Bearing Silent Witness: A Grandfather’s Secret Attestation to German War Crimes in Occupied France

McKay M. Smith

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss
pp. 358-381

Recommended Citation
Bearing Silent Witness: A Grandfather’s Secret Attestation to German War Crimes in Occupied France
Bearing Silent Witness: A Grandfather’s Secret Attestation to German War Crimes in Occupied France

McKay M. Smith

Over half a century after the Nazi era, the U.S. Government continues to keep secret much of the information it has on Nazi war criminals. It is imperative that this information receive full scrutiny by the public. Only through an informed understanding of the Nazi era and its aftermath can we guard against a repeat of one of the darkest moments in history.¹


Introduction

The Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act of 1998 required the U.S. Government to expedite the release of classified intelligence information related to German war crimes committed during World War II.² In an effort to fulfill this mandate, an interagency working group was called upon to “locate, identify, recommend for declassification, and make available to the public at the National Archives and Records Administration, all classified Nazi war criminal records of the United States.”³ This working group would ultimately release over 8.5 million pages from documents “scattered among the vast quantities of files stored in the national archives and individual federal agencies.”⁴ As a result, this project would come to be regarded as the “largest congressionally mandated declassification effort in history.”⁵ Although members of Congress were successful in initiating an unprecedented release of information,⁶ their efforts are notable for another reason as well — America’s lawmakers failed to allocate funds for the continued research and preservation of this material.⁷ Rather, they left this substantial responsibility to inquisitive historians and members of the general public.⁸

Scholars have acknowledged that the study of World War II era intelligence can be an extremely arduous undertaking.⁹ Intelligence tradecraft, by its very nature, requires that certain information

³ Ibid, 1(c)(1); See also Nazi War Criminal Records Interagency Working Group, Implementation of Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act: An Interim Report to Congress (1999).
⁵ Ibid, 1.
⁶ See generally Hearing, supra note 1, at 2 (describing congressional intent behind the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act of 1998).
⁸ Ibid,15; see also Final Report, supra note 4, at 1, 2 (clarifying that agency participants did not receive independent funding for the prolonged study of these documents—rather, their mandate was to release these records to the general public).
⁹ Richard breitman et al., u.s. intelligence and the nazis 8 (2005); richard aldrich, the hidden hand: britain, american, and cold war secret intelligence 16 (2001).
remain secret.\textsuperscript{10} It necessitates the sustained concealment of activities and events.\textsuperscript{11} Moreover, this government emphasis on secrecy often results in the suppression of sensitive information from historians and citizens alike.\textsuperscript{12} Thus, it has “become a tradition in intelligence scholarship to look to the declassified records of the past for enlightenment.”\textsuperscript{13} This trend has led multiple historians to conclude that “there are remarkable fragments of the story which have lain undiscovered in improbable places for more than fifty years.”\textsuperscript{14} Consequently, those choosing to carry out archival research “will undoubtedly find their own discoveries in these declassified documents and in related records of the National Archives.”\textsuperscript{15}

This Article should be regarded as a spirited departure from traditional legal scholarship. It endeavors to be a “largely empirical contribution to the start of a wider project”\textsuperscript{16} — namely, one that examines fragments of declassified intelligence and attempts to place this information into a larger mosaic of historical events.\textsuperscript{17} The following discussion utilizes the case study method to communicate a powerful message related to both law and history. Readers are encouraged to examine this narrative and related analysis in conjunction with the primary source material it references. More importantly, they are asked to evaluate relevant provisions of international law and to apply these principles to a specific declassified report. It is through a similar process that this Article arrives at its central conclusion.

Background

There is little doubt that memory is an essential concept for historians.\textsuperscript{18} In their search for “the ‘truth’ of remembered account,” scholars often turn to the case study method to “record and value” historical events.\textsuperscript{19} In his recent work related to postwar intelligence, Michael Salter emphasizes the importance of the case study in placing declassified intelligence into its broader historical context.\textsuperscript{20} Specifically, he suggests that “detailed case studies can be as revealing of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See Lowenthal, supra note 10, at 1.
\item See id. (explaining that secrecy can be a source of consternation to private citizens, especially in a democratic society such as the United States).
\item Lorie Charlesworth, 2 SAS Regiment, War Crimes Investigations, and British Intelligence: Intelligence Officials and the Natzweiler Trial, 6 J. Intelligence Hist. 21 (2006) [hereinafter Charlesworth, 2 SAS Regiment].
\item Aldrich, supra note 9, at 15. See also Breitman et al., supra note 9, at 8; Michael Salter, Nazi War Crimes, U.S. Intelligence and Selective Prosecution at Nuremberg: Controversies Regarding the Role of the Office of Strategic Services 2, 3 (2007).
\item Breitman et al., supra note 9, at 8.
\item Salter, supra note 14, at 4.
\item Aldrich, supra note 9, at 15, 16; Salter, supra note 14, at 5 (discussing the inherent difficulty in researching events that are recorded in documents scattered across various archival collections); Charlesworth, 2 SAS Regiment, supra note 13, at 21 (comparing the study of declassified intelligence to assembling a larger mosaic of historical information).
\item See id. at 4.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
wider historical and institutional tendencies as apparently broader sociological approaches that seek to capture and generalize about the entire field. As Salter’s viewpoints have gained acceptance amongst prominent academic circles, a new legal sub-discipline has started to emerge.

Socio-legal analysis is described as a “fluid, changing, open movement [that] defies a fixed descriptor.” At its core, however this approach focuses on the intersection of law, intelligence, and human rights. Proponents of this movement stress that it explores historical events “from the perspective of the various participants, emphasizing their ‘lived experience.’” As a result, some scholars have asserted that this legal sub-discipline “encourages the voice of the historian to be heard directly in the text,” thereby making remembered account an integral piece of the ensuing narrative. Thus, readers should be aware that throughout the remainder of this Article, “the authorial voice, my voice, disrupts this narrative… to allow other interpretations to emerge and to sabotage illusions of closure.” This was done deliberately and in an effort to familiarize the audience with the case study that follows.

In the summer of 2011, through hard work and a bit of luck, my father and I were able to learn more about the man who made our very existence possible, Lt. Raymond Murphy. The task of locating my grandfather was complicated by a number of factors, not the least of which was his misrepresenting his age by one year to join the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1942. In addition, my father never met his birth father and knew few particulars of the man’s life. Although my grandfather passed away in 1970 at the age of forty-six, we were fortunate to discover a series of documents detailing his experiences during World War II. Moreover, our journey led us to his final resting place at Arlington National Cemetery.

Although the details that led to this discovery are certainly noteworthy, this Article seeks to examine something much more significant — the story my grandfather was able to share with us nearly forty years after his death. On April 28, 1944, Lt. Murphy was shot down by German anti-aircraft fire over Avord, France on his sixteenth mission as a B-17 Navigator with the 91st Bomb Group, 324th Squadron. For the next three months, he successfully evaded German patrols and Nazi collaborators with the help of local French Resistance fighters known as le Maquis.

---

21 Salter, supra note 14, at 3.
22 Charlesworth, Forgotten Justice, supra note 18, at 3.
23 See id. (referencing socio-legal studies in the context of Salter’s emphasis on intelligence studies and humanitarian scholarship).
24 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 The information in this Article is primarily drawn from Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) No. 4235 and Escape and Evasion Report (E&E) No. 866. During World War II, U.S. Army Air Corps Bomb Groups were required to submit MACRs when airmen were lost during combat operations. E&E Reports were required when personnel subsequently avoided capture by enemy forces. Notably, the National Archives and Records Administration recently made E&E reports publicly available in electronic format. Thus, the primary source material contained in MACR No. 4235 and E&E No. 866 should be examined in conjunction with this Article. Please see relevant citations and associated hyperlinks to access publicly available versions of these documents.
Following his escape in August of 1944, my grandfather was questioned by the U.S. Army Military Intelligence Service at Headquarters, European Theater of Operations. The information he provided during his debriefing was recorded in narrative form and analyzed for intelligence related to the continued presence of German forces in occupied France. At the conclusion of his interview, my grandfather signed a security certificate forbidding him from disclosing any facts related to his wartime experience. The resulting report was marked “SECRET” and titled Escape and Evasion Report No. 866, Evasion in France. Only recently has this document been made available to the public in electronic format.

