

Interrogation Report  
IPW Team 60  
134th Inf Regt

28 Nov 44

The following report was obtained from a man who claimed to have been a French soldier who was captured by the Germans and who now made his escape. Soldier's name is MAURICE TROTRIGNON: he belonged to the 15th French Inf Div (57th Inf Regt). He was captured at Bordeaux on 27 July 1940. His home is in VITRY-SUR-LOIRE.

Soldier gave the following tactical information:

The 17th SS Panzer Div including 8 tanks, 30 half-tracks, and 3 or 4 self propelled guns was in this vicinity and was supposed to take up a defensive position in the vicinity of GRUNDWEILER. On the night of 25 Nov they were taken out of this area and assigned a new zone about 20 Km farther south: there are now no SS troops in this immediate vicinity.

Soldier also located for us a mine field which has been previously reported.

On morning of 25 Nov there were 3 tanks at 426488: one was in a barn and two behind a house.

In the northwesterly house at CR 426488 is a mg. There are two more in the cemetery at 425488.

90 yds from this CR to the SE on the STRASSBOURG-METZ road are one or two mg.

AT 427493 is an mg or mortar emplacement.

There is an AT gun at 429488 and another at 428492.

At 424487 on a little bridge on the REMERING - GRUNDWEILER rd is a road block and an unmounted machine gun: the bridge is mined.

The PW camp from which the soldier escaped was at BRUSS, GERMANY. They were taken out from here to dig trenches 10 km behind the Russian front. He also spent some time at a concentration camp at WECTA (near BREMEN) and was beaten here by SS guards: after this he was hospitalized. He escaped from the camp and stayed at the home of a Polish girl for 4 weeks: during this time he met another escaped Frenchman and they decided to attempt to return to France. Their first attempt was unsuccessful, and they returned to the Polish girl (at SCHWARNIGAS), where they met two more escaped French. Three dressed as women to start with, but they found this clothing unsuitable for cross-country marches, and soon changed back to men's clothes. One who could speak fluent German was the spokesman for the group: the soldier we have speaks poor German. They were often able to "hitch" rides in German military vehicles: this is common practice in Germany now because of the shortage of transportation. Soldier says that their travels took them through BRESLAU, POSEN and PRAGUE in 12 days. They then went to MAINZ and then toward SAARBRUECKEN. They were arrested by the mayor of ALZEY, but escaped by a ruse and went to SARRE-GUEMINES. They found a truck which contained German uniforms taken from wounded, and each put one on over their civilian clothes. In WOUSTWEILER they were picked up by a German sergeant who issued them guns and helmets and told them to report to an SS unit which would come to GRUNDWEILER that night (17 SS Div). Instead of going there the men came to the front, were fired upon by a German patrol, killed 2 Germans, lost one of their own men, separated, and this one

went to the town of Remering. There were only a few German soldiers here, and the civilians were very hostile to him because of the German uniform he wore: they threw him out of a cellar while we were shelling the town. He took of the uniform and went back to civilian clothes, stayed in another cellar overnight, and the following day the Americans came into town: he then turned himself over to an American officer.

Soldier located a concealed German airfield near KAISERSLAUTERN: it is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  km east of POTZBACH and 2 km northwest of WARSENBERG-ROHRBACH.

He also located a large barracks containing 40,000 members of the former pro-German French militia who are now members of the SS. This is at a small village called WILDFLECKEN which is halfway between the larger villages of GERSFELD and BRUECENAU: the nearest city is FULDA.

Among observations made by the soldier are:

1. There is no wall higher than 6 ft standing in Cologne.
2. Because of fuel shortage all vehicles operated in Germany are wood-burners: these are operated in trains of one powered vehicle towing 7 or 8 vehicles used as trailers.
3. While digging trenches for the Germans in Poland they dug into a place where an estimated 11,000 Jews had been given a mass burial.
4. When asked (in this vicinity) by an SS non-com whether they were French volunteers in the German army they replied that they were: the non-com advised them to put on civilian clothes and attempt to get back to France since the Germans were "in a bad way".
5. Between here and SAARALBE soldier saw many individual and small groups of German soldiers who were going to the rear claiming that they had lost their units. When asked how things were going up at the front the stragglers expressed complete disgust.

It is possible that this soldier is not what he purports to be. His familiarity with the barracks mentioned above leads to the suspicion that he may have been one of the pro-German French militia who now thinks it is about time to abandon his sinking ship.

Theodor Teimer, Jr.  
1st Lt. IPW 60  
134th Inf Regt