks. As the train went by I could see the driver quite clearly. Crossed railroad and skirted the big building then headed in a north east direction to avoid a cluster of farm houses ahead of us then after having cleared them we changed our direction to westerly. The fields were still very soggy making walking very difficult. So far in our travels we noticed numerous bits of silver paper scattered over the fields, also a propaganda leaflet which had been dropped by some allied aircraft.

We continued on until we came to a large stream bending away from a village on the opposite side we followed the stream to the right hoping to find a bridge, but were confronted by some buildings; cutting around these in a wide arc until we came to the stream again. There was a small house nearby from which we could see a light glowing. Hearing someone whistle, we hid behind a tree. After a short wait we continued along the river bank coming to what looked like shell craters, but were made by dynamite that had been used for blasting tree stumps. Here we stopped for a short rest. Hank had some cigarettes of which we smoked one each; I had my pipe but had left my tobacco in the aircraft. After about fifteen minutes we continued on but being suddenly confronted by an eight foot interlaced wire fence topped by three strands of barbed wire. We could see no place where we could cross the stream so I contemplated swimming it, but Hank asked me how we expected to dry our clothes, and it being a rather frosty evening, we decided against it. Following the fence a short distance we found that it turned away and then following a small road we were able to walk parallel to the stream. We had to tiptoe past two large houses one of which had a light showing. A short distance on there was a road branching off into some woods, so we followed this into the woods.

The time was now about 0430 hrs so we started to look around for a hiding place for the day. Seeing another track branching off from this one in the direction of the stream we followed it hoping to get across the stream before morning. We noticed that many of the trees in the wood had been cut down recently. Coming to a small clearing we noticed some straw stacks on the left hand side of the road. Continuing on to the stream we found there was no means of crossing it in sight so we filled the water bags we found in our escape kit then returned to the stacks deciding to spend the day atop one of them. Climbing to the top, of the likeliest one we found that the straw was damp, as we found it was on all the others. ~~Returning~~ Returning to the first one we dug down in the straw to hide us from the road and also to help keep us warm. My feet were very damp and my hands were very sore from scratches, so all in all, I felt very miserable. Using my cloth escape map for a scarf and borrowing one of Hank's scarves (he had two), I tied it around my head to keep my ears warm, then Hank and I huddled together to keep warm and snuggling further into the straw we tried to get some sleep. We found it almost impossible to sleep, our bodies being much too cold to relax, however we had much to think about as we lay there; wondering what was to become of us and how our people would take the news that we were missing.

We had walked about ten to twelve miles that night. The intelligence people at base had told us that it was best to put about thirty miles between us and the scene of the crash, but they must have overlooked the difficulties of travelling at night. Covering that distance is almost impossible in one night what with climbing over fences, skirting woods, and avoiding villages.

Thursday. February. 22nd.

I must have dozed off for about an hour being much too cold to sleep continuously. This is the first time we had seen the dawn break for a long time. After a while I got my escape kit out of my uniform and studied the contents, in the map bag there was a hacksaw blade in a cardboard case, a small luminous compass, one half inch in diameter and a map covering all Germany, especially the frontiers. The map was made of thin cotton material which made it very enduring; it proved invaluable to us in the days to come.

In the escape box itself there were thirty Horlick tablets (concentrated milk); three bars of vitamin toffee four inches long by two inches wide; four, one inch fruit candies; a small packet containing a razor; blade, and small piece of shaving soap; four Hazaldone (pep) pills; a dozen Benzadrin tablets for stagnant water; one packet of matches; a compass; two needles and some black thread in a cardboard case; a roll of sticky tape, and a black transparent water bag twelve inches long by two inches wide. (Hank also had a fishing line with three hooks in his kit.) All these articles were enclosed in a case nine inches long by six inches wide by one inch deep.

In the morning no one passed by the stack; the sun coming out, and in the distance we could see aircraft flying around and the sound of flak could be heard.