Although my father and I will never be able to sit down with Lt. Murphy and discuss his story, his words are compelling even forty years after his death. As a scholar of intelligence law and history, I was struck by the significance of his experiences in the summer of 1944. When examined from a legal perspective, his declassified first person account is illustrative of a number of law of war topics, including the law related to land and aerial warfare, escape and evasion, and the duties owed to inhabitants during belligerent occupation. Most notably, however, my grandfather’s report also evidences criminal atrocities committed by German soldiers.

The story told by Lt. Murphy is one of great valor and sacrifice. Accordingly, this Article will attempt to honor his memory while also providing a thorough legal analysis of the conduct that he witnessed. The following discussion will examine his experiences in the context of the law of war as it existed in 1944. It will also provide a modern perspective of how this body of law has evolved since World War II. In addition, this Article will examine a particularly disturbing recollection reported by my grandfather to military intelligence officers and attempt to answer one important question — could the terrible event described in Escape and Evasion Report No. 866 constitute evidence of a long-forgotten war crime?

The Law of War in Historical Perspective

In order to analyze Lt. Murphy’s account, it is first necessary to provide some context to the war as it existed in the skies over Europe during this period. The experiences of my grandfather and the crew of his B-17 were in no way unique or exceptional. Rather, all airmen in the U.S. Eighth

30 See E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 1. See, e.g., Charlesworth, 2 SAS Regiment, supra note 13, at 13 (demonstrating that intelligence collection played a critical role in post-War proceedings such as the Nuremberg Trials and other minor war crimes trials).
31 E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 21.
32 Ibid; According to the National Archives, E&E Reports were developed to collect and evaluate data on escape and evasion activities in the European Theater of Operations. They included a brief questionnaire as well as a typed or handwritten narrative provided by the escapee or evader. Notably, these reports were not intended to collect information on war crimes or other criminal acts perpetrated by enemy forces.
34 Leslie C. Green, The Contemporary Law of Armed Conflict 50, 320 (2008); Salter, supra note 14, at 6 (illustrating that under Article 6 of the London Charter of 1945, the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg was given jurisdiction over crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity — although crimes against peace and humanity had never been previously defined under international law, these terms were given broad application under these proceedings).

https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol6/iss5/34
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.6.3S.37
Air Force, or the Mighty Eighth as it was often referred to, took part in fierce aerial combat in the period leading up to the summer of 1944. One aircrew in particular, the crew of the Memphis Belle, made my grandfather’s squadron famous when they were the first to successfully complete twenty-five missions and return to America as celebrated heroes.

The air war had raged in Europe “for two years by the time elements of the Eighth Air Force began to arrive in late 1942 and deploy across the misty English countryside.” As the conflict wound on, the air war “kept on creating and re-creating itself in a furious upward curve, attackers and defenders alike improvising tactics on a round-the-clock basis, ransacking science and engineering for new technology, any kind of edge – new bomber specs and new fighter-plane wrinkles… ever-higher ranges in antiaircraft fire.”

In addition, the Eighth Air Force’s mission in Europe was made all the more deadly by one major factor — daytime bombing missions. The American forces had committed themselves to daylight bombing, against the advice of their British counterparts, who considered it suicidal and had long since switched to nighttime bombing. The Eighth still held to the theory that a tight formation or a combat box, of B-17 Flying Fortresses, each bristling with guns, was capable of defending itself from enemy fighter aircraft. And the Eighth was finding that this was a mistake.

The losses suffered by the Eighth Air Force were staggering. During the European Campaign, more than 30,000 U.S airmen were killed or missing and another 30,000 were captured as prisoners of war. Overall, the Eighth Air Force “took more casualties in World War II than the Marine Corps and the Navy combined.” Of the thirty-six bombers that had originally crossed the Atlantic to form the 91st Bomb Group, “twenty-nine had been shot down, a casualty rate of 82 percent.”

As a result of the alarming rate of casualties, many survivors were troubled by the memories of friends and acquaintances who, just the day before, had been drinking next to them in a pub in England. Although some men chose to talk openly about their experiences, others suffered in silence. All airmen, however, speculated about what happened to those who were able to escape their crippled aircraft and survive their rapid descent to German occupied territory.

Robert Morgan, the pilot of the Memphis Belle, reflected on these men when he wrote:

---

37 Ibid, 102; See also Havelaar, supra note 35, at 9 (describing the arrival and deployment of the 8th Air Force in 1942).
38 Powers & Morgan, supra note 36, at 102.
40 Morris, supra note 35, at 54.
41 Powers & Morgan, supra note 36, at 106. See also Freeman, supra note 35; Havelaar, supra note 35 (providing more specific casualty reporting for the 8th Air Force and 91st Bomb Group).
42 Powers & Morgan, supra note 36, at 106.
43 Ibid, 132.
44 Ibid, 132-33; see also Travis Ayres, The Bomber Boys: Heroes Who Flew the B-17s in World War II (2005); Bert Stiles, Serenade to the Big Bird 69 (2001) (detailing personal accounts of airmen who served in World War II).
45 See Powers & Morgan, supra note 36, at 133.
46 See Kay Sloan, Not Without Honor: The Nazi Journal of Steve Carano 129 (2008) (providing Bill Blackmon’s personal account of the events of April 28, 1944 — notably, Blackmon spent months in German captivity after his
[w]e knew every time we went up, that it was very possible, likely even, to get hit hard, maybe knocked out of the sky. We might get trapped and roasted at our stations, or riddled with flak or machine gun bullets, or captured and sent to prison camps if we bailed out, provided we survived the trip down.\(^47\)

From twenty-five thousand feet, the conflict below may have seemed somewhat impersonal or distant at times. When an airman found himself in the unfortunate situation of being shot down, however, the deadly reality of the situation quickly became apparent.\(^48\) Rather than returning to base to enjoy a hot meal and shower, men like Lt. Murphy and his crew members were forced to come face to face with the ground truth of land warfare.

In 1944, the law of land warfare was primarily regulated by the 1907 Hague Convention IV Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague IV).\(^49\) The precursor to Hague IV was the 1899 Hague Convention II (Hague II).\(^50\) Although Hague II represented the “first successful effort of the international community to codify a relatively comprehensive regime governing the laws of land warfare,”\(^51\) the treaty provisions agreed upon by the parties to Hague IV are still in force today.\(^52\)

Parties to both Hague II and Hague IV laid the foundation for what would become known as *jus in bello*, or “the laws and customs of war.”\(^53\) Notably, the Preamble to Hague IV also gave expression to certain “high ideals” which formed the basis for modern humanitarian law.\(^54\) The Preamble reads in part:

> “[a]nimated by the desire to serve, even in this extreme case, the interests of humanity and the ever progressive needs of civilization; [t]hinking it important, with this object, to revise the general laws and customs of war... the high contracting Parties deem it expedient to declare that, in cases not included by the Regulations adopted by them, the inhabitants and belligerents remain under the protection and the rule of the principles of the law of nations, as they result from

\(^{47}\) Powers & Morgan, *supra* note 36, at 165.


\(^{51}\) Green, *supra* note 34, at 41.


\(^{54}\) Green, *supra* note 34, at 22, 23.
the usages established among civilized peoples, from the laws of humanity, and
the dictates of the public conscience.”

This section of Hague IV, which would come to be known as the Martens Clause, makes a clear
distinction between the “laws” versus the “customs” of war. Thus, while Hague IV represented
a “relatively comprehensive agreement on the law of land warfare,” its provisions were not
intended to be inclusive of all applicable law. Rather, the Martens Clause proscribes that “cases
not included in the Regulations annexed to the Convention remain governed by customary
international law relating to the conduct of warfare.” Consequently, this principle would be
resoundingly reaffirmed in the 1949 Geneva Convention III Relative to the Treatment of
Prisoners (GPW), the 1949 Geneva Convention IV Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons
in Times of War (GC IV), and the 1977 Geneva Protocol I Additional to the Geneva
Conventions of 1949 (AP I).

The “Geneva Law,” as this postwar collective is sometimes referred to, dictates that the
principles of humanitarian law are applicable to any conflict, even if a nation has clearly
denounced the Conventions. Thus, Hague IV, which regulated land warfare during World War II,
contained many of the fundamental precepts for modern international agreements. In effect,
the Geneva Law “complemented and supplemented” these already existing legal norms. German
officials, however, had a much different interpretation of the duties owed under Hague
IV in the build-up to World War II. Although Germany signed and ratified the annexed
Regulations, they maintained a specific reservation to Article 44.

