

These Men Flew With Andy Mynarski

by Jim Kelly

as told to Jack Brickenden in the Winnipeg Free Press.
(Jim Kelly, a former Georgetown resident, is the son
of Town Clerk John D. and Mrs. Kelly)



Jim Kelly

(Final Instalment)

"We didn't know what to do. We saw a pile of onions lying on the floor beside a basket. We sat down on the floor and began to sort the onions. The soldiers burst into the attic and began shouting out at some imaginary enemy.

After a few minutes we picked up the basket of onions and went down to the kitchen. When the Germans had finished playing war games upstairs they came down again hardly glancing at us as we sat at the table drinking imitation coffee and went outside.

"Well, we's got away with it again, but our nerves were pretty bad. They weren't as ragged as the nerves of the poor unfortunate woman who was har-boring us. She was terrified and ask-us to leave!

Leader Captured

"The priest took us to a home in another small village nearby. The food problem was acute but this family gladly shared what little it had. The grandfather was a man of 86 who had taken part in two previous wars against the Germans. Anything that helped us hindered them, so he cheerfully divided his own slices of bread into fractions and passed them around.

"While we were there the local underground leader... the man who interrogated us the first time and threatened us with the Luger was caught by the Gestapo. We had to leave again. He mightn't talk but we could only stay out of sight until he had been killed. Otherwise we'd run the risk of being caught by the Germans. (We learned later that this man, who was a cripple, had managed to keep silent about us and any other of his underground activities even tho' the Germans filed his teeth down to the gums."

Another Move

"While he was alive and in German hands, all Allied evaders in the area left shelter and rendezvous in the fields just in case he wasn't able to hold out. In all there were six Canadians, one American, two Englishmen and one New Zealander. Food was brought to us from the village and we passed the time by playing poker with our escape money.

"When the crippled underground leader died of his torture we went back to our various shelters.

"Not long after this a young girl called for us and led us away, using the bicycle system again. We went to Sanlis-le-see just a few miles away. Our guide, who was a school teacher, turned us over to a lady and her two daughters in a chateau who... thanks goodness... could afford to deal regularly with the Black Market. We ate better there.

The Germans Flee

"They put us in a big room and gave us clean linen, good food and a general good time. While we were there we heard that Paris had been liberated, which explained why the traffic on the main road nearby had suddenly grown thicker.

"The Germans fled from Paris in tanks and trucks and British and American aircraft strafed them day and night. When the heavier vehicles got by then individual soldiers in buggies and on bikes began to scramble along the roads. Then they began coming along on foot. Then we began to see them limping along without shoes. There was no organization at all. The only thing that kept them moving was the fact that they knew the French peasants were waiting with pitchforks and long-hidden guns to kill any stragglers.

"The chateau where we stayed was used off and on as a temporary command post — at least as long as there was some organization in the retreat. The first time the Germans took over the chateau Bob and I hid in the cellar and ate once a day. Once we passed a German officer on the stairs but we simply exchanged bonjours and kept on going. He probably thought we were French workers.

Cupboard Refuge

"One night the school teacher guide was over visiting. She stayed past curfew hour and had to spend the night or risk being shot on sight if she went out at night.

"That night a group of storm troopers moved in. They drove a tank through the front gate and over the rabbit hutch and shot in the front door. Bob and I jumped out of bed and slipped into a big cupboard in our bedroom. The schoolteacher rushed in and jumped into our bed to account for the fact that it had been used. When the SS guard looked in everything was normal.

We Hear the Guns

"We lived in that cupboard for four days. We had to sit silently stark naked on a pile of high-heeled ladies' shoes. We couldn't stretch and I don't think we slept once during the entire four days. The Germans were in the next room and we could hear them as they shaved and washed.

"Somehow the women managed to smuggle food in to us once each day. "Finally our hostess... decided to move us out. She found clothing for

us and we dressed, left our prison, stretched for the first time in 96 hours, and set out. It was really quite simple. We just walked down the main stairway, passed the officers' mess, out the front door, over the sleeping forms of German soldiers, on the lawn and into the family vault. Later the village gendarme moved us from the vault to his own home. While we were there we heard the BBC news again and learned that the British had taken Amiens, which was only about 20 miles away. We prayed that Jerry would move out soon.