In the afternoon the sun was quite warm and the stack began to steam. The sun played on our faces the warmth thus given making us feel much more comfortable. A man with a horse and cart came along the track near our hiding place and started loading his cart with something, what it was we couldn't see. He did this a number of times during the course of the afternoon, returning each time to a farmhouse nearby. We could hear someone chopping trees in a nearby wood for about an hour. From our position we could see women and girls passing to and fro along the track for the greater part of the afternoon disappearing about 1800 hrs. They had apparently come from the two large houses we had passed the night before. Some children cut off track and passed right by the base of our stack, for a while we were afraid they would discover us, but they finally left.

Studying our map we believe we are about sixty miles from the British lines at Nijmegen, so we decide head towards Arnhem, hoping to get help on the way.

The sun went in about six o'clock and it began to get cold, however much we huddled together. We stayed in the stack until ten thirty p.m. Got down, all was quiet, so we had a smoke. Set off down the track until we came to a bridge which we crossed heading in a westerly direction. The sky was overcast and we could see no stars, Hank had now to use the compass to keep us heading in the right direction.

We now followed a rough track towards the village and could see what appeared to be a main road, as we approached the road we realised we had passed the village so crossed the road, noticing heavy tank tracks on the grass verge running parallel to the road also along the grass verge were deep oblong holes large enough for a man to lie in and shelter from strafing aircraft. We walked beside this road for a little way. Then cut off again across the fields climbing over or crawling through fences, getting hands and uniform wet and scratched. I always caught myself somewhere, either my hands pants or blouse; walking kept my feet warm although the ground was very soggy. As we walked through

one field we saw a small mound of earth covered with straw, on digging into the mound we found potatoes we took out six each and washed them in a nearby ditch and ate three each, keeping the others for later. We then came to a large thick forest which we entered (forests were not shown on the map which was a pity as we encountered many of them and they would have acted as good pin-points). We followed a cart-track through the woods many of the pine trees had been sawn down recently, no automobiles had used this track so we thought that the track would be safe to follow (only German soldiers have cars). Followed the track about a mile and came to a sudden bend round the bend was a large well designed house, to miss the house we cut through fields round the house coming back to the track again, followed the track until we came to track cross roads, here there was a sign-post on which an order of the German army had been printed, in German and in another language which we believed to be Dutch, so we assumed we had crossed the German Dutch frontier although we had not noticed no actual border-line, the gist of the message was that we were in forbidden woods. Crossed over the cross road and carried on into the woods it was by now 4:30am. and time to start looking for a hiding place for the day-time, see no barns or shacks we decided we would hide in the woods so we headed into the thickest part looking around for dry leaves, we found a good spot underneath a low lying thick pine tree but we could only find a few hand-fulls of leaves, then we filled our water bags up from a drainage ditch in which a shallow stream flowed, went back to our living abode, hung our water bags up on a twig and tried to settle ourselves for the forthcoming day. We had walked about 6 miles.

February. Friday. 23rd.

The day was long and drawn out our feet were wet and cold, during the day men with horse and carts ~~went~~ went up and down track A and B. (As in diagram) For food we ate a couple of potatoes a piece of toffee and three tablets of Horlicks. During the day we heard the sound of rifle shots also a noise of heavy powerful engines being run up, I believe they were tanks. All these sounds came from (appeared to come) from woods A. Hank broke off pine branches we covered ourselves with them they helped a to keep us a bit warmer, the sun did not come out at all, slowly the day came to a close and dusk brought with it a slight drizzle to add to our discomforts, the trees kept off most of the rain, it ~~kept~~ kept up drizzling until 12pm. by this time my clothes were quite damp and we were glad to start on our travels again, before setting off I hid my Marconi wireless fault finding note book in the soil.

February. Saturday. 24th.