Germany’s reservation to Hague IV should have served as a forewarning of events to come. Specifically, Article 44 states that a “[b]elligerent is forbidden to force the inhabitants of territory occupied by it to furnish information about the army of the other belligerent, or about its means of self-defense.” Thus, Germany’s reservation to Hague IV could be viewed as evidence of the country’s intention to not only invade neighboring territory, but also gather information on a

55 Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague IV), pmbl., Oct. 18, 1907, 36 Stat. 2277, 1 Bevans 631, 632-33 (1968) [Hereinafter Hague IV].
57 Roberts & Guelff, supra note 50, at 68. See also Schmitt, supra note 49, at 797.
58 Roberts & Guelff, supra note 50, at 68.
60 See Kalshoven & Zegveld, supra note 52, at 53-54; see also Green, supra note 34, at 23.
61 Roberts & Guelff, supra note 50, at 68. See also Schmitt, supra note 49, at 807-11 (explaining the evolution of the law of war).
62 Roberts & Guelff, supra note 50, at 68.
64 See Roberts & Guelff, supra note 50, at 84. Germany signed the annexed Regulations of Hague IV on October 18, 1907 and subsequently ratified these provisions on November 27, 1909. Id. at 83, 84. At the time of signature they made note of their specific reservation and maintained this reservation until ratification, as did Austria-Hungary, Japan, Montenegro, and Russia. Id.
65 Hague IV, supra note 55, at 651.
country’s military defenses by forcing local inhabitants into collaboration. These facts become even more troubling when coupled with the doctrine of Kriegsraison geht vor Kriegsrecht, or as it is more commonly referred to, Kriegsraison.

Kriegsraison is a concept that first appeared in German literature in the late 18th century. The literal translation of this term is “military necessity in war overrides the law of war.” Accordingly, German proponents of the doctrine believed that “military necessity… renders inoperative ordinary law and the customs and usages of war.” Interestingly, this belief starkly contrasts with the contemporary law of war framework which recognizes that “[n]ecessity cannot overrule the law of war.” In fact, modern U.S. Army doctrine explains that “[m]ilitary necessity has been generally rejected as a defense for acts forbidden by the customary and conventional laws of war.” Of particular note, relevant law and custom are binding “not only upon states… but also upon individuals, and in particular, the members of their armed forces.”

Although Kriegsraison was overwhelmingly repudiated by the international community in the years following World War II, the facts and circumstances in Escape and Evasion Report No. 866 strongly suggest that this doctrine was thriving amongst German forces in war-torn France. While Kriegsraison allows a belligerent to violate rules of international law it deems “necessary for the success of its military operations,” the underlying reasoning for this viewpoint is fundamentally flawed. As German forces in World War II were the sole judge of what constituted military necessity, the “doctrine [was] really that a belligerent may violate the law or repudiate it or ignore it whenever [it was] deemed to be for its military advantage.” Thus, Kriegsraison had no basis in fundamental principles of international law, but rather relied on a practitioner’s self-serving motivations and an innate “contempt” for the established law of war.

---

66 See Garner, supra note 63, at 10, 20.
67 Scott Horton, Kriegsraison or Military Necessity? The Bush Administration’s Wilhelmine Attitude Towards the Conduct of War, 30 Fordham Int’l L.J. 576, 585-87. For a more detailed discussion of the doctrine, see also Gary D. Solis, The Law of Armed Conflict: International Humanitarian Law 266 (2010). Solis writes that “Kriegsmanier was the conduct of war according to the customs and laws of war; Kriegsraison, its opposite, was the non-observation of those customs and laws.” Id. He further asserts that while Kriegsraison was embraced by some German politicians and military officers, “it is probable that the resort to this doctrine was above all based on contempt for the law.” Id.
68 Solis, supra note 67, at 266. See also Garner, supra note 63, at 11.
69 Solis, supra note 67, at 265. See also War Book, supra note 63, at 68. Notably, this German manual on land warfare states that: A war conducted without energy cannot be directed merely against the combatants of the Enemy State and the positions they occupy, but it will and must in like manner seek to destroy the total intellectual and material resources of the latter. Humanitarian claims such as the protection of men and their goods can only be taken into consideration in so far as the nature and object of the war permit.
70 Solis, supra note 67, at 266 (citing Louis Doswald Beck, International Humanitarian Law and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality or Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, 316 Int’l Rev. Red Cross 33 (1997)).
71 Ibid, 265.
73 The Law of Land Warfare, supra note 72.
74 See Downey, supra note 56, at 253 (discussing the doctrine of Kriegsraison and its application in World War II); see also Norman Dunbar, Military Necessity in War Crimes Trials, 29 Brit. Y.B. Int’l L. 441, 446-67 (1952).
75 Solis, supra note 67, at 267.
76 Horton, supra note 67, at 586; see also Schmitt, supra note 49, at 797-99.
77 Solis, supra note 67, at 267 (citing Clad Mullins, The Liepzig Trial: An Account of the War Criminals’ Trials and a Study of German Mentality 123 (1921)).
78 Id.; see also Jochnick & Normand, supra note 49, at 63-64.
The First to Leave the Ship

At 1154 hours on April 28, 1944, two airmen in accompanying B-17s observed my grandfather’s aircraft leave formation with its “No. 3 engine on fire.”\(^79\) The weather conditions for the mission over Avord, France were relatively clear with only “slight ground haze… [and] scattered clouds.”\(^80\) Although this enabled the heavy bombers a great deal of visibility over their target, it also allowed German forces below to more effectively direct their anti-aircraft fire during this dangerous daytime mission. The first witness to the incident remembered seeing nine parachutes before his vision was obstructed by other planes in the formation.\(^81\) The second witness saw all ten airmen bail out of the crippled aircraft before it exploded in midair.\(^82\)

My grandfather reported that his B-17 was “in pretty bad shape” after receiving a direct hit immediately over its target.\(^83\) He had been wounded in both hands by exploding flak and observed a substantial amount of “fire on [the] wing.”\(^84\) The gas tank between the No. 3 and No. 4 engine was in flames, which left the crew with little time to escape.\(^85\) My grandfather “was the first to leave the ship” and jumped from an altitude of approximately 15,000 feet.\(^86\) He delayed opening his parachute to avoid German flak and machine gun fire.\(^87\) Unfortunately, he waited too long and the resulting impact knocked him unconscious and fractured his back.\(^88\) Shortly thereafter, local Frenchmen picked him up and carried him into the woods where they gave him some “wine and a woodman’s jacket” and “helped [him] the best they could.”\(^89\)

Although the pilot, Lt. James Cater, also escaped the crippled B-17, his exit from the nose hatch at 15,000 feet was less than ideal.\(^90\) He jumped with his hand on the rip cord, and accidentally released his parachute while he was “still in the prop wash.”\(^91\) In all, Lt. Cater hung from his parachute harness, exposed to exploding flak, for nearly eighteen minutes.\(^92\) During the final stage of his descent, he observed German “machine gun fire from the ground, directed at [him] and the other men.”\(^93\) Although he landed unharmed, he reported that other downed airmen were not so lucky. Lt. Cater recounted that “[t]wo men were said to be shot by German machine gun fire” while trapped in their harnesses.\(^94\)

\(^79\) See Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) No. 4235 (May 2, 1944) [hereinafter MACR No. 4235], available at http://heroesoffreedom.nl/42-97199.pdf; see also Havelaar, supra note 35, at 118.
\(^80\) MACR No. 4235, supra note 79, at 2.
\(^81\) Ibid, 3.
\(^82\) Ibid.
\(^83\) E&E No. 866, supra note 79, at 12.
\(^84\) Ibid.
\(^85\) Ibid. See also Havelaar, supra note 35, at 188.
\(^86\) E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 1.
\(^87\) Ibid.
\(^88\) Ibid.
\(^89\) Ibid.
\(^90\) See generally Escape and Evasion Report No. 827, Evasion in France (July 14, 1944) [hereinafter E&E No. 827], available at http://media.nara.gov/nw/305270/EE-827.pdf?bcsi_scan__0F6519961A220080=0&bcsi_scan_filename=EE-827.pdf. Lt. James Cater also survived the destruction of my grandfather’s aircraft over Avord, France. Id. His personal account is recorded in E&E No. 827, dated July 1944. Thus, his rescue preceded that of my grandfather by approximately one month. Although these two men did not act in concert to escape German occupied France, they were both able to evade German forces by working in close coordination with le Maquis. Id.
\(^91\) Ibid, 1.
\(^92\) Ibid.
\(^93\) Ibid.
\(^94\) Ibid, 10.
When interviewed by military intelligence officers after his escape, my grandfather was unsure of the fate of his fellow crewmembers. He reported seeing seven parachutes open during his rapid descent, and remarked that the bombardier was exiting the aircraft “at the moment” the plane exploded. When asked during his debriefing, “[w]hat is [the] source’s opinion as to the fate of the other crew members,” my grandfather’s answer revealed the hopelessness he must have felt. Lt. Murphy responded matter-of-factly that all men were “believed to be prisoners or dead — no one [else] contacted the resistance.”