"Early next morning we heard machine guns in the distance. The women and children were put in the air-raid shelters and provided with British and American flags. The Germans began to leave. All the tank ports were shut tight.

Liberation

"Soon afterwards the British arrived riding on top of their tanks and covered with flowers. Wine and champagne that had been hidden away for years suddenly began to flow and the gay abandon of the celebration as that village was freed was something I'll never forget. Everyone was kissing and hugging everyone else. It was just half an hour from the time that the first gunfire was heard in the distance that the village was free.

"The priest we had met earlier in our career as evaders turned up again that day looking rather flushed and doubtlessly with victory. He swept aside his robe to display a row of revolvers stuck in his belt. He gave us each a Luger and we set off in search of German stragglers.

"We found quite a few. "We stayed around for a week of hectic celebration. We met and befriended the Allied agent who had been dropped into the area earlier in the war to lead the underground movement. As part of the celebrations he dressed up in a uniform of his own design and called himself a colonel. He told Bob and me we were majors, and during that week we were given a sloppy but sincere present arms by young members of the village militia who stood guard at civic buildings. These youngsters left soon after to join the French army.

We See England

"When the roads began to clear a bit we hitched a ride to Paris with the agent, the priest and a young boy from a local farm who was our driver. It was full speed all the way. In short order we had reached Le Bourget airport in Paris, reported to British authorities and learned that there was no space available to take us back home. We went to the Hotel Maurice on Rue de Rivaille, which was still beautiful in spite of bullet holes. It had all the luxuries of life — except hot water. After three months we still couldn't have a proper bath.

"We had a big night on the town while we waited for transport home and then caught a Dakota headed for England. I can't tell you how I felt when the misty island edged into view. I'd had my doubts about ever seeing it again.

Back From the Dead

"Coming back from the dead, as Bob and I did, was a little complicated. We had to go to a large hotel in London along with about 400 hundred other servicemen in much the same position. I was lucky, though. Some of those guys had been trying to get back to England since Rommel's time.

"I sent a telegram to my wife in Winnipeg the next day, and to my parents in Georgetown. I was pretty pleased when I found out later that my telegrams arrived before the official notification by the government."

"And that's the story, just the way Jim told it to me sitting on the edge of my bunk on that RCAF flying station in England during the closing months of the war.

"When I learned that Jim and his friends had got together to present the plaque in honour of Andy's memory, it brought the whole thing to life again. I think it's a story worth telling.

TOM WARNES MASTER ORANGE LODGE 245

Tom Warnes was elected Worshipful Master of Loyal Orange Lodge No. 245 when election and installation of officers took place at the monthly meeting in the IOOF Hall.

The election was conducted by the district master, Wor. Bro. Ernie Rawson and installation by the past county master, Wor. Bro. Clifford Bealy of Hornby Lodge. There were also several lodge members present from Milton, Hornby, Brampton and Campbell's Cross lodges. After lodge closed coffee and sandwiches were served.