We followed track A until we came to the usual fields with the usual barbed fences and ditches the ground was very wet and clung to our shoes making walking very tiring. There were no stars out and Hank was using our trusty friend the compass heading in a northerly direction after we had walked a little way we came across a barn with houses nearby, if we had only walked a little farther the previous night we could have had a much better shelter, here we stopped for a short rest and smoke. We now headed out in a westerly direction coming to a secondary road with a sign-post pointing to "Lonnekerische Weg" we ~~k~~ now being able to fix our position as Lonneker which was on our escape maps, some five miles inside the Dutch border. (We had come across many signposts before but this was the first we could find on our escape maps.) Had a good drink from a fast flowing stream which followed the road also filled the water bags, then carried on again over the fields coming to a high steel inter-laced fence we retraced our footsteps in a south westerly direction it was by now

3am. and I saw what appeared to be a large barn we walked towards it but came up against the high fence once more, we followed the fence round by a farm-house and walked along a footpath that had a hedge on one side of it. On the other side of the path was a road which seemed to lead through a village, as we walked along the path we heard the sound of heavy footsteps, we stood still and listened, the heavy tread of the feet went up then down the street as if they belonged to a soldier on sentry duty. But whom ever it was he evidently had not heard us so we slowly tip-toed down the path until we came to a proper footpath leading through a village. (We now know this village to have been the suburbs of Enskede.)

Here we followed a road through the village, (I noticed that the houses were much larger and better built than the average English house.) crossing a single track railway line and carried on in a southerly heading through fields until we came to a main road with large built up area on one side of it.

We crossed the road and came up against one of our usual obstacles the 8ft steel interlaced fence, it was by now getting very late for us to be on the march and we had to start looking around for a place to hide for the day-time so we followed the fence by the path by the road, we had only gone a little way when we heard the rumble of cart wheels and saw an approaching light, luckily we had just then come to a gap in the high fence which we quickly entered and crouched down behind some trees to wait for these people to pass, seeing a man pulling a cart and a few bicycles go by, it was by now 5'30am and the road appeared to be getting fairly busy we had to find somewhere to hide very quickly, so we decided to remain on this side of the fence and to look for a thick clump of trees to spend the day. As we went deeper in we came to the fence once again this time we could see that it went round the outskirts of a large house with a gap in the fence leading to the house, skirting round the fence there were some thick pine trees with branches touching the floor, next to the pine trees were rows of young saplings planted very close together we thought that this would have to do for a hiding place so we crawled under the trees picking the thickest tree. The ground was covered with pine needles which were damp and we tried to build a pine needle and mud wall to hide us a bit better also to keep the wind off us little but, we only succeeded in building a wall a few inches high, it was now getting fairly light and by turning my head I could see two roads A and B (As in diagram). My feet very cold and damp, beard was growing very fast, hands sore from deep scratches not to mention how filthy my hands and face were, I felt very miserable for my self but my thoughts wended home to my father and mother and my dearly beloved wife I wondered what they had in their thoughts, the best I suppose they could hope for was, that I was a prisoner of war, I had often told Helena that if was given the slightest chance to escape I would do so, also I wondered if she remembered my bad penny catch phrase.

There were many army cars and bicycles on both roads also german soldiers and occasionally a Me 109. (We were told later that there was an airadrome at ENSCKEN). As we studied our map we could see that this was no village that we were in and the only town near that part of the frontier was Enskede.

During the morning children went to and fro up the path leading to the house, my left foot went absolutely numb and no amount of wriggling my toes would bring it to life again, so I had to take off my boot, all my foot was a pinky colour the toes were worst and I had to massage them very vigorously to bring the toes into play, again, I did the same to the other foot leaving my stockings off in the vain hope that they would dry a bit, then I put my feet in the top wooly part off my boot they felt a bit warmer. Hank and I were just having a smoke when we heard footsteps very close to us, we kept very quiet, looking around I could see two men wearing identical clothing, brown johpurs, sports jacket and a light brown soft felt hat with an insignia in the front, they also had rifles slung over their shoulders which made them look to business like for our taste, they appeared to be looking

for something perhaps us, as we knew that the Dutch people would not be allowed to have rifles, for five minutes or so they remained near the wire fence then one of the men started to walk in our direction. As he came near to us he had to force his way through the closely planted saplings (As in diagram.) If it had not been for these trees he would definitely have seen us but the trees kept his eyes from the ground as he had to watch where he was going, as he went by us we lay with our faces pressed close to the soil. I thought he would surely see us as he was but a few feet away we breathed a deep sigh of relief as the men left the woods.