While my grandfather’s predicament must have seemed quite desperate, he was fortunate to have survived such a harrowing experience. As he rightfully noted, he had not been killed during his escape nor had he been captured as a prisoner of war. Most importantly, the delayed release of his parachute had saved him from the indiscriminate machine gun fire directed at his crew while they hung defenseless from their parachutes. While such conduct on the part of German forces certainly seems less than chivalrous, it is also notable for another reason. It evidences a clear disregard for the laws and customs of war.

As a matter of course, “the belligerents in both World Wars accepted the 1907 [Hague] Conventions as governing their activities.” Although Hague IV provides limited guidance related to the targeting of defenseless airmen, it is notable that the annexed Regulations make reference to the use of “balloons” and “appliances in the air” during times of war. Thus, while Hague IV’s provisions were intended to apply to land warfare rather than aerial warfare, one could infer that it is often quite difficult to ascertain where one type of conflict ends and the other begins. This distinction is especially complicated when discussing the duty owed to those who have successfully parachuted to the earth after their aircraft has been destroyed.

While Hague IV contains guidelines related to the treatment and care of prisoners of war, my grandfather’s situation was not directly analogous to that of a captured prisoner. Rather, he was a combatant who had successfully escaped his stricken aircraft and had not yet been given the opportunity to surrender. He was admittedly unarmed and was effectively incapacitated at the time of his landing. Despite the fact that Germany maintained a reservation to Article 44 of the annexed Regulations, they were bound by all other duties imposed by Hague IV when dealing with U.S. airmen. In particular, Article 23 imposes a specific prohibition on killing or wounding an enemy “who, having laid down his arms, or having no longer means of defence [sic], has surrendered at [his] discretion.”

95 E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 12.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid; See also Claude Grimaud, Ils Etaient Dix Mai-juin 1944, at 56-64 (2011). Although Lt. Murphy did not encounter any of his crewmembers in occupied France, he was mistaken when he asserted that “no one [else] contacted the resistance.” E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 12. Four other airmen found shelter with le Maquis including James Cater, Clement Dowler, Regis Carney, and Herbert Campbell. Grimaud, supra, at 56. Their story was recently recounted by French historian Claude Grimaud. Id.
99 Green, supra note 34, at 44. See also Jochnick & Normand, supra note 49, at 52.
100 Hague IV, supra note 55, arts. 29 & 53.
102 E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 1, 10.
103 Roberts & Guelff, supra note 50, at 84; Garner, supra note 63, at 7, 8.
104 Hague IV, supra note 55, art. 23.
In addition, German soldiers were constrained by the rules of customary international law articulated in the 1923 Hague Rules of Aerial Warfare. Although these draft rules were never adopted as legally binding, they were regarded as an authoritative attempt to clarify and formulate rules of air warfare, and largely corresponded to [established] customary rules and general principles. As evidence of their applicability during World War II, both Axis and Allied powers proclaimed their adherence to the [Hague Rules of Aerial Warfare] and made accusations of their violation. Specifically, Article 20 expressly forbids the type of misconduct witnessed by my grandfather and his crew. It states, “[w]hen an aircraft has been disabled, the occupants when endeavoring to escape by means of parachute must not be attacked in the course of their descent.”

Under the modern law of war, there is still no “formally binding agreement that exclusively addresses air warfare.” As if to emphasize the importance of the 1923 Hague Rules of Aerial Warfare, however, a number of its principles are reiterated in modern provisions of international law. Notably, GPW formally recognizes the concept of combatant immunity that is further articulated in contemporary U.S. jurisprudence. In recent times, combatant immunity has come to signify “a doctrine rooted in the customary international law of war, [which] forbids prosecution of soldiers for their lawful belligerent acts committed during the course of armed conflicts against legitimate military targets.”

Furthermore AP I, that has not been adopted by the United States but has come to represent persuasive customary international law that provides unambiguous protections for escaping parachutists. Specifically, AP I forbids the targeting of a “person parachuting from an aircraft in distress” and further requires that a downed airman “be given an opportunity to surrender before being made the object of attack.” Thus, it is “generally considered a rule of customary international law that an aircrew baling out [sic] of a damaged aircraft are hors de combat and immune from attack whether by enemy aircraft or from the ground.” In addition, once an airman reaches the ground he shall not be made the object of attack if “he has been rendered

---

106 Roberts & Gueff, supra note 50, at 139.
107 Ibid, 140.
109 Ibid.
110 Roberts & Gueff, supra note 50, at 141.
111 Ronzitti & Ventuini, supra note 105, at 10, 21, 45, 96.
113 Lindh, 212 F. Supp. 2d at 553.
115 Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, art. 42 (1977) [hereinafter AP I].
116 Green, supra note 34, at 177. See also The Judge Advocate General’s School, Air Force Operations and the Law 16, 25 (2009).
unconscious or is otherwise incapacitated by wounds or sickness, and therefore is incapable of defending himself.”

Thus, the conduct of German forces described by both my grandfather and the pilot of his B-17 constituted violations of the laws and customs of war. Despite the fact that Hague IV contained no specific prohibition on the targeting of downed airmen descending from their crippled aircraft, these actions were strictly forbidden by established customary international law. In addition, it is unclear how such behavior could be justified under the doctrines of Kriegsraison or military necessity. Certainly, killing unarmed and incapacitated airmen is not indispensable for military success. Rather, it signifies a gross repudiation of the laws of war and an overall contempt for the humanitarian principles embodied in Hague IV.

Successful Escape and Evasion

While Lt. Murphy was certainly fortunate to have escaped the fate of some of his fellow airmen at the hands of the Germans, his adventure was far from over. For the next three months he would be forced to evade capture by enemy soldiers and la Milice Française, local French militias loyal to occupying German forces. My grandfather had been trained in escape and evasion in February of 1944 by an Intelligence Officer in England and he found the lectures to be of significant value. As revealed in Escape and Evasion Report No. 866, he took his duties very seriously. When asked about the destruction of “secret papers and equipment,” my grandfather responded in partially capitalized letters, “I ATE them,” as if to emphasize his resolve.

In order for my grandfather to escape detection by German soldiers, it was necessary for him to blend in with the civilian population. He was lucky that the Frenchmen who initially found him saw fit to place a “woodman’s jacket” over his shoulders. Although my grandfather could barely walk because of the back injury he sustained during his landing, the jacket provided a much needed disguise. He remarked:

“I started S by compass. Shortly after I started out, and while I was talking to some Frenchmen, three truckloads of Germans drove by, evidently searching for me. They paid no attention to me while the Frenchmen said “Bonjour” to them… [Subsequently] I kept well off the roads and stayed in the woods as much as possible.”

Throughout my grandfather’s escape, German soldiers were in close pursuit. He was told by resistance fighters that the “Germans formed a circle from Avord and followed him as far as [the

117 AP I, supra note 116, arts. 41(2)(c) & 42(1).
118 See E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 5. See also Herbert Lottman, The Purge: The purification of French Collaborators after World War II (1986). While le Maquis was composed of rural French Resistance fighters, la Milice Française was a paramilitary militia loyal to the Vichy Regime. In his narrative, Lt. Murphy described how he was weary of not only traditional German forces but also French collaborators. For periods up to a week in duration, he was forced to sleep “in the woods carefully concealed, for the Milice were raising hell in the section.” E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 5.
119 E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 19.
120 Ibid, 22.
121 Ibid, 1.
122 Ibid.
123 Ibid.
town of Blet.” This was a distance of nearly twenty kilometers. At one point, “they were just three or four kilometers behind; one town they entered about four hours after [he] had left it.”

My grandfather, however, had discovered a creative means of transportation in light of his injuries. He observed that “[b]icycling seemed to be quite safe as long as one ducked for cars.”