MALLINAPAD

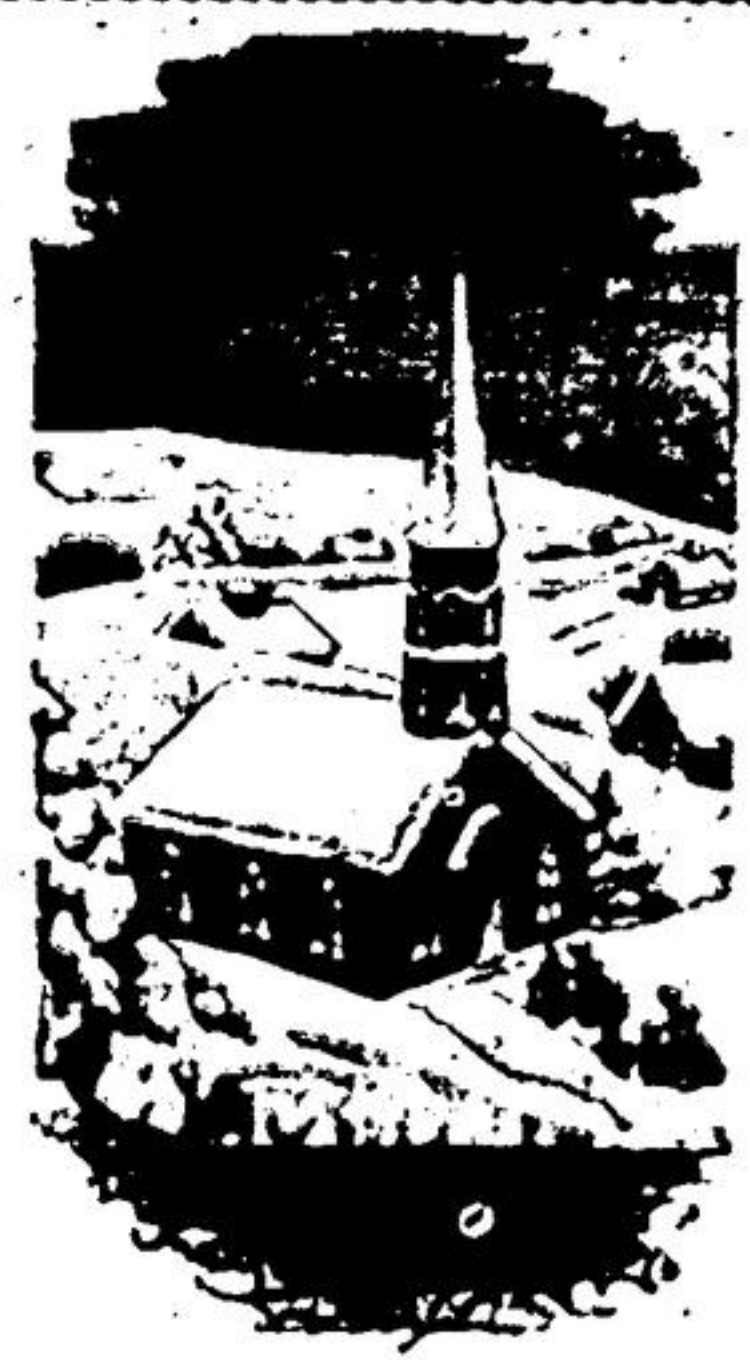
MISS B. HILTS NEW MISSION PRESIDENT

Mrs. G. Townsend was hostess for the WMS December meeting. The meeting opened with a Christmas carol and prayer by the president. The worship service with the theme "What Child Is This" was led by Mrs. F. W. Shortill and interspersed with familiar carols. The supply secretary read our allocation for the bale next spring and plans were made for our January meeting. Each member present gave a reading or expressed a thought on the true meaning of Christmas. Officers for the coming year are President, Miss B. Hilts; 1st vice president, Mrs. Warnes; Treas., Miss M. Young; Secretary Mrs. J. Kirkwood; Temperance Secretary, Mrs. Townsend; Literature secretary, Mrs. R. Warnes; Supply, Miss Hilts and Christian Stewardship, Mrs. F. W. Shortill. Mrs. Kirkwood and Miss Hilts assisted Mrs. Townsend in serving a delicious lunch.

Home for Christmas holidays are Janice Baker of the University of Toronto, Mary Jennings of Teacher's College, Toronto; Jim Kirkwood of Emmanuel, Brock Robinson of Albert College, Belleville; and our minister, Mr. G. Townsend of Victoria.

A lovely Candlelight Service was held Sunday evening in the church. The setting of candlelight, evergreens and other Christmas symbols added much to the inspiration of the program. Miss B. Hilts was in charge. Mrs. N. Sinclair, Bonnie Cotton and Janice Baker sang solo parts, Brian Sinclair and Gary Allan sang a duet "Away in a Manger". A story on the Canadian Indians was read by Mrs. Jesse McEnery.

—An evening drive around town this week is a "must" for those who enjoy the lighted Xmas decorations.



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