The sun did come out for a short while but we got no warmth from it as the trees hid the sun's rays from us and it was quite cold as there was also a slight wind blowing, as the day drew to a close we put our socks on in preparation for the fifth night's march, our socks were just as damp as they had been before we took them off, we were just about to start on our way when we thought we heard a sentry on road B waited a little bit hearing no more footsteps we slowly approached the road. All the way down the road was the usual high fence and as we could see no breach in the fence the only thing to do was to climb it, it was quite difficult to climb as there were no footholds, on jumping to the soft ground below I heard the heavy footsteps coming towards us so I hid in one of the straffing holes by the roadside. Hank did likewise, the footsteps stopped then started again I decided to risk crossing the road doing so on my hands and knees then beckoned Hank to follow. Started to cut across the fields noticed light flack coming from in front of us but it was still a good way ahead of us so we proceeded on over the fields until we thought we had skirted the town then headed north to bring us to road A. As we approached the road there was a house with no blackout and all the lights were full on also we could ~~hear~~ hear the German soldiers talking loudly in or by the house (We knew they were Germans as we were practically certain that there was a curfew fairly early for Hollanders.) Carried on in a south westerly direction, a bit later we saw that we were getting a bit too close to where the flack was coming from so we again headed for the road and although we still were in a built up area we decided it would be the best to take a chance and cross the road as we thought perhaps the flack position would have sentry picket posts around it. When we reached the road we could see quite plainly a factory and the flack position seemed to be guarding the factory, the road had on one side of it a row of houses then a path and a deep gully in which a single track railway ran, this we crossed and went up the other side of the gully and onto path which also had houses on the side of it, we walked along the footpath until we were opposite the factory. ~~that~~ ~~we had seen the~~ Then cut down street running due north with a house that had apparently caught a bomb intended for the factory, we did not want to walk on the road as our boots made quite a noise especially as there was no other sound so entered the grounds of some house with a road running by it, here we came to a very large building with an extensive cemetery stretching behind it, this building and the cemetery had a fence enclosing them, but next to the m was a park with large iron gates which to our surprise were open we went through the park and crossed over a ditch at the other end and came to a road with the never to be forgotten fence. Over the fence was a road just as we had started to walk down the road heard heavy footsteps coming towards us I dived over the fence and lay flat on the slope Hank being a bit ahead of me had no time to get over the fence but hid behind a tree that was growing on path a German soldier with rifle passed right by us, Hank could have touched him with his hand (without straining himself) We crossed over the road and crawled under a fence into a field, three more soldiers went by and we crouched down again after they had passed we carried on in a north westerly direction.

Although it was a bright night and the moon was at full strength the clouds hid stars and we were using our trusty friend the compass once more.

Eventually we came to a cart-track which we followed as it was heading in our direction.

until we came to the 8ft high fence again. We followed the fence and came to a farmhouse, here there was a steel gate with the words ~~of~~ "Forbidden" and a road ran along outside the gate which we followed until we came to a village. (Perhaps still ~~by~~ the outskirts of Enschede.) Headed over the fields to avoid the village, as we were crossing one of the fields we noticed a small low wooden shack with a tarpaulined roof and no door, we decided to hide the day here at least it would be dry and we should be warmer than in the open, as there was a keen wind springing up, we filled our water-bags up from a small drainage ditch putting Benzadrine tablet in it as the water appeared stagnant. When we returned to the hut and looked around, we found a large sheaf of straw, four sacks slightly damp, (these sacks were to be our unseparable companions to be used for escape when traveling and a coverlet when trying to sleep.) We spread the straw on the ground and around the sides of the hut to keep the draught out, and tried to sleep. Getting out of Enschede had taken most of our traveling time up and we only had achieved about four miles.