Following the D-Day invasion of June 6, 1944, travel became increasingly difficult. My grandfather noted that German patrols were increasing as a result of the Allied landing, and the “Gestapo ran patrols on the main roads, using chiefly motor cars.” In addition, the Germans did away with all “through trains in France” and transportation was limited to only those rail cars running east or northeast towards the German border. In the meantime, however, my grandfather had been fortunate to come across a French family that put him in direct contact with le Maquis.

After contacting the French Resistance, Lt. Murphy was moved to the farm of a local resistance leader, Monsieur Camille Gerbeau. At this point in his journey, my grandfather seemed less concerned with affecting his own escape and instead turned his attention towards assisting the nearly 575 men training at this “center of resistance activities.”

He was introduced to the grand chef de resistance, and “participated in the parachuting [of resistance forces] and in their radio work, decoding messages as they instructed [him].”

As a result of his actions, my grandfather was now acting in concert with le Maquis and aiding their efforts as if he was a fellow resistance fighter rather than a downed U.S. airman. He writes that he was “sending out regular messages” to Allied forces and was also relaying information related to German “V-1” and “V-2” weapons. When he was finally rescued by the British Royal Air Force on August 5, 1944, he was fully immersed in the culture of the resistance fighter. As evidenced in Escape and Evasion Report No. 866, my grandfather often used the term “we” to describe the efforts of le Maquis against the occupying German forces. Thus, on August 4, 1944, he recalls that “we got our operational messages over the BBC… that night we went to the [meeting location], armed with MG’s [machine guns] and pistols [sic].”

Finally, more than three months after his plane was shot down over Avord, Lt. Murphy’s long awaited salvation arrived. Although my grandfather returned to England on August 6, 1944

---

124 Ibid, 4.
125 Ibid, 1.
126 Ibid, 2.
127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid, 4.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
133 Ibid, 5.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid; See also Peter Cooksley, Flying Bomb: The Story of Hitler’s V-Weapons in World War II (1979); Ayres, supra note 44, at 216. See also Richard Holmes, World War II: the Definitive Visual History 278 (2009). The German V-Weapons, known as the V-1 flying bomb and the V-2 rocket, were pilotless, free-flight rockets developed for use against England. Holmes, supra, at 278. Notably, these weapons were largely indiscriminate and inflicted substantial casualties on Allied civilians. Id.
136 E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 5.
137 Ibid.
after a daring Royal Air Force rescue, the danger he faced in occupied France is even more significant when analyzed from a law of war perspective. Prior to World War II, parties to a conflict presupposed that treaty obligations applied only to international armed conflicts or conflicts between states. Notably, Hague IV and its annexed Regulations refer exclusively to “conflicts between nations.”

As demonstrated by my grandfather’s narrative, however, the conflict in German occupied France was extremely complex. It had both the characteristics of an inter-state and intra-state conflict. While German soldiers were forced to defend against aerial bombardment from traditional military forces stationed outside of German occupied territory, internal resistance fighters such as le Maquis were actively challenging German control from within. The multifaceted nature of this conflict allowed escaping combatants to more easily blend in with sympathetic members of the local French population in order to avoid capture. Although my grandfather deliberately disguised himself in civilian clothing to avoid detection, his interactions with le Maquis appear to go well beyond that of a typical downed airman. As a result, he could no longer be considered as merely an escaping combatant. Rather, his activities are more accurately described as being analogous to that of a spy or saboteur.

The term “spy,” as it is generally understood under Hague IV, refers to a person who “collects information clandestinely behind enemy lines while wearing civilian clothing.” Specifically, a person is considered a spy when “he obtains or endeavors to obtain information in the zone of operations of a belligerent, with the intention of communicating it to [a] hostile party.” While my grandfather provided valuable assistance to the French Resistance, such activities were likely conducted with substantial risk to his well-being.

Hague IV makes a clear distinction between soldiers “carrying out their missions openly” and those seeking to conceal their identities by removing their uniforms. In addition, the 1923 Hague Rules of Aerial Warfare requires members of the crew of a military aircraft to wear a “distinctive emblem... should they become separated from their aircraft.” Generally, “[a]ny person who collects information while in uniform retains his status as a combatant... and if captured is to be treated as a prisoner of war.” In contrast, spies and saboteurs do not enjoy

---

138 Ibid.
139 Green, supra note 34, at 66.
140 Hague IV, supra note 55, pmbl.
141 See generally E&E No. 866, supra note 28.
143 See generally E&E No. 866, supra note 28.
144 Ibid; See also Childers, supra note 48, at 173-98.
145 Radsson, supra note 10, at 599-602.
146 Green, supra note 34, at 176 (citing Hague IV, supra note 55, art. 24).
147 Hague IV, supra note 55, art. 29.
148 Ibid; Radsson, supra note 10, at 601-02.
149 Hague Rules of Air Warfare, supra note 105, art. 15.
150 Green, supra note 34, at 176.
protected status when captured by enemy forces.\textsuperscript{151} Rather, they may be tried and sentenced to death for their actions.\textsuperscript{152}

In contemporary conflicts, AP I provides that, as a matter of customary international law, “combatants are obliged to distinguish themselves from the civilian population while they are engaged in an attack or in a military operation preparatory to an attack.”\textsuperscript{153} Therefore, it would be contrary to the modern law of war for a combatant to disguise himself as a civilian while openly taking part in hostilities. AP I recognizes, however, “that there are situations in armed conflicts where, owing to the nature of the hostilities an armed combatant cannot so distinguish himself.”\textsuperscript{154} All that is required in these instances is that an individual “[carry] his arms openly.”\textsuperscript{155} A combatant that is captured by an enemy while refusing to comply with these provisions effectively “forfeit[s] his right to be a prisoner of war.”\textsuperscript{156}

Therefore, under the law of war as it existed in 1944 and in modern treaty provisions, it is highly advisable that “members of the armed forces engaged in the collecting of information or sabotage in... enemy-occupied territory should, whenever possible, wear [a] uniform.”\textsuperscript{157} To do otherwise would run the risk of being treated as a spy if captured. Given the remainder of the discussion contained in this Article, it seems likely that my grandfather would have been put to death without the benefit of a trial had he been captured while assisting \textit{le Maquis}. In fact, Adolf Hitler had issued an order in 1942 calling for the immediate execution of Allied parachutists as a matter of military necessity.\textsuperscript{158} Thus, like many downed airmen and French resistance fighters who met their fate, my grandfather’s death might have served as yet another example of Germany’s violent occupation.

The Horrors of War and Germany’s Violent Occupation

Lt. Murphy survived the harrowing experience of parachuting from his stricken B-17 and subsequently evading capture. Specific details of his declassified account, however, reveal that he was likely unprepared for the horrific nature of land warfare.\textsuperscript{159} As described in the remainder of \textit{Escape and Evasion Report No. 866}, the conduct of German soldiers was not only contrary to the law of war as it existed in the summer of 1944, it was also morally reprehensible.\textsuperscript{160}

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid, 145; Radsan, supra note 10, 1277–78.
\textsuperscript{152} Hague IV, supra note 55, art. 30; see also \textit{Ex parte} Quirin, 317 U.S. 1 (1942). In this historic decision, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the jurisdiction of a military tribunal that sentenced eight German-born conspirators to death when they were captured entering the United States during World War II for the purposes of espionage and sabotage. \textit{Ex parte} Quirin, supra, at 48. These individuals initially wore German military uniforms. \textit{Id.} at 21. After penetrating inland, however, they buried their uniforms and disguised themselves in civilian attire. \textit{Id.} Notably, Article 30 of Hague IV requires that “a spy taken in the act shall not be punished without previous trial.” Hague IV, supra note 55, art. 30. In fact, in modern conflicts it is widely understood that to “punish [a spy] without a proper trial is a war crime.” Green, supra note 34, at 176.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, Article 44(3).
\textsuperscript{154} Green, supra note 34, at 174.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, 176.
\textsuperscript{158} Charlesworth, 2 SAS Regiment, supra note 13, at 12. Charlesworth writes that this Commando Order and subsequent Supplementary Order of the Fuhrer “called for all captured parachutists to be handed over ... for disposal.” \textit{Id.} at 18. Notably, both documents cite military necessity as justification for such conduct. \textit{Id.} To view a translation of this primary source material, see Hitler’s Commando Order (Oct. 18, 1942), available at http://www.combinedops.com/Hitlers_Commando_Order.htm.
\textsuperscript{159} See generally E&E No. 866, supra note 28.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
Within the first two days of his attempted escape, my grandfather learned that survival was going to be a daily struggle. He slept in the woods at night and nearly froze to death. He quickly exhausted the meager supplies in his survival pack and had no food or water. As a result, he had to approach sympathetic civilians for assistance. One of the few facts my father and I knew about my grandfather was that the man was a devout Catholic. Thus, it must have seemed like divine providence when in those first few days he was directed to a Catholic Priest for assistance.

