

but before the plan could be put into effect, the Germans reorganised the defences. On discovering that the Germans were wiring the windows of the barracks about the end of April, 1944, Warrant Officer Leitch decided to make yet another attempt without delay, and he broke out of the camp wearing civilian clothes. He remained at large until 8th June, 1944, when he was recaptured. He was eventually liberated by the allied forces at Velson on the 16th April, 1945.

*Air Ministry, 17th May, 1946.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards:—

*Military Cross.*

Flight Lieutenant Bertram Arthur JAMES (42232), Royal Air Force, No. 9 Squadron.

On the night of 5th June, 1940, Flight Lieutenant James was the 2nd pilot of a Wellington aircraft which was hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire and had to be abandoned whilst over Holland. He made a successful parachute descent some 25 miles south of Rotterdam, disposed of his equipment, and evaded some people who were approaching, but subsequently was captured by the Germans. He was held at Oberussel for four days for interrogation. Later he was sent to Stalag Luft I at Barth from which camp he made an attempt to escape during an air raid on 21st October, 1941. His attempt, which was made after a tunnel had been constructed, was unsuccessful and as a punishment he received 14 days solitary confinement. In November, 1941, he was discovered whilst engaged in the construction of a second tunnel, and was sentenced to another 14 days solitary confinement. While at Stalag Luft I, he worked on the construction of at least five other tunnels, all without success. His next attempt was made whilst at Stalag Luft III (Sagan) in July, 1942, when he, with another prisoner, managed to slip away from a sick parade and hide in a cow shed. Here they began to construct another tunnel, but were discovered when it was 21 feet long. For this, Flight Lieutenant James served a sentence of 14 days in the cells. In April, 1943, he, with others, commenced the construction of a tunnel which resulted in the escape of 76 officers, but unfortunately 50 R.A.F. officers were shot by the Germans whilst endeavouring to get away. Flight Lieutenant James, however, managed to leave with civilian clothes and forged documents and, together with eleven others, entrained for Boberohrsdorf, arriving there the next morning. Here the party decided to split up into pairs. Flight Lieutenant James and his companion walked across country towards Hirschberg, but were apprehended by German Police. Flight Lieutenant James was eventually sent to Saohsenhausen Concentration Camp where, with others, in May, 1944, he commenced the construction of a tunnel some hundred feet in length, and 10 feet below the surface. On 23rd September, 1944, he and four others escaped through this tunnel. Flight Lieutenant James and a companion made their way towards Rostock, but were arrested by members of the German Home Guard who returned them to the Concentration Camp where they were put in cells. Flight Lieutenant James remained in the cells from 6th October, 1944, until 15th February, 1945. He was ultimately liberated by the Allied forces on the 6th May, 1945.

Flight Lieutenant Peter STEVENS (88219), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 144 Squadron.

Flight Lieutenant Stevens was the captain of a Hampden aircraft detailed to bomb Berlin on 7th September, 1941. After the mission had been completed the aircraft was hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire and had to be crash-landed subsequently, on the outskirts of Amsterdam. Flight Lieutenant Stevens set fire to the aircraft, destroyed all documents and then, in company with the navigator, commenced to walk towards Amsterdam. They met a farmer who took them to his house and gave them food, at the same time promising to put them in touch with an organisation. Both walked across country for an hour, and then hid in a hut on a football field. They were later found by German Feldgendarmerie and taken to a Military prison, remaining there for two days. They were then sent to the Dulag Luft at Oberussel. Flight Lieutenant Stevens was

moved to Lubeck on 20th September, 1941. On 6th October, 1941, he was entrained for Warburg, and during the journey he made his escape, accompanied by another officer, by crawling through a ventilator and dropping to the ground while the train was in motion. Shots were fired and the train was stopped but he and his companion managed to reach a wood where they hid until the departure of the train. Shortly afterwards they jumped on a goods train and reached Hanover on 8th October. Here Flight Lieutenant Stevens made contact with some pre-war acquaintances who provided him with food, money and civilian clothes. He, with his companion, then entrained for Frankfurt. Here they were challenged by Railway Police and arrested being subsequently sent to Oflag VI.B. at Warburg. On 1st December, 1941, Flight Lieutenant Stevens made a further attempt to escape by disguising himself as a German Unter-Offizier. He led a party of 10 officers disguised as orderlies, and two officers disguised as guards with dummy rifles, and all marched through the gates of the camp. They had to return however as the sentry was not satisfied that the gate pass was correct. Flight Lieutenant Stevens marched his party back to the compound and the sentry was then quite unaware that the party was not genuine. A similar plan of escape was therefore adopted a week later, but on this occasion the sentry was immediately suspicious and demanded of the party their pay-books. The party then had to disperse hurriedly but two of its members were arrested. In September, 1942, Flight Lieutenant Stevens was moved to Oflag XXIB at Schubin. Here he made a fourth attempt to escape and managed to get away by means of a tunnel, carrying forged identity papers, wearing a civilian suit and carrying a converted great-coat. He took a train to Berlin, arriving there on the evening of 5th March, 1943. He bought a railway ticket to Cologne and, when on the journey to that town, he was asked for his identity card by a Gestapo official. The latter discovered that it was forged, and Flight Lieutenant Stevens was then arrested and returned to the Oflag XXIB, receiving as a punishment 14 days in the cells. Flight Lieutenant Stevens made a further attempt on 21st April, 1943, but it was unsuccessful and he served a sentence of 7 days in the cells. He was ultimately liberated by the Russian forces whilst at Stalag IIIA on the 21st April, 1945.

Captain John Jerome ORR (102836), South African Air Force, attd. No. 2 P.R.U., R.A.F.

On 18th March, 1943, Captain Orr was attacked by two M.E.109's while on a photographic reconnaissance over Greece. The aircraft was damaged and had to be abandoned. Captain Orr sustained head and ankle wounds. He was picked up by a Greek fishing boat and handed over to the Italians. On 29th March, 1943, he was placed in a small boat with a Warrant Officer and three other ranks as escort. During the journey the mast was damaged in a storm, but after repairs, the party proceeded on their way to Syra. When the vessel was about 300 yards from the shore of Paros Island Captain Orr jumped overboard and swam ashore. He was, however, captured and taken to Syra Island where he was imprisoned until 7th April, 1943, when he was transferred to a civil prison on Leros Island. On 10th April, 1943, he was moved to a P/W Camp on Rhodes Island from which he escaped. He was recaptured almost immediately and for this attempt he received 14 days solitary confinement. On 7th June, 1943, he was sent to a camp at Modena which was shortly taken over by the Germans. Captain Orr, with another officer, hid in a coal shed and both eventually made their escape. They crossed the Swiss frontier in December, 1943. Captain Orr recrossed the frontier in June, 1944, joining the F.F.I. and remaining with them until August, 1944, when he rejoined the Allied Forces.

Warrant Officer (now Pilot Officer) Vernon James BASTABLE (R.95313) Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 106 Squadron.

Warrant Officer Bastable was captured in the Rouen area in September 1942, and was held in various prison camps. He made his first attempt to escape in May 1943, whilst with a working party at Metsdorf, Sudetenland, having obtained civilian clothing from the Czechs. His true identity was discovered and he was returned to Stalag 344. Warrant Officer Bastable then decided to make an