### February. Sunday. 26.

In the morning we heard children picking something out of the ground behind the hut they had come from the village which was only 500yds away. The morning passed very slowly, and as Hank's cigarettes had by now been smoked we tried to smoke the husk of the corn in my pipe not too much of a success, the only thing we had to eat was our usual rations of three Horlick's tablets two pieces of toffee, our stomachs were by now beginning to feel empty. A farmer approached the hut with his dog, he would have gone right by if his dog had not decided to investigate the hut, the dog sniffed inside the hut and the man peered into the hut through a hole in one of the boards, I think he said in Dutch "Who are you" I answered "Hollander R A F", either he did not understand or he did not want to understand as after waiting a few moments he returned to a farm that we could see through the open door. Hank and I put our shoes and stockings on, as we did not know if the farmer was going to bring the Germans or food so we were preparing for all eventualities but as the time went by he did not return. The evening brought with it heavy rain and wind so we decided to remain in the shack for another day, filling the water-bags up from the drainage ditch, also I found an over-ripe cabbage returning to the shack to spend another long dreary night.

### February. Monday. 27.

I slept very little as the wind seemed to find every nook and cranny in which to blow through, the rain eventually stopped and the dawn began to break. Had nothing to eat except the usual rations and the cabbage of which we eat every morsel, we were now beginning to feel the full effects of hunger and we felt pretty weak also our water ran out so we were ~~thirsty~~ thirsty too. In the afternoon the same farmer came from farm towards the hut, most likely to see if we had gone as, when he saw us still in possession he went quickly by and returned. The evening came and we put ~~on~~ our shoes and stockings on, I found that I had a blister on the back of my left foot, we left the shack taking with us the four sacks which we had sown two ends together leaving a space in the middle in which to put the lead through. There was a keen wind blowing and no stars out, we headed south west over ploughed fields which we found very heavy going as they were very soggy. Hank did not feel so good and the first stream we came to he took a pep pill at the same stream I absolutely drank my fill and my stomach felt bloated with water, as we carried on over the ploughed fields we felt very tired, before we gone any distance and after we had crossed a road and a single track railway line we lay down in a small copse of trees.

and fell asleep, it must have been an hour before I woke up and realised we had been sleeping, I woke HANK up and we found that where we had been sleeping was very damp and our uniform was wet, we resumed our journey still heading south-west over the fields. Now I had another garment to catch on the fences my overcoat every fence we crawled or climbed my overcoat left a piece behind, much to my annoyance. We carried on for about 6 miles and it was 5'30am and we were already looking around for a hiding place when we saw a barn in a field but on entering it we found to our ~~disappointment~~ disappointment that the floor was all mud and that one of the walls was down.

It was by now nearing 5am seeing a stream we filled our water-bags up and followed the stream towards a forest, when we had reached the forest the stream branched away and as the stream was too wide to jump we had to retrace our footsteps until we came to a small bridge, crossing the bridge we walked to the forest.

On entering the woods we noticed that a lot of the pine trees had been chopped down and layed in neat piles awaiting transportation, as we went deeper in, the signs of the ~~chopping~~ chopping decreased and we found ourselves in some private estate. Following a small path we came to a pond which looked as if it had been used for swimming as there was a wooden jetty jutting out into the water, by the pond was a stretch of lawn leading to a large house which we could see very clearly in the moonlight. Just then we heard a car drive up to the house and a man got out and started to talk to someone outside the house, a light appeared from the house and we slowly and silently went down the lawn. Hank lost his compass in the grass and as we were still close to the house we had to leave it.

The sky was beginning to become very light it was now 6am and we had to find a hiding place so when we saw some rhododendron bushes although, still in sight of the house we crawled underneath them, only to find the ground absolutely sodden, we retraced our selves completely and walked out of the woods seeing a small copse of trees in the distance we headed for them. It was now 7am and proper daylight. As we headed for the trees we passed by a house but as it had no barn or shed we carried on to the small woods.

The small woods were about a 100yds in length and surrounded by a low barbed wire fence, the trees were sparse and we could find no thick foliage, but we had no choice we had to remain there so making a small screen of pine branches we huddled together near the edge of the tree's facing a house which was a couple of 100yds away.

February. Tuesday. 28th.

