

Italian soldiers. In December, 1941, he escaped from Stalag Luft I disguised as a French worker, and walked west. He reached Warnemunde by train 24 hours later where he managed to board a train ferry unseen and crossed into Denmark. As he was trying to force his way into a train he was seen by Danish police and handed over to the Germans. When prisoners of war were being transferred from Stalag Luft I to Sagan in April, 1942, Flight Lieutenant Wilson arranged to be hidden in a crate and put in with the luggage. Unfortunately the door of the van was padlocked and by the time he had wrenched it open the train had reached Bernau where he jumped off and walked towards Stettin, which he eventually reached by jumping a train. Flight Lieutenant Wilson then spent two days looking in vain for a Swedish boat and then decided to make for Rostock. Unfortunately, he boarded the wrong train arriving at Kustrin, where hunger and fatigue forced him to give himself up. During his captivity, Flight Lieutenant Wilson was engaged on several tunnels from one of which three officers escaped. This officer showed great determination to escape and was a marked man by the Germans.

Warrant Officer Thomas Phillip Edward BLATCH (976618), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 76 Squadron.

Warrant Officer Blatch was the wireless operator of an aircraft which caught fire and had to be abandoned in September, 1942. He sustained head and foot injuries and was captured 24 hours later. In February, 1943, he exchanged identity with a soldier at Lamsdorf and, whilst on a working party at a coal mine near Dabrowa, he escaped by means of a disused air shaft. He made for the east and next day made contact with a Pole who took him over the border and introduced him to a member of an underground movement. Warrant Officer Blatch was provided with Polish papers, clothing and money, and with a student member of the movement went on various missions, including one for the destruction of German road convoys and the local S.S. H.Q. at Przemysl. After a train wrecking incident the Germans made a thorough check up and Warrant Officer Blatch, with others, was arrested and interrogated. He failed to satisfy a Polish interpreter and was taken to Monte Lubitsch prison where he was kept for 3 weeks under the sentence of death. He was later identified and in April, 1943, returned to Lamsdorf. In March, 1944, Warrant Officer Blatch with a companion, provided with papers, money and civilian clothes, escaped through the wire and made their way to the railway station at Annadorf where they boarded a train for Stettin. On arrival they contacted some friendly Polish dock workers who gave them shelter until they could stow away on a Swedish vessel. They were, however, betrayed and arrested and Warrant Officer Blatch was sent to Stalag IIIA at Luckenwald. While at Stalag IIIA Warrant Officer Blatch obtained civilian clothes and, with the aid of a Yugoslav, walked out of the camp and eventually boarded a goods train. He reached Posen next morning and there hid until dusk. He then contacted members of the underground movement, with whom he stayed until August, 1944, when he was again arrested after taking part in an attack on a German ammunition dump. In April, 1945, when the camp at Altengrabow was evacuated Warrant Officer Blatch and another made their escape and contacted Russian forces five days later.

Warrant Officer Edgar Louis Graham HALL (564838), Royal Air Force, No. 102 Squadron.

Warrant Officer Hall was captured near Goch in May, 1940, after his aircraft had crashed, and he was imprisoned in various camps in Germany. During his captivity he carried out the work of Senior non-commissioned officer in three different camps; he also served on various Escape Committees, organising and assisting in several tunnelling operations. In May, 1942, he and a companion jumped from a moving train whilst being transferred to Stalag VIII B (Sagan). They walked most of the night and next day but were recaptured 3 miles beyond Frankfurt. Warrant Officer Hall and another left a column during a halt in April, 1945, intending to wait for Allied troops, but they were recaptured four days later.

Warrant Officer John Neil PRENDERGRAST (620735), Royal Air Force, No. 61 Squadron.

Warrant Officer Prendergrast was captured when

his aircraft crash-landed in July, 1940, and imprisoned in various camps in Germany. Throughout his captivity he took a leading part in all escape activities and assisted in numerous tunnelling operations. In March, 1943, he escaped from Oflag XXIB, by means of a tunnel which he had helped to construct, and made his way towards Danzig but was recaptured the next morning by railway police at Bromberg. Warrant Officer Prendergrast made a further attempt in September and reached the Lithuanian frontier where he was arrested by frontier police. When Stalag Luft VI was being evacuated, this warrant officer hid in the camp until night-fall when he cut his way through the perimeter wire. Warrant Officer Prendergrast succeeded in crossing the Lithuanian border and walked for five days before being recaptured by a German patrol. Warrant Officer Prendergrast worked unceasingly in connection with Escape and Intelligence activities.

Warrant Officer Frank SANDERS (541666), Royal Air Force, No. 90 Squadron.

Warrant Officer Sanders was forced to abandon his aircraft after it had been hit by anti-aircraft fire in June, 1943. He made a parachute landing in a farm paddock near Ouderkerk and hid in a nearby wood. The next morning he located the local priest, but was unable to obtain assistance from him. Warrant Officer Sanders wandered about for four days and eventually made contact with members of an organisation who fed, clothed and sheltered him. Warrant Officer Sanders, with others, was then taken to Brussels and thence to Paris. While in Paris the whole party was arrested by the Gestapo and imprisoned in Fresnes prison. In March, 1944, whilst at Stalag IVB, Warrant Officer Sanders, with a companion, hid in a hole in the compound and, at a suitable moment, cut the wire and made for Czechoslovakia. Two days later, while hiding in a barn, they were discovered by some children and were arrested by the Wehrmacht. In June, 1944, Warrant Officer Sanders changed his identity and went to a working camp at Fransburg. Thirteen prisoners, including Sanders, tunneled under their hut into a cellar from which they escaped. Warrant Officer Sanders and two others made their way towards the Czechoslovakian frontier. After three days, whilst resting in a wood, they were seen by a child. They did not suspect any trouble until the child returned with the father, who was armed, and who handed them over to the local police. Warrant Officer Sanders made a third attempt to escape, while on a working party at Ammendorf, by leaving the hut after roll call. He returned and removed the bars of the window so that others could escape; they then left the camp via the Russian compound. With two others, Warrant Officer Sanders boarded a goods train which took them to a goods yard at Halle; they quickly made their way into the country, but two days later were recaptured by a farmer. In March, 1945, Warrant Officer Sanders made a further attempt to escape from Halle, during an air raid, dressed in a French military uniform. He boarded a goods train, but had to jump off when seen by the guard. After walking for five days, he attempted to steal a bicycle but was observed and arrested. Warrant Officer Sanders was liberated in April, 1945, by Russian troops.

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD.

St. James's Palace, S.W. 1.

6th September, 1946.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve that the undermentioned, who were appointed to be Members of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire under date the 4th September, 1945, and announced in the Third Supplement to the London Gazette of the 31st August, 1945, No. 37250, page 4434, shall now be transferred to be Members of the Military Division of the said Most Excellent Order, to be dated 4th September, 1945:—

Acting Flight Lieutenant Arthur Vivian BREEN (185510), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

Flight Officer (Honorary) Beatrice Yvonne CORMEAU (9903), Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

Flight Officer (Honorary) Cecile Pearl CORNIOLEY (née WITHERINGTON) (9904), Women's Auxiliary Air Force.