Although my grandfather spoke no French, local inhabitants likely realized his religious preference from the engravings on his dog tags. They gave him a letter and pointed him toward a nearby village. He circled the small town at first, looking for signs of German patrols, and then proceeded directly to the church as he had been instructed. When the Priest appeared at the door, my grandfather handed him the note and pleaded for assistance. The Priest responded almost immediately with one simple phrase — “Au revoir.” Like most of the civilian population, this man of faith was likely frightened by the threat of retribution.

German forces had increased patrols because they knew “Americans were in the region.” In addition, la Milice Française was terrorizing the countryside at the behest of its German occupiers. With few options, my grandfather slept on the bare earth and later concealed himself amongst horses in local stables. He even hid in one family’s “WC,” or outhouse, on June 6, 1944, the day the Normandy landings took place. His daily existence was fraught with peril, and during this time, German soldiers monitored all radio transmissions in the region. As a result, a number of French operatives were captured after they signaled my grandfather’s position to Allied troops. One man who narrowly escaped had “literally been beaten half to death” during the incident.

Being taken into custody by German forces or la Milice Française meant certain death for many members of le Maquis. While staying at Monsieur Gerbeau’s farm, my grandfather met a “tall very good looking young captain in the French Intelligence Service, Jean, who had arrived with a short very heavily bearded chap... having parachuted into France.” These men came to meet with the grand chef de resistance and assist training operations at the farm. Unfortunately,

161 Ibid. 8.
162 Ibid. 9.
163 Ibid. 8.
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
166 Ibid. 8-9.
167 Ibid. 9.
168 Ibid.
169 Ibid.
170 Ibid.
171 Ibid. 5.
172 Ibid.
173 Ibid. 4.
174 Ibid. 5.
175 Ibid.
176 Ibid.
177 Jackson, supra note 29, at 544-46. See generally Chambard, supra note 29.
178 E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 5.
179 Ibid.
both men were captured and subsequently brutalized by German forces. Jean, the tall good looking captain, was tortured. His companion, the “bearded chap,” was summarily murdered.

Although these events are alarming, they represent only a hint of the true horror my grandfather witnessed. German soldiers throughout France used violence as a tool of occupation. Furthermore, they were capable of far more egregious conduct than merely murdering local resistance fighters. While the deaths of members of le Maquis were certainly tragic, there is one particular recollection contained in Escape and Evasion Report No. 866 that defies all explanation. It can only be described as a grotesque and appalling perversion of war. In a handwritten note scrawled in the margin of the report, my grandfather attests to having witnessed a shameful atrocity committed against the French population. In his own voice, he painfully recalls:

“All about 3 weeks ago I saw a town within 4 hours bicycle ride up the Gerbeau farm where some 500 men, women, and children had been murdered by the Germans. I saw one baby who had been crucified.”

There is no question that the event described by Lt. Murphy signifies a complete abandonment of the laws and customs of war. Readers of his words, even sixty-nine years after they were first transcribed, cannot help but succumb to the powerful and deplorable imagery they invoke. Such conduct seemingly transcends all conscionable bounds of cruelty. Furthermore, it suggests a gross repudiation of every principle of human decency. While the men who committed these crimes likely justified their behavior under the doctrine of Kriegsraison, the genuine rationale behind their conduct may be far simpler to explain. German soldiers were attempting to terrorize French civilians into submission. In effect, they were acting out of desperation as the War slowly slipped from their grasp.

Despite the shocking content of this revelation, it is initially unclear whether the full significance of my grandfather’s addendum was recognized by military intelligence officers overseeing his debriefing. As a practical matter, this hastily transcribed addition was not included in the final, typed version of the report. The officer charged with conducting my grandfather’s interview also failed to record any other information related to this grisly remembrance. Rather, he seemed far more concerned with discussing German tactical movements and troop concentrations — the precise type of information that escape and evasion reports were intended to collect. Thus, it seems possible this classified postscript, which was unavailable for public

---

180 Ibid.
181 Ibid.
182 Ibid.
183 Max Hastings, Das Reich: The March of the 2nd SS Panzer Division Through France (1982) (documenting the 2nd SS Panzer Division’s march through France to reinforce German soldiers battling the advancing American Army).
184 E&E No. 866, supra note 28, at 5.
185 Ibid.
186 Ibid.
187 Ibid.
188 Hastings, supra note 185 (describing savage reprisals taken against civilians by the 2nd SS Panzer Division in central France).
189 Ibid.
190 See generally E&E No. 866, supra note 28.
scrutiny, went unnoticed by the approving official and the Army chain of command due to its nearly indecipherable penmanship.

By the time this document was first declassified in 1974, nearly thirty years had passed since the end of the War and four years since my grandfather’s death.\textsuperscript{191} In addition, the war crime trials at Nuremberg and other related war crimes proceedings had concluded over twenty-five years prior. During this intervening period, my grandfather was prohibited from openly discussing the particular facts of his wartime experience because of the security certificate he signed in 1944.\textsuperscript{192} Moreover, it seems likely that he found it difficult to speak about such hellish recollections. In subsequently contacting members of the Murphy family, it was clear they had no knowledge of this report or the incident described therein. As a result, it has yet to be determined whether this long-faded and nearly forgotten attestation represents undiscovered evidence of a terrible criminal act perpetrated against the French population.\textsuperscript{193}

One can only imagine how this experience affected my grandfather, a religious man forced to observe this scene of extreme malice. These memories likely haunted him for the remainder of his life. While German soldiers had demonstrated little regard for the law of war, nothing could prepare an individual for the horrific image of a crucified child. In addition, there is no feasible justification for why these activities would have been necessary for military success. Rather, such misconduct suggests an innate contempt for all humanitarian duties imposed under international law.

This event demonstrates an absolute disregard for the “high ideals” expressed in the Preamble to Hague IV.\textsuperscript{194} Moreover, it represents multiple violations of the Articles contained in the annexed Regulations.\textsuperscript{195} During World War II, there was “no special provision in the law of armed conflict concerning the treatment of the civilian population in territory controlled by a belligerent… although atrocities against the civilian population of the adverse party would amount to war crimes.”\textsuperscript{196} Rather, the duties inherent to belligerent occupation were expressed by a host of provisions in Hague IV.\textsuperscript{197}

Generally, Hague IV’s annexed Regulations “proscribe the rules of conduct and the limitations imposed upon the occupant on behalf of the inhabitants of the territory in question.”\textsuperscript{198} Article 43

\textsuperscript{191} According to the National Archives and Records Administration, \textit{E&E No. 866} was declassified under Declassification Project Number NND 745001 in 1974. E-mail from National Archives and Records Administration, to author (June 2, 2011, 15:46 EST) (on file with author). Thus, the report remained classified for a period of thirty years after its initial transcription and classification. Notably, this declassified document was only recently made available to the public in electronic format on the National Archives website.

\textsuperscript{192} \textit{E&E No. 866, supra} note 28, at 21.

\textsuperscript{193} See Sarah Farmer, Martyred Village (1999); Jean-Jacques Fouche, Massacre at Oradour France, 1944: Coming to Grips with Terror (2005); Andre Desourteaux, Oradour/Glane: Notre Village Assassin (1998). Atrocities similar to that described in \textit{E&E No. 866} occurred in a west central French village named Oradour-sur-Glane. Farmer, \textit{supra}, at 1. On June 10, 1944, a special unit of German forces indiscriminately massacred 642 men, women, and children. \textit{Id.} On June 11, “all that remained of Oradour was a smoldering mass of burnt farms, shops, and houses.” \textit{Id} at 24. The ruins of the town, sometimes referred to as \textit{village martyr}, were left untouched after the war as a memorial to those who were murdered. \textit{Id.} at 2. It is unclear from Lt. Murphy’s account whether this is the town in question.

\textsuperscript{194} Green, \textit{supra} note 34, at 41; Meron, \textit{supra} note 56, at 79. See generally Downey, \textit{supra} note 56, at 251.