Covering ourselves with our sacks we tried to get a bit of sleep, I found this impossible as I was too cold and hungry and watched some children playing in field also bicycles went to and fro up a path leading to the forest we had been in the morning.

Two children with dogs approached the woods from the house, as they got near us the <sup>dog</sup> started to bark vigorously much to our annoyance, the children on seeing called the dogs and returned quickly to the house.

In the afternoon a man with wooden shoes on, (we thought that wooden shoes denoted he was a Hollander.) entered the woods as he drew near I said to him, "Hollander, RAF" he came round to ~~the~~ face us and studied us for a few moments then said pointing to himself "Goot Hollander." and I made a motion with my mouth and hand to show him in sign language that we were hungry and thirsty, which he understood. Then after saying something in Dutch which we couldn't understand he went off the way he had come, to return in an hour's time with his wife, a woman about 35 ish

The man brought out of his pockets four sandwiches and a large blue flask full of fresh milk, the sandwiches were of white bread (more like cake than bread.) and sausage, they motioned us to come to the other side of the woods where we could not be seen by the children or the house's, here the woman spoke to us and our surprise she spoke a bit of english, as she spoke, we eat the food ~~it tasted~~ <sup>it was</sup> marvelous, it was the first proper food we had eaten for six days, the woman also produced from her apron pocket two big rosy apples and a long narrow vaush which we put inside our uniform for a future meal, on finding that Hank could speak a fair amount of german she began to converse with him in that language as she could speak it fluently, the man in the meanwhile went to the edge of the wood and kept watch, occasionally he would return and I would talk to him with a bit of english a bit of yiddish and also with the international sign language. The woman told Hank that the Germans were billeted in the large house and also they were all around the woods and that if they were caught helping us they would be shot immediately this we fully appreciated. (We had to bear this in mind all the time we were in Holland.)

She also told Hank that there was a big barn with a hay-loft in the field adjoining the small woods and that if we would wait there she would try to bring an english speaking man who may be able to help us, but if she did not come by 7pm we were to carry on with our journey. (We now suspect that this man was in the underground.) She also took our names and address's and told us that she would write to us after the war, then hid the address's in the top of her stocking.

Before they went away the man gave us all his tobacco and told us that he had told the children whom had seen us that we were german soldiers. They both shook hands with us and wished us Gods protection then went out of the woods towards the barn in the adjoining field.

We sat down after they had gone and studied our map and planned our nights travel. (The lady had pointed out our position as Boekelo some 20 miles from the German frontier.)

As we sat there with our sacks around us cold yet happy and warm inside at last people had helped us and perhaps now other people would do so too.

At 6 o'clock we decided to chance a walk to the barn, it was still light but we felt cold and there was no one in sight, no one saw us enter the barn.

Inside the barn we found that it had the hay loft all along the top and we climbed up to it finding it filled with dry clean smelling <sup>new</sup> straw and hay, taking our shoes and stockings off we buried our feet in the hay, they felt beautiful and warm the first time they had been so warm since we had left the ~~the~~ a/c. Ate our apples and smoked a pipe of tobacco, we really did feel good, full stomachs a smoke and a nice warm place to stay and sleep the night, (we had already decided that even if the weather was good we would stay in the barn overnight and the next day.)

7pm came and went and so we thought the man was not coming, so we quickly dozed off. I seemed to hear in my sleep the sound of voices and the heavy slam of the door. I woke up with a sudden start now thoroughly awake realised that it must have been the man and the woman who had come later than we had expected. Hank and myself could have kicked ourselves for falling asleep, there was nothing we could do about it so we fell asleep again.

~~February.~~

March. 1st. Wednesday.

I slept in snatch's and woke in the morning feeling stiff with my clothes a bit damp, my feet were dry but I had a funny tingling sensation as if I had constant pins and needles.

Our stockings were fairly dry so we put them on and buried our feet once again in the straw, by doing this we managed to dry our stockings completely by night-fall.

At 2 o'clock we ate our quarter portion of vausht, swallowing a few gulps of water as we had not replenished our water the previous day we had very little left, and after having a smoke we took turns at looking out to see if we could possibly see the man or the woman whom had helped us, but the odds were very much against us and we were not fortunate enough to see them.

We put our shoes on in preparation for our evenings march, in the evening we needed to head for ~~Haaks~~ Haaksbergen which was about 6 miles away, before ~~leaving~~ leaving the barn we had a smoke and putting our faithful sacks around us we continued on our journey.

It was a bright moonlight night and after midnight it was fairly warm with no wind, we headed in a south westerly direction avoiding the surrounding woods and the places where the woman had said there were German soldiers, stopping at the first stream we drank our fill.

After crossing some fields we came to a farmhouse which was facing a dirt track road which we followed, it skirted by the ~~large~~ large forest, also in the distance we could hear traffic on a road which seemed to follow parallel to the track we were on. (We believe this road was the proper road to Haaksbergen.) We followed the track for quite a way for speed and ease of travel until we came to an intersection where the track went to the main road where we took to our usual road, the fields with the barbed fences.

The fields were for the most part dryer than per usual with the exception of the ploughed ones, in which we sank down to our ankles in the mud.

Coming to a small farmhouse, we crossed the meadow in front of the house, as we were crossing a dog began to bark so we turned south to get as quickly away from the house as possible. We could see a light shining from some tree's directly ahead of us so we again changed our direction to west to avoid it, crossing a secondary road we again took to the fields, in one of the fields we saw a large mound of soil, investigating it we found it to contain as far as we could see turnips.

Sitting down with our backs against the straw that was covering the mound, to keep us out of the wind that was springing up, we literally gorged ourselves, also putting two medium sized ones into our sacks to have with our vausht during the day.

Carrying on over the fields for about an hour we could hear a fast flowing stream when we approached the stream we could see that it was far too wide to jump, it being about 20 ft across. Fortunately a road with a bridge crossed the stream a few hundred yards to our left, we followed the small road (no cars had used this road.) coming to a signpost which we couldn't understand, as we carried along the road an a/c flew fairly low overhead when he had gone a few miles ahead of us I heard a faint crack and saw four bright flares descending, (so this was what they looked from the ground we had often seen these fighter flares when we had been flying in Germany. I never thought I would ever be seeing them from a German fighter in German occupied territory.) After the a/c had passed we could see and hear ack ack on our left so we headed away from it skirting round a wood noticing high tension wires running right across our track, after we had walked a little further we came to a very wide ditch and a road on the other side, as the ditch had a stagnant water in it we followed it until we came to where the ditch went under the road. here we had to follow the road as on the other side was a long narrow pond but eventually we came to another road that crossed the pond we followed the road for a while but not wishing to remain on the road for too long we cut off again into the fields heading south west until we came to a road running north and south, we followed this road north as we did not want to go through a large wood that was on the other side (We had by now become very allergic to woods as there seemed to be a German gunpost or searchlights in all the woods around these parts.)

Walking along the road for a little way we saw a large break in the woods and a path went through them, we followed this path coming to some small shrubs and a ditch which we crossed and entered a farm-yard. Here we sat down in a pile of

straw in lea of the wind, which was by now very keen.

We now decided to look around for a barn or shed as we travelled, as the wind was much to keen for wood sleeping, so when ever we saw a building we headed for it to see if it had a barn, we came to a road which we could see lead to some farms, as we approached one of them a dog started to bark in the yard. (Hank and I made a vow to own a dog.) We quickly headed away from this farm cutting across the fields. After crossing a few fields a wide ditch cut across our path and as it was to wide to jump we followed it until we came to a bridge which lead to a muddy country lane. This we followed, by the side of this lane was a few farms one of the farms we thoroughly investigated but as it was a very large building and we thought we could see tyre tracks leading to it we decided to carry on and look for a safer hiding place, as we cut off into the fields we could see in a neighboring field to this farm, what appeared to be a large wooden shack, that must at one time have been a chicken-coop. We entered the shack and as it was by now dawn and the sky was becoming grey this would have to be our hiding place for the daytime.