\textsuperscript{195} See generally Hague IV, \textit{supra} note 55.

\textsuperscript{196} Green, \textit{supra} note 34, at 256.

\textsuperscript{197} See generally Hague IV, \textit{supra} note 55, pmbl. & arts 22, 25, 43, 50.

\textsuperscript{198} Green, \textit{supra} note 34, at 284. For primary source material related to the American view of the Law of Occupation during World War II, see The Judge Advocate General’s School, \textit{The Law of Belligerent Occupation} (1944)
dictates that “the authority of the legitimate power having in fact passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all the measures in his power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country.”\(^ {199}\) Notably, the conduct described in *Escape and Evasion Report No. 866* seems to embody the antithesis of protecting public order and safety.\(^ {200}\)

The concept of distinction, which was first articulated in Article 25, requires that parties to a conflict distinguish at all times between combatants and peaceful civilians.\(^ {201}\) This provision effectively precludes “the attack or bombardment, by whatever means, of towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings which are undefended.”\(^ {202}\) Articles 22 and 23(e) of the annexed Regulations prohibit the infliction of “unnecessary suffering” and “superfluous injury” during hostilities.\(^ {203}\) As noted, “[t]he right of belligerents to adopt means of injuring the enemy is not unlimited.”\(^ {204}\) In addition, Article 50 declares that “[n]o general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, shall be inflicted upon the population on account of the acts of individuals for which they cannot be regarded as jointly and severally liable.”\(^ {205}\) Thus, collective punishment of the civilian population is forbidden.\(^ {206}\)

World War II was “catastrophic for many civilian populations, especially those in besieged and bombarded cities, and in occupied territories.”\(^ {207}\) At the end of hostilities, however, “there was broad international acceptance of the need to adopt an international agreement for the protection of civilians.”\(^ {208}\) As a result, GC IV was the “first treaty devoted exclusively to the protection of civilians in time of war.”\(^ {209}\) Article 3 of GC IV reemphasizes the humanitarian principles outlined in the Martens Clause when it requires that “[p]ersons taking no active part in the hostilities… shall in all circumstances be treated humanely.”\(^ {210}\) Furthermore, Article 4 introduces the term “protected persons” which is defined as “those who, at a given moment and in any manner whatsoever, find themselves, in case of a conflict or occupation, in the hands of a party to the conflict or Occupying Power of which they are not nationals.”\(^ {211}\)

In contemporary conflicts, GC IV requires that certain common protections be applied to protected persons, in particular women and children.\(^ {212}\) For example, “[p]rotected persons are

\(^{199}\) Hague IV, supra note 55, art. 43. See also Law of Occupation, supra note 200, at 36, 38, 54, 55, 70.

\(^{200}\) See generally E&E No. 866, supra note 28.


\(^{202}\) Hague IV, supra note 55, art. 25.

\(^{203}\) Ibid, Articles 22 & 23(e).

\(^{204}\) Ibid, Article 22.

\(^{205}\) Ibid, Article 50; See also Law of Occupation, supra note 200, at 116.


\(^{207}\) Roberts & Guelff, supra note 50, at 300.

\(^{208}\) Ibid.

\(^{209}\) Ibid, 299.


\(^{211}\) Geneva Convention IV, supra note 212, art. 4.

\(^{212}\) Ibid, Article 27; See also Solis, supra note 67, at 311.
entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their persons, their honour, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs... [t]hey shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence.” Article 32 of GC IV also forbids “physical suffering or extermination of protected persons... [t]his prohibition applies not only to murder, torture, corporal punishment, mutilation... but also to any other measures of brutality whether applied by civilian or military agents.”

In addition, GC IV’s provisions have been heavily supplemented by AP I which deals with the protection of civilian persons during times of war. Notably, Article 35 of AP I reiterates Hague IV’s prohibition on superfluous injury and unnecessary suffering. Moreover, Article 51 states that the “civilian population and individual civilians shall enjoy general protection against dangers arising from military operations... [t]hey shall not be the object of attack.” Thus, “acts or threats of violence the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population” are expressly prohibited.

As such, there is little question that the event described in Escape and Evasion Report No. 866 constitutes a gross violation of both the historical and contemporary laws of war. In addition, this incident signifies a repudiation of the humanitarian principles outlined in the Preamble to Hague IV and in relevant customary international law. Despite Germany’s reliance on the doctrine of Kriegsraison, there was no general exception to applicable treaty provisions which allowed for indiscriminate attacks and infliction of unnecessary suffering based upon military necessity. Rather, the event described by my grandfather should have been characterized as an egregious war crime and punished accordingly.

Conclusion

The study of declassified intelligence has the potential to reshape modern conceptions of history. In particular, World War II era records provide valuable insight into “aspects of German behavior, and thus of Western European culture in the first half of the twentieth century.” As German forces swept across Europe, Nazi leaders worried “that ‘weaker’ contemporaries and subsequent generations might not understand the ‘necessity’ of their actions.” Thus, they attempted to conceal not only the corpses of their victims but also the homicidal policies underlying their wartime indiscretions. At the conclusion of this great conflict, thousands of war criminals escaped prosecution due in part to an “intelligence failure” by Allied forces.

212 Geneva Convention IV, supra note 212, art. 27.
213 Ibid, Article 32.
214 AP I, supra note 116, art. 35.
215 Ibid, Article 51; See also Solis, supra note 67, at 121-25.
216 AP I, supra note 116, art. 35.
217 Ibid, at 10 (theorizing that Nazi law itself “constituted a ‘state of exception,’ thereby conferring a separate cocoon-like status upon law in Nazi Germany”).
218 Ibid, 9.
219 Ibid et al., supra note 9, at 3.
220 Ibid; See also Charlesworth, Forgotten Justice, supra note 18, at 10 (explaining that Nazi rule sanctioned gross misconduct “all the while ensuring that it was publicly unmentionable... The taboo was not the doing but the talking about what was done”).
221 Breitman et al., supra note 9, at 6. See also Charlesworth, 2 SAS Regiment, supra note 13, at 21. While Breitman notes the partial intelligence failure of Allied forces, Charlesworth adds that this situation was complicated by the

https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol6/iss5/34
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.6.35.37
Scholars acknowledge that “this failure had less to do with collecting information than with recognizing its significance.”

Socio-legal methods have a tendency to reveal alternative viewpoints or reconstructions of historical events. As Salter notes, “[n]o single and supposedly self-sufficient academic discipline can ever be adequate to any research topic.” Thus, proponents of this interdisciplinary approach understand that “history is a work in progress.” They appreciate that by elevating the experience of the individual above the collective, researchers are able to challenge the assumptions of traditional historians. When ordinary soldiers include personal comments in their correspondence, or write in pencil on the margins of reports… [t]hey are not writing diaries for posterity. Rather, these historical witnesses are “writing in the moment to satisfy military requirements.” As a result, their words should be afforded additional deference by virtue of their having experienced these events firsthand.

Unfortunately, modern war crimes scholarship is often dominated by “pessimism, disapproval, and critique.” This environment of negativity has led some to reject the study of declassified intelligence, and by implication socio-legal analysis, as a “naive search for heroes.” Such academic detachment ignores “the possibility of alternative histories… [as well as] a broader understanding and recognition of the personal roles of individuals.” Moreover, it marginalizes the voices of victims whose stories have yet to be told. Most scholars fail to understand that only by questioning established orthodoxy can we truly “expose and destabilize claims to the authority of objectivity.” Thus, “our best hope of completing this complex mosaic… are aggressive and inquisitive historians who believe that there are no real secrets.”

Although critics of this Article will contend that numerous treatises have dealt with German atrocities committed during the War, there is one important distinction that must be made. As with any historical research, it is often difficult to shift from a theoretical analysis of events to a precise study of “temporal and geographic locations.” Thus, I went to great lengths to determine the accuracy of the information contained in my grandfather’s report. In October of 2011, I traveled to the Cher region of France. More importantly, I was accompanied by a size of the displaced population in postwar Europe. She writes, “It has been estimated that seven million German soldiers had surrendered in the west, one and a half million German civilians had fled from the Red Army into the other occupied zones, some eight million foreign workers were displaced and ten million German urban residents had fled to the countryside.”