The shack's door had no catch on and we had to let it swing in the wind which whistled through it and also through the many cracks in the walls, on the floor was a thin layer of straw but in certain parts it was squelchy under-foot.

We lay ourselves down covering as much as possible of <sup>us</sup> with our sacks, Hank went to sleep but I was much too cold, in fact I was colder then than our most golden day in the woods and ~~xxxx~~ so I paced up and down the shack trying to keep warm but I could not stop myself from shivering, one moment I would sit down on a threshing machine that was in one corner of the hut the next I would pace the floor.

From two windows facing the farm-house I could see two men come out of the house and walk up the track that led to the hut, but before they reached the hut they branched off and started to dig in a field behind the hut about 10 yds away.

Hank by now had woken up and also was very cold, we tried to eat one of the turnips we had carried in our sacks but on biting into it found them too sickly sweet the same sweetness as if I had been sucking saccharine tablets, ~~th~~ what we had picked up to be turnips must have been sugar-beets.

This made me feel worse than ever and as I paced up and down the hut I was contemplating going outside and asking the farmers for help, but Hank would neither say yeigh or neigh and as I did not want to risk our liberty gave up the idea.

Later on in the ~~xxxx~~ morning two more men started to sprinkle a kind of fertiliser on the fields by the left of the hut, it started to rain but still these four men carried on working. We hoped that if it rained heavily the two men working beside the hut would take shelter and we would be able to converse with them without being seen.

But how ever ~~xxxx~~ hard it rained these four men kept on working much to our disgust eventually I could stand it no longer I was terribly cold and I could not stop my body from trembling so I took the chance and when the two men whom ~~where~~ were working in the far field were looking the other way I slipped out of the hut and darted round the back, keeping my sack tightly wrapped around me to hide my uniform from any prying Germans.

As I approached the men whom ~~where~~ were digging they did not look up until I was a foot away from them and even then they didn't show any sign of surprise at my dirty appearance or beard. I said to them "R.A.F." but they did not understand, so I made motions, with my hands as if I was an a/c but they still didn't understand but they followed me into the hut motioning to the other two men whom were working in the far field to come also, as these two fellows came nearer we could see that they were boys in their late teens.

When they had all come into the hut, Hank and I both tried to tell them whom we ~~was~~ were eventually they began to get the gist of what we were saying, and one of the boys went off for an English speaking man meanwhile the owner of the farm went back to the house for some food for us, while he was gone the other two men gave us some of their home grown tobacco and we rolled ourselves a cigarette.

Also they explained to us that the reason we couldn't go into the house was because one of the men had two children and that unknowingly the children might give them away and then as they put it "Bang Bang" which explains itself. The owner came back with some ~~xxxx~~ sand

with some bread sandwiches which were made of two different kinds of bread a light brown and a very dark bread which made me thirsty, he also brought some warm fresh milk.

At one o'clock the school-master came, he spoke quite good english and he was very enthusiastic about helping us. It had been his ambition to help english airmen, he believed that he knew some one that was in the underground as he was not in the organisation himself but as he we would have to stay where we were for a couple of days the farmers would feed us and he would come to see the following day.

After the school-master had gone the farmers brought some sheaves of straw into the hut and tied them to the door to keep the wind out and also put some on the floor to lie on gave us some tobacco and left us. ~~at~~ In the evening

the farmers brought us some more bread sandwiches and they brought more sheaves of straw into the hut to make a straw bed for us. ~~with them they had~~ brought blankets and pillows and they made a bed up for us and literally tucked us into bed. Then they left us and returned in a couple of hours with coffee made from mill (the coffee was sugar made from the dark rye bread ground down and as ~~Harold~~ said it was rather good him being a Canadian speaks for itself.)

this time the schoolteacher & the farmers wives were with them I asked the schoolteacher to ~~translate~~ tell the farmers & their wives how grateful we were for the shelter food they had given us but as he told them as saw them shake their head and say that it was nothing & that that was their way of repaying a little to the allies in Britain.

The Schoolmaster told us that he taught in a small school at Neda (a little village three miles away, the school was