---

224 Breitman et al., supra note 9, at 6.
225 Charlesworth, Forgotten Justice, supra note 18, at 3.
226 Salter, supra note 14, at 3.
227 Charlesworth, Forgotten Justice, supra note 18, at 4.
228 Ibid, 7.
229 Ibid.
230 Ibid.
231 Ibid.
232 Ibid.
233 Ibid.
234 Ibid.
235 Ibid, 8.
236 Ibid, 9.
237 Ibid, 4.
238 Ibid, 16.
239 Ibid, supra note 9, at 16.
240 Ibid, 2.
remarkable historical witness, Tech Sergeant Clement Dowler, the eighty-seven year old ball turret gunner from my grandfather’s fateful flight.238

Mr. Dowler and I saw many memorable things as we retraced my grandfather’s journey south through the French cities of Avord, Bourges, Sancoins, and Sagonne. Thanks to the generosity of the French Air Force, we gazed out upon the old runway of the Avord Airbase where Mr. Dowler fractured his leg during a rough parachute landing on the afternoon of April 28, 1944. We also visited with the wonderful townspeople of the region who sheltered my grandfather and still referred to him as the “géant américain” due to his surprising height.239 In addition, historians associated with le Musée de la Résistance in Bourges introduced us to extraordinary men who served with le Maquis during this tumultuous period in French history.240

Of particular note, not one of the individuals present — scholar, resistance fighter, or Mr. Dowler himself — could state with certainty where the dreadful event described by my grandfather occurred. In subsequent correspondence, a historian in the region, Frederic Henoff, described the difficulties he encountered during his search for related information:

Regarding your grandfather’s [Escape and Evasion Report], I had also read this handwritten note. When he was hidden at Mr. Gerbeau farm [sic], at the time of the Normandy landing, a city not far from there — Saint-Amand-Montrond — was for a short time a place of fights between the French underground and the Germans... But we don’t know [the whole] story, and perhaps your grandfather saw things which were forgotten then in the storm of the following fights, at the time of the liberation of the area.

The scale of the carnage described in Escape and Evasion Report No. 866 strongly suggests that my grandfather bore witness to the aftermath of the massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane.241 This infamous mass murder represents one of the most disgraceful wartime atrocities committed by German forces in occupied France. Moreover, he may have been recalling the fighting that took place in Saint-Amand-Montrond, or events that transpired in another nearby village, as Mr. Henoff maintains. It is clear that Lt. Murphy traveled through this region, and he likely overestimated the number of victims he observed. Nonetheless, there is one other alternative that has significant historical and moral implications — no matter how improbable it may seem, this declassified intelligence report could contain evidence of an undocumented German war crime.

Criminal acts were witnessed by many, including Mr. Dowler, during his five month escape from German occupied France. Despite this fact, the victims described in my grandfather’s report are no less deserving of justice than the millions of innocents who suffered during this brutal conflict. At the conclusion of hostilities in World War II, it was widely acknowledged that the

239 See Laurent Boudier, Lurcy-Levis: D’Hier et D’Aujourd’Hui 169 (1965) (explaining the general history of the region and providing specific description of Lt. Murphy’s involvement with resistance efforts during the war).
240 See Natalee Seely, Dowler Thanks French for Saving Him: Evaded German Capture During World War II, Parkersburg News & Sentinel (Nov. 11, 2011), available at http://www.newsandsentinel.com/page/content.detail/id/554025.html (providing more information on Mr. Dowler’s recent visit to France).
241 For additional discussion of the massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane, see generally Farmer, supra note 195. Notably, the village of Oradour is within a four hour bicycle ride of the Cher department. In addition, this is the general area where by grandfather and Tech Sergeant Clement Dowler independently participated in resistance activities from the period May through August 1944. Interview with Clement Dowler, former Tech Sergeant, in Avord, France (Oct. 12, 2011).
“Germans had ill-treated and in many cases executed Allied personnel belonging to both regular and resistance forces, as well as civilians… in occupied territories.”242 As a result of Germany’s disregard for the tenets of humanitarian law, the Nuremberg Tribunal was established pursuant to the London Charter of 1945 for the purpose of securing “just and prompt trial and punishment of the major war criminals of the European Axis.”243

The London Charter was notable in that it first provided a clear definition of what constituted a war crime for the purpose of the ensuing proceedings.244 The principles established in the Charter and in the Nuremberg Tribunal’s resulting judgment would come to be regarded as declaratory of the law of war.245 The term “war crime” was given broad application in the proceedings and included conduct that evidenced “violations of the laws and customs of war.”246 In addition, the Charter introduced a new subset of war crimes described as crimes against humanity.247 This designation included such transgressions as “murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population.”248

Interestingly, the Nuremberg Tribunal gave little credence to the use of military necessity as a defense to German war crimes.249 Many felt that by distorting this concept, German soldiers reduced “the entire body of the laws of war to a code of military convenience, having no further sanction than the sense of honour [sic] of the individual military commander.”250 Thus, within the guidelines set forth by the Nuremberg Tribunal, my grandfather’s account unequivocally demonstrates that Kriegsraison is both morally reprehensible and criminal. In effect, this doctrine allows a belligerent to justify even the most abhorrent behavior under the guise of military necessity. Consequently, it serves as nothing more than a means of enabling wartime misconduct.

While the Nuremberg Tribunal is now a fixture of the past, the majority of German war criminals were tried by national courts.251 This trend continues to the present day.252 One only has to look to the May 2011 conviction of a former guard at a Nazi concentration camp to see the utility of

---

242 Green, supra note 34, at 320.
244 Taylor, supra note 244, at 324. See also Theodor Meron, Reflections on the Prosecution of War Crimes by International Tribunals, 100 Am. J. Int’l L. 551, 562 (2006).
245 Green, supra note 34, at 320.
246 London Charter, supra note 245, art. 6 (emphasis added).
247 Ibid.
248 Ibid.
250 Green, supra note 34, at 148. See also Horton, supra note 67, at 585-87; Solis, supra note 67, at 266.
252 Roberts & Guelff, supra note 50, at 11.
this forum for prosecuting war crimes which occurred many years ago. Although my initial intent in writing this Article was to pay tribute to Lt. Murphy’s bravery and sacrifice, my thoughts often turned to the innocent French civilians whose lives were extinguished in the summer of 1944. I pondered whether the perpetrators of this vicious crime were punished and whether the true extent of their acts had been exposed to the world.

As a result, my final conclusion related to *Escape and Evasion Report No. 866* is that the facts outlined in this document simply demand further scrutiny. In essence, this Article is a humble appeal for renewed investigation of this historical evidence. National courts still provide a feasible venue for determining culpability should my grandfather’s report lead to evidence that is more substantial in nature. Furthermore, the Nuremberg Tribunal did not place a statute of limitations on war crimes or crimes against humanity, nor should the French government.

Thus, even though my grandfather passed away over forty years ago, his story could finally bring justice for the men, women, and children who suffered unlawful deaths at the hands of their German occupiers. Although I never had the pleasure of meeting Lt. Murphy, I strongly suspect that he, and the honorable men that fought alongside him, would have wanted it that way.

**About the Author**

McKay Smith is an Attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice, National Security Division. He is also an Adjunct Professor at the George Washington University Law School and the George Mason University School of Law where he teaches courses on government oversight and internal investigations. Prior to joining the Department of Justice, Mr. Smith was a Senior Inspector with the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General. He worked in multiple capacities within the Office of Inspector General, including as an Attorney and as the Acting Intelligence Operations Specialist. Mr. Smith earned his J.D. from William and Mary Law School and an LL.M., with distinction, from the Georgetown University Law Center.

---

253 See generally Jack Ewing & Alan Cowell, *Demjanjuk Convicted for Role in Nazi Death Camp*, N.Y. Times, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/13/world/europe/13nazi.html. On May 12, 2011, John Demjanjuk was found guilty by a German court of taking part in the murder of 28,000 people in 1943. *Id.* He served as a guard at the Sobibor concentration camp in German occupied Poland during World War II. *Id.* After decades of legal proceedings, Demjanjuk’s conviction was hailed by many as evidence of the immutability of justice. *Id.*

254 The applicability of statutes of limitation to war crimes and crimes against humanity has been an area of debate in France. National law and subsequent decisions by the Court of assation seemingly indicate that war crimes prosecutions are constrained by a statute of limitations. See Barbie Case (1985). Nonetheless, France unequivocally supported non-applicability during debate in front of the U.N. General Assembly. See Statement Before the U.N. General Assembly (1967). In addition, they signed the European Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes. See Signatories to the Convention